

RC 10 SKYLINE NEWS



NYSUT Retiree Council 10

Serving Over 9000 Members in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Washington Counties

TEACHER UNION SOLIDARITY

ISSUE 2 for 2018-19 Nov-Dec

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From Your President:

By the time this gets to you the election noise will be fading into memory. Hopefully, some degree of peace and quiet will have settled over the land. The degree of negative advertising this election season has been discouraging to all but especially to those who taught Social Studies. It has brought forth a reality that we have an education gap where Social Studies and especially Civics are concerned. We have all been told that STEM is what matters, that it is the portal to future prosperity and a happy life. It is true that STEM skills are clearly important to develop as widely and well as we can manage.

When we get our students to be as good as Russian hackers, what then? What do they do with that skill set? How do they know what makes our society work well, and for the common good? We provide opportunity for all to work. We train our students in skills that are productive. We encourage, by example, public service like coaching softball, football or other sports for thousands of students. Most could never afford to "purchase" such character and skill building experience if they had to pay all of that staff, club support etc. that is required in other advanced countries.

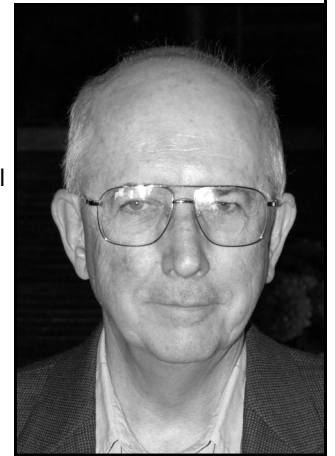
Outside of large cities, fire departments in most of our communities depend on the service of volunteers. In the old days you paid the fire brigade to protect your property or they let it burn, now it is not the case. Thanks to our host of trained volunteer firefighters! Where did they learn about civic duty? It requires more than technical competence to put forth that extra effort beyond your work commitments. It requires more sense of civic duty and community responsibility than it does of fire science. They need that as well, but they must have a sense of being in this community with everyone else, not just those they agree with and like best.

Civics aim to make us all aware of our opportunities and the obligations that make us a productive and successful society. It is more than just collecting additional money for ourselves and making every decision so we are enriched and others disadvantaged. It's about payback to our community, because volunteerism enriches our self-esteem, community quality of life, and the future of our children and grandchildren. Civics is also about assuring that those who choose careers that are crucial to our communities are able to support themselves and their families decently because they can earn a living wage.

We had a battle last year about what the minimum wage should be in NY State. What was a reasonable rate? Well, what was reasonable in NY City seemed extravagant and even ruinous in Upstate New York. The difference in the cost of living in each area and what you could afford for housing, etc., was a jolt to those of us who live here and found it hard to imagine such costs for daily expenses. We split the difference and set one rate for the City now and another for Upstate that was lower but would move up in the future. It seemed like a reasonable settlement but left behind a lot of bruised feelings and upstate/downstate ill will. Then the other shoe dropped.

A new basic wage of \$15.00 per hour for those working for a major sales/shipping company made headlines. It was a company that makes it possible for many of our local small businesses to be undersold by companies a great distance away. The company also makes it possible for small firms here to compete elsewhere as well. But now this major company was competing for labor with the local card shop, cafe, bar & grill, gas station etc. Is that a matter of STEM or Civics? Is life in our scattered communities across our four-county area beyond the reach of outside economic forces and government action, or is it in the bullseye of change? What world are we preparing our children for, one on STEM alone or one of Civics alone or one where both are understood and we can understand the true scope of the choices we face.

In nearby Utica, a lot of civic concern arose a few years ago when a block of refugees began to move to town as part of a resettlement program. They did not speak Spanish but Bosnian. Hardly anyone in town had heard of that language and few, if any, spoke it. Some fear abated when the newcomers were shuttled off to the more downtrodden and run-down parts of town. Not in my backyard, thank God! Then some began to notice that some yards on those run-down houses were cleaned up and taken care of. Paint began to appear on the outside and inside of these homes. The new folks in town began to take note of older residents who needed a bit of help. Trash cans just got put back in the yard. When someone fell on a street, there was a quick helping hand. Older children showed up to help mature residents with yard work, and would not take any payment. They were just being good neighbors. Soon the best news a homeowner could get was that a



DAVID GOLDEN

**"Our interests are
linked and our
destiny is indivisible."**

~Continued on Page 4

NYSUT RETIREE SERVICES CONSULTANT RC 9/10

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SAVE THESE DATES–TRAVEL AND SOCIAL CALENDAR!!!!

