ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Since 1991 Still Serving Issue 3/2016 July, August, September

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.

September 9- Welcome New Retirees

October 7 - Enhanced Fitness

November 4 - Holistic Wellness

December 2 - Holiday Luncheon

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.

New and/or **gently**-used children's books are being collected for the **Books to Home Program** at every meeting. Please donate.

OFFICERS

Nick Siciliano - President
kpnic1@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

SCHOLARSHIP NIGHT 2016

by Kathy Guleksen

Pictured from left to right: Miranda Sostre, Angela Rice, Kathy Guleksen, Melissa Cintellus and Jenny Maldonado

We are proud to announce that once again **ROBS** was able to award scholarships to graduating Brentwood High School seniors who want to pursue a degree in education.

Scholarship night was held on May 25, 2016 at the Brentwood High School, and as **ROBS** Vice President, I was there to present awards to the winners.

Thanks to you, our very generous **ROBS** members, we were able to award scholarships to four deserving Brentwood seniors.

The $1,000 **Jack Zuckerman** award was presented to Jenny Maldonado. The $1,000 **Dorothy Zuckerman** award was presented to Miranda Sostre. The $750 **Lilian Kelly** award went to Melissa Cintellus. **Letty Sustrin** funded a $500 scholarship in her late sister **Sheila's** name. That award was presented to Angela Rice.

Congratulations to all the winners! We wish you all a successful college experience and a rewarding career in education.

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Marty Hochheiser-BTA Liaison
Barbara Mascaro-Archivist and RC 21 Liaison
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Valerie Vismale - Programs
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EDITORIAL BOARD
Carmela Criscione - Editor
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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

NICK'S NOTES by Nick Siciliano

ROBS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

As we end another year of **ROBS** I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support.

Your contributions to **ROBS** during the past year are greatly appreciated.

As we begin our **25th** year of existence this fall I am concerned, as I hope you are too, about the continuation of **ROBS** as an active, vibrant organization.

This can only happen if you step up and become part of the leadership team of **ROBS**.

I am sure a number of you have ideas to make our organization even stronger and better than it is. Do not keep your ideas to yourself. I strongly encourage you to volunteer to work on committees, form committees, write articles, participate at meetings and most importantly run for an office in **ROBS.**

Look over to the column on the left. This list contains some of the opportunities you can participate in. Everyone has a talent, and we wish to tap into yours.

Remember, it is **YOU** who makes this organization exist.

If you want to see it thrive, please consider playing a more active role in **ROBS**.

Best wishes for a great summer. I look forward to seeing all of you in the fall as we celebrate our **25th anniversary**.

ROBS OWL HAS A NAME!

Our members have spoken. Starting with the Holiday Party in December, at membership meetings and lastly, at the End of the Year Luncheon we asked for names for our **Owl** mascot who has been nameless for 25 years.

The selections ranged from Feathers, variations of Hooter, Hooty, Whooty, Robbie, etc.

The final selection was made at the June 3rd Luncheon.

Third place - Owlbert Einstein.
Second place - Chauncey
FIRST PLACE - OLLIE

There is a very good chance that **Ollie** will make a special guest appearance at the **September 9** membership meeting. **Do not miss it.**

BOOKS TO HOME PROGRAM

by Barbara Mascaro

"You're never too old, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child."
Dr. Seuss

This past year members of **ROBS** have participated in a project that is now in its fourth year in the Brentwood School District. It is called Books to Home and it offers the parents/guardians of the school community the opportunity to come and acquire free books for their elementary-aged children.

The members of **ROBS** have collected new and/or gently-used books in memory of Miriam Massucci, a retired member of the Brentwood school community, who in the past sought donations of children's books for the FAN (Food and Nutrition) program clients.

A large donation of used books (20 cartons) was obtained by John Sherin from the Jericho Public Library and was given to Ms. Paula Ribeiro, Staff Developer for the Language Arts Department. A special thank you goes out to Carmela Criscione for her donation of over 150 gently-used books. Thanks to all who participated in this worthwhile endeavor!

What a wonderful way to promote literacy in the young people of the Brentwood school community and to support our in-service colleagues!

We will continue to collect children's books at each of our monthly meetings in the coming year.

Thank you for your generous donations.

IT'S ALL ABOUT US

by Carmela Criscione

I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer.

It's a little frightening how fast time flies by. You can't find a bathing suit in the stores and Hallmark Cards has Keepsake Christmas ornaments on the shelf, and it's still summer.

Sad to say that we lost **Hal Paster** in May. He was featured in the last newsletter in a lovely article by Herb Laub. Hal was a Brentwood teacher for sixty years as a full time Social Studies teacher and doing home teaching. Many times we would spot him in a meeting room at the Brentwood Library tutoring a student.

