

ROB News Letters

NUMBER 20

RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

JUNE 1997

UFT LEADER ELECTED TO HEAD AFT

Sandra Feldman was chosen to succeed Al Shanker. Excerpts from a letter received from her in May are reproduced here so you can learn a bit about her.

"I wanted to write this letter as soon as I could after being elected AFT President. ... I do so feeling proud but also sad, because, like all of you, I will miss Al Shanker very much. ...

"... I thought you might want to know a bit about me. ...

"I grew up in Coney Island, home of Nathan's famous hot dogs, great beaches, a famous amusement park, and terrible poverty among the locals. I lived in a city-owned slum, condemned for all the years I lived in it. I went to the same public school my mother attended -- only she never went past elementary school. I'm the only one in my family who went to college -- Brooklyn College, which had free tuition or I couldn't have gone. I didn't have books at home. I didn't know about table settings or musical instruments or paintings until I went to school. School was everything to me. It's why

I'm here, and the only way I could have gotten here.

...

"I met Al Shanker in 1966 and I learned a great deal from him. ... I see carrying on this work as my responsibility and agenda.

"I also intend to carry it forward in some new and different ways. ... building capacity in our state and local affiliates for bringing greater quality to the workplace, and for equity in the resources needed for delivery of our services. I'm especially determined to help make our public schools the best they can be for all children.

"We face real problems, ... assaults on collective bargaining, the efforts to privatize, ... consolidations, the Neanderthal managements, the resistance to standards and to the professional treatment of those we represent, the greater reliance on part-time work, even among professional workers.... they are problems we can and will overcome.

"I know our membership is terrific. I have organized nurses and PSRPs as well as teachers. I've sat at post-contract labor-

management consultation meetings with hospital administrators whose socks were knocked off by nurses who not only made demands to fix shoddy management practices but who exhibited much greater knowledge of what needed to be done than the administrators themselves. ...

"I also will continue the merger talks with the NEA, and I will keep our union active and involved with the AFL-CIO. I am committed to a strengthened labor movement. ... at stake is what kind of society we will have: a democracy where working people have a good chance for education and health care and decent jobs, where organized labor and public institutions that serve all the people are respected; or one in which the rich take care of themselves, and the chasm between the haves and have-nots widens and deepens. And in that struggle, we know which side we're on.

"I look forward to hearing from you and getting your insights. ... together we can continue to build the AFT, the labor movement, and a just society."



MARCHING DOWN TO WASHINGTON

or

Investing In Our Future - NYSUT RA 1997

Happy Birthday NYSUT! The May 1997 NYSUT Representative Assembly was the official kick-off of a year long celebration of NYSUT's 25th anniversary. Over 2000 delegates and guests came to Washington, D.C. to set directions for the future and to look back to where we started from. On the first night, at the Retiree Dinner, Pulitzer Prize winner Frank McCourt set the tone with a rollicking, high-spirited repartee of his teaching experiences in the New York City schools. After signing copies of Angela's Ashes, he gave us captivating hints of what to anticipate in the next book to come. Many of his reminiscences touched on themes all too familiar to those of us who had also "toughed it out" in the classroom for so many years! What many of us may only have thought but had to suppress, he gave voice to eloquently and hilariously.

Other highlights of the convention were the presentation of First Award for General Excellence to our Retiree Council 21 newsletter "*Retirees ON TRACK*" and our own Ruth McCalla's receipt of a 1997 NYSUT Community Service Award. Many speakers came to meet with and thank the NYSUT delegates - top among them Vice-President Al Gore (President Clinton was at the dedication ceremonies of the FDR Memorial.) Many heartfelt tributes were made to the memory of Al Shanker, our mentor and guide, .

I've attended all twenty-five NYSUT conventions. I've listened to heated discussions and debates over individual words, or commas, or intentions. In those early days, the meetings continued through the nights and into Sunday morning. The 1997 RA was a quiet and efficient convention that progressed rapidly. The only challenges that took place were handled in the committees. It was concluded before 5 P.M. Saturday even with time set aside for the many speakers who addressed the delegates. Could it be that maturity has set in at age 25 or have we rather become complacent and satisfied with what we have accomplished and where we have been heading? The future of our Union will rest in the hands of the emerging new delegates who bring with them new perspectives and new quests. While striving to maintain our position as retirees involved within the NYSUT structure, we must commit ourselves to the campaign to encourage new activists to participate and lead. As we have sung together over the years - "Solidarity Forever"!

