

Peter Herron, RC39 President, attended the Pre NYSUT RA Local & Retiree Council Presidents Conference and the RA in Buffalo, April 30 to May 1, 2015. As expected, the hottest issue is the continuous and vicious attack on teachers by Governor Cuomo and others. President Herron attended workshops on “Defending the Earned Benefits of Our in-Service and Retired Members,” “Beyond Mobilizing Our Members – A Focus on Organizing,” and “Strategic Conversations: Preparing for a Post-Agency Fee World.” Information learned at these workshops will be in future RC39 newsletters.

As usual there were many proposed resolutions and reaffirmations. Those recommended by the RA will be published by NYSUT in the near future. There were four proposed constitutional amendments. Proposed amendments 1 and 2 were submitted by the NYSUT Board of Directors. Proposed amendment 1 was changes to the dues schedule. Proposed amendment 2 recommended changes to maintain five NYSUT officers. The Constitutional and Bylaw Amendments committee recommended concurrence and the RA agreed with the committee.

The proposed constitutional amendments 3 and 4 were submitted by more than 100 members drawn from at least five election districts. Both of these proposals involved election of NYSUT officers and terms of office. These were attempts to have the NYSUT elections held at the local level rather than at the RA. The Constitutional and Bylaw Amendments committee recommended nonconcurrency for both of these proposals. There was a very heated debate indicating dissention with how the current officers were elected at last year’s RA and with the current NYSUT administration. The debate on proposal 3 lasted the maximum 15 minutes requiring a vote on ending debate. The voice vote was inconclusive, so tellers did a count of hands. About two-thirds voted to end debate. The majority of the RA agreed with the committee’s recommenda-

## Nominating Committee Presents a Slate of Candidates

In preparation of the June RC39 election, RC39 President Peter Herron appointed the board of directors as the nominating committee. To serve in any of these positions, a person must be a member of RC39 and willing to serve. In recent newsletter issues, and in particular the March/April issue, members were requested to submit nominations. None were received from the membership. The nominating committee inquired of NYSUT officers and local NYSUT members throughout the state in its effort to obtain a geographically balanced slate. RC39 members did not respond to the committee’s appeal.

In June the office of Floyd Cameron, NYSUT Retiree Service manager, will facilitate the election by mail, on behalf of RC39. The ballot will have a place for a write-in option for each position.

All these positions have a three-year term beginning July 1, 2015. For a copy of the NYSUT RC39 constitution, which contains the regulations for RC39 elections, go to the RC39 website, <http://rc39.ny.aft.org/>.

## Nominating Committee Slate of Candidates for RC39 Delegates and Officers

President, First delegate to the NYSUT, Representative Assembly and AFT Convention

**Peter Herron**

Vice President, Delegate to the NYSUT, Representative Assembly and AFT Convention

**Judith McFatter Holmes**

Secretary, Delegate to the NYSUT, Representative Assembly and AFT Convention

**Corita Kong**

Treasurer, first alternate delegate to the NYSUT Representative Assembly and AFT Convention

**Joan Prymas**

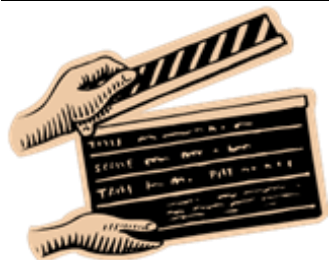
Director-at-Large **James V. Brennan**

Director-at-Large **George Wybenga**

See “Meet the Candidates,” page 3, for a brief statement from each candidate.

This meant the proposed amendment was defeated. Proposal 4 was also defeated..

It appears that what happened with the proposed amendments 3 and 4 indicates that there is a large minority dissatisfied with the current NYSUT administration and how elections are conducted. This does not bode well for NYSUT and its members. With current unprecedented attacks on teachers, unions, pensions, health insurance, and tenure in New York State and the nation, we do not need to be fighting each other. We do not need to agree with everything the NYSUT administration is doing in order to support NYSUT; however, if NYSUT is defeated there will be no other organization able to defend us.



## MOVIES NOW AND THEN

By Ann Fey



The teacher-film genre has said GOOD BYE to MR. CHIPS and moved to hello BAD TEACHER. Similarly, the wedding film genre has taken a slide in idealism and quality as it hits the top in popularity and profitably. It has been reported that the "I Do" moment, the essence of sweetness and sadness, has since the early eighties, brought about over two billion dollars in box office income. And in theme, the "I Do" has been morphed into "I Won't," "I Forgot," "Why Should I?" "Let's not," etc.

