

THE OUTLOOK

Newsletter of the Retiree Council 12

A NYSUT-NEA-AFT Affiliate November 2021

Our Solar Adventure

by **Jeanne Williams Bennett**, *Immediate past president of RC 12*

During Hurricane Irene, as many RC 12 members experienced, our home and property were damaged, and among other things, we lost our wood burning gravity-fed furnace. Since our farmhouse was built in 1853, there is no ductwork, and therefore, options for a replacement heating system were limited. We decided to explore three sources of renewable energy: geothermal, hydroelectric, and solar. Since we still have the remains of the 1930's hydroelectric power system that electrified our farm and the property across the road, and since we live in a deep gorge with lots of water and a steep vertical drop, we started with the exploration of hydroelectric. However, it became apparent that the technology wasn't quite there yet, and it required more maintenance (ex. regularly cleaning out the intake, care of holding ponds, etc.)



After attending several workshops, it appeared that solar was our best option. In previous years, we had traveled in Germany and Austria and had noticed the number of homes and businesses with solar roofs. We learned that laws had been passed that all new construction had to have solar panels on the roofs. Since Germany is at a more northern latitude than central New York State, we realized that we would generate more power which gave us the additional reassurance that the financial investment would be prudent.

On a very cold January day, we visited the person who would become our solar installer at his home. He was heating his home with Mitsubishi hyper heaters or mini splits. The house was warm, and the children were playing in their shirtsleeves. We realized that the hyper heaters were the answer for us as they did not require any ductwork.

Therefore, we contracted for a 72 panel solar array system to be installed along with the hyper heaters. NYSERDA paid a portion of the quote, and we received a federal tax credit, New York State tax incentives, and some insurance money.

At the time of the installation, our installer did not recommend battery storage so we opted for National Grid's net metering program. Basically, the program works like a bank account. During the long summer days, we deposit kWh (kilowatt hours) into the bank. Then, during the short days of winter, we make withdrawals. If we run out of kWh, we then pay National Grid. Of course, what National Grid charges us is about 3 times the amount that it gives us for the deposited hours!

Bruce and I love paying \$16.35 per month to National Grid for all of our heating, cooling, and lighting! The only problem: each year, we emptied the bank and ended up paying for 3 - 4 months. After five years of doing this, we decided to add more solar panels to our array. We were still eligible for NYSERDA and additional federal tax credits.

In spite of the rain we have had this summer, we have already banked enough kWh to cover the entire year. (Our anniversary month is April so that our year runs from April 1 - April 1.) Our pole barn and workshop (power equipment) are also powered by the solar. We bought an electric clothes dryer when our gas dryer needed to be replaced, and we have an electric hot water heater. Our hyper heaters air condition as well as heat so we have run all of them during this summer's heat spells, and our entire house is air-conditioned. The hyper heaters are super quiet and efficient when they air condition which is a huge improvement over the old window air conditioners that we had.

Have we paid back the money that we initially invested in this project? It's hard to say because we originally heated with wood from trees on our property so there was little cost involved. Our installer said that it would basically take 7 - 10 years for a complete return on our initial investment. However, knowing what our electrical costs were and how much more electricity we are using, I believe that we have now broken even with our initial costs. The bottom line: Bruce and I have been extremely happy with our decision to install solar energy.

Save the Date

March 15, 2022 RC 12 General Membership Meeting (winter)



April 6, 2022 RC 12 Trip to see Hugh Jackman in "The Music Man" on Broadway

May 12, 2022 NYSUT RC 12 General Membership Luncheon and Election & NYSUT Regional Conference for RC 12

June 12-18, 2022 RC 12 Trip to Mackinac Island *Space Available*, Call Dolores (518) 993-2854 or Phyllis (518) 725-4060 for details.

