



RETIREES
American Federation
of Teachers

Fall/Winter 2025-26

AFTerwords

NEWSLETTER • LOCAL 2373

ROWAN UNIVERSITY

201 Mullica Hill Rd., Glassboro, N.J., 08028

Fall Luncheon Features Lacovara on Why Dinosaurs Matter

This year's Welcome Back Luncheon, held on September 11, was a great success. For the first time, members were invited to bring guests for a small additional fee, and the room at Shpeen Hall was filled with nearly 65 attendees. President Ali Houshmand and newly appointed Chancellor Tony Lowman shared news about Rowan and stories about our keynote speaker, Dr. Kenneth Lacovara. Joe Basso, President of Local 2373, offered greetings as well.

Dr. Lacovara's presentation, "Why Dinosaurs Matter," took us from the 19th century's first inaccurate impressions of dinosaurs to climate change and prospects for the future. Even in the 19th century, some of the most important dinosaur fossils were found in New Jersey. And it was here that Dr. Lacovara found decisive evidence proving that the extinction of dinosaurs was indeed caused by an asteroid strike, some 65 million years ago. After traveling the world in search of a mass extinction site, he discovered it, as he wryly noted, behind the Lowe's in Sewell.

Dr. Lacovara offered fascinating details about development of the Edelman Fossil Park & Museum, the cover story in our last issue of *AFTerwords*. From carbon-neutral construction to stunning dinosaur sculptures and hands-on fossil digs for kids, the museum sets a standard of excellence. Dr. Lacovara emphasized its mission of educating visitors about climate and species history, inviting them (and us) to explore science in person and take action to help protect our fragile planet. The museum's volunteer coordinator, Amanda Dutkiewicz, also invited attendees to contact her about the many volunteer opportunities at the museum, from reading to digging. Those interested can reach her by email (amanda@efm.org) or phone (856-208-7168).

With this year's numbers and program, we did not get our usual group picture, but we have pictures of our speaker and the new members we welcomed into the Retirees Chapter. Welcome to new retiree members Carol Eigenbrot, Janet Lindman, J.T. Mills,



Dr. Kenneth Lacovara shows members why dinosaurs matter.

and Eileen Stutzbach, and new associate members CarolAnn DeSimine and Rose Scott. As always, it was a great opportunity to reconnect with friends and colleagues. **See NEW MEMBERS on page 6.**



Brewing Stronger Ties with Local 2373

This year has seen the addition of a new appointee to our executive committee, Jon Foglein as official liaison from the AFT Local. Jon has been an active leader in the Local and is now working with Bill Carrigan and others to forge connections between retirees and our pre-retirement colleagues. We appreciate the Local's investment in the Retirees Chapter, including the invitation for shared conviviality at Bonesaw Brewing on October 16. Look for more joint opportunities to come!

Pictured, from left:

Jon Foglein, Julie Mallory, Dilip Mirchandani, Joe Basso, Seth Bergmann.

Toni Libro: 'AFTERwords' in More Ways than One

By Joy Wiltenburg

A generous and dedicated leader, editor of *AFTERwords* for some 20 years, Toni Libro has a host of admirers among us. And yet how many know the full range of her accomplishments? It's not possible to do justice to them all!

Most inspiring to our members should be Toni's constant creativity after she retired as professor emerita in 2002. Yes, she has steadfastly and energetically contributed her skills to our chapter. But if you thought that was her main activity, prepare to be enlightened! Her invaluable work for the AFT retirees has been merely a sideline.

Toni's history with Rowan goes all the way back to her fondly remembered undergraduate days at Glassboro State. She received a first-class education as an English major at our then little-known school, and even then she was a standout among her peers. Many will know of her career as a professor, teaching courses in writing and literature, and her appointment as founding dean of the College of Communications at Rowan. Her excellence in that role earned her recognition as outstanding administrator of the year in 2000.

