



August 2014 Issue 1
Academic Year 2014-2015

**RETIREES
NEWSLETTER**

Professional Staff Congress
Jack Judd, Editor
psc-cuny.org/retirees

I. SEPTEMBER CHAPTER MEETING. Our first monthly meeting will be on Monday, September 8, at 1 PM, in the PSC Union Hall, 16th floor, 61 Broadway.

PSC President **Barbara Bowen will report on “The State of the Union.”** We’ll also touch on two upcoming events of particular interest to PSC members: (1) the **September 9 primary election** to choose Democratic candidates for governor and the state legislature, and (2) the **People’s Climate March** on Sunday, September 21 (the week of the UN Climate Summit in NYC). We’re mobilizing a contingent of retirees to march with the PSC at the People’s Climate March.

The chapter Executive Committee will meet at 61 Broadway from 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM in the Justice Room on the 15th floor. Anyone interested is invited to attend.

II. FALL PROGRAMS

September 8: State of the Union
Speaker: PSC President Barbara Bowen.

October 6: Environmental Politics: What’s Next? Experts and advocates drawn from the CUNY community will assess the state of the environmental movement in the wake of the People’s Climate March. Speakers: TBA.

November 3: How Single-Payer Advocates Should Approach the Affordable Care Act. Forum and debate. Speakers: Dr. Oliver Fein, president of Physicians for a National Health Program and professor of clinical public health at Cornell University; a second speaker TBA.



December 1: The CUNY Digital History Project. Speakers: Steve Brier and Andrea Vasquez (CUNY Graduate Center).

III. CUNY's NEW CHANCELLOR

Newly appointed as chancellor of the City University of New York, James B. Milliken attended the PSC Retirees Chapter luncheon on June 9. He was introduced to the retirees by PSC President Barbara Bowen, who pointed out that no previous chancellor had sought to attend a retiree affair. Milliken spoke about his career at the University of Nebraska and his interaction with the retirees from that institution. Chancellor Milliken acknowledged the thousands of years of service to CUNY represented in the Retirees Chapter during his speech and said he envisioned closer contact with retirees.

REPORT ON JUNE LUNCHEON.

MEMORIES OF CONFLICT AND PROTEST. For many retirees who were in service at CUNY during the late 1960s and 1970s, the commentary of Penny Lewis (Professor at CUNY's Murphy Institute) at the Chapter's June luncheon activated vivid memories of that contentious era. Vice-Chairman Joel Berger provided this brief summary of her remarks:

In the popular memory of the Vietnam Era, the coalition of academics, professionals and college students in opposition to the war is usually contrasted with support for the conflict by most labor unions and blue collar workers. With "our memory structured by the media," Penny Lewis believes that the perception of the national debate over the Vietnam War as a struggle between the "good workers of

America and elite intellectuals" is not based upon facts.



Vietnam era anti-war buttons

In her book, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement as Myth and Memory*, rather than this conventional picture of class polarization in the anti-war movement, Lewis presented a more nuanced view of its cross-class nature, as well as its tensions. She documents working-class movements in opposition to the war, resistance among working-class soldiers in the army, and the efforts of Vietnam vets against the war. By the end of the war, according to a Gallup poll, working-class opposition to the war was greater than that of any other sector of American society.

Given that, for most retirees in the room, the anti-war movement was "lived history," there was lively and informed discussion after the presentation – and high praise for Lewis' work.

IV. PSC MOURNS THE LOSS OF FORMER CHAPTER CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE J. KAPLAN

Larry Kaplan, chairman of the PSC Retirees Chapter from 1992-2001, died Aug. 5 at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset. He was 98. Kaplan held degrees in economics from Brooklyn College and Columbia University, was a decorated member of General George S. Patton's Sixth Armored Division in WWII, and served as an economist for New York City before he joined the faculty of John Jay in 1965. He retired in 1986 and spent the next 15 years building the strength and the reach of the PSC Retirees Chapter. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Jeanne, his three children, Harriot, Sandford and Marcia, and his seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. A full obituary will appear in *Clarion*.

V. ANNOUNCED CHANGES BY SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION



The Social Security Administration (SSA) is promoting use of its web-based services, and reducing face-to-face services. Many local SSA offices have closed, including these in NYS: Amherst (closed 3/28/14), Astoria (closed 12/10/12), Bronx

(closed 3/28/14), Chinatown Manhattan (closed 4/20/12), Brooklyn/East NY (closed 3/9/12), Glendale/Rego Park (closed 7/15/11), Grand Central/NYC Midtown (closed 12/9/13), Kingston (closed 3/28/14), Long Beach (closed 2/10/12) Mount Vernon (closed 9/23/11), Rome (closed 4/27/12), and Williamsburg (closed 3/10/14).

No More Social Security Number Printouts

As of August 1, 2014, SSA offices that remain open are no longer issuing Social Security number printouts to those who don't have their Social Security cards. If you need official evidence of your Social Security number, you must now apply for a mailed replacement card instead. Beginning on October 1, 2014, people who receive Social Security benefits of any kind -- including Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments -- will be unable to obtain a letter explaining their benefits directly from their local Social Security office.

On-Line Services

Proof of Social Security and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is available to most beneficiaries by registering for their personal MY Social Security account online at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount, or by calling the national, toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213.

Medicare Part B Reimbursement for 2013 in the Mail

New York City currently reimburses retirees for their monthly premium for Medicare Part B, as well for their eligible dependents' premiums on Medicare Part B. Medicare Part B reimbursement checks are generally issued once a year, in the year following your Medicare Part B eligibility. The standard reimbursement check amount for Calendar Year 2013 is \$104.90 per person per month. Recipients should receive checks this month. The checks were mailed beginning in August.

You must be receiving a City pension check and be enrolled as the contract holder for City health benefits in order to receive reimbursement for Part B premiums. For most retirees, the refund is issued automatically by the Health Benefits Program. If you haven't received your check, you must wait until the first week of October and then write to the Health Benefits Program, 40 Rector Street, Attn: Medicare Unit, New York, NY 10006. Include your Social Security number, current address, telephone number, and a copy of your Medicare card. The investigation process takes 6-8 weeks. The Health Benefits Program's phone number is (212) 513-0470.

Retirees with Incomes above \$85K May Be Eligible for Additional Reimbursements

Federal law requires Medicare beneficiaries with incomes above

\$85,000 to pay progressively higher monthly premiums above the \$104.90 basic rate. The required additional premium is called the Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA). If you paid more than the \$104.90 basic monthly rate for Medicare Part B in 2013, you may be eligible for additional reimbursement. For the reimbursement claim form and instructions, see this URL on the NYC Office of Labor Relations web page:

www.nyc.gov/html/olr/downloads/pdf/healthb/irmaa_2013.pdf

If you don't have a computer, you may contact the Health Benefits Program, in writing only, at Health Benefits Program, 40 Rector Street, Attn: IRMAA, New York, NY 10006.

VI. PEOPLE'S CLIMATE MARCH, SUNDAY, SEPT. 21. BE THERE!



The Retirees Chapter will be in the house, energized and committed, joining many generations at the People's Climate March, 11:30 AM Sunday, September 21. The PSC is one of more than 750 labor, environmental, community, faith-based, grassroots and NGO organizations sponsoring and building the march. It may be the largest climate event in history.

An Invitation to Change Everything

On its website (peoplesclimate.org), the People's Climate March makes a bold call:

In September, heads of state are going to New York City for a historic summit on climate change. With our future on the line, we will take a weekend and use it to bend the course of history.

In New York City there will be an unprecedented climate mobilization – in size, beauty, and impact. Our demand is a world we know is within our reach: a world with an economy that works for people and the planet. In short, a world safe from the ravages of climate change.

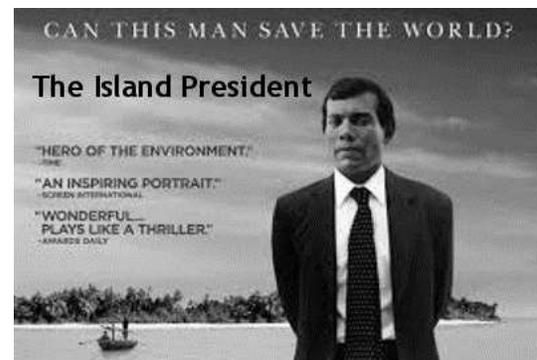
March organizers have negotiated a parade route with the NYPD that will begin at Columbus Circle, move through Times Square and finish at 11th Avenue and 34th Street, next to the Javits Center. A gathering point for labor and the PSC has yet to be determined, but will probably be north of Columbus Circle somewhere in the low Sixties (location to be posted on the PSC website).

We Need Everyone

March with the PSC and CUNY! And urge your colleagues, friends, and family to join you! Failure to address the climate crisis will have devastating consequences for ourselves, our families, our children and grandchildren, and the students we nourished and taught, let alone our planet.

For updates, resources, a gathering point for PSC marchers and to RSVP, go to psc-cuny.org/ClimateMarch.

VII. LABOR GOES TO THE MOVIES PRESENTS *THE ISLAND PRESIDENT*—SEPT. 19



This year's Labor Goes to the Movies film series presents a group of films—documentary and fiction—that take the threat of apocalypse as their premise. The threat of global climate change has given apocalyptic scenarios more mainstream girth, but filmmakers have been documenting and imagining man-made end times for years. The featured films depict nuclear confrontation, resource wars, tampering with ecological balance, or nature's metaphysical revenge. They are meant to stimulate

discussion about options for future actions.

The Island President (2011, US, Jon Shank) documents the efforts of President Mohammed Nasheem of the Maldives, the lowest-lying country on the planet, to slow sea level rise by pushing for the implementation of global CO₂ emissions limits. Shot mostly in 2009 and released in 2012, the film highlights the events in Copenhagen during the U.N. climate summit, with footage shot both inside the negotiations and outside in the streets. The film offers an important look at a largely unknown island nation experiencing the mortal threat of annihilation consequent to global warming.

The screening will take place in the PSC Union Hall on Friday, September 19. Doors open at 6 p.m. A discussion will follow the film. Light refreshments provided.