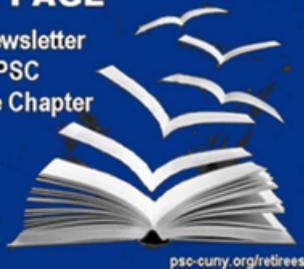


**TURNING
THE PAGE**

The Newsletter
of the PSC
Retiree Chapter



APRIL / MAY 2026

Academic Year 2025-26, No. 4

CONTENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

“The Revival of the Celebration of May Day: The May Day Solidarity School”
by Lorraine Cohen

“Update on the Fired Four: “Three Down, One To Go!”
by Corinna Mullin

“Artificial Intelligence is on the March: Are We?”
by Joan Greenbaum

MY TWO CENTS: POINT/COUNTERPOINT

“NYC’s Mayor Zohran Mamdani: An Opening to Democratic Socialism”
by Peter Ranis

WHAT ‘CHA UP TO NOW?

“Women’s Connection: Make New Friends in Retirement”
by Leslie Galman

**“Worker-to-worker Organizing for the 21st Century:
The Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee”**
by Debra Bergen

WHAT’D I MISS? CHAPTER MEETING RECAP

“To Eat or Not To Eat: Retirees Chapter January Luncheon”
by Diane Menna

“NYSUT’s Social Justice Initiatives: February 2 Chapter Meeting”
by Bonnie Nelson

CULTURE CORNER

Museum Exhibits: “April/May 2026”
by Marcia Newfield

Poem: “Reflecting”
by Joan Greenbaum

COMMUNITY BOARD

Book Announcement

The PSC Pension Committee Says Job Well Done!
Eileen Moran Asks Us to Contribute to Vote Cope

Shawn Fain Calls for General Strike

One of the catalysts behind these May Day trainings was a speech given by Shawn Fain, the President of the United Auto Workers in April of 2022. He is calling for all of labor to participate in a general strike on May Day of 2028. Fain is calling for unions to align their contracts to expire at the same time. He stated that this plan for a general strike was not just to bring out workers for a one-day event but to build a movement. He stated his belief that a successful general strike could bring about transformational changes in the balance of power between labor and capital. He is proposing a large working-class movement to oppose the power of the very wealthy.

The speakers in the morning sessions articulated a strong anti-capitalist anti-authoritarian framework that linked together multiple issues. The present Trump administration's policies are leading us down the road to an authoritarian fascist regime. As evidence, the speakers pointed to the tax breaks and other policies that resulted in a large scale redistribution of wealth and power to the "the billionaire class;" the shift of government money from programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and other safety net programs to the military-industrial complex, ICE, Border Patrols, and tech companies that make it possible for the state to collect information on citizens.

The morning speakers put forward a specific political agenda: full funding for CUNY; tax the rich; get ICE out of NYC; invest in quality education for all, give tenants more rights and build affordable housing, invest in accessible, quality healthcare, and stop the destruction of the global environment. The speakers emphasized that an important first step towards building the movement was organizing people, including people who have never rallied before, to come out to May Day 2026.

Beginning Now

To build towards a national general strike in May of 2028 a lot of organizing work has to take place *beginning now*. The Minneapolis mass strike came out of a history of labor and community struggles that had been waged over a period of years. To build such a movement requires a period of deep and broad organizing that is accompanied by a series of escalating actions. Mass strikes arise in situations in which there has been a period of collective action by coalitions of labor and community groups and a series of escalating tactics. Often a mass strike appears to be spontaneous, and to some extent it is. They grow out of a specific act by the ruling powers that triggers enough anger that thousands of people are willing to come out, even if it means violating the law; however, this action also becomes possible because of previous organizing and mobilization.

In the afternoon, there were workshops that provided opportunities for participants to learn about organizing strategies that have been effective in recruitment, increasing the base of activists, identifying leaders, and developing a strategic plan. The facilitators in both workshops were experienced labor educators and organizers. The first workshop was described as “How to build the base and a level of solidarity required to pull off acts of non-cooperation.” The second workshop was about campaigns and tactics. It focused on identifying leaders and developing an escalation plan leading up to May Day 2026 and beyond. As is often the case, the breakout sessions in each workshop exposed each of us to the experience and thinking of individuals from other groups. New approaches to organizing were shared. Thinking about a series of escalating actions was also useful.

The final session of the training was led by a UAW officer. In his closing remarks, he briefly talked about other general strikes. He called attention to the importance of Shawn Fain’s call for a general strike in 2028. He reiterated the importance of incorporating into conversations a framework that was rooted in a class perspective: millionaires against workers. He spoke of the importance of having an agenda that included tenants, workers, students, religious and community leaders, all groups whose economic power and living standards have been adversely impacted by the Trump regime. The goal is to build the power of the people so that we can change the social and political dynamics in the US. To do that we must begin organizing and training now.



Update on the Fired Four: “Three Down, One To Go!” **by Corinna Mullin**

In the summer of 2025, four adjunct faculty members at Brooklyn College (myself included), widely known as the “Fired Four”—were summarily non-reappointed after being targeted for our Palestine solidarity and union activism. Despite having been reappointed by our departments and assigned courses for the upcoming semester, we were dismissed without explanation or due process. All four of us had strong teaching records, including consistently excellent faculty and student evaluations, and were widely respected educators within our departments. Our firings followed months of escalating attacks on academic workers and students speaking out against Israel’s U.S.-backed genocide in Gaza and criticizing CUNY’s institutional ties to settler colonialism and the US war machine. One

colleague was additionally charged with “conduct unbecoming,” a term with roots in the McCarthyite purges of the mid-twentieth century used to remove leftist educators from public institutions. The message was clear: faculty who speak out for Palestinian liberation do so at their peril.

