

RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS



NYSUT Retiree Council 10

Serving Over 9000 Members in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Washington Counties

TEACHER UNION SOLIDARITY

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**TO UPDATE YOUR
PERSONAL CONTACT
INFORMATION,
CALL NYSUT MEMBER
RECORDS (518) 213-6000**

From Your President:

By the time you get this, the vote on the Constitutional Convention question will be over. The effort to get people to recognize the folly of a simple fix and the limits of the idea that "trust me I will only do good things if you sign this blank check" have pointed out a shortcoming in how we have managed our collective heritage of building better school systems and practices. Professionalizing education and those who deliver it has provided enormous benefit to the students of New York and the economic development of the state as a whole. We have not perhaps done such a good job of passing that realization along to our emerging successors.

There is still a lot we can do to safeguard our heritage and the interest of our members. We all share ownership of a valuable and strong tool to help ourselves achieve that outcome. That tool is our collective memory of what we went through to get the protections we now enjoy both as retirees and as active teachers.

We did well in our efforts to improve teaching, teaching conditions and the lives of our members. One thing we did not always do so well was to realize that those who came after us shared the benefits but not the memories of the struggles to get them. They have little or no experience with the bad old ways in the bad old days. The benefits were just there, a part of normal daily teaching and helping our students. We worked with many of those who had shared the effort and yes, often the pain that was the price of progress. Over time those partners in progress left us. Some moved, some left active teaching, some died and some retired before or after we did.

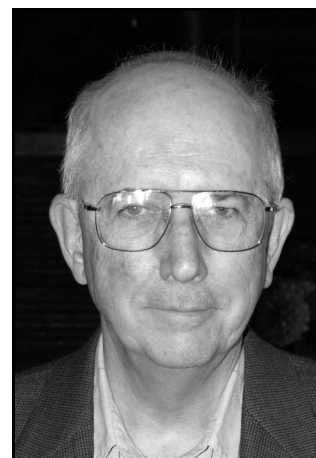
We were not alone on that journey. The administrators who we worked with, and sometimes struggled with, have followed a similar path. They too took their experiences with them as they moved on through life. We came to a point where no one in the institution knew why a provision was in a contract or handbook or insurance program, only that it was there. Some began to think of those things as "just good practice" that everyone wanted. Others saw them as coin of the realm to be used for getting some immediate need they wanted. Often little thought was given to now absent colleagues and the impact change might have on them. Those who now carry on have often not experienced the poor working conditions that saved money even if they harmed teaching and student progress. They found it hard to understand the full impact of working without built-in planning time, limits on class size or similar requirements intended to help us be effective professionals who had the time and conditions to innovate change and help students.

We fought for what was good, earned it with our sacrifice. Why does that now concern us? Because all of those hard-earned benefits were not limited to teaching conditions. We also worked for comprehensive insurance coverage for all. Today some may see that as unnecessary. Why not cover those in our own age brackets and reduce or limit other areas of coverage? Is senior home care less important than maternity coverage? If we take out some area of coverage we do not need right now, surely, we can get it back when we do need it, right? In the meantime, we can move those savings to the salary pool! What harm can that do?

Well, that is where you can come into the process. You know from experience the perils of such an approach for all who are involved. We remember someone who was hurt by the lack of that provision and that we all decided to help by adding it. *It was not just a matter of what we need next week but rather one of taking care of us all.* But now we all tend to believe it's something we cannot affect any longer because we are retired.

But we can have an impact. Do you keep in touch with your former colleagues and bargaining unit? You should try to do that when you can. A cup of coffee now and then, a chat on the phone or a visit to the school when they can talk. Offer to help a bit on a staff day event or their individual work time. It can make a big difference to ease their load and keep you both in touch. Share your life experiences and share any news you learn with your fellow retirees. We are all the trustees of the hard-learned lessons of our career. There were things we thought of little immediate importance but learned a bit later they did matter to us. You are still a part of that community of educators. You can still help them and help yourselves. You can work on getting a good board member reelected and a bad one sent home. You can make them aware of the value of what they are considering giving up. You can be a friend who cares - not just a ghost from the past who is no longer a part of the teaching community.

