

CITATION

CENTRAL ISLIP TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, LOCAL 2552, NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO
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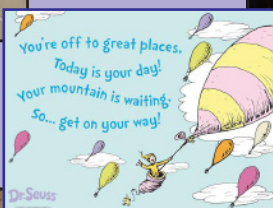
"Oh, The Places You'll Go!" O'Neill School Welcomes Back CITA Retirees for PARP *by Tara Maguire*

"You're off to great places, today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting, so...get on your way!"
These inspirational words rang through my classroom
as we welcomed our guest reader to our class.

On Wednesday, February 28th the O'Neill
School warmly welcomed four very special edu-
cators back to the Central Islip community as guest
readers for PARP. Maryann Bonis, Elizabeth Daly,
Brian Roethgen, and Debbie Schwartz shared pic-
ture books with children who sat before them wide
eyed and full of excitement. In some instances, like
myself, our guest reader brought back the many fond
memories you had of sitting in school before her when

she was your teacher. I've always known the Central
Islip Teachers to be a dedicated group, both when I
was a student and as an educator. It's heartwarming
that some continue to demonstrate their dedication to
the Central Islip children even after they have retired.
Thank you, Maryann, Betty, Brian and Debbie for your
continued support and dedication to our children.

A tremendous thank you to Allison Philips for
organizing such a powerful experience for our stu-
dents. In the upcoming weeks, this amazing experi-
ence continues at the Morrow School, thanks to Mau-
reen Esposito. Oh, the places our CI students will go,
thanks to the hard work and dedication of our teachers!





From the President's Desk

Michael Romano, President
Central Islip Teachers Association

Welcome to the OK Corral

Safety, whether it be the illusion of safety or the actual securing of our schools, has jumped to the forefront of nearly every school related discussion since the tragedy that recently occurred in Florida. The President has Trump-eted the need to arm teachers. I do believe that his comment was that if the teachers were armed they would have "shot the hell out of him!" I could stray far afield now and point out that this kind of rhetoric from the President of the United States is incredibly un-Presidential and only panders to the crowd who needs to get real belts instead of ropes to hold up their pants while they endeavor to put the wheels back on their respective houses!

We are TEACHERS! Our job is to educate the children in a safe environment. It is NOT our job to become armed bodyguards. This idea of armed teachers only strengthens the opinion of the ignorant that we don't do anything worthwhile during the day. There are those who have totally abandoned their parental responsibilities and now say that we should be teaching their children basic manners and life skills, skills and social interaction abilities that they should have down cold before they ever step into the classroom. I guess that's our job now, and there are those who now want teachers to also serve guard duty. We must be careful not to jump to a knee-jerk reaction to this situation. It is my

opinion that arming staff members is a destructive notion. As President of the CITA it is my job to safeguard your rights and working conditions. It is not my job to allow teachers to be placed into positions that are inherently outside of their job description and which potentially place their lives and/or livelihood in danger each and every day. A teacher with a gun is a teacher who must worry every second of the day about lawsuits, about accidental discharge, about taking a life, about having their gun taken by a student during a fight, etc. We have had students try to take the gun out of the holster of a uniformed SCPD officer at the HS. If there are students willing to try that they won't blink at grabbing for the weapon of an armed teacher.

The district needs to improve its security procedures. I have proposed changes in the procedures for admitting visitors to the High School Principal. The proposed changes are grounded in common sense and accountability, not in firepower. Those procedures would work in every building and to that end I have had discussions with the Superintendent and the President of the Board of Education. The district needs to adopt strict security protocols to keep up with our ever changing environment. What we do not need is an armed CITA militia.



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Professional Rights and Responsibilities

Adrian Gonzalez

Public Relations

Melissa Romano

Teacher Education and Professional Standing

Michele Celenza



A F L • C I O

Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court Case- What the Janus Case is Really About

by Tom Kuhn, Vice President



The case is challenging the 45-year-old precedent that 23 states have used to determine wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of public employees' jobs. As the Illinois solicitor general eloquently argued at the Supreme Court, these 23 states decided that, for labor peace and the efficiency of services, public employees can be represented by a union, and, as long as the union represents everyone, those who do not want to join may instead pay a "fair share" fee. This fee is meant to compensate the union for bargaining contracts and other services; non-members are not required to pay anything toward any political

activity by the union.

