

Spotlight 21

SERVING RETIREES FROM

Bay Shore	Brentwood	East Islip	West Islip
Bayport-Blue Point	Central Islip	Hauppauge	Sayville
	Connetquot	Islip	



Vol. 12 No. 3

An Award Winning Publication of NYSUT Retiree Council 21

February-March, 2013

DECEMBER WELCOME BRUNCH

- ◆ **AFT Living Legacy Awards**
- ◆ **Welcome to new retirees**
- ◆ **Guest Speaker: Lee Cutler, NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer**



AFT' Women's Right Caucus gives the Living Legacy Award to women leaders who foster the rights of women in the workplace and in society as a whole. This year Joan Perrini was awarded the 50 year service award for her work in the West Islip Teachers' Association, the West Islip Retired Teachers' Association and on RC 21. All of us at RC 21 are proud and grateful for her service. She keeps us informed on all issues which affect us as retirees and represents our interests as a voting member of the NYSUT Board of Directors.

Simonne Harkavy received the 40 year service award. Anyone who has enjoyed RC 21 trips and luncheons can thank Simonne for her dedication to our members at RC 21 as a member of the Benefits Committee. Simonne is active in her community with service on the West Islip Public Library Board. She has been a literacy volunteer and also serves as an advocate for nursing home patients. Both Simonne and Joan are exemplars of unselfish dedication to women, all the community and to the upholding of union values.



Our welcome to new retirees was delayed by two months because of Super Storm Sandy's visit to our area. RC 21 members turned out in great numbers to welcome new members and to celebrate the holidays. Joan and the people of the Benefits committee held nothing back with scores of baskets for the silent auction and raffles. Proceeds from the 50-50 raffle will be donated to the NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund for Sandy victims. Joan Perrini welcomed all new members and called their attention to the information packet they were given which contained useful State and local program information. She urged new members to attend RC 21 meetings held

at the West Islip Library. The Next meeting is: March 19th at 10:15 AM. She thanked all who helped put this day together.



Lee Cutler, NYSUT Secretary Treasurer, spoke to us about relief efforts, political issues, and social justice issues being addressed by NYSUT. Due to the unprecedented numbers of applications for relief, NYSUT will be awarding \$250 grants to members who suffered destruction from Super Storm Sandy.

Mr. Cutler spoke to the importance of being politically aware and active because elections matter. He made reference to the failed recall of the Governor Walker of Wisconsin after his

attempt to destroy union's collective bargaining rights. Michigan passed the "Right to Work (for less)" act during a Lame Duck session. Mr. Cutler warned that it is critical that we raise our voices regarding the anti-union sentiment in New York State, fueled by politicians and the media. One action NYSUT has initiated is the "Tell It Like It Is" campaign which allows teachers, active and retired, to write in their experiences and possible solutions to help districts improve childrens' education while overcoming some of the shortfalls in funding. You can give your suggestions by going to NYSUT.org and clicking on the Tell It Like It Is banner. The first phase of the promotion is to send suggestions and stories to Boards of Education and the Commissioner of Education; the second phase is outreach to parents.

One of Mr. Cutler's duties is head of the Social Justice Committee. He told us about the efforts being made to pass the "Dignity for All Students Act" which addresses bullying in our schools.

(Continued on page 4)

A Message From President

Joan Perrini



ARE WE FACING THE “SENIOR CLIFF”?

After a long battle, President Obama was finally able to force Congress to take action and save the country from the threat of falling off the “fiscal cliff”. We now have a more equitable tax plan affecting our more affluent citizens. As a result, families with incomes over \$450,000 and individuals with incomes over \$400,000 will have higher tax rates.

While this is a move in the right direction, we’re still facing another financial crisis where we have to raise the debt ceiling or face a new economic meltdown. Unfortunately, some of our illustrious members of Congress wish to hold the government and the country hostage by withholding their approval unless we cut “entitlements” (alias Medicare and Social Security).

