



December 2007

# WCCFT *Union* NEWS

Monthly Newsletter of The Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

## Our Union Reaches Out...

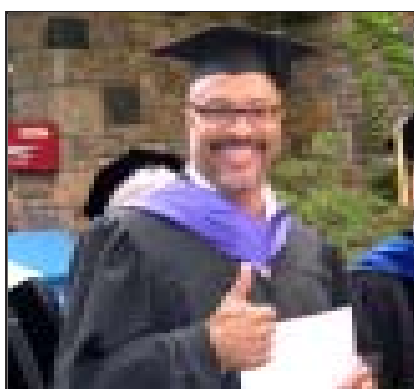
**...To Students:** The WCCFT has established a \$1500 scholarship to be awarded to a student with a background or interest in labor. Selection of recipient will be based on grade point average and an essay on the importance of unions in the workplace. Entries must be submitted by March 10, 2008. The winner will be announced at the Graduation Ceremony in May 2008.



**...To Adjunct Faculty:** October was a big month for outreach to adjunct faculty. The union held a number of events to get information out to part-timers. It brought adjunct faculty and new faculty together in a luncheon and distributed dozens of One Faculty buttons both on the Valhalla and the Extension campuses. It also sent out a survey to which **91** adjuncts responded. With this substantial participation, the Union can proceed to formulate positions on behalf of adjunct faculty.



**...To Retirees:** The WCCFT would like to stay in touch with its retired members and has made arrangements to have the Newsletter sent to retired faculty. The Holiday Party honors retirees. It is hoped that retirees will become involved with Union activities, especially political campaigns and VOTE COPE. Across the state, retirees are forming auxiliary councils to keep their union commitment alive.



**...To Full-time Faculty:** In preparation for contract negotiations, the Union prepared a questionnaire covering a broad-range of issues and distributed it online to all full-time faculty. To date, **114** have responded. The bargaining committee is in the process of reviewing all comments to craft proposals to submit to the Administration.

**...To Politicians:** The WCCFT continues to be active in political work—educating and lobbying local and state legislators and executives on the issues of importance to higher ed. The Union has introduced the AFT FACE Campaign to the Westchester County Board of Legislators and the New York State Legislature and will make it a priority item in the spring NYSUT Committee of 100 lobbying work in Albany.



**...To Administrators:** This fall the WCCFT Executive Board and the Associate Deans formed a committee, called the Joint Council, to look into campus concerns that could be solved in an atmosphere of cooperation. At the first meeting in September, it chose two issues, the role of department chairs in resolving complaints involving faculty members and the need for sound-proofing classrooms to promote a positive learning environment.



[www.wccft.org](http://www.wccft.org)



A Monthly Newsletter of  
Local 2431 American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO)  
Affiliated with New York State United Teachers

#### WCCFT Officers, 2007-2008

Anne D'Orazio, president  
Richard Rosell, vice-president  
Joyce McQuade, treasurer  
Lynette DeBellis, secretary

#### WCCFT Executive Board

Carolyn DiLeo, Faculty Development  
Matt Ferranto  
Jodie Hopkins, Membership  
Judy Langer  
Steve Nardozi, Benefits  
Joanna Peters  
Rafael Rodriguez  
Diane Urban, Adjunct Rep

#### Newsletter Editorial Board

Richard Rodriguez, Editor  
Kate Ray  
Patti Sehulster  
Julia Daniels, Photo Editor  
Alfred Quinn Quinones, editorial ass't.

Phone: (914) 345-8856

Fax: (914) 345-2761

#### Newsletter printer

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



#### President's Message

## An Opportunity for Significant Change

By Anne D'Orazio

**A**t last! An invitation from the President for campus-wide input on the governance structure of the College. Not just a call for a wide-net list of suggestions (as useful as that can be), but a targeted appeal for ideas regarding administrative change. Dr. Hankin refers to "opportunities for significant change" and the "opportunity to analyze" a sudden vacancy "in the context of all the needs of the college." For several years, this column, as well as the articles by Richard Rosell, have focused on the fundamental relationship between faculty and administration in decision-making,

from personnel issues to the allocation of resources. The WCCFT has followed the lead of its parent organization, the American Federation of Teachers, and the example of other colleges and universities, in advocating a system of shared governance, that is, one where decision-making is a joint function of the faculty and the administration.

