

ROBS NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2007

RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

ISSUE 71



General meetings
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MAY 2

HISTORY VIDEO

ELECTION OF ROBS OFFICERS

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ELECTION 2008: And a NYSUT MOMENT

If we're going to win the battle for high-quality schools, affordable healthcare and workers' rights, union members and their allies will need to rally behind a presidential candidate who will not back down from a fight.

That message came through clearly during the AFT Civil, Human and Women's Rights Conference in New Orleans Oct. 26-28. Speaker after speaker connected the needs of ordinary Americans—whether they belong to unions or not—to the outcome of next fall's elections.

Political commentator Donna Brazile, who managed Al Gore's presidential campaign, told conference participants to disregard the polls and be prepared for a "street fight." Polls don't matter "because polls don't vote," she asserted. "We are going to have to roll up our sleeves and convince people that we need a change [of direction] in the White House." In this coming election season, "we're going to have to be agents of change and agents of hope," Brazile added.

In early October, the AFT Executive Board endorsed Hillary Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination.

On that day, NYSUT president, Dick Iannuzzi, escorted Hillary Clinton into the meet-

ing of the AFT Executive Council after they had endorsed her. The endorsement followed a day and a half of extensive deliberation and a presentation on the latest polls of members and the general public. It also followed presentations by the major candidates at previous meetings and creation of the "You Decide" web site where more than 50,000 members expressed their views. (The site was publicized in this newsletter.)

In Iannuzzi's words: they "stood and cheered. They, like me, sensed that we were part of history. Not only did it appear that this nation may finally be ready for its first woman president and that we were doing our part to make that happen, but clearly we had the right candidate — right on our issues — to make it happen...

The senator has been with us — as NYSUT members and New Yorkers — on all of our major issues in education, health care and labor... She has a 100% AFT voting record and a 93% AFL-CIO record. Her credentials are impeccable... Sen. Clinton is our favorite daughter. She has earned that through her hard work and leadership.

"...I still have a photograph



Picture from AFT, Michael Campbell (10/07)

of Sen. Clinton, then-NYSUT President Tom Hobart and myself where Tom wrote across the photo, 'Richard, Do you think we can sell a Senator Clinton on Long Island?' At the time I was new to the NY political arena and I was president of the NYSUT local in Central Islip.

"But I was proud to throw her my support then, just as I am proud — as your representative — to be supporting her now in this historic, and so vitally important quest for the White House.

"...The bold decision to endorse Sen. Clinton at this time...says a lot about AFT's strength as an organization. It takes courage to stand up for your convictions and what you believe is best for your members and your country."

(The AFT will make an endorsement in the general election next July).

PHYLL'S FORUM

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



Dear Colleagues,

We are coming down to the busiest time of the year. The hustle and bustle of the holidays is enough to frazzle the toughest in our group.

Take a deep breath, count to 10 or 100, RELAX and SLOW DOWN, at least try to attempt it. The good news is we are retired. We have all the time in the world.

In the next few weeks you will receive the addendum to last year's directory. This is a limited edition since it only contains information on new members and corrections from last year's issue. Next year, we will send out a more comprehensive directory.

We are looking into setting up our own ROBS web site. This promises to be an exciting venture. We hope to have it up and running sometime after the first of the year.

Marilyn De Plaza has tentatively set March 6, 2008 as the date for our Florida luncheon at Padrino's in Boca Raton. She hopes to see more people this year.

On behalf of the Executive Board, I would like to wish you all a Happy, Healthy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.

In Harmony,
Phyllis Goodwin

LIFE EXPECTANCY = RECORD HIGH

Life expectancy for U.S. residents in 2005 reached a record high of 77.9 years, an increase from the previous high of 77.8 years in 2004, according to a preliminary report released in September by the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control.

Life expectancy for blacks increased to 73.2 years in 2005 from 73.1 years in 2004, and life expectancy for whites remained about the same at 78.3 years. Mortality rates among all residents for heart disease, cancer and stroke decreased in 2005. Deaths from HIV dropped to 12,456 in 2005 from 13,063 in 2004. Mortality rates for respiratory disease, accidents, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease rose in 2005.

