

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R I

Local: *CIRTA*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: The Trump Team

Publication/Website: CIRTAion

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

Let the facts speak for themselves. Here they are paraded, sourced and attributed as they appear. The writer does not comment on Trump, but on those with whom he surrounds himself and on whom he relies. Is it a pretty picture he paints? As always, it is in the eyes of the beholder.

A lot of information that might be stronger with some streamlining and a clearer purpose.

Local: *CIRTA*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: One Man's Opinion

Publication/Website: CIRTAion

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

This writer contends and supports the idea that racism, hatred and bigotry have been an active, vicious part of American society from the beginning and are alive and active today. He then examines the two major party candidates for president and concludes he will vote for Hillary and explains why. He then urges the reader to vote as well. This is intense, passionate writing and those who are open to his points will consider them and those who don't want to hear it, will simply choose not to and will do as they please. But at least he has said what he feels must be said.

There is a lot of information presented here - it might benefit from streamlining and approaching it with a clearer purpose, such as providing an alternative perspective to what is often the commonly accepted view. Newsworthiness is about sharing something people didn't know, something unusual and something that a lot of people will care about.

Be careful about overt political perspectives in a union publication. It's almost always polarizing in some way. There are better ways to approach moving people by finding common ground on issues and encouraging considered thought rather than knee-jerks.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R I

Local: *Islip Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: 2017 Constitutional Convention Threatens Pensions

Publication/Website: Islip "Connections"

Issue Date: 20160101

Judges' Comments:

This is mostly a good story about an important subject. Unfortunately, the writer failed to check the dates of New York's constitutional conventions and she has them wrong. The last convention was in 1967 and voters rejected all of its recommendations. The periodic opportunities to hold subsequent conventions also have been rejected by voters.

An informational article that would be stronger with more context and a clearer sense of what the reader should think, feel or do based on what is presented.

Class R I

Local: *Islip Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Elaine Cohen - IRTA Secretary "Brooklyn Girl"

Publication/Website: Islip "Connections"

Issue Date: 20160501

Judges' Comments:

Charming is the word to describe this memoir that is simply told and happily recalled. It's a treat even for someone who never cared about baseball and or lived in Brooklyn.

A sweet memoir of a time gone-by and the impact it made for a lifetime. Wonderful detail and the sense of community it creates is warm and inviting to the reader. A clearer sense on the take-away lessons of the experience would make it even stronger.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R I

Local: *Islip Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Every Month is Alzheimer's Month - Our Family's Story

Publication/Website: Islip "Connections"

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

This is an honest, personal and, sadly, news-you-can-use story about Alzheimer's disease told in an interesting and original way that pairs objective clinical information about how to recognize it with the writer's personal experience and observation of her mother-in-law's long trip down this tragic road. It is told without sentimentality or self-pity, but with great caring and affection.

A very moving feature that provides excellent information about a heartbreaking disease with personal anecdotes and practical suggestions. This is a challenging issue that affects so many people and the presentation here is comprehensive and personal.

Local: *Islip Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: From the President

Publication/Website: Islip "Connections"

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

This is a timely call for members to educate themselves on the candidates and consider carefully before the vote. While most of it is informative, it includes one mistake. The assertion that the state legislators will decide on whether to hold a state constitutional convention is in error. The question will go directly to the voters November 7, 2017.

Political orientation in a union publication will often be polarizing, which is a good reason to avoid it. The factual information here is valuable but might be better coming at members in a different way. A president's column should be about building consensus and strengthening relations between the member and the leadership.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R I

Local: *Islip Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: On the Road Again

Publication/Website: Islip "Connections"

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

Join these peripatetic retirees on a wander in Connecticut on a beautiful day with lots to learn and admire. It makes me wish I could have gone with them.

Some nice insights and an implied sense of local community in these entries. Connecting how the local brings people together fosters community and provides for shared growing experiences would make them even stronger.

Local: *Malverne Teachers' Assoc. Retiree Chapter*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: "From Glenda Good Potter"

Publication/Website: Retiree ReView

Issue Date: 20160405

Judges' Comments:

Here's a glimpse of how one retiree enjoys spending her time golfing here and abroad.

A nice update from a member, which contributes to the local's sense of community.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R I

Local: *Malverne Teachers' Assoc. Retiree Chapter*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: "June Was a Busy Month"

Publication/Website: Retiree ReView

Issue Date: 20160913

Judges' Comments:

The title misleads you into thinking this is someone's list of too many things to do. Instead, it showcases a tribute to teachers from a graduating high school senior. The student's words are just what teachers and retired teachers long to hear, so hopefully no one passed by this hidden gem without discovering it.

Local: *Malverne Teachers' Assoc. Retiree Chapter*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: "My Florida Vacation was Quite Unforgettable!"

