

ROBS NewsLetter

NUMBER 24

RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

MARCH 1998

PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

President Clinton bestowed the nation's highest civilian honor - the Presidential Medal of Freedom- on the late Albert Shanker, who led the American Federation of Teachers for 23 years until his death in February 1997.

His widow, Eadie Shanker accepted the award at a January 15th White House ceremony. She observed that "this is the most apt kind of honor for Al. He always felt that education is a freeing and liberating force for all people and societies. ...it is a fitting tribute because of his ardent advocacy of democracy, freedom and civil rights in the United States and throughout the world."

Other medal recipients include Wilma Mankiller, head of the Cherokee Nation and the first female Indian Chief; Elliot Richardson, who held four Cabinet Positions under Presidents Nixon and Ford; James Farmer, who founded the Congress of Racial Equality; and child psychologist Robert Coles.

(excerpted from AFT Action, 1/30/98)



1998 STATE OF THE UNION

Joe Hogan, President of Brentwood Teacher's Association, will be the guest speaker at the Wednesday, April 1st ROBS meeting 10 A.M. at the Islip Public Library.

This will be the third year that Joe will be our speaker on the state of BTA and how it affects us as retirees. ROBS has always enjoyed his visits.

And for a little April Fool's surprise, we will also showcase the stand-up humor of our own Bill Lane, retired Social Studies teacher from Ross. **DON'T MISS THIS MEETING!**

Mark your calendars for the Wednesday, May 6th meeting when we will have the Director of NYSUT Member Benefits as a guest speaker. And Wednesday, June 3rd is the ROBS Luncheon! Details will follow.

At the March ROBS meeting, Herb Kramer, of Feldman, Kramer, P.C., gave us a necessary look at preparing our legal affairs from the Living Will, Health Care Proxy, Power of Attorney to the actual Will. In a time when laws are changing rapidly regarding what is exempt and when, the update was beneficial and well presented. Kramer and Feldman administer the NYSUT Legal Plan here in Suffolk.

ROBS members attending the March meeting also passed the hat for the NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund to help upstaters who suffered through the storms that ravaged that area this winter. See **BITS AND PIECES** for information on contributing.



CATCHING UP!

We've survived the winter, as mild as it was. Looking forward to Spring usually means pulling together the bits and pieces that have been waiting for our attention. This is a good time to share important information with you.

§§§ Good news for our secretaries and clericals! You will each be receiving a health insurance contract from the Brentwood school district that will guarantee your health insurance coverage. This means you will no longer have to be concerned about contract negotiations. Because of the volume involved, the contracts will probably not be issued before the end of the year. If you want more information, call me at 516-567-3866.

§§§ Jack and I had a wonderful **get-together in January with our Florida colleagues**. Thanks to the effort and energy of Marilyn DePlaza, we spent a hectic but happy afternoon with about fifty of our ROBS members who have moved south. They are really thrilled to know that we haven't forgotten them. They wanted to be as informed about what's happening here as we were to learn about their doings. Most of them are very actively involved in their communities, heading programs and committees. All of them are enjoying their after-Brentwood years in Florida. The severe tornadoes struck after we left. We haven't heard whether any of our members have been affected by the storms. If you know of anyone in need of assistance, please let me know.

§§§ Our ROBS membership continues to grow! As of this month, we have surpassed all other years since our beginnings seven years ago. Even now we hear from those who for one reason or another have not joined us in the past. We all have reason to be proud of this trend. It's a strong affirmation of all we have been doing, of the goals we have set, and of the communication we have tried to maintain. Hurray for us!

§§§ Last year a law was enacted called the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (aka the Kennedy Kassebaum Act). One of the lesser known provisions of this act is the possibility to deduct qualified long term care services as an itemized deduction. If you have responsibility for a chronically ill individual, it may be possible to deduct the cost of maintenance or personal care services in an Assisted Living facility as well as in a nursing home. For further information check with your income tax advisor.

§§§ Mark the calendar for our **Spring meetings!** It's one thing to have lots of members but it's even more rewarding to see them every month! Bring at least one person with you - a friend - a spouse!

