



## ROBS NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 2004

RETIRES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

ISSUE 54

**ROBS  
LUNCHEON**  
**JUNE 9: SEE FLYER**

"THE WHOLE IDEA IS NOT THAT  
WE HAVE TO FIND A FINAL AN-  
SWER: IT'S THAT WE KEEP  
THINKING."

*Chris Philips, founder of the Socrates Café*



*ROBS Retirees of June 2004*

*See page 4*

**CONGRATULATIONS ON  
FREEDOM!**

### Playing "NATIONAL SECURITY CARD" BUSTS OVERSEAS UNION (Inside AFT)

AFT members working in Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) are fighting back after the Bush administration moved to obliterate their rights as union members – all in the name of national security. The fight erupted following a Feb. 6 Defense Department document stating that professional employees, including teachers on DoDDS schools, must be excluded from unions as a matter of national security. "Under the guise of the need for more flexibility and 'national security,' (the

dept.'s actions) are not just an attack on teachers but an act of union busting," said Marie Sainz-Funaro, president of the Overseas Federation of Teachers/AFT. The Defense Dept. invoked provisions under the National Defense Authorization Act to press for the change. That law, bitterly opposed by organized labor, authorizes Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld to work with the Office of Personnel Management to replace parts of the existing federal personnel system for DoD employees. The

change was necessary, the administration argued, to meet the nation's national security needs. But the "proposals set forth by DoD are crafted to bust unions, not to protect national security," Sainz-Funaro said. Union members are conducting a letter writing campaign asking their U.S. representatives to demand that secretary Rumsfeld respect the right of federal workers to belong to unions as he develops the new national security personnel system. To help go to: [www.unionvoice.org/campaign/OFTdefensedept1](http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/OFTdefensedept1)

### EEOC HEALTHCARE DECISION SPURS COORDINATION

A high profile decision by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has been mischaracterized by some media as a threat to the rights of Medicare eligible retirees.

In fact, the AFT backed decision simply allows retiree health benefits to be coordinated with Medicare without violating federal law.

The Commission voted on April 22 to modify the effect of a court decision (Erie County Retirees Association v County of Erie) that threatened employers' ability to offer continued health care coverage to employees who choose to retire before they are eligible for Medicare.

The health benefits provided to these "early retirees" are often negotiated through collective bargaining.

Specifically, the EEOC clarified that employees are not in violation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) when they provide health benefits solely to retirees who are not eligible for Medicare, or when they do not provide the same benefits to retirees who are over age 65 and are eligible for Medicare.

The EEOC decision was crucial because the prior court ruling held that providing such benefits to early retirees violated ADEA. As a result of the court ruling,

and to comply with the ADEA, employers were faced with an all-or-nothing choice. Assume the potential cost of providing healthcare benefits to all retirees (whether Medicare eligible or not) or don't provide coverage to any early retirees.

The union, in concert with the AFL-CIO, the NEA and the UAW, helped persuade the EEOC to reverse its stand and will continue to work with congressional leaders for a long-term legislative fix to the problem.

*From the AFT Retiree  
May 3, 2004*

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# PHYLL'S FORUM

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



Dear Colleagues,

In the next few months, solicitations for drug prescription plans will increase. Be aware that you don't have to sign up for any of them, including the Medicare endorsed prescription card. We have our prescription drug plan through Empire/United Health Care and are covered. Plans that are offered – some from local pharmacies – do not list the drugs that will be covered or the amounts discounted.

As the election season is gearing up, we would like you to take the time to research the candidates thoroughly. We need candidates who are willing to rework, rewrite and repair the Medicare bill.

Since many of you may have cancelled your membership in AARP and its myriad insurance plans, the Alliance for Retired Americans is

offering an alternative health insurance plan. But be aware that you already have supplementary insurance through Empire.

Vote/Cope Automatic Pension Deduction is now a reality. Governor Pataki signed the law allowing members of the NYSTRS to contribute directly through their pension. The pension deduction offers convenience to the retiree. No retiree is required to participate and automatic deductions can be revoked at any time. If you did not receive your form from NYSUT please call Dot Zuckerman at 631-273-8822.

NYSUT's Lifeline has been recommended for people who are living alone. It is a response system that includes a pendant, emergency buttons or wristband to notify appropriate family members and emergency

services that there is a problem. More information can be obtained by calling 1-800-543-3546 or online at [www.lifelinesystems.com](http://www.lifelinesystems.com).

