



# ROBS - RETIREES OF BRENTWOOD SCHOOLS

## LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

On December 7th, **ROBS** closed out 2018 with a Holiday Party at the Irish Coffee Pub. It was a happy crowd that mingled and caught up on news. For once, the weather cooperated. You may recall another holiday luncheon at the Irish Coffee Pub during a bad snow fall that had all our dinners wrapped up so we could all leave. We started 2019 in grand fashion also. Our New Year's Breakfast at the Candlelight Dinner was also well attended. Some additional tables were necessary to accommodate everyone. (See photos on back cover) Congratulations on a well-done job to our Hospitality and Events coordinator, Valerie Vismale.



Adrienne Eastman, Edie Filosa, Carmela Criscione



Toni LaCollaHenke, Patti Booy



Valerie Vismale, Carmen Roldan, Barbara DeLillo, Helen Feeny, Barbara Terlecki



Marty Hochheiser, Gloria Hannemann



Valerie Vismale, Margaret Demers



Carole Comerford, Peter Vercillo



Letty Sustrin, Lois Morella, Marie Poppo, Maria Canale



Barbara Mascaro, Janet Verdi



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Virginia Guarino, Connie & Tony Gennaro



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Eleanor Roode, Diana Spagnuolo, Rachel DeCaesar



Christina Ayasse, Nickie DiPietro, Amalia Moise, Susana Bouza, Orieta Blanco, Gina Schnyer



Maureen Finnegan, Sue Lanchantin



Margaret Demers, Pat Schuler, Toni LaColla Henke, Patti Booy

### 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.

Feb. - No meeting

Mar. 1 - HS Performing Arts Dept.

Apr. 5 - Susan Cullen, Physical Therapist on Fall Prevention and Aging Gracefully

May 3 - TBA

June 7 - Luncheon 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.

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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)



## NICK'S NOTES

*By Nick Siciliano*

Happy New Year! Another year, and we are starting our 28th as an organization. There are a number of issues confronting us. I urge you to be aware of them and take appropriate action.

Membership, to enable **ROBS** to continue, is needed. Membership is down, and I urge you to talk to friends who are retired and have not joined. We are having fewer retirees because 25-30 years ago, the District was in the throes of declining enrollment and fewer teachers were hired. We need all the new retirees to join.

We have to keep informed about proposals and legislation, in both Albany and Washington, that can impact on retirees. We will, of course, pass on all information that we have. We will be starting each membership meeting with reports on events that may impact us as well as finding interesting topics for our meetings. If you have any ideas for meetings, please pass them on to me or any other officer.

On a positive note, I would like to thank all of you who contributed to our Project Hope drive which is successful through your generous donations. We will also be launching our scholarship drive (see below).

Looking back on the year, we note the passing of some of our members or their family members. We offer our sincere condolences and want you to know that we deeply care about our members.

Tell us how you feel about your organization. Do you have ideas to make us more responsive whether through articles in the newsletters or programs? This is your organization and the officers and members of the Executive Board want to hear from you.

Happiest of New Years and I'm looking forward to seeing you at the March meeting.

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## EDUCATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

Education is one of the most important tools that you can give a child. For many years you have educated new generations of children and helped those who wanted to become educators themselves through our scholarship program.

Every year, four scholarships are awarded to Brentwood High School seniors wishing to pursue careers as teachers. We call on you again to generously continue to provide the funds for these scholarships.

We will be collecting at our general membership meetings or you can send a check made out to "**ROBS**" with "Scholarship Fund" on the memo line. Please mail to our Treasurer, Carmen Roldan at 49 Linda Lane, North Babylon, New York 11703.

It's an investment in the future.



## IT'S ALL ABOUT US

*By Carmela Criscione*

Happy 2019! Another year has slipped by. This past November seemed to hang around forever. Whenever I looked at the calendar it was still November. When December came in, it went like a flash. I hope all your days were merry and bright.