March 4 - April 1- May 6 (Election of Officers)

All meetings are held at 10 A.M. at the Islip Public Library on Monell Avenue off Montauk Highway. Come and help us celebrate togetherness!

In Unity,
Dot



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



ROBS ELECTIONS AGAIN

At the April 1, 1998 ROBS meeting to be held at the Islip Public Library at 10 A.M., the slate presented by the Nominating Committee and voted by the ROBS Executive Board will be presented to the membership, Chairperson Ruth McCalla reported.

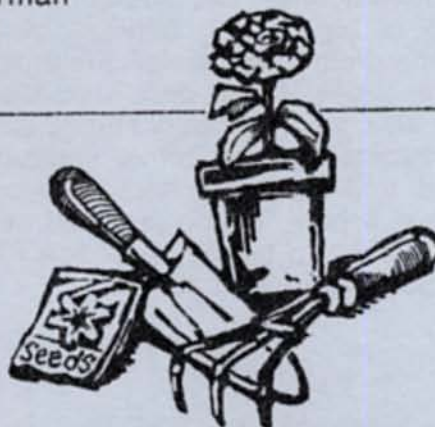
Elections will take place at the May 6th meeting, also at the Islip Public Library at 10 A.M.. **"EACH MEMBER SHALL BE GIVEN REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE AT THE ELECTION MEETING."** (ROBS Constitution).

The slate of nominees is as follows:

- ☒ Pres. Dorothy Zuckerman
- ☒ V.P. Harriet Pepine
- ☒ Sec'y. Lynn Prass
- ☒ Treas. Lilian Kelly

**NYSUT RETIREES 88,000
ROBS MEMBERSHIP OVER 300**

As of 1/1/98, NYSUT retiree membership swelled to 88,343. As of 3/2/98, ROBS membership spiraled to well over 300, the highest number since our inception. Think of the political implications of that, the lobbying and voting power! WELCOME!



BITS AND PIECES

This winter has seen much disaster across the nation, including Florida and New York. To help, make a donation to AFT Disaster Relief Fund, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001; or to: NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund, Attn. Accounting Dept., Box 15008, 159 Wolf Rd., Albany, NY 12212-5008.

STOP UNWANTED TELEMARKETING CALLS: Call the Federal Communications hotline at 202-632-7553 and request its new consumer pamphlet, "What You Can Do About Unsolicited Telephone Marketing Calls and Faxes."

CHARITY CHECK-UP: Check out the charity you're considering with these organizations. ☉ Philanthropic Advisory Service, Council of Better Business Bureaus, 4200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 800, Arlington, VA 22203-1838, (703-276-

0100). ☉ National Charities Information Bureau, 19 Union Square W., 6th Floor, New York, NY 10003-3395, (212-929-6300). ☉ American Institute of Philanthropy, 4579 Laclede Ave., Suite 136, St. Louis, MO 63108-2103, (314-454-3040). ☉ NY State Dept. of State, Division of Charity Registration, 41 State Street, Albany, NY 12207, (518-474-3820).

INN THE KNOW: The Internet Union Hotel Guide, produced by the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, features a web site worth checking out: www.erols.com.hereiu. The most complete guide to union hotels, motels, resorts and other lodgings in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, the guide also suggests other travel reservation links. Don't check in anywhere until you've checked this out, says AFT's LIFE TIMES publication.

ART IN WOODSTOCK ALIVE & WELL

Ellie Steffen recently hosted a celebration of her late husband Bernard Steffen's Life of Art in the Woodstock Artists Association Towbin Wing. It runs through April 6th.

Ellie herself has received some nice media attention in the WOODSTOCK TIMES of March 5, 1998. Her work was exhibited with other artists in a show called "Close to the Heart" in early March.. With a photo of one of her paintings, the article devoted a paragraph to her. It reads in part: " Chief among the less controversial images is Eleanor Steffen's "Susie, Janine and Navi," a large acrylic on canvas. ... a dynamic, powerful composition that reeks of confidence and competence. The quiet, loosely drawn scene - two adults hanging out with a toddler asleep in one's lap - is composed of big, strong patches of color, among them grey, black, red and a gorgeous medium-toned violet. Flesh tones were applied in blocky shapes using just two or three hues. A few dark lines indicate the grown-ups' facial features; the child has none. This painting really stands out in a room full of illustrative landscapes."

