

The **Communicator** PEF

The Official Publication of the New York State Public Employees Federation, AFL-CIO

November 2016



KUDOS TO PEF'S CONTRACT TEAM!

**Agreement Reached on
Tentative 3-Yr. Contract**

VOTE AND MAIL IN YOUR CONTRACT BALLOT TODAY!

More information on back cover and inside





New PS&T tentative agreement proves: 'Together we really do win!'

By WAYNE SPENCE

When I was sworn into office, I promised to turn the page and change our approach to dealing with the state, and that included how we negotiate with the governor. What matters is action, not words or promises. I believe this three-year tentative contract is proof of our efforts and actions in the last year and a half.

Details of the tentative agreement, FAQs and a Gains/Tradeoff chart can be found in the pages of this *Communicator*, on the PEF website and on PEF social media pages. In the coming weeks, the PEF contract team will travel to every PEF region to meet with you to answer your questions and address any lingering concerns. I encourage you to attend one of the meetings in your region and get the facts straight from the folks who negotiated this contract for the PEF membership.

Let me tell you a little about the work ethic of your contract team, led by Region 11 Coordinator Jemma Marie-Hanson and professional negotiator Mark Richard. Your team was always prepared, smart and unified, showing the governor's team that PEF, as a union, is as professional as the work we do. Your contract team members worked diligently and tirelessly for the past year until they had a contract they were proud to present to the membership for ratification.

I know you join me in thanking them for their great work. And to give you an idea of their dedication, in the last days of negotiations the team worked literally around-the-clock to dot the i's and cross the t's to finalize the provisions, a number



WAYNE SPENCE, PEF PRESIDENT

— Photos by Deborah Miles

of which are very significant:

- 2 percent raises in each of the three years of the contract.
- NO increases in negotiated health care costs. That means NO increases in member co-pays, deductibles and NO other increases in out-of-pocket costs to members for the full three years of the pact. Where many companies are shifting health care costs to their employees, PEF was able to hold strong on negotiated health care costs for you and your family. This was no easy feat, but it was the one thing we heard over and over again from members during the 92 town hall meetings we held around the state last winter – **"Hold the line on health care costs!"** – and we did just that.
- For the first time in PEF history we settled a contract before the other unions negotiating with the state.

• We have a "me-too" clause, which means that if any union negotiating with the state after us gets something better, we also have the ability to gain that benefit in this contract.

I also want to thank you, the members, for your constant support. The governor and his team took notice last spring when you wore your contract support stickers and definitely took notice when 97 percent of the votes on our 2-percent-raise, one-year, retroactive contract were YES. It proved that PEF is indeed alive and well!

Is this a perfect contract? No, because there is no such thing. But, in the end, our goal was to meet your goals: Get as much of a pay increase as we could without having it eaten up by other expenses, and hold the line on health care costs.

We all recognize that there are other issues on the horizon for us, and ratifying this agreement will allow us to move forward together and be better prepared for what lies ahead.

TOGETHER WE WIN!



THE COMMUNICATOR

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Remembering Jeff Satz's legacy

To the Editor:

I am a bit confused about the association of the late Jeff Satz and the "Balkanization of PEF" with the example of the PEF Jewish Committee (referred to by a letter in the October issue of *The Communicator*).

I was pleased to have served six years as the upstate vice president of the PEF Jewish Committee and Jeff was an active member of that committee. In fact, I was pleased to have speakers such as Joe Bress who was then the state director of employee relations, Shelly Silver who was then the speaker of the NYS Assembly, Sol Greenberg who was then the Albany County district attorney, and countless other dignitaries at our monthly meetings.

The PEF Upstate Jewish Committee afforded all PEF members, since we excluded no one, the opportunity to meet many major state policymakers and engage in conversation with the various speakers.

Satz's use of the term "balkanization" was based on the involvement of PEF resources with causes unrelated to the fundamental purpose of PEF as a public-sector union. He advocated strongly that PEF must continually increase its influence selectively to increase our salaries and improve our working conditions.

The most important thing to honor Jeff's legacy is to ensure that all members are protected by aggressive civil service and contract enforcement units within PEF.

HARVEY BRODY
New York City

PEF scholarship means a lot

To the Editor:

Thank you so much for the PEF Scacalossi Scholarship. This scholarship is going to be so helpful for college and I plan to use it for books and other expenses.

My parents have been union members a long time and this scholarship means a lot to them, too.

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To the Editor:

We want to thank both the Scholarship Committee and PEF for all you do for families. As a family with now 76 combined years of public service and with a child just entering college, we have been, and will remain for the long haul, very appreciative of this scholarship. It means a lot for many reasons.

When the letter arrived (announcing the award to our daughter), we were teary eyed, excited and thankful. Our union investing in children and education: It doesn't get much better than that.

JOHN and BONNIE LICHAK
Nassau, NY

Poor medical pay threatens care

To the Editor:

I am a state employee since 1988 and work for the state Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services. I would like the PS&T contract team to review these issues affecting all medical doctors. Since twice in the last 15 years salary grade 8 and grade 38 received an \$800 raise, the doctors' salary has been lagging at least \$20,000 compared to the private sector.

Additionally, physicians in grade 38 are continuously discriminated against for longevity pay, even though we are getting paid less than those in grade 36.

Our neighboring facility, Mid-Hudson Psychiatric Center, has been unable to hire any doctors for the last five years and was about to be closed. They just got permission to increase their salary by \$40,000 for a psychiatrist 2, and by \$20,000 for a psychiatrist 1. Otherwise, they would have had to close the institution. Now they have more than 10 doctors.

This will be the same story for many institutions, unless the doctors' salary is competitive with the private sector.

We have not been able to hire a psychiatrist for the last two years. We just got permission to offer \$200,000 for psychiatrists.

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KATARINA LICHAK
Nassau, NY

PEF should ask why the state is not able to hire new doctors in various places, and PEF should collect data to support updating our salaries to market value. Otherwise, a lot more institutions will be forced to close.

The state does not seem to care about these issues. I hope you guys can review this issue and do the right thing.

If you have any questions, appoint a doctors' team to analyze the problem and then do the right thing, please.

UMAKANTHA SANNESY, MD
Goshen

Recent retirees await raise too

To the Editor:

I retired from state service in January 2016. When might I see the (first) 2 percent raise in my retirement check? I have called all over from retirement, personnel, etc. and can't seem to get an answer from anyone.

I did receive my September retirement check with back withholding upon time of retirement, but nothing that showed a 2 percent (retroactive) raise from April 2015 - January 2016.

Any advice would be deeply appreciated.

PETE SLAVINKSI
Delhi, NY

Editor's Note: PEF was informed the state hopes to complete the recalculations for the one-year 2 percent raise next spring. It is also recalculating sick leave annuity payments. However, PEF has not been told when the state expects to complete and implement the retroactive raises and the recalculations of final average salaries and pensions for those retirees affected by that retroactive pay raise. PEF will continue to monitor this situation. If you are a NYS retiree, you may go to <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/portal.php> for up-to-date information about your pension.

Cover photo by Sherry Halbrook
Cover graphic by Mario Bruni



- OVER THREE DECADES OF COMMITMENT •
- TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PROFESSIONALS •
- SERVING MILLIONS OF NEW YORKERS •

Across-the-board raises, no increase **Landmark contract d**

By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

It was in the very early hours of October 19 when PEF's contract team and the negotiators from the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) called it a morning around 3 a.m., after continuous bargaining for more than 16 hours.

Both sides knew they were close in clinching a deal for a multi-billion dollar contract. Later that day, history was made when PEF and GOER settled on a momentous tentative agreement that provides three years of 2 percent across-the-board raises and no increases or concessions in negotiated health care benefits.

This three-year successor agreement that expires April 1, 2019, succeeds the one-year pact that the PEF membership ratified in June to get a 2 percent retroactive raise.

What makes this tentative pact a breakthrough deal is several things.

In a world of soaring health care costs, PEF members in the PS&T Unit, including those who work at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and the state

Schools for the Deaf and Blind, will have no negotiated increases.



HANSON

increases and additional deductibles to the plan. We had long discussions at small table talks with a few of the members from both teams, and at large table where complete teams discussed and bargained.

"PEF's team pushed back as hard as we could and it was finally decided that the state would not ask for any concessions. PEF's tentative agreement is very unique because it contains absolutely no negotiated health care concessions. Our position at the

"We encountered a lot of sticking points with health care issues," said PEF's contract team chair Jemma Marie-Hanson. "We were not happy with the state's proposal and it was something we were never going to entertain. The GOER team wanted

bargaining table was consistent with the marching orders that our members gave us prior to and throughout negotiations.

"Had we accepted the state's concessions in health care, it would have cost PEF members approximately \$150 million for more than three years. That number was impossible for us to wrap our heads around. It was basic



THE SIGNING

— Photo by Mayra Ithier

in negotiated health care costs deal awaits *your* vote

cost-shifting onto the membership and we pushed back a lot.”

Small table talks

PEF’s team worked diligently throughout the summer and early fall, mainly at small table talks, to persuade the state’s negotiators to forgo their unacceptable proposals. Three members

of PEF’s contract team, along with Marie-Hanson, said these talks helped move the negotiation process forward.

Doug Begent, Stephen Geyer and Karen Spotford agreed the small table meetings provided a platform for a better exchange of reasons and examples, as well as straight-forward dialogue and understanding of each side’s views.

