

The Agenda

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Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association

O/N BOCES Decides on Split...

The Orleans-Niagara BOCES has decided to follow a split calendar commencing in the 2006-07 school year. It's not "new" news, but news none-the-less.

This calendar change is apparently to better align themselves with Erie 1 BOCES so that services aren't interrupted. Many Niagara County schools do not have contract language addressing the scheduling of Spring Break; therefore, they will be forced to follow the BOCES calendar.

That leaves us with one question... What does it mean for the Nwta?



New calendar effects everyone in the county!

Inside this issue:

"On Track with Your Contract" Contest	2
The Lighter Side	2
NEW Contest: "Can You Picture This?"	3
From Where I Stand...	3
NYSUT Member Benefits	4
What's Good on the Bookshelves	5

Happy New Year 2006

- * This year, make a point to get involved in your local!
- * Familiarize yourself with the contract.
- * Get to know who your building Reps are.
- * Stay active!

... And Our Perspective on the Issue

From Darlene Fegatilli, President

Please be aware that the Nwta and the District will be discussing the spring vacation of 06-07. We do have language (11:10 b) addressing Spring Break. However, we cannot ignore the impact of following our own schedule and disregarding the effects of a different schedule academically and financially on our school District. We have requested from the District a memo outlining the academic and financial impacts if we do not agree to the split schedule.

Some people have suggested that we send out a survey asking teachers for their opinion concerning changing our Spring Break. Unfortunately, I know that any

survey results would be shared with administrators, who in turn would inform Central Office, thereby allowing Dr. Howard and Mr. Sikora to know the strength of our position. For that reason, I am requesting that each member share with his/her building representatives his/her opinion on the split schedule. The BOD and the Executive Board will then have a confidential discussion. I am not asking for helpful negotiation hints. Please do not tell the building representatives what we should ask for in return if we do decide to follow the split schedule. I do not foresee a blockbuster trade involving the two-week vs. split schedule Spring Break situation!

Are You On Track with Our Contract?

Mrs. Suzie Q. is expecting her first child in February. Her doctor has already told her she will need six to eight weeks off. She does not have enough accumulated sick days to cover her absence. What should Mrs. Suzie Q. do? Where would she find helpful information to guide her in the right direction? Who might she contact for further information? How will she be affected by the new contract language? Please site the section in our contract that would help Suzie the most. Send your completed entry via email to dbubar@nwcsd.org or interoffice mail to Darla Bubar at ETMS. All entries must be received no later than January 31st to be considered for eligibility. The winning entry will be ran-

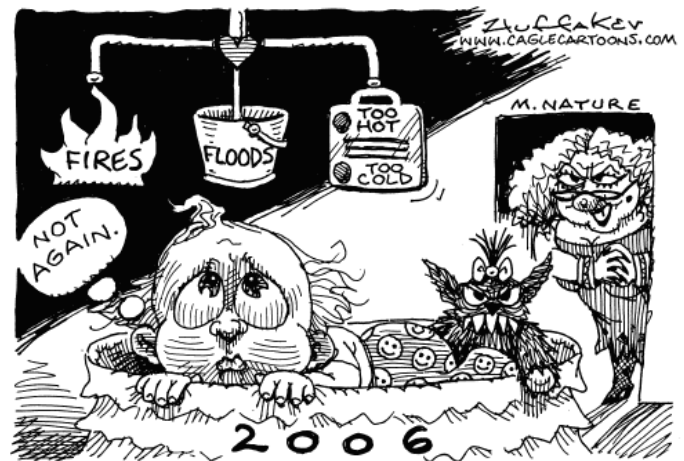
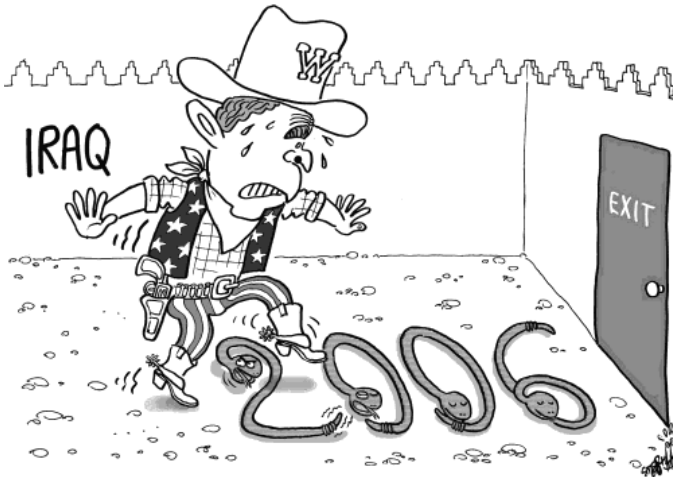
domly drawn from all correct entries submitted. The prize is a \$5.00 gift book to Tim Horton's. Good luck!

