

ROBS NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 32

October 1999

EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE THREATENED (from AFT ACTION 8/13/99)

Calling the Congressional tax-cut bill the "reckless GOP bill" because the votes in favor of the plan have been largely along party lines, AFT president, Sandra Feldman, observed that neither the House or the Senate won approval by veto-proof margins.

She recently warned lawmakers that the massive tax cuts proposed by Congress "would provide unnecessary and excessive benefits primarily to wealthy Americans while placing drastic restrictions on domestic programs that are so critical to the well being of all in our nation. Before even considering a tax cut, Congress should make solvency of Social Security and Medicare, and long term investments in education, health care and other discretionary programs its top priorities."

Feldman went on to stress that expansion of the Education Savings Accounts was a particularly troubling feature of the bill. It would establish the principle of using taxpayers money to subsidize the costs of private and religious schools. "These 'covert vouchers' would do nothing to improve the public schools that serve almost 90% of our



country's children."

Feldman also warned that lawmakers were using unrealistic assumptions about a projected \$1 trillion non-Social Security surplus over the next 10 years. It assumes "no downturn in our booming economy and that existing budget caps on discretionary spending would remain in place."

More than \$700 billion of the projected surplus would come from maintaining caps on discretionary spending through 2002. That would "lead to key defense and non-defense cuts by more than 20% in real terms," she warned.

MEDICARE CALL-IN DAYS

The AFT, AFL-CIO, National Council of Senior Citizens, and the Leadership Council Of Aging Organizations, a coalition of 50 senior groups including the major ones, launched a Call the White House Program September 21 through the 23rd. It was to support the president's veto of the Republican tax cut bill and support his program to use the budget surplus to strengthen Medicare, Social Security and other vital domestic programs.

ROBS SEPTEMBER GET-TOGETHER

AT 10 A.M. at the Wednesday, September 8th meeting, ROBS began its 8th year. Hardly believable!

Sixty members and guests crowded into the Islip library to renew friendships, make new ones, and welcome some of our 22 new retirees. **MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

NOTE OCTOBER CHANGE IIIII

We hope you will join us. **WEDNESDAY**.

October 13th meeting at 10 A.M. at the Islip Library, our program will feature the History Project's newest "Time to Remember" video with John Sherin hosting.

November 3: "TAKING THE MYSTERY OUT OF MEDICARE & SOCIAL SECURITY" - Dot Z.

Wednesday, Dec. 1: HOLIDAY NOSH, place to be announced.

ALL MEETINGS AT ISLIP LIBRARY ON WEDNESDAYS at 10 A.M.

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Special points of interest:

- Support the Norwood-Dingell BI-partisan Patient Rights Bill (H.R. 2723) in Congress now! Call toll free: 1-877-633-1227, then ask for your member of Congress.
- Union COLA bill: Write state legislators about A-8516 and S-5703. Urge them to get it on the floor as soon as possible AND VOTE FOR IT!



SEASON'S GREETINGS

Summer's winding down and fall is just around the corner. It's time to wish each other a happy new year! For most of us who have spent the greater portion of our lives attuned to the school calendar, September marks a time of new beginnings, a time to kindle new ideas and anticipations. I'm writing this letter to you during Labor Day weekend – the last Labor Day of the twentieth century. People are hurrying to the stores for bargains, to the beaches for that last burst of sun, to parties and get-togethers. For us retirees, Labor Day should have a much deeper meaning.

It's time for us to give thanks to those strong men and women who fought to secure our pensions, to negotiate and guarantee our health benefits. The courage of our labor leaders won decent salary levels and working conditions for us. Nothing was gained without struggle and strife. In spite of the odds they persevered and brought to all of us the



benefits of well being we enjoy even into retirement. But this is a new year and we are faced with groups of backward looking people who are trying to take from us what we fought so hard to achieve. Social Security and Medicare are being placed on the chopping block. Health benefits are being eroded. We can't sit by and watch the destruction of what was so hard won in the past.

