



ROBS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 48

RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

MARCH 2003



PROJECT HOPE'S HOLIDAY GIFTS BRING JOY!

Carolina Pinto and children Karina & John Paul's eyes grew bright when Frank Spencer appeared at the door with gifts galore. Ms. Pinto wrote in a thank you letter to ROBS: "I would like to take this opportunity to give you many thanks for all your wonderful & joyous actions.

You have made yet another family happier this year. There are no words to express my appreciation for all that you have done for both my children and I. May God bless you all for the happiness you have brought to my family (and many others I'm sure). God will look upon you & bless you for your devotion to help the needy."

Educational Liaison of Suburban Children, Diane Gustaw also extends sincerest thanks on behalf of the (4) families ROBS adopted...."for the moms and dads who so desperately worried how they were going to give their children a holiday and because of you, they were able to put smiles on the faces of their children who very often don't have much to smile about."

And ROBS Treasurer, Marge Kirchner, in a letter to Frank and Vern Spencer: "As I looked over the sales receipts for all the food purchased to fill the Thanksgiving baskets, I knew those four families certainly had wholesome, traditional dinners to celebrate the holiday. I'm sure the memories of receiving those well stocked baskets warmed their hearts. And, as I looked at the receipts for the Holiday gifts, I became childlike in my joy picturing each family member receiving such specially chosen presents...I know all these things brought squeals of happiness, smiles and a tear or two to the recipients...you must feel very fulfilled by your commitment to Project Hope. Good for you!"

The ROBS Community Liaison Committee wishes to thank Phyllis Goodwin, Letty & Sheila Sustrin, Lois Morella and the Spencers for shopping for those special gifts. And thanks also to Phyllis, Letty, Sheila, Ruth McCalla, Harriet Pepine and Shirley and Bob Lloyd, the wrappers for this year's gifts.

Pictured above is Community Liaison Committee Chair Frank Spencer with the colorful gifts after the wrap party!

SPRING ROBS' MEETINGS

FRIDAY, APRIL 4 VIDEO PRESENTATION OF "US"!

History Project - John Sherin

FRIDAY, MAY 2 STATE OF THE UNION

Joe Hogan, BTA

Bay Shore Library
10 A.M.

BUSH ECONOMIC PLAN-WINDFALL TO THE WEALTHY AFT Retiree E-News -1/16/03

The \$670 billion 10 year economic stimulus package unveiled January 7, 2003 by President George W. Bush, is drawing strong opposition, with even some in the president's own party questioning the plan. The proposal's centerpiece is the elimination of taxes on dividends to boost the economy.

According to Citizens for Tax Justice, a Washington policy group, the wealthiest 1% of taxpayers (over \$356,000 a year), will get almost 50% of the benefit of eliminating the tax on dividends. 80% of households with incomes of less than \$73,000 a year would get less than 10% of the new tax breaks. The tax cut would add more than \$700 billion over the next 10 years to the already growing federal deficit.

An Urban Institute-Brookings Tax Policy Center analysis found that, while 41% of the dividend-exemption benefits would go to those over 65, nearly 40% of the benefits to seniors would flow to the 2.5% with incomes over \$200,000. 2/3s of seniors, (incomes below \$50,000, would receive only 13% of the tax cut going to seniors and less than 6% of the total tax cut.

More information: (www.afl-cio.org/yourjobeconomy/ns01062003a.cfm)

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PHYLL'S FORUM

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



Dear Colleagues: Recently, one of our members wanted to know why ROBS was not doing anything to aid the retirees of 2001-02 in receiving their correct pension. It is a unique case. Teachers who retired and had deferred moneys previous to 1999 were not allowed to use these sums in their final average salary. The state would not grant this arrangement as it had done in the past. The District and BTA have decided to challenge the state in court. ROBS has no input in the area of pension payouts since this is negotiated by BTA and the District. Since BTA is managing this in court, we can only hope this matter will be resolved quickly.

Many people were surprised that their names were not in the Directory, but we did keep to our October 31 deadline. We must adhere to this schedule to facilitate our calendar year and budget constraints. We are still receiving dues and address changes, and lack of a consistent roster makes it very difficult to plan our activities. Please don't assume we know you have moved or that your information is the same. We do not have a record of your birthday, and there is no golden sign that lights up to inform us that you are 75. We don't give out or sell our mailing list; it is strictly confidential. We need your help and support in this area.

