



ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

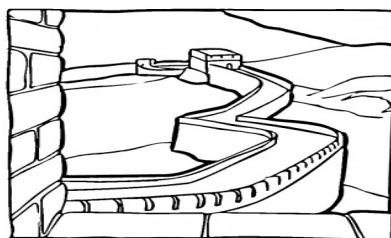
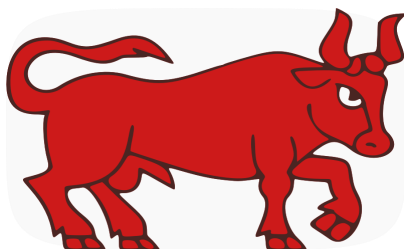
WELCOME TO A NEW YEAR OF ROBS

By Phyllis Goodwin

Welcome to the new year of ROBS meetings. We started with the great idea of calling or emailing people about our upcoming first meeting. The response was overwhelming with attendance topping out at 54 members. We began the meeting with a get-acquainted activity as we didn't have a speaker for our first meeting. Each person was asked to tell two truths and one lie. The group was then asked to discern which statement was untrue. It was mind-boggling the number of people who "ran with the bulls in Pamplona" or "walked on the Great Wall of China." One very straight-faced person surprised everyone by telling three lies. It proves that you can't always believe the most trust-worthy people. There were many inuendos, lots of laughs and a great time was had by all.



Some of our new ROBS retirees (L. to R.) Phyllis Brusca, Doris Silvagnoli, ROBS President Nick Siciliano, Patricia Booy and Toni LaColla-Henke



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.

Dec. 7 - Holiday Luncheon

Jan. 4 - New Year Breakfast

Feb. - No meeting

Mar. 1 - TBA

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 are being collected for the Books to Home Program at every meeting. Please donate.

OFFICERS

Nick Siciliano - President
kpnici@aol.com

Barbara Mascaro - 1st VP

Adrienne Eastman - 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

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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

STILL SERVING

You no doubt have seen this phrase on our website and on our various publications.

Although we are retired, we still contribute to the district in which we worked for so many years.

Let us review some of the programs we participate in to help our school district and community.

A) At all our meetings we collect food for PRONTO to help the needy in the Brentwood community.

B) During the holidays we adopt at least four families and, due to your generous donations, we are able to buy gifts for them.

C) At the end of the school year, we provide four scholarships. We should thank Letty Sustrin who donates the funds for one of these scholarships in memory of her sister, Sheila.

D) We are still contributing to the community. This year we are participating in a mentoring program to help students.

We ought to be very proud of what we are doing. Whenever we can, we will do more to help the Brentwood Community.

As your President, I want to thank all of you for what you have done to make these programs successful. As our logo states, WE ARE "Still Serving."

END-OF-THE-YEAR PARTY UPDATE



The names of these four lovely ladies were inadvertently omitted from our last issue. They are: Top row (l. to r.) Margaret Dineen and Lois Morella. Bottom row (l. to r.) Ann Marie Battaglia and Diana Spagnuolo. Thanks again to all who attended. Hope to see everyone at our next get-together.

IT'S ALL ABOUT US

By Carmela Criscione

And another season is upon us. Autumn sneaked up on us. The leaves are doing double duty changing colors and turkeys are on sale. I recently visited **Shirley Stamm** in Florida. When I left it was 87°. When I landed at Islip it was 59°. It felt delightful.

Welcome aboard to **Fern Sasso**, our new Delegate-at-Large.

Sue Lanchantin (Elementary-SW) and **Maureen Finnegan** (Elementary-SW) will be singing in the Chorus of Emmanuel, a folk musical, at the Sayville Congregational Church in November. **Phyllis Goodwin** and **Marie Poppo** are also members of choral societies. Perhaps we can have a members music meeting in the future.

Laura and **Albert Pfaffe** (Elementary-North) recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in August. Congratulations to you and many more happy, healthy years together.

Speaking of 50th anniversaries, **Kris Dougherty** (Special Ed - Elementary) and her husband, Tom, celebrated the 50th anniversary of their college graduation at St. Leo's in Florida.

