



September/October 2009

The Courier

Catskill Hudson District New York Annual Conference

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A Word from Your DS: “Come as Living Stones”

While spending some weekends this summer at Kingswood, one of our conference camps, I have gotten fairly involved in “Stone Ministry,” a project that invites campers to take part in the building of a stone chapel in the woods. It’s a wonderfully impractical project, which began five years ago and won’t be



completed for probably another twenty years or more, in which the process of involvement and reflection and community-building are more important than the ultimate completion of the building.

It’s slow work, as each camper chooses a single field stone to be their contribution to the wall, and spiritual work as the process invites people to be thoughtful before God. As they wash their stones, removing moss and dirt from the stone’s surface, the campers are invited to reflect on their lives, and to ask, “What do I need to get rid of if I am to be the one God made me to be?”.....

They then are invited to write a prayer or dedication or affirmation on their stone, in chalk. The chalk eventually washes away, but each stone in the growing wall symbolizes a deeply-felt thought or prayer that has been offered up to God. Some people also choose to write their thought in a journal that is kept nearby..... And then, with the help of the volunteer masons, each person places their stone somewhere in the wall. Stones of all shapes and sizes are included – small ones brought by little children, big stones that require a couple of men to hoist them, stones with nice straight angles that are easy to place in the wall, and some with odd shapes that are more of a challenge. But they all fit somewhere, and they all become a part of the whole.

As I’ve been helping with this project I come back again and again to a favorite verse of scripture that reflects some of my basic convictions about life in Christ, and life in the church: ***“Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones let yourself be built into a spiritual house.....”*** (1 Peter 2: 4-5)



What a wealth of insights flow out of those lines! Each might be worthy of an entire sermon, but here I’ll simply list some ideas:

As living stones we can be part of something much bigger than ourselves, when joined to Christ, “the stone which the builders rejected” that has become the cornerstone.... If we are living stones our diversity and uniqueness is honored by God. No stone is identical to any other, but the builder can use them all..... If we are living stones we shouldn’t be too proud of ourselves. By ourselves we’re not so significant, but in the hands of the builder, connected to the cornerstone, and united with other stones, we truly matter..... As living stones we can be part of something beautiful strong, enduring and useful,

namely the Church of Christ, which will endure by God's will and in God's way, long after our lives and our contributions have ceased.

God is using each one of us, not just in any single wall, but in many places – in our homes, our communities, our churches, our relationships. Are you a willing stone in God's hands? "Come as living stones and let yourself be built into a spiritual house."

I give thanks for the ways in which we are united through our Cornerstone.

Your DS, Jim Moore

Filling Your Toolbox:
Getting Equipped for Service in our Church

Five significant learning experiences, for laity and clergy, offered at

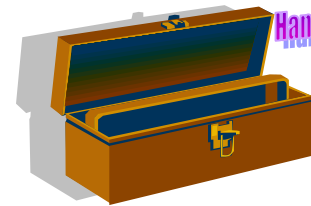
**Monticello UMC on Oct. 3rd and at
UMC of Greenville and Norton Hill on Oct. 4th**

1:30 Gathering and Fellowship
2:00 Worship
2:30 – 5:00 Workshop

UMCOR Readiness

Intro to Lay Speaking Ministries

Safe Sanctuaries



Hands on Praying

Rethink Church - Radical Hospitality

Would you and your congregation be ready to help if there were a natural disaster in your community – a flood, a significant fire, etc? What could you do now so that you would be ready then? Find out in **UMCOR Readiness**, taught by Larry Powell (not our pastor in Ellenville, but another Larry Powell who is a staff person from UMCOR)

Is your church good at inviting people who are new and somehow different from the folks currently in the pews? Would you like to get better at it? Come to **Rethink Church – Radical Hospitality**, led by Rev. Darlene Kelley of Clinton Ave. UMC in Kingston, a church that is succeeding in this kind of welcoming.

Have you wondered about getting involved in Lay Speaking ministries – perhaps to preach and lead worship, or perhaps to do some other kind of service? Find out what's involved in **Intro to Lay Speaking Ministries**, led by Rev. Eileen Daunt (who was at one time herself a lay speaker).

