

## Wittner named 2013 'Outstanding Retiree'

By Mike Lisi  
UUP Communications Specialist

**L**arry Wittner has been a tireless advocate for labor. For this and other reasons, Wittner, a UAlbany emeritus professor of history, was honored in October with the Pearl H. Brod Outstanding Active Retiree Award.

The award, presented by the union's Committee on Active Retired Membership (COARM), honors an individual who has rendered outstanding volunteer service and has provided exemplary service to UUP and SUNY following retirement. The candidate is recommended by COARM; UUP's statewide Executive Board makes the final decision.

### UUP HONOREE

Wittner taught for 43 years on college campuses in the U.S. and abroad; he spent 36 years at UAlbany before retiring in 2010.

Wittner, a recipient of the union's 2010 Nina Mitchell Award for Distinguished Service, began his UUP involvement in 1979, when he became an Albany Chapter executive board member. He was the first

chair of UUP's Solidarity Committee; he's been a member since 1988. In 1990, he received a New York State/UUP Excellence Award.

Currently, he is the executive secretary of the Albany County Central Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO. He also sings and plays banjo with the Solidarity Singers of Albany.

Wittner has been quite active in UUP and with civil justice issues since his retirement. This year alone, he's served as a UUP delegate and chaired UUP's Solidarity Committee. He was elected as a board member of Peace Action, a national organization dedicated to peace.

"If there were a Nobel Prize for unionism, I would give it to Larry," said COARM Chair Judy Wishnia. "Happily, we can honor him with our UUP prize: retiree of the year."



Wittner

### COMMUNITY CONSCIOUS

Last year, Wittner pushed for passage of the Albany County Peace Proclamation, which called for U.S. troops to return home from Afghanistan and a substantial Pentagon budget cut. The measure was approved by the Albany County Legislature.

In 2009, Wittner played a role in re-unionizing

UAlbany dining hall workers, who pressed their employer to recognize HERE Local 471 as the collective bargaining agent for campus dining hall employees.

Wittner's involvement in social justice dates back to the 1960s, when he was a civil rights worker and picked fruit as a migratory farm worker. In the 1980s, he spoke out against apartheid in South Africa, and was arrested at a peaceful sit-in at Albany's Federal Building in 1985, as part of the nationwide Free South Africa demonstrations.

see WITTNER, page 9

## UUPers attend first NYSUT Retiree Council 40-42 meeting

By Jo Schaffer  
Cortland

**N**YSUT has a highly organized and involved program for its retirees within its Election District (ED) system. NYSUT's organizational requirements are different than those of UUP: NYSUT members pay set dues during their active years to provide paid-in-full membership for the Retiree Council system.

Only recently, UUP's retiree members have been able to take advantage of the Retiree Council network. If you remember, UUP's Committee on Active Retired Membership (COARM) asked UUP retiree members to accept a set of bylaws that would be in compliance with both NYSUT and UUP. Discussion for this process took a long time, as COARM weighed the consequences of being a more active participant with NYSUT retirees. Elections were held last year for nine seats on Retiree Council 40-42—the EDs assigned to UUP—

that also gives UUP retirees representation at NYSUT Representative Assemblies.

For the first time, four of those elected Retiree Council 40-42 officers participated in the statewide NYSUT retirees meeting, Oct. 23-24. Patricia Stempel, Joan Connolly, Patty Bentley and Jo Schaffer joined NYSUT members to discuss issues of concern to retirees.

"The advantages of our entering into this arrangement came to fruition with the initial statement I made to them," Schaffer said. "I introduced 'us,' explaining that public education extends from preK through higher ed, and that we have supported their efforts, especially at the June rally in Albany. They needed to know the many problems SUNY/UUP and CUNY/PSC were facing, and that we were all in the same fight to protect public education and that we need to work cooperatively."

see COUNCIL, page 9

## The Active Retiree

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**Jamie F. Dangler**/VP for Academics  
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## Life as I see it ...

# 'Retirement shock'

By Henry Geerken  
 Cobleskill



Geerken

If you are a new SUNY retiree—welcome aboard!

