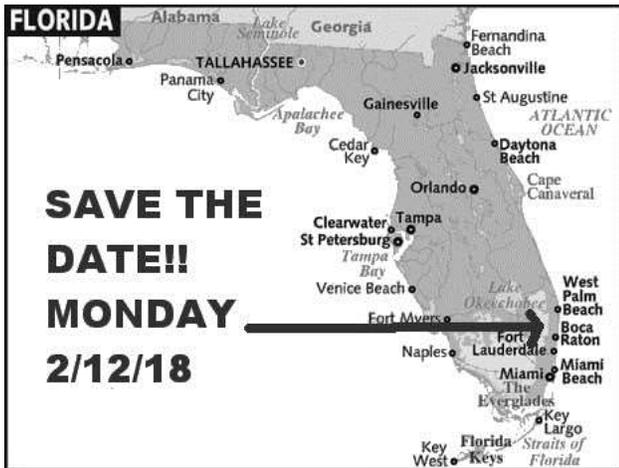




activist, and is presently active on the PSC Environmental Justice Working Group. She was founder of the Brooklyn Food Coalition.

### **FLORIDA RETIREES AND SNOWBIRDS: SAVE THE DATE.**



The annual Florida Branch Benefits Seminar and Luncheon is set for Monday, February 12 at the Lakeside Terrace in Boca Raton. An invitation and reservation form will be sent to all PSC retiree residents in Florida in December. If you are a snowbird and wish to be included in the mailing, contact the chapter at [retirees@pscmail.org](mailto:retirees@pscmail.org), providing us with your name and mailing and email addresses.

### **THE MONTH THAT WAS: MAKING CHOICES— October's Chapter Meeting**

*--Joel Berger, retirees CSI*

Choices: we make them daily. And when it's election time, many PSC members are often confronted with making a choice among candidates who do not reflect their political values, policies, and philosophy. **Bob Master**, political and legislative director for the Northeast Region

of the Communication Workers of America and a founder of the Working Families Party, addressed this dilemma and the challenges of being independent of the two major political parties at the October chapter meeting. He acknowledged that the two parties are "less than ideal." Yet, he believes a choice must be made. Looking back to the 1860s, he noted that the Abolitionists did not endorse Lincoln when he ran for his first term. William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips thought Lincoln weak on abolishing slavery.

Four years later, Garrison became more pragmatic. He supported Lincoln, fearing his loss would strengthen pro-slavery parties. Phillips thought Lincoln a failure, and again did not endorse him. So, Bob Master observed, the problem is not new—but "the lesser of two evils, is still the lesser." If Hillary was not OK, Trump was worse. Much worse! He appointed a Supreme Court justice who will serve 30-40 years.

Bob chronicled how the WFP struggled to negotiate the fine line between promoting independent candidates and supporting "the lesser of two evils," between the stark political realities of the moment and the politics of possibility. The WFP has negotiated this tension in different ways depending on the political context and debates within its ranks. Reflecting upon the establishment of the Working Families Party, Bob said the task was how to intervene, and not to succumb to the Democratic Party. In our political system there is no proportional representation. There is no tradition of multiple major parties. Sometimes a third party can be a

spoiler, and the greater of evils prevails. In New York State, cross endorsements among parties are permitted. As a party with independent power and structure, the WFP advances positions, and tries to influence legislators, who are mindful of the advantage of a WFP endorsement.

Bob described the strain, strife, and process which led to the WFP endorsement of Governor Cuomo in the last election. But he noted that Cuomo has moved toward some of Bernie Sanders' positions since then. The task now is to continue to challenge Democrats and also to support them in efforts to take back the House. The WFP is now active in eight other states, where they hope to move debate inside the Democratic Party. Bob hopes that this "inside-outside" strategy will be successful.

The next speaker, **Barry Kaufmann**, president of the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans (NYSARA), urged the audience to vote "NO" on the state constitutional convention.

Illustrating the reasons to vote NO with a PowerPoint presentation, he described the threats to previously hard-won victories in pensions, equal protections under law, minimum wage, social welfare, and conservation.

Barry also destroyed any claim that the effort is for a "peoples' convention." Delegates will likely be party officials, lobbyists and other political insiders. They will be elected by party machines from highly gerrymandered NYS Senate districts. Without party affiliation, it will be very costly to run as a delegate. Those who serve can be paid up to \$80,000. The cost to the state

will be in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

It is important not only to vote "NO," but also to make sure that everyone we know votes "NO."