You really signed up for life. Retirement is just a phase where you get to manage your time fully and prioritize what you feel is important. It is also a time of vital need for you to stay in touch and help assure benefits, theirs and ours, remain available to us all. Do your part; stay in touch; share your reality and help us all preserve our best practice and best possible future. Do your part when you can and as often as you can. Be part of the solution for a better future for us all.



DAVID GOLDEN

**"You are still a part
of that community of
educators. You can
still help them and
help yourselves."**

~David Golden, President



SAVE THESE DATES—TRAVEL AND SOCIAL CALENDAR!!!!

MARCH 25 TO MARCH 30, 2018, OUT AND ABOUT IN NEW ORLEANS: JAZZ, JAMBALAYA, AND JOIE DEVIVRE. Please contact Karen Maher, kmaher2@nycap.rr.com or 518-477-6746 or 518-588-4083. She is presently taking names for a waiting list.

APRIL 16-26, 2018, ESSENTIAL HOLLAND: TULIPS IN SPRING. THIS TRIP IS FILLED.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2018, BRONX BOTANICAL GARDENS/GEORGIA O'KEEFFE EXHIBIT. A stunning display of more than 15 paintings and lush flower show examines pioneering American modernist Georgia O'Keeffe's immersion in the Hawaiian Islands in 1939. Curated by art historian Theresa Papanikolas, Ph.D., of the Honolulu Museum of Art, this groundbreaking exhibition will offer a rare focus on O'Keeffe's paintings created during a three-month sojourn commissioned by the Hawaiian Pineapple Company (now Dole). It will spotlight a transformative time in the legendary artist's life, revealing O'Keeffe's deeply felt impressions of the sites that instilled a lifelong affection for the Islands' rugged topography, dramatic landscapes, and exotic plants. Highlights include a stunning display in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library Art Gallery of more than 15 of O'Keeffe's Hawai'i paintings—not seen together in New York since their debut in 1940. In the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, discover a lush flower show evoking the gardens and landscapes that inspired O'Keeffe as well as showcasing the remarkable flora and ecological complexity of Hawai'i, while a rich program of performances, events, and activities throughout NYBG celebrate the diverse cultural traditions of the Hawaiian Islands past and present. The total cost, including entrance to all gardens and collections, special exhibitions, and daily programs as well as unlimited access to the Garden Tram Tour, is \$85 for all members who have paid the annual sustaining membership fee. Price is \$90 for guests and members who have not paid the annual sustaining membership fee. Lunch is not included. Options for lunch include the Pine Tree Cafe and Hudson Garden Grill. **BUS PICK UP AT TWO LOCATIONS:** 6:45 AM at Saratoga, Exit 15 Park and Ride (Wilton Mall close to Dick's Sporting Goods) and 7:30 AM, Crossgates Commons behind PetCo. The bus will leave the Gardens at 4 PM, approximate arrival will be 7-7:30 PM Crossgates Commons and 8 PM in Saratoga. **MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO RC 10** and send to Maureen Woerner and Grace Cramer at 2012 Baker Avenue, Niskayuna, NY 12309, by May 1. Make sure to list your place of pick up and phone numbers. If you have any questions, contact Maureen 518-374-8277 (reeniewoerner@gmail.com) or Grace 518-209-4655 (grace-cramer59@yahoo.com).