Plans are being made for day trips and luncheons for 2019. These events will be announced in the coming months.

MAY 30 TO JUNE 10, 2019, SLOVENIA & CROATIA: HIDDEN COVES AND ANCIENT TREASURES BY SEA. Undiscovered gems--beautiful and historic beyond imagination. Set sail by small ship (the My Casanova is a 126-foot yacht first launched in 2016) through the crystal water of the Northern Adriatic Sea to medieval villages, hidden coves and the picturesque coastlines of Croatia and three nights in postcard perfect Slovenia. The entire ship is reserved exclusively for 30 RC 10 members. Learn how communities of the Northern Adriatic have been linked through history as you explore ancient white-stone streets constructed by the Romans and marvel at towering mountains, picture-perfect lakes and striking Venetian Gothic architecture. Understand the influence of the past as you discover ruins of ancient villages with experts and walk among the splendor of historic national parks. For additional information, contact Karen Maher, kmaher2@nycap.rr.com, 518-477-6746 (home) 518-588-4083 (cell).

SEPTEMBER 8 TO 20, 2019, ICELAND. SPECIAL NOTE: Our first travel date filled so quickly and has been so popular with RC 10 members that we have added this additional travel date. Has Iceland been on your bucket list? Reserve a space now on this exciting and fascinating trip. **The travel company offers a discount plan so the earlier you sign up the better!** This is small group adventure (moderate activity level program) offered exclusively for RC 10. After exploring Reyjavik, we'll head north to the Snaefellsness Peninsula--the entry point of Jules Verne's Journey to the Center of the Earth, visit the home of Leif Ericson, stay at a lodge on an Icelandic horse farm, and visit the northern fjords near the Arctic Circle. We'll visit the Black Castle lava formation and explore Godfoss Waterfall and Lake Myvatn. Then on to the northern town of Dalvik to whale watch in the Arctic Sea, surprisingly good in September! Then we fly back to Reykejavik (maximizing our travel time) and head south to Explore the Golden Circle. We'll visit the iconic Seljalandsfoss Waterfall, go off roading on a Super Truck tour through black sandy landscapes and ATVing in volcanic landscapes. We'll see geothermal power first hand and then, of course, relax at the thermal waters of the Blue Lagoon. Seven doubles and four singles (at no additional cost) are available. For more information, contact Maureen Woerner, 518-374-8277 or reeniewoerner@gmail.com

THE FOLLOWING TRIPS ARE FILLED:

SEPTEMBER 7 TO 19, 2019, ICELAND.
OCTOBER 28 TO NOVEMBER 12, 2019, SWITZERLAND & THE HEART OF THE RHINE & MOSELLE RIVER CRUISE.

When registering for a trip, please remember that a member of RC 10 is anyone who has retired from a NYSUT local that is located in Albany, Saratoga, Rensselaer, or Washington counties or is a Social Member who has retired from a NYSUT local in some other part of the state and has paid member fees to his/her Council and a social membership fee to RC 10. Anyone who did not retire as an in-service member of a NYSUT local is not eligible for sustaining or social membership and must pay the guest registration fee. A sustaining member has paid the annual sustaining membership fee for the fiscal year that is from July 1 to June 30.



Photos from the September 16 "Taste of Troy" tour.



TRAVEL/SOCIAL GENERIC REGISTRATION FORM

Use this form if you are unable to access the event-specific registration forms at <http://rc10.ny.aft.org>.
(If you are signing up for more than one activity, or will be taking a guest, please copy this form and fill in the appropriate information.)

