



### NYSUT Retiree Contiguous E. D. 51-53 (At-large) Meeting, October 6-7, 2015

Representing RC39 at the NYSUT Retiree Contiguous E. D. 51-53 (At-large) meeting are RC39 President Peter Herron, RC39 Vice President Judith Holmes, and RC39 Treasurer Joan Prymas. There will be at least two plenary sessions and many group meetings to discuss issues relevant to retirees in general and to specific issues of NYSUT retirees. Retiree councils will be submitting resolutions. Accepted resolutions will be submitted to NYSUT for consideration at the next Representative Assembly.

Having our officers attending the E.D. meeting will provide an excellent opportunity for them to interact with NYSUT officers and staff, delegates from other councils, attend workshops, and learn how resolutions are submitted. While in Albany RC39 officers will discuss ways RC39 can better serve its members.

### A Retirement Full of Rewarding and Productive Contributions to So Many

William Lowen

I have been asked several times to write a column as to what my wife, Lori, and I having been doing during my 20+ years of retirement. But first let me say that I had a wonderful career at Suffolk County Community College (SCCC). I was appointed to the position of assistant professor in the Natural Science Department at a time when the college was in its relative infancy. After a few years, and an increase in department size, the department was split into the Biology Department and the Marine & Technology Department. I was appointed the first Biology Department chairman, a position that I occupied for ten years. After another 10+ years, I retired at the end of December in 1992. In February 1993 we moved to New Mexico and moved into our new home in June 1993. Shortly thereafter I received the happy news that I was designated Professor emeritus of Biology. Lori, who is a pediatric nurse practitioner, received an appointment as Instructor of Nursing at Albuquerque Technical and Vocational Institute (TVI). TVI is now Central New Mexico Community College, which shares the same initials, CNMCC, as the Central New Mexico Correctional Center. CNMCC is superficially similar to SCCC because of similar size and number of campuses, but does not have the same breadth or depth of courses.



Bill Lowen

When people retire they should have an idea in mind what they are going to do with all this available time. I chose, as did Lori who retired four years ago, to become involved in non-profit, humanitarian organizations. I began this quest with my joining the Rotary Club of Rio Rancho. Rotary is found in approximately 200 countries and has about 1.3 million members. Rotary is not political nor is it religious. Rotary is the oldest service club and its sole purpose is to make the world a better place for all. It wasn't long before I became secretary of my club. I have been secretary ever since with the exception of one year when I was president of the club. I have also been secretary of Rotary District 5520, which is all of New Mexico plus a goodly part of west Texas. I have been an assistant governor of the district for six years and lieutenant governor for three years. It was through my Rotary contacts that I became involved in other organizations. Soon after I joined Rotary I became a member of the board of Storehouse West, which is the official food pantry for Sandoval County and the Kids Clothes Closet which supplies clothing to children up



Lori Lowen

to the age of eighteen. I was on this board for over fifteen years including a stint as president of the board. We not only supplied food to the hungry, a means test was required, but we also helped out with emergency payments for utilities and rent or mortgages.

At the urging of my state senator I accepted an appointment on the Citizens Advisory Board to Intel Corporation of New Mexico. Needless to say it was an interesting position and somewhat important since the Intel facility in New Mexico was the biggest producer of computer chips in the world. I spent about three years on this board. About this time, or a little later, Lori and I made our first Rotary trip to Guatemala. Several clubs in the district were involved with improving the lot of the Mayan peoples who inhabit the high country northeast of Guatemala City, the capital. This first trip involved a clean water project for three villages and reworking the electrical system of the regional hospital. My club wholly paid for the rewiring in the hospital which eliminated brown outs and allowed for the use of refrigerators for blood storage, etc. I went on to write three successful grant applications for additional clean water projects, educational equipment and supplies for the Usantpan schools and lastly for the establishment of rural health clinics and rural ambulance services. Lori and I went to Guatemala four years in a row for at least ten days at a time. Wherever we provided clean water we cut the childhood mortality rate by 80%, for cholera was the primary cause of death among children.

Both Lori and I have been very involved with A Park Above, which is a park presently being constructed for peoples of all abilities. This park will be 100% accessible to people with handicaps, the first park like it west of San Antonio. This is a no fee park. Everyone can use the park facilities. We expect that the park will open by September 2015. Lori is vice president of A Park Above and I served on the board for several years. Two years ago I joined the board of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and I am presently 1<sup>st</sup> vice-president of NAMI Westside. It is an organization that educates the public, the care givers, and the patients about mental illness, treatment opportunities, etc. It also works to remove the stigma of mental illness.

Lori was on the New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium (NMNEC). The purpose of this group was to develop a statewide concept-based nursing curriculum bridging nursing practice and education. This curriculum was put into place in 2014 and it provides a unified system of accessible, innovative, and state of the art nursing education.

Overall, we have enjoyed living in the southwest. New Mexico is beautiful; the people tend to be unhurried and friendly. In the winter, where I live, you can be skiing in the morning and playing outdoor tennis in the afternoon. The weather is wonderful, except that it usually does not rain enough.