Ellie reports that her former student Tim Lynch visited with his wife and baby for a weekend, and that the school secretaries were coming at the end of March. She is also back at school "taking pre-med and algebra and chemistry courses. If they can send John Glenn to the moon at age 77, why I'm only 60! I've never been happier in my life." Sounds good to us!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



(The following letters were sent to ROBS filled with colorful pictures drawn by the children who received our Project Hope holiday gifts this past December).

To the Retirees of Brentwood Schools.
Hi my name is Ashley. I really appreciate all the gifts that all of you all brought for me. I loved all of them a lot. I hoped that you all had a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.
Love, Ashley

To: the Retirees of Brentwood Schools
Thank you very much for the wonderful gifts! I loved them a lot. I really needed a lot of long sleeved shirts to wear. Thanks for getting most of the games we wanted. I know that it was hard to get all of those games. Thanks for all you've done for us. We appreciate it!
From: Dawn

To: The Retirees of Brentwood Schools
THANK YOU!
Thank you for giving us all of the gifts. I like them a lot. I play with my basketball all the time. I like the Nike shirt. I really appreciate everything. I hope that you had a very merry

Christmas like mine.

From: Mikey

(And a letter in the shape of a butterfly to Frank Spencer, one of Project Hope's tutors).

I thank you with this card for coming to our class. I am wishing you a good Valentine's Day. I like how you teach. The good wishes from: Ana Amuya

(Ed.'s Note: The following letter was sent to History Chair, John Sherin who shared it with us).

We just sat down to watch "ROBS Interviews" starring "ME." Just reviewing it invokes so many more memories. Thank you for taking the time to interview me. Thank you for doing this for ROBS. If you have not been interviewed, I will be more than happy to be the interviewer. Name the place and time. ...
With fond memories, Phyllis Baumann

(This letter was sent to Dot Zuckerman).
... I must congratulate you for doing such a splendid job at organizing ROBS into such a viable association.
... I will be 76 on June 28 of this year!
Sincerely, Anthony Messina

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

THE Q TIP

by Edy Filosa (retired Nurse Teacher)



Oh my aching back!

Your back might have "gone out" when you bent over to pet your pooch but don't blame it on the dog!

More than likely your back has undergone years of abuse from your own poor posture both sitting and standing. Poor lifting and bending habits coupled with a sedentary life style have helped to contribute to low back pain.

What to do about it? Practice! Practice! Practice!

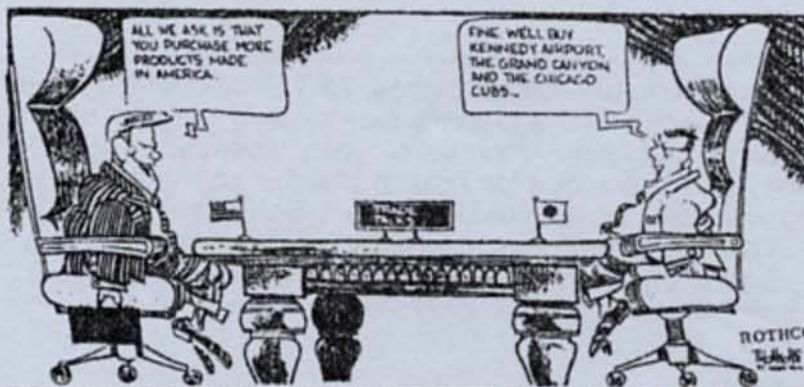
You will probably find that you tire more easily in the correct sitting position because the lumbar extensor muscles used to keep the arch in your back are the most underused in your body. If you can only hold the correct seated posture for a short time - never fear. You can work to increase the time as these muscles gain in strength. Use a lumbar roll or a cushion to keep the curve in your lower back. This is especially good to use when driving long distances.

If you are experiencing any difficulty it might be a good idea to have your back evaluated by a professional before you begin any exercise program. Keeping your back healthy should be something you work on every day - not just on occasion. If, however, exercise increases your pain stop immediately and see your doctor.

