



Dedicated to the Preservation and Enhancement of the Retiree Benefits of New York State Community College Retirees

New York State's Civilian Emergency Response Corps needs you.

Hurricanes, blizzards, floods, and other natural disasters are becoming increasingly common in New York State. To better confront the new reality of severe weather, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo recently announced the creation of the Civilian Emergency Response Corps. This statewide disaster preparedness and response initiative aims to recruit skilled volunteers to assist in ongoing Superstorm Sandy recovery efforts and develop a network of volunteers who will be able to respond to future disasters.

While many of the physical scars of Superstorm Sandy are fading, individuals and families in impacted communities still have unaddressed needs. In addition to ongoing home repairs, storm victims need assistance with insurance claims, legal issues, and filing complicated tax returns. Communities need help rebuilding parks and public spaces, and designing more resilient structures that will be able to withstand future storms. The Civilian Emergency Response Corps is unique among volunteer programs in

that it focuses specifically on recruiting volunteers who have the necessary skills to meet these specialized needs.

Current and retired attorneys, insurance and tax professionals, tradesmen, social workers, psychologists, engineers, environmental scientists, people with foreign-language proficiencies, and other skilled individuals who live in Sandy-impacted communities can join the Civilian Emergency Response Corps. They can connect with volunteer opportunities by contacting their local Regional Volunteer Center (RVC) or New York State Office for New Americans (ONA) Opportunity Center. RVCs help unite interested volunteers with projects in their communities, and with ONA's assistance, New Americans can contribute to their communities and fully participate in New York State's civic and economic life.

For more information about the Civilian Emergency Response Corps and Sandy-related service opportunities, please contact your local RVC or ONA:

Long Island Regional Volunteer Center

Laura Messano, Director of Disaster Services
Email: lmessano.livc@optimum.net
Phone: (845) 608-7394

Mid-Hudson Regional Volunteer Center

Damian Morales, Director of Disaster Programs
Email: damian@volunteer-center.org
Phone: (914) 227-9306

New York City Regional Volunteer Center

Stephanie Gillette, Sandy Recovery Services Manager
Email: sgillette@cityhall.nyc.gov
Phone: (212) 788-1401

Economic Opportunity Commission of Nassau County (ONA)

Patricia Telfort, Office for New Americans Volunteer Liaison
Email: ptelfort@eoc-nassau.org
Phone: (516) 292-9710 x229

New York Immigration Coalition (ONA)

Kiwi Grady, New Americans Volunteer Coordinator
Email: kgrady@thenyic.org
Phone: (212) 627-2227, ext. 245

While much of the work of the Civilian Emergency Response Corps is focused on Sandy-impacted areas, every region of the state has been affected by severe weather or some other type of emergency, so there are opportunities for skilled volunteers in every community. By visiting www.prepare.ny.gov, you can join the state's Skilled Volunteers registry and let New York State know that the next time a disaster strikes, you are standing by and ready to assist.

Superstorm Sandy caused tremendous damage in many communities, but it also demonstrated the willingness of New Yorkers to give of their talents to help their neighbors. We hope that you will consider reaching out and learning more about how you can serve through the Civilian Emergency Response Corps. Thank you for doing your part to help New York State prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

RC39 Partnership with Long Island Cares

Over 350,000 people living on Long Island depend on Long Island Cares every month for assistance. RC39's \$200 donation helped change someone's circumstances: a child drank a glass of milk, a mother fed her baby, an elderly man had a sandwich and a bowl of soup, a returning veteran had a meal. For a moment, hunger wasn't an issue and these people were just like everyone else. RC39 members have assisted Long Island Cares in its mission to ensure that more Long Island children and families do not go hungry and to give people the tools and help they need to get back on their feet. The need never goes away. You can help by contacting Long Island Cares, 10 Davids— Harry Chapin Way, Hauppauge, NY 1178-2039, www.licares.org, (631) 582-FOOD.

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Subscribe to the NYSUT mailing list for fast and efficient communications from NYSUT and your retiree council president. Go to www.nysut.org. Scroll to the bottom of the page. Click **Retirees** in the Members column. Then scroll down this page until you see and then click **Sign Up for email Alerts**. Just fill in the form and you are all set to receive NYSUT email alerts which will keep you informed of issues important to retirees and NYSUT members.

Are We Instructors or Professors?

