

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 1 – Class I

Local: *Bainbridge-Guilford Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: From the President's Pen

Publication/Website: BGTA Newsletter

Issue Date: January 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a well-written, forceful rebuttal to Gov. Cuomo's comment about pedophiles in the classroom. The author notes how that comment is a slur on all teachers and urges union members to answer back by taking the steps outlined in a sidebar. Well done, especially the reminder that complaining won't get the job done – members have to act. Really good job of linking current political climate with not just the need to defend your profession but also with specific strategies the reader/member can use. Also, excellent use of cartoon, although I didn't think the Tony Robbin's quote added much and that space could be better used to give your readers another sentence or two of information about how anti-public ed forces outspend those who favor public ed by 15 to 1 or even the missed opportunity that up to 40 percent of all VOTE-COPE funds come back to the local for your use.

Local: *Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: So Where Do We Go From Here?

Publication/Website: Local Do's Newsletter

Issue Date: May/June 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry is an interesting examination of what successes union members have had in mitigating Cuomo's anti-public school agenda, along with a look at what NYSUT officers are doing to join the battle. Good work. Very good job of laying out the work your members have done, the results of that work and then noting that more work needs to be done. But then your points get confusing and I actually wonder if paragraphs or sentences were transposed. Directly after the sentence "Whatever the reason, NYSUT must do a better job conveying how they are leading the battle against Governor Cuomo" comes the sentence that starts "In an attempt to get their message out" and then a 9-point legislative plan is referenced and the essay ends with "NYSUT's 9-point

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plan will certainly be their guide, as well as ours, as we moved forward to protect public education here in New York.”

Local: *Edgemont Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Diane Ravitch at SUNY Purchase

Publication/Website: ETA PIPELINE

Issue Date: April 2015

Judges' Comments:

A very good article on a speech by Diane Ravitch, complete with examples of how ludicrous test questions can be. Very good recap of not just a speech but also the whole issue of education reform. Excellent use of the editorial “we” and really personalizing the event for those who might have missed it, or recapping it for the 1,000 who were. I actually wanted to hear more about the panel discussion you referenced!

Local: *Fillmore Central Schools Faculty Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: FCS: Ours, Not His

Publication/Website: Association Press

Judges' Comments:

The layout is good. You took on a huge job of trying to explain the complex political issue of the governor trying to do more than just deliver a state budget to the legislature for approval, but then only followed up with “He can get his way. Well, he can, mostly.” Then laying out the war that is being waged in a concise manner but ending with “Can you say charter school?” is confusing. A turn of the page however is a great example of strong writing complemented by a membership photo. This really works and I hope that page went up on bulletin boards across your district. Strong persuasive ending. I would have argued to take out the word “dear” as an adjective to describe the governor. It’s stronger without it. This entry is just a single graph, which isn’t really a writing sample.

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Local: *Lewiston-Porter Administrative Professionals*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: NYSUT Leadership Conference

Publication/Website: Lewiston-Porter Administrative Professionals

Issue Date: Sept/Oct 2015

Judges' Comments:

Very good job of making union membership meaningful and bringing average topics to life. Very nice description of what would happen with a union. A few more specific examples of what you learned at the meeting would have strengthened this entry. Better yet, give one example of what you learned and then explain how it would help every member in your administrative professionals unit.

Local: *Pembroke Teachers' Federation*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: PTF Members Join Thousands in West Seneca

Publication/Website: PTF Messenger

Judges' Comments:

It could have been developed more. There are many photos but they are understandably small. It would have been better to print fewer photos and size them appropriately. Good job of overview reporting. You got in the who, what, why, where and when. I applaud the use of membership photos that show real engagement. Nice twitter graphic and explanation. What would have strengthened this entry was adding information about how to attend the next rally or other actions the member could do to support these efforts.

Local: *Schalmont Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: We All Deserve Better Than This: Enough is Enough

Publication/Website: STATIC

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a first-rate speech on Common Core and its flaws. Good points that are well written and compelling in their logic. The blue background for a break-out quote is too dark, though, although the photo is excellent. Not sure if this is an original contribution to the newsletter or a reprint. While it is usually better to say what you are rather than what you are not, you make this work. This entry starts strong with clear views and grows stronger with specific examples of harmful education reform and then brings the

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topic to the most personal level as the writer discloses her cancer diagnosis. This skilled educator explains the impact of the flawed rollout of the assessments on her students and her profession and even her own children. Kudos!

Local: *Thousand Islands Education Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: TIEA River Rat Retiree's News

Publication/Website: The TIEA Voice

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

Very nice compilation of what retirees are doing. Photos are lively and interesting and convey a great deal of information. Also love the graphic treatments. I am certain this is a well-read section of The TIEA Voice, but I am not certain this entry shows original writing.

Local: *Waterville Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Have You Commented on APPR Regulations Yet?

Publication/Website: Waterville Teachers' Times

Issue Date: July 2015

Judges' Comments:

The entry consists of a reminder to comment on the Regents regulations. The reminder is well taken and attractively packaged, but the text is too brief to be weighed as a writing sample. This is a great headline. The article also does a good job of explaining the legal issues surrounding the APPR regulations. Also a good job explaining how to comment to the State Education Department, but this entry would have been strengthened if it had explained why comments are needed.

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Best Writing 2 – Class I

Local: *Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: A Tribute To A Great Friend

Publication/Website: Local Do's Newsletter

Issue Date: Oct/Nov 2015

Judges' Comments:

O, what an entry! A beautiful tribute to an extraordinary teacher. Lovingly written. And the photo is outstanding! It speaks volumes about what a presence this teacher must have been in the classroom. Excellent all around. Wonderful recollections of a teacher's life and impact. Great use of specifics and concrete descriptions really help the reader try to get to know why this death deserved such a tribute.

Local: *Edgemont Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: RALLIES IN NYC AND WHITE PLAINS

Publication/Website: ETA PIPELINE

Issue Date: April 2015

Judges' Comments:

This account of rallies in White Plains and NYC covers the range of current issues from testing to teacher evaluation, etc. The article is well done but the photos are too dark and too small. This is a most misleading headline. Because instead of getting a recap of two rallies, the reader gets an extremely perceptive analysis of why teachers are having these rallies and the need for them. Skilled use at bringing the larger issues to a personal level as well. Editing one extremely long, run-on sentence into at least three separate ones would have strengthened the concluding paragraph.

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Local: *Fillmore Central Schools Faculty Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: When you retire ... or ... Where are they now? That day in June.

Publication/Website: Association Press

Judges' Comments:

Nice photos. This was fun to read. Great use of graphics and pull-quotes from Dr. Seuss. It would be interesting to see the original material you pulled from retirees because I have a feeling you made the proverbial purse out of a sows ear by crafting enjoyable recaps, however I am uncertain how much of this is original writing. I'm glad this section is also entered under general excellence, so I can address a bit more there.

Local: *Lewiston-Porter Administrative Professionals*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: LPAP Bake Sale

Publication/Website: Lewiston-Porter Administrative Professionals

Issue Date: Sept/Oct 2015

Judges' Comments:

Who would have thought a recap of a bake sale could be so enjoyable to read? This writer displays a nice humorous touch with a rather mundane topic. This entry would have been strengthened with several sentences about why the LPAP raises funds for the Making Strides efforts.

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Local: *Pembroke Teachers' Federation*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: PTF Pride

Publication/Website: PTF Messenger

Judges' Comments:

Attached were 9 photos with the headline PTF Pride! The photo collage is nicely done. This compilation is excellent as it shows a range of faces in different places and formats that are quite interesting. Very nice job of showing members. I consider it a strong contender for best original photographs.

Local: *Schalmont Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: From Apple Tree to Willow Tree

Publication/Website: STATIC

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

An original perspective on apple and willow trees and cores and CORE. The writer cleverly weaves these themes throughout a piece that ends with a vow to weather the storm. Nicely done. Extremely effective essay. It takes a skilled writer to weave ever-changing standards with gardening and pruning and the importance of solidarity. Excellent descriptions and a very nice way of tying the intro with the main points and to the conclusion.

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Local: *Thousand Islands Education Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Did You Know...& Breakwater Gallery

Publication/Website: The TIEA Voice

Issue Date: June 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry consists mostly of news nuggets and graphics. The packaging is attractive but the content is sparse. Nice compilation of tips, ideas and updates for the members. The graphics are nice. This entry would be strengthened by more explanation about why the union participates in Relay for Life. Or even about the chick-hatching event: Such as does Mary Mason always donate an incubator? What will happen to the chicks at the end of school?

Local: *Waterville Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Member Profile: Tammi Picolla

Publication/Website: Waterville Teachers' Times

Issue Date: July 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry is a brief member profile of a teacher who witnesses students grow up before her eyes and who watches over her own kids in life's journey. It could be improved if the main theme were developed more. Profiles are a great way to spotlight members. This profile gives great information about this member. I am not clear if you provide questions for the member to answer or let them write their own profile but I love the explanation about "best Waterville experience." This entry could be strengthened with a question or section for the member to either ask for, or give, classroom or collegial advice just to make this piece more interactive for the members.

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Best Writing 3 – Class I

Local: *Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: The Soul of Calhoun H.S.

Publication/Website: Local Do's Newsletter

Issue Date: Oct/Nov 2015

Judges' Comments:

This tribute of a teacher and friend is heartfelt and moving. It is another example of the extraordinary people who enter the teaching profession. While the writer is obviously mourning the loss of a friend as well as a teacher, he could have focused less on that relationship and more of what his friend meant to Calhoun High. This essay gives even more insight into Doug Smestad's life and impact. Nice job on a difficult topic. Explaining some of the lessons learned could have strengthened this entry. So many of these entries were about one teacher, it is hard to judge them individually.

Local: *Edgemont Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Dear Colleagues

Publication/Website: ETA PIPELINE

Issue Date: April 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry focuses on the writer's letter to the editor of a local paper slugging it out with Gov. Cuomo. The real gem of this entry comes at the end though, with a very clever and revealing computation on how teachers could be paid just \$3 an hour and wind up earning more than \$500 per day if they were compensated for the number of students they teach in a day. This is what should have been front and center as it exposes the sham behind the Cuomo claim that teachers are overpaid. What a whirlwind! This entry starts with a thank you to the membership for help during a convalescence and then a reprint to a letter to the editor to an excellent math lesson on what public salaries really should be. The letter to the editor would have been strengthened with a bit more explanation on why the writer is unhappy with a Senator's vote on ed reforms, and a spelling check.

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Local: *Fillmore Central Schools Faculty Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Fillmore Faculty Association Member Brendan Heaney scores a "dream" interview with Governor Andrew Cuomo

Publication/Website: Association Press

Judges' Comments:

This is an imaginative "dream" interview with Gov. Cuomo. It covers the key points in the teachers vs. Cuomo battles but it could have been a little subtler and less contrived. A good effort nonetheless. The page lacks graphics. Interesting entry. While I understand where this satire comes from and how it can feel so good to vent, the best satire is grounded in reality. There is so much fodder where you could use actual quotes and/or actual instances to make your points. For example, referencing Cuomo's "Hunger Games" approach forcing regions of the state to compete for funds rather than the section that starts "My politics is reserved for New York City and Long Island" I think would have been more persuasive. This entry also had spelling and grammar errors and inconsistent capitalization, but perhaps that was intended.

Local: *Pembroke Teachers' Federation*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: PTF Rings in the Holiday Season

Publication/Website: PTF Messenger

Judges' Comments:

If the three sentences under the headline above was the entry for best writing, little information was provided to readers other than who, when and what. This entry would have been strengthened with information on why these union members take valuable time during the holiday season to help the Salvation Army; where this event took place; what else the union does to support the less fortunate during the holidays, or a quote from the Salvation Army about what it means to their organization to have unions participate. A better entry would have been the five-paragraph story below titled "Raise some orange to end violence against women." Even in that story, it is unclear if the local union is doing something more than providing information. Did the union put an orange light somewhere in its offices or display posters or banners? Notice the difference a sentence such as "Join the PTF as it installs orange lights and displays posters this month" can make.

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Local: *Schalmont Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: A Failing Grade for Tests

Publication/Website: STATIC

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a look at the sharp contrast between the writer's 4th grade class before the testing craze took hold and today's 4th grade class where the students are anxious and nervous over facing these tests. The contrast speaks volumes about how today's rigid priorities are damaging tomorrow's adults. It could have been improved with judicious editing to reduce the length so as not to overwhelm the writer's key points. Very good insights. Very good example of bringing personal experiences, perspectives and history into a current event. Concrete descriptions of how classrooms differ over 14 years are strong and written well. Also, skilled linking of the intro to the penultimate paragraph. A very good job that would be strengthened with a finer edit. For example, when you come across a sentence that starts "I hate to drop a bomb, but here's a little secret:" choose one. You don't need both.

Local: *Thousand Islands Education Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Local Action News

Publication/Website: The TIEA Voice

Issue Date: October 2015

Judges' Comments:

Good recap of different efforts the union undertakes to benefit both students and the community. The description of how to deal with bullying appears helpful for those schools that could not participate in the assembly. This entry would have been strengthened with better attention to the math in the fundraiser article. If \$5,500 was raised and \$2,000 went to a member and over \$2,000 went to the student scholarship fund, it would be far better to say almost \$1,500 went to fire departments in Clayton, Cape Vincent, Fishers Landing and Depauville; or say that \$400 each went to the fire departments. Just something so the reader isn't left wondering what happened. It's also fair to note if the union covered the cost.

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Local: *Waterville Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: WTA Supports Cruisin' into Waterville

Publication/Website: Waterville Teachers' Times

Issue Date: Sept. 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a humorous look at a dunking contest – for a good cause – of WTA members. Nice recap of the union's efforts to raise funds for a scholarship and very nice to thank those community groups that helped the union make this event a success. This article would have been stronger with just a bit more information for those who could not attend or might be new to this. Questions I had were: How many WTA members were dunked? Who got dunked the most? How much did folks pay? How many years has the union does this? (Because of the way the article starts), and who qualifies for the memorial scholarship?

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Best Writing 4 – Class I

Local: *Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Common Core Prep in Pre-K

Publication/Website: Local Do's Newsletter

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

Very good article on the absurdity of some Common Core test questions, such as the one on Stephen Hawking and cosmology for 10R students. The writer also confesses to getting three Common Core English questions wrong. Taken together, these examples show how unfair and demoralizing these tests can be. Effective way of bringing personal experience with your own child to highlight issues with implementation of the Common Core, and then going one step further and reporting your own results taking an English exam. Strong descriptions and logic are well represented and persuasive. Using an active voice would strengthen this entry.

