



ROBS-RETIREES of BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Since 1991 - Still Serving

Issue 2/2011-2012

January, February, March, 2012

MEETINGS

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

February - no meeting

March 2 -ROBS Art Show

April 13 -DATE CHANGE
Speaker

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

kpn1c1@aol.com

Kathy Guleksen - 1st VP

Harriet Pepine - 2nd VP

Lucille Fink - Secretary

Marge Kirchner - Treasurer

Dot Zuckerman and Phyllis

Goodwin - Presidents

Emeritus

AFFILIATIONS

ROBS is proudly affiliated with NYSUT, AFT, NEA, AFL/CIO, RC 21 & NYSARA.

www.robsny.org

ATTACKS ON SOCIAL SECURITY

LONG ISLAND ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS

By Lucille Fink

The attack on Social Security and why we must stand up now to protect it was the theme of a presentation to Long Island Alliance for Retired Americans members on October 14, 2011 by Eric Kingston, a Syracuse University social policy professor and co-director of the Strengthen Social Security Campaign. Kingston stated that the Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid programs make a huge difference in the life of our nation and he emphasized that Americans deserve a certain level of protection and dignity. He reviewed the causes of the current, deficit noting that Social Security is not part of the cause. Since Social Security has enough funding to provide full benefits until 2035 and 77% of promised benefits after 2035 (which can be increased to 100% with some timely intervention), Kingston maintains that there should be no cuts to the existing program.

Kingston noted that attacks on Social Security began in the 1930's when Social Security was first passed, and stressed the seriousness of the current attacks on the program. The congressional Super Committee was charged with reducing the deficit by 1.5 trillion dollars over ten years. Since the Super Committee failed to forge a deficit reduction deal, automatic cuts to defense and non-defense spending will begin in 2013. Kingston was especially concerned about how these cuts would affect Social Security and Medicare benefits.

Kingston noted that retirees must take an active role in protecting the benefits that we receive, citing the need to participate in ARA actions, attend district visits of politicians, and question candidates about their positions and votes. He also stated that we should call or write letters to senators and representatives, stating that we are against raising the Social Security eligibility age to 67, and that we do not want a global cap, or cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or the annual COLA. Kingston noted that if the Super Committee did not reach a consensus, the automatic cuts would not kick in until 2013, which would give Congress time to modify the law. He stressed the need for us to act now, in order to have an effect on the outcome.

NOTE: If you are interested in viewing Kingston's PowerPoint presentation, contact Dot Zuckerman at dzuckerm@nysutmail.org.

**NICK'S NOTES** by Nick Siciliano**Executive Board**

Carmela Criscione - ROBS Cares
Adrienne Eastman - BCA Liaison
Gloria Hanneman - Web Coord.
Marty Hochheiser - BTA Liaison
Barbara Mascaro - Archivist
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Lynn Prass, Ellen Edelstein, Paula Moore - Delegates at Large

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John Sherin
Nick Siciliano

Talk to Us

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

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

www.robsny.org



2012 will be an important year for all of us. As you are aware this a Presidential election year. Not only will we be electing a new President but a new Congress as well. We should all pay close attention to the issues being discussed this year as the outcome of the election will have a great impact on both active and retired teachers.

The Super Committee failed in its mission Republicans and Democrats in Congress cannot agree on anything, and there seems no middle road to reason. It is likely that due to the national debt our tax structure may be impacted. No doubt there will be further discussion on what to do about education. The attacks on teachers will probably continue, and we should all be prepared to counter these meaningless attacks by writing letters, attending rallies and making our voices heard.

I urge you to pay close attention to the campaign as the year progresses and be sure to vote in November. I will have more to say on this election in future newsletters.

I would like at this time to thank all of you who have generously contributed to **ROBS' Project Hope** and **Scholarship Fund**. In addition, I would like to express my thanks to those of you who regularly attend our General Meeting and bring food items for the food pantry at **Pronto**. These programs would not be successful without your support. I wish to give special thanks to the Officers and Executive Board of ROBS for their contributions throughout the year. As I have said before, no organization can be successful without the active participation of its members. As we move into 2012 I ask that you make your organization aware of any way we can assist you to make **ROBS** even better.

Our website (www.robsny.org) will now feature a **Letters to the Editor** segment. If you want to vent, express your opinion or have a pithy statement on the state of the nation, the world, politics or anything else, please feel free to post your thoughts -- be concise please.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your President and I am sure I speak as well for your other officers and members of the Executive Board.

May you have a happy and successful New Year.



High Tea at Hidden Oaks By Phyllis Goodwin



On the 21st of September, a beautiful late summer day, ROBS members and their guests gathered at the Bayard Cutting Arboretum to begin the first of several activities commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the founding of ROBS.