To download Kaufmann's PowerPoint presentation, go to:

[psc-cuny.org/issues/vote-no-nys-constitutional-convention](http://psc-cuny.org/issues/vote-no-nys-constitutional-convention)



#### **ENVIRONMENTAL WRAP-UP**

#### **A Land Bank for the Adirondacks: Ballot Proposal 3**

*-Eileen Moran, retiree Queens College*

This New York State ballot proposal would create a 250-acre land bank, which would allow local governments to request forest preserve land for projects in exchange for the state acquiring 250 acres for the forest preserves. Upstate environmental groups are strongly in favor of this constitutional amendment. Proposal 3 also demonstrates a way to amend the state constitution without the high risks of a constitutional convention.

The land bank would be referred to in law as the *Health and Safety Land Account*. The way it would work is that municipalities would request to use acres in the land bank

to address such projects as bridge and road hazards, wells to meet drinking water standards, and stabilization of public utility lines. Before local governments could begin acquiring acres in the land bank, the state would have to acquire 250 new acres to include in the state Forest Preserve, which is designated as "forever wild."

Currently, local villages and towns located within the "forever wild" areas of the Forest Preserve have to go through the lengthy process of amending the state constitution with statewide ballot approval in order to do necessary maintenance or health and safety improvements. Instead, the land bank establishes a process allowing localities to make needed repairs while ensuring that the state's "forever wild" acreage is not reduced.

For those voting in New York State, there are three ballot proposals which may be located on the back of your ballot. Please look for the proposals. NYSUT and the PSC have taken a strong position opposing Proposal 1, which asks about a constitutional convention. While the unions have not taken stances on Proposals 2 or 3, the environmental issues at stake in Proposal 3 are noteworthy, and we feel need this clarification. Proposal 2 is straight forward. It would allow judges to reduce or revoke the state pension of a public officer convicted of a felony related to his or her duties.



[sources:  
<https://www.elections.ny.gov/ProposedAmendments.html> and see  
[https://ballotpedia.org/New\\_York\\_2017\\_ballot\\_measures](https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_2017_ballot_measures) ]

### **Environmental News from Neighbors at DC 37**

*-Doris Hart, retiree BMCC*

Like our PSC Environmental Justice Working Group, our neighbors at DC 37 have been active on a broad range of environmental issues. On October 5<sup>th</sup>, DC37 presented an incisive forum about the impacts of climate change and how it affects us all, particularly people of color.

DC37 member Jon Forster showed a brief film about how rising sea waters could drown New York City and spoke with urgency about the need to get off fossil fuels and turn to renewable energy. He reminded us that we have little time to avert disasters such as worsening heat waves, forest fires, droughts and hurricanes.

The four panelists who followed discussed the multiple ways that poor people and people of color are put at risk. Eddie Bautista, executive director of NYC Environmental Justice Alliance (NYCEJA), noted that most garbage and chemical dumps and landfills are in low-income communities. The Bronx has one of the highest asthma and death rates. During heat waves, high death rates have occurred in minority communities in NYC. Bautista also argued that we must train workers to transition to renewable energy.

Bautista and two other members of the panel, Eduardo Rosario, president of Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), and Judy Sheridan Gonzalez, president of NYS Nurses Association (NYSNA), spoke of the dire situation in Puerto Rico after the two hurricanes. Relief efforts of FEMA and others have been a farce. The panelists have relatives in Puerto Rico and were informed that little or nothing has been done to help residents in communities outside San Juan.

The fourth panelist, Fitz Reid, president of Local 768, DC37, emphasized the importance of education and being aware of the dangers of climate change and its effects on all of us. The time for taking action is now, he said.

The panelists pointed out that companies, nuclear plants and developers of luxury hotels are seeing Puerto Rico as an opportunity for redevelopment. But people must insist on rebuilding with renewable energy: solar, wind, water power. They also urged that we find ways to send bicycles, solar panels and anything needed

to transition to renewable energy. And they argued for government, not private, ownership of energy.

The forum ended with the union announcing their plans for action—they rallied in support of Puerto Rico on October 11 in Union Square.



Like our Environmental Justice Working Group, our sisters and brothers in DC37 are involved in the commemoration of the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Superstorm Sandy on October 28<sup>th</sup> (see last issue of *Turning the Page*).

For information about PSC Environmental Justice meetings, please email [retirees@pscmail.org](mailto:retirees@pscmail.org) with “EJ” in the subject line.

#### **REMINDER 1: VOTE “NO” ON CON CON**

*-Joan Greenbaum, retiree, LaGuardia CC*

By now you have seen and heard the arguments in New York State against the constitutional convention. Here is a quick “cheat sheet” to use when reminding your friends and neighbors to vote “NO” on Ballot Proposal 3, which asks about a statewide constitutional convention.

- **Costly**—Such a gathering would cost taxpayers several hundred million dollars; some estimates range much higher.

