



ROBS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2004

RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

ISSUE 55

**TIE A SHEET OF FABRIC
SOFTENER IN YOUR BELT
LOOP TO REPEL
MOSQUITOES WHEN OUT
THIS SUMMER.
PREVENTS MUSTY SUIT-
CASES & CARS TOO.**



**CONGRATULATIONS ON
FREEDOM!**

Clerical retirees

Marie Cohn, Payroll 7/24

Roberta Columbo Ross
8/7

Ann Walters Northeast
7/7

OUTSOURCING REPUBLICAN VOTER LISTS

Excerpted from KA Badarinarth & Prerna K. Mishra's piece in the *Hindustan Times* (NYSUT Listserv: 6/18)

Until very recently, the fund raising and vote seeking campaign for the Republican party was done partly out of India.

For 14 months, between May 16, 2002 and July 22, 2003, HCLBPO Services – the 100% owned subsidiary of Shiv Nadar – promoted HCL Technologies which had some 125 agents working in 7 teams soliciting financial contributions ranging between \$5 and \$3,000 from lists of Republican voters. The data base was provided by the Republican National Committee.

The contract was originally awarded by the RNC to Washington based Capital Communications Group. For cost & efficiency reasons, the company outsourced the work to HCL Technologies which sent it off

shore. HCLBPO Services refused to comment.

According to deal details, 75 agents worked on a \$9.25 per hour billing rate, and contacted at least 20,000 voters through an automatic dialer.

During the campaign, HCL ran nearly 6 – 7 campaigns (polls) on various issues, some in the form of simple yes or no polls on issues like Pro Choice/Pro Life.

There were other campaigns for fund raising where the voter would pledge to the party. The RNC would follow up in the U.S. for fund retrieval. By conservative estimates, at least \$10 million was committed to President Bush's campaign through the BPO centers in India.

But the million dollar question is why was the contract

called off? Insiders say the growing resentment in the US against outsourcing to India and strong reactions from candidate Sen. John Kerry were at the root of capping the contract. There is also an anti outsourcing lobby within the RNC which had a hand in it too.

But according to HCL sources, one consideration was non-viability in the last few months after having covered most voters from the RNC data base.

Perhaps the Indian political establishment can take a lesson or two from the RNC and outsource its fundraising campaign during the next general elections.

(Ed. Note: Interesting. Now our voter lists have gone global, and India knows who voted Republican...with phone numbers included).

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KERRY ON STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY: (AFT Retiree)

The economic policies of the last 3 years have resulted in the loss of 1.2 million jobs overall and 2.7 million lost manufacturing jobs. Incomes are down, costs for healthcare, college, energy & childcare are up. Debt & bankruptcy stand at record levels. The economy is 7 million jobs short of what the president predicted his policies would create. The ones being created are paying more than \$9,000 less than those they replaced. Profits are rising, real wages are

stagnant. If wages had grown as they did in the past, each household would be earning \$2,600 more than it is today.

To begin to address these issues, Democrat Sen. John Kerry is proposing:

- An end to tax breaks for companies that move jobs overseas, (see story above) & tax cuts for corporations that keep jobs in America.
- Healthcare relief by cutting annual insurance premiums by up to

\$1,000 through a federal government pickup of 75 % of hospital costs for patients with over \$50,000 in medical bills.

- An annual tax credit – not a deduction – on the first \$4,000 spent for college tuition. This tax credit would be refundable for low-income households.

(Ed. Note: Haven't seen Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11"? See it this summer! Remember, a documentary = an Op Ed piece)

PHYLLIS'S FORUM

Phyllis Goodwin, President – (631-673-2971)



Dear Colleagues,

We had a lovely luncheon at Gatsby's in Islip. There were 62 people in attendance and a great time was had by all. It was wonderful seeing good friends again

The State Legislature adjourned on June 23rd failing to pass a budget or to regulate assisted living facilities or to enact a state bulk purchasing authority for prescription drugs. A budget extension was passed to fund the state through August 2nd. There is hope that when the legislators return, the budget will be passed before the Republican National Convention on August 30th.

The largest stumbling block is the institution of the court-ordered increased funding for NYC and the poorer school districts in the state, such as Brentwood. The Assembly and the Senate passed a bill to establish a Bill of Rights for Older Persons (A9587 and S6007) sponsored by Senator Martin Golden and Assemblyman Steve Englebright.

Reminders: Please make sure to fill out and send in the NYSUT payroll deduction form for Vote/Cope or if you prefer you may enclose a separate Vote /Cope check with your dues.