Try These Simple Work-outs.

1. To identify correct seated posture - sit in an extreme slouched position, then slowly draw your back up straight and arch it. Relax the arch about 10% to find your correct posture.
2. Stand with feet slightly apart and hands on lower back with fingers toward the spine. Bend backward from waist as far as you can keeping knees straight. Hold for 5 seconds. Use this exercise whenever you work in a bent forward position.
3. Any light stretching exercises you may already use to aid in strengthening of your lower back muscles can be used. Just remember not to over do as this could cause you more discomfort. Remember, start with an ant hill and build it into a mountain. Slow and steady are your guides here.

*NOTE: There are about 2000+ doctors in New York State who currently are in active practice even though they have various complaints against them. Complaints you might want to know about. If you want to check out your doctor call: 1-800-663-6114.
* Channel 4 News



--UAW-LUPA

NEWS NOTES

Get well to **Mary Bender**, who retired from Southwest. Get back on your feet soon!

Also to **Jack Zuckerman** who goes in for surgery in March and again in May.

And to **Millie O'Neil**, who had a mild heart attack at the end of September due to Emphysema; her activity is very limited. But she has the help and support of a loving family. **Millie's** Valentine article appeared in the last issue of this newsletter.

Ivy Rosenthal is in the Hospital for Joint Diseases in NYC for a knee replacement. Knowing **Ivy**, she'll dance right out of there with a tennis racket in her hand! Thinking of you **Ivy**!

And then there's **Gene LaColla** who made a wrong turn out in Lake Tahoe and met a cliff he couldn't avoid. He's home now recuperating from 6 broken ribs and a punctured lung. That was pure luck, even though he's hurting. Best wishes, **Gene**!

Heard from **Tom McDonough** recently, Sonderling Guidance. He resurfaced in Ponce Inlet in Florida, where he works at the local Safety Council as an evaluator. He interviews clients who have had a driving under the influence (DUI) arrest. He determines if that client has a risk to repeat and/or a substance abuse problem which requires the evaluator to refer that person to a local treatment provider, who determines if the client has to go into treatment. We retirees are a busy bunch.

David O. Brown is very proud of his daughter Randi Millman. She just had a book published by Chronicle Books. It's called: "Fun Places to Go with Children in New York." Sounds like something grandparents might use, as well as other family members!

CONGRATULATIONS

Editor **Chris Veech** took off for the sunny hills of Taormina, Sicily in March. Mount Etna was threatening, but didn't erupt. It was quite awesome!

FLASH!

On March 6, 1998 at 2 A.M., **Edy Filosa's** first grandchild, Helen Ann, entered the world at 9.7 lbs., 20 1/2 inches. There is one happy Q TIP floating around! Congratulations to all the Filosa's!



Another flash for the **Zuckermans**. Their son and daughter-in-law presented them with a new grandson on February 23rd, David Alex. Congratulations!

We note with sadness the death of Charles Cogen, AFT President from 1964 to 1968. He presided over a sea change in the climate surrounding teacher unionism as the AFT organized thousands of new members, won collective bargaining rights throughout the country, and expanded its role in politics and lobbying in Congress. Cogen died on February 18th at his residence in Washington D.C. of Parkinsons Disease. He was 94. This editor will miss his yearly holiday letters and his supportive friendship since she was his student at Bay Ridge High School in Brooklyn.

Air Bags...Do They Protect?

Air bags have become standard safety equipment in most cars. Designed to help protect occupants in a front or rear car crash, they are supposed to provide a cushion for people in the front seat and reduce the risk of serious injury. However, recent newspaper headlines have warned that air bags could be responsible for killing some passengers, including children, during collisions.

Air bags are not designed to protect everyone in every crash. Classified as a "supplemental" restraint system, an air bag is supposed to work in conjunction with a seat belt to hold a passenger in place so that he or she is in the proper position to be protected during a collision. Without the benefit of a seat belt, a passenger can be thrown around inside a car and be too close to the dashboard when an air bag inflates.

