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PSC Pleased with November's Election Results

by Eileen Moran

As Heather James, Chair of the PSC Legislation Committee proclaimed, the PSC's fall electoral successes were built early in our organizing for the spring primaries. That organizing included door knocking, phone banks, and rallies. All of our PSC-endorsed Council candidates won their primaries despite heavily funded opponents backed by New York's real estate and corporate interests. The more progressive Council endorsees have been strong supporters of PSC's budget demands but also stood with us on issues of academic freedom, protecting immigrants, the New Deal for CUNY, and the broad coalition committed to taxing New York's millionaires. Enthusiasm for both the contested Council races and an exciting Mayoral contest brought more PSC members into the grassroots work all campaigns require.

For the ranked choice Mayoralty primary, PSC endorsed five candidates, encouraging members to rank Zohran Mamdani, Brad Lander and Adrienne Adams in the top three. PSC also joined a broad effective coalition of encouraging voters to rank anybody but Cuomo, which paid off.

Before joining the Mayoral race, Mamdani had amply demonstrated his support for CUNY and PSC's priorities: taxing the rich, environmental justice and pressing for the New Deal for CUNY. He was also among the handful of legislators demanding that the tax-exempt real estate empires of NYU and Columbia be taxed and those revenues go to CUNY specifically.

Zohran attended numerous rallies in support of these goals and was a key sponsor of the Build Public Renewables Act. Ironically, he voted against one of the budget bills restoring the CUNY funding that Governor Hochul had cut. "While this budget is an improvement for CUNY, this still leaves the 16,000-plus students, faculty, staff and recent alumni that call my district home without the investments that they deserve," Assembly member Zohran Mamdani said, adding that needed "investments would fund academic advisors, create adjunct pay parity, adequately fund mental health services and would decrease and ultimately eliminate tuition," all things the PSC had called for under its New Deal for CUNY legislation.

He also joined Senator Sanders at Brooklyn College in September voicing support for the PSC in its fight against repression. On the morning after Election Day, Mamdani called President James Davis to thank the PSC as one of the few unions supporting him in the Primary and key to his election victories last June and in November.



Zohran Mamdani wearing PSC/CUNY hat at Brooklyn Town Hall event.

Now the Mayor Elect's commitment to affordability and expanding childcare will be significant for everyone in the CUNY community—staff and students. He has already appointed several PSC/CUNY members to his transition team.

The PSC welcomes all, including retirees, who want to help achieve our goals as we move closer and closer to a New Deal for CUNY and taxing the rich for a more affordable New York. (For more details go to the [*Clarion's* updates on the PSC website.](#))

(If you are interested in working with the PSC on Environmental Justice or PSC's broader agenda, please email me at eileenmoran7@gmail.com.)



AI Demands on Electricity and Water: Data About Data Centers

by Dave Kotelchuck

ChatGPT, the first Artificial Intelligence (AI) system accessible to the public, was released by its developer, OpenAI, in November 2022. Since then, its growth has been phenomenal, attracting other AI developers and billions of dollars of capital investment, while also triggering fears that the industry may have created an economic bubble, that will burst, leading to a major depression.

Now, over 4,000 massive AI data centers are operating or under development in the United States alone, according to the Pew Research Center (10/24/25). One-third of these are in three states: Virginia, Texas and California. These centers are putting major demands on our electrical power systems and our water supplies. How great are these demands? Today in 2026 we can begin to assess their extent.

Electrical demand

U.S. data centers' demand for electricity rose rapidly from 1.9 percent of U.S. demand in 2018, before AI systems were made public, to 4.4 percent by 2023, according to the U.S. Data Center Energy Usage Report. While 4.4 percent may be a small proportion of our electrical usage, this actually represents a massive amount of energy, greater, for example, than the entire electrical output of the nation of Pakistan that year, according to Pew. And by 2028 the percentage of electrical use by U.S. data centers is expected to double or triple.

As an example of the prodigious energy use by current AI systems, just to create a high-quality, five-second video generated by AI is estimated to consume as much electrical energy as it takes to run a household microwave for over an hour. (Referenced in *Catalyst*, the quarterly publication of the Union of Concerned Scientists, Fall 2025 issue, pp.16-18). Systems now being constructed in 2025 are likely to consume even greater energy per consumer request. And even now, ChatGPT receives over a billion such requests *per day*, according to the *Catalyst*.

Will U.S. energy systems be able keep up with such increases in demand? And who will pay for the added costs to meet this demand? This is already a public issue in states across the U.S., and was a factor in the gubernatorial races in New Jersey and Virginia last November.

Demands on our water supplies

The electrical systems that process AI user requests generate heat, which must be dissipated to prevent damage to their operating systems. Vast amounts of water are consumed for this purpose. The U.S. Data Center Energy Usage Report estimates that 66 million liters of water were used in 2023 by data centers, led by AI systems, three times as much as used by conventional data centers a decade earlier. The stress on the water supply system caused by this increased water usage varies greatly among states across the U.S. A 2025 study by Bloomberg News concluded that about two-thirds of AI data centers in operation or development in the U.S. since 2022 are in states already gripped by high levels of water stress. The states most affected now are Virginia, Texas and California—the three states with the most centers operating or under development—plus Arizona and Illinois.

Air pollution

Given the sudden increase in demand for electrical energy to run these new data centers, utility operators are pressed to turn to the cheapest, most

readily available energy sources, fossil fuels, to generate this added energy. And, of course, the increased use of fossil fuels generates greater levels of air pollution, which undermines human health worldwide and counteracts efforts by governments (other than the U.S.) to reign in global warming. Also, the construction of many massive new data centers adds to the levels of toxic pollutants in the atmosphere.

Conclusion

Despite the above potential threats to health and environment, as well as the many other difficult social issues AI presents, the U.S. currently does not have any federal legislation on the books specifically regulating the challenges posed by AI systems. Since Trump took office, his Administration has made clear its opposition to any such federal legislation and has expressed support for Republican bills in Congress banning state regulations of AI, such as those now in effect in California, Colorado, Utah and Texas. In this writer's opinion, in view of the massive impact which AI systems are having in the U.S., we urgently need federal legislation providing oversight of this rapidly developing new industry.



The Underside of the AI Industry: November Chapter Meeting

by Marcia Newfield and Joan Greenbaum

Did you know:

Open AI has spent 360 billion over the last 12 months on building data centers.

The Israeli Defense Forces used data-driven AI to identify targets in Gaza through a project started by Google, but Google pulled out due to worker protests; Palantir, Theil's company, took over target identification.

20 million low-paid workers worldwide have been entering identifying labels on photos; this is how AI "sees" pictures.

In higher education, decisions to buy AI applications and other technologies are made by administrators with little to no input from faculty, staff, and students.

Much of what we are told about the latest in Artificial Intelligence is coming from tech industry executives. They leave out the dangers, the hidden costs to workers and the drain on the environment and our financial resources.

