

**RC 43 TRIF-ic NEWS IS THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF RETIREE COUNCIL 43,  
NYSUT TEACHER RETIREES IN FLORIDA. IT IS PUBLISHED FIVE TIMES PER YEAR**

**SPRING, 2018**

**Vol. 34, No. 4**

**Affiliated with NYSUT,  
AFT, NEA, AFL-CIO, FLARA  
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## **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

We are revamping the newsletter. After this issue, contact information for each TRIF unit will be published on page 4. We will no longer include meeting information. We will use page 2 to highlight the activities and volunteer work of individual TRIF units. Please send us news about what your Unit is doing so that your Unit may be featured.

## **From the Desk of the President, Deb Peterson**

**WHO:** Spring cleaning is a ritual some people enjoy while others skip, but whatever your attitude might be, spring is a time of renewal and freshness. Your body is programmed by evolution to sense the awakening of spring, but what about your mind? Mind and body are intimately connected, so spring is already affecting your entire system. In short, you are set by default to feel an instinctive sense of renewal. As retirees, educators, and unionists, let's bring the rejuvenating qualities of spring into our lives. We are each accountable for our Democracy. Today, with the Janus case, we are even more aware of the stakes. NYSUT Retirees who want to get involved / be active can join with someone already active; do it on issue-by-issue basis. You can do it for a while, take a break, and do it again! Just take the first step!

**WHAT:** The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement taught us "Empowerment through Engagement!" It is about building our own power and doing that together in a collective and Democratic way. The OWS movement's main issues are social and economic inequality, greed, corruption, and the perceived undue influence of corporations on government.

As NYSUT Retirees, we need to "Start the Conversations" and discussions about gun safety, sexual harassment, bullying, racial diversity, gender equality, and tolerance in our schools, on campus and in the community. Why? As unionists and educators, we can and must counter bias wherever it appears. There's no better time; lives matter; bigotry cannot prevail; opportunity should be equal for all; and truth **MUST** triumph over false ideas.

**HOW:** Labor needs to strengthen coalitions by reaching outside our unions; finding areas of mutual concern with community groups and civic organizations. National Education Association leaders encourage local leaders to "rebrand" their locals and embark on a route that offers a future to teacher unions through less classic unionism, peppered with more political and community activism.

What really powers the viability of a campaign is when two separate forces manage to work well together. Network members focus on supporting candidates whose positions they find congenial, such as challenging gerrymandering, lobbying for specific bills in state legislatures and pushing for changes they would like to see in their own communities. Civic organizations possess rich knowledge of local conditions, political and otherwise, which makes them highly effective at pinpointing key issues, canvassing and getting out the vote. Their members usually have deep and long-standing personal ties with one another, motivating them to become reliable, hard-working volunteers. As NYSUT Retirees, you can become a liaison between your community group or club and union educators in your area.

**WHY:** It is difficult to imagine the country successfully addressing the issues relating to labor inequality; stagnant real wages for the bulk of the workforce; poverty level earnings and benefits for low-paid workers; continued high rates of joblessness - without a strong labor movement. Share your memories, experiences, challenges and strategies. Help groom the young people of today to become the great labor and community leaders of tomorrow.

**REMEMBER: YOU ARE RETIRED – NOT EXPIRED!**



Every May, the Administration on Aging, part of the Administration for Community Living, leads our nation's observance of Older American's Month. The 2018 theme, *Engage at Every Age*, emphasizes that you are never too old (or young) to take part in activities that can enrich your physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

**CONTACT INFORMATION FOR NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL 43 TRIF UNITS IS NOW ON PAGE 4**

This page will highlight the accomplishments of the various RC 43 TRIF Units.  
Please send us news about what your TRIF Unit is doing so that your TRIF Unit may be featured.

**March for Our Lives Movement**

People all over the U.S. and the world marched in solidarity on March 24 for the passage of common-sense gun legislation. Teachers, students, retired teachers, and people from all walks of life stood up for the importance of securing our schools and creating a safe learning environment.