Can your church assure new families that their children will be in safe and responsible hands when they are in your care? Find out how to combine a loving outreach to kids with sensible practices that protect the kids and the church and make it clear to parents that we are serious about taking good care of their children, in **Safe Sanctuaries**, led by Rev. Beth Perry, a Safe Sanctuaries consultant for the New York Annual Conference. *(Please note that this workshop is for churches with limited programs, or no programs with children, not for churches with large Sunday Schools or Youth Groups)*

Are you looking for ways to deepen your spiritual life, and to connect mind and body in your worship of God? Learn some traditional and new practices in **Hands On Praying**, led by Gail Erdie, lay pastor at Lloyd and a director of Wellspring.

Come join us for an afternoon of learning and fellowship.

Filling Your Tool Box

Intro to Lay Speaking Ministries

Rethink Church - Radical Hospitality



UMCOR Readiness

Hands on Praying

Safe Sanctuaries

Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Your home church: _____

I will be attending the event at (check one):

Monticello UMC (Saturday, October 3, 2009) (445 Broadway, Monticello, NY 12701)

Greenville Norton Hill UMC (Sunday, October 4, 2009) (5820 Route 81 West, Greenville, NY 12083)

My Workshop Choice (check one):

Rethink Church – Radical Hospitality

Safe Sanctuaries

UMCOR Readiness

Intro to Lay Speaking Ministries

Hands on Praying

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E-mail registration to [cathudnyac@aol.com](mailto:cathudnyac@aol.com) or Call registration to (845) 679-6350 or  
Mail registration to the Catskill Hudson District Office (71 Van Dale Rd., Woodstock, NY 12498)

**Directions:** Google “Find-a-church” and get directions from your location to Monticello UMC or Greenville Norton Hill UMC

**Questions:** [howemarg@aol.com](mailto:howemarg@aol.com) or [cathudnyac@aol.com](mailto:cathudnyac@aol.com)  
Registration Deadline – September 25<sup>th</sup>



## **Save the Date: Festival of Praise, Sat. Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>**

Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> will be a joy-filled day of music, as people gather for Festival of Praise at Overlook UMC in Woodstock.

More details will soon be shared, but we will have 5 or 6 choirs from the different regions of our district, a “massed choir” that should be over 100 voices, brass players, a praise band, a youth choir, a liturgical dance group, and lots of hymn-singing. Following the words of Psalm 150 that say “Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!” we will spend an afternoon in joyfully praising God.

The “regional choirs” will be getting together for practice in late September or October in 5 or 6 areas of the district. Choir members, and singers in churches who don’t have a choir just now – watch for the invitation to get together with neighbors to learn an anthem or two that you’ll sing for us all on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and also learn the music for the massed choir.

Choirs will gather in Woodstock at 1:00 on the 7<sup>th</sup> for rehearsing and preparation. The festival service will begin at 4:00.

More details will soon be shared. Committee members planning this event include Lee Pritchard and Margaret Howe (New Paltz), Jeremy Mills (Monticello), Herb Lamb (Overlook), Lee Stowe and Carol Merante (Reservoir), Donna Jolly (St. James) and Jim Moore. Among the other musicians involved are Tom and Julie Carney (Greenville-Norton Hill) and Marge Van Valkenburg (Hobart).

## **Greetings from Your New District Lay Leaders**

We have welcomed September and waved good-bye to summer activities – hope all of you have memories to share of family fun and fellowship.

Yes, the heading said .....*your new District Lay Leaders*.....there are four of us.....Toni Vessey, Fran Reed, Gerry Rosenberger, Margaret Howe. District Superintendent, Jim Moore, wanted to try something new – have four of us, whose home churches are at opposite ends of one another, share in the task of Lay Leader for the huge Catskill Hudson District. The four of us find this very exciting and are looking forward to the vast opportunities and challenges within the District.

Before the four of us are introduced, let me take this occasion to offer a sincere “**Thank You**” to Diane Meredith for her years of service as the District Lay Leader. I, for one, looked forward to her “Wanderings” column in *The Courier*. I know we will find Diane in some other leadership role within the District and may God be with her always.

So here we are –

Toni Vessey – from Colchester Community United Methodist Church

Fran Reed – from Stamford United Methodist Church

Gerry Rosenberger – from Saugerties United Methodist Church

Margaret Howe – from New Paltz United Methodist Church

Some things about us –

We are all Certified Lay Speakers.

