

# IMPACT

The Official Publication of the **W**allkill **T**eachers' **A**ssociation

*Debra Becker, Co-Editor*

*Miguel Rios, Co-Editor*

NYSUT Local # 13-265 AFT Local #3082



## Inside this Issue.....

President's Message	2
Constitutional Convention	3
Wallkill: Making Strides Against Breast Cancer!	4
A Lot at Stake!	6
JGBMS National Junior Honor Society: JDRF Walk!	9
New WTA Members	9
2017—2018 Building Reps	9
NYSUT Member Benefits	10

# **President's Message**     *By, Rich Shands*



Why does it always seem like there is unwarranted drama swirling around our profession? While we are doing our best with limited resources to provide a learning environment that works for all of our students, forces outside of our school buildings continue to threaten our profession and livelihood.

As a timeline here's how the landscape looks:

**November 7, 2017 – Constitutional Convention**

**December 2017 – Ruling on the Janus Case**

**June 2019 – End of Moratorium for grades 3-8 testing being linked to teacher evaluation**

What does all of this mean to us?

A Constitutional Convention threatens our right to unionize and collectively bargain. It threatens public pension protections that guarantee our pensions will be there. Many states have made pension "reforms" that have hurt both active members and retirees. (Remember the Mario Coumo Bridge is still not paid for.) There are many other things that could be at risk here as well. We can't afford to let that happen in New York. **GET OUT AND VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 1!! Tell everyone you know to do the same!**

The Janus case before the Supreme Court will change the playing field for unions. The plaintiff Mark Janus, who is sponsored by an anti-union organization, contends that he should not have to pay any union dues because he does not agree politically with any of his union's positions. He contends that all union activities including negotiations are political, so he should not be responsible for any dues even if he winds up in trouble and requires representation.

The 1977 decision, *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, has been the guiding language regarding unionism. The court made a distinction between two kinds of compelled payments. It said workers need not pay for the political activities of unions, but should pay their fair share of dues for contract related activities.

This is why we have Vote-Cope. Giving money to Vote-Cope is voluntary and covers political activities that are in the best interests of our members livelihoods.

The goal of these anti-union organizations is to have the court overturn *Abood* which would weaken unions significantly. Paying dues would become voluntary. Every year we will have to sign up at least 50% plus one of our membership to have a union. On the Vote-Cope end, we can't even come close to generating money to keep up with our opponents. This will lead to fewer and fewer seats at the table for labor.

The second piece of this decision will decide if unions will have to represent "freeloaders" or people that don't pay voluntary dues but find themselves in trouble and require representation. **THIS IS A BIG DEAL!** We are making plans both locally and statewide when *Abood* is overturned and we need to mobilize to maintain collective bargaining and all our contractual rights. The Supreme Court clearly has the ideological numbers to overturn *Abood*. It is just a matter of time.

Last but not least...APPR! Presently, there is a moratorium in place that protects our 3-8 teachers from being "harmed" on their APPR with regards to student performance on state tests. Although we have been fortunate that few of our teachers have been impacted by state test scores, believe me it still is a concern. That's all I have to say for now. Please get involved however you can. Speak up, speak out! If you want to do more, call me. We can definitely find something for you to do!

In solidarity,

Rich Shands

***Impact* is your newsletter, highlighting our members' activities and contributions to the WCSD and school community: as well as informing the**

## What's All the fuss about?

The upcoming referendum vote on the New York State Constitution seems to be causing quite an uproar lately. If you are involved with any groups that sprouted up since the Women's March in January you have experienced the divisive discussions happening all over the state. If you are involved in any progressive groups that have activated since last November, you are feeling the push and pull of a yes or no vote. If you are involved in conservative or moderate groups, religious groups, environmental groups or many others, you have felt the effects of the debates.

So – what's it all about? This coming November 7<sup>th</sup> when you go out to vote (that is a definite – you will go out to vote), on the back of the ballot are three referendums.

