

The Communicator PEF

Official Publication of the New York State Public Employees

September 2015

*Charting a new course
Newly elected PEF President
Wayne Spence and elected
leaders take oath of office*



UNITY
A NEW ERA FOR THE UNION

Liked story on counselings

To the Editor:

It is apparent (the member who criticized your story on counseling memos) has not worked for the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.

(There) counseling memos are used punitively and are not presented in the way the contract describes. Sometimes a person's supervisor calls them in to "talk" about some issues and then presents it in written form as a counseling notification the following day. The PEF member thought it was just a discussion.

Of course, the employee's response or

comments are not covered in the counseling memo or are misrepresented with a negative bias toward the employee. At times, the employee is informed at the end of the "talk" that this is, indeed, a counseling. Rarely is any response or defense encouraged or allowed from the employee.

Counselings are used in a disciplinary way and not as a tool for guidance or improvement, at least that's usually the case in DOCCS.

I appreciated *The Communicator* story and find PEF is too lax in enforcing (members' rights in) the counseling process. Please provide more such information.

ANDREA LINGENFELTER
Buffalo

Thanks RNs committee

To the Editor:

I thank all of the members of the Joint PEF-NYS Nurse Labor-Management Committee at the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision for the kindness shown to me during my time on the committee and at my retirement.

It was an honor to be part of this group. The tireless work on behalf of DOCCS nurses and all nurses, particularly by PEF nurse organizer Nancy Wolff, is a credit to the profession. Keep up the great work. We and the profession are worth it.

SHEILA LUTZ
Romulus

LABOR HISTORY

Collective bargaining, its roots to today

By DEBORAH A. MILES

For most of the 19th century, collective bargaining was often considered to be some type of criminal conspiracy. Despite this stigma, workers formed unions.

The 19th century workforce faced many battles such as long hours and low wages. When workers wanted to make a point, they went on strike. This made state courts hostile to trade unions. Judges, most of whom were anti-labor, jailed union leaders for the potential to create violence. This was prominent across the nation, with the exception being the courts in Massachusetts and New York that displayed more sympathetic attitudes.

During this time, federal legislation did not address labor organizing, collective bargaining and strikes. It wasn't until the early 20th century American society recognized a need for federal legislation to address labor conflicts and to develop a unified national policy for the private sector. The regulations for public-sector collective bargaining emerged in the second half of the 20th century.

The first important national legislation on collective bargaining focused on the railroad industry. Congress enacted the Railway Labor Act (RLA) of 1926, and 10 years later applied it to the airline industry. As part of the national transportation system, both were considered vital to the nation's economy and lawmakers knew a strike would cause much disruption.

The RLA created an elaborate system of bargaining, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and other measures designed to prevent strikes. The system is still controlled by the National Mediation Board (NMB) and no strike may occur unless the NMB releases the parties from the lengthy

mediation and arbitration process.

In 1935, Congress adopted the National Labor Relations Act, which covers most private-sector workers outside the railroad and airline industries. It is administered by the National Labor Relations Board that created a collective-bargaining system. Some of its cardinal features include prohibiting retaliation against workers for filing unfair-labor-practice charges, employer domination of a labor organization, discrimination against workers for union activity, and refusal to bargain.

It wasn't until the 1960s that public employees were allowed the right to genuine collective bargaining. Ironically, Wisconsin was the first state that enacted a collective bargaining law for state employees. Today, its governor Scott Walker, a presidential hopeful, is focused on destroying unions and their bargaining rights.

But public-sector unions continue to grow. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports for the first time ever, there are more public-sector employees (7.9 million) than private-sector employees (7.4 million) who belong to unions. New York tops the chart with roughly 70 percent of state employees in unions.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy issued an executive order reaffirming the right of federal employees to organize, and codifying their rights to bargain collectively. Then, states and cities followed with a plethora of laws providing public-employee unions with collective bargaining rights.

In New York state, one year after the passage of the Taylor Law in 1967, 360,000 state and local government employees became unionized. *The New York Times* described the law as having an

"almost revolutionary effect." A year later, New York passed a collective bargaining law. By 1972, nearly half of the states had public-employee collective-bargaining laws in place at the state or local level.

Collective bargaining laws gave government workers powerful incentives to join unions. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) grew from 99,000 members in 1955 to just under 1 million members in 1980. During the same time, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) grew from 40,000 to more than a half million members.

In 2015, lawmakers and policymakers such as Walker and New Jersey's governor Chris Christie, resurrected the subject of whether government employees should enjoy the privilege of collective bargaining. Christie, another presidential candidate, created a firestorm from unions his first day of office by issuing an executive order preventing state-worker unions from making political contributions.

Both governors targeted state employees and their unions as the chief perpetrators of their state's fiscal catastrophes.

PEF President Wayne Spence said union members must unify and fiercely oppose all policies that even hint at reforming collective bargaining.

"A shift has occurred in government, not only in New York but in the nation that has clearly reshaped the country's labor movement," Spence said. "What is important to citizens is the way this shift has transformed the relationships between public employees, the government they work for and the public they serve. PEF needs to show the demand for quality public services, and protect its bargaining power. It will take the vast majority of our members to accomplish our goals."



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THE COMMUNICATOR

Volume 32, No. 7 September 2015 (0745-6514)

The Official Publication of the New York State Public Employees Federation, AFL-CIO
1168-70 Troy-Schenectady Rd., Latham, NY 12110-1006

The Communicator is published monthly, except for January and August, for members of the New York State Public Employees Federation. Periodical postage paid at Latham, NY and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
Editor, PEF Communicator
1168-70 Troy-Schenectady Road
P.O. Box 12414 Albany, NY 12212-2414
Phone 518-785-1900, x221

Letters Policy: The Communicator welcomes letters to the editor about union issues and events relevant to PEF's diverse membership. All letters are subject to editing for space, fairness and good taste. Please type your letters, keep them brief (up to 250 words), and include your name and phone number for verification.

Send letters to: The Communicator
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A NEW ERA – The family of PEF President Wayne Spence looks on as he takes the oath of office to become PEF’s ninth president. Shown are his wife Dietra, and their children Alita and Aaron. — Photos by Deborah A. Miles

New PEF leaders take office

Story By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

Wayne Spence was sworn in as the ninth president of PEF and its first African-American president August 3 at PEF headquarters in Latham.

Also taking the oath of office before a packed crowd were Secretary-Treasurer

Kevin Hintz, Vice Presidents Adreina Adams, Peter Banks and Nikki Brate, and Trustees Maureen Kellman, Sarah Lauser and Maddie Shannon-Roberts. This marks the first time women hold all three of PEF’s trustee posts. The new officers will serve three-year terms that expire July 31, 2018.

Spence thanked his many supporters and set a tone of humility, determination and respect and called for both unity within PEF and solidarity with the greater labor movement.

“A team approach is how we will govern going forward,” Spence said. “Our number one priority is unity. We cannot move forward externally, if we are not united internally.”

State AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento, who administered the oaths of office to the new officers and trustees, echoed Spence’s call for solidarity and member commitment. He said the NYS AFL-CIO has a membership



SWEARING-IN — State AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento administers the oath of office to PEF Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Hintz.



Vernetta Chesimard



Fonda Lloyd



The Rev. Craig Wright, Calvary AME



PEF President Wayne Spence with the Brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity



TOP BRASS — DOCCS Deputy Commissioner Daniel Martuscello III, Acting Commissioner Anthony Annucci, PEF President Wayne Spence, state AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento and Albany County Executive Daniel McCoy pose for a photo at PEF Headquarters after Spence was sworn-in.



Minister Sonya Gomes, Trustee Maddie-Shannon Roberts and Stephanie McLean-Beathley



PEF Region 8 Coordinator Mike Blue

of approximately 3,000 local unions with a combined membership of 2.5 million workers, “but it doesn’t mean a thing unless we are working out of the same play book.”

Spence called on PEF members to behave like a family of sisters and brothers, who may disagree among themselves, but who always stand up for each other and stick together when any of them is under attack from outside the union.

“I don’t know everything. I don’t pretend to know everything. If you see me stumble, don’t stand there and laugh at me, help me get up.” That said, Spence pledged. “I will do my best, my very best.”

“A team approach is how we will govern going forward, Our number one priority is unity. We cannot move forward externally, if we are not united internally.”

— Wayne Spence, PEF President

Spence said he had spoken with the governor and that PEF will have three main approaches to the current

PS&T contract negotiations and to other challenges: unity, courteous dialogue and solidarity with other labor organizations.

“We will treat others the way we want them to treat us,” Spence said. But he

warned, “Don’t mistake the kindness of PEF for weakness.”

Hintz said he, too, puts a priority on healing the political divisions within PEF and he wanted to “assure members their hard-earned dues will be used wisely and responsibly.”

Others participating in the ceremony were PEF members Stephanie McLean-Beathley and Fonda Lloyd, and the Rev. Craig Wright and the Rev.

Sonya Gomes.

The event was attended by a wide range of family members, friends and supporters, former PEF officers and staff, as well as other labor leaders, legislators and local political figures.



Team aims to get good contract

By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

Members voted to elect a new PEF administration, and the transition period has focused on numerous issues within the union. The one issue which involves all members is getting a new contract with the state. And the Spence-Hintz administration has hit the ground running with Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Since PEF President Wayne Spence took the oath of office August 3, he has stated publicly and during TV interviews how he looks forward to a more respectful and open relationship with the governor's office. His approach is already paying off.

The governor's director of communications, Melissa Derosa, sent Spence a note of congratulations on his election.

"The governor looks forward to a courteous and constructive dialogue with PEF under President Spence's leadership, and is optimistic that it will be a welcome change from the rancor and destructive rhetoric of the past. The governor will continue to strive for agreements that are fair to both employees and New York's taxpayers," Derosa wrote.

Spence said contract meetings with the state will resume shortly. He has appointed Jemma Marie-Hanson as the team's contract chair. Marie-Hanson is the PEF Region 11 coordinator and has worked tirelessly as a union leader fighting to help save SUNY Downstate Medical Center from privatization, as well as helping to prevent the closing of Kingsboro Psychiatric Center during this past decade.

"Jemma brings a wealth of experience to the table, and we are grateful for her willingness to undertake this important role in helping to secure a contract members will be eager to ratify," Spence said.

Marie-Hanson said the team will continue to work to achieve a contract that addresses the needs and concerns of members. The team will focus on economic gain such as across-the-board raises, a balance of home and work life, and raising the professional profile of members.

Spence has reviewed the contract team given the results of the Triennial

Election. Many members of the current team will remain, and new members will be added who have prior experience negotiating with the state. They will be announced in the near future.

Spence said as negotiations move forward, members will be alerted to important developments. However, discussions at the bargaining table will remain discreet and there may be extended periods of time when PEF will refrain from comment while working through negotiations.

"I ask for your patience and unity," Spence said.



MOVING FORWARD — PEF President Wayne Spence congratulates PEF Region 11 Coordinator Jemma Marie-Hanson in her new role as PS&T contract team chair. Negotiations with the state are scheduled to resume shortly.

— Photo by Scott Morlock

PEF puts the brakes on fingerprinting members

By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

PEF members at the state Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) won't be washing ink from their fingertips, thanks to a favorable decision granted by state Supreme Court Justice Richard E. Sise in mid-August.

Earlier this year, ITS began unilaterally implementing fingerprinting and background checks with PEF-represented employees. When PEF learned of this in May, the union filed an Improper Practice (IP) charge with the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB). The charge stated the fingerprinting and background checks were in violation of the Taylor Law, which provides union members with the right to negotiate their terms and conditions of employment.

PERB authorized PEF to seek a court injunction. The court agreed and granted an injunction based on favoring collective bargaining, and the fact ITS had not done the fingerprinting and background checks for several years.

