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The Active Retiree

A Newsletter for Retiree Members of United University Professions

Task force to review retirees' role in UUP

The role of retirees in the union is a hot topic for a 12-member task force appointed by President Fred Kowal.

“There are close to 5,000 UUP retiree members, so it’s understandable that President Kowal would name a task force to explore the fiscal and theoretical relationship of the retirees to the union,” said COARM Chair Schaffer, who serves on the task force. “We are reviewing previous white papers and investigatory history to see if there are continuing issues that need immediate remediation.”

Dave Curry of Plattsburgh, a former statewide Executive Board member, is task force chair.

Also serving are retiree members Patty Bentley, Plattsburgh; Cliff DaVis, Cobleskill; Ed Drummond, Stony Brook HSC; Jim Engle, Morrisville; Jeanne Galbraith, Stony Brook HSC; Barbara Maertz, Farmingdale; Charlie McAteer, Stony Brook; Bob Pompei, Binghamton; and Bob Reganse, Farmingdale. The Executive Board liaison is Jeri O’Byryan-Losee, Morrisville.

COARM: The year in review

by Jo Schaffer
COARM Chair

It was a year of transition for a new chair after the many years of able and dynamic leadership of Judith Wishnia.

To enable a smooth transition, COARM held a three-day organizing retreat last summer for the new regional reps and chair. Among the invited participants were staffers Tina George and Walter Apple, and Outreach Co-chair Pamela Malone. Such a dedicated retreat gave the newly elected reps confidence and the experienced ones a boost of energy.

All regions, for the first time, were active and held membership meetings with ever-increasing attendance. The two Long Island region meetings were incredibly well attended, as were the individual meetings for the Central NY region. Given the success of individual campus/chapter meetings, and the emergence of some new chapter volunteers and reps, I hope that we will see greater involvement and participation.

I heard from some legislators that during the advocacy period they had received (“inundated” was one report) letters, faxes, etc., from retirees on UUP issues. Many retirees sent the letter that had appeared in a recent issue of *The Active Retiree*.

There were the usual number of

Active Retiree issues published. Great credit should go to the retirees who contributed excellent articles. For the second time, *The Active Retiree* was named the Best of the Best retiree publication in the annual NYSUT journalism contest.

COARM is solidly positioned to take care of its activities and commitments based on its budget, ably created by the COARM Finance Subcommittee.

I have not yet seen a year-end report on the number of retirees who call with questions about benefits, etc. I know I have passed on many inquiries with very satisfactory results. We should continue to sponsor regular pre-retirement workshops, in conjunction with campus Human Resources, so that members know that we are with them and that they can continue their membership into retirement. Walter Apple has received rave reviews from the chapters where he has done these workshops.

This year saw new, excited and eager activists attend DA COARM meetings.

It should be of great interest to see where the newly formed Retiree Task Force will eventually lead. There are many retirees who continue to nurture their commitment to the union and to public higher education. I look forward to seeing greater participation and involvement by our retirees as a result of the task force’s report.

The Active Retiree

UUP Officers

Frederick E. Kowal/President
J. Philippe Abraham/VP for Professionals
Jamie F. Dangler/VP for Academics
Eileen Landy/Secretary
Rowena J. Blackman-Stroud/Treasurer
Thomas C. Hoey/Membership Dev. Officer

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily the opinions of United University Professions.

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In memoriam

Let us take time to remember the UUP Active Retirees who have passed away:

ALBANY

Royann Blodgett
 William Sheehan
 John Therrien

BINGHAMTON

Anne Convertino
 Akbar Muhammad
 Sue Park

BROCKPORT

C. Stuart Dube II
 Judith Kitchen

BUFFALO CENTER

Gary Danford
 Richard Mitchell
 George Nancollas
 Keith Otterbein
 Richard Schmidt
 Richard Vesley
 Jui Wang

BUFFALO HSC

Lawrence Zabaldo
 Robert Seller

BUFFALO STATE

John Byczkowski

COBLESKILL

Henry Geerken
 Robert Miller
 Albert Zeppieri

CORTLAND

C. Ashley Ellefson
 Fred Zimmerman

DOWNSTATE MEDICAL

Dan Casaregola
 Kay Jacobs
 Ronald Rieder
 Myron Weinber

EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

David Dubois
 Robert Seidel
 Elizabeth Steltenpohl

FARMINGDALE

Norma Curchack
 Kathleen Fitzwilliam
 Linda Seidel

GENESEO

Gilbert Palmer

MARITIME

Paul Levy

MORRISVILLE

Ethel Schaffer

NEW PALTZ

Salvatore Anastasio
 Albert Gawer
 Todd Quinlan

OSWEGO

Gubbi Sachidanandan

POTSDAM

Maurice Kenny

PURCHASE

Robert Berlind
 Harriet Shorr

STONY BROOK

Kenton Draigh
 Roderich Engelmann
 Zakia Mahmood
 Richard Solo
 Rose Zimbardo

STONY BROOK HSC

Erminie Bruno
 Blasco Gomes
 Hsin Kuan
 Abraham Lurie

UPSTATE MEDICAL

Marybeth Coolican
 Ronald Daloia

From the COARM Chair

A little bit of this and a lot of that

So much has happened that may affect you since the last issue that I decided not to focus on one subject, but give you a smorgasbord of the many important events from the last few months.

First, and perhaps most importantly, the four major issues concerning the protection and increase in our retiree benefits supported and promoted by UUP were passed by the state Legislature. With the help of NYSUT, VOTE-COPE and your efforts, we protected those negotiated benefits we had long appreciated. A huge thank you goes out to all of you who called, visited, wrote and/or faxed your state legislators many of whom told us they were “flooded” with your positive comments. Advocacy works! You made your voice heard. Several of the governor’s proposals that would have negatively impacted retirees in the New York State Health Insurance Program, namely:

- capping basic premiums for Medicare reimbursement at the prior year \$104;
- future retirees would not pay varying premiums for NYSHIP based on years of state service;
- giving veterans the chance to buy back credit for service in retirement programs;
- eliminating the Medicare Part B reimbursement for those paying the IRMMA Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount; and
- supported increased maximum allowable earning level to \$35,000 for retirees.

