



## ROBS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2006

RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

ISSUE 66



### WE'VE RELOCATED!

General meetings are now at the  
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**FRIDAYS - 2006  
NOVEMBER 10**

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See flyer in this issue

**2007**

**FRIDAY**

**FEBRUARY 9**

**NEW YEAR BREAKFAST**

**FRIDAYS - 2007**

**MARCH 9**

**APRIL 13**

**MAY 11**



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### **ROLL BACK MEDICARE MEANS-TESTING**

H.R. 5147, a bill to repeal the means-testing provisions in the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act, scheduled to start Jan. 1, 2007, has been tied up in committee without a vote. The discharge petition, must be signed by 218 representatives, and requires an up/down vote by the House.

Under the 2003 Medicare law, for the first time, monthly Part B premiums seniors pay will be tied to their income. Almost 2 million seniors will be hit with a substantially higher premium. For higher-income seniors, premiums will jump to \$106 a month, \$143 a month and as much as \$162 a month. Within 3 years, it is estimated that some will be paying \$391 per month.

Those with incomes under

\$80,000 a year (individual) and \$160,000 a year (couple) will pay \$93.50 per month next year. Premiums for high-income seniors will continue to skyrocket dramatically—reaching almost \$400 a month for some by 2009.

In addition, President Bush's budget would require, over time, more middle-income seniors to pay these higher Medicare premiums due to elimination of the inflation adjustment. Please call your U.S. representative on AFT's toll-free hotline to the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 1-866-327-8670 and ask that he/she sign the discharge petition on H.R. 5147.

### **AFT CREDIT CARD OFFER CONSUMER ALERT**

A "credit" offer recently mailed to some AFT members from Union Workers Credit Services, implies on its Web site that the company is associated with the AFT and other international unions. **IT IS NOT!** We've demanded to be deleted from its Web site. Beware any credit card offer that requires you to pay a fee before you learn the details of the offer. Be sure that solicitation is from a bank that issues regular credit cards & not from a company, such as Union Workers Credit Services, that provides a card that can be used only to order from a catalog. Spread the word so fellow retirees are protected from a misrepresentation of an AFT program.

### **JACK ZUCKERMAN, FORMER BTA PRESIDENT DIES**

Jack Zuckerman retired from Ross High School in 1990 and rather than "fade away," helped found ROBS and Retiree Council 21 which has led to a strong focus on retiree issues through NYSUT's Retiree Council. In ill health for some time, Jack succumbed to a cerebral hemorrhage on October 23.

Master teacher, BTA president, political advocate, husband, father and grandfather, Jack's funeral was attended

by NYSUT & BTA notables, as well as so many friends.

With quotations from John Donne and Alfred Tennyson, Jack was lauded as a man who never gave up. Even bound to a wheel chair, he joined Dot and other retired teachers on a trip to Alaska this spring. At home, he took great pride in the freedom his motorized scooter gave him.

Son Richard called his father, who served in Korea, a complex man who always

came out on the side of justice. He taught his children, and his students, to think for themselves.

For daughter Gerri, her father was a towering giant and the strongest person she knew.

Jack and Dot had been married 51 years, a union based on shared ideals and respect.

Jack will be greatly missed by family, friends, and the many people he helped during his productive life.



# PHYLL'S FORUM

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



Dear Colleagues,

The passing of Jack Zuckerman has left a void in our organization. I knew Jack for approximately 40 years and find difficulty in knowing that he won't be there to answer my obscure questions or give me some insight as to why my computer decided to go on vacation. His capacity to listen and give everyone a chance to state his or her case – no matter how insignificant – was a source of amazement to me. I will miss him dearly and know that unionism has lost a great advocate for teachers. Donations can be made in his memory to: B'nai Israel Reform Temple Religious School Oakdale Bohemia Rd. Oakdale 11769.

