



# ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Since 1991

Still Serving

Issue 1/2015

January, February, March 2015

## MEETINGS

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

February - no meeting

March 6 - EDP Dental Plan

April 10 - Cooking with Maria Canale

## 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  
kpncl@aol.com

Kathy Guleksen - 1st VP

Harriet Pepine - 2nd VP

Nancy Churchillo - Secretary

Carmen Roldan - Treasurer

Phyllis Goodwin - President Emerita

Dot Zuckerman - Founder

## AFFILIATIONS

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

[www.robsny.org](http://www.robsny.org)

## ROBS HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES

2014



Winners of the door prizes, Barbara Terlecki, Paula Moore, Rosemarie Brousseau and Betty Lou Heran

by Adrienne Eastman

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We finished 2014 in fine style with our annual Holiday Luncheon. This year it was held at San Marco Restaurant, Motor Parkway, Hauppauge on Friday, December 5.

Orlando, the maitre d' saw that everything was running perfectly. We mingled and got to speak to everyone. There were 45 people attending. The meal was scrumptious, and while it was difficult to decide which dessert to choose from the dessert trolley, the choice was delicious.

We drew for door prizes and (pictured above) are the happy winners.

Kudos to Lynda Romano for another enjoyable outing for ROBS.





### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Carmela Criscione-ROBS Cares  
Adrienne Eastman-BCA Liaison  
Gloria Hannemann-Web Coord.  
Marty Hochheiser-BTA Liaison  
Barbara Mascaro-Archivist and  
RC 21 Liaison  
Paula Moore-Photographer  
Lynda Romano-Hospitality &  
Programs  
John Sherin-History Project  
Nick Siciliano-Web Editor  
Letty Sustrin-Project Hope  
Sheila Sustrin-Project Hope  
Ellen Edelstein, Jim Nanos and  
Valerie Vismale-Delegates at  
Large

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Carmela Criscione - Editor  
tecnouquen@aol.com  
Ronda Brooks - Graphic Designer  
Adrienne Eastman  
Lucille Fink  
Phyllis Goodwin  
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.

This newsletter is all about us.

[www.robsny.org](http://www.robsny.org)

Visit us today!

### NICK'S NOTES by Nick Siciliano

It's a New Year and once again I would like to thank all of you who have contributed to our Project Hope and Scholarship Funds.

During this year I urge you to keep informed and express your views on issues confronting retirees such as Social Security and Medicare.

In addition, we should all support staff still in service as they will be facing a number of issues.

**ROBS**, as you are aware, has been in existence for more than twenty years. Let us all work together to make **ROBS** a viable organization that will last well into the future and serve the needs of our members.

As always I ask that you make us aware of any way we can improve our organization and make it even better.

This is an election year for **ROBS** officers. Please note the sample ballot included in this newsletter. Anyone wishing to run for office please contact **Phyllis Goodwin**, our Nomination Chairperson.

I would like to express **ROBS'** deep appreciation to **Marge Kirchner** for the excellent job she has done as Treasurer. She has stepped down because of health reasons. **Job well done, Marge!** We welcome **Carmen Roldan** who has stepped in to complete **Marge's** term.

February is Black History Month and we have included a very interesting article on two young black women poets of the World War I era. World War I was from 1914-1918. It was a hundred years ago but we all know/knew someone, a father, grandfather or uncle, who may have served, or a parent who grew up in that time. It is history that has touched us, and its echoes still resound in today's world. "Black" Jack Pershing was the head of the American Expeditionary Force. He got his nickname from commanding an all black battalion in Texas before the war. The role of the black soldier during this conflict is little known and underappreciated. We hope that **Valerie Vismale's** excellent article will spur you to seek more of the Peters sisters' poetry and the role of black soldiers in this conflict.

On behalf of the entire Executive Board I would like to wish you a very **Happy New Year!**





### IT'S ALL ABOUT US by Carmela Criscione

Happy New Year! Here's hoping it's a good one...happy, healthy, and wealthy wouldn't hurt either.