Local: *Edgemont Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Dear Edgemont Colleagues

Publication/Website: ETA PIPELINE

Issue Date: Dec. 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry is a mix of tributes to a young teacher who died and observations on Common Core. This column had a difficult task of recognizing the death of a young colleague as well as noting the involvement of colleagues who supported each other and the woman's family and then provide information about the new federal implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act. It is jarring to go from a thank you to teachers who volunteered to substitute for those who wanted to attend the funeral, to the next sentence telling people "work we have left to do." If it's any consolation, few writers could do that successfully.

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Local: *Pembroke Teachers' Federation*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Summer Leadership Conference

Publication/Website: PTF Messenger

Judges' Comments:

This three-sentence entry gives the barest of details of what a summer leadership conference is. Missing is a reason why members would give up three days of their summer for a meeting or any concrete description of what happened. Here are three sentences, and fewer words, that give more info. "How to respond to attacks on the teaching profession" was just one workshop members of the Pembroke Teachers Federation attended at the NYSUT Summer Leadership conference at the Peak n' Peak resort. NYSUT President Karen Magee kicked off the three-day conference with an overview of current events and the statewide union's response to a number of legal and legislative challenges. Your representatives will update all PTF members on these issues and much more when we see you back at school this fall.

Local: *Schalmont Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Rotterdam Teachers Unite to Call Out Cuomo

Publication/Website: STATIC

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry is largely a report on a Rotterdam Teachers Unite event and a letter writing campaign in support of public education. Good job of putting a positive spin on such a negative issue. Noting the need to unite against attacks is so necessary yet often forgotten. Concrete and specific descriptions of actions members took strengthened this entry. This is a writing competition, but this entry backed it up with strong photos that were perfectly placed on the main page. The headlines across the bottom "Respect Public Education IT WORKS" also contributed to the piece. Photos on the second page also showed strength in numbers as well as highlighting an active membership in both local unions.

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Local: *Thousand Islands Education Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Political Action News

Publication/Website: The TIEA Voice

Issue Date: February 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is an extremely effective page of information for member. I do not think it qualifies for best writing but I would strongly recommend this for the Best Info Graphic award. Excellent work.

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Best Writing 5 – Class I

Local: *Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: State of Affairs

Publication/Website: Local Do's Newsletter

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry is mainly an account of a member's experience calling a state senator to convey concerns about education, using NYSUT talking points to help the conversation along. A fresh look at union action in person, coupled with a call to action for all members to speak out on behalf of public schools. The article is mainly a report, however. This writer takes us on a personal journey of becoming a more active member. Strong descriptions complement humorous interjections to liven this essay up. Persuasive without being preachy is a strong skill to employ. I really hope you keep writing. Kudos!

Local: *Schalmont Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Just Because You Went to School

Publication/Website: STATIC

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry focuses on what must irritate teachers the most when they hear critics say the public school are failing – namely, that the critics are always those who don't teach and aren't qualified to criticize. Teachers are the experts of teaching, and they are the ones politicians should listen to when proposing "reforms." Good points well taken. Enjoyable to read this writer taking on the favorite game of finger pointing. Usually, we would advise writers to not take attacks personally, but this writer is able to take things personally and turn the arguments totally around. Giving example after example of why attendance in her personal opinion does not equal to being an expert in that field builds to a logical conclusion. One piece of constructive criticism is to delete "I would just like to state that." Just start with "I have completed New York State college programs in my chosen fields of mathematics and special education" See how that makes it stronger?

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Local: *Thousand Islands Education Association*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: New Member Spotlight

Publication/Website: The TIEA Voice

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

Very nice job to spotlight new members and in such an interesting format. Love the use of the graphics to highlight the trivia answers. I am just not certain this Q and A format belongs in this writing category. Also be more careful with proofing for grammar errors and typos.

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General Excellence – Class I

Local: *Bainbridge-Guilford Teachers' Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: BGTA Newsletter

Issue Date: Jan/Feb 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has essentially only one article of substance although there other informative items, including a retirement update. It could be improved with more content and graphics. Extremely informational newsletter in an easy-to-read format. You pack a lot of info into four pages. Your members should appreciate how you try to make information a two-way street in such a skilled manner. Keep up the good work.

Local: *Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Local Do's Newsletter

Issue Date: Oct/Nov 2015

Judges' Comments:

Hands down the best of the lot. The tributes to this extraordinary teacher are beautifully written and lovingly rendered. They are free of the standard banalities that appear in so many eulogies – he'll be missed; RIP, always in our hearts. Instead there are lines like this: "Whenever I pass by his classroom I hear his words of wisdom whispering in my ear." Beautiful. And the photos! Outstanding! They capture this teacher's charisma, his soul. What a presence he must have been in the classroom! Beyond the tributes there is another message that shines through, albeit not explicitly expressed. It is this: There is no way – none – that this teacher's life could be reduced to an evaluation score. His knowledge, talent and impact on those he touched in life cannot be reduced to a number. Thankfully his colleagues have given us the full measure of this man – a teacher's teacher. This local is to be commended for devoting an entire issue to the memory of a colleague. After reading each separately, it is interesting to read them again as a package and to realize how each piece fits together rather than reading the same. They all complement each other. Also: skilled graphic treatments on the cover and back pages. Keep up the good work.

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Local: *Edgemont Teachers Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: ETA PIPELINE

Issue Date: April 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry contains plenty of baby photos and one article on a speech by Diane Ravitch. The photos are too dark and need better reproduction. So great to see the space allowed to births, and extremely witty to call it "New Faculty Arrivals." Well done for the article and profiles on five who received tenure. Excellent recap of Committee of 100. Your congratulations page for administrators I hope goes a long way. Congratulations on such a top entry and fine newsletter. More substantive content would help as well.

Local: *Fillmore Central Schools Faculty Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Association Press

Issue Date: Spring 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry includes lots of coverage of retirees, as well as a "Dream" interview with Gov. Cuomo that was judged separately. This newsletter could be improved with more topical content and comment. The back page of this entry appears to go with the When You Retire entry. But then this gets confusing because pages 1-5 are numbered; then there is the two-page dream interview and then the last page is numbered 7. This may seem nit-picky but with the fierce competition you are up against in this category I have to take this into consideration. Great job on the graphics, the photos and reproduction in this newsletter. You do so much right it is the smallest of errors that keep you from the top.

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Local: *Hilton School Employee Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Hilton Central School District

Issue Date: Nov/Dec 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has an interesting layout and good graphics. It could be improved with more content. Great way to give your members the exact resources for the information they need rather than you trying to reinvent the wheel and repurpose what someone else has already done. You really pack a lot of information in for your members. I wonder if you have an association logo you could use instead of the district's, because this looks like it came from administration. The section about Offices up for Election raises some questions. Are the incumbents not running? When is the election? How will it be held? Keep up the good work.

Local: *Lewiston-Porter Administrative Professionals*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Lewiston-Porter Administrative Professionals

Issue Date: Sept/Oct 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has a varied and colorful layout. However, the newsletter could be improved with more substantive content to add to the various shorter items that are included. Great job on your cover page. That format works perfectly. It is clean and easy to read. It gives a great deal of information in one column and even has a call for the membership to submit news across the bottom. I appreciate the tone of the President's Column. It takes a skilled communicator to go from welcoming new members to dealing with representative changes to thanking members for their efforts as well as giving basic membership info in five paragraphs. Keep up the good work for your members, and I hope your president can make all her grandsons' birthdays.

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Local: *Schalmont Teachers' Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: STATIC

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry is packed with information on a variety of topics. On content alone it stands out for thoroughness. It could be improved with a design makeover, however. The typeface is too black and the pages are so crammed with type, with little white space to offset the black look. The occasional color squares seem almost garish in contrast to the black. The newsletter deserves better – a cleaner look will turn it into a winner. Great cover. I wondered what STATIC stood for. Love the quote treatment across the bottom. This makes me want to look inside, even though not a single article is referenced. Effective second page that gives members all they need to know about union leadership, who their building representatives are and how to submit to STATIC. The President's Report is well done as it lays the groundwork on what members are facing from their own local administration. Skilled use of cause and effect by the president.

Excellent recap on Political Action that explained for members not just how the state union and its allies worked, but also what the local union did especially on page 8. Excellent reprints of articles that ran in the state paper. This local understands the need to credit where the articles first ran and also that many members might not have found those articles in a state publication. Excellent remembrance of Eleanor Linberg. Using concrete examples, the writer explains how a teacher who had been retired nearly 20 years could still have an impact today. And great photo! This 24-page newsletter also makes great use of hashtags on each page and inspirational quotes to exemplify points on certain pages. This newsletter clearly has a vision and works hard to make it a reality.

Local: *Thousand Islands Education Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: The TIEA Voice

Issue Date: June 2015

Judges' Comments:

Good presentation overall with a mix of political action and retiree news. It could be improved with more varied content. This 16-page newsletter is a complete package. The president's message on the cover is a lesson in effective brevity that also sets a great tone without stealing the thunder from articles inside. Graphics are well done. The Political Action page does a commendable job of reflecting on the past year and looking toward the future. The next several pages give updates in a lively manner, especially in

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the retiree section. The Toot Your Own Horn section is extremely well done and effective. State and National news pages complement the local's efforts and struggles. Please see comments for the columns submitted under best writing. Please realize you were up against fierce competition in this category. Keep up the good work for your members.

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Local: *Waterville Teachers' Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Waterville Teachers' Times

Issue Date: July 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has an appealing layout and good use of graphics. But the content is basically a collection of briefs. The newsletter could be improved with more substantive articles. It's commendable to complete a 4-page newsletter for July, normally a slow time for education news. Reaching out to your members, especially on the 3rd page, is well done. The news story about the Utica Regional PAC meeting on the first page is confusing. First it notes that information would be shared about an impending ruling, yet in a follow-up sentence it notes "repercussions of this decision." The Who's In, Who's Out at NYSED seems like it is just there to fill space rather than to really give information. Members could wonder what impact those changes would have on them. The second page provides needed updates. Please see comments under the writing category for the APPR regulations article. The 3-8 Testing Update and Every Child Achieves Act Passes the US Senate are rewrites of information that are good for teachers to know if they missed in the mainstream media. The strongest part of this newsletter is reaching out to members about how to make the union and the union's newsletter better and the editor puts herself out there as a member profile. Great way to include two-way communication. This entry was up against fierce competition. Keep up the good work for your members.

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Best Website – Class I

Local: *Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers Website

URL: www.BMUST.org

Judges' Comments:

Eye appealing and easy to access and navigate. Good information on links. Excellent video on home page about California agency fee case. Clean and bright home page. About Us, Leadership, Committees pages are complete to give members the news they need. Member Services is where this web site starts to shine as it groups downloadable forms, guidelines and sample letters and links to websites for member services. The New teachers/175 HRS section is great to keep separate for those folks. This website does its best work under the News and Events section. It works really hard to keep members informed. Great job!

Local: *Medina Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Medina Teachers' Association Website

URL: www.medinateachers.org

Judges' Comments:

A good website with informative links. However, the home page is sparse and requires the visitor to click through in search of info. This could be improved by having more informative briefs on the home page that have the link attached to them. That way the visitor can quickly check to see what might interest him or her and be connected instantly. But make no mistake – if you take the trouble to click the link, there is much useful information there. Great slide show in the Photos section that shows a range of activities. The lack of caption information did not bother me in the least, especially in conjunction with the scrolling list you have under the Community section of the website. Might I suggest you add a line for those who might want to join your community programs and school events in that section? Especially since the only contact listed under Contact is Webmaster and you don't provide contact information under the Executive Board section. (I can understand why for a public website.) The most complete sections are Documents Section and the VOTE-COPE section. There has got to be more to MTA's history than six sentences! I also tried several different days to click on the links under MTA news but they did not work, so all I could see were headlines such as "MTA Teachers Expanding Their Roles as Leaders" or "Teacher Todd Bensley meets with Senator Ortt at the Committee of 100." This is a great start for your members but I think you could do a bit more.

Local: *Pembroke Teachers' Federation*

Category: Best Website

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Publication/Website: Pembroke Teachers' Federation Website

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

Judges' Comments:

An inviting home page that includes brief summaries of stories of interest with a "more" link for visitors who want to read the entire article. Well presented with a good mix of topics. There are several helpful links at the top of the page but some of them contain only sparse information and should be expanded. The basic home page format is excellent, however. It is great that you take full advantage of the AFT template for websites. Since there was little original content provided by the local during the 3 weeks I checked, I would be sure to update the site regularly with info relevant to your local.

Local: *Schalmont Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Schalmont Teachers' Association Website

URL: <https://www.schalmontta.org>

Judges' Comments:

An appealing website that is packed with information. The home page contains photos of interest and the right side contains icons of interest on union and other matters. The left side of the page also contains important links, including announcements, but the heavy green background makes the links difficult to see. Also, the use of big group photos on some link pages could be improved if there were groups of photos with fewer people in them so that they can be seen more readily. I had trouble accessing the site; two weeks I got the message the site was under construction.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Thousand Islands Education Association*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Thousand Islands Education Association Website

URL: <https://sites.google.com/site/tiea3052>

Judges' Comments:

Very attractive home page with lots of information available on numerous links. The site could be improved with a little more general and breaking information on the home page rather than making the visitor click through for every area of interest. This website does a great job of providing resources to members. Having just judged the General Excellence category for the newsletter, I wish you would bring some of the attention to detail you show in the website over to the newsletter (such as the information about Relay for Life on the website, which explains why the union is involved.)

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Use of Social Media – Class I

Local: *Bainbridge-Guilford Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Bainbridge-Guilford Teachers' Association Facebook

URL: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/818614414824056>

Judges' Comments:

Could not access.

Local: *Pembroke Teachers' Federation*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Pembroke TF Facebook

URL: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010043648659&fref=nf>

Judges' Comments:

This entry consists of photos from past years, with many other postings from a real estate services firm. It needs to be more current and more topical.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Thousand Islands Education Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Thousand Islands Education Association Vikings Facebook

URL: <https://www.facebook.com/tieavikings>

Judges' Comments:

Great use of social media. I am thinking you thought too late of taking pics of the care packages for military. I understand you might not want to include photos of kids but what about close-ups of their hands when they were making the items? Given the negative attention Wounded Warriors is getting, it might be good to add something there about how during these times, members know their contributions are getting right to those fighting to protect us.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 1 – Class II

Local: *Gates Chili Teachers' Association*
Category: Best Writing 1
Name of Entry: What I learned from my father
Publication/Website: The Voice

Judges' Comments:

This entry is a tale of two teachers well told. The author is a teacher whose father was a teacher and who went on strike twice, despite the threat of arrest and the sacrifices the family had to make as a result. This experience makes the author's call for courage in the face of the Cuomo onslaught all the more credible. Well-done. A very effective article. Excellent writing of the many essays urging member involvement during times of strife. Strong concrete descriptions without overdoing it. Running the historical photo adds to the package. Fierce competition keeps this from getting the top writing award.

