

# THE OUTLOOK

Newsletter of the Retiree Council 12

A NYSUT-NEA-AFT Affiliate

May 2012

## NYSUT RC 12 LUNCHEON MEETING

Thursday, June 14, 2012

Water's Edge Lighthouse, 2 Freemans Bridge Road, Scotia, NY

9:30-10:00 AM -Registration with Coffee and Danish  
10:00-12:00 AM — General Membership Meeting and Election of Officers

### Presentation of RC 12 Award of Excellence to James Wood

### Guest Speaker New York State Teacher of the Year -- Katie Ferguson

12:00-1:00PM —Lunch  
MENU (cost \$22.00)

#### 1st Course

Choice of Salad or Soup du Jour

#### Entree Choices

Chicken Francaise  
Sliced Top Round of Beef  
Herb Crusted Salmon  
Vegetarian

**Dessert** Lemon Ice **Coffee and Tea** (Cash Bar available)

Directions: From the NYS Thruway—Get off at Exit 26 and Merge onto 1-890 East. Take Exit 4B toward Erie Blvd. Turn slight left onto Erie Blvd. Erie Blvd. becomes Freemans Bridge Road. Go 1.7 miles and the restaurant is on your right.



..... Please send the form below to Vickie McGowan .....

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ # of Reservations \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Your menu choice. Please put the name(s) & number of people in your party who are ordering each entree  
\_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Beef \_\_\_\_\_ Salmon \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian

Please make out a check for \$22.00 to NYSUT RC -12 and mail it along with this reservation form to Vickie McGowan 142 Front Street, Schenectady, NY 12305. 518-852-0113 Reservation Deadline: **Thursday, June 7th**

## Jennifer Shaad-Derby

### NYSUT RC 12 Retiree Services Consultant

By Elizabeth Batchelor, retired from Johnstown TA.

Having grown up in a family of union activists and having served in the Mayfield TA for years, Jennifer Shaad-Derby was a likely candidate to be tapped by NYSUT to serve as the Retiree Services Consultant for both RC 12 and 13. Although the consultant job can be overwhelming because there is so much to learn, Shaad-Derby has already found the rewards to be great.

Among the rewards she has found is the getting to work with others who are equally committed to serving retirees. She also appreciates the opportunity to stay involved in the union. Shadd-Derby had been her local's president for ten years and had been the vice president before that. She also had been involved with the Committee of 100 for at least thirty years. "The union had become like family to me," she said. The political action piece is very important to her, so of course she attended the rally at HMF BOCES to address the issue of funding rural schools.

She looks forward to working on the relationship between NYSUT and the retirees. Shaad-Derby is currently trying to address the membership list of those who should be listed as members of RC 12. It's a critical issue, she said, because these are people who should have an impact on the election. She also considers communication issues to be a priority. Timeliness of the newsletter, for example, is important because it affects so many of the activities of RC 12 including those of the social committee, luncheons, and political action.

NYSUT did provide training to help her understand her responsibilities as consultant. Chief among those is planning for the Regional Conferences for both RC 12 and RC 13, which Shadd-Derby described as being much like planning a mini-wedding. She "survived" her first Regional Conference in April because of the support from the retirees she serves, support she calls "comforting." There is just so much to learn, so much to get used to – that and "Bill Schultz left awfully big shoes to fill," she said. But, she admits, the job does get easier as she gains experience.



## From the President's Desk...

### Jeanne W. Bennett

*Those who are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed by those who are dumber. ~Plato*

It is of utmost importance that each of us examine our core values and vote accordingly in the upcoming political elections this year. Are you worried about threats to Medicare and Social Security? Are you concerned that your retirement savings are being eroded

while daily expenses are rising? What is going to happen with your health insurance coverage and costs? Do you still have a mortgage? Are environmental issues important to you? As a large percentage of our members are female, how do you feel about what has been happening with women's rights? Do you believe that corporations should pay taxes? Should the wealthiest of Americans get tax breaks? This year's elections are about political and economic power and the future direction of our country.

Recent studies have shown that in states where there are a larger number of conservative voters who are not in favor of government programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, a greater percentage of these voters actually receive and benefit from those programs. In the more liberal voting states, however, the reverse is true.

