



2013

Journalism Competition



Judges' Comments

In-Service

Class I - V



BEST OF THE BEST

THE TED BLEECKER AWARD

Tie for Best of the Best in 2013

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

The WORD

Editor: Cynthia Eaton

Local President: Ellen Schuler Mauk

Comments: *The WORD* is an extremely attractive publication that provides essential information to its members in a format that's easy to read and even easier to understand. Using a relaxed, colloquial style of writing, virtually every article is both interesting and inspirational. Just a few of the standouts are "Help for Harry" and "What's your sign?" The three-column layout makes reading a breeze, and the graphics are simple yet effective. The photos are truly excellent, large and sharp, and do a very good job of complementing the information in the stories. Articles are well-researched and well-written and provide a variety of material from features to pocketbook issues to community involvement.



Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

Editor: Sarah Mattice

Local President: Mary Beth Flatley

Comments: From the attention-grabbing and effective illustration on the cover through the inspirational article about the Family and Consumer Science teacher's efforts to help others in the community, this publication is an excellent example of what a newsletter can and should be. All of the articles are well-written and interesting, and highlight either union issues or the efforts of members on behalf of students and the community. There is so much useful news and information in these 24 pages that it's hard to believe this publication comes out bi-monthly. Someone obviously is spending a great deal of time and effort to make this an attractive and useful publication — and it shows.

SOLIDARITY AWARD 2013

Nyack Teachers Association *The Bridge*

Editor: Tracy Potter
Local President: Donna Ramundo

“Message from the president”

Comments: The “Message from the president” is a strong one about the importance of the involvement of NYSUT personnel to ensure the smooth functioning of the local union. By giving each Labor Relations Specialist a human face, and describing their challenges and accomplishments, this article does a very good job of relating issues on the state level to those of the local. The excellent description of the efforts of NYSUT in the negotiations on teachers/principal evaluation also highlights the activities of the state organization on behalf of the local.

This president’s message screams solidarity on two fronts. First, it takes the occasion of the retirement of the local’s NYSUT LRS and uses it to talk about the man, his job and his important role as the NYSUT employee who is the union’s “go-to guy.” Second, it discusses NYSUT’s role in teacher/principal evaluation and how the outcome of that agreement affects the local. The details in both parts of the message are excellent and demonstrate the close relationship between the local union and its statewide organization. Great job!



AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Class I – Best Editorial Design

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

“Chemistry teachers implement environmentally safe labs”

Comments: Using two pictures to break up the type and illustrate the story is an excellent idea. The headline is easy to read, and the “Go Green” graphic is attractive and relevant. However, the effect is spoiled by the fact that the black type on the dark green background is difficult to decipher. And, although the smiling faces in the top photo make an excellent accompaniment to the story, the bottom photo is very dark.

Nice, straightforward layout with two photos breaking up what otherwise might have been solid lines of type running across the page. “Smells like Green Spirit” was a clever overline for the top photo. To nitpick, I would go with a larger headline size on top, and avoid the dark green background on the top cutline; it’s hard to read. The story was very interesting and had nice detail. While the writing isn’t a factor in this category I would mention that the lead should have been fashioned from the second and third sentences, getting “Schalmont” and “teachers” into the lead, rather than EPA and Encon.

FIRST PLACE

Class I - Best Editorial Design

Westfield Teachers' Association

WTAttention!!

Comments: What an attractive issue! The use of color, photos and, especially, white space are uniformly excellent. If this newsletter were any easier to read, it would read itself out loud! The small graphic elements are attractive, and not distracting. My only suggestions would be to make all the pages two columns, and keep the space between the lines of text (leading) uniform for all the stories.

Lots of color, artwork and white space make this an easy and enjoyable read. Every article had tangible value to a member, including the best explanation I’ve seen of the state constitution’s protection of public employee pension benefits. As always, I would make the headlines a bit larger and try to avoid “label heads” — Summer Leadership Conference, Retirement Get-Together, etc.

Class I - Best Opinion Writing

FIRST PLACE

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

"It takes a village"

Comments: This is an excellent editorial! It uses a logical progression of facts and statistics to build a strong and convincing argument, and then takes that argument a step further by urging specific action. The "village" metaphor is very apt, as is the idea of teachers being on the "front lines" as advocates for the children. It would have tied up the article nicely if one or both of these ideas had been revisited in the final paragraph.

Nicely written front-page editorial on fighting back against budget, staff and program cuts. Good use of NYSUT-related artwork to break up the type, which runs across the full 8-1/2x11 page. I'd prefer two columns — easier to read. Bullet points at the bottom sum up what readers need to do to help stop the cuts. Nice touch. Good headline could be made better by making it larger so it stands out more.

Class I - Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

"We pull together"

Comments: This is a very interesting, informative and moving profile of the union's efforts following a major storm. The vivid language used to describe the storm's aftermath brings the events into sharp focus, and the photos also help to draw the reader in. The subheads are an excellent way to link the different sections of the story, while the quotes and graphic devices also reinforce the points that are made. My only suggestions would be to keep the descriptions in the past tense; skipping back and forth from past to present is confusing.

This is a great example of a union doing what unions do so well — community action; in this case, the many ways the local union helped community members (and some of its own members) recover from tropical storms that flooded two riverfront communities in the school district. Good use of photos from NYSUT, from members and their families. Part of the message in this special section dealt with "coming out of the dark." Cover photos of the devastation were shown in black and white, and photos of the rebuilding efforts on subsequent pages were all in color. Not sure if that was planned or accidental, but it was a nice touch. Lots of detail throughout, from descriptions of the devastation, to the funds raised, the articles of clothing and other items collected. One article even details the food and monetary contributions of a NYSUT local in an adjacent community that pitched in to help. As in other entries, I would avoid the dark green backgrounds for photo captions and headlines. It makes them terribly hard to read.

Class I - Best Publication

FIRST PLACE

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

Comments: From the attention-grabbing and effective illustration on the cover through the inspirational article about the Family and Consumer Science teacher's efforts to help others in the community, this publication is an excellent example of what a newsletter can and should be. All of the articles are well-written and interesting, and highlight either union issues or the efforts of members on behalf of students and the community. Many of the graphic elements and photos are used well to increase interest in the story, such as the vivid "Approved," but some of the photos are too small and/or too dark to be effective. A two-column format and a huge increase in white space would make the copy more readable, and DON'T EVER use a dark green, red or blue shade under black ink.

There is so much useful news and information in these 24 pages that it's hard to believe this publication comes out bi-monthly. Some quarterly and semiannual publications don't reach this level of coverage. An attractive cover page trumpets approval of new contract. My only quibble is the hard-to-read dark green on the cover head and a missing refer to the inside page where the story can be found. From community action to pocketbook issues to professional development, every article inside has a purpose and a reason to be there — no space-fillers. It's always good to see headlines like the ones here that say something and are not just labels. Nice use of color throughout, including liberal use of photos, charts and clip art. I would recommend a two-column format. It can be hard to follow the single-column format that stretches all the way across the page. I would also avoid the dark greens and blues that are sometimes used for headlines and caption backgrounds. They wash out the heads and make the captions hard to read. But those are minor points. Someone obviously is spending a great deal of time and effort to make this an attractive and useful publication — and it shows.

Class I - Best Publication

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Westfield Teachers' Association

WTAttention!!

Comments: This attractive publication uses color, photos, graphics and white space to create a format that is extremely readable. The stories are well-written and easy to understand, and offer a good overview of the activities and interests of union members. It might be a good idea to delve more deeply into some of the more complex issues, such as the issues facing the APPR committee. Also, more descriptive and interesting headlines would help to draw readers into the articles. For example, "From the President's Desk" is the name of the column, not a description of what the article is about.

-comments continued-

This publication is very straightforward and businesslike. It makes liberal use of white space, a two-column format, color, photos and clip art to give members a newsletter that is inviting and easy to read. It's also full of news that should interest and inform everyone from the new members to the retirees. I may have mentioned this in another category, but the article on how pensions are protected by the state constitution is the best explanation I've seen of how these protections work and how they could be taken away. If I had to quibble about something, it would be to try to take the time to write headlines that help describe what the article is about — for instance, instead of “Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk 2011,” try something like “Members brave rain to support breast cancer research.”

Class I - Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

“Little pockets full of sunshine...”

Comments: This is an interesting report of a significant activity organized and attended by many union members. It does a wonderful job of illustrating the involvement of the members in the welfare of the community, but did not appear to be an official union event.

Nice story about a “community day,” one of the many activities this local has sponsored to help flood victims in the community. Good detail, including description of activities going on in the school gym, money raised and reasons why the activity was so important to the children who were affected. Good quotes are absolutely essential to an article like this and they were included, as well. Five photos help tell the story, including one picture of two local members who both lost their homes in the floods. Great reporting.

Class I - Best Union News Story

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Westfield Teachers' Association

WTAttention!!

“Strides against breast cancer walk 2011”

Comments: This is an interesting story about union members' participation in a community event. It does a good job of illustrating the members' concern for cancer patients.

Straightforward reporting of union's involvement in Strides Against Breast Cancer walk. Accompanying photo of about two dozen members who took part helps illustrate the story. Even if they're not identified it gives more than 20 members another reason to pick up and read the newsletter. Although the essential detail is all there, I would give it even more space next year, with more detail — maybe some info on NYSUT's role as a statewide sponsor and the fact that its members statewide help raise more than \$1 million annually.