We also lost **Daurice Synder** in mid-July. She was a professional dancer in her youth and later became the dance teacher in a BTA sponsored dance program. When I started working in the District in 1965 she was already a legend. Ellen Edelstein alerted us to a really fabulous picture in the **Brentwood-Images of America** book published by Arcadia Publications, and available online and at Barnes and Noble. It shows a very elegant and talented lady at the height of her professional career. There are many grown-up men and women who owe their dancing abilities to her.

You will notice that this is a very light column. The reason for this is that I can't report the news if I don't receive items from you.

We all want to know what's going on with our members, and the only way to do that is to share it.

Please let me know what you'd like to share with your **ROBS**' colleagues.

SAVE THE DATE!

It's time to get out the calendar or appointment book and mark the 2016-2017 **ROBS** meeting dates. We have many interesting presentations and activities, and you don't want to miss a single one.

September 9 - Meet the new retirees with a **surprise** guest appearance.

October 7 - Enhanced Fitness

November 4 - Holistic Wellness

December 2 - Holiday Luncheon

January 6 - Breakfast

February - no meeting

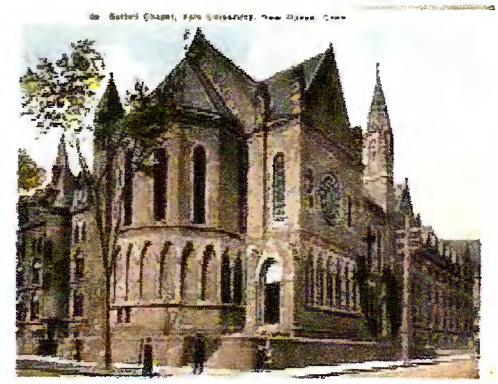
March 3 - Decluttering your Life

April 7 - Ronda Brooks on Bird Watching

May 5 - to be announced

June 2 - End of the Year Luncheon

REST - the Winter Window



Battell Chapel - Norfolk Connecticut

A TOUCH OF TIFFANY

A VISIT TO THE BATTELL CHAPEL & MORE

by Adrienne Eastman

On a sunny, picture-perfect day May 25th, a group of RC21 members, including Carmela Criscione and myself, enjoyed a relaxing ferry ride from Port Jefferson harbor to Bridgeport, Connecticut to start our journey.

Upon landing in Connecticut and boarding our tour bus, our first destination was the Battell Chapel of the Norfolk Congregational Church in Norfolk which was built in 1888. The five magnificent Four Seasons Tiffany windows in the Chapel were dedicated in 1928. The first window is called **PROMISE** and depicts early Spring. The second window, called **REALIZATION**, depicts Summer and shows clumps of roses, lilies, violets and a green rolling landscape. The center window symbolizes the rising of the **SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** which shines through all the seasons. The center window is also duplicated in the main part of the church. The fourth window is **FULFILLMENT** portraying Autumn as a blazing mass of color. The fifth window is **REST**, with a frozen stream, banks drifted with snow and pine trees with snow-laden branches depicting winter.

The windows were the gift of Mrs. Ellen Battell Stoeckel and designed by the Tiffany Studios of New York under the personal supervision of Louis Comfort Tiffany, a life-long friend of Mrs. Stoeckel. I could not help but feel the peace and serenity from viewing these beautiful windows.

It was time for lunch, so on to the Infinity Music Hall and Bistro we went. This also has an interesting history. The restored Hall was originally founded in 1883 by three Norfolk ladies as a multi-purpose village hall. It was used for town meetings, lectures, talent shows, vaudeville performances and more. During the last half of the 20th century it was largely unused and fell into disrepair. The street level of the hall has housed the town butcher, Post Office, Town Hall, the Apple House grocery market, and other businesses in recent years.

In 2007, Dan Hincks acquired the building at public auction. He renamed it Infinity Hall, and it was renovated yet again into a state-of-the-art Music Hall and fine dining Bistro. It has since hosted more than 1,200 concerts. More than 200,000 patrons have attended shows and dined at the Bistro. Such stars as Kevin Costner, Roseanne Cash, Judy Collins and Tori Amos are some of the acts that have appeared there.

