

**TURNING  
THE PAGE**

The Newsletter  
of the PSC  
Retiree Chapter



**NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2025**

**Academic Year 2025-26, No. 2**

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Far too frequently, I'll get a call from one of the Fund's retired members. The conversation will go like this:

A close-up photograph of an older woman with short, wavy grey hair, smiling as she uses a gold-colored smartphone. She is wearing a grey sweater over a yellow collared shirt. Her hands are in focus, showing several rings on her fingers. The background is blurred, showing a white wall and a lamp.

"Of course not," the member says.

“That’s right. I don’t even know if I can use it. I’ve got very good retiree benefits,” the member says. “I’m a cautious person and catastrophes are rare.”

“Really?”

“Yes! Let’s say you then need a visiting nurse or in-home care that

Medicare partially covers. Catastrophic pays. It's a very long list of benefits. Any out-of-pocket medical costs up to \$2 million are eligible for reimbursement. Even some dental procedures. Here's another example: You've probably heard that an ambulance ride can cost more than \$1,000. Catastrophic pays, even for an air ambulance."

"Wow!"

"Wow is right. Remember, the Fund can't offer the Catastrophic Major Medical policy anymore because no insurance company will offer affordable premiums. Your premium is peanuts compared to the open market. So let's start to put this policy to work. I'm going to mail you a copy of the policy and you're going to start bundling up receipts and submit them for reimbursement at least once a year. Sound good?"

"Yes. Thank you."

"You're welcome and have a great day!"

Click.

Contact me at [mfoley@psccunywf.org](mailto:mfoley@psccunywf.org) or 212-354-5230, ex. 1318 and we'll talk. Your future self will thank you.



### **Come Celebrate With Us** **by Cecelia McCall**

In these anxious days, I often find solace and inspiration when thinking about some of CUNY's remarkable students who are feted at the annual **Belle Zeller Scholarship and Welfare Fund's reception and awards ceremony**. I can't help but be in awe of these outstanding young men and women when listening to them speak about their commitment to social change and academic achievement.

Full-time students from all CUNY campuses who have completed 30 credits with at least a 3.75 GPA and have demonstrated service to CUNY and community are eligible to compete for a generous \$5000 scholarship.

The scholarship, established in 1979, honors the memory of the founding president of the PSC, Belle Zeller, Professor Emerita of Political Science, Brooklyn College.

Like members of our union, the awardees, both US citizens and immigrants, are ambitious, motivated and talented individuals. If their

applications survive a vigorous vetting process, they are interviewed by the Belle Zeller Board of Trustees, who make the selection.



Since its founding, the Belle Zeller Scholarship has supported more than 300 students. Among the highly accomplished CUNY graduates and scholarship recipients are Joanne Waldstreicker, Brooklyn College, 1981 and Chinweiki Okumadu, Lehman College, 1984. Dr. Waldstreicker was, for many years, the Chief Medical Officer at Johnson and Johnson. She was named the 2016 Healthcare Champion of the Year by the National Association of Female Executives. Dr. Okumadu is a Gastroenterologist, who was on the faculty of Brigham and Women's Hospital (Boston, MA) and was also an independent investigator, clinician and educator at Harvard Medical School.

The Fund also honors individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to CUNY and the community. State Senator Andrew Gounardes was so honored in 2021. This year at our event, Brad Lander, former member of the City Council and current Comptroller, will be receiving the Friend of CUNY Award. Justice of the NY State Supreme Court Carmen Velasquez is receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award. And, a member of our own Retirees Chapter, Manfred Phillip, will be receiving the Belle Zeller Leadership Award. There are also two awards in the name of the PSC past presidents Irwin Polishok and Barbara Bowen.

If, like me, you need a pick-me-up or just want a celebratory evening, come to the awards ceremony at John Jay College on December 3 at 6:00 PM. You will be among colleagues, students, their supporters and family, along with Trustees of the Fund and our own President, James Davis.

Tickets are available through the website [www.bellezeller.org](http://www.bellezeller.org). If you are unable to attend, you may still support our scholars by making a donation through the site. With your generosity, we can continue to expand this legacy—the more we raise, the more scholarships we can award. Hope to see you all there.