Our **New Year's Breakfast** wasn't what we hoped for. A sudden and extreme surprise snow shower put a damper on transportation and attendance was affected. We all had a good time nevertheless. Even though we had seen one another at the **Holiday Party** there was lots to talk about.

Sadly in late December we learned of the passing of **Alex Salmin** (math teacher). We did not learn until recently that **Melinda Marcalo** (art at the middle school) had died in August. Condolences to friends and families.

Get well wishes and comforting thoughts go out to **Marge Kirchner**, and **Sheila Sustrin**. Also get well wishes to **Shirley Stamm** who is having knee replacement surgery in late January.

Thanks to everyone involved in the **Project Hope Holiday Drive**. Because of our members generosity three families, totaling twenty-one people, were helped.

We learned that students at the North Middle School wrote "Letters to Cops" thanking them for all that they do for us. There was a spot on Channel 12 news highlighting their efforts. You can learn more by clicking on the Channel 12 website.

We also learned of the passing of Mitch Kupchak's fifteen year old daughter, Alina Claire. Mitch was a Brentwood basketball star and general manager of the Los Angeles Lakers. A moment of silence was observed at a Brentwood basketball game. Mitch has never forgotten the Brentwood Schools, and we have not forgotten him. Condolences to the Kupchak family from his Brentwood family.

If you have any news item you would like to share, please send it on to me. This column is **ALL ABOUT US!**

### 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 **Carmen Roldan**.

Checks should be made out to **ROBS** with "scholarship fund" on the memo line and send to Carmen Roldan, 49 Linda Lane, North Babylon, New York 11703.

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.





*iconic picture of a WWI soldier**Ethel & Ada Peters*

### WAR POEMS

#### Ada Tessibel and Ethel Pauline Peters

#### Forgotten Voices of World War I

by Valerie Vismale

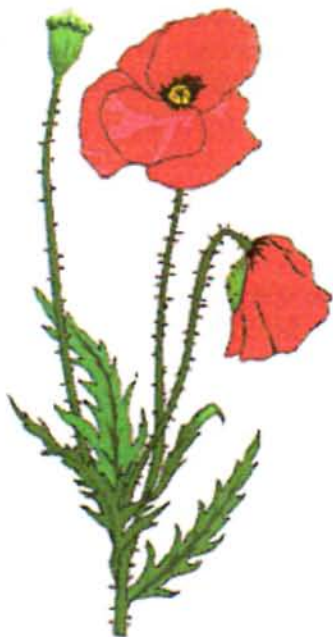
World War I galvanized the black community in their effort to make America truly democratic by ensuring full citizenship for all people. African-American soldiers, willing to serve in the nation's military, saw an opportunity to win the respect of their white neighbors. It was an opportunity to prove their loyalty, patriotism, and worthiness. Many African-Americans did not reap the benefits of American democracy but still chose to support a nation that denied them full citizenship. The significance of World War I is essential to developing a full understanding of modern African-American history and the struggle for black freedom.

In 1919, two teenage African-American sisters, Ada Tessibel Peters (age 18) and Ethel Pauline Peters (age 17), recognized that World War I was a transformative movement in African-American history. Thus, the book, War Poems, written by the sisters, was published. Through their poetry, "The Peters Sisters", with a limited education from rural West Virginia, provide their perspective and views on the war, the nation's race issues, and the world at large. Their poetic expression uncovers the difficulties that were encountered during the Jim Crow period, including gender, age, and geography. The poems celebrate the bravery and patriotism of African-American soldiers. They reflect the struggle for freedom, equality, and self-determination. Ada and Ethel Peters vividly depict the injustice African-American soldiers endured during the period of World War I. Soldiers fighting for their country with honor, only to suffer degradation.

