



=NEWSLETTER=

NUMBER 14

RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

MARCH 1996

BLIZZARD OF '96 KO'S BREAKFAST AND EVERYTHING ELSE

The event that all ROBS non-snow birds look forward to is the biannual breakfast. This year's get-together, scheduled for Thursday, January 11th at a new diner, had a new experience as well. It had to be canceled due to the record 27-30" of snow that blanketed the East Coast on the 9th.

Shoveling out was a disaster since drifting was rampant. Roadways were closed and people were advised to stay off secondary roads as well as major highways if possible. Highways were eventually only partially cleared, and secondary roads were extremely dangerous.

So we canceled, as did the entire area. Even Brentwood Schools were closed for two days, as were all the other districts on Long Island. It was a real "Snow Week!" As you may recall, even the Federal Government was shut down as a result of the "Blizzard of '96", making it the third time in very recent memory!

But we're back in action now. Our March 5th meeting featured a "State of the Union" message by the Brentwood Teacher's Association President, Joe Hogan. And as a point of information, the Brentwood Schools had another snow day on Friday, March 8th! Hopefully that was Mother Nature's last winter hurrah!

ROBS NEWSLETTER DOES IT BETTER!

After two years of winning the Award of Merit for General Excellence in the NYSUT- New York Teacher Journalism Competition, ROBS Newsletter moved up! This year's award for the newsletter you are reading is: **FIRST AWARD, GENERAL EXCELLENCE!**

Chris Veech, Content Editor, accepted the award for the ROBS Chapter at the NYSUT Journalism Breakfast and Awards Presentation, held during the 1996 RA at the New York Hilton Hotel on Saturday, March 2nd.

The judges' comments on the ROBS Newsletter were:

☆ Good to see a "Letters to the Editor" column to help keep up communication. Good reports on legislative activity news, particularly on pensions and social security.

☆ A good mix of elements with welcome touches of humor. The format is attractive, and the editor is to be congratulated for encouraging letters to the editor.

☆ Zuckerman report good. Local news on state issues. Committee of 100 story good. This is a newsletter that takes itself seriously.

A big thank you to all of you who work so hard on getting this communication to the ROBS membership!

**LOOK FOR 1996 R.A. REPORT IN THE MAIL
"MEETING THE CHALLENGES"**



THE NYSUT RETIREE

SOUTHERN COMFORT THIS WINTER - Dot Zuckerman

We didn't escape the blizzard completely. We were in Baltimore for a wedding that Sunday the storm hit. And we were held prisoners there for four days before we were able to leave. Of course, there are many worse places to be stuck in a blizzard than a Hilton hotel, without having to do the shoveling, and with lots of food available. We finally broke free, and after confronting three more inches of snow in Virginia, drove south to Fort Lauderdale. We were scheduled for an Elderhostel program, but it left time for us to contact and visit with several of our ROBS retirees. There are now more than fifty ROBS members living either permanently or part-time in Florida. We spoke with Marilyn DePlaza and Anita Silverman before we left Long Island but because of their schedules they were unable to set up dates for us. So when we got to Fort Lauderdale we used the phone and made arrangements. One afternoon we had lunch with Rhoda Stamler, our past vice-president, and June Farbman and her husband. We had an enjoyable visit with them. Rhoda is putting her energies into getting her new apartment together, trying bravely to face Florida and the future without Lou. When the Elderhostel program ended, new retirees and our good friends Alan and Roseann Rosenzweig insisted we stay with them in their beautiful apartment. We had several wonderful on-the-go days together. They'll be back in March. Thanks to Fran Graff, we were able to have lunch with Joyce Shapiro and Dottie Lesser and their husbands, Helen Miller and her friend, Alan and Roseann, and of course, Fran and Joe Graff. Joe is not well, but true to his nature is putting a good face on it. It was great to see them all again. They had lots of questions about Brentwood, ROBS, and of course, our health insurance coverage. Because of the Elderhostel schedule we were not able to touch base with everyone, but we were able to speak by phone with Bruno Valente, Fran Forman (as busy as always), and Grace Fishenfeld (she's really going places with her art; has had a one-woman show). We would like to have contacted all of our Florida friends, but time just ran out. Many of you will probably be heading to Florida before the winter is over. Take your Directory and keep in touch with our Southern members. They look forward to seeing you and enjoy showing you the wonders of their beautiful new homes and locations. Besides, what's so terrible about 85 degrees in February?