Today, our pensions, teacher salaries, and public schools are being bombarded from all sides. It seems that we, as public employees, are being blamed for all of the state and national financial problems. I urge you to consider voting for candidates who are concerned with public education and support programs that provide for the needs, well-being, and dignity of senior citizens. I urge you to know where your interests lie. Find out what the candidates are promising that coincides with those interests, and then, vote accordingly.

It's unfortunate that a large number of NYSUT members did not vote in the last election. NYSUT members make up approximately 5% of each election district. This percentage is enough to swing a vote. Please be sure to get out and vote this year for those candidates who will protect the things that are truly important to your/our welfare.

*(Special thanks is given to Joan Perrini, president of NYSUT Retiree council 21, for some of the above content.)*

## AFT Endorses Barack Obama

*By John Ost Political Director of AFT*

On February 7, 2012, the AFT executive council voted to endorse the candidacy of Barack Obama for president in 2012. Education, jobs, and the economy continue to be the top issues confronting our members and the country. When President Obama took office, he inherited an economy on the verge of collapse. Over the past three years, he has proposed and fought for legislation - despite an implacable Congress - that has worked to stabilize the economy, save jobs, and prevent cuts to vital services that Americans depend on.

The Republican candidates are promoting a view of America that differs greatly from those concerned about economic and educational fairness. These candidates seek to repeal healthcare legislation. They have supported efforts to strip workers of collective bargaining and a voice in the workplace by jamming through so-called 'right to work for less' legislation, as we saw in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and elsewhere. Also, they support tax plans that don't ask the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share.

**These are not minor differences.** Re-electing Barack Obama will move our country forward in a direction that is fundamentally different from that of any of the contenders still in the running for the Republican nomination.

This does not mean that we agree with every decision the president and his administration have made, particularly those education policies that place more emphasis on competition and measurements than on promoting what frontline professionals and parents know will improve teaching and learning in our classrooms. We recognize there is still work to be done. When we have disagreed with the Obama administration, the AFT has made that known, and we will continue to do so.

## The Outlook

Published by Retiree Council 12 NYSUT,  
NEA, AFT, AFL-CIO

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Co-2<sup>nd</sup> VP Mary Pritchard (518) 374-0607  
Sec. Carolyn Darkangelo (518) 883-7440  
Treasurer John Mazur (518) 773-7180

### Immediate Past President

Karen Wojcik-Hess (518) 899-7592

**Past Presidents:** Judy Schultz

Don Griffith Bill Schultz Jim Marquit

### Directors (as of July 1, 2011)

#### Montgomery

Alex Boschi

#### Otsego and Schoharie

Joseph F Bernocco & Margaret Dafeldecker

#### Schenectady

Vicki McGowen

#### Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer

David Sammons & Don Harris

**Newsletter Staff :** We need volunteers!

**Webmaster - Carolyn Darkangelo**

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**Jennifer Shaad-Derby**

(518) 783-7977 [jderby@nysutmail.org](mailto:jderby@nysutmail.org)

## Save the Dates

**May 31** NYSUT RC-12 Regional Conference  
at Glen Sanders Scotia

**June 14** Luncheon and election  
at Water's Edge Lighthouse Glenville

**June 27** Trip to Yankee Stadium (wait list only)

**Sept. 27** Trip to Culinary Institute (CIA)

**Oct. 10** Fall General Meeting at Otesaga

**Oct. 14-16** Trip to Newport, RI

Go to the website at [www.ny.aft.org/rc12](http://www.ny.aft.org/rc12)  
to get information and registration forms for trips



## A Retiree's New Life: Writing Historical "Cozies"

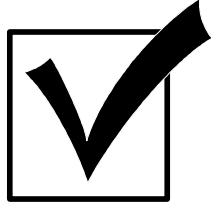
by Rosemary Miner, retiree from Niskayuna TA

In my previous life, I taught American History at Niskayuna High School. I continue to teach the history I've always had a passion for - but now as a writer of mysteries, set in the history of an earlier America.

