

# THE OUTLOOK

Newsletter of the Retiree Council 12

A NYSUT-NEA-AFT Affiliate

April 2011

## NYSUT RC 12 ANNUAL MEETING ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Thursday, May 26, 2011

River Stone Manor, 1437 Amsterdam Rd., Glenville, NY

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Retiree Councils and Recognition of Honorees

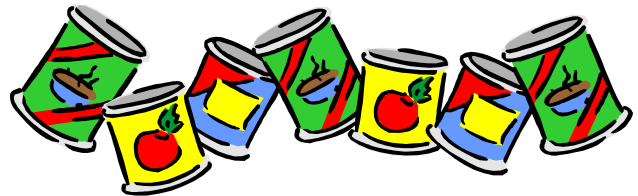
Patrick Lyons, Assistant to the President of NYSUT

will speak on

### “Today’s Political Climate”

We invite everyone to bring one non-perishable food item or monetary donation to support the Regional Food Bank Northeastern New York.

- 9:30 – 10:00 Registration with coffee and tea
- 10:00 – 11:15 Meeting of general membership
- 11:15 – 12:00 Guest Speaker
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch



- Entrée Choices: Manicotti Primavera – Sautéed garden fresh vegetables, roasted garlic cream  
Champagne Chicken – Medallions of chicken, sautéed white mushrooms, champagne cream, garnished with red & white grapes  
Grouper Picatta – Sundried tomatoes, capers, white wine butter & lemon sauce

Cost to you: \$20.00

**Directions from the west:** Take NYS Thruway I-90 E. Take Exit #26. Take ramp toward Scotia/RotterdamJct./RT-5. Rt. Onto 5E. Travel 1.0 Mile – River Stone Manor entrance on right.

**From Points east:** Take NYS Thruway I-90 W. Take Exit # 25, Schenectady I-890 W. Continue on I-890 W (toward Amsterdam) to the end. At traffic light make right onto RT-5 E. Travel 1.0 Mile-River Stone Manor entrance on right.

**From Points south:** Take I-87 N and merge onto NYS Thruway I-90 W. Take I-90 W to Exit #25 (toward Amsterdam) to the end. At traffic light make right onto RT-5E. Travel 1.0 Mile-River Stone Manor entrance on right.

**From Points north:** Take I-87S to Exit 1W – NYS Thruway I-90W(toll entrance). Take I-90 West to exit #25 Schenectady I-890W. Continue on I-890W (toward Amsterdam) to the end. At traffic light make Right onto RT-5E. Travel 1.0 Mile-River Stone Manor entrance on right.

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

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

Your Menu Choice: (Please put the number of people in your party that are ordering each entrée.)  
         Manicotti          Chicken          Grouper

Please make out a check for \$20.00 to NYSUT RC-12 and mail it along with this reservation form to:  
**Royann Rogerson 24 Knottingly Pl.,**  
**Ballston Lake, NY 12019 518-289-5733 Reservation Deadline: Friday, May 13, 2011.**

### Mike Corn Remembered

Mike Corn, this year’s recipient of RC 12’s Award of Excellence, passed away on March 26<sup>th</sup> after a valiant eight-year battle with cancer. His wife, Jan, proudly displayed our plaque at the funeral home during the calling hours. Mike served as a teacher member of the New York Teachers’ Retirement System Board for 19 years and served on the NYSUT Board of Directors for 23 years. A chair was left vacant during the RA with two red roses and Mike Corn’s name on it. Delegates honored Mike with a moment of silence.

## From the President's Desk...

*Jeanne Williams*

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Somewhere in New York State, a vibrant, talented young music teacher has just received a pink slip. Elsewhere, a 58-year-old mother of two with seventeen years in the NYSTRS has just been fired because her program has been eliminated. In a third district, both members of a married couple have had their positions cut to half time; neither one will receive benefits.

Ironically, I was typing this article when the telephone rang. It was my husband informing me that his position and program have been eliminated. According to Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, 240 school districts in New York State are laying off roughly 16,000 teachers. How many more members of the educational community – teacher aides, health care workers, cafeteria workers, clerical workers, bus driv-

ers, and custodians – will be added to this total? What will this do to the economy of New York State?

Even more important is the impact the cuts have on the children. David Steiner, NYS Commissioner of Education, said that difficult budget choices are clearly taking their toll. “The social contract has broken down. We are fifth in the country on the disparity of what we spend from one child to another. No child deserves less than her brother, her neighbor, or the child in the district next door. How did it come to this?”

Unfortunately, the current political climate grants tax breaks to the wealthy at the expense of adequate funding for education and health care. Last year, General Electric, despite \$14 billion in worldwide profits (\$5 billion of this in US profits), paid no taxes. In comparison, if Gov. Scott Walker has his way, a custodian earning \$24,622 at the University of Wisconsin will have to pay 16% more of his pension and health care costs.

