

# The Member Ship



The Newsletter of The West Genesee Teachers' Association

## Teachers: Do Your Summer Reading

What a year! You all know what I mean. More than 20 years ago when I started teaching, the picture was very different. Teachers gathered for coffee every morning before embarking on our day; we actually had time to talk to each other! I don't have to tell you that this is a different world. Plates have become far too full to have time to gather regularly. Days are much too packed with tests and test preparation to collaborate as much as we'd like. And summer workshop money? Not as abundant to help catch up on all the things we had no time to do during the year.

I remember when I was asked to negotiate the 2007 contract. We sent out more

than 400 surveys and they all came back the same: just secure my standard 4 percent raise and don't touch my health care benefits. We didn't know how good we had it! Back then it was all about staying together and NOT taking less than 4 percent. Private sector was booming and all we wanted was a sub-par raise. Comparing contracts from district to district will be a much more complex endeavor in 2011 with adjustments to co-pays, changes in contribution toward your health care premiums, concessions on retirement incentives, lack of appropriate raises, to name just a few items.

If that is not enough, we are in the midst of battle. Pension funds are under

attack. Seniority and tenure are being questioned.



John Christian

Property tax caps combined with unfairly distributed state aid threaten the face of public schooling as we have grown to know it. The governor says to use your reserves; we have used over half of our reserves in one year. He claims that the state aid formula is fine - yet downstate schools do not have to bridge massive gaps with cutbacks and layoffs. He is also proposing a Tier 6 immediately after instituting a Tier 5 which requires teachers to work until 62 to say

Continued on page 3

### Inside...

**Scholarship  
winner**

**page 3**

**News and  
Kudos**

**page 2**

**Woo-oo-oo-oo  
yeah**

**page 4**

# KUDOS◆◆◆

...to West Genesee, chosen as one of the "Best Communities for Music Education" by the The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation. The total district-wide enrollment in music classes and performing groups is 3,669. This represents 74.1% of the entire school district population.

Teachers responsible for this program are: **Tony Alvaro, Christine Astafan, Greg Borsz, Tracy Cheney, Marcia DeMartini, Jill DiBattista, Kevin Dimmel, Deanna Fitzpatrick, Steve Frackenhohl, Steve Frank, Martha Grener, Leah Randall, Christy Knowlton, Bill Mercer, Maggie Mercer, Kristen Panzetta, Andrew Perry, Andrea Scerbo, Don Schuessler, Rosemarie Speich, Mike Stachnik, and Deaetta Szulis.**

Congratulations and best wishes to our retirees:

**Donna Coloton-Forman** - 31 years - grade 4 at EH, grade 3 and 5 at SR, and grade 1 through 5 AIS at ST

**Ann Crane** - 16 years - home and careers - recently at CMS

**David Crawford** - 36 years - grade 7 and 8 science at CMS

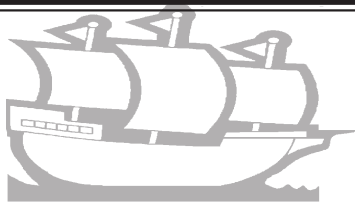
**Steven Frank** - 16 years - instrumental music at ST and EH; Jazz band director at WGHS

**Susan Gillen** - 14 years - grade 1 through 5 AIS at ST

**Rose Ann LeBlanc** - 34 years - grade 2, 4, and 5 at Warners and SR

**Willam McGrade** - 26 years - grade 1, 3 and 4 and pre-1 through 5 reading specialist at ST

**Jane Rose** - 21 years - library media specialist at ST



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## **Looking for Kudos!**

*The Member Ship* is looking for news to publish about West Genesee teachers. If you - or someone you know - has attended or presented at a conference, had a baby, published an article, etc., please contact Ellen Miller (CMS) or at: **emmiller@twcny.rr.com**

Please — DON'T BE SHY!! The teachers in West Genesee have a lot to be proud about — help us spread the word.

**Continued from page 1**

the least. VOTE-COPE contributions will be CRUCIAL to fighting this fight.

Sorry to end the year with these difficult-to-digest facts, but I do have a motive. As we head into next year together, I challenge you this summer to read your contract. Know the contents. If our governor does not waver from his vision, and I do not expect him to, we are going to have some tough decisions to make. In order for you to make informed decisions as WGTA members, it

will be imperative that you know the contents of your contract

Lastly: please enjoy the summer. Take some things off the list that can wait until next summer and enjoy family and friends. We have successfully navigated the most difficult year in recent memory, and you all deserve rest and relaxation. I thank you for all your hard work and dedication. Take care. See you in September.

# READ. YOUR. CONTRACT.

## ***WGTA chooses scholarship winner***

The winner of the WGTA Scholarship for 2011 is Shannon E. Howes. Shannon will attend SUNY Cortland in the fall and she'll major in Childhood Education. We're looking forward to hearing all about her college experience next year!!

## ***Don't forget those appointments!***

We get a free half day for mammogram appointments as well as prostate screening appointments. Be sure to make those appointments and keep them! Then give your attendance clerk a note from the doctor to get your free half day!