## – MY TWO CENTS: POINT/COUNTERPOINT –

### Trump's Time Warp and The Struggle for the Present

by Hester Eisenstein

[Reprinted with revisions from *The Voice of the Hill*, Three Arrows Community, Putnam Valley, NY]

Historians are aware that the great movement of (white) women into the paid workforce in the United States took place from the 1950s on, led by the activism of unions. Presaged by the important role of women in the workforce during World War II, replacing men at the front, the wide distribution of women of all races in all parts of the US economy, from the military to the highest reaches of law and politics, has been a fait accompli for many years. Why then is the so-called “manosphere” reacting under Trump as though women, Black, white, Hispanic, and otherwise, have just recently usurped the role of men throughout the workforce?

It is as though certain male persons have just woken up from a Rip Van Winkle sleep of many years to suddenly encounter women in their workplaces for the first time. They are in shock! What has happened to male privilege? What are women doing in the realm of paid work? Why are they not home having babies? And indeed we see the rise of what certain women are proudly calling “tradwives,” although it seems this category includes some women making a nice living pretending not to work. Now part of this may be stemming from what the Donald himself seems to experience, which is a kind of time warp. Now a convicted felon, decades ago he was ready to lynch the (entirely innocent) Central Park Five. Overall he and his cohort seem to prefer the 1950s, before the upheavals of the civil rights and women's movement transformed the country for the better. And certainly the profound questioning of gender stemming from the LGBTQ and trans movements is something they are eager to repress.

#### **Back to the future**

Let us ask ourselves: what exactly are these folk nostalgic for? The women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s challenged many aspects of US culture, from violence against women, to rape, compulsory childbirth, compulsory heterosexuality, unequal pay, and on and on. And those of us who worked to establish Women's Studies and Black Studies programs in universities prided ourselves on raising a wide range of issues that had previously been excluded or suppressed from curricula, let alone public discussion. Let us add to the list the issues of mass incarceration, police

brutality, and the death penalty, persistent and ugly features of US life that still haunt us. The creation of a substantial Black middle class; the entry of women of all races into professions such as law, medicine, and architecture; and the challenging of gender norms were all important achievements of the 1960s and 1970s.

But such victories do not go unchallenged. We are confronting a backlash of monumental proportions, contesting these expansions of democracy in the name of a white nationalist ideology which sees the United States as fundamentally owned by only its white-skinned residents. Meanwhile the horrific war on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank by the racist Zionist entity has produced a righteous movement among young people (and not only them) which has challenged everything about unconditional US support for the murderous and lawless state of Israel.

This really is a time to ask: what side are you on? That Trump and his minions including the terrifying Steven Miller and his ICE goons are riding roughshod over the rights of immigrants, to the point where a comparison to Nazis is no exaggeration, should signal to us that what is at stake is the possibility of keeping and defending a society that values justice, inclusion, the rule of law, and the ideal of equal rights. Ironically it is worth noting that the feminism of my youth actually defended the right of women to choose paid work, motherhood, marriage, celibacy, or any other path; but this has been lost in the noise. I think we are in the fight of our lives now, and defending the gains of the 1960s and 1970s is an important part of the struggle.

Here at CUNY, we are deeply embattled, with at least four faculty members (to my knowledge), including the brilliant and courageous Corinna Mullin, being fired without cause for their support of the Palestinian struggle. Our own Chancellor went before a Congressional committee to condemn his own faculty members, selling them out as traitors to Zionism, without any consciousness of his own disloyal and unworthy behavior as an academic leader. What a disgrace! If CUNY, with its proud tradition of defending and empowering the working class of New York, does not have the courage to stave off this new McCarthyism, we are deeper into this crisis than we might have realized. It is urgent that we fight back with all of the tools at our disposal, and make it clear that the struggle for Palestine liberation and against the Zionist slaughter is part of a world wide anti-colonial sea change: self-determination for emerging peoples and nations against the iron grip of US imperialism. But it is also a struggle for ourselves, our children, and their children.

