

THE OUTLOOK

Newsletter of the Retiree Council 12

A NYSUT-NEA-AFT Affiliate

September 2022

NYSUT RC 12 Fall General Membership Luncheon Meeting Tuesday, September 20, 2022 Otesaga Resort Hotel, Cooperstown, NY

2021 NYSUT RC 12 Award of Excellence will be presented to GERALYN O'REILLY
Presentation of NYSUT Community Service Award to PHYLLIS VANSTEENBURGH
Presentation on Identity Theft

TENTATIVE AGENDA

9:15 - 9:45 am Registration –Ballroom Rotunda - coffee and tea in Ballroom
9:45 - 11:00 am General Membership Meeting, The Ballroom
1:10 - 12:00 pm Guest speaker – Identity Theft
12:15 - 1:15 pm Otesaga Grand Buffet Luncheon

Your Luncheon Cost: \$35.00 (The cost is subsidized by RC 12.)



NYSUT RC 12 Fall Luncheon Meeting- The Otesaga, Cooperstown, NY

Name _____

Local retired from _____ Year Retired _____

Email Address _____ Cell Phone _____

Please enclose a check for **\$35 made out to NYSUT RC 12** and return by **September 4, 2022**, to:
Dolores Talmadge, Treasurer, NYSUT RC 12
206 Main Street, Fort Plain, NY 13339

New RC 12 trips will be announced at this meeting.

NYSUT RC 12 Community Service Award 2022

By *Jeanne W. Bennett, CVA retiree*



It is with great pleasure that RC 12 announces that the 2022 Community Service Award recipient is **Phyllis VanSteenburgh**, a retiree of the Oppenheim-Ephratah-St. Johnsville Central School District. As an inservice educator, Phyllis taught reading to students as well as was involved with annual book fairs and the creation of a school newspaper club and an after school reading program. As a Literacy Volunteer for over ten years, Phyllis's adult students met with success. Her first adult, a woman, who was reading at a second grade level when Phyllis began working with her, advanced to a sixth grade reading level. Her second student, a man, was an ESL (English as a Second Language) learner. Phyllis worked with him on conversation skills and reading and practicing common American phrases. Phyllis actively recruited literacy volunteers and presented a number of workshops to train tutors. Also, she served on the board of directors for two years.

Phyllis has written a number of informational articles for The Outlook with helpful advice for seniors. One article featured palliative care, describing what it is and how it benefits families by helping relieve pain and stress caused by serious illness through meeting emotional, spiritual and practical needs. Her article stressed the importance of putting palliative care into one's living will. Another article about diabetics explained the Libre Free System, a continuous glucose monitoring system where patients can see their glucose levels on their smartphones. In 2014, Phyllis received a NYSUT Award of Distinction in recognition of her writing and work. (Continued on page 3)

NYSUT Retiree Council 12 President's Message

I hope that everyone has been enjoying the wonderful summer weather! Spending time with family and friends in the great outdoors can be so rejuvenating! On the 4th of July, I was together with some family members. I commented about putting up our American flag to which my daughter, extremely frustrated over the Supreme Court decision regarding Roe v. Wade, replied, "Why bother? I feel like my country doesn't represent me anymore." Unfortunately, this has become a common frustration after the ruling.

Recently, I had the opportunity to get together with some friends from college. We were so happy that we could again get together in person! One of our discussions turned to politics and what is going on with the Jan. 6 Investigation Committee hearings. Hopefully, people have been listening to and paying attention to the information about the assault on our nation's democracy. (Again, I encourage you to go to different sources i.e., tv networks, radio stations, websites, print media, etc., to hear differing points of view.) This talk led to a discussion of the upcoming elections this November and what is at stake. (Less than 100 days away!) One friend, in exasperation, said, "But what can we do?"

My reply to both my daughter and my friend is what I say to anyone who expresses the same concerns: **GET INVOLVED!!!!** Throwing up your hands and giving up **IS NOT AN OPTION!!!!** Democracy is messy, and we must continually work at protecting it. Doing things to help you feel empowered is a great way to stand up for your rights! Research the candidates, and find candidates whose positions on issues you can support. Look to see who NYSUT is endorsing. If you are able, make monetary donations to the campaigns of people whom you support. Volunteer your time for those campaigns to make phone calls, send text messages, and knock on doors. Help register people to vote. Find out about new voting districts created by redistricting, and help inform people who are affected by any changes. You can write postcards and/or letters to people in swing states about the importance of voting. This will help with determining who has control of the US House of Representatives and of the US Senate. At our fall luncheon meeting at the Otesaga, on September 20, 2022, we will have more information and opportunities on how you can get involved. At the conclusion of this article, there are a few suggestions of some websites where you can find out more.

