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RETIREES NEWSLETTER

Professional Staff Congress
Jack Judd, Editor
psc-cuny.org/retirees

22ND ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON -- JUNE 8th. The Retirees Chapter has hosted an annual June luncheon every year since 1993. On Monday, June 8, we continue the tradition, breaking bread, connecting with old friends, making new ones and addressing important issues.

The June 8th luncheon will feature professor emeritus of Cinema (CSI and The Graduate Center) and cultural critic, Leonard Quart. He will engage us in a "**Conversation about Gentrification.**"



Picket sign at anti-gentrification rally

AT the luncheon, we'll also be honoring emeritus chair **Jack Judd**, who after almost a decade, is stepping down as editor of the Retiree Newsletter.

An invitation and reservation form, available at tinyurl.com/Luncheon060815, provides details for the luncheon, the coffee hour (and year-end chapter review) that precedes it, and directions to John Jay College, where the event is being held.

If you are making a last minute reservation, call the PSC at [212-354-1252](tel:212-354-1252), ask for Sharon Tonge and arrange to pay at the door. We won't be able to take reservations after Tuesday, June 2.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS. The first monthly meeting of the Retirees Chapter in the fall will be held on Tuesday, September 8. PSC President Barbara Bowen will open the academic year with the traditional, "State of the Union Address." We are also inviting Karen Magee, president of the PSC's statewide affiliate, New York State United Teachers, to address us on the state of NYSUT. NYSUT is waging a battle of historic importance to defend public K-12 education in New York State against the overreach of Governor Andrew

Cuomo. We'll also hear about NYSUT's higher education initiatives.

FIGHTING RETIREMENT INSECURITY. *The following summary of remarks delivered at the May chapter meeting by our two guest speakers was prepared by Joel Berger, vice-chairman of the Retirees Chapter.*

The Retiree Chapter, through its Social Safety Net Working Group, has focused attention on how to defend and to expand important programs that comprise a Social Safety Net, such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Other labor unions and concerned groups have built coalitions with similar goals. One of our speakers at the May chapter meeting, Mark Hannay, director of the Metro NY Healthcare for All campaign, founded the No Grand Bad Bargain coalition, a city-wide group (which includes the PSC) organized to fend off attacks on the safety net. Hannay described the Federal budget process as it impacts upon the Social Safety Net.

Hannay argued that congressional budgets have undercut the safety net, particularly "since the mid-term elections of 2010 when control of the House slipped from the Democrats to the Republicans." "[W]e began to see a major effort around deficit reduction coming from them."

In the early 2000s, Hannay pointed out, the U.S. government was running a modest budget surplus. Then, the Bush-era tax cuts plus the

inclusion of prescription drug benefits for Medicare recipients pushed the budget into a deficit, as neither policy was paid for. "We also had two wars that we were fighting at that time, which were technically off-budget."

Next, in Hannay's account, the fiscal crisis of 2008 resulted in less tax revenue received by the government as unemployment rose. It also triggered greater spending on unemployment benefits and other safety-net programs.



In 2011, the new House leadership was "obsessed with deficit reduction." There was a battle over whether to raise the debt ceiling, and talk of a "Grand Bargain" between President Barack Obama and House Speaker John Boehner. In response, Hannay led a coalition of groups throughout New York State under the banner of the "Restore American Promise" campaign, lobbying members of Congress to reject a "Bad Grand Bargain."

With all this as background, Hannay then described in detail the budget process followed by Congress. The President submits a budget, and

after holding hearings, each house adopts a budget resolution. Ideally, a joint resolution emerges from a budget conference. Then 12 different appropriation bills are passed, covering a ten-year window. Identical budgets must be passed by both houses by September 30. If not, continuing resolutions maintain the status quo. If there is no agreement, the government shuts down; as it did last year for two weeks over an effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Reconciliation can be used in the Senate to require only a 51 vote majority, as the procedure is not subject to the 60 votes needed to stop a filibuster. Hannay believes that the Republicans will use this maneuver to attempt repeal of Obamacare. (Which the President will veto.) Although the budget deficit is decreasing, there still is a concerted effort to eliminate the deficit by cutting social programs. Analyzing the various budget proposals, Mark concluded, "We have got our work cut out for us."

Reflecting upon his own personal involvement with issues involving safety net programs, Roger Sanjek, retired professor of anthropology at Queens College and author of a book on the "Gray Panthers," shared his experiences with the Retirees Chapter as a follow up to Mark Hannay's presentation.

As a young professor at Queens in 1975, during the fiscal crisis, Sanjek was awarded a fellowship at UC, Berkeley. During his stay there, he and his wife became involved with

the Center for Independent Living and the Gray Panthers. "We encountered, in the Gray Panthers, two different strains of members. One consisted of life-long activists in their 60s, 70s and 80s, who were really members of the 1930s generation. The other group was made up of younger Gray Panthers in their early 30s...the 1960s generation." The two generations gave the group its vitality, as they engaged the political establishment in a variety of local and national issues.



