



## ROBS NEWSLETTER

DEC. '03 - JAN. 2004

RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

ISSUE 52



### ROBS MEETINGS

**MARCH 5** - Dan Bahr, NYSUT

**APRIL 2** - ROBS Members Sharing Hobbies

**FRIDAYS - 10 AM**  
**BAY SHORE LIBRARY**

### FLORIDA LUNCHEON

**FEBRUARY 19, 2004**

**NOON-3**

**SEE P.2 FOR MORE INFO**



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## RALLY OPPOSES MEDICARE BILL

by Kay Dillon, Twin Pines, 2001

I was one of 25 people who left the NYST office at 5:00 A.M. on Wednesday, Nov. 19 bound for Washington, DC to voice our concern over the Medicare legislation. This bill has a prescription drug clause that at first glance sounds very attractive, but in fact could possibly lead to a change in Brentwood Retirees coverage and eventually privatize Medicare, and hurt all seniors. As we approached the Senate Office Building, on our way to the rally, Ted Kennedy, who is a strong opponent of the bill walked

by and yelled, " We'll stop them!" I must admit I am not a fan of his but it was exciting to see him in person. Hillary Clinton addressed the rally as well as Senators from other states who also oppose the bill. They believe the bill will only benefit the drug companies and HMO's. Charles Rangel, a Senator from NYC stated; we, our parents and grandparents have all supported the Medicare since 1966. We are entitled to have it for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren. After the rally, we visited

Chuck Schumer's office to voice our concerns about the legislation. After listening to our apprehension about the bill, he expressed surprise and seemed unaware of the fact that all public employees could lose their existing health coverage. **As you are now aware, he voted against the bill. I believe our being there made a difference!** The fight continues, however I felt satisfied that my husband, friends and colleagues chose to spend our time trying to help achieve a worthwhile goal!

## BUSH SIGNS MEDICARE BILL

President George W. Bush signed the Medicare bill into law, December 8. ...A new WashingtonPost/ABC News poll finds that when people age 65 & older were asked if they approve of the changes made to Medicare, 47% disapproved while 26% approved, and 28% had no opinion. The survey also found that the public is also divided over the changes: 38% disapprove, 32% approve, and 30% have no opinion.

Those pictured at the signing

have accepted a total of \$14 million from the Health (HI) & Drug (DI) Industries. Sen. Dr. Bill Frist HI=\$550,264 DI= \$123,957; Sen. Orrin Hatch, HI=\$743,940 DI= \$433,324; Sen Max Baucus, HI=\$646,450 DI=\$145,372; Sen. Charles Grassley, HI= \$573,678 DI=\$217,921; Speaker Dennis Hasser, HI= \$545,985 DI \$194,700; Rep. Tom DeLay, HI=\$237,199 DI= \$78,250; President George W. Bush, HI= \$7,549,695 DI=\$891,208; Rep. Bill Thomas, HI= \$1,021,920 DI=\$322,514;

Rep. Nancy Johnson, HI= \$1,418,258 DI=\$336,908; Rep. Billy Tauzin, HI= \$601,077 DI= \$211,249; and Sen. John Breaux, HI= \$118,612 DI= \$59,150.

According to 6/03 *Public Citizen Report*, "Drug companies & their trade associations deployed nearly 700 lobbyists to stamp out any proposal that would result in the federal government negotiating the cost of drugs or otherwise limiting the industry's astronomical profits." (Thanks to D Z)



# PHYLL'S FORUM

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



Dear Colleagues: This has been a very busy year for most of us and I'm sure that 99% of it was great. I want to start out by correcting several errors in our last newsletter. The print machines at NYSUT didn't like my blue text. I'll try again. For the defensive driving class online the address is [www.tutorial.com](http://www.tutorial.com). The update material for Congress is <http://www.Moveon.org>. This is run by Eli Pariser and he keeps a sharp eye on the doings in the House and Senate. The website for NYSARA (New York State Alliance for Retired Americans) is <http://www.retiredamericans.org>. This is the umbrella group for all the retired workers in New York State. Greg Olsen is the Executive Director and promises to come to one of our meetings next year. These are significant

websites, in light of the recent debacle in Washington over Medicare.