The crowd in Washington DC was estimated by the organizers at more than 800,000. In addition to the massive march in



Washington, an estimated 800 other marches were held across the country, including one in Parkland, Florida, where the movement was born following the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in February.

**Clearwater Unit of TRIF Receives Honors**

For over ten years, at the suggestion of Fred Egge, who sadly passed away in December, the Clearwater Unit has had a special relationship with Egan Cottage at the Sheriffs Youth Ranch in Safety Harbor. It has not only been a financial, but also a caring and social closeness and awareness that has bound them with the youngsters living there. They received this award in January in recognition of their ties with the Ranch.

Founded in 1957, The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches has been improving the lives of at-risk children through its six Florida locations and comprehensive programs. The Sheriffs Youth Ranches is credited with helping more than 152,000 children and families in Florida. The cornerstone and pride of the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches is its nationally renown network of residential campuses. With two camp locations, their summer camping program is for children ages 10 to 15. Special events throughout Florida help raise funds to support the life-changing work of our organization. Recently, The



Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches announced it has achieved national accreditation through the New York-based Council on Accreditation (COA). As part of the accreditation process, COA evaluated all aspects of the Youth Ranches programs, services, management and administration.

The Clearwater Unit plans to have its last meeting of

the 2017-18 year at the Sheriffs Youth Ranch Clubhouse on April 12. The Unit will be presenting their donation to Egan Cottage at this time. Terri and Allan Martin, the present Cottage Parents, will be leaving because of family commitments. They will be meeting their new Cottage Parents, Cheryl and Bruce Rzegota and will give them a warm welcome.

**Southeast Unit of RC 43 TRIF Welcomes League of Women Voters**

At the March member meeting, the Southeast Unit enjoyed a presentation by representatives from the League of Women Voters, Palm Beach County Speakers Bureau that was pertinent, interesting, and informative. The TRIF members came away with a good understanding of the history of the electoral college, that segued into information about the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. The LWV is working toward future passage of the NPVIC in Florida.

**Strength in Numbers**

The union movement is built on the "strength in numbers" theory which has demonstrated its viability throughout history. Large groups of people are stronger, obviously, than any one or two individuals can hope to be. "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." --Henry Ford

Below is a list of things you can do to make your voice heard in the halls of power. Some you can do from the comfort of your living room without changing from your pajamas ! Others require more planning. Whatever you choose, try to do as many of these as you can:

**Hold your elected officials accountable.** Attend town halls and other community events.

**Talk with your neighbors.** Get out into the community and hold face to face conversations about issues and candidates you care about.

**Make phone calls.** Call voters and share what's at stake in an upcoming election in your community. NOW you can even participate in phone banks at call centers OR from the convenience of your home.

**Raise your voice!** Demand that your representatives in DC are responsive

**Stay Informed:** keep current on the latest news about Social Security, Medicare and other programs or legislation that will impact the quality of your life

**Share Your Passion.** Bring friends to conservation meetings, political meetings or rallies

**JOIN** a political party, campaign, or club that cares about the same things you do

**GET SOCIAL.** Follow a political party, campaign or club on Face Book or Twitter or one of the other social sites.

## What Do You Hear Calling?

Spiritual practice tells us that each of us is called to do different things at different times in our lives. Sometimes the call is aligned with our original life plan but often it is a new set of circumstances that brings us to answer the call. Whether it is Jack London telling us about the *CALL OF THE WILD* or Robert Frost telling us he took the path less traveled because he had to answer his inner voice beckoning him to do so...that inner voice is there guiding us, nudging us, haunting us until we answer the call.

USUALLY it is a call from our 'higher self' telling us to serve in some way. Clergy hears the call to serve as spiritual counselors. Volunteers hear the call to 'give back' and 'help others'. Public servants want to heed the call to 'serve the greater good' although in recent days, many have been maligned as their actions did not match their words.

