

If it is happening in Wisconsin, it could happen in New York

Pete Herron

Do you remember Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker? He thought that bashing unions would put him on the road to the White House. He might have been right except for revival candidates such as Trump, Christie, Cruz, and Rubio. Mr. Walker's aborted presidential bid began in 2010 when he was elected governor along with the Republican sweep of both state houses. He immediately began the movement to cut rights for most public sector employees. He was able to do this in a state with a long history of union support because Republicans controlled all three branches of the state government. The reason given for these anti-worker laws was to solve the state's budget gap. Well, the state budget gap is still there. Realizing what was at stake, union members from across the nation had mass rallies in Wisconsin's capital, Madison. All this effort failed to have Gov. Walker recalled. Since then, union membership collapsed. More than half of Wisconsin's public employees were union members before the "right-to-work" law took effect, but now only about a quarter remain in a union. With membership drastically down, unions have fewer resources to fight anti-union and anti-worker politicians.



*"It's a repetitive stress injury...
have you been bashing unions again?"*

In addition to cutting collective bargaining rights for most public sector employees, the new law required workers to contribute more for pensions and health plans. Under the new law, unions must be "recertified" each year by the majority of those eligible to vote. People now have the option of not paying union dues even though they benefit from union negotiated contracts. That is, it ended the "fair share" requirements that public workers who opted out of union membership pay "agent" fees for the benefits of representation. The impact of this legislation was immediate. Union membership dropped by one-third, some union membership dropped by half. Union budgets collapsed. Some unions were not able to recertify and disappeared.

Wisconsin was a leading state in establishing Civil Service rules. This did not stop Gov. Walker and both Republican controlled legislative bodies from destroying the well-established Civil Service rules. They recently passed new Civil Service rules that eliminate seniority rights and exams for job applicants. This now means that most state government, state universities, state hospitals, public school districts, towns, cities, and villages positions will be filled on a political patronage basis.

After decimating public employees and their unions, Walker and his political allies turned their sights to workers in the private sector. Last year Walker signed legislation barring private companies from requiring "agent fees" from those who opted out of union membership. First go after the public sector employees, they are an easy target, and then go after the private sector workers. Destroy the unions and the middle class loses its political voice and power.



It is not just happening in Wisconsin. It is happening in California with the United States Supreme Court case involving a "right-to-work" claim. The Illinois Republican Governor Bruce Rauner is currently pushing "right-to-work" legislation. In Michigan and Indiana, Republicans have eliminated requirements that all employees at unionized workplaces pay union dues or fees.

All is not lost! Unions have been badly hurt, but they are still strong. The attacks will go on. All of us will have to join the fight if unions are to be saved. Active or retired union members must become candidates in state, county, local, and school board elections. We must all support union and worker-friendly candidates by donating money, going door-to-door, working phone banks, or whatever it takes to stop the destruction of the middle class worker.

Oh by the way, Governor Walker's approval rating is now down to 39%. Maybe people are starting to wake up.

TOWARD an IMPERFECT LIFE

By Sivia Kaye

For those of us who are tired of living the perfect life, here is an easy route to a bad habit. (I'm told it's healthy to have at least one!) And if email is not part of your life, I'll try to come up with another pathway to imperfection; it shouldn't be too hard.

1. When I send someone an email that is not merely informational, but requires an answer, I send a blind cc back to myself. Thus, if my email asks Prof. Charles Smith to send me the bibliographical reference of musical notations that we were discussing at the opera, I will place the blind cc, when it comes back to me, in a folder called "AWAITING RESPONSES." The plan was that when the response comes in, I would go into "AWAITING RESPONSES" and delete the missive to Smith. But I never do.

Further, this folder was designed to help me follow up on those people who ignore my requests. Weekly, at least, it was my intention to enter this folder and send a cc of Smith's note to back to him, with 28 point red type on top, saying "Second Request". My idea backfired. First, I would forget to re-enter the folder to see who had ignored my requests. Second, the 28 point red type would not come over to the recipient that way unless he had the exact same email program I had. Thus, I struck out with this idea. The "AWAITING RESPONSES" folder now has 67 emails in it: I've no idea how many of my requests have been honored, or have been cavalierly clicked into the recipients' "Delete" bin.

2. I created a professional folder called "TO RESPOND," thinking this was a sensible way to honor the emails I receive that request something from me. It might be a simple question of someone asking me for the name of my ophthalmologist; or it might be a note I received telling me of some happy accomplishment of a friend. Instead of a brief "Mazel Tov," my good manners dictates that it would be more courteous to send a longer email telling Joan Surick how proud of her I was to learn of her admission to the Bar. So I drag her letter to my "TO RESPOND" folder, and there it sits. Never again do I click it open. Joan thinks I don't give a darn about her major professional accomplishments; that I'm too busy doing my own thing to remember that once we were close friends and that this was her dream; that I'm just like everyone else on this planet, too self-involved. There are now 83 emails in my "TO RESPOND" folder, and as a consequence, at least 83 people have removed me from their Christmas gift list.

3. I have a folder called DRAFTS. Here's how this gets filled: I receive an email from Harry McFarlane. Having read every single article that's been printed on effective handling of email, I am primed to answer immediately. "Handle every paper or email just once," dictate those in the know. Eager to emulate one of the seven habits of highly effective people, I immediately click, "Reply to Sender" and I begin typing my response. But I note there is something I want to add, that I can't put my fingers on immediately, and so I send it to DRAFTS. And there it dies a slow death. McFarlane thinks I neglected his email. I think I answered it. And the poor missive, 90% complete, sits quietly in "DRAFTS," I now have 16 emails in this folder.

