

RECONNECT (I'M STICKIN' WITH THE UNION)

Judith Holmes, RC39 Vice President

“Well, I’ve decided that hiring math and science teachers is harder than in other areas of instruction. Therefore, prospective and currently employed math and science instructors/professors will be **paid more** than teachers in all other academic areas.”

WHAT!!! DID I JUST HEAR THAT? These words ring in my head to this day, fifty years later. As a new faculty member, I remember this vividly. The president of Rockland Community College said these words at the first September faculty meeting in 1968. Well, I have been retired for more than thirty years now and find my current life style suits my needs, thanks to NYSUT, my union. My financial and emotional way of life would be very, very different without the union. As a young non-tenured twenty-seven-year-old teacher, I didn’t really understand the impact my decision would have on my future when I took the stand for fairness and justice and joined a union.

How could this be? How could a college president decide to pay an annual salary to teachers depending on the subjects they taught? Well, pre-Taylor Law (1968), employers had the “management right to unilaterally establish pay rates and working conditions for public employees.” There was no collective bargaining for public K-12 education, community colleges, SUNY 4-year colleges or for all public employees in the state. In those days, the Rockland CC Faculty Senate representatives were invited to meet with the college president (hat in hand) to present their rationale for pay increases. There was no **binding legal** reason for the college president to pay any attention to their requests. But this committee was determined to meet with the president anyway to try and change his mind. So much for collective bargaining.

But what could be done to stop the president’s NEW PAY action declaration? Many faculty members were outraged and STATED “**Enough is Enough.**” Some faculty members investigated the possibility of forming a collective bargaining unit, a UNION. The American Association of University Professors, the National Education Association, and the American Federation of Teach-

ers were contacted, and each organization sent a representative to speak at a meeting of all interested faculty concerning the merits of joining their organization. The AFT met our needs. A formal vote was held by PERB (Public Employees Relations Board) to join the AFT or not join a union at all. Joining a union meant negotiating salary, health insurance, and other working conditions with your employer. The faculty members voted overwhelmingly to join the United College Teachers of NY/AFT, which later joined the New York State United Teachers. K-12 teachers joined NYSTA (New York State Teachers Association). Eventually, teacher locals merged into NYSUT. **UNION STRONG!**

Forming a union was possible because in 1968, for the first time, the New York State Legislature passed collective bargaining legislation, The Taylor Law, which enabled public employees throughout the state to bargain on the local level with their employer concerning salary and working conditions. This allowed teachers to organize. Elections were to be held in school districts, public colleges, and county and municipal governments. Public employee unions were formed all over New York State. Yay

The Struggle. Establishing which employees qualified to be in the “bargaining unit” was a difficult task. Who would qualify to be able to vote for a union? In order to control the future direction of the union, the RCC college president argued with the state PERB for everyone to be in the unit. His idea was not accepted by PERB, “no community of interest.” A unit of 127 full-time teaching faculty was legally established. Rockland Community College Federation of Teachers, Local 1871 (RCCFT) was born. The officers of the union knew nothing of the procedure for forming a union—we were very “green.” Without the help of a very qualified AFT staff member, Thomas Mannix, we wouldn’t exist as a faculty union today. He stepped in, sat at the “table” with four union officers and management representatives.

The First Contract. Again, we were very, very “green.” In 1969 we asked the AFT to

again help us negotiate. Soon we were creating limits to the management rights clause, negotiating hours of work, number of classes taught to establish a full-time position, seniority rights, and many other working conditions. A one-year contract was agreed to and passed by the county legislature in early 1970. Immediately we started negotiating for the next contract. Very few multi-year contracts were ever concluded. We quickly learned a one-year contract was a management tactic. Drag out negotiations as long as possible, wear the union negotiation team down so the union would be weak. But the faculty held STRONG. No union negotiator was paid a salary; we negotiated after classes and late into the night and then taught early morning classes on top of it all. (Administrators would check each morning after negotiations to see if we were in our assigned class.) We never missed class, but the college negotiators would “sleep in” after a late night of negotiating.

Contracts: 1969-1988 -- Major Struggles Continued. In late July 1978, twelve full-time tenured faculty members were told “Your services are no longer required due to budgetary exigencies.” In two days NYSUT filed a legal grievance defending all twelve members. In September, these faculty members were replaced with part-time faculty who were assigned their classes. After fifty-one grievance hearings and two years later, with Tom Hobart, Tony Wildman, and NYSUT lawyers we were **SUCCESSFUL**. Eleven of the twelve members were reinstated with back pay. One faculty member chose to leave teaching altogether, but received back pay.