We all hold leadership positions within our own churches.

We all are faithful disciples of Christ

We all are 50+ years old.

We all are grandparents.

We all are willing to take on new tasks and continue learning.

We all care deeply about our faith journeys.

We all are challenged by our role as Lay Leader.

As your District Lay Leaders, it is our role and responsibility to reach out to the entire breadth of the congregation's life. In the Guidelines for Lay Leader it states, among other things, that the district lay leader works in partnership with the district superintendent. And, because Jim has such a large district and cannot always be at events and celebrations, one of us might represent Jim and be a spokesperson for the District. The guidelines also state that lay leaders assist the local church lay leaders with understanding their jobs – fostering awareness of the role of laity in congregations and communities as well as supporting and enabling lay participation in the planning and decision making of the district.

We look forward to meeting those of you we do not know – connecting and sharing and networking in the name of Jesus Christ.

Margaret Howe

*Margaret Howe*

One of the Four – District Lay Leaders – Catskill Hudson

### **This Worked for Us: stories of successes in our District Churches**

#### **Daily summer lunch program at First UMC in Walton**

by Rev. Mark Del Giudice

Over 2,000 lunches served to children eighteen and younger in the Walton Area was the accomplishment of a team of volunteers led by pastor the Rev. Mark Del Giudice. The vision for this ministry came at the end of the summer of 2008, when members of First United Methodist Church in Walton asked, “Why was the free lunch program discontinued in Walton,” and “What could be done about it.” We further learned that Walton lies in a census area where more than fifty percent of its children are below the poverty level. When our schools discontinued the FDA lunch program for summer recess, many of the children were not adequately fed. We also found out that if we partnered with the Delaware County Youth Bureau, we could reinstitute the FDA free summer lunch program in Walton. They would secure funding and sponsor our site, but we had to find volunteers, receive training, and volunteer the use our new kitchen and dining facilities (that were restored with the help of funds and volunteers from UMC churches after the 2006 Flood in Walton). We also had to prepare a master menu, a budget, order and receive bulk food supplies, and prepare and serve the food – all according to NYS and federal health and food handling standards. The program offered a serving of milk, a sandwich, and a serving of fruit and vegetable with a dessert. This was new territory for most of us, but with 27 volunteers from Walton and surrounding towns we not only succeeded but our site received the FDA award for excellence.

It was hard work that we had to face on a daily basis for a full seven weeks, but at the end of the seven weeks each volunteer had also received satisfaction from watching hungry children rush to get their meals, eat them in an atmosphere of warm hospitality, and then receive genuine “thank-you’s” from them. Our reward was from the cards of thanks that we started receiving from children and parents and from the conversations that we overheard. One little girl told her father, “Daddy, this is a nice place.” Responses like that prompted our volunteers to sign up in advance for next year’s program.

But the story does not end here. When our church held its Vacation Bible Program the week after the lunch program ended, we noticed that many of the same faces who had come for lunch had also signed up to experience this time for spiritual learning and growth. The pastor did not need any introduction when he began the program with prayer. Without prompting they chanted in unison, “Hi, Pastor Mark.”

Thank God for this new door of a thousand doors for our church to use in making a connection with our community.

### **This Worked for Us**

**... if you're looking for an accessible mission trip that doesn't cost too much and that's not too far away ...**

#### **Don't Overlook This Mission Opportunity for Youth**

by Tony Zirilli – Walden United Methodist Church

Looking for an exciting mission or service opportunity for young teens or pre-teens next summer? Well here's one that worked for us at Walden UMC and the kids haven't stopped talking about it.



On August 16<sup>th</sup> after worship service, a group of 11 youth (coincidentally all girls, ages 11-16) and 4 adults hit the road for a 5-day/4-night summer mission trip to the Heifer Project's Overlook Farm in Rutland, Massachusetts. For most of the members of our group it was their first sleep-away mission experience. It turned out to be illuminating, inspirational and a great introduction to the field of missions for our young people.

Overlook Farm does an excellent job of balancing educational, team-building and service activities. The kids (and adults) worked hard, learned much and had fun doing it. Our nightly devotions brought us closer together as we discussed our experiences and what we had learned from a Christian perspective.

