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WE'RE ON THE WEB
 WWW.NWTA-UNION.ORG



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).

*We would love to hear from you! If you are interested in submitting an article, photo, or any other newsworthy event, please contact the Editor, Darla Bubar at dbubar@nwcsd.org.
 All submissions are subject to editing for space and clarity.

What's good on the bookshelves

Now and Forever by Ray Bradbury

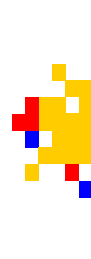
A pair of stories by one of science fictions most accessible and enjoyable writers. These are quick reads and very thought provoking. One is about a small community hidden in plain sight. The second is an interesting update on Herman Melville's classic. Strongly recommended and not too sci-fi-ish to enjoy.



The Naming of the Dead by Ian Rankin

The setting is an international conference at Edinburgh Castle. The murder and the action surrounding current world events intertwine to make an interesting story. Great characters and an interesting plot make this quite enjoyable.

Charlie Donner



The Agenda

Official Newsletter of Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association

Volume 35, Issue 6

February 2009

Union says: Do the right thing with fed stimulus aid

NYSUT Leader - February 20, 2009

Now that Washington has delivered on a \$789 billion federal stimulus plan, it is up to the state Legislature and Gov. Paterson to ensure New York state's share of the money is spent wisely. NYSUT is using its fax action center and lobbying visits to stress that point urgently.

The union can celebrate the successful lobbying and letter-writing campaign by union activists to secure the federal stimulus package. The NYSUT Web site at <http://www.nysut.org/budget> has complete coverage of the efforts by NYSUT officers, lobbyists and grassroots activists in Washington, D.C.

But now the focus has shifted to making sure the funds are used to stave off massive layoffs and devastating cuts to education and health care at home.

Gov. David Paterson acknowledged the money must be used to restore school funding. But that doesn't mean our work is done. Urge your members to contact state legislators and tell them we are relying on them to put the money to its intended use. Direct them to the Legislative Action Center at <http://politicalaction.nysut.org>, where they also will find a new letter asking for fair share tax reform.

Only part of the solution

Even with the federal stimulus funds coming, a significant state budget gap looms. NYSUT is building support for an increase in the state income tax on the wealthiest to help increase revenues. As Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said, "You cannot cut your way out of this crisis. It's too large."

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Wit and wisdom... taking Ianuzzi's message to heart



Kevin Rustowicz,
President

For this month's article, I asked to have much of NY-SUT President, Dick Ianuzzi's February Opinion article reprinted. The article offers a great deal of insight into these tough economic times.

Recovery and reinvestment needed — not retreat and retrenchment

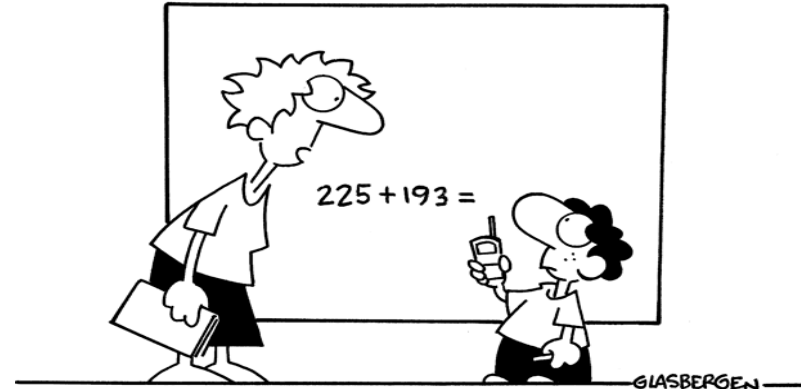
"I don't view the labor movement as part of the problem. To me it's part of the solution." With those words, President Obama demonstrated that he understands the interdependent relationship that exists between employees and their employers, unions and management.

And so it didn't go unnoticed at NY-SUT headquarters in Albany or in union offices across the nation that the very first bill signed into law by President Barack Obama was a pro-labor measure... "We need to level the playing field for workers and the unions that represent their interests," President Obama said recently. "Because we know that you cannot have a strong middle class without a strong labor movement. And we know that strong, vibrant and growing unions can exist with strong, vibrant and growing businesses. This is not an either-or proposition between the interests of

workers and the interests of shareholders. The American economy is not — and has never been — a zero-sum game." This president understands that America's working women and men must have a voice if we are to address our current economic crisis. He has set a place at the table for unions side by side with the business community. He knows that if we are going to work our way out of the current economic crisis, it's going to take the efforts of all of us — business and labor, Republican and Democrat and, yes, the working class and the very wealthy. NYSUT is no stranger to partnerships. This union is willing — in fact, eager — to work with any group or individual sharing our goals and priorities. We regularly form coalitions with other unions and progressive organizations, yet we also collaborate with the chamber of commerce and school administrators when the time — and the issue — is right. NYSUT's executive vice president, Alan Lubin, co-chairs the Business and Labor Coalition of New York — BALCONY. And at election time we endorse candidates from both of the major political parties. For NYSUT, it has always been about issues and values, about our members and those they serve. This crisis — as painful as it is for many Americans, including many of our own colleagues — provides an opportunity to rethink the way

The lighter side

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"You have to solve this problem by yourself. You can't call tech support."

