

## Trump is Our President – Let There Be Light

Pete Herron

You may not like it but the fact is on January 20 Trump became our president. The ugly campaign, his Tweeter comments during and after the campaign, his the cabinet appointments, his debasement of federal agencies, his refusal to deal with clear conflict of interest issues, and so much more bodes of dark times coming. The United States and the world have already been severely hurt and this is only the beginning.

While we cannot prevent much of the harm that is coming, we cannot stand by and do nothing. All of us

must shine light on the lies, bullying, intimidation, the attacks on the vulnerable, and everything else the Trump administration will try to get away with.

We can write to the editors of newspapers, not be customers of companies owned by those abusing power, participate in lawful demonstrations, use social media to counter the false information that will be coming, and support organizations that are in the fight to preserve the values that have made America the nation we all love.

The stakes are much too high for us

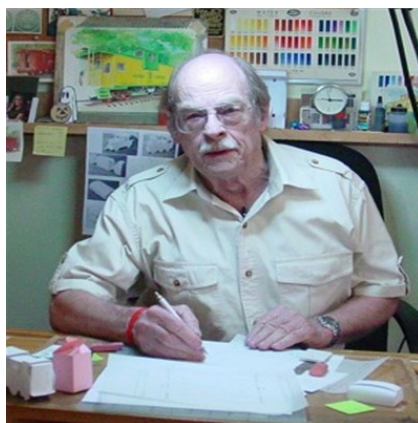
to stay on the sidelines. This is the fight of our lifetime. The very foundations of our nation are being undermined. This is one fight we cannot lose. We are old; we have enjoyed the fruits of this wonderful country but our children and grandchildren could very likely find themselves in a very different country, one that only the very powerful will enjoy the bounty created by its citizens.

If each of us shines as much light as we can, together we can overcome the darkness descending on the United States of America and the world.

## RC39 Director-at-large, George Wybenga, dies

RC39 director-at-large, George Wybenga, died of a heart attack on October 27, 2016. Even though George was incredibly active during his seventeen years of retirement he responded to our request for members to get active in RC39 by “listening in” to RC39 board deliberations and communications. Eventually he agreed to serve as a director-at-large. In this capacity he participated in all board activities, all by email. George attended a few ED meetings in Albany. He never submitted any travel expenses. That was George. We will miss his contributions to RC39.

George Wybenga was born in Delft, the Netherlands, in 1937. Fortunately his whole family survived World War II. He arrived in the United States in 1956, and shortly after he enlisted in the US Army for three years because that was the fastest way of becoming a United States citizen. After active duty, he attended evening commercial art classes. One of his art instructors helped him get a job in a packaging design studio. While working days he earned his Bachelor’s degree (cum laude) in Graphic Design from Pratt Institute. George eventually earned Master’s degrees from Hunter College



and Stony Brook University. After several years teaching in Long Island schools, he obtained a teaching position at Parson’s School of Design. There he was a major force in the establishment of a program in Packaging Design, one of the first packaging design programs in the United States.

After retirement, he continued to create and exhibit the serigraphs that had been his primary artistic medium. But the September 11, 2001, attack changed everything. The pictures of the attack reminded him of the destruction he experienced during WW II. He had to find a diversion. He looked through his photograph files and came across a picture of a railroad caboose which he began to paint. He went on to paint over 270 watercolor

images of cabooses, which were exhibited at many train shows. He believed his collection of paintings of cabooses embodied “Americana.” The evocative quality of his work led the American Railway Caboose Historical Education Society to name him “America’s Caboose Artist.” Each year George Wybenga would donate a painting to the American Railway Caboose Historical Education Society, which featured his work in its annual calendar. The day before he died, he sent the final proof of a book compilation of his caboose painting to his publisher.



In 2014 George made his 300<sup>th</sup> apheresis donation at Stony Brook University Hospital. The blood bank nursing staff, peeking through the window, copied his caboose art on the blood bank’s bulletin board.

## Respective: Spirit of a People



The skills of Collette V. Fournier encompass the best of photography. She has a MFA in the Visual Arts from the Vermont College of Fine Arts and a BS from the Rochester Institute of Technology in Communications and Photographic Illustration. She is currently the staff photographer in the Campus Communications Department, and is an adjunct professor in the Photography Department at Rockland Community College since 1992. Ms. Fournier is a part of the RCC Speaker's Bureau.

