

The Rochester Teacher

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Representing teachers • retirees • school instructors • substitute teachers • home/hospital teachers

Vol. 31, No. 9 November 2006



Winner of NYSUT Journalism Awards and the Ted Bleecker Award as "BEST OF THE BEST"

FTLC Teachers Speak at National Conference



by Raina Moore and Amy Wells

We, **Raina Moore** and **Amy Wells**, two first year teachers from Dr. Freddie Thomas High School, were invited to speak about our vision for the future of schools and teachers at a national conference for education in Chicago, IL. This conference was sponsored by the National Evaluation Services and was attended by various leaders in the field of education including Rochester Teacher's Association's own **Dr. Adam Urbanski**. Others in attendance were superintendents of public and charter schools, one of the founders of KIPP Academy, chairs of departments of education from universities such as Harvard and Johns Hopkins, NES representatives and others in the field of education.

Our presentation, entitled "Teachers and Schools of the Future," was focused on our own school's unique educational design, our experience as second career teachers and the benefits of the Urban Teachers for Tomorrow Program in which we are currently participating. Our expectations as second career teachers were surpassed because of the way our school is set up for the success of both teachers and students. Dr. Freddie Thomas High School is designed in such a way as to provide teachers with various resources such as co-teaching models and administrative support, which have increased student academic achievement and performance.

In our presentation we also shared about our participation in the Urban Teachers for Tomorrow Program which is a joint venture between Roberts Wesleyan College and the Rochester City School District, partnering with the Rochester's Teachers Association and the New York State Education Department. This program is an alternate, accelerated pathway to obtaining teaching certification and a Masters of Education degree. The program is aimed at attracting a diverse population of professionals. We underscored the importance of programs like this which draw on professionals who bring real world experience into the classroom that can ignite interest in that particular content area.

Listening to speakers during this conference, we as teachers, were able to reflect on what we can do collectively to benefit the education for our children today and tomorrow. Taking part in this conference, all parties involved could share their perspectives, discuss best practices and come together to better the educational process. Coming back into the classroom, we bring with us a clearer vision of what it means to be an educator, not only locally in the Rochester City School District but also nationally. We believe we are part of a school and a district that are leading the way in the future of education.

NYSUT/NEA Merger Benefits Members

This past May, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the New York State National Teachers Association (NEA) voted to merge. The historical votes occurred at their respective delegate meetings. The merger of the two unions creates one teachers union of 575,000 members. This merger has benefits for all RTA members in many ways.

Teachers have access to the NEA website and have available to them many opportunities for themselves and for their students. Members can now access grants, professional development, online educational toolkits, logos, and poster art among many other resources that are available through NEA. Logging in as a member to receive member only information is as easy as entering your email address and a password. Once registered, members have at their fingertips lesson ideas, classroom management suggestions and articles to inform teachers about their teaching practice. To access this information and to learn more about our new affiliation with NEA, go to www.nea.org.

NYSUT TEACHER CERTIFICATION VIDEO CONFERENCE WORKSHOP December 12, 2006

Please contact the regional office if you have questions.

**Workshop A
Information on Permanent Certification - for teachers holding provisional certification**
This session is targeted at teachers certified under the old requirements and are looking for information on the process of obtaining permanent certification.

**Workshop B
Information on Initial & Professional Certification - The New Requirements for Teachers**

This session will provide information on the new certification requirements in place since February 2004. Anyone applying for a certificate in a new subject area after this date will be held to these requirements. (It is important to note that this session may be helpful for teachers who may be certified under the old requirements but may be applying for an additional certificate in a new subject area as a result of completing a master's degree program. The additional certificate in the new subject area would be under these requirements even though you may hold other certificates under the old requirements.)