While she taught full-time at Rowan, Toni's creativity overflowed into poetry, plays, and fiction. Some will remember her plays produced at Rowan, including the social justice trilogy *Out of Bounds*, *Out of the Shadows*, and *Out of the Cradle*. Her one-act play *Out of Bounds* has found an especially broad audience, awarded grants and performed across New Jersey and beyond. Toni's writings have gained her honors from leading authorities in literature and the arts. She has been invited to read by the prestigious Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, at Philadelphia's famed Painted Bride Center, and at the Free Library of Philadelphia, among others, and won a prize in the national poetry competition sponsored by the Paterson Literary Review Poetry Center.

Toni continues to write and publish, even as this newsletter goes to press. She is the author of several chapbooks and is planning another collection of her poetry. Her most recent book of poetry, *The Carpenter's Lament in Winter*, appeared in 2018 to warm applause. "These well-crafted, beautifully-polished poems sneak past all our defenses and often bring us to tears," writes author Maria Mazziotti Gillan. *AFTERwords* readers can enjoy a sample here.

After she taught part-time for several years beyond her official retirement, Toni began spending winters in St. Augustine,

Florida. There she is an active contributor to the city's vibrant arts community. She has been a member for years of Ancient City Poets, named for the historic city of St. Augustine. "I qualify in more ways than one!"

Toni jokes with self-deprecating humor. The group meets monthly and sponsors events that have led to serendipitous connections with fellow creatives. The theater group Rising Tide Productions has recently produced Toni's play *Out of Bounds*. For the future, Rising Tide is planning an even more ambitious production, with music and dance, of her *Dwellers Among the Clouds*, about the 11th-century Japanese author Lady Murasaki.

In the summers Toni returns to her home town of Sea Isle City, where she is coordinator of the Beach Bards Poetry & Prose Reading Series. In



*Is there life after retirement?
Absolutely yes!
Says Toni Libro.*

Haiku:

*His old workshop--
only dust and sunlight now
on the wooden counter*

partnership with the Sea Isle City library, this initiative invites both local and more widely known writers to well-attended monthly meetings. Luckily, it's not too far from her college home at Glassboro, and writers from Rowan have been featured readers in the Beach Bards Series as well.

AFT retirees have been so fortunate to benefit from Toni's exceptional gifts and inspiring example. Members testify to her generosity and kindness over many decades, from welcoming younger faculty to collaborating with fellow leaders on the executive committee. She has also drawn colleagues to our chapter, as Cindy Vitto notes with appreciation for her continuing "friendship, creativity, and positive influence." I can't add all the accolades she deserves, but as the new editor of *AFTERwords* I have to add my personal gratitude for her gracious welcome and unstinting help.

Many Thanks To Our Scholarship Donors for 2025-2026



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Bridging the Generations:

Bill Carrigan on his Friendship with Ed Wolfe

On April 30, 2025, I conducted my one-hundredth interview with Edward Wolfe, a former professor of English literature who began teaching at Glassboro State College in 1959 and continued doing so all the way into the 21st century at what became Rowan University. While I met with him several times after this, we never did have another full session. At the age of 97, he passed away on May 11, 2025.

In late 2022, I hardly knew Ed. We had met briefly once or twice, but I sought out Ed because I had heard nice things about him and I wanted to ask him about our university's history. Ed had joined the faculty in 1959, and I hoped his memories would help me understand the transforming decade of the 1960s for the college. From my very first meeting, I knew that I would need more than one meeting with Ed. I had no idea, however, what truly lay ahead for me. I know that Ed appreciated and looked forward to my visits, but the experience has been transformative for me.

The friendship that I built with Ed was a new thing. I was never his student, and we were never close while we were colleagues. Everything we built was done hour by hour and after Ed was already 95 years old. My wife and daughter often comment that Ed almost became a member of our family, like a recently discovered uncle. In truth, I doubt even that conveys the depth of the connection I felt and still feel with Ed.