Class I - Best Use of Social Media

FIRST PLACE

Hastings Teachers Association

Hastings Teachers Association

Comments: A solid entry. Topical, good use of photos and feedback from viewers.

This site does what a good social media site should do — it not only presents the union and NYSUT in the best light but it also gives visitors a sense of what the Hastings Teachers Association is all about as it serves and contributes to its community. The photos and layout are well packaged and the information easily accessible.

Class I - Best Website

FIRST PLACE

Hastings Teachers Association

Hastings Teachers Association Website

Comments: An excellent site. Deep with lots of categories links and photo galleries.

This website is informative and visually appealing — sure to draw visitors in to navigate its pages. It also has great interactive features, including Facebook access.

Class I - Best Website

Schalmont Teachers' Association

Schalmont Teachers' Association Website

Comments: The homepage lacked visuals and attempts to open pages and links resulted in blank pages.

This site has a very good home page and has good use of photos, color type and layout. It could use a bit more variety in layout, however. But there is lots of useful information on some very accessible links.

Class I - Best Website

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Westfield Teachers' Association

Westfield Teachers' Association Website

Comments: Homepage would benefit from the use of visuals. Links and pages were strong.

This site features a visually stunning home page, which makes visitors want to stay a while. There are great links to information and the site is easy to navigate overall, although it is somewhat difficult to exit.

Class I - Solidarity Award

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Hastings Teachers Association

Hastings Teachers Association You Tube

“HTA annual food drive 2012”

Comments: What an excellent production! This video does a wonderful job of highlighting the efforts of teachers on behalf of the community — not just as individual teachers, but also as members of the teachers’ union. The still photos and video are excellent, focusing lots of attention on the HTA logo, and the narration does a good job of reinforcing the message. I’m not sure how relevant it is to solidarity, other than the importance of members working together to achieve a common goal.

As they did last year, this local continues to create some really great videos of its solidarity activities, including its annual food drive on behalf of the local food pantry. Here the union uses interviews with the food pantry manager and shoppers at a local food store to tell the story for them. Production values are excellent. Unfortunately, while it is pursuing an issue that is certainly of importance to the statewide and national unions, this entry doesn’t specifically tie in the statewide or national union angles or show how they relate to the local concerns.

Class I - Solidarity Award

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

“STA unites for hope”

Comments: This is an excellent report of an important event in which many union members participated. The photo, illustrations and quotation are a wonderful accompaniment, but the event itself does not seem to be related to union issues and/or concerns.

This is a well-written article with a nice accompanying photo that could easily be a winner in another category. However, it lacks the category’s necessary ties to NYSUT and its national affiliates, which is unfortunate since NYSUT and the nationals are so heavily involved in the Making Strides campaign. NYSUT through its affiliates raises more than \$1 million for this campaign. There is a wealth of information available from NYSUT and AFT, for instance, which would enhance this story and fulfill the requirements of the category.

Class II - Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

“Budget cuts put student success at risk”

Comments: The “cutting” graphic does a good job of enhancing the message of the article, and the colorful “Register and Vote” message in the middle of the page breaks up the type and draws the reader into the story. However, the italic lightface type of the main story is difficult to read, and there should be more white space around the center graphic, especially on the right side.

Well-written editorial broken up with colorful, related artwork. Good detail and lots of obvious research of the facts. Two-column format is nice, but the all-italic body type is a little hard to read. Also watch the lack of white space separating the type from the artwork.

Class II - Best Editorial Design

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

“Message from the president”

Comments: Using bullets to break up the type is an excellent way to make an article more attractive and draw readers into the article. The photo of the president’s smiling face also helps to attract readers and reinforce the message of the copy. However, the tight space between the columns detracts from the look of the page and makes it more difficult to read.

Three-column format makes this an easy page to read, broken up with president’s headshot, an “Action Center” logo and a related pull quote. All of these elements spotlight a very personal message from the president and result in a page that undoubtedly is popular with readers.

Class II - Best Editorial Design

Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association

PORTAL

Comments: The use of soft pastel colors is an understated way to make a publication attractive. And several of the photos do a good job of complementing the stories. However, a number of the photos are so small and the reproductive quality is so bad that it’s difficult to make out what the subjects are doing. And the lack of white space between the type and the sides of the boxes makes the pages appear crowded and difficult to read. A black-and-white format with crisp reproduction and plenty of white space would be a better use of resources.

-comments continued-

Very attractive, colorful publication. Good use of color throughout to help visually separate the articles. Good mix of news, opinion and features, including an interesting feature on a member's loss of her home to fire and how the community and her union colleagues helped the family get through their loss. Nitpicks? I found P. 3 a little confusing and hard to tell the difference between articles, ads, a standalone editorial cartoon and a two-part masthead, which all kind of ran together.

Class II - Best Editorial Design

FIRST PLACE

Wallkill Teachers' Association

IMPACT

Comments: This very attractive and easy to read page makes a huge "impact" on readers. The use of color is excellent; especially the reverse type on the dark blue banner. The "Say No" graphic on the bottom right is very effective. The use of white space to make the various elements stand out is exceptional. My only suggestions would be to use a photo on the cover, if possible, and make the main headline shorter and more expressive.

If you are going to use color in your publication, as this one does, I think you're pretty safe with a combination of red, white and blue, which I believe gives an implied credibility to the message you're trying to get across. This is a very straightforward Page 1 design, with the two-column article (on Tier 6) enhanced with some relevant artwork in the lower corner. The use of some spot color in the body type is something to be careful with. It can look blotchy. But here I think it is used well, to underscore some specific points in the article.

Class II - Best Opinion Writing

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

"Why 187 days?"

Comments: This article does an excellent job of laying out the facts related to an important issue in the district. The historical events leading to increasing the length of the school year is explained well and clearly, leaving the reader with an excellent grasp of the situation and the part played by the union in bringing it about. However, other than clarifying an important issue, the article doesn't really build a logical argument or recommend specific action.

Very interesting and clearly written article on why the district has a longer school year than most others. A simple headline, "Why 187 days?" drew me in, as it probably did other readers who were either intrigued by the odd number or knew what it meant and read to find the answer. The calendar artwork that accompanies the article is simple but well-done, and contains just a touch of color for the page. Hard to tell if it is clip art or was drawn in house. Either way it looks great.

Class II - Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

“Wendy Gottlieb's speech to the REF on March 1st”

Comments: This speech does an excellent job of laying out a passionate and convincing argument against standardized testing. The writer draws on her own extensive experience to explain many of the problems caused by the new procedures. However, more facts and figures to back up her claims would make the argument even more convincing.

One teacher’s speech on standardized testing makes for a good article in this publication. It’s also a great timesaver for an editor. The person who might not want to take time to write an article for your publication would probably have no qualms about handing over a copy of their speech or a letter they wrote to a local newspaper, for instance. But something like a speech calls for more visual enhancements to keep from looking too gray and forbidding. This article has a photo of the speaker, but it could run a lot larger, or there could be several photos scattered throughout the article, which jumps to a second page. Judicious use of subheads and “pull-quotes” also helps give these kinds of articles more visual appeal.

Class II - Best Opinion Writing

FIRST PLACE

Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association

PORTAL

“There are no bad employees”

Comments: The writer does an excellent job of setting up an elaborate hypothetical situation in order to construct a logical, convincing argument about a common myth in today’s educational climate. By framing the situation as a discussion of a “shoe salesperson,” the article removes some of the baggage from the hot-button issue of tenure and makes it a more objective, and less emotional, topic. A very good job.

The author has found an interesting approach to a perennial topic facing rank-and-file educators: Who is to blame when an employee doesn’t measure up to expectations, especially a tenured employee? Putting the blame squarely on those who do the hiring, the author makes a number of excellent points that any reader could cite when tenure and “incompetent teachers” become topics of conversation.

Class II - Best Opinion Writing
Tonawanda Education Association

TAB

“Keep your eye on the ball”

Comments: This article does an excellent job of refuting a number of very common myths often used against committed and experienced teachers. The writer draws on real-life events faced by teachers in the union to debunk these myths and expose the real facts of life. However, it’s not always a foregone conclusion that everyone else has read all the material that is being discussed. It might be more effective to repeat more of the material from “The Ball” in order to argue against it more effectively.

I have re-read this at least a dozen times and I absolutely don’t understand it. Much of it appears to be based on events of the district’s staff development day, which presumably all teachers would have attended. In that case, the audience for whom this was written would probably understand the material. To this outsider it seems like a lot of explanatory information that would tie it all together is missing.

Class II - Best Opinion Writing
Wallkill Teachers' Association

IMPACT

“President's message”

Comments: The brevity of this editorial helps to make it an effective argument for members to increase their knowledge about the issues affecting the state of education today. It’s easy to read and, hopefully, will inspire members to research the topics mentioned. The inclusion of a slightly higher level of specific information about such important subjects as teacher evaluation, Tier 6 and school funding cuts might have been more convincing without overwhelming the reader.