With our dues increase, we have set aside \$1 from each member for our ROBS scholarship fund. This will enable us, in conjunction with the education grant from RC 21, to expand our assistance to deserving students of Brentwood. Our presence continues to provide a foundation for students continuing their education.

A special "Hats Off" to Marilyn DePlaza for her work on the ROBS Florida luncheon, which I attended. All of us appreciate her "Town Crier" emails.

In the recent Directory, I neglected to add my phone number. It is: 631-673-2971. Please write me at P.O. Box 2709, or 114 E. Rogues Path, Huntington Sta., NY 11746. Email: pbgoodwin@msn.com. It is important you send info to me so it can be disseminated through the proper channels as quickly as possible.

In Harmony, Phyllis



The ROBS Directory has been mailed. Inadvertently, some names were omitted, others were incorrect. In subsequent newsletters we will update the directory. Please add the corrections and additions to it as they appear:

James Watson, 1320 E. Bethany Home Rd. Unit 36, Phoenix, AZ 85014
email: revjsw@earthlink.net

Renee Arbuiso, 1 Fisherman's Circle Apt. #4, Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Beverly Carpenter, 1 Jefferson Ferry Drive, So. Setauket, NY 11720; 631-650-3154

Online retirement planning tools improving:

Be careful with all tools you resource regarding financial planning. That said, interactive financial planning tools such as Morningstar's ClearFuture, available at www.morningstar.com, or Financial Engines, at www.financialengines.com can be a great help. These can be set up to provide a personal plan for the long or short term. Let's say you want to figure out whether you might outlive your retirement income, you can go to T. Rowe Price's Retirement Income Calculator (free to all users at <http://www3.troweprice.com/ric/RIC/>). Online plans are quick and easy to read but never as personal as you would get in person. Read with some degree of skepticism. Many sites are self promoting. Check the privacy policy carefully before you take the free financial plan as well. Other planning sites include: SEC's Financial Facts Tool Kit (www.sec.gov/investor/pubs/toolkit.htm); and the American Savings Education Council Tools and Resources section (www.asec.org/toolsh.htm).

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Newsday's Saturday feature, "Act II: A Weekly Guide to Retirement Planning and Living" is 3 weeks old at this time. Pretty good feature. Check it out. Some interesting resources are at www.newsday.com/act2 where you can link onto Yahoo! Retire Early Message Board which discusses a wide range of issues from financial to emotional.

Then there is www.thetransitionnetwork.com (which was created by two business women who retired last year), for women who are retired, soon to be retired or have retirement on their radar screens.

AFT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL Approves Resolution on Iraq – Weighs in on Affirmative Action Case

In the interests of being fully informed about actions our union takes, we hope you will read and react to the following AFT-news items. (Letters to the Editor welcome).

Main-line religious leaders have come out opposing **war with Iraq**. Others have expressed opinions backing the administration. U.N. Investigators are requesting more time to let inspections work as the ruling polls seesaw. A growing peace movement is emerging around the country and the world. At the same time, young U.S. recruits are being shipped to Kuwait and environs. By the time this newsletter reaches you, we may be at war. The economic reality of fighting in, and **rebuilding, both Afghanistan and Iraq**, makes the debate a real and imminent one in relation to the growing unemployment and worsening economy. The **Michigan affirmative action case** is hotly debated in and out of government and education...and the results of the court case could have ramifications far into the future regarding institutional racism.

Inside AFT – January 27, 2003

As the military and political showdown on Iraq heats up, AFT executive council members approved a comprehensive resolution on January 23 recognizing the threat of Saddam Hussein to the region and the world as well as the need for action to force him to give up his weapons of mass destruction. The resolution condemns Saddam Hussein's regime of terror, torture and systematic murder against his own people and the threat he poses to stability in the Middle East and the national security interest of the United States.

The resolution was critical of how President Bush has handled the crisis on Iraq, noting that the union is "gravely concerned" that the president "is pursuing a deeply partisan agenda at a time of prospective war."

Nevertheless, "we know that our position on national security issues must be taken in response to security threats and not from our disagreement with the administration on other issues."