The Hidden Oaks Café put together a very elegant High Tea in their Library. Each person had a lovely place setting with beautiful china. A list of twenty different teas was available for each person to choose from and each person was provided with an individual teapot. The tables were set with three-tiered dishes. Scrumptious scones, clotted cream and jam were on the top tier. The second tier was piled high with various tea sandwiches, enough to satisfy every appetite. The bottom tier was filled with delectable desserts that would gratify any sweet tooth - think cannolis, chocolate mousse and pistachio cake.

The ladies were bedecked with hats of all shapes and sizes and their best High Tea attire. **Lois Morella and Geri Burgert** were the epitome of British fashion with their fascinators. **Claudia DeBellis** came dressed as Mary Poppins and brought a supply of vintage hats which she collects. Door prizes were given in several categories. **Kathy Guleksen** wore a vintage black hat covered in a tulle veil which won Best Hat. **Barbara Terlecki** had the most unusual moniker as Lady George Jelly Bean. **Anne Mygland** won a prize as the person born the furthest from Brentwood. Anne was born in Norway.

The afternoon was filled with lively conversation and great fun. The consensus was that members would like to continue this event on a yearly basis.





IT'S ALL ABOUT US by Carmela Criscione

Can't believe another year has gone by. I hope your holidays were wonderful. Mine were. My niece T'rea and Richey had a beautiful baby girl on November 9th at 12:07 in the morning. Her name is Averyanna Christine, she weighed 6 pounds 15 ounces and, of course, is gorgeous. The family staked out the waiting room at Stony Brook for two long nights but the wait was worth it. There are no more toys, clothes and baby gear left in any store on Long Island, and I can't wait until she is old enough to go to DSW (Designer Shoe Warehouse).

We have two radio celebs in our midst, **Nick Geraci**, aka A. C. Nicholas, was with Roland Smith on Sunday October 30th on the Smith/Sabbinto radio show on AM 970 the Apple. He spoke about his novel, **Anna and the Tale of the Wolf**. The show can be heard online at www.am970theapple.com. **John Sherin** was also on Old Westbury Radio October 29th on Gary Carlton's show, *Choice Cuts*. He was interviewed about the quartet he has been a part of since 1956. The group performed several numbers on the show. Check our website for John's article about the group.

Get well wishes go out to **Debbie Berkman** who recently had hip surgery and **Lois Morella** who also had surgery.

Sad news to report: **Peter Vercillo's** aunt, Marie, passed away in November. We also received word that **Jack Goldstein** (Reading Consultant) passed in September; **Ruth Lange** (Clerical), **Bruce Van Duyn** (SS/West MS) and **Rhoda Stamler** (Reading Consultant) all passed away in October. In November we lost **Vinnie DeRiggi** (Drug Counselor), and **Carole Schansinger** (Elementary/SE). We lost **Pat Leap** (Language) and **Maureen Rezza** (clerical) in December. They all will be missed. Although she had not retired we note the passing in October of **Dr. Claudia Cockerill** (School Psychologist). She may have been the employee with the longest seniority in the District. I think it may have been close to 50 years. **Florence** and **Kate Corkery** lost their daughter and sister, Florence in December. Our heartfelt sympathy to all who lost someone this year.

The November special anniversary meeting was very special indeed. **Dot Zuckerman** spoke about the earliest days of the organization. Many of the original founders and members were in the audience. They received a well-deserved round of applause for their efforts in making **ROBS** a vital and vigorous organization then and now. **Phyllis Goodwin** did an outstanding PowerPoint presentation of clips of now and then, important moments in our organization's life and the people, sadly some no longer with us, who were there every step of the way. There were decorations, door prizes, a special cake and a lot of talk. It was probably the best attended meeting of the year. Check out the photos on the website.

On Saturday, January 7, 2012, the Brentwood High School dedicated its Sonderling basketball court to **Stan Kellner**, long-time physical education teacher and basketball coach.

Phyllis Goodwin participated in the Holiday Reception to Benefit the INN on November 19 at the Martin Viette Nursery in East Norwich. I was privileged to be her guest. The caroling was wonderful and the setting perfect. It was a great kick-off to the holidays. The INN stands for the Interfaith Nutrition Network and serves the hungry and homeless.

We thank **Marty Hochheiser** for his many years of service as RC21 Liaison. Marty stepped down in November but remains as our BTA liaison. **Barbara Mascaro** will now be serving as RC21 Liaison. She has big shoes to fill. Barbara is new archivist and has already started to gather yearbooks, minutes, newsletters and other **ROBS** related material. If you recall, it was Barbara who discovered the slides of the **Maddie Dwyer/Gerry Brophy** Brentwood project that was presented at one of our recent meetings.

