

Looking for newsworthy “stuff”

From the Editor...

I am always looking for contributions to our newsletter. I would also LOVE to write about you or include what is happening at your school or in your classroom.

Last year, *The Agenda* spotlighted



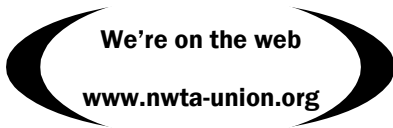
several cool happenings in and around our N-W schools. We also ran poems and articles contributed by our members as well as ads, photos, letters and announcements. If you have something newsworthy or notable... please contact me via email

at dbubar@nwcsd.org.

This is OUR newsletter and our readers would love to hear about what you are doing as a member of the NWTA!

Have a safe and enjoyable 2008-09 school year. I look forward to hearing from each of you!

Next month look for a new Vice President’s page featuring negotiations updates, VOTE/COPE information, and a new column called, “Perspectives from our VP.”



Darla Bubar, Editor

NWTA

We stand united... we stand for education

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).

The Agenda



Volume 35, Issue 1

September 2008

Official newsletter of the Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association

Welcome new teachers

Darla Bubar, Editor

Welcome Back!



It seems that not too long ago, we bid farewell to our 2008 retirees. We now welcome those new teachers who have come to join our ranks and wish them all the best this academic year.

CV

- Shawn Siddall—El. Ed.
- Jamie Bienko—El. Ed.
- Michele Deguilio—Spec. Ed.
- Lisa Sturniolo—El. Ed.
- Morgan Kline—El. Ed.

ER

- Mary Claire Lewis—El. Ed.
- Jennifer Lazewski—LTS El. Ed.
- Traci Anne Ventry—LTS El. Ed.
- Maria Cristina Brockway—LTS El. Ed.

West

- Aubrey Broduehrer—LTS El. Ed.
- Michael Johnson—El. Ed.
- Bonnie Quick—LTS El. Ed.
- Tammy Byrd-Spec. Ed.

Tuscarora

- Randon Augustino—El. Ed.

**If you were left out, please let me know and I will include your name in the next issue!*

List reprinted from district office list.

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SHS

- Kathryn Kohout—Latin
- Brandon Seebauer—Business
- Debra Moreno—Biology
- Amanda Kelly—Math/ISS
- Curtis Bachek—LTS Art
- Jason Kuczmnanski—S. Studies
- Nicole D’Ancona—LTS S. Studies
- Jeffrey Steinel—Math
- Kristen Franklin—Math
- Jeffer Kipp—LTS PE

ETMS

- Jennifer Idziak—S. Studies
- Ashley Wood—Math
- Kevin Gaume—School Counselor
- Rose Ann Lynch—LTS El. Ed.
- Kelly McGuinness—Health/PE
- Bryan Barth—LTS El. Ed.
- Mike Carter—ELA
- Tara Lynch—PE
- Heather Link—LTS El. Ed.
- Autumn Johnson—Temp. Sp. Ed.
- Ann Ditto—Teacher Assistant

Look at what's available to you!

Through your membership in NYSUT, you have access to a variety of programs and services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits Trust. Every endorsed program is monitored on a regular basis for participation, member satisfaction, utilization and product competitiveness.

<p>Insurance plans include term life, catastrophe major medical, disability, auto, home, boat, personal excess liability, long-term care, WrapPlan term life insurance coordination plan, accidental death & dismemberment, vision, and retiree dental.</p>	<p>Financial and legal services include online banking, mortgage services, credit monitoring service, consumer credit counseling services, and a legal service plan.</p>
<p>Discounts include OfficeMax, Bose, Dell Computers, Barnes & Noble.com, Working Advantage (discount tickets and more), Lifeline Medical Alert Service, car and truck rentals, Six Flags, The Buyer's Edge Buying Service, and HEAT USA. Be sure to check the Member Benefits Web site, www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, for particulars on these discounts, because some you can only receive by linking off the Member Benefits site. Many have unique ID numbers.</p>	<p>Other services include MAP (Member Assistance Program), an e-mail information service; payroll and pension deduction of Member Benefits-endorsed programs, which often yield reduced premiums or additional coverage; Consumer's Guides on Automobile Insurance, Homeowners and Renters Insurance, Legal Services, Long-Term Care Insurance, Long-Term Disability Insurance and 403(b) Plans; and MetDESK (Division of Estate Planning for Special Kids).</p>
<p>Workshops include Defensive Driving, Identity Theft, and Unraveling the Mysteries of Credit and Credit Reports. Workshops are scheduled by your local president, chapter leader, retiree council leader or retiree chapter leader.</p>	

To request more information, call Member Benefits at (800) 626-8101, e-mail benefits@nysutmail.org, or visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org.

