

SFTR NEWSBEAT

Sewanhaka Federation of Teachers Retired

From Tom Cook:

SFTR Political Action Chair

2016 Where the Candidates Stand on Social Security, Medicare, Health Care, and other issues

“Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road of life is paved with FLAT squirrels who couldn’t make a decision.”

This quote, which appeared on a Facebook meme, serves to remind us that the time is soon coming when we must fulfill our obligations as citizens, and **make a decision**. Remember, not only are we electing a president, but also 34 Senate seats, and all 435 seats in the House of Representatives. It is important to know the views of the presidential candidates. But first, just for fun, go to ontheissues.org. I challenge you to take the **2016 Presidential Vote Match Quiz**. It is a brief exercise I once assigned to my students. You may be as surprised as my students were, to find out which candidates match you!

For what it’s worth, here is some information on candidate positions gleaned from several sources.

Donald Trump’s Stated Positions

➤ “Allow every American to dedicate some portion of their payroll taxes to a personal Social Security account that they could own and invest in stocks and bonds... Privatization would be good for all of us. Directing Social Security funds into personal accounts invested in real assets would swell national

savings, pumping hundreds of billions of dollars into jobs and the economy. These

In This Issue:

- **Focus on Support**
by Anna Zurawinsky
Page 7
- **Retirees Grant Awards to 5 Students**
by Norma Bushing
Page 4
- **Invitation to our Fall Luncheon on October 25**
(Use enclosed tear-off to make reservation)
- **...and much more**

investments would boost national investment, productivity, wages, and future economic growth.”

- “Jim Geraghty noted in National Review ‘Within 24 hours of becoming the presumptive Republican nominee, Donald Trump had reversed his positions on tax increases, paying down the debt, raising the minimum wage, and self-financing his campaign. It was a busy day.’”

Source: *The America We Deserve*, by Donald Trump, p.198-199 & 203, Jul 2, 2000

Source: <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/435096/donald-trump-flip-flops-toward-center>

Trump campaign's response... contains no recommendations that are specific to Social Security, relying on economic growth to boost revenues to Social Security.

The Trump statement to AARP reiterates several well-publicized positions including:

- Tax reform that streamlines tax brackets, removing carve-outs for special interests and eliminating the alternative minimum tax and death tax.
- Reforming corporate taxes, including a reduction in the corporate income tax rate.
- Renegotiating trade agreements.
- Repealing the Dodd-Frank Act and the Affordable Care Act.
- Attacking fraud and waste in the federal government and reducing the size of the federal workforce.
- Reforming immigration policies that will ‘save hundreds of billions of dollars a year in education, health care and public safety costs.’

Trump's website contains no stated positions on Social Security, although Trump has been quoted as opposing any changes to Social Security.

Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-hillary-clinton-and-donald-trump-view-social-security/>

In addition –

- Completely repeal Obamacare.
- Allow individuals to fully deduct health insurance premium payments from their tax returns under the current tax system.
- Allow individuals to use Health Savings Accounts (HSAs).

Source: <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/positions/healthcare-reform>

Special note: Several sites highlight Mike Pence's position:

- “Governor Pence has a long history of fighting to cut and privatize Social Security. In 2005, he was the leader of a group of House Republicans who criticized George W. Bush's Social Security privatization plan for not being extreme enough! He supports raising the retirement age and other cuts to Social Security benefits.

Source: <http://www.socialsecurityworks.org/2016/07/14/statement-on-mike-pences-support-for-social-security-cuts>

Hillary Clinton's Stated Positions

- "Fight any attempts to gamble seniors' retirement security on the stock market through privatization."
- "Oppose reducing annual cost-of-living adjustments."
- "Oppose Republican efforts to raise the retirement age -- an unfair idea that will particularly hurt the seniors who have worked the hardest throughout their lives."
- "Oppose closing the long-term shortfall on the backs of the middle class, whether through benefits cuts or tax increases."
- Expand Social Security for those who need it most and who are treated unfairly by the current system.
- Preserve Social Security for decades to come by asking the wealthiest to contribute more.
- Fight Republican attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act.
- Fight back against Republican plans to privatize or "phase out" Medicare as we know it.
- Cap monthly and annual out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs to save patients with chronic or serious health conditions hundreds or thousands of dollars.
- Require drug companies that benefit from taxpayers' support to invest in research, not marketing or profits.
- Increase competition for prescription drugs, including specialty drugs, to drive down prices and give consumers more choices.
- Allow Americans to import drugs from abroad – with careful protections for safety and quality.

Source: <https://www.hillaryclinton.com/>

Please note that space was limited. A more complete picture of each candidate or party is available in the websites noted below. Make no mistake, it is important to know something about the party platforms. Party platforms reflect the views of the people running for 469 seats in Congress!

