

ROBS Newsletters

NUMBER 18 RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS JAN./FEB. 1997

ROBS: A LOCAL SANTA

While other folk were doing their last odds and ends this past Christmas Eve, ROBS members were playing Santa to the homeless family it adopted for the holidays. Through ROBS' Project Hope, our Community Liaison Committee raised money, shopped, and delivered both fun gifts and practical ones to our homeless family of three adults and eleven children ranging in age from 2 weeks to 15 years.

Verne and Frank Spencer did much of the shopping, and Chris Veech, Shirley Walker-Lloyd, and Donna Ragonese joined them for a wrapping party. On the 24th, Donna, Shirley and Frank delivered \$500 worth of gifts, and donated clothes and necessities for the new baby, to a very grateful group of people. The children were starry eyed as they saw the brightly wrapped packages placed under their tree.

"Sharing is what the holiday is all about," said Shirley, who was openly touched by the big hug she received from 4 1/2 year old Shaqausia, the child she had personally chosen to purchase gifts for. "I've got a soft spot for kids, and homelessness has got to be the biggest strike against them."

Donna, who retired this year from Oak Park, felt that "our" homeless family was an upbeat group, perhaps because they had remained intact with almost immediate housing available for them. "I'm glad we were able to help make their celebration a bit brighter."

"I felt real good for the children," said Frank. "It was building a rapport with them that was more important than the gifts for me. I was able to stress the importance of education and doing well in school. We were able to encourage the adults to think about going back to school for a GED. We'll follow up on that."

So, the next time you feel that the holiday season is too hyped and commercialized, remember that there are good things that happen because good people get involved.

And stay involved. Already, six ROBS members are tutoring homeless children in programs at Suburban Housing in Bay Shore and the elementary schools in Brentwood. Anyone interested in volunteering in any capacity, may call Frank Spencer at 253-0355. The volunteers get as much out of helping as those being helped. So let's hear from you!

BRENTWOOD BOND ISSUE VOTE IN FEBRUARY

A 43 million dollar bond issue will be put before the Brentwood voters on February 11th. 70% of the total will be paid for by New York State. It calls for building new additions, refurbishing existing facilities, and purchasing new technology. If not passed, the district will go back on split session in 1998.



There are 400 NYSUT members in Brentwood, and 300 of them work for the school district. Contact BTA to help get out the vote!

Retirees living in Brentwood are urged to get out and vote!





ROBS NEWSLETTER STAFF

CONTENT EDITOR: Christin Veech
PRODUCTION: Don Kubicko
Mary Ruffino

ROBS OFFICERS

PRES. Dorothy Zuckerman
V. Pres. Chris Veech
SEC'Y. Beverly Carpenter
TREAS. Harriet Pepine

IF YOUR CARD IS MISSING
CALL HARRIET PEPINE
516-234-1247

HERE IS YOUR ROBS 1997
MEMBERSHIP CARD
REMOVE & FILE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The ROBS Newsletter is a very positive, exciting reflection of the exuberance and deep involvement in many important areas by the Brentwood retirees. The community is very fortunate to have such an energetic retiree association.

I surely would love to volunteer for "Project Hope" but cannot at this time - I am recuperating from hospitalization due to congestive heart failure -

"Good Luck" in all the wonderful, needy programs. Happy holiday greetings to all.

Gratefully, Charlotte Goldman
Oak Park Retiree

P.S. Consider a Retiree Volunteer program for the Ross Nursing Home. I initiated the Oak Park students and faculty many a year in involvement with the residents. It was a very meaningful experience for everyone.

A BRIGHT IDEA

THIS IS A "LETTER" BY TELEPHONE

Joe Carson, who lives in Brooklyn, and was a music teacher at North East, found himself in Maui, Hawaii with a free calling card. He dialed the Zuckermans, and during the conversation made an interesting suggestion. Since we all have lots of stuff, like discount coupons we never use, collections, books, tapes, trip discounts, etc., bring them to meetings, or advertise in this publication for trade. Anyone interested? Let us know:

Chris Veech, 11 Yates Ave., Commack, N.Y. 11725
516-499-1680 / FAX (516) 499-1680

Internet Connection

We are trying to begin an e-mail network for ROBS members. The purpose is to maintain links with as many members as possible while utilizing the speed of the Internet for emergencies should they arise. We have ten members who have ok'd the use of their e-mail addresses. We hope that many more will join us.

