The Retiree

ROBS NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER 2007

RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

ISSUE 70



General meetings
BRENTWOOD
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

2 Avenue & 4th Street Phone: 273-7883 Meetings at 10 AM

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 2:
ROBS member, Joe Purcell's
TRAVELOGUE &
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES
ALSO A BOOK/CD/DVD
SWAP

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON
December 7 (SEE FLYER)

NEW YEAR'S BREAKFAST
JANUARY 25, 2008
9 AM – 11 AM
PARADISE DINER
579 VETERAN'S
MEMORIAL HWY.
HAUPPAUGE

JOIN US!

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CLINTON RESPONDS TO AFT STATE LEADERS

The day after accepting the AFT's endorsement, Hillary Clinton participated in a meeting-via the Internet and telephone-with AFT state federation leaders. She answered questions posed by AFT leaders on a range of topics, including No Child Left Behind, the economy, higher education and the war in Iraq. On the topic of performance pay for teachers based on student test scores, which is expected to be part of the NCLB bill slated to be introduced soon in the U.S. House of Representatives, Clinton said, "That, to me, is just a dead end." There is no evidence it works, and it inter-

feres with collective bargaining rights at the local level, she added. Clinton said she does support encouraging teachers and school staff at the local level to figure out what sort of voluntary, school wide incentive plans might work to boost student achievement. but she rejected the idea of the federal government imposing a mandatory system of performance pay on schools across the country. What's more important, she added, is figuring out how to help each child learn as much as possible each

year, and how to "support teachers in making the magic of learning come alive for their students." On the issue of affordability of higher education, Sen. Clinton noted that she recently voted to reduce the cost of college loans and to increase Pell Grants. But more is needed to eliminate the lock banks have on loans, reduce interest rates and pass a student borrowers' bill of rights. To make sure that students have access to quality higher education, other issues have to be addressed, including the increase in the number of part-time faculty adjuncts, who often receive fewer benefits.

AFT COUNCIL PASSES RESOLUTIONS ON BURMA, 'JENA 6'

The AFT executive council on Oct. 3 passed resolutions on two issues currently in the news--the military crackdown in Burma and concerns over the 'Jena 6' controversy in Louisiana.

The council issued a strong condemnation of the Burmese government's crackdown on peaceful demonstrators that has resulted in the deaths of at least 10 people and the arrest of thousands of Buddhist monks. Burma has been ruled by a brutal military dictatorship since 1962.

In 1990, the government refused to honor the results of a free parliamentary election, in which the National League for Democracy, led by Nobel Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, won an overwhelming majority of the seats in parliament.

At its meeting in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 3, the council passed a resolution calling on the military government to "enter immediately into unconditional political talks" with religious leaders, Aung San Suu Kyi and the leadership of the NLD that "will lead to the restoration of democracy in that country.

In a separate action, the coun-

cil also passed a resolution on the racially charged events in Jena, La., which initially occurred in December 2006 but have attracted national attention in recent months. School discipline and the law "must be applied equally to all," said the council, which condemned "the transparent discrepancies between the criminal charges issued against the six African-American Jena, La., youths and the penalties applied to the white students in Jena."

The council also called for a Justice Department investigation of the events in Jena. Read the full story on LeaderNet.

THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST ISSUE IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED ROBS FOR 2007-2008!

PHYLL'S FORUM Phyllis Goodwin, President - (631-673-2971)

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back to a new year of interesting programs. I will start by reiterating the obvious. We are behind in our membership drive by almost 80 members. Hats Off to our over 75 group - they return their forms much faster than the "youngsters." Our cut off date is October 31. However, we will only send out an addendum to the Directory this year which will include new retirees, people who have not joined for several years and address changes.