We live in a world that honors the political system of democracy which is based on representation and consent. Every introductory government course begins with a rundown of the driving forces behind democracy: checks and balances, popular participation, elective choice, delineated rights. Can you imagine how we would react if someone insisted that we change our federal system and make Congress an "advisory" body?

No institution in a democratic system would proclaim itself to be exempt from the principles of a democracy, especially an educational institution. We pride ourselves on adhering to democratic principles and practices. We champion openness and debate in all our classes. Just recently we all applauded

the efforts of the Student Senate to engage students in the political process.

And yet we have not embraced or even addressed the concept of democratic shared governance at WCC. A four-year college at which I taught in Indiana had what it called the College Council which was composed of representatives of the administration, the faculty and the staff. It reviewed the budget, articulated college policies, and outlined the direction in which the college should go. The community college at which I worked in California had a joint faculty-administration committee to determine where new

*"The WCCFT has followed the lead of its parent organization, the American Federation of Teachers, and the example of other colleges and universities, in advocating a system of shared governance, that is, one where decision-making was a joint function of the faculty and the administration."*

faculty lines should be assigned; staff and students served on search and screen committees.

Now is the time for us to be inclusive and progressive in our thinking. What about a structure that would open the budget to all four college constituencies so that informed decisions could be made by representatives of those groups? Why not a combined committee consisting of the heads of elected bodies of faculty, staff, administration and students which would report to the Board of Trustees? Instead of weekly information sessions between Dr. Hankin and representatives of the important constituencies, perhaps the time would be better spent if Dr. Hankin, Dr. Rogalski and Dean Boyar met together with these representatives and shared vital data so that they could truly be a part of the process.

Critical, out-of-the-box thinking leaves no alternative unconsidered. Can we expect this approach from the Administration's seductive offer to take advantage of Dean Mignogna's departure to restructure governance at Westchester Community College?

## Calendar of Events

**Monthly Meetings:**  
First Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.  
Science Building 102  
(Lunch is served)



**December 5, 2007:**  
Holiday Party

**February 6, 2008:**  
Union Contract Proposals

**March 5, 2008:**  
Benefits

**April 2, 2008:**  
Health and Safety

**May 7, 2008:**  
Legislative Luncheon



[www.wccft.org](http://www.wccft.org)

# Voters Say “Yes-yes” to Nonna

By Richard Rodriguez

Among the contests decided in the recent elections was the race to win a seat at the table of our own local government: the Westchester County Board of Legislators. November 7 was a good day for Democrats, as three Democratic candidates emerged victorious from that race: Lyndon Williams, Peter Harkhem, and, representing the college’s own 3<sup>rd</sup> legislative district, John Nonna. The 3<sup>rd</sup> District comprises the towns of Mount Pleasant and North Castle, a portion of the towns of Harrison and Greenburgh, and the Village of Pleasantville.

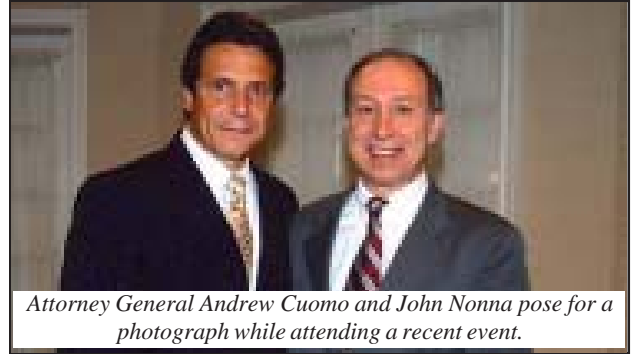
Nonna’s victory was dramatic, a landslide majority of 56% of the vote that defeated Sue Swanson, a Republican who had represented our district for 14 of the last 16 years. Perhaps even

more impressive is that Nonna’s victory overturned a tradition of Republican dominance of the 3<sup>rd</sup> district that extends all the way back to the creation of the board in 1970.