The Holiday Luncheon held on December 2nd at the Bonwit and the annual breakfast held on January 6th at the Paradise Diner were wonderful. Kudos to **Lynda Romano** for organizing such successful events. Photos can be viewed on our website www.robsny.org.

Dot Zuckerman is planning a trip to Turkey, Greece and the Aegean and would like to know if anyone would be interested in joining the fun. It is a cruise/land package from July 12-22, 2012. Anyone interested can contact dotzee@optonline.net or 631-567-3866. This is not a NYSUT sponsored trip.

WANTED: We are looking for someone who can do calligraphy. If you have this ability please contact **John Sherin** (address and phone number in the Directory). He will give you details. It's a surprise for our members.

The special outing to the John W. Engeman Theater to see the musical "It's A Wonderful Life" was indeed wonderful. The weather was dreadful but Skipper's Pub gave us a good meal before the play. The production was worthy of Broadway. We were later treated to a backstage tour thanks to Amy Muenster Dolce a former special Education teacher in Brentwood and now part of the theater management. We got to see the orchestra pit, dressing rooms, make-up stations, prop rooms and even stood on stage. The outing was part of the **ROBS** 20th anniversary special activities.



My Summer Adventure in Europe

By Ronda Brooks



This past summer I had the extreme good fortune to chaperone a group of 43 high school students on a 19-day tour of France, Austria, Italy and Switzerland. I had never been to Europe before. In the summer of 2010, I began volunteering as a leader with People to People, a 55-year-old program started by President Eisenhower that promotes world peace and understanding by sending student delegates all over the world every summer. My first trip was to China, and this was my second trip with this group. We saw so many sights that I had only previously heard about. We visited an American WWI/WWII cemetery in France as well as the Eiffel Tower, the Palace of Versailles, the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs Elysses, Montmartre, Notre Dame and Paris City Hall. We saw the Mona Lisa at the Louvre and were surprised at how small a painting it really is. We traveled up north to the Champagne region where we stayed for three nights with local families and

visited champagne cellars, cathedrals and other local sights. Shopping was great fun as we searched for souvenirs and gifts for loved ones. Then it was on to Switzerland. The Alps were spectacular. In Austria we learned how to make *apfelstrudel*, slept in a medieval barn, helped to build a castle and danced the night away in a local disco. We also witnessed the horrors of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp.

Italy was lovely. We had a gondola ride in Venice, shopped at the Murano Glass Factory, marveled at the beauty of Michelangelo's David in Florence, took funny touristy pictures at the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and explored the history of Rome at the Coliseum and the Roman Forum. We spent an awe inspired afternoon at the Vatican and were overwhelmed by the Sistine Chapel. There were many other adventures and experiences on this trip. I have a lifetime of memories and loved every minute of it.

I can't wait to see where I'm going next summer!



PEDALS FOR PROGRESS

Putting Used Bikes To Good Use

by Kathy Williams-Ging

Do you have an old bicycle sitting in the garage? Did you just treat yourself to a new bike and don't know what to do with the old one? What can you do with the bicycles that grandchildren have outgrown? You can donate them to **Pedals for Progress** and get a tax deduction while doing a good deed.

Pedals for Progress is an organization based in High Bridge, New Jersey. They collect used bicycles and send them to developing countries. The bikes provide affordable, non-polluting transportation for the working poor. A study has shown that having a bicycle immediately increases a worker's earning capacity by fifteen percent.

Dave Schweidenback founded **Pedals for Progress** 20 years ago. He had served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador and saw the difference a bicycle could make in the life and work of villagers there. Dave also noted all of the bikes being put to the curb after yard sales in the U.S. He developed the organization to collect those bikes and ship them overseas. Since 1991, **Pedals** has shipped over 100,000 bikes to 26 different countries. The program has expanded to include **Treadles for Progress**, which collects used sewing machines. Women are taught how to use the machines, providing another source of income for their families.

I am a member of the Long Island Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. We have been sponsoring an annual collection for **Pedals for Progress** since 2003. Over the years we have collected 892 bikes and about 10 sewing machines.

Our next collection will be in April 21, 2012, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the South Huntington Library. When someone donates a bike or sewing machine, **Pedals** also asks for a \$10 donation to help defray the shipping costs. I hope you will all consider donating a bicycle, sewing machine or cash to our next collection. You can go on their website (www.p4p.org) to read more about the good work that they does.



GETTING READY TO VOTE 2012

The year 2012 is a very important election year. We will be voting on President, 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer of **ROBS**. Oh, we will also vote for President of the United States. The Nominating Committee has started its work and will present to the Executive Board a slate of candidates in February. We will be publishing a ballot in our spring issue and voting at the May meeting.