In Unity,
Dot

ROBS NEWSLETTER STAFF

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ROBS RETIREE PRESENTS PAPER AT SYMPOSIUM ON CARTER PRESIDENCY

Herb Laub, who retired from teaching social studies at the high school in 1993, and finished his Ph.D. from Stony Brook in 1996, was invited to present part of his paper at the 3 day symposium in Atlanta, Georgia on February 21st. His presentation centered on a letter President Carter wrote to Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin that complemented the peace process in the Middle East, leading up to the Camp David Accords.

Herb's thesis dealt with 1947 up to Camp David. Herb took part in a panel discussion with several well known academicians and former Carter advisors from the former president's years in Washington. It was a heady experience for Dr. Laub, and his wife Estee, a psychologist, and one he won't soon forget!

Herb reports that his children with Carol, his former wife who died of cancer in 1988, (an art teacher at East Elementary) are doing very well. He credits her raising them with the fact that they have turned out so well. David, 29, is a Patent Lawyer with Sieman Corporation, and Larry, 26, is a teacher and football coach outside Philadelphia. Dr. Laub seemed as proud of his sons as of the honor of delivering a paper at the Carter Symposium; perhaps even more so.

AUDIO/VIDEO SCRAPBOOK

History chairperson, John Sherin reports that getting feedback from ROBS retirees who do not live locally has just become easier.

The History Project Committee will be mailing out audio and video cassettes to any ROBS member who wishes to be part of our ongoing interviews of their teaching and living experiences.

Our first long distance interviews are Fran and Joe Graff, and Jean Elarde, who was the secretary at Maslow Toffler. Jean has also written a 4 page article about her memories.

Anyone interested in participating, please contact John Sherin at: 356 Dawson La., Jericho, N.Y. 11753; 516-931-2971. He will send you what you need. Then you record at your own pace and get the cassette back to John who will splice you into history!

LARGE TYPE NEEDS?

It has been brought to our attention that there are some members who may need a large type edition of the ROBS Newsletter.

Please send your request to us, and we'll send a large type edition.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



As you remember, I came to San Diego to retire. What I forgot is that people here in California are strange. I don't understand how they think, and I don't think I ever will.

They are all conservative, hate unions, the IRS, Clinton & Hillary, Democrats, and last but not least, they hate the government.

It has been tough but I won't let them get me. I tell them I am proud to be a liberal and a democrat, and I love the way Clinton beat them. All these Republicans and Libertarians are very frustrated, and that is the only thing that keeps me going.

Enough for the moment. Let me tell you what my interests are. I am a member of R.S.V.P. (Retired Seniors Voluntary Patrol). We are members of the police in San Diego without pay. I took a one week course learning what we can do as volunteers. We learned how to act as the eyes and ears for the police in the community. I get a lot of satisfaction knowing that I'm doing my share to keep our community safe. I do Vacation House Checks, visit people who are old and living alone, and much more.

That's all for now. Tell Mike Lambert I'd like to get in touch with him.

Thanks for all the good memories I have of everyone at Ross. I miss everyone.

Ed Robles: edrobles1@juno.com

(Editor's note: You can reach me at address below. I have a FAX, but no e-mail yet, Ed. Miss you too!)

WE WELCOME LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
Chris Veech
11 Yates Avenue, Commack, N.Y 11725

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT

The May ROBS meeting featured Gayle Rawlings, Educational Consultant for the L.I. Women's Coalition. She spoke about the issue of domestic violence, which covers everything from a live-in situation, a former live-in situation, and dating. It runs the gamut from teen dating to retired couples and everything in between. To focus it a bit more, in 1995 there were 40,000 domestic violence police calls in Nassau and Suffolk. And most domestic violence is not reported.

