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# A "C.U.T." ABOVE

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These last few long months have been unprecedented in the lifetimes of the residents of this planet. The pandemic has touched all our lives. Just look around. Go to the local Publix for needed groceries. Or CVS for medications. At the dentist-temperatures taken, masks on. Barriers in place. Disinfectants everywhere. Our lives, as we knew it, have dramatically changed. Trips cancelled. Restaurants closed. Many businesses and stores have not been able to survive financially. Jobs have been lost. Our Clearwater Unit has not met since our DAY AT THE RACES in February.

Virtual learning was the only way during the last few months of the school year 2019-20. Now teachers in many states are being required to do online/virtual learning and also to be present in the classroom for those students whose parents opt to have their children attend. In some districts, masks are "optional"! Social distancing is "required". If adults have difficulty social distancing, how can you expect a five year old to do so?

Teachers in the classroom need our support. They are truly on the frontlines. Many have left the profession rather than risk getting the virus and possibly infecting their families.

I know that many of you did not go north for the summer months because of the pandemic and quarantine restrictions. It's a real hardship not to be able to visit friends and family.

Is the end in sight? We need a government that will take leadership and work cooperatively with world nations to come up with a vaccine that is proven safe, not for political reasons but for the health and safety of ALL. We need a leader who is honest and works with the best people in their areas of expertise-not political donors. We need an honest election. We need a safe election. We need a change. This one isn't working for all Americans.

The way we can make this change happen is to vote. Joe and I have been voting by mail for the last several years. There is information in this Newsletter on how to register to vote by mail. Call or go online to request your ballot. Mail it early! There is a "slowdown" at the post office. Not due to the diligent postal workers, but to the Postmaster DeJoy's directives and destruction of equipment that would keep the mail running quickly and efficiently. I have first hand knowledge of this. It took TWO WHOLE WEEKS for card to reach my son in New York!!

Meanwhile Joe and I are still following all the safety precautions. Only outdoor activities, social distancing, wearing masks, frequent hand washing have become the way of life for us and for most of the population.

Please be safe and let's VOTE FOR CHANGE.

## UPDATES FROM TRIF

We have a new president of RC#43, Felicia Bruce. Felicia has succeeded Deb Peterson who is now representing RC43 as a delegate. Our thanks goes out to Deb for the many years of hard work and leadership she has devoted to our retirees. More information can be found at the website <http://rc43.ny.aft.org/> I encourage you to check out the website periodically to find out what is happening in the various units.

Unfortunately we have lost two lovely ladies from our Clearwater Unit over the summer, Connie Papoulas and Jo Anne Mitchell.

Wendy and Herb Wickenden have moved back to New York to be closer to family. We will miss them and wish them all the best. I have contact information if you would like to say hi.

Ellen Artale has been slowly recuperating from a hip fracture three and 3 replacement surgeries with follow up physical therapies. It's been a difficult road to recovery for our award winning Newsletter Editor, but she is still working diligently to produce our A CUT ABOVE Newsletter.

I've communicated with the SHERIFFS YOUTH RANCH and they have been in "lockdown" since the outbreak of the pandemic. Only two Cottages have residents, Noell and Egan, with six children in each cottage. All of residents are scheduled for virtual learning for the first nine weeks of school. If the situation with the virus is much improved after first quarter of school, they will reevaluate their "brick and mortar" attendance. Meanwhile, the only "outside " activities the kids have been able to do over the the summer, have been trips to the beach and the park-always social distancing. They did enjoy a fishing trip in recent weeks as the only participants on the boat.

The Oxfords, who stepped in as Egan Cottage parents at Christmas time, are still there and hopefully, we will get to meet them at our Opening whenever it is safe to do so. The Ranch is closely monitoring each child and adult to keep any chance of the virus from invading the campus.

# All About TRIF / CUT and Membership

Membership participation of \$30 covers costs for both the local unit and the statewide Florida Council during the 2020-21 season. Our season goes from September 2020 to August 2021. Who may join? Any retired New York State public school teacher, and any AFT teacher retiree from any state may join our group.

For the 2020-2021 CUT (Clearwater Unit of TRIF) season of gatherings and programs commencing in September, we hope to see ALL of you joining our leadership and the plans and programs for our group.

Please, if you have not already done so, would you complete this membership form today and send it to treasurer Joe Lanza with your membership check.

YEARLY MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020-2021 SEASON is \$30. (\$20 for Associate Membership)

## Our mission is:

to develop new friendships established within our Unit and seek new acquaintances

to keep members informed of changes involving health and retirement benefits

to spotlight political choices ONLY if they may impact our members

to feature programs and speakers having significant impact on our group

to select and support youth based projects benefiting Tampa Bay youngsters

## Your membership helps to support the following:

Giving a group donation toward a special child-centered project.