It is a great life once you get used to the ins and outs of being a person of leisure.

I say that with tongue in cheek because the idea that you'll have "free time" just flew out the window.

The first thing you need to know is that, once you make the decision to retire, you'll be assailed by hoards of people, all asking you to volunteer for one thing or another. Within minutes of your decision, the drums start beating throughout the land, announcing you as "fresh blood."

You'll be called on by people you know (and perhaps respect) to help in one crisis or another. The library needs more books; committees need more members. They will appeal to your "civic pride," beg you to become active. They will make it sound that by serving you will be saved from the doldrums of retirement. They do not accept the excuse that "my wife/husband has a million jobs for me to do."

If after reading this you still say "yes," expect additional requests for you to pick up roadside garbage, serve as town clerk or town justice, act as town librarian, attend condo review and school board meetings, volunteer as town building inspector or dog catcher, be road supervisor and town constable—and the beat goes on in a never-ending crescendo.

If you're lucky to "step out" of the whirl-

wind that has become your life, the first thing you will probably say is, "What the hell happened?" My friend has dubbed it "Retirement shock."

## SHOCK ATTACK

The only way to fight back is to plan ahead. The first

thing that you want to do is to buy a new vehicle—the dream car you couldn't afford because of sending the kids to college, paying off your mortgage, buying clothes for work, and fixing the kids' teeth. You know exactly what you want. Do it. Then go out and buy a "junker" that still runs. This will become your "town car." The new car you bought stays in the garage to be driven only on trips out of town.

When you go into town, make sure that you haven't shaved for at least three days and wear old clothes that smell of motor oil or, better yet, a barn full of cows. (Offer to shovel down the silage for one day.) Do not offer to do it for multiple days because you want to stink and not smell from "stench." It won't take long before people start avoiding you ... and you are on your way to a peaceful retirement.

In addition to the new car (that you so richly deserve), buy yourself a hammock. Lying in a hammock with a grandchild on either side is the best way to "tell them a story that starts with 'Once upon a time.'"

There is one more pitfall to be aware of and that is the list of jobs that have accumulated over the years. But that's been covered in a previous article.

*From the COARM chair*

# I can't help but wonder ...

I have spent the last few weeks shepherding my husband from medical test to medical test and then sitting at his hospital bedside. Happily, he is doing well, but those quiet hours of waiting made me think about how lucky we are, as UUP retirees, to have excellent medical coverage. His surgeon is considered the best in his field and the care he got from the nurses and other staff members at Beth Israel/Mt. Sinai hospital was extraordinary.

But, what about other Americans? What about the poor of Brooklyn, uninsured or on Medicaid, who need and value the medical services at our own Downstate University Hospital, now underfunded and threatened with drastic cuts? And what about the citizens of Texas who live in the state with the highest percentage of uninsured citizens, where Gov. Perry has refused to take *federal* money to expand Medicaid? And of course, Texas is willing to endanger the health of women by passing onerous regulations for women's health clinics.

A lead article in *The New York Times* (Nov. 10) tells of a hospital in Savannah, Ga., (yet another state refusing to expand Medicaid) struggling to care for cancer and other illnesses because of lack of funds. So I wonder: Do they want people to die?

And then, of course, we have the cuts in SNAP (the food stamp program). Millionaires will get farm subsidies but the food stamp budget, part of the same Farm bill, has already been cut by \$5 billion and House Republicans have passed further cuts of \$39 billion. I watched our members of Congress talk about how food stamps encourage dependency (thank you, Paul Ryan). And I heard a Congressman declare that cutting food stamps was the Christian thing to do because the Bible says: "He who does not work, shall not eat." But of course, many SNAP recipients do work (at Walmart, for example); many are veterans and, of the 47 million Americans receiving food stamps, 49 percent are children. I can only assume that the Congressman wants to return to the 19th century and have those children



EL-WISE NOSETTE

**"Even as the top 1 percent saw an income increase of 34 percent, we hear the mantra to cut the 'entitlements.'"**

— Judy Wishnia

work in factories (oops, there are not many factories left).

