

**RC 8
Retiree**



November/December 2012

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**Political Action Post Election...
There's Still More Work To Do
By Ken Drake, President**

- Political action to promote public education and public school teachers: support Educate NY Now's effort to adequately fund public education, work to repeal the tax cap, lobby the SED to adopt content specific common core curricula in which all disciplines of study are represented, provide support to teachers as they deal with the requirements of APPR, continue to support NYSUT's position on charter schools
- Political action to keep our pensions secure and to improve COLA
- Political action in defense of workers' rights and benefits: preserve collective bargaining rights, strengthen Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, resist impending attacks against the Taylor Law and Triborough Amendment, lobby for single payer health insurance

Visit the RC 8 website at retireecouncil8.org on a regular basis for political action updates.

Retiree Council 8 Fall Luncheon



Ken Drake, Dr. Kingson and Peg Corbett at recent Retiree Council 8 Annual Fall Luncheon

The RC 8 Annual Fall Luncheon was held on October 18, 2012, at Katie & Karl's Restaurant in Camden. Approximately 75 people were in attendance.

President Ken Drake welcomed the group and introduced officers and steering committee members. Former RC 8 President, Peg Corbett, introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Eric Kingson. Dr. Kingson is professor of social work at Syracuse University whose extensive credentials include being a member of the board of directors of the Foundation of The Nation-

al Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. He stressed that Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are more at risk today than ever. He described these programs as systems (like highways) that we need to maintain.

He suggested things we can do: stay alert and informed; seek written pledges/promises from candidates; circulate petitions; write/call members of Congress and the White House; participate in phone banks to get out the vote; write letters to newspapers and take part in radio call-ins.

Perhaps a quote from Dr. Kingson sums up what we need to do: "Protect the legacy—a commitment to each other." Dr. Kingson's PowerPoint presentation is on the web at <http://www.retireecouncil8.org/political-action/>

Submitted by Howard La Fave, RC 8 Vice President; Adirondack

Retiree Council 8 Steering Committee: Adirondack—H. LaFave; Canastota—B. Woodarek; Clinton—G. Adams, M. Duink; Holland Patent—D. Schue, J. Grossman; New Hartford—D. Markson; Oneida—S. Sorrentino, K. Brown; Oneida BOCES—J. Furgal, C. Zammiello; Oriskany—S. McQueen, D. Inserra; Oswego—K. Mantaro; Renssen—J. Corn; Rome—P. Fitzpatrick, W. Carey; Utica—P. Baker, A. Gorman; VVS—K. Drake, A. Wright; Waterville—M. Berardino; Whitesboro—H. Chomin, F. Wood; Immediate past president—Peg Corbett

**Thanks,
Retirees**

The following is a letter received from Pat Gregory, sister of Beth Kinsella from Oneida, for the \$330 collection taken up at the RC 8 Annual Fall Luncheon.

Dear Ken,

Beth forwarded the message you sent her to me. Wow! That is a great amount of money you collected for America's VetDogs. Veterans who have received our dogs can't thank everyone enough. Thanks to you and your organization for making a difference in the lives of these men and women.

Paul and I have had one of our puppies go on to become a Vet dog and another one in training at this time. Each dog that goes into training is evaluated to determine the appropriate career path, much like a child going to college. Dogs have different personalities and qualities that make them perform differently. It is exciting to be part of this team, even in a small way. Thanks again for helping out. It is truly appreciated.

Officers and Delegates Attend Important Meetings

NYSUT Endorsement Conference, August 13-14
Upstate Coalition Election District (ED) 7-11 Meeting, September 14
ED 7 & 8 Meetings, NYSUT Syracuse Regional Office (SRO), October 18
Retiree Council Contiguous ED 51-53 Meeting, October 23-24
Oneida County Presidents' Council Meetings, NYSUT Regional Office (URO), monthly
Central New York Alliance for Retired Americans Meetings, SRO, monthly

Central New York Alliance for Retired Americans

The Central New York Alliance for Retired Americans (CNYARA) was formed in 2003 with Jerry Lotierzo serving as president. Retirees from all the unions in the Syracuse and Utica areas were invited to join the group. The group decided to meet on the second Friday of each month from September to June with a picnic in August. The meetings are held at different union offices, SEIU, NYSUT, and other union locations.

The ARA mission statement reads, "Our mission of the Alliance for Retired Americans is to ensure social and economic justice and full civil rights for all citizens so that they may enjoy lives of dignity, personal fulfillment and security."

Peg Corbett, Carole Gehrig, and I have attended meetings on a regular basis. The group is concerned about changes to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Dr. Eric Kingson, a professor from Syracuse University School of Social Work, has been a frequent speaker on this topic. He works directly with people in Washington, D.C., and gives updates on a regular basis. The CNYARA actively supports Dr. Kingson in his work to strengthen these vital programs.

The leadership recently changed to a triumvirate with Jerry Lotierzo, Doug Matousek, and Bill Spreter sharing the organizational duties. These three men will ensure that this chapter continues to be very active long into the future. *Submitted by Florence Wood, Steering Committee Member; Whitesboro*

Program to Enhance Communication Between NYSUT and Retirees

NYSUT is coordinating a program to communicate with retirees faster and more efficiently by e-mail. A Listserv has been established for retiree council presidents to use to communicate directly with members. NYSUT will collect, maintain and safeguard all of the retiree contact information it receives. Go to www.nysut.org/retiree to sign up today.

