



# PORT OF CALL

NYSUT NO. 19 080R

AFT NO. 9591-R

Visit Our Website at: [www.pwta.us/Retirees](http://www.pwta.us/Retirees)



We can all remember the movie in which heads popped out of windows and people shouted "We're not going to take it any more!" There are times when saying NO is essential:

- NO to cutting Social Security and Medicare benefits
- NO to putting our retirement security at risk
- NO to reducing the federal deficit on the backs of working Americans and senior citizens by slashing earned benefits.

Although the President's Deficit Commission failed to get the 18 votes needed to approve their report and its recommendations, the fight is by no means over. We all need to speak out - not through an open window, but by signing petitions, phoning and FAX-ing and writing our Senators and Congressmen, writing letters to newspapers (keep them brief and to the point). Did you know that 1.3 million children today receive Social Security survivor benefits; 9.3 million Americans receive Social Security disability income; Social Security accounts for nearly 40% of an older American's income. According to Sen. Kohl, Chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, "Social Security has never been responsible for one penny of the federal deficit, and by law is barred from doing so. In fact, it has been in surplus every year since its inception in 1935."

We are influential. We speak as individuals and as one; in the recent elections more than 90% of NYSUT-endorsed candidates were successful at the polls. State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli in fact stated "From the bottom of my heart I thank my brothers and sisters in labor." Contributing to and increasing our VOTE/COPE contributions DOES make a difference! So let's all do our part - SPEAK UP and ACT in our own behalf.

And just to update our more local political headlines: it would appear that the New York State Senate has now reverted to Republican control; in the 7th S.D. the judge has ruled that Jack Martins will replace Craig Johnson, Sen. Johnson's request for a manual recount of 85,000 ballots was denied, although there still remains at this writing the question of whether the Senator will now appeal further to the state's highest court (i.e. the Court of Appeals) or concede to Mr. Martins. There have been problems with the new optical scan ballot machines; every valid vote ought to count, but with Inauguration Day in less than three weeks, the matter of balancing human error, machine error and the desire for accuracy remain tricky and controversial.

LIGHTEN UP, BERMAN! 'Tis the season to make merry! So in the spirit of December, let us all be very grateful for our blessings, and look forward with hope to a 2011 of fulfilled expectations. Happy New Year, all. **Elaine**

**(NEWS FLASH):** Sen. Jack Martins HAS finally been declared winner of our NYS Senatorial District seat, complete with Craig Johnson's concession. Replace Craig's name with Jack's on the back cover of the member directory. Jack's phone number is not yet known.)

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FROM THE DESK OF OUR PRESIDENT

# ITEMS OF INTEREST

## YOUR RETIREES AT WORK



More from  
the Desk of  
Our  
President

At the October meeting of NYS retiree delegates, several Resolutions for submission to the R.A. in April were formulated and have now been approved by the PWTA and other NYSUT locals so will go forth. They are largely "motherhood and apple pie," and include Resolutions (summarized here) to oppose any recommendations that would result in reduction of Social Security and Medicare benefits; urge NYSUT and its affiliates to support lifting the cap on all contributions to FICA or Social Security; oppose attempts to diminish benefits of the 2010 Health Reform Act; (n.b. see article elsewhere on some of its benefits) support efforts to include Single Payer Universal Health Coverage for all; work for a retirement plan to grant to new retirees a plan similar to that afforded Tier IV members (n.b.: a Tier V has already been passed, and there is talk of a Tier VI); work to strengthen public relations programs to counteract negative publicity about teachers and teacher unions.

Apropos of the last resolve: you are, I am sure, aware that being a retired teacher these days is far preferable to still being in the classroom in light of all that is going on and will continue, I am afraid, for quite some time to come.

Former Washington schools chancellor Michelle Rhee, having demolished the tenure system for teachers in that system urging that "effective" teachers rather than more senior teachers be paid significantly higher, that

evaluations be based upon student performance on tests and teacher ability to "reach" students, has now started a national reform group called Students First. Our President, our Secretary of Education, our NYS Governor-Elect are all impressed with these "reforms". Secretary Arnie Duncan had imposed similar changes in the city of Chicago when that was his domain; Chicago, it is true, had many educationally problematic areas - and from what I understand from current residents, still does! Teachers know that for many reasons evaluation methods that are being imposed (in NY as elsewhere) will lead to similar and MORE problems: parents will request the "A+" teachers; teachers of students who need and get the most help may surely find their test scores cannot rise as do those of students with fewer problems and consequently the teachers may find themselves among the poorly evaluated; evaluators will not all be bias-free ... etcetera, etcetera. In addition to a potential loss of a job for lack of "excellence," educators are being asked to take wage freezes and/or cuts, to increase class sizes, to give up rights. Hey, out there - maybe it's time to opt for another profession.

