



May 2005

# Union NEWS

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

## New Executive Board to Move Forward

### Elected Board Members

\* President:  
Anne D'Orazio

\* Vice President:  
Richard Rosell

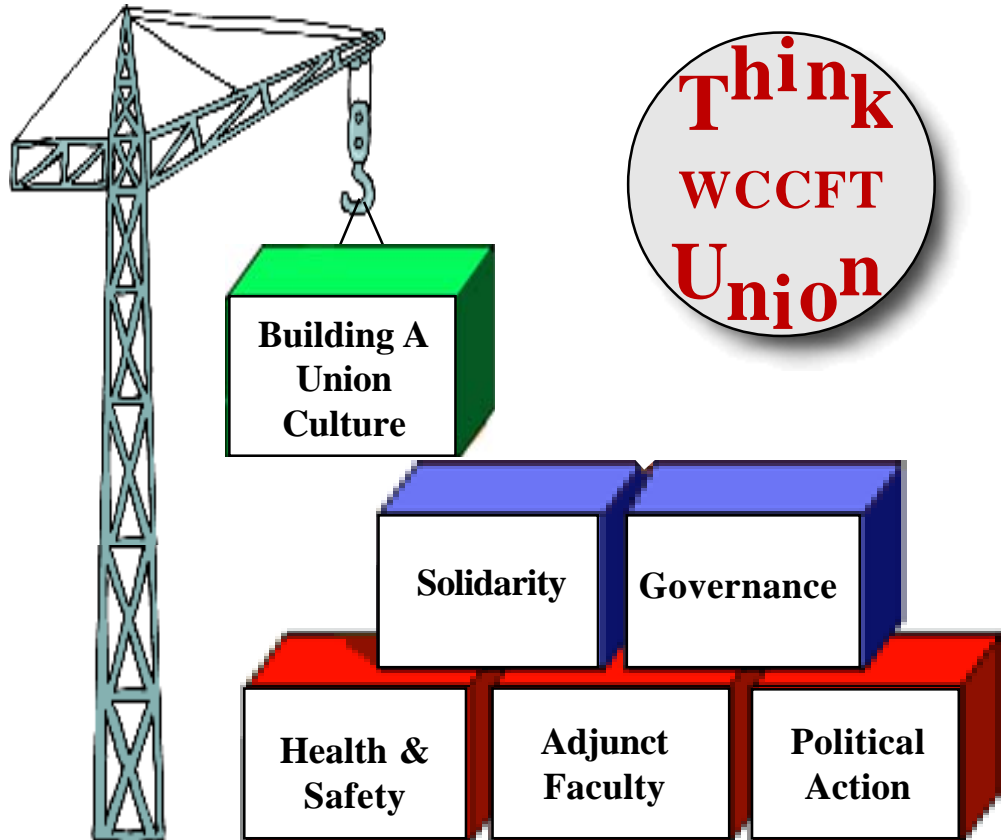
\* Secretary:  
Lynette DeBellis

\* Treasurer:  
Joyce McQuade

\* Adjunct Representative:  
Patricia Torres

### Members:

- \* Ronald Brown
- \* Richard Courage
- \* Carlos Delgado
- \* Carolyn Di Leo
- \* Judy Langer
- \* Stephen J. Nardoizzi
- \* Joanna Peters



## Union News Wins Five State Journalism Awards



The WCCFT's monthly news letter, *Union News*, received five awards at the NYSUT convention. The awards included two *First Awards* for best front page and best article on health issues. The *Union News* received two second place awards, one for a local membership publication and one for best original cartoon. The cartoon was by Michael Downie of the English Department. The newsletter also received one honorable mention in the category of best news story. Congratulations to Professor Downie and special thanks to Alfred Quinones, our newsletter designer, and all who contributed to the *Union News* over the past year.



L-R: Michael Downie, Richard Rodriguez and Alfred Quinones review the current issue of the *Union News*

**WCCFT Officers, 2004-2005**

Anne D'Orazio, president  
 Richard Rosell, vice-president  
 Jack Anderson, treasurer  
 Ellen Zendman, secretary

**WCCFT Executive Committee**

Barbara Chakmakjian  
 Lynette DeBellis  
 Carolyn DiLeo  
 Joyce McQuade  
 Patricia Torres, Adjunct Rep  
 William Widulski

**Newsletter Editorial Board**

Richard Rodriguez  
 Kate Ray  
 Thomasina Tucker  
 Alfred Quinn Quinones, editorial ass't.

**Phone: (914) 345-8856 or 345-8835**  
**Fax: (914) 345-2761**

**Newsletter printer**

Efficiency Printing Co., A Union Shop  
 126 So. Lexington, White Plains, NY  
 914-949-8611

**2005-2006****Calendar of Events****Monthly Meetings:**

**First Wednesday, 12:00, Sci 102**

**September 7, 2005:**

Political Action

**October 5, 2005:**

Adjunct Faculty

**November 2, 2005:**

Governance

**December 7, 2005:**

Holiday Party

**February 1, 2006:**

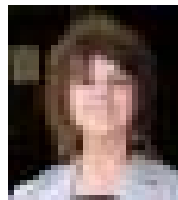
Member Luncheon

**March 1, 2006:**

Solidarity

**April 5, 2006:**

Health & Safety

**President's Message**

# A Positive Approach to a Negative Situation

By Anne D'Orazio

Recent state and national conferences have focused on some alarming trends in higher education: annual budget cuts, decline in full-time faculty positions, unresolved health and safety problems in the workplace, lack of shared governance between faculty and administration, erosion of health benefits, political agendas which undermine public education, even international trade agreements that infringe on well-established standards set by colleges and universities. It's hard sometimes to see where the sun is shining these days.

