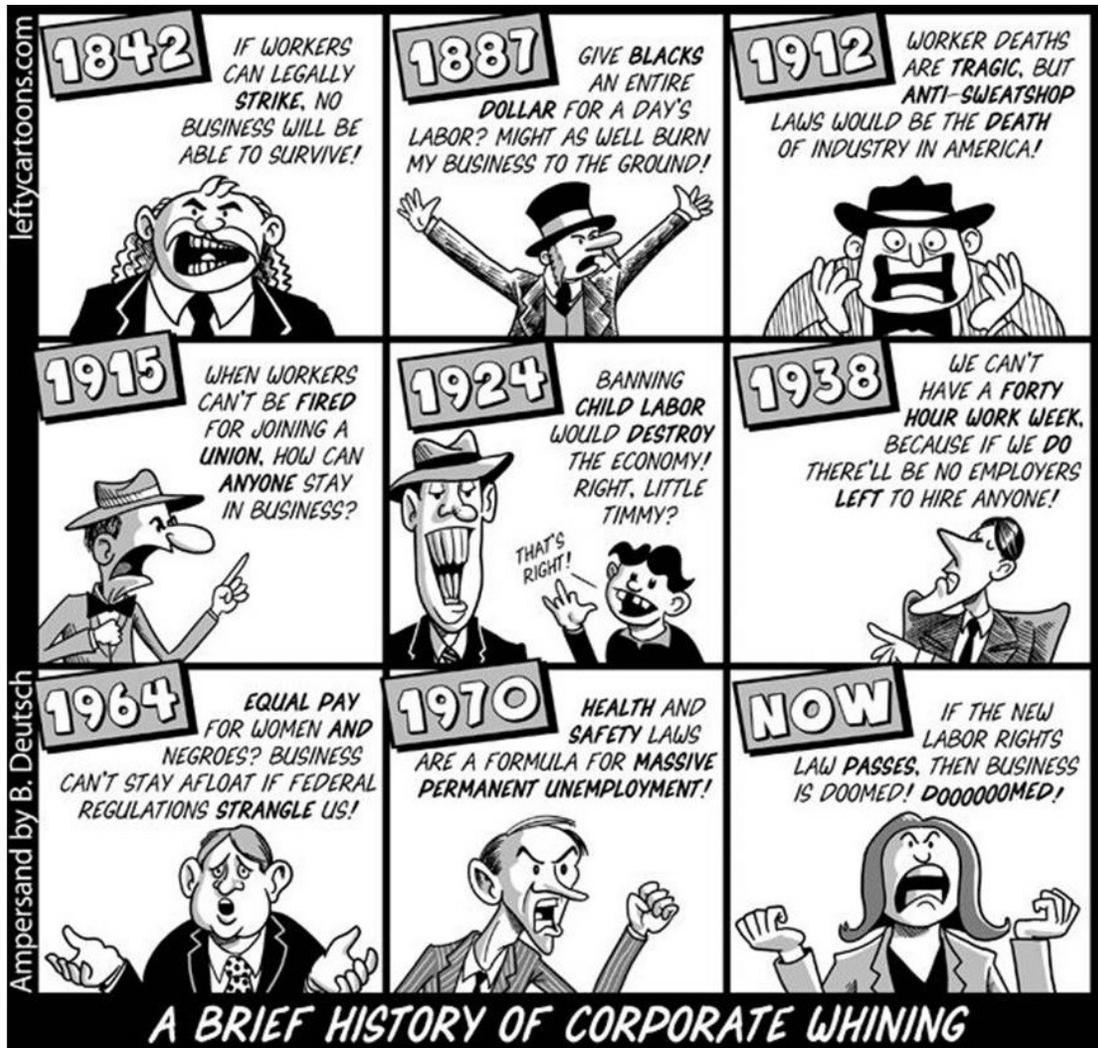


PAnorama

UNITED FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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PAorama's Editorial Policy

PAorama is the voice of our local. In addition to the PA website (www.mvccpa.org), email, and bulletin boards, PAorama is a principal vehicle for bringing you, on a regular basis, information on the views and activities of our members.