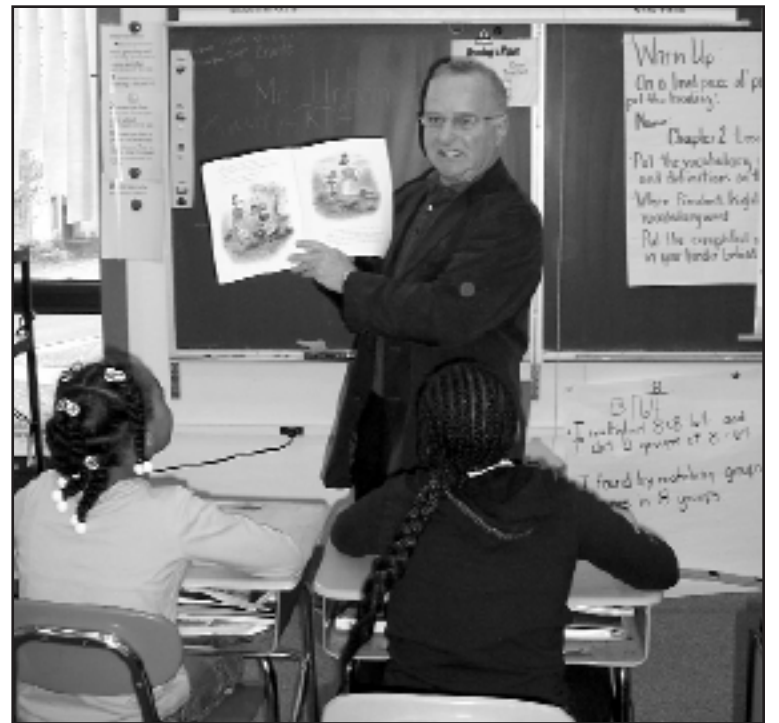
Spitzer Thanks Labor and the RTA



The new Governor thanks RTA's VOTE/COPE Co-Chair John Pavone

Governor-Elect **Elliot Spitzer** came to Western New York, one week after the election, to thank Rochester labor leaders for the outstanding efforts and support in the recent elections. Spitzer met with Rochester area union leaders, including RTA President **Adam Urbanski**, at the Monroe County Democratic Headquarters on Tuesday, November 14.

Celebrity Reader at NRCS



As part of his schedule of school visits and guest-teaching, RTA president **Adam Urbanski** was a "Celebrity Reader" at **Jennifer Loria's** 5th Grade class at the Nathaniel Rochester Community School (NRCS). Ms. Loria is also an RTA Faculty Representative for her school.

Crime Victims Assistance Committee November 30 • 4-6 p.m. RTA office

The committee invites you to attend to discuss:

- How can RTA help our teachers who have been hurt?
- How can we make our schools safer?
- What speakers should we invite this year?

Call **Greta Davis**, CVAC Chair, 232 5762 with any questions.

Call the RTA office 546 2681 to let us know you are coming.

voge
COPE

**Ho! Ho! Ho!
Hear Ye! Hear Ye!**

Save this date:

Friday, December 8, 2006

RTA and VOTE/COPE

**will sponsor a Holiday Extravaganza for ALL
RTA members at the
Martini Bar at SOHO East**



by Adam Urbanski



A Different Kind of Superintendent's Conference Day

Remember those awful, irrelevant and often frustrating mass meetings for "professional development" planned by the District on Superintendent's Conference Days? Remember how you wished that they either ask you what you need and want - or leave you alone to just catch up on the load of work in your own classroom?

Believe it or not, that's exactly what we have agreed upon with the District for the March 23, 2007 Superintendent's Conference Day. The entire morning will be dedicated to you for working in your own classroom on teaching-related "catch-up" that you determine you need. And in the afternoon, you'll participate in a professional development activity at your own school. What you'll do will be determined by you, through your representatives on your School-based Planning Team, and affirmed by the SBP team's other constituents.

Your union will dedicate funds to help, too. Each school will receive a pro-rated sum of money for the afternoon activity. This money could be used to purchase supplies, pay for food and refreshments, stipends for speakers or presenters, or any other related costs. This will be in lieu of the annual educational conference that the RTA sponsored in prior years.

We believe that the best professional development is the kind that is inseparable from the day-to-day work of teachers. That is why we are launching this new and de-centralized collaborative approach. We also believe that you know best what your professional development needs are and therefore you should participate in making those decisions and choices.

Some schools may decide to have combined activities - and that's OK, as long as their School-based Planning Teams concur. In such instances, the schools would be able to pool their allotted funds. The possibilities are broad - but so also is the collective wisdom of teachers.