By William F. Powers

In early 1986, a friend who was teaching Sociology at El Paso Community College in Texas phoned and presented the idea that he and I do a faculty exchange for the fall semester. I had been teaching Sociology at Suffolk County Community College for some years and found the idea appealing. However, there were complications. Both of us had working wives and school age children. As it turned out, the most daunting challenge was not family matters but getting the exchange approved by the Suffolk administration.

Moving up the college's chain of command from department head, to dean of instruction, to vice president, I was told that no one had ever before made such a request and that therefore there was no precedent; no one was sure how to proceed. County lawyers were consulted since a major concern was liability. Who would be responsible if I had an accident or was sued while teaching in Texas? Would it be Suffolk or El Paso? The same concern applied to the man who would take my place on Long Island.

To the credit of the administration, after protracted consultations, all the issues were resolved. Contracts were drawn up stating that, although thousands of miles away from home, I remained the responsibility of Suffolk County while Romeo DiBenedetto, the El Paso faculty member, would remain an employee of his college. Each would receive his home institution salary and retain all benefits.

So, in late summer, my wife, children and I flew to Texas and the DiBenedettos flew east. We not only exchanged jobs but houses and cars as well.

There were many differences, of course, between the two community colleges. The one I will focus on here is how faculty members were designated. At Suffolk, having satisfied the requirements for each step, I had moved up the ranks to full professor. In El Paso, on the other hand, Romeo and all his colleagues remained "instructors" throughout their careers. It might be added that they had no union, few benefits, and salaries that were substantially lower than those of their counterparts in New York.

Leaving aside for now those balmy days in El Paso, I'd like to jump ahead more than a decade, to my retirement in 1999. With our children gone off to their own life adventures and with little likelihood of their returning to Long Island, my wife and I pulled up stakes and moved to North Carolina. This southern state was not completely unfamiliar territory since we had spent a sabbatical year in Chapel Hill while I researched what became the book *Tar Heel Catholics: A History of Catholicism in North Carolina*. We fell in love with the Tar Heel State and fifteen years down the road remain fully satisfied with our decision.

Among North Carolina's treasures is a network of 58 community colleges, the third largest system in the country. In a recent speech to the North Carolina Community College board, Governor Pat McCrory referred to the community colleges as the key to the state's economic recovery and to its ability to attract good jobs to the state. Despite his glowing words, the governor signed a budget that cut \$16 million from the community colleges. Furthermore, there is widespread discontent and protest in North Carolina on a number of issues, including the state's commitment to education. For K through 12 teachers, for example, tenure is being phased out and there will be no more pay increases for those obtaining master's degrees.

As in El Paso, North Carolina community college faculty members, no matter how long their tenure or in what subject area they teach, remain "instructors" and their salaries are low. This is particularly true for adjuncts. In 2013, an adjunct instructor was paid \$1,500 per course. A full time instructor made \$4,000 per class, or \$40,000 for a 10-section annual schedule. A recent analysis found that "relative to other states, North Carolina community college faculty members earn monthly salaries that rank at the bottom...."

On a personal note, when I moved to North Carolina I visited Durham Tech, the closest community college to my home in Chapel Hill and inquired about teaching a course in Sociology as an adjunct. The administrator responsible for the Social Sciences said that I could have a course, but *she didn't know why I would want to teach there since the pay was so low!* She might have been having a bad hair day or had just looked at her own pay check, but I was shocked by what she said. I never did teach there.

Despite the generally dismal situation, there is a ray of hope. In February of this year, breaking with tradition, Wake Tech, the community college which serves the Raleigh area, promoted a number of staff to professorial ranks, using the traditional grades of assistant, associate, and full professor. Only those with a minimum of seven years of service were considered for professorial rank, and only two of the 196 individuals promoted were given the highest title. But it was a breakthrough. What also pleased the new professors was the 3% pay raise went along with a promotion.

One North Carolina community college system official explained that few community colleges across the country use the "professor" designation because there is concern as to what to call faculty who work in non-academic areas, like welding and auto mechanics. He added: "At community colleges, there's sort of an egalitarian view, compared to...our brothers and sisters in the universities. We don't like to have this ranking system; in a way, we think that everybody's sort of together."

On the other hand, the faculty members promoted at Wake Tech expressed pleasure in being recognized for their service. They also felt that the professor designation enhanced the status of their institution. Real colleges have professors.

