



The Vanguard



AFL-CIO

American Federation of Teachers

LOCAL 1723

NORWALK FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

NORWALK FEDERATION OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL

NORWALK FEDERATION OF RETIREES

AFT Connecticut

January 2013

Norwalk, Connecticut

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FROM MY VIEWPOINT FINALLY, IT IS TIME

Because it happened in Newtown, a place that most people outside Connecticut never heard of, it has had a profound and lasting impact so that finally something will be done about our crazed gun culture. This is not the time of the founding fathers; it is the 21st century, and strong measures must be taken at all levels of government, and, yes, the topic of mental illness must also be fully addressed. We do not have instant answers, but there will be changes to better protect all the citizens and most especially to protect all children at all times. We can and will do better, and we will never ever forget.

BETWEEN THE BOOK ENDS

Last spring, Governor Molly visited Norwalk, in particular Brookside Elementary School and Norwalk Community College, to view the early childhood programs and to observe the excellence that had been created. He was impressed and said so at the news conference. Six months later on Friday, February 1, the Governor returned to Norwalk to see the work being done to turn Briggs High School around, and again he was most impressed and said so at the news conference.

Such excellence does not happen by accident; it is with the very hard work of Norwalk teachers and administrators as well as support staff. Collaboration is a key to such successes.

INAUGURATION DAY AND ELECTION DAY SHOULD BE A NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Is it too much to ask in this great democracy that once every four years that we all celebrate two of our greatest democratic traditions? The percentage of persons who vote is embarrassingly low. Only 57.5% of eligible voters in 2012 cast their ballots. This is the lowest turnout since 2004. According to an informal poll done by *The Hour* newspaper, only one in three persons polled watched the presidential Inauguration. This being true, how do we expect young people to participate when their elders have such a poor record of participation?

The Presidential Election Day and Inauguration Day and should designated as national holidays.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF A STAR-STUDED UNION WEDDING

On a recent evening, many Americans watched SAG-AFTRA Honors Outstanding Film and Television Performances at the 19th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards.

Beside the outstanding performances that were recognized, I found the documentary about the history of SAG-AFTRA to be most interesting. It is a union affiliated with the AFL-CIO, just as is the NFT. The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) dates back to 1935 with the passage of the National Labor Relations Act, but it was not until July 12, 1938, that it negotiated its first collective bargaining agreement on a national scale. Radio stars such as Eddie Cantor, Edgar Bergen, Jack Benny, Bing Crosby, and others were early supporters of the union.

As with all unions, it had its successes and challenges over the decades, but its leap forward occurred on March 30, 2012, when it merged with the Screen Actors Guild (SAG). The name of the new union is SAG-AFTRA, and it has almost 68,000 members.

Congratulations to SAG-AFTRA and to its members; may they enjoy nothing but success for the all the pleasure they bring us.

LET'S HEAR ONE FOR BRIGGS HIGH SCHOOL!

Congratulations to our Briggs colleagues who have done an outstanding job of working to turn around Briggs High School, an accomplishment that was recognized with a visit by the Governor and the Commissioner of Education on February 1, 2013. Both complimented the collaboration that has made this possible over the past six months.

There is a road still to be traveled, but the journey has begun!

HAYNIE WATCH (CONTINUED)

Board of Education member Sue Haynie held a Negotiations and Personnel Committee meeting on 1/31/13, and the agenda alone sent shock waves to all who saw it based on the phone calls and email mails I received. It was a mean-spirited agenda that was unnecessary and rather a big waste of everyone's time for an hour and half.

One of the items she was exploring was the fact that administrators leave school early when there is an early dismissal, and somehow she wants the "cost" of this practice to be determined and shared. Does she ask for all the hours that administrators come in early and stay late? Of course not! Her premise is what? Actually, there is really no valid premise.

I do not want to bore you with the rest of the triviality that she wanted to discuss and the Central Office administrative time that would be required to compile this downright silly data, just because she wanted it.

Sue Haynie should not be re-elected to the BOE in November of 2013, and in fact she should not be even be nominated.

In unity,
Bruce LeVine Mellion

In Memoriam**RUTH BERLER****March 9, 1920 – January 12, 2013****Retired Wolfpit Elementary School Teacher****SCHOOL SECURITY IN NORWALK IS A TOP PRIORITY**

In light of the events that occurred in December in Newtown, there have been meetings at all levels of government to attend to this most urgent issue. For the Norwalk Public Schools, there is the Emergency Planning Committee, which held its first meeting on January 24, 2013 and will be meeting twice a month for all of 2013. There are about 25 persons on the committee including first responders, building and central office administrators, and other selected individuals with special expertise.