## Book Club Dates

Wednesday, January 12, 2011 at 11:00 a.m.

Book: *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*

Author: Alexandra Fuller

Where: Home of Marilyn Gilbert

Wednesday, March 2, 2011 at 11:00 a.m.

Book: *The Warmth of Other Suns*

Author: Isabel Ilkerson

Where: Home of Seth (a.k.a. Ray) Erlich

### PORT OF CALL

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Warning: Do not Dial Area Codes 809, 284 or 876 even if you receive an urgent message to call. The charges are exorbitant.

# P.W.R.E. CHAPTER NEWS

Toni Salerno ... *A Tribute to One of the First Members of PWRE*  
July 9, 1924- November 5, 2010



There are only 4 things you need to know to understand who Antoinette Salerno was. First, she had a deep and abiding faith in God which spread across everything else in her life. Second, she was all about everything to do with family. Third, she was a teacher and THE TEACHER that everyone wanted their children to have. Finally, she loved to travel.

It's number 3 that I want to share more thoughts about and I'll start by saying the world is a better place because Antoinette Salerno was born on July 9, 1924. We spoke several times about how the world has changed and how opportunities for women in the workplace have changed over the years. All who know her know that she would have been one of those women who would have been pushing against the "glass ceiling" if she had been born at a later time. It seemed that she was capable of doing anything that she decided she wanted to do. But, she was born in 1924 and the opportunities available to women were much more limited than they are today. In the case of Antoinette Salerno this turned out to be a good thing.

This was a good thing because she was an exceptional teacher. She loved all of her students and made sure that she gave each of them the part of her that they needed. But that was not enough for Toni. She was also constantly looking to the future to find ways to help her students cope with the world they would grow into. She was concerned with environmental education decades before the term "green" was adopted to signify a concern for the world in which we live. She worked with her students in the area of rapidly evolving technology and had computers in her classroom long before computers were part of every day life. She was not just content to teach children, she wanted to help prepare them to be viable parts of the world they would confront as adults. To that end, she was never happier than when she received a letter from a former student telling her how much they respected what she had done for them. She had many students who have told her that she was a significant force in guiding their decisions about their life choices.

Because of her love for the environment, she was particularly proud of the young man who gave her credit for pointing him on the career path of becoming a park ranger. She was proud of them all. I started off by telling you the world was a better place because Aunt Toni was born on July 9, 1924. I'm going to close by telling you that I think heaven became a little bit richer place at 11:50 p.m. on Friday November 5.

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Joan Gerken

### Condolences Are Sent To:

- Jackie Bendick on the death of her husband
- The Family of Lee Ann Coccarelli
- Harriet Englander on the death of her husband
- Nicole Hamburger and family on the death of Marty
- Ruth Haukeland on the death of her brother
- The Family of Gertrude Jacobson
- Arlene Murray on the death of her husband
- The Family of Toni Salerno

A \$50 Contribution Was Sent to the  
PWTA Scholarship Fund in memory of each:

- Lee Ann Coccarelli
- Marty Hamburger
- Gertrude Jacobson
- Toni Salerno

Get Well Wishes Were Sent to:  
Jean Sellers

**From your Editor:**  
Thank you for all the  
many  
cards, notes and e-mails  
wishing me a  
speedy  
recovery from my leg  
injuries and surgery.  
It looks as if it will be quite a  
while before I'm walking nor-  
mally again and may be fac-  
ing more surgery. Right



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE ([pwta.us/retirees](http://pwta.us/retirees)) WEEKLY FOR TIMELY INFORMATION.  
Look for up-to-date information related to legislation, NYSUT items of importance, see [NYSUT.org](http://NYSUT.org) - then click on whatever link to the left is of interest

# We Asked to Hear from You ... and We Did!

## Joan Brinkhuis

### The Brinkhuis Book Club and Bountiful Buffet

Retirees nostalgic for coffee hour were in luck as Joan recreated one for us at her home, as she hosted the discussion of *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett. Having long thought that coffee hour was a euphemism for an all too brief 30 minutes of camaraderie on a Friday morning at school, the contrast was amazing. THIS was a real coffee hour and a half, with lots of yummy cakes baked by Joan, crackers, cheese, dips, veggies, fruit, coffee, tea.... Well, you get



the idea. Someone suggested that Joan have a party after we left, as there was enough to feed another group of guests, and it was already out!!