In September, Dot Zuckerman and I attended the Alliance for Retired Americans Conference in Washington, DC. There were over 500 delegates from all over the U.S. with 80 members from NY. A rally was held on the front lawn of

the Capitol building to show our opposition to privatization of Social Security and Medicare Part D. A sizeable group of Congressmen came out to support our cause. The major thrust of the conference was to alert members of Congress to the ramifications of the Medicare Part D and the Donut Hole. When the rally broke up, delegates went to visit the Representatives and Congressmen from their districts. We visited Steve Israel, Tim Bishop and an aide to Peter King. We presented a packaged donut to each person. The implication is that many people will fall into the "donut hole" this year and with the current Medicare Part D plan, many members will be placed in the donut hole earlier in each ensuing year.

Recently, new COLA legislation was passed and we will receive an increase

of 3.3% starting the first of the year.

By now, everyone should have received the "credible coverage" letter from NYSHIP. Please make sure that this form is kept in a safe place for the year. Brentwood has sent out forms to verify your insurance coverage for the year. If you have not received your form please contact Kathy Browman at Central Administration.

The season of gift giving will soon be upon us. Miriam Massucci is collecting books for preschoolers for the Food and Nutrition Network. Please keep this great project in mind for your holiday gifting. This year, Peter Vercillo has agreed to chair Project Hope for ROBS. See the enclosed flyer for all pertinent information.

Have a Happy Holiday Season.  
Phyllis Goodwin.

**SEARCH HOW YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS VOTED** on retiree issues through either the national American Retiree Association website at [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org) or on our state website [www.nysara.org](http://www.nysara.org). At the NYSARA site, simply click on the red tab on the left side of the home page, "How your Congress member voted." This has been updated to include 2005 information with a rating from the national office on votes on key bills and an explanation of the bills which make up the rating.

If you need additional information please do not hesitate to call the office at: NYSARA 518-783-6231 Michael Burgess, E.D.

## JUST FOR TEACHERS: STRESS-EASING LAUGHS

"No more books, no more pupils dirty looks..." The New Yorker has captured the essence of being a teacher in a new collection of cartoons published over the last 80 years. Called the "*New Yorker Book of Teacher Cartoons*," (Bloomberg Press, \$21.95), the often laugh-out-loud work is available at [www.bloomberg.com/books](http://www.bloomberg.com/books) just in time for gift giving time. Example: Picture a teacher sitting facing a man and a woman on teacher conference night in the classroom, backed by a blackboard and American flag. The teacher says: "Your daughter is a pain in the ass."

Whew... There went that job!

### ROBS NEWSLETTER

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#### ROBS OFFICERS

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V. PRES. Harriet Pepine  
SEC. Y. Lucille Fink

Harriet Helman

TREAS. Marge Kirchner

### Quote of Note:

"Growing older is mandatory; growing up is optional; laughing at yourself is therapeutic."  
Anonymous



### ROBS Newsletter

#### Editorial Board:

Carmela Criscione  
Adrienne Eastman  
Linda Gibson  
Phyllis Goodwin  
Marge Kirchner

## THE M-T CORNER

"It's not enough to have lived. We should be determined to live for something.

May I suggest that it be creating joy for others..."

— Leo Buscaglia



## RETIREE CLASS OF '06 SPEAKS OUT



In April 2006 at Retiree Information Day at the high school library, ROBS History Project interviewers, **John Sherin** and **Carmela Criscione**, buttonholed seven members of the class of '06. All were long term employees in Brentwood, ranging from 30 to almost 38 years in the district. The resulting video was shown at the October 13th ROBS meeting. **Steve Scheitzer**, who "brought life to Brentwood's equipment," and has helped with the mechanics of the History project was there in a flaming yellow Hawaiian shirt to see the latest product.

All thought the kids were the best part of the job. "The kids give me joy, the kids are the community." "10% are difficult, 90% are great!" Countering the outside influences on Brentwood's children was the desire of **Alan Poquette** who has been supervising the after school program at West Middle, and will continue to run it for a year after retirement. Alan's dad, **Reggie Poquette** taught Industrial Arts in the district, and **Alan** is a product of the schools.

