

THE OUTLOOK

Newsletter of the Retiree Council 12

A NYSUT-NEA-AFT Affiliate June/July 2020

*This issue will be a series of essays and pictures
by RC 12 members on*



The Peace of Wild Things

By Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives might be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

From *The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry* (Counterpoint, 1999),



Picture showing spring's beautiful blossoms also taken by Mary P

THOUGHTS ON STAYING AT HOME

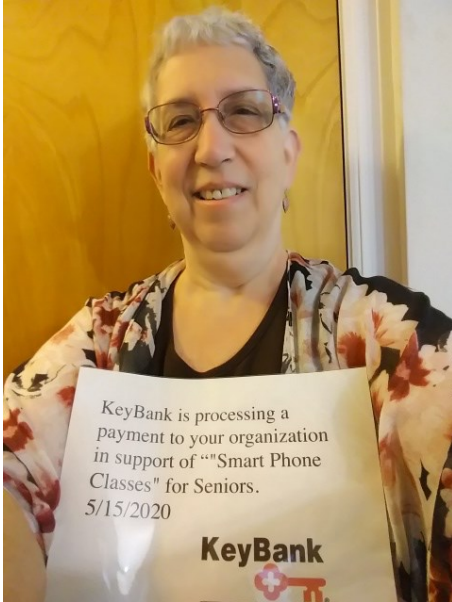


*Mary Prichard, former RC 12 Legislative Co VP
Shares this poem which expresses her feelings
while staying at camp this summer.*

The Albany Guardian Society offers many excellent classes for seniors. That I now do over the phone such as "Gizmos and Gadgets!", handy devices to help seniors remain independent.

I have also been busy attending monthly conference calls as part of the public policy committee for the NY StateWide Senior Action Council with Gail Myers and others across New York State. I am on the board of directors and we have our meetings our Zoom. I have participated in a number of their informational telephone teach-ins on many issues important to seniors.

**Mary Pritchard, former
vice president for legislative af-
fairs of RC 12**



In late March 2020, while sitting home and looking online at different sites, I decided, hey, now I have the time to talk to the Gloversville Senior Center director over the phone and through email so I can write some program grants. I had tried to do that earlier but to no avail because the director was always too busy to help me.

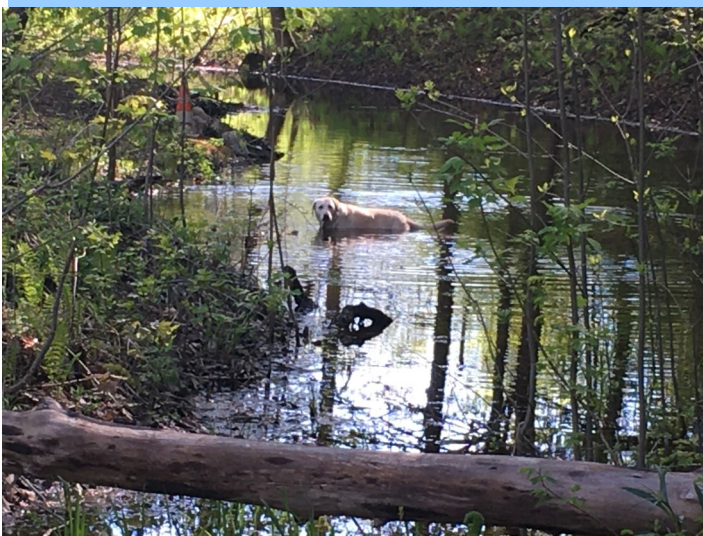
Now, the Senior Center was closed, but the director was still there with the Food Pantry on Monday-Friday mornings, 8:00-noon. The director was looking to write some grants, too. She gave me the ideas for programs, and then, I wrote out grant applications for organizations that might fund them.

Finding grants online takes lots of time, but I found out that the "KeyBank Foundation will fund programs which measurably change the fabric and quality of life of an individual and enhance the economic vitality of the community." Keybank was the second grant I wrote in late April. I found out fifteen days later that they were willing to fund "Smart Phone Classes for Seniors" which includes 6 classes that might start in late September 2020.

Here's a picture of me with the note informing me that I received that first grant!!

Phyllis Vansteenburgh, OE Teacher Retiree

I have to admit that social distancing has opened up possibilities to me that I would never have found. I do spend a number of hours every day reading through information that can be sent out to our membership. One of my favorite hours was practicing chair yoga in my kitchen with other retired teachers and NYSUT members! I am also updated with everything that goes on with New York StateWide Senior Action Counsel and signed up for many telephone communications. I also look forward to the ARA (Alliance for Retired Americans) Monday Alerts. It was suggested that we pay attention and stay informed! I love having everything at my fingertips!



What I find the most dynamic is all the information that NYSUT is making available for parents with children and the general public regarding how to speak to our children about what is going on in our world. I purchased a book called **Me and White Supremacy** by Layla Saad so I could become more educated. I believe the only way that things can change in our country is by making myself available to vote and by looking at myself regarding my own behaviors and attitudes.

