	<p><b>APRIL 2012</b></p> <p><b>To:</b> All Members of the Retirees Chapter</p> <p><b>Re:</b> Meeting Notice</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The next meeting of the Retirees Chapter of the PSC will be held on **Monday, May 7** at the **PSC Office, 61 Broadway**, between Rector Street and Exchange Place, **16<sup>th</sup> floor**, from **1:00 to 3:00 p.m.** Photo ID is necessary to enter the building.

This month our program will be:

**Jocelyn Wills, “New Perspectives on American Immigration: Failure Studies.”**

The **Executive Committee** of the Retirees Chapter will meet at the PSC Office, 61 Broadway, **14<sup>th</sup> floor, at 10:30 a.m.** Anyone interested is invited to attend.

The April newsletter follows➡➡➡



April 2012      Issue 7  
Academic Year 2011-2012

# Retirees Newsletter

**Professional Staff Congress**  
Jack Judd, Editor

## I. JUNE LUNCHEON

**luncheon**  
*Invitation*

*Annual June Luncheon*

*Celebrating the  
40<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
of the PSC*

**Monday -- June 18 - BMCC**

The invitation to the June luncheon at BMCC is attached. **It is important that you respond by May 18.**

## II. CELEBRATE THE 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE PSC

By Irwin Yellowitz

In April 1972, the Professional Staff Congress was founded from a merger of the Legislative Conference and the United Federation of College Teachers. The Retirees Chapter will celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PSC at its annual June luncheon on June 18. You should

have received an invitation enclosed with your March newsletter, and another copy is attached to this newsletter.

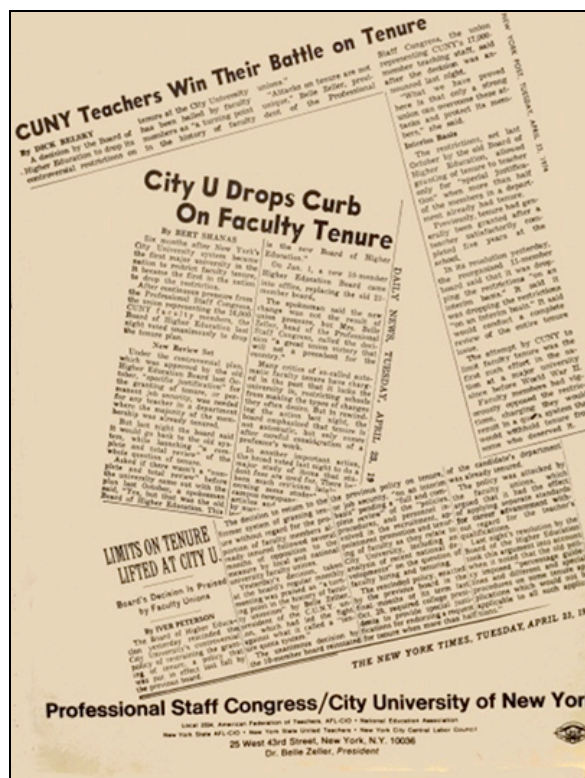
My history in the PSC goes back to 1965 when I joined the United Federation of College Teachers. Many of you have histories in the PSC that also stretch far back into your lives. We want to celebrate your many years of being part of a vibrant union, and so the leadership of the Retirees Chapter takes special pleasure in inviting you to the luncheon on June 18.



*Line drawing from 1972 commemorating PSC merger of the Legislative Conference and UFCT.*

Our program at the luncheon will honor the two living presidents of the PSC,

Barbara Bowen (2000-present) and Irwin Polishook (1976-2000). They have served for 36 of the PSC's 40 years. The other president, Belle Zeller, held office from the founding in 1972 until 1976. We will honor Barbara and Irwin for their leadership of a union that advanced the legitimate interests of our members; defended the university against fierce attacks, as during the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, and during the recent and ongoing financial assault on CUNY; and served as a national leader in higher education unionism.



Archival NYC media clippings from 1974 reporting on successful PSC campaign to get the CUNY Board to rescind tenure quotas.

These were difficult tasks, and Barbara and Irwin did not do them alone. They were part of a leadership team that included not only the other officers, but members of the Executive Council, the Delegate Assembly, chapter leadership,

and after 1986, the Trustees and Advisory Council of the Welfare Fund. Thus, when we honor Barbara and Irwin, we honor a much larger group of dedicated people who have made the PSC a strong union.

We also know that all of you have memories of how the PSC affected your professional and personal lives over these 40 years. We would like you to speak briefly about this during the luncheon program. For example, how did the union's actions preserve CUNY, and affect you directly, during the fiscal crisis of the 1970s? How has the union protected you through the grievance process? How have your working conditions improved, including salaries, workload, pensions and health benefits? How did the attitude of administrators changed toward you once you had the procedural protections of the contract? How has the union's work in Albany to protect CUNY's budget from destructive cuts affected your work? How, in all sorts of private ways, has being part of a strong, democratic union made you feel better about your career? Please share the answers to some of these questions and whatever else is important to you at the luncheon.