But there are rays of light. This month, on the day after graduation, the new WCCFT Executive Committee will spend a day in retreat tackling the issues our Union faces and developing goals, strategies and tactics for the coming year. With broad departmental representation and an enthusiastic spirit, the EC will be working on our Building a Union Culture campaign. We will be structuring the campaign around five major areas: Governance, Political Action, Adjunct Faculty, Health & Safety and Solidarity. Committees will spearhead specific actions to accompany each area and we are hoping that a broad

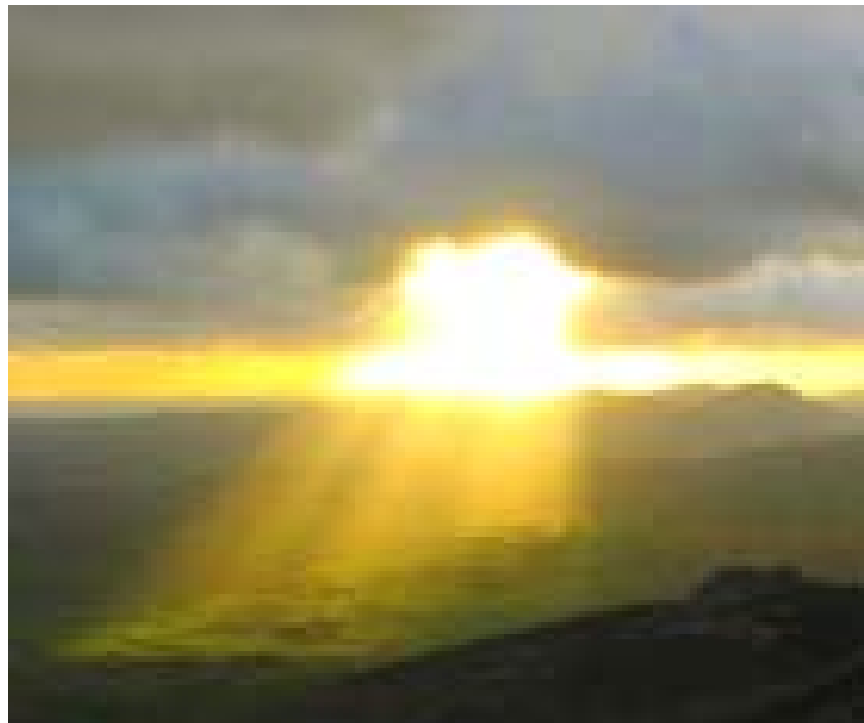
range of events will enable everyone to find some personal role to play.

The slogan of the campaign is Think Union and this is already paying off. More and more calls are coming into the Union office prefaced by the statement, "I don't know if this is a Union matter, but...." They are almost always definitely Union matters because they affect terms and conditions of employment.

Beyond the campaign, the Union is now engaged in its most important task: Negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA). We have had two sessions. First we exchanged proposals and then we addressed eight specific proposals, six from the Union and two from Management, which we thought could be settled easily. Over the course of the summer we will keep you updated on what is happening.

We need you to be informed on the progress of negotiations and to be involved in Union activities because the quality of the contract is directly proportionate to the quantity of member participation.

And above all, we need to be united in our vision for the Union and our commitment to making it work.



# State, Federal and International Reports

## Highlights from NYSUT's 33<sup>rd</sup> Representative Assembly



**N**YSUT held its 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Representative Assembly in New York City between April 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Anne D'Orazio and Richard Rosell represented the WCCFT at the convention. Below are some highlights from the RA:

### NYSUT Salutes Tom Hobart for 33 Years of Leadership

A focus of this year's meeting was the state union's salute to Tom Hobart, who retired after serving as NYSUT's president since its founding in 1972. Some of those who addressed the convention and congratulated Hobart for his contribu-

tion to education were U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, State Comptroller Alan Hevesi and Education Commissioner Richard Mills. Sheldon Silver acknowledged Hobart's leadership in pushing education and health care funding through the New York State Legislature.

The Delegates elected Richard Iannuzzi, a former fourth grade teacher from East Islip, New York, as NYSUT's new president.

### Resolutions

The work of the RA is centered on the consideration of

resolutions that establish the goals and the policy of the state union for the year ahead. One hundred and forty-five resolutions were submitted to the convention by local unions. The resolutions are first discussed in committees and are then presented to the entire body for consideration. This year's resolutions were divided into six major categories: Civil and Human Rights, College and University, Educational Issues, Health Care and Workplace Safety, Legislative and Political Action, Organization, Pension and Retirement. A copy of the resolutions is available in the union office.

