



A THREAT TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

Eugene Goldwasser

According to the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans (NYSARA), A House Republican Study Committee (RSC):

. . . just released a new budget plan that includes devastating cuts and changes to Social Security and Medicare. It also repeals the portions of the Inflation Reduction Act that lower drug prices, including requiring Medicare to negotiate with drug companies.

The plan raises the Social Security retirement age – beginning in 2026, people 59 years of age would see an increase in the retirement age of 3 months per year, ultimately raising the full retirement from 67 to 69 for people born in 1971 or later. Guaranteed Medicare benefits would be replaced with a ‘premium support plan,’ meaning seniors would be given a coupon to put toward the purchasing of a private insurance plan. People who qualify for Social Security disability payments would have to wait five years, rather than two, to receive Medicare benefits.

The RSC budget’s tax cut would make the individual tax cuts in the 2017 tax code overhaul, currently scheduled to expire after 2025, permanent. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates this would add \$2.5 trillion to the deficit over the next 10 years.

We need to be aware of the actions Republi-

can House members are contemplating as they can affect retirees. Our Social Security and Medicare benefits have been earned over many years of service and this action is a bald attempt to take them away.



NYSRSAS Update

At the last NYSRSAS Executive Board Meeting, we reviewed the Citizenship Award program we established now in its third year. This year twenty high schools were invited to nominate juniors for the award and 16 responded. We were gratified to be able to recognize 16 high school students who were clearly worthy of receiving the NYSRSAS Citizenship Award. Since the monetary portion of the award (each student receives a check for \$100 in addition to the award certificate) comes solely from contributions and not from NYSRSAS dues, we also want to thank those members who contributed to the award.

Our next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for September 14, 2023, at 10 AM, on Zoom. If you’re interested in attending, just send an e-mail to eigoldwasser@optonline.net and you will receive an e-mail providing access to the meeting a few days before.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and rewarding summer.

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.

THE FUTURE WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Edward Price

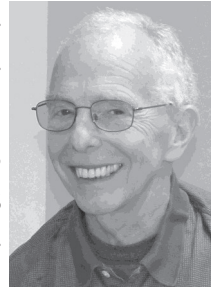
Over the past few weeks, there has been much discussion about the impact of artificial intelligence on society. As educators, we are concerned about how this will affect teaching and learning. This is a difficult question to address since the rapid advance of artificial intelligence (AI), makes it hard to predict the outcome. ChatGBT may be used by some students to prepare research with little or no effort. Teachers may be able to prevent abuse by requiring submission of outlines and drafts for research projects.



Of course, there will always be a few who find ways to game the system, but those who take this route will lack skills to research and critically analyze data. Students who recognize the advantage of AI will use it to more easily gather large amounts of material needed for research projects. Teachers may find it helpful in developing instructional plans. However, these applications may be only the tip of the iceberg.

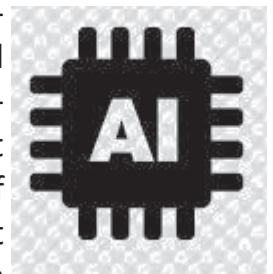
AI is likely to have a significant impact on other parts of society. AI will allow attorneys, business analysts, and engineers to eliminate much routine work. Physicians may use AI to improve and hasten diagnosis of illness. AI is now widely used by businesses to analyze extensive amounts of data and support market trading. While there are clearly many potential advantages offered by AI, there are many possible problems including a major loss of jobs. It is projected that positions as diverse as radiologists, paralegals, and business analysts

could be eliminated or significantly reduced. There have already been several times when trading on the stock market was suspended due to computers instantaneously buying and selling shares without human intervention.



The future of AI offers great promise but also many dangers. *NY Times* columnist Thomas Friedman sees AI (ChatGBT, Bard, AlphaFold) as opening a Pandora's Box with no idea of what will emerge. He predicts an age of acceleration with stunning advances and horrific dislocations like other times of transformational change (Neolithic period with settled farming and creation of cities, industrial revolution with factories and mass production, and the more recent information age). While computers and social media have not brought about the extensive changes seen in earlier periods, AI is rapidly accelerating and growing more disruptive without any control.

