



BUFFALO RETIREE



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Retiree Council No. 44

Keeping you informed and connected. Published by Retiree Council # 44

nysut



2026 NYSUT RA

The NYSUT RA was held in Albany on May 1 and 2, 2026. Nearly 2,000 delegates, including retirees, voted to uphold union values centering around democracy, solidarity and action. Delegates discussed and voted on a myriad of issues including Expanding the Charge of NYSUT's Pension and Retirement Committee and Informing Members of the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans of which we are all members. Delegates re-elected NYSUT officers: Melinda Person as President, Jaime Ciffone, Executive Vice-President, Ron Gross, Second Vice President and J. Philippe Abraham, Secretary-Treasurer.



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President, Sara Rodland

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Board of Directors:

Pending

(See page 3 under Save the Date)

Retiree Services Consultant

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Editor: Sara Rodland



Retiree Council #44 was represented by delegates Lynn Garcia, Stan Nowak and Sara Rodland. **Thanks to the efforts of all of YOU**, RC #44 was the recipient of a Local Community Service Award and one of five locals recognized with the Ken Kurzweil Social Justice Recognition Award. Sara Rodland received the Not For Ourselves Alone: The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award. Sara was nominated by the Buffalo Teachers Federation and recognized as a tireless labor champion. *L to R: Joe Montante, Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan, Rich Nigro, Sara Rodland, Melinda Person and Phil Rumore*

NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

The NEA Representative Assembly was held in Denver, Colorado from July 3 through July 7, 2026. Six thousand educators were in attendance to set the course of the NEA for the upcoming year.

Highlights of the RA



Becky Pringle, outgoing NEA President, addressed the delegates. *NEA, We must keep walking. Even when the road is long. Even when the arc of hope is hard to see, and the forces against us try to extinguish our light, dampen our hope and deny our power. We can't stop. We won't stop.*

Delegates were encouraged to prepare for the mid-term elections with a four point plan.

- **FUEL THE MOVEMENT:** Join the fight for democracy and the freedom to vote.
- **MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE:** Check your registration. Make your plan. Remind your friends!
- **PROMOTE THE VOTE:** Turn out voters.
- **PROTECT THE VOTE:** Become a poll worker.

Delegates elected new NEA Officers. Left to Right: Robert Rodriguez, Secretary-Treasurer, Princess Moss, President and Noel Candelaria, Vice President.



Follow NYSUT Retiree Council #44 on Facebook & website <http://rcwest.ny.aft.org>

Retiree Council #44 Voluntary 2026-2027 Participation Fee Form

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Please circle your affiliation

BTF BEST TAB SUB

Please check the amount of
your Participation Fee:

\$10.00 _____ Other \$ _____

Send check payable to: NYSUT RC #44 and mail to:

Rebecca Pordum—RC #44 Treasurer, c/o NYSUT, 270 Essjay Road Williamsville, NY

Year of Retirement _____

RC#44 EXPERIENCED • RESOURCEFUL • ENGAGED

Fix Tier 6 Rally in Albany March 8, 2026

When 15,000 unionists fight, we win! The result was that lawmakers agreed to change retirement age from 63 to 58 and a reduction in pension contribution.

Front Row L to R: Eva Mrocza, Sara Rodland, Lisa Mangino
Back Row L to R: Darcy Spengler, Tom Spengler, Kathy Brown, Lynn Garcia



Books, Bites and Booze at NYSUT Regional Office April, 20, 2026

The first annual Books, Bites and Booze event was a great success with close to 100 retirees in attendance.
L to R: Lynn Garcia and Clara Hall



NYSUT RA Retiree Luncheon May 2, 2026

L to R: Florence McCue, At Large Director ED 51-53; Stan Nowak, RC #44 Delegate; Eva Mrocza, RC #2 Delegate; Lynn Garcia, RC #44 Delegate; Sara Rodland, RC #44 Delegate; Lisa Mangino, RC #3 Delegate and David Keefe, NYSTRS Board President and Retired Teacher Member



The Teacher's Desk Volunteers Luncheon May 9, 2026

The Teacher's Desk thanked volunteers for their efforts on behalf of teachers and students. RC #44 members are dedicated volunteers from September through May.

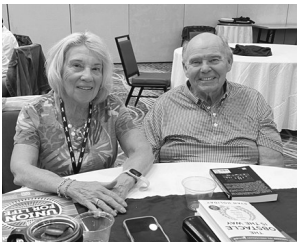
First Picture: L to R: Claudia Kania, Becky Pordum, and Betty Kulpa
Second Picture: L to R: Teri DiPasquale-Mahar, Stephanie Hall and Shirley MacKinnon



NYSUT Retiree Council Leadership Conference June 2 and 3, 2026

Lynn Diagostino, Becky Pordum and Sara Rodland represented RC #44 at the Leadership Conference. Randi Weingarten, President of AFT, was honored at the conference as the 2026 Recipient of the Kate Mullany Medal from the American Labor Studies Center.

