

# Spotlight 21

## SERVING RETIREES FROM

Bay Shore  
Bayport-Blue Point

Brentwood  
Central Islip  
Connetquot

East Islip  
Islip

West Islip  
Sayville



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January-February, 2014

## ***A Message From***

## ***President Joan Perrini***



### **We Are The People Who Gave You the Weekend**

Current public opinion of teaching and teacher unions has reached a critical point in this country, and in particular New York State where we live. I am continually amazed at the reaction of some people when asked what they think of teachers. Sadly, most of them respond that they love the teachers in their school district, but they don't like the teacher unions who create all kinds of problems. To some of you this may seem like just another issue that will go away if we don't think about it, because you're not sure what you can do and you may think "What can I do about it anyway?"

Well, I believe we all have to care about it and we have to act soon. Collective bargaining in public schools could change and that would mean disaster. We cannot afford to ignore it anymore.

Many of you will remember how it was when you taught back in the 1960s when teacher salaries were very low and good working conditions non-existent. Jokes were often made about the plight of the "poor" teacher and few people desired to enter the field of education. But you and I dared to be teachers because we wanted to make a difference. A few months ago I wrote about the struggle we faced then, the rewards we realized in the end, how our status of teaching was raised and our salaries and benefits started to match those of other respected professions.

But now the economy in our country is so bad that everyone is looking for someone or something to

blame. Profitability of US corporations, as a share of our total gross domestic product, has never been higher; the reason is that all of the benefits of productivity have gone into profits instead of sharing it with the workers. Management even refuses to raise the minimum wage which would give workers the financial help they so badly need. The weakening of unions has caused the decline of the middle class because wages have not gone up in 40 years, adjusted for inflation. The benefits of the increased productivity in this State and this country have gone to the 1% and zero has gone to the worker.

People have forgotten why unions had to be created in the first place. Made up of workers for the protection of workers, when these unions were established they helped to create a middle class which improved the economy and kept a balance of power against greedy corporations.

This philosophy has now spilled over to the field of education and again we have people playing the blame game naming teachers, their benefits and, in particular, their unions as the cause for everything that may be wrong with education. My friends, there is much at stake if this continues.

So to help us respond to the naysayers and critics, here is some ammunition to use when your friends and neighbors complain about teachers and their benefits.

Our critics have complained about the defined benefit pension as being too expensive and that we should

switch to defined contribution pensions (401K and 403B). The unions have protected defined benefits pensions and it has been proven that they work far better than defined contribution pensions, are less expensive and provide a safeguard against poverty in old age. In addition, New York pensions have a history of being very well managed thanks to our Comptroller, Tom DiNapoli.

While some people do think that pensions are an unnecessary expense of public employers, we should remind them that 85% of the money that is given out in pensions in New York remains in New York and contributes to the economy of New York. Any businessmen who complain that our public pensions are costing too much, forgets that the middle class is spending this money in their communities and on their businesses.

Beyond pensions, let us not forget that teacher unions have worked for security in schools, better conditions for teachers and students, educational advancement and have kept a balance between teachers and management. I saw a bumper sticker recently that said "WE ARE THE UNIONS – THE PEOPLE WHO GAVE YOU THE WEEKEND." What a contrast to the old statement of management that said "IF YOU DON'T COME IN SUNDAY, DON'T COME IN MONDAY."

So when the public says that they love teachers, they cannot say that they hate the union, because they are one and the same. We have good schools in *(continued on page 3)*

## Members Enjoy a Festive Holiday Celebration at RC 21 December Meeting

The holiday spirit was alive and well at our December meeting. Joan Perrini and her elves served up goodies, a delicious hot and cold buffet and gift raffles along with information on issues facing retirees and NYSUT members with guest speaker, Tom Laraia - NYSUT Political Action Committee.



December, 2013

Over-worked elf

## LIRDC

(LI Retiree Delegates Council)

### Legislative Luncheon

Meet your NYSUT Delegates and NY State Political Leaders from LI. Get a chance to speak with our lawmakers at this crucial time when Social Security, Medicare, Pensions, and Education are being unfairly attacked.