Sept. 30 - Oct. 10, 2022 RC 12 Trip to Mount Rushmore



Ron Gross, NYSUT Second Vice President and RAC (Retiree Advisory Committee) co-chair, at the RC 12 meeting at the Otesaga on September 30

Kathlene Lyman, Vice President's Message

Having recently attended the ED 51, 52, 53 Contiguous Zoom Meeting of NYSUT, I would like to share some of the discussion points. Participating in the meeting were delegates from several retiree councils. Many items were on the agenda, and many NYSUT officers spoke to us. Early in the meeting, Ron Gross, NYSUT Second Vice President and RAC (Retiree Advisory Committee) co-chair, spoke favorably of the increase of in-person meetings, and he highlighted his participation in our RC 12 September 30, 2021, in-person general membership meeting at the Otesaga. The meeting was attended by fifty-five retirees and guests. The gathering was a nice way to begin to celebrate the 30th anniversary of retiree councils. Among several topics, Ron Gross spoke to us about the NYSUT Legacy Fund.

The NYSUT Legacy Fund was highlighted in an article in the recent issue of NYSUT UNITED. The NYSUT Legacy Fund gives members, locals, and retirees a means to recognize individuals who have dedicated themselves to keeping NYSUT moving forward. Currently, the NYSUT Legacy Fund recognizes honorees at three contribution levels. The fund will be used to build and enhance the union. A portion of the money earned will expand support for NYSUT retirees by offering retiree council grants and enhancements to retiree services programs. For information on how to honor an activist, visit nysut.org/legacyfund. For questions about the fund, contact Pat Puleo at Pattip860@gmail.com.

Jolene DiBrango, NYSUT Executive Vice President, spoke about the "Take a Look at Teaching" Initiative. We, who have spent our careers in the classroom, know how important good teachers are to education. Currently, there is a huge shortage of teachers. State education officials estimate that in the next decade, New York will need more than 180,000 new teachers (NYSUT website). Currently, NYSUT is hosting and supporting many events to help students and career changers engage in meaningful conversations about becoming a teacher and making a difference in our communities. On a personal note, I knew from age five, that I wanted to be a teacher. During my junior high and high school years, I was a member, and officer, of our Future Teachers of America Club. I know that Sandy Bliss was also active in her Future Teachers of America Club. For more information on the initiative, go to the NYSUT website at Taking a Look at Teaching.

Andrew Pallotta, NYSUT President, commended everyone for keeping up the good work to keep the union strong. J. Phillippe Abraham, NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer, spoke about the Social Justice initiatives. J. Phillippe Abraham also reminded everyone of the availability of the NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund. Any NYSUT member can apply for the \$500 grants available if they have been impacted by Mother Nature.

Swinka Richards was introduced as the new Human Resources Generalist at NYSUT. She will oversee programs and retiree services. Swinka assumes the role vacated when Geralyn O'Reilly retired. We will miss Geralyn and have every confidence in Swinka. The resolutions for the next RA were reviewed and will be published in NYSUT UNITED.

Enjoy the fall weather! Get vaccinated!

Kathlene Lyman

The Outlook

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VP, Kathy Lyman &
 President, Stacey Caruso-Sharp
 greet new retirees
 Maggie Bouck, Cindy Ferrell,
 and Patricia Prime.

They also recognized 30-year member
 of RC 12, Marlene Towne.

These are the contributions of record received from members from August 14, 2021 thru October 11, 2021. Your name will appear **only once** in *The Outlook*. **Please keep track of your contribution as to avoid multiple payments within one year.**

“ * “ indicates paid through June 2022.

“ + “ indicates paid beyond June 2022.

