

# CITATION

CENTRAL ISLIP TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, LOCAL 2552, NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO  
VOLUME XXXIX, NUMBER 1 September/October 2017

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 **100s**  
**OF MILLIONS!**



NYS Constitutional Convention

**Yes, you read that right.**

**Albany wants to spend hundreds of millions of your taxpayer dollars on a constitutional convention,** even as class sizes grow and educators

are asked to do more with less. And what will those millions buy? Return trips to Albany for state legislators, since most convention delegates will likely already hold office. And since double dipping is allowed, lawmakers can collect salaries as elected officials *and* as delegates.



**New York's constitution protects the fundamental rights we enjoy as state citizens,**



including **free public education,** the **right to unionize** and **retirement security.**



New York State Constitution

Holding a constitutional convention gives delegates free rein to overhaul the entire document.

Your taxpayer

**MONEY**

**\$100s of millions in tax dollars wasted, and our rights up for grabs?** Heck, NO.



**On Nov. 7, remember to VOTE**

[www.NoNewYorkConvention.org](http://www.NoNewYorkConvention.org)

**nysut**  
A Union of Professionals

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## From the President's Desk

**Michael Romano, President**  
Central Islip Teachers Association

### Welcome Back

Welcome back one and all! The 2017-2018 school year has arrived and, as usual, there is disaster in the air. We are facing a vote in November to have a State Constitutional Convention. This vote can come around once every 20 years. It is very clearly being pushed by the anti-union, big business interests and their political cronies in Albany. A constitutional convention will be run by the politicians, NOT by the people. Please do not believe the misinformation and pandering that you will be exposed to in every media format. This Constitutional Convention cannot happen. This MUST be a NO vote for EVERY union member in New York State! A convention would open the New York State constitution and leave vulnerable the very protections that make New York unions the strongest in the nation. Your ability to have a defined retirement, the safeguards that keep the State from changing your retirement, and the ability to organize are but a few of the protections that are in the constitution. Let me be clear: This is NOT a Republican vs. Democrat issue. This is not a political philosophy issue. This is a survival and protection issue for EVERY union member in the state. EVERY public-sector union is at risk. Teachers, Police Officers,

Firemen, Government workers, Correction Officers, etc. are all in the same boat. Our response as union members MUST be unanimous: NO!! You MUST VOTE! Your family members MUST VOTE! Your friends MUST VOTE! We are all in danger and the danger is very real. I am not spewing rhetoric nor am I posturing. I am not Chicken Little; in this case the sky could literally fall and hit EVERY one of us in the head! You can expect your building Reps to be very vocal in their pursuit of our survival. They will be asked to personally touch base with every member...repeatedly. We will have buttons, car magnets, and lawn signs available after the next CITA Executive Board meeting on September 13<sup>th</sup>. Please wear your button proudly and put the magnet on your car because in this case the cliché couldn't be more true: United we will stand, divided we will most assuredly fall.

This is literally a once in your career event. We all need to ensure that this event does not occur because your retirement and your working conditions are at stake...in effect your Professional EVERYTHING!

Enjoy your year!



*Michael Romano, President*  
*Thomas Kuhn, Vice President*  
*Amy Harrington, Treasurer*  
*Sandy Mercurio, Secretary*  
*Melissa Romano, Editor*

### Central Islip Teachers Association

PO Box 1411  
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or visit us on the web at  
[www.centralita.org](http://www.centralita.org)

### Committee Chairpersons

#### Community Liaison Committee

Jennifer Cicero

#### Health and Welfare

Maureen Esposito

#### Member Services

Tara Maguire

#### Negotiations

Vincent Ruggiero

#### Political Action

Christian Pisano

#### Professional Rights and Responsibilities

Adrian Gonzalez

#### Public Relations

Melissa Romano

#### Teacher Education and Professional Standing

Michele Celenza



A F L • C I O

# New York State Constitutional Conventional: What's at Stake for You?

by Tom Kuhn, Vice President



In 1787, “in order to form a more perfect union” delegates assembled in Philadelphia to craft a plan for a new government that is our Constitution. A testament to their wisdom was the inclusion of an elastic clause to empower the government to address needs not foreseen by its authors, and a process for amendment so that the document could adapt to the challenges of time.

No sooner had the proposed Constitution been sent to the states for ratification than the process of amendment began. A statement of the rights of people was a glaring omission. The first ten amendments – the Bill of Rights – were immediately added to the Constitution. With the passage of time, this expression of democratic spirit became more inclusive through the amendment process: slavery was ended, citizenship conferred on the freedmen, their civil rights guaranteed, and later their right to vote protected by eliminating poll taxes that adversely affected the poor. Amendments extended the right to vote to women, and lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 in response to protests against the Vietnam War and the draft. An amendment mandated that Senators, previously selected by the state legislatures, be elected by voters in each state. In the early 20th century, defense of democracy became paramount as the country witnessed the militarization of Europe. On the eve of World War I, the 16th Amendment

laid the foundation for the federal government to collect income taxes to bolster our nation's finances. During the Depression and World War II, voters in four separation elections sent FDR to the White House, breaking the tradition of two terms established by Washington. Fear of dictatorship led to the 22nd Amendment which made the two-term tradition the law of the land. There was even an attempt to regulate public morality through an amendment outlawing the manufacture, transport and sale of alcoholic beverages. The Roaring Twenties ensued with its organized crime and bootlegging...and the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th.

Each of these changes was a tectonic shift in thought and perspective, but the original document, the Constitution, endured. That is why today, our Constitution is the oldest written plan of government.

By contrast, New York State has had four constitutions. Eight constitutional conventions have convened since the original plan of government was formulated in 1777. At three of those meetings – 1821, 1846, and 1894 – changes made to the existing plan were so pervasive that the revisions amounted to a whole new constitution. After 1894, voters approved about two-thirds of the amendments suggested by the 1938 convention, but rejected revisions put forward in 1915 and 1967.