#1 Shall there be a convention to revise the Constitution and amend the same?

#2 The proposed amendment to section 7 of Article 2 of the State Constitution would allow a court to reduce or revoke the pension of a public officer who is convicted of a felony that has a direct and actual relationship to the performance of the public officer's duties. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

#3 The proposed amendment will create a land account with up to 250 acres of forest preserve land eligible for use by towns, villages, and counties that have no viable alternative to using forest preserve land to address specific public health and safety concerns; as a substitute for the land removed from the forest preserve, another 250 acres of land, subject to legislative approval, will be added to the forest preserve. The proposed amendment also will allow bicycle trails and certain public utility lines to be located within the width of highways that traverse the forest preserve while minimizing removal of trees and vegetation. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

Numbers 2 and 3 will be amendments to the constitution if adopted by the NY voters. It is democracy in action. It is how the legislative process works to amend the constitution.

Proposition #1 is the one that is causing all of the uproar. This proposition comes around once every 20 years and New York voters get to decide whether to open up the constitution to make changes to it instead of going through the legislative process.

Before you go and vote, do a little research. Make sure you understand all sides of the issue before you vote. When doing research into the convention one can get mired in the issues, whether social justice, fiscal responsibility, ethics and elections reform, the environment or gun owner rights. The issues are many and the passions are intense. Sometimes it's good just to take a step back and look at the plain facts about the convention:

If adopted, New Yorkers will vote for 204 delegates in 2018, (3 for each district and 15 at large). Think about what else will be up for votes in 2018: the governor, our US congressional representatives, and one US Senate seat. That's a lot to focus on for an election. Now, add onto it a delegate's election. That's a lot of money and time spread very thin.

Each of the delegates will receive a salary of \$79,500 per year. That adds up to \$16.32 million dollars in just delegate salaries alone. That does not take into consideration the salaries of each delegates staff, the cost of renting a venue (or multiple venues since some ideas are to have a traveling road show for the convention), cost of housing, travel, IT and many other things.

The taxpayers will pay the entire bill for the convention, whatever it costs.

As union members there are some important facts to consider when looking at the constitutional convention. Collective bargaining, the right to have a union, our public employee pensions and the Blaine amendment would all be up for grabs if the constitution is opened. You will hear people say that this is fear mongering. It is not – it is fact – those issues are



[NoNewYorkConvention.org](http://NoNewYorkConvention.org)

protected in our constitution. If opened, they could change. Some say that if we run the right delegates, then we could make those protections stronger, not weaker. Past history of conventions shows that the elected delegates have been public officials, not strong labor voices. Some say that the 1938 convention gave us all those protections and they are right. It did. 1938 was also a very different time. No matter what your important issues are, you do have to admit that we live in a very different time than progressive 1938.

If you have issues and rights that are important to you – research those. Find out from all sorts of groups dealing with your issues what they say, what is at stake, what could be gained. Once you have done that, then make your choice on November 7. Whichever way you choose to vote – make it an educated vote. \*

## Walkkill: Making Strides Against Breast Cancer!

The Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk took place on Sunday, October 15, 2017, at Woodbury Commons. This is the twelfth year Walkkill has participated. Donna Otto and Danielle Krebs have been co-chairs at this event. Kristy Bailey and her family (pictured below) participated in this year's walk. \*



# Have you had your financial check-up lately?

## NYSUT Member Benefits launches the new Financial Planning Center!

NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce the launch of our NEW online Financial Planning Center. This enhanced site will assist NYSUT members and their families with making a variety of important financial decisions.

The NYSUT Member Benefits Financial Planning Center provides helpful tools and resources to assist members with

a number of crucial decisions regarding financial wellness and retirement planning.

**This new site includes more than 100 modules on different financial topics along with a financial fitness check-up to see where members stand with their financial knowledge.**

Whether it's planning for retirement, saving for college for your children or considering purchasing a home, the choices we need to make on a regular basis are never easy. If you're already enjoying retirement, you may be dealing with long-term care needs, managing your investments and estate planning.