In the debate, council members noted that if military action in Iraq is necessary, a program to promote democratic institutions – and not just a change in regime – must be created in the aftermath. Any international military action in Iraq "must be followed by a comprehensive and fully funded international program to rebuild the nation's infrastructure," says the resolution, as well as economic rehabilitation, free and open education, basic health care, the rule of law, tolerance for religious diversity and the right to free association. The full text of the resolution is posted online at (<http://www.unionvoice.org/ct/D1q8qbp1Apam/iraq>).

Inside AFT – February 3, 2003

In keeping with past practice, the AFT has come out in strong support of affirmative action and policies that have as their goal diversity and access. At its executive council meeting in Florida last week, union leaders passed a resolution directing the AFT to file an amicus brief before the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the University of Michigan's affirmative action plan. Just before the AFT leaders took this action, the Bush administration announced opposition to the policy. The AFT resolution notes that Michigan's policy adheres to the guidelines laid out in *University of California v. Bakke*, the Supreme Court decision that has shaped affirmative action policy in the U.S. since 1978 and which the AFT has endorsed. The "AFT believes that meaningful diversity in the student body in our nation's colleges and universities provides a richer educational environment for all students," the resolution states. It supports the UM policy, in which an applicant's race is considered as just one of many factors, but gets extra weight in order to help the university achieve its goal of a diverse student body.

PROJECT HOPE NEEDS TUTORS FOR BRENTWOOD'S CHILDREN PLEASE, PLEASE JOIN US, EVEN FOR SHORT TERM HELP IN THE 2002-2003 SCHOOL YEAR

ROBS TO OFFER HOPE

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ Email _____

I am available to volunteer:

Brentwood Classroom Suburban Educational Center Both

2 hours a week 2 hours a month Other _____

Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

My talents & interests are:

Return to: Frank Spencer, ROBS Community Liaison Committee
3 Nottingham Dr., Wheatley Heights, N.Y. 11798-1593. Phone: 631-253-0355



NEWS NOTES

Welcome to retirement as of 1/3/03 to **Emily Arens**, Human Resources secretary!

Estelle Hoyt (Oak Park/District/wide '96) let it be known proudly at the ROBS breakfast that "Hair Spray" the new musical hit on Broadway has a great musical director/conductor! Her son, Lon Hoyt. Anyone with tickets, go say hi from mom!

And proud grandmother **Ruth McCalla** announced that granddaughter Nicloe M. Gillis was individually honored during a campus ceremony at the University of Vermont upon accepting membership in the Golden Key International Honour Society. Membership is by invitation only to the top 15% of junior and seniors in all fields of study. Congratulations!

Marilyn DePlaza (No. Junior '89) reports her daughter Marcie has "broken the glass ceiling in the residential home building field. She and 6 men are the executive board of the company." Another proud mother!

The Governor's Club will host an art exhibit of one of ROBS' foremost artists, **Grace Fishenfeld**, (H.S. '92) The exhibit will begin March 4th. An artist's reception will be held on March 5 from 5:30 - 7 P.M. at the club, 777 S. Flagler Drive. The exhibit of Grace's paintings will run through March 30th. *It's a Go-See if you're in West Palm.*

The **Writer's Group** released "The Writer's First Book" of articles written by Brentwood Retirees. Congratulations!



Grace Fata, a retired Ross HS aide, reports that after she finished chemo she and her family are moving right along with their lives. In July all 11 took a trip to Hawaii, including Pearl Harbor. Memories are what it's all about...

Ross aide **Phyllis Tulipano** took a bad fall and broke her hip last year. But after a long stint with surgery and PT, she's now doing nicely, reports **Roseann Crawford** from Sonderling. As **Grace Fata** says, "you can't hold her down." Feel better!

And **Bev Carpenter** (Southwest '94) is doing incredibly well after emergency heart surgery in November. On the get well list are also: **Alma Murray**; **Elie Steffen** (Sonderling '93) who tripped in December and is now recovering from a spiral break of the metatarsal; **Eleanor Burkitt** (Southeast '90) had hip replacement surgery; **Ruth Teich** (Northeast '88) recovering from surgery; **Judy Curran** (Ross '93) recovered from surgery and now back to skiing; **Lilian Kelly** (So. Middle '96) beginning chemo but feeling good; **Elaine Levy** (Human Resources '01) recovering from eye surgery; **Ivy Rosenthal** (North '84) who is feeling poorly; **Jean Geraci** (Admin. Bldg. '95) recovering from pneumonia; and **Stan Yankowski**, recovering from hip surgery.



