



# ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Since 1991 - Still Serving

Issue 3/2013-21014

April, May, June 2014

## 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.

**May 2 - Video Presentation  
Election of Officers**

**June 6 - Luncheon at the View  
See flyer**

**July, August - no meeting**

## 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  
Marge Kirchner - Treasurer  
Dot Zuckerman & Phyllis Goodwin  
Presidents Emeritas

## AFFILIATIONS

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

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

## **YOU DID IT! YOU DID IT! YOU DID IT!**

Because of your advocacy for a second-year-in-a-row **IRMAA** language is now **out of the final New York State budget!**

This mean **NO diminishment** of collectively bargained Retiree Medicare Benefits.

When **NYSUT** retirees act together, **NYSUT** retirees win!

We must keep an eye on this Governor.

Same time next year.

### **Background:**

**The Empire Plan (NYSHIP)** requires **NYSUT** Retirees to enroll in Medicare Park B.

Under **IRMAA**, the federal government conducts an annual review of each Medicare recipient's earned income. When a beneficiary's total annual income rises above a certain level, Medicare then increases that person's monthly out-of-pocket-fee for their Medicare Park B premium.

Under the current law, the **EMPIRE (NYSHIP)** plan reimburses school districts as well as some individuals directly as to off-set any increased **IRMAA** fees placed on their Part B premium, which the state has reimbursed for the last seven years.

### **Governor up to old tricks:**

Governor Cuomo's 2014-2015 budget proposal contained a provision that alters Section 167-a of the Civil Service Law which, if enacted, would discontinue the State's reimbursement of the **Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA)** payment.

This would mean participating **Empire Plan/New York State Health Insurance Plan (NYSHIP)** members would have additional out-of-pocket health care costs placed upon them.

*This article is from the desk of NYSUT Vice President Kathleen Donahue*



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

Visit us today!



### **NICK'S NOTES** by Nick Siciliano

#### **WE ALL MUST STAY INVOLVED**

As it has been said many times before, "An organization is only as good as its membership". For any organization to be successful it requires involvement and commitment from its members.

For ROBS to continue for present and future retirees your involvement is vital!

At the May meeting we will be having an election to elect the officers to run this organization. While your present officers have agreed to run again, at some point one or more will no longer wish to serve.

I urge you to consider running for an office in this organization in the future. You can also volunteer to serve on the Executive Board. Many on the Executive Board serve on multiple committees, and additional help would be much appreciated.

Also, what this organization does requires is your involvement. Tell your officers what you like and do not like about our organization. Make suggestions to improve the organization. Regularly attend general meetings and urge friends to do so too.

Your officers are here to serve you, but they look to you for input to make it an ever better organization!







## **HAPPINESS IS BEING A RETIRED TIER ONE TEACHER!**

by Lucille Fink

As a first-year teacher back in 1968, I was so naive and so happy to have a job that I didn't even give a thought to things like salary increases, working conditions and retirement benefits. I did know the importance of unions because my father was very active in the postal workers union so I dutifully became involved in the BTA very early in my teaching career. I remember almost going on strike in the early seventies, working with a tax pack board and then working with an administration, Board and union that all wanted what was best for the children. No matter what the situation, the BTA under the leadership of Jack Zuckerman, Les Black and Joe Hogan, stood up and fought for our rights and fought to do what was best for the students of Brentwood.

I didn't fully appreciate what NYSUT and the BTA has done to protect the rights of teachers until I moved to North Carolina. I met several retired school teachers on shopping expeditions. They were working as cashiers in the stores. Then I began reading about the Moral Monday protests taking place in Raleigh. One of the issues under protest was the current situation in education.

North Carolina has teachers' associations but they do not have the power to negotiate for improvement in the schools or for teachers' rights. In most cases, teachers are hired by the county instead of by a single school district as in New York State. Teachers' salaries and many other issues affecting educators are determined by the state and to a lesser extent by the counties or districts.

