



The Member Ship

The Newsletter of The West Genesee Teachers' Association

Stay Informed

[John Mannion](#), President

Teachers across the state and country have been hit with a perfect storm of decreased funding, larger class sizes, increased testing, new curricula, a labor intensive evaluation system, an attack on tenure, and a multitude of other changes. As these initiatives continue to be thrown at us, what the policy makers need to be reminded of is that education is not a business. We do not have a bottom line. Education Reformers will continue to use the phrase "College and Career Readiness" to push their agenda.



The alumni of West Genesee have proven that we have prepared them for their future--and prepared them well. Not a day goes by without hearing about the accomplishments and success of one of our graduates. However, under the guise of education reform, steps are being taken to weaken teachers' rights, to implement curriculum to profit from the tests and support materials that accompany it, and to push for privatization. A new industry is being created on the backs of public school students. Below are a few bits of information that may relate to us directly at West Genesee, either on a local, state and/or national level:

- ***Vergara v. California*** – This case in California was brought on behalf of several students and their families claiming that protected teacher seniority and tenure violated students' civil rights. David Welch, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur, founded the group Students Matter which spent nearly three million dollars to fund the lawsuit and is supported by several charter school advocates. The California courts ruled that key job protections for California teachers violate the state's constitution, thereby stripping teachers of tenure rights. The case is now under appeal.
- ***Can this happen in NY? – Wright v. The State of New York*** – Former CNN anchor Campbell Brown is the founder of the organization Partnership for Educational Justice. She contends that job protection for teachers is archaic and argues that more affluent students are more likely to be taught by higher quality teachers. Her efforts are to "save" public schools. Brown's legal team is representing the plaintiffs of the case, pro bono. Her husband, hedge fund manager Dan Senior, sits on the Students First NY board with charter school entrepreneur Eva Moskowitz. Campbell Brown refuses to disclose the names of her donors which help her push for charter schools and the elimination of unions and teacher tenure. The argument is that "last in, first out" policies are damaging to students. Tenure doesn't ensure the employment of bad teachers; it provides a process for their discipline and potential termination.

Continued on page 3



Stay connected this by following us on Twitter or liking our page on Facebook. Click on pics to see how you can stay informed!

You Never Know

[Ellen Miller](#), Assistant Editor

*In the “olden” days of teaching (for me, that’s the early 90s), we used to sit around and drink coffee and chat before starting our day in the classroom. That’s when we’d talk about our families, our lives, and get to know our fellow teachers as more than just the person in the classroom next door. Now, in the “Common Core” era, we don’t have time to drink coffee, let alone chat with anyone before class. That’s where Spotlight comes in. Each issue of *The Membership* will feature a WG teacher. Take a few minutes of your sparse down time to learn a bit more about a colleague. Maybe the next one will be about you!*



Dale Keida teaches Technology at **Camillus Middle School**. For the past 15 years, he has taught in the West Genesee School District at the high school and both middle schools. In addition to his teaching duties, Dale serves as WGTA Building Leader for CMS, as well as Yearbook Advisor. He also collects money from all staff any time there is a big jackpot in the lottery a (very important role at CMS!)

Before his teaching career, Dale was a man of many talents. After obtaining a photography degree from RIT, his first career was as a photographer for Varden Studios. After that, he worked for a printed circuit board company, designing and producing all of their literature, such as brochures. His father’s wholesale snack distributing company then expanded from Utica to Syracuse, so Dale then had to lend a hand. Dale became the president of the company, which quickly grew, employing 14 people with sales of \$6 million a year. The company merged with Snyder’s of Ha-

nover pretzel company, “after they painted a pretty picture,” said Dale, only to be unemployed one year later.

And that’s when former WGHS principal, Helen White, told Dale that he was going to be a teacher. “I guess it paid off to be very involved with our three sons growing up,” said Dale. So at 45 years old, he went back to school to get certified and obtain his masters. “Luckily that fall I was hired by Westhill and West Genesee,” and his teaching career was on its way.

