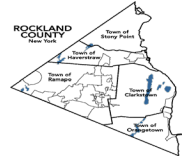




The RepORter



NYSUT Orange and Rockland County Retiree Council 14

March / April 2024

Issue 4

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SPRING 2024

RC 14 CALENDAR

March 4-5	Mon & Tues.	Committee of 100	Albany
March 5-6	Tues & Wed.	ED 51-53 Meeting	Albany
April 17	Wednesday	Pizza Party RC 14 Member Meeting Executive Committee	Rockland
May 2-3	Thurs-Fri	Local & Retiree Presidents	NYC
May 3-4	Fri-Sat	NYSUT RA	NYC
May 16	Thursday	Executive Committee (Mt Ivy Diner - Pomona - 10:00am)	Orange
June 6	Thursday	Scholarships/Awards Luncheon	Orange
July 11	Thursday	Executive Committee	

*** PLEASE VOTE: SCHOOL BUDGET & SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 21, 2024**

*** LET'S GET TOGETHER AT OUR ANNUAL RC 14 PIZZA PARTY!! PLEASE RETURN THE FORM BELOW**

Make sure RC 14 has your email address. If not, please email to Retireecouncil14@gmail.com

RC 14 PIZZA PARTY - WEDNESDAY, April 17, 2024, 12:00 pm

**Join with us as we celebrate another in-person get-together!
SPACE MIGHT BE LIMITED SO PLEASE RESERVE YOUR SEAT EARLY**

Menu Option: Cheese Pizza, Salad, Soft Drinks

Cost: \$10.00 by Non-Refundable check with the form below

Location: Posa Posa – 121 Rockland Center, Nanuet, NY 10954 (845-623-7050)

WE WELCOME NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS TO BE CONTRIBUTED TO LOCAL PEOPLE TO PEOPLE FOOD BANK

Pizza Party Reservation Form - CHECK PAYABLE TO NYSUT RC 14

**RSVP (by Friday, April 12, 2024) to Jennifer Thompson - 31 Hudson St - Warwick, NY 10990
w. Non-Refundable \$10.00 check. (Any unused reservation \$ directed to Scholarship Fund.)**

Name _____ Retired from _____

Email _____ Phone _____

President's Column

Dear Fellow Retirees:

Things are fine until they are not. Last month, my wife Mary was experiencing severe neck, shoulder, and chest pain. After several visits to an urgent care facility and an appointment with an ENT specialist, her pain did not subside. We thought that we were dealing with a nasal infection but could not figure out why she was in such pain.

After having an eight-hour long wait this past fall at an ER back in NY, we were hesitant to return. But her condition was too serious to ignore so I took her to the Memorial University Hospital ER in Savannah.

To our surprise, despite the large numbers of people being seen at the ER, the doctors and nurses were terrific. She was treated quickly. Tests were done and results were forthcoming. Until she could be admitted, they were very attentive. After several days at Memorial, she was released, having to follow up with her doctors soon after. Mary is feeling much better now.

On the last day of Mary's hospital stay, I received a call from my sister-in-law in Newport, VT. My oldest brother David had fallen down the cellar stairs of his home, fracturing his right shoulder and his left wrist. He was immediately taken to the local hospital for treatment. Unfortunately, it did not have the proper staff to perform the surgery needed so he was transported two hours

to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Hospital in Lebanon, NH. He had his surgery there and is now back in Newport for physical therapy. My sister-in-law traveled two hours each way to visit him while he was recuperating.

The point of this article is not to share our medical history. I decided to share this story because, as retirees, we all need proper medical treatment when the situation presents itself. If we were in NY or GA in a rural area then the situation might have been different. Being geographically close to quality medical facilities and hospitals does make a difference, especially as we age. When we first chose to become snowbirds in GA, we never gave much consideration to being close to them. We think differently now.

As you enjoy your well-deserved retirement, I hope that you and your families are well and have access to quality healthcare where you now reside. If you ever move, or plan to move in the future, check out the ratings of those facilities near you. A tool on [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) offers information and allows you to compare hospitals by city, state, zip code, or hospital name. Talk to your doctor or other healthcare providers whom you trust about which hospitals they prefer to use.

In Solidarity,
Paul Ellis-Graham

From Vice-President Martin Cohen

DEMOCRACIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD FACING THE BIGGEST THREAT IN THIS YEAR'S ELECTIONS

There was a time when we heard the words authoritarian leanings and it meant Nazi Germany and Japan, Fascist Italy, Communist Russia, China, North Korea, and a few others. However, democracy is being challenged in more than 50 countries which are holding national elections this year. There are authoritarian leaders who plan to dominate these elections which become a true threat to democracy around the world. Over 50 countries will have these elections, and they represent one-half of the planet's population.