THE BIG WEDDING (2013) managed to achieve what would seem impossible: casting Robert De Niro, Diane Keaton, Susan Sarandon and Robin Williams in a wedding film that is – well – terrible. All chopped up into incomplete scenes, peppered with vulgar profanities that don't have the usual taboo humorous effect, and laced with clownish sex scenes, the story is a turn off. The De Niro and Keaton characters were married over twenty years, and then divorced. Their adopted son is going to marry. His birth mother coming from Columbia is a strict Catholic, so they will pretend not to have been divorced. De Niro's lover is Sarandon, and the triangle is at the center of this really pointless story. Robin Williams plays an alcoholic priest. He prevails in a gross Cana Conference interview, preparing the young couple for marriage. De Niro features in an ugly unfunny drunk scene. Keaton tries to be sexy. The Columbian mother turns out to have been a swinger. The young couple gets married, and Sarandon gets De Niro. Spoiler intended.

But it is possible to sidestep the straight down-the-aisle dignity and decorum of the ideal wedding story, and to indulge in zany antics with wild characters, and to step totally away from the ending at the end of the aisle, and still have a very entertaining, light, and even moving film. That's the case with THE WEDDING RINGER (2015). Kevin Hart, as Bic, the ringer, is the owner and chief executive officer of Best Man, Inc. He provides the best man for grooms who need one. Josh Gad plays Doug Ham, a nice nerd and a loner, who needs not only a best man, but also five additional groomsmen because his event-crazy bride-to-be has five bridesmaids, and he has assured her he has five friends. Bic helps him. The selection and training of the ersatz guys chosen for the roles is funny. The characterization of the selfish bride flourishes, as she insists on the wedding song being the same one she had at her first marriage because she likes it so much. In a series of humorous events, the characters of Gad and Hart create a history of lies about the backgrounds of the role players. Friendship develops, and the chemistry of the quiet, insecure Doug and the sharp, funny Bic affect the story, which has an interesting outcome. The comical situations and humorous dialogue, combined with wildly clownish antics, grow to a sort of sensitivity as the themes of friendship and self-confidence emerge.

The wedding film has flourished in many international settings. The family, friends, and helpers at the center of MONSOON WEDDING (2001) seem to reflect the universal package that collects at these events. Set in India at an arranged marriage in an upper middle class family, Academy Award nominated director Mira Nair's highly acclaimed film looks, sounds, and feels beautiful. She treats the stressful tension of the well-intentioned father, the happy life style of the romantic hired wedding-planner, and the on-the-side affair of the bride-to-be with clarity and subtlety. The bride's young brother finds his true personality in the course of preparing for his part. The guests include relatives from America and Australia. A sub-plot threaded through at first unnoticeably and then disturbingly clearly concerns the perverted inclination of one of the guests. The relationship between the bride-to-be and the groom from America is developed gradually. Music fills the film, but the general effect is as much Hollywood as Bollywood, as the story fills out to a happy event. When the film was made, a good part of the footage was ruined by an airport security x-ray. Fortunately, Nair got the funds to reshoot it. The setting is filled with marigolds, and the movie is filled with interest and fun.

## Scary Things are Happening to Pensions in Illinois

By Colin C. Campbell

I'm a retired NYSUT member living in Illinois. NYSUT members may or may not be aware of what is happening here. Over the decades the Illinois legislature has failed to adequately fund the state pension system and has even borrowed money from it and failed to repay.

At this point the state is in terrible financial shape, the pension fund is funded at less than 40%, and we have a new, conservative governor who wants to solve the problem by cutting benefits.

The teachers in this state have been getting the blame for this situation for years. Apparently they "used their voting power to force the legislature to give in to exorbitant contract demands." Little is said about the legislature's failure to meet its obligation to fund the pension system year after year. The state constitution forbids cutting benefits, but the governor has pledged not to raise taxes, and in the forthcoming game of "chicken" I would not be surprised to see an attempt to amend the constitution-not in the teacher's favor.

My daughter is a teacher in Illinois. I have advised her to set up and fund her own retirement plan and not to count on ever getting a penny from her state pension plan, not even reimbursement of what she has paid into the plan. It's gotten that bad.

I know that New York is in better shape than Illinois, but if the current trend toward neo-conservative state governments breaking unions and relegating education to an afterthought continues we all need to fight back as hard as we can. What is happening in Illinois today could be New York's future.

*Note from the editor: This article is the result of Campbell's responding to a recent NYSUT RC39 request for information on what is happening in your part of the state. Let us know what's happening in your neck of the woods.*

## Meet the Candidates

Please save this as a reference when you complete your ballot in June.