It is essential to note that the article on Howard Dean was an informational article from AFT and not intended as an endorsement. NYSUT or ROBS has not endorsed any candidates at this point in time. Rest assured, we will continue to keep you informed

Recently 25 members of RC21 headed to Washington at 5 AM on November 19<sup>th</sup> to make our concerns known to our legislators. (See Kay Dillon's article.) Kay was also quoted in the Sunday Edition (November 23) of Newsday. We were pushed out of the papers for four days because Medicare is not as news worthy as Michael Jackson.

By now, everyone should have received the first newsletter and the Directory. Jack deserves a great deal

of credit in putting the stats together.

Please email me, if you didn't receive this information or if corrections are needed. It will be mailed out immediately. We sent out 421 directories this year and almost everyone made it into "the book."

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

In Harmony,

Phyllis Goodwin



## The Merz's on 6 years in Papua, New Guinea

At the November 7 ROBS meeting, participants were treated to an animated presentation by Robert and Ruth Merz, Brentwood retirees, on their time in this region northeast of Australia which used to be the Solomon Islands. Robert was a reading teacher in his former life in Brentwood and upon retiring, put this to good use with an international church organization that translates the Bible into local languages, trains teachers to teach literacy and provides support services for some 1,200 people which includes pilots, mechanics, clinic workers, etc.

Interesting points in the presentation were numerous. In the small region the Merz's were in, there were 850 local dialects. Communication was very difficult. If a person came and started farming another person's land, there was no way to explain that, and so the sword became the weapon of communication for the most part. Perhaps that gives one an insight into continuing conflicts.

The people of this region lived in abject fear of evil spirits previously. With communication improving in terms of the training of local people to teach literacy, some 41 % are now reading minimally. Literacy is starting to belong to the people as a result. Now the powerful control of evil spirits is diminishing as the people are exposed to more ideas. An interesting meeting!

### ROBS NEWSLETTER

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"GOTTA GET  
TO THE ROBS  
BREAKFAST  
JANUARY 7TH.  
THIS \*#\*  
SNOW!"

### FLORIDA LUNCHEON SCHEDULED FOR

THURSDAY February 19, 2004

Padrino's 12 - 3 P.M.

Participants will place their own order and pay their own bill individually. There is a buffet for \$6.99 or \$7.99 (whatever they charge at the time), plus drink, dessert, tax & tip. Or orders may be made from the menu. Since only 20 responded last year, Marilyn DePlaza thought this was a good idea.

HOWEVER, SHE STILL NEEDS A BALL-PARK  
FIGURE FOR THE RESTAURANT. Call her at 561-  
488-1267 or email at [marilyndeplaza@aol.com](mailto:marilyndeplaza@aol.com)



**NYSUT NOTES**

Dorothy Zuckerman, NYSUT Retiree Services Consultant (631-273- 8822)  
 (e-mail: [dzuckerm@nysutmail.org](mailto:dzuckerm@nysutmail.org))

**WHAT IS THE ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS?**

The Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) was organized by the AFL-CIO in January 2001 to speak for union retirees, senior citizens and their families, and community organizations throughout the country. The goal of the ARA is to mobilize these individuals and groups and to bring them together with one voice in order to make their needs known. The New York State Alliance for Retired Americans (NYSARA) plays a major role on the state level to protect the health and economic security of older New Yorkers.

**WHY DO WE NEED THE ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS?**

Over the past couple of years serious attempts have been made to attack and destroy the social programs that have been so vital to the security of working men and women. Programs and services such as Social Security, Medicare and health care are being severely eroded by individuals whose ideology is to get rid of all the social

progress made over the last century.

While the AARP claims to be the voice of all retirees the AARP has advocated as its policy the need to put prescription drug coverage above all other matters regarding changes in the Medicare program ([www.aarp.com](http://www.aarp.com)). It has been willing to make conciliations on privatization and major reductions. Keep in mind that the AARP has many items for sale, especially including insurance policies for health care.

The ARA has nothing to sell but the protection, education and organization of retired workers.

