



# GET OUT AND VOTE!

BY DARRELL KUHN

To say that there is a great deal at stake for the November 2018 election is an understatement. The fate of a plethora of issues hangs in the balance. The anti-worker agenda should put educators on notice for this midterm election.

The midterm elections are very important because we want to make sure that the anti-worker agenda in this country does not continue to win," said Newburgh Teachers Association President Stacy Moran. "Because of the amount of money corporations and billionaires like the Koch brothers and Walmart heirs spend to get particular politicians who will do their bidding elected, unions are being attacked.

"We have seen in other parts of the country that when union membership declines, wages decline, health care and other benefits are no longer available, and working conditions become less safe," Moran added. "We must change the dialogue in this country."

According to an August 8, 2018 statement from New York State United Teachers, the state-wide union for public school educators, it has withheld endorsements from every state senator who voted for more charter schools and against reforms to the state's broken testing and evaluation system in the waning hours of the legislative session.

"We have had a charter school in Newburgh that took millions of dollars away from (the Newburgh Enlarged City School District) and our students," Moran explained. "It had very little oversight, and eventually its charter was not renewed. Our students lost the benefit of those funds for all of the years it was running."

NYSUT, according to its statement, backed State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli for re-election.

CONTINUED PAGE 2

## SEEDS OF UNIONISM IN NEWBURGH

### THE NTA STRIKE OF 1973

BY CAMILLE ALAIMO

Before it became a union, the NTA was simply an association. When we unionized, we retained the name we have today, the Newburgh Teacher Association.

Although the NTA's first contract under the Taylor Law was in 1968, by 1972 Newburgh educator salaries still ranged between only \$7,800 per-year for new educators upwards to \$17,280 for veteran educators. The NTA asked that teacher salaries start at \$8,200 per-year and cap at \$18,146. Equally as important were components such as dental insurance, a sick leave bank, a job security clause, payment for credit hours, and supplementary pay for extra-curricular school activities. Each time the association brought the requests before the Board of Education, they were rejected. It seemed that the union was involved in collective begging, not collective bargaining. It became increasingly apparent that the NTA would have to organize and take more aggressive actions.

#### Salaries Not the Only Issue

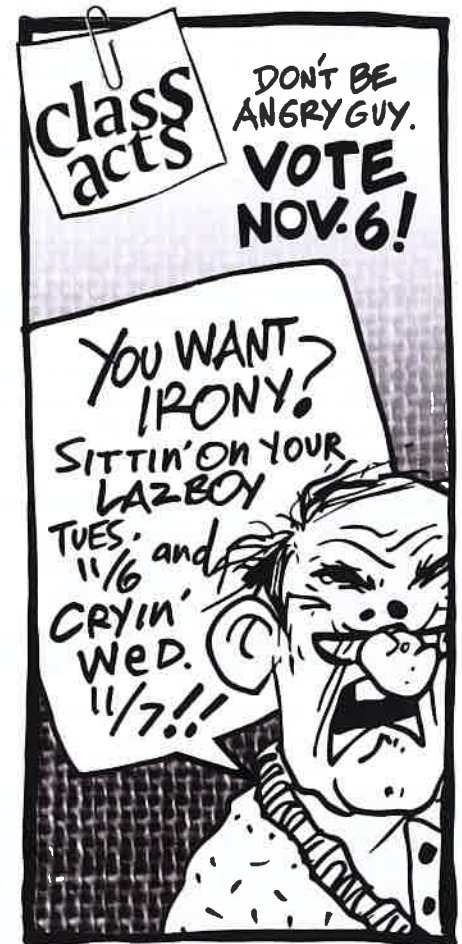
In the fall of 1973, after being refused salary increases and increments on four separate occasions,

CONTINUED PAGE 2



## INSIDE

- NFA HAPPENINGS P.3
- JANUS AFTERMATH P.3
- NYSUT ENDORSED CANDIDATES BACK COVER
- NTA SPOTLIGHT: RUSS COUGHLIN BACK COVER



GEHARDT ©2018

**GET OUT AND VOTE!**

FROM COVER

NYSUT endorsed 37 State Senate candidates, supported 136 candidates for State Assembly, and recommended to its national affiliates the endorsement of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and some two-dozen members of Congress. NYSUT also endorsed Letitia James for State Attorney General, according to the statement.

