



ROBS - RETIREES of BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Since 1991 - Still Serving

Issue 4/2011-2012

June, July, August 2012

MEETINGS

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

July - no meeting

August - no meeting

September -
Welcome New Retirees

October - to be announced

ROBS CARES CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

Pronto, the community action group we support, is in need of dry or canned goods, paper products and toiletries. **Please** bring your contribution to each meeting. The need is great.

OFFICERS

Nick Siciliano - President
kpnici1@aol.com
Kathy Guleksen - 1st VP
Harriet Pepine - 2nd VP
Lucille Fink - Secretary
Marge Kirchner - Treasurer
Dorothy Zuckerman and
Phyllis Goodwin - Presidents
Emeritus

AFFILIATIONS

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

Website: www.robsony.org

ROBS 2012 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

ROBS IS PROUD TO INCREASE ITS NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS!

by Kathy Guleksen



Standing left to right: Merissa Bhimsingh, Karissa Jean Pierre, Mrs. Kathy Guleksen, Wendy Escobar, Patricia Iglesias and Maryam Rabbani

Brentwood High School's Scholarship Presentation was held on May 17, 2012. Through your generosity ROBS was able to increase the number of scholarships this year from four awards to five. An additional \$500 scholarship was awarded. In all, ROBS awarded \$3,000 in scholarship money.

Merissa Bhimsingh is the recipient of the \$1,000 Jack Zuckerman Scholarship Award and Patricia Iglesias is the recipient of the \$500 Lilian Kelly Scholarship Award. The recipients of ROBS \$500 scholarships are Karissa Jean Pierre, Wendy Escobar and Maryam Rabbani.

All scholarship winners plan to pursue careers in education. ROBS congratulates the winners and wishes them good luck in their college careers.



EXECUTIVE BOARD

Carmela Criscione - ROBS Cares
Adrienne Eastman - BCA Liaison
Gloria Hannemann - Web Coord.
Marty Hochheiser - BTA Liaison
Barbara Mascaro - RC21 Liaison & Archivist
Lynda Romano - Programs and Hospitality
John Sherin - History Project
Nick Siciliano - Web Editor
Vacancy - Project Hope
Paula Moore - Delegate at Large & Photographer
Ellen Edelstein - Delegate at Large
Vacancy - Delegate at Large

EDITORIAL BOARD

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tecnoquuen@aol.com
Ronda Brooks
Adrienne Eastman
Lucille Fink
Phyllis Goodwin
Miriam Massucci
Paula Moore
John Sherin
Nick Siciliano

TALK TO US

The phone numbers, addresses and e-mail addresses of all the Officers, Executive Board and Editorial Board Members are in the Directory should you wish to contact us. We really want to hear from you!



Website: www.robsny.org

NICK'S NOTES by Nick Siciliano

As we end our 20th year as a retiree organization, I would like to thank all of you for your continued support. As I have said previously, we rely on you to give your officers feedback on how we are doing and how we can continue to improve.

I would like to recognize several individuals who have made contributions to this organization. **John Sherin** has interviewed, as of this year, 150 retirees. This has been an enormous undertaking and John deserves our profound thanks for taking on this monumental project. You can see excerpts of these interviews which are posted on our website. John has also spent many hours in working on projects dealing with the history of the Brentwood community and school district. For all of his work John deserves our tremendous gratitude.

Another individual I would like to recognize is **Peter Vercillo** who runs **ROBS' Project Hope** committee which each year adopts four families for the holidays. Peter ably succeeded **Frank Spencer** who also did a fabulous job. Peter is stepping down as chairperson this month. He deserves our gratitude for his commitment each year to making **ROBS' Project Hope** a huge success.

We are in need of someone to run this program. If any of you wish to get more involved in **ROBS**, please contact me.

Lastly, I would like to thank **Lynn Prass** who, after a number of years serving as a Delegate at Large to the Executive Board, is also stepping down. All of us are very appreciative of the time and effort expended by Lynn in helping **ROBS** in its many activities.

The bi-annual election of Delegates at Large will be held at the September meeting.

A special thanks goes to the committee working on special events to celebrate our 20th anniversary. They came up with interesting activities such as a theater outing, a high tea at the Bayard Arboretum, a retiree art show, and a visit to the Bayport Flower House to make up herb garden pots. Several of the activities will be repeated because of their popularity. So, a special thanks to **Kathy Guleksen, Phyllis Goodwin, Lucille Fink**, for making this **ROBS** year so memorable. I'd also like to thank Harriet Pepine and Lynda Romano for their help with the anniversary November meeting.

Thank you **Lynda Romano** for another enjoyable and delicious Luncheon.

