



September 2012 Issue 1  
Academic Year 2012-2013

# Retirees Newsletter

Professional Staff Congress  
Jack Judd, Editor

**I. OUR JUNE LUNCHEON.** On the afternoon of June 18, some 100 retirees and guests assembled in the dining hall at the Borough of Manhattan Community College for the Retirees Chapter luncheon. The program's theme was the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Professional Staff Congress. The anniversary celebration was the brainchild of former Retirees Chapter Chairman Irwin Yellowitz. He created a team consisting of members from the chapter's Executive Committee who produced a group of story-boards, which were then placed strategically around the dining hall, graphically portraying the PSC's history from the 1970's to the present. Using the expert technical skills of Bill Friedheim, also on the chapter's Executive Committee, a PowerPoint slideshow was displayed on a giant screen. After lunch, and speaking about the formative years of the PSC, came Irwin Polishook, president of the PSC from 1980 until 2000. He was followed by our current president, Barbara Bowen. Irwin Yellowitz, who had served as PSC treasurer for many years, introduced Irwin Polishook. Then John Hyland, who had also served

as treasurer, introduced Barbara Bowen.



*There was a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake at the luncheon.*

For a detailed report of the proceedings, including pictures, see the PSC website at :  
[www.psc-cuny.org/chapters/psc-40th-anniversary-celebrated-retiree-luncheon](http://www.psc-cuny.org/chapters/psc-40th-anniversary-celebrated-retiree-luncheon)

**II. IT'S TIME TO PAY YOUR ANNUAL DUES.** The annual retiree dues payment invoices (for the period 9/1/12 through 8/31/13) were mailed out in August. Payment is due upon receipt of your invoice to ensure continuous membership. If you have not received your invoice, or if you have questions regarding your membership status, please call the PSC Membership Dept. at 212-354-1252.

### III. COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT



The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for September 2012 through August 2013 benefit payments for the New York State and Local Retirement System is 1.4%. As a result, an eligible retired member with an annual benefit of \$18,000 or more will receive a maximum monthly increase of \$21. (Learn more at [osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirees/cost\\_of\\_living\\_adjustment.htm](http://osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirees/cost_of_living_adjustment.htm) - receiving)

This latest COLA brings the cumulative maximum monthly increase since COLA legislation was enacted in 2001 to \$252. New York's permanent, automatic COLA is designed to help offset inflation's adverse effects on the fixed retirement benefits of the State's public retirees. By law, the COLA is calculated by taking 50% of the March-to-March Consumer Price

Index increase (rounded up to the next higher one-tenth of 1%) and multiplying it by the first \$18,000 of the retirement benefit. (The CPI increase from March 2011 to March 2012 was 2.65%.) The annual increase is a minimum of 1% to a maximum of 3%.

To begin receiving COLA payments, you must be:

- Age 62 or older and retired for five or more years; or
- Age 55 or older and retired for ten or more years (uniformed employees such as police officers, firefighters and correction officers); or
- A disability retiree for five years; or
- The spouse of a deceased retiree receiving a lifetime benefit under an option elected by the retiree at retirement. An eligible spouse is entitled to one-half the COLA amount that would have been paid to the retiree when the retiree would have met the eligibility criteria.
- A beneficiary receiving the accidental death benefit for five or more years on behalf of a deceased Employees' Retirement System member.

### IV. RETIREES CHAPTER MEETING DATES, 2012-2013

All chapter meetings are held at the PSC's union hall at 61 Broadway, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor. Time: 1-3 PM.