On Monday, February 26th the Supreme Court began listening to the oral arguments in the Janus Case. The right wing launched attack after attack on unions and on what collective bargaining gains for working people, those they serve, and their communities. Indeed, Justice Sotomayor nailed the right wing's argument, pointing out, "You're basically arguing, do away with unions."

This case isn't about petitioner Mark Janus. It's about defunding unions. It's about who will have power in our country—working people or big corporate interests. That's why it's being funded by the Koch brothers, the DeVos family, and other wealthy and corporate interests. First, they pledged

\$80 million to "defund and defang" unions. Then, the Kochs, after getting the Trump tax cut, upped the ante with \$400 million to undermine public education and "break" the teachers' unions. And now, with the Janus case, they are pushing to prevent workers from having a union at all. Why? Because unions are our vehicle to fight for and win a better life for people, and corporate interests see that as a threat to their power.

Study after study shows that union workers have higher wages, better benefits, a more secure retirement, and a voice in the workplace. We cannot revert to a time when workers were systematically denied even the most fundamental rights—a voice and a better life.

Planning for Retirement

by Maureen Esposito



No matter how far along you are in your career, careful financial and retirement planning are so important.

NYSTRS' Pension & Retirement Education Program (PREP) is designed to help members of all ages accomplish that. Seminars are available on NYSTRS benefits, financial planning, Social Security, estate planning, retirement—a new beginning, and the retirement process.

PREP seminars are free and are held throughout the spring across Long Island. Your spouse/companion can attend too, but you

must make a reservation.

Spring 2018 Locations:

**Hauppauge- March 23 (Friday)
& April 19 (Thursday)**

Radisson Hotel Hauppauge- 110
Motor Pkwy., Hauppauge

Melville- March 24 (Saturday)

Melville Marriott
1350 Walt Whitman Road,
Melville

Westbury- April 20 (Friday)

Nassau BOCES
1 Merrick Avenue, Westbury

Make reservations by calling (800) 348-7298 Ext. 6180, weekdays from 8:30-4:15. When calling, you must provide your Employee ID Or Social Security number, email address, and home phone number. Seminars run 8:30

am to 3:30 pm; check in begins at 8:00 am.

SEMINARS FILL UP QUICKLY,
SO BOOK EARLY!



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@citeachers
to 81010.**

The Scholarship Drive is in Full Swing

by Jennifer Cicero



The 2018 Scholarship Drive is in full swing. Interviews for potential scholarship recipients will be held on April 23rd, so we will need to know exactly how much money the CITA will be donating at that time. It is impossible for me to thank each and every person who donates which is why I am writing this article. I know it seems like the Community Liaison and Scholarship Committees are always asking for something. Whether it is your money, non-perishable food, or your time, we always need your help. And when it comes to the scholarship drive, you never let us down. When I say “us”, I mean not only the committee but the students who desperately need our help. Every penny that the Scholarship Committee collects goes directly to the students. So every donation counts! Thank you to everyone who has already donated. You’re making dreams come true!

Please see me or another Scholarship Committee member as soon as possible to make your donation. You can make checks payable to the CITA Scholarship Fund. If you don’t usually contribute, I ask that you reconsider. This is for the children of this great community. They need our help. We are asking for **thirty dollars (\$30) or more** from every CITA member. Below is a list of the scholarship committee members in each building who are collecting. Let’s have another amazing year of contributions. Our students deserve it. **And remember, every donation counts!!**

The scholarship committee members are Charlene Murphy – ECC, Yanick Frederic – Cordello, Yvette Elliard-Liburd & Jill Esposito – O’Neill, Christine Wesnofske – Mulvey, Siobhan Brunkard & Jill Esposito – Morrow, Marlene L’Hommedieu & Gwen Jacobowitz – Mulligan, Allison Dorn & Maria LaRocca – Reed, and Jennifer Cicero, Fran Alabau, Greg Alpers, Bob Bonfe, Orlando Diaz, Amy Harrington and Sandy Morrow – High School.

