



October 2015 Issue 2
Academic Year 2014-2015

**RETIREES
NEWSLETTER**

Professional Staff Congress
Joan Greenbaum, Editor
psc-cuny.org/retirees

**CHAPTER MEETING, MONDAY,
OCTOBER 5, 1 – 3 PM**
Single-Payer Health Care

**Speaker: New York State
Assemblyman Richard Gottfried:**

Gottfried has led a decades-long campaign for a **New York State Single-Payer Healthcare** plan.



In June, the NYS Assembly, by a vote of 89 to 47, passed a Gottfried-sponsored bill that would bypass insurance companies altogether by funding a state program capable of covering New York's health care costs. Funded by a progressive payroll tax (80 percent paid by employers, 20 percent by employees), the system would have the state directly pay healthcare providers.

Passage by the Assembly was a huge first step. The bill now faces daunting steps two and three:

approval by the State Senate and a signature from the governor. Gottfried will discuss the continuing campaign to turn this legislation into law.

Questions and discussion will follow the presentation. Come one and all, as we need to protect all generations in the basic right of health.

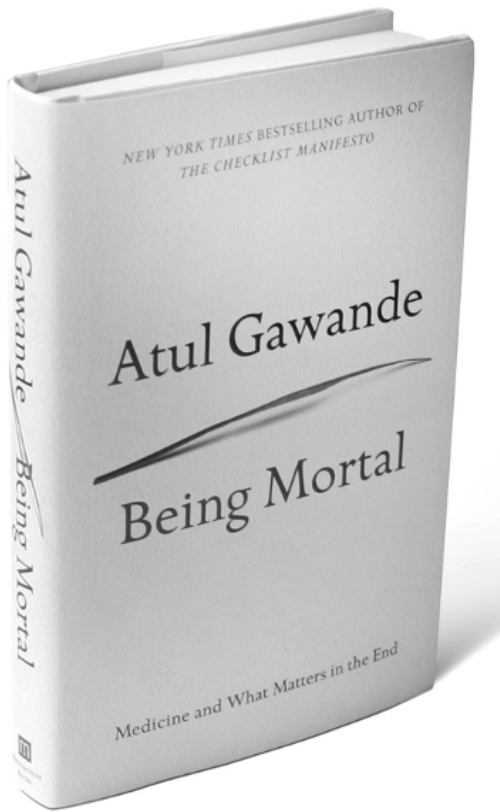
We meet at 61 Broadway, 16th floor, in PSC Union Hall, 1 – 3 PM. Light refreshments will be served. (For those of you who know, save room for those fabulous cookies & fruit.)

The chapter's Executive Committee meets at 10:30 AM before the Oct. 5 meeting in the PSC's Justice Room, 15th floor. Executive Committee meetings are open to all members.

SAVE THESE DATES:

Monday, November 2: Organizing Around Climate Change. A panel organized in anticipation of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change happening the following month.

Monday, December 7: A panel and discussion exploring issues raised by Atul Gawande's book, *Being Mortal*. [This will be our first book-club-like chapter meeting; Reading *Being Mortal* is not required, but you might enjoy it!]



Monday, January 11 Luncheon: We've invited CUNY alumni to speak who participated in the Mississippi Freedom Summer and the Selma marches. Luncheon is at John Jay College.

Monday, February 1: Ginger Adams Otis, author of *Fire-Fight, the Century-Long Battle to Integrate New York's Bravest*. Otis will be joined by a group of Black activist firefighters who played a key role in the campaign to integrate the FDNY.

REPORT ON THE SEPTEMBER CHAPTER MEETING. PSC President Barbara Bowen and NYSUT Vice President Paul Pecorale spoke at our opening chapter meeting on September 8. Our chapter's vice chair, Joel Berger, reports on both addresses.

