

# SPOTLIGHT on RC 45

Volume 4, Issue 3

NYSUT Retiree Council 45 Newsletter

Sept. 2015

## NYSUT Retiree Council 45

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## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT:

We all need to stay informed, be prepared to react to, and speak to current issues that affect all educators. One such issue is a legal case now before the U.S. Supreme Court, Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association (CTA). This poses a potential threat to the ability of public-sector unions nationwide to represent their members. What's at stake is the principle of "fair share." The concept that all who benefit from union representation should pay their fair share of the costs incurred from that representation. The Friedrichs vs. CTA case asks the court to decide whether public sector unions may continue to charge nonmembers a fee equal to the cost of representing them to their employer.

If the court rules in favor of the plaintiffs in this case, teachers unions could lose the right to charge all members their fair share of the cost of doing union business, but, still be required to represent all employees. This would weaken the union's ability to negotiate fair contracts and to protect their members. New York state law now states that if you choose not to be a union member, you must pay your "fair share" for the union's work that benefits you. Now everyone who profits from higher salaries and better benefits, better working conditions, better health insurance and better retirement benefits must pay their part of the cost of obtaining those benefits. New York laws protect the "free speech" of those who are opposed to union membership by establishing a fee payer option instead of full membership in the union. Fee payers are required to contribute only toward the services that benefit them; no one is or can be forced to contribute to political activity they do not support. In New York this fair share/fee payer option is called, agency fee.

In Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association, some individuals have gone to court insisting they should be able to be "free riders." They want to share in the benefits of a unionized work place without contributing their fair share, or any share. They want to be entitled to union representation and to all the benefits and contract protections of the union but pay nothing for this protection. A decision by the Supreme Court could come down as early as December 2015. It will become effective immediately.

Andy Pallotta, NYSUT Executive Vice President and Shamus Cooke a trade unionist put it in prospective for me. Pallotta stated that **"the same billionaires who are attacking our public schools are behind this lawsuit, attacking our labor rights and rights to effectively organize."** Cooke has stated that "Unions have a decision to make: organize or die. It's that simple. Cooke goes on to say that the Supreme Court intends to take aim at organized labor by ruling against the California Teachers Association. This would fundamentally change labor law in a way that would cripple public sector unions, the last bastion of significant social power in the United States labor movement. Cooke further states that although the Supreme Court is expected to be anti-union, there is still time to change the Court's mind. The Supreme Court is like any other political organization: it is incredibly sensitive to public sentiment and flexed social power.

# RC 45 FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 2015

Mark your calendar and join RC 45 for our next membership meeting. The meeting will be held at the Lime Hollow Nature Center located at 338 McLean Road Cortland, NY 13045, (607) 662-4632. Check them out: <http://www.limehollow.org/>

A full day has been planned. You can catch up with friends, hear from Loretta Donlan ED 51 Director about what is going on in education at the state and national levels that may affect your retirement, and what you can do to protect yourself and your benefits. Glen Reisweber the director of Lime Hollow will discuss the Lime Hollow facility and the mission of Lime Hollow. You may drive or walk over to the new environmental building where Glen will give us a tour of the newest facility that has been added to Lime Hollow.

A healthy lunch of wraps, salad, and maybe not so healthy chips and desert and beverage will be provided for \$17.00. WE will make a donation to the center for allowing us to use their magnificent facility.

For those interested following lunch one of our RC 45 members Bobbie Monroe will discuss the many possible trails and outdoor experiences you may choose to explore on your own or with her as your guide.

Please feel free to attend the meeting dressed appropriately for hiking.

### Meeting Agenda:

10:00 – 10: 30 - Registration and socialize

10:30 – 12:00 - Membership Meeting and Speakers

12:00 – 12:45 - Lunch

12:45 – closing - take a guided or self-guided nature walk or walk for exercise.

### Lunch Menu:

Mixed wraps, Chips, Salads, Beverage

### Q and A's about Lime Hollow

#### **Q-How many acres does Lime Hollow own and/or manage?**

A-430 acres of woodlands, wetlands, fields, ponds, and streams.