“The atmosphere was professional at all times, and the discussions were open and frank. It was a learning experience and one I leave with in a positive light with knowledge to apply in the future,” Geyer said.

Other gains

Marie-Hanson said there were arduous discussions between both teams concerning the protection of employees, travel reimbursement, professional development, review of personal history folders and the grievance and arbitration procedure.

PEF’s team also negotiated side letters in the tentative contract which will address safe staffing levels.

“GOER will actually be making

recommendations to agencies about safe staffing levels and the issues associated with them,” Marie-Hanson said. “Another side letter will help us develop a process for long-term non-permanent employees if they are let go.”

Workers compensation was another issue that caused the negotiators to butt heads at the bargaining table.

“The state wanted to change how we do things. PEF members would be sent to state doctors and have to abide by whatever decision that physician made. That would be problematic for our members,” Marie-Hanson said. “The state also wanted to change the overtime calculation. That would have affected our members who work overtime. At the end of the day, they would have been paid less. Other unions accepted this in their contracts, but we did not.”

The discussion among negotiators for the geographic differential and relocation pay was another tough fight.

“This was something we could not pull off, although we tried very, very hard. If an adjustment was agreed

(Continued on next page)

CLINCHING THE DEAL – Joseph Bress, the governor’s lead negotiator and PEF President Wayne Spence shake hands after signing a tentative agreement.



— Photos by Jane Briggs





A FINAL LOOK – Joseph Bress and Richard Hall, assistant director of GOER, and PEF President Wayne Spence with PEF's chief negotiator, Mark Richard, sign the tentative agreement.
 — Photos by Jane Briggs

(Continued from previous page)

upon, PEF would have had to give back something significant.

“There is a feeling of sorrow when you leave a proposal on the table. There is true pain when you have to leave something that you know is good,” Marie-Hanson said. “Ultimately, we followed the credo of our president. That was to do the best we can at the table for the greater good of the 54,000 in the PEF membership. We did that by pushing back on health care and getting across-the-board raises.”

PEF President Wayne Spence applauded the work of PEF's team, and its chief negotiator, Mark Richard, who was on loan to PEF from the American Federation of Teachers.

“Mark Richard's reputation for being one of the top negotiators in the country continues with this historic tentative agreement PEF has with the state,” Spence said. “PEF is grateful to him and the AFT for his service to our membership.”

Timeline

PEF's Executive Board voted October 27 to send the tentative agreement for a ratification vote to the members.

Throughout November, PEF's contract team will be meeting with members in all PEF regions to discuss the tentative agreement and answer questions.

A Special Edition of *The Communicator* that contains the full text of the tentative agreement was mailed to PS&T members in early November.

Ballots were mailed to members November 9 and must be returned to the American Arbitration Association (AAA) by close of business December 13. They will be counted the following day.

If you did not receive a ballot or misplaced it, call the AAA at 800-529-5218 for a replacement ballot. See following pages for PS&T contract FAQ's and Gains and Trade-offs chart.



**URGENT—PEF MEMBERS:
 YOUR 3-YR. PS&T CONTRACT BALLOT
 NEEDS YOUR ATTENTION NOW!**



VOTE & MAIL YOUR BALLOT BACK TO AAA — ASAP!



PS&T CONTRACT AGREEMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



2016-2019

COMPENSATION

Q. What are the base salary increases in the Tentative Agreement?

- A. Fiscal Year 2016-2017 – 2% retroactive to April 2016.
Fiscal Year 2017-2018 – 2%
Fiscal Year 2018-2019 – 2%

Q. When will the retroactive portion of the fiscal year 2016-2017 salary increase appear in my regular biweekly paycheck?

A. The State has historically included retroactive salary increases in employees' regular biweekly paychecks. For example, this occurred after ratification of PEF's 2007-2011 and 2015-2016 Agreements. Following ratification, there are several steps that must occur before retroactive monies can be paid. The Legislature and Governor must enact legislation to implement the contract (called a "paybill") and then the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) must process the payments. Because of these multiple steps, we do not know precisely when payments will occur. Regardless of when the monies are paid, checks will be fully retroactive to April 2, 2016.

Q. How will the retroactive 2% increase be calculated if I retired or otherwise left State service after April 2, 2016?

A. If you retired or separated from State service, your retroactive compensation will be prorated based on the time you served in a PS&T bargaining unit position covered by the Tentative Agreement from April 2, 2016, through the date of your separation from State service.

Q. Will I receive my performance advance/increment/step?

A. Yes. Employees who are eligible to receive performance advances/increments/steps will continue to receive them during the term of the 2016-2019 Tentative Agreement.

Q. What about my performance award/longevity?

A. The performance award program continues unchanged in the Tentative Agreement. As before, the rights of eligible employees to receive performance awards will be contractually protected through April 2019 if the Tentative Agreement is ratified. If there is no successor agreement in April 2020, the performance awards of employees who received them in April 2019 will be protected under the Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Law. Those who are newly eligible for an award for the first time after April 2019 will not receive it until a successor agreement is ratified.

Q. Will my location pay, inconvenience pay, hazardous duty pay, standby on-call pay, special assignment to duty pay and recall pay continue?

A. Yes. Location pay, inconvenience pay, hazardous duty pay, standby on-call pay, and special assignment to duty pay all continue at the same rates and on the same terms and conditions as existed at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 Agreement. Standby pay and recall pay will also continue to be paid consistently with how they were paid under the 2015-2016 Agreement.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Q. Are there any changes to negotiated health benefits in the Tentative Agreement?

A. No. The Tentative Agreement makes no changes to negotiated health benefits. There are no increases to employees' premium share (i.e., the percentage of the premium the employee pays). There are also no increases in any Empire Plan office visit, lab, radiology, prescription, medical, hospital, ambulatory surgery, emergency room, or any other copays, or any deductibles, coinsurance maximums, or any other negotiated out-of-pocket costs during the term of the 2016-2019 Tentative Agreement.

PEF (and other unions) can only negotiate the copays and other elements of plan design for the Empire Plan. PEF does not negotiate the benefits that HMOs provide. HMOs are allowed to change copays and benefit levels on an annual basis, independent of the negotiated Empire Plan benefits. These pieces can and do change from year to year, even when no agreement is in place. For this reason, we always recommend that HMO enrollees review their plan options carefully each year during the Option Transfer Period because the level of HMO benefits may change from year to year.

Q. Will my health insurance premium rates remain the same throughout the term of the Tentative Agreement?

A. PEF negotiates the percentage of the health insurance premium the employee pays, but we do not negotiate the premium rates. The Tentative Agreement makes no changes to enrollees' premium shares. That is, employees will continue to pay 16% of the total premium for individual Empire Plan coverage, and 31% for dependents' Empire Plan coverage.

Empire Plan premium rates are adjusted annually based on enrollee utilization and projected medical costs. Again, these rates are not negotiated by PEF. Annual premium rate increases are effective in the paycheck closest to January 1 of each year regardless of whether there is a contract in place or whether this Tentative Agreement is ratified. (The 2017 NYSHIP premium rates have not yet been finalized. We expect the rates will be announced in mid- to late-November.)

Q. Will the Productivity Enhance Program (PEP) be available under the Tentative Agreement?

A. Yes. PEP will continue to be available for the 2017, 2018, 2019 calendar years. We have been notified that the enrollment period for PEP in 2017 is November 1 through December 2, 2016.

Q. Both the Governor's and PEF's press releases about the Tentative Agreement say that the State and PEF agreed to work together on a plan to reduce out-of-control health care costs. Did PEF agree to implement any future health insurance concessions?

A. No. PEF did not agree to any future health insurance changes or concessions. We agreed to meet with the State in an existing labor-management committee, known as the Joint Committee on Health Benefits (JCHB) to explore the feasibility and cost effectiveness of changes in the Empire Plan benefit structure after April 1, 2019. This joint labor-management committee will issue non-binding recommendations that both PEF and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations will consider when they negotiate a successor collective bargaining agreement. Again, the JCHB's recommendations are not binding in future negotiations. Moreover, the JCHB has no authority to agree to health insurance concessions during the term of this Tentative Agreement.

Q. Is there any change in how much sick leave I can use toward retirement service credit or to pay for health insurance in retirement?

A. No. There are no changes. Employees can still earn and accumulate the same number of sick leave days, and use those days for retirement service credit and to pay for health insurance in retirement.



PS&T CONTRACT AGREEMENT
FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS

(Continued on next page)

JOINT CONTRACT COMMITTEES ARTICLES 9, 10, 14, 15, 18, 27, 42

Q. Are there any changes to existing Joint Committees?

A. Yes. The Tentative Agreement requires the Article 15 Professional Development Committee, which oversees administration of the public service training program, tuition reimbursement, workshop and seminar reimbursement, other education and training benefits, to continue identifying professional development opportunities that will allow PS&T bargaining unit members to perform tasks that are currently, or might otherwise be, performed by outside vendors or consultants.

The Agreement expands the jurisdiction of the Article 18 Health and Safety Committee to include: development of standards and identification of best practices for decontamination of State vehicles and equipment; approaches to reducing slip, trip and fall hazards; best practices for reducing exposure to vector-borne illnesses; and best practices for addressing employee exposure to toxic substances or other hazardous materials. Additionally, the State and PEF committed to streamlining the grant process for the Safety and Health Initiatives Program (SHIP) and other measures to expedite awarding and implementing grants that address safety and health training needs of PEF-represented members.

