



# THE CENTRAL NEW YORKER

<http://nysutretireecouncil7.org/>

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## A Tale of Two Years!

2015 was a year marked by activism against incessant student testing, the test and punish agenda of the Governor, and the decoupling of state tests from teacher evaluation.

And, as a result of 70 educational forums, confrontations with the Lt. Gov at the Fair, billboards, lobbying, radio, television and print ads.... and our getting behind the opt out movement, we have educated the Governor's own Common Core task force. They made recommendations to the Governor and SED, what teachers and our union were making all along when Commissioner King and Chancellor Meryl Tisch refused to listen. They agreed that:

- The standards were too rigid
- The implementation was botched
- The standards were not done in an open and transparent manner
- The standards and modules were not age appropriate
- The standards did not address the needs of the SWD or ESL students
- The state must involve teachers in test making
- There must be a moratorium on using test scores to evaluate teachers until 2020.

As of December 15, 2015, the Regents formally voted to decouple the state tests from teacher evaluations until 2019! While the devil still may be in the details, we may yet call it a Christmas miracle, a Hanukkah miracle, a Kwanza miracle or whatever spiritual miracle made possible by hard work, great organizing, and help from your contributions.

Now, 2016 has arrived, and we don't know what the Governor will recommend on education, but another issue on the Federal level is fast approaching and that may have a direct effect on retiree concerns dealing with our pensions. And, it is not the Constitutional Convention vote in 2017. It is the Friedrichs vs. California Teachers' Association case.

In that case ten teachers led by Rebecca Friedrichs, a 28-year veteran teacher, contend that their right to free speech is being violated because she and the others do not agree with the union's political agenda. She says she and others should not be forced to pay fees for a service they do not choose.

Know this: for forty years the Supreme Court has affirmed the constitutionality of agency fee or the paying of a Fair Share to a union as a result of the Abood vs. Detroit Board of Education decision in 1977.

Indeed, 25 states as well as NY require employees represented by a union pay union dues or their fair share of union dues since they receive all the benefits of the union as well as all the protections. The Taylor law in our state requires a public sector union to represent all, fully and fairly. Under the previous rulings, represented employees who do not want to belong must opt out of union membership.

Should the plaintiffs in the case win fully, fair share payers may become free riders getting union negotiated benefits and protections without paying union dues or a fair share. In addition, if the plaintiffs win, each member may have to opt in to the union every year.

Why does this affect us? Any loss in membership through elimination of agency fee or fair share payments means a loss of our union's bargaining power, which impacts our health, dental, and vision benefits.

It means a loss of political power. That political power is changing the conversation in Albany, adding common sense to a flawed reform effort. Fewer members mean fewer dollars for dues and for Vote/Cope. It means we may inch closer to opening up the NYS Constitution that, if done, could result in rewriting our pension protections. Could we lose pension

benefits already promised? Yes. A strong union means a strong political presence to preserve our pensions. A loss in the Friedrichs' case at the Supreme Court could challenge efforts to preserve pensions and the strength of our union.

In addition, whoever emerges as President in 2016 will make appointments to the Supreme Court that could profoundly affect us. Listen closely to all candidates of both major political parties. Ask yourself who would make appointments that would preserve, protect and enhance pensions, social security, Medicare, Medicaid and other programs we have fought hard to protect.

So, we have a tale of two years - 2015's activism and distinct probability of changes to the chaotic school reforms under this Governor, our miracle, made possible, in part, through your contributions to Vote/Cope. And, 2016 - a watershed year for whether public employee unions can preserve their political strength to enhance and grow the middle class through a victory in the Friedrichs' case.

Remember, it's the season for hope and celebration. It looks like we have much to celebrate as 2015 ends, and much to anticipate as 2016 begins. With all of us together as we are today, we will endure and succeed!

**Enjoy the season and the New Year!**

*~Bill Spreter, RC 7's 2nd VP  
and Vote Cope Coordinator*

### 2015-16 MEETINGS

March 15 - NYSUT  
*see page 3 for reservation form*

April 19 - Hilton Garden Inn,  
Auburn

May 17 - Lakeshore CC

June 21 - NYSUT

**Active membership** in Retiree Council 7 is open to every NYSUT retiree of any NYSUT represented group in Election District 7. ED 7 is comprised of all units in Cayuga and Onondaga counties. Active members are those who have paid RC 7's participation fee of \$10 per year and, if required by the local, payment of local retiree fees. **Associate membership** is open to the spouses of active members. Go to our website for more information.

