



U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer addressing NYSUT RA



NYSUT President Richard Iannuzzi welcoming Congressman Tim Bishop

**RC39 President Attends NYSUT RA, April 11-13**

The RA is the union's highest policy-making body, except for a membership referendum. NYSUT delegates debate and vote on proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws, proposed resolutions and other business that might be brought before the Representative Assembly according to NYSUT Constitution and Bylaws provisions or policy. This conference met just days before New York State students were to take another round of standardized test. Clearly the Common Core Testing was a hot topic. At one session delegates had the opportunity to question NYS Commissioner of Education, John King. While delegates were respectful, they were tough. Questions were largely on why his department is overemphasizing standardized tests and moving so fast on Common Core assessments. RC 39 President Peter Herron was not impressed with Dr. King's answers and thinks most other delegates were not impressed with what they heard.

State Controller Thomas DiNapoli showed a great respect for teachers. He thanked NYSUT activists for their advocacy, which helped restore nearly \$1 billion in state education funding. He called for members to continue to fight cuts in education. He congratulated union members for making SUNY, CUNY and community colleges strong institutions. DiNapoli reaffirmed his support for defined benefit pension plans.

U. S. Senator Chuck Schumer brought delegates to their feet with praise and with promises. "I love teachers," he said several times. A proud product of New York City schools, he thanked teachers for providing him with an excellent education. He said "It makes no sense to degrade, to belittle the most important profession in America. We should make it an exalted profession." He pledged his support for increasing federal aid and programs that range from pre-kindergarten to career and technical education.

Of course a major portion of the RA conference is ratifying resolutions. Proposals are submitted before the conference. Many subcommittees work to combine and/or refine proposed resolutions and make recommendations on accepting or rejecting proposals. At the general delegates sessions each committee reports on its findings and makes its recommendations. Delegates can make comments or amendments to the resolutions and then the delegates vote on the resolutions. Continued on page 3.

**Joan Prymas, RC 39 Treasurer, Attends NYSUT RC12 Meeting**

On March 13, 2013 Joan Prymas attended the general membership meeting of Retiree Council 12. She traveled with co-president Jeanne Williams Bennett and LaVergne McMurray. Committee and officer reports were given and there was a special presentation on Medicare by Susan Klug. Attention was also drawn to an issue about being an inpatient at a hospital or being there under observation. This status is important because Medicare will not pay for further rehabilitation or physical therapy if you are not a hospital inpatient for a specified amount of time. This topic was presented in a recent article in the New York Teacher.

It is always a pleasure to get together with this group. Unfortunately, during the meeting I received texts from my husband about a series of shootings in the villages next to ours. At the time the suspect, Kurt Myers, was still at large. We were not sure how we should return home. We did make it safely but four people were killed and two severely injured in the original rampage. The shooter was cornered in an abandoned building and was killed the next morning when the FBI stormed the place. Sadly, APE, an FBI K-9 was killed protecting the agents. No motive for the shootings is known. Truly, violence can happen anywhere, even in rural upstate New York.

**Pre NYSUT RA Local & Retiree Council Presidents Conference**

RC39 President Peter Herron, along with about 350 other union leaders, attended the Pre NYSUT RA Local & Retiree Council Presidents Conference, April 10-11, in Washington, D.C. There was ample time to dialogue with NYSUT officers and learn how NYSUT Headquarters can assist locals in getting the word out about issues of importance to NYSUT members, both active and retired. There were three seminars. At the "Growing Our Activist Garden" seminar NYSUT legislative staff shared many tools local presidents can use while growing their political activism such as getting members to participate in local robo-calls, providing a voter resource guide and endorsing candidates. In the last election 90% of NYSUT endorsed candidates won.

At the "Implementation of Regents Agenda" there were updates on the state budget, common core curriculum testing and Annual Professional Performance Review. The "Hot Topics on the Legal Front" seminar covered NYSUT's commitment to the legal fight challenging the constitutionality of the state's property tax cap. We were also briefed on lawsuits brought by upstate cities and Nassau and Monroe counties.

