



March/April 2015      Issue 7  
Academic Year      2014-2015

## RETIREES NEWSLETTER

Professional Staff Congress  
Jack Judd, Editor  
[psc-cuny.org/retirees](http://psc-cuny.org/retirees)

### APRIL 6<sup>th</sup> CHAPTER PROGRAM: IS THE LABOR MOVEMENT REVIVABLE?



**Speakers: Irwin Yellowitz:** Retired professor of history (CCNY and The Graduate Center), labor historian and author, past treasurer of the PSC, former chair of the Retirees Chapter and president of the New York Labor History Association.

**Bill Fletcher:** Labor, social justice and community activist, author,

former president of TransAfrica Forum, senior scholar with the Institute for Policy Studies, syndicated columnist, a regular commentator on television, radio and the web, and a former senior staff person at the national AFL-CIO.

We meet at the PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16<sup>th</sup> floor, 1-3 PM. Doors open at 12:45 PM. There will be coffee, tea and light refreshments.

The Executive Committee meets at 10:30 AM in the Justice Room on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor. These meetings are open to all interested retirees.

### THE ANNUAL JUNE LUNCHEON - A CONVERSATION ABOUT

**GENTRIFICATION:** 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.

New York City has one of the highest rates of income inequality in the nation. Large portions of neighborhoods like Williamsburg, Long Island City and the East Village have been gentrified, turned into upper-middle-class oases, and big

money has taken over large pieces of Manhattan where even the upper middle class has been priced out. Clearly, there is a human cost to gentrification, but in some cases the restored buildings and new businesses will help revive both the city and neighborhood's economic life.

Professor Quart, a cultural and film critic writing in both academic and popular media, will look at the complexity of gentrification through its treatment in film and the mass media, as well as through a political, social and economic lens. His aim is to pose questions for what should be a lively discussion.



**An invitation and reservation form** is included for those who receive the newsletter by U.S. Mail. Those receiving the newsletter by email, can view and print the invitation/reservation form at [tinyurl.com/Luncheon060815](http://tinyurl.com/Luncheon060815). Send your luncheon checks and completed reservation form to the

PSC (address and event details are on the invitation).

The luncheon is Monday, June 8, 12:30 PM in the second floor faculty dining commons of John Jay's New Building, 899 Tenth Avenue. The best entrance of the New Building for the luncheon is on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 58<sup>th</sup> & 59<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Preceding the luncheon, there will be a coffee hour in the faculty lounge at 10:30 AM. followed by a report and discussion reviewing the activities and outreach of the chapter over the past year.

### **SUMMARY OF MARCH 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**CHAPTER PROGRAM.** *Joel Berger, vice chairman of the Retirees Chapter, has prepared a summary of remarks made by Professor Carrolle Charles, the featured speaker at our March meeting.*

### **"Is Haiti the Same as Congo?"**

Disaster and devastation make the headlines and television coverage. What lies underneath is usually ignored. In a provocative talk to the chapter at its March meeting, Carrolle Charles, associate professor of sociology at Baruch College asked, "Is Haiti the Same as Congo?"

The earthquake in Haiti on January 12, 2010 caused 200,000 deaths, with one million people being displaced. Women who sought refuge in the camps set up in Port-au-Prince were vulnerable to sexual predators, according to United Nations reports and those of non-governmental organizations, which

documented the significant increase of rape in the aftermath of the earthquake. But there is disagreement about the number of cases. Reflecting upon statistics about rape in the United States and other countries, Professor Charles observed that rape is not something specific to Haiti.



Domestic violence and rape have been of continuing concerns of feminist organizations in Haiti. Through their efforts, rape was recognized as a criminal offense in Haiti in 2004. Yet, sexual assault persists, and has been identified as part of a "culture of violence." This is a constant issue for all women's organizations in Haiti, with rapes occurring too frequently.

Yet the situation is nowhere near what happened in the Congo during the civil war of 1998-2000. There rape was used as a weapon of war by soldiers on each side. "Now we don't hear anything more about the crisis." Professor Charles remarked that, "in the United States, out of every 100 rapes, only 40 get

reported, and only 10 lead to an arrest, and 8 get convicted. Every two minutes, another American is sexually assaulted; each year there are 230,868 victims of sexual assault." With Sweden, New Zealand, and Belgium among the five countries with the highest incidence of rape, Prof Charles asked, "What organization, within the United States or within the international community, would dare to say that Sweden, or Belgium, has a culture of violence?" She concluded by stating, "rape is not a unique Haitian phenomenon."

#### **MARTIN KAPLAN DIES AT 91.**

Professor Martin Kaplan, a member of the Biology Department at Queens College for over 40 years, and a longtime leader in the PSC, died recently at age 91.