The discussion of the book ranged from its content, to its intent, to a discussion of southern society and civil rights in America in the 50's and 60's.

As always, our colleagues had lots of interesting insights and cogent comments about the style of writing, the presentation of characters, and the content.

"The Warmth of Other Suns," by Isabel Wilkerson—a non-fiction account of Black migration to the North, is a consideration for a future meeting.

Lee Fertitta, Port Washington Public Librarian, suggests another non-fiction read, "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks," a story of a black woman who died of cancer in the 50's whose cells were used successfully for research for the benefit of thousands of women. Her family wasn't informed of this until just recently.

As always, you can log onto our award-winning website to see what the next book will be, and where the meeting will be held.



## Brian and Ashley are Inducted into The Port Washington Athletic Hall of Fame

*From: Linda (Birch) Ross*

Brian Birch with his award and his four sons.



On Saturday, October 2nd, both of my children, Brian and Ashley Birch (Matlow) were inducted into the Port Washington Athletic Hall of Fame. Needless to say, it was a proud day for me to be sitting with my husband, Bill, Brian and his wife Jenny and his four sons - Bracken (5), and triplets

Henry, Wade, and Ried (2) and Ashley and her husband, Dave and her three sons - Michael (4), James (2), and Christopher (8 months) as their accomplishments were acknowledged.



Ashley Birch Matlow with her husband and their three sons.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you teachers and coaches who made this day possible for us. It was certainly a tribute to the dedicated teachers and coaches we are so blessed to have in Port Washington. Without their outstanding educational and athletic opportunities afforded us in this district, Brian and Ashley could not have achieved all that has led them to the rich family and professional lives they now enjoy. Thank you for making these opportunities possible. I am so grateful that Harold and I were able to be a part of this outstanding teaching environment.

Linda

Linda (left) with her husband Bill (right) with her children and their families.



# More - We Asked to Hear from You ... and We Did!

## It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

By Merry Gilbert

(And that was how our wonderful day out ended!)

The adventure began very early at Christopher Morley Park, where we met to board the bus for Hudson, New York, 18 miles south of Albany. We were headed to the homes and studios of Frederic Edwin Church and Thomas Cole (both now national historic sites), painters of what came to be called the Hudson River School. Quoting from the "Art Trail" brochure:

"In the early years of the 19th century, the fledgling American nation was seeking a cultural identity apart from Europe and a style of art that it could call its own. A group of artists found the answer in the beauty and majesty of the natural world they encountered in the Hudson River Valley and created magnificent landscape paintings. This movement, the first in American art, became known as the Hudson River School.

The Hudson River School painters believed art to be an agent of moral and spiritual transformation. In large-scale canvases of dramatic vistas with atmospheric lighting, they sought to capture a sense of the divine, envisioning the pristine American landscape as a new Garden of Eden."

Our first stop was Olana, home of Frederick Church, where we learned how Church created an incredible house and studio, and transformed the property into an ornamental farm, including orchards, gardens, and a 10-acre lake he created.

After a fabulous lunch at Reds, in Coxsaxie, we visited the home and studio of Thomas Cole, Church's teacher, and original Hudson River school painter, "where American art was born."



Olana



Thomas Cole

In videos at both houses, we saw the actual landscape from which these artists painted, juxtaposed with their paintings. The Hudson River School Art Trail is a series of actual walking paths you can follow to see the real scenes from which they painted.

Looking out of the window at the Cole House, we watched a storm boil its way up the Hudson. Our docent commented we might be in for some rain. And what a rain it was.

Although macrobursts, tornadoes, and everything but locusts hit parts of New York City and Long Island, as we traveled home, we luckily missed all but a few showers. By the time we got back to our cars, the storm was over.

## A Wondrous Experience

by Barbara Mayer

Our recent two-week trip to Israel was so much more than a visit to a new country. It represented a life-changing experience for me. To stand where religions and cultures began thousands of years ago, I was in awe of the history of this small country, no bigger than New Jersey. We were led by a fabulous guide, so passionate and knowledgeable about his homeland. We learned from a master teacher, and who better to appreciate that than us? We traveled all over the country, from the forests (so sadly, recently burned) to the desert to the mountains to the seas.

My first visit to this fascinating place was memorable in so many ways that I cannot even express in words, only in emotions. I do know that it will not be my last trip to Israel.



Chagall painted these windows for the Hadassah Hospital Synagogue in Jerusalem when he was in his 70s. When they were destroyed during the bombing of 1967, he re-did them then in his 80s!



This sculpture at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem represents the Hebrew word for "love."



