



ROBS-RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Since 1991

Still Serving

Issue 2 & 3/2015

April-August 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.

September 11 - welcome new retirees

October 2 - program to be announced

November 6 - program to be announced

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 collected for the Books to Home Program.

OFFICERS

Nick Siciliano - President
kpnici1@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



*Evelyn Sekac, lucky cake winner, and chef Maria Canale
photo by Ronda Brooks*

IS THERE LIFE IN RETIREMENT?

by Maria Canale

There sure is, should you want it. It is the perfect opportunity to pursue any passions you have. How can bringing a specially prepared delight to someone who is anxiously waiting that delivery be outdone?

Chicken soup for the soul is commonly acclaimed as Jewish penicillin. It's akin to practicing medicine without a license. Of course there is the adage, "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. However, that is a whole other essay. Then there is always the luxury of waking up whenever you so desire, not having to choose a complete outfit the night before, or having to prepare lunch for the next day. You are free to shop for the next catering job any time you want. Planning a menu with someone is a pleasant thing. Most of the time the gathering is for a happy occasion. Occasionally, we have catered a luncheon for the guests who have attended a funeral. Having a carefully prepared feast when you arrive home certainly lightens the mood.

From birth we are satisfied by food. When a baby cries, it's usually because he is hungry. Then there is the job of presenting ROBS with a "No Cooking" dessert for the April meeting. I hope you were able to attend. I am sure you were not sorry. Everyone got a sample and some goodies to take home.

I did not forget to mention the "cons" of catering because **THERE ARE NONE!** If you want, a recipe book (\$1 to cover copying) it is available.

I leave you with the famous words of Julia Child -- bon appetit!

On April 8 Maria was guest speaker at our ROBS meeting. Having enjoyed Maria's cooking for years, I was a definite fan. I can attest to the fact that everyone enjoyed the desserts we were able to take home. Evelyn Sekac won the mocha layer cake...she said it was meant to be because her name is "cakes" spelled backwards. Comments by Phyllis Goodwin.



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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

For a number of years we have been told that students are not learning. During the past decade a new way to educate students to prepare them for college and life has been developed. This is the **Common Core** program.

Now, in addition to Common Core, we are being told that we must improve teaching. According to the politicians, the teachers are at fault for students not learning.

Governor Cuomo has proposed among other things that:

Tenure not be granted after three years but perhaps after four or five years. This was tried about twenty years ago and failed. There have also been discussions about making tenure renewable.

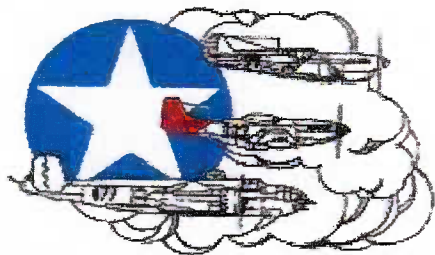
Student test scores count 50% towards teacher evaluations, and teachers should be rated from highly effective to ineffective. On and on it goes. Teachers must be held more accountable for student learning. No other factors play a role in the success or failure of students.

Over the past several months NYSUT has been waging a battle against the Governor's proposals. Some of you might have attended rallies held by NYSUT or contacted your state legislators regarding the Governor's proposals.

We must be willing to take action to support NYSUT and your local BTA in expressing our outrage at what the Governor is attempting to do.

By the time you are reading this article the legislature may have acted on the Governor's proposals. This article is, however, still relevant because this is just the start of the Governor's plans to overhaul and manipulate the students, teachers and residents of New York State.

Continue to keep yourself briefed on the latest changes and make your voice known to your assemblymen and senators. It's that important.



THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

by Paula Moore

In celebration of Black History Month, I had the honor of meeting Dabney N. Montgomery, 91 years old, and one of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen. He shared his extraordinary story with the Air Force JROTC and other students on February 24, 2015 at the Brentwood Sonderling High School. When he walked on stage leaning on his cane, the students gave him a rousing standing ovation.

Just observing this gentleman and listening to his story made for an emotional day for me, students and staff. The Principal, Mr. Loeschner, mentioned that in his 30 years in education he had never heard such a beautiful speech. Some of us had tears in our eyes because of all the injustice and hardships he and the other airmen experienced. Through it all, he harbored no hatred toward his tormentors.