# From the President's Desk...

*Loretta K. Donlon*

## *It's A New Year, but Good Work Never Ends!*

By now we have recovered from the excitement of the holidays and have a little free time to read and catch up with NYSUT's battles to protect our profession and our retirement. Through our activism with parents and other pro education groups, major changes have been accomplished.

The new federal law, *Every Student Succeeds Act*, replaces the *No Child Left Behind* legislation, which created problems of excessive student testing and teacher evaluations, based on those scores. At the state level, the report of the Governor's Common Core Task Force admitted the current tests were not appropriate for students and ordered the state to develop new tests suitable - for students and developed by teachers! In addition, the report placed a moratorium on the use of test scores in teacher evaluations for four years - giving NYSUT time to work for a fair evaluation system. As we know these are massive victories.

However, NYSUT's Executive Vice President Andy Pallotta said in a recent letter to Council Presidents, "This war is not over. Attacks on public education continue." He listed a few such attacks - Receivership, inadequate school funding, and a zero tax cap - which will put more pressure on school budgets. They can cause cuts in staff and other expenses like transportation and health benefits. Other major issues, like the threat of a Constitutional Convention and a tax on health insurance, as well as proposed cuts to Social Security and Medicare, are still battles to be fought and won with constant activism from NYSUT members.

So get ready for the next phase of your activism in 2016! Step one for retirees - teach your neighbors to be ready to "VOTE NO" on the Constitutional Convention. One poll said 69 percent of them thought it was a good idea not knowing voting for a Convention could change environmental protections, a right to a free public education, allow reduction in public pensions, and stop the right to bargain collectively and to workers compensation.

Our work on this first step to inform members and friends about the possible harms of a Constitutional Conventions means our work is cut out for us. Watch for the next steps in future newsletters.

Enjoy the season - but stay ever vigilant to respond to the needs of our in-service colleagues, our fellow retirees, and our children!

### WORTH NOTING

- ✓ *The **RC 7 Denim Shirts** have arrived! They will be distributed at the March and April Meetings.*
- ✓ ***See page 3 for details** on RC 7 trips to Niagara on the Lake and Bar Harbor, Maine. Info about Oct. 22 trip to Tioga Oktoberfest Express, Wellsboro PA, will appear in a future issue.*
- ✓ **Save the Date**  
*NYSUT Regional Retiree Conference for RC 7 & 8 Tuesday, May 3, 2015 Doubletree Hotel, E. Syracuse 8:30 am - 3:00 pm Invitation will arrive in spring.*
- ✓ **Remember... If you move, notify RC 7 and your school district. Without a correct address on file, you may miss out on important information.**

### *In Remembrance...*

#### **West Genesee**

Eugene Field  
Aspasia Filtch  
Mary Margaret Lynch  
Ann Mangan  
JoAnn Macaluso  
John Pagano  
Elizabeth Palma

#### **North Syracuse**

David Casolare  
Patricia Desroches  
Nancy Devine  
Gloria Ferguson  
Annette Sauter (+Lafayette)  
Robert Palmer (+L'pool)

#### **Baldwinsville**

Nancy Brin (+WG)

#### **Solvay**

David Flaherty  
Lucy Scaia

#### **Liverpool**

Carol Denny  
Sharon Gilbert  
Nicholas Pallotta

#### **Fayetteville-Manlius**

Elizabeth Dorr  
Carol McCord  
Nancy McDade

#### **East Syracuse-Minoa**

John Colella, Jr.  
Betty Reese

#### **OCC**

Phillip MacArthur

#### **Jordan-Elbridge**

Michael Gallagher  
Nancy Olson  
Arthur TenEyck

#### **Tully**

Frederick Rose

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NYSUT Retiree Council 7

NYSUT, AFT, NEA, AFL-CIO

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Loretta Donlon, ED 51 Director

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Estelle Przybycien  
Sabra Reichardt  
Donald Schulenberg  
Ciro Tantillo  
Valerie Torrence  
Carol Ware  
Shirley West



Join Us on March 15, 2016 for the RC 7 Luncheon Meeting at  
**NYSUT Regional Office, 4893 Brittonfield Parkway, E. Syracuse**

\$10 per person

**Registration and Lunch at 11:30 • Program at 12:00**

Enjoy a buffet luncheon of Assorted Sandwiches, Macaroni Salad, Baked Beans, Chips, Brownies and Cookies, Soda and Water, catered by Brooklyn Pickle.

We will have a different format at this luncheon! We will be showing the film *Education, Inc.*, a 90-minute documentary about how money and politics are changing our schools. In order to show the film and have time to socialize, we will have lunch available as soon as you enter the NYSUT building. Feel free to help yourself, find your seat, socialize, and prepare for the movie to begin shortly after 12 noon.

