

Volume 2, Issue 1

March, 2009



CWA 1141

ALLIANCE

# CWA Day 2008 August 22, 2008 Lanthier's Grove



## SAVE THE DATE!

## CWA Day, 2009 FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2009 More details to follow!

The chairperson for CWA 2009 is Deb Conerty from NYSUT Member Benefits. If you are interested in helping out with the planning, basket raffles, etc., please e-mail Deb at [dconerty@nysutmail.org](mailto:dconerty@nysutmail.org)

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# TAIGE NEAL KINNEY UPDATE

*Kendra Waddington's Granddaughter (Jamestown RO)*



I cannot adequately express the gratitude I have for the prayers, thoughts, and assistance given to me and my family by my CWA sisters and brothers since the accident suffered by my granddaughter, Taige, in April 2007. Something that seems so simple can mean so much--such as getting home late at night after a 1 1/2 hour drive from the hospital in Buffalo and finding a card from one of you. I will never forget your kindness, and I want to reassure you that your prayers did and are working.

Thanks to God and your prayers, Taige celebrated her 2nd birthday on August 21. She is our joy. As many of you know, Taige was released from Buffalo's Women's & Children's Hospital at the end of June 2007, and she and her parents moved in with us until November 2008 when they could move back to their own home. Taige suffered severe brain damage resulting from the 2-3 foot fall, and the doctors would make no prognosis as to the extent of her recovery. She is still on several medications, but not as many as before, and

they are down to only a couple times per day. She is still getting most of her nourishment through her feeding tube; however, she is physically capable of eating, and they are working on that. Taige still has one type of therapy every day--mostly physical and occupational, along with speech, special ed, vision. Taige does have the capability of seeing, and her therapists are working on getting her brain to recognize what she sees. She is getting measured for leg braces at Shriners Hospital in Erie this month, as they hope she will learn to walk. She has all kinds of therapy equipment for sitting, standing, walking, and playing.

Most important, she is a happy girl as you can see from the photo. She has a beautiful smile and a contagious laugh. My family still can't understand why she loves her Nana Waddington (me) to sing to her (I compare my voice to Willy Nelson)!!

Seriously, we are so lucky that her life was spared, and we know that she will continue to improve against any and all odds with your prayers and God's mercy. Life is full of agony and joy, but so long as you have hope, the joy can triumph. Thank you again, my friends, for your support.



## PRESIDENT'S PEN



I thought I'd talk about unionism for this article. For many of us this is simply old hat, but for more and more people, this may be their first look at what unionism is. My first union experience began when I started working for NYSUT. Many of you who are reading this may be standing exactly where I stood. The only difference was my first year started right in the middle of negotiations and everyone was using terms like strike, picketing, picket lines, solidarity and many more. I was so nervous when negotiations went right to the wire and all I could do was sit back grabbing tiny pieces of information from whomever as to what was going on. I'm thinking, I just started this job, what have I gotten myself into. Many people grew up in the "union" family where both parents were members of unions. Unfortunately that was not my case so I had to learn it on the run so-to-speak. Over the years I have come to love unionism more and more and see the importance of it every day. It's a shame that unionism in this country is on such a decline and has been for a number of years. I could write a novel on my viewpoints on that subject (and I may one day) but than I'd have to answer to the editor of this newsletter. The point I'm trying to make is that yes there will be good times and there will be bad times. In a union, we are all looking out for one another. If you started recently and you have questions about something, yes contact your stewards, your officers or myself, but don't hesitate to ask the co-worker who has been around for a few years or more also. By asking questions, getting informed and doing research your understanding grows and so does your comfort level. Just remember, as unionists, were all in this together.

*Michael Ostrander*

## CWA JOE BEIRNE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The CWA Joe Beirne Foundation was established in October 1974 by the Communications Workers of America Executive Board to honor the name and memory of the founding President of CWA, who served for more than 30 years. In his capacity as the first CWA President, Joe Beirne took great pride in the roles he played in the fields of education and learning and other areas of social concern.

On April 26, 1999, the CWA Executive Board voted to combine the Joseph Anthony Beirne Memorial Foundation and the Ray Hackney Scholarship Fund, thereby creating the CWA Joe Beirne Foundation.