And we must also continue to work for the future. The battle to secure a guaranteed cost of living increase is now before us. It will not be handed to us graciously – it will be up to each and every one of us to get involved in every way to ensure passage of this important legislation.

So happy new year! As the season's change, let's toast the beginning of great expectations!

In Unity, Dot Zuckerman



WELCOME NEW RETIREES

This year Brentwood new retirees numbered 22. ROBS invites all of them to join us on this most delicious adventure called many things, but the best is GREAT!

Here they are: the soon to be relaxed and fit!

Stephanie Bail
Annie Binford
Iris Bowers
Amanda Brooks
James Doig
Emma Fernandez
Peter Ferrante
Eileen Gavigan
Gloria Graves-Holmes
Carmen Hill
James Howard



Richard Huttner
Margaret Kirchner
Robert Leiterman
Joy Licari
Nina Mulhearn
Joseph Palazzolo
Nanette Santa Croce
Karen Storjohann
Warren Swensen
Isabelle Weinberg
Peter Wohnsigl

RETIREMENT: "every day is a snow day."

WE WELCOME LETTERS TO EDITOR:

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SEND in your MEMBERSHIP on page 5 NOW

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

BY RICH EDWARDS, '98 RETIREE TOURING U.S. BY RV/MOTORCYCLE



Imagine a town where one side of Main Street is filled with quaint shops and the other side of the street is a grassy field that leads to cliffs that overlook the Pacific Ocean. A town with four bakeries and two bookstores, lots of cafes and art galleries and bed & breakfast hostels. A town with no fast food joints and no supermarkets. A place where yellow poppies and white lilies grow wild all the way down to the beach.

Mendocino is that place. There are no new structures; nearly every lovingly restored building dates back to the 1800's and early 1900's. The wooden water towers, erected before "city water" was available, are still there. The narrow horse and wagon streets are paved but still narrow. This picturesqueness made it the perfect place to film "East of Eden" with James Dean.

I camped a few miles down the road in Casper Beach. I knew it was a unique campground when I saw the sign: "No

wetsuits in the shower." Most of the other campers were either abalone gatherers or sea-kayakers. Since those activities call for entering the 47 degree water in the lagoon in front of the campground, wetsuits were quite necessary. The fish table, not far from my motor home, got a good workout each night as the abalone gatherers removed the succulent meat from the large shells.

I traveled about 180 miles north from San Francisco along the Pacific Coast Highway to get to these two places. It continues to be one of the most beautiful roads in America and I look forward to more as I make my way up to Redwood National Park, near the top of California.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dot & Jack:

Just received my ROBS Directory and once again reflected on how happy I am to be a member of ROBS. It was a long and stressful trip to gain my membership and I

sel-dom go an hour without reflecting on the fact that the hard, demanding, and often frustrating work is done. What Anne and I do now is what we choose to do now. I may look the same from the outside but inside my spirit is in springtime.

The promise of many more good things and good experiences, God willing, awaits us. I hold the other ROBS members in the greatest respect for I know what many of them have been

through, and how much unselfish service they had put in over years. Only those who have been through the system.....

You two pebbles have made some fine ripples in the pond of life! Thanks.....

I am completely involved in the networking/marketing/ fostering of my artwork Anne sews American Doll clothes, and has started craft shows. Retirement's actually been a bit better than we had dreamed. ...as many people said to me years ago. ROBS has helped give me the chance to see faces I would have missed

Rick Mundy, Setauket, N.Y.

*...the hard, demanding, and often
frustrating work is done. What (we)
do now is what we choose to do now!*

R.C. 21 BUS TRIP FOXWOOD CASINO

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1999

\$20 PER PERSON

BUS PICK UP AT NYSUT OFFICES IN HAUPPAUGE

9 A.M. & JERICHO 9:30 A.M.

BUS ARRIVES FOXWOOD NOON, DEPARTS 5 P.M.

