



## LOOKING BACK AT 2022

*Eugene Goldwasser*



### The Biden Administration

Looking back on the past year, much has been accomplished by the Biden administration. As compiled by our Political Action Chair, Stu Mortman, the following are some of those accomplishments to date:

- Passage of the Inflation Reduction Act which reduced the deficit and took aggressive action on climate issues
- Improved health care for veterans, especially those exposed to “burn pits” while serving in Iraq
- Passed the Bipartisan Safe Communities Act which addressed gun violence
- Ended the war in Afghanistan
- Provided support in the form of military hardware and funds to Ukraine
- Reauthorized and strengthened the Violence Against Women Act
- Passed the American Rescue Plan which provided \$1.9 trillion to combat Covid and help the economy recover
- Added 6.5 million jobs – largest job growth in American history
- Passed the bipartisan Infrastructure Act which strengthened the supply chain and brought jobs back to America
- Rejoined the Paris Accords to combat the climate crisis
- Expanded health care to millions by strengthening the Affordable Care Act
- Nominated and had confirmed the first black woman to SCOTUS. Other judicial confirma-

tions were 80% women and 53% people of color

- Passed the Respect for Marriage Act which recognized same sex and interracial marriages in all 50 states
- Passed the \$1.7 trillion budget, keeping the government open and operating through September, 2023

With the Republican Party controlling the House of Representatives, it will be interesting to see if bipartisan efforts and achievements will continue through 2023 and beyond.

### Focus Group Meeting in February

School Boards, administrators and teachers have come under fire the last several years from basically conservative groups that question curricular and teaching decisions. Some states have passed laws governing what is taught and how it is taught in classrooms. As a result, we have scheduled a focus group to determine our perspective on the pressure school boards and school personnel are facing regarding what is taught, how it’s taught and who gets to decide. The focus group is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom. If you would like to attend, please send an email to [eigoldwasser@optonline.net](mailto:eigoldwasser@optonline.net) and you will receive a link to the meeting a few days before.

### Best wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2023!

*NYSRSAS President, Gene Goldwasser, was a school principal for 24 years. Since retiring, he has been a Hofstra adjunct professor and a coach with the Institute for Student Achievement.*

## How Did Educators Do in 2022?

Mary Louise Haley

While most schools were open for in-person learning in 2022 and schools slowly returned to a sense of normalcy, educators are still navigating the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In this post-pandemic era, teachers and principals are still experiencing high levels of stress and depression.

The results of a recent RAND Corporation survey indicate that teachers' job satisfaction appears to be at an all-time low, as their stress levels have sky-rocketed since the pandemic. In fact, the RAND survey indicates that teachers and principals may be faring worse than other working adults. Seventy-five percent of teachers and 85% of principals reported experiencing frequent job-related stress as compared to just 1/3 of working adults in other fields. Forty percent of school principals reported that they are considering leaving the profession in three years.

Teachers reported that their top-ranked sources of job-related stress are: addressing the effects of interruptions on student learning, managing students' increased behavioral and mental health issues, taking on extra work due to staff shortages, and spending too many hours working outside of the school day. The 2022 school year had been filled with election and political messages about gender identity issues, school prayer and what books students read in school. This political turmoil added pressure to teachers' already challenging jobs. Principals' sources of stress mirrored those of teachers with the additional problem of addressing teacher and staff shortages.



How can districts support the well-being of staff? Teachers and principals told researchers that positive re-

lationships with their colleagues helped them cope with the stressors of their jobs. Researchers recommended that principals and district leaders should intentionally facilitate these relationships. Experts recommended that districts offer mental health supports and make them more accessible. Teachers complained that district services were too limited or not convenient to meet their needs; for example, wellness programs that started well after the school day when they felt they needed to be home or spend time grading and lesson planning.



An EdWeek Research Center survey found that the most common step among school and district leaders to address mental health needs was offering professional development on self-care, such as yoga and meditation techniques. But many teachers felt these sessions were superficial and did not address the broader systemic change that would prevent them from feeling that their jobs are untenable.

Some school and district administrators recognize that they are contributing to teachers' stress in their efforts to return to school as "usual" when there are already so many stressors for educators in this post-Covid world. They are reflecting on the many initiatives and professional development activities available to teachers in the past with the current goal of slowing things down and focusing on a few manageable and key goals. Instead of adding to teachers' mental stress, they are seeking to lighten the load. While this is one step school leaders can make towards reducing job-related stress, system-wide changes to support teachers and principals in this challenging time are needed.