THERE'S STILL TIME TO HELP

While Hurricane Sandy brushed by upstate New York, downstate and New Jersey felt the devastating impact. If you would like to make a financial donation to help those in need, send your check to the following:

NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund
Attention: Jeff Lockwood, Accounting Department
800 Troy-Schenectady Road
Latham, NY 12110

Numbers Tell the Story

...”Three numbers are enough to tell the story. Last year's median U.S. household income was \$50,045. The average cost of family coverage through an employer-sponsored plan was more than \$15,000, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. And an average employee shouldered more than \$4,000 of the premium—before other out-of-pocket costs. In other words, for at least half of American households, quality health insurance is close to unaffordable.

The basic problem is that we have a health-care system that costs more than any other country's while providing uneven care, especially to those whose only access is the ER. And it's not just Medicare that's a problem. Private insurers are no better at controlling costs....”

Source: Jeff Gelles, Philadelphia Inquirer Business Columnist, Sept.30, 2012

The Rich Get Richer

Forbes reports that in the last year alone, the total net worth of the 400 people at the top skyrocketed \$200 billion. The average net worth of a 400-lister jumped from \$3.8 billion to \$4.2 billion, the highest figure ever recorded. Two-thirds of the individuals got richer in the past year. Forbes, not exactly a cheerleader for income equality, concluded: “The gap between the very rich and the merely rich is widening.” And how did the rest of us do while the uber-rich were getting richer? Not so well, according to the Census Bureau. Adjusted for inflation, America suffered a 1.5 percent drop in median household income last year.

Source: Lynn Stuart Parramore, alternet.org, Oct. 30, 2012

Public Or Private?

Charter schools are the only way to repair our “broken” schools. At least that’s what many would have you believe. In fact, Geoffrey Canada, founder of Harlem Children’s Zone and advocate of education reform, recently visited the Mohawk Valley and spoke to that point. What many don’t know, however, is how charter schools are set up and funded.

A charter school is a public school. It is financed through public local, state, and federal funds but is independent of local school boards. The authority of the charter school to provide education is through a “charter,” a type of contract between the charter school board of trustees and one of the chartering entities. The charter is issued by the Board of Regents.

Two applications have been submitted in the Utica School District. According to Utica School Business official Maureen Albanese, the charter schools will receive roughly 70 cents of every dollar the state provides for educating students. She believes “it’s a loss to the students of Utica.” Submitted by Janet Furgal, Steering Committee Member; Oneida BOCES

Sources: uticaod.com 9/25/12; www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/documents/csparentguide.pdf 10/12

2012-2013 Participation Fee

IMPORTANT! Retirees from Adirondack, Canastota, Central Square, Clinton, Holland Patent, Oneida, Oneida/Herkimer/Madison BOCES, New Hartford, Oriskany, Pulaski, Remsen, Sauquoit, Utica, VVS, Waterville, Westmoreland, and Whitesboro **do not have to send \$5**, since the Participation Fee is contributed via retiree dues by your local. **ATTENTION ALL OTHER RETIREES NOT BELONGING TO THE ABOVE-MENTIONED LOCALS; please fill out the form below.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Retiree School District: _____

E-mail address: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND A \$5 CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO “RETIREE COUNCIL 8” AND MAIL TO: Wanona E. Carey, RC8 Treasurer, 8623 Turin Road, Rome, NY 13440-7523.

Planning a trip? Let Member Benefits help!

Are you finally looking to book that fantastic getaway to the Caribbean or Europe that you've always been dreaming about? Maybe you've got a business trip that you need to plan? Or, do you need to rent a car to get around town as part of your next excursion?

Let your friends at NYSUT Member Benefits help! We've got a variety of endorsed discount travel programs designed to help you keep a few more dollars in your wallet while enjoying some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

If big savings is your game, the Member Benefits-endorsed travel program offered by Wyndham Hotels & Endless Vacation Rentals is for you! NYSUT members can enjoy savings of up to 20% at nearly 7,000 participating hotels among 15 hotel brands with Wyndham Worldwide; meanwhile, save 25% at more than 200,000 vacation rentals in 100 countries with Endless Vacation Rentals.

Wyndham Hotels has the right hotel for you at the right price – whether it's an upscale hotel, all-inclusive resort or something more cost-effective. With Endless Vacation Rentals, NYSUT members can save on resort condos, villas, homes, and cottages that provide space and flexibility ideal for families and groups of friends traveling together.

These aren't your everyday run-of-the-mill hotel rooms! Accommodations range in size from resort studios to multi-bedroom units. And, many units feature large living rooms, dining rooms, fully-equipped kitchens, and laundry facilities.

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.

Nov./Dec. '12

Whether you're looking for a multi-bedroom condo in Orlando or Las Vegas, or a luxurious resort in Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe, or Canada, Endless Vacation Rentals offers the space and comforts-of-home to make each stay a memorable time!

Need to rent a car as part of your next trip?

NYSUT members can get discounted rates on passenger car rentals with the following companies: Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National. You can even receive 20% off local or one-way truck rentals from Budget Truck Rental.

Finally, don't forget about TripMark.travel if you're looking for great deals on the most beautiful vacation spots in the world. This program provides NYSUT members and their family and

friends with online and offline (toll-free travel agents) leisure travel benefits.

TripMark.travel allows you to effortlessly book flights, hotels, vacation packages, and cruises online for personal and business travel needs. With a simple interface and advanced encryption technology, your information is safe and secure – giving you peace of mind as you plan your next trip.

Learn more about these endorsed programs – including how to access discounts, unique website codes and website links – by contacting Member Benefits at **800-626-8101** or visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org. Happy travels!



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Dick Iannuzzi, NYSUT President, and Randi Weingarten, AFT President, will be at MVCC in Utica on November 26 at 5 p.m. to discuss union views on education reform.