NYSUT members can get assistance with these questions and more with our NEW Financial Planning Center.



To access the Financial Planning Center (and more than 100 planning modules), visit the NYSUT Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) and click on "Financial Planning Center."

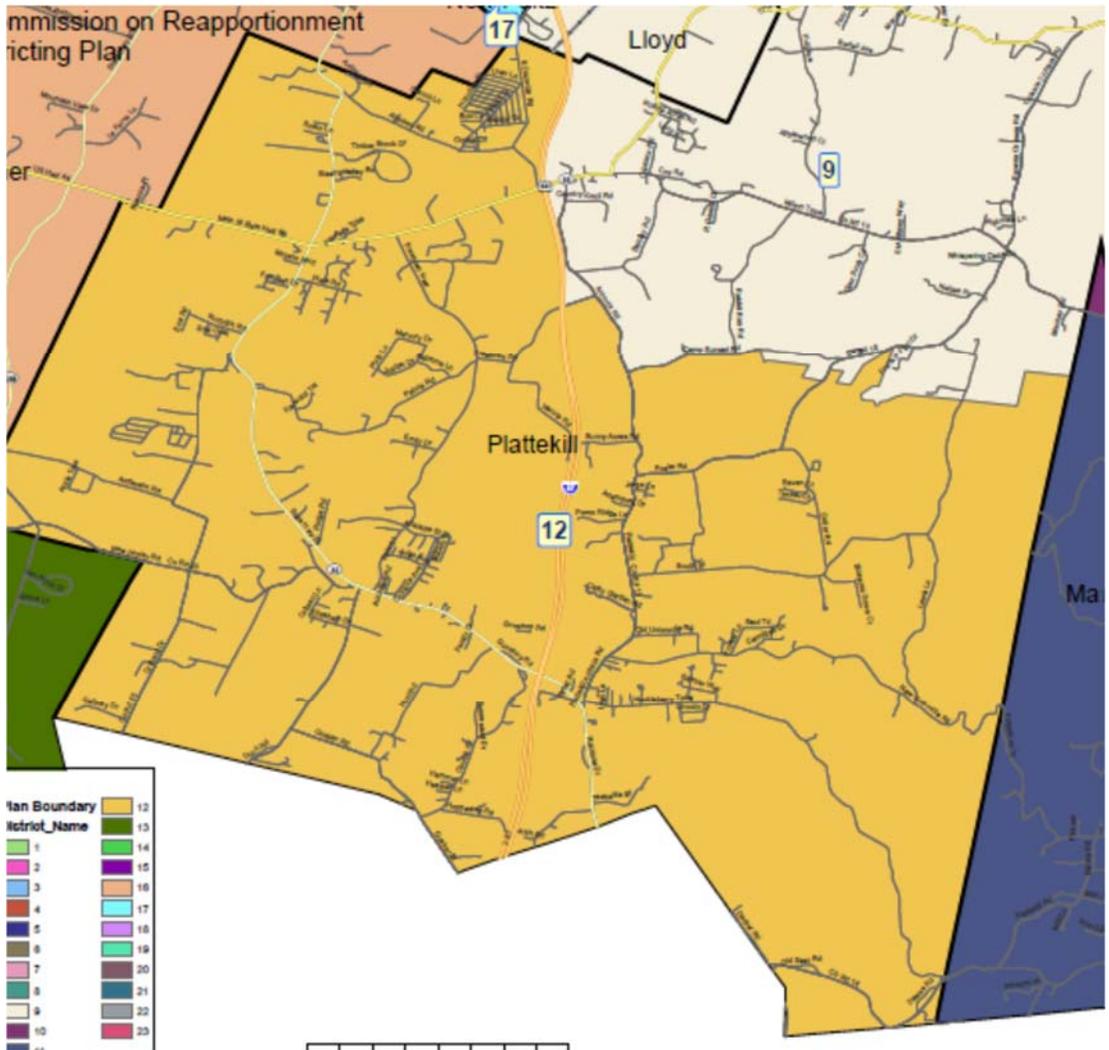
To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

# A Lot at Stake!

November 7th is fast approaching and there is a lot at stake here in our little neck of the woods. There is one local election that could mean a lot for the WTA and our membership.