Lillian Martinez Neal (North '95) is home after a cruise from California through the Panama Canal. She reports that her dearest friend **Jean Price** (Twin Pines '95) who had brain surgery last year, and spent many months in rehab, is back in the hospital again. Her address is: 3 August Crescent, Commack, NY 11725.

Special thoughts go out to **Ruth Rosenthal** (Principal) and her companion **Helen**, who are both having difficulty getting around; and **Tony Feliciano**, who is recently home from the hospital.

In November, just a year after the death of her sister, **Mary Ruffino** (10 NW Center '91) lost her nephew Michael. Our thoughts are with her...



On December 11, Jerry Steiner, long time public relations director for the Brentwood schools died suddenly of an apparent heart attack. He was 52. He leaves a nephew.

Our deepest sympathies go to the family and friends of: **Margaret (Marge) Stasi**, (Sec'y. North Middle '81) who passed away on November 13; **Mary Louise Fitzgerald** (Southeast '91), a resident of Charlotte, NC; **Marie Jarolem** (Northeast '92) of Stony Brook, who lost her husband; and **Eileen Grogan** (Loretta Park '01) whose husband passed away in December. On January 26, **Ike Fleischer** passed on. He was a custodian for many years at North Elementary. His wife, **Irene**, worked at IMC. Their address is: 9125 Flynn Circle #2, Boca Raton, FL 33496.

HEALTH BEAT

Bush Lite: "Americans were served a dose of 'Bush Lite' on the economy Tuesday night by the President in his 'State of the Union' message," said Edward F. Coyle, Executive Director of the 3 million member Alliance for Retired Americans. The speech "contained a lot of 'feel good' rhetoric but few specifics," he noted.

According to Coyle, details being leaked about the president's plan reveal that seniors will be forced to join a new version of Medicare that relies on managed care in order to get prescription drug coverage. The President was careful not to disclose this in his speech. (Call 1-800-998-0180 to oppose).

"Seniors already know that HMOs are not the way to go. If you are healthy and wealthy, fine, but if you get sick and you are elderly, there is nothing to stop the HMOs from dropping you or denying you coverage in the first place. The President's plan is too big a risk for older Americans who have earned the right to peace of mind about their health. National security should also mean health and economic security. The Alliance for Retired Americans calls on the President to stop trying to dismantle Medicare and instead urge Congress to enact a real prescription drug benefit for all Medicare beneficiaries this session," says Coyle. The traditional fee-for-service Medicare program works! (*Friday Alert* - January 31, 2003)

Bush Watch: According to the Alliance for Retired Americans, the Bush Administration has struck again!. The most recent outrage is a bulletin issued December 24 to Medicare contractors instructing them to halt outreach and education activities to inform Medicare beneficiaries of their rights under the program. The reason: The government needs to save

money. "If beneficiaries aren't told what their rights are under the program, the government probably will save a lot of money...but only at the expense of poor and vulnerable older men and women," note George J. Kourpias, president of the Alliance. "The timing of the announcement is also suspect since it comes just as President Bush is getting ready to finally unveil his proposed changes for Medicare," says Kourpias.

CVS Fined for Drug Overcharges: The nation's second largest pharmacy chain, CVS, has agreed to pay \$1.1 million to 18 states who accused it of charging states full price for prescriptions that it had only partially filled. More info: (www.atsh.org/news/cvs.html)

The Town Crier: "Our 2/21 Florida Luncheon"

by Marilyn DePlaza

We celebrated down here yesterday...and let me tell you...You missed a fun time. We ate well and had lots of laughs. Some people got to see each other for the first time in years. I got to see old friends like Carl Perrino, Estelle Hoyt, Claudette Benjamin, Larry & Flo Briggs, Maxine Berlin, Lil Jason, Loretta Ellington and best of all, EVERYONE was thrilled to see Bernie Heller there... a big surprise for all of us. He looked well even though he recently fell and broke a few bones and had a few bad scrapes, but he was our smiling Bernie again with Amy right beside him every minute. Phyllis Goodwin was there to bring us up to date on union and health issues. Some of the guests came back to my house and we chatted and reminisced and laughed and caught up on old times (yup, gossiped). Even though the group was smaller than in past years, it was still just great to get together and I thank all who made the effort to join me there. I loved seeing all of you!