Courage and strength for the battles ahead!



## – WHAT'D I MISS? CHAPTER MEETING RECAP –

### Research and Training Grants Under Fire by David Kotelchuck

On October 6, before a Zoom audience of 150 retirees at our monthly Retiree Chapter meeting, guest speakers addressed “Trump’s Attacks on Higher Education and the Fight Back.” They focused on cuts to research and training grants at institutions of higher education. These attacks have come so suddenly and dramatically since President Trump’s inauguration in January that for many, it’s hard to get a grip on them, both on their extent and the new policies they reflect.



Nicole Hochsprung

The first speaker, who addressed the extent of the cuts, was **Nicole Hochsprung, Assistant Director for Higher Education at our national union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).**

After inauguration, Trump put a freeze on spending and then

unleashed his attacks on federal government agencies, led by Elon Musk. In health-related fields, Musk unleashed his chainsaw eliminating all grants whose titles included the words “pollution,” “diversity,” and “trauma,” no matter their underlying programmatic aims. These were clearly politically motivated cuts, Hochsprung noted. Entire programs were cut, for example the F31 program, which allocated funds to graduate students of color seeking to achieve their doctoral degrees. F31 programs sought to provide a distribution of doctorally-trained professionals which better reflects the underlying U.S. population than at present.

Since she could hardly encompass all of the cuts made so far by this Administration, Ms. Hochsprung recommended a website (<https://grant-witness.us/>), which reports on biomedical cuts already enacted in states across the U.S. by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Here are the results of NIH cuts in New York State, as accessed from this website on 10/11/25:

#### **NIH Cuts (NYS)**

Nr. Grants Ever Impacted – 1,175

Nr. Grants Currently Impacted – 951

Nr. Grants Reinstated – 224

Estimated Current Loss -- \$1.32 Billion

This loss is the greatest for any state in the U.S., exceeding even that for the research- and training-intensive state of Massachusetts

The silver lining, as noted by the speaker: 224 grants (19 percent) have been re-instated, many of them after lawsuits and public demonstrations.

### **TRIO programs on the chopping block**

In higher education specifically, the Trump Administration has cut funding and cancelled many so-called TRIO programs, a group of federal programs aimed at helping low-income and first-generation students earn a college degree, such as the Upward Bound program. These TRIO programs, many in place for over half a century, collectively serve an estimated 870,000 students annually nationwide. (<https://www.npr.org/2025/08/22/nx-s1-5501580/trump-proposes-cuts-programs-poor-students-colleges>) The funds remaining after the cuts are allocated between HSIs (Hispanic Serving Institutions), of which CUNY is one, and HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). In addition, Hochsprung noted, the Administration has transferred some of the remaining HSI funds to HCBU programs—pitting all of these under-resourced institutions in direct competition for the same shrunken pot of resources!

In the end though, she noted, we in higher education have strong popular support for re-instating biomedical grants and for strengthening community colleges. If we resist and speak out against these cuts, we can win.

Our second speaker on October 6 was **Rotua Lumbantobing, national Vice-President of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)** and Professor of Economics at Western Connecticut State University. She talked about the landscape of higher education—first the problems we in this field have



Rotua Lumbantobing

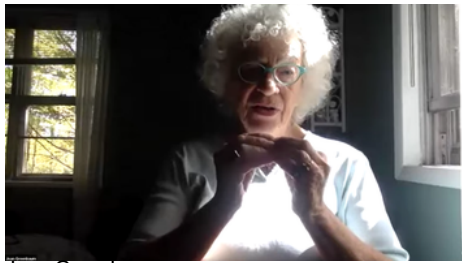
faced for decades, namely budget cuts to public colleges and universities, boards of higher ed which ignore us, the erosion of tenure at all higher ed institutions and the precarity of a large majority of higher-ed faculty—today, she noted, **three quarters of all higher ed faculty across the nation are contingent faculty**. Now, added on to this, the Trump Administration has cut research funding in biomedicine, public health and other fields, eliminated all DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) programs nationwide, and supported campus bans on free speech by withholding grant funds from higher ed institutions. More recently, the Administration has offered



contracts to nine institutions which, Prof. Lumbantobing said, “amount to a loyalty oath.”

