



ROBS - RETIREES of the BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

Since 1991 - Still Serving

Issue 1/2010-2011

September - December

MEETINGS

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

November 5 - Speaker

December 3 - Holiday

Luncheon at Orlando's
flyer to follow

January 7 - Breakfast at the
Paradise Diner - flyer to
follow

February - no meeting

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
Emerita

AFFILIATIONS

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

RETIREES OF 2009/2010

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



The ROBS membership was very happy to welcome nine new retirees to their first official meeting. It was wonderful to meet and greet former colleagues. The following "newbies" attended our meeting and are pictured below with our new President Nick Siciliano: Ronda Brooks, Nickie DiPietro, Vinnie Ercole, Marcie Fiori, Barbara Goldstein, Wendie Gelardi, Amalia Moise, Vicky Powers and Melanie Schlumpf.



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TALK TO US

The phone numbers, addresses
and e-mail address of all the
Officers, Executive 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

**NOTES FROM NICK**

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our members both current and newly retired as we enter our 19th year as a retiree organization. If you have not done so, I would like to remind you to renew your membership. If you need a membership form, please go to our website, www.robsny.org, and click on "Membership" and download the form. In addition, you will find a form to contribute to VOTE COPE if you so desire and have the amount you designate deducted from your pension check each month.

Next year we will be celebrating the 20th year of **ROBS'** founding. Among the things we are planning is an article highlighting those twenty years. If any of you were members from the beginning of **ROBS**, we would appreciate your reflections on the early days of the organization. You can e-mail these to Carmela, and she will incorporate them into the article.

Two worthwhile projects **ROBS** is involved in every year is providing scholarships to Brentwood high school students who will be pursuing career, in teaching. In addition, **ROBS'** Project Hope program helps needy families during the holidays. Both of these worthwhile programs warrant your support. If you wish to contribute to the Scholarship Fund, please send your check to Marge Kirchner, Treasurer. Project Hope will be sending out a flyer in the next few weeks and will also be accepting donations at the general meetings.

Politically, you may have heard the news about possible changes to the Social Security program. I would urge you to keep abreast of what is going on in this area and to make your views known to your representatives .

Lastly, any organization depends for its success on its members. Remember **ROBS** is here to serve you, and I urge you to make us aware of ways we can make this organization even better and serve you in the best way possible for many years to come.





IT'S ALL ABOUT US - by Carmela Criscione

Letty and Sheila Sustrin were featured in the June 26 **My Turn** feature in Newsday. They wrote about going to elementary schools to read to children while keeping in mind that teachers serve as role models in many ways including how they dress. They specifically modeled their fictional **Miss Bell** to dress as a teacher should and to influence youngsters to look their best.

Lynda Romano's granddaughter, **Samantha**, graduated from Kings Park High School this past June and will attend Ithaca College in the Fall. **Angela**, daughter of **Claire** (TP 2nd grade) and **Nick Geraci** (Guidance), is following in her parents' footsteps. She teaches Music in Lakeland, Florida. Their son, **Nick**, is a chef in Providence at La Laiterie and has recently visited NYC where the staff presented for the James Beard Foundation. Congratulations to our talented young people and their families.

Get well wishes go to **Ida Donald** (Business/HS) and **Eileen Kelly** (Secretary/Human Resources) both having been in the hospital recently. Also get well wishes to **Adrienne Eastman** recovering from shingles. Speedy recoveries to all.

Sadly we note the passing of **Ronald Burr** (Elementary/NE) and long-time front office secretary at Northeast, **Ruth Bernhardt**. Ruth was **Eleanor Bazata's** sister. Eleanor was also a secretary. **Audrey Competello** (Secretary to the Business Director) lost her sister **Joyce Ehlers** in July. Joyce was the registered nurse at North Elementary. We also note the passing of **Ida Donald's** mother in August. We also received word that **Joan Young** (Elementary/PP) was killed in a car accident in California this past April. **Aram Athanasian** also passed away in September and **Hank Salerno** lost his mom. Our heartfelt sympathies to all their families. We also lost physical education teacher, and legendary wrestling coach, **Joe Campo** on Thursday, September 30th. He will be missed by his friends, colleagues and fellow wrestling coaches, many had been his students.

Steve Rochester passed this **Brentwood Sightings** moment on to us. It seems that friends of the Rochesters recently relocated to New Mexico. The wife is a hostess at the Sandia Casino and got into a conversation with a couple. They said they had relocated from New York and that he had worked in the Brentwood Schools. When asked if he knew **Steve Rochester** and **Cas Howard**, he told her yes and that Steve and his wife would be visiting them in Durango. It seems she had been talking to **Ken Gaherty** and his wife Sueann. After visiting the Gahertys Steve and his wife took in an **Orleans** concert in Utah. Look at page 8 for photos of the visit and other things our members are doing.

Ending on a happy note: Congratulations to **Lucille** and **Mark Fink**, first time grandparents. **Madeline Noelle Fink** arrived on September 23rd. Grandma and Grandpa are spending time with her and loving it.