Be sure to thank your legislators when you see them.

Please remember that no union dues may be used to support political advocacy. The need for contributions to VOTE-COPE for such purposes is extremely important. With the past months efforts on our behalf and the future political campaigns coming up this fall, please continue to contribute to VOTE-COPE (a coupon can be found on page 6).

We, the retiree organization of UUP, increased our visibility and strength with major involvement in other retiree

organizations in the state. We have a strong working relationship with the New York StateWide Senior Action Council. We sent delegates to their annual meetings, as well as representatives to the New York state branch of the national Alliance for Retired Americans (AFL-CIO organization for all union retirees) and continued to work with the NYSUT Retiree Councils to achieve our goals. In unity there is strength.

Attendance at COARM regional meetings has increased in numbers participating. Most often, Walt Apple, our retiree member services coordinator (518-640-6600, ext. 638), joins me and a host of fascinating speakers in making the retiree meetings a source of valuable information. With that added personal information, we hear, bite and see better.

For all of our long-term activity in and for our union, the question of our relation with our parent organization, UUP, has once again been placed under scrutiny. As we approach the 5,000-member mark, we become the largest of any designated UUP group. It is understandable, therefore, that President Fred Kowal has created a task force of UUP retirees and an active Executive Board member, chaired by Plattsburgh’s David Curry, to review the role of retirees in UUP.

The task force met at the 2016 Spring Delegate Assembly in Saratoga Springs. A couple of urgent, continuing issues have emerged. The most pressing is for all chapters to have a permanent seat for a retiree representative, as a conduit for a two-way flow of information at the chapter. This would require a constitutional change to add an “Officer for Retirees” at each chapter. Such an amendment has already been created and is getting support from multiple chapters. The change may take effect with next year’s bi-annual chapter elections.

Talking of constitutional changes, there is a more far-reaching issue that has been working its way to the surface—that of the potential for a 2017 vote to hold a Constitutional Convention in New York



state. In 2013, there was a symposium on my campus hosted by a conservative group called the Constitutional Dimension and funded by The Effective New York Foundation. While it had a mix of views, the primary focus was to present the reasons for sustaining such a convention. UUP will be engaged in informing our members and the public why such a Constitutional Convention is not a very good idea. First, it will cost taxpayers millions to elect and run the convention; second, it unzips the entire constitution for scrutiny and change.

While the constitution can be amended and has been many times in its history, there are really important items to be protected. The constitution guarantees a free public education for all New York state children; guarantees the right to organize; and guarantees and protects our public pension system, among other important sections. Once opened, everything is up for grabs. We most certainly will continue this discussion in the future.

That’s all for now. An abbreviated COARM annual report can be found on page 1.

COARM: Member activism a top priority

by Loraine Tyler
Oneonta

The 2016 spring meeting of the Committee on Active Retired Membership was held May 12 during the union's 2016 Spring Delegate Assembly.

Present: Jo Schaffer, chair; Loraine Tyler, Southern Tier, recorder; Stacey Johnson, Western New York; Barbara Maertz, Long Island; Al Magid, Capital District; John Nixon, North Country; Eric Russell, Metropolitan; Carol Torok, Central New York; Frank Maraviglia and Jack Richert, outgoing presidential appointees.

Officers and staff: Statewide Membership Development Officer Tom Hoey, and Walter Apple, retiree member services coordinator.

Guests: Ed Drummond, Irene Stern, Harvey Inventasch, Bob Kasprak, Lawrence Fuller, Charles McAteer, Judy Wishnia, Rich Tyler, Cindy Fuller, Pat Stempel, Dave Curry and Cindy Riedi.

Chair Schaffer called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. and welcomed all.

Minutes of the Feb. 1 meeting were approved as submitted.

Chair's Report

Attended several district meetings and statewide meetings. Attendance at regional meetings is growing. Pre-retirement sessions are gaining in importance. Legislative issues should be discussed at brunches. This year all four retiree issues in the state budget were defeated in the legislature. Capped basic Medicare premiums, eliminated IRMMA, eliminated tier for those with less than 30 years. Shows that we are active advocates. A goal is to get retirees more active. Stress at brunches.

Certificate of appreciation was given to



KAREN L. MATTISON PHOTOS

Above, COARM Chair Jo Schaffer of Cortland shares her expertise with the Task Force on Retirees, chaired by Dave Curry of Plattsburgh, right.



Left, Task force members Jim Engle of Morrisville and Cliff DaVis of Cobleskill add to the conversation.

Inventasch for years of service on COARM's Finance Subcommittee.

Financial Report—Maertz, Rich Tyler and McAteer were appointed to serve on the Finance Subcommittee on behalf of COARM. Passed. Maraviglia moved and Richert seconded the motion. Schaffer thanked Maertz and the Finance Subcommittee for their excellent work.

- Budget 2016-2017: Maertz discussed the COARM budget for 2016-17, as distributed. Regional meetings must be approved in the minutes in order for the expenses to be covered. Out of state meetings will be covered under the chair's budget. Honorariums are limited to \$100 per event and, in most cases, are

not needed. COARM's fund balance is \$396,351.02. Tyler moved and Drummond seconded the motion to approve the budget. Passed.

Regional Meetings

Moved by Tyler and seconded by Magid that regional reports be approved and plans for fall meetings be approved for funding. Passed.

Maertz—Long Island: Spring meetings in Stony Brook and Farmingdale. All legislators that represent Farmingdale were present. Two brunches planned for fall.

Nixon—North Country: Surveyed retirees with only three responses. The May meeting was canceled. September meeting is planned with a speaker from

Office of the Aging. A meeting in Plattsburgh is being considered.