Congress has approved a bill that would expand health insurance coverage for low-income children, adding \$35 billion over five years to cover an additional 4 million of the nation's 10 million uninsured children. Currently 6.6 million children are already enrolled in the program. AFT president Edward J. McElroy is hailing the vote as an important victory, noting that "children with access to good healthcare are less likely to miss school, can better concentrate in class and do better academically." A compromise between original House and Senate legislation to renew the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), the healthcare package won dozens of Republican votes, but President Bush is still threatening to veto it. Proponents of the bill need 19 more votes in the House to

override a Bush veto, and AFT legislative staffer Bill Cunningham says the union is trying to get those members of Congress who opposed the bill to rethink their positions (contact your member of Congress now). In the House vote, 265-159, 45 Republicans voted for it, up from five who supported the original House version. In addition, the legislation has won the backing of insurers, doctors and other groups who usually look askance at public healthcare programs. The Senate on Sept. 27 passed the bill overwhelmingly, 67-29, but it won't do much good if the House can't muster the votes for an override.

There are 2 interesting conferences coming up in November. The annual NYSUT Retiree Conference will take place on November 14 at the Water Mill, 8:30 to 3 PM. As usual, Dot Zuckerman has put together a very interesting and diverse program. The second is the Intergeneration Strategies Conference "It Takes A Village" at the Charles B. Wang Center at Stony Brook University on November 12 from 8:30 to 4 PM. I look forward to seeing you at both conferences.

In Harmony,

Phyllis Goodwin

CONGRESS CREATING PROGRAMS TO EASE TRANSITION TO DIGITAL TELEVISION

Senate Special Committee on Aging Chairman Herb Kohl (D-WI) is concerned about the February 17, 2009, transition to digital television (DTV), and the disproportionate effects it will have on seniors. An Aging Committee investigation found the federal government unprepared to educate older Americans about the switch, when homes receiving only over-the-air, broadcast television will lose their analog signal. "This is considered a public safety issue, as these households will no longer be able to receive national and local emergency alerts via television," said Sen. Kohl, who will introduce a bill to establish a new public-private DTV education initiative. The legislation would intensify coordination among the Federal Communications Commission, the

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the Administration on Aging and the television industry, and increase the \$5 million that has been allocated to inform more than 300 million people of the change. The money would fund assistance measures such as mandatory public service announcements and a toll-free number people could call to find out if they will be affected and what help is available.

By January 1, 2008, NTIA will be making available \$40 coupons that can be applied toward the purchase of DTV converter boxes.



ROBS NEWSLETTER

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Did You Know ...

About 7.4% of Americans aged 75 and older lived in nursing homes in 2006, compared with 8.1% in 2000 and 10.2% in 1990, according to U.S. Census figures released last week. The downturn reflects the improved health of seniors and more choices of care for the elderly.



ROBS Newsletter Editorial Board:

Carmela Criscione Adrienne Eastman Phyllis Goodwin Marge Kirchner

THE M-T CORNER

"If you don't read the newspaper, you are uninformed; if you do read the newspaper, you are misinformed."

> attributed to Mark Twain (1835-1910)

NYSUT NOTES

Dorothy Zuckerman, NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant, 631-273-8822 e-mail: dzuckerm@nysutmail.org

BUILDING FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

The first week of September over 600 members of the Alliance for Retired Americans met in Washington, DC to plan the agenda for the activist program in the important election year of 2008. Meeting with our elected Congress people and Senators, we emphasized the need to allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices. We also re-emphasized the importance of allowing the safe re-importation of drugs from Canada and other countries. We heard from many inspiring and supportive speakers, including Sen. Hillary Clinton, Rep. Dennis Kucinich and Elizabeth Edwards.

The Alliance sponsored an impressive "Strategic Survey" to get a sense of how retirees feel today about their country and their future. The results were very informative and often disturbing, mainly because <u>older voters are not optimistic about the state of the country.</u>

⇒ Seniors are concerned over security issues

- By almost 3-1 older voters believe the country is on the wrong track
- Iraq, terrorism and national security top the list of concerns
- 48% believe the war in Iraq has made us less safe
- Although they support a change in the direction of the war, there is no
- agreement on what course to take
- More than any other economic issue they are most worried about rising health care costs
- 64% worry that Social Security won't be there for retirement, while 61% think taxes will go up too much to afford retirement
- There is strong opposition to privatizing Social Security