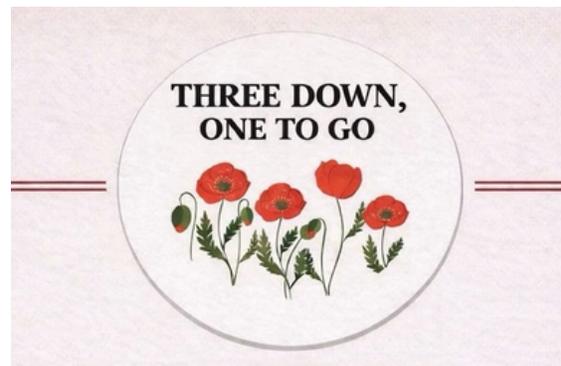
After months of sustained organizing by our union, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC-CUNY), alongside students, faculty, and community members, as well as advocacy from national academic freedom organizations and allies across the labor movement—three of us have now been rehired. I am grateful to report that I am among those reinstated. This development represents an important victory for academic freedom, political speech, and contingent faculty rights. It also demonstrates the power of solidarity across job categories, campuses, and unions. By reversing the non-reappointments of three adjunct faculty members, the administration has effectively acknowledged that there was no legitimate case against us.

At the same time, the struggle remains unfinished. One member of the Fired Four continues to face a CUNY-wide “do not rehire” designation, barring her from teaching anywhere in the university system where she had worked and been widely respected for nearly a decade. As a result, she has lost not only her position but also her health insurance and livelihood. There are also several students across CUNY who have been suspended and otherwise disciplined for solidarity with Palestine liberation. The harm caused by these administrative actions—both to the individuals targeted and to the broader CUNY community—cannot be easily undone.

Even when administrative decisions are reversed, the process itself produces a chilling effect designed to deter others from speaking out. This episode is part of a broader pattern widely described as the “Palestine Exception” to academic freedom, in which otherwise protected speech and scholarship become grounds for investigation, discipline, or dismissal when one challenges Israeli state violence or expresses solidarity with Palestinian liberation. Confronting and dismantling this exception remains essential if universities are to function as spaces for critical inquiry and meaningful learning.

Yet this partial victory demonstrates the power of collective resistance! The reinstatement of three adjuncts was the result of a unified and persistent fight by our CUNY community and comrades beyond the University. The solidarity expressed through the Fired Four campaign has affirmed a core principle of the labor movement: an injury to one is an injury to all. The fight

continues until every member of the Fired Four is reinstated, until our students' suspensions are reversed, and until the McCarthyite repression and Palestine Exception to academic freedom is defeated. Join us in this important fight as we insist: **“Three Down, One To Go!”**



Graphic by @reinstatetcunyfiredfour

Please sign the action letter and demand reinstatement for the Fired Fourth: <https://psc-cuny.org/issues/reinstate-the-fired-four-at-brooklyn-college/three-down-one-to-go/>



Artificial Intelligence is on the March: Are We? **by Joan Greenbaum**

The White House's policy has been to try to block any state from limiting the spread of AI. The big tech firms touted AI in their expensive ads at the Super Bowl. Unlike the European Union, the U.S. has no legislation protecting all Americans from the misuse of their information by Artificial Intelligence. There is some good news though: the New York State Governor has recently signed a bill to protect state workers from Artificial Intelligence systems in the workplace. The PSC and the UUP, SUNY's union, put pressure on the Governor to have our universities included. I'll return to this bill shortly.

We should be asking if AI is a growing industry, why are those firms laying off so many workers. In 2025, big tech companies such as Microsoft and Alphabet, the parent company of Google, laid off at least 127,000 tech workers. Amazon, a leader in web-hosting services, recently fired more than 27,000 white collar workers with expectations of more layoffs this spring.

Anthropic, a start-up, updated its chatbot Claude to an application called Claude Code, which can do program coding faster and more accurately than humans. Some say that programs that would have taken a month to write can be simply described to Claude Code and accurate code is generated anywhere from minutes to within an hour, depending on the complexity of the task. OpenID's Codex and Google's Gemini are not far behind Anthropic as the AI firms race to compete in this lucrative market.

Employees in the software industry are now expecting huge job losses.

I taught computer programming for 35 years. A good programmer needs to understand how computers work, know several computer languages and be fluent in the uses that programs would be needed for. We do not yet know how people may be trained to “describe” what programs should do, nor do we accurately know what types of jobs people can be educated or trained for, although we certainly hear hype about this and the possibilities of AI jobs.



AI companies are in the business of making profit. Trained and educated workers, like all workers, need decent salaries to live on. These two facts already have been on a collision course in legal and paralegal work, as well as among engineers and through the ranks of middle management where positions are in decline. In higher education, we have seen the dearth of jobs for PhDs. Up until now, the inroads made by educational tech applications have been designed, for the most part, to assist faculty in functions like attendance, grading and enhanced note-taking. But as of this writing, we know little about what the big tech firms are developing for higher education. As we have seen, however, from the massive spread of online courses, and from the number of full-time positions available, universities are keenly interested in cutting down on the number of faculty and staff.

This brings us back to the New York State bill LOADing Act (S8831/A9487). One of the provisions in the New York State bill says workers have a right to see the list of AI applications that their public-sector employers have bought. Another states that there should be no layoffs from AI applications, and a third ensures existing bargaining rights to unions.

The challenge for us as a union is to monitor these developments closely and continually. In the past, university management has claimed that software purchasing is a “management prerogative.” The software and specific AI applications or AI components of other packages has a direct affect on our working conditions. General use applications such as Zoom and Microsoft Word now have AI components that can collect information about our meetings and documents. How do we know what add-ons are doing in applications like Brightspace, which is widely used at CUNY?

It will be imperative to monitor all applications in use and to get prior knowledge about forthcoming purchases and leases. This will take a vigilant faculty and staff. Are those still working ready to track these developments? Are we as retirees ready to help?

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– MY TWO CENTS: POINT/COUNTERPOINT –

NYC’s Mayor Zohran Mamdani: An Opening to Democratic Socialism by Peter Ranis

Zohran Mamdani’s victory as mayor of NYC has created an opening: those who advocate for significant societal change in the US can learn lessons from this historic win. It is important to note that NYC’s population is greater than 100 countries in the world, so his accession to municipal power has significant impact within the US. He has, as of this writing, been principled, steadfast and focused on his agenda for change, and I do not expect any revisionism moving forward.

Mamdani is a Muslim African immigrant on his father’s side and a South Asian Hindu on his mother’s side. These identities contribute to the

importance of this election. His energy, charisma and eloquence are undeniable: these attributes are a clear departure in NYC politics, securing for him a platform to initiate a democratic socialist agenda and process. Mamdani was able to mobilize 104,000 volunteers knocking on 3.1 million doors and sending 2.7 million text messages.