### **Contact Your WGTA Officers**

**John Christian -**  
Cell: 382-3048  
email: jchristian2222@yahoo.com

**Sue Giannini -**  
School: 487-4656  
Cell: 727-7241  
email: srgianni@twcny.rr.com

**Andrea Moore -**  
School: 487-4601  
Cell: 657-2780  
email: amoore8@twcny.rr.com

**Danielle Tuttle -**  
School 487-4648  
Cell: 391-3669  
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## What have you done for me lately?

Luckily, we don't hear people say that around West Genesee. Despite the fact that we agreed to forego a raise next year to help save jobs and programs for students, WGTA members dug deep into their pockets for many causes this year. Just looking at the district-wide "jeans days" we held, here are the numbers...

American Heart Association, initiated by Peg Bailey - \$940.00  
Academic Decathlon Competition, initiated by District - \$1,325.00  
Susan G. Komen, initiated by Theresa Mosey - \$1,600.00  
Craig Reinhardt, initiated by Courtney Lyons - \$1,200.00  
Carol Baldwin Breast Cancer, initiated by Ginny Cummings - \$835.00  
**Total: \$5,900.00**

This doesn't reflect the many other fundraisers we held locally at the various school buildings or the time spent volunteering for other diverse causes. It *does* reflect the spirit of generosity we have here. We at West Genesee have proven our mettle repeatedly through our unflagging donations of time, talent and money. Thank you.



### E-mail Directory

**Join the FREE WGTA E-mail Directory.** There are currently more than 100 WGTA members, retirees, West Genesee staff and WG parents in the directory. We share our E-mail addresses and send each other educational articles, WGTA and union information, and personal notes.

If you would like to be a part of this FREE directory please send your name, E-mail address, and WG status (school name / retired / WG staff / WG parent) to Lynn Davis at: **davis@twcny.rr.com**

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**KATHY LYKUDIS**, Licensed Real Estate Salesperson, Hunt Real Estate, 5854 Belle Isle Road. 487-5640 or 430-1453. E-mail: [klykudis@yahoo.com](mailto:klykudis@yahoo.com).

**R.E. Raaflaub Studio.** Weddings, portraits and gatherings. Phone 454-9441.

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**UNION PLUS LEGAL SERVICES.** Cantone Law Firm, P.C., 5426 West Genesee Street, Camillus. General practice legal services with 30% discount applied for all WGTA members. Real estate closings. Wills and estates. Primary concentration in Collaborative Family Law for separation/divorce. Dan Cantone is the father of three WG grads, including WGTA member Laura (East Hill). Call 484-9255 and mention you're with WGTA. Email: [dgc@canlawpc.com](mailto:dgc@canlawpc.com). Website: [canlawpc.com](http://canlawpc.com)

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**Teacher pension plan (403b) provider,** Michael Greene of Confidential Planning will help set up a private retirement plan. Work phone is 474-3986. E-mail [mike.greene@evansandbennett.com](mailto:mike.greene@evansandbennett.com).

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Find a list of permanent ads on the WGTA website: <http://www.wgta.net>

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# Summer is the perfect time

Summer is the perfect time for so many things – gardening, vacationing, swimming, catching up on reading, and whatever else one wants to do but can't seem to find the time for during the school year. That's why summers seem to go so fast, because we're so busy!

But summer is also the perfect time to pay attention to those things that we don't have time for during the rest of the year, such as, (groan), our finances. It's so easy to go day-to-day without making any long-term financial plans, setting up a budget, saving for a rainy day, etc.

Fortunately, the **Financial Counseling Program** endorsed by *NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation* can be of great assistance in getting your financial house in order.

When you enroll in the plan, you'll receive toll-free access to certified financial planners and registered investment advisors who will address your various financial questions and situations. You'll also have options for in-person consultations. And you have the added comfort of knowing these professionals are there solely to help you, not to line their pockets by pushing you in one direction or another.

**These financial professionals do not sell any financial products;** hence, they receive no

commissions from mutual funds, brokerage firms, insurance companies or any other third party. These are the professionals of Stacey Braun Associates, Inc., the provider of the Financial Counseling Program.

Stacey Braun Associates is an investment advisory company established in 1977. It provides fee-based professional financial counseling.

## Here is a sampling of topics you can receive advice and assistance on:

- Pre- and post-retirement planning
- 403(b) and 457(b) plan advice
- Mutual fund questions
- Establishing risk tolerance
- Mortgages and refinancing
- Savings
- Estate and inheritance planning
- Financial advice relating to divorce
- Tax planning
- Insurance
- Social Security
- Education funding

The plan also includes no-cost written summaries or reports upon request; access to Stacey Braun's password-protected website, which features all kinds of helpful information and calculators; an e-mail helpdesk; and free admission to regional educational workshops.

In addition to the plan described here, a

403(b) Limited Financial Counseling Program is available.

So why not take a little time out of your busy summer and see how you can benefit from the Financial Counseling Program?

For more information, call NYSUT Member Benefits at **800-626-8101** or visit [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org).



*For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.*