Please give some thought to this and let your representatives on the SBP team know your ideas and your suggestions. The RTA/RCSA Joint Committee on Professional Development is ready to assist any school that may not be able to come to a decision about the March 23, 2007 activities. But I am confident that teachers themselves have always known best what would be the good use of their time. Now you'll have the chance to act on it.

OPEN ENROLLMENT REMINDER

The open enrollment period for active members is November. You have the opportunity to switch health insurance only during this time period.

It is also the time to sign up for the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) that allows pre-tax dollars to cover co-pays, dental bills, child care, glasses, etc.

Changes and enrollment are due by November 30. This must be accomplished by using the online enrollment system through e-Benefits. There is a training guide to demonstrate how to use the e-Benefits system. Help can be obtained by calling the Benefits help desk at: 262 8206.



VOLUNTARY TRANSFERS

December and January are the months during which the voluntary transfer forms appear in Administrative Bulletins and are also available at the RTA Office. To date there has been no discussion between the District and RTA as to which subject area and/or schools will be excluded for school year 2007-2008. It is understood that the schools and positions taken out from participation in the transfer procedures this year will not be on the list again this year. Applications for transfer should be due on Friday, January 26, 2007.

ATTENTION FIRST YEAR HIRES

First year employees should have received at their home address a letter concerning their placement on the salary schedule. New teachers who have not received this letter should contact the RTA Office and request the letter.

OBSERVATIONS

By now probationary teachers should have had one formal observation. Teachers who are rated less than Meets Professional Standards are encouraged to call the RTA Office to discuss next steps. Also teachers who have not had an observation should call.

BUILDING COMMITTEE & SBPT

If there is any difficulty in the formation of either a building committee or School-based Planning Team, RTA representatives may request in writing the assignment of the RTA consultants for these two committees. These requests should be addressed to President Adam Urbanski.

SABBATICALS

Applications for sabbaticals are due on Friday, January 26, 2007. Sabbaticals are available to teachers who are in at least their sixth year of employment with the District, make application and are approved by the Joint Committee receive 60% of their salary. Interested teachers should refer to the Administrative Bulletin for the application.



MONDAY TO THURSDAY, 4 TO 7 PM
6-8:30 PM WXXI-TV

The Rochester Teacher

Rochester Teachers Association NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Official publication of the Rochester Teachers Association Affiliated with the New York State United Teachers, the American Federation of Teachers (Local 616), AFL-CIO, and the Greater Rochester Labor Council.

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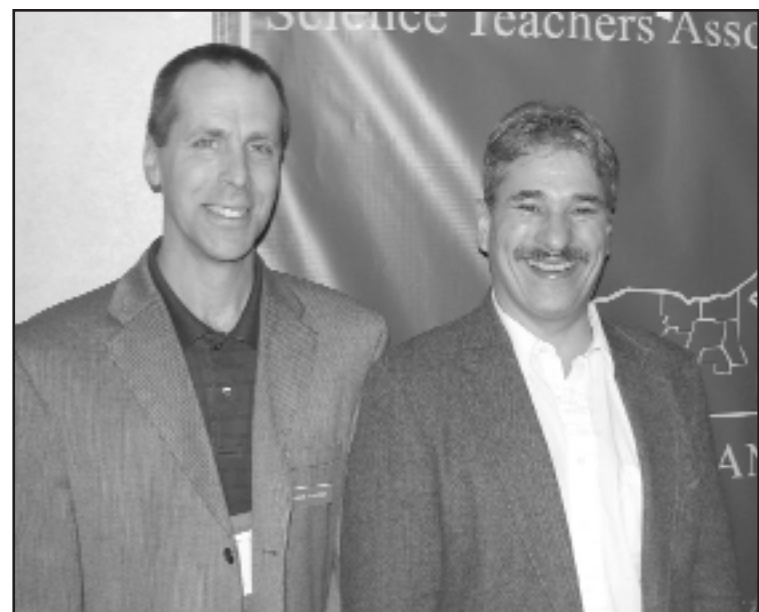
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(Top) Students at #42 School getting extra help on the laptops from Glenn Vanderwater and Todd Bissell.