The 1894 constitution as revised in 1938 requires that a public referendum on a constitutional convention be held every twenty years. The question will appear on the

ballot in November 2017. Should the vote be such a convention, the legislature will appropriate money and set a time for the election of delegates. When those delegates meet, all provisions of the constitution will be subject to review.

## What's at stake for you?

- The right to a free public education and public support for libraries and state universities.
- The right to have a union, collective bargaining, and job security.
- Guarantees regarding public pensions and retirement benefits (there are no ‘grandfather clauses’ – any changes will impact everyone, including retirees).
- The rights to workers’ compensation and other social welfare needs.
- Environmental protections.
- Protection against development of public lands and parks.
- Caps on state spending and debt limits, etc.

**Do you want to place the fate of public education, your union and financial security in the hands of delegates chosen by a general election?** Every individual, every group that is hostile to public employees will throw their support behind candidates who promise to re-write those sections of the constitution most important to you. Don't believe me? Look at a state like Wisconsin where the government had the power to take away public unions' right to negotiate contracts. Now the state and local government, as well as school districts, have the authority to dictate contracts, working conditions, dress codes, salaries, benefits and conditions for retirement.



Consider states like Ohio that have not fully funded their pension systems, or New Jersey where the state legislature borrowed half the money in public retirement system and is unwilling to pay it back in full. How about North Carolina where the legislature determines a universal salary schedule for all districts in the state? What about the national scene? We face an education secretary who does not believe in public education...a labor secretary who does not believe in unions or raising the minimum wage...an environmental protection agency administrator who does believe in climate change ...an attorney general who could not win approval for a federal judgeship because of his views on civil rights...billionaire cabinet members with ties to Wall Street.

**In this charged political atmosphere, can anyone guarantee that delegates elected to a NYS constitutional convention will be sympathetic to issues of greatest importance to you?**

As we get closer to November, we will hear a lot of 'noise' about corruption in state government and the need to 'root it out'. No one can argue with that, but

the real question, the important debate, will be how to accomplish it. There may be a question on the ballot about public officials convicted of a felony losing their pensions. Linked to that will be a referendum as to whether or not to hold a constitutional convention. Proponents will tell you that it is needed to 'wipe the slate clean' in ALBANY. They may even promise that certain areas of the constitution will not be touched, that they only want to propose amendments. **DO NOT BELIEVE THEM! Once opened, every area of the constitution can be scrutinized. Be aware that the 1894/1938 New York State Constitution prescribes an amendment process through the state legislature that does not require the convening of a convention! Amendments provide a 'surgical process' to pinpoint area in need of remediation without opening the whole constitution. They have worked well for the Constitution of the U.S since 1981...they can and should work well as well for New York State.**

**VOTE "NO" ON THE QUESTION OF A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION IN NOVEMBER 2017!**

## Thank You Letters

*by Jennifer Cicero*



No one can say thank you better than the person who received the award. Therefore, here are six of the many thank you letters that we have gotten from grateful seniors who received scholarships from us at the Awards Night on May 15<sup>th</sup>. \$82,000 in scholarships was awarded that night to 34 of our deserving seniors. Please take the time to read these letters. It makes the \$30 (or more) that you have donated worth it!

Dear CITA,

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude for your generosity in helping to educate the students of Central Islip, while generously donating time, energy, and money to the class of 2017. I am humbled and yet grateful to have had the opportunity to meet educators like yourselves who want to see students excel and pursue the American Dream.

During Awards Night, when I heard my name called, I felt honored and privileged to represent the students of Central Islip in receiving this prestigious award. There are no words to express my deepest gratitude for being selected as a CITA Wallach Memorial Scholarship recipient. This scholarship will be greatly used toward my education continuing in the field of science. I never thought I had the worth of receiving such an honor, but I guess going the extra mile is sometimes worth doing.

I know I have to give back to a great community who has given so much to me. My motivation has always been my family and not forgetting where I came from, and CI has had a great impact on me. I am proud to be a Musketeer. Again, thank you very much and God Bless you all.

Love,

*Dulce E Medina Rodas*

To the CITA,

Thank you for the scholarship! When I first received the award, I did not realize who Teresa Rodriguez was. Then later that night it hit me that she was my fourth grade teacher and I shed a tear. I found it somewhat fitting that my fourth grade teacher, who believed so much in me and helped so much is still helping even after she passed. Ms. Rodriguez's class was the first higher level class I took and because of it, I ended up taking advanced classes all the way up til now (where I take 5 AP classes). If it was not for her, I would not be where I am today. That is why when I attend college in the fall, I will continue to work hard and honor not only her memory, but the memories I shared with her.

Thank you again for everything,  
*Pharez Varlack*

To the CITA

I want to personally thank you for presenting me the scholarship that I received on Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. It was an honor to be chosen as one of the many candidates who applied to receive \$4,000 from the CITA at Central Islip High School. You have lightened my financial burden which allows me to focus more on the most important aspect of school, learning. I hope one day I will be able to help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me.

Thank you again for your generosity and support as it means a great deal to my family and I.

Sincerely,  
*Steven Hernandez*

Dear Central Islip Teachers Association,

Thank you for selecting me as the recipient of your extremely generous scholarship. I am still speechless. You have lightened my financial burdens which allow me to focus more on my education. I cannot thank you enough for your kindness. You are the teachers who supported me throughout my entire educational career. I would not have been anywhere close to where I am now without all of your support. You have been my greatest role models and will continue to be my inspiration. Now with your help, I will be able to pursue my dream of becoming a pediatrician. I am going to study biology as a major at Stony Brook University this upcoming semester. Thanks to you, I am one step closer to that goal. Thank you once again for your kindness and generosity. It really means a lot.

I promise I won't let you down.  
Forever bleeding purple and gold,  
*Aqsa Mabood*

Dear CITA,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing me for the Carol Pufahl Memorial Scholarship. As this year's recipient, I am grateful for the opportunities this award will provide me. I will be relying on financial aid, grants and student loans to help finance my education. Receiving this scholarship will help reduce my financial burdens and provide assistance for me as I continue pursuing my education.