Ideologically, he represents a departure from mainstream liberal Democrats in his unapologetic stance for both big government and taxing the wealthy and propertied without the traditional caveats and subservience to capitalist interests and guardrails. He has spoken movingly of replacing “rugged individualism” with the warmth of “collectivism” and “solidarity,” the historical watchwords of socialism and labor unions. As a democratic socialist, Mamdani acknowledges that for every majoritarian-based policy initiative, there will be conservative minoritarian resistance. In that awareness, he has pursued this working class agenda while avoiding commentary that baits the power elite.

As a democratic socialist with his theme of “affordability,” now iconic, Mamdani advances socio-economic development over divisive ideology. His focus is on the working class of NYC, perhaps 90% of the population, and what Marx referred to as the petty bourgeoisie, the small shop keepers and vendors. They are not the enemies of the working class and have overlapping interests against big capital. Mamdani, since his populist campaign and victory, has given voice and the right of expression to those who are not wealthy. He is a natural champion of DEI, not only because of his background but by the selection of his multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-gender deputy mayors, commissioners and other mayoral appointees.

A unique politician

Mamdani is unique as a politician. He doesn't just talk the talk, he walks the walk for societal change. He joined the picket line supporting the NYSNA hospital nurses' strike, which has confronted the corporate-run private mega hospitals in NYC. He supports the PSC's “New Deal for CUNY” (free tuition and increased staffing) and defended the “fired four” adjunct professors at PSC demonstrations. He has supported UAW workers at Mercedes-Benz, Columbia University,



Mamdani in Albany speaking on the importance of a New Deal for CUNY at Higher Education Action Day February 28, 2024

and Starbucks and participated in a hunger strike for medallion taxi driver debt relief. He has advocated for a minimum wage of \$30 an hour by 2030. And he has been physically present addressing the dangers of hypothermia, the plight of the homeless, and supporting the sanitation workers responsible for snow removal and refuse collection during the recent NYC storms. He has truly been a man for all seasons for those struggling amidst NYC's challenges.

Mamdani has had the moral and ethical courage to oppose Israel as a Jewish state rather than a democratic state and revoked former Mayor Adams' prohibition on the right to support Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions in NYC. He called for abolishing ICE and is on record in favor of eliminating property tax exemptions for Columbia and NYU that would free up millions of dollars to support CUNY. Mamdani, via the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, has supported grocery and meal delivery workers in their fight for a minimum wage of \$21 dollars an hour and clear app tipping options and controls at employer checkouts on platforms such as Instacart, DoorDash, Uber, and Lyft. These actions would benefit 80,000 New York food deliverers, mostly Latin American, West African and South Asian men on e-bikes. He has instituted consumer protections against "junk fees" implemented by resorts, hospitality services, concerts, sports arenas and gyms. He has also advocated for fair ticket pricing for the upcoming World Cup.

Mamdani recognizes that NYC is the economic engine of NYS in that 54.5% of its tax revenue goes to Albany while the return to NYC is only 40.5%. In this context, he has joined the call for the State to raise taxes by 2% on incomes over \$1 million and increase the corporate tax rate from 7.25% to 11.5%, comparable to the corporate tax rate in New Jersey.

Issues of critical importance

The ultra left in NYC and elsewhere have focused on what they consider Mamdani's reformist agenda. They underestimate the critical importance of childcare, low-cost transportation and housing (via a rent freeze), food security and infrastructure initiatives, all proposals that challenge capitalist values and interests. The ultra-left sees elections as a fool's errand, but Mamdani's victory demonstrates that an election has consequences. Democratic Socialists are not so naive as to expect to achieve political power in the short term. However, authentic democracy will push liberal capitalism to address the sectors of the population that Mamdani champions: the poorly housed, poorly educated and poorly fed, precarious workers and immigrants. He is a candle in an increasingly dark world of

rampant fascistic neoliberalism at home, weakening social democracies in Europe and authoritarianism in the East and West.

I believe Mamdani has had an impact on receptive Democrats and Independents. Success will require the use of available laws and new initiatives, which Mamdani has already announced and promoted, combined with the original vigilance and pressure of his working-class supporters who carried him to victory. A built-in absolute majority already exists: labor unions, community organizations, tenant groups, faith-based alliances, and unorganized workers, including construction workers, hotel employees, bank employees, food delivery workers, Uber and Lyft employees.

Mamdani's means and aims are both justified as he uses existing laws to gain strength for democratic socialism at each stage of his initiatives. In that process, important potential allies are the NYS Assembly, which has a two-thirds Democratic Party majority, and the Senate, which is just one vote short of that absolute majority. This gives the legislature the capacity to override Governor Hochul's more centrist views on key issues that impact NYC. Moreover, the NYC Council has an absolute majority of 45 of 51 seats. Thus, being a pragmatic instrumentalist and a committed democratic socialist are not contradictory. Mamdani embodies democratic socialist attempts to tug at capitalism's weakest link: that it does not address the working-class response to NYC's race and class disparity.

It is my belief that, given the numerous progressive candidates emerging in 2026 in New York and elsewhere in US state and congressional districts, Mamdani has shown the Democratic Party that to move left and represent the working class is both ethical and politically rewarding. Bernie Sanders, an outspoken senator, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a powerful congresswoman, are now joined by Zohran Mamdani with executive powers in the United States' largest metropolis.



– WHAT 'CHA UP TO NOW? –

With this issue, the editors are introducing a new column featuring some of the interesting activities and experiences in which members are presently engaged in their retirement. We encourage submissions to retirees@pscmail.org.

Women's Connection: Make New Friends in Retirement

by Leslie Galman

Retirement gives us things we've all earned: time to slow down, follow our interests, and set our own schedules. But for many PSC/CUNY retirees, it also brings a change that we may not have anticipated—the loss of everyday social connection. For me, work provided regular conversation, shared routines, and relationships built over years. When that ended, despite my busy life and strong family ties, I found myself missing simple things: talking with peers, laughing and learning together, and feeling part of a community.

