

Member Survey: 80% Give CSA Thumbs Up

BY YURIDIA PEÑA

A recent CSA-member survey revealed members have an overwhelmingly favorable view of the union, with nearly seven out of 10 approving of the job the union does. In addition, 80 percent of the membership, when asked about attitudes toward the union, answered "favorable."

"CSA works tirelessly for its members in ensuring services in an efficient and timely manner," said CSA President Ernest Logan, who said he was pleased with the survey results but remains dedicated to improving member services. "It may be impossible to have 100 percent of our members happy with us, but that doesn't mean it's not my goal," he said.

Members' overwhelmingly positive response toward the CSA has remained steady since the last member survey in 2009. Both surveys were conducted by the Global Strategy Group, a marketing consulting firm, which was hired by the union.

In addition, the new survey showed that Mr. Logan has a near-universal name recognition among members, and that more than seven

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'Honoring Our Own': Eleven New Awards Highlight Annual Meeting



ANTOINETTE ISABLE

■ From left, standing: CSA Executive Vice President Peter McNally, Mary McInerney, CSA President Ernest Logan, CSA First Vice President Randi Herman, and Lawrence Parker. Seated, from left, Susan Smith, Wilma Meyers, Madeleine Brennan, Mario Costantino and Muriel Mapp.

CSA honored 11 members who have served in their titles longer than other union members at its Nov. 8 annual meeting. The new awards gave rise to the theme "Honoring Our Own."

"We are proud of these members,"

said CSA President Ernest Logan, "for their many years of service to the children of NYC. These educators inspire all of us."

In alphabetical order, the awardees are:

■ Mairria Barry, Assistant Principal

Special Education, since 1991;

■ Madeleine Brennan, Principal, Junior High School, since 1963;

■ Anne Bussel, Principal, Day Elementary School, since 1982;

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*'For Many
Years of Service
to the Children
of Our City'*



Awardees received an acrylic statuette for longevity in their respected titles.

HUNDREDS AT ANNUAL MEETING

Strong Sense of Union at Upbeat Gathering



ANTOINETTE ISABLE

■ Left, Food and Finance High School students serve dinner to CSA members after the meeting. Center, CSA members share a laugh as they wait for the business portion of the meeting to begin. Right, Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott addresses the membership and maintains that he will continue to chip away at the mountain of mandates flung at school leaders.

BY ANNE SILVERSTEIN

More than 350 members attended CSA's annual meeting on Nov. 8 at Food and Finance High School, Manhattan. The meeting, required by the organization's Constitution, provides an opportunity for the CSA President to report to the membership about the state of the union.

"I came to tell you that the state of the

union is strong," said CSA President Ernest Logan, as he began his address.

He continued by thanking retirees for their past efforts in organizing and strengthening the union, and spoke to the need for in-service members to continue to stand firm for collective bargaining rights. "All too often, we take for granted that we were the first to do something. We were not," he said, referring to past strug-

gles fought by retirees. (To read Mr. Logan's speech, see Pages 2-3.)

Food and Finance High School Principal Roger Turgeon welcomed attendees and told the audience a little about his students. "Food and Finance does not prepare students to become cooks. We prepare students to go to college," he said, pointing out that 97 percent of seniors attend a two-

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CSA PRESIDENT ERNEST LOGAN ADDRESSES

The 'Education Mayor' Who

Council of School Supervisors & Administrators

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CSA News (004-532) is published monthly except July and August for \$35 per year per member by CSA, 16 Court St., Brooklyn, NY 11241. Periodical postage paid at Brooklyn, NY, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CSA News, 16 Court St., Brooklyn, NY 11241.

CSA President Ernest Logan addressed 350 members during the union's annual membership meeting on Nov. 8 at Food and Finance High School. The following speech has been slightly edited.

Tonight I come before you and say that the state of the union is strong. This union is half a century old. When CSA was founded, we were still watching Ben Casey, Gunsmoke and I Love Lucy on our small TVs. We were eating JiffyPop Popcorn, flying on TWA and PanAm (when we could fly,) but we all saw the commercials.

But here we are still here going strong. PanAm and TWA are gone, replaced by Virgin Air. Lucy has been replaced by reality TV. JiffyPop stove top has been replaced by microwave popcorn, and now we tweet, use Facebook and we text.

For over 50 years, this union has continued to ensure a decent living, health care and a viable pension. This union sent children to college, provided medical care, bought homes, paid mortgages. Yes, unions created the middle class. All of these benefits and protections are now under attack.

Unions are under attack in America – not because of your benefits and pensions, but because the union was the last independent voice in America. That was until about two months ago when a ragtag bunch of young and middle-aged people started to speak for America, calling for equitable taxation that would not only restore education funding, but would also help our poorer families with safety nets like health care, unemployment, housing and early childhood education.

Please someone help me understand this America where a young man spends \$200,000 to get a college education and yet can't find a job paying more than minimum wage. Help me to understand why our grown children are being supported by their retired or close to retirement age parents. The OWS folks understand those questions and they want answers and they have shouted them out to the world. Thank God we live in a country where you can shout it out to the world.

In an age when the education establishment is talking about the importance of Day Care, our Mayor has disowned it. He's allowing EarlyLearn to replace city-funded Day Care, reducing the amount of care that will be available especially to our poor-



ANTOINETTE ISABLE

CSA President Ernest Logan speaks at the union's annual meeting at Food and Finance High School.

est little citizens.

He refuses to negotiate a Day Care contract, claiming that our Day Care Directors and Assistant Directors aren't city employees. CSA has asked the city to delay the implementation of EarlyLearn and is working hand-in-fist with the City Council to win support for our issues. But until we have someone who has the right values, we are going to be treading water.

This "education Mayor" has also refused to negotiate a new DOE contract in good faith with both the CSA and the UFT, saying that our city is too broke to support educators. But he's found the money to stack the city with \$800 million worth of consultants for CityTime alone – another high-tech system that doesn't work – and then he claims there is no money left for education.

Speaking of new systems and new programs, in these times with the Mayor crying poverty, and protestors marching in the streets, the city manages to embark on expensive new initiatives: SESIS, the fancy special education technology system that's so sophisticated, it doesn't work! They still haven't cleaned up student enrollment.

And, turning over persistently low achieving schools to EPOs, outside organizations who will be paid princely sums to restart schools. Remember the days when we used to turn around schools ourselves? Remember when we did it successfully with a Chancellor's District?

So how is it that the city doesn't have the money to pay teachers and administrators, not even a cost-of-living raise in the foreseeable future? Instead of fooling around, pretending

We're the only hope for the chancellor to make his system successful.

that the city had any intention of negotiating a fair contract with us, we called it like it was: A few weeks ago, we filed for impasse with Public Employment Relations Board, and last week, PERB agreed with CSA that negotiations with the city

More than 350 Members Attend Annual Meeting

Continued from Page 1

or four-year program after graduating high school. (CSA hired the school's culinary arts students to prepare and serve the food.)

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer addressed the members as well, thanking them for their hard work and crediting NYC public school educators for his success in life. He reminded everyone that unions helped the city during the 1975 fiscal crisis, and that, "In the years ahead ... we will find the common ground position to lift up this city ... We will work with you, fight with you, march with you ...but we're not going to give up on this city," he said.

City Councilwoman Gale Brewer also spoke to the members: "The job you have is the hardest in the United States." To help CSA members in her district succeed, Ms. Brewer makes sure that they have her telephone numbers and that she is in frequent

contact with them. She often helps schools upgrade their technology, not simply to have the latest invention, but "for what it can do for students." She pointed out that CSA members are on the front line in fight-

'The job you have is the hardest in the US.'

—COUNCILWOMAN GALE BREWER

ing the city's bureaucracy; she also pointed out that in desperate economic times such as today's, if any money is available, "There's only one place to put it: in the public schools."

Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott also thanked CSA members for their hard work,

perseverance, energy and dedication. He exhorted members to continue focusing on what's best for students and raising the bar of expectations. He characterized his relationship with CSA President Ernest Logan as "fantastic" and said that although they don't always agree, they always figure out a way to communicate and discuss their differences. CSA is in the "vanguard" in school reform and always has students' interests at heart when working out issues, he said.

Mr. Walcott also pledged to streamline the many mandates and policies promulgated by the DOE that have hamstrung school supervisors around the city. That pledge was greeted with a round of applause from CSA members.

Before the program, CSA members had time to chat with each other over coffee and home-made pastries; afterwards, attendees ate dinner in the school's cafeterias.

MEMBERSHIP AT UNION'S ANNUAL MEETING

Refuses to Negotiate



ANTOINETTE ISABLE

■ CSA members slowly filter in from the reception into the auditorium to take their seats at the beginning of the meeting.

really are at impasse. A neutral third-party mediator will enter the picture to help advance the collective bargaining process.

What the city wanted was a contract that wouldn't provide for any raises at all but would modify the Principal Performance Review without stating how; that would lengthen the amount of time it takes to conclude investigations of our members; and would reduce your number of annual sick days. So if you were wondering why we reached an impasse, now you know.

Meanwhile, CSA is working with our new Chancellor Dennis Walcott. We're taking a leap of faith and choosing to believe that the Chancellor and the Mayor aren't the same person. It's a big leap of faith to take, but Dennis Walcott is the most down-to-earth Chancellor we've had in eight years and he's a man of the people, with a history of fighting for them when he was head of the NYC Board of Education and head of the New York City Urban League. But he is not Superman. He's already made a couple of mistakes, but he never said he was Superman. Geoffrey Canada thinks he's Superman, not Dennis. He's not Superman, but he is a marathon man. (*Mr. Walcott ran the NYC marathon.*)



We want to work with the Chancellor to reduce your stress to remove those unfunded mandates. Those things are getting in the way of school leaders. We want to work together. We want to be able to work with systems that work. We want to be sure that you don't take the hit if SESIS doesn't work or the new ELL program doesn't quite pull itself together. We don't want to be held accountable for things that don't work.

Remember, the Chancellor is your boss, and every boss wants his workers to be successful. And we're the only hope for the Chancellor to make his system successful.

CSA was formed because it had Principals, Assistant Principals, supervisors and administrators who were completely vulnerable to the whims of the government – there was no collective bargaining, no due process and no guaranteed benefits. Those were tough times for educators. Then the union took root and

gave you a collective voice in educational policy, working conditions, salary schedules, and grievance procedures.

We're living through tough times again as the economic crisis gives rise to the scapegoating of educators and education unions.