The Tentative Agreement empowers the Article 44 Joint Committee on Nursing and Institutional Issues to review PEF's concerns regarding safe staffing ratios in direct care settings, and issue recommendations to agency management.

Q. Does the Tentative Agreement continue to fund the joint contract committees?

A. Yes. The Tentative Agreement increases funding for the above joint contract committees by 2% in each Fiscal Year. Additionally, the Tentative Agreement continues funding of the committees after expiration of the Tentative Agreement for the period from April 2, 2019, through December 31, 2019.

Q. Are there any new Joint Committees in the Tentative Agreement?

A. Yes. The Tentative Agreement provides for the creation of: (1) a Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Issues, (2) a Joint Committee on Non-permanent Employees, and (3) a Joint Committee on Employee Travel Reimbursement Issues. Additionally, the Tentative Agreement codifies the existing Career Mobility Office (CMO) Advisory Board, and allows PEF to appoint three designees to serve on the Board.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUNDING (INCLUDING TUITION REIMBURSEMENT)

Q. Is there funding for education & training in the Tentative Agreement?

A. Yes. The funding for the education and training programs offered through Article 15 of the Agreement has been increased by 2% in each Fiscal Year. Additionally, the Tentative Agreement continues funding of programs after expiration of the Tentative Agreement for the period from April 2, 2019, through December 31, 2019.

Q. Where can I find the education and training guidelines?

A. If the Tentative Agreement is ratified, guidelines on education and training benefits for 2017 will be developed as soon as possible. The guidelines will be available at: http://www.goer.ny.gov/Training_Development/PEF/index.cfm.

OTHER STATE BARGAINING UNITS

Q. What if another State bargaining unit's union negotiates more favorable across-the-board salary increases or other increases to compensation?

A. Importantly, the Tentative Agreement gives PEF the right to reopen negotiations, if any other State union negotiates and ratifies more favorable overall increases or other direct compensation in Fiscal Years 2016-2017, 2017-2018, or 2018-2019. Direct compensation includes, but is not limited to, negotiated general salary increases, negotiated payments to specific sub-groups within our bargaining unit, negotiated longevity payments, negotiated location pay and other direct payments made by the State pursuant to the collective bargaining agreement. If, after reopening negotiations, PEF and the State are unable to reach agreement, PEF

has the right to have an arbitrator determine the amount of any increase due to PEF members. Please note that whether PEF is entitled to increases must take into account the impact of any concessions made to achieve the gains, including health insurance givebacks. So, for example, if another bargaining unit negotiates a 4% salary increase, but agrees to significant health insurance concessions that are equivalent to the value of that increase, PEF members will not receive the additional compensation, unless PEF agrees to the same significant concessions.

WORK-LIFE SERVICES PROGRAMS

Q. What is the Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAA)?

A. The DCAA is a negotiated benefit that helps State employees save money by paying for child care, elder care, or disabled dependent care on a pre-tax basis. The DCAA is funded by pre-tax employee contributions and/or an employer contribution which varies depending on the employee's salary. The combined amount of the employee and employer contribution cannot exceed \$5,000 annually.

Q. Will the Employer Contribution to DCAA be offered to employees?

A. Yes. The employer contribution will be offered in Calendar Year 2017. The enrollment period for the 2017 DCAA employer contribution is October 3 through November 7, 2016. If the Tentative Agreement is ratified, the Employer Contribution will also be guaranteed in 2018 and 2019.

Q. What is the amount of the Employer Contribution?

A. The amount of the employer contribution is based on your NYS salary, not on your household income or the number of children you have. If you work less than full time, the amount of the employer contribution will be based on your annualized salary rather than on your part-time salary. The Employer Contribution Rates will increase by \$100 for each salary range from the last contract. They will be:

If Your Salary Is...	The EC Is...
Under \$30,000	\$800
\$30,001 - \$40,000	\$700
\$40,001 - \$50,000	\$600
\$50,001 - \$60,000	\$500
\$60,001 - \$70,000	\$400
Over \$70,000	\$300

Q. Why was the Article 42 Family Benefits Program/Work-Life Services language deleted?

A. The language of Article 42 was moved to Article 10 and merged with the Employee Assistance Program language as the programs provided and funded by the two separate Articles are jointly administered and overseen by the multi-union labor/management Work-Life Services Advisory Board. All the programs previously provided and funded by the two separate Articles are now included in the new Article 10 - Work-Life Services Programs. The new Article 10 now provides for and funds the Employee Assistance Program, Network Child Care Assistance, and the Dependent Care Advantage Account employer contributions. The Tentative Agreement includes a 2% increase in that combined funding for each Fiscal Year. There is also a side letter that reflects the funding distribution for all the programs in the new Article 10. Those percentages are different merely because of the merger of the funding, proportionally they remain the same.

DEFICIT REDUCTION LEAVE/ WORKFORCE REDUCTION LIMITATION

Q. Why is the Article 21 Deficit Reduction Leave and Workforce Reduction Limitation language still included in this Tentative Agreement?

A. Both the Deficit Reduction Leave and the Workforce Reduction Limitation language continue to appear in the Tentative Agreement solely to provide a basis for processing any pending disputes between the State and PEF concerning alleged violations of Article 21 that took place prior to April 2, 2016.

Members express appreciation for PEF contract team efforts

By DEBORAH A. MILES



Mikki Ramos-Ensslin

“Through collective bargaining, workers negotiate wages, health and safety issues,

benefits and working conditions with management via their union. The contracts secured by PEF have allowed me to enjoy many benefits such as having the vacation time to spend with family, and the opportunity to advance through professional development training. This recent contract is a testament to what devoted leadership within PEF and the governor’s office can accomplish when working together to create and maintain the state’s professional workforce.”



“PEF’s team pushed back as hard as we could and it was finally decided that the state would not ask for any concessions. PEF’s tentative agreement is very unique because it contains absolutely no negotiated health care concessions. Our position at the bargaining table was consistent with the marching orders that our members gave us prior to and throughout negotiations.” — *PEF’s contract team chair Jemma Marie-Hanson*



Barrington Scott

“Members of PEF have access to other skilled and professional members who

make the state of New York a great state. PEF provides its own members with gains through contract negotiations and good agreements with the state that provide, among many other things, affordable health care and other benefits. PEF, through its website, print media, training seminars and meetings, has shown its members the purpose of the union and the many accomplishments continually being made on behalf of the membership.”



Kay Wilkie

“Being part of PEF provides a myriad of personal benefits, and even more meaningfully,

it allows me to serve colleagues in our division, region and statewide. PEF membership has supported professional development throughout my career. While serving as an elected official within PEF, it has permitted me to help advance our collective interests and priorities. Whether obtaining discounts on entertainment, gift cards, legal services, or meeting with legislators to advocate for our agenda, it continues to be a privilege to be a PEF member.”



Vincent Rutigliano

“One advantage of being a union member is the opportunity of collective

bargaining, which is the heart and soul of the labor union. Collective bargaining occurs when a group of people such as the workforce of a company or organization bands together to increase its negotiating power for a better outcome for all. The recent negotiation talks between PEF and the state showed how PEF members can band together to get the best contract. This is what Wayne Spence and his negotiating team did for us, the PEF membership.”



Darlene Williams

“Along with the benefits secured by PEF through its contract with the state, the value of this

union reaches beyond its 54,000 professional members. The people of New York state who we care for in mental health facilities, hospitals, the disadvantaged children, and the services provided to taxpayers all benefit from PEF’s professional employees. The work PEF members accomplish across the state every day, from our transportation workers, to the people issuing driver’s licenses, to those who teach inmates new skills, we all weave a part of the fabric that makes our state a leader in the nation.”

2016-2019 PS&T Unit Tentative Agreement

GAINS and TRADE OFFS

Article	Gains	Trade Offs														
Article 7 – Base Salary Increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2% base salary increase retroactive to April 2016. • 2% base salary increase April 2017. • 2% base salary increase April 2018. 															
Article 9 – Health Benefits*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change in negotiated benefits 															
Joint Committees – Articles 9, 10, 14, 15, 18, 27, 42, and side letter	<p>Funding for the following Contract Committees will increase by 2% in each Fiscal Year of the Agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art. 9 – JCHB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$530,604 in 2016-2017 \$541,216 in 2017-2018 \$552,040 in 2018-2019 • Art. 10 – Work-Life Services Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2,452,028 in 2016-2017 \$2,501,068 in 2017-2018 \$2,551,089 in 2018-2019 • Art. 14 – PDQWL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$562,440 in 2016-2017 \$573,689 in 2017-2018 \$585,163 in 2018-2019 • Art. 15 – Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$8,563,099 in 2016-2017 \$8,734,361 in 2017-2018 \$8,909,049 in 2018-2019 • Art. 18 – H&S <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$730,111 in 2016-2017 \$744,713 in 2017-2018 \$759,607 in 2018-2019 • Art. 27 – Prop. Dam. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$21,967 in 2016-2017 \$22,406 in 2017-2018 \$22,854 in 2018-2019 • All committees will continue to be funded for the 9-month period following expiration of the 2016-2019 Tentative Agreement – that is, for the period from April 2, 2019, through December 31, 2019. 															
Article 10 – Work-Life Services Programs and side letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer Contribution to Dependent Care Advantage Accounts will be offered in calendar years 2017, 2018 and 2019. Starting in 2017, the Employer Contribution will increase by \$100 for each salary range: <table border="0" data-bbox="555 1451 1102 1650"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;"><i>Gross Annual Salary</i></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><i>Employer Contribution</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Up to \$30,000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$800</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">\$30,001-\$40,000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$700</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">\$40,001-\$50,000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$600</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">\$50,001-\$60,000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$500</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">\$60,001-\$70,000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$400</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Over \$70,000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$300</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New related side letter mandates the development and implementation of strategic outreach to educate NYS agencies and employees about available EAP services, and ensure that accurate EAP Coordinator contact information is readily available to employees. The side letter also empowers the Work-Life Services Programs Advisory Board to meet and discuss the establishment of EAP coordinator-to-employee ratios, release time minimums, multi-agency EAP Coordinators and other strategies to ensure the existence of a robust and accessible EAP Coordinator network. 	<i>Gross Annual Salary</i>	<i>Employer Contribution</i>	Up to \$30,000	\$800	\$30,001-\$40,000	\$700	\$40,001-\$50,000	\$600	\$50,001-\$60,000	\$500	\$60,001-\$70,000	\$400	Over \$70,000	\$300	
<i>Gross Annual Salary</i>	<i>Employer Contribution</i>															
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Over \$70,000	\$300															