As proof of the prejudice he and other African-American pilots were subject to, he read aloud a copy of a 1918 document that said in essence that African-American men did not have the intelligence to fly planes.

When he was stationed in southern Italy near Mt. Vesuvius, the volcano erupted, and the smoke and ash rained down on them. Thinking of that 1918 report that degraded black men as not being able to fight, in the midst of all this, the airmen stood up and said, "**we will fight, we will fight!**" A few days after that, one of the airmen sunk a German destroyer in the Mediterranean. It had never been done before. One of the airmen, Mr. Charles McGee, flew behind enemy lines 409 times, a record that has not been broken.

Mr. Montgomery spoke of the injustices he faced after returning home from World War II. He told the students to fight for justice through peaceful means. He mentioned that a love for all people was an inspiration.

He spoke of the time when he met the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. when MLK was studying for his Ph.D. at Boston University, and he was studying ballet. He became friends with MLK and Coretta Scott King. Mr. Montgomery attended MLK's wedding, and he said that if he knew MLK was going to be famous, he would have saved the invitation. Mr. Montgomery eventually became MLK's bodyguard.

He was with him during the historic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, over the Edmund Pettus Bridge. There was a threat that the Ku Klux Klan and other anti-civil rights people had planted a bomb where the marchers were to sleep. He and two others had to search every foot of that field for bombs. He mentioned that he was most proud of his involvement in the civil rights movement (the walk) and his time as a Tuskegee Airman ground crew in Italy during WWII. He knew those events were going to make a profound change in the civil rights condition in the United States. The military was integrated by President Harry Truman after WWII. In the 1960s President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act.

Mr. Montgomery was born in Selma, Alabama and was drafted into the Army Air Corps during World War II. He was a ground crewman with the Tuskegee Airmen in southern Italy from 1942-1945. He was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, the WWII Victory Medal, the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal with two Bronze Stars, a Service Award, the Honorable Service Medal and a Basic Driver and Mechanic Medal. He was also awarded the United States Congressional Gold Medal.

His inspiring message to the students was to "stand up for truth, stand up for what is right and never, never give in. It's hard, but that's life. In every generation someone is going to threaten your freedom. Don't give in."

Mr. Montgomery told the students that when you find yourself in difficult situations or someone says you can't achieve a certain goal, say to yourself, "we will fight, we will fight; not with guns and knives, but with our brains, and we **will** overcome."



Dabney N. Montgomery and Paula Moore

Ed note: please check out Mr. Montgomery's speech at the Sonderling Building on YouTube Brentwood UFSD.



PRONTO

of Long Island Inc. People helping People



December 23, 2014

I'm writing to express my deep appreciation for your recent donation. It is so kind of you to remember the needs of others and give from the heart. Our clients will be happy to receive the benefits of your donation.

Pronto is a non-profit agency that has been providing services to community residents for over forty-five years. Through the services of our Food Pantry, Thrift Center, Health and Educational Services and other programs, we provided assistance to thousands of Long Islanders who are in need. We continue to see a great many individuals who are unemployed, uninsured and otherwise under-served who come to us for help. Your contribution helps us to carry out our mission to feed, clothe and serve the needy.

If you would like additional information, contact us at (631) 231-8290. You are always welcome to visit our establishment, view our website: www.prntolongisland.org or email me at info@prntolongisland.org.

Sincerely,

Belinda Alvarez-Groneman
President

Ed note: this letter was sent to Nick Siciliano, President of ROBS, acknowledging our contributions collected at every ROBS meeting. Your contributions are needed and welcome. Please also consider donations of clothing or furniture as well.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please mark your calendars for the 2015-2016 ROBS meeting dates.

September 11 - welcome new retirees

October 2 - program to be announced

November 6 - program to be announced

December 4 - Luncheon - venue to be announced.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

Pronto, the community action group we support, is in need of dry and canned goods, paper products and toiletries.

AND

New and/or **gently** used children's books will also be collected for the **Books to Home Program**.

THANK YOU!



A BRIDGE TO TOMORROW

General Meeting September 5, 2014

by John Sherin

It was our wish at the September **ROBS** meeting to welcome the new retirees and provide a quality experience similar to the one we extended last year with "key" activity. On that occasion everyone was comfortable, engaged, and upon leaving were ready for more similar activities. This year we looked to find and recruit talented new Executive Board leaders to take on our educational, philanthropic and informative mission.

