



General Information

General Meetings are held at the Brentwood Public Library, 2nd Avenue & Third Street, at 10 a.m. on the first **Friday** of the month.

Calendar

March 6th, 2009 - Library
10 a.m. in the lower level.

April 3rd, 2009 - Library
10 a.m. in the lower level.

May 1st, 2009 - Library
10 a.m. in the lower level,
presentation of the **History Video**.

June 5th, 2009 - TBA
End of the Year Luncheon

ROBS WEB ADDRESS

www.robsny.org

Newsletter Contributors

Carmela Criscione
Adrienne Eastman
Phyllis Goodwin
Martin Hochheiser
Marge Kirchner
Paula Moore
Steve Rochester
John Sherin
Nick Siciliano

President's Message

Welcome to the New Year. I hope that the holiday season was kind to all of you. I am filled with such great anticipation for the coming year. Although the economic crisis of the country is stretching into every sector, the political scene is showing great promise. As my cousins and I burned up the phone wires during the election process one theme became increasingly clear. We never thought that an African-American would ever be elected to the highest office in the country. The importance was significant enough for my cousin to drive from Maryland to upstate New York to take his 89 year old mother to the polling booth - pride at the highest level.

President-Elect Obama, with the selection of his cabinet and staff, has stretched across every spectrum of the American republic. The image of the Obama family has finally given a positive face to African-Americans; not the television, newspaper or movie version but the norm. Mr. Obama is moving ahead at a slow and steady pace cautioning us that this country will not heal overnight. With this election, people have voted for change and change must be implemented for the people and not the big corporations. The bailouts are at the expense of the average American's purse strings.

The Iraq war was so unnecessary and did little to help our economy. We now have untold numbers of soldiers with horrific injuries and no support system. There is no universal health care for this country. In a country that was supposed to be the model for everything right, we have neglected a very large portion of our population. No one should be hungry, homeless or in dire medical and financial straits.

Given the very nature of our existence, racism has been an accepted part of our lives. For the past ten years, I have been concerned about the less than subtle racism that has risen in this country. Mr. Obama's election, has brought this behavior out into the open. I can only hope and pray that this country will do everything in its power to keep our President safe. Our election was enthusiastically watched by every country in the world. They recognized our need for change and endorsed it whole heartedly. We must do the same.

In Harmony,

Phyllis Goodwin





Officers

Phyllis Goodwin - President
Harriet Pepine - Vice President
Lucille Fink - Secretary
Marge Kirchner - Treasurer
Dot Zuckerman - President Emerita

Executive Board

Ruth McCalla - Program
Chris Veech - Newsletter
John Sherin - History Project
Peter Vercillo - Project Hope
Marty Hochheiser - BTA/RC21
Adrienne Eastman - BCA Liaison
Carmela Criscione - ROBS Cares
Kris Dougherty, Lynn Prass,
and Lynn Tiscione -
At-Large Delegates
Gloria Hanneman - Web
Coordinator

Announcement

Nick Siciliano has agreed to become our **Web Editor**. Anyone wishing to post something on the ROBS Website should send it to Nick.

Get Well Wishes

Our best wishes to Lois Morella recovering from hip surgery in October. Bob Veech is recovering from a second surgery on a broken ankle. Chris Veech has been sidelined by a bout of shingles (ouch!). Letty Sustrin is doing well after November surgery as is Edie Welch. Again, our best wishes for speedy recoveries, and we hope to see you all at our next meeting.

Welcome to the Club

Maureen Rezza (Human Resources Office) will be retiring in early January as will Roberta "Bo" Messina (Teacher Center).

A Bit of News

John Sherin's brother, Michael, Chairman of the Board of the Garden City Group, had the honor of being in the group ringing the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange on November 21st, 2008. Even better, it was an up day.

Author, Author

Letty and Sheila Sustrin will be seeing their third **Teacher Who Wouldn't Retire** book released in the Spring of 2009. We will have them at an author-signing event at one of the Spring meetings.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Marilyn and Henry DePlaza who celebrated 50 years of wedded bliss in November, 2008.

Sadly...

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the Burkitt family on the loss of both their father, Frank, and Eleanor, their Mom. Eleanor was the front office secretary at Southeast School for many years. Barbara Foreman (NE) and Lois Morella (Laurel Park) both lost their brothers and Peter Vercillo (TP) his mom. Elaine Cucciniello (NE) lost her husband as did Cathy Miceli (Data Processing). Cathy writes that her husband of 53 years, Joe, was a professional prize fighter in the 1950's and is in the Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame. He was a true champ. November also saw us lose Anita Alleyne (South MS) and Jean Kasin Killian (Dept Hd of Home Ec). In December we lost Addie Murphy (long time head of the Payroll Department in the 1960's-70's) and Frank Saladino (Southwest). We shall remember them all.