A nice overview of the issues facing educators and some of the campaigns underway to combat the attacks. Obviously timed to come out just ahead of the State of the State, the state budget and the next legislative session. Well-timed. It’s good, as far as it goes, basically calling for all union members to be aware of the issues. I would have taken it one step further and offered some suggestions on how members could become personally involved — possibly taking part in the efforts of NYSUT, AFL-CIO and AFT, which were outlined in the president’s message.

Class II - Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

“What is the union doing?”

Comments: This article does an excellent job of laying out the very specific actions of union members to address such problems as the state’s property tax cap, the local school budget and contract negotiations. The issues are described well, and the writing is colorful and interesting. A good job!

Answering the question, posed in the headline, that local union leaders hear all too frequently, this entry is rich in detail. It outlines some of the key issues facing all educators in New York state, then proceeds to carefully and specifically inform readers exactly what the union is doing to counter the layoffs, the loss of state aid, the property tax cap and the delay in reaching a new budget agreement. Anyone who takes the time to read this article will have their questions answered.

Class II - Best Profile

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

“NTA members walk for a cure and a friend”

Comments: This is a wonderful and inspirational story about the importance of both fund-raising and personal support in the fight against breast cancer. The writing is excellent, and the use of quotes is especially good.

A good, in-depth look at how union members come together to support the American Cancer Society’s Making Strides campaign. The article outlines in detail some of the background of the annual campaign, then profiles a breast cancer survivor and her friend, a union member. It details that member’s efforts over the years to take part in cancer walks and help raise money for research. Good quotes and well-illustrated with photos of union members and others at the cancer walk. Nice job.

Class II - Best Profile

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association

PORTAL

“The wheels on the bus”

Comments: An interesting and inspirational story about the writer’s trip to Washington with her daughter that was significant on both a personal and professional level. The lively and descriptive writing does an excellent job of creating a clear picture of the events at the rally, and reinforces for the reader the importance of the efforts of union members on both a local and national level.

-comments continued-

This first-person account of a trip to Washington to take part in the march for jobs and justice illustrates how local union members, working with their regional and statewide counterparts are making a difference. It could very well convince other members to take part in the next rally. It just cries out for a photo.

Class II - Best Profile

Tonawanda Education Association

TAB

“Make a living by what you get”

Comments: This article does a good job of laying out the efforts of the union to contribute to a number of significant local causes. The situations of the various beneficiaries who are battling cancer are laid out in an interesting and moving way, and the colorful descriptions help to hold the reader’s interest.

A solid P. 1 feature about how and why the local supports dress-down day fundraisers and other efforts to raise money for good causes. Nice headline and photo. The article is very detailed in outlining the events sponsored and how much money has been raised. But what I found most interesting was the description of two local friends of the union who are suffering from aggressive cancers and who have been recipients of some of the funds raised. No one could read this article and then pass by a collection box without making a contribution.

Class II - Best Profile

Wallkill Teachers' Association

IMPACT

“Team Wallkill”

Comments: This article offers an interesting description of an important fund-raising event. Documenting the different activities of the union to raise money for breast cancer research is a good way to demonstrate members’ concern for community issues.

Nice color photo illustrates this brief profile of the union’s participation in the Making Strides breast cancer walk. Good detail on fundraising efforts — who was involved, what the activities were, and how much was collected. Kudos for mentioning that the local effort is part of a NYSUT-wide support of the Making Strides campaign. It shows the local union involved in a larger cause, which may give it more support from local members.

Class II - Best Publication

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

Comments: *The Scribe* offers readers an excellent variety of timely and important information. The articles are well-written, with creative headlines that help to draw readers into the story. Two stories, "What is the union doing?" and "Where do we go from here?" are especially good. However, the layout and use of color combine to make the publication very difficult to read. Black type on a dark red shade is bad enough, but red type on a red background? The quality of the photos are good, but several are too dark and/or out of focus. And the type in the boxes is crowded all the way to the edge.

A very attractive and professional-looking publication. Red highlights throughout and attractive folio lines on each page give it a nice consistency and the feeling that the entire issue was carefully planned and laid out. Information throughout covers all issues — current events, contractual, people items, an attractive picture page reviewing the past year and a nice centerspread tribute to retirees. This publication makes good use of photos, all color. Nitpicks? No white space around the P. 1 photo, use of difficult-to-read italic type throughout the retiree centerspread, and a few misspellings. But all in all, a very nice publication.

Class II - Best Publication

FIRST PLACE

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

Comments: *The Bridge* is a very attractive publication full of timely information presented in an interesting way. From the cover story about the Walk for a Cure to the personal information about the NTA members in each building, each article is well-written and concise enough to hold the reader's interest. The layout is excellent, with good use of photos and a consistent look to the typography and graphic elements on each page. Slightly wider gutters between the columns would make it even easier to read.

With so many union publications now using color it would be easy to dismiss this all-black-and-white publication — if only it didn't look so good. The P. 1 flag is attractive and eye-catching. Solid headlines on the two P. 1 articles, and the layout is clean and uncluttered. The same clean layout with plenty of white space continues throughout the publication, which has articles that run the gamut from hard news to features to people items and pocketbook issues. Well-illustrated with plenty of photos that make up for the lack of color by being crisp, focused and well sized. Nice, solid publication.

Class II - Best Publication

Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association

PORTAL

Comments: *Portal* is an excellent publication, with a variety of well-written and informative articles covering timely topics of interest to members. The President's Message and other stories about the budget are written from a personal perspective that makes a convincing argument. The personal tale, "Heading home," is both moving and powerful. The use of the pastel colors, however, adds little to the attractiveness of the issue, and has a very adverse impact on the photos, especially the ones on the cover. A yellow face is never a good look. Also, more white space between the inside of the boxes and the type would make the copy easier to read.

Good use of color throughout makes this publication attractive and eye-catching. Lots of variety in the articles, which carry a great deal of information and details. Many photos throughout, but most of them could be bumped up in size to give them more impact. One thing lacking is good, descriptive headlines, especially noticeable on P. 1. I found P. 3 confusing. It's difficult to distinguish among the articles, ads, artwork, cartoon and masthead, which are split into two parts.

Class II - Best Publication

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Tonawanda Education Association

TAB

Comments: *TAB* is a colorful and informative newsletter that provides interesting and timely information to members. The President's Message and Know Your Contract feature are both well done, and there are a number of entertaining articles that offer insight into the activities and interests of members. The layout is good, but the type is rather small and difficult to read. Most of the photos are excellent, especially the one on the cover, and the graphic elements are consistent throughout.

A photo dominates the front page of this publication — a welcome change from photos that are too often undersized. Someone also went to the trouble of superimposing the photo caption and head for the accompanying story on the photo. A nice, professional-looking graphic touch, along with an attractive flag. The background color on the index carries throughout the issue, giving it a consistent look through all eight pages. The headline style throughout is consistent, graphically pleasing and very different from what we normally see. A great P. 2, which shares the president's message with a clean, businesslike masthead. Nice layout on the P. 7 "Lindsay's Legacy" article — which includes a large anchor photo with three smaller photos. Nice variety of articles, all well-illustrated. The only artwork flaws are the photo and plan for the Capital Project Update on P. 6. They are way too small to have any value. But in all, a very professionally designed and executed issue.

Class II - Best Publication

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Wallkill Teachers' Association

IMPACT

Comments: *Impact* is such an attractive publication that it's easy to believe that members read every word of each issue. The stories are well-written, and the information is offered in a simple, concise style that's very easy to understand. "A Season for Giving" and the "President's Message" are especially good. The layout is beyond reproach, with excellent photos, graphics, typography, color and white space.

This newsletter demonstrates that you can produce an attractive, full-color publication on a budget. It makes good use of available clip art in addition to three photos in an eight-page publication. It also takes advantage of articles and information available from other sources, including NYSUT and the AFT, that can benefit members. But it still generates a great deal of material internally — articles on local SRPs, the President's Message, items about members and a feature on the local's involvement in the Making Strides cancer walk, to name a few. A great effort.

Class II - Best Union News Story

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

"Solidarity renewed"

Comments: This is an excellent editorial that stresses the importance of solidarity in the fight against those who are launching attacks against both teachers and students. It builds a convincing argument based on well-researched facts and information. However, it doesn't describe a union event.

This article takes readers back a year to the march on Washington to protest public-school-and-teacher bashing, then follows up with an accounting of subsequent attacks on public education. Then, in detail, it outlines some optimistic signs that the tide is turning. It culminates with the most significant sign — the strength of the union. It builds to an effective close, renewing the call for solidarity and action. Good work.

Class II - Best Union News Story

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

"NTA Supports REF on education funding"

Comments: This story does an excellent job of describing a very important union event — a meeting of the union members and others in support of increasing school funding. The colorful writing brings the speeches to life, with enough description of the setting and background information to underscore the importance of the event.

-comments continued-

This is an in-depth accounting of the union's involvement with a local group of public education advocates known as Restore Education Funding. The article, illustrated with two photos, details a meeting of the organization, quotes the various speakers, then describes the group's beginnings and its aims and how its work affects rank-and-file union members. The article also includes links to a petition of support and the group's Facebook site. This covers all bases.

Class II - Best Union News Story

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association

PORTAL

"Can you hear me now?"

Comments: An excellent description of an event emphasizing the union's support of the Occupy Wall Street movement. The writer's visit to the site of the demonstration is related in a way that is both colorful and creative, and gives a good insight into the union's activities supporting the movement. It might have been helpful to include slightly more information about the movement, its origins and aims.