Name _____ Home Phone _____ Cell Phone* _____
*Take phone to event

Email _____ Registering for: Event & Date _____
Check One: For 2018-19: () RC10 Member who has paid the annual sustaining membership fee
() Guest or Member who has not paid the annual sustaining membership fee

Event Selections:

For Luncheons/Meals, Entrée of Choice _____ For Trips, Pick Up Location _____

Other notes (Keep it Simple): _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____



Social Justice Committee News

As part of RC 10's ongoing commitment to Social Justice, our Council has been participating in the Regional Food Bank's Backpack Program. This Program is designed to meet the needs of hungry children on weekends when other food resources are not available. The program provides bags filled with foods that are child-friendly, shelf-stable, and easily-consumed. Bags are packed each week by school staff and discreetly distributed to participating children every Friday afternoon. The bags are then returned on Monday to be refilled for the next weekend.

In the four counties that RC 10 represents, the following school districts currently have a Regional Food Bank Backpack Program: Albany, Argyle, Averill Park, Ballston Spa, Berne-Knox-Westerlo, Brunswick-Brittonkill, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake, Capital Region BOCES, Cohoes, Corinth, Fort Edward, Greenwich, Guilderland, Hartford, Green Island (Heatly), Hoosick Falls, Hudson Falls, Lansingburgh, Mechanicville, North Colonie, Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk, Rensselaer, Schodack, Shenendehowa, South Glens Falls, Stillwater, Troy, Voorheesville, Watervliet and Whitehall School Districts.

It costs the Regional Food Bank \$183 to support a child for the entire year. There are never enough funds to provide for all the applicants so we are asking for the assistance of RC 10 members to contribute to this very worthy cause. No contribution is too small since our combined efforts will help to sustain the program. If you would like to contribute, make checks payable to The Regional Food Bank, and write **RC10 Backpack Program/Name of School** you would like to support in the **memo section** of your check. For example: **RC 10 Backpack Program/ North Colonie**. If you do not care which school gets the funds, simply write **RC 10 Backpack Program**. Please mail your check to Barbara McCarthy, 5 Ascot Circle-Apt. 9, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Donations are tax-deductible and all donors will receive a donor acknowledgement letter. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara McCarthy at irishiz9@aol.com /-682-2814. Thank you for your anticipated generosity. Since September, these contributions have been collected.

SCHOOL	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
ALBANY	25	100	25			150
ANY SCHOOL	50					50
ARGYLE	50	183				233
GREENWICH	183					183
HUDSON FALLS	50					50
RENSSELAER	30					30
STILLWATER	183					183
VOORHEESVILLE	183					183
WHITEHALL	75					75
TOTAL						\$1,137



BY DEB ESCOBAR, 20 OCTOBER 2018

At the October 11th RC 10 Fall Meeting, members were treated to a workshop on Reversing Runaway Inequality, led by Charlie Albanetti of Citizen Action New York.

We were astonished to learn the true facts about income inequality, including that a top CEO makes 794 times the amount of an average worker. The gap becomes even worse when you consider race and gender. For example, Black women make only 64% of what white men make, and Latina women only 54%. This disparity leads to a lack of wealth that could have been used to pay for higher education, purchase homes, provide a financially secure retirement, or be passed on to future generations.

Many of us were surprised to learn that the primary cause of wage stagnation in the US is financialization. This means that the financial industry is extracting value from our workplaces by stock buy-backs, which increase the worth of each share of stock for the investors. These buy-backs are taking place to make a quick profit instead of investing in the capital resources or growth of the business, or fairly adjusting the wages and benefits of workers. This financialization has separated average wages from productivity.

We also learned that after the Citizens United legislation in 2010, independent political expenditures (not coordinated with candidate or party) skyrocketed from about \$50,000 in 2005, to \$200,000,000 in 2010. In 2014, Super PAC contributions amounted to \$343,517,137. This influx of Super PAC contributions and donor class contributions has had a disproportionate impact on our political process.

The first step in reversing this process is to educate others about the true facts of income inequality. As retired teachers, we know firsthand how this impacts not only students but our communities and our retired population. We no longer have the luxury of sitting back from our political process -- we must get involved, get out the vote, and elect representatives who will be truly responsive to people, not to corporations, Super PACs, or the wealthy elite.

If anyone would like to learn more about this issue, the book Runaway Inequality by Les Leopold was recommended. If you are a part of a group that would like to bring this presentation to your members, contact calbanetti@citizenactionny.org.