The recipients for this year's ROBS Scholarship are: Perla Iglesias, Tiffany J. Pannell, Colleen McEntee, Jennifer DA Silva and Spencer Blumenfeld. The scholarships will be presented at the Awards Presentation on May 25th at the Ross building. I know that the membership joins the Executive Board in congratulating these students entering the field of education.

Please contact your House Representative to support HR676, which is meant to replace the present Medicare bill with a Universal Health Care plan.

In Harmony,

Phyllis Goodwin

## A HUGE THANK YOU

Congratulations to the 418 people who sent in their dues prior to the October 31, 2003 deadline. As a result, all of you were included in the ROBS directory that was mailed in November. Eleven other members sent in their dues after October 31<sup>st</sup> making our total membership 429 for the 2003-2004 year. What an incredible number of people!

Because of your quick response, it was much easier to do banking and to send our dues to R.C. 21 in a timely fashion. Thank you for that.

This year ROBS will award 5 scholarships to Brentwood graduates who will be going on to study education. The Scholarship Committee feels they have chosen 5 very fine candidates from the 26 applications they reviewed. One of those scholarships is in the amount of \$1,000.00 and four of them are for \$500.00 each.

By late June, you will be receiving a letter and a membership form for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. You may send those in beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Let's have another terrific membership drive!

Marge Kirchner, Treasurer

### ROBS NEWSLETTER

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PRES. Phyllis Goodwin

V.PRES. Harriet Pepine

SEC'Y. Shirley Walker-Lloyd

TREAS. Marge Kirchner



Congratulations  
to the Retiree  
Class of 2004!

### Guaranteed to make us healthier!

Have you heard of the NO-CARB Diet for 2004?

NO Cheney  
NO Ashcroft  
NO Rumsfeld  
NO Bush

and Absolutely NO RICE

**NYSUT NOTES**

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

In my last article I wrote about some of the changes that will take place as a result of the new Medicare Law. This month we will continue the discussion and try to explain some of the other aspects of the law which will go into effect in 2006.

**Talking Points and Highlights of the New Medicare Law - Part ii**

- \* **What Does Medicare Cover?** # Part A: Inpatient services (hospitals; home care; hospice)  
# Part B: Outpatient services (doctors, labs, durable equipment)  
# Part C: Medicare + Choice (HMO's; PPO's)  
# Part D: Prescription Drugs Coverage

\* **2006 Medicare Drug Benefits Costs:**

- Monthly premium: about \$35/month (\$420/year) - could be higher depending on where you live (i.e. Nassau, Suffolk counties) - will increase from year to year
- First \$250 of drug costs: deductible (out of pocket)
- \$250 - \$2250 of drug costs: you pay 25% of the cost (out of pocket)
- \$2250 - \$5100: you pay 100% of costs (out of pocket) - "DONUT HOLE"
- over \$5100: Catastrophic Coverage - you pay 5% of costs (out of pocket)

\* **Gaps in Drug Benefits:**

- You may not buy supplementary insurance to cover Donut Hole expenses
- You may not buy drugs from Canada
- The government may not negotiate lower drug prices
- Medicare private plans may offer richer benefit packages at higher premium costs

\* **Medicare Discount Cards:** - Available in May or June 2004 - cost about \$30/year

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: The health insurance plan provided by your school district includes a prescription drug coverage; you have no need at this time to buy additional drug discount coverage.**

There are still many questions to be answered and many concerns that need to be addressed:

- \* Will employers drop or reduce coverage?
- \* If employers keep present coverage, how will they coordinate with Medicare Part D?
- \* Will employers pay all of the Part D premium?
- \* Will employers pay for catastrophic coverage?

**WE MUST CONTINUE TO STAY INFORMED AND AWARE**

**BITS & PIECES****HOUSE REPUBLICANS HALT INVESTIGATION OF LOWBALL MEDICARE ESTIMATE.** (AFT Retiree)

On April 1st, House Republicans shut down an inquiry by Democrats into whether the Bush administration acted illegally or inappropriately last year when it withheld from Congress its estimates of the true cost of the Medicare prescription drug bill. At issue are allegations that then-Medicare Administrator Thomas A. Scully threatened to fire his top actuary if he gave lawmakers his analysis showing the costs would be 1/3rd higher than administration officials were saying publicly. The decision all but ensured that two individuals central to the controversy - Scully and White House aide Doug Badger - would not testify before Congress. The Health & Hu-

man Services Department is conducting a separate internal investigation into the matter, and Democratic lawmakers have requested civil & criminal inquiries. White House spokesperson Trent Duffy cited executive privilege as the reason Badger would not appear. Scully, now a consultant, said he was unable to appear before the committee because he had been traveling. (ed. TRY THAT EXCUSE THE NEXT TIME YOU HAVE TO APPEAR SOMEWHERE FOR A LEGAL MATTER!)

