

# SFTR NEWSBEAT

Sewanhaka Federation of Teachers Retired

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## From Our Rep: By Anna Zurawinsky

### HUMAN DIGNITY

Congrats and best wishes to our new retirees, may you continue to be an advocate for public education and unions. Hopefully, everyone who reads this article will realize that the most important reason for being a retired union member is legislation information and political action. It would be a big mistake to feel completely secure about the retirement benefits you earned through your years of service. Today's economic reality and anti-public teachers attitude demands that you defend your pension and health care insurance against serious threats to scale back or eliminate them. In today's political environment, union rights long thought safe such as guaranteed defined pension, employer contribution to health care and collective bargaining are targeted for so called reform. A most vivid example is Governor Cuomo's relentless drive to dismantle public employees' pension and employer provided health care insurance.

We must also heed the call to respect human dignity and the inclusion of equality by not supporting those who accept greed and insensitivity to the pain of others as the norm in our society. Indeed union activism goes beyond the boundaries of our inner circle, it must expand to all of our society. Remember as a union member we strive to raise the quality of life for all people and that money is to be used to serve all people and not as a symbol of power.

***Never forget that the battle to preserve our quality of life continues for as long as we live.***

## A NEW YEAR AND LOOK FOR TARGET READING, 2015-2016

By Julia O’Keeffe

This year Target Reading will be reading at two elementary schools, not three, and do so once a month. There are a number of reasons for the change:

- It was becoming difficult to find enough volunteers to service Washington Street School, Polk Street School, and Garden City Park Elementary School
- Most of those who did volunteer were reading three times a month, often on dates close to holidays
- Fifteen readers would have been ideal; we were lucky to get five

Since Tom Riccobono, AP at Polk Street, was “promoted” to principal at John Street School, It would have been difficult for him to coordinate the program while getting adjusted to new responsibilities. We congratulate him and thank him for his past help; and we hope we’ll be back on track next year. Since our volunteers are getting older, and I know from experience that doctors’ appointments fill up my calendar. So I made the decision to read at one school a month, needing only five volunteers to make the program (now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year) work.

### TARGET READING SCHEDULE 2015-2016

<b>GARDEN CITY PARK 1:20 PM</b>			
<b>Sept 29, 2015</b>	<b>Nov 10, 2015</b>	<b>Dec 21, 2015</b>	<b>June 7, 2016</b>
<b>WASHINGTON STREET SCHOOL 2:00 PM</b>			
<b>Oct 23, 2015</b>	<b>Jan 12, 2016</b>	<b>March 8, 2016</b>	<b>March 30, 2016</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 5 *</b>

\*(Grade 5, Read Across America and Dr. Seuss).

***If you are interested:***

***please call Julia O’Keeffe at 718-465-0228. I hope you all had a great summer; and I hope you, like me, look forward to seeing the smiling faces of those youngsters who love when we read to them.***

## HAVEN (RUTH GRUBER)

By Anna Zurawinsky

The SFTR is very fortunate to have as a member an in-house Professor of Cultural Affairs, **Cynthia Woodhouse**. Cynthia, an H Frank Carey retiree for several years has conducted presentations at our meetings ranging from Empire State Building construction, Rafting on the Colorado River, medieval art displays to the latest this past spring *The Haven*.

In Cynthia's informative and visual presentation we learned about Ruth Gruber and the only Jewish refugee camp in the USA during World War II. The camp was right near us in Oswego New York. She told the dramatic story of how a thousand World War II refugees came to the NY camp and also how they fared in Oswego, NY.

As always, the group was delighted to hear and see Cynthia's presentation. We hope to schedule another presentation this year. I recommend that you attend our meeting when Cynthia honors us with another informative talk. Our members always make sure that our meetings are not only informative but also a way to connect with other retirees.

*Many thanks to Cynthia Woodhouse for her service to our retirees*

### OUR AWARD WINNING MEMBERS

**Rosalia Gioia**, former teacher at New Hyde Park Memorial HS, is being honored in the first class of the **Nassau County High School Athletic Hall of Fame**, for her longevity as a rated official. Ro has officiated volleyball, basketball, softball, field hockey, and lacrosse for over 60 years. In addition, she has been an active participant in the preparation of prospective officials.

*What an amazing woman!*

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**Frank McHugh and Karla Adasse** will both be receiving awards from NYSUT for their work on Newsbeat. Frank will be recognized for the cover story he wrote entitled **How Times Have Changed**. Karla will receive an award for her work as editor of SFTR's Newsbeat. Karla has been the editor for our newsletter for 15 years and is working to redesign the format of the newsletter.

