



PORT OF CALL

The newsletter that keeps Port's retirees connected and informed.

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK
DECEMBER 2013**

VOL.23 NO.4

NYSUT NO. 19 080R Visit our website at: www.pwta.us/PWRE/ AFT NO. 9591-R

**A Belated
Happy
Hanukkah**

**Merry
Christmas**

**Happy
Holidays**

**A Happy
Healthy**

2014

**Is Wished
To All**



January 2014						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

It's That Time of Year Again! Time to Look Back:

The Members We Lost

*Evangeline Angelo
Esther Brunola
Jean Cocks
Edith Cocopardo
Shirley Dailey
Rose Eisenberg
Diana Telfeyan Gross
Joan Keyes
Anne MacIntosh
Mildred Matous
Mary McLean
Elizabeth Rice
Beverly Spelfogel*

The Members We Gained Our Newest Retirees

*Liz LeSueur
Lenora Matricardi
Vickie Migatz
Jan Effman
Camille Corbisiero
Joe Bozzono
Mariann Dragunas
Bob Pfizenmayer
Kathy Reilly
Stephanie Tolbert-Johnson
Denise Johnert*

*Lisa Gewolb
Aldona Marijosius
David Baylen
Marlon Villalva
Barbara Pollock
Laura Giordano
John Placella,
Evie Garofalo,
Susan O'Donnell
Senka Kasap*

We Got Involved



We protested that too much time is spent teaching for standardized tests.

Our New Website was Created



*Retired Educators Chapter
Port Washington Teachers Association
NYSUT No. 19 080R AFT No. 9591-R*



This Year We Heard From:

Pam Rothman, Phyllis Keogh, Johanna La Fiandra, Joanne Freyer, Jim Jones, Eleanor Oppenheim, Vicki Field, Patty Barnett, Liz Frangides Foster, Barbara Mayer, Marty Farber, Sue Mittelstaedt, Merry Gilbert, Rita Auerbach, Carol Kratenstein,

Our First Place winners in the NYSUT

Journalism Contest



Merry Mary Anne

The Books We Read

*Fire in the Ashes
My Beloved World
Quiet
Art of Hearing Heartbeats
End of Your Life Book Club*

Time to Look Forward and Hope that 2014 is Truly a Happy New Year

We hope that more of our members will come to our annual luncheons.



We hope to welcome more of our members at our monthly Meetings

We hope that you will get involved and let your representatives know you are concerned about

The Chained CPI (page 6)
The emphasis on testing
The Tax Cap



...And We Hope That you will visit our website www.pwta.us/PWRE/ as often as you can. It's a great way to keep up-to-date with P.W.R.E. events.

We hope that you will contribute to Port of Call as well as to our website when you have events or pictures to share..

STAY CONNECTED! TAKE A STAND! GET INVOLVED!

From the Desk Of
Our President



Elaine Berman

This seems to have been - not the "winter of our discontent" (to quote Shakespeare's Richard III) - but the autumn of our King-size conundrums. The King in the past that has given periodic pause for deliberation has been our Congressman Peter. The most recent reigning King around

whom much controversy has ensued is our NYS Commissioner of Education, with whose name Core Curriculum, testing and APPR have become almost synonymous. Even Diane Ravitch, nationally acclaimed education historian and policy analyst, author of the recently published REIGN OF ERROR, called upon educators to boycott core curriculum standards and refuse to administer state tests in defiance of state and federal government standards which she said were not acting in the best interests of children.

Major criticism stems not from the need, recognized by most, for national curricular standards, but that too much happened too fast: one publisher churning out materials and tests, far too much testing demanded, assessments promulgated and made available to computer data banks (inBloom), etc. THIS has been the agenda of 2013. Stay tuned, friends.

So what you may ask, of good news do you speak at this year end? Well our own retiree organization is thriving, thanks to our too-numerous-to-name worker bees, thanks to our website and newsletter frequent disseminators of information - and thanks to all of you for caring about one another, caring enough about what happens in our own lives and of those around us to contribute to VOIE/COPE and to hammer our legislators to do what is right and proper. Our book club meetings attract many in the area (remember the bread ad that said "You don't have to be Jewish to eat Levy's"? Well,

you don't have to have finished the book to . . .) as do our occasional trips.

We are gaining more in number than we are losing (happy circumstance, that!) and certainly contributing much to the economy - surely a pension give-back in taxes and limited purchasing.

And good health continues to be our goal for all - plus the continuation of Senior benefits that will enable that goal.

May you and your family enjoy a 2014 that meets and even surpasses your own hopes!