North Carolina ranks 46th in teachers' pay. The starting salary is \$30,800 and the top salary is, at 36+ years, \$59,560. If you have not yet started your Master's Degree, you will not receive an increase in salary if you obtain it. The prevailing feeling is that advanced degrees do not necessarily make a better teacher. There are steps on the salary schedule and teachers continue to move up the steps, but salaries have been frozen for several years and teachers' salaries have remained the same.

You can retire and receive unreduced benefits at any age with 30 years of service. If you retire at age 60 with more than 30 years of service, you can expect to receive about \$33,000 (average final compensation, the average of the four highest paid years in a row,  $\times .0182 \times$  creditable service). No wonder why I was meeting so many retired North Carolina teachers at work in the shops!



Other issues under attack are class size limits and teacher tenure. The State feels that decisions on how to use State funding for teacher positions should be decided by each district. A tenure law was just passed that will result in the abolition of tenure in the next five years. Instead, the top 25% of teachers will be offered a four-year contract and pay raises in exchange of giving up tenure rights. Other teachers will be offered one two year contract. Can you just see how this will end cooperation among teachers for the common good and pit teacher against teacher in a fight to be in that top tier?

The amount of testing that students have to undergo in order to meet the Common Core Curriculum goals is also a hot topic here. At the end of the third grade, students take the EOG (End of Grade Test). Student retention at the third grade level involves failure to show success in reading. If students fail the EOG, retesting, summer reading camps, and re-evaluation based on tests or student portfolios are all possible alternatives. Third grade teachers and many parents are very concerned about the emotional well-being of the third grade students and the lack of teaching time resulting from the excessive amount of testing at the grade level. The procedure for preparing third grade students for the EOG, and the consequences for students who are not proficient is currently undergoing a process of change due to problems with the program.

As I sit back each morning, especially on the last day of each month, and read about the current educational problems in North Carolina, I realize how much NYSUT and the BTA have done over the years to protect the teaching profession.

**I am so very grateful that I am a retired Brentwood teacher!**

*This is an important article about what our colleagues in other states face in their careers. If you live out of New York State and want to write about education, teachers and unions in your new state, please contact Carmela (tecnouquen@aol.com) with your article.*





## IT'S ALL ABOUT US by Carmela Criscione

Enough with the snow! I think we are very ready for Spring.

For anyone who did, wants to do, or would like to learn needlepoint do I have a shop for you! It's called Ladybug Stitches and is located at 840 Lincoln Avenue, Bohemia (244-0001). Who knew? Lots of pre-printed canvasses, rainbow displays of thread and very helpful ladies to guide you through creating an unique work of art. I've bumped into **Dot Zuckerman** and her daughter, Geri, two times already.

**ROBS** is proud to announce that **Ellen Edelstein** has been awarded the NYSUT Community Award for 2013-2014. In January Ellen was honored at the annual Martin Luther King Luncheon. As you already know, Ellen is the president of the Brentwood Historical Society and **real** progress is being made on the restoration of the original school house. Congratulations, Ellen, all the praise is well-deserved.

Congratulations to **Letty and Sheila Sustrin** have been listed in the Brooklyn College magazine as authors for their delightful **The Teacher Who Would Not Retire** series.

**Steve Rochester** recently got an e-mail from **Cecil Harrishburg** (Special Education Teacher) from Jerusalem. He has been living in Israel for the last seven years. One night surfing the net he came across the **ROBS** site and contacted Steve.

The whole Editorial Board would like to thank **Miriam Massucci** for her contributions to the Newsletter. She's leaving the Editorial Board because, like so many of us, she has more projects than she has time. We appreciated her help in putting the newsletter together and for articles she submitted. We hope she can give us articles on her present projects.

**Paula Moore**, Board of Education Trustee, announced that the Brentwood School District provides a school tax discount for veterans and their widows. Please contact the Town of Islip about this program.

A surprise visitor to the March general meeting was Steven Hoyt, son of **Eugene G. Hoyt**, District Principal in the 1950's-1960's. Steven has been all over the world working in educational programs. After teaching in Russia, Iraq, Europe, Afghanistan and other places, he is now a professor at Chapel Hill and is involved with a progressive school in Glen Cove. He is pursuing an on-line newspaper for students worldwide. He will be making a presentation at the Brentwood Historical Society in the near future.