PEF General Counsel Lisa King said

the court found reasonable cause to believe that ITS' failure to bargain over this issue violated the Taylor Law.

"Because of the sensitive personal information involved with this procedure, an injunction was necessary to protect PEF members," King said.

"Guarding the rights of PEF members is a primary responsibility of the union," said PEF President Wayne Spence. "Without this injunction, there was the

potential for immediate and irreparable damage to our members who work at ITS. This is an example of how local leaders and members can work with the appropriate PEF departments to protect members on the job. Had the union not intervened, ITS would be in possession of sensitive, personal information to which it is not entitled, and may have used that information to the detriment of PEF-represented employees.

"The administration is pleased the court agreed with PEF and PERB's position that this injunction was warranted," Spence said.

The state has 30 days to appeal the court's decision.





Addressing members' needs is priority

By **WAYNE SPENCE**

It's been quite a whirlwind for me since taking office August 1, and I must tell you that I still start each and every day humbled and honored to have been elected by you to serve as president of the Public Employees Federation.

I'd like to start by telling you a little bit about my leadership style. I believe effective leaders understand that one of their roles is to bring out the answers in others. I believe in clearly and explicitly seeking contributions, challenges and ideas from other PEF leaders, from leaders of other unions and from you, our members.

What this means is, I will not be working in isolation. Do I run the risk of someone seeing me make a mistake? Indeed. But if you see me stumble, help me up! I'll gladly take your hand, welcome your input and will always do the same for you.

Now, let me tell you a little bit about my immediate priority. Job one for me is to heal this union so we can move forward together in unity. As you all know, we

just came through a contentious election in which union apathy resulted in a low voter turnout. I believe one reason for this apathy is that members do not feel their needs are being met by their union. In fact, I heard this over and over again as I traveled the state in recent months. This must change.

Addressing the needs of PEF members will be a priority for our team. To this end, we have already started streamlining and re-aligning PEF resources in ways that, not only make more sense for our members, but will result in greater accountability in union operations.

Make no mistake about it, we have some very serious challenges ahead. We are in the midst of contract talks, the

reality of planned facility closures will hit us soon, and the possibility of an adverse U.S. Supreme Court decision next year could cause serious setbacks to the union movement in this country. You'll be hearing me speak about this case, *Friedrichs v California Teachers' Association*, and its ramifications often in the coming weeks and months.

Let me close this month's message by sharing with you something I recently saw that reminded me of our union:

"No family is perfect. We argue. We fight. We even stop talking to each other at times. But in the end, family is family." I'm hoping you all will agree with me that in the end, union is union.

THE NEW TEAM —

(Left to Right), PEF Trustees **Maddie Shannon-Roberts** and **Sarah Lauser**, Vice Presidents **Peter Banks** and **Nikki Brate**, PEF President **Wayne Spence**, Secretary-Treasurer **Kevin Hintz**, Vice President **Adreina Adams** and Trustee **Maureen Kellman** at your service.

— Photo by Tim Raab



Face to face with the 2015 S

By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

For the past 27 years, PEF has paid tribute to Joseph Scacalossi in the form of a scholarship. He was a highly respected union man who fought hard for his members at the state Department of Labor in New York City, and was an activist until his death in 1988.

In Scacalossi's memory, PEF has annually awarded 10 students with \$4,000, distributed in \$1,000 installments over four years. Since its inception, PEF has awarded more than a million dollars to help students launch their careers.

In 2015, approximately 350 applications were received. Bonnie Wood, who chaired PEF's scholarship committee, described the winning applicants as "diverse, talented, highly intelligent and motivated to give back to their communities."

PEF President Wayne Spence said the Scacalossi Scholarship continues to be an example of how PEF values its members and recognizes the importance of investing in education.

Along with Wood, the scholarship committee includes PEF Executive Board members Frank Flack, David Lovell, Ramlochand Singh, and Joanne Wright, PEF staff. The winners are:



Richard Adamovich-Zeitlin was accepted at the University of Pennsylvania where he is studying for a career in biomedical engineering. At Clarkstown High School South, he was an Intel semifinalist for a study on a computer interface for binary communication. He was a National Merit commended student and also received an AP Scholar Award with distinction. Adamovich-Zeitlin was an active volunteer for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Helen Hayes Hospital and Habitat for Humanity. He enjoys playing tennis, doing science research on brain-computer interface and is proficient and creative in shooting and editing videos. Parent: Debra Zeitlin.



Write a comment...

Edit Profile



Kristin Connolly has planned a dual major, political science and economics, at Catholic University of America. She finished 14th in her class at Troy High School where she graduated with 30 college credits. She is also the recipient of a Scholar Athlete Award. Connolly's community service includes organizing a fully functional library with more than 8,000 books for underprivileged children. She received the Girl Scouts Gold Award, and was active in various capacities to benefit the Our Lady of Victoria congregation. Her interests include playing soccer, listening to music and keeping up on the fashion scene. Parent: John Connolly.



Write a comment...

Edit Profile



Mark Brenner is focused on a business career while he attends Siena College. At Shenendehowa High School, he achieved the status of scholar athlete, was a member of the National Honor Society and aced the 100 Point Club for the New York State Regents Exams by scoring 100 percent. He created and facilitated the Bullying Speak Out program at his school and was active in several aspects of student government. He helped prepare packages for people in underdeveloped countries, and a fundraiser for less fortunate students during the holiday season. Brenner also was the varsity tennis captain and enjoys skiing. Parent: James Brenner.



Write a comment...

Edit Profile



Ryan DiPasquale is studying accounting at Canisius College. At St. Francis High School, he was a member of the National Honor Society. He also received the Advanced Regents Diploma with honors, and the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce Student Star Award. He has worked with the Friends of the Night People, a Buffalo-based organization to help the poor and homeless, and at the Bread of Life Outreach Center. He also volunteers as a youth basketball coach. When he's not studying or doing community work, you can find DiPasquale playing hockey, reading or running. Parent: Dianne DiPasquale.



Write a comment...

Edit Profile



Gabilis Castillo is looking forward to a career in finance as she studies at Fordham University. She was valedictorian of her class at Maria Regina High School where she also received the Woolworth Award from the Gabelli School of Business at Fordham University. She is an Elks National Scholar recipient and earned the NYS Excellence Scholarship. Castillo's community outreach includes tutoring elementary students, assisting an elderly woman with domestic work, and collecting and delivering food and clothing to poor citizens of Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic. She enjoys playing basketball, running, and cantoring at her local parish. Parent: Gabriel Castillo.



Write a comment...

Edit Profile



Harrison Forte selected the Rochester Institute of Technology to launch a career in chemical engineering. He achieved a perfect score of 5 on the AP biology exam while attending Mattituck High School. During all four years in high school, he was on the high honor roll for each quarter. He also received an AP Scholar Award. Forte participated in numerous community service activities such as beach clean-ups. He volunteered at a nature preserve and participated in a project to make blankets for children in hospitals. Having been to Spain and Peru, Forte loves to travel and experience new cultures. Another interest is caring for his exotic pets. Parent: Edward Forte.



Write a comment...

Edit Profile

Scalossi Scholarship winners



Samantha Hesler will spend her first college year in Italy, as part of Marist College's Freshman Florence Experience. Upon returning, her plans are to pursue a career in broadcast journalism. She attended Ichabod Crane High School where she was in the top 10 percent of her class. She was the first student member of the Ichabod Crane Board of Education, and was the creator/president of the school's freshman mentorship program. Hesler worked as a volunteer in the communications department of her local Red Cross, as well as being a blood donor. She also volunteered at the Valatie Free Library. She enjoys traveling, acting and singing. Parent: Susan Hesler.



Victoria Towndrow is studying civil engineering at the University of Buffalo. She attended Mexico Academy & Central High School where she graduated in the top 10 of her class. She was a member of the Math, German and National Honor Societies, and received the U.S. Lacrosse 2014 High School All-Academic Award. Towndrow participated in the two-mile Buddy Walk to benefit the Down Syndrome Association of Central New York, volunteered at the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and at American Red Cross blood drives. During her free time, she enjoys lacrosse, soccer, indoor track and field, traveling and kayaking. Parent: Tracy Evanchik.



Angelina Lorence is aiming for a career in environmental biology and attends SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). A graduate of Cobleskill-Richmondville High School, Lorence earned 32 college credits and was third in her class. She was a National Honor Society member and recipient of the SUNY ESF Presidential Scholars Award. Lorence was president of her area's Environmental Science Club, assistant coach of a community tennis program and received the Girl Scouts' Silver Award. She plays guitar, viola and is part of the jazz-pop quartet "The Onlys" and a guitar/vocal duo, "The Buffleheads." Parent: Stephen Lorence.



Elisabeth Wolff attends Alfred State College working toward a major in interior design and technology management. At Camden High School, she was salutatorian, voted "ideal senior" by classmates, and captain of the Science Olympiad team. She played for the USTA junior tennis team, and was a varsity bowling division B champion. Wolff received the Camden Chamber of Commerce Junior Citizen of the Year and Seed of Selflessness Awards. Her volunteer efforts include the Salvation Army, Cluster 13 Ministries and her local senior citizens center. She enjoys operating a bow and hair accessories business "Bow"tique and baking cupcakes. Parent: Timothy Wolff, II.



PEF Region 8 Coordinator Mike Blue presents a scholarship certificate to Samantha Hesler at PEF Headquarters in Latham. Afterward, PEF President Wayne Spence congratulates Samantha. Her mother, Susan Hesler, a senior insurance examiner at the state Department of Financial Services, was at the event.



IN THE REGIONS — Elisabeth Wolff receives a certificate for winning a PEF Scalossi Scholarship from Ken Denison, PEF Division 166 council leader at the State Department of Transportation in PEF Region 6. Joining them are Elisabeth's parents, Denya and Tim Wolff.



A message from PEF Retirees President Jim Carr

Feel strongly? Speak up. We're listening

As the last of the summer days slip through our fingers, it's easy to be lulled into a carefree belief that fall will find everything just as spring left it. And for some of us that may be true.

Others, however, have kept a keen eye all through the summer on the public issues that affect our country and our lives.

Visit the PEF Retirees website at <http://pefretirees.org> to see some of the information we've posted such as the facts about Social Security and Medicare, and a letter our Region 1 (Buffalo) Chapter president, Craig Speers, wrote about the controversial TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) Trade Agreement that was published July 18 in *The Buffalo News*.

Here's part of what Craig had to say: "The Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement is an ill-conceived pact that will surely visit destructive forces on the American industrial heartland on a grander scale than we have ever witnessed.

"The fallacy and moral corruption of these trade agreements is no more



CARR

they are Detroit or Salamanca, Gary or Medina, Cleveland or Buffalo, Milwaukee or Lackawanna — have been diminished. A more flawed economic policy has never been inflicted on our nation and its citizens.

"It is due time that American workers and America-based businesses stand up for our jobs, and fight this massive TPP injustice, an injustice that threatens the very existence of a sound American economy and its ability to provide for a good-paying job and earned benefits for every able-bodied citizen. Reject the TPP now."

evident than in our own Great Lakes Basin region, upstate New York and New England, where once mighty industrial centers have been struggling, stripped clean of manufacturing, employment and hope. The very fabric of these urban communities, large and small — whether

You may have a different perspective on this issue or feel passionately about something else. It's good to be involved and to care deeply about issues. So do your research, check your facts with reliable, unbiased sources and speak up. Send your own letter to the editor of your local newspaper and share your comments with PEF Retirees. Just send them to PEFRetirees@pef.org. Sharing our diverse insights and viewpoints makes us all wiser and stronger. That's what democracy is meant to do.

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Meet Adreina Adams, PEF vice president

Adreina Adams, one of PEF's new vice presidents, has been a long-standing union activist who understands the intricate balance needed when being an "agent of change."