Save the Date

The last few months of school are very busy months for the Community Liaison and Scholarship Committees and we will need your help. None of the functions that we hold would be successful without the help of the many CITA members who volunteer. Here are some dates to mark off on your calendar:

Monday, March 26th at 7pm – Awards Night

Friday, April 13th at 6pm – Movie Night

Monday, May 14th at 7pm – Awards Night with distribution of scholarships

Saturday, June 2nd at 10am – Wellness Fair



Planning on Retiring? CITA Retiree Reflections

Are you planning on retiring? Contact Tara Maguire @ citamemberservices@gmail.com to request the CITA Retiree Reflection Questionnaire. Your responses to the questionnaire will be published in an article recognizing CITA’s 2018 retirees in the May/June Citation. You may submit this questionnaire along with a photo that you would like to be published in the CITation by Friday, April 20th to Tara Maguire at O’Neill School, or you may email your responses to me at citamemberservices@gmail.com.

School Safety: Who is Responsible?

by Michele Celenza



It has taken yet another catastrophic event to finally produce dialogue focusing on safety in the school setting. As an educator, a parent, and a grandparent of school aged children, I am deeply concerned and angry. Parents say goodbye to their children in the morning and see them off to school expecting them to return home safely at the end of the day. I believe that is part of my charge as their teacher, but I can't do it alone. I will not pretend to know the answers, but I do know some of the factors that contribute to the recurring nightmares, the largest being a lack of shared information and ongoing communication between all parties involved. Why is it that obvious warning signs are not shared and discussed in earnest? Looking back to the tragedy at Columbine in 1999 and now to the most recent in Parkland, Florida, it seems we haven't learned much in the way of deterring school shootings.

Reading accounts of alleged school shooters it becomes clear that emotional issues, anger, inappropriate behaviors, and obsessive violent thoughts were observed on numerous occasions. And yet, they were still able to take the lives of innocent people, many of

whom were just beginning their journeys in life. We must stop downplaying troubling behaviors because of the child's age, home life, or emotional state. Now is not the time to dismiss any warning signs of possible conflict within a student. That mindset begets heartache and can change the lives of families forever. School districts have disciplinary policies in place. If you take a look on the Central Islip School District Website you will find the numerous School Board policies outlined very clearly. However, if they are not adhered to, what function do they play?

I, along with my colleagues and students, are well aware of lock down and lock out drills. Over the years we have practiced many times and have experienced a number of real incidents that required either a lockdown or a lockout. We know the protocol and procedures. The key here is to prevent real events warranting such procedures. Tighter security, along with more open communication, would be a start. We are all stretched to the max every day in school, but safety needs to be a priority more than ever. Everyone needs to be heard and more importantly listened to. Concerns should not be dismissed, but followed up and discussed with all the parties involved. Turning a blind eye is an easy recipe for potential disaster.

A New NYSED Teacher Evaluation Plan?

by Vincent Ruggiero



Last month, Commissioner Elia announced a proposal to initiate a new and less contentious teacher performance plan by the 2019-2020 school year. As part of the design, the Commissioner has begun disseminating surveys to all teachers statewide in an effort to tie public feedback to any changes made to the new teacher evaluation format.

It was nearly four years ago when Governor Cuomo referred to the original state-approved teacher evaluation plan as one of Boars Head's most popular deli meats: baloney. He could neither comprehend nor believe over 80 percent of teachers in New York could actually be rated effective or highly effective; a real confidence booster for educators across the state.

Following his characterization, the Governor crafted a legislative state budget that directly tied an evaluation revision which included 50 percent of a teacher's rating based on student math and ELA assessment performance. Nearly a year after the Governor's plan, the Board of Regents approved a temporary freeze on the use of 3-8 state math and ELA assessments until a collaborative successor agreement could be reached.

