

# WGTA History from 2005 - 2010

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By Lynn Davis

## **History from 2005 - 2010**

### **2005 - 2006**

#### 2005 -2006 Executive Officers

Mike Cost - WGTA President - Senior High  
Dave Smithson - Vice President - Stonehedge - B  
John Christian - VP - Negotiations - Senior High  
Ray Fuller - VP - Grievances - Onondaga Road  
Andrea Moore - Treasurer - Senior High  
Lynn Davis - Secretary - Camillus Middle

High School art teacher Jennifer Schrader and her students were featured in a Post Standard article (October 13, 2005). According to the article, "they are creating a stained-glass window depicting symbols of the freedom that veterans fight for and the honor and respect they believe veterans should receive." The window they are constructing is 15 feet long by 7 feet high, and will be placed in the main lobby of the VA hospital. Dedication is set for November 9th. Pictures of the project are located in the High School Library and another story about the project will run in an upcoming issue of the New York Teacher magazine.

A total of 173 teachers are contributing a total of \$177.50 per pay period to VOTE / COPE via payroll deduction. Deductions will be taken over 20 pay periods.

Onondaga road first grade teacher, Jennifer Scicchitano, was named educator of the Week by WSTM-TV Channel 3 on October 24.

Split Rock Elementary School kindergarten teacher Elva Stebbins, CMS librarian Carolyn Trombly, and High School science teachers Sam Gervaise received the 2005 Joseph A. Witowski Teacher of the Year Awards.

Kathy Annan received national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching standards. Kathy is a chemistry teacher at the High School. According to the Post-Standard, "she is one of only 107 teachers in New York State to receive the honor this year." Kathy joins two other West Genesee teachers, both at CMS, who have attained national certification.

A retirement award tentative agreement was ratified by a vote of 260 to 11 during the January 5, 2006 balloting. The new agreement changes the January 2007

retirement incentive window to June 2006. The new agreement also changes the notification dates that teachers must give the district in order to be eligible for the award. To be eligible for the award, the new agreement also changes the notification date to February 1 in 2006 and March 1 in 2007. The District has agreed to allow June 2006 retirees to make health insurance adjustments during the annual enrollment period in September 2006.

The WGTA dues from January 2005 to December 2005 were \$529.52.

A thank you note was received from Kate Flannery, the Executive Director of the Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, for the WGTA donation of \$897 raised during a recent Denim Day for Breast Cancer.

The WGTA web site won the 2006 NYSUT - New York Teacher Journalism Competition. This is the third year in a row that the web site has won the award. According to Deb Ward, NYSUT Director of Publications, Web and Video, and Lance Howland, Editor of the New York Teacher, the judge's panel noted a trend toward more entries, including an upsurge in retiree entries this year. This makes your award even more meritorious." Lynn Davis, CMS, is the Webmaster. See our web site awards - [click here](#).

Tom Clerkin, our retired NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist died unexpectedly in February. His impact on our association is immeasurable. For over twenty-five years he advised and represented the WGTA in its labor/management issues.

On May 18, 2006, three WGTA members received an Onondaga County Teachers' Association / WGTA Service Award. These awards were presented for unselfish and dedicated service to the teachers of central New York. The 2006 WGTA recipients were:

\* Marsha Tunison - for many years of service as the Building Leader at Camillus Middle School.

\* Janice Pellegrino - for many years of service as a WGTA Building Preventative at Camillus Middle School and a member of the Superintendent's Liaison Committee.

\* Chris Edinger - for 15 years of service as the Chairperson of the WGTA Scholarship Committee.

The WGTA awarded a \$2,000 scholarship to Miss Kim Petrick. Kim will be attending Houghton College and plans to major in History.

On June 13, 2006 the WGTA was notified that our web site won the 1st Place Award in the American Federation of Teachers Communication Network (AFTCN) annual journalism competition. This is the 7th year that the web site has won the national title in the last 8 years of competition. Lynn Davis, CMS, is the Webmaster.

## **2006 - 2007**

### 2006 -2007 Executive Officers

Mike Cost - WGTA President - Senior High  
Dave Smithson - Vice President - Stonehedge - B  
John Christian - VP - Negotiations - Senior High  
Ray Fuller - VP - Grievances - Onondaga Road  
Andrea Moore - Treasurer - Senior High  
Lynn Davis - Secretary - Camillus Middle

Lisa Tamiso (CMS), Tammy Annicharico (CMS) and Sue Potrikus (CMS) were nominated to the "Who's Who Among America's Teachers."