Each day brought farm chores such as milking goats, feeding chickens, pigs, llamas, water buffalo or even a camel. Work projects are seasonal, but for us they meant weeding the biggest vegetable garden most of us had ever seen and peeling, cleaning and chopping by hand what seemed to be a lifetime supply of garlic. We also got to experience herding sheep to a new pasture area each day.



We learned in various hands-on ways about poverty, hunger, conservation of resources and the distribution of wealth around the world. At the same time we learned to work together and to accomplish as a group what seemed impossible individually.

The highlight and possibly biggest challenge of our trip was our day and night in the Global Village. We broke up into family groups and simulated what it might be like to live as a poor family in various countries around the world. Our three family groups were assigned Guatemala, Peru and Thailand. We lived in structures that might be found in each of these countries, gathered wood, cooked over an open fire and had a small amount of food to live on. The youth totally ran the show. The adults were just to act as a dependent family member except in emergencies. (We were told to think of ourselves as three-year olds.) Each group had specific challenges to overcome and the young people handled them all admirably.

I think it's safe to say that each of us was touched in a positive way by this experience and will have some memories from this trip that will last a lifetime. As we headed for home, several of the young people and even the adults were excitedly talking about the possibility of going on a mission trip to Appalachia next summer.

The Conference newspaper, **The Vision**, is now available only on-line. As a matter of financial stewardship, the Conference will no longer be paying for the cost of printing and mailing the newspaper, and the money that has been saved is being used in other missional ways. It would be helpful if each church could print a few copies of the Vision each month for their members who don't use the computer.

Those that are on Ann Pearson's Connectional Ministries newsletter will automatically receive notice whenever a new edition of the Vision is available. (If you'd like to receive the Connectional Ministries newsletter, e-mail Ann Pearson at [apearson@nyac.com](mailto:apearson@nyac.com).)

To see the new on-line Vision

- Go to [nyac.com](http://nyac.com) and click on *The Vision* in the left column, or
- Type [nyac.com/vision](http://nyac.com/vision) into your browser, or
- [Click here to go to The Vision page](#)

Camp Quinipet is looking for a used "tandem" (double-axel) flat-bed trailer to be converted to a boat trailer for a larger boat – the Ensign – to be able to store it at Quinipet over the winter season rather than paying yard storage and maintenance fees. The trailer doesn't have to be in great condition since the most it will travel, once on Shelter Island is a couple miles per year. It will not be a "float on/off" trailer – a hoist will set the boat on the trailer – so the trailer will not get submerged.

If anyone has a "tandem" trailer sitting in their yard they don't use, or has a neighbor who has one that you have been looking at for years that has not moved, contact Greg Nissen at [gwnissen@hotmail.com](mailto:gwnissen@hotmail.com). Of course a donor would get a non-profit donation letter.

### Children and Youth Coordinator

The **Catskill United Methodist Church** is seeking a qualified applicant for the position of Children and Youth Coordinator. This is a part-time position (12-15 hours per week). This individual will be responsible for the aspects of children and youth ministries including re-establishing a Youth Fellowship. A passion for working with young people and their families is vital. Knowledge of music helpful. Application deadline: October 20, 2009. Please send cover letter, complete resume with references to: Rev. Joyce Wilkerson, Catskill UMC, 40 Woodland Avenue, Catskill, N Y 12414. Or e-mail to: [Catskillumc@verizon.net](mailto:Catskillumc@verizon.net).

### Art Opening

**Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

**The Clinton Avenue Project in Our Backyards**

**Photographer Glenn DeWitt** is sharing portraits of folks from **The Caring Hands Soup Kitchen**



## Lay Speaking Ministries – Catskill Hudson District

Margaret Howe, [howemarg@aol.com](mailto:howemarg@aol.com)

Gene Knoth, [knothheat@yahoo.com](mailto:knothheat@yahoo.com)

Greetings – signs of fall are all around us – I certainly hope each of you had a wonderful summer. Your Lay Speaking Ministries Committee certainly had a busy summer.

As we mentioned in the summer *Courier*, there were opportunities for Local Lay Speakers to keep themselves up to date by taking the *Concepts in Leadership* course. Gerry Rosenberger and Judi Bathrick traveled throughout the District with this course. They taught in Shandaken, White Sulphur Springs and in Andes. This course is for those Local Lay Speakers who need to have training at least every three years to keep their status as a Local Lay Speaker. This course, sometimes called a “refresher,” is also a great opportunity for local church leadership to come together for some basic leadership training. We expect to offer this course again during the coming year. Thank you, Gerry and Judi.