Your elected officers would like to thank you for returning them to office. As I said at the May meeting when we were re-elected, we need more of you to become involved in **ROBS** if it is to last as a viable organization. I hope more of you will seek to run for office or get involved in our various projects. Anyone wishing to contribute a newsletter article or a suggestion for a speaker or special events meeting can contact any of the Officers or Executive Board members.

Thanks again for your support. Have a great summer and we will see you in September.



IT'S ALL ABOUT US - by Carmela Criscione

As we close our 20th anniversary year we have a lot to be proud of. This organization is still thriving. Our meetings are informative and entertaining. This past year we had interesting speakers, a build-your-own herb/flower pot at the Bayport Flower House, a holiday theater excursion to see "It's a Wonderful Life", an art show featuring four retiree artists, another of **John's Sherin's** interview tapes, our election of officers in addition to our Welcome Back, New Year's Breakfast and End of the Year socials. We hope you enjoyed all the special activities, and our thanks goes out to the committee that worked so hard to make them successes.

The End of the Year Luncheon at **Ciro's** on June 1st was well-attended. We thanked **Peter Vercillo** for his service as head of Project Hope, and **Lynn Prass** for her service as Delegate-at-Large. **John Sherin** will remain on the Executive Board and will continue to work on history related projects but after 150 interviews is shutting down that part of his activities. He was honored with his own "Oscar" for the body of work we called "The Story of Us". There are 150 video interviews, compilations of videos featuring the community and school district in past times. He has also been instrumental in having material given to the school district which may, some day, be included in the elementary curriculum. To all, thank you for your service.

There is sad news to report. **Vivian Gaitan-Nelson** passed away in May after a long struggle with cancer. Vivian was a student worker in Human Resources in the late 1970's- early 1980's. She was a sweet girl and a good worker and deserved more time. **Shirley Hodges** also passed away in May. She resided in a health facility out west for many years. **Florence and Kate Corkery** lost Edwin Mussler in May. He was Florence's son-in-law and Kate's brother-in-law. This is just a few weeks after his wife's death. **Claire** (who retired 6/30/12) and **Nick Geraci**, lost her sister, Cynthia Langhauser after a long and valiant battle with cancer. **Gerry Duff** (elementary/Guidance) died in June. He left the District many years ago but I'm sure there are colleagues who remember him. **Marie Allen**, Teacher Assistant at Loretta Park, also died in June. In late June we received word that **Melenese Hamilton** (PE/TP) had passed away.

Adrienne Eastman's grandson, Geoff, thrilled his Mom and Dad with a surprise furlough from his Army duties in Kuwait where he is a Specialist in the Infantry. Shortly before coming home on June 5th, he helped save a Kuwaiti man's life by rescuing him from a burning crane at a nearby seaport. He is being recommended for an Army Commendation Medal which is one step below a Bronze Star. Kudos to a true American hero!

The Mid-Island Club held their annual scholarship luncheon at Captain Bill's on Saturday, April 28. Two Brentwood High School seniors received scholarships. The Mid-Island Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., has close Brentwood connections. Past presidents included **Barbara Ford**, **Constance Nichols**, **Leora Haywood**, and **Lois R. Branch** (not yet retired). Current members are **Mac Lane**, **Paula Moore**, **Betty Brown-Greene**, **Ida Donald** and **Antoinette Shervington** (not yet retired). Paula was awarded the President's Award for her service to the club and in particular to the scholarship committee.

The District held its annual Retirement Information Day on May 17th and 18th. There were 24 retirees most of them non-teachers. The turnout reflects the years of declining enrollment and lack of hiring. The newly-minted retirees were upbeat and happy to start a new chapter in their lives. We hope that they join **ROBS** and start attending meetings starting in September.

Congratulations to **Gloria Hannemann**, Website Coordinator, for again being honored by the NYSUT journalism judges for best website. Gloria has been so honored from the first year of the website's creation. Job very well done!

Marilyn DePlaza came up from Florida to attend **Jose Suarez's** retirement party. **John Sherin** was able to do an in-depth interview with her. We will see clips from it at a forthcoming meeting. While he has closed down the interview project it was just too good an interview to lose.

Congratulations to **Bob Hoppey**, long-time physical education teacher and coach at the Brentwood High School. On Saturday, May 12th, the District named the new soccer field in his honor.



BE AS WISE AS OUR OWL!

JOIN ROBS!

It's that time of the year. This issue carries the renewal form and information about what your \$25 dues covers.

We all know there is strength in numbers and we are a large active retiree group, but we always welcome new members.