That's when a friend recommended **Women's Connection**.

Women's Connection is a national, nonprofit, membership-based organization created to help women form **new friendships and social connections** in midlife and retirement. Women's Connection chapters bring together women who are looking for the same things: companionship, conversation, and community. What makes Women's Connection feel different is that members aren't showing up with established friend groups or inside circles. Many are newly retired, new to the city, or simply ready to meet new people. That shared openness makes it easier to start conversations and build relationships without awkwardness or pressure. Women's Connection also understands that making new friends later in life can feel intimidating. Walking into a room where you don't know anyone takes courage. The organization is intentional about being welcoming and inclusive. New members are greeted, introduced, and encouraged to participate at their own pace. Many women say they felt comfortable after just one or two events.



One of the most popular aspects of Women's Connection is its **small, interest-based groups**. These groups focus on shared interests like literature, theater, history, wellness, current events, or simply exploring the city together. Because they meet regularly, it's easy to get to know people and feel comfortable quickly. For many members, these

smaller circles become the heart of their experience and an important part of their routine.

The **New York City Chapter** offers a wide variety of activities—book and film discussions, lectures, cultural outings, museum visits, walking groups, shared meals, travel opportunities, and volunteer projects. Members can easily start new groups that reflect their own skills and passions. But what members talk about most isn't the activity itself—it's the people they meet along the way. A museum visit turns into coffee afterward. A discussion group becomes a regular social touchstone. Over time, familiar faces become friends.



The chapter is shaped by its members. Programs are member-driven, reflecting the interests and ideas of the women who participate. Some members enjoy attending events occasionally, while others become more involved over time. There's no expectation to do it all—just the invitation to join in when something sparks your interest.

For PSC/CUNY retirees, this often feels like a natural fit. So much of our professional lives revolved around collaboration, discussion, and shared values. Women's Connection reflects those same principles, creating a welcoming space where curiosity, respect, and mutual support are part of the culture.

For me, Women's Connection isn't about staying busy or filling empty hours. It's about **building friendships**—the kind that make everyday life more enjoyable and connected. It has offered me a way to replace the social rhythms of work with something new, supportive, and sustaining. I learned that retirement doesn't have to mean stepping back from community. It can be a chance to create it again, in a new way. Women's Connection offers that opportunity: a friendly place to meet people, make friends, and feel connected in this next chapter of life.

How to learn more and join

If you're curious about Women's Connection, visit nyc@womenconnecting.org to learn more about the national organization and the New York Chapter. Or join Darla Hastings, our executive director, for a monthly online chat about what you can expect when you join our amazing community of women. Annual membership dues are \$190, which

supports programming and chapter activities. The website lists membership information and upcoming events, as well as current interest-based groups.



**Worker-to-worker Organizing for the 21st Century:
The Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee**
by Debra Bergen

Editor's note: *Debra Bergen was Director of Contract Administration at the Professional Staff Congress and is now a member of our Retirees Chapter.*

I volunteered with The Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee (EWOC) in November 2022 after watching a video in which Chris Smalls, co-founder and former president of the Amazon Labor Union was being interviewed by Eric Blanc, author of *We Are the*



Union: How Worker-to-worker Organizing is Revitalizing the Labor Movement, a book which describes the organizing strategies employed by EWOC. Smalls talked about how EWOC supported Amazon's organizing campaign on Staten Island. In his book, Blanc writes about worker-to-worker organizing in which union staff play a minimal role. After retiring from the PSC/CUNY in 2018, I was ready to jump back into union organizing and was excited by the Amazon campaign.

While workers' rights are under attack under the Trump administration, union organizing around the country by all kinds of workers, coffee shop baristas, movie theater ushers, bakery workers, professional dancers, art gallery workers, nurses and full- and part-time faculty is increasing.

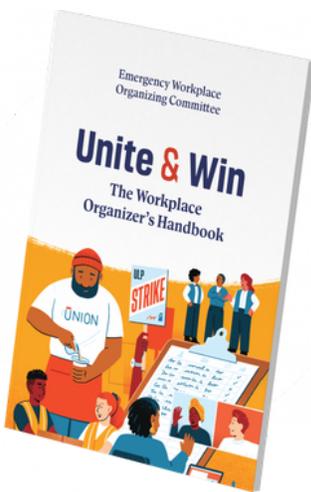
According to a report issued by the Economic Policy Institute, in 2025 the number of workers represented by a union increased by 463,000 to 16.5 million, the highest level recorded in 16 years! (Celine McNicholas, Margaret Poydock and Heidi Shierholz, *Economic Policy Institute Report*, February 18, 2026). In these times of repression, workers are organizing around the country and successfully winning union elections!

Through my involvement with EWOC, I have been inspired by this increase in unionization, especially by a cadre of young workers. EWOC originated in 2020 during COVID, as a national volunteer project of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America and the Democratic

Socialists of America to address the needs of essential workers across the country and to assist workers in organizing for improvements in health and safety conditions at work. EWOC developed a system of volunteer organizers that included experienced veteran union organizers partnering with workers with little or no experience organizing to form independent unions or take workplace actions.

A new approach

Since 2020, EWOC has hired a small national staff that works with volunteer organizers around the country. The national staff coordinates training, communications and strategic organizing efforts. Daphne Their, EWOC's director of organizing, serves on the national staff of EWOC supervising staff organizers and overseeing New York City's local activities.



EWOC'S approach to organizing, called “pre-majority unionism” is defined in EWOC's Workplace Organizer's Handbook, “Unite and Win,” as a union model in which workers organize and act like a union, sometimes even collecting dues—even though they have not filed with the National Labor Relations Board. The handbook goes into every phase of an organizing campaign such as developing an organizing committee, having organizing conversations, identifying issues,

building towards taking collective action and seeking union representation in whatever union these workers decide is appropriate for them and their workplaces.

This organizing model is based on worker-to-worker organizing initiated by the workers themselves with no union or union staff involved. EWOC relies on volunteer organizers to assist workers in building an independent union campaign. The volunteers meet with workers who have contacted EWOC and provide guidance, identifying issues of importance, developing leadership skills through training in organizing conversations, and mapping and charting their workplaces.

