

NYSUT Communications Awards 2017

Class R I

Local: Islip Retired Teachers Association

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20160301

Judges' Comments:

This is a bright publication with lots of features, such as book and theater reviews, along with a personal travelogue and some news to interest retirees.

A wide range of information with a nice layout that strikes a good balance between copy and graphics makes this an appealing newsletter that creates a sense of community. Some sharper focus about what members should do with this information and how they can be a stronger part of the local would strengthen the effort.

Local: Johnstown Retired Teachers Association

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: *JRTA Communique*

Issue Date: 20160422

Judges' Comments:

This publication is essentially one long Q&A interview with a retiree who has moved to Texas and now teaches in a faith-based school. The layout adds to the stream of consciousness feel of this style of reporting and writing. There is a little bit of color art and photos, but it is really all about the words and that one interview. A different layout and a few more contributors could add needed dimension.

A nice effort to share information and build community. Additional graphics to help tell the story or capture interest would be welcome along with a sharper focus on how members can more fully be a part of the local.

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Local: Malverne Teachers' Assoc. Retiree Chapter

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: *Retiree ReView*

Issue Date: 20160913

Judges' Comments:

This is a newsy newsletter with a warm, personal tone and photos. It also includes membership benefits information and notices of events.

Nice range of issues and warm tone that builds community. Piggyback information about how to get more involved with local activities would be a strong complement to the appeal for dues payment.

Local: Space Coast TRIF

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: *Space Coast-TRIF Unit Fall Newsletter*

Issue Date: 20161111

Judges' Comments:

This issue of the newsletter leads with the president's observation that the devastation of Hurricane Matthew has blown divisiveness and dissension away at least temporarily and left a kinder, gentler spirit in its wake. The publication also features colorful photos and news about events and activities.

Nice friendly presentation and a lot of information. More focus on activities/issues/features by and for members would help to make the publication more appealing.

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Class R II

Local: BAY SHORE RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: *THE 4TH R*

Issue Date: 20161028

Judges' Comments:

This entry was very difficult to judge because it came in more than 20 pieces and they were from both the fall and the summer issues. Nevertheless, it is a very chatty and personal publication full of ruminations of days gone by and even a lonely heart appeal for an introduction to a lovely lady in her 70s who lives nearby. Although the ruminations were very long, there were some golden nuggets to be found there.

A nice range of information and a sense of community throughout. Some sharper focus to connect the elements presented here would strengthen the impact. Adding more photos and graphics would also make it more appealing.

Local: Region 13 Retiree Council

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: *Mid-Hudson Bridges*

Issue Date: 20160501

Judges' Comments:

This is a no-nonsense approach to reporting on the news and providing useful information briefly and succinctly. It is a good newsletter.

A lot of good information here. Connecting it to the members more directly and focusing on a sense of community among members would provide some additional benefit. More photos graphics, particularly some that capture that sense of community would be valuable.

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Class R II

Local: Retirees of Brentwood Schools
Category: General Excellence
Publication/Website: *ROBS Newsletter*
Issue Date: 20160601

Judges' Comments:

This is a lovely, well balanced newsletter with features and news and nothing too long. It also features color action photos.

Wide range of information and interesting features. Nice sense of community and member involvement. Good balance of copy and graphics and the length of stories/items is good for keeping attention.

Local: RC 43 TRIF: Teachers Retired In Florida
Category: General Excellence
Publication/Website: *Odds 'n Ends*
Issue Date: 20161201
URL: <http://rc43.ny.aft.org/>

Judges' Comments:

This publication is titled *Odds 'n Ends* and that describes its style which strives to gather key bits of information from the many groups scattered through southern and central Florida with information of general interest to all of the groups and their members. It is a businesslike, sturdy newsletter.

A lot of good information. Connecting it to the members more directly would strengthen the publication - e.g. explain how members, especially retirees, are really a part of the AFT centennial legacy. More features about and by members would help to also create a stronger sense of community.

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Class R III

Local: Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20161221

Judges' Comments:

This newsletter has a kind of Facebook charm in that it includes mini updates from numerous members, as well as a president's report and other useful information. The steel sculpture featured on the front page of this issue steals the show.

A lot of good information. Providing some clearer context about the information and what it means for members along with a sharper focus that connects members to the local would strengthen the newsletter.

Local: NYSUT Retiree Council 10

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20161201

Judges' Comments:

Both an analytic and thoughtful approach to the coming election and a remembrance of a loved member who died cohabit this newsletter, which is clear and balanced.

A lot of good, purposeful information. More features by and about members would help to build a stronger sense of vibrant community. Photos and graphics might also help to connect members more directly.

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Class R III

Local: NYSUT Retiree Council 12
Category: General Excellence
Publication/Website: RC12.ny.aft.org
Issue Date: 20160801

Judges' Comments:

Get out and vote is the central message of this issue and it pushes for pledges to do just that. It also has a feature on Paul Cole, two travelogues and what's involved in becoming a political activist.

Good information and a range of features by and about members contribute to a sense of community in the publication. The Paul Cole feature could use more context in its set up to better connect it to the publication and the rest of the items.

Local: NYSUT Retiree Council 18
Category: General Excellence
Publication/Website: *LINKAGE*
Issue Date: 20161201

Judges' Comments:

This has bits of news and useful information on many topics central to NYSUT and this retiree's council.

A lot of good information. Presenting more features by and about members that connect them to the union might strengthen the sense of community and make participation more inviting.

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Class R III

Local: NYSUT Retiree Council No. 44

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20160501 or 0701

Judges' Comments:

You don't need to read very far to see where this council's heart is. Its members are devoted to helping children and families in Buffalo who need help getting the food and school supplies they need. Members also volunteer tutoring kids so they can improve their reading skills. This council collects no dues. Instead it asks for an annual \$10 donation. All of that caring shines out in this publication.