This organization has always prided itself on being up-to-date on matters concerning retirees, union, senior and other issues. We are concerned and informed. This newsletter and our website, www.robsny.org, are important means to keep us up-dated.

Please send your renewal information to Marge Kirchner, Treasurer, as soon as you can.

HELP WANTED!

After many years of service to Project Hope, Peter Vercillo is stepping down. Lynn Prass, who served ably as a Delegate-at-Large, is also stepping down.

They leave big shoes to fill, but we know that we have many talented and dedicated retirees in our ranks who could step forward.

We realize that these are important jobs. Please think about stepping forward. There are many people willing to help you.

OWN A PIECE OF THE ROCK

Yes, you can own a piece of the rock.

John Sherin has created a unique object that is functional, decorative and practical.

He has created granite pieces with **ROBS** mottos on them, such as "Still Serving", "Live, Love, Laugh", "Support Project Hope". There are approximately a dozen mottoes or so to choose from.

They are made of grey, black or tan granite or marble, have a saying on them, and have felt to protect table surfaces.

Many of these paperweights, book ends, stand-alone pieces were bought at the May meeting and the June luncheon. They cost \$5 each and proceeds go to Project Hope.

Please contact John directly if you are interested in purchasing one. He will also take orders and bring them to the September or October meetings.

They make great stocking stuffers.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS MAY 4 MEETING

An Election of Officers was held on May 4 at the General Meeting.

Nominees were running unopposed, and the Secretary of **ROBS**, Lucille Fink, cast the deciding vote.

Your officers for the term 2012-2014 are:

Nick Siciliano, President
Kathy Guleksen, 1st Vice President
Harriet Pepine, 2nd Vice President
Marge Kirchner, Treasurer
Lucille Fink, Secretary

Congratulations to our re-elected officers. We know they will continue to do a great job.



I REMEMBER RHODA

by Gail Inzerillo Latella

Few colleagues are as memorable as Rhoda Stamler. Rhoda was an elementary teacher who was placed in East Junior High School when East was alive with an unconventional and irreverent cast of characters. Once Rhoda was over her initial shell-shock of being a member of the zany East Faculty, she quickly adapted to the high energy level and the emotional ebbs and flows of junior high.

Back then, being the Reading Consultant, meant being in the classroom with a teacher who was assigned to teach reading. Rhoda was with us; organizing, orchestrating, encouraging and teaching.

She was a child of the Depression, a member of "the Greatest Generation" and older than many of the staff at East; nevertheless, she had more energy than most of us. She was optimistic and cheerful, happy in her work. The only aspect brighter than her clothing and lipstick was her personality. She was "in the moment" before we knew what being in the moment meant.

Purposeful and enthusiastic, she always had another idea, another method, another word of encouragement. "Honey, we can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear," was her way of telling us to be more realistic without giving up. Deeply dedicated, she loved and respected the "children". Even a sullen and bearded ninth grader would frantically dig into his pockets, seeking the necessary collateral in order to borrow one of Mrs. Stamler's pens. She had rules and they were followed.

Our students were not statistics, scores or grades. They were children, and she never let us forget that these were the formative years and how important it was to support and

respect them. "Casting pearls before swine" was not a demeaning statement by Rhoda. It was a gentle and humorous recognition of our sometimes impossible task.

Rhoda was a joy, a gift to education. She taught me patience. She taught me persistence. She showed me what it meant to be a professional. I was fortunate to have her as a colleague and a mentor. She was a presence. Affectionately, I remember her smile and her words and the scent of her perfume wafting through the hallways.



Ms. Stamler

Marilyn Flamberg sent this lovely tribute to Rhoda written by Gail Inzerillo Latella to us. To quote Marilyn: I think she speaks for all of us who treasured and admired Rhoda.

If there is someone you wish to write about, please contact Carmela.



THE WISDOM OF GEESE

by
Milton Olsen

As each bird flaps its wings it creates an uplift for the bird following it. By flying a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71 per cent greater flying range than if the bird flew alone.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

If we have as much sense as a goose, we will work in formation with those who are headed where we want to go and be willing to accept their help as well as give our help to others.

When the lead goose gets tired it falls back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. With people, as with geese, we are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents and resources.

The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those in front to keep up their speed.

We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging and not something else.

When a goose gets sick or wounded, two geese drop out of the formation and follow it down to help protect it. They stay with it until it gets better or dies. They then launch out and join another flock or catch up with their formation.

If we have as much sense as geese, we too will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

Thanks to Lois Morella for this thought-provoking article. All too often we get caught up in the modern world and forget we share a lot with other creatures.



