



## ROBS NEWSLETTER

Summer 2007

RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

ISSUE 69



### WE'VE RELOCATED!

General meetings are now at the

#### **BRENTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY**

2 Avenue & 4th Street

Phone: 273-7883

Meetings at 10 AM

**FRIDAYS**

September 7

October 5

November 2

### HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

December 7

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### AFT TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The 2008 presidential candidates are making appearances all over the country, including at a series of town hall meetings sponsored by the AFL-CIO. AFT members reports are now available on the AFT: You Decide 2008 Web site.



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## Ideological Opposites Work Together on Social Security

From opposite ends of the political spectrum, Congressmen **Charlie Rangel** (D-NY) and **Jim McCrery** (R-LA) have spent over three months secretly working out a compromise on Social Security reform, one of the most complex and contentious issues in Washington.

According to a recent report in *Fortune*, while most Republicans are reluctant to revisit an issue that President Bush was unsuccessful in tackling two years ago, the pair genuinely believes they can solve the problem. The partnership is

particularly significant as Reps. Rangel and McCrery are respectively the chairman and ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, the point of origin for legislation from tax policy to entitlement reform. Recently, the two negotiated a trade agreement reconciling free trade with new labor and environmental standards. Many of their peers do not believe the duo will be able to circumvent various objections to tax increases, privatization and reductions in benefits, but neither one has ex-

any discouragement.

No details about the discussions have been disclosed, except that the White House will have a limited role, if any, in the reform effort. "The Alliance will be monitoring these talks closely," said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer. "We will be ready to mobilize, especially if there are further attempts to gamble away retirees' money in private accounts or reduce benefits." (*Alliance for Retired Americans*, July 6, 2007)

## POOR RECRUITMENT IN NEW ORLEANS (AFT NEWS 6/25)

As long as New Orleans continues with its dual and unequal school systems, students in the district of last resort—the Recovery School District—will be shortchanged because of policies perpetuating an acute shortage of experienced teachers, according to a new AFT report. "**No Experience Necessary:** How the New Orleans School Takeover Experiment Devalues Experienced Teachers" chronicles the missteps made during the state takeover, including the creation of a Balkanized school system; the firing of virtually all teachers and other school district staff in December 2005, prompting a mass exodus of experienced teachers; and the refusal to restore collective bargaining rights. Today, veteran teachers make up less than half

of the teaching staff in RSD regular and charter schools. "The **post-Katrina education** decisions made by Louisiana officials turned a pre-existing challenge—retaining experienced teachers—into a **full-blown crisis**," the report says. The dearth of experienced teachers is especially disturbing given the research demonstrating the connection between experienced teachers and higher student performance. The report, produced in conjunction with the Louisiana Federation of Teachers and United Teachers of New Orleans, makes several recommendations for attracting and retaining teachers, especially veterans. LFT and UTNO leaders are presenting the report's findings and rec-

ommendations to the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. **The full report is available online.**

**Katrina Relief:** Giving Voice to the People of New Orleans: The Kaiser Post-Katrina Baseline Survey examines the ongoing struggles of residents trying to recover from the Hurricane Katrina disaster, including a detailed look at how those views and experiences differ by race. The survey documents the devastating impact that Hurricane Katrina and the government's failed response have had on the economic well-being, physical and mental health, and personal lives of the people of the New Orleans area. (Kaiser Family Foundation) Families USA

# PHYLLIS'S FORUM

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



Dear Colleagues,

Things are certainly moving right along this summer and hopefully it is to our advantage. On July 1st, a law went into effect that requires hospitals to better ensure that Medicare beneficiaries know their rights before being discharged, and outlines how to object when a patient or family member feels release is medically premature. While the new rules are designed to protect patients, they will require more paperwork and hours from hospital employees, including additional administrative visits to hospital rooms, which recovering person may find bothersome. The notification, an **"Important Message from Medicare,"** now features a clearer explanation of patients' rights and will be provided to families both after arrival and before departure. Hospital staff delivering the information must be able to answer questions about the policy, and for the first time, patients and their legal representatives must sign the paper. If a discharge is contested, hospitals have until noon of the next day to provide detailed explanations of why a patient is ready for release and how to continue an appeal. (ARA Friday Alert)

In September, NYSUT retirees will see several more dollars in their monthly retirement benefits. The Cost of Living Adjustment for 2007 translates to a maximum monthly increase of \$21. This figure represents an increase of 1.4% applied to the first \$18,000 of pensions under New York's permanent automatic COLA legislation. The maximum monthly benefit has increased by \$147 since legislation took effect in 2001. The statewide union continues to seek increased benefits for older retirees whose pension benefits are still lacking, as well as legislation that will provide greater protection from inflation for all retirees.