⇒ Retirees are unhappy with anyone in government

- They strongly blame corporations and greedy CEO's for rising health care costs. But when asked to decide who was most to blame, more held the government responsible than the insurance companies and HMOs
- They feel that both parties in Congress are doing a fair/poor job
- Health care costs is the first issue they want Congress to address, followed by guaranteeing affordable health care for everybody

⇒ This age group strongly believes in the American Dream

- 70% are paying a lot or some attention to the presidential campaign and 40% are enthusiastic about voting in 2008
- Many don't feel the candidates are paying attention to their concerns
- They are worried that their children and grandchildren won't be able to afford to retire

These are issues the Alliance will be addressing on the local, state and national levels. It is urgent that more of us must become involved as activists to accomplish our goals. <u>Start by becoming a member of the Long Island Alliance for Retired Americans</u>. Call me at 631-273-8822 for more information and material.

MIDDLE CLASS STAR REBATE PROGRAM

STAR, New York State's School Tax Relief Program, provides a school property tax rebate and a partial exemption from school district taxes only. Basic STAR exemption is for the first \$30,000 of the full home value. In July 2007 Governor Spitzer announced that homeowners will now be eligible to receive the largest additional tax relief in state history, specifically targeted to the middle class. The additional benefit will provide up to a 60% increase for 2007-2008 increasing up to 80% by 2009-2010. The deadline to submit the application is November 30, 2007. Enrollment on-line: www.nystax.gov or call 1-877-678-2769.

LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE YOU CAN TRUST FROM AFT+

Chances are you or someone in your family will need nursing home or in-home care someday. With the average cost of a nursing home now about \$60,000 a year, this kind of care can drain a lifetime of savings. Long-term care helps protect your financial independence and dignity by giving you more freedom to choose the kind of care best for you. This plan is open to family members, too. Find out more by visiting www.aft.org/aftplusinsurecan/ltc or by calling 866/253-1334.

NEWS NOTES

Congratulations to clerical retirees Martha Wharton, Payroll in June; Elsa Hernandez, Registration; and Madeline Forzano, Speech Dept. secretary in July.

Received a phone call from a friend, not associated with Brentwood, who was in a sidewalk café in the Big Apple. He reported that **Donna-Marie Ragonese** (Laurel Pk. '96) had him helping her, and hubby Gene in the AM, hang signs in New Paltz where **Donna-Marie** is running for Town Board. **Donna** is up against a woman who scandalized the area by downloading porn on town computers. Imagine! Good Luck. It is a small world.

Richard Zuckerman, son of **Dot Z**, (NE '91), was listed among the top 5 % New York lawyers in the New York Times Magazine section recently. Mom is mighty proud!

Eleanor Lipkins Steffen (Sond. Art '93) reports she's enjoying having solo art shows up in Woodstock, which brought her into contact with some former colleagues, including retired HS administrator Ralph Ruggerio and family. Gerry Cohen (HS Guid.) reports he and Marsha are traveling, he's helping out in summer school, golfing, playing softball 2x a week & going to the gym.

In early September, Judi Hearst Weissman (HS '07), Patti Munson, upcoming '08 retiree and this editor went to the Stony Brook street fair to celebrate a year with no schedules. The rain was teeming down and the wind was approaching gale force at

times. We took refuge in Rick Mundy's (Ross '98) tent where he was displaying his art work, and had a lovely visit. Visit his work at: rickmundy.com. When the rain stopped, we meandered on and discovered that the wind had totally destroyed a tent that belonged to Bobbie and Bob Dalpiaz (Band Director '05). Almost all their lovely handcrafted pieces were destroyed when the wind blew through the tent and sent shelves and earthenwood crashing to the ground. Visit their web site to see the type of work they do: earthenwoodartisans.com where you'll see Bob in action. They are hard at work making more for their holiday show at their home in Sayville. Then in October, Gilda Mantin (Eng. Chair '88) lunched with Bette Stosuy (Ross



'03) & Judi Weissman on one of Gilda's trips east to connect with friends and see her son. She has recovered nicely from a mild stroke last spring.