ROBS CREATES CONTAINER GARDENS

by Kathy Guleksen



left to right: Pat Stuhler, Kathy Guleksen, Dot Zuckerman and her daughter, Gerry

The 2nd annual event at the beautiful Bayport Flower House was held on June 7th. Members were ready to kick off the summer by creating herb or flower container gardens to enjoy all season. This year members and their guests created 18 beautiful container gardens.

When members arrived, work stations were organized and ready to go. Each station had a large flower pot filled with soil and earthy friendly fertilizer. ROBS gardeners were given everything needed to create beautiful container gardens.

Once again master gardener Karl Auwaeter, whose family has owned the Bayport Flower House for 80 years, provided a demonstration and planting tips. Then Karl invited members into the extensive greenhouse where many varieties of herbs and flowers are carefully arranged. It is an exciting experience to explore the greenhouse and select the perfect plants for your own garden.

ROBS members used the large carts to wheel their completed gardens to their cars. Many returned to browse the gift shop filled with gorgeous garden ornaments.

It was a beautiful day to spend in their garden. It was a lovely way to spend time with friends.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT



JUNE 28, 2012

HEALTH REFORM BENEFITS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act ensures hard-working, middle class families will get the security they deserve and protects every American from the worst insurance company abuses.

- ✓ Lets millions of young adults stay on parent's insurance until age 26
- ✓ Ends insurance company power to cap the amount of care a person can receive in their lifetime
- ✓ Stops insurance companies from canceling coverage when someone gets sick
- ✓ Lowers the cost of care for those on Medicare and helps seniors save money on their medication
- ✓ Requires insurance companies to cover preventive services like mammograms free of charge
- ✓ Strengthens and protects Medicare by increasing penalties for fraud
- ✓ Stops insurance companies from denying coverage to children with pre-existing conditions
- ✓ Ends insurance company power to jack up rates without justification
- ✓ Provides Americans with rebates from insurers who spend too much on CEO bonuses or ads
- ✓ Gives tax credits to small business owners so they can afford to offer quality health care for employees
- ✓ Builds and improves hundreds of community health centers
- ✓ Gives hard-working Americans tax credits so they can afford insurance beginning in 2014
- ✓ Ends discrimination against adults with pre-existing conditions beginning in 2014
- ✓ Prevents insurance companies from charging women more than men and overcharging those who need care the most beginning in 2014
- ✓ Creates state-based marketplaces where people can easily compare and shop for insurance beginning in 2014



NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

MEMBER ID#: _____

LOCAL#: 21-010

*If there is no name and address listed above,
you may mail your form directly to:*

VOTE-COPE
P.O. Box 5190
Albany, NY 12205-0190

vote COPE Pension Deduction Authorization Card

The undersigned authorizes the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) or the New York State Employees' Retirement System (NYSERS) to deduct from each of my regular defined-benefit pension payments the sum of ☐\$5, ☐\$3 or ☐Other \$_____ (per month) and to forward that amount to VOTE-COPE, P.O. Box 5190, Albany, NY 12205-0190. I understand that this monthly amount will continue to be deducted until revoked by me in writing.

This authorization is made voluntarily and without fear of reprisal and with the understanding that the making of contributions to VOTE-COPE is not a condition of membership in any labor organization, will not impact the provision of my defined-benefit pension and that VOTE-COPE will use the money it receives to make political contributions and expenditures in connection with federal, state and local elections. This authorization shall remain in full force and effect for all purposes until revoked by me in writing.

I expressly acknowledge and understand that the deduction as specified above be withheld monthly and that NYSUT will transmit this authorization to the appropriate retirement system. I hereby certify to NYSTRS and NYSERS that I am a member of NYSUT, an employee organization entitled to receive union deduction payments as provided by law.

Name _____ Pension # _____

Phone # _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Local from which you retired: _____

VOTE-COPE is the New York State United Teachers' political action fund.

VOTE-COPE solicits and accepts only voluntary contributions.

Contributions or gifts to VOTE-COPE are not tax deductible.

vote COPE Pension Deduction Authorization Card

NAME: _____

MEMBER ID#: _____

ADDRESS: _____

LOCAL#: 21-010

☐ I belong to the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS), or

☐ I belong to the New York State Employees' Retirement System (NYSERS) and I hereby request monthly withholding of union deductions from my monthly benefit as permitted by Section 536 of the Education Law and Section 110-C of the Retirement Social Security Law.

NYSTRS or NYSERS is authorized to continue taking such deduction until NYSUT receives written notice from me to the contrary.

VOTE-COPE is the New York State United Teachers' political action fund.

VOTE-COPE solicits and accepts only voluntary contributions.

Contributions or gifts to VOTE-COPE are not tax deductible.