Starting in September, our meetings will be moved to

Thursday's at 10 AM at the Bay Shore Brightwaters Library.

We hope that this change in day will increase attendance at our meetings. We try to bring good programs to you but we need you there to participate and to disseminate the information. Meetings are more enjoyable when you **bring a friend.**

I hope that your summer is enjoyable and we look forward to seeing you in September.

In Harmony,
Phyllis Goodwin

From: Lilian Kelly, June 30, 2004

I called Nick Massimo at FITZHARRIS (516-777-4800) and expressed my concern that the bill for life insurance had not been sent out in June. FITZHARRIS is dealing with a different company this year and the bills had not as yet been sent out but would be sent out this week. Keep an eye out for this bill. (Ed. Note: Got mine.

Deadline extended till July 31).

From: Marilyn DePlaza, July 2004

A few months ago, **Mort Ostfeld**, a colleague who was a counselor during the 60's, wrote us asking if we knew where **Marvin Davis** was. Last week, **Lilian Kelly** found that he and his wife are living here in Delray Beach, just 10 minutes from Mort. They got together over the weekend. Thanks again to ROBS for keeping us all connected.

FRAUD ALERT: The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) suggests you call the 3 national credit reporting organizations to place a fraud alert on your name and Social Security number **before anything happens.** The alert flags creditors to contact you before opening a new charge account or authorizing a large purchase. Whichever number you call will notify the other two to place a fraud alert on your name. Husband and wife must call separately. The numbers are: Equifax, 800-525-6285; Experian, 888-397-3742; Trans Union, 800-680-7289. The Social Security fraud line is: 800-269-0271.

Environmentally Friendly Lifestyle: "Moving Out and Moving In" is a 10 page booklet you can read at (www.epa.gov/epaoswer/aging/move.pdf). It gives detailed suggestions on downsizing plus tips on how to live an environmentally friendly lifestyle in your new home.



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**HAPPY
SUMMER
VACATION !
Remember
when it ended?
Now it never
does!
Like snow days**

RC 21 ACTIVITIES

R.O.B.S. members are eligible to participate in a plethora of activities organized by the Benefits Committee of RC21. Usually these activities are listed on the RC21 Website<http://nysut.org/retiree21>

On August 26th there is a "Theater Party" to see Fosse at the Patchogue Theater with lunch before the show at Trios. Application available from Marie Kanzler 631-581-5981.

On September 8th ..Driving Course ... Application available from Simonne Harkavy 631-661-4446.

Bridge lessons start September 10th ... Application available from Marie Kanzler.

Since very often these trips/activities are extremely popular getting the application and payment in as soon as possible is very important.

Check SPOTLIGHT for further information.

Lilian Kelly

NYSUT NOTES

Dorothy Zuckerman, NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant (631-273- 8822)

(e-mail: dzuckerm@nysutmail.org)**What Have They Done For Us Lately?**

We have reached the stage in our life when we thought we could leave work behind us and enjoy the pleasures of retirement that we planned for over the years. We now find that our world has been turned upside down. Our sense of security and well being is being challenged as never before in our lifetime.

The Medicare Prescription Drug Bill: Under this new "modernization act" thousands of seniors will be worse off than we were under the traditional Medicare program. Our health care costs will continue to increase while the private companies will reap huge profits from our medical needs. We have grave concerns about the future of our supplemental health benefits: will we continue to receive the coverage we had when we retired or will we be turned over to the federal government prescription drug plan instead? Will we be able to afford our medical costs as prices continue to escalate because of unrestrained controls?

The Health of Social Security and Medicare: We have been warned that Social Security and Medicare are about to face a shortfall of trillions of dollars and that the programs will soon be dismantled because of lack of funds. We have been told that the only way to correct this trend is to throw out the tried and trusted and successful programs we have known and to re-structure them under private plans. The real fact is that Social Security will be fully funded through 2042; after that there will be enough money to provide 73% of the benefits. In fact the funds generated by Social Security payroll payments are being used to help offset the increasingly gigantic federal deficit generated by massive tax cuts. Traditional Medicare has already been dismantled and now there is a major thrust to privatize Social Security "in order to save it"!

Misinformation and Confusion: Millions of our taxpayer dollars are being spent to advertise the new Medicare prescription drug plan with misleading claims, paid actors and gross misstatements of fact. Projected costs for the new Medicare program were underestimated by more than \$100 billion dollars and weren't corrected until after the bill became law. The new discount drug cards have caused massive confusion for our most vulnerable seniors.