The interviewing process was made more personal for me seeing familiar faces, including my fourth grade teacher Ms. S. Brunkard. The last four years, I've tried to be a well-rounded student and active citizen, so it was nice to be acknowledged for my work in the interview. The joy and appreciation I felt sitting in that room is what pushes me forward to continue giving back to the community.

Thank you again for your generosity and support. I promise you that I will work very hard and eventually give something back to others through my career.

I am proud to leave behind a positive legacy at Central Islip High School,  
With warm regards,

*Bre-Anna Johnson*

Dear CITA,

I would like to thank you for your generous grant and selecting me as a scholarship recipient of the John and Peggy Russell Memorial Scholarship. I will work to the best of my ability to honor the memory of the Russells. Due to your kind offer you have not only motivated me more, but also placed me a step closer to obtaining my dreams. I hope to get an amazing experience out of college. I want to receive my masters in journalism and minor in business. I then hope to have networked enough to have a job when I complete my time at Norfolk State University. I then want to branch off and use my minor in business to assist me in developing my own journalism company. There is nothing but big dreams in my future, and I am grateful for you in assisting me to achieve them.

Sincerely,  
*Aniyah Gaston*

## Let's Show Our Appreciation

by Adrian Gonzalez



On behalf of the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee, I would like to welcome all of you back to a new school year that promises to be extremely rewarding and overwhelmingly successful. As I told the new CITA members when I met them on August 29th, please know that you have made the most noble and wise decision in your life when you decided to teach, being the noblest of all professions, and the most intelligent decision to be part of the Central Islip Teachers' Association, Central Islip School District, and its fantastic community. Enjoy the school year!

As we move forward and the school year unfolds and becomes busy, please keep the following things in mind: your Building Representatives are your first line of defense. They are knowledgeable and eager and willing to help you when you encounter a problem. If it is determined that the issue at hand is a violation of the contract, they will provide for you a grievance form. The form must be completed in its entirety, providing as much information as possible, along with any supporting documents.

The thirtieth day of school is October 17th. Please ensure that by this date, you have received all of your supplies (if you placed an order before the end of the school year in June) and that you have returned the signed purchase order form to accounting, confirming

that you have received your budget items. If you transferred from one building to another, please visit your previous building to see if your supplies were delivered there. Also, please understand that all CITA members are to be on the master schedule in each building. Additionally, at the secondary level, all CITA members are required to have a duty, unless they teach six periods or travel between buildings. Please familiarize yourself with the Danielson model for observations and the APPR. Knowing the components of these two things will ensure that you receive a fair evaluation. No CITA member is to be observed in the months of September and June.

The following CITA members are part of the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee: Allison Philips (teaches at O'Neill)- any issues at Cordello, O'Neill, and the ECC should be shared with Allison. Craig Reynolds (teaches at Morrow)- any issues at Morrow, Mulvey, and OLOP should be shared with Craig. Lori Rossi (teaches at the high school)- any issues at Mulligan or the high school should be shared with Lori. I work at the high school and any issues pertaining to Reed or the high school should be shared with me. Our contact information can be found in the CITA directory.

*"Teaching is the one profession that creates all other professions."* -Unknown

Have a fantastic school year!

## Mission United Campaign

by Sandra Mercurio

The CITA once again proudly supports United Way of Long Island as they invite us to support America's heroes by participating in the 2017 MISSION UNITED Campaign. Funds raised from the drive support United Way of Long Island's veterans initiatives, which provide veterans and military families with emergency financial assistance, job training, and key referrals to secure careers, in addition to vital case management services.

Order forms will be distributed in the coming weeks with short sleeve t-shirts starting at \$15 and long sleeve t-shirts starting at \$20. T-shirt order forms should be sent to Sandy Mercurio at either Reed or Mulligan by

October 13th. All members are asked to wear their t-shirts on Thursday, November 9th in support of all of the men and women on Long Island who fought for our freedom.



**Sign up for Remind texts!**  
**Text @citeachers to 81010**

## Health and Welfare

by Maureen Esposito



Welcome back to the 2017-18 school year! The summers seem to pass faster and faster every year. I hope you are all rested, rejuvenated, and ready to go.

I had the opportunity last week on August 29 to meet our newly hired colleagues at the CITA New Member Workshop. They were given so much information, so I would like to re-iterate for them, and for all of you, how Patrick Murphy (my committee member) and I can help you this year.

If you need any information, or have a question about the following, please contact me: our insurances including Empire, dental, and vision care, Maternity Leaves, Half sick pay, Personal or Childcare Leaves

of Absence, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), EAP, Flex Plan, AFLAC, Disability, Retirement, and the 457 Savings Plan. I will discuss some of the above in detail in my upcoming CITation articles.

I can be reached at the O'Neill School at ext. 5817, or I prefer if you call my home phone and leave a message. (My number is in the directory.) I will get back to you ASAP.

Patrick Murphy deals with Health & Safety and Buildings & Grounds issues in the schools. If you have a question or problem, he can be reached at the Reed Middle School or e-mail him at [cifd99@hotmail.com](mailto:cifd99@hotmail.com). We are here for you, so contact us if needed. We wish you all a HEALTHY, successful school year!

## 3 + 1 = Renewed Doubts Regarding Standardized Assessments

by Vincent Ruggiero



Last month, New York's School Board of Regents waived 3 questions on the June Common Core Geometry Regents Exam. Each of these questions offered no real clear and correct answer in the choices provided on the test.

The most notable discovery came from one person, a Three Village School District student who identified the error on question 24. After the student garnered overwhelming public support, NYSED acquiesced and allowed credit for the question along with the previously acknowledged mistakes on questions 14 and 22.

Originally intended as a way to equally evaluate student achievement in various subject specific areas, new and revised Regents Exams have become a magnet for questions as well as warranted criticism. While New York State Regents Exams are required as part of

graduation requirements, they are not required or even recommended by the state education department to be calculated as part of a student's overall final course grade; past and even more recent events certainly lend credence to this position. In fact, more than half of the school districts on Long Island have moved to more flexible grading policies that weigh, highlight, and support year-long achievement over the results of one test.