As is **Vinnie DiRiggi** who moved to Brentwood 50 years ago. He was the water boy for the first football team and then wound up as coach. **Vinnie** is most happy about the Long Island Football Championship in 1999. After 35 years in teaching and then guidance, he hopes Brentwood will seriously address the issue of gangs in the community, which impacts the schools. (The week of October 23, an active teacher reported the following: a stabbing behind Ross on Wed; a retaliatory gang fight on Thursday with loads of gang kids wearing their colors; a lockdown two days that week, and some kind of crazy incident after school on Friday with five cop cars outside the gate, lots of kids, and a bunch of kids up against the cop cars being patted down.) **Vinnie** is moving south.

**Rich Carter-Kauffman** is retiring from the tech lab for the bonus, and faults angry adults and an administration "who forgot they were human beings" also as prods. Still, he's going to "miss teaching a lot," because kids are the best part of the job. So he intends to sub in the high school after retirement. Cites **Reggie Poquette** as his tech lab expert.

**Ray Liebert** was Hofstra Teacher of the year two times. He feels that schools have been given the impossible task of healing social problems, as well as having to achieve academically, and that this is an impossible task with a lack of resources.

**Matthew Fauvell**, who grew up in West Islip and still lives there, enjoys teaching still after 36 years, but feels it is time to move on. "It's people who change, not kids. I've changed. I don't have the energy I had." Matt wants to work in a mentoring situation with new teachers. Above all, he wants to stay true to himself, to enjoy not having to do everything "by the bell!" His teaching career, took him from Music to Industrial Arts to Social Studies and then English and Phys Ed, all due to declining enrollment. His daughter now teaches Social Studies at West.

**Rich Graziano**, 33 years in Brentwood, is retiring due to health/weight issues. His best time in teaching was his first 19 years in junior high, when he played street hockey with the students after school. But a split school program ended that. The biggest change he's seen is electronic: the computer, which will make books obsolete as internet info is readily available. "Teaching is a people profession. I'll miss that." He also wants to mentor and sub. He'll miss the kids even as he cites their lack of responsibility regarding assignments. And he does wonder how the 33 years went so fast.

Citing the preponderance of negative press on Brentwood, **Mariana Marotta** gave a resounding thanks to the Brentwood district for all the good she has experienced in her 32 years there. A long time resident of the district, whose children attended school there, she and her husband are moving to Tampa, Florida. She was at Loretta Park and East as a teaching assistant for 18 years, and became a teacher in 1993 at East. Her philosophy is to go with the flow, adapt to situations, and remember that "you are here for the children." Her advice to teachers of the future: be able to communicate with parents, learn a lot from the kids, be patient and listen to them, and believe that there is no problem you can't conquer." Marian is happiest when she sees excitement in a child's eyes, and feels anger when there is nothing in those eyes because of the child's home environment.

It all sounds familiar and the echoes resound. Teachers' reasons for retiring seem the same as they always were – just different specifics. And the comment, "the kids are the best part of the job," is something all retirees can relate to, as is being "happiest when [you] see excitement in a child's eyes" rather than "nothing."

**WELCOME TO RETIREMENT GUYS, AND KEEP IN TOUCH!**



# NEWS NOTES

**CORRECTION:** John Sherin (Ross '92) is participating with BTA & Brentwood's NE Elementary School's Liz Borman's 4th graders in using manipulatives to teach local & regional geography with his Mapzzles. They secured a Mini grant from Staples. He himself has a grant from LIPA to distribute 1,000 of the Mapzzles. ([www.mapzzles.com](http://www.mapzzles.com)) They are also being sold at L.L. Weams, an Educational Teacher's Store in Airport Plaza, Farmingdale, and on their web site. [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) will take you to the site. (The underlining notes the corrections of errors in the last issue of the ROBS Newsletter.)



