

THE OUTLOOK

Newsletter of the Retiree Council 12

A NYSUT-NEA-AFT Affiliate

June 2014

Sandra Bliss Receives The Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award at 2014 NYSUT RA

written by *Phyllis VanSteenburgh, OESJ Retiree*

The "Not for Ourselves Alone" Outstanding Leadership Award was renamed in 2006 in honor of former AFT and UFT President Sandy Feldman. Feldman succumbed to breast cancer in September of 2005. In the spirit of Sandy Feldman and all those female pioneers within NYSUT who have been recognized with the award since it was first presented in 2002, the award continues to celebrate the contributions of NYSUT's largest constituency group - women.

A lifetime achievement award, it honors those women who have provided throughout their careers significant service and leadership to their local and state affiliates, as well as to the labor movement. In making a selection, the NYSUT Women's History Committee considers length, breadth and depth of service. This year's selected honoree is Sandra J.

Bliss, co-president of RC 12. Sandy was recognized at the 2014 NYSUT Representative Assembly and received a gold pendant inset with a Susan B. Anthony coin. Sandy's photograph is on display in the entryway at NYSUT Headquarters with the previous winners. A video of Sandy and her history was created for showing at the RA, and Sandy gave a four-minute speech.

For over 40 years, Sandy was a math teacher in the Frankfort-Schuyler School District. In her third year of teaching, Sandy's local went out on strike, and Sandy ran the strike headquarters during the four-day strike in October of 1971. Her 45 years of service to her local began with her appointment to work on negotiations. This appointment lasted 42 years! Sandy held multiple elected and/or appointed positions, including president, throughout her entire career. Currently, she is president of the Frankfort-Schuyler TA Retiree Chapter.

When Sandy was 26 years old, she was elected to the NYSUT Board of Directors, and she continued to serve for the next 24 years, first as ED 12 Director, and later, as the ED 11 and 12 At-Large Director. She was a member of the original Committee of 100, and her interest in legislation continues today. With a small group of NYSUT members, Sandy spent two summers (1990 and 1992) teaching in the country of Poland as part of the Solidarity Project, which aided the Poles' transition to a democracy and helped the Polish teachers' unions reorganize. She also was instrumental in helping NYSUT form its Unity Caucus.

In 2012, Retiree Council 12 nominated Sandy for the "Not for Ourselves Alone" Outstanding Leadership Award. Fellow co-president, Jeanne Williams Bennett, stated, "Sandra attended her first Central New York Labor Council meeting in 1975, and in 1976, began serving as a delegate from the Frankfort-Schuyler Teachers Association. Later, Sandra held several leadership positions in the labor council including vice president and state convention delegate. She was instrumental in reinvigorating the CNY labor body by encouraging member participation to help make the council more meaningful and effective for labor." Sandy was nominated by Mike Corn and was awarded the Samuel Gompers AFL-CIO Award from the CNY Labor Council in 2010. A brick in the walkway in Sandy's name was dedicated by the CNY Labor Council and placed by NYSUT at the Workers Memorial in Ilion in 2013.

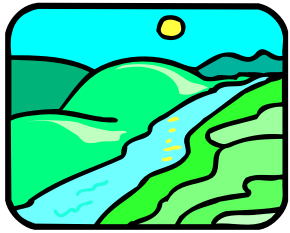
In 2014, Thomas Y. Hobart, Jr., NYSUT President Emeritus, and Antonia Cortese, NYSUT Board Member Emeritus, joined the list to nominate Sandra for this award. They stated, "Her work covered a broad spectrum from her roles as local union president, member of the NYSUT Board of Directors and the first director of her area teacher center. Sandy was the 'go to' person for any job, big or small. When Sandy worked, the task was done and done well.

When Sandy started teaching back in 1969, NYSUT was in its infancy, as was collective bargaining. Sandy was an advocate. Working with political parties at a convention was not only new, but many delegates did not understand the reason for them. Sandy was always there to help keep the organization together. Unity does not just happen. You need advocates and you need role models to help members, especially women, believe in unionism. Sandy embodied both."

To this end, Sandy tells us, "I took the opportunity to participate in the building of this mighty, mighty union – called NYSUT...The rewards were many, the hours were long, and I will continue to participate as a retiree to keep NYSUT strong and united—with one voice - because it is not for ourselves alone."