FOR OUR RETIREES IN FLORIDA

We know you receive - and love - our PWRE newsletters which help you keep in touch with your colleagues everywhere and the up-to-the-minute news in Port Washington. Your annual "dues" to us make that possible - and are indeed vital to the retention of NYSUT benefits.

BUT - as a transplanted Floridian, you may wish also to keep up with events in Florida that may affect your well-being. To this end, you may wish also to join and/or attend meetings and functions of a NYSUT/TRIF (Teacher Retirees in Florida) unit. ("Snowbirds" also invited!) There are units in Clearwater, Daytona, the St. Augustine area, Sarasota, the Boynton Beach area, the Melbourne area, Orlando, the Spring Hill area, Greater Naples, Jupiter, Stewart, and the Palm City area.

For further information, contact Maxine Knisley - phone 772-321-4974 email: mxknisley@aol.com Have fun in Florida, stay warm, enjoy your new friends - but remember us OLD ones!

Love ya all,

Elaine



Come to the P.W.R.E. Book Club

Date: January 20, 2014
Time: 11:30 a.m.
Book: *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*
Author: Katherine Boo
Where: Norma Ziegel's Home

and
Date: February 25, 2014
Time: 11:30 a.m.
Book: *Selected Stories*
Author: Alice Munro
Where: Seth Ehrlich's Home

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CHAPTER NEWS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE



The Port Washington Public Library featured beautiful original art by nine renowned children's book illustrators during the month of November.

On Sunday, November 10th, the Library hosted a Panel Discussion entitled: *Past, Present and Future: Insiders Look at Children's Literature in the 21st Century.*


Among the panelists was Rita Auerbach (Former Manorhaven librarian and former Caldecott Chair).

Questions and discussion centered primarily on the changing demands in the field of children's literature, particularly related to picture books, i.e. how much of what is loved of the beautifully printed, illustrated and tactile qualities will be carried into the future vis-a-vis digital output. Panelists included authors,

librarians and publishing personnel.

The well-attended audience included Barbara Mayer, Marilyn Gilbert, Ute Johnson, Tessa Jordan, Jane Tafarella and Elaine Berman.

YOU MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW

 -that thanks to the generosity of our members, PWRE contributed \$2000 to NYSUT's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Drive.

(Thanks to chair Sue Mittelstaedt, and the walkers too!)

-that we will be joined by 18 known-to-date new retirees come June!

- that Katy McEntegart is home after her accident, and making remarkable progress!

- that you can still make needed contributions to the Philippines super typhoon Haiyan fund through the AFT Disaster Relief Fund.

- that Retiree Scholarship Fund contributions, are tax deductible, checks should be made out to the PWTA Scholarship Foundation, with "retiree scholarship" noted in memo line of check, and mailed to the PWTA office.

-that Carol Kratenstein and Barbara Blum are now planning our retiree excursions.



Carol

If you have suggestions, let them know.

(Active plans are already in the works!)



Barbara

FRIENDSHIP/ REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE *Joan Gerken*



Get Well Wishes Were Sent to:

*Bill Allen
Eleanor Ascher
Anna Murphy
Joanne Sebetic
George Williams*

Condolences Were Sent to:

*The Family of Jean Cocks
Penny D'Antonio on the death of her son, George
The Family of Elizabeth Rice
The Family of Beverly Spelfogel*

A \$50 contribution, in memory of each, has been sent to the PWRE Scholarship Fund

*Jean Cocks
Elizabeth Rice
Beverly Spelfogel*

MEDICARE



HEALTH INSURANCE

DID YOU KNOW

-that...you must continue to do nothing re your medical coverage;

-that our prescription drug coverage provider will be known as Silver Script starting 1/1/14;

-that your drug purchases may continue wherever you have been shopping.

(N.B.:, if you are just going on Medicare and your spouse has medical coverage, be sure to keep your own insurance - but if you have a question, call NYSHIP @ 1-877-769-7447.)

-that there will be no change in the Medicare Part B premium in 2014, and only a small increase in the Part D (IRMMA) - e.g. for \$85,000-107,000 income, from \$11.60 to \$12.10.