Providing the funds to send one or two of our members to the annual NYSUT conference.

Paying for the cost of our newsletter including printing costs, mailing labels, and stamps.

Buying the lunches for our guest speakers.

Having a contingency fund to defray the expenses for special guest speakers, whom we would want to hear, that require some fee or donation to their organization.

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## COMPLETE AND SEND YOUR 2020-2021 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please, make your check payable to: NYSUT RC 43 / Clearwater

Mail this form and check to:

JOE LANZA, 7450 EVESBOROUGH LANE, NEW PORT RICHEY, FL 34655

Special Note: If there is a retiree chapter involving the NYS local from which you retired, you must remain a member of that chapter in order to maintain your membership in NYSUT/AFT and any benefits that the local NYSUT/AFT provide. Additionally, you may participate here in Florida.

PLEASE PRINT ON THE FORM.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY & ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

FLORIDA PHONE: [\_\_\_\_\_] \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE (if preferred): [\_\_\_\_\_] \_\_\_\_\_

E Mail address \_\_\_\_\_

District from which you retired \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Additional contribution to Egan Cottage( Sheriffs Youth Ranch) Amount of \_\_\_\_\_

This does not include money for the Egan Cottage Holiday Fund

United Federation of Teachers \*\*\*\*\* A Union of Professionals  
Retired Teachers Chapter \*\*\*\*\* Florida Section  
NYSUT, Local 2 AFT, AFL-CIO

Michael Mulgrew  
UFT President

Tom Murphy  
Chapter Leader

Kenneth Goodfriend  
Florida Coordinator of Services and Sections

Dear U.F.T./R.T.C. member,



**BASICS OF VOTING IN FLORIDA'S 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**  
**VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE : 10/5/20**

**VOTE BY MAIL.** Note: At any time until 5:00 p.m. on 10/24/20, voters can request a VBM ballot be mailed to them. Obviously, earlier requests are better. Voters can request a VBM ballot in person at their county SOE's office at any time. Be aware that the completed ballot must be received by the SOE before 7 p.m. on election Day.

9/24/20-10/1/20. SOE's must mail VBM ballots to voters who have already requested them. Voters can expect to receive a previously requested ballot sometime by early October. If you think your ballot should have arrived, call your SOE.

10/5/20. Voter registration deadline. Registrations must be postmarked or hand-delivered to the SOE's office on or before this date.

10/24/20. At any time until 5:00 p.m. on this date, voters can request a VBM ballot be mailed to them.

11/3/20. Deadline to return COMPLETED VBM ballots, by 7 p.m.

**EARLY VOTING** Note. Mandatory Early Voting lists 8 days and MUST be provided by each county. Optional Early Voting is 5 extra days than can be implemented-- in whole or part-- by any county SOE that wants to provide them.

10/4/20. Date by which SOE's must designate polling location for Early Voting

10/19/20. Optional Early Voting begins

10/24/20. Mandatory Early Voting begins

10/31/20. Mandatory Early Voting ends

11/1/20. Optional Early Voting ends

**ELECTION DAY VOTING.** 11/3/20. Election Day

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MYTH..... VBM is not safe      **FACT.** You can track your VBM ballot at your SOE website

MYTH.....VBM ballots may be rejected      **FACT....** Return your VBM ballot early to allow time for corrections; VBM acceptance rate in Florida is 99%; #1 reason for rejection is that a voter forgets to sign the mailing envelope.

MYTH..... VBM means I cannot vote in person      **FACT...**Only if your SOE has already received your completed VBM

MYTH..... I need an excuse to VBM      **FACT....** Any registered voter can use VBM in Florida; no excuse is necessary

MYTH.... I only have to sign up once to VBM      **FACT...**VBM is valid for 2 election cycles, up to 4 years and must be renewed

MYTH.... USPS will lose my ballot.      **FACT...**You can skip the mail and return your completed ballot in person to a secure drop box if you prefer

MYTH....Nobody will put my ballot into the tabulation machine      **FACT...**VBM ballots are removed from their mailing envelopes and placed into the machine in a public proceeding

\*\*\*\*\*To join us on Facebook go to: UFT Retired Teachers Chapter of Tampa Bay and the West Coast Sections\*\*\*\*\*

Sincerely yours,

Stewart H. Cohen  
West Coast U.F.T./R.T.C.Section Coordinator  
Political Action Coordinator



