

ROBS-RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Since 1991 - Still Serving

ssue 3/2012-2013

April, May, June 2013

MEETINGS

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

May 3 - History Project

June 7 - Luncheon at the Irish Coffee Pub

July & August - no meeting

ROBS CARES CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

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

OFFICERS

Nick Siciliano - President kpnic1@aol.com Kathy Guleksen - 1st VP Harriet Pepine - 2nd VP Lucille Fink - Secretary Marge Kirchner - Treasurer Dot Zuckerman & Phyllis Goodwin - Presidents Emeritus

AFFILIATIONS

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

www.robsny.org

TOOTING OUR OWN HORN

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE

by Marge Kirchner

As Treasurer of ROBS, I thought you'd like to know a bit about our finances. We collect dues of \$25.00 per member of which \$7.00 each goes to Retiree Council 21. The rest of those receipts go to our yearly costs to keep ROBS operating successfully. That includes the enormous cost associated with printing our directories and our award-winning Newsletters. We also pay the USPS quite a bit for mailing them to all our members. We have costs related to our highly praised, and award-winning website, refreshments at meetings, office supplies, and miscellaneous expenses including sending Thinking of You cards to our many shut-ins four times a year. We also send Sympathy cards to those who have suffered losses.

The rest of our income comes from our members who donate to PROJECT HOPE and our SCHOLARSHIP FUND. Considering we are an organization of fewer than 300 members, I am amazed at your generosity and want to tell you about our achievements this year. Your charitable contributions have allowed us to:

- Spend \$2,472 on families we adopted for Thanksgiving and Christmas
- Send \$250 each to the soup kitchens at the First Baptist Church of Bay Shore and St. Anne's of Brentwood
- Send \$500 to the NYSUT Emergency Relief Fund for Hurricane Sandy
- Give \$3,000 in scholarships to five Brentwood graduates who will be studying education in college.

That's \$6,472.00. Pat yourselves on the back, give yourself a gold star and toot that horn as loud as you can.

As the kids say, "You're awesome!"





ROBS NEWSLETTER | Issue 3/2012-2013

Page 2

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Carmela Criscione - Editor tecnoquuen@aol.com Ronda Brooks Adrienne Eastman Lucille Fink Phyllis Goodwin Miriam Massucci Paula Moore John Sherin Nick Siciliano

TALK TO US

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

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

www.robsny.org

Visit us today!



NICK'S NOTES by Nick Siciliano

SEQUESTER..DEFICITS..ENTITLEMENT CUTS

We have all heard and read about the above items. It is important that we be aware of what is going on with the economy as it pertains to retirees. It is possible that sometime this year the President and Congress will agree on a budget that includes possible cuts that may affect people still working as well as retirees.

The in-service members of the District will definitely feel the impact of future cuts in programs as more baby boom generation retirees benefit from Social Security and Medicare to name only two programs.

This year we will, and must, work with the Brentwood Teachers Association, NYSUT and the AFL-CIO to help get word out to our representatives not to make any drastic cuts in entitlement programs.

On the local level we have been in contact with Kevin Coyne, President of the BTA. He and I agree that we should work together on these and other issues. I am sure you join with me in looking forward to working with the BTA in dealing with issues that concern us.

If you are interested in attending rallies, covering phone banks, or even stuffing envelopes for large mailings, please contact any of officers, our contact information is in the Directory.





ROBS NEWSLETTER | Issue 3/2012-2013

IT'S ALL ABOUT US by Carmela Criscione

Brentwood Grads on the Red Carpet in Hollywood. Two Brentwood graduates, sisters Cynthia Sansone and Rachel DeMolfetto own and operate a beauty salon on Montauk Highway in Islip called "Racine's". Their inspiration to open the shop was what their mother was going through with cancer treatments. They open the shop free of charge on the third Monday night of the month, to cancer patients who are then treated to manicures, facials and all those other services that make ladies feel pretty. A 90-minute HBO documentary was made about this, titled "Mondays at Racine's", and was nominated in the best documentary short subject category. It also won awards at other film festivals. Check the local papers for viewing time, check the local listings and NETFLIK. Congratulations!

