

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

General Excellence

Category Code: 01

Class: RI

Local: Central Islip Retired Teachers Association

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: The CIRTation

Publication/Website: The CIRTation

Issue Date: Nov-Dec 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good content, good member photos, some "sameness" to the look.

Judge 2: The CIRTation is one of the most user-friendly publications I've ever seen. From the simple, attractive layout to the large type (what a spectacular idea for a retiree newsletter) to the clearly written, timely articles, this publication is truly excellent from cover to cover. The President's Message, the easy-to-read NYSUT endorsements and The Tenure Debacle all provide valuable information on very current issues, while the HI CI and photo pages are interesting to the reader. Good work!

Judge 3: This is a well-put-together publication. Not fancy, but clean and easy to follow. Writing is good and layout is clean and generally free of errors. Type is large and easy to read. Not sure if that was done on purpose for older retirees, but I'm sure they appreciate it. Readability could also be enhanced with a two-column format on the inside pages. There is a nice picture page, but it would be nice to see some photos scattered throughout other pages, particularly the cover and pages 2 and 3. Some photos are a bit dark, especially those of people sitting around tables. Since none of them are identified anyway, consider shooting some of these up close and concentrating on one or two people rather than the entire table. All in all, a nice publication.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RI

Local: Islip Retired Teachers Association

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: ISLIP 'CONNECTIONS'

Publication/Website: ISLIP 'CONNECTIONS'

Issue Date: April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very pleasant newsletter with lots of tips on healthy living and retiree contributions to community.

Judge 2: This attractive publication offers a variety of interesting and inspirational stories to members. Reaching Out to Others, Senior Living and Team Rehab are all excellent, well-written articles that give valuable advice to those living the retirement lifestyle. There also is an entire page devoted to union news. However, a two-column layout would be easier to read, and the sporadic colored and underlined type is distracting.

Judge 3: With plenty of photos and other illustrations, this is a very colorful publication that catches your eye immediately. Writing is good, topics are varied. I especially enjoyed the first-person article by a member who had just been diagnosed with Parkinson's and vertigo. Layout is sometimes busy. I would opt for a two- or three-column format to make reading easier.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RI

Local: Malverne Teachers' Association Retiree Chapter

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: The Retiree ReView

Publication/Website: The Retiree ReView

Issue Date: Dec. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice mix of news and photos as well as student photos — well done!

Judge 2: Whether it's sent by email or snail mail, the Retiree ReView is a wonderful way to keep in touch with members. The simple layout and short bursts of information make it easy to read, and the photos are very good, although the two on the cover would be better if they were much larger. Also, I don't think the arrows pointing to the photos are necessary to make it clear which photo is with which outline.

Judge 3: This is a publication that is chockfull of information for its readers. It may look at bit busy at times, particularly the cover page, but there is an amazing amount of good information here. We always hate saying this to overworked newsletter editors, but try to watch the typos. There is one on a p. 1 headline. I also have a love-hate relationship with photos containing large numbers of people (back page). On one hand, they don't represent good photography because they are jammed full of people; on the other hand, they get the names and faces of lots of members in the newsletter, and that's one of the key reasons members read the newsletter. This publication breaks a lot of the traditional rules of layout, but it also has a charming look and I'm guessing it's quite popular. Keep up the good work.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RI

Local: Oriskany Retirees' Organization

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: Oriskany Retirees' Organization

Publication/Website: Oriskany Retirees' Organization

Issue Date: May/June 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Good read. Visually attractive, nice mix of retiree, current members and student achievements.

Judge 2: What could be more attractive or inspirational to members than the large photo of the three smiling scholarship winners on the cover? And the articles and photos inside do a wonderful job of keeping members apprised of both group events and the varied activities of individual members. The simple layout and colorful graphics keep the reader engaged from cover to cover.

Judge 3: Lots of color and lots of information in this publication. Good use of headlines, and photos are run large enough to make everyone visible. This issue is also very student-oriented, with articles on scholarship winners, valedictorian and salutatorian and an update on a 2004 high school graduate. Not all of these publications keep such close ties to students. Layout is very clean, with lots of white space.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RI

Local: Pine Bush Teachers Association Retiree Chapter

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: PBTARC

Publication/Website: PBTARC

Issue Date: Nov. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very pleasant newsletter, easy to read, nice focus on the quality of life of retirees.

Judge 2: Although there are no fancy graphics or photos in this newsletter, it contains a variety of interesting, concise and well-written articles that keep readers informed about upcoming chapter events and varied activities of its members. The cover story explaining the purpose of the group and the many causes it embraces is especially good.

Judge 3: This organization does a great job with a very simple publication. It's the little touches, like boldfacing the names of members so they are clearly visible, that make this publication stand out. The lead article, basically describing what the retiree chapter is and what it does, can be a valuable tool for recruiting new members who ask what the chapter can do for them. Getting members' names in the newsletter helps keep the readership up, and most of the articles are people-oriented and deal with things that members are doing. The two-column format is easy to read.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RI

Local: Sewanhaka Federation of Teachers

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: SFT Retirees Newsbeat

Publication/Website: SFT Retirees Newsbeat

Issue Date: Sept. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good article about Social Security and other helpful information. Many very good info pieces. A real activist local.

Judge 2: Although small in size, this publication contains a wealth of information in its pages. From the excellent explanation of the importance of the Social Security program on the cover to the very useful and timely Congressional Voting Record, members receive a wide variety of helpful facts. And the articles about the past and future activities of the chapter paint a vivid picture of an active, informed and useful group.

Judge 3: This is an interesting publication in paperback-size. It lacks photos and most graphic enhancements, but the writing and the choice of articles and topics are very good. The layout is clean and no-nonsense. While a good deal of the articles involve state and national issues dealing with education, organized labor and retiree issues of health care and finances, the back pages are devoted to social issues. It's a nice mix of information. It often helps to compartmentalize the different types of information, as this publication does.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RI

Local: Space Coast TRIF

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: SPACE COAST TRIF UNIT FALL NEWSLETTER 2014

Publication/Website: SPACE COAST TRIF UNIT

Issue Date: Nov. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice newsletter – sets a good tone with chapter's purpose on the front and proof of its good work in the rest of the newsletter.

Judge 2: Judging by this publication's list of meetings, awards and other events, the members of this chapter are very active in a variety of causes, and also interested in current issues affecting teachers and the union. The newsletter gives members useful information about these issues and upcoming activities. However, the variety of type styles and sizes is distracting and difficult to read, especially on the cover.

Judge 3: This organization does a nice job with its unique mission as one of 11 TRIF (Teacher Retirees in Florida) units delivering information to NYSUT members who now live, or spend at least part of the year, in Florida. This four-page issue focuses largely on social and non-legislative issues. It is well-illustrated with photos and graphic enhancements that make it an attractive publication. Considering that the unit claims only 22 members and five associates, this relatively small readership is getting a lot from its newsletter.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RII

Local: Bay Shore Retired Teachers' Association

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: THE 4th R

Publication/Website: THE 4th R

Issue Date: June 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: This is a wonderful newsletter with a wide variety of excellent articles, reminisces, photos and the ongoing relationships with current schools.

Judge 2: On almost every page, this excellent publication paints a vivid picture of members who are intelligent, informed and committed to a variety of worthy causes. The Social Events Update, accompanied by many excellent photos, is enough to make anyone regret having missed a single meeting. The Retirees' Corner offers page after page of interesting and inspirational stories of the accomplishments and adventures of various members. The first-person account of the recording session is especially good. There are also several good union and education-related articles. My only suggestions would be to stop putting graphics behind the words. The pages with the graphics under the type range from difficult to almost impossible to read.

Judge 3: Lots of photos in this newsletter. The cover serves as a photo hint to what's on the inside pages. Those inside pages are compartmentalized into social items, features and education/labor reports and information. The writing is good and seems to be relatively free of typos, etc. Maybe it's just me, but I find it hard to read a one-column format on an 8.5x11 page. Two columns or even three seems easier to follow. Lots of white space, and the photos are good sizes. My only quibble on the inside pages is I would use a larger type for headlines, rather than just using body type that is bold-faced and underlined. On the cover, I would box the flag – the name of the publication, the description and the slogan – to separate it from the news and photos. It all runs together with the descriptions over the photos.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RII

Local: Farmingdale Federation of Teachers/Retiree Chapter

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: Farmingdale Focus

Publication/Website: Farmingdale Focus

Issue Date: Fall 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A good read with a mix of up-to-date issues; retiree contributions and other possibilities to contribute.

Judge 2: The excellent and very timely article and photo on the cover sets the stage for a publication that is both attractive and well-written. There's plenty of information about both upcoming chapter events and members' milestones and accomplishments. The layout is simple and easy to read, although it would be even better with uniform type styles and sizes, and more white space, especially around the picture on the cover.

Judge 3: Clean, nice-looking front page, good cover photo and cover story — and a two-column format, which looks so much better than running the copy across the page. Plenty of white space inside. Good variety of articles, and articles have real headlines, not just a one- or two-word label. My only quibble with headlines (see p. 2) is how the two-line heads break from one line to another – long top line and extremely short second line. Take a word or two off the top line and add it to the second line. All in all, a well-done publication.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RII

Local: Kingston Retired Teachers' Federation

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: The P.O.R.C.H.

Publication/Website: The P.O.R.C.H.

Issue Date: August 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice newsletter. A very good explainer on the difference between state and local and two retirement funds.

Judge 2: This neat, simple and attractive newsletter gives members lots of information about upcoming and past events in a concise and easy to read format. There's also relevant information about NYSUT events and the advantages of membership. I'm not sure I would have chosen to box every single article, but it does make it easy to see the whole story at a glance.

Judge 3: I would love to know what P.O.R.C.H. stands for – the name of this publication. In any event I found this newsletter very readable and well laid-out. It's not usually a good idea to box every article, especially when you have four articles on the cover, but it looks good here and provides a nice, clean layout. Good variety of articles.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RII

Local: Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: Retired Times

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: Feb 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very compelling newsletter — great front page; first-person story and an information packed president message.