(Bottom) Steve Polo and Joe Zuniga (both of Wilson Academy) at the STANYS (Science Teachers Association of NYS) held in Ellenville, NY from Nov. 5 - 7. (Photos by Alex Johnson)



Post Election Dreams for the New Budget Year....



You want *how much* extra money?!? I'm just a lame duck, ask "Spitzer Claus" and maybe he'll deliver more for you in the new year!

RCSA EMPLOYEE BENEFITS WEBSITE NAMED "ENWISEN"

[HTTP://ERC.ENWISE.COM](http://erc.enwise.com)

There are many forms and loads of information available. You need to know your employee ID #, the company code is RCSA; and the password = last four digits of your social security number.

CONTRACT AND BUILDING ISSUES



Section 28 of the collective bargaining agreement discusses various working conditions that teachers are entitled to have. One of these rights is to have a safe and healthful environment in which to teach. If the classroom is too cold or too hot, if the air quality and lighting is poor, if the building is not secure, then the work environment is not up to standards. If the facilities are unhealthy for teachers, then they would be unsafe for children also.

What steps can teachers take if they believe that their environment is not safe and healthful? The first thing that teachers can do is talk to their school custodian about the issue and try to resolve the problem. If the issue is irresolvable at this level, the next step should be to bring the concern(s) to the Faculty Representatives or the Building Committee. The Building Committee can negotiate solutions to various problems: for example, developing a building cleaning schedule or developing a reporting protocol to resolve issues that arise in buildings.

Teachers can also take steps in their own classrooms to ensure that their environment is safe and healthful. Some of the things that teachers can do are:

- Store food in airtight containers to minimize pests.
- Keep areas free of clutter, i.e. stacks of paper, books piled on the floor.
- Keep items in plastic containers instead of cardboard boxes that can break down.
- Keep Univents (air return vents under windows) free of books or other items that block the flow of fresh air.
- If classrooms are carpeted, request that they are vacuumed regularly.
- Do not use air fresheners or cleansers from home that may trigger student or adult sensitivities.
- Minimize plants in classrooms as they may grow mold and trigger allergies.
- Wash hands frequently to prevent the spread of germs.

If there are major health concerns or questions that members have, they may contact me at the RTA office at 546-2681.

MONEY MATTERS



by John
Pavone,
Treasurer

Q. I get confused about who is an approved company when it comes to the Tax Shelter Annuity Program. Can we get a list of the approved vendors?

A. Yes. The following companies are eligible to participate in the Rochester City School District Tax Shelter Annuity Program:

The Legend Group
585-272-8470

CitiStreet
585-475-1310

AXA Equitable Life Assurance
585-475-8463

L&M Associates
716-626-5200

A M & Risk Management, Inc.
585-248-0050

Rogers Financial Group, LLC
585-292-9880

Preferred Financial Group
585-427-2420

Bancroft & Associates
585-658-4330

Barberi-Defreze Financial
585-225-9260

Capital Management Group
1-800-651-7240

ING
716-626-1772

Northwestern Mutual
585-586-6300

Web Site for Lessons on Films

An article appeared in Education Week about a web site that offers lessons drawn from movies. There is an annual fee of \$11.99. This membership enables a teacher to access information (lesson plans, character development in history, science, health, ethics, and other subject) about 270 movies. The RTA does not endorse this site, however, it may be of use to some teachers.
www.teachwithmovies.org.

**Experience a
World of
Difference
in teaching.**

**Join the
literacy volunteers
and get reimbursed.**

**Call LVA:
585-473-3030 or
www.literacyvolunteers.org for further
information.**

Chancery Questions and Answers

On Wednesday, November 1, a meeting was held with the District to 'catch up' on the implementation of Chancery. **Martha Keating, Margaret Sergent, Jon Hickey and Ken Schultz** had gathered questions, concerns, and comments from teachers. **C. Michael Robinson, Lori Whalen, and Chris Volkmar** who have worked on the District implementation of Chancery responded to our questions.