Did You Know?

The Town of Islip provides a variety of services for its residents.

Among them:

Brief Respite Care

A program designed to give caregivers relief from the stress and responsibility of care of the frail or disabled members of their family. Up to 4 hours of respite per visit is provided. For information call: 631 224-5378.

Essential Transportation

Seniors who do not have access to private or public transportation and cannot afford private cab fare can utilize this service for trips to senior centers, medical appointments, government offices or food shopping. The service operates Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Advance booking is necessary. The service is free but a voluntary contribution of \$2.00 is suggested. For information: 224-5686.

EISEP - Expanded In-Home Services

This program provides management and non-medical home care for residents 60 or more years of age who are unable to complete home tasks. Services include shopping, laundry and light housekeeping. This service is available to eligible seniors not on Medicaid. Call the Suffolk County Office of the Aging at 631-853-8200

Home Chore Program

Assistance is provided for small household repairs that the homeowner cannot manage such as leaf raking, cleaning out gutters, etc. The homeowner is responsible only for parts and supplies. Call Monday-Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. 631 224-5685.

More services are available. If you are not already getting the "**It's Never Too Late News**" call the Town of Islip Department of Human Services, Division of Senior Citizen Services at 224-5340.

If you do not live in the Town of Islip, check the blue pages of the telephone book for your town's offices, and call for a list of their services.

Good Music, Good Food and Good Company

The Jon Sherin Quartet had an engagement this past October 24th at the Snapper Inn.

A large contingent of Brentwood retirees were on hand for a fun-filled evening. The Quartet played from about 6:30 to after 10 p.m. Great American standards were played with John as the group's singer.

Among those enjoying the evening were: Chico and Bobbe Frankel, Grace DeRiggi, Ruth and Mac McCalla, Paula Moore, Harriet Pepine, Nick and Claire Geraci, Marsha and Gerry Cohen, Beverly and Ralph Ruggiero, Phyllis Goodwin, Dot Zuckerman, Adrienne Eastman, Carmela Criscione, and Patty Monsen.



A Letter from Great Grandfather

by John Sherin

John Patrick married Kate O'Reilly, who bore their eleven children (nine of whom survived). One of the youngest, Cornelius, became my Grandfather, father of my father, Michael, or "Micho".



Returning from my first visit to Ireland in the summer of 1962, I arrived at "Idlewild" with several mementoes in my bag among them a small, tan leather lined notebook given to me by my Aunt Marie. She trusted me with it because of my expressed interest in family history. It was a personal item, she said, belonging to my Great Grandfather. Something he always carried with him in an inside pocket of his jacket.

Appreciative of the connection, I deferred reading its contents for many years due to my difficulty in deciphering the tiny handwritten script which consisted of notes and bits of personal information and observations that John P. deemed important to remember.

There were lists of French idiomatic phrases, paraphrased

reference to lines from Hamlet, quotes in German and a page of geometric laws and math theorems. There were also pasted pictorial cut-out icons of the city of Kilkenny, the family's crest and symbols for a few regional fraternal organizations, like the Limerick Club.

It has occupied a revered place for years in my home untouched, on a busy bookshelf beneath a miniature volume of Russian proverbs and next to an engraved sterling silver and gold inlaid "Snuff Box", my connection to another Great-Great Grandfather, Michael Reilly (Kate's dad) presented to him by his commanding officer in 1843 upon military retirement with a rank of Sergeant Major, no small honor for an Irishman who served honorably under Wellington to defeat Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1814.

J.P. died on July 28, 1908 at the age of 55, sole proprietor of the family business where adverts read "House Furnishing, Bedsteads & Bedding, Iron Mongery, Oil and Colour Stores, Kitchen Ranges and Grates, Gun Cartridges and All Sporting Requisites". Kate continued all operations with my Grandfather's help until the 10th of December 1934 when she passed away at age 81.

Another picture of the same man survives through these notes and offers an illuminating image of one

who was by all measure "a life long learner". When he autographed the page of the 28th of April, 1883, he took on an identity of a family man of some sensitivity and intellect; an uncommon philosopher whose moral compass was grounded firmly in his own family values -- pre-eminent among them self-realization, a quest for knowledge and the unswerving pursuit of life's unfolding purpose.

Strange, how I moved to revisit his notes on this Thanksgiving. What I discovered came as a surprise. In measured "Old English" it spoke to me within the context of today's headlines about decisions made by all the transient entities that populated our world.

How to Take Life

"Take life like a man -- take it by the forelock, by the shoulders, by the spine, by every limb and part. Take it just as though it was -- as it is -- an earnest, vital, essential affair. Take it just as though you personally were born to the task of performing a merry part in it; as though the world had waited for your coming. Take it as though it was a grand opportunity to do and to achieve; to carry forward great and good schemes; to help and cheer a suffering and weary, and, it may be, a heart sickened-brother.