Good information, appealing layout and stories/items/features presented in digestible chunks. There's balance between copy and graphics. Information is relevant and effort is made to engage the member. The impact would be even stronger with more features by and about members connected to the union. It would create a stronger sense of community.

Local: Pittsford District Retired Teachers Association

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20160502 or 1101

Judges' Comments:

This council newsletter includes several voices that provide news you can use and accounts of recent meetings and events. The main messages of this issue are getting retirees to join the council and getting them to vote in the general election.

A range of good information presented simply and clearly, creates a sense of community. Make the opening page more appealing and inviting to the individual member - the basic information is there but present it more warmly. Be careful about overt political calls to action - often it can be helpful to call people to action around their shared values and interests. Testimonial about why people are going to vote and what they really care about might be a way to leverage more support.

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Class R III

Local: RC 7

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20160901

Judges' Comments:

The focus in this Oct. '16 issue is on the election and how NYSUT arrives at its endorsements. It also includes news and information about the council activities and membership benefits. It is a pleasant read.

A lot of information and a focus on politics. More connection to members about why their participation matters and how their interests play a role in endorsements and the records of the candidates would likely yield more impact. Testimonials from activists about why they get involved might be helpful.

Local: RC39

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: *NYSUT RC39 Newsletter*

Issue Date: 20160301

Judges' Comments:

The lead story in this issue is about Scott Walker and how he and the Koch brothers got control of the Legislature and statehouse in Wisconsin and used that power to steamroll unions into oblivion. The newsletter also contains other information about activities and the foibles of organizing your emails.

There's a lot of information here that would make stronger impact if streamlined and distilled down to what really matters for the individual member. Shorter features providing information shared between copy and graphics makes it easier to engage readers. More features by and about members that connect them to the union would help create a stronger sense of community.

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Class R III

Local: Retiree Council 21
Category: General Excellence
Publication/Website: *Spotlight 21*
Issue Date: 20160325

Judges' Comments:

This newsletter is taking a serialized look at truths and myths about Social Security and it's a very good story. The issue also includes other news, but the series on Social Security is the jewel in its crown.

A lot of information is presented that might make more impact if streamlined and distilled down to what really matters for the member. More features with graphics by and about members and their connection to the union would create a stronger sense of community.

Local: Retirees Chapter/Professional Staff Congress
Category: General Excellence
Publication/Website:
Issue Date: 20161128

Judges' Comments:

How can any place or, for that matter, how can any council compete with New York City? The city's energy and dynamic intellectual, social and cultural milieu come through even in this council newsletter. It's black and white and straightforward, but the city's mystique loves that gear and nothing can stop it. This issue starts by announcing a program on solitary confinement and mass incarceration. It is inherently and unselfconsciously edgy. Right away you are on notice: Listen up!

A lot of good information here that could benefit from a sharper central focus connecting the members to the union more directly. Interesting features would benefit from that connection and build a stronger sense of community.

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Class R III

Local: UUP Retirees (UUP is Local 2190)

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20161016

Judges' Comments:

A lot of information and a nicely formatted presentation. While it has lots of professional grade photos and graphics, this publication suffers from meeting and minutes fatigue. Some sharper focus to pull together the wide range of news and features into a stronger sense of what this means for the individual member would strengthen the publication and connect members more strongly to the sense of union community. It's a wall of words only the highly motivated retiree would care or dare to scale.

Local: Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website: *PostScript*

Issue Date: 20161014

Judges' Comments:

If you like snapshots of you and your fellow retirees taking part in the retirees group then this is the newsletter for you because it is chock full of colorful little shots and they are accompanied by captions. In a few cases, however, such as the story about the donation of 21,000 books, so many photos and captions crowd in between the headline and the story that you need a GPS to find it. Don't divorce the headline from the story, let them live happily together and surround them with their family photos.

A lot of good and valuable information here presented in a nice package. A sense of vibrant community and activism comes through. Streamlining the officer reports and focusing them more directly on connecting with why the information is important to the individual member would strengthen the publication.

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Class R III

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

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20161115 or 0516

Judges' Comments:

This issue looks forward to the election and talks about the importance of voting for candidates based on how they will affect the key issues that affect your life. It also talks about solidarity and the need to support other unions whose members support you.

A lot of good information. The opening page would be stronger with some appropriate headlines to highlight the significance of the individual bits or information that are presented. Some sharper focus with features about and by members would help to create a stronger sense of community.

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Class R IV

Local: Retired Councils 1, 2 and 3

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20160701 or 1101

Judges' Comments:

Food is up front in this publication and it's a time honored attention grabber. So it makes sense to put information about the upcoming post-Labor Day luncheon at the top, but news about the group's many good works aren't far behind.

There's a lot of information here and it is presented in digestible chunks. It would be stronger with a more direct connection to what it means for the individual member...features connecting members to the issues with photos helping to tell the story would strengthen a sense of community.

Local: United Federation of Teachers Retired Teachers Chapter (Local 2)

Category: General Excellence

Publication/Website:

Issue Date: 20161101

Judges' Comments:

This issue is all about Washington and federal/national issues and the shell shock UFT members and retirees are feeling after Nov. 8, 2016. The advice: Wait for your head to stop spinning and then get back to work, crying over spilled milk won't clean it up. That high intensity work ethic is front and center, along with the famous tough-minded survival instincts that New Yorkers call on when the going gets suddenly rough. You can practically hear this group say: "Recalculating."

A clear focus and a lot of information. Some streamlining and connecting the info to what it means for the individual member would help to strengthen the impact. Testimonials from individuals about their commitment to the work moving forward — and even explaining what that means — might be one approach to consider. Connecting members through other members — not just officers — is a way to build community.