Continued on page 3.

## Save on vacations with Member Benefits

Have you been planning to finally book that incredible vacation to the Caribbean, Europe or Australia that you've always dreamed about? Or perhaps you need to plan an upcoming business trip or rent a vehicle as part of your next excursion?

Wouldn't it be great to be able to save some money while doing so? NYSUT Member Benefits has a variety of endorsed discount travel programs designed to help you keep extra cash in your wallet while enjoying some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

If you're on the hunt for big savings, look no further than the Member Benefits-endorsed travel program offered by **Wyndham Hotels & Endless Vacation Rentals**. NYSUT members can enjoy savings of up to 20% at nearly 7,000 participating hotels among 17 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 as 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.

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!

### Don't forget the car rental discounts!

Next time you need to rent a vehicle, make sure to contact **Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, or National**. These companies provide NYSUT members and their families with discounted rates on passenger car rentals.

You can even receive 20% off local or one-way truck rentals from **Budget Truck Rental**.

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](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.

May/June '13



### 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, NY12110 or e-mail changes to [memberec@nysutmail.org](mailto:memberec@nysutmail.org). If you are a snowbird, give Member Records a few weeks notice to change its address records each way.

### From page 1. **Pre NYSUT RA Presidents Conference**

There was a great workshop, "Federal Legislative Retirement Security Update: 113th U. S. Congress," that provided an update concerning federal retirement issues, including health care reform and entitlement reform, Medicare and Social Security. Retiree leaders were strongly advised to make their voices heard in order to protect the future of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Al Campos, a lobbyist for the NEA's Government Relations, Federal Advocacy Department, and Lauren Luchi, manager of AFT retirees, highlighted key threats facing the programs. "NEA is working in coalition with Americans for Tax Fairness, Social Security Works and the Alliance for Retired Americans to protect these programs," said Campos. The union is also fighting rollbacks to the ACA. Luchi highlighted the pitfalls of the Chained Consumer Price Index, which would lower retiree Cost-of-Living Adjustments. Retirees aged 65 would lose roughly \$6,000 over 15 years. "These cuts would hit seniors hardest in late old age when they are the most economically vulnerable," Luchi said.

A highlight of the pre-conference was the special breakfast plenary session where Congressman Tim Bishop discussed the current dysfunctional congress.

### **S.O.S. Medicare (Seniors out Speaking on Medicare) By Frances S. Hilliard**

A great number of older Americans today are not well-informed about their health care options under Medicare, and consequently they may be paying more than necessary out-of-pocket costs, or they may be missing out on important aspects of health care such as preventive services. There is a great need among seniors for unbiased, consumer friendly information and support concerning Medicare and related health insurance coverage.

The Medicare Rights Center is a national nonprofit consumer service organization that works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities. The goals of this organization are carried out through educational programs, counseling, advocacy, and public policy initiatives. To help meet these goals, the Medicare Rights Center created *S.O.S. Medicare*, which brings trained volunteers to community sites where they present programs on various Medicare topics. These programs are designed to provide clear and focused health care coverage information to seniors and to answer questions of concern about Medicare benefits. Topics include Medicare Basics, Prescription Drug Coverage, HMOs and PPOs, Preventive Care, Medicare Summary Notices, and Advance Directives.

NYSUT has partnered with the Medicare Rights Center to provide S.O.S Medicare volunteers. Volunteers receive ongoing training and support which prepares them to offer presentations to community groups such as senior centers, public libraries, and NYSUT Retiree Chapters. Volunteers are provided with suggested topics, scripts, and handouts, but can customize their presentations for particular group needs and interests.