My resolution for the new year is not to make any resolutions. I don't stick with them very long and then I feel guilty because I caved. So for a guilt-free new year -- no resolutions.

Books, books, books were donated to Brentwood Book-To-Home Program. **John Sherin**, working with the Jericho Library, donated nearly fifty cartons of books. **Gary Teich** donated six boxes in memory of his parents (**Ruth and Merrill Teich** were both Brentwood teachers). To recap the program: donated children's books in good condition are displayed on tables outside the security office at the Administration Building and, just before school ends for the year, in the public meeting room. Children can choose **as many books** as they want and can **keep** them. Sometimes small stuffed animal toys are donated and the little ones who can't yet read can take them. Bring books to our meetings or call the Language Arts Office, 631-434-2241, to make arrangements to drop off books.

Congratulations going out to **Edythe Welch's** (Admin) dad who recently celebrated his 100th birthday!

Sorry to report the passing of

**Conrad Follansbee's** (Maslow-Toffler Principal) wife in November and **Herb Laub** also lost a son in December. Our sincere sympathies to both families. We lost **Gail Inzerillo Latella** (English/HS), **Lorraine Keen** (Home Ec/EMS), and **Evelyn Vannoy** (Attendance Secretary) in November, and **Peggy DelBene** (SS/EMS) in December. In January, **Eleanor Roode** (Elem/NE) passed away.

We lost one of our founding members, **Ruth McCalla** in December. Ruth was very active in **ROBS** and served as our Hospitality and Programs contact. She, **Phyllis Goodwin**, **Harriet Pepine**, **Dot Zuckerman** and I made up a revolving Mah Jongg group. We played the Chinese style without the card. Ruth always made Mah Jongg with flower tiles. We still play with Geri Burgert (Dot's daughter) and whenever she wins with flowers, we think of Ruth. Services were private. Donations can be made to Roberta's House, 2510 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, Maryland, 21218. It provides a safe and supportive place for grieving families.

**ROBS** contributed \$250 to the **Les Black** Scholarship Fund. It was **Diana Spagnuolo** who suggested it and, when it was brought up at the Executive Board Meeting, it was approved unanimously. Anyone wishing to contribute to the fund can contact **Michele Rogers** (Principal) at Southwest.

**Valerie Vismale's** church has donated 200 small bags of lotion, soap, and shampoo to the Bay Shore YMCA. They, with St. Pat-

rick's Church, provide services to the homeless such as the opportunity to take showers. We all can appreciate how good we feel after a shower.

**Monica Martinez**, former Brentwood Schools teacher, was elected to the New York State Senate. Congratulations!

You will shortly be receiving your 2019-2020 **ROBS** Directory. Take a minute and run your fingers down the pages. Reconnect with colleagues and friends you lost contact with or haven't heard from recently. Out-of-Staters, look for people living close to you. Give them a call even if you don't know them. You have the Brentwood Schools in common. Open a dialogue, go out to lunch -- make a connection.

If you watched any coverage of President George H. W. Bush's funeral you may have seen the poignant picture of his golden retriever service dog, Sully, laying in front of the casket. At our September meeting, Cliff Miller gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Friends of American Vet Dogs. He mentioned Sully as one of those dogs. Sully is going back to Smithtown for further training and will be assigned as an all-purpose support/companion dog at Walter Reed Hospital. Anyone wishing to contribute to a wonderful program can contact Cliff Miller, P. O. Box 18, Bohemia NY 11716-0015.

Remember,  
**IT'S ALL ABOUT US!**



## ESTATE PLANNING AND WILLS

*by Diana Spagnuolo*

It was a pleasure to welcome Mr. Christopher Petillo from the law firm of Feldman, Kramer and Monaco, to speak to our members at our November meeting about "Probate Traps and Medicare Tips."

Mr. Petillo explained the different aspects that we should be aware of when writing our wills. Also, he explained what probate means as related to your assets and the importance of designating beneficiaries, properties owned, IRA and retirement accounts and other investments.