■ Food and Finance HS Principal Roger Turgeon welcomes CSA members to his school.



■ Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer praised educators for helping him succeed.

There are political forces trying to convince the public that educators have it too good, make too much money, have too many benefits, as if we caused the fiscal crisis alone in 2008, and that no one else had anything to do with it but us union workers.

That's the same kind of thinking that says the middle class should pay a higher percentage of taxes than people who make more than a million dollars a year. But we won't be stripped of our dignity and protections. We won't let children down that way. We'll fight for them and fight for the ability to replace teachers we lose and to create a pool of future Assistant Principals and Principals. In the current economic climate, it may take us a little longer, but we have right on our side and once again we'll come through.



That is why we have hope. We know America; we are the products of America. We know that when we are knocked down, America gets back up. We know that we can make the future better for our children and for the children we educate. We don't say "We can't." We say, "Yes, we can!" We don't blame the victim. We acknowledge the issues and say "no excuses" and move on. We are America. We hear the voices and we will continue to spread the word.

COMING EVENTS

(Events are at CSA's Brooklyn Headquarters, 16 Court Street, unless otherwise noted.)

DEC. 8, 10 AM: Retiree Chapter Advisory Committee Meeting

DEC. 9, 5 PM: NYCESPA-sponsored professional development

DEC. 12, 5 PM: Association of Assistant Principals

Dec. 12, 5 PM: Irish American Heritage and Cultural Committee (DOE)

Dec. 12, 5 PM: CSA Latino Caucus

DEC. 13, 5 PM: Association of Black Educators of NY

DEC. 22, 9 AM: CSA Retiree Chapter Executive Board

DEC. 27, ALL DAY: SSP Workshop

JAN. 3, 4 PM: Pre-Retirement Workshop

JAN. 4, 4:30 PM: CSA District Chairs

JAN. 5, 4 PM: NYCESPA Executive Board

Please check with the event organizer to confirm dates.

Members Honored

Continued from Page 1

■ Mario Costantino, Assistant Principal Supervision, since 1982;

■ Gerard DePaola, Assistant Principal, Elementary Junior High School, since 1987;

■ John Ficalora, Principal, High School, since 1992;

■ Muriel Mapp, Day Care Director/Assistant Director, since 1967;

■ Mary McInerney, Principal/Assistant Principal, Special Schools, since 1988;

■ Wilma Meyers, Assistant Principal, High School Administration, since 1978;

■ Lawrence Parker, Education Administrator, since 1979;

■ Susan Smith, "Supervisor of", since 1986.

Mr. Ficalora, Mr. DePaola, Ms. Barry and Ms. Bussel were unable to attend the annual meeting and received their awards at a later date.

—ALS



■ City Councilwoman Gale Brewer: "The job you have is the hardest in the United States," she said.

The Grievance Corner | Bob Reich

Contract Outlines the Rules of Per Session Activities



The DOE is strict when it comes to defining per session activities.

Article VI C of the CSA collective bargaining agreement and Chancellor's Regulation C-175 govern per session employment for CSA members.

Article VI C says: Per session employment may not be used as a means of providing additional compensation for work or responsibilities related to an individual's assignment. Please understand that alleged infractions of this article have been the subject of numerous investigations. Do not do anything foolish; the DOE is not given to loose interpretations!

Who Has First Dibs

In schools that are under the jurisdiction of a community school district, district supervisory staff members are the only ones eligible for per session if qualified. If no one from the district "after a full recruitment effort by the Community Superintendent," fits the bill, "The position may be filled with other qualified supervisors."

Note: If the position is at a school where teachers and students will be supervised, "Supervisors below the level of Principal shall be given notice by the Principal of such position" and get first crack at the assignment.

If the Assistant Principals do not apply, the Principal should maintain a copy of the

posting and document the fact that the Assistant Principals did not wish to apply.

Timetable for Grievances

No retention rights are earned for per session work that is performed by a supervisor. This means, just as in the case of those who work as non-mandated, 12-month Assistant Principals, that one must apply whenever a position/activity is posted.

As for filing a grievance related to per session activities, the collective bargaining agreement delineates a specific timeframe: "The grievance must be presented orally or in writing within five days after the employee has a knowledge of the act or condition which is the basis of the complaint."

Chancellor's Regulation C-175 states the Department of Education per session policy is as follows: "Per session work must not interfere or be an extension of the employee's primary job responsibilities, or be used as a means of providing additional compensation for work in an individual's primary assignment."

"No per session compensation may be paid for work performed at home. In addition, no individual is authorized to work in a per session activity during his/her normal working hours on a regular school day, or during the daily lunch hour. Principals per-

forming per session work in their school must receive prior approval from their respective superintendent."

When the DOE advertises a per session job, the posting must remain open for at least 20 school days prior to the commencement of the activity. The posting should include a job description, qualifications, selection criteria, number of hours, specific work locations and the hours.

Maximum Hours

Remember, you can't sign in for per session work if your official day of work has not ended. You may not work more than 500 hours of per session a year unless a waiver is requested and approved. If you are working per session, you cannot work on a day that you are absent from your day school assignment. A time card must be used upon arrival and departure from any per session job.

Last, but not least, for every 20 sessions of per session work, you'll earn one session of sick leave. This sick leave may be used after you work the 20th session or you may add it to your Cumulative Absence Reserve provided you complete the appropriate form at your school.

Questions about the contract? Email Bob Reich at bob@csa-nyc.org.

Letters

Family Hears from Many CSA Members After Article in CSA News

To the Editor:

I never expected the response that my family and I received after my husband's obituary was printed in the *CSA News*. People who Frank knew and worked with many, many years ago, went out of their way to locate my son and me and send cards and contributions to the Catalina Community Services Food Bank in Frank's memory. Some of them went so far as to call my son and reminisce about Frank's wonderful qualities as a friend, teacher, mentor and supervisor.

People do read the *CSA News* and people do reach out. Thank you again.

—BARBARA LONGO
Tucson, AZ

Frank Longo, the former Principal of JHS 50, D-14, Brooklyn, died on May 19. His obituary ran in the September 2011 *CSA News*.

Credit for Success May Lie in Behind-the-Scenes Battle

To the Editor: I recently read about one of my school's former students, Edwidge Danticat, a Haitian-American author and wanted to share some thoughts with my colleagues.

In 1981, Ms. Danticat arrived at IS 320, Brooklyn, straight from her native country of Haiti, where she had the good fortune to enter Raymond Dussek's class. Since then she has written and spoken at length about how much he helped her and what he meant to her.

What Ms. Danticat does not mention – and no doubt is completely unaware of – is that her beloved teacher, Mr. Dussek, never would have survived the internecine battles going on at that time between the advocates of bilingual education and those who favored English-as-a-second-language instruction, if not for the support and protection given to him by IS 320's then-Principal Adele Charyn. She recognized in the soft-spoken academician a person who would take other people's children and make them his own, bestowing upon them along the way the rich gifts of self-esteem and a love of learning.

But in this respect Mr. Dussek was not unique. Ms. Charyn was sensitive to the needs of her staff and always provided a positive environment and the nurturing that enabled her teachers to excel in their work with their students.

In closing, it is worth noting that Ms. Danticat, who eventually was nominated for the National Book Award and has won many other writing awards, says of herself at that time, "I grasped everything but English composition. I was writing so badly." But she credits the "teacher-angels [she studied with] along the way."

—BERNARD GORDON
Assistant Principal, IS 320 (retired)

Send Letters to the Editor

to Anne Silverstein
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or e-mail anne@csa-nyc.org.



Education in NYC: A Historical View of NYC Schools and Unions



We have arranged for a lecture by education historian Diane Ravitch for CSA members. Please join us Jan. 31 at St. Francis College.

Registration is online only at the CSA website: www.csa-nyc.org

Jan. 31 at 5pm • St. Francis College

Sold Out!

The 50th Anniversary celebration culminates with a gala dinner/dance at the Waldorf=Astoria® on April 27.

Stay tuned for details!

Problems With SESIS Continue to Mount

BY RANDI HERMAN
CSA FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

The Special Education Student Information System – SESIS – is intended to streamline record-keeping. The program, unfortunately, was implemented before it was ready and has exacerbated an already complex process.

“SEGIS is the million-dollar Frankenstein. It’s a horror,” said a teacher who was visiting CSA.

The following responses and comments from CSA members represent some of the more serious issues arising with SESIS. We are in regular

‘SEGIS is the million-dollar Frankenstein. It’s a horror.’

communication with the DOE about SESIS to make sure member ratings are not adversely impacted vis à vis compliance.

- SESIS, CAP, ATS, SEC: Information is inconsistent across these systems and the problems cannot be rectified at the school level. Schools do not have access to CAP – Child Assistance Program data system – and cannot make corrections. Therefore, the IEP in SESIS remains out of compliance because it cannot be finalized.

- The SESIS Helpdesk is awful: Wait time can exceed an hour, and two- and three-hour waits are still reported. Personnel often can’t assist as the problems are system-based “glitches.” Some issues may take weeks to resolve and, meanwhile, the case is deemed out of compliance.

- Only the Principal can grant staff access to student information via Galaxy.

- Only one person can work on a single record at a time, while multiple people serve the same child. Entering data to complete an evaluation can take up to four hours as the team members must work one at a time.

- Cases opened in CAP and then either with-

drawn or closed show up in SESIS as “out of compliance.” Again, schools can’t fix the problem.

- SESIS does not recognize confirmation numbers regardless of how many times the “first attend date” is entered. Similarly, the system doesn’t recognize fax numbers even after the annual review has been faxed and the fax number has been entered into the system as required.

- Entering attendance is laborious and time-consuming for related service providers, up to 45 minutes each day, or an instructional period. In addition, service location may vary but no space is provided to record multiple locations.

- Notice of final recommendation is not included in SESIS. Schools are still sending the prior version.

- SESIS cannot generate a report on the mandated triennials due in August and September resulting in cases going out of compliance between June and September.

- The psychologist cannot open a case to write a “historical psychological profile” without the parent signing consent, something that is only required for new testing.

- SESIS does not provide a cumulative history of IEP activity. The program is incapable of recording or maintaining social history. In short, the information may be current, but the history of services, placement, and other vital information is not readily accessible, which is essential to the foundation of a relevant new IEP.

- The parent signature/date appears only on the signature page. Parents cannot sign each page of an IEP to verify that he has read it.