### **AAUP takes action**

What is AAUP doing about these problems? It is organizing within its own ranks, having recruited 6,000 new members since Trump’s inauguration and organized or revitalized 33 AAUP chapters. It has joined forces with other organizations such as Labor for Higher Education, a coalition which includes the AFT, PSC’s national union, and SEIU, the Service Employees International Union. AAUP is also a party to eight state and federal lawsuits. But even these are not enough to turn the tide against attacks on higher ed. “We must organize ourselves. There is no alternative.” We need to build our own political power, she said. “We cannot give up because our students, our communities, our democracy depend on this fight.”



Joan Greenbaum

In the absence of the third scheduled speaker, **Joan Greenbaum of our retiree chapter** gave brief remarks about grants lost at CUNY. First, though, she thanked the previous speaker for calling attention to the problems faced in higher education by other than so-called elite institutions. As an example of what is transpiring at CUNY, she cited a three-year grant at LaGuardia that was “ripped away” without explanation. It was a three-year grant to train students and faculty on taking oral histories. “Any great harm in that? No!,” she said. Similarly, other science and research grants have been rescinded, again with no reasons given. Those who have lost grants at CUNY have been joining together in the union’s Defending Research Funding Working Group. PSC members are welcome to join this group as well by signing the form on the working group’s website. (<https://psc-cuny.org/issues/science-and-research-defense-working-group/>).

### **Chapter elections and health care**

Following the presentations and questions from the audience, the Retiree chapter elected Francine Egger-Sider as an alternate delegate to the PSC Delegate Assembly to replace the late Blanca Vazquez. Francine is a retired librarian from LaGuardia Community College.

The meeting ended with brief remarks about open enrollment and vaccine availability, among others, by **Michael Foley, Communications Director for the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund**. This was followed by answers to questions from individual PSC members in the audience.



Michael Foley



Peking. Angela Meade was in very good voice as the title character. She projected strength and security in everything she sang and was powerful yet lyrical in the riddle scene in which she confronts the unknown prince. She has a huge voice that seems perfect for this role. I have heard her in bel canto repertory, for which I think she is not as well suited. Michael Fabiano was very moving as Calaf and sang well except for a few shaky high notes. “Nessun dorma,” as expected, received a huge burst of applause.



Mozart's *Don Giovanni*: “Fin ch’han dal vino” (Ryan Speedo Green).

The following night, **Yannick Nézet-Séguin was in the pit conducting a performance of *Don Giovanni***. The cast was pretty uneven. Ryan Speedo Green as the Don, in his Met debut in the role, was underwhelming. Adam Plachetka was an uninspired Leporello. Perhaps the best of the men was Ben Bliss: his Ottavio was plangent and

well-delineated. The women fared better. Hera Hyesang Park was a poignant Zerlina, and Federica Lombardi, a proficient Mozartean, sang Donna Anna with feeling and power. Nézet-Séguin conducted with restraint and kept the momentum moving forward. He was particularly good in the tricky ensembles and *concertati*.

The Met has scheduled two live broadcasts a week for the rest of the season. These can be heard at [metopera.org/season/radio/free-live-audio-streams](https://metopera.org/season/radio/free-live-audio-streams).



## **Museum Exhibits: September-October 2025**

**by Marcia Newfield**

All of these museums have multiple exhibits of interest. I focus on only one or two just to get you started. Linger longer and/or plan to return. I have not necessarily highlighted the most featured exhibits since the museums do that so effectively.

### **MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN**

#### **Clearly Indigenous: Native Visions Reimagined in Glass (November 15, 2025–May 29, 2026)**

Explores glass art as a medium for Indigenous stories, designs, and contemporary issues. The exhibition traces 45 years of Native glass art and showcases approximately 120 artworks by 29 Indigenous artists. Also

featured are works by Dale Chihuly, who established the first glass program at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, and collaborations between Native glass workers, Yolŋu (Aboriginal Australian) artists, and Māori artists.