NOTE: All contractual provisions that are not expressly amended by the terms of the 2016-2019 Tentative Agreement are continued. Similarly, all side letters and side agreements providing benefits to members that were included in the 2015-2016 Agreement are continued in the 2016-2019 Tentative Agreement. These side letters and agreements are updated as necessary to assure continuation of the benefits they provide during the term of the 2016-2019 Tentative Agreement. * See also, Appendix III – Joint Committee on Health Benefits Feasibility Study side letter (p. 13).

2016-2019 PS&T Unit Tentative Agreement

GAINS and TRADE OFFS

Article	Gains	Trade Offs
Article 10 – Work-Life Services Programs	<p>NOTE: These changes represent neither a gain, nor a tradeoff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merged Article 10 (Employee Assistance Program/Work-Life Services) with Article 42 (Family Benefits Program/Work-Life Services) as the programs provided and funded by the two separate Articles are jointly administered and overseen by the multi-union labor/management Work-Life Services Advisory Board. • Deleted obsolete references to the existence of elder care initiatives, and direct payroll deductions to pay for child care at worksite child care centers. Neither the elder care initiatives, nor the direct payroll deductions existed. 	
Article 14- Professional Development and Quality of Working Life Coordinating Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added new Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Issues (see Article 46). This Committee will be coordinated and overseen by the PDQWLCC. • The Committee will meet as agreed to resolve disputes that may arise in the specific joint committees. • The Committee has the authority to allocate money to fund the activities of any joint committee. 	
Article 15 – Professional Development Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Professional Development Committee will meet and confer to identify professional development opportunities that will allow members to perform tasks that are currently, or might otherwise be, performed by outside vendors or consultants. • Inserted reference to the existing Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Program, and deleted duplicative references to the Workshop and Seminar Reimbursement Program and Workforce Initiatives Programs, and reference to non-existent Career Transition Program. 	
Article 18 – Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Joint Health and Safety Committee is empowered to develop standards and identify: best practices for decontamination of State vehicles if exposed to hazardous or toxic materials; approaches to reducing slip, trip and fall hazards; best practices for reducing hazards from vector-borne illnesses; best practices for reducing exposure to vector-borne illnesses; and best practices for addressing exposure to other toxic substances or hazardous materials. • The Committee will also make efforts to streamline and expedite the awarding of Safety and Health Initiative Program grants. 	
Article 19 - Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parking Committee will be comprised of up to three designees of GOER and up to three designees of PEF. 	
Article 21 – Deficit Reduction Leave/ Workforce Reduction Limitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserved historic language from the 2011-2015 and 2015-2016 State/PEF Agreements, solely to provide a basis for processing any pending disputes between the State and PEF concerning alleged violations of Article 21 that took place prior to April 2, 2016. 	
Article 34 – Grievance and Arbitration Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEF and the State will meet and discuss whether the implementation of a pilot program for the electronic transmittal of grievance submission and response is feasible and otherwise appropriate. If the parties are unable to agree on a pilot program, submittal by certified mail will continue. • If the pilot program is implemented, the State will allow PEF to amend grievances at Step 3 of the grievance procedure. 	
Article 42 – Family Benefits Program/Work Life Services	<p>NOTE: These changes represent neither a gain, nor a tradeoff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deleted Article 42 because it was merged with Article 10 to form the new Article 10 Work-Life Services Programs. See Article 10 changes above. 	
New Article 42 – Career Mobility Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOER and PEF will each appoint three designees to serve on the Career Mobility Advisory Board, which will meet quarterly. The funding is \$260,000 for each fiscal year. 	

2016-2019 PS&T Unit Tentative Agreement

GAINS and TRADE OFFS

Article	Gains	Trade Offs
Article 43 – Printing of Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 60 days of ratification, PEF and the State will each publish a searchable electronic copy of the Agreement on their respective websites so that it is easily accessible to PEF-represented members and representatives of management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State and PEF shall each pay the cost of printing and furnishing copies of the Agreement to members of the PS&T Unit and representatives of management. Previously, the cost of printing was shared equally by the State and PEF.
New Article 46 – Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Joint Committee on Law Enforcement Issues will be established to study and make recommendations regarding problems and issues facing employees whose duties include law enforcement functions. The Committee will meet at least quarterly, unless the parties agree to meet less frequently. 	
Article 50 – Duration of Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2, 2016, to April 1, 2019. 	
Appendix II – Compensation Reopener	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEF has the right to reopen negotiations during the term of this Agreement if any other State bargaining unit negotiates and ratifies overall increases to direct compensation in Fiscal Years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 that exceed the increases to direct compensation contained in this Agreement. • Direct compensation includes, but is not limited to, negotiated general salary increases, negotiated payments to specific sub-groups within a bargaining unit, negotiated longevity payments, negotiated location pay and other direct payments made by the State pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement. • The resolution of disputes will take into account the impact of any concessions made to achieve the gains that are contained in the other State bargaining unit’s contract. • If PEF and the State cannot negotiate a mutually acceptable resolution, PEF has the right to go to arbitration. 	
Appendix III – Productivity Enhancement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) and Teachers’ PEP will be offered in calendar years 2017, 2018 and 2019. The enrollment period for 2017 will be conducted in November and December of 2016. 	
Appendix III – Over40 Comp Time Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program made permanent and is no longer a “pilot”. 	
Appendix III – Firearms Training and Safety Incentive Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program made permanent and is no longer a “pilot”. 	
Appendix III – Annual Leave Restoration Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program made permanent and is no longer a “pilot”. 	

2016-2019 PS&T Unit Tentative Agreement

GAINS and TRADE OFFS

Article	Gains	Trade Offs
Appendix III – Family Benefits Funding side letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted above, the language of the old Articles 10 and 42 were merged within the new Article 10 Work-Life Services Program, which includes all the programs previously funded by each of the two Articles. The side letter reflects that the funding from both Articles has been merged. The percentages are different merely because of the merger of the funding. Proportionally, funding for each program remains the same. 	
Appendix III – Joint Committee on Long-term Non-permanent Employees side letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PEF and the State agree to establish a Joint Committee on Non-permanent Employees to study issues surrounding long-term non-permanent employees. 	
Appendix III – Joint Committee on Travel Reimbursement side letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PEF and the State agree to establish a Joint Committee on Travel Reimbursement to identify and rectify any impediments to the timely processing of employee requests for travel reimbursements. 	
Appendix III – Joint Committee on Health Benefits Feasibility Study side letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing Joint Committee on Health Benefits will explore and make non-binding recommendations on the feasibility and cost effectiveness of changes in the Empire Plan benefit structure. GOER and PEF will consider the non-binding recommendations when they negotiate a successor collective bargaining agreement. 	
Appendix III – Safe Staffing Ratios in Direct Care Settings side letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Article 44 Joint Committee on Nursing and Institutional Issues shall be empowered to take referrals from Labor/Management discussions regarding safe staffing ratios in direct care settings. The Committee will issue non-binding written recommendations to agency management. PEF and the State committed to using this process to identify and address staffing shortages in direct care settings. 	
Appendix V – Roswell Park Cancer Institute New MOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PEF and the State agree to establish a Joint Committee on Professional Issues at RPCI to study and make non-binding recommendations on topics, including: recruitment and retention of specific titles at RPCI; specialized training and professional development concerns; and best practices for managing staff and communicating with employees during weather emergencies. In collaboration with the Joint Professional Development Committee, this Committee will work to identify and sponsor training and professional development programs tailored to PS&T Unit members at RPCI. 	
NYS Schools for the Deaf and Blind New Side Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GOER to explore feasibility of a comprehensive L/M training program for the L/M Committees at the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. PEF and the State agree to establish a Joint Committee on Professional Issues at the Schools to study and make non-binding recommendations on topics, including: recruitment and retention of specific titles at the Schools; specialized training and professional development concerns; and substitute teacher rates of pay. 	



SAVE BERNARD FINESON – PEF President Wayne Spence leads a rally to save Bernard Fineson DDSO in Queens.