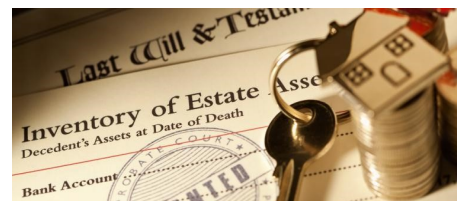
Mr. Petillo made us aware of "probate traps" associated with retirement and other monies.

Very important, and also mentioned, was "uneven splits," when children and spouses are involved in the estate, the will, long term insurance and trusts.

Planning ahead is the best thing you can do. Seek a litigation attorney to discuss issues or any other concerns or questions you may have.

His presentation was very enlightening and impressive. He can be reached at: [cpetillo@fkmlaw.com](mailto:cpetillo@fkmlaw.com)

Ed note: Of course we all know that this is an important subject but we will get to it another day. No, it's something we need to do soon. It's a complicated subject which the speaker explained clearly and answered all our questions. As Diana says in her article, his presentation was great, but we need to contact him or another estate/probate attorney so we do not leave a tangle for someone else to deal with at the end.



## ROBS MEMBERS TRIUMPH AGAIN

*By Letty Sustrin*  
**ROBS** "Project Hope"  
 Chairperson

When my deceased sister, Sheila, and I, retired 20 years ago, we joined **ROBS** and immediately were asked to be on the "Project Hope" Committee which was chaired by Frank and Vern Spencer. Thus began our connection to the families of Brentwood who needed the support and love of the **ROBS** members. To this day, the retirees of Brentwood Schools continue to serve the community. The members open up their hearts, pocketbooks, wallets, and checkbooks, and donations come in from all over the United States for this worthy cause. I am happy to say our organization has made three families (20 people) very happy for this holiday season.

Phyllis Goodwin shopped and provided the families with all the food and goodies to make each family a fantastic Thanksgiving Feast. Thank you, Phyllis, for always doing this, every year. My two special Elves, Lois Morella and Loretta Ellington, were busy little beavers, and were a tremendous help to me. We tried, as best as possible, to make the recipients' wishes come true. Just to give you an example of how hard we worked, the mother in one of the families needed a new comforter set and bed linens. Loretta comparison shopped (she's great at this!) and we were able to get a lovely coordinated set for this Mom. In another family, the father is obviously the cook. He wished for new pots and pans. Lois (she's some bargainer!) went all over until she found him a magnificent set of

blue cookware that even came with all the matching utensils. I had so much fun shopping for one particular teenager on our list who was so proud that he was a "College Student" and wanted "Dorm" things. Hopefully, I made him happy with his "Preppy" gifts. It made me feel so good that our Brentwood families have children who are attending college and will have a better life ahead of them. So, as you can see, our **ROBS** members have done it again. They have truly shown the Brentwood Community that they love and support the district that they all served for most of their lifetime. Thank you, and Happy New Year to all.



## MY FRIEND RUTH

by Harriet Pepine

Ruth McCalla, a very dear friend, passed away on December 12, 2018, in Maryland.

Ruth was involved in the formation of **ROBS** since its early beginnings in 1991.

Her career in the Brentwood Public Schools started in 1968 as an elementary teacher at Pine Park.

During her career she worked in six different elementary schools. We met when she was assigned to Northeast Elementary. Declining enrollment was a challenge, but she took it in stride, working as an elementary physical educa-

tion teacher and ESOL teacher. She retired in 1991 only to start a new career as the Hospitality and Programs Chairperson for **ROBS**. Under her leadership, we enjoyed many interesting pro-



grams. She planned breakfasts, luncheons, trip and arranged for thought-provoking speakers.

Ruth was also very active in her local community and church group. She was nominated for a Community Service award to **NYSUT**. She was a regular mah jongg, bridge, domino and card player. We spent many happy hours together.