Local: *Lynbrook Teachers Association*
Category: Best Writing 1
Name of Entry: From the President's Desk
Publication/Website: LTA Examiner
Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

This president's message puts an original twist on the original Atticus Finch saga – namely, that more Atticus Finches are needed to stand up for what is right in the battle against the Cuomo agenda. Very well-developed and very well-written. Excellent essay that links a current event topic to the many public education needs and also works in a call to action for increased member involvement. Excellent use of repetition both with the different politics or policies that put Atticus' life at risk, then later with what members need to question and, finally, the four separate areas where the writer wants to be part of the solution. It all comes full circle with "I want to keep Atticus alive, so all future generations have a role model."

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mahopac Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: A Family's Decision

Publication/Website: Mahopac Teachers' Association Blog

Judges' Comments:

Given all the entries that focus on the teachers' point of view on testing, this entry offers a different perspective — namely a kid's point of view. It's one thing for adults to decry the "testing is everything craze," but it's quite another when a youngster literally lives with the fear of doing poorly on "the most important test" of the year. This article shows what the "reformers" are doing to kids, and why they need to be reined in. Well-done. Very good writing on a timely topic. The writer truly takes the time to help the reader understand how one decision can have such an impact as well as to try to educate the reader on the lack of reliability of cut scores. If only the mainstream press could do such a clear job explaining this. This entry is up against some amazing entries.

Local: *Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: From Where I Stand... Don't Be A Victim

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Judges' Comments:

This is a typed entry where the author compares her past experience of a home burglary with the current threat of being robbed by the Cuomo agenda. Very original metaphor and an effective one. But did it appear in a newsletter or just as a manuscript. If the latter, does it fit within the rules? This entry has strong descriptions and wonderful phrasing. It is very good writing. Unfortunately the slow start and long build up to the "meat" of the story must be taken into account when determining a winner against other excellent entries this year.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *North Tonawanda United Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Mission Impossible

Publication/Website: The Journal

Judges' Comments:

This is a good wake-up call to a district that has passed shoestring budgets. Good topic but it could be improved by citing specific examples of where the penny-pinching hurts kids the most. This entry certainly is effective in comparison/contrast of a new mission statement with a district that is in chaos. Each new paragraph gives yet another concrete example of what must be the most horrendous learning and working conditions for students and staff. But what is the point? I can't tell if the writer is trying to urge a rejection of the mission statement, or election of new candidates to the school board, or better formulas for state funding, or settlement of a contract.

Local: *Nyack Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Unions Under Attack

Publication/Website: The Bridge

Issue Date: Fall 2015

Judges' Comments:

Type here:

A solid, informative article on the agency fee case before the Supreme Court. Good layout and use of breakout quotes and graph. Very detailed analysis of what this case means for unions.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: The Special Ed-ition

Publication/Website: PJSTA PORTAL

Judges' Comments:

Excellent article on how a testing glitch wound up giving this teacher a bad rating even though none of her students took the test. This speaks volumes of what is wrong with the testing craze by reformers and the governor. If the results can't be trusted, what good are they? Well-done. This excellent entry gives the reader a look past the curtain ("Wizard of Oz" reference intended here) and painstakingly points out the problems with growth scores. Just enough examples are given with concrete descriptions. I am certain the writer could have provided more, but shows excellent restraint. And then, just at the right time, the essay turns persuasive to urge member involvement. Great job.

Local: *Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Meteorologists vs. Teachers: A Perfect Storm?

Publication/Website: THE UNION SOUND

Judges' Comments:

A very original comparison between weather forecasters and teachers. No one blames the forecaster if he or she gets it wrong because of sudden shifts that are beyond his or her control. Yet teachers are being blamed for testing results even though those results can be traced at least in part to the students home environment and other circumstances beyond the teacher's control. Good analysis, well-done. This is a complete package. The headline draws in the reader. The first sentence sets the stage and then the second sentence does more to capture the test score debate in its one question than many others do in whole paragraphs. This is an excellent lesson in effective writing where less is so much more. KUDOS!

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Union of Adjunct Faculty at Pace*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Pace's Negotiating Tactic: Just say "NO"

Publication/Website: Union of Adjunct Faculty at Pace Website

Issue Date: 6/30/15

Judges' Comments:

Excellent summary of where contract negotiations stand in an easy-to-read format. Effective persuasive arguments about what members can do. Although this is about writing, your graphic treatment of the words also makes it so much easier for the reader. Excellent job.

Local: *United University Professions - Cortland Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: We Don't Have a Union

Publication/Website: The Cortland Cause

Issue Date: October 2015

Judges' Comments:

Very good speech on courage and the need to stand up to SUNY on behalf of adjuncts. Good points well made. Excellent entry that is a pleasure to read. This piece not only pays homage to union history, but also draws parallels to current "right-to-work" laws and an overreliance of adjunct professors. Excellent use of repetition. This writer is skilled at weaving in inspirational quotes with the need for action.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Wallkill Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: President's Message

Publication/Website: IMPACT

Issue Date: February 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry takes on Cuomo and his agenda, particularly his threat to hold hostage any school aid increase until he gets his way. The author issues a call to action that conveys a proper sense of urgency. Effective use of questions with bullet points to explain complex topics. Also entertaining how the writer draws parallels between the weather and politics and works in a "Titanic" reference just in case members did not catch the catastrophe that could await. Good persuasive job.

Local: *Yorktown Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Freidrichs vs CTA Explained

Publication/Website: Yorktown Congressional Record

Judges' Comments:

This is an informative article on the agency fees case before the Supreme Court. It is filled with facts and clear explanations of what agency fees are and how they came to be, as well as what non-members get from unions for their money. Some analysis would improve this otherwise solid article. This entry would be strengthened with just one more line about the implication for members, not just the union. I applaud you taking on this complex issue. Great descriptions about what unions do to support and benefit members.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 2 – Class II

Local: *Gates Chili Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Vice President's Message

Publication/Website: The Voice

Issue Date: March/April 14-15

Judges' Comments:

Excellent entry that accomplishes so many things in one column. Effective use of repetition with "Actions speak louder than words" including the implied ones. Also nice touches in thanking members for their work and noting a former president. These kinds of passages go a long way toward helping folks recognize past struggles and fostering solidarity.

Local: *Lynbrook Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: From the President's Desk

Publication/Website: LTA Examiner

Issue Date: Dec 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry praises Preet Bharara as the new watchman in Albany and sees the pendulum swinging against the "three men in a room," including Gov. Cuomo and Common Core. A different take on today's battles over public education. It could be improved with a less vengeful tone though. Excellent follow-up to Mockingbird entry already submitted. It's almost like you had a sixth sense so these two essays naturally flow together. Same effective use of repetition. Same excellent descriptions. Again, excellent job.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mahopac Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Tis the Season

Publication/Website: Mahopac Teachers' Association Blog

Judges' Comments:

This entry provides an insightful look at the Gap Elimination Adjustment and how it adversely affects schools in regard to classroom numbers, faculty numbers and course offerings. Well-developed. Excellent analysis of what the local union needs its members to not just understand, but also to do. It starts strong and ends stronger and in between is all the information the members needs with appropriate links and resources. This entry could be strengthened by a tighter word edit.

Local: *Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: The Gist

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Issue Date: Nov/Dec 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a snappy bullet-point overview of Common Core Opt Out, Preet Bharara and more. It is cleverly done but sometimes the tone is more snarky than snappy. This witty piece really works as it takes a thread here, a thread there and then weaves a tapestry for the reader about current events. It entertains, it informs, it questions, and when needed, I hope it infuriates the reader to action. Great job.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *North Tonawanda United Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Failed to Show Progress

Publication/Website: The Journal

Judges' Comments:

This typed entry is in the form of a Socratic dialogue that artfully uses the acronym SCAM instead of CORE and takes aim at the absurdities of the testing craze. Highly original, with a welcome reminder that the humanities count as well as STEM. High marks for originality and imagination. Witty, even for those who may not get the Socratic method employed here. After reading so many other entries pointing out the frustrations of the testing climate, it was refreshing to read this play featuring Plato and Socrates. Excellent historical references. Excellent "play" on words and use of acronyms.

Local: *Nyack Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Message From Our President

Publication/Website: The Bridge

Judges' Comments:

A somewhat personal president's message on how he came to lead the chapter, and how important it is to stand up for schools, union and jobs. It could be improved with more emphasis on the call to action and less detail on the personal observations. Very good column to the membership that strikes exactly the right tone of leading by example to urge increased involvement. This writer shows skill in varying sentence lengths to great effect. Good job.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Kahoot!

Publication/Website: PJSTA PORTAL

Judges' Comments:

Interesting entry that does a great job on trying to urge members, especially those "who may not be technologically inclined" to try a new quiz-based game. Good descriptions and declarative sentences make this an easy read. I would love to see this writer take on a more complex topic.

Local: *Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Good Teachers Don't Become Bad Ones

Publication/Website: THE UNION SOUND

Judges' Comments:

This entry provides a much-needed reminder that the crisis in education doesn't lie with teachers but with childhood poverty. This theme was often mentioned in the past but seems to have been forgotten by those pushing the testing/teacher evaluation agenda. Credit this author for putting the focus where it belongs. This entry is so much more than the headline implies. An excellent analysis of the manufactured crisis in education is provided in an easy-to-read format. This entry would have been strengthened by less repetition in the bullet points. Since the lead-in line states, "Children who live in poverty suffer in ways unimaginable to those who have always had what they need," the bullet points could just say "They" instead of repeating "Children who live in poverty" for all five.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Wallkill Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Kudos Corner

Publication/Website: IMPACT

Issue Date: February 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a congratulatory message to the winner of the Martin Luther King Jr. Award for the Hudson Valley, complete with a biography of the winner. It is well presented but more of an announcement than a writing sample. This is a very good recap of a teacher's commitment to multicultural education. It covers a lot of bases but only touches on why the teacher believes so strongly in it.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 3 – Class II

Local: *Gates Chili Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Sue's Sidebar

Publication/Website: The Voice

Issue Date: March/April 14-15

Judges' Comments:

This entry is essentially a note of thanks to those who helped in winning a new contract. The writer uses the right tone to convey a hard-won victory but never crosses the line into boasting. Very entertaining essay into the wide-ranging emotions of a local president at negotiation perhaps the final contract of her career. It takes skill to employ such an unassuming writing style that puts the membership first.

Local: *Lynbrook Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Know Your Contract

Publication/Website: LTA Examiner

Judges' Comments:

This entry does an admirable job explaining not just why a grievance process exists but also the ramifications if the process is not followed. This is a great service for your members. It is too bad an editor didn't catch the error in the sentence "But it's also important to understand that something as serious as a contractual violation does take time to accomplish." I am certain the writer either meant to write "rectify" instead of accomplish or perhaps shortening the sentence to "fixing a contractual violation does take time to accomplish."

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mahopac Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Business! Mankind Was My Business

Publication/Website: MahopacTeachers' Asociation Blog

Judges' Comments:

An original perspective on Cuomo – as Scrooge who is visited by ghosts representing the teachers union, parents and polls. The writer avoids a purely critical article by ending with his belief that there is still hope for Andrew. Well-done. The comparisons and contrasts work so well, I really didn't want this piece to end. The writer shows great skill, but perhaps Dickens was a great teacher. Kudos!

Local: *Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Jenga Cuomo

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Judges' Comments:

This article contains no text, just an illustration of Cuomo either building, or tearing down, a pillar of bricks. Hard to assess its message. This is a hilarious illustration. I applaud your inventive image. It truly does say 1,000 words. This is a top contender for best cartoon.

Local: *North Tonawanda United Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Fighting to Teach

Publication/Website: The Journal

Judges' Comments:

This article has potential as a call to action to fight to teach. It could have had more impact if the author focused on one topic at a time, rather than weaving back and forth, and provided more facts to back up the main points of the argument. Good headline that sets the stage for a very good summary of the challenges the teaching profession faced during the year. Historical references points are well written here.

Local: *Nyack Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Time Line of Friedrichs v. CTA

Publication/Website: The Bridge

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Judges' Comments:

This article provides much valuable information about the Friedrichs case, but it is mostly a timeline on what's happened so far with author analysis and perspective. This timeline does not contain original writing so I did not judge this entry on its writing. It is an excellent info graphic, however; there is such fierce competition for that award. It just falls a tad short.

Local: *Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Calling All Teachers

Publication/Website: PJSTA PORTAL

Judges' Comments:

This is a strongly worded indictment of testing and evaluations that are devised by people who don't teach. The call for local control is good as far as it goes but it is thin on facts to back up the rhetoric. Very good call to action against state growth scores. This writer shows great skill in culling down 10 years of concerns into this insightful analysis. This essay, for the most part, does a great job making its point. This entry would have been strengthened by a few simple edits to several overly long sentences.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Persistence and Perseverance Prevail

Publication/Website: THE UNION SOUND

Judges' Comments:

This article supplies some of the big names behind the testing/evaluation craze. While that is helpful, and often overlooked by many critics, the writer loses credibility by misspelling Murdoch and engaging in name-calling – Cuomo as bully, emperor, etc. Very good retrospective of the trials and tribulations. It opens strong. The writing is good and is strongest when sticking to just one point. It just gets bogged down in clichés or overused phrases. Verb tenses also get mixed up, which can confuse the reader. This entry also ends well with a strong call to action.

Local: *Wallkill Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Rumors and Fairytales

Publication/Website: IMPACT

Issue Date: February 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry does a good job of demolishing the rumors and myths about testing/evaluations and opting-out. The presentation could have been improved with some graphics to break up blocks of type, although the layout itself is well done. This entry does an excellent job of separating fact from fiction in an engaging manner. References to fairytales and monsters go a long way in telling a story. If this column could not calm the masses, I don't know what could. This entry could be strengthened by a tighter word edit, but overall a good job.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 4 – Class II

Local: *Gates Chili Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: President's Message

Publication/Website: The Voice

Issue Date: Jan/Feb 14-15

Judges' Comments:

This president's message contains good suggestions in dealing with the Cuomo agenda and education budget. A solid call to action. Very good persuasive essay. The writer sets up the problems and offers the solutions in an effective manner. Solid concrete descriptions help inform the reader as well as the writer clearly announcing when a section is just his opinion. Keep up the good work.