*Mary Louise Haley (Mel) started as a special education teacher. She retired from her position as principal in the the Hericks Schools and is now serving as Education Chair for NYSRSAS.*

FROM THE DESK OF: *The Reflective Retiree*

**A NEW YEAR'S TOAST TO YOU**

***May the New Year bring you good health and happiness and all that you wish for!***

*Corine Lipset-Huberman*

New Year's Day has come and gone, but perhaps the memory lingers on. Perchance that memory includes a glass or two (or three) of wine, beer, liquor, schnapps, something on the rocks, something straight up— however you prefer your booze. And probably when the clock struck midnight, you and someone you love, someone you care about, raised a glass to each other, clinked glasses and toasted each other. At the stroke of midnight, I'm quite certain that neither you nor anyone with you thought about the origin of "the toast." But now that the glow of New Year's Eve is over, perhaps you'd like to know, and if you read on, I am about to tell you.



It was during ancient times that alcohol first entered the human diet. It may have been a deliberate concoction or a fortuitous stumble on fermented fruit which led the Cro-Magnon man to murmur, "Hmm, this is good!" However it came about, it is a known fact that Tutankhamun's tomb held 26 wine jars with both red and white vintages from 15 different vintners. The ancient Egyptians made both beer and wine, supplying the builders of the Giza pyramids with a beer ration of over a gallon a day. The ancient Chinese made wine from rice and grapes, the Mayans from fermented corn, the Celts from mead and the Mongols from fermented mare's milk. The ancient Greeks, however, took wine to a higher level, viewing water-drinkers with suspicion. Those who drank water were thought to be surly and unpleasant, in contrast to wine drinkers who were thought to be convivial, social and fond of intellectual conversation.

So how did a glass filled with liquid of some sort get to be a "toast"? Folklore is filled with stories about toasting but the word *toast* itself, meaning to drink to one's health, is thought to have come about in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when it was common practice to drop a piece of scorched or spiced toast into the wine glass. The bread would soak up some of the acidity and improve the flavor of the poor wine. Some also suggested that the bread supposedly lessened any bad odor that arose from the wine. Apparently, vintners were not as talented at wine-making as they are today.



Historian Paul Dickson, who has written widely about toasting, tells us that toasting definitely goes back to the ancient world. He informs us that Ulysses toasted Achilles' health in *The Odyssey*, and in Rome, the Senate demanded that all diners drink to the health of Emperor Augustus prior to every meal. As to the toast at the bottom of a glass, it "may have been a flavoring device," Dickson maintains. "The practice was common, and virtually anything found floating in a drink was referred to as toast." Shakespeare mentions this practice in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, with Falstaff calling for a quart of spiced wine, then adding "Put a toast in it." By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the term *toast* moved from the floating bread to the person honored by the toast, leading to the term *toast of the town*.

*(cont'd on page 4)*

## A NEW YEAR'S TOAST TO YOU *(cont'd from page 7)*

So when did people begin clinking their glasses when toasting each other? According to Dickson, that didn't become popular until the early days of Christianity. Some believed that the tingling noise made when glasses clinked together would drive off the devil. Others contended that by adding the clink, imbibers could get greater pleasure from a drink because the sound added a fifth sense to the experience. Although unconfirmed, an additional theory held that the clinking of glasses began as a way for nobles to ensure they were not being poisoned. It was believed that the clank would slosh liquid from one glass to another, reassuring the guest that his drink was safe to be consumed.

Americans have a special tie to toasting. In 1778, a musical composition titled "To Anacreon in Heaven" was published in a London magazine, written by John Stafford Smith. Anacreon was a Greek poet who wrote poems in praise of love and wine. The Anacreon Society was a gentlemen's club dedicated to "wit, harmony, and the god of wine." The members of the society enthusiastically adopted the song, opening each meeting with a rendition of the song as a musical toast. The popularity of its melody grew and

eventually was co-opted for many other popular songs, among them our very own "The Star-Spangled Banner," lyrics written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key.

And so, as a fitting ending to this article, let us raise our glasses (don't forget to clink) and toast the United States of America, our President, our Congress and our Supreme Court. May they all do the job they were elected or appointed to do with dedication, sincerity, honesty and common sense – and put country before party!

And let us all say

*Cheers!*

*In case you're still toasting, here is the equivalent to CHEERS in many different languages, should you be entertaining foreign guests:*