Adams has worked as a parole officer in Brooklyn and Manhattan for 17 years, and has sacrificed and dedicated her career to unionism based on her desire to create a work environment where everyone is treated respectfully.

"If I saw something was a problem, I felt compelled to make things right. Unionism has always resonated within me," Adams said. "My experience to take on this role as a PEF vice president who represents thousands of public-employees throughout the state is one to which I am devoted."

"I want to empower members by ensuring they get the services they need from PEF to facilitate their goals for improvement at their worksites. As union brothers and sisters, we need to use



our collective voices and knowledge to support each other. We need adherence regarding civil service rules, and how to combat workplace violence, retaliation, bullying, sexual harassment, and unfair notices of discipline. We need to work together to get training, supplies and equipment. Improvements in these areas would enhance the outstanding services PEF members provide."

Adams has been a steward for 15 years, was secretary-treasurer of her division, and served as a convention delegate. She is familiar with many challenges that arise at worksites and has strived for fairness and justice.

"I want to be of assistance to others, and my mission is to help strengthen PEF. We live in an era where the labor movement is facing some of its biggest challenges. We must work together to not only protect what we have, such as our right to collective bargaining, but to fight for a good future for the next generation."

— Deborah A. Miles

PEF Region 1: Coordinator Rocco Brindisi



"This is a great region," said Region 1's new coordinator Rocco Brindisi. "We have Buffalo and Niagara Falls, beautiful scenery and so many state parks and things for our members and visitors to do here. PEF members must love it because they have held three of the last four PEF conventions in this region."

More than 4,200 PEF members work in this, PEF's westernmost region, which encompasses Niagara, Erie, Wyoming, Chautauqua and

Cattaraugus counties and stretches from the Pennsylvania border on the south, to the Canadian border on the north.

Brindisi said the region has many very active members and retirees that work well together on everything from labor, political and legislative action to preparing their participation in Buffalo's annual Labor Day parades.

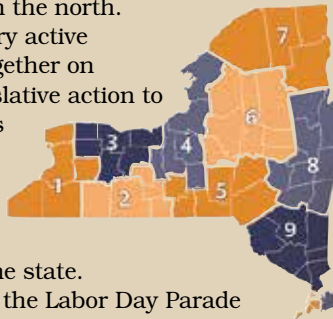
"We have a great presence on the labor councils with the help of our retirees," Brindisi said. "We probably have the best PEF Retirees chapter in the state."

This year we will again participate in the Labor Day Parade and, for the first time, we will even have a 'float.' It's an old-time fire engine that belongs to a former fire fighter who's a friend of one of our members."

While Brindisi is new to being Region 1's coordinator, he has been active in PEF and the region for many years. His state service has been at the state Insurance Fund (SIF) since 1984 and he currently is a claims service representative 2.

He has been a steward of PEF Division 240 since 1989 and has served on both the joint labor-management and joint health and safety committees at the SIF. He has been a member of the PEF Executive Board, PEF chair of the Joint PEF-NYS Health and Safety Committee and a member of the PEF Workers Compensation Committee. He also has been a PEF political action liaison and member of Region 1's convention committee.

— By Sherry Halbrook



PEF Region 12: Coordinator Nora Geiser



Region 12, comprising Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island, has a long and proud history of activism in PEF. It now, for the first time, has the distinction of home region for the union's ninth and newest president, Wayne Spence.

And while Region 12 Coordinator Nora Geiser is not quite as new as some other regional coordinators elected in June, she only has a few months seniority on them.

"This is a very active region," Geiser said, "So far this year, we've held a leadership conference, two Political Action Committee meetings, a general membership meeting, and steward training. In July, our region had its 'biggest office party of the year' at the annual Marcum Challenge where we enjoyed all-day barbecue and a 5K run in the evening."

In September, Geiser said she will address the Long Island Chapter of PEF Retirees, and she is already strengthening the PEF region's ties to the Long Island Federation of Labor.

The region's delegates to the PEF convention will meet at the Region 12 office October 5 and the PAC will meet October 26.

Geiser is a teaching and research center nurse 3 at SUNY Stony Brook University Hospital, a state facility that also produced former Region 12 Coordinator Doris (Dee) Dodson.

Geiser began her career at the medical center as a registered nurse with an associate's degree and is currently an associate clinical professor.

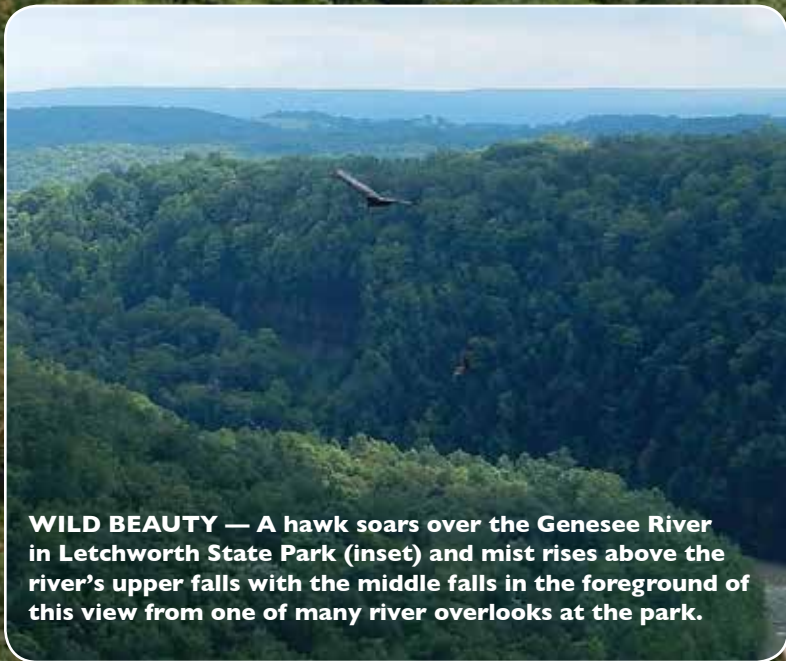
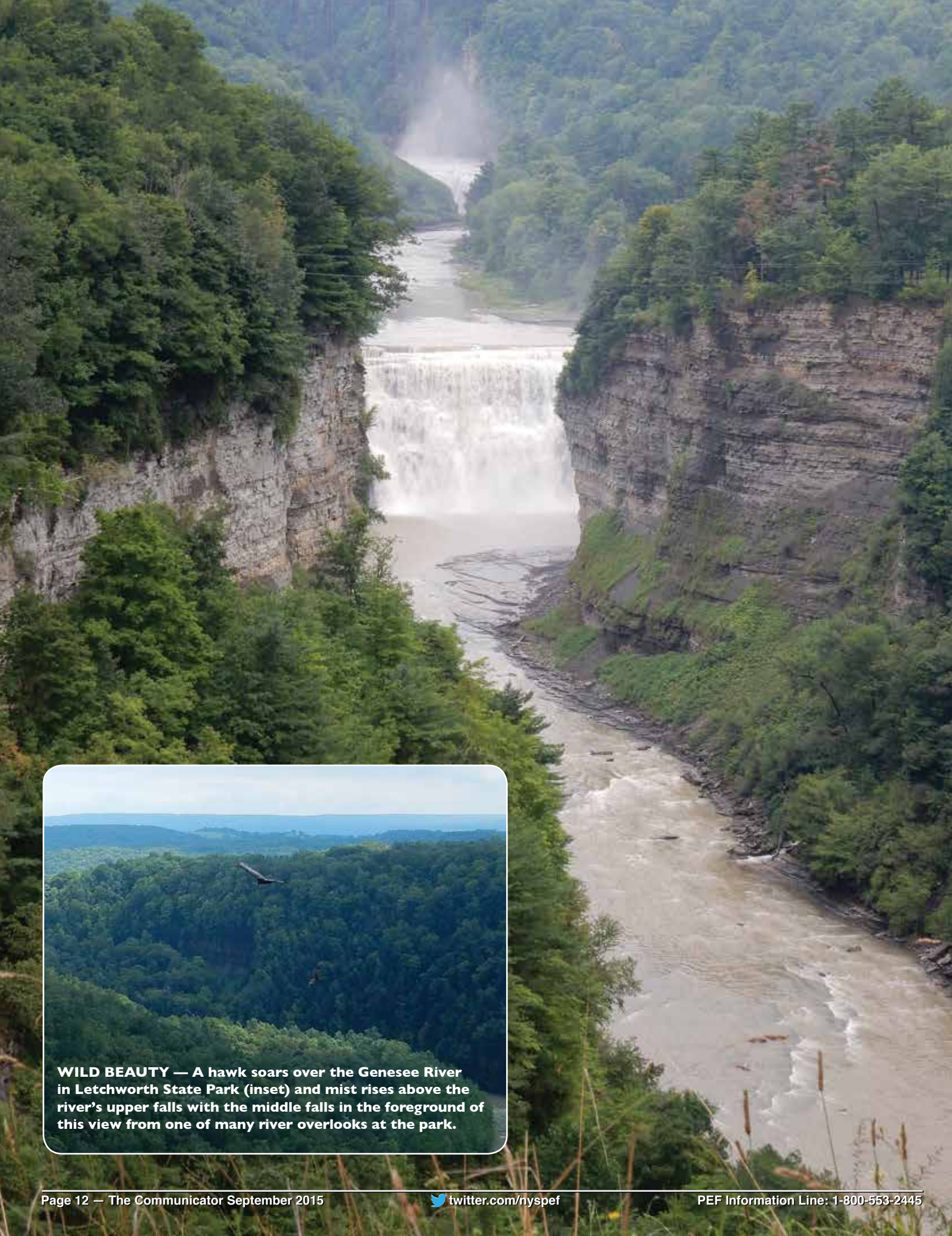
"I earned my bachelor's and master's degrees with the help of PEF's tuition-reimbursement program," Geiser said.

At Stony Brook she has served on both the Legislative Action Committee and the Cultural Diversity Committee of the United Nurses Congress.

Geiser has been both the secretary and a steward of PEF Division 225, active on the Region 12 PAC, and a delegate to PEF conventions where she was a featured soloist once in singing the national anthem.

— By Sherry Halbrook





WILD BEAUTY — A hawk soars over the Genesee River in Letchworth State Park (inset) and mist rises above the river's upper falls with the middle falls in the foreground of this view from one of many river overlooks at the park.

Letchworth voted nation's top state park



Story and photos by SHERRY HALBROOK

Spectacular vistas, roaring waterfalls, soaring hawks, wild deer and gracious campgrounds are some of the reasons New York's Letchworth State Park was voted the best state park in the nation by readers of *USA Today* in its 2015 10 Best Readers' Choice contest.

In fact, New York had two of the top three state parks in the competition, with Watkins Glen State Park taking third place. They were chosen from among more than 6,000 state parks in the country and the 19 of those that were nominated to be among the Top 10.

A visit to these magnificent parks will quickly assure you the honors are well deserved.

Letchworth's 14,000 acres flank 17 miles of the Genesee River as it runs north from southern Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario. Located southwest of Rochester, the park overlays the boundary between Wyoming and Livingston counties.

With cliffs and peaks towering as much as 600 feet above the Genesee River, Letchworth is sometimes called "the Grand Canyon of the East." But the park offers its visitors far more than wild and beautiful views of the river and its tributaries.

The park is open year-round with 66 miles of hiking trails, many of them open for cross country skiing, snow tubing and snowmobiling in the winter. It has trails for horseback riding and biking, too. Swim, take hot-air balloon rides May through October, go rafting on the river or take

guided nature walks led by PEF member Doug Bassett, an environmental educator 2 at the state Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, which operates the park.

Bassett is just one of many PEF members and approximately 260 state Parks and Rec regional employees mainly based at Letchworth who work every day to make this and several other state parks and boat launches in the area ready and welcoming to thousands of New Yorkers and visitors from throughout the country and the world.