We hope that you have an enjoyable summer and we look forward to seeing you in the fall at our first ROBS meeting at 10 AM on September 7th at the Brentwood Library.

In Harmony,  
Phyllis Goodwin, President

## 2007 ROBS SCHOLARSHIPS



**PROUD RECIPIENTS:** (L to R): Jasmine Bermudez, Xavia Ortega, ROBS President Phyllis Goodwin, Alyssa Rizzuto, Trisha Ceparano

The ROBS Scholarship Committee reviewed approximately 30 candidate's scholarship applications. The committee members were: Harriet Pepine, Adrienne Eastman, Lynn Prass, Ruth McCalla and Martin Hochheiser.

The candidates had excellent grades, GPS's and SAT scores. Every recipient is pursuing a career in education and was willing to work in the community. All of the students were active in community affairs and services. The awards were presented on May 22, 2007 at Brentwood Sonderling High School. The recipients were:

- Xavia Ortega – Jack Zuckerman Scholarship, \$1,000
- Alyssa Rizzuto – Lilian Kelly Scholarship, \$500
- Jasmine Bermudez – ROBS Scholarship, \$500
- Trisha Ceparano – ROBS Scholarship, \$500

### ROBS NEWSLETTER

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TREAS. Marge Kirchner

In 1796 in his farewell address, George Washington urged avoiding "overgrown military establishments, which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty." He cautioned against "excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another." And he advised, "The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our *commercial* relations, to have with them as little *political* connection as possible."



### ROBS Newsletter Editorial Board:

Carmela Criscione  
Adrienne Eastman  
Phyllis Goodwin  
Marge Kirchner

### THE M-T CORNER

*As nightfall does not come all at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such twilight that we all must be aware of change in the air however slight, lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.*

Justice William O. Douglas

**NYSUT NOTES** Dorothy Zuckerman, NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant  
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**THE AGING of AMERICA**

As the Baby Boomers enter their senior years, society is compelled to adjust its views and attitudes towards older people. The **New York State Office for the Aging** (NYSOFA) is now headed by Michael Burgess, former Executive Director of the NYS Alliance for Retired Americans. Its mission is to serve as an advocate for New Yorkers 60 and older and to help them maintain their independence as they age. Among the various programs and services they offer they also advise and assist the Governor in developing policies that affect seniors and their needs.

I have recently been appointed to serve on the Governor's Advisory Committee to the Office for the Aging. At the May meeting which I attended major emphasis was given to Long Term Care needs and Care-Giving Assistance, along with many other vital issues.

Under the program called "**NY Connects: Choices for Long Term Care**" (www.nyconnects.org), consumers will be able to access long term care information and assistance from one regionally accessible location instead of wading through the morass of multiple agencies and providers.

More and more family members are providing caregiver support to their loved ones, whether older people with chronic illnesses or grandparents caring for grandchildren. Through the local Office for the Aging the **New York Elder Caregiver Support Program** provides information, assistance, counseling, respite and a large variety of additional services to help older individuals and their families.

**Project 2015: The Future of Aging in New York State** is a program designed to provide information, studies, and future projections. The graying of the Baby Boom generation is having a huge impact on the discussion of aging. There is greater focus now on identifying and anticipating the needs and services required for older Americans. We will continue to monitor the evolving programs and policies to help keep you informed. **Senior Citizens' Hot Line: 1-800-342-9871**

**Dot Zuckerman drew our attention to the following Teacher Retirement System Accounts:**

The NYSTRS is trying to locate former members who have unclaimed contribution funds. The following Brentwood people are listed as either Unclaimed or Abandoned. If you know the location of any of them, they have money waiting for them and should claim it.

**UNCLAIMED**

Thomas Bernard	Leslie A. Caback
Frances Demott	Shireen Farooq
Catherine Gonzalez	Laura Hirt
Ingrid Jiminez	Dolores Lazarick
Lyudmilla Makushrika	Sandra Morales
Allison Sgrizzi	Carmen Varela

**ABANDONED**

Maria Ambrosio	Lester Arana
Regina Belfrom	Gloria Bones
Sarah Burgos	Isabel Caro
Maricelis Carrasquello	Catherine Chartier
Corina Cruz	Susan Dellaripa
Kassandra Dixon	Dona Edwards
William Fields	Malik Ford
Robert Fusco	Particia Huancayo
Helena James	Deborah Labadie
Lisa McArdle	Joseph Nichols
Dwight Parker	Mavis Rose
Joan Santiago	Diana Saro
Ivonne Sierra-Garay	Jason Snyder

**ROBS JOURNALISM AWARD**



ROBS President **Phyllis Goodwin** was presented NYSUT's 2007 Journalism award for Best Editorial or Column by **Dick Ianuzzi**, president of the state union, at the RA this May.