AMEDURI, Karen O'Donnell*	DeVAUGHN, Betty	HARTA, Randee	MOLLE, Wendy	TESTO, Patricia
AMES, Nancy M.	DIVIETRO, Lisa	HENZE, Sarajane C.	NAGELE, Nancy	THERRIAULT, Thomas*
ARMSTRONG, Mary Louise	DOURNEY, Judith	HILL, Elizabeth	O'CONNOR, Wendy D.	TINKER, Stephanie
BAKER, Kathleen M.	DOYLE, Barbara*	HOOSE, Carol	OLDS, Cathy*	TOWNE, Marlene
BARNEY, Patricia K.	DUNN-JONES, Winifred A.	HUDAK, Becky	ORCUTT, David	VALENT, Joan
BAUMLER, Joan	EIPP, Sandra	HUGHES, Sandra M.	PASQUARIELLO, Lidia	VALENT, Steve
BERGER, Debora+	ETHINGTON, Brian	HUGO, Judy	PATTERSON, Sara Elizabeth	VanALLEN, Marilyn
BIELANSKI, Marjorie	ETHINGTON, Susan	INGLESE, Lucille	PRATT, Rupert	VanSTEENBURGH, Phyllis
BOGERD, Cynthia B.	FABER, Rosanne	JOHNSON, Patricia	PTAK, Diane	WAGNER, Delia
BOVEE, Carolyn*	FALLONE, Barbara	KARKER, Charles	RITZMAN, Sharon	WALCHKO, Kimberly
BUNDY, David*	FARRANT, Mary Jane	KING, Anne*	SCHAD, Judith S.	WEINER, Barbara
CADIEUX, Ronald	FARRELL, Ruth S.*	KING, David*	SCHECHTER, Stephanie	WILDGRUBE, Jean
CALLAHAN, John	FASDOLDT, Winona*	KINGSBURY, Apryll	SCHERMERHORN, Susan+	WRIGHT, Patricia
CASTIGLIONE, Carolyn	FLETCHER, Lorraine	KUGLER, Frances E.	SCHERY, Carol	WRIGHTSMAN, Eileen*
CHAMBERS, Eileen	FLICHTBEIL, Sharon	LENTINI, Adrienne	SCHIAVONE, Linda	YERDON, Margaret
CHAMBERS, Fred	FREDERES, Grace	LESIUK, Kathryn M.	SMRTIC, Sharon	
CLAYMAN, Winni +	GALEAZZA, Pat	LYMAN, Kathlene	SNYDER, Linda	
COMPOLI, Sara	GAWLAS, Raymond	MACOMBER, Elizabeth	STANTON, Martha J.	
CRAWFORD, Susan	GENZER, Amanda	MATIS, Susan	STEARNS, Cathy	
CROSS, Linda K.	GENTILE, Marjorie*	MAXWELL, Karen	STEPHENS, Joan	
CROSS Jr., Robert R.	GEORGE, John W.	McCARTY, Janet*	STEWART, Willard	
DEIS, Janet	GEORGE, Paulette R.	MISEIKIS, Mary Lynn	TERRY, Richard	
DEMARS, Judith	HANNA, Maureen	MITCHELL, Lauren	TESTO, Daniel	

Thanks !!



RC 12 members enjoy the first in person meeting since March 2020 at the Otesaga in Cooperstown

“What is NYSUT to you?”

by Phyllis VanSteenburgh, *Oppenheim-Ephratah Teacher Retiree*

This question could be answered by our Award of Excellence Honoree for the year 2020, Paul Pecorale, the former 2nd Vice President of NYSUT.

I believe that Paul exemplifies what NYSUT states so well on its website: “We are dedicated to improving not only our working conditions, but also our professions. We’re united in a common commitment to improve the quality of education for the people of New York.”

Paul’s dedication showed when he said, “The pep in my step has always been and will always continue to be the desire to work in the labor movement and to build on what we have to do to survive, to represent workers, and to defend them.” Soon after finishing his second three-year term as 2nd Vice president in 2020, Paul went back to the classroom in Long Island where he is from. In the past, he was a longtime special education teacher from Patchogue-Medford where he also served eight years as president of the PM Congress of Teachers.



At NYSUT, Paul had many responsibilities, like overseeing NYSUT Program Services, which assists retirees and school-related professionals. He also provided resources to members through the Health and Safety, Health Care, and Community Outreach programs. Paul visited many school districts over the years and provided assistance where needed. He is quoted as saying,

“Belonging to a union seeks to merge people through shared interests.”

The Award of Excellence honors a person who has worked to help the retirees of RC 12. This is so true of Paul because I found two members who remembered how he helped us throughout the years.

