



September 2011 Issue 1  
Academic Year 2011-2012

# Retirees Newsletter

Professional Staff Congress  
Jack Judd, Editor

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: JIM PERLSTEIN

**I. Welcome back!** Politically speaking, it's been an exhausting summer: a few victories, and those small; many disappointments and a host of ominous prospects. Still, we continue to fight the good fight and, I keep reminding myself, the battles we wage strengthen us for the battles to come. As the blogger Josh Marshall points out, commenting on the Wisconsin recall elections, political muscles, like any others, atrophy with disuse. The only way to strengthen them is to keep working them. We certainly have the opportunities to stay in training.

Particularly, as retirees, we need to focus on the battle to preserve the social safety net, a battle we began to engage in a concerted way this past year, and a battle that will only become more intense in the days ahead. Take a careful look at the annual report of the chapter (see below) to get a sense of how busy we've been, and gear up for the busy year ahead. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I send greetings to you all. Find a way to get engaged. The members are the chapter and the chapters are the union.

## II. Retiree Chapter Annual Report, 2010-2011:

**--SAVE THE DATE--**  
**Tuesday, Oct. 25, 6 pm**  
**SEIU #1199 Auditorium**  
**310 West 43rd St.**

**A call to action:**  
**DEFEND THE SOCIAL**  
**SAFETY NET**

Keynote Speaker: Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research. ----- A distinguished panel includes James Parrot (Fiscal Policy Institute), Kim Phillips-Fein (NYU) and Frances Fox-Piven (Graduate Center).

**Membership:** Final results will be available after the fall membership drive, when we expect a bump because of the ERI, but membership so far has increased for this academic year by several hundred. Total chapter membership exceeds 2,600.

**Executive Committee:** The chapter has an extremely diverse, hard working, and collegial Executive Committee, which deserves full credit for whatever achievements the chapter can claim for 2010-2011.

*Sponsored by the PSC Social Safety Net Working Group*

**Meetings:** The chapter continued to meet monthly at the PSC from October through June, except that the January and June luncheons were held at John Jay. Programs this year continued the practice of mixing speakers on politics, culture, and the benefit concerns of retirees. Topics included: The state of the union; the 2010 elections; the Welfare Fund and health care reform; the Professor Fox Piven imbroglio and academic freedom; academic freedom and the corporatizing of academe; unemployment; political theater; and the fiscal crises of 1975 and the present. Attendance fluctuates from ca. 40 to ca. 60 except for the luncheons at which attendance approaches 100.

**Newsletter:** The chapter produces a monthly newsletter that keeps the entire membership apprised of general union concerns and those specifically related to retirees. It reports on chapter meetings, the union calendar and political issues. We are currently shepherding a transition, insofar as possible, from regular to electronic mailings. We have developed a web page that is under constant development and expansion.

**Outreach Initiative:** We have done preliminary work correlating chapter members by zip code in hopes that neighborhood aggregations may find it easier to engage with the work of the union where they live and thus become more active union members.

**Affiliations:** Members of the chapter Executive Committee chapter maintained an active role in NYSUT retiree affairs, served on the Executive Board of NYCARA and chaired and served as delegates to COMRO, joined the Steering Committee of the Strengthen Social Security coalition, worked with Rekindling Reform and participated with NYS Senior Action.

**PSC Committee Work:** Manifesting retiree engagement with the larger concerns of the

PSC, retiree Executive Committee members chaired or served as active members of the Legislative, Solidarity, Academic Freedom, and Peace & Justice Committees.

An Executive Committee member serves on the PSC Communications Committee and is the PSC Webmaster, and other members serve on the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund and its Advisory Board. Members of the chapter, otherwise inactive in chapter affairs, are also active in the International Committee. The chapter is thus well integrated into the work of the union.

**Political Action:** In two distinct fundraising campaigns for VOTE-COPE, the chapter raised roughly \$14,000 and \$15,000 respectively from its members. Chapter members worked actively in lobbying efforts on behalf of the PSC, NYSUT, public higher education and public education generally in Albany, at City Hall, and the five boroughs. Retirees comprised significant contingents at rallies and demonstrations in support of PSC issues, including important participation in civil disobedience at the Capitol Building in Albany. In addition, retirees played an active role in citywide mobilizations on April 9, May 1 and May 12. Retiree phone banking played a role in most of these activities.



**Cultural Activities:** The chapter continues to sponsor a Social Problems Book Group, which has met monthly for over two years. The group also has worked to encourage the formation of other chapter book groups with subject matter to be determined by the interests of the members of the new

groups. The chapter sponsored a theater party, open to all PSC members and guests, attending a performance of the Working Theater.



**Social Safety Net Campaign:** The main initiative for this year has been the start of a campaign, embraced by the PSC as a whole, to defend the benefits, pensions and Social Security protections won by working people over three-quarters of a century ago. The chapter has formed a Social Safety Net Working Group, which has succeeded in engaging the energies of several new members, and which has produced a brochure on the safety net and the assaults upon it. The Working Group has begun outreach to the other PSC chapters with the goals of educating and mobilizing our own members in defense of the safety net. In addition, the Working Group is taking the lead, on behalf of the PSC, in coalition work, locally and nationally, to defend and expand the social protections available to working people.

#### **Ongoing Issues:**

- The chapter continues to struggle with the need to expand, expedite and simplify communications with a comparatively dispersed membership.
- We continue to seek ways to expend the drawing power of monthly meetings.

