

ROBS NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 33

November 1999

PROJECT HOPE GEARS UP

Thanksgiving is almost here, the holiday season is not far behind and Project Hope is gearing up for giving.



SHARE THE HOLIDAYS

There will be a Thanksgiving dinner provided for a homeless family, and we will again adopt a family for gifts during the holidays.

Anyone wishing to contribute toward Holiday giving, send contributions to Frank Spencer at 3 Nottingham Drive, Wheatley Hts., N.Y. 11798-1523. Make checks payable to: Suburban Children, Inc.. (for tax purposes).

In addition, there is the ongoing tutoring program that is by now well established in Brentwood's elementary schools. Anyone wishing to sign on to help children learn, call Frank Spencer at 253- 0355... The rewards are great!

You can volunteer any day or time you are available; during the school day, or after school at Suburban Inc., in Bay Shore.

If you travel, or if you are a snowbird, Project Hope can use your skills for short term tutoring for students who need to bone up for the increasing number of tests that are being given to meet higher school standards.



Inside this Issue:

On the Road Again	3
American Story	3
Title I- Writer's Group	back
Alerts:	back
Holiday Luncheon	5
News Notes	4
In Unity -Zuckerman	2

CHARTER SCHOOLS

- The AFT remains committed to supporting charter schools that are open to all students, engage all stakeholders, create new professional opportunities for staff, & most important, find effective ways to help students reach the state's high standards.
- But the AFT opposes charter schools that do not hold students to the state's high standards, that selectively admit students, that hide academic & financial information from the public, & that deny their employees the right to bargain collectively.

FINALLY A COLA BILL

Now it's up to us to get the New York State legislature to put A-8516 and S-5703 on the floor for a vote. The bills provide retirees of all public retirement systems in N.Y.

a permanent and automatic COLA on the first \$25,000 of their annual retirement allowance. (See July 1999 ROBS Newsletter). **SEND LETTERS!** Such as: Now is the time

for the NY State Legislature to enact ___ through which both current & future retirees can live out their retirement years in dignity & security. **Enact this important legislation.**

SIXTY FIVE YEARS AND STILL WAITING

I have just finished reading the second volume of Eleanor Roosevelt, the biography by Blanche Wiesen Cook. I believe Eleanor Roosevelt was the most influential woman of this century. She has always been my mentor. It came as an overwhelming surprise to learn that universal health care has been a side-stepped issue all the way back to the new deal! When FDR introduced his social security program in January 1935, he included government assistance in all areas except health insurance. The American Medical Association had strongly opposed the introduction of health care into the social security act. The fear was over "socialized medicine." In spite of E.R.'s persistent lobbying for a national health care program, FDR put off any further discussion on the subject during his tenure. So here we are almost 65 years later, still fighting the same fight

and still listening to the same arguments against universal health care for all our citizens. Today the insurance companies have joined the fray. The primary question our country has refused to face is whether the role of government is to provide for the needs and care of the many or for the profits of the few. Throughout the world, universal health care has become a hallmark of social legislation. We have just visited Scandinavian countries that have a proud and long-standing history of providing universal health care while their citizens willingly pay the necessary taxes to protect their well-being. Enlightened governments have recognized the overwhelming need to maintain a

healthy, informed populace, capable of providing for their families while making their contribution to the economy without fear of destitution caused by illness. As we close this century we must assume the responsibility for making our voices heard. Universal health care in America is no longer a matter to be put aside for another day. Eleanor Roosevelt is no longer here to speak for our cause. It's up to each one of us to pick up the mantle she so bravely carried and to wear it as our own. If we don't do it, who will?

In Unity, Dot Zuckerman



PATIENTS BILL OF RIGHTS

The AFT is calling for the help of all members to contact their members of both houses in congress supporting the Dingell-Norwood Bill which passed the House by a surprising 275-151 vote in October.

This bill includes whistleblower protection to forbid retaliation against health

care professionals who report inferior care - a top priority of the AFT. The bill also removes the special immunity from lawsuits for HMO's.

The bill now goes to a conference committee and must overcome the weak bill passed by the Senate last

summer which omits whistleblower protection and maintains HMO lawsuit immunity.

WRITE YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. The wide margin of victory in the House - including 68 Republicans - gives the Patient's Bill of Rights a fighting chance!