Additional Sources:

<http://www.socialsecurityworks.org/2016/07/20/4204/>

<https://www.demconvention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Democratic-Party-Platform-7.21.16>

<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/>

“An election is a bet on the future, not a popularity test of the past.”

~ James Reston

In Unity,
Tom Cook

Retirees Award Grants to Five Students

By Norma Bushing

The Sewahaka Federation of Teacher Retirees has established a grant for students who have demonstrated a marked increase in academic achievement and motivation over the last few years of high school. Initiated in 2015, the goal of the grant is to acknowledge these students and encourage them to keep the momentum going as they continue on with their studies. In thanking us one recipient wrote: *“I am grateful to everyone for honoring me with this award. I am more encouraged because of your contribution.”*

Each school in the district selects a school winner. The winners are then interviewed by the Grant Committee and a district winner is selected. School winners receive \$100 and the district winner receives \$500. All receive a plaque to commemorate the award. Awards are presented at the home school’s Senior Awards Assembly. This year’s winners are: **Angie Moise** (Elmont), **Solangel Pena-Rivero** (H .Frank Carey High School), **Jenny Anna Jose** (New Hyde Park Memorial High School), **Daniel Delahoz** (Sewanhaka High School) and the district winner is **Vivika Persaud** (Floral Park Memorial High School). Vivika’s picture is below.

The Grant Committee: Norma Busching, Marie Cannava, Frank McHugh, Joan Natalie, Glenn Nielsen and Sophia Suzzi Valli, have been very impressed by the quality of the candidates. They are poised, mature and have all overcome significant obstacles. When asked what brought about the change, most often it was the influence of a teacher, guidance counselor, principal or relative.



In order to finance future grants, we are asking you to consider sending in a donation along with your membership dues in the form of a separate check made out to SFT. Please write “grant” in the memo section. In addition, a fund has been set up to memorialize colleagues who have passed away. Special forms are available in the union office and acknowledgements will be sent to the family. You may also wish to mark a special occasion such as a birthday.

What better way to help finance our future grants and/or to honor someone who has been devoted to the education of the students in the Sewanhaka District!

Why Support Vote Cope

By Maddy Maffetore

If you are not thrilled with either of the 2 presidential candidates, realize that a lot is at stake, and vote to maintain the security of your quality of life:

- Vote for Supreme Court decisions that won't harm you
- Vote to strengthen Social Security, not to privatize it
- Vote against Medicare becoming a voucher program

Question: Why should we be concerned about losing our earned benefits?

Answer: Corporate interests!

Corporate interests lobby against our retirees and other public employee retirees to destroy and diminish our benefits, namely pensions, Social Security, and Medicare. WHY? That puts the burden of increased costs onto seniors while lining the pockets of the wealthy few. Union dues, by law, are not legally permitted to be used for political action purposes such as for lobbying and for supporting legislators who vote our agenda. We have no way to fight back other than with the dollars we get from VOTE COPE. Contributions to VOTE COPE don't compare to the private sector money used against us so it's important for you to support VOTE COPE. The easiest way is to have a monthly deduction taken from your pension (as I do) or you may write a check each year to VOTE COPE for the amount you wish to contribute. Either way, use the enclosed form.

***Vote wisely to secure your quality of life!
Please support VOTE COPE to help do it!***

SFT Retirement Party

May 25 2016

By Maddy Maffetore

Several retirees attended the SFT Retirement Party not only to honor new retirees, but also to reunite with fellow retirees... that's always fun. We additionally had occasion to present a gift to our outgoing President, Ro Mamo. We gave her a silver Monarch butterfly pendant. Ro loves investigating the migration and reproduction of butterflies and even took her Easter vacation in Mexico to view them and bring back a plethora of pictures. Ro is anticipating her new challenges which will include teaching AP classes.

Joe Grossi, our new President spoke well of his pledge to support retirees and we are looking forward to working with him.

Target Reading's 17th Year By Julia O'Keeffe

This the seventeenth year that the SFTR readers have served the Sewanhaka Community by reading to the students of Washington Street Elementary School and Garden City Park Elementary School. It has been a delightful and rewarding experience for all of those involved. Thanks to all, but there are just too many to name individually. A special thanks goes to **Jeanne Robinson**, who served as co-chair for those seventeen years, and to **Tom Crimmins**, who will carry the torch as of this September.

We are always looking for readers and encourage former and new members to join us this year (2016-17). Please mark your calendars with the dates of our upcoming schedule as shown on our calendar which is located on the back page.

