

Spotlight 21

SERVING RETIREES FROM

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



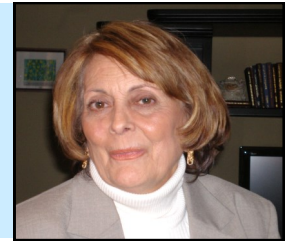
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October-November, 2013

A Message From President

Joan Perrini



A History Lesson for Today

Today New York teachers are fortunate to be able to enjoy the advantages of good salaries, realistic pensions and health care. But it wasn't always that way. When some of us started teaching back in the '60s, we made under \$10,000 a year and had to pay 100% of our health insurance. If we were lucky, we received one small raise each year. We joined NYSTA and though this was not a bona fide labor union, it was the beginning of our journey to improve the system.

Then in the 1960s along came Albert Shanker, who knew how poorly teachers were paid when he started teaching in the '50s and how they often struggled with autocratic principals. He saw the value of unions and how they could change the status quo and raise the significance of the teaching profession. History tells us that he succeeded in organizing New York City teachers through an AFT affiliate and eventually merged with New York City's High School Teachers' Association to form the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in 1960. Not too long after, he reached out to teachers all over the state and united them with the AFT and the AFL-CIO and the UFT.

For many teachers it was an easy sell. For others there was some initial resistance because they could not understand why we needed to organize as a labor force. We had to go on strike, we had to picket and attend rallies. Some were not happy with these activities, but it was a process of fighting for what we believed was just and deserved.

Ultimately, the growing pains we endured were more than worth it. We gained status as a profession and we

substantially increased our salaries and benefits. For the first time we had salaries equal to the elevated station of our profession and we gained the benefits enjoyed to this day. We also had a say in our profession and what we believed was good for our students.

At this point, you're probably asking yourself why I've chosen to give you this history lesson, so let me tell you why.

I don't want any of you to forget the history of our struggle and the success those efforts brought us. I don't want any of you to take these gains for granted. And I don't want any of you to think that when we retire, our connection to our union is over. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our union connection is still valid and very, very important, and here are the reasons I firmly believe this.

For one, we are faced with the possibility of a New York State Constitutional Convention in 2017 that seriously threatens our pension benefits. We currently enjoy a defined benefit pension that other workers envy, and there is a clause in the present New York State Constitution that essentially says once you are hired and become a member of the New York State Retirement System, your pension benefits cannot be diminished. But a Constitutional Convention could eliminate this clause and this is a most frightening prospect.

For another, if some politicians have their way, we could face a reduction or elimination of our Social Security and a replacement of our Medicare with a voucher system that would not nearly cover our medical needs.

I fear that some of our members don't realize the dangers we face. Just because you are not actively working doesn't mean you have no impact on what can happen in the future. You have to remember the benefits we have are not guaranteed indefinitely. We need the strength of the union behind us to maintain what we fought so hard for.

You may not like politicians and you may resist being political, but sometimes you cannot escape the reality. If we are not vigilant, if we do not use our political strength and our vote to secure our own interests, changes can happen before we know it – changes that will be difficult to remedy. Politicians will steer the course of our future and they must be dealt with. We must be a strong force to add to the efforts of our union and our profession. We *must* make the effort. We cannot afford not to.

I extend a plea to my fellow retirees that I cannot over-emphasize: The union needs our votes and our strength. Your voices, joined with the voices of in-service teachers, will serve to increase the strength of our cause. Your involvement in this whole process is absolutely essential. Let's heed the advice of British statesman, Edmund Burke, who said in the late 1700s: "*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men should do nothing.*" Don't let that happen. Do your part.

Remember, retirement doesn't mean THE END. It's the beginning of a new phase of your life, one in which you can have a very active and powerful part.

The Affordable Health Care Act - Obamacare

Do you know the facts?

Luckily most of our members have had the benefit of good healthcare insurance programs, fought for and won by union efforts. However we may have family and friends in need of good healthcare coverage. The Affordable Health Care Act, known as Obamacare, can help many Americans apply for and receive healthcare coverage. To find out how to get health insurance visit:

Barackobama.com/healthcare
or
call Toll Free: 1-800-318-2596.

The chart below lists some of the advantages of Obamacare for non-insured and insured Americans.

NEED Health Insurance ?	HAVE Health Insurance ?
<p>Millions of Americans now have the chance to get quality care that they can afford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need help, financial assistance is available. You can't be denied coverage, regardless of your health. You can choose the plan that's right for you. You can sign up any time between October 2013 and March 2014. 	<p>Even if you already have health insurance, you're getting benefits because of Obamacare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You get money back if insurance companies don't spend at least 80% of your premium on care. Preventive care is now free - including annual check-ups, vaccinations, and mammograms. Children and young adults can stay on their family plans until they turn 26. Insurance companies can no longer set lifetime limits on coverage, so if you or a family member gets sick you won't be billed into bankruptcy.