It was Jean Barnes-Peters, a distant relative, who stumbled upon the little red book in her home in the late 1970's. The authors were half-sisters to her late husband, Joseph Cromwell Peters. Her husband didn't have any knowledge of his sisters, since their mother and his father were divorced at least twenty years before he was born. She was captivated by her precious find and had stated the following:

*"I was in awe... because they were young. They were students, teenagers. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that this was their way of contributing to the civil rights of their people. Having lived the life of a black person who had been segregated always, in my schooling, church, in every way... my neighborhood had no other people who didn't look like me; my school was completely segregated - so the book struck me... They knew what was happening to black people. And they saw fit to put it in writing."*

Mrs. Peters shared the book with Joel Beeson, a West Virginia visual journalist and news media professional and his students. He and his students began working to document the story. Through their efforts, today these forgotten black poets are recognized at the Kimball Memorial, the nation's first memorial of African-American World War I Veterans, located in Kimball, West Virginia. It is the hope that, even in this day, War Poems and the Memorial will raise awareness of the role African-American soldiers played in World War I.



African-American soldiers circa 1917



*"The sole intention of the Authors in writing these poems is to show the Negro's loyalty to the Stars and Stripes, in the war with Germany; and to show the need of unity of all men in the fight for democracy."*

#### The Authors

An excerpt from "THE BETTER PART"  
(Original Poem by Ada Tessibel Peters)

On Boston soil in 1775,  
When America fought to be free  
Crispus Attucks a Negro 'didst die  
'Didst shed his blood for Liberty;  
Though slavery's yoke was upon him  
Though his people had no voice  
A heart beat for his fellowmen  
And freedom or death his choice

An excerpt from "NEGROES BE BLACK"  
(Reconstruction Poem – By Ethel Pauline Peters)

T'was on the fields of Flanders  
In the midst of bursting shells  
We learned the Black Boys are human,  
When by our side they fell.  
Though they were Dark Skin,  
And their veins were hidden from sight,  
They too shed red blood,  
Like their blue vein brothers, white  
They did not crawl or prowl,  
Around on their feet and hands  
But stood erect and walked  
Like "God" made the son of man.

The book, *War Poems*, has spiked the interest of many. An alumna of West Virginia University, Casey Hoffman, developed an interactive website in 2012, [thebookofwarpoems.com](http://thebookofwarpoems.com). The site highlights the poems written by the two sisters and encourages visitors to create poems of their own. Visit the site and connect with their powerful story that reaches the hearts of mankind.





**A CELEBRATION OF LIFE, CAREERS,  
AND THE UNIQUENESS OF THE  
BRENTWOOD EXPERIENCE**

by John Sherin

For the past 20-odd years, and 153 interviews, the **Brentwood History Project** has documented the lives and careers of Brentwood Public Schools employees.

It started out as a means to record and preserve the union activities of members in the pre-and post-Taylor Law days. The Taylor Law made collective bargaining between fledgling unions and public employers possible. This resulted in benefits and rights negotiated by public service employees and their employers, many of which are still in force.

The **Project** quickly morphed into something bigger. We started to interview our fellow colleagues about why they went into education, how they chose Brentwood, and, at the end of their careers, what they scored as successes or unfilled goals. They spoke about their fellow employees, the students, the community and the institution of the Brentwood Public Schools from the 1950's until today.

Over the years a lot of interviews were conducted in the Brentwood High School's TV studio, the Brentwood Library and private homes. Each and every one was fascinating because each life is a biography just waiting to be recorded for all time.

While we were fortunate to preserve so many memories, time has taken its toll and we made the mistake of thinking we had time to record many more.

On Friday, May , 2015, at 10:30 a.m., at the Brentwood Library we will celebrate the History Project when the Retirees of Brentwood Schools hands over the DVD collection of these biographies to Dr. Geri Solomon, Archivist, of the LI Studies Institute of Hofstra University and Thomas Tarantowicz, Director of the Brentwood Library. These DVDs will become part of their permanent collection of oral histories.

We are asking everyone who was interviewed (see list on opposite page), or family members of deceased interviewees, to be present for individual presentations of DVDs and a group picture.