The two speakers at our November Chapter meeting, **Dr. Lucy Suchman**, recently retired from the University of Lancaster in the UK and **Dr. Britt Paris** of Rutgers, have studied the AI industry, as has our own Dr. Joan Greenbaum, who invited and introduced them. The speakers agreed that the dominant structures are more brittle than we are told, and in fact, pushback is necessary. Joan pointed out that we have been here before. At the turn of this century for example, we were told that the Internet would have “on and off ramps” and would bring about more democracy and solve societal problems. We heard similar exaggerated claims in the subsequent decade about social media.

Putting the pieces together

As retired educated professionals, we have a keen interest in finding out what AI is and how it can be used, perhaps because much of what we are hearing does not seem to ring true. And so much of what we hear is being anthropomorphized like the term *Artificial Intelligence* itself. We might remember in 1997 when IBM’s Big Blue computer beat Kasparov in chess, but that was just a large computer programmed to play the complicated game of chess. Ten years later, many start-up firms turned in another direction building *large data models* and combining this with what they called *machine learning*. This was a process of attempting to get computers to predict the next item in a sequence, say, of words. In everyday life we have seen how the text function on our phones has gotten more predictive telling us about the next word we want to type (sometimes rather humorously!).

Then in late 2022, Open AI launched Chat GPT. Their so-called large language models were created by taking all the data they could find on the web such as emails, Facebook posts, articles, books, and lots of odd bits of garbage, bulking up the model’s prediction capacities. This is not at all mysterious. Much of the data was in fact taken without permission to “train” the large language models. And the term Artificial Intelligence was then resurrected to describe this prediction process based on masses and masses of data.

Lucy Suchman, who describes herself as a skeptic, says that the claims for AI are overhyped. The term, coined by John McCarthy in 1956, was based on the premise that our brains are like computers and at some point, computing power would reach the level of our consciousness. The term inspired science fiction, even in an era when



Dr. Lucy Suchman

computers were room-sized and could only do calculations. And even though Open AI would like us to believe that Artificial Intelligence is here, Chat GPT is nothing near human intelligence.

Lucy Suchman has studied the military's interest in automated systems. Her research extends from the early computer-controlled guidance systems in Vietnam, to the AI systems used with dubious accuracy in Gaza. She showed us pictures to explain how "data" is labeled which then results in identifying certain objects as targets. An ordinary pick-up truck, for example, could be identified as a Hamas truck and thus become a bombing target. During weapons system development for profit, she argues, international humanitarian laws have been violated as well as laws of the International Criminal Court.

She told us that while the AI models are described as too complex to understand, the bulk of work is done by humans on both ends of the models. Low-wage workers are hired to identify photos and data that are input into the AI systems and people are employed at somewhat better pay to decide how the data should be used. Pushback is starting to emerge from tech workers and community groups like the Data Labelers Association in Kenya; a place where the colonial past coexists with a colonial present in which photos are labeled by thousands and thousands of underpaid workers. In the belly of the tech field, a general walk out at Google in 2018 was a major factor pushing Google to drop their AI-oriented bombing program called, interestingly, Project Maven. Not surprisingly, Peter Theil's mega firm Palantir took over the project and has now become dominant in military and surveillance technologies. Currently tech activists and environmental groups are joining forces to oppose the massive building of data centers that use a huge amount of electricity and water. No Dessert Data Centers is one such coalition in Arizona that was mentioned.

Suchman recommended several books to educate ourselves about the underside of the industry: *Empire of AI* by Karen Hao; *Ghost Work: How to Stop Silicon Valley From Building a New Global Underclass* by Mary Gray and Suri Siddharth; *Art Unintelligence* by Meredith Broussard, and *Artificial Intelligence: A Guide for Thinking Humans* by Melanie Mitchell.

Britt Paris got our attention by saying that in education "AI is over, if we want it to be." As editor of the AAUP Ad-hoc Committee on AI in Higher Education, she spearheaded a report which is a must-read for all faculty and staff (including retirees). She says that high level administrators are ordering AI packages to cut faculty, particularly contingent faculty. The tech

companies are making “sweetheart deals” with Chief Technology Officers in universities to try out new AI proprietary systems. Many of these, like the AI notetaking and recording functions of Zoom, cannot be turned off easily. These AI-based systems also erode working conditions as they further speed up work for faculty and staff and undermine our ability to make decisions.



Dr. Britt Paris

The report argues that

AI is both a marketing term and a usable product. Management in higher education and other sectors, the press, and technology companies often frame AI as something new, opaque, and exceedingly powerful that will replace many activities based on human intelligence, including labor. At the same time, they encourage public buy-in...

Some of the key take-aways from the report include: the need to implement shared governance around technology; critical engagement in the procurement process; ongoing audits of technology in use; and academic freedom regarding intellectual property rights. The report is available on the [aaup.org](https://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/aaup-policies-reports/topical-reports/artificial-intelligence-and-academic/) website, see <https://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/aaup-policies-reports/topical-reports/artificial-intelligence-and-academic/>. As a researcher and organizer, Britt has been working with AAUP chapters to let faculty and staff know they have some control over technology such as the ability to “opt out” of particular programs. If we are not aware of what these new AI products can do, then, according to Dr. Paris there is a “high cost to these free tools.”

Their presentations can be found [here](#) on the PSC's YouTube page.

Additional Resources:

Preparing for Action Around AI in Higher Education

AAUP Report: *Artificial Intelligence and Academic Professions* | AAUP

AAUP Bargaining/resource doc: [AAUP AI Committee Policy Resources for AI & EdTech - Google Docs](#)

AAUP Resources for organizing around and incorporating critical approaches to AI in higher ed: Google Drive



Workplace Health and Safety for All

by Jean Grassman and Laura Meltzer

While we're not construction workers or lumberjacks, as PSC members, we know that our work within the City University can have a huge effect on our health. We might contend with chemical exposure in laboratories; job stress associated with tenure, students' problems, and bullying supervisors, as well as working in buildings that are undergoing renovation. For over twenty years, the PSC has supported efforts to improve working conditions through the creation and ongoing support of the Environmental Health and Safety Watchdogs (aka "Watchdogs"). Initiated in 2001 by Joan Greenbaum and Dave Kotelchuck, the Watchdogs are unique among union health and safety efforts. Rather than functioning as a passive service delivered by union staff, the Watchdogs rely on the eyes and ears of rank-and-file union members to organize around issues. Coordination of these functions is handled by the authors along with PSC organizer, Brian Graf.



The mission of the Watchdogs is to help union members recognize emerging health and safety problems and ensure that CUNY responds to them effectively as required by OSHA (as state employees we're covered under New York State Public Employee's Safety and Health PESH whose requirements are similar to OSHA's). To do this, the Watchdogs have monthly Watchdog Updates to share stories and

strategies and regular trainings on health and safety topics, perform workplace walkthroughs, and with the most recent contract, serve as union reps for campus-based H&S labor management meetings which are required at least once every semester.

One effort in particular demonstrates both the successes and frustrations associated with efforts to improve conditions. Delany Hall, a historic building on the Queens College campus that houses the SEEK Program and several other University functions, is undergoing a multi-year building envelope restoration to stabilize the crumbling exterior. In summer 2025, what seemed to be a routine inquiry about asbestos abatement evolved into a vociferous fight demanding that our members be protected from the impacts of working in a building under renovation.