When I first met him, I was immediately impressed by his energy, vitality, and attitude. Ed's memory was so sharp. I remember the amazement I felt sitting with someone who had not only been alive when Franklin Roosevelt was running for his second term but had such vivid memories of the election. Having grown up knowing Roosevelt helped win World War II, I remember thinking how much this story deepened my appreciation of contingency and uncertainty in history, even though I preach those to my students all the time. With Ed, I had living proof of this powerful yet often underappreciated point that the past was uncertain day to day, just as it is now.

Often, Ed made historical comparisons with more recent events that startled and amazed me. There are not many people still able to pull as much from personal memory. By chance, our seventy-third interview session fell on September 11, 2024. Naturally, I asked him about his memories of September 11, 2001. Like all of us alive at the time, Ed had vivid memories of where he was and what he was doing when the towers fell. Ed, however, placed those memories alongside his memories of the attack on Pearl Harbor. While similar in that both events touched Americans of all backgrounds, these two events felt very different to Ed.

One of the things that I most admired about Ed was that he continued to write short essays almost all the way up to his death, engaging with such current trends as the popular phenomenon of Taylor Swift. Right before I met him on



Ed Wolfe (Center) with Emily Blanck and Bill Carrigan

most Wednesdays at 4 pm, he had just come from his "writing group." It seems Ed wrote a short essay most weeks. He typed them on his computer, printed them out, and usually had an extra copy for me when I arrived.

Ed was clearly unusual for someone of his age. While he complained regularly about "being tethered to his oxygen machine," his overall health and mind were remarkable. I have been absolutely transformed by my meetings with Ed.

During a challenging time in the world, Ed gave me great joy. I hope his memories and reflections will now endure because of our collaboration, which will be preserved in the Rowan archives. Those interested can read one of our interviews on Rowan's website, https://www.rowan.edu/ric-edelman-college/departments/history/alumni/project-100/interviewees/edward_wolfe.html.

I do think that Ed was special and believe that there are few like him still living. At the same time, I suspect there are others very similar to Ed, individuals with rich memories waiting to share with someone who cares and is willing to preserve those stories. I hope that those on both sides of generational divides will embrace the opportunity to share in the mutual enrichment Ed and I experienced.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
SPRING MEETINGS VIA ZOOM**

2nd Wednesday of the Month

FEBRUARY 11TH -- MAY 13TH

Watch for Program Announcements!

AFTerthoughts: On the Chapter's History

By Harold Sahn



Almost ten percent of our members are new this year, so it is time for an update of our Chapter History since the last membership directory was printed in early 2020, edited by Toni Libro.

The Rowan AFT Local 2373 Retiree Chapter was established in 1987 with Al Taylor elected as its first President (1987-1991). Kay Queeney was elected as the second president (1991-1993).

The third President, Rose Glassberg (1993-2020), nurtured the development of most of the aspects that identify the Chapter today: meeting on the second Wednesday of the month at noon; establishing student scholarship stipends (1994) and annual dues (1995); developing new Bylaws which assisted in gaining recognition by the National AFT (2002); printing the first issue of *AFTerwords* with Toni Libro as editor (2003) and establishing the first Annual Recent Retirees Luncheon in September (2011).

Among other accomplishments during this period was *AFTerwords* winning the national Best Print Publication in 2010 and 2014 plus numerous other awards during these years; developing four membership directories; printing *The Union Story* about Local 2373's origin and growth; and honoring two Local 2373 past presidents by naming scholarships in their memory (Al Taylor and Nicholas Yovnello).

The two events that brought the most people together during the Glassberg Years were the development and performance of "A Concert for Hoyle" in 2004, genesis of the major Carpenter Memorial Scholarships in Music, and the 25th Anniversary Reception for Rose Glassberg, which attracted both statewide and national dignitaries honoring her for her years of service.

The president from 2020 through 2025 has been Harold Sahn, who has seen 54 of the 101 members we had in 2020 pass or leave the rolls. Because of Covid and the crowded parking on campus, meetings have been held on Zoom, which has actually increased the number of members participating. The Bylaws have been amended twice, recognizing changing norms, and educational programs with outside presenters have been added to every membership meeting. Maintaining campus parking permits has always been a challenge for retirees, but for the past two

years, the new Presidential Parking Permit puts retirees in the same category as members of the Board of Trustees.

The Chapter Treasury was at a low point in 2019; it is at a very healthy level now without raising dues. The Student Scholarship account has increased by 50 percent. Since we are handling most correspondence electronically, the printing bills have fallen, and the remaining postage budget has been supported by Local 2373. In fact, Local 2373 totally supported the September 2025 Welcome Back Luncheon because we involved so many University people.

Besides the excellent editions of *AFTerwords*, 24 members of the Chapter wrote memoirs for the 96-page booklet *A Centennial Collection of Memoirs*. An Archivist was appointed and with a committee of six members digitized eight large boxes of archives. As a look to the future, every member for the past five years should have an electronic copy of every agenda, meeting minutes, financial report, committee report and president's letters.

The election of 2021 brought seven new people to the Executive Committee. The only holdover was Toni Libro, who provided the stability of the excellent communications developed during the previous 17 years, especially during the Centenary of 2023. With the decrease of USPS demands, Corresponding Secretary Larry De Pasquale had the opportunity to use his musical talent to become a fundraising force, providing five Chapter-supported scholarship events.

The biggest current concern that we have as a Chapter is that our succession plan for leadership is not working. No one was willing to serve as President, Executive Vice President or Program Chair in Spring 2025. The current president reluctantly allowed his name to be placed on the ballot and has served the beginning of this fiscal year, where the major work of the position occurs.

Now, with his departure, the Executive Committee and concerned members have the opportunity to forge a new path to the future while the immediate past president is still an active member. It is important to be aware of our history and proud of our legacy. We have current Rowan employees who want to be members of the Retirees Chapter in the future. Let's do what we can to build on that energy and assure that the Chapter exists when they are ready to retire.

Current thoughts: On the immediate future

As we honor Harold Sahn for his leadership, the Executive Committee recognizes the challenges he has identified. Readers of *AFTerwords* will also remember the challenges highlighted by Jay Chaskes in his column for the Spring 2025 issue. We are actively working on ways to adapt to change and shepherd our chapter through this transition.

An important aspect of moving forward will be finding ways to involve more of our members in the work that keeps the chapter functioning. One change we have already adopted is a plan devised by Seth Bergmann, redefining the role of Program Coordinator to one of overseeing a rotation of organizers, each handling one program per year. This plan will give all members an opportunity to contribute to the chapter. Many thanks and welcome to Ron Czochor, who will be taking on this position

overseeing programs. Other plans include revitalizing the Membership Committee, seeking a co-chair and volunteers to help with such tasks as following up with stray members who may have forgotten to renew.

Our interim steering committee of Julie Mallory, Seth Bergmann, and Joy Wiltenburg will be aiming to keep operations organized for the spring. Many thanks to Jay Chaskes, Toni Libro, and Mike Miller for offering their wisdom as ex officio executive members, and to Nick DiObilda as he finishes his long and faithful service. We plan to have an election in the spring, with the hope that clearer definition of roles and tasks will make officeholding less intimidating to potential candidates. A key goal is to avoid over-burdening our volunteer members, while keeping up our energy for moving forward. Keep an eye out for more involvement opportunities!

Principal of the Year Shares Inspiration at October Program

Tony Cattani, Rowan Grad and National Honoree

In a lively and engaging presentation for our October 8 program, Tony Cattani recounted his journey from lackluster student to national High School Principal of the Year. As principal of Lenape High School for the past 19 years, Tony has lived a remarkable story of perseverance and success. According to Tony, it was the teachers, coaches, role models, and friends he encountered at Rowan who inspired him to get serious about education and turn his life around. (We take the liberty of using his first name here because of his inviting and collegial style in speaking with us.)

Among many fond memories of Rowan, Tony highlighted his admiration for President Herman James and for Dr. Richard Fopeano, both of whom modeled qualities of leadership he has sought to emulate in his own career. Dr. James, he noted, was friendly with everyone and cared enough to learn their names, even the names of students' parents. Dr. Fopeano was authentic and vulnerable in his teaching practice. Tony met his future wife and lifelong friends here on campus. His early academic path was rocky; at one point his GPA was 1.67, and he took

English 101 three times. Yet in the end, he graduated with high honors.

His own experience of change has shaped his life as an educator, learning from mistakes and actively seeking sources of encouragement. Tony promotes what he calls "Proud Principal Practices." While "education is a roller coaster," he urges educators to "find the joy." Among the staff at Lenape, Tony seeks out individual moments of pride, and in place of routine faculty meetings, he has instituted solving circles, collegiality cafes, and extensive peer observation to encourage excellent teachers to learn from each other and share their wisdom with others. He has been active in sharing sources of "Lenape Pride" and educational success outside the school, on social media and in his interview podcast, "Proud Principals."

A charming moment during the question-and-answer period demonstrated Tony's success at following in the footsteps of Dr. James. Sean Scott, a Rowan admissions counselor, attended Lenape High along with his sister Colleen Scott, a professional services specialist at Rowan.



Tony Cattani shows both Lenape pride and Rowan pride.

When Sean offered thanks for his work at Lenape, Tony remembered Colleen and the whole family!



BENEFIT CONCERT RAISES OVER \$1300 FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

By Cindy Vitto

On Sunday, November 9, approximately 100 AFT retirees, their guests, and members of the Rowan and local communities gathered in Pfleeger Hall for a scholarship benefit concert. Although admission was free, attendees were encouraged to contribute to donation baskets as they entered. All proceeds, more than \$1300, will benefit the Rowan University General Scholarship Fund.

A bit of history: This November concert is the third annual scholarship benefit concert but the first to be held on Rowan's campus rather than at a local church. Larry De Pasquale was involved with organizing all three concerts. A member of the AFT Retirees Executive Council, De Pasquale began his association with GSC/Rowan in 1977 as a music education major, with a studio major in organ. He eventually held positions as the Coordinator of Field Experiences, undergraduate advisor for music majors, and adjunct professor for theory, music education, and musicology courses. He retired in 2018 but continues to teach adjunct on campus. He is active as an ordained deacon of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as organist and choir director at the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Chews Landing.

Retirees Chapter, the festival of organ and brass music began with *Four Themes of Paintings* by Edward Munch (*Sun, Dance of Life, Woman Embracing Death, and Night*), featuring De Pasquale on organ and, on trumpet, Bryan Appleby-Wineberg, Professor of Trumpet and Head of Brass at Rowan. Rowan music students also performed solo and in groups, creating an 80-minute concert with various combinations of organ, trumpets, horns, trombones, tubas, and timpani.



Larry De Pasquale at the organ, dressed in finest AFT fashion.

During the penultimate selection, the audience was summoned to rise to their feet to sing the chorale to Martin Shaw's *Processional*. De Pasquale shared a bit of history about the official opening of the Wilson Music Center (now Wilson Hall, home to Pfleeger Auditorium) in the early 1970s. Vaclav Nelhybel was commissioned to compose a special celebratory piece for that occasion. His *Agape* provided the setting of the ending chorale for this concert, "A Mighty Fortress." De Pasquale recited an English translation of Martin Luther's sixteenth-century verses, then sat down at the organ to join Appleby-Wineberg on trumpet and all the student performers on various brass instruments in a rousing finale.

Be sure to mark your calendar next year when the 2026 scholarship benefit concert is announced. This is an event you will not want to miss!

NEW MEMBERS



New members, with flowers, graciously joined by our guest speaker at the fall luncheon.

From left:

- ❖ J.T. Mills,
- ❖ Kenneth Lacovara
- ❖ CarolAnn DeSimine
- ❖ Carol Eigenbrot
- ❖ Eileen Stutzbach

Not pictured:

- ❖ Janet Lindman
- ❖ Rose Scott

Welcome to New AFTERwords Editor

By Toni Libro



As your former editor, please join me in welcoming Joy Wiltenburg to her new position as Editor of *AFTERwords*. Joy retired from the department of history as professor emerita in 2021 after 30 years of service, specializing in the social and cultural history of early modern Europe. She holds a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Rochester, and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. She is the author of four books, most recently *Laughing Histories: From the Renaissance Man to the Woman of Wit*, showing how laughter was inflected by gender and social power, published by Routledge in 2022.

Joy brings her outstanding abilities as a writer and researcher, along with her inquisitive and thoughtful nature, to this position. Her previous experience as a proofreader also will be put to good use as she becomes the eyes and ears, in print, of the Retirees Chapter. Let's wish Joy well in her new position and support her in every way possible. Congratulations Joy, we are fortunate to have you! Thank you for stepping up!

Choices: On Volunteering Our Time and Money to Influence Elections

By Julie Mallory

Do political ads change the votes of undecided voters? Research tells us “very little.” But think about it. If your doctor tells you that changing a particular behavior could extend your life, but “not that much,” while continuing another behavior will likely have no impact, which behavior will you concentrate on? This article may help you to decide where to best focus your donations and volunteer efforts to feel that they make a reasonable, if small difference.

Every election season we are bombarded by requests to donate our precious fixed income to support political campaigns and causes. Pressure to “hurry up and donate...or else” is punctuated by assurances of either midnight doom or victory. Yet, we may actually want to donate our money to an election. Likewise, calling, writing, and knocking on doors are volunteer efforts we might willingly choose to influence voter turnout.

Efforts to impact the outcome of elections generally fit into one of two categories:

- * Mobilizing voter turnout, or
- * Influencing voters' choice of candidates.

Campaigns spend large amounts of our donations on television ads which studies show may have strong, but short-term effects on voter choice, with their influence mostly occurring during the week they are aired. Reputable research also shows that volunteers calling voters have a small impact, whereas automated calls have little to no effect on voter turnout.

Text messages have been shown to be effective in influencing voters to vote and donors to donate. In fact, the move to investigate Act Blue, a Democratic tool for fund raising, but not its Republican counterpart, WinRed, raises concerns about the politicization of core fundraising through digital technology. Undoubtedly, digital technology makes us more vulnerable to persistent spam texts and emails soliciting our donations, some fraudulently. Yet, while we can easily designate email as Spam or Junk Mail, eliminating political messages by texting “Stop” ironically may bring on even more texts!

As we age and our resources of time, energy, money and patience potentially decrease, our participation in this moment as voters and/or as volunteers is worth serious consideration. One final thought: The quality of your life is built on the quality of your decisions (anonymous). For the good of retaining both democracy and our scarce resources, may we choose wisely.



Sad News at Press Time

As this issue went to press, members were heartbroken to learn of the passing of our former longtime president, Rose Glassberg, on Dec. 28. We were also sorry to receive late word of the death of member Patrick Westcott this past summer. Obituaries will appear in the next issue of *AFTERwords*.

AFTERwords - Issue #47 Fall/Winter 2025-2026

AFTERwords is a publication of the
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Logo and Banner Design: Des McLean

Production: DuBose Printing

Contributors and Photos: Seth Bergmann, Bill Carrigan,
Toni Libro, Julie Mallory, Harold Sahn,
Cindy Vitto, Joy Wiltenburg

Special Thanks to:

Joseph Basso, President, AFT Local 2373

Dr. Ali A. Houshmand, President, Rowan University