Had am upbeat phone conversation with Harriet Helman (Ross '05) upon her return from a week in the hospital. She has a 2 month recovery period from cellulitis, so she's pretty much home bound. Feel better real soon! Bobbe (EMS '04) & Chico Frankel (Guid. "05) sent a note thanking ROBS members for their prayers and concerns as they battled Chico's cancer. "Living with cancer is an unfamiliar journey that changes life completely." To celebrate a successful doctor's report, the duo went to Florida with family in August to celebrate their 38th anniversary, and to Machu Picchu and the Galapagos Islands in September with Chris (Ross '04) and Alida (EMS '04) Thorpe. Visit Alida"s photo site, alidathorpe.com to see what she's doing in retirement. Chico received an award at CW Post in June, where this picture, with Bobbe & daughter Jennifer, was taken. We have so many talented retirees!

Henry and Mariyn DePlaza (NMS '88) were on their 17th annual trek to Fantasy Fest in Key West-a fun and crazy week at their Banyan Resort time share. Peter Hoegel (Ross '01) left Utah for a visit in San Diego, Home Port of the USS New Orleans where Peter Jr. is the Operations Officer. Then on to Houston, a day in Lawton, OK where Peter and Susan lived while he trained at Fort Sill before he shipped out to Vietnam. Oct 28 will be their 40th anniversary. Congratulations! Don (Sond. '95) & Barbara Kubicsko recently traveled to Mexico, then California and Florida. Joyce Trespel (SMS '95) and Art spend summers in Massachusetts (they live in Port St.Lucie), and are now on their dream cruise to Italy, Croatia, Greece & Turkey. Jeff & Claudia DeBellis (EMS '95) were in Prague at an International Physics Conference with a side trip to Geneva this summer. Judy Curran (Ross '93) was in Vienna AGAIN! ROBS members are a well traveled group too.

You meet folks in strange places. Saw a familiar face on the Pt. Jeff Ferry on a Smithtown Library trip to Boston in July. It turned out to be **Ethel Tarkan** (Twin Pines '96). Great visit to the Isabella Stewart Gardiner Museum, & the ferry ride was great!

Kris Dougherty and Lynn Tiscione were elected as At-Large Delegates to the ROBS Executive Board in September. Welcome!

Miriam Massucci, a member of FAN appealed to members to donate NEW books for preschool and beginning readers 6 and under to give with food baskets donated to the needy at holiday time. Bring any donations of books to the next ROBS meeting.

NEWS NOTES

Kathy Williams-Ging (Fr. Ctr. '05) was featured in a 9/22 NEWSDAY Act Two article on marriage and retirement written by Liza Burby who is married to Steve Burby, an English teacher at the Freshman Center in Brentwood. The section on **Kathy** follows:

"Couples can share retirement successfully, regardless of who stops working first, if they lay the groundwork throughout their marriage. Kathy Williams-Ging, 56, and Tim Ging, 49, of Huntington Station, set up their division of labor when they married 16 years ago. Kathy cooks and does the laundry and Tim cleans. When Kathy retired from teaching in 2005 after 30 years, she took over the chauffeuring of their 15-year-old daughter, Sarah.

"And one nice change is that we can all have breakfast together; whereas, when I was teaching high school, I was out of the house before they were up," Kathy says.

Tim, who works full-time as a massage therapist, doesn't plan to retire until Sarah graduates college. But, he says, having **Kathy** home is making their lives run smoothly. "My schedule is easier because now Kathy can do the errands I used to fit in between clients. My advice if your spouse retires before you is to be happy for them and not begrudge them; they've earned it. But don't be afraid to ask for favors that make your work schedule easier."

Anna Mattausch (Ross '72) has moved into the Medford Health center. Her phone number is 631-286-2701.

Ruth Bernhardt (NE '78) has been moved into an assisted living facility that specializes in Alzheimer's related dementia. Her son, Ron, notes that they refer to it as a "memory issue" in her presence. She is no longer on line and any mail you wish to send should be sent to her c/o Ron Bernhardt, 447 Malibu Ct., Livermore, CA 94550. Ron's email is" rebernhardt@aol.com.