- When a student is decertified but still requires related services or test modifications, SESIS is incapable of recording this information or reporting it, which is necessary in identifying the students moved to the least restrictive environment.

- The final document is not easily read or understood by parents and fails to provide a summary of services or program placement category. Parents also do not receive a summary of any changes or modifications to the IEP.

CSA Supports Free Speech



YURIDIA PEÑA

On Oct. 26, the CSA Executive Board unanimously passed a resolution in support of the Occupy Wall Street movement’s right to free speech and its right to assemble. CSA further supports the movement’s efforts to address the increasing inequities in the funding of public education. Above, unions joined the Occupy Wall Street protestors on Oct. 5 during a mass rally and march that began in Foley Square and wound up at Zuccotti Park, where the encampment was in its third week.

The Welfare Fund

Douglas V.
Hathaway, Ph.D

Get Ready for Cheaper Generics

Beginning this fall, and continuing for the next few years, many blockbuster brand-name medications will lose patent protection, including Lipitor which was scheduled to go generic Nov. 30, and become available as generic medications. The result will be lower co-payments for Welfare Fund members and lower prices for the Welfare Fund once the vendor faces competition among generic producers.

Lipitor is the most prescribed drug among CSA members and in the United States as well. The generic version of Lipitor, known as atorvastatin, either will be on the market by the time you read this, or will be available any day.

The FDA has set up the process to allow one generic manufacturer the right to market its product for a six-month period. Only after that window of time will other manufacturers be allowed to sell their generic drug. We anticipate that with increased competition, the drug will cost the Welfare Fund a lot less; in any event your co-pay will be reduced by \$15. (If, for some reason, your doctor wants you to continue with the brand-name medication, you’ll have a co-pay of \$35 because Lipitor will now be classified as a “non-preferred medication.”)

The drug manufacturers are already pushing doctors to switch patients to a brand-name cholesterol-lowering medication such as Crestor or Zetia. The only reason for this is to maximize their profits. If the generic medication was working you have no reason to switch to a different brand. The Fund urges members and their dependents to resist any push by providers thus ensuring a prescription for the generic.

In the next few months, other blockbuster drugs such as Caduet (high blood pressure); Combivir (HIV infection); Lexapro (depression/anxiety); Plavix (to prevent blood clots); and Singulair (asthma and allergy) will be available as generics. Please make every effort to use the generic medications and save yourself – and your Welfare Fund – money.

The Fund would like to take this opportunity to remind the parents of newborns what is required to obtain a prescription formula. Prescription formula is covered if there is a medical condition that prohibits the child from using an over-the-counter formula. Digestive conditions, such as lactose intolerance, by themselves are insufficient to have coverage for an alternative formula unless doctor-approved. The Fund, therefore, requires a letter of medical necessity from the child’s pediatrician before approval is granted. Approvals are only granted for the first year of the child’s life unless your pediatrician provides documentation of a particular medical condition.

January Pre-Retirement Workshops Scheduled

Two pre-retirement workshops are scheduled for CSA Department of Education members planning to retire this winter. One session is scheduled at CSA’s headquarters, 16 Court Street, on Jan. 3, and the second one will be held on Jan. 18 at the Bronx Educational Leadership Center, MS 127, Room 202, 1560 Purdy St.

Both workshops start at 4 p.m. and last about two hours. To reserve your spot, call the Welfare Fund at (718) 624-2600. Additional workshops will be scheduled in the spring for those planning to retire next summer.



As drug patents expire, we’ll see a drop in the price of generic medicines.

Legislative Agenda

Herman Merritt

Preparing for Battle Upstate

While December marks the holiday season for most of us, in Albany, December is the calm before the storm. Next month, Gov. Andrew Cuomo will deliver his second State of the State address. This message will give us a hint of what will be in his Executive Budget.

The state legislature will begin the 2012 session in January as well and CSA will be ready to advocate for our legislative agenda. There are three bills that CSA will continue to advance:

1. Expand and Enhance Early Childhood Education (A7591 and S5650)

Every child should have access to high quality early education and corresponding social, health and mental health supports, including full day opportunities for all three- and four-year-olds. CSA also supports requiring the NY State Education Department to make recommendations on the creation of a seamless and comprehensive set of educational systems and supports for all children from birth to age five.

2. Turn Around Schools (A7501 and S56480)

Schools that have been designated as "persistently lowest achieving" are eligible for federal State Improvement Grants. To be eligible, schools must be placed in one of four "turnaround" models. The school Principal must be removed in each of the models. CSA supports legislation to require that an assessment be conducted of any school identified as PLA to determine what factors caused the school to be identified prior to implementing one of the four intervention models.

3. Principal Leave (A300 and S5691)

One of the reasons charter schools were created was to create new professional opportunities for educators. Existing law allows public school teachers to request an extended leave of up to two years to teach in a charter school. CSA believes that public school Principals should be accorded the same opportunity to work in charter schools.

CSA closely monitors all bills that may have an impact on the school system. Our advocacy work is led by our Albany-based Assistant Director of Governmental Relations, Alithia Rodriguez Rolon. She monitors the progress of legislation and meets regularly with lawmakers and members of the Governor's staff. Her efforts are supplemented by upstate visits by our officers and Retiree Chapter Legislative Committee members.

It takes a coordinated effort on many fronts to successfully pass a bill or prevent its passage. That is why we recruit in-service members to become Legislative District Coordinators (LCD) to support our efforts here in the city.

In addition, we continue to monitor the new teacher and principal evaluation systems, pension reform and the possible extension of the Millionaires' Tax after Dec. 31. (Gov. Cuomo has, so far, shown no inkling to change his position on allowing this tax to expire.)

Next month: I'll examine some of the issues before the City Council. Our primary issue is securing a contract for our Day Care members as well as for our Department of Education members. Day Care members have been without a new contract since June 30, 2006 while the DOE contract expired in March 2010. Please direct questions about CSA's political agenda to me at herman@csa-nyc.org.



Improving NYS's early childhood education system remains a union priority

History is Made: First Day Care Contract in Nation

CSA turns 50 on Jan. 30, 2012. Each month, the CSA News will highlight a milestone in the union's history, and the union will sponsor special events culminating with a gala dinner-dance on April 27 at the Waldorf=Astoria®. This month: Day Care Directors and Assistant Directors join the union.

BY ANNE SILVERSTEIN

Ten years after CSA's first organizing meeting as a federation of supervisory groups, the Executive Board voted to admit Day Care leaders who ran the city-subsidized Day Care Centers, feeder programs to the city schools.

The vote on May 30, 1972 stated that CSA would form a separate citywide district for Day Care Center administrative personnel. Dues were established at .95 percent of the maximum annual salary for each category.

It would be four years before these Day Care members would win a contract.

CSA had to fight the city for the right of day care workers to select CSA as their bargaining agent. That took two years and a protracted legal battle; in the fall of 1974, the State Labor Relations Board ruled that CSA had the right to be the focus of an election in which Day Care workers would decide whether to join the union. The November 1974 election affirmed Day Care members' resolve to be unionized.

Still, the powers-that-were fought Day Care members right to negotiate a contract. In 1975, CSA's Day Care member picketed at the Day Care Council's annual meeting on Nov. 20.

Finally, a year later, the city's Day Care Directors

and Assistants signed the nation's first Day Care Director's contract negotiated by a union on Sept. 28. While health benefits are now part of the package, the most significant aspect of the contract truly was the fact that a contract existed at all.



Lydia Tait



Gladys Weekes

Unsung Heros The leaders of the battle for day care in the 1970s were the late Lydia Tait, who was hired by CSA to work part-time as a special liaison with Day Care Directors, and retired DC Director Gladys Weekes. It is no exaggeration to say that without their work their colleagues would never have become unionized.

SOMOS EL FUTURO

Latino Networking in San Juan

BY CSA STAFF

CSA sent a delegation, including CSA President Ernest Logan, to the annual Somos el Futuro Legislative Conference Nov. 9-13 at the Conrad San Juan Condado Plaza in San Juan, Puerto Rico. There, CSA staff and members met with dozens of lawmakers and their staff members to advocate for education issues. In attendance from CSA were President Ernest Logan, Executive Director Operations Anita Gomez-Palacio, Director of Political Affairs Herman Merritt and his two assistants Alithia Rodriguez-Rolon and Jahmila Joseph, Field Director Bernard Lopez, Retiree Chapter member Charles Hernandez and CSA Executive Board member Robert Flores.



ANITA GOMEZ-PALACIO

■ From left, Assemblyman Felix Ortiz, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and CSA retiree Charles Hernandez.

Political Action at CSA



ANTOINETTE ISABLE

■ CSA's Legislative District Coordinators (LDCs) and Retiree Chapter political activists attended a meeting on Oct. 25 to kick off the union's 2011-2012 legislative activities. The LDCs – volunteers from CSA's in-service ranks – interact with their local, state and federal elected representatives, fostering ongoing relationships that will benefit schools and advance CSA member priorities. Top left, City Councilman Hakeem Jeffries addresses the meeting; and bottom, CSA President Ernest Logan introduces Mr. Jeffries before he spoke.



Schools Expert: We Need Radical Change in Teacher Training

BY ANNE SILVERSTEIN

The Executive Leadership Institute hosted a plenary session, led by education expert Tony Wagner, entitled Learning, Leading and Teaching in the 21st Century. More than 170 school administrators attended the Oct. 19 session at Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus.

Mr. Wagner discussed why national standards should be concept-driven and engage students with hands-on learning. He criticized recent school reform initiatives adding, "The common core are content-standard, not skills being taught." He suggested a radical transformation of how teachers are trained in this country; he said the U.S. should embrace best practices from countries such as Finland, which, despite few tests, a shorter school day and infrequent evaluation of teachers, has what is considered the best public school system in the world.

Standardized testing here relies on memorization and content-driven skills, and Mr. Wagner believes continuing this model is a big mistake since many automated jobs are out-sourced. Most job creators, especially Fortune 500 companies, seek talented, innovative employees who know how to ask the right questions.



■ ELI Director Dr. Eloise Messineo welcomed participants to Tony Wagner's presentation.

"Tests tell us nothing about college or career," he said.

American students lack critical thinking skills, Mr. Wagner continued, and tests have proven that. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Tests tell us nothing about college or career.

is an international study that evaluates education systems by testing 15-year-old students in participating countries economies. Of 65 countries, the US ranked 15th in reading, 23rd in science and 32nd in math. "It's not that our kids are stupid, it's that they are badly tested," said Mr. Wagner. The reason American students performed poorly is because the test was entirely comprised of open-ended questions that students are not accustomed to because most of the U.S. standardized tests are memory-based.