OCTOBER 21 TO OCTOBER 26, 2018, OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA FE. highlights of our itinerary will include wonderful collections of pottery, weaving, baskets, jewelry, paintings only seen by the public via special invitation at the Indian Arts Research Center and a lecture about the life and art of Georgia O'Keeffe and a tour of her museum. Visit Cintinela Traditional Arts weaving gallery where we will meet families who have been creating Hispanic weavings for generations, and a beautiful little Roman Catholic Church, El Santuario de Chimayo, a National Historic Landmark. Interact with a Pueblo native potter and visit the Museum of Indian Arts and the Museum of International Folk Art. Attend a lecture on southwest cuisines presented by James Beard Award-winning chefs followed by a meal prepared at the Red Mesa Cuisine. We will stay at the Drury Plaza Hotel, located in the heart of downtown Santa Fe, with easy access for exploration. Six days' activities, twelve meals, six lectures, seven field trips, one performance, gratuities included. Cost: \$1499 double/\$2039 single for land program package. Not including airfare (group arrangements are available) and approximately \$66 airport shuttle fee. Plus \$25 RC 10 pre-registration fee for fee-paying members, \$50 for non-fee paying members. Additional cancellation insurance available for \$100/\$157 (double/single). For additional information, contact Karen Maher, kmaher2@nycap.rr.com or 518-477-6746 or 518-588-4083. This is an active, small travel group and is selling quickly. Check out this link for complete itinerary: <https://www.roadscholar.org/ia-22047-rc10-santa-fe>.

NOVEMBER 30 TO DECEMBER 8, 2018, DANUBE WALTZ RIVER CRUISE—HISTORY, MUSIC AND CHRISTMAS MARKETS! Please contact Alice Schielke at aliceschielke@gmail.com or 518-368-9009. She is presently taking names for a waiting list.

When registering for a trip, please remember that a **member of RC 10** is anyone who has retired from a NYSUT local that is located in Albany, Saratoga, Rensselaer, or Washington counties or is a Social Member who has retired from a NYSUT local in some other part of the state and has paid member fees to his/her Council and a social membership fee to RC 10. Anyone who did not retire as an in-service member of a NYSUT local is not eligible for sustaining or social membership and must pay the guest registration fee. A **sustaining member** has paid the annual sustaining membership fee for the fiscal year that is from July 1 to June 30.

THE TRAVEL COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!!!

At present, we're undergoing a significant loss of volunteers who have served our Travel Committee admirably for many years, but now must move on. We are in need of more manpower if we're to continue to serve our membership as we have to date. If you've enjoyed our activities, consider joining our Committee to help make them happen. You don't need previous experience start with a luncheon or an afternoon outing or a day activity. You probably have ideas of your own. Our meetings are usually held the third Tuesday of the month at 9:30 AM, at NYSUT headquarters in Latham. Interested? Please contact Karen Maher, kmaher2@nycap.rr.com.



GET TRIP INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION FORMS ON THE WEB! Here's how: 1) Log on to <http://rc10.ny.aft.org>. 2) Click on ACTIONS & EVENTS menu, and 3) Click the Travel & Social tab. The generic travel/form (printed below) is a pdf file on this page.

TRAVEL/SOCIAL GENERIC REGISTRATION FORM

(If you are signing up for more than one activity, or will be taking a guest, please copy this form and fill in the appropriate information.)

Name _____ Home Phone _____ Cell Phone* _____
*Take phone to event

Email _____ Registering for: Event & Date _____

Check One: For 2017-2018: () RC10 Member who has paid the annual sustaining membership fee
() Guest or Member who has not paid the annual sustaining membership fee

Event Selections:

For Luncheons/Meals, Entrée of Choice _____ For Trips, Pick Up Location _____

Other notes (Keep it Simple): _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

RC-10 FALL LUNCHEON FOCUSES ON REFERENDUM FOR STATE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION



By DEB ESCOBAR

On October 10, 2017, over 90 RC 10 members and guests gathered for our Fall Luncheon and General Meeting. The keynote speaker was Peter Savage, NYSUT Senior Legislative Representative, who spoke on the dangers of a State Constitutional Convention. By the time this issue hits the press, the referendum will already have been voted on and the results will be known. We are hopeful that our efforts to educate others about the dangers of a Constitutional Convention will result in the defeat of this proposition. If voters approve the referendum, then on your 2018 ballot you will be voting for three delegates from your Senate District, and another 15 at-large delegates, to the Constitutional Convention. We will need to vote for representatives who will hopefully safeguard our constitutional pension rights, worker rights, environmental protection, funding for free public schools, etc. On Election Day 2019, we would get a chance to approve or disapprove of any changes that the delegates to the Constitutional Convention propose.