1. What is new? Teachers may now change, correct, add comments, etc. to attendance at any time until the end of the school year. But, the teacher must "Submit" attendance each day. Once attendance has been submitted, a teacher may make subsequent changes. If attendance was not submitted on the correct day, a teacher MUST contact the school's Attendance Clerk to have the information submitted. [This should help alleviate concerns about the time frame requirements. While teachers will have to submit attendance during the class period (secondary) or before 11 am (elementary), mistakes made during the day can now be fixed at a later time/date. Attendance must be submitted by the end of the teacher day.]

2. What should I do if others know my password? Teachers should not give passwords to ANYONE, including their Para or TA. A new password can be obtained by calling the District's Help Desk at 262-8151.

3. Are the attendance letters now the responsibility of teachers? It is required by the RCSD Attendance Policy that a teacher must notify a parent in some fashion that their child has been absent more than 3 classes. Building committees and/or SBPT may discuss how to use Chancery to generate 3-Day absence letters.

4. When can we use Chancery at home? Access at home should be available by the time of the 2nd marking period.

5. Is it mandated by the District that copies of teacher grades (electronic or paper) be submitted to the teacher's supervisor? It was only done for the first marking period this year. It is not mandated by RCSD that a copy of grades be turned in, as administrators have the ability to view all grades completed by teachers.

6. a. Does a Principal have the authority to change a grade submitted by a teacher? Administrators cannot change grades.

b. Can an administrator direct a teacher to change a grade? An administrator could order a teacher to change a grade, but that may be a grievable action.

7. Can teachers have access to all students' information in their building? A Principal can give individual teachers who need-to-know or who have reason to have access (i.e. social workers, psychologists, etc.) This is done by giving those teachers "School View" access.

8. Teachers cannot see all of the comments in the comments window, as it is too small, can this be fixed? The District suggested that we contact one of the implementation team members to discuss adding a scroll bar.

9. In some cases, block periods are set up as two periods, teachers have to submit attendance twice, can this be changed so teachers take attendance only for the block?

Yes. Have the registrar contact the Chancery implementation team to help them change this.

10. In some cases there are multiple grade levels in a class and they are listed on a separate list, can this be changed to have all those on one class list? Yes.

11. When can we start using Gradebook? Gradebook will NOT be available this year, due to problems with the software. Chancery may offer a new grading application in the future.

12. Can the value of an F be changed? (Currently it is not lower than 50%.) A SBPT can decide to change the value of an F but it must be done prior to the start of the school year. SBPT should notify the Chief in charge of their school so that he/she may address the SBPT to give the pros and cons. If the SBPT decides to change value they will notify C. Michael Robinson and he will make the change in Chancery.

Memoriam for Kathy Murphy



During the final days of school last June, when children were dwelling on Seabreeze and teachers were dreaming of summer vacation, School 42 paused to bid a tearful goodbye to librarian Kathy Murphy.

Mrs. Murphy, 52, died of a heart attack on June 14. Her death left a void among administrators, teachers, staff and students, who learned to cope with the loss of a mentor, advocate and friend.

"I'll remember her by her warm, sincere demeanor with all children," said Rick DeRose, principal at Abelard Reynolds Elementary. "I don't think she ever, ever, ever had a bad word to say about a child. She got along with all our students. And our staff respected her tremendously."

Mrs. Murphy had joined the staff in 2003, sharing her passion for books and reading with students in the Charlotte neighborhood school. With her daily work in the library, Mrs. Murphy read regularly to primary students, taught research skills, prepared students for citywide storytelling competitions and formed a literacy team of intermediate students. They visited primary classrooms to share their love of reading and to provide positive behavior and leadership skills.

Mrs. Murphy's presence modeled what is best among teachers - she was patient yet firm. "I don't think I ever heard her raise her voice," DeRose remarked.

Teachers and staff had learned on a Tuesday morning that Murphy had endured a heart attack but was recovering in the hospital. Students and teachers fashioned get-well cards with cheering messages, made posters and wrote letters.