It was at a NYSUT Retiree Conference in 2011 that

I first learned about S.O.S. Medicare, through a conversation with Jay Broad, the S.O.S. Coordinator for Nassau County. After receiving training and orientation, I began volunteering for the program. Although my experience as a nurse has at times proved helpful, you do not need a background in health care in order to volunteer. For me, this has been an interesting and rewarding retirement pursuit, and I am hopeful that some of you reading this will be inspired to become S.O.S. volunteers. For more information about becoming an S.O.S. volunteer, or to arrange a speaker for your community group, contact Jay H. Broad at (516) 781-8685 or e-mail Jay: [jayh@broad.tc](mailto:jayh@broad.tc) For assistance with Medicare questions, contact the Medicare Rights Center at (800) 333-4114 or go to [www.medicareinteractive.org](http://www.medicareinteractive.org). The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services can be reached at (800) 633-4227 or go to [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

### From page 1. **RC39 President Attends NYSUT RA**

Proposals are on such topics as civil and human rights, higher education, educational issues, health care and workplace safety, legislative/political action, and pension/retirement. Of particular importance to retirees were two proposals. "Defined Benefit Pensions as a Fundamental Defined Right for Workers" stated that NYSUT and its affiliates – the AFT, NEA, and AFT-CIO continue with their aggressive campaigns to protect existing defined benefit pension plans and the benefits currently provided to all public and private-sector workers. "Earned Benefits" resolves that NYSUT work with all of its locals to educate its members and tell the public that it is time to do away with the use of the word "entitlements" in reference to benefits earned through a lifetime of work and sacrifices.

Will  
you  
be there?



### **Albany Rally, Be There: June 8**

NYSUT has issued a clarion call to all union members, parents, students, grandparents and community members to be at a June 8 rally in Albany to fight for the future of public education.

We must "cry out with one voice" against those threatening to destroy public education, NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi declared in announcing plans for the rally.

The rally is "a fight about the truth - not the lies we suffer through every day," he said. "It's a fight about the future of public education and getting it right! It's about celebrating, not demonizing, educators ... it's a fight about supporting quality in higher education, not pathways that lead to nowhere ... it's a fight about informative assessments, not the tyranny of obsessive standardized testing!"

Members and locals across the state are already making plans to add their voice to the fight to take back public education. Regional offices are reporting that interest is already so high, it is becoming a challenge to reserve buses. So, don't wait! The rally begins at noon and features speakers and music. Children are welcome. Contact your NYSUT regional office for details. Get updates here at [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org) and [www.twitter.com/nysut](http://www.twitter.com/nysut) or use the Twitter hashtag [#rallyJune8](https://twitter.com/hashtag/rallyJune8). You can also [RSVP via Facebook](#).

### **"VOICE," Stay Informed Via Text**

Be among the first to know! To receive updates via text messages about the June 8 rally and other union initiatives, text the word "VOICE" on your cellphone to 518-631-3202. And invite other NYSUT members to do the same. Please note: Message and data rates apply.

**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.

**Retiree Council 39 Board of Directors**

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

**Vice President, NYSUT and AFT Delegate:** Ann Smallen

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

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

**Director-at-large:** Frances Hilliard

**Director-at-large:** George Wybenga

**CUT YOUR LOSSES**



**NOW IS YOUR TIME TO**

**START FRESH**

**+ Credit and Budget Counseling**  
Free certified consumer credit counseling and discounted debt-management assistance are available 24 hours a day. Learn new money-management skills and save for the future.

**GET MORE FROM MEMBERSHIP**

for more information about this and other savings:  
**aft.org/members**



All Rights Reserved  
**AFT+**  
ambassadors

AFT + is your advocate. For information on all AFT + programs, call 800-238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail [aftplus@aft.org](mailto:aftplus@aft.org). The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800-238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to [disclosureinfo@aft.org](mailto:disclosureinfo@aft.org); or visit [www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure](http://www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure).

**Have you paid your voluntary RC39 contribution for 2013?**

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 2013 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