Some benefits may not be available in all local associations.

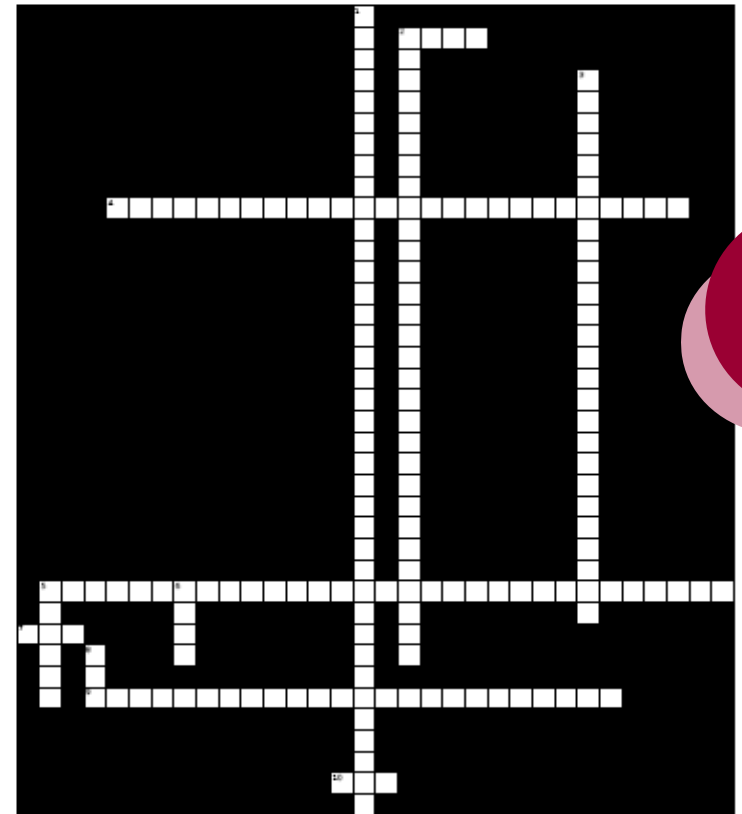
For information about these programs or about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits Trust or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed programs.



Labor lingo from the world of education unions

BEGINS WITH "A"... Can you match these commonly used union acronyms with their definitions in the crossword below?

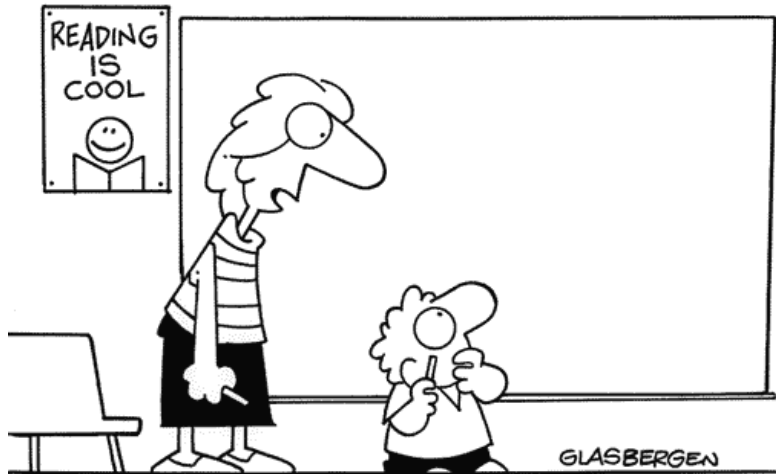


- | | | | |
|-----------|---|---------|---|
| 2 Across | Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills | Down | APPR |
| 4 Across | ADL | 4 Down | AIS |
| 5 Down | AFT | 5 Down | ADD |
| 7 Across | Area Labor Federation | 7 Down | American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations |
| 9 Down | AYP | 9 Down | Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder |
| 10 Across | Adult Education Act | 10 Down | Americans with Disabilities Act |

Remember to submit any name changes or address changes to our treasurer, Rich Tilyou. We need to keep our NYSUT registry as current as possible.