These elections have huge implications for human rights, economic stability, and equal justice for all people. The possibility exists of legally elected officials being threatened, overthrown, or votes altered. The fate of democracy will certainly be a central issue. Countries like Russia, Taiwan, El Salvador, India and South Africa will face authoritarian rulers or dictatorships that will jeopardize free, fair, and equal representation of all citizens. We cannot forget the past repressions, and at the same time we must understand the real possibility that these threats will return.

In our country we have experienced a former president who continues to use his comments, his challenges to the Constitution, and his belief that a president has executive authority to act in any way without interference. In our own country we have a divided population and too many have been led to believe that the United States is exclusively a white, Christian country which should be opposed to any national gun regulation, opposed to women's right of freedom of choice, opposed to the possibility that climate change is a real threat that, if not acted upon, could cause a frightening future.

Democracy doesn't mean that one must vote only for a certain political party; it means making reasoned, intelligent choices that will protect, defend and provide for the well-being of all of its citizens and citizens to be.

**Kottie, tell us about your teaching background.**

I taught for over 30 years in the elementary classroom, the last 23 years in 4th and 5th grades in the South Orangetown CSD, retiring from the classroom in 2019. (That's right, just before Covid hit!)

What are your fondest memories of your teaching career?

I loved teaching and have many fond memories. My favorite lessons were those related to the teaching of climate change because students were highly motivated because they saw the learning as relevant and because many of the lessons were fun hands-on science experiments and demonstrations. In addition, the activities were multidisciplinary, incorporating ELA, Math, and the Arts into science learning, making them more engaging for students, as well as for me.

When and why did you begin teaching climate change?

I began teaching climate change in 2008, following a visit to the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway. I have seen the movie *An Inconvenient Truth*. The entire upper floor of the Peace Center was devoted to the connection between climate change and global stability. It was a real "Ah ha!" moment for me. I began to understand the importance of the issue.

Back in the "olden days" in 2008, there were no climate science lessons for students. I had to make my own. It was easy to incorporate climate into environmental studies, as well as to use it as a topic to practice skills in reading and writing, interpreting a line graph, or understanding social movements throughout history. In 2015 my students told me that we needed to create a website to communicate this climate change information to other kids.

Our website *Kids Against Climate Change* was born. My students were so excited when it had 100 views! (Mostly from them looking at their own work.) I updated the site with subsequent classes and continue to monitor it and add to it. It now has over 185,000 views and is funded by NOAA. It was recently chosen as one of the top 100 student climate action activities in the world by Teachers for the Planet and was presented at COP28. *Kidsagainstclimatechange.com* highlights student climate work, provides articles and videos that teachers can use, and has a discussion board so kids can share their concerns and ideas. Please tell your favorite teachers and students that we would love to have them join the discussion! I'm also looking for pictures of high school students using the site or taking climate action so that the graphics better reflect the content for older kids. If you know of anyone who's interested, please have them contact me via the website.

In addition to managing your *Kids Against Climate Change* website, what else are you doing in retirement?

Using the skills I honed as a teacher, I'm now an instructor for the University of San Diego in California. I teach only one asynchronous online class, so I'm not burdened by a huge time commitment. The class "Teaching Climate Change in the NGSS Classroom," a graduate level course for teachers, is differentiated by grade level taught. The teacher-participants are from across the United States and around the world. They create a climate unit for their culminating project. I'm continually amazed by their dedication and creativity!

I'm also a Climate Change Education Consultant. Building on my teaching skills, I'm working to get climate science taught in an engaging way in classrooms around the world. I've had opportunities to provide consulting services or presentations to authors, producers, media syndicates, the US State Department, an Advisory Board for the creation of a video series for middle school teachers. Last June I worked in Costa Rica helping staff at a nature preserve develop climate lessons for local schools and nature centers. I continue to publish in educational journals and magazines, and present at educational conferences, with the hope that teachers will be inspired to ramp up their teaching of climate. (See www.kottiecb.com)

What can we do if we want to get involved in environmental stewardship (without going too radical)?

There are multiple ways to wade into the climate movement while testing the waters:

- Celebrate Earth Day 2024 with someone you love. Although Earth Day is officially April 22, celebrations are happening at multiple venues across Orange and Rockland Counties throughout the month, so it's best to google it.
- Sign up online for Climate Reality Leadership Training by Al Gore and his team. It will be held for the first time in NYC on April 12-14. It's free. (No, you don't need to know all about climate change to take this training.) The lectures are thought-provoking, and the networking sessions are interesting and will provide future opportunities for you, such as joining the Hudson Valley Chapter of Climate Reality. (www.climaterealityproject.org)
- Third Act might be of interest to you. It's a nonpolitical, climate action group for "experienced Americans." Ha ha! Don't you love the euphemism?! (<https://thirdact.org>)

There are now tax credits and rebates for going electric and making your home more environmentally friendly. Now is a good time to get started... and then tell everyone you know what you have done!

<https://content.rewiringamerica.org/reports/Rewiring%20America%20Go%20Electric%20Digital%20Guide.pdf>