Torok—Central NY: Meeting scheduled for June 16 with a speaker from the attorney general's office. Fall meeting will be in November. Larry Fuller will have a September meeting in Oswego. The goal is to have two to three meetings a year.

Tyler—Southern Tier: Two of three meetings are completed. Three meetings are planned for the fall.

Johnson—Western NY: Retiree brunch next week; 57 are registered. A meeting will be scheduled for the fall.

Magid—Capital Region: Spring brunch to include two speakers, who will discuss the *Friedrichs* Supreme Court case. Fall meeting set for October.

Russell—Metropolitan: A fall meeting is planned for October, with a speaker from the League of Women Voters. Spring meeting was in April.

Florida West Coast—Stempel: No response for a second meeting.

Florida East Coast—Inventasch: Distance is a problem. Last meeting was unsuccessful.

Florida South—Axlerod: Fall/winter meeting was delayed. A meeting will be planned for spring or fall.

Meeting invitations come from COARM. The COARM chair must have advance notice. Meetings should put forth goals of UUP, keep members informed of retiree issues, and encourage advocacy.

RELAG—ad hoc committee report

May 19-20, in-district advocacy. Handled by political action coordinators in NYSUT. Contact UUP Legislation Coordinator Celine Mell for information.

Brod Retiree of the Year Award

A nominee for the Pearl H. Brod Retiree of the Year Award was accepted.



KAREN L. MATTISON

Active Retirees, from left, Loraine Tyler of Oneonta, Bob Kasprak of Optometry and Ed Drummond of Stony Brook HSC look over palm cards outlining the union's legislative initiatives on retiree issues.

Magid moved and Maertz seconded that the nomination be accepted and advanced to the Executive Board. Passed.

Summer COARM Meeting

At present, the meeting would be an overnight, not two nights. We could meet at the DA for an extra day/night. Task is to know what the union's agenda is concerning the nationwide attack on retirees.

Task Force Appointed

UUP President Fred Kowal appointed David Curry of Plattsburgh to chair a task force to examine issues related to retirees and the role of retirees in the union.

- Agenda—our constitutional proposal, among other issues.
- Historical documents—earlier reports by Jack Ether, Tom Matthews, Henry Geerken and the “White Paper” will be referred to.
- Looking for broad input. Task force wants as much data as possible.
- Final report will be presented at the 2016 Fall DA or the 2017 Winter DA.

Other Business

- AFT meeting—Retiree meeting is the day before the conference. Looking for someone to attend.
 - *The Active Retiree* is published three times per year (four times in COARM election years); Schaffer is editor. An issue will be available just before the General Election. This issue should be related to the attacks on retirees. Articles are needed.
 - May 24 post-budget advocacy day. Issues include a renewed commitment to public higher education, especially the MOE; support for SUNY hospitals and health sciences centers; transparency and accountability for research and campus foundations; and teacher certification, especially the removal of the edTPA as a high-stakes mandate for certification.
 - A proposal for a Constitutional Convention will be on the ballot in 2017. It's to our benefit that this not happen. Free public education, state pensions, and the right to bargain collectively are among the rights in jeopardy.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

Why should I give to VOTE-COPE



- 1** VOTE-COPE funds help protect collective bargaining rights.
- 2** VOTE-COPE funds give members and students valuable opportunities to deliver UUP's message to legislators by attending advocacy days, in-district meetings/events and fundraisers.
- 3** VOTE-COPE funds support candidates who fight to protect public higher education—our University, our students, our patients, our jobs and our retirement benefits—regardless of party affiliation.
- 4** VOTE-COPE funds give us a voice against the formidable forces pushing to privatize campus resources.
- 5** VOTE-COPE funds allow us to challenge misperceptions and promote solutions to the real problems we face.



**What dues can't do,
YOU and VOTE-COPE can!**



UUP RETIREE MEMBER

UUP VOTE/COPE Voluntary Contribution • United University Professions • P.O. Box 15143, Albany, NY 12212-5143

Last Name _____ First _____ MI _____

Address (Include Street, City, State, ZIP) _____



Contribution \$50 \$75 \$100 Other \$ _____

Signature _____ Date _____

UUP Retiree Members who belong to the Teachers' Retirement System or the Employees' Retirement System can request a Pension Deduction Authorization Card at 800.342.4206.

'Modernizing' the opportunities for nuclear war

by Larry Wittner
Albany

Have you heard about America's largest single public expenditure scheduled for the coming decades?

The expenditure is for a 30-year program to "modernize" the U.S. nuclear arsenal and production facilities. Although President Obama began his administration with a dramatic public commitment to building a nuclear weapons-free world, that commitment has long ago dwindled and died. It has been replaced by an administration plan to build a new generation of U.S. nuclear weapons and nuclear production facilities to last the nation well into the second half of the 21st century. This plan includes redesigned nuclear warheads, as well as new nuclear bombers, submarines, land-based missiles, weapons labs, and production plants. The estimated cost? \$1,000,000,000,000.00—or, for anyone unfamiliar with such lofty figures, \$1 trillion.

Critics charge that the expenditure of this staggering sum will either bankrupt the country or, at the least, require massive cutbacks in funding for other government programs. Public education, savaged for years, will almost certainly get the axe in the scramble to cover the costs of this nuclear cornucopia. "We're ... wondering how the heck we're going to pay for it," admitted Brian McKeon, an undersecretary of defense. And we're "probably thanking our stars we won't be here to have to answer the question," he added with a chuckle.