FAMILIES USA CREATES WELLSTONE FELLOWSHIP

In honor of the late Senator Paul Wellstone, an articulate and persuasive voice for Progressive values and issues, Families USA, the voice of health care consumers, has created the Paul Wellstone Fellowship for Social Justice.

The year long fellowship will pay the salary and benefits for an advocate to work at Families USA in Washington D.C. and will focus substantially on their work with communities of color. It will be awarded to someone who has demonstrated a commitment to social justice issues and who is considering making a career of working in the public interest.

"We thought the best way to memorialize Paul's contribution to our work was to allow someone to work for social justice in his name," said Families USA's executive director Ron Pollack.

Details of the competition for the fellowship will be available on the Families USA Web site at (www.familiesusa.org) in February. They expect the first Wellstone Fellow to start work in September 2003. *Reprinted from Health Action, Families USA*

BLUEBERRY STORY



Jamie Vollmer, an executive in an ice cream company began an address to a group of teachers with "if I ran my business the way you people operate your schools, I wouldn't be in business very long." The audience was outraged.

One teacher eventually queried: "Good ice cream?" The best. "Rich & smooth? Premium ingredients?" 16% butter fat, nothing but triple A ingredients.

"Mr. Vollmer, when you are standing on your receiving block and see an inferior shipment of blueberries arrive, what do you do?" The silence in the room was deafening.

"I send them back."

"That's right," she barked, "and we can never send back our blueberries. We take them, big, small, rich, poor, gifted, exceptional, abused, frightened, confident, homeless, rude, and brilliant. We take them with ADHD, sick, English as their second language. We take them all! Every one! And that, Mr. Vollmer, is why its not a business. It's a school!"

The audience exploded, chanting: blueberries, blueberries. And so began businessman Vollmer's long transformation....

YOUR RIGHTS ARE AT RISK Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum (D-Ohio)
U.S. Senate, 19 year member Senate Labor & Judiciary Committees

Overtaking union elections and unfair labor practice charges. Striking down consumer and environmental protection rules. Denying public employees the right to recover lost wages from their employers when they are fired illegally from their jobs.

... are decisions by federal judges – decisions with real life consequences that affect the air we breathe, the food we eat and the jobs we do.

Federal judges – the 900 people who sit on our federal district courts, courts of appeals and U.S. Supreme Court – are appointed for life. They are responsible for deciding and enforcing a whole host of constitutional rights and statutory protection – the right to free speech, the right not to be discriminated against, the right to receive minimum wages and to join a union. They review rules and decisions by federal agencies aimed at protecting our health and safety and the environment.

When I served on the Senate Judiciary committee ... We fought and stopped the nomination of Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court and Kenneth Ryskamp's nomination to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, and we tried to defeat several other nominees because we felt their views were too far out of the mainstream for lifetime appointments to our federal courts.

...we didn't always win. But they were fights that needed to be made, because the rights and protections at stake are so important.

With the Senate now in Republican hands, the Bush administration and its Senate allies are moving quickly to pack the courts with ultra-conservative appointees. If they get their way, the federal judiciary will be thrown out of balance for a generation or more to come....

Several U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals – the highest courts in the land after the Supreme Court – hang in the balance. For example, the powerful U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, which hears the majority of cases involving employer appeals from unfair labor practice decisions by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), currently is evenly divided between Republican and Democratic appointees. The balance on the court will be completely destroyed if President George W. Bush succeeds in pressuring senators to confirm ultra-conservatives to the four vacancies on that court. (Ed. Note: At this writing, the Alliance for Retired Americans is asking Americans to help convince their senators to oppose Miguel Estrada who has refused to answer important questions from senators about his views and legal philosophy. Contact them today about nominating moderate judges, not extremists! www.unionvoice.org).

...The midterm elections might have given Republicans a bare one vote majority in the Senate, but they did not give this president or this Senate a mandate to pack the courts and skew the federal judiciary for generations to come.