One thing on which we were all agreed was the degree of gratitude we felt for another retirement school year. Some came to us for the first time and others with less than five years immersion into their redirection life style. Some members had come for ten or more September meetings. The familiar faces indicated by their presence that they intended to stay active and informed.

We called our suggested task a "bucket list". We gave every one a supply of post-it notes and asked that they be attached to a "Yellow Brick Road" comprising a metaphoric life road stretching across the gap on a bridge joining past and future. Everyone then shared orally within a small group what they had written.

After the meeting all the post-its (124 in all) were collected by Phyllis Goodwin who created the "Yellow Brick Road" bridging our past to our future.

The results are as follows:

23 chose time to reconnect with family and friends. Looking forward to becoming grandparents, visiting more often, attending graduations and weddings and living to be a healthy 103 years old.

18 wanted to be better organized. Clean out closets, get a new kitchen, bathroom, patio or den. Give away those things cluttering their closets, garages and basements. Do the filing or shred outdated paperwork.

16 chose health. They were going to exercise more, eat healthier, stay active physically and mentally. They wanted to learn to relax more without guilt, read that book that they've had for months, play golf or go fishing.

15 were concerned with financial matters and estate planning. They wanted to make sure that all the important papers were in one place.

15 set new goals like learning how to use a computer, write a book. Some wanted to take lessons and pilot a plane. A new car, maybe even a convertible, was one wish. They wanted to attend Broadway shows and take art and photography classes.

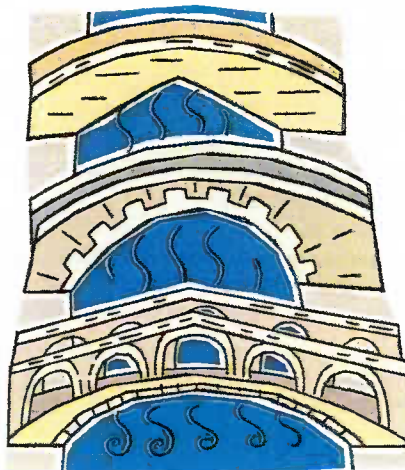
14 wanted to travel. They wanted to travel to Italy, London, France. Hawaii, the Grand Canyon, or take a Danube cruise. One wanted to take the family to Cuba and Panama. They wanted to establish a warm weather home in Florida. Some wanted to take grandchildren on a special trip.

11 chose final plans such as planning a funeral, make a will, update a will, finish a will. Update all papers so kids have everything they need when the time comes. Some were even going to the funeral director to make their own plans in advance.

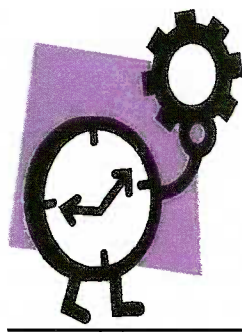
9 wanted to explore their family history by working on their genealogy. Creating a family tree. Write "My Story" for grandchildren to have. Organize family photo albums (making sure names are noted).

3 wanted to volunteer their time and do good works.

In the end we learned that we all pretty much wanted the same things. Now all we have to do is pick ourselves up and actually do those things.



*Ed note: John's full article is on the **ROBS** website, www.robsony.org.*



TIMES REMEMBERED

A CAREER IN BRENTWOOD

By Estelle Hoyt

A recent mention of Dr. Eugene Hoyt, former Superintendent of the Brentwood Schools, reminded me of an incident in 1969 when I started working in Brentwood. At that time, he was no longer the superintendent, and I did not know him. As the first Spanish-speaking Social Worker in the district, I covered five elementary schools and was on call throughout the district.

I was elated by the warm reception I received from the various principals and attributed it to my position. After several months, I was finally asked by one of them how I was related to Dr. Hoyt. I indicated I did not know him. This news must have spread throughout the district as I noted a change of attitude on the part of the administrators.

Since my retirement in 1996, I continued working as a home teacher of Spanish for students who mainly were suspended from school for behavioral problems.

I have also been involved with the Nassau County Mental Health Association, "The Players" doing improvisational acting dealing with problems of every day living, and have been on the board of the Council for Prejudice Reduction, confronting these problems in schools as well as the community.

More importantly, I am a recycled grandmother of four - two aged 24 and 27 and two aged 4 and 7. Unfortunately, no one lives in New York State so this requires traveling to several parts of the country.

