

**RRTA Meeting
March 2, 2017**

Attendance: D. Altobelli, Z. Artson-Crichlow, K. Barkley, M. Barnum, P. Brody, C. Dean, K. Fager, K. Huey, W. Humphrey, M. Jenkins-Cox, B. Jones, F. Macek, M. McCarron, K. Schultz, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, A. Smith, D. Sullivan, B. Swan, F. Valente, M. Week, Y. Wooten, M. Zimmer

Absent: R. Allen, L. Bonanni, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, B. Buckingham, K. Evans, M. Ferenchak, J. Ivanick, M. Keating, L. Rapkin, G. Sweeney, R. Wolf

Also in attendance: M. Casey, L. Kotwas, S. Raymond, D. Smith, MJ Whalen,

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:08.
2. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Anne Allen and Gloria Hamm. A \$25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.
3. The minutes were approved as amended. In section 9 of the February minutes it is stated that the speaker to the No Constitutional Convention forum luncheon is from NYSUT. A speaker has not been chosen so may not be from NYSUT.
4. **Shaw – Niagara on the Lake** - Maureen McCarron reported that the June 15 musical, Me and My Girl has sold out even with 10 more tickets added. Ten tickets remain for St. Joan with a deadline of March 17 for the May 24th trip. There are many tickets left for the October 13 play Dracula. The deadline for that play is in August.
5. **Vote Cope** – Dave Altobelli reiterated what he shared at Tuesday's RTA rep assembly. The Vote Cope campaign will begin in April. The committee will work on preparing the teachers' information during April's Spring Break and be distributed at the Rep meeting on April 25.

He spoke about the NYSUT Legislative breakfast on February 25 with 6 lawmakers in attendance answering questions from Monroe County teachers. The majority of them are not in favor of having a Constitutional Convention.

Dave is also working with Zelda Artson Crichlow on a No Constitutional Convention Forum on September 7 at the Genesee Valley Club where lunch will be served. Registration forms will be in the April RRTA newspaper. There will be a drawing for returning pledge cards from voters, speaker(s), and RRTA members are encouraged to bring friends to listen. RRTA members will get a \$15 reduction in the price of the lunch. (See below for more on the discussion.)

The forum is just before Primary Day and there was a discussion of whether NYSUT will endorse local politicians. Sharon Silvio, who used to be the

chair of the RTA's Legislative Committee, said that it was not the habit of endorsing local positions such as mayor or city council members. Candace Rubin, the present chair of the committee, may send out information. Matt Juda, Sue and Dick Raymond's (RRTA present and former members respectively) nephew is running for Rochester City Council.

5. **Dress A Girl** – Gaya reported that the group met Monday and made 52 dresses and 8 dolls. She is asking for new to excellent condition standard pillowcases to be donated to make bookbags for the kids.

6. **Legislative Breakfast** – NYSUT's annual breakfast to meet legislators and ask questions was held Saturday, February 25. RTA and RRTA filled 4 tables. Six legislators attended. Phone calls should be made to them to ask them to speak against the Constitutional Convention.

7. **Friends of Strong Memorial Hospital Volunteers** – Joyce Stadtmiller, the volunteer coordinator came to speak to the RRTA reps. They are always looking for volunteers and they find that retired teachers are some of their best volunteers. There are a variety of 40 different types of positions at the hospital, Galisano Children's, and off site locations such as Clinton Crossing, Hall of Justice, and Strong West in Brockport. There is free parking for volunteers at Strong. At the Hall of Justice you might sit with children while their parents are in court, there are greeters needed, people to work in the gift shop, rocking infants in the nic-u or helping with fund raising. Rose Fawcett, retiree from School 4, is president of the volunteer council. Joyce will place an article in the August RRTA newspaper. However, if you would like to know more information immediately to help contact her: joyce_sstadtmiller@urmc.rochester.edu or call her at 275-2420.

8. **Books for Kids** – February we visited 2 classes at School 44 and on March 14 at 9:30 am we are going to School 8. Any RRTA member is welcome to join.

9. **NCC Committee – No Constitutional Convention Committee** – Ken Schultz (kzschultz@gmail.com) reported that the resolution that the RRTA proposed last month passed at the RTA Rep Assembly, asking for \$3000 to help with the costs of the forum in September and in printing pledge cards to get people out to vote on November 7, 2017. Their next meeting as a committee is March 28 and if you are interested in helping or have ideas you want to share, contact Ken. We are the union and need to get the word out about opening the constitution and what it will mean for NYS. We will reach out to the 2000 retirees on the rolls. The constitution is very expensive (estimated to cost more than \$350,000) and lengthy (estimated to take 6 years to accomplish).

In May each RRTA member will receive 5 pledge cards to go to any voter they know and speak to them about why they should vote no on November 7.

Returned cards from RRTA members will be placed in the drawing for the opportunity of a restaurant gift certificate. On one side of the card will be the name of the voter and the RRTA member and on the other side it is suggested that a fact sheet about what is at stake if the Constitution is opened with a possible stop sign logo.

Zelda Artson Crichlow is looking into getting buttons made.

Ken Schultz will write an article for the April RRTA newspaper.

Sharon Silvio shared that next week there will be meetings in Albany at NYSUT to discuss these issues and Ken and Frank Valente will be attending with her.

Al Smith recommends people to download the NYS Constitution to see what could be taken away. There are many areas that could be open to the whims of the public such as schools, alternate uses of park land, as well as public pensions.

Mary Barnum shared a sheet from the Constitutional Convention of 1938 when public employees were given the guarantee of not diminishing pensions as per the constitution. This is what has protected public employee pensions since 1938.

At the RTA Rep Assembly, the active teachers also formed a committee to let teachers know what is at stake chaired by Candace Rubin.

10. **RRTA membership** – Mary Barnum reported that there are 700 members.

11. **RRTA newspaper** – the deadline for the April RRTA newspaper is April 3 and Mary Barnum shared the articles she has or has been promised.

12. **Calendar** – we reviewed the list from the paper and added June 23 for the RRTA picnic.

13. Charlie Dean shared the **Election District 5 & 6 Legislative Handbook** with all the emails, addresses and phone numbers of our state and federal legislators. If you would like a copy, contact him or NYSUT. He said that phone calls are most effective and then sending a postcard would be the next effective thing. He recommends everyone to call and write to the state legislators to encourage them in voting no and encouraging their constituents to do the same.

14. The RRTA reps sent get well cards to Lillian Bonanni and Linda Rapkin.

15. **Labor News** - The retiree group from many unions celebrated their 15th anniversary of being organized in 2016. Freddie Macek reported that they are having a labor meeting at the RIT Conference Center on Saturday, March 4 at 8 am (for breakfast). Mario Celento from AFL/CIO and Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hocol are speaking. She said that City Council candidate Matt Juda would be there to talk to anyone.

16. RTA's NYSUT delegates are having a meeting on March 28. Karen Magee, NYSUT president, is choosing not to run and information will be shared about the convention and the NYSUT election.

17. Al Smith shared that the Air Force/STEM teacher of the year, John Haag at East High has been written about in the D & C and the Air Force magazine about his optics program and getting glasses to needy kids (with the help from teacher Logan Newman).

18. Barry Swan shared information about Saturday, March 4, Education Metro Justice March at the Liberty Pole from 2 to 4. All are welcome.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.

Mary Zimmer
RRTA secretary