**VIAGRA ; NOW MEDICARE LAW!**

Former Sen. Bob Dole is extolling the benefits of the Medicare Law on a national tour paid for by Pfizer a big supporter of the bill. Dole was also a spokesperson for Pfizer's blockbuster drug Viagra. The senator, who voted against the creation of Medicare in 1965, said when the full drug

benefits are available in '06, it will be "probably the greatest change in Medicare" since it was first enacted, the Tallahassee Democrat reported.

**THE CRISIS** in the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund (trustees project 2019 as date it will run out of money) is "not true," according to AFT's Bill Cunningham, associate director of legislation. "The reason for the alleged crisis is that the surplus is being diverted to cover tax cuts & other general needs. ...This administration and its allies in Congress are cooking the books to manufacture a crisis...to build a case for privatizing Medicare."

**"No PR campaign can camouflage the gaping flaws & the dishonest way in which (the Medicare legislation) was sold... There's a simple way to fix this: Congress should rescind the law."** -Chicago TRibune

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2004 RETIREES!

Margaret Corrado - Secretary - Cent. Admin.  
 Richard Feldman - Science - W MS  
 Robert Shanley - SS - W MS  
 Rachel Barr - Drug Educator - Elem. level  
 Carole Basso - Math Lab - S MS  
 Carole Beedy - Spec Ed - HS  
 Joan Cook - Reading - SW  
 Charles DiGiovanni - Math - HS



Ann Marie DiSibio - Music - HS  
 Bobbe Frankel - Guidance - E MS  
 Joseph Governale - English - HS  
 Dalmar Kittredge - PE - HS  
 Mary Jane Lugovsky - Spec Ed - N Elem.  
 Scott Lyons - SS - Freshman Center

Diana Mallon - Secretary - S MS  
 Daniel Malossi - SS - S MS  
 Eleanor Meineke - S MS  
 John Olshlager - Art - HS  
 Stephen Peters - Math - S MS  
 Joyce Pittinaro - Business - HS  
 Stephen Rochester - SS - HS  
 Catherine Rosario-Rodriguez - Bilingual - PP  
 Joseph Scalise - Attendance - Special Services  
 James Smith - Reading Consultant - S MS  
 Jance Stanzin - Librarian - N MS  
 Alida Thorpe - English - E MS  
 Christian Thorpe - Guidance - HS  
 Leon Weissman - PE - E MS

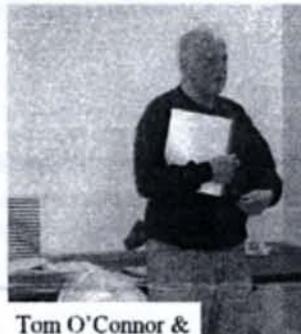
### DO YOU KNOW THESE HAPPY, INVOLVED PEOPLE? They are **ROBS retirees** who presented their hobbies, obsessions and good information at the April meeting!



Esther Klein & her handmade jewelry



Clint Spahr & stamp collection (largest in NYS & listed in Guinness Book of Records).



Tom O'Connor & Writer's Group publication



Charlene Keely & her travel information



Ruth McCalla & her porcelain egg collection



Harriet Pepine & her decoupage boxes & trays



Jack Zuckerman & photo collection of ROBS members

# NEWS NOTES

Gino's Glass & Aluminum, Mirror & Screen, Inc. is owned & operated by 1977 Brentwood graduate, Stephen Ingenito. He also installs auto glass for major insurance companies. It is located at 84 Pine Aire Dr., Bay Shore 11706; 631-231-9600. For faculty & staff of Brentwood (including retirees) he is offering a 70% discount off list prices.

Shirley Walker-Lloyd sent us an article about Long Island's, and possibly the nation's, first Solar Café, built in Brentwood and scheduled to open shortly. It is the former LIRR terminal, 1 First Avenue, which was abandoned for almost 20 years. Owner and Brentwood resident, Chris Castro, says it will seat 50 inside and 50 outside, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Using organic fruits, vegetables and meats, it will be a health conscious restaurant that is environmentally focused. Recycled materials have been used in construction and solar panels will reduce the use of electricity with a goal of 100% solar energy use. They are also planning the first Solar Festival in New York State July 24 - 25 at the Academy of St. Joseph in Brentwood. Visit [www.nysolarenergy.org](http://www.nysolarenergy.org) for more information. Perhaps a ROBS event there?