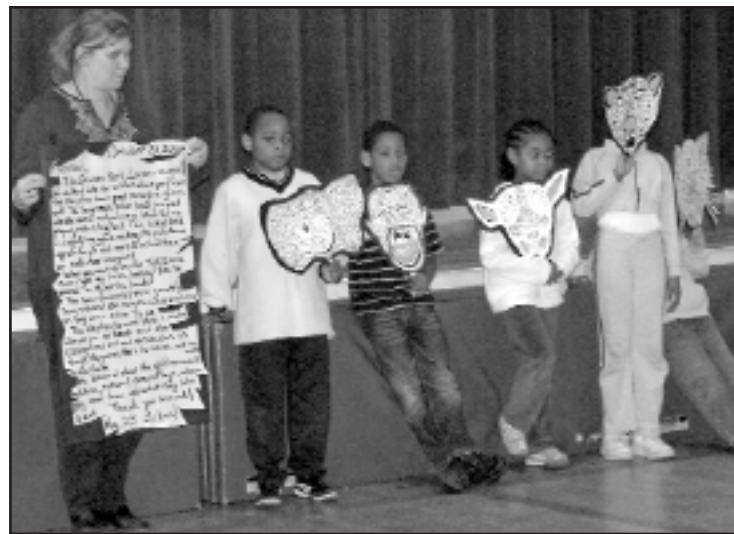
The following day, the uplift was shattered. Teachers and staff were summoned to the library 20 minutes before school began while the principal broke the news. Students soon read the grief in the adults' faces and began asking questions. "Why is everybody upset? Why are teachers crying?"

Teachers passed the word to their students and began counseling them. After many tears and fond remembrances, students began to tell how they would remember Mrs. Murphy and wrote letters to her immediate family - husband Derek ("Rick"), son Derek Jr. and daughter Kaitlyn.

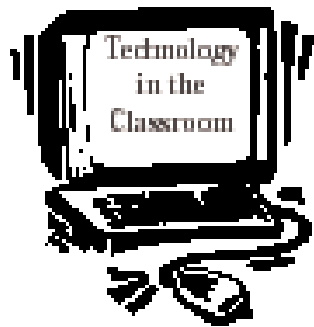
Murphy's colleagues in the Rochester City School District rallied too. Former School 42 librarian Robin Valoris and Linda Cruttenden, descended on School 42 and went to work, logging and reshelving books, finishing administrative duties, and preparing the library for summer recess.

Mrs. Murphy will be succeeded by Rita Bannister, who moves over from a part-time position at School 50.

Memoriam for Linda Jacobs



Linda Jacobs was a primary teacher at School #25 for the last 11 years. She was interested in reaching each and every child as a whole and not just academic based. Her caring nature and thoughts of kindness reflected among everyone she came in contact with. Her students, colleagues and parents were all touched in different ways by Linda. Her willingness to help out and guide students in a positive direction was heart felt and beneficial to all. She definitely was a wonderful person and her kindness and caring ways will continue to be evident at School #25 and with everyone she touched.



by Bill Gerber

Dealing with Email Problems

Of all the things that can be done with a personal computer, email is probably the biggest application for the average PC user. Unfortunately, it is a sad but undeniable fact that email is no longer as simple to use as it once was. Between the spammers and the malware writers, the life of the email user has been greatly complicated. There is even talk that email as we know it is doomed. The writers of malware such as viruses and worms have made email the primary choice for spreading their malicious work. Be that as it may, there are steps that all users of email can and should take to defend their computers against this onslaught.

“Phishing”- an Internet scam

A growing Internet scam that has caught many people has been given the name “phishing”. This type of scam uses phony emails to fool people into revealing important personal information such as credit card numbers, account usernames and passwords, social security numbers, etc.

“Phishing” is a form of identity theft that used to be done over the telephone. Now, however, the crooks have gone high-tech and are using the Internet for their con games. Most commonly this consists of sending out e-mails purporting to be from a legitimate source such as a financial institution. Under some false pretense, such as the claim that your account needs verifying, an email will ask that you go to a Web site by clicking on a link in the email. When you go to the Web site, you are asked to “update” or “confirm” personal information such as account numbers and passwords. The Web sites may look just like a legitimate page but they are bogus sites designed to steal from your accounts. The link in the email may read like it leads to an authentic site but actually takes you to a fake page.