NWTA scholarship bulletin

We have posted the updated three union scholarships to our union website today. We also have hard copies in the Counseling Center. Completed applications need to be sent to my attention in the high school by April 24th at 2:30 p.m. We will be interviewing candidates on May 14th.

Here's a quick recap of the scholarships:

Clark-Foster Scholarship

*\$2,000

* open to an NWTA member's son/daughter, grandchild, niece/nephew or brother/sister

NWTA Scholarship

*\$1,000

* graduating NW student

NWTA "Friend" Scholarship

*\$1,000

* personal relationship with an NWTA member that does not meet the Clark-Foster "family" criteria. For example, godchild, cousin, etc. Only one nominee per union member.

Please note that it is through YOUR donations to our union scholarship fund that we can make these scholarships available. Please contact your building rep if you would like to make a donation or sign-up for payroll deduction.

Thank you.

Mary Graber

Scholarship Chair



Guest viewpoint... an NWTA retiree's perspective

Hi, Darla... I want to thank you for sending the last three copies of the NWTA Agenda to me and compliment you upon your continual professional work on same. Being retired and 'out of the loop', it's always good to hear what those who followed me upon my retirement are trying to do for N-W. However, and please do not take this as an adverse criticism, I find all of the past decades' copies of The Agenda, rarely have anything of substance to say exactly what is going on in our district's schools. Being retired, it would be wonderful to hear of individual teacher accomplishments and attempts. I know that printing and such costs more these days, but I feel I am so far removed from what is really going on in our district that this is in need of remedy. I know it is very hard to get teachers to take the time to send you articles, etc., but it would be wonderful to know what they are doing in their various schools/disciplines, aside from commentaries about the importance of union loyalties and adherence to our contracts in effect. I don't think it would be asking too much to

require that ALL building reps canvass and report just what is going on in their schools! It would be wonderful press and news, not only for retirees but for current employees as well. I always felt I never really knew what was going on in elementary and high school happenings, being mostly interested in my building, the middle school, but gosh, how nice it would be to KNOW some of the actual stuff teachers are doing these days! All of you current employees are the benefactors of what we, the previous generations worked so hard to do/ accomplish, and how about filling us in on what the current happenings are? Yes, it is time-consuming, but I think it would be worth the effort. I hope I am not being too demanding, but I think this is sorely needed. Again, thank you for the very professional presentations of your efforts, and I wish I had been there to work with you, but my time was up, and I have moved on, as many have. Please continue to do what you have done so well so far, but maybe add an additional dimension. Thanks!

Regards,
Tom Rycombel

CONT'D FROM PG.2

government operates, to redefine how best to achieve our priorities, and, as I wrote about in an earlier column, to decide just what we stand for as a society.

Through the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the new leadership in Washington, with the expert help of our state's delegation leaders — Senator Schumer and Congressman Rangel — has provided real change aimed at recognizing the importance of the average American and the middle class — change aimed at protecting and promoting our nation's work force while at the same time revitalizing its economy.

Now it's Albany's turn. With a state budget crisis and billions of dollars in federal stimulus money winding its way to New York, we, too, have before us a transformational opportunity. Now it's our turn to think anew about the relationship between New York's workers, businesses, and our state's priorities. But, in order to succeed, we must first ask ourselves very fundamental questions. How can we best maximize the potential provided by the federal stimulus bill? What should New York be doing to create a strong, self-sustaining economy? How can business and labor work together more closely so shareholders, small businesses, and workers thrive? For as the president said,



"When workers are prospering, they buy products that make businesses prosper."

Critical to the answer are two elements that are closely intertwined: investing more in education and creating a more vibrant middle class. Think of what might be possible if every public school could offer quality pre-kindergarten to every 4-year-old, ensure small classes and adequate health support, provide necessary remedial programs as well as advanced level courses, and invest in recruiting and retaining the best teachers and providing them with the most up-to-date and challenging professional development.

We would not only prevent staff reductions that add to unemployment and drain the economy further, but would also promote the quality education needed to drive our economy into the future on a sound foundation. And as our public schools become even more successful, enrollment would surely continue to increase at our state's excellent four-year and community colleges, creating a legion of highly trained candidates for tomorrow's employment opportunities. Together, New York's business community, labor community and government entities can and should seize the opportunity to solve our budget crisis in ways that would fuel our state's future. The federal government has provided at least part of the solution; now it's our turn to step up...



Strong Economies, Strong Unions

Ten of the strongest economies in the world have very high levels of union membership in their workforce.