**Barbara Keilty, NYSUT Retiree Council 18 president, will present the awards at our fall luncheon on October 20th.**

## **VOLUNTEER IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Mary De George-Hampton

By Anna Zurawinsky

Mary is remembered by us all as a Home Economics Teacher in our District. Upon moving to Florida in 2007 Mary established the Seminole Discussion Group on recycling in the city of Seminole Florida. She recently established a new community group, called ***Preserve Our Environment***. Mary volunteered to teach first grade children about Florida agriculture in the classroom day which is held on the last day of February. On that day she taught a grand total of 178 children. Mary also has been writing a green column for the ***Northeast Journal of St. Pete*** for three years.

***Kudos to our SFTR member Mary De George-Hampton.***

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## **BON VOYAGE**

By Barbara Simonetti

On June 9, 2015 the SFTR cruised the Great South Bay, on the Lauren Kristie, a paddle boat from the Bayshore Marina. Our SFTR captain and organizer was Ellen Forman.

The day started with the likelihood of rain, but as the cruise progressed the sunshine appeared. It was if Ellen channeled for sun and got her way. As the boat paddled towards Fire Island the Robert Moses Bridge and the Lighthouse were some of the sights viewed. Accompanying the ride was an Italian buffet luncheon which was enjoyed by all aboard.



Relaxation and good company among our union members made this event a memorable 2015 experience.

***Thanks for making it possible Ellen!***

## VOTE COPE

By Maddy Maffetore

We must safeguard the earned benefits that provide us with a good middle class quality of life. NYSUT needs more political strength to combat attacks on our Social Security and Medicare on the federal level and our defined pensions on the state level. VOTE COPE dollars are the tools we use to beat back those attacks. Without the tools to defend your retirement security in the present, your future may be compromised..

I thank all of my colleagues who have contributed to VOTE COPE by either pension deduction or check. I'm somewhat distressed that only 39 of our 230 members of SFTR chose to contribute to the vehicle we have in NYSUT. For me, the easiest way to contribute is by pension deduction. I chose the recommended amount of \$5 per month. Can you pledge more or less? YES. Some retirees prefer to donate by yearly checks. This past year the amounts varied from \$10 to \$500. To me, it's not so much how much you give, but the fact that you realize that your contribution demonstrates your understanding of the importance of political action and the vital role it plays in your retirement. This fall, I shall again be soliciting your participation.

***WE NEED VOTE COPE AND VOTE COPE NEEDS US***

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## BREAST CANCER APPEAL

By: Maddy Maffetore



Each year the SFTR participates in the ***Making Strides Against Breast Cancer*** drive by walking at Jones Beach and by making donations to the American Cancer Society. The walk will take place on October 18; if you care to take part in the walk, please email me at < [maddymaff@aol.com](mailto:maddymaff@aol.com) >. If you have lost a loved one to cancer as I have, know someone experiencing this terrible disease, or wish to help fund research in the effort to beat cancer as well as donate money to support cancer victims, please send a check made out to American Cancer Society to:

SFTR  
270 Jericho Tpke.  
Floral Park, N Y 11001 ATTN: Maddy

Several of our members solicit their friends for donations. If you also care to do so, please follow the directions above. It would be wonderful if we exceeded the over \$2000.00 we collected last year. We do this through NYSUT because it is one of its pet projects. Thanks in advance for your generosity.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2015-16

## Communications Group Meetings\*

Tues: 10:00 AM: SFT Office: Sept 29, Nov 10, Dec 15

## NYSUT RC18 Meetings\*

Mon: 10:00 AM: Sept 28, Oct 19, Nov 16, Dec 21

North Bellmore Public Library (Newbridge Road and Bellmore Avenue)

\*All members are welcome

## Target Reading

**Garden City Park School:** 1:20 PM (arrive 1:00PM)

Sept 29, Nov 10, Dec 21, June 7

**Washington Street School:** 2:00

Oct 23 (Kindergarten) , Jan 12 (Grade 1) , March 8 (Grade 2)

March 30 (Grade 5 ) Diffendoofer play

## SFTR Events

### Fall Luncheon

Tuesday October 20, 12:30 PM (Invitation and tear-off below)

RC 18 president Barbara Keilty will be attending

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**Anna Zurawinsky, Maddy Maffetore: SFTR Reps**

**Karla Adasse: Newsbeat Editor**

**Contributors: Leslie Fields, Maddy Maffetore,  
Julia O'Keefe, Barbara Simonetti, Anna Zurawinsky**

**Special thanks to Helen Zurawinsky**

**Letters welcome e-mail: [KarlaFSA@aol.com](mailto:KarlaFSA@aol.com)**

**Log onto: [www.sft-nea.org](http://www.sft-nea.org)**