**WHAT HAS THE ARA DONE?**

In September 2003, NYSARA sponsored busses to a Washington, DC rally on the Medicare Drug Prescription discussions. Many of our Long Island retiree leaders participated in the National Legislative Conference. The message to the Congressional legislators was a fervent opposition to privatizing Medicare in order to provide a drug prescription benefit. On November 19<sup>th</sup> retirees from

Nassau and Suffolk counties and from all over the state (funded by NYSUT) again rode the busses to Washington to deliver the same demand - no privatization of Medicare.

**WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) are participating AFL-CIO unions affiliated with the ARA. You have become a lifelong member of the Alliance with dues paid for you by these organizations to the Alliance for Retired Americans. In return, your responsibility is to become actively involved. Add your voice to the thousands of New York retirees who are concerned with the future of our social and economic well-being. Attend your chapter and retiree council meetings to get more information. Contact your senators and congresspersons by e-mail, fax or telephone (1-800-839-5276).

Check the ARA website: [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org). But, DO SOMETHING! Our future is in YOUR hands.

**BITS & PIECES**

**Memories of Tony Felicio:** The Felicio family is seeking to collect memories of Tony . a simple sentence, a special memory, remembering a wave, a smile when he was in your building, any thought, feeling or observation you had of him. The reason? For his young grandchildren so they will know who their grandpa was and how many lives he touched. Remit to: Donna Rohrbacker, 16 Royal Oak Ct., Holbrook, NY 11741 before January 30, 2004.

**Quote of Note:** James Parkel, AARP President- " We had to change. We had the boomers coming and you didn't want to be perceived by the boom-

ers as just being for old people."

**Medicare Officials Jump Ship:**

Tommy Thompson, Sec'y. Health & Human Services says he will "have everything set up & operating smoothly" before he leaves. Beating him out the door are Thomas L. Grieson, Dir. Center for Medicare Management, who has accepted a position with Boston Scientific Corp., which manufactures medical devices and Thomas Scully, Admin. Of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) effective 12/16. The three are key people responsible for the disastrous Medicare/prescription bill who are getting out before the plan goes into

effect. Sen. John Breaux, another key player, announced that he will not seek reelection. At 59, he wants to "start a second career."

**AARP:** AARP earned \$217 million last year from its insurance business, supported the Medicare bill. Was it because it could sell some of the \$400 billion in drug insurance the legislation will pay for over the next 10 years? Saul Friedman guesses that the leadership supported the bill to get the drug benefit "to make AARP a significant Washington player in the booming future of the aging business..." and thus made common cause with Bush & Gingrich's prediction of "medicare withering on the vine."



## FINALLY AN ANSWER: FIBROMYALGIA by Marge Kirchner

I have had years of back pain, tingling in my limbs, sleep disturbances, restless leg syndrome, extreme fatigue, depression, impaired coordination, severe pain and stiffness in the shoulders and neck, and anxiety. I attributed all of these problems to a back fracture in 1996, getting older, menopausal problems, osteoporosis and being a "klutz." Not being able to lift a teacup in early 2003 led me to seek further help. And, it provided me with a diagnosis.

In January of this year, I began having difficulty lifting anything with my right arm. The pain I experienced was unbelievable and the weakness floored me. I sought medical assistance and was referred to a Rheumatologist and a Neurologist. Both of these professionals took a detailed medical history and administered a thorough examination. They both concurred that I probably had Fibromyalgia. Since there is no test for Fibro, the patient needs to have tests to rule out other conditions that could present similar symptoms. These included extensive blood tests and an EMG. Since all of my tests were negative, and my symptoms matched Fibromyalgia the diagnosis was made in February of this year.

Both doctors also suspect I was undiagnosed for about 10 years, a common problem with Fibro patients. Because its symptoms are quite common and laboratory tests are

generally normal, people with Fibro were once told that their condition was "all in their head." However medical studies have proven that Fibromyalgia does indeed exist and disproportionately affects women (80-90%) and can be seen at any age. It is estimated to affect 2% of the US population and disability rates are as high as 44% of people diagnosed with the syndrome.

Since it has about 80 symptoms, Fibro is certainly not a simple medical condition, but simply put, it attacks the soft tissue (fascia) of the body and causes pain and stiffness around the joints and in muscles and bones. It is characterized by chronic widespread pain on both sides of the body, pain in at least 11 of the 18 tender points, extreme fatigue and non-restorative sleep patterns, impaired coordination, depression and anxiety, restless leg syndrome, tingling limbs and cognitive difficulties which is also called Fibro Fog wherein there may be feelings of confusion, lapses in memory, word mix-ups and trouble concentrating.

