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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Plans are in place for our next General Membership Meeting, and we are set to gather at the Big Flats American Legion on June 3rd. You can set your GPS for 45 Olcott Road South, Big Flats, NY with registration beginning at 10:30, meeting at 11:00, lunch at 12:00 and our speaker Joe Veres from WENY television station at 12:45. Fill in the registration form and get your reservation to **Jim Jacobus**, 614 Hillingdon Way, Horseheads NY 14845 by May 28, 2024. The cost to you will be \$20.00 and the RC 46 treasury (thanks to those who send us a voluntary participation fee) will be able to defray some of the actual cost. The buffet will include roast beef au jus, marinated chicken breasts, roasted red potatoes, mixed vegetables, tossed salad, rolls with butter, apple crisp, and brownies. Corning Catering will provide our meal—and all reports are that their food is quite tasty! When you get this newsletter fill the form in and send it to Jim. If you are like me and say "I'll do it later..." later may send you scurrying last minute to find it and meet the deadline so don't wait! And if you are waffling about attending just think a great meal, no clean up and you get to catch up with your retired colleagues in a stress-free relaxed setting! And while you are thinking on those lines here's another calendar reminder—the RC 4/46 NYSUT sponsored conference will be held at the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel on September 23, 2024.

In closing, I, due to my personal angst, would like to "bury my head in the sand" and ignore the chaos our world is in. I never believed I would live to see a pandemic, possibility of world war erupting, an insurrection taking place at our revered Capitol during a process to transfer power to the next president, a Supreme Court that seems ready to reverse 50+ years of precedence in multiple areas, or an election season trying to figure out how to save our over 200-year-old democratic institutions. But I know I can't because come November I must place the best vote that I can place—up and down the ballot—to try to keep the country of which I have been so proud to call my country. I know I cannot expect perfection from a candidate but must identify what is most important to me and then the candidates who come closest to achieving that goal. So, I will continue to be informed as much as I can but also know at times, I need to step away from my fears of what may come and do something to divert those thoughts. If there comes a time when I start to feel there is no hope, I have a husband **Jim Jacobus** who is the author of "Why I Vote" which you will find below. It helps me and may do the same for you at those times when you may be considering staying home and hiding from everything politically going on around us.

Cathie

WHY I VOTE

By: **Jim Jacobus**

The next election is near. I know that I am going to vote. Will you? My first vote was in a Presidential election while sitting on a bunker in Vietnam. I had finally reached the age of 21 and registered to vote. Many have forgotten that at one time you had to be 21 to vote, but I have never forgotten. I was the only member of my squad that could vote. So, the squad watched as I filled out the absentee ballot.

One month later we were hit with a mortar attack. Three members of my squad were killed. They were not old enough to vote, but they could die for their country. I will never forget that they were not able to vote, and I will never understand why people don't vote.

Please, if you or anyone you know is not registered, register, and encourage others to register. Remember those who gave their lives to have a country with democratic voting rights AND PLEASE VOTE!

FIX TIER SIX

The message below is taken from a communication received from Melinda Person, NYSUT President. Many tell that they, who have shared their e-mail addresses, received the link to support this "Fix Tier Six" effort by e-mailing their legislators. If it did not come to you, you can go to nysut.org and under the tab labeled "Take Action" you will find directions to the MAC (Member Action Center). Please join in this fight by clicking on the "Fix Tier Six" moniker. You can also go directly to this site for guidance fixtier6.org. Help bring fairness to new hires as they find themselves starting a career under this draconian alteration of pension benefits. We are facing problems with filling positions and retaining staff after they choose this career.

Suddenly there is the realization that this decision comes with a diminished pension where you must work longer, pay more into your pension and for a longer period than any other tier and why would those entering the world of work stay in the educational field? We retirees dedicated our hearts and souls to our profession and now must stand

to support those entrapped in Tier 6. If you are not into using the computer to contact your legislators feel free to call or send a personalized communication to them.

FYI—Here is how bad it is:



Tier 6 member

Retiring at 55 with 30 years, would only receive 26.4 percent of his Final Average Salary — after paying tens of thousands more into the system.

Can't retire and collect his pension, without facing heavy penalties, until he's 63



Tier 4 member

Retiring at 55 with 30 years, would receive 60 percent of her Final Average Salary.

Can retire and collect her pension, penalty free, with 30 years of service at 55 years old.

From **Melinda Person**, NYSUT President:

Why it matters: Whether you're a Tier 5 or 6 member, an earlier pension tier member, a retired educator, a state or local employee who's a non-educator, or you just believe that public employees deserve the dignity of a pension, we must stand in solidarity with Tiers 5 and 6 members. Pension fairness for one means pension fairness for all.