**Frank Spencer** (Spec. Svs '95) traveled to South Korea for 10 days in July to visit son Wayne, who was on special assignment at Osan AFB. They returned together and Wayne is now stationed in Florida. Frank reports it was a long trip, 14 hours each way. The high points were visiting Seoul, the DMZ, and participating in the launch of a U-2 spy plane. He was impressed with the South Korean economy. Everyone seemed to be working, buying cars, houses and everything in sight. Wayne graduated from Brentwood and this editor taught him when he was a senior. He teaches flying now. 9/11 he was flying! He sends best regards to all his former teachers.

And **Steve Rochester** (Ross '04), who retired after 37 years, has been mentoring new social studies teachers for the last 3 years, and still announces basketball, football and Lacrosse games at BHS. He and his wife also travel a lot, loving cruising. This past May they volunteered in New Orleans for a week, cooking for volunteer, cleaning houses, and manning phone lines! They found it an eye opening, and memorable, experience. Way to go Rochesters! My kind of retirement! Still learning and giving...

**Vic Cipolla** (Ross SS) touched base with us via email. He's traveling quite a bit: been to England, east and west Canada 3 times, and Italy 5 times in the last 3 years. Off to Costa Rica as this newsletter goes to press. His youngest son, Joseph, was married on the beach in Montauk in September with the weather cooperating. He lives in Sag Harbor. Lunch anyone?

Congratulations to **Irene Utecht**, who retired on October 28th from clerical/purchasing! Happy days are here again...

Happy 9/11 Birthday to **Florence Koehler** (Elem. Reading '68). She's enjoying family and sunshine in Hilton Head. And happy 59th anniversary this summer to **Polly** (East Jr. '80) and **Bill Lane** (Ross '85).

A Mexican trip lured the much traveled **Kubicsko's**, Don and Barbara. They loved it! And Henry & **Marilyn DePlaza** have been partying too. And check out **Rick Mundy's** (Ross '98) new web site: [www.rickmundy.com](http://www.rickmundy.com)



Former Brentwood student, Democrat **Jimmy Dahroug**, an aide to County Executive Steve Levy, is challenging 19 term NYSUT endorsed Republican **State Senator Caesar Trunzo**, whose children also went through the Brentwood schools. It was the 2nd run by Dahroug. It does show that in the 3rd senatorial district, Brentwood has both major party candidates for this office. We'll keep you posted.

Last issue we noted the **Vivan Renta** Optometrist practice at 1758 Brentwood Rd. We need to add it is a "family" practice with husband Jordan Skyer as the partner optometrist and brother **Jorge Renta**, Brentwood grad '95, as the optician. Her sister, **Veronica Renta**, a '93 graduate is an attorney. Our graduates do go far, and some of them come back. **Vivian** & Jordan live bought a home in Brentwood.

**Beverly Carpenter** (Southwest '94) is in the skilled nursing center at Jefferson Ferry where she and husband, John, have had an apartment for 5 years after moving from Sayville. Bev has been diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy. She would love to hear from colleagues. Her direct number at the health center is: 631-650-2879. This editor spoke with her the other day and she sounded good. We hear the food is good there, so you can even stop in for lunch or dinner with both Carpenters.



Get well wishes also to **Marge Acosta** who had spinal surgery in August, **Vita Aziz's** husband Bob, recovering from surgery, and **Bob De Soto** (Reading/Ross). **Marty Hochheiser's** wife, Marsha, was hospitalized in October, as was **Esther (Kitty) Hayes** (Heinlock Park '89).



## MORE NEWS NOTES



We are saddened by the sudden death of one of ROBS' former at-large board members, Addie Lee (Southeast/Ross '94) who passed away in September. She went to the hospital for a stint and valve replacement and her kidneys failed. Condolences to her partner, Rosalie Falco, 3000 Carefree Blvd., N. Ft. Myers, FL 33917.