~From Your President, Continued from Page 1

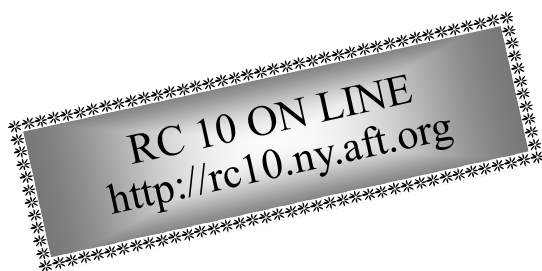
Bosnian family had moved to their street. Property values would be going up for sure and the quality of life was getting better. They were all one community and realized the reality of the benefits of welcoming strangers outplayed the fear that they began with upon their arrival.

America has offered us the chance to exist in an environment we like, whether in a small town or a city. Good as that is, it is also a flight from civic reality. Where is job and wage growth? In the large cities and metro areas. Where is there population loss and economic decline? In the small rural areas, where we like the quality of life and its freedom to do our thing our way. How long is it possible to sustain those differences without finding how to accommodate the shared needs of both?

Amtrak is one of the most suitable and affordable ways to provide economic high-speed transportation upstate. We have been working on that for a decade or two but have not gotten around to it just yet! Look at how long it took to get a second track from Albany to Schenectady (20 miles), one of the major choke points for improving that rail corridor. Hence little progress was made in the business opportunities for Upstate local manufacturers marketing their products as well as for workers to live where they want and still get to a well-paying job. If that job is not in the Capital District metro area, there is no place to go. If the transportation is not there, we can't get to it anyway. We are all in this together.

The tone of political speech impacts our civic discussion and the ability of our communities to come together for the common good. We must understand the good in others who are different from ourselves before we can learn to work with them and learn from each other. What we think has little impact on us may be vital. You may not ride the rails, but the economic future of your community may well depend on the ability to do so. The cost of labor is impacted by the larger economy more than just local preference. We must learn to appreciate the connections that tie us all together. We all need to understand that we are in one community, not just defined by the density of residents and whether our home is measured by the hundred square feet or in the thousands. Our interests are linked and our destiny is indivisible. Our common good requires common tolerance, teamwork and mutual help. Division only leads to our mutual harm.

~David Golden



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SHINGLES

BY DEB ESCOBAR, 17 October 2018

NOTE: Check out our website at <http://rc10.ny.aft.org> for an extended version of this article, as well as other articles and reports that were not able to be included in this newsletter due to space constraints.

I was recently hospitalized with what was diagnosed as Ramsay Hunt Syndrome, a variation of shingles that hits the ear canal and affects nerves on one side of the face, causing paralysis or weakness of muscles, lip, tongue and eyelid. Luckily, taking prednisone with the antiviral greatly increased the odds of recovering from the paralysis. Within a week of leaving the hospital, I got my smile back. Two months later, I still struggle with vertigo/dizziness. The doctor is hopeful the nerves in my ear will heal with time.

Shingles is caused by a reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus that lies dormant within the nerve cells in most of us. Anyone who has had chicken pox has this virus in their body. When it activates, the first sign is a rash and either itching or pain. The telltale blisters at the site of the rash do not come out for a couple of days after the first symptoms.

I never knew that there were so many variations of shingles that can affect vision (when the rash occurs near the eye), cause loss of hearing, muscle weakness/paralysis, inflammation of the brain, etc. Even the everyday variety of shingles can leave scarring and pain that lasts for a long time after the blisters themselves have healed. The good news is that the new vaccine, called Shingrix, is 97% effective in preventing shingles, lasts for longer than five years, and is recommended for anyone over 50 years of age, even if you had the earlier type of vaccine (which is not as effective). Shingrix is a two-shot vaccine, made with a nonliving virus, that is taken two months apart. The most common side effect is a sore arm. Though you should always consult with your doctor first, they do not carry this vaccine in their office – you have to get the shots at a pharmacy. It is even recommended that those like myself, who have already had shingles, be vaccinated because you can get shingles more than once. You do have to wait a few months between the active infection and receiving the vaccine. Please be an advocate for yourself, and also tell your family and friends who are over 50.