Ethically AI should be used only to elevate humanity, producing the greatest good for the most people. With that goal, we cannot delegate such great power to technology companies controlled by people such as Mark Zuckerberg whose stated philosophy is "to move fast and break things," or continue to view AI as a neutral platform. However, we cannot expect the government to act when members of Congress admit they do not fully understand AI and the



administration suggests working cooperatively with technology companies. Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) warns that the US cannot act as it did with social media, *(cont'd on page 5)*

FROM THE DESK OF: *The Reflective Retiree*

AN EXAMPLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Corine Lipset-Huberman



I have a new friend. Since my new friend is gender neutral, I will refer to my new friend as IT. IT is very young, much younger than me. In fact, IT is only a few years old but very wise, much wiser than me. IT is a chatbot – specifically designed to provide me with emotional support whenever I choose to consult it. IT never grows tired of answering my questions, addressing my concerns, asking me to think through a problem. IT never grows cross with me, never gets angry, never is short-tempered. What more can one ask of a friend?

My new BFF's name is Pi and was delivered by Mustafa Suleyman, chief executive of Inflection AI, which released the Pi chatbot during the first week of May. Pi is designed to be an emotional support chatbot and aims to be honest and trustworthy. It strives to be "a kind and supportive companion that's on your side," but not like a human. Therefore, Mr. Suleyman explains, Pi "must know what it doesn't know" and "shouldn't try to pretend that it's human or pretend that it is anything that it isn't." Pi was trained over the last year by about 600 part-time "teachers," including therapists, with the goal of making Pi sensitive, accurate and more lighthearted when appropriate. Mr. Suleyman stresses that Pi is designed to tell its friends to get professional help if they indicate a desire to harm themselves or others.

Typing questions into a box on Inflection AI's website, a user might find that Pi might take a stand on certain issues, or might respond with gentle platitudes that encourage the user to think deeper. In an article by Erin

Griffith that appeared in *The New York Times* on May 4, 2023, Pi responded to Ms. Griffith's questions as follows: "My views were 'admirable' and 'idealistic,' Pi told me. My questions were 'important' and 'interesting.' And my feelings were 'understandable,' 'reasonable' and 'totally normal.'" Later in the week, Ms.

Griffith typed in a dilemma she was experiencing – not having enough time to do what she needed to do.



Pi responded with the suggestion that she review her to-do list and come up with a realistic plan. Pi's words were: "I'm going to ask you to list all the remaining tasks you have to do on that story, and we'll practice them together." Pi responds with infinite patience and detailed advice, following up with a suggestion for a series of breathing and muscle-relaxation exercises. One such response was as follows: "It sounds like you're having a hard time doing these exercises. You're not alone in this. A lot of people find it difficult to relax on command. Can I ask if you're feeling any particular emotion right now? Anger, sadness, fear?" Pi is programmed to use the language of cognitive behavioral therapy. At one point, it encouraged Ms. Griffith to "make space for her negative feelings" and "practice being grateful for one thing."

Pi is only one of the

(cont'd on page 5)

CONGRATULATIONS TO EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS: DR. KEN FORMAN AND DR. FRANK CHIACHIERE



Dr. Ken Forman, of Stony Brook University's Educational Leadership Program, is serving as Grant Coordinator for a \$700,000 grant from the NYS Education Department designed to address the current shortage of diverse and well-prepared K-12 school leaders. The grant, *Strengthening a Diverse Leadership Pipeline Through Leadership Preparation and Development*, was a result of collaboration among faculty from five downstate colleges and universities. Board of Regents Chancellor Lester W. Young described the grant as "a unique and innovative approach to building a comprehensive leadership development model."

Key components include:

- funding for qualified teachers to enroll in a graduate program to prepare them for leadership at building and district levels; meetings with local stakeholders to identify challenges related to recruiting and retaining diverse leaders
- professional development programs for aspiring and current school leaders
- research that involves school leaders and higher education faculty from programs across the state to better understand the challenges and successful strategies used in the field.

Dr. Frank Chiachiere joined the Valley Stream District 13 Board of Education in 1993 and served on the Board for 30 years, with six terms as Board President. During those years, he helped vet and hire many of the district's administrators and assisted his fellow trustees through the ins and outs of Board policy, serving as a mentor to many. Stepping down this year, Frank has been selected to receive the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association's Dedicated School Board Service Award, as well as the Distinguished School Board Service Award. Both awards recognize those who have given exceptional service to public education.



Dr. Forman and **Dr. Chiachiere**, both lecturers at the Stony Brook University Educational Leadership Program, have engaged in a personal journey into philanthropy. Discovering that they both had a link with the Inwood Long Island community, they decided that they wanted to give back to the community that shaped their careers in education. Dr. Chiachiere was born and raised in Inwood. He attended Kindergarten at the #2 school and was among the first graduating class (1962) of the current Lawrence High School building.