The physical abuse is sometimes visible, not always. The emotional, psychological and verbal abuse is not. It's part of the embarrassing secret. 30% of women are murdered by their partners. By the time young people have reached 20, 1/3rd of them have been, or are, in abusive relationships. Ms. Rawlings posed the question: WHERE IS THE RAGE IN THIS ISSUE?

To help: don't ignore the signs of abuse in friends, children, or grandchildren. Be an ear. Try to boost the person's self esteem by convincing her that it is not her fault, without trying to control the situation. Get her to call the LI Women's Coalition HOT LINE: 666-8833. The victim will only leave when she is ready to.

If you wish to volunteer at the Women's Coalition for clerical, newsletter, etc., call 666-7181.



ROBS SPRING LUNCHEON

Another successful year of retirement was celebrated by a hardy group of ROBS members and guests on June 3rd at the Dieties Cafe in Commack. Ruth McCalla and Harriet Pepine again outdid themselves in planning a lovely get together.

Celebrants were off to places near and far. And perhaps just to do what is most fun in summer: vegging out with a good book at the beach or in the backyard. Happy summer to all!

SITUATIONS AVAILABLE

Do you enjoy people? Are you curious about issues? Are you organized and efficient? Can you give just a small amount of time to help plan and execute a meeting or two for ROBS?

THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

Chair, Ruth McCalla would like you to call her at 234-8013. She's having a lunch meeting at her house on July 10th at noon.

Even if you're only in town for part of the year, Ruth can use your input, and help! Call and find out if this is for you!

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS: 1997



Twenty two retirees received NYSUT awards at the 1997 Representative Assembly in May in Washington.

Among them was our own Ruth McCalla, who was the recipient for Retiree Council 21. Besides being a power horse for ROBS as Chair of the Program Committee and a member of the Executive Board, Ruth has an active service record.

She has been a member for 25 years of Delta Kappa Gamma Society, holding offices as president, secretary, and co-treasurer. She is a tutor for Literacy Volunteers of America; life member of NAACP; volunteer for the American Heart Association and the Long Island Women's Coalition; member of the Black Ministry Council; and mentor for Catholic Charities.

WELL DONE, RUTH & CONGRATS!! We're very proud of you.

THE Q TIP

by Edy Filosa, (retired Nurse Teacher)



Have you noticed that the young actors in today's films all seem to mumble? The other evening while watching a particularly complicated "who done it," I had to increase the volume several times, and still the particulars of the crime escaped my hearing. Does this mean I will always be left to wonder how the crime was committed? Will I never be able to hear with clarity as the hero whispers (and I do mean whispers) sweet nothings into the heroine's shell-like ear? And what happened to my ability to hear my son open the refrigerator door when I was on the other side of the house?

We all experience slight to moderate hearing losses as we age. Most of it is due to continual exposure to loud noises in the environment. And some of it is due to the changes we experience as we go through the aging process.

Just how loud is too loud? Continual unprotected exposure to noises louder than 85 decibels can be dangerous and may eventually result in hearing loss. Many everyday sounds like those created by leaf blowers, stereo headphones and motorcycles, can be 100db or more, and can cause permanent damage in only a couple of hours or less.

- * 30db = whisper, quiet library
- * 60db = normal conversation, sewing machine, typewriter
- * 90db = lawn mower, shop tools (only 8 hours a day exposure w/o ear protection)
- * 100db = chain saw, pneumatic drill, snowmobile (only 2 hours w/o protection)
- * 115db = sandblasting, loud rock concert, auto horns (15 minutes a day w/o prot.)
- * 140db = gun muzzle blast, jet engine (just brief exposure can cause pain and permanent injury to your hearing. Ear protection is a must!

Do you sometimes hear ringing, buzzing or hissing in your ears? Is this normal? What causes it?

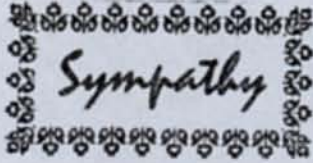
Called Tinnitus, that noise you hear can result from factors such as stress, hypertension, excessive ear wax or exposure to loud noise. If it lasts more than a few weeks, see a doctor. Many things that cause Tinnitus can be treated. Ringing resulting from noise exposure however, may be a sign of damaged hearing. It can't be cured, but you can try masking the sound, which is most annoying at bedtime, with the use of a fan.

