

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING:  
MONDAY, NOV. 7, 1 – 3 PM**

**Solitary Confinement/Mass Incarceration and the Need for Prison Reform.**

**Speakers: Jack Beck, Director, Prison Visiting Project, Correctional Association of NY.** Beck is a lawyer with a long history of prisoner rights advocacy. Before he joined the staff of the Correctional Association in 2004, he was senior supervising attorney at the Prisoners' Right Project of the Legal Aid Society, where he worked for 23 years. Beck is a nationally recognized advocate and expert on prison health care (physical and mental).

**Johnny Perez** first went to prison while still a teenager. He spent an accumulated three years in solitary confinement. Since his 2013 release,

Perez has been a determined activist working against mass incarceration in general and solitary confinement in particular. He has become a leader in the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC), where he trains other previously incarcerated individuals to be spokespersons for the cause. He has also written about these experiences on CAIC's blog: [tinyurl.com/BlogPerez](http://tinyurl.com/BlogPerez)

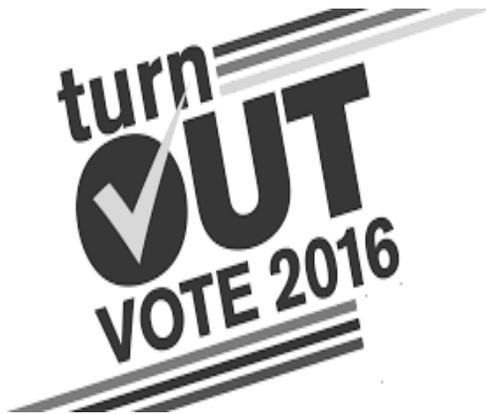


**Monday, November 7, 1-3 PM, PSC Union Hall, 61 Broadway, 16<sup>th</sup> floor.**

Light refreshments as usual. And, oh yes, if you can, plan to stay for election phone banking—see *Last Call(s)* below.

## LAST CALL(S)

**It is not too late for volunteers to participate** in the PSC's get out the vote (GOTV) activities—getting out the vote for Hillary and PSC-prioritized state and congressional elections. For more information on prioritized endorsements go to [tinyurl.com/KeyRacesPSC](http://tinyurl.com/KeyRacesPSC)



For a sign-up list of phone-banking dates (including any time between 3 and 9 PM after our November 7 chapter meeting), go to [tinyurl.com/PSCphonebanking](http://tinyurl.com/PSCphonebanking).

If you want to make calls from home, we will teach you to use the virtual online system. To volunteer, contact Tiffany Brown ([tbrown@pscmail.org](mailto:tbrown@pscmail.org)) or call the PSC at 212-354-1252 and ask for Tiffany.

## UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS AND JANUARY LUNCHEON

**Monday, December 5:** Defending Public Higher Education. Speakers:

Mike Fabricant and Steve Brier, authors of an upcoming book from Johns Hopkins University Press, *Austerity Blues, Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education*. They will examine how austerity politics, disinvestment and growing privatization threaten public higher education and undercut its mission to promote opportunity for poor, working-class and minority students in a democracy.

The current *Clarion* has a two-page article by Brier and Fabricant based on the book. *Austerity Blues* is available from Johns Hopkins University Press at a 30% discount by calling 1-800-537-5487 and indicating the code "HNAF."

## Monday, January 9 Luncheon:

Speakers from the Living New Deal. The Living New Deal is a national database of thousands of documents, photographs, and personal stories about public works made possible by the New Deal. Its goal is to promote and extend the legacy and policies of the New Deal.

**Writers' Group.** The PSC retirees writing group meets once a month for a supportive session on varied topics. Please contact [chgemson@gmail.com](mailto:chgemson@gmail.com) for the next session, date and time. All kinds of writing are welcome in this informal group.