This college president continued to be a union buster. In the Spring of 1978, the local chapter of CSEA (Civil Service Employees Association) representing all county public employees voted to strike after long and tenuous negotiations. The college faculty were half way through their yearly contract. The college president called the union president at home and stated that he was

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NYSUT Retiree Contiguous E. D. 51-53 (At-large) Meeting, October 3-4, 2018

Representing Retiree Council 39 at the NYSUT Retiree Contiguous E. D. 51-53 (At-large) meeting are RC39 President, First NYSUT and AFT Delegate, Peter Herron, RC39 Vice President, NYSUT and AFT Delegate Judith Holmes, and RC39 Secretary, NYSUT and AFT Delegate, Shaun Gerien. 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.

Your Health Connection
By Frances S. Hilliard, RN, MS
Professor Emerita, Nassau Community College

Did you know that Medicare (Original or Advantage Plans) cover certain preventive services without any deductibles or copays? Preventive Care is defined as care received for illness prevention and early detection of medical conditions, and which is designed to keep you well. Certain eligibility criteria and established medical guidelines must be met.

If, during the course of your care, your provider discovers the need to treat a new or existing problem, care is now considered diagnostic, and preventive rules regarding cost no longer apply. (You may be billed for the care you receive.)

For a full list of preventive services under Medicare as well as information on eligibility requirements, you should contact Medicare:

1-800-MEDICARE [1-800-633-4227]

www.medicare.gov/coverage/preventive-and-screening-services.html

Louis Harmin, newly elected Director-at-large, is still willing to serve.

Twenty years ago, Lou and his wife retired to Crystal River, Florida, and they are living the “good” life. After thirty years of community college teaching, serving the Village of Monticello as mayor and justice, marriage officer of the Town of Thompson, and participating in many civic organizations, Lou still wanted more, so for seven years he taught the AARP Driver Safety Program. Now, at age 84, Lou spends a lot of time just enjoying water aerobics, relaxing, and taking the occasional cruise with his loving wife. Lou says life can be good if you allow it to be.

NYSUT Retiree Council 39
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDING JUNE 30, 2018

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Checking Account		\$20,499.03
TOTAL CASH ASSETS		20,499.03
NET ASSETS		\$20,499.03

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES

REVENUE ACCOUNTS	ADOPTED BUDGET	ACTUAL TO-DATE	BUDGET REMAINING
Voluntary Participation Fees	\$2,200.00	\$2,365.00	\$ 165.00
Ads for Newsletters	920.00	120.00	(800.00)
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,120.00	\$2,485.00	\$ (635.00)
EXPENSE ACCOUNT			
Supplies	\$ 5.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 5.00
Postage	170.00	39.90	130.10
Travel for Officers/Conference Expenses	545.00	305.10	239.90
Delegate Expenses (NYSUT RA)	1,350.00	0.00	1,350.00
Charitable Contributions	1,000.00	600.00	400.00
Dues	50.00	0.00	50.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,120.00	\$ 945.00	\$ 2,175.00
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,540.00	\$ 1,540.00

NYSUT RC 39
Revenue and Expenses
Budget 2018-2019 Fiscal Year

<u>Revenue Accounts</u>	<u>Adopted Budget</u>
Voluntary Participation Fees	\$ 2200.00
Newsletter and Website Advertisement Revenue	<u>\$ 920.00</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 3120.00
Expense Accounts	
Supplies	\$ 5.00
Postage	\$ 170.00
Dues	\$ 50.00
Charitable Contributions	\$ 1000.00
Travel for Officers/ Conference Expenses	\$ 545.00
Delegate Expenses (RA and AFT Conferences)	<u>\$ 1350.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 3120.00
Projected increases (decreases) in Net Assets	\$ (0.00)

This budget was adopted by a board resolution.

RC39 needs member participation

RC39 President Pete Herron

The RC39 newsletter is by and for its members. All members are encouraged to submit (email preferred) an article. The article can be a creative writing piece, something on a retiree issue (union, health insurance, pending legislation, etc.), travel, hobbies, volunteer activities, or whatever you think would be of interest to RC39 members.

RC39 needs new leadership. All RC39 deliberations are done by email. 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.

You can contact me at rc39pete@optonline.net, or 98 Rocky Point Landing Rd., Rocky Point, NY 11778. Looking forward to hearing from you.

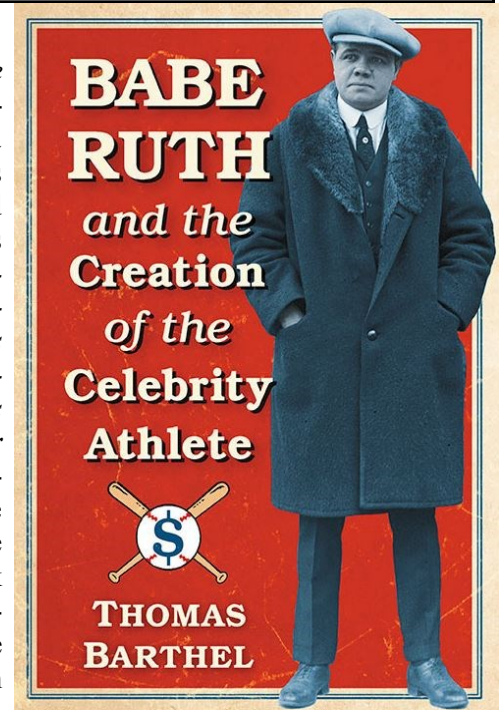
RC39 Website

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.

