


- Defines a union’s responsibility to members as well as non-members. and
- Preserves exclusivity to a single union for collective bargaining.

The UFT has always kept our entire bargaining unit informed of the various threats and dangers to union strength to insure that in-service members internalize and recognize the importance of union membership. It is organizing the organized. We retirees experienced it during our in-service years when the union was young and growing. The effort is ongoing and equally important today, more so indeed as we await the Janus decision.



*Cathy Nolan, chair of the NY State Assembly Labor Committee, was honored by the DOE’s Irish American Heritage and Culture Committee at its 39th annual awards ceremony at Brooklyn Borough Hall on March 22. RTC Chair **Tom Murphy** presented the award to Ms. Nolan. The UFT is a member of the committee.*



**UFT RETIREE**  
Michael Mulgrew,  
UFT President  
Tom Murphy,  
Chapter Leader

Debra Penny, UFT Liaison to RTC  
Gerri Herskowitz, Director, Retiree Programs  
Robin DiPalma, UFT Health Consultant  
Christopher Chin, LMSW, Director, Retiree Social Services  
Lynn Lospenuso, Editor

individual members. Some testimonials have contrasted the working conditions, salary and benefits of a UFT member with prior experience in private and charter schools or in non-union out-of-state schools. Their stories are compelling.

On the political front, the UFT and NYSUT along with other unions lobbied the New York State legislature and governor to pass legislation to insulate New York public employees from this anticipated court decision. Please see the “Congress Watch” column in this edition concerning Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s bill-signing event at the UFT in the presence of public, private and building trade sector union members in a great show of labor solidarity.

These campaigns and strategies may serve as the best antidote to the poisonous anti-labor assault that endangers our belief system and our professional and economic benefits. If we retirees want to protect what we have worked for throughout our careers, we should enthusiastically join in promoting this message in every way we can.

Sincerely,  
Tom Murphy  
UFT Retired Teachers, Chapter Leader

# RETIREE



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THE UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

## Congress watch



After the passage of the tax “reform” and recent budget bills, though some are advocating for it, no one expects any major Congressional legislative events until the 2018 elections. A large number of Republican Congress members are retiring, including current House Speaker Paul Ryan. As one rude wag put it, while the Republicans see the 2018 elections as time for the “chickens to come home to roost,” their “chickens” intend to “fly the coop” instead! In many instances, it is predicted that even more right-wing Republican candidates will attempt to take their places. Democrats plan otherwise.

This column also will forsake Congress temporarily to describe here some of the “checks and balances” with the federal government that have been wrought recently in a bipartisan fashion by our New York State legislature and Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The yet-to-be-decided Supreme Court case, Janus v. AFSCME, in which the plaintiff argues that his payment to the union, even as an agency fee payer, is a violation of his free speech rights, could have small or extreme consequences to public sector unions. If you think that, as retirees, we are immune to the problem,

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## Message from Tom

BY TOM MURPHY, UFT/RTC CHAPTER LEADER



As we await the shoe to drop from the Janus Supreme Court case, our union has spent the two years since the court rejected the similar Friedrichs case preparing for all the potentially crippling policy actions the bad guys could throw at us.

We know that requiring all those in a collective bargaining unit to pay their fair share of the cost of negotiating a collective bargaining agreement is the right thing to do. They benefit from that negotiated contract. They should contribute to its cost. (By the way, a retiree member called me to object to the use of the term “freeloader” in one of my prior columns. He maintained that there are many contributing factors as to why some members, while still pro-union become disgruntled. I respectfully acknowledged his point and will leave it to readers to figure out the best description of those who choose this course of action. Perhaps invective is poor salesmanship.)

This agency fee payment/fair share policy for non-members was affirmed by the 1977 Supreme Court decision in Abood v. Detroit Board of Education, the very court that is now considering an argument to overturn that traditional labor doctrine. One could hope that since conservative justices tend to uphold long established practices, those so inclined would affirm those practices and reject Mark Janus’ argument. But given the current ideological climate and makeup of this Court, we can expect the worst. And we have been preparing for it.

The best antidote for ongoing anti-union venom is member engagement. The UFT has launched a door-knocking campaign to connect with our members as the best way to prepare for the Court decision that could deprive public employee unions their decades long legal right to dues’ check-off. This outreach could be the tonic that will spare the body politic from such attacks against progressive labor, its hard won achievements, and defend the social contract that has benefited our entire society.

The following represents some excerpts touching on the purpose of the campaign and on some of the messaging used in the one-on-one conversations with members. Retirees are in a somewhat different circumstance than our in-service colleagues. Our shared history and earned benefits enjoyed in our retirement have a different draw for us. Nevertheless, the RTC is going to adapt some of this messaging in its outreach to chapter members.

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IRMAA/MEDICARE PART B

Thanks to UFT/NYSUT political action, the state budget once again spared state cuts to IRMAA. While it would not have immediately or directly affected us, it would have been a precedent that the city could have tried to follow.

The governor’s proposal to scale back health care benefits for retired state workers didn’t survive negotiations with the legislature. The plan would have generated long-term savings by capping the reimbursements for Medicare Part B premiums. The legislature also nixed an idea to eliminate certain reimbursements for higher earning retirees.