OUR NATIONAL TREASURES

OUR NATIONAL PARKS

America The Beautiful

The scenic wonders of the United States are truly spectacular. In all directions of the compass there are wonderful parks featuring the glories of nature, austere rock formations, lush vegetation, waterfalls, glaciers, lakes and many, many animals and birds most of us have only seen in pictures. This summer two groups of ROBS travelers took in the wonders of the western national parks. Here are some impressions they wish to share with all of us.

Natural Wonders Everywhere

by Miriam Massucci

This year's travel for me was the National Parks trip and what a great trip it was. Traveling from the desert country of New Mexico to the Great Tetons of Wyoming we were exposed to the history of the area, the special beauty of each park and the variations of natural phenomena caused by water conditions through the ages. Add to the above congenial traveling companions, great accommodations, good food and who could ask for anything more! Go and see your country -- you'll love it.



Rafting on the Snake River: Dot Zuckerman, Miriam Massucci and Adrienne Eastman

Mount Rushmore, South Dakota

by Lynda Romano

I went on a National Parks bus tour for 14 days in June with Lois Morella, Marie Poppo and another friend, Dolores. We visited 8 states and 10 national parks.

What impressed me the most was Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The granite carvings of Washington, Jefferson, Teddy Roosevelt and Lincoln were magnificent, especially when lit up at night. The lighting ceremony takes place in the amphitheater each summer evening. An announcement is made asking veterans to come to the stage. The American flag is lowered, folded by a local Boy Scout and passed to each and every veteran. It was so quiet, you could have heard a pin drop.

Our great country is so rich in history, and I am glad I had the opportunity to see a small part of it.

Breathtaking Bryce Canyon

by Adrienne Eastman

On the morning of the 8th day of our journey we left Zion National Park in Utah and headed for Bryce Canyon. The day was sunny and in the upper 70's. Upon arrival we were treated to a spectacular sight of a valley of closely knit red-orange spires, the likes of which were not seen in any of the other parks we visited. Our view was from 8,300 feet, making a great panoramic vista for miles.

Bryce was my favorite of all the parks.



NATIONAL PARKS con'tMonument Valley

by Lois Morella

In June, Marie Poppo, Dolores Rezza, Lynda Romano and I took a scenic tour of the western parks which covered 8 states and 3,600 miles in 14 days! Although we saw many magnificent vistas, Monument Valley, located on the vast Navajo Tribal Reservation along the Arizona-Utah border, was my personal favorite.

Monument Valley was first made famous in the 1930's by Hollywood director, John Ford. Ford thought this incredible terrain symbolized the American West and used it as backdrop for such movie classics as: **Stagecoach, Rio Grande, Fort Apache and The Searchers.** As our group bumped along a rocky, rutted 17-mile looped road in an open aired vehicle, I could visualize John Wayne galloping passed the towering monoliths, deep canyons, and eroded mesas. The much photographed formations were more recently captured in: **Easy Rider, Forrest Gump, Thelma and Louise,** and **2001: A Space Odyssey.**

The Burger King adjacent to our hotel also had memorabilia that paid tribute to the Navajo Code Talkers of World War II. The Navajos developed a communication system based on their language that was never deciphered. The Nicholas Cage movie, **Windtalkers**, also filmed in Monument Valley, depicts the valiant service of these Navajo Marines who guarded the code at any cost. Monument Valley is truly a photographer's, history and movie buff's paradise.

Colorado River Rafting

by Dot Zuckerman

It was a scorching hot, blazing-sun day. We were on the third lap of the full-day Colorado River "triathlon", having first flown over the Grand Canyon at dawn and then wandered through the stunning Antelope (slot) Canyon. Now it was time for us to explore the mighty Colorado River as it wandered through the glorious heights of the Grand Canyon. We climbed into the raft and began, what was for me, the most exciting and memorable experience of the trip. As we set off, surrounded by some of the most beautiful scenery in the world, I imagined myself floating along with John Wesley Powell, the man who mounted a river expedition through the then unknown depths of the Grand Canyon in 1869. I was floating down the river (no white water rafting here) sandwiched by the awesome canyon walls, eyes and camera clicking. The brilliant sandstone cliffs changed colors with the light -- once vermillion, now bronze, then copper -- more imaginative than a painter's palette. I have been fortunate to travel to many exotic and spectacular regions of the world, but none hold any comparison to the magnificence of this natural wonder. It is an experience I will always treasure with a memory card in my mind.



At the Monument Valley Sign: Marie Poppo, Lois Morella, Lynda Romano and Dolores Rezza



TWO OF OUR OWN TREASURES

Ann Mattausch

A Special Friend - by Edie Filosa

Ann Mattausch and I met when I first came to Brentwood High School in 1958 as the school nurse teacher. She was a secretary in Guidance and Tom Hastings' gal Friday. We began to eat lunch together and enjoyed each other's company. It seemed a logical next step to see each other socially, and since we both had husbands, we naturally included them in our plans. It just so happened that my Al and Ann's Eddie hit it off too.