...All that is standing between Bush and his agenda for an ultra-conservative takeover of the federal courts – including the U.S. Supreme Court – is the U.S. Senate. When they were in the majority last year, Senate Democrats drew the line and rejected extremist nominees like Charles Pickering (a Mississippi judge with a troubling record in civil rights cases and who sought to reduce the sentence of a convicted cross burner) and Pricilla Owen (who a broad coalition of Texans opposed because of her anti-worker, anti-consumer and anti-choice record). Now that the president's party controls the Senate, senators likely will need to resort to the filibuster to block extremist appointees and to force moderation on the part of the White House. (Democrats are, on Estrada: 2/25)

We need to ...make our voices heard... about the need to hold the line against a takeover of the federal courts by extremist nominees who do not represent mainstream America. (Reprinted from, January 2003 *America At Work* AFL-CIO Public Affairs)

And...BELTWAY BANDITS AT IT AGAIN

Remember that amendment to the bill that established the Department of Homeland Security? The one that gave pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly & Co. a powerful shield from lawsuits such as parents who say that thimerosal, a child vaccine preservative the company manufactures, caused their children's autism? It diverts such lawsuits from state courts, where they belong, to a federal "vaccine court" where damages are limited to \$250,000 – not even close to the cost of a lifetime of medical care.

Who is responsible for that language? The *Indianapolis Star* reports that the author of an earlier bill that would have granted Eli Lilly the same boondoggle was none other than the new Senate majority leader, Bill Frist (R-Tenn). He has received nearly \$4 million in campaign contributions from pharmaceutical and health products industries in the 2002 election cycle, and Eli Lilly has purchased 5000 copies of his new book (his first) and is distributing them to physicians, some say to boost it's sales. For more misdeeds in D.C., visit (www.tompaine.com). [Adapted from *America at Work*, AFL-CIO Public Affairs]

Saul Friedman's 2/8/03 *Gray Matters* *Newsday* column, takes on Frist and Sen. John Breaux (D-LA), who with the president, "want to give away the whole Medicare store to the insurance companies." (Think Medicare Plus Choice). The newest pitch is similar to the Frist/Breaux previous attempts to dismantle Medicare in exchange for a drug benefit, except this time vouchers have been introduced after retirees buy into a managed care plan in order to get a drug benefit.

According to Friedman's article, "Another physician in Congress, Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) said Frist is the Bush administration's 'finesse card on health care' because he can provide a doctor's seal of approval." Gail Shearer, director of health policy analysis for Consumers Union, said she's been "really impressed by Frist's doctoring ability, his compassion and his charitable actions. But in the past, he's aligned himself with market-oriented solutions."

According to Friedman, "sharp ideological differences remain over whether the drug benefit should be administrated within Medicare, as most Democrats propose, or through private insurers, the view of the White House. And Sen. Frist will be the standard bearer for the administration's assault on Medicare."

Frist sponsored the first Homeland Security Bill which limited legal responsibility for drug maker Eli Lilly and other manufacturers for the possible adverse effects of vaccines that may be used to thwart a biological attack, but "out of embarrassment he agreed to

demands for a quick repeal. But most troubling to an old-fashioned reporter ... taught to 'follow the money,' Frist's family business is Columbia HCA, an \$18 billion Nashville Tennessee-based company founded by the senator's father and run for years by his brother, Dr. Thomas F. Frist Jr., who is chairman emeritus. Frist and his wife own millions of dollars worth of stock and though it is in a blind trust, the senator knows what is in it

"The largest hospital company in the nation, HCA owns more than 200 hospitals and other health facilities in the U.S. and abroad, most of which depend on health-insurance companies for revenue as well as Medicare. Earlier this year, after a lengthy federal investigation, HCA finished paying the government \$1.7 billion in fines for defrauding Medicare, the program that Sen. (Dr.) Frist proposes to "modernize."



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

(Date Change) - Friday, MARCH 14
CRADLE OF AVIATION TOUR/LUNCHEON/I-MAX

FRIDAY, APRIL 4
ANNUAL VIDEO PRESENTATION

FRIDAY, MAY 2
STATE OF THE UNION: JOE HOGAN
Bay Shore Library, 10 A.M.



FRIDAY, JUNE 6
TOUR OF THE WINERIES/LUNCHEON
(This is tentative depending on coordination.)

NYSUT Task Force Makes Final Recommendation

In November 2002, NYSUT announced that its Task Force on Retiree Services made its final recommendations.

It recommends that the NYSUT Board of Directors, using the powers granted to it by the constitution, create four seats on the NYSUT Board of Directors to represent retirees. They should be allowed full voting rights on the Board, and should receive the same considerations as all other elected board members.