PEF’s protest of Bernard Fineson closing plan draws broad support

Story and photos by **SHERRY HALBROOK**

October 20th was a day of unity and common purpose as parents and family members of the individuals treated at Bernard Fineson Developmental Disabilities Services Office (DDSO) in Queens joined PEF members, legislators, community religious and political leaders and members and leaders of other labor unions to speak out with one voice against the state’s plans to close the DDSO by March 31, 2017.

“The state has already moved hundreds of individuals from Bernard Fineson to community-based settings,” said PEF Region 11 Coordinator Jemma Marie-Hanson. “There are approximately 75 individuals left at this facility who require a higher level of care than private homes are able to provide.”

“Moving patients from comfortable, familiar settings has the potential to cause great disruption in their lives,” said Halcyone Thomas, whose son Lafayette Lanham is among those affected. “Most of the general population has no idea of what it is like to be born with challenges,



and the importance of having dedicated caregivers by their side. They are our most vulnerable population, and it is up to us and the state to protect and help them in every way possible. Closing Bernard Fineson is not the right way.”

“Your jobs matter,” said state Sen. Leroy Comrie. “Let’s take this fight to the governor and tell him that if it means we have to take the federal government to court (to prevent the closing), then let’s do it!”

Although he could not attend the event, state Assemblymember David Weprin sent a representative from his office with a message of support: “The workers at the Bernard Fineson facility deserve

security for their professions, as well as a guarantee that their jobs will not be reassigned to a facility outside of New York City. I ... am confident we will be able to come together to find a viable solution to protect some of our state’s most dedicated employees.”

PEF President Wayne Spence said he feared the real motive behind the plan to close Bernard Fineson was a “land grab” to benefit private developers and, “We cannot let that happen.”

“Over my dead body!” said state Sen. Tony Avella. He added that “For 30 years, Bernard Fineson DDSO has provided exceptional services to those community members who need it most. They’re not just numbers in a database, they are community members, just like you and I, who need extra care. Now is not the time to be putting the jobs of 500 New Yorkers in jeopardy of being cut.”

Spence said he was very happy to have just concluded negotiations on a new tentative contract agreement for the state’s PS&T bargaining unit, “but what good is a contract without members and jobs? This issue of closing and privatizing state services is bigger than Bernard Fineson!”

Others who spoke and joined in the informational picketing and rally included state Assemblymember Alicia Hyndman, representatives of the Working Families Party, the NYS Correction Officers and Police Benevolent Association and a member of the Civil Service Employees Association local at the DDSO.

PEF Region 3 members in Rochester demonstrated their support and PEF is collecting signatures of support on a petition at www.savebernardfineson.com.

Facing the gathering of nearly 100 supporters, PEF Executive Board member Elizabeth Cheese, who heads PEF Division 207 at Bernard Fineson, was deeply moved by the outpouring of support.

“I’ve never felt so much love and unity until today,” she said.



COMRIE



PEF REGION 3 - ROCHESTER - WWW.SAVEBERNARDFINESON.COM



CHEESE

Good things happen when labor and management team together

By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

There seems to be a new trend in the labor and management relationship, and it's one that is beneficial to both. It's simply working together that makes the agency and its employees aspire to be the best it can.

That's what happened at the end of October when the state Office of Information Technology Services (OITS) held a town hall meeting at the Empire State Plaza in Albany.

More than 1,400 OITS employees who are predominantly represented by PEF filled the convention center. The large crowd was a result of OITS management working with the union.

"When the town hall meeting was in its initial planning phase, OITS managers requested the cooperation of PEF," said Penny Howansky, an Executive Board member and Division 357 council leader.

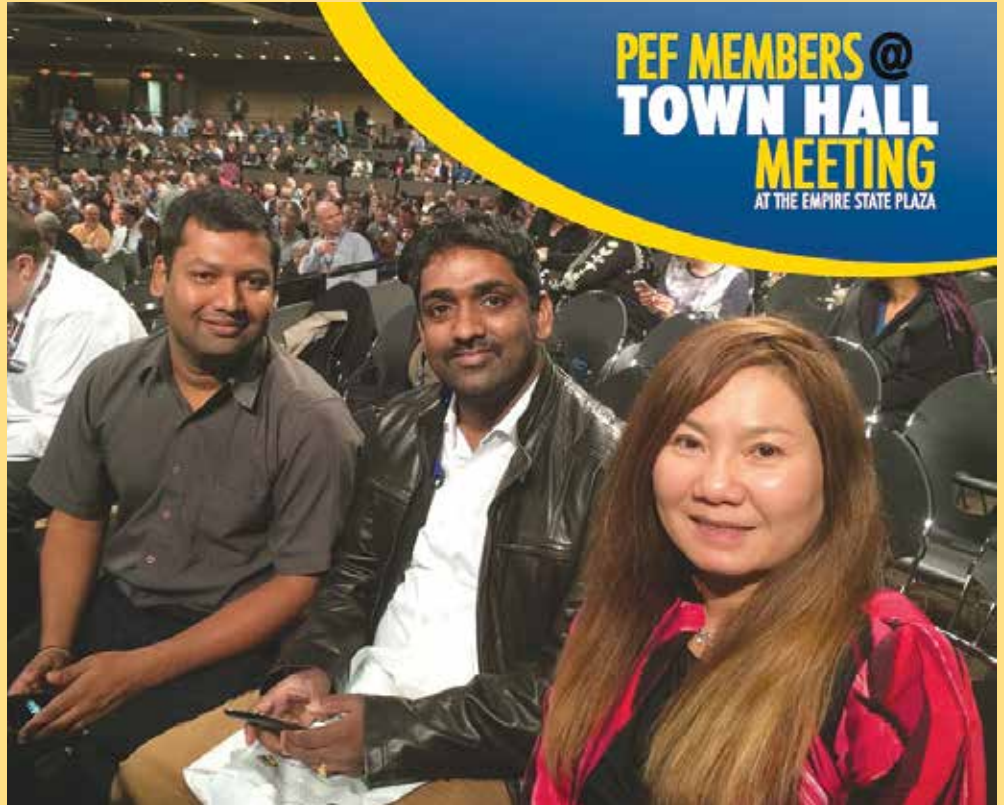
"We worked collaboratively to set up a location and communicate with all the employees to ensure good attendance. We knew it would be a good opportunity for our members to participate at the meeting, network, and hear the strategies presented by OITS. It also was an occasion for PEF members to learn what was happening within their union by having PEF President Wayne Spence address the audience,"

Howansky said.

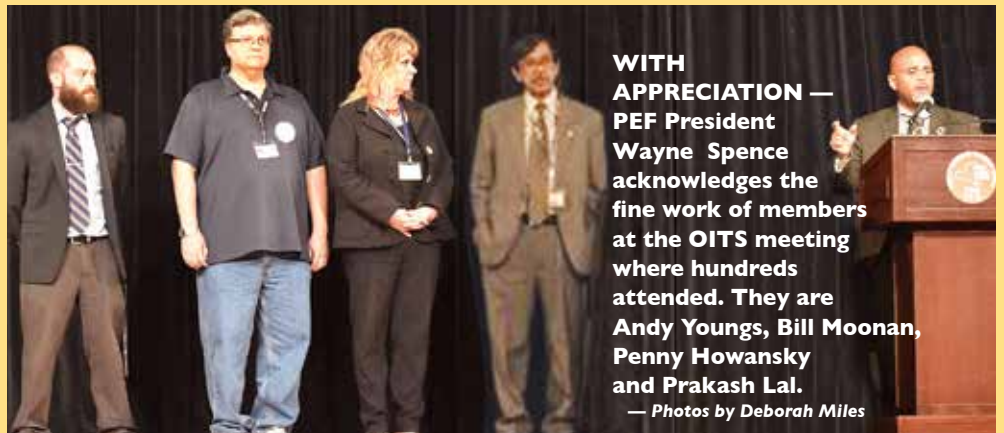
PEF's role in this event included getting the buses so people across the state could participate and hear firsthand the plan OITS has for the agency and to be a part of the awards ceremony.

"We spent division finances to provide the funding for the buses and we provided cookies," Howansky said. "It was a win-win situation. The meeting gave our members insight into the innovative path OITS is taking into the future, and how we can improve our work skills to mesh with new and exciting challenges.

"The event was a good avenue to build upon the relationship between labor and management. It brought to light how working together can achieve our personal and professional goals."



— Photo by Chris Leo



WITH APPRECIATION — PEF President Wayne Spence acknowledges the fine work of members at the OITS meeting where hundreds attended. They are Andy Youngs, Bill Moonan, Penny Howansky and Prakash Lal.
— Photos by Deborah Miles



CARR

A message from PEF Retirees President Jim Carr

Bill in Congress would improve Medicare

I look for current and relevant information on issues important to retirees and seniors and

I believe the following information from the September 22, 2016, Medicare Watch meets that need.

Congress took steps to improve Medicare coverage and enrollment rules by introducing the Medicare Affordability and Enrollment Act of 2016. If passed, the bill would create an out-of-pocket spending cap, reform the Medicare enrollment process by reducing penalties and gaps in coverage, and increase support for lower-income beneficiaries.

“Medicare has long been an ironclad guarantee to seniors of health care security and peace of mind in their later years,” said Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), one of the original cosponsors of the bill. “Today, the promise of Medicare falls short for too many who find their health costs becoming more and more unaffordable. Protecting and strengthening the Medicare guarantee is a vital task as the program prepares to enroll the next generation of older Americans, and these policies will put many seniors on a firm foundation for years to come.”