Although the Arthritis Foundation is the only organization that is doing research on this syndrome, Fibromyalgia is not a form of Arthritis nor is it associated with inflammation.

It is a manageable condition, but certainly not a curable one. Some treatments include medications that

may relieve pain and sleep disturbances, acupuncture, mild aerobic exercise, and muscle massage

I know that I usually look fine, even though I may be in severe pain. I have had pain for so long that I am almost immune to all but very severe pain. There are days that I have plenty of energy and there are days when I want to hide under the covers. I have learned to pace myself when I am doing chores...and some days they can't get done at all. Hobbies I have are also affected. Some days I can garden for 30 minutes and on other days I just look at the flowers and know that another day will come when I can plant and prune.

People frequently ask if I'm getting better. I cannot get better. I will have this for the rest of my life. I can have days when I feel so well that I can't believe I have Fibromyalgia. There are other days when I know I have an incurable health condition. Nothing can bring on a good or a bad day; they just come.

Being aware of my body and its reactions, educating myself about the syndrome, and knowing how to pace myself will allow me to achieve good living in spite of having Fibromyalgia. That and finally having a diagnosis has helped tremendously.

### TIPS FOR EATING CHINESE FOOD FOR THOSE WITH HIGH CHOLESTEROL

#### INSTEAD OF:

Egg Drop soup  
Egg rolls or fried wontons  
Fried Entrees  
Dishes with fried meats  
Dishes with cashews & peanuts  
Fried rice  
Lobster sauce (egg yolks)

#### TRY:

Wonton or hot & sour soup  
Steamed dumplings  
Boiled, broiled, steamed or lightly stir-fried entrees  
Dishes with lots of vegetables  
Dishes with water chestnuts  
Steamed rice  
Oyster, bean and soy sauce, sweet & sour sauce,  
plum or duck sauce (high sodium)





# NEWS NOTES

**Marilyn DePlaza** reports she received a call from **Morton Ostfeld**, who was a guidance counselor in Ross (1965-66) and would like to get in touch with **Marvin & Bernice Davis**. If anyone has information on their whereabouts, email **Marilyn** at Marilyn-Deplaza@aol.com, or call **Morton** at 561-731-4177 in Boynton Beach, Florida.

Anyone who wishes to be included in the Florida "Town Crier" emails, send your email address to: Marilyndeplaza@aol.com **Marilyn** posts info on ROBS folk via internet. Also gets info to people as it happens. She does a great job!

Received a lovely letter from **Florence Koehler** in November. She is getting used to southern living but misses everyone up here. This editor and **Florence** share 9/11 as a birthday and she remembered that she, at 21, actually started teaching in Brentwood in September 1933, the year I was born. Add her phone number to your directory: 843-689-6360.

**Charleen Keely**, (Twin Pines '03) is working with Travel Trends, (a p/t position while she was teaching) an agency opened 20 years ago by another former teacher. Contact her if you're considering a trip and see what services she can provide, along with discounts. 631-265-4097 or 631-724-3311. Email: ckeely@optonline.net

Just returned from a trip "down under" is **Betty Stosuy** (Ross '03). She and her mom enjoyed the trip immensely. **Betty** loves retirement! (What's not to love: especially no bells...).

**Audrey Kutin's** (Special Ed. '03) daughter, Dr. Stephanie Kutin, a school psychologist in Scarsdale, is engaged. The wedding is coming up in May. Congratulations!

Dual magna cum laude graduates, Lisa Beneventano (Hofstra) & Steven Tiscione (Hofstra & Yale Law) son of **Linda Tiscione** (Twin Pines '01) will be tying the knot on June 5, 2004. All the best!!

**Kay Dillon** (Twin Pines, '01) reports that Liam Patrick Dillon, born on October 30 (in our last issue) is her 10th grandchild. He is the 3rd child of son Robert and wife Linda. 10... Wow! How do you keep up? (I thought 6 was a lot). Congratulations!