The strength of our organization is our membership. We cannot ignore these critical issues at such a critical time. Retirees are potent advocates, and what we do **does** matter. There are too many children and elderly who do not have a voice, and we need to speak for them.

Kathleen Donahue, NYSUT Vice President, called retirees NYSUT’s “daytime warriors”, who continue to fight to save Social Security, fight off attacks on pensions, and protect Medicare benefits.

As retirees, we know and remember where we’ve been and what we have accomplished. Now we have the responsibility to act, influence, and make a difference. We can make a difference by voting for our local school district budgets. We can influence our local boards of education by attending meetings in support of in-service teachers. We can act effectively if we attend the RC 12 luncheon meetings in order to remain informed and involved. This is not the time to give in, give up, or give out. **Let us act together and act with courage!**

### The Outlook

Published by Retiree Council 12 NYSUT,  
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## Something We Can All Celebrate!

By **Bill Schultz**, Past President of RC 12

You will be hearing a lot about the 20th anniversary of Retiree Councils in the coming months, and hopefully, not too many of you are asking what there is to celebrate. If you have been reading your council newsletter, attending your council general meetings, enjoying the social programs, attending the NYSUT Regional Conferences, and observing NYSUT’s efforts to protect our schools and educators, there are clearly many things to appreciate. But here is one more, perhaps a little less obvious but no less important.

When the Councils were created in 1991, it took them several years to get organized, involve members, and create a program. But when they did, it became evident to all that the arena of greatest importance to us was the legislative arena. And the issue foremost on the minds of the retirees of that time was a COLA. Literally thousands of our fellow retirees’ pensions fell below \$10,000 a year. This was because of the very low original salaries these members had retired on, but it was also due to the lack of enhancements their pensions received. To be sure, occa-

sional pension supplements had been given over the years, but these proved to be inadequate. We wanted a legally binding, yearly adjustment in our pensions that reflected the real increases in the cost of living that were so eroding our income and the dignity of our retirement. Then, at the end of the 90’s, retirees came together in their demand that a COLA be enacted. Passage of this legislation was by no means assured. In fact, few, including many within our own ranks, thought we had any chance. But retirees were determined, and with NYSUT’s support and leadership, we won! We did not get all we wanted. You never do. We did not obtain a full COLA, so our pensions continue to diminish in purchasing power. So much remains to be done. But we won, the legislation is on the books, a ‘work in progress’ for future generations to complete.

I looked over my recent NYSTRS pension statement the other day and noted that the sum total of my pension increases as the result of the COLA, per month, every month since the enactment of this legislation, now amounts to exactly \$350. Judy’s, \$321. \$671 per month, over \$8,000 per year, that she and I would not have were it not for the efforts of NYSUT and your retiree council. Take a look at your NYSTRS Member Profile, first page, “Previous COLAs,” and see the difference this legislation made for you.

**Our Committee of 100 members  
met with Senator Farley and Assemblymen Amedore, Butler, and Tedisco.**

**Assemblyman Butler:** Butler is supportive of the millionaires' tax and understands our education issues. He reports that Silver says seniority is non-negotiable. He acknowledges that there are flaws in the funding formula but said they won't be corrected this year.

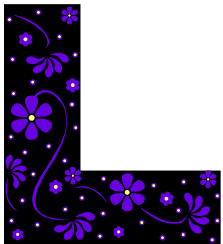
**Assemblyman Amedore:** He is passionate about protecting programs kids need. He is concerned that people won't buy homes if property taxes rise, schools are closed, and programs are dropped. He said we have to walk a fine line with the budget, but his priority is to invest in education. He, too, is also concerned about the inequities in school aid formula. He does not support raising taxes. He believes we need a whole new way to fund education. He thinks \$200K is too low for millionaires' tax. For the first time in four years, he felt that Sheldon Silver seems wishy-washy.

**Assemblyman Tedisco:** He, too, is concerned with funding formula. He also believes we need mandate relief.

**Senator Farley:** He used to mention being a NYSUT member; now he doesn't mention that. Instead he mentioned that NYSUT did not endorse him, noting that he got elected, in his words, "handily," without NYSUT. He said he will not be our champion on the millionaire's tax—he has "other" issues to deal with and claims no other group has pushed this issue with him. RC 12 Vice President Sandy Bliss spoke up and said she was there last week and discussed it with him. He insisted that "10 to 1 are in favor of whatever the governor wants." He raised his voice at us, would not answer questions, and answered AROUND questions. We left shaking our heads.

For more information or to send a message to your legislators, please log on to nysut.org or [www.facebook.com/nysutunited](http://www.facebook.com/nysutunited).

Respectfully submitted in solidarity,  
Laura J. Bellinger, NYSUT PAC Coordinator 44<sup>th</sup> Senate District



## Lilac Festival

Join us for a bus trip to visit Highland Park and the world famous Lilac Festival and the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film on **May 18, 2011**.