Local: *Lynbrook Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: LTA President Candidate Platforms

Publication/Website: LTA Examiner

Judges' Comments:

The entry consists of a summary of the platforms showing where candidates stand on various issues. Informational but not a writing sample as such, as the candidates themselves do most of the talking. It is unclear whether this qualifies as original writing, as it appears the words come from the candidates. I will say that graphically this is a very good comparison of the two candidates. As an informational graphic it does an excellent job, but it faces fierce competition in this category.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mahopac Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: The Face of Mahopac's Public Education

Publication/Website: MahopacTeachers' Asociation Blog

Judges' Comments:

This entry is mainly a report on after-school programs. It shows how teachers, assistants and parents have come together to make the programs work, but it is mostly reporting facts, not original writing. The program this article references is a crown jewel, but that fact is buried until halfway into the story. The writer has great information and details to share, but just takes too long to get there. The first paragraph might hook more readers with a simple statement along the lines of "Just think of what we can achieve when we all work together." This isn't a fantasy world. It happens every day after school at the Mahopac Middle School where 240 students enrolled in 11 different programs etc.... Then, aspects of that first paragraph would work well in the conclusion. I hope this helps.

Local: *Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: I Love Public Education Valentine Campaign

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Judges' Comments:

This entry consists only of a graphic – I Love Public Education – valentines. Attractive but not a writing sample. What fun and inventive ways to engage your readers. The graphics are bold and simple. The slogans are clever. This entry is better suited for the social media category. It is a strong contender for best community outreach, best info graphic, etc.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Nyack Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: The Governor's Agenda: How it Attacks Teachers, Students & Education

Publication/Website: The Bridge

Judges' Comments:

This is a look at the governor's agenda and a countdown of the attacks on public education that the agenda contains. Hard-hitting and specific, although the tone need not be so hostile. Commendable entry of taking on the large and complex issue of the state budget and trying to explain portions of it to your members. However, this entry gives credence by repeating, even quoting, the Governor's proposals, claims and website. Yes, the writer follows up with each section to give another viewpoint, but that comes after Cuomo's case is made. Take for example "Proposal #43 would make it easier, fairer and faster to remove ineffective teachers from the classroom according to Governor Cuomo." That is followed by eight sentences explaining the proposal. The writer does provide five lengthy paragraphs to explain the union's views of the proposals, but at times ends up further explaining Cuomo's proposals.

Local: *Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: You Are The Union

Publication/Website: PJSTA PORTAL

Judges' Comments:

This entry provides a good contrast between shallow efforts that union members might make to advance a union cause and so-called deep organizing that shows real commitment to that cause. This is coupled with a call for union members to build trusting relationships with members and parents. Well-done, very positive, constructive points. I think this entry would be strengthened by sticking to just one or two topics at a time and a much tighter word edit.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Dare to be Divergent!

Publication/Website: THE UNION SOUND

Judges' Comments:

This entry uses the Divergent series to make the point that an APPR score doesn't measure how good a teacher is. Good points well taken, although not everyone might be aware of Divergent's relevance. This essay cleverly compares a popular book series to the APPR requirements. Excellent examples are provided and varying sentence lengths are used effectively. This clear call to action is a strong entry.

Local: *Walkill Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Standing Up for Public Education in Walkill

Publication/Website: IMPACT

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This recap of a rally gave a good general overview of a rally. The writer covers the basics of what, who, when and where. This rally was on a Friday. Quotes from any of the more than 60 members about why they chose to be there at the end of a long workweek would strengthen this entry.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 5 – Class II

Local: *Gates Chili Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: President's Message

Publication/Website: The Voice

Issue Date: May/June 14-15

Judges' Comments:

The president's message uses a recent retirement party as an example of the kind of social gatherings that teachers should participate in more regularly. Her point that these functions are ways for faculty to bond is well taken. This writer pays tribute to retirees as well as expresses concern about increasing a "generational connection that all educators share." Detailed descriptions explain why this is much more than a challenge to those staying in the profession to become more social. This column gives the reader a lot to ponder and I found myself thinking more about its message than many of the other more "heavy" topics such as funding, testing and such.

Local: *Lynbrook Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Endorsements Postcard

Publication/Website: LTA Examiner

Judges' Comments:

This entry is an endorsements postcard. While it performs an important service for members it is not a writing sample as such. Sometimes simple is not just better, it is best. There is no second-guessing. No questions. This postcard is direct and to the point. Well-done.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mahopac Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: What's the best research in education?

Publication/Website: Mahopac Teachers' Association Blog

Judges' Comments:

This entry makes a point that is often overlooked in other articles about classroom research – namely, that the best research is done in the classroom every day when teachers get to know their students individually and serve them as individuals. That's something blind testing and evaluations can't match. Excellent descriptions. Excellent details. Kudos.

Local: *Nyack Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Fight Back NTA Says "No!" To Gov. Cuomo's Budget

Publication/Website: The Bridge

Issue Date: Spring 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry is a complete package. It starts with a great headline to draw in the reader. The accompanying photo is lively and shows active members. The writing gets right to the point and answers all the who, what, where, when and why questions needed in a true news article. An added bonus is the call to action to sign petitions and other actions against the budget. Good job.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Let's end top down unionism

Publication/Website: PJSTA PORTAL

Judges' Comments:

Give credit to this author's candor. The entry is an all-out slam against NYSUT as a top-down organization with power-hungry leaders. Given those sweeping allegations the author has an obligation to provide facts to support them, but does not. This entry is much like the You Are the Union entry. It takes too long to get to the heart of the matter. The strongest writing is the description of what the PJSTA did to support Zephyr Teachout. Descriptions of more democratic unionism follow and this writer does end on a strong note.

Local: *Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Take Action on the American DREAM for All Students

Publication/Website: THE UNION SOUND

Judges' Comments:

This article recounts the hopes and broken dreams of undocumented students as captured in a student documentary titled "Dreams Among US." The author skillfully uses the documentary to support a call for New York State lawmakers to pass the NY DREAM Act. Good job. This article gives excellent insight into the complex social issue of immigration. Refreshing use of quotes by both teachers and students throughout the column and three explanatory paragraphs of the DREAM Act help inform the reader. The writing could have been structured better as the essay discusses a student-created documentary at length, and then goes back to the documentary after discussing legislation, and then again goes back to legislation.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Walkill Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Education Rally to Support Public Education

Publication/Website: IMPACT

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry consists mostly of photos of a rally in support of public education, with very little text to accompany them. As such, it can't be seen as a writing sample. s page has an excellent quote about why this local held a rally that is supported by three very good photos. However, it lacked some of the basic information about the rally, such as when and where although one could guess it is Walkill and somewhere near the State Police on Route 55 because of the photo.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

General Excellence – Class II

Local: *Fayetteville-Manlius Teachers' Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Fayetteville-Manlius Teachers' Association - Working for Pride!
Website

URL: <http://www.fmteachers.org>

Judges' Comments:

This entry was submitted electronically with a password. However, the handwritten password can't be read. I couldn't access the site.

Local: *Gates Chili Teachers' Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: The Voice

Issue Date: Jan/Feb 14-15

Judges' Comments:

This entry is packed with information and packaged attractively. There is a good mix of topics and a good balance of in-depth and shorter pieces. The layout is appealing to the eye and makes the entire issue a pleasure to read. Solid work all around. Nice clean cover followed by good recap of what's to come (both in the issue and in the coming weeks) on page 2. Please see comments under best writing entries for next two articles. Excellent direction and descriptions to membership on the next two pages. GREAT graphic treatment of a "post-it note" atop a reprint of a legislative update. It shows a president not afraid to share information with the membership. It is always good to make sure your membership knows contract basics. Page 12 devotes a full page to the opt-out resolution. Good job communicating with members

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Lynbrook Teachers Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: LTA Examiner

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has very good graphics and photos, which are well displayed. It could be improved with more substantive content. This four-page newsletter packs a punch. The cover article about the "I Refuse" movement is an excellent recap. Credit is given to other sources. Please see comments regarding the President's Desk column. The Where We Stand page is provided information but it is re-packaged. I wonder if you could have given more space to any of the fundraiser pieces or the educator award news on your back page. I think raising more than \$4,000 at the paint night is worth more than a paragraph!

Local: *New Hartford Teachers Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: The Chalkboard

Issue Date: Oct. 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry features plenty of profiles of new faculty and staff, all packaged in an attractive layout. It could be improved by changing the typeface, which is so black as to give each page a black look. This 8-page newsletter is extremely well done. Welcoming new members to the local with individual profiles, each with their own headline and photos is such a nice touch. "On that Note, Myles Welcomes Christine Krumbach" for a music teacher is exceptionally good. A feature on members participating in a Corporate Cup is also well done. This publication has an exceptionally consistent look, thanks to the format. Photo coverage of the welcome back event could have been improved with some photo captions, but perhaps you all know each other. You must know how much was raised in the TV raffle so why not add that? Retirees get space as well and what an adorable photo! I would have liked to see Herr Beck without sunglasses and more of him! Extremely well done back page, cramming a lot of info in a graphically pleasing way. Clearly you have a variety of members contributing to your newsletter and the writers get a credit. Do they take the photos too? In the Chalkboard box, how about a list of the editor, photographers, contributors who don't get bylines?

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: The AGENDA

Issue Date: Nov/Dec 2015

Judges' Comments:

Lots of information at a glance. However, the busy layout virtually explodes with brief items and while the information is useful the overall effect is to give the issue a cramped look. This newsletter could be improved with a better mix of long and short pieces. Congrats on 18 pages of a very good newsletter! You find so many ways to pack in information in a pleasing way. The cover page sets the tone with a clean look and do you change the question at the bottom of the left panel each issue? That is a great idea! The president's column does a good job explaining the bargaining process to the membership. You do so much right! The column could have been improved by using more specific language (which is often shorter). Every article on programs, charitable events, compassion assembly, etc., completely covers the event with great descriptions. Even your coverage of the Ugly Sweater contest in just two sentences explains why, and that it raises funds for district graduates. Compared to the rest of the publication, the different fonts and sizes on the Colonial Village page varied differently from the other pages. Really nice back page. Overall, very enjoyable read.

Local: *North Tonawanda United Teachers*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: The Journal

Issue Date: October 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a nice package criticizing contract negotiations, Common Core and teacher evaluations. It could be improved if there was a better mix in the content to include less controversial subjects, so that the critical tone of the issue as a whole won't be so overwhelming. Interesting that I judged this newsletter Mar. 22, a day after the new chancellor for the Board of Regents pledging, "practice should inform policy," not the other way around. *The Journal* cover 17 months earlier with the headline "Better Times are Coming" predicts, "soon the education pendulum will begin to swing the other way." Kudos to the writer for bringing perspective to fed-up members. Other articles are well done, and each has a distinct voice. Extremely insightful (and brave) Student Evaluation topic. Rather than just reacting to Cuomo's proposal of adding student input, this article investigates and adds to the discussion. I did not understand the full-page photo of people's backs opposite the page of Keep Our Union Strong. I doubt it was the regional conference. Perhaps it was to go with the previous article, "Opening Day?"

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Nyack Teachers Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: The Bridge

Issue Date: Spring 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry pulls no punches on the Cuomo agenda – it is forceful and pointed. It also happens to have a nice package of news items from different schools, all in an attractive layout. This 12-page newsletter does a very good job reporting news and bringing perspective to clearly an active membership. Great rally photos and of the pool fundraiser. I think the What Can I do? graphic is so witty. Excellent word choices. The news from our schools section is a great way to get members' info into the publication. Might I suggest different photos than buildings be used? Perhaps that is not possible. Does each school have a motto? Or are there buttons? Great Myth vs. Reality chart that helps give the membership far more detail than the mainstream media will ever report. Was that provided? If it was original, you should credit that! Clearly this newsletter is a team effort and it shows great care and respect for members.

Local: *Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: PJSTA PORTAL

Issue Date: June 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has an attractive cover and features a long article that examines teacher evaluations and student testing. It could be improved if there were more articles on a wider variety of topics. Is the graphic on the cover original? Great idea for a Summer edition on Long Island. Love the photo recognition on the scholarships page, but it leaves me wanting for more info. At the very least, each of these graduates knows their college. Add a line (especially for the Career in Education winner.) Also, thank members for their support of efforts that make these scholarships possible. Great photo pages on PJSTA in action (and witty R&R edition). Consider turning that Read aloud compilation or even the Flanagan compilation of photos into a 8 x 10 poster. Weakest photo was of LaValle protest. I understand the problems shooting across the street. But when heads are not even the size of a pin, what is the use? Next time take the picture on the same side of the street and have folks at a diagonal line. The Summer Time Fun article is a great way to invite folks to keep getting together over July and August. Great info in the Tech Corner and who couldn't smile at the baby pictures. Oh Groan article gives a lot of union history and is written with a nice tone. I really enjoyed reading this edition of such a member-centered newsletter.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Rondout Valley Federation of Teachers and School-Related Professionals*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: THE UNION SOUND

Issue Date: Winter 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has a good mix of articles and an attractive layout. The article on what a teacher's day is really like stands out, and the article on attention deficit disorder is informative and timely. Good job. Great front page. Strong yet clean graphic then the open letter to the governor is visually striking. And great effort putting your members' voices on pages 3-4. President's message on page 2 is certainly timely and absolutely conveys the tone that the time to act is now. Just be careful with repeating phrases. Love the bullet points. Editorial cartoon is well-done and good touch. What a lovely article "No Substitute for Hard work" is. Kudos to you for running it across two pages. Yes, it has journalistic writing flaws, but the details and explanation make up for that. The two-page scholarly article about ADHD and physical activity was extremely useful and I am not a teacher. Yes, perhaps this info might have been better offered in a Q and A format. But if that is not an option, this level of detail for your members who most likely have kids on all these medications is a great service. Because it ends with the author offering additional help, it makes me think this is a staffer, so your folks must know how to contact her. The photo back page is nicely laid out although you should have reconsidered your caption. Aren't those RVFT & SRP members joining with allies? Generally in photos with fewer than four people, it's great to identify the folks, so it would have been nice to have names with four of the pics. You would have room without the bullhorn graphic at the left bottom corner and then bump down the Cuomo report card photo and switch the rating photo with the marching with sign photo. Really great job and a pleasure to read.

