

The CIRTAtion

Central Islip Retired Teachers Association

March April 2017



Wheeler Road School 1913

- CITA contract from beginning to present
- Defending our contract
- Entitlements? Bah Humbug

CIRTA Meetings: March 22

All Meetings are at the
NYSUT Offices at Citibank
office building, 150 Motor
Parkway, Hauppauge NY
at 10 AM.

Inside This Issue:

President's Message
Irene Spero 1

My Heart Cries Over Sy's
Passing by Phyllis Pacheco 1,4

A Tribute to a Cherished
Friend by Philip Griffith 2

Remembering Norman
Nadeau by Philip Griffith 5

What Now?
By James Nohe 8

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James Nohe
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President's Message by Irene Spero

It is nice to know that Spring is just around the corner. With the nicer weather, you might be thinking about going on a trip. If you are, you might like to look at a new travel program endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits. This program from Premier World Discovery is designed to help you and family members travel together on journeys across the world. This company specializes in traditional escorted tours, unique rail tours, one hotel/ unpack once tours, and river cruise charters. Since 1999, it has developed more than 70 travel programs around the world including fully escorted tours, private chartered European river cruises, and more. If you are interested, you can call toll-free 877-953-8687 Monday through Friday 11 AM to 8 PM. Be sure to mention that you are a NYSUT member when you call or visit <http://premiumworlddiscovery.com/NYSUTMBC/>

Our next meeting is Wednesday, March 22 at 10AM. It will be in the Citibank Building (150 Motor Parkway Hauppauge) at the NYSUT office on the 3rd floor. There will be much to talk about since our last meeting in November. I hope you will attend.

My Heart Cries Over Sy's Passing by Phyllis Pacheco

My heart cries over Sy's passing. We were colleagues in the high school. He was much beloved by the students and teachers. No one worked as hard. He came in very early in the morning and his room was filled with teachers who had to talk to him until the students came in. Then after school he would meet with the CITA leaders. Sometimes there would be a meeting with the negotiating committee. After the building closed, Sy and Phil Griffith and others would go to the diner. If there was an evening meeting in the high

See page 4

A Tribute to a Cherished Friend by Philip Griffith



Phil Griffith and Sy Ginsberg



Sy Ginsberg

On November 30, 2016, Seymour Ginsberg passed away at the age of 87. Sy was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey and raised in Trenton. Sy was married to his beloved Marilyn for 44 years and together had four daughters, Linda Miller, Marlene Cohen, Robyn Symon, and Golda Paul. Sy was the grandfather of Miranda, Brandon, Benjamin and Geoffrey and great grandfather of Madison, Kira, Isabela, and Leland. Rabbi Anthony Fratello conducted services at Beth Israel Memorial Chapel. Our condolences go to his family.

Seymour Ginsburg was a social studies teacher in Central Islip Junior and Senior High Schools from 1960 to 1991. Prior to entering college, Seymour was a Sargent in the U.S. Army. He earned the combat infantryman's badge and several citations for bravery during the Korean War.

Sy was recognized as an outstanding teacher.

The Parent Teachers Association presented him with the prestigious Jenkins Award for his service to Central Islip students and community. This special honor was inaugurated in 1946 as a living memorial to young people who lost their lives in World War II. Clifford N. Jenkins son of Margaret Jenkins was one of those who made the supreme sacrifice. Mrs. Jenkins was both N.Y. State and National PTA president from 1944-47 and 1961-64 respectively. The Central Islip Board of Education presented him with a diamond pin for his 25 years of service to the C.I. students. The Long Island Directors of the New York State United Teachers gave Sy an award for service to our teaching profession and teacher unionism. He is also the recipient of AFT's Diamond Service Award for his union service.

Upon his retirement, Seymour Ginsberg received special awards from C.I.T.A., NYSUT, AFT, and AFL-CIO for his local, state and national contributions to the causes of education and unionism and a synopsis is cited as follows:

- 1962-1963 Chairperson Legislative Committee
- 1964-1965 Chairperson Contract Research Committee
- 1966-1968 C.I.T.A. President
- 1969-1991 Chairperson Negotiations Committee
- 1969-1971 Delegate to National Education Association
- 1969-1971 Delegate to N.Y. State Teachers Association
- 1972-1991 Delegate to American Federation of Teachers
- 1972-1991 Delegate to New York United Teachers
- 1980-1991 Building Representative C.I. High School

A Tribute to a Cherished Friend by Philip Griffith

Sy also served as our C.I.T.A. representative to the Long Island Federation of Labor and the N.Y. State AFL-CIO. In each of these positions, he rendered loyal service and outstanding leadership.