Marty was an officer of the Retirees Chapter for more than a decade. Before his retirement in 1995, he had served for many years on the PSC Executive Council. His leadership role in PSC thus continued from in-service to retiree, and we benefited immensely from his wisdom and energy over several decades.

He also was a Trustee of the Belle Zeller Scholarship Fund. Marty had a strong interest in medical ethics, and when we interviewed finalists for the scholarship awards, many of whom aspired to be doctors, he would ask tough questions about medical ethics. He received some excellent replies, and some not so good responses, but all the students left the interview with an appreciation

for a vital subject that had not been on their radar.

Marty believed deeply that retirees had to be an integral part of the PSC. In a Clarion article, he argued that in-service and retired members of the union were linked in a lifelong continuum. As he put it so neatly: “we are all retirees in training.”

Wearing another hat, Marty also was a member of the Executive Committee of the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund during the 1980s and 1990s.

Those of us who knew Marty well liked him immensely. He had a keen, analytical mind that could cut to the essence of an issue. He also was a friendly, warm person, who always spoke well of others, and stressed the positive in any situation. The PSC Retirees Chapter regrets his passing, and we send condolences to his family.

*Irwin Yellowitz*

**REDISCOVERY AND RETIREMENT.** *We are instituting a new feature wherein retirees write about post-CUNY activities that have enhanced their wellbeing and joy in life. Retiree Renate Bridenthal inaugurates this Newsletter feature. If you would like to consider writing a brief piece on renewal or rediscovery in retirement, contact the newsletter editor, Jack Judd at [jjudd18@optimum.net](mailto:jjudd18@optimum.net).*

**Renewal in Music** *by Renate Bridenthal*

We all know that the joys of retirement include FREEDOM and FOUND TIME. The pleasure of sleeping late, lingering over a slow breakfast with the *New York Times*, reading books long deferred, seeing friends more often, getting out to theater, movies, museums, concerts. And maybe picking up again an activity beloved long ago but shelved under the pressure of a busy career.



For me, that has been piano. I played it very seriously from the ages of nine to seventeen, but had to give it up when I veered off onto the demanding intellectual trajectory that led me ultimately to teach at CUNY and, now, to our vibrant PSC Retirees Chapter. I have found it quite easy to resume, although certainly not at the level I had left off. Under the direction of kind and understanding teachers, I have found my love of music nurtured, my knowledge of it expanding, my technique improving. I've even lost much of my anxiety about performing for friends. Maybe we can't memorize the way we did in our youth, but I've seen even famous pianists keep their notes in front of them. Anyway, at this point in our lives, it's all about fun, love of music,

and even just the feel of the keyboard.

You might be dreaming of having this experience again or even just trying it for the first time. I had a friend who started at age 65 and just a couple of years later was playing simple pieces from Bach's Notebook for Anna Magdalena. I encourage you to try it with a wonderful young teacher I've been working with recently.

A Juilliard graduate, he is very personable, patient and creative in his teaching. If you want to talk about this, please feel free to call me at (212) 662-0934 or e-mail me at [bridenthalr@yahoo.com](mailto:bridenthalr@yahoo.com).

**FOR IRMAA PARTICIPANTS:**  
2013 IRMAA reimbursement payments are scheduled to go out by April 2015.

For more information about IRMAA reimbursements, go to the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund's website at [pscunywf.org/2013-irmaa-reimbursement-checks.aspx](http://pscunywf.org/2013-irmaa-reimbursement-checks.aspx). If you cannot open up this link, copy and paste it into your browser.

If you applied and do not receive your 2013 IRMAA reimbursement, contact Yvonne Rodriguez, University Deputy Director of Employee Benefits, at 646-313-8231 or by email at [yvonne.rodriguez@cuny.edu](mailto:yvonne.rodriguez@cuny.edu).

**LABOR GOES TO THE MOVIES PRESENTS, CHINATOWN (1974, U.S., ROMAN POLANSKI)** Friday,

April 17, 6 – 9 PM, PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16<sup>th</sup> floor.

*[This year's Labor Goes to the Movies, the PSC film series, presents a group of films—documentary and fiction—that take the threat of apocalypse as their premise.]*



One of the great U.S. films of the second half of the 20th Century, Roman Polanski directed a Robert Towne film noir script, based on a true story, about ecological, financial and sexual crimes in Los Angeles during the 1930s. Though set in the 1930s, the film was far ahead of its time, tracing the perverse reverberations of the battle over water rights in California, with drowning in the midst of a drought, incest, voyeurism, and adultery, all generated by capitalist greed, and all ultimately obscured by the fog of orientalist projection. Nominated for 11 Oscars, including Director, Screenwriter, Actor (Jack Nicholson), and Actress (Faye Dunaway), with a spooky performance by Polanski.

Doors open at 6 PM. A discussion will follow the film. Light refreshments provided.