

ROBS NewsLetter

NUMBER 22

RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

DECEMBER 1997

PROJECT HOPE HAS HIGH HOPES...AGAIN!

The holiday season is fast approaching, and ROBS Community Liaison Committee again raised the question of adopting a homeless family for the holidays. ROBS members responded by collecting \$125 at the November meeting. As a result of this generosity, the Community Liaison Committee will donate a Thanksgiving dinner to a family as well as gifts for Christmas/Hanukah.

Anyone wishing to donate for holiday gifts may make toy and gift donations at our December meeting. Checks made payable to Suburban Children, Inc., are tax deductible, and may be mailed to Frank Spencer, 3 Nottingham Drive, Wheatley Heights, N.Y. 11798. As Diane Gustaw, coordinator of Suburban Children wrote: "These acts of kindness and unselfish giving models to our clients that there are people who care about them in a system that is not always easy to navigate and sometimes quite frustrating."

Both Ms. Gustaw and Diane Fanning, Education Liaison for Suburban were at the November ROBS meeting to present awards of thanks to retirees Beverly Sheehan, Beverly Fisher, Ivy Rosenthal and Frank Spencer for their work with homeless children last year.

This year the tutoring work continues with retirees Irene Brown and Verne Spencer at Hemlock Pines Elementary; Frank Spencer and Estelle Hoyt at Southwest; and Mary Ruffino and Ruth McCalla at Northeast. More volunteers are needed both at Brentwood schools, and at Suburban after school programs or Thursdays at 10-12. Contact Frank Spencer, chair of the Committee at 253-0355 if you are able to give some time to help homeless kids learn. It's a rewarding experience for both tutor and tutored.

(see questionnaire on page 7)

STAR PROGRAM

The STAR Program (School Tax Relief) was passed by the NYS Legislature earlier this year. The tax cut allows seniors, 65 or older, with incomes below \$60,000, to receive a tax break on their school taxes effective September 1998. A total of \$50,000 will be reduced from the assessed value over a four year period ending in 2001.

All other N.Y. property taxpayers will receive similar school tax relief in the fall of 1999.

Seniors must submit an application form RP-425 plus proof of income

(federal or state tax return), as well as proof of age. It must be submitted to your local town assessor no later than March 1, 1998 in Suffolk County, and December 31, 1998 in Nassau County.

The STAR Program in no way interferes with any local property tax exemption you may already be receiving.

You should all have received health contracts from the Brentwood District, and signed and returned them by now.

UP DATE



Happy Birthday to all of Us!

NYSUT is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. This is a time to look forward - to prepare for the challenges of the future, to set direction for the years to come. But it is also necessary for us to look back at what made us the powerful teacher union that we have become. It is time for us to remember the strength and courage of those who spoke out and acted in the belief that teachers have the right to fair and decent working conditions. It is a time for us to reflect on our first contract language, the first time we walked the picket line, the first time we won a grievance - the first time we stood tall and proud to be a member of the Brentwood Teacher's Association and the New York State United Teachers.

We who are now retired are the ones who provided the backbone and teeth to the organization we honor this year. We walked on uncharted paths, students of the labor movement each step of the way, while we taught lessons to administrators and boards of education on labor-management relations. We achieved a great many gains over the years, but most important of all, we gained dignity and respect for ourselves.

The in-service generation today did not live these experiences - they inherited the rewards. What they accept as "given" are the result of our determination and strength. Teachers today are being attacked from all directions - "renewable tenure," contract give-backs, Al D'Amato's spurious attacks. It is urgent that they learn about those who went before them and what was achieved for them and their teaching conditions today.

Although we are no longer on the firing line, we must continue what we began. We must give our support and experience to those who need us now even as we did in the past. Take an active role - contact your legislators, speak up in your community, attend the board meetings, write letters to support our teaching heirs, become involved with ROBS. You are needed now as much as you were needed then. Stay involved and continue to roll the union on!

In unity,
Dot

ROBS MEETINGS RING IN JOY

ROBS members danced the morning away at the November meeting under the leadership of Elinor Tepper, a fellow ROBS retiree. The dances were international; the exercise was great!