Do New York State Regents Exams have a place in a student's high school education? Of course. However, shouldn't the record of a student's educational achievement and intelligence require more holistic measures with greater weight? Participation, effort, and work ethic should all play a greater role; not to mention months of presentations, labs, quizzes, writing responses, and a myriad of other assignments.

The academic success of any student should never be measured by a less than perfect 3-hour test.



## CITA Retiree Reflections

Planning on retiring? Contact Tara Maguire @ [citamemberservices@gmail.com](mailto:citamemberservices@gmail.com) to receive the CITA Retiree Reflection Questionnaire. The questionnaire will be published 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 20<sup>th</sup> to Tara Maguire at O'Neill School or email your responses to [citamemberservices@gmail.com](mailto:citamemberservices@gmail.com).



## Union Strong and Proud

*by Melissa Romano*

I grew up knowing of the importance of unions, but didn't really understand until much later. Every time my father got his paycheck he would declare, "God Bless the Union," and he isn't a religious man. When he would regale us with stories from work, somewhere in there was his famous refrain. He always told us about the importance of not only belonging to a union, but becoming actively involved in unionism. When I started working, I truly understood what he meant.

My first teaching job was in Jamaica, Queens in 1995 at a grant-funded program run out of a community-learning center at CUNY York College. There was another teacher there named Charlie who always tried to unionize us. I was fearful of doing so because one of the administrators had told me if I wanted this to only be a stepping stone in my teaching career, I better not be labeled an organizer. That year the CUNY teachers went on strike. We weren't affiliated with them, but we were warned by our administration that if we took off in solidarity with them we would be in trouble. Charlie and I called in sick anyway because my father taught me that you never cross a picket line. I was questioned about it, and I remember being so scared about what could happen. You see, those tactics were allowed to be used because we weren't unionized. The importance of unions became even clearer to me.

Those two years in Queens were only a stepping-stone before getting hired in Central Islip. I remember proudly calling Charlie and telling him I was asked at the end of my first year to be on the Public Relations Committee. Because I was non-tenured, it would be kept quiet. Both my dad and Charlie were so proud. When I was tenured, I took over as Chair. I have been the CITA Public Relations Chair since then with the exception of a few years I took off for personal reasons and to raise my children. Every year the importance of a strong union becomes even clearer. Last year at my son's school picnic, some of the teachers were telling me about an issue they were having with administration. I told them what they should do. One of them quipped, "We aren't CITA, Melissa." I was so proud to not only be a member of, but to work for the CITA. It is because of the dedicated, determined work done by our officers, chairs, reps, designees, and members that we are such a strong union and are the envy of many other locals.

We must continue to be union strong and proud. Additionally, we must always support other unions. It was amazing to see how so many supported the Clare Rose workers on their recent strike. I haven't shopped at Meat Farms all summer since Local 342 is on strike asking for a fair contract for their meat department workers. We must all help each other out because when one union is under attack, we all are.

This is exactly what is happening this November with the Constitutional Convention. So much that educators have fought so hard to get is under attack: repeal of the Blaine Amendment prohibiting public funds from going to religious schools; the right to an education that meets the needs of our challenged students; an increase in the number of charter schools; the right to unionize and negotiate terms of employment; the right that your pension cannot be diminished; workers' compensation. Many rumors are spread by the powers that be including that certain rights will be threatened if we do not open the constitution. Some claim there is a grandfather clause to protect pensions. This is not the case. The NYS Constitution can be amended through the Legislature as it has been many times. A Constitutional Convention is not needed to amend it, and there is no grandfather clause. Furthermore, it is not a people's convention. Most of the delegates are not ordinary citizens. In fact most of them are career politicians, attorneys, and Albany insiders. The lawmakers and judges elected as delegates could double their salaries and fatten their pensions. Estimates of the cost of a convention are anywhere from 50 to 100 million dollars. This is paid with taxpayer dollars. Educate yourselves about this! Once a convention opens the state constitution for review, not only can new things be added, existing guarantees can be compromised or eliminated.

Please make sure you spread the word to vote NO for a Con-Con on November 7<sup>th</sup>. This transcends political party affiliation. Do not allow them to strip you of what our union brothers and sisters fought so hard to achieve, and continue to fight to maintain. Don't just spread the word; make sure that people actually show up to vote that day. Offer to drive those who cannot get to the polls. Offer to watch children if that is what is preventing them from showing up to vote. Better yet, tell them to bring their children and teach them the importance of unionism as my father did with my brother and I. My children have been told since they were old enough to say CITA!



## The Night's Watch

by Christian Pisano



I hope everybody had a restful, relaxing summer vacation. I would like to welcome aboard new PAC team member Rahana Schmalacker. Rahana teaches English at the high school. She will be very helpful in our endless political battles and challenges that we face ahead.

As you may well know politics never sleeps. Battles are constantly fought and wars are won and lost 24/7/365 just like in the "Game of Thrones." While you were relaxing, on a beach hopefully, the Washington pols were engaging in the first of many wars in regard to the Affordable Care Act – a.k.a. Obamacare. Many of you probably think that the ACA does not affect you, but think again. Healthcare affects over 1/6 of our economy, and our schools are a big part.

The Republicans in Congress were trying to repeal and replace the ACA which would have reduced the amount of money states received for Medicaid. Medicaid is the healthcare program for the poor, mostly elderly who rely only on social security and a small pension as income. In addition, some of these people may even

be in nursing homes rather than upstairs in your house. Medicaid spending is almost double K-12 education spending in the NYS budget. However, Medicaid is used to reimburse schools for many special education services that poorer and middle class districts rely on. This affects every special education child.

If congressional Republicans were successful in their repeal of the ACA Central Islip Schools would have lost several million dollars in Medicaid reimbursement from the state and federal government. When this source of revenue gets cut but the laws that require schools to help these children are still in place, guess where the revenue shortfall will be made up? That's right, more layoffs – especially in regular education. Just when you think things were starting to turn the corner or perhaps could not get worse.