Age-related deaths decreased for whites, blacks and Asians in 2005 but increased for Hispanics. (AFT E-News)

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Go to: www.memberbenefits.nysut.org and click on the Discounts tab.

You can help fellow AFT members reclaim their lives from losses from the fires in CA, and reconstruction in the Gulf states, by contributing to the AFT Disaster Relief Fund, Attn. Connie Cordovilla, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001. Contributions are tax deductible.

ROBS NEWSLETTER

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Did You Know ...

Americans over age 55 make up the fastest-growing segment of health-club members. There were 8.5 million in 2006, up from 1.5 million about 20 years ago, according to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (*Wall Street Journal*).



ROBS Newsletter Editorial Board:

Carmela Criscione
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Phyllis Goodwin
Marge Kirchner

THE M-T CORNER

"Not to know what happened before one was born is always to remain a child."

— Cicero

BITS & PIECES

Administration Appeals Ruling on Release of Medicare Data for Doctors

The Bush administration has appealed a federal judge's ruling favoring Consumers' Checkbook, a non-profit organization suing for detailed Medicare claims data to be released for use in rating individual doctors. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, the information is found in claims paid by Medicare, and includes data on types of procedure performed, year, diagnosis, and the doctor identification number. Consumers' Checkbook intends to use the information to produce a website to help patients make informed decisions about choosing a physician, such as researching how many times a doctor has performed a procedure or how closely treatment recommendations are followed. "Retirees need and demand all the facts possible," said **George J. Kourpias**, President of the Alliance of Retired Americans. "Why does the Administration feel the need to hide this information?"

GAO Report Recommends More Seniors be Included in Clinical Drug Trials

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, released recently by House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman **Henry Waxman** (D-CA) and Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman **Edward Kennedy** (D-MA), sheds light on the issue of seniors not being included in new drug studies. Those 65 and older use drugs at a higher rate than younger people, in part because seniors experience higher rates of certain diseases - such as cancer, Parkinson's disease, and heart disorders. Older people are also more likely than younger adults to experience complications when taking some prescription drugs. As a result, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has noted that it is important that drugs be studied for use by older people during the clinical drug trials - that is, those drug studies conducted by drug sponsors before they submit an application to have a drug approved for marketing. Failing to include sufficient numbers of seniors in clinical drug trials may make it less likely that safety concerns and effectiveness outcomes unique to older people will be detected during the clinical drug trials. The GAO report suggests that, when necessary, exclusion criteria focus on more relevant issues, such as either the presence of an illness that could make participation in the clinical drug trial dangerous or the person's inability to provide informed consent, rather than on age alone. FDA officials said that the agency expects their medical officers to assess the safety and effectiveness of a drug for older people when they review data; however, these expectations are not currently conveyed in agency guidance. (AFT E News)

Health Care Industry Giving to Democrats More Than Republicans

Unlike in previous Presidential elections, Democrats are raising far more money in health care industry campaign contributions than Republicans. According to a recent article in *The New York Times*, Democratic presidential candidates have received approximately \$6.5 million from doctors, drug makers, hospitals and insurers, while Republicans have collected about \$4.8 million. The difference in giving occurred despite several candidates proposing significant changes to the country's health care system. Experts see the contributions as a "defensive measure," as the industry tries to ensure that their concerns about reform are heard. With health care considered a priority issue for voters, Democrats have offered plans to reduce prescription drug prices and insurance premiums, control overall health costs and expand medical coverage. The number of contributions has increased as such ideas have been given more attention by both the candidates and the media. "This change in giving by the health care industry demonstrates, in part, the Democratic presidential candidates' strong showing in polls," said **Ruben Burks**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