- While we have high hopes for the Safety Net Campaign, we continue to try to define a strategy that will recruit an increasing number of retirees as union activists. This may involve redefining “union work” as including community activism of various kinds.
- We need to increase our outreach to HEO and CLT retirees.

Chairman Jim Perlstein  
June 1, 2011

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**II. Chairman Emeritus Lawrence J. Kaplan Honored by COMRO:** While Larry Kaplan chaired the PSC Retirees Chapter, he set out, at the same time, to revitalize a dormant municipal retiree organization, the Council of Municipal Retiree Organizations of the City of New York, known as COMRO. The Retirees Chapter has always played a major role in COMRO activities, for example, Retiree Chapter Executive Committee member John Hyland, currently serves as Chairman of COMRO, along with three other Retiree Chapter EC members on the COMRO Executive Committee. It was felt incumbent upon COMRO to honor Kaplan for his bounteous years of devoted service in the cause of municipal retirees. On June 13, with a coterie of Retirees Chapter members present, Kaplan received the COMRO service award. In addition, a new award was created, the Lawrence J. Kaplan Award. Kaplan, in turn, bestowed that award on Mel Aaronson, a distinguished board member of the Teachers Retirement System.

**III. Subject: Relocation of the University Benefits Office:** We wish to announce that effective July 18, 2011, the University Benefits office will re-locate from 535 East 80th Street to the 5th Floor at 395 Hudson Street, NY, NY 10014. All mail sent after 7/13 should be directed to this new address. University Benefits email addresses will remain the same, however,

all University Benefits Office employees will receive new phone numbers. As an FYI, anyone wishing to visit our offices should make an appointment, as building security requires you be announced in advance of your arrival.

Leslie Williams, Yvonne Rodriguez, Georgette Roper, Maria Conti, William McGowan, Tiffany Jackson-Mitchell  
Fax number: 646-313-8888.

Mr. Leslie E. Williams University Executive Director

Shared Services Voice: (212) 794-5343:

Fax : (212) 794-5587

**IV. CCNY Exhibit at the Center for Worker Education: September 15 to October 28: "The Struggle for Free Speech at CCNY, 1931-42":** Photographs, graphics, cartoons, and flyers highlight student and faculty activism at CCNY in the 1930s and the ensuing repression, which culminated in the dismissal of more than 50 faculty and staff in the early 1940s. Curated by Carol Smith, retired faculty, CCNY Center for Worker Education, 25 Broadway, 7th Fl.

Carol Smith will be speaking about her exhibit at the Graduate Center-Center for Humanities, 365 5th Ave. at 34th St, Martin Segal Theatre. on Friday, Sept. 23 at 4pm.



An image from the exhibition

(Lerman, *Winter Soldiers*, CCNY Archives)

## V. 2011-2012 Calendar of Chapter Meetings:

- September 19: Welcome to New Retirees
- October 3: Barbara Bowen, "State of the Union. Richard Filingeri, of TIAA, to speak on TIAA-CREF issues following close of regular meeting.
- November 7: Irwin Yellowitz, "Public Sector Collective Bargaining in NYC: History and the Current Assault."
- December 5: Larry Morgan, Patrick Smith, Donna Costa, "Your Welfare Fund," and Report By: Safety Net Working Group, "Defending the Safety Net."
- January 9: Luncheon: Jonathan Buchsbaum, "New Directions in Film with Visuals."
- February 6: TBA, Panel Discussion: "New Perspectives on Malcolm X."
- March 5: Jared Herst, " Pension and Welfare Benefits" or, if contested PSC election, campaign debate.
- April 2: TBA, "LGBT Studies at CUNY."
- May 7: Jocelyn Wills, "New Perspectives on American Immigration: Failure Studies."
- June 11: Luncheon, Belle Kaufman or Ruth Westheimer, [if possible].

## VI. Medicare "Part B" Reimbursement:

The reimbursement checks for the year 2010 were received during the month of August. Accompanying the checks came information as to how to apply for the supplementary Medicare "Part B" payments referred to as IRMAA. For those who paid the supplementary fee, the time is now to apply for such reimbursement. All the necessary information for IRMAA may be found at the NYC Department of Labor, Health Benefits web site.

**VII. Hearing Loss?** Some Sources of Information: Ezra Seltzer, a member of the Chapter's Executive Committee, has

provided WEB sites carrying information for those having hearing difficulties.

▶ *Hearing Loss Defined:*

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/hearingloss/hearinglossdefined/01.html>

▶ *Causes and Prevention:*

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/hearingloss/causesriskfactorsprevention/01.html>

▶ *Symptoms and Diagnosis:*

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/hearingloss/symptomsanddiagnosis/01.html>

▶ *Treatment and Research:*

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/hearingloss/treatmentandresearch/01.html>

▶ *Frequently Asked Questions about Hearing Loss:*

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/hearingloss/faq/faqlist.html>

▶ *Videos about Hearing Loss*

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/videolist.html#hearingloss>

This information was provided for NIHSeniorHealth by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders [ <http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/> ] .

**VIII. E-Newsletter.** The day for the Newsletter arriving by E-Mail is getting closer. Until that time when it is officially announced, we'll provide opportunities for you to give us your E-Mail information.

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**Only if you have not already done so, please print your information on the form below. Complete it and send to:**

Professional Staff Congress  
Attn: Membership Department  
61 Broadway, 15th floor  
New York, NY 10006

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town/city: \_\_\_\_\_  
State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
College that employed you: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of retirement: \_\_\_\_\_