Publication/Website: Retiree ReView

Issue Date: 20160201

Judges' Comments:

Not all surprises are pleasant and not all adventures are painless, but they do give you something to talk about.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R I

Local: *Malverne Teachers' Assoc. Retiree Chapter*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: I asked For Tidbits, and This is What I Received.... Read On!!

Publication/Website: Retiree ReView

Issue Date: 20160209

Judges' Comments:

This retiree's mini travelogue takes you to Cuba, where waiters and taxi drivers earn more than teachers and doctors. Who knew?

Local: *Malverne Teachers' Assoc. Retiree Chapter*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: NYSUT REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR Retiree councils 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 Wrap-Up

Publication/Website: Retiree ReView

Issue Date: 20161101

Judges' Comments:

This quick rundown of an October conference includes ways for retirees to get better informed before they vote. Unfortunately, the issue didn't go out to members until after the November election.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R I

Local: *Wallkill Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Reflections: Doobie

Publication/Website: CONNECTIONS

Issue Date: Spring 2016

Judges' Comments:

Codes, spies and suicide come out of the cold in this snippet from one retiree's memories of her work and coworkers during WWII.

A nice story that is worthy of sharing.

Local: *Wallkill Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Bill Rule and Lowell Sanders

Publication/Website: CONNECTIONS

Issue Date: Fall 2016

Judges' Comments:

This is election news you can use presented impartially and with a salty quote from President Lincoln to leaven it.

Be careful about overt political messages - they can be polarizing in a local. There is some good general information about the importance of voting at the end of the column. There are many ways to engage members about areas and issues of common concern that are more effective for relationship building.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R I

Local: *Wallkill Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Retired Teacher Meets Former Student

Publication/Website: CONNECTIONS

Issue Date: Fall 2016

Judges' Comments:

This retired teacher remembered her former 3rd grade student when she encountered her by surprise at a WRTA breakfast, and the former student remembered her teacher, too. Not only did she take her teacher's encouragement to put more effort into arithmetic to heart, the student grew up to be a math teacher.

An interesting and historical memoir. Some sharper focus and clearer takeaways from the experience might make it even stronger. This was a unique story to share.

Local: *Wallkill Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: A New Place to Visit in our Hudson Valley: The Angry Orchard

Publication/Website: CONNECTIONS

Issue Date: Fall 2016

Judges' Comments:

This reads a bit more like a paid promotion than a shared personal account of a pleasant visit.

An informational article about something new in the area. It would be stronger with a clearer connection to the local.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

CLASS RI

Local: *Walkill Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Book Review: Dark Money

Publication/Website: CONNECTIONS

Issue Date: Fall 2016

Judges' Comments:

Follow the money. This book review is more about sharing the powerful information in the book about money, elections and our society than it is about analyzing or criticizing it. This summary of the book is well written and will motivate those who really want to know about money and politics to sit down and read the book.

A strong and comprehensive book review. There's a lot of dense information presented here because the subject is complex. Some streamlining and distillation of information might give the review more impact with the reader.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R II

Local: *BAY SHORE RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: A SYSTEM OF DOUBTS

Publication/Website: THE 4th R

Issue Date: 20161028

Judges' Comments:

Honest and thought provoking, this article is bound to start meaningful conversation among educators, even when they are just "talking to themselves."

A worthwhile issue for consideration. It's not quite clear what the point is in the piece and how we might make improvements.

Local: *BAY SHORE RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY

Publication/Website: THE 4th R

Issue Date: 20160831

Judges' Comments:

These recollections of the writer's former students, but mainly parents, are definitely funny and bound to inspire many more in the minds of the retired teachers who read them. Best of all, he remembers with tolerance and bemusement.

A light-hearted memoir that rings true. Perspective worth sharing with friends and colleagues and an enjoyable read.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R II

Local: *BAY SHORE RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: MOM'S HOME MOVIES

Publication/Website: THE 4th R

Issue Date: 20160129

Judges' Comments:

This is a terrific little reminiscence, but I think I recall reading an ending in the General Excellence entry that is missing in this entry. That's too bad, because the story loses a lot without its punch line. It's impossible to read this and not think differently about people, especially the really lonely ones in nursing homes who don't mind borrowing someone else's family memories.

A poignant memoir and very relatable. Nice piece to share with friends and colleagues and it contributes to the local's sense of community.

Local: *BAY SHORE RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: NOT JUST CLIMATE CHANGE

Publication/Website: THE 4th R

Issue Date: 20160831

Judges' Comments:

This entry is shown on the bottom of a page below another story and the entry appears to stop in mid-sentence.

Worthwhile subjects here, but it's not quite clear what the point is.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R II

Local: BAY SHORE RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: THE GAME I PLAYED

Publication/Website: THE 4th R

Issue Date: 20161028

Judges' Comments:

This entry is missing and *A System of Doubts* is in its place, even though that entry also appears under its own name.

