



PORT OF CALL

PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER

PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK

DECEMBER 2009

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Visit Our Website at: www.pwta.us/Retirees

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It has been a hell of a year - and a year that should make most of us give thought to doubling or trebling our VOTE/COPE contributions; efforts to achieve political goals, on both a national and state-wide basis, have been tedious and costly both in dollars and physical stamina. Before we summarize accomplishments to date, we must thank NYSUT's diligent officers and legislative staffers who have worked so long and hard on our behalf.

You have read by now that while there was agreement to reduce the state's deficit by \$2.7 billion dollars, the legislature held firm against the governor's plan for huge midyear cuts to schools; however, this will mean drawing upon NEXT YEAR's federal stimulus dollars - next year's budget deficit will likely range between \$5 billion and \$7 billion. The budget bills did hit hard upon grant-based programs, e.g. Teacher Centers will be subject to a 12.5% cut of their funds unexpended as of Nov. 1st. With that said, we must thank our own legislators who held firm against huge midyear cuts to schools - not easily achieved.

Tier 5, whose enactment NYSUT was successful in delaying for almost a year, did come to fruition. Although it will mean that the minimum retirement age for employees hired after 1/1/10 will be 57, with 30 years of service without penalty, that vesting in the pension system will now require 10 rather than 5 years, and that they will contribute 3.5% to their pensions, the good news for many is that the Legislature and Governor are committed to offer a 55/25 early retirement option during a 3-month window in 2010. Many of the benefits provided previously remain in place.

Saving the best parts of this brief discussion for last: we no longer will have to BEG on an annual basis for a continuation of the health insurance moratorium for retirees. THE AGREEMENT PERMANENTLY PROTECTS RETIREE HEALTH INSURANCE FROM BEING DIMINISHED - unless in-service Members negotiate a reduction in their own health insurance as well. This is a HUGE gain in a tough year! NYSUT was also successful in maintaining the integrity of the DEFINED BENEFIT plan that can be counted on by all members, current and future - for example, continuation of a permanent COLA benefit for all future retirees. (And yes, we WILL try to improve that COLA...) I personally want to thank all those of you who have sent your FAXES, telephoned and/or written to legislators every time you have been asked; nothing gets accomplished in a vacuum.

In re health insurance, we have all kept up with the long process and multitude of proposals. We do need to keep fact from fiction. Medicare will NOT be cut; reform protects and strengthens, and it neither uses a dime of the Medicare trust fund to pay for reform nor cuts guaranteed Medicare benefits. Reform will strengthen the financial health of the program and add five years to the Medicare trust fund; it will crack down on waste, fraud and abuse. Do not fall prey to distortion of facts- always check the veracity of sources and statements.

May 2010 be the start of a new year and a new decade where love and peace replace hatred and war among peoples, where unemployment recedes and all people can live out their daily lives free of anguish - and may all of us be blessed with good health and an optimistic outlook for the future. *Elaine*



Elaine Berman

For Your Information item: Many of you have enjoyed reading the *Gray Matters* columns, begun in 1996 by Saul Friedman, that appeared in the Saturday editions of NEWSDAY. Mr. Friedman has discontinued working for NEWSDAY since its decision to require some readers to pay for access to the paper's website. His column can now be read on his own website, timegoesby.net, on the same weekly basis.



P.W.R.E. CHAPTER NEWS

THE CULINARY INSTITUTE TOUR



After touring the Culinary Institute in Hyde Park, New York and eating lunch at the Escoffier, our group of 31 visited the Franklin Roosevelt home and museum nearby.

Important Dates to Remember

The 2010 Spring Luncheon
April 22, 2010
at the
George Washington Manor in Roslyn.
Time: 12 Noon
The cost of \$35 per person
includes lunch and a glass of wine.

Book Club Dates
January 19, 2010- 11 A.M.
at Joyce Shapiro's
The Book: *The Outliers*
by: Malcolm Gladwell



March 1, 2010 - 11 A.M.
at Linda Bracken's
The Book: *Mornings on Horseback*
by: David Mc Cullough

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Joan Gerken

Condolences Were Sent To:

- The sister of Marianne Atkielski
- Nancy Aurori on the loss of her husband
- Anne Burkard on the loss of her sister
- The Family of Marie Doscher
- Gail and Barry Femmel on the loss of their daughter
- The Family of George Gillette
- Miriam Hopkins on the loss of her son
- The Family of Ida Ioanna
- Annette Keenan on the loss of her husband

A \$50 contribution was sent to the PWTA Scholarship Fund in memory of each:

- Marianne Atkielsk
- Marie Doscher
- George Gillette
- Ida Ioanna



Get Well Wishes Were Sent to:

- Emily McGrade
- Toni Salerno



A WALKING TOUR OF GREENWICH VILLAGE

Retired Carle Place teacher Mike Nicoll guided eleven of us through the streets of Greenwich Village on November 9th.