I would like to say THANK YOU to the members of RC 12 who plan our trips and social outings. Everyone involved in planning activities volunteers their time, and it does take a substantial amount of time. Anyone who has traveled knows that most trips rarely go as planned. While last minute changes can be disappointing, they can also be a wonderful opportunity to see or do something that wasn't anticipated. The next time you travel or participate in one of the RC 12 outings or trips, please remember to thank the organizers for volunteering their time.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead
Websites with opportunities to get involved: <https://www.turnoutpac.org>
<https://demvolctr.org/write-letters-and-postcards> <https://www.mobilize.us/mobilize/event/382323/>

In solidarity, Stacey

The Outlook

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Should You Get the Shingles Vaccine?

By Carolyn Darkangelo, retiree from Mayfield TA

Shingles begins with a painful rash which usually occurs as blisters in a line along the torso, but also can appear in many other areas of the body. I had chicken pox as a child, and my attack of shingles occurred only on my left ear with very little pain, but I rushed to the ER when the left side of my face became paralyzed due to Bell's Palsy. This occurred when the nerves swelled due to shingles. I thought I was having a stroke. After about a month with anti-viral and anti-inflammatory medications and a patch on my eye, I recovered. My hearing was tested to check for Ramsey Hunt Syndrome which can lead to ringing in the ears and permanent hearing loss.

The chicken pox vaccine for children was widely distributed in 1995 so people who were born prior to 1995 are most likely to have the chicken pox virus which can be reactivated when your immune system becomes less effective as you age. Treatment is most effective if you get to the doctor within three days of the appearance of the rash. This is very important because some people develop a condition that results in severe pain which continues after the rash is gone. This is due to damage to the sensory nerves that causes intense long-term pain.

"The **new shingles vaccine (Shingrix) is highly effective in preventing shingles (97% for those under 70 and 91% for those over 70). It reduces the risk of the long-term pain from postherpetic neuralgia by 90%.**" * The CDC recommends that people over 50 get this vaccine. It requires two shots two to six months apart. You should discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist.

My husband and I received the shots this winter at CVS. Side effects included arm pain and swollen glands for a few days that are minimal compared to the symptoms that shingles can create. My shots had a \$10 copay, but some insurance plans do not pay for the shingles vaccination at this time. Medicare prescription drug plans cover the shots. If you do not have this coverage, go to Good Rx. It can reduce the amount per shot from \$211 to \$155 at CVS. When I had shingles, the ER and three doctor visits cost me hundreds of dollars. I have some relatives who have had the long-term pain for thirty years. That puts the cost in perspective. * *Mayo Clinic Health Letter, July 2022, page 2*



RC 12 Members Doing Something Good

By Stacey Caruso Sharpe

I have been extremely fortunate to work with many generous people throughout my career and now in retirement. Dr. William Bouton, aka Doc, is one such person whom I had the good fortune to work with at Lynch Middle School in Amsterdam. Bill was an art teacher who always cared about the students and staff at Lynch. I remember talking with him many years ago about his generosity to students and to the community. He said that his mother raised him and his siblings to be grateful for what they had been given and that they had a responsibility to always give back.

Although Bill has been retired for many years, he is still giving back to the community on a regular basis. He supports veterans (Bill is a veteran) and veterans' widows, the homeless shelter in our community, people in nursing homes, and the local soup kitchen. He even continued to bring monthly donations right through the worst of the pandemic. To help with the costs, Bill has a program he calls, "Art from the Heart". He has created art prints that people can choose from for making a donation. 100% of the proceeds go toward donations to those in need. If you would like to help support Bill's good deeds and to learn more, please visit:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ntCuwFmxTaNpdi75OjFjz8LxZYBTxbS69-qGFTotLbY/mobilebasic?urp=gmail_link

If you know of a NYSUT RC 12 member that you think should be recognized for Doing Something Good for the community, please let us know.

RC 12 Trip to Mackinac Island



**The contributions list for
July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023
will be published
starting in
the November issue.**

Community Service Award continued from page 1

Because Phyllis is familiar with the grant application process, she has successfully applied for a number of grants for the Gloversville Senior Citizen Services Center. One grant provided funding for the creation of monthly informational meetings for veterans that also provided them with a free meal. Each month, Phyllis also created new informational sheets covering topics such as where vets could get flu shots, property tax exemptions, assisted living benefits, health services, home energy assistance, and obtaining veterans status on their licenses.

In June of 2020, Phyllis was awarded a grant that allowed her to develop a smartphone literacy class for seniors. The program was divided into six classes that were designed to teach seniors how to call and store contacts, use the Internet to find needed services, download apps and use them, reach friends and family through video chat, and establish how to create a wireless connection from one's phone to a printer. Phyllis acted as an assistant to the instructor of these classes.