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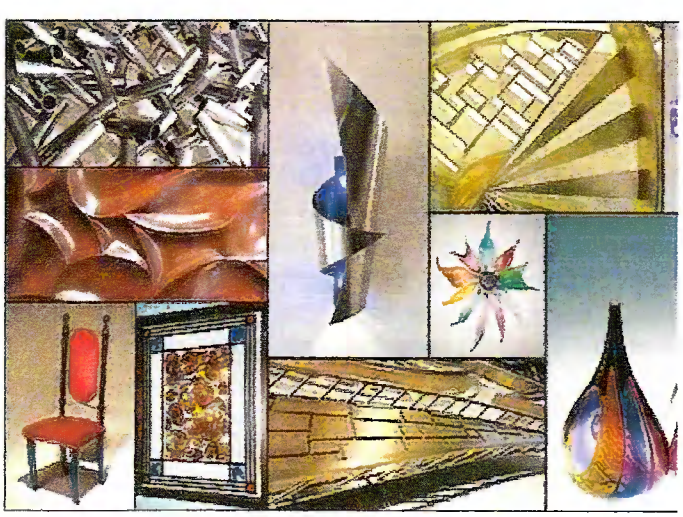
TOUCH OF TIFFANY - con't from page 5

After lunch we continued on to the house where both of Louis Comfort Tiffany's twin daughters lived in Litchfield Hills. The house is now owned by a charming couple who gave us an interesting tour of the house. When they bought it they didn't realize that it came with a lot of the contents which consisted of beautiful dishes, glassware, furniture and more. This 11-room "cottage" is next to the home of the person who sold them the house. It has even more rooms.

To wind up our tour, we proceeded to Riverton to see the studio and gallery of master glassblower Peter Greenwood. His studio is located in the historic Union Church (1829). It was fascinating to see how beautiful objects were created and shaped from molten materials and fired in white-hot ovens. Mr. Greenwood explained the whole process from beginning to end including the tools to create a large bowl and colorful glass paperweights. Perhaps the most interesting thing was how the glass changed color after several firings.

After the demonstration was over, we were able to go upstairs to the gallery and see his other works of art which included glass chandeliers, tables, wall sculptures, vases and more paperweights. Many purchases were made by our group.

We all left Connecticut thinking that this truly interesting and educational trip was enjoyed by all.



MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

THE CHECK IS IN THE MAIL

The District reimburses retirees on a quarterly basis for the standard monthly Medicare deduction from our Social Security checks.

The quarters end on March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31. The checks are mailed within six weeks of the end of the quarter. Sometimes they come earlier.

Reimbursement for higher deduction rates are made in June and reflect the difference between the standard and higher rates retroactively for the year.

25th ANNIVERSARY

SPECIAL EVENTS

We will be celebrating our 25th anniversary this year.

Do you have any ideas for a special meeting program or activity?

When we celebrated our 20th anniversary we had a theater trip, potting party at a local nursery and a Brentwood history presentation.

Let's see if we can match those activities.

Please contact Carmela or any of the officers with your suggestions and ideas.

Thanks.

PAINT NIGHT

BRENTWOOD HISTORICAL FUND RAISER

by Nancy Churchillo

On May 18, 2016 the Brentwood Historical Society held a fund raiser, "Paint Night", at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Brentwood. The Society is raising funds to restore the original Brentwood schoolhouse.

The night was a very enjoyable event. Seating was open at the many round tables. There was a silent auction with many gift baskets and gifts to bid on. Before the painting began there was food. All the food was donated by local stores in Brentwood and was delicious.

I have been to paint nights before, but this one was different in the fact that we all did not paint the same picture. First of all, we were given a wine glass. The instructors placed several pictures on each table with suggestions of what to paint on our glass. Every table also got a selection of paints and brushes to use. You were also free to use your imagination and paint whatever you wanted. They also came around to help if we needed it or to offer suggestions. I saw many beautiful creations! Some people are so talented! A friend at my table painted pine trees and snow, which was her own idea and very beautiful. Some people did simple painting such as multi-colored dots or a single flower proving that sometimes less is more. I also saw some glasses entirely painted upon which also looked nice.

We had a DJ playing wonderful music for us to listen to as we painted. He also called out the winning numbers for the silent auction. I won a beautiful necklace, by the way! Towards the end of the evening, cake, cookies and coffee were provided. It was fun to share a night with friends doing something creative.

I have to say, everyone seemed to enjoy the event. I even heard some people ask when the Society would host another Paint Night!

NYSUT JOURNALISM AWARDS FOR 2015

by Carmela Criscione

I am very proud to announce that our **ROBS** newsletter was honored in the **2015 NYSUT Journalism Competition** with five awards.

First Place awards for best writing were won by: **Marie Poppo's** "Walking With Han Yu", **John Sherin's** "A Bridge To Tomorrow". **Valerie Vismale's** "War Poems" about World War I.