Eligibility: CWA members, their spouses, children and grandchildren (including dependents of laid-off, retired or deceased CWA members) may apply. Applicants must be high school graduates or at least high school students who will graduate during the year in which they apply. Undergraduate and graduate students returning to schooling may also apply. Prior winners may not reapply.

### CWA SCHOLARSHIPS

Fifteen (15) two-year scholarships, to be paid at the rate of \$3,000 annually, are awarded each year to applicants from the U.S.A. and Canada. Winners, selected in a lottery drawing, also will receive second-year scholarships of the same amount contingent upon satisfactory academic accomplishment. Part-time students, less than 12 credits, will receive half of the scholarship monies. Applications are accepted during the months of November through March. **Final deadline is March 31, 2009.**

**For more details and to download the application form visit the CWA Website, <http://www.cwa-union.org/members/beirne/general-information.html>**

# WASTE-NOT CREW LEFT WANTING

By Sharon Hong, Staff Writer, Albany Times Union  
First published: Tuesday, January 20, 2009, Troy



(Above) Mike Gundrum, NYSUT Polling Center

A lot of people are hoping Pop's Daily Bread Senior Outreach gets on the road again. "When we're operating," the group's president Michael Gundrum said, "we're on the road seven days a week." But it's been a year since Pop's lost its sponsorship with a local church, ending their ability to deliver food to nearly 40 senior housing sites. Last week at St. Jude's Senior Apartments in Wynantskill, 86-year-old Bianca Alago saw her old friend and asked: "When are we going to get more goodies, Michael?" "As soon as we get back on the road," Gundrum replied. "I love you, Mike," the tiny white-haired woman exclaimed, standing on tiptoe to give the huge man a hug. Gundrum of Troy, who works full time for New York State United Teachers, and Gen Longo of Watervliet, a V.A. Hospital retired nurse, started up their enterprise in 2005 when a food pantry where they both volunteered closed down. Not wanting to lose the donors, they took over distribution of the donations. Two years later, they were reaching 25,000 Rensselaer County residents and expanded into Albany, picking up thousands more and securing more corporate donors. The duo was joined by a handful of unpaid volunteers, many of them seniors themselves, whom they met at the housing complexes they served. It was heavy lifting for drivers, one of them a 70-year-old volunteer who had been driving for two years, loading and unloading an old Saturn sedan that ferried fresh

and canned goods from Stewarts, Hannaford, and Price Chopper - which pull perishables before their expiration dates - and day-old baked goods from Panera Breads. "One time, we got 15 cases of milk (from Price Chopper) because their cooler broke down," Gundrum said. When Pop's volunteers got more than they could distribute to seniors, they shared the surplus with pantries, halfway houses, homeless shelters and residential youth facilities. "Sometimes, we'll drop stuff off at Vanderheyden Hall and you should see the looks on the kids' faces when you hand them a box of doughnuts," Gundrum said. "We don't waste anything." Gundrum and his volunteers would be greeted with coffee and homemade desserts and invited to the events at St. Jude's, Branson Manor in Rensselaer, Carondolet Commons in Watervliet and Kennedy Towers in Troy and some three-dozen other senior centers from Hoosick Falls to Ravena. "It's like I have 25,000 grandparents," said Gundrum. "We don't just provide them with food. We give them companionship." These days, it hurts him to think about all the food that could be going to help the people. "They are suffering without us. Especially now with the prices jacked up; they can't afford it," Gundrum said. "And do you know what they do with the stuff we're not picking up? Dumpsters." Money is very tight for many seniors. Initially, all expenses were made out of pocket, but when gas prices shot up,

they began putting out a tin can so their seniors could make voluntary donations.

"Instead of paying \$4 for a loaf of bread, you can get it for a donation of 50 cents" from Pop's, said Lynn Gorman, resident building representative at St. Jude's. Now, "one trip to the store and all my food stamps are gone, then the next three weeks, I'm on my own." Pop's has been trying to secure its own tax ID number; without it, Pop's is unable to get donations from the corporate sponsors it relies on. It has written bylaws, and volunteer Ann Williams has started taking online accounting classes to help with the books. But they need an attorney's help to become a non-profit. "We're at a standstill," said volunteer Heather McCabe. Gundrum meets with his core group each month about getting back on the road. Meanwhile, the seniors look forward to their return, said Barbara Weatherwax, St. Jude's building manager. "It's been a year and they still haven't given up on us," said program volunteer Dawn Loetterle. For information about Pop's Daily Bread Senior Outreach, e-mail Mike Gundrum at [ffkttc045@hotmail.com](mailto:ffkttc045@hotmail.com).