"The fact is, life is unvalued by a great majority of mankind. It is not made half as much of as should be the case. Where is the man or woman who accomplishes one tithe of what might be done? Who cannot look back upon opportunities lost, plans unachieved, thoughts crushed, aspirations unfilled and all because of the lack of the necessary and possible effort? If we knew better how to take and make the most of life, it would be far greater than it is.

"Now and then a man stands aside from the crowd, labors earnestly, steadfastly, confidently, and straightaway becomes famous for wisdom, intellect, skill, greatness, of some sort. The world wonders, admires, idolizes and it only illustrates what each may do if he takes hold of life with a purpose-- by the head and shoulders. If a man but say he will, and follow it up by the right kind of effort, there is nothing within reason he may not expect to accomplish. There is no magic, no miracle, no secret to him who is brave in heart and determined in spirit"

A Caution and Timeless Affirmation

"More harm is wrought by want of thought than is by want of heart. Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, these three alone lead

life to sovereign favor. Let nothing disturb thee. All things are passing. God never changeth. Patient endurance attaineth to all things. Who God possesseth nothing is wanting. Alone God sufficeth."

No longer believing in accidents, I took time, this time, to read his hand-scripted words. That's when I felt as if I'd received **A Letter From My Great Grandfather**, only I was the student this time, he the teacher.

I pray he'll reserve a place for me at his table. What long conversations we might have -- but not, I trust, for a very long time. PG.

Empire Card Change

We all recently received new Empire Cards in the mail. The new card carries the letter "D". All this means is that the co-pay amount has gone up to \$20. The change went into effect on January 1st, 2009.

For All You Pet Lovers

Dogs come when they are called. Cats take a message and get back to you.

Coming Soon

Joel Ratner, Coordinator of Music, was enthusiastic about Phyllis' request to have the "Brentwood Song" on our website. Ann Kollar, High School Choir Director, will direct the Brentwood Chorus. The clip will also appear on the District's website.

The "Brentwood Song" was written for Brentwood's Centennial (circa 1950's) and is sung to the tune of "America, The Beautiful".

We will put the lyrics on the website also.

Ain't It The Truth

God must have loved calories. He made so many of them.

Get Well Wishes

Get well wishes to Elaine Levy (Human Resources) who is recuperating after surgery in December.



Sports By Steve

The highlight of the Fall season was the Boys Soccer Team winning the New York State Championship.

The Team finished the regular season with a 19 and 0 record. They have won 5 straight League 1 titles and have not lost a league game in 5 years. They marched through the Suffolk County playoffs defeating West Islip, Bay Shore, and North Babylon. Then they won the Long Island Championship defeating Massapequa. The following weekend they traveled to Oneonta, home of the Soccer Hall of Fame, for the NY State Championship. There they met and defeated two undefeated teams.

The Brentwood team and their fans were also selected by the NY State Soccer Officials as the winner of the Sportsmanship Award.

The culmination of this season was being ranked as the Number 1 team in the **United States** by both **ESPN** and **SOCCER WORLD MAGAZINE**.

Congratulations to Coaches Ron Eden and Francisco Herrera as well as the entire team.

Steve Rochester

Happy New Year

A new year, a new beginning and a hope that this year will be better than last year.

We are in the midst of one of the greatest economic crises to affect this country and the world since the Great Depression.

This past November Americans seeking change voted in an historic election for Senator Barack Obama, the first African-American to be elected President of the United States.

Throughout his campaign Senator Obama promised to bring about needed change in the nation and restore the economy. The new President faces a Herculean task in dealing with the many problems confronting the nation.

All Americans, be they Democrats or Republicans, must now come together to help our new President be successful in solving these problems. Let us all hope that this year will be one that brings us peace and prosperity.

Nick Siciliano

Membership

We are happy to report that as a result of an e-mail effort, individual phone calls and the membership form in a recent newsletter, that membership is up. We now total over 380 members. However, we cannot become complacent and urge you to renew your membership when you receive your form in the spring.

Thank you for your cooperation in this recent effort and for your continuing commitment to ROBS.

De-Icer

Snow. Sure it's beautiful coming down but we don't want to go down because of it.

Salt and ice melts can stain or erode concrete or brickwork. An environmentally friendly, clean alternative that is inexpensive as well is baking soda. Sprinkle the icy surface with liberal amounts. You can also add sand for extra surefootedness.

Too True

Nostalgia is like a grammar lesson. You find the present tense and the past perfect.