All donations for PWTA scholarships now go to the PWTA Scholarship Foundation, and thus are tax-deductible

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... AND ITEMS OF INTEREST



When the **Port Washington Education Foundation** held its Grant Awards Ceremony on November 12th, it recognized our PWRE members from the Education Support Center. In addition, it was announced that the Foundation will celebrate Lee Aschenbrenner Day each April beginning with April 27, 2010. "T" Aschenbrenner was among the volunteers who attended the ceremony.

75 Years of PWTA History

Thanks to Tessa Jordan & Mary Anne Cariello



Last Fall 255 current staff, retirees and guests celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Port Washington Teachers Association. Shortly thereafter, Tessa



and Mary Anne decided to pursue the idea of compiling a written history of the association. With the help of many, they've done just that. You can read their work on the www.pwta.us/Retirees website. Below is just a sample of what they've done.

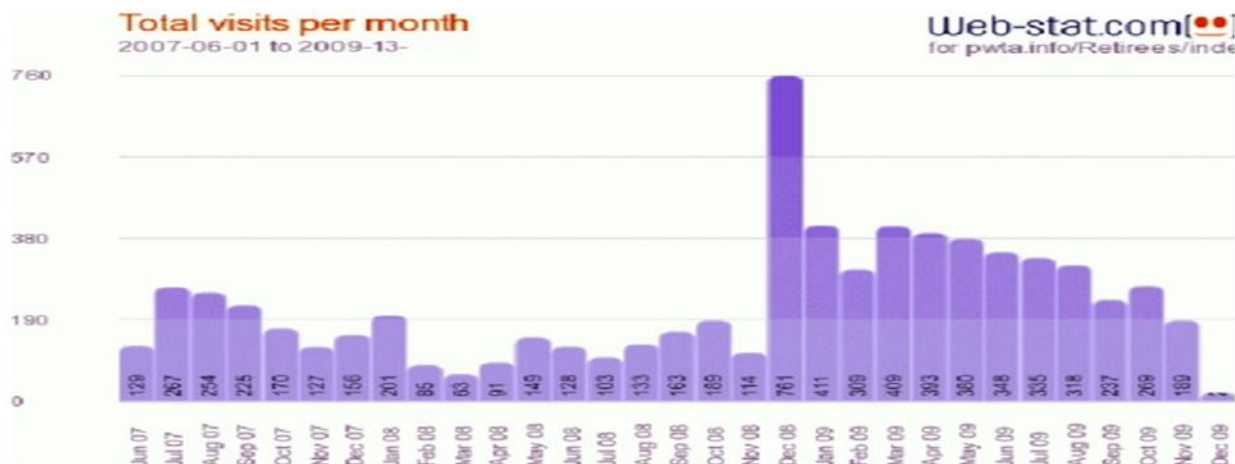
PORT WASHINGTON TEACHERS ASSOCIATION 1932-2007

1945 Salary Committee established.
"Teachers revolted at the Board's decision not to grant a raise. The budget had been passed and the Board said it could not be changed. The teachers disagreed...and sat there until a raise was voted by the Board...That same evening the teachers who were present got together by school and chose a member from each school to be on the Salary Committee."

Over 7,125 Visitors!

by Barbara Mayer, Webmaster

Since the "birth" of our website in late June 2007, we have had over 7,125 visitors! As you can see from the graph, below, (as of December 5) the number of monthly visitors has grown substantially over the past year. (The graph is part of the information we get from WebStat, the company that provides the counter on our homepage and all the other statistics we get.) We started out with an average of about 100 monthly visits, and we now average over 300! As always, I beseech you to let me know what types/categories of information you'd like to see added to the website. I have gotten some requests for specifics recently, and very much appreciate the input! I also request pictures to add to our gallery - it's always wonderful to see our families grow and our travels documented - we are fascinating people! So, come and visit - soon and often!



KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH ISSUES THAT AFFECT US



Elaine and Sheila Goldberg, another retiree—NYSUT PAC representative, met with Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy when they were in Washington, D.C. meeting with our Congressional people about health plans, use of stimulus money for New York State education, etc.

Elaine wears “many hats” in addition to her role as our Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter President.

Thanks to her efforts, while “donning” those other hats, she has kept us informed on legislative issues that affect us and has worked to educate our elected officials, both in New York and Washington, D.C., about the needs of retirees.