Merry-Go-Round by Merry Gilbert

Thanksgiving...and the Turkey Wept

Are you able to harken back, oh, a year or so ago, before Black Friday leaked into Thursday?
 Are you able to recall when family togetherness meant conversation, and not a convocation of individuals each engaged in communicating with others, absent from the group, on their devices?
 If so, you, like me, must be a mature retiree, reminiscing about the good old days.
 Did you spend hours in the supermarket and kitchen preparing for the Thanksgiving feast, only to have guests assume that it was OK for them to jump up right after dinner so they could go.... shopping?
 Did you spend several hours in traffic getting to your Thanksgiving celebration? Then you, like me, probably recall when there was one car per family, and the whole family traveled together.
 (Do you also remember when the “op” in “stop” did not mean that obeying the sign was at the driver’s discretion.)
 And, how convenient, that this year on the fourth Thursday of November, you were able to celebrate two holidays at once, thereby saving more time to..... shop.
 When did “*Be in the moment*” come to mean you pay attention to things for just one moment?
 Do you remember wool pants? Do you remember wool anything?
 Should shopping for the next holiday, according to the media, be the be all and end all of the entire month of December?
 Why not have stores open on December 25th, so really last minute shoppers can procrastinate to the very last minute?
 Does anyone give Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh any more?
 How about the store employees who have to curtail their holiday celebrations so others can....shop?
 Mace, a taser, pushing and shoving: here’s to the shoppers who usher in the season of peace and joy with fights over bargains.
 And lest you think I am a total curmudgeon, here is an anecdote I have treasured for about 30 years.
 We had just finished discussing the first Thanksgiving menu in my second grade class (although this was not going to be on any standardized test, in the old days we took the time to have discussions), when one of my students jumped up, all agitated. “You mean,” he nearly shouted in disbelief, “the Pilgrims didn’t have lasagna!”

Former Colleague ...John Hinton

On the evening of November 19th, 2013, John Hinton was inducted into the Long Island Mathematics Educators Hall of Fame. The Hall Of Fame was "created to bestow upon individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to mathematics education - an honor befitting their stature in the mathematics community."

Known to many in Port Washington as an interim

assistant principal, and teacher of outstanding staff development workshops, he is also the author of seven books on mathematics, and published 14 volumes of Math Matters, a national journal of math games for elementary and middle school teachers.

John is currently an associate professor of Education at Long Island University, CW Post campus.

Submitted by Merry Gilbert

You Need to Know

Report Fraud



If you suspect errors, fraud, or abuse when

you use Medicare—or if someone tries to sell you a product or service you don’t need—report it. Learn what to look for, and get details about [preventing and detecting fraud](#).

Notify the: **HHS Office of Inspector General**
 Call: 800-447-8477
 TTY: 800-377-4950
 Online: [Report Fraud Online](#)
 Or Mail: **HHS Tips Hotline**
 P.O. Box 23489
 Washington, DC 20026-3489

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P.W.R.E. ON THE MOVE AND MORE



A Tour of Two New York City Landmarks by Barbara Blum

October 22nd, 2013 was a beautiful and clear day. It was a perfect day for a group of Port Washington Retired Educators to visit Manhattan. It was so clear that through the course of the day we could see the Ground Zero site and the Freedom Tower, City Hall and the Municipal Building, the Woolworth Building, Bryant Park, the 42nd

street branch of the New York Public Library, the art deco Chrysler Building, and the Empire State Building!

are just ordinary. The tower on the top of the building has been sold and is currently being renovated for co-op apartments. The New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies Center for Global Affairs is housed in the Woolworth Building. This a good segue to our next stop - a place for study and research: the main branch of the New York Public Library on 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. The library opened in May 1911. It is a Beaux-Arts building made from Vermont marble built on what was a reservoir and is the main branch of a library system that encompasses Manhattan, Bronx, and Staten Island. Brooklyn and Queens have their own library system.

Elaine booked tours of the Woolworth Building and the New York Public Library Main Branch.

F. W. Woolworth, the developer of the Woolworth building, wanted to erect the tallest building in the city. He wanted it to be an epicenter for commerce.

Construction of this magnificent building was completed in 1913. It was open to the public and tourists. The lobby was lined with stores and restaurants, and it remained open until September 11, 2001. It was the tallest building in New York City at the time it was built, but was surpassed by 40 Wall Street and the Chrysler Building in 1930 and then the Empire State Building surpassed them all.

Built at a cost of 13 million dollars; it only took two years for Woolworth to pay off the cost of the construction of the Woolworth Building. The structure was designed by the architect Cass Gilbert in the neo-Gothic style, similar to European gothic cathedrals.

The Woolworth Building's ornate lobby is made up of veined marble and has a beautiful vaulted ceiling with

Our guide took our group into many of the rooms in the library. Each room was beautiful. The woods of the walls and tables, the pictures, the maps - all of it was exciting to see. It is a building made of old world architecture that blends with the new technology of our modern world. The main reading room was built on the third floor so that the noise and dirt, from the street and the horses and carriages, would not bother the readers. The main reading room is still on the third floor decorated with chandeliers, long oak tables, bronze lamps and a ceiling with scenes of the sky and clouds. There is space for researchers, readers and writers. Taking a break from research, or just waiting for friends, some people just play computer games in this quiet space.