Another *The New York Times* article (Nov. 3), this one by Mark Rank of Washington University, analyzes how widespread poverty is in our country. Twenty-two percent of our children live in dire poverty and millions more in near poverty. He notes that the U.S. spends the least among industrialized nations in terms of pulling families out of poverty. Unlike other countries, the U.S. does not provide universal health care, affordable child care or low-income housing. Our poverty rate is twice the European average. I can't help but wonder: Do they want children to die?

Let us not forget our cohorts, the senior citizens. We, in UUP, can rely on some pension income, as well as Social Security. But millions of seniors have no pensions and no savings. Their only income is

Social Security. Even as the top 1 percent saw an income increase of 34 percent, we hear the mantra to cut the "entitlements." So again I wonder: Do they want people (us) to die?

This year's election saw some victories for those who would reject these policies, and I urge you to make sure that your representatives are not supporting the Republican "death panels."

But the real strength will be in the grassroots efforts to wipe out poverty by making sure that there is health care for all, that all children are educated, that there is an increase in the minimum wage, and that Social Security and Medicare are improved, not cut.

Make your voices heard.

*Judy Wishnia*



# Regional meetings

## A tale of two cities: Albany and Niagara Falls

By Harvey Axlerod  
Buffalo Center

In late October, Western New York retirees had two events. The first, our annual fall membership meeting replete with guest speakers; our second was a fun trip to an area culinary institute.

The Oct. 15 gathering had a theme of “What’s Happening in Albany: The Good and the Bad.” It featured UUP statewide Vice President for Academics Jamie Dangler and Democratic state Assemblyman Sean Ryan, who represents the Erie Lake waterfront district from the Black Rock area of Buffalo to Hamburg.

Dangler, dazzling as always, detailed several issues:

- The growing representation of part-time faculty, their poor salary and working conditions, and lack of job security;
- The lawsuit on behalf of retirees, who incurred a 2 percent increase in their share of the health insurance premium as a result of a questionable legislative maneuver; and
- The availability of “Centers of Excellence” for medical care, such as Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

Ryan, who holds a 100 percent legislative voting record from NYSUT, was also dazzling; he not only took reasonable positions, he was very well versed in the logic as well. He outlined:

- His concurrence with Dangler on part-time faculty, asking (rhetorically), Why would anyone want to invest in a Ph.D., just to work as a part-time faculty member?;
- He supports the need for SUNY to make higher education affordable to more students and the need for more direct funding to SUNY; and
- He supports the Buffalo Medical Corridor, but also questioned if this relates to the attempted destruction of Downstate Medical Center.

After the talk, there was unanimous agreement that this was a wonderful meeting. Our traditional door prize, a succulent dish, was won by Joan Roberts.

On Oct. 25, we had a “social event”—a



Clockwise from top left are UUP VP for Academics Jamie Dangler, Assemblyman Sean Ryan and COARM Western NY regional representative Harvey Axlerod.

chance to have some fun. We toured the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute (NFCI), a part of Niagara County Community College. The program moved to its current location in the old “Rainbow Mall” in September 2012. The program has seven majors, from restaurant management to baking pastry arts, and has plans to open an eighth program, “Microbreweries.”

Led by Jim Carlo, coordinator of hospitality management, the 90-minute tour was a fact-filled, exciting event. Among the many facts presented were:

- “Labs,” which include a beverage lab, cake decorating labs, and at least half a dozen others;
- NFCI supplies 80 percent of the baked

goods at the Seneca-Niagara Casino, located across the street;

- ElectroLux is known for vacuum cleaners in the U.S., but the company is famous in Europe for producing high-end, professional-grade restaurant appliances;
- NFCI is currently negotiating with the Empire State College campus in Western NY for an even larger program; and
- The culinary institute near New Paltz costs about \$60,000 for a two-year program, while the NFCI costs about \$10,000.

After the tour, the group had a chance to explore some of the facilities open to the public. There is a wine shop, featuring only New York state wines; a Barnes and Noble, featuring all kinds of culinary books and a variety of culinary supplies; a deli and pastry shop; and SAVOR, the NFCI’s gourmet restaurant open to the public. Those of us who had lunch at SAVOR were very impressed with the high quality of food.