OCT. 1: PSC President Barbara Bowen: "The State of the Union" and Ed Ott: "The Upcoming Elections"

NOV.5: PSC Pension & Health Benefits Coordinator Jared Herst: "Pension and Welfare Benefits" and a panel presentation on "The Social Safety Net"

DEC. 3: William Fletcher: Subject TBA

JAN. Date TBD: LUNCHEON: Entertainment by David Laibman

FEB. 4: Panel Discussion; "Stop and Frisk: A Question of Civil Rights"



MAR.4: PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund Director Larry Morgan: "Your Welfare Fund Benefits"

APR. 1: Prof. Frank Deal: "The Supreme Court"

MAY 6: Speaker TBA: "The Dream Act and the Immigration Situation"

JUNE Date TBD: LUNCHEON

## V. UPDATED IRMAA MEDICARE PART B REIMBURSEMENT CLAIM INSTRUCTIONS

A new federal law requires that some beneficiaries pay a higher premium for Medicare Part B coverage based on their income. If you and/or your eligible dependent paid a Medicare Part B income-related monthly adjustment amount (IRMAA) during CALENDAR YEAR 2011 - which means more than the standard Medicare Part B monthly premium during 2011- you may be entitled to an additional reimbursement.

Following a request made by this editor to the NYC Office of Labor Relations for them to update their IRMAA forms, the Office complied with my request and posted new instructions and a new form for claiming reimbursements. To download a copy of the new instructions and the new form, go to: [www.psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/form.pdf](http://www.psc-cuny.org/sites/default/files/form.pdf)

*IRMAA reimbursement checks will be issued beginning in March 2013.*

## VI. JARED HERST, PSC PENSIONS AND HEALTH BENEFITS COORDINATOR, REPORTS ON GHI BENEFITS:

Israel Maldonado is a benefit specialist from GHI, one of the health insurance plans available to New York City employees from the New York City Health Benefits Program. Israel is the GHI representative who

spends every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund.

Israel's primary purpose is to troubleshoot any questions about GHI-CBP posed both by our in-service and retired members. He said he is concerned that retirees need to understand that the GHI "Extended Medical" benefit is available only to in-service employees to help cover out-of-network costs, not to retirees.

The most effective way for retiree members to reach Israel on Tuesdays at the Welfare Fund is the general number: 212-354-5230. Additionally, members can review GHI's AnswerLine on their website at [tinyurl.com/GHIANSWERS](http://tinyurl.com/GHIANSWERS)

#### **VII. A CALL FOR ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE FROM PROFESSOR ELLEN SCHRECKER, YESHIVA UNIVERSITY**

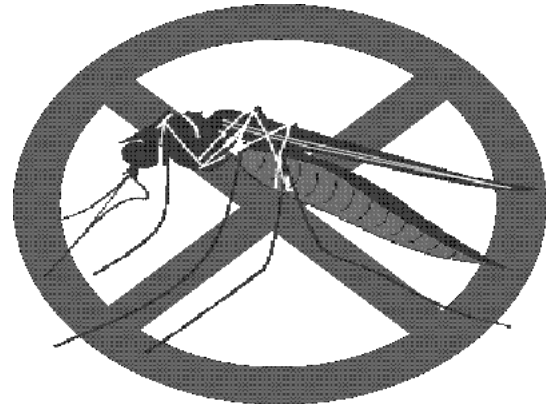
For a study of academic freedom and the political culture of higher education in the 1960s and 1970s, I am looking for information about the experiences of faculty members during that turbulent era. Naturally, I am interested in cases involving violations of academic freedom, but I would also like to find out about the political activities of college and university teachers and how those activities affected (or did not affect) their academic careers – at the City University and, if relevant, elsewhere.

*I have already written about academic freedom in the 1950s in "No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and*

*the Universities" and "Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America." This study will try to provide a similar narrative for the 60s and 70s.*

I can be contacted at [ellen.schrecker@gmail.com](mailto:ellen.schrecker@gmail.com).

#### **VIII. NEWS FROM THE CDC ON WEST NILE VIRUS.**



West Nile virus (WNV) is a potentially serious illness. Experts believe WNV is established as a seasonal epidemic in North America that flares up in the summer and continues into the fall. This fact sheet ([tinyurl.com/WNVFACTSHEET](http://tinyurl.com/WNVFACTSHEET)) contains important information that can help you recognize and prevent West Nile virus.