

# ROBS NewsLetter

Number 21 RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS SEPT. 1997

## NO on convention

In November, the referendum on whether or not New York State should have a Constitutional Convention will be on the ballot. RETIREES HAVE A PARTICULARLY GOOD REASON FOR RESISTING SUCH A CONVENTION: the protection the current constitution has against the diminution of our pensions, which has been upheld by the courts and has protected our funds on several occasions over the years.

There are other reasons to vote no. It is estimated that a constitutional convention will cost over \$50 million. That money would be better spent on a pension COLA, public education or higher education.

And there is no limit to the range of issues that may be brought before such a convention: cuts in school programs, public aid to private schools, vouchers, changes in environmental protections, elimination of workers rights to organize and to collective bargaining, as well as health issues.

If the constitution needs amending, it can be done through the legislative process. Constitutional amendments may be proposed in the senate and assembly, and if such amendments pass two successive legislative votes, they go before the voters for approval.

Anti-union, anti-government, anti-dozens of other things, can ax grind our constitution to death, and you can bet seniors will get it in the pocketbook!

**VOTE NO ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION AMENDMENT ON ELECTION DAY!**

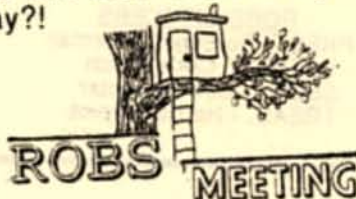


### ROBS FALL WELCOME

On September 3rd, Brentwood retirees began their 6th year welcoming yet another happy band of new retirees!

This year there are 16, and the 40 some folk at the meeting gave them a look at the good times ahead. The frequently heard comment of those new to the world of no school schedules and bells was: I can't believe how young you look.

How else does one look when every day is a snow day?!



**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, OCT. 7, ISLIP LIBRARY AT 10 A.M. - Enter laughing again with John Sherin and his "Postcards from the Edge" video.**

**NOVEMBER MEETING: Wednesday, Nov. 5th - Folk Dancing - Elinor Tepper**

### WELCOME NEW RETIREES...

Carole Bruno	William Mullady
Veronica Cowan	Elsie Reavis
Michael Falton	Mary Jo Schmidt
Gary Hoskins	John Sepulveda
William John	Patricia Sepulveda
June Kurtz	Clinton Spahr
Stephen Kittredge	Barbara Thurman
Carolyn McCarthy	Jeff Wolfe



## RETHINKING THE MEANING OF LABOR DAY

Recently, through the e-mail, I received a thought-provoking article written by J. Federico Martin, President of AFSCME Clerical Local 3235 at UCLA. In light of the recent UPS strike, down-sizing, and part-time employment practices, I was very moved by his words and felt I would like to share these thoughts with you. They are as relevant to us as retirees as they are to in-service workers. I would welcome responses and reactions from you.

"When in Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' it is said that the 'evil that men do lives after them', it speaks of the lasting and abiding effects of malevolent human acts on fellow human beings. In the twentieth century the Jewish Holocaust symbolizes the Great Evil that remains a red spot on humanities' hands.

But there are lesser evils that quietly happen every day. Acts against people that can only be described as 'evil' because of the absence of conscience. Acts that unfortunately are too often overlooked because they occur individually and in the workplace. ... But because the infliction is emotional and psychological, the wound is invisible. And so too the act. ... No one sees this daily violence.

There are no newspaper headlines, no TV or radio broadcasts, no public opinion, no condemnation. Labor laws are woefully inadequate. The government no longer protects its people. Even workers have failed to protect themselves by not rising up on their own behalf. And by not helping each other they have made each other vulnerable to employer abuse.

I believe that we must restore morality to the workplace. To restore a sense of right and wrong upon which we act. ... In these times of change and upheaval, times in which we have seemed to lose direction, we need to reassert those basic, fundamental principles of conduct to guide us, and against which to hold those in power accountable.