The bill seeks to address several key

challenges that people with Medicare face: affordability for beneficiaries who have low-to-moderate income, but do not currently qualify for assistance; a complicated, outdated, and potentially costly enrollment process in which it is easy to make mistakes; and a two-year wait for benefits for those who receive Social Security disability benefits.

Key aspects of the bill include the following:

- Set a maximum out-of-pocket cap for medical services under traditional Medicare, which exists today for Medicare Advantage and most commercial insurance plans;
- Significantly expand the number of low-income beneficiaries eligible for financial assistance to cover premiums and out-of-pocket costs;
- Eliminate the arbitrary two-year waiting period for people with disabilities to enroll in Medicare;
- Modernize the Medicare enrollment system to facilitate easier enrollment, begin coverage earlier and reduce arbitrary late-enrollment penalties that today are paid for a lifetime; and
- Increase and extend permanent funding for low-income Medicare beneficiary outreach and

education activities.

The bill was introduced in the Senate by Finance Committee Ranking Member Wyden. The bill’s Senate co-sponsors include Debbie Stabenow, (D-MI), and Michael Bennet, (D-CO), Bill Nelson, (D-FL), and Sherrod Brown, (D-OH).

A companion bill was introduced in the House by Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ), Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member Sander Levin (D-MI), Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee Ranking Member Gene Green (D-TX), and Ways and Means Health Subcommittee Ranking Member Jim McDermott (D-WA).

Editor’s note: “This information is republished with permission of the Medicare Rights Center, www.medicarerights.org.”

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Miss Lucy – a polite powerhouse who raised labor standards



By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

To many people, she was simply known as “Miss Lucy,” a Southern belle who grew up to be a formidable force in changing labor standards throughout the country. Along with her future years of staunch activism, this daughter of an Episcopal minister who was raised by an old and respected Virginia family, always retained the social status of a Southern lady.

Lucy Randolph Mason started to leave her imprint on labor history while in her twenties. She worked as a stenographer to support herself, but devoted much time to volunteer social service work and political activities on behalf of the women’s suffrage movement.

She caught the attention of the Richmond Young Women’s Christian Association and it offered her a job as an industrial secretary, which she accepted. Mason focused on the economic advancement in the African American community and generated public support for state labor laws that would ensure safer workplaces, end child labor, raise minimum wages and shorten work hours.

Mason also was a member of Richmond’s Union Label League and promoted union-made products and services. During World War I, American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers appointed her the Virginia chairwoman of the Women

in Industry Committee, a division of the wartime National Advisory Committee on Labor.

Mason wrote “Standards for Workers in Southern Industry” in 1931, the first pamphlet of its kind to help promote fair labor standards throughout the South. Her activism appealed to several of the nation’s female reformers, including Florence Kelley, secretary of the National Consumers League (NCL), who chose Mason as her successor.

Under Mason, the NCL won the passage of new state labor laws, lobbied for improved labor codes in the 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act and helped ensure the passage of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

During congressional hearings on the FLSA, Mason met Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) President John L. Lewis, who helped arrange a job for her as the CIO’s public relations representative for the South.

For Mason, the CIO was a vehicle for her to bring democracy to the South and help alleviate the economic and racial injustices experienced by minorities and the poor. She traveled alone to small towns where union organizers and their sympathizers had been shot, beaten, threatened and jailed. She explained workers’ rights to organize and bargain under the new federal statutes and promoted unionism to sheriffs, judges, newspaper editors and politicians.

She also played an important role in “Operation Dixie,” the CIO’s attempt to organize Southern textile workers following World War II. Frequently, Mason’s intervention prevented violent outbreaks

against union organizers.

“Miss Lucy’s” success rested on her blunt speech, a calm yet steely demeanor and her ability to spotlight civil liberties violations to federal officials, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt. She persuaded Roosevelt to send a special federal investigator to Memphis in 1940, to scrutinize the physical attacks on the United Rubber Workers’ organizers who were trying to create an interracial union.

In her later years, Mason remained committed to ending white supremacy in the South. She helped the Southern Baptist Convention adopt a resolution in 1938 recognizing the right of labor to organize and engage in collective bargaining. She was a founding member of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, a frequent speaker at interracial gatherings, and an ideological ally to Southern liberals in their fights against segregation.

Mason organized interfaith, multi-union and interracial groups in Atlanta and other Southern cities of workers dedicated to building bridges between organized labor and churches. Eventually, these local groups formed the National Religion and Labor Foundation and honored Mason with its Social Justice Award.

Eleanor Roosevelt commended her in the forward to Mason’s 1952 autobiography, *To Win These Rights*, noting in particular “the courage of this mild looking, soft-spoken gentlewoman with a fiery fighting spirit.”

In 1953, Mason retired from union work, and died six years later in an Atlanta nursing home at the age of 71.

Region 5 veterans chair honored for his service

PEF Region 5 Veterans Committee Chair Bill Fowler was honored November 3 by the Southern Tier Veterans Support Group and News Channel 34 in Binghamton. He was among five local veterans receiving the honor. Fowler is a NYS labor services representative trainee 2 (local veterans’ employment representative). He retired as a chief warrant officer 4 from the U.S. Army after 20 years of service and he has worked for the state Labor Department for 11 years. He is now a member of the New York Guard and is very active with the Southern Tier Veterans Support Group and several other veterans’ organizations.

Fowler said he felt “honored and humbled to be nominated” for such an honor and he accepted it “on behalf of all those who have served, past and present.”

In addition to a plaque, Fowler was presented with an American flag, “challenge” coins, and a handmade quilt.

— Sherry Halbrook



Members trained to lift patients safely

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

While conferences on how to lift and handle patients safely have been held every year for some time, this year's NYS Zero Lift Taskforce Conference offered new information and training that addressed a very serious need.

For the first time, the conference included a training "track" for participants that lift and handle individuals with developmental challenges in residential or community settings.

The other tracks offered at the conference were: Long-Term Care/Sub-Acute Rehabilitation; Acute/Critical Care; Outpatient/Ambulatory Care; and best-practices training developed by the Western NY Committee on Occupational Safety and Health. All five tracks provided information on how to assess a patient's needs and how to assess the relevant features of the environment in which the lifting or handling was taking place, as well as strategies for preventing accidents.

"It was a great event attended by many PEF members and some of the training tracks were led by PEF members as well," said PEF Region 8 Coordinator Mike Blue, co-chair of the PEF Health and Safety Committee. "We were given information regarding the methods of safe patient handling and the tools that are available, as well as the timeline for agencies and facilities to develop and implement plans for safe patient handling. It was well organized and I loved that they included hands-on demonstrations of equipment and techniques."

Held in Buffalo September 21 and 22, the conference attracted hundreds of PEF members and other state employees eager to deepen their understanding of how to meet the lifting and positioning needs of clients as safely and effectively as possible.

PEF worked with state managers and other state-employee unions to obtain a SHIP (Safety and Health Improvement Program) grant to fund the conference. Approximately 100 PEF members from the state Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and many other agencies as well as Roswell Park Cancer



Institute were among those participating.

The conference also involved representatives of companies that make equipment to help lift and position patients comfortably and safely, who demonstrated the equipment and trained the conferees on how to use and maintain it.

The timeline for developing and implementing plans for lifting and handling patients safely is mandated by the Safe Patient Handling Law that PEF and other groups worked for years to get introduced and passed by the state Legislature and signed into law. It requires Safe Patient Handling programs to be implemented at every covered health care location by January 1, 2017.

"This law and the plans it mandates agencies and facilities to develop and use will greatly reduce injuries and suffering by the clients and the health care workers," Blue said. "And it will reduce the state's costs for workers' compensation and the need to pay for overtime and

hiring temporary employees or contractors to fill the time and service gaps created by employee injuries."

According to the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), musculoskeletal injuries accounted for nearly half of all on-the-job injuries and illnesses reported nationally in 2011 by nurses and other health care staff. Each of those injuries can cost between \$12,000 and \$100,000 to treat.

"PEF has been a leader on this issue," Blue said, "and I was proud to see our members conducting some of the training at this conference. They were phenomenal instructors."

The PEF members providing training on safely handling people with developmental challenges were: Elizabeth Allaire-Love, a chief physical therapist at Finger Lakes Developmental Disabilities Services Office; Carmen Vianese, an occupational therapy assistant 2 at Finger Lakes DDSO; and Elizabeth Calamita, a senior physical therapist at Western NY DDSO.

Maureen Cox, who coordinated the conference, presented to Allaire-Love the Zero Lift Taskforce Safe Patient Handling Advocacy Award for her distinguished service as a member of taskforce and as an advocate for safe patient handling.

"For me, the best part of this conference was that they talked about what was required by the law and then demonstrated how to comply with the law," Blue said. "Which of course, translates into fewer injuries going forward."



BUILDING SAFETY SKILLS – PEF members Elizabeth Calamita, Elizabeth Allaire-Love and Carmen Vianese taught conference participants in September about safely lifting and handling individuals with developmental disabilities and other special needs.

Contract Town Hall Meetings



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Ailing members need your leave donations

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

The following PEF members have reported a need for leave donations:

• **Oluyemisi (Yemi) Babarinde** is a social work assistant 3 at the Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Services Office. She is being treated for complications to a head injury. To donate leave, call 718-642-6310.