The vote reflected the changing demographic of Valhalla and its environs. Republican enrollments declined by 476 voters throughout the district in the past four years, while Democratic enrollments have increased by 847, although Republicans still hold a majority of about 2,000 voters all told.

Nonna is ex-mayor of Pleasantville and a popular Democrat who is well known to our district. He attributes his victory to aggressive campaigning throughout the county and his focus of attention during that campaign on local issues such as the Kensico Dam road clos-

ing and the fears arising from the relocation of a homeless shelter from Westchester County Airport to the Grasslands Reservation in Valhalla.

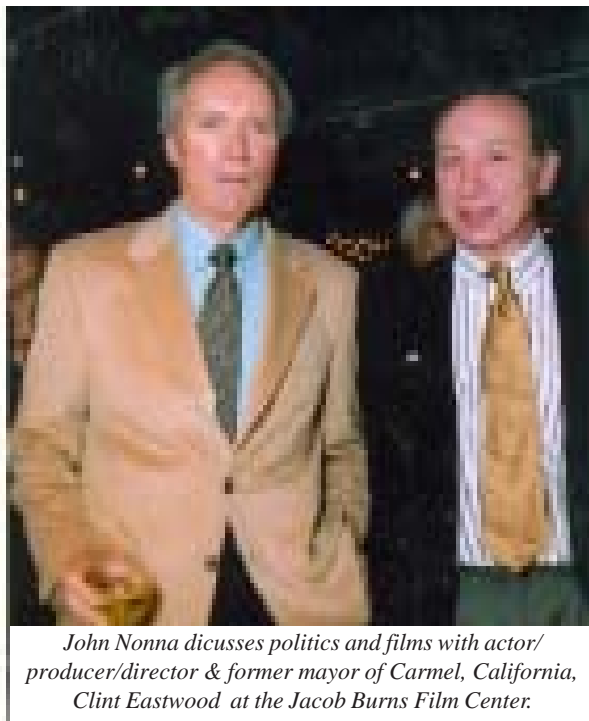


Attorney General Andrew Cuomo and John Nonna pose for a photograph while attending a recent event.



John Nonna and Governor Elliot Spitzer

Nonna’s record on college issues is still a blank slate that has yet to be inscribed. While campaigning, he had little to say about the place of education in his agenda. He did express a commitment to the reduction of property taxes through a concomitant increase in the local sales tax. (Westchester has one of the lowest sales taxes of any county in the state.) But we are hopeful that the new Board members will join their colleagues in furthering the Union’s efforts to get heard at the bargaining table in this important coming year of contract negotiations.



John Nonna discusses politics and films with actor/producer/director & former mayor of Carmel, California, Clint Eastwood at the Jacob Burns Film Center.



John Nonna attends the Westchester County Senior Citizens Hall of Fame induction ceremony for his father, Angelo.

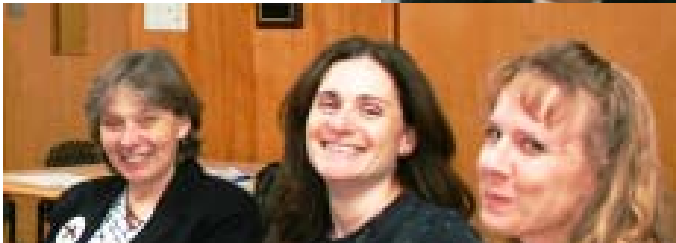


John Nonna (3rd from right holding shovel) participates in ground breaking for Pleasantville Senior Housing and Recreation Center after fulfilling his campaign promise to build affordable housing for seniors in Pleasantville.



# Getting to Know Each Other

By Diane Urban



At the opening of Adjunct Faculty Month in October, I quoted from Virginia Paley's book *You Can't Say You Can't Play* and indicated that I believed fulltime and adjunct faculty shared many common goals and could find ways to "play" together. The final event of that month was a luncheon for new full-time faculty as well as ad-

adjuncts. It was a wonderful opportunity for all of us to get to know each other a little better. It was a perfect way to end the month; it seemed so in line with my theme of sharing common goals. As we prepare for the new year and entering contract negotiations, I encourage all faculty to go to <http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/highered/>

[www.wccft.org](http://www.wccft.org)

[standards\\_pt\\_adjunct.pdf](#) and read Fairness and Equity Blueprint for Quality. It will give us all a guideline that is consistent with the AFT guidelines for moving toward better working conditions for all of us.