<b>ITALY:</b> Cin cin	<b>DENMARK:</b> Skal
<b>THAILAND:</b> Chok dee	<b>CHINA:</b> Ganbei
<b>KOREA:</b> Gun bae	<b>LITHUANIA:</b> I sveikata
<b>JAPAN:</b> Kanpai	<b>ISRAEL:</b> L'chaim
<b>PHILIPPINES:</b> Mabuhay	<b>SPAIN:</b> Salud
<b>HOLLAND:</b> Proost	<b>IRELAND:</b> Slante
<b>POLAND:</b> Na zdrowie	<b>SWEDEN:</b> Skal
<b>PORTUGAL:</b> Saude	<b>RUSSIA:</b> Za zdarovyie
<b>GREECE:</b> Yamas	<b>GUAM:</b> Biba
<b>WALES:</b> Iechy da	<b>UKRAINE:</b> Budmo
<b>GERMANY:</b> Prost	<b>FRANCE:</b> Sante
<b>GEORGIA:</b> Gaumarjos	<b>SERBIA:</b> Ziveli
<b>TURKEY:</b> Serefe	<b>ENGLAND:</b> Cheers
<b>ROMANIA:</b> Noroc	<b>EGYPT:</b> Fe sahetek
<b>ICELAND:</b> Skal	<b>ESTONIA:</b> Terviseks
<b>ARMENIA:</b> Genatzt	<b>NORWAY:</b> Skal
<b>SLOVENIA:</b> Na Zdravje	<b>SLOVAKIA:</b> Na zdravie
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC:</b> Na zdravi	

Sources: Dickson, Paul. TOASTS. Dell Publishing Co., 2009 ed. Rupp, Rebecca. "Cheers: Celebration Drinking Is an Ancient Tradition." National Geographic, Dec.26, 2014  
"Drinking Toasts: How to Say Cheers in 35 Different Languages." SavoredSips.com., Dec. 16, 2021

### REMINDERS

Membership letters are mailed out in January. Please remember to mail in your dues.

We are continuing our Citizenship Award Program and expanding it to twenty schools this year. If you wish to contribute, you may include your donation with your dues.

Our next meeting will be on March 16, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. If you would like to attend, email [eigoldwasser@optonline.net](mailto:eigoldwasser@optonline.net) to request an invitation allowing you to access the meeting.

*Dr. Corine Lipset-Huberman has had experience at all levels of education. She spent the last 19 years prior to retirement as principal of the Village Elementary School in Syosset, NY.*

**AUTUMN QUARTERLY QUERY - GETTING OUT THE VOTE**

*Our query was, "What suggestions do you have that you think would encourage more people to engage in the election of officers at all levels, from federal to state to local?"*

**Edward Price:** You think voting doesn't matter? Look at the actions of the Supreme Court overturning Roe v Wade, and striking down key elements of the Voting Rights Act. These decisions most likely would not have been possible without three extremely conservative justices appointed by the last president. Protect your rights: VOTE!

**Pat Galaskas:** Create a designated "national holiday" for voting, and, to "encourage" people to actually USE the voting holiday to cast their ballots, think about a penalty for NOT voting, as exists in Australia.

**Marvin Kreutzberger:** Voter-age appropriate schools should encourage voter participation, an important part of risk-reward, critical reasoning-centered teaching and learning.



**John Wallace:** Allow voters to register on Election Day as some states do. Those votes could be kept separately until it is verified that they meet all qualifications for voting.

**Stewart Mortman:** One way to encourage greater turnout on Election Day is to move the day of voting to a weekend or establish Election Day as a national holiday.

**Corine Lipset-Huberman:** Work with local Election Boards to make the actual voting process easier on people waiting to vote. Examples: perhaps a local chair rental business would donate chairs during voting hours; supermarkets might donate water and snacks; local citizens might lend umbrellas on a rainy day. Voters should be aware of these arrangements prior to voting day. Local Election Boards could



arrange for volunteers to go to assisted and independent living residences and nursing homes to assist in filling out forms for absentee ballots.

Candidates for office might use some of their campaign money to hire buses to transport groups of people, perhaps from a place of worship/school/factory to the voting site and back.

**Martin Mandelker:** During each election cycle we attempt to increase voter participation by decreasing voter apathy. A variety of ideas have been tried with little success. Perhaps it's time to try a "Smokey the Bear" technique, using similar advertising strategies like animated images of talking voting machines, voting symbols superimposed upon a series of patriotic images such as a windblown flag or Statue of Liberty or a familiar tune with voting-appropriate lyrics. How about lyrics to the tune of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game?" Perhaps something like this, played over and over again on various media:

Let's all go out and vote now  
 Let our voices be heard  
 Focus on fairness and justice for all  
 We all win when we hear the call  
 Let us vote, vote, vote for the best set  
 If they don't win, it's a shame  
 Let us vote, vote, vote without fail  
 So democracy can prevail.