EWOC's current national focus is to support the building of democratic structures within workplaces for strong union campaigns, according to Their. In addition, EWOC supports locals around the country. As volunteers join the organization, they can become active in their EWOC local. There have been over a dozen ICE-related organizing campaigns that have received support in Minneapolis, St. Paul. In 2025, EWOC assisted in 992

campaigns with 163 making connections with unions or taking workplace action. While local groups exist for in-person actions, much of EWOC's work is conducted by 400 active volunteers operating virtually. There are currently over 40 EWOC locals throughout the country.

The NYC Local

The EWOC NY local is a hybrid structure connected to national EWOC but also autonomous. The local provides organizing support through a volunteer mentoring structure for workers from any industry at any stage of organizing and works to support them in building workplace power. EWOC has worked with a number of successful union campaigns, including the Vital Climbing Gym, Barboncino Workers United, Tutor Associates, Hex and Co, the New York Live Arts Union, coffee and gaming unions.

The local provides a four-part training for organizers in the fundamentals of workplace organizing called “Connecting with Co-workers,” and on a monthly basis, the local conducts “Workers’ Circles” that provide an opportunity for workers organizing their workplaces to share experiences and learn from each other. In addition, the local holds socials for volunteers and organizers to help build a community of new labor organizing.

The local also runs a joint reading group with the New York State Labor History Association (NYLHA). I initiated the reading group as a member of both NYLHA and EWOC with Harry August from EWOC. It is chaired by two people from the NYHLA and two from EWOC. The reading group provides an excellent opportunity for cross-generational discussions on unions and labor history.

Jason Malone, co-coordinator of the local, came to EWOC from tenant organizing after getting involved with the NYS DSA labor branch. Jason co-coordinated a host panel event with the Rank-and-File project about organizing at the workplace, conducting “How to Organize Your Workplace” training, and together with other volunteer organizers taught over a dozen workers how to develop their union drive. The local also conducted a joint training with the Break the Chain campaign, teaching workers how to organize around Palestine at the workplace. The local worked on over 80 campaigns in 2025 and assisted in nine campaigns that obtained recognition and were handed over to a union.

Looking towards the future under Mayor Mamdani, Jason would like to increase the local’s visibility in the trade union movement in New York City. He envisions the local partnering with unions and other worker organizations while continuing to conduct workplace organizing training and

even breaking into sectors where EWOC has not yet been involved.

Volunteering is empowering

Volunteering at EWOC provides both inter-generational and cross-generational training for organizers. Experienced volunteers serve as “advanced organizers” and mentors to less experienced volunteers. Together, the team mentors those working on job actions.

I have mentored two successful organizing campaigns, one at Hex and Co. and the other at New York Live Arts. In both campaigns as an advanced organizer, I mentored less experienced organizers, Harry G.W. August (Hex and Co.) and the lead worker on the Organizing Committee at New York Live Arts Union, Artie Ticknor, House Manager.

Harry August, a staff organizer with Northeast Nurses Association, volunteered with EWOC as a beginner organizer. We worked on the campaign for Hex & Co. training and supporting the organizing committee and developing leadership. While Harry did much of the day-to-day communications and follow-up



Hex Workers United

needed to support the workers, I led meetings that involved educating different groups of workers about their rights. When I asked Harry what drew him to volunteer with EWOC, he said that he had been disappointed by the staff-led approach to organizing he experienced and was drawn to EWOC’s model of workers leading their own campaigns with volunteer support as a much more exciting, innovative and successful model.

When asked about what benefits he derived from the EWOC organizer mentoring structure, Harry responded that while he attended training and read labor books, he found organizing to be a skill that is best learned by working alongside someone with years of experience. He said, “EWOC gave me exactly that in my advanced organizer and mentor, a person to plan and attend meetings with, discuss campaign next steps and debrief hard conversations. But I was also gaining so much more: a person with decades of experience in our movement who I could lean on as I find my own way at EWOC, at work in unions, and in our increasingly messed up world.”

Artie Ticknor contacted EWOC because they wanted help building a union at New York Live Arts, a dance company in Manhattan. Artie had some

experience organizing as a part of the union campaign at Vital Climbing Gym where they had been an instructor. They reached out to EWOC, and I was assigned as the organizer along with Harry August. When I asked Artie what was so beneficial about the worker-to-worker approach and EWOC's assistance in the organizing campaign, they said that just having someone to check in with for accountability and support was helpful. They said "I think it helped us problem-solve and make deeper connections with each other as workers." They continued, "And I think in this era where everything is under attack, it's like the most important thing to fall back on."

Looking ahead

What does 2026 hold in store for the EWOC NY local? I recently met with one of the new EWOC NY Co-Chairs, Abbie Harper. Abbie is a graduate student at CUNYSLU. She came to EWOC through her experience in organizing her workplace as an educator with EWOC's assistance. We discussed the local's vision for the future and plans for training and worker support. To that end, she emphasized the need to create "a regenerative volunteer" experience based on the knowledge and skills that experienced union organizer volunteers can share with young workers and less experienced volunteers.

Abbie explained that among the goals for Spring 2026, the local seeks to promote Workers' Circles among workers in campaigns, expand training and partnerships with unions and affinity groups and promote ICE preparedness training. The local sees opportunities now to work with Mayor Mamdani's administration on ICE preparedness and enhance its work with protecting and expanding workers' legal protections and rights. Currently the local has 373 active organizing campaigns.

EWOC's organizing approach to building worker power from the bottom up, empowering workers to build their own unions and strengthen established unions is much needed today. Their mission is to support any worker, in any industry, to connect with their co-workers and win lasting change in their workplace.

You never know where life will take you. After 40 years in the labor movement as a labor educator, organizer, administrator and negotiator, I feel like I have come full circle. EWOC's worker-to-worker organizing strategies are very similar to the organizing approaches I had taken as an organizer in the 1980s organizing office workers in NYC with 9 to 5. This group helps support workers organizing for recognition and power in the workplace absent an established union. Once you have organized your co-

workers, you have your union!