The danger to public employee retirees is real. There is presently language in our state constitution that protects the New York State Teachers Retirement System. The US Constitution does not protect our pensions, as evidenced by the fact that seven states have lost pension rights and suffered a significant reduction of their pensions in recent years. Our pension funds are always a tempting target for those in power. When the State wanted to rebuild the Tappan Zee, they wanted to borrow from the common fund from pensions, but could not because our Constitution protected pensions. Savage stated, that "If language changed in the Constitution, on the next downturn the state would be able to take from the pension fund."

In addition, our present Constitution has an amendment called the Blaine amendment, which guarantees that public money may not be used for religious purposes. During the State Constitutional Convention in 1967, the delegates wanted to eliminate the Blaine Amendment, but it did not pass. Presently there are monied interests that spend a great deal to pass vouchers and establish more rights for charters. We fight proposed voucher legislation every year, but it does not pass because it conflicts with the Blaine amendment. If the Constitutional Convention could eliminate that amendment, we would have vouchers immediately, and public monies would flow to parochial schools. This would divert income from the tax stream that public schools depend upon, and would, therefore, threaten our public school system. A Constitution change could also make New York a right to work state, and we would lose collective bargaining, worker rights, Triborough, etc. Whether the current referendum passes or not, we must continue to talk to others and inform them of the need to safeguard our rights and our schools.

During lunch, NYSUT President Andy Pallotta also gave a brief speech to members, and we also heard from Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango and 1st Vice President Philippe Abraham. Members enjoyed a delicious lunch and had time to socialize and catch up with colleagues. Evaluations of the event were overwhelmingly positive. Some comments included:

- "The presenter and literature handed out were excellent in informing me about what the ConCon is and how it affects our lives."
- "Pete did an outstanding job. The best talk he has ever done."
- "Pensions are not protected. We need to flip the ballot and remind others to do so. Education Reform Groups mean Charters."
- "Realizing a convention could be a waste of time and money. Realizing parts of the Constitution can already be changed via amendment."
- "Importance of Word of Mouth: I will call people who may or may not understand the consequences."
- "The 2016 Presidential election should have alerted all of us that anything can happen. We must remain proactively involved to combat further impossible events from occurring. Teachers are still respected in some circles but the incredible taxpayer cost alone should sway undecided voters."
- "Excellent presentation. Very informative. I would propose a yearly luncheon at NYSUT in the fall to discuss appropriate issues related to retirees."

To see a photo album of the occasion, visit the RC 10 website at this link: <http://rc10.ny.aft.org/rc-10-fall-luncheon-october-10-2017>

VISIT THE BRONX BOTANICAL GARDENS/GEORGIA O'KEEFFE EXHIBIT ON MAY 23, 2018

Come with RC 10 as we visit the beautiful New York Botanical Gardens in Bronx, New York and have the opportunity to view a stunning display of more than 15 paintings by pioneering American modernist Georgia O'Keeffe. The exhibit focuses on her immersion in the Hawaiian Islands in 1929.

Curated by art historian Theresa Papanikolas, Ph.D., of the Honolulu Museum of Art, this groundbreaking exhibition will offer a rare focus on O'Keeffe's paintings created during a three-month sojourn that was commissioned by the Hawaiian Pineapple Company (now Dole). It will spotlight a transformative time in the legendary artist's life, revealing O'Keeffe's deeply felt impressions of the sites that instilled a lifelong affection for the Islands' rugged topography, dramatic landscapes, and exotic plants. The 15 O'Keeffe paintings on display in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library Art Gallery have not been seen together in New York since their debut in 1940.