As a thank you for the tour, members of the group made a donation to the NFCI Scholarship Fund.

# Capital District retirees discuss labor's future

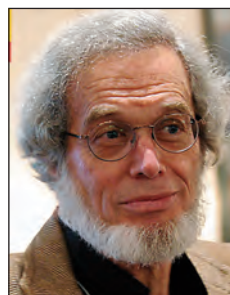
By Al Magid  
Albany

Many of us can remember a time when American labor and the union movement were riding on the high tide of a buoyant economy, when for a large and growing number of people wages were rising, benefits and workplace conditions were improving, and expectations of job security were building. It was a time when unions were strong and well-positioned to protect and advance the interests of a burgeoning middle class, grounded mostly on a labor force that thought the future would be even better. Alas, not anymore.

With these considerations in mind, Capital District COARM's Executive Committee deemed it appropriate, nay urgent, to address the question, What to do about American labor and the union movement in deep trouble? For that purpose, Capital District COARM convened its fall semester semi-annual meeting on Oct. 3 in the Alumni House on UAlbany's main campus, with two fine speakers, Bill Scheuerman and Larry Wittner.

Scheuerman was UUP president for 14 years, from 1993 to 2007. He left that post to take up the presidency of the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md., for a few years. A well-published emeritus professor of political science at SUNY Oswego, he is currently consulting on labor affairs and collaborating on a book about the history of the UUP.

Wittner, an emeritus professor of history at UAlbany, has distinguished himself as the author of numerous books and articles and as a union and peace activist. His most recent book, *What's Going on at*



Speaking at the Capital District retirees luncheon were, from left, former UUP president Bill Scheuerman, 2013 Outstanding Retiree Award recipient Larry Wittner of UAlbany, and COARM Capital District rep Al Magid.

*UAardvark?*, a novel about academia, has attracted much interest. Among his many awards is having been endorsed by statewide COARM—and approved by the statewide Executive Board—to receive the Pearl H. Brod Outstanding Active Retiree Award for 2013.

Scheuerman and Wittner highlighted the interconnected histories of American labor and the union movement, of their fortunes rising and falling in tandem. They focused, among other things, on traditional union structures and patterns of behavior and the need for the union movement to better adapt to shifting forces in an era of globalization marked by capital and governments increasingly allying against the interests of labor and the union movement. Both speakers offered prescriptions for how unions might reinvent themselves in their own and labor's long-term interest.

The meeting ran from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It began with SUNY academic and professional retirees and guests from the

campuses at Albany, New Paltz and Cobleskill socializing over coffee, tea and sweets, and consulting printed materials provided by UUP Member Benefits and Services. Walter Apple, UUP retiree member services coordinator, updated the gathering on retiree benefits.

Scheuerman and Wittner made their presentations from noon to 1 p.m., followed by an hour-long Q & A.

Capital District COARM urges the more than 300 academic and professional retirees from the Albany, New Paltz and Cobleskill areas to participate in its lively and informative semi-annual meetings, held in October and May. All of the meetings include guest speakers and are keyed to timely issues, with an emphasis on education and public policy, domestic and international. And, of course, there's always food and drink—a buffet brunch is provided by statewide COARM.

Capital District COARM's Executive Committee is planning a May program.



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# Regional meetings

## Southern Tier retirees meet on local campuses

By Jo Schaffer  
Cortland

**B**usy, busy, busy! As Southern Tier rep, I have found it more productive to have campus/small area meetings. Folks have fewer miles to travel; enjoy social time with those they have known for years; and expect more personal answers to questions they ask me directly, face to face, mano y mano! I also get the benefit of traveling through some of the plushest countryside in the state.

### CORTLAND: OCT. 2

I had the pleasure of attending the 13th Annual NYSUT Retiree Councils 7 and 8 Conference held in East Syracuse. The NYSUT councils are active in engaging members in joint regional meetings and presenting them with issues of specific concern. Among the workshop titles were "Concepts of Aging in Place," "Stress Strategies," and "Bats."