If you are interested, please send an e-mail to me with your e-mail address. If there are enough members who are interested, we will add an e-mail page to the Directory.

Jack Zuckerman
E-mail: bookworm@li.net
Phone: 516-567-3866
FAX: 516-567-3866

E-Mail Address Request

**ROBS FEATURED IN
"NEW YORK TEACHER"
AGAIN**

The January 13, 1997 issue of the NYSUT publication featured a story on page 12 under the heading: "LOOKING FOR THOSE WHO DESERVE ACCOLADES; A Helping Hand for the Homeless. It focuses on ROBS having initiated an outreach to our community through Project Hope.

volunteer opportunity *

Peggy Sheehan, who retired from Twin Pines in 1995, suggests being a Dosant at Coe Hall in Planting Fields. Training is Saturdays in March, 12-4. Call Susan Donovan at 922-9206.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. REMEMBERED



BUY UNION MADE PRODUCTS

As teachers we sometimes wonder how lessons on Reverend King play out in children's minds. After all the lessons, do they spend the day off shopping or remembering? And what is it they retain about this American hero?

Peter Veech who is 6 and in 1st grade in Binghamton, N.Y. let his grandparents in on something special on Monday, January 20th. He called them and said he was having a birthday party for M.L.K. Jr., and his daddy was baking the cake. When he was asked where he'd gotten the idea, he said he'd thought it up the night before as he was going to sleep.

That evening he sent the following FAX all on his own, and phonetically:

Martin Lotr King Jr. wese
so smaret. He
Graguwated fom colij 2
yers rle. He was a minastr
in his Dad's chce.



Here is a listing of American companies
and their union-made toy products you may
wish to buy special children of all ages.

- Huffy Co., Murray Inc.(bicycles)
- Lionel Trains Inc. (model & toy train sets)
- Testor Corp. (hobby kits, games, supplies)
- Ertl Co. Inc.; Mattel Inc. (toy trucks, matchbook cars, children's record players, games, toys)
- Radio Flyer Inc.; Holbrook-Patterson Inc.; Welsh Co. of the South (scooters, wagons, tricycles, pedal cars):
- Goldberger Doll Mfg. Co. Inc; Lovee Doll & Toy Co. (dolls and stuffed toys)
- Golden Books (nursery books and games)
- Dixon Ticonderoga Co. (children's art supplies)
- Ohio Art Co. (toys and hobby supplies)
- Ditri Associate Div. Hedstrom Corp. (Hoppity Ball, toy balls, bats, punchball balloons).

Now as we recuperate from our holiday shopping spree, it may be time to reflect on the things we bought, and the things we may purchase in the near future.

Buying American may be hard to do. 90% of toys are made in China, reports the AFL-CIO Union Label & Service Trades Department. Charles Mercer, its president reports that the People's Liberation Army runs companies that sell toys, clothes and household products to stores like K-Mart, Wal-Mart and Home Depot.

Buying Union made saves jobs. Mercer says that if every American switched just \$30 a year from imported apparel and home fashions purchases to U.S. made products, more than 100,000 textile jobs could be saved without spending any additional money.

Sweatshops are another concern for the American consumer. One of the more profitable sweatshop employers is the LA based company called GUESS, known for its high priced designer jeans.

Consumer pressure is an effective weapon, and worked last year against a former violator, the retail chain GAP, which is now monitoring all its contractors to ensure that worker's rights are protected.

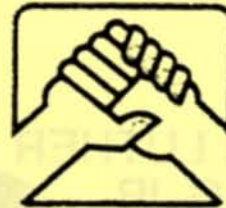
When you shop, ask questions about where the clothes in the store are made, about the wages and working conditions of those who made them. Walk out without purchasing if you can't be assured that none of the products come from sweatshops.