Dale has been married to his wife, Angela, for 36 years this month. They met in junior college and have three sons: Brian, 33, married to Colleen and living in Atlanta with their only granddaughter, Maeve, who is 21 months old; Jeffrey, 30; and Mark, 28. Dale and Angela live with Keira, their five-year-old Siberian husky that also belongs to their son Jeff.

Dale is enthusiastic about his chosen profession. “I love interacting with the students and learning from them. Teaching technology is the best because I can change my lessons to what is going on currently in and around the lives of my students. They love doing hands-on problem-solving and seeing immediate results for their efforts.”

“My passion is getting students to respect each other and their environment,” Dale said. “To be kind, willing to share their knowledge and volunteer to help others.”

Spotlight...

The Changing Face of Education--Staying Informed

Tenure allows teachers to question decisions made within their district and at the state and national level. It provides them with due process rights which protects them from unfair removal from employment. Most importantly, tenure allows teachers to advocate for their students. It protects teachers who question the issues of class size, curriculum decisions, materials, and appropriate services for students with special needs. Without these protections in place, teachers can be removed without due process. Tenure allows good teachers to advocate for their students and have the freedom to be creative and autonomous in their teaching.

- **Harris v. Quinn ruling** – The Supreme Court recently decided that **some** health care workers are not required to pay dues to the local union that represents them. A war is being waged in the courts and legislature to diminish the strength of unions and their ability to secure these rights. Other cases are travelling through the courts that would allow employees to opt out of paying dues to their union. We could all use a few extra dollars in our pocket. However, without a collection of dues, our local, state, and national organizations cannot continue to lobby for greater funding, limit the expansion of privatization, and continue to maintain the rights that teachers have come to expect. If later decisions declare that union fee collection is not required of all members it could destroy our collective bargaining structure and, in essence, ourselves.
- I encourage you do take an active role in the **upcoming elections**. Please take the time to visit the following websites to make an informed decision:

Rob Astorino, Republican, Stop Common Core @ www.robastorino.com

Andrew Cuomo, Democrat, Working Families Party @ www.andrewcuomo.com

Howie Hawkins, Green Party @ www.howichawkins.org

The WGTA is continuing their efforts to make sure that your voices are heard. We are in communication with District Administration, Board of Education members, and your representatives at NYSUT. We promise to be persistent in maintaining and establishing relationships that assure that a teacher's perspective is always a part of the decision making process.

John


MJS Home Improvement L.L.C.
"for all of your home improvement needs"

Doors, Windows, Decks, Kitchens, Baths,
Flooring, Interior/Exterior Painting, Additions,
Retaining Walls, Patios and Walkways

Insured with over 25 years of experience
free estimates

(315) 696-8395 or (315) 559-0244

"I became a teacher so that I could help kids pass the standardized tests," said no teacher ever.



someecards
user card

shared by: **Teach HUB**.com

The Happenings...

FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT, [MARY WEAVER](#)

Hello! Welcome back and I hope you had a great vacation! We are moving along on a lot of items for the Association. Our annual Fall Fling is October 3rd from 4-6PM at The Wildcat. More information will be forthcoming via email, so be sure to keep an eye out for that. Another important item is finalizing a Vice President for Negotiations for the upcoming year. Whomever takes on this crucial position will be a part of a team that will look at the contract and act on the needs of WGTA. Please contact any of the Executive Officers if you are interested in learning more about this position.

The Directing Council is also off and running where we have 51% teacher representation so that what teachers want and need as professional development and support for their classrooms is the focus of the committee. The Superintendent Liaison Committee meeting is set for September 17th. Please email me with any topics for the agenda, keeping in mind that each topic must go through the building level Principal Liaison Committee first. In the meantime, if you have questions, contact me, any of the Executive Officers, or your building reps for information. We may not have immediate answers, but we will try to get the answers as soon as we can. It is apparent that teachers throughout the district have worked hard on technology workshops, curriculum development, and Common Core strategies throughout the summer. We at the WGTA appreciate such hard work. We hope everyone has a great school year.