Letchworth is a great place to work, said PEF member Tim Bucknam, a park engineer with 28 years of state service. Not only does the work offer a good variety of engineering challenges, he said, the setting is a great stress reliever.

"If you need to clear your head, just go outside for a few minutes," Bucknam said. Currently, he and some of the other engineering staff are focused on improving playgrounds in the region's parks.

Senior park engineer Mike Petti, also a PEF member, said he is currently supervising work on such things as the park's water system, a new campground, and new bathrooms and showers as well as the playground improvements.

Since many of the structures and facilities in the park are more than a century old and others are mid-20th Century vintage, Petti said he and the other engineers "are always trying to find a balance" between keeping true to the original materials and incorporating new,

better products.

"We want to use better materials, but we want them to look the same," Bucknam said.

"Park attendance is way up, we've added three or four staff and we're doing 10 times the work," Petti added. "It's making a big difference. We have a really big focus on long-term costs and future maintenance."

Not only did the *USA Today* honor heighten public awareness of the park, Letchworth suddenly found itself in the national and international spotlight last winter when a visitor posted a photo of the park's fountain sheathed in a cone-shaped ice "volcano" on the Internet and it "went viral."

"We have a huge following," said Park Manager Roland Beck. "We are on Facebook, and there is a Letchworth Lovers Facebook page. When the picture of the frozen

fountain went viral, we suddenly had hundreds of people coming into the park in the middle of the winter."

"Having the attendance going up so much, is a great challenge to us to give visitors the best Letchworth experience," said PEF member Douglas Kelly, the park's assistant manager. "I've lived most of my life near the park and two of my siblings were married here. A lot of good people work here with me. Everybody pulls together and we work as a team. I feel we are privileged to work in a place that's so beautiful and enjoyable."

While it's great for day trips, many visitors stay much longer at the park's 270 camp sites with electrical power available. It also has more than 80 cabins for rent, and the Maplewood Lodge that's available year-round for family rental. For



**PROUD ACHIEVEMENT –
Letchworth Park Assistant
Manager Doug Kelly pauses in
front of the park's visitor center.**

(Continued on next page)



GREAT WORKPLACE – Park engineer Tim Bucknam appreciates the variety of challenges the park offers.

Letchworth State Park.

Next to the inn is the William Pryor Letchworth Museum. The park is filled with rich Native American, pioneer, Civil War, state canal history and more. The park includes the grave of Mary Jemison, an Irish immigrant who at age 15 was taken captive by the Senecas in 1758. She chose to spend her life with the tribe and became well known as “the white woman of the Genesee.”

The Glen Iris Inn, which is open through the warmer months, hosts many wedding parties, as do many of the romantic overlooks throughout the park.

The biggest new project in the park is construction of a new nature center they hope to have open by next spring.

In addition to all of the regular activities and facilities, the park offers many special events. Coming up in September are its

Summer Farewell Festival on the sixth, with bands, food and fireworks. On September 12, the park will hold the 20th Annual Glen Iris 5K Run and on the 19th, the



park will hold Native American and Pioneer Heritage Days. A few weeks later, the park will hold its annual three-day Letchworth Arts and Crafts Show and Sale with more than 300 exhibitors, food vendors and live entertainment October 10-12.

“Most people who work in the park have a lot of pride in it,” Bucknam said. “We see people from all over the world coming here and enjoying the benefits of what we do.”



PLENTY TO DO – Senior park engineer Mike Petti leads the constant effort to maintain and improve park facilities.

HISTORIC SCENE – The railroad trestle above the upper falls was the world’s highest wooden bridge when it was first constructed in 1852.

(Continued from previous page)

an historic and more refined stay, the park offers the Glen Iris Inn, which was the home of William Pryor Letchworth and his family. He spent his latter years developing the estate and gave the house and approximately 1,000 acres to the state in 1907. After his death in 1910, it became



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COMPLIMENTS OF MEMBERS MORTGAGE

Trustees report on division audit issues

By PEF Trustees **RONALD BROWN, KENNETH JOHNSON and MAUREEN KELLMAN**

(Editor's note: Brown's and Johnson's terms of office ended July 31, 2015. They are succeeded by Sarah Lauser and Maddie Shannon-Roberts. Kellman was elected to a second three-year term.)

On July 20, 2015, we, the trustees of PEF, met to find answers to the following questions regarding the misuse of a PEF purchase card by the council leader of PEF Division 235 at Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center in PEF Region 9:

1. How could the misuse of funds go undetected for so many years?

2. What measures must be put in place to prevent this from happening again?

For this review, we:

1. Met with PEF Director of Finance Valerie O'Dell;

2. Reviewed the way Division 235's disbursements are handled;

3. Reviewed how annual audits of PEF divisions are performed;

4. Reviewed the role of division treasurers; and

5. Reviewed the staffing level of the PEF Financial Department.

Division Audits

Annual division audits essentially involve a division's audit committee completing a standard form. The audit committee should be comprised of members from the division.

We found such division audit committees are made up of members who, in most divisions, are not equipped to review expenditures.

The division audit form asks for a

review of:

- receipts;
- division vouchers;
- attendance sheets; and
- signatures.

Nowhere on the form is there a requirement for the review of expenditures.

It is our understanding that divisions were set up to act somewhat "independently" of statewide PEF when it comes to the use of funds. That is, divisions are given the freedom to use their funds in a manner that best suits their members.

PEF relies on the division's committees and treasurer to take an accountability role in the disbursement of funds.

Problems occur when:

- **The division has a non-functioning steward council;**
- **The treasurer is not accountable; and/or**

- **Other members within the council are not accountable.**

The issue of accountability is further complicated by the recent use of purchase cards. Unlike checks, purchase cards do not require signatures before a purchase is made.

A division may not receive any funding from PEF under any of the following conditions:

- It has no treasurer;
- Its financial reports are not filed with the PEF secretary-treasurer on time;
- No division audit has been submitted to the PEF secretary-treasurer; or
- The division lacks an approved budget.

As soon as these conditions are met, a division may ask for "forgiveness" and they will receive funding. Forgiveness is at the discretion of the secretary-treasurer. **There is currently no penalty in place for non-compliance.**

Recommendations:

1. Revise the division audit form to include a review of expenditures;

2. Provide more education to audit committees, division councils, and treasurers on their respective roles;

3. Institute approval procedures on the use of purchase cards; and

4. Institute penalties for repeat offenders who do not submit required documentations in a timely manner.

PEF Staffing

Currently, only one staff member in PEF is assigned to oversee all 220 divisions.

It is impossible for just one staff member to do in-depth annual audits for all divisions in addition to all of the staff member's other duties. On average, it takes two to four days to do an in-depth analysis of one year of one division's financial activities. This period may be longer if the audit finds questionable activities.

At this rate, only a small percentage of divisions' financial records can be audited within one year.

Recommendation: Hire adequate, qualified accounting staff to do annual division audits within PEF.

Role of the Trustees

Trustees may continue to do random audits and make recommendations, as is the current practice. However, we cannot take the place of qualified staff in performing annual audits of divisions.

Please note that, although we have statewide responsibilities, PEF's trustees do not have set release (EOL) times and must rely on at least three weeks of advance notice to the Governor's Office of Employee Relations for approval before we can meet to do any of our trustees' work.

As a result of the recent activities, PEF's director of finance is recommending the trustees review the financial records of divisions that:

1. Have long term leaders;
2. Have dysfunctional committees; and
3. Spend down their money.

PEF trustees commit to investigating any union operational concerns

PEF Trustees Maureen Kellman, Sarah Lauser and Maddie Shannon-Roberts



KELLMAN



LAUSER



SHANNON-ROBERTS

state: "We intend to continue any outstanding investigations into concerns that were in progress, as well as addressing any new concerns. We commit to providing more avenues of communication with the members of PEF and look forward to serving you for the next three years."

If you have questions or information for the trustees, you may email them at trustees@pef.org.

Members delighted to golf for Ronald McDonald House Charities

Story and photos

by DEBORAH A. MILES

Dozens of PEF members, elected officers and PEF retirees were swinging their golf clubs on a picture-perfect day at the Normanside Country Club in Delmar August 12. The annual PEF Region 8 Golf Tournament attracted nearly 65 members from various state agencies. This year, proceeds from the tournament will be donated to Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of the Capital District, an organization focused on providing care for families and children who are in hospitals around the world.

Sheila Ambrose, a medical assistant specialist at the state Department of Health (DOH), said she was eager to participate in the tournament when she learned it would benefit the RMHC.

"I was a former volunteer at RMHC, and was glad to learn PEF was supporting this organization. Cancer touches many lives, including those of our union brothers and sisters. My mother is a cancer survivor and my brother passed away from brain cancer. Helping organizations that assist families dealing with cancer is important to me," Ambrose said.

Kathy Sheridan, a tax regulations specialist at the state Department of



"FORE" CHILDREN — Dozens of PEF members, elected leaders and PEF retirees swing their golf clubs on a picture-perfect August day at the Normanside Country Club in Delmar. The annual PEF Region 8 golf tournament attracted members who work at various agencies and facilities across the state.

Taxation and Finance (DTF), said she wanted to honor the tradition of playing in PEF's tournament.

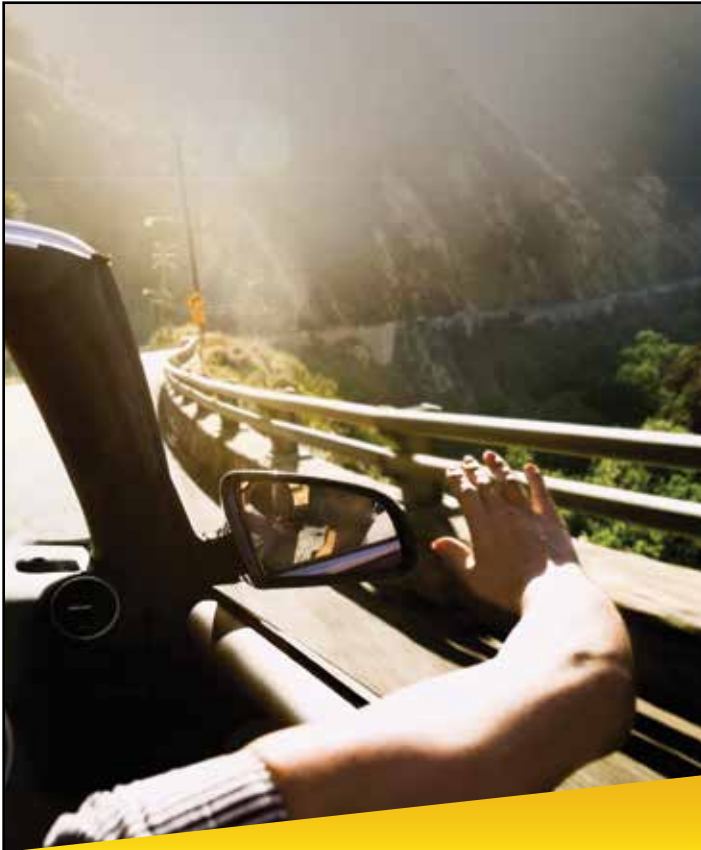
"Some of my co-workers were unable to participate because of scheduling conflicts. I was happy to make it as I respect PEF for giving back to the community every year. After I listened to the remarks of Debbie Ross, resident director of RMHC, it warmed my heart to know the proceeds will be going to this extremely deserving organization."

PEF Region 8 Coordinator Mike Blue said the tournament demonstrated the commitment of PEF members to raise the bar and help benefit a worthy cause.

PEF Executive Board Member Joe Donahue's foursome won the men's first place with a score of 58. A close second-place score, 59, for men went to Josh Ives, Matt Falzano, Joe Scialdo (all at DOH), and Christopher Young (DTF).