According to the Commissioner, NYSED will begin forming stakeholder groups to collect teacher evaluation feedback and recommendations by this fall. Final recommendations, along with a revised evaluation plan, are scheduled to be presented to the NYS Board of Regents for approval by spring of 2019.

Republicans Love Freeloaders

by Christian Pisano



The Supreme Court of the United States has been instrumental in undercutting union strength for the last 45 years with a series of decisions that prevent workers from joining unions, allowing collective bargaining, and allowing unions to strike. Those decisions even occurred with more “fair” minded justices than we have now. The court now has tilted considerably more anti-worker with the seating of its newest member.

We all know Donald Trump talked a good game when it came to treating workers fairly, but the actual evidence indicates that he constantly either underpaid his employees or outright stiffed them. He arguably appointed the most anti-labor Supreme Court justice - Neil Gorsuch. Gorsuch has a history of favoring employers over employees in several work place disputes. Gorsuch actually sided with a trucking company’s decision to fire an employee because he abandoned his truck in sub-zero temperatures after losing feeling in his limbs.

Now that SCOTUS has five justices that are firmly anti-labor, the right wing of the Republican Par-

ty can finally do what it has been dreaming of: creating freeloaders in unionized work places. As it stands right now, if you don’t agree with your union’s political philosophy you still must pay what is called a shop agency fee. This money has long been used to support a union’s ability to collectively bargain. This ability to collect a shop agency fee was even affirmed by the Supreme Court in 1977. It looks like SCOTUS will overturn this long running precedent – a very unusual move by the court because most justices loathe overturning precedents. This is what the Janus V. AFSCME is all about. If I sound biased against Republicans it’s because I am. I was once a registered Republican, but the changes in the party’s platform with regard to labor have forced me to switch my allegiance.

If the Supreme Court supports Janus it will essentially allow members to free-load off the hard work of others. It would allow members not to pay dues but still benefit from the contract that the dues helped to create. Freeloaders, like Mark Janus, think a union contract is like a menu that allows you to pick and choose what you like. It’s ironic how these same Republicans incessantly complain about the “freeloading” food stamp and welfare recipients, but when it comes to union freeloaders, it is ok.

When You Think You've Got it Bad

by Adrian Gonzalez



At the time this article is being written, please know that the teachers in West Virginia are on strike and no deal is in sight. Being among the lowest paid teachers in the nation, insult was added to injury when Governor James Justice proposed a 2% raise in July followed by a 1% raise in the 2020 fiscal year and another 1% in the 2021 fiscal year. These meager raises will not cover the cost-of-living increases and the rising cost of health care. West Virginia teachers earn an average salary of \$45,622. This is significantly below the national average of \$56,383.

Teachers in the fifty-five counties in West Virginia have not swayed and have not lost their determination to fight for what they know is right. They are “55united” and they are dedicated to achieving

their goal, earning a reasonable, respectable salary. They vow to remember the politicians who let them down come November. In West Virginia, public-sector employees do not have collective bargaining rights (something that our State Constitution guarantees us). The unions do not negotiate their contracts. They must depend on the goodwill of the state legislature to pass bills that determine their salaries and raises. This makes electing politicians who are pro-education even more important.

When we relish in all that the CITA provides for us, I ask that you think of your union brothers and sisters in West Virginia and hope that they get the salaries and benefits that they deserve. In the grand scheme of things, we’ve got it pretty good with the CITA protecting our working conditions and negotiating a contract that is one of best contracts in the state of New York.



CITA End of the Year Party

Save the Date: Thursday, June 14th

On Thursday, June 14th from 5:30 pm to 10:30 pm we will be celebrating the end of the school year at the CITA End of the Year Party. CITA will be honoring our retirees and newly tenured members and acknowledging our new members and their buddies.

Save the date and join us at the Stonebridge Country Club at 2000 Raynor's Way in Smithtown. Top Hat Entertainment will be providing the music entertainment for the evening.