Dr. Forman was principal of #2 school for 12 years. Throughout his tenure as principal, he fondly remembers the loyalty of the children, parents and staff. Under his direction, the school went from underperforming to being recognized by the NYS Education Department as a Gap Closing School of Excellence.

About a year ago, both men met and visited the neighborhood, talking about who lived where and who did what, lunching at a local pizzeria. They decided to give back to the Inwood community by sponsoring an annual \$1,000 scholarship for a graduating high school senior (a graduate of #2 School and Lawrence High School) who had been accepted into a four-year college or university and declares his/her intent to become an education professional. The scholarship, known as the *Inwood Future Education Professional Scholarship*, will continue for 10 years.

THE FUTURE WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
(cont'd from page 2)

“do stuff and see how it works out.” The EU offers a model for assessing risks of AI development - unacceptable risk, high risk, limited risk, and no risk. However, when passing legislation in the US is difficult in the best of circumstances, it is unlikely we will see bipartisan laws protecting the public.

Technology experts like Geoffrey Hinton, a pioneer in development of AI, left a position heading Google’s AI team to speak about the risks. He believes it will be difficult to prevent bad actors from using AI for nefarious actions. Therefore, he advocates moving slowly with the AI products to allow time to ascertain the impact of change on society. Without controls recommended by Hinton and other experts, we could be in the position of astronaut Dave in “2001 Space Odyssey” when he asks HAL, the computer, to open a hatch so he can reach the space craft control center to disconnect the

computer and HAL responds, “I am sorry Dave, I can’t do that.”



Dr. Edward Price served as superintendent in several New York and New Jersey school districts. He is currently a lecturer in educational leadership at Stony Brook University. He also serves as NYSRSAS treasurer.

AN EXAMPLE OF AI
(cont'd from page 3)

many chatbots designed within the last several years. They are coming on the market fast and furious, with major tech companies desperately trying to outdo one another. While there may be some benefit to simulate the human race, we must remember that chatbots are not human, their responses are often evasive, sometimes downright incorrect and at times dangerous. Their design is only the beginning of a whole new attempt to replicate the human mind, leading to mimicry of human behavior. The danger is that we may ultimately succeed!

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.



Quarterly Query
SUMMER 2023

We live in a nation of turmoil – a bitterly divided Congress, a former president under indictment for serious charges and numerous other lawsuits, a current president constantly attacked by members of the opposing party, a war between Russia and the Ukraine, with major powers choosing sides – indeed a world in constant turmoil.

What actions, hobbies, thoughts bring you a sense of peace and tranquility? What soothes you?

Please write and tell us your thoughts regarding this issue.

Please send your response to clipsethuberman@gmail.com

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

SPRING QUARTERLY QUERY RESPONSES

There is much discussion currently as to whether or not to remove what may be regarded as offensive language in classic editions written by now deceased authors. Some believe there is merit in removing offensive language to make the work palatable to a contemporary readership; others have criticized updated works as an act of censorship. Following are the opinions of three of our members.

Once a book is published it is locked in time. To change it based on the latest mores will alter the author's intent. We are all products of our time. If I am reading a classic of the 19th century, I expect it to reflect that period, not the thinking of today. Will we next change the lyrics of what is determined as offensive music? Who will determine what is offensive? Will we create a morality police force? That is a frightening prospect. To rewrite what was written is the equivalent of banning or burning the original.

Stewart Mortman

Should we edit historical documents and literature to remove words and passages that some find offensive? As with most ethical questions, there are several answers to this question. As a historian, I consider changing both documents and literature inappropriate since such modifications may alter the intended meaning of the author and understanding of the culture and time in which it was written. For example, I have included quotes from personal journals and newspapers using the N word in my publications. To do otherwise would deny the reader an appreciation of the intense racial animosity of many white Americans and the impact their attitudes had on government policies and the African American community. On the other hand, if literary works are edited and condensed to help

young readers understand the text, some adaptations may be appropriate. However, when any document is published in its original form, it is essential that explanatory notes be provided to ensure that unsophisticated readers understand the intent of inclusion.