The New York Public Library's mission is "to inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our communities". It has achieved this and has sustained and enhanced the intellectual life of millions of Americans.

! Our tours of both buildings were enjoyed by all!

A TRIP IS BEING PLANNED! MUSIC LOVERS TAKE NOTE

A TOUR OF THE LOUIS ARMSTRONG HOUSE MUSEUM AND THE QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART

From: Barbara Blum

The PWRE has planned a tour of **The Louis Armstrong House Museum** for Wednesday **January 8th**. at **10:30 a.m.** (If anyone wants to spend time in the gift shop, they should plan on doing it before the tour.) Parking is on the street, so leave time to find a parking space. The cost for the tour will be **\$6 per person**.

We have **12:00 Noon** reservations at the **Parkside Restaurant in Corona**. Our lunch choice is Salad, Pasta, and Dessert for **\$18 per person**.

At **2:00 p.m.**, a docent tour is scheduled for our group at the **Queens Museum of Art**. (If anyone wants to spend time in the gift shop, they should plan on doing it before the tour.) It is a 1 1/2 hour tour that we can shorten to one hour if we desire - so let me know. The cost for the docent tour is \$150 for the group. We can be a group of up to 30 people. Let me know if you would like to join us for this lovely day. (LBBLUM67@gmail.com) Page 5

NYSUT Regional Conference

On November 20, 2013 NYSUT retirees from Nassau and Suffolk councils gathered at the WATERMILL in Smithtown for NYSUT's Regional Conference "**One Voice United**". Many issues that require a "One Voice United" front were presented by speakers whose aim was to keep retirees informed on political, social and general wellness issues.

Floyd Cameron, the NYSUT Retiree Services Manager, provided an update on NYSUT's services for its members and its legislative agenda targeting retirees, such as, Medicare, the Social Security COLA and prescription drug costs.

Kyle Belokopitsky, NYSUT's Legislative Representative, emphasized "piercing the cap", both the state aid cap and the 2% cap. She stated that since 2009-2010 there has been a big loss in state aid. There also is the 2% tax cap in each school district. As we are aware, if a budget fails, the second vote requires a 60% majority to pass. NYSUT filed a Tax Cap Complaint in February 2013 and an amended Complaint in July 2013. One of the stated seven causes of action includes this undemocratic 60% supermajority vote.

Ms. Belokopitsky spoke at length about the Common Core Standards and Testing. A goal is to not have testing from kindergarten to grade two. Also it is believed that waiting a few years to tie the test results to teacher evaluation is vital.

The luncheon speaker was Thomas DiNapoli, the NY State Comptroller. He spoke at length about education in the state and the value of its outstanding teachers.



He also highlighted our pension system and how it is well funded, well run and one of the best in the country. He is a friend to education.

Dynamic speakers at this conference made the education news of the day come alive. As retired educators we want to be kept informed and up-to-date.

Reported by Eleanor Irish and Mary Ann Leonard

Important Telephone Numbers:
Albany Switchboard 1-877-255-9417
press #1 for the Governor
press #2 for a State Senator
press #3 for an Assembly-person

Congressional Switchboard and the US Capitol 1-866-327-8670
ask for a specific house or senate member

White House 1-202-456-1111 (not a toll free call)

Chained Consumer Price Index ...

AND WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT IT!

The CPI is used by the government to determine the cost of living adjustments for Social Security recipients (including surviving spouses and children), the disabled, veterans and others who depend on federal support for their income. It is also used in setting tax rates.

The **chained** CPI would calculate the cost of living differently. Your first clue that this new method will hurt you is that it's projected to save \$230 billion.

Dashiell Bennett writes that the older way of calculating the CPI "doesn't account for consumers' ability to substitute one product for another when prices change." For example, if the price of whole grain bread goes up, you can buy white bread. If the price of fresh fruit goes up, you can buy canned. Health implications are apparently not a concern. "In any given year," says Bennett, "the resulting change is small." But over time the change is huge because "each year's CPI is based off the previous year's number so the effect compounds."

We probably all had a math teacher along the way who asked us if we would choose to receive \$1,000,000 today or \$.01 today and then double the previous day's amount each day for a month. If you chose option 2, along about the middle of the month you'd be thinking you made a mistake because you'd be getting under \$200 a day. But by the 21st day you'd be over \$100,000 a day and by the 28th day over \$1,000,000. It's that effect of compounding that led the Alliance for Retired Americans to calculate that, if you retired at 65 and lived to age 85, your cumulative cuts would add up to almost \$14,000.