... Those of us in the union ... struggle against employment practices that dehumanize us all. We believe that we should not lose our humanity as a condition of our employment. Nor our self-esteem. We should not live in fear of those who employ us and exercise abusive authority. There needs to be a balance against power held over us, so that we do not become things to be manipulated or thrown away.

... A union is a reminder to the employer of our humanity. And a demand for respect and dignity. It lies at the heart of the concept of unionism, and affects the very quality of our lives.

These days, when the 'bottom line' has replaced moral conscience, we need to reassert - not yield - our humanity."



In unity,  
Dot

**No word yet on individual  
Health Contracts for  
Retirees. We'll keep you  
posted!**

### ROBS NEWSLETTER STAFF

CONTENT EDITOR: Christin Veech  
PRODUCTION: Don Kubicko  
Mary Ruffino

### ROBS OFFICERS

PRES. - Dorothy Zuckerman  
V. PRES. - Chris Veech  
SEC'Y. - Bev Carpenter  
TREAS. - Harriet Pepine

# NAFTA: 3 years later

**M**ore than three years have elapsed since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect, but the treaty hasn't produced the benefits that its supporters promised. reports the AFL-CIO.

Mexican workers' wages have remained stagnant, and as many as 700,000 good-paying American jobs have been lost, the union reports, adding that human rights abuses in Mexico have become worse, not better. The job losses have been concentrated in industries like apparel, auto parts and electronics, hurting low-paid workers with few skills the most.

In fact, NAFTA increased incentives for firms to bargain down wages and working conditions in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, and to shift jobs to Mexico, according to the Institute for Policy Studies.

The Institute's new report, *NAFTA's Corporate Camouflage*, reveals that six of the leading corporate NAFTA advocates used the threat of moving plants abroad to head off union organizing drives, and 12 of 28 manufacturers laid off workers who then qualified for the NAFTA retraining program. For copies of the report, call IPS at 202-234-9282.

BOTTOM LINE 6/13/97



## Get affordable legal help for personal legal matters

What should I do about being pulled over for a traffic violation I didn't commit?  
Will my family be okay if I don't have a will?  
Am I responsible for my son's friend who was injured in my home?  
Is my landlord able to break a verbal agreement about raising my rent?

Every day we're faced with what appear to be simple legal questions that, if left unaddressed, could lead to legal problems.

With the high cost of some attorneys' fees, you may feel you have no other choice than to deal with these situations on your own. But you do have a choice!

With the NYSUT Legal Service Plan, you can get fast, accurate answers to the personal legal questions and concerns you have, and so much more. Plus, you get it all at an affordable cost!

For just \$49.50 a year, you'll receive unlimited toll-free telephone advice and assistance on personal legal matters. If your matter warrants other than telephone advice, you will be referred to a participating referral attorney in your geographic area who has contractually agreed to charge the plan's discounted fees. Many legal services come with guaranteed maximum fees. For other services, attorneys will charge \$75 per hour or a 40 percent reduction of their usual hourly rate, whichever is less.

In addition, you are entitled to a free simple will every year of plan membership. The Legal Plan gives you access to unlimited legal letters and phone calls made on your behalf; coupons for office consultations with a Plan attorney; and the Preventive Law Guide, an informative newsletter covering consumer-oriented legal issues. A 24-hour emergency hotline is available for all legal emergencies occurring after regular business hours.



The Plan extends coverage to the NYSUT member or agency fee payer, his or her spouse or domestic partner, and unmarried, dependent children under the age of 25. Coverage is also provided for parents who are wholly dependent on the plan member for their own support and maintenance. NYSUT also offers a Retiree Legal Service Plan with slightly different benefits, for \$29 a year.

Optional riders for Business Protection and Elder Law services can be added to the Plan's coverage for a modest fee. For more information, contact NYSUT Member Benefits at 800-626-8101.

# The story behind downsizing

BOTTOM LINE 3/7/97

With corporations laying off workers and flattening their management, what's the real story behind this recent trend?