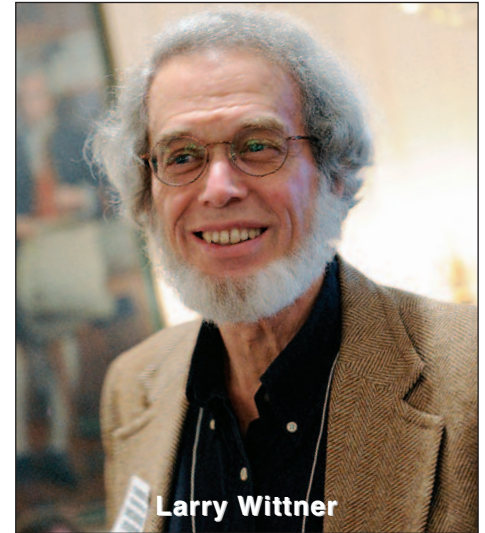
Of course, this nuclear "modernization" plan violates the terms of the 1968 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which requires the nuclear powers to engage in

nuclear disarmament. The plan is also moving forward despite the fact that the U.S. government already possesses roughly 7,000 nuclear weapons that can easily destroy the world. Although climate change might end up accomplishing much the same thing, a nuclear war does have the advantage of terminating life on earth more rapidly.

Progress along these lines is well underway. Last year, the Pentagon flight-tested a mock version of the most advanced of its new nuclear weapons, the B61 Model 12. This redesigned weapon of mass destruction is the country's first precision-guided atomic bomb, with a computer brain and maneuverable fins that enable it to more accurately target sites for annihilation. It also has a "dial-a-yield" feature that allows its handlers to adjust the level of its explosive power.

Supporters of this revamped nuclear weapon argue that, by ensuring greater precision in bombing "enemy" targets, reducing the yield of a nuclear blast, and making a nuclear attack more "thinkable," the B61 Model 12 is actually a more humanitarian and credible weapon than older, bigger versions. James Miller, who developed the nuclear weapons modernization plan while undersecretary of defense, stated in a recent interview that "minimizing civilian casualties if deterrence fails is both a more credible and a more ethical approach."

Other specialists were more critical. The Federation of American Scientists pointed out that the high accuracy of the weapon and its lower settings for destructiveness might tempt military commanders to call



Larry Wittner

America's largest public expenditure in the coming decades could make deployment of nuclear weapons 'more thinkable.'

for its use in a future conflict.

General James E. Cartright, a former head of the U.S. Strategic Command and a retired vice chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, conceded that possessing a smaller nuclear device did make its employment "more thinkable." But he supported developing the weapon because of its presumed ability to enhance nuclear deterrence. Using a gun as a metaphor, he stated: "It makes the trigger easier to pull, but makes the need to pull the trigger less likely."

Are you reassured?

(Larry Wittner, professor emeritus of history, University at Albany, most recently authored a satirical novel about university corporatization, What's Going On at UAardvark?)



What your beneficiaries need to know

Don't forget to remind your beneficiaries that, upon your death, they need to inform the campus Human Resources Department *and* contact UUP Retiree Member Services Coordinator Walter

Apple at (800) 342-4206. If they don't contact the campus or UUP, they won't get the survivor's benefits: that's \$3,000 from the state and \$1,000 from UUP. Remind them to make the calls!

The Active Retiree earns top NYSUT journalism award

by Karen L. Mattison
Associate Director of Communications

UUP's statewide affiliate has named *The Active Retiree* the best retiree publication in the 2016 NYSUT United Communications Contest.

The Active Retiree, edited by COARM Chair Jo Schaffer of Cortland, is published at least three times a year for UUP's 4,800-plus retiree members. This is the second time the newsletter received NYSUT's Best of the Best honor; the first was in 2010.

"I am delighted that our newsletter is again getting the recognition it deserves," said Schaffer, who was elected as statewide COARM chair in 2015.

The judges praised the publication's professional writing, editing, layout and photography.

"The overall package is excellent," the judges wrote. "The topics were timely, informative and uniformly well written. The graphics, layout and headlines

enhanced the content and lifted the entry to a higher level."

En route to being named Best of the Best, the newsletter received a first-place award and two awards of distinction for exceptional writing.

Judy Wishnia of the Stony Brook Chapter won a first-place award for her book review on *Social Security Works* by Nancy J. Altman and Eric R. Kingson, which debunks the myth that the program is failing. The article ran in the Summer 2015 issue.

"Great book review and analysis on Social Security and the myth that it is financially doomed," the judges wrote.

"Unfortunately for the authors, I feel no need to read their book, as this essay is so thorough."

Musings by Mac Nelson of Fredonia landed him an award of distinction for

his article, "Summer jobs ain't what they used to be," published in the Fall 2015 issue.

"What an entertaining essay that also sneaks in perspectives on social justice, economic equality and outsourcing," according to the judges. "Well written, well reasoned, well presented."

Larry Wittner of Albany won an award of distinction for his article, "What do Americans think about economic inequality?" in the Fall 2015 issue.

"This essay does a great job bringing together poll results to explore the discussion about economic inequality," the judges wrote. "The writer notes the difference between polling companies far better than most mainstream media."

The article also earned Wittner first-place honors in the annual UUP Journalism Contest. He received that award at the 2016 Spring Delegate Assembly, May 12-13 in Saratoga Springs.



Public universities are being starved of support

by Judy Wishnia
Stony Brook

On May 28, *The New York Times* had a front page story on the difficulties faced by our sister institution, the City University of New York. Frequently called the "poor man's Harvard," CUNY has always been the open door for generations of lower-income New Yorkers, for immigrants, and for working men and women to attain a college education. The article mentioned many of the famous graduates, such as Jonas Salk (the polio vaccine) and General Colin Powell, as well as CUNY's 10 Nobel Prize winners. Sadly, lack of funding support has led to larger classes, cancellation of courses needed for graduation, and a demoralized faculty, which has been without a

contract and salary increases for six years. As a result of failed negotiations, the CUNY union, the Professional Staff Congress, has voted to strike.

Several days after the *Times* article, first lady Michelle Obama delivered the commencement address to the CUNY graduates, in which she emphasized CUNY's function as an educational institution for all.