My three sons are still employed. The oldest, Andy, as a professor of genetic engineering at John Hopkins U., the middle one, Lon, as Musical Director for a new musical by Gloria Estefan, that they hope to get to Broadway soon, and the youngest, Jeff, who is editor of a website dealing with financial matters.

Ed note: Send in your work and life bio, we would be interested in knowing what your story is.

WE BEG YOUR PARDON

EXPLAINING THE DELAY IN NEWSLETTERS

by Carmela Criscione

We wish to explain, and apologize, for missing a newsletter issue date, Issue 2, April-May 2015.

AHRC prints, collates and prepares for mailing our newsletter. They had done so flawlessly for many years. Every so often there are bumps in the road. In April we encountered some of them.

A valued member of Chris Shock's team died. One of the vital machines broke down, and no jobs could be completed. The part necessary to fix the machine was not easy to obtain. We were told that it would not be until mid-June before things could function normally. Machines break down and need to be fixed. Getting back to normal after a co-worker and friend dies is difficult at best. Our condolences to everyone at AHRC.

The Editorial and Executive Boards decided to delay the newsletter until we could insure AHRC could accommodate us.

This newsletter comprises issue 2 (April, May, June) and 3 (July and August). The next newsletter will be in September.

We are sorry for the delay, but it was unforeseen and unexpected.

We hope you enjoy this jumbo issue because it has many informative, enlightening and enjoyable features and we think well worth the wait.





SEARCHING FOR YOUR ROOTS

ONE FAMILY'S STORY

by Barbara Mascaro

With the birth of our first grandchild in 2011, my husband, Charlie, and I felt the need to fill in our family tree with information about both of our families. We had names, dates, and photographs, but we wanted more. It all started with a 2012 trip to Italy with our Brentwood colleagues and friends. Who better to travel with!

It was to be a Spring break trip to three cities, Palermo, Naples and Rome, with tours to many places near these three areas. These cities would be our home bases.

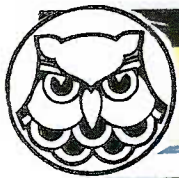
Our first few days in Palermo, Sicily, would take us to the town of Alcamo, ancestral home to Charlie's maternal grandfather. He knew that his grandfather was born in Alcamo on August 22, 1879, and Charlie was on a quest to find his birth certificate. We arrived in Alcamo on Good Friday, one of the holiest days in the Christian calendar. My husband was taken to Town Hall by our driver Silvano, who spoke English and would serve as an interpreter if needed. They were then directed to the Public Library in town since they were informed that all the records were moved to that location shortly after World War II. The library should have closed early that day since it was a holiday, but the gentleman who was helping them locate the records continued to search until the birth certificate was found. My husband said that he felt that this kind gentleman knew how important finding this document was to him and continued to search well past closing time. Finally the record was found, and it was not only just his birth certificate, it was also a record of his life. It contained the date that he was married and the name of his bride. Charlie had tears in his eyes as he was presented with the copy of this most precious document!

If you are interested in exploring your roots, there are several places that you can check on the internet. The most famous website is **Ancestry.com**. It is a great first step to your exploration. You can start with a free 14-day trial, and as it states on the website, "How would you like your story to begin?"

The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., whose website is www.libertyellisfoundation.org, is another great place to search for information from ship manifests. You can explore their vast website of 51 million passenger records. They have the manifests from ships that arrived at Ellis Island, Port of New York, from 1892 through 1924.

There is a PBS series hosted by Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., where you are able to "explore your ancestral path and share your genealogical journey using DNA." The website for this series is www.pbs.org/wnet/finding-your-roots/.

Our personal journey is not over yet, as we would love to return to Italy to explore where my grandparents are from, a town along the Amalfi coast near Naples called Salerno. So, the adventure continues, and when you explore your roots, you know where you came from, and it just might give you an idea as to where you are going!



***CELEBRATION OF THE HISTORY PROJECT,
THE BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY
AND US, ITS STUDENTS, RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES***

A VERY SPECIAL ROBS MEETING

by Carmela Criscione

On Friday, May 8, 2015, a very special **ROBS** meeting was held in the auditorium of the Brentwood Library.

Everyone who participated in the **ROBS** Oral History Project was invited to attend. There was a symbolic handing to Prof. Geri Solomon, Assistant Dean of Special Collections, LI Studies Institute at Hofstra University, and a representative of Tom Tarantowicz, Director of the Brentwood Public Library, of 153 DVDS of interviews conducted over a 20-year period.