Tier 5 and 6 members deserve better: Paying more and getting less isn't fair, dignified or much of an incentive for our newer members to stay in the teaching profession.

Supporting our professions: If we want to solve the teacher shortage, we need to Fix Tiers 5 and 6. We can't expect newer educators to stay in the field if they must work longer, pay more, and get less in retirement than generations before them. Fixing Tiers 5 and 6 is about solidarity and fairness.

Stand together. We need the collective power of every NYSUT member and public education advocate to get this done. It's time to come together and do the right thing. Together, we can Fix Tier 6!

COMMITTEE OF 100 REPORT

Three of us (**Peter Gordon**, **Jim Jacobus**, and **Cathie Jacobus**) participated in the Committee of 100 (which is closer to including 500 participants—it has grown over the years!) March 4-5. It began with a briefing on the 4th and an early morning arrival in the capitol on the 5th. We lobbied Senator **Tom O'Mara**, Assemblyman **Phil Palmesano**, and Assemblyman **Chris Friend** and discussed the impact of the political decisions they will be making in this year's budget and other legislative actions. The strength of this visit lies with providing them factual and true to life effects of how local school districts are impacted by the choices made in Albany. At the top of the list was the reduction in the foundation aide presented in Governor **Kathy Hochul's** budget. This has decimated many of the small rural districts as well as taken a bite out of programs in larger districts. All legislators assured us that they will fight to restore that essential foundation aide. Fix Tier 6 was also discussed, and they understand that the future of hiring educators is at risk. The pay will never equal the level of importance but a healthy, defined pension often is an incentive to choose and then remain in that position. We need the legislators to undertake this course correction as soon as possible as the crisis will only intensify. Teacher Center funding, APPR for evaluation purposes, Charter schools drain on funding, and the property tax cap were also topics of discussion. Generally, there seemed to be a cooperative atmosphere and we hope to see them "walk the talk." Vote Cope money is used to finance this event so if you do not already contribute, please consider doing so—pension deduction is an easy way to do so! If you do contribute you might consider raising it even if just a bit—we all know that like everything else in this world everything costs a bit more.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON REGISTRATION FORM FOR JUNE 3, 2024

Complete, detach, and mail to **Jim Jacobus** at 614 Hillingdon Way, Horseheads, NY 14845 by May 28, 2024. Payment is non-refundable after May 25, 2023. Check must be made out to RETIREE COUNCIL 46 for \$20.00.

Send all registration forms with a check by May 28, 2024, DEADLINE so we can provide Corning Catering with an accurate count.

NAME _____ STREET _____

TOWN/CITY _____ STATE _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Thank you Thank you Thank you

Check out all your union membership has to offer!

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of endorsed programs and services that can save you money, assist you in protecting your family, and help you plan for the future.

Legal Service Plan

Plan benefits include:

- Crucial estate planning documents (Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney)
- Free telephone consultations
- Guaranteed maximum fees for specific legal matters

Financial Counseling Program

Plan benefits include:

- Unbiased objective advice
- Free telephone & virtual consultations
- Assistance with retirement planning, 403(b) savings, college savings, tax planning and more

For an annual fee, the Legal Service Plan -- provided by the law firm of Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C. -- offers legal expertise on a variety of personal legal matters such as dealing with a speeding ticket or handling estate planning. Plan participants receive unlimited access to toll-free advice weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST) as well as a toll-free hotline for urgent legal assistance outside of these hours.

Meanwhile, the Financial Counseling Program -- provided by Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. -- offers unbiased, objective advice customized to your specific financial situation. The full-service program provides up to six hours of objective toll-free telephone or virtual consultations with a Stacey Braun Certified Financial Planner. *



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org, or calling 800-626-8101.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.



Mar/Apr 2024



2024 NYSUT REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY (RA)

Jim Jacobus and Hilary Strong (your elected delegates) and I as your president are off to NYC to attend the RA May 3-5. There will be 55 resolutions discussed in committees and then those that remain will be brought to the floor for a vote. We have joined in many resolutions including those that reaffirm that retiree health care is our right. With all the emphasis on Medicare Advantage plans being promoted and/or forced onto retirees by districts there are many resolutions to monitor them to ensure that they are not cost saving for the district but expensive for the retiree by diminished coverage, added fees, fine print conditions, etc. Banning books, of concern to all retirees is also included. We will let you know how things go in our next newsletter—hopefully there will be no new dents on our car as we wind our way through the streets of NYC!

"America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.

- Abraham Lincoln

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