Virgil Ortiz (Cochiti Pueblo), *Incubators*, 2016.

## GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM



*Barge* (1962–63).

### **Robert Rauschenberg: Life Can't Be Stopped (through May 3, 2026)**

This exhibition features over a dozen seminal works from the Guggenheim's collection along with major loans from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, which together highlight the artist's radical use of materials and media. The

centerpiece of the exhibition is *Barge* (1962–63), a monumental 32-foot-long silkscreen painting made predominantly over a 24-hour period and the largest in a series of approximately 80 Silkscreen Paintings works the artist created between 1962 and 1964. This pivotal work returns to New York for the first time in nearly 25 years.

### **Gabriele Münter: Contours of A World (through April 26, 2026)**

Münter was at the forefront of modern art in early 20th-century Europe. Constantly experimenting, she

revitalized landscape, still life, and portrait painting, transforming everyday subjects into bold, original works.

Rather than imitating reality, she

sought to “convey an essence,” offering an alternative to modernist movements that favored pure abstraction. This exhibition highlights Münter's lifelong commitment to subjects rooted in daily life and shaped by travel, place, and community.



Gabriele Münter, *The Blue Lake* (Der blaue See), 1954.

## METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

### **Baseball Cards from the Collection of Jefferson R. Burdick (through Jan 20, 2026)**

The Jefferson R. Burdick collection of ephemera at The Met contains one of



the most distinguished collections of historical baseball cards anywhere in the world. In 1947, Burdick (1900–1963), an electrician from Syracuse, New York, and avid collector of ephemera, began to donate in large batches his holdings of more than 300,000 trade cards, postcards, and posters to the Museum. Included in the donation were more than 30,000 baseball cards dating back to the 1880s. This exhibition features over one hundred cards dating from the nineteenth century to the 1950s.



Babe Ruth, N.Y. Yankees; verso: No. 402, George (Babe) Ruth, New York Yankees 1933

## **Allegory and Abstraction: Selections from the Department of Drawings and Prints (through Dec 9, 2025)**



Matisse's 1947 series Jazz

The Department of Drawings and Prints boasts more than one million drawings, prints, and illustrated books made in Europe and the Americas from around 1400 to the present day. Because of their number and sensitivity to light, the works can only be exhibited for a limited period. To highlight the vast range of works on paper, the department organizes four

rotations a year. Each installation is the product of a collaboration among curators and consists of up to 100 objects grouped by artist, technique, style, period, or subject. The current installation explores the ways artists embed their works with complex layers of meaning, whether relating stories, ideas, and feelings through symbols, as in allegory, or suggesting them through line, color, and pattern, as in abstraction.

## **MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN**

### **Designing Motherhood: Things that Make and Break Our Births (through March 15, 2026)**

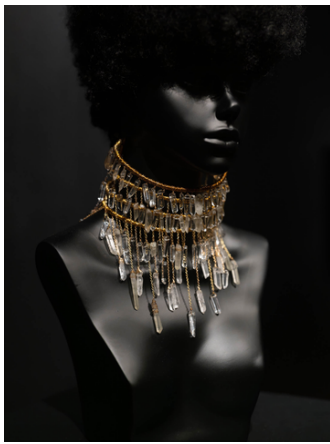
The exhibit explores the arc of human reproduction through a design lens, inviting audiences to consider how designs developed over the last 150 years have shaped reproductive health. The exhibition broadly explores the intersections of design, access, and experiences of (in)fertility,



Left: DialPak Contraceptive Dispenser, 1964.

Right: Fisher-Price Nursery Monitor, 1983.

pregnancy, postpartum, and parenthood, and includes more than 250 manufactured products, speculative design projects, medical devices and tools, graphic materials, contemporary artworks, and videos.



Douriean Fletcher, Messenger Collection, c. 2021

## **Douriean Fletcher: Jewelry of the Afrofuture (through March 15, 2026)**

Crafted from brass, gold, and semi-precious stones, Douriean Fletcher's boldly sculptural designs articulate Black identity and embody spiritual meaning. Ideas of Afrofuturism materialize in Fletcher's work, highlighting her research into African and African American jewelry design and her efforts to build aesthetic and cultural bridges between Black communities, countries, continents, and histories torn apart by colonialism, slavery, and oppression.