At the first meeting, the purposes and goals of the committee were shared with all. There will be building level committees for all 19 buildings including the central office, and every school will be extensively inspected for what is necessary to make it as secure as possible. Additional measures will also be taken.

The work will not be accomplished over night, but it will be attended to so that the schools will be secure and procedures will be designed for emergencies beyond just fire safety. It is sad that we have to do this, but the world of 2013 necessitates it.

The plans that were designed after 911 are outdated and must be revised, and that will be done.

In unity,
Bruce LeVine Mellion

NFT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ADDRESSES GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S LABOR COMMITTEE

Testimony of John A. Altieri, AFT Connecticut Jurisdictional Vice President for Teachers, Connecticut AFL-CIO Vice President, Past President and Executive Secretary of the Norwalk Federation of Teachers concerning 5713: HB "An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Labor History in the Public School Curriculum"

January 31, 2013

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee: My name is John Altieri, and I am AFT CT. Jurisdictional Vice President for Teachers and I Chair its Pre K-12 Council:

I am here today not only speaking as a union leader but as a retired social studies teacher for over 38 years in the Norwalk Public Schools. Teaching labor history would give our students the opportunity to not only join a union when they graduate but also help them to understand what it means to be a union member.

Students in Connecticut public schools are never shown the contributions labor has made to help all workers and their families. Teaching labor history in the social studies classes would help our students to better understand how the labor movement has raised the standard of living in America and how it has helped to create and to build a stronger middle class. The labor movement has brought us the five-day, 40-hour week; health and safety protection; pensions; grievance procedures; and collective bargaining—just to name a few accomplishments that have protected workers on the job and raised their standard of living.

Including labor history in the curriculum will demonstrate to our students the struggles the unions have made to achieve these rights, which included being jailed, losing their jobs, and in many cases their lives. Without including labor history in our curriculum, students do not learn a big part of American history: how our country has grown and works. Teaching labor history will give our students of all ages and grade levels knowledge needed to think and reason for themselves about their own lives and what they want to achieve in the future.

When entering the job market, students should have the information needed to decide whether or not to join a union. It is important for students to understand the hard work and sacrifices those in the labor movement have made to better the lives of all workers, union and non-union.

Therefore, I urge you to support HB 5713: "An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Labor History in the Connecticut Public School Curriculum."

Thank you.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF MOTHER JONES?

Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, 1830-1930, was born in Cork, Ireland. After emigrating from Ireland, Mother Jones worked as a teacher and dressmaker. She lost her husband and four children in the yellow fever epidemic of 1867 and then lost her dressmaking business in the famous Chicago fire of 1871. She committed herself to labor activism and to fighting worker oppression, becoming a fearless leader of strikes, boycotts, unionization drives, and public rallies. A dynamic public speaker, Mother Jones became a symbol of labor's call for rights to decent wages and living conditions. She tirelessly traveled the country, championing legislation to ban child labor and helping to organize miners, garment workers, and streetcar workers. Jones was a founder of the Social Democratic party (1898) and the Industrial Workers of the World (1905). In 1913, she was convicted of conspiracy to commit murder; authorities blamed her for contributing to violence that occurred during coal miner organizing drives in Virginia. Her sentence was commuted in 1914, and she continued her activism, which lasted over half a century. Jones was 101 when she died in 1930. She authored two labor books, *The New Right* and *Letters of Love and Labor*, 1900-1901. She also wrote an autobiography, first published in 1925.



"If policymakers understood the discrepancy between tests and subject matter, they'd be less likely to treat scores as precise measures of teaching quality or student achievement."

Diana Senechal
American Educator, Winter 2012-13

NFT PUBLICATIONS

Most months the NFT publishes one *Focus* and one *Vanguard*. In the beginning, *The Vanguard* was the only publication, but the *Focus* was added, which was intended to be a little more "newsy" and less opinionated. That distinction has largely disappeared over the years, and the two publications are now similar.

Please take the time to read each edition so you are well informed on issues that impact you, your profession, and your family. Your letters to the NFT are always welcome. Letters to the editor should be directed to Don Kehoe at donaldkehoe@sbcglobal.net or in care of Tracey School.