Local: *Union of Adjunct Faculty at Pace*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Union of Adjunct Faculty at Pace

Issue Date: Sept. 2015

Judges' Comments:

This two-page contract update is exactly what your members need, although it is disheartening to work without a contract. Great job playing it straight with your members, telling them exactly what the union will or won't accept. Perhaps this entry could have been strengthened by adding another line after why the union won't accept a two-tiered system, or, perhaps, even just rewording it to explain a bit more. Nice layout with photos and how to contact officers and staffers. Excellent choice to offer ways members can help during this stressful time.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Wallkill Teachers' Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: IMPACT

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry consists mostly of photos and awards with a brief item on a Rally for Public Education. While the photos are very good, the newsletter could be improved with more substantive articles and a wider mix of topics. School budget page is great. Nice recognition for those who helped pass the budget. Nice photos. All your photos are good, especially on the Poughkeepsie and sign-making page. List of those receiving tenure is also good and was it planned to have the political action ads right below. Your mission statement is good – to make it better how about adding a line such as “We welcome your contributions and ideas.” Very nice to reprint the thank you notes your local has received. The other pages are ads. May is such a busy month, I congratulate you on getting out such a lively and informative edition.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Website – Class II

Local: *Fayetteville-Manlius Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Fayetteville-Manlius Teachers' Association - Working for Pride!
Website

URL: <http://www.fmteachers.org>

Judges' Comments:

The site is password protected. Can't access. Need a password

Local: *Harrison Association of Teachers*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Harrison Association of Teachers Website

URL: www.harrisonteachers.com

Judges' Comments:

Home page has useful links and is touting a new look. Nonetheless the home page is devoid of photos and graphics, although links do package type and photos that make the page inviting. More content would be welcome. I accessed this page three different days. I think your secondary head with all the words is way too busy. It is extremely difficult to read the letters in white type. I was easily able to navigate to HAT Organization and Mission Statement under the ABOUT US section. After that nothing would load. It is too bad because the Scholarship, charity and History sections sound most interesting. (Hence the multiple attempts on the site.) Your main page on each day featured links to NYSUT articles. I am sorry I can't truly judge your website as I could not get it to load. From what I could see, it holds much promise.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association Website

URL: <http://www.nwta-union.org>

Judges' Comments:

This website has an attractive home page with links on the right and left side that members can access for information on a wide range of topics. The home page could contain more current items with links attached, however, and one of the links led to a page that said it had expired. Easy-to-navigate website that seemed packed with information for members. Obviously I could not access the Private Member Information section. I wonder if you should rename that. If I were a hacker, boy, would I want into that site. Also Forms and BOD Meeting Minutes are password protected so I couldn't access there either. Financial information is very interesting as it gives info about 529 college savings plans, as well as retirement plans.

Local: *Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: The Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association Website

URL: www.thepjsta.org

Judges' Comments:

Very bright and informative home page with a running scroll of items that have a "more information" link included. This site is current and visually attractive. There are links to varied topics on the right side of the page as well as a long list of archive lists. All in all, a comprehensive newsy site. I went to the website on March 11 and March 22. The Reclaim our Schools graphic was featured because of the rescheduled date. I won't be able to check for coverage of that rally. Everything about the main page is pleasing. Scrolling through recent content was not just extremely interesting but also pleasing to read. The video for the Students Not Scores forum was a tad dark, but kudos for putting up any videos as that can really take a lot of computer time for loading. The second video wouldn't load for me. This entire site was easy to navigate and really made sense, except The PJSTA Letter to the Community, while well-written, is dated February 2015 and is the second choice, even before the About section. Why the PJSTA Wears Red for Public Ed is also extremely well-written and is the last choice. I would suggest making that your 2nd choice and moving the community letter down. Given you have excellent photos on the main site, how about a photo of your officers? Either a group photo or individually. This is an extremely good site that seeks to increase participation and organizing.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Union of Adjunct Faculty at Pace*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Union of Adjunct Faculty at Pace Website

URL: www.uafponline.org

Judges' Comments:

This is a good website with newsy items on the home page and links above the page. It could be improved with more content on both the home page and the links. Extremely clean look to this website's home page. Wise decision to have contact email addresses right there. Clicking on the rotating sections only kept bringing me to Google maps. It's too bad because those rotating screens are extremely well written and made me want to read more. I did find some of the info under the Membership section and under forms and Docs, so I think that you are just rotating those boxes without links. Are those actual members in the photos? If so, they would get a top award. Perhaps you should contract to have someone recreate those photos. I had no problem accessing any area of this site, including the 2012-2015 contract. I was surprised that was not password protected. The site is not updated regularly, only when there is news to report. I found the Labor Press Briefs an interesting section although there were only two items from *The New York Times* in it. Both excellent choices for a union website. It's clear this local is struggling to settle a contract and that takes much time. Excellent strategies to have a student letter included and the Jan. 29th call to sign a letter to the president and the board.

Local: *Walkkill Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Walkkill Teachers Website

URL: www.wallkillteachers.org

Judges' Comments:

The graphics are good and the links on top of the page take the visitor to a range of information including benefits and voting. Eliminating the scrolling news on the right side of the page and incorporating these items on the home page front and center could improve it. Overall the website could use more content. Easy-to-use website with a clean look. I was able to access every section of this website. This site includes sections for retirees and parents. I found it interesting one could even book a room at the union offices through the website and wondered how frequently that option is used. All the benefits information a member would need appears to be in the Benefit Trust section. I was unclear as to the purpose of the NYSUT Member Action Center section. It appeared to just have a logo. No information, no additional link to click on. Other than the events calendar, most of the updates are through the Impact Newsletter section or the photo gallery. There is also a prominent link to the local's Facebook page, where there were more frequent updates.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Blog – Class II

Local: *Fayetteville-Manlius Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Blog

Publication/Website: Fayetteville-Manlius Teachers' Association President's Blog

URL: <http://www.fmteachers.org/president>

Judges' Comments:

Cannot access. Password protected

Local: *Mahopac Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Blog

Publication/Website: Mahopac Teachers' Association Blog

URL: mahopacta.blogspot.com

Judges' Comments:

Good postings all around but some postings do not have an author's name. Otherwise a very informative site. I was easily able to access this blog. This website also features easy ways to follow the local on Twitter. I checked the site several times in March. It was updated with a well-written article by the local president about why as a parent he was opting his sons out of the tests. Previous posts are all just as well written. While the quality is high, I must grade low for quantity. There have certainly been many topics to write about, not the least of which is the proposed state budget. While this is only submitted as best blog, I snooped around and the actions page did not appear to have been updated in a while. Tisch is no longer chancellor and King is no longer commissioner. You should remove outdated items. What a great idea to run member classifieds.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Use of Social Media – Class II

Local: *Fayetteville-Manlius Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Fayetteville-Manlius Teachers' Association Facebook

URL: www.facebook.com/FMTA

Judges' Comments:

Hard to access, search takes visitors to long list of sites that also have FMTA in search line.

Local: *Lynbrook Teachers Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Lynbrook Teachers Association Facebook

URL: <https://www.facebook.com/Lynbrook-Teachers-Association-143322819071350>

Judges' Comments:

Very good timely postings, very attractive host page. It could be improved with better reproduction of some photos. When I tried to access: "The link may have expired or the page may only be visible to an audience that you aren't in."

Local: *Mahopac Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Mahopac Teachers' Association Twitter

URL: twitter.com/mahopacta

Judges' Comments:

Great photos, great tweets – an account that obviously has a loyal following. And it's easy to access as well. Good job. Excellent twitter feed. Doesn't over tweet every single item that comes across its desk. Of course there are retweets of local presidents, other unions and news organizations, but refreshing to see retweets of the Mahopac Orchestra, the MHS band, sports teams. Thank you to school bus drivers especially sweet.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Name of Entry: Constitution Convention PSA

Publication/Website: Niagara Wheatfield Teachers Association YouTube

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0TijNuDZVE>

Judges' Comments:

Very good segments on the perils of a Constitutional Convention. Includes much perspective and demolishes "myths," and the use of kids to introduce the subject is eye-catching and well done. Hilarious, witty, engaging, fun. I could watch this again and again. This gets my vote! This gets my vote for Best Community Outreach and Best Creative Writing.

Local: *Nyack Teachers Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Nyack Teachers Association Facebook

URL: www.Facebook.com/groups/719327341480037

Judges' Comments:

This entry has brief content that consists of a few old photos. It needs to be improved with more timely content. Couldn't find the page.

Local: *Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: The Port Jefferson Station Teachers Association Twitter

URL: www.twitter.com/@thepjsta

Judges' Comments:

This link takes the visitor to the website of the chapter, which is reviewed in the best website category. Most of these tweets are of the local's website and other Opt Out supporters, which tends to make this feed one-dimensional, like listening to the same music over and over again.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Wallkill Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Wallkill Teachers' Association Facebook

URL: <https://www.facebook.com/wallkillteachers>

Judges' Comments:

A very good site. Lots of information attractively packaged with a combination of photos, graphics and type. Good balance of topics and interesting postings. Do you know you use the British spelling of Organization? Active page. Lots of shares. Most recent content was three photos from a March 11 event at New Paltz. The only original content was captions for the photo and then every once in awhile adding a comment to a share. While it is commendable to have a Facebook page, this entry would be strengthened with more original content.

Local: *Yorktown Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Yorktown Congress of Teachers YouTube

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?sns=em&v=cZH606BRD6o>

Judges' Comments:

This link has video from a 2011 rally and a 2012 rally. The visuals are well done, but the site could be improved with more timely postings. Video was unavailable when I accessed the page.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 1 – Class III

Local: *Buffalo Teachers Federation*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Buffalo Bashing Cuomo Called Out By BTF For Recent Negative Remarks

Publication/Website: PROVOCATOR

Issue Date: Feb 2015

Judges' Comments:

A forceful rebuttal to Gov. Cuomo's attacks on Buffalo public schools, with facts to back up the author's theme. Persuasive with just the right touch of outrage. The lead to this article is perfect, but why allow four lengthy paragraphs quoting something you disagree with? Put the union view first.

Local: *Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: A meditation of sorts. On mediation.

Publication/Website: The WORD

Judges' Comments:

Drawing a comparison between arbitration and mediation, and noting how the latter might be a better choice in some labor situations could improve this entry. Attractive layout. This writing does an excellent job of working in scholarly views with current events and homage to Alice's Restaurant. Also, skilled use of varying sentence length and descriptive phrasing. Engaging, fun to read, perceptive. A top contender.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Levittown United Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: What is Friedrichs?

Publication/Website: Levittown Teachers

Judges' Comments:

This article is an extremely well done and thoughtful analysis of the Friedrichs court case. Also, I applaud devoting so much space to this complex issue. Having said that, crediting others would have strengthened this entry's research, for which it relied on heavily.

Local: *Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Governor Cuomo Out of Control!

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Judges' Comments:

This is a broadside against Cuomo and his budget, with a focus on districts that will suffer the most if Cuomo stints on school aid. The reader can feel the writer's blood pressure rising, which is good, but when the author resorts to terms like "king" and "rant" and "insane" the rhetoric gets a tad too heated. Providing more than generalities would have strengthened it.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: We Will Prevail

Publication/Website: NCCFT Blog

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is quite the summary of the bad state of affairs at this community college while constantly thanking members who are making the best of a bad situation. To paraphrase this entry, it is remarkable this local is able to maintain a blog, put out a newsletter and continue countless achievements in such chaos. Yes, there are grammatical and typographical errors in this entry. This entry is aptly titled and sometimes, there should be awards for just showing up.

Local: *Niskayuna Educational Secretaries Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Tip of the Month

Publication/Website: Noteworthy - NESA

Issue Date: May-June 2015

Judges' Comments:

I wish there was an award for "Best article to help you on your job" because this entry would receive it. I learned more about Microsoft EXCEL from this article than I did from the workbook I received and one-on-one training. Great job and am certain your members appreciated it.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: WORKING TOGETHER

Publication/Website: SPEAKOUT

Judges' Comments:

Hats off for devoting two full pages to a community outreach event. Excellent captioning. So wonderful that you ran both the creating of the float and then what the float actually looked like. KUDOS! Who was the photographer? The members painting the green boxes... It could be better if the photographer would stand next to those red boxes to perhaps get their faces rather than the backs of their heads. Same for the photo above, that member with the pink cap, look at her working and all those materials in front. If the photographer would have gotten over by the window and gotten low, that would have made a good photo a great photo.

Local: *Professional Staff Congress/CUNY*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Teaching on racial justice and policing

Publication/Website: Clarion

Issue Date: January 2015

Judges' Comments:

It is long on reporting and could be improved with some analysis, perhaps in a sidebar. And the type-heavy page could be improved with some breakout quotes. Excellent coverage of current events and relating it not just to the members in the union, but also the student body as well as community members. Excellent use of source materials and trying to get numerous perspectives. This is minor, but this piece just needed a closer edit to use a more active voice to be truly stellar. Such as "will be a presenter" to will present. Or when a sentence has "says that when there is a" realize all the reader needs is "says when a." See how "Getting students talking to each other is a key goal, Bornstein says." is stronger than "Bornstein says that a key goal of his class is to get students talking to each other.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Smithtown Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Make the Connection

Publication/Website: FACULTY FOCUS

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

Nice balance between criticism and action. Very good article about the need for solidarity without being too preachy! Excellent use of specifics in the opening paragraph. I do wish the concluding paragraph would have a specific example ... such as: If you do not vote or speak up ... we might run out of classroom supplies in December, students will get even fewer services.

Local: *Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Bobst Trial Concludes

Publication/Website: Momentum

Judges' Comments:

This is a strong contender for best article about union values as this writer goes to great lengths to spell out how the union has gone to bat for its members at the Bobst Library. Great use of members' voices as well as leadership. Be careful with editorializing.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *United University Professions - Empire State College Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association: The Stakes for Labor, Economic Justice, and Democracy

Publication/Website: UUP ESC Chapter Newsletter Excellence in Unity

Issue Date: Fall 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is another article on the agency fee case before the Supreme Court, but with a big difference. The author treats the subject as a legal topic, complete with footnotes and citations to previous cases that might indicate how the court will vote. As a result the reader learns a lot about court precedent as well as a lot about this case and the high stakes for unions. Excellent, thorough job of scholarship. This writer does an excellent job explaining complex issues.

Local: *United University Professions - Farmingdale Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Academic Adjuncts Revisited

Publication/Website: UNIFIER

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a good breakdown on issues involving adjuncts at Owego. The author breaks down the topic issue by issue rather than stringing all of them in one large block of type. Very informative. The hyphens and dashes with no period in the first sentence confused me. After that thought, the writer cleverly points out the rather horrendous working conditions adjuncts have. This article truly saddened me about those conditions, and then the last paragraph throws in that adjuncts love to teach. After such a buildup, to have two sentences, just doesn't seem to do it justice.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *United University Professions - Oswego Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Pearson and the Common Core: Deforming Public Education and Dismantling the Commons

Publication/Website: IN TOUCH...