#### **Q-What is the least physically challenging trail.**

A-There is a .2-mile "Trail for All" that is designed for wheelchair access, located near our Visitor Center on McLean Road. If you are looking for a longer accessible excursion, ask about the trail-ready wheelchair, with mountain bike tires, for venturing further into Lime Hollow.

#### **PLEASE NOTE: that there are ticks at Lime Hollow as there are ticks in most areas of upstate New York.**

Ticks transmit various disease vectors from animals to humans. All hikers are encouraged to take the following precautions when outside in the woods.

- Wear long pants and long-sleeve shirts.
- Tuck your pant legs into socks or boots and your shirt into pants. This helps keep ticks on the outside of your clothing where they can be more easily spotted and removed.
- Wear light-colored, tightly woven clothing, which allows dark ticks to be seen more easily. The tight weave makes it harder for the tick to attach itself.
- Use tick repellent, but please follow instructions on the label carefully.



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Complete and return the form below by October 9, with your check (\$17 per person) made payable to 'NYSUT Retiree Council 45' – checks only please - and mail to Max Cleveland, 5 Brentwood Drive, Homer, NY 13077.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

School District You Retired From \_\_\_\_\_

Guest(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check for \_\_\_\_\_ (no cash payments please)

Are you a 2014 or 2015 retiree      YES      NO

Questions - Contact Bill Ninness at [wninness@gmail.com](mailto:wninness@gmail.com)

**RAC REPORT:**

RAC stands for **Retiree Advisory Committee** of NYSUT. This year the Committee has established two major goals. One goal is to find ways to get retirees involved in the activities of their retiree councils. The RAC Committee has accepted the charge of finding ways to increase retiree participation and involvement in NYSUT sponsored daytime rallies, which are held around the state and support issues important to retirees and active in-service members. The RAC Committee will also attempt to find ways to increase retiree participation in day time phone banks and local rallies in support of NYSUT endorsed political candidates. The second goal is to increase retiree support of Vote Cope. Retired NYSUT members can choose to donate to Vote Cope by writing a single check yearly or have a few dollars taken out of each month’s pension check. Donations to Vote Cope are used to lobby in Albany and Washington. Part of this program is devoted to gaining support for retiree issues such as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, health insurance and pension benefits. The money is also used to send hundreds of teachers and retirees to Albany, as the Committee of 100, to meet with their legislators to discuss issues that are of current interest to educational employees. Some of the money is used to support NYSUT endorsed candidates with radio, television, and print ads as well as billboard ads. *(Bill Ninness RC 45 RAC member)*

**NEW YORK CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:**

**Q: I recently read that a state constitutional convention vote will occur in 2017. What does this mean, and how could it impact me?**

**A:** A constitutional convention vote could impact you, and every other New York state resident, a great deal. The New York State Constitution mandates that every 20 years voters decide whether to hold a statewide constitutional convention — basically a forum to tweak, change or radically makeover the state constitution.

Since the state constitution safeguards the fundamental rights you enjoy as a New York state citizen, including guaranteed pension benefits, the right to unionize and free public education, fiddling around with it is akin to opening Pandora's box. NYSUT is encouraging members to mobilize to help voters understand what's on the line if a constitutional convention takes place. Voters rejected a constitutional convention in 1997 after concerned activists worked together to educate voters about the risks of opening the state constitution. (March 10, 2015 NYSUT UNITED)

Please consider becoming a contributor to RC 45 so we can continue our effort to represent you and your concerns. A \$10.00 (or more) voluntary contribution to NYSUT Retiree Council 45 will help us with these endeavors. The officers of RC 45 appreciate your support. Yours in Unity,  
*Bill Ninness, Retiree Council 45 President.*

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Please complete the form below and send your voluntary contribution for 2012 to: Maxine Cleveland, RC 45 Treasurer, 5 Brentwood Drive, Homer NY 13077 OR hand this form in when you attend the RC 45 Spring Luncheon Meeting on Thursday, June 25.  
Please make checks payable to: **NYSUT Retiree Council 45**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

District From Which You Retired: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

(Your e-mail address will only be used to communicate information from RC 45)