ROBS has received thank you acknowledgement letters for our contributions to St. Anne's and First Baptist Church of Bay Shore to their food pantries, and NYSUT for contributions to the Hurricane Sandy fund. The need is still there and we urge you to bring food stuffs to every ROBS meeting for PRONTO.

Phyllis Goodwin is organizing another High Tea. This one will be at Hidden Oaks, Bayard Cutting Arboretum on Wednesday, May 8 starting at noon. Notices are in the Newsletter and flyers will be available at the April and May meetings. The annual ROBS luncheon will be at the Irish Coffee Pub on Friday, June 7 starting at noon.

We are sorry to report the death of Jeff Wolfe (Social Studies/HS) in January. Steve Rochester has written a moving tribute to his friend which can be read on page 4 of this newsletter. We are also sad to report that Albert Jones (Ind. Arts) died in February and eva efron (Library Media Specialist) and Ethel Tarkan (Elementary) died in March. They will be missed.

Dolores Herrmann (Elementary/North) is recovering from a stroke and is doing well. Thinking-of-you cards have gone out to 23 of our colleagues who are in need of a lift. .

If anyone is planning a party or a special dinner consider Maria Canale's catering service. We can all share in her expertise as a great Italian cook. If you are interested, please contact her at fromourkitchentoyours@chef.net. Also check out her ad on our website, www.robsny.org to view her advertisement in our classified section.

Happy news to report from Adrienne Eastman. Her oldest grandson, E. J. and Maria, are the proud parents of a boy named Isaiah Jack. He was born on March 14 and was an even 8 pounds. He is Adrienne's second great-grandson. Congratulations.

Check out the ROBS website, www.robsny.org, for video clips of Marilyn DePlaza (April), Tony Felicio (April), Jeff Wolfe (May) and Barbara McNicholas (June). The History Project will be presenting its annual program in May.

Evelyn Vannoy (Attendance Secretary/North JHS) is living in Ohio and wants to reconnect with colleagues. If you are interested in contacting her, call her daughter Odette Robinson at 513-625-0704.

Miriam Massucci's granddaughter, Sarah Keller, is graduating from the University of Maine with a BA in Wildlife Ecology. She will be working on protecting the red wolf population in Virginia. Congratulations.

Don and Margaret Kubisco celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in January. Our best wishes for many, many happy years.

Vern and Frank Spencer returned recently from a 10-night Holland American cruise through the Panama Canal and then visited a friend who lives in Bermuda. We all envy you.

Dot Zuckerman, Edie Filosa, and I will be traveling to Scotland this July. If anyone is interested in walking through the heather, spotting the Loch Ness Monster, finding Brigadoon and, of course, stopping at any distilleries that we happen to pass, please contact Dot for further information. The trip leaves on July 4 and is ten days long. Hope you can join us.

Congratulations to Gloria Hannemann on the arrival of a second granddaughter, River Hannemann, who was born on Friday, April 5. Kudos to Gloria for being winning NYSUT 2012 Journalism Award for Best Website. This is the fourth year Gloria has been recognized for the website, which is only four years old.

Congratulations to the entire Editorial Board for winning an Award of Distinction for the ROBS Newsletter. This is the first time our newsletter has been so recognized. My personal thanks to the many people who work so hard to make the newsletter what it is.

REMEMBERING

JEFF WOLFE

by

Steve Rochester

I first met Jeff Wolfe in 1967. We were two of the eight new Social Studies teachers hired that year. Jeff was a great teacher. His students loved him and he put everything into his teaching. Jeff started the Psychology course at Brentwood. He convinced the powers that be that it was a worthwhile endeavor. He wrote the curriculum and enjoyed teaching it. I remember seeing some of his "psychology experiments" like using food coloring and blindfolding his students. When they saw the color of the food they had just eaten, they couldn't believe it. Jeff also started the Advanced Government course at Brentwood High School. It was so great to see students involved with Plato, Socrates and Aristotle.

One of the things that he was most proud of was his founding, along with Frank Spencer, of the Human Relations Council. This came about right after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King when race relations were very tenuous. The Human Relations Council was very instrumental in easing tensions in Brentwood.