Luckily we are safe for now, but we on PAC are the "Night's Watch" because politicians are always wide awake and scheming to hurt our profession with "White Walker" political bills that seek to destroy public education. You can sleep tight for now because the "Lords of the Night's Watch" never do.

## HOT TOPICS

Wouldn't it be great to see what interesting things go on in other classrooms? Collectively we are such a diverse group with differing outlooks and unique ideas. If you would like to share something you have done with your class that was well received and engaging then email it to me and I will include it in future CITation editions.

**Michele Celenza, Mulvey School**  
**TEPS/New Member Chairperson**  
**[mcelenzacita@gmail.com](mailto:mcelenzacita@gmail.com)**

*Classroom  
Management*

*Homework Helper  
Ideas*

*Parent-Teacher Conference  
Strategies*

*Exciting and  
Engaging  
Class Trips*

*School to Home  
Connections*

## Teacher Education and Professional Standards Committee

by Michele Celenza



As we begin a new school year I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the role of the TEPS Committee so that everyone knows that we are just a phone call away if assistance is needed. TEPS serves as a liaison between the teacher and administration when a compliance issue arises. Each

committee member is responsible for overseeing specific education sectors within the district.

If a compliance issue does arise the teacher must first attempt to find a solution with their principal and/or director of their department. If the teacher's attempt is unsuccessful on their own or with the guidance of their Building Representative then the teacher should contact the appropriate liaison based on the nature of the compliance. Do not contact Central Administration directly. It is important that you follow the course of action stated above to ensure a better outcome.

When seeking TEPS assistance, it is important to provide detailed information of the compliance issue and the steps already taken to address the issue so that we may proceed expeditiously. In addition, this committee

represents CITA at the District's Curriculum Council Meetings. In doing so we are able to research new programs and materials, ensure curriculum alignment in core subjects, and explore best practice strategies.

Do not let an issue go unresolved for any length of time. Reaching out is the only road to resolution.

### General Education Contact:

Michele Celenza 516-532-3662

### Special Education Contact:

Jill Bothwell 631-379-8615

### Bilingual Education Contact:

Sheila Haglund 631-682-3784

I would be remiss to not include this. I would like to emphasize the importance of a "NO" vote on November 7<sup>th</sup> for the New York Constitutional Convention. It is imperative to get that message out to all family, friends and neighbors! If it is not shut down some of our basic rights can be taken away such as the right to collective bargaining as well as keeping our pension benefits. A "NO" vote is essential to maintaining what we all have worked so hard for over the years. Everyone must come together voting "NO" so that politicians can't rewrite our future and the future of our children.

## New Member Committee

by Michele Celenza

Welcome to the start of a new school year. 2017-2018 is starting off on the right note. As of this writing, the school district has added 16 new teachers. CITA is proud to welcome them and lend our support as their journeys begin in the Central Islip School District. Please join me in welcoming our newest members!

### Robert Bocchiere- *High School-Special Education Math*

My name is Robert Bocchieri and I have taught special education, mathematics, and business courses. Most of my work has been in middle school and high school settings. I completed my undergraduate studies in economics at Hofstra University. Following that, I used my strong mathematics background to further my studies and received a Master of Business Administration in Finance and a Master of Science in Education. Additionally, I have served on various committees in

schools, written curriculum in business math and financial literacy courses, worked in a district's Saturday Mathematics Academy program, and have taught various classes for the BOCES summer school program.

### Jodi Cameron- *Morrow and O'Neill-*

#### Physical Education

Jodi Cameron is joining the Central Islip School District as a Physical Education Teacher at Morrow Elementary School and O'Neill Elementary School. She received her Master of Arts degree from Adelphi in Physical Education and also holds certifications in Childhood Education Gr. 1-6 and Health Education. As a member of the Suffolk Zone NYS AHPERD Board, Jodi is continually growing as a professional and striving to improve as an educator. She has attended numerous conferences as well as been a co-presenter at the Suffolk Zone and NYS AAHPERD Conferences. Jodi is excited to return to Central Islip

after completing a leave replacement at Cordello Elementary in 2015/2016. During her free time, Jodi enjoys spending time with her family, playing soccer, camping, paddle boarding, and hiking.

**Louis Colon-High School-Bilingual Living Sciences**

My name is Louis Colon and I am excited to join the amazing teachers at the High School. After many years in the world of Pharmacy, I found my passion for Science and decided to teach Biology. During my student teaching, I spent 5 months at Reed Middle School and became familiar with the Central Islip School District and a few teachers as well. After graduating from Dowling in 2010 with a degree in Biology, I spent some time as a substitute at Mulligan, Reed and the High School. I began my master's program in Special Education with the intent to teach Science to that population. In 2015 I began teaching at a private high school with high functioning Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and associated disabilities. After 2 years, I saw an opportunity to teach Science to the Bilingual population in Central Islip. So now my newest challenge is engaging bilingual students in Living Environment and possibly sparking a lifelong love of Science. I am looking forward to working with the faculty and the staff that positively impact the Central Islip community.

**Ryan Cummings- Mulligan-Special Education**

I am a 2009 graduate of Bay Shore High School and a 2014 graduate of Buffalo State College with a Bachelors of Science in Childhood Education as well as a Bachelors of Science in Exceptional Education. I hold a dual New York State Teaching Certification in Students with Disabilities grades 1-6 and Childhood Education grades 1-6. When not working in the classroom, I enjoy spending time with my family and playing/coaching sports. I believe that every child deserves a fair and equal opportunity to become the best version of themselves both in and out of the classroom. I am eager and excited to become part of the Central Islip community and family.

**Francis Ehrhardt-Reed-Special Education**

Frances Ehrhardt is a passionate and dedicated Special Education teacher who has been assisting children with special needs for the past 15 years. Her desire and excitement to watch children succeed led her to receiving her board certification in behavior analysis and becoming a licensed behavior analyst in the

state of New York. In addition to her teaching career, Frances is a proud and devoted mother of two who resides with her family right here in Central Islip. When she is not teaching or tending to family matters, Frances enjoys unwinding with her myriad of sewing and crochet projects.