At the December meeting, ROBS members and guests noshed until 1, while they socialized. A basket was set up for those who attended to drop in travel size toilet articles for the homeless clients at Suburban Housing. Food stamps do not cover toiletries.

It was a small way to usher in the time of giving. Happy holidays to all.

Mark your calendars for the ROBS annual breakfast on January 7, 1998!



ROBS NEWSLETTER STAFF

CONTENT EDITOR: Christin Veech
PRODUCTION: Don Kubicsko
Mary Ruffino

ROBS OFFICERS

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

DIRECTORY THOUGHTS from Jack Z.

I have watched our Directory grow from a scrawny few pages to the handbook it is now. Our membership in ROBS has also grown. With features such as E-mail addresses added last year, FAX numbers possibly added this year, we have been able to develop a comprehensive Directory.

Now, half way through our 1998 membership drive, my computer is digesting the information you send via your membership applications and letters. There are lots of changes. Our members are moving, and not all to Florida. There is a steady trickle westward. Upstate New York has become popular, and the Carolinas continue to be. But there are other changes too. Take Florida, for example. Last year there was a massive change in area codes. A large number of Florida phone numbers had to be changed.

I want to share this with you, because I worry that some of you might forget to send in your dues money and won't be a member next year! Then you would not be in the Directory, and you would not receive one in the mail!

You would lose track of many of your friends and they with you. You would wander the streets friendless, unknown, and desperate, and finally end it all by living by yourself in the forsaken barrens of Staten Island.

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU. Renew your membership today. Remain a member of the ROBS community and maintain your ties to all the rest of Planet Earth.

(Ed.'s Note: The ramblings above are those of the author after being locked in his computer room too long. But they do carry an element of truth. JOIN TODAY & STAY ON OUR MAILING LIST.)

SEE APPLICATION ON LAST PAGE!

SENIOR ROAD RUNNER



Ruth McCalla was featured in the October 6th issue of the NEW YORK TEACHER in a story titled "Retiree has a Bumper Crop of Volunteerism."

Ruth was one of 22 winners of the 1997 NYSUT Community Service Award. She was pictured with her license plate: SRRDRUNR. Her daily itinerary, which includes the ROBS Executive Board, makes that plate quite accurate! Congratulations Ruth!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

As NYSUT celebrates its 25th anniversary (as does Disney World), it is reaching out to recognize those members who have made contributions to the union and the community. **THE 25th ANNIVERSARY RECOGNITION**

PROGRAM is designed to bring honor to those who have served the state and local union in various capacities, such as delegates, officers, or committee members. The time has come to say thank you to those who have helped bring us this important anniversary.

THE NYSUT COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD recognizes those who become involved and volunteer their services to community projects where they are needed.

The NEW YORK TEACHER has initiated a program called **HAVE I GOT A STORY FOR YOU!** You are invited to share your anecdotes and remembrances with others who may have experienced similar moments themselves. Put them in writing!

This is the time to come forward and be recognized. If you know people who should be honored, give us a call and let us know. (516-567-3866, Dot Z.)

THE Q TIP

by Edy Filosa (retired Nurse Teacher)



IT'S TIME !

No one knows if this year will be a "bad" flu season or not, but it is something we should be prepared for.

We know that the flu can make you feel like last night's pasta, but the real problem is the complications it can cause such as pneumonia. It can be a killer!

Influenza causes about 20,000 deaths in the U.S. each year and results in thousands more hospitalizations.

Older people, those with chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease asthma, etc.) are most at risk and should be getting shots every year.

Flu season generally lasts from November until spring. Antibodies take about two weeks to develop after your shot.

You say you got your shot last year? Fine - but viruses mutate to elude your immune system and what worked last year might not be helpful this year.

There are three types of flu viruses: A, B, and C. The C type is fairly mild and not associated with dangerous outbreaks. A and B are another story!

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) there are currently two A viruses and one B known to be in circulation. This year's vaccine contains both Type A strains as well as B/Beijing-like strains.