Jeff's most well-known accomplishment was starting the Fencing Program at BHS. At the beginning he scrounged for money and equipment from his former coach at NYU and the Brentwood Student Council. After establishing the Boys program, he started the Girls team. It was the first Girls team on Long Island. His accomplishments as a coach are unapproachable. His teams had a record of 388 wins against only 14 losses. His Girls teams were undefeated for 18 straight years and won 18 consecutive County Championships. His fencers were awarded more than \$100,000 in scholarships. Eight of his fencers became collegiate All Americans and 4 represented the United States in international competition. In 1987 he was named NCAA Regional Coach of the Year. The US Fencing Association announced that the Annual Coach of the Year Award would be named "The Jeff Wolfe Coach of the Year Award".



Jeff passed away on January 20, 2013 due to complications from kidney problems.

He will be sorely missed.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Wolfe family is planning a memorial service for Jeff. This has been scheduled for April 20, 2013, in the Sonderling Auditorium. Check our website for the actual time.

The cafeteria where Jeff held so many practices will be named after him.

Also check out the website for video clips from several oral history interviews John Sherin has conducted over the years. Jeff Wolfe is among those featured. Please check it out.



ROBS NEWSLETTER Issue 3/2012-2013 Page 5



DAVID MITCHELL

AUTHOR EXTRAORDINAIRE

by

Lucille Fink

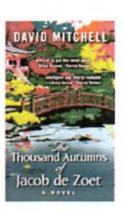
A few winters ago, when I was looking for a good book to read, I came across a rave review in the New York Times for The book exceeded my expectations. It tells the story of a young Dutch clerk who travels to Japan in 1799 to seek his fortune so that he can marry his rich fiancée. In Japan, he meets the disfigured daughter of a Samurai doctor. You become so caught up in this tale, filled with crosscultural romance and political intrigue, that you just can't put the book down. The richness of the language and clever development of the characters and plot draws you into the world of feudal Japan, and you just don't want to stop reading until you know the final outcome.

I went on to quickly read the rest of David Mitchell's books, all filled with complex plots, interesting insights and rich language. Mitchell is a prize winning author who is on *Time* magazine's list of 100 Most Influential People in the World. All of his books have intriguing characters, and complex plots with interesting twists. The characters from one book often appear in a marginal role in other books. However, each book is so very different from the other.

Ghostwritten moves around the world from Mongolia to Europe to the United States. Nine narrators tell tales that interlock and intersect in very intriguing ways. Number9dream tells of a 19 years-old's search for his father in Japan. The coming-of-age story juxtaposes his real journey with an imaginary one. Black Swan Green, also a coming-of-age story of a 13 year-old boy, is semi-autobiographical and takes place in England over the course of 13 months.

The construction of the book, <u>Cloud Atlas</u>, recently made into a motion picture, is very unique. The tale starts in the South Pacific in the 19th century and concludes in the post-apocalyptic future. The book consists of six stories. Each story is interrupted at a key moment. The sixth story is told in full. Mitchell then returns to the previous five stories and completes them in reverse chronological order. What is especially interesting is how he relates each tale to the one before it through the main character in the tale that follows.

Mitchell's books are difficult to put down once started. His versatility in plot development, and his ability to develop rich characterizations, and immerse the reader in diverse settings make reading his works a pleasure.



ROBS SCHOLARSHIPS

Our Scholarship Committee will shortly be receiving letters and applications from Brentwood High School's graduating seniors.

ROBS has been committed from its very beginning to fostering the educational goals of Brentwood students pursuing careers in education.

We will be accepting contributions at all our meetings and checks can be sent directly to Marge Kirchner.

Checks should be made out to ROBS with "scholarship fund" on the memo line can be sent to Marge Kirchner, Treasurer, 666 Hawkins Road East, Coram, NY 11727.

In the past, our members have been very generous. There is great need. Now more than ever we need motivated young people entering the teacher rolls.

Thank you for your support.





ROBS NEWSLETTER | Issue 3/2012-2013



FLY ME TO THE MOON



In Love With LEM

by

Claire Geraci

I have always had a secret love affair with space exploration. From the time that I was a little girl, through to my adult years, a NASA launch was never missed. I even watched in disbelief, the horrific Challenger disaster in 1986. And through it all, I can still recall Walter Cronkite narrating every step of the way.