AFT APPLAUDS OBAMA'S PROPOSALS ON GUN VIOLENCE

The tragic events of Newtown must serve as a clarion call for immediate action to keep our communities safe from gun violence and ensure schools are the safe sanctuaries our children need to learn and grow, AFT president Randi Weingarten says. Weingarten, who was at the White House Jan. 16 for the Obama administration's announcement on proposals to reduce gun violence and create safe schools and communities, applauded President Obama and Vice President Biden for outlining a series of commonsense, balanced proposals that will make our nation safer. "Schools across our country are in desperate need of resources to create safe, secure and nurturing learning environments, and we are glad the president has recognized that need," Weingarten says.

K-12 EDUCATORS CAN STILL DEDUCT UP TO \$150 FOR SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The *American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012*, which pulled the nation back from the brink of the "fiscal cliff," contains a provision of note to K-12 educators: the educator expense deduction.

Elementary and secondary-school educators can deduct up to \$250 for school books, supplies, computer equipment or other materials purchased with their own money. This deduction is available to K-12 teachers, aides, counselors, instructors, and principals.

For more information go to <http://www.gov/taxtopics/tc458/html>. Full text of *American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012*: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hr8eas/pdf/BILLS-112hr8eas.pdf>.

AFT CONNECTICUT SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

The 2013 AFT Connecticut Scholarship applications are now available on its Website aftct.org. Go to the benefits section and click on scholarships.

LOOKING BACK ON EDUCATION NEWS IN NORWALK

Jan. 3, 1963—Naramake School students finally enter their new school after spending the fall at Norwalk High School and Fitch School. **Jan. 18, 1963**—The Norwalk Common Council approves preliminary plans for two elementary schools, the largest to be built in the city at 600-pupil capacity each. Wolfpit School off Starlight Drive and Silvermine School off Perry Avenue are estimated to cost a combined \$1.7 million with the former at \$938,000 according to Lyons & Mather Architects of Bridgeport and the latter at \$855,000, according to Fletcher Thompson Architects, also of Bridgeport. Superintendent **Harry A. Becker**, Ph.D., urges approval because of the burgeoning youth population of the two areas. **Jan. 5, 1987**—**Ralph E. Sloan**, Ph.D., says the proposed state school aid formula falls short of meeting the needs of cities like Norwalk. **Jan. 6, 1987**—**Ralph Sloan** isn't terribly excited by a new state proposal for integrated schools. The City of Norwalk and its school system have been integrated for several years." **Jan. 7, 1988**—**Attorney Lawrence F. Cafero, Jr.**, is elected chairman of the Norwalk school board for which his father has worked as a middle school principal for 30 years. **Jan. 19, 1988**—**Marguerite Fuller**, the first black certified teacher in the Norwalk schools, now an administrator in the Bridgeport system, tells another Dr. King Memorial program at Nathan Hale Middle School that parents must fight to make sure their children have the same opportunities as their peers. **Jan. 20, 1988**—Norwalk Finance Director **Jack Miller** cuts the school budget by \$1.7 million to \$57 million, nine percent above the current budget but still disappointing to school board members and staff. "When my daughter starts kindergarten in 1991, she won't have the same opportunities I had when I started kindergarten at Fox Run School in 1961," says Chairman **Lawrence F. Cafero, Jr.**

Frank Fay, "The Way We Were"
The Hour

LOCAL AND TIMELY

NFEP Pension Buy-Back Deadline

The pension buy-back deadline for NFEP members who so qualify has been extended to **Friday, February 15**. This is a one-time opportunity to buy back pension time that will give members higher pensions at the time of retirement and increased COLA values for the rest of the member's life. Do not give away money that you can have access to.

Reminder

At no time should you be treated by students, administrators, parents, or guardians with anything less than respect, courtesy, and as a professional. There is no excuse for anything less. If this occurs, give one statement saying if the untoward behavior is repeated, you will leave the meeting. If it does, then leave.

CORRECTION

In the January *Focus*, reference was made in two articles to the location of the Esposito's family's grocery store as being on North Taylor Avenue. The correct location was West Cedar Street.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE RECOMMENDS CAPITAL BUDGET TOTAL

Norwalk Director of Finance Thomas S. Hamilton is recommending \$19.6 million in capital spending for the fiscal year starting July 2013.

On Feb. 1, after reviewing city and school spending request totaling \$35.3 million, Hamilton released his recommended 2013-14 capital budget.

For the Board of Education, he has recommended \$2.7 million. That includes \$500,000 for district technology, \$100,000 for enhancements to school security, and \$2.1 million to begin purchasing curriculum materials to comply with Common Core State Standards.