### RA Supports AIDS-Africa

NYSUT and the AFT have both been actively involved in addressing the issue of AIDS in Africa. A leader of the South African Teachers Union, Solly Molose Mabusela, addressed delegates telling them that in South Africa one teacher dies of AIDS every two hours. He thanked NYSUT and the AFT for the support they have given over the past few years. Delegates to the convention contributed over 21,000 dollars to fight AIDS in Africa.

Full coverage of the RA is available at the NYSUT web site or through a link at WCCFT.org.



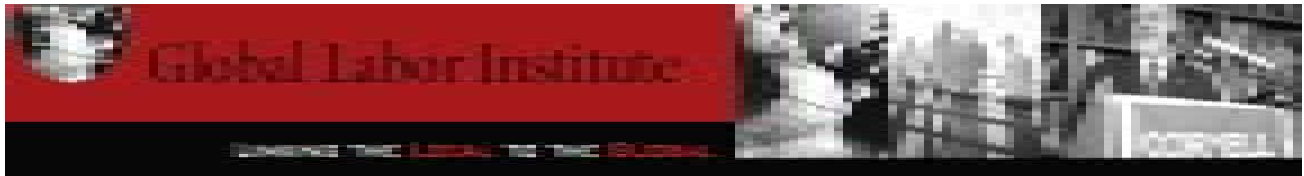
## National Affiliation: American Federation of Teachers

**E**very year, our union, the American Federation of Teachers, holds a conference on higher education. Participation in this gathering of unionists from colleges and universities all over the country enables us to be a part of a national dia-

logue of trade unionists and come back with new ideas and strategies. The theme of this year's higher ed meeting was, "Making Our Values Count: Advancing Equality, Education and Economic Security in Challenging Times." The conference was held in Minne-

apolis and the WCCFT sent Union President Anne D'Orazio and Adjunct Rep Patricia Torres. They report that the most valuable sessions provided strategies for involving adjuncts in Union activities, a new conceptualization of higher education

as a strategic industry in the community, and the threatening presence of for-profit investors who see and sell higher education as a commercial commodity. Materials from the conference as well as a report on the sessions are available in the Union office.



## International Affiliation: Global Labor Institute

**T**here are many international organizations of trade unions such as Education International and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. At Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, a new educational and

activist organization has been formed. It expresses its purpose as providing "a unique venue for unions to work together to strengthen labor's response to the challenges posed by globalization." It is the goal of the GLI to "help union officers, staff

and activists gain a deeper understanding of the policies and institutions that operate at the global level, and assist in bringing unionists based in different countries into contact with each other." At its offices on 34<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan, the GLI holds

regular conferences with speakers from unions all over the world. The most recent meeting brought together individuals concerned with sustainable development and particularly the privatization of water.



## Member Response Hotline

### Question from Iris Cook, Chair, Biology Dept.:

*What is the Union's position on the Extension Sites in relation to 1) teaching courses during common hours which block students from attending campus activities, 2) establishing make-up schedules for snow days which are not reflected on the general campus and for which there is no compensation and 3) offering dissimilar schedules which further complicate students' coordination of lectures and labs as well as participation in school events?*

### Answer:

The Union is aware of problems that have arisen since the growth of the extension sites. In responding to issues, the Union has tried to balance the interests of faculty and students. After announcing that common hour would be observed on the extension sites, the Union received many complaints from faculty indicating that their teaching loads would be negatively affected by this change so to accommodate the faculty, classes were allowed to continue as they had in the past. As for the make-up schedules, according to the Administration, the make-up days were offered on a voluntary basis as a result of faculty complaints that since so many classes had been missed they were behind in completion of their syllabi. Finally, the dissimilar schedules need to be addressed by departments having oversight of extension site schedules, but this raises the overarching problem which is that the responsibilities of department chairs have greatly increased in regard to extension site operations without any increased released time or compensation.

### Question from Christine Bobkoff, Adjunct Faculty, English Dept.:

*When faculty select overload or adjunct courses, they are often unable to get a course that meets, in the case, say, of a 3-credit course, for the full 45 hours. This is usually due to holidays. As a result, the faculty member might get a contract for, perhaps, only 43 or 44 hours plus exam, instead of the normal 45 hours plus exam. Just as the college currently pays faculty when their class is cancelled by the Administration due to snow, it should also pay the faculty member when classes cannot be scheduled due to conflicts in the calendar. Logically, the two situations are similar insofar as the faculty member is not responsible for the course not meeting for the full 45 hours. I propose, therefore, that we negotiate for paying the faculty by the course, rather than by the hour.*

### Answer:

The Union has asked that adjunct and overload courses be paid as a package, not by the hour, but the Administration has not agreed to this in contract negotiations, preferring to stick to an hourly payment which does not reflect all the hours spent in preparation of material and assessment of student performance (what an irony with all our emphasis on assessment!). And how unprofessional to view teaching as a time-clock job. Anyone who has ever taught knows how wide of the mark that position is.

# Support Vote COPE