At the age of twelve, I was given a major gift; something that I remember fondly to this day. My father and uncles worked on the Apollo Lunar Module (LEM) at Grumman in Bethpage. I was taken to Grumman, to a special building, given a badge and was invited to see and walk into the LEM; not a model, the actual LEM. To a little girl, this amazing machine was a multi-legged robot with walls of switches and buttons, that men could sit in and ride to the moon. It was the stuff of science fiction, brought to life, and I was standing in it! To me, it was absolute magic.

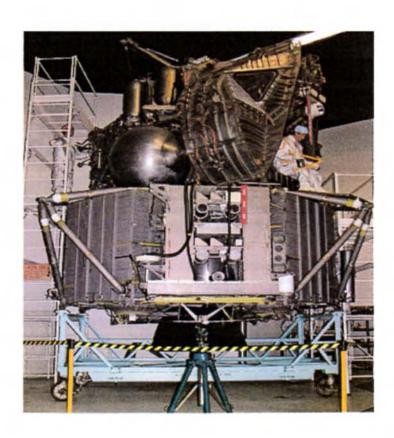
At home, on July 20, 1969, I willed myself to stay awake and see a man walking on the moon. When Neil Armstrong said,"...that's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," I thought that this was even better than the Beatles performing on the Ed Sullivan show. To top it off, the LEM that I was in was the one to bring these astronauts back to their ship. I was in awe.

As a teacher at Twin Pines Elementary, I have taken many second graders to the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City. The museum has among its exhibits various Grumman projects and is manned predominantly by retired Grummann engineers and employees. I still feel a rush of excitement when I see the LEM and all the apparatus that went with it. Sadly some of this can be lost on the eight year old of today.

But I did find that a teacher's excitement and knowledge will spark children to ask questions about the past. I told them stories about myself at their age and they listened intently. I recall one specific time when twenty-eight children, two chaperones and a museum guide followed me through the

Center as I explained everything from the F-14 fighter planes to the LEM, and the wonders of the moon's surface that it helped to discover.

After I finished the story of my LEM adventure, one child innocently raised his hand. He said, "Mrs. Geraci, you do know that my Dad's cell phone can do more than the inside of that thing?" As I sighed, I wished that I could remain just a little longer in my exciting world of space exploration.





ROBS NEWSLETTER | Issue 3/2012-2013 | Page 7



...AND LET ME PLAY AMONG THE STARS

Remembering the 60's

by

Adrienne Eastman



The 1960's and early 1970's were exciting times for our country. In May, 1961 President John F. Kennedy had announced that he believed our nation should commit to achieving the goal before the decade was out of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth. And indeed we did. The public watched the launches with bated breath.

My husband, Edward Eastman, was very proud to have worked on several of the LEM (Lunar Excursion Module) vehicles including Apollo 11, the first of the LEMs to land on the moon, Apollo 12 and Apollo 13 (Aquarius), while he worked at Grumman. His name is on a scroll that was signed by the Grumman Aerospace employees who worked on Apollo 11 and was left on the moon by astronaut Neil Armstrong. Ed was an Environmental Control Technician. His job was to install lines in the cockpit of the LEM.

On one occasion my husband was granted permission to give our two sons and me a close-up look at the cab where the astronauts controlled the vehicle.

We all had to wear protective white suits, hats and shoe coverings to enter the cabin. All the workers wore similar suits to keep the area clean and sterile.

When a problem developed in the Command/Service Module of Apollo 13 in the flight towards the moon, it was the Grumman-built LEM that got the astronauts home safely. The crew of Apollo 13, Jim Lovell, Jack Swigert and Fred Haise sent a letter to the Grumman engineering and manufacturing team expressing their deepest thanks for building a most outstanding spacecraft. Aquarius (LEM 7) performed beyond expectations in providing their only means of returning home.

Houston, we have a problem.

My husband passed away in 1997 but his legacy to his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons will live on in the extensive LEM memorabilia, he collected while working at Grumman.