ROBS received lovely thank you notes from **Harriet Pepine** and **Kathy Guleksen** who both "retired" as **ROBS** officers after many years. Thank you for

all your hard work and dedication to our organization.

Susana Bouza recently returned from Antarctica (see page 7) but also went on a river cruise in September visiting Paris, Versailles, Chantilly, the Champagne region and Normandy Beach. We look forward to hearing all about that.

Ronda Brooks (SW - NMS) also had a busy travel year. She visited Greece, Italy, France, Mexico, Florida (three times!), Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Arizona. Look for some of her adventures in our next issue!

Congratulations to the **BTA** for their formidable project of renewing membership for all staff members. **BTA** signed up 1400 members (100%) in 15 days. Well done, Kevin Coyne and the 147 **BTA** delegates.

Sad news to report. **Evelyn Vannoy** (long time attendance secretary) recently passed away. She lived with her daughter, Odette, in Ohio. We also lost **Patricia Hucke** (English - HS) in October and **Richard Roth** (Health - HS). Dick was also a driver's ed teacher. In November, we lost **John Podstupka** (Ind. Arts - NMS). Our sympathies to all who lost loved ones.

December 2nd will see the annual **Gary Mintz** Race which gives scholarships to Brentwood students. For more infor-

mation about the Race or to donate gifts for raffles, please contact Diane Cazzetta, Ross Center, Room 2205, no later than November 27.

Diana Spagnuolo has been working with Michelle Rogers on donations to the Les Black Scholarship Fund. Les was Superintendent for many years as well as **BTA** president before Joe Hogan (if you can image that). Donations to the Scholarship Fund can be sent to Michelle Rogers, Principal of Southwest Elementary School.

Rick Mundy (Science - HS) had, in the month of September, a show of his work at the Bayard Cutting Arboretum. His eight painting series titled "These Mountains" shows various views of the Adirondacks. Rick showed **ROBS** members a sampling of his work and techniques at the members' art meeting several years ago. For more info about Rick, he can be reached at 631-689-6298 or RickMundyWatercolors.com.

Please remember that this column and the whole newsletter is **ALL ABOUT US**. Please pass on any news items you wish to share with members.



STUDENT INTERNSHIPS RESULT IN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

by Jim Nanos

Our guest speaker at our October 5, 2018 meeting was Gary Teich. He shared information with us about a program he operates for special needs students in partnership with the East Islip Schools. This program is designed to develop job skills for each individual involved.

Working with Lee's Auto Body Shop on Main Street, East Islip, the students participated two times per week. Each person is encouraged to accept challenges by being asked, "Who wants to....?" As they become more confident, various skills are taught to them to "create" a car. The vehicles start out as total

wrecks and are transformed into fully restored and equipped security cars with lights and all the trimmings. They are aptly named "Learn and Respect." Beaming with pride in their accomplishment, they have worked and completed a second security vehicle for their school district, East Islip. The second security car was dubbed "E Pluribus Schoolum".

Both of Gary's parents were members of **ROBS** (Merrill, an elementary teacher at North and Ruth, an elementary teacher at Northeast).

Ed note: Gary is very active in community affairs and is the president of the East Islip Chamber of Commerce. His son Matthew (who is only 20 years old) is the Commissioner of KIC (Keep Islip Clean) and is second vice president of the East Islip Chamber of Commerce.

Gary clearly enjoys working with these students. The young folks are proud of what they have accomplished. Together, Gary and his team have reconditioned a van. This vehicle became the "Vet Van," a courtesy vehicle for veterans' transportation to needed services (doctor's appointment, hospital stays). This project was through the American Legion Post #411 in Islip. To assist this program, you can "buy a star" as part of their fundraiser. Details are found at www.rbpost411.org or call 631- 581-2465. Their address is P.O. Box 384, Islip NY 11751.

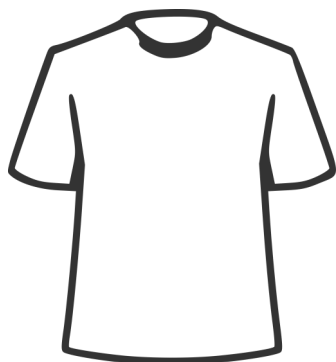
For these special needs students, Gary Teich and the East Islip community, this is a win, win, win situation!