Anyone wishing to run for office should contact the Nominating Committee (Phyllis Goodwin, chairperson, Dot Zuckerman, Carmela Criscione) or a member of the Executive Board. Addresses, phone numbers, email addresses are listed in the Directory.

If you have any questions regarding the procedure, please refer to the Constitution.

Please be sure you are registered and eligible to vote in the general elections in November. **It is that important!**

PROJECT HOPE SAYS THANK YOU

Peter Vercillo sends a heartfelt thank you for your generous donations to **ROBS Project Hope**. Our membership made this holiday season an extra special one for the families we adopted.

This season 4 families were adopted. They included 21 children and 7 adults.

The wrap party at Kris Dougherty's house on December 15th was a lot of fun with many, many presents being wrapped, music in the background, holiday paper and gift bags flying as the elves helped pull everything together.

Many thanks to Kris for again opening her home and to the elves: Sheila and Letty Sustrin, Pat Stuhler, Nick Siciliano, Phyllis Goodwin, Lucille Fink, Barbara Mascaro, Lynn Tiscione, Kathy Williams-Ging, Charleen Keely and Peter Vercillo. A special thank you to Phyllis Goodwin for shopping, assembling and delivering the Thanksgiving baskets.





Time To Say Goodbye

We honestly do not know where good

people go when they leave us.

What we do know is they leave behind

love, memories and

people who wish they had not gone.

We wish you loving memories to comfort

you as you say good-bye to

a wonderful person.

To everyone who lost someone dear to them this year we extend our heartfelt condolences.



September 2010
Constance Nichols - Elementary

February
Victor Mojica - Bldgs & Grounds

March
Ruth Walker - Monitor
Gertrude Manning - Elementary

April
Theresa Cornelius - Clerical
Stan Yankowski - Administrator

May
Stan Kellner - Physical Education & Coach
Marilyn Bickwid - Elementary

July
Irene Fleischman - Clerical

August
Joe Carson - Music
Caryl Meringolo - Clerical

September
Jacqueline Hartman - Business Ed
Jack Goldstein - Reading Consultant

October
Ruth Lange - Clerical
Bruce Van Duyne - Social Studies
Rhoda Stamler - Reading Consultant

November
Vinnie DeRiggi - Drug Counselor
Carole Schansinger - Elementary

December
Pat Leap - Language
Maureen Rezza - Clerical



A Little Bit About Pronto of Long Island By Ellen Edelstein

At every ROBS meeting we are asked to bring food donations for Pronto. But how many of us really know what Pronto does and how much it means to the community? A quick look at their website, prontolongisland.org, gives a detailed portrait of this organization.

Pronto of Long Island's Mission:

To feed the hungry, clothe the needy, welcome the stranger and provide healing and hope to everyone who walks through our doors.

It started with humble beginnings in 1969, working out of the basement of St. Anne's Church in Brentwood, serving people in need in the community. As the demand for services grew, so did Pronto. In 1977 volunteers cleaned up a shell of a house on Pine Aire Drive to create a new headquarters. In 1989 Brentwood High School volunteers enlarged the facility as part of Newsday's High School of the Year competition. (They won!) Over the years the facility has changed but the commitment to serve people in need has never wavered.

We Are People helping people...

just as the slogan suggests. In fact, many of the volunteers are people who were once helped and so touched by Pronto of Long Island that they have returned to help others in need.

Pronto of Long Island is a nonprofit community outreach center which provides basic human services with care and compassion to those in need. The homeless, unemployed, immigrants, uninsured and anyone in need of basic human services are welcome to turn to Pronto of Long Island for assistance. Each client is handled with warmth, understanding and confidentiality. They provide food through the Food Pantry and gently used clothing and household goods through the Thrift Center and Warehouse. They also provide a host of other necessary services including immunizations through the Shots For Tots program in cooperation with the Suffolk County Department of Health as well as three levels of ESL and GED classes. Additionally, Pronto's intake staff also assists clients with many other services where they facilitate care by partnering with the appropriate agencies for their professional support. In 2009, Pronto of Long Island served over 63,000 clients. The demand for services continues to grow tremendously from year to year so they are always looking for community support. They constantly recruit volunteers and would appreciate any donations as well; either monetary or clothes and goods. They need your support to continue their mission.

Pronto's many programs include: Food Pantry, Thrift Center for clothing and bedding, Warehouse for furniture and household goods, Asthma Program, Citizenship Program, Computer Classes, ESL Classes, Introduction to English, Beginners English, GED classes, Girl Scouts, Shots for Tots, Senior Services and many more. Contact Pronto at 631 231-8290 for more information and a complete calendar of services.