Note: this is a re-run of November's contest as we had no entries at that time! Please stay active and get involved in your local... remember this union is nothing without is ACTIVE members!



Enter today for your chance to win!

The Lighter Side



Happy New Year?

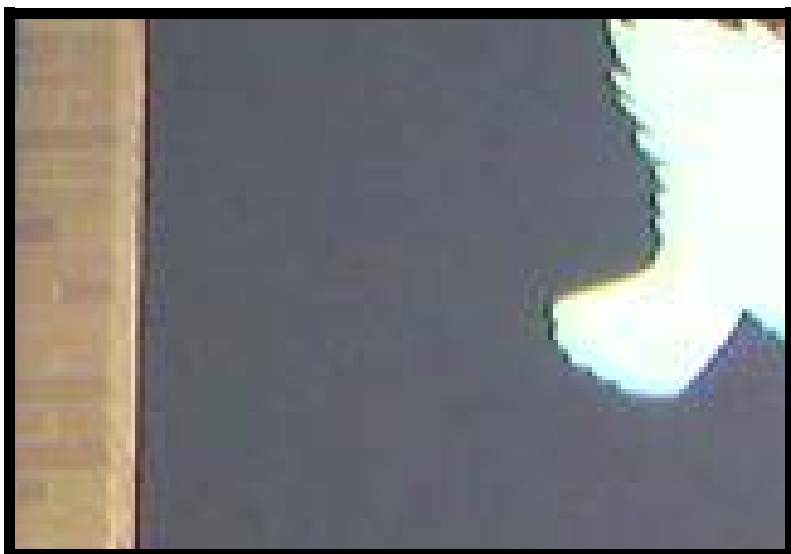
Can You Picture This?

Starting this month, *The Agenda* will feature a new contest. A different photo of some NW attribute will be featured.

You'll need to use your imagination, your thinking cap, and your eyes to figure what object is pictured. Identify the object and where it is, then submit your name and your guess to Darla Bubar by the end of the month, and you could be eligible for a prize. A winner will be

selected from all correct entries and receive a five-dollar gift book to Tim Horton's. This month's photo is an easy one!

Can you picture this?



From Where I Stand... Happy Two Years!

Darla Bubar, Editor

When I was a kid, I always used to wish I was older; then I'd be able to do more, right? If you have your own children or think about your students, you probably see them wishing the same thing sometimes, too. Didn't we all at one time or another? And then that dreaded day comes when we are older and something comes out of our mouths that reminds us of our parents, and we instead say, "Where did the time go?" or "My how time flies!" right after we think, "Oh my gosh, I sound just like my mother!" We wish somehow we could freeze time, or at least slow it down a little. We finally understand that quote, "Time waits for no man."

We sure don't believe it when we're kids ourselves, but it happens to the best of us. And sure enough, another New Year is upon us and we look back over 2005 (hopefully with fondness and maybe with a little regret.) We've had experiences and shared memories, we've laughed and cried... and some of us have celebrated with complete joy while others endured severe hardship and sorrow. We reflect on the top news stories, we see change in the world — sometimes for the better. We ponder what is yet to come. We make our resolutions and our plans and wonder what 2006 will be like. We don't feel like we're getting older, but we realize we are. The good news is — with age comes wisdom.

How many times have you thought about the year in terms of September to June rather than January to December — or referred to next year by thinking of the next *school*

year? Unlike many other professionals, we get to celebrate two New Year's Days within one "year" - a new calendar year in January and a new school year in September. We get two opportunities to make some kind of difference in our own lives and in the lives of others. We get a second chance at a new year when the old one hasn't yet ended. Where else could anyone say that, except in education?