We welcome articles by, for, and about PA members on union-related issues and concerns as reflected in NYSUT and AFT activities as well as in the purpose and functions of the PA's standing committees: Community Outreach, Education & Training, Grievance, Internal Communications, Member Services, Negotiations, Political Action, and Research and Records.

All submissions are subject to the review and acceptance of the Editor and/or Internal Communications Committee. We do not accept articles that make personal attacks and we reserve the right to edit articles for length. We look forward to hearing from you.

Publisher
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President
Norma Chrisman

Editors
Rialda Shulman
George J. Searles

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PrezDesk By Norma Chrisman

Vance Muse was an oil industry lobbyist. It was commonly known that Mr. Muse was against women's suffrage, child-labor laws, and the eight-hour workday that organized labor fought to make part of the "norm" in the work place. In 1955, Mr. Muse established the National Right to Work committee.

In March of 2015, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker made a name for himself. Despite protests and marches on the Wisconsin Capital building by teachers, teamsters, firefighters, and other union affiliates, he signed legislation making Wisconsin the 25th Right To Work state.

While the three words "right," "to," and "work" grouped together seem non-threatening and a good thing, this could not be farther from the truth. A Right To Work law is a state law that *stops* employers and employees from negotiating an agreement. Right To Work laws state that unions must represent all eligible employees, whether or not they pay dues. This law allows those who do not pay dues to still be eligible for all of the benefits of union membership such as pay increases, health insurance, retirement benefits, and vacation and sick time. This free ride hamstring the power of collective bargaining.

Research has shown that the quality of life for residents of states that have enacted Right to Work laws is less than in states without these laws. On average, workers earn nearly \$6,000 a year less; states spend \$2,671 less per

pupil on elementary and secondary education; and there is a 52.9% increase in work place fatalities. Studies

also show that union members receive 28% more in wages and benefits than nonunion workers while 78% of union members have access to medical insurance versus 51% for nonunion members. It only makes sense that states with right to work laws have weaker economies due to workers having less to spend. The small business owners, mom and pop stores, are seeing the biggest impact of this weakened economy.

A similar issue, which has been brewing since August 2013, is *Friedrichs vs California Teachers Association*. This case, now in Supreme Court, concerns employees that pay union dues whether or not they complete their membership form. Employees that do not wish to complete a membership form still have dues deducted but do not have all of the rights afforded to someone who has completed the membership form. These employees are known as agency fee payers.



Agency fee payers, per a 1988 Supreme Court decision (*Communications Workers of America v. Beck*), are entitled to be compensated for their portion of union dues moneys spent on their union's political operations. This decision allowed for agency fee payers to still pay their share of union representation but not have to contribute to political activities oppose. Agency fee payers still receive the same benefits as union members, including representation in the event of disciplinary charges being brought forth against the agency fee payer, but they cannot participate in elections or meetings.

The plaintiff in the *Friedrichs* case feels that the decision of *Abood v Detroit Board of Education* should be overruled. The *Abood* case affirms that unions can continue to permit "agency shop" arrangement that require employees to pay dues even if they do not want to be a union member. The plaintiff feels that they should not have to pay dues but still be afforded all of the benefits of a dues paying member.

Should the California Teachers Association lose their case, it could have a huge impact on unions as we know them. Depending on how the Supreme Court rules, we could have employees opt out who do not see the benefit in having a union but still reap the benefits that dues-paying union members have negotiated with their employer. Regardless of whether it is Right to Work laws or the *Friedrichs* case, the fundamental purpose behind each action is to deny union funding. The funding helps to effectively bargain and participate in political activities that impact the union's voice and power that labor activists in our history have fought so hard for. Eleanor Roosevelt said that Right To Work "does nothing for working people, but instead gives employers the right to exploit labor."

Need I say more?

Community Outreach –It's What We Do!

Making Strides

Donations brought in approximately \$21,000.00 .

Winners of the Making Strides Raffle:

Kevin Siembab
Ellis Serles
Diane Nobles
Jed Kimball

Coat Drive

All warm garments are appreciated!