State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli was the luncheon speaker. He never fails to energize his audience. Apart from his assurance that the pension fund he supervises is in healthy condition, DiNapoli shared his passion about protecting public education.

### CORTLAND: OCT. 12

The semi-annual SUNY Cortland Emeriti Brunches, co-sponsored by the campus administration and COARM (with COARM organizing the speakers)

was held on campus on a Saturday. Close to 72 guests were in attendance to hear UUP President Fred Kowal and a campus proxy talk about current achievements and goals. I had my few minutes to bring everyone up to date on benefits, Medicare changes, hospital regulations on observation rules, and other retiree and union issues.

Our guest speaker was Kathryn Kramer, chair of the art and art history department who specializes in modern and contemporary art. Her talk, about the Shanghai Biennale, was a grand

Above, from left, are UUP Binghamton Chapter President Benita Roth, former chapter president Bob Pompei and COARM Southern Tier rep Jo Schaffer of Cortland.

Left, from left, are Richard Tyler and Bill Simons, both of Oneonta, and Joe Baldwin of Canton.

success as she made understanding contemporary art accessible and fascinating. She made the old axiom "I don't understand any of that modern stuff" moot with a delightful program that was easily comprehensible.

An added gift for me came with her mention of one of the Chinese artists she has studied, who turned out to be my former translator in 1986 when he was a



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JO SCHAFFER

## North Country retirees gather in Malone



A hardy group of 18 gathered (the first such meeting in eight years) at the Malone Golf Club, braving high winds, downed trees and driving rain. UUP President Fred Kowal (pictured in suit and tie) was the featured speaker. Many thanks to Walter Apple

and Arty Shertzer for attending and speaking as well. Among those photographed with Kowal, Shertzer and Apple are Dave Curry, Deb Zinser, Joe Lamendola, George Kahn and Patty Bentley. The next meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2014, also in Malone.

young student in Beijing and I was on exchange at his college, Beijing Capital University and the painter of a portrait of the wife of a former SUNY College president who was in the audience. We had both lost contact with him over the years. A double whammy of coincidence!

### ONEONTA: OCT. 30

Loraine Tyler, the SUNY Oneonta COARM liaison and organizer extraordinaire, arranged for a meeting at a restaurant in “midtown” Oneonta.

Present were such old hands as Fred Miller and many new retirees. UUP Oneonta Chapter President Bill Simons is always supportive of the involvement of the area retirees and presented his best wishes to the group.

The speaker/performer was Dan Brenner, former SUNY Oneonta registrar. He has devoted considerable time to studying Edwin Moore, a local newspaper columnist and character. Brenner’s program was a monologue consisting of opinions and quotations from the many columns written by Moore. Brenner could be compared to a local Mark Twain—witty, sarcastic and poignant all at the same time.

### SYRACUSE: NOV. 8

The Central New York Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA), a regional gang of dedicated retiree activists met as usual at NYSUT’s East Syracuse office on the second Friday of the month.

I always find these meetings to be of current and important interest, and well attended by experienced and vital labor retirees. The ARA represents retirees, nationally, from all areas of union involvement—the UAW, NYSUT, BPEW, Postal Workers and UUP, to name a few. It is comforting to know that our concerns with retiree issues, e.g., health insurance, Social Security, pensions and Medicare, are shared across the unions.

The meeting this month featured a historical reminder from the participants of the first teachers’ strike in the Syracuse area decades ago. I had forgotten that some of these teacher leaders spent jail time in defense of their colleagues.

We also heard a report from the veterans of area firefighters months-long struggle for a decent contract.

It was good to hear these recounts because, often, we take for granted the sacrifices of the unionists who have come before us. More knowledge of union history would serve all of us better.

### BINGHAMTON: NOV. 11

On the road again!

With the help of Corinna Kruman, a UUP professional with Human Resources/Retiree Benefits at Binghamton University, the fall retiree brunch meeting was held on campus.

Walter Apple, UUP retiree member services coordinator, and I presented current information to the attendees about changes and non-changes to retiree benefits.