The purpose of the **ROBS** History Project was to document early union activity but slowly evolved into 153 interviews of teachers, secretaries, administrators, board of education members and superintendents of the Brentwood Schools.

This project, the brain child of Dot Zuckerman, to document early union activities found wings under John Sherin who personally conducted all the interviews, put them first on video cassettes and then DVDs. It is a unique view of life and times in suburbia after World War II, education in the mid-20th century and a showcase for the talented, dedicated people who devoted their careers to the Brentwood Public Schools and community. It was, and continues to be, a Class Act.

Sadly, many of the interviewees have passed on, but we have them on tape telling their stories. It was particularly touching when sons, daughters and grandchildren of those deceased members came to honor their loved ones.

The Library and District provided technical and support assistance. This group picture is an example. The names of everyone represented can be found on the **ROBS** website, www.robsny.org. By looking at the photo you can identify many yourself.

There was an open mike, and many people took advantage to say what the project and the feeling of family at the meeting meant to them.

There was a slide presentation with 153 faces displayed. It is not an overstatement to say that many a tear formed as faces came before us. In many ways the meeting was bittersweet, but thanks to John's faith and hard work with the project, it was an overwhelming success.





IT'S ALL ABOUT US by Carmela Criscione

Well, it took a long time but March finally is behind us. It was more of a lion than a lamb ALL month long. The buds are starting to break ground and hopefully spring is finally and truly on its way.

We are sorry to report that **Judy Poggie** (Secretary) passed away in December. We also lost **Mary Jo Gallo** (Art Teacher) and **George Catandella** (Music Coordinator) in February. **Ron Albaum** (Phys Ed) died in March after a long illness. **Joel Ratner** left us too early also. He was the current Music Coordinator. I did not know him well. He came to Brentwood shortly before I retired but he was a very pleasant person and will be sorely missed. **Laura Alicastro** and husband, **Vincent DeRosa**, lost his father, Thomas, in March. **Stella Finan** (English) and **Peggy Bloom** (Spec Ed) passed away in May. Condolences to everyone who lost someone dear to them.

Congratulations to **Nick and Claire Geraci** on their son, Nick's marriage to Kathy. The wedding was in Rhode Island (where it snowed...just a little) and was held in an historic library. Both the bride and groom are culinary experts and the reception, held in a friend's restaurant, was beyond five stars. Much happiness to the new couple.

Get well wishes also to **Marilyn DePlaza** recovering after a fall and to **Shirley Stamm** from a full knee replacement, and **Sheila Sustrin** during her course of treatment.. Nothing keeps a **ROBS** retiree down. Keep kickin' ladies.

Many who were interviewed for the History Project please made every effort to attend the **MAY 8 ROBS MEETING**. There was a special program, and it was really good to see the turnout of interviewees. Check out the **ROBS** website, www.robsny.org for pictures taken at the meeting.

The Brentwood High School Varsity Basketball team won League I Suffolk Class A and LI Class AA Championships for the second year in a row. Congratulations to our athletes and the coaches who work with them.

Joe Bond, Superintendent of Schools, is retiring June, 2015. The Board of Education has named **Levi McIntyre** as the new Superintendent effective July 1. Mr. McIntyre is a long-time resident of the Brentwood School District and is presently a principal in the Longwood School District. **ROBS** extends its best wishes to him in his new role.

A very happy occasion for the **Adrienne Eastman** family took place on May 21. Her grandson Geoff's fiancé, Stephanie Baker, graduated from Stony Brook University with her Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science - summa cum laude. In June she will receive her Master of Science degree from Stony Brook - with distinction. She completed her BS and MA courses in Occupational Therapy together in 3 years. Congratulations to all.

Congratulations to **Grace Fishenfeld** (Art) who recently called **John Sherin** with her exciting news. The Kellenberg Gallery, Malloy College, is presently exhibiting her painting titled "Copland's Lincoln Portrait" in their Women in the Visual Arts Show. Grace's work was purchased by a member of the Aaron Copland Society where it will be on permanent display in the Copland House Museum in Peekskill, New York. Grace has had other works prominently displayed in the past. Well earned congratulations.