# Merry-Go-Round

by Merry Gilbert



During my October visit to Dallas, Texas, I was invited on a date with a mystery destination (to meet Big Tex, the world's biggest cowboy) which turned out to be a visit to the Texas State Fair. It was a real interestin' experience, y'all. Despite the honky tonk of the ubiquitous souvenir booths, enough "real" country was on display to make it authentic and memorable. Imagine my excitement at the pig races, having collected 1,739 pig objects over the course of my teaching career, earning for me my sobriquet of "Miss Piggy." First, mama pig, all 550 pounds of her, was paraded out. Some pig! Clearly she, like Wilbur, had been rubbed with buttermilk to make her glow. Then, the little piglets entered the starting gates. The horn was blown, and they were off around the track. It was simply hilarious, as the crowd roared and cheered for their favorites. Next, we went to the state agriculture pavilion where I met the real Elsie the Cow (probably her great-great grandchild,



as the original Elsie was born for the 1939 World's Fair) and her son Brandon, the original of whom they alleged was born in Macy's window. (You'd think I'd remember this blessed event, but maybe it predates me.)

You may not know that most cotton cloth for t-shirts is woven (in China) out of cotton from Texas. Good thing there was a photo of cotton growing in a field, because shortly afterward, when I saw the acres of the beautiful, silvery, shimmering plants growing along the highway, I could identify what it was. Nice, too, to learn how the crop is machine harvested.



I learned about researchers who are converting animal waste from pigs and livestock into bioenergy; the use of swine and bovine valves for human transplants as part of medical innovation; and that there's even Texas wine (!).

As a true pig, the highlight of my day was the food. You may not know that my motto is "If it's fried, I want it inside." Since it is a State Fair tradition to introduce one new deep fried item each year, resulting in a galaxy of fried goodies, culinarily speaking, this Fair is my kind of place. The deep fried menu includes: deep fried butter, deep fried chocolate, deep fried margaritas, beer, and cookies.

My personal moment of gustatory rapture happened when I tasted a deep fried peanut butter, jelly and banana sandwich. Pure heaven, followed by fried chocolate and fried cookie dough. With just a bite of each, I was literally transported.

I attribute my affinity for these fried foods to the fact that I must be a Southern girl at heart. After all I too was born in the South, the South Bronx, that is.



# UPDATES AND ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR ALL

## "CHANGES TO OUR MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY"

- Joan Blacher - remove email address
- Janet Cusa - email change to gmajanel@verizon.net
- Elizabeth F Foster - email correction to lizfoster@optonline.net
- Mary Ann Leonard - address correction: 26910 Grand Central Parkway (etc)
- Jay Lewis - email correction to wmhenry@msn.com
- Donna Sanchez' phone number should be: 708-1413

## THE "RAC" HAS MET.

The RAC (Retiree Advisory Committee), chaired by NYSUT Vice-president Kathleen Donahue and Retiree Joan Perrini, is composed of 20-plus retiree members from around New York State, of which I am one. It meets quarterly, its most recent meeting having been earlier this month. We are charged with representing the interests of our retiree members and making these known to NYSUT, and - conversely - helping our retirees understand some of the problems being faced by NYSUT. In order to accomplish this agenda, we regularly attend meetings of retiree groups, NYSUT conventions, and in-service meetings in order to gather

information and report on RAC activities. For our three-year terms coming to its end in 2011, we have been working in focus groups on such topics as effective communication through the New York Teacher (now NYSUT United), the NYSUT website and Leader Access, as well as our own local publications and websites, engaging and increasing participation of our retirees; maximizing resources and revenue prospects. Our recommendations will go to the NYSUT Board, who will then act (or not) on some or all of our recommendations.

Elaine

## What's Happening with MyMedicare?

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) - the new health care law. The Act provides numerous benefits for seniors. Here are the major changes for 2011.

### Free Medical Check Up under Medicare

Prior to passage of the new health care law, Medicare allowed for a one-time free check up when seniors joined the Medicare program. Beginning in 2011, seniors will be able to get a free check up every year.

### Free Preventive Screenings

Beneficiaries will no longer have to pay any cost-sharing for Medicare-covered preventive services that are recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and rated A or B. The law also waives the Medicare deductible for colorectal cancer screening tests.

### Prescription Drug Discounts and Subsidies

In 2011, the Medicare Part D drug benefit donut hole is from \$2840 to \$6447.50. When beneficiaries fall into donut hole, they must pay the entire cost of their prescription medications. Beneficiaries would not exit the donut hole until they have paid a total of \$4550 in out-of-pocket costs. Beginning in 2011, Medicare beneficiaries who fall in the Part D drug benefit donut hole will receive a 50% discount on the price of their brand-name drugs. Beneficiaries who fall in the donut hole will also receive a 7% government subsidy toward the cost of generic drugs.