## Did You Hear?

- **Jeanne Hamilton (Albany OGC)** and her husband adopted a baby girl, Abiageal Rose Hamilton, born June 22, 2008
- **Kathy Robinson (Utica RO)** is excited to share that her daughter and "new" son-in-law were married on February 14, 2009.
- **Sherry DeCastro** ( ) would like to remind us of simple ways to help people, like baking cookies for school/booster club donations or offering to be the one to drop off items for bottle drives or food collections, very easy and quick things we can do to help. You don't have to be the head organizer - we've all got busy lives, but if you're baking brownies for a sleepover, make an extra batch for someone else. Sherry's neighbor has three children and they are always running, so when making a lasagna every once in a while Sherry makes a double batch and drops one off to her neighbor. Even if it's just your neighbor - you've made someone's day a little easier. Sherry's comment, "we could all do something small to create a greater change."

- **Georgette Bacon, (Potsdam RO)** has been creating gourd art for two years and has sold many pieces at the St. Lawrence County Arts Council store in Potsdam. She currently has two gourds on display at the Massena Library where they were accepted for the annual juried art show. Within the last year she has started making necklaces out of scraps of gourds from when cutting them to make the larger pieces. Georgette says, "I am never as happy as when I am creating in my workshop." Georgette is a member of the St. Lawrence County Arts Council, Adirondack North Country Association and the American Gourd Society. In the past two years I have exhibited my gourd art in the International Juried Art Show in the Fredric Remington Art Museum in Ogdensburg, the Massena Artists Guild, the Adirondack Artist Guild Juried Art Show in Saranac Lake and at the Gibson Gallery at Potsdam State University. Check out her website too [www.dragonflylanegourds.net](http://www.dragonflylanegourds.net)

- **Cheryl Durant (Potsdam RO)** Congratulations to her for receiving two awards for the following photographs:

**Misty Morn** was awarded third prize from the 2008 Massena Artists Association's Juried Art Exhibit and was also chosen to be exhibited at the Frederic Remington Museum in Ogdensburg.



**Bejeweled** was awarded honorable mention at the 2009 Massena Artists Association's Juried Art Exhibit



# The Water Cooler!



This will be an ongoing column. Please submit any "tidbits" you would like included in our next issue to [krobinso@nysutmail.org](mailto:krobinso@nysutmail.org)

# CWA LOCAL 1141 EXECUTIVE BOARD 2009-2011

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## Congratulations to Nancy Lott, Vestal RO



After 24 years of service to NYSUT in the Vestal regional office, Nancy's retirement became official on January 20, 2009. A retirement celebration was held in Nancy's honor on January 9 at Bobby's Place in Endicott. In attendance were staff and family. NYSUT and CWA 1141 presented Nancy with gifts of appreciation for her many years of dedicated service. Nancy is looking forward to the good life at home with her husband Michael, her son, daughter and son-in-law, not to mention her adorable dogs. Happy retirement!

## CWA Executive Board Meeting: Thursday, April 23, 2009

Please let your steward know  
if you have any issues to be  
brought to the meeting.



## LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP OUT LAUNCHING A CWA 1141 WEBSITE.

Please contact Teresa Swartz  
and let her know if you are  
interested. Email her at  
[tswartz@nysutmail.org](mailto:tswartz@nysutmail.org).



We are in the process of putting together an extension of our annual CWA Day to have an evening of festivities. The evening will include: dinner, dancing, live entertainment, raffles, drawings and more. Spouses or significant others are also invited to attend.

We are trying to get an idea of how many people would be interested in attending this evening of fun.

Please complete the following information, cut out and send to:  
**Deb Conerty, NYSUT Member Benefits Trust, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Work Location/Bargaining Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

More information to follow...



## NEWSLETTER TEAM...

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