So let's face the reality - we definitely haven't left our work behind us. There is a great deal we must do and continue to do to turn our world right again. We've got to stay informed. We must continue to let our legislators know what we need and what we want. We've got to continue to meet and discuss and set our agenda. Above all, we must not sit back and do nothing. Democracy gives us the right to take action.

BITS & PIECES

According to Lynn Brenner who writes for **NEWSDAY's ACT II, estate planning is vital for unmarried couples.**

Advantages available only to married couples include automatic inheritance rights, (in NY a spouse is automatically entitled to \$50,000 or 1/3rd of the estate, whichever is bigger. If you die without a will, NY law divides your assets between the spouse and kids. It provides nothing for lifelong companions or friends).

Advantages also include unlimited marital deduction on estate taxes, unlimited tax-free gifts to each other, the right to be beneficiary on employer sponsored retirement plans, the right to roll deceased spouse's retirement plans and IRA accounts into one's own name & postpone

withdrawals until 70 1/2, and Social Security benefits.

Unmarried couples can protect each other by writing wills in each other's favor, naming each other as insurance beneficiaries, and owning assets jointly with right of survivorship. Also, sign a health care proxy giving your partner the legal right to make medical decisions for you if you are incapacitated.

Also, consider a revocable trust naming the partner as the beneficiary. As trustee you control the assets and you can change beneficiaries at any time. The main advantage is the trust is less easily contested.

Consider having life insurance policies owned by your partner or by an irrevocable trust so it is not included in your taxable estate.

Add your partner to the deed for your

house and you're making a gift equal to half your equity. You must file a gift tax return, but no tax will be due because you can give away up to \$1 million during your lifetime without owing a gift tax. This does reduce your estate tax exclusion - \$1.5 million this year.

In addition, you can give gifts up to \$11,000 each to as many people as you like every year, free of tax.

In the battle over legalizing same-sex marriage, it's only a matter of time before tax law takes center stage. Massachusetts has until next year to work state law out. But, Massachusetts couples won't automatically qualify for federal marital tax rights, because the Defense of Marriage Act refuses federal recognition of same-sex marriage. That law is bound to be challenged, according to Mark Kozol a tax attorney in Quincy, MA, but it may not happen for years.

BUSH-KERRY UPDATE UNIONVOICE.ORG

"I don't cross picket lines. I never have." With these eight words, this past weekend (6/27) Sen. John Kerry illustrated the stark difference between himself and George W. Bush on workers' rights, including workers' freedom to form and join unions.

Sen. Kerry cancelled a speech at a major meeting of U.S. mayors rather than cross a picket line of firefighters and police who have been working in Boston without a contract--some as long as two years. Unlike President Bush, Sen. Kerry strongly supports workers' freedom to form unions. Take action on these differences at http://www.unionvoice.org/ct/pdaVI_MIX7ZS/

Where do the presidential candidates stand? Sen. Kerry is a co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act--the most important piece of workers' rights legislation in decades--which would help stop the employer harassment and intimidation workers face when forming a union. President Bush hasn't taken a public stand on the legislation--but his administration is actively working to undermine workers' unions and stack the National Labor Relations Board with anti-worker appointees who have indicated their intention to roll back workers' rights.

During the Voice @ Work National Workplace Week of Action June 28-July 4, thousands of people reclaimed Independence Day and demanded that we restore workers' freedom to form unions and bargain collectively in America.

Today, workers have lost this right in America's workplaces. In fact, workers who attempt to form unions in the private sector are illegally fired in % of union election campaigns. The Employee Free Choice Act would remove many of the obstacles workers currently face. Please stand in solidarity on this important issue and take action right now at http://www.unionvoice.org/ct/pdaVI_MIX7ZS/

Everyone suffers when workers lose the freedom to form unions. The Employee Free Choice Act would allow workers to form a union through a majority verification process, allow employees to seek mediation and arbitration in securing a first contract and increase penalties against employers that violate the law.

KERRY, BUSH SQUARE OFF ON PATIENTS' RIGHTS, VETERANS' BENEFITS.

AFT Retiree

Renewed debate over patients' rights legislation and veterans' benefits has dominated the presidential campaign as presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry (Mass.) and President Bush traded barbs over the issues. The renewed debate on patients' rights comes in response to a U.S. Supreme Court decision on June 21 that limited the ability of patients to file suit against HMOs in state court. In a speech at the SEIU convention June 23, Kerry criticized Bush for helping defeat bipartisan legislation that would have allowed patients to sue HMOs in state court for unlimited damages.