Carmela Criscione with Gary Teich



ROBS PRIDE



Ellen Bresloff wants to know if there is any interest in a tee shirt or golf shirt with the **ROBS** owl and the words above and below spelling out **R.O.B.S.** and Still Serving. The shirts would be black and short sleeved. Approximate cost would be \$15 for the tee shirt and \$20 for the golf shirt. Sizes S-XL.

For more information, contact Ellen at flwrs4fun@gmail.com



DR. BERYL DORSETT'S JAPAN TRIP

By Paula Moore

Our travel group consists of 15 mostly retired, well-traveled, energetic, professional women who like to immerse themselves in the culture of the countries they visit.

I have traveled with Dr. Dorsett to Egypt and China though most of the group have traveled with her to places such as Viet Nam, Cambodia, countries throughout Africa, Australia, India, Dubai, Brazil.

Our plane took off at 1:30 am for the 18 hour trip to Osaka, Japan via Hong Kong and I was awake the entire time using some of that time listening to music, watching movies, reading and reflecting on the crazy, bizarre day I had prior to making that 1:30 am flight. Also, making a vow to myself that the next time I fly across the world, I will fly first class. I do this every time until they quote the price and then I get the guilty feeling that I am wasting my children's inheritance.

We toured Osaka, located on Osaka Bay. With its navigable Yodo River and numerous canals, the city became known as the City of Water and is often referred to as Venice of Japan. We toured the Aerial Garden Observatory and Twin Towers. We were able to get a 360° degree view of Osaka as well as a view all the way to Awaji Island.

We then proceeded to the Nanba and Dotonbori districts where we learned about the unique street food culture. We learned how to make Takayaki (octopus balls) at a street food stand. Dotonbori is situated along the Dotonbori Gawa River. The city was formerly a pleasure district. Today the remnants of that lifestyle can be felt and seen in the numerous small restaurants and bars that dot the river. There we found great restaurants and excellent shopping. Of course, we went shopping.

We spent a day at Mt. Koya, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a Buddhist retreat, where we visited one of the more than 100 Buddhist temples. We visited Japan's largest ceme-

tery. I had no interest in visiting the cemetery, but once I got there, I was awestruck by each of the large beautifully designed mausoleums owned by large corporations such as Nissan, Sony, etc. that inter the ashes of their workers. Can you imagine this in the US? We also visited a Buddhist complex that consisted of 20 temples, pagodas and stupas. Afterwards, we were treated to a Okonomyaki dinner at a local restaurant.



Next we traveled by bullet train to Hiroshima. The city was not what I expected. Hiroshima is a modern city. The only remnant was one building that was left just as it was after the atom bomb was dropped. The building was located in Peace Park and Museum (a UNESCO World Heritage

Site) with a tangible link to Hiroshima's unique past. Visiting the museum was a sobering view on the horrors of war.

After visiting Hiroshima we took the ferry to Miyajima to see the UNESCO-listed Itukushima Shrine to view the well-known "floating" torii gates. At high tide, the gate seems to float on the water and is ranked as one of Japan's three best views. The island had many shops and, of course, we shopped.

The next day we boarded the bullet train to Kyoto. While there, we visited Nijo Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage site and former residence of the founder of Edo Shogunate. The castle, completed in 1603, is famous for its Momoyama architecture, decorated sliding doors and floors that squeak like nightingales when someone walks on them. You can imagine the sound when you have a couple of hundred tourists walking on the floor at the same time. Afterward we visited the Golden Pavilion Temple, a Zen temple that functions as a sharden, housing sacred relics of the Buddha.

One of the highlights of this trip was visiting the impressive Kodaiji Temple, which featured richly decorated interiors and zen gardens. The gardens were absolutely beautiful, serene and almost mesmerizing. When we walked among the gardens, no one spoke a word. I would say that I was awestruck by the peacefulness and beauty of the gardens.

