



PCT PLEDGE

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IT'S PUSH-BACK TIME

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

If organized teachers don't stand up denounce, resist and counter the irresponsible nonsense that is passing for education policy these days, who will? Why do our national union leaders insist on playing footsy with a democratic administration we helped elect when that administration is more fervent in their support for charter schools, seems to think removing great numbers of teachers from the classroom an improvement, and naively believes that the competitive spirit of business and athletics will somehow speed us to the top, of what they do not say.

Surely the members of the NEA and AFT in the trenches don't support the Obama's administration's reform efforts. The current AFT website asks members to talk about how data is being used to inform instruction in their schools. Almost to a person, respondents talk about the misuse of data and how manipulating and reporting it is consuming more and more teacher time to no apparent purpose. A look at the NEA's website where teachers are asked about Race to the Top reveals comments that are startling in their anger at the NEA's support for the administration.

In my own travels, I often ask teachers and administrators if they think Race to the Top stands any chance of significantly improving our nation's schools. I've yet to find anyone that does. Most are offended by the sports metaphor for the important work they do. Most are trying to teach students. They're not racing anywhere.

If as I believe there is broad objection among the rank and file to the Obama administration's education program, why are our national unions basically supportive of it? Why do we allow our votes to be taken for granted? All of the political energy in this country is on the Republican side at the moment. The Obama crowd shouldn't be permitted to screw with impunity the people who helped them get elected. It's time for us to push back.

P.S. After completing this article, I was amazed to learn that the President publically supported the firing of 93 teachers and support professionals in Central Falls, Rhode Island. As of this writing, there is no response from either the NEA or the AFT on their websites. I will be addressing this issue in my TeacherTalk column soon.

MR

50 YEARS OF DIGNITY AND STATUS

In the spring of 2011, the PCT will celebrate its 50th anniversary of its chartering as a local of the American Federation of Teachers. When they were organizing the PCT, the founders wore a little blue and gold button, almost too small to read, which expressed their demand. They wanted Dignity and Status.

There was not much dignity in working for \$3000 a year and being at the beck and call of the administration that could literally call upon a teacher's services day and night. They were an exploited group of largely women who decided they were fed up with their conditions and determined to join together to make things change.

Without their amazing courage, there might not have been a PCT today. Facing tremendous odds and staggering pressure, these brave people organized a union and charted a course to the first strike and the first collective bargaining agreement on Long Island and one of the first in the nation.

The Officers are asking for volunteers to serve on a PCT committee to plan an appropriate celebration for our 50th anniversary. Members wishing to serve are asked to contact the PCT Office.

MENTORING 2010-11

Members wishing to be mentors to new teachers next year are asked to send their names to the PCT Office to the attention of PCT Secretary Judi Alexanderson.

Our agreement with the District calls for PCT members wishing to mentor a new teacher to volunteer to the PCT. The PCT then forwards the names of qualified candidates to the Superintendent who makes the final selection.

Teachers selected to mentor receive a stipend of \$3000.

SNOW DAYS

At this point, the District has used all of the snow days built into the 2009-10 school calendar. Should we unfortunately have to close an additional day, state regulations appear to say that we must then be open on a remaining day scheduled to be a holiday. That would mean that we would have to open school on April 5, presently scheduled as the last day of the spring vacation.

PCT SAFE DRIVER COURSE

There are still 20 slots remaining for the PCT Safe Driver Course to be conducted on March 22 and 23 from 4:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Members wishing to attend should send a check made payable to 'PCT' to the PCT Office.

IN MEMORIAM

A number of PCT members both active and retired have passed away in recent days.

We learned of the death of Genevieve Eaton, former Elementary Vice-President of the PCT and for many years a Nurse-Teacher in our elementary schools, a position that had her teaching in addition to her nurse 's duties.

Whether it was nursing, teaching or as an advocate for PCT members, Gen brought to her duties energy, professionalism and a passion for public education that did us all proud.

Joan Hoerger is another in a long history of PCT activists. A librarian in our schools, Joan was an outspoken member of the PCT Executive Board for many years. She continued her activism into retirement, lobbying public officials on education and retiree issues as well as maintaining an interest in the political activities of the PCT.

William (Bill) McIver was a quiet, dignified gentleman who served for many years as a junior high and high school science teacher. A PCT member from 1966, Bill was of the generation who built our union.

Helen Cutler was a distinguished music teacher in our schools for many years. She brought to her work a passion and professionalism that served as a role model to her generation of teacher. Always an outspoken PCT member, she was with us in every struggle lending her ideas and wisdom to our cause.

Miriam Feierstone, and Elaine Lynn, both elementary teachers for many years, also passed away recently. They too were important parts of the early movement to build our union. They too contributed years of professional service to the children of our community.

Sandi Vanderpool died on February 16, 2010, following her long and courageous battle with cancer. Sandi was a beloved member of the Plainview community in her various roles as teacher, club advisor, confidante and neighbor. Sandi began her career at POBJFKHS teaching math. She later changed her focus and taught 12th grade health, a class many POB students found both helpful and memorable. Kids loved Sandi's warm and concerned teaching style and the nurturing, open atmosphere she created in her classroom. They appreciated the long hours she dedicated to supervising, coordinating and attending activities such as Relay for Life, SING, Senior show and prom. For many kids, Sandi was the kind shoulder to cry on and the person with whom to share their proudest moments.

Sandi's colleagues found warmth and friendship in her smile; she had a way of speaking to others with deep concern and sensitivity. Many found professional inspiration in her tireless commitment to her students and the creativity with which she approached instruction. Sandi's excellent work as a teacher was recognized in 2009 when she was named Health Education Teacher of the Year by the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

The Vanderpool family has asked that anyone who would like to make a donation to the American Cancer Society in Sandi's honor send it to:

The American Cancer Society
c/o Lisa Schack, in honor of Sandi Vanderpool
6800 Jericho Turnpike
Suite 200 W
Syosset, NY 11791

The donations will go towards the POB Relay for Life and will be earmarked towards breast cancer research.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Enclosed are our contributions to VOTE/COPE. While VOTE/COPE does valuable political work, it would be extreme folly in today's circumstances to depend only or even primarily, on the usual VOTE/COPE activities.

The heightened threats to active and retired education workers as well as to all public workers, require united direct action by all of us. That means massive local, regional, statewide and even national demonstrations, letting all the politicians know that we can't and won't be bullied into submission. Such united actions will let the political world know that Main Street people will not be the scapegoats for Wall Street's debacle, their unremitting greed and their buying of political favor.

The time for hope is over. We can deliver on our needs and give others inspiration if we demand action and ACT in a united fashion.

Dolores and John Norman, retired PCT members.

CREDITS FOR SALE

Contact Sharon Lasher at Slasher@pob.k12.ny.us for CW Post credits.

Contact Lorraine Charletta for Dowling credits at PMS, 349-4750.

APARTMENTS

One bedroom apartment for sale. East Islip. Call Debra Saffran, 631-650-0699.

Two bedroom condo for sale or rent in Farmingdale. Contact Jackie Borrelli, 516-662-1391.