The lighter side

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“There aren’t any icons to click. It’s a chalk board.”

Contract connection

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

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.

Mr. Clementine called in sick for three days before the Winter Break and he was docked the Winter Break pay (one week).

*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!

Thanks to Gino Merlo for the original contest idea.



Teacher certification information

New York State Teacher Certification Examinations

The New York State Teacher Certification Examinations’

(NYSTCE) website now contains information for the 2008-09 program year. Candidates can register for all test dates for the 2008-09 program year on the NYSTCE website. This site provides up-to-date program and registration information, test preparation materials, and services that enable you to register online. For more information,

go to the NYSTCE website at <http://www.nystce.nesinc.com>.

In response to NYSUT’s request, the SED changed the NYSTCE program for the upcoming school year by adding an additional administration of the Spanish Content Specialty Test (CST) in December of 2008. NYSUT had noted to the State Education Department that this particular test is not available on every test date in the NYSTCE schedule. Some teachers, who may have a pro-

visional certificate expiring on January 31, would only have one opportunity in September to take and pass the test prior to the expiration date in the middle of the school year. The extra administration will provide a second opportunity to take the Spanish CST which is a requirement for permanent certification.



Congratulations on receiving tenure

The following NWTA members received their official tenure on September 1, 2008:

Diane DiBernardo, Angela Gnann, Rae Anne Roggow,

Brigette Callahan, Amanda Jasper, Kelly Sirianni, Elizabeth Potempa, Angela Rookey, Marisa Fasolino, Elizabeth Baker, Kristen Moran, Kristen Pizzicarola, Ashley Peterson, Lori

Bellacose, Angela Desai, Elena Dzadur

Congratulations on a job well done!

Wit and wisdom from our president



On behalf of the Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association, I would

like to welcome you back and wish you a happy, productive and prosperous year. This year brings us change. For the first time in 11 years, we are beginning with a new Superintendent. This year also holds promise. Promise (not only for us as teachers, but also for us as a district) to work as a cohesive organization, dedicated to betterment of our students' education. We look forward to a new era of mutual respect and productive relations between the NWTA and the district administration. This will be of great importance while moving our district toward the educational goals of the 21st century. It will also be a decisive factor in the ongoing contract negotiations that your NWTA negotiating team is now involved in. I have been in close contact with the new Superintendent and our district administrators. I am convinced of their dedication to the same goals. We have moved forward

as a district in our embrace of educational initiatives and professional training. Those that have been here for a while will testify to the improved atmosphere and opportunity for students, from improved buildings and grounds to the broadening of academic offerings, to the improvement of student scores. I would urge you to view yourself and your colleagues as dedicated teachers who are on the front line of implementing every educational initiative, every new course, every extra-curricular program and virtually every one-on-one interaction with the students of this great district. The work we do with students is by far the most integral factor in determining the experience and success of our students. And we have always done this collectively as a unified teachers' association. For us to continue to be effective, we need to secure suitable working conditions. We have routinely done that as a

union. Not to put too dramatic a point on it but Franklin Roosevelt once said, "those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy, forget in time that people have fought to win them". We need to recognize those that have come before us; those that have secured the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement that we now work under - from our past president, Darlene Fegatilli, to countless others, who gave up so much of their time in pursuit of that end. Today our negotiating team is again fighting. With costs going up, especially in health care, it promises to be a lively negotiation. I write this as a 21-year veteran and as your Union president. If I can impress one idea upon you it would be this: **We are in this together.** The improvement of this district for our students in the multitude of ways mentioned and the historic strength and solidarity of our union are truly things to be proud of.

~Rusto

Cool savings just for union members

AT&T Wireless Discount

www.unionplus.org/att-wireless.cfm

10 percent discount off AT&T wireless plans with an additional \$50 equipment discount. AT&T is the only unionized wireless company!