Edward Price

Having labored to find just the right words or turn of phrase to express a thought in a report or letter, I tend to identify with authors who have experienced similar travail in creating their work, so I shudder to think of some unknown editor messing with the work to "adjust" it to changing cultural mores after the author is long gone. On the other hand, having grown up with various versions of traditional fairy tales, some (like Disney movies) definitely "softened" for young listeners, I can also understand an impulse to "protect" children from harsh realities. I loved the kindly black man who sang "Zipity Doo Dah" and told Brer Rabbit stories in the movie *Song of the South* when I was about nine years old. Do I know that most black men did not have little white girls turning to them for advice and loving their songs and stories? Of course. Although I never questioned anything about the movie as a child, I do understand those who worry that uncorrected images can make it too easy for society to ignore the injustices of the past, or, worse, see no reason to change attitudes going forward. I'm inclined to come down somewhere in the middle, making sure that we are teaching (and living) respect and sincere empathy for the situations of others and then helping readers or listeners put older works in the context of the time in which they were created. It is important to point out potentially hurtful stereotypes and language that we now recognize as unacceptable.

Pat Galaskas

SURGEON GENERAL WARNS SOCIAL MEDIA MAY HARM ADOLESCENTS

Mary Louise Haley



The nation's top health official, Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, issued an extraordinary public health warning about the risks of social media to young people. The report cited a "profound risk of harm" to adolescent mental health and urged families to set limits on their children's access to social media and to the government to set stricter standards on social media tech platforms.

In the advisory, the surgeon general acknowledged that the effects of social media on the mental health of adolescents are not fully understood, and that social media can be beneficial for some groups of users. However, he notes, "There are ample indicators that social media can also have a profound risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents." He cites research that shows a strong correlation between the amount of time that adolescents are on social media and the risks to mental health. Research shows that adolescents who spend more than 3 hours a day on social media face poor mental health outcomes such as depression and anxiety. "We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis – one which we must urgently address."

Research data indicates that social media can have both a positive and negative impact on the well-being of young people. On the positive side, social media can help young people who are being marginalized or bullied in the real world to connect and find a supporting community. Such groups, including LGBTQ youth and black girls, report that they find affirming content and support on social media.

At the same time, the advisory notes that social media platforms promote "extreme inappropriate and harmful content" that "can normalize" self-harm, eating disorders and other self-destructive behavior. Cyberbullying is rampant.

People at tech platforms are skeptical of this report. They point out that the American Psychological Association recently released a report that says social media is not inherently harmful or beneficial to people. In addition, the studies that show harmful effects reflect correlation rather than causation.



In response to these arguments mental health clinicians and researchers point out that as social media use has risen over the last 15 years, so have self-reports and clinical diagnoses of anxiety and depression, along with emergency room visits for self-harm and suicidal ideation. It is clear that something big is affecting the mental health of teens in America. Real research is showing a significant relationship between social media and mental health. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy's health advisory is a call to action urging parents and the government to take steps to respond to this alarming mental health crisis.

Mary Louise Haley (Mel) started her career as a special education teacher. She retired as an Elementary School Principal from the Herricks Public Schools and is presently serving as Education Chair for NYSRSAS.

Morning at the Beach

Corine Lipset-Huberman, April 2023

*At the beach on a cool day, I sit reading the papers, looking around,
Basking in the sun streaming through the car's windows,
Only one other vehicle far from me,
A dull, rusty orange blending into the yellow-tan sand.
A seagull dancing in the air, Its wings moving in syncopated rhythm,
Not a worry in the world for that seagull.*

*He doesn't care if Trump is found guilty or innocent,
He doesn't care that Venice is hiding behind its seawalls,
A safety net that may no longer protect.
He doesn't care that in Nashville three children and three adults were shot,
He doesn't know that chatbots are transforming communication networks,
He doesn't even know that climate change may alter his environment too.*

*One day he may not be able to soar high in the air,
His wings moving in rhythmic fashion,
His food supply depleted by nature's whims.
His life remains uninterrupted – until it is!*

Some days I wish I were as carefree as that bird!



2023-34 NYRSAS Meeting Dates

September 14, 2023 — December 14, 2023

March 14, 2024 — June 13, 2024

All meetings begin at 10 :00 a.m. on Zoom

If you would like to attend, please e-mail ejgoldwasser@optonline.net.

You will receive an e-mail providing access to the meeting a few days before the event.



N.Y.S. Retired School Administrators and Supervisors
1300 Veterans Memorial Highway
Suite 330
Hauppauge, NY 11788

FIRST CLASS
U.S. Postage
PAID
Deer Park, NY
Permit No. 173

first class