Sy credited his mother for his devotion to the union movement. She was a proud member of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union founded in 1900 and one of America's most progressive organizations led by the great labor leader David Dubinsky from 1932 to 1982.

In his play "Long Day's Journey into Night," Eugene O'Neill wrote, "The past is present isn't it? It's the future too." From Mother Ginsburg, to son, Sy, to his union brothers and sisters in Central Islip. Sy was the elder statesman and mentor who trained much of the union leadership especially me. He was a knowledgeable instructor about labor history and its humanistic traditions. President Lyndon Johnson said, "A president's hardest job is not to do what is right but rather to know what is right." Sy had the wisdom to know what was right and the courage to do the right thing.

Sy's mettle was often tested but never more than during the strike in 1970. That year negotiations were bitter and intense. It was our first collective bargaining sessions since the advent of the Taylor Law in 1968. The Board of Education was attempting to hold onto its unilateral authority. The union was asserting its demand for a fair and just contract. Teachers were being intimidated by administration throughout the district. The negotiations went through the stages of impasse, mediation and factfinding. The C.I.T.A. membership voted to strike. During the following negotiation session, the C.I.T.A. was served with an injunction and court order not to strike. This action by the Board of Education incensed the union leadership and the strike became a reality. 85% of the teachers honored our picket lines. The union strike lasted two days, but the C.I.T.A. held out for its demands and won a victory which has lasted for years. President Martin Feinberg and Chief Negotiator, Sy were sentenced to jail, the C.I.T.A. was fined and every teacher lost four days pay. In its vindictiveness, the district deducted the four days salary shortly before the Christmas/Hanukah holidays. During this crisis, Sy never wavered. His leadership and courage were crucial to our success. It was during these watershed events that the union was forged and the Board and administration now recognized their power was no longer absolute. Since that time, C.I.T.A. leadership has changed and subsequent boards of education were elected. Today there's a mutual respect, and we attempt to work together to improve education.

Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Non cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good." Those were the pioneering days of teacher militancy. Sy led us from an era of collective begging into a new dawn

A Tribute to a Cherished Friend by Philip Griffith

of collective bargaining. For 22 years, Sy Ginsburg was our chief negotiator and over the years was superbly assisted by Diane Lysaght, Jim Nohe, Peg Misner, Ed Rooney and Dennis Weber. During that long span, our original one page contract grew in words, phrases, paragraphs and became C.I.T.A.'s declaration of independence and constitution. Sy was our Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Both active and retired teachers owe our good life to his efforts.

I vividly remember our many discussions well into the evening after long meetings, negotiating sessions or grievance hearings. I'm reminded of the Woody Allen lines whereby an inquirer asks, "Why does a rabbi always answer a question with a question?" The rabbi responded, "Why shouldn't a rabbi answer a question with a question?" A few of us would sit around Sy and marvel at his knowledge of American and labor history, politics, bargaining, sports, literature, and antiques. Throughout all our exchanges of ideas on tactics and strategy, he exhibited a humility to be admired. As per his teaching, he mastered the Aristotelian art of questioning. Oh how I miss those discussions with him.

For me it's impossible to summarize in a single article what Sy meant to me personally and to all of us collectively. I close with the words of William Thackeray:

"To endure is greater than to dare;
To tire out hostile fortune;
To be daunted by no difficulty;
To keep heart when all have lost it;
To go through intrigue spotless;
To forego ambition when the end is gained;

My Heart Cries Over Sy's Passing by Phyllis Pacheco from p. 1

school Sy would attend and get home about midnight. And then the next day he would have the same grueling schedule. The kids loved Mr. Ginsburg and Sy was a devoted teacher. When Sy had his heart attack the entire building went into mourning mode. They cheered when he recovered and returned to his busy schedule. A personal note, when I retired and went to retiree meetings in Suffolk and Long Island and in New York State I found, of course, that the CI contract was the best, the most protective, the most superior in benefits of all contracts. We owe our union's strength and magnificent contracts to Sy and the other founders like Phil and Dick and others who gave of themselves so we could be professional teachers and enjoy our retirements. Phyllis Pacheco

Remembering Norman Nadeau by Philip Griffith



Sy Ginsberg and Norm Nadeau

Longevity of age has its advantages; however it has its sorrows such as the passing of a colleague union brother, and friend such as Norm Nadeau.

Norman died on May 13, 2016 at the age of 83 from lung disease. Nadeau was born in Biddeford, Maine, population 21,337. It was founded in 1616 and is the site of one of the earliest European settlements in the United States. Norm was a small town boy and a big league man.

Upon graduation from the college Norman enlisted in the U.S. Army. Having received an honorable discharge, he began teaching in a small upstate Village. In 1959, he began his career in the Central Islip school district as a science teacher in the high school and retired in 1988. He was affectionately called "Stormin Norman."