An 8 pound bundle of joy arrived to brighten the life of **Grace Bridget Polvay**. Eve Clemence Polvay is the daughter of son Andrew and wife Kathy, who are doing quite well it is reported. Happy wishes.

**Miriam Massucci** (Sond, '87) is very proud of her granddaughter, Rachel Keller, who just received a \$10,000 scholarship for 4 years to Franklin Pierce College. She's interested in graphic design, a good field these days. **Cass Howard's** (Ross '03) daughter Danielle is also involved in media work, but as a film editor. And boy are he and wife Denise proud, as they should be!

**Ed Hannon** (Ross, Eng. '96) suffered a heart attack recently. Fortunately he was in the ER when it occurred and he was attended to immediately. 5 stints later, he is back home and is reported to be doing very well. Cheery notes can be sent to him at: 182 Davis Ave., Staten Island, NY 10310.

And we send continuing cheery hellos to **Ivy Rosenthal**, (North '83) who is back at activities of the C.I. Senior Citizen's Center. Glad to hear that!

And to everyone feeling a little low after the holidays, we hope 2004 will find you all feeling great again!



In November, we heard of the untimely death of **Janet Pascale**, who was only 51 and still employed in the Business office of Brentwood. She suffered a heart attack. Also untimely, was the death of **Peter Wohnigi**, a current PE teacher at North Elementary, as the result of an auto accident. Sympathies to the family at 37 Howell Dr., Smithtown, NY 11787.

And with heavy heart, we pass on the news that longtime ROBS member, **Dave Brown** (music, Southeast '91) passed away on 12/12. He was suffering from cancer and was in hospice care at St. Catherine's in Smithtown. Besides music, **Dave** was a leader in the L.I. Fencing community. Condolences may be sent to: Mrs. David Brown, 9 Grouse Dr., Brentwood, NY 11717; 631-273-9362.

**Florence Bloch** reports that **Phyllis Miller**, a social worker in Brentwood for many years, passed away on November 3rd. Condolences to her husband Ira Miller, 50-20 Avenida del Sol, Laguna Hills, CA 92653.

And **Eddie Filosa** let us know that **Edna Alexander** (Nurse Teacher, '94) died in December. She had lung cancer. Our condolences to all. We shall miss these colleagues....





## A SEAT OF KINDNESS – OR NOT: by Ed Lowe (Reprinted from November 21, 2003 *NEWSDAY*)

I'm on a crowded subway train Wednesday evening, traveling from Union Turnpike and Queens Boulevard in Kew Gardens to Gramercy Park, in lower Manhattan. At the Roosevelt station, maybe two stops after departure, I watch a slender, dark-haired, pale-faced man effect a come-hither motion to a significantly older, larger, sympathetically wheezy-looking, dark-skinned man, for whom the younger man then sacrifices his seat, standing by the pole for the rest of his ride.



I think about Eileen Ortenzi. She lives in Bay Shore.

Eileen, 33, teaches third grade at one of the 11 elementary schools in the Brentwood School District, from which she graduated from high school - from which, in fact, her father, George Talley, graduated from high school. Eileen is scheduled for a C-section, Monday, at Columbia Presbyterian hospital in Manhattan.

In July, Eileen and her husband, Vinny, a New York City cop assigned to the 113 Precinct in Jamaica, learned that their expected first child had some serious problems. A high-risk, prenatal doctor in Mineola had viewed a fetal echocardiogram a second time and, at first, suspected either transposition of the great vessels or a ventricular septal defect, a hole between the right and left pumping chambers of the heart. The membrane at the bottom of the heart appeared opened, and the oxygenated and non-oxygenated blood were mixing.

The doctor referred the Ortenzis to Columbia Presbyterian, where, after a third echocardiogram, specialists determined that the baby had the septal defect, beneath which, they told the couple, was what they called an "omphalocele," defined as "a congenital malformation in which variable amounts of abdominal contents protrude into the base of the umbilical cord."

"The baby's intestines are protruding into the umbilical cord, outside the body," Eileen said. "It looks like a big sack. If you can picture a cord stretched into a bubble, that's what it looks like. Our baby has the liver inside that, also. There are different degrees of size and difficulty in omphaloceles. We lucked out. Ours is the giant omphalocele.