Some key details enliven this report of the union's role in New York City's Occupy Wall Street movement. In addition to the local's involvement, the author details how the UFT was supporting protestors. The article carries only a single photo, but provides a link to others. Nice job. I wish it had been longer, but I enjoyed what was there.

Class II - Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Tonawanda Education Association

TAB

"TEA rallies"

Comments: This article provides an excellent description of a rally attended by union members, and also includes a very interesting look back at union activities in the past. The members' comments in the sidebar are interesting and revealing, and the photos are excellent. It might have been better to separate out the art teacher's memories into another sidebar, as it is rather confusing, especially with no quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph of the long quote.

This publication devoted two full pages to a richly illustrated cover story on the local's participation in a NYSUT-sponsored rally for public education. Quotes from several of the participants bring the article to life, including one account from a retired teacher who talked about protests that took place during his early years. That was a great counterpoint to the article's descriptions of many of the current participants, for whom it was their first rally. Good-sized photos, especially the cover photo, help tell the story. Great job.

Class II - Best Union News Story

Wallkill Teachers' Association

IMPACT

“Celebrating our School-Related Professionals”

Comments: This article offers a colorful account of an important union activity. It does a good job of explaining why it’s important to recognize such essential personnel, and how the union activities are designed to make them feel special.

A nice tribute to SRPs with details on how the local union honored the support staff on the statewide SRP Recognition Day, and why this event is so important. The photo also helps tell the story. But I have to take issue with one detail that is lacking — this annual day of recognition only came about because of NYSUT’s tireless advocacy in the state Legislature. SRPs need to know not only that they are honored every November, but that it was their very unions that garnered this honor for them. It’s a key detail that can’t be left out.

Class II - Best Use of Social Media

FIRST PLACE

Amityville Teachers' Association

Amityville Teachers' Association Facebook

Comments: The Facebook page has lots of notices about important events, and lots of photos. The page also receives positive feedback from viewers.

This is a good site with opportunities for feedback by visitors, and easily accessed information. It does a good job of reaching out to the community. But more content is needed to make the site outstanding.

Class II - Best Website

FIRST PLACE

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

Comments: Cleanly designed and dynamic homepage. Easy to navigate to links and pages. Very well done.

This site contains useful information but it takes visitors a very long time to load, far longer than any other entry. Nonetheless, once the page comes up, it’s worth all the patience it took to retrieve it. This is a page that stands out for the way it packages information. Its home page provides ample choices for visitors — they can read a few graphs of an article and then click on to read further if they desire. So visitors don’t have to go page by page to find something that is of interest to them. Good job.

Class II - Best Website

Nyack Teachers Association

Nyack Teachers Association Website

Comments: Appears to be a template homepage which would benefit with the use of visuals. Links and pages a little thin.

This site contains a great deal of AFT information. However, it has no layout to speak of and is type-heavy. Also, visitors need to log on with a password to access certain pages, which makes it difficult for outside visitors to navigate.

Class II - Best Website

Tonawanda Education Association

Tonawanda Education Association Website

Comments: Homepage would benefit with better design and use of visuals. Try using some of your locally produced photos on the homepage. Otherwise a good site.

This site has a great link to photos/flickr, but it is overall lacking in layout and type-heavy. Also, some links require authorization to access.

Class II - Solidarity Award

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

"Budget cuts put student success at risk"

Comments: This article does an excellent job of tying a serious problem facing local students and teachers to issues on the national level. The efforts of NYSUT to address the challenges of budget cuts and student achievement on the local level are well-documented, and the importance of voter registration as a solution is addressed.

This article begins by detailing the effects of budget cuts on schools and students. It jumps to the larger issue of how and why public education has become the whipping-boy for the right wing and explains why these attacks have caused NYSUT to reenergize its programs to register and mobilize voters. It then makes an appropriate call for all members and their families to be registered and to vote. Illustrated with some "register and vote" artwork from NYSUT, it ties together the local, state and national perspective.

Class II - Solidarity Award

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Tonawanda Education Association

TAB

“Unshackle upstate”

Comments: This article does an excellent job of explaining a very complex issue of extreme importance to members. It begins by laying out the six points that have been proposed by those looking to reduce the cost of education by addressing state mandates, and then refutes each one individually with specific facts and figures. It might have been better to open the article with a short summary/position statement, instead of letting all the arguments unfold in the body of the story. Also, the tie-in to NYSUT actions and concerns occurs rather late in the story.

A good article on the “Let NY Work” agenda and the dangers of Tier VI. However, its only effort to integrate local issues with NYSUT or national concerns is a brief sentence at the end urging members to sign up for the Member Action Center on the NYSUT website to receive related briefings and other information.

Class III - Best Editorial Design

FIRST PLACE

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

“Marching on ...”

Comments: *The Union Sound* uses an attractive layout and plenty of white space to show off its excellent photos and graphics to the best advantage. The typeface is easy to read and consistent throughout, and the black-and-white format is attractive and doesn't use garish colors to distract from the message. All of the photos are of excellent quality, but some are too small. Also, the photo page is a good idea, but it would be better to use larger pictures throughout the publication to break up the type and add interest to each page.

This black-and-white publication is another example of how a lack of color doesn't have to stand in the way of a bright, attractive product. Starting with a picture layout of the union's participation in a St. Patrick's Day parade on the cover page, the editor picked a nice anchor photo, ran it large and supplemented it with other, smaller photos. The same eye for a good layout is evident on an inside photo page on the union's participation in a rally at the Capitol. Every inside page is illustrated with a photo or appropriate clip art. The style and display of headlines, bylines, folios and other elements is consistent throughout. The three-column format is easy to read. A great publication.

Class III - Best Opinion Writing

FIRST PLACE

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

“Standing together”

Comments: This editorial does an excellent job of building a very persuasive argument based not only on well-researched facts and figures, but also on the personal experience of the writer. By personalizing the specific challenges facing the students, the writer makes some dramatic points about the inequality facing today’s educational system. My only suggestion would be to make the article more compact. As a speech or an editorial, the length affects its ability to hold the reader’s interest.

Here is an example of how a good speech can make a good editorial. This member’s speech to the Alliance for Quality Education, calling for changes to funding of public education, is well-researched, full of factual information — and a good read. The editor supplemented it with some artwork and photos to break up the banks of type. A few pull-quotes and subheads would also help visually. But the category here is the writing, and that is excellent.

Class III - Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

“Honoring our School-Related Professionals (pages 1-7)”

Comments: I fully understand why it was difficult to choose a single story to submit as a profile. Virtually all of the content on these seven pages gives an excellent picture of the work done by a group of professionals to advance the union’s mission. The writing is excellent, and the first-person stories are all both interesting and inspirational.

Coinciding with SRP Recognition Day, this issue honors SRPs in a number of ways — a cover page letter from the local president, accompanied by photos of SRP members; excerpts from a speech by an NEA vice president at NYSUT’s SRP Conference; a locally written poem; and more than a dozen interviews and photos of SRPs who are asked about their jobs and suggestions for how they can be made better. Great idea and a nice tribute.

Class III - Best Publication

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

Classroom Pointers

Comments: Almost every page of *Classroom Pointers* gives an informative glimpse into the interesting and inspirational activities arranged by the teachers for the benefit of the students. Their dedication and experience is expertly profiled and, as such, reinforces the importance of the union members in the community. However, there is not a lot of information about specific union concerns and issues, and the publication would be more attractive with a simpler layout, consistent typeface, larger photos, and no dark green shades behind the words.

This is a nice-looking publication. The green highlights and backgrounds on all four pages provide consistency throughout. Solid headlines. Plenty of photos on all pages. Good, straightforward writing and obvious attention to detail and accuracy in articles and captions. Two suggestions — a two- or three-column format is easier to read than the single column on the cover and back page. And this issue, at least, is all about the students, which may be typical for a summer issue. Not as many member-related articles as we would expect to see. This, of course, is up to the editor, who knows the readership better than we do. It's just something we noticed.

Class III - Best Publication

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Rockville Centre Teachers' Association

RVCTA Newsletter

Comments: Every one of the "Portraits of professionalism" features is well-written and interesting. They all offer a compelling picture of the quality and dedication of the teachers in the district. However, there's not a lot of information about union issues and concerns. Also, the black type on a white background is easy to read, but the use of some photos and/or graphics would increase interest, as would a descriptive headline in addition to the "Portraits" designation.

Nice tributes to four members in this publication's "Portraits of professionalism." Three-page publication also includes a classified ad section. It's good as far as it goes, but I would add some headlines and standing heads to separate the various articles. Also add a masthead with basic publication information — editor, union officers, frequency of publication, etc.

Class III - Best Publication

FIRST PLACE

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

Comments: *The Union Sound* offers members a wealth of important information in a very attractive package. The articles are well-written, interesting and, occasionally, very moving. "Reflections" is especially effective, although it might have been more cohesive if the writer had returned to the topic of the funeral service from time to time, especially at the end. The photos on the cover are all of excellent quality, but it might have been better to use fewer of them but make them larger.

This black-and-white publication is professional throughout. Eye-catching cover. All 12 pages carefully and neatly laid out. Headline style is attractive and consistent throughout the pages. Articles are well-written and free of typos. Varying a two- and three-column format is also a nice touch. Plenty of photos and even a locally produced editorial cartoon. Also impressive was a two-page tribute to a member who had recently died. Given that the death obviously occurred fairly close to the publication date, it was especially impressive to see how much work had been done in a short time to put together the section and collect photos and tributes from members. A very classy publication.

Class III - Best Union News Story

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

Classroom Pointers

"Teachers are making strides"

Comments: Although brief, this story does a good job of conveying both the setting and emotions of the walk to benefit breast cancer research. Some quotes from the participants might have helped to make the background and importance of the event more vivid.

This is a well-written, well-illustrated article about the union's participation in a Making Strides walk. It covers all the basic information and even adds some nice color about the weather on the day of the walk. It meets all the requirements of the category, but perhaps because it was so well put together I was a bit disappointed that it didn't go on a little longer.

Class III - Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

“Reclaiming the dream”

Comments: This story does an excellent job of reporting on an extremely important event — the 2012 NYSUT Representative Assembly — in a way that is not only interesting but also easy to understand. The descriptive yet relaxed writing style not only helps to bring the speeches and events of the meeting to life, but also conveys complex issues in a way that the reader can relate to his or her own life. An excellent job!

Having attended many NYSUT RAs, I was impressed by this member’s account of the 2012 RA. The author tackles the daunting task of going back through three days of non-stop meetings, seminars and speeches and offers an excellent and concise overview for colleagues who will be informed by the speeches and affected by the work accomplished by delegates. She captures the emotion of delegates in a heated Q-and-A with the state education commissioner. She does a great job of poring through the long list of resolutions and constitutional amendments and highlighting those that will have the greatest impact on the greatest number of members. For those in this local union who were not in attendance at the RA, this news story is the next best thing to being there. Well-done.

Class III - Best Use of Social Media

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Mahopac Teachers' Association

Mahopac Teachers' Association

Comments: Lots of topical activity on this site. People are responding to it.

Very easy to access this site. It contains a union message worthy of spreading. Good link to follow and comment.

Class III - Best Use of Social Media

FIRST PLACE

Yorktown Congress of Teachers

YCTUnion.com/YouTube

“Tip a teacher 2011”

Comments: This is a fantastic entry! Very, very well done! Congratulations to the Yorktown Congress of Teachers!

Very good page. Lots of information and videos. The one video submitted for consideration was well photographed and contained an important message. This is using social media at its best.

Class III - Best Website

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers Website

Comments: Clean design with good spacing of topics. Easy to navigate. The site would benefit with more visuals.

This site is a rare find. It does more than just contain commentary and articles about core testing — it provides clear examples that enable visitors to judge for themselves whether the state’s testing mania makes any sense. Plus, the site is so easy to navigate. It could use better layout, though, and more graphics. Overall, though, a winner.

Class III - Best Website

FIRST PLACE

Rockville Centre Teachers' Association

Rockville Centre Teachers' Association Website

Comments: Excellent site! Original design, easy to navigate and good use of visuals!

This site has good links to informative articles on key issues. However, it could use a more imaginative layout to give it visual appeal.

Class III - Solidarity Award

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

Comments: This entire issue is well-written, informative, and gives an excellent idea of the concerns and activities of the union. The cover story is especially good, tying union issues to a moving tale of holiday charity to strangers. However, there isn’t a lot of information about the efforts of the state and national unions, and how they relate to local situations.

Three excellent articles highlight this publication’s concern with issues that hit at the very existence of unions — the attempts to dismantle public education through tax caps and other fiscal gimmicks; the ambivalence of some members about the value of their union; and the actions — national, statewide and local — that threaten workers’ rights, health care and other social issues. The recent closing of a popular school in this district provides writers with a fitting metaphor for the issues and conditions that unions are battling across the state and the nation, and they use it to rally members to action. Good job.

Class IV - Best Editorial Design
Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

Comments: The consistent typeface and layout make *The Educator* an attractive publication. Limiting the number of colors used adds to the appeal. Slightly more white space in the gutters and around the type in the boxes would make it easier to read, and more photos and graphics to break up the type would help to draw the reader in.

This attractive publication makes judicious use of some nice earth tone colors to provide a visually pleasing and consistent look. Three-column format with lots of white space is easy to read. Color photos and color clip art are present throughout. Well-written headlines, appropriately sized. Very clean, very professional look that someone has worked very hard to deliver.

Class IV - Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

The WORD

“Help us support pro-labor, pro-education county leaders”

Comments: A very attractive, compelling layout for an important story about supporting elected officials who agree with the union point of view. The large photo on the cover is an excellent way to draw the reader in, and the two charts on the second page go a long way toward explaining a complex topic. However, more white space between the columns and in the banner at the top of page one would make it even more attractive. Also, the photos on the third page are too similar to each other and not very compelling. Straight “mug shots” of each candidate would serve the same purpose.

Nice use of color throughout this feature, including many photos and an easy-to-read pie chart. Page one treatment helps stress the importance of union involvement in election of local political leaders. Very clean and attractive layout.

Class IV - Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Smithtown Teachers' Association

FACULTY FOCUS

“Setting the record straight: ... Evaluation law”

Comments: Using a simple, straightforward layout is an excellent way to let the content of a story shine. The black type on pale yellow paper is very easy to read, and there are no distracting colors or unrelated graphics to detract from the story. A little more white space between the type and the inside of the box would have made it even easier to read, as would a two-column format.

-comments continued-

This important and often misunderstood subject gets well-deserved page one treatment in this publication, with the article jumping to an inside page. A simple, but effective headline tells readers what they can expect to learn. My only concerns — the single-column format is difficult to read. Two or even three columns are easier to follow and add some needed white space to the pages. And, I'm not sure what the publication's limits are on adding artwork, but a photo or two or some clip art would break up the huge bank of type, especially on page one. If artwork cannot be incorporated, a "pull quote" could be copied from an appropriate section of the text and plugged somewhere into the layout.

Class IV - Best Editorial Design

FIRST PLACE

Valley Central Teachers' Association

VC ECHOES

"APPR reform?"

Comments: Using an interesting and compelling cover graphic is an excellent way to draw readers into the newsletter. This illustration is a good example of how to accomplish that goal. Although the drawing is simple, it does a good job of showing the pitfalls of poorly planned teacher evaluations — a message that is instantly comprehensible to teachers in the district. Very nice!

It's always nice to see a locally produced editorial cartoon, and this one is well-done. Running in color on page one it offers commentary on the thorny issue of APPR. I assume it refers to some more detailed editorial treatment of the topic on the inside pages. If so, it could have used a refer ("see APPR, p. 4," etc.) However, APPR is an ongoing issue so this cartoon certainly could have run just fine without an accompanying article.

Class IV - Best Opinion Writing

FIRST PLACE

Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

"Don't worry, Be happy"

Comments: This inspirational article does an excellent job of taking the writer's personal experience with the APPR and relating it to the specific experiences of other teachers — not just in the district, but all around the country. Even more than that, it succeeds in tying those concerns to important union issues, and urging solidarity at the local level. An excellent opinion piece.

This well-written editorial offers some sound advice for all teachers: focus on teaching and why you became a teacher and you can cope better with APPR, budget cuts, public criticism and the other dispiriting issues of the day. Good head, nice layout, even a pull quote (the same one I would have chosen) to dress up the page.

Class IV - Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

The WORD

“Notwithstanding everything”

Comments: This article does an excellent job of presenting a very complex issue — community college funding — in a way that is both easy to understand and persuasive. Using very extensive research based on historical facts, the writer builds a strong argument for a better funding model and urges specific action to convince legislators to act in the desired way. An excellent effort!

This editorial made me want to drop what I’m doing and go lobby the state Legislature for funding they owe community colleges dating back nearly 40 years. Given the subject matter and the writer’s attention to facts, figures and other arcane details, this could easily have turned into one of those editorials you know you should read but just don’t want to. However, the writer keeps it interesting with a provocative lead, some indisputable and interesting statistics and some reasonable suggestions for rectifying a problem facing all of the state’s community colleges. It is dotted throughout with quotes and relevant observations from President Obama, Gov. Cuomo and state lawmakers. And it concludes with a call to members to contact their state legislators when requested by their union. Very nice work.

Class IV - Best Opinion Writing

Smithtown Teachers' Association

FACULTY FOCUS

“State of education in New York”

Comments: This editorial does an excellent job of presenting an issue and then highlighting facts and figures that support the writer’s case. Although the governor has said that he is advocating for the students, this editorial builds a logical argument to support the writer’s contention that his policies will reduce the quality of education for the students.

The writer here makes a very good case that while Gov. Cuomo proclaims himself an advocate for students, his actions demonstrate otherwise. He dissects the governor’s State of the State address, showing the realities beyond the sound bites. It’s one thing to randomly claim that the governor is anti-teacher or “no friend to public education;” it’s quite another thing to prove it as effectively as this writer has.

Class IV - Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Valley Central Teachers' Association

VC ECHOES

"It's good to be the king!"

Comments: From the headline that grabs the reader's attention through all the passionate arguments against the commissioner of education, this editorial uses colorful and colloquial writing to build a persuasive argument. Although somewhat lengthy, the article is easy to read and understand, with occasional injections of humor that help to hold the reader's attention. The use of rhetorical questions is also a good way to maintain interest.

A very clever headline leads off this well-researched editorial on the state education commissioner. The editorial looks at the commissioner's close ties to Gov. Cuomo, and details the commissioner's brief teaching career and his long association with charter schools, including his work as managing director of the Uncommon Charter Schools organization. The writer effectively shows how so many statistics regarding the organization's claims of academic success have been skewed. Possibly a bit colloquial in some parts, but a nice job altogether.

Class IV - Best Profile

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

"Tis the season of giving"

Comments: This article paints an excellent picture of the wide range of charitable activities undertaken by ATA members. The details of each project are interesting in themselves and add up to a compelling vision of community service. I'm not sure that all the different projects are actual union activities, however.

Running in a December issue, this is a well-timed feature about the time, money and energy that union members devote to charitable endeavors. Getting in the names of as many members as possible is always good, and this profile provides great detail on the charity work that each person and group is involved with.

Class IV - Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

The WORD

“What's your sign?”

Comments: What a wonderful, inspirational story about the importance and history of unions in these members’ lives! From the excellent headline and lead paragraph/ through the story of the residual payments to the actor’s family, the memories recounted by the writer and her friends are lively, moving and fun to read. Although it doesn’t exactly tell how the individuals advance their union’s mission, the entire story serves as an endorsement of union activities and, as such, meets the qualification of a profile.

A unique and interesting article about local union members from union families, with lots of recollections about what it’s like to grow up in a family that sometimes has two or three generations of union members. The author employs a variety of interview topics — members relating stories about their parents and grandparents, some talking about their own experiences and their pride at becoming members of entertainment industry unions. Author talks about her own uncle, an actor who got a SAG card and went on to a career in TV and movies. Nicely illustrated with some current and file photos. My only disappointment — I’d like to have seen a photo of the author’s uncle at work in a movie or TV show.

Class IV - Best Profile

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Smithtown Teachers' Association

FACULTY FOCUS

“Be an activist”

Comments: This well-written and interesting article gives a good picture of the union’s activities and, even more important, describes the specific actions — both large and small — that members can take to advance those projects. The simple yet descriptive language and easy-to-understand suggestions add up to a very effective story.

An interesting article on the union’s need for activists, and what it takes to become one. Author employs some unusual facts, including an observation that if every member gave two hours a year to activism, it would be the equivalent of having another full-time staff member working for the union. Any local could put something like this together quickly and possibly generate some new blood for the union.

Class IV - Best Profile

Valley Central Teachers' Association

VC ECHOES

“Calvino joining AFT's CCSS Team”

Comments: This is an interesting account of a local teacher's important work with the national organization. A little more background about the teacher and some of the 38 recommendations already formulated would help to give a clearer picture of the event.

Brief but well-written profile of a local member named to an AFT committee on Common Core Standards. A worthy topic, as demonstrated in the article's details of the committee. Could use a little more detail on the member and possibly a quote from her.

Class IV - Best Publication

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

Comments: True to its name, *The Educator* is packed with important and useful information. Some of the articles are inspirational (“The student is now the teacher”), and some address essential issues (“Many questions about APPR”). All are well-written and easy to understand. The layout is good, although some of the pages are very busy with competing photos, colors and graphic elements. A simpler design with larger photos would be more attractive.

Thumbing through this publication, you can see that it's attractive, colorful, well laid-out, clean and has plenty of visual appeal with lots of photos. This excellence continues when you take a closer look at the material. The writing is good, as is the variety of articles, from a cover story on what it's like to teach in the district where you went to school to updates on APPR, contract negotiations, and community action projects. Headlines are descriptive and creative. Three-column format is easy to read and there is lots of white space. A very impressive publication.

Class IV - Best Publication

FIRST PLACE

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

The WORD

Comments: *The Word* is an extremely attractive publication that provides essential information to its members in a format that's easy to read and even easier to understand. Using a relaxed, colloquial style of writing, virtually every article is both interesting and inspirational. Just a few of the standouts are “Help for Harry” and “What's your Sign?” The three-column layout makes reading a breeze, and the graphics are simple yet effective. The photos are truly excellent, large and sharp, and do a very good job of complementing the information in the stories.

-comments continued-

It's nice when a publication runs lots of photos. It's even better when photos are run large enough to be worth running at all, as they are in this publication. Large, colorful photos, a consistent spot color on heads and good white space all add to the attractiveness. Articles are well-researched and well-written and provide a variety of material from features to pocketbook issues to community involvement. Most of the heads could be a little larger and a little longer but they are generally good.

Class IV - Best Publication

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Kenmore Teachers Association

THE ANNOUNCER

Comments: *The Announcer* does a good job of keeping local members in touch with the activities of the union. Every article provides important information in a clear, concise format that is easy to understand. Although the layout is simple, most of it is attractive and easy to read. It would look better if the graphic elements were more consistent — the different styles of rules, boxes, typeface, etc. can be distracting. Many of the photos are good, but quite a few of them are too small.

It takes a lot of creativity to put together an attractive and thoroughly enjoyable publication that is obviously done on a minimal budget. This one may be just four single-sided pages stapled together, but it makes the most of what it's got. There is judicious use of color on all pages — photos, artwork, headlines and column rules. Articles cover a variety of topics and do it well. This little publication does a great job of informing and educating its readers. One minor point — I would add a masthead. One not-so-minor point — try to do a little more proofreading. There are several typos, including one very visible on page one and another unfortunate one inside that has members “untied” by their beliefs, rather than “united.”

Class IV - Best Publication

Smithtown Teachers' Association

FACULTY FOCUS

Comments: *Faculty Focus* offers its readers a variety of interesting and well-written articles that both entertain and inform. The Political Action column is a detailed, easy-to-understand explanation of a very important topic — mandate relief — while “The real race to the top” is an inspirational and moving story about the hospice program. The newsletter's layout is attractive and simple, with enough white space to make the stories easy to read. It would be a good idea to make the typeface, layout and box styles more consistent, with more graphics to break up the pages. Photos would be an excellent addition, although the yellow paper would be problematic.

-comments continued-

One thing I've noticed from seeing several issues of this publication is that it has a consistent overall look from issue to issue — very important. It's packed full of information — opinion, news, people items, lots of members' names, which always helps develop readership. Nice classified section and an interesting "Investors' Corner." No photos, but good use of clip art and other graphic enhancements. A solid publication.

Class IV - Best Publication

Valley Central Teachers' Association

VC ECHOES

Comments: This publication offers some of the most passionate arguments for educational excellence that I've seen. From the arresting illustration on the cover to "Governor Cuomo is guilty" and "Walk on water," almost every article offers a well-written and persuasive argument against said governor's educational policies. Most are very effective. The layout is simple and attractive, although many of the pages need more white space in the gutter between the columns. More local photos and relevant graphics would also improve the look of the pages.

A very striking, full-color painting titled "Cuomo devouring NY's students first" covers the front page of this publication, beckoning you to look inside, where all is explained. Writing is good and opinion pieces are well researched. This publication has a very consistent look on its inside pages, almost like an academic journal or literary publication, with most articles running a full page. I would try for a little more variety in story length and headlines.

Class IV - Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

"We have a contract!"

Comments: An excellent article about a very important topic — an agreement on a new contract with the district after more than two years of negotiations. The information about the new contract and the steps taken to secure it is presented clearly and concisely, yet contains all the essential facts about this momentous happening. The language is simple and easy to understand, with no bureaucratic posturing to muddy the waters.

-comments continued-

Good treatment of a very basic topic of interest to all members. Because details have already been explained in a membership meeting and members have voted on the contract, the article goes into much of the background of more than two years of negotiations with three different superintendents. There are good quotes from the union's chief negotiator, who praises the efforts of the interim superintendent, and Facebook comments from a rank-and-file member. Because it is entered in the "Best Union News Story" category, the writer should be commended for putting together a very balanced and even-handed report and avoiding editorial comment — no gloating, no whining, no finger-pointing and no sniping at administrators — just solid reporting of the facts.

Class IV - Best Union News Story

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

The WORD

"Hospice can wait"

Comments: What a wonderful, inspirational story this is! Although somewhat long, it's clearly written and beautifully conveys the emotion and joy of all the different graduation ceremonies celebrated by the senior citizens. Even the subheads in the story are excellent; they draw the reader on and on into the article. However, although the program is sponsored by the union and carried out by union members, I'm not sure how important the union angle is.

This is a great and very inspirational piece that I think would have also fit well in the Best Profile category. Nevertheless, it tells the story of the union's Professors on Wheels program, primarily through the words of the senior citizens, for whom the popular lecture series was created, including some nonagenarians who never had the opportunity to finish high school. Lots of color and detail are critical to articles like these and the author doesn't neglect either one. Quotes from some of the elderly students are touching. Others are colorful and amusing without being condescending or patronizing. Photography is excellent, with wheelchair-bound attendees showing off their certificates. The article also provides details on the Professors on Wheels program, some discussion of its value, and comments from some of the union members who take part in it. Very well done.

Class IV - Best Union News Story

Smithtown Teachers' Association

FACULTY FOCUS

"STA members ratify contract 808-39"

Comments: Although the ratification of the contract is certainly an extremely important union event, this is really more of an opinion piece than an accurate recital of the relevant facts.

-comments continued-

The good news is that this is a very well-written, well thought-out article on the effort it takes to get a contract ratified. The bad news is that it's an opinion piece, written in the first person, urging readers to take certain actions, and should more accurately have been entered in the Best Opinion Writing category. It's writing to be proud of and it's an article that almost any local union could pick up and use with only minor editing, but as written it's not a news story.

Class IV - Best Union News Story

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Valley Central Teachers' Association

VC ECHOES

"Understanding APPR"

Comments: This is an excellent and very complete explanation of a complex and important issue. It's clearly written, well-organized and does a good job of highlighting the differences between the old professional performance review plan and the new one. It doesn't really describe a union event, however.

This is a very good primer on the details of APPR for rank-and-file union educators. Although the details are provided in a Q-and-A format, it certainly qualifies as a news story, delivering timely information and facts in an impartial manner. For something as complicated as the details of APPR this is actually a good way to get the information out to readers who might be discouraged at trying to understand the topic by reading a long article that attempts to explain it.

Class IV - Best Use of Social Media

FIRST PLACE

Arlington Teachers' Association

Arlington Teachers' Association Facebook

Comments: Another excellent Facebook Page! Lots of topics covered and lots of positive feedback and links.

Fabulous. This is what a social media site should be. It's packed with information that is attractively packaged, and there are many clicks where visitors can interact and provide feedback. And it's all so visually appealing.

Class IV - Best Use of Social Media

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Facebook

Comments: Good site. Positive feedback from viewers. Very topical.

Easy to access and packed with information. A very inviting home page with lots of links and comments. Great use of feedback comments.

Class IV - Best Website

Arlington Teachers' Association

Arlington Teachers' Association Website

Comments: A deep site with lots of links and pages. As is the case with many of the entries, this site would be vastly better with more visuals.

Good layout, good information and lots of it. Very easy to access. It could use more photos and graphics, though.

Class IV - Best Website

FIRST PLACE

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Website

Comments: A solid site. Has a very professional look. Lots of links, pages and photos.

This site shows how it is done. Great layout and great use of photos. Give visitors lots of useful information and easy to access overall.

Class IV - Best Website

Smithtown Teachers' Association

Smithtown Teachers' Association Website

Comments: Good use of a photo on the homepage but there's plenty more room to place information, links, and more visuals. A little thin as you navigate the site.

This site contains good links to information and easy access for visitors. But it has a Plain Jane home page and it is rather thin on content.

Class IV - Best Website

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Valley Central Teachers' Association

Valley Central Teachers' Association Website

Comments: A lot of work goes into this site. Deep with high value information, forms, etc.

Packed with information. Great use of photos. Easy access to links. However, some links require authorization, which shuts out outside visitors. Overall, though, it is an excellent site.

Class IV - Solidarity Award

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

Comments: This issue of *The Educator* does an excellent job of describing the concerns and interests of the union, and urging group solidarity and action on a number of issues. The article about the 2012 NYSUT Representative Assembly is especially well done.

Several articles in this issue provide the link between local issues and the concerns of NYSUT and its national affiliates, including coverage of the NYSUT RA and an article on how state regs are testing the patience of local unionists. RA coverage is the very essence of solidarity and this article clearly demonstrates how local delegates work with their statewide union, the AFT and NEA to deal with shared issues. In the article on how state regulations affect members, the author explains NYSUT's effort to deal with issues and provides a link to the NYSUT website, where local members can voice their opinions, which will be made known to state legislators.

Class IV - Solidarity Award

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

The WORD

“Do it yourself’ university with no ‘conventional instructors’”

Comments: The writer of this article is both passionate and extremely knowledgeable about the subject matter. She offers a well-organized, factual and logical argument against the assertions of a controversial author that online education is the wave of the future. Although the topic is certainly one that affects virtually every college and university, the tie-in to state and national unions could be stronger.

The author of this article has been teaching online courses for 12 years. When writing about the long-controversial topic of distance education, she gives some additional perspective to her own report by citing some of the work in this area by the American Federation of Teachers as far back as 2003. It certainly gives the article additional depth and perspective.

Class IV - Solidarity Award

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Valley Central Teachers' Association

VC ECHOES

"It's all fun & games until you lose rights"

Comments: This passionate piece is an excellent and well-written argument that skillfully refutes many of the ill-conceived attacks on both teachers and unions that are so prevalent in the media today. Using facts, figures and historical perspective, the writer builds a strong case for supporting the local union. An excellent article, although rather long.

This lengthy article on the state of the economy, public education and union-bashing, whether nationally or in New York state, makes good arguments for NYSUT's locally supported VOTE-COPE efforts. The author compares the VOTE-COPE fund-raising to that of the massive and deep-pocketed Committee to Save New York and urges readers to support VOTE-COPE. I would have included a sidebar for readers on how to give to VOTE-COPE.

Class V - Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

"You might be ready to retire if you remember ..."

Comments: What a fun page! The pictures of the old toys and other cultural items are an essential element of this feature, and they perfectly complement the text. My only suggestion would be to use each graphic in such a way that they are equal in size and spacing.

This trivia quiz of 1950s pop culture makes an eye-catching and attractively designed page. Does it have any professional value to readers? Probably not. But I'm sure it got a lot of readership and it certainly provides a relief from a steady diet of not-so-good news that all union publications are forced to deliver. Having challenged the newest members, editors should now plan to run a trivia quiz of current pop culture to test the more veteran members.

Class V - Best Editorial Design

FIRST PLACE

Sachem Central Teachers' Association

Speak Out

“The battle in Albany will affect us”

Comments: This attractive and effective illustration does an excellent job of capturing the essence of the issue, and portraying it in a way that’s easy to understand. The “tug of war” definitely brings a statewide issue down to the local level. In this case, a picture really is worth a thousand words!

This colorful and very creative front page graphically represents the tug-of-war between the governor and public school teachers. It’s a great way to introduce the inside material on how local union members are affected by the issues at the state capitol. One of the virtues of this entry is that while the concept and the artwork are clever and well done, if you examine the various elements it is not a complicated design and could be put together fairly easily by someone with a minimal understanding of computer graphics. Its simplicity is what makes this front page so good. One very minor nitpick – my headline would have read: “HOW the battle in Albany will affect us.” It’s a given that what happens in Albany affects all districts. What readers want to know is exactly HOW it affects them.

Class V - Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU

Momentum

“NYU Profitship Enterprise soars”

Comments: The cover illustration does an excellent job of drawing the reader into the issue in general and, specifically, to the referenced story. It not only makes for an attractive cover, but the huge “profitship” figure effectively brings home the message of the story before the reader has even opened the publication. An excellent job!

I loved the “Star Trek” theme on the cover page of this article. The eye-catching cover art draws readers in to a great story. The article is well-written, filled with factual detail and accompanied by a nice chart. A great package of information. One minor observation, and it’s only a matter of opinion. Instead of showing the profit figure as \$114,671,000 on the cover, I would have written \$114.67 million. I think it grabs the reader’s attention faster than having to mentally convert those zeroes to “millions.”

Class V - Best Opinion Writing
BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

“Great satisfaction”

Comments: This column is a wonderful testament to the hard work and dedication of a long-time teacher and union member! I’m not sure I would call it an opinion piece, however.

This is a great from-the-heart message from a local president who is ending a 39-year career as an educator and unionist. It offers some real detail on what it is like to be a union president and an educator, with equal measures of satisfaction and frustration. It should serve to inspire newcomers to the profession.

Class V - Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Buffalo Teachers Federation

PROVACATOR

“Those who can, teach”

Comments: This excellent and very passionate opinion piece makes some very strong points about the important issue of teacher evaluation and standardized testing. The facts cited about student absenteeism and the errors built into the tests help create a persuasive argument, and the points about English learners and students with disabilities affecting the scores are also well taken. However, some of these points are repeated several times, which detracts from their effectiveness, and some of the language used to describe the commissioner, while it may be warranted, is slightly “over the top.”

Well-written commentary on teacher evaluations. While it contains a certain amount of justifiable rhetoric about an unpopular topic, the author makes a reasoned case, offering up credible statistics — including some chilling facts on student absenteeism — to bolster the union’s position on the components of evaluations and the equally controversial topic of standardized testing. Good job.

Class V - Best Opinion Writing

FIRST PLACE

Sachem Central Teachers' Association

Speak Out

“A time to rise”

Comments: “Time to rise” is an excellent editorial. The writer does a very good job of presenting the issue of how budget cuts and decisions “from above” affect teachers and students, and passionately builds a strong case for action by union members. It’s very long, however, and many of the same points could have been made in a much shorter article.

-comments continued-

An excellent call to arms. In this familiar topic, the author outlines the many problems and criticism facing public education, the facts behind the various issues and the critical need for every union member to stand up and help preserve the rights and benefits that previous generations fought to acquire. A well-written, well thought-out piece of commentary that offers all union leaders a fitting response to the member who asks: "What is the union doing to help me?" The author's response? "You are the union; what are you doing to help us?"

Class V - Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU

Momentum

"Bargain every day"

Comments: This editorial does an excellent job of addressing several very important issues. By highlighting a number of facts about the current contract, it reminds members of how the union makes a difference in both their lives and careers. But even more important, it builds on these facts to frame a very persuasive argument for members to get involved in the day-to-day activities of the union. A very good job!

This president's letter deals very well with the mixed feelings members often express in the wake of ratification of a new contract. The writer does an excellent job of explaining to critics why the glass is half full. He also seizes the opportunity to recruit members to run for open steward positions within the union, pointing out their key role in negotiating the next contract. Lots of good information here that would be very useful to any union leader.

Class V - Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

"Great satisfaction"

Comments: This profile does a wonderful job of telling the story of how one individual tirelessly advanced the union's mission over her long career as a teacher and a union official. In the process of thanking those who have helped her along the road, the writer graphically depicts how she has helped and mentored others along the way. It's not just an interesting account of the highlights of her career; it's also an inspirational call to action for future union officials.

-comments continued-

The retirement of a local union leader after 39 years in the field of education provides great material for this profile. Looking back over her classroom/union career, the author provides a glimpse of the joys and frustrations of both careers. Particularly interesting is the fact that the author attended BOCES where she later came to work with many of her former instructors and mentors and stayed long enough to see her own daughter join the faculty as a teacher.

Class V - Best Profile

Sachem Central Teachers' Association

Speak Out

“Run to remember 5K”

Comments: This is a well-written and interesting account of an important event. It doesn't appear to be a union event, however.

Good effort here on how faculty and students at the local high school came together with community members to organize what will become an annual 5K run to remember local residents lost in the 9/11 tragedy. Community action is an excellent union project and this one was outlined in great detail. One observation — the article talks about the event organizer, a high school English teacher, and notes, for instance, that she wanted to thank the community for its support. This message would have had greater impact if she had been quoted directly rather than indirectly.

Class V - Best Publication

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

Comments: *The Beacon* is an attractive publication that does an excellent job of keeping its members informed. The simple layout puts the focus on the important information that is provided in clear, concise articles. “The president's report,” in particular, is a very complete account of recent events and decisions. A two-column format would be easier to read in print, or if the newsletter were delivered by email in the future, a narrower column width would be better.

This first-issue-of-the-year is packed with information for all members, covering everything from statistics on the incoming classes to building upgrades and upcoming elections. All information is laid out in an easy-to-read fashion, with plenty of subheads to separate the various topics, which are fact-filled without being overly long. It's a good combination of factual information told in the first person by the local president.

Class V - Best Publication

Buffalo Teachers Federation

PROVACATOR

Comments: *Provocator* is a passionate, creative and timely source of information for its members. The articles are well-written and clearly present the union's point of view on a wide range of important issues, while the story about Tommy is especially entertaining and inspirational. The layout is simple and easy to read, and the use of color and white space are good. There are a number of typos, however, and many of the headlines are way too long. Also, fewer pictures used much larger would be more effective.

This eight-page tabloid serves its readers well. It is neatly laid out with muted color throughout. There is a good mix of news and information. The "hard news," much of it dispiriting, is offset with some more upbeat features — an inspirational Christmas story from the local president, a report on a successful food drive and other items to benefit members. Plenty of photos are provided; I would run fewer of them but make them larger, and put a photo on page 1 — perhaps something seasonal since this is a December issue.

Class V - Best Publication

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Sachem Central Teachers' Association

Speak Out

Comments: *Speak Out* is a very attractive publication that provides a number of useful, entertaining and inspirational articles on a wide variety of timely and important issues. The "Time to rise" theme, which is reinforced by the cover illustration, "The president's message" and the excellent article on page 3 and 4, is especially well done. The layout is simple, clean and easy to read, with plenty of white space, good photos and effective graphic elements. My only suggestion would be to make the design elements, such as column width, type size, etc., more consistent throughout the publication.

Colorful, eye-catching cover art on this newsletter holds out the promise that there is much to read, absorb and enjoy on the inside pages. And the reader won't be disappointed. This 12-page full-color publication is well put together. Two well-written columns on the critical need for solidarity and member involvement lead off the issue, which also includes articles on community action projects, professional development and a local congressman's visit to the union. Good use of graphic enhancements such as the Post-It note on page 5 and a standing head on page 8. My only quibble with an otherwise excellent layout is the use of single-column body type on many pages. Compare it with the two-column format on page 3, which is so much easier to read and provides needed white space.

Class V - Best Publication

FIRST PLACE

Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU

Momentum

Comments: This newsletter does a truly exceptional job of keeping its members informed about all the current events and issues that are important to their careers and their lives. Virtually every article is a well-written, interesting and easy to understand explanation of union policies, contracts and benefits. From the president's "Bargain every day" to the explanation of health care benefits and on through the ins and outs of the long negotiation process, it's all first rate. The layout is also a masterpiece, with clean attractive pages, easy to read type and excellent photos.

A very slick, professional, clean and colorful publication. Some nice photos dominate the cover and give a visual preview of the contract ratification coverage on inside pages. Page folios are attractive, pages are a nice mix of two-, three- and even four-column formats. Crisp, well-written heads, properly sized. Photo quality is good and plenty of variety in the types of articles. Members must wish this publication came out more than four times a year.

Class V - Best Union News Story

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

"Freeing freedoms"

Comments: This article is a well-written and inspirational tribute to the importance of teachers unions on the local, state and national level. It doesn't report on a specific union event, however.

I loved this article, which is well-written, compelling and timely in its subject matter. It brings up many details about current events that readers may not be aware of. I know some of it came as a surprise to me. However, this entry would have been better suited to the Best Opinion Writing category.

Class V - Best Union News Story

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Buffalo Teachers Federation

PROVACATOR

"APPR MOU, created with teacher input, approved overwhelmingly by members"

Comments: This is an excellent article on a very important union issue, the Annual Professional Performance Review. It's well organized, provides just enough background to make the current changes easy to understand, and gives all the essential facts on the version of the Memorandum of Understanding that was adopted by the members. A very good job.

-comments continued-

Good, straightforward reporting of a news event that affects all members — the essence of this contest category. The topic is not sexy; it is a subject that necessarily requires the use of many abbreviations and acronyms, but the writer breaks it down into the details that will most interest and affect members. It explains what happened and why it is important to members.

Class V - Best Union News Story
Sachem Central Teachers' Association

Speak Out

“We are Sachem”

Comments: An interesting and inspirational story about a tragic event and how it brought members of the community together to aid one of their own. The story is well-written and compelling, but it’s not clear that any of the efforts that took place were union events.

Good coverage of the events following a fire that destroyed the home of a union member. This is primarily a well-detailed account of the fund-raising activities the union sponsored or participated in, and how union members stepped up to help in other ways as well. Some great quotes help tell the story and provide needed color. Nice job.

Class V - Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU

Momentum

“The new negotiators”

Comments: What an inspirational idea: to tell the story of long and difficult contract negotiations from the point of view of the “new kids on the block.” Not only is this story an extremely enlightening glimpse of the hard work put in by all members of the team, it’s also entertaining, creative and very easy to understand. The conversational tone, coupled with the well-organized recital of the facts, makes the new contract — and the path taken to get there — comprehensible to all.

An interesting —and compelling — story on contract negotiations as seen through the eyes of four members sitting on the bargaining team for the first time. A clever idea. Well-illustrated with quality photos and running a full four pages, this is a very detailed look behind the scenes at an activity that affects all the members but is shared by relatively few. The writers give readers a feeling of being in the room, trying to “read” the other side and having the ultimate satisfaction of seeing some of their proposals take shape and be included in the final agreement. A great way to show members the pain that comes with the often drawn-out process of contract negotiations.

Class V - Best Website

FIRST PLACE

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk Website

Comments: An excellent site. Clean design, easy to navigate and lots of valuable links. A lot of work goes into this site.

This site continues its winning tradition with an attractive home page, visually appealing layout, great use of photos and lots of useful information.

Class V - Best Website

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Newburgh Teachers' Association

Newburgh Teachers' Association Website

Comments: This site would benefit from the use of more visuals on the home page and throughout. Good to see the photo pages. Lots of valuable information throughout, although this judge wonders if the number of steps needed to get to some links could be shortened.

Class V - Solidarity Award

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

"It's a travesty"

Comments: This article does an excellent job of integrating local issues with the concerns of national unions. It clearly explains the thought process behind the union's endorsement of President Obama, and urges solidarity among local union members.

A concise and well-written article. The writer shares with readers his experience as a delegate to the NEA national convention, where Vice President Biden addresses delegates, who later vote to endorse President Obama for reelection. The writer explains the significance of that endorsement and its timing, so early in the presidential campaign.

Class V - Solidarity Award

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Sachem Central Teachers' Association

Speak Out

"A time to rise"

Comments: This is one of the most inspirational and convincing manifestos I've seen urging local union members to unite and join the fight against arbitrary, bureaucratic decisions that affect the quality of education. It's well-written, well-researched and builds a very persuasive argument for unity and action. There's not a lot of information about efforts on a statewide level, however.

This is an excellent call to arms. It discusses the well-known issues and controversies facing local members and explains them in a state and national context as well. The writer does an especially good job explaining the importance of voting in every election, local, state and national, noting that the clout built up over the years by unions — NYSUT included — is based on the ability to get members to the polls to elect officials who are sympathetic to union concerns.

CONGRATULATIONS!