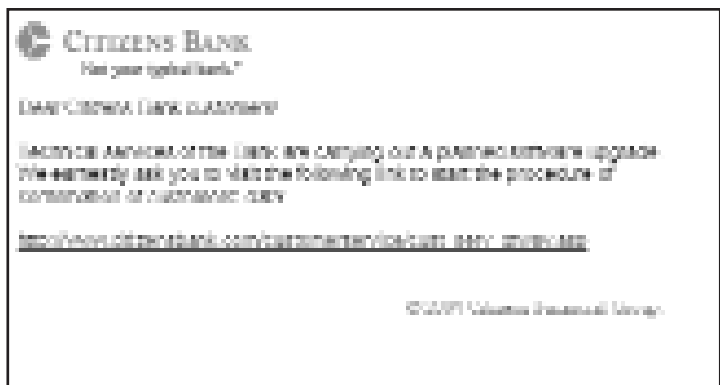
Recently, banks have been a favorite target of “phishing”. An example of a scam email that I recently received is shown below.



Note the psychological tricks known as social engineering in the email. The very problem that we are concerned with- identity theft- is brazenly used as a way to induce you to allow identity theft. It plays on your fears. Moreover, the email looks like a real Citicorp email. Also, note that although the link in the email contains the name “Citibank”, it has nothing to do with Citibank. In fact, the link that appears in the text of the message is likely to have little relation to the actual link contained in the underlying HTML code. To see the real link in an email message, right-click on the text and choose “Properties” from the context menu. To see an example of a faked link, try this one that seems to be from a familiar company (but isn't): <http://www.microsoft.com>.

Another trick that is used is to take you to a page that uses JavaScript to generate a pop-up form and then redirect you to the actual bank site. What then appears on your screen is a fake form on top of a legitimate page.

Here is another example of “phishing”:



ISPs, banks, etc. do not ask for passwords and the like to be entered by email. Be suspicious of any email message that asks for personal information. Don't ever follow a link in an email that asks you to update or verify sensitive information. If you want to contact a company, go to their Web site by using a link from your records or telephone them.

If you would like to test how good you are at recognizing “phishing” messages go to <http://www.sonicwall.com/phishing/> where examples of actual “phishing” are mixed with legitimate mail.

RETIRES CORNER

By Ted Modern

We survived Halloween and all the “mischievous ones”. Now we need to make ready for all the eating we will be “forced” to do in November and beyond.

Those that attended “High Society” at the Shaw Festival not only had beautiful “weather”, but the play was outstanding, as was the seating. Thank you **Beryl Conklin** for making the arrangements.

For those that think crossing the Border is uneventful, think again. When re-entering the USA the Shaw travelers were highly scrutinized. The Immigration Officer came aboard and requested all too not only have their photo ID out, but to hold it near their face. As he was proceeding from the rear of the coach to the front another Officer came aboard. He was very stern – faced. As he passed I noticed he had a small black box in his hand. A red light started to flash as he approached me. Right away I figured it was my “hip” setting it off (it always does when I go through security). He went on by, stopping a couple of seats behind me. The two Officers then proceeded to have an extended conversation with a “Relaxed Retiree” sitting there.

Eventually we were all told that we had to disembark and enter the Immigration building. The coach was taken to another location to be put through detectors. They also scanned us as we disembarked (most “Relaxed Retirees” were unaware of this) and continued their “conversation” with the “Relaxed Retiree” outside and in the building. Finally we were told they had detected radiation outside and inside the bus. This was at the time of the “dirty bombs” alert. The detectors were picking up radiation signals from the retiree.

The person had had some barium scans the previous week. We were told that at times it could be detected as long as a month later. If you will be traveling after tests of this type have the Doctor give you documentation.

RRTA's **Eldridge McClaney** presented her background and book *I GO BACK: Stories from a Southern Upbringing*. She grew up in the farming belt of Pigeon Creek, Alabama and relates stories from her growing years. Today she is a retired teacher, a professional storyteller and a toastmaster. Her stories bring back memories of growing up, family values and togetherness. We did not want her to stop. To order her book c o n t a c t www.brazonpress@yahoo.com or Brazon Press: P.O. Box 64653. Rochester, NY 14624. If you contact her directly, she would be happy to sign your copy.

Rosie Rich has a few copies available of her book *Beirut and Beyond*. The book is available by calling her at [585] 637-4956 or E-mail georich64@yahoo.com.