The award was for the column written by former Brentwood student, **Ray Flores**, a contractor of North Carolina, titled, "Romancing the Trades: A tribute to Joe Campo, Brentwood teacher." It was in the April 2006 issue of the *ROBS Newsletter*.

The column was about salvaging ALL the children, not just the college bound, so that their gifts and talents will be acknowledged and valued.

"Seek and reach out to the least of us and transform them into the best of us. I was an at risk child. My life is not defined by those failures but by the success of that fact. Education...Without it, what do we really have? And who are we to say which children are worthy and which are not? ... Thank you Mr. Campo." Joe Campo was the wrestling guy who is alive and well in Florida!

## THANK YOU, GOVERNOR SPITZER by Marge Kirchner

We came back from "SNOWBIRDING 2007" on Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. Relaxing with my old friend, *Newsday*, the very next morning, I noticed a small and obscurely placed article entitled, "Health Plans Open to Some Gay Couples." Perusing it quickly, I noted that Governor Spitzer had announced that NYSHIP would extend coverage to legally married spouses of gay and lesbian employees of entities that use this health plan.

I then did a search on the internet and found that the ruling covers same-sex couples who were legally married in places such as Massachusetts, Canada, Spain, Belgium, South Africa and the Netherlands. My search continued and I found that same sex couples that marry in Massachusetts must be residents of the state. That, however, was not the case in Canada.

I spoke with Cathy Browman, the Health Benefits Administrator in the Personnel Office at Brentwood. She had no knowledge of the ruling, but called Albany and received the information necessary for my partner, Pat, and me to seek further information. If we were married and applied for benefits during the special May 2007 enrollment period, there would be no waiting period for benefits for Pat.



We've always loved Canada; one of my favorite statements about our neighbor to the north has been, "It's such a civilized nation with such caring people." That thought became more and more meaningful as we moved through the planning of our marriage. Our experience with the Canadian Government's web site, and particularly, Ontario's web page provided all the information we needed in very readable material. We were able to download forms, know precisely what to do when we arrived in Toronto, and understand each step in the process.

Both of us are very spiritually minded women and we decided we would marry in a religious ceremony. We spoke with the wedding coordinator at the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto many times and essentially planned our wedding via e-mails

and faxes. Everything fit into place as far as buying our new rings, wedding attire, getting flight reservations, arranging for a few family members and two Canadian friends to be there, finding a marvelous Zen inspired suite hotel in the heart of the city and planning a wedding luncheon at an elegant Country Inn.

Our wedding was on Saturday, May 26, 2007 complete with the marvelous, "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," by Bach, special biblical passages that are very significant to us, an amazingly touching poem by Goerge Eliot, beautiful and deeply felt vows and special remarks from the sweet, young minister who presided over our holy ceremony.

Thus, what started as a quest to receive medical benefits for Pat, became an emotionally charged, more than beautiful day that not only will remain in our hearts for the rest of our lives, but also a moment in time shared by the witnesses to our marriage.

Pat did not have to pay her \$750.00 per month Health Insurance bill for June and the new NYSHIP cards that list us as family were delivered within 2 weeks of our wedding day.

Thank you, Governor Spitzer, for recognizing the importance of this benefit and for following through with its design. I've always been a pioneer and loved that we were the first same sex couple in Brentwood to marry and apply for these legally approved benefits. We feel very blessed.

### WORDS TO IDLE BY

"Stop a minute, right where you are. Relax your shoulders, shake your head and spine like a dog shaking off cold water. Tell that imperious voice in your head to be still..." Barbara Kingsolver

"So let's make a toast to the long art / of lingering." Lee Upton

"You must learn to be still in the midst of activity and to be vibrantly alive in repose." Indira Gandhi

"What is this life if, full of care, / We have no time to stop and stare?" W. H. Davies

# NEWS NOTES

The happiest news this issue is the marriage of ROBS treasurer, **Marge Kirchner** (Laurel Park '99) and her partner Pat Landry. Pat just retired, and the two now divide their time between Long Island and Florida. Besides the wedding in Toronto in May, (see opposite page) they celebrated again in Florida in July. We wish the newlyweds many years of married bliss!

**Polly** (EMS '80) and **Bill Lane** (Ross '85) celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in June! Now that's staying power! And we see them at ROBS meetings too. Remember Bill's many poems about Brentwood teacher's high school experiences?