As with much of what we face at CUNY, this was an issue of environmental justice, as we were struggling to force the administration to recognize and resolve H&S issues that were affecting programs that served primarily students of color. Besides asbestos, members reported choking dust that made them ill. Norka Blackman-Richards, the Director of the SEEK program and a champion for workplace health and safety, wrote:

Everyday we come into our offices and have to clean thick layers of dust off chairs, desks and windowsills, even some of our doors. When there is drilling during work hours cloud-like dust rises up seeping through the second-floor windows.

The Administration insisted that steps were being taken to control conditions but photos from members showed otherwise, with thick layers of settled dust on virtually all horizontal surfaces. The Watchdogs, alongside the NY Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH), arrived at Delany and found an active construction site with members working inside.

Inadequate barriers on windows left dust seeping in. With the start of the Fall semester well underway, staff began exhibiting signs of respiratory illnesses. Air contamination was so pervasive that fire detectors had to be deactivated because they were being triggered. Without guidance from the administration, a collective decision was made by Delany occupants to vacate the building. Members took matters into their own hands and relocated themselves to other parts of campus.

You can read more about the details of the situation in the *Clarion* article [Fighting for Safety at Queens College](#) and [Dust in Delany Hall: CUNY Union Fights back](#) from the Queens College student newspaper.

In the past year, the Watchdogs have dealt with increasingly serious issues at other campuses as well—mold affecting library collections and archives at City College, City Tech, Queens, and Medgar Evers; water leaks at Medgar Evers and City Tech; and this December, members at one campus reported office and classroom temperatures in the 90s. What we are experiencing is the consequence of decades of deferred maintenance, which is not merely unsightly, it is dangerous. From CUNY's website, we know that the University has more than 300 buildings with an average age exceeding 50 years. Fifty of these were built before 1929. Environmental controls are outdated; buildings are often extremely hot or extremely cold or lack adequate ventilation. And yet, when CUNY does repair buildings, little thought is given to the conditions faced by the occupants.

As of September 2025, the Watchdogs communicated that based on the ongoing construction hazards, Delany Hall needed to be vacated. Remarkably, that's what happened.

Why were we able to make headway at Queens College in protecting members from the conditions in Delany Hall? And what can members do when faced with a health and safety situation?

Members and Watchdogs champion the effort

To champion a cause means to actively and passionately support something and by doing so, go beyond simple agreement to become a vocal advocate, often by inspiring others and taking concrete actions to help it succeed. This precisely describes the role taken by the SEEK Director, Norka Blackman-Richards, backed by the Queens College chapter leadership and the Watchdogs. She documented the situation, met and corresponded with the administration, the CUNY Board of Trustees, and clearly articulated the need for members and students to be protected.

Develop clearly defined goals

Initially, requests were made for thorough cleaning of the areas and steps to prevent further contamination by airborne particulates. When the situation persisted, the PSC collective —spearheaded by Norka —made it clear that our members could not work with the level of dust, and since the situation could not be successfully remediated, the building's occupants needed to be relocated to alternative spaces.

Demand needed information

Since there was disagreement about the degree of hazard, Queens College agreed to hire an outside consultant to do an assessment. After the College failed to respond to requests, the PSC filed an OSHA/PESH record request. Review of the report that we received, while flawed, revealed that the dust was about 2/3 crystalline silica, a substance capable of causing serious lung disease.

Spread the word

Messaging demanding protection for the users of Delany Hall was disseminated through a petition distributed throughout Queens College, the neighboring community, and the PSC (with over 1200 signatures!). Members also spoke with the press and thanks to PSC organizer Sam Rasiotis, a remarkably vigorous demonstration took place on the College campus on November 17.

Use union rights to assert the legal right to healthy and safe workplaces

We placed pressure on the administration through many union-based mechanisms—from basic health and safety walkthroughs to labor-management meetings at the chapter and CUNY-wide levels.

Now a bit about the frustrations: our success at moving our members out of Delany Hall did not happen because the administration took responsibility for the situation. It happened ONLY when the administration stopped mandating that the workforce continue to use the building. **Our members had to find available spaces, so they could relocate themselves.** The struggle around Delany Hall is not finished—our members are no longer being exposed but their work futures are uncertain.

Clearly, this is not acceptable. In December, the union had our first CUNY-wide H&S labor management meeting in six years. Using the experience of Delany Hall as a clarion call, we have called upon CUNY to do the following: Protocols for construction should be developed and followed at all campuses. The protocols should include, but not be limited to, regular communication regarding pending work, timelines, who to contact with concerns, and hazard-based decision-making for relocation.

In 2026, the PSC Watchdogs—as a collective of member activists throughout all 25 CUNY schools, will be placing an emphasis on moving CUNY away from being reactive—responding only after there have been failures and health-impacting exposures and instead, place active and continued pressure on them to develop the vision and planning needed to maintain safe and healthy workplaces right out of the gate. While the rollout of this may be long and varied, on a campus-by-campus basis, we are determined to establish a more healthy and safe present and future for workers and students at CUNY. Stay tuned.



After the Fall by Gail Green-Anderson

As we age, how do we face the reality of falling and sustaining injury in a fall? This question becomes pressing for many of us who are or were New York City cyclists, relying on bicycles for transportation. Many of us are also adventuresome travelers for whom cycling has been essential to exploring the world.

This past May, I had a fall while cycling on The Katy Trail in Missouri. Guided by seasoned tour leader Heather Andersen, my husband Rick and I were part of a group on an Adventure Cycling Association trip, tracing part of the route of the Lewis and Clark expedition. One day, my bike got mired in a particular deep patch of gravel; my bike stopped and I flew off. I could sit and eventually stand. Cuts from the gravel gave me a bloody knee and elbow, but I felt OK and my bike remained rideable. Rick said, "We gotta go." In an area where we had been warned about tornadoes, he had his eyes on the sky turning green.



We squirted water from our water bottles on my knee and elbow and rode on to Hermann, Missouri where our group would be staying that night. I bandaged myself and applied antibiotic cream offered by a fellow cyclist. Buoyed by the fact that I had emerged from the fall seemingly with only minor cuts and that no tornado had materialized, I rode for two more days to St. Charles, Missouri where the trip ended.

Back in New York, I cherished memories of our adventure on the Katy Trail. But I ached, physically. Along with the achiness, I had green and yellow bruises on the arm which had born the brunt of the fall, and my cuts looked like they were festering. A trip to the doctor resulted in X-rays and a prescription for an antibiotic. Fortunately, I had no breaks and thanks to the antibiotic, the cuts healed quickly.

Since my fall on the Katy Trail, I have been thinking about falling, specifically how I now feel about falling as a 72-year-old woman. The aftermath of my fall took a lot more out of me than previous falls. Having spent time cycling and talking with Heather on the trail in Missouri, I was motivated to read her memoir *I Never Intended to Be Brave: A Woman's Bicycle Journey Through Southern Africa*. Describing her love of cycling, Heather refers to being "able to just go, a connection with the universe that traveling under one's own power brings." Heather's memoir includes accounts of many glorious days cycling but also a harrowing experience causing her to be injured. The experience and resulting injury might have made her stop and return to the United States, not completing her planned trip. In her epilogue, Heather writes movingly of her decision to go on: "So although it was emotionally difficult to get back on my bike, and

braking was still physically difficult [Heather's right arm was injured], I did it....I chose to go on leading the life I wanted to live, at least as much as I could with the circumstances I faced." While reading this passage and taking into account that Heather was much younger on her journey than I was reading about it, I still gained strength from her decision to get back on her bike.