Kerry said that Bush opposed the Texas law involved in the Supreme Court case when he served as governor of the state, praised the law in his 2000 presidential campaign, and, as president, sent the solicitor general to fight the law at the Supreme Court. Aides to Kerry said that if he's elected, he will make patients' rights a major focus of his healthcare agenda.

The day before, Kerry cancelled campaign appearances to return to Washington, to vote for a veterans' healthcare measure--only to see the vote delayed by the Senate Republican leadership. The veterans' health measure, sponsored by Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), would have increased spending for veterans' healthcare by 30 percent next year and required continued funding increases related to the number of veterans and the cost of healthcare. The bill would have expanded access to full health coverage to an additional 500,000 veterans.

A spokesperson for the Bush campaign said, "mandatory spending increases are the wrong approach for America's veterans."

An interesting aside: one of our ROBS members had a discussion with a WW II marine while buying a rose for Memorial Day. Both agreed that the important thing about the U.S. is that democracy means we have the freedom to disagree (the ROBS member was opposed to the Iraq war) and that is the concept our service people fight for. They also both agreed that what is happening to veteran's benefits, and the extension of duty in Iraq, is an abomination of their rights. And both agreed that they hoped the % of those eligible to vote this time will be much higher than some 38% in 2000! That right is also what our soldiers are fighting for and always have.

GET OUT AND VOTE IN NOVEMBER. Take your neighbors too!

NEWS NOTES

Tidbits heard at the June Luncheon: Barbara and **Tom O'Connor** (Sonderling '92) were beaming and showing pictures of their first grandchild, 6 week old Breana, child of daughter Kathy. The kid is gorgeous! **Ida Donald** (Ross '96) is off to Hawaii in August. **Elmon Kazandjian** (Sond. '91) was beaming about her children and grandchildren and is still a happy child care person. **Anna Mattausch** (Ross Guid. '72) attended as usual and was her cheery self. June & **Aram Athanasian** (Sond/W Jr.) '91) just returned from their semi annual trip to Vermont, fly fishing!

Clint Spahr (Southeast '97) asked us to make a correction in last issue's reporting of his stamp collection at the Hobby Day meeting in April. We stated that he had the largest collection of stamps in N.Y. and was listed in the "Guinness Book of Records." **WRONG.** We should have said he has one of the largest stamp collections in the state, and was listed in "Who's Who in New York." Either way, he is a formidable stamp collector!

Adrienne Eastman (Human Resources '00) was just elected 1st Vice President of the Brentwood Homemakers. Congrats! **Chris Veech** (Ross '91) is stepping down after 3 years as founding co-chair of the Nassau/Suffolk Community of Faith Task Force on Domestic Violence but will remain as editor of their newsletter. The Task Force is an Agency/Faith networking group.

Grace Mannino (2000) has moved to Rockland County. She & husband Vincent split their time between 188 N. Route 303, Unit 2, Congers, NY 10920 and Marco Island, FL. Their son, Frank, a N. Carolina State U. 3rd year Phd student in Bioinformatics, married his high school sweetheart in April. Congratulations!

Shirley Seiden Smith (Ross '95) has moved into a new home in Arizona. Her new email address is: ssmith221@cox.net

Thanks to **Shirley Walker Lloyd** (Hemlock '95) for serving so ably as ROBS secretary for the past two years. **Mary Ruffino** is taking on that role for the next two years.

Our coping thoughts go out to **Peter Cerullo** (North '83) as he undergoes dialysis 3x a week. And to **Beverly Carpenter** Southwest '94) who is recuperating from a fall. Get well to **Jean Geraci** (sec'y. to supt.).



Sympathies are extended to **Carl Fogliano** (Sond. '91) who lost his 99 year old father in May; Pat Landry & **Marge Kirchner's** (Loretta Pk...Laurel Pk. '99) mother in May as well.



We lost **Jim Cliggett** (Ross '93) in May and **Leonard Seiden** (TP, Pine Park '85). **Jim**, who relocated to Florida touched the lives of many of us with his wit. He is survived by his sister, Mary Cliggett at 6252 Alexandria Circle, Ft. Pierce, FL 34982. **Len** died of congestive heart failure at the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington in Rockville, MD. He is survived by his wife, Betty, and their daughter. **Martin Kushnick** (North Jr. '91) passed away in April, as did **Ed Settle** and **Madeline Moger** (Data Processing '84).

July 2 saw the passing of **Marvin Cooper's** (North Jr. '90) wife Muriel (Mickey). **Marv's** address is 295 Terry Road, Smithtown, NY 11787. Phone: 631-724-5299. **Alberta Shyvall (Malek)** (secretary Pine Park) lost her husband of less than 2 years to recently diagnosed cancer in February. Her address is 5 Washington Court, Smithtown, NY 11787. Our thoughts go out to all family and friends.

