



# ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

## DEATH OF AN ORGANIZATION? IS ROBS GOING TO BE ALLOWED TO WITHER AND DIE?

By Carmela Criscione

That's right, you read it correctly. May 2018 is that date of our biannual election of officers.

For years our president, Nick Siciliano, and others, have asked for people to step forward to take leadership roles in **ROBS**. Those pleas were ignored.

We have no more time. May 2018 is a short time away. We've heard the reasons why people won't get involved, "too busy, sounds like work, someone else can do it." **No**, no one else is going to do it.

There may be no one on the ballot. **NO ONE**. Do you know what that means come July 1, 2018? It means **ROBS** will be an organization with no one in control. It will cease to exist. Want to know something else? 2017-2018 will see the final **Project Hope Holiday Drive**, the last **Holiday Luncheon**, the last **New Year's Breakfast**, the last **scholarships** to Brentwood seniors planning a career in education, and the final **End of the Year Luncheon**. There will be **no monthly meetings** where speakers are

found to give you helpful information or provide entertainment.

For those of you who come faithfully to meetings, thank you -- even though you have your coffee and bagel and never come forward to give news for the **All About Us** column or volunteer for anything. The retired secretaries have come out in good numbers to meetings and we welcome them as members of **NYSUT** and ask that they consider leadership roles in **ROBS**. The **Holiday Drive** has a dedicated leader and hard working elves who make the effort for the success it has been, but alas, there are too few others who want to get involved.

New retirees come to the September meeting but then drop off. No amount of urging makes them come back. Membership renewals are down. Out of a potential 350-400 retirees we have a membership of about 200.

Come July 1, 2018, there will no longer be a **Newsletter**. You can't have a newsletter for an organization that doesn't exist.

The current elected officers have served multi-

ple terms and acknowledge that it is time for new leaders so **ROBS** can keep pace with the times. The Executive Board has also served for years doing double and triple duty.

If this organization is to succeed we need your support. Twenty-five years is an outstanding feat, but we must have leadership for the future. The time for action is **NOW**.

You have the choice to step up and help or **ROBS** dies. I'm sorry to speak so frankly to you but the outcome is dire unless you act.

If you're interested in stepping up to the challenge, contact any officer or executive board member. Our addresses, phone numbers and email are in the **Directory**...another thing that will cease to exist along with the **Website**.



### MEETINGS

General Meetings are held at the Brentwood Public Library, 2nd Avenue and Third Street at 10:00 a.m. on the first Friday of the month unless otherwise noted.

January 5—Breakfast

February - no meeting

March 3—TBA

### ROBS CARES

#### CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

Pronto, the community action group we support, is in need of dry and canned goods, paper products and toiletries. Please bring your contributions to every meeting. Thank you.

New and/or gently-used children's books are being collected for the Books to Home Program at every meeting. Please donate.

### OFFICERS

Nick Siciliano - President  
kpnici1@aol.com

Kathy Guleksen - 1st VP

Harriet Pepine - 2nd VP

Nancy Churchillo - Secretary

Carmen Roldan - Treasurer

Phyllis Goodwin - President Emerita

Dot Zuckerman - Founder

### AFFILIATIONS

ROBS is proudly affiliated with NYSUT, AFT, NEA, AFL-CIO, RC21 & NYSARA.

[www.robsny.org](http://www.robsny.org)

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**ROBS EXECUTIVE BOARD**

- Carmela Criscione - ROBS Cares
- Adrienne Eastman - BCA Liaison
- Gloria Hannemann - Webmaster
- Marty Hochheiser - BTA Liaison
- Barbara Mascaro - Archivist and RC 21 Liaison
- Paula Moore - Photographer
- Johanna Kane, Joanne Brown & Lynda Romano - Hospitality
- John Sherin - History Project
- Nick Siciliano - Web Editor
- Letty Sustrin - Project Hope
- Susana Bouza, Ellen Edelstein, and Jim Nanos - Delegates at Large
- Valerie Vismale - Programs

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- Adrienne Eastman
- Lucille Fink
- Phyllis Goodwin
- Paula Moore
- John Sherin
- Nick Siciliano

**TALK TO US**

The phone numbers, home addresses, and e-mail addresses of all the Officers and Executive Board Members are in the Directory should you wish to contact us.

Stories, ideas for stories or columns and news items are always welcome.

This newsletter is all about us.

[www.robsny.org](http://www.robsny.org)



**NICK'S NOTES**

***By Nick Siciliano***

As we end the year, I would like to thank all of you who voted to not approve the calling of a constitutional convention next year. According to the media, more people turned out to vote in an off-year election than in previous years.