Again this fall, the District Council on Ministries will offer a weekend of short workshops, “*Filling Your Tool Box – getting equipped for service in our church*”. One of the workshop sessions will be an Intro to Lay Speaking Ministries. Rev. Eileen Daunt, a member of the Lay Speaking Ministries Committee, will facilitate this workshop. This is an opportunity for folks – for laity - to explore the ministries of lay speaking – caring, leading and communicating. The registration forms have been sent to all pastors and I am sure there will be one in this publication. The event is October 3 in Monticello or October 4 in Greenville-Norton Hill.

Two “new” Basic Lay Speaking Courses are scheduled for this fall. One will be on September 12<sup>th</sup> in Margaretville with instructor Pastor Sallie Soltysiak. The other will begin on October 10<sup>th</sup> at St. James Church in Kingston with instructor John Fritz. Registration forms for these courses are on the District web site. Reminder, the Basic Course has been totally revised by the GBOD.

Lula Anderson will teach an Advanced course – Storytelling – in October at Saugerties UMC. This is a wonderful course and those who have taken this with Lula have come away with wonderful tools for ministry. Again, this Registration form is on the District Web Site.

The Lay Speaking Ministries Committee has recognized the need to reach more people with more courses throughout this huge District. And we recognize that there are changes coming from the GBOD and the Annual Conference. With that in mind we have sent to all Lay Speakers a questionnaire/survey. We will review this information and share it with you – so we can better serve the laity of the District.

Some have asked about the “credit” for the Annual Conference Course. Yes, if you spent the weekend at Hofstra you should list the course on your 2009 Annual Lay Speaking Course. I am trying to determine if a certificate will come from AC or will we send you one locally.

There is much work to do in this ministry and your committee did not take the summer off. We look forward to a busy and challenging year serving through the Lay Speaking Ministries.

Blessings,

*Margaret Howe*

Margaret Howe

Co-director Lay Speaking Ministries

## Catskill Hudson District UMW Annual Meeting

### Saugerties UMC

Saturday, September 26th

Registration at 9:00 a.m. - \$10.00 (includes lunch)

Rev. Dr. David Montayne speaking on the Rural and Migrant Ministries

## Spirituality and Creation Conference at Camp Epworth October 2-3

Led by **Pam Harris and Garrie Stevens**, Methodist clergy, bring a deep love and commitment to the essential connection between faith and the natural world. They are consultants for camping and retreat ministries across the country, and develop and lead workshops and retreats in the areas of practical spirituality, spiritual discernment, and workshop.

Also led by **Karen and Terry Cianci**, who bring years of collegiate level teaching in biological and environmental sciences and five years as directors at Epworth

For more information, visit <http://www.epworthcenter.com/creation.html>



### Round and About the District



**First UMC (Walton)** sponsored a discount sale on backpacks. The purpose of this event was to help parents in the community with school related expenses. The congregation and the UMW raised \$510 to purchase 50 backpacks and supplies for each one. The backpacks sold for \$5 each. The sale was very popular and more people were interested even after they sold out. The proceeds from this sale have been donated to the weekly soup supper ministry.

**St. James UMC (Kingston)** has started a “God Sightings” bulletin board in the rear of their sanctuary. This is a place where people can post stories of where they have seen God in their lives. These God

Stories can be anonymous if the person wishes. The idea is that by sharing the different ways they see God every day, others will receive hope and encouragement in their spiritual life.

**St. Paul's UMC (Middletown)** is participating in an ecumenical Children's Festival. It will be held in Thrall Park and there will be musical and dancing entertainment in addition to games and crafts.

Those attending the worship service at **St. Paul's UMC Middletown** on June 7<sup>th</sup> received \$1.00 of God's money. They were entrusted with this money and asked to take responsibility for its use, as were the servants in the parable of the Talents (Matthew 15:14-30). Brochures explaining the program were available.