Another grant was awarded in September of 2020 to update outdated equipment at the senior center. This grant was used to purchase an extension ladder, snowblower, and weed-whacker for the facility. The equipment is battery operated for easy and accessible use. An up-to-date laptop was also purchased to create a newsletter and to update the center's Facebook page with information.

In October 2021, Phyllis was notified that she won a grant to install a gardening club within the Gloversville Senior Center. The money was earmarked to fund the senior center's educational and environmental programs. The start date for the club was April 2022. The funds were used to purchase pots, produce, and seeds, and to publish articles on the growth and development of the garden. All materials were purchased locally, and the edible produce will be used for the center's weekly Wednesday lunch and Saturday breakfast.

Phyllis has compiled a list of places in Fulton and Montgomery Counties where seniors can go for help. Topics include transportation, meals at specific sites, offices of the aging, places to go for activities such as senior centers, free yoga classes, and bus tours. She created "Be a Tourist in Your Own Town", a list of local places to go to visit.

Never one to rest on her laurels, Phyllis recently started Tablet Time where seniors can come in and use the Samsung and Apple tablets that the Senior Center owns. Phyllis is there to help seniors learn how to use the tablets and to do emails.

As you can see, Phyllis is truly worthy of this award. ***Congratulations, Phyllis!***

Retiree Council 12 Contribution Form July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023

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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 _____

\$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

September 2022

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

The Stock Market Is Falling!

by Jeanne Williams Bennett, *CVA retiree*

Recently, Barron's published an article concerning how worried retirees are about the current stock market decline. However, the thrust of the article was that retirees shouldn't be worried about this decline; what they should be worried about is outliving their money and savings. The article cited many statistics to back up this concern.

As I was reading, I was thinking how fortunate we are to have a defined benefit retirement plan. As David Keefe, president of the NYSTRS Board, stated at our recent RC 12 meeting, we will have a pension check every month for as long as we live.

Also, as New York State retirees, we have both a pension and Social Security. (There are states where retired teachers have to pick Social Security **or** a pension.) In addition, we do have a COLA (Cost-of-Living Adjustment) on the first \$18,000 of our retirement benefit to help with inflationary increases, and our pensions are not taxed by New York State. Lastly, we do have a NYS Constitutional guarantee that our pensions are safe and will continue to be paid.

In view of so much negativity in the news right now, it's comforting to know that we are blessed to have so much financial security. Of course, we enjoy these benefits due to the activism of our members and especially our past RC 12 presidents and leaders, including Bill and Judy Schultz, who were directly responsible for the obtainment of the COLA.

Save the Date

Sept. 20, 2022 - RC 12 General Meeting at the Otesaga in Cooperstown

Sept. 21, 2022 - RC 12 NYC Trip for Moulin Rouge matinee.

****Sept. 30 - Oct. 10, 2022 RC 12 Trip to Mount Rushmore.** Contact Linda Zilka by email - ljzilka@gmail.com or call at (518) 725-5139 to place your name on the waiting list

Another Reason to Get Your Flu Shot!!!

Here's what recent research has shown at Houston Methodist Hospital:

- Cardiovascular deaths and influenza epidemics spike around the same time.
- Patients are six times more likely to experience a heart attack **the week after an influenza infection** than at any point during the year prior or the year after the infection.
- In one study looking at 336,000 hospital admissions for flu, 11.5% experienced a serious cardiac event.
- Another study looking at 90,000 lab-confirmed influenza infections showed a strikingly similar rate of 11.7% experiencing an acute cardiovascular event.
- One in eight patients, or **12.5%**, **admitted to the hospital with influenza experienced a cardiovascular event**, with 31% of those requiring intensive care and 7% dying as a result of the event, another study found.



The reason influenza stresses the heart and vascular system so much has to do with the body's inflammatory response to the infection. When you get the flu, inflammation occurs when your body's "first responders" -- white blood cells and what they produce to protect you -- convene in an area and get to work fighting an infection, bacteria or virus. This causes swelling, tenderness, pain, weakness and sometimes redness and increased temperature of your joints, muscles, and lymph nodes. This activity can lead to blood clots, elevated blood pressure and even swelling or scarring within the heart. The added stressors make plaque within your arteries more vulnerable to rupture, causing a blockage that cuts off oxygen to the heart or brain and results in heart attacks or strokes, respectively.

Additionally, non-cardiac complications from the viral illness, including pneumonia and respiratory failure, can make heart failure symptoms or heart arrhythmia much worse.

Adults who received the flu vaccine were 37% less likely to be hospitalized for the flu and 82% less likely to be admitted to the ICU because of it.

Source : <https://www.sciencedaily.com/> / October 15, 2022 - Houston Methodist

**Vickie
McGowan-Horan**

**Attends the rally to end
gun Violence**



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