Jeanne Williams-Bennett, past President of RC 12, remembers what Paul’s help meant to us: “For several years, I worked with Paul Pecorale as ED 51’s delegate to RAC (the Retiree Advisory Committee). Paul was very hard working and truly an advocate for retirees. One of the traits that I most admired about Paul was his “can do” attitude. Whenever he was confronted with a problem, he would listen, and invariably, his response was, “I am sure that we can solve that problem,” and he did. In a couple of cases, there were problems with which RAC had been grappling for several years. Paul was able to resolve those problems and make positive changes, which allowed us to move forward. In fact, it was during this time that the online (nysut.org) publication, “Your Blueprint for a Successful Retirement”, was created and published.”

Kathy Lyman, Vice President of RC 12, stated: “When I first heard Paul Pecorale’s name, it was at a NYSUT RC 12 Board of Directors meeting. Sandy Bliss was giving her report on the NYSUT officer candidates, and Paul was going to run that year. Sandy gave him her absolute vote of confidence that he was going to be a person with our best interests in mind. She felt that he would listen, advocate, and be involved with us retirees. She was absolutely correct!

“I often had the privilege of sharing a room with Sandy at NYSUT events in Albany. Paul always came to our table to greet us and to ask about us. Eventually, I lost my shyness and was able to ask about his family as I discovered that both of us grew up on Long Island.

“Paul made a point to join one of our general membership meetings each year. He gave us praise for our efforts and kept us informed of NYSUT’s efforts on our behalf. He was also present when I received my Community Service Award. When our executive board was asked for a nomination and recommendation for the 2020 RC 12 Award of Excellence, I didn’t hesitate to blurt out Paul’s name. The entire board agreed with me! He is most deserving of our NYSUT RC 12 Award of Excellence.”

Congratulations, Paul! A donation will be made to the charity of Paul’s choice, and he will receive a framed certificate. Paul picked “The Shawn Mendes Foundation” that was started in 2019 by singer Shawn Mendes to help youth changemakers and their organizations by giving them direct support to causes about which they are passionate.

Check out all your union membership has to offer!

Legal Service Plan

Plan benefits include:

- Crucial estate planning documents (a Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney)
- Free telephone consultations
- Guaranteed maximum fees for specific legal matters

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Plan benefits include:

- Unbiased objective advice
- Free telephone and virtual consultations
- Assistance with retirement planning, 403(b) savings, college savings, tax planning and more

NYSUT Member Benefits

Every Dollar Counts!

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Whether it's insurance products, financial or legal services, or discounts, shopping or travel, NYSUT Member Benefits offers numerous programs that can help you save time and money while protecting those you care about most. Many of these programs can be purchased through payroll or pension deduction for greater convenience and savings opportunities.

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Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left,
visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org
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Nov/Dec 2021

Name _____ County _____
Address _____ City _____ Year Retired _____
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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 _____

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\$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

November 2021



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



*RC 12 Members from
Fulton County at the
Otesaga on September 30*

Remembering Don Griffith

(With special thanks to Bill and Judy Schultz)

Don Griffith, past president of RC 12, passed away Thursday, September 23, 2021. He had fallen in his home several weeks earlier, was injured, and went through a series of hospital and medical procedures but never recovered.

Don was very active and very supportive of RC 12 from its inception, rising to the positions of vice president, and finally, president. Don became president of RC 12 after Bill Schultz resigned to work at NYSUT. To further place the time of his service, Judy Schultz assumed the presidency after Don.

Educationally, Don taught physical education and retired from Middleburgh Central School. He was an avid wrestling, soccer, cross country and track coach. His soccer and track teams won numerous championships, and he was the one who started a varsity wrestling team. Don was proud to have coached so many student athletes who over the years brightened his life as he enlightened theirs.

Don loved fly fishing, and he and his wife, Marge, traveled extensively.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Marge, two sons, David and William, and his grandson, Keegan. David, Bill and Keegan have been a constant, supportive presence to both Don and Marge, especially during this trial.

Past president of RC 12, Bill Schultz, stated, "Personally, Judy and I have known them (Don and Marge) for decades and consider them among our closest friends. Great people!"



Don enjoyed running with family.