Barbara Bowen: Ramping Up the Resistance -- The PSC is Fighting Back

In a fired-up and determined State of the Union address to the Retiree Chapter at its September 8 meeting, President Barbara Bowen stated that after five years without a contract (and six without a raise), "we will not accept the excuse that things are not moving in the State or in the City." The union will not accept not putting an economic offer on the table as management's response to collective bargaining. Chancellor Milliken's and the State's failure to provide funds to settle our contract "has to be seen as an attack on our students." Bowen reviewed the demographics and the income levels of CUNY students and spoke about how more burdens have been placed upon them as a result of inadequate funding. Focusing on the faculty, she said, "Having the insult--and the attack--of not having a raise is completely unacceptable." She outlined the PSC contract demands, including retroactive raises and money for future raises and support, asserting that, "we are completely justified in demanding a decent contract." A "maintenance of effort" bill requiring the State to fund CUNY's annual operating cost increases has passed both houses

of the State Legislature, and awaits Governor Cuomo's signature.

The PSC has begun a new level of resistance with action on local campuses, and a wake-up call protest at the Chancellor's CUNY-funded \$19,500-a-month apartment on **Oct. 1** [see psc-cuny.org for details]. There will also be teach-ins and mass actions. Bowen emphasized that, "this is a fight with and for our students and for the whole of the City." She called upon us, the members of the Retiree chapter to engage in "the escalation that we are doing this fall." Forty retirees signed up at the meeting to join the picket line at the Chancellor's apartment on October 1.

Paul Pecorale: NYSUT Action Promotes K-12, PSC, and Higher Education

Following President Bowen, Paul Pecorale, vice president of NYSUT and AFT vice president, affirmed NYSUT's support in the PSC 's struggle for a new contract. He reflected upon the year in Albany, with the leaders of the Assembly and the Senate under indictment and other legislators in jail. The reelection of Governor Cuomo colored his treatment of teachers. NYSUT did not endorse him and "he took it personally." The legislative session brought many changes at the K-12 level. The granting of tenure was increased from 3 to 4 years. NYSUT is fighting against efforts to eliminate tenure and against efforts to rate teachers based upon student test scores. The

statewide union is opposing an increase in charter schools, and is striving to increase funding for public schools. NYSUT championed the PSC's maintenance of effort bill, and is now building coalitions to secure the governor's signature.

Pecorale alerted the chapter to a mandatory referendum on whether to have a State Constitutional Convention in 2017, observing that there are many good things in the Constitution that we would not want to see removed.

THE RETIREES CHAPTER DOES THE TOUR DE BRONX. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25.



The Retirees Chapter will ride in the 20th annual Tour de Bronx, a twenty-five mile ride through the borough's 61 neighborhoods. This is New York State's largest free bicycling event, beginning at the Grand Concourse and 161st Street (in the shadow of Yankee Stadium) and ending with a festival at the NY Botanical Garden.

This is a family-friendly event for every age and skill level accompanied by marshals and NYPD escorts. And it's a wonderful opportunity for PSC retirees to bike and bond.

If you would like to join us, please email chapter chair Bill Friedheim at retirees@pscmail.org.

BOARD PASSES MEASURE ENTITLING RETIRED FACULTY AND LIBRARIANS TO RETAIN THEIR CUNY EMAILS



On Monday, June 29, the CUNY Board of Trustees amended its policy on "Acceptable Use of Computer Resources" as follows:

Use of CUNY Computer Resources is generally limited to activities relating to the performance by CUNY employees of their duties and responsibilities and, by students in connection with their college courses and activities, *and by retired CUNY teaching faculty, librarians, and other retired*

employees approved by the college president or where the employee is a member of the Central Office staff then by the Chancellor or his or her designee. [Amended section italicized.]

What is clear is that the policy applies to those who retired *after* June 2015. What is not clear is how it applies to those who retired *before* June 2015.

In a clarification, CUNY's Department of Labor Relations noted that retirees who requested a CUNY email address with the designator "ret" in it before 6/15 can request to their college to revert to their in-service cuny.edu email address.

The clarification suggested that faculty retirees who retired prior to June 2015 can contact their college and request activation of their in-service cuny.edu email address.

Here is what we suggest for those who retired *before* June 2015: If you still have a cuny.edu email address, do nothing. If you do not have a cuny.edu address and want one, contact your college president, cite the resolution and request activation of your cuny.edu email.

Tell us what happens by emailing retirees@pscmail.org.

By pushing this, we hope to establish a precedent for all retirees maintaining their cuny.edu accounts.