"Seventy percent [of the] economy is based on consumer spending; what's going to be the engine of growth in the 21st century? The answer is innovation," he said. According to Mr. Wagner, innovation is the ability to possess agility, accountability, initiative and entrepreneurship. "Boredom is the number one reason to drop out," he said. "School is boring and it got more boring because of this testing stuff," he added.

Mr. Wagner is the first Innovation Education Fellow at the Technology and Entrepreneurship Center at Harvard University. He helped with the documentary, *The Finnish Phenomenon: Inside The World's Most Surprising School System*. Mr. Wagner was invited by school officials from the Finland National Board of Education to interview students and teachers for the film, which depicted an unconventional school system where the school day is shorter, teachers are rarely evaluated and standardized testing is inconsequential.



YURIDIA PEÑA

■ Tony Wagner criticized current reform trends saying that US schools are focusing on the wrong skills to train future workers in American companies.

Ohio Voters Say 'No' to Anti-Union Legislation

BY ANNE SILVERSTEIN

The labor movement celebrated a huge triumph on Nov. 8 when Ohio voters said "no" to the state's new law that took away collective bargaining rights for public employees. The vote was hailed as a setback for Gov. John Kasich who spearheaded the movement in Ohio to enact the law.

Sixty-one percent of Ohioans backed the repeal showing their support for the state's 350,000 public employees.

Said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka in press reports: "The workers

here have done a tremendous job of saying enough is enough. They're saying 'We're not going to let you take away our ladder into the middle class.'"

Republican Gov. John Kasich signed the law last March, which had not yet taken effect, that would have banned public employee strikes, scrapped binding arbitration, and denied public workers the ability to negotiate pensions and health care benefits.

Thousands of people protested at the statehouse during legislative hearings on the bill. The law was pushed as a way for local governments to save money.

Special Children, Special Needs



ANNE SILVERSTEIN

■ The first Day Care workshop of the year took place on Nov. 3 at CSA. The topic was autism. Above, and inset, Dr. Elizabeth Matthews of City College/CUNY, spoke to about 20 Day Care Directors and Assistant Directors about providing a good early educational experience for autistic children.

Day Care Workshops 2011-12

BY CSA STAFF

Each year, the Executive Leadership Institute presents a series of six workshops for Day Care Directors and Assistant Directors. The workshops are made possible through funding from the NY City Council. The first two workshops were held in November and December.

■ Feb. 3, 2012, Sara Seiden presents a morning workshop entitled *NAEYC Accreditation: What You Can Learn From the Process* and in the afternoon, Dr. Vicki Garavuso will present, *Supervision: What to Look for When Teachers Are Teaching*. Both presenters are from the Center for Workers Education, CUNY, which partners with ELI in these workshops.

■ March 9, 2012, Liege Motta, staff developer, Bank Street College of Education, presents the morning workshop, *Language and Literacy in Early Childhood Classrooms: What Do the Standards Mean to You?* Dr. Garavuso presents in the afternoon,

How to Plan Hands-On Workshops for Staff. At CWE, 25 Broadway, 7th floor, Manhattan.

■ April 4, 2012, Dr. Elizabeth Matthews presents the morning workshop *Forming an Assessment Plan Using the Whole Child Approach*. In the afternoon, Dr. Garavuso will present *How to Build a Community of Learners: Teachers' Professional Development*. At CWE.

■ May 18, 2012, Lynn Hurdle-Price will present *Decisive Communication and Leadership: Communication that Supports Effective Management and Supervision*. At CSA's new location: 40 Rector St., Manhattan.

Workshops begin promptly at 9 a.m. after breakfast at 8:30. Lunch is served at noon, and the day ends at 3:30 p.m. Please note: Food and materials are ordered for registered participants only. To register for this workshop, visit the CSA website, www.csanyc.org, to download an application.

For more information, contact ELI at (718) 852-3000.

Alternative to Violence: Ex-Ga



■ Rick Brown, a CFU site coordinator at Sheepshead Bay High School, explains to students how to make a presentation and the criteria on which they will be graded.

Council for Unity Helps Sheepshead Bay Students Make Better Choices in Life

BY YURIDIA PEÑA

Rick J. Brown was a gang member and an at-risk student at Erasmus High School in the early 1990s. After a riot broke out in the hallway over footwear – one student wouldn't apologize for stepping on someone's sneaker – he came into contact with a program that would eventually turn his life around.

That program, the Council for Unity (CFU), got him off the streets. He is now a site coordinator at Sheepshead Bay High School for CFU, where he counsels at-risk students to seek alternatives to gang culture.

"My gang was a little bit different, mine's was a money gang ... we didn't have to beat you up to get in [the gang,] there was nobody stabbing you or shooting you. It was like this: Make money, bring it home, put it in the pot. That was the gang I was down with," he said during a recent interview.

The day after the riot, CFU came to Erasmus High School, and Mr. Brown was introduced to Robert DeSena, CFU's founder. Mr. Brown was "dumb-founded" by what the organization offered. Through the program, he met former gang members and criminals whom he related to and who strongly suggested that there were better ways to live. Mr. Brown left the streets and earned his high school diploma.

CFU has been working with kids and adults for more than 30 years. It offers peer mediation, conflict resolution classes and workshops, trips to colleges, trips to prisons, career development and job counseling. Arguably, the most important thing CFU does is offer a community of support – a substitute for what at-risk teenagers seek through street life.

"They are looking for ... a family," said Yelena Geller, an English teacher who facilitates CFU courses at Sheepshead Bay. Ms. Geller taught English for seven years before Principal Reesa Levy asked her to run CFU classes. "These kids have enriched my life, specifically

in this program, because as an English teacher, I would always find a way to finagle these topics into my lessons ... being here I have the best of both worlds," Ms. Geller said.

• • •

Topics such as drugs, violence, teen pregnancy and domestic abuse are discussed through student-led presentations and mini lessons. "This is my favorite class; you feel welcomed (and) nobody judges you," said Lakisha Innocent, a junior.

Another student, 20-year-old Aliah Madoo, said CFU helped her put an end to an abusive relationship. "I realized I deserved better," she said. She plans to graduate this spring and attend the University of Rhode Island for nursing.

"It just helped me stay in school ... sometimes high school is boring," said Miguel Augustus, another jun-

ior. Gafar Liameed simply stated: "I feel safe."

CFU classes are designed to teach students how to pick a topic, research it, conduct a lesson and lead a class discussion. "They are heard, they can talk about their issues, and somebody is actually listening to them and addressing those issues," said Yvonne Prescod, CFU Director of School-Based Initiatives. She noted that Mr. Brown is "a very big selling point [for] kids coming into the classroom."

(Watching Mr. Brown, it's easy to see how teens are lured by his charisma and "swag," urban-speak for confidence and style. Mr. Brown chooses to reside in a nearby housing project, which makes him even better equipped to relate to his students.)

• • •

CFU is an elective course at Sheepshead Bay and has been so successful that many students – even honor roll teenagers – take the class to learn leadership and research skills; however, many at-risk students, over-aged and under-credited, are offered CFU as a credit-recovery class. It becomes mandatory. Other schools shape the program to meet their student needs. Some offer it as an after-school program, others use CFU coordinators as guest speakers.

The nonprofit's multi-faceted program was originally created to target high school students. Today, CFU offers the program to a younger demographic as well. The curriculum is carefully structured for each age group and school level.

At IS 228 in Brooklyn, for example, CFU acts as an anti-bullying program and leadership training. "CFU has taught students not to be bystander because a bystander is as guilty as a bully," said Dominick D'Angelo, the school's Principal. Mr. D'Angelo said CFU classes help students become "service-minded – to value the community in which they live." CFU is so important for middle school students because these are the years that the leadership foundation is set with our students," he added.



■ Principal Reesa Levy says much of her job is keeping her students safe; CFU has helped her reduce violence in and around her school.

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■ Yelena Geller during a CFU event.

CFU
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ing Members Lead the Way



■ CFU's founder Robert DeSena: "They are not born criminals; they are not happy in their circumstances and given the option to change, they will take it. That is the CFU experience."

U's overall mission is to create a culture of hope and a culture of despair. The program is not only for students but also prisoners – CFU has a center at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility. Studies have shown that the program's presence has reduced

organized crime, bullying and violence in jails, schools and neighborhoods where gang culture thrives.

CSA President Ernest Logan, who serves on the CFU Board of Directors, has been an advocate for CFU's work for many years.



na Geller, right, watches her students ask questions during student-presentations.

U Students Learn Leadership, Speaking and Research Skills



■ Sheepshead Bay Principal Reesa Levy, left, at a Council for Unity Conference last spring. She's a fierce advocate of the program.



■ Two students explain survey findings in a CFU class. Their survey was about relationships; its subjects were boys, ages 14-17.

PHOTOS BY YURIDIA PEÑA

NATION *Labor*

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Principal Training

A report from the Center for American Progress (CAP) has recommended that districts look beyond traditional supervisory training programs to develop school leaders. Eight states, including New York, were touted for leading the way in innovative techniques, as well as enlarging the pool of leaders. CAP is one of numerous groups studying the effectiveness of Principals and chose Principal preparation as its main focus. (Education Week)

CALIFORNIA: Against The Tide

The National Council on Teacher Quality recently reported that most states have made changes in the way they evaluate teachers, with a large majority now considering student achievement when determining whether to grant tenure or retain teachers. However, California has not been swept up in this tide. Critics believe, as a result, the state is lagging behind but others praise California for not succumbing to unproven strategies. (LA Times)

FLORIDA: Biden On GOP

Speaking before about 1,000 educators at the Florida Education Association, Vice President Joe Biden said that Republicans are wrong in thinking that public education isn't salvageable and in their lack of interest in investing in its future. He blamed the GOP for selling the public the message that teachers and their unions are responsible for bad schools. "They're using you to launch the most direct assault on labor... since the 20s" (Orlando Sentinel)

ILLINOIS: Going After Labor

Though Chicago is known for its Democrats and unions working hand-in-hand, organized labor has been the target of scrutiny and criticism by Mayor Rahm Emanuel. While there were face-offs in the past, union leaders note they were primarily private; Mr. Emanuel has made their discord public. He has cancelled a raise that was due the city's teachers and is going head-to-head with the union to extend the school day. (Associated Press)

NEW YORK: Test Grading Vote

Will teachers be permitted to grade their own students' standardized tests? A vote by the NYS Regents is slated. If a change is implemented in the current procedures, it wouldn't take effect until 2012-13 and would require school districts to grade one another's tests. Such a change could result in higher costs and the necessity for earlier testing. (The New York Times)

— COMPILED BY
CHRISTINE ALTMAN

Survey Shows Members Have Favorable View of Union

Continued from Page 1

in 10 people approve of his job performance; 82 percent expressing a favorable attitude toward him.