I carried the message from the newly reorganized UUP Outreach Committee that retirees are a treasure when it comes to promoting our needs to the legislators. When we go to their regional offices, we are not there for “bread-and-butter” issues but in defense of public higher education and the values it represents.

UUP Binghamton Chapter President Benita Roth spoke about some of the “active” issues.

The featured speaker was Dr. Anna McCall, dean of Harpur College, the liberal arts component of the university.

It was heartening to hear that Harpur College will be hiring to sustain and enlarge the liberal arts program and that she understands the commitment to renew the emphasis of such a program for students.



# Regional meetings

## Central NYers meet in Cazenovia, Syracuse

By Pat Stremmel  
Upstate Medical University

Central New York retirees met twice this fall, once in Syracuse and again in Cazenovia. During both meetings, the retirees shared their thoughts about issues of concern, heard from speakers, and enjoyed the company of their union colleagues.

### M'VILLE, SUNY IT BRUNCH

On Oct. 8, the first meeting of the Central New York COARM eastern region was held at the Lincklaen House in Cazenovia. It was a small, but energizing meeting. Many thanks to Marie Smith, who helped Pat Stremmel with planning the meeting.

Handouts were provided of the many benefits available to COARM retirees. The two life insurances for retirees were discussed and members were urged to ensure that the beneficiary information is current.

Our closer alliance with Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA), was discussed. We are already members of ARA. These larger organizations have a loud voice concerning retiree issues. Both of these organizations have been advocating to ensure that Medicare and Social Security remain intact.

UUP advocacy is now done in 13 districts. Jim Engle of Morrisville spoke at length about the need for the change and the hope that it will be more effective.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to learning from each other and sharing retirement problems and solutions. The group felt that they benefited from both the more formalized meeting in Syracuse with a speaker and the smaller local meeting. It was agreed that a meeting will be scheduled for the eastern area in fall 2014.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAT STREMPEL

Active Retirees—including Pat Stremmel, third from right—had an opportunity to meet with their union colleagues in Syracuse and Cazenovia to discuss issues of concern and to catch up with old friends.

### CNY RETIREE BRUNCH

On Sept. 30, almost 40 retirees met at the Casa Di Copani restaurant in Syracuse for a very exciting Central New York Retiree Brunch.

CNY Region rep Pat Stremmel welcomed everyone and thanked Bob Fluck for his help in setting up the meeting. Joe Ciravolo reported on a very successful clam bake and brought extra door prizes to the meeting. Thanks Joe.

Mike Lyon, new UUP president of the Upstate Medical University Chapter in Syracuse, was unable to attend the meeting due to a previous commitment, but hopes to attend in the future. Mike helped to plan a pre-retirement meeting that drew 150 employees. Our new statewide president, Fred Kowal, has been very active and attended the annual meeting.

Stremmel spoke about COARM's closer alliance RPEA, and Fluck provided an update regarding advocacy for retirees and their issues.

Attendees were reminded to refer to

*The Active Retiree* for information regarding the Survivor Benefit program for state employees and also the booklet to help manage financial information.

Nine UUP retirees now represent their union colleagues on NYSUT Retiree Council 40-42, which will give a voice to the issues of higher education. Stremmel will be attending the council meeting in October.

UUP retiree Tom Wolff provided information about the SUNY Retirees Services Corp. conference Nov. 20 in Albany for retirees regarding technology.

After a wonderful lunch, attorney and CPA David Zumpano gave a very informative presentation titled "2013 Estate Planning, Tax and Asset Protection Strategies." He discussed the contents of an estate plan, defined "power of attorney," and explained what needs to be included in a detailed health care proxy. The different types of trusts were explained, as well as the benefits of each. Medicaid qualifications were discussed.





Active Retiree Carol Braund of the Upstate Medical University Chapter attends the Syracuse luncheon with her colleagues, including Jim Engle of Morrisville, right.

Zumpano answered questions for 30 minutes and offered all attendees an opportunity to sign up for a free, in-depth workshop. Everyone agreed this was an excellent, educational presentation.

Dave Peckham spoke about the realignment at the UUP state level for advocacy. Workshops and further details are being planned. It is hoped this will provide stronger, grassroots advocacy for statewide UUP issues. The hard fight continues to keep Downstate Medical Center open.