Lynn Davis (CMS) was featured in the September 25th issue of the Advocate as the "Community Member of the Week."

Jim Vermeulen (CMS resource teacher, Coach and Post-Standard Contributing Writer) had his article, "In Pursuit of Average - Don't Underestimate the Value of Finishing 'In The Pack,'" published in the October 29, 2006 issue of The Post Standard.

Matt Bohla (WGMS Social Studies Teacher) was named the "Educator of the Week" by WSTM-TV Channel 3 for the week of September 25th.

Marsha Tunison (CMS - retired) was nominated to Who's Who In American Education.

WGTA members doubled their Vote/Cope contributions from last year.

Nancy Menges (East Hill), Sue Pray (WGMS) and Peggy Timmons (High School) were elected as the 2006 Joseph A Witowski Teacher of Year honorees by the Camillus Optimists.

The 2006 yearly WGTA dues were \$584.83.

Donna Mahar (WGMS) achieved National Board Certification.

The WGTA web site won a NYSUT First Award for Best Web site in Class III. This is the fourth year in a row that the web site has won a NYSUT First Award. Lynn Davis (CMS) is the Webmaster.

The WGTA donated \$250 to the West Genesee Senior All Night After The Ball Party.

The WGTA donated \$250 to the St. Baldrick's Foundation in support of President Cost's "give five to help kids survive cancer" challenge. President Cost and Vice President Fuller together raised about \$4,800 for the St. Baldrick's Foundation. The mission of the Foundation is to raise awareness and funds to cure kid's cancer by supporting cancer research and fellowships.

#### 25-Year Club Inductees

##### 30 Years

Rose Ann LeBlanc - SR  
James Vermeulen - CMS

##### 35 Years

Lynn Davis - CMS  
Frederick Guerreschi - CMS  
Danielle Hamberger - WGMS  
Christine Rust - ST-B  
Thomas Sakowski - WGMS  
David Smithson - ST-B

##### 40 Years

JoAnn Macaluso - WGMS

The WGTA Spring Fling was held on Friday, June 1, 2007 at Gilflilian's.

The WGTA Cabinet voted to donate \$50.00 to the Camillus Memorial Day Boosters to help support the Camillus Memorial Day festivities.

The WGTA Denim Day for the American Heart Association raised \$881.75.

The WGTA Cabinet voted to increase the individual WGTA scholarships from \$500 per year to \$750 per year.

Ellen Miller (Stonehedge) was appointed as the Assistant Newsletter Editor.

Anne Sierotnik (High School) is one of five finalists for the NYS 2008 Teacher of the Year award. Anne is an English teacher and taught in the district for 16 years.

The WGTA sponsored the Fall and the Spring Flings, paid for half of the district retirement party, and purchased umbrellas for all its members. The Sick Bank was activated on four separate occasions with teachers volunteering hundreds of days for their colleagues. The WGTA sponsored and organized a retirement informational meeting, a Denim Day for the Susan B. Komen Foundation (raising approximately \$1,000), a Denim Day for the American Heart Association (raising approximately \$900), and President Cost and Vice President Fuller shaved their heads for St.

Baldrick's and raised approximately \$5,000. WGTA members contributed more than \$15,000 for Vote/Cope, the WGTA Scholarship Fund and the United Way.

The WGTA web site won a First Place Award for its class in a national competition sponsored by the American Federation of Teachers Communications Network. This is the 8th win in 9 years for the web site!

Melissa Lynn DiBattista was selected as the 2007 WGTA Scholarship winner. Melissa will be attending St. Bonaventure University majoring in Early and Elementary Education. The WGTA scholarship is now \$750 per year for four years.

The new WGTA Teacher's Contract was ratified by a vote of 327 to 6.

## **2007 - 2008**

### 2007 -2008 Executive Officers

John Christian - WGTA President - Senior High  
Susan Gianniini - Vice President - Split Rock  
Andrea Moore- VP - Negotiations - Senior High  
Ray Fuller - VP - Grievances - Onondaga Road  
Thersa Mosey - Treasurer - Senior High  
Michelle Lepak - Secretary - Camillus Middle





WGTA Cabinet 2008

Anne Sierotnik, a high school English teacher in West Genesee, was one of 5 finalists named by the New York State Education Department for NYS Teacher of the Year.