This is another example of how your retiree organization operates to make you aware of issues that may have an impact on you. There has been much discussion on having our members step up and run for offices to make **ROBS** continue well into the future. Remember to run for an office next year when we hold elections for officers of **ROBS**.

I would like to thank those of you who contributed to providing Thanksgiving dinner and gifts for the Holiday Season. Due to your generosity, we were able to adopt three families this year.

In addition, thank you for your contributions to help the people of Puerto Rico in dealing with the re-

cent hurricane they have experienced.

Thanks to our Editorial Board for our excellent newsletter which keeps us informed on our organization. Also, thanks to Gloria Hannemann for our excellent website.

I would also like to thank John Sherin for his work on the History Project. Thanks to Phyllis Goodwin who has been helpful in so many ways to make **ROBS** a viable organization. Also, thanks to Letty Sustrin, Lois Morella, Loretta Ellington and all the elves for the work they have done in buying and wrapping gifts for the families we adopted for the holidays.

Lastly, thanks to the Executive Board for all their work to make **ROBS** a success. Thanks to all our members for their ongoing support.

May you have a wonderful holiday and a Happy New Year!



## IT'S ALL ABOUT US

**By Carmela Criscione**

Well, most of the leaves have fallen except for that one persistent one which seems to be tied to the branch and won't fall off until all the others are raked and bagged and the landscaper has driven out of sight.

It's just a short time before the holidays come around with all the attendant music, crowds, parties, fabulous foods and family gatherings. Enjoy it all but pace yourself because it is a hectic time.

Congratulations to all for going out on Election Day and resoundingly voting down the Constitutional Convention amendment. With all the economic news swirling around us we did not need the threat of changes to our pensions that might have been enacted had it passed.

If you attended the November 3rd general meeting you received my open letter about the state of **ROBS**. It is also the front page story in this newsletter. While we know this is distressing news to you it is also an opportunity to give something back to your organization by getting involved. The truth is if

you don't, we may have to discontinue. If you are interested **PLEASE** contact any of the officers or members of the Executive Board for information.

**Paula Moore's** niece, Shannah Walton, has written a book titled *Demystifying Digital Currency: A Basic User Guide*. She explains bit coin (I think).

**Paula's** nephew, Victor Broushet, has opened the Vegan Nest in Worcester, Mass. Paula says you'll be surprised.

Sad news to report. **Joyse Trespel** (Elementary) passed away in October. Barbara Callan, wife of **John Callan** (Dept Head/SS) and mother of John Callan, Jr. (current HS Principal) died in October. Josie Rashkin, wife of **Steve Rashkin** (Psychologist), died in October as did **Tim Embree**, the husband of Suzanne Belanger Embree (former Board of Education member.) **Elizabeth Norton** (Elementary/Loretta Park) passed in November. **Marilyn DePlaza's** (NMS) husband, Henry, passed away November 19th. **Tommy Marsden**, long time buildings and grounds foreman, passed

away in November. We lost **Ann Bass** (Secretary/IMC) in early December. We're also sorry to hear of the passing of Chris Schock's (newsletter printer from AHRC) father in late November. Condolences to all.

**ROBS** made donations to Suburban Children for school supplies and to the Breast Cancer Survivors Walk which was held on September 15th. We received a lovely letter from Ann Palmer (Coordinator of Language Arts) regarding our donations to the summer book drive (see page 5.) Please continue to donate to this worthy endeavor and to our Pronto food donations.

This falls under "Helpful Hints." Having problems putting on a bracelet because it slips and slides before you can get the clasp in place? Put the bracelet on your wrist with the loop facing forward. Anchor it with a piece of scotch tape and with your free hand put the clasp through the loop. It works!

Remember...

**IT'S ALL ABOUT US!!!**



### NINETEEN YEARS

Retirees Phyllis Goodwin and Janet Verdi wanted to share these two pictures of themselves taken 19 years apart at their respective retirement parties. Two beautiful women who've hardly changed a bit. Brentwood friendships are the best!



## DIVERSITY

*By Babara Delillo*

I just retired on June 30<sup>th</sup> and attended my first **ROBS** meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup>. It was great to see so many familiar faces and catch up with the latest news.

We did an activity on Diversity led by John Sherin. We all gathered on one side of the room. John asked an assortment of questions and if the question pertained to us we crossed over to the other side of the room. It was interesting to see how much we all had in common at

times. Questions ranged from our position in our family to our beliefs about various issues and our experiences in life.