"They can't just put the organs back in right away. There's another birth defect called a gastroschisis, where the surgeon can push the organs back in, but it's not the same. Here, they let the baby get over the trauma of being born. They wait one to three days, and they take the membrane around the intestines and rupture it, and they take a plastic pouch and put it around the intestines and sew it on to protect them. They gradually shrink the stomach content back in. The doctor said that because my baby's heart is so low it poses a big challenge. They have to be able to get the heart back to where it's supposed to be, without putting too much pressure on the lungs. The cardiologist said the chest cavity and the lungs are so small, that, if they don't grow, 'You'll need an act of God,' he said. So far, everybody's prayers are working, because they tell us the chest cavity is getting bigger each time they look at it."

With that in mind, Eileen was planning to take the Long Island Rail Road, on Election Day, Nov. 4, from Bay Shore to Jamaica, where she would rendezvous with Vinny, who then would drive her into Manhattan to see her specialist. Until a week before, she had been seeing two doctors, alternately; one in Islip, the other at Columbia, but this visit would inaugurate weekly visits to the city, because on Oct. 30 the doctor in Islip had told Eileen that she was dilated.

"As I was getting ready," she said, "I was listening to the traffic report on the radio, and I happened to hear them say that six freight cars had derailed on the Ronkonkoma line, so service there was kind of interrupted. I thought, 'Oh, I better get to the [Bay Shore] station earlier, because there might be a line of people there from the Ronkonkoma line.

"It was the 7:15 a.m. train. I'm sitting in my car at 6:45, and I see a man nearby, and I say, 'Are these people waiting for the 7:15? Do you think it'll be more crowded than usual? Do you think commuters from Ronkonkoma will come over here?' He said, 'I'm one of them.'

"I got out and waited 20 minutes, thinking, 'Well, this isn't too mobbed.' But when the train arrived, I realized that the commuters from Ronkonkoma already had gotten on at a station east of Bay Shore, and when I looked around, I thought, 'Oh, my God. There's no seat.'

"I was very nervous. Standing, for me, is, like, a chore. I stood and held on to the pole. A few times, I fell onto a guy's lap. After three more stops, tears started rolling down my face. Two teenagers in a seat on the lower level were looking at me. One of them wore a hooded sweatshirt. They looked at me like I had five heads, I guess because I was crying. Somebody vacated a seat, and this woman dove for it. I saw about six inches of space left at the end of a bench seat facing the aisle, next to some kind of cabinet. I took it. My whole left side was bumping into the cabinet.

"Just then, my cell phone rang. It was Vinny, asking, 'How'd you make out?' I started crying even more. I said, 'Not one. Not one person.' He knew. He was so mad. He knew exactly what it meant."

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(This story was brought to our attention a bit before Ed Lowe wrote this article. **Lilian Kelly** [who taught Eileen Ortenzi] and daughter **Eileen** [who teaches with her] both forwarded the story to lots of us by email. We thought that many of you who live out of the area, or who were all caught up in holiday preparations might have missed it, so we have reprinted it. Eileen and Vinny's little boy, was born in November, and after a rocky start, is progressing well).



# A FITTING TRIBUTE FOR MIKE AND FOR "WE THE PEOPLE"

by Tom O'Connor, Sonderling 1992

On October 30, 2003, a Renaming Ceremony took place at the Western Campus of Suffolk Community College in Brentwood. From that day on, this will be known as the "Michael J. Grant Campus." Who was Michael J. Grant and why does this campus now bear his name?

He was a legislator, business leader, U.S. Navy veteran (Korean War), volunteer firefighter (46 years) and ambulance corps charter member. Mike and Georgia Grant had a fine family. They were blessed with five children and seventeen grandchildren. Mike died in 1998 at the age of 66. Family was important to Mike. And so were his faith, community, and nation. He worked hard to make the community and Suffolk County better places. Some people say that Mike Grant really belonged to *The People*. I strongly agree.

When he served in public office as a Suffolk Legislator, Mike tried his best to represent *all* the people, not just the rich and lucky. He was accessible to the common man. He rooted for underdogs and really appreciated and applauded their efforts in climbing the ladder. When it came to higher education, Mike was not a man of letters but he did, through his efforts as a legislator, make it possible for tens of thousands of others to earn college degrees.