INCLUDES: NEW BUS WITH RESTROOM, LESSONS ON TABLE GAMES, VOUCHER FOR GAMING & FOOD. SPACE LIMITED. Send check made out to NYSUT RC 21 by October 15, to: Len Klein, 4 Hickory Hills Rd., Dix Hills

11746

SPECIAL MEETING: R.C.21 & Commack Retiree chapter present:

Saul Friedman (Newsday columnist) and Jim
Lynn (Newsday senior editorial writer)

Enriching your lives in the new millenium

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

I.B.E.W. HALL, 370 Motor Pkwy., Hauppauge

\$1 secures registration

Send to: Jack Z., 8 Woody Lane, Oakdale 11769

PROJECT HOPE – LETTERS FROM THE KIDS



Dear Ms. Veech,

Mr. Frank Spencer and Mr. & Mrs. O'Connor have unselfishly volunteered their valuable time visiting Mrs. DiPietro and my classroom each week.

They have assisted children in need of extra help, as well as helping with class lessons. Besides academics, the children learned self worth, kindness and caring about others.

No amount of words could describe or praise the wonderful things that they shared with our children! We truly enjoyed every moment with our special friends.

We wanted everyone to know how much we appreciate and love these wonderful people. Our classes wrote letters for your paper. We hope you enjoy them!

Sincerely, Diana Spagnuolo

Dear Editor,

We were so lucky to have Mr. & Mrs. O'Connor visit our classroom each week. They helped us with our reading, writing and math. Mrs. DiPietro said that we received great scores on all our tests because of their help. Also Mrs. O'Connor was our special guest reader during Readers Rush Week and Mr. O'Connor told us about Jackie Robinson, a great hero. Besides learning all kinds of great things from them, Mrs. O'Connor makes the best chocolate chip cookies! We loved them.

Love, Mrs. DiPietro's class



Dear Editor,

Mr. Spencer came to our class every week since last year.

He is the best! Mr. Spencer taught us that we are special and that we can be anything we want to be if we work hard. He cared about us and told us to respect each other even if we are not old. He showed us and taught us many things.

It was so nice that Mr. Spencer took the time to come every Tuesday. We will miss Mr. Spencer next year, when we go to third grade.

We will always remember Mr.

Spencer and his kindness!

Mrs. Spagnuolo's class

HMO INDUSTRY PUTS PROFITS ABOVE PATIENTS

In the wake of a recent announcement that 41 health plans will drop 327,000 Medicare beneficiaries from their managed care roles by the end of 1999, the National Council of Senior Citizens blasted the HMO industry. This is the second unilateral "disenrollment" of seniors by HMO's in the last year. In January an additional 407,000 seniors were dropped from their plans.

NCSC Executive Director, Steve Proutulis, criticized providers who claim

that costs are squeezing them out of the Medicare market. Medicare provides affordable health care to more than 39 million older Americans. About 6.5 million seniors have switched to Medicare HMO's after being told by providers that they would pay less premiums and get more coverage.

"The HMO industry has a history of making expansive promises and delivering shrinking service," Proutulis said. "Medicare is supposed to be about health security – security that the

HMO industry clearly cannot deliver. Seniors need to understand that unlike fee-for-service Medicare, HMO coverage can be cancelled anytime."

The latest round of cutbacks will affect 1 in 20 Medicare recipients enrolled in HMO's. Those dropped have few options: either rejoin the traditional fee-for-service Medicare program and pay higher Medigap premiums, or find another HMO in their area if they can.

A LITTLE BIT OF HMO HUMOR

- Q. Do all diagnostic procedures require pre-certification?
- A. No. Only those you need.
- Q. What are pre-existing conditions?
- A. This is a phrase used by the grammatically challenged when they want to talk about existing conditions. Unfortunately we seem to be pre-stuck with it.
- Q. Well, can I get coverage for my pre-existing conditions?
- A. Certainly. As long as they don't require any treatment.
- Q. What if I'm away from home and get sick?
- A. You really shouldn't do that. You'll have a hard time seeing your primary care physician. It's best to wait until you return, then get sick.