**IF YOU HAVE NEWS OF YOURSELF,
OR OTHER ROBS MEMBERS, LET US
KNOW!**

ROBS NEWSLETTER STAFF

CONTENT EDITOR: Christin Veech
STAFF: Cathy Tomney, officers, members
PRODUCTION EDITOR: Mary Ruffino
STAFF: Mary Bender, Bev Carpenter, Don
Kubiczko, Polly Lane, Miriam Massucci, Lyn Prass

ROBS OFFICERS

PRES. - Dorothy Zuckerman
V.PRES. - Chris Veech
SEC'Y. - June Dawson
TREAS. - Harriet Pepine



AFT LAUNCHES NEW CAR RENTAL BENEFIT

The AFT is teaming up with National Car Rental to provide special discounts for AFT members.

National is offering AFT members 20 percent off daily rates and 5 percent off weekend and weekly rates. The chain has more than 5,000 locations worldwide and offers customers a full range of choice concerning the make, model and color for the class of car reserved.

To receive this benefit, AFT members should call 1-800-CAR-RENT and refer to AFT ID #5130283.





STATE OF THE UNION

At the March general meeting, BTA President, Joe Hogan, addressed ROBS members on the current state of affairs in the Brentwood Schools. Student population and teaching staff have grown. Over 250 of the current staff weren't even born when we last walked a picket line for contract negotiations!

Classroom space is at a minimum. Separate classes are housed in one room, a bathroom serves as a classroom. Special Ed classes are suffering from changes in State mandates. Most of these classes, with no need for a waiver, are now at 18 students; age categories have been expanded up to a two year range. Resource Room teachers now meet with 30 students a day. Cutbacks in state funding have severely impacted on programs: Early Intervention alone has been cut 20%.

SIT Teams (Site Based Management) are meeting in all schools to make long range plans for improving schools and student performance, but many of the teachers on these SIT Teams do not understand the concepts of setting precedents or undermining contractual agreements.

Staff and administrators have ongoing meetings to resolve local school problems. The era of the dominating administrator is disappearing, and there is a greater spirit of cooperation.

BTA, with Joe, Maddie Dwyer (now retired), and Jerry Brophy as negotiators, is presently working on a new contract to take effect July 1, 1996. Their position is that health benefits will not change for present retirees. In the last contract agreement, language was added stipulating that the District would continue to fund retiree benefits at 100%.

However, there are two Long Island court cases that are challenging the PERB Cohoes decision. The outcome of these cases could have an effect on our benefits. Brentwood clerical's represented by a strong professional leadership, are equally bound by BTA contract negotiations and benefits.

May 21st is School Budget Day all across Long Island. Absentee ballots have been mandated. There are two Board seats on the ballot in Brentwood, and a strong anti-teacher, anti-education climate is prevalent. Tenure is under attack. Guidance counselors are viewed as unnecessary, as are elementary art, music, and physical education programs.

Several ROBS members at the meeting reiterated to Hogan that we are here ready to assist in every way we can. We still care about the Brentwood community. In fact, many of our members are still Brentwood residents.

At the close of the meeting, ROBS president Dorothy Zuckerman suggested we plan to make this State of the Union address an annual event. The idea met with exuberant approval!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Come to the Feast of St. John of Galaris. According to the legend, John of Galaris, a poor and humble administrator, founded a series of learning institutions based on the premise, "If I make enough baklava, great educators will come!" Over the years, hundreds of the greatest minds in education have flocked to Leahy Avenue, the site of countless "miracles." Come join us as we celebrate John Galaris. Wednesday, April 24th, 7 P.M., John Anthony's on the Water in Babylon, \$55 per person.

(Ed.'s Note: John is retiring!)

Suzan Canino, Freshman Center

**WE WELCOME LETTERS TO THE
EDITOR: 11 Yates Ave. Commack
New York 11725**

**Who:
What:
When:
Where:**

MEDICARE RHETORIC?

