



PCT PLEDGE

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BUDGET SEASON AGAIN

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

Work on the 2007-08 school budget is well underway. This year, the budget is being developed from a zero base. That is, each item in it is being looked at as though it is being proposed for the first time. In theory, a zero based process causes decision makers to rethink their expenditures, perhaps even reorder their priorities. More often than not, however, zero based budgeting becomes a rationale for maintaining the *status quo* by creating the illusion that proposed expenditures have been more carefully scrutinized by this new process.

What has been needed in Plainview-Old Bethpage for a long time, but which never happens, is a prolonged and careful examination of what our budget says about our educational priorities and how we are organized to achieve them. If we had done that last year, for example, I doubt that we would have made the cuts we did, cuts which yielded increased class sizes and teaching loads at our high school that have contributed to a degrading of the academic program and standards. Such an examination would force us to look too at the way we organize the work of the district. It would enable us to find ways to streamline the district's bureaucracy, thereby saving dollars that could be used to better support the academic programs and provide us with a steady stream of resources to plan to repair and maintain our facilities.

The kind of budget discussion we need would have the staff more heavily involved than submitting lists of books and supplies. It would tap their knowledge of the work of the district to promote innovation and productivity. It would, in short, treat them as competent, knowledgeable employees, most of who have a career commitment to the district, rather than production units.

The best we can hope for from this budget cycle, I fear, is a fix to the problems created by last year's cuts. The PCT officers have repeatedly drawn the attention of the administration and Board of Education to the serious problems last year's budget created. At our meetings with them, the Board seemed to indicate that they understood, even authorizing the hiring of some staff this year to solve some serious issues.

The budget games are about to begin. Stay tuned for the play by play.

On another and more important note, I wrote the following words in the Pledge of February 6, 2003, shortly before we went to war in Iraq. Our President is about to recommend a "surge," spin-talk for escalation, in U.S. forces in Iraq. To me, what I wrote then makes even more sense now that we have destroyed Iraq and killed or maimed thousands of brave American young people, to say nothing about the long range damage done to the prestige of the U.S. as a world power. I have just written to my representatives in the Congress demanding that they put a stop to this lunacy. I urge you to do the same.

February 6, 2003

As I write this, the rhetoric of the leaders of the United States grow more and more bellicose. We are being martialed to view the impending battle against Iraq as part of the ongoing struggle between the forces of good and evil. Once again, America must cleanse the world of an insidious evil.

Paralleling the escalating rhetoric is a huge buildup of military forces in the Middle East . It seems quite clear that our country is about to go to war on what seems to be essentially a presumption that Iraq poses an imminent danger to us. Perhaps even more frighteningly incomprehensible is the new foreign policy doctrine being enunciated by the administration that says we have the right to remove from power regimes that we believe to be inimical to the welfare of the United States or others. Other countries are either with us or against us. There doesn't appear to be any tolerance for thoughtful analysis.

It all has such a familiar ring to my ear. Yet another generation of American youth is being told that, "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country." When I was young, we were told that if Viet Nam fell to the communists, it would be the first of a series of dominoes to fall in Southeast Asia . If unchecked, all of the countries of that area would fall to the red scourge. Today, can any of my generation stand beside the monument to our Viet Nam dead in Washington without breaking down at being confronted with the staggering waste of so many young lives? Can anyone look back to those days and still believe that they died in a noble cause?

You and I have to organize to oppose this outrageous misapplication of American power. While the regime in Iraq is despicable, there are many in this world as bad or worse. Are we to remove them all?

PCT LONG TERM CARE SEMINAR

PCT members can purchase long term care insurance at approximately a ten percent savings from what is available to them as individuals. They additionally have the flexibility of not being limited to one company or one plan.

Mr. Ken Bloom, a long term care specialist who has worked with the PCT for many years, will be conducting a seminar on long term care on Tuesday, January 30, 2007 at 4:00 P.M. at the Plainview-Old Bethpage Public Library.

Members who wish to attend the long term care seminar should contact the PCT Office to reserve one of the 35 seats available.

CONTRACT PRINTING

Members of the Teacher, Clerical and Substitute Teacher Units of the PCT are advised that preparation of the manuscripts of the contracts ratified in September is under way. This is a tedious process that must be carefully done. As soon as it is completed, a new printing of all contracts will be done and copies will be distributed to each member.

There are unfortunately many PCT members who do not have a copy of their contract in that there hasn't been a printing of the agreements for almost four years. Members in immediate need of a contract are reminded that SRC Reps have a copy that may be consulted.

MATH COMMITTEE BEGINS WORK

By the time this edition of the *Pledge* reaches the membership, the Math Committee will have had two meetings. The committee has been reconstituted to look at the districts math program again with the aim of making recommendations for the improvement of the district's program K-12.

In order to insure that the PCT representatives on the committee are better connected to the members and to attempt to build a consensus among our members, the PCT has been meeting with them and additional math representatives from each building. PCT President Morty Rosenfeld has said, "This is the time for our members to stand up and say what needs to be done to fix our math program. We've been hearing complaints for years. Everyone finally seems concerned about our state assessment scores. The stars appear to be aligned to make changes possible. If we don't do so now, it may be years before we have a similar opportunity."

19TH ED MOVES TO HELP PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE

NYSUT, the PCT's state union, divides itself up into Election Districts (EDs) for purposes of bringing members together to work on regional issues. The PCT along with Syosset and others is in the 19th ED. One of the first things our members did within the ED was to work in the recent political phone bank at the NYSUT Office in Jericho.

Our ED meets once a month to exchange

information and discuss issues of mutual concern.

At our last meeting, the PCT representatives raised a merger related issue of concern to them. Stated simply, the PCT was formerly entitled to four (4) representatives to the NEA Convention, under the merger agreement we would not be entitled to even one. We would have to band together or cluster with other locals to gain any representation.

Our representatives were very pleased with the response of the 19th ED to our problem. They easily understood that we were accustomed to going to the NEA Convention and that in fact we had worked very hard there to bring about the New York merger. They voted unanimously to "lend" us the members we need to keep our four (4) delegates to this year's NEA Convention in Philadelphia in July.

This was but the latest experience of the way in which the merger is working. Where there are problems, people from Dick Iannuzzi, the President of NYSUT, to the representatives of ED19 have made every effort to make the PCT welcome and accommodate its needs.

WEBPAGE READERSHIP GROWS

2006 continued the pattern of growth of the readership of the PCT's webpage. The page received 16,717 visits with the average reader visiting 1.3 times per month. Readers looked at 32, 551 pages of information and opinion. Over 2300 more visits were recorded and those visitors looked at 7705 more pages of material. The webpage has developed as a powerful vehicle for the agenda of our union.

CAR FOR SALE

1998 Honda Civic, original owner, silver, 2-door, 73,000 miles. Call Eric 582-7408.

CREDITS WANTED

Looking for Hofstra credits. Amy Plutzer 937-6404 and Georgian Kreps 937-6364.