Issue Date: Spring 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is an eye-opening, even alarming, article on how the testing craze crushed the hopes, at least for the moment, of a promising and dedicated education student. The author rightly points out the danger of rigid testing parameters that ignore past achievements and future potential. Very good effort. Well-researched, referenced and useful. Excellent use of specific examples. This article begins to lay out strategies for member actions, but stops far short. "SUNY faculty and staff could do more to agitate and organize for the end of Pearson's reign over K-12 education" is followed only with the suggestion of taking cues from parents who opt out of tests. What about signing a petition, attending a rally or giving to VOTE-COPE?

Local: *Utica Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing 1

Name of Entry: Solidarity

Publication/Website: Utica Teachers Association Signal

Issue Date: Nov/Dec 2015

Judges' Comments:

This article focuses on solidarity and what it means for unions. It is a good exposition but it is a stretch to compare unions fighting battles with the war on terrorism. That diminishes the argument's effectiveness. Obviously a contender for best article about solidarity. This writer makes skilled use of current events, concrete descriptions, and specific examples. Also, excellent way to vary sentence structure to make this a pleasure to read.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 2 – Class III

Local: *Buffalo Teachers Federation*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: 80 Reps Spend Weekend Learning BTF Contract

Publication/Website: PROVOCATOR

Judges' Comments:

Informative and well-presented, but could be improved with more of the writer's perspective and analysis. Great lead sentence. It takes skill to make a weekend training conference sound interesting. Photographing workshops also take some skills and you do a great job of showing a wide variety of members. This article really puts a face on those 80 reps. Captions would have strengthened this entry. If you don't think there is room, realize that some of the info from the article could be put into the caption.

Local: *Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Labor history is alive online

Publication/Website: The WORD

Judges' Comments:

The information is interesting and well presented. It could have been improved with a greater application of past struggles to today's battles. Excellent accompanying graphic. The writer clearly shares her interest in labor history and resources for others. This entry would be strengthened with an example why the writer is so interested in labor history.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers*

Category: **Best Writing 2**

Name of Entry: Continue the Fight - Advocate for Public Education

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Judges' Comments:

This is a good call to action to fight Cuomo's anti-school agenda. It includes a good suggestion for standing up and fighting back, and there is a proper tone of outrage throughout. This writer clearly knows how to persuade. Simple clear examples are used effectively. Points are made and then the writer moves on. This is a delight to read. Also clear strategies are laid out in the conclusion. Excellent job.

Local: *Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers*

Category: **Best Writing 2**

Name of Entry: Get Ready

Publication/Website: NCCFT Blog

Issue Date: June 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry makes the reader feel as if he or she was attending the June Board of Trustees meeting – it is that detailed in presentation. But it is so in-house it leaves an outsider wishing that just some highlights were featured, with lessons that could be applied to chapters everywhere. This reads more like minutes from a meeting and in such “buries the lead.” More than halfway into the article is the news that the acting deans told the board of directors it was okay to devastate the programs they headed at the college. (Yes I oversimplified.) Thinking about conveying to the reader what news happened at the meeting would strengthen this entry.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Niskayuna Educational Secretaries Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Baby Snapping Turtles at Glencliff

Publication/Website: Noteworthy - NESAs

Issue Date: Sept-Oct 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry would be strengthened with an explanation for those who are not at Glencliff. Perhaps this happens every year. Perhaps this is a school project and involves science lessons. Creative that the writer noted "We saw the mother making a nest just before the end of the school year." And then Sept. 2, the turtles hatched. The front office is the front lines so if the paperwork is not ready, schools just don't work!

Local: *Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: 19th Annual Student Citizen Awards

Publication/Website: Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers Website

Judges' Comments:

The photos are well developed and properly sized. Excellent use of photography, interspersing musicians, presenters with award recipients. Captions would have strengthened this entry.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Professional Staff Congress/CUNY*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Who's behind anti-union SCOTUS case?

Publication/Website: Clarion

Issue Date: October 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is an in-depth look at the agency fee case before the Supreme Court. There is much valuable background information to give readers a perspective on the case and what it means for unions if the court sides with the plaintiffs. Excellent analysis not just the current event of a case before the Supreme Court, but as the headline promises, who is behind it and why. This article is so well researched and well referenced.

Local: *Smithtown Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Why Union?

Publication/Website: FACULTY FOCUS

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

I really love this kind of article, especially at the holidays. I have seen this referenced so many times though; I don't think the 36 reasons qualify as original writing. I do wish they had been referenced. However, I do consider the very strong opening paragraph and conclusion as a job well done.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: NYSUT Representative Assembly

Publication/Website: Momentum

Judges' Comments:

Excellent strategy of pairing issues facing the local union with increased participation in the statewide union governance structure. This article clearly spells out why members should care. Excellent use of photographs with captions makes this a complete package. Perhaps the only flaw is the headline and the fact that the last sentence of the first paragraph should have been worked into the first. Every other aspect is so creative and well done!

Local: *United University Professions - Empire State College Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Corporatization of the University

Publication/Website: UUP ESC Chapter Newsletter Excellence in Unity

Issue Date: June 2015

Judges' Comments:

This article lays out the problem at length, but then ends with one sentence that organizing is essential to countering the influences pulling higher ed away from its mission. That is a huge missed opportunity. How about some examples of that organizing? Well done although it could have been improved with less reporting on the Lawyer's Guild presentation and more of the author's own observations and conclusions.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *United University Professions - Farmingdale Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: President's Message

Publication/Website: UNIFIER

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

Very good article explaining to members how leadership works to represent them as well as bringing back to the members information that was learned at a conference. Then, this writer also skillfully provides strategies. Good use of specific examples. Good summary points.

Local: *United University Professions - Oswego Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 2

Name of Entry: Book Review: How to Jump Start Your Union: Lessons from the Chicago Teachers

Publication/Website: IN TOUCH...

Issue Date: Fall 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a long review of a book about the Chicago teachers' strike in 2012. The writer wisely applies the lessons from that struggle to the crisis facing today's faculties as they go up against hard-bargaining administrators. Well done. The presentation could have benefited with more graphics or breakout quotes to break up the type-heavy pages. This article is well researched and well referenced. It's refreshing to find a review willing to devote a large section explaining the appendix. The author also shares additional research with the reader. Great job.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 3 – Class III

Local: *Buffalo Teachers Federation*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Buffalo Believe Ambassadors Have Conversations With Buffalo Voters

Publication/Website: PROVOCATOR

Judges' Comments:

Too many Buffaloes in this headline! Otherwise good job explaining this program to members. Excellent use of quote by Joe Cantafio. This entry would have been strengthened with a sentence about follow-up. Did this program really end in August, with just having genuine conversations with more than 20,000 voters?

Local: *Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Beware the thunder lizards coming to a campus near you

Publication/Website: The WORD

Judges' Comments:

What college teacher doesn't remember the MOOCs craze? This article is a welcome perspective on that mania, which has eased somewhat, but warns that wealthy and influential people are pushing hard for more online courses so that teachers can teach even more students than they do now. The writer also warns that online courses may someday be for the poor, while only the rich can afford a campus education. Well done – a wakeup call that should not be ignored. Exceptional headline! Excellent analysis of the online course issue. Well-researched and well referenced. Using Godzilla as a touchstone throughout this essay works extremely well. A pleasure to read.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Testing - Not an Indicator of Success

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Judges' Comments:

This fine article puts the spotlight on the one great flaw of measuring student success by testing – namely, students who memorize to pass tests usually forget all that they learn within a few months after classes have ended. How true. The writer wisely calls for a more enlightened approach to learning. This point deserves more attention than ever in this age of testing mania. This is yet another strong example of writing from this publication. Strong descriptions. Clear details. Persuasive essay. This entry has extremely fierce competition in this category.

Local: *Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Paradigm Shift

Publication/Website: NCCFT Blog

Issue Date: November 2015

Judges' Comments:

Entertaining insight into the testing issues using a golf analogy. Very good use of descriptions and details. The writer continues to use the lesson from that analogy in three concluding paragraphs. Too many points are made in these three paragraphs that confuse the issue. Perhaps leave out the recollection of proctoring the biology Regents with students clinging to their review books. It seems to muddy your otherwise clear analysis.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Niskayuna Educational Secretaries Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Taking Clean Water for Granted

Publication/Website: Noteworthy - NESA

Issue Date: Sept-Oct 2015

Judges' Comments:

This article uses a water main break in Niskayuna as a backdrop for commenting on the water crisis of the Navajos as reported by CBS. Good effort that demonstrates how water shortages can inconvenience some but amount to a real struggle for others. It could have been improved if the writer had included more analysis and perspective. Excellent compilation of three disparate events with a common thread that you present to your members so well. Your concern for members is a lovely touch. Great job.

Local: *Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: You are More Than a Test Score

Publication/Website: SPEAKOUT

Issue Date: 9/2015

Judges' Comments:

Could this be the first headline that notes teachers are more than a test score? It's quite creative and I do wish you had started off this column along those lines. Perhaps mix it in with your welcome back and acknowledging the weird workweek schedule that was September. Something like, "As we all worked to establish routines with our students this month, I saw example after example of your hard work to make sure it was a great start to the school year. The calendar tested us, but time and again, you aced that exam, getting students and your classrooms back in the groove." Nice style to your updates. Clear and concise writing. Good job!

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Professional Staff Congress/CUNY*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: City College, Selma, Montgomery

Publication/Website: Clarion

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

The author draws a great contrast between members of the City College community who rushed to fight segregation in Selma during the 1960s, while City College itself was lily white. Good insight and perspective on the past and now, and how some of those early anti-segregation protestors remained behind to live and work among the South's black community. Well-done, but clearly an example of professional writing. Top contender for the best article about labor history. Also, for a news article this has excellent graphic design. Excellent use of historical photographs. Excellent subheads in the writing. Perhaps its only flaw is the headline. It doesn't really draw the reader in. Excellent use of quotes. The writer does an excellent job of weaving in recollections and articles from 50 years ago (so of course it helps to have such great historical records) with current interviews. What a gem the Somerstein interview was! Great job.

Local: *Smithtown Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: The History of Charter Schools

Publication/Website: FACULTY FOCUS

Issue Date: May 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry could have been improved if the author had expanded on his last point – namely that the charter schools haven't lived up to their promise. Congratulations for taking on the complex issue of charter schools. This article does a great job of laying the groundwork on the history (as the headline promises). Providing more research where charters are a threat to public education would have strengthened this entry. Otherwise it's just a claim that is not backed up. There are many examples of for-profit companies putting profits above the education of students. Use at least one of them. Or at least cite those that do such a bad job of educating students the state has to close them. These figures are available.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Health & Safety Update: Workplace Bullying

Publication/Website: Momentum

Judges' Comments:

Excellent connection between how a workshop a union rep attends can help members on the job. The writer uses clear and concise language. Especially helpful to list so many strategies members can use themselves, and how the union can help them. This entry is up against fierce competition so realize we have to find weaknesses in articles for the top awards. So in this case, what bothers me is why is there a photo of Wendy Hord? The writer notes in the first paragraph she is part of the health and safety committee. But then I noticed the byline. So then, clearly this health and safety specialist is the person creating the Workplace Bullying Toolkit and that could have been a great connection to make. Please realize that is nitpicky and you did a great job.

Local: *United University Professions - Empire State College Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: Outreach at the NYS Legislature: Not What I Expected!

Publication/Website: UUP ESC Chapter Newsletter Excellence in Unity

Issue Date: Summer 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a very interesting first-person account of a student who joins with UUP members to address the Assembly and Senate. The author acknowledges that his fears of facing a hostile audience were more receptive than he anticipated. A good example of teamwork in getting the union message out, as told from a "beginner's" well-balanced perspective. Good job. Kudos to this chapter for creating the teachable moment that allowed this article to be written in the first place. Clearly this writer is a student intern and writing is not her field, nor is politics! The enthusiasm and descriptions of the day work hard to outweigh those flaws. Specifics of the "fighting for the rights of thousands" or the change that is needed would have strengthened this entry. Here's an example where it works so well to include a photo of the author. Nicely cropped to show the face and the sign.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *United University Professions - Farmingdale Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: How Prepared Are You?

Publication/Website: UNIFIER

Issue Date: Nov 2015

Judges' Comments:

This writer does a great job giving members information on ways to get more info that could help them in the event of a tragedy. This article would be strengthened by perhaps giving the members one specific bit of information he learned, and then suggest the readers learn more by going to those resources. With the fierce level of competition at this level, that is the way we have to judge. Really this is a great job. It is well written and gives great specifics. It just needed one more thing to really stand out. Keep at it!

Local: *United University Professions - Oswego Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 3

Name of Entry: For Whom May the Union Speak? May it Speak for Thee?

Publication/Website: IN TOUCH...

Issue Date: Fall 2015

Judges' Comments:

This informative article is packed with facts about the Friedrichs case, which is a testament to the author's extensive research efforts. It could have been strengthened if the author's analysis and perspective played more of a role in the finished product. Having read numerous other articles dissecting the Friedrichs case, I found this a most enjoyable analysis. Not only does the writer summarize this complex issue well, she also finds ways to draw connections with other current events. I find her linking of this case to the 2010 Citizens United case to be well researched and referenced. Great job.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 4 – Class III

Local: *Buffalo Teachers Federation*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: BTF, NYSUT Fighting Receivership

Publication/Website: PROVOCATOR

Issue Date: June 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a tough one. Clearly this is a huge topic in Buffalo, so of course your members already probably get some information from the mainstream media about this. I know the media gives labor news short shrift, so here is where you come in. Your headline says the BTF and NYSUT are fighting receivership. Why you are doing that should be much higher in this article and much more clearly stated. You could even work that in with how the union informed members at meetings. The reader must go all the way to the end of the article to find out what the union is working for. The theme and tone are right-on but the article could be improved by relying less on reporting and more on highlighting the state's hypocrisy.

Local: *Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Looking forward

Publication/Website: The WORD

Judges' Comments:

This writer takes on a huge challenge of summarizing the advocacy work of a full year in one column. (It's great there are many successes to celebrate as well as laying out future challenges.) The photo editor needs to be commended for grouping together first-time attendees at a conference in such a nice way. Excellent way of showcasing those members and removing the so-called "dead" space from four photos. This article is an excellent recap, but it is up against such fierce competition, it needed to do more than recap events to win recognition. Keep up the good work, please!

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: MVFT Distributes 10,000 Books to Mount Vernon Students

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Judges' Comments:

This writer does an excellent job explaining what went into distributing 10,000 books to students. Excellent use of photographs showing the many stages the boxes and boxes of books went through to get to the hands of students. Kudos to thinking out of the box, pun intended on that, as most articles would have just focused perhaps on making sure to get quotes from a reading teacher about the impact having books at home can make. Great job.