Have a wonderful holiday season. I look forward to working with all of you in 2008!

# A Visit to Cooperstown



## WCCFT Officials Attend NYSUT Community College Conference

Amid beautiful fall foliage in picturesque Cooperstown, three WCCFT Executive Board members spent long hours discussing finances, distance learning, grievance procedures, labor law, adjunct faculty rights and union organizing. The annual NYSUT Community College Conference was held the weekend of November 9-11 at the Otesaga Hotel. Anne D'Orazio, Richard Rosell and Rafael Rodriguez represented the Union at six sessions and workshops. D'Orazio was also a presenter on a panel on shared governance. The Conference attracted 150 higher education faculty from SUNY Community Colleges, SUNY state operated four-year schools and the CUNY system. Highlights from the Conference included:

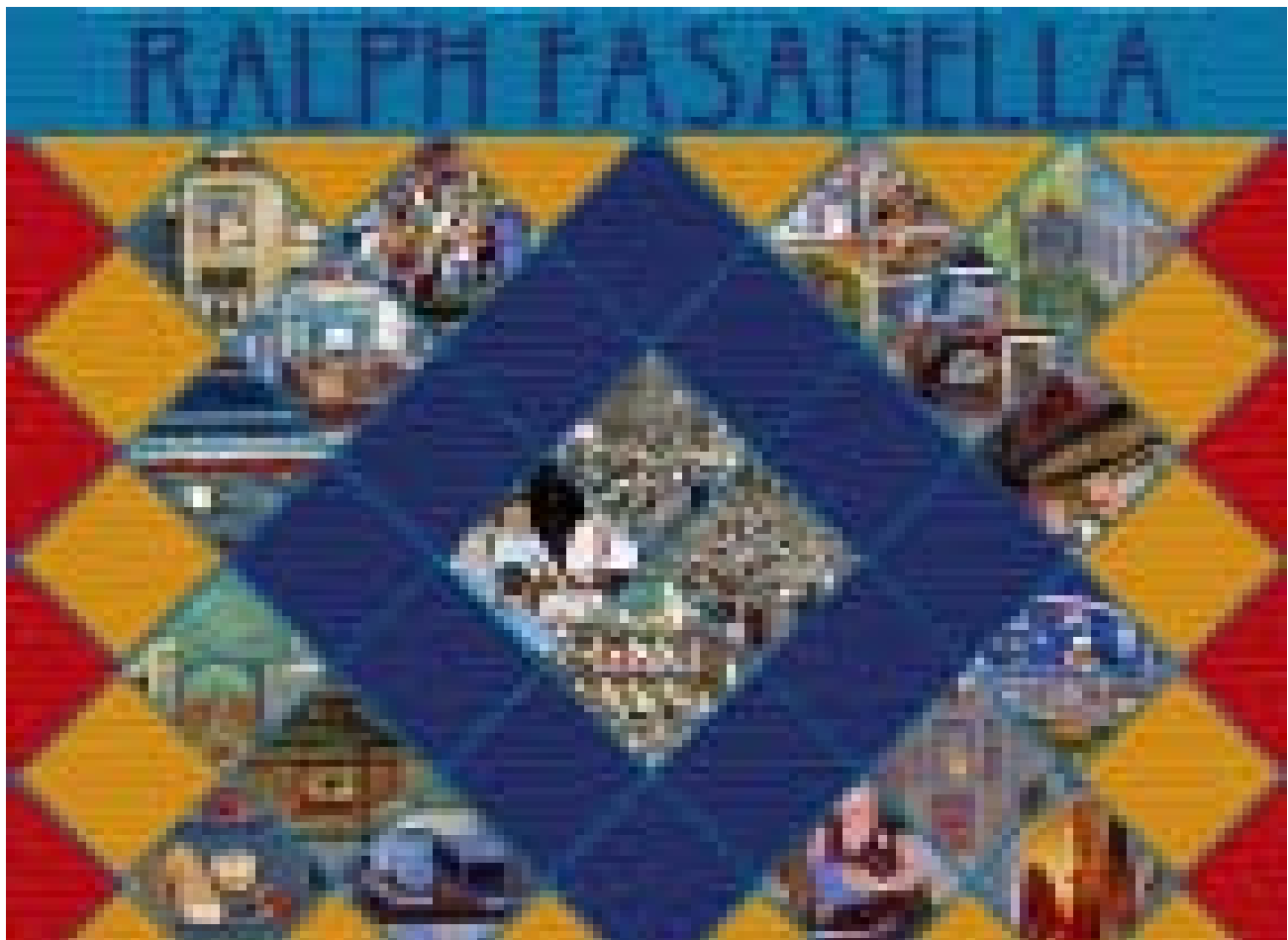
- Data on average adjunct faculty salaries and hours in the