1. Hong Kong — 22.1 percent union membership
2. Singapore — 18.5 percent
3. Australia — 20.0 percent
4. Ireland — 35.0 percent
5. New Zealand — 21.1 percent
6. United States — 12.1 percent
7. Canada — 29.7 percent
8. Denmark — 80.0 percent
9. Switzerland — 25.0 percent
10. United Kingdom — 28.4 percent

Many of these countries have laws that are more worker-friendly than the U.S.

In Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, Denmark, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, the process of forming a union and bargaining is controlled by the affected workers, not their employer.

These nations have laws like the Employee Free Choice Act, which would give American workers the choice to form unions through majority sign-up. The U.S. is an exception, with employers having strong rights in opposing workers organizing themselves.

The U. S. economy would be strengthened if workers could form unions and bargain for wages, benefits and a stronger voice on the job, economists say. That would build the middle class, increase purchasing power and give families more economic security.

Source: Center for American Progress Action Fund

"Without unions, students would not have the consistency of a professional in their education. Teachers would not have the security they need to deliver the education our students deserve. Unions matter because we want a society in which people are treated fairly and our members' rights are protected. Educators and other professionals deserve fair treatment — that is why unions matter."

Maceo Dubose Jr., Guilderland Teachers Association

Payroll Paychecks for the Remainder of the Year



March 6 & 20
April 3 & 17
May 1, 15 & 29
June 12 & 26

**June 26 is our last pay for the school year*

2009 Falcon PRIDE awards

The Nwta will soon be sending information on the FALCON PRIDE AWARD. Teachers will be asked to nominate two students from their class to receive the FALCON PRIDE award for the 2008-09 school year.

Please start to consider which students you might nominate for this Falcon Award. It is our hope that DIFFERENT students will be chosen this year so that we avoid repeating from year to year.



The award is given to students who exemplify these traits: **P**ride, **R**esponsibility, **I**ntegrity, **D**etermination, and **E**nthusiasm.

Thank you,
Kathy Weber and
Jennifer Dean, PR
Committee Chairpersons

BOD Meeting Schedule...

All meetings will take place on Thursdays at Edward Town Middle School in the Adult Learning Center beginning at 3:45 PM.

March 19, 2009
April 30, 2009
May 21 or 28, 2009 (TBA)
June TBA



From where I stand... *speechless*



Darla Bubar, Editor

It isn't too often that I don't have much to say. After all, I am opinionated and more vocal than I should be at times. I have, however, spent a great deal of time reflecting on this newsletter—OUR newsletter—and the bottom line is, I would much rather put things in this paper that YOU, the membership, want to read about instead of guessing each month. Don't get me wrong, people do submit articles and pictures and to them I tip my hat because I LOVE featuring those kinds of stories and editorials, and thanks to Rusty and Charlie Donner who consistently give me something to include each month along with Amanda Jasper who has made it

her mission to enter every Contract Connections contest to date! But, can of worms or not, I wonder if that is enough. I try to include the things that NYSUT puts out to its local leaders and the things that I "think" you'd like to read about, thus the reason for including that wonderful letter from Tom Rycombel. He's right. It would be nice to hear more about what is going on at each school. So this month I will keep things short and leave you with a challenge; or perhaps better put, a question... *what would YOU like to read about?*

Thanks for your continued support and your readership. As always,
~Darla

Contract Connections Winner

Previous months' answers:

December answer: Under article 5.01 (layoff selection) the district can abolish/reduce teaching positions and will do so within the constraints of seniority lists within each tenure area.

This issue is a complaint.

November answer: Under article 7.04 "Voluntary Basis" the District can make involuntary transfers with notification.

This issue is a complaint.

Amanda Jasper was our only winning entrant. Congrats, Amanda!

Tactics in tough times

Local unions face challenges in tough times. While NYSUT battles on the state level for full and fair funding, locals are preparing for a variety of issues. Our goals are to maintain services for our students and defend our members' work.

Here are some tips for local leaders to keep in mind in this tough environment:

Teamwork works: Every local union needs allies in the schools and in the community. Work with other unions and parent organizations to ensure programs that meet students' needs are a top priority.

Keep members informed: Information builds unity and understanding, silence creates a lack of cohesion. Short meetings and information bulletins are key to a united agenda.

Tell your story: Each of our locals does a great job of educating the community's children. Make sure your school board members and local elected officials know about it.

Be prepared: Get all the financial information you can about the district. Assess it with your LRS. Carefully review management's assumptions and projections.

Contract connection

Here's your chance to win a \$10 gift card from your choice of either Starbucks, Tim Hortons, or Dunkin Donuts!

Members have always had access to the parking lot. A new administrator has decided to assign parking spaces.

Decide if the following scenario is **complaint** or **grievance** based on

our contract language. Cite the page and section number from our current contract that you used as evidence for your answer.

*all members in good standing are eligible. Winner will be drawn randomly from all correct entries submitted. Include your name, building, and gift choice along with your entry! One entry per person per month.