It is indeed a tragedy that Medicare has become the whipping boy for all our debt problems. With the rising costs of health care, we know that solutions are needed. Too

many members of Congress, however, want the easy solution of cutting Medicare benefits rather than working on ways to reduce medical costs. Cuts in Medicare would be devastating to the average senior on a fixed retirement income. If Congress gets their way, retirees would face their own serious “senior cliff.”

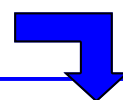
What can you do?

1. Write your Congressional representative about saving Medicare and Social Security.
2. If you have access to a computer, you can use the MAC Center on the NYSUT website – www.NYSUT.org – to send a letter to Congress.
3. You can join the Alliance for Retired Americans as an individual member (\$10.)
4. Come to Retiree Council 21 for more information on political action.

While I’m on the subject of Congress, you should know that they

have been very slow to approve money to replenish the National Flood Insurance Program. Following Superstorm Sandy, many of our members continue to struggle with repairs, and hundreds still remain homeless. The NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund can help, but it depends on voluntary donations. If you want to support this worthy effort, you can send a check to NYSUT, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110, ATTENTION: Jeff Lockwood, NYSUT Disaster Relief, or make online donations using PayPal at www.NYSUT.org/disasterrelief. At chapter and RC21 meetings you can also raise money which will be forwarded to NYSUT. Our members need our help.

By now you should have received your new Empire Plan Medicare RX prescription Card. Premiums remain the same unless you are over the annual income amounts shown in the chart below.



PART D MONTHLY PREMIUM

If your yearly income in 2012 was		You Pay
File individual Tax Return	File Joint Tax Return	
\$85,000 or less	\$170,000 or less	Your Plan Premium
Above 85,000 up to \$107,000	Above \$170,00 up to \$214,000	\$11.60 + Your Plan Premium
Above \$107,000 up to \$160,000	Above \$214,000 up to \$320,000	\$29.90 + Your Plan Premium
Above \$160,000 up to \$214,000	Above \$320,000 up to \$428,000	\$48.10 + Your Plan Premium
Above \$214,000	Above \$428,000	\$66.40 + Your Plan Premium

In an effort to get some feedback from our readers we are initiating a Poll Column where we will ask your opinions on current issues. We would like to hear from you. Send your comments to Spotlight 21 by email to:

spot21editor@optonline.net

or to:

Diana Baranec
119 Sherry Street
East Islip, NY 11730

If the response is sufficient, we will tally the poll results and print a few responses.

The topic for this issue is:

Gun Control Legislation and the Safety of our schools—post Sandy Hook Tragedy.

After the tragic events at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, our national conscience has been jolted into facing the need to safeguard our children against senseless acts of violence and once again work on gun control legislation.

The NRA calls for arming teachers and security personnel in every school to protect our children from “bad guys with guns” by having “good guys with guns.”

AFT backs Representative Carolyn McCarthy & Diana DeGette gun violence-prevention legislation known as The Large Capacity Ammunition Feeding Device Act which would ban production and sale of high-capacity ammunition clips

Where do you stand?

**RC 21 Benefits Committee Presents
 "Lower East Side Experience"
 Thursday, March 21, 2013**

**Including: Eldridge Street Synagogue (museum)
 Lunch @ Katz's Delicatessen
 The Tenement Museum
 Free time for shopping**

Departure times:

**7:30 am - Suffolk - 150 Motor Pkwy
 Hauppauge
 8:00 am - Nassau - 1000 Woodbury Road
 Woodbury**

**Cost \$95 - Final Payment due
 February 22, 2013
 (Check made out to Fantastic Tours)**

**Participation Fee - Non-refundable
 RC 21 members - \$5
 Non-members - \$10
 (Checks made out to RC21 - ASAP)**

**Send Check and form below to:
 Sharon Eckhaus - (631) 472-7602
 204 Springmeadow Dr. Unit A
 Holbrook, NY 11741**

Name _____ **Chapter** _____

Address _____ **Phone** _____ **Cell** _____

Guest Name _____

Address _____ **Phone** _____ **Cell** _____

Please Check where you will meet the bus: Suffolk _____ Nassau _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____ **for** _____ **# of people** _____ **Lower East Side Experience**