If you're looking for someone who would tell you the unvarnished truth, Norman was your man. He chose his words selectively and expressed them directly. He was a card-carrying member of the old school who believed in objective right and wrong, truth and lies, justice and injustice. Those of us who grew to know him accepted his firmly held opinions about discipline, tradition and education. His moral compass was often my guide in difficult decisions. He never compromised his principles when it involved the integrity of our profession. His standards of excellence were high and he expected the same from students and colleagues.

The novelist, Ernest Hemingway said, "The way to learn whether a person's trustworthy is to trust him." After I appointed Norman as chairperson of the grievance committee, he never let me down. He along with Dick Climo, Peggy Russel and Walt Wiwczar were the C. I. T. A.'s squad of "Untouchables." Each was intelligent, energetic and passionate about protecting every clause in our contract. They diligently maintained every teacher's right to due process and a fair hearing. Their preparation was meticulous through all four grievance levels. For Norman, the school day often extended into the evening with research, interviews, writing, telephone calls, meetings and hearings. The Polish born American immigrant and humorist, Leo Rosten was asked what is the purpose of life? He wrote, "The purpose is to be useful, to be responsible, to be compassionate. It is above all to matter, to count, to stand for something, to have made some difference that you have lived it all." For 33 years as a teacher and 20 years as a leader in our union, Norm served both students and colleagues and made a difference in their lives.

In 1968, when C.I.T.A. negotiated its first contract under the Taylor law, some administrators had no respect for our contract. These same administrators

Remembering Norman Nadeau by Philip Griffith

caused the union the file hundreds of grievances. Many of these grievances might today seem trivial. They are a sampling of the administrative obstruction in our early days of teacher representation. Without a Norman Nadeau and a strong grievance committee our contract would be worthless. Teachers would not have these professional rights if the following grievances were not filed, processed and won:

- 1) · posting of' all vacancies in promotional, extracurricular, coaching, and teaching positions
- 2) · sabbatical' leaves
- 3) · interschool transfers
- 4) · assignments in writing on June 1st
- 5) · equitable teaching assignments
- 6) · duty free lunch periods
- 7) · child care leave
- 8) · preparation periods
- 9) · right to union representation at an administrative conference
- 10) · ability to remain in the same building
- 11) · telephone for private outside calls
- 12) · lockable space
- 13) · notification of change in student's grade
- 14) · notification of cut in supply budget
- 15) · safe, groomed athletic fields
- 16) · payment for coaching and extra-curricular activities

Without the vigilance of Norm, the following are the conditions of employment that would exist:

- 1) · guidance counselors would be assigned over 350 students
- 2) · a longer school day
- 3) · additional bus, cafeteria, hall, and playground duties
- 4) · six teaching periods and a duty
- 5) · over four teaching preparations
- 6) · teachers assigned to storage rooms
- 7) · teachers without desks
- 8) · teachers assigned as permanent substitutes
- 9) · teachers fired without due process
- 10) · two classes in one room
- 11) · coaches laundering all athletic uniforms
- 12) · new positions created without negotiations
- 13) · teachers' aides used as administrative aides

Remembering Norman Nadeau by Philip Griffith

- 14)· faculty meetings without notice
- 15)· rooms with temperatures below 50 and above 100 degrees
- 16)· withholding teachers' paychecks for disciplinary reasons
- 17)· teachers directing buses
- 18)· unilateral changes in evaluation forms
- 19)· sexual discrimination
- 20)· loss of Constitutional Rights of Freedom of Speech and Dress
- 21)· hundreds of unjust reprimands sitting in teachers' personnel files

What about the students? Did the Grievance Committee protect their rights in our contract? They sure did. They were forced to fight for the most basic of items. Grievances were constantly filed to obtain:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1)· textbooks | 13)· drinking fountains |
| 2)· workbooks | 14)· electricity for shops |
| 3)· chalkboards | 15)· ventilating systems |
| 4)· bulletin boards | 16)· doors on lavatory stalls |
| 5)· venetian blinds | 17)· composition paper |
| 6)· television sets | 18)· ditto fluid |
| 7)· computers | 19)· paper clips |
| 8)· wall screens | 20)· repairing broken windows |
| 9)· maps | 21)· art supplies |
| 10)· shelving | 22)· tissues |
| 11)· pencils | |
| 12)· replacement of missing floor/
ceiling tiles | |

The long list represents a non inclusive summary of the work of the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee under the leadership of Norman Nadeau. It's an incredible record of fighting for all of us. Norm was proud to be a teacher. He made no apologies for our professional progress from collective begging to collective bargaining. Standing up for teachers' protection and students' education, he served all yesterday, today and tomorrow.