Jim Watson visited Rich Edwards at his new home in Land O Lakes, FL. They had a reunion dinner at Rich's with Brentwood School employees: Larry & Florence Briggs, Matt & Lois Faye & Joan Pyatt. Way to go, retirees!

Get well wishes to: Jeanne Bukowski, Pete Cirillo, Eileen Kelly, Marie Norris, and Jim Cligget.

While recuperating, or just driving around, some of our members suggest you tune in to the new  Air America. Al Franken's new liberal answer to Rush Limbaugh. You will find the station, WLIB, at 1190 AM in New York, as well as stations across the country as it expands. The conversation is thought provoking and more interesting than the usual pap. Try it! Tune in!

March was not a good month for ROBS members:



At the beginning of the month, Dick Simmons (H.S. '90) passed away. He had taught physical education and was track & field coach for many years. He coached some of our Brentwood teachers. Jim Howard was Dick's assistant for 8 - 9 years during the '70's.

Jim Howard, (Sond. '99) who has battled cancer for the past 3 years died quietly on March 31st. His daughter, Aimee, emailed us this photo taken of her and Jim some 20 years ago in Carson City with cowboys "hijacking" the trolley. She says "It's how I will always remember him, taking care of me, keeping the bad people away." Jim, coached with Dick Simmons. Our deepest sympathies to family and friends. The Howard family can be reached at: 388 Poulsen St., Holbrook; 631-588-6409.



Marie Norris (Laurel Park '87) passed away recently in Texas. Brentwood also lost active teacher, Bill Rodgers, Jr., on March 14 of a heart attack. He was 57. Bill worked with ROBS in filming the History Project's video interviews with retirees at the Brentwood Media Communications Center. He is survived by his wife, two children and his parents.

Peter Witte, Brentwood School Business Administrator, died in March as well. Our hearts go out to all the families and friends of our departed colleagues.

**GET A BALLPARK FIGURE!** Before you move, get a preview of the tax burden in your new location: find out by contacting the Tax Foundation at [www.taxfoundation.org/statelocal.html](http://www.taxfoundation.org/statelocal.html) or by calling 202-464-6200. Also [www.bestplaces.net](http://www.bestplaces.net) to compare taxes & living costs of two areas. These are generic comparisons. For exact figures contact tax authorities directly.

Vermont's **VOLUNTEERS FOR PEACE** lets you choose from among 2,400 programs in more than 90 countries for a low-cost, off-beat kind of adventure. For as little as \$220 and transportation you can live & work for 2 - 3 weeks helping in building, environmental projects, park maintenance, organic farming, working with children, arts, historic preservation, archeology and more. Go to [www.vfp.org](http://www.vfp.org) or call 802-259-2759.

Want to volunteer to **MONITOR THE COASTS OF OCEANS, RIVERS, BAYS & LAGOONS** for environmental and wildlife events? Go to [www.globallifeguards.org](http://www.globallifeguards.org) or call toll free 866-302-6453.

**AFT MEMBERS SAVE BIG** at Hotel Royal Plaza in Orlando, FL. It is unionized and in heart of downtown Disney. Call 800-248-7890 ext 2500 to check rates or visit [www.royalplaza.com](http://www.royalplaza.com). Happy traveling!



# ROBS JUNE LUNCHEON

## The GATSBY

712 Main Street, Islip  
(just west of Oconee Diner  
at Rte. 111) 631-581-1900

Wednesday, June 9, 2004 12 - 4 P.M. \$ 25 per person

### MENU

Choice of Soup  
House Salad

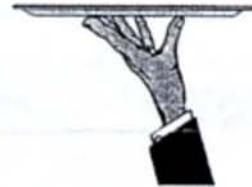
### Entrée:

Sliced Filet Mignon Stuffed Chicken Shrimp  
Monte Blanc Potato, Baby Carrots & String Beans

Dessert: Sliced Fruit or Ice Cream

Coffee, Tea, Soda

Cash Bar



### DIRECTIONS

**From Long Island Expressway:** Take Exit 53 South (Sagtikos Pkwy), stay on pkwy for approx. 3 miles until fork, bear left (Southern State Pkwy), take Southern State to Exit 43S (Rt 111), follow until end, make right, The Gatsby is 1/2 block on left.

**From Northern State Parkway:** Take Northern State to Wantagh Pkwy South (Exit 33), Wantagh to Exit W4 E (Southern State Pkwy), Take pkwy east to Robert Moses Causeway South (Exit 40 Beaches), to Exit RM 1 B, (Sunrise Highway 27). Take Sunrise to Exit 45 South (Rt 111), follow Rt 111 South til end, make right, The Gatsby is 1/2 block on left.