The start of an interesting memoir but the conclusion of the entry is not viewable.

Local: Region 13 Retiree Council

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: "2016 - Pay attention"

Publication/Website: "Mid-Hudson Bridges"

Issue Date: 20160201

Judges' Comments:

Many readers will sympathize with this writer's suggestion that presidential campaigns should be limited by law to 60 days prior to the election. They may also like his list of questions he wants the candidates to answer in explicit detail. He does not consider that election campaigns are surely a billion dollar industry.

Some worthwhile questions raised...They might be stronger if tied more directly to some explanation of why they matter for members of the local.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R II

Local: *Region 13 Retiree Council*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: "Be Informed - Enjoy Retirement"

Publication/Website: "Mid-Hudson Bridges"

Issue Date: 20161001

Judges' Comments:

Get your mind off politics and enjoy your benefits and retirement is the message here and it will surely resonate with many readers. If you are one who appreciates the suggestion, he makes it easy by providing links and resources.

A nice tone and some good information. A stronger call to action for involvement and a connection to local activities might be a worthy addition here.

Local: *Region 13 Retiree Council*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: "Exercise Your Right - Vote!"

Publication/Website: "Mid-Hudson Bridges"

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

The call to vote is bolstered here by a brief explanation of how NYSUT and AFT arrive at their endorsement choices.

A strong, well written call to vote that walks a fine line of challenging people to exercise their rights without being overly political. It's informational and reasoned. In a local newsletter, however, it is always helpful to connect the big picture issues to why it is meaningful locally.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R II

Local: *Region 13 Retiree Council*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: "Legislative Update"

Publication/Website: "Mid-Hudson Bridges"

Issue Date: 20160201

Judges' Comments:

This entry looks at both state and federal bills and potential actions that could change retirees' health care benefits, costs and taxes on them.

Good, valuable information. Writing in a way that connects the information more directly to people in the local - what does this mean for me? - would strengthen its impact.

Local: *Region 13 Retiree Council*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: "Respect and Compromise"

Publication/Website: "Mid-Hudson Bridges"

Issue Date: 20160501

Judges' Comments:

This writer exhorts readers to remember the negotiating process and the importance of compromise in making a democracy work when they go to the polls to vote.

A wise and well-reasoned perspective. Connecting it even more closely to people and experiences in the local would make it even stronger.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R II

Local: *Retirees of Brentwood Schools*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: A Touch of Tiffany

Publication/Website: ROBS Newsletter

Issue Date: 20160902

Judges' Comments:

This is a very pleasant travelogue that recounts a day trip I now wish I could have taken too.

An interesting chronicle of a road trip. A fuller connection to the local and the shared experience of the trip along with a more focused takeaway would make this even stronger.

Local: *Retirees of Brentwood Schools*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Nick's Notes

Publication/Website: ROBS Newsletter

Issue Date: 20161201

Judges' Comments:

This is a reminder to members to vote and to consider the importance of congressional and state legislative races, as well as the battle for the White House.

Straightforward and informative. There are always potential pitfalls when introducing even an impartial political message into a local newsletter.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R II

Local: *Retirees of Brentwood Schools*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: NYSARA Conference - September 19, 2016

Publication/Website: ROBS Newsletter

Issue Date: 20161201

Judges' Comments:

This conference report shares information about Social Security and how Congress and other politicians approach its future. The report provides some useful insights into a confusing and contentious issue.

A valuable effort to share information about a range of important issues. More context and explanation would strengthen the article. Even with the disclaimer about not making an endorsement, even introducing the politics to this situation has risks. You might consider simply suggesting that people should take time to learn about where the candidates stand on these issues in this election year.

Local: *Retirees of Brentwood Schools*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Project Hope A Time of Giving

Publication/Website: ROBS Newsletter

Issue Date: 20161201

Judges' Comments:

This is a good annual appeal to help a charity that has been "adopted" by this retirees group. It includes a bit of history about that relationship, as well as what you need to know to contribute to it.

A worthwhile project and an informational article offering some background, perspective and encouragement to participate.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R II

Local: *Retirees of Brentwood Schools*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: They Never Forget

Publication/Website: ROBS Newsletter

Issue Date: 20160601

Judges' Comments:

This is a column that must be a favorite with retirees because it shares their stories of encountering their former students as adults and expressions of gratitude and appreciation from former students to the teachers.

A nice story to share. More detail and a stronger purpose would make it more effective.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Keep In Touch

Publication/Website: HHHART BEAT

Issue Date: 20160615T000000

URL:

Judges' Comments:

This is a nice column that lets retirees in the group post updates on what's happening in their lives to help everyone network and stay in touch. The writing varies from one individual to another, but concept is a service that is apparently used and appreciated.