**Jennifer Giambalvo- Cordello-Special Education**

Jennifer Giambalvo will be teaching first-grade Special Ed at Cordello Avenue Elementary. She spent the last two years working in Bushwick, NY, as a self-contained K-2 teacher. Jennifer received her Bachelors Degree in TV Journalism from West Virginia University, but decided to pursue her teaching degree, earning her Master's from Pace University. In addition to her love for teaching, Jennifer loves animals and currently has four rescue cats. As of January, she will be getting married and changing her name from Ms. Giambalvo to Mrs. Austin. She can't wait for this year to start!

**Victoria Ingram- .4 Morrow -Art**

My interest in the arts became visible to me at a very young age. I've always loved to learn and I want to share that love of learning with others. I am excited to encourage my students to discover their individual identities and potentials. Art has given me the gift to look at life through a variety of different colored lenses, and a way to communicate with others through imagery and self expression. My goal is to give my students that same gift.

**Ashlee Palmer- High School-ENL/ELA**

Ashlee Palmer is a native Floridian who is trying to get used to Long Island winters. She began her career as an English teacher at Hillsborough High School in Tampa, Florida after graduating with her Masters in English Education. Ashlee continued her teaching career as an English teacher at Broome Street Academy in the city for the 2016/2017 school year. When she isn't reading, writing, or lesson planning, Ashlee is an aspiring runner and triathlete, and a self-proclaimed Disney fanatic.

**Gregory Patriss- Reed-English**

My name is Gregory Patriss. I come to the Central Islip School District from experiences in private schools in NYC, from teaching beginnings at Freeport Middle School, and most recently from teaching at Eastern Suffolk BOCES. All along this way I gained invaluable knowledge from teachers, parents, and most of all students. I am a humanitarian at heart



and always try to remain humble in this profession. Shakespeare says, “A fool thinks himself to be wise, but a wise man knows himself to be a fool.” This is not a self-indictment, but my acknowledgment and desire to continue to learn and grow for the benefit of others. I truly appreciate this opportunity and pledge to be a “team player” and have a “do whatever it takes” attitude for the Central Islip School District. I look forward to the challenges lying ahead.

### **Ezequias Rodriguez Madera-*High School-Bilingual Social Studies***

I have had the opportunity to teach in different learning environments including ESL, bilingual, inclusion, and mainstream classes. As an educator, I believe that all students need to succeed. I believe in a student-centered classroom where students are active. I encourage student participation through journal writing, reading, games, multicultural, and thematic units. I believe that a disciplined classroom increases student efficiency and productivity. I also believe that working as a team with staff members, parents, and community leaders will maximize students' performance.

### **Sharon Pavulaan- *High School-Earth Science***

I earned a M.S. in Marine Science from Stony Brook University and worked there for fourteen years before switching gears to become a science teacher. At Stony Brook, I worked in the College of Engineering and Applied Science where I coordinated mentoring and STEM outreach programs, advised students in the WISE program, and taught an undergraduate course. For nine of those years, I also worked part-time at Commack High School as part of their science research program. My role was to mentor young researchers who were pursuing their interests in science. When I began teaching, I first subbed for a year, then taught in a public school in Brooklyn. I then took a leave replacement position at Reed MS last December. I am certified in Earth Science and have my science extension for middle school. I applied for my biology certificate this summer. I like a challenge, being involved, and ran programs for many years at Stony Brook, so in the future I see myself becoming involved in some sort of organizational or leadership capacity. On a nice weekend day, you can usually find my husband and I out golfing. We love to travel and if things work out, visit out-of-town ballparks. This summer while visiting family in Georgia, we saw the Atlanta Braves in their new stadium. We also enjoy growing vegetables in our garden and finding recipes to try new

meals.

### **Amparo Fernandez Torres- *High School/Reed-Bilingual Math***

My name is Amparo Fernandez-Torres. Since I was a child, I wanted to be an engineer. When I went to college, I also wanted to get a profession in which I could help people. I got my Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering with a specialty in Structural Design. I worked in the field of Civil Engineering, a career that gave me experience and the opportunity to help the community. Years later, I came to the United States where I became a Math teacher and got the Bilingual Extension. I worked as a substitute teacher for several years. Working in the Central Islip School District for so long has given me the opportunity to value the multicultural diversity within us. I am very excited and grateful to start this new chapter in my professional career, as a full time Bilingual Math teacher

### **David Wilcox- *High School-Technology***

I received my BA from Hofstra University and my MS from New York Institute of Technology. I previously worked several years in a college preparatory high school in Brooklyn before making the move to Long Island. I am passionate about the use of technology in the classroom because I believe that education must keep pace with the tech savvy world we live in.

### **Diane Woodruff- *Reed-Special Education***

My name is Diane Woodruff. I was hired this year to teach a sixth grade self-contained 12:1:1 special education class at Reed Middle School. I have been subbing in the district for the past five years. I graduated from St. Joseph's College with my bachelor's Degree and graduated from St. John's University with my Master's Degree. I am certified in general education from birth through sixth grade, special education birth through twelfth grade, TESOL, and Literacy. I grew up and went to school in Central Islip, and I am very excited to start my teaching career here.

I would like to extend my appreciation to our teachers who have graciously volunteered as CITA Buddies for our first year teachers. I am proud to say that our members always step up to lend a hand which is one of the reasons why the CITA remains a strong union of dedicated professionals.

## Two Thumbs Up for the Stonebridge Country Club

by Tara Maguire



The day was perfect. The backdrop of the sun shining upon the vast, picturesque, manicured golf course was relaxing. The reception room was surrounded with glass windows allowing the light to shine through. The wait staff was impeccable. The music was energizing. Our members were generous when contributing to the CITA Scholarship Raffles throughout the evening. It was the Central Islip Teachers' Association End of the Year Party, and everyone came out for a relaxing, yet invigorating, evening to celebrate all that we do.