• **Noreen Campbell (Cotov)** is a parole hearing officer at Rikers Island Correctional Facility. To donate leave to her, contact the human resources office at 518-457-6692.

• **Helen Crane** is a principal health care manager at the state Health Department in Albany. She is being treated for late-stage Lyme disease. To donate leave, call 518-457-4272.

• **Shelley Depew Reynolds** is a psychiatric nurse administrator 1 at Central NY Psychiatric Center and assigned to Fishkill Correctional Facility. She is being treated for a serious illness. To donate leave to her, obtain and complete a leave donation slip from your agency human resources department and fax it to 315-765-3369.

• **Maria Downes** is a psychiatric nurse administrator 1 at Capital District Psychiatric Center in Albany. She is undergoing extended treatment for breast cancer. To donate leave, call 518-549-6612.

• **Catherine Giblin** is a licensed master social worker 2 at South Beach Psychiatric Center on Staten Island. She is undergoing a series of surgeries. To donate leave, call 718-667-2741.

• **Wanda Gonzalez (Rosado)** is a standards compliance analyst 1 for the Department of Quality Improvement at the state Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. She is recovering from surgery related to bone cancer. To donate leave, call 518-402-4677.

• **Robert Henderson III** is an alcohol and substance abuse treatment program assistant at Coxsackie Correctional Facility. He is recovering from injuries sustained in a serious motorcycle accident. To donate leave to Henderson, call the facility at 518-731-2781 and ask for human resources.

• **Nancy Hodgkinson** is an information technology specialist 1 for the state Office of Information Technology Services at Wadsworth Center Laboratory in Albany. She had surgery in September for complications related to previous emergency surgery. To donate leave, call 518-457-4272.

• **Melvin Jimenez** is an information technology specialist 2 at the Office of Information Technology in Albany. He is being treated for life-threatening complications to septic pneumonia that have required life support and amputations. To donate leave to him, contact the human resources office at 518-457-4272.

• **Judy Koerber** is an investigative specialist 1 for the state Health Department in Albany. She is recovering from breast cancer surgery and receiving radiation treatments. To donate leave to Koerber, contact the human resources office at 518-402-0893.

• **Pauline Merakis** is a teaching and research center nurse 2 at SUNY Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse. She has liver failure and needs a transplant. To donate leave, call 315-464-4943.

• **Jim Mextorf** is a program technology analyst 3 at the state Office of Information Technology Services. He continues to require treatment for severe complications to diabetes and he needs a kidney transplant. To donate leave, call 518-473-0398 or email hr.benefits@its.ny.gov.

• **Carmen Scism-Slaughter** is a senior administrative analyst at the state Department of Financial Services in Albany. She is being treated for a life-threatening illness. To donate leave to Slaughter, call 518-486-1774.

• **Jennifer Voelker** is a youth counselor for the state Office of Children and Family Services in Buffalo. She is being treated for complications following childbirth. To donate leave to Voelker, email Jeanne.tatko-gile@ocfs.ny.gov.

• **Philip Ward** is an addictions program specialist 2 at the state Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services in Albany. He is recovering from a head injury and multiple fractures sustained in a fall. To donate leave to him, email bscbenefitsadmin@ogs.ny.gov.

• **Ruth Warner** is a social worker assistant 3, at Taconic Developmental Disabilities Services Office in Kingston. She is being treated for recurring cancer. To donate leave, call 845-877-6821, ext. 3284.

• **Mary Wesley-Bullock** is a senior administrative analyst at the state Office of Children and Family Services in Rensselaer. She has a chronic condition that requires frequent absences from work for medical care. To donate leave, call 518-408-3510.

The rules for making and receiving leave donations are set forth on page 72 of the 2015-16 PS&T Contract. If you, or a PEF member you know, needs leave donations because of a medical issue, you may contact *The Communicator* to request publication of that need. Send requests to thecomunicator@pef.org, or call 800-342-4306, ext. 271. Be sure to provide your contact information.

Division 245 names 2016 scholarship winners

PEF Division 245 Council Leader Scarlett Ahmed announced the following winners of the division's 2016 scholarships:

• **John Likanje**, University of Rochester, won the Bertram Harris Scholarship award of \$1,000. He is the son of Michele Lassi, a labor services representative at the state Labor Department in Brooklyn;

• **Andrew Au Yeung**, Stony Brook University, won the Bernice Jones Scholarship award of \$1,000. He is the son of Lee Shing Au Yeung, a labor standards investigator in Manhattan; and

• **Sarah Miriam Schwartz**, Queens College, won the Ron Goldstein/Paul Kalka Scholarship award of \$1,000. She is the daughter of Rebecca Schwartz,

an administrative law judge at the state Labor Department in Brooklyn.

Scholarship candidates were required to be full-time college students with a GPA of at least 3.0, or a student who just started college this fall, with a high school average of at least 85.

— Sherry Halbrook

Protecting dogs from the cruelty of humankind

By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

There is an underground railroad of sorts happening in our country. Except in this case, it is a network of people who are actively taking a role to save and transport abused dogs to a caring rescue shelter where adoption is likely.

The animals usually surface in the Southern part of the country. Some have been found wandering along a dangerous Alabama highway. Others are released from the deadly hands of people who run kill shelters. The lucky ones are rescued and transported by dozens of people, each of whom take a one-to-two hour leg to get the dogs to a final destination in the Northeast

This network of animal activists has no formal name. There is a coordinator who sends out emails to volunteer transporters with information on where to be, what time, and how many dogs are being moved. There is a run sheet that accompanies each animal, with information about its medical history and the receiving rescue organization.

Dan Hrubciak has been a part of the transport crew for a couple of years. This PEF member is an information technology specialist 3 who works at Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca.

"My wife, Nancy, and I became involved through our daughter's



HRUBCIAK AND JETHRO

— Photos by Nancy Hrubciak

passion to help animals," Hrubciak said. "It's important for a dog to have a family, and not just a family who wants a dog. We do what we can to make that happen.

"Any time the network runs into a bind and one of the transports is in jeopardy of failing, we raise our hands and help. Nancy and I are a team. She does the driving and I do the ear scratching. A typical run for us would be to pick up the dogs in Erie, PA and take them to Cheektowaga, NY. The drive one way is less than an hour and a half.

"I've seen the carnage of these innocent creatures. Some were left out in the cold, others starved. I have seen dogs with no hair, missing paws and infected eyes that bulge out of their heads. You see so many bad things it makes you feel good to help them. It only takes a few hours of your time and a few bucks for gasoline to make a difference."

Hrubciak said the switching of the animals from one car to another takes place behind fast food restaurants or auto service stations where the dogs are allowed to stretch and hydrate for 15 minutes before moving on to the next leg of their journey, sometimes traveling to Cape Cod or Maine. He drives a large SUV with enough room to have three crates in the back, room for dogs in the middle seat, and on his lap in the front seat.

"I wish I could keep each and every one of them, but you have to maintain some discipline. There is always another run and more



HRUBCIAK AND RALPHIE

dogs. We get to keep them for about two hours, and hope they find a forever home at their final destination.

"Sometimes you do make a connection and there are some you wish you could keep. We transported a four-year-old Pit Bull named Bull. His name was changed to Drifter, but I renamed him Ralphie. He was more of a Ralphie than a Drifter. The notes said he was a goofy boy, difficult to handle on a lead, and food aggressive. We thought he may be a handful. I sat with him in the back seat and scratched his belly for two hours. He is a big boy, 62 pounds. When we reached our drop off point, we took him out of the car. I bent over to switch leads. Ralphie put his paws on my shoulders and I got the shellacking of my life. I really liked that animal."

Hrubciak said more people are needed to be a part of the transport crew. The way to slip into this underground network for dogs is to contact local rescue shelters.

"As long as there are rescues and people who care, there is hope for these animals."

Hrubciak said he wanted to share one of his favorite quotes by Mahatma Gandhi:

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of humankind."

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**The Communicator print edition will cease publication with the December 2016-January 2017 combined winter edition.*



Deadlines for 2017 benefits choices

By LORRAINE SIMPKINS

• **November 30, 2016 — Pre-Tax Contribution Program (PTCP).** The PTCP may lower your 2017 income taxes (payable in 2018) by allowing you to pay for your health insurance premiums before taxes are withheld. If you participate in the PTCP, there are limitations on when you may make changes to your health insurance coverage. You may make the following changes only in November each year when there has been no PTCP-qualifying event: Change from family to individual coverage while your dependents are still eligible; or voluntarily cancel your coverage while you're still eligible for coverage. Also, you can elect to opt-in or opt-out of the PTCP. For more information, see the September 2016 Planning for Option Transfer flyer.

• **December 2, 2016 — Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP).** PEP allows eligible full- and part-time employees in a job title at or below grade 24 to exchange previously accrued annual leave and/or personal leave in

return for a credit that reduces their share of their New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP) premium on a biweekly basis. If you are currently enrolled in PEP, you must re-enroll if you wish to continue participation in 2017.

• **Deadline date to be announced for electing to participate in the Opt-out Program.** The Opt-out Program allows eligible employees who have other employer-sponsored group health insurance to opt out of their NYSHIP coverage in exchange for an annual incentive payment. Other coverage cannot be NYSHIP coverage that is the result of your or your spouse's, domestic partner's or parent's employment relationship with New York State, or the result of your own employment with a NYSHIP participating agency (PA) or participating employer (PE). If you are covered as a dependent on another NYSHIP policy through a PA or PE, you are eligible to receive the individual incentive payment of \$1,000, but not the family incentive payment of \$3,000.