What are some of the most common signs of hearing loss?

If you're having trouble carrying on conversations when there's background noise, understanding women's or children's voices, people talking to you from other rooms, you may be experiencing the first signs of hearing loss. You should see a doctor!



Chris Veech's son, Gregg, teaches in the Harry L Johnson Elementary School in Johnson City, N.Y., outside Binghamton. If you would like to support the AT&T LEARNING POINTS Program to help the school get free Educational Computer Technology, join the 57 families who have by calling 1-800-354-8800. The school code is: 00964815. For every \$1 in calls you make, the school will get 5 points. (It is like collecting Campbell Soup labels...) This enables the school to get hardware and software. It is a marketing strategy by AT&T to value their long time customers; to make community connectedness a real thing again. There are absolutely no extra costs to this program! And the kids would say thank you!



NEWS NOTES

In February we lost **Bess Neveloff**, who was a social worker in the Ross Building. She lived in Manhattan and worked until her death as a deprogrammer for those separated from cults.

And two other ROBS members passed away suddenly in April. Both had attended the Florida luncheon Dot and Jack Zuckerman attended this winter. **Betsy Sinatra**, who retired from Loretta Park in 1981, was diagnosed with lung cancer in February, and died in April.

Sonia Davis, retiree from Hemlock Pines in 1988, who lived in Boynton Beach, Florida, passed away just prior to scheduled surgery, also in April. Our hearts go out to the families of our former colleagues.

Our sympathy goes to **Jim Watson** also, on the death of his mother in Colorado in April.

Get well wishes go to: **Shirley Hodges** who was hospitalized in April for surgery; **Fran Chester**, who is being chauffeured to the hospital by **Joyce Shapiro** of Boynton Beach, Fla.; **Joe Graff**, husband of Fran from Northeast; our ROBS secretary, **Beverly Carpenter**; ROBS Membership Chair, **Elmon Kazandjian** recuperating after cataract surgery; **Jeanne Bader**, recuperating after nose surgery; and **Selma Berkowitz**, ROBS Sec'y./Clerical representative, who is recovering at home from an angioplasty procedure at Lenox Hill Hospital in May. May the sun shine brightly on your collective recovery. Hugs from us all!



Maria DiTucci, of Stuart, Fla., writes us good news. "Thank you for the well wishes in ROBS. The good news is that the "heart problems" were not heart problems. The heart is okay. I'm doing well and hoping to get to N.Y. soon for a visit." Good for you, Maria!

Dave Brown e-mailed us the following on May 10th: "Am getting prepared for a cataract operation and a stress test. If you live long enough, you come down with something. Best wishes..." Be well, Dave!

Congratulations are in order for: **Hal and Judy Pastor**, who celebrated a 40 something anniversary in March; **Elmon** and George **Kazandjian**, on the birth of their first grandchild, daughter Elinor's son Matthew John; and our very own Q TIP, **Edy Filosa** and husband Alex, whose son, Sandy, was married on May 3rd., to Lynn McCarron at St. Peter's in BayShore with a reception at the Snapper Inn.



Our Newsletter production person, **Don Kubicsko**, and wife Barbara had a relaxing and wonderful cruise to the Caribbean in March.

Cathy Tomney (Cathy's Clerical Corner), took a trip to Port St. Lucie on the east coast of Florida in March. She had such a marvelous time that she bought a condo , in Ft. Pierce, came home, sold her place in Sayville, and moved in April. How's that for timing? Best wishes, Cathy.



Marianne Gruskin has been in Italy (April) and leaves for Alaska in August. Her 1st granddaughter is due in Florida in July, & there's a Beer Stein Convention till Sept. 1st in Seattle. Besides that she works at Suffolk Community!