**May 8, 2013
 West Point Tour**

Tentative cost \$94

**Fliers will be available at
 March 19th General Meeting**

June 3, 2013

Museum of The Moving Image

Details to be announced



**Fliers will be available at
 March 19th General Meeting**

NYSUT RESPONDS TO GOVERNOR CUOMO'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

New York State United Teachers today said Gov. Andrew Cuomo's State of the State message lays out an ambitious agenda for the state's public schools and colleges that includes a number of worthy initiatives. NYSUT President Richard C. Iannuzzi said proposals to expand pre-kindergarten programs, to establish more community schools with a full range of services for students in low wealth districts and to explore increasing learning time for students have the potential to accelerate learning.

"We appreciate the governor's recognition that schools are more than an academic setting and that expanded access to pre-kindergarten programs offers valuable educational opportunities to our neediest students," he noted. NYSUT advocated for community schools and investment in pre-K in testimony to Cuomo's education commission. NYSUT also supports the concept of establishing a quality 'bar exam' that would raise standards for those entering the teaching profession.

Iannuzzi said other proposals, many of which have positive potential, need additional detail and NYSUT looks forward to hearing more when the state budget is released later this month.

NYSUT Executive Vice President Andrew Pallotta said, "Using SUNY and CUNY as incubators for economic growth and investing in community colleges' ability to train graduates for jobs are good steps toward a stronger education system and statewide job creation. I look forward to seeing the funding behind the proposals." Pallotta said NYSUT will work diligently with lawmakers and Gov. Cuomo on specifics as the budget process goes forward.

NYSUT Media Relations - January 9, 2013

Spotlight 21

A Publication of **NYSUT Retiree Council 21**
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FISCAL CLIFF AGREEMENT AND YOU

The imperfect agreement passed by Congress does provide immediate relief to middle class American families. Randi Weingarten said: "As important as this relief is right now to the majority of Americans, this is a temporary, Band-Aid solution."

The following list comes from Whitehouse.gov dated January 2, 2013.



7 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW — ABOUT THE TAX DEAL —

1. Income tax rates for middle-class families will stay low permanently.
2. For the first time in 20 years, a bipartisan agreement will increase tax rates on the wealthy.
3. The deal cuts the deficit by \$737 billion by asking the wealthiest to begin to pay their fair share.
4. A group of tax cuts that help middle-class families keep more money in their pockets and afford to pay for higher education was also extended.
5. The Production Tax Credit and the Research & Experimentation Tax Credit are extended.
6. The emergency unemployment insurance for 2 million people looking for work is extended.
7. Social Security benefits, Medicare or Medicaid were not cut.

(Welcome Brunch from page 1)

Mr. Cutler also urges members to take advantage of **NYSUT's Member Benefits** which gives us access to financial, legal, and insurance help as well as travel planning and discounts. For more information go to the NYSUT web page or contact:

Kim Haefelin at: **(516) 496 - 2035** NYSUT Woodbury Office
1000 Woodbury Road Suite 214
Woodbury, NY 11797



RC 21 Calendar 2012 - 2013

Executive Board Meetings
NYSUT Office 10:15 AM

February 5, 2013
March 5, 2013

General Membership Meetings
West Islip Library 10:15 AM

March 19, 2013
April 30, 2013

Upcoming Events

March 21, 2013
Lower East Side Experience

May 8, 2013
West Point Tour
Fliers will be available at
March 19th General Meeting

June 3, 2013
Museum of Moving Images
Fliers will be available at
March 19th General Meeting

Get details and registration forms
on line at our website:

<http://ny.aft.org/rc21>

or at

General Meetings

Reservations accepted on
a first-come basis.



**Next General Meeting: March 19th
10:15 AM West Islip Library**



Joan Perinni,
Simonne Harkavy
Marilyn Dygus-Aitken



Simonne Harkavy
Lee Cutler
Joan Perinni



Pictures by Frank Mauceri

RC 21 Family





Happy Raffle Winners



Photos by Kathleen Llyons

Union Leaders
Dot Zuckerman
Joan Perini



Joan receiving the 50 Year Living Legacy Award at AFT Convention.