



PCT PLEDGE

**Plainview-Old Bethpage
Congress of Teachers
303 Sunnyside Boulevard - Suite 90
Plainview, New York 11803
(516) 349-1310**

**On the Web at:
[http:// pobct.org](http://pobct.org)**

Volume XXXV, No. 10

May 16, 2008



CONCERNING PCT ELECTIONS

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

It had been a while since we had a contested election for union office. While the campaign was going on, questions and comments came my way that were awkward to answer in these pages at the time. Now that the election is over, I'm more comfortable answering them and feel a responsibility to do so.

I know a few people were upset that I took a position in support of Cindy Feldman. That reaction, it seems to me, springs from a misconception of how our union works. While the PCT Constitution does not mandate that the officers run as a team, historically officers have run as a slate. Every current officer of the PCT was recruited by me to run with me as a team. While being on a team doesn't mean that we agree on everything, we do share certain core ideas about unions and specifically how our union should operate. What sort of leader would I be if I failed to very strenuously support an officer who has loyally worked for me? What sort of message would that send to the other members of my team? For how long would they continue to be an effective team if we felt that we could not count on one another?

Some members don't understand why all teachers get to vote for vice-presidents of instructional levels different than their own. Why was an elementary teacher being asked to pick between Cindy and Sharon? Put simply, the framers of our constitution wisely created building reps to represent buildings. They created the officer positions to represent the MEMBERSHIP. That is, they attempted to provide for a group of people who while each must come from one of the district's instructional levels, they are expected to be able to think globally about the best interests of our union. We work in a system that is structured to encourage people to see their work from a building perspective, even though a moment's thought reminds us that we work for a school district. Dealing with the issue that come before officers requires them to think globally.

Perhaps, we need to reconsider an idea I put forward some years ago. In a very real way, it would be more appropriate to call our vice-presidents, first-vice president, second vice-president and third vice-president. Surely structuring things that way would more accurately reflect the way in which the work of the PCT gets done. Incidentally, it's the way NYSUT and many other locals are structured.

Of deep concern to me is the fact that about 100 PCT members didn't bother to vote. Do they not care who represents them? Do they think it makes no

difference? Did people in leave replacement positions not feel entitled to vote? I'm troubled by these questions. I hope you are too. I hope that if you have answers to them that you will share them with me.

OFFICERS ELECTED

In accordance with the PCT Constitution, a formal election was held for the position of High School Vice-President. Cindy Feldman was re-elected.

Since none of the other officer positions were contested, the PCT Executive Board introduced and passed a motion directing PCT Secretary Judi Alexanderson to cast one ballot for each candidate as is called for in the Constitution. The elected officers will serve a two year term beginning on July 1, 2008.

NEA & AFT DELEGATES ELECTED

The PCT Constitution provides that delegates to the conventions of our national unions are selected by the Executive Board from the officers of the union.

At the May meeting of the Board, Morty Rosenfeld and Judi Alexanderson were elected to represent us at the NEA Convention. Morty, Judi and Cindy Feldman were elected to be delegates to the AFT Convention.

KENNEDY MOTION PASSED

Working hard to beef up the academic standards of their school, the Kennedy High School SRC adopted a motion that originated in their Academic Standards Committee that would seek the District's cooperation to establish teacher generated criteria for entrance into AP and Honors classes and to then publish those criteria in the District's Guidance Curriculum Guide so that parents and students know what the standards are.

The Kennedy motion was unanimously adopted by the PCT Executive Board at its May meeting. The passage of such a motion gives the officers of our union a clear direction to take in their dealings with administration and the Board of Education.

RETIREEE MEETING SET

Eight PCT members have officially announced their retirements at the end of this academic year. They are:

Linda Markowicz, POBMS
Barbara Nizewitz, POBMS
Sherry Oakes, POBMS
Muriel Rapaport, POBMS
Lily Teoh, POBMS

Anna Hand, Kennedy H.S.
Georgian Kreps, Kennedy H.S.
Jolynn Gabel, Pasadena

The PCT and the District are sponsoring a workshop on June 19, 2008 to help this year's retirees take advantage of the new 403b and 457 benefits. A similar workshop on the 457 plan for returning members will be held in the fall.

EXEC BD RECEIVES DRAFT BUDGET

PCT Treasurer Kevin Dugan presented the Executive Board with the draft 2008-09 PCT Budget. The final budget will be adopted by the Executive Board at their June 10 meeting.

The proposed budget maintains all existing PCT programs. It was built on the assumption that raises next year will come in at 3.5%. Should that number work out differently, the budget assumes that the appropriate adjustments will be made. The budget maintains the existing dues structure with one minor modification. Retiree dues will increase modestly from \$60 to \$65.

The PCT anticipates an income for the 2008-09 fiscal year of \$683,917 and expenditures of \$681,230. Approximately \$310,000 of the projected expenditures will go for membership dues to NYSUT, the NEA and AFT.

SRC Reps have copies of the proposed budget. They have been asked to share this document with members in the buildings.

2008-09 RAISES

Because Teacher and Clerical Unit raises for next year are tied to the bargaining results of other districts in the county, we clearly will not know what the numbers will be by the close of the school year. The percentage increase and the salary schedules will probably not be ready until sometime in July.

To get this salary information as soon as it is available, the PCT will be e-mailing every member for whom it has a working email address. If you have not been receiving regular emails from the PCT, it means that the union does not have your address. If the PCT does not have your email address, drop the office an email at pobctorg@pobct.org.

PCT OFFICE HOURS

To better serve our membership, the PCT office is now open from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

RETIREMENT SYSTEM ADVISORY

We were checking the New York State Teacher Retirement System webpage as we frequently do and found the following advisory which we bring to the memberships attention. What follows is equally true for the Employees Retirement System. Those contemplating retirement will need to decide for themselves. Members wishing to change a retirement date already submitted to a retirement system can do

so up until the date of their retirement application.

Your Retirement Date May Have Consequences (April 22, 2008) – If you intend to retire soon, give careful consideration to your date of retirement. In some situations, this date could have consequences that will impact your benefit for life.

Most NYSTRS members are contracted to work through June 30 and, therefore, select July 1 (their first date of eligibility) as their retirement date. However, you may be entitled to retire earlier and many members choose to retire when first eligible.

The downside of retiring before July 1, though, is that you'd likely not qualify for any benefit improvement legislation that may be enacted before year-end.

Here's why: Chapter 497 of the Laws of 2005 provides that any legislation affecting benefits provided by NYSTRS will take effect no later than June 30 of the year in which the legislation is enacted (unless the legislation specifically states it does not take effect June 30). So if you retire July 1 and a law improving System benefits is passed before Dec. 31, you would be eligible for the improvement as the law will be considered "in effect" as of June 30 – or the last day of your active member status.

However, if you retired on or before June 30, you would not be considered an active member as of June 30. As a result, you would not qualify for the benefit improvement.

In summary, forfeiting a few retirement dollars by choosing a July 1 date of retirement could be advantageous in the long run.

Members nearing retirement are urged to discuss this matter with a NYSTRS information representative at a consultation or by calling (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6250.

CREDITS FOR SALE

CW Post. Call Sharon Lasher 631-553-9025.