2018 RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER ELECTIONS

The ballots and candidates’ statements will be mailed on or about May 15, 2018. The deadline for the receipt of ballots at the American Arbitration Association, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271 is 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 7, 2018. The ballots will be counted on this day as well.

A retired member who does not receive a ballot should call the Retired Teachers Chapter office at 212-780-0127.

If circumstances require a change of any dates, adequate notice will be given in the New York Teacher.

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Here is the gist of the campaign:

UFT and NYSUT are resolved to conduct internal campaigns to increase union membership and enlist current members to make a public commitment to remain dues-paying union members so that we emerge from this year with deepened member adhesion and greater capacity to advocate collectively for the public good.

One of the strongest predictors of member retention is whether someone from the union has reached out to grass-root, rank-and-file members.

The union’s goal therefore is to have one-on-one conversations with every in-service UFT member that include:

- 1. Speaking to the member about the importance of paying dues and the implications of the Janus case, and asking them to symbolically re-commit to the union.
- 2. Having a conversation with the member about an issue that is relevant to that member, such as a proposal for the upcoming contract or the importance of paid parental leave. The issue should be tied back to union value — this is your union looking out for you, asking for your input, asking what you need. Listening empathetically.

Perhaps crucial to the member discussions is the



Tom Murphy, RTC Chapter Leader along with union members and leaders at UFT headquarters watch Gov. Andrew Cuomo sign into legislation a new law that gives a boost to New York’s public sector unions that are facing the Janus threat.

question: Why do we pay union dues?

The list of benefits is long, personal and professional-coverage extensive. The UFT website and the New York Teacher have supported the door-knocking campaign by focusing on union benefits intensively over the past few months. A series of member “testimonials” have told stories of the many and different ways the UFT has supported

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RTC member Robert Berger wrote to The Chief in March regarding the Janus case. His letter appears below:

Et Tu, Janus?

To the Editor:

“The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones (Julius Caesar, Act 3, Scene2).”

Mark these words well as you deliberate, Judge Gorsuch. For Janus is an honorable man.

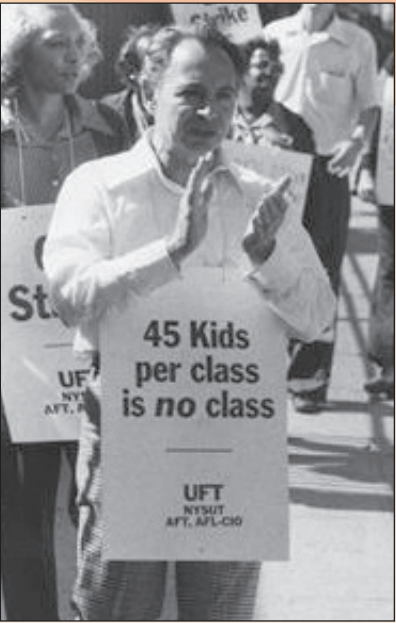
ROBERT BERGER

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CELEBRATIONS



**Retiree Albert Moldoff**, who is a former Chapter Chair and Delegate, just celebrated his **100th birthday** on March 28. He taught at P.S. 184 and P.S. 144, both in Manhattan. However, his proudest moment was when a photograph of him leading the picket line in front of P.S. 144 during the 1975 strike was featured on the front page of The New York Times. Mr. Moldoff now lives in Boynton Beach, Florida. A Proclamation signed by UFT President Michael Mulgrew was sent to Mr. Moldoff to commemorate this happy event.



**Helen Steinlein** taught in a variety of schools in Queens until she retired from William Cullen Bryant High School in 1973. She just celebrated her **101st birthday** on Jan. 22. Mrs. Steinlein graduated from Hunter College and then got her master’s degree from City College in an era when very few women went that far in higher education. She was married for 57 years to Leo until his death. Mrs. Steinlein was a swimmer well into her 90s and has a daughter, Jean. A proclamation was sent to her to celebrate this milestone.

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think again.

To enumerate just a few of the benefits because we are part of a strong public-sector union:

Health care city negotiations took place post-1965 following Medicare’s passage;

Reimbursement of your Part B Medicare and IRMAA payments, legislation won through lobbying in City Council;

Eyeglasses, hearing aids, and dental benefits through the UFT Welfare Fund, per capita funding for retirees negotiated with New York City.

A member-weakened UFT and

member-weakened public-sector unions in New York City could fall victim to a negative political climate, such as exists on the national stage right now. Think Giuliani. Think Bloomberg. These guys were not union stalwarts, except when it served their political interests. When you look at politicians, you need to separate the wheat from the chaff of their political views.

On April 12, at UFT headquarters, in the presence of many public-sector, private sector and building trades union representatives, including many of our own retirees,

Cuomo signed a law that the Democrats and Republicans of New York enacted to enhance our vitality and vibrancy as a union in the face of a potentially negative Janus decision from the U.S. Supreme Court. That law:

- Is the codification of certain responsibilities of public sector employers to unions pertaining to enrolling and maintaining union membership rolls. The law, for example, allows union representatives to meet with new employees during work hours to talk about the benefits of enrolling,

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