Getting the flu shot cannot give you the flu. The vaccine is made from killed viruses. Some people will get a sore arm, a few will get a fever which can be treated. Because the vaccine is grown in eggs, anyone with an allergy to eggs should consult their doctor.

That's the good news! The bad news is that getting a shot is not a guarantee you won't get the flu. This is because the vaccine strains have to be chosen about 9 months before the flu season and mutation is always a possibility. Mutations reduce the vaccine's effectiveness. Also, the immune system may not be as active in producing antibodies. Even if you do get the flu despite vaccination, complications or hospitalizations are much lower.

If you are 65 or older, or have a chronic disease, it is advisable to discuss pneumococcal vaccine with your physician. This shot, in most cases, will give lifetime immunity.

Both vaccines are covered by Medicare.

FLU SYMPTOMS

High fever (3-4 days)
Headache
General aches and pains
Fatigue (usually long duration)
Chest discomfort and/or cough

COLD

Usually no fever
Runny nose
Sore throat (may be present in flu)



In any event, it is best to consult your physician! **STAY HEALTHY !!**

NEWS NOTES

Our sympathy goes to the family of **Manny Kafka** who died of cancer on November 6th. Manny was not a ROBS member, but our elected Representative to the Teacher's Retirement System and a regular participant at our meetings. See the ON TRACK obituary written by Dot Zuckerman.

Eugene La Colla was rushed to St. Francis at the end of October for a second heart by-pass. We hope all goes well, **Gene**. Get well wishes to you...



Returning from Florida after caring for his mother-in-law, **John Sherin** wound up in first class sitting with the Miami Dolphins and next to Connie Francis who was also on a mission of mercy to a sick friend in New York. **John** has a welcoming shoulder! John also attended the reunion of the graduating class of 1977 in October.



Jim Watson visited **Ellie Steffen** this fall in Woodstock with his daughter Caroline, who is an artist living in Albany. **Jim**, who lives in Maine, is planning to escape the cold by attending a 3 week Elder Hostel in Mexico this winter, with a 2 week continued stay in Mexico City. Ole!

CONGRATULATIONS

There is nothing like a 1st grandchild. And **Shirley Walker Lloyd** is ecstatic! Her son James and wife Kim presented her with Ian James on September 5th. It was double joy for **Shirley** because daughter Tandra married John McKim in Maryland on July 4th. Now that's a day for celebrating. Everyone throws you a party with firecrackers!

After they returned from France, **Jack and Dot Zuckerman** welcomed daughter Geri and husband Frank's first child, Ryan David Burgert on October 20th. Congrats!

Marianne Gruskin also was blessed with a first grandchild, Ashley, in August, - born to son Peter and wife Patty. Son John and wife Laura are expecting next June. Perhaps that will keep the well traveled **Marianne** home more. She and husband Matt will be hosting an 11 year old Durango, Mexico girl who needs angioplastic surgery - and her mother - beginning October 12th. This is through the Gift of Life Program, which Brentwood Library Director Doris Sargeant heads. Interested? Call 273-7883.

Suffolk Community College has both **Marianne** and **Don Kubicsko** working. **Don** teaches business, and **Marianne** is in her 2nd year as a Job Developer. If anyone out there knows of any paid, or unpaid, internships for SCCC students, call 851-6754.

The Florida Connection: We heard from **Phyllis B. Ramjattansingh** who is moving into a brand new home in Spring Hill in December. She loves the heat. Also **Lila Cantor** who is recuperating from an illness. **Fran Graff** sends regards to all. **Betty Cascone** from Boca Raton wants **Edna Doherty** to contact her and give her her address. **Cathy Tomney** of Ft. Pierce announced she's become a computer buff. E-Mail address is: castle002@aol.com.



Grace Fishenfeld is still racking up those prizes. She flew in from Florida to pick up 1st prize for a painting at a ceremony in Great Neck on November 15th. Hugs!!