The mixed couples first place went to Patti Mason's team with a score of 64, and second place was won by PEF Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Hintz, who played with former PEF Regional Coordinators Tom Donahue, John Prince and PEF staff Nancy Wolff. Their score was 68.

The longest drive was made by Jesse Canino, from the state Office of Information Technology Services.



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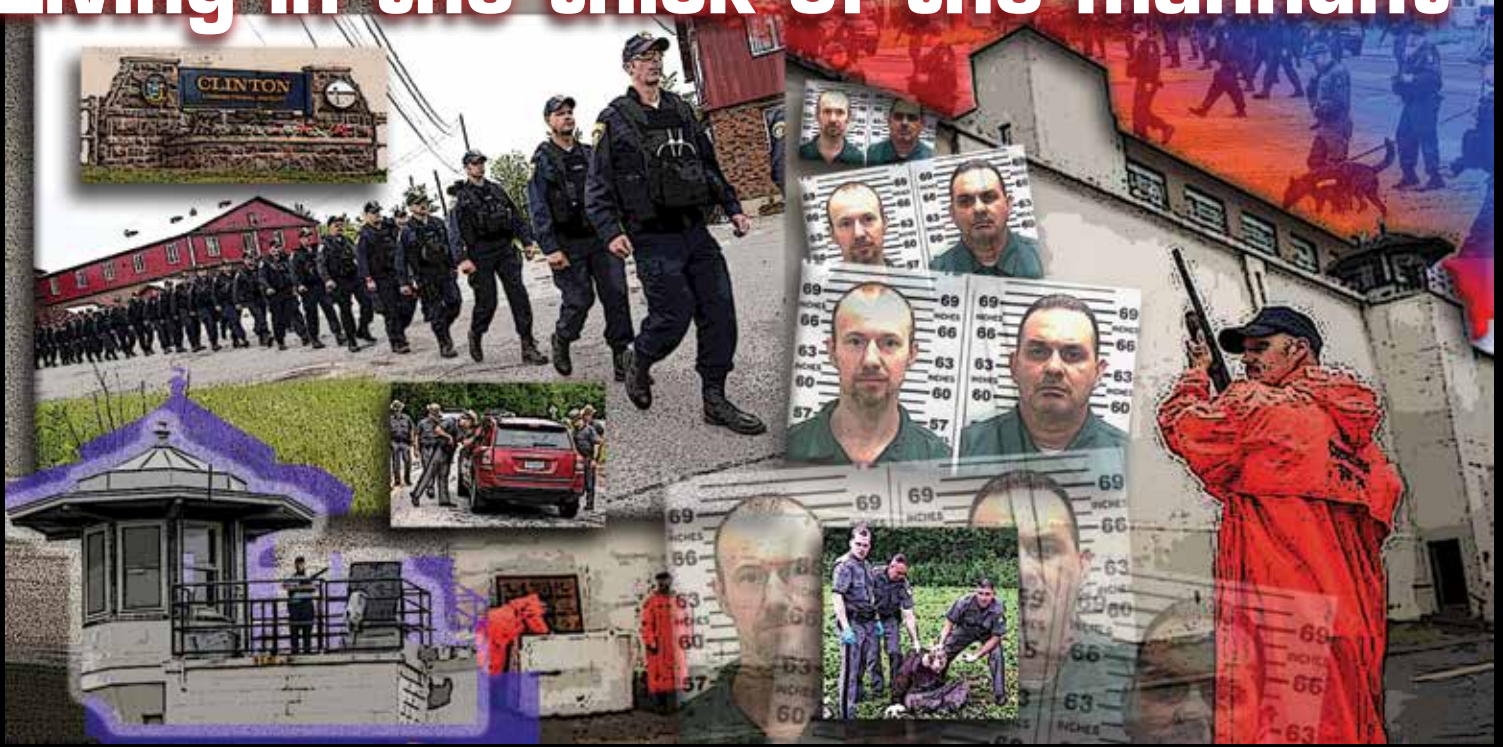
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Living in the thick of the manhunt



By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

“It was hell. I live two miles from where the prisoner was shot.”

Those are the words of a PEF-represented nurse who lives close to Malone. The nurse was referring to June 26, when a federal agent killed Richard Matt, a convict who captured the attention of the nation along with his prison partner, David Sweat.

Matt and Sweat gained almost instant household recognition, as the two convicted murderers executed a long-planned and stunning escape from the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora. For 20 grueling days prior, hundreds of state troopers, corrections officers, federal agents and local officers scoured the rural areas around the prison and beyond, inching their way through thick forests in heavy rainfall and humidity. Then they finally got a glimpse of Matt, and he refused to drop a shotgun. That’s when the federal agent took him out.

“The shooting occurred very close to my home,” said the nurse, who works at one of the many state prisons in northern New York, and at a hospital. “I still had to go to work. I worked at the hospital that day and was not allowed to go home. I was involved in the whole case as a hospital nurse. The investigation into Matt’s death has been ongoing.

“Life was not the same. We couldn’t get home. There were roadblocks. We were escorted, and I stayed with family members.”

When asked, “Were you afraid?”

“Absolutely,” the nurse responded. “It was pretty scary. The people at the prison where I work were the ones monitoring the roadblocks. I can’t say enough about the great job of the law enforcement officers. The people from the correctional facilities, border patrol and state troopers were fantastic. I think the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) corrections officers got a bad rap. They were excellent in every way.”

Gerald Cahill, a clinical physician at Franklin Correctional Facility, agreed.

“Never take law enforcement or people who work in corrections for granted. They did phenomenal work during this episode. It is possible that those of us living on the outside know that maybe this breakout could have been prevented. I am repeating what some reliable sources here have said. People working at corrections facilities can’t make appropriate decisions without going all the way up the chain of command. The superintendent at Clinton CF was unable to get a lockdown at his facility after an uprising in the yard because the people in Albany would not approve the overtime or extra staff. People can’t make front-line decisions the way they want, and they should be able to.”

Cahill said the escape and manhunt changed the way people feel about their lives.

“It changed the quality of our life a great deal. The uncertainty of where these individuals were at any one time, was really upsetting. For the first time in our lives, my wife and I felt we had a false sense of security. We had installed an alarm system before the breakout, but never used it until they escaped. Every night, I double checked the locks on our doors. I leave very early in the morning to go to the facility. I checked inside my garage and behind it. As it happened, Sweat wasn’t far from our home when he was trying to get to Canada, no more than a half mile away. This made us more aware as the North Country is heavily populated with correctional facilities. You must have great security to ensure the civilian population is protected,” Cahill said.

Approximately 110 PEF members live in Malone and Constable, where Sweat was shot and captured by a state police sergeant June 28. While some described taking similar precautions such as Cahill did, others reported that life didn’t change.

Jeffrey Mulverhill, an offender rehabilitation coordinator at DOCCS, said the one thing he noticed was “more police presence.”

Konstantin Levin, a dentist at Upstate CF, said he was not affected during the manhunt.

“Everything in my life was pretty much normal,” said Greg Cunningham, a traffic system technician at the state Department of Transportation. “Everyone was watching it on TV, but I slept well at night. I had my guns with me at all times.”



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PEF loses former trustee to cancer

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

Many PEF members were shocked and saddened to learn in July they had lost the union's longest serving trustee to brain cancer.

Seth Olubiyi Sehindemi, 68, died July 1 in the Bronx which had been his home for many years.

Born Seth Olubiyi Sehindemi, November 13, 1946, in Nigeria, he was the son of the late Pa Samuel Olayinka Sehindemi and the late Catharine Oladunni Omotomilola.

After completing his elementary and secondary schooling, he worked briefly at the Federal Board of Internal Revenue in Lagos, Nigeria before traveling to the U.S. where he studied economics and business administration at Long Island University, graduating in 1977 with a BA in economics and later with his masters' degree in business administration.

He went to work for the NYS Department of Social Services in late 1980 and continued in state service until his retirement April 30, 2015, as a management specialist at the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance in New York City.

Better known to PEF members as Mr. B, Biyi or simply "B," he was first elected a PEF trustee in September 2001 when he filled the mid-term vacancy created by the resignation of Glendore Ulerie. He served through July 2012, for a total of nearly 11 years.

"His work as a trustee and in the union was very important to him," said his friend of 30 years, PEF retiree Richard Dillard. "B really cared about what he was doing for the union."

Before becoming a PEF trustee, Mr. B served PEF Division 191 in elected posts ranging from steward to secretary and assistant council leader. He also served the union as chair of the Ethics Committee of the Black Caucus of PEF, a member of the Equal Opportunity Committee, chair of the Fiscal Review Committee, and as a member of the PS&T Contract Article 15 Professional Development Committee.

In his campaigns for the office of trustee (a watchdog role), he described himself as "a no-nonsense fiscal conservative with the experience to get the job done."

"He was truly a blessing to the Black Caucus and holding the office of trustee of this great union for so many years," said

Caucus President Elizabeth Cheese. "We loved him."

"I can still see him at the microphone at PEF Executive Board meetings, presenting a balanced approach," said Marie-Carmelle Souffrant.

"Mr. B was my union buddy," said Ron Honig. "I would always see him at union functions and conventions. He made the union a better organization and the world a better place to live. We all miss his role as self appointed social director and we called him 'Ambassador of Gertz Plaza'

"We all miss his calls for our birthdays," Honig said, adding it was especially painful losing his friend the day before his (Honig's) birthday. "I wanted to hear his voice again. I miss him very much."

"I will never forget his thoughtfulness and kindness. His birthday cards and holiday greetings always brought a smile to my face," said PEF Secretary-Treasurer Carlos J. Garcia.

Dillard said he cherishes memories of the many great times he and Mr. B shared as roommates and travel companions

for PEF events, where they frequently functioned as devoted and skilled photographers for *The Communicator*.

"Mr. B and I spent many hours on the road between the Bronx and Albany," Dillard recalled. "We discussed many things, including cars. I knew he liked big cars because when I first met him, back in the early '80s, he was driving a big, old, beat-up Cadillac. We were driving back to the Bronx from the Desmond Hotel after my first Executive Board meeting and I asked him to stop so I could play the Lotto and get a Starbucks Frappachino. I told him if I hit the Lotto jackpot I would buy him a new car, and I asked him what kind he wanted, thinking he would say a Cadillac.

"He looked at me and said, 'Chuck D., I want a Hummer!'

"I looked at him and we both started laughing. I said, 'No way, am I going to buy you a car that only gets 8 miles to the gallon!' From then on, every time we left Albany and stopped so I could play the Lotto and get a Frappachino, he would ask: 'Where is my Hummer?' And I would respond, 'I didn't hit the jackpot, and if I did I'm not buying you a damned Hummer!' And we would both burst out laughing about it all over

again.

"I will truly miss my friend Mr. B and that's just one of the many good times and laughs we shared."

Mr. B is survived by a son, Abayomi Sehindemi, who lives in England with his wife and three children, and daughters Ramona Ruffin of Michigan and Opeolu Sehindemi of the Bronx, as well as several sisters, brothers, nieces and nephews.

Ruffin said, "Biyi was a loving father, husband, caring brother and trusted friend."



when we worked there," said Ron Honig.

While Mr. B's professional skills and efforts on behalf of the state and the union were deeply appreciated, it was his way of connecting with people personally that brought him a great wealth of friends who invariably comment on his penchant for faithfully calling them on their birthdays to sing "Happy Birthday" in his deep base voice and slight accent. He always ended by saying, "This is B," as if the friend could be in any doubt of who had left this 7 a.m. serenade on their phone.



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Enroll in Flex Spending to cut your taxes

By **DEBORAH STAYMAN**

If you want to use the Flex Spending Account (FSA) program in 2016, which PEF negotiated with the state to help PS&T members save money on their taxes, you must enroll between October 5 and November 9, 2015.