Utica:

AB Lobby
PH 3rd floor foyer

Rome:

PH Student Services

New Member Celebration

Wednesday November 18th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m IT225

Please bring an unwrapped toy or a donation for Toys for Tots.

Light refreshment will be served.

NYSUT Regional Conference Proves We Walk the Walk By Alison Doughtie

Members of the PA negotiations team (Alex Haines-Stephan, Dawson McDermott, Alison Doughtie, Aaron Fried, Justin Rahn, and Kevin Siembab), along with 1st VP Patti Antanavige attended the annual NYSUT CNY Regional Fall Leadership Conference in Alexandria Bay on the weekend of October 2nd. While the conference typically has workshops on various union matters, such as upcoming legislative issues, building union leadership, grievance issues, etc., the PA has been very fortunate to use this weekend to focus on strategic planning or negotiations. In addition, the conference usually falls around the same time as Strides Against Breast Cancer, so it has typically been a great opportunity to raise funds for breast cancer research.

This conference was no different. Together, our regional union locals raised over \$21,000. As you may know, each local donates a basket or more of goodies for a raffle on Saturday night. The PA and the Adjunct Professional Association were lucky with two winners each—Jed Kimball and Kevin Siembab from the PA, and Ellis Gage Searles and Diane Nobles from the APA. After the raffle, there was an auction, which our Labor Relations Specialist Jim Henck conducted. He is a master auctioneer. In the past, he's gotten folks to bid hundreds of dollars on a can of Spam, and this year he had people competing over Utica Club. Of course, the competition and generosity is based on the knowledge that all of the money is going to a good cause. This weekend always demonstrates the power behind collective good will.

This weekend, however, was a particularly good example of how lucky we are to have the support of our union brothers and sisters. At the end of the night, Jim Henck told the group about our president



Aaron Fried, Kevin Siembab, Patricia Antanavige, and Justin Rahn

Norma Chrisman's tragic loss, and he asked us to show our support for Norma and her family in a variety of ways, one of which was donations to the Chrisman family and/or to the Kevin Chrisman Scholarship at FMCC. Within fifteen minutes, the group contributed \$1,500 (all of which the family has contributed to Kevin's scholarship). It was an amazing show of support and collective good work. This is what our unions do.

Aside from helping to raise money and provide support, the PA negotiations team started to prepare for our next contract negotiations, which we hope will begin in January, 2016. Team members include Alex Haines-Stephan, Dawson McDermott, Alison Doughtie, Aaron Fried, Justin Rahn, and Kevin Siembab.

On Friday and Saturday, the team reviewed the contract surveys which members submitted before the conference and which we received Friday night. After our review, we set priorities and assigned various tasks to team members on Saturday and on Sunday morning. Our job from now until our first meeting with the College will be to create a complete document, including new proposals.

That may not sound like a lot of work, but each proposal is researched and carefully considered. The team will be meeting regularly before our first session with the College in order to ensure that we come to the table as prepared as we always have been.

The work of the team is one more example of how we come together to reach a common goal. Whether we are raising money, supporting a friend and colleague, or serving as representatives of the individual voices of the whole, we are stronger together.



Kevin Siembab, Justin Rahn, Aaron Fried, Dawson McDermott, Alex Haines-Stephan, and Patti Antanavige

**NEW MEMBER PROFILE:
SHANNON CROCKER**
By George J. Searles

If you see her in the halls, say Hello to Shannon Crocker, a new instructor in the Center for Life and Health Sciences.



Shannon comes to this position after serving as an adjunct here last spring and summer, and earlier at Herkimer County Community College for three years.

Teaching Anatomy and Physiology, she draws on her strong interest in necropsy and previous experience as a biologist. Shannon told *PAnorama*, “One of the most rewarding feelings I have as a teacher is when I see understanding and interest in the eyes of my students.”

Originally from nearby Newport, Shannon graduated from Spring Hill, a Jesuit college in Mobile, Alabama. She then earned her Master’s degree at the University of South Alabama and became Coordinator of Public Education at the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center in Virginia.

Education runs in the family, as both her now-retired parents were special ed teachers, her father at Herkimer BOCES and her mother at Dolgeville High School. In addition, her husband, Robbie, is the SUNY account rep for Tyco Integrated Security.

Busy parents of a son, 4, and twin daughters, 3, Shannon and Robbie are “outdoors types” who enjoy gardening, along with kayaking and camping in the Adirondacks.

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Benefits Fund Update

Medical Reimbursement

Please make sure to take advantage of the annual health reimbursement benefit which is \$150 per member for 2015. All receipts should be submitted to The Preferred Group and forms can be found on the benefits fund web page at www.mvccpa.org. Make sure to submit only receipts for expenses in 2015. Your receipts should be postmarked no later than December 31, 2015. This is a great opportunity to take advantage of increasing health care costs by receiving some reimbursement.

Davis Vision

Many of you may have received Davis Vision member cards in the mail. If you have not received a card, please feel free to contact me or Davis Vision directly.

Updated Booklet

The benefits fund will also be circulating updated benefits booklets via inter office mail in the next couple of weeks.

Should any PA members have questions pertaining to the MVCC Professional Associations Benefit Trust Fund please contact Justin Wilcox at JWilcox@mvcc.edu.

NYSUT RA: Democracy at Work

By Stacey McCall

As a first-time delegate to the NYSUT RA, in Buffalo, NY, May 1st-3rd, I was amazed at the amount of business accomplished in such a short period of time. There was so much information to take in ... resolutions to review and vote on and then there was the opportunity of attending the higher education caucus and the general assembly! The experience was so beneficial, and I encourage my sisters and brothers in labor to join in and be active in the union.

The RA provides numerous opportunities for members to voice concerns and demonstrate one's commitment to the ideals of organized labor. In a time when state and national politicians routinely take pot-shots at labor unions and advocate for "right to work" legislation (i.e., the "right" to dismantle labor unions), we need to stand together and remind those same politicians that labor built this country. Being involved in something larger than oneself really drives home the importance of organized labor, and our voices in education.

In addition to learning the formal RA protocol, I was also introduced to other delegates; I viewed several short videos highlighting the work and achievements of fellow NYSUT members, and was reminded of the numerous gains made by the NYSUT this past year. Overall, I was encouraged to reach out to other members and staffers at the various RA Information Booths with questions or concerns.

The big message I took from the event was the need to urge more members to get involved in our union activities. Solidarity! NYSUT provides a big umbrella that allows for our voices to be heard and to witness our democracy at work.

What better way to get involved than by supporting NYSUT's VOTE COPE initiative? VOTE COPE is the political fund-raising arm of NYSUT.

VOTE-COPE is a non-partisan action fund that coordinates the voluntary contributions of members and supports NYSUT-endorsed candidates and campaign committees that are pro-public-education and pro-labor. No NYSUT dues dollars are used to support candidates or campaign committees. NYSUT provides rebates to local unions based on a percentage (up to 40%) of the contributions VOTE-COPE receives from our local union's members. The rebates can be used by the PA to sponsor local activities.

Last year, VOTE-COPE raised over 9 million dollars to combat private funding that is attempting influence our public education policies.

So, if you currently do not contribute to VOTE-COPE please consider it. I will be contacting each of you in the upcoming days with program information and registration forms. If you have and continue to support VOTE-COPE, thank you and please keep up the fight. "Solidarity forever, for the union makes us strong!"

MVCCPA and Social Media

The Professional Association is proud to announce a newly invigorated online social media presence. The PA uses Facebook and Twitter as a hub for union communications, both locally and nationally. We are connected with other NYSUT locals and various community organizations including the NYSUT Action Center, CNY Labor Council, and other local businesses. Be sure to follow the PA for immediate updates on political action and fundraising campaigns, union meetings, and social events. We also function as a resource for all union members by providing a series on national labor history and information on how to get involved.

Invite your friends and other local organizations to follow the sites. You can find us on Facebook at MVCC Professional Association, and on Twitter, at MVCC PA.