My play time consists of being out on my land ...what I call "my little peace of heaven". I feel so blessed to be where I am in my life. Enclosed is a picture of my dog, Luna, in one of my ponds that is filled with spring water! I continue to learn about acceptance and gratitude. There is always more to be revealed.

Cathy Picciocca Secretary RC12



Carolyn Darkangelo social distancing with her grand dog , Kramer.

My husband Dom and I started the “stay at home period” by building a coffee table project we had been planning for over 10 years. Now we are renovating our 40-year old bathroom. Dom’s hairdo now looks like a cross between Einstein’s “do” and a dandelion gone to seed depending on the humidity. This taught us to appreciate the simple things, like getting your hair cut.

Our April trip to Sicily was cancelled. Now we are focusing on the beautiful environment we live in. As we walked 3 miles each morning, we noticed nature’s subtle changes each day this spring. We have enjoyed watching the mallards, geese, and mergansers raise their young and spied many snapping turtles laying eggs.

We pass by 40 homes on our daily journey. Prior to the pandemic we rarely saw our neighbors outside of their homes. Since March, we have spoken to 90% of them and we now know the names of all the dogs in the area. Our 45-minute walk sometimes takes nearly 1 ½ hours as we find out the latest news and see what fish are biting near the bridge. One day we watched a dad teaching his 4 young children how to fish and one fisherman noted that a nearby loon was much more successful than he was. We are so lucky to walk without masks, because all of our neighbors observe social distancing.

Last week, we met a couple who had just returned from southern Italy after being in lock down for nearly 2 months and then they were quarantined in their house in Mayfield for 14 days. That put our stay at home time order in perspective.

In general, we have slowed down and learned to focus on what is important. Our time with our family is much more precious to us now whether it be socially distant cookouts or visits on zoom. We are blessed to live in such an amazing place and will never take it for granted again.

We worry about our daughter’s family in Florida as covid spikes, our granddaughter in Scotia, who lives for volleyball competition, and family members who have underlying conditions, but we are so thankful that we live in NY where science directs policy. We pray that all of our friends in RC 12 are healthy and safe..

Carolyn Darkangelo, Outlook Editor



Beautiful Mayfield Lake in June
Photo by Carolyn D

The Outlook

President Stacey Caruso-Sharpe (518) 496-2769
1st VP Kathlene Lyman (518) 399-0256
2nd VP TBD
Treasurer Dolores Talmadge (518) 993-2854
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Newsletter Staff Phyllis VanSteenburgh,
 Carolyn Darkangelo, Jeanne W. Bennett,
 Theresa Kovian

Webmaster - Carolyn Darkangelo
Assistant Webmaster - Theresa Kovian
 Darkangelo @nycap.rr.com

Website: <http://rc12.ny.aft.org/>

NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant:
 Jennifer Shaad-Derby (518) 783-7977



Here are pictures of a beautiful yard provided by

Teresa Kovian, RC 12 board member and Outlook staff member.



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🎈 Thank you to all of our contributors to this issue. If you have some pictures or observations on our shared experience this year, please submit them to Carolyn Darkangelo and we can create another special issue. 🎈

🎈 (Darkangelo@nycap.rr.com) 🎈

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Retiree Council 12 Contribution Form July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

Name _____ County _____
Address _____ City _____ Year Retired _____
State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

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

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

Check this box if there has been a change in your contact information Check # _____