Marge Kirchner was able to attend our luncheon meeting on June 5th. She was a little battle weary but was not going to let aches and pains get in the way of life. She recently had shoulder surgery. She and Pat had lots of necessary repairs to their home because of the horrible weather but it is under control. Because of health issues she felt she could not devote the time necessary to be our treasurer. She stepped down, and **Carmen Roldan** has stepped in and is doing an admirable job. The Executive Board and members of **ROBS** presented Marge with a watch as a token of appreciation for the many years she toiled as treasurer. We are grateful and lucky that she has agreed to stay on the Executive Board and is a welcome contributor to that group.

Congratulations to **Ronda Brooks** and her family. Her son, Sam Smith, was recently sworn into the New York State Bar Association!



WE PROUDLY ANNOUNCE

(drum roll please)

The Awards of the 2014 NYSUT Journalism Competition

by Carmela Criscione

As the editor of this newsletter, and on behalf of the members of the Editorial Board, I am very proud to announce our standings in the 2014 NYSUT Journalism Competition.

We received six awards. The most we have ever earned. The awards were presented at the RC 21 luncheon in June.

The awards are as follows:

Award of Distinction - General Excellence for the July-August 2014 Newsletter

Award of Distinction for "Dot Z: The Consummate Union Person" by John Sherin (issue 3).

First Place - Best Overall Graphic for the Holiday Luncheon Flyer by Phyllis Goodwin (Issue 4)

Award of Distinction - Photo or Illustration for "A Part of Brentwood History Finds a Home" by Adrienne Eastman (Issue 2).

First Place - Best Creative Writing for "A Celebration of a Non-Party" by Claire Geraci (issue 2)

First Place for the Most Friendly Website goes to Gloria Hannemann. Gloria has won this award every year since the website was launched.

Congratulations to everyone involved.

The newsletter could/would not be what it is without you, the ROBS membership, contributors of articles, and especially, the Editorial Board: Ronda Brooks, Adrienne Eastman, Lucille Fink, Phyllis Goodwin, Paula Moore, John Sherin, Nick Siciliano and Gloria Hannemann for their patience and thoroughness in putting it all together. Thank you.

The newsletter is all about us. If you have an item or article or idea for an article please let us know. We always look forward to contributors.

BOOKS TO HOME PROJECT
IN HONOR OF
MIRIAM MASSUCCI

by Barbara Mascaro

We lost Miriam this past February. We can all remember her collecting books for children under the FAN (Family and Nutrition) Network.

As retirees of the Brentwood School District we would like to support our in-service colleagues by taking part in a very worthwhile project going on in the District. It is called **Books to Home**, a program that promotes and supports literacy.

It is being facilitated by Ms. Paula Ribiero, Staff Developer of Language Arts and Social Studies K-12.

At each of our **ROBS** meetings we will be collecting new and/or gently used children's books. They will be collected all through the year, and then each June (date and time to be announced), they will be distributed to anyone who wishes to obtain a free book(s) for their child.

To start this endeavor, the **ROBS** Executive Board has approved the donation of \$100 worth of new books to the **2015 Book to Home Program**.

We are dedicating our participation in this program to Miriam Massucci for all her dedicated work in also providing books to children.

Please bring your books to every **ROBS** meeting. There will be a box for your contributions.

Thank you for your participation.





PRESENTING OUR
2015 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

by Kathy Guleksen



pictured from left to right: Keyanae Miller, Katherine Escobar, Kathy Guleksen and Catalina Benavides

This year's Scholarship Night at the Brentwood High School was held on May 20, 2015. We are proud to announce that ROBS was able to award college scholarships to three graduating Brentwood High School seniors who plan to pursue a degree in education.

As **ROBS** Vice President I was there to present the awards and congratulate the winners.

A new \$1,000 scholarship, given in honor of **ROBS** co-founder, Dorothy Zuckerman, who passed away this year, was awarded for the first time. The happy recipient was Catalina Benavides. The \$1,000 Jack Zuckerman award was presented to Katherine Escobar. The \$750 Lilian Kelly award was presented to Keyanae Miller.

Thanks to all of our members who gave so generously this year to make this an exciting night and help our college-bound seniors.



A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

A BRENTWOOD TREASURE

by Herb Laub

Hal Paster was, and continues to be a man for all seasons.

His teaching career spans over 60 years teaching History at the Brentwood High School, and now as a retiree, home teaching.

I have known and admired Hal since I began my own teaching career in Brentwood in September of 1963, also in the History Department.