## Ellen Shuler Mauk Honored

At the August 27 SCCC Academic Convocation, Ellen Shuler Mauk not only was awarded Emeritus Professor but was also awarded the Distinguish Suffolk County Community College Presidential Medal.



V.P. for Academic Affairs Suzanne Johnson, Professor Emeritus Ellen Shuler Mauk, President Shaun L. McKay, Suffolk County Community College Board of Trustees Chair, Theresa Sanders, and V.P. for Student Affairs Christopher Adams.

## Some Facts on Profiteers and Privateers

\$ Profiteer Pearson's \$33 million testing contract with New York State puts profits ahead of student needs. Students are over-tested so Pearson can try out sample questions.

\$ Pearson is paid to design standardized tests and wields undue influence over student scores. Teachers, not testing companies, know what knowledge and skills students should master ([www.lohud.com/story/news/education/2014/07/26/common-core-cut-scores-examined/13219981](http://www.lohud.com/story/news/education/2014/07/26/common-core-cut-scores-examined/13219981)). However, a "gag order" prohibits teachers from talking publicly about state tests, even to point out problems with questions or scoring!

\$ The center for Media and Democracy, an investigative reporting group, identified more than 800 bills and resolutions that were crafted and secretly pushed by the corporate-funded American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) to promote vouchers and attack teacher tenure and seniority. The Walton Family Foundation is the leading funder of privatizing attempts, while more than two thirds of newly formed charter schools are for-profit.

\$ Privateer Campbell Brown, who is leading a meritless legal challenge to teachers' due process rights, refuses to identify her deep-pocket donors, even as she promotes propaganda against tenure in New York State.

\$ Corporate foundations, such as Gates, Walton and Dell, along with private philanthropies, spend at least \$6 billion annually to influence education policies, according to University of Southern California researchers.

**Public Education - NOT Private Profits!**

## Did You Know...?

- 7 of the 10 best high schools in the country are in New York State?
- The highest AP scores come from students in NYS?
- The governor's budget does not include any new money for teacher centers - current funding is less than 2008-09?
- The President is asking for community colleges to be free to those who work for it, yet the governor is aiming to cut funding to ours?
- The governor is asking for more charter schools, yet 126 slots still remain open?
- CUNY/SUNY has been cut \$1.5 billion since 2008, driving up tuition to make up the costs?
- A Constitutional Convention could occur in 2017 and could affect your guaranteed pension and the right to unionize?

## Some Pension Facts

### *Did you know:*

- That NYSTRS, New York State Teachers Retirement System, currently has assets totally \$106.8 billion, the largest since founded in 1921?
  - That the return on investments for the fiscal year ending in August was 18.9%?
  - That as of July 1, 2014, the system is distributing \$6.3 billion per year to retiree teachers and that is not including the monies paid to New York City retirees?
  - That 82% of the funds dispersed are sent to New York State residents and have a huge impact on the local economy? - That Suffolk County has the largest number of teacher retirees in the state and Nassau ranks number 3?
  - That Tier VI of the retirement system ranks number 2 in total numbers enrolled and when it becomes the largest tier, the first time members will be contributing more (51%) to the fund than employers?
  - That the pension funds (not just the teachers' fund) in New York State are funded at 97-103% of outstanding liabilities and that nationwide public pensions are funded in the range of 68-72%?
  - Your pensions are secure financially and economically but are politically attacked as unsustainable. The state constitution guarantees that your pension is an individual contract between you and the state which cannot be "diminished or impaired." The call for a constitutional convention by law will be on the ballot in 2017.
- David Keefe, Retiree Representative, Teachers Retirement System 516- 741-1241.*

## 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.

## Identity theft protection available for NYSUT members



## TRUE IDENTITY PROTECTION™

*NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce that its newest endorsed program -- ID Watchdog -- is now available to all NYSUT members & their families looking for protection against the growing threat of identity and credit theft.*

### What Do I Get When I Sign Up for ID Watchdog?

- Credit & Cyber Monitoring
- Monthly Credit Score Tracker
- Credit Reports & Scores
- High Risk Monitoring
- Individual, Individual/Spouse or Family Coverage Available

According to Javelin Strategy & Research, an estimated 13.1 million Americans fall victim to identity theft each year. These individuals are hit with approximately \$7,000 in fraudulent charges per person and spend about 330 hours each trying to recover from the effects of identity theft.

ID Watchdog (founded in 2005 as a theft protection service) uses proprietary monitoring technology that alerts members as soon as new or updated information associated with their identity is detected -- allowing them to catch fraudulent activity immediately.

**To learn more about ID Watchdog, call toll-free 866-513-0823  
or visit [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.

Sept/Oct. '15

### Retiree Council 39 Board of Directors

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

Send your comments, suggestions, and inquiries to NYSUT RC39Officers, 98 Rocky Point Landing Rd., Rocky Point, NY 11778 or [rc39pete@optonline.net](mailto: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 memberec@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 2015-16?**

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 2015-16 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