Sadly we have to report that **Florence Koehler** died at age 101. A memorial service was held for her at Grant's Funeral Home on March 22. **Janice Oehler** and **Barbara McNicholas** both lost their mothers in March. We also mourn the deaths of **Elaine Cucciniello** (Elementary Teacher and mother of **Madeline Mazella**), **Carol Herzog** (Special Education Teacher and wife of **Ross Herzog**). Our sincere sympathy to all their families.

**Alex Werner** and **Karen Storjohann** celebrated the marriage of their son, Alex, this past fall. Congratulations to the two happy couples.

There was mention in Newsday that the Brentwood Public Library has installed the largest solar panel configuration of any public library in New York State. Congratulations on going green and once again, Brentwood leads the way.

**Loretta Ellington** writes to tell us that her son, Joe saved a man's life a couple of weeks ago. He was at a restaurant when a man choked on his steak, became unconscious and was turning blue. Joe got the man on the floor, fished out the piece of meat and performed CPR. The EMTs took him away. The man came back to the restaurant the following week to get Joe's name to thank him. Joe is a Congressman in West Virginia and a hero.

Recent Brentwood graduate Frank Juarez has a small but recurring part in the new NBC series **Believe** which airs on Monday nights at 10 p.m. Tune in and support another Brentwood success story.

This column is **all about you**. Please send in your news items!





### A DEDICATION TO A SPECIAL LADY

by Adrienne Eastman

On Saturday, February 1, 2014 in the Ross Gym, a long-over-due tribute was paid to Ivy Ramsey Rosenthal, a retired Brentwood Physical Education teacher and its first Women's Tennis Coach. Kevin O'Reilly, Coordinator of Athletics, did a great job as Master of Ceremonies.

Among the approximately 100 people present, there were four Board of Education members. The Board President, Ana Martinez, and Trustee Helen Moss spoke highly of Ivy's accomplishments. Also in attendance were retired coaches Mike Tully and Chuck Goehring, as well as the current Girls Varsity Tennis team with their coach.

Not many people are aware of Ivy's long and illustrious history outside of Brentwood. She was a Junior and Senior champion tennis player in Jamaica, and her name is in the Jamaica Tennis Hall of Fame, as well as being listed in Who's Who is Jamaica. She played professional tennis against such opponents as Althea Gibson and represented Jamaica at Forest Hills for three years. Ivy also played in the South American Tennis Championships and the Pan American Olympics. She also won the New York State championships three times.

Besides being a tennis champion, Ivy was also a champion in golf, track and steeplechase. In track she was a champion in the 220-yard dash, the 60-yard hurdles and the high jump.

Outside of the sports field, Ivy studied at the Royal Academy of Dancing and the National Academy of Dancing. She is a graduate of Tennessee State University and worked for the Bureau of Statistics as a specialist on the Monroe calculator and keypunch machines.

Before coming to Brentwood, Ivy taught Health, Science, Physical Education and Recreation at Southern University. She was a counselor at the Brooklyn Shelter for Girls and taught Health at City College.

Among the many activities Ivy was involved in in Brentwood, she taught Shelter Management and

Radiology for Civil Defense and ran the first three day Shelter Drill at North Junior High School. She was the girls Tennis coach for many successful years, and led the team to the League Championships in 1984. She also choreographed numerous dance numbers for various programs and concerts performed at North Elementary and donated her time running the North Elementary Girls Social Club for 17 years.

After the ceremony refreshments were served in the cafeteria. There were two cakes, one with a tennis racquet in frosting on it.

A plaque in Ivy's honor will be installed on the Ross tennis court fence in the spring.

Ivy is not only a beloved Brentwood champion, she is a world champion in every way.

### **CONGRATULATIONS, IVY!**



Ivy Rosenthal with the 2013-2014 Girls Tennis Team





### THEY NEVER FORGET

by Marty Hochheiser

Recently two former students surprised me with remembrances of how I touched their lives.