All current members (those listed in the 2013 and 2015 **ROBS** Directories), and family members of deceased members, will receive a free DVD. Additional copies will be available at \$15. Non-members may purchase copies at \$15. They can also join **ROBS** for \$25 (yearly dues) and receive a copy for free.

A brief slide presentation of faces of project participants will follow. The meeting will end with refreshments graciously provided by the Brentwood Library.

Newsday, Channel 12 News and other local media will be invited to attend.

Please make every effort to attend this special occasion. Over the years you have enjoyed the May presentation of clips of the interviews done in a particular year. This is your opportunity to view the full scope of the project.

Please review the list of names and let others know about the event, especially family members of those we have lost.

I feel privileged to have worked on this project and am proud to make available the voices and memories to the Brentwood community. It is a history of a town, a school system and its teachers in the last half of the 20th century.

Please make every effort to join us.

Please **RSVP** to John Sherin at [jmsherin@optonline.net](mailto:jmsherin@optonline.net) or Carmela Criscione at [tecnoquen@aol.com](mailto:tecnoquen@aol.com).

Please join us.

**SAVE THE DATE!!**

**May 1, 2015**

**Brentwood Library**

**10:00 Meeting & Election of Officers  
10:30 Celebration**





Acosta, Eli  
Acunzo, Toni  
Andrews, Sally\*  
Ashdown, Laurie Ann\*  
Ausili, Grace  
Ayasse, Chris  
Barber, Grace  
Basso, Carol  
Bauman, Phyllis  
Bazata, Eleanor\*  
Berlin, Maxine  
Bernhardt, Ruth\*  
Binford, Annie  
Black, Les  
Brida, Fran  
Brooks, Ronda  
Brousseau, Rosemarie  
Brown, David\*  
Bruno, Carole  
Cairo, Lou\*  
Campanile, Mike  
Carey, Richard  
Carnese, Frank  
Carnevale, Vincent  
Carpenter, Beverly\*  
Castano, Cheryl  
Cerullo, Peter\*  
Cohen, Gerry  
Corkery, Florence  
Corkery, Katherine  
Criscione, Carmela  
Cuneen, Ray\*  
Datre, Virginia\*  
Dawson, June  
DeBellis, Claudia  
DeBellis, Helen  
DeBellis, Mike\*  
DeLong, Elizabeth\*  
DePlaza, Marilyn  
DeRiggi, Grace  
DeRiggi, Vincent  
DiMento, Peter  
Dougherty, Kris  
Dwyer, Maddi  
Edwards, Rick  
Efron, Marty\*  
Fasullo, Mike  
Felicio, Anthony\*  
Filosa, Edith  
Finkelstein, Barry  
Finnigan, Maureen  
Fishenfeld, Grace  
Fornwald, Cal\*  
Franchi, Ed

Frankel, Bobbe  
Frankel, Chico\*  
Freed, Arthur  
Garrazone, Michael  
Gerolomon, Cathy  
Gibson, Linda  
Goehring, Charles  
Goldstein, Jack\*  
Goodwin, Phyllis  
Gray, Marian\*  
Graziano, Rich  
Geraci, Jean\*  
Greene, Moses  
Grobluski, Gae\*  
Hannan, Ed  
Hannemann, Gloria  
Hartman, Jacqueline\*  
Hayes, Kitty  
Helman, Harriet  
Heran, Bill\*  
Herzog, Ross  
Hochheiser, Marty  
Hodges, Shirley\*  
Hoyt, Estelle  
Karp, Walter\*  
Kazandjian, Elmon  
Kelly, Lillian\*  
Kirchner, Marge  
Klein, George  
Koehler, Florence\*  
Kutin, Audrey  
Lambert, Mke  
Lane, Bill\*  
Lange, Joan  
Laub, Herb  
Nanos, Jim  
LeBron, Bernard\*  
Leftenant, Amy  
Leiterman, Robert\*  
Lew, Irvina  
Mallon, Diana  
Lotito, Lou  
Martz, David  
McCalla, Ruth  
McNicholas, Barbara  
McNicholas, Kevin  
Messina, Anthony\*  
Monsen, Patricia  
Moore, Paula  
Moriarty, Rosemary  
Moss, Ken  
Mundy, Rick  
Murray, Alma  
Nannini, Louis