While Mr. Logan's leadership and the union's efforts are well regarded, some troubling trends raised a few red flags for union officials. The new survey showed a drop in job satisfaction among members, as well as an increase in dissatisfaction with wages and workload when compared to member responses in 2009. In addition, members clearly want the union to focus on contract-related issues and fight budget cuts in schools. (High-stakes testing, job insecurity and draconian accountability measures contribute to why so many members – 24 percent – expressed dissatisfaction with their own jobs.)

But the most vital issue for all members is salary.

"Much of this anxiety may be due to the fact that the Mayor has specifically said that there is no money for raises. Members are increasingly frustrated about the lack of a new contract with the city," said CSA Executive Vice President Peter McNally.

CSA's contract expired in March 2009 and the union filed for impasse this October with the NYS Public Employment Relations Board over the

city's inability to negotiate a news contract. PERB agreed with CSA that the union and the city were at an impasse.

Administrators overwhelmingly said they would stand beside Mr. Logan if he decides to press Mayor Bloomberg about discussing a new

The most important issue for members is salary.

collective bargaining agreement.

Seventy-three percent of the membership said they have an "unfavorable" attitude toward Mayor Bloomberg, with 63 percent disapproving of his job performance. Union officials surmised this may be because of increasing demands on school administrators with fewer resources to meet those demands.

Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott has yet to make a huge impression among members but survey results indicate they are willing to give him a chance. Specific groups of CSA members expressed differing degrees of satisfaction with the union depending upon the question. For example, the number of Education Administrators, Principals under the age 50 and African-Americans who say they are displeased with CSA's handling of contractual issues has increased from 2009 to 2011. (The percentage of Education Administrators who expressed satisfaction decreased from 63 percent to 42 percent, Principals under 50 from 54 percent to 34 percent and African Americans, from 70 percent to 53 percent.)

Another example of this is Principals feel less positive than Assistant Principals and Education Administrators about the union's handling of issues such as pensions, benefits, healthcare and working conditions. While Education Administrators are more concerned with job security, Principals feel more strongly than others about legal issues.

Global Strategy Group, a marketing consulting firm, conducted the online survey from Sept. 27 to Oct. 20 among 1,089 CSA members.

Teachers' Retirement System

November 2011 Unit Values

Diversified Equity Fund: 56.249

Stable-Value Fund: 19.351

International Equity Fund: 8.730

Inflation Protection Fund: 10.729

Socially Responsive Equity Fund: 9.979

www.trsnyc.org

In Memoriam

■ **PATRICIA M. CALLAHAN**, 86, a resident of Montclair, NJ, died on Sept. 23. Ms. Callahan received her bachelor's degree from Hunter College in 1947 and earned her master's degree in educational administration from Teachers College Columbia University. She began her career as a teacher, became an Assistant Principal at JHS 45, Bronx, and then a Principal. She eventually worked at the Board of Education, first, in the Division of Curriculum Development, and then in the Division of Personnel before retiring in 1987. Condolences may be sent to the family at her sister's house: Margaret E. Callahan-Lesser, 1308 E. Bluefield Ave., Phoenix, AZ, 85022.

■ **MILTON J. STRONG**, 83, died on April 18. Born in Harlem, he received degrees from NYU and Teachers College Columbia University. He held various positions in a career that spanned 47 years. In addition to teaching, he served in the Central Zoning Department, as a CEC Director in District 29 and as Business Manager in District 28. In 1975 he became principal of IS 166 in District 19 where he served until his retirement in 2000. Condolences may be sent to his wife, Marjorie, at 23 Bagatelle Rd, Dix Hills, NY 11746. Donations in his memory can be made to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, www.lls.org.

■ **BERNARD WALKER**, 87, of Delray Beach, FL, a former Supervising Principal of District 31, Staten Island, died on Sept. 12. He spent 38 years in the city's school system, many of them as a CSA member, before he retired in 1987. Among the schools in which he served is IS 61, D-31. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Toby. Condolences may be sent to her at 7889 Lake Sands Dr., Delray Beach, FL, 33446.

■ The founding Principal of Cobble Hill School of American Studies, **RICHARD E. WEISBERG**, 67, died on May 25. He retired from the school system in September 2002. Dr. Weisberg earned a doctorate in French history from NYU in 1995. Condolences may be sent to his wife, Kathryn Annette Clark, 153 E. 92 St., Apt 5F, NY, NY 10128. Donations in Mr. Weisberg's name may be sent to Imus Cattle Ranch for Kids with Cancer in Ribera, NM.

■ **MURIEL HALE**, 89, wife of Dr. Jordan Hale, former Assistant Principal at John Bowne High School, Queens, passed away on Nov. 15. Condolences may be sent to Dr. Hale, 305 West End Ave., Apt. 1502, NY, NY 10023.

■ **MARK CONN**, 95, a former Director Of Adult Education and After School Recreation, as well as a Golden Gloves Boxing Champion

AAP CONFERENCE

'Promoting Success In Challenging Times'

More than 300 school supervisors and teachers attended the 69th Annual Educational Leadership Conference of the Association of Assistant Principals. The all-day Conference, held on Oct. 29 at the LaGuardia Marriott went on despite an early winter storm that crippled upstate.

State Board of Regent Chancellor Merryl Tisch was the keynote speaker and addressed the challenges and struggles school supervisors face. She also spoke in support of community schools. The Conference honored Public Advocate Bill DeBlasio for his dedication to the children and schools of New York City, although he sent a representative at the last minute because he had a commitment in Washington.

—ALS



YURIDIA PEÑA

■ Top Left: Keynote speaker Merryl Tisch, Board of Regents Chancellor, addresses the luncheon crowd. Top Right: SSP Intervener Sonia Nieves, standing, and Dr. Nancy Westerband-Brown, SSP Director, presented on instructional rounds. Bottom: Conference participants collaborate and compare notes.



■ Mark Conn, a former school supervisor, above, officiated at a 1948 fight between Ike Williams and Jesse Flores.

and a professional boxing referee, passed away on Sept. 29. Mr. Conn grew up on the handball courts of Arverne, Queens, and at Far Rockaway High School, and was captain of the baseball team and gymnastics participant. This love of sports followed Mr. Conn into the military; he brought boxing to the Chinese army through his service as a mem-

ber of the Flying Tigers. While in China, Mr. Conn taught boys' basketball – a sport they had never heard of. Returning home, he received a bachelor's and master's degree in health and physical education from CCNY. Mr. Conn worked for the NYC Board of Education from 1946 to 1970. He became a boxing referee and oversaw dozens of fights with major boxing figures that included the stars of the sport Muhammad Ali, Joe Louis and Ezzard Charles. Condolences may be sent to his daughter, Susan Rice, 951 Lyons Rd., #6-108

Coconut Creek, FL 33063.

Obituary information should be sent to CSA News Editor Anne Silverstein at 16 Court St., Brooklyn, NY 11241 or by email to anne@csa-nyc.org. Obituaries are printed as space allows.

Learning From the Experts

Students Get Advice from Top Designers at Industry Fair

BY YURIDIA PEÑA

Hundreds of boisterous teenagers filled Manhattan's iconic Altman Building in Chelsea at the Sixth Annual NYC Design Fair this fall to learn about the world of design from the top people in their fields.

The two-hour event featured an opportunity for students to go from table to table to speak with dozens of designers from different fields – fashion, graphics, architecture, cartooning and technology – who answered questions, offered advice and looked at student portfolios. The designers, themselves, brought their own portfolios to show students what a good portfolio contains.



FASHION GURU
Tim Gunn: Follow your passion.

(To make sure nobody starved, the fair hosts offered plenty of delicious finger food for the students.)

Fashion expert and Project Runway co-host Tim Gunn was frank about the competitive nature of the business as he answered questions from the audience during a Q&A. "If you are not passionate about being a designer, don't do it. It's not just a job; you live with it, you don't leave it back in the office," he said.

"I want to encourage young people to pursue their dream in design," said Phil Jimenez, an artist for Marvel and DC Comics. His advice: Be polite and persistent. "Never give-up and when they say 'no,' find out what will make them say 'yes,'" he added.

"Employers look for versatility," said Ryan Cox, a freelance artist. Designers brought examples of what good versatility and original concepts looks like. And it worked. Students wrote notes as they



YURIDIA PEÑA

ASPIRING DESIGNERS meet with Jonathan Jackson and Sarah Nelson, media and graphic designers, to learn about their experiences in the industry.

received pointers on how to market themselves and make their work memorable to potential clients. "You get a lot of chances to build relationships and network," said Taylor Johnson, a senior student at Art and Design High School.

"I created a hair jacket, [because] what I'm trying to do [is] make myself stand out," said Georgina Jean-Dusseck, a sophomore at Fashion Industries High School. The confident young woman said the best advice she received was from Mr. Gunn who inspired her to learn about the history of fashion to design authentic and original pieces.

Middle school student Robyn Salazar learned valuable tips too. She said a designer suggested sketching lightly and swiftly before concentrating on the details.

Representatives from art schools also attended the fair to talk about the college admissions process and financial aid resources.

The Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum organized the free event, which is part of National Design Week, Oct. 15 – 23. Since 2006, National Design Week has been an education initiative that draws attention to the ways in which design enriches people's lives.



STRAIGHT ADVICE: Sahar Pazirandeh has had a varied career in the fashion and apparel industry. She mentors students interested in the fashion industry through her Freedom Star Mentorship program.



CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM: Juliana Jaramillo, above, the Design Director of David Stark Design & Productions, reviews a portfolio with a student. The company designs and creates corporate events and private affairs.

Right, students take a break during the fair to have an after-school snack of crepes prepared on the spot and other delicacies.