A letter came from Tina Marcisee on how I helped her with career choices while at North Junior High School. Tina was in the service when she retired serving as a federal mediator. Today she is a chaplain in her church and sets up programs for handicapped students. She did age me somewhat when she wrote that she has eight grandchildren!

A phone call was received from Carlysa Hurdle. She said she was thinking of me. Carlysa was an outstanding athlete in high school and played professional basketball in Europe.

*If you have a "They Never Forget" story you would like to share, please contact Carmela at [www.tecnoquuen@aol.com](mailto:www.tecnoquuen@aol.com).*

### FLORENCE KOEHLER

#### *The end of an era*

Florence P. Koehler passed away on February 26, 2014. She was 101 years old.

Mrs. Koehler was one of the four teachers employed by the Brentwood Schools in the 1930's. She taught in the school house which later became the old Administration Building and is now is incorporated into the Brentwood Library.

She was a Brentwood Library Trustee and remained active in Brentwood activities for many years after retiring.

She married into the Koehler family. You may remember the store that was the place to shop for general goods up until the late 1960's.

She retired in 1968 and moved to South Carolina.

She was a lovely lady, and we shall miss her.

*There is a full-page article about Mrs. Koehler in the September-December 2010-2011 Newsletter. This should be accessible through our website, [www.robsny.org](http://www.robsny.org).*

### SCHOLARSHIPS

It's not too late to send in your contributions to the **ROBS** Scholarship Fund.

We plan on giving **five** scholarship awards this year, four scholarships at \$750 each and one at \$1,000.

This is possible because of the generosity of our members who value education by giving deserving seniors help to make their dreams possible.

If you wish to give a contribution please make checks out to **ROBS** with "scholarship drive" on the memo line. You can mail your check to our Treasurer, Marge Kirchner, 666 Hawkins Road East, Coram, New York 11727 or bring it to a ROBS general meeting.

Thank you, as ever, for your generous support.

### IMAGES OF BRENTWOOD

#### AN ARCADIA BOOK

Arcadia Books has just released, *Images of Brentwood* their latest picture book of towns. It's now Brentwood's turn.

This book captures Brentwood from the mid-1800's to the mid-20th century and is a treasure trove of memories.

The author, Jason Klosowicz has worked closely with the Brentwood Historical Society to produce this book.

You may order it on Amazon or Barnes and Noble. The Brentwood Historical Society, however, is selling it at \$15 (quite a saving). If you are interested, make your check out to the Brentwood Historical Society. Ellen Edelstein, President, will have copies available at our April Meeting. There is a book signing scheduled at the Brentwood Library in the very near future.

Don't miss it -- it's a walk down memory lane.



**ROBS ELECTION OF OFFICERS**  
**COPY OF THE OFFICIAL BALLOT**

MAY 2, 2014



<b>PRESIDENT</b> NICHOLAS SICILIANO			
<b>FIRST VICE PRESIDENT</b> KATHLEEN GULEKSEN			
<b>SECOND VICE PRESIDENT</b> HARRIET PEPINE			
<b>SECRETARY</b> NANCY CHURCHILLO			
<b>TREASURER</b> MARGE KIRCHNER			

**B. 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.

**C. 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.





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## *ROBS Luncheon*

### *Vien Restaurant*

*2 Consuelo Place, Oakdale, NY 11769 (631 589-2694)*

*June 6, 2014 12-3 p.m.*

### *First Course*

*Mixed Green Salad or Baked Stuffed Clams*

### *Second Course*

*Florentine Breast of Chicken*

*Cedar Roasted Atlantic Salmon with Herb Dijon Crème*

*Center-Cut Pork Loin with Caramelized Apples*

*Vegetarian Meal (upon request)*

### *Dessert*

*Tiramisu*

*Soda, Coffee and Tea, Cash Bar*

*Cost is \$33 per person*

*Please make your check payable to **ROBS** and send it to:  
Lynda Romano, 18 Danville Drive, Greenlawn, NY 11740  
(631) 757-9450*

*Deadline is May 30, 2014*

*There will be no refunds as a count must be given to the restaurant.*