Fournier has worked as a staff photographer for the *Rockland Journal-News*, *The Bergen Record*, freelanced for the *New York Post*, and has worked in the television industry. Earlier in her career, Fournier was selected by the Rochester City School District and the University of Rochester to photograph three educational tours to West Africa.

Fournier is an active member of NYC-based Kamoinge Inc., an African American photography collective. Through Atria Books/Simon & Schuster, Kamoinge published *Sweet Breath of Life. A Poetic Narrative of the African American Family* with writer Ntozake Shange. Through Kamoinge and The Soros Institute/ Open Society grant, Ms. Fournier's photos were on view in "Kamoinge:

Revealing the Face of Katrina" in NYC at HP at Calumet Gallery and at the College of New Rochelle, Gordon Parks Gallery, in May 2012. Kamoinge's most current highly acclaimed book *Timeless* to celebrate Kamoinge's 50th year was published in 2015.

You are encouraged to visit Collette's website, <http://www.collettefournierphotography.com/home.html>, to see a sample of her fine work and to experience the breadth of her interests and subjects.

Produced through an Arts Council grant, photographer Collette V. Fournier's one and a half hour Power Point presentation with a Q and A, "Retrospective: Spirit of a People," is a historic embodiment of four decades of her photography archives. Ms. Fournier takes the viewer from black and white to color imagery and from film to digital capture. There is a Q A after her presentation. Fournier's serial works explore themes of *The Amistad: From Mystic Seaport to Nova Scotia, Post Hurricane Katrina, Travels to West Africa*, and her community. If you are interested in having Ms. Fournier give this presentation to your group, please contact her at [fourniercollette147@gmail.com](mailto:fourniercollette147@gmail.com).



## RC39 Director-at-large Vacancy

The death of George Wybenga created a vacancy on the RC39 Board of Directors. RC39 needs members to step forward to fill the member-at-large position George held. As a member of the RC39 Board of Directors, the member-at-large participates in board discussions and votes whenever decisions are required. All this is done by email. Board members may attend NYSUT meetings in Albany.

Members can request to be placed on the RC39 officer email list. Everyone on the list will be able to participate in all email discussions. Only elected officers will be able to vote. This is a great way to learn what is involved in being a RC39 officer.

If you are interested in serving or need more information contact Pete Herron at [rc39pete@optonline.net](mailto:rc39pete@optonline.net), 631 744-5534, or 98 Rocky Point Landing Rd., Rocky Point, NY 11778.

If there ever was a time RC39 needed member participation, it is now.

## 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.

## A dog — “I could call him Wolf.”

Lou Rupnick, Suffolk County Community College Retiree

It was a cold, gray day during February 2004. I was returning to the north fork of Long Island on the LIRR after meeting my grad school buddy (from Poland) & his family in NYC for lunch. I hadn't seen him in a few years. It was a good lunch and a good time too.

The train had left Penn Station, emerged from the dark tunnel and was heading toward stops in Jamaica in late afternoon daylight. Sitting on the cold, plastic seats close to one of the doors with a *good* read in my hands, I was resigned to a pretty long ride with lots of stops.

I'm not sure where, but somewhere in Jamaica an interesting character got on board with a very unkempt German Shepherd dog. The dog's black/brown fur was matted and dirty. The traveler was blind and his dog was obviously his guide dog. It was pretty obvious this fellow was not only blind, but he was also pretty down on his luck. Even the dog's ragged and worn harness had seen much better days. I'd say he was in his mid-forties, about five-six. His hands were callused and dirty, and his shoes were beyond worn and useful. He was hatless with mussed brown hair, and he wore an old dirty and soiled coat that was ill-fitting and torn in places. In spite of its condition, the dog was clearly well trained in the business of being a guide-dog for a blind person in need. They both looked cold. This formidable dog looked at me, but I really wasn't its concern. The man no sooner sat next to me when the dog obediently curled beneath our seat without a word spoken.