Afterward we all gathered in a large circle and John asked each of us how we came to work and/or live in Brentwood. I enjoyed hearing so many different stories. I learned that in the 60's, teachers came to Brentwood because they were recruited as minorities. Others came to Brentwood for the diversity that was not available everywhere. Some of us moved to Brentwood for various rea-

sons and then became employees. It was a fun meeting, and we all got our daily walking exercise in when we crossed from one side of the room to another for 30 minutes!



## AARP



*Bernard Macias*



*By Valerie Vismale*

When you hear someone say AARP, what is the first thing that comes to mind???

Most of us think about red membership card and the AARP monthly magazine we receive in the mail. However, at our October **ROBS** meeting, Bernard Macias, the AARP Associate State Director of Outreach for Long Island, shared that AARP is so much more!

We learned that AARP is an integral part of communities across Long Island providing guidance and support on important aging issues. Fraud, an issue affecting the senior community, is one that Mr. Macias is most passionate. He shared

quite a few stories of individuals who have been victims and encouraged our members to be vigilant and watchful. Information was provided on the Fraud Watch Network Program; a free workshop to help protect you and your family from identity theft, fraud, and scams.

Mr. Macias invited our members to check out all of the fun things that AARP is doing in our neighborhoods like free advance screenings of new movies and offerings of discounted theatre tickets to local productions. By the end of his presentation we knew that AARP is much more than the red membership card we carry in our wallets!

# CONQUERING STRESS

**By Adrienne Eastman**

Have you ever stressed over your job, family situations, finances or even the direction our country is going in?

At our November 3rd **ROBS** General Meeting Deborah McElligott, a Nurse Practitioner from Northwell Health, spoke about some techniques to help you cope.

It is especially important to bring down your stress levels to stay healthy because it affects your body's blood pressure and cholesterol level and your mind's ability to cope with events, responsibilities, behavior and emotions .

There are many steps you can take to reduce and control your stress level. Some are listed below.

1. Walk off your stress. Take a 30-minute walk a day or do something you like to do.
2. Talk to someone about your problems. Don't bottle up your feelings.

3. If you can't change something, let it go.
4. Eliminate resistant thinking such as jumping to conclusions.
5. Don't feed, drink or smoke your stress.
6. Eat breakfast, and don't skip lunch. Think about what you are eating.
7. Sleep, exercise, reduce fear.
8. Engage with family and friends.
9. Let go of guilt. Don't blame yourself.
10. Try prayer and meditation.
11. Tai Chi, yoga or acupuncture.
12. Aroma therapy and mindfulness.
13. Chiropractic.
14. Breathing affects the body and mind. Focus on your heart and breathe slowly.

Although Deborah didn't mention these two techniques, my personal favorites are thinking about the word RELAX, and picturing myself sitting by the water's edge at the beach. When I think about the word RELAX, I say "RE" when I inhale and "LAX" on a long exhale while also concentrating on dropping my shoulders which is where all the tightness and tension is. In the beach scenario, I picture the gentle waves coming up and covering first my feet and receding, then each following wave coming higher on my body and receding. With each receding the wave takes away more stress until my whole body is de-stressed and relaxed.

If you have your own de-stressing techniques that you would like to share with us, we would love to hear them and will publish them in a future edition of the **ROBS** newsletter.

Many thanks to Deborah McElligott for her informative presentation.



## A LETTER OF THANKS

We received this thank you letter from Ann Palmer, Brentwood's Coordinator of Language Arts and Social Studies K-12, for our book donations. Please read it and continue to support this very worthy cause.



I want to express my appreciation for your generous book donation for our *Books to Home* event in June. It was a huge success! A special thank you is owed to John Sherin for arranging a book donation from a public library and Barbara Mascaro, Karen Riley, and Ellen Edelstein for going above and beyond and personally delivering the books to the Felicio Administration Building. Because of your donations, we have been able to keep a table of books open daily for children to shop for free books.

Summer reading loss and the widening economic gap are solvable problems when a community comes together to meet the needs of its children. Your generous donations help us equalize our children's access to books during the school year. People take books for granted – until you have to choose between purchasing books and necessities. Please know how much you help lessen the burden for our hard-working parents and how much we all appreciate your commitment to the Brentwood Community.

A former Brentwood graduate, I know first-hand that children need positive role models they can look up to. Brentwood teachers have always set the finest example. I am grateful for our partnership, admire your spirit, and congratulate you on 25 years of success!