In the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, discover a lush flower show evoking the gardens and landscapes that inspired O'Keeffe as well as showcasing the remarkable flora and ecological complexity of Hawai'i.

The price of \$85 for dues-paying members of RC-10, and \$90 for nonmembers and guests includes:

- Entrance to all gardens and collections, special exhibitions, and daily programs.
- Unlimited access to the Garden Tram Tour.

Lunch will not be included, but there are two dining options within the gardens. The Hudson Garden Grill is full-service spotlighting New American cuisine as inspired by locally sourced, ethically produced ingredients from Hudson Valley farms and other regional producers. At the Pine Tree Cafe, enjoy first-class culinary creations amid a renowned collection of rare and unusual pines from Asia, Europe, and North America. The family-friendly menu ranges from artisanal panini, Neapolitan-style pizza, and signature salads to sweet treats and snacks. Or, you could bring your own lunch and/or snacks.

The bus picks up at Saratoga Exit 15 Park and Ride (Wilton Mall close to Dick's Sporting Goods) at 6:45 AM, and at Crossgates Commons behind the Petco at 7:30 AM. Leaves Gardens at 4:00 PM, approximate arrival 7-7:30 PM Crossgates Commons, 8:00 PM Saratoga. For a registration form, see the Travel/Social Column on Page 2 of this newsletter.



DRIVER POINT REDUCTION PROGRAM REGISTRATION

On Wednesday, December 13, a Driver Point Reduction Program will be held at NYSUT. This is a NYS Certified Point and Insurance Reduction class presented by "Driver Training Associates." Successful completion of this program will qualify you for a 10 percent discount on your car insurance for the next three consecutive years. You may also earn a reduction by 4 points on your license, if you have accumulated any points due to a violation of the NYS Traffic laws. \$35 per person, RC 10 members or guests. Lunch Break: A box lunch may be purchased in advance and will be delivered that day. This will speed up lunch and the meeting of state time standards. You may leave the building for lunch if you choose but must be in attendance at class time. Food may not be brought into the building under the terms of our contract with the in-house vendor. Contact Laraine Gillette, 9 Cortland Drive, Albany, NY 12211. Email: RC10secretary@hotmail.com for the registration form.

PUBLIC RETIREES CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES



RC 10'S JANE WEINE, PRISCILLA MUELLER AND VINCE PELLICCIA WERE AMONG THE PROTESTERS AT SARATOGA RALLY AGAINST THE SUNY BOARD DOWNGRADING TEACHER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.

Of the pension money received by public retirees who reside in NYS, 75% comes from investment income, not taxpayers, and it flows back into the communities where they reside. In 2015, NYS retirees were responsible for \$11.7 billion in economic activity in the state.

Public employee retirees make up 2.9% of the State's population, and they paid \$1.7 billion in property taxes or 5% of the total property taxes paid in NY.

Public employee retirees spent \$9.9 billion in NYS supporting close to 70,000 jobs.

Public employee retirees paid \$550 million in State and Local sales tax.

Information provided to NYSUTS by the State Comptroller's Office.

RC 10 NEEDS YOUR EMAIL



Due to the economic reality of a coming decision in the Supreme Court Janus case that would most likely negatively impact the collection of membership dues, NYSUT has reduced the number of print copies of *The Skyline News* from six a year, to five a year. This means that there will be occasions when you do not receive time-sensitive news on trips or other activities by mail. We will continue to publish digital-only issues of the newsletter, and send them by email to those who have registered their email address with NYSUT and/or RC 10. To make sure you receive the most current news, register your email by sending your information to RC10secretary@hotmail.com.

RC 10 ON LINE
<http://rc10.ny.aft.org>

PHOTO ALBUMS ON THE RC 10 WEBSITE

Did you know that there are a number of photo albums including RC 10 trips, luncheons, and other activities that are available on our website? Go to <http://rc10.ny.aft.org>, click the "News" tab on the menu, and go to "Photos." In the meantime, enjoy these photos from the September 2017 RC 10 trip to Portugal.