Returning to my long ago experience as an exchange professor/instructor in El Paso –what I found among the faculty was a quiet resignation to the low pay and lack of a bargaining agent. One man smiled, shrugged his shoulders and said, "What can I do; it's a job. There's no point complaining." The immediate supervisors, not elected by the faculty but appointed by the top college administrators, felt no bond with the rank-and-file teachers. Once appointed to an administrative position, they had crossed a great divide and saw themselves as "bosses," not as colleagues. When I asked what was expected as to office hours I was told by the social sciences administrator that when not in the classroom I was expected to be in my office. From his perspective, teaching college was a 9 to 5-type job.

I'm glad I had that faculty exchange. It was a valuable learning experience. It made me appreciate what I had at Suffolk, not the least of which was a vibrant union and an administration that valued the faculty as "professors."

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MOVIES NOW AND THEN

By Ann Fey



In Alexander Payne's latest film NEBRASKA, Woody Grant, played by Bruce Dern, sets out walking along a highway in Montana on his quest: to claim the million dollars he has been led, by a magazine publishing gimmick, into believing he has won. Like Gregory Peck's Ahab pursuing the whale in MOBY DICK or Spencer Tracy in THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA striving for the precious marlin, this is Woody's quest. Aged, confused, scruffy and alcoholic, he would not rate a close-up, even photo-shopped, on the cover of the AARP magazine, but his experiences go universal in a social context that rains satire, humor, and sadness on the world.

His distanced sons are typical young men: one unemployed electronics salesman, the other striving to be a newsman. His wife Kate, played by June Squibb, looks like a kindly muffin-baking grandma and talks like a sharp cookie. If excessive portliness and unembarrassed scheming were protected conditions, many of the characters in the cast would be very safe. His unemployed son, played by Will Forte, visits, the family reconnects, and the son agrees to cater to Woody's irrational, defiant desire to reach the publishing scheme office in Nebraska to claim his dream, and they go on the road again.

The main stop, in the town where Woody spent most of his earlier life, combines characterizations and caricatures, schemes and stupidity, and sentimentality. Arguably it includes the best local bar sequence in recent films and possibly the best bookstore scene too, in which we meet the love of Woody's young life, an un-Kate, and learn about his marriage choice. As the trip continues, father and son connect. Beautiful flat landscapes and wide vistas in black and white add to the sense of man's smallness. Ultimately millionaire status does not get checked as done on Woody's bucket list. But maybe the list was not specific enough, because somehow, in the end, as Woody, at the wheel, rides towards sunset, it's lump-in-the-throat powerful. This is a film to see: the right combination of sweet and sad, funny and disturbing, in outstanding performances and fine filmic effects.

This is not director Payne's first film about an old fellow's final road trip. Actress June Squibb, Woody's wife, in ABOUT SCHMIDT, also set in Nebraska, starring Jack Nicholson, played his wife, who died unexpectedly, early in the story. (Nicholson had been considered for the role of Woody in NEBRASKA, as were Gene Hackman and Robert Duval.) Schmidt, who had retired reluctantly, turned off by his lonely widower home life, goes on a long interstate road trip. It is his last, connecting with elements from his past, and with his daughter.

Schmidt and Woody are essentially on the same trip, at the same point in their lives. ABOUT SCHMIDT is a well-crafted film, enjoyable to view. The original story, from Louis Begley's novel ABOUT SCHMIDT, was not set in Nebraska. Rather than a fly-over location, it took place in a fly-to location: Long Island, New York. Schmidt, who here in the novel, is Jewish, lives in the Hamptons and his trips are to New York. This delightfully readable book is as "New York" as the film is "middle America." It's a great read after seeing the movie – or before.

The novel-to-film basis of the end of life journey occurs again in a little noticed film called BEING FLYNN, starring Robert De Niro that has been acclaimed in some circles, and is hard to forget. He plays Jonathan Flynn, whose wife (Julianne Moore) dies from drugs. His is an inner-city urban journey, from poor home to institution to rough streets and so forth, fighting drugs, and then indulging. Towards the end, his end, he is admitted to a homeless shelter, to find his long separated son Nick working there, his purpose in life is to help others. There is a very hard end to his journey. There is darkness to the film, shadowed by the urban landscape; De Niro's past repertory is enough to create a following for it, especially since the opening scene looks into the front window of a cab, showing De Niro in the driver's seat staring into the rear view mirror. No, he is not saying "You lookin at me?" but clearly it visually deliberately recalls his iconic character Travis Bickel in TAXI DRIVER, 1976. The work that this film is based on is a memoir set in Boston, (which you might not want to request because your librarian will likely look up from the desk, at you) -- Nick Flynn's memoir: "Another Bull\$#%+ Night in Suck City."

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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.



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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.

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