She was always willing to help and was an inspiration to others.

We missed her when she moved to Maryland, but she would keep in touch and come to luncheons when possible.

She was a wonderful friend and I shall miss her very much.

## YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE JEWISH TO LOVE YIDDISH

by Ellen Edelstein

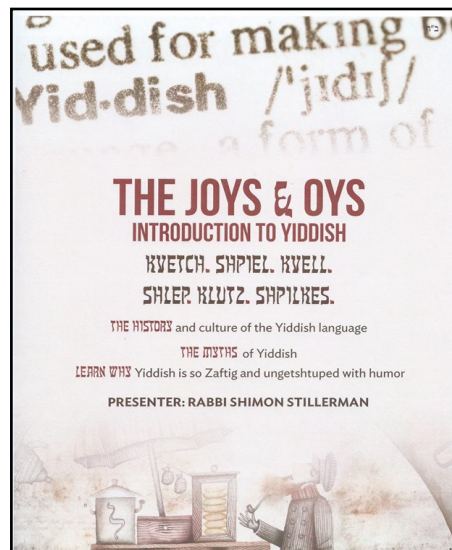
That was the name of the class that was held over five weeks at the Brentwood Public Library and attended by **ROBS** members Letty Sustrin, Ronda Brooks, Cheryl Castano and me, along with several other interested people. It was taught by Rabbi Shimon Stillerman of Chabad of Islip and *oy*, did we learn a lot!

On the first day, we were presented with a workbook and asked how many of the words on the first page we were familiar with. The Rabbi, in his *yarmulka*, was a real *mensch*, and he *schmoozed* with the class and *kvelled* as people recognized words like *bagel*, *blintz* and *knish*. The second week of class, he brought in potato *latkes*, which his wife, the *Rebbetzin*, made for *Chanukah*. Nobody had the *chutzpah* to *kvetch* about the calories we consumed!

By the end of the fifth week, most of us were able to put together simple sentences about our families, our homes, our pets and, of course, food. Each class ended with a Yiddish song, and we followed along in our workbooks

as the song was played. It was nice to be able to understand the meaning of songs that I had been singing since childhood.

This was the second series of classes that Rabbi Stillerman taught (the first was at the Bay Shore - Brightwaters Library,) and he is planning more classes at other libraries in Islip. He would like to bring all the classes together at some point in order to continue the conversations. He also invited the class to his home on January 4 to celebrate *Shabbos in the Shtetl*, with a traditional Friday night meal. Only Cheryl and I were able to attend, but we really enjoyed *schmoozing* with the Stillerman family while we ate our potato *kugel*, *gefilte fish* (and not the kind from the jar!), *kasha varnishkes*, roasted chicken, soup with *knaidel*, *challah* and chocolate *babke* for dessert. What's not to love?



## My European Odyssey

**By Ronda Brooks**

Every summer for the past eight years, I had the extreme privilege of leading a People to People Student Ambassador delegation. I've been to China, Australia and Europe with several other leaders and approximately 45 high school students from all over the US. Summer 2018 was no exception.

In early July, we took off from JFK and landed in Athens, Greece! The next 19 days were nothing short of amazing. We explored Athens and climbed up the Acropolis to the Parthenon. We ate deliciously fresh Greek salads and learned how to make stuffed grape leaves. We stopped at a school and had Greek dancing lessons.



After a breezy ferry ride, we visited the island of Aegina, where the major crop is pistachio nuts. After doing community service on a farm that rehabilitates injured animals, we headed to the beautiful blue waters of the Saronic Gulf in the Aegean Sea. A little shopping trip through the village had us tasting everything pistachio, including pistachio butter, pesto, ice cream, infused oil and cookies. So yummy!

Back on the mainland, we visited Olympus, the home of the first

Olympics among other historic towns.

The second country on our journey was Italy. Pompeii was fascinating and our tour guide was so funny, as he led us through the cobblestone streets telling stories and jokes.



