



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. 7

April 2, 2011



CRAZY TIMES

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

There's a hysteria afoot in our country. Whipped up by unscrupulous politicians on the right who would have us believe that our nation, the richest nation in the world by far, is going broke. They would have us understand that we have to cut back - that we cannot do anything about the fact that 25 percent of our children are living in poverty - that we can't afford to provide dedicated public servants with decent pensions that allow them to live with dignity in retirement - that we cannot afford to be a decent society. These so-called leaders ignore the fact that we have experienced years of tax breaks for the rich that have helped them amass a larger share of the income while the middle class shrinks. The hysteria has become so pervasive that democrats and republicans are all singing the same poor mouth songs.

It's in this context that the PCT has been attempting to deal with the impact of this hysteria on our District. The superintendent and Board are clearly intent on presenting an austere budget, one which as originally presented called for a cut of 10.4 positions. Now relative to what is happening in some other districts, I suppose we could turn away and say we got off easy, but there really is no reason for most of these cuts, and the PCT has been talking to the Board about the reasons they should be restored. They have already put back one, while others will be discussed publically at the Board meeting of April 4. The officers remain hopeful that at least some of these positions will be restored, especially in light of the fact that we know now that we will be receiving additional state aid.

The atmosphere surrounding the national, state and local budgets has created as bad a climate in which to negotiate a contract as one can imagine. Hopefully, the intensity of the anti-teacher, anti-public employee rhetoric will abate now that New York has a budget. Given what's been going on, the Negotiating Committee and I have been in no rush to get formal talks started. One way or another, those talks will begin prior to the end of the school year. The PCT is prepared to be reasonable

and trusts that the Board understands too that what we surely don't need now is another labor management dispute. I know well the anxiety that builds in our membership when our contracts are about to expire. This time around, however, I believe we are going to need patience and discipline to get the job done. I have no doubt that we are up to that challenge.

PPS SURVEY COMPLETED

Faced with many serious complaints by members working in the Pupil Personnel Department, the PCT undertook a questionnaire of the teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers and speech teachers to try to understand the nature and the extent of the problems. The survey has now been completed and the results sent to the superintendent of schools. Clear from this survey is the need of the district to address a number of issues that militate against the smooth running of that department.

The PCT has offered to work with the District on these problems and is recruiting members to work with the officers and representatives of the district on them. We are in the process of working out the form that cooperation should take.

HUGE TURNOUT FOR EDUCATE NEW YORK RALLY

The PCT was very well represented at the Educate New York Rally at Hofstra held on March 24. Over 3000 school employees, board of education members, parents, grandparents, and school administrators gathered to protest the governor's proposed budget cuts. It was one of a growing number of such protests throughout the state by people who are fed up with tax cuts for millionaires and budget cuts for working people. PCT SRC Reps did a fine job of organizing outstanding participation of our membership at this important event.

TIMES SQUARE RALLY ON APRIL 9

As this issue of the *Pledge* was being finalized, the New York State legislature had voted to finalize the state's budget, writing very significant cuts into the law. NYSUT, other public and private sector unions and progressive people who are tired of shouldering all of the sacrifice while the wealthy get tax breaks, will be holding a massive demonstration in Times Square on

Saturday, April 9, 2011 at noon. PCT

members are urged to attend.

LEGAL MATTERS

The PCT and the District are attempting to negotiate solutions to a number of grievances and other legal matters that have arisen. These matters include the docking of an Entitlement Day from members of the Clerical Unit on a day when the district was closed due to inclement weather; the denial of teachers to take staff development courses of their choosing; the denial of credit for those wishing to take certain graduate courses; and the refusal of the District to recognize that the work of our members in the so-called TAG program, an after-school program tied to the District's autism program, as belonging to the teacher bargaining unit.

The PCT will continue to resolve these matters amicably. However, if there is no resolution of them soon, we will continue with the litigation process.

RETIREMENT WORKSHOP

On April 28, 2011, PCT President Morty Rosenfeld will conduct a retirement workshop for teacher, clericals and substitute teachers. This presentation is not meant to be a substitute for a private consultation with a representative of either the New York State Teachers Retirement System or the New York State Employees Retirement System. Rather, the focus of this workshop will be on the practical things those wishing to retire need to know in order to go about the process. Topics covered will include contractual deadlines, sick leave buy-outs, retirement applications, letters of resignation, pension system adjustments, health insurance benefits, Welfare Fund benefits and Social Security.

The Retirement Workshop will be held in Room 109 of the Kennedy High School beginning at 4:15 P.M. Those wishing to attend **who have NOT notified the PCT Office, are asked to do so as soon as possible.**

PCT AUDIT COMPLETED

The yearly certified audit of the PCT has been completed and will be presented to the Executive Board at their meeting on Tuesday, April 5, 2011. Our union ended the fiscal year on August 31 with a small surplus for the year of \$28,218 over what the approved budget for the year projected. Members wishing to review the financial statements are asked to see their SRC Reps after April 5.

PCT 50th PLANS FINALIZING

Have you reserved your place at the PCT 50th

Anniversary Celebration? If not, better do it soon.

Plans are being finalized for the evening of May 5, at the Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury. There will be a cocktail hour with an open bar and plenty of hors d'oeuvres plus some "media areas" where guests can view various presentations that should start the evening's conversations.

Dinner will follow with a cash bar. There will be a DJ for dancing and a live performance by the Aesthetic Realism Theatre entitled, "Ethics Is a Force!-Songs About Labor." There will be a very small list of speakers, all of whom will be asked to keep their remarks to about 5 minutes.

It should be a spectacular evening. Checks for \$35.00 should be sent directly to the PCT Office. Feel free to indicate the names of people you would like to be seated with. The Anniversary Committee will make every effort to accommodate your request.

CHILD CARE

PCT members are reminded that the PCT has negotiated a 10% discount with Shalom Day Care housed in the Jamaica Avenue School. Our union has had this relationship with Shalom for many years. Over that time, we have never had a single complaint about the services they provide. On the contrary, our members who have sent their children to Shalom have often let us know how happy they were with the service. If you want to take advantage of this PCT benefit for the fall, call Shalom Director Mickey Agman at 433-0038.

INFORMING OUR MEMBERS

There is so much going on in public education that our union struggles to keep its members as informed as possible. In recent months, we've added a Facebook page to our communications program that includes the *Pledge*, our webpage and Morty Rosenfeld's blog *A Teachable Moment*, trying to benefit from the very easy way it allows us to draw attention to information that we would like the members to have but which would be cumbersome to provide them through conventional vehicles. Sign on to Facebook and search the Plainview Old Bethpage Congress of Teachers.

CREDITS FOR SALE

C.W. Post credits for sale. Contact Michele Macedonio at 937-2785.