CORTLI FALL LUNCHEON

MONDAY, October 18, 12 noon at Huntington Hilton, Melville. Speaker: Matthew Shebar of Comptroller McCall's office on COLA.

Choice of chicken or salmon, \$25 to: John Cooney, 19 Cliff Rd., Merrick, 11566.

No tickets at the door.

Membership 1999-2000



In 1995 we announced a membership dues reduction. We were able to hold the line at \$10 for the past five years. **HOWEVER, CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED AND WE NOW FIND IT NECESSARY TO BRING MEMBERSHIP DUES BACK TO \$15 A YEAR.** Our biggest expenditure is communication and mailing the newsletter. We are no longer able to use the BTA third class mailing arrangement and the cost of first class mail has increased. As we happily continue to grow, our treasury cannot continue to provide those membership services you enjoy without additional funds. As always, \$5 of your dues goes to your membership in NYSUT Retiree Council #21, while \$10 remains in the ROBS treasury.

We thank all our members for their continued support and encouragement. We hope you will continue to grow with us and share in our adventures.

-
1. I am enclosing \$15 for my 1999-2000 ROBS dues.
 I am 75 or older and am now a free life time member.

2. NAME: _____

3. ADDRESS: _____

Alternate Address: (Dates) _____

4. Social Security #: _____

5. PHONE #: _____ FAX # _____ E-MAIL _____

6. Retirement Year: _____ Building last served in: _____

7. I DO NOT WISH TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DIRECTORY.

NYSUT VOTE-COPE

Enclosed is my VOTE-COPE contribution of \$ _____ in a separate check made out to NYSUT VOTE-COPE. *Be sure to include your Social Security number.*
(Suggested contribution [but not limited to] \$20)

MAIL TO: Jack Zuckerman
8 Woody Lane
Oakdale, New York 11769-1515

RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

C/o Zuckerman
8 Woody Lane
Oakdale, N.Y. 11769-1515

Phone: 567-3866
Email: dotzee@juno.com

Mailing Address Line 1
Mailing Address Line 2
Mailing Address Line 3
Mailing Address Line 4
Mailing Address Line 5

BUY UNION MADE ITEMS



ROBS NEWSLETTER

NEWS NOTES

Ellie Steffen was honored at a party by the ALS patients she advocates for and assists. Besides her 8 year old grandson who lives with her in Woodstock, she has just acquired 3 the instant way: her son's marriage. She recently won BEST IN SHOW at the Woodstock Artists Association show, whose theme was "food." Her 9 Tillie St., Bay Shore house is for sale for \$38,000. Check it out.

At the beginning of July, we received news that **Harold Schwinger** (Sonderling English) passed away. He and his wife, Dorothy, were at the airport on the way to the Poconos when he just keeled over with a massive heart attack. Harold had been BTA treasurer when Jack Zuckerman was president.



THE GIFT OF READING: Donate a book!

Miriam Massucci is involved with the Catholic Charities Food and Nutrition Program (FAN.). One of their projects involves giving children, who may never have had one before, a book for the holidays!

Books donated must be new, unwrapped, and geared for pre-school or early elementary ages. They should be ethnically and culturally diverse as well. Call Miriam, (665-3541) or bring books to ROBS meetings and she will deliver them to an appropriate office in Suffolk.

12,000 books were collected in 1998 for gifts to young children. The hope is that this will begin the process of parents and children getting involved with each other, having quality time, and beginning a life long connection with all the joys and information a book can bring.



Have you made your travel plans for the year 2000 yet? Why not join RC 21 and hosts Dot & Jack Zuckerman on September 7, 2000 for 16 days of "The Magic of Italy!"

A \$150 DEPOSIT WILL RESERVE A PLACE FOR YOU.

Call the Zuckermans at 516-567-3866.