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

CAMEO

TEX

by Grace Fishenfeld



Margaret Vlasits was my pal. When we wrote to each other I always addressed her as "Tex." She came to New York from Texas as a pre-WW II Vogue Magazine art contest winner where she worked as a photographer. She then worked for Macy's as a merchandise photographer, followed by a long stint at Woman's Day Magazine, where she was the creative crafts wiz, with the byline, "Margaret Greene." When you were her friend, she was yours forever. Her New York buddies and her school colleagues stayed in her heart, and lucky me, I was one of them.

Tex was a very creative woman. She designed things, from aprons and cooking caps, to women's hats. There was a time when she and her husband Joe, went into the business of hand crafting leather sandals at home while she raised their children. Joe was the love of her life. They met during WW II, and the two of them worked on projects of one kind or another throughout their lives. They sent each other back to school to earn their teaching degrees. Tex became an elementary school art teacher in Brentwood, and Joe, a librarian in the Farmingdale Public School System.

When Tex moved up to Brentwood High School, I got my first teaching position at the Ross building. She was a most encouraging person. She sat me down, poured me a hot cup of tea and said: "You're gonna be great at this, you'll see." She taught me to box my supplies for my lessons, like setting up drawers - pulling out what I needed as the classes changed. She was the "Cardboard Queen," she said. And indeed she was. I feel I owe my survival as a Brentwood High School art teacher to her. She was bright and spunky. "Never tell those kids that you're a new teacher or they'll walk all over you." I listened to her, packaged my lessons, preparing for each unit very early. It really made things run smoothly and made the students believe that they were getting a well designed course of study. Thank you, Tex.

Tex saw the world of technology moving along. She had a computer and wrote to me on her Word Processor. She built two houses with Joe, and both their children are now living in them with their children.

Just before she died, I mailed a letter to her, telling her that my attorney daughter, Randi, quit law to become a Jazz violinist. I know she would have cheered her on. Tex believed you should be brave enough to pursue your interests. Of course she believed you should develop a firm base, refining your skills so that you could do well at what you wished. She was a realist/optimist. When you spoke to her, she listened carefully and took great interest in helping you along. She was a great friend, and I loved her.

In her last letter, I received a recipe for pumpkin cake. I'll pass it on to you folks. Bake it, eat it, and think of her.

PUMPKIN CAKE - 350 DEGREES for one hour or until done. Prepare pan (tube) or four loaf pans, greased and floured. Ingredients: 2 cups sugar, 1 1/4 cups corn oil, 1 1/2 cups puree of pumpkin (small can of pumpkin is about 1 1/2 cups. I use the whole can, but the big can holds about 3 cups).

4 or 5 eggs put in warm water;

3 cups unbleached flour (use 1/2 cup to coat nuts and fruit);

2 tsps baking powder; 2 tsps baking soda; 2 tsps cinnamon;

2 tsps ground clove; 1 tsp nutmeg; 1 cup each of raisin and (or) currants;

1 cup chopped walnuts.

Sift dry ingredients together. Put eggs in warm water, then break eggs into mixing bowl that is set in warm water -beat till fluffy. Add sugar - beat. Add oil and 1/2 cup flour - mix. Add pumpkin - beat, then add remaining flour in 1/2 cup amounts. Fold the flour-coated nuts and fruit into the batter. Pour into pan or pans. Bake in 350 degree oven one hour, or till done. Completely cool. This can be frozen.

NOTE - I always soak the raisins and currants in warm water - then squeeze dry in paper towels. Then they get coated with the flour.

Enjoy!
Tex

BUMPER STICKER WISDOM

"I may be slow, but I'm ahead of you."

"We have enough youth, how about a fountain of smart?"

"Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine."

CREATIVE CORNER

Millie O'Neill, retired school Aide, says she's slowed down, but she's still writing!

Lines of age adorn this face
Liver spots have found their place
My reach is not as long you see
I'm not as tall as I used to be
I walk a little slower but talk a little
more
Please tell me why I find a closed
door?

Yet reflections in the mirror reveal a
younger age
Back in the time of youth I'd gauge.
No gray in the hair or wrinkles galore
What more can I expect to be in store?
Ah! 'Tis the reason I look so good...
My eyeglasses on the table as here I
stood!!!

BRENTWOOD ROTARY CLUB

Marianne Gruskin, retired ROBS member is Vice President of the Brentwood Rotary Club, and would like to know if any ROBS members would like to join.