## MEDITERRANEAN DREAMS

*by Ronda Brooks*



Every summer, I have the privilege of leading student delegations on trips around the world with an organization called People to People. This summer, my group of 43 students and 7 adults traveled to Italy, Monaco, France and Spain. We traveled by plane, motor coach, ferry, inflatable raft, train and on foot to get to our various destinations.

Some of the activities we participated in were: white water rafting and pizza-making in Italy; ferrying around and swimming in Cinque Terre; spear-throwing and mountain climbing to reach a prehistoric cave in France; watching the Spider-

man movie in Cannes (with French subtitles); touring Monte Carlo and visiting Princess Grace's burial site in Monaco, making paella and dancing the flamenco in Spain; all this and so much more.

We saw such iconic sights as the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Spanish Steps, the Vatican with its stunning Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo's statue of David, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the beautiful beaches of the French Riviera, Tautavel Man Cave in France, and the statue of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in Madrid.

It's such a wonderful opportunity to learn about various cultures and see landmarks I've

only been able to read about. Meeting residents of different countries and trying out my rusty high school Spanish and French has also been a very special part of these journeys. Tasting new foods and learning about local customs is a fascinating part of the process. Seeing the look of wonder on the students' faces, as they explore new places, makes it all worthwhile.

Take a trip when you get the chance. There's a whole world out there waiting to be seen!

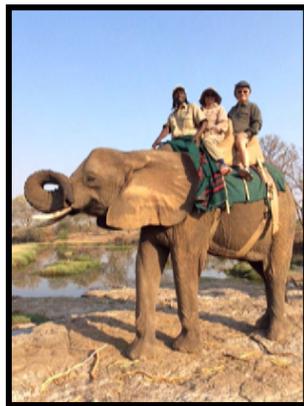
Next summer? Paris, Italy and Greece!

## MY AFRICAN ADVENTURE

*By Susana Bouza*

Our most recent vacation took us to Africa. It took us fifteen and a half hours to fly to Johannesburg, which is the largest city in South Africa. We visited Nelson Mandela's home that is now a museum, and also visited the Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum. Afterwards, we took another flight to Skukusa to go to Kruger National Park which is the richest wildlife refuge. On our way to our hotel, which was located within the national park, we could see impalas and elephants in the river. At this park, we were able to see the big five game animals: elephants, lions, leopards, African buffalos and rhinoceros. The impalas were all over the place, as well as giraffes, warthogs, hippopotamus, and African wild dogs. For the next part of our excursion, we flew to Zambia and crossed the border to Zimba-

bwe to go to Hwange National Park where we went on another photo safari, and then visited Victoria Falls! Eve-



ry place was an experience! The sunsets are spectacular! We took a helicopter ride over Victoria Falls! We went to visit Chinotimba Primary School, and we also had the opportunity to have dinner with a local fam-

ily at their home. Then we took a sunset cruise on the Chobe River where we admired hippos, elephants, baboons, and crocodiles. We visited three national parks all with amazing animals. My favorite park was Kruger, though, maybe because it was my first. What really gave me chills was riding on an elephant. Not even in my wildest dreams would I think I would ever go to Africa and ride an elephant. Her name was Brenda and her baby was following her mom behind us. We then flew to Cape Town, took a tour of the city and visited Table Mountain. We rode The Flying Dutchman Funicular to reach the hilltop lighthouse to see where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet. We visited the African penguins and went wine tasting in the Winelands region. The 21 days of our trip went by so fast! It was an unforgettable trip!

## ROBS HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

On Friday, December 1, **ROBS** turned out to celebrate the upcoming holidays at the Irish Coffee Pub in East Islip. We had a wonderful afternoon eating a delicious meal and chatting with friends. Wishing all of our **ROBS** members a wonderful holiday season and a peaceful and happy New Year.

Kudos to Valerie Vismale for her party planning efforts!



ROBS NEW YEAR BREAKFAST

January 5, 2018 9-11 AM

Candlelight Diner 56 Vets Highway Commack NY 11725

Special Breakfast Menu

Cheese Omelette (Swiss, Mozzarella or American)

Western Omelette

2 eggs any style

French toast

All of the above served with a choice of bacon or sausage,  
Home Fries and toast.

Pancakes served with bacon, sausage, butter and syrup.

Oatmeal served with raisin or banana topping.

Fruit salad

Every breakfast includes coffee, tea and  
juice (apple, cranberry or orange).

The cost is \$15 per person. Make your check payable to ROBS  
with "breakfast" written on the memo line and send to:

Valerie Vismale 1586 Lincoln Blvd.  
Bay Shore NY 11706 631.680.4730  
The deadline is December 30, 2017