**From Southern State Parkway:** Take Southern State to Exit 43S (Rt 111), follow until end, make right, The Gatsby is 1/2 block on left.

**From Sunrise Highway:** Take Sunrise to Exit 45 South (Rt 111), follow Rt 111 South til end, make right, The Gatsby is 1/2 block on left.

Clip and return by May 31, 2004 to:

.....  
Harriet Pepine, 82 Gloria Blvd., Hauppauge, NY 11788; 631-234-1247

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ NO. OF PEOPLE \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

## **New Banking/Mortgage Program now available**

Members have a new benefit from New York State United Teachers Member Benefits available, Preferred Savings Plus<sup>SM</sup> from MetLife Bank®.

While most members have an established banking relationship with a local bank or credit union, Preferred Savings Plus provides an easy vehicle to build up your savings in a high interest-bearing account. MetLife Bank offers NYSUT members some of the highest interest rates in the country on certificates of deposit, money markets and savings accounts, all FDIC-insured for up to \$100,000.



MetLife Bank also offers home financing programs (mortgages and home equity loans) with the strongest service guarantees in the industry through its relationship with PHH Mortgage Services, one of the nation's largest lenders. For example, they will beat any lender's price or pay you \$500. You are guaranteed a same-day loan decision or you'll receive \$250. Finally, your loan will close by your requested date or your interest rate will be reduced by one-eighth of one percent for the life of the loan.

MetLife Bank CDs are available in a variety of terms to suit your short- and long-term investment needs. You can rest easy knowing the funds you set aside in Met CDs will be there when you need them, earning high rates. Plus, you only need \$1,000 to open a Certificate of Deposit.

Money Market Accounts and High-Yield Savings Accounts offer a tiered interest rate based on the amount of money in the account. Whether you are setting aside funds for a rainy day, saving toward a special occasion or waiting for the right investment, you will have quick and easy access to your account information by phone, Internet, mail or ATM 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

With the Money Market Account, you can receive a reimbursement up to \$5 per monthly statement cycle when accessing non-MetLife Bank ATMs. No minimum deposit is required with the Money Market Account, and your first order of 30 standard checks is free. A minimum deposit of \$50 is required to open a High-Yield Savings Account.

The Preferred Savings Plus Automated Savings Plan is an incredibly easy way to build your balance. MetLife Bank will make regular transfers from your current checking account at another bank to your new money market or savings account. To get started, speak to one of the banking advisors after opening your account.

For more information or to open an account, call MetLife Bank toll-free at **1-866-NYSUT22** (1-866-697-8822), or log on to [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org).

## **NYSUT Retiree Dental Plan offers choice**

The Retiree Dental Plan from NYSUT Member Benefits has been available for more than one year now. The plan is provided through MetLife and pays benefits for three categories of service: Type A Preventive (cleanings, exams, X-rays), Type B Restorative (fillings; simple extractions; crown, denture and bridge repair), and Type C Major Restorative (surgical extractions, general anesthesia, oral surgery, bridges and dentures).

Members have the choice of using a participating MetLife dentist or a non-participating dentist. The plan has more than 60,000 participating dentists throughout the U.S., including more than 10,200 specialists.

The plan has an annual benefit maximum of \$1,250 per person for covered services rendered by any dentist.

### **Participating Dentists**

When a participating (in-network) dentist is used, members receive the greatest benefit and incur the least out-of-pocket expense. The plan provides paid-in-full benefits for Type A services. Members will have out-of-pocket costs for Type B and Type C services. There is no deductible for any type of service.

### **Non-Participating Dentists**

When an out-of-network dentist is used, members will have higher out-of-pocket costs for all types of services. Type B and Type C services are subject to an annual deductible, which is \$50 for individual coverage and \$100 for family coverage.



### **Who is eligible?**

Retired NYSUT members are eligible to apply. Members may also apply for coverage for their spouses or domestic partners and children. Children are covered until age 19, or until age 23 if unmarried and a full-time student.

If members use the convenience of pension deduction to pay for the plan, they will incur no service fees. There is a \$4 service fee per billing cycle for direct billing; frequency of direct billing can be quarterly, semi-annual or annual.

For an informative brochure and application, contact NYSUT Member Benefits by calling 1-800-626-8101 or e-mailing [benefits@nysutmail.org](mailto:benefits@nysutmail.org).