NASA patch for Apollo 13 www.nasa.gov

IT WAS JUST FORTY YEARS AGO

As Claire and Adrienne have described, it was an exciting time. We can all remember being glued to the television set waiting to see the first launch, the first walk on the lunar surface, the first space walk, the first picture of the earth looking like a blue marble in the blackness of space, the first golf drive with a club Armstrong smuggled on board, the imprint of a man's foot on the surface, the flag being planted, and the astronauts jumping around in the low gravity. They are all indelible memories.. We also remember the anxiety of the whole world until the crew of Apollo 13 splashed down in the ocean.

Sign on to the NASA site, www.nasa.gov, where you can find the most out-of-this-world pictures you will ever see.



TONY

A TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY F. FELICIO

by Tom O'Connor

Much can be said about his accomplishments for the children of Brentwood during the time he was here. In all, he served on the school board for more than three decades, first as a trustee then as president. Of course, as a local political leader who did more than pay lip service to public education, he was fair game for attacks from detractors. He typically handled them in good form and didn't complain. He just kept going. I remember him saying, "You've got to get along to go along." In the ever-contentious environment in which he served, this was no easy task. But, he did it.

Tony had a seemingly endless amount of energy and was seen at all school functions to support the efforts of those who built the school district and community, both children and adults. Not only did he attend athletic contests, meetings, and the like, he helped with fund-raisers, as well. In 1968, the first election for the newly formed Suffolk Legislature took place. He ran as the Democratic candidate against Michael J. Grant, the Republican candidate. Many years later, Mike would tell me about what it was like to run against this man. "He was everywhere," Mike would say. "He was at every event going on in the district. I don't know how he did it!" This store of energy would serve this man well throughout his life. And he used his gift for the best purposes, serving the people of his community.

He also knew how important it was to support the academic teams and he did it with great gusto. I worked as an advisor to the mock trial team and the government club. He did every thing possible to encourage the kids in these activities. In 1985, when the mock trial team won the Long Island Championship, he found a way to get the needed funding to get all of the 14 members of the team up to Albany for the "tournament of champions" after the tournament sponsors announced that they would cover the expenses of only eight of the kids. Also, when he learned that our kids need a courtroom to be built (in the back of my classroom) he pushed the



project and saw it through in spite of the opposition of some administrators. He certainly supported the government club's activities too. He helped to put his community "on the map," so to speak, by furthering the activities of the students.

He was not shy about stepping into a situation involving disagreement between school authorities and students. The government club had a situation in which the high school principal was holding back sheets of statistics for a mock election the students held. Without this data, the students could not complete their election project in a timely fashion. The club's president appealed to him as her representative in government after her request to see the high school principal and superintendent had been refused. He responded right away. The building principal handed over the statistics to the students the next morning in plenty of time to meet their deadline. A few ruffled feathers, but mission accomplished.

These are just a few of things I'll recall when I think of Tony Felicio. He made a difference for the better despite the obstacles he faced. He never wavered and with his help, Brentwood is a better place.

Tom wrote this essay on Tony April 2003 shortly after Tony died. He titled it simply "Tony". When we decided to put it as a tribute to a great man we wondered whether we should retitle it. The only problem was that there are probably 100 adjectives you could use to describe Tony and then we realized that just "Tony" said it all.



ROBS NEWSLETTER | Issue 3/2012-2013 Page 9



PEOPLE TO PEOPLE AMBASSADOR

PROGRAMS

by Ronda Brooks

I have written several articles for ROBS about my summer travels with People to People. Here's a little background about the program. In 1956, President Eisenhower proposed a peaceful solution for a world consumed with war. His suggestion was to give everyday citizens the chance to meet and get to know other people around the world, His goal was understanding, friendship and lasting peace. Out of that vision grew People to People. People to People Ambassador Programs provide international educational travel opportunities to students in grades 5-12 and college.

Each year, 20,000 students from all over the US travel abroad with People to People. In the last 50 years, more than 500,000 American students have had the unique experience of traveling with a group of their peers, and several chaperones to 40 countries on 7 continents...yes that includes Antarctica! I have personally led delegations to China, Hong Kong, France, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Next summer I will be returning to England, France and Italy.