I have now been back on my bike. In October, I took a multi-day trip with Rick to see the fall foliage upstate. We left New York City on the Empire State Trail in Van Cortlandt Park. Unfortunately, a storm cut our trip short in Brewster. We returned to New York City, but plan to return to finish the ride, extending our trip to Albany. I felt so reassured to be back on my bike, and I realized how much the trail, exclusively for cyclists and pedestrians, made that reassurance available to me. Regrettably, I also realized that my days cycling on New York City streets were numbered. However, I could accept that if I knew there were safer places for me to ride.

More recently, I corresponded with Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Parks and Trails New York, about my fall in Missouri and about my plans to write about it in our PSC Retirees Chapter newsletter. I was surprised when Paul told me about an injury he had sustained as a much younger New York City cyclist and about his return to cycling. Paul is a powerful advocate for environments necessary for more people to feel comfortable cycling. In our email exchange, Paul wrote: "To be an active cyclist in most parts of the United States, including New York, one must evolve a high tolerance for hazards for there are simply not enough safe places to ride. Coming back from my crash, I realized how unacceptable this is. Why should everyday cycling require exceptional acts of bravery—or heedlessness?"

Paul goes on, displaying the democratic spirit he brings to his job, a spirit that I imagine most in the PSC Retirees Chapter share: "Wide bike lanes and greenways with smooth pavement, intuitive way-finding, calming greenery and protection from cars are not just ideal for kids, senior citizens, and those coming back from injury. They are ideal for everyone."

Fueled by Paul's words, I now have a conviction that sustains and deepens my personal decision to keep cycling. I favor safe environments for ALL of us to not only cycle, but to walk—perhaps pushing grandchildren in strollers, pushing walkers, and being pushed in wheelchairs. I don't think I can deny the risks that cycling presents me, and I can't stop cycling because of those risks. However, I can change where I ride now and join efforts to support the maintenance and building of trails that welcome me as I go forward.

Anderson, Heather. *I Never Intended to Be Brave: A Woman's Journey Through Southern Africa*. Chicago. Mag Mile Books, Windy City Publishers, 2011

White, Paul Steely. Executive Director, Parks and Trails New York, email correspondence, November 24, 2025



– MY TWO CENTS: POINT/COUNTERPOINT –

Growing Support for the PSC Fired Four

by Ruben Rangel

The PSC Delegate Assembly, the AAUP, the CUNY University Faculty Senate, student groups and elected officials have come to the defense of the academic freedom of four CUNY faculty fired in May 2025 in what PSC President James Davis has called a “political purge.” Zohran Mamdani even donned a PSC cap at a September campaign event at Brooklyn College and said that “no faculty member should be disciplined for supporting Palestinian human rights.”

The case of the Fired Four

Despite being recommended by their respective departments for reappointment four adjunct faculty members working at Brooklyn College and other CUNY campuses were targeted by President Michelle Anderson for non-appointment for their participation in a Brooklyn College campus protest in support of Palestinian rights on May 8, 2025. Without any consultation with their respective departments, the Brooklyn College President overturned the decisions of the various departments.

At the May 8 demonstration, the NYPD was called in by the administration, and the Fired Four were among several faculty members that linked arms in an effort to protect the students. Some of the faculty members also attempted to act as mediators to prevent students from being arrested.

At a September 30, 2025, Faculty Council meeting, the President said “the college canceled four adjunct members’ fall teaching appointments because” they violated the Henderson Rules of Conduct. Yet, at the time of their decision, Brooklyn College had not conducted any investigation into the alleged violation, nor specified which of the 11-points of conduct had been violated, nor held any hearing on the matter for any of the Fired Four.

The College, supporting the decision to non-reappoint the Fired Four, ignored the Brooklyn College President's own statement of September 30, and claims that there is no evidence of a connection between the May 8 event and the June decision by the President to reject the recommendations of the respective department faculty to approve reappointment.

Broader context

The case of the Brooklyn College Fired Four comes amid pressure from Congress and the President to eliminate DEI policies at CUNY and other institutions of higher education that might limit the structural privileges of white males.

CUNY and other university administrations have made several efforts to appease the right-wing Republican administration. While several major universities have adjusted their policies and practices and even paid fines to settle lawsuits in order to restore eliminated funding, the PSC is resisting the CUNY administration's attempt to cower to privileged white supremacist politics.



PSC President James Davis speaks at Brooklyn College Rally, July 2025

Under the guise of protecting students from alleged anti-Semitic harassment or indoctrination, the current CUNY administration is brazenly willing to stifle actual free speech and restrict academic freedom at Brooklyn College.



PSC members at a Rally for the BC Fired Four, October 2025

The attack against the Fired Four sends an ominous and chilling message that unpopular or controversial views expressed by faculty or students are not worthy of protection by CUNY.

Such cowardice from the CUNY administration can only be overcome with broader and more vociferous free speech in defense of the Brooklyn College Fired Four.



—WHAT'D I MISS? CHAPTER MEETING RECAP—

State of the Unions: September 8 Chapter Meeting by Lorraine Cohen

This recap of September's Chapter Meetings should have appeared in our last issue. The editor responsible for the oversight apologizes.

Dead or dormant Medicare Advantage

President James Davis reassured retirees that Medicare Advantage was dead for now, even though the State Appeals Court overturned the decisions of lower courts around the question of whether the Mayor has the authority to impose Medicare Advantage. The Mayor announced that he will not revive negotiations around Medicare Advantage.

James also discussed the proposed health insurance plan for active workers that was negotiated by the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) with the City Office of Labor Relations (OLR). The process has not been fully transparent, despite the promises of the negotiation team at the MLC.

Crisis and organized resistance by the PSC

James defined the period we are living in as a “crisis.” We are in the middle of a “New McCarthyism.” This crisis has generated a new level of activism among PSC rank and file. The New McCarthyism, Davis continued, seeks to punish faculty for exercising their free speech rights if they express a belief that Palestinians have human rights or if they criticize the policies of the Israeli government.

James connected the firings of four part-time faculty at Brooklyn College to the Trump attacks on universities, free speech and academic freedom. He talked about the vigorous campaign that the PSC has undertaken to restore the jobs of the Fired Four. Using the grievance procedure is one of the ways to fight back. Protests against these non-reappointments have taken many forms: demonstrations, letters, news articles, etc. This campaign has been joined by the AAUP, and the City Council’s Progressive Caucus.

The PSC Defending Research Funding Working Group is engaging in a wide range of actions against the cuts to scientific research imposed by the Trump administration. Retiree Joan Greenbaum pointed out that research money has been cut for projects that had already been funded. The Chancellor, to his credit, promised money to bridge these cutbacks.