Memorial Grant Donations for SFTR By Julia O'Keeffe

Each year the SFTR awards five grants to students from each of the five high schools within the Sewanhaka District. The monetary award and plaque go to a student who has greatly improved throughout his/her years and who would not otherwise be recognized for his/her efforts. In order to increase the grant amount, **perhaps you would consider making a memorial donation to the SFT Grant Fund.**

Oftentimes we run out of ideas on how to honor a deceased family member or teaching colleague. Flowers are expensive and, since most funerals are one day, such a waste. A **Memorial Donation** is so much more meaningful. The SFT will send an acknowledgement of your donation to the family.

To make a donation a form is available at the SFT Office. Or you can write a note giving the name of the person honored and the name and address needed for us to send the acknowledgement. Please send your check and note or form to:

*SFT Office 270 Jericho Turnpike, Floral Park, NY 11001
Attention: Anna Zurawinsky
All checks must be made out to the SFT
and under the space for memo, write SFTR Grant Fund*

Is Agreeing to Disagree a Thing of the Past? By Marlene Natale

Over the last 2 decades it has been apparent that opinions of political leaders and politics in general have led to a polarization of ideas. With that, polarization has come a vitriolic discourse which in turn has become dangerous. Dangerous for people and dangerous for our democracy.

College campuses have refused to have conservative political figures and pundits because of their opinions. Of all places, the college experience should have a diversity of opinions so that students can form their own philosophy.

(continued bottom page 7)

Focus On Support

By Anna Zurawinsky

The results of the Presidential election may threaten our retirement security.

The impact of this election if the wrong candidate wins would certainly erode or destroy our pensions, employer provided health care, Social Security and Medicare. Do not heed the cries of those who are emotionally unbalanced and offer opinions not facts. Step back, be aware who supports our interests and quests for financial security.

First and foremost, we are public school educators who earned benefits

that are the basis of our quality of life. Good decisions are made by examining facts and values about ourselves as well as each candidate.

WHO supports: public education, public retirees who receive earned pensions and health care insurances, Social Security, Medicare and unions?

WHO supports: privatization of public education, union busting, erosion of public pensions, elimination of government provided health care, privatization of Social Security and Medicare?

In addition to our interests, ***we must 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 for our society.*** As an educator and union member, we aim to raise the quality of life for all people. **Money** is used to serve all people and not as a symbol of power.

Remember in November that we are public educators who reap the benefits created by our unions and vote accordingly.

Many Thanks Ro !

After 8 years as President of the SFT which includes retirees as members, **Rosanne Mammo** has decided not to run again. Ro took care of many concerns and issues that required input from the District and legal counsel, thus improving the status of retirees. These issues ranged from health insurances, wages, death benefits, the list goes on.

We will miss our SFT President Ro Mammo, KUDOS to Ro from us.

The recently elected SFT President **Joe Grossi** is a former New Hyde Park Building Representative. Congrats and best wishes for a productive future.

(Continued from page 6)

When I was at SUNY New Paltz there was a large anti-Vietnam presence. Yet, there were speakers who were for and against. At this point in time whether you are for or against the Presidential candidates we should all respect the other's opinion. The fact that many are afraid to have bumper stickers or lawn signs of one candidate or the other for fear that their property would be vandalized is not acceptable, not in our democracy.

Agreeing to disagree does not mean, shut up or I'll call you stupid. It means that we have come to an understanding that both sides have an opinion and we will respect that opinion even if we disagree.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2016-2017

Communications Group Meetings*

Tues: 10:00 AM: SFT Office:

September 13, 2016

(October meeting during luncheon)

November 15, 2016

Cynthia Woodhouse will give a presentation on
"The Monarch Butterfly"

NYSUT RC18 Meetings*

Mon: 9:30 AM to Noon

September 19, October 17, November 21, December 19

North Bellmore Public Library

(Newbridge Road and Bellmore Avenue)

*All members are welcome

Target Reading Schedule

Garden City Park: 1:00 PM

September 28, November 22, December 19, June 13

Washington Street School: 2:00 PM

October 26 (Kindergarten)

January 11 (Grade 1)

February 8 (Grade 2)

March or April for (Grade 5 and Dr. Seuss) to be announced

Fall Luncheon

October 25, 2016

Uncle Bacala's

(Invitation and tear-off enclosed)

Anna Zurawinsky and Maddy Maffetore: SFTR Reps

Karla Adasse: Newsbeat Editor

Contributors: Norma Busching, Tom Cook, Maddy Maffetore,

Marlene Natale, Julia O'Keeffe, Anna Zurawinsky

Special thanks to Helen Zurawinsky

Letters welcome e-mail: KarlaFSA@aol.com

Log onto: www.sft-nea.org