May Norm Rest in peace. May his wife Jeanette, son Michael and his family know this husband, father, grandfather, colleague, and union activist was remembered and appreciated.

What Now? by Jim Nohe

I am not going to go into President Trump's actions, hopefully you already know how they are hurting our country and the world. So what do we do as citizens of the world, U.S. citizens, educators, senior citizens and retirees? First in my opinion, we must fight, we must take action and we must resist. On the national level the risks to us are particularly in Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and revoking the Dodd-Frank Legislation.

First, I resent the term entitlements regarding Social Security and Medicare. We put money into both these funds, for me over forty years, we are not getting something for free, we earned these benefits. Paul Ryan, Speaker of the house, and many Republicans say these programs are in terrible trouble. This group is entitled to their own opinions, but not their own facts. Right now Social Security is still taking in more money than it is paying out. Right now Social Security will pay full benefits until approximately 2034, and if nothing changes 70% of benefits afterwards. With the economy improving and more workers contributing those numbers will probably improve. The maximum contribution in 2017 for workers is \$127,200. If that number was increased to \$200,000, it is estimated that the system would be able to provide full benefits for 70 years. Also, Social Security contributions are only on earned income not all income. If it was on all income these years of full benefits would be greater. These people contributing a larger amount would get increased benefits. Why would anyone be against this? The S.S. fund consists of contributions from the employees (the workers) and the employer. Many Republican legislators are philosophically against raising the rate because it affects employer profits.

Now let's look at Medicare! Medicare is an absolutely terrific program. Medicare pays 100% of hospital costs and 80% of doctor's payments. In Central Islip when you reach 65 you must sign up for Medicare part A&B. The district provides a supplement that covers 20% of the doctor's charge and drug coverage both under the Empire Plan. The worker pays 1.45% of earned income into the fund, it again is matched by the employer. This would increase solvency for many years if the rate was increased to 2.00%. Again many Republicans don't want to decrease profits of employers!

Next, we have Medicaid! This provides healthcare for families, individuals and their children, who have limited income. It is a federal program that is administered by the states. Paul Ryan wants to reduce the amount, get the federal government out of the program. Their idea is to give block grants to the states, with little or no oversight. This means there would be 50 different programs. How would that affect us? Sixty two percent of Medicaid goes to Long Term Care now. (that's us) If it goes to the states who knows!

Next we have the Dodd-Frank Act, and the Consumer Financial Protective Bureau. The Todd-Frank Act was created because of the 2008 financial meltdown

What Now? by Jim Nohe

and the great depression (How quickly we forget). It forces banks with strict regulations on reserves for loan losses and much tighter regulations on investments. It has a rule called fiduciary rule that requires brokers to act in a client's best interest, rather than seek the highest profit for themselves when providing retirement advice. Who could be against this, it is great for the consumer (us). Well Donald Trump and the Republicans. The Donald said, "He knows so many people who can't borrow money just because of the rules and regulations to Dodd-Frank." On Friday February 3, 2017 the Dow Industrials closed up \$20,017 the largest score ever. The Dow consists of 30 different companies many of them banks.

Next we have the Consumer Financial Protective Bureau, that was created to protect us as the consumer. Thank you Elizabeth Warren! Before this if a consumer had a dispute with a bank or financial institution you are required to go to arbitration. This is in the very small print of the credit card application or debit card application. They would be represented by their attorneys against you. If you lost you would be required to pay court costs. The chances of winning are slim and none and slim just left. Now the consumer files a complaint with the Consumer Financial Bureau (CFB), they in a sense represent the consumer. The CFB sends a notice to the bank or financial institution that they must respond to, in a limited time period, with a resolution. The CFB can side with the consumer, or even fine the institution. Great for us as the consumer, not so great for the banks because they must respond. The Republican congress wants to reduce regulator assistance to the consumer (us).

Next at the state level, in New York State in the November elections 2017 there will be a vote on whether there should be a constitutional convention. This vote comes up every twenty years. If the vote is no (as it should be) it will come up in twenty years (yea). If they vote yes there is a procedure set up to have a constitutional convention with elected delegates to make changes to the N.Y.S. constitution. Our pension is guaranteed by the state constitution, but this could change. I don't think that would affect us who are retired, but then again I thought Hillary Clinton would win the election. They could make our pensions taxable in N.Y.S. or cancel the Triborough Decision which states contracts continue as if a contract expires with all benefits and terms and conditions of employment. Nothing can get better for us only worse.

So what to do! Obviously vote No. Start now tell everybody to vote No, if you're a snowbird make sure you have an absentee ballot, contribute to Vote/Cope, speak to your local state legislators.

These are trying times both on the Federal and State level. We must stand up, speak up, and make a difference for all of us.