ROBS' received the following from Addie's church in Fort Myers, FL.: "Thank you for your contribution to St. John the Apostle MCC in memory of Addie Lee. All of us feel the loss of Addie with us. She touched so many people in her time with us. I believe that the gift of knowing her in some way changed each of us for the better. Her goodness is now ours to share. May God bless you," Rev. Steve Filizzi. Addie was always helping someone, driving folks to ROBS meetings or shoveling snow and shopping for neighbors out in Ridge. We'll miss her happy style. Carol Schansinge sent out of town condolences by email as well.

Linda Knudsen, retired Special Education teacher at Laurel Park has passed away. Condolences can be sent to husband Paul and daughters Alyssa and Nicole at 10 Carrington Road, E. Northport, NY 11731. Jerry Waldman, Director of Psychological and Social Work Services passed away in August.

Shirley Stamm's (Admin. Bldg. '85) husband, Ben, passed away in October. The funeral was on L.I. Condolence calls were at Carmela Criscione's in Bay Shore. Shirley lives at 6055 Caladium Rd., Del ray Beach, FL 33484.

Helen Feeney's (Sec'y HS principal) husband, John, died in November. Condolences to 4 Gary St, E. Northport 11731.

### WRITER'S GROUP TO WRITE HISTORY OF BTA

The *Writers Group* would like to write a history of the Brentwood Teachers Association from the 1950's to 1980's. They would therefore welcome any information and memories you, and other members, might have of the BTA during that period. If anyone would like to share their thoughts or memories, copies of the BTA Newsletter, or other BTA communications, these would be welcome. This was Jack Zuckerman's dream, said John Sherin. Please send all information to:

Tom O'Conner  
10 Grace Ct  
Islip, NY 11761-4604

Emails should be addressed to Nick Siciliano at [KPNIC1@aol.com](mailto:KPNIC1@aol.com)

### 2007 MEDICARE HANDBOOK CRITICIZED

According to the October 29 *New York Times*, Congressional Democrats say the 2007 Medicare Handbook, which is sent to all recipients at government expense, "presents a misleading and biased view of Medicare coverage and option." The Democrats wrote to Michael O. Leavitt, the secretary of health and human services.

Since this handbook has always been viewed as an objective and authoritative guide for those on Medicare, the charge is worrisome, especially with the administration leading the charge for privatizing Social Security and Medicare.

Under federal law, the secretary of health and human services is to disseminate information comparing the performance of private plans under Medicare. But Consumer's Union pointed out that this information was missing for more than half the plans listed in the 2007 handbook. Federal officials said some of the data would be made available on the Internet.

Read the handbook carefully and question, question, question....



Sheila & Letty Sustrin's **ROBS PET PROFILES: "HEY YOUNG FELLA"**



*ROBS member, Marie Poppo, (Laurel Park, '01) has an unusual relationship with her daughter Francine's dog. Here is their story written by Francine Poppo Rich.*

"Hey Young Fella" are the words I hear when my mother uses her own key to enter my home. Ordinarily, she would be talking to one of my three young children who rush to her arms as she enters. But today, she is addressing Algarve, our one-year-old Portuguese Water Dog, who...rushes to her arms as she enters.

He runs quick circles and throws his fifty-five pound frame on her sixty-seven year old body and she doesn't flinch. "Okay, I know. Try not to get my new shirt dirty," she says calmly, as she pets him in his favorite spots. Mom is used to this enthusiastic greeting, and she treats him as if he were just another one of her eleven grandchildren. "Okay, now, no more jumping. Sit." And he listens.

Despite the fact that Algarve is very different than the German Shepherd my mother raised, she does not have to feign the warmth she already feels for my new dog. And that warmth comes complete with her opinions about how to make his life more pleasant. Today, she has something to say about his long hair. "When are you going to cut his hair? I don't think he can see. I certainly can't see his eyes," she announces.

I respond, "Mom, he can see. Portuguese Water Dogs are supposed to have long hair. It's called the wavy cut."