Thomas Barthel just keeps on writing.

Thomas Barthel, Professor Emeritus Herkimer CCC, latest book, *Babe Ruth and the Creation of the Celebrity Athlete*, was published by McFarland this past June. This biography does not praise Ruth or ignore his gluttony and faithlessness. It sees him as a corporation and examines the influences in America that exalted him. A friendly press created an idealized Ruth, but this book scrutinizes the tall tales and other manufactured lies that have been taken as truth over the years. The book has more than 600 sources and an index with 687 entries. Other books by Barthel: *Pepper Martin, a Baseball Biography*, McFarland, 2002; *The Fierce Fun of Ducky Medwick*, Scarecrow, 2003; *Baseball Barnstorming and Exhibition Games, 1901-1962*, McFarland, 2007; *Those Peerless Semipro: The Brooklyn Bushwicks of Dexter Park*, St. Johann, May 2009; *General Abner Doubleday: A Civil War Biography*, McFarland, May 2010; *Baseball Ambassadors Visit World War II Combat Areas*, Kindle Edition, 2012; *Babe Ruth is Coming to Your Town*, Kindle Edition, Oct 3, 2016. Most of Barthel's books have covered various aspects of baseball. These include biographies, histories, and critiques of the sport. The Doubleday book explored the general's whole life from his youth, his military service prior to and during the Civil War, his presidency of a Buddhist group in New York City, and finally the absolute proof that he had nothing to do with baseball. The Doubleday myth refers to the belief that the sport of baseball was invented in 1839 by future American Civil War general Abner Doubleday. The claim eventually received criticism and most modern baseball historians consider it to be false. Thomas Barthel is currently

at work on a book about engineering on the East River 1866-1885.



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ordering all faculty to report to the county health complex on Monday morning to take over the jobs of these CSEA striking workers. All faculty were to be transported to the health complex during times of the day when they did not have a class to teach. They would fill the jobs of office workers, nurses, and janitors, that is, all jobs done by CSEA employees. RCCFT members would become SCABS. On Monday a union meeting was held and all faculty members held together refusing to become scabs. The college president's plan was not implemented. UNION STRONG held.

The fight over maintaining health care benefits. The Rockland County Legislature decided to implement a self-funded health insurance plan for all its employees. (All local unions had to agree.) Self-funding was a management proposal for contract negotiations in the early 1980's. NYSUT advised us that changing health insurance plans would not guarantee the same coverage that presently existed. RCCFT union refused to agree to this change at the negotiations table and self-funding never became part of the contract.

In 1980 the college president attempted to eliminate seniority by redefining area of competence. Basically, teachers would gain seniority only in their originally hired "area of competence." If English Literature teachers taught creative writing, they would only be credited for those years they spent as an English Literature teacher, the original area of competence. Adding creative writing competency to your resume would not count in your years of teaching for seniority purposes. **Again, WHAT?** How crazy did this seem? It was the college president's plan to fire any faculty member he wanted to for reasons such as personal or economic. Fire the higher paid faculty and hire those who would work for a lower salary.

Attempts to hold a union recertification vote. There were a few faculty members who were used by the college president to report back what occurred at union meetings and disrupt these meetings whenever possible. Within ten minutes after a union meeting ended, someone from the college administration would call the union president and complain about the information passed on to the

union membership. The union officers knew who these members were and so we agreed to pass on some minor information to see how long it would take to get back to the administration.

The college president encouraged a member of the faculty to file for a recertification of the union. This individual invited a representative of the NEA to speak to union members. This occurred because legally such a recertification vote can take place shortly before the expiration of a contract. This attempt by the president and his "traitors" failed. The union remained STRONG!

Working conditions, benefits, and seniority clauses, and RESPECT at the bargaining table all helped add to the wonderful retirement RCC faculty currently enjoy. Standing together in those difficult years gave us all strength and solidarity needed for success and allowed us to enjoy an excellent retirement today. So, I recommend to all teacher union members **RECONNECT WITH YOUR UNION, STAND TALL, STAY STRONG, UNION STRONG. AS FOR ME, I'M STICKIN' WITH THE UNION 'TIL THE DAY I DIE!**

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: Shaun Gerien

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Director-at-large: Tim McLean

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 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 2018?

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 2018 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