There are many volunteer opportunities at EWOC for those in the PSC Retirees Chapter with organizing, legal, negotiating and union leadership experience. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities with EWOC click here: <https://workerorganizing.org>



– WHAT'D I MISS? CHAPTER MEETING RECAP –

To Eat or Not To Eat: Retirees Chapter January Luncheon by Diane Menna

The Retirees Chapter held its January luncheon on Monday, January 12 at John Jay College. As usual the room was abuzz with exclamations and salutations as long-time friends and acquaintances greeted each other again. Meeting in the flesh in this post-Covid age is always a rejuvenating experience. Popping up from her new sporty rollator, Marcia Newfield welcomed the participants with her usual aplomb kicking off the event by introducing the first speaker, Jen Gaboury, PSC first vice-president, who spoke about recent PSC meetings with Mayor Mamdani and his staff. As you probably know, the PSC was one of only two unions that endorsed Mamdani before the primaries last year. Now the PSC has been working very closely with the newly installed Mayor to realize some of the progressive initiatives articulated during the campaign.

The first anecdote Jen reported involved a recent meeting with the Mayor and his staff. After identifying one or two major “asks” regarding CUNY and higher ed, to her surprise and delight, the Mayor and his staff responded, “okay, what else?” This was unprecedented in her considerable political experience.

Another positive prospect was the fact that at the end of the Adams administration, there were two or three open seats on the CUNY Board of Trustees which had been open for the latter part of the Adams Administration. The PSC Legislative Committee had their fingers crossed that he would not fill them before his term ended. Now, the Mamdani Administration will be able to appoint these board members. Although she cheekily would not provide us with names of who the PSC leadership might recommend to the Mamdani people, she did say the candidates should finally be people with higher education credentials and not the usual feckless politicians.

Supporting our immigrant community

While we all waited impatiently for our entrees to be served, Marcia introduced Andrea Vásquez, PSC secretary, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on PSC efforts this year to provide support to our immigrant students and fellow New Yorkers in the face of relentless harassment and aggressive (even lethal) tactics by Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) agents under the Trump Administration. Images flashed across the screen of PSC members with bright red signs saying “Education Not Deportation” at large general demonstrations across the City along with pictures of other unions and activists and plain old everyday New York citizens who decided they had had enough. We saw PSC faculty and staff bearing witness and providing moral support and legal information to immigrants at Federal Court in lower Manhattan who show up for hearings on their asylum cases.



**Court
Support
Every
Friday**

How can I get involved?

When this writer circulated around the tables of still unfed retirees to ask them how they envision themselves being active in the coming months, responses reflected how they were inspired by the speakers. Many said they saw themselves joining the court watchers in support of the immigrants. One retiree wanted to use her multilingual skills as a translator. Another retiree said she was herself an immigrant and former CUNY student as well as an employee and wanted to pay it forward. Some planned to write their legislators, go to Albany on lobby day, work with the Mamdani campaigns, work to pass the New York State Health Act, participate in Environmental Justice Actions, and join the Anti-racism Committee.

Environmental Justice Working Group

While we waited for the utensils to be distributed so we could eat our entrees, Eileen Moran spoke briefly about the work of the Environmental Justice Working Group and their efforts. Eileen began by reminding us that the nurses are on strike and have a picket line across the street in front of Mount Sinai, encouraging us to join the picket line on our way back to the subway station.

Focusing on the work of the Environmental Justice Working Group this year, Eileen reported that along with coalition partners like Public Power NY, the group has effectively passed strong climate bills to transition from fossil fuels to greener, renewable energy. Governor Hochul signed those bills and now does everything she can to block implementation. There is no funding in her budget, and she delays and delays the steps her administration needs to take if NYS is to meet its targets for 2030 and 2040.

Looking forward, Eileen explained that the group is working closely with ALIGN to decarbonize public schools. The Green Health Schools (GHS) project has been on labor's agenda for years but was ignored by former Mayor Adams. Now, in Mayor Mamdani's administration, they expect to see progress. She asked us to please join them in these efforts. While the early focus will be adding renewable energy where it's feasible, the decarbonization in many cases will be using heat pumps for heating and cooling as more efficient and cheaper ways to decarbonize schools and reduce the air pollution surrounding them. They hope to add CUNY's community colleges as the GHS advances.



Nancy Romer, Decarbonize CUNY Town Hall by Paul Frangipane

This writer had to leave directly thereafter to attend another event and therefore cannot report whether dessert was ever served. Although we always enjoy these luncheons in no small part due to the engaging speakers and delightful friends and colleagues, we have not been very lucky with the three different caterers so far. So, if anyone knows a good caterer . . .



**NYSUT's Social Justice Initiatives: February 2 Chapter Meeting
by Bonnie Nelson**

At our February 2 chapter meeting, we had the pleasure of meeting **J. Philippe Abraham, NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer**, who coordinates—and spoke to us about—NYSUT’s social justice efforts. When Abraham was elected to NYSUT’s leadership ranks in 2017, he was the first higher education member and the first person of African descent to serve as a statewide officer.



Abraham discovered that there was a demand from members for programming on DEI issues and in 2020 NYSUT launched *Many Threads, One Fabric*, a series of NYSUT and AFT virtual town halls exploring racial justice, diversity and equity issues.

NYSUT has created programming for every month of celebration; e.g., for Hispanic Heritage Month, LGBTQ History Month, Native American Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women’s Herstory Month, and AAPI History Month.

They also run *Sticks and Stones* workshops, focusing on interpersonal bias and harm, which were designed for members by members and have been funded by grants from the NYS legislature. Training is on Zoom or in person and nearly 14,000 members have taken part so far. Abraham suggested that some of the members of our chapter might wish to volunteer to become trainers. NYSUT also does *Safe Zones* training, working with the LGBTQ+ community.

A third area of training is called *Reversing Runaway Inequality*, which connects economics to justice by pointing out how wealth inequality impact schools and workers. Abraham noted that one in five students in New York State is living in poverty. This is not left vs. right, but rather the top 1% vs. everyone else.

Abraham also spoke about the *Social Justice Academy*—a year-long, in-person, member-driven academy about community-building that works through NYSUT locals, tailoring programs and goals to promote social and racial justice within schools, locals and the community.



Other NYSUT social justice initiatives include BIPOC Pathways to build a pipeline of BIPOC leaders through training and mentorships; MoCAA (Members of Color Affinity and Action); and the Justice Conference, held for the first time in 2024.