Hilliard and Harris Publishers have recently released the third in my Adirondack series, "Adirondack Rubies to Die For." Set in upstate New York where the ruby red garnets were mined for industrial abrasives in the 1800's, this novel again features the amateur sleuth, herbalist Miss Grace Wickham, who agrees with her friend Susan B. Anthony that a woman should have a "purse of her own." Each novel in the series reveals the social and cultural history of nineteenth century life in the region. As an herbal doctor, Gracie sees patients in these small hamlets and gathers clues to solve crimes that occur in their hardscrabble lives. While seeing patients who work at the tannery turning hides into leather or ride logs on the annual Hudson River drive, or as in this latest story, mine the garnets, history comes alive when there's a murder Miss Wickham is asked to solve.

To see a listing of my books and interviews go to  
[www.RosemaryMiner.com](http://www.RosemaryMiner.com).

Nominees at the March 28 meeting at the Perthshire. From left to right: Mary Pritchard, David Sammons, S. David King, Sandra Bliss, Jeanne B. Williams, Judy Schultz, John Mazur, Carolyn Darkangelo



## RC 12 Nominations – Election to be held on June 14

**Co-Presidents** *The two candidates below would like to be considered as co-presidents. Being president of any organization can consume one's life. Jeanne Bennett and Sandra Bliss have worked together for over 25 years and believe as co-presidents they will best be able to serve RC 12 at this time of overwhelming challenges. Advocacy, organizing, and political action are their goals.*

**Jeanne Williams Bennett** (retired from Mohawk Central School TA) has served as the president of RC 12 for the last two years and served as 1<sup>st</sup> vice president prior to that. She would be the lead delegate at the 2014 RA.

**Sandra Bliss** (retired from Frankfort-Schuyler TA) served as the 1<sup>st</sup> vice president of RC 12. She has been on the Legislative Committee and is a Committee of 100 representative. She would be the lead delegate at the 2013 RA.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

**David Sammons** (Retired from Mayfield Central School) originally became involved in teacher retirement issues through his participation in the Committee of 100. This involvement led to his serving on the Board of Directors for the past four years and being active on several of its committees. The opportunity to serve education and retired teachers in these capacities has been very rewarding.

### Co-2nd Vice Presidents for Legislation

**S. David King** (retired from Broadalbin-Perth TA) served as a member of the Broadalbin Perth negotiating team, as the RA delegate, and as the chief negotiator for both Perth CSTA and Broadalbin-Perth CSTA before retiring in 2000. In 1964, he organized a committee to have Al Shanker speak in Fulton County about the formation of local teachers' unions. Since his retirement he has served as co-2nd vice president of RC 12. He has been a delegate for RC 12 at the RA, a former member of the NYSUT Retiree Advisory Committee, and helped to organize the Committee of 100, which he attends. He has also helped to organize the NYSUT phone banks.

**Mary D'Ercole Pritchard** (retired from Schenectady Federation of Teachers) believes this is a critical time in education necessitating lobbying for teachers' rights and quality education for all, which NYSUT does effectively. She wants to continue to do what she can to support the union's point of view. She is a strong union person having been raised by a father who was shop steward at the International Harvester Plant and a mother who represented the Ladies' Garment Worker Union.

### Secretary

**Carolyn Darkangelo** (retired from Mayfield TA) believes we live in challenging times for NYSUT and RC 12. The devastating Tax Cap Law and the assault on pensions and benefits make it vital that we all do whatever we can to help. As webmaster and secretary, she has worked to communicate effectively for RC12 for the past four years. She would like to continue to serve RC 12 as its secretary.

### Treasurer

**John Mazur** (retired from Gloversville TA) has served RC 12 as the treasurer and on the social committee. He was an active member of the Gloversville TA and wishes to continue to be an active member of RC 12.

### Delegates to the NYSUT RA in 2013 and 2014

**Jeanne Williams Bennett** proposes to be the co-delegate with Sandy Bliss for the 2013 RA (and the lead delegate in 2014) if they are elected as co-presidents.

**Sandra Bliss** proposes to be the co-delegate with Jeanne Williams Bennett for the 2014 RA (and the lead delegate in 2013) if they are elected as co-presidents.

**Don Griffith** (retired from Middleburgh Central) is a past-president of RC 12 and also served as vice president and as a delegate and alternate at previous RAs.