NEW CALL TO ACTION BOOKLETS

Our Retirees Safety Net Working group has produced a revised, updated booklet for saving and expanding the Social Safety Net. You can download a copy on the website (www.psc-cuny.org/retirees) or better yet, come to the Oct. 5 meeting and get a copy.

If you work with a community group that may be interested in a workshop using this booklet, please email us at retirees@pscmail.org.

Reminder: Annual retiree dues of \$71 are due. Mail them in to the PSC/ 61 Broadway/15th floor/NY 10006. If you don't have a dues statement (or maybe you lost it with the other mail!), call the Membership Office at 212-354-1252.

CALLING ALL WRITERS

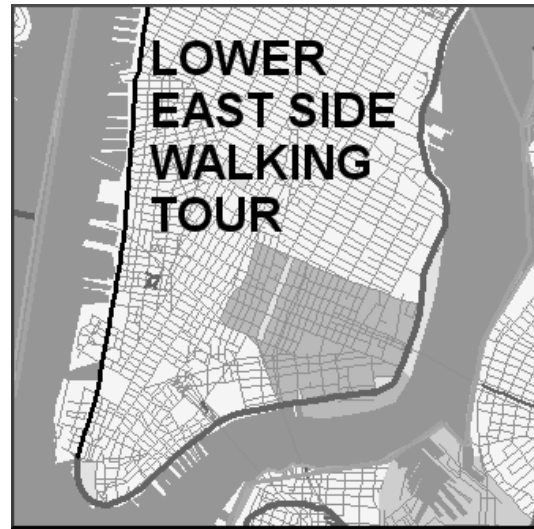


Many members of the retiree chapter are hard at work on memoirs, academic writing, poetry, assorted essays and fiction. Connie Gemson, an experienced writing facilitator, will be putting together a meeting of such scribes who may be interested in sharing work and peer review. As those who fiddle away at writing in retirement know, a supportive group

may be just the right kick in the pants to continue writing. First meeting to plan and begin to share:

Monday, Nov. 9, 1-3 PM at the PSC, 61 Broadway, 15th floor.
Contact Connie for more information: chgemson@aol.com.

Newsletter writing: If you would like to contribute a short piece about retirement or a current political issue, please send it to Newsletter editor: Joan Greenbaum
joanbaum@ix.netcom.com



Monday, October 19
Meet at 2 PM in front of Katz's Deli, 205 E. Houston St. (corner Ludlow). Take the F train to 2nd Ave. The tour takes about 2 hours.

Our first in what we hope will become a series of historical walking tours will be led by Stephen Levine. We will explore the landmarks of the old Jewish neighborhood, including the Jewish Daily Forward, the Educational Alliance, the University and Henry Street Settlement Houses, the Bialystoker Synagogue,

Streits Matzoh factory and the LES Tenement Museum. Of course we will make nosh stops at Kossar's Bialys and Yoneh Schimmel knish bakery. Along the way we will note the changes in the neighborhood over the years, including the development of Hispanic and Chinese communities and the gentrification that has made the area a magnet for the young and hip.

Call Sharon Tonge at the PSC (212-354-1252) to reserve a place. Reservations required.

Stephen Levine teaches the History of New York City at CUNY's Center for Worker Education. For more than thirty years, He has led his students and other groups on history tours of the Lower East Side, Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn Heights.

POETRY CORNER

A poem to Greece published by Monthly Review Press in www.mrzine.org (with permission) this summer in the heat of the ongoing debt crisis.

Criminal Interest

Debt wedged sharply on the shoulders,
 necks, heads and bodies of state.

A debt to others, burrowed deep, deeper, deeply into
 caves of criminal interest.

Debt composed of mounds of soft bills, notes, and hard-edged instruments of finance, a percussion beating, in
 a nation's ears.

Clanging sounds of resistance,

echoes of agony
 the old--pensionless
 the young--jobless
 the middleclass--cashless,

on the blurred boundaries
of a hungry currency
craving more interest.

Interest, not in living flesh
but in the beasts of a mathematically unbearable form
 of blunt, blind greed.

One nation against another, again,
unleashed on the unlevel
 playing fields of finance.
--Joan Greenbaum