Some nice narratives and a worthwhile feature.

Local: *Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: On The Road

Publication/Website: HHHART BEAT

Issue Date: 20161001T000000

URL:

Judges' Comments:

This column lets the chapter's members share brief accounts of their latest travels.

Another set of interesting and sincere narratives that contribute to a sense of community in the local.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Politcial Action

Publication/Website: HHHART BEAT

Issue Date: 20161215

Judges' Comments:

This is a helpful update on legislative and political issues that matter to this chapter's members.

Be careful about sharing informative updates and stepping over the line into personal commentary. Politics can always be a polarizing issue. Find ways to share information factually that helps to find common ground around issues and build relationships that are based on shared interests.

Local: *Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Reflections: Memories of the 1975 HHH Teachers Strike

Publication/Website: HHHART BEAT

Issue Date: 20161001T000000

Judges' Comments:

Sharing memories of his union's strike is what more members and retirees should do. Other retirees may not have had that experience, and they need to understand what unions do, why they do it and how they can make a real difference in the lives of people long into the future. Telling labor's story is more critically needed now than ever.

A worthwhile and interesting perspective to share. More context and clearer points to take away about why it is an experience to remember and share would make the article even stronger.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: The HHHART Annual Meeting

Publication/Website: HHHART BEAT

Issue Date: 20160622

Judges' Comments:

Showing up is half the battle and sharing what you did and learned may be the other half. This report on a productive meeting scores on both counts.

A lot of good information on a range of issues. Focus on explaining why it is important for members in the local to strengthen the report.

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 10*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Ernie Reis Ernie's Legacy

Publication/Website: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Issue Date: 20161201

Judges' Comments:

A strong eulogy is presented here to honor and remember a strong man who dedicated his life to serving the public and young people in particular. Somehow he found strength to support his union as well and clearly that support was appreciated and will be missed.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 10*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: From Your President

Publication/Website: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Issue Date: 20160801

Judges' Comments:

Even before last November's general election this column took the 2017 question of a constitutional convention apart and revealed exactly how it ticks and could wake everybody up with a big bill and a big headache. Get educated and get involved if you want to sleep soundly now and in the future. That's this council president's advice.

Another well-written and well-reasoned presentation. Streamlining and distilling would help along with tying the issues more directly to the local community.

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 10*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: From Your President

Publication/Website: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Issue Date: 20161001

Judges' Comments:

This column on jobs, the economy, democracy and elections is very well thought out and reasoned. It also focuses on issues and ideas in a way that shows respect for people regardless of their politics.

An interesting, informative, reasoned and factual perspective. While it steers a non-partisan course in presenting a good argument, it is still likely to provoke some controversy. It is always a challenge to confront Politics within the local newsletter. While there is much to admire in this column, some streamlining, distilling and effort to connect the issues to common ground within the local might strengthen the impact of the effort.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 10*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: From Your President

Publication/Website: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Issue Date: 20161201

Judges' Comments:

This president reminds his fellow retirees that while the election is over, the war to protect what you have worked all your life to get is not. He makes a strong case for staying informed, politically active and donating money and time to VOTE-COPE and candidates and causes that will advance your interests.

A good argument with back up and good reasoning. Streamlining and distilling would help to make it more effective.

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 10*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Report From the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the American Federation of Teachers

Publication/Website: RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS

Issue Date: 20161001

Judges' Comments:

If you ever wondered what goes on at a national union convention, here is one delegate's answer as he shares his recollections of the actions and words that stood out for him.

A factual and informational overview of an important event. Tying the significance of the event to the history, interests and circumstances of the local would help to make it stronger and better connected to the individual member.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 12*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Congratulations to the newest Retiree Chapter in RC 12 !

Publication/Website: THE OUTLOOK

Issue Date: 20161107

Judges' Comments:

New life is welcomed as this announcement reveals the birthing process for a new chapter forming in this retirees council.

A straightforward and informational article.

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 12*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Consider Joining the RC 12 Committee of 100!!

Publication/Website: THE OUTLOOK

Issue Date: 20160801

Judges' Comments:

This veteran political activist tells members what it's like to be part of the union's cadre of political action volunteers. They encourage others to try it, since it is a good opportunity to make a significant difference in the public policy that affects the lives of New Yorkers and their families.

Straightforward and informational with a brief personal narrative at the start. Developing that perspective more fully and carrying it through the piece would strengthen the impact. People relate to stories, especially when they can see themselves experiencing something similar.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: NYSUT Retiree Council 12

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: My Cable Bundle is too Expensive !!!