**Judy Schultz** (retired from Schenectady Federation of Teachers) has been part of the RC 12 leadership team since her retirement in 1992. She wishes to continue to advocate for retirees and their families against those seeking to diminish or eliminate much of what we depend upon for a secure retirement. We know our support systems, including Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid benefits and at the state level, our pensions and health insurance, must be protected. Judy asserts she will continue to support members of RC 12 as she has for the past 20 years.

**Karen Wojcek-Hess** (Schenectady Federation of Teachers) became involved in RC 12, NYSUT, AFT, and the Alliance for Retired Americans following her retirement. She has served RC 12 as vice president and president each for a term, as a delegate to NYSUT, and this year as a delegate to AFT. She has worked to have RC 12 represented on NYSUT's Retiree Advisory Committee, and at the end of last year was appointed to that committee for a three-year term. She would like to represent RC 12 again as a delegate for NYSUT and AFT.

**S. David King** (see above)

### Delegate to the AFT 2014 Convention

**Judy Schultz** (see above) **Karen Wojcek-Hess** (see above)

# Forming a Retiree Chapter: The Gloversville Retired Teachers Association

by Don Harris, GRTA President

In July of 2007, the founders of the GRTA sent out a letter to potential members which started as follows: "Retirement is great, but even though you have retired, we haven't forgotten about you! As a former educator in the Gloversville School District, you remain a member of an important group with a significant purpose."

A group of retirees felt that it was important to form a retiree chapter in our city for a number of reasons:

- ◆ We could facilitate first-hand involvement with our local teacher union (GTA).
- ◆ We could work with other retiree groups to share information.
- ◆ We could keep our members informed regarding issues affecting our retirement.
- ◆ We could publish a newsletter for our members.
- ◆ We could provide financial support for worthwhile charitable organizations.
- ◆ We could have luncheons where our members could socialize and receive current information that keep them informed.

As a result of our efforts, the GRTA now is a very vibrant organization with over 200 members. This has come about as a result of a lot of hard work and dedication from "our founding fathers and mothers." We were formally recognized by the GTA in January of 2008, and we've been a very active group ever since that date.

We generally have two luncheons a year, and these have proven to be very popular with our members. We average between 60 and 70 people at our luncheons, and we bring in guest speakers who have spoken on a variety of topics such as Literacy Volunteers, the

Gloversville Co-op Market, the Landis Arboretum, Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle, and Taking Advantage of NYSUT Member Benefits. We also take time at each meeting to go over some of the recent activities undertaken by RC 12. In addition, we have co-sponsored with other retiree groups two local conferences which have dealt with retiree issues. Both of these conferences have been very well received.

Since most of our members have Internet access, we email the "GRTA Connection," a newsletter which includes articles about our recent activities as well as the minutes from our most recent meeting for those who were unable to attend. We also mail newsletters to those members who don't have a computer. We have compiled a member directory so that retirees can get in touch with other retirees from our district.

We have also maintained a close working relationship with the Gloversville Teachers Association over the years. We have one of our Exec Committee members attend their monthly Representative Council Meetings, and we have frequent contact with the GTA president. We have consistently reminded the GTA of the importance in retirement of a good health insurance plan. Health insurance is the issue that has engaged our organization the most, since our district has periodically changed insurance policies.

Successful organizations don't just happen. It has taken a lot of time and hard work from our Executive Committee to reach this point, and I certainly have been most appreciative of their efforts. The committee is made up of the following people: Vince LaPorta – Vice-President; Recording Secretary – Sam Vojtek; Corresponding Secretary – Gerry Samek Vojtek; Treasurer – John Mazur; Public Relations – Siggie Dugan; Membership Chairperson – Marie Wojeski; GTA Liason – Marian Lachanski; Newsletter Chairperson – Ginny Mazur/Barbara Weiner. To paraphrase The Beatles,

"I Get By With **A Lot** of Help From My Friends."

Retiree Council 12 Contribution Form July 1, 2011 - June 30 2012

Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Year Retired \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Original Union Local \_\_\_\_\_ You may share my email with AFT \_\_\_\_\_

My Assemblyman \_\_\_\_\_ 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