Treasury Secretary, Former Fed Chairman Weigh in on Social Security

In September, Treasury Secretary **Henry M. Paulson, Jr.** released an issue brief, the first in a series of "Treasury Social Security Papers on Common Ground." The briefs are designed to find areas of Social Security reform on which both parties can agree. Paulson said that he had many conversations with both Democratic and Republican members of Congress, and had invited them to discuss Social Security reform with no preconditions. He said that while differences over personal accounts and taxes tend to dominate the public debate, he has found areas of agreement. Issue Brief No. 1 is entitled *Social Security Reform: The Nature of the Problem*. "We must remain vigilant," said **Edward Coyle**, Executive Director of the Alliance of Retired Americans. "Despite what this Administration may say, it has not given up on privatization." On the NBC talk show *Meet The Press*, former Federal Reserve Chairman **Alan Greenspan** also weighed in on Social Security. "Social Security is not (in) a big crisis. We're approximately 2 percentage points of payroll short over the very long run. It's a significant closing of the gap, but it's doable, and doable in any number of ways," Mr. Greenspan stated. He expressed far greater concern about Medicare. (AFT E-News)

WEB SITE OF THE WEEK: www.ssa.gov/pressoffice/colafacts.htm

Social Security benefits go up 2.3 percent on Jan. 1, 2008, as part of the annual cost of living adjustment. Find out more right from the horse's mouth.

(AFT Retiree E-News 11/1)

SUSTRIN TWINS HONORED AT WEST HEMPSTEAD LIBRARY



On October 18, 2007, Sheila and Letty Sustrin were two of the fifteen Long Island authors honored at "The Long Island Distinctive Author's Reception" that was held at the newly renovated West Hempstead Public Library. The event was run by the Friends of the West Hempstead Library, and the reception was a tribute to local authors who have made a special contribution to Long Island.

The authors were served a delicious hot buffet which was followed by a cocktail reception for the honored guests. Each author's books, awards, and display materials were set up for all to see.

The Honorable Dorothy L. Goosby, councilwoman from the Town of Hempstead, (above with Sheila left and Letty right) attended the affair and brought a Certificate of Recognition from the town for each honoree. Each author also received a beautiful plaque from the West Hempstead Library and a letter of congratulations from Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The Sustrins are the authors of "The Teacher Who Would Not Retire," and "The Teacher Who Would Not Retire Goes To Camp." In 2009, the third book in the series, "The Teacher Who Would Not Retire Discovers a New Planet," will make its debut. Sheila and Letty may be retired, but they will make sure that their character, Mrs. Belle, will NEVER retire.

The evening was a memorable occasion for Sheila and Letty. Their publisher, Francine Poppo Rich of Blue Marlin Publications attended the event with the twins.

A DECEMBER WISH

Bill Lane, who retired from the high school in 1985, was our resident poet. Here's a poem from those days which still fits!

That time of year has come again,
It happens each December.
Just let your thoughts go back in time

Did you light a menorah
Or wait for Santa Clause?
What other memories are there
Back in the time that was?

Yeah, carry me on back there
Through Time's quite distant haze.
I recall some splendid times
Back in 'the good old days.'

Mom & dad were standing there
With 'Grammie' in her chair.
She's done most of the cooking
For the guests who gathered there.

The time for being nosy
Had passed for one and all.
I was told to stay away
From the closet in the hall.



Gifts piled up around the tree
Drew kids with eager eyes.
They tried to figure mentally

A pair of skates, some wooden blocks,
Toy cars, a model plane,
A book to read, a cowboy hat,
A new electronic train.

Sometimes we sit and reminisce,
Perhaps with misty eyes
As someone said, 'The past grows old
But never really dies.'

Sing 'peace on earth, good will to men,'
I love the carol's sound.
How sad those lovely feelings
Are not with us all year round.

So light up all the candles
And decorate the tree.
At Chanukah and Christmas
The best to you from me!

WFL

NEWS NOTES

ROBS' PROJECT HOPE adopted four families for this holiday season. There are 5 adults and 15 children all of whom will be well served by our Thanksgiving and Holiday elves who scurry around all fall to make the season bright and cheery for these less fortunate people within our community. Thanks for all your donations, ROBS members!