· **Risky to rights**—Free public education is in the state constitution. It, like other guarantees in the state constitution, including the right to bargain collectively and “forever wild” designations in the Catskills and Adirondacks, could be taken away.

· **Our Pensions**—The state constitution currently protects our pensions against diminution, a protection that could be eliminated or weakened in a Con Con.

· **Unpredictable**—Delegates to the Con Con will be political appointees, lobbyists and state officials, who may not be in touch with the needs of working people.

See this month's *Clarion* for a more detailed analysis and please remind people to look for Proposal 3 on the ballot (it may be on the back) and vote “NO” on the Con Con.

## **REMINDER 2: NYSUT ESTATE PLANNING**

NYSUT provides a wide range of member benefits, including insurance, legal services and estate planning. Most of these are fee- and referral-based, but members have found the costs comparable to other financial and legal services.

Among the first things retirees look at in estate planning include: figuring out a health care proxy, writing a living will and authorizing a power of attorney. Discussion with family members and friends is extremely useful, as facing these daunting tasks reminds us that we are not immortal.

Then, in developing a will and testament, it is useful to talk with an accountant to learn about tax thresholds and to find out if some of your assets may be best handled with a

trust in addition to the will. Another perhaps off-putting task is making an inventory of your assets.

NYSUT member benefits can be reached at <http://memberbenefits.nysut.org/>. You can also call 800-626-8101 and ask for help with estate planning.

## **MONTHLY MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Dolores Lowe Friedman, retiree from Kingsborough CC, tells us about her novel, *Wildflowers***

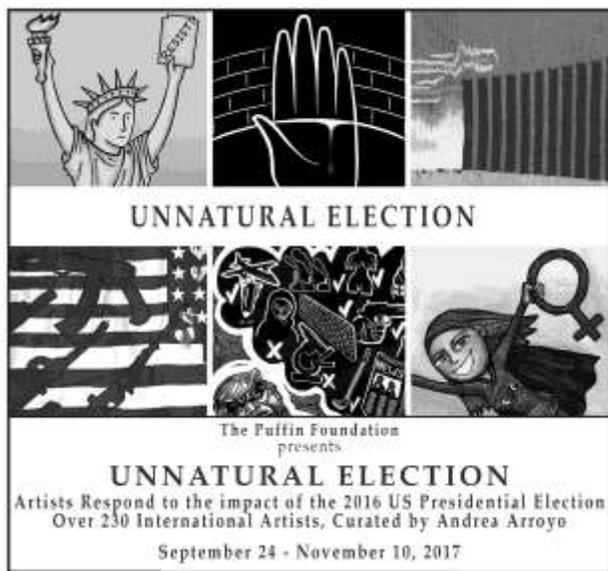


Set in twentieth-century New York City, *Wildflowers* is about the dynamic of friendship. Camille must face hard truths about her relationships—and herself. She wrote in the 1960s while in college that she and her friends were like wildflowers unfolding, each one unique. In the end,

Camille realizes that friendships are often complicated and fragile, and she must become her own distinct and firmly planted self. *Wildflowers* is a coming-of-age story of friends confronting issues of love, betrayal, ambition and race.

*Wildflowers* will be available November 15 on Amazon, and on [www.DeloresLoweFriedman.com](http://www.DeloresLoweFriedman.com)

**Elizabeth Starčević, retiree from City College, presented a selection of her weavings**



On September 24, the Puffin Gallery in Teaneck, New Jersey opened a show called UNNATURAL ELECTION, which was curated by artist Andrea Arroyo. It contains artistic responses to the election of Donald Trump.

Elizabeth Starčević has three weavings in the show. One speaks to the violence unleashed by the electoral campaign—and is a response to the massacre of homosexuals at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. One describes the

reactions we saw in the U.S. and around the world when Trump was elected. The third shows the wall between Mexico and the United States in blood red.

The show will run until November 10. Visit [puffinculturalforum.org](http://puffinculturalforum.org) or email [unnaturalelection@gmail.com](mailto:unnaturalelection@gmail.com) for more information.

**Professor Emeritus Joel Mason, retiree from New York City College of Technology, talks about design**

Joel Mason, a faculty member in the Department of Communication Design, gave a presentation, "Drawing Type, Drawing Connections" at a Design Incubation Colloquium on September 9<sup>th</sup> at SUNY New Paltz. Professor Mason showed how typography can serve as a bridge from students' understanding of the relevance of the liberal arts and sciences to the design discipline. See the website: [www.designincubation.org](http://www.designincubation.org)

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Turning the Page* is for and about you. Please suggest, and write, an article for us about a current issue of interest to retirees. Also tell us about what you are doing or have written. Regular features include "Retirement Reflections" and "Book Corner." In these times of attacks on unions, among other groups, we urgently ask you add to our feature on "why you are sticking to the union."