And did you notice the cover story in Newsday's Part II on Tuesday, November 11th: "A Nurse Remembers; a Veteran's Day Conversation" by Fred Bruning. The conversation was with 77 year old Nancy Leftenant-Colon, sister of retired Brentwood teacher **Amy Leftenant**. Quite a story about a woman achieving against the odds!



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



...those of us here in the west have had some get-togethers. Shirley Stamm lives in Las Vegas now and Harvey and I had lunch at her house with Maria Campaign and her husband. This past weekend (August '97) Dotty Callahan and her husband Pete visited us in St. George and the following day Shirley and Ben Stamm met us in Mesquite, Nevada and we all spent a fun day together.

...I want ROBS to know that I enjoy the newsletter very much.

Judy Kenpler; St. George, Utah



OOPS!

As a point of information about a notice in the recent newsletter: Jean Weinstein (who passed away in June) was first married to Jack Gordon. After his death she married **Joe Weinstein**. (Ed. Note: Apologies for the error in September newsletter).

I was pleased to see the wonderful article about Ruth McCalla. What a gal! Also shocked to read that Elsie Reavis has retired. I remember when she first came to the district - so young. Does anyone know anything about Barry Friedfertig? I lost track of him sometime ago.

Continue your good work up there. It's great to hear about all of you.

Edie Erder; Delray Beach, Fl.

Attached card is for Old Buncombe County Geneological Society, Asheville, N.C. where I do volunteer work. Am 2nd Vice President in charge of publications and am editor of the quarterly journal. Also am Webmaster of the above URL. Visit the site. Also e-mail links to me there. (hmuller@madison.main.nc.us). Love to hear from some! This the big year - Social Security kicks in!

Henry Muller; Mars Hill, N.C.

I'm writing this to let you know how busy (meaningfully) and happy I am in retirement. I'm active in the Woodstock Artist's Association and the Woodstock School of Art. I decorate the town and

make floats for Halloween and the Renaissance Faire. I volunteer my care taking to the ill and my daughter and grandson live here in my studio. Life is Great!

Retired Art Teacher; Ellie Steffen; Woodstock, N.Y.

I moved to Davie, Florida located in Broward County, some 4 months ago. I would like to get in touch with any teachers that live in the vicinity, who taught at North Junior High School.

I have been retired for nine years and it would be nice to meet some of my old buddies that went through the "mill" with me. I was the Industrial Arts teacher, (Shop Teacher to some) for 30 years, 28 at North.

If there are any of you out there, who were at North, would you please give me a buzz at 954-236-0802. Or write me at 1760 SW 110 Terrace; Davie, Fl. 33324.

I would appreciate hearing from you. Regards to all ROBS.

Myron Shapiro; Davie, Fl.

As always, I enjoy your newsletter and read it from cover to cover. ... I have found that there is a life outside of L.I..

...I am the Volunteer Coordinator of the Volunteer Tutorial Program at the North Regional Broward County Library. It is a time consuming, but most rewarding responsibility, and I am happy to say our reputation is becoming the talk of many school groups. We work with grades K-6 after school. It's a great program and is growing by leaps and bounds.

As always, my sincere wishes for good health, good deeds, and long life to ROBS and its members.

Former VP of ROBS:

Rhoda Stamler; Coconut Creek, Fl.

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

START PLANNING FOR ANOTHER FABULOUS TRIP

The time has come - again! Dot and Jack Zuckerman will be serving as group leaders on a spectacular **JOURNEY THROUGH SPAIN** September 3-17, 1998. Travel to Madrid, Cordoba, Seville, Costa del Sol, Granada, Valencia and Barcelona, all for only \$1895! Many things included plus optional excursions and an extension in Mallorca.

Call Dot and Jack at 567-3866 for more information or to book! Act fast!