Publication/Website: THE OUTLOOK

Issue Date: 20160404

Judges' Comments:

Want to lower your payments for TV, Internet and phone service? It's a hassle trying to sort out all of the options and how they might work for you and what they would cost. This consumer interest story shares what the writer learned when he jumped into that maze and how he has charted his course and lowered his costs. As a bonus, he even promises to share how it all works out in one or more future columns.

Some good perspective and a lot of information. Streamlining and condensing the info and connecting it more to colleagues and friends in the local would strengthen its impact. Take a tone that more fully plays up the common experience to better engage readers.

Local: NYSUT Retiree Council 12

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: ODDS AND ENDS

Publication/Website: THE OUTLOOK

Issue Date: 20160404

Judges' Comments:

The name Cooperstown and baseball history goes hand-in-glove for most of us, but what about opera? You weren't expecting that, were you? As if that's not plenty to ponder, there's one more oddball pitch on health insurance to look out for in this catch-all column.

Some worthwhile information presented in a way that makes it easy to read and grasp.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 12*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Whale Watching in the St. Lawrence River?

Publication/Website: THE OUTLOOK

Issue Date: 20160801

Judges' Comments:

The advantage of a travelogue is that it helps you learn about places you might want to visit someday, and this one gives a quick peek at several whales you, too, might see if you visit the St. Lawrence River in Canada.

An interesting perspective worth sharing.

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 18*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Focus on Support

Publication/Website: LINKAGE

Issue Date: 20161001

Judges' Comments:

One more voice calls for reason and rationality in choosing which candidate to support in the November election.

A valuable perspective. Try to tie the points even more closely to the interests of people in the local. References to the shared community that you have with specific connections might be helpful to give it more impact.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 18*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: From Rockville Centre's Retired Teachers' Association

Publication/Website: LINKAGE

Issue Date: 20160501

Judges' Comments:

Food and clothing drive packs in lots of items.

A valuable and worthwhile topic and some good information. Developing a fuller appreciation of why and how this benefits the community and the rewards of being a part of the effort would be welcome.

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 18*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Grandfather Clause? Don't Be Conned!

Publication/Website: LINKAGE

Issue Date: 20160301

Judges' Comments:

This retiree's message to his fellow retirees about the dangers posed by a state constitutional convention is an effective way to open that conversation.

Lots of information here. Some sharper focus to connect this more directly to the individual member would help strengthen the article.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 18*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: NYSUT's Presidents' Endorsement Conference

Publication/Website: LINKAGE

Issue Date: 20161001

Judges' Comments:

Political endorsements often require compromises.

Informational and factual. It would be stronger with more development about the process and how it considers the views of members. It would also be valuable to connect the endorsements to local interests more directly.

Local: *NYSUT Retiree Council 18*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Ode to Governors Island

Publication/Website: LINKAGE

Issue Date: 20160601

Judges' Comments:

This story about volunteer gardening and restoration on Governor's Island made me want to go there and see it too. The construction of the story isn't as tight as it might be, but it's not long enough to be a problem and the writer's enthusiasm for his subject come through well.

Interesting and informational. Some sharper focus and streamlining to develop a clearer appeal to the audience to think, feel or do something with the information would strengthen the piece.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Carol Lovell Comments on Her Student, Ward Stare

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: 20160801

Judges' Comments:

You can feel this retired teacher's enthusiasm and pride in her former student and the transition he has helped her make to become a student again, herself. It's a very satisfying story.

A very sincere personal narrative connected to a news event. The article provides perspective and insight and is interesting and appealing. A lesson for all teachers.

Local: *Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Doreen Called...

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: 20161101

Judges' Comments:

This is one retiree's story of how deep roots and keen interest persuaded her to get involved in her retired teachers association, and how it all started with a phone call. It's a nice, personal vignette.

A nice introduction and narrative about how we get connected.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Dr. Jim Sculley - A Collector of Note

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: 20160502

Judges' Comments:

This is a nice introduction to a member of this retiree's association. It focuses on his collection of WWII aircraft and pilots, especially the German planes and pilots.

An interesting and informative feature. It's not clear if the subject has a connection to the local union.

Local: *Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Oh, The People We Met

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: 20160201

Judges' Comments:

This retiree says the best part of her trip to Sweden was the people she met, so this is a travelogue of encounters she had with Swedes and those who have emigrated to Sweden. She likes people, so her enthusiasm for them is contagious.

A nice narrative about a very significant experience. Some sharper focus to move from travelogue to a clear message about the value of experiences like this would strengthen the article and make it more appealing for a broader audience.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: WE GO BACK A LONG WAY

Publication/Website: Retired Times

Issue Date: 20161101

Judges' Comments:

This is a good fundraising appeal for VOTE-COPE.

A lot of information here. A sharper focus on the collective history of NYSUT and the local union would help give this article more resonance.