Neesham, Diane  
O'Connor, Tom\*  
Palazzolo, Joe\*  
Paschkes, Martin  
Pepine, Harriet  
Pirro, Bianca\*  
Pirro, Italia  
Puleo, Carmine\*  
Purcell Joe  
Rochester, Steve  
Rosenthal, Ivy  
Rosenthal, Ruth\*  
Salerno, Hank  
Scharf, Karen  
Scheele, Ray\*  
Sekac, Evelyn  
Sherin, John  
Siciliano, Nick  
Siler, Milton  
Silverman, Anita (Rubenstein)\*  
Spencer, Frank  
Spina, Richard  
Storjohann, Karen  
Sustrin, Letty  
Sustrin, Sheila  
Swensen, Warren  
Thorpe, Chris  
Tiscione, Linda  
Trutt, Wes\*  
Vannoy, Evelyn  
Veech, Chris  
Vega, Manny\*  
Vercillo, Peter  
Walker-Lloyd, Shirley\*  
Weaver, Fred\*  
Weaver, Ruth\*  
Weissman, Judi  
Welch, Edythe  
Werner, Alex  
Wharton, Mercedes  
Wolfe, Jeff\*  
Williams, Kathy  
Young, Joan\*  
Zuckerman, Dot\*  
Zuckerman, Jack\*

\*deceased





### HAPPY HOLIDAYS

#### PROJECT HOPE 2014

Dear Friends,

The shopping was done! The presents were wrapped! Everything was delivered to the three families! Hopefully they had a very happy holiday due to the generosity and caring of our ROBS members. Kudos to all of you!

We both truly enjoyed chairing this committee. It was both challenging and very rewarding. We couldn't have done it by ourselves. There are so many to thank. Firstly, a very special thanks to **Lois Morella, Loretta Ellington, Ginger Battiste and Pat Stuhler** for devoting so much time and effort with helping us shop for twenty-one people. They really know how to find great bargains. We also must thank **Kris Dougherty** for not only hosting the "Wrap Party" but also shopping too. Thanks also to the **ROBS Elves** for showing up to wrap with us, and they did a wonderful job.

And of course, there is **Phyllis Goodwin**. She has always been there for us, and this year was no exception. Phyllis, along with **Adrienne Eastman**, handled the shopping and delivery of food to the families so that they could all have a Thanksgiving feast.

Last, but not least, was the support given to us by our **ROBS president, Nick Siciliano**. He was there constantly for us to answer our questions and give us advice.

We hope that all of you will have a **Happy and Healthy New Year**. We're already looking forward to the 2015 Project Hope challenge!

*Letty and Sheila Sustrin*

### A BITTERSWEET GOODBYE

I've conferred with many family members and people I've spent the last 15 years with on the **ROBS Executive Board**, and what resulted was a very bittersweet decision to resign.

Twelve years ago, I began being the Treasurer of **ROBS**. I loved the job that included more than depositing and writing checks. I made a correct monthly financial report that was given to our Board. Along with that, I kept a data base of our members, a yearly accounting of each year's budgets and whether or not we met them, and a running account of how much we sent to **RC21** as annual dues. I also kept an accounting of who gave to Project Hope and to our Scholarship Fund each year. After the scholarship recipients sent in their necessary paperwork from their colleges, I wrote congratulatory letters to them along with sending them their checks. And, on and on...

Some of you know that the last three years of my life have been filled with breast cancer for both me and my wife, Pat. You may also know about the multiple surgeries trying to correct mistakes some doctors made.

Over a year ago, I began experiencing terrible back pain. After specific tests it was found that I had a fractured vertebra. I had a kyphoplasty operation to fill the fractured space with special cement to help build the space that had fractured and add strength to my spine. What I didn't expect was that during 2014 I would have three more separate fractures and surgeries. I've had a lengthy stay at one hospital, a shorter one at another and since I had no ability to sit or stand, I spent almost six weeks in a rehab center followed by physical therapy all year.