NATION Education

NEW YORK:

Focus On ELLs

New York City has committed to changing services for English Language Learners. The NY State Education Department ordered NYC to adhere to a "corrective action plan" as a result of its inability to meet the needs of ELLs. City school officials announced plans to start 125 bilingual programs over the next three years. (Education Week)

MARYLAND:

Minimum Standards

Should student athletes be required to maintain a 2.0 GPA to be eligible to play high school sports is the question before the state board. Reportedly, 16 Maryland school districts already have this requirement. One concern of board members is that the dropout rate may increase if this is enforced. But as one coach said, "... we can't lower our standards so low that they are coming to school for sports." (The Baltimore Sun)

PENNSYLVANIA:

Joker Or Bully?

"This is a Joke – Making Fun of Others is Not" is a program of the Bar Association that supplements the Bar's diversity programs already in high schools. The Bar sends attorneys to elementary schools to teach students the difference between joking and bullying, to discuss types of jokes that are offensive. The idea of approaching the topic through jokes was in recognition of the fact that many children tell jokes in an effort to fit in without realizing how harmful they can be. (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

ALABAMA:

Special Ed Changes

Officials are ramping up measures to ensure that special education students get the services to which they are entitled in the Montgomery schools. Of 31,000 students in Montgomery public schools, 3,082 have disabilities and are classified as special education. One way teachers track students' services is a resource notebook; teachers maintain a page for each special education child to document the instruction and services given to him or her. (montgomeryadvertiser.com)

CALIFORNIA:

Wii Remotes

In Hillsborough, sixth graders are using Nintendo's Wii remote controls to collect scientific data and test theories. They are learning about acceleration and the difference between engineering and science. The class will use its remotes to create a rat-trap car, a marble roller-coaster and a balloon-powered vehicle. The remotes allow students to use an interesting new technology while creating their own designs. (mindshift.kqed.org)

— COMPILED BY
CHRISTINE ALTMAN

Travel Desk

GARY GOLDSTEIN

New Destinations: Costa Rica and the Amazon

President's Week Cruise

Feb. 19-26, 2012

The Celebrity *Solstice* sails Feb. 19 from Ft. Lauderdale to Grand Cayman, Cozumel, Honduras and Costa Maya! Round-trip airfare is included. Prices won't last.

RATES: inside, \$1,587.43; verandah, \$1,857.43; verandah concierge, \$1,927.43 (best value!); aqua class, \$2,017.43; sky suite, \$3,067.42.

Romantic Danube

May 20-27, 2012
(depart NYC May 19)

Sail from Nuremberg on the *Legend*. Visit the Danube Canal, Kelheim, Regensburg, Passau, Melk, Vienna and arrive in Budapest on May 27. Extend your stay in Prague or Budapest.

RATES: Cat E window, \$2,498; Cat D window, \$2,698 per person; Cat C balcony, \$3,098 per person. Wine, excursions and taxes included. Add air, single supplement and insurance.

Northern Europe

Aug. 11-24, 2012

Fly to Amsterdam on Aug. 11 and sail Aug. 12. We'll cruise on Celebrity's *Constellation* to St. Petersburg (with an optional trip to Moscow), Berlin, Stockholm, Helsinki, Estonia and Copenhagen. Return from Amsterdam. **RATES:** inside, \$2,207.18; window, \$2,342.18; balcony, \$2,942.18; concierge, \$3,242.18; sky suite, \$4,522.18. Roundtrip air to Amsterdam is now available. Also, book a two-night stay in Amsterdam at the cruise's end (hotel NH Grand Krasnapolsky) for \$432.26 per person.

Summer Sail to Bermuda

July 1-8, 2012

Sail Celebrity's *Summit* from Cape Liberty, (Bayonne), NJ, to the pearl of the Atlantic: Bermuda. Spend three days on the island while enjoying an array of food, beverages, entertainment and amenities on this floating hotel. Take advantage of these special rates for CSA while they last.

RATES: interior, \$1,227.68; window, \$1,257.68; balcony with concierge service (best value), \$1,537.68; aqua class, \$1,735.68; sky suite, \$2,437.68. If you book and deposit prior to Dec. 1 you will receive onboard credit for sky suites of \$200 per cabin; all other cabins receive \$100 per cabin onboard credit.

Canada New England

August 18-25, 2012

Sail with us on the elegant *Maasdam* (Holland America). We leave from Boston on Aug. 18 and arrive in Montreal on Aug 25, 2012. Our ports

For third, fourth person rates, single rates, optional insurance or any other questions, email Gary Goldstein at ggoldstein@csa-nyc.org.



ELEANOR GOLDSTEIN

■ The ruins of Urquhart Castle, the Scottish Highlands; the Travel Desk visited the British Isles in July.

of call include Bar Harbor, ME, Halifax-Nova Scotia, Sydney, Nova Scotia, Charlottetown, and Prince Edward Island. We'll cruise the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Quebec City, and the St. Lawrence Seaway to Montreal. Extend your trip for two nights in Boston and/or Montreal. Airfare not included. Call for more details.

RATES: Inside, \$1,311.48 per person; window, \$1,491.48; oversized verandah, \$2,511.48. Insurance on request.

A Motor Tour of Costa Rica

Nov. 10, 2012

We fly from NYC to San Jose, Costa Rica's capital, on Nov. 12. You'll travel with a guide on a motorcoach from San Jose through the Monteverde Rainforest to the beaches of Tamarindo in the province of Guanacaste on the Pacific Ocean. Rates include round-trip airfare from NYC, eight nights in hotels, 12 meals, transfers, and taxes, excluding tour guide gratuity.

RATES: double room, \$2,279 per person; single, \$2,679; triples, \$2,249.

The Intriguing Amazon

Jan. 3-17, 2013

Sail the *Pacific Princess* (Princess Cruises) departing Manaus, the bustling Amazon port, home of the world-famous opera house, Teatro Amazonas, on Jan. 3, a year from now. We'll venture into the rainforest when we visit Boca da Valeria, a remote village at the confluence of the Rio da Valeria and the Amazon. On to the rubber port of Santarem and then east into the Atlantic to Devil's Island (Isle Royal) to see the infamous penal colony home of Papillon and Alfred Dreyfus. As we sail to Ft. Lauderdale, our home port, we'll stop in Tobago (Republic of Trinidad and Tobago), St. Lucia and St. Maarten. Rates: from \$3,420 to \$4,840 per person include-government charges and taxes. Airfare and insurance not included.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Principal Wins Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture

BY CSA STAFF

Ronnie Shuster, the Principal of PS 94, Manhattan, was among a small group of luminaries to receive a special mayor's award for running a special education school that embraces the arts.

Ms. Shuster received her award on Nov. 1 at Alice Tully Hall; other recipients of the award this year are Mikhail Baryshnikov, Alice Diamond, Jimmy Heath, Maya Lin and the Theatre Development Fund.

Stephen Sondheim was presented with the 2011 NYC Handel Medallion, the city's highest honor for achievement in the arts. Mayor Michael Bloomberg and actor Alec Baldwin presented the awards.

Ms. Shuster was recognized "for her extraordinary leadership as Principal of PS 94M, a public school made more dynamic by integrating theater arts into the academic experience of students with autism

as well as other disabilities. Through her outstanding contribution to education and her commitment to the arts, Ms. Shuster has been an unwavering champion for arts education and its importance to all aspects of learning," said a press release from the Mayor's office.

Ms. Shuster's school has five sites in Manhattan and she has been the Principal since 2001. "We believe that it's really, really important to tap into every student's fascination in order to help them learn best," Ms. Shuster told *The New York Times*. Ms. Shuster is responsible for about 250 students in K-8.



THE EPOCH USA

■ Ronnie Shuster, in blue jacket is flanked by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and actor Alec Baldwin.

Recognition for Dr. Julia Mortley

The Bedford-Stuyvesant Lions Club presented its Education Award to Dr. Julia Mortley at the organization's 41st Anniversary Dinner Dance on Oct. 14 at Fleur de Lis, Ridgewood, Queens.

Dr. Mortley has been the Principal of PS 305, Brooklyn, since her appointment in 2006; she has been working in the school system since 1986

and became an Assistant Principal in 1999.

The Lion's Club selected Dr. Mortley to honor for her implementation of her vision: to integrate the arts, technology and character education in her school. PS 305 was among the schools selected to participate in the Chancellor's Innovation Zone Technology Pilot Program in 2010.



■ Julia Mortley: Innovative school leader.

Retirements

■ SHARON GRUNFELD retired on Sept. 30 as a Senior School Improvement Specialist for the Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language learners with 31 years of service. During this time she also worked as a Special Education Teacher, District 06 Trainer, Special Education Supervisor, Instructional Support Specialist and IEP Specialist. A brunch was given in her honor on November 6, 2011 at La Fontana Restaurant in Nyack, NY.

■ PHYLLIS MARINO REGGIO retired on March 1 after 32 years of service in the city's schools. Ms. Reggio's career began at Concord High School, Staten Island, teaching English. Soon after, she became the librarian at Washington Irving High School, Manhattan and was then appointed Assistant Principal there. Two years later, Ms. Reggio became the Principal of Humanities High School,

Manhattan. She later served as a Learning Instructional Superintendent in Region 5 and the Executive Director of Youth Development at Tweed, and retired as Principal of IS 78, D-22, Brooklyn. Ms. Reggio is now a doctoral candidate (educational leadership) at Fordham University and is working on her dissertation. A party was held in her honor at Kennedy's Restaurant in Breezy Point on March 24.

■ JEANNE SCHULTZ, the former Director of Student Services for Academy of Educational Services/CUNY Partnership Support Organization retired on June 30 with more than 30 years of service in the NYC school system. She was a special education teacher, special education supervisor, Instructional Support specialist and IEP specialist. A retirement party was hosted by her family and friends on Oct. 6 at Juliano's Catering, New Rochelle.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Compiled by
Anne Silverstein

School Leader Receives National Award



■ Principal Cheryl Quatrano-Hatzidimitriou, with her plaque, is flanked by education researchers Dr. Joseph Renzulli and Dr. Sally Reis, who nominated her for the award.

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) awarded Cheryl Quatrano-Hatzidimitriou the 2011 NAGC/Ball State Administrator Award on Nov. 3 in New Orleans at the NAGC's national conference. Ms. Quatrano-Hatzidimitriou is the founding Principal of the BELL Academy, MS 294, Bayside.

Prior to her appointment as Principal in 2007, she was the Regional Director of Gifted and Talented Programs (Region 4) and oversaw setting up more than 40 school enrichment programs. She also sat on a city committee that examined and created policy for the NYC Gifted and Talented Program, known informally as the Gifted Think Tank.