Gloria Hannemann again was honored for having the best website. Gloria has won ever since she put together our website (**www.robsny.org.**). If you haven't visited please do so and see why it's so special.

The newsletter also was cited for **General Excellence**.

Felicia Bruce a **ROBS** member living in Florida won an award for an article in the **TRIF RC43** newsletter. Congratulations to Felicia.

You can go on the **NYSUT** website and read the judges' comments on these and other articles.

The awards were presented at the **RC21** annual luncheon held on June 21st.

Attending the luncheon were **Adrienne Eastman, Phyllis Goodwin, Gloria Hannemann, John Sherin, Barbara Mascaro** and other members of ROBS.

It is the **Editorial Board** that makes the newsletter what it is. Everyone pitches in whether it is proof-reading or writing articles.

It's always great to be acknowledged for the work that you do, and we always remember that the newsletter is all about our members making the effort very worthwhile.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

by Phyllis Goodwin

For several years **ROBS** has been losing members through attrition or the lack luster response to our calls for your involvement. Our organization was at the forefront in establishing retiree chapters and helped pave the way for many of the benefits that we receive. Time and effort was put forth to obtain a permanent **COLA**, benefits and a decent pension. I know that most of you believe that once you retire your commitment to Brentwood and the union is over. That couldn't be further from the truth. The **COLA** did not become permanent until I had been retired for five years, and we are still trying to make it better.

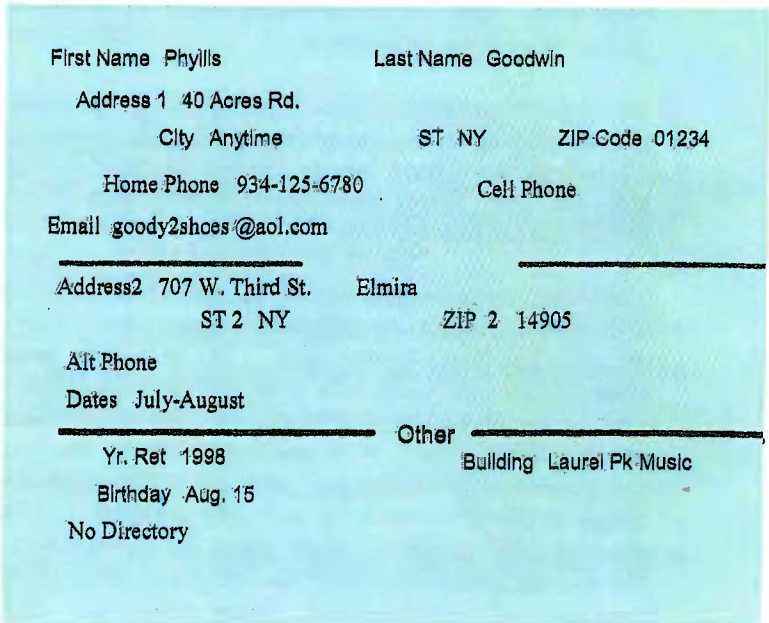
This brings me to my next point.

My membership list has a grand total of 549 people. Of this total, only 287 are paying members. This does not include those who were "grandfathered" in 2010. Each year this number is reduced by 4 or 5. My plan is to send a 4 x 6 index card with all your pertinent information on it. If there are corrections to be made, please make them on the card. But here's the catch: all you will be required to do is return your card in the pre-addressed envelope made out **Carmen Roldan, 49 Linda Lane, North Babylon, New York 11703**. Insert your check for $25 with **"dues"** on the memo line, put a stamp on the envelope and mail it. Your information will not be changed unless you request a change. These cards will be sent out every 2 to 3 years or as we gain new members. You will be reminded in our newsletter to send in your dues every year before the deadline date. Please show us that you are up to the task of keeping us informed.

The onus will be on **you** to keep this a viable organization. If everyone returns a check, there will be less chance of a dues increase. We are an effectively run organization, and we have the lowest chapter dues in **RC21.** We get more bang for our buck thanks to you, and your generosity but we need more people to step up. This fall we are celebrating our 25th anniversary. Your participation would be a great way to honor those people who started **ROBS**.

All that is required is due diligence on your part.

SAMPLE COPY OF INDEX CARD


First Name Phyllis Last Name Goodwin
Address 1 40 Acres Rd.
City Anytime ST NY ZIP Code 01234
Home Phone 934-125-6780 Cell Phone
Email goody2shoes@aol.com
Address2 707 W. Third St. Elmira
ST 2 NY ZIP 2 14905
Alt Phone
Dates July-August
Other
Yr. Ret 1998 Building Laurel Pk Music
Birthday Aug. 15
No Directory