Jim Hunter was recently named the Channel 3 Teacher of the Week. Jim is a technology teacher at Camillus Middle School.

The WGTA held a Fall Fling at McNamara's.

Tammy Annicharico (CMS) achieved her National Board Certification.

Jim Vermeulen (CMS) had an article in The Post-Standard published titled, "A Closer Look at a Week on the Run."

Bob Deegan (High School) who will be participating with a team of scientists this coming summer collecting water samples for meteorology and climate change research.

The WGTA sponsored a Christmas Holiday Happy Hour at McNamara's.

East Hill Elementary School first grade teacher Susan Deegan, CMS guidance counselor Melissa Ahern, and High School foreign language teacher Jennifer Roethel received the 2007 Joseph A. Witowski Optimist Teacher of the Year Award.

Mary Humphrey (librarian at Split Rock) just had her second book published. It's called: Kids Yoga Book of Feelings.

Jan Chemotti, librarian, and Susan Gibbons, 7W English teacher at WGMS, recently presented a workshop at the New York Middle School Conference in Saratoga Springs. The Conference theme was "Powerful Partnerships for Success."

The total amount of teacher union dues paid for the 2007 calendar year for a full time teacher was \$618.58.

The WGTA held a Spring Fling on May 8th at McNamara's that combined a toy drive with the festivities.

The 2007 Vote Cope drive raised an average of \$11.33 per member.

Marcia Ranieri (high school) raised more than \$3,300 dollars through the St. Baldrick's event. Marcia also received the YWCA's Academy of Diversity Achievers Award.

The WGTA website placed 2nd in the national AFT Journalism Contest.

School science teacher Richard Chapman will receive an Outstanding Teacher Award from the Technology Alliance of Central New York.

WGTA members donated \$100 to the Camillus PBA; \$100 to the West Genesee Sports Boosters in memory of high school teacher Kevin Kerswell; approximately \$5,000 to VOTE/COPE, \$3,000 to the WGTA scholarship fund, \$900 for the Susan G. Komen Foundation and \$805 for the American Heart Association

Wendy Cross, West Genesee High School art teacher, won the inaugural JGB Jazz Fest Poster Contest.

The following teachers were honored for their many years of service to the district at a dinner at Gilfillan's West Hill Catering Club:

25 years

Susan Blumer, OR  
Diane Grygiel, WGMS  
Elva Stebbins, SR

30 years

Janet Campbell, SR  
Karol Gibson, OR  
Nancy Miller, SR

35 years

Samuel Dance, WGHS  
Richard Duggan, WGMS  
Raymond Fuller, OR

Carl Weed, CMS

40 years

Virginia Lynch, EH

Congratulations to the Retirees!

Susan Blumer, OR

Lynn Davis, CMS

Jeannie Gmyr, ST B

Danielle Hamberger, WGMS

Mary Ellen Hoag, SR

Nancy Menges, EH

Leo Potrikus, CMS

Valerie Socha, OR/EH/ST

Elva Stebbins, SR

Carl Weed, CMS

THERE IS A YOU IN WGTA

By Ellen Miller (Editor)

We all know that without “U,” there is no union, but did you know there is also a “U” in WGTA? The U, of course, is YOU – the approximately 400 full- and part-time teachers. YOU are represented in the WGTA by a cabinet of 34 members – six executive officers, eight building leaders, 14 building representatives, five alternates and the immediate WGTA past president. In addition to the cabinet, people like YOU are serving on such committees as the EDC, Superintendent’s Liaison, Shared Decision Making, the Teaching Center, and Strategic Planning.

The 2007-08 academic year began under new leadership with John Christian as our WGTA president and Susan Giannini as our VP. With our new leadership came a fresh new start, some innovative ideas, and some new twists to our old (but still good!) routines. Let’s take a look back at our union and how it represented YOU through 2007-08.

- YOU started out “The New Era” in grand style, with a t-shirt toss and iPod giveaway at the general membership meeting in September.
- YOU gave \$100 to the Camillus PBA; \$100 to the West Genesee Sports Boosters in memory of high school teacher Kevin Kerswell; approximately \$5,000 to VOTE/COPE and \$3,000 to the WGTA scholarship fund.
- YOU asked for and secured numerous pet projects, technology pet projects, collegial circles and action research projects from the S.U. Teaching Center.
- YOU attended not two but three “flings” this year, including the first-ever holiday fling as well as a spring fling that combined a toy drive with the festivities.
- YOU raised \$900 for the Susan G. Komen Foundation, as well as \$805 for the American Heart Association.