When Mike took office in 1969 as an original member of the Suffolk Legislature, one of the most important priorities which faced them came in the area of higher education. The county was developing a community college system, with several campuses throughout Suffolk. The question arose as to where to locate a western campus. Someone proposed that the campus be located in Commack on land that the county would purchase for six to seven million dollars from a private owner. Mike opposed this proposal because he considered it wasteful in two ways. First, the county would have to raise the money to purchase the land, which could mean more taxes. Second, the land once purchased by the county would no longer be on the tax rolls. This would create a tax shortfall that would have to be made up with tax increases. Mike pointed to the Pilgrim State Hospital property in Brentwood and, as an alternative, he proposed that the county ask New York State to transfer the needed acreage from this property to Suffolk County for a token sum. This proposal was approved by the state and county. The Western campus soon became a reality.

As was brought out by more than one speaker at the Renaming Ceremony on October 30, there were many obstacles to establishing the Western campus 34 years ago. First, at one point, the county and then the state backed out on funding proposals. Many gave up hope. But not Mike. He would never give up. He kept driving until the Brentwood campus became a reality. As one who was privileged to know Mike and to see many of the amazing things he did for people (many unknown to the public) I sincerely hope that those who become students at the Michael J. Grant Campus of Suffolk Community College remember him as a wonderful friend to his fellow man. In the 25 years we were friends, I never saw him turn his back on another human being who was in need. He provided a glowing example for us all!



## PROJECT HOPE ADOPTED 4 FAMILIES FOR THANKSGIVING AND HOLIDAY GIFTS

Again, the ROBS Community Liaison Committee successfully provided another happy holiday season for homeless families whose outlook is bleak.

The annual gift wrap party was held on December 22 at the home of the Spencers. Their hospitality is legend.

Many thanks to those of you who contributed in time and donations. The folks who received Thanksgiving, and gifts for the holidays were deeply grateful for the caring shown them.

**PROJECT HOPE NEEDS TUTORS FOR BRENTWOOD'S CHILDREN**  
**PLEASE, PLEASE JOIN US, EVEN FOR SHORT TERM HELP IN THIS SCHOOL YEAR**

**ROBS TO OFFER HOPE**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

I am able 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 Drive, Wheatley Heights, N.Y. 11798-1593, Phone: 631-253-0355



# Look what's new!

*New York State United Teachers Member Benefits offers three new discount programs. Each will save you money!*

## Simply Certificates

Perfect for holiday time! If you're stumped about a gift for Aunt Sadie, Simply Certificates has the answer! Gift certificates purchased on-line or by phone are discounted 10 percent for NYSUT members. You must identify yourself as a NYSUT member to receive the discount.

Note: This discount is not valid at Simply Certificates retail locations.

Certificates are accepted at hundreds of participating restaurants, day spas, resorts, golf courses and ski areas. Merchants are located in many areas within New York, as well as in 14 other states and D.C. Participation in the downstate area will be expanded in the near future. Request a merchant listing from NYSUT Member Benefits.

## Working Advantage

If you like to save money on entertainment, then this program will interest you. Purchase discounted tickets for movie theaters, video rentals, theme/amusement parks, Broadway shows, museums and special family events through Working Advantage.

You can order tickets through the mail, Internet or phone. You must identify

yourself as a NYSUT member and use the special NYSUT identification number.

## Lifeline

If you have an older relative living at home, Lifeline can give both of you peace of mind. It's an easy-to-use personal response service that ensures older adults living at home get quick assistance whenever it is needed, 24 hours every day.



A push of a button dials a monitoring center and establishes two-way voice communication. A Lifeline representative communicates with the individual, assesses the situation, summons appropriate help and follows up to ensure help arrived. Lifeline allows the user to answer the phone without rushing and

risking a fall. It can give reminders about medications, appointments, etc.

NYSUT members receive discounted pricing. Note: Some communities may offer Lifeline through hospitals or service agencies. You should check with these facilities for availability and pricing.

For information and ID numbers for these programs, contact NYSUT Member Benefits: **1-800-626-8101**, e-mail: [benefits@nysutmail.org](mailto:benefits@nysutmail.org), or on-line: [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org).