The FSA has two benefits: the Health Care Spending Account (HCSAccount) and the Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAAccount). They allow you to set aside pre-tax earnings from your paycheck to reimburse yourself for health care or dependent care. In addition to the tax advantage of using these programs, the state subsidizes enrollments in the DCAAccount to help you pay for child care or other dependent care.

Even if you are enrolled in one or both of these accounts for 2015, that enrollment will not automatically renew. You must enroll again this year if you want to participate in 2016.

You may enroll online at www.flexspend.ny.gov or by calling 800-358-7202. If you have additional questions, you may email them to fsa@goer.ny.gov.

Enrolling in either benefit is voluntary. How much you save on your taxes will depend on factors such as your annual income, the number of dependents you claim on your taxes, and the amount of money you contribute through payroll deductions to your HCSAccount and/or DCAAccount.

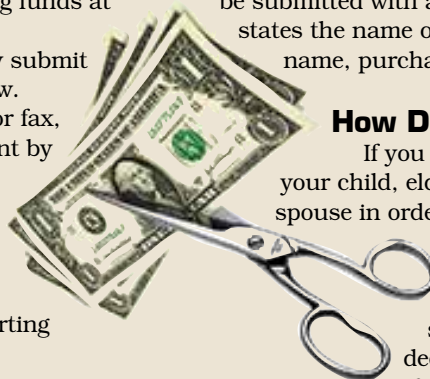
It's important to understand that you may not pay directly for eligible expenses from these accounts. You must pay the expenses first and then submit claims for reimbursement from your HCSAccount or DCAAccount.

To enroll, you must estimate your annual out-of-pocket costs, and then

decide how much money to have withheld from your paychecks. Be very careful to estimate conservatively, because if you don't file reimbursement claims to use the entire amount you had withheld in 2016, you will lose any remaining funds at the end of the year.

Once enrolled, you may submit claims online through www.myFBMC.com or by mail or fax, then receive reimbursement by check or direct deposit.

The two-step online process allows enrollees to upload scanned images of completed claim forms along with scans of supporting documents.



How HCSAccount works

If you are eligible, you may contribute any amount totaling from \$100 to \$2,550 annually in pre-tax dollars to a HCSAccount and use those funds to reimburse yourself for out-of-pocket medical, dental, vision, or hearing costs that are not reimbursed by health insurance. The maximum of \$2,550 is the maximum annual election allowed by the federal government. Some examples of allowable costs are prescription drug copayments, dental implants, and orthodontia fees paid to non-participating providers, deductibles, laser eye surgery and contact lenses.

Federal law limits what kinds of non-prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drug expenses can be reimbursed with pre-tax earnings. Over-the-counter drugs (even though they may be purchased without a prescription), medicines, and biologicals require a doctor's prescription to be eligible for reimbursement under the

HCSAccount.

Other OTC products (e.g., hearing aid batteries, Band-Aids, contact lens solution, etc.) are not affected by the law. OTC drug claims for reimbursement must be submitted with a receipt that clearly states the name of the drug or item, store name, purchase date and price.

How DCAA works

If you pay someone to care for your child, elderly parent, or disabled spouse in order for you

to work, you can set aside up to \$5,000 in pre-tax salary through payroll deduction to help pay for these expenses.

Examples of expenses eligible for DCAAccount reimbursement include care expenses for children below age 13, summer day camp, before/after school programs, adult day care, home aide, and housekeeper or cook (these last two must provide custodial care to be considered eligible expenses).

The state also will contribute to your DCAAccount on a sliding scale based on your earnings.

Employer contributions for 2016 are:

- \$800 for employees earning up to \$30,000;
- \$700 for those earning \$30,001 to \$40,000;
- \$600 for those earning \$40,001 to \$50,000;
- \$500 for those earning \$50,001 to \$60,000;
- \$400 for those earning \$60,001 to \$70,000; and
- \$300 for those earning \$70,001 or more.

Parents: Protect your access in medical emergency

Can you get information about your college-age child in a medical emergency?

Do you have a child who's 18 or older and attending college away from home? Every parent's worst nightmare is getting a phone call with the news that his or her son or daughter has a medical emergency and is in a hospital. Most parents would call the hospital to get information about their child's condition.

However, the hospital may refuse to release information, or to allow a parent to speak to the doctor. A hospital may choose not to disclose information due to the Privacy Rule of the Health Insurance



Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA.

Most college orientations do not address this issue, so it's important to be prepared. Three forms — HIPAA authorization, health care power of attorney and durable

power of attorney — will help a parent or legal guardian in a medical emergency. Many websites have free downloadable forms.

If a student attends college out of state, fill out the forms for the home state and the college state to avoid any challenges. Some colleges have their own forms, so be sure to sign that one, too. After the forms are completed, scan and save them on a smart phone and home computer so they are readily accessible.

— Deborah Stayman



Check, vote if your party has a primary Sept. 10

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

Thursday, September 10, is primary day in New York state. That's when voters, who are enrolled in political parties, can choose which candidates they want to run on their party's line on the November 3 ballot.

Generally, this is the year for county, city and other municipal elections. However, five mid-term vacancies in the state Legislature will also be on the November ballot and PEF has endorsed one of its own to fill the vacancy in state Assembly District 29 that represents a portion of Queens.

At its meeting June 30, the PEF Executive Board endorsed PEF member Alicia Hyndman in her bid for the Democratic nomination in the 29th AD. She has no primary opponent and she will be on the ballot in November.

Hyndman is an assistant occupational school supervisor for the state Education Department in PEF Region 10. She lives in the Rosedale section of southeast Queens where she has been an active member of Community Board 12Q and a participant

in the Rosedale Civic Association. She is president of the New York City Department of Education Council 29.

So far, PEF has not endorsed any candidates in the races to fill the vacancies in the 46th (Brooklyn) and 128th (Onondaga County) ADs, or the 19th (Brooklyn) and 52nd (Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Tioga counties) Senate districts.

"I strongly encourage all PEF members to vote in their primary and general elections," said PEF President Wayne Spence. "Please

take the time to learn about any primary races and candidates running in your district and go to the polls and vote."

If you are a member of a party that is holding a primary race in your district, but you cannot go to the polls Thursday, September 10, you may

vote by absentee ballot.

ATTENTION PEF MEMBERS: TUESDAY NOV. 3 IS ELECTION DAY

VOTE FOR ALICIA HYNDMAN

A PEF MEMBER WHO KNOWS AND SUPPORTS PEF AND OUR ISSUES

Wayne Spence, PEF President
Adreina Adams, Peter Banks, Kevin Hintz, Secretary-Treasurer
Jemma Hanson, PEF Regional Coordinator

Vote for Our Endorsed Candidate

ALICIA HYNDMAN
Democrat for Assembly District 29

- Experienced investigator and administrator with over nineteen years experience in higher education, giving back to the community.
- Long-time resident of South East Queens who is passionate about serving and
- Active member of Community Board 12Q, serving as a member of the Board's Education Committee, and also as a regular participant of the Rosedale Civic Association.
- Serves as the President of the NYC Department of Education Community District Education Council 29 working closely with principals, teachers, parents, public safety officials and community leaders to bring money and resources to local schools and to ensure that children get the highest quality education possible allowing them to be successful and move on to the next level.
- Holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the State University of New York at New Paltz, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Framingham State College, MA.
- Currently resides in Rosedale, Queens with her loving family.



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Ailing members need your leave donations

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

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

- **Kristine Brennan** is an inmate grievance program supervisor and the liaison to Puppies behind Bars at Otisville Correctional Facility. She is receiving chemotherapy and physical therapy while recovering from the amputation of her right leg above the knee. To donate leave, call the facility at 845-386-1490 and ask for the personnel department.

- **Holly Clapper** is a nurse 2 at Green Haven Correctional Facility. She is being treated for several medical issues. To donate leave, call the facility's personnel office at 845-221-2711, ext. 3600.

- **Stephanie Coglitore** is a psychiatric nurse 2 at Hutchings Psychiatric Center. She has an autoimmune disorder that requires intermittent surgeries and causes surges in her symptoms that make her unable to work until they subside. To donate leave, call 315-426-3616 and ask for Wendy in the Human Resources Department or email wendy.willm@omh.ny.gov.

- **Andrea (Ackerley) Collins** is a housing specialist 2 at the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance in Albany. She is undergoing treatment for myasthenia gravis and recurring cancer. To donate leave, contact Kathy Salisbury at 518-474-0960 in the OTDA personnel office.

- **Collette Collins** is an offender rehabilitation coordinator at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. Her recovery from glaucoma surgery last May was interrupted and has been delayed by injuries suffered in an accident in October. To donate leave, call the facility at 914-941-0108, ext. 3600.

- **Jeffrey Collins** is a teaching and research center nurse 2 at SUNY Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse. He is recuperating from open-heart surgery. To donate leave, contact Linda Mazzone in human resources at the hospital. Her number is 315-464-4943.

- **Helen Crane** is a principal health care manager at the state Health Department in Albany. She is undergoing treatment for late-stage Lyme disease. To donate leave, call Melissa Mulrain in the department's personnel office at 518-473-3333.

- **Kimberly Ernst-Harris** is an offender rehabilitation coordinator at Coxsackie Correctional Facility. She is recovering from surgery. To donate leave, call the facility at 518-731-2781.

- **William Gaudette** is an information technology specialist 1 at the state Office

of Children and Family Services. He is undergoing a series of surgeries for his back. To donate leave to him, call the agency's benefits unit at 518-473-7936.

- **Chad and Megan Goodell** both need leave donations. They are teaching and research center nurse 2s at University Hospital in Syracuse. Chad is recovering from multiple fractures and injuries suffered when he was struck by a truck while he was snow blowing their driveway. Megan is homebound with an at-risk pregnancy. To donate leave to Chad or Megan, contact Linda Mazzone in human resources at the hospital. Her number is 315-464-4943.

- **Lori Grabowski** is a teaching and research center nurse 2 at SUNY Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse. She is being treated for lymphoma. To donate leave, contact Linda Mazzone in human resources at the hospital. Her number is 315-464-4943.

- **Heidi Haskell** is a nurse 2 at SUNY Stony Brook Medical Center on Long Island. She is recovering from knee-replacement surgery and also is being treated for a chronic illness. To donate leave, call the hospital's Human Resources Office at 631-444-4700.

- **Cora Hayes** is an intensive case manager at New York City Children's Center in Brooklyn. She is recovering from spinal surgery. To donate leave, call the center at 718-931-0600 and ask for the human resources office.

- **Joanne Hennessy** is a labor services representative for the state Labor Department in Troy. She is recovering from rotator cuff surgery and is undergoing treatment for ulcerative colitis. To donate leave, call the department's Human Resources Office at 518-457-9045.

- **Elizabeth Leahy** is an information technology specialist 2 for the state Office of Information Technology Services in Albany. She is being treated for complications to post-chronic Lyme disease and other serious conditions. To donate leave, email darci.boniewski@ogs.ny.gov.

- **Kayla Mahar-Liszewski** is a nurse 2 at SUNY Upstate University Hospital at Community General in Syracuse. She is having spinal surgery and treatment for a rare form of bone cancer. To donate leave to her, call Linda Mazzone in human resources at SUNY Upstate. Her number is 315-464-4943.

- **Leonardo Mangiaracina-Martinez** is an offender rehabilitation coordinator at Mohawk Correctional Facility in Rome. He is being treated for pulmonary

embolisms, post-traumatic stress disorder and other ailments stemming from a car accident. To donate leave to him, call his facility's personnel office at 315-339-5232, extension 3600.

- **Jim Mextorf** is a program technology analyst 3 at the state Office of Information Technology Services. Following severe complications to diabetes, he has had several surgeries and he needs a kidney transplant. To donate leave, call his personnel office at 518-473-0398 or email hr.benefits@its.ny.gov.