L to R: Sara Rodland and Randi Weingarten



NYSUT Retirees of WNY Regional Conference May 19, 2026

RC #44 members engaged in workshops, collaborated with colleagues, and reaffirmed Union for Life.



Shirley and Steve Banko



L to R: Jacqui Berger and Bob Zaffram



Tom Giambra



Johnny Singletary

L to R: Cathy Burgin, Sheila Mahone and Sandra Price-Allen



L to R: Lois Norman and Kathy O'Brien

NEA Retired Annual Meeting in Denver June 30 and July 1, 2026

Three hundred sixteen retirees attended the meeting. Susie Jablinske was awarded the 2026 Distinguished Service Award. In accepting her award Susie said that *the most important group in NEA are retirees because we know how to do it right!*

L to Right: Susie Jablinske and Sara Rodland



L to R: Cathy Stearns and Christine Salamone



L to R: Cynthia Mehary and Ramona Adams



L to R: Lynn Diagostino, Lynn Garcia and Becky Pordum



L to R: Ginna Coon and Phyllis Zak



NYSUT RETIREES FALL LUNCHEON HONORING NEW RETIREES

*Join your fellow retirees and meet new ones as we get
together for our Fall Luncheon and NYSUT Retiree Recognition Day.*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2026

DOORS OPEN AT 11:00 AM - BUFFET LUNCH AT 12:00 NOON

The Columns at 2221 Transit Road, Elma, NY 14059

Please complete the form below and **return by October 2, 2026.**

This form may be copied. Use one registration form per person.

No registrations will be accepted after **October 2. No refunds will be issued.**

Your check should be **dated, signed** and payable to:

NYSUT Retirees of WNY

Please mail to: **Jill Wilkie, c/o NYSUT, 270 Essjay Road, Williamsville, NY 14221**

The cost of attendance is reduced this year! There will be open seating for this event.

****New retirees will receive \$10 in NYSUT bonus bucks to be used on the day of the event.****

There will be a BASKET RAFFLE and SHARE THE WEALTH to benefit the NYSUT Retiree Coalition Mini Grant Program.

Please consider BRINGING TOILETRIES to benefit a local women's shelter.

Questions? Please contact Amy Schaffstall (716) 435-5013 or Jill Wilkie (716) 984-3674.

----- **Please cut and return slip with payment** -----

Name: _____ District from which you retired: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____ Phone: _____

Luncheon Fee: Please choose one option for your registration.

_____ I am a new retiree. I retired on or after September 1, 2025. I have enclosed a check for \$20.

_____ I retired before September 1, 2025. I have enclosed a check for \$40.

_____ I am a guest. I have enclosed a check for \$40.



SAVE THE DATE

September 2026: There are two contested elections-for
RC#44 Board Members and AFT Alternate Delegate.

Watch your mailbox for your ballot.

October 17, 2026: Making Strides Walk

October 19, 2026: Retiree Recognition Day and Fall
Luncheon to Welcome New Retirees at The Columns

December 8, 2026: Holiday Luncheon at Salvatore's
Italian Gardens

April 19, 2027: Books, Bites and Booze Book Fair at
NYSUT Regional Office

May 18, 2027: Regional Conference at the Buffalo
Niagara Marriott

How to maximize your NYSUT membership

Your NYSUT membership offers special advantages unavailable to the general public. Make sure you're utilizing all the savings opportunities below provided by NYSUT Member Benefits.

Member-Only Pricing: Protect your loved ones with various life insurances. Plan for the future with quality long-term care insurance plans. Select from multiple highly rated auto and home insurance carriers. Receive reimbursement for eligible pet care through Nationwide.

Unbiased Advice: Ensure your financial and legal affairs are in order. Receive expert guidance on personal legal matters with unlimited advice from attorneys through our legal service plan. Obtain unbiased, objective phone consultations with a certified financial planner or registered investment advisor with our financial counseling program.

Travel Savings: Bundle and save on flights, cruises, vehicle rentals, and over 850,000 hotels and resorts for the optimal travel experience with MB Discounts & Deals. Enjoy reduced pricing on over 80 explorations across 100 countries with Grand Circle Travel & Overseas Adventure Travel, including new "Immersions" options for more active travelers.

Free Benefits: Check out our free benefits! All in-service and retiree members receive unlimited access to the popular Calm app and can add up to five dependents (age 16 or older). Whether you have a specific matter or simply need an empathetic voice, the Peer Support Line can help. Other benefits include: \$5,000 accidental death & dismemberment insurance, travel assistance services, financial learning center, and more.

Feel confident knowing you have a trusted advocate on your side if you ever need us.

Find out all that's available from Member Benefits. Scan the QR code, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org, or call 800-626-8101.



**MEMBER
BENEFITS**
nysut
Working to Benefit You

September/October 2026