**Maria Neira, Sandra Bliss, Tom Hobart, and Dick Iannuzzi
at the NYSUT RA**



**NYSUT RC 12 Trip
A Day in History and the
Erie Canal
on August 27, 2014**

The bus will leave Wade Tours terminal at 8:15 am, Amsterdam (Mt. Carmel Church) at 8:45 am, and the Iroquois service area at 9:15 am. The group will tour the Herkimer Home and the Remington Arms Museum and gift shop in the morning. Lunch will be at Rocky's Canal Side Grille. After lunch, we will board the cruise ship for a narrated trip on the Erie Canal. Dinner on your own will be at the Turning Stone Casino Resort (\$15.00 free play and \$5.00 food credit). The bus will return to Wade Terminal at approximately 10:00 pm. The cost per person will be \$66.00. It includes bus, lunch, gratuities and admissions. **Lunch/Cruise option only**--Meet at Gems along the Mohawk at 1:15pm. Cost \$27.00 per person.

For more complete information go to RC12.ny.aft.org

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail address _____

Phone no. _____ *No refunds after July 25th.*

I (we) will board the bus at (Circle one.)

Wade Terminal Amsterdam Mt. Carmel Church Iroquois Service Plaza

Enclosed: Full Day _____ @ \$66.00 per person Amt. _____

 Cruise/lunch only option _____ @ \$27.00 per person Amt. _____

Lunch choice: Chicken _____ Black Angus Burger _____

 Sausage and Peppers _____ Vegetarian choice _____

Mail payment /checks made out to NYSUT RC12 to: **Wendy Wilson, 119**

Woodland Drive, Apt. 50, Cobleskill, NY 12043 (518)234-3230

Moose123@nycap.rr.com Reservations should be received by July 20th.

The Outlook

- Co-Pres. Jeanne W. Bennett (315) 895-7063
- Co-Pres. Sandra Bliss (315) 725-0706
- 1st VP David Sammons (518) 661-5637
- Co-2nd VP S. David King (518) 725-0848
- Co-2nd VP Mary Pritchard (518) 374-0607
- Secretary Kathlene Lyman (518) 399-0256
- Treasurer Dolores Talmadge (518)993-2854

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Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer

Don Harris

Newsletter Staff Phyllis VanSteenburgh

Carolyn Darkangelo Janis Bassett

Webmaster - Carolyn Darkangelo

Darkangelo @nycap.rr.com

Website: RC12.ny.aft.org

NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant:

Jennifer Shaad-Derby

(518) 783-7977 jderby@nysutmail.org

**Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act of 2013
113th CONGRESS 2013 & 2014**

by Judy Schultz, RC 12 past president

We strongly urge you, our members, to contact legislators to support or continue to support passage of S. 459/H.R. 1179 bills that would address the quagmire faced by Medicare beneficiaries who are placed in observation status instead of being formally admitted to the hospital as inpatients. In our RC 12 area, U.S. Senators Gillibrand and Schumer and Representatives Gibson, Hanna, Owens and Tonko are co-sponsors. These bills were first introduced in 2010 and passage needs to be escalated.

Why? Upon passage into law, S. 459/H.R. 1179 would amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count a period of receipt of outpatient observation services in a hospital toward satisfying the 3-day inpatient hospital requirement for coverage of skilled nursing facility services under Medicare.

The following is from a letter written to the original sponsors of the bills, U.S. Representatives, Joe Courtney (D) and Tom Latham (R) and U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D), by the Leadership Council of Aging, which includes among its members, the AFL-CIO, Alliance for Retired Americans, and AARP. (All NYSUT members automatically belong to both the AFL-CIO and the ARA.)

“ ‘Observation’ is the term used to describe the outpatient status of a patient who is in a hospital bed, but who is not called an inpatient. Patients in observation status receive medical and nursing services, tests, medications, and food, and they are often intermingled with inpatients. The care is indistinguishable from the care received by inpatients. Although Medicare rules limit observation to, at most 24-28 hours, many older people and people with disabilities nationwide are experiencing much longer stays in acute care hospitals under observation.

Since the Medicare statute requires that patients have at least three consecutive days of inpatient status (not including the date of discharge) in order to qualify for Medicare-covered care in a skilled nursing facility (SNF), a major consequence for beneficiaries of not being classified as inpatients is that their subsequent stays in SNF’s are not covered by Medicare. In addition, the prescription drugs that patients take while in the hospital in observation status are not paid for at the same rate as they would be if the beneficiaries were inpatients.”

Solution: “S. 569 and H.R. 1179 amend the Medicare statute’s definition of “post-hospital extended care services” to clarify that Medicare beneficiaries in observation are deemed inpatients in the hospital. Under the language of the bills, a patient who is in the hospital under observation status would be deemed to have been an inpatient during that time period and would generally be considered to have been discharged upon leaving the hospital. The bills would apply retroactively to periods of observation status that began on or after January 1, 2013, but only to beneficiaries who appeal the completed services in question within the 90 days of the enactment of the ACT. These changes would help to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries receive SNF coverage to which they are entitled under Medicare Part A.” *(continued on page3)*

Save the Dates– 2014

- Aug. 11-12** Pres. Endorsement Conf -Albany**
- Aug. 27** RC 12 Erie Canal trip
- Sept. 30** RC 12 meeting Otesaga in Cooperstown
- Oct. 8-9** RC 12 trip to Vermont
- Nov. 1-9** RC 12 trip to Branson
- Nov. 25** RC 12 trip to see Billy Joel

Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act of 2013 continued

Future goals. Reduce the time to qualify for Medicare SNF coverage from 3 days to 2, and possibly to, “as prescribed by the patient’s physician.” Require all states to require their hospitals to notify patients of their status with explanations of the differences at time of hospital classification as New York State has recently done.