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The M-T Corner

"Teachers are going to have to forget most of what they learned about professionalism in the past half century. They will have to reverse roles and become participants - along with parents, paraprofessionals and outside community resource people - in the many educational games that will go on, learning at the same time they are teaching."

Alvin Toffler

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

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



I removed the visor on my motorcycle helmet in order to drive along the "Avenue of the Giants" on the way to Redwood National Park. I needed to look up, way up, and the visor would not let me see the tops of the trees that were over 300 feet tall.

There are many places to see the redwoods in Northern California. They're all over the northern coast but one does not get tired of them. John Steinbeck once said: "The redwoods, once seen, leave a mark or create a vision that stays with you always...from them comes silence and awe. The most irreverent of men, in the presence of redwoods,

goes under a spell of wonder and respect."

Indeed, driving on a road bordered with these huge trees is like entering a cathedral. They block out the sky and it grows dark. They smother sound and it becomes quiet. There is a damp freshness in the air.

Redwood National Park is combined with several California State Parks to preserve the redwoods, protecting them especially from the lumber industry. Harvesting redwoods is big business. The attitude of many residents is captured in

the name of a local high school marching band, "The Fighting Lumberjacks."

The parks are necessary to save the redwoods from those who call conservationists "tree-huggers."



Anyone who doesn't love a tree?

TEACHERS: THE AMERICAN STORY

On October 13th, those who attended the ROBS General Meeting were treated to another "Time To Remember," video from the History Project chaired by John Sherin. John received multiple calls afterwards from people who missed it, and wanted to see it.

Those interviewed this time covered areas from their own immigration and struggles to succeed to gender/race issues, as well as the importance of education to fulfill dreams. It was definitely a video about all of us in one way or other, and beautifully put together by John.

There were vignettes: a first year secretary in the position of opening a brand new building because the principal was ill. (We always knew the secretary was the most organized person in a building)!

A teacher, fearful of a student because he looked the part of a hoodlum, and finding that he was really a sweet, gentle, frightened soul. The lesson learned: outward looks don't mirror the inner self.

Interestingly enough, Frank McCourt was interviewed in the *TIMES MAGAZINE*, and asked to offer his thoughts about the

state of education. As one letter to the editor stated: "the questions... were never asked of McCourt during his 25 years as a teacher," just now that he is famous. The letter writer went on to suggest: "An exit interview with experienced teachers would be a good first step in separating the educationally possible from the miasma of slogans and jargon...your interview with McCourt became the exit interview we never received. Perhaps now attention may finally be paid."

Seems to me ROBS is way ahead of the game. We've been doing exit interviews for five years!

ON-LINE HELP

Talk With Teachers allows veteran teachers to give newcomers advice & assistance via e-mail. It's "New Teachers On-Line" web site: www.teachernet.org

HISTORY PROJECT LOOKING FOR A CAMERA BUFF TO TAKE DIGITAL PHOTOS FOR COMPUTER DISC.

Call John Sherin: 931-2971

NEWS NOTES

Heard from **Mary Bender**, Southwest Elementary. She had surgery recently. Spent 12 days in ICU. She's thankful she's still around. Stay well **Mary**.

Janet Anderson, "ye olde secretary from Ross Guidance," who retired in 1998, e-mailed us. She loves it in North Carolina (except for the hurricanes). They were fortunate this fall that water was lapping on their 2nd step, but didn't make it up one more and into the house. They are 40 minutes below Wilmington, N.C. and 30 miles above Myrtle Beach, S.C. Janet & husband Alan relocated from Holbrook to Calabash, N.C. last year. That's just 5 miles from the S.C. border! Janet's e-mail is: alanjanet@nccoast.net



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Dot,

We've settled in to Upstate living. Everyone who lives here likes it here, everyone is very friendly. I've renewed some friendships with SUNY Albany classmates, and am co-councilor of the class of '64... We have a little circle of friends already.

I guess ROBS is gearing up again, so you'll be even busier. How well attended was the first meeting? I'll miss seeing John's video this year. Maybe I'll arrange a private showing someday! ..it feels so different

Also had a note from **Mary Saikin** who retired from Northeast and enjoys our newsletter. She's in PA. & FL.