Empire Safety Council's Drivers Safety Course

**When: Tuesday, April 10th & Thursday, April 12th
from 4:00 pm-7:00 pm**

Where: ECC Multipurpose Room (You must enter through the ECC Main Entrance. Do not enter through the Central Office Entrance.)

Complete the form below and submit with a \$27.00 registration fee check payable to Anthony Palumbo to Mary Csorny at the ECC by Friday, April 6th.

You may bring a light snack and beverage.

Family and friends may register too!

You must bring your license/picture ID to the course, and you need to be present both days to receive credit for the course.

Name: _____ School: _____

Contact Number: _____ Check # _____



The CIRTA Retiree

CENTRAL ISLIP RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
AFFILIATED WITH NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL ED #21,
LOCAL 9521R

by Nancy Porta Libert

An Uncanny Coincidence, An Unsettling Confirmation

The headlines on February 15 produced a wave of hopelessness I've never felt before. I've opened newspapers and been shocked, angered, outraged or frightened, but never drained of hope. Another school shooting, another massacre. Other times, such news would raise my blood pressure and increase my heart rate. This time, the information flat-lined in my mind, and a genuine despair settled in.

What caused the difference? Was there no despair after Sutherland Springs, Las Vegas, Orlando, San Bernardino, Aurora, Columbine, Fort Hood or Newton? Was this a version of "the last straw?"

In a blame-throwing frame of mind, my thoughts centered on the polarization of American politics with respect to gun control. Culturally, mindsets have continued to crystallize, to harden. All along, many of us had expectations that modest and sensible legislation would have been enacted on a national level long before this, yet compromise on banning assault weapons, in-depth background checks, and more challenging registration requirements has not occurred. What, in heaven or hell, is the matter with us? Have other countries made progress in preventing such tragedies? I went to the internet to find out.

Scotland had a mass killing at Dunblane Primary School in 1996 that took the lives of 16 children and one teacher and wounded 32. By 1997, the UK's Conservative government under John Major banned all privately owned, cartridge-loading handguns with one exception. That same year, when Tony Blair and the Labor Party were voted in, his administration outlawed that one exception. The result: no school shootings since. Australia's reaction was similar: After a mass shooting at Port Arthur in 1996 left 35 dead and 23 wounded, the Australian government took almost immediate steps to create strict gun control legislation which included, among other things, thorough-vetting registration, serial number recordings, and weapons categorization that imposed restrictions for ownership. Result: no mass shootings since. Take a look at Japan's gun control laws and you will not be surprised that they are on the very bottom of the world's gun-relat-

ed death toll statistics.

If other nations dealt effectively with the problem decades ago, what could be the matter here at home? Is this some kind of an American problem? Are we in the grips of a cultural divide that will seriously damage our capability to function as a federal republic? To govern in a united way as the world's preeminent democracy?

Little more than a week after the shooting I was working at an overloaded, dining room table trying to archive newspaper clippings, minutes, records, and letters found in an old filing cabinet at church. Unprepared for the electrifying coincidence that was about to unfold, I opened a letter written to a former pastor from a parishioner who was, at that time, in England. Its contents, as if by metaphysical magic, caused the intervening fifty-five years to vanish, and its subject matter became one with the existing moment. I offer it in its entirety:

December 5, 1963

Dear Rev. Daley,

Thank you for your kind letter. I enclose a recent photo of my three sons—you may remember the last sentence of *The City of Man*, although I wrote it first in 1956. The disaster in Dallas first reached us over B.B.C. radio at 11 p.m. Our being so far from home helped to make the news seem chillingly unreal, and I still cannot quite believe it. The British have been sympathetic and concerned, but one feels underneath the sorrow a great doubting about the American way of life. The image in many European minds of Americans as hysterical adolescents and American homes as private arsenals, was given much encouragement by this outbreak of madness and murder in Texas. They liked Kennedy, but suspicion of America itself runs very deep.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

Sincerely,

W. Warren Wagar (signed in script)

I stood staring at each letter's less-than-perfect ink distribution, so typical of those old, standard typewriters. But the content was clear. More than half a century ago, much of the world saw our nation in a way that we may just be coming to terms with today.