Sanjek returned to New York and rejoined the local chapter of the Gray Panthers. He was elected to their National Board in 1981, representing all the Gray Panther groups in New York City. It was a time of great activism, but, over time, no new generation joined the membership, and the organization declined in chapters. In January of this year, the Gray Panthers officially disbanded.

Among the campaigns that they waged were efforts to beat back recommendations of the 1981 National Commission on Social Security Reform chaired by Alan Greenspan, which sought to erode many benefits that workers received. The Panthers, along with many other groups, defeated the campaign by President Bush to privatize Social Security in 2005. With the 2016 election looming ahead, Sanjek believes that the coalitions formed today are stronger and are better organized today, with public opinion supporting Social Security. Reviewing current movements and activism, Roger concluded, "There are some good things happening."



SOME IMPORTANT LINKS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING. Read the following for further information on Social Security and topics pertinent to senior citizens.

Retirement Security:
whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/blog/policy/post/retirement-security#.VVYFA0CWhNg.hotmail

Talking With Your Doctor: A Guide for Older People:

1.usa.gov/1c0gwdc

CDC's Healthy Brain Initiative

Road Map:

cdc.gov/aging/healthybrain

Home And Recreational Safety:

cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/Falls/steady/patients.html

CLAUDE CAMPBELL: IN MEMORIAM

By Irwin Yellowitz

Claude Campbell, secretary of the PSC from 1973 to 1979, and first vice president from 1979 to 1984, died on April 17, 2015, in Tucson, Arizona, at the age of 86.

Claude was a lifetime unionist. In the 1960s, he was active in the United Federation of Teachers, and when he joined the faculty of the Staten Island Community College (later merged with Richmond College to form the College of Staten Island), he became active in the United Federation of College Teachers, headed by Israel Kugler. The UFCT merged with the Legislative Conference in 1972 to form the PSC, and Claude continued his activism, holding major union offices from 1973 until his retirement in 1984.

You never had to wonder about Claude's views on any subject. He was outspoken and direct, but his views were based on a clear and realistic evaluation of the situation.

He constantly sought the best achievable outcome. He was a pragmatist in essence, but Claude also knew what he wanted to accomplish, and he made every effort to do so.

Claude was a major influence in the founding of the PSC-CUNY Credit Union in 1979, and he became its first president. He had a strong interest in financial affairs in general, and he correctly understood that a credit union would be of great value to the CUNY faculty and staff. Clearly its success over several decades proves how right he was.

He was a multifaceted person. In addition to his teaching and union activities, Claude was the author of about a half dozen novels, most written after he retired when he had time to focus on this aspect of his life

Claude played a major role in the founding of the PSC, in the response to the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, and in the PSC's gains in the better years of the early and mid-1980s. He was a leader, an advocate and a keen analyst. Claude was at the center of everything that happened, and he was vital to the success of the PSC in good times and bad. We have lost a major player in the early history of the PSC.

VOTE COPE

By Cecelia McCall

The PSC Retiree Chapter has a record to be proud of. We have long-supported our union's legislative efforts by contributing to

VOTE/COPE, the union's political action fund: in 2012, 472 of us responded to the request for donations: in 2013, 332 of us made a donation and in 2014, 280 did. But as of May 2015, only 27 retirees responded to the letter that was sent last fall.



Now more than ever our in-service colleagues are relying on our support. They have been working for five years without across-the-board raises and are owed retroactive pay. As a public institution, CUNY is funded by the city and state, and money for negotiated contracts must be included in their annual budgets. As yet, that has not happened. The Chancellor has said that he cannot settle until he knows that money is available.

Many of you have been lobbying state and local legislators throughout the year. This effort may have to continue through the summer or until our colleagues get a fair contract. VOTE/COPE funds, separate from union dues, are key to maintaining the union's political influence and bringing home the contract.

Unlike former years, you will not be receiving a spring letter, so this brief appeal from the chapter executive committee is on behalf of the PSC. We ask that you send a donation (payable to PSC/CUNY COPE) to the PSC office at 61 Broadway, Suite 15, New York, NY 10006.

**SHALOM: AUF WIEDERSEHEN:
HASTA LUEGO.**

This Editor, a longtime member of the PSC and former chairman of this Chapter, bids you farewell. Enjoy your years in retirement and, most important of all, stay well and active.

I am happy to announce that retiree Joan Greenbaum has consented to become the editor of the Newsletter.

Jacob (Jack) Judd

[We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jack, not only for his years as chair of the Retirees Chapter, but for his labor of love nurturing a newsletter that built retiree community, engagement and activism. Jack, thank you for setting the bar so high.]

Join us at the June 8th retirees luncheon when we'll be honoring Jack. – Bill Friedheim, chapter chair.]