The night began with a cocktail hour situated around a lengthy bar that allowed members to enjoy hors d'oeuvres as they sipped on refreshing beverages. People mingled around tables or strolled out to the patio adjacent to the golf course and enjoyed the June sunset. Guests then went into the reception area for a night of food, drinks and dancing. Throughout the evening raffle tickets were sold to members to benefit our 2018 CITA Scholarship Fund. Raffles included a

50/50 raffle and two raffles for burlap wreaths. A total of \$517 was raised through the wreath raffles and a total of \$880 was raised through the 50/50 raffle. Our 50/50 winner was Cecilia Avila Young who generously gave her \$440 winnings back to the CITA Scholarship Fund. Thank you, Cecilia Avila Young! This brought our grand total to \$1397 for the 2018 CITA Scholarship Fund. Last but certainly not least, we honored our 2017 retirees including Barry Machin, Cindy Roach, and Iris Rodriguez for their many years of dedication and service to the Central Islip community. We also congratulated our newly tenured teachers and acknowledged our new members and their buddies.

Our 2018 CITA End of the Year Party will once again be held at the Stonebridge Country Club at 2000 Raynor's Way in Smithtown. Save the date... Thursday, June 14<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 pm – 10:30 pm. The music for the evening will be provided by Top Hat Entertainment. If you missed our 2017 End of the Year Party, be sure not to miss this one. I promise, it will be an enjoyable evening for all.

### CITA End of the Year Party 2017



CITA New Members



CITA Newly Tenured Teachers



Wreaths for CITA Scholarship Raffle

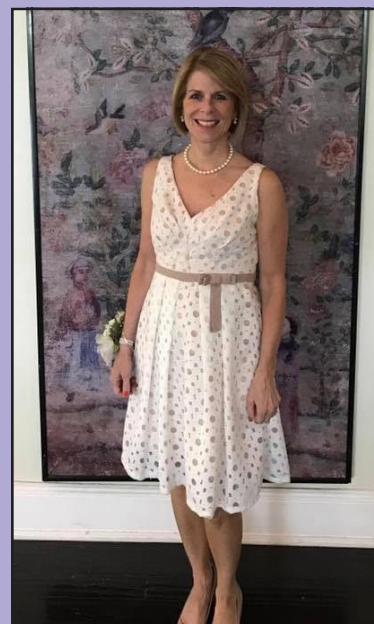




Retiree Iris Rodriguez



Retiree Barry Machin and Mrs. Machin



Retiree Cindy Roach



CITA Newly Retired Teachers



New Retirees with CITA Officers Lou Celenza, Mike Romano, & Tom Kuhn



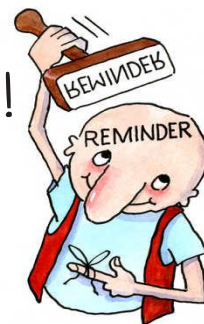
VP Tom Kuhn & Iris Rodriguez



Former Mulligan Colleagues, but always Mulligan friends!



## CITA Save the Dates!



Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Breast Cancer Baseball Cap Order due with donations of \$25.00 or more to Charlene Murphy @ ECC



Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup> ~ CITA Tee Order Due to Tara Maguire @ O'Neill (Visit our CITA Facebook Page to view styles)



Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup> ~ Fall Driver Safety Course at the ECC Multipurpose Room from 4:00 pm — 7:00 pm



Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup> ~ Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Donations due to Charlene Murphy @ the ECC



Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup> ~ Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk @ Jones Beach Field 5, Rolling Start @ 8:00 am and group photo @ 8:15 am.



Friday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ CITA Tee Order Due to Tara Maguire @ O'Neill



Tuesday, April 10<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup> ~ Spring Driver Safety Course at the ECC Multipurpose Room from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm.



Friday, June 1<sup>st</sup> ~ CITA End of the Year Party RSVPs and Payment Due to Tara Maguire @ O'Neill



Thursday, June 14<sup>th</sup> ~ CITA End of the Year Party at Stonebridge Country Club in Smithtown from 5:30 pm — 10:30 pm



# *Making Strides Against* **BREAST** **CANCER**

*Come join  
Team CITA!  
Beach  
Walk*

**Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at Jones Beach Field 5.**

**Rolling start at 8:00 a.m. Group photo at 8:15 a.m.**

**Complete and return the slip below with your donation to  
Charlene Murphy at the ECC by Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>.**

**DONATIONS OF \$25 or more WILL entitle you to receive a Free  
CITA Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Baseball Cap if  
Submitted by Friday, September 22nd.**

**Visit our CITA Team Page to make an online donation using**

**[http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR/MakingStridesAgainstBreastCancer/MSABCCY16EA?team\\_id=2066239&pg=team&fr\\_id=77387&ga=1.47459311.910174607.1469867601](http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR/MakingStridesAgainstBreastCancer/MSABCCY16EA?team_id=2066239&pg=team&fr_id=77387&ga=1.47459311.910174607.1469867601)**

**or visit the Central Islip Teacher's Association's Facebook Page for the Making Strides Against  
Breast Cancer Post/Link.**

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Donation Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I donated \$25 or more by Friday, 9/23/16 and would like to receive a CITA Ball Cap** \_\_\_\_\_



## Empire Safety Council's Drivers Safety Course

**When:** Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> & Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup>  
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, October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- ~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.