For more info on the GUESS Campaign, or for a free tee shirt or tote bag, write to: National Consumer's League, attn. D. Adkins, 1701 K Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20006.

If you would like to become involved with the N.Y. State AFL-CIO Union Label initiative, contact Annmarie Polinsky in the Albany office at 518-436-8516.

More information about union activities, positions, and union-made products is available on the AFL-CIO's LaborNet, a computer-based network accessed via CompuServe.

UNITED WE STAND
DIVIDED WE FALL



Carol Feldhaus, Farmingdale Federation of Teacher's President has great respect for the NYSUT Retiree Chapter in her district. In a contract dispute that lasted a year and a half, active and retired teachers worked together to fend off a "mean-spirited and vindictive board," according to a letter she wrote to the NYSUT Retiree Office.

There were many contract issues involved. One of the most acrimonious was when the school board attempted to "change their contribution to retirees health insurance for people already retired, despite the moratorium making such action illegal." This was an attempt "to pit retirees against our active teachers." It didn't work.

Instead "it galvanized our members and retirees to stand together...writing letters, speaking to community members, contacting administrators and board members...picketing board meetings and the home of the board president. ...retirees - many with canes in hand, and some more than 80 years old-picketing on a main street in town!"

This resulted in many of them, as well as the union leadership, being named in an injunction. "We fought the injunction together" with the help of NYSUT legal staff.

"When the board withdrew their demand to reduce their contribution to health insurance for already retired teachers, our retirees didn't back off.

They kept working with the actives, picketing...keeping up the pressure and dealing with the media.

"Please convey our appreciation to retirees across the state who understand the attacks being made against public education. Their participation in the union, even after they leave the classroom, will make it possible for high quality education to continue in New York State.

"In Farmingdale, retirees have been in the forefront of building solidarity and unionism, as they were when they were active teachers. Together we have prevailed. We have fought off attacks against our contract, but perhaps most importantly, we have succeeded in maintaining our pride and dignity.

"We have held out, yes. But the real winners have been the community and the children in the classrooms. As the judge said when he threw the board's charges out of court, 'The children have a right to see democracy in action.'"

In the same issue of The Retiree Organizer, Margarita Duncan Tomko, FFT/Retired Chapter President, stated: "Retirees shall continue our attendance at board meetings. We shall continue to work closely with the FFT. We are indebted to President Carol Feldhaus and the FFT for protecting our retiree health benefits during the contract negotiations." Manny Kafka worked closely with the Chapter as well.



AFT SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

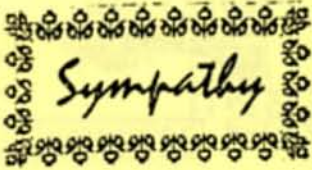
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VALID UNTIL 2/97



NEWS NOTES

We were saddened to hear of the death of **William Hawkins**. He passed away in September in Virginia Beach. **Bill** retired from Laurel in 1991.

And we lost art teacher **Margaret Vlasits** in November. She was known affectionately to all as "**Tex**," and had lived in Downington, Pa. since retirement.

BTA President **Joe Hogan** suffered the loss of his father Edward on December 13th. Our thoughts and prayers go out to these three families.

Marie DiTucci, who lives in Stuart, Florida, is recuperating from heart problems. Take it easy, Marie. She retired from South Middle School in 1990.



Another 1990 retiree, **Jeanne Bader**, took a spill in her driveway Thanksgiving week, and did a number on her face. She's coming along nicely now though.

On a happier note, **Selma Berkowitz**, retired Library Clerk at Loretta Park happily reports that her daughter, Susan became engaged to Philip Armel on December 20th. An early spring wedding is planned. Susan is a graduate of Ross H.S.

Ivy Rosenthal is a very proud grandmother. Angela Ramsey, also a graduate of Ross H.S., with a BA from Syracuse, will receive a Masters in Speech Pathology from Howard University. Zoe Brugger will receive a Masters in Child Psychology & Testing from Pattsburgh in May. Johannes Brugger finishes his BA at Duke this spring.