- CUNY, SUNY and private institutions of higher education
- Recent legislation affirming the right of public sector employees to union representation at any meeting with management which could lead to disciplinary action
- Proposals for moving forward with the AFT FACE Campaign
- Renewed efforts of the AFL-CIO to organize more workers into unions
- Models for restructuring college governance to increase participation of faculty in decision-making
- Comparative data on health plans
- Announcement of a NYSUT task force to study dual enrollment (that is, college courses

offered for credit in high schools)

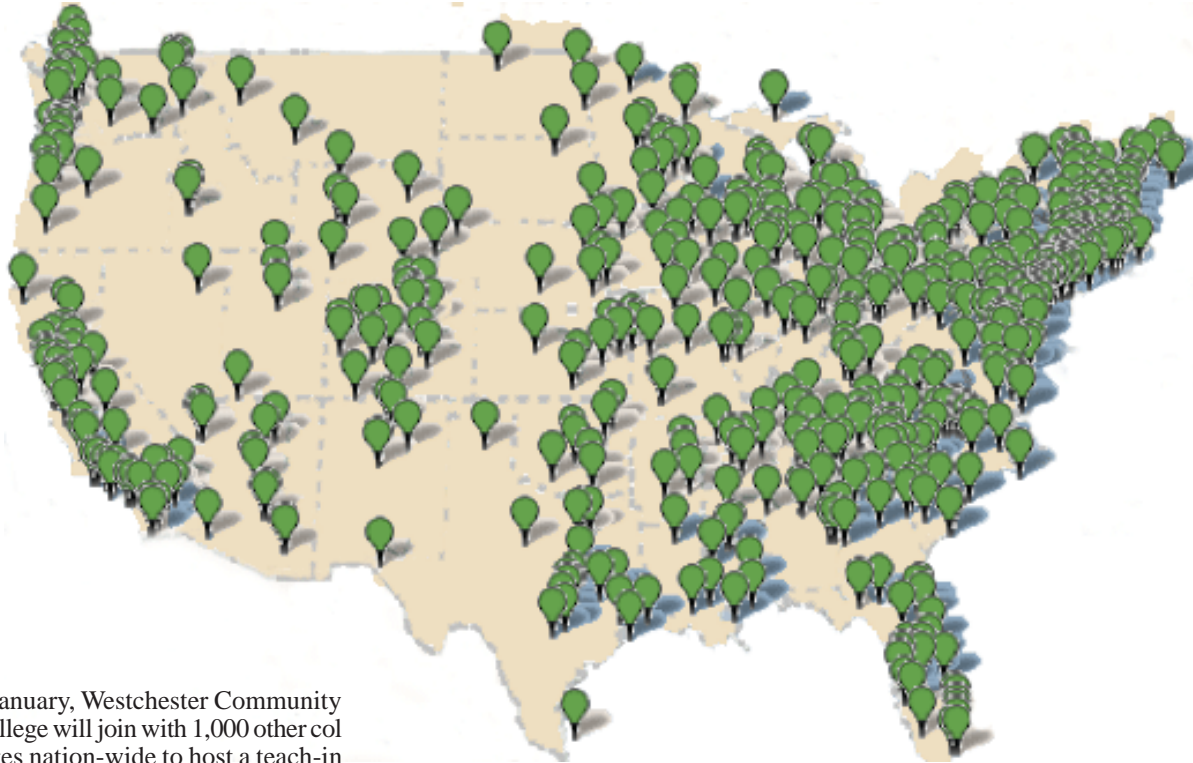
- Remarks from New York City representative Deborah Glick, Chair of the New York State Assembly Committee on Higher Education
- Results of a survey on hybrid distance learning courses