Local: *Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: How Nassau Republicans Take Care of One of Their Own

Publication/Website: NCCFT Blog

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

The sense of outrage is palpable in this article and with good reason – it uncovers a \$150,000-a-year plum job to a politically connected insider. Excellent analysis on the impact government corruption can have and the ways it can trickle down. This writer does so much right, I wonder if an errant editor slipped in the error in the last line. It makes so much more sense if the words “because it” are removed. Well-referenced citations and summaries help the reader make connections except for the reference to an “editorial board” in the sixth paragraph. Did you mean the college board, which is most often referenced? Or perhaps since *Newsday* is cited, was there an article about a meeting with those editors? Those are the only errors in an otherwise pleasure-to-read piece.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Our Schools - Our Community - Our Voice

Publication/Website: Connection

Issue Date: 3/2015

Judges' Comments:

This is an excellent recap of a community forum, however you are up against such fierce competition in this area that a recap is not enough for an award. Congratulations though on doing a great job informing your members about the event. Excellent use of photography. The shirts are one of the few examples where the back of folks works in a photo. Excellent crop to show how packed that auditorium must have been.

Local: *Professional Staff Congress/CUNY*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Religion behind anti-union SCOTUS case

Publication/Website: Clarion

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is an interesting angle on the Friedrichs case before the Supreme Court – namely, that religiously aligned groups are supporting the plaintiffs in what is an apparent effort to bolster private schools over publicly funded ones by depriving teacher unions of agency fees. Very good job by an investigative journalist, but the question is whether investigative journalism is appropriate for a writing contest. As noted in the Editor's note, this is part of a series on the Friedrichs case. It is so well written and then when I get to the end I see why. The writer is an investigate journalist who specializes in such coverage. I certainly applaud this local for providing this information to its members. I don't feel right about nominating this entry for a top award, however, I will advocate for the entire series to be recognized for best news coverage.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Smithtown Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: As it Relates to Us

Publication/Website: FACULTY FOCUS

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is really an article about an article – one in *Rolling Stone* magazine about looting a union pension. The topic is a good one but the writer relies heavily on merely citing the *Rolling Stone* article. And nowadays any mention of *Rolling Stone* brings up a question of that magazine's credibility. This writer provides an excellent summary of a crisis facing public employees who are busy fighting education reform. The writer does an excellent job citing others' work and then begins to draw the connection to the possibility of a Constitutional Convention in New York State. This entry would have been strengthened by the information about how New York pension funds have a board that includes teacher-members and a retired member, and a state comptroller to keep the funds out of the hands of a governor. There would have been room without the graphic of the man reading a newspaper, which doesn't add to the article.

Local: *Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Health Insurance on the Rocks

Publication/Website: Momentum

Judges' Comments:

This article raises a point about the Affordable Care Act that is too often overlooked – namely, that some insurances have such high deductibles as to be insurance in name only. The writer also lambastes NYU administrators as “shameless liars” and notes the huge discrepancy between NYU's surplus and its cries of tight budgets. Good effort but name calling - shameless liars - diminishes the writer's credibility. This is an excellent package. Easy to read graphically. The headline draws readers into the story. The photo pairs nicely and even provides info to another story on a different page. This writer clearly makes points about the complex issue of health insurance with specific appropriate examples. Not only is this sentence — “Make no mistake that what NYU has done to faculty/administrators, they will want to do the same to your health insurance options when our contract expires in 2017.”— so skilled, the next sentences are just as clear and logical about what the union is facing. Perhaps all that is missing is what the union is doing to fight it, but I bet that is on that other page referenced in the photo.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *United University Professions - Empire State College Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Paying it Forward

Publication/Website: UUP ESC Chapter Newsletter Excellence in Unity

Issue Date: Fall 2015

Judges' Comments:

Good perspective on what opportunities will be lost if the wrong candidates get elected. This column does a great job of setting the reader up to get angry about how union members are portrayed in the media, and then provides strategies of how the writer copes. The writer skillfully weaves in an invitation to work with the union to identify more. Excellent use of repetition. This entry could have been stronger by adopting an editorial "we" once in a while. See how "We all know this" is stronger than "I know you all know this." Keep at it.

Local: *United University Professions - Farmingdale Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Fun With Bugs at COARM

Publication/Website: UNIFIER

Issue Date: Nov 2015

Judges' Comments:

This writer finds ways to make a union meeting interesting! Even better, she provides specific information to members about what NOT to do at the risk of putting state health coverage at risk. This entry would have been a top contender if it had done that with at least two more areas. What is one interesting bug fact that made you reconsider using pesticides? And when should the retirees apply for the vision and dental plans. It won't take more space and might even take fewer words. Great job and keep at it.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *United University Professions - Oswego Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 4

Name of Entry: Oswego Adjuncts Organize

Publication/Website: IN TOUCH...

Issue Date: Spring 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is an excellent recap about the plight of contingent and adjunct faculty. Nice use of photos and excellent captioning that gives additional information not repeated in the story. Great package.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Writing 5 – Class III

Local: *Buffalo Teachers Federation*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Cuomo Indicted on Five Charges as 1,000 Participate in Mock Trial in Kleinhans Music Hall

Publication/Website: PROVOCATOR

Issue Date: April 2015

Judges' Comments:

The idea of a mock trial to indict Gov. Cuomo is original and instructive at the same time. Overall it is well done but words like "brutalized our students" go a bit far. This would be just as effective, if not more so, without the strident language. Too bad the lead sentence just recaps the headline – or perhaps the headline was written first? This is certainly a most creative way to get your point across. Excellent use of photographs, although perhaps it would have been better to use fewer and then provide more space to testimony? I would have been interested to read what the state Teacher of the Year testified to as well as college professors and principals. The former school board member quote is most apt, but it's an interesting choice that is the only witness quoted when the article appeared to have room for at least four more lines.

Local: *Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: What we can learn from Zimbabwean orphans about social justice and collective action

Publication/Website: The WORD

Judges' Comments:

This is a very moving account of Zimbabwean orphans visiting the campus and explanation of a program called ZimKids. That alone makes for interesting reading but it is what the author adds that makes this entry stand out. She relates the orphans' struggle with her early life, which was harsh but not as severe as the orphans' experiences. But also draws a link to how unionism helped her and others like her to rise above her circumstances. Very well done and heartfelt. This excellent entry starts strong and just gets stronger. A pleasure to read. Perhaps its only flaw is that I don't know where Bulawayo is. Excellent descriptive language paired with specific concrete examples is done well but then the writer skillfully reveals her inner struggles and emotions.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: What Has the Union Done For Me Lately?

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Judges' Comments:

This writer does a great job of providing not just information to the members, but also strategies they could also use. This is an excellent example of a local responding specifically to one specialized area of the membership, which also benefits the students and the entire learning community. I especially liked the writer's way of taking the moral high ground over a contentious testing issue. Teachers should not be forced to consider needy students a liability could become a rallying cry. Excellent work.

Local: *Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Foundation Foil

Publication/Website: NCCFT Blog

Issue Date: April 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry is labeled a blog, so there is a question whether it has been entered in the correct category. While I applaud this local for providing the space to run legal proceedings, you really should have summarized for the reader especially since first you lost the case and then you won the case. Or perhaps that was your intent? Regardless, this is not even a recap of the legal proceedings. It doesn't really qualify as an entry for this contest as it doesn't contain original writing.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: PMHS Senior Leads Renovation of Soup Kitchen

Publication/Website: Connection

Issue Date: 3/2015

Judges' Comments:

This is a good profile of a student who led the renovation of a soup kitchen. However, there is a dark blue background for the type that makes it almost impossible to read. This is an excellent entry of a worthy cause. Excellent timeline photos accompany the article. Because this entry is up against such fierce competition I must note that the verb tense changes were distracting. Going from past to present, sometimes even in the same paragraph distracted from this otherwise very good entry. This article goes above and beyond to really detail how this senior student went about all that was needed for this project. Good work!

Local: *Professional Staff Congress/CUNY*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Wikipedia, Women and Art

Publication/Website: Clarion

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry is an article on the low number of women who edit or write for Wikipedia. It could have been improved if the author had been more analytical. The actual headline is "Chipping away at Wikipedia's gender gap," which is a great head made even better with a subhead of The Art Feminism Edit-a-thon. Excellent entry and this is a top contender for Best Feature Story. This article actually made me care about Wikipedia with its vivid descriptions and specific examples. While many articles are well-researched and referenced, this writer's work is stellar. Perhaps starting with the information from the second paragraph could have strengthened it, but that is an extremely minor quibble. Excellent job.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Smithtown Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Governor Cuomo's WAR on Public Education

Publication/Website: FACULTY FOCUS

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

This is an eye-opening article that claims Cuomo wants to discredit public schools so he can replace them with charter schools favored by his wealthy backers. Good as far as it goes, but it needs to have facts to back up the allegations. This editorial certainly is persuasive and really takes on a lot. That is unfortunately its downfall. This writer works very hard and I appreciate cramming a lot of information into one article. Realize that complex issues often require simpler sentences. For example, each reform listed also includes the expected real impact on education. It would be easier for the reader if each long sentence were broken into two. Also, this is one example where repetition (of portions of the intro again in the conclusion) is not used as effectively as other entries. Please keep at it. This writer does a very good job.

Local: *Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Sexton's Stats

Publication/Website: Momentum

Judges' Comments:

This entry takes an up-close look at the outgoing NYU president's lavish salary, bonus, and other perks, all based on IRS data. The numbers are jaw dropping but there should have been more text to accompany them. This is a top contender for Best Info Graphic. This is a great example where a listing of stats works far better than written words. This works on so many levels.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *United University Professions - Empire State College Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Our Union Umbrella

Publication/Website: UUP ESC Chapter Newsletter Excellence in Unity

Issue Date: October 2015

Judges' Comments:

Excellent entry. This writer does a stellar job explaining to members what a new organization structure by the employer means to employees as well as what rights and responsibilities they have. This article works on so many levels; I hope it is shared with all unions as a primer of clear, explanatory writing. Great job.

Local: *United University Professions - Farmingdale Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Governor's Goals: 2015-2016: Wisconsin and New York

Publication/Website: UNIFIER

Issue Date: Feb 2015

Judges' Comments:

The photos of Gov. Cuomo and Wisconsin Gov. Walker – both grinning – is worth a thousand words. The warning that what happened to unions in Wisconsin can happen here in New York is well taken. This writer cleverly ties together two different states by comparing similar leadership styles and budget proposals. Very few flaws in this entry. (Look at the captions. Why repeat Governor twice in each?) Also, be aware the governor's State of the State address and his executive budget are two different things.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *United University Professions - Oswego Chapter*

Category: Best Writing 5

Name of Entry: Adjunct Hustle

Publication/Website: IN TOUCH...

Issue Date: Fall 2015

Judges' Comments:

This article on adjuncts and how they must often take multiple jobs to get by focuses on a topic that is only now getting the attention it deserves. The author rightly calls on adjuncts to make their voices heard by standing with the union in the fight for fair wages. Excellent entry. This writer skillfully uses a whole variety of techniques to make this a pleasure to read. This entry makes me care to know if the adjunct was asked back. This entry does far more than inform, it provides a depth of understanding to the reader as well as a breadth. Excellent work.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

General Excellence – Class III

Local: *Buffalo Teachers Federation*
Category: General Excellence
Publication/Website: PROVOCATOR
Issue Date: February 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry contains a contrast of note – mainly a high critical article on Gov. Cuomo and his agenda, contrasted with another article that recalls how the governor's father, Mario, was a friend of public education when he was in office. Nicely done. The issue also contains articles on a weekend contract hearing, executive committee appointments and other items of interest. In all, a good mix. The newsletter could be improved by shrinking its size, which gives it a tabloid look. This local clearly cares about informing a rather large membership on a wide variety of issues. With all this local faces, information is a strong tool to increase participation and solidarity among the members. The six profiles of new exec committee members are well done and I applaud you for running photographs. The varying graphic treatments made me wonder though. Why are some indented and others not? The more I look at this publication, I realize what a huge undertaking it is, and then notice the masthead. Is it really done with only three newsletter members? Or are these staffers whose only job is to put out this publication? This must weigh in my decision on general excellence. Also, excellent use of rerunning information from other sources to provide more information. Why redo something that works?

Local: *East Ramapo Teachers Association*
Category: General Excellence

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Publication/Website: UNION-EYES

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has a very attractive layout and a very good article on an interview with an interim superintendent that touches on many union concerns. It could be improved with more content and better photo reproduction. Very nice touches in the President's Message on the cover. The literacy night page is wonderful. The photo collage could have been better organized but I applaud you for trying to work in so many excellent photos. The third page is a wonderful collection of news for members to use. The continuation of the teacher center information to the next page is just a smidge confusing. It's essential for unions to include a Contract Corner and this is well done. The Meeting Dr. Wortham article made me fear for this local's continued interaction with a new leader!

Local: *Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: The WORD

Issue Date: Feb. 2015

Judges' Comments:

An overall solid entry. Great mix of content that is nicely balanced according to topic. Very attractive presentation throughout. Excellent job. It's budget time and Reclaiming Maria's Promise starts this newsletter off with such a strong bang. Promotion: Mythbusters edition is fact-filled over what must be a divisive issue for the membership. Clear information about officer elections, and other what could be considered mundane news. Here's just one example. Great headline for a story about course reimbursements. "You want money? Let me help you get money." Who wouldn't want to read that article. Also beautiful profile on an astronomy teacher and his class, extremely useful technology column and then, the In Memoriam column written by Malskis is a touching tribute. Again, you are truly blessed with a talented membership. Great job.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: The Agenda

Issue Date: Spring 2015

Judges' Comments:

This issue contains a mix of articles on testing and brief articles on different schools in the district. Good package but the photos could be improved This is such a strong contender. You do so many things so well and with such variety! I like the graphic use of Spotlight on pages 6 and 9. Excellent job of getting lots of members faces in. Also, is that a reprint of a newspaper photo of the hands holding the basketball trophy with the score in the background? That is an EXCELLENT photo. What a wonderful recap of your food drive, of your honorees, of the MVHS Courtyard cleanup, and you show true brilliance on your back page. Who would have thought a Correspondence Report could be so well done! Kudos to The Agenda staff. Your commitment to informing your members shines (like a spotlight.)

Local: *Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: SPEAKOUT

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

This 8-page newsletter clearly shows a commitment to members. Strong graphic design with clear information boxes helps the reader. Photos on page 2 are strong, but I would have liked captions. Much of this newsletter is a recitation of information, board minutes, a balance sheet, birthdays, etc., for members. This entry would have been strengthened with an analysis of a current topic. (Especially since this is a March issue and the state budget is due April 1, it's a missed opportunity to not remind members about what your local is doing on that front.) This is thin on content and could be improved by adding longer substantive articles of interest.