Labor, particularly education unions, has been asking members to translate their organizing and service skills from the closed environment of the brotherhood to openly run for office. Recently I heard the call...and took it. **I am running for the School Board in St. Lucie County.**

**WHY?** The most compelling reason I have is this: if good people, with unselfish motives don't answer the call...the only choices voters will have will be between "the lesser of two evils" or 'bad and worse'. OTHER REASONS include: I know education. I am familiar with education law. I care about kids. I believe if our democracy is to be sustainable it requires an educated population. I know American public education has been an inalienable right in most states since the 1800's; it is part of the foundation of our democracy. It must be protected and expanded. To find out more about me or my positions go to my web page **www.feliciabruce.com**

*Felicia Bruce serves as Vice President of RC 43 TRIF; she may be contacted at [Spmomtch1@aol.com](mailto:Spmomtch1@aol.com)*

## Health Care for Seniors Is Under Attack

Guaranteed health care benefits for 59 million Americans are now at risk. The Trumpcare plan, introduced in March by President Donald Trump, Secretary Tom Price and Speaker Paul Ryan, weakens Medicare's funding, slashes Medicaid and will allow insurance companies to dramatically increase premiums for older people as well as those who live in rural communities.

Plans are to cut back on the provisions of the Older Americans Act, cutting funding for senior centers, Meals on Wheels, and benefits for future Social Security recipients. Cuts are also planned for disability benefits and Medicare funding for nursing homes.

The individual mandate for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act has been rescinded, further weakening the ACA. President Trump and the Congress are proposing that insurance companies will be permitted to charge up to 5X more for health insurance for seniors, as opposed to the current allowance of up to 3X more.

Trumpcare would also allow insurance companies to cut benefits for tests such as colonoscopies. States would be allowed to exempt their insurance plans from covering certain tests and procedures and to cap the dollar amount of benefits for subscribers.

Most of the changes would take place in "Medicare Advantage" programs. Most NY teacher retirees are in "Employer Based" plans, which would not be affected. But they are proposing to tax our "Cadillac Plans" that cover a wide range of medical care. The Senate would need 60 votes to enact these changes.

*From Alliance for Retired Americans, 3/18 and thanks to Bill Cea [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org)*



## The Push for the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact would guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would ensure that every vote, in every state, will matter in every presidential election. The bill has been enacted into law in 11 states possessing 165 electoral votes, including small states (RI, VT, HI, DC), medium-sized states (MD, MA, WA), and large states (NJ, IL, NY, CA). The bill will take effect when enacted by states with 105 more electoral votes.

The bill has passed at least one chamber in 12 additional states with 96 electoral votes, including recent approvals by the New Mexico Senate, Oregon House, Arizona House, Oklahoma Senate, and

unanimous committee votes in Georgia and Missouri. A total of 3,101 state legislators from all 50 states have endorsed it.

The shortcomings of the current system stem from state winner-take-all laws (i.e., awarding all of a state's electoral votes to the candidate receiving the most popular votes in each separate state). Because of winner-take-all, presidential candidates have no reason to solicit votes in states where the statewide outcome is a foregone conclusion. The 12 closely divided "battleground" states within 3% of the national outcome received 100% of the general-election campaign events in 2012. Obama and Romney campaigned together in only 8 states. Two-thirds of the events (176 of 253) were in just 4 states (Ohio, Florida, Virginia, and Iowa). Meanwhile, 38 states were totally ignored. Battleground states receive 7% more presidentially controlled grants, twice as many disaster declarations, and numerous favorable actions from Presidents, as detailed in *Presidential Pork* (Hudak 2014), *Presidential Swing States: Why Only Ten Matter* (Hecht and Schultz 2015), *Going Red: The Two Million Voters Who Will Elect the Next President* (Morrissey 2016), *The Rise of the President's Permanent Campaign* (Doherty 2011), and *The Particularistic President* (Kriner and Reeves 2015).