**Peter Herron-** President, First delegate to the NYSUT, Representative Assembly and AFT Convention.

Peter retired as an emeritus professor of mathematics from Suffolk County Community College in 1995. He is the founding president of the Retiree Association of Suffolk Community College (RASCC), founding president of NYSUT RC39 and served on the SUNY Retiree Services Corps Advisory Committee. He is the web manager of the RASCC, RC39, and Long Island Master Gardeners' websites. Peter is the editor of the NYSUT RC39 newsletter.

**Judith R. McFatter Holmes-** Vice President, Delegate to the NYSUT, Representative Assembly and AFT Convention.

Judith is a former Professor of Business Administration at SUNY Rockland Community College (RCC) in Suffern, NY, where she was elected President of the RCC Federation of Teachers #1871. As union president, she was confronted daily with an anti-union college president and successfully negotiated 12 faculty contracts, maintaining salary increases & health benefits. Judith also served as treasurer of the Rockland County Central Labor Council and was elected the Labor Council Delegate to the 1984 Democratic Convention in San Francisco. During a three-year leave of absence from teaching, she served as Director of Employment and Training for the NY State AFL-CIO where she designed and implemented a statewide employment program for workers affected by plant closings and a Worker Assistance Center whose concept is still in use today by the NY State Department of Labor. She was later hired by the National AFL-CIO as Regional Political Director (NY/NJ) where she coordinated Labor political campaigns for national & state elections. She also worked as an AFL-CIO national staff representative where she coordinated local union and Labor Council activities with organizing campaigns gaining collective bargaining rights for workers. Judith is currently retired and living in Blauvelt, NY, where she participates in activities relating to homeless adults/children and teaches basic computer skills to senior citizens.

**Corita Kong-** Secretary, Delegate to the NYSUT, Representative Assembly and AFT Convention.

After teaching history for 30 years at Suffolk Community College, Corita retired in 1998 and was gratified to be designated as Professor Emeritus in the following year. She always believed that teachers should excel not only in the classroom but should also be involved in activities promoting the well-being of the students, the teaching profession and society's appreciation of the value of education. Corita believes that in retirement, retiree associations and councils help retirees maintain contacts with former colleagues and voice retiree concerns and interests in unison. Corita is proud of being one of the founding members of the Retiree Association of Suffolk Community College and serving as the secretary of NYSUT Retiree Council 39 since its inception.

**Joan Prymas-** Treasurer, first alternate delegate to the NYSUT Representative Assembly and AFT Convention.

Joan retired from Herkimer County Community College in 2004. Since then she has been involved in the high school music boosters organization for three years as treasurer, served three terms as RC 39 treasurer, served on the SUNY Retiree Services Corps Advisory Committee, tutored some high school math students, and did some traveling. Joan still does some lobbying in Albany for higher education, in particular, community colleges and retirees. Joan Prymas has been treasurer of NYSUT Retiree Council 39 since its inception.

**George L. Wybenga-** Director-at-Large.

In 1937 George was born in Delft, The Netherlands. George migrated to the U. S. 1956 and served in the U. S. Army in active duty from 1957-1960, SP5.E5. He worked in graphic & packaging design studios in New York City while attending Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY, BFA (cl) 1962-1967. He taught art in the Islip Public Schools from 1970 to 1978 while attending Hunter College (CUNY) 1967-1969, MA/Art Ed, and SUNY at Stony Brook 1975-1977, MA/LS. George was a faculty member of Parsons School of Design, New York, 1979-1983. With late colleague Laszlo Roth, he developed the BFA program for package design at the Fashion Institute of New York (SUNY), joined the faculty at FIT 1985 and retired from FIT in 1995. He was a member of the Islip Teachers Association and joined the UCE at FIT in 1985. George is married since 1967 and has one son, Eric, who resides in Cocksackie, NY. George is currently finishing the 4th Edition of *The Packaging Designers Book of Patterns* (John Wiley & Sons).

**James V. Brennan-** Director-at-Large.

Jim retired as an emeritus professor from Suffolk County Community College in 1999. He was the Dean for the Division of Nursing, Health Careers and Physical Education. In his last year at SCC Jim served as the Associate Dean of Students for the Ammerman Campus. He was president of the Guild of Administrative Officers and is a past president of the Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College (RASCC).

## Retiree Council 39 Board of Directors

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Send your comments, suggestions, and inquiries to NYSUT RC39Officers, 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](mailto: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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**Have you paid your voluntary RC39 contribution for 2015?**

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 2015 Participation Fee form

Name\_\_\_\_\_ e-mail\_\_\_\_\_

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Please check amount of your voluntary participation fee: \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send your check, made out to NYSUT RC39, along with this completed form to:

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