Besides being colleagues at work, Hal and his wife, Judy, who herself was a political activist and the New York Mets number one fan, graciously invited me and my wife, Carole Taylor Laub, to celebrate Passover with them. Their son, Seth, looked up at me and said, "you are very tall." I'm 6'5.

Hal was a Brentwood High School statesman in the department and is still going strong doing home teaching at the Brentwood Public Library.

I would like to thank **ROBS** for giving me the opportunity to say a few words about my friend. He is a Brentwood icon, having started his career in Brentwood in the 1950's and is still part of inspiring Brentwood students, at the age of 89. He is forever young.

He was, and is, an inspiration to the colleagues he worked with and to the tens of thousands of students who had the privilege to be in his classes.

In these trying times for teachers he optimizes what a teacher should always be: a well to which young minds can go to receive enlightenment.

**SAGTIKOS MANOR:****A HISTORICAL
TREASURE**

by Adrienne Eastman

On April 21st a group of twenty hardy Brentwood Historical Society members, which included Carmela Criscione, Adrienne Eastman, Phyllis Goodwin, Kathy Guleksen and Ellen Edelstein, braved a foggy, damp and chilly day to go see the Sagtikos Manor in Bay Shore. We have all passed it before many times but no one had visited it. And were we glad we did!

We were met at the front door by a docent dressed in a colonial-times costume who gave us an oral history of the house and its occupants before we were given a guided tour of the first and second floors. The third floor was off-limit because it is still being restored.

Did you know that "Sagtikos" is an Indian word meaning "snake that hisses"? Sagtikos Manor is the oldest house in the Town of Islip and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The original section of the manor was built in 1697 after the land was purchased from the Secatogue Indians in 1692 by Stephanus Van Cortland. Van Cortland Park in the Bronx is named after him.

In 1758 the house was purchased by Jonathan Thompson of Setauket. The property was then deeded to his son Isaac and wife, Mary Gardiner, who expanded the house to fourteen rooms to accommodate their lifestyle.

After having won the Battle of Long Island during the Revolutionary War, British soldiers and high-ranking officers were billeted there. After the colonies achieved their independence, the new president, George Washington, made a tour of Long Island. On April 21, 1790 (we were there on the 225th anniversary) he spent the night at Sagtikos Manor and recorded it in his personal journal.

The final additions were added to the house by Frederick Thompson, Isaac Thompson's great-grandson in 1902. There are now 42 rooms. The

but is now down to 10 acres.

The last owner to live in the manor house was Robert David Lion Gardiner of Gardiner's Island fame. He owned the property from 1935 to 1985 when he deeded it to the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation. In 2002, Suffolk County purchased the remaining ten acres from the Foundation.

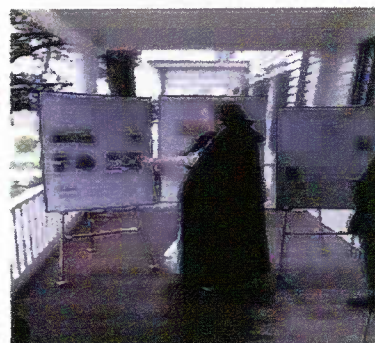
The interior of the house was very interesting in that one could see the difference in construction between the original section with its low ceilings (they must have been a challenge to George Washington as he was over 6 feet tall) and the newer sections with higher ceilings and larger rooms. Sarah Gardiner's fondness for peacocks was reflected in the wall paper in a couple of rooms and a peacock fountain in the Walled Garden.

Many items were left in the house including clothing, dishes, papers and furniture. Mr. Gardiner's personal effects are still around the house. His US Navy coat and boots are among the displays.

Due to the poor weather we were not able to tour the grounds of the manor, but it was also a working farm at one time which included a dairy, stables and one of Long Island's first race tracks. On a nice day you can view the carriage house, buttery (which was used to store perishables during colonial times), the Walled Garden and the family cemetery.

Many thanks to Ellen Edelstein, a member of the ROBS Executive Board and President of the Brentwood Historical Society, for arranging this fascinating tour for us. It was well worth the trip.

Next time you are on that stretch of Montauk Highway in Bay Shore, pull into the Manor's driveway and take a tour. You will enjoy it.



Docent dressed in colonial era clothing
photo by Ellen Edelstein, Brentwood Historical Society,