**Co-Presidents Jeanne Williams Bennett and Sandra Bliss will attend the NYSUT Endorsement Conference for the November elections to represent RC 12. If you have input for their consideration, give them a call.

Programs designed specifically for NYSUT members

Get expert legal assistance today!

The NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed Legal Service Plan -- provided by Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C. -- offers legal expertise on a variety of personal legal matters ranging from dealing with a speeding ticket to handling estate planning.

- Low annual cost of just \$85 (\$55 for retirees)
- Unlimited toll-free legal advice
- Free Simple Will
- Two, free, hour-long consultations with a plan attorney

Don't wait to get the legal assistance you need. Learn more about the plan today!

***Please note that if you belong to a local association that provides a group legal service plan through the local or its benefit fund, remember to take advantage of the plan's benefits.*



Time for an insurance check-up!

Find out what your insurance policies currently cover.

Keep your policies in a secure, fire-proof location

Determine if you have enough coverage to meet your needs today and in the future.

We encourage you to check out the variety of quality, competitive insurance programs endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits, including Term & Level Term Life Insurance; Disability Insurance; and MetLife Auto & Home Insurance, among many others.

Learn more about these endorsed programs and many others by calling **800-626-8101** or visiting **memberbenefits.nysut.org**.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



Retiree Council 12 Contribution Form July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

Name _____ County _____

Address _____ City _____ Year Retired _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Original Union Local _____ You may share my email with AFT and NYSUT _____

My Assembly member _____ My NY State Senator _____ My US Representative _____

I would be willing to work for my fellow retirees in the area of:

___ Legislation ___ Social Committee ___ Newsletter

\$15.00 yearly contribution requested. Send to
John Mazur, 176 West Bush Rd, Gloversville, NY 12078 518-773-7180
Make check payable to NYSUT Retiree Council 12



**JUNE 2014
RC 12 Outlook**



RC 12 Trip to Vermont

RC 12 is planning a trip to Vermont on Wednesday and Thursday October 8-9, 2014.

The pickup will be at 7:00 am at Wade and 7:30 am at Mt. Carmel Church in Amsterdam. We will visit the Shelburne Museum (www.shelburnemuseum.org). We will be staying at the Best Western Windjammer in S. Burlington. In the evening, we will take the Spirit of Ethan Allen – Harvest Moon Dinner Cruise on Lake Champlain. After a complimentary breakfast at the hotel, we will visit the Rock of Ages Quarry. Following lunch at the Hilltop Restaurant, we will tour Ben and Jerry’s and visit Church Street Marketplace in Burlington. The bus will return between 9:00 and 9:30 pm.

The trip will cost \$225 per person dbl occupancy, tip included. Get the registration form at the website and send the check payable to NYSUT RC 12 by Sept. 5, 2014, to Kathy Lyman, 254 Riverside Place, Alplaus, NY 12008 (518-399-0256). No refunds after Sept 5.

Go to the RC 12 Website for the registration form.
RC12.ny.aft.org

ELECTION NOTICE – VACANCY -- NYSUT RC 12

Director - Two Positions Available

Due to two NYSUT RC 12 Directors’ election to officer positions on June 5, 2014, two director vacancies exist on the NYSUT RC 12 Board of Directors. An election will be held on September 30, 2014, during the NYSUT Retiree Council 12 General Membership Meeting at the Otesaga, Cooperstown, New York between 10:00 -10:30 am.

All members of NYSUT RC 12 are eligible to run for office. Members do not need to attend the entire meeting or pay for the luncheon in order to vote. The term of office is September 30, 2014 to June 30, 2015, the remainder of the existing terms.

The duties of the office are attending RC 12 Executive Committee meetings and General Membership meetings to carry out the business of RC 12 and being responsible for a geographic area of RC 12. Some, but not all, meeting travel expenses are reimbursed. At least three meetings of each type are held annually.

Nomination forms may be obtained from Judith Schultz, nomination chair. Completed forms must be returned to Judy and must be received or postmarked no later than August 1, 2014. Email your request for a nomination form to: mainemate@aol.com or call Judy @ (518)399-4957.