\$15.00 yearly contribution requested. Send to Amount _____

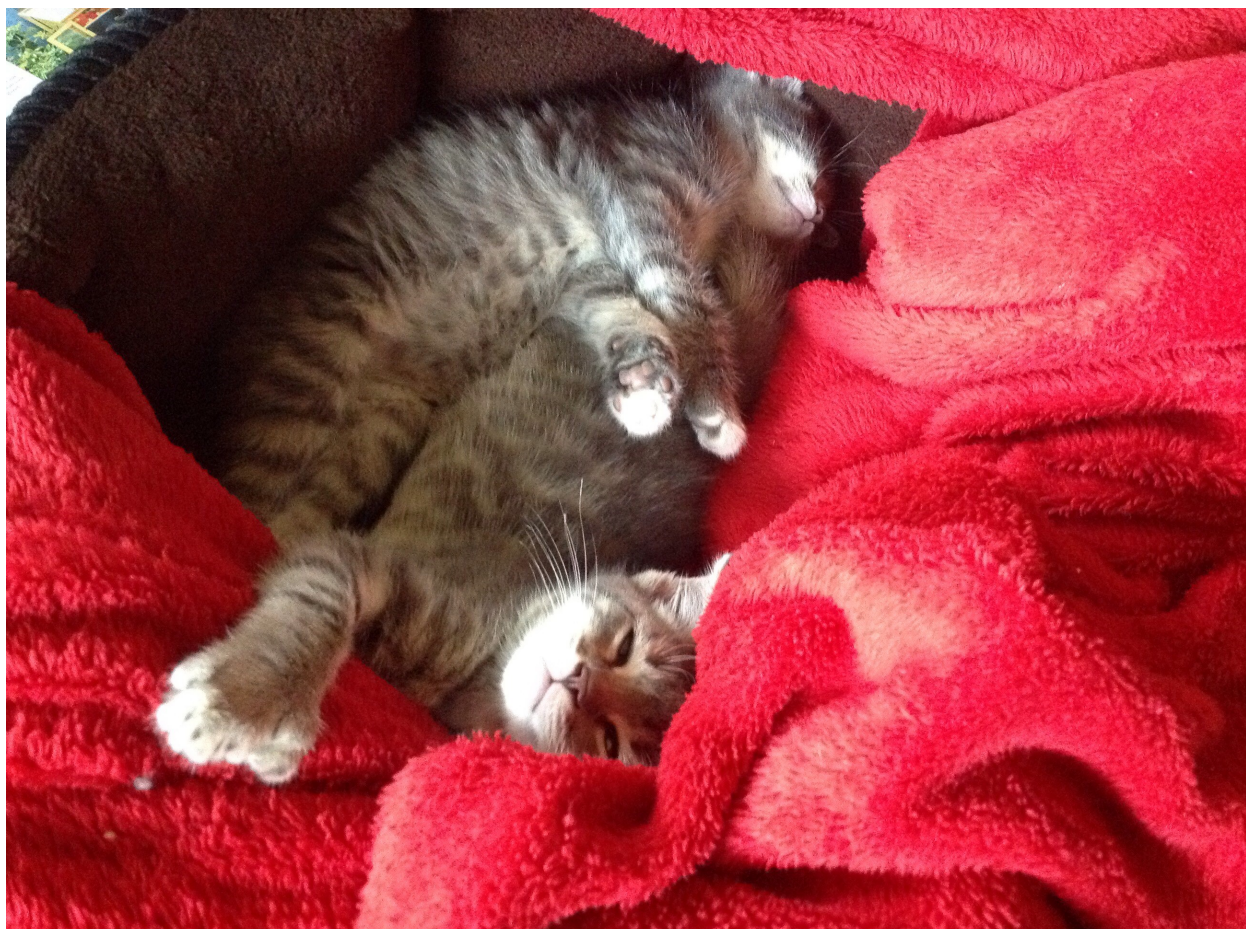
Dolores Talmadge 206 Main Street, Fort Plain, NY 13339

Make check payable to NYSUT Retiree Council 12.

Any questions, please call (518) 993-2854 .



RC 12 Outlook Special Stay at Home Edition 2020



Dolores Talmadge, RC 12 Treasurer and world traveler, says,

“What do you do when you are lonely during the pandemic.....get two kittens. Gus and Izzy.”

My husband, Bruce, and I live on what was his parents' dairy farm. Both of us thoroughly enjoy the outdoors and find that sunshine and fresh air are very therapeutic. Since we own over 200 acres, we spend lots of our time outdoors walking and hiking. We also love gardening and have lots of flowers, specialty trees, and vegetables. This year, we have put in a larger than usual vegetable garden. We have 126 tomato plants, 10 rows of super sweet corn, spinach, Swiss chard, lettuce, cucumbers, peppers, zucchini, butternut squash, potatoes, and herbs. You can guess what we will be doing in September!

Bruce also enjoys working with wood and stone. He built a stone waterfall last year, and he added steps and planters this year. In addition, he has built garden benches and Adirondack chairs. Since we live in a deep gorge, we have some magnificent views from above! Our two Labrador retrievers provide a lot of entertainment and love, and they especially enjoy the creeks and the pond on our property.

Bruce and I feel very fortunate to be New York State retirees. We have "Cadillac" health insurance plans (which we earned and paid for with lower salaries) so we haven't had to worry about the cost of medicine or the cost of getting sick at this time, the way so many other Americans do. A couple of our teacher friends from other states had a choice to make when they decided to retire: Social Security **or** a pension. When we tell them that we have both, the response usually is, "Oh, that's right. You are from New York. You have strong unions!" Of course, we fully agree! Some of our other friends are from states which have raided their teachers' and state employee pension plans. Their plans are in precarious financial straits.



Those of you who participated in the NYSUT webinar featuring David Keefe, president of the board of the NYSTRS, heard the news that even with the economic downturn and the decline in the stock market, our NYSTRS fund is 99% funded and fully stable. (Any retirement fund that is 80% or higher is considered to be full or well-funded.) David Keefe said, "NYSTRS remains one of the strongest and best-funded public retirement systems in the nation. The System has distributed earned retirement benefits on time and without fail throughout its nearly 100-year history, and members should be confident this will continue." Also, due to all of the hard work and diligence of our members, a NYS Constitutional Convention was voted down. Therefore, according to our NYS Constitution, our pensions cannot be diminished in any way.

Jeanne Williams Bennett
RC 12 Immediate Past President

RC 12 Trip Dates

RC 12 trip to Mackinac Island, Michigan **(moved to 2021)**

RC 12 trip to South Dakota moved to **September 24,2021-October 4,2021**

(Always verify dates with the trip coordinator.)