If you currently participate in the Opt-out Program, you must re-enroll to continue to receive incentive payments in 2017. The deadline is the same as the deadline for changing health plans. For more information, see the September 2016 Planning for Option Transfer flyer.

• **Deadline date to be announced for changing health plans.** The annual Option Transfer Period will be announced once 2017 premium rates are approved. You will have 30 days from the date your agency receives the rates to change your health plan. Consider your choice carefully. You may not change your health plan after the deadline except in special circumstances. No action is required if you do not wish to change health plans.

For the most up-to-date information on the annual Option Transfer Period, including the 2017 premium rates, visit the NYS Department of Civil Service website at www.cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits. Select your group (PEF) and plan, if prompted, and then select "Health Benefits & Option Transfer."

Trade time off to lower health insurance cost?

By DEBORAH STAYMAN

Would you like to trade some of your leave to lower your paycheck deduction for health insurance? It's an option if you work in a salary grade 24 position or lower.

Under the Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP), eligible full- and part-time employees may forfeit previously accrued annual and/or personal leave in return for a credit that reduces their state health insurance premium contribution.

The PEP credit of either \$500 or \$1,000 is divided by 26 paychecks and applied on a biweekly basis.

The enrollment period for 2017 began November 1 and ends December 2, 2016. If you are participating in the 2016 PEP, it will not automatically carry forward into 2017. To continue, you must re-enroll.

Full-time employees in a job title at or below grade 17 may forfeit a total of either three days or six days of annual and/or personal leave at the time they enroll in PEP, in return for a credit of up to either \$500 or \$1000, respectively, for 2017.

Full-time employees in a job title between salary grade 18 and through 24 may forfeit a total of either two days or four days of annual and/or personal leave at the time they enroll in PEP in return for a credit of up to either \$500 or \$1000, respectively.

To enroll, PS&T employees must meet all of the following criteria:



- Be a classified or unclassified service employee in the Executive branch in a title at Salary Grade 24 or below or equated to a position at or below Salary Grade 24;
- Have a combined total of at least eight days of vacation and personal leave left after trading time for the insurance credit; and
- Be a NYS Health Insurance Program contract holder in either the Empire Plan or an HMO at the time of enrollment. Part-time employees may participate on a prorated basis. Ask your agency health benefits administrator (HBA), usually located in the personnel office, for details and an application.



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Labor News Briefs

Former Miss America is now union leader

Kate Shindle was crowned Miss America in 1998, and is now the president of Actors' Equity. She is leading her union as it works to improve pay and benefits for more than 50,000 actors and stage managers across the United States. And in the beginning of October, she began playing the nation's most famous lesbian cartoonist, Alison Bechdel, in the touring production of the Tony-winning stage play "Fun Home."

Shindle is straight and single, and was elected last year to a three-year term as president. She is not paid for her union work and earns



1998



TODAY

a living as an actress. Since she took the helm at Actors' Equity, the union for the first time endorsed a presidential candidate (Hillary Clinton), and Shindle has been focusing on priorities such as gender parity and racial and ethnic diversity. She is also looking into sharing the profits of shows that her members helped to develop.

Maryland food service workers win privatization battle

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan attempted to outsource 57 dietary services jobs at Springfield Hospital Center, and his outsourcing threat extended to 26 more positions at two other medical facilities. But through their union, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Council 3, the workers organized, rallied and reached out to small businesses in the area for their support. Local elected leaders and community leaders rallied behind the workers, and they succeeded.

"AFSCME Strong was already in place

before the outsourcing announcement was made, and it was having the program in place that made this fight possible," said Patrick Moran, president of Council 3. "We were ready for a challenge like this."

Women advance into Massachusetts building trades

Through efforts by the Policy Group on Tradeswomen's Issues (PGTI), Massachusetts has become one of the leaders at employing women in the nearly all-male building trades. In 2015, women filled more than 6 percent of apprentice positions in that state, a 50 percent increase from 2012. The PGTI brings together local construction companies, unions, developers, community organizations, schools and government agencies with the "right people" in the room to change the numbers. *The Boston Globe* reported the PGTI to be a persistent and passionate group, women who deserve opportunities and are not backing down. — Deborah A. Miles



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Fond farewells

PEF's gratitude and best wishes go out to the following members who are retiring:

- **Karen Arkison**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Marilyn Aversano**, PEF Division 276, Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Pierre Belzie**, PEF Division 276, Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Barry Cook**, PEF Division 356, Wyoming Correctional Facility;

- **Judith Dedrick**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Mary DeRose**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Wanda Gonzalez**, PEF Division 292, Manhattan Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Richard Maddox**, PEF Division 241, Creedmoor Psychiatric Center;
- **Deidre Martin**, PEF Division 356, Wyoming Correctional Facility;
- **Venus Mendez**, PEF Division 276, Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Services Office;

- **Paul Merget**, PEF Division 179, state Office of General Services;
- **Milaglio Plumey**, PEF Division 236, state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision;
- **Rajeev Singh**, PEF Division 241, Creedmoor Psychiatric Center; and
- **Jeff Williams**, PEF Division 356, Wyoming Correctional Facility;

Are you or PEF members you know retiring? Please send information for this column to thecommunicator@pef.org.

— Sherry Halbrook



Valor is stability, not of legs and arms, but of courage and the soul. - John F. Kennedy



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Four PEF Executive Board vacancies filled

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

Four of nine midterm vacancies on the PEF Executive Board were filled in October and balloting will be conducted to determine the winner of a fifth seat.

The four new board members were the sole certified candidates for those seats following the submission of nominating petitions that ended October 27. They are:

- **Christopher Dennihy fills Seat 65**, which represents state Education Department members working in PEF Regions 1-7 and 9-12 in ACCES vocational rehabilitation;

- **Valerie Ridgeway fills Seat 185**, which represents PEF Region 8 members at the state Health Department main office working in the Corning Tower in Albany;

- **Colleen Quackenbush fills Seat 195**, which represents PEF Region 8 members



at the state Health Department main office working at various locations in Albany and East Greenbush; and

- **Thomas Lutz fills Seat 530**, which represents PEF members at the state Transportation Department in Syracuse and Watertown.

An election between Matthew Maraglio and Terra Sturn is being conducted to fill Seat 460, which represents PEF members at the state Department of State.

Ballots in that election will be mailed to constituents November 17 and must be returned to the American Arbitration Association by December 12, for counting December 14.

Nominations will be sought in January to fill the following remaining vacant board seats and any additional seats that are

vacated by December 31:

- **Seat 100** represents members in the teaching and research center nurse 2 title whose last names start with letters A-E and who work at SUNY Stonybrook and all other PEF members working at the hospital who are in non-nursing titles;

- **Seat 280** represents members at Rochester Psychiatric Center (PC), Rochester Children's Services, at the state Office of Mental Health in PEF Region 3, certain members at the state Office of Mental Health main office, and at Central NY PC;

- **Seat 425**, which represents PEF members at the state Department of Public Service; and

- **Seat 545**, which represents members working in the following political subdivisions of New York state: Albany Housing Authority; Albany County Probation; and Allegany County.

GREAT TIME – Dozens of PEF members enjoyed a "Family Day" at Long Acre Farms in Macedon October 22. The event brought new and veteran PEF families together to celebrate the fall season. — Photos by Caitlin Janiszewski




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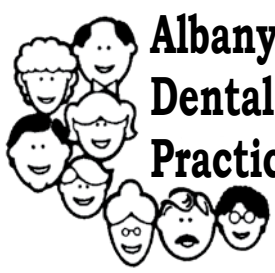
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Movie ticket monthly maximum

In November and December the monthly maximum increases to 40 per theater.

MOVIE THEATERS	MEMBER PRICE
AMC Theatres - Green (exclusions apply)	\$8
Bow-Tie Cinemas	\$6
Cinemark Cinemas	\$7
City Cinemas	\$7.50
Dipson Theaters	\$6.75
Landmark Theaters	\$7
Marquee Cinemas	\$7.50
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Albany:	December 11
Binghamton:	November 19
Buffalo:	November 19
Poughkeepsie:	December 10
Utica:	November 19

Please check our website for full listing of class dates.



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Bonefish Grill	\$25	\$23
Carrabba's Italian Grill	\$25	\$23
Chili's	\$25	\$23
Cracker Barrel	\$25	\$23.25
CVS Pharmacy	\$25	\$23.75
Domino's Pizza	\$25	\$22.50
Fleming's	\$25	\$23
Gap	\$25	\$22
HomeGoods	\$25	\$23
JCPenney	\$25	\$23.50
Kohl's	\$25	\$23.25
Lands' End	\$25	\$20.75
L.L. Bean	\$25	\$22.25
Macy's	\$25	\$21.75
Maggiano's	\$25	\$23
Marshalls	\$25	\$23
On the Border	\$25	\$23
Old Navy	\$25	\$22
Outback Steakhouse	\$25	\$23
P.F. Chang's	\$25	\$22.50
Panera Bread	\$25	\$23.25
Pier1 imports	\$25	\$21.25
Red Robin	\$25	\$23
Regal	\$10 \$25	\$9.20 \$23
Romano's Macaroni Grill	\$25	\$23
Roy's	\$25	\$23
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2

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3

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4

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