In Plattekill, a local college professor is running for Ulster County legislature. Glenn Geher is running for UC leg district 12. District 12 is an

oddly cut district (like most of them are) that covers a bit of New Paltz, Gardiner and most of Plattekill.

Glenn lives in New Paltz and his kids go to New Paltz High School. Glenn is a professor and he served for eight years as chair of the Psychology department at SUNY New Paltz. He is a member of UUP and therefore a fellow NYSUT member.

You may have seen him running around Plattekill as he is an avid runner and marathoner. He may know him from being one of the participants and organizers of Plattekill Day or as the Vice President of the Friends of the Plattekill Library. Glenn is also one of the founding members of Move Forward New York, a grassroots organization that started when we lost CD 19 to John Faso (our current US representative). The point is – you know him - he is one of us. He has been a force for change long before he decided to run for Ulster County legislature.

So why consider a vote for Glenn Geher? Here's a couple of important reasons to WTA members:

- He knows the importance of teachers to our future. He is one of us and he writes about it.
  - o <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/darwins-subterranean-world/201704/the-future-nation-depends-teachers>

- He is fiscally cautious. For years, he successfully ran the Psychology department overseeing 35 employees with a 7-figure budget. He has managed to keep all of his full-time employees during a time when SUNY would rather hire adjuncts than keep full time professors.
  - o He will use his past experience and negotiating skills to work with the other legislators to do what is right for Plattekill.
- He has held many leadership positions.
  - o Department **Chair** of Psychology at SUNY New Paltz
  - o **Chair**, President's Task Force on Free Speech at SUNY New Paltz
  - o Acting Department **Chair** of Black Studies\* at SUNY New Paltz
  - o Founding **Director** of Evolutionary Studies at SUNY New Paltz
  - o **Chair**, Academic Affairs Committee at SUNY New Paltz
  - o **Senator**, Academic Senate (Campus-wide) at SUNY New Paltz
  - o **Senator**, Liberal Arts and Sciences Senate at SUNY New Paltz
  - o Founding **President** of the NorthEastern Evolutionary Psychology Society
  - o **Editor**, EvoS Journal
  - o **Associate Editor**, Human Ethology Bulletin
  - o **Vice President** of the Faculty, Western Oregon University
  - o **Vice President** of the Friends of the Plattekill Public Library

He knows how to run committees and meetings efficiently to get the work done in the Ulster County legislature.

- His vision for Plattekill in his own words

The Town of Plattekill was designated as an *economically distressed* municipality in a 2015 federal report. Our town has no main street lined with businesses and many of our residents live in economically difficult conditions. This is not acceptable and we can do better. Ulster County tourism brings in hundreds of millions of dollars a year – yet when people think of the Hudson Valley, Plattekill doesn't typically make the radar. We cannot stand for this. Plattekill is an extraordinary town with great land and an exceptional array of hard-working families looking to make advancements. Years ago, Plattekill was known throughout the tri-state region as the home of the Spanish Alps – a tourist destination for thousands. Through vision, hard work, and collaboration, we will take steps to bring Plattekill into its next Golden Age.

At the county level, we need to ensure that Plattekill is well-represented at the meetings of the Legislature. My attendance record at SUNY New Paltz is well over 99%, and if given the opportunity to serve in this position, you can bet that I will bring that same dedicated work style to our county office in Kingston. The legislature is currently Republican-dominated, while the County of Ulster is disproportionately Democratic. This is a problem. And it is a problem that we are going to fix.



Glenn has asked his opponent for a public forum to discuss their varied views on the future of Plattekill. As of this writing, there has been no reply. Don't the residents of UC District 12 deserve the opportunity to hear both of the candidates speak on what is important to them?