A Woman To Be Admired

by Marge Kirchner

When I think of Phyllis Goodwin, I think of a talented woman who is a faithful and caring friend. I think of yearly dinners with my partner, Pat, and Donna Ragonese, to celebrate our four birthdays. I think of a woman who adores music -- even to the point of naming her cat Miles for the legendary gifted Miles Davis. I think of a woman whose garden is lovely and who grows the sweetest roses and peonies you could ever imagine. I think of a woman who is a wonderful Mother, a devoted family member and a helper to all who need it. I also think of a woman who scuffs off praise for all she does.

I'd like to introduce you to **your** ROBS President, Phyllis Goodwin. These are some of the things she undertakes for your benefit.

- *Chairing all Executive Board Meetings of ROBS every month.
- *Chairing all General Meetings.
- *Designing the membership forms for our Organization.
- * Designing flyers for various events.
- *Writing and duplicating the Agendas for all meetings.
- *Contributing to our newsletter (doing the work on the entire last issue).

***Remembering** information about almost every member.

*Figuring out a way to design our directory **and** inputting all the data from each application form so that members can each have a directory every two years and an addendum directory every other year.

*Taking all things to be duplicated to AHRC in Bohemia.

*Stuffing envelopes and applying address labels.

*Taking all mail to the Huntington Station Post Office after making sure that she has bundled everything according to zip codes.

*Getting some of the goodies for our meetings.

*Keeping on top of RC 21's and the State's information regarding retirees.

*Working NYSUT phone banks.

*Attending RC21 meetings and functions.

*Producing and duplicating our Brentwood Pen and Ink Note cards for a ROBS fundraiser.

*Keeping in touch with members via telephone and notes.

*Attending the yearly awards evening at the High School to present our scholarships to the chosen students who will study education in college.

*Etc, etc, **ETC!**

Most of these "duties" go far beyond the usual role of President. Wouldn't you like to praise Phyllis for her efforts on your behalf?

Flood her mailbox...she can't scuff that off.

Holiday Party 2008

Our annual holiday party was held at Sweetwaters in Hauppauge this year on Friday, December 5th and was great fun.

Over 40 retirees attended and there were some new faces along with the regulars. We missed Letty and Sheila Sustrin, Chris Veech, Lois Morella and Edie Welch, but all are doing well and will be with us on future occasions.

Lynn Tiscione coordinated a raffle with the proceeds going toward very badly needed new video equipment for the History Project. It was a very successful endeavor and a lot of fun. Liz Dicce's wonderful pen and ink note cards were also sold with the proceeds again going to the equipment fund.

Sweetwaters was a wonderful restaurant. The atmosphere, service and, of course, the food was excellent.

Kudos to our program director, Ruth McCalla, for another memorable gathering.



A Tribute to Bill Heran

We recently lost Bill Heran, a good friend of ROBS. He waged his battle with grace and dignity and our heartfelt condolences go to his devoted wife, Betty Lou. Bill was always a gentleman and a gentle man.

Marty Hochheiser, a friend of over 40 years, has written this tribute.

Bill and I were friends for over 40 years, and many fond recollections come to mind when I think of him.

Most vividly is the genuine love and devotion of Bill and Betty Lou. They were always together, be it a celebration of events, including ROBS luncheons, or just shopping.

Their close relationship was, and is, an inspiration for many of us.

Bill started the G.E.D. Program in Brentwood about 40 years ago. For many years during the test, Lou Cairo, Bill and I would solve many of Brentwood's, the world's, and sports problems. This tradition continued with Bill Mullady and Bill McGinn.

An avid sports fan, Bill was a season ticket holder for the Long Island Ducks. He was generous and often gave tickets to ROBS and his church.

He had a collection of baseball memorabilia. He collected signed pictures, programs, score cards, baseballs, etc. He created a mini-Cooperstown in his home.

One of the enduring memories of Bill is of his spirit and sense of humor undimmed by pain and medical problems. This quality continued until the very end.

Bill passed away on October 26th, 2008. He will be missed but not forgotten.

Have Something to Say?

Do you have any comments about the newsletter? Any suggestions for columns or articles? Would you like to write an article?

Coming in the next newsletter will be an article on Cell Phones, Paula Moore's recent trip to Egypt with a visit to a Nubian village, hints that help us all, as well as news of members and much, much more.

Please contact either Phyllis or Carmela if you have anything you would like to see in Newsletter.

Always Learning

Seniors are invited to audit cost-free courses at schools in the SUNY system. The courses run from gardening, art, theater, history, computer and many, many more. Call the SUNY school of your choice for more information. Added bonus: No term papers.

Project Hope

We were very happy to learn from Peter Vercillo that this year's holiday drive for Project Hope was the best to date.

We were able to help two families totaling 15 people for both Thanksgiving and the Holidays.

The shoppers, as usual, were amazing, and the wrap party at Kris Dougherty's house was a huge success.

Peter and his merry band of helpers send their thanks to all who helped.