**Day & Date:** Friday, May 9, 2014  
**Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Woodbury Country Club  
**Cost:** \$40 per person (Check payable to LIRDC\*\*\*)  
*\*\*\* Contact your retiree chapter President for payment information*  
**First registered basis - Space is limited!**  
**Respond as soon as possible before April 1, 2014**

Mail check and form below to: Louise Levine-Rosenthal, 4 Admiral Road, Massapequa, NY 11758

### LIRDC - Legislative Luncheon Registration Form

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

District retired from: \_\_\_\_\_

# of persons attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Check Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to be seated with \_\_\_\_\_ (accommodation as best as possible)

Your choice(s) of entrée are \_\_\_\_\_  
 chicken, salmon, vegetarian

# Bits and Pieces

## **Nominations for RC 21 Elections to be held on May 13, 2014 at General Meeting**

Positions are: President  
1st and 2nd Vice President  
Treasurer  
Secretary  
Three delegates to NYSUT  
Two alternate positions for delegate

**All Terms are 3 years**

If you would like to run for an office please send your application to:

**Mary Schlaikjer**  
78 Bay Avenue  
Huntington, NY 11743

**BEFORE April 23, 2014**

You should include your name and position you wish to run for.

## **Continuing Education Grant Applications**

May be picked up at our next  
**General Membership Meeting on:**  
**March 11, 2014 @ 10:15 AM**  
West Islip Public Library.  
Applications are due on or before  
**April 30, 2014.**

## **Israel, Jordan and the Holy Land May 16 - 26, 2014**

Trip planned by Joan, Simonne, & Marilyn  
Interested parties call RC21 at 631-587-1151



or



Linda at 631-383-9413.

*(This program is NOT endorsed by NYSUT)*



***WE NEED YOU!***

*The Benefits Committee is looking  
for new members.*

*Possible trips on the agenda are:*

**Fall 2014**

**Lake Winnepesaukee in NH for Fall Foliage**

**Spring 2014**

**Oheka and Sagamore**

**Spring 2015**

**3 day trip to Biltmore Hotel**

*Do you have good ideas for trips?*

*Do you want to help RC 21?*

*Call Simonne Harkavy at 661 - 4446*

*(Weekend from page 1)* New York because we have good teachers supported by a good union. As retirees, we need to examine how our union continues to support our benefits and our educational systems, which includes our children and grandchildren who attend our public school system. And let us never forget that we have a comfortable life in retirement because of our work in the union and we wish that all Americans could share this benefit. As the philosopher and author, George Santayana wrote: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

*The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits.*

[Albert Einstein](#)

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A Publication of NYSUT Retiree Council 21

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Forward changes in addresses/names to NYSUT and/or your local

Dorothy Zuckerman, NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant  
631-273-8822; e-mail: dzuckerm@nysutmail.org

## RC 21 Meeting Dates 2014

### General Membership

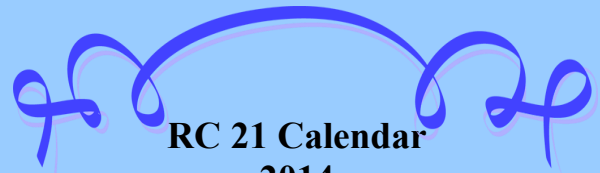
West Islip Public Library  
Higbie Lane/Montauk Hwy.  
10:15 - 12 noon

January and February No Meetings
March 18, 2014
April 22, 2014
<b>Change of Date</b> <b>May 13, 2014</b> Election of officers & delegates
June 17, 2014 Awards Luncheon

### Executive Board Meetings

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

January - No Meeting	
February 4, 2014	April 1, 2014
<b>March 11, 2014</b>	May 6, 2014
June 3, 2014	



## RC 21 Calendar 2014

### Upcoming Events

#### Spring Trip TBA

May 9, 2014  
Legislative Luncheon  
Woodbury Country Club  
(See flyer in Newsletter)

May 16, 2014  
Israel, Jordan & the Holy Land  
12 Day Trip

June 17, 2014  
Awards Luncheon

June, 2014  
Day at the Races

July, 2014 After the 4th  
Steam Train Ride to Griswald Pond Dam in  
Essex County, Connecticut

Get details & registration forms online at  
our website:

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

and at General Membership Meetings  
Reservations accepted on a first-come basis.