Unfortunately, CUNY is not alone in its lack of financial support. SUNY and state universities across the country are being starved. Lack of state support has led to increased dependence on tuition and



more student debt. Since 2008, state support for state universities is down 17 percent and tuition is up 33 percent. For some systems, the figures are even worse. The California system now gets only 9 percent of its support from the state, and in Arizona, students now carry 88 percent of costs.

One can only conclude that many governors and legislators do not wish to have an educated citizenry. The richest country in the world is failing to support public higher education.

It's time we demand action on behalf of our commitment to CUNY, SUNY and all state universities.

Baseball is my game

by Mac Nelson
Fredonia

Though I grew up before Little League and have never played a formal game of what we kids then called “hardball,” I’ve been a fan seemingly since birth. My Chicago household rooted for two teams: my North Side Mom for the Cubs, my South Side Dad for the White Sox. I was happy to inherit both passions. Most Chicagoans felt the same; there was no such fierce rivalry as, say, between the Yankees and the Dodgers.

I was thrilled when my Cubs made the World Series in 1945, and just as delighted by the Go Go Sox of the 1950s—Nellie Fox, Luis Aparicio, and Minnie Minoso, God love him. I spent more time at Wrigley Field than at Comiskey Park, but that was mostly geography—we were North Siders.

Wrigley Field was (and is) green and airy, games then only in the daytime; Comiskey Park was dark, raffish and brooding. It was about a mile from the huge Chicago stockyards (long since closed). When the wind was right, Meat, Poop Blood and Death were in the air. But that never deterred us. Where else you gonna see Joe DiMaggio? Bob Feller? Ted Williams?

And, on the night of Aug. 13, 1948, Leroy R. (“Satchel”) Paige.

I have been to some historic baseball games, but none so thrilling as that night. Satchel Paige was to make his second major league start, for the Cleveland Indians against the Sox.

His many years in the Negro Leagues,

and exhibition games against white major leaguers, had shown beyond doubt that he was one of the great pitchers of the age. We had once lived in Kansas City, home of the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro League, and Satchel Paige was often their big star. I was too young to go to ball games then, but my parents did, and saw him pitch there, in the Minor League park of the Blues, the Yankee affiliate where many Yankees of the ’40s (Johnny Lindell, Ernie Bonham) learned their trade. Satchel did not pitch against the Blues, of course—that happened only after the regular season, on barnstorming tours.

But that was Satchel Paige at his peak, probably in his early middle thirties. It was now 1948, and that brash, delightful charlatan Bill Veeck had scraped together enough money to buy the Cleveland Indians. When he signed with the Tribe, Satchel Paige was listed as 42 years old, though he may have been older; he was the oldest rookie in the history of organized baseball.

That sounds like a joke, and many commentators treated it as one. Jackie Robinson had integrated the National League the previous year; Larry Doby did the same for the American League with the Indians. They had proved they could play. But Paige? At 42?

Gimme a break. That’s just Bill Veeck pandering to African-Americans, looking to make a few extra bucks from the very Black South Side.

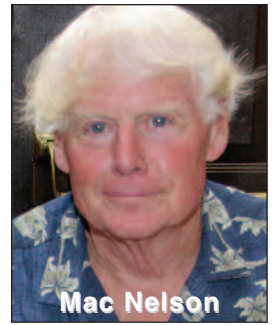
It is certainly true that Bill Veeck was never above a stunt to increase attendance. Who else signed and played a

3-foot 7-inch dwarf? Eddie Gaedel, who walked in his one plate appearance, has a perfect lifetime On Base Percentage: 1,000. He’s right there in the official records, like Babe Ruth. And we all got a good laugh, and a great memory.

By the 1940s, Chicago had become the unofficial capital of Black America. The people and the blues came up Highway 61 and the Illinois Central Railroad and found a home on the South Side. Negro League All-Star games were usually played in Comiskey Park, so the fans knew and loved Satchel Paige. They were there and eager and ready.

Boy, were they ever ready. Comiskey Park had a listed capacity of 52,000. Fans lined up hours before the game, and when the gates opened, they rushed in. No one knows how many were in the park that night to watch Satchel pitch, but a good guess is 70,000. Without me and my Dad, it would have been 69,998.

Harold Nelson had been a good country ball player. He even got an offer from the Yankees to play in their low minor leagues. As he said, “I run too long in the same place,” that is, he was slow (like his son), so he turned it down. But he loved baseball and equity and he knew what a historic night this was, so we took the train from the suburbs to Comiskey and just squeezed in.



Mac Nelson

see **Baseball**, page 15

Get the *Organizing Your Vital Records* booklet

Having all your personal information in one place can make it easier to deal with the unexpected.

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“We hope this document helps give you a view of your vital

information, and some measure of peace of mind for you and those you hold dear,” said COARM Chair Jo Schaffer.

The document can be found on the UUP website at <http://bit.ly/1kJD2LR> or by contacting Walter Apple, retiree member services coordinator, at wapple@uupmail.org or at (800) 342-4206.



Reading is fun

(Editor's Note: Alvin Magid is founder and executive director of The Reading Is Fun Program. His effort is an example of how SUNY retirees can do personally rewarding work that serves the public/community interest. This article is an update to one published in The Active Retiree, Fall 2013, p. 11.)

by Al Magid
Albany

Three years ago, I founded The Reading Is Fun Program in Schenectady, an economically challenged, heterogeneous city of 65,000, many of whom were suffering distressed lives. Since then, aided by a large—and ever-growing—cohort of volunteers, I've been networking all over the city and in the surrounding area to keep building the program, so that it can fulfill its mission: to help teach reading-readiness (letter identification, letter sounds, and letter combinations) and conversational skills and vocabulary to as many as possible of the city's 4- to 9-year-olds, in pre-K, kindergarten and grades 1-3, so that the youngsters may be more solidly grounded and their prospects in life significantly improved.