This Conference brings union leaders around the state together to share information, plan strategies and draft proposals for furthering the interests of higher education faculty. Copies of materials gathered at the meeting are available in the Union office. Anne D'Orazio's paper on shared governance will be placed on the website. Next year's conference will take place from September 19-21, 2008 at the Gideon-Putnam Hotel in Saratoga Springs.



# Focus the Nation: January 30, 2008

By Scott Zaluda



In January, Westchester Community College will join with 1,000 other colleges nation-wide to host a teach-in on global warming and its solutions for America. Focus the Nation ([www.focusthenation.org](http://www.focusthenation.org)) will be paired with a second event, Focus the County, designed to increase political and community involvement. Along with the WCCFT, the Faculty Senate, the Student Senate, the Board of Trustees, and Dr. Hankin have endorsed the two events.

Simultaneously with campuses across the United States, Westchester's teach-in has been planned for January 30 from 11 to 1 in C200. Several of our faculty colleagues will give talks

- on the science behind global warming and resulting ecological impacts
- on the psychology of denial
- on the economics of global warming and/or impacts on developing nations
- on national - international law
- on impacts upon developing nations
- on what we can do as individuals

County Executive Andy Spano and members of his Global Warming Task Force will help to Focus the County during a town hall meeting in the AAB auditorium on February 13, 2008 at 7:00.

All aspects of this event are being planned to generate a minimum of waste. Towards that end, Professor Michael Priano has arranged with Neil Cutler of Synergis, Zero Waste Group to consult with us *gratis*. Kevin Garvey and members of his staff, Mark Edwards and Professor Desi Colon will work with Priano and Cutler to plan a "zero waste café" before the town meeting.

The Focus the Nation planning committee hopes that the entire college community will treat this event as a jumpstart to keep global warming in focus once these events have passed. The committee wants to encourage faculty to do whatever they can to generate a buzz on campus about the teach-in and to encourage students to attend. Wherever appropriate, faculty can try to work the topic of global warming and

its solutions into spring semester curricula. Faculty who advise student clubs and organizations might encourage students to develop initiatives for further dialogue and action.

Westchester Community College plans to examine its own carbon footprint and to make environmental sustainability a priority. The college's website asserts that the college "will inventory greenhouse gas emissions, develop a comprehensive plan to achieve climate neutrality, and track progress on various goals and actions regarding regulating emissions. The college will also encourage the use of and provide access to public transportation for members of the college community." Dr. Hankin has signed onto the American College and University Presidents "Climate Commitment."

# FOCUS

# THE NATION

[www.wccft.org](http://www.wccft.org)

### Shadows from the Past

At night I lie awake,  
not troubled, but remembering the day's events,  
I marvel at how the material comes back so quickly  
when I observe an enthusiastic new colleague  
teaching Early American Lit.

Cotton Mather's link to Benjamin Franklin,  
the delicious incongruity of the author's  
"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"  
and his lyric to his young wife "Sarah Pierpont."

Now new colleagues vie to teach these courses  
we thought had become irrelevant  
to our students.  
When I open the text I find material  
fascinating which I'd become weary of.

I'm reminded of the miracle of books  
sitting quietly on shelves for years,  
but holding the words of lives.  
Franklin with his puffy rolls  
and his list of virtues which he turned  
into a rubric which Fitzgerald adapted  
for Jimmy Gatz  
before he changed his name to Jay Gatsby  
one hundred and fifty years later.

What happened to  
that young teacher,  
idealistic, certain of goodness,  
only slowly  
learning about the shadow side?

- Mary Ellen LeClair





# HOLIDAY PARTY



FACULTY  
RETIREES  
ADJUNCTS



MUSIC



MEMORIES



Wednesday  
December 5  
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Science Lounge