"Some of the many good things we do for the Brentwood community: support 2 Boy Scout troops, make an Xmas party and give gifts to the Special Ed students, clean and maintain the Bishop tract (Pine Barren) by Sonderling's tennis courts, raise money for Scout scholarship and H.S. scholarships, support Interact Clubs at the 9th grade Center and H.S., Plus International service. If interested, call me at 673-6031."

CATHY'S CLERICAL CORNER

by Catherine Tomney
7 Nuestra Isla., Ft. Pierce, Fla., 34951
561-467-9557



I want to thank those who responded to the letters concerning the "Video Scrapbook." You should be hearing from John Sherin shortly.

It's important, I strongly feel, that when the history of past employees is being compiled, the dedication of **all** be recorded.

Nor should the demands we made as women to be treated as equal in the working place go unnoticed.

I hope you are all enjoying your well earned retirement. I took a giant step in April and am now residing in Florida. I am looking forward to "new beginnings" and seeing old and new friends.

BITS AND PIECES

Thursday, June 19th there will be "An Evening of Elder Law and Estate Planning Solutions," at the Melville Marriott, 1350 Old Walt Whitman Road. Refreshments are available at 6:45 P.M., the free seminar is at 7. Lawrence Davidoff is the presenter, the sponsor is the Stony Brook Foundation of SUNY at Stony Brook. Call 516-234-3030 to reserve a seat

Free copy: A GUIDE TO DISABILITY RIGHTS LAWS that lists the laws that protect disabled Americans in the areas of air travel, housing, special education, and other programs. Write to: Consumer Information Center, Dept. 68, Pueblo, Colo. 81009. To learn more about the Americans With Disabilities Act, call the Department of Justice's ADA Information Line: 1-800-514-0301 (or 1-800-514-0383 TDD).

JOBS NEEDED

Marianne Gruskin works as a Job Developer at Suffolk County Community College in Brentwood, Dept. of Cooperative Ed. She asks if anyone knows of businesses that would hire her students for a paid or non-paid internship; call her at 851-6754 or leave a message with her secretary if she is not in.

Take Control of Your Car Insurance

Just about everyone needs car insurance. But not everyone pays the same premium. Examine your policy on a regular basis to make sure your insurance coverage matches your current needs and follow these suggestions to see if you're getting the right amount of coverage for the right price:

- Obtain a rate quotation from NYSUT Benefit Trust-endorsed METPAY. Because this is a group insurance program offered by your union, you may get rates that aren't available to individual policyholders.
- When buying a new car, keep in mind that sedans and economy cars are generally less expensive to insure than sports and luxury cars.
- If your car is older, talk to your insurance consultant about which optional coverages may no longer be necessary.
- Raise your deductible to a higher limit. By doing this, you will lower your premium and potentially save money. You will, however, pay more in out-of-pocket expenses if you need to repair damages caused by an accident.

You could also save money on your insurance if you're eligible for various policy discounts*. For instance, NYSUT members may qualify for discounts by following these suggestions:

- Have your premiums deducted from your paycheck (if payroll deduction for NYSUT benefits is available).

- If you're over age 65 and retired, let your insurance company know your car is for pleasure use only.



- If your children attend school at least 100 miles away, list them on your policy as resident students.
- Take a state-approved driver training course.
- Join a car pool and ride in someone else's car at least three days per week.
- Keep a clean driving record.

These suggestions are provided from NYSUT Benefit Trust-endorsed METPAY, which is underwritten by Metropolitan Property and Casualty Insurance Company and Affiliates (Met P&CSM), Warwick, RI. In New Jersey, insurance is underwritten by Metropolitan Group Property and Casualty Insurance Company and First General Insurance Company, two subsidiaries of Met P&C. If you would like to receive a no-obligation quote on your auto, home, renters or other personal property insurance, call METPAY at 1 800 GET-MET 1 (1-800-438-6381):

Monday - Thursday: 8 A.M. to 10 P.M.

Friday: 8 A.M. to 9 P.M.

Saturday: 9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

**Available in most states to those who qualify.*