Local: RC 7

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: A Savvy Senior's Summer

Publication/Website: The Central New Yorker

Issue Date: 20160701

Judges' Comments:

This is a good reminder to use summer "vacation" productively — to educate yourself and others about the general election and candidates of 2016; and about the potential dangers of a state constitutional convention that will be on the ballot in November 2017.

A nice tone and a lot of good information. Connect it more directly to the local and individual members' interests.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: RC 7

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: A Tale of Two Years

Publication/Website: The Central New Yorker

Issue Date: 20160101

Judges' Comments:

This story looks at the big issues for teachers in 2016 and 2017 and concludes that it's an awfully good thing that NYSUT is there to keep advancing the local's interests.

A lot of good information here but there's a lot to digest. Try to streamline and distill it down along with connecting it more directly to the interests of the individual member in the local.

Local: RC 7

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: A War Correspondent's Report

Publication/Website: The Central New Yorker

Issue Date: 20160301

Judges' Comments:

File missing.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: RC 7

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Time to Get Political! Time to VOTE!

Publication/Website: The Central New Yorker

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

This column explains how NYSUT determines which candidates to endorse, then it lists the endorsed candidates and urges RC 7 members to vote. The writer tells what information is gathered about candidates before endorsements are made, but never says who makes those final decisions.

A lot of good information and a nice effort to explain the process. Connecting the endorsements and issues more directly to input and concerns from members locally would strengthen the impact. Help members to feel like they have a role and stake in what happens.

Local: RC 7

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: What We Ought To Be About

Publication/Website: The Central New Yorker

Issue Date: 20160501

Judges' Comments:

This is like a column that tries to tackle multiple things to work its way slowly up its main point. It starts by explaining basic organizational information about the retirees' council. Then it gives data on how potentially powerful NYSUT's retirees can be politically if they get involved. And finally it asks the retiree to get involved. This story structure puts the ask at the end of the story, and many people may not read that far. It might be more effective to start by asking and then explain why it is such a valuable and potentially powerful thing to do.

A lot of information here. A sharper focus on what people should think feel or do with it would strengthen the impact. Be careful about overt political messages.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: RC39

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: If it is happening in Wisconsin it could happen in New York

Publication/Website: NYSUT RC39 Newsletter

Issue Date: 20160301

Judges' Comments:

A lot of information to digest here. Try to streamline and distill it down for the member with a clearer focus on what it means for the individual locally.

Local: RC39

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: New York State Care Act

Publication/Website: NYSUT RC39 Newsletter

Issue Date: 20160301

Judges' Comments:

Good and valuable information. A fuller development with a connection to how the issue affects local people would help make stronger impact.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: RC39

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: On the Run

Publication/Website: NYSUT RC39 Newsletter

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

An interesting and sincere personal narrative with a valuable takeaway message. Some streamlining would help improve the impact here.

Local: RC39

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Retirement Challenges Unmet

Publication/Website: NYSUT RC39 Newsletter

Issue Date: 20160101

Judges' Comments:

A warm and interesting personal narrative. It would be stronger with some clear lessons for the reader to take away from the article.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: RC39

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Why You Need the Shingles Vaccine

Publication/Website: NYSUT RC39 Newsletter

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

A lot of good information here. The article would be stronger with a more personal appeal to the reader to understand why this is important for him or her.

Local: Retiree Council 21

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Reasons We Don't Want a NYS Constitutional Convention in 2017

Publication/Website: Spotlight 21

Issue Date: 20160405

Judges' Comments:

This is a very good explanation of what the constitutional convention option is and why it poses a threat to public employee pensions, and would not be a good way to amend the constitution. The writer chooses an unusual way to present this information: citing the kinds of groups that opposed the last constitutional convention option 20 years ago and explaining very briefly why each of those groups was strongly opposed. It's a fresh approach and that's important as NYSUT and many other groups begin hammering these points over a prolonged period.

A lot of good information which would be stronger by a clearer connection to what it means for the individual member in the local. A more specific call to action about how people can get involved in the NYSUT effort would strengthen the piece.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Retiree Council 21*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Social Security...The FINAL Chapter

Publication/Website: Spotlight 21

Issue Date: 20160921

Judges' Comments:

This is another fine piece of the series on Social Security, and this one spells out why the fund is not receiving enough revenue and how that relates to the funneling of wealth to the people who are already the wealthiest in the country. It also explains how the program can falter or thrive depending on what steps if any are taken to increase its income or decrease its expenses. The writer takes a close look at each of the options and explains how they would affect the program and Social Security recipients now and in the future. Then, he asks retirees to keep these issues and facts in mind when they choose the candidates they will vote for in the 2016 election.

Lots of great information but on the technical side. Try to focus it in a way that it connects more directly with the individual member. Sometimes just a narrative construct about why this is of concern to people like us can be an effective approach.