"In endorsing for State Senate, we are standing with those who have stood consistently with us," NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said in the statement. "Those (State) Senators who have turned their backs on (educators) and public education – and held students and educators hostage in hopes of dealing for more charter schools – are now being held accountable for their vote."

**THESE CANDIDATES HAVE DEMONSTRATED A WILLINGNESS TO STAND SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER WITH EDUCATORS TO FIGHT FOR BETTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND HOSPITALS.**

**NYSUT President  
— Andy Pallotta**

es, and hospitals.

Moran stressed the importance of unity.

"The NTA and its members need to remain committed to standing together so we can continue to negotiate good salaries and benefits for our members," Moran explained. "We also need to be advocates for public education. Without equal access to education, the divide between the rich and the working poor will only widen."

**SEEDS OF UNIONISM IN NEWBURGH****THE NTA STRIKE OF 1973**

FROM COVER

approximately 70% of Newburgh teachers went on strike under the leadership of John Wolner, the NTA President at the time. The district resorted to the courts and coercion, and some teachers were subpoenaed while others were threatened with incarceration.

However, there was no going back. The strike was on.

The Taylor Law of 1967 stipulated that it was illegal for public employees to strike. The penalty was that teachers and other public employees would each have to pay a fine equal to two day's salary for each day out on strike. At the end of the two-week strike, fines ranged from approximately \$1,500 to \$2,500.

Many striking educators' paychecks after the strike were between 17 and 54 cents after the District took out the fines. "It was absurd," said Russ Coughlin, a retired Newburgh Free Academy English teacher and current NTA Benefit Trust Fund Administrator. "Money wasn't the most important thing to us. We were very idealistic, many of us having come straight from the campus protests of the sixties. We weren't going to let the District push us around. For many teachers, it was one of the high points of their careers, standing up for their rights. Of course, they lost money, and there was a considerable amount of resentment and hostility towards teachers who didn't strike."

There was also plenty of support. Businesses, particularly those that were unionized, showed their support as well. UPS stopped delivering to the schools. Telephone workers would not cross the picket lines. Local delicatessens provided free coffee and donuts to the strikers. In the absence of teachers, students were crowded into gyms under the supervision of a single administrator. There was outrage when the District advertised far and wide for subs and paid them \$79 a day, a huge amount at that time. Parents received letters urging to keep their children at home.

**Benefits of the Strike of '73**

"When the strike was over, we got a good contract which still benefits us today," said Russ. "We got the Empire Plan. We got the dental



plan, which has evolved into the Benefit Trust Fund, but we didn't own our fund back then. The district purchased dental insurance through an outside agency," Russ said. Since 1985, when the NTA took it over, the union has

managed its own dental, vision, and prescription co-pay benefits. However, perhaps the most important benefit of the strike was the "no reprisal" clause that became a permanent part of the contract. This clause prevents the District from punishing teachers for union activity. The clause remains in the contract and protects us to this day.

Russ cautions that the old cliché is true: "If you don't hang together, you will surely hang separately. Without a union, teachers would be at the mercy of District administrators." Russ continued, "After the union was formed, it's been a much better job because our contract protects us. It grants us due process. Without a contract, some teachers could be treated a lot less fairly than others. The union gives all teachers the same rights."

"These days, the contract is outstanding, thanks to (NTA President Stacy Moran), who continues to preside over and build the union and the contracts that evolved during the presidency of longtime NTA President Frank Colone," Russ continued, "Indeed, we are one of a small number of districts in the state that still retains the Empire Plan at a nominal cost of 8% to teachers."

Our current contract also guarantees a competitive 2% increase each year for the next five years for a total of 10%.

Let us remember that not much more than a generation ago, there was no collective bargaining for teachers. It is because of our predecessors who built the foundation of our contract and our current leadership that we, the NTA, continue to enjoy the advantages that we have today.