"Oh, it's wavy alright. It's waving right over his eyes. Poor thing."

My mother has a way of calling everyone in my life--from my husband to my children and now to my dog-- a poor thing. I apparently mistreat everyone. My husband doesn't get enough cooked meals, my children don't dress warmly enough, and Algarve has a seventies hairdo. It's all my fault. But my mother is my best friend, and I weigh everything she says. So, I take a look at Algarve. And a second look. I have to admit--I'm not so sure he can see where he is going.

As always, I have tons of questions I've been saving for my mother. She is a wealth of information, and she always has good advice about all aspects of raising children. So, I figure that filters into dog-raising. She puts her purse down, and I begin. All the while, she is petting Algarve, and he is sniffing the Stuffed Peppers she has brought over--the ones she didn't get around to serving on Easter because she had cooked so many other wonderful things. "So Mom," I ask, "Algarve is back to putting the kid's toys in his mouth. I thought he had stopped, but he's chewing ears off the stuffed animals and noses off the Dora toys. He's driving me crazy."

"Well," she answers, without looking at me, "he's no different than the kids. He's a young fella. He wants attention. Are you giving him enough attention?"

And based on how she's gushing over him, I have to wonder if I am giving him enough of the one-an-one TLC he needs. Darn it-- why does she always have to be so on target with everything? And why does her advice always point to me changing something I am doing?

I watch as the two of them interact, and as Algarve runs and gets his bone, it occurs to me that my mother comes over so often that Algarve thinks she has come home in the same way that my husband comes home at the end of the day. I have to smile because it warms my heart to know that Algarve has already come to consider my mother a member of my immediate family in the same way I do. I walk down the hall, looking for the phone book, so I can call to schedule Algarve's haircut.

*ROBS Holiday Luncheon*  
*Bonwit Inn Commack Rd. & Motor Pkwy.*  
*December 8, 2006 12-4 PM*

*First Course*

*Greek Salad*

*Second Course*

*Homemade Mozzarella & Vine Ripe Tomato*

*Main Course*

*Chicken Boscaiola*

*Bonwit Veal Scallopine*

*Grilled Salmon with Dill Sauce*

*Eggplant Parmesan*

*Served with seasonal vegetables and roasted potatoes*

*Dessert served with coffee or tea*

*Chocolate Chocolate Mousse Cake*

*Cost \$30 per person - all inclusive*

*Cash Bar*

Clip and return with a check made out to **ROBS** by Nov. 27, 2006 to

**Harriet Pepine 82 Gloria Blvd. Hauppauge NY 11788 631-234-1247**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_



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E-mail us at: [benefits@nysutmail.org](mailto:benefits@nysutmail.org) or visit us

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## RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

114 East Rogues Path Huntington Station NY 11746

Phone 631-673-2971 Fax 631-351-0915

Phyllis Goodwin - President Harriet Pepine - Vice President Marge Kirchner - Treasurer

Dear ROBS Member,

November, 2006

ROBS PROJECT HOPE is now 10 years old. PROJECT HOPE is a way for the retired clericals and teachers of the Brentwood school community to show that we still care about the children of the area. Through SUBURBAN CHILDREN, INC., ROBS adopts local families during the traditional holiday season. Food is provided for Thanksgiving, and many gifts are bought, wrapped, and presented at Christmastime.

In the past, many have you have generously supported this endeavor. Your efforts have been very much appreciated, not only by the folks at Suburban, but especially by the children and their parents.

Through our donations, PROJECT HOPE touches the lives of many. It is a way to add to the joy and spirit of the season. Please help continue this fine tradition. Checks should be made payable to ROBS/PROJECT HOPE. So that we may keep proper records, please send checks to:

Peter Vercillo  
26 Willoughby St.  
Brentwood, NY 11717

Thank you for your continued support. Best wishes for the special weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

Peter Vercillo  
PROJECT HOPE CHAIRPERSON