In July we lost **Hank Muller** who taught at Loretta Park. His wife & all five of his children were with him at the end at 17 Oakwood Circle, Ormand Beach, FL. There will be a memorial service at Pinelawn this fall.

Ray Cunneen, long time SS teacher and HS basketball coach in Brentwood passed away of complications of a valve replacement in August. ROBS members will miss our '89 retiree at our luncheons where he always regaled us with his antics on the golf course and elsewhere with long time buddies. Condolences to his wife Mary at 5 Surf Avenue, Islip 11751.

And sadly, Amy Heller, Bernie's wife, also died in August. "She really fought the good fight. Even in the hospital, she was more concerned about Bernie keeping to his poker game schedule, telling him she would be furious if he showed up at the hospital! She had such spirit.. I will miss hearing her spunky voice so very much." wrote Marilyn DePlaza. Florence Briggs (10 GC '91) widow of Larry, a college buddy of Bernie's, was the last one to speak to her before her death, and saw her before she went into Hospice. Bernie's address is: 2037 Cross Breeze Dr., Wellington, FL 33414; 561-798-2046.



Jean Price, (TP '95) who taught at S. Elem & Twin Pines died in September after a long illness. Jean leaves sons Andrew & Eugene, their wives & 4 grandchildren. Condolences to 143 Hayrick Lane, Commack, NY 11725

Amy Leftenant's 94 year old sister Gabriella Leftenant-Crews passed away in September in Amityville. Sadly too we must report that Grace Mauro (Admin. Bldg) lost her son, Joseph, to a heart attack in August. (349 Patricia CT., Oakdale, NY 11769). Eleanor Klein's (SW) son Mitchell Klein passed away. She's at 13013 Harbour Ridge Rd., Palm City, FL 34990.

We noted the death of Pete Cerullo (N '83) in the last issue. Here is a tribute written by Marty Hochheiser (NMS '02).

Peter was a talented teacher of music in Brentwood. He developed and ran many musical programs which inspired a multitude of students.

Peter was involved in the first Professional Hearing that I co-chaired as the BTA representative. George Catandella decided to involuntarily transfer him from elementary to junior high school. With the help of the

then BTA president, Les Black, the unfair move was thwarted.

The last few years were medically challenging ones for **Peter**, including bi-weekly dialysis. What will be remembered was his humor and strong spirit despite the pain. I would see him at the Old Country Buffet as recently as several weeks before his death in June, stubbornly eating things that he shouldn't.

OUR THOUGHTS GO OUT TO FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THOSE LOST.

FYI--RC 21 by Marge Kirchner

Retiree Council 21 consists of eleven local districts; ten of those have chapter membership in the Council. Think of RC 21 as a regional "umbrella" to each of those local retiree chapters.

As a larger group, RC 21 can provide great service to their members with political action and social activities. Because of their larger numbers, they have a greater influence in the political sector. Lobbying for senior benefits including improved COLA, reforms in Medicare, and continued stabilization of our Health Care and Social Security benefits are a priority to their Political arm.

Their activities are varied providing classes such as Defensive Driving, as well as luncheons, many and varied local and overnight trips and the legendary Fall Brunch to welcome new retirees.

Five dollars of your \$20.00 dues goes to RC 21 to support their efforts on our behalf. They also contribute \$300.00-\$400.00 to our scholarship fund each year.

Check them out on the web at locals.nysut.org/retiree21

A MESSAGE FROM MARGE KIRCHNER...

Each year I write a small article thanking our members for the many notes I receive along with their membership applications. I've always been taken by the pleasant messages that send fond regards and remembrances of our days together in Brentwood. I also receive a yearly message from one gentleman who has been over 75 for many years and is entitled to free membership in our Organization. Even so, he continues to send \$20.00 along with his membership form. His note always refers to the good work we are doing at ROBS and the statement, "I'll send in my \$20.00 dues for as long as I can." It always brings a smile to my lips.