During the school year 2015-2016, 65 RIF volunteers worked one-on-one with 104 youngsters in different public venues, principally in eight schools. Early on I was warned by some that it would be a daunting task, with little likelihood of success. They've been proven wrong.

RIF is partnering with six key organizations in Schenectady, all of them as determined as I am to ensure that RIF will have a permanent place in the civic life of the municipality: the Schenectady City School District, the Schenectady City School District Education Foundation, the historic First United Methodist Church, the Boys and Girls Club, the Schenectady County Sheriff's Office/Jail, and the Schenectady Police Department. Among the RIF volunteers are the county sheriff and an assistant chief of police, both of them decked out in their handsome uniforms as they work on reading



ERICA MILLER/DAILY GAZETTE

RIF Executive Director Al Magid works on reading skills with a Schenectady County Jail inmate and his son. The photo first ran alongside an article in the July 14, 2015, issue of the Schenectady *Daily Gazette*.

with Schenectady school children. (Note: A 501(c)3 tax-exempt entity, the Schenectady City School District Education Foundation manages all money raised by The Reading Is Fun Program to support RIF activities; the education foundation also does routine year-end bookkeeping for RIF.)

I'm often asked what led me to adopt the motto, "Where Every Child Is Everyone's Child." I'll tell you.

More than a half century ago, I went with my family—my wife and our two daughters, ages 26 months and 15 months—to Nigeria, to spend the academic year 1962-1963 conducting Ph.D. dissertation research on local politics and governmental administration among the Idoma people. While there I frequently observed newborns being breast-fed by women who were not their biological mothers, e.g., when the biological mothers were ill or tilling the fields or trading in the marketplace.

One day I remarked on this to a village elder, who proceeded to ask me if it was not the practice also in America. I answered that it was not, then asked him why it was so in Idomaland. He an-

swered, "It has always been this way among our people. You see, among the Idoma, every child is everyone's child."

A few months later, my family had an experience that brought this practice home to us squarely, directly. Traveling along a country road, my battered old VW Bug suddenly blew a tire. My wife and our two daughters sat nearby as my local research assistant and I strained to replace it. At noontime, in the blazing heat. Suddenly, there appeared a bare-chested woman carrying a load of firewood on her head. Seeing our plight, she put the firewood down on the ground and began rubbing her breasts. What could this mean? My wife and I conjectured that the woman must be ill, suffering pain. I asked my assistant if this was so, should we drive her immediately to the government hospital a long way off. He laughed, then remarked, "No, she's not ill, she requires no hospital care."

My assistant went on to explain, "Seeing your two children and your family's distress, she was offering to breast-feed the youngsters." I asked him to tell the woman that my wife and I were deeply appreciative and that our girls were off

In your opinion

Why I'm opposed to online courses

by Judy Wishnia
Stony Brook

Although I am happy and incredibly busy as a retiree, there are many times when I miss the excitement, the challenges and the intellectual atmosphere of the classroom. And that is why I am opposed to the expansion of online courses at the expense of classroom teaching.

Yes, there is room for online courses, especially for working people or those who live far away from a campus. But can you teach a language without hearing speech, or a science course without a lab. Even if the course is viable online, what is missing is the intellectual stimulation, the instant give and take of the classroom.

I taught large history classes, frequently with as many as 150 students. By being in the classroom, I could tell if I had their interest and understanding. If there was a sea of bored faces and notes being passed with giggles, I knew to change my approach (or tell a joke). Most critically, the students would

question, would challenge and, best of all, add to our discussion. It was exciting!

I frequently attend meetings of K-12 retirees on Long Island, and often a former student will stop me and tell me how much they enjoyed the stimulation of our class. (Not bad for the ego as well.)

One of my most interesting teaching experiences was when I taught a seminar for older women returning to college, all of them with work and family obligations. Needless to say, they were nervous about their late entry into college, but gradually the friendships and support network grew. They had coffee together, discussed their course work together. When one woman had a sick child at home and she had to take an important exam, two of the seminar students went to her house to stay with the child. I once suggested that they



Judy Wishnia

might take a break from textbooks and read a novel. One woman, with 4 or 5 kids, came to me to say that she had never read a novel and did not know where to begin. I knew that she had probably read a novel or two in high school, but I did not question her. *The Color Purple* had just been released and I had just finished reading it. I gave her my copy, thinking that it might relate to her experiences.

Two days later, she burst into my office. "I loved the book. Do you have any more novels?" Today, that woman with her four kids would be taking an online course, without a support network of friends, and I would not be able to give her a book.

Years later, my husband and I were invited to a party celebrating the law school graduation of one of the women. The seminar members, all of them proud of their diplomas and achievements, were there to cheer her on.

(Judy Wishnia, professor emerita of history, SUNY Stony Brook, is immediate past chair of COARM).

breast and needed no assistance with feeding. Hearing that, she lifted the firewood back onto her head, wished us good fortune, and went on her way. I asked my assistant if the woman had expected to be paid for her service, and he replied tersely, "Of course not, among the Idoma, every child is everyone's child."

That spirit is what the all-volunteer Reading Is Fun Program is about, helping children in need in families in need, engendering widespread feelings of optimism and hope.

RIF continues to be acclaimed in many quarters in Schenectady and the surrounding area. Classroom teachers in the city school district have been effusive in their praise of RIF's work with youngsters on the

reading front, as have been the superintendent of schools and other school administrators; government officials; the electronic and print media; a wide array of civic organizations; and the public.

The Schenectady City School District Education Foundation has selected The Reading Is Fun Program as the 2017 recipient of the Ray and June Benenson Community Service Award, which is presented annually to individuals and/or organizations rendering outstanding support to the students and teachers in the city school district. The award will be presented at the foundation's Education Celebration event, Jan. 19, 2017, at the historic Proctor's Theatre in Schenectady.