You might think this a relaxing vacation, however, it's anything but! We wake up early in the morning and spend the day exploring well-known sites as well as having some exclusive opportunities not available to most tourists. For example, when we were in China we spent the afternoon at the excavation site of the Terra Cotta Warriors. Then later in the day we got to meet the farmer who actually discovered the clay soldiers while he was searching for a well during a dry season in 1974. What an honor to hear his story. After a day out and about with 4 or 5 scheduled activities and meals, the delegates and chaperones are pretty well exhausted. We fall asleep easily and wake in the morning for another day of adventure. Most trips last from 14 to 23 days.

Almost all of the People to People chaperones are teachers. Teachers have a wonderful combination of experience working with children and extended summer vacations during which they can travel. Also during the school year, we meet our new delegates at information meetings and socials. We conduct 4 to 6 orientation meetings for our individual delegations and we have a Bon Voyage as well as a Reunion Party soon after we return. We don't get paid but we do get to travel for free. Now that I have retired and only work part-time, I feel like I have more time and energy to devote to this worthwhile program.

If you are interested in learning more about People to People either as a teacher-leader or for your children or grandchildren, please check out www.peopletopeople.com.

Let's do what we can to support People to People's mission: To bridge cultural and political borders through education and exchange, creating global citizens and making the world a better place for future generations.

PINE PARK'S GOLDEN BIRTHDAY

The 2012-2013 school year marks Pine Park's 50th Birthday!

PaulAnne Anziano (anziano@optonline.net) is coordinating the celebrations and activities. The birthday celebration is scheduled for Friday, May 3rd, 2013.

All ROBS members and Pine Park staff are invited but please RSVP if you wish to attend. If anyone would like to say a few words during the presentation, please contact PaulAnne Anziano directly.



ON A SERIOUS NOTE...

INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR SPOUSES

Carmela Criscione

We have received inquiries about the status of spouses when the active or retired employee of the District dies.

The District referred me to the Agreement to Provide Health Benefits to Retirees, or as many call it the "Contract on Health Benefits". retirees received a copy of this signed by the District representatives when they retired. agreement form is extremely important and should be kept in a safe place.

It states that the District is "to pay the designated cost of benefits for the said retiree pursuant to this agreement, and his or dependents eligible and enrolled in the plan, for the lifetime of said retiree."

The District will allow the surviving spouse to continue benefits at his/her expense. The District's responsibility for paid benefits ends shortly after the death of its employee, whether in service or retired.

If you have any questions regarding this, please call the District.



ROBS 3rd Annual Herb and Flower Event

Create your own herb or flower container for \$35 at the Bayport Flower House (940 Montuak Highway, Bayport) on Tuesday, June 4 at 10:00 a.m. The Flower House will provide all materials.

For further details contact Kathy Guleksen before May 28. No refunds after June 1. Please make checks out to ROBS.





MOON ROCKS

ROCK BRENTWOOD

Did you know that moon rocks from the first lunar landing was on display in Brentwood?

Jim Nanos was a science teacher at West Junior High School in the 1970's and, was taking courses at the Brookhaven National Lab when he learned that they were examining moon rocks.

He was able to persuade them to send the rock to West Junior High for their Science Fair.

These were rocks from the very first moon landing and Brentwood had them. arrived in armored cars with armed guards looking over them.

Everyone in the District was invited to participate in this one of a kind experience.

TELL US A STORY

Do you have a story you would like to share?

Please let Carmela know and it may appear in an up-coming newsletter for everyone's enjoyment and edification.

We'd really like to hear from you.





LEGELEE GEEGE

IRISH COFFEE PUB

131 Carleton Avenue, East Islip (631) 277-0007

Menu

Appetizer

Gemelli Pasta With Sweet Red Pepper Sauce

Salad

Pub With Creamy Dill Dressing

Monterey With Spinach, Strawberries, Mozzarella

And Pecans

Entree

Chicken Francaise Herb Crusted Salmon Sliced Steak Forrestiere

Dessert

Apple Crumb a la Mode Coffee, Tea & Soda - Cash Bar \$30 Per Person

Please make your check payable to ROBS and send to: Lynda Romano, 18 Danville Drive, Greenlawn, NY 11740 (631) 757-9450 <u>Deadline May 31st</u> There will be no refunds.