Today's rights were yesterday's privileges. Salary steps, health insurance, the Benefit Trust Fund, the sick bank and many other benefits have been secured through the perseverance of those who have come before us.



**NEWBURGH  
TEACHERS'  
ASSOCIATION**

The Newburgh Teachers' Association Official Publication  
New York State United Teachers  
American Federation of Teachers  
Local 2867, AFL-CIO  
Founding Editor: John Wolner

52 Pierces Road  
Newburgh, New York 12550  
1.845.562.8120  
(fax) 845.568.7905  
(email) nta@hvc.ny.com  
www.newburghta.org



Editor Darrell Kuhn  
Writers Darrell Kuhn &  
Camille Alaimo  
Design and  
Production Jeff Gebhardt

President Stacy Moran  
Vice-President Matthew Scully  
Secretary Jillian Caci  
Treasurer Linda Vinti

# THE JANUS AFTERMATH SPELLS 100% NTA MEMBERSHIP

BY DARRELL KUHN

Despite the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in favor of the infamous Janus case in June of 2018, the Newburgh Teachers Association retained 100% of its dues-paying membership.

In the months leading up to the Janus decision, the NTA leadership started to educate its members about the dangers of opting out of paying union dues.

"We started training our representatives on how to use one-to-one conversations to educate members (in the fall of 2017)," explained NTA President Stacy Moran. "We continued the training throughout the (2017-18 school year), so they were able to have these conversations in the spring. By the end of the school year, when the decision came down, almost 100% of our members had recommitted to the union."

Ultimately, the NTA reached a recommitment from all of its members. Moran said that all of the educator and teaching assistant bargaining units recommitted.

In February of 2018, the case of Mark Janus went before the U.S. Supreme Court. Janus, an employee of the Illinois Department of Healthcare Services, sued his union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees because he does not want to pay his fair share of union dues while continuing to reap all of the union benefits.

Moran said she was not surprised that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Janus.

"Corporations won big when the Citizens United decision was handed down in their favor by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2010," Moran said. "It allows corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money to support or try to defeat a particular candidate. This opened the door for billionaires to outspend everyone in order to get anti-labor politicians to win."

"Once you get rid of the unions, working people have no protections from the greed of corporations, and then these corporations can make unlimited profits off of other people's labor," Moran added. "It is true that elections have consequences, and we knew that if (the U.S. Supreme Court) became overwhelmingly conservative, we would lose the Janus v. AFSCME case."

NTA Vice President Matt Scully believes the NTA has become stronger despite the Janus ruling and will continue to gain strength.

"People are more aware," Scully said. "People are more educated and more involved. They can see what will happen if our rights are taken away from us."

In order for the NTA to maintain its dues-paying membership at 100%, union members need to stay alert and informed about issues that could directly impact them.

"We can't get lazy or complacent and take things for granted," explained Scully. "We have to remain acutely aware that there are people out there who want to take away the rights that many people have fought for. We need to remind ourselves that we are stronger when we band together."

Moran agrees.

"We are going to continue to educate our members on the importance of collective bargaining," she said. "No one can take all of the benefits and language about our working conditions in our contract for granted anymore."

**"WE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE TO EDUCATE OUR MEMBERS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING," SHE SAID. "NO ONE CAN TAKE ALL OF THE BENEFITS AND LANGUAGE ABOUT OUR WORKING CONDITIONS IN OUR CONTRACT FOR GRANTED ANYMORE."**