You missed **Bobbie & Bob Dalpaz'** (Band '05) Home Studio show in Sayville, but don't despair! They are exhibiting their Earthenwood ceramics at the 45th Annual Fine Holiday and Craft Show on Saturday, December 1 - 2 from 10 AM to 5 PM. It's At the Elwood Middle School on Elwood Road in East Northport. Directions at their site: earthenwoodartisans.com



BE PREPARED for retirement blared *NEWSDAY's* ACT II headline on October 27th. And there in a half page picture was ROBS editor **Chris Veech** (Ross '91) with her hip hugger, Lucky the cocker spaniel, at the computer on which she edits newsletters for non-profits. (She does 3). And prominently on her wrist was **Chico Frankel's** (Guid. '05) circle of love bracelet. Our retirees are certainly media darlings!



Congratulations to **Jeanne Krygier** from Food Service, retiring on 1/6/08; **Lucy Medina** from the Attendance Dept. retiring 1/1/08; and **Peggy Cameron** retiring effective 3/29/08.

And Happy Birthday to **Phyllis Goodwin** ('98 Laurel Park.) who celebrated with **Donna Marie Ragonese** ('91 Laurel Pk.) in a Hot Air Balloon that went from Middletown to Goshen. The balloon almost upended the ston jockey in the front yard of a private home when it landed. But they'd do it again...and again...

The picture here was taken of some of **Chico Frankel's** circle of love bracelets worn by Brentwood friends. We're printing it here to expand the circle to include all our colleagues who aren't feeling up to snuff right now.

We're circling **Mary Giammarco** (Ross '90), and **Bob De Soto** (HS Reading). Also **Jean Geraci** ('95 Admin.) who just got out of the hospital. And to **Jim Watson** ('95 Sond.) who we hope is out of the hospital by now. We're also including **Melenese Hamilton** ('03 PE/win Pines) and **Gae Grobulski** ('05 Adm/Trans.).



If you'd like to send **Ann Mattausch** (Ross '72) a card it's c/o the Medford Multi-care Center, 3115 Horseblock Rd., Medford, NY 11763. Phone is 631-286-2701. Address omitted in the last newsletter.



We're sad to report, we lost **Alexander Filosa** on October 24th., husband of **Edith Filosa**, ('89 Sond. 1 teacher). Their son, Alex Jr., also known as Sandy, teaches Special Ed. in Brentwood. Alex and Edy he yearly holiday open house which featured trains collected by Alex. He brought some of them to ROBS m as well. Donations to St. Peter's Food Pantry, 500 So. Country Rd., Bay Shore 11706. Condolences to 3 Ave. West Islip 11795. Guest Book at *Newsday* Obituaries.

Mabel Cummings Canario of Glen Cove (Elem. OP) passed on the 24th as well. Condolences go to **Tom Tarantowicz** upon the death of his mother. Tom is a former Brentwood student who is now head of the Brentwood Library, where ROBS holds its meetings.



NEW DEAL OR NO DEAL: words from Saul Friedman, Newsday's ACT II

(Used with permission)

"A year from now, if our Constitution is still in force, Americans will vote in what many of us of a certain age will consider the most important presidential election since 1932.

"For people too young to remember, that's when a coalition of Democratic voters – workers, farmers and immigrants of the cities – overturned more than a dozen years of conservative Republican rule, and established under Franklin D. Roosevelt a new activist role for the federal government on behalf of ordinary Americans, who had been shut out of the Gilded Age and the Roaring Twenties and were left to struggle through the Great Depression. ..

"Roosevelt's New Deal laid the basis for the modern social democratic American government of today. And its monuments stand, including the Securities & Exchange Commission and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. to protect stockholders and bank depositors, the Federal Housing Administration to help people buy houses, and Social Security, which provided old age, survivors and disability insurance and helped set the stage for Medicare.

"No matter who the candidates are in 2008, it appears almost certain that the elections for president & Congress will be a referendum on whether these pillars of an activist government and the social contract with Americans that they represented, will be strengthened and expanded, or whether government will be allowed to continue to wither so that the nation can be outsourced and return to an unregulated, greed-is-good capitalism."