My latest diagnosis is that I have 3 or 4 rotator cuff tendons in my right shoulder torn beyond repair. Since I'm right-handed, it's more than difficult. I'll probably have a reverse ball and socket replacement when we return from Florida in the late spring.

I wear a steel-lined brace every day and have graduated from a walker to a cane. I have difficulty focusing, my handwriting has changed dramatically and those correct financial reports became no reports at all.

We have a wonderful woman named **Carmen Roldan** lined up to take over the responsibilities I had. I hope you will give her as much joy as you have given me.

Peace and good health to you in 2015!

*Marge Kirchner*





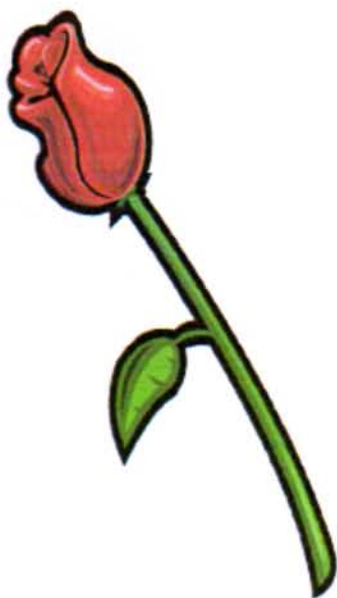
## *With Our Deepest Sympathies*

*You may not want to talk right now because the pain is still sharp.*

*Do whatever it takes to make the time easier to bear.*

*Please know that all of ROBS have many comforting words and warm thoughts coming to you through your time of grief.*

*They were part of us and we miss them too.*



## *Time To Say Goodbye*

### *January, 2014*

*Jane LeMoine - Secretary  
Tom O'Connor - Social Studies  
Eileen Sullivan - Elementary*

### *February*

*Andrew Coccari - Administrator  
Florence Koehler - Elementary  
Mary Martinez - Bilingual*

### *March*

*Elaine Cucciniello - Elementary  
Carol Herzog - Spec Ed*

### *April*

*Alan Lazarus - Administrator  
Roy Horne - Music  
Anthony Messina - Math*

### *May*

*Edward Swensen - Administrator*

### *June*

*William Cowan - Administrator  
John Galaris - Administrator  
Mina Lynch - Secretary  
Carmine Puleo - Administrator  
Dot Zuckerman - Everything*

### *July*

*Fran Koch - Elementary*

### *August*

*Melinda Marcalo - Art*

### *September*

*Ethel Carter - Math Lab  
Donna Marie Ragonese - Spec Ed*

### *November*

*Eleanor Bazata  
Beverly Bienemann - Spec Ed  
June Newman Clark - Secretary*

### *December*

*Judith Poggie - Secretary  
Alex Salmin - Math*



## ROBS ELECTION OF OFFICERS

### COPY OF THE OFFICIAL BALLOT

May 1, 2015

<b>PRESIDENT</b> NICHOLAS SICILIANO		Nominations from the Floor	
<b>FIRST VICE PRESIDENT</b> KATHLEEN GULEKSEN			
<b>SECOND VICE PRESIDENT</b> HARRIET PEPINE			
<b>SECRETARY</b> NANCY CHURCHILLO			
<b>TREASURER</b> CARMEN ROLDAN			

#### ELECTION

1. Written notice announcing the time and place of elections shall be mailed/emailed to each member in good standing at his/her last known address at least fifteen (15) days prior to the election.
2. A contested election shall be by secret ballot.
3. Only NYSUT members in good standing present at the election meeting may vote.
4. Each member shall be given reasonable opportunity to nominate candidates for office at the election meeting.
5. If no candidate receives a simple majority for his/her office, a runoff election of the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be held.

#### TERMS OF OFFICE

1. Duly elected officers shall serve a two (2) year term commencing July 1<sup>st</sup>. Each officer shall remain in office until his/her successor assumes office.