(formerly Cingular) customers: you will need to renew your contract to be eligible for the discount. However, if you've signed up for the 5% Union

Plus discount previously, you will *automatically* receive the 10% discount.

All program plans for new and existing customers require a new two-year

contract. This offer cannot be combined with any other discounts. The 10% discount is not available on additional lines for family plans, unlimited minutes or AT&T Unity plans.

**made possible through AFT*

Note to current AT&T

BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE THIS MONTH! PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO SERVE.

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW VIA EMAIL.

What's good on the bookshelves

Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?: Content Comprehension, Grades 6-12 by Cris Tovani

This book takes a somewhat humorous approach to the dilemma we teachers face... kids who can't read! Tovani explores teaching reading in the

content areas and give helpful suggestions and reproducible to make the whole thing a little easier to deal with!



She also discusses real world examples from her own classroom and from fellow colleagues.

From where I stand... is it easier to ask forgiveness?



My husband often says, "It's easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission." I wonder if this is true? Maybe for him... he's laid back, easy going, and somewhat of a risk taker. I, on the other hand, am not. I have to plan, I have a hard time making mistakes, I do not like to see others feeling bad—I like things to move along smoothly. So, I guess I live by the opposite motto most of the time. When things do go wrong—I sit and analyze the outcome for days—I obsess about what I can do to fix the problem—I overcompensate. Asking forgiveness doesn't seem like enough in my estimation. Couple that with my somewhat hot temper and it's a recipe for disas-

ter! Don't get the wrong idea—I'm not talking about any major social infraction here! Simple things that go awry put me into the "woulda, shoulda, coulda" mode (like, most recently, upsetting our head custodian while setting up my classroom). A character flaw? Perhaps; but something I've used to try and bring forth betterment when possible. Things are not much different in my classroom. I want each and every child I come into contact with to achieve. I hate to see them struggling, hurting, feeling down. I want my classroom to be a place where kids feel safe, successful, and nurtured. I feel bad when I can't make this happen. I am their advocate—their protector, their mentor. I know we all feel in some way—just like I do. Otherwise, we

would have more than likely chosen different career paths. We spend our hours planning and re-teaching when those initial plans don't work. We stay after or come in early to find some way to help those who "don't get it." We get involved in our students' lives because sometimes, we are their only positive role models. We coach, we advise, we offer our time, patience, and insight. We are in the business of asking for permission—for field trips, fundraisers, clubs, activities. No matter what motto better describes you, the bottom line is we all have the chance to make a difference—because we are teachers! Welcome back and have a terrific year.

~Darla

What you need to know about new tenure rules

New statewide tenure rules are in effect for teachers whose probationary period began on or after July 1, 2008. The tenure determination process for teachers providing instructional services employed in school districts and BOCES must now include:

- Peer review by other teachers, as far as practicable;
- As assessment of the teacher's performance by

the teacher's building administration.

NYSUT successfully pushed for amendments to the new law to prohibit school districts and BOCES from using student test scores to grant or deny tenure.

NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira noted the process for evaluating teachers is a mandatory subject of CBAs. Both NYSUT and the SED agree that, "as far as practicable" means that peer review by other teachers can only occur when col-

lectively bargained. SED's implementing rules and regulations provide no guidance on the designs of peer review process, leaving all operational choices and decisions to be determined through collective bargaining.

Neira also noted the new rules do not apply to educators who were on probation prior to July 1.

The law will sunset in two years, which means the legislature may revisit the law in 2010.

There are a lot of different ways you can help support our union. In September, each building will hold Building Reps elections. Consider running. You can also show your support by helping out with committee work. We can always use volunteers to help with public relations, membership rosters, event planning, and budget vote awareness. Not sure what you'd like to do? Talk to a current building rep or an officer to find more ways to become involved. Remember that our Negotiating Team is still hard at work and now is a great time to become more involved in the NWTA. Together—we can make a difference!

Next month, the NWTA will once again participate in the
Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk

Sunday, October 5, 2008.

Wrist bands and t-shirts are available.

Please contact Liz Young or Peggy Palmer for details!



Have you done your monthly self-exam or scheduled your
yearly mammogram?