Because of state winner-take-all statutes, five of our nation's 45 Presidents have come into office without winning the most popular votes nationwide. A shift of 214,393 votes in 2012 would have elected Mitt Romney despite President Obama's nationwide lead of almost 5,000,000 votes. The U.S. Constitution (Article II, Section 1) gives states exclusive control over awarding their electoral votes: "Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors...." Winner-take-all was not debated at the Constitutional Convention or mentioned in the *Federalist Papers*. It was not used by a majority of the states until the 11th presidential election (1828). The National Popular Vote interstate compact will go into effect after it is enacted by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough to elect a President (270 of 538). Under the compact, when the Electoral College meets in mid-December, the candidate who received the most popular votes in all 50 states (and DC) will receive all of the electoral votes of the enacting states. The National Popular Vote bill preserves the Electoral College and state control of elections.

Supporters include former Senators Jake Garn (R-UT), Birch Bayh (D-IN), and David Durenberger (R-MN); former Cong. John Buchanan (R-AL), Tom Campbell (R-CA), Tom Downey (D-NY), Tom Tancredo (R-CO) and Bob Barr (R-GA); former Governors Howard Dean (D-VT) and Jim Edgar (R-IL); and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA). For additional information, see our book *Every Vote Equal: A State-Based Plan for Electing the President by National Popular Vote* (downloadable for free at [www.NationalPopularVote.com](http://www.NationalPopularVote.com)).



## Membership

As **NYSUT** members who live in Florida, **NYSUT RC 43 Teacher Retirees In Florida** is our direct link to our Union Leadership in Albany and member benefits. In addition to the nine **TRIF** Units across the state, we are looking to start **TRIF** Units in other parts of Florida.

As Educators & Retirees it is essential that we continue to stay aware of the actions of our legislators. This vigilance includes monitoring legislators in Florida, New York as well as Washington D.C. Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid, and Federal Education Regulations are among the National Issues that we should give input to our Legislators with phone calls, visits & emails. We can easily maintain input on critical issues through the NYSUT MAC Center. <https://mac.nysut.org> OR through AFT's Take Action Center <https://www.aft.org/action>

I invite you to renew your **NYSUT** activism and camaraderie by visiting one of our **TRIF** Unit meetings. If you live in an area with no nearby **TRIF** Unit, our Board will help you meet others in your area to start a new **TRIF** Unit. **NYSUT** members living in Florida both permanently or as snowbirds can join a Florida **TRIF** Unit and maintain membership in their NY home school district local.

All of the **NYSUT** Benefits we enjoyed as in-service members are retained as Retirees. Through **TRIF** meetings as well as 2 annual

**NYSUT** Conferences., it is easier to: 1. Have access to up-to-date programs & services; 2. Be informed which candidates the Florida Education Association and other unions in Florida have endorsed. This last information can be elusive when we aren't familiar with Florida politics.

Our website <http://rc43.ny.aft.org> includes articles and resources focusing on **NYSUT** Retirees living in Florida. Our Facebook page New York State United Teacher Retirees In Florida <https://www.facebook.com/New-York-State-United-Teacher-Retirees-In-Florida-166355720080638/> helps us to stay current on issues of which we, as active retirees, should be aware. Both social media sites enable us to stay connected and informed on current issues relevant to Education, as well as to our **NYSUT Retiree Membership**. (You don't have to be a member of or signed into Facebook to view our page. )

For additional help in locating an **RC 43 TRIF UNIT** to visit, contact a **TRIF** Unit as listed on page 4 of this newsletter or me directly: Maxine Knisley, **RC 43 Membership Chair** – 772-321-4974 or [mknisley744@gmail.com](mailto:mknisley744@gmail.com)

### Save the Date

NYSUT Retiree Council 43  
Annual Conference  
Tuesday, September 25, 2018



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