The American Management Association (AMA) reports that only 6% of the corporations that laid off workers last year said they did it because they were suffering losses or anticipating a business downturn. "Organizational restructuring" was the reason given by 68% of companies the AMA surveyed, which usually means cutting labor costs to hike profits. It also probably explains why 70% of people polled recently by the Preamble Center for Public Policy say corporate greed, not competitiveness, is behind the downsizing.

This may be a case where people's perceptions are correct. Corporate executives' compensation rose 223% in inflation-adjusted terms since 1976, while real wages for American workers moved up only 5%, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.



"The good news is company stock and profits are up and the CEO got a nice big bonus. The bad news is they celebrated by firing 500 of us today."

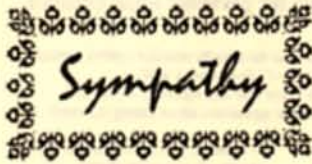
Renouit/Rothco, UAW-LUPA

## HELPFUL TIPS (Clip & Save)

Suffolk County Office on Aging	516-853-3610
HUD: Reverse Mortgage Complaints	1-888-466-3487
National Senior Service Corps	1-800-424-8867
Social Security:	1-800-772-1213
Babylon	516-225-7926
Huntington/Melville	516-673-5464
Islip	516-475-4668
Eldercare Locator	1-800-677-1116

## Veterans' and Seniors' Tax Exemptions:

Babylon	516-957-3014
Huntington	516-351-3226
Islip	516-224-5700
Suffolk County Veterans' Services	516-853-3790
Northport VA Medical Center	516-261-4400
Pharmacy-Inpatient	Ext. 2614
Pharmacy-Outpatient	Ext. 7900
IRS Helpline	1-800-829-4477
Medicare Rights Center	1-800-333-4114
Medicaid Eligibility	516-853-8765



## NEWS NOTES

Chester Shapiro informed us of the death of **Jean Weinstein** at the end of June. Our thoughts are with husband **Gordon**, and family.

And all of us are sending **Camille Petrycki** cheery best wishes to feel better soon!

It was so good to see jovial **Ray Cunneen** at the September ROBS meeting. He's bounced back well after a heart scare. Bet he's back on the golf green too!

**Marilyn DePlaza** communicates by E-Mail that daughter Marcie gave birth to her first child on May 15th, Danielle Hallie. Marcie and husband Brett live only 4 miles from them in Parkland, Florida. **Marilyn's** son, Laurence lives in Dallas and has "two adorable girls. We are sooooo excited!!!"

In the last issue, we mistakenly wrote the wrong name when welcoming **Elmon Kazandjian's** grandson Matthew into the world. **Elmon's** daughter's name is **Marta!** She also has another daughter, Kristine, who with husband John Woodward own the Woodward Art Gallery at 476 Broome Street in So-Ho. They've been written up in the N.Y. Times and N.Y. Magazine. Stop in and browse, or call 212-966-3411. If you go to an opening you'll definitely see George and **Elmon**. They'll be the glowing ones....



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



I'm settling down after the excitement of searching for and finding my "dream home" here in Florence, Oregon. The summer has been beautiful. If you're ever in the area, let me know. There are actually some New Yorkers here and one Long Islander so far. Regards to all ROBS.

Love, **Edna Doherty**  
(1994 retiree & former Brentwood resident)

I've been meaning to write for the ROB's Newsletter for a while - so here's how I'm enjoying retirement.

I retired June of 1993 from West Middle school - thinking the hard work was over. Wrong! Dom and I bought a consignment shop called KID'S STUFF in P.S. Lucie, Fla. You'd think I'd want to get away from kids, but I guess once you're a teacher, it's in your blood forever.

We've never worked so hard to keep

the shop current and going. People bring in their children's clothes and furniture in good shape, we hope, but that's not always the case. We go through it and keep what we can use, tag, put on hangers and rack. It's a 6 day a week job. We try to treat our work as a ministry - sometimes some of our customers don't have enough change to pay. We try to help in every way we can.

So **Cathy Tomney**, who just moved to Ft. Pierce, came down to see us; we're neighbors. Our store is in the Yellow Pages. Come and introduce yourselves; we'd love to meet you!