Many folks are getting tired of the rhetoric on Medicare/Medicaid cuts. It is difficult to keep up with the changing directions, the back tracking, the about faces, and everything else that occurs in Washington and Albany these days.

NYSUT's Retiree Office devoted an article in February's The Retiree Organizer to what the real concerns must be for those of us who are retired.

"I do not think it is, 'for greed and not for the good of the community,' to advocate for the maintenance of programs which are so important to seniors on fixed incomes: Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, etc.. Seniors are part of the community. We have spent our working careers paying taxes....

"As more recent retirees, you and I have a pretty good pension (for now). However, in this office we also deal with thousands of retirees whose pensions are less than \$8000 (...18,000), many of whom are single, do not receive Social Security and are living on a total income below \$8000 per year. ... Some of our oldest retirees are already making choices between meals and prescriptive medicine...."

Mary L.S. Clyne wrote an article in 1993 for the Utica Observer-Dispatch which zeroed in specifically on those teacher's in most need:

"The issue is a delicate one, involving conditions some call genteel poverty, but which amount, others say, to gross and unfair privation. Those whose welfare is chiefly at issue are about 5000, mostly women, ages 80 to more than 100, whose pensions were fixed decades ago at tiny sums. Many didn't come under Social Security protection when they were teaching and couldn't afford to buy in later. Some have no health coverage at all; others have limited assistance.

"Retired teachers older than 80 are leading lives of quiet desperation in dignified destitution," said one retiree. Many are unmarried; married women

weren't allowed to teach when these women were young, so they have no husbands' pensions to fall back on and no children to support them in their old age. ...even those who own their own homes are unable to keep them up....

"Others live in apartments, frequently in declining and increasingly dangerous neighborhoods. Most had to find their own way in the world and entered teaching because it was one of the few opportunities open then to respectable young women. Starting out with little, they ended up with less...."

Not only women over 80 are struggling. According to the Retiree Office files, more recent retirees are as well. For example: Retiree A retired 14 years ago on a pension of about \$10,000. Five years ago his district reduced retiree medical insurance. In that one year, A's medical insurance cost increased by \$1000, 10% of his pension. A has had bypass surgery and has diabetes; prescription drug and other medical costs are crushing.

So, if the political rhetoric gets to you, think about the above to keep yourself focused. We could all be in the same boat in the not so distant future.

AFT TOLL-FREE DIRECT
CONNECTIONS TO D.C.
REPRESENTATIVES: 800-238-1727.



PATIENT'S BILL OF RIGHTS

In the last issue of the ROBS NEWSLETTER we reported on Assemblyman Paul Harenberg's concern about the lack of redress in developing HMO's. Since then, a bill has been filed in Albany that ROBS members should support. It is A.6800, Grannis, which would enact the Managed Care Patient's Bill of Rights and also supports other initiatives to increase regulation of HMO's. **WRITE YOUR LEGISLATORS!**

SOMETHING NEW...

In this issue, we are premiering what we hope will be repeated in coming issues: a **CREATIVE CORNER!** If you have something you've written and would like to share it, send it to the editor: Chris Veech; 11 Yates Avenue, Commack, N.Y. 11725.

The following poem was written by retirees Millie O'Neill, an aide at Ross High School, and John Sherin, who taught at Ross.

Eternal

One hundred and fifty years from now
will they know that I was here?
Will anyone feel my presence then
as they move from year to year?

My life's shining path, has a purpose
though they see not this temporal face,
for neither will they know my voice,
my origin, creed or race.

Cod knows I've no plan to be famous,
win medals, fine jewels, or a crown.
I'm just - an 'ordinary' person,
who toiled in a modern-times town.

Roads I traveled along from school
a mystery for them will be,
burdens I carried up hills and down;
were treasures discovered - in me.

Did I open a heart with a hug, or a prayer
that my music embraced in a song?
Did I pause to touch a child's essence
remembering to pass me along?

We are the love that is shared every day
the journey enhanced as we go -
With wind-borne desire drifting hope lifts us higher
to still places the heart may not know.

Through eons and stages in ancient 'New Ages'
weaves Spirit a pattern - so grand,
As snowflakes we mingle from ice crystals single,
- blind to the blizzard - at hand!