Ruth Cummings writes from Ticonderoga, N.Y. that she is enjoying foliage season greatly. Since the World Figure Skating Championships are being held in Nice, France, she's decided there isn't any better place to spend a few weeks in March 2000. Happy tripping!

Just returned from a Mediterranean cruise are **Vern and Frank Spencer**. They hit such ports as Venice, Athens, Barcelona and Malta, Lillian Kelly's homeland.

Thomas O'Connor is chairman of The Michael Grant Scholarship Fund, designed to aid local Brentwood students starting with a student entering college in the fall of 2000. Checks to the MGS Fund, PO 578, Brentwood.

receiving the newsletter as an Upstater. The news was really new! Speaking of news, I guess everyone has heard about **John Durant's** illness and retirement. Also **Barry Finkelstein** surprised everyone and announced his retirement at the end of June.

Fondly, Carole Bruno
Saratoga Springs, N.Y..

Dear Jack,

Looking at your name I suddenly remembered that one year in the 1960's you went off on one of your

We just heard that **Bernie Kaplan** of Wantagh, who retired from Southwest, is getting married this month.



On October 23rd, more than 200 people crowded into Captain Bill's Restaurant to celebrate **John Durant's** retirement. He retired from his position as Chair of the Math Department, but had taught math for many years at the high school. Our best wishes, **John!**

And **Marie Jarolm** sadly informed us about the death at Christmas 1997 of **Elizabeth Matson**, of Holtsville, who was an elementary special education teacher in SE and North. She had no family and was wheelchair dependent.

educational tangents and left me with that special group of sweet misfits - Those who were encouraged to stay in school - well, damn it, they did stay for the year, but I survived the ordeal. Oh happy/unhappy thoughts...

Smile, Rolf Meier, Centereach, N.Y.



ROBS HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

WEDNESDAY, December 1, 1999

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

12 o'clock

IRISH COFFEE PUB

131 Carlton Avenue

East Islip, N.Y.

277-0007



- Appetizer: Soup de Jour
- Garden Salad with creamy dill dressing
 - Entrée Choice:
 - Sliced Steak Forestiere
 - Chicken Champani
 - Filet of Salmon
- Dessert: Warm Apple Crumb ala mode
 - Coffee, Tea, soda
 - Cash Bar

Robs Members: \$17 ; Non Members: \$18.50

Tax & Tips included

Seating limited to 50

Reserve by November 22

Clip & send check made out to RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS BY Monday, November 22 to:
Harriet Pepine, 82 Gloria Blvd., Hauppauge, N.Y. 11788; 234-1247

NAME _____ No. Attending _____

ADDRESS _____ Amt. Enclosed _____

PHONE _____

RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS
C/o Zuckerman
8 Woody Lane
Oakdale, N.Y. 11769-1515

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

DISASTER RELIEF: Union members in Florida, Georgia, Virginia, & N.C. who were victims of Hurricane Floyd are eligible for special assistance through Union Privilege Programs. If you participate, call toll free: Union Plus Credit Card, 800-622-2580; Union Member Mortgage & Real Estate, 800-848-6466; and Union Plus Loan Program, 800-343-7097



BLACK CAUCUS HEARS FROM AFT ON TITLE I

The AFT continues to make the case for reauthorization of the federal Title I program based on sensible reforms instituted five years ago.

Addressing the Congressional Black Caucus annual legislative conference, AFT's political & legislative mobilization department director Juanita Dunlop Smith called for staying the course on the standards-based Title I program put in place during the 1994 reauthorization. "The law's basic framework - implementing high standards in the core academic subjects - is the right one," she said. Title I funding, she

pointed out, has helped to close the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged and advantaged children.

Smith also urged continued support "for the important role of paraprofessionals in Title I programs." Responding to concerns that too many paras are actually teaching students, Smith said the answer is to close loopholes in the law that allow districts to use paras inappropriately and fail to provide them with the necessary training. "When properly trained, supervised and assigned, paras are effective". From AFT ACTION, 10/8/99

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The ROBS Writer's Group wants to know what you think. This is the 1st in a series of 3 issues on Title I. The other 2 will be in the next two issues of this newsletter.

Congress is considering reauthorization of Title I. **If passed, the proposed measure would require schools receiving federal funds to provide parents with:**

Data indicating whether teachers are licensed or trained to teach classes to which they have been assigned.

WRITE TO US

11 Yates Ave Commack, NY11725