James Davis

James also spoke about the work of the Immigrant Solidarity Working Group. PSC faculty and staff have been going downtown to provide support to immigrants that show up for hearings on their asylum claims. PSC members have witnessed the aggressive, and at times violent, behavior of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

James reported that ICE recruiters have been driven out of CUNY colleges. The PSC is sending a message that "ICE is not welcome in CUNY and in all of NYC." The PSC is now being asked by the Central Labor Committee to train members of other unions who want to stand in solidarity with their undocumented immigrant coworkers and their communities.

James emphasized that these struggles are likely to continue. We must be prepared both to act in the present and over the long haul. In closing, he reiterated that he has never seen more evidence of the strength of this union in perilous times: "We are a vibrant and resilient union."

Good news about unions in 2024

Van der Naald is the coauthor (with Ruth Milkman) of *The State of the Unions 2024: A Profile of Organized Labor in New York City, New York State and the United States*. According to the summary provided by Van der Naald, "Growth in union election petitions since 2020 has reversed decades of decline, reaching a level not seen since 2015. Unions are both petitioning for more representation and winning more of those elections, with over three-quarters of all private-sector organizations organizing attempts ending in union victories in 2023-24. Polls show increasing support for unions among Americans, particularly the young." Van der Naald pointed out that naturalized immigrants are the most likely to join unions, and that while in most of the private sector union density was still in decline, there were some bright spots: an increase in the membership of public sector workers, especially in education, transport and utilities. NYC had the highest numbers of employers that voluntarily recognized the petitions to vote for or against the union in their workplace. This means that a vote can be taken much more quickly. The full text and graphics of the report can be found at <https://slu.cuny.edu/public-engagement/research-publications/state-of-the-unions>.



Joseph van der Naald

The Retirees Chapter

Anne Friedman, Chapter Chair, presented an overview of the state of the Retirees Chapter. She introduced Diane Menna, Vice-chair, Bonnie Nelson, Secretary, and Jessica Varonne, the new PSC staff member supporting the chapter. She also discussed the functions of the elected Chapter Executive Committee, including representatives to the Delegate Assembly. Anne described the ongoing activities of the Chapter, the Chapter newsletter, Turning the Page, the Anti-Racism Retirees Committee, the Program Committee, the PSC Pensions Committee and the Sub-committee that plans the in-person Retirees luncheons. If you are interested in joining any of these, contact the Chapter at Retirees@PSCmail.org.



Anne Friedman

Anne reminded us that retirees past and present have to rejoin the chapter every year and pay dues. The website to rejoin the chapter and pay dues is <https://psc-cuny.org/retirees/>.

Hidden realities in healthcare



Debbie Bell

Debbie Bell, former PSC executive director and current PSC consultant on health care, talked about issues connected to health care. Debbie explained that those on Medicare and Senior Care would not be affected by the new contract with United Health Care and Emblem; however, there are ongoing threats to the funding of Medicare, and changes in the options presented for new retirees in

some states. Debbie recommended that retirees look at Bonnie Nelson's informative article in the September/October issue of the newsletter on the changes in policies that are likely to be implemented, including use of AI to make judgement about whether various procedures are permissible, and the increase in the number of procedures that require prior approval.

Debbie also cited PSC concerns about the federal cuts to Medicaid. On the state level, NY State has provided many programs to fund healthcare for low-income individuals and families. There will be fewer neighborhood clinics where low-income people are able to access healthcare. It is unclear whether the state has enough resources to make up for the federal cuts.

Debbie explained how to obtain reimbursement if you have paid higher Premiums on Part B and D. IRMAA, or Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount, is a surcharge added to Medicare Part B and Part D premiums for those with higher incomes. Checks will start to be released in October. The website that explains IRMAA is:

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/olr/health/retiree/health-retiree-medb-irmaa.page>.

Vaccine confusion

Michael Foley, Communications Director of the PSC Welfare Fund, addressed the confusion about which vaccines required prescriptions by your doctor, and which did not. The Covid, Flu, and Pneumonia vaccines require prescriptions. If you show your SilverScript cards, these vaccines should be free. RSV, Shingles and TDAP do not require prescriptions. Michael also announced that the Audiology Clinic in Brooklyn College is now a recognized vendor in the network. They have an excellent team; he strongly recommended our members choose them to meet their audiology needs. Finally, he urged individuals who have Catastrophic Long-term Care Plans to use them. They may qualify for reimbursement for out-of-pocket costs not covered by other insurance. Michael assured us he would be happy to answer questions and advocate for members about any Welfare Fund matters, just call the PSC Welfare Office at 212-354-5230. The full video of the September meeting is available [here](#).



Michael Foley

Editors' Note: for a recap of the November Retirees Chapter Meeting on AI see above article.



What We Should Know About Choosing Senior Residences: December Chapter Meeting by Irwin Yellowitz

As retirees we face an important dichotomy: we live longer and thus we may face changes that limit our independence. At the December Chapter meeting, our invited guest, **Professor Emeritus Jim Cohen of John Jay College**, made clear, the senior residence industry has emerged to respond to this tension between longer life and the strains on our independence.



Jim Cohen

Jim Cohen spoke to our Chapter in April 2024 about the variety of senior residences available and the significant differences among them in cost and services. His talk was so well received by our members that we invited Jim to offer a sequel. Happily, he agreed, and this time he focused on the many questions and issues we should consider if we need a senior residence.

A brief history of senior residences

Jim Cohen first offered a brief history of the development of senior residences. In the past, older people, who no longer could provide for themselves, joined the households of children or other relatives. Of course, people of means could hire aides and continue to live in their homes. The poor who lacked relatives ended up in poor houses.

Over the course of the Twentieth Century, as the senior population grew, these arrangements no longer served. Increasingly, seniors who could not live independently found new types of residences developed by private, for-profit companies or by non-profits, such as religious organizations. First, nursing homes and assisted living facilities were created. Then came independent living facilities and memory care units. Ultimately continuous care communities were created that provide all levels of facility in one setting and often allow for progression from one to another as the person's needs change.

Some of us would prefer to use home health aides to extend our time in our own homes, but a significant number of us will ultimately have to turn to senior residences. Jim Cohen focused on the questions and issues we should ask and consider if we need to make that decision.

Factors to consider

Cost eliminates many facilities as realistic choices for a wide range of seniors. However, among the residences that are affordable, there remains an important set of questions and concerns if we are to choose a facility that will provide a decent quality of life.

Location is a major issue, often related to cost. Facilities in the New York City area are extremely expensive. Cheaper alternatives exist elsewhere, but do we want to give up connections with family and friends that exist in our current location?

There also are other significant cost factors to consider. Facilities vary in whether they require a significant entry fee, which may or may not be refundable if a person leaves the residence or dies. Future increases in carrying charges must be included in our estimate of whether we can afford a residence. If we live for many years, will the facility continue to house us even if our money runs out? Will the residence accept Medicaid if we become eligible, and, if so, will the management move us to a less desirable apartment?

Should we choose non-profit residences, which comprise only 20% of the total, over for-profit facilities? Jim Cohen clearly would choose the non-profit sector since profit facilities are more likely to sacrifice care for cost cutting as a means of improving profitability. For-profits also may own many facilities, and thus those who are in charge of a particular residence are only managers who may lack the authority to respond to complaints. Non-profits generally avoid these pitfalls, and they often have a philanthropic purpose that better serves residents.