- YOU are among many distinguished colleagues receiving accolades in 2007-08, including:

- One Outstanding Teacher Award from Technology Alliance of Central New York
- One Academy of Diversity Achievers Award by the YWCA
- Three Optimist Teachers of the Year awards
- One of five finalists in NYSED's Teacher of the Year contest
- One Channel 3 Teacher of the Week
- One second place website award by the American Federation of Teachers Communications Network

- Some of our colleagues showed talent and persistence through their accomplishments:

- One teacher earned National Board Certification
- One had a (second!) book published
- Some presented workshops at state conferences
- One featured art at a solo art exhibit

- Many of our colleagues gave their time and energy to worthy causes with amazing results, including:

- Running a marathon for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- Riding in the Tour de Cure for Juvenile Diabetes research
- Shaving a head for the St. Baldrick's Foundation's fight against childhood cancer
- And while you may not have been one of these individuals, many, many of you donated money, time and talent to help them achieve success in their endeavors.
- YOU donated hundreds of hours of your own time, above and beyond your school day each week on such committees as Curriculum Council, Respect and Responsibility, Character Education, Special Education Team, and Principal's Liaison, to name a few.

- YOU will continue to work into the summer, planning a record number of independent workshops through the S.U. Teaching Center, as well as technology training, AIM training, Rigby reading series training, curriculum mapping, and diversity training.

- YOU read eight newsletters published by the WGTA this school year.
- YOU were represented at nine cabinet meetings this school year.
- YOU as part of the WGTA, co-sponsored the District Retirement Reception at the Camillus Elks Club.
- YOU took courses, taught courses, and mentored student teachers and new teachers.
- YOU manned the NYSUT booth at the State Fair and walked or ran in the 100-degree heat at the Corporate Challenge.

- YOU volunteered many sick days for your colleagues in need.
- YOU dug money out of your own pockets to pay for extra school supplies, popsicles, birthday cupcakes, and whatever else is necessary to help a student have a better day or a more successful school year.

For all these and many other things that you do as a teacher for West Genesee, your union – the WGTA – is here for you. So yes, there IS a U in Union, and there is a YOU in WGTA. Without YOU, they're just four letters; it's the YOU in WGTA that makes us who we are – an Association of quality, dedicated professionals committed to creating lifelong learners who are well prepared for the challenges ahead.

Thank YOU for all that you do.

## **2008 - 2009**

Academic Year 2008-09: Where did it go?

By Ellen Miller

WGTA Members: the June crunch will soon be over and our entire 2008-09 year will become a blur. Let me refresh your collective memory and remind you of a few of our accomplishments earned throughout 2008-09.

- \* We donated toys to local families in need and filled the food pantry of Holy Family church in Fairmount and the Westminster food pantry in Syracuse.
- \* We raised \$1350 for breast cancer research during the fall Lee National Denim Day.
- \* We won a Pride of the Union Award for our NYSUT members.
- \* We ran or walked in our 10th annual Race for Respect.
- \* We won a Top Team Award for the American Heart Association's Heart Walk/Run.
- \* We won the Abel-Blatman award for our outstanding VOTE-COPE donations.
- \* Our website won a NYSUT First Award for Best Website in Class III.

Lauded members of the WGTA:

- \* Were inducted into the Upstate New York chapter of the US Lacrosse Hall of Fame.
- \* Will attend Honeywell's Space Academy and Advanced Space Academy Program for educators.
- \* Will spend one week aboard a research vessel on Lake Huron.

Many of us attended conferences, presented at conferences, read research articles, earned degrees, helped clean up highways, donated to families in need, conducted concerts and attended countless meetings, open houses, CODE graduations, and other myriad nightly meetings on our own time.

But the real rewards earned by us all are the intangibles. You all know what I'm talking about: the child who learned to read against the odds; the one who is now comfortable with his or her peers; the unwilling learner who now has the spark of motivation; those children you helped to become friends, to become a team, to be

successful. Those children are better off because of your efforts. Their success is our big payoff. That's why we do what we do. And that's why we are privileged to be a part of this quality organization, the West Genesee Teachers' Association.