The **Filosa's**, **Edy**, Alex and Sandy have been showing their train display after school during the holiday season. There are 27 trains and an intricate track system. WOW!



Ruth McCalla has been nominated by Retiree Council 21 for the NYSUT 1997 Community Service Award given at the convention. Congratulations!



CATHY'S CLERICAL CORNER

by Cathy Tomney

Hi! Lots of "Happy Retirees" in our news this month. Here's a sampling:

Flo Briggs reports that retirement in New Bern, N.C. is gr-r-reat.

Maria Campain's husband is doing well after suffering a stroke. They're in Las Vegas.

Audrey Clifton was visiting her son on Long Island - looking great.

Shirley Stamm, now of Las Vegas, and **Judy Kempler** of St. George, Utah, had a reunion recently. Greetings from **Eleanor Love**, also in Las Vegas.

Selma Berkowitz met up with **Anita Silverman** while Anita was visiting on Long Island.

Marion Carroll and husband had two celebrations around the holidays - a 40th wedding anniversary and each had a milestone birthday!

The ROBS breakfast was a great success. **Ann Dougherty**, **Marion Carroll**, and **Selma Berkowitz** were among those who attended.



How are you enjoying retirement? Let's hear from you.

Contact me: 42 Brown's River Rd., Sayville, N.Y. 11782; 516-563-3573

HAPPY NEW YEAR - AND CONGRATULATIONS TO US!! Two years ago we had visions of sugarplums and 200 members - and we did it! Last year we begged to break the 300 mark and almost got there! This year, thanks to all of you, we have actually gone past 300 members and are now looking toward the 400 goal! We appreciate your interest and support and hope that we can continue to make ROBS a vital and stimulating organization to keep you with us. Now we're going to ask you to help spread the word to Brentwood retirees who have not yet joined us.



When you retired you were offered a lifetime membership in NYSUT providing you maintained your membership with the Brentwood Teachers Association. Since ROBS is an affiliated chapter of BTA, your lifetime NYSUT membership is continued through your membership in ROBS. In that way, you continue to be eligible for all NYSUT benefits, such as insurance plans under the group rates. Anyone who chooses not to join ROBS, voluntarily gives up the lifetime NYSUT membership and loses all benefits, among which are reduced premiums for such policies as catastrophic illness, life insurance, etc. We want all of our retirees to be protected and it is very important that they be informed of the impending results of their non-membership. Our Florida friends must also be made aware that although they may have transferred their Retiree Council membership to TRIF (Teachers Retired in Florida), **they must continue their membership in ROBS in order to maintain their lifetime NYSUT membership.** Transferring from Retiree Council 21 to Retiree Council 43 simply makes you eligible to vote for the delegates from the Florida Council, but it does not eliminate the requirement to maintain your ROBS membership. Letters will soon go out to all non-members, but we ask in the meantime that you make personal contact with any eligible Brentwood retirees and encourage them to protect themselves while becoming part of our wonderful, forward looking group of interesting people! To our 300+ members, we thank you and welcome you to join us at our general meetings which will resume in March. There are lots of exciting plans in the works and we'll miss you if you're not there!

In unity,



RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS
 c/o Zuckerman
 6 Woody Lane
 Oakdale, N.Y. 11769



ROBS MEETING

After a very well attended breakfast January 7th, we're taking a recess.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE MARCH 5TH (TUES.) MEETING AT THE ISLIP LIBRARY!

We always have a good time, learn a lot, and share our busy lives. Bring your suggestions, input, and join us for coffee at 10 A.M. In December we **WERE** dancing in the aisles thanks to Elinor Tepper.

RETIREE COUNCIL 21

Also mark your calendars for Tuesday, March 18th at the Bay Shore Library at 10 A.M. to find out **what to do with your TSA's now!** Steve Coles is the speaker.

Child Care Position: a part time position caring for two boys 4 years, and 15 months, while their mom works at home. Flexible hours and days. Bay Shore. Carrie Fishetti, 666-9332.

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—THE YEAR AHEAD—