Once the train got rolling, the con-

ductor approached us searching for new passengers and calling out “Ticket!” This man sitting next to me with his dog curled beneath him fumbled in his pocket and produced a ticket. “This has been used,” the conductor said. My traveling companion reached into his pocket a second time and produced another ticket. “This one's been used too.” The expressionless conductor was patient and polite; he didn't lose his temper. For a third time the blind man reached into his other pocket and produced yet a third Long Island Railroad ticket. The conductor looked at it, looked at the man — then me. His eyes fixed back on to the blind man, clicked his ticket puncher without touching the ticket, and then pressed the clearly voided and useless ticket back into the blind man's hand without saying another word. His dog remained quiet and motionless obediently below us, but indeed alert.

I hadn't read a word in my book since this man and his dog appeared and sat next to me. I couldn't help myself. “That's a pretty handsome dog you have there. What's his name?” I asked. The man was clearly uncomfortable with any sort of interaction with another person. After a pause, and without moving his head as if *looking* straight ahead of himself, the man said somewhat curtly, “He doesn't have a name.” Honestly, I felt uncomfortable and speechless for a moment or two feeling like an unwanted interloper into this man's private world. Yet, I wanted to befriend this person in some way.

With little effort I took a twenty dollar bill out of my wallet and folded it a couple of times. I leaned toward

him and whispered, “Please don't be frightened. I'm gonna put some money into your hand. I want you to know it's a *twenty* so that when you go to spend it no one will try to rip you off.” I pressed the bill into one of his hands; it closed quickly around the money. “Buy something for yourself and your fine dog.”

I had no sooner given him the money than the train began slowing for the next stop. It lurched to a stop at that next station. Without a word, the blind man stood, and as he did his guide dog came to attention from under our seat. The man walked the few steps toward the door with his dog carefully guiding him. Before leaving the train car my short-lived traveling companion stopped and turned toward me. The dog stopped, looked up at his master and seemed puzzled. He said to me, “I could call him Wolf — if I wanted to.” He paused a moment longer, just long enough for me to say, “Wolf? That would be a very good name for such a fine dog.” The blind man and his dog turned away then disappeared through the door.

As the train's doors shut & the steel wheels began rolling again (to continue on its journey to the north fork of Long Island), through a window I watched the man cautiously shuffle along as his uncombed and scruffy, albeit noble dog, safely guided him toward the train platform steps.

I hoped they would search for a warm meal together, or perhaps some other shared pleasure. I knew I would never see them again, but I also knew I would never forget them —my blind traveling companion and his worthy dog —called Wolf.

### Retiree Council 39 Board of Directors

**President, First NYSUT and AFT Delegate, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster:** Peter Herron

**Vice President, NYSUT and AFT Delegate:** Judith Holmes

**Secretary, NYSUT and AFT Delegate:** Corita Kong

**Treasurer, NYSUT and AFT Alternate Delegate:** Joan Prymas

**Director-at-large:** James V. Brennan

**Director-at-large:** Vacant

Send your comments, suggestions, and inquiries to NYSUT RC39 Officers, 98 Rocky Point Landing Rd., Rocky Point, NY 11778 or rc39pete@optonline.net.

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



Send your comments, suggestions, or article to Peter Herron at rc39pete@optonline.net or mail to 98 Rocky Point Landing Road, Rocky Point, NY 11778. Your article will be published when space is available. RC39, NYSUT, and AFT news will be given priority.



**Address Change**

Do not let a new address keep you from receiving NYSUT RC39 newsletters. There are three ways to update your address. Contact NYSUT Member Records at 1-800-342-9810 ext. 6224. Send written changes to: NYSUT Member Records, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110, or e-mail changes to [member@nysutmail.org](mailto:member@nysutmail.org). If you are a snowbird, give Member Records a few weeks notice to change its address records each way.

**Have you paid your voluntary RC39 contribution for 2017?**

If you have not sent in your voluntary NYSUT RC39 annual contribution, now is as good a time as ever. Just send your check along with the form below to the RC39 treasurer. It is your contributions that enable RC39 officers and delegates to represent you at NYSUT conferences and meetings.

**Retiree Council 39 Voluntary 2017 Participation Fee form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
 College retired from \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Retirement \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please check amount of your voluntary participation fee: \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Send your check, made out to NYSUT RC39, along with this completed form to:  
 Ms. Joan Prymas, RC39 Treasurer, 141 Montgomery Street, Ilion, NY 13357