4. I have a folder called "REFERENCE." Here I've placed emails which seem to contain fascinating information that I may want at a later date: Examples: someone sent me list of code numbers for producing "TM" for the trademark sign, and the tiny "O" for the degree sign. How am I to know when I'll need to write to the United States Patent Office requesting a trademark of one of my ideas? Or when I might want to tell my Canadian friend who is freezing, that it's a balmy 60 degrees here in NY. I have 43 emails here. (I have never had occasion yet to write to the Patent Office).

5. I have the folder, which we all do, that comes courtesy of the email provider, called SENT. Here all emails -- which had been sent out -- go to live until I personally delete them. A good housekeeper, would empty the SENT folder after each session. But not I. Suppose I want to track down an email that I sent a year or two ago? I can find it here. I can sort by date or person. So if Larry Brokaw says I never sent him those Fourth of July barbeque photos, I sort by date, and voila, July 10, 1998, those photos were sent. Handy device. I have 830 emails here.

If the truth be told, I have 8 more folders, but I am embarrassed to reveal all my email quirks; enough has already been exposed here for me to feel vulnerable to attacks on my professionalism, proficiency, and general sanity.



Should you wish to offer your suggestions on how I might remedy this serious cyber malady, my address is SiviaKaye@mac.com.

Sivia

RC39 Website

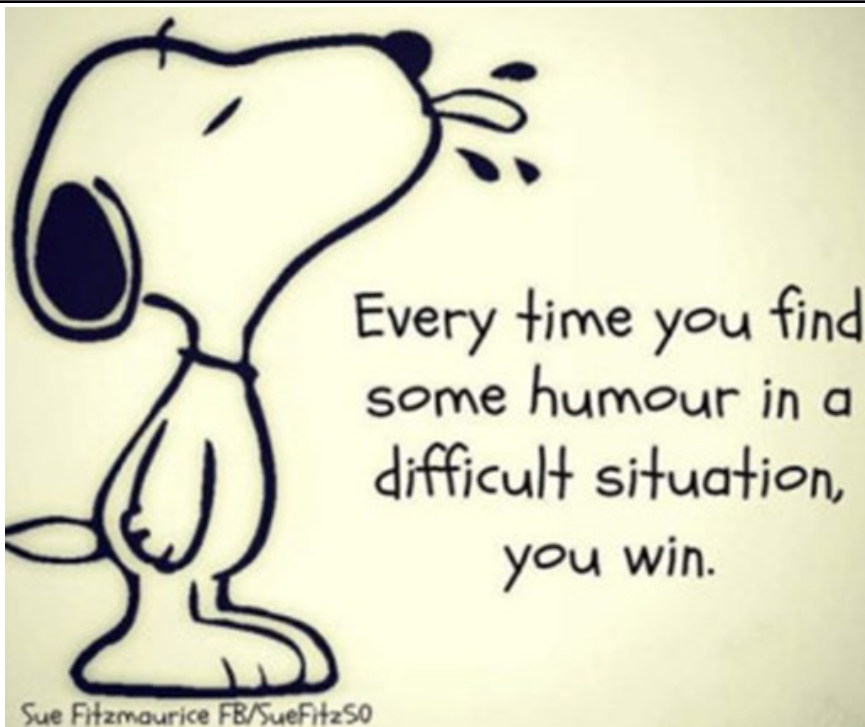
Check out RC39 website <http://rc39.ny.aft.org/> where you can read recent NYSUT RC39 newsletters, AFT and NYSUT news releases, and much more.

New York State CARE Act

By Frances S. Hilliard, RN, MS

It is estimated that over two million New Yorkers are caring for a loved one at home. Family caregivers carry an enormous responsibility and they are in need of support to make things less difficult. In 2015, New York State enacted legislation that helps provide such support: The Caregiver Advise, Record, and Enable [CARE] Act. Thanks go out to the bill's co-sponsors, State Senator Kemp Hannon and Assemblyperson Linda Rosenthal, and to Governor Andrew Cuomo for signing the bill into law.

The CARE Act defines an identified caregiver as "a relative, partner, friend, or neighbor who has a significant relationship with the patient," and requires that the patient be living in his/her own residence (not in a nursing home or other extended care facility). If the patient enters a hospital, the CARE Act requires that the patient (or legal guardian) be asked to identify a caregiver, and that the identified caregiver be documented in the patient's medical record. In addition, the caregiver is to be included in discharge planning, and must be notified of the patient's discharge to home or transfer to another facility. Should the patient require after-care at home, the CARE Act specifies that the hospital assess the caregiver's capabilities to perform such care, and appropriate instructions for after-care tasks must be provided to the caregiver.



New York State Constitutional Facts

- The New York State Constitution guarantees free public education for elementary and secondary students.
- The New York State Constitution prohibits public monies for religious education.
- The New York State Constitution guarantees that state parks will be forever wild.
- The New York State Constitution guarantees that retired public employees' retirement benefits cannot be reduced.
- The New York State Constitution determines how New York State judges are elected or appointed.
- The New York State Constitution determines the membership rules for both legislative bodies.
- The New York State Constitution defines how bills become law.
- The New York State Constitution limits how much the state can borrow.
- The New York State Constitution protects the state's canals and other waterways.

All of the above protections and a lot more could be altered if there is a New York State constitutional convention in 2017. The only way we can be certain that the power brokers do not get a chance to amend the state constitution is to see that there is no New York State constitutional convention in 2017. Get the word out to all your friends and relatives. **JUST VOTE NO!**

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RC39 Newsletter is looking for comments, suggestions and articles from its members.



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