All of these initiatives are described on the NYSUT Social Justice page nysut.org/socialjustice. Abraham urged anyone who wished to get further involved to contact him at philippe.abraham@nysut.org or the Social Justice Department at socialjustice@nysut.org.

Brooklyn College Hearing Center

Philippe Abraham was followed by **Michael Bergen, the director of the Brooklyn College Speech Language Hearing Center**—a center that is 94-years-old and pre-dates the current Brooklyn College campus! The Center trains audiologists—the doctor of audiology degree is now conferred by Brooklyn College—and provides services to members of the public. Fortunately for us, the BC Speech and Hearing Center is now a member of the Tru-Hearing network, so Welfare Fund members can take advantage of this first-rate academic center to get their hearing tested and be fitted for hearing aids from some of the world’s best hearing aid manufacturers—at little or no cost to them. Those who are interested need to arrange an appointment through Tru-Hearing (see the information on the [Welfare Fund website](#)). Dr. Bergen’s PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded [here](#).

Changes to health insurance

Michael Foley of the Welfare Fund and Debbie Bell, the former Executive Director of the PSC then quickly reviewed health insurance changes that are affecting some Chapter members—those who are retired but are not yet eligible for Medicare (pre-age 65). Some of the questions that have come up so far have to do with changes in the NYC drug plan, which provides certain drugs for active and pre-Medicare retirees. Other than that, most of the confusion for our members seems to be on the part of some providers, who know that the NYC health insurance plan has changed but are not totally sure how that affects retirees. Remember, **if you are over 65 and retired, Medicare is your primary insurance**. Just tell your providers that they should bill Medicare; Medicare will pay their share and send it on to either Emblem SeniorCare (usually) or Anthem (for hospital stays and some procedures).



Debbie Bell also provided a very enlightening brief history of the rise and fall of the NYC Stabilization Fund, which has been in the news recently because of a City Comptroller audit.

The second half of the chapter meeting was recorded (J. Philippe Abraham asked that we not record him) and can be [viewed online](#). Bell's Stabilization Fund explanation appears at the 46:00-minute mark.



– CULTURE CORNER –

Museum Exhibits: April/May 2026

by Marcia Newfield

Spring, what better time for starting something new—or in the case of museums, visiting someplace new.

The New Museum in the Bowery

The only museum devoted to contemporary art is having its new public opening on March 21. The expanded New Museum will be one of the only examples in the world of the combined work of two living Pritzker Prize winners. In 2007, the New Museum opened its first purpose-built, flagship building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects SANAA / Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa. In this new building designed by OMA / Shohei Shigematsu and Rem Koolhaas, the New Museum will continue to make history. The expansion features a new public plaza at the intersection of the Bowery and Prince Street that will host art installations, performances, and gatherings.

New Humans: Memories of the Future (opens March 21)

**OPENING
MARCH 21!**

On March 21, 2026, the New Museum's 60,000-square-foot building expansion will open with the exhibition *New Humans: Memories of the Future*, spanning the entire Museum alongside several major new commissions that will be on long-term view in and around the building.



Rendering of the expanded New Museum at 235 Bowery. Courtesy OMA/
bloomimages.de

This inaugural exhibit will trace a diagonal history of the past one hundred years through the work of more than two hundred international artists, writers, scientists, architects, and filmmakers, highlighting key moments when dramatic technological and societal changes spurred new conceptions of humanity and new visions for its possible futures. The exhibition stretches across history and features artists from more than fifty countries. The wide range of works on view captures individualized responses to moments of sweeping global change. Seen through a contemporary lens, these artists offer proposals that resonate with our contemporary moment but also document dreams of futures that never arrived. As with earlier thematic exhibitions at the New Museum, *New Humans* finds the roots of the present in the layers of the past. In particular, the show highlights the recurrence of collective fears of and aspirations for new technologies as they arrive with the immense potential to shape, or even dominate, human life. *New Humans* establishes a symmetry between the 1920s and the present: The early decades of the twentieth century saw the first appearance of the term “robot” and the rise of automated factory labor, along with the emergence of mechanized warfare and the explosion of new media. All these phenomena are echoed by today’s disruptive diffusion of AI, the brutal efficiency of contemporary warfare, and the myriad apparatuses of misinformation that characterize communication in the digital age.

Highlighting these transhistorical correspondences, the show connects the medical devices invented for soldiers returning injured from World War I to contemporary imaginings of a trans-humanist future, while the image of the “New Man”—and that of the “New Woman”—in the work of the early twentieth-century avant-garde presages the cyborgs and bioengineered bodies imagined by the artists and technologists of today.

The Studio Museum in Harlem

Undertaken as a public-private initiative in partnership with the City of New York, the new 82,000-square-foot building will have enhanced space for exhibitions and educational opportunities. Space for exhibitions and the Museum’s signature Artist-in-Residence program will more than double, and indoor and outdoor public space (including space for educational activities and other programs) will increase by almost seventy percent.

Artists in Residence (through October 2026)

(Connect via the museum's website to stay on top of their events, exhibits, etc.) Derriann Pharr, Simonette Quamina, and Taylor Simmons have been selected as the 2026 participants in the Museum's signature residency in the museum's new Artist in Residence Center. They will enjoy individualized studio space that includes a dedicated lounge for gathering and collaborative ideation. Over the course of the program's duration, from March 15 until October 15, 2026, Pharr, Quamina, and Simmons will also receive institutional and material support; ongoing interaction with members of the Studio Museum community, including curators and Studio Museum Institute and *Expanding the Walls* participants; professional development guidance; a culminating exhibition in one of the museum's galleries; and an exhibition publication.



From Now: A Collection in Context (through August 16, 2026)

A dynamic, shifting installation of thematic exchanges drawn entirely from the Studio Museum in Harlem's collection and installed throughout the building. Featuring a call-and-response of regular rotations of works, the exhibition is organized in sections that will unfold and evolve over the course of the year. Altogether, the installation presents a plurality of voices and explores motifs that have preoccupied artists of African descent across generations. With works from the nineteenth century appearing alongside those of the present, *From Now* demonstrates the myriad ways artworks from disparate times, locations, and genres—and the artists who make them—can be in dialogue. Works that have rarely, if ever, been on view are displayed with those both newly acquired and long synonymous with the institution. The exhibition thus follows in the lineage of past collection shows committed to revealing the many



perspectives, identities, and forms of artmaking by Black artists. Although the Studio Museum was initially founded in 1968 as a non-collecting institution, their community of artists quickly recognized the need for the museum to collect, steward, and preserve the work of Black artists. The collection now comprises thousands of objects made by over eight hundred artists working across all media, attesting to the vitality of Black culture and the significance of the museum's mission. From Now is a tribute to these early, monumental efforts to establish and build a collection. Though only a fraction of works in their collection will be on view, the exhibition is also an invitation for current and future engagement with the living history and limitless possibilities of works by artists of African descent.

New York Historical

Old Masters, New Amsterdam (through August 30, 2026)

Exactly 400 years ago, the Dutch founded the city of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island. In Europe, at that same time they were revolutionizing art, with Rembrandt and his contemporaries turning a keen eye to the world around them. This first-of-its-kind exhibition uses their paintings to help us envision life in the little Dutch settlement that would become New York. With works by Rembrandt van Rijn, Frans Hals, and Jan Steen, many of them never before shown in New York, the exhibition will dazzle and delight viewers. Let the Old Masters introduce you to New Amsterdam.

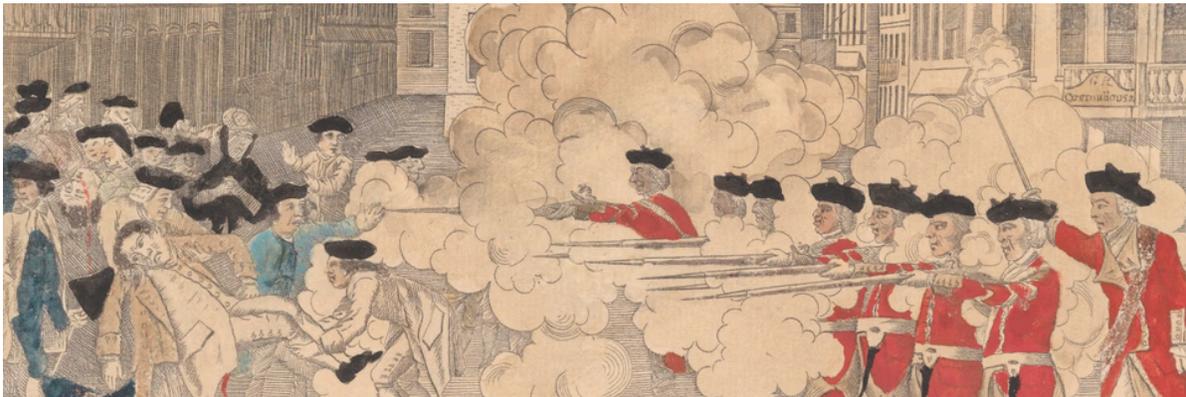


Accompanying the exhibition is a digital reimagining of the 1660 Castello Plan of New Amsterdam. Created in partnership with the New Amsterdam History Center, this interactive map lets visitors explore sites in the 17th century city, including a house where enslaved Africans lived, the original City Hall, and the Indian Trading House.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Revolution! (through August 20, 2026)

This special installation marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the founding document of the United States of America. Featured works offer a wide view of the roots, course, and aftermath of the Revolutionary War (1775–1783)—from early conflicts between colonists and Indigenous peoples to George Washington’s voluntary retirement in 1797 from his two-term presidency. Rarely seen prints reveal the transatlantic circulation of news about the struggle for independence during a fractious political period. This window into the era’s print culture highlights the global dimensions of the rebellion and contested ideas.



Raphael: Sublime Poetry (through June 28, 2026)

Dive into the artistic process of one of history’s most beloved and influential artists. A true titan of the Italian Renaissance, Raffaello di Giovanni Santi (1483–1520)—better known as Raphael—matched ambition with lyricism to create works with both intellectual heft and emotional depth, a necessary skill in the complex political landscape of Renaissance courts. In his short life of only 37 years, he achieved such profound success as a painter, designer, and architect that he was regarded as the pinnacle of artistic perfection for centuries after his death. Raphael: Sublime Poetry is the first comprehensive exhibition on Raphael in the United States, bringing together more than 200 of the artist’s greatest masterpieces and rarely seen treasures to illuminate the brilliance of Raphael’s extraordinary creativity. The son of a painter and poet, Raphael engaged with the foremost writers and thinkers of his age in Rome, displaying a poetic sensibility that captivated his peers and generations that followed. Follow the full breadth of his life and career, from his origins in Urbino to his rise in Florence, where he began to emerge as a peer of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, to his final, prolific decade at the papal court in Rome. To underscore the range of his genius, this presentation brings together important drawings, paintings, and tapestries from public and private



collections across Europe and the United States, many of which have never been shown together. With particular attention to Raphael's portrayal of women—from his use of nude female models for the first time in Western art to his tender depictions of the Madonna and Child—and recent scientific discoveries made using state-of-the-art technology, this exhibition offers a rare opportunity to experience the genius of an artist who helped shape the course of art history.



Reflecting
by Joan Greenbaum

On this day of Greenland über alles
with ICE raids on the blood splashed snows of Minneapolis
winter white coating the frozen north
bare branches vying for a battered blue sky
my soul escapes this encapsulated body

and dissolves in Monet's water lilies
splashes of lavender and peach float
reflecting sky and roots
solitary quiet envelopes and
calls one to stillness



Water Lilies by Claude Monet, 1919

away from this embattled world
of shattered dreams, a lifetime of struggle
back to the black leather bench my mother left me on
in MOMA with my legs swinging over the side
A tired 9-year-old, in the time of McCarthy's witch hunt.

(special inspiration from Robert Hayden's *Monet's Lilies*)



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, April 6, 2026 — 1:00 PM
MONDAY, May 4, 2026 — 1:00 PM



The *Turning The Page* editorial committee for this April/May 2026 issue is made up of Diane Menna, Marianne Pita, David Kotelchuck, and Joan Greenbaum. Graphic design by Amanda Magalhaes.



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