We plan to record the program so it will be available through the Retiree Newsletter to our retired colleagues, through the *Clarion* and PSC website to all union members, and through the Archives to researchers now and in the future. Please think about what you want to say in advance, and do not hesitate to speak at the luncheon. If you have any mementos of your years in the PSC, please bring them for others to see. We believe your comments should be a lively and unique part of our

40<sup>th</sup> anniversary luncheon program. We look forward to seeing you.

### **III. DEFENDING THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET: A CALL TO ACTION**

Prepared by Joel Berger, Vice-Chairman of Retirees Chapter

The struggle continues. The active engagement necessary to preserve the social safety net must not be diminished. The public conversation is focused upon austerity and budget reduction. The PSC, both retirees and in-service members, along with others, must change the conversation regarding the social safety net. This message was delivered by members of the Social Safety Net Working Group at the April Retirees Chapter meeting. It set the tone for the progress report they delivered. When the working group set out to create the brochure, "A Call to Action," and to organize a conference on protecting the safety net, the Simpson-Bowles Commission was on the verge of issuing its report on "Fiscal Responsibility and Reform." Their proposals would have seriously curtailed many of the benefits that working people have achieved over the years.

As a result of concerted pushback efforts, perhaps aided by the Occupy Wall Street movement, subsequent labors by a special committee of Congress to agree on how to find 1.5 trillion dollars of budget savings over the next ten years failed. As a result, and adhering to the legislation that established this "super" committee, 1.2 trillion dollars in automatic across-the-board spending cuts are scheduled to go into effect. Half of those cuts would come from domestic programs and half

would come from cuts to defense spending. Social Security, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), veterans' benefits, civilian and military retirement programs, and other programs serving low-income families would be exempt from these cuts. Medicare benefits would not be cut, but payments to doctors and insurance providers would be cut up to a maximum of 2%.

There are competing views as to a way forward. The House Republicans' budget proposal, sponsored by Congressman Paul Ryan, would privatize Medicare, while reducing funds to other social safety net programs. A "grand bargain" between President Obama and Speaker Boehner, which would have required Democrats to accept painful cuts in Medicare and Social Security in exchange for Republican support for raising taxes, collapsed, but similar proposals persist.



At our April meeting, members of the Social Safety Net Working Group described how each strand of the safety net protects both working and retired Americans. They provided documentation dispelling myths about the Social Security Trust Fund, and

suggested ways to make the fund more robust. They emphasized the role of the safety net in the fabric of our lives. The Social Net Safety Working Group states in its brochure (p.19), "This social safety net is ours. We worked for it. We contributed to it. We negotiated for it. We will not let the very few, the very rich, the very powerful (and those whom they have fooled) destroy it." (The brochure, **"Defending the Safety Net: A Call to Action"** can be downloaded from the PSC website).

#### **IV. TAKE THE AARP DRIVER SAFETY PROGRAM IN JULY OR AUGUST AND PAY ONLY \$5.**

AARP's refresher course for drivers age 50 and older usually costs \$17 per person for AARP members and \$19 for non-AARP members. However, a special promotion is being held during July and August, 2012. Any person who has worked, or is working in a school district or university in any capacity, is eligible to take the course for just \$5, if they take the course during July or August. A completed coupon, which will be made available by the instructor, is required. Course discussions include:

- Avoiding crashes and citations;
- Reviewing the rules of the road;
- Updating driving knowledge;
- Compensating for normal age-related physical changes;
- Dealing with hazardous driving situations; and
- Making driving less stressful and safer.

The course, given throughout the country, is conducted solely by

volunteers. It consists of 6 to 7 hours of instruction. No tests are given. Drivers who complete the course are eligible to receive a reduction in their automobile insurance premiums in 34 states, including New York. In New York State, the reduction is 10% of the cost of liability, personal injury protection and collision insurance.

Call a live operator at 866-238-2954, or visit [www.aarp.org/educators](http://www.aarp.org/educators) to locate a classroom course near you for this promotion.

#### **V. RETIREE GERTRUDE EZORSKY HONORED** by New York Society for Women in Philosophy

At a conference held in her honor on November 18, 2011 at the Graduate Center, Ezorsky was described as an "Analytic philosopher par excellence, feminist, public intellectual, institutional gadfly, and fearless fighter for social justice in word and deed."

Congratulations.

**VI. HAVE YOU SIGNED THE PATHWAYS PETITION?** More than 4,700 (including many retirees) have signed a petition opposing the CUNY Board's imposition of a new university-wide core curriculum and transfer policy. There is a growing consensus that Pathways cheapens the CUNY degree, makes a mockery of shared governance, dilutes the rigor and intellectual content of curriculum and does a great disservice to CUNY students. You can find out more and add your name to the petition by going to <http://psc-cuny.org/PathwaysPetition>.