After visiting the gardens, we had a tea break where we learned the ceremony of serving tea Japanese style. Kyoto conjures images of Japan streets of traditional wooden houses, the click-clack of geta on paving stones, geisha passing in a flourish of bright silks and temple pagodas surrounded by cherry blossom trees.

We traveled to Kanazawa by bullet train, travelling at 175 mph, where we explored one of the three most famous gardens in Japan and explored the Natamachi Samurai district where samurai and families used to reside.

The next day we traveled to Hakone by bullet train. We cruised the Lake Ashi where we took the ropeway up to Mt. Komagatake for a spectacular panoramic view of Mt. Fuji, except the day we went was hazy and foggy.

We traveled to Tokyo, the bustling capital of Japan, with a population of over 38 million people, where we traveled to Harajuku which is famous for its street fashion, explored Ginza, Tokyo's most famous upscale shopping and restaurant



district, visited Tokyo Tower, learned the origami art, the process of making, dyeing and decorating origami paper. We totally enjoyed the night life, and, of course, we shopped. We also learned the art of making sushi, (I am a certified sushi maker), visited Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple and enjoyed a Sumida River Cruise.

Next stop, home!

My reflections:

- The Japanese were friendly and helpful
- They have a deep respect and sense of duty
- The Japanese have a deep sense of their history

PROJECT HOPE: A TIME OF GIVING

By Letty Sustrin
(twinniesls@optonline.net)

Many years ago, **ROBS** began **PROJECT HOPE!** This project was a way that the **RETIREES OF THE BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS** could show our support and love for the families the district services. Through “Suburban Children” an organization located in Bay Shore, we have been able to adopt local families and give them “HOPE” during the Holiday Season. Our organization provides food for Thanksgiving, and gifts for the members of the families at Christmas time. We have been fortunate that our **ROBS** members have been so generous each year when, “giving” time has come. With your wonderful support, **ROBS** has been able to adopt three families each year. We hope we can do this again for the 2018 Holiday Season. **PROJECT HOPE** has touched the lives of many; not only the families that we make happy, but also those who are involved in trying to fulfill some of the dreams of people who are less fortunate than themselves. For Thanksgiving, our special “Feast Expert,” Phyllis Goodwin, organizes the shopping and delivering of holiday goods to the adopted families so that they can be blessed with a wonderful holiday meal.

Once again, I am honored to be chairing this committee. I’m looking forward to fun days of shopping with my loyal elves, Lois Morella and Loretta Ellington, helping me. At the beginning of December we will have a “Wrapping Party” at the Brentwood Library and need volunteers to come help wrap, deliver the presents to the families, and socialize with the committee (delicious goodies!!!!) Please make your checks out to **ROBS**, and put “Project Hope” in the memo area. All donations should be sent to our Treasurer:

Carmen Roldan
49 Linda Lane
N. Babylon, NY 11703

Thanking you in advance for your support. Have a wonderful holiday season.



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL LUNCHEON - August 16, 2018



Back row (l. to r.) Carmela Criscione, Susana Bouza, Ronda Brooks, Jim Nanos, Ellen Edelstein, Valerie Vismale, Nick Siciliano
Front row (l. to r.) Adrienne Eastman, Letty Sustrin, Phyllis Goodwin, Barbara Mascaro

OUR CRUISE TO ANTARCTICA

By Susana Bouza

On February 20th of this year, we traveled to Santiago de Chile. The temperature in Chile was in the 80's. It is winter in the US, but in South America and Antarctica it is still summer. We traveled with a group from the US and Canada. In Santiago, we met with the group that also signed up to take the Pre-Cruise Extension trip with us before our flight to Easter Island the following day. Easter Island is the most isolated, inhabited island in the world. It is a tropical island where you can see the Moai. The Moai are statues that weigh several tons each. It is so incredible to see them all over the island. On February 25th, we flew back to Santiago de Chile to meet with the people that would join us on the Antarctica Cruise. After staying two days in Santiago, we flew the following day to Punta Arenas. This city is the world's southernmost continental city. The temperature is 49 degrees now. We boarded our ship, the MS Midnatsol, on March 2nd at 5pm. We sailed through the Magellan Strait. This connects the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. We left the American Continent behind. The following morning, we went to collect our orange waterproof jackets that are given to you when you take this cruise. We also picked up our waterproof boots. The boots are lent to you for the duration of the cruise and you keep them in your cabin. We were all divided into groups to board on the rubber rafts that will be used for disembarkation in Antarctica. Our group was #13, the Giant Petrel. The order of the groups gets switched every trip, so you get a different order each time you get off of the ship.