ROBS to offer HOPE

PROJECT HOPE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. NAME: _____
2. ADDRESS: _____
3. PHONE: _____
4. I WISH TO VOLUNTEER WITHIN:
 - BRENTWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT CLASSROOM (MON. - FRI. 9:00 - 3:00)
 - SUBURBAN SHELTER EDUCATION CENTER (MON.-THURS.: 4:00 - 6:00) (THURS. - 10:00 - 12:00)
 - BOTH
5. I AM AVAILABLE TO VOLUNTEER:
 - 2 HOURS PER WEEK
 - 2 HOURS PER MONTH
 - OTHER (LIST AVAILABILITY) _____
6. MY TALENTS AND INTEREST ARE:
 - ART
 - TUTORIAL - READING, MATH, ECT.
 - COMPUTER
 - MUSIC
 - MOTIVATIONAL
 - ESL / BILINGUAL
 - SPECIAL EDUCATION
 - SPECIAL PROJECTS (CLOTHING, SCHOOL SUPPLIES, ECT.)
 - OTHER _____

PLEASE SEND QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE ATTENTION OF:
FRANK SPENCER ROBS COMMUNITY LIAISON
3 NOTTINGHAM DR.
WHEATLY HEIGHTS, NY 11798

Opportunity Plus has several distinguishing features

Your participation in an optional retirement savings program could help enhance your retirement years.

Begin saving early and investing wisely by participating in a tax-deferred variable annuity. It allows you to defer taxes while potentially accumulating earnings across a broad range of investments. (Taxes are due upon withdrawal, usually at retirement when you may be in a lower tax bracket.)

How do you distinguish Opportunity Plus — the tax-deferred variable annuity developed specifically for NYSUT members and agency fee payers — from all the others?

Opportunity Plus was developed in collaboration between NYSUT Benefit Trust and Aetna Life Insurance and Annuity Company. It includes a number of innovative features and benefits that may not be available in other programs. Notable among them:

- 26 investment options -- including a variety of variable options and a fixed option.
- A dedicated Opportunity Plus Service Center -- available during business hours and a 24-hour automated facility for inquiries and transactions.
- No Deferred Sales Charge -- This charge, sometimes applied to funds withdrawn before a stipulated period

of time, is not imposed on deposits into the Guaranteed Accumulation Account or any of the variable funding options (in which principal is not guaranteed, is subject to market conditions and may increase or decrease over time).



- Attractive loan provisions -- with a low 1% interest rate.
- Lifestyle Security Protection -- helps

contributing participants complete the process of saving in the event of death or disability. (LSP coverage is provided by UNUM.)

In addition, NYSUT Benefit Trust has made the SurvivorSupport® financial counseling service available to current Opportunity Plus participants diagnosed as terminally ill or to the beneficiary of a deceased participant to identify and resolve immediate and long-term financial concerns and issues. (Counseling is provided by The Ayco Company, L.P., a premier financial counseling/planning firm. No products are sold. SurvivorSupport® is a registered trademark of The Ayco Company, L.P.)

Give Opportunity Plus a closer look. Call the Opportunity Plus Service Center at 1-800-OPP-INFO/677-4636 for prospectuses containing more complete information, including fees and expenses. Please read them carefully before investing.

Opportunity Plus is a tax-deferred variable annuity issued by Aetna Life Insurance and Annuity Company (ALAC). Securities are offered through Aetna Investment Services, Inc. Except for SurvivorSupport®, NYSUT Benefit Trust is reimbursed by ALAC for expenses in support of the Opportunity Plus program.

WEB RESOURCES

- *Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturing Association of America: <http://www.phrma.org>
- *AFT Breast & Cervical Cancer Education & Detection Project: <http://www.aft.org/cancer/index.htm>
- *Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov>
- *National Cancer Institute: <http://rex.nci.nih.gov>
- *National Institutes of Health: <http://www.nih.gov>
- *Healthfinder: <http://www.healthfinder.gov>
- *CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse: <http://www.cdcnac.org>
- *Prospering in America: www.prospering.com.

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY JOINED ROBS FOR 1998,
THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST MAILING - NO MORE NEWSLETTERS!
FILL OUT THE APPLICATION ON THE LAST PAGE AND SEND IT WITH YOUR CHECK TO KEEP IN TOUCH!

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

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



**STILL TIME
TO CLIMB
ON BOARD**

Did You Forget
To Renew Your
ROBS
Membership?