Millie O'Neill
John M. Sherin

Jan 15, 1996



CATHY'S CLERICAL CORNER

by Catherine Tomney

Hi! I've been doing some reminiscing about our "SCHOOL DAYS."

Remember **SNOW DAYS** - school closings, early dismissals, frantic phone calls?

Who remembers the **LADIES IN BLACK** - "Raises Not Roses."

And do you remember your first telephone bomb scare?

What is your best
"I REMEMBER" ?

Why not call or write and share it?
Contact me at: 42 Browns River Rd.,
Sayville, N.Y. 11782; 516-563-3573.



BITS AND PIECES

SHOPPING SMART: The Union of Needle Trades, Industrial and Textile Employees, has developed a wallet-sized card that can help consumers learn whether clothing was made under sweatshop conditions. The card contains a list of questions that shoppers can ask to determine if retailers are working to end exploitation of garment workers. To order, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: **UNITE!**, Communications Dept., 1710 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019.

NEWS OF THE WEAK IN REVIEW

So let's assume that Hillary personally eighty-sixed seven travel office employees. As Jimmy Tingle pointed out at a benefit for the Center for Constitutional Rights, AT&T fired 44,000 and nobody said a word.

THE NATION

February 12, 1996





NEWS NOTES

We were saddened to read of the death of **Harold Gruber**, 72, in December after an October heart attack. **Harold** was a former vice president of BTA when he taught in Brentwood. He retired from N.E. Elementary in 1984. For the past two years he has been mayor of the Village of the Branch in the Township of Smithtown, after serving as Village of the Branch deputy mayor and trustee for 28 years. He leaves his wife, Katherine, children and grandchildren.

And on March 8th, we lost **Juanita Adams**, who taught in Brentwood for more than 25 years, retiring from Northwest Elementary. She was educated in Americus, Ga., and before coming to Brentwood taught in Plains, Ga. and Troy, N.C. Her teaching career spanned more than 35 years. She died suddenly of a massive hemorrhage. Our thoughts go out to her son. Her husband and daughter predeceased her.

Condolences are also in order for **Bernie Kaplan** retiree of Southwest Elementary, who lost his wife in December.

In our last Newsletter we reported that **Maria DiTucci**, retired nurse teacher from South Middle had moved to Stuart, Florida and was settling in nicely. Sadly, her husband, Guy, died suddenly on New Year's Eve.

And after a long illness, **Patricia Hucke's** mother, Lillian Foley, passed away in February. Our thoughts are with all these families who have lost loved ones.

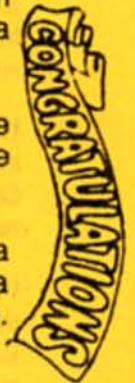
Get well wishes are in order for **Mary Baber**, **Fran Graff's** husband, Joe; **Marilyn DePlaza's** husband, Henry and **Jean Gordon Weinstein**. Also for former principal, **Mike Debellis**.



Ivy Rosenthal has had a rough 4 months. While recovering from an operation, she fell on the ice in February, was rushed to the hospital, and operated for a hematoma on the brain. She is undergoing therapy, and is doing well. On March 7th, she had a **BIG BIRTHDAY!** **HAPPY, HAPPY BIRTHDAY !!!**

60th Wedding Anniversary wishes are in order for **Ann** and **Ed Mattausch**, who will be celebrating on April 19th. **Ann** was the secretary in Ross High School's Guidance office before she retired. **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY AND MANY MORE!**

Grace Fishenfeld, retired art teacher from Sonderling High School, is taking Boca Raton by storm. Besides winning prizes for her paintings, she recently had a successful one woman show! We knew she could do it, and obviously, so did she. Keep it up, and we can say we knew you when, **Grace!**



One of our active teachers, who was always there for teachers in his capacity as BTA Building Rep at Sonderling High School, was stricken by a stroke. **Joe Palazzolo**, Language teacher, is at home and undergoing physical therapy. We know he'd love to hear from some of his "old" buddies. **WE'RE ALL PULLING FOR YOU, JOE!** (11 Georgetown Pl., Smithtown 11787)



MEMBER BENEFITS



This year we have begun to explore ways to offer our members more benefits. We have already initiated an Arts and Crafts class. Also underway is a trip to Turkey. (23 people have signed up at this writing)! The following activities will soon be available:

☆ A Creative Writers Group for those who have always wanted to write. SEND US YOUR NAME, AND THE WORD "WRITING."