Here is what Glenn would like to discuss:

- How to best revitalize Plattekill's distressed economy.
- The primary needs of the people of Plattekill and how to best address these needs.
- The most effective approaches to lobby for County, State, or Federal monies to initiate programs that would benefit the people of our district.
- The recent Green Party controversy.

Glenn needs our help as the teachers in his district. We can talk to our neighbors if we live in the district about Glenn. We can as the WTA volunteer to canvass for him and make calls to Plattekill residents for him. Please think about donating an hour or two to help get one of our own elected, locally. It is time for us to have a real advocate for our issues in the Ulster County legislature. Glenn is someone who carries our educational issues forward in everything he does. It is time to see some real positive change in Plattekill.

If you would like to meet Glenn or hear him play (yup he plays in a band also), come out to Café 32, next Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> between 6:00 and 8:00 to hear his band "Questionable Authorities" play. This is a fundraiser for Glenn's campaign. You will have an opportunity to sit and chat with Glenn and just have a good time.

Please send me an email if you would like to get involved in Glenn Geher's run for Ulster County legislator for District 12. \*



JGBMS National Junior Honor Society students walked on Saturday, October 14th 2017, to raise money for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. Students fundraised money earlier in the week by distributing muffins and coffee to staff who donated to our cause, participated in Caps for Care, and fundraised on their own collecting about \$1400 to help find a cure for Juvenile Diabetes. Outstanding job! \*

## Welcome New WTA Members!

### Wallkill Senior High School

Annmarie Arsanious - English Teacher  
 Jordan Taylor - Earth Science Teacher  
 Meghan Twomey - English Teacher

### John G. Borden Middle School

Keicha Kempsey - English Teacher

### Leptondale Elementary School

Megan Lesczynski - Elementary Teacher  
 Nicole Passaro - Elementary Teacher

### Ostrander Elementary School

Jennifer Ippolito - ESOL Teacher  
 Amanda Manner - Speech and Language Disb. Teacher

### Plattekill Elementary School

Chelsea Cozzolino

### District-Wide

Alex Danon - School Counselor

## 2017-2018 Building Reps

**High School** - Nick Malgieri, Julie Michella & Ed Stewart

**Middle School** - Kyle Bird & Leeann Pazoga

**Leptondale** - Melissa Beecher & Patty Kartis

**Ostrander** - Kim Jennings & Sue McGowan

**Plattekill** - Barbara Bouck & Annie Saunders

**Special Education** - Margaret Koonz & Tanya Yuro Clark

# NYSUT Member Benefits... more than just insurance!

**As an additional benefit to NYSUT members and their families, your union membership allows you to participate in more than 40 programs & services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits.**

These offerings include crucial products that you may already purchase such as life, auto & homeowners insurance, unbiased financial services and expert legal advice. But your NYSUT membership also allows you to participate in a variety of shopping, travel and personal programs that can help you save on everyday purchases and those special occasions.



**Our endorsed shopping/travel/personal programs offer savings on numerous online purchases, including:**

**Theme Park & Movie Tickets  
Hotel & Vacation Discounts  
Car & Truck Rentals**

**Office Supply Discounts  
Retail Store Discounts  
Concerts & Sporting Events**

**Electronics Discounts  
Ski Tickets  
Car Buying Service**

Participation in Member Benefits-endorsed programs also gives you a trusted advocate ready to assist you with any issues or concerns with any of our programs.



## **Member Appreciation Month coming in February 2018!**

As a show of thanks to the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that comprise this labor union, NYSUT Member Benefits will once again be holding our annual Member Appreciation Month celebration in February 2018.

Special prize drawings will be held each day of the month. To be eligible to win, you must be a member of our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

Sign up any time through the end of February 2018 to be eligible to win... but if you join MAP by January 31, 2018, you'll have the most chances to win!

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit **[memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org)** or call **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.