Judge 2: At first, I was somewhat puzzled by the placement of a first-person story on the cover, rather than an article about union-related issues or events. But this story is so well-written and compelling that I can't imagine anyone not turning the page to continue reading. And once inside this very attractive publication, any reader would be drawn on to peruse the timely and well-written articles about NYSUT, important community issues, upcoming events and member news. An excellent publication!

Judge 3: Very nice newsletter, starting with the cover story on "The Hidden Family." Clean cover layout with a very strong photo and an attractive flag. The president's message inside is well-written and tackles a number of issues. A good variety of article inside, including one written by the village mayor about a development project that would affect many of this local's members. While there are few photos, the newsletter is dotted with graphic enhancements and makes good use of clip art. In every way, this is a newsletter to be proud of.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 13

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: Mid-Hudson Bridges

Publication/Website: Mid-Hudson Bridges

Issue Date: Summer 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good newsletter with a nice mix of local retiree activity (FDR) and political issues.

Judge 2: Mid-Hudson Bridges details quite a bit of interesting information given by speakers at a recent luncheon, and also does a good job of stressing the importance of supporting important national, state and local issues. However, the small type, crowded layout and poor quality of the photos detract from the readability of the publication.

Judge 3: This newsletter has a lot going for it. Attractive and very professional-looking layout. Articles are well-written and headlines are well-thought-out. On the downside, photos throughout are dark, especially cover photos. I found the artwork on back page "Chapter Chats" kind of distracting. They made it difficult to read parts of the feature. Nevertheless, this is a newsletter that is a cut above.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 43

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: NYSUT Retiree Council 43

Publication/Website: NYSUT Retiree Council 43

Issue Date: Dec 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very good compilation of important articles.

Judge 2: This seems more like a printout of a website rather than a publication. However, it does offer several interesting and well-written articles about timely and important issues. The President's Message is an especially good round-up of economic and governmental issues affecting seniors and retirees.

Judge 3: This electronic publication is tops at providing information to its readers – lots of it. A great variety of education-related news and issues, member benefits updates, information on this Retiree Council and details on how to join a local unit of the RC, which is spread across the state of Florida. Excellent work at getting information out to the members, and kudos on helping dispel the notion that retirees and senior citizens can't deal with online news providers.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RII

Local: Retirees of Brentwood Schools

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Publication/Website: ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Issue Date: July/Aug. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A terrific newsletter that emphasizes the role teachers had in the county and the strong bond with each other. One good read!

Judge 2: This attractive and well-written publication offers page after page of inspiring stories of many members' varied and impressive accomplishments. But nothing is more inspirational than the stories and memories of the late Dot Zuckerman. The interesting articles truly bring this colorful person to life. There's also plenty of information about upcoming chapter events, but not a lot about union issues and concerns. The clean and simple layout is a definite plus, but more uniform typeface and type sizes (larger, please!) would improve the look.

Judge 3: This is certainly one of the cleanest and neatest publications I've seen. Good, easy-to-follow layout with lots of white space and many photos. A variety of articles, including a back-page entry by one member with a brief, but well-written account about running in to a former student. I'd like to have seen that entered in the Creative Writing category. Keep up the good work.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers Association

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: the HHHART BEAT

Publication/Website: the HHHART BEAT

Issue Date: Winter 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice newsletter — a unique cover page, letter from a former student made me want to read the rest of the interesting newsletter.

Judge 2: From the inspirational and touching letter on the cover to the beautiful photo of the Alaskan travelers near the end, this publication gives members a variety of interesting and informational articles. The president's account of the NYSUT conference is well-written and provides insight into some very important issues, while the update on members' activities is sure to capture everyone's attention. The layout is simple, with some colorful graphics, but a more uniform look to the pages and a better use of white space would improve the appearance.

Judge 3: This publication packs a lot of material into seven pages, printed on one side of the page. It makes good use of clip art and some photos, and provides its readers with a great deal of useful information – from social notes to a newsy president's column to a cover story of praise for a former teacher from a grateful student to travelogues and updates from a recent union meeting. Sometimes the simplest and most basic publications are the most useful and effective.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: Retired Educators, Sachem Chapter

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: From The RESC Desk

Publication/Website: From The RESC Desk

Issue Date: Dec. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very nice newsletter; I thought Tony's Musings was particularly well done.

Judge 2: This attractive and well-written publication is packed with pictures of members and interesting articles about their memories, adventures and accomplishments. Especially entertaining is the story about Santa and the necklace, which is sure to capture the attention of any reader. The layout is simple and easy to read, but would be even better with a more uniform look to the pages, more white space around the photos and a two-column format.

Judge 3: An attractive publication, with interesting and varied articles. Well-illustrated with many color photos – most of them of members, which goes a long way toward keeping readers happy. I would suggest putting a photo on the cover, and pages 2 and 3 could have benefited from some of that color as well. That's a lot of type on those two pages that readers have to get through before they get to those colorful pages that follow.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 10

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Publication/Website: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Issue Date: Feb/Mar. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very informative newsletter — David Golden's op-ed was a very thoughtful piece of writing.

Judge 2: Although only four pages long, the Skyline News offers a variety of articles that provide both important information and entertainment. The president's message gives members a complete and excellent explanation of the NYSUT elections, while the articles about the teacher's charity organization and the community service award are interesting accounts of members' accomplishments. The layout is clean and simple, but the type over the gray shades is difficult to read.

Judge 3: A solid publication with lots of news and information on four pages. As usual, I would push for a two- or three-column format rather than a single column. It's so much easier to read and follow. Nice feature on the member who runs a non-profit to benefit Tibetan children. I enjoyed the president's column on p. 1 but would like to see a headline on it – even a standing head that doesn't change from issue to issue. It's a good column but it would benefit graphically from a headline and maybe some subheads within the text to break up the huge mass of gray type.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 12

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: The Outlook

Publication/Website: The Outlook

Issue Date: Nov. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very informative newsletter and Phyllis Van Steinburgh's article re the constitutional convention was a very good political analysis.

Judge 2: This attractive publication is packed with information about important issues affecting teachers and the educational system. The article about the constitutional convention and its possible effect on pensions – with its excellent headline – is a concise and easy to understand explanation about a critical issue. The president's message and the article about the AFT convention are also well done. However, the photo on page 2 is much too dark, and the type printed over the gray shades is difficult to read.

Judge 3: This black-and-white publication is very impressive in its understated four-page simplicity. Pages are well laid out, there is a variety of material and the topics are good ones. I would have flipped the positions of the two items on the cover. That great article on a possible state constitutional convention deserves the top of the page, and the excursion to Nashville, with the registration form, would have looked more appropriate across the bottom. But all in all, this is a well-put together newsletter.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 18

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: Linkage

Publication/Website: Linkage

Issue Date: Winter 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good newsletter focusing on important political issues (i.e. Pensions).

Judge 2: Linkage does indeed give members an "attachment" to important local, state and national issues. The president's message, with its excellent headline, provides a very good explanation about several critical situations that could have an adverse impact on members. The layout is attractive and easy to read – I especially like the "corners" on some of the photos, but I wish they were better quality.

Judge 3: This retiree council's newsletter has a lot of information in it, running many brief articles rather than a lesser number of long ones. It's a good, quick way for members to keep up. Articles run the gamut from news to opinion to social notes to health-related items. Lots of photos as well. It's a little busy, with so much going on, but still an attractive publication. That definitely reflects the great deal of work that goes into it.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 39

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL 39 NEWSLETTER

Publication/Website: NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL 39 NEWSLETTER

Issue Date: July/August 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very helpful information on the current NYSUT developments and important health tips.

Judge 2: This simple newsletter gives members some important and relevant information. Directing members to the website is an excellent idea, and the health and entertainment related stories are interesting. The graphics do a good job of complementing the stories, but the layout would be better with a two-column format and uniform typeface and sizes.

Judge 3: While this newsletter seems to be geared more to general information than specific news or local Retiree Council issues, it does provide information on two additional information sources available to members – the RC's website and the NYSUT Listserv. One item worth noting: a very entertaining p. 2 review of the movie "Chef" and a brief look at other films with notable food scenes. Very well written. I wish it had been entered in the Creative Writing Category.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 44

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: BUFFALO RETIREE

Publication/Website: BUFFALO RETIREE

Issue Date: Sept./Oct. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very good information source on a dynamic view of Retiree Council.

Judge 2: This publication gives its members important information about timely issues. The president's message on the cover makes an excellent argument for the importance of letting elected officials know where members stand on critical topics, and the inside stories give a good picture of members' activities, upcoming events and past honors. It's a wonderful idea to include plenty of photos with the articles, but most of these are too dark, small and fuzzy to be reproduced.

Judge 3: This is another good, clean, well-put together newsletter that does its job well in four simple pages. The cover page contains a well-written and timely president's column; inside pages honor members in words and photos, and provide social notes; and the back page alerts readers to NYSUT Member Benefits programs available to them. Any editors looking for a good formula to follow would do well to look at this publication. Nitpicks include not enough white space between items on the cover page and a few typos that slipped through.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 7

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: THE CENTRAL NEW YORKER

Publication/Website: THE CENTRAL NEW YORKER

Issue Date: March/April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very pleasant newsletter with strong communications core analysis by Margo Buckingham.

Judge 2: This attractive and easy to read publication rightly features an interesting and inspirational tribute to a deceased member as its lead story, while the president's message offers a very well-written, logical and strong argument against the flawed implementation of Common Core. The layout is clean and simple, and the typeface is a good size. It would look better, however, with uniform column widths and type styles throughout.

Judge 3: Here is a newsletter that makes the most of its four-page format. Excellent page one tribute to a former local leader and news of local scholarships available for children or grandchildren of Retiree Council members, along with some meeting notices. A well-written president's report and the newsletter masthead take their traditional place on page 2, along with memoriams for deceased members. The rest of the newsletter is given over to social events, travel excursions and other local-interest news. Layout is neat; headlines are good, as is the three-column format. Nice job.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: United Federation of Teachers Retiree Chapter #2

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: UFT-RTC RETIREE

Publication/Website: UFT-RTC RETIREE

Issue Date: Feb. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very informative and helpful information. The front-page story about what teachers and students mean to each other would have been better with an appropriate photo.

Judge 2: This very attractive and well-written publication addresses a variety of timely issues of critical importance to members. The "Message from Tom," which offers a variety of ways members can be active in union causes without ever leaving their homes, is especially good, and the article about the union's efforts to retain health care benefits for members is also excellent. The layout is very easy to read, but the headlines could be much more descriptive, and maybe even a little clever.

Judge 3: This glossy publication has a nice, clean, professional look throughout. The addition of blue spot color really enhances what is basically a black-and-white newsletter. It is extremely member-oriented. Every article is local in nature – obviously locally written and produced for the local members. Nothing canned or re-used from other publications. Not that there is anything wrong with using material from outside sources (NYSUT and its national affiliates produce a great deal of material to be used by our local publications), but it's unusual to see a retiree local publication that seems to contain only locally produced material. Attractive three-column format and good, crisp photos. This is a nice publication.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 01

Class: RIII

Local: Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers

Category: General Excellence

Name of Entry: Post Script

Publication/Website: Post Script

Issue Date: April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very meaty newsletter — news, analysis, politics, photos — a good combination!

Judge 2: This excellent publication is packed with both important information and inspirational stories. The cover story has an interesting and unique perspective on a speech by the WCT president at a Board of Education meeting, comparing it to one delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. Photos are an important part of the publication, with an excellent spread on the St. Patty's Day Parade, and many more complementing the excellent article on the wolf specialist. The layout is attractive, but perhaps a bit too crowded and colorful, and the letters and words under the type are distracting and hard to read.

Judge 3: There is a lot to like in this newsletter. Nice layout, colorful and creative headlines, very creative writing on a wide variety of subjects, and lots and lots of crisp photos. There seems to be an ongoing effort to attempt new ways to attract readers by constantly looking for better ways to package their information and display it. Not everything works (the WCRT "ghosted" across the front page, for instance. It's too dark), but there is certainly willingness to work to keep the product fresh. You might love — or not love — the cover story that compares the local president's speech at a board of ed meeting to Martin Luther King and his 1963 "I have a dream" speech. Like it or not, it's a clever piece of writing under a headline that dares you NOT to read the story: "WCT Prez: I Have a Dream too." Congratulations to all who are involved in getting this newsletter out to the members.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015
Retirees
Best Article about Local or Chapter
Issues

Category Code: 02
Class: RI
Local: Central Islip Retired Teachers Association
Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues
Name of Entry: The Tenure Debacle
Publication/Website: The CIRTAtion
Issue Date: Nov-Dec 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very impassioned pro-tenure quality argument.

Judge 2: When a teacher uses his own personal experience to drive home the importance of teachers having tenure in the educational system, it sends a powerful message to readers. And this article does just that.

Judge 3: This is a good addition to the debate over tenure and one of the many reasons why it is important. Here, the author makes the point that attempts to abolish tenure have nothing to do with student or teacher performance but are simply about breaking up unions. He offers a significant example from his own career in which tenure enabled him to right a wrong by the school district – which cost the district a \$10,000 fine -- and how his superintendent reminded him that without tenure he would have been fired for his actions. Nice work.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RI

Local: Malverne Teachers' Association Retiree Chapter

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: From Emily Schreiber: We Share Because We Care!

Publication/Website: The Retiree ReView

Issue Date: Sept. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very nice article about an extremely valuable community outreach effort.

Judge 2: Giving prizes and donations directly to students is an excellent way to improve their appreciation of the important work teachers do. The account of the chapter's gifts to students shows the many accomplishment of the group in this direction.

Judge 3: This article reminds us that it's not enough to for a union to donate funds to scholarships, charities and other good causes – these good deeds need to be publicized. That is what is done here, in words and photos. It's a simple, basic article, but one we don't see often enough.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RI

Local: Pine Bush Teachers Association Retiree Chapter

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: WHAT IS PBTARC ALL ABOUT?

Publication/Website: PBTARC

Issue Date: Nov. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A clean, concise summary of the value of belonging to a really strong local.

Judge 2: The gifts, donations and community events of this extremely active chapter are admirable. What an excellent way to engage members and improve relations between the union and the community!

Judge 3: Here is another version of "blowing your own horn," and it's a good thing. This article basically explains what this particular retiree chapter is all about, why it was created and what it does for its members and the community. It's important to remind your members why you exist, and it's good to have an article like this to show when you're recruiting the newest members.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RI

Local: Sewanhaka Federation of Teachers

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: How Times Have Changed

Publication/Website: SFT Retirees Newsbeat

Issue Date: April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: An excellent reminder of what teachers fought for and why elections matter.

Judge 2: An excellent discussion of a political issue of critical importance to the union and its members. The writer gives an interesting account of his entry into teaching and uses it to make a strong point about the continuance of teachers' pensions.

Judge 3: A nice article on how the times have changed from when this writer began teaching in the early 1960s and today, when a teacher's life is so much tougher and a retiree's future financial well-being is threatened. The writer recalls his first day driving to work and hearing Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changin'" on the radio, and thinking today about how the times have changed – and not for the better. I'd like to see it expanded a little to add more detail, particularly a bit more about WHY the times are changing. But all in all, a good read.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RII

Local: Kingston Retired Teachers' Federation

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: In his honor we remember... a KTF union activist, a KCSD professional, a dedicated colleague, a beloved friend.

Publication/Website: The P.O.R.C.H.

Issue Date: Nov. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very touching tributes to one of the early local leaders.

Judge 2: The touching and inspiring tributes to a long-time union activist and beloved friend are an excellent testimony to the many ways the actions of one man can impact both the community and the union. An excellent article.

Judge 3: Nice tribute to a fallen leader. Augmenting the obituary from the local newspaper with a page full of tributes from former colleagues provides a nice remembrance of a union veteran. Even the segue to the regular business pages of the newsletter acknowledged that he would want "the business of union work" to go on.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RII

Local: Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: A Tribute to Longtime Union Activist Donna Traver

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: August 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice tribute to another one of the people NYSUT owes debt to.

Judge 2: A dedicated and hard-working union activist such as the one described in this touching tribute can have a huge impact not just on the local chapter, but also the community and even the world. Inspirational stories such as this one encourage others to continue the important work.

Judge 3: This article takes the concept of a tribute a bit further than the previous entry, with a number of observations about her role in the union and the retiree council and her many activities as a retiree. But once again, I believe that the best tributes are told in the words of friends and colleagues and this lacks any direct quotes.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 13

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: Teachers, retirees attacked but we have ways to fight back

Publication/Website: Mid-Hudson Bridges

Issue Date: Holiday 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A good report on important conference that is then wrapped with strong call to action.

Judge 2: This strong and persuasive call to action is an excellent example of how members of a local chapter can work together to influence public opinion. The writer cites a number of recent attacks on teachers and the educational system to convince members to come together and fight back in solidarity.

Judge 3: This article certainly reminds readers that retirees have the power to fight back against the attacks on public education as long as retiree members are willing to support the cause. The best aspect of this entry is that the writer took the activities of a Retiree Contiguous meeting and made an interesting story out of it and put a good headline on top of it, rather than just summarizing the agenda in a line-by-line fashion. This is something members will read.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 43

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: Scenes Around the State: Space Coast Joined The Brevard Federation of Teachers...

Publication/Website: NYSUT Retiree Council 43

Issue Date: Oct 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Excellent photo and caption on important inter-union solidarity.

Judge 2: Although retired, the members of the local chapter came together to support their brothers and sisters in Florida in their efforts to increase funding for schools. An excellent example of members' efforts to engage the community and promote union solidarity.

Judge 3: This long series of articles certainly meets the qualifications of the category, particularly in putting "solution-driven unionism to work." But I think that selection of a single article would have more impact. Nevertheless, it definitely shows a deep commitment to covering the activities that members are engaged in.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RII

Local: Retirees of Brentwood Schools

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: DOT Z THE CONSUMMATE UNION PERSON

Publication/Website: ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Issue Date: July/Aug. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Another very nice profile of a historic local and regional union leader.

Judge 2: This inspirational article about a dedicated mother, teacher, community member and union activist is a beautiful example of how the impact of one person can extend beyond her family, her school and her union, engaging her community in the widest sense.

Judge 3: A nice tribute to a longtime leader of this retiree unit and the union from which it sprang. Well-written and personal, although I still believe something like this can definitely benefit from some actual quotes from co-workers and others. One other quibble: perhaps it's just from being an outsider, but I had to read all the way to the final paragraph to find out that the subject had actually died. This could just as easily have been a feature article about a longtime union activist who was being honored while still alive. Just adding the year of her birth and death under her photo would be a nice touch.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RIII

Local:

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: Westchester/Putnam Retirees Reinstate Scholarships

Publication/Website: Senior Class

Issue Date: Nov/Dec. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A lovely article and very important effort linking retirees with schools.

Judge 2: Funding scholarships for district students is an excellent way for the local chapter to engage in the community. The public relations value of such a program is priceless in this age of teacher bashing. This article does a good job of explaining the program and how the scholarships are funded.

Judge 3: A good accounting of how this Retiree Council managed to breathe life into a dormant scholarship fund. The bottom line here is stated in a sentence by the writer: "This activity is an outreach to communities to let them know that although our bodies are no longer standing before students, our commitment and concern for them continues long after we leave our classrooms."

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RIII

Local: Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: Know Your Benefits "Your Pension - Is it Safe?"

Publication/Website: the HHHART BEAT

Issue Date: Winter 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very concise and compelling about importance of contributing to COPE to protect pensions.

Judge 2: This article does an excellent job of explaining the background of the pension benefit, and the strong movement now gaining steam to reduce that benefit. Building on that background, it creates a strong argument for members to take action to help preserve their benefits.

Judge 3: This year we have seen many articles about the fiscal dangers posed by a constitutional convention. This article, like the others, warns about threats to pensions if voters agree in 2017 to hold a convention in 2020. This is a topic that can't be covered enough, and this writer found yet another way to remind readers what they stand to lose, and the need to contribute to VOTE-COPE.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 10

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: From Your President:

Publication/Website: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Issue Date: Nov. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Strong advocacy piece about importance of voting and evaluating candidates.

Judge 2: This excellent article not only urges members to take action and vote on election day, it clearly and carefully explains the qualifications and positions of every elected official on the issues that are important to union members. This is the best way to convince union members to take action.

Judge 3: One of the best and most concise articles I have seen that lays out a slate of political candidates for an upcoming election and the reasons why members should vote for them. Each candidate's voting record on union and educational matters is discussed; those who have done especially well are singled out. The writer keeps it simple and as brief as possible. Nice job.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 12

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: Sandra Bliss Receives The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award at 2014 NYSUT RA

Publication/Website: The Outlook

Issue Date: Nov. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice tribute to another historic figure in life of NYSUT.

Judge 2: This inspirational article tells the story of an outstanding chapter member and her impact on the union, the community, the statewide organization and the international labor movement. Although she entered the profession when the union was just getting started, she helped build it from the ground up, and kept it going through good times and bad. An excellent example of the good works of union members.

Judge 3: A detailed accounting of a local member's receipt of NYSUT's "Not For Ourselves Alone" leadership award. Excellent tribute to the recipient. Lots of detail that tell us all about the recipient. And, it has a direct quote from the recipient and two others who knew her – something that is missing too often from these types of features. One small quibble: The article led with two paragraphs about the award before it even mentioned the recipient's name. The award details could have waited for a few paragraphs.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 18

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: President's Corner Staying Informed

Publication/Website: Linkage

Issue Date: Spring 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very good call to action with some cleanly striking lines like "one has to wonder why the millionaires...."

Judge 2: This article does a good job of explaining an important chapter issue: the work of the union leaders on behalf of the members. Not only does the writer carefully lay out a list of the benefits gained by the leadership for the members, she also explains the benefits available from NYSUT, and ends by urging members to donate to VOTE-COPE. And excellent and persuasive article.

Judge 3: This president's column is an accounting of some of the meetings this council's delegates must attend on behalf of members. Lots of detail, presented in an informal fashion. Here the writer looks for the most interesting and important item from the various meetings and provides updates for readers. Good, solid work

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 21

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JOAN PERRINI "IS IT SPRING YET?"

Publication/Website: Spotlight 21

Issue Date: March/April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very nice combo of some retirement joys, exciting trips and plays, combined with reminder of politics stressing all educators.

Judge 2: The President's Message does an excellent job of urging members to join in the many and varied activities of the union, and thus keep the local strong and thriving. By briefly describing the many challenges facing today's teachers, she builds an even stronger case for members to take an active role in the community and the chapter.

Judge 3: With the apt headline "Is it spring yet?" this president's column reflects on the near-end of a lousy winter and looks at the good and the bad things coming up for members – the "good" in the form of upcoming trips, excursions and other get-togethers, and the "bad" in the form of threats to public education and organized labor. Nice work.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 39

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: Are We Instructors or Professors?

Publication/Website: NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL 39 NEWSLETTER

Issue Date: March/April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Fascinating look at the difference between community college pay and working conditions in NY and NC. Thoughtful and informative.

Judge 2: This is an extremely interesting article about the differences in pay and status for community college instructors in different parts of the country. Based on the writer's personal experience as an instructor in three different states, it highlights the better treatment of teachers in New York where, of course, they are union members.

Judge 3: This fascinating article outlines a Long Island community college professor's participation in a faculty exchange with a friend at a New Mexico community college. He also discusses his interactions with community colleges in North Carolina, where he has since retired. In both cases, the writer does a great job showing how conditions in both states are far worse for faculty than they are in New York state, including a reluctance by both states to confer the rank of "Professor" on community college educators. This was a real eye-opener and very interesting.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 7

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: From the President's Desk... A FALL CHECKLIST FOR AN ACTIVE RC 7 MEMBER

Publication/Website: THE CENTRAL NEW YORKER

Issue Date: Nov/Dec. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very charming and informative list of good information for all retirees to consider. Well done.

Judge 2: This humorous article is packed with important facts for members about their health coverage. While highlighting the superiority of the health and drug plan negotiated by the union for its members, and the assistance available for members from NYSUT, it also urges the important activism of voting on election day.

Judge 3: This checklist format is a good vehicle for putting out information in an easy-to-follow fashion. This one deals primarily with health care issues for retirees, a potentially confusing topic that can be simplified by presenting the information in an informal fashion, rather than in long paragraphs.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 02

Class: RIII

Local: Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers

Category: Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues

Name of Entry: WCT Prez: I Have a Dream too!

Publication/Website: Post Script

Issue Date: April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very interesting and thoughtful juxtaposition of **** speech and WCT speech to Board.

Judge 2: It's an interesting and unique concept to compare a speech by the local chapter president to one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s most famous orations. The writer does a good job, however, of highlighting the similarities of both speakers making their case for the downtrodden – in this instance, the plight of teachers working without a contract for two years.

Judge 3: I applaud the writer's and the editor's creative efforts on this potentially controversial entry – comparing a recent speech by the local union president and Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech from 1963. As the writer explains, both speakers possessed oratorical tones and styles that resounded through their audiences. And both advocated their case "for the downtrodden and possibly disenfranchised." I'm guessing the effort may not have been appreciated by all readers, but I'm simply looking at the creativity, the writing and the presentation, and I was impressed. One quibble: If you want to "ghost" an image behind the type, as was done here, dial back the color a bit and make it lighter so it doesn't compete with the type. Wherever the ghosted image appears, it's difficult to read the type within it.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Category Code: 03

Class: RI

Local: Malverne Teachers' Association Retiree Chapter

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: From Our Vice President Rosetta Giannotti

Publication/Website: The Retiree ReView

Issue Date: Sept. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A succinct summary of the power of VOTE-COPE — very nicely done.

Judge 2: It's beyond admirable that your chapter achieved outstanding participation in the VOTE-COPE campaign. And the vice president's piece is an excellent explanation of why this program is so important. I have no doubt that similar articles contributed to the chapter's success.

Judge 3: This article that explains the operation of VOTE-COPE is a great service to members, but it doesn't address the issue of social justice, which is generally considered to be the acts that a union and its members undertake to help the less fortunate OUTSIDE the union.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 03

Class: RII

Local: Bay Shore Retired Teachers' Association

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: AN HISTORIC JOURNEY

Publication/Website: THE 4th R

Issue Date: Fall 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: While not specifically a social justice issue, a well-written and very touching narrative of a personal and historic trip.

Judge 2: This beautifully written and touching story about a son's visit to his father's gravesite in Normandy holds the reader's attention from beginning to end. The vivid descriptions truly bring the French countryside to life. This article would definitely have been an appropriate entry in the Best Creative Writing category.

Judge 3: A moving story about a retiree who travels to France to locate the grave of his father, who was killed in WWII in 1944, and to meet the French family who adopted the grave and spent 10 years learning about his family. This is a very detailed account of the trip, which concludes with an emotional visit to the American Cemetery in Normandy on the 70th anniversary of the father's death.

Even the editor who submitted the article admits that it doesn't exactly fit the Social Justice category or any other category. I would have submitted it in Best Creative writing, simply for the author's attention to small details — rubbing Omaha Beach sand on the grave marker and finding a spent rifle shell from the war as he walked through a nearby hedgerow. It is excellent work about a deserving subject.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 03

Class: RII

Local: Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: FROM MY HANDS AND HEART... COOKING MATTERS

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: May 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice story about generous retiree who gives back to community and learns much in return.

Judge 2: This is an excellent story about an extremely important social justice issue — hunger. It's well-written and gives a very clear picture of both the program and its participants. And what could be more useful to a family struggling with poverty than to learn how to shop for and prepare nutritious and economical meals?

Judge 3: Here is an article that truly captures the spirit of social justice. A local teacher, aided by volunteer chefs, delivers a nationally sponsored cooking and nutrition program to youngsters and teens, as well as adults and families in the community. It's all designed to empower families at risk of hunger with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make healthy and affordable meals. Students are taught so they can pass along their knowledge to their families and others. Nice idea, and a well-written article.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 03

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 13

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: You hold the power!

Publication/Website: Mid-Hudson Bridges

Issue Date: Sept. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A strong, straightforward reminder on importance of voting and key issues affecting retirees and all Americans.

Judge 2: This is an excellent article about a critical issue: the importance of voting — and voting intelligently — in every election. The writer builds a strong argument for exercising one's power in the voting booth, and also points out a number of false claims made by national and local politicians in an attempt to fool voters.

Judge 3: I would have entered this co-president's report in the Best Column/Blog category. It is a well-written and well-thought-out article on the power of the vote and the need for all members to exercise that power, but it does not address the topic of social justice.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 03

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 43

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: Do Teachers Have to Take VOWS OF POVERTY

Publication/Website: NYSUT Retiree Council 43

Issue Date: April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good reminder of the importance of collective bargaining and how our colleagues in many other states need stronger unions and more power.

Judge 2: This excellent headline is followed up by a well-written article about teachers' pay. Basing the argument on many well-researched facts, the story makes a strong point about the low pay of teachers, and also about the difference in pay between states with strong unions and those with weak or nonexistent unions.

Judge 3: The entry is well-written and thought-provoking. It looks at how low teacher salaries actually are around the country and how in many states teachers (veterans as well as rookies) qualify for benefits intended for low-income families. I think the best social justice articles look at issues outside of the union that affect other areas of society, but this article comes closer to the definition than many in this category.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 03

Class: RII

Local: Retirees of Brentwood Schools

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NYSUT COMMUNITY SERVICE
AWARD WINNER ELLEN EDELSTEIN

Publication/Website: ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Issue Date: July/Aug. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A lovely profile of an educator who was a great teacher and now an unbelievably active participant in life of her many communities.

Judge 2: An excellent story about a hard-working member who is also a hard-working community volunteer with a wide range of interests and activities. The article does a good job of detailing her active participation in a number of different organizations and causes, especially the restoration of the local historical society.

Judge 3: This is a nice feature on a member who has been honored by NYSUT – and others – for her long history of community involvement. Good writing and nice photo to accompany the article.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 03

Class: RIII

Local:

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: "Our Kids"

Publication/Website: Senior Class

Issue Date: Nov/Dec. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Absolutely spot-on commentary of what's wrong and what's right in NY schools — a very thoughtful, excellent piece.

Judge 2: Two simple words, "Our Kids," are used by the First Lady to emphasize that we are all responsible for the welfare of every American child. However, the writer of this article makes a strong argument that this country in general, and those in charge of the educational system in particular, focus only on the needs of their own children and those of their constituents. Drawing on her own experience as a teacher, she does a good job of explaining how destructive this attitude is to "our kids."

Judge 3: The writer does a nice job here with an article about the close relationship between teachers and their students and how many issues facing public education today are not aimed at benefitting those students — only some of them. I'm not sure it works so well in the Social Justice category, however. I think it would have been better placed in the Best Column/Blog category.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 03

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 10

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: IN SEARCH OF NEW CHALLENGES

Publication/Website: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Issue Date: Feb. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A lovely article about a generous retiree whose vision and hard work benefit orphans thousands of miles away in India. Very worthy cause!

Judge 2: What undertaking could be more difficult, yet more rewarding, than helping orphans in a remote village in India? This excellent and inspirational article paints a vivid picture of an AFT Everyday Heroes award winner who set up a nonprofit organization to provide mattresses, shoes and books for these deserving children.

Judge 3: Here is an article that in my mind defines the topic of social justice – a retiree runs a non-profit organization that purchases mattresses, shoes and books for orphans who have made the trip from Tibet to a small village in India. All contributions go to the children, and the retiree pays all administrative costs, including twice-yearly trips back to India. The article is illustrated with a photo of the retiree and some of the children she has helped through the organization: To the Himalayas With Love. I wish the article was longer because I so enjoyed what was written. Nice job, and a good understanding of the category.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 03

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 18

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: Report on the Committee of 100 --March 4, 2014

Publication/Website: Linkage

Issue Date: Spring 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Clean and concise report on lobbying local legislators on key issues.

Judge 2: By describing his own conversations with different elected officials on topics related to education, the writer of this excellent article gives the readers a very good idea of where each legislator stands on several specific issues. Not only is this information helpful when it comes to deciding which candidate to vote for, it also gives an interesting insight into the lobbying process.

Judge 3: This is a good report on the Committee of 100, with much detail and some follow-up. It is well written and even has a photo of one of the participants, but I don't see where it addresses the issue of social justice.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 03

Class: RIII

Local: Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers

Category: Best Article about a Social Justice Issue

Name of Entry: 320 7th graders "thrown to the wolves"

Publication/Website: Post Script

Issue Date: April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good article about a great project that honors a former local teacher and introduces new exciting wolf curriculum to students and encourages action.

Judge 2: This excellent article touches on a number of very important issues, including, but not limited to, maintaining the balance of ecological systems, integrating a single teaching topic throughout a number of different classes and the behavior and abilities of wolves. But most of all, it's an inspiring story of a special man who devoted the last years of his life to learning and teaching about this remarkable animal to safeguard its future.

Judge 3: This well-written and comprehensive article details a program known as "Wolf Journal," being taught to seventh-graders in English classes in this district. The program dispels many myths and untruths about wolves and the writer provides a great deal of information that students learned about wolves, including their key role in the ecosystem. The article takes on a special significance because a teacher from this local, who spent 10 years of his retirement as a collector of data as a wolf watcher in Yellowstone National Park, died last year of cancer. Catchy headline, lots of nice photos and good writing. I just feel that its link to social justice is tenuous, although I'm sure others might disagree.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Best Creative Writing

Category Code: 04

Class: RI

Local: Central Islip Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: HI CI

Publication/Website: The CIRTAtion

Issue Date: Nov-Dec 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice first-person narrative of how easily life in the Central Islip system forged her into an incredibly impressive adult.

Judge 2: Although not written by a member of the local chapter, this inspiring letter from a former student uses vivid and detailed language to tell an interesting tale. From the beginning, she uses references to her former school and teachers to build up suspense, leading to a satisfying climax when her dreams and wishes are fulfilled. If this letter doesn't make her former teachers feel as if they'd had a valuable impact on their students' lives, nothing will.

Judge 3: This letter from a former student makes a nice feature that stresses the importance and influence of one of her teachers at an early age and how she has carried those lessons into her adult life. Very inspirational. Among other things, someone taught this former student how to write well.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RI

Local: Islip Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: THE AMATEUR ARTIST

Publication/Website: ISLIP 'CONNECTIONS'

Issue Date: Nov/Dec 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very important reminder about the wonderful power of art to touch lives through generations.

Judge 2: This first-person story "paints" a vivid picture of the artist and what her art means to her. It's clearly written with good descriptions, and the pictures of what I assume to be the artist's work enhance the story.

Judge 3: This short article is well-illustrated with samples of some of the author's own artwork. I'd like to see more detail in the article, but what was there was good. It simply came across more as a caption for the artwork, rather than a story that was illustrated with art. In any event, I enjoyed both the article and the artwork.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RI

Local: Jericho Teachers Association Retirees

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: Jericho's Fulbrights

Publication/Website: The Jericho Retiree

Issue Date: 09/2/2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Four charming and stimulating stories about how the Fulbright program brought new awareness and programs to and from Jericho to spots around the world. Well done.

Judge 2: These four first-person accounts of the teachers' experiences working and living in foreign countries are extremely well done. The stories are interesting in themselves, but the language and vivid descriptions add a wonderful dimension. The inspirational element of the cross-cultural "peace" painting and the letters to the Olympic Committee to correct an injustice are the icing on the cake.

Judge 3: A great article that details the work of four retirees who had been named Fulbright recipients during their teaching careers. Each teacher tells their own story, all of them with good detail. A sidebar provides information on the program, which has been around since 1946. Two observations that don't affect the judging: I would have run this in two columns to make it easier to read. Also, choose a typeface for captions that is different from the type used for the body of an article. I thought the picture caption was the lead for the story.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RI

Local: Malverne Teachers' Association Retiree Chapter

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: Maxine & Sandy Pesner at the Taj Mahal

Publication/Website: The Retiree ReView

Issue Date: Early Spring 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice first-person account of trip to India, opening eyes on cultural differences and similarities.

Judge 2: This vivid account of a fascinating trip truly brings the Indian cities and countryside to life. The writer's descriptions are interesting in themselves, and her use of language elevates the story to a higher level.

Judge 3: This report on a trip to India by a retiree and her husband does a good job of painting a picture of what the sub-continent is like to anyone who has not visited there. I always wish articles like this were just a little longer, but what I saw was enjoyable.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RII

Local: Bay Shore Retired Teachers' Association

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: IT CAN HELP, IF IT DOESN'T KILL YOU!

Publication/Website: THE 4th R

Issue Date: June 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very funny, very ironic take on all the prescription drugs that flood our TV viewing — listing all those side effects is hilarious — and not!

Judge 2: This creative and humorous look at the world of modern drug commercials begins as a serious overview of the many side effects caused by the “miracle cures” touted in the ads, but injects a funny or satirical element into each one. And the last section, an ode to “Retiredol,” can’t help but bring a smile to the lips of anyone over 65. An excellent article.

Judge 3: Here is a humorous rant that any TV viewer can relate to – ads for prescription drugs whose possible side effects could be worse than the disease. Humor doesn’t always work in these types of publications, but this article should have every reader chuckling and nodding their heads in agreement.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RII

Local: Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: SINGING IN THE RAIN: Weathering the Storm of Dementia with Humor, Love, and Patience

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: Nov 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very helpful book review for the thousands dealing with pain of dementia.

Judge 2: The issue of families dealing with dementia is certainly one of the most pressing problems facing society today, and it's especially critical among retirees. This article does an excellent job of conveying some of the most important points in a book aimed at caregivers, and also mentions the author's local ties, which increases interest in what seems to be a very helpful publication.

Judge 3: I enjoyed this review of a book co-written by a local woman whose husband – a BOCES psychologist, social worker and family therapist – suffered from Alzheimer's for 17 years before dying at the age of 64. The review describes the woman's work as a caregiver for her husband and is quite well done. However, it made me wish instead that I could have read an article about this woman and her husband and tell more of her story — in her own words — than can be provided in a book review. Nevertheless, this was well written and interesting. It just left me wishing for a lot more.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 13

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: As we age, be aware, look ahead

Publication/Website: Mid-Hudson Bridges

Issue Date: Summer 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nice reminder that summer brings the joys of childhood — but is soon followed by the fall and the adult challenges of elections.

Judge 2: From the first words of this excellent article, the vivid language paints a powerful picture of the sights, sounds and smells of summer pleasures. And once, the reader's attention has been captured by this attractive picture, the writer uses even stronger words to build a persuasive argument on the importance of voting in the fall election and contributing to VOTE-COPE.

Judge 3: This is a very enjoyable co-president's report that opens with a nostalgic tribute to summer that actually leads us to think about fall and the then-upcoming elections and the importance of staying informed and voting for the right candidates. The opening was a clever way to draw readers in to a topic that might otherwise turn them away.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 43

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: State of Teaching: National, Florida, NYS

Publication/Website: NYSUT Retiree Council 43

Issue Date: March 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A sweeping and detailed evaluation of the state of teaching and education in NY, FL and across the country. Very helpful to all readers!

Judge 2: This well-researched and well-written article does an excellent job of updating the reader on developments affecting education at the national level, and also in both New York and Florida.

Judge 3: This is a good, in-depth report on issues facing teachers – and education in general – out of New York, Florida and the nation's capital. It's a great service to the readers of this publication, who are NYSUT retirees now living in Florida. While it is well-done, I wouldn't call it creative writing. That's not a criticism; I just think it would have been better entered in the Best Article about Local or Chapter Issues category. It's a straightforward recounting of issues that affect members, and again, it's very well done.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RII

Local: Retirees of Brentwood Schools

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: A Celebration of the Non-Party

Publication/Website: ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Issue Date: Jan-March 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Kudos for this teacher whose journey has lead her from classroom to another school filled with life lessons — McDonald House. Very nicely done!

Judge 2: What an inspirational, interesting and thought-provoking piece! This first-person account of the writer's decision to forgo a retirement party in favor of donations to the Ronald McDonald House is written in simple language, yet it grabs and holds the reader's attention from the first sentence to the last. We almost feel as if we're participating in the writer's decision-making process, and also in her realization about how valuable her contribution had become. Excellent work.

Judge 3: Here is a very inspirational first-person article by a teacher who refused an opportunity for a retirement party, preferring instead to ask colleagues to make a donation to the local Ronald McDonald House. As she explains, it would make children the focus instead of the teacher. In great detail, the author describes the operation of "The House That Love Built," and the work of the many volunteers who run it. The article is nicely illustrated with one photo of the author seated next to Ronald McDonald and a second photo of an inscribed brick on a walkway that leads to the building — and honors this teacher. Very nice work.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RIII

Local:

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: Brave New World?

Publication/Website: Senior Class

Issue Date: Nov/Dec. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good analysis of challenges facing teachers and public education by wealthy-funded secretive organizations like ***** — and encourages retirees to support still on-duty colleagues.

Judge 2: Backed up by some excellent research, this article reveals little-known information about charter schools, and builds a strong case for fighting the proliferation of “corporate schools.” The argument is laid out in clear, easy-to-understand language, and ends with some concrete suggestions for action.

Judge 3: A great – and scary -- article on the American Legislative Exchange Council, an organization founded by the religious right to limit government, end social welfare programs and earned benefits, among other things. The author describes the rise of the organization in the early 70s as a secret society that was unveiled in 2012, and shows how it has influenced many of the state legislative actions and court decisions that threaten public education, collective bargaining, pensions and voter rights around the nation. She then demonstrates how this impacts the efforts in New York state to privatize public education, demonize teachers and increase testing. This all provides the backdrop for a call to arms and for members to join forces and take action to protect public education, as we know it. Very well done.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RIII

Local: Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: The President's Message

Publication/Website: the HHHART BEAT

Issue Date: Fall 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good summary of a clearly engaged forward-thinking local, still up to date on local and political issues.

Judge 2: This president's message gives an excellent description of the events at a recent chapter luncheon, and describes several upcoming happenings. The vivid language elevates the article from a mundane recital of facts and, despite the brevity of each entry, provides enough detail to keep the reader well informed about the group's activities.

Judge 3: This is a very good president's message, in that it brings members up to date on recent events within the local, provides some follow-up on social events and reminders of upcoming activities and has a call for members to get out and vote in the general elections and to elect candidates who have a record of supporting public education. I'm not sure it exhibits the kind of creativity the category calls for, but It does an excellent job of communicating with the members very well.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 10

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: JUST ANOTHER ELECTION?

Publication/Website: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Issue Date: March 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good, nuts and bolts description of how local political campaigns work — makes progress less mysterious for members. Very helpful.

Judge 2: Instead of merely urging members to vote, this excellent article goes through a step-by-step explanation of the election process, from choosing the candidate through certifying the winner. It ends with a powerful first-person story of why every single vote counts. If anyone was considering staying home on election day, this article is a very persuasive argument against it.

Judge 3: Here, the author uses the outcome of a recent town election that was decided by a single vote to stress the point that every vote counts. He also gives an in-depth explanation of what goes on in a small-town election — from finding a candidate, to raising funds, to dealing with egos, to removing campaign signs promptly after election day. One observation: Article contained a number of typos and a few grammatical errors. We realize how difficult it is for newsletter editors to do all the proofreading in addition to the many other duties they perform — usually by themselves — but we thought it was important to mention.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 18

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: The Scary Truth!

Publication/Website: Linkage

Issue Date: Winter 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very good, motivating summary of challenges facing educators. Good call to action.

Judge 2: An excellent discussion of such critical issues as the state Constitutional Convention, the governor's proposed tax credit to school districts, Social Security and Common Core. Although each section is brief, it's well-written and presents the facts clearly.

Judge 3: Like many presidents' messages, this one deals largely with the looming threats to public education and the teaching profession in New York state. This is a message that local leaders cannot emphasize enough. The author also outlines remarks on the topic by the member of the state Board of Regents who represents Long Island on the board in Albany (which I would have run as a separate, detailed article as well). Keep up the good work.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 39

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: HOW TO TAKE YOUR MEDICATIONS PROPERLY AND SAFELY

Publication/Website: NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL 39 NEWSLETTER

Issue Date: January/Feb. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Incredibly helpful guide to retired and all members about how to safely and correctly handle prescriptions.

Judge 2: This excellent article presents an impressive amount of very critical information in a clear, well researched, easy-to-understand style. Although one hopes medication errors would never happen, knowing the right material to read, the right questions to ask and the right people to consult prevents many unfortunate accidents.

Judge 3: Here is a very useful topic for a retiree publication: How to take medications properly and safely. Written by a registered nurse (presumably a member of the RC), this well-written article provides statistics on drug use in the US and outlines a list of questions every patient should ask their doctor when a drug is prescribed. The author discusses the danger of drug interactions, skipping doses and possible side effects, and stresses the importance of communication between doctor and patient. She closes with a list of hints for safe drug usage. The author manages to impart a lot of important medical information without lapsing into medical jargon or double-talk. Well done.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 04

Class: RIII

Local: Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers

Category: Best Creative Writing

Name of Entry: Saranne Rap A transparent view of issues - A Lucky Bunch of Retirees: Health Insurance Changes Still Benefit the WCRT

Publication/Website: Post Script

Issue Date: July/August 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: An understandably grateful reflection on the importance of quality healthcare for retirees and families. Very nicely done.

Judge 2: Putting a positive spin on a situation that many members are unhappy about — a new health insurance plan — is a very difficult undertaking, but this article accomplishes that objective very well. By pointing out all the benefits of the new plan in plain conversational language, without seeming pedantic or chiding her colleagues, the writer does an excellent job of sharing her gratitude.

Judge 3: I still love the name of this column and its author: "Saranne Rap," by Saranne Ratner. Here, the author takes a different view on a common issue in these days of shrinking health-care benefits. Instead of grouching about higher costs for co-pays, office visits and the like, she writes about how lucky she is to have insurance at all, and thanks the union negotiating team for preserving the benefit. As she writes: "It may not be the 'Cadillac' policy anymore, but it is surely the top-of-the-line Buick." Nicely done.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Best Overall Graphic Design

Category Code: 05

Class: RI

Local: Islip Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Overall Graphic Design

Name of Entry: LIVING HISTORY IN GETTYSBURG

Publication/Website: ISLIP 'CONNECTIONS'

Issue Date: Feb 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nicely designed page with good balance of excellent text and photos.

Judge 2: The photos at the bottom of the page are an excellent complement to the information about the visit to Gettysburg contained in the story. They do a good job of helping to set the tone of the events of Civil War era. However, some of the photos are so small it's difficult to make out the subject. Also, more white space would help make the story easier to read.

Judge 3: A nice feature in the 150th anniversary of Gettysburg, complete with color photos. The material itself is very good, but I would have made a few changes in the presentation. You are somewhat limited with the 8.5x11 format, so I would have run fewer, but larger photos. I believe you would find the story itself easier to read with a two-column format. That would also give you some options in how you lay out the photos.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 05

Class: RI

Local: Malverne Teachers' Association Retiree Chapter

Category: Best Overall Graphic Design

Name of Entry: The Retiree ReView

Publication/Website: The Retiree ReView

Issue Date: Dec. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very pleasant, good read, excellent photos of teachers, student and retirees. Very nicely done.

Judge 2: This clean, simple layout does an excellent job of conveying information to the reader in a style that is easy to read. There are no garish colors, graphics or backgrounds to distract the reader from the most important thing in any publication – the words. There's also a good use of white space, which prevents the pages from appearing crowded -- a good way to attract prospective readers. However, I would minimize the use of underlines in the text, and you might want to consider a uniform box style.

Judge 3: The editor here packs a lot of valuable information into an 8.5x11 format. The two-column format makes reading a lot easier on the eyes. Lots of good photos, particularly on the cover. As a matter of fact, I would have moved some of the other material inside and run the two cover photos much larger, with a little more information in the captions and larger headlines. I would definitely move the "boilerplate" material (editor and president) to an inside page, probably p. 2, and combine it with some basic info on the publication – how often it's published, the address, etc. – and make it into a proper masthead that always runs on that page. Keep up the good work, especially the photos, and don't be afraid to run them large.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 05

Class: RI

Local: Oriskany Retirees' Organization

Category: Best Overall Graphic Design

Name of Entry: Oriskany Retirees' Organization

Publication/Website: Oriskany Retirees' Organization

Issue Date: Sept/Oct 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very good newsletter — wonderful mix of news articles with photos of students, teachers and retirees and other important information designed to be read. Simple design can be good design.

Judge 2: This excellent and very attractive publication is easy to read, with wonderful photos and graphics that are both relevant to the story and interesting. There's a good amount of white space, and not too much material crammed onto each page. My only suggestions would be to use the two-column format and the same typeface throughout, and don't put graphics or shading underneath the type.

Judge 3: This is such a good looking publication I'm surprised it does not have a masthead telling us about the publication, who puts it together, how often it's published, etc. One thing that jumped out at me was the "In Memoriam" boxes. I would try to run them together on a single page. Use "In Memoriam" as a headline across the top of the column and just run the name as the headline for each individual passing. I would also box the retiree column (What's happening with our retirees) and move it to the top of the column. Boldface each name to stand out, and run the request for retiree info at the end. I enjoyed the photo of the wineries trip. It deserved to be run as large as it was. A very good publication.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 05

Class: RII

Local: Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Overall Graphic Design

Name of Entry: PDRTA HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: Nov 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very clear and inviting notice to retirees about upcoming event — nicely done.

Judge 2: This attractive page is an excellent way to induce members to attend any event. The holiday graphics adorning the page are attractive and appropriate, and the necessary information is laid out clearly. There's no guessing about the date or the menu. It's too bad it couldn't be in color.

Judge 3: What can I say about this promotion page for a holiday luncheon? It's clean, attractive and well-designed. My only quibble is the VOTE-COPE donation form that runs below it. I think it's lost on that page. It took me a few minutes to notice that it was not part of the holiday luncheon promotion. Since it's there, however, I will say that it's also clean, well-designed and attractive. I would have just run it on another page or opened up the space between the two notices.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 05

Class: RII

Local: Port Washington Teachers Association Retired Educators Chapter

Category: Best Overall Graphic Design

Name of Entry: Retired Educators Chapter Port Washington Teachers Association Website

Publication/Website: Retired Educators Chapter Port Washington Teachers Association Website

Issue Date:

URL: <http://www.pwta.info/PWRE/index.shtml>

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nicely done site with good mix of retiree social life and current issues affecting members. A few more photos would make it more visually appealing.

Judge 2: This is a very attractive web site, with the changing photos and the lighthouse at the top. The muted colors are not distracting, and the information is laid out clearly. However, websites are another category.

Judge 3: A clean and attractive website that seems error-free. I just felt that it was missing some type of graphic treatment to anchor the page and draw the viewers in. Then I saw the member photo of dusk on the Atlantic and thought that would have made an ideal graphic element if it had been run way larger.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 05

Class: RII

Local: Retirees of Brentwood Schools

Category: Best Overall Graphic Design

Name of Entry: ROBS HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Publication/Website: ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Issue Date: Sept. - Dec. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very nicely designed flier — You shouldn't have any questions after reading except where do I sign up?

Judge 2: What a festive looking page! The holiday-themed graphics are attractive and appropriate, and the important information is laid out clearly. There's enough white space to set off the type, and the decorations make it clear immediately what kind of party is being described.

Judge 3: We actually got two entries in this category that promote holiday luncheons. This one is also well-designed, clean and seemingly error-free. The only thing I can see that would have improved it is color. Nice work.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 05

Class: RIII

Local: Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Overall Graphic Design

Name of Entry: Where Are They Now?

Publication/Website: the HHHART BEAT

Issue Date: Winter 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A lovely story matched by appropriate graphics — You can't help but smile at this joyful piece of word music.

Judge 2: The "musical" graphics do a great deal to enhance the theme and message of the story. As a former music student who is now a music teacher, the writer's words definitely call for such decorations. The type is easy to read, and there's enough white space around the graphics to make them stand out. It would have looked even better if they had been larger.

Judge 3: This was a nice cover feature on a former student – actually a letter from a former student – praising his former middle school music teacher. The article is illustrated with clip art of musical instruments. Good choice of story and art. I would have run the type in two columns rather than a single column running across the page, to make it easier to read. If it was available, I would have tried to run a current photo of the student, along with a yearbook photo, if available. This story makes some good points about the importance of music education in schools, at a time when these programs are falling victim to budget cuts and other issues such as Common Core concerns.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 05

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 18

Category: Best Overall Graphic Design

Name of Entry: Linkage

Publication/Website: Linkage

Issue Date: Winter 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good combination of text, graphics, photos. Never looks cluttered despite covering work of many locals.

Judge 2: The attractive design of this publication does a great deal to enhance the message and the information contained in the stories. The clean and simple design is easy to read, and the photos are excellent. The inside pages have plenty of white space, which makes each element on the page stand out, but a little more white space on the cover would make it even better.

Judge 3: Lots of news in this layout and quite a variety of articles. I always prefer the two-column format on 8.5x11 pages, as this one does. Cover and back page are just a little busy, but not distracting. Page 2 format showed good placement of articles and photos, but I would like to have seen a headline that says more than "Our Nov. 18 meeting." Perhaps something like "Learning about Medicare." Overall, the layout is neat, clean and inviting.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 05

Class: RIII

Local: Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers

Category: Best Overall Graphic Design

Name of Entry: Batter Up! We're Panik-stricken! World-class World Series featured District, County athlete

Publication/Website: Post Script

Issue Date: December 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: This was a wonderful layout for two tremendous stories — a great reminder that there are great teachers and coaches — even behind WS heroes. Only off-note, the green used was a little jarring and hard to read over.

Judge 2: While it may be an interesting idea to continue the baseball theme into the design, the dark green color of the graphic, combined with the small size of the type, makes both pages almost impossible to read. And most of the pictures on the first page are way too small to even make out what the subject is. The second page is better, with larger photos and slightly more white space around them. When you're designing a page, your first, second and even third consideration has to be readability.

Judge 3: Great headline on page 6. This centerspread layout has a kind of NY Daily News look about it (which is a compliment). Nice, clean, three-column layout, lots of good, well-placed photos with information-filled captions. The writing is good and the type is clean and free from apparent typos, etc. I like the idea of the green-and-brown ball field ghosted behind the type. It's attractive and very clever but I found it hard to read the type covered in green. I think it would have had much more impact if both colors were several shades paler. It would move the graphic behind the type, rather than in front of it. But all in all, this is a very professional production. Congratulations.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Best Photo or Illustration

Category Code: 06

Class: RI

Local: Central Islip Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Photo or Illustration

Name of Entry: Nancy Libert

Publication/Website: The CIRTation

Issue Date: Nov-Dec 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very charming photo that shows the solidarity between generations of local leaders.

Judge 2: This photo does an excellent job of capturing the camaraderie of a group of friends reuniting to spend some quality time together. The faces would be brighter and easier to see if the photographer had composed the shot so the windows were not in the background, causing the room to be backlit.

Judge 3: This is a nice photo, a staple of retiree newsletters. They're important to run, but they don't often rise to the level of contest material. With the exception of the featured lady, others at the table are too dark to recognize. If it was shot tighter and closer, focusing on the charter member, it still wouldn't be a contest winner, but it would have made a better photo, especially since the other people are hard to see and were not identified anyway.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 06

Class: RI

Local: Islip Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Photo or Illustration

Name of Entry: SPRINGTIME IN TUSCANY

Publication/Website: ISLIP 'CONNECTIONS'

Issue Date: Nov/Dec 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: I'm jealous — gorgeous photo that emphasizes the bright side of retirement. Italy trip!

Judge 2: What a spectacular photo! It truly captures the quaint and picturesque qualities of the waterfront village. I wish the cutline identified the specific location.

Judge 3: This travel shot, taken by a member, was published in the retiree newsletter as part of a photomontage of the member's trip to Italy. The photo spread is nice, but this photo by itself is outstanding. As a matter of fact, you don't realize just how great it is until you see it away from the other shots. Great work.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 06

Class: RI

Local: Malverne Teachers' Association Retiree Chapter

Category: Best Photo or Illustration

Name of Entry: Malverne Run for Education

Publication/Website: The Retiree ReView

Issue Date: Dec. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Sometimes simple is best — a nice multi-generational, student-teacher active participation photo!

Judge 2: Even without a cutline, this wonderful photo tells a story of old and young striving together to reach a common goal. Considering the amount of movement that was taking place at the time, the focus, composition and exposure are excellent. But I don't believe this is the way it ran in the publication. It was very small, and black and white.

Judge 3: I like this photo. I wish I had the background for it – who are the people? Are they teacher and student? What is the event? This, of course, has nothing to do with the judging. It just helps us understand the context. The photo stands by itself as a good candid shot of two polar opposite competitors in a race.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 06

Class: RII

Local: Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Photo or Illustration

Name of Entry: The Hidden Family

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: Feb 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A charming photo that makes you want to read this fascinating story.

Judge 2: I'm not sure if this is an actual photo of the writer's meeting with her overseas family or a stock photo used for illustration purposes. Either way, it does an excellent job of conveying the emotion portrayed in the story. However, stock photos are not eligible for this category.

Judge 3: A very touching photo to illustrate a touching story of two distant relatives meeting for the first time. Both the photo and the story are excellent. Although it's not part of the judging criteria, I would suggest that the photo could have been run larger to give it a little more impact.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 06

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 43

Category: Best Photo or Illustration

Name of Entry: Scenes Around the State: Space Coast joined The Brevard Federation of Teachers...

Publication/Website: NYSUT Retiree Council 43

Issue Date: Oct 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Solidarity lives in a picture like this — a more active pose would have made it even better.

Judge 2: There are at least a thousand words of meaning in this excellent photo. The smiling faces, the signs and the proud stance of the protestors all tell the story of the event. If the faces were brighter in relation to the bright sky behind, it would tell the story even better.

Judge 3: The photo is well composed, but sadly it's too dark to distinguish the faces. Rallies like this can be a source of great photos, but I'd give a few more points to an action photo of participants actually marching or giving a speech, rather than posing.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 06

Class: RII

Local: Retirees of Brentwood Schools

Category: Best Photo or Illustration

Name of Entry: A PART OF BRENTWOOD HISTORY FINDS A NEW HOME

Publication/Website: ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Issue Date: Jan. - Mar. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: What a great story — and the before and after photos make you curious about the story behind the photos.

Judge 2: The photo of the Boy Scout standing proudly next to the bell does an excellent job of illustrating the events described in the article. And it adds interest to the story to show the bell's progress from the abandonment and dereliction in the first photo to the place of honor in the second.

Judge 3: These two photos really help illustrate a nice story that would not have had as much impact without the photos. Showing is as important as telling. In a perfect world, the bell would have been photographed by itself, away from the distracting materials in the trailer, and in the second photo, the scout wouldn't be wearing sunglasses. Rule of thumb: Get people to remove sunglasses before you photograph them. But these two points are nitpicking. The photos as they are give extra meaning to the article.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 06

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 18

Category: Best Photo or Illustration

Name of Entry: This is Jon Trapani!

Publication/Website: Linkage

Issue Date: Spring 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: That is a fascinating photo of Jon — it makes me ask, “what the hey is going on here?”

Judge 2: This photo does an excellent job of capturing a significant action. The man's expression, his gesture and the faces of the men in the background all convey a sense of urgency. However, without the context of the page, it's impossible to understand what the photo is about. Also, I believe the photo was used in a significantly smaller size in the publication, which would decrease its effectiveness.

Judge 3: A good photo, but I wish I had the article it went with. It helps us understand why the photo was taken and what its purpose is. Nevertheless, it's well composed, and I'm guessing it helps readers understand the subject better.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 06

Class: RIII

Local: Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers

Category: Best Photo or Illustration

Name of Entry: St. Patty's Day parade

Publication/Website: Post Script

Issue Date: April 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: These photos cover all the good things about locals having strong ongoing relations with communities they serve.

Judge 2: Each one of these photos does an excellent job of portraying the events, the emotions and spirit of camaraderie of this special day. The signs, the smiles and the colorful costumes all combine to tell an interesting story. It would be even better if the photos were larger, and not so crowded. This is really enough material for a two-page spread.

Judge 3: Nice photo spread of the local's participation in a St. Patrick's Day parade. A lot of members are pictured and identified, which is always good. Creative signs, lots of green, and well-composed photos

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 07

Class: RII

Local: Port Washington Teachers Association Retired Educators Chapter

Category: Most User-Friendly Website

Name of Entry: Retired Educators Chapter Port Washington Teachers Association Website

Publication/Website: Retired Educators Chapter Port Washington Teachers Association Website

Issue Date:

URL: <http://www.pwta.info/PWRE/index.shtml>

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Clear, accessible, attractive, very good mix of light fare and serious business.

Judge 2: This is a very attractive web site, with its pastel colors, excellent photos and illustration of the lighthouse. There are many links to relevant information on the home page, and they're almost all accessible without having to scroll way down. The links all work well, but when you click on a link the information you're looking for should be right there at the top of the page, not all the way down at the bottom. Also, links to other sites should open a new page, to keep the visitor from getting lost in the playback.fm site and never coming back.

Judge 3: This website is super-easy to navigate, largely because it is very basic, but still seems to carry all the information that a retiree chapter member would need to know. This one is also very up-to-date — all meeting notices and calendar items are timely and there is nothing that should have been removed or updated a long time ago (except for the "About Us" section. It notes that the group was founded in 1989 and has been in operation for 24 years. You're actually starting your 26th year. Maybe you could do an item about having completed 25 years.)

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 07

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 43

Category: Most User-Friendly Website

Name of Entry: NYSUT Retiree Council 43 Website

Publication/Website: NYSUT Retiree Council 43 Website

Issue Date:

URL: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org>

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Very good website with access to up-to-date current NSYUT activities and news. The front page could be more welcoming — perhaps photos of some of the leaders and activities could be featured.

Judge 2: This excellent site is loaded with colorful photos that do an excellent job of illustrating the many meetings, marches and protests of a very committed chapter. The links all work well and the different topics are clearly laid out at the top of the home page.

Judge 3: This professional-looking website provides an easy way for members to keep up with education-related information from New York, DC and Florida, where this large Retiree Council is located. Attractive, large artwork and photos illustrate the pages, and information is easy to find and up to date. A great service for the members of the Retiree Council.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 07

Class: RII

Local: Retirees of Brentwood Schools

Category: Most User-Friendly Website

Name of Entry: ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS Website

Publication/Website: ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Issue Date:

URL: www.robsny.org

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: Another terrific website. Every click-on sent you to a new file of attractively presented information from association leaders to upcoming meeting and newsletters.

Judge 2: This web site is not just attractive and very functional, it's just loaded with interesting and useful information. The links are clearly laid out at the left of the home page, and everywhere you go there's always a "Home" button to bring you back. It takes just seconds to find what you're looking for, whether it's the next meeting date or a newsletter from last spring, The photo galleries are excellent, and I just loved the filmstrip of photos on the home page! What a great feature!

Judge 3: This attractive site has a very warm and welcoming feel to it, perhaps because there is much material – photos and articles -- dealing with the history of the school district and the people who worked and taught there. But the site also seems geared more toward local information rather than state and national news of general education issues. It does provide a NYSUT News section, with information from the statewide union, including the use of its important Member Action Center. Nice job on this website.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 07

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 10

Category: Most User-Friendly Website

Name of Entry: RC 10 Website

Publication/Website: RC 10 Website

Issue Date: March 2014

URL: rc10.ny.aft.org

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A straightforward website with clearly presented information. Its usage might be increased by some design style changes similar to what other RCs are doing. Very helpful site.

Judge 2: There's plenty of useful and interesting content available in this excellent web site. However, there's also a lot of repetition. Many of the photos and articles on the home page are repeated on the other pages, and in the rotating photos at the top of the page. Also, when looking for meeting dates or other important information, the visitor has to click through two or three pages, and then is brought to a PDF to download. It would be better to have important information or date available with one click directly from the home page.

Judge 3: There is a great deal of information on this site, and it's all easy to locate. Headlines on all stories are colored red, which gets your attention. Items are up to date. It's obvious this site is regularly tended to. Good, solid work.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Best Use of Social Media

Category Code: 08

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 43

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Name of Entry: New York State United Teacher Retirees in Florida Facebook

Publication/Website: New York State United Teacher Retirees in Florida Facebook

Issue Date:

URL: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/New-York-State-United-Teacher-Retirees-In-Florida/166355720080638?ref=>

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A terrific website. Clear focus on what's happening in Albany and the impact on the local unions these folks helped build. But also coverage of important national labor issues — and the statehouse in Florida, which seems as troublesome as our Capitol. Friendly tone, easy-to-use and helpful info on the many ways to connect with this very active group. Nicely done.

Judge 2: This Facebook page does an excellent job of keeping members right up to the minute with important issues and events not just on the national scene, but also back in New York and in Florida. The number of current posts on issues of critical importance to members is truly impressive, and illustrates a serious commitment to informing members.

Judge 3: Here is a Facebook page that is absolutely dedicated to keeping this chapter's members up-to-the-minute on all things educational. Catering to NYSUT retirees who have settled in Florida, it obviously follows NYS educational issues closely and from a variety of sources. But while its focus is on NYS, it also closely follows education-related issues out of Washington, DC, and Florida, where many of these retirees now live and pay taxes. It's quite a juggling act, but someone is doing it quite well.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Best Column/Blog

Category Code: 09

Class: RI

Local: Islip Retired Teachers Association

Category: Best Column/Blog

Name of Entry: 'THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER'

Publication/Website: ISLIP 'CONNECTIONS'

Issue Date: Nov/Dec 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very honest and open dialogue with members regarding political endorsements. Explains rationale of political endorsements in clear and helpful way.

Judge 2: This column does an excellent job of explaining the mission of not just the local chapter, but also of NYSUT. The spirited language of the president's response quickly grabs the reader's interest, and also encourages them to visit the NYSUT site to research the candidates, and also to VOTE. Very effective.

Judge 3: This pre-election president's column deftly tackles a number of issues related to the upcoming elections — including NYSUT endorsements and recommendations — and skillfully answers a critic who had written a letter complaining about the retiree chapter promoting such political material. She closes with a heartfelt urging that members register, take time to learn why NYSUT has endorsed certain candidates, and vote. Great service to retiree members. My only quibble — I think this would be easier to read if it ran in two columns, rather than a single column across the entire page.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 09

Class: RII

Local: Retiree Council 43

Category: Best Column/Blog

Name of Entry: ODDS 'n' ENDS

Publication/Website: NYSUT Retiree Council 43

Issue Date: Nov/Dec 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A nicely assembled set of political facts that lead members to the conclusion that their vote and activism are at the heart of democracy — or else its being sold to highest bidder.

Judge 2: The discussion of campaign finance on the first page of the article is one of the best I've seen. It's concise, yet hits all the important points of the dangers of American politics and elections being controlled by a small number of billionaires with an agenda. The rundown of resolutions on the second page is less successful. It would have been better to briefly paraphrase each resolution, rather than force the reader to wade through the formal language of each one.

Judge 3: Members of this retiree council could learn a lot by reading this president's message, written in the aftermath of the 2014 elections. She explains how state legislatures, the super-wealthy and the U.S. Supreme Court have taken power and political control from the people and given it to corporations and a handful of wealthy individuals. Good writing and a timely message.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 09

Class: RIII

Local: Retiree Council 12

Category: Best Column/Blog

Name of Entry: What's Coming in 2017?

Publication/Website: The Outlook

Issue Date: Nov. 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: A very good recitation of facts about importance of stopping a **** convention which would play havoc with pension rights.

Judge 2: This column is an excellent explanation of a very complex topic. Many people don't understand the potential effects of a constitutional convention on teachers' pensions, and it seems very far in the future. However, the writer uses well-researched facts and simple language to build a strong argument against both these issues.

Judge 3: A good explanation of the threats a constitutional convention could hold for retired members. This is a timely warning of what could happen to pensions, bargaining rights and other rights if NYS voters agree in 2017 to hold a constitutional convention. It's not too early to begin reminding members of what's at stake, beginning in just two years.

NYSUT Communication Awards 2015

Retirees

Category Code: 09

Class: RIII

Local: Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers

Category: Best Column/Blog

Name of Entry: AS THE SMOKE SETTLES

Publication/Website: Post Script

Issue Date: June 2014

Judges' Comments:

Judge 1: An enlightening piece about locals involvement in school board elections and the role educators should play in local elections.

Judge 2: What an excellent discussion of the exact role of the union in school board elections! The writer goes through a step-by-step explanation of how the union chooses which candidates to endorse, and how such endorsements may affect the outcome of the election. And, of course, best of all, he closes by urging donations to VOTE/COPE. An excellent article!

Judge 3: "As the smoke settles" is an apt title for this column, written in the aftermath of a school board election for five open seats. The writer provides nice detail how the local interviews and rates candidates to decide who to endorse. He also points out that seven of the 11 candidates agreed to be interviewed and all the winners were union-endorsed. It was an ideal time to remind readers that VOTE-COPE donations were being collected, and that's how the writer closed out the column. Nice work.