To support its work, RIF is continuing to

attract volunteers, along with donations of money and children's books and educational apparatus and writing supplies. Its fundraising campaign includes an annual hayride/bonfire event at Riverview Orchard, Riverview Road, Rexford, NY, this year on Sept. 30 from 7-9:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Magid, The Schenectady City School District Education Foundation/The Reading Is Fun Program, PO Box 9437, Niskayuna, NY 12309, at magid2@juno.com or at 518-377-9542.

(Al Magid, a professor emeritus of political science, UAlbany, is the elected representative for COARM's Capital District region.)

COARM regional updates

Souther Tier

by Jo Schaffer
Cortland

The Southern District has had a busy spring! On April 26, 44 retirees from the Oneonta and Delhi campuses met at Brooks House of Bar-B-Que to catch up with news of fellow retirees.

Dr. Larry Guzy, a retiree from the psychology department at SUNY Oneonta, gave attendees points on driving more safely in a fun and collaborative manner.

Thirty-eight Cortland retirees met on campus April 30. Kevin Sheets of the history department entertained with the topic of memory systems of the 19th century. These systems drew on ancient memory techniques which included the creation of elaborate “memory palaces” allowing association of facts so one could recall details. It is not recommended that these memory aids would be effective today!

More than 30 retirees met on June 6 in the Tau Bearcat Room on Binghamton’s campus. Professor Carl Lipo of the anthropology department enlightened the audience with a “Rethinking of the Mystery of Easter Island.” Recent research has revealed that the arrival of Europeans caused the collapse of the Rapa Nui’s culture, not the exhaustion of resources as previously thought.

At each meetings, Schaffer spoke on current budget and retiree issues, especially the need for everyone to be involved in advocacy. Southern Tier rep Loraine Tyler talked about the problems of a Constitutional Convention and the need to vote no!

Capital District

by Al Magid
Albany

Capital District Region COARM met May 17 at Alumni House on the UAlbany campus for its semiannual forum/brunch. The forum addressed the hot-button topic, “The Assault on Public Sector Unions: The U.S. Supreme Court and *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*.”



Benjamin



Seidel

Two experts, Bret Benjamin, an associate professor of English at UAlbany and president of the UUP Albany Chapter, and attorney Maureen Seidel, a NYSUT labor relations specialist assigned to UUP, spoke about the case and its manifold aspects and implications. Among them, importantly, is the stalemate between the White House and the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate and House, as well as the impending presidential and congressional elections, and the as-yet unresolved faceoff between President Obama and the Senate over how and with whom to fill the U.S. Supreme Court vacancy resulting from the recent death of Justice Antonin Scalia, etc. As it stands,

public-sector unions won what was essentially a temporary reprieve in *Friedrichs* because the Court, divided 4-4, could not render a definitive, binding judgment. For the time being, the principle of “fair share,” i.e., that all who benefit from union representation should share fairly in the costs of that work, has life. But cases kindred to *Friedrichs* are continuing to accumulate around the country, promising a long, drawn-out struggle over “fair share” and the future of public-sector unions.



Magid

A robust Q & A followed the two presentations, in conjunction with a buffet lunch provided by statewide COARM. The audience included mostly retirees from the SUNY campuses at Albany, New Paltz and Cobleskill.

COARM’s Capital District Region Executive Committee urges the more than 300 academic and professional retirees from the Albany, New Paltz and Cobleskill campuses and the retirees from SUNY System Administration to participate in the always lively and informative semiannual meetings, held in May and October. All of the meetings include guest speakers and are keyed to timely issues, with an emphasis on education and public policy, domestic and international.

The Executive Committee will soon meet to plan the October forum/brunch.

Farmingdale

by Barbara Maertz
Farmingdale

In a departure from the usual agenda at our COARM brunch, local legislators were invited to speak to the retirees about the issues affecting their benefits that were voted on in this year’s budget negotiations.

Legislators Charles Lavine, Joseph Saladino, Kimberly Jean-Pierre and Chad Lupinacci and Sen. Michael Venditto heard UUP President Fred Kowal thank them for their votes to prevent IRMMA legislation from being approved. IRMMA, as proposed by Gov. Cuomo, would have capped reimbursement of Medicare payments at \$104.90 per month, causing many retirees to lose up to \$1,200 a year in reimbursement monies. Kowal also cited another Cuomo proposal to pro rate health benefits for new retirees with less than 30 years of service, which would have resulted in higher premiums for their health benefits in retirement. This proposal would also severely affect the large number of contingent members who do not accrue sick benefit credits at the same rate as full-time members or serve for as long a time. With part-time members approaching 68 percent of UUP membership at Farmingdale, this proposal would negatively affect large numbers of our members and future retirees.

Kowal reminded the legislators of the need for stronger language

to compel SUNY to pay for utilities and other expenses instead of using tuition dollars. Kowal thanked the retirees for continuing to advocate through the email; letters to protect the benefits of retirees. He told us that while the legislators had supported us on these benefits issues again this year, the governor could likely resubmit them next year. Each legislator that spoke assured the retirees that they would continue to support our issues, but emphasized the need to hear from the retirees on these issues. Barbara Maertz reminded the members to go to the union's website at www.UUPinfo.org to send letters to the legislators on a number of topics.

Members enjoyed friendly conversation, a good brunch and some benefits information. In the fall meeting, UUP Retiree Member Services Coordinator Walter Apple will be here for a full benefits discussion. We hope to see you there.

Stony Brook

by **Barbara Maertz**
Farmingdale

There was a full house of 120 people that came to the COARM brunch to hear Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker speak about local issues affecting seniors.

Anker is chair of the Senior and Consumer Affairs Committee and has heard the complaints of all the scam calls seniors get and the constant robocalls. She shared many tips to combat this nuisance, as well as detailed information about the services that are available to help seniors.

Anker had a list of many stores that give senior discounts, a brochure that highlighted the SCAT bus system, and plenty of phone numbers to keep at hand. Anker is bright, hardworking and dedicated to family and senior issues.