Friedman feels that for Boomers and the rest of us, the issues are clear, but fraught with bitter ideological division. They are:

- Health Care – Everyone agrees it needs fixing to provide sufficient insurance for the uninsured and underinsured at affordable prices; Democrats want some form of universal health care, Republicans count on tax credits & the private sector.
- Medicare – Dems seek to roll back part of the privatization with some of Part D under Medicare, allowing it to negotiate prices with drug companies, cutting funds for Medicare Advantage plans, restoring money cut from Medicare. Reps opposed to strengthening Medicare, say it is a step toward "Socialized Medicine."
- Long term care – Reps would use tax incentives to spur purchase of LTC insurance; Dems want expansion of Medicare and tax incentives to provide LTC.
- Retirement Security – Reps, predicting impending bankruptcy, are calling for drastic action to cut benefits and convert the system from an insurance program to millions of private accounts. Dems see no imminent problems and believe the program should remain as it is, perhaps helped by an increase in the SS tax rate.
- Reps would turn SS into many 401(k) plans. Dems would seek to strengthen company pension plans, and supplement them, and SS, by providing federal matching funds for 401(k) contributions.
- The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – Older Americans are more involved due to having children and grandchildren in harm's way, and they understand that the billions being spent could otherwise support environmental protection and education, as well as programs for seniors.

Friedman quotes Robert Kutner in an essay in September's *American Prospect* on the "Bubble Economy," like the dot.com bubble of the 90's and the housing bubble that burst this past summer: "Since the '70's, in the name of free market efficiency, Congress and presidents of both parties [have] repealed key protections put in place by the New Deal. The main effect has been to engineer windfall profits for financial insiders...shift wealth from families to corporations and put the entire American economy at ever greater risk."

Economists, Kutner says, assure us we're protected by "automatic stabilizers," unemployment insurance, public spending, SS and regulations dating back to the New Deal. But many of those regulations have been weakened or abandoned. How many times have we heard Reagan's "government is the problem with the American economy," or Clinton's "the era of big government is over." "The results of less government and less regulation are the disappearance of defined benefit pensions, which guarantee an income based on longevity and earnings." Think Enron.

Also think the Glass-Steagal Act, which prohibited the same financial company from being both a commercial bank and an investment bank, preventing banks from making speculative investments with depositor's money, or peddling investments, like annuities or insurance to unsuspecting customers, perhaps as they visit the bank. This is common practice because the salesperson makes a healthy commission and the bank can peddle the paper to a speculator. Under presidents from Reagan on, Glass-Steagal was allowed to wither away and then disappear.

Government's role has increasingly been assumed by unregulated private enterprise – in business, banking, housing, health care, even disasters.

Friedman puts forth a central question for all the candidates: How much do they believe in the efficacy of the government they want to lead? Future disaster victims, the uninsured, people who are losing their homes and the unemployed who are joining the army want to know.

THE ROBS NEWSLETTER WELCOMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ROBS BREAKFAST JANUARY 25, 2008 9AM-11AM
PARADISE DINER 579 Veteran's Memorial Hwy. Hauppauge, NY
(631) 724 - 11788

Breakfast Specials: include: Coffee or Tea and Small Juice

- 1. Two Eggs any style served with Home Fries and Toast
with choice of Bacon, Ham, or Sausage**
- 2. Choice of French Toast, Buttermilk Pancakes or Belgium Waffles
with choice of Bacon, Ham, or Sausage**
- 3. Make Your Own Omelette: Choose any TWO items in a Three Egg
Omelette served with Homefries and Toast
(American, Swiss, Mozzarella, Cheddar, Feta Cheese, Ham, Bacon,
Sausage, Mushrooms, Artichokes, Tomatoes, Peppers, Onions,
Broccoli, Spinach)**
- 4. One Egg, any style with Ham, Bacon, or Sausage and choice of
Cheese on a Hard Roll or Wrap**

NO ADDITIONS OR SUBSTITUTIONS

***Your check must be made out to ROBS and sent to RUTH McCALLA
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(631)-234 - 8013 The Cost is \$13 per person.***

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