**Reservation Form RC 7 Luncheon - March 15, 2016**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Number of reservations \_\_\_\_\_ at \$10. Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send reservation form and a check payable to NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL 7 to:

**FRAN HUDSON, NYSUT Regional Office, 4983 Brittonfield Parkway, Box 247, E. Syracuse, NY 13057**

**Reservations must be received by March 1. No one can be seated without a reservation.**

**RC 7 Trip: Niagara on the Lake/Shaw Festival, Canada - May 18-19, 2016**

**RC 7 Trip: Maine Adventure - Aug 23-26, 2016**

Package includes:

- ❖ Roundtrip motor coach transportation
- ❖ 1 Night Lodging at Embassy Suites Fallsview Niagara Falls
- ❖ 1 Breakfast at the hotel
- ❖ 1 Lunch at the Trius Vineyard, Niagara on the Lake
- ❖ 1 Dinner at Betty's Restaurant, Niagara Falls
- ❖ Admission to:
  - Shaw Festival Performance (OPTIONAL +\$55)
  - Tour of the Peller Estates Winery
  - Kurtz Orchards and Marketplace, Butterfly Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, White Water Walk
  - Free time at Niagara Casino

Cost is based on number of travelers and room occupancy choice. Cost will range from a high of \$495 (single room, 25 travelers) to a low of \$305 (quad room, 40 travelers). Initial deposit of \$100 per person and registration form is necessary to reserve your seat.

Package includes:

- ❖ Roundtrip motor coach transportation
- ❖ 3 Nights Lodging at Trade Winds Inn, Rockland, Me
- ❖ 3 Buffet Breakfasts at the hotel
- ❖ Wine and Cheese reception
- ❖ 2 Dinners - a "Lobsta Bake" at hotel and dinner at Eclipse Restaurant
- ❖ Admission to:
  - Acadia National Park and Cadillac Mountain
  - Tour of Rockland Maine
  - Boat Cruise on Camden Harbor
  - Stops at Thomaston Maine State Prison, Bar Harbor Shops, Nubble Lighthouse, Yankee Candle Village

Cost is based on number of travelers and room occupancy choice. Cost will range from a high of \$935 (single room, 25 travelers) to a low of \$555 (quad room, 40 travelers). Initial deposit of \$200 per person and registration form is necessary to reserve your seat.

Questions?? Contact Bella Tours! Or call Marge Schuster at 315-446-2037 or email mschuster730@yahoo.com.

**NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL 7 & 8 RESERVATION FORM**

Please complete the following form for each traveler and return to Bella Tours and Travel Inc. 305 Vine Street, Suite 9, Liverpool, NY 13088 Phone# 315-652-0121 Fax# 315-299-4733 email: bellatours@hotmail.com



Name \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Room Choice Single \_\_\_ Double \_\_\_ Triple \_\_\_ Quad \_\_\_ Roommate Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Cancellation Insurance? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
 (please submit with deposit - insurance is \$30 per person - additional info available at Bella Tours)

Method of payment: Cash \_\_\_ Check# \_\_\_ Credit Card \_\_\_ (call cc info into Bella) Money Order \_\_\_

Make checks payable to Bella Tours and Travel Inc. (There will be a \$20 fee for any returned checks.)

# 5 *Benefits Of Being a NYSUT Member*



1. Higher pay & better benefits
2. A contract you can rely on
3. A strong voice at work
4. Professional learning

## 5. NYSUT Member Benefits

**NYSUT members & their families can choose from a variety of insurance, financial, legal, and shopping & travel programs designed with the NYSUT member in mind -- including term life insurance, auto insurance, legal & financial services, car rentals, vacation packages, and much more!**

## Member Appreciation Month is back again this February!

Since it was such a big hit last year, we're doing it again! Member Appreciation Month is coming February 2016.

To be eligible for these drawings, all you need to do is participate in our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

This year will be even bigger because it's a leap year... that means more chances to win even more great prizes!!!

Once again, Member Appreciation Month will be filled with a series of special prize drawings for items donated by Member Benefits and our endorsed program providers. Prizes will include gift cards, Beats headphones, a Go Pro camera and more.



We will announce the winners of these special prize drawings exclusively on the Member Benefits website throughout the month of February.

It's the strength of the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that makes it possible for Member Benefits to offer more than 40 endorsed programs & services designed with you in mind.

For more details about this exciting event, visit the Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call **800-626-8101**.



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.

Jan./Feb. '16