Local: *Retiree Council 21*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Social Security: Chapter 2

Publication/Website: Spotlight 21

Issue Date: 20160405

Judges' Comments:

This is a very well written analysis of the arguments against Social Security and how the facts fail to support them. It is part of a series of stories on this subject.

A lot of good information here. Nice to break it into a Q & A format to make it more digestible. A narrative introduction connecting the issue and its relevance more closely to the local would strengthen the impact.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Retiree Council 21*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Together We Must Stand

Publication/Website: Spotlight 21

Issue Date: 20160526

Judges' Comments:

This is a good report on the Representative Assembly with some inspirational quotes from Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. to give it some heart and motivation.

A lot of good information here and it is presented in digestible chunks. It would be even stronger with some sharper focus on what it means for members of the local and how they can get involved to make a difference.

Local: *Retiree Council 21*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: What My Cell Phone's GPS Told Me

Publication/Website: Spotlight 21

Issue Date: 20161220

Judges' Comments:

This is a thoughtful and thought provoking look at the 2016 general election and its policy implications through the lens of a personal trip to southwestern Texas border communities.

A very sincere narrative. This piece would work better as two separate, shorter pieces. It would help with focus and to offer a clearer takeaway for each.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *UUP Retirees (UUP is Local 2190)*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Modernizing the Opportunities for Nuclear War

Publication/Website: The Active Retiree

Issue Date: 20160616

Judges' Comments:

Bankrupting the country to make more sophisticated nuclear weapons is the topic and the writer explains the current (summer of 2016) plan, its costs, the treaty and pacts that it would violate, and how making nuclear weapons more precise and adjustable may make nuclear warfare more likely. This story is well done and avoids the hyperbole and extreme sarcasm that would tempt many other writers on this topic.

An interesting and valuable perspective. Connecting the issue to concerns of people in the local would strengthen its resonance.

Local: *UUP Retirees (UUP is Local 2190)*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: 'RUMP CRUSHES OPPOSITION'

Publication/Website: The Active Retiree

Issue Date: 20160216

Judges' Comments:

Here is the hope that Donald Trump really just wants the publicity and ego warming of running for president and will find a way to duck serving if he has the misfortune to be elected. More than a year later, the story reminds us of how the dreams of others can be our nightmares when we awake to find they are real. This story has fun and drips with sarcasm but in the end we are the rump of this joke and the Donald has the last laugh.

While politics is often polarizing within a local, the tone of this piece helps to provide an interesting perspective while also maintaining a wry sense of humor. Connecting it more directly to the shared community of UUP retirees might be helpful.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *UUP Retirees (UUP is Local 2190)*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Thoughts On The Future of SCOTUS and Friedrichs

Publication/Website: The Active Retiree

Issue Date: 20160216

Judges' Comments:

Written in the winter of 2015-16, the writer tries to gaze into the future and concludes that union members and retirees should get to work writing letters to the editors of their local papers telling why they want and need unions and why it would be unfair and destructive to find for the plaintiffs in Friedrichs v. CTA. A year has passed and it's still good advice to advance labor's cause to the public.

A thoughtful and interesting perspective. It is strongest when it offers some personal observations and commonsense approach that tie a big picture issue to the individual, locally. Some streamlining and distilling might also strengthen the article.

Local: *UUP Retirees (UUP is Local 2190)*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: TPP is a Bad Idea

Publication/Website: The Active Retiree

Issue Date: 20160216

Judges' Comments:

The writer recounts a first-hand look at the effects of NAFTA in Mexico and then discusses some of the issues raised by the TPP. She does a good job of identifying the greatest concern for seniors: the effect it would likely have on drug prices.

A strong and valuable perspective with a deft mix of firsthand observation and commonsense perspective on a big picture issue.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *UUP Retirees (UUP is Local 2190)*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Trump and the Working Class

Publication/Website: The Active Retiree

Issue Date: 20160616

Judges' Comments:

The writer is not holding his fire or soft peddling Trump's hypocrisy and anti-union animus. This is the low down and dirty on why he is no friend to working people. He makes a strong attack but, after all, the ammunition is endless.

A strong and understandable perspective but one that is likely to cause controversy despite its good intentions, disclaimers and back up support.

Local: *Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers*

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: THE WIND BEGINS TO CHANGE DIRECTION

Publication/Website: PostScript

Issue Date:

Judges' Comments:

This writer notes the wind is shifting a bit in the Common Core gale that has battered teachers, students and even parents into near rebellion. He cites the hopeful signs that were visible when this story was written.

A strong perspective with good information. It might resonate more fully if connected more fully to firsthand experiences of teachers, locally and a fuller explanation about why that matters.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Devine Intervention: a lofty look at retirement

Publication/Website: PostScript

Issue Date: 20160615

Judges' Comments:

An octogenarian takes a not too serious look at life in retirement and his not too inflexible plan for post retirement.