Critical for any senior residence is the staff, which can be a major problem area. Eighty percent of facilities report that they cannot hire all the staff they need. We should ask if there is high turnover among staff; are staff primarily full-time; are the staff unionized. Facilities are often reluctant to discuss staffing because they pay poorly and have harsh working conditions. However, we should ask about staffing since this will significantly affect our experience.



There are many questions that relate to what life will be like in the senior residence. Can a resident leave the facility at will? Can he own a vehicle? Does the facility provide transportation for outside activities such as museums, theaters or shopping? Are services available on demand or only on schedule? Are the other residents people who can become friends? Does the social atmosphere seem conducive to an engaged social life? How is medical care provided? Finally, do residents have a role in the operation of the facility through committees that have some real influence with management?

Personal particulars

I would add to Jim Cohen's concerns, a comment about my family's experiences. We all know that some senior residences have waiting lists for

entry, but we also must consider waiting lists once you are part of a continuous care community. One of my cousins lived with his wife in the assisted living facility of a continuous care community, and when he suffered increased dementia, he was admitted promptly to the memory care unit. That is how it should work. However, in a second case, one person in a couple suffered rapid dementia, but when they sought to transfer her to the memory care unit in the continuous care community, there was no bed available. The husband had to move his wife from the facility to a separate, and frankly less suitable, residence, while he remained in the original location. Thus, the continuous care system broke down in real time. We should find out whether a facility is able to meet its obligations for continuous care.

This is a complicated subject, and you may want to follow Jim Cohen's research more fully. If you would like to view his initial presentation in April 2024, please [click here](#). If you would like to view the December 2025 program, [click here](#). Finally, Jim Cohen has provided background and detail for both talks. This material contains valuable information and is available through the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/RetireesLCAdocs>.

Many people prefer to remain independent as long as possible, but the reality is that many of us will need a senior residence. Jim Cohen has done a great service for the Retirees Chapter by researching this complex area and presenting his conclusion to us in these two meetings. Thank you, Jim, for this important contribution to your colleagues.



– CULTURE CORNER –

In An Upper West Side Cafe by Constance H. Gemson

Monday morning: 5 a.m. Two years ago, my husband died. I woke up early, still missing his presence. His half of the bed still feels lonely. As Joni Mitchell expressed, "The bed's too big The frying pan's too wide." I woke up to darkness. I gazed outside my window, and the sky seemed endless, black, and bleak. I felt restless, unable to sleep.

I'm glad I live on the Upper West Side. I liked the early morning quietude of my neighborhood. In my pre-pandemic memory, the familiar blocks seemed to be buzzing twenty-four seven. Now, the once-busy bars have almost

disappeared, replaced by small cafés serving an endless variety of coffee in all possible colors, textures, and combinations.

I wanted to race out and not be alone. I dressed quickly in comfortable casual clothes. I had no destination in mind, just wanting to be away from my solo state and my lonely city apartment.

It was so early, even the faithful dog walkers were still asleep. Traffic was slow. The bright city buses shone in the darkness, yet the city still seemed sleepy.

Most small places that served an early shot of caffeine were open at 7 a.m. The nearest cafe hadn't opened yet this morning. The familiar glass door was unlocked, and I walked into the quiet darkness.

"Hello, hello, is anyone here?" I asked at the empty store. A small man in a blue woolen cap and work clothes emerged from the kitchen in the back.

"Hi, we don't open till 7:00." He looked at his watch. "It's only 5:15."

"Oh, I'll come back." I felt forlorn and sad.

"No, you're here. I know you, you're the lady who always orders 'iced coffee with lots of milk, no sugar.' You always come by early in the morning."

"That's right." I smiled. The man took off his cap.
"I know you; you're Jose." I smiled.

"And you're Connie," he said cheerfully.

"Yes, you're right... I know all my regular customers. I've made bagels in the back here for sixteen years."

"Sixteen years!" I thought of my own varied work history and admired Jose's consistency.

"Stay right here. One iced coffee is coming up for you." The iced coffee lacked the bitter grinds, and seemed like a perfect, small miracle.

I sat in a comfortable chair near the worn and scratched wooden table. I



was there for a few minutes, to value the quietude, to appreciate the rare silence.

“Thank you, Jose. I’ll be back tomorrow.”

“Goodbye, Connie, enjoy your day,” he replied.

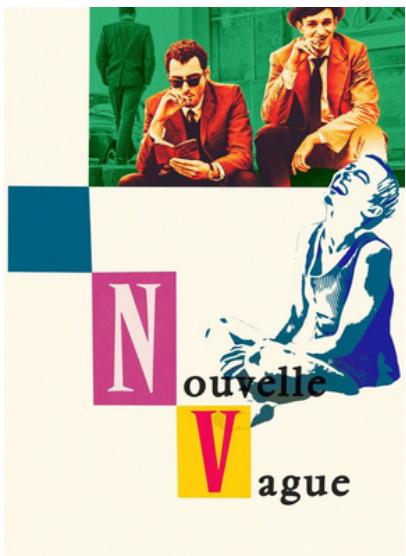
We both smiled.

Soon, the day’s gloom lifted. The frail sun peeked through the sky’s fading darkness, vulnerable yet shining.



Nouvelle Vague, a Film Directed by Richard Linklater

by Jonathan Buchsbaum



No doubt many chapter members recall the French filmmaking explosion known as the New Wave, or *Nouvelle Vague*, the title of the recent film directed by Richard Linklater (available on Netflix). Choosing to make a film about the most influential of the first films of this new generation of French filmmakers, Linklater has produced a compelling recreation of the making of *A Bout de Souffle* (*Breathless*). While *Breathless* of course now enjoys iconic status, the impressive detail of the reconstruction effort perhaps inevitably fails to convey the significance of director Jean-Luc

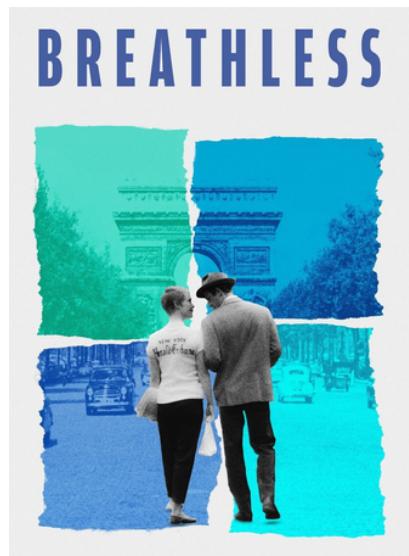
Godard’s achievement. On the other hand, *Nouvelle Vague* does offer an intriguing portrait of the director.

