

# Spotlight 21

## SERVING RETIREES FROM

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



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February, 2018

Visit our webpage: <http://ny.aft.org/rc21> for the expanded color version of the Spotlight.

## ***A Message From***

## ***Co-President Louisa Eiermann***



## **Now What?**

After the resounding no-vote on whether or not to hold a Constitutional Convention, we all walked away feeling proud and accomplished. So many had worked so hard to get out the no vote, and it worked! What an eye-opener to us as to what can be accomplished if people who all believe in the same thing, no matter where they come from, stand up and be counted! Now, can we do it again? Can we all band together to take up the banners on so many different fronts to do what is right?

Diana Baranec has written on an imminent issue, Janus vs. AFSCME. Please read her article. ALL unions' rights are at stake! Where will we be, as retirees, without the strength of NYSUT behind us? Call, write, attend rallies. An important rally will be held in NYC before this Newsletter is published, on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2 days prior to the arguments being heard before the Supreme Court. Your chapters have been informed so you should have heard about it and tried to attend. Please keep alert and read what comes your way. If the decision goes against us, our lives will be changed forever.

The NYSUT MAC Alerts come to us as well as the Friday and Monday Alerts from NYSARA as to what is happening in the State with regards to Part B reimbursements and well as the IRMAA reimbursement for those who qualify. Every year the Governor puts in his budget the elimination of the IRMAA and the freezing of the Part B Premium: both mean an increase in what we pay for our health insurance. As premiums rise, this would put an additional burden on all of us, with so many who are the least able to

incur this increase. Please contact your state legislators to let them know that this cannot be. Furthermore, NYSUT is asking the State to double the proposed \$769 million aid increase "to help school districts meet rising costs and pay for programs that help students succeed". Again, contact your state legislators to let them know what our schools need and why.

On the National level, we are currently living with the results of the new tax plan. Were any of you scurrying around in December as we tried to learn what the new laws meant? Should we pre-pay our taxes? Should we pre-pay donations? Some answers are still being worked out but the definite outcome is that these new laws will adversely affect New Yorkers. According to a report by the State Department of Tax and Finance, "the elimination of the full state and local tax deduction will cost state residents \$14.3 billion dollars." It is also interesting to note that since the tax cuts proposed for Americans have been realized, a Secretary in South Carolina is now receiving an extra \$1.50 a week while Paul Ryan will be receiving \$372 a week! Inequality lives on.

There are daily news articles that should frighten us: Newsweek firing reporters who were investigating the company; attendees at the State of the Union speech being accused of treason for not clapping, possibly being able to read a memo concerning the president but it will be "redacted," a Holocaust denier is a likely Republican candidate in Illinois, an honors student in a Queens parochial school is told he cannot wear a sweater with Malcolm X (his name is Malcolm Xavier) on it and then that student being told *(continued on page 2)*

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“that he (Malcolm X) is not someone I want to be associated with.” The president came away from his visit to France with the idea of holding a military parade (to impress whom?), Pennsylvania Republicans want to impeach five of the State’s Supreme Court justices who ordered the Republican-controlled legislature to draw new, fair congressional districting maps. AND let us not forget the abandonment of the Dreamers. How can this have happened?

So, do we have our work cut out for us? Our mission could not be clearer. The status quo is not acceptable. As those in the field of education, we always looked inward to see how to improve a lesson, or how to reach a student or how to help a fellow teacher. Wouldn’t it be nice if we could have the same kind of introspection occur by the president, by our elected officials? If they cannot, then we must read, write and speak out whenever we can. You made a difference before, YOU can do it again!

## Unions under attack in Supreme Court Case Janus vs. AFSCME

Forty years ago a unanimous Supreme Court decision approved the kind of cost-sharing arrangements for unions known as fair share. Last year in the Friedrichs case hearing the same issue was heard before the Supreme Court and ended in a deadlock at 4-4 after the untimely death of Justice Scalia. Therefore under current law all public service workers may choose whether or not to join the union — but the union is required to negotiate on behalf of all workers whether they join or not. Since all the workers benefit from the union’s gains, it’s only fair that everyone chip in toward the cost. Current law has given unionized workers the right to opt out of paying dues that support political candidates, while the union is allowed to charge them a “fair-share” fee for costs of negotiating contracts and advocating for workers in disputes with management.

Once again this common sense approach to union dues and agency fee decisions is under attack. The Janus vs. AFSCME lawsuit has been brought in the name of one Illinois state employee but is funded by the National Right to Work Foundations and Liberty Justice Center. These organizations are part of a network of billionaires and CEO’s who work diligently to push their interests through lobbying and campaign contributions. "The fight for prosperity and opportunity for all, embodied by the labor movement, is an anathema to the corporate backers of this case—

the people funding it are the same people attacking civil rights, attacking voting rights and attacking public education," says AFT President Randi Weingarten.

