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
kpnie1@aol.com
Kathy Gulcksen - 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

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.
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 Marealo (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!
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.
"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)

'Twas 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. 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 1, 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 or Carmela Criscione at tecnoquuen@aol.com.

Please join us.

SAVE THE DATE!!

May 1, 2015

Brentwood Library

10:00 Meeting & Election of Officers
10:30 Celebration
Acosta, Eli
Aunzo, 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
Camese, Frank
Camervale, Vincent
Carpenter, Beverly*
Castano, Cheryl
Carullo, Peter*
Cohen, Gerry
Corkery, Florence
Corkery, Katherine
Crisccione, Carmela
Cuneen, Ray*
Datre, Virginia*
Dawson, June
DeBellis, Claudia
DeBellis, Helen
DeBellis, Mike*
DeLong, Elizabeth*
DePlaza, Marilyn
DeRiggs, Grace
DeRiggs, Vincent
DiMento, Peter
Dougherty, Kris
Dwyer, Maddi
Edwards, Rick
Efron, Marty*
Fasullo, Mike
Feliciano, Anthony*ic
Filosa, Edith
Finkelstein, Barry
Finnigan, Maureen
Fisherfeld, Grace
Fornwald, Cal*
Franchi, Ed
Frankel, Bobbe
Frankel, Chico*
Freed, Arthur
Garramone, Michael
Gerolomon, Cathy
Gibson, Linda
Goehrings, Charles
Goldstein, Jack*
Goodwin, Phyllis
Gray, Marian*
Graziano, Rich
Geraci, Jean*
Greene, Moses
Grobelski, Gae*
Hannan, Ed
Hannemann, Gloria
Hartman, Jacqueline*
Hayes, Kitty
Helman, Harriet
Heron, Bill*
Heizog, Ross
Hochheiser, Marty
Hodges, Shirley*
Hoyt, Estelle
Karp, Walter*
Kazandjian, Elmon
Kelly, Lilian*
Kirchner, Marge
Klein, George
Koehler, Florence*
Kutin, Audrey
Lambert, Mke
Lane, Bill*
Lange, Joan
Laub, Herb
Nanos, Jim
LeBron, Bernard*
Leitnent, Amy
Leiterman, Robert*
Lew, Irina
Mallon, Diana
Lotito, Lou
Martz, David
McCalla, Ruth
McNicholas, Barbara
McNicholas, Kevin
Messina, Anthony*
Monsen, Patricia
Moore, Paula
Morita, 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
Shenin, John
Siciliano, Nick
Siler, Milton
Silverman, Anita (Rubenstein)*
Spencer, Frank
Spina, Richard
Storjohann, Karen
Sustin, Letty
Sustin, 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 Kehlner - 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 Marcado - 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESIDENT</th>
<th>Nominations from the Floor</th>
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<tr>
<td>NICHOLAS SICILIANO</td>
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| FIRST VICE PRESIDENT       |                            |
| KATHLEEN GULEKSEN          |                            |

| SECOND VICE PRESIDENT      |                            |
| HARRIET PEPIE              |                            |

| SECRETARY                  |                            |
| NANCY CHURCHILLO           |                            |

| TREASURER                  |                            |
| 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 1st. Each officer shall remain in office until his/her successor assumes office.