### Medicare Advantage Changes

Medicare Advantage (MA) plans are prohibited from imposing higher cost-sharing requirements for some Medicare-covered benefits than is allowed under the traditional Medicare fee-for-service program. Also, Medicare will begin to phase-out overpayments to MA plans by freezing MA payments in 2011 at the 2010 level. MA plans are paid on average 14% more than traditional Medicare; thus the government pays these

plans over \$1000 more per person each year than traditional Medicare. The overpayments also raise Part B premiums for seniors and the disabled, including those not on MA plans, by \$90 per couple a year. The new health care law restricts government payments to Medicare Advantage plans to keep them more in line with that of traditional Medicare. The reductions in overpayments will extend the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund by 12 years according to the Medicare actuaries.

### Bonus for Primary Care Providers under Medicare

Primary Care providers will receive a 10% bonus payment for primary care services under Medicare; also, general surgeons practicing in health professional shortage areas will receive a 10% Medicare bonus payment.

### Medicaid Long-Term Care Services

Beginning October 1, 2011, the State Balancing Incentive Program in Medicaid will go into effect to provide enhanced federal matching payments to increase non-institutionally based long-term care services.

### Community First Choice Act

On October 1, 2011, the Community First Choice Option in Medicaid will provide community-based attendant support services to people with disabilities who require institutional level of care. States will receive an enhanced federal match of 6 percent for reimbursable expenses.

For more information about the Medicare benefits that go into effect in 2011, go to: <http://healthreform.kff.org/timeline.aspx> or visit: <http://www.healthcare.gov/foryou/seniors/index.html>

To view the Medicare 2011 handbook visit: <http://www.medicare.gov/publications/pubs/pdf/10050.pdf>

Thank you to the Alliance for Retired Americans for this information.



## Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter

Meetings will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursdays  
in the Hagedorn room of the Port  
Washington Library on the dates listed below  
unless otherwise notified,

# 2011 Meeting Dates

January 20, 2011

February 24, 2011

March 24, 2011

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

PORT WASHINGTON  
RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER,  
PWTA  
99 CAMPUS DRIVE

FORWARD SERVICE RE-

## NYSUT MEMBER BENEFITS FOR YOU

Look at what your  
NYSUT membership brings you!

Your NYSUT membership gives you access to a variety of benefit programs and services, endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits. Every endorsed program is monitored on a regular basis for participation, member satisfaction, utilization, financial health and product competitiveness.

**Insurance plans** include term life, disability, auto, term, boat, personal excess liability, umbrella, long-term care, catastrophic major medical, flexible premium adjustable life, vision and active dental.

**Financial and legal services** include a financial counseling program, online banking, money markets, savings and CDs, mortgages, credit monitoring service, consumer credit counseling services, and a legal service plan.

**Discounts** include TripAdvisor of Hotels, flights, cruises and more; Wyndham Hotels & Resorts Vacation Rewards, Marzano Online Marketplace, EPR, Hearing Service Plan, Powell's Books, OfficeMax, Best, Barnes & Noble.com, Working Advantage discount tickets and more; Philips Lifestyle, car and truck rentals, Six Flags, Regis's Edge Inc. (shoeing services), HEAT USA and Defensive Driving (online or classroom). Be sure to check the Member Benefits website, [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org), for particulars on these discounts, because some you can only receive by linking off the Member Benefits site. Many have unique ID numbers.

For information about these programs or other potential endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Best Services Plan Description. Agency fee applies to NYSUT or its agents to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits and endorsed programs.

**Other services** include MAP (Member Alert Program), an e-mail information service; payroll and pension deduction of Member Benefits-endorsed programs, which often yield reduced premiums or additional coverage; MPP (My Program Participation), an online look-up service on programs in which you participate; Consumer's Guides on Automobile Insurance, Homeowners and Renters Insurance, Legal Services, Long-Term Care Insurance, Long-Term Disability Insurance and Health Plans; and MedFASK (Division of Future Planning for Special Kids).

**Workshops** include Identity Theft, 401(k) Basics, 403(b) Employer Contributions, Inside the 403(b), Uncovering the Mysteries of Credit and Credit Reports and The Financial Planning Profile. Workshops are scheduled by

your local president, chapter leader, retiree council leader or retiree chapter leader.

To request information, call Member Benefits at 800-625-4100 or visit [www.memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://www.memberbenefits.nysut.org).

Some benefits may not be available in all local associations.



Nov 09, 10

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FIRST CLASS