One of the four seats should be a Retiree-at-large seat, to be elected at the RA with the same term of office as all other at-large directors.

The remaining three seats will be created by the Board of Directors and elected at the RA by delegates from the newly established retiree election districts. It appears that there will be one ED for Retiree Districts 1-13 (upstate); one ED for Retiree Councils 14-23, (Long Island) and 37-43 (Higher Ed) plus TRIF (Florida); and one ED for Retiree Councils 24-35 (UFT).

The entitlement of Retiree Councils to the RA will be increased from one delegate to three delegates, something Long Island Retiree Councils have led the fight on for many years.

BITS AND PIECES

Medicare to Launch Pilot Project to Help Seniors Stop Smoking:

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has announced a pilot project in seven states to test the best ways to help seniors stop smoking – Alabama, Florida, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Wyoming. They were selected in part for having a large number of older smokers. The programs to be tested will include counseling, nicotine patches, prescription drugs and educational materials. Only those 65 and older who are enrolled in Medicare Part B and live in one of the seven states will be permitted to participate. The project will be for one year. Results from the project will be released in 2005. I wonder if they'll test going cold turkey?

Breast Cancer Risk Higher Among Teachers: California Study

A study of more than 130,000 female teachers and administrators in California found a higher than expected incidence of breast cancer, and excess risks of both endometrial and ovarian cancer. They did find that teachers have a lower than average risk of lung and cervical cancer however. Postponing childbirth, participation in hormone-replacement therapies are being cited as factors to explain this. (See September 2002 issue of the journal Cancer Causes and Control).

AFT has formed partnership with Powell's Book Store:

Members are offered more than a million titles of online new and used books. A % of each members purchase online will be credited to the AFT Recovery Fund for 9/11. To place an order, visit www.adtplus.org and click on any of Powell's Bookstore links. Free shipping within the U.S. for online purchase orders of \$50 or more, which does not include taxes and shipping.

BenefitsCheckUpRx: (www.benefitscheckup.org)

Medicaid & State Economy:

A report by FamiliesUSA can be found at www.familiesusa.org/good%20medicine%20report.pdf

Medicaid advocates back an increase in the Federal Medical Assistance %, and a bi-partisan bill. S138 has been introduced in the U.S. Senate. Go to (www.familiesusa.org/FMAP/FMAPstates.htm) to see the additional stimulus your state would receive.

Union adds consumer credit counseling

The Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Central New York was recently endorsed by New York State United Teachers Benefit Trust. CCCS/CNY is a non-profit community service organization that provides free confidential credit and housing counseling since 1972.

Recognizing the highly personal nature of information shared, CCCS is committed to assuring the confidentiality of individuals and/or families who have contact with this agency.

Services available include **toll-free credit management advice** seven days a week. If in-depth counseling is needed, arrangements will be made for an appointment with a counselor located in your area. CCCS/CNY has five main offices in Syracuse, Utica, Binghamton, Albany and Watertown. For members residing in other areas, CCCS has arrangements with other nationally accredited consumer credit affiliates who can handle in-state and out-of-state members. Credit management counseling services are provided free of charge.

As an U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-certified counseling agency, they also do pre-purchase counseling, home buyer seminars, and mortgage/rental default counseling. **Housing counseling** services are provided free of charge.

CCCS offers a **Debt Repayment Plan** to allow consumers to repay creditors over

time, without additional loans or stress of personal bankruptcy. Funds are distributed monthly to creditors from an established and closely monitored escrow account. This program is nationally recognized for re-establishing credit upon successful completion of repayment plans. This service is priced on a monthly sliding scale fee and is available by phone, mail, on-line or in person.

CCCS/CNY also offers a valuable **credit report review**. Your credit report influences your ability to buy a car, establish credit, purchase a home and more. Financial experts recommend you check your credit report at least once a year to be sure the information it contains is accurate. CCCS/CNY, acting in conjunction with Associated Credit

Bureaus, Inc., can provide you with a confidential interpretation of your personal credit history.

Credit report reviews are conducted as in-person appointments only. Credit report review services are available in many, but not all, locations in New York state. Credit report review services may not be available in all states. The fee for credit report review services is dependent upon how many reports are reviewed and upon location.

For more information, call CCCS/CNY at 1-800-479-6026 within New York state, 1-800-388-2227 in other states. It is very important that you identify yourself as a NYSUT member when you call.