Reminders:
December 5 Holiday Party
December 7 RRTA meeting (10ish).

MEDIA REVIEW



MOCKINGBIRD

A Portrait of Harper Lee

by **Charles Shields**
 2006 Henry Holt
 285 pages

MOCKINGBIRD is an unauthorized biography of Harper Lee, author of *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*. Formerly a high school English teacher, Charles Shields has written several biographies for young adults. **MOCKINGBIRD**, however, is an adult book.

Shields was drawn by the mystery of Harper Lee, who at 80 years old is still living in the town of her birth, Monroeville, Alabama, model for the fictional Maycomb of Lee's first and only novel.

Therein lies the mystery of Harper Lee. How did she write this one and only novel and why did she never write another?

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD was published in 1960 and was an instant, spectacular success. It sold millions of copies. It was published in other languages. It was made into an Academy Award winning, box office smash movie. It made Harper Lee a rich woman.

At first Harper Lee gave interviews, visited college campuses, talked about her book and promised another. Then, she stopped responding to requests for interviews. After ten years passed, Lee's older sister told a friend that a burglar had broken into their home in Monroeville and stolen the script of the second novel. The author never again talked about a second novel. “Glimpses of Harper Lee during most the the 1970's and 80's were as infrequent as spotting a rare bird native to the South in New York's Central Park.”

Shield's describes how unauthorized his **MOCKINGBIRD** is. “...This book has been produced without Lee's help, although I have repeatedly solicited it. She has declined with vigor, even to the extent of refusing to respond to my attempts to check facts by mail.”

We must give Shields credit for doing voluminous research among secondary and even tertiary sources.

Shields explores the origins of **MOCKINGBIRD**'s leading characters: Atticus, Scout, Jem, and Dill. They are simply Harper Lee's father, Harper Lee herself, Harper Lee's older brother and Truman Capote. Yes, indeed, Truman Capote. Shields' gives us a possible explanation for the absence of a mother in *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*: Lee's own mother had a “nervous disorder.” She spent her days playing the piano and tending her nasturtiums. Harper Lee as a child was, by all accounts, ignored by her mother and cared for by a black maid.

The chapter on Lee's struggle to write the novel originally titled “ATTICUS” should be read by every teacher who has ever assigned this novel. (*TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* is taught in 79% of American high schools.) Lee moved to New York City, against her family's wishes, to concentrate on writing. However, she had to work to support herself for ten years and found little time to write. Then some New York friends gave her enough money to quit her job for a year. She produced a group of short pieces, which a very good editor helped her turn into a novel. It took two and a half years.

No one, especially Harper Lee, dreamed the book would be such a success. Just as it was going to print, Truman Capote, who was already an established author, asked her to help him with research on a book about a murder in Kansas. Lee did help, a great deal. Before Capote's *IN COLD BLOOD* was published, Harper Lee was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Capote never received that recognition and he never acknowledged Lee's contribution to *IN COLD BLOOD*. Also he never denied the small talk that he had written portions of *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*. Some of Shields' witnesses said that Lee had written half of Capote's book. Shields presents evidence that Lee is the sole author of *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*.

Shields concludes that Lee was simply overwhelmed by the celebrity brought to her by *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*. After all, how could one top that? He suggests that she was wounded by the treachery of her childhood friend, Truman, aka Dill.

Shields also covers the making of the movie. Gregory Peck made himself Atticus, but he, also, in the editing, enlarged the Atticus role and, consequently, reduced the parallel story of the children.

One is left to wonder, not why no novel followed *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*, but why we love this one so much. There might be an answer in a speech which Harper Lee made to the freshman class of West Point in 1965, before she stopped talking.

“We like to have our comforts and familiars about us, and tend to push away that which is different and worrisome. That is what happened to Boo Radley and to Tom Robinson. They were not set apart by evil men, or evil women, or evil thoughts. They were set apart by an evil past, which good people in the present were ill equipped to change. The irony is, if we divide ourselves for our own comfort, no one will have comfort. It means we must bury our pasts by seeing them, and destroy our differences by learning another way.”

I recommend **MOCKINGBIRD**, on all levels. There is an excellent bibliography and very good index.

Reviewed by Mary Barnum