Three CSA Members Saluted for Education Contributions

La Universidad Pro Educacion y Cultura honored three CSA members during the 19th Annual Dominican Week at CCNY/CUNY in October.

La Universidad, a private university in Santo Domingo, honored Principal Henry Rubio, Principal Angela Rodriguez and Assistant Principal Marybelle Ferreira during an Oct. 19 ceremony. US Ambassador to the Dominican Republic Raul Yzaguirre addressed the audience and spoke about the struggling education system in the

Dominican Republic, which, he said, provides only 2.5 hours of school a day to its children. But, he said, the country has the desire and the will to build a better future.

Mr. Rubio is the Principal of Phillip A. Randolph High School, Manhattan. Ms. Rodriguez is the Principal of PS 115, Manhattan. Dr. Ferreira is an Assistant Principal at PS 85, Bronx. A fourth educator was also honored: Dr. Fenix Arias, the Director of Assessment and Testing at York College/CUNY.

Nominations Sought for Awards and Scholarships

ABENY's next meeting, the annual holiday celebration, is at 3 p.m. on Dec. 18 at the Bedford YMCA, 1121 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn. For information, contact President-Elect L. Victor Millsap at mllspvct@aol.com.

In other news, ABENY is inviting NYC public school students, grades 2-10, to participate in its annual Black History Month Essay Contest. The theme: Peoples of African Descent – Global Influences and Traditions. The deadline for submissions is Jan. 9, 2012. ABENY will honor winners at a Feb. 4 reception at the Brooklyn Heights Cadman

Plaza Library. The guest speaker will be Deputy Chancellor Dorita Gibson.

ABENY will also be accepting nominations for its Human Services Awards. High School Principals are invited to nominate a student who has performed outstanding service by March 30, 2012. NYC public high school students are also invited to apply for ABENY's college scholarship. The deadline is April 27, 2012.

For information about the contest, awards or scholarships, call Dr. Sheilah Bobo at (917) 412-9099 or email her at sbobo@schools.nyc.gov.

Queens Organization Honors Six Including CSA's Gomez-Palacio

BY CSA STAFF

CSA Executive Director of Operations Anita Gomez-Palacio was among six honorees at ANIBIC's 49th Annual Autumn Dinner Dance on Oct. 23. The dinner was held at Russo's on the Bay in Howard Beach.

In addition to Ms. Gomez-Palacio, the Association for Neurologically Impaired Brain Injured Children honored Queens Borough President Helen Marshall; NYS Regents

Chancellor Merryl H. Tisch; Community National Bank CEO Stuart Lubow; ANIBIC Assistant Director of Residential Services Jacqueline Wynn; and Frederic Rossi, a recipient of ANIBIC services for nearly 20 years, who received the ANIBIC Program Award for Outstanding Improvement. Former CSA President Jill Levy was a past President of ANIBIC and has been a major supporter of the organization, with her husband, for many years.



BRETT KALINSKY

■ From left, standing: Kathleen Leonard, Mildred Boyce, CSA President Ernest Logan, Anita Gomez-Palacio, Richard Oppenheimer, Myrna Walters and Mark Brodsky. From left, seated: Juanita Bass, Rosalie David, Mary Aloisio, Thelma Peeples and Jermaine Garden

CSA's John Khani: A King of Queens

CSA's John Khani, Assistant Director of Political Affairs, was among dozens honored for their contributions to the borough of Queens as "Kings of Queens" by the Queens Courier during the media outlet's Fourth Annual Kings of Queens Award and Networking Event on Nov. 3 at Terrace on the Park, Flushing. City Comptroller John Liu was named "Man of the Year," and Matilda Cuomo was named "Woman of the Year." More than 450 people gathered at what The Queens Courier called "one of the largest networking events in the borough."



QUEENS COURIER

■ QUEENS LUMINARIES: From left, former Queens Borough President Claire Shulman, Matilda Cuomo, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, CSA's John Khani and City Comptroller John Liu.

CSA Sponsors 7th Annual Teaching and Learning Celebration

Don't miss Thirteen/WNET and WLIW21's premier professional development conference at the Hilton NY, March 16-17

Early Bird Registration Deadline Dec. 16
\$175 per day or \$300 for both days
(A savings of \$50 on the one-day ticket and \$75 on the two-day ticket.)

ONLINE REGISTRATION web1.accureg.com/ctl12_prod/webmain/Info.asp

RETIREE Chapter

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Neil Lefkowitz

Hacking Away at Nation's Future



We believe that education is the great equalizer in our society.

Last month, I attended an Arizona Regional Unit membership meeting chaired by Maishe Levitan. It was a pleasure to see my friends and colleagues again, and I was grateful for the opportunity to address their concerns and update them on CSA activities.

During the meeting, several members voiced concerns about Mayor Bloomberg's demand that municipal workers and retirees pay part of the cost for our basic health care insurance. I reassured them that, at this time, the Municipal Labor Committee has no intentions of agreeing to the Mayor's demand, there are no discussions at this time regarding this issue, and it is CSA's policy that we will not give back the gains we made over the years. *(In fact, quite the opposite: The Retiree Chapter will increase eyeglass and hearing aid benefits beginning Jan. 1! We'll tell you about this in the January issue of the CSA News.)*

Although we are retired, we remain concerned about the education of NYC's children. Our Chapter's members, when they're together, discuss Medicare, health insurance and the rising cost of prescription drugs. But they also discuss whether the constant testing of children will actually improve the quality of education.

Our overwhelming sense is one of doubt.

We are also concerned about the drastic cuts states are making to education budgets. Certainly, watching the axe repeatedly fall raises serious questions about how much we, as a nation, value public education.

We retired educators believe that public education is the great equalizer in American society. Every study shows that the higher one's level of education, the higher one's future social standing and income. Every study also shows that the earlier children begin their educations, the more likely they are to succeed. Conversely, the earlier children begin their formal educations, the less money we are likely to spend on prisons.

The nation is failing public school students throughout their years of school, but especially when it come to early childhood education. *New York Times'* columnist Nicholas Kristof recently pointed out that the United States' failure to properly fund early childhood education is one of the major causes of economic inequality in this country. As a nation, we invest less in early childhood education than most western nations and Japan.

Many labor leaders have thanked Occupy Wall Street protestors across the nation for bringing to the forefront the issue of economic inequity – it is an issue the labor movement has tried for years to get some traction on to no avail. Whether you agree with the protestors' tactics, I am sure that each and every one of you agrees that we have a fundamental problem in our nation when the chasm between the haves and have-nots grows wider every year.

Not to end on a negative note as we say goodbye to 2011, on behalf of our Chapter's officers and Executive Board, I wish you and your family happy holidays and a healthy New Year.

AFSA Goal: Organize Retirees Nationwide

The American Federation of School Administrators, AFL-CIO, wants its locals to organize retirees as well as improve services among those that already have retiree groups. AFSA's leadership asked Legislative

Liaison Dee-Dee Goidel and Outreach Coordinator Felice Hannah to present at AFSA's 2011 Regional Leadership Conference in San Francisco, Oct. 28-29. Below are their reports.

Coast to Coast, Retirees Must Coalesce

BY DEE-DEE GOIDEL

My workshop was on how to involve retirees in a union's political life. The importance of local units working with a central retiree group cannot be overstated; recruiting leaders for these groups is equally important. The first step, however, must be to establish a steering committee with clear goals.

At CSA, I explained, Regional Units are organized for local political action and networking. We provide an avenue for continued activity as well as validate a retiree's value to the organization.

I opened my remarks with a brief overview of landmark federal and state laws passed as a direct result of union's efforts, even though sometimes it's two steps forward and one step back. (Jack Zuckerman, AFSA's historian, was unable to attend, so I felt it would be a fitting tribute to his work to begin in this manner.)

In 1910, for example, NYS adopted a worker's compensation law, among the first state's to pass such legislation. Unfortunately, the following year, the NY Court of Appeals ruled the law unconstitutional. The day after this decision, on March 25, 146 workers were killed in the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire and their families had to battle in court to receive compensation. The unions and the public



MICHAEL MUSTACCHI

Dee-Dee Goidel, right, speaks with workshop participants after her presentation.

responded with outrage; public safety laws followed, and the state also passed another compensation law in 1913 that could withstand judicial review.

Other major milestones: 1935 – Congress passes the National Labor Relations Act and Social Security; 1954 – the federal government adds disability benefits; 1961 – the creation of Medicare.

My point: We must remind the public, especially in today's climate, that these laws – enjoyed by all our citizens – were passed in large part because of the efforts of unions.

Locals Aim to Expand Outreach Services

BY FELICE HANNAH

Retirees in Action, my workshop, included a discussion of the benefits of an Outreach Program, successful strategies in implementing such a program, changes to Medicare in 2012, a review of the Affordable Care Act and implementing SMP strategies. *(Editor's Note: The Senior Medicare Patrol, a volunteer organization, educates consumers about Medicare and how to identify errors, fraud, waste and abuse.)*

I emphasized that the primary benefit of an Outreach Program is to provide services to retirees and their spouses. These services might include one-on-one consultations or referrals to Medicare, Social Security and/or a local office for the aging. I also emphasized that developing contacts and maintaining a good working relationship with agency representatives is essential in the provision of services and keeping current on information.

Mark Manfredi, with the US Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, also spoke at the workshop about Medicare services and Social Security in 2012 and beyond.

The workshop already has seen results: Jennie A. Horn, President of the retiree group with United Administrators of San Francisco (UASF, AFSA, Local 3), met Mr. Manfredi and



Felice Hannah with Mark Manfredi.

will work with him in the future. (Her local has an active social network, but among her goals is to provide more services to her members.)

Pat Aramendia, Executive Director, UASF, also spoke to Mr. Manfredi and me about some of the problems UASF retiree members experience when they become Medicare eligible. Mr. Manfredi gave Ms. Aramendia a Social Security contact to answer questions.

Representatives from other AFSA locals also spoke to CSA President Ernest Logan about assistance in developing outreach programs.

New Offerings for Education and Culture Program

BY MICHAEL EBENSTEIN

The Educational Cultural Program will offer a four-day, three-night bus trip to Ocean City, MD. The Educational Cultural Program is working with Prime Time Travel to offer this trip May 14 to 17, 2012. The cost is \$499 per person for double occupancy. Single supplement will be \$109.