This year I have been very touched by the numerous congratulatory messages in response to the article I wrote about my recent marriage. These notes were written on the applications, on post-its, on notepaper and on special wedding cards. Many of them came from people I had the pleasure of working with, but others came from members I do not know. Taking those extra moments to recognize this significant event in my life has filled me with sweet warmth. Thank you for your congratulations, your Mazel Tovs, and your many well wishes.

THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER UNLESS YOU JOIN US BY SENDING DUES FOR 2007 – 2008 OF \$20 MADE OUT TO ROBS. MAIL TO MARGE KIRCHNER, 666 HAWKINS ROAD EAST, CORAM, NY 11727



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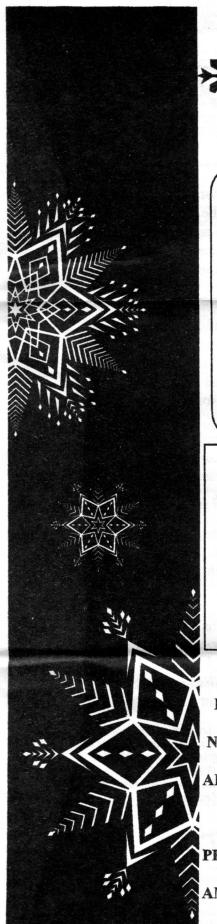
THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"The Pilgrims wore black and white because that was their football team's colors."

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING





BONWIT INN

1 Vanderbilt Motor Parkway Commack, NY 631-499-2068

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2007 12 – 4 P.M.

\$ 32 all inclusive

ROBS HOLJDAY LUNCHEON

MENU

Greek Salad

Choice of: Penne ala Vodka, Fresh Mozzarella & Vine Ripe Tomatoes, Baked clams

Entrée Choices

Chicken Boscaiola, Veal Bonwit, Sea Bass Mediterranean, Grilled Salmon, Eggplant Parmesan

Dessert

Chocolate Mousse Cake Coffee, Tea, Soda

Cash Bar

| Clip and return by November 26, 2007 to: (check payable to ROBS) Ruth McCalla, 100 Columbus Avenue, Central Islip 11722; 631-234-8013 | |
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NO. OF PEOPLE PHONE

AMOUNT ENCLOSED

GUEST NAME



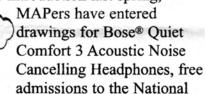
What's all the buzz about?



You might have heard your colleagues talking about MAP, the Member Assistance Program available from NYSUT Member Benefits Trust. Or maybe you've already joined. But if you haven't, you may want to once you read about MAP's benefits.

By joining MAP, an e-mail based program, you'll be among the first to hear about new, endorsed programs and program updates. You'll receive special offers from Member Benefits or from providers of its endorsed programs. Your opinions will be solicited on new programs under consideration for endorsement. When possible, you'll help Member Benefits test potential new programs and provide feedback.

Frequently, MAPers are entered into drawings for prizes donated by providers of endorsed programs and Member Benefits. Since MAP's introduction last spring,



Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, a summer fun pack filled with a variety of items, and an OfficeMax gift card worth \$100. In addition, new MAP enrollees and existing MAPers are automatically entered into quarterly raffles; to date, prizes included digital cameras and an iPod nano.

MAPers receive e-mail communications from Member Benefits and occasionally from

its providers of endorsed programs. Member Benefits oversees the frequency of e-mail communications to ensure you will not be bombarded. On average, a MAP e-mail alert is sent once every three weeks.

Rest assured, Member Benefits does not share your e-mail address with outside interests other than endorsed program providers and then only under controlled circumstances. Once a program provider receives approval from Member Benefits to send you an offer or information, the vendor will be required to destroy the e-mail listing after sending the communication.

This exciting, new program allows you to help shape future programs and services exclusively available to you and your colleagues.

Help make a difference. Become a MAP team member. Enroll on our secure page by logging on to www.memberbenefits.nysut.org and see the feature on our home page.

For information about this program or about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please call NYSUT Member Benefits Trust at (800) 626-8101, e-mail benefits@nysutmail.org, visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