— **STACY MORAN**  
NTA PRESIDENT



**WHAT:** NTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING.

**WHERE:** NTA OFFICE, 52 PIERCES ROAD, NEWBURGH, NY

**WHEN:** 11/7, 2018 @ 4:30 P.M.

**WHAT:** NTA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY.

**WHERE:** NTA OFFICE, 52 PIERCES ROAD, NEWBURGH, NY

**WHEN:** WED. 11/4, 2018 @ 4:30 P.M.

**WHAT:** NTA HEAD DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

**WHERE:** NTA OFFICE, 52 PIERCES ROAD, NEWBURGH, NY

**WHEN:** 11/28, 2018 @ 4:30 P.M.

**WHAT:** NTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING.

**WHERE:** NTA OFFICE, 52 PIERCES ROAD, NEWBURGH, NY

**WHEN:** 12/5, 2018 @ 4:30 P.M.



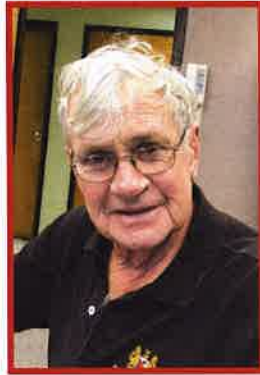
## Newburgh Teacher Center

**NICK KARNAVEZOS**  
Coordinator  
CHESTNUT STREET SCHOOL  
ntc@newburghtc.com  
**845.568.6719**

**HOURS:**

MON 10:45am - 6pm  
TUES 8am - 3:15pm  
WED 7am - 2:15pm  
THURS 10:45am - 6pm  
FRI 7am-2:15pm

BY CAMILLE ALAIMO



## MEET RUSS COUGHLIN

**LONGTIME NEWBURGH TEACHERS ASSOCIATION ACTIVIST, HEAD DELEGATE, AND ADMINISTRATOR OF YOUR BENEFIT TRUST FUND**

Russ Coughlin began his career as an English teacher at Newburgh Free Academy in 1966. His first year's salary was \$5,500.

Russ describes himself as a political activist at the height of the turbulent 60's Civil Rights Movement. Deeply saddened by the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., Russ, along with a small contingent of other NFA teachers, joined a memorial march down Broadway in Newburgh.

The superintendent at the time, like many in the country, did not look favorably upon protesters. Shortly thereafter, Russ received a letter from his draft board notifying him that his services were no longer needed by the Newburgh Enlarged City School District, and that he would no longer be deferred from military service. As a result, in June of 1968, Russ received a draft notice and was inducted into the U.S. Navy on his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday, the very last day possible, since after a man reached his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday, he was no longer eligible for the draft. Women could not be drafted at the time. Russ was stationed in Saigon, South Vietnam, as a Navy journalist.

At the end of his military service, as was required by law, Russ informed the Board of Education that he would be returning to his teaching job. The law also required that a returning veteran would get his same job back along with all accrued benefits and seniority. Instead, he was greeted with a return letter that said, in essence, thanks for serving your country, but the Newburgh School District does not have any job openings right now, so try again some other time. Russ did not take kindly to this rebuff, so he fought an uphill battle to get his job back. He eventually won, and in return, the Newburgh School District got a lifetime union activist!

**RUSS DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS A POLITICAL ACTIVIST AT THE HEIGHT OF THE TURBULENT 60'S CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.**

**NEWBURGH TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**  
52 Pierces Road  
Newburgh, New York 12550

## NYSUT Political Candidate Endorsements

**ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 6, 2018.**

NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS, THE STATEWIDE UNION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS, HAS ENDORSED SEVERAL CANDIDATES FOR THE MANY CONTESTED RACES ON ELECTION DAY.

### STATEWIDE OFFICES:

Leticia James for Attorney General  
Thomas DiNapoli for Comptroller

### US SENATE:

Kirsten Gillibrand (D)

### US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

(Hudson Valley Area):

Sean Patrick Maloney      Antonio Delgado

### NEW YORK STATE SENATE

(Hudson Valley Area):

39 James Skoufis

41 Karen Smythe

42 Jennifer Metzger

### NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY:

(Hudson Valley Area):

98 Karl Brabenec

99 Matthew Rettig

100 Aileen Gunther

101 Chad McEvoy

103 Kevin Cahill

104 Jonathan Jacobson

106 Didi Barrett

## ELECTION DAY PHONE BANKS

The Newburgh Teachers Association is hosting its phone banks to rally support for New York State Senator James Skoufis for the November 6, 2018 election on **October 29, October 30, November 1, and November 5**. The phone banks will run from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the NTA office at 52 Pierces Road, Newburgh, NY.