FROM THE TREASURER, [SUE MARSHALL](#)

Firstly, I am happy to report that the West Genesee Teachers' Association has regained our tax-exempt status! When we first came into office last year, we knew this was an important financial item to complete for our members, and after many months of filing papers with the IRS and contacting the Federal Government for updates, we can now breathe a bit easier—and maybe save a little money.

Keeping with our focus of maintaining sound financial practices, auditors from Grossman St. Amour were in the WGTA office again this summer to audit our financial records checking to see if we tightened up our procedures and followed suggestions they gave us last year to ensure union members' money was spent for union expenses. They were happy to see we had amended our by-laws to include procedures for expense reimbursement and travel reimbursement. They selected random checks issued to see if original receipts were attached and duplicate signatures appeared on checks. In addition, the auditors looked at our operating fund and scholarship fund bank reconciliations. They saw no problems. As a union member, you can rest assured your dues are being spent prudently. The Cabinet has approved the 2014-2015 budget, and we have no local increase in dues. We will continue to work for you to keep our expenses down while ensuring we provide you with the support you require to do your jobs.

FROM THE TREASURER, [JEANINE STABLES](#)

A couple reminders as the school year begins. First, one of my roles this year will be chair of the Sick Bank. The Sick Bank provision of our contract offers support to members in need of additional sick time for extended absences. To be eligible, a member must have used all of his/her allotted sick days plus a loss of 10 paid days. Please contact me if you should find yourself in need. Second, we have several opportunities available if members are interested in signing up for committees, including the Social Committee, Sabbatical Committee, and Rules and By-Laws Committee. Your building leader will have more information on these at your next building meeting. Please consider volunteering to support the union that supports you!

Welcome Back!
We hope you have a great school year!

KUDOS!

Congratulations **Carol Glor** who spent some time this summer learning at sea! The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Teacher at Sea Program provides teachers hands-on, real-world research experience working at sea with world-renowned NOAA scientists, thereby giving them unique insight into the oceanic and atmospheric research crucial to the nation. The program provides a unique opportunity for kindergarten through college-level teachers to sail aboard NOAA research ships to work under the tutelage of scientists and crew.

To read about Carol's adventures, go to her blog at <http://teacheratsea.wordpress.com/category/Pcarol-glor/>.

Please send your Kudos to Keith Newvine at konewvine@gmail.com.

3	4		8	2	6		7	1
		8				9		
7	6			9			4	3
	8		1	2			3	
	3						9	
	7		9	4			1	
8	2			4			5	9
		7				3		
4	1		3	8	9		6	2



Contact YOUR Executive Officers...

John Mannion, President
Email: mannonforwgta@gmail.com
School: 315-487-4601
Cell: 315-333-2094

Mary Weaver, Vice President
Email: mweave66@gmail.com
School: 315-487-4615

Keith Newvine, Vice President for Grievances
Email: konewvine@gmail.com
School: 315-487-4601
Cell: 315-771-8928

Susan Marshall, Treasurer
Email: smarshall1@rocketmail.com
School: 315-487-4615

Jeanine Stables, Secretary
Email: jstablesster@gmail.com
School: 315-487-4653



Member Shopping Program *powered by PayCheck Direct*



**As NYSUT members, you work hard every day!
*Shouldn't buying what you want be easy?***

Well, now it can be... The Member Shopping Program powered by PayCheck Direct allows eligible NYSUT members to purchase what they want now and pay interest-free over 12 months. Choose from either 12 or 26 payments via automatic checking account withdrawals.

Through PayCheck Direct, all eligible NYSUT members have access to thousands of name-brand products such as appliances, computers & tablets, electronics, furniture, jewelry & watches, home & garden items, children's toys, and recreation & fitness items.

PayCheck Direct offers a 30-day in-home trial on many products; flexible return policy; no interest fees, credit checks, down payments, or finance charges; and toll-free customer service representatives located in the U.S.

NYSUT members are encouraged to shop and compare prices before making a purchase with this program and consider it as an alternative to using their credit card. Please note that PayCheck Direct will have access to certain information from NYSUT's membership files to verify levels of eligibility for those NYSUT members that choose to participate in this program.

**For more information about PayCheck Direct,
call toll-free 866-441-9160 or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.**