And air bags do fill with a lot of force. In fact, they are inflated by a small explosion of gas in a fraction of a second. Therefore, passengers should move their seats back all the way, and drivers should move back as far as possible while maintaining a safe, comfortable driving position.

Because of the force of air bags, children are especially at risk if improperly seated in the car. Many studies

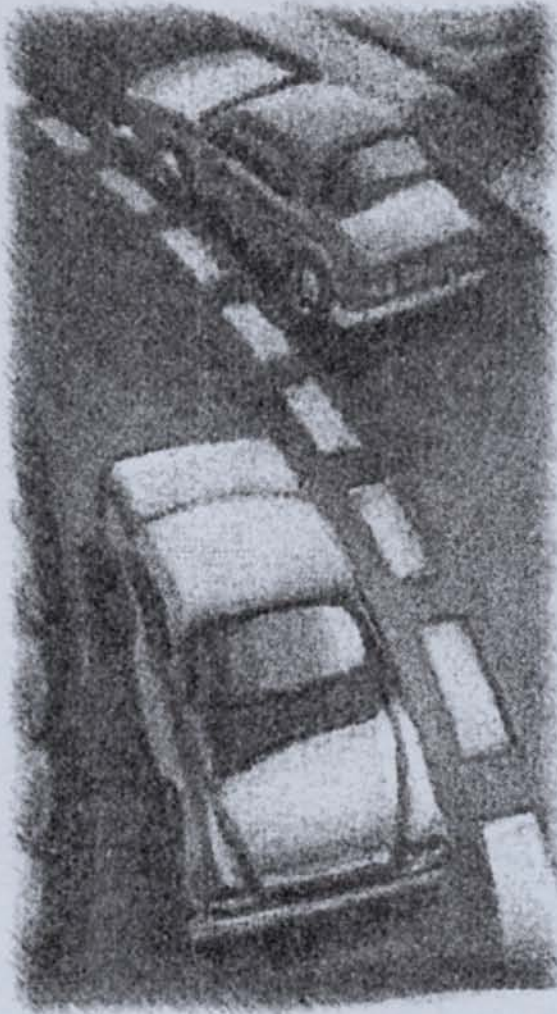
have shown that the back seat is the safest place for a child to be during a crash. Small children should always be in child safety seats designed for their size and weight. Read the instructions carefully when installing a car seat to make sure it is secure. Children too big for

child safety seats should use a regular seat belt adjusted for their size.

With all the controversy surrounding air bags lately, one thing remains clear. Air bags are only part of a safety system designed to protect you in a crash. You must wear your seat belt, especially because air bags don't inflate in all kinds of collisions. And when it comes to your child's safety, there is no substitute for a properly buckled child safety car seat, installed out of the path of an air bag.

Besides saving lives, air bags could also save you money. If you purchase automobile insurance through NYSUT Benefit Trust-endorsed METPAYSM, you could receive a discount* off certain coverages if you own a vehicle that has factory-installed air bags. For more information about the air bag discount and a free

insurance review, call the toll-free METPAY Hotline at 1 800 GET-MET 1 (1-800-438-6381). The METPAY program, underwritten by Metropolitan Property and Casualty Insurance Company and its Affiliates, Warwick, RI, is available in most states to those who qualify.



*Available in most states to those who qualify.

I need a birth control spray for
the papers on my desk. . . .
They seem to reproduce
overnight.



BRENTWOOD AUDIO HISTORY

Several years ago we began documenting an oral/video history of the Brentwood remembrances of our ROBS members. With the help of volunteers and our retirees, using volunteer equipment, we set out to interview as many people as time and energy would permit. The benefits of this project have continued to multiply along with the magnitude of the undertaking.

Since those first interviews, our membership has grown steadily. Our members now live in all parts of the country. Distance and the difficulty of scheduling interviews have presented obstacles to the project.

In an attempt to encourage broader participation we are extending an opportunity for all our members currently living outside Long Island to record their memories on an audio tape. Here's what we ask you to do!

Clip and send the coupon below to: John Sherin, 356 Dawson La., Jericho, N.Y. 11753

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

YES! I wish to participate in the Oral History Project.
Please send me a blank audio tape and a list of questions.
I will return both to ROBS.

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

