



## **PCT PLEDGE**

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## **ELECTION THOUGHTS**

**By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld**

Thinking about Election Night the morning after, I feel obliged to comment but only images flood the mind.

Ambassador Andrew Young interviewed for his response to the election of Barack Obama fights back the tears, struggling to somehow express what he is feeling.

An administrator from Howard University surrounded by hundreds of students tries to capture her thoughts, but she cannot get even one sentence out, so overwhelmed with joy is she that she hides her face from the camera as if it's somehow shameful to feel what she is feeling.

Amid the throng of Chicagoans in Grant Park waiting to greet the President Elect, the camera finds Jessie Jackson, the same Jessie who has had some hard words with Obama in recent days. He stands silently, tears sliding down his cheeks. His eyes glued on an as yet empty stage. His mind who knows where, kneeling over Martin Luther King's body - traveling again on his own campaign trail that leads directly to Barack.

College students from George Washington and other D.C. schools gathering outside the White House, Obama posters in hand, chanting his name - O-BA-MA, O-BA-MA, O-BA-MA, clearly hoping that the current occupant of the house, trapped inside for several weeks, hears them, his unhappiness amplifying their exhilaration.

Lyndon Johnson comes to the fore, big burley Johnson, speaking to the Congress, drawing and daring them not to pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act. I look up his words. "At times, history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama." So it is in America today.

Johnson's eloquence takes me back to my own youth. His words about how there is no Negro problem and no White problem but only an American problem harmonize with Obama's no red America and no blue. There's leadership in both their words. "But even if we pass this bill the battle will not be over. What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and state of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life. Their cause must be our cause too. Because it's

not just Negroes, but really it's all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome." To which Barack would have us chant, **Yes we can!**

## **IT'S VOTE/COPE MONTH**

By the time this edition of the *Pledge* reaches you, your SRC Reps will have distributed your 2008 VOTE/COPE contribution form and an accompanying letter from PCT President Morty Rosenfeld. November is PCT VOTE/COPE month.

Morty's letter outlines the reasons why VOTE/COPE is even more important in these extraordinary times. We need to be sure that education is not sacrificed on the alter of economizing. As Morty said, "Hard times are here. Just this week, Governor Paterson spoke of a one and one half billion dollar revenue short fall in this year's state budget. He projected that New York will be up to 45 billion dollars short over the next three years. Locally, boards of education are already talking about anticipated cuts in state aid and the need to hold the line on local property tax increases. Surely, we are entering a period when competing interests will have to fight for scarce resources. We have to win that battle, both to preserve the quality of the education we provide and maintain the employment of our membership."

SRC leaders do many jobs in our schools. Collecting money is one of the more unpleasant ones. Won't you have your form filled out and your check ready when your SRC Rep visits you? By doing so, you will lighten the burden that our union places on these front-line union representatives. Even more importantly, you will see to it that our collective voice is heard at all levels of government.

## **DISTRICT TAKES STEP TOWARDS TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM**

In what the Officers of the PCT hope will be a long series of significant advances, our union and the District have agreed to the establishment of the position of Teacher Coordinator of the Kennedy High School Business Department. Our union leadership has long advanced the idea that not only do such positions save the District considerable money, but teachers taking charge of their own work and collegially addressing the professional challenges that they encounter yields better outcomes both for students and the job satisfaction of the teachers who instruct them.

Teachers taking charge of their own work has not been a popular idea in some quarters of the PCT membership. Other opportunities to try this approach have presented themselves in the past. They foundered on the reluctance of the teachers concerned to accept the challenge. Talking to the Business Department the morning after the Board of Education approved the coordinator position, PCT President Morty Rosenfeld said, "You folks

have agreed to try an idea that is very important to the future of our union. It is essential that this experiment work. I know I can count on you to do so.” Rosenfeld’s remarks were greeted by enthusiastic assurances from the department who are confident of the outcome of the experiment and anxious to get it underway.

Sharon Lasher will be the Business department Teacher Coordinator and will assume her duties immediately.

## **UPDATED TEACHER SENIORITY LISTS AVAILABLE**

Head SRC Reps have received copies of the updated teacher seniority list. Head Reps have also attended a workshop on seniority to help them explain how the list has been constructed.

If upon examining the teacher seniority list, members think their position on it is incorrect, they are asked to send the following information to the PCT Office:

- 1- Where you believe you belong on the teacher seniority list.
- 2- The reasons why you believe your seniority is incorrectly stated.
- 3 - Copies of any documents that you believe support your belief that you are inappropriately placed on the seniority list.

Members requesting a review of their seniority will receive a written response from the PCT within a few weeks.

## **FLEX BENEFITS**

The District will shortly be distributing Flexible Benefits Enrollment forms on which members must indicate the payroll deductions they wish to make for their flexible medical spending and childcare accounts.

**All PCT members who wish to start an account or maintain an existing one must complete and return the form to the Business Office.** Because some members have lost track of their accounts thereby losing significant sums of money, the PCT has agreed with the District to have members submit a new form each year. The time for that is now for January deductions to begin.

## **SIGN FOR YOUR PAYCHECK**

Members are being notified that unless they routinely sign for their paychecks, **even if they are on direct deposit**, the District will be obliged by their auditors to remove them from the direct deposit system, a serious inconvenience for both our members and the district.

Signing for one’s paycheck is part of an accounting control system that ensures that phantom employees are not drawing paychecks from public bodies. It is one of many inconveniences we are obliged to put up with in the post-Roslyn world.

## **SRP RECOGNITION DAY NOVEMBER 18**

Whether we use the NEA term ESP (educational support professional) or the AFT SRP (school related professional), we are referring to the members of the Clerical Unit of the PCT, those hardworking people without whom the wheels of the school bureaucracy would grind to a screeching halt.

On Tuesday, November 18 the PCT will join with NYSUT members throughout the state in recognizing the contribution of these essential people and how they work behind the scenes to make the schooling of the children in our schools possible.

SRC Reps are in the process of organizing the day in each of our schools. PCT members are asked to make sure they participate.

## **PROBLEM EMAIL ADDRESSES**

Often, the PCT does bulk e-mailings to its members. In recent times, the anti-spam software of **Hotmail, Yahoo** and **MSN** have been refusing to accept many of our e-mails thinking them to be spam.

If you have not been receiving notices of updates of PCT publications and have your email address at one of these domains, you might want to consider a different email option. If the PCT and the Board of education undertake a full round of negotiations, you will not be receiving the e-mail reports of our negotiating sessions that are sent immediately after each session.

## **FOR SALE**

2002 Honda Civic EX - Stick shift-excellent gas mileage - 60K miles - \$7500 - Call Judi Alexanderson at 516-364-3907.

## **CREDITS FOR SALE**

1.5 CW Post credits. Contact Frank Buck at 680-9391.

CW Post and Dowling credits. Call Sharon Lasher at 631-553-9025.

1.5 CW Post credits. Contact Jeff Salzberg at 810-5315.