☆ Bridge players looking for Bridge partners. SEND YOUR NAME AND "BRIDGE", and we will match members in your area so you will be able to get together. If we have enough groups we might even have a ROBS tournament!

☆ A Beginning Computer class in late spring. SEND US YOUR NAME AND THE WORD "COMPUTER."

If you have other suggestions for activities our members might enjoy, please let us know.

Send info and request (s) to:
ROBS
8 Woody Lane
Oakdale, N.Y. 11769-1515



SPRING

CORTLI LUNCHEON

The Coalition of Retired Teachers of L.I., of which ROBS is a member organization, announces its Spring Luncheon Thursday, April 18th, 11:30-3 P.M. at the LaGrange. Cost is \$20 with a cash bar.

Guest speakers will be Assemblymen Paul Harenberg, Steven Engelbright, and Robert Sweeney. We already have a group going, and a Brentwood table, so join us!

Send check and reservation to: Ethel Abbot, 228 Harding Ct., Centerport 11721. Call her at 427-6956 to make your entree and dessert choice. And indicate you wish to be at the Brentwood table.

SUPPORT OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.



Remember When...

BAG OF TRICKS MEETING



Tuesday, April 2nd's ROBS general meeting promises to be an interesting one. The History Committee will present a video of interviews with ROBS members.

While we remember, laugh, and enjoy, John Sherin, Guru to the retired and infamous, will pull some tricks from his sleeve, and we'll all find it wonderful!

JOIN US AT 10 A.M. AT THE
BRENTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY!

Unfortunately we can't have refreshments due to Library policy, but the meeting will be lively. And there is all that updated legislative information.



CELEBRATION

ROBS 5th ANNIVERSARY

WE'RE PLANNING A PARTY AND
HOPING YOU'LL COME.
THERE'LL BE GOOD FOOD AND
DANCING FOR EVERYONE
(with or without a partner).

So mark your calendar and join us on
WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1996.

SEE ENCLOSED INVITATION!

NYSTRS CANDIDATES CHOSEN

Emanuel Kafka, well known L.I. teacher retiree and NYSUT Health Care Consultant, has been chosen by NYSUT to be the candidate for Retiree Member on the New York State Teachers' Retirement System Board. Upstater Josephine Davenport was chosen as alternate.

The election, a mail ballot sent to all NYSTRS retirees, (that's us), is scheduled for Fall of 1996, and the winner will serve a three year term on the ten member board.

It is vital that all NYSUT retirees take a voting interest in this election so that our interests can be represented on the NYSTRS Board. The NYSUT candidate was defeated in the last election.

Watch for upcoming information. AND RETURN YOUR BALLOT AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE IT!



ROBS ELECTIONS AGAIN

At the April 2nd ROBS meeting, to be held at the Brentwood Public Library at 10 A.M., the slate presented by the Nominating Committee and voted by the Executive Board will be presented to the membership, Chairperson Ruth McCalla reported.

Elections will take place at the May 7th meeting, also at the Brentwood Public Library at 10 A.M..

" EACH MEMBER SHALL BE GIVEN REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE AT THE ELECTION MEETING." (ROBS Constitution).

The Slate of Nominees is as follows:

- ☐ PRES. Dorothy Zuckerman
- ☐ V.P. Christin Veech
- ☐ SEC'Y. Beverly Carpenter
- ☐ Treas. Harriet Pepine

ARTS AND CRAFTS
March 29 and April 26
Islip Public Library 10 A.M.
Info: Lilian Masten
567-7294

A RAY PEREZ SCHOLARSHIP FUND has been established in memory of the popular Guidance Counselor and coach. Donations may be sent to: Chuck Goehring, Administration Building, Brentwood Union Free School District, Brentwood, N.Y. 11717.



RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS
C/O Zuckerman
8 Woody Lane
Oakdale, N.Y. 11769

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NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY
APRIL 2, 1996
ALSO...
MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE
TUESDAY, MAY 7th MEETING!