Anker also brought along the director of the Office for the Aging, Holly Rhodes Teague, who stressed that her staff is friendly and helpful. She acknowledged that they cannot fix all the problems brought to them, but they can give correct information and referrals. She distributed the *Program and Services Guide For Senior Citizens*, which is the A-to-Z reference for programs in Suffolk County. Many thanks to Charlie McAteer, who arranged the speakers.

UUP Membership Development Officer Tom Hoey introduced himself to the group and talked about the necessity to recruit members because of the *Friedrichs* Supreme Court case and the value of membership. Hoey shared with the group the latest info on the status of the Maintenance of Effort bill to support SUNY funding, and the veteran's legislation.

New UUP Stony Brook Chapter President Kevin Moriarty also was introduced to the group and told us that the union was ready to help in the legislative advocacy and invited them to join with him.

Judy Wishnia of Stony Brook spoke about the successes that



NICK KORIDIS

Suffolk County Legislator Sarah Anker, center, spoke about issues affecting seniors. She is flanked by COARM Long Island Region representative Barbara Maertz and Charlie McAteer of Stony Brook.

UUP has gained from the Legislature for retirees, specifically the IRMMA reimbursement, the prevention of the governor's tier legislation for employees with less than 30 years of service, and the veteran's buy-back legislation. Wishnia and Maertz urged members to go to www.uupinfo.org to support these issues and other legislation that UUP members need.

Thanks to my helpers for the event: Beverly Rivera Drummond; Wishnia; Diana Tischler, Stony Brook Chapter administrative assistant; and Moriarty. With so many members attending, I couldn't have done it without them.

We hope to see you again at the fall membership brunch in October.

Southern Florida

by **Harvey Axlerod**
Buffalo Center

On May 3, 2016, a group of Southern Florida retirees held their second meeting in Boynton Beach, Florida.

The guest speaker was Deputy John Ledford of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, who spoke on "Seniors and Scams." The talk had two main components: Identity theft, and residential security.

There was too much presented to recall it all, but one example on identity theft: Never use the red flag on your mail box for outgoing mail. Yes, it's convenient for you and the mail carrier. But it also serves as an indicator to an identity thief that some "goodies" might be inside to help them grab your identity.

On residential security, bear in mind that thieves always seek four items: money, jewelry, drugs (both legal and illegal) and weapons. They always head for the master bedroom. It was suggested that seniors keep these items in an alternate location.

see **Regions**, page 15



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Regions

(continued from page 13)

Western NY

by Stacey Johnson
Buffalo

The Western NY retirees met May 17 over lunch at Sean Patrick's Restaurant in Getzville. UUP Retiree Services Coordinator Walter Apple and Stacey Johnson greeted members, and Dawn Becker handled registration. There were 59 attendees.

The meeting opened with an enthusiastic presentation by Karen Davis, senior consumer fraud representative from the Regional Office of the NYS Attorney General. Davis brought a knowledgeable, and cautionary message to each of us regarding the expansion of 'scamming' to the 20-30 and 65+ age



LARRY SCOTT

Office of the Attorney General staffer Karen Davis spoke about consumer fraud.

groups. It seemed like all those present had telephone calls that fell into the scamming category. Davis's message was that if you thought you were being scammed or defrauded somehow, call her office. They take care of all kinds of these

they had other concerns.

Speakers were presented with a certificate of appreciation.

We look forward to meeting again in the fall.

fraudulent activities. By the end of her talk we were "her people." Everyone appreciated her presence at our luncheon.

Lunch was buffet and excellent. Everyone found something they enjoyed. By the time dessert was served, they were ready for our second speaker, UUP Retiree Member Services Coordinator Walter Apple. He spoke about benefits that not everyone was aware of. He was able to answer questions immediately, and encouraged those present to contact him if

Baseball

(continued from page 9)

The crowd, almost all Black, was in festive mood. On any other night they would have been rooting for the White Sox. Not tonight. We found an unoccupied set of concrete steps along the first base line and settled in to watch a master work. Satchel was always gangly, lean. He had never looked like the power pitcher he once was. He of course no longer had the blazing fastball, and the "stuff" that had made him a star. What he did have was a wide variety of pitching motions, slow, fast, sidearm, overarm, hesitation, all designed to baffle the batter and get him out with average "stuff."

And baffle them he did. As Warren Spahn put it: "Hitting is timing. Pitching is upsetting timing," and that's exactly what the old master did. The zeros kept piling up on the scoreboard, the crowd (me included) cheering, adoring every minute of it. It was goosebump thrilling. Could he possibly keep it up? He could and

did. He pitched a five-hit shutout, winning 5-0. You couldn't make this stuff up.

And what did this so-called Veeck gimmick do for his team? Cleveland tied with Boston for the pennant in 1948, and won a playoff and then the World Series. Satchel Paige had 6 wins, 1 loss, for the half season he played. Clearly, Cleveland does not win the pennant or the Series without him. He was the difference. And, of course, he proved what we had all lost by his and others' exclusion from organized baseball. So long as there was no direct competition, some could say that African-Americans couldn't play well enough to be in the Majors. Larry Doby and Jackie Robinson showed how ridiculous that was. Now an old man, his skills dwindling, embarrasses the youngsters and wins a world championship.

Much later, when his skills were really



almost gone, Satchel Paige did participate in jokes about his age. At age 59, he sat in a rocking chair in the bullpen, and in a reclining chair in the dugout. He could afford to laugh; he'd made his point. I've visited his grave in Kansas City, a pilgrimage. His big white marble monument lists his six famous rules for

living, including "Avoid running at all times," and "Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you." He left us wise, witty observations and aphorisms, my favorite of which is one his life exemplifies: "Work like you don't need the money. Love like you've never been hurt. Dance like nobody's watching."

(Mac Nelson lives in Brocton. His prize-winning book TWENTY WEST: The Great Road Across America [SUNY Press] is available in paperback.)



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