RC 19 Co-President Louise Levine Rosenthal along with Elaine and two Suffolk Retiree Presidents enjoyed real Buffalo wings in Buffalo while attending the RA meeting.

Eighth Annual Nassau Regional Retiree Conference

If you have missed any or all of the eight, we encourage you next year to attend the ninth! Not only are these conferences an opportunity to talk to other retirees from throughout Nassau County, but they provide a wealth of valuable information and insights delivered by provocative speakers. Opening comments this year were delivered by Kathleen Donahue, NYSUT Vice-President, who filled us in on NYSUT initiatives to fill retiree needs as well as the other most cogent issues on which NYSUT continues to be involved - e.g. Social Justice, Fair Trade, Women's Rights, Civil Rights, etc. Luncheon Keynote Speaker was from the NYS Office of the Aging, providing a wealth of information on the types of services and aid available through this agency.

In keeping with NYSUT's theme of "Landscaping Your Retirement," attendees had a choice of

workshops, i.e. Exploring Your Roots (presented by a member of the Italian Genealogical Group), Raising Your Credit Awareness (NEFCU speaker Ellen Smiley - Nassau Educators Federal Credit Union), Harvesting the Rewards of Your Career (NYSTRS Retiree Board member David Keefe), and an enlightening pictorial presentation by Vincent Simeone, Director of the Oyster Bay Planting Fields. Also on the compact agenda was a third mini-session, Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning, presented by the always well-received Herb Kramer of NYSUT's Legal Plan.

The event, complete with continental breakfast and sumptuous lunch, took place at the Woodbury Country Club on November 4th from 8:30 until 3 p.m. Lou Tremante is a regular attendee at these conferences, and we were joined this year by first-timer John Sficos.



NYSUT's annual Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk

At present count, Nassau County NYSUT members have contributed an awesome \$124,000+ to this effort. Those of you who had the misfortune of being on LI on that horrendous Sunday will recall that wind-driven rains and plain old nasty weather kept most of us who usually walk home in our comfy beds, although a number of hearty, stalwart (and very wet!) good souls did get out on the boardwalks of Jones Beach. So given those circumstances, the amount of money raised was incredible - just proves you can give from your wallet even if not from your legs!

WE ASKED TO HEAR FROM YOU, AND WE DID!



Carol and David Kratenstein

From Carol Kratenstein:

David and I just returned from a wonderful Mediterranean Cruise and I would like to share some of our pictures in Port of Call. I liked these pictures of us eating gelato, the windmills of Mykonos, the Spice Market stop and us in a flowery setting on Mykonos.



At the Spanish Steps in Rome.



Visiting Ephesus in Turkey



The windmills of Mykonos



The Spice Market



New retiree Lenore Ilberg couldn't stay away from a classroom for long. She volunteered to teach about apples to her grandson's Pre-K class.

A Pehlke Family Wedding



Karen (left) and Dave (2nd from right) Pehlke celebrated the wedding of their son Jon to his new wife, Tara. (Picture to the right) That's daughter Joy between Karen and Dave and her husband Joe on the right. Joy officiated at her brother's wedding (after obtaining a license in California to do so).



Jon Pehlke with wife Tara after their October 4th wedding in Laguna Beach, California.



Top: John Sficos with granddaughters Samantha, on his lap, and Alexandra shown below



Four month old Max Mayer celebrated his first Thanksgiving on Nov. 26th.



Sandy Rosenwald's youngest granddaughter, Ellie.



Ed Conti's granddaughter Sydney



Share your retired lifestyle, family events, photos, and trips with your former colleagues. You can e-mail pictures and descriptions of events or trips to either your editor or the web-master. See page 2 for the e-mail addresses.

SHARING THOUGHTS



The Herring Has Landed Or Is Anyone Out There Listening?

About a month ago my sister in law, who lives in Dallas, called with the news that she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She was feeling awful, was dark yellow, and could hardly eat.

In that call, she requested that I send her some of her favorite NY food, matjes herring in wine sauce, as she thought it might slip down nicely. Pre-9/11, I had been able to get a quart or so from Fairway for her, wrap it up well, and bring it on the plane. Post 9/11, the appetizing manager sold me a kilo can which I could pack in my suitcase. She wanted one of those giant cans.

Although this is not about me, I knew I was in for a trying experience, as even though the herring is canned, it has to be kept refrigerated for the trip. I got the herring, in Plainview, picked up a Styrofoam cooler on the way out of the store, and stopped at Nuzzolese Bros. in Hicksville on the way back to Port for dry ice. Having been advised at the PO that it would take 3-4 days to reach Dallas, I got sufficient dry ice for 4 days.