## SAFETY NET COMMITTEE WINS AWARD

Congratulations Safety Net Working Group! The International Labor Communications Association (ILCA)

recently announced the winners in its annual awards contest:

2nd Place: General  
Excellence: Single Issue  
Publication: State/Other  
**DEFENDING THE SOCIAL  
SAFETY NET: A CALL TO  
ACTION**  
By Social Safety Net Working  
Group, PSC Retirees' Chapter

This is quite a feather in the group's cap. The ILCA competition is national, encompassing thousands of locals.

## RETIREE DUES



Most of you have paid your annual dues, but a few have not. If you have not yet paid your dues, you will receive (or have received) a final invoice. If your dues are not paid by November, you will no longer be a member of chapter and will not receive the newsletter.

But fear not. Simply return the invoice with a check and you will be good to go for another year.

Retirees need to renew annually. Since we are no longer on payroll, there are no deductions! Your NYSUT benefits and our PSC

programs depend on you sending in your dues.

If you didn't receive a final invoice, or if you can't find it, please call the **PSC Membership Department** and ask for one. Perhaps you also need to update your mailing address now that we are sending this *Turning the Page* as a paper copy, as well as by email (and maybe you need to update that too). Call 212-354-1252.

## THE MONTH THAT WAS

### Do No Harm

*Cecelia McCall, Retired PSC  
Secretary, Baruch College*

"Do no harm." Responding to a question posed at last month's chapter meeting on October 5, Irwin Yellowitz, (professor emeritus, CCNY) quoted those words from the Hippocratic Oath. He and Ed Ott (distinguished lecturer at the Murphy Institute and former chair of NYC Central Labor Council) addressed issues related to the 2016 presidential election that have been referred to in a recent issue of *The Nation* as a national crisis. Irwin Yellowitz presented an overview of voting patterns of union members and union households. He distributed data, largely from the *New York Times*, indicating that union members and their families vote for Democrats at a higher rate than others. Latinos, African Americans and Jews vote at an even higher rate for Democrats, according to the same data. He noted that since the FDR administration, labor has voted consistently as a bloc for Democrats, but cautioned that since

Democratic candidates can't win without labor, union members must be motivated to get to the polls.

Ed Ott was not as sanguine. He said that the AFL/CIO is divided over the election and not fully mobilizing its members. He was concerned that people outside of New York are indifferent to the race, that the conservative wing of labor is holding the movement back and that the white working class, particularly in the South, has shifted to the Republican Party because of social issues, religion and race—the increased influence of African Americans and others. He believes the AFL/CIO misunderstood the import of the Sanders campaign in the same way that the Right misunderstood Trump. He concluded by saying that whether Clinton wins or not, the labor movement will be cracked and there will be a struggle among labor unions that may last a decade. The role of the Left will be to ensure that the transition maintains a democratic character and does not descend into fascism.

During the question and answer period, Professor Yellowitz invoked the phrase from the oath taken by physicians to answer a query about opting to vote for a third party candidate. He said that Trump will do considerable harm in that much of his campaign is reminiscent of the fascism of the 1920s and 30s, but that unless the polls are completely wrong, NYS will go with Clinton. A vote for a third party candidate here will not damage Clinton.

## **WALKING TOURS: WALKING, TALKING AND EATING**

### **Looking Up**



### **Walking Tour: Baruch**

*-Fatima Makloufi, Hostos Community College*

On Friday, October 14, the PSC-CUNY Retiree Chapter organized a walking tour of the architectural styles and social welfare institutions around Baruch College.

*Bert Hansen*, professor emeritus in the department of history at Baruch College, led the tour, which was attended by eleven retirees. Participants were amazed that the experience taught them to pay more attention to the ignored gems of history surrounding them. In the rush of things, all of us tend to look down and straight ahead instead of up and around us.

Thanks to Bert's research and vast knowledge of the area's history, the group was able to tour several landmarks and learn about the philanthropic social welfare institutions that were clustered in the area at the turn of the Twentieth Century. The tour, which lasted an hour, covered buildings with a range of styles and the various ways that their functions have changed over time. Here is a selected list of

buildings visited that people agreed were worth going back and taking a look at:

*The Madison Square Station Post Office (1930s)* has the "Scenes of New York" mural series by Kindred McLeary, commissioned by a Federal Arts program in the late 1930s. It is really worth seeing. If you haven't been there, go take a look. Look up! Each panel is a scene of everyday New Yorkers in action.