**IN MEMORIUM**  
**JOSEPH QUINN**  
**1933-2022**

**PAST-PRESIDENT OF OLLI**  
**(Osher Life-Long Learning Institute)**  
**PAST VICE-PRESIDENT OF NYSRSAS**

**WE WILL MISS YOU, JOE!**  
**REST IN PEACE**

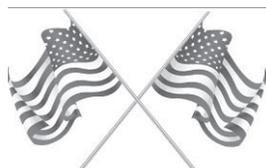
**NOVEMBER '22 ELECTION RESULTS**

*NYSRSAS reviewed the positions of candidates for the offices listed below.*

*Here are the names of the candidates who won the election.*

*Candidates we endorsed are in capital letters.*

*As you may recall, the redrawing of New York's election districts complicated the campaign season in 2022 and resulted in some changes in the representation of several Long Island districts.*



**United States Congress**

**Senate—CHARLES SCHUMER**

**House of Representatives**

**District #1—Nicholas Lalota**

**District #2 - Andrew Garbarino**

**District #3— George Santos**

**District #4—Anthony D'Esposito**

**New York State**

**Governor- KATHY HOCHUL**

**NYS Senate**

**Senate District #1 - Anthony Palumbo**

**Senate District #2 - Mario Mattera**

**Senate District #3 - DEAN MURRAY**

**Senate District #4 - MONICA MARTINEZ**

**Senate District #5 – Steven Rhodes**

**Senate District #6 – KEVIN THOMAS**

**Senate District #7 – Jack Martins**

**Senate District #8 – Alexis Welk**

**Quarterly Query**

**WINTER 2023**

Considerable pressure has been brought to bear on educational leaders and school personnel by mostly conservative groups regarding the ideology, curriculum and pedagogy of instruction. One noteworthy attack on our educational system was the recent statement former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo offered in an interview with [Semafor.com](https://www.semafor.com) in November. He said:

*I get asked "Who's the most dangerous person in the world? Is it Chairman Kim, is it Xi Jinping?" The most dangerous person in the world is Randi Weingarten. It's not a close call. If you ask, "Who's the most likely to take this republic down?" It would be the teachers' unions, and the filth that they're teaching our kids. . . .*

Our Focus Group will discuss these issues and how we, as educators, should respond to them. What would you like to say to former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in response to his statement? Please write and tell us your thoughts regarding this issue.

*Please send your response to [clipsethuberman@gmail.com](mailto:clipsethuberman@gmail.com)*

*Kindly include your name and the district from which you retired.*

## ETHICS

Stewart Mortman



“Ethics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with human conduct, more specifically the behavior of individuals in society.” Ethics are the things and actions that an individual believes to be right or wrong.

Merriam-Webster explains ethics as a set of moral principles: a theory or system of moral values.

A code of ethics is a guide of principles designed to help professionals conduct business honestly and with integrity. A code of ethics document may outline the mission and values of the business or organization, how professionals are supposed to approach problems, the ethical principles based on the organization's core values, and the standards to which the professional is held.

Educators have long been subject to organizational and professional rules of ethical conduct that govern their behavior. These underpinnings provide a framework that encourages positive values and actions in self, learners and community. Ethics can be compared to a guide that helps the teacher navigate, providing quality education and encouraging good values among learners. These ethical guides demonstrate that teachers have a major role in bringing desirable change. An educators’ code of ethics makes clear, by formalizing, what behaviors are acceptable and appropriate.

Most educational institutions, businesses and corporations have formal codes of ethics. Many have human resource departments that help employees understand and adhere to their established code. There is a code of conduct for feder-



al judges (other than justices) that require them to “act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.” Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate have codes of conduct.



That leaves us with one glaring exception, the Supreme Court. The nine justices of the Supreme Court are the only federal judges not bound by the Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges, which goes beyond the basic ethics laws and creates uniformity around thorny issues like recusals and participation in political activities. Research compiled from Fix the Court points out that while none of the justices has committed a removal offense, all nine are culpable of various ethical oversights, from leaving assets off their annual financial disclosure reports to speaking at partisan fundraisers to ruling on cases despite credible conflicts of interest. Justices are currently allowed to trade stocks of private companies, which could create a conflict of interest. Also, they are exempt from almost all restrictions on receiving gifts, personal hospitality and travel.

The highest court in our land has demonstrated an unwillingness to establish a code of ethics on itself. The justices could easily and formally adopt a code to-

*(continued on page 8)*

**ETHICS** (cont'd from page 7)

morrow if they so choose. Legal scholars believe that since Congress has the authority to legislate institutional changes to the high court, it may use its statutory authority to compel acceptance of a code of ethics. The House of Representatives' Bill H.R.4766 -117th Congress (2021-2022)



establishes a new statutory requirement for the Judicial Conference of the United States to issue a judicial code of conduct for judges and justices of

U.S. courts, including Justices of the Supreme Court. This still has a long way to go before being implemented.

It is time for those entrusted with the high responsibility of interpreting the laws of this land to have a set of standards of conduct that govern their actions. We the people must have confidence that our institutions are just, fair and honest. No individual or group of individuals should be permitted to operate without standards that are firmly established and easily understood.

*Stewart Mortman retired from a position as an Assistant Principal from the New Rochelle Public Schools. He currently serves as NYSRSAS Chairperson for Political Action.*



**"A single dream is more powerful than a thousand realities."**

J.R.R. Tolkien

**In 2023, may our dreams prompt action!**



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