Your part in this is to recognize the danger and to let your legislators know that you care. Write a letter, fax or email your Congressional Representative and Senators. Even those who reliably stand in support of us need to hear from their constituents.

Chained CPI is WRONG FOR SENIORS.

Let them hear from you.

We Asked To Hear From You...and We Did!

A Cultural Journey

Barbara Mayer



Barbara and Joe at the Summer Palace in Beijing, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

We recently returned from almost three weeks in China and it was a very active trip full of exciting experiences. We hiked up the Great Wall of China in Beijing, marveled at the Terra Cotta Warriors in Xi'an, fell in love with the Giant Pandas in Chongqing, enjoyed a cruise down the Yangtze River, gaped at the skyscrapers along the Bund in Shanghai, and were dazzled by cosmopolitan Hong Kong. Our guides told us, "image is everything" in China, but they showed/shared with us a great deal more about their country, both the good and the bad.



Classical Yu Garden in Shanghai



The Hong Kong Symphony of Lights

For Your Information

NYSUT FIGHTING ON SEVERAL FRONTS

Oral arguments in NYSUT's challenge of the Tax Cap law are expected to begin (have begun) in December. The complaint alleges that the tax cap is unconstitutional under both state and U.S. constitutions (i.e. it violates 1-person, 1-vote protection by requiring a 60% super-majority for an override; it violates a constitutional equal protection clause by treating districts unequally from local government; it deprives students of a sound basic education, etc.

NYSUT leaders and members have been urging SED to "get it right" re rushed implementation of Common Core assessments -to slow things down. Education Commissioner John King and Regent Meryl Tisch

have been holding community forum meetings of educators and parents around the state - at which they have heard unanimous criticism of testing Common Core that has not yet had a chance to be taught, of evaluating students and teachers much too early on unreliable data, and of being urged first to listen, then to take some positive action. NYSUT has called for a three-year moratorium on the process (the state PTA for one year). It does appear that there will be some immediate revision of pre K-2 testing (!) and of over-testing of certain math curricula.

There has been a strong and growing parental **Opt-Out of testing** movement.

Elaine

RETIREE RESOLUTIONS TO GO BEFORE 2014 RA

The agenda of the annual NYSUT combined Retiree Council ED's 51-52-53 includes approval of Resolutions to be presented before the upcoming R.A. This year they included, among others:

-- the adoption by Congress of the Voting Rights Act, ensuring the right to vote for all citizens which was declared invalid by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2013.

-- the encouragement of in-service leaders to form retiree chapters and encouragement also of active membership in NYSUT Retiree Councils.

-- lobbying along with national affiliates for legislation allowing retirees to utilize up to \$4000 pre-tax dollars annually for qualified health services and products.

-- that coverage of the shingles vaccine as a necessary preventative measure come under Medicare Part B or Part D.

2014 Proposed PWRE Events

January 8th- Trip to the Louis Armstrong Museum

January 20th- Book Club

February 25th - Book Club

March 4th or 6th- Possible trip to the Rubin Museum

April 30th- (Last week in April) - tentative trip to the Barnes Museum in Philadelphia.

May 9th- Legislative Luncheon at the Woodbury Country Club-\$38 per person but \$10 will be subsidized by PWRE.

No Date Yet - Tentative PWRE trip to Princeton and the Sculpture Gardens- details will follow when available.



Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter

Meetings will be held on Thursdays at the Port Washington Library on the dates and times listed below, **unless otherwise notified.** **Please check your e-mail or the website for any meeting changes.**

These meetings aren't just for the PWRE officers. All members are welcome to attend.

2013 and 2014 Meeting Dates

December 19th, 2013 at 10:30 a.m. (There will be no meeting in January.)

Check the website: www.pwta.us/PWRE/ in January for future meeting dates.

Reminder to those wanting Port Of Call "online." There is no need to have it e-mailed to you personally. It is on our website at <http://pwta.us/PWRE/>. If you wish a paper copy, you can just print it from the website.

To be a better newsletter, we need to hear from more of you. Make it your New Year's "resolution" to contribute to Port Of Call by sharing your retirement activities and photos with us. The most difficult issues to produce are the ones without member input.

PLEASE NOTE: Checks for contributions to the PWRE Scholarship Fund should be made out to the PWTA Scholarship Foundation and mailed to the PWTA office at 99 Campus Drive.

PORT WASHINGTON
RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER, PWTA
99 CAMPUS DRIVE

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL