

DECEMBER 2021



Academic Year 2021-22 No. 3

[psc-cuny.org/retirees.org](http://psc-cuny.org/retirees.org)

## VIRTUAL CHAPTER MEETING MONDAY, DEC 6. 1-3 on ZOOM

A look at the changing political landscape of New York state and NYC in the wake of Governor Andrew Cuomo's resignation and the election for city-wide offices and City Council in the five boroughs. What does this mean for CUNY's funding, for the union's next contract, for the "New Deal for CUNY" and for the issues most important to our retirees?

**Speakers:** **Luke Elliot-Negri** -- Chair of the PSC Legislative Committee, **Renee Freeman Butler** -- Coordinator PSC Vote-COPE, **Bettina Damiani** – PSC Legislative Director.

**Retiree Healthcare?** If developments dictate, we will devote the final 45 minutes of the chapter meeting to updates on retiree healthcare as we have done in the last meetings. We will also continue to send out email blasts

with breaking news, so please check your email.

Zoom link for the chapter meeting will be sent out the week before on email as usual. □

## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH RETIREE HEALTHCARE?

[Literally, as we go to press, there is important news to report on decisions made and not made. James Davis, PSC president, sent a letter to all PSC retirees updating where the lawsuit before the court of Judge Leon. E. Frank stands. There are many players, multiple twists and turns and a rather confusing legal landscape. Davis's letter skillfully navigates the confusion, explaining what we know, what we do not know and the many issues that still need to be resolved. His letter, and other key documents can be read at: <https://www.psc-cuny.org/retiree-healthcare-links>]

Lots has happened since the last issue of *Turning the Page*:

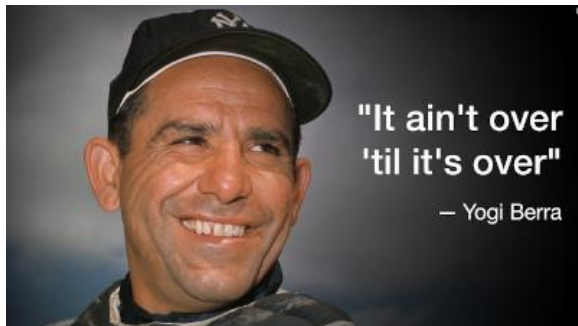


--A front-page story in the *NY Daily News* on October 16<sup>th</sup> in which the next mayor, Eric Adams, characterized the move to Medicare Advantage as “bait and switch.”

**--A judge’s temporary restraining order (TRO) on October 21 that extended indefinitely the enrollment date to opt in or out** of the new NYC Medicare Advantage Plus plan.

**--A hearing by the City Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor** on Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup> notable for aggressive cross-examination by Council members of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the NYC Office of Labor Relations (OLR) and for testimony highly critical of the move of NYC retiree healthcare to Medicare Advantage (including testimony by PSC retirees and PSC President James Davis).

**--A hearing on the Medicare Advantage contract** on November 10<sup>th</sup> that turned into absolute bedlam because it was so poorly run by OLR to the point where speakers could not register to testify and could only be heard by out-shouting others trying to talk.



**“IT AIN’T OVER ‘TILL IT’S OVER”** The quote is from Yogi Berra, baseball hall of fame catcher, whose Yogi-isms can

stand as a surrogate for our own understanding (or is it confusion?) about where we are on retiree healthcare. The move to Medicare Advantage seemed like a done deal – until it wasn’t. But then again, it was Yogi who proclaimed that “It’s déjà vu all over again.” Déjà vu might just be that we end up with the choice we started with – a flawed but premium-free Medicare Advantage plan or traditional Medicare with NYC Senior Care as our secondary insurance, but at a cost of almost \$200 per month. But then again, maybe not.

We will know more once a decision is made in the wake of the TRO by Judge Leon E Frank on the lawsuit brought by the NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees. That decision may have happened by the time this newsletter reaches members.

If, as a result, the Court makes a decision that extends implementation of NYC Medicare Advantage Plus beyond January 1<sup>st</sup>, there will be new decision makers in City Hall, the most prominent of whom will be Eric Adams, the mayor, and Brad Lander, the comptroller. We will need to press both to stop the planned changes to retiree healthcare.

What all of this means is that to take advantage of new opportunities, we must continue to organize; to build on the mobilization of thousands of retirees, who signed petitions, marched, demonstrated, held forums, contributed affidavits and money to a lawsuit and testified at multiple hearings. As the famous labor organizer Mother Jones proclaimed, “Don’t mourn, organize.”

## LINKS AND UPDATES ON WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

**The go-to page for updates** and information is the retiree healthcare web-page at:

<https://www.psc-cuny.org/whats-happening-retiree-healthcare>

We've created an additional page (at

<https://www.psc-cuny.org/retiree-healthcare-links>) just with links to:

**The Court Case:** The article 78 hearing before Judge Leon E. Frank (links to decisions, filings affidavits and a page where you can contribute to the lawsuit brought by the NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees.).

### **The October 28<sup>th</sup> City Council**

**Hearing:** City Council members aggressively cross examined the OLR commissioner and deputy commissioner after they proclaimed that the NYC Medicare Plus Plan was a “win/win for everybody” and scores of retirees testified in protest (links to a video of the hearing and testimony by PSC members.)

### **The November 10<sup>th</sup> OLR Hearing on the Medicare Advantage contract.**

The hearing was organized as a telephone conference call where anyone could press \*6 to unmute, which meant that multiple attendees tried to talk at the same time. An account in the online city journal, *New York Focus*, captured the absurdity of what the Office of Labor Relations (OLR) publicized as a hearing. OLR did not create even a bare bones structure for registering, for testifying and for conducting the hearing in an orderly manner. Even so, over 200 retirees attended but only fifty got to

testify; not one supported the Medicare Advantage plan.

James Davis, president of the PSC, submitted testimony based on a close reading of the document which raised serious questions about lack of accountability in the contract for the vendor. He urged "elected officials of the City to reject the contract because it is significantly flawed. (links to the *NY Focus* article and to the testimony of James Davis).

Davis's November 29<sup>th</sup> letter.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



WEDNESDAY,  
DECEMBER 8  
AT 6:30 PM

BELLE  
ZELLER  
SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAM

Academic Excellence  
Social Commitment

CUNY

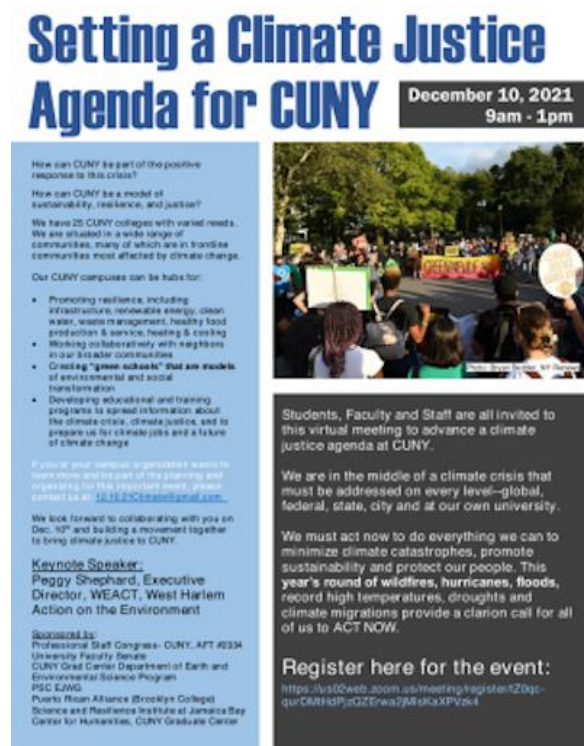
BELLE ZELLER  
Scholarship Trust Fund

2021 Dinner to salute student scholars and to honor friends of CUNY. Click [here](#) for information and tickets.

### **FRIDAY DECEMBER 10, 9AM-1PM CUNY-WIDE MEETING ON CLIMATE JUSTICE.**

"Setting a Climate Justice Agenda for CUNY." Faculty, students, staff and community members are invited with the intention of deepening our work as a union and a university in climate justice. We will have short

presentations but most of our work that day will involve breakout groups to address what CUNY can do to be a model of climate justice action. We will then go into campus-based breakout groups to discuss what faculty, staff and students wish to address and accomplish within their campus groups. We hope to jump-start a climate justice movement on our campuses and in our university and do our part to act on sustainability and climate justice. [Here's the link](#) to the program and [here's the registration link](#)/ Join us and help spread the word!



**Setting a Climate Justice Agenda for CUNY** December 10, 2021 9am - 1pm

How can CUNY be part of the positive response to this crisis?  
How can CUNY be a model of sustainability, resilience, and justice?  
We have 25 CUNY colleges with varied needs. We are situated in a wide range of communities, many of which are in frontline communities most affected by climate change.

Our CUNY campuses can be hubs for:

- Promoting resilience, including infrastructure, renewable energy, clean water, waste management, healthy food production & service, heating & cooling
- Working collaboratively with neighbors in our broader communities
- Creating "green schools" that are models of environmental and social transformation
- Developing educational and training programs to spread information about the climate crisis, climate justice, and to prepare us for climate jobs and a future of climate change

If you or your campus organization wants to be involved and be part of the planning and execution for this important event, please contact us at [CLJ@CUNY.edu](mailto:CLJ@CUNY.edu).

We look forward to collaborating with you on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> and building a movement together to bring climate justice to CUNY.

**Keynote Speaker:**  
Peggy Shepard, Executive Director, WEACT, West Harlem Action on the Environment

**Sponsors:**  
Professional Staff Congress- CUNY APT #234  
University Faculty Senate  
CUNY Grad Center Department of Earth and Environmental Science Program  
PSC LJM  
Puerto Rican Alliance (Brooklyn College)  
Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay  
Center for Humanism, CUNY Graduate Center

Students, Faculty and Staff are all invited to this virtual meeting to advance a climate justice agenda at CUNY.

We are in the middle of a climate crisis that must be addressed on every level—global, federal, state, city and at our own university.

We must act now to do everything we can to minimize climate catastrophes, promote sustainability and protect our people. This year's round of wildfires, hurricanes, floods, record high temperatures, droughts and climate migrations provide a clarion call for all of us to ACT NOW.

**Register here for the event:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91610848200?pwd=QURHdPp0ZDZwa2JMc0xkXVZkLz09>

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 13 5:30 PM  
PSC ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
WORKING GROUP**

This is an ongoing group started by our Retiree chapter. All are welcome.

Contact [nancyromer@gmail.com](mailto:nancyromer@gmail.com) □

**THE MONTH THAT WAS**

**NOVEMBER CHAPTER MEETING: POLICING 2021**

--Eileen Moran, Queens

The issues of policing—functions, funding and reforms—have been front and center at least since the Black Lives Matter movement put it in front of cameras and the press. The heart of the matter has long been felt deeply and painfully in communities of color. Policing is important for labor, especially public service unions. While we at CUNY and other city services faced decades of austerity, the police department budget grew and grew. In NYC the police budget is larger than that of homeless services, public parks, and health and human services combined.

Those who cringe at demands to defund the police acknowledge that police officers' abuse of their power to use deadly force is problematic. "Don't worry we'll fix policing with reforms and better training," they say. But police departments have repeatedly failed to change the institutionalized racism in their organizations while they remain steadfast about keeping their huge budgets.

Retired PSC members were lucky to get three speakers with different experiences on this issue. The panel on **Policing in Our Cities & Its Alternatives** included Alex Vitale, professor of sociology at Brooklyn College; Christina Sparrock, CPA and mental health advocate for Fountain House; and Jawanza Williams of Voices of Community Activists and Leaders (VOCAL-NY).

**Alex Vitale**, well-known author of *End of Policing* (Verso, 2017) began by listing some of the deaths of African Americans at the hands of police, deaths that sparked the Black Lives Matter movement.

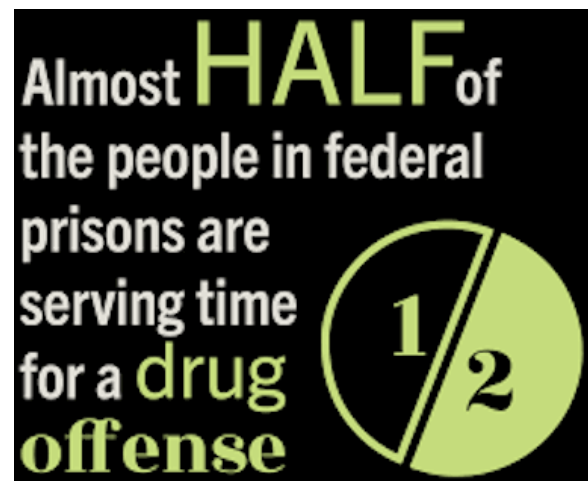
So far, the reforms enacted have not changed police culture or conduct. Because of previous abuse, particularly of Black residents, Minneapolis was under a federal consent order when Derek Chauvin killed George Floyd and the Minneapolis Police Department had implemented all the reform recommendations. Officers had body cameras and training in implicit bias, mindfulness, de-escalating techniques, use of force and the obligation to intervene to stop misconduct by another officer. Alex affirmed, "That's why protestors' signs do not say: We need more body cameras and better training. They say defund the police."

Policing, Alex reminded us, was created as a tool to maintain racial inequality after emancipation in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. While problems in wealthy communities are met with improved resources, in poor and Black and Brown communities, problems of homelessness, drug use, and mental health are often criminalized. Millions of persons have criminal records due to the disproportionate enforcement of drug laws. According to Vitale, the solution is not just anti-bias training but ending the war on drugs, a war which, in spite of public pronouncements, continues in NYC.

Police are expected to deal with homelessness, drug overdoses, and mentally disturbed persons, most of

whom would be better served by health or social services. The State of Oregon successfully decriminalized drug possession, transferring addiction services to public health, resulting in fewer overdoses and communicable diseases -- with no rise in drug use. New York has started to do this with pot but could do much more. Even when studies demonstrate that body cameras do not work as intended, police departments still want to keep them as they are useful in expanding surveillance.

Fifty years of austerity have given us failing schools, mass homelessness and untreated drug and mental health problems. Austerity has defunded CUNY, kept our salaries low with the burden passed to students and others, paying more for declining services.



**Christina Sparrock** spoke passionately based on her association with Fountain House and her personal experience: "I became an advocate with Fountain House after my own bad interaction with the NYPD." She showed how inappropriately and potentially deadly it is to have police respond to a person in mental health crisis. Officers come with

their explicit and implicit biases. Too quickly, someone is labeled “EDP”, an emotionally disturbed person, coloring that interaction and any future contact with NYPD. NYC officers have only an hour of Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), with no input from those who have experienced such crises. Even NYPD’s CIT trainers note that police, arriving with 4 to 6 armed officers, tend to incite rather than defuse the situations. Instead of police, NYC needs prevention and intervention services for mental health in communities that operate 24\7 just as emergency MD services do.

**Jawanza Williams** described Voices of Community Activists and Leaders (VOCAL-NY) as a statewide membership organization to meet the needs of poor Black and Brown communities, focusing on housing insecurity, health issues and ending the war on drugs. According to Jawanza, how does our society justify the oppression and exploitation that accepts political and economic inequality--the haves and have nots? How is that OK? The issue of mass incarceration is inseparable from larger social issues.

From his own large Texas family, he shared stories of cousins disappearing when they were about 15, reappearing in their early 20’s with criminal records for possession or sale of small amounts of drugs. No attention was paid to the economic and political climate that targeted largely poor Black and Brown teens to enforce the war on drugs. “Those millions in jail are not sexual predators, kidnappers, or heads of large corporations that threaten us with extinction but those who used or sold crack.”



A lively Q&A expanded on the ideas presented for better ensuring public safety for all New Yorkers. Members not present on November 1 may now access the meeting from the PSC Retiree Web page.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOiv6Rr7Mxc&t=6394s> □

## **MEMBERS DISCUSS PALESTINE RESOLUTION:**

### **Excerpts From the Four Presentations**

The discussion of the PSC Delegate Assembly resolution about Palestine was reported on in the November newsletter. For a fuller understanding of the divergent views within our Retirees chapter here we give the names and positions of each of the speakers and excerpts from their presentations at the October 20 special meeting on the Palestine Resolution:

**Jonathan Buchsbaum**— *in support of the June 10 resolution:*

“I would emphasize that the original resolution went through all of the proper PSC channels, and no one has questioned the legitimacy of the process or the vote, as far as I know.”

“I believe thinking of members has evolved, with many more than in the past questioning US policies supporting Israel. In particular, some dynamic younger members, especially following the establishment of the new Anti-Racism Committee, see Israel in terms different from what I think many members saw in earlier years. They are making specific connections among today’s Black liberation struggle in the US, the fight for rights of indigenous peoples in the US, and international struggles against colonialism and racism. Israel is no longer a special case, but fits into that analysis, and traditional blanket support for Israel across the political spectrum is no longer the norm. I see that as a positive sign, and one we all should at the very least reflect on, especially as it represents (some) grass roots thinking within our union. Thus, I support broad discussion at the chapter level to hear the debate out and allow democracy to play out in the union.”

**Irwin Yellowitz** – *the resolution should be rescinded:*

“The Resolution of June 10 is one sided and inflammatory. It castigates Israel in the most severe terms, but says not one word about Palestinian actions, for example the firing of thousands of rockets by Hamas into Israel, or the killing of innocent Israeli civilians by Palestinians during the intifadas.”

“The negative effects of the June 10 Resolution reach beyond our own ranks. This action weakens the influence of the PSC with our affiliates – the New York State United Teachers, the American Federation of Teachers, and the American Association of University Professors, and in the larger labor movement.”

“Very few politicians support the sentiments of the June 10 Resolution. They will be less eager to endorse PSC legislative activities when the union is linked to an extreme resolution on Israel-Palestine that can lose a politician vote from other constituents. The Resolution of June 10 will hurt the PSC in both the NYC and NY State arenas. The New Deal for CUNY, and any attempt to modify the Medicare Advantage Plan, will become all the more difficult to achieve.”



**Dave Kotelchuck** – *the resolution should be amended or replaced:*

Before setting a policy in the Delegate Assembly, “we have to determine our own policy through discussion among our members. This is especially important for sensitive issues in which our members have strongly held and sharply divergent views.”

The Palestine resolution of June 10 is a “forthright attack on Israeli policies that tells many of our members that their beliefs in support of Israel are so seriously in error that we no longer wish to work with them in the struggle for social justice for faculty, staff and

students of the City University of New York. Far from building unity against our oppressors in the halls of power, by its inflamed rhetoric, imprecision and omissions it assists CUNY management and our opponents elsewhere in their efforts to divide us and thereby seek to conquer us.”

**Nancy Romer** – *the results of the resolution should be accepted, and we should move on to more pressing union matters.*

“The PSC has attempted to fairly and effectively be a ‘social justice’ union that participates in and takes stands on broader social issues going beyond the immediate concerns of our wages, rights and working conditions.”

However, “many in the PSC are distressed by the vitriol engendered by the June 10 resolution on Israel-Palestine with some members resigning from the union and some threatening to resign. We mourn the disunity that this resolution has evoked and further commit to our shared organizing in our shared interests in the future.”

“The PSC welcomes the opinions of all its members, accepts the fact that we will have deeply held differences on issues aside from the central work of the union and that healthy, respectful debate is always welcomed but that unity as members, as CUNY workers with shared interests, is and will remain the most central dynamic in our work and relationships together.” Therefore, I propose that members of the chapter accept it and move on with more pressing union matters.

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## MEMBERS DISCUSS PALESTINE RESOLUTION:



### A NEWS REPORT From the Discussion

In the special Zoom meeting held on October 20, fifty-seven retiree members discussed and debated the merits and demerits of the resolution passed by the PSC Delegate Assembly on June 10, 2021 entitled “In Support of the Palestinian People.” [https://www.psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/Final\\_Resolution\\_in\\_Support\\_of\\_the\\_Palestinian\\_People.pdf](https://www.psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/Final_Resolution_in_Support_of_the_Palestinian_People.pdf)

Four speakers led off the meeting, followed by an hour of discussion from the floor, after which all present were polled on the positions advocated by each of the speakers. The discussion was moderated by retiree co-hosts Bonnie Nelson (John Jay) and Robert Nelson (Graduate Center). In the interests of encouraging discussion on this sensitive topic, the Chapter Executive Committee decided not to record this discussion.

See excerpts from each of the four speakers which are presented in the previous article.

### Floor Discussion and Polling

After the four brief presentations, a lively and respectful floor discussion followed, in which attendees spoke in criticism and defense of each of the speakers’



positions. All those attending had an opportunity to speak themselves and/or ask questions of the presenters. This was followed by polling on each of the four positions advocated. Participants could vote for more than one position. The polling results were printed in the November 2021 issue of *Turning the Page* <https://www.psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/Nov21TTP.pdf>, p.5-6

1. Do you agree with Jonathan Buchsbaum and **support the June 10 DA Resolution** in Support of the Palestinian People as it stands? Agree 20%. Disagree 76%. Not sure 4%.

2. Do you agree with Irwin Yellowitz that the DA resolution of June 10 on Israel/**Palestine should be rescinded?** Agree 60%. Disagree 31%. Not sure 8%\*

3. Do you agree with Dave Kotelchuck that the June 10 resolution **should be amended or replaced?** Agree 60%. Disagree 36%. Not sure 4%.

4. Do you agree with Nancy Romer that for the long-term good of the Union we should just accept the results of the vote on the Resolution and **move on?** Agree 40%. Disagree 57%. Not sure 2%\*  
(\* indicates that sum of results < 100% due to round-off error.)

The polling shows a tie for the greatest support: 60% of those present agree that the resolution of June 10 “In support of the Palestinian people” should either be rescinded, amended or replaced. The least supported of any of these four positions is support for the June 10 resolution as it stands -- supported only by 20 percent of those attending and

opposed by 76 percent. The position that the union should move on in the interests of unity has support and opposition intermediate between the other positions. These results will be reported to the PSC Delegate Assembly when discussion on this issue resumes.

[**Editorial Note:** This report was written by Editorial Board member Dave Kotelchuck, who was also one of the speakers. We have a small staff. As indicated in the headline this is a news article, not an opinion piece, and the balance in its news content was reviewed by others on the Editorial Board.]



## PROFILE OF A NEW PSC OFFICER

### Penny Lewis: Living Labor History

Marcia Newfield, BMCC



Penny Lewis’s labor activism, scholarship, and teaching has been all of a piece—a deep commitment to investigating and advocating for workers. Even *before* she allied with the network of labor-oriented fellow graduate students at CUNY in the ‘90s

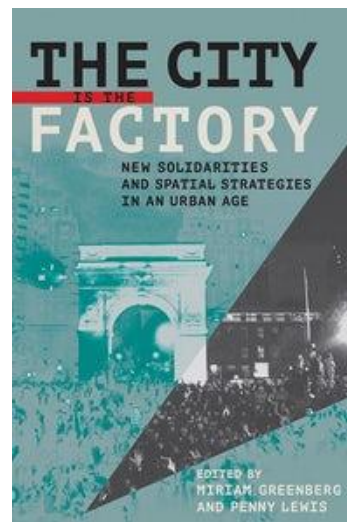
to form Scholars, Artists and Writers for Social Justice (SAWSJ), she was involved in organizing at the National Lawyers Guild, UAW, and 1199.

Early in her work with the PSC as an organizer, she participated in the founding of USLAW (US Labor Against the War) and the massive peace conference that followed. The subject of her doctoral thesis and first book, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks* (Cornell University Press, 2013), is a reexamination of the myths and memories of the Vietnam anti-war movement, challenging the conventional myth that only left-wing people opposed the war. Interaction with CUNY scholars and mentors Stanley Aronowitz, Josh Freeman, and Frances Fox Piven deepened her commitment to a perspective that is grounded in an intersectional view. In a memorial to Aronowitz, she wrote, “Stanley rejected the separation of labor from community, of a worker from their life as lived in all of its 360 degrees.”

Lewis became more and more involved with PSC as she traversed teaching appointments at John Jay, Queens, Hunter Campus Schools, and BMCC. Since 2009, she has served on the PSC Executive Council, the Solidarity Committee and the Labor- Management and Bargaining team. She has been a chapter chair, a VP for Senior Colleges, and now, Secretary of the PSC. In-between all this, she has become Professor of Labor Studies at SLU, CUNY’S School of Labor and Urban Studies.

Lewis believes that “Public sector unions can effect change; they can and should do public good.” Her research

has supported her belief. She co-edited an anthology of how to make the city better. *The City Is The Factory* (Cornell University Press, 2017) is an examination of how we can build power in the city based on alliances. Her upcoming new illustrated book, co-authored with Brooklyn professors Carolina Bank Munoz and Emily Tumpson Molina, *A People’s Guide to New York City* (University of California Press, January, 2022) tells the narrative of New York from the point of labor struggles and tensions at 150 sites. This volume is part of an ambitious series that challenges conventional tourist literature by illuminating the power struggles and tensions that are integral to an area’s history. Current books in this series include Greater Boston, Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, and New Orleans. To those of us who grew up without labor education being part of the curriculum, this is a significant breakthrough.



One of the first things that struck Lewis in her in her new position is how complex and many-pronged the PSC is. The unanticipated stress brought by a controversial resolution, covid pandemic

and isolation, and the unexpected removal of Cuomo presents obstacles and opportunities. Her aspirations for the union include: to deepen the organization and its internal capacity, and to intensify the potential power of the majority by increasing the involvement of membership (the volunteer participation of more than 200 members in the PSC Health and Safety Watchdogs is a model). She holds the vision of solid funding for CUNY and free tuition; a focus on the nuts and bolts of local organizing, internal education, and communication and connection with the community is her strategy for achieving these results.

In this daunting environment, Penny remains determined and optimistic. When asked about her plan for maintaining a balance between her new leadership responsibilities and her family life, she says she is not sure. So far, her family (husband and 12- and 15-year olds) has been supportive “I talk much more about work than I used to, My kids know I’m doing something important.” □

## WHAT’S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

Joan Greenbaum, LaGuardia  
No matter how long ago you retired, you probably still remember infrastructure problems on your campus: cold room temperature when it should be warm, too hot when it should be cool, dripping pipes, mold, non-working toilets, disabled elevators and so on. Those who recently retired can probably still remember odors that shouldn’t have been there, as well as feel their shoulders hunched from trying to open or close recalcitrant windows. Now imagine what this means in the age of

Covid, an airborne disease that tragically travels rapidly indoors in crowded situations of poor air circulation. In a nutshell these are the conditions that faculty and staff have been working in since the campuses re-opened in August 2020.

On every campus now, including the EOCs, the PSC Health and Safety Watchdogs have trained members in what to look for, how to report it and critically, how to take action to get problems fixed. Bronx Community College was forced by Watchdog members to close Nichols Hall due to mold, and shortly thereafter the Administration was pushed to close all buildings when it was acknowledged that the boiler to provide central heating did not work. Likewise at Medgar Evers, a college like BCC which has been consistently underfunded and poorly managed, has closed two major buildings including the library as a result of water infiltration and heating and cooling problems.



### Bad News-Good News

Wings of buildings, floors and entire buildings like those at Bronx and Medgar Evers are being closed or open only for limited use as a result of members pushing reluctant administrations. The Watchdogs trained

close to 150 active members in concepts such as the role of ventilation in stopping COVID spread.

As we enter yet another pandemic winter all students are expected to be fully vaccinated. This is good news. But as we know, even vaccinated people can carry and transmit the COVID virus. And on many older campuses like Brooklyn, Queens and City, it is difficult to check vaccine certificates at central points on campus, so unvaccinated people can wander in.

Closing buildings with ventilation problems and rolling classes back into remote mode provide relatively good solutions, however long-term problems remain. Meanwhile the new buildings constructed during this Century, such as at Baruch, John Jay and the Graduate Center, have been built to save energy. That may sound like good news, but saving energy means controlling heating and cooling costs by limiting outside air intake. This means that they cost less to operate and use less electricity. The bad news is obvious—viruses circulate more readily indoors when outside air circulation is limited.

Fall 2021 opened belatedly in August due to PSC pressure because buildings had not been inspected for safety and health. It also opened into the Delta variant wave, which the CUNY central administration had not prepared for. Indeed, their instructions to returning students and staff didn't even mention the Delta variant, nor did it require masking until the PSC weighed in. The goodish news was that occupancy on campuses was limited with the majority of courses remaining online or in a

hybrid mode with occasional on-campus meetings.

Spring 2022, coming soon, is expected to open with 70% in-person classes and almost all HEOs and CLTs present. This may be very good news for students craving an in-person education, however when and how the COVID virus mutates is a huge unknown factor. Given CUNY managers' slowness in adapting to new health and safety problems this may be very bad news.



### USEFUL UNION LINKS:

#### Retiree Chapter:

<https://www.psc-cuny.org/retirees>

#### Welfare Fund

<http://psccunywf.org/>

**Reminder!** Our Welfare Fund benefits provided by the PSC, including pharmacy, dental, eyeglasses and hearing all remain the same.

**TURNING THE PAGE** is a publication of the Retirees chapter of PSC-CUNY, Local 2334 of NYSUT and the AFT. We welcome contributions from our several thousand members: articles of special interest to retirees, short essays on your activities during this period of politics and plague, and your comments on recent publications of interest. Our newsletter collective is made up of Michael Frank, Bill Friedheim, Joan Greenbaum and Dave Kotelchuck.

Please write to us at [retirees@pscmail.org](mailto:retirees@pscmail.org), with 'Newsletter' in the subject line.

## LIFE DURING WARTIME

Josh Brown, the retired director of the American Social History Project at the CUNY Graduate Center, has produced a series of weekly political illustrations, beginning in 2003 with the war in Iraq, called Life During Wartime. You can view them by going to the entire collection, 2003- 2021, which is online at: [www.joshbrownnyc.com/ldw.htm](http://www.joshbrownnyc.com/ldw.htm)

**CHAPTER ELECTION:** The Retiree Chapter Executive Committee is up for election in April. Positions are chapter chair, vice chair, secretary, four officers at large, six delegates to the Delegate Assembly, five alternates to the DA and a representative the Welfare Fund Advisory Board. Declarations of candidacy are due 1/14/22. Full information on the nominating and election process is available at:

<https://www.psc-cuny.org/about-us/elections-committee>

**Erratum :** The last sentence of the paragraph below was omitted from Michael Frank's opinion piece in the October newsletter "Why Does the MLC Operate in Secret?" It has been slightly modified for clarity.

"Leaders have a unique role as mediators between the opposing interests of management and workers. Management tries to reduce its costs while workers strive to improve their working conditions and satisfy their needs. Structurally, management is in the stronger position. In the case of the MLC's secret meetings, leaders tried to increase their room to negotiate with management by *insulating themselves* from the pressure of their members."