*The Art Deco Baruch administration building* at 135 East 22nd street was formerly Family Court. It was built in the late 1930s as an expansion to the Children's Court.

*The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies Building* at 281 Park Avenue South was built 1892-94. It is now gentrified into high-priced apartments.

The former offices for the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children* were built in 1892. This building has an unadorned stone base with ornamental terra-cotta panels located on the seventh floor.

The Neo-Classical Renaissance palazzo building of the *Provident Loan Society*, built in 1909 at 346 Park Avenue across from 25th Street, is a building that served to foster low-priced loans and pawn services for many immigrants.

The flamboyant Neo-Baroque facade of the *Appellate Division, First Department of the New York State Supreme Court* was built in 1900. The grand facade can be seen while

walking west along the south side of 25th Street to Madison Avenue. This building, among other interesting engravings, has embedded into the stone on the ground floor, this statement, which could appear very relevant today: "We Must Not use FORCE Till Just Laws are Denied."

The fortress-like *Sixty-ninth Regiment Armory*, built 1904-06 on East 25th street toward Lexington Avenue, served as the site of the famous 1913 modern art show.

The eclectically styled *Vertical Campus of Baruch* by Kohn, Pederson and Fox was built in 2000. It was once referred to as a "beached cruise ship" by the AIA.

The group ended the tour with a delicious Indian-Vegetarian lunch at Saravanaa Bhavan, a favorite place for locals. Bert was asked to plan another tour, including one in his field of medical history and public health.



**Brooklyn  
Heights and  
Robert Moses  
Collide**

*-Steve Leberstein, Retiree City College Center for Worker Education*

On a mild, clear September Day, seventeen retirees gathered in front of Brooklyn's Borough Hall for a tour of historic Brooklyn Heights, led by Steve Levine, an urban historian who

teaches at City College's Center for Worker Education.

Borough Hall, completed in 1848, was a logical starting point for the tour. The group then took off for the central part of the Heights whose mainly single-family houses, reflect changing architectural styles over the decades, in styles such as Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Romanesque Revival, Italianate, Renaissance Revival, and Queen Anne.

In the Twentieth Century, during the Depression and on to the 1950s, many of these grand houses fell on hard times. But their decline, he explained, also allowed for a bohemian haven, becoming home to many artists, intellectuals and writers, including W. H. Auden, Carson McCullers, Henry Miller, Benjamin Britten, W.E.B. DuBois, Earl Robinson, and Norman Mailer, among others. By the 1960s, gentrification began to remake the neighborhood, as it has continued to do in many formerly affordable parts of New York.

Parts of the Heights were also home to multi-racial working-class areas targeted for urban renewal by Robert Moses. What is now Cadman Plaza West, formerly Fulton Street, was home to over 1,000 people, when Moses declared it blighted and bulldozed it in the 1950s. On the southwestern side of the neighborhood, Willow Place was also home to a multi-racial population. Levine pointed to the Riverside Buildings there, built as limited-profit housing for workers by

A.T. White, a Brooklyn industrialist who had earlier built worker housing on nearby Hicks Street. Moses also tried to bulldoze Willow-Town, but it survived except for a portion destroyed to make way for an entry ramp for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, one of Moses' noisier footprints.



What was Robert Moses' legacy in Brooklyn Heights?

We then strolled the Promenade, which is cantilevered over the Expressway. Levine explained that Moses wanted to put the Expressway right down the middle of the Heights, but was defeated in a compromise that resulted in the Promenade.

Robert Moses sparked a fight with community groups over his plan to build high-rise towers of studio and small apartments for professional people on Cadman Plaza West. He lost, and instead Mitchell Lama housing with modest town houses and towers were built for middle-income families. In 1965, Mayor Robert Wagner replaced Moses as head of urban redevelopment, and community activism made the Heights the first NYC Historic District that same year.

Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims on Orange Street in the North Heights, was a stop on the Underground Railroad. Henry Ward Beecher, a prominent abolitionist and Plymouth's minister, sheltered runaway slaves in the church basement. Around the corner is the only public school in the Heights, P.S. 8, once again the object of controversy over integration and local control.

As with other PSC retiree tours, a highlight was a stop for lunch at one of the area's most popular restaurants, Teresa's on Montague Street, a branch of the Polish restaurant on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Manhattan.

Participants called on Levine to offer more tours. One member of the group, Judy Gex, said that she loved not only the walk and the talk, but also meeting people and eating at Teresa's. Gerry Barker said, "it was a memorable experience—seeing a part of New York I hardly knew..." For his wife Ann, he said, "it was returning to where she had lived half a century ago..." New York neighborhoods hold memories for many of us in the Retirees Chapter. More tours will be planned for spring. Please let us know if you want to organize or lead one.



**AGE-FRIENDLY NEW YORK CITY**  
*Francine Brewer, Retiree, LaGuardia  
Community College*

An Age-Friendly New York City (A-FNYC) project started in 2007 when Mayor Bloomberg, Council Speaker Christine Quinn and the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) announced their collaboration and explained what the project was about. A-FNYC wanted to find out how the City responded to older New Yorkers' needs and desires and to "develop recommendations and implement strategies" that will allow NYC to be called age-friendly.

What makes a city age-friendly? The background is the huge growth in the number of older adults in the City (including us). It is likely that from 2005 to 2030, the number of New Yorkers age 65 and older will increase by 47%! The City, in collaboration with NYAM, wanted to find out how age-friendly the city was. What followed was an investigation of what stakeholders had to say. In September 2008, NYAM issued a report about their findings. NYC then proposed initiatives in four categories: community and civic participation, housing, public spaces and transportation, and health and social services.

Here are a few highlights from the Housing section of A-FNYC.

**Affordable Housing.** Increasing affordable housing is at the heart of this initiative. Finance and build low-income housing. Change zoning code when necessary. Rehabilitate housing using loans.

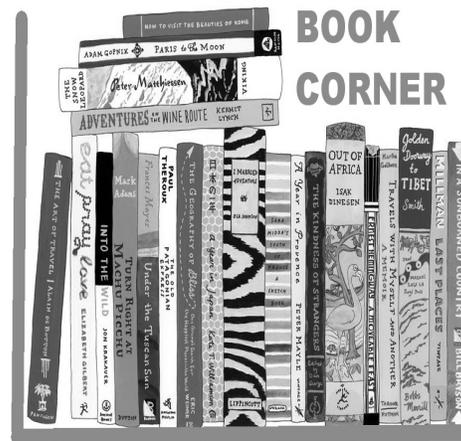
**Homeowner & Renter Assistance.** Help older New Yorkers obtain loans for home repairs. Encourage contractors to develop best practices. Make it easier to get Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program (SCRIE). Try to prevent eviction of older New Yorkers by providing legal assistance.

**Aging in Place.** The original proposal included expanding social services for naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCS), using Section 8 vouchers to help avoid eviction, and using new models of housing to help people age in place. The latest version of the plan states that Section 8 vouchers are no longer available. Developing new models of housing for aging in place has been referred to the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), New York Chapter. The organization will develop new designs and solutions to help people age in place. The second Age-Friendly Commission has developed “A Guide for Building Owners,” which recommends building modifications that will help to accommodate older adults.

The de Blasio administration has continued this initiative by appointing new members to the Academy of Medicine Commission. This is obviously a work in progress and should be monitored and evaluated. If any of the PSC retirees are working on Age-friendly NYC or if you have a story about how New York is, or is not, age-friendly, please

let *Turning the Page* know. Email us at [retirees@pscmail.org](mailto:retirees@pscmail.org).