**Reservoir UMC**, along with Christ the King Episcopal Church of Stone Ridge, hosted a bountiful welcoming dinner for the Mexican migrant workers at the Gill Corn Farm in July. Most of the workers spend the winter in Florida working with the strawberry growers. There are about 100 adults and children spending the summer in Hurley. They served delicious chicken, rice and beans, and lots of homemade cookies. The day included activities such as helium balloons, bubbles for blowing and crayons for coloring. The children were part of a summer camp sponsored by rural and Migrant Ministries. Reservoir will again participate in the Ice Cream Social for the farm workers at the end of the season.

**Colchester Community UMC** has a morning phone call ministry. It was begun to give people who live alone a morning phone call to say, "Hello" and to make sure all is well with them. It has been very rewarding for the people on each end of the call.

**White Sulphur Springs UMC** is beginning Marriage Makers this fall. This is a fellowship for couples who want to strengthen their faith and their marriage. It will be informal discussion type sharing and covenant based group.

In August the **Windham-Hensonville UMC** and **Ashland United Methodist Community Church** sponsored a three day celebration of 200 years of Methodism in their mountaintop community. Roy Davis, church historian, created a display case of church historical documents, artifacts, and old photographs and an album. On Friday, August 14 they held a covered dish dinner at the Windham Church followed by an outstanding concert of gospel music by Chuck and Kitty Gleason. Saturday the congregation and many guests enjoyed an Old Fashioned Ice Cream Sociale held on the parsonage lawn. The TLC (Tender Lover Care) Country Cloggers performed. On Sunday morning each church held their regular service, a luncheon was held, and then a service was held at the Old North Settlement Methodist Church, one of the oldest churches in the area, having been built in 1826. The District Superintendent spoke, as did Fran Reed, District Lay Leader. Several former pastors attended and spoke.

**Hobart UMC** is collecting items to be sent to the men and women in the military who are serving in the Mid-East. They are sending snacks and sweets, personal care items, communication items, and "fun stuff."

## Calendar

**Sept. 21:** Pastor Stewardship Training, Saugerties, 10-4

**Sept. 22:** Pastor Stewardship Training, Liberty, 10-4

**Sept. 27:** District UMW District Fall Meeting, Saugerties, 9 a.m.

1 **Sept. 28-29:** Bishop's Retreat, Mt. St. Alphonsus, Monday 11:00-Tuesday lunch

**Oct. 3:** Filling Your Toolbox Training Event, Monticello, 1:30-5 p.m.

**Oct. 4:** Filling Your Toolbox Training Event, Greenville-Norton Hill, 1:30-5 p.m.

**Oct. 6:** Catskill Hudson District Charge Conferences begin

**Oct. 15:** Order of Elders, Memorial UMC, White Plains

**Oct. 17:** Finance Officers Training, New Paltz,  
**Oct. 19:** Pastor Stewardship Training - Session 2, Saugerties, 10-2  
**Oct. 20:** Pastor Stewardship Training - Session 2, Liberty, 10-2  
**Oct. 22:** Parish Development, Modena UMC, 7 p.m.  
**Oct. 22:** Deadline for November-December Courier  
**Oct. 27:** Local Pastors Group, 2-8, Quarryville  
**Oct. 29:** District Committee on Ministry, Saugerties, 9:30-4:15  
**Nov. 7:** District Music Festival, Overlook UMC, Woodstock, rehearsals 1:00, service 4:00  
**Nov. 10-12:** Board of Ordained Ministry, Mt. St. Alphonsus  
**Dec. 1:** Local Pastors, Quarryville, 2-4  
**Dec. 3:** District Committee on Ministry, Saugerties  
**Jan. 19-21:** Bishop's Convocation  
**Jan. 23:** DCOM, 1:00 (place to be announced)  
**Jan. 25-27:** Board of Ordained Ministry  
**April 20-22:** Order of Elders Retreat  
**May 15:** "Rethink Worship" led by Jorge Lockward, Catskill UMC  
**May 22:** Camp Meeting at Epworth  
**June 9-12:** Annual Conference, Hofstra University

Please freely **post** and **distribute** this copy of the COURIER. Contact the District Office ([cathudnyac@aol.com](mailto:cathudnyac@aol.com)) if you would like to delete yourself from or add yourself to our database for receiving the COURIER online.

**The deadline for the November-  
December Courier will be October 22, 2009.**