MISSOURI COURT STRENGTHENS BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR UNIONS

The Missouri Supreme Court has ruled that public education employers, such as school boards, are required to meet with unions and bargain in good faith with the intention of reaching an agreement. The case represents a significant turning point in a state where a general right to collective bargaining under the state constitution had opened the door to employers to agree to one thing, and then do another.

That was the case with the Construction Careers Center Charter School in St. Louis and the teachers there who were represented by AFT Local 420. After being elected as bargaining agent in 2008, the union met with the school board over the course of a year, only to have one agreement after another rejected by the board behind closed doors. After the board came to a decision on salaries that it did not disclose but subsequently tried to impose, the union sued, charging that the board had both violated sunshine laws and failed to bargain in good faith, in violation of the employees' rights in the state constitution.

The employer argued that the right of public employees to bargain collectively did not require an employer to bargain in good faith, but only to meet and confer with the union. The trial court agreed with that view in a summary judgment. The union appealed and, in a 5-1 decision delivered on Nov. 21, the state Supreme Court decided in favor of the union, throwing out the lower court ruling.

"Unlike many states, Missouri does not have a statutorily imposed duty to bargain collectively in good faith," explains David Strom, AFT general counsel. Instead, what exists is a general constitutional right for employees "to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing." That language was added to the Missouri Constitution in 1945, but there has been very little case law under it until the last five years.

In coming to its decision, the Missouri justices thoroughly reviewed case law and legislation across the nation to clarify what it meant to "bargain collectively" at the time when the constitutional amendment was adopted in Missouri.

"'Collective bargaining,' as a technical term, always has been construed to include a duty to negotiate in good faith— even when it was not required explicitly by statute," the justices wrote. They also noted that the language of the constitution is not intended to lead to "unjust or unreasonable results."

The court rejected the employer's argument that all it had to do was meet and confer with the union because "otherwise public employers could act with the intent to thwart collective bargaining so as never to reach an agreement, frustrating the very purpose of bargaining and invalidating the right."

"We're ecstatic that this ruling has come," says Mary Armstrong, president of AFT St. Louis and an AFT vice president. "This opens the door for us to go back and organize the teachers, who now will know that the board has to bargain with them. It's also a big victory for us to organize in the entire St. Louis metropolitan area."

On the same day the court decided the AFT case, it also released a similar decision extending the right to good-faith bargaining to police officers. Together, the cases upend 55 years of labor case law in Missouri.

EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN

Four years ago, President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which was an important first step in the long fight for pay equity and fairness. On the anniversary of the signing, Ledbetter is asking people to urge Congress to take the next step and pass the recently reintroduced Paycheck Fairness Act, which would close some of the loopholes in the Equal Pay Act of 1963 that have made it less effective.

AFT APPLAUDS OBAMA'S IMMIGRATION REFORM PLAN

The time for immigration reform is long overdue, and the AFT applauds President Obama for proposing on Jan. 29 a commonsense, compassionate, comprehensive immigration reform plan that provides a pathway to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants who currently reside in the United States, AFT president Randi Weingarten says. "The president's blueprint for reform and the U.S. Senate bipartisan framework show an understanding that our nation has always been enriched by immigrants and strengthened by the diversity they bring," she says. "His proposal strengthens our borders, ensures immigrant children can go to school without fear, keeps families together, and promotes safe and secure jobs for all workers."

CTU CALLS FOR ACTION AFTER ANOTHER STUDENT KILLING

The shooting death of Chicago student Hadiya Pendleton, who was killed a little more than a week after participating in President Obama's second inauguration as part of her school band, has caused even more pain for a city whose students, teachers, and community are already dealing with devastating levels of violence. "We have much pain in our hearts, but the most sorrow comes in the fact that, unless something is done right now by all of us who have some influence in these young lives, this is pain that we are sure to feel again," Chicago Teachers Union president and AFT vice president Karen Lewis said in a long and moving statement.

NEW COLLEGE CREDIT COURSE OFFERINGS

MODES OF LEARNING: METHODS FOR THE CLASSROOM: Open Corridor Schools, Provider; Stuart Schwartzman, Instructor; 3 graduate credits (through Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts); Feb. 9, 10, 16, 17, 18; 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m./1-4:30 p.m.; Locations in Connecticut and New York; \$795 tuition (\$195 deposit required with registration)

CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM: Open Corridor Schools, Provider; Stuart Schwartzman, Instructor; 3 graduate credits (through Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts); Feb. 23, 24, Mar. 2, 3, 9; 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m./1-4:30 p.m.; Locations in Connecticut and New York; \$795 tuition (\$195 deposit required with registration)