At the end of the 1950s in France, a group of young filmmakers who wanted to break with the stodgy “tradition of quality” of French cinema of the post-war created a new kind of cinema. In 1962, the feisty herald of this movement, *Cahiers du cinema*, named 162 new filmmakers in a special issue on the *Nouvelle Vague*. Most of those names have disappeared, but the best known had brilliant careers: Francois Truffaut, Claude Chabrol and Jean-Luc Godard. Claude Chabrol made two of the earliest films. Francois Truffaut’s success with *400 Blows* was a sensation at Cannes in 1959, the same year that *Hiroshima Mon Amour* stunned audiences with a rare look back at collaboration during the war. Jean-Luc Godard’s *Breathless* won

the Prix Jean Vigo (for most promising French filmmaker) the following year, and like *400 Blows* enjoyed remarkable success at the box office.

Staking out a claim

By choosing the title *Nouvelle Vague*, Linklater clearly stakes out a claim to capturing a cultural movement that reverberated far beyond the cinephilic world of French cinema in 1960. The film offers a compendium of inside references that will pass unnoticed for most viewers (especially foreign ones), but Linklater, relying on French screenwriters, delivers a sprawling canvas of remarkable historical accuracy. Yet that aspiration may attenuate full appreciation of the film.



As a thought experiment, I would recommend watching *Nouvelle Vague* through a forensic lens. Linklater has reconstructed incidents attending the production of *Breathless*, giving us “the making of” after the historical facts. Based on my research, I would conclude that the film does a faithful job touching on many bases: financing, source material, script(s), assembling cast and crew, daily shooting, technical innovations, etc. But there is little in the collection of evidence that leads to any sense of why the film was so revolutionary, its critical reception, or its popularity at the box office.

Nouvelle Vague, then, re-creates, as it were, the primary sources. To see how Godard drew on those sources to make one of the most creative and ground-breaking films ever, one can move on to view *Breathless*. Viewers can then judge how well the imagined primary documents prepare them for or explain the film.

Shortly after finishing the film, Godard noted that “What I wanted was to start off with a conventional story, and to remake, but differently, all cinema which had already been done.” Linklater’s film, to its great credit, tries to capture that robust creativity.

A matter of accuracy

My former department chair asked me how much of *Nouvelle Vague* is accurate. I’d say that the information contained in the “primary sources” is remarkably accurate in spirit if not in all detail. Belmondo was a boxer, the young Seberg had just acted in two Preminger films and Columbia agreed to release her to act in *Breathless* for \$15,000. Francois Truffaut and

Claude Chabrol did vouch for Godard with the producer, who only then was willing to take a chance on this first feature film of a still little-known Godard. Truffaut did pass on to Godard the idea for the film taken from a tawdry newspaper story several years earlier. The cinematographer, Raoul Coutard, had served in the French army in Indochina and had also been a photojournalist after his service. And so on. There are also references to incidents that happened later, so there is some fudging with the “primary sources,” and probably some scenes that never happened, but that license does not misrepresent the project.

However, the catalogue of primary sources leaves a huge gap between the production history and the brilliance of the final film. Thus, with the exception of the short scene at the end in the editing room of *Nouvelle Vague*, viewers get no sense of the famous editing of the film, punctuated by “jump cuts” and an aggressive indifference to normal continuity. Characters should not change shirts when walking from one room to another; a gun should not point in one on-screen direction and then fire in another.

Constructing the soundtrack

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of this discrepancy concerns the soundtrack. For various reasons, Godard shot *Breathless* without recording sound. So Godard constructed the entire soundtrack after completion of filming. Godard poured sounds in from a plethora of sources: poems read during projection of an offscreen film, radio broadcasts of news events, a poem of Georges Braessens, classical music, phonograph records. For the dialogues he handed out on slips of paper every morning, Godard sprinkled unprecedented samples of contemporary slang: “fregate à la con”/stupid car; “merde, la flicaille”/shit, the fuzz; “je peux pisser dans le lavabo?”/Can I piss in the sink? Thus, every sound in *Breathless* was chosen by Godard and mixed in a staggering assemblage of sound unlike any other film of the time. *Nouvelle Vague* does include some of those citations, but gives no sense of the complexity of Godard’s post-production work.

If *Nouvelle Vague* effectively ends on the last day of shooting, depriving viewers of the alchemy of post-production, the film does create a portrait of the artist as a young director. According to *Nouvelle Vague*, Godard comes across as phlegmatic, diffident, aggressive, droll, enigmatic with an unwavering belief in a new approach to cinema. That belief applied also to the production process, that is, the days of shooting, which is the bulk of what *Nouvelle Vague* shows viewers. Though Godard did have a short written version known as a treatment, he never wrote a normal screenplay

with dialogue. He did have a precise list of locations—and cars to be used—which he hands to his assistant before shooting begins. But actors did not normally know what they were to do on a given day until Godard handed them the slips of paper with dialogue the morning of the shoot. If an assistant points out a continuity error, Godard explains with varying degrees of exasperation and aphoristic aplomb how continuity was part of the traditional rules which restricted creativity, spontaneity, and authenticity.

Into the Pantheon

Godard often spoke in such aphorisms invented on the spot, leaving actors and crew baffled. Godard would call off shooting at any moment when he announced he had run out of ideas for the day, and on one occasion called in “sick” from a café where he was playing pinball, leading to a physical fight with his producer. No doubt the film exaggerates Godard’s (considerable) eccentricities, but eventually in Linklater’s film the actors and crew are converted and throw back aphorisms in Godard’s face, to his only partially disguised delight. The most disgruntled actor, Jean Seberg, familiar only with the misogynistic hierarchy of Hollywood, considers quitting on multiple occasions. Even she joins the repartee, a wonderfully rendered touch with her heavily accented, slightly awkward, if excellent French: “Life is short. Art is long. We’ll re-do the shot several times more until you forget all that you imagined all by yourself in your little corner. Roll camera!”

At times, what appear to be quick throwaway lines of dialogue carry a weight invisible to most viewers. During a scene with Belmondo and Seberg on the street, a passerby in the street asks what they are filming. Godard replies quickly that it is a documentary on the two actors acting. By choosing a cinematographer who had worked primarily in nonfiction, and shooting without the normal heavy equipment and large crew of bigger budget films, Godard wanted the film to have a documentary feel. This easy mélange of documentary and fiction was a fundamental characteristic of Godard’s work throughout the 1960s, an approach that refused to accept the facile dichotomy between the nonfiction tradition begun by the French inventors of cinema, Louis and Auguste Lumiere, and the delirious fiction invented by Georges Melies.

When Belmondo encourages the crew one day to go out and “make film history,” Godard quickly adds “let’s go into the Pantheon.” That comment captures the ambition of the critics-turned-filmmakers to have film be accepted as a legitimate art form, not simply popular entertainment. During the 1950s, French critics, including the allusive writings of Godard, waged a

campaign to have film taken seriously, which installation in the Pantheon would consecrate.

Though *Breathless* is clearly a fiction film, its surprising box office success suggests, even arguably confirms, that *Breathless* resonated with French people at that moment. More than any other film of that short creative explosion of the New Wave, *Breathless* was a documentary of France in the exact middle of the “trente glorieuses” far more than it was a fiction film about a cheap hood who killed a cop.