Hope this finds all well. I met my five sisters in Myrtle Beach for a week. It was fun [even though] 70,000 bikers showed up that week. Too noisy!

I still miss New York. I enjoy the newsletter and look forward to receiving it.

Love, **Jackie Buccola**

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

**WHAT HAPPENS IN WASHINGTON AND ALBANY AFFECTS US ALL!  
WHEREVER WE LIVE, WHATEVER WE'RE DOING NOW!**

Don't let our future security and financial stability be dependent on the whim of Congress and the State Legislature Lend us your support so we can continue to alert you to action on behalf of our retiree benefits, as well as giving us a good sized membership to represent when we try to 'educate' elected officials.

**GET ON OUR MAILING LIST! JOIN US NOW!**

**I am enclosing \$10 for my 1997-1998 ROBS dues.\***

\*ROBS retains \$5 and forwards \$5 to our NYSUT Retiree Council which represents us at the Representative Assembly, conferences and other activities. Should you belong to another Council, send only the ROBS portion of the dues. The other Council will handle its own.

**REMEMBER!!! As a ROBS member benefit, if you are 75 and over you do not have to pay any dues.**

**I am 75 or older.**(Please return this form so that we include you as a member.)

**I am enclosing a separate check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ made out to NYSUT VOTE-COPE to support legislative efforts made on my behalf. (Include SS# on the check)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

If your name has changed since you retired please indicate current and previous name.

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
If you have a summer/winter address, please indicate. Add dates if you wish (e.g. May to October) Please use the 9 digit zip (5+4). This will, we hope, get the mail to you faster.

**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax #** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

Remember, if your phone is unlisted but you want ROBS members to have it, this will be indicated in the Directory. If you wish, you may omit it altogether.

**Building you retired from:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you wish, you might use the building you are most associated with.

**Year of retirement:** \_\_\_\_\_

Now that we are in existence over five years it is time to verify the information that we have so that the Directory will be as accurate as possible. Please remember that if you do not want to be in the Directory no information about you will appear. **But do fill out the form because then we will be able to contact you should the need arise.** We also will be able to verify NYSUT records as well.

I do not wish to be in the Directory.

**Mail to: ROBS Treasurer Harriet Pepine  
82 Gloria Boulevard  
Hauppauge, NY 11788**



# PROJECT HOPE

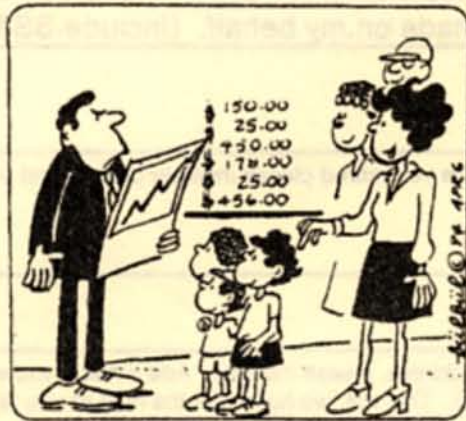
Since the ROBS Community Liaison Committee introduced Project Hope in 1996, at least six volunteers have been tutoring homeless children in programs at Suburban Housing in Bay Shore or in the elementary schools in Brentwood. Fifteen ROBS members have volunteered for other jobs.

Project Hope also adopted a homeless family for the holidays, and volunteers shopped for, wrapped and delivered gifts and food on Christmas Eve.

Frank Spencer, chair of the committee, assumes all who volunteered last year will continue this year. They will be called by October 1st to determine if they prefer to work at Suburban or at the schools.

Those who wish to get involved this year should call Frank (253-0355) or sign up at the October ROBS meeting. We will again adopt a family for the holidays.

Thanks to all those who helped last year, and let's make Project Hope bigger and better in 1998!



"Let's make them the bottom line!"

RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD  
SCHOOLS  
c/o Zuckerman  
8 Woody Lane  
Oakdale, N.Y. 11769

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