The package includes: three nights lodging at Castle in The Sand Hotel; three breakfasts; three dinners; tour of Assateague Island; a visit to the Ocean City boardwalk; a boat ride from Fisherman's Wharf; a tour of Nassau Valley Winery; a visit to Victorian Cape May including the Cape May-Lewes Ferry; and two evenings of entertainment, including the OC Jamboree. All taxes and gratuities included in the price.

A deposit for the trip is \$250. All registration is through Prime Time Travel at (631) 286-7329, x136; ask for Barbara Eisenstein. Call Prime Time Travel for further details or Michael Ebenstein at the CSA. (*The CSA website in the Retiree Chapter section has the full flyer and details, www.csa-nyc.org.*)



■ The Ocean City boardwalk, August 2009.

Starting this winter, the Educational Cultural program will begin its inter-session program, offering two events, one in January and one in February.

1) On Jan. 23, from 10:30 a.m. to noon, we'll offer a financial seminar, led by financial planner Jennifer Lee, on Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) at union headquarters, 16 Court St., Brooklyn. Limit: 40 people.

2) On Feb. 7, we'll be taking a docent-led tour of Channel 13's Manhattan offices and studios. The hour-long tour begins at 11 a.m. Limit: 14 people.

Both events have a \$5 fee. **Registration opens online on Dec. 19, first-come, first-served.** If the event is full, the online system notifies you immediately and tells you that you are on a wait list. Please note: We will not accept mail-in registration for these two events.

The link to register will be available on Dec. 19 on the CSA website, Retiree Chapter section, Upcoming Events Page. (<http://bit.ly/u5bMZr>) Questions? Please call Michael Ebenstein at (718) 625-3434.

Bold Faces

Members in the News

Each month we highlight the interesting things retirees are doing. Are you running in a marathon? Volunteering at an animal shelter? Sailing around the world? Email your information to Anne Silverstein at anne@csa-nyc.org. Keep it brief, please!

Dorothy Weber Schaffner celebrated her 100th birthday with a party on Sept. 4 surrounded by her family and friends.



■ Dorothy Schaffner

The party was given by her daughter, Amy, and son-in-law, Lewis, at the West End Temple in Neponsit, NY. The former Supervisor of Guidance Counselors

trained numerous counselors and related personnel during the supervisory portion of her 30 years in the NYC public school system. She retired from District 17 in June 1977.

Since retiring in 2001 as Principal of John F. Kennedy HS, **Gino Silvestri** has volunteered for a non-profit tutoring organization called One-2-One Learning in Upper Nyack, NY. More than 60 volunteers assist recent immigrants to learn English, develop job skills and prepare

for the GED and the naturalization exam. The evening program serves more than 250 teenagers and adults. Mr. Silvestri teaches computer skills to beginners. He is a member of the Board of Directors and the Finance Director and instrumental in fundraising. (*Editor's Note: Mr. Silvestri also told CSA about a fundraising method that was new to us. Computer users can download a link onto their desktops from a website called GoodSearch. Everytime you browse the Internet, funds are generated for your charity/organization of choice. To learn more visit www.goodsearch.com.*)

Retired Principal **Bruce Levenberg**, Retired Early Childhood Director **Yvonne Warren** and retired Assistant Principal **Robert Golomb** have founded and now run JBB Test Prep, a service that prepares current and prospective teachers for the Students With Disabilities and the Multi-Subject licensing examinations.

Murray Bromberg, the former Principal of Andrew Jackson High School and the founding Director of CSA's Supercenter, is the editor of the *Chronicle*, the newspaper of the Professionals and Executives In Retirement group at Hofstra University. His latest publication is the sixth edition of *504 Absolutely Essential Words*, a book that has sold more than 1 million copies, cowritten by CSA retired members **Julius Liebb** and **Arthur Traiger**.

RC Regional Units

BROOKLYN

At our Dec. 7 meeting at St. Francis College, 180 Remsen St, we'll formally acknowledge those members who served during WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War.

—RON JONES



■ Ron Jones, the leader of the Brooklyn Regional Unit, spoke at the Oct. 25 meeting at St. Francis College.

YURIDIA PEÑA

SUNCOAST

The first of our two annual meetings is at the Oriental Buffet in Sarasota at noon, on Jan. 10, 2012. Bring your appetites and questions. Great, informative speakers and wide variety of fresh food. Specific information should have been mailed to members earlier this month. Questions? Call me at (941) 383-0408.

—MICHAEL NEMOYNTIN

STATEN ISLAND

We are looking forward to our Gala Holiday Party at the Hilton Garden Inn Dec. 5, at noon. There will be our usual bell-ringing entertainment and secret Santa gifts. You may also wish to bring an unwrapped child's toy that will be distributed by the US Marines on Staten Island. The cost is \$35 per person. Hope to see you there.

—AL NILSEN

QUEENS

On Dec. 5, we held our annual meeting for newly retired CSA members at North Shore Towers. Our purpose was to inform these recent in-service members of the importance of becoming a member of a Regional Unit in addition to joining the CSA Retiree Chapter. For information about our activities, email me at: stermanlen@aol.com.

—LEONARD B. STERMAN

PALM BEACH

We're delighted to welcome Welfare Fund Administrator Douglas V. Hathaway and RC Chair Neil Lefkowitz on Jan. 9, 2012 for our first general membership meeting of the year. On Feb. 10, we'll hold our second annual meeting followed by our annual gala luncheon at Benvenuto's Catering. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. and the luncheon is set for noon. On Feb. 29, in conjunction with the CSA Retiree Chapter and Welfare Fund, we'll hold a health fair that's open to all our Florida retirees. Questions? Contact me at rosecb70@aol.com.

—ROSE BENNET

NEW JERSEY

Our Oct. 26 "bagel meeting" was well attended. After the general meeting, Sherri Tabachnick, outreach chair, and Douglas Hathaway, CSA Welfare Fund Administrator, provided information to retirees, age 65 or younger, about health benefits, Social Security and Medicare. In other business, Robin Small, cultural chair, arranged a successful trip on Nov. 2 to Drumthwacket, (yes, that is the name!) the NJ governor's mansion. To become active in our Unit, email me at stephenporter@yahoo.com or call (732) 431-1081.

—STEVE PORTER

LOWER HUDSON VALLEY

Our newsletter will be mailed in January and will include a membership form for current (and future!) members to fill out and return. The issue will also include dates for our May and June meetings as well as the names of guest speakers. Happy Holidays!

JOHN GENTILE

John Liu at Manhattan Meeting



YURIDIA PEÑA

■ Above, RC Director Mark Brodsky, left, introduces City Comptroller John Liu at the Manhattan Regional Unit's membership meeting on Oct. 28 at Manhattan Comprehensive Night and Day School. Mr. Liu spoke about proposed administrative changes that would consolidate some of the functions of the city's five pension systems; he also spoke about today's economic climate and acknowledged retirees' concerns. Before Mr. Liu spoke, Assistant RC Treasurer Donald Juliano, left, spoke about required minimum distribution rules and the differences between a traditional IRA and the TRS TDA.





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Borough Briefs / In The Schools

Compiled
by Yuridia Peña

Citywide

Science/Math Teaching Honored

The Fund for the City of New York hosted an awards ceremony this fall at Cooper Union in Manhattan to celebrate the third annual Sloan Awards for Excellence in Teaching Science. Seven teachers in all were honored from Curtis High School, Staten Island; the High School for Environmental Studies, Manhattan; Hunter College High School, Manhattan; Stuyvesant High School, Manhattan; Sheepshead Bay High School, Brooklyn; Midwood High School, Brooklyn; and Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School, Bronx. Each teacher received \$5,000 and the school's science or mathematics department received \$2,500.

Queens (DIST. 24-30)

Scholars' Academy and Healthy Choices

The Scholars' Academy celebrated technology with a special assembly – and a virtual ribbon-cutting – on Nov. 15 that culminated in the school giving sixth graders Kindles and seventh graders iPads. The school band, step-team and cheerleading squad performed, and students sang a song in Latin and recited poems. The assembly was broadcast live through online streaming.

Parents and guardians of students at PS 97 are learning to maintain a healthy lifestyle for their families through free



■ PS 97 students and parents celebrate their healthy lifestyles. See story above under Queens.

Magical Visit to Land of PS 104



■ CSA President Ernest Logan, center, is surrounded by the denizens of Oz, aka, the staff at PS 104, Queens, during the school's annual "Favorite Book-Character Day."

CSA President Ernest Logan visited PS 104, D-27, Queens for the school's annual literacy celebration on Oct. 31. Staff and children dressed up as a favorite character from a book. Said Principal Katie Grady in a note to Mr. Logan after his visit: "It was

great having you here today. We really enjoyed sharing our fun and school spirit with you. Come back anytime because the door is always open. Thank you also for doing all you do for those of us in the field. You make a difference in our lives."

Cornell University workshops. Second-grade students completed a six-week course on health and nutrition facilitated by Ana Claussell, a Cornell community educator. Students learned about the value of healthy foods and exercise. Ms. Claussell also led an eight-week course for parents. She reviewed the food pyramid and taught parents how to shop for healthier meals. A Nov. 22 ceremony acknowledged all the participants work and allowed them to share their favorite recipes.



■ PS 206 students hover around Chantae Wright, US Air Force, for autographs. See story under Brooklyn.

To submit an item to Borough Briefs, contact Yuridia Peña at yuridia@csa-nyc.org or call her at (718)852-3000 x 1042.

Manhattan (DIST. 1-6)

Caring for Animals, Learning to Lead

Students from the all-girls NYC Lab Middle School for Collaborative Studies are helping animals while learning leadership skills through an afterschool program created by Unleashed. Unleashed is an organization that empowers girls using animal welfare as a training ground. The program integrates social justice and humane education curriculum. Girls also rescue puppies and manage adoption events on the weekends. The program aims to reduce bullying and build a "sisterhood" among the girls.

Brooklyn (DIST. 13-23, 32)

Assembly Honors Veterans

The PS 206 community honored the men and women of the armed forces with a Veterans Day assembly. Hosted by Assistant Principal Randy Nelson, the program included poetry readings and a PowerPoint presentation by students. The school chorus concluded with performances of Katy Perry's Firework and Stevie Wonder's I Just Called to Say I Love You. Students presented their guests – veterans of several wars – with hand-made thank you cards. Veterans and active military personnel stayed after the assembly to sign autographs for students.