Another issue is online education, which the chancellor is advocating in the hopes of attracting 100,000 students by 2017.

Strempele thanked everyone for attending and requested that people send her topics of interest for future meetings.

The next meeting will be in May 2014.



EL-WISE NOISSETTE

Outstanding Retiree Larry Wittner of UAlbany, left, poses with UUP President Fred Kowal after receiving his award during the 2013 Fall Delegate Assembly in Saratoga Springs.

## Wittner ...

(continued from page 1)

### NEW NOVEL

In April, Wittner published his latest book, a novel called *What's Going On at UAardvark?* The novel, loosely based on UAlbany, is a comical look at a serious topic: the corporate takeover of public higher education.

Wittner describes the book as a "lively,

irreverent tale of how an increasingly corporatized, modern American university becomes the site of a rambunctious rebellion that turns the nation's campus life upside down."

His cast of zany characters includes a playboy university president, poetry-writing Hell's Angels members, a "schizophrenic" FBI director, and a "witch-like" union leader.

## Council ...

(continued from page 1)

Following the sessions, NYSUT members approached the new UUP Retiree Council members, offering their assistance and expressing their concerns for the problems facing public higher education that they had previously not understood.

"If there were questions as to why we needed to bond with our colleagues, the proof was that, with information-

sharing, we built new allies for our continuing struggles," Schaffer said. "This is a liaison we need to build on. We need to stay in contact with the retiree groups around the state."

"I have attended meetings with the NYSUT retirees in the Ithaca Cortland area and found them receptive to hearing from us as partners," she added.

Among the agenda items discussed were benefits, Medicare and computer

safety updates. A number of resolutions of a general nature were discussed and approved by the body.

The highlight of the program were the comments by New York state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. The comptroller brought cheers with his report that the Teacher Retirement System, from which many of the meeting participants draw their pensions, was in great financial shape.



## A financial safety net for NYSUT members & their families

Long-term care insurance pays for services that aren't covered by Medicare or traditional health insurance but are important when you can't fully take care of yourself.

You may think it's unnecessary since you have no plans of ending up in a nursing home or requiring assistance for basic daily activities. The fact remains, though, that none of us can predict what's going to happen in the future.

This is where long-term care insurance comes into play – helping to pay the high cost of custodial care and other long-term care expenses that a long-term illness or injury can bring.

That's why the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust is excited to be back in the long-term care business with the endorsement of New York Long-Term Care Brokers.

**With this endorsed program, NYSUT members and their eligible family members have the opportunity to receive a 5% to 10% discount on various plans.**

With regional representatives throughout New York state and beyond, eligible individuals have access to long-term care insurance plans from multiple highly-rated insurance companies – including the New York State Partnership for Long-Term Care.

And with Americans living longer than ever today, the need for a financial safety net has never been greater. Through this endorsed program, eligible individuals can get a long-term care insurance plan designed with their specific needs in mind.

And don't automatically discount the cost of this type of insurance as it may be far more affordable than you may think.

If you or a loved one has been previously declined for long-term care insurance, you may still be insurable with a different company.

NYLTCB represents numerous long-term care insurance companies – all with different medical underwriting guidelines. Make sure to ask your long-term care insurance specialist for more details.

We encourage you to look into the cost of a long-term care plan tailored to your specific needs.

For more information about this endorsed offering, please contact **NYLTCB toll-free at 888-884-0077**. You can also contact Member Benefits with any questions at **800-626-8101** or visit **[memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org)**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



## The Reading Is Fun Program:

# 'Where every child is everyone's child'

**P**roviding pre-school children with the literacy skills they need to succeed is the basis for a new program in Schenectady: The Reading Is Fun Program.

Founded by Active Retiree Al Magid, an emeritus professor of political science at UAlbany and elected representative for COARM's Capital District region, the program aims to mobilize a large cohort of volunteers and train them in how to teach reading readiness skills to the parents or other principal caregivers of the city's 700 to 900 four-year-olds. All instruction will be organized mostly around play and be conducted in suitable public venues. Where children are taught directly by volunteers, the parents or other principal caregivers will be required to be present to observe the teaching process or, if they prefer, to participate in it.