We are allowed to make two sets of plans, we think about our families and our students in terms of two calendars, we understand the importance of time in regards to the future because we have to spend each day from September to June trying to make a difference in the lives of our students so that they can grow-up to be successful, and each day from January to December with our families so that they can understand the value of love and goals and family. Many of us have already begun the new school year with success and have also begun thinking about next year, while this new calendar year has only just started. Time is flying by—as promised by our parents, but it's never too late to make a difference today. We get two chances to do so, too.

As you make your resolutions and your plans and wonder what 2006 will bring you, remember... this current school year is still in progress and it's never too late to make a difference! *Two New Years?* Yet another great thing about being a teacher!

"That dreaded day comes when we are older and something comes out of our mouths and reminds us of our parents..."

Looking to Save Money?

These discount programs endorsed by New York State United Teachers Member Benefits will save you money!

Simply Certificates

Perfect for gift giving! Gift certificates purchased from Simply Certificates online or by phone are discounted 10 percent for NYSUT members and agency fee payers. You must identify yourself as a NYSUT member to receive the discount. Note: This discount is not valid at Simply Certificates retail locations.

Certificates are accepted at hundreds of participating restaurants, day spas, resorts, golf courses and ski areas. Merchants are located in many areas within New York, as well as in many other states and D.C.



Working Advantage

If you like to save money on entertainment, then this program will interest you. Purchase discounted tickets for movie theaters, video rentals, theme/amusement parks, skiing, Broadway shows, museums and special family events through Working Advantage.

You can order tickets through the mail, Internet or phone. You must identify yourself as a NYSUT member and use the special NYSUT identification number: 704689984.

Lifeline

If you have an older relative living at home, Lifeline can give both of you peace of mind. It's an easy-to-use personal response service that ensures older adults living at home get quick assistance whenever it is needed, 24 hours every day.

A push of a button dials a monitoring center and establishes two-way voice communication. A Lifeline Personal Help Associate communicates with the individual, assesses the situation, summons appropriate help and follows up to ensure help arrived. Lifeline also allows the user to answer the phone without rushing and risking a fall. Additionally, it can give reminders about medications, appointments, etc.

NYSUT members receive discounted pricing. Note: Some communities may offer Lifeline through hospitals or service agencies. You should check with these facilities for availability and pricing.

How to Access

For information about these programs, contact NYSUT Member Benefits: (800) 626-8101, e-mail: benefits@nysutmail.org, or online: www.memberbenefits.nysut.org.

For information about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with endorsed programs, please call NYSUT Member Benefits.

Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association

The Agenda
Darla Bubar, Editor
2292 Saunders Settlement Road
Sanborn, New York 14132
Phone: 716-215-3150 ext. 2254
Email: dbubar@nwcsd.org

Your business tag line here.

We're on the web!
www.nwta-union.org



Niagara Wheatfield
Teachers Association

We are pleased that our history dates back to 1971 when The New York State Teachers Association certified our union. Today we are proudly affiliated with The New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and The American Federation of Teachers (AFT). We are also honored to be a part of The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).



What's Good on the Bookshelves...

Mark Frost, **The Six Messiahs** (sequel to The List of Seven).
A cool religious-cult thriller, once again featuring adventures of Arthur Conan Doyle and the mysterious Jack. Way too much fun.

Stephen King, **The Colorado Kid**.
Pulp fiction with a little of the famous King unknown and darkness, asking what makes a mystery anyway?

John Berendt, **The City of Falling Angels**.
As he did in Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, Berendt tries to profile a city through the background of a crime and the people associated with it.

I thought the earlier work did more for New Orleans that this did for Venice however it may just be me. Worth reading. There really are some interesting stories within the story.

Kurt Vonnegut, **A Man Without A Country**.
If you have never read anything by Vonnegut before that's OK. You can get a real sense of the man here and maybe then read something of his earlier work.
This is a funny but dark humored book designed to make one think. Most will be and should be uncomfortable while reading this. (BUT PLEASE DO!) His observations such as being amazed and embarrassed at living so long that the three most powerful people on the planet are "Bush, Dick and Colon" are priceless.

Featured Reviewer:
Charlie Donner, ETMS

If you are interested in submitting a review, please contact Darla Bubar at ETMS or email her at dbubar@nwcsd.org.



Escape out of the cold and into a good book this month!