A nice perspective and some food for thought. Some sharper focus and clearer take away lessons for the leader would help to strengthen it.

Local: *Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: I can see for miles and miles...

Publication/Website: PostScript

Issue Date: 20160615

Judges' Comments:

This mid-point account of a bicycle trip from Ft. Lauderdale to Bar Harbor is interesting, but brief. A few personal detailed experiences might have made it come to life, but perhaps there wasn't space for that.

A very nice and inspiring personal narrative. Well-written, to the point, and offering some encouragement in a way that helps build community.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Peyton Meyer: Liver Transplant Superhero

Publication/Website: PostScript

Issue Date: 20160212

Judges' Comments:

This is a very brief update on the recovery of a toddler who underwent a liver transplant. Thankfully, his recovery and the donor's recovery seem to be going well. What would be great would be one or two little anecdotes about his progress to bring the story to life. But the baby's gaining a much stronger grip on life and that is what really matters.

A nice update. Some background information about the story would be helpful for readers who might just be connecting to it with this article.

Local: *Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Prez warns retirees about key issues

Publication/Website: PostScript

Issue Date: 20161209

Judges' Comments:

This is a good rundown of key issues for teachers and retired teachers that may or may not be related to the state constitution and a possible state constitutional convention. It might be improved by making a sharper distinction between issues relating to the U.S. Constitution and those relating to the state constitution, since it throws both into the pot.

Some important and valuable information. Additional context and connecting it more clearly to what it means for the members would strengthen the impact.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R III

Local: *Westchester/Putnam Retirees, NYSUT RC 15/16*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Protecting Our Interests

Publication/Website: Senior Class

Issue Date:

Judges' Comments:

This column reminds members to protect their interests by supporting VOTE-COPE with monthly donations. It makes a good case for that effort.

Some important information presented straightforwardly and formatted in digestible chunks. Tying some of the information (especially about VOTE-COPE support) to the individual member - explain why and how the process works and how people can be a part of it - would make it stronger.

Local: *Westchester/Putnam Retirees, NYSUT RC 15/16*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: The Way We Were

Publication/Website: Senior Class

Issue Date: 20160104

Judges' Comments:

File missing.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Local: *Westchester/Putnam Retirees, NYSUT RC 15/16*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: Vote-Cope Endorsement Conference

Publication/Website: Senior Class

Issue Date: 20160908T000000

URL: RC1516page1.pubSeptOct2016pdf

Judges' Comments:

This is a good description of how NYSUT endorses candidates and why it is important to participate in VOTE-COPE.

Some good information here along with valuable perspective. Be careful about getting into the weeds in some of the commentary and process and provide more information about specific candidates and why they deserve support.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R IV

Local: *Coalition of Retiree Councils 1, 2 and 3*

Category: **Best Writing**

Name of Entry: In Memoriam Rosalie McLean - Marcella Fugle

Publication/Website: Western N.Y. News and Views

Issue Date: 20161101

Judges' Comments:

This is a fine posthumous tribute to two women who were clearly pioneers and very influential in leading NYSUT, and in community action throughout their years in-service and afterward. These tributes might have been even more powerful if they had included a few quotes from either the women themselves, or from those who knew them well.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class RII

Local: RC 43 TRIF: Teachers Retired In Florida

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: A New Way To Go

Publication/Website: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org>

Issue Date: 20161204

Judges' Comments:

This writer says she was inspired by stories from other retirees to do more to help others, so she recounts her experiments taking social "impact" cruises to Cuba and the Dominican Republic. She hopes her tales will inspire others to do it too.

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class RII

Local: RC 43 TRIF: Teachers Retired In Florida

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Keep The Promise Not Just For Teachers

Publication/Website: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org>

Issue Date: 20160909

URL: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org/news/keep-promise-not-just-teachers>

Judges' Comments:

File missing

Local: RC 43 TRIF: Teachers Retired In Florida

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Senior Concerns: Social Justice

Publication/Website: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org>

Issue Date: 20161026T000000

URL: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org/social-justice/senior-concerns>

Judges' Comments:

File missing

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class RII

Local: RC 43 TRIF: Teachers Retired In Florida

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: Solidarity Now And Forever

Publication/Website: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org>

Issue Date: 20160128T000000

URL: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org/news/solidarity-now-forever>

Judges' Comments:

File missing

Local: RC 43 TRIF: Teachers Retired In Florida

Category: Best Writing

Name of Entry: What's Your New Year's Resolution?

Publication/Website: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org>

Issue Date: 20170102

Judges' Comments:

How about making social and political "resolutions" and bucket lists? It's an original way of looking at old. This is well written and thought provoking.