GENERAL MEETINGS FOR THE 2004-'05 ROBS YEAR

MARK YOUR CALENDARS All Meetings at Bay Shore Library, 10 A.M.

September 9 (Thursday) March 10 (Thursday)

October 14 (Thursday) April 14 (Thursday)

November 10 (Wednesday) May 12 (Thursday)

December 3 (Thursday) Holiday Luncheon June 3 (Friday) Luncheon

January 7 (Friday) New Year Breakfast

ROBS SCHOLARSHIP LETTERS

Dear Ms. Goodwin and Retirees of Brentwood Schools,

On behalf of the recipients of the Retirees of Brentwood Schools scholarship, thank you. My name is Jennifer da Silva and I am one of your gracious recipients. I received one of your five hundred-dollar awards and I just wanted to let you know and those you represent know that their money will not be wasted. I appreciate all of your help.

I will be attending SUNY Oswego, where my major shall be in Earth Science and environmental Science / education. I will also continue hobbies such as; art, literature, track and field and I will maintain my rigorous study habits. I have decided to become an earth science teacher due to the inspiration and guidance of a current retired teacher. **Mr. (Paul) Fein** was my ninth grade earth science teacher and his methods have encouraged me to continue his work. The dream lives on in me. Thank you Mr. Fein, Ms. Goodwin and all of the Retirees of Brentwood Schools.

Gratefully Yours,
Jennifer da Silva

Dear Ms. Goodwin,

I would like to thank you for your generous scholarship that I was awarded at the Scholarship Awards night at Brentwood High School. Your continuing support of the community and of education is greatly appreciated. The money will be used wisely. Thank you so much.

Regards,
Spencer Blumenfeld
Ithaca College, Music Education and Eagle Scout

Dear Phyllis Goodwin,

Thank you for the scholarship that I have received from your department and staff. You can rest assured that I will put the money to good use in college. Thank you again and God Bless.

Sincerely,
Tiffany Pannell

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR 2004 GRADUATES



Rachel Barr, Carol Basso, Carole Beedy, Chandra Butts, Marie Cohen, Joan Cook, Charles DiGiovanni, AnnMarie DiSibio, Richard Feldman, Bobbe Frankel, Joe Governale, Gail Inzerilla-Latella, Dalmar Kittredge, Milagros Kresse, Mary Jane Lugovsky, Scott Lyons, Diana Mallon, Daniel Malossi, Eleanor Meineke, John Olshlager, Roberta Palumbo, Stephen Peters, Joyce Pittinaro, Steve Rochester, Catherine Rosario-Rodriguez, Joe Scalise, Jeanne Scholl, Robert Shanley, James Smith, Janice Stanzin, Alida Thorpe, Christian Thorpe, Leon Weissman, Ann Walters and Teri Wolf.

MEMBER SURVEY
2004/2005

Over the last few months we have received some inquiries and suggestions about member activities. We have put together this survey and hope that you will read, complete and return it so we can gauge what new activities we may introduce to the group. **Please understand that this is just a survey and not a list of scheduled activities or events.** We will compile and publish the results of this survey in an upcoming newsletter. Thank you for your participation. Please return this survey with your renewal form.

- want to receive meeting and other notices by e-mail.
- interested in bridge/Scrabble/Trivial Pursuit after meetings.
- prefer afternoon activities rather than mornings.
- want to write an article in the newsletter.
- interested in joining the Brentwood Writers Group.
- would like to see a late summer picnic for members and family.
- notification of day or short trips. **This would NOT be an official ROBS activity. All we would do is seek out information and circulate it among interested parties.**
- Book Buddy program – book swapping after meetings.
- reading and discussion group.
- have a hobby or talent like quilting, wood working, wine making, knitting, painting, jewelry making, magic, etc., that I would like to share and teach.
- able to attend rallies or lobbying events.
- looking for golf or tennis partner.
- would like to see a Letters to the Editor segment in the newsletter.
- would like to see more member profiles in the newsletter.
- would like a “whatever happened to....” column where we could reconnect with colleagues we have lost touch with.
- would like an “Educated Guess” guest column in the newsletter.

- () would like a "See You In September" breakfast/luncheon.
- () would enjoy an evening of music performed by our members.
- () would like to attend a "Senior Prom".
- () none of the above **but I have a great idea:** _____

My name is _____

Call me at: _____



Please return this survey to:
Phyllis Goodwin
114 East Rogues Path
Huntington Station NY 117 46