"The Reading Is Fun Program is being launched as a crucial, permanent feature of civic life in Schenectady, centered on its four-year-olds," said Magid, who also serves as the program's executive director. "Many of the city's four-year-olds come from poor families, and face great obstacles in developing reading readiness skills before entering kindergarten.

"Without a strong literacy foundation on which to build, in the future they are likely to find themselves denied the joys and benefits of advanced formal education, wide employment opportunities and broad cultural enrichment. It is imperative that those baleful conditions be countered with vision and vigor."

The program also hopes to instill in the children and their adult counterparts a sense of self-worth and the

drive to be successful.

"The Reading Is Fun Program will pursue more general life-skills mentoring of the four-year-olds, their parents or other principal caregivers, by seeking to inculcate in them the values of self-discipline, proper behavior, self-esteem and positive goal-setting on the base of personal achievement," Magid said.



**Magid**

"Without a strong literacy foundation on which to build, in the future (the four-year-olds) are likely to find themselves denied the joys and benefits of advanced formal education, wide employment opportunities and broad cultural enrichment."

— Al Magid

### HOW IT WORKS

During July and August, select K-3 teachers and reading specialists in the city school district will train volunteers in how to teach reading readiness skills. From September to June, parents or other principal caregivers will be taught those skills by program volunteers, at meetings to be held twice monthly, for at least 30 minutes each time; or, where circumstances warrant, the four-year-olds will meet their volunteers for reading lessons three or four times a month, for at least 30 minutes each time.

The Reading Is Fun Program will also organize further reading readiness activities, such as "Reading Rallies," which will be held periodically with clusters of four-year-olds, their parents or other principal caregivers, and volunteer teachers, in suitable venues throughout the city. At the end of the program year, all participants—the children, parents, principal

caregivers and volunteers—will come together for a "Grand Reading Jamboree," with awards for all the four-year-olds.

The Reading Is Fun Program will partner with select Schenectady City School District administrators, teachers and reading specialists in designing a curriculum aligned with the district's K-level

reading program. Select district personnel will work closely with The Reading Is Fun Program in tracking and charting teaching/learning progress and end-of-year outcomes.

The program is keyed to garnering wide public support in Schenectady and beyond by networking with an array of organizations, institutions and individuals to promote recruitment of four-year-olds and their parents or other principal caregivers. The program also will mobilize a large cohort of volunteers, and continue raising substantial funds and in-kind donations.

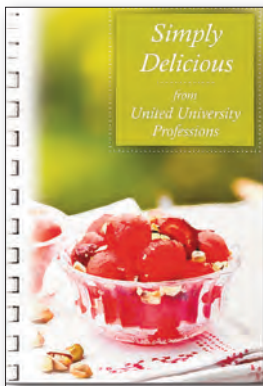
The Schenectady City School District Education Foundation Inc., a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, will apply for grants for The Reading Is Fun Program to support program needs and activities; it will also manage the program's financial affairs.

# Cookbook sale benefits UUP College Scholarship Fund

**U**UP is selling cookbooks filled with favorite recipes submitted by UUP members, family, friends and staff.

All proceeds from the sale go to the UUP College Scholarship Fund, which each year awards scholarships to one post baccalaureate and up to four SUNY undergraduate students.

UUP's "Simply Delicious" cookbooks cost \$10, plus \$2.50 for postage and handling, if using the coupon at right. Check with your chapter, or with members of the Scholarship Development Committee—which produced the cookbook and organized the sale—to see if they have copies on hand.



You may order as many copies of UUP's "Simply Delicious" cookbook as you wish for \$10 each, plus \$2.50 for shipping per book ordered. Enclose check payable to "UUP College Scholarship Fund" and mail to:

**United University Professions  
PO Box 15143  
Albany, NY 12212-5143**

Please mail \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the UUP cookbook @ \$12.50 each to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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*The Active Retiree*  
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**P.O. Box 15143**  
**Albany, N.Y. 12212-5143**