After Pompeii, we traveled a few miles away to Mt. Vesuvius, the volcano responsible for burying Pompeii under 13-20 feet of ash. We climbed to the top of Vesuvius, which is only half the height that it was before it blew its top nearly 2000 years ago.



Our travels took us to Rome where we marveled at the Colosseum and the Roman Forum.

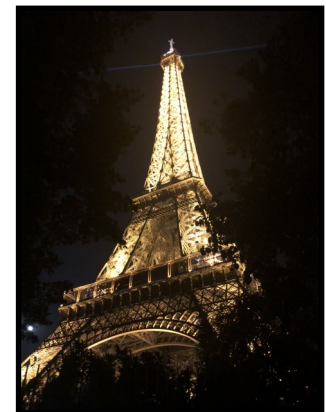
Next, we visited Vatican City (which is actually a separate country within Rome.) The art and the history are incredible.



One of our stops took us to Venice where we rode in gondolas along the Grand Canal and shopped for souvenirs.

The trip continued with many more adventures, Florence, and Pisa among them. As it drew to a close, we boarded an overnight train to Paris, where we spent our last two days.

In Paris, we visited the Montmartre area which afforded beautiful views of the entire city. We ate snails and had an art lesson at a neighborhood restaurant. We visited the Mona Lisa at the Louvre. And of course, we went to the Eiffel Tower which was stunningly lit up at night.



We were sad to say goodbye to each other when the tour ended, but we all went home with fantastic new memories and lots of new friends.



## TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

### **JANUARY 2018**

*Carl Fogliano - SS/HS*

*William Dargan - Spec Ed/Adm*

### **FEBRUARY**

*Les Black, Superintendent*

### **AUGUST**

*Patricia Crevoisserat - Special Ed*

*Carol Kwitkin - English*

### **OCTOBER**

*Patricia Hucke - English/HS*

*Richard Roth - Health/HS*

*John Podstupka - Industrial Arts/NMS*

### **NOVEMBER**

*Gail Inzerillo-Latella - English/HS*

*Lorraine Keen - Home Ec/EMS*

*Evelyn Vannoy - Attendance Secretary*

### **DECEMBER**

*Ruth McCalla - ESL/NE*

*Peggy DelBene - SS/EMS*

*To all who grieve,  
our sincere condolences.  
They were our friends, colleagues  
and fellow retirees,  
and we miss them too.*

What if the brilliant, twinkling stars  
that bring the dark night sky to life  
are windows looking out of heaven?

And the very moment when  
we're wishing on those stars,  
hoping that the loved ones we have lost  
are happy, safe and free...  
maybe they are looking at those same stars  
from the other side,  
making the same wish for us...  
sending us all their love.

I'm wishing you the comfort  
of loving memories  
and the feeling that you'll always be  
connected to one  
so close to your heart.

*Sharon Valleau*

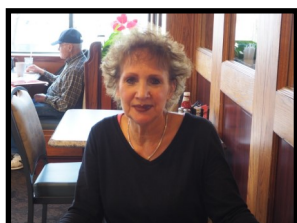




**ROBS**  
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Huntington Station, NY 11746

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11746  
PERMIT 101

### NEW YEAR'S BREAKFAST



Our Hostess, Joan



Tom DiPietro,  
Tony & Connie Gennaro



Edie Filosa, Barbara Terlecki



Ellie Talarek, Nora Kirdahy,  
Patti Booy



Herb Laub, John Sherin



Diana Spagnuolo, Nickie DiPietro



Barbara Terlecki, Helen Feeny,  
Barbara DeLillo



Orieta Blanco,  
Susana Bouza,  
Amalia Moise



Nancy Churchillo, Orieta Blanco



Myra Feeny, Anne Hutnick



Barbara DeLillo,  
Rachel DeCaesar



Toni LaColla Henke,  
Carmela Criscione



Adrienne Eastman,  
Frank Spencer