TOPICS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS: AMERICAN CULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM: Open Corridor Schools, Provider; Stuart Schwartzman, Instructor; 3 graduate credits (through Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts); Mar. 16, 17, 23, 24, 30; 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m./1-4:30 p.m.; Locations in Connecticut and New York; \$795 tuition (\$195 deposit required with registration)

Register for above by phone toll free (855-319-7389) or fax (508-799-7968) or mail check with registration form to Open Corridor at address found on registration form (Master Card/Visa/Discover cards accepted). Tuition fees are fully refundable through the opening day of the course if registration is withdrawn.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR CLASSROOM OBSERVING OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Beginning in 1926, Black History Week was established during the second week of February, which coincided with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, the week was expanded to Black History Month.

According to U.S. Census data, more than 42 million African-Americans live in the United States today—slightly more than 13 percent of the total U.S. population. By 2050, it is projected that the U.S. African-American population will grow to more than 65 million.

The AFT has identified a variety of resources to help educators celebrate Black History Month in their classrooms. This site highlights key historical events, influential figures, and the continuing contributions African-Americans are making to our nation and the world. For instance, did you know that African-Americans were largely responsible for developing our railway system? More than 40 different patents were awarded to African-Americans for inventions of machinery and parts vital to the function of trains, tracks, and passenger safety.

This Web site features a special focus on the landmark desegregation case *Brown v. Board of Education*, including profiles of its leaders, key events, recommended readings for grades K-12, and links to primary documents and lesson plans.

Go the aft.com and find links to the list of topics under "Black History Month."

Celebrate Black History Month

Let me give you a word on the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all absorbing, and for the time being putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roars of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong, which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.

--Frederick Douglass
Letter to an abolitionist associate, 1849

TAX PREPARATION TIP

KAHAN, STEIGER & COMPANY, P.C., certified public accountants and participants in the NFT/NFEP discount program, again for 2013 is offering NFT/NFEP/NFR members substantial discounts for their tax preparation and other accounting services:

1. Up to one hour free of professional consultation per year to be applied toward services billed by Kahan, Steiger & Company, P.C.
2. A 15% discount on standard billing rates for services actually rendered.

Services are to be engaged on an individual basis and such services *must result in some billable amount* to each individual. The one free hour of consultation is *not* to be used by an individual to obtain information regarding his or her tax concerns and then go elsewhere, or to review a tax return prepared by someone other than a Kahan Steiger employee.

All members interested in these accounting and tax services should contact [Dahl Bowser](#) directly to coordinate such services.

Kahan, Steiger & Company, P.C.
1100 Summer Street
P.O. Box 3227
Stamford, Connecticut 06095-0227
(203) 327-5717 FAX (203) 967-9483

2013 ROBERT G. PORTER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Applications for the 2013 Robert G. Porter Scholars Program are available online. NFT members and their children are eligible to participate in the program, which awards four \$8,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors and \$1,000 grants to AFT members who are continuing their education.

To apply: (1) Download the application from the AFT Web site at <http://go.aft.org/scholarships> or (2) E-mail an application to porterscholars@aft.org.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 1, 2013.

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INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

A new report from the American Society of Civil Engineers warns that unless the United States invests an additional \$1.57 billion per year in infrastructure—things like drinking water and waste water, electricity, airports, seaports and waterways, and surface transportation—between now and 2020, the nation's gross national product will drop significantly, along with trade, disposable income, consumer spending and jobs.

LETTERS

December 21, 2012

Dear Members of the NFT/NFEP/NFR,

Sometimes saying thank you doesn't reflect all of the kindness you demonstrate year after year. But all I can say is thank you for your generous contributions regarding the holiday toy drive.

I can assure you that those families who receive toys for their children are truly thankful, and so appreciative of our endeavor. It is all too good we do this, because it reinforces the love and compassion people have for one another.

I wish all of you the very best this holiday season, and again, can never thank you enough.

Fraternally,
Kevin M. Byxbee
Secretary/Treasurer
Fairfield County Labor Council

January 18, 2013

Hi, Bruce,

Thank you so much for your time with my school-related issues. You'll never know how much your guidance and support has meant to me through this painful situation.

All the best,

Name withheld by request



CUT YOUR LOSSES

NOW IS YOUR TIME TO START FRESH

+ Credit and Budget Counseling

Certified credit counselors are available 24 hours a day.

+ for more information about this and other savings:

aft.org/members

AFT + is your advocate. For information on all AFT + programs, call 800-238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail aftplus@aft.org. The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800-238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org; or visit www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure.