

nysut

2012

Journalism Competition



Judges' Comments

In-Service

Class I — Class V

The Ted Bleecker Award

“Best of the Best”



Valley Central Teachers’ Association

VC ECHOES

Editor: Meghan Rilley

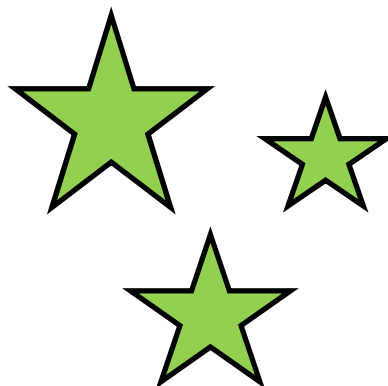
Comments:

Very bold, arresting cover photo sets the tone for their comprehensive look at what teachers and their union are fighting for in today’s climate of cost-cutting and attacks on education in general. The inside commentary is focused and forceful, and the message of “union strong” reads loud and clear.

Great use of color and bold photos on the cover and back page of this attractive publication. Articles are well edited and varied in content. Since some of the articles tend to cover a single page, I would consider looking at ways to increase white space, use pull quotes, set off some material in boxes, etc.

Very bold use of a powerful photograph on the front page. No other publication used photography like this to communicate to readers.

Overall, this publication was well designed and had lots of visual impact. Very well done!!! Congratulations.



Solidarity Awards



Arlington Teachers' Association

The Educator

Editors: Samantha Falk and Robert McHugh

Comments:

In times like these, an entire issue dedicated to solidarity is certainly not overkill. As the editor's Page 1 column tells us, there was only a tepid response to an unscientific survey querying members about the union. After making salient points in that column for the critical need for solidarity, this special issue deals with the topic in many ways – including articles about the union's community and school involvement, explanations and definitions of some of the main issues, a well-done fact-vs.-fiction centerspread and recognizing members' recent accomplishments. Obviously a lot of work done here, all of it good.

Whole issue is very strong, but, the column on the cover is outstanding.

From the "United We Stand, Divided We Fall" headline on the cover to the dates for the "We Are One" rally on the back, *The Educator* stands firmly for solidarity. The feature on "Labor organizations under fire" is especially effective, with its information on "Threats across the nation," and photos of the state rally organized by NYSUT.



Beacon Teachers Association

Between Assignments

Editor: Dawn Clemens

Comments:

An unprecedented undertaking! Deep, thorough examination of all aspects of solidarity, including local and state issues.

It's a major effort for a local to tackle an entire issue devoted to solidarity, but it's even more impressive when it's this well done. From the editor's letter, to the talking points, to the update on VOTE-COPE, to the profile of the local union-hating assemblyman, to the explanation of how the governor plays fast and loose with education statistics, this issue gets to the heart of the topic of solidarity and the critical importance of becoming informed and involved.

The issue combines well-written, locally produced articles with material taken from *NYSUT United*, the NYSUT website and other NYSUT sources, which is perfectly acceptable – and encouraged. Kudos to everyone involved in this effort.

An entire issue devoted to solidarity? What a wonderful idea! And this publication brings it to fruition in the best, most effective way possible. From the opening letter from the editor, which explains the concept, to "Fact vs. Fiction," which is one of the best explanations of misconceptions about teachers that I've seen, the entire newsletter is just stuffed with facts, figures, background and lots and lots of passion. An excellent effort!



Judges' Comments

In-Service



Class I

Class I – Best Community Outreach Using Electronic Media

FIRST PLACE

Hastings Teachers Association

Hastings Teachers Association YouTube Channel

Comments: Great idea to use YouTube. Not only does it get the message out that this chapter is reaching out to the community, but viewers can actually see the volunteers in action. Very compelling.

Class I – Best Editorial Design

Cambridge Faculty Association

The Blackboard

"Chalk dust"

Comments: Good use of color and photography. With the theme of "Alice in Wonderland" to describe teacher evaluation, the pull quotes using quotes from the original book were a nice touch and graphically pleasing. Realizing that there was a lot of timely material to get on these two pages, my only suggestion would be to strive for a little more white space so pages don't look so crowded.

The idea of using a "chalk board" as a graphic and topping it with a chalk-like headline is eye-catching and clever. The white and yellow text stands out well against the black background. However, it would be much easier to read if the type were bigger and the lines not so crowded together.

Class I – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Deposit Teachers Association

The Hatchet

"School funding"

Comments: Nice cover. Good use of color throughout, especially timely since this is a Spring issue. Only small quibble would be a little more white space around the masthead on Page 3.

The excellent photo illustration of the money being dumped down the tubes is eye-catching, clever and appropriate to the content of the story. But there's no text on the graphic connecting it to the inside story, and no headline on the inside story to connect it to the illustration. And even if all the readers know perfectly well that the "Rant" is always the first story in the paper, it should be labeled as such, with a headline to tell what the content will be.

Class I – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Homer Teachers' Association

The Tale

"Rally"

Comments: Liberal use of photos shows how a black-and-white publication can be eye-catching and attractive. A headline up top would have brought it all together.

Each photo is excellent on its own and, taken together, they tell a coherent and interesting story of the event. The closeups of the baby and the four women are especially effective. It might have been better to lay out the page with a larger headline and the story in the middle of the page. That would encourage readers to peruse the type, rather than just look at the pictures. And the white space bordering the photos should have been uniform, not different widths.

Class I – Best Editorial Design

Liberty Assistants, Monitors & Aides Association

LAMA Lines _ _ _

Comments: The in-house editorial cartoon helps illustrate president's message. Good use of membership talent. Editorial well-written and to the point.

The illustration of LAMA in the water with the life preserver being held out of reach is an effective accompaniment to the story about cuts in education. And the President's Message is laid out well and the format is easy to read. However, the "Inside this Issue" list should not have been placed so that a paragraph in the main story is broken up. It would have been better to start a new paragraph with the words "I am very disappointed" and place the box there.

Class I – Best Editorial Design

FIRST PLACE

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

“Take a look; It’s in a Nook”

Comments: Very creative headline. Placing the type for the feature about Nooks inside a Nook was a clever idea.

What a clever idea to place the article inside an illustration of a Nook! The photos are an excellent enhancement of the content of the article, and the lead photo of the teacher holding the device and looking at the camera is especially effective and helps to draw the reader into the article. Some of the other photos are rather dark, and the fact that all the subjects are looking down makes them less effective.

Class I – Best Opinion Writing

FIRST PLACE

Cambridge Faculty Association

The Blackboard

“Down the rabbit hole”

Comments: Could there be a better metaphor for teacher evaluation than “Alice in Wonderland?” Good, solid detail. The Legal Update box, with the latest info, gives it immediacy.

This editorial does a good job of laying out the background of an important issue, and forming a persuasive case about the problems of the new teacher evaluation system. The “Alice in Wonderland” analogy is an excellent one, and the quotes from the classic book are carried all the way through in a very effective way.

Class I – Best Opinion Writing

Deposit Teachers Association

The Hatchet

“The rant”

Comments: These columns are always interesting and conversational, like having a discussion with the author instead of being fed cold facts. Writer obviously has a good handle on local issues and problems.

The column’s “recipe” approach is an effective one, and the writer carries it all the way through to the end. It’s an excellent way to present an issue and create a persuasive argument for a specific course of action – in this case: solidarity. However, since this is an official publication, it might be more dignified to use a slightly less informal tone. And it’s really important to put the name of column at the top of the page, along with a headline describing the content, and the author’s name.

Class I – Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF MERIT

Homer Teachers' Association

The Tale

“The importance of a union”

Comments: Good explanation of the problems of a tax cap and related issues that are not often well-explained by traditional media. The writer also explains all the ways that members can make their voices heard and take action – perhaps the most important part of any local editorial/opinion writing.

This is a very well-written and effective editorial. It does an excellent job of laying out the issue and building a logical and easy-to-understand case opposing the tax cap proposal. The fact that it ends by urging specific action and providing the means to take that action makes it even more effective. Well done! (Although the article provided was not “The importance of a union,” I’m going to give you the benefit of the doubt and assume it was a last-minute change.)

Class I – Best Opinion Writing

Liberty Assistants, Monitors & Aides Association

LAMA Lines _ _ _

“Awaken the sleeping giant”

Comments: A solid, straightforward call to action. Layout definitely identifies it as an opinion piece. Concise and to the point.

An excellent editorial! Without going into excessive detail, the article clearly and concisely draws an important parallel between events of the past and the current attacks on teachers and the education system. The piece also lays out a strong and persuasive argument for future actions to counteract the attack. And it does all this in only five paragraphs! The only weak points are several typos (it’s instead of its; beaurocrats instead of bureaucrats; and an extra word in the final sentence).

Class I – Best Opinion Writing

Randolph Central School Teachers Association

The RCSTA Banner

“RCSTA negotiating team responds to NYSSBA attorney’s message”

Comments: A bit long, but given the complex topic – contract talks – it’s excusable. Provides readers with full detail of where negotiations stand, as well as some good talking points – a valuable service.

This article does an excellent job of explaining the current state of the union’s negotiations by providing lots of historical context and background material. It builds a strong case for member support as the process continues. Although the editorial is rather long, it highlights important facts and events and explains them well in an easy-to-follow format.

Class I – Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF MERIT

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

“A view from Kindergarten”

Comments: A great explanation for all members of exactly how cuts affect the youngest learners. A good foundation for asking for members' help in overturning those cuts. One suggestion -- a two-column format would make it easier to read.

This editorial clearly and effectively presents the background of an important issue, serious staffing problems at the kindergarten level, and uses these facts to build a logical and persuasive argument. Instead of relying on emotion, the writer objectively lays out the situation, backing up the facts with a building block analogy that is especially relevant to a kindergarten issue. An excellent editorial!

Class I – Best Profile

AWARD OF MERIT

Homer Teachers' Association

The Tale

“Fair Trade chocolate”

Comments: Good coverage of an often-overlooked union issue. Shows the NYSUT angle as well as what's being done locally. Does a service by including resources for someone who wants to take part in the campaign.

This is an interesting description of the efforts by a group of teachers to further an important union cause – the Fair Trade issue. The facts are presented clearly, but using quotes from the teachers and students, or possibly some specific descriptions of the “reverse trick or treating” would have made the story come to life.

Class I – Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

Randolph Central School Teachers Association

The RCSTA Banner

“Retired RCSTA member Kathy Klee honored with NYSUT outstanding service award”

Comments: This retiree was a perfect subject for a profile. A good start, especially the quote from the honoree, but could use a little more detail.

Winning an Outstanding Service Award is, indeed, an important accomplishment, and the article does a good job of listing many of the honoree's activities and posts. And we can all identify with Klee's delight about enjoying Sunday nights without worrying about the next day. However, it would have been nice to hear how she felt about her union activities, and what the speaker said about Klee, rather than just including quotes about the union in general.

Class I – Best Profile

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

“VOTE-COPE: Why should I contribute?”

Comments: A good, in-depth look at an important union function. Obviously well-researched. Plenty of reasons given for why members should contribute. One very tiny nitpick: An important but overlooked argument for attracting VOTE-COPE contributors is the fact that much of money is rebated back to locals for their own campaigns.

This is an excellent description of VOTE-COPE and the important work it does. It builds a strong case for supporting the cause, but doesn't really profile a group of people and the work they do.

Class I – Best Publication

Beach Channel High School – UFT Chapter Newsletter

Beach Channel High School - UFT Chapter Newsletter

Comments: Not fancy, but in two pages it manages to inform members about 16 different items – from local to state and national. Newsletter format with brief (but substantial) items gives it a sense of immediacy and begs readers to pick it up and read it as soon as they receive it.

Despite its size, this newsletter is crammed with useful and interesting information. It's well-written and gives an excellent overview of the activities of the local. However, the type is crowded and difficult to read, with no photos or graphic elements. It would be better to use two regular sized sheets of paper with much more white space and headlines to separate the different items.

Class I – Best Publication

Cambridge Faculty Association

The Blackboard

Comments: Glossy paper, full color and lots of photos give this publication an attractive look that will bring readers in. Articles like the creative editorial on teacher evaluation will keep them coming back.

This is an excellent publication with well-written articles, creative headlines and good information about relevant issues. The story about the rally and “Down the Rabbit Hole” are especially good. The photos of the rally tell a wonderful story – although there's a typo in the top cutline — and the use of color is good. The newsletter would be more attractive and easier to read with uniform column widths, and the type on the back page is too small.

Class I – Best Publication

Deposit Teachers Association

The Hatchet

Comments: This publication continues its tradition of interesting, informative and provocative articles that showcase the talents of many different writers. Shows what can be accomplished when you can get members to participate in the product.

The Hatchet is an entertaining, interesting and enlightening publication. The authors put their heart and soul into each story, and many important issues are addressed in its pages. The layout is simple and easy to read, with generous-sized type and good use of color. However, many of the articles are too long, and more creative headlines would help to draw the readers into each story.

Class I – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

Homer Teachers' Association

The Tale

Comments: Great mix of local and state news, features, photos, social notes, advocacy and – especially – blowing the union's own horn. It's good to write about fundraisers, scholarships and cleanup projects that benefit students and the community.

The Tale offers a wealth of interesting and important information wrapped in a package that is simple, attractive and easy to read. The photos are excellent, and presented well, with stories that are clearly written and concise. The "Rally" story is very good, as is "The Importance of a union." However, the headlines could be much more creative and descriptive, and there are several typos – "filed" days, instead of "field" days – that detract from the overall impression.

Class I – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

Liberty Assistants, Monitors & Aides Association

LAMA Lines

Comments: Nice layout and judicious use of color make this publication stand out. It honors members, informs them and challenges them to stand up and fight for what is theirs.

The colorful photo on the cover of *Lama Lines* is a good preview of the interesting and attractive publication that follows. The stories are timely and well written, especially the President's Message and "Sleeping Giant." The layout is attractive and very easy to read, with good graphic elements throughout. It would be nice to include several more photos, and some of the regular features could also use a headline to draw readers into the story, in addition to just "Member questions" and "President's Message."

Class I – Best Publication

Pocantico Hills Teachers' Association

PHTA News

Comments: Interesting style – most items only a sentence long and members identified by first name only. But if it works for readers, it packs in a great deal of information and works in lots of members' names – two important things to remember.

This publication offers quite a bit of interesting information. But even though it's e-mailed to members, not printed, it could still have a lead story with a catchy headline to draw readers into the content. The opening quote is excellent, but doesn't really serve the same purpose as a headline and story with a photo and/or graphic. The bullet format with quick snippets of information is easy to read, but the jumble of facts is sometimes confusing. And the "Say Hey" section is a mix of both personal and professional accomplishments. Separating the new babies and anniversaries from the actual school news might be easier to understand and also more relevant to the union's activities and interests.

Class I – Best Publication

FIRST PLACE

Schalmont Teachers' Association

STATIC

Comments: This glossy, full-color publication has the look of a commercial magazine. But when you go beyond the flash, you find real substance: well-written features and editorials, and nice profiles on recent retirees.

From the colorful and eye-catching photo on the front cover to the smiling faces on the back, the *STATIC* paints a wonderful picture of the teachers in the district. The articles celebrating the retirees are well-written and interesting, and offer some excellent words of advice. There are also several good descriptions of union activities and interest, and the layout is attractive. However, larger type, more white space and less use of color would make it easier to read.

Class I – Best Publication

Westfield Teachers' Association

WTAttention!!

Comments: Excellent job of keeping members up on what their union is doing for them, with first-person reports from officers on their activities. Good use of photos, but don't be afraid to make them larger. This publication offers a wealth of interesting and timely information in a very attractive format. The articles are concise, and written in simple, easy-to-understand language. "Mayville Rally" and the "President's Message" are especially good. The use of white space is absolutely outstanding. My only suggestion would be to use larger photos and more graphics to dress up the pages.

Class I – Best Union News Story

Cambridge Faculty Association

The Blackboard

“We are what Democracy looks like”

Comments: Good headline leads into nice, tight story about Committee of 100 activism and its outcome. Accompanying photos help set the scene and provide detail. Story would have more impact if it talked specifically and with more detail about the local’s role in the activities.

The photos accompanying this story are excellent, and do a good job of conveying the message. The story is short and to the point, and makes several valid points, but their effect is reduced by several grammatical and spelling errors: coiffers instead of coffers; effecting instead of affecting; and the run-on sentence in the cutline. Also, it’s not at all obvious that the headline is also the beginning of the story, making what appears to be the first sentence into a sentence fragment.

Class I – Best Union News Story

AWARD OF MERIT

Deposit Teachers Association

The Hatchet

“Cooperstown revisited”

Comments: Great detail in recounting the activities of one member of the local at a NYSUT leadership conference, including the positives and negatives. Colorful descriptions of the workshops the writer attended made me feel as if I were there. This very good story could have been made even better if it included some input from some of the other members who were there, particularly describing the workshops they attended.

This is an excellent account of a union function that offers a wealth of useful information for members. The story is well-written and told in an engaging and entertaining way. It was longer than necessary, however, and may have lost some readers by the time it reached the important point of urging attendance at future events. It might have been better to focus more on the workshop that was viewed as helpful, and less on the other activities.

Class I – Best Union News Story

AWARD OF MERIT

Homer Teachers’ Association

The Tale

“Rally”

Comments: Good, detailed word-and-photo coverage of a local rally supporting education. Story was made even better by including info on what members could do to help, and how to reach state lawmakers.

The article offers an interesting account of a very important union activity – a local rally to protest cuts to

the education system. It lays out the important points of the issue, and urges action. The pictures are excellent, and wonderfully illustrate the story. A more creative headline, however, would help to draw readers in, and the story should probably focus more on the points raised by the speakers, and less on their names and affiliations.

Class I – Best Union News Story

Liberty Assistants, Monitors & Aides Association

LAMA Lines _ _ _

“Enough is enough!”

Comments: A tightly written article on a local rally in support of education. It packs a lot of information into just over 200 words.

This story is a concise, to-the-point description of an important union activity – a Labor Rights Rally. The headline and photos are excellent, and the issue is described clearly and in colorful language. Slightly more background might have helped to clarify the issue even more.

Class I – Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Randolph Central School Teachers Association

The RCSTA Banner

“Local NYSUT rallies to organize against cuts in budget & rights”

Comments: Excellent coverage of a NYSUT rally held to inform local union leaders about anti-union activities around the state and nation. Author took that information and crafted it into a well-written account that served to help other union members understand the crisis that faces them if they don’t act now. Then it goes on to explain exactly what they need to do. Nice work on several levels.

A very complete and interesting account of an important union event – a rally to protest budget cuts. The story carefully lays out the background of the issue, and relates the high points of each speech using carefully chosen quotes. The list of recommended actions at the end is an excellent way to close, and highlights the importance of the issue even more. A higher resolution photo would have increased interest in the event, especially if faces were visible instead of the backs of heads.

Class I – Best Union News Story **Schalmont Teachers' Association**

STATIC

“Fundraiser raises hope and awareness”

Comments: Great account of a fundraiser for Haiti, what a local union can do for others and how it has grown into an annual event. Very inspirational. The author talks about coming together for a greater cause and shows how the union lived up to that ideal. This is an excellent account of an important and interesting event. It's well-written and offers a personal view of a timely issue. However, although many union members participated, it wasn't really a union event.

Class I – Best Website

FIRST PLACE

Hastings Teachers Association

Hastings Teachers Association Website

Comments: A very comprehensive website, covering everything from cancer awareness programs to local district events to the Italian cruise ship disaster. Great links, great graphics. A model for other sites to follow. A very deep website with lots of great features. Excellent!

Class I – Best Website

AWARD OF MERIT

Schalmont Teachers' Association

Schalmont Teachers' Association Website

Comments: A good site with large, easy-to-read type. Good coverage of member news. Photos could be enlarged though. Not the most visual of websites but has plenty of good features including a site for young students.

Class I – Best Website

Westfield Teachers' Association

Westfield Teachers' Association Website

Comments: The link to photos takes viewers to a series of great shots that are interesting and well composed. But the home page and other pages could use more graphics and photos to make the pages more inviting. The homepage could be more attractively designed. The feature link on faculty members and their classes is a plus for parents and site visitors.

Class I – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Deposit Teachers Association

The Hatchet

“The bottom drawer”

Comments: Excellent first-person account of an unsuccessful effort by the union to meet with state lawmakers. Author shows how more of a turnout – a bit more solidarity – would have helped the cause and aptly

warns that lawmakers expect and count on this kind of apathy.

This article does an excellent job of tying together local, statewide and national union issues. The description of the writer's meetings with various state officials is interesting and entertaining while making an important point. A little bit more background on exactly how the budget cuts would affect teachers and students would have made the argument even stronger.

Class I – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Hastings Teachers Association

Hastings Teachers Association YouTube Channel

Comments: Three very professional, well-edited union-produced videos airing on *YouTube* show the union's work with a local food bank, its participation in a multi-district rally for another local union, and its observance of workers' rights day honoring Martin Luther King. Production quality is excellent. By utilizing this form of communication, the local's story can be seen by people all over the world.

These videos are excellent! They truly tie together local, state and national union issues. The narration is very well done, the photos and videos are wonderful, the music is good and the speakers are, for the most part, dynamic. Each one truly demonstrates that a picture is worth 1,000 words. Several suggestions: 1) Try to display the speaker's name whenever possible; 2) To improve the sound quality either tie in the microphone to the sound system or prop it on the podium near the speaker's mouth (also, try to stay away from crying babies; 3) When doing “man on the street” interviews, use a stick microphone, not the camera microphone, for better sound quality.

Class I – Solidarity Award

Homer Teachers' Association

The Tale

“The importance of a union”

Comments: Nicely written feature on why we need unions and why members need to get involved – something that will hopefully be read by all members, young and old. Sections on tenure, Triborough and other important topics provide information that all members need to know and need to be reminded of periodically.

This article makes a strong case for both the existence of unions and the importance of local participation in union efforts. The story is well-written and full of facts that are presented in a very convincing way. It would probably be even more effective if the issues were discussed more concisely. Also, the name of the factory in the lead should be Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. A typo in the very first sentence detracts from the effectiveness of the whole story.

Class I – Solidarity Award **Pocantico Hills Teachers’ Association**

PHTA News

Comments: Even with its terse, bulletin-like writing and layout, this publication manages to weave in the theme of solidarity, even into an item as routine as the sale of union T-shirts and why it’s important to buy one. The PHTA news contains many nuggets of important and interesting information. It also offers insight on a variety of local, state and national union issues. However, there isn’t really any cohesive view of union activities and interests.

Class I – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Schalmont Teachers’ Association

STATIC

“NYSUT rally for education”

Comments: This straightforward, article about the union’s participation in a rally is not highly detailed, but explains in words and pictures why the union presence is important and how it impacts on state budget deliberation, negotiations and ultimate passage. The article offers a vivid and interesting description of an important union event – a rally to protest state budget cuts to education. The photos are excellent, and the facts are presented well. It might have helped to include a little more background on the budget issue and the efforts of the statewide union.

Class II

Class II – Best Community Outreach Using Electronic Media

FIRST PLACE

Amityville Teachers’ Association

Amityville Teachers’ Association Website

Comments: This site is the same as the entry for best website. It does a good job of informing viewers about the chapter and its efforts both in the classroom and in the community. But it could use more variety and balance in its photos and graphics. Excellent! The link to the Kiwanis fundraiser was very well done.

Class II – Best Community Outreach Using Electronic Media

AWARD OF MERIT

Beacon Teachers Association

Beacon Teachers Association Website

Comments: The home page has a pleasant enough background and inviting layout, but content is a bit thin, with most items limited to monthly meeting dates and minutes. This entry is still growing.

Class II – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Amityville Teachers’ Association

the Scribe

“Not waiting for Superman”

Comments: A good headline helps draw readers into this article, as do the photos, although I would have run them a bit larger – especially because they are good photos. Nicely laid out, and the pull quote helps set the stage.

The headline type stands out well, and the two-column format with generous space between the lines is easy to read. The border is decorative and the italic type for the quotation is appropriate. However, the photos are much too small, especially the ones in the bottom corner. It’s almost impossible to see what they are. Also, larger type would make the article even easier to read.

Class II – Best Editorial Design

FIRST PLACE

Beacon Teachers Association

Between Assignments

Comments: Nice, clean front page. Good use of photos. Bold, striking graphics throughout and a wide variety of content inside. Perfect example of a useful and interesting local union publication.

Between Assignments is an extremely attractive publication in a very easy-to-read format. The front page is especially good, with large photos and plenty of white space. The design of the page works well to draw readers into the publication, which also features excellent photos and consistent design elements. One suggestion would be to use a two-column format with each column surrounded by white space. The pages where the text goes all the way from one side to the other appear somewhat daunting to the reader.

Class II – Best Editorial Design

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

“The NTA says goodbye to their retirees”

Comments: All the elements of a great front page. Simple, straightforward headline for article about retirees. Lots of photos, lots of names. Taking time to write headlines for each individual item in “In This Issue” pays off in a professional look.

The Bridge is an attractive publication, with its clean black, white and grey format and easy-to-read typeface. The list of inside stories and reporters down the left side is clear and stands out from the rest of the page. However, the photos are dark, and most of them are too small to see the subjects. Also, scattering them around the page in a way that breaks up the type is confusing to the reader. It would be better to place one above the story and the rest below.

Class II – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Walkkill Teachers’ Association

IMPACT

“Wisconsin: From outrage to action!”

Comments: Wow! It would be hard to resist picking up this publication the minute you received it. Good use of eye-catching red, white and blue colors, and lots of white space.

This page is both attractive and easy to read. The use of color is restrained and complements the design, and there is plenty of white space to make the elements stand out. The list of contents in the lower right corner is separated well from the rest of the page, and the typeface is an excellent size and style. A graphic or photo on top of one of the stories would help to separate them and increase interest on the page.

Class II – Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF MERIT

Amityville Teachers’ Association

the Scribe

“It’s not what you think”

Comments: Good explanation of why districts need new and experienced teachers and why debate over new vs. experienced has nothing to do with what is best for students. Good defense of “last in, first out.” Although this doesn’t affect the writing quality, I would avoid italicizing an entire article, especially one of this length. Italics can be hard to read, especially when type is this small.

This editorial does an excellent job of presenting an important issue – the contributions of experienced teachers to the schools and the students. The doctor’s office scenario at the beginning is a familiar one to many people, and helps to draw the reader into the piece. Then the writer uses personal experience to hold the reader’s

attention, and builds on each fact to create a very persuasive argument. However, the small type, lack of paragraphs and dark shading combine to counteract many of these excellent strategies.

Class II – Best Opinion Writing

FIRST PLACE

Beacon Teachers Association

Between Assignments

“NYSUT endorsements”

Comments: Excellent and enjoyable explanation of a perennial controversy – NYSUT endorsements, who the union endorses and why. This should be updated and run every two years, preceding the endorsement conference, and copies made available to all local union publications. This excellent editorial does a wonderful job of presenting a very important issue – how candidate endorsements can advance union interests. Using an impressive collection of background information and facts, the writer builds a logical case, frames a persuasive argument, and ends by urging specific action. An excellent job!

Class II – Best Opinion Writing

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

“The President’s Message: Where there is unity there is always victory”

Comments: This editorial about the problems facing education and unions clearly explains the problems and, more importantly, spells out for readers exactly what they can do to help their union fight back. This opinion piece does a good job of laying out a passionate plea for member unity. The issue is presented well, and the writer closes by urging specific actions. The use of more facts, figures and background material might have yielded an even stronger argument.

Class II – Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF MERIT

Walkkill Teachers’ Association

IMPACT

“President’s message”

Comments: A good example of writing about basic issues that members need to be reminded of over and over – myths about tenure, attacks on seniority and misunderstanding about Triborough. A good primer on these topics.

Using an impressive array of facts, the writer of this piece does an excellent job of specifically addressing a number of commonly held beliefs about the education system and uncovering the truth and fallacies inherent in each one. Along the way, the writer builds a very strong and logical argument for Triborough rights, tenure and seniority.

Class II – Best Profile

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

“Wisdom of the sandbox”

Comments: I loved this well-written, creative article that conveys an important message in an entertaining fashion. One of the best entries I have read in any category, but I don't see it fitting this category. This is an excellent editorial: well-written, loaded with facts and persuasive. The sandbox analogy, using nuggets of wisdom from childhood to describe the current situation is well done and maintained throughout. However, it's NOT a profile.

Class II – Best Profile

AWARD OF MERIT

Beacon Teachers Association

Between Assignments

“BTA scholarship winners honor influential teachers”

Comments: It was a great idea to pick the winners of a union scholarship from students who wrote the best essay on their most influential teacher. It was an even better idea to run those essays in the union newspaper to profile two of those teachers, one of whom was picked and profiled by two of the winners and who is retiring. These essays about influential teachers are not only uniformly excellent, they are a wonderful testament to the talents of the teachers who inspired them – not just in the praise heaped upon them by the students, but also by the skill with which they are written. (I'm not sure they have a union theme, however, other than the fact that the scholarships were presented by the union.)

Class II – Best Profile

AWARD OF MERIT

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

“The NTA newsletter, *The Bridge*, wins awards”

Comments: Profiling the newsletter's staff is certainly OK. Members need to see and appreciate all that you do and how your good work has been recognized statewide. I would just have given it more detail about the individuals and maybe used it as an opportunity to invite other members to become part of the “award-winning staff.”

Putting together a newsletter is, without a doubt, one of the most important activities of a local union. However, other than listing the awards, this article doesn't really profile the duties and accomplishments of the people involved.

Class II – Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

Wallkill Teachers' Association

IMPACT

“PAC News”

Comments: Two good articles here, outlining the union's activism, both with good photos. But both articles could use more of the details that a profile should include.

These articles are a good description of two very important activities – rallies to support union issues. The pictures also help to bring the events to life. More background material on how the events were organized and how they tie into continuing union concerns would have been helpful

Class II – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

Comments: Great front-page article, good use of background color and including a full photo page. Entire publication has nice mix of features, news, profiles and basic union education.

The Scribe is an excellent publication packed with interesting and important information for members. “Wisdom of the Sandbox” and “From the Ground Up” are especially well done. However, there are several typos – Senator Johnson – and the design is overly busy with conflicting and clashing elements. The red shading makes the stories very difficult to read, and many of the photos are too small.

Class II – Best Publication

FIRST PLACE

Beacon Teachers Association

Between Assignments

Comments: Very professional publication. Good use of photos, graphics and charts. Excellent mix of articles, written both in-house and by contributors. My only recommendation would be a two-column format. Single column means long rows of small type that can discourage readers from getting into the fine content. This publication is not just attractive – it offers a variety of articles that are both entertaining and informative. The cover is lovely, with excellent photos and plenty of white space, and the articles written about the teachers by their students are wonderful. I just wish there were slightly more content addressed toward current union events and issues.

Class II – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

Comments: The attractive and professional-looking page one flag is the first indication that this is a well-done publication. Lots of participation by officers, as well as “correspondents” from the different schools. Solid headlines and an easy-to-read three-column format.

The Bridge offers members page after page of well-written, timely and informative articles. The President’s Message and “The NTA Takes Action” are especially good. Many of the photos are excellent, and the three-column format with restrained use of color and plenty of white space is attractive and easy to read. The only problem is the cover, where several of the photos are too small and out of focus, and the way they interrupt the flow of the text makes it difficult to read.

Class II – Best Publication

Wallkill Teachers’ Association

IMPACT

Comments: Front page a little busy but draws your attention and makes you want to look inside. There you find a nice mix of news, features, people items and things you need to know. Good use of color, and two-column format is easy to read.

The *IMPACT* is an excellent publication with many informative and useful articles that must, indeed, have an impact on members. The content is written clearly and simply, with a focus on union interests and issues. The color photos are excellent – although it would be nice to have one on the cover – and the pages are laid out in a very clean, attractive, easy-to-read format. It might have been slightly more effective to start one of the more important articles about the BOE on the cover and jump it inside instead of leading the issue with the story on which teachers received tenure.

Class II – Best Publication

Wayne Teachers’ Association

Wayne’s World

Comments: With its striking color and lots of short, varied items and breezy writing style, this is a publication that is fun to open up and read. But it still carries a good mix of hard news, editorial comment and general information. Should consider a two- or three-column format to make it easier to read.

Wayne’s World (what a wonderful name!) truly does offer a world of information to members. The lively and informal tone of the writing does a good job of holding the reader’s interest while discussing timely and important issues. From the President’s Message to the Editor’s Note, the publication sounds like an old and trusted friend offering help and encouragement. As for

the layout, a lot more white space and a lot less color would make the whole thing more attractive and easy to read.

Class II – Best Union News Story

AWARD OF MERIT

Amityville Teachers’ Association

the Scribe

“Stand in solidarity”

Comments: Good compilation of recent events the union has been involved in, with an explanation of why they are important and why members should help in mobilizing. Photos will help draw readers into the story, but I would run one or two larger photos, rather than four tiny ones. They are important because they include members, but they could be moved inside.

This excellent story gives a vivid account of several extremely important rallies and meetings in support of union issues around the state and around the country. The descriptions are very good, and the use of quotes from the speakers to emphasize points is outstanding. Closing by urging specific actions adds to the story’s appeal.

Class II – Best Union News Story

Beacon Teachers Association

Between Assignments

“From the president”

Comments: Very well-written and detailed account of the issues facing the union now and in coming months. Presented as an open letter to members, it might have been as well suited as an entry in Best Opinion Writing. Nevertheless, it provides valuable information on important issues, fulfilling a basic duty of local publications, and doing it quite well.

This is an excellent opinion piece: well-organized with plenty of specific facts and background material. However, it does not relate a union event.

Class II – Best Union News Story

AWARD OF MERIT

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

“The NTA takes action, rallies for teachers and unions”

Comments: Tightly written, but still lots of detail about the union’s latest solidarity activities on behalf of both itself and other neighboring unions. Good, economical use of the space.

This story does a good job of reporting on several very important events – rallies around the state in support of union issues. The descriptions are good and convey the facts in a clear and easy-to-understand way. However, there are a number of typos that detract from the quality of the article. (Barging instead of bargaining, as just one example.)

Class II – Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Wallkill Teachers' Association

IMPACT

“Union News!”

Comments: Solid account of the local's effort to stop the board of education from unilaterally changing the health plan. Although I read it as an outsider, I was able to follow an issue unfamiliar to me, which is the mark of a well-written article.

An excellent description of two very important union events! The facts are presented clearly, and the article does a very good job of explaining why the meetings were so important without overwhelming the reader with detail after detail. The plea for unity at the end ties everything together in a very effective way.

Class II – Best Website

FIRST PLACE

Amityville Teachers' Association

Amityville Teachers' Association Website

Comments: The home page is attention grabbing and invites readers to access links to a wealth of information. But all the home page photos are the same size – more variety is needed.

Appears to have been designed from a template. A little thin on links and information compared to the competition.

Class II – Best Website

AWARD OF MERIT

Nyack Teachers Association

Nyack Teachers Association Website

Comments: Lots of content, well displayed, with easy to navigate pages and links.

While the site could use more graphics, it is sound overall.

Class II – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Amityville Teachers' Association

the Scribe

“Not waiting for Superman”

Comments: A well-crafted response to nationwide teacher-bashing, which skillfully weaves in how the local has been addressing the issue as part of its routine activities. As always, I would make the photos larger, but they still enhance the nice look of this piece and its apt headline.

“Not waiting for Superman” is an excellent example of how to relate the problems and concerns of union members around the state and the country to local issues and efforts. From the description of the October rally in the beginning of the story to the achievements of local members at the end, this article does a wonderful job of refuting the “Superman” myth that is being used to attack

teachers and the quality of public education around the country.

Class II – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Nyack Teachers Association

The Bridge

“What is ahead and in our future”

Comments: A solid wrapup of the issues facing education, what the union has been doing in its defense, and an appeal to members to help continue the battle. The article also outlines how the local has been working with NYSUT in this effort, reminding us that solidarity extends beyond the local union.

This is an excellent opinion piece that gives an accurate overview of an issue that is important on a local, state and national level – teacher evaluation. The facts are presented clearly and used to build a logical and convincing argument for unity in the face of challenging times.

Class II – Solidarity Award

Wallkill Teachers' Association

IMPACT

“A fast start at Walkkill!”

Comments: While most solidarity efforts seem to be covered in the final issue of the year, this one comes near the start of the school year. A good idea for getting members fired up and ready to join in the upcoming solidarity activities – rallies, Committee of 100, etc.

“A Fast Start at Walkkill” gives an interesting account of several important union events, but it doesn't really tie them in with state and national issues.

Class III

Class III – Best Community Outreach Using Electronic Media

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers Website

Comments: The outreach is commendable, but the goal should be to make access as wide as possible. By placing it on *Facebook*, exposure is limited. Other websites provide a link to *Facebook* for those users, while also being accessible online.

Class III – Best Community Outreach Using Electronic Media

Port Washington Teachers Association

Port Washington Teachers Association

Website

Comments: Links to photos, events, news etc. are helpful, as is the overall content of this site. It could be improved, though, with better graphics on the home page.

A very limited entry.

Class III – Best Editorial Design

Central Islip Teachers Association

CITation

“It all adds up”

Comments: Bilingual cover page is a nice touch, especially since this edition appears to be sent home to parents of students. Whether to include a caption with a photo is often a judgment call. I would have used one here.

This *CITation* cover does a good job of using graphic elements to illustrate an important point – the accomplishments of CITA’s members. The bold numbers stacked above the plus sign really stand out and get their message across. A little more space between the two columns and between the years would make it stand out even more, and it would have been nice to have a photo that advanced the message of the story.

Class III – Best Editorial Design

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

CLASSROOM POINTERS

“The key to honoring our vets”

Comments: Nice headline on this article honoring vets. And “ghosting” the American flag in the background is a nice touch that made this article pop for readers. It’s the kind of graphic tool that isn’t often seen in publications of this size.

What could be more appropriate than a flag background to illustrate a story about flags used to honor veterans? The graphic certainly complements the text and helps to draw the reader into the article. Unfortunately, the places where the shading is dark makes it difficult to read, and the type runs much too close to the border.

Class III – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Gates Chili Teachers’ Association

The Voice

“Know your contract”

Comments: Bold artwork draws you into this regular column about the local contract. The artwork is a good tool to get readers interested in reading material that is important for them to know but perhaps not inherently interesting.

This graphic does an excellent job of enhancing the subject of the piece – urging members to read and understand their contract. The magnifying glass and the words “Small Fine Print” really help to drive home the message. The rest of the page is attractive and easy to read, with no “small print” involved, and a decent amount of white space.

Class III – Best Editorial Design

FIRST PLACE

North Babylon Teachers’ Organization

Partners in Education

“Spotlight on the high school (centerfold)”

Comments: Has all the elements of an attractive centerspread – good quality photos, headlines that describe what each article is about, and use of color on heads and in background.

Devoting an entire centerfold to one topic – the activities and accomplishments of students and teachers at the high school – is an excellent idea, and this layout is attractive and easy to read. The photos are excellent, and really help to draw the reader into the page. It would be better to use a simpler, easier-to-read typeface for the headlines, and more space between the stories and the columns would make it look even better.

Class III – Best Editorial Design

North Colonie Teachers’ Association

NCTA News

Comments: Three-column design works well in this publication, which packs a lot of information into four letter-size pages. Good selection of articles. Only suggestion is that the single photo could have been larger.

The *NCTA News* is a very attractive publication with an easy-to-read typeface, uniform design elements and a column width that makes the pages look clean and inviting. The boxes help to set off the information inside them, and the shading is not so dark that the type is impossible to read. Using more and larger photos, and putting more space under the headlines would make it even more attractive.

Class III – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

Comments: Lots of photos, especially on cover, and lots of names of members make this a very attractive publication that will be picked up and read. Having friends or co-workers write tributes to the retirees is a great way to put together an issue like this without a lot of staff time.

The Union Sound is an extremely attractive publication with an excellent layout, wonderful photos and consistent design elements throughout. The three-column format is very easy to read, especially with the generous white space between columns. Using different sized boxes to set off the teacher profiles works very well, and the informal type style is very appropriate. Some of the photos, however, would work better if they were larger, and more white space on the cover would make it even more attractive.

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

Central Islip Teachers Association

CITAtion

“It’s the poverty, Stupid”

Comments: Casual, colloquial style works well here. Fact-filled, and the headline draws you in.

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

Gates Chili Teachers’ Association

The Voice

“GC Elementary teachers experience frustration with contract, GCTA Leadership”

Comments: Nicely presented editorial made even better by good headline and pull quote that breaks up the mass of type. Brings members up-to-date on contract talks and – without being defensive – deals head-on with an issue of whether the union leadership is doing an effective job for some members during the talks.

This article shows evidence of extensive research, and the pertinent facts about the issues experienced by elementary school teachers are well-organized and laid out clearly. The problems are presented in a logical, easy-to-understand way. However, the article doesn’t seem to be trying to persuade the reader. It’s more like an objective news story.

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

North Babylon Teachers’ Organization

Partners in Education

“Is a tax cap a good idea?”

Comments: Good explanation of a complicated topic. The phrasing of the headline is sure to draw readers in, since they will have to read the editorial to see whether a tax caps is, in fact, a good idea. Breaking the article into clear sections helps readers more easily digest a lot of facts and other information. Makes compelling arguments against a tax cap.

An excellent editorial! It shows evidence of extensive research into a very complex issue – the state tax cap proposal – and the facts are presented clearly and in an easy-to-understand way. In fact, this is one of the best explanations of the hot-button issue that I’ve seen. And all this is accomplished in only four paragraphs! Good job.

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

North Colonie Teachers’ Association

NCTA News

“Envisioning the future of North Colonie”

Comments: A refreshingly different take on the “crisis in education.” Comparing the America of today with the America visited by De Tocqueville nearly 300 years ago provides a sobering picture of the state of education today. This editorial offers an interesting, scholarly and very complete treatise on an important and timely issue – the importance of local control in the education system. The writer has obviously completed a huge amount of research – the quotes from De Tocqueville are well-used and pertinent – and is very familiar with all the ramifications and subtleties of the situation. The facts are presented well, and build to a logical and persuasive conclusion. It might have been slightly more effective if written in more colloquial language and kept to a shorter length.

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

SPEAK OUT

“Obama’s Race to the Top”

Comments: Whether you agree with it or not, this criticism of Race to the Top is well-researched, well-written and provocative, starting with the lead sentence in which the author clearly outlines his take on the controversial program and those who would support it. Only criticism – the quote from Lincoln at the end might have had more impact if run as a pull quote.

This editorial offers a passionate, well-written and persuasive argument against the controversial Race to the Top program. The writer offers many opinions, which are used to build to a logical conclusion. However, more research and use of actual facts would have helped to create an even stronger argument.

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

FIRST PLACE

Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association

PORTAL

“Fair assessment or bad science?”

Comments: The author takes a potentially dull topic – value-added assessment – and explains clearly what it is, how it works and why it’s bad for measuring teacher effectiveness. Made it interesting. Good headline and pull quote, but (nitpicking) I would have run the head a larger size and across both columns.

This editorial uses an easy-to-understand explanation of a very complex subject – statistical analysis – to refute a commonly held belief. Using a well-organized array of facts, the writer carefully builds a logical and very persuasive argument against the “value added” assessment model. An excellent effort!

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF MERIT

Port Washington Teachers Association

PWTA CONTACT

““Dear (personalized)””

Comments: This Page 1 open letter provides some valuable talking points in districts blaming teachers for budget shortfalls and looking to balance the budget on teachers’ backs. Great talking points for members who are accosted in the supermarket by critics. This editorial is a passionate and beautifully written piece about a proposal for funding in the district. Using colorful and creative language – indeed, portions of this piece are almost poetry – the writer pleads for fair treatment of teachers. Although there is very little in the way of facts, figures and background material, the piece still works well.

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF MERIT

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

“What has happened to the joy?”

Comments: Excellent from-the-heart writing. It should resonate with any teacher who reads it. The headline says it all.

The writer builds a passionate – and very effective – argument against regimentation of education. She draws on her extensive experience in teaching to craft a persuasive case for joy in education. Thirty-two years and 4,000 students is an impressive amount of background research; however, it’s possible that some facts and figures from other sources could have been integrated into the argument.

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

Sayville Teachers Association

The STatement

“Cuomo wrong to denigrate NY schools”

Comments: A good explanation of why NY and US education systems in general are better than the governor and other critics say they are. Well-documented with relevant facts and statistics. This article uses an excellent combination of background research and strong, simple prose to create a very effective argument. From the opening quote from Sen. Moynihan to the well-expressed conclusion, the writer uses facts to refute some common claims and build a very persuasive case for the strengths inherent in the current educational system.

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

West Babylon Teachers Association

the Catalyst

“President’s message”

Comments: Well-done, detailed account of the past sacrifices teachers made to help a financially strapped district. It makes a well-reasoned case urging the board of education to use budget reserves to avoid layoffs and program cuts. Excellent example of a union advocating for its members.

Based on an impressive array of facts, figures and background information, the writer crafts a passionate and very effective argument for using the district’s reserve funds to improve education. Listing the sacrifices made by the union members in the past allows the writer to build a logical case for avoiding such cuts in the present. An excellent job!

Class III – Best Opinion Writing

West Genesee Teachers’ Association

The Member Ship

“Let’s keep perspective while forging on”

Comments: Good topic, well-written and nicely presented to readers. Provides interesting perspective on national issues that affect local members. This editorial offers a different perspective on recent events in the district. After carefully describing the events leading up to a recent decision to accept a pay freeze, the writer uses parallel situations from around the world to urge caution in future decisions. He builds a persuasive case for future actions based on facts, background material and passion. An excellent article.

Class III – Best Profile

AWARD OF MERIT

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

CLASSROOM POINTERS

“A teacher who’s a cut above”

Comments: Excellent profile on a teacher who shaved her head and convinced her elementary-grade students to do the same for a fellow student with cancer. Plenty of meaningful quotes from the teacher help tell the story and illustrate just what a kind, caring individual she is. When careful thought is given to the headline, as it was here, it tells the reader that the story is something worth reading. While the union theme being advanced here obviously involves caring teachers whose lessons involve more than academics, that theme needs to be spelled out in greater detail.

This is an excellent profile of a teacher who sounds like a wonderful person as well as an effective teacher. The story is told well, with just enough background material to make it interesting, and excellent quotes from the teacher. However, it doesn’t really have a union theme, other than the fact that she’s a union member.

Class III – Best Profile

AWARD OF MERIT

Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

Connection

“Margaret King-Literacy Award”

Comments: When a teacher wins the local honors that the subject of this profile did, for her work in literacy, it deserves a nice profile, as she received from this publication. The quotes – both from the recipient and her principal, help tell the story and give the reader some valuable insight into the teacher. While advancing literacy has always been a theme for national, state and local unions, it needs to be spelled out here.

An excellent profile of a member who goes above and beyond in her service to the community. The use of quotes to describe her and her activities livens up the prose, and there’s just enough background material to make the story come alive. However, it doesn’t really have a union theme, other than the fact that she’s a union member.

Class III – Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

“Count me in! RVF LAP update”

Comments: Profiling a union’s LAP activities certainly meets the criteria for a union-themed profile. This profile shows in great detail how the local is putting into practice the concept that a local union needs a high

level of recognition in the community if it is to be able to count on community support in times of trouble. Nicely done.

What an active, civic-minded group this local union is! The list and description of activities is easy to read, with just enough detail to be interesting, and not so much that the reader is overwhelmed. The story does an excellent job of promoting the group’s mission of building bridges with the community. It would be even better if some of the photos were larger.

Class III – Best Publication

Central Islip Teachers Association

CITation

Comments: A very provocative cover clearly demonstrating the effect of teacher layoffs sets the stage for an issue filled with news and commentary on the attacks on education, a comparison of today’s economy with the Gilded Age, tax caps, a defense of multilingualism and a winning sports season, to name a few. It even devotes a solid page to retiree news and information. Clean straightforward layout has nice touch of color.

The *CITation* is a truly excellent publication. The layout is attractive, with uniform graphic elements throughout, and the two-column format is easy to read. But the content is what sets this publication apart: it’s full of well-written, well-organized and easy to understand articles that give an excellent picture of the many activities and interests of this group. It would be nice to see more and larger photos, and the elaborate corners on the boxes are distracting and unnecessary.

Class III – Best Publication

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

CLASSROOM POINTERS

Comments: All the elements of a professional-looking publication – good writing, nice headlines, a little color, clean layout and lots of photos, all on glossy paper. *Classroom Pointers* does indeed give an excellent view of the wonderful things that are happening inside this district’s classrooms. The cover story about the Odyssey of the Mind is well-written and lively, with a very creative headline, while the inside vignettes are concise and easy to read, accompanied by wonderful photos. The plethora of boxes on the insides pages, however, is distracting and unattractive. If you must use a box, make sure there’s plenty of white space both inside and outside the lines to avoid the look of crowding.

Class III – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

Gates Chili Teachers' Association

The Voice

Comments: This full-color publication sends a clear message that someone has spent a lot of time in its design and takes a great deal of care putting it together. Cover photos are good size action shots, displayed nicely and are technically good photos, as well. Basic design of the inside pages is very clean and professional. Little touches like the folio lines on the inside pages give it a professional look. A good mix of local news and information, commentary, and timely material from NYSUT and AFT. Articles are tightly written, informative and free of typos, misspellings and grammatical errors. *The Voice* is an extremely attractive publication that also offers timely, important information in an easy-to-understand format. The white space around and between stories is excellent, and the restrained use of color along with graphic elements that truly complement the content is outstanding. By keeping the articles concise and focused, the publication drives home its message without overwhelming the reader. My only suggestion would be to use more photos, as long as they're relevant and good quality.

Class III – Best Publication

Mahopac Teachers' Association

MTA Chalkboard

Comments: This is one of those publications that just begs to be opened and read. A very eye-catching cover design, created by using the Wordle software makes me wish this had also been entered in the Design category. Inside pages cram in lots of news, information and photos without looking crowded. Three-column layout and well-written headlines are a plus. The *MTA Chalkboard* offers members a wide variety of timely, important information in an easy-to-read format. The article on "Mahopac's Morale" is excellent, as is the "President's Message." Many of the photos are wonderful, especially the extra-large rally photo. Although the three-column format with ragged right type is attractive and easy to read, there are several technical issues with the layout: 1) Don't use sideways type – period. 2) Don't place photos into a story in such a way that one part of the story is completely cut off from the rest. 3) When you box a story, put the headline INSIDE the box.

Class III – Best Publication

FIRST PLACE

North Babylon Teachers' Organization

Partners in Education

Comments: An attractive publication that lives up to its name – *Partners in Education*. It effectively mixes hard news that affects members with news of how the membership interfaces with students, parents, the

school board and the community. A seemingly small item, like taking the time to write a meaningful headline for every story makes a big difference in the appearance of this publication, as do the standing heads that separate the different sections. This is a great vehicle for keeping the troops informed and letting the community see just how much teachers and staff are doing for the community.

Partners in Education is absolutely packed with information about the activities of union members and discussions of timely and relevant issues. The articles are well-written and concise, with lively descriptions and accompanied by excellent photos. The layout is attractive and easy to read, but would benefit from more white space and consistent typeface for the headlines. The fancy italic script on the centerfold is difficult to read and distracting.

Class III – Best Publication

Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

Connection

Comments: Not sure if this is a typical issue, but in it the union tells its story through the accomplishments of current and former students. Page 1 is well laid-out with a single cover-worthy article under a good headline and accompanied by a photo. Inside news is compartmentalized for easy reading and the headlines help tell the stories, as they should. One small nitpick – I would add a masthead with the basic info – names of officers, editor, how often published, etc. *Connection* is an attractive, easy-to-read publication with interesting, well-written articles. The cover story does a good job of describing an important grant received by a group of students, and the information about the activities of well-known district alumni is also presented well. However, the cover story is too long and involved, and it would be a good idea to include more union-related information in the newsletter. The bicycle safety photos are very cute, but too small.

Class III – Best Publication

Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association

PORTAL

Comments: Lots of useful information in this publication, including a tutorial on tweeting and its uses in and out of the classroom. Page 1 President's Message is chockful of updates on a variety of issues of interest to members. Seems to be doing a good job of keeping members informed. Going green is an admirable goal, and the *Portal* does an excellent job of using this medium to offer an extraordinary amount of useful and timely information. The President's message, "Why didn't I think of this before?" and "Teaching 2.0: Twitter" are exceptional articles, well-written, well-organized and interesting. However, they all are too long. If you can make your point with fewer words, you have a better chance of holding on to the reader until the end. Also, more white space around each column would make it easier to read.

Class III – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

Comments: A very inspirational publication, judging from the articles and the commentary. Union leadership obviously has its finger on the pulse of the membership and understand that after three years without a contract, members need some reassurance that the union is doing everything possible. And they get that in this issue. Articles written by a variety of authors, which helps provide a variety of opinions and makes the editor's job a little easier. Nice clean layout, good photos.

The Union Sound does indeed make a lot of noise about union issues. And all in exactly the right way. The articles are uniformly excellent: well-researched, well-written and full of passion. Some, like the cover story, are true poetry. The layout is clean, simple and attractive with uniform style throughout. A little more space between the type and the boxes would make it even easier to read.

Class III – Best Publication

West Babylon Teachers Association

the Catalyst

Comments: This is a publication that demands to be read immediately – not because it has a lot of color or great photos or wild graphics, but because it looks important and timely. It looks like those daily newsletters that report on industries like telecommunications and charge exorbitant rates to subscribers to tell them what's going on in their world. This union publication is all business, no fluff – updates on teacher evaluation, standards, 403(b), code of conduct and the contract. It's even printed on yellow stock as so many commercial newsletters are. This no-nonsense style may not be to everyone's taste, but if the union has chosen this style for delivering information, they are doing a great job at it.

The Catalyst is crammed with important information for members. From the explanation of the new teacher evaluation process on the cover, to the rundown of the contract changes near the end, every page offers facts on timely issues. The clean, simple layout is attractive and the type size is very easy to read. However, it might be a good idea to have some sort of editorial piece to offer the union's view on all the changes, instead of straight news.

Class III – Best Union News Story

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

CLASSROOM POINTERS

“Federation feeds Farmingdale”

Comments: Presented as a picture page with the story told in the captions, this feature still answers all the five W's. It makes good use of the space, presenting a great deal of information and detail about a union/student effort to help re-stock a local food pantry.

An excellent story about an important event in the school community. The article does a good job of describing the food drive, and the photos also help to illustrate how various teachers contributed to the success of the event. However, except for the photo of the FFT table, it's not really clear if this is a union event or a school event in which many teachers participated.

Class III – Best Union News Story

Gates Chili Teachers' Association

The Voice

“Paul Road teachers ride”

Comments: Attractive page 1 feature has two good action photos that are well-displayed. The caption/article accompanying the photos is well written and answers the basic questions. However, I would have liked a little more detail, which could have been jumped to an inside page, preserving this nice layout. An excellent story with truly exceptional photos.

However, it doesn't appear to be a union event.

Class III – Best Union News Story

AWARD OF MERIT

North Babylon Teachers' Organization

Partners in Education

“North Babylon Teachers' Organization holds karaoke contest to fight breast cancer”

Comments: Union members taking part in a karaoke contest to raise money for Making Strides Against Breast Cancer was a great subject for this union news story. Interspersed with descriptions of the various singers and their material were the necessary five W's, including the district superintendent's quote of praise at the end. This article does an excellent job of bringing to life a lively union event held to raise money for an important charity. The detailed descriptions of the performers, their costumes and their songs paint a wonderful picture of unity and shared effort. The photos add a wonderful extra dimension to the story.

Class III – Best Union News Story **North Colonie Teachers’ Association**

NCTA News

“AFT convention report”

Comments: Lots of detail in this local officer’s account of attending an AFT convention, including reporting on (and some analysis of) speeches by AFT President Randi Weingarten and controversial speaker Bill Gates. Author also sets the stage for the mood of the convention by detailing some of the ongoing criticism and attacks on teachers and public education. The writer offers a very complete, colorful and fact-filled account of an important union convention. He does an excellent job describing, especially the speeches by Weingarten and Gates. The information is presented in a lively, informal tone that is very easy to read and to understand. However, it might have been more effective to condense some of the physical details of the convention and focus more on the substance.

Class III – Best Union News Story **Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers**

SPEAK OUT

“The winter of our discontent”

Comments: Very well-written article about the attacks on public employees. Well- researched and presents a lot of useful information that readers could take with them as talking points in the ongoing debate over public education. However, I don’t believe it qualifies as a news story. I would like to have seen it entered in the Best Opinion Writing category. This is an excellent editorial. The writer uses extensive background material to build a strong argument against the loss of bargaining rights for teachers. However, it’s not a news story about a specific event.

Class III – Best Union News Story

AWARD OF MERIT

Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association

PORTAL

“NYSUT RA”

Comments: Lots of good photos in this picture/story about the NYSUT RA. Information contained here is good, but article could use more detail. An interesting report on a very important union gathering. The facts are presented well, and the description of the mood of the crowd and the rally are lively. The photos add another dimension to the report, although it would have been better to use them much larger.

Class III – Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

“Shoulder-to-shoulder”

Comments: A wonderful and unusually well-detailed first-person account of a union member taking part in two separate pro-union rallies. You can feel the bitter cold and the author’s fatigue, along with her pride at sharing the experience with her 17-year-old daughter who wants to be a teacher. The photos chosen to illustrate this news feature complement the article perfectly. If it wasn’t so well written, the author’s account of the importance of this movement and the need for all unionists to take part in it could have come across as preachy and accusatory. Instead, it is a sincere and heartfelt call to arms that would be difficult for any unionist to ignore.

This is a truly excellent, very creative and passionate account of an important union event. The writer paints a vivid picture of the speeches and the emotions at the rallies, and the presence of her daughter adds a very personal dimension. The photos are a wonderful accompaniment. However, describing past events in the present tense can be confusing. I know the writer was just trying to make the story more vivid and relevant, but it doesn’t work well.

Class III – Best Union News Story **Sayville Teachers Association**

The STATEment

“Fighting back”

Comments: If members of this local had any doubts about how they could be affected by the state budget and tax caps, this article would dispel them all. And it certainly left no readers unsure of what to do next. The author describes who has been meeting with whom, where the coalitions are being formed, what the local state legislators are being urged to do and what are the next steps. Members are advised of upcoming local meetings and NYSUT’s Committee of 100 plans. The article explains the truth behind the so-called Committee to Save NY and tells why the need for union action is unprecedented. A great example of how to keep the troops informed.

This story reports a number of excellent arguments advanced by union leaders in opposition to statewide budget proposals. It builds a strong case and urges specific actions to accomplish the goals. However, it’s not really clear what or where the event was.

Class III – Best Website

Central Islip Teachers Association

Central Islip Teachers Association Website

Comments: Very inviting home page layout, with a format that cleverly reminds the viewer of a school bulletin board. The fine graphics and photos, combined with a wealth of easily accessible information, makes this site a winner.

A solid website without all of the bells and whistles.

Nice to see use of bold colors on the homepage.

Class III – Best Website

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers Website

Comments: This is an informative site, but it could be made more appealing by using graphics more effectively. Also, more content would help make this site stand out.

This site noticeably lacks the use of photos, video and other graphic and visual elements.

Class III – Best Website

FIRST PLACE

North Babylon Teachers' Organization

North Babylon Teachers' Organization Website

Comments: Very good home page, with the right mix of text, photos and graphics. Great links to school activities, student achievements etc., in addition to teacher resources.

A solid website that was easy to navigate. Lots of valuable links. Strong use of photos and graphic elements.

Class III – Best Website

AWARD OF MERIT

Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers Website

Comments: An excellent site that has a well-designed homepage. Packed with all sorts of links and features. Very strong use of photography.

A good site with lots of information and photos. Easy to navigate, with links that cover both local and national issues as well as retiree news.

Class III – Best Website

West Babylon Teachers Association

West Babylon Teachers Association Website

Comments: A good site but one that is difficult to navigate at first. Once you do, however, you are rewarded with excellent links to newsletters, events, latest news items etc. Plus, there are lots of good

photos. Make it more user-friendly and it will be a top-notch entry.

Noticeably lacking visual elements compared to the competition.

Class III – Solidarity Award

Central Islip Teachers Association

CITation

“Stop the insanity”

Comments: Takes the issue of layoffs, taxes, attacks on collective bargaining and makes it personal for readers through analogies, reports on how local members have already been affected and what readers can do to help. This article does a good job of tying local concerns to those on the statewide and national level. By relating the issue to situations that every family has experienced, the writer builds a strong argument for not breaking existing contracts.

Class III – Solidarity Award

Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

CLASSROOM POINTERS

“Federation feeds Farmingdale”

Comments: This union-sponsored food drive reported here is an excellent exercise in solidarity. The photo feature provides detail on members who took part, how much they collected, how one teacher used the event as a teachable moment, and how the community later recognized the union and its members for their efforts. This is an excellent story about a food drive. The article is interesting and the photos add extra depth. However, it doesn't really address solidarity.

Class III – Solidarity Award

Gates Chili Teachers' Association

The Voice

“Sue's Sidebar”

Comments: This article details quite well how state mandates, funding cutbacks and layoffs have affected a single school district. It puts a face on the issues that all unions and their members are up against. This is an excellent explanation of the huge impact supposedly “small” changes have on teachers and their students. However, it's not really about solidarity.

Class III – Solidarity Award

Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers

SPEAK OUT

“We need to understand the issues”

Comments: Good take on the issues facing unions and educators. Provides good talking points on basics such as tenure and Triborough. This article is a passionate plea for understanding during a serious public relations crisis affecting public employees, especially teachers. It doesn't really address the concerns of state and national unions, however.

Class III – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association

POTAL

“One nation working together”

Comments: This 2010 rally in Washington, DC, is an excellent solidarity topic, especially when told from the perspective of a union leader who attended. The article references NYSUT and national leaders in attendance, lending credence to the movement and reinforcing for members the importance of solidarity.

An excellent description of an important union event that stresses the importance of union solidarity at the local, state and national levels. The writer does a good job of relating the emotions experienced by participants in the event, and explaining how such rallies can advance the common cause.

Class III – Solidarity Award

Port Washington Teachers Association

PWTA CONTACT

“On election day ...”

Comments: A powerful message to a local state lawmaker – reminding him who helped put him in office and who will be watching his votes on key issues to decide whether to help keep him in office. Make it easy for members to send letters like this to local, state and federal lawmakers and they will do it. However, it looks like this was published too late for the cutoff date of Aug. 31, 2011.

This article stresses the importance of giving legislators timely reminders of past support by the union. It lays out specific actions and even suggests the wording of the email. An excellent idea!

Class III – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals

THE UNION SOUND

Comments: From its photo cover page to the from-the-heart articles inside on the local’s participation in the various rallies for education, this issue demonstrates the essence of solidarity. It skillfully weaves in the local’s work with NYSUT, the AFL-CIO and other organizers and other locals to get the message out about the critical issues facing education, collective bargaining and public employees.

This excellent publication is packed with information, passion and strong arguments for solidarity. From the photos on the cover – including Pete Seeger!!! – through the wonderful “Shoulder-to-shoulder” and, of course “Solidarity forever,” the issue offers one clear message. Excellent job!

Class III – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Sayville Teachers Association

The STatement

“President's message”

Comments: This pre-election day president’s message provides a call to arms for members in the face of “unprecedented attacks” on schools, teachers and unions. It doesn’t waste time or space rehashing the issues and problems, it calls simply for solidarity – supporting one another and other union members in these troubled times. A very effective message.

From the excellent – and extremely relevant – quote from Benjamin Franklin, to the hope for the future at the end, this article offers a strong, passionate and convincing plea for unity and solidarity. Very effective.

Class IV

Class IV – Best Community Outreach Using Electronic Media

FIRST PLACE

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Website

Comments: There’s a lot of information to be had on this site, and an inviting home page that uses graphics well. But viewers have to log on to *Facebook* to peruse the site, which limits outreach. Not everyone is on *Facebook*, and the goal of outreach should be to reach everyone in the community.

Well done! Program for seniors is excellent!

Class IV – Best Community Outreach Using Electronic Media

AWARD OF MERIT

United University Professions – Farmingdale Chapter

United University Professions – Farmingdale Chapter Website

Comments: A good site with lots of information on students and faculty, as well as links to outside sites such as the Daily Beast. This site also links to a Find Us on *Facebook*, rather than *Facebook* only, which assures that those who are on *Facebook*, and those who are not, will have access.

Class IV – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

Comments: A very professional-looking and attractive publication that obviously takes a lot of time to put together. Good use of spot color throughout, particularly in the centerspread article and charts on the results of a local union survey. Headlines are well-written and appropriately sized. Excellent Page 3 article on APPR. Like other articles, it helps explain a complicated issue and breaks out some of the main components for emphasis. Pull-quotes throughout help break up large blocks of type and draw readers in the articles. Only nitpick is Page 2 photos and captions could be larger, especially the captions. This is truly a product to be proud of.

The Educator is a very well-designed publication. The three-column ragged right format is easy to read, the graphic elements and colors are simple and consistent, the typeface is attractive and the photos are excellent. My only suggestion would be to increase the white space between columns, and both inside and outside the boxes.

Class IV – Best Editorial Design

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

THE WORD

“One nation working together”

Comments: Attractive photo page of local's participation in the One Nation rally in Washington, DC. Picture of members boarding a 5 a.m. bus in the dark says it all. Lots of names, lots of faces and lots of quotes from participants pack a lot of information into a small space.

This is an excellent photo page! The faces tell the story of the day more than thousands of words, and the simple, pleasing layout makes the most of each colorful photo. The wide shot conveys a very good idea of the scope of the demonstration, but the “shot in the dark” in the top corner might better have been replaced with another daylight photo.

Class IV – Best Editorial Design

Smithtown Teachers' Association

FACULTY FOCUS

Comments: Nice work on this issue, printed on pink stock to honor a member who died of breast cancer and including a centerspread tribute to her and a first-person article on walking in a marathon for breast cancer. But the issue also features a well-written president's column on Page 1, an informative article on boards of education, people news, and an extensive classified ad section, something rarely seen in local union publications. A lot of info for members.

Faculty Focus is an attractive publication with a simple, clean layout and an easy-to-read format. I applaud the use of pink paper in memory of a beloved teacher, although I'm not sure it adds any more depth than the excellent two-page tribute inside the publication. In general, it would be better to use a uniform typeface all the way through, and the headline of a story should go INSIDE the box with the story.

Class IV – Best Editorial Design

FIRST PLACE

United University Professions – Farmingdale Chapter

Unifier

“Part-time labor management”

Comments: Some eye-catching artwork, including a cartoon, illustrate this account of a part-time labor-management meeting. Kudos for devoting a page to drawing attention to the problems facing adjuncts and part-timers.

This page is an excellent example of how layout and graphics can enhance a story. The three-column ragged right layout is attractive and easy to read, while the white space and graphic elements are used very effectively to attract the reader into the article and to advance the message. Truly excellent!

Class IV – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Valley Central Teachers' Association

VC ECHOES

“They're back!”

Comments: It would be tough to see the colorful, locally produced full-page cartoon on the cover of this publication and not immediately flip to Page 3 to read the story that it illustrates. Whether it's a cartoon, a photograph or some other type of visual, locally produced artwork is a great asset for any local publication.

This wonderful illustration not only enhances the attractive cover, it does an excellent job of pulling the reader into the publication. Who wouldn't want to read the story accompanying this picture? A perfect example of how to use design elements to advance an important message.

Class IV – Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF MERIT

Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

“State budget threatens Arlington”

Comments: Well-written and well-researched editorial on exactly how a proposed state budget and tax cap would hurt this particular district. Lots of detail and lots of color, including quotes from a *New York Times* editorial and from NYSUT officers Dick Iannuzzi and Andy Pallotta. Editorial even gives info on contacting local state legislators via the NYSUT website. Lots of specific material but still easy to follow.

This is an excellent editorial that uses a strong base of facts to build a persuasive case against the governor's proposed budget cuts. The quotes from NYSUT officers and the *New York Times* are used effectively to back up the writer's point of view, and the closing quote from NYSUT's Pallotta is especially good.

Class IV – Best Opinion Writing

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

THE WORD

“Alarms are sounding”

Comments: Once you start reading this editorial about the issues facing this community college local (and others around the state) you have trouble putting it down until you're finished. This president's message clearly tells readers why it's time to sound the alarm and why it's time for more than just the union leadership to be involved in political activism. Using subheds to break it up into sections was helpful.

This is an excellent editorial! By starting with an overview of historical developments, the writer lays down a strong base of understanding, and then builds a persuasive case against Gov. Cuomo's proposals. The sentences in boldface help to advance the message, and the specific calls for action at the end are an appropriate climax.

Class IV – Best Opinion Writing

Kenmore Teachers Association

KTAnnouncer

“Get the 411 on Fair Trade”

Comments: The issue of Fair Trade, a major concern of NYSUT and its national affiliates, gets great treatment here as the author describes a recent visit to Nicaragua to see how Fair Trade has improved the lives of people. A highly detailed account of the visit, followed by the author urging readers to get involved in the movement with the simple act of buying Fair Trade products in the supermarket.

This is an excellent description of the writer's experiences on an important trip to South America. The vivid and creative language paint a wonderful picture of

the country and its people. The impassioned plea for using Fair Trade products is effective, but we never really learn exactly how buying these products makes a daily difference in the lives of the people who were visited.

Class IV – Best Opinion Writing

FIRST PLACE

Smithtown Teachers' Association

FACULTY FOCUS

“Opportunity vs. Opportunism”

Comments: Writing about stalled contract talks takes on a different slant here as the author explains the difference between opportunity and opportunism and how the district's choice of the latter has affected negotiations. Good presentation of a frequent topic for locals.

This editorial does an excellent job of presenting an important issue – contract negotiations in difficult economic times – and using background information to build a strong case. The “opportunity vs. opportunism” dichotomy is laid out well, and maintained throughout the article very effectively. The simple, informal tone also helps to convey the message.

Class IV – Best Opinion Writing

United University Professions – Farmingdale Chapter

Unifier

“President's message”

Comments: At a time when the odds seem stacked against educators, it's good when a president's message can talk about winning one battle in the state Legislature. It's even better when the president can use that success to fire up readers and begin advocacy efforts to convince lawmakers to vote pro-union in the upcoming battle over funding. It's good to remind readers that many of their benefits are only there because the union fought for them – and won.

The “President's message” does a good job of explaining how past events can impact the current and future situation. By framing the issue in terms of what has already happened between the union and the SUNY chancellor, the writer builds a strong and persuasive case for future actions.

Class IV – Best Opinion Writing
Valley Central Teachers’ Association
VC ECHOES

“Escalating attacks”

Comments: Readers looking for talking points to defend themselves and their profession from critics will find all the ammunition they need in this president’s column. Rich with factual detail on the myths behind charter school “successes,” student achievement in union states vs. right-to-work states, and how the governor and others skew the figures to make NY look bad. Obviously well researched and well thought-out. The writer of this editorial does an excellent job of dispelling some very prevalent myths about the differences in achievement between charter school students and their regular public school counterparts. Facts, figures and (correctly explained) statistics are all used to illustrate the differences in the two types of institutions. The informal tone and easy to understand prose help to build a strong argument for the achievements of traditional public school teachers. It would have been even more effective if it could have been kept to a shorter length.

Class IV – Best Opinion Writing

AWARD OF MERIT

Webster Teachers’ Association
THE WTA VOICE

“How many years can you survive without a raise?”

Comments: With little good news to report, the local president here still strives to keep members up to date on contract talks and the administration’s calls for givebacks. The column reports on givebacks 20 years earlier that failed to save the jobs they were supposed to – a good bit of information for members who may not have been around at that time. A good, honest reporting of what the union can do, can’t do and is trying to do. By starting with a question almost guaranteed to grab attention, this editorial does an excellent job of personalizing an issue that is important to every teacher in the district. From that strong start, the article goes on to explain the current economic situation in light of past developments. The article also does a good job of personalizing the issue for the administration, suggesting specific cuts that would optimize education without cutting teachers. A very effective argument.

Class IV – Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College
THE WORD

“Profiles of FA leaders and activists”

Comments: Q-and-A is always a good format for a profile, allowing the subject to tell his or her story in his or her own words, guided by the writer’s questions. This one shows much of the personal side of a professor and member of the local’s executive board. It also gives the subject an opportunity to talk about the union and its importance. My only nitpicks would be to simplify the questions – don’t ask three or four at a time – and feel free to edit the responses for length, as long as you inform readers upfront that the interview has been edited. This is an excellent profile: well-written and interesting, it truly captures the essence of the person being described. From a union perspective, it might be better to have the union-themed section higher up in the story. On the other hand, by the time we reach this section, we feel as if this person is a friend, so we’re more likely to keep reading. Good job.

Class IV – Best Profile

AWARD OF MERIT

United University Professions – Farmingdale Chapter
Unifier

“A stellar night for Farmingdale in Buffalo”

Comments: Brief profiles of local award-winners at UUP’s delegate assembly. Some good factual biographical background of the winners and a strong union theme, but I’d like to see more personal detail, including quotes. Tell us more about these folks. This article does a good job reporting on an important statewide union meeting, and awards given to several of the people who contribute to the local union’s mission. Although the article is well-written and does a good job describing how each person earned the award, it might have been better to focus on one person and spend more time profiling his or her specific role and contribution.

Class IV – Best Profile

Valley Central Teachers' Association

VC ECHOES

“Band together & sing!”

Comments: This is a lovely, upbeat story that the author tells us in the lead paragraph was written because of “the recent deluge of discouraging news.” All union publications need these kinds of articles to offset the seemingly endless stream of news that you have an obligation to write about – the tax caps, budget cuts, layoffs, contract talks, givebacks, etc. This article has great detail, comments from parents, teachers and students, and a nice photo to illustrate this feature. What it lacks is a union theme, which the category requires.

This is an excellent story. Its lively descriptions of what appears to have been an important program are both interesting and inspirational. However, although union members participated, it doesn't really have a union theme.

Class IV – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

Comments: This publication scores high on all points. At first glance, it is colorful, well edited, clean – very professional looking. A closer look shows headlines that tell a story, copy that is readable, error-free and touches on a variety of issues – hard news, opinion, people news, features. News coverage draws on the resources of NYSUT, as it should. It is obvious that a lot of thought goes into the articles – a feature on finding donors to underwrite projects, a Valentine's Day article on members who met in the district, and a centerspread feature on how to read your paystub. This is exactly what a local publication should be.

The Educator is an attractive publication that provides a wide variety of interesting and important information to members. The state budget story and update on negotiations are especially timely and well done, and the pay stub analysis is an excellent feature that should be of interest to every member. As far as the layout goes, the typeface, graphics and photos are all excellent. However, the layout would benefit greatly from more white space. Some of the pages, especially 3 and 6, are too crowded and busy.

Class IV – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

THE WORD

Comments: Good use of graphics helps lighten some very serious material here. This publication seems to have its finger on the pulse of its readers, covering many of the arcane issues that affect members financially, such as promotion criteria, direct deposits, information for adjuncts, professional development and health insurance. It also provides in-depth coverage of the issues facing higher education, with articles countering the many myths involving unions and education. Three-column format is easy to read and good for this publication, where some articles are necessarily lengthy. *The Word* is truly an excellent publication. Without exception, the articles are clearly written and offer timely information. The cover story, the profile of the art professor and “The alarms are sounding” are especially good. The layout is simple, clean and very easy to read, with interesting graphic elements and good photos. Several of the pages, however, are rather “grey,” and would benefit from graphic elements and/or photos. And the box on the cover is too tight. It needs more white space inside and around it.

Class IV – Best Publication

Smithtown Teachers' Association

FACULTY FOCUS

Comments: A good variety of news and features in this very member-oriented publication. It works in the names of lots of members and seems to get a lot of member participation in writing articles. Nice classified section, which is rare in these local union publications. This publication truly does focus on the needs, interests and concerns of the faculty. The articles are creative, well-written and interesting, especially “The perfect storm,” “Torch award newbie” and “The prize.” However, although many of the stories are creative and passionate, it would be nice to see even more union-themed material. And, although the layout is clean, simple and easy to read, there should be more of an effort to use uniform typestyles throughout, even if it means retyping some submissions.

Class IV – Best Publication

United University Professions – Farmingdale Chapter

Unifier

Comments: Lots of useful information for members in this publication. It has learned the secret of using materials provided by NYSUT, AFT and other sources to augment material this is produced locally. The staff has also taken some of this prepared material and localized it to make it specific to local readers.

The *Unifier* is a valuable publication, offering a wide variety of important and interesting information in an attractive and easy to read format. The President's message is especially good. However, in the cover story, it would have been better to explain and analyze the functions of the Health and Safety committee, rather than just citing the provisions about it. And the layout would be more attractive if the typeface and graphic elements were uniform throughout.

Class IV – Best Publication

Webster Teachers' Association

THE WTA VOICE

Comments: Considering that this is apparently the first issue (Vol. 1, Issue 1) of this publication, it's off to a good start. Inside page articles are refreshingly brief; most are illustrated with photos or appropriate graphics. Good variety of articles. Due to its length, I would run the Page 1 president's column in a two-column format to make it easier to read.

The WTA Voice does indeed give voice to members' interests and concerns. The concise articles allow a lot of information to be packed into a small space. All are well-written and address timely and important issues. The cover story, however, is slightly too formal in tone. It would be easier to understand in a more colloquial style and, although the layout is attractive, the type style for the headlines is difficult to read and looks too "Halloweeny."

Class IV – Best Union News Story

Arlington Teachers' Association

THE EDUCATOR

"Foundation keeps hope alive for students"

Comments: Great story about how a single union member, a guidance counselor, started a foundation that provides scholarships to students who have lost a parent. In detailing how the foundation raises funds, the article shows how other union members help the project in ways large and small. Nice quote from the founder and photos of one of the fund-raising events. This is an excellent story about an important scholarship program in the district. However, although many members of the union are active in the organization and participated in the basketball tournament, it's not clear that it was a union event.

Class IV – Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

THE WORD

"Why Stanley Fish is suddenly pro-union"

Comments: From the curious headline that draws you in, to the quirky graphic that works on two levels, to the writing itself, this entry had all the earmarks of an article from the *New Yorker* or the *New York Times Magazine*. Telling the story of how a longtime foe of academic unions has now embraced collective bargaining is an inspiration to the unionists who keep fighting on in the face of increasing animosity toward education and unions. The writer breathed real life into an article that could have easily been just another routine account of what a group of speakers said at a conference. This is an excellent and very complete description of an important union event: the AFT conference in Philadelphia. The writer does a good job of relating the high points of several speeches, which addressed the very timely issue of the events unfolding in Wisconsin. However, it doesn't do as good a job at describing the conference

Class IV – Best Union News Story

AWARD OF MERIT

Smithtown Teachers' Association

FACULTY FOCUS

"United we stand"

Comments: Faced with the problems that all union leaders face these days, it's nice when a local president can write about how the union's efforts are winning over more community members to the union's cause. This is from-the-heart writing about a topic that faces every union educator today.

"United we stand" does an excellent job of describing an important event – the district board of education meeting – and its aftermath. It's well-organized, well-written and brings the event to life. However, it would have been nice to hear a little more of the background from the writer himself. For example, one of the callers says the president wasn't allowed to finish his speech. I would have liked to hear exactly how that transpired.

Class IV – Best Union News Story

AWARD OF MERIT

United University Professions – Farmingdale Chapter

Unifier

“One Nation March”

Comments: A nice, tight account of the local’s participation in the One Nation March. Fulfills all of the requirements of the category in just over 150 words and even illustrates the article with two photos.

An excellent description of a very important union event: the One Nation March in Washington, D.C. The article offers good background on the event, but it would be nice to hear what the local attendees thought about the march, and why it was so important.

Class IV – Best Union News Story

Valley Central Teachers' Association

VC ECHOES

“VC=Valley Central Cares”

Comments: This local’s community service projects for the first four months of the school year provides some impressive material for an article on how union members team up to help the community and each other. It’s a story that can’t be told often enough. This article does a good job of describing a number of important fund-raising activities undertaken by VC teachers to benefit various community causes. However, although the events were organized by union members, they weren’t really union events.

Class IV – Best Website

FIRST PLACE

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Website

Comments: An attractive home page with continuously updated photos, as well as an excellent, easy to navigate top ribbon that covers diverse topics.

All in all, a solid package.

A very good website with very professional looking photographs. Lots of links and good features.

Class IV – Best Website

Smithtown Teachers' Association

Smithtown Teachers' Association Website

Comments: This website is informative and a good resource for members and the community at large. But it needs more graphics and photos to make it a standout. The home page says the site was to have been revamped by July 2011, but as of now it does not appear to be.

Class IV – Best Website

United University Professions – Farmingdale Chapter

United University Professions – Farmingdale Chapter Website

Comments: Nicely balanced home page with continuous streaming photos, lots of information and a breeze to navigate. Inside there are good graphics to complement the text and there’s a Facebook link for those who want to access their information via this route.

Some of the features/links on this site could not be found. Noticeably lacking in visuals.

Class IV – Best Website

Valley Central Teachers' Association

Valley Central Teachers' Association Website

Comments: This site offers plentiful information on its inside pages, but it could use more graphics and photos on its home page. All in all, though, a solid entry.

A homepage very dense with type and lacking in visuals. Could not open or find some links.

Class IV – Best Website

Webster Teachers' Association

Webster Teachers' Association Website

Comments: The site is informative and could be improved by being less type-heavy. There is also a drop down menu that exceeds the bottom of the screen page, making it difficult to link to information on the bottom rung. But there is potential here – with a little more attention to appearances and access, this site would serve its members, and the public, well.

Another website that was dense with type. This site would be enhanced with stronger design throughout.

Class IV – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College

THE WORD

“WTF?!”

Comments: A very provocative headline draws readers into this excellent account of attending a higher ed lobby day. Very detailed in its coverage of the day’s meetings with state lawmakers and very adept at weaving in financial details about the state of higher ed, particularly at this institution. Graphically well-supported with two charts and a photograph. Nice job. Despite its somewhat comical title, “WTF?!” is a very serious and effective discussion of an important issue: cuts to higher education. The article does an excellent job of detailing the efforts of not just the local union, but the statewide organizations as well.

Class IV – Solidarity Award Smithtown Teachers’ Association

FACULTY FOCUS

“Why Wisconsin matters”

Comments: A good explanation of why New York will be affected by what has happened in Wisconsin and why New York’s union members must be vigilant in fighting to hold on to what they have won in negotiations. Bulleted highlights set off in a box capture the main points and help add white space to the full-page cover article.

This article does an excellent job of explaining the importance of unions, and how attacks on unions in one part of the country can spread to those in other locations. The writer makes a strong and effective plea for solidarity among union members.

Class IV – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Webster Teachers’ Association

THE WTA VOICE

“Positive community relations in 2 easy steps”

Comments: Many a NYSUT Communications Dept. workshop has dealt with the problem of local unions that do so many good deeds but fail to publicize them. This well-written and very practical guide to union/ community relations deals with exactly that issue and does it quite well. Contains many useful tips for members to get their story out to the public to help offset anti-union sentiment.

This article is an excellent and timely discussion of a very important issue: how unions can increase the public’s appreciation of the amount of community service done by its members. The writer offers excellent advice on how to promote a favorable image, and many tips gained from attendance at a NYSUT conference.

Class V

Class V – Best Community Outreach Using Electronic Media

FIRST PLACE

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk Website

Comments: It took a while to access the autism walk link – but the effort was worth it. This was a great combination of photos and information that gave the viewer a close-up look at a chapter living up to its outreach promise. Well done.

Class V – Best Community Outreach Using Electronic Media

AWARD OF MERIT

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY Website

Comments: The URL reference appears to be the one on the group’s best website entry, which features the local’s campaign to secure health insurance for adjuncts. The graphics and photos work well, and the text is attractively packaged to catch the viewer’s attention. But overall, the content is on the thin side and the site is text-heavy. Could use more balance.

Class V – Best Editorial Design

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

“Sowing seeds on fertile ground”

Comments: Nice use of color and catchy headline help draw readers into this report on career and technical education. Photos are good but could be run larger for more impact.

What an attractive graphic! And it’s more than just pretty. The climbing vines combined with the photos are a very effective way to enhance the message of the words and the article. An excellent job.

Class V – Best Editorial Design

FIRST PLACE

Buffalo Teachers Federation

PROVOCATOR

“Vote! You are the union”

Comments: A very bold statement on an important issue. It gets your attention. Not sure if the artwork of Uncle Sam was done by a local artist or was acquired elsewhere, but it was great. Nice work.

I love the idea of the “Uncle Sam” character encouraging members to vote. The graphic is not just well-executed and attractive, it’s also eye-catching – sure to attract the attention of any reader. And then the words surrounding the character reinforce the message with all the reasons for voting. A wonderful design.

Class V – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Clarion

“Faculty & staff rights at risk in Bylaws changes”

Comments: The locally produced illustrations really add to this centerspread – an in-depth news report of planned changes in CUNY bylaws that would harm union members. Main headline and subheads help tell the story as do the sidebars detailing the union’s response to the plan and the administration’s agreement to delay action, based on the union’s response. An attractive and complete package of crucial information. This extremely attractive centerfold is an excellent example of how layout, typeface and graphics can advance the message of a story. The clean, simple design, restrained use of color and easy-to-read type allow the effective graphics to do their job and pull readers into the stories. In fact, even without reading all of the text, the graphics themselves tell an important part of the story. An excellent design.

Class V – Best Editorial Design

AWARD OF MERIT

Sachem Central Teachers’ Association

Speak Out

“Budget cuts”

Comments: An attention-getting cover for a special edition. Nice color. Not sure if the artwork is locally produced or just locally altered, but either way it makes an impact and is perfect for the page. This excellent illustration does a wonderful job of conveying the problems facing the union with only a few words. The picture of money, the tear and the words “Budget Cuts” tell the reader everything he needs to know about the content of the special edition. Very effective.

Class V – Best Editorial Design

Yonkers Federation of Teachers

The Yonkers Teacher

“We are one. Respect our rights”

Comments: Very colorful centerspread chronicling two major rallies in photos. The prevalence of red, white and blue in the photos as well as the headline type may just be coincidental but it certainly sends a subliminal message about rights and freedom and the willingness to go out and fight for them. These attractive pages are a very effective combination of photos, design elements and text. The photos are excellent, and really help to enhance the message – “We Are One. Respect Our Rights” – and also the quotes from Thomas Paine and Van Roekel. I would suggest making the photos in each column a uniform width, and

trying to improve the quality of the “Be The Union” page at the top.

Class V – Best Opinion Writing

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

“Outraged over rules for evaluating teacher effectiveness”

Comments: A good take on a controversial issue. Provides readers a lot of information about teacher evaluation that they likely would not receive in the traditional media.

This passionate editorial does an excellent job of citing facts and background information to refute the ideas contained in the governor’s proposed teacher evaluation package. The writer presents the issue well, highlights the perceived problems, and builds a strong argument in opposition to the proposal. I’m not sure the bold type and capital letters do a lot to advance the message, and there are several typos in the text that detract from its effectiveness.

Class V – Best Opinion Writing

Buffalo Teachers Federation

PROVOCATOR

“Unprecedented attacks meet unwavering resolve”

Comments: A good take on the need of local leaders to get all members fired up about the attacks on educators and education – nationally, statewide and locally. This one clearly draws a line in the sand and doesn’t waste words explaining the problems all members face and vowing not to back down.

This editorial does an excellent job of pointing out that many of the advantages enjoyed by workers today were put in place by unions. By highlighting the facts of the current situation on a state and local level, the writer builds a strong case for union solidarity.

Class V – Best Opinion Writing

Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

The Agenda

“Stop the “blame game””

Comments: Nice headline on this from-the-heart defense of public employees. Writer makes many good points – including why public employees were not responsible for today’s economic climate and how the people who got us into this mess are now the ones seeking to make public employees the scapegoats. This is an excellent editorial! Step by step, the writer carefully uses historical facts and background to refute each one of the so-called “reasons” for the current hostile attitude toward public employees, and especially teachers. The tone is reasonable, not rabid, and the language is simple and informal. A very convincing argument.

Class V – Best Opinion Writing
Oceanside Federation of Teachers
OFTIMES

“Teacher creatures”

Comments: A good dose of sarcasm works well in this entry, with the writer facetiously explaining how those who attack teachers may be right. It’s certainly a unique and in this case, effective way to tackle an issue like this one.

This amusing opinion piece uses sarcasm to point out the absurdity of some of the arguments currently being used against teachers. Humor is, indeed, an excellent way to make a point, and this piece accomplishes its aim very well.

Class V – Best Opinion Writing
FIRST PLACE

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY
Clarion

“Reclaiming public institutions”

Comments: Creating an opinion piece from a colleague’s commencement speech is certainly a clever way to get material that is ready-to-use, provocative, timely and well-researched. It will also be long, as this one is, but it reads so well you find yourself at the end before you know it. The headline is good and a photo of the author giving the speech gives it a sense of immediacy and helps break up what might otherwise be a gray page. Nice work by everyone involved. Professor Fine’s scholarly speech translates well to the printed page. Her historical examples, interesting stories and flashes of humor, all related in simple yet poetic prose, combine to create a very strong argument for public education. A very convincing and beautifully crafted piece.

Class V – Best Opinion Writing
AWARD OF MERIT

Sachem Central Teachers’ Association
Speak Out

“The politics of hate”

Comments: A very interesting and unique take on the issue of teacher- and union-bashing. Here the author – who might well be a social studies teacher – compares today’s economic social political climate with that of post-World War I America and through the Great Depression when immigrants, African-Americans and other groups were blamed for the nation’s woes. Nice job.

This well-crafted and effective editorial looks back to the last 100 years of American history to find the source of today’s rampant ill-will aimed at teachers and other public servants. Building a logical argument by highlighting historical facts is an excellent technique, and this writer does it very well.

Class V – Best Opinion Writing
AWARD OF MERIT

Yonkers Federation of Teachers
The Yonkers Teacher

“Why last in, first out makes sense”

Comments: Anyone who struggles to explain and justify the concept of Last In, First Out should read this thoughtful and well-researched article on why it is so important – and beneficial to students. And, as the author points out, the real issue is not who to lay off first, but how to avoid layoffs altogether. Excellent work.

This is one of the best arguments I’ve seen for retaining the seniority system for teachers. The writer lays out the background material and uses it to build a strong logical case in favor of her position. But best of all, she uses the argument to deftly introduce her final point: the question is not who should be laid off, but how to avoid layoffs. An excellent effort.

Class V – Best Profile

FIRST PLACE

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk
THE BEACON

“Wayne Kubacki’s world”

Comments: This union’s outgoing grievance officer does a nice job of sharing some grievances of his own. His passionate defense of the union’s executive board provides a valuable service to members who may not understand how the board works and what it has accomplished for them.

An interesting profile of a man who has given many years of service to the union. He expresses his opinions well, and gives us quite a bit of insight into the hard work performed by union leadership.

Class V – Best Profile

AWARD OF MERIT

Oceanside Federation of Teachers
OFTIMES

“Soul shines: Heart rejoices”

Comments: Inspired by a union fundraiser to aid a member family in need, this profile of unionists working together for the good of all provides an opportunity to shine some light on the people who work the hardest and can be counted on to take part in fund-raisers, rallies, board of ed meetings – whatever is needed. It also gives the author an opportunity to advocate for every member to take part and to remember that it is numbers – large numbers of active members – that give a union strength and power.

This is a very interesting report on an important event in the high school community. However, it was not a union event, and the article focuses more on why it was important instead of profiling the people or group who carried it out.

Class V – Best Profile

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Clarion

“New York City is their classroom”

Comments: Fascinating article with all the attributes of a great profile. In showing how urban studies professors at LaGuardia College make use of New York City as a real-life laboratory for students, the author interviewed professors and students from a variety of classes. The author allows the people to tell the story; it is alive with rich and colorful quotes. Excellent work.

This interesting, well-written article focuses on the excellent work of union members as they inspire their students by taking them to visit landmarks of the city that are relevant to their studies. It does not appear to be a union program, however.

Class V – Best Profile

AWARD OF MERIT

Sachem Central Teachers’ Association

Speak Out

“Honoring my sister”

Comments: In honoring her sister who died of breast cancer, the author also honors all members of this local who have long supported the “Making Strides” walks to raise money to find a cure for breast cancer. Inspired by a tragic event, it’s a nice profile of the annual walk, the people who take part in it and those the author is seeking to encourage to join the effort.

“Honoring My Sister” is an inspirational story about the writer’s participation in the union’s team on the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk. The story is both interesting and moving, and demonstrates the union’s commitment to community causes. It doesn’t really have a union theme, however.

Class V – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

Comments: An attractive and colorful front page, starting with the flag and moving down through a fact-filled president’s message that jumps inside. A very clean publication that packs in a lot of useful information without looking jammed.

The Beacon is a very attractive publication that is packed with clearly written articles. The layout is clean, simple and easy to read, and the graphics and photos are well-chosen and relevant to the material. Each page offers a wealth of timely and important information to members, and gives an excellent idea of the range of union activities. My only suggestion would be to make some of the stories more concise – some, such as the President’s Report, are spread over multiple pages – and add more graphics and photos to break up the text.

Class V – Best Publication

Buffalo Teachers Federation

PROVOCATOR

Comments: This publication makes good use of its tabloid size, with an abundance of information for members. Nice clean layout on inside pages. Lots of photos, good headlines. My only quibble would be with the headlines on Page 1. I would have made them way larger and possibly lay out the two cover stories horizontally rather than vertically.

The *Provocator* is a truly excellent publication. The layout is very attractive with its easy-to-read type, restrained use of color and excellent photos. “No greater gift” sets a very high standard, yet the other articles are also extremely well-written and offer a variety of useful and interesting material. However, although it’s a wonderful idea to include as many photos of members as possible, a number of them are too small. It might be better to use fewer photos, make them much larger, and put the rest in a gallery on the website. Also, a photo on the front page would be an excellent way to draw in readers.

Class V – Best Publication

FIRST PLACE

Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

The Agenda

Comments: Here is a great example of how to get a good-looking, information-filled newsletter in the popular 8 ½ x 11 size. Lots of news, photos, teacher tips, contract info, social notes, community outreach and politics, all in 10 pages. Great job.

The Agenda is an attractive publication that offers a wide variety of useful information to members. The layout is clean, simple and easy to read, and the articles are well-written and informative without being overly long or complicated. The photos are excellent, but might have looked better with a border and/or white space around each one, instead of being combined into a collage. And a photo on the cover would have been a wonderful addition.

Class V – Best Publication

Oceanside Federation of Teachers

OFTIMES

Comments: A well-written president's message on page 1 gets this publication off to a great start. A photo centerspread welcoming new teachers is a good way to give them a reason to begin reading their union newsletter. While it may just be coincidental, the issue contains a preponderance of articles about the union's good deeds and community activism. Nothing wrong with that. It's probably a great way to kick off a school year that everyone knew ahead of time was going to contain a lot of bad news.

OFTIMES (what a wonderful name!) is an excellent publication with good articles, a simple layout and wonderful photos. The photo of the new teachers is especially good, and the president's message on the cover is well-written and inspirational without being overly long or complex. However, some of the graphics inside, especially on Page 7, strike a slightly discordant note. The photos on the back cover, as wonderful as they are, take quite a bit of space away from union news, and might better have been used on a website where there is infinite space.

Class V – Best Publication

AWARD OF MERIT

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Clarion

Comments: This one does all the right things – judicious use of color, nice clean, pleasing layout, a cover page that draws you inside for 12 pages of union news, activism, pocketbook information, features and opinion. It's hard to find anything lacking in this publication. *Clarion* is a truly excellent publication with beautiful writing, excellent photos and meaningful and attractive graphic elements on every page. The news stories, especially the ones about the rally and the Kushner fracas are especially well done, but the feature on "Why I decided to Take Action" is also interesting and inspirational. The graphic on the front cover conveys the point of the story clearly, and the cartoons on "Faculty and Staff Rights" tell the story on their own. An excellent job from cover to cover.

Class V – Best Publication

Sachem Central Teachers' Association

Speak Out

Comments: Lots of color, lots of photos. This publication would definitely get the reader's attention. This particular issue is certainly a tribute to Sachem members and their political activism. From the excellent photo on the cover to the centerfold of faces and signs, *Speak Out* truly lives up to its name. The articles are written clearly and discuss a variety of issues that are important to members. The president's message is especially good, giving an overview of the

budget situation in a very readable, persuasive format. The layout is attractive, but would be better if the two-column format were maintained consistently. And I'm not sure the "Rogue's gallery" of faces and microphones on Page 10 adds anything to the discussion.

Class V – Best Publication

Yonkers Federation of Teachers

The Yonkers Teacher

Comments: A good president's letter on the cover gets this local union publication off to a strong start. This letter tackles a good subject and answers the question – "what is the union doing?" This union has always been strong in community activism and this issue shows it. A colorful centerspread on a member's Fair Trade expedition to Nicaragua rounds out a very readable and good-looking issue.

The Yonkers Teacher truly is the voice of its members. It provides a variety of useful and interesting articles in an attractive package. The story on the trip to Nicaragua is excellent, and the photos add a wonderful dimension to the tale, as do the photos on the Storybook Bonanza. It would be nice to see some of those photos larger, and the disparate type styles used throughout the publication are distracting. The YFT graphic under the type on the cover makes the story difficult to read.

Class V – Best Union News Story

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

"Sacrificing to save"

Comments: Some good, positive writing by the local president here probably convinced a lot of members to look past the contract givebacks they just authorized and see the benefits to themselves, their students, the BOCES and its component districts. Well-detailed throughout.

"Sacrificing to save" is a well-written and passionate message about an important union decision. The facts are presented clearly and persuasively, but the story is not really about a specific event.

Class V – Best Union News Story

AWARD OF MERIT

Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

The Agenda

“MVFT leadership demonstrates solidarity”

Comments: This article does a good job of keeping members in the loop about the latest in long-stalled contract negotiations. I might have led with the upcoming protests, however, instead of closing with that information, especially since union leaders are looking for maximum turnout for the protests. This story begins with an excellent account of an important Board of Education meeting. The background and the events of the day are clearly and vividly described. However, after that report, the article becomes more of an opinion piece than a news story.

Class V – Best Union News Story

Oceanside Federation of Teachers

OFTIMES

“What is excellence?”

Comments: This article does double duty – it notes that a member teacher has been honored by TV’s Regis and Kelly for all her good work, then asks (facetiously) how she could have been selected with no mention of how well her students do on standardized tests. That provides an opportunity to discuss the shortcomings of the state’s teacher evaluation system and its reliance on test results. Clever idea, but unless the story of the teacher was covered elsewhere in the newsletter, it deserves more background detail here.

This article begins with an excellent account of a very important event in the district: the selection of a union member as “Regis and Kelly’s Top Teacher.” But after reporting the selection, the story becomes more of an opinion piece on teacher evaluation.

Class V – Best Union News Story

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Clarion

“Are rich people leaving NY?”

Comments: An in-depth, well-written, and extremely well-documented article dispelling the myth that higher taxes on the wealthy will cause them to leave the state. The article quotes a number of respected, outside sources such as the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, and looks at how the population of wealthy people actually increased in other states with similar taxes. A copy of this excellent article should be sent to every lawmaker at the state Capitol. Great work. This article is extremely well-written, and offers a wealth of facts to counter popular claims about rich people leaving the state. All the points are backed up with solid data, and it’s written in a clear, interesting and easy to understand style. However, it’s not about a union event.

Class V – Best Union News Story

FIRST PLACE

Sachem Central Teachers’ Association

Speak Out

“Capital gains?”

Comments: Lots of color and detail make this article on the union’s participation in an Albany rally a good one. A simple thing like describing the t-shirts worn by participants and the messages on the signs they carried is what sets this article apart. This article offers a passionate account of an extremely important union event. The writer’s descriptions of what he saw and what he felt on a trip to Albany to rally support for teachers is both interesting and informative. However, it might have been better to focus more on what happened and less on the writer’s emotions.

Class V – Best Union News Story

Yonkers Federation of Teachers

The Yonkers Teacher

“The truth about tenure”

Comments: An article dispelling the myths about tenure is a worthwhile project for union communicators, and this publication does it quite well. The article takes on the various complaints and criticisms about tenure and sets the story straight in a conversational way. Several large subheads and a sidebar on what constitutes “due process” help explain a complicated topic that is often misunderstood by union members themselves. This is one of the best explanations I’ve ever seen of tenure, how it works, and how it benefits students. However, it’s not a news story about a specific event.

Class V – Best Website

FIRST PLACE

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk Website

Comments: The site continues to maintain its standard of excellence with an inviting home page and easily navigated links. The information is timely and accessible and well packaged. Very nicely designed homepage and incredibly impressive links page!

Class V – Best Website

Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers

Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers Website

Comments: The site has an inviting home page with continuous updating of photos, but it could use more content. A nice looking homepage but inside content not as strong as other entries in this category.

Class V – Best Website

Newburgh Teachers' Association

Newburgh Teachers' Association Website

Comments: This site serves its membership well but is thin on photos and content. There are nice links to chapters and newsletters.

Despite having lots of features and links this site suffered because of the lack of visuals.

Class V – Best Website

AWARD OF MERIT

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY Website

Comments: This website contains a wealth of agenda items for members, including the campaign to save health care for adjuncts. It's informative and motivating, but could use a better balance of graphics and text.

A well-designed website that was easy to navigate and deep with content.

Class V – Best Website

Sachem Central Teachers' Association

Sachem Central Teachers' Association Website

Comments: Unable to access site. Explorer kept rejecting repeated attempts to log on.

A very nicely designed homepage. Lacked visuals on the internal links and the Community Service page was blank.

Class V – Solidarity Award

BOCES Educators of Eastern Suffolk

THE BEACON

"On solid ground"

Comments: This is a solid report from an officer keeping members up to date on the latest from Albany, Washington, local elections and what to expect in coming months. It also draws references to NYSUT and the candidates it did and did not support – and why.

This excellent article does a very good job of linking local concerns with statewide issues and the efforts of NYSUT. The writer carefully lays out the background and builds a persuasive argument about the importance of union efforts.

Class V – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Buffalo Teachers Federation

PROVOCATOR

"Rally shows strong solidarity among Buffalo public school teachers"

Comments: This full-page coverage of a rally prior to a school board meeting is the essence of solidarity – lots of photos of sign-carrying members in large numbers taking to the streets for the specific purpose of displaying their solidarity in the face of disrespect, blame and scapegoating by the board of ed. The accompanying article is well-detailed and contains personal accounts of teachers' issues and problems. Nice job.

This excellent article, combined with some wonderful photos, truly illustrates the solidarity achieved by members of the local union. The story clearly lays out background information, and persuasively explains the flaws in the teacher evaluation system.

Class V – Solidarity Award

Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

Clarion

"Charters not so 'Super'"

Comments: This publication seems to have access to some excellent writers. This is an outstanding, well-researched de-construction of the film "Waiting for Superman." It painstakingly rebuts every criticism the film levels against public schools and unions. It brings in facts that could silence the most vocal of critics. Excellent work.

This article does an excellent job of refuting the message of the film "Waiting for Superman." The writer lays out the points claimed in the film, and then carefully and deliberately refutes each one. It's a very persuasive argument against some very prevalent myths, and the writer urges solidarity in fighting for change.

Class V – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Sachem Central Teachers' Association

Speak Out

“A call for civility”

Comments: With only minor editing, this appeal for solidarity in a large local union could easily run in any local's newspaper. Referencing the shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, the author writes passionately about the need for civil discourse and mutual respect among union members, even in disagreements such as those affecting the union.

The writer of this article makes a passionate and very persuasive call for solidarity among union members. Citing past arguments and uncivil discourse, he urges members to work together to further common causes and to show a united face. An excellent effort!

Class V – Solidarity Award

AWARD OF MERIT

Yonkers Federation of Teachers

The Yonkers Teacher

“United voices of protest”

Comments: Nice centerspread of back-to-back rallies at City Hall and the Board of Education to protest cuts to staff and programs. In this one the pictures tell much of the story. I would look for a little more detail, including quotes from those who attended and who spoke out at the board meeting.

This package of text and photos offers a truly inspirational message of the impact of solidarity. The visual impact of the signs and faces is strong, and they do an excellent job of communicating the impact of group unity.

CONGRATULATIONS!