- **Tim Norton** is a senior engineering technician at the state Transportation Department in Binghamton. He is having a series of surgeries to his back. To donate leave, call Dawn Mochler in DOT Human Resources at 607-721-8144.

- **Karen (Kay) OKeefe** is a licensed master social worker 2 at Pilgrim Psychiatric Center on Long Island. She has been unable to work since June 1 while undergoing treatment for lymphoma. To donate leave, call Pilgrim at 631-761-3500 and ask for the personnel office.

- **Kathy Sainsbury** is a nurse 2 at Wende Correctional Facility in Alden. She is recuperating from hip-replacement surgery. To donate leave to her, contact Wende's personnel office at 315-937-4000.

- **Crista Sanders** is a nurse administrator 1 at Groveland Correctional Facility in Sonyea. She is recuperating from major surgery. To donate leave to Sanders, contact Pam Wagner in the DOCCS human relations department at pam.wagner@doccs.ny.gov.

- **Gary Smith** is a labor services representative at the state Labor Department in Hempstead. He is recuperating from a rare brain stem stroke that has left him severely disabled. To donate leave to him, call 518-457-9040 in the DOL human relations department.

- **Pamela Talkovsky** is an information technology specialist 4 at the state Department of Financial Services in New York City. She is having major surgery and also is being treated for other medical conditions. To donate leave to Talkovsky, call Laurie Bellinger at the department's office of human resources at 518-486-1774.

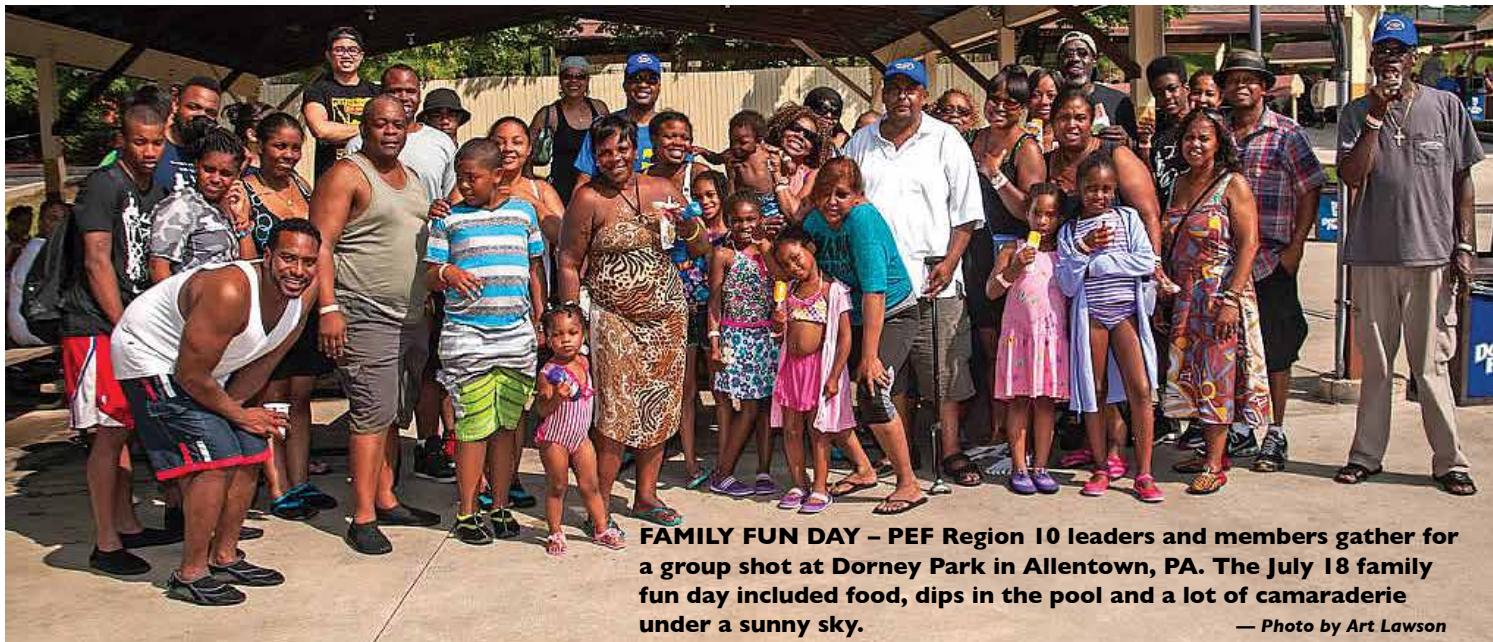
- **Kristen Trapalis** is an offender rehabilitation coordinator at Greene Correctional Facility. She is being treated for recurring cancer. To donate leave, contact Sherry McGinnis in the facility's personnel office at 518-731-2741.

- **Audrey Tyson** is an insurance premium auditor 2 at NYS Insurance



TEAM SPIRIT — Dozens of PEF Region 12 members pose for a photo at the Marcum Workforce Challenge held at Jones Beach July 28. The PEF team could be spotted wearing navy shirts with a yellow PEF logo. Among the runners were PEF Region 12 Coordinator Nora Geiser (L), and Gina Fanelli, Karen Graulich and Lisa Tettelbach from the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Bill Pike, a civil engineer at the state Department of Transportation, was the team captain. The event supports the Long Island's Children's Museum, Children's Medical Fund of New York, Long Island Cares, Inc. – The Harry Chapin Food Bank, and the Nassau Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

— Photos by Bill Pike



FAMILY FUN DAY – PEF Region 10 leaders and members gather for a group shot at Dorney Park in Allentown, PA. The July 18 family fun day included food, dips in the pool and a lot of camaraderie under a sunny sky.

— Photo by Art Lawson

Fund. She is receiving an organ transplant and faces a 12-week recovery. To donate leave to her, email the NYSIF personnel office at lyahm@nysif.com.

• **Cristie VanGorden** is a nurse 2 at Coxsackie Correctional Facility. She has severe tendonitis and severe tarsal tunnel syndrome in her feet as well as back pain. To donate leave, call the facility at 518-731-2781 and ask for the personnel office.

• **Lisa Wallace** is a nurse 2, psychiatric, at Mid-Hudson Psychiatric Center. She must have major surgery. To donate leave,

call the facility at 845-374-8929.

• **Robert Weaver** is a project assistant for the state Statewide Financial System in Albany. He continues to be treated for severe complications to West Nile virus and had surgery in May. To donate leave, call Lorissa Camarda at the state Division of Budget human relations department at 518-474-7366.

• **Bill Wiemers** is a teacher 4 at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. He has a debilitating autoimmune disease that reduces his ability to work on a regular

basis. To donate leave, call the facility at 914-941-0108, extension 3600.

The rules for making and receiving leave donations are set forth on page 148 of the 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.



Fond farewells

By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

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

- **Rosemary Ballaro**, PEF Division 295, state Department of State;
- **Michael Bastian**, PEF Division 357, state Office of Information Technology Services;
- **Kelly Biviano**, PEF Division 304, Central NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Cathy Borelli**, PEF Division 357, state Office of Information Technology Services;
- **Harry Cooke**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Anastasia Cromie**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Donna DiCesare**, PEF Division 275, state Department of Agriculture and Markets;
- **Janice DiDonna**, PEF Division 189, Central NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Patricia Driscoll**, PEF Division 262, Empire State Development;
- **Michelle Flanagan**, PEF Division 189, Central NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;

- **Barbara Franklin**, PEF Division 167, Western NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Roy Gottlieb**, PEF Division 357, state Office of Information Technology Services;
- **Mary K. Hernandez**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Daniel Hoage**, PEF Division 189, Central NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Greg Kidd**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Ida M. Kraichy**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Judith Lake**, PEF Division 167, Western NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Ung-Kyu Lim**, PEF Division 189, Central NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Andrea Lingenfelter**, PEF Division 356, Wyoming Correctional Facility;
- **Christopher Maloy**, PEF Division 189, Central NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Cherin McGinty**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;

- **Glen Mikkelsen**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Kimberly Norwood**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Cecily Peinkofer**, PEF Division 167, Western NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Chandra Perry-Patterson**, PEF Division 236, state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision;
- **Susan Rifenberg**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Arlene Rozell**, PEF Division 190, state Department of Taxation and Finance;
- **Judith Shampine**, PEF Division 189, Central NY Developmental Disabilities Services Office;
- **Gary Sick**, PEF Division 284, state Department of Transportation;
- **Peter VanWely**, PEF Division 284, state Department of Transportation;
- **Robert Wrona**, PEF Division 284, state Department of Transportation; and
- **Emilio Zoli**, PEF Division 284, state Department of Transportation.

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

Special elections starting to fill E Board vacancies



By **SHERRY HALBROOK**

PEF is busy tying up the loose ends from its Triennial Elections.

In August, Kevin Dobies was certified the winner of a runoff election to fill Executive Board Seat 210, which represents all PEF

Region 8 members working at the state Insurance Fund.

Appeals were made to the Triennial Elections Committee that elections for Executive Board Seats 195 and 200 did not produce valid results because some candidates' petitions were erroneously ruled invalid. However, those appeals have been ruled untimely. That ruling may be appealed to the PEF Executive Board.

In the case of Seat 195, which represents certain Region 8 members

working at the state Health Department (DOH), the petitions of one candidate, Pat Pafundi, were invalidated in error and, as the only certified candidate, Jeffrey Shepardson was announced the winner.

In the race for Executive Board Seat 200 that represents certain DOH employees downstate, a data error caused some nominating petitions of Susan Billi to be disqualified in error by the computer company retained to examine PEF eligibility records. The Triennial Elections Committee did not catch the error until appeals were filed and the basis of the appeals examined. Ramlochand Singh had already been announced as the sole certified candidate and, therefore, the winner.

In addition, the Triennial Elections Committee received an appeal from Susan Kent who was running for re-election as PEF president. The committee will meet in September to review that appeal.

No candidates were certified in the Triennial Elections for several board seats, including Seats 15, 90, 197 and 545. Those seats and any new mid-term vacancies will be subject to the PEF

fourth-quarter special elections.

The constituencies of these seats are:

- **Seat 15** represents members at the state Department of Civil Service;
- **Seat 90** represents members at Higher Education Services Corp;
- **Seat 197** represents members at the state Health Department main office PEF Region 8 including offices at One Commerce Plaza at 875 Central Avenue in Albany, Herkimer, Saranac Lake and Glens Falls; and
- **Seat 545** represents members working in political subdivisions of New York state: Albany Housing Authority; Albany County Probation; and Allegany County.

Nominating petitions will be available for these seats September 15 and must be submitted to PEF headquarters by October 8. If more than one candidate for a seat is certified, ballots will be mailed October 28 to members in that constituency. They must be returned to AAA by November 18, for counting November 19.

Training benefits Mohawk CF staff prior to the arrival of mentally ill inmates

By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

In recent years, state correctional facilities have experienced an overflow of mentally ill inmates. Recent stories in *The New York Times*, such as the death of Samuel Harrell, an inmate at Fishkill Correctional Facility who suffered from a bipolar disorder and was allegedly beaten to death for erratic behavior, magnify the need for proper mental health treatment in state prisons and staff training.

PEF and the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) have been addressing this major issue at meetings and through testimony at legislative hearings.

It has made a difference.

DOCCS has partnered with the state Office of Mental Health (OMH) to provide the necessary treatment for inmates diagnosed with a mental illness. That population of inmates continues to be on the upswing.

To relieve the pressure on staff who work at prisons with a mentally ill inmate population, DOCCS has unrolled an initiative to transfer some of these inmates to other facilities. Mainly, the initiative provides OMH training to the staff at every correctional facility throughout the state that will receive this special needs inmate population.

Steven Drake, PEF labor-management chair for DOCCS and a vocational instructor at Mohawk Correctional Facility, said, "DOCCS Assistant Commissioner Brian Hilton has been a great asset in pushing forward and expanding the OMH training for DOCCS staff."