BUS - leaves

7:00 AM: Wade Tours, 797 Burdeck Street, Schenectady  
7:30 AM.: Amsterdam (Exit 27) OR Johnstown (Exit 28) parking lot next to McDonalds.

The Bus will return to Johnstown or Amsterdam around 9:30 and to Wade Terminal around 10:00 p.m.

We will Visit Highland Park and the Lilac Festival - over 1,200 lilac bushes -- as well as arts and crafts and international food. There will be plenty to do and see as we walk around the park. Then we will tour the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film. This 50-room mansion has been restored to its early 1900's splendor, when it was occupied by George Eastman, founder of Eastman Kodak. The museum hosts a Civil War photography exhibit, focusing on the photography of George Barnard, Matthew Brady, and Alexander Gardner. On our way home, we will stop at Turning Stone Casino for a dinner buffet at the Season's Harvest.

The cost is **\$71.00** per person which includes cost of bus and tip for driver, admission to George Eastman House- cost of dinner buffet at Season's Harvest at Turning Stone.

### Lilac Festival Trip Reservation Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

No. People Attending: \_\_\_\_ @ \$71.00 PER PERSON  
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO  
**NYSUT Retiree Council 12**

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Send by April 29, 2011 to:**

PAT MICHALSKI  
69 LINCOLN AVENUE COLONIE, NY. 12205-4911  
PHONE -518.869.7969 [booklady72@yahoo.com](mailto:booklady72@yahoo.com)

## Musical Volunteers Needed

The RC 12 Social Committee has proposed a new social activity for our members with appropriate guidelines to be set in cooperation with RC 12 President, Jeanne Williams Bennett. The Social Committee is inviting RC 12 members to help launch this new activity. The committee is seeking out musically inclined volunteers to provide a musical interlude of 5 or 10 minutes of musical entertainment at our general meetings.

We happen to know there are plenty of RC 12 members who could provide a vocal or instrumental solo or ensemble at our general meetings. Don't be shy! The next general meeting is May 26, 2011, at Riverstone Manor, Scotia, NY. Let's get some entertainment for this meeting. Please contact me to make arrangements!

For more information, call 518-234-7578 or fill out the following form and send it in today to:  
Beverly Buddle, 103 Anthony Circle, Cobleskill, NY 12043 [hbuddle@nycap.rr.com](http://hbuddle@nycap.rr.com)



NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominees for NYSUT RC 12  
Directors positions 2011-2013**

**JOSEPH BERNOCCO** retired from Cobleskill-Richmondville in 2008. He is currently an RC 12 Director. He states that he is willing to continue to serve and work for retirees.

**ALEX BOSCHI** retired from Fonda-Fultonville in 1991. He is currently an RC 12 Director. He has participated in Committee of 100 for many years, visiting legislators to push NYSUT's programs and to garner support for both in service and retired teachers. He states that he intends to support NYSUT's and RC 12's agenda, especially given the problems educators may be facing in the near future.

**MARGARET DAFELDECKER** retired from Middleburgh in 1997. She is currently an RC 12 Director. She states that in this difficult and polarizing economic and social climate, she intends to stay informed, to inform other RC 12 members, and possibly to bring a voice of reason to the discussion.

**DONALD HARRIS** retired from Gloversville in 1998. At present, he is chair of the RC 12 social committee. He states that he has been very active in RC 12 over the past 4-5 years and has

enjoyed working with other retirees. He would like to develop a program to encourage area locals to form a retiree chapter. He would also like to lobby NYSUT to devote more effort to helping retiree chapters.


**VICTORIA MCGOWAN** retired from Schenectady in 2010. She has been an active union member and officer for many of her teaching years. She states that she has always been involved in many NYSUT activities and wishes to continue her involvement as a retiree. The director position would provide her with a great opportunity to further the interests of her fellow retirees. In solidarity!

**DAVID SAMMONS** retired from Mayfield in 2003. He is currently an RC 12 Director. During his two terms as Hamilton, Fulton, and Herkimer counties' representative to RC 12, he has helped start local retirement chapters that are associated with their school district's in-service unions and with NYSUT. He is a member the RC 12 Social Committee and has helped planned some of their trips for our membership. He has planned the March general membership luncheon meeting for the past three years.

He states that these are challenging times for education and for the teaching profession. For the past several years, he has been a member of the Committee of 100 that lobbies our state legislators. This experience has helped him better represent retirees on the state level and on RC 12's Board of Directors.

**Don't forget to vote  
on May 17th on  
your school budget**





**Save the Date**  
May 9 -10 Committee of 100

May 18 Lilac Festival Trip—Rochester

May 26 RC 12 General Meeting Riverstone Manor - Scotia

Oct. 11 Fall General Meeting at the Otesaga in Cooperstown

**Retiree Council 12 Contribution Form  
July 1, 2010 - June 30 2011**

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