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Local: *Professional Staff Congress/CUNY*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Clarion

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has the look of a professional journal. It is loaded with well-written content on varied topics, including a riveting article on the mother of an American Muslim who died helping others on 9/11 - in a rebuke to Donald Trump. Excellent entry. Fantastic front-page graphically. You are so fortunate to have such wonderful choices in photography as perhaps the photo across pages 6-7 could have also worked. Excellent articles all around. Excellent short notes, news coverage of the low-wage fight, tuition hikes, social justice, the list goes on.

Local: *Smithtown Teachers' Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: FACULTY FOCUS

Issue Date: December 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry contains all kinds of information ranging from union issues to baking cookies and baby announcements. It is nicely packaged but could be improved with more substantive articles and a design makeover — to eliminate the heavy black cover page. This newsletter does a great job of interspersing lively ads and information boxes with columns. “Thankful for my dad” is quite touching, as are the follow up pages with a collection of thankful thoughts. I bet the recipe page is clipped into many a members cookbook. Also, nice essay on “What our Union Means to Me” and congratulations for running a book review. The tech talk column is really well done. I rarely use heart-felt, but will in your case. This publication truly reads like love for your members on the page. Great job.

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Local: *Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Momentum

Issue Date: Issue 4, Volume 36, 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has an attractive layout and graphics. But it is thin on content and relies on a bulletin board format to cover many items of interest. It could be improved with more content including longer articles on substantive topics. Extremely strong graphic and message on your cover. The type style is distracting though. This publication is so well done. What a wonderful profile on a new staffer (which also explains what happened to the staffer he replaced- Bravo) The coverage about how to support Bobst members is well done and photos are excellent. This publication was also one of the few that devotes a whole page to the struggle of a sister local — the contract fight PSC is in. Excellent work to reach out. Also, while I thought the Sexton's Stats is a Best Info Graphic, I also love your back pages Bulletin Board. What a great way to get just the facts across.

Local: *United University Professions - Empire State College Chapter*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: UUP ESC Chapter Newsletter Excellence in Unity

Issue Date: Fall 2015

Judges' Comments:

There's no shortage of content here – it's page after page of informative articles and, to top it off, one page is a spreadsheet. Adding photos and graphics throughout could improve it to break up the many pages that are all text. Creating a special edition all around one theme certainly works in this case. I especially like the foresight of not just including but truly highlighting information members might find useful. This is so well done. Of course the writing is good as well, especially when you rerun an award-winner –Smart thinking! This edition truly lives up to the promise of "Membership is our strength."

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Local: *United University Professions - Farmingdale Chapter*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: UNIFIER

Issue Date: March 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry features articles on a Call Out Cuomo rally and president's message, along with a very well done satire of the toils of adjuncts in a world made for full-timers. Good as far as it goes but the newsletter needs more substantive content. Good graphics and photos. This is the first entry I have seen that suggests members contact their lawmakers directly and not just rely on the NYSUT MAC. Why is that? This publication presents all info in a graphically pleasing manner. Coverage of a rally, a UUP retreat and a contract corner are the only articles not already submitted. All are well written and do an excellent job informing the members. This entry is just up against extremely fierce competition and could have been strengthened with a bit more analysis for members. Keep up the good work.

Local: *United University Professions - Oswego Chapter*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: IN TOUCH...

Issue Date: Fall 2015

Judges' Comments:

Credit the editors of this entry for putting a table of contents out front so that visitors don't have to click through every page to find what interests them. Also credit the editors for including good mix of content ranging from environmental issues to the shabby treatment of adjuncts. There is room for improvement of graphics and photos though – most pages are text heavy and a photo collage was undersized, leaving faces unrecognizable. Overall, though, a good job. This very good publication is filled with articles ranging from climate change, fracking, retirement decisions and a report about the termination of professional writing instructors. This publication clearly is a treasure trove of information for members. The photo page of Labor Day parade is well done. Graphics are also well done although I do find the Newsletter of the Oswego Chapter hard to read on the cover logo. Keep up the good work.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Utica Teachers Association*

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: Utica Teachers Association Signal

Issue Date: Dec 2015

Judges' Comments:

This entry has a very neat layout and judicious use of graphics. It is thin on content, though, and could be improved with more substantive articles and better sizing of photos. Excellent President's Message and nice accompanying graphic. I question running a building rep attendance sheet on page 3. Wouldn't page 7 have been better in that prime spot? Otherwise, this is a lively publication filled with information for members. I especially love the back page and think you do a great job, although I would have liked to know why you won the Strides Spirit award. I also don't understand whether the photos on the bottom of page 4 are supposed to go with the match-up game, and is a match-up game really a project of NYSUT? You really do a great job, but are up against extremely strong competition.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Website – Class III

Local: *Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Website

URL: www.fascc.org

Judges' Comments:

This entry has a great home page – very bright and appealing. It could be improved, though, by making it easier to access the links. As it stands now, the visitor has to know enough to click on a non-identified box in the left-hand corner to get to these links. But content is good once you retrieve it. While I was able to access the main page of this website, I was unable to navigate anywhere else. I love the rotating photos and given the quality of your newsletter, I am certain this is a very good to excellent website, especially since I was able to read all of The Undercurrent for new members.

Local: *Levittown United Teachers*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Levittown United Teachers Website

URL: <http://levittownteachers.org/>

Judges' Comments:

An inviting home page that serves visitors well by including links to stories for ease of access. No need to hunt around for them. It could be improved with more content, however. This website is so easy to navigate, and with such wonderful photos it's a joy. Also such wonderful touches like "Official email for the hardworking members of the LUT" I like that you are putting together a union history. The "News" section of the website was updated at least six different times in March that I could tell. Each entry was strong. The photo and video galleries are well done and engaging. Great job.

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Local: *Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Mount Vernon Federation of Teachers Website

URL: www.mvft.org

Judges' Comments:

This entry has a pleasant looking, colorful home page. There are links stripped across the top that provide easy access to a variety of topics ranging from VOTE-COPE to the school calendar. It could be improved by providing more items on the home page with links attached, to make it timelier. I was able to access most areas of the site.

Information is clear; photos are engaging, although a tad dark. Check your settings. See how other local's photos seem to pop off the page. I love that suggestion box although the options I clicked on sent me back to the home page. Documents and forms are easy for members to find. It did not appear this website was updated often, mainly with adding The Agenda newsletter. While I thought the video about VOTE-COPE was good, I think there is some missed opportunity to put more information up there, like how do folks participate in a drive? What do you do with your rebates?

Local: *Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Nassau Community College Federation of Teachers Website

URL: www.nccft.org

Judges' Comments:

This is a very neat looking site with plenty of news and information posted right on the home page and accessed by simply scrolling down the page to view the headlines and initial text at a glance. It could be improved by making the links across the top of the page accessible — they did not work when the page was visited. This is an easy to navigate website and I especially appreciate the ease of linking contact info right to the person's name. I was able to access most areas of the site. Everything is so well thought out. Photos are engaging, and I liked the way they were grouped by event. I love that suggestion box although the options I clicked on sent me back to the home page. Documents and forms are easy for members to find. This local updated its website at least weekly in February and March.

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Local: *Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers Website

URL: <http://patmedteachers.org>

Judges' Comments:

This site literally jumps out at the visitor. Loaded with photos and articles that are accessible by scrolling down the home page, it keeps members informed of all aspects of the district. There are links across the top of the page too, and they are also easily accessed. The site could be improved with a more uniform appearance — that is, some links take the visitor to huge headlines, while others, such as the Diane Ravitch link, have much smaller typefaces in headline and text. There should be a happy medium. This website did not appear to be updated often in March. I finally found links at the bottom. The outreach event calendar for 2016 needs to have dates attached. The blogs are links to other blogs, no original content. The political action urges members to email their Regents in September 2015. All of this needs to be updated.

Local: *Rush-Henrietta Employees Association*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Rush-Henrietta Employees' Association Website

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

Judges' Comments:

This website offers members all the information they need and then some. That's what a good website should do, of course, but this site could be improved with a better design. The current site requires visitors to click through individual pages to access information, a process that can take a while. And every page has the same format — huge headlines and big body type. It would help visitors if the site had a table of contents on the home page, so visitors could see in advance which pages to click for which topic. And the page layouts should have some variety to them. Not everything merits a big headline and big body type. This is a good tool to share information with members, however, little original content is generated. Even the About Us page goes to NYSUT.org. Photos have not been updated in years. Also watch spelling in headlines.

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Local: *Schenectady Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Schenectady Federation of Teachers Website

URL: www.sft803.org

Judges' Comments:

This link takes visitors to a Facebook notice that the website is being launched and a login procedure must be followed. For the whole month of March the website featured a March 3 event. It urged folks to attend but there was never coverage. The SFT In Action section contained photos from a Dec. 9 event and then it went back to 2013. Swap shop is a nice feature for members. This entry would be strengthened with more frequent updates.

Local: *Smithtown Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Smithtown Teachers' Association Website

URL: <http://www.smithtownta.com/>

Judges' Comments:

This site is easily accessed and contains much useful information. The home page is attractive and inviting. It could be improved by checking on some of the links, which can be tricky to access, and to use fewer download links in favor of direct ones. I was able to access the site. It's good at providing forms for members and providing electronic versions of the newsletter, which does also appear to be the times, the site is updated.

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Local: *Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU Website

URL: www.ucats3882.org

Judges' Comments:

This site boasts a new look and it is eye-catching. The home page has good use of typefaces, photos and graphics and includes a strip of boxes that list the page numbers of various inside stories. It could be improved by making what appears to be an inset of a Web page more legible and the boxes should have links to the stories instead of just other page numbers. This is a bright website and easy to navigate. The majority of updates appear to be photos, but even there the rotating photos reference a 2011 event, two 2014 events and an undated event in Albany. The newest item in News (other than the excellent newsletter) was from Nov. 2015.

Local: *United University Professions - Empire State College Chapter*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: UUP Empire State College Chapter Website

URL: <https://sites.google.com/site/escuupchapter>

Judges' Comments:

This website is loaded with information. Members are kept informed on a variety of issues relating to their contract and also other items that are summarized on the home page with links to more information. The site could be improved with more graphics and better use of them as well as photos. So every time I went on there was a notice UUP was about to be evicted. When I tried to find out why, it took me to a solidarity pledge. That is confusing. The site appears to be updated frequently, although it notes an update of 11/10/16. So it can time travel? I was able to access the negotiations updates, which certainly must be of most interest. It had not been updated since Feb. 18 and Dec. 16 before that.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *United University Professions - Farmingdale Chapter*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: United University Professions - Farmingdale Chapter Website

URL: www.uupfarm.org

Judges' Comments:

This entry has potential to be a dynamic site but first some kinks will need to be worked out. The main home page photo keeps dissolving into another photo or series of photos but there is no caption to identify who the people are or what their contribution to the discussion is. The site is easy to access but a visitor can scroll down the home page. The links that do work provide only limited information. I was able to access all areas of this website, including the contract, which I wonder if that is wise to have public. There was no news section and I could not tell how often this site is updated.

Local: *Wappingers Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Website

Publication/Website: Wappingers Congress of Teachers Website

URL: www.wcteachers.org

Judges' Comments:

This site is the complete package of information about members and information useful for members. The home page is very active with lots of links to individual items and a long list of links to member benefits. Easy to access and navigate. Good job. A LOT is packed onto the main page and that page appears to be updated regularly. Digging a little deeper, it seems weird to not have updated your Where We Stand page since June of 2015. Then the Stay Informed section – Jeepers. If you promise that these issues will directly affect you on a daily basis it should have something more current than a 2014 Reclaim the Promise letter followed by a December 2013 Stay Informed document (and it just gets older from there.)

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Blog – Class III

Local: *Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College*

Category: Best Blog

Publication/Website: the Undercurrent: FA New Member Blog

URL: <http://fascnewmemberblog.blogspot.com>

Judges' Comments:

This blog has it all – lots of information, good updates, good graphics and content mix. It could be improved with more frequent updates, as the average seems to be about two per month. Also, the glaring red page that first greets the visitor could be toned down. There was a spot to Sign In, so I am not sure what I was missing, but this is an excellent blog devoted to the newest member of a local. Wonderful headlines this blog has. Really well done.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Best Use of Social Media – Class III

Local: *Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Faculty Association of Suffolk Community College Facebook

URL: www.facebook.com/FASCC

Judges' Comments:

Good postings, rich in variety and presentation, balances the serious with a few touches of the lighthearted. Good interactive commentary. Excellent photos and overall presentation. This FB page is updated constantly. It doesn't just share links it also creates original content. Very nice touch putting the Norma Rae picture as the smaller photo!

Local: *Patchogue-Medford Congress of Teachers*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: PMCT YouTube

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKxtR274gpT9FOZOGormk0g>

Judges' Comments:

Can't access. "This channel does not exist" was what I got when trying to find this entry.

Local: *Pittsford District Teachers Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Pittsford District Teachers Association Facebook

URL: <https://www.facebook.com/PittsfordDistrictTeachersAssociation/?ref=hl>

Judges' Comments:

Can't access. Was not able to access this page.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2016

Local: *Rush-Henrietta Employees Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: RHEA Teachers Facebook

URL: <https://www.facebook.com/rheateachers>

Judges' Comments:

Great page, packed with information, photos, news and events and political doings. Lots of feedback and good use of graphics throughout. One important message — it appears to be a press release — was almost unreadable until the visitor clicked on it and saw a larger type version. These messages should have a “click here” icon to alert visitors to this option. I question the decision to cut off the faces from whoever is holding your sign in your cover photo. Great use of FB to share your press release March 20. This is a good consideration as most sites just share info (which is worthwhile of course.)

Local: *Schenectady Federation of Teachers*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: Schenectady Federation of Teachers, ~NYSUT, AFT Local 803 Facebook

URL: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Schenectady-Federation-of-TeachersNYSUT-AFT-Local-803/199941733355611>

Judges' Comments:

This link takes the visitor to a page that has a small announcement about the local's new website and urges visitors to check it out. Could not access the new page. This FB page is updated at least every other day for the month I checked. It creates its own posts rather than just sharing links, and seems to have an open conversation going. Love your cover photo.

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Local: *White Plains Teachers' Association*

Category: Best Use of Social Media

Publication/Website: White Plains Teachers' Association App

URL: www.remind.com

Judges' Comments:

This link takes visitors to a sign-up page for a classroom instruction program. It provides an opportunity to see what the program entails but it could be improved with some commentary on what the program is designed to achieve, etc., and an assessment of its effectiveness. I had to log in to view this site.