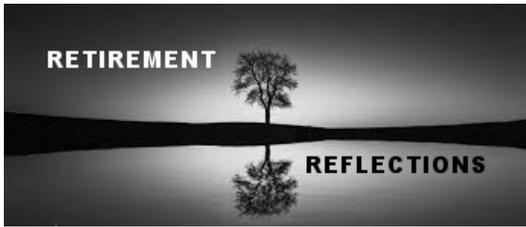
[Francine based the above information on a presentation of the New York City Chapter of the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans, adding some additional research.]



**Peter Ranis** (Retiree, York College & Graduate Center) has a new book entitled, *Cooperatives Confront Capitalism: Challenging the Neoliberal Economy* (London: Zed Books, 2016). It analyzes the ideas, achievements and wider historical context of the cooperative movement.

**Glenn Kissack** (Retiree, Hunter Campus Schools) has an article that, given our long contract fight, may be of interest to many of us, entitled, “Cuomo, Wall Street and Class Struggle at CUNY,” in the November 2016 issue of *Socialism and Democracy*. It is available for download:

[tandfonline.com/toc/csad20/30/3?nav=toCList](http://tandfonline.com/toc/csad20/30/3?nav=toCList)



### ...and Lessons Learned

#### The Search for Long Term Care and Medicaid

*-Dave Kotelchuck, Retiree, Hunter School of Health Science*

*Several years ago, I had the sad duty of helping my dear Aunt Freida find a nursing home in which to live out the last years of her life. The realities of what Freida faced also forced me to confront how my wife and I might have to live out our lives in the not too distant future.*

First, those CUNY retirees who had the wisdom and means to enroll years ago in long-term care plans are often well taken care of by these plans, as I heard from folks when I served as a member of the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Board of Trustees. However, the long-term care plan endorsed by the Welfare Fund through John Hancock is no longer available to new applicants. (Those who signed on to the plan in the past and have continued their payments will receive their promised care benefits.)

So what do the rest of us do when a spouse/partner/relative needs long-term nursing care? Such care is available only through Medicaid, a means-tested program; Medicare covers only short-term stays in

nursing and related facilities. To become eligible for Medicaid a person in need of long-term nursing home care must spend down their assets (excluding home and car) until their household income (2 persons) is \$1,229 per month or less. This is less than the \$1,342 average income a Social Security beneficiary receives each month and far less than most CUNY employees receive.

For those facing the prospect for themselves or loved ones in long-term care facilities, there may come a time, often suddenly, when a spend-down is imperative and urgent. This can be accomplished by transferring most of your assets to your children or other trusted relatives or friends, but this must be done *at least five years in advance* of seeking Medicaid eligibility. If your health-care timeframe demands quick admission to Medicaid, this process can be speeded up by months in NY State by consulting an elder law attorney *and* having a current Power of Attorney in effect.



Both can be accomplished for CUNY retirees by joining the NYSUT Legal Services Plan. For the first year's dues of \$55, applicants will have access to elder law attorneys and receive a packet containing forms for Power of Attorney (POA), a Simple Will and a Living Health Care Proxy. Go to [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.

Retired CUNY employees in states other than New York should check first with the Legal Services Plan to assure there is an associated elder law attorney in your area.

NOTE please that the New York State Legislature established a standardized POA form in 2010. If your personal POAs were signed before 2010 and you are a NY State resident, attorneys suggest you update the form *now* to avoid delay at a future time of need. NYS forms are available online.

This has been a time consuming journey, as many of you dealing with aging and disabled relatives know. But the research has yielded results that I wanted to share with others.

Editor's  
Note....



*Joan Greenbaum*  
*Turning the Page editor*

*Winter is coming on (hopefully not too soon) and there are rumors that the election will soon be over, so maybe some of you may find a bit of time to write for Turning the Page. Retirement Reflections, Book Corner and now Memory Lane are regular columns that contributors can write for, but you also might consider writing a short piece about aging in New York—a sort of new aging New York Story. Contributions can be submitted to: [retirees@pscmail.org](mailto:retirees@pscmail.org) (subject line: Newsletter).*