Opera Online: November 2025

by Norman Lewis

Arabella



On November 10, the Met presented Richard Strauss' fluffy *Arabella* for the first time since 2014. It was Strauss' last collaboration with his great librettist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who died before the premiere in 1933. It has many qualities in common with the earlier *Der Rosenkavalier*. The plot is an elaborate confection that hinges on transvestism and gender disguise. Rachel Willis-Sørensen was the titular heroine, and her performance was adequate although lacking in the polish and elegance that the role calls for. Tomasz Konieczny was her suitor, Mandryka. He sang and acted well but not with great musicality. The standout of the evening was Louise Alder, a British soprano making her Met debut in the transvestite role of Zdenka/Zdenko. She has a lovely voice and inhabits the part with grace and excellent comic timing. I hope we will continue to hear her in future roles.

Carmen



November 17 saw the season revival of *Carmen* in the production that was first seen last year. It is set in a 21st century trailer park amid trucks that surround a factory, where Carmen and her associates produce weapons instead of tobacco. Isabel Leonard was a lethargic and vocally underpowered Carmen. It is a mystery to me why the Met keeps casting her in leading roles and new productions. She has a very ordinary mezzo voice and was unable to rise to the emotional and musical demands of the role. On the other hand, her Don José was sung to perfection by Michael Fabiano. He brought a sense of rising drama and superb singing to the opera. Kristina Mkhitarian was a respectable Micaela, but Escamillo was a very blustery Adam Plachetka. Like Leonard, he is a favorite of the Met casting department and woefully unqualified for most of the roles he sings; a dismal Leporello earlier this season demonstrated this. Fabien Gabel, making his conducting debut, had some problems with the ensembles and choruses but was for the most part an able leader of the orchestra.

Andrea Chénier



On November 24, the season premiere of *Andrea Chénier* was broadcast. This is a work that needs two strong leads but unfortunately did not have them. Sonya Yoncheva as Maddalena and Piotr Beczala in the title role were both afflicted with wide vibratos that made it difficult, even painful at times, to listen to them. Both singers have had these problems in the past and I wonder why they are still being cast in leading roles such as these. Both singers also had trouble with high notes, and to make matters worse Yoncheva took an optional high note at the end of “La mamma morta” and failed miserably. The baritone Igor Golovatenko did slightly better in the role of Gérard, although his Act III aria, “Nemico della patria,” lacked distinction. On the plus side, the orchestra, under the Met’s new guest principal conductor, Daniele Rustioni, performed brilliantly, and helped save this evening from total disaster.

All three operas may be viewed on You Tube:





Museum Exhibits: “February/March 2026”

by Marcia Newfield

A new year...a new way. The vistas beckon. There were many exhibits closing in January which if you missed, you can still get a glimpse of on the museum websites. Divine Egypt & Man Ray at the Met; Rashid Johnson & Faith Ringgold at the Guggenheim; Monet in Venice at the Brooklyn Museum.

MORGAN LIBRARY

Drawings by Renoir (through February 8, 2026)

Inspired by the major gift to the Morgan of a large-scale preparatory sketch for one of Renoir's most significant paintings, *The Great Bathers*, this exhibition is the first in a century to explore the artist's works on paper in depth. *Renoir Drawings* brings together nearly one hundred drawings, pastels, watercolors, prints, and a small selection of paintings, enabling visitors to engage with Renoir's creative process while offering insights into his artistic methods over five decades.



NEW YORK HISTORICAL

Photographs: Stirring the Melting Pot (through March 29, 2026)



Featuring more than 100 photographs and objects, the exhibition explores how immigrants transformed the city as a whole and created communities in their new home. Among the highlights are photographs that document the impact of the 1904 General Slocum steamboat

disaster on one family, illustrating how the tragedy reshaped a community and city neighborhoods, as well as images spanning the 20th century that capture immigrant life.

Photographs show children at play and in school, seniors at recreational centers, workers in sweatshops and factories, families at home, and visitors to festivals and parades—all making a life for themselves after leaving places like Bosnia, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Ethiopia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Italy, Philippines, Russia, Ukraine, and Vietnam, among other countries. Depictions of Greek Orthodox churches, Cambodian Buddhist temples, Jewish synagogues, and Sikh temples highlight the City's diverse faiths, while images of street vendors and storefronts chart how food has played a transformative role in New York's landscape.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Seeing Silence: Helene Schjerfbeck (through April 5, 2026)

Beloved in Nordic countries for her highly original style, Finnish painter Helene Schjerfbeck (1862–1946) is relatively unknown to the rest of the world.

Overcoming immense personal struggles and working in a remote location for decades, she produced a powerful body of work through sheer force of will. This exhibition of 60 paintings affirms her rightful place in the story of modern art.

Following Schjerfbeck's journey from art school in Paris to her final days in Sweden, the exhibition illustrates her shift from traditional and realistic subjects to a simplified, spare style. In the early 1900s, using her mother and neighbors as models, she painted abstractly, paring down her subjects in form and color and developing a bold, new language.



BROOKLYN MUSEUM

Book of the Dead (opens January 30, 2026)



For the first time ever, lay eyes on one of the only complete and gilded Books of the Dead—the world's finest existing copy. The Brooklyn Museum's conservation team spent three years carefully restoring this 21-foot papyrus, which now debuts in a special spotlight within a refreshed gallery dedicated to ancient Egyptian funerary practices. Filled with

gleaming vignettes, the scroll appears alongside one of the earliest Books of the Dead and fascinating artifacts, such as gold amulets and reed pens. Unrolling Eternity illuminates both ancient burial rites and the artistic prowess behind a rare masterpiece, as well as the cutting-edge techniques used to preserve it.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Black Contribution (ongoing)

Celebrating the contributions of Black scientists, artists, and curators in natural history, the exhibition includes profiles of 17 modern and historical Black individuals, such as John Edmonstone, a formerly enslaved person who taught taxidermy to Charles Darwin, and Margaret Collins, the first Black woman to earn a doctorate in entomology. It also highlights the challenges and adversity Black naturalists have faced in pursuing their work. The exhibition is produced by the Black in Natural History Museums organization and is included with any admission to the museum.

DR. MARGARET COLLINS
1922-1996
Entomologist, Professor, Museum Specialist



EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

Jangueando (Summer 2026)



This exhibit debuts recently accessioned works to El Museo del Barrio's Permanent Collection. Jangueando meaning "hanging out with your communities," from the street to the club, invites viewers to reflect on places of gathering. It features nearly 40 works across diverse media—painting, photography, sculpture, and video—and cultural perspectives, organized into

thematic clusters. Select groupings build on the museum's historical strengths, such as Puerto Rican and Nuyorican portraiture and Latinx photography. The exhibition highlights the evolution of the museum's collecting strategy, including renewed focus on queer artists and those of Indigenous descent.



— 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 with “TTP” as the subject.



SPRING SEMESTER MEETING DATES: PSC RETIREES CHAPTER

PSC Retirees Meetings, on Zoom

MONDAY, February 2, 2026 — 1:00 PM

MONDAY, March 2, 2026 — 1:00 PM

MONDAY, April 6, 2026 — 1:00 PM

MONDAY, May 4, 2026 — 1:00 PM



The *Turning The Page* editorial committee
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is made up of Diane Menna, Marianne Pita,
David Kotelchuck, and Joan Greenbaum.



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