I got it all home, wrapped it up in cardboard, using half a roll of duct tape, and brought it to the post office. The clerk wrote “perishable” all over the box, and for 70 cents, I got tracking.

Cost: Herring \$47.50, ice \$25.00, shipping \$40.00 plus 70 cents for tracking.

(Schlepping, priceless.)

Seven days elapsed, and still no herring in Texas!! (There is a biblical analogy in here, you realize.)

On the eighth day, it arrived, package smashed, no ice left at all.

What I learned:--three to four days is a “suggested” delivery time.

--USPS tracking shows when the package left the PO, and when it arrived in Dallas—not, as with every other shipping service, where it is on its journey. (For cripes sake, someone would have called me when the package arrived, for less than 70 cents. I spent a whole week calling daily to see if it had arrived!!)

I wrote to the Postmaster General of the United States, describing as above, in more detail, and got back a letter from an underling apologizing that my package had never arrived.

OOPS—do you have to be able to read to be able to work at the PO?

“...your case will require the knowledge of our mangers overseeing Post offices in your area... we have forwarded the information to them for their review and investigation.”

Next letter (in summary) : “You can get your money back for the contents if you insured them.”

Which brings me to health coverage reform. I watched a program on PBS about citizens having difficulty with health insurance after they had lost their jobs, or who had had their coverage terminated and couldn't replace it on account of pre-existing conditions. The people on the 90 minute program were involved in tremendous ordeals in cost and familial health. All of them said they were in favor of reform.

Camera next focuses on a Senator, who says something like: the American (excuse me, Amurican) people do not want government control of their health care.

Clearly this person in government is out of touch with what the American people want and need.

BUT---In the back of my mind is: what if the new health system runs like the Post Office?

Important Notice LIRDC

Long Island Retiree Delegates Council

Legislative Breakfast Buffet

Meet your NYSUT Delegates and State Political Leaders from Long Island. Get a chance to speak with our lawmakers at this crucial time.

Day & Date: Friday, April 9, 2010
Time: 9:15 a.m. – 12 Noon
Location: The Woodlands at Woodbury
Cost: \$29.50 per person
check payable to LIRDC
Space is limited!
Respond as soon as possible before
March 16, 2010

Directions: To the Woodlands at One Southwoods Road, Woodbury.

Southern State Parkway - Exit 28A N or
Northern State Parkway - Exit 36B or
Long Island Expressway (Rt. 495) - Exit 44N

then proceed to Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway (Rt. 135), Northbound to Syosset Exit 14E (Route 25) Jericho Turnpike. Follow Jericho Turnpike Eastbound 3 lights to Southwoods Road. Make left turn on Southwoods Road. Continue on Southwoods Road to the first traffic light make a left into Town of Oyster Bay Golf Course. Make left into Course, follow road to Mansion.

NOTE: " Port Washington retirees: do NOT send a check at this time, hold for further information. Your PWRE may be able to subsidize part of the cost."

Detach here and mail this form with check to

Louise Rosenthal at 4 Admiral Road, Massapequa, New York 11758

LIRDC – Legislative Breakfast Registration Form

Name: _____

District retired from: _____

of persons attending: _____

Check amount: \$ _____

Make check payable to LIRDC

Legislative Breakfast Buffet
MENU

☪ Greeting Table ☪

A delicious display of:

Muffins, Croissants, Coffee Cake and Rolls
Fresh Fruit Plate, Yogurt, Granola, Bagel
with the Works

Lettuce, Tomato, Cucumber, Scallions,
Cream Cheese & capers

☪ Chafing Dishes ☪

Banana Stuffed Croissant French Toast
Potato Pancakes

Bacon, Sausage

Scrambled Eggs

☪ Dessert Station ☪

Brownies and Cookies

☪ Beverages ☪

Soda, Tea, Coffee, Espresso, Orange Juice,
and Juices

Happy Holidays



Happy New Year

Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter

**Meetings are held in the Port Washington Library on Thursdays
on the dates listed below unless notified otherwise.**

Please note the differing times of the following meetings.

2010 Meeting Dates

January 21st at 10:00 a.m. in the Hagedorn Room
February 25th at 11:30 a.m. in the Hagedorn Room
March 25th at 11:30 a.m. in the Hagedorn Room

April 22nd - 12 Noon luncheon ...
This year it will be held at the
George Washington Manor in Roslyn.

Please continue to bring toiletries and non-perishable food items for the needy to the PWRE meetings.

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend these monthly meetings.

**PORT WASHINGTON
RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER, PWTA
99 CAMPUS DRIVE
PORT WASHINGTON, NY 11050**

FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED

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FIRST CLASS MAIL