The Mohawk CF in Rome was one of the first facilities to accept some of the "overflow" inmates diagnosed with mental illness. Mohawk was categorized as a level 6 facility, a prison that houses a general population of inmates, those not requiring any special care. The plan was for it to become a level 2 facility, one that receives inmates who can function in a general population, but may require medication for mental illness and monthly mental health monitoring.



STEVE DRAKE AND LINDSAY BONANZA

Here, PEF members took the lead to ensure this initiative would be positive for both the staff and inmates.

When Drake became aware Mohawk was going to receive mentally ill inmates, he met with former DOCCS Assistant Commissioner Diane Van Buren to review the plan. He was accompanied by two teacher 4 members, Lindsay Bonanza at Mohawk CF, and PEF Executive Board Member Cathy Coty who works at Marcy CF, a maximum-security prison known for its success dealing with a mentally ill population.

"We discussed OMH training for the staff prior to the arrival of the inmates diagnosed with mental illness," Drake said. "Everyone agreed and the initiative started in January 2014, and we received training in April of that year."

"Mohawk was the first facility to receive training prior to the arrival of the inmates diagnosed with mental illness," Bonanza said. "DOCCS filtered them into our general population slowly, so the staff could gain knowledge, and to become aware of what to look for and what to expect if any one exhibited unusual behavior."

Currently, there are approximately 260 inmates diagnosed with some type of mental illness who are part of Mohawk's 1,400 inmate population. Drake and Bonanza said the training

played an integral role in supporting this initiative.

The training described the various levels of mental illness, and the signs to observe when an individual may be receiving the wrong medication, or may have another health issue that affects the medication.

Bonanza explained a level 1 correctional facility has a permanent staff of OMH nurses and physicians. At Mohawk, an OMH psychologist and social workers are there five days a week. She credited Mohawk CF Superintendent Paul Gonyea for "opening the

doors with OMH to make its staff feel like a partner at Mohawk, rather than a visitor."

"It is a slow process, but we are headed in a better direction. Our superintendent participates in this partnership and helps keep things moving in the right direction," Bonanza said.

"I am in the classroom with the inmates teaching basic education. The training has reminded me there may be more to the story if issues arise in the classroom. If there is some misbehavior, or if someone is having difficulty paying attention or falling asleep, it could be a sign something may be wrong. Prior to the training, we didn't know what to look for. With the OMH staff here daily, we have extra resources and can fill out mental health referrals when a teacher or other staff member questions the behavior of an inmate. The inmate benefits because he gets immediate attention."

Bonanza said, as a teacher, she is always looking for the best way to bring out the good in her students and their positive attributes so they can re-enter the outside world with more knowledge and confidence to take the right path.

"The training we received was like an extra tool to help us achieve our goals," Bonanza said. "When the inmates are released, if they have a few more skills on how to deal with their challenges, it can only benefit them."

Military-style drug treatment program prevails at Willard

By **DEBORAH A. MILES**

A week rarely goes by without hearing news about a drug bust, someone who has died of an overdose or was killed by a drunk driver, or the trials of a young teenager hooked on heroin. Addiction to drugs and alcohol is growing and has no regard to gender, age, race or income.

The rich and famous may seek help at the Betty Ford Center or a luxury rehabilitation facility such as Passages in Malibu, CA.

One place offering substance abuse help in New York state is Willard Drug Treatment Campus (DTC), adjacent to Seneca Lake in the Finger Lakes region.

Willard is very unique, as it exclusively provides treatment for convicted felons with programs similar to a bootcamp, unlike the treatment programs padded with gourmet foods, Jacuzzis and tennis courts.

Willard is a specialized prison operated by the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) and is licensed by the state Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services. It opened in 1995 as a new sentencing option for low-level drug offenders and parole violators, but its treatment program includes an ironclad regime.

For almost 19 years, Sheila Lutz has worked as a registered nurse at this facility that can hold up to 1,000

inmates. The census figure changes week to week, but it hovers around 700. They range in age from 17 to those in their 70s, and include both men and women who reside in separate housing units on the campus.

"The population has changed since I started working here," Lutz said. "They are older, sicker and nastier. We never used to have the fights like the ones we do now. We get people who have spent 20 to 30 years in prison and when they come here, they think they know how to live in the Willard DTC environment.

"Willard offers a different program, and our goal is to help people by holding them accountable and we do not enable them. We try to make them understand it is not

what you want, but what you need. Our society is built on immediate gratification. When you earn something, you have more self-esteem. Our program teaches them to work hard and earn it. It is a modified shock incarceration program. It lasts 90 days, instead of the traditional six-month shock program."

In perfect formation

The hard work begins at the sound of the 5:30 a.m. reveille. The inmates put on a pressed uniform, hair off the collar, and march military style outside.

"Physical training follows, and afterward they go to the chow hall for breakfast. All of this is done in a formation pattern, much like those practiced in the military. Then the nurses distribute the medications, including psychotropic meds as well as regular meds," Lutz said. "Afterward, some inmates go to educational classes where they are required to wear white shirts and ties. Others attend vocational programs and some have prison jobs. Following is the 12-step ASAT (Alcohol Substance Abuse

"We try to teach them how to appropriately use health care and how to function out of jail. It is the behavior we are trying to modify to help people deal with pressure without turning to alcohol or drugs." — c, Registered Nurse

Willard Drug Treatment Campus

Treatment) program. After evening chow, there is another formation when the flag is lowered. Taps is played, then it's lights out."

Nurses and staff at Willard must go through a four-week program to be totally familiar with the 12-step ASAT program. Lutz trained at the Lakeview Shock Incarceration Facility, but said training is now done at Willard for new employees.

Currently, Willard employs eight full-time nurses, and often hires per diem nurses. Due to people retiring, there is only one part-time physician on staff.

"The pay is poor and the benefit package isn't what it used to be. We are having trouble recruiting good quality staff. We are located in a rural area, and the rate

of pay here is significantly less than at any of the area hospitals," Lutz said.

Multiple duties

Despite pay inequity, Willard nurses remain devoted to their patients and take on many roles. They prepare individual care plans, a medication path, provide chronic care such as glucose testing, provide immunization clinics where vaccines are available, and administer electrocardiograms.

"We perform all the nursing duties one would expect in the private sector," Lutz said.

On Tuesday morning, a bus rolls out with the felons who have completed the program, and returns in the afternoon with a new group.

"We are a mini reception center because we turn over 50 to 60 inmates each week. We should be RN3s, as we also tend to their multiple medical and mental health problems and prepare a comprehensive medical summary for each inmate upon release. Sex offenders come through the program who are not qualified to reside

at a regular address, so special accommodations must be made. Everything here is done by exception. We are specialists within the DOCCS system.

"Everyone's health care needs are met. We try

to teach them how to appropriately use health care and how to function out of jail. It is the behavior we are trying to modify to help people deal with pressure without turning to alcohol or drugs. Often we see people raised under terrible circumstances, such as those who started using heroin under age 15. That is a tough thing."

Lutz said a friend she has known for nearly 50 years recently called and asked for help regarding her son's heroin addiction. Lutz offered ways to get the boy into a drug program.

"We are a nurse 24/7," Lutz said. "I work in a rehab program for DOCCS, but addiction is everywhere."



Nominate a Region 8 'Woman of Merit'

Do you know a woman in Region 8 who deserves some special recognition?

The Region 8 Women's Program is now accepting nominations for its 2015 Women of Merit awards.

For seven years, the program has recognized deserving Region 8 women who work tirelessly for PEF members and their communities. Nominees should be active in the union and the community as well.

To nominate someone for this recognition, submit a statement of no more than 200 words describing why she deserves the title of 2015 PEF Region 8 Woman of Merit. In addition to Region 8 PEF members, one retiree from Region 8 also will be acknowledged.

Submit your nomination by September 25 to Linda Baker at LINDABAKER0916@YAHOO.COM or to Maddie Shannon-Roberts at Maddiesr05@gmail.com.

— Sherry Halbrook

Would you lose to win?

The PEF Region 8 Women's Committee is ready to start a new round of "Lose to Win" weight-loss competition in October.

If you would like to participate and compete, the 10-week program starts October 5 with the initial "weigh in" at PEF headquarters in Latham at 5:30 p.m. and requires a registration fee of \$30.

When you return December 14 for the final "weigh out," you will be reimbursed \$5 of your registration fee. However, significant prizes are awarded to those who lose the most weight as a percentage of their weight on October 5.

The program is available only to Region 8 members.

Watch for more information on PEF bulletin boards and online.

Attention: all Region 9 members

PEF Region 9 (the Mid-Hudson Valley) will hold a membership



conference at the Villa Roma resort and conference center October 2-4.

"This is a great opportunity to meet PEF leaders, receive training and network with other

Region 9 members," said Region 9 Coordinator Vivian Street.

If you would like to attend the conference, please call Susan Finck in the Region 9 office at 845-473-5022 or 800-548-4870 for more information or to make reservations.

In addition, at 5 p.m. Friday, October 5, a meeting of all Region 9 delegates to the PEF 2015 Convention will be held at Villa Roma.

— Sherry Halbrook



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PEF receives award trifecta from ILCA

The International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) awarded PEF two first-place, two second-place and one third-place award. The results of the 2015 ILCA contest were announced in August.

PEF's Training and Education Department received a first-place Electronic Media Award for the production of a training video called "Basic Probation Issues." It was created by training specialist Tammy Carney, and Arlene Zilkowski, a research assistant in PEF's

Civil Service Enforcement Department.

PEF's Public Relations Department scooped up a first-place writing award for Best Labor History Story (July Marks Mother Jones' Fight Against Child Labor); a second-place Visual Communications Award for best photo essay (Labor Day On The Move); a second-place Saul Miller Writing Award for Political Action (Hundreds Rally To Protect Community Services); and a third-place Saul Miller Writing Award for Organizing (AFT President Cites Visibility, Unity,

Community Involvement As Key Elements for Labor's Success). Deborah Miles was the writer of the stories. They were edited and proofed by Sherry Halbrook and Paul Murphy. Mario Bruni designed the layout, and Paul Seeger formatted the contest entries.

The stories can be viewed on the PEF website by selecting the 2014 March, July-August and October issues of *The Communicator*.

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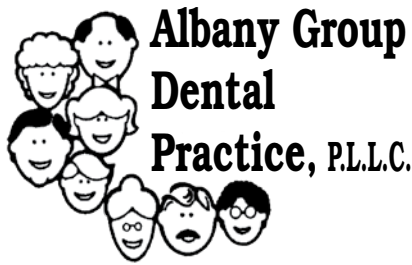
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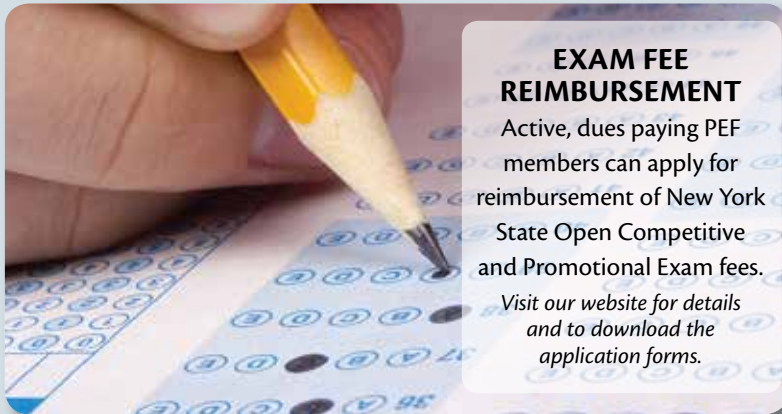
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Maddie Shannon-Roberts
Maureen Kellman *Trustees*



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Wayne Spence, *President*

Kevin Hintz, *Secretary-Treasurer*