We made an odd foursome. Al was 6'2" and Eddie was 5'5" and I was 5'8" and Ann was 5'2". We sure turned a lot of heads!

From then on we were inseparable friends. We shared a lot of life--some good and some bad. Ann's son Robert graduated from Brentwood and went off to college. In his last year he met Eileen who was later to become Ann's daughter-in-law. Robert went to 'Nam after college graduation and we all sweated out his safe return until we could dance at his wedding.

Ann lost her mom and dad and I shared her grief and she mine when my mom died. Ann gave me my baby shower when I had my son after almost 17 years of marriage. We took Ann and Eddie out for their anniversary and asked them to be Sandy's god parents. When Ann became a grandma we rejoiced together.

Ann and Eddie were at Sandy's 30th birthday party in June 1996 and shortly afterward Eddie was diagnosed with terminal cancer. I saw Ann suddenly find strength she never knew she had as she lovingly

cared for the husband of 62 years until his death. We cried together and then again when my own Al died.

She was an honored family member when my son married in 1997 and proudly held his daughter the following year at her christening. Helen was swaddled in the same blanket Ann had given Sandy at his christening. I rejoiced when several months ago Ann became a great-grandma--something she had been looking forward to.

Ann is now going on 99 years young and although her stamina is low her spunkiness still shines through. She resides in the Medford Health Care Center. I visit every two weeks and call in between. She enjoys talking over old times and recalls happy memories. One that always gets her laughing is our car trip to Florida when she and I sat in the back and talked non-stop from here to there and back again. Al and Eddie teased us about it for months.

Growing old happens to all of us. I just hope I am doing it as gracefully and cheerfully as Ann Mattausch, my dear friend.



Ann Mattausch with Edie's son, Sandy, at his wedding.



BRENTWOOD'S GRANDE DAME

Florence Koehler

The Koehler family owned Brentwood's General Store - the only one in town from 1918. Her husband Connie had inherited the store at age 16 from his father. He left school to run the family business. Florence worked at the store until 1966 when it was forced to close from competition from supermarkets. They rented their building to the US Post Office. Today it is a church across from the old railroad station (now occupied by the Solar Cafe). The Koehlers eventually sold the property on which their home stood on the corner of Brentwood Road to Chemical Bank (later Chase) and Friendly's (now closed too).

She and Connie were married for fifty-eight years and were blessed with children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Florence attended first grade in 1918 when Woodrow Wilson was president. She was born and grew up in Brockport, NY, and attended what was called "Normal School". She decided upon graduation to try her luck on Long Island where it was known that salaries were higher. It was the height of the Great Depression. She began teaching on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1933. It was her 21st birthday.

Brentwood had only a one four room school house. She and another female teacher paid the President of the Board of Education ten dollars a week for room and board to live with his family. Her salary was \$1,400 a year and got no increase for the next three years. In 1936 she received a \$50-a-year-raise.

She used "Dick and Jane" readers her first year. She was there when innovative teaching techniques like Cuisenaire rods, an educational manipulative to teach addition and subtraction, was introduced. She left teaching to raise her family but came back as a substitute teacher at \$5 a day. When she retired in 1968 her salary had grown to over ten thousand dollars.

Brentwood was quite rural when she first arrived. The big town was Bay Shore where families went to the movies or did their shopping. She was always active in the community and was elected to the Board of the Brentwood Library.

She reflected on the times by saying "students were for the most part well-behaved, and their teachers were looked up to in those days." When parents were invited to offer their support "they always backed the teacher". She made home visits when students were ill "to bring homework". Parents appreciated her going beyond the normal call of duty. She always enjoyed teaching.

She is still remembered fondly as a gracious lady and a pillar of education in the Brentwood Schools.



This article drew its material from a piece titled "Hemlock Park to Hilton Head" by John Sherin. It was done at Mrs. Koehler's home in 1994 when Jack Zuckerman, Chris Veech and John interviewed her for the History Project. You can read it in full on our website, www.robsny.org.



ROBS PHOTO ALBUM



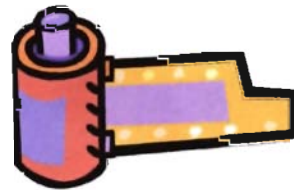
Ken Gaherty & Steve Rochester at Ken's home outside Durango.



Florence Briggs (Secty 10NW), Otilie LaSalata (Teacher Asst SW) and Irene Spano (Secty Funded Programs) at the Bayonet Point Heart Institute Volunteer Recognition Luncheon. April 2010



ORLEANS Concert Utah, 2010 that Steve Rochester and his wife attended. Picture is the band. The Hoppen Brothers are all Brentwood HS grads.



+ Carmela Criscione, Dot Zuckerman, Lois Morella, Karen Storjohann, Alex Werner, Adrienne Eastman on the Nile River in 2008.