



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 XXXXVII No. 6

January 14, 2011



A FULL PLATE

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

What a year. It seems like the whole civilized world has decided that teachers and their unions are the root cause of all of our problems. Regressive property taxes cause real suffering in some places, slap a 2% property tax cap on school districts and local governments and the hell with what happens to the schools and public services. Colleagues, you and I working with our state and national organizations are about to wage the most difficult and important political battle in a very long time, probably since our union was founded fifty years ago. It is a battle that will require the commitment of every PCT member to make the political action efforts we are planning a success. The forces arrayed against us are formidable. As I write this Governor Cuomo's real estate buddies are raising millions of dollars to wage a propaganda campaign targeting us and other public employees as the enemy. They attack us to deflect opinion away from the real cause of so much anger among the citizens we serve - the massive redistribution of income and wealth away from the lower and middle class to what has emerged as an economic elite in this country. Somehow, unions have to reach out to the public and get them to realize that our health and theirs are inextricably tied. We will have to find ways to use our numbers to do that. We cannot possibly match their wealth.

The political world in which we exist directly influences our work world. School districts are busily at work preparing their budgets for next year. All are worried about the end of emergency federal funding and the plans of a governor that appears to think that the public schools are a waste of money. None of our leaders has the nerve to say that there needs to be a state tax increase,

especially on those who have been getting away with murder. Earn \$56,000 in New York and have a tax burden of 11%. Earn \$650,000 and pay at the rate of 8.4%. How come that fact doesn't outrage our governor? As we are such a big part of the budget, I had hoped the district would have worked with us on issues related to it including quickly wrapping up negotiations. That, however, is not the style of the current regime.

Anxieties about negotiations being what they are in Plainview-Old Bethpage, members have begun asking me when we will begin the process. In fact we began last August when we started to negotiate the new APPR requirements that must be a part of any new contract. Those talks have moved along. I suspect that discussion of economic and benefit and work rule issues will have to wait for the Board to shape its budget, even though that tends to complicate negotiations rather than facilitate them. These days, the trustees of the Plainview Public Library are way ahead of the Board of Education in working with the PCT. The result has been a tremendous improvement in the morale at the library and a real team effort to make it one of the highest rated libraries in the area. One way or another, I anticipate calling for a general membership meeting of all of our bargaining units sometime in mid-March. Watch for a flyer announcing your unit's meeting.

While we have much to keep us busy these days, I trust as always that we will continue to maintain the solidarity that has made the PCT the education union second to none. We have weathered difficult periods before. We have battled powerful enemies. We are still here and celebrating fifty years of accomplishment.

WINTER BREAK SNOW DAY

While teachers were off on winter break, Long Island experienced a blizzard requiring the closing of school on the Monday after Christmas. Some members of the Clerical Unit had put in for a vacation or "entitlement day" on that date, while some put in for a personal day. The District's bizarre implementation of the collective bargaining agreement and practice led them once again to respond in a hopelessly confused way. If one put in for a personal day, she was not charged. Put in for a vacation or entitlement day however, and one was charged for the day and told that one would have to work on a designated snow day in May. It seems that a day is not a day in Plainview-Old Bethpage.

To be fair, last year the PCT filed a grievance on the charging of a vacation day on a day when the school district was closed. That grievance was settled in the presence of the

arbitrator in September with the CUPCT members getting half of their time back and an understanding that we would fix this illogical way of charging leave in the upcoming round of negotiations. Before this could happen, however, the second major snow storm of the year hit requiring the closing of school and triggering the same response from the district in regard to Clerical Unit leaves.

The PCT has so far done the following in response to this situation that has rankled the members of the CUPCT like few actions by the District have. As the settlement of our grievance last year said that the district would continue to do what it had in terms of vacation days "...until such time as modified by a memorandum of agreement or subsequent collective bargaining agreement," the PCT has called upon the Board of Education to sit down and negotiate a memorandum of agreement immediately to fix what is a patent injustice. We have additionally referred this matter to our attorney, Barry Peek, to determine whether our settlement of the grievance on vacation days last year covered entitlement days. His opinion is that entitlement days are not covered, leaving our union the option of filing a new grievance should we be unable to work this problem out with the Board of Education. Watch the *Pledge* for further developments.

ATTENTION CLERICAL UNIT

A reminder to all members of the Clerical Unit that if your name has been certified from the Nassau County Civil Service Commission for various clerical titles, be sure to reply by the date required for a response. The NCCSC rule is more than **two no responses** to canvass letters results in the removal of a candidate from the eligibility list.

If you are currently on an active list and have not been receiving canvass letters, it may be a good idea to check with Civil Service to be sure there have not been any missed responses. It is always best to be proactive; once your name is removed, it is very difficult, if not impossible to be reinstated, resulting in a missed opportunity. Keep yourself well informed. For current announcements for upcoming examinations go to the Nassau County Civil Service Commission website: www.nassaucivilservice.com and click on Announcements.

CHINESE AWARD

Congratulations to our district's Chinese teachers, Marisa Fang, Helen Jung, and Rosemary Firestein whose publication, *Chinese Treasure Chest*, has won an award for Outstanding International Chinese Language Teaching Materials of 2010. In a

competition hosted by the Confucius Institute Headquarters, more than 3500 teachers from 77 countries nominated 2530 teaching materials. *Chinese Treasure Chest* was selected as one of 20 winners which are the most popular titles selected by expert appraisal. *Chinese Treasure Chest* Volumes 1 and 2 are teacher's resource books for teaching Chinese to students in grades K thru 8. The books, now currently in their 3rd print, have received positive feedback and have been adopted by many teacher training programs worldwide.

GRADUATE COURSES REJECTED

Teachers if you have applied to take a graduate course to advance on the salary schedule **and have been rejected, please see an SRC Rep today.** Reps will ask you to fill out a form and return it to the PCT Office.

The PCT has become aware of a number of instances where members have been denied contrary to what the contract between the PCT and the District provides. While as usual, we are attempting to work this issue out with the District and avoid costly and unnecessary litigation, the officers want to be sure that if we have to file a grievance we know of all of our members to who it applies. Again, **if you have been denied the right to take graduate credits, please see your SRC Rep today.**

PCT ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Plans for the PCT 50th anniversary party have been firmed up. On Thursday, May 5, 2011, we will hold our gala celebration at the Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury from 6:30 P.M. to 11:30 P.M. There will be an open bar cocktail hour with passed hors d'oeuvres followed by a sit-down dinner, a multi-media event, dancing and, yes, a few speeches appropriate to this milestone in our union's history. A final price for attendance will be determined shortly, and plans are being made to permit members to buy their tickets online using a credit card. Watch the *Pledge* for further details.

Kicking off the celebration year of the founding of the PCT, each member is receiving a button that is a replica of the original button used by the pioneers of the PCT in their work organizing the teachers of the District into a union and bringing about the first teacher collective bargaining agreement on Long Island. The Officers are asking members to wear these buttons daily as a reminder of the debt we owe to the brave elementary teachers who started the PCT.