With Neil Gorsuch’s appointment to the court, it is believed that the 4-4 tie in the Friedrichs case will be broken in favor of Janus. The result of this would be hard on unions. States with weakened unions have seen drops in membership and income. For example Michigan’s affiliate of the NEA reported a loss of nearly 24,000 members since 2012 as well as a drop of about \$10 million in income. The US Supreme Court will consider arguments on February 26th.

Unions must take action to ready themselves for the post-Janus world. In Michigan and Wisconsin the already weakened unions have shown a lowering of average wages by 2.6 percent and membership has declined by 2.1 percent. This would be devastating for NYSUT and NEA.

NYSUT Member Organizing Institute will have training on LI on March 9th through March 11th. The institute will help develop and train members to have conversations and home visits with our membership using state of the art technology. These members will help become our army of resistance against the present and future attacks on unionism. Please go to NYSUT.org MAC for alerts and possible actions you can take.

### Spotlight 21

A Publication of NYSUT Retiree Council 21

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

# RC 21 Benefits Committee

## 2018 Trips in the planning



The Cloisters - in April  
(Flyers will be at our March 20th meeting.)



Snug Harbor is set for June 13th  
(Information at General Meeting)

Westchester Playhouse trip in the planning for the Fall



Christmas trip to NYC - Rockefeller Center  
In December



### Membership has its privileges!

*Your union is steadfast in its fight for better contracts, safer working conditions, fair pay, advocacy, and upholding the labor rights of the dedicated women and men proudly working in the education and health care industries on a daily basis.*

**But your NYSUT membership does so much more!** It also provides you with the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of more than 40 endorsed programs & services offered by NYSUT Member Benefits, including a variety of quality, competitive insurance plans.

Endorsed By:



**As an Example: With the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed MetLife Auto & Home insurance program, NYSUT members receive special group rates on auto insurance, homeowners insurance as well as motorcycle, boat, personal property and other types of insurance -- rates that are NOT available to the general public.**

That is why we encourage you to always look for the "Endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits" logo before you or your loved ones make any purchasing decisions.

Visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or  
call **800-626-8101** for specific information about this program.



### Newly endorsed Member Shopping Program available for use!

We heard the requests of the NYSUT membership and spent months diligently researching new member shopping program options. The NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation is pleased to announce that the Purchasing Power Member Shopping Program is now available for use by eligible NYSUT members.

Purchasing Power is an online shopping option that offers another way to purchase brand-new, brand-name products and pay for them over time through the ease of payroll deduction or ACH withdrawals. Eligible NYSUT members can enjoy access to products such as computers, appliances, jewelry, furniture, televisions, electronics, travel packages and much more.

While Purchasing Power is not a discount program, it can save you money and stress compared to high-interest credit cards or rent-to-own stores. As always, you are encouraged to shop and compare before making any purchasing decisions.

Visit [nysutmbc.purchasingpower.com](http://nysutmbc.purchasingpower.com) or call **800-537-3135** to learn more.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

## Celebrating ??? Charter Schools and other forms of School Choice

During School Choice Week (January 21 - 27) Secretary of Education DeVos spoke at a rally in the nation's capital, extolling the benefits of choice. President Trump applauded the benefits of parents choosing the best education for their children. School choice proponents declare public schools the problem with American Education. What was missing from all these events was the news of the closure of the nation's largest charter school, the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow, in Ohio. Halfway through the year (January 19th) this closure left about 12,000 students scrambling to find other schools to finish out their academic year.

Charter schools are driven by a market-based

principle. This principle somewhat guarantees a certain portion are expected to fail. Though public schools sometimes close too, we don't hear of this often. Public schools have served as the backbone of our democracy. Public schools have led the way in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and California where they stayed open even after the disasters of hurricanes and wildfires devastated these areas. Public school teachers led the fight to make life more normal for their displaced students. We must lift our voices to protect our public schools from attacks by school choice advocates. The voucher programs strip our public schools of needed funding and cause harm to trusting families looking for the best for their children. Keep informed by going to [NYSUT.org](http://NYSUT.org) for the frontline stories. Write letters to DeVos and your representatives letting them know that you support the American institution of public education for all.

**Next General Meeting  
March 20th  
10:30 West Islip Library**

### RC 21 Meeting Schedule 2018

#### Executive Board

10:15 am NYSUT Office, 150 Motor Parkway

#### General Meetings

10:30 am West Islip Library

**March 13**

**April 10**

**May 8**

**June 5**

**March 20**

**April 17**

**May 15**

**June 19**

(Awards Luncheon)  
At Timber Point