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Check #** \_\_\_\_\_



*Last school year I was contacted by our retired colleague, CIRT President Irene Spero. Our CIRT colleagues are understandably just as concerned about the vote on the Constitutional Convention as we are. Past CITA President Phil Griffith wrote wonderfully informative articles for the retiree newsletter about the importance of unionism and the path our past CITA union leaders paved for us. Irene and I agreed on the importance of sharing some of the history of the CITA with all of our members in order for everyone to get a genuine understanding of the necessity of unions and how many of the contractual rights and privileges we have today are a result of our strong past and present leadership. She graciously offered to share them with us. This is the second in the two part series; the first article appeared in the May/June 2017 CITation and was entitled "Remembering Norman Nadeau." Thank you to Phil Griffith, Irene Spero, and Brian Roethgen for their help and collaboration!*

*In solidarity,  
Melissa Romano*

## **A Tribute to a Cherished Friend**

*by Philip Griffith*

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. Robert 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 Sergeant 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 NY 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 25 years of service to the CI 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 re-

ceived special awards from CITA., 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 of Legislative Committee; 1964-1965 Chairperson of Contract Research Committee; 1966-1968 CITA. President; 1969-1991 Chairperson Negotiations Committee; 1969-1971 Delegate to National Education Association; 1969-1971 Delegate to NY State Teachers Association; 1972-1991 Delegate to American Federation of Teachers; 1972-1991 Delegate to New York United Teachers; 1980-1991 Building Representative CI High School

Sy also served as our CITA representative to the Long Island Federation of Labor and the NY 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 1800 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.

## CENTRAL ISLIP TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Sy's mettle was often tested, but never more than during the strike in 1970. That year negotiations were bitter and intense. It was the first year of collective bargaining after 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 fact-finding. The CITA membership voted to strike. During the following negotiation session, the CITA 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 CITA 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 CITA was fined, and every teacher lost four days pay. In its vindictiveness, the district deducted the four days salary shortly before the Christmas/Hanukkah 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, CITA 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

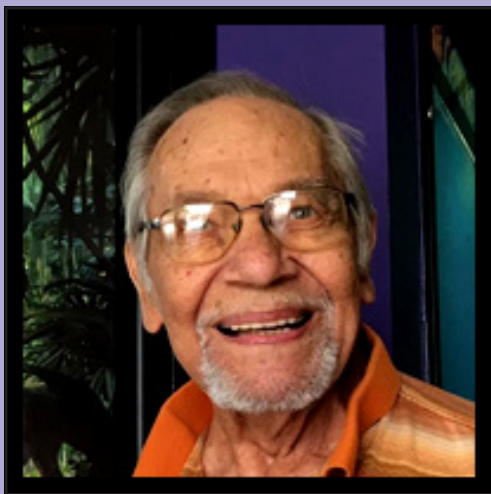
begging into a new dawn of collective bargaining. For 22 years, Sy Ginsburg was our Chief Negotiator. During that span, our one page contract grew in words, phrases, paragraphs and a CITA declaration of independence and constitution. Sy was our Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Both active and retired teachers owe our good lives 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;  
Who can say this is not greatness."*

Quite frankly, Sy was the greatest.



Sy Ginsburg



Phil Griffith & Sy Ginsburg



# The CIRTA Retiree

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

by Nancy Porta Libert

## Acknowledgement And Regret In A Country Graveyard

Graveyards are quiet, pastoral places that some people find pleasurable to visit. Older cemeteries, ones that go back a century or more, contain plots that offer not just mature shrubs and flowering bushes, but a quaint variety of creative touches. Those little delights are visible across the tall-treed landscape in the form of granite entrance pillars, and concrete curbing around headstones and graves. Small, flowering areas provide additional charm. Property owners in those days were permitted such embellishments, but last century's decorative details are impediments for today's groundskeepers who must maneuver huge mowers and spend excessive time weed-hacking.

Families in past generations — the years before “perpetual care” — visited their departed members regularly as a matter of love and duty. Once a week, usually after Sunday supper, the lawn mower was put in the trunk of the car along with grass clippers, pruners and rakes, and the short trip was made. My job was to get the watering jars hidden under a big hydrangea bush, and run to a nearby spigot to fill them up.

That is the kind of cemetery in which my maternal grandfather, Henry Klenner, purchased our 16-grave family plot in the early 1900's, and the one in which I stand twice a week. Since Cal's burial there, my visits accelerated. Not surprisingly, being able to share news with him about the kids, the family and friends helps ease the loss. How fortunate it is, I would think, to have a place to come and spend time with those I love. That hallowed ground, however, has since become much more.

Just to Cal's left lie the headstones of my mother and father, long gone. Through all the intervening years I had never held conversations with them while tending the plot. I'm not sure why, and the realization began to weigh on my mind. I certainly loved them enough. But did I ever tell them? Well, maybe not in so many words. I was a very busy kid, too busy with clubs, playing sports, cheerleading, planning dances, running for student council, the regular school stuff that my two, devoted parents — one an immigrant and the other whose parents were “off the boat” as well — certainly wouldn't understand. How could they when their growing up was so strikingly different? Did I actually share things at home? I don't know. I hope I pleased them in some way. But, they were there. They

were always there. It is the one thing in my life about which I never had a doubt.

The last few years have been transforming. Now, not only visiting with Cal, I've begun to chat with my mother and father, spending time remembering their invaluable (and hitherto unacknowledged) contributions that influenced me: “Brush your teeth three times a day, and don't forget the gums!” “Daddy, what's a good word that means “generous?” “Well, there's “benevolent, “magnanimous,” “giving.” (That was my father, for whom English was a second language!) My mother, a quiet soul who let my father run the show, actually made an appointment with my guidance counselor and walked up the street to the high school to tell him she had no problem with the academic course they laid out, “as long as you find a way to get a typing and a business course in there.” (Dear Lord, my mother, of all people!) It turned out to be one of the best things that ever happened to me. “Eat living things; growing things,” my father counseled for years. “They will keep you healthy. And don't cut off the skin, that's where so much nutrition is.”

Those were the folks who dearly loved their headstrong and fiercely-independent only child, a child who always thought she was raising herself.

Regrets? Hell, yes, I've had more than a few. Cemeteries can be cathartic places. I'm growing much closer to my parents as we continue this journey of revelation, and, I've become a more fulfilled human being because of it. Apparently, miraculously, they're still there for me, and I'm still benefitting from it. Way too late or not, I don't care. At the end of each visit I tell them anyway: “Mom and Dad, I love you. Thank you.”

## CIRTA Annual Luncheon

**Wednesday, October 4, 2017, 12 noon,  
Irish Coffee Pub, East Islip**

**Whether your first time at the  
affair or your 21st, please join us.**

**Contact Irene Spero for info.**