Remarks of AFT President Randi Weingarten TEACH Conference July 22, 2013

People are waking up to the fact that decades of top-down edicts, mass school closures, privatization and test fixation with sanctions instead of support haven't moved the needle—not in the right direction at least.

Reclaiming the promise of public education is about **fighting** for neighborhood public schools that are safe, welcoming places for teaching and learning. Reclaiming the promise is about **ensuring** that teachers are well-prepared, are supported and have time to collaborate. Reclaiming the promise is about **enabling** them to teach an engaging curriculum that includes art and music and the sciences. And reclaiming the promise is about **ensuring** that kids have access to wraparound services to meet their emotional, social and health needs.



**Retirees - Take Action -
 Contact Your Legislators
 Use NYSUT's Website at...
www.NYSUT.org**

1. Click on **Legislative Action Center** from the menu on the left side of the page.
2. Click on **Contact Your Elected Officials** in the box on the left side..
3. Choose the person you wish to Fax from the list.
4. Then follow the instruction in the "How to Send box on the right side of the screen.

TOLL FREE NUMBERS TO CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS

- 1 (866) 327 - 8670
- 1 (866) 388 - 1015
- 1 (866) 220 - 0044
- 1 (877) 851 - 6437

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Bits and Pieces



Save the Dates

November 20, 2013

December 5, 2013

Combined NYSUT Regional Conference Wednesday, November 20, 2013



Watermill

711 Smithtown By Pass, Smithtown
\$30 per person includes
continental breakfast and lunch!

You will receive a flyer in the mail with
registration information.

Topics will include: Pensions, Social Security,
Cancer Advocacy
PM Session with Steve Kramer on Elder Law

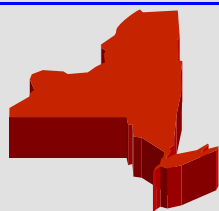
RC 21 Benefits Committee presents NYC Holiday Tour Thursday, December 5, 2013



Includes: Metropolitan Museum of Art
Tea at Gracie Mansion
Bryant Park Holiday Shops Market
Dinner (Little Italy, tentative)
Bus Tour - Holiday Lights of NYC

Cost: approximately \$135

Flyers will be available at
October Brunch &
November General Membership meeting



New York State Dept. Taxation and Finance STAR Registration

Resident homeowners who currently
receive the Basic STAR exemption must
register with the NYS Tax Department in
order to receive the exemption in 2014
and subsequent years.

Registration begins August 19, 2013
and continues through December 31,
2013.

The Tax Department will mail instruc-
tions to all homeowners who currently
receive the Basic STAR exemption. The
letters will include a STAR code that
homeowners will need to register. Our
area should receive this letter by
December 1st.

November 19, 2013 RC 21 General Meeting

Steve Kramer of NYSUT Legal Services

**Will present information
on
Elder Law and NYSUT Legal Services
Programs**

**Benefits Committee
Planning trips for Spring
Including:**

**Steam Train Ride to Griswald Pond
Dam in Essex County, Massachusetts
Paddle Boat Ride back
Details to follow**

RC 21 Meeting Tentative Dates 2013 – 2014

General Membership
West Islip Public Library
Higbie Lane/Montauk Hwy.
10:15 - 12 noon

October 22, 2013 Brunch	March 18, 2014
November 19, 2013	April 22, 2014
December 17, 2013 Holiday Brunch WIPL	May 20, 2014
June 17, 2014	Awards Luncheon
January and February No Meetings	

Executive Board Meetings

NYSUT Office
150 Motor Pkwy, Hauppauge (Citibank Building)
10:15 - 12 noon

November 5, 2013	April 1, 2014
December 3, 2013	May 6, 2014
February 4, 2014	June 3, 2014
March 4, 2014	
January - No Meeting	



RC 21 Calendar 2013 - 2014

Executive Board Meetings
NYSUT Office 10:15 a.m.
November 5th
December 3rd

General Membership Meeting
West Islip Library 10:15 a.m.
November 19th
Representative of NYSUT
Legal Services will speak

Upcoming Events

November 4, 2013
Vanderbilt Mansion/Museum/Planetarium
Contact Jean @ 631 - 472-3811

December 5, 2013
Day trip to NYC

Flyers will be available
At General Meetings

Get details & registration forms online at
our website:

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

Reservations accepted on a first-come basis.