Our motorcycling retiree, **Rich Edwards** (Sond. '98) clocked another 8,000 miles this spring from Florida to the Canadian Rockies!

*Newsday* published another of **Chris Veech's** (Ross '91) articles in "500 Words or Less," on May 12. This one was titled "Cutting up in class: Hamlet duels for his due." It was based on a real class experience in Brentwood Ross HS, and was "classy" and fun.

Ed Martinez, a '78 grad of Brentwood, now a Nassau County police officer had a DUI swerve into his patrol car on the LIE while he was writing a ticket. Made headlines this Spring. He's on the mend. Found this out on the same day I met **Frank Lerche** (Sond. '91) who is still teaching at St. Joseph's College at '78 graduate Dennis Dasilva's chiropractor office. That's where the extended Brentwood family meets these days! It's either backs or knees.

Mary Jane (Branca) Beierle, '78, sent us news of her brother, Paul Branca, '67. The NY Yankees drafted him out of BHS that year. (<http://www.thebaseballcube.com/teams/draft/new-york-yankees-1967.shtml> Scroll down to "Team Draft Picks", he is No. 63.) He left for Oneonta that year to play for their farm team. He played on Brentwood's Baseball Team (Catcher), was starting quarterback for the Football Team, and was on the Basketball Team. He enlisted in the US Navy, served 4 years during Vietnam. **He just retired from the Nassau County Police Dept. in November**, after 23 years. He became a grandfather for the first time in June. Feeling old yet, ROBS members? The class of '78 is having their 30th reunion in 2008.

And a blast from the past: **Conrad Follansbee** (Princ South, Village, AP Ross) reports he has passed muster by the state police and Child Welfare Dept. in Wayne, PA to volunteer in a local elementary school. He was in on ground floor of Maslow Toffler.

Heard from **Peter Hoegel** (Ross 2001) who had aneurysm surgery at Stony Brook in December. He and Susan moved from L. I. to Utah in March and will soon be in a house in Draper at the base of the Wasatch Mountains which will allow him to reach 10 world class ski areas within a 20 – 60 minute drive. This is his idea of heaven, and all 3 kids ski, so they'll visit! Have fun! His email is [phtiroi@yahoo.com](mailto:phtiroi@yahoo.com) if you want to touch base with this go-getter!

On the sick list are **Warren Dolbeer** (Sond. '85); **Gilda Mantin** who had a mini stroke but is improving nicely; **Bernie Heller's** (Ross '90) wife, Amy; **Linda Gibson** (NE '99) who had several small strokes after heart surgery and wound up at Rusk Rehab at NYU Hospital. And to all on our "thinking of you" list. "Idle up" this summer, and emerge refreshed!



We note these losses with deep sympathy to family and friends. **Oneida Lee's** (SW '85) husband John in March; **Phyllis Goodwin's** (Laurel Park '98) dearest cousin, Ernestine Mills also March; Howard Brodsky, May 20 age 76.

April 4, **David Martz's** (Ross Princ.) brother, Edward Mallory, popular NBC daytime drama actor 1966 to 1980; later directed "Generations," "All My Children" and "The Young and the Restless." Films: "Diamond Head" and "Birdman of Alcatraz." Guest starred on "Bewitched," "The Munsters," "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.," "Wagon Train," "McHale's Navy" & "Perry Mason." Did Bios & documentaries for the A&E Network and The History Channel. **Dave & Aletta's** address is: 20 Glen Lake Rd., Swanton, MD 21561-2728. Who knew?

**Joseph Spano** (AV at IMC '98), husband of **Irene Spano** (Principle clerk '98) died in Spring Hill, FL. June 10. He was an Alzheimer's patient since 2002 and broke his hip in April. Donations to Alzheimer's Assoc. L. I. In June also, **John Sherin's** (Ross '92) sister, Betty Anne Trapani, passed away in CO. after a long illness. Donations: CU Foundation, Attn. Dr. Ross Camidge Resaearech Lab, Mailstop 8111, PO Box 6511, Aurora, CO 80045.

**Peter Cerullo** (N '83). Music teacher and Dept. Chair, passed away after a long illness on June 4. He has been on our "thinking of you" list since 2004, and missed being able to come to meetings.

**Larry Briggs**, (AP 10th Gr. Ctr.) passed away June 26 at the Hernando Pasco Hospice in Hudson, FL. He leaves his daughter, Denise and wife **Florence** (10 Gr. Ctr. '91). There was a memorial mass at St. Anne's in Brentwood on July 3. Donations to the hospice, 12107 Majestic Blvd in Hudson, FL 34667-2460.