I was well prepared to avoid seasickness: pressure point wristbands, fresh ginger roots, ginger candy and Bonine. I was also well prepared for the cold with lots of layers. It takes two sea days to reach Antarctica. We first sailed through the Beagle Passage, Cape Horn and the Drake Passage. It is getting colder, there is a lot of ice in the water and you can see icebergs. The sea is rough.

On the first day when we reached Ant-

arctica, we boarded the rubber rafts and we cruised King George to see the icebergs and the blue water. The next day, at Half Moon Island, it was our first landing. Before you board the raft, you step into a bin with both boots. The bin is filled with a disinfecting solution so you don't bring any germs to Antarctica. It takes about 15 minutes to board the rubber rafts and reach the shore. You sit on the rim of the raft and hold on to the rope that is around it to stay seated and not fall off. Before you land, the members of the Exploration Team are the first ones to get off and survey the place to make sure there are no crevices you may fall into. They place markers and make a route for the people to follow. They also bring walking poles for anyone to use if are needed or wanted. Of course, I used them! We all walk in a single file following the marked path. We have to keep at least a 5 foot distance from any of the penguins or seals. If they are the ones to get close to you, then it is OK. Sometimes you couldn't continue walking because penguins were blocking your path! You had to wait or go around them. It was so amazing to know that you are stepping on Antarctica. It's the end of the world! It is icy and slippery and the view is just fantastic. The air is so clean and pure. There are lots and lots of penguins, a few seals and petrels. We climbed a hill to take a great picture with the penguins in the front and the ship in the background. It was snowing a little and it was cold. I felt cozy with 6 layers of clothing. In the afternoon, we saw so many whales around the ship. When you return to the ship, they help you out of the rubber rafts and then you step on a machine that washes your boots with brushes so you don't bring any penguin poop on to the ship!

The third day we went to Paradise Bay. We took rubber rafts to cruise and then land at the Chilean Base. In the afternoon of the fourth day, we went to Port Lockroy in the Niumayer Channel and Gerlach Strait. There were so many whales, orcas and humpbacks. So many! The fifth day, we landed on Deception Island, which is a big and active caldera in Antarci-

ca. There was freezing rain falling and it was very windy. I felt like a true explorer. I had to use both poles not to fall. You had to walk sideways in order not to be pushed by the wind. Forget about taking pictures. It was impossible. The main purpose was to stay upright. We were all covered with ice but it was exhilarating to be there doing this. We walked all around, slipping and sliding. Many people chose not to come to the shore because of the weather. While we were on the rafts going back to the ship, you would see the waves coming over the raft but by the time the waves landed on you, it was ice! This was our last day in Antarctica. We then headed towards the Falkland Islands. We sailed through the Drake Passage. The Captain tried to avoid a bad storm but we still got 6 hours of very rough seas with waves over 50 feet. We received a certificate to prove that we survived the storm! We then continued to sail to reach the Falkland Islands. We stayed there two days and then we headed to Montevideo, Uruguay. We took a tour to a Gaucho Ranch for lunch and then we were taken to the airport to board our plane home on March 20th.

It was an extraordinary experience! We are so glad we had the opportunity to do this incredible journey!





ROBS
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ROBS MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR 2018-19

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Building _____ Department _____

Retirement Year _____ Birthday (Month and day) _____

*Checks should be made out to **ROBS** with "Dues" written on the memo line and sent to:

**Carmen Roldan
49 Linda Lane
N. Babylon, NY 11703**

Please send your dues of \$25 as soon as possible.

Please Do Not Staple Your Check To This Form.

Thank you for your prompt return.