## **MUSEUM OF FOLK ART**

### **An Ecology of Quilts: The Natural History of American Textiles (through March 1, 2026)**

The vibrant reopening of this museum after redesign brings together approximately 30 examples spanning the 18th to 20th centuries, exploring the environmental and social impact of cultivating and harvesting raw materials; the networks of overland and ocean trade required to transport dyestuffs, fibers, and fabrics; and the technologies and industrial techniques developed to process them, such as the cotton gin—all of which allowed quilt-making to flourish as a quintessential American art form.



Floral Appliqué Quilt, United States, 1856

### **Vincent Valdez: *Just a Dream* by Barbara Winslow**

If you are planning a trip to the Berkshires, make sure you include a detour to North Adams, Massachusetts to visit the art installation at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA). *Just a Dream* is a stunning, explosive, shattering retrospective of the work of Vincent Valdez. His work addresses American politics today, including topics such as boxing, lynchings of Mexican Americans, border walls, politics, greed, the Ku Klux Klan, and the failings and triumphs of society.

The exhibit is housed in the MASS MoCA, whose history is in part the history of the working class, immigrants, industrialization, deindustrialization, and arts reinvigoration of this declining New England town. Mass MoCA is now a museum within the converted Arnold Print



Works factory building complex in North Adams, one of the largest centers for contemporary and visual arts in the United States. The building was originally built by the Arnold Print Works, which began operations in 1860. At its peak, it hired over 3,000 workers and was one of the largest producers of printed textiles. In 1942, Print Works closed due to the low price of cloth produced in the South and abroad, as well as the economic effects of the Great Depression. In 1942 the complex was bought by the Sprague Electric Company which, at its peak, employed over 4,000 workers, mainly women, and was the economic and social mainstay of the town. Sprague was organized by the International Union of Electricians. The company closed in 1985, contributing to the economic decline of North Adams. MASS MoCA originally opened with 19 galleries and 100,000 sq. ft. (9,300 m<sup>2</sup>) of exhibition space in 1999. It has expanded since and is now one of the engines of social and economic recovery of the area. The complex's architecture alone makes Mass MoCA worth the visit. Today Mass MoCA has made partnerships with Jacobs Pillow, the dance festival and performance space and many public schools in the Berkshires, as well as local business and philanthropic institutions. Mass MoCA is about a three-and-a-half-hour drive from NYC and definitely worth the trip.



## – COMMUNITY BOARD –

### A Call For Articles For Our Newsletter



The editors of *Turning The Page* are soliciting story proposals and article submissions. Please let us know what you are interested in reading and writing about in your newsletter. Do you have an idea for a book or movie review you think would be of interest to others? A poem? Is there a topic you think we should discuss,

a labor subject we should present, a question we should explore? Perhaps share something personal like an event, person, or experience that impacted your life. As retirees, we all have a trove of great stories that are worth remembering and sharing with others.

Send your proposals to [retirees@pscmail.org](mailto:retirees@pscmail.org) with "TTP" as the subject.



## **Don't forget to VOTE ON TUESDAY NOVEMBER 4!**

**The PSC endorses Zohran Mamdani for Mayor.**

**For all PSC endorsements and other information go to:  
[psc-cuny.org/issues/endorsements-2025/#city-wide-endorsements](https://psc-cuny.org/issues/endorsements-2025/#city-wide-endorsements)**

## **FALL SEMESTER MEETING DATES: PSC RETIREES CHAPTER**

### **PSC Retirees Meetings, on Zoom**

**MONDAY, November 3, 2025 – 1:00 PM**

**MONDAY, December 1, 2025 – 1:00 PM**

The *Turning The Page* editorial committee for this NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025 issue is made up of Diane Menna, Marianne Pita, David Kotelchuck, and Joan Greenbaum.

*Turning The Page* is a publication of the Retirees Chapter of PSC-CUNY, Local 2334 of NYSUT and the AFT