



# PORT OF CALL

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

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

**June 2015**

**VOL.25 NO.2**

**NYSUT NO. 19 080R Visit our website at: [www.pwta.us/PWRE](http://www.pwta.us/PWRE) AFT NO. 9591-R**

## *So How Did The PWRE Come To Be?*

By 1990 a number of teacher locals in northern Nassau County had already established retired teacher chapters. For a number of years the PWTA officers had hoped that new Port Washington retirees would start a chapter, but no one was willing to do the work of organizing. However, when George Williams retired, the officers knew that a retired teacher chapter would be started, and they were right!

On January 29, 1991, a steering committee of George Williams, Betty McNally, Audrey Minard, Lynn Schreiber, Beatrice Lawrence, Bette Stetson, Selma Gordon, Babette Harper, Toni Salerno, and George Kesner met with Mary McWilliams, of the Great Neck Retired Teachers Association, and Mary Anne Cariello, PWTA President, to begin the formation of a retiree chapter. Audrey Minard reminisced, "Everyone was enthusiastic and eventually asked to volunteer in an area. All jobs seemed to be filled when George turned to the last person, me, and asked, 'What about you, Audrey? We are going to need funds.' I suddenly became the uncontested membership chairperson and collector of money. The dues were set at ten dollars."

The PWTA active teachers were supportive of the retired teacher chapter and helped in many ways. The constitution was amended to provide for a retired teachers chapter with representation on the Executive Council and, in 2005, gave retirees one voting member. NYSUT, too, recognized retirees as an important part of its organization. In 1991 NYSUT dues for active members were increased by one dollar, and later by two dollars, eliminating the need for retirees to pay NYSUT dues.

In the spring of 1991 the first of many newsletters was published. George Williams edited *Port of Call* with the help of Bea Lawrence, Betty McNally, and Toni Salerno. The organization held its first meeting and luncheon, and forty-five retirees attended. New by-laws made retired administrators, paraprofessionals, and secretaries eligible for membership, and the name of the chapter was changed to Port Washington Retired Educators. By the winter of 1991, the PWRE had 117 members, 60 of whom attended the second luncheon. The first directory was compiled in the spring of 1992 and directories have been printed and mailed every year since then.

Like the PWTA, the PWRE decided to award scholarships in memory or honor of a member. In June 1993 the first one was awarded to Laurie Rinke in memory of George Horton, assistant principal at Schreiber and Weber Junior High math chairperson. Laurie Rinke thanked the PWRE "for the very generous scholarship you awarded me. Beyond the scholarship itself, the fact that I was recognized by such a prestigious group was quite an honor for me." To this day, the PWRE continues to award scholarships, and members continue to make contributions in honor or memory of their former colleagues. In addition, the PWRE contributes to other charities. In January 1998 \$750 was contributed to the Landmark Committee to purchase a bench at Landmark on Main Street. A plaque was inscribed, "Port Washington Retired Educators, in honor of their service to our children."

The December 2003 *Port of Call* quoted Alan Lubin, then NYSUT Executive Vice President, "You may be retired ...but you're never retired from political action." Port's retirees understood this, and their efforts began as soon as they were organized and have continued. In 1992 Lynn Schreiber attended the "Committee of 100" lobbying effort in Albany. Retirees were urged to write to Governor Mario Cuomo to ask him to maintain state aid to public schools. Retirees appreciate the necessity of contributing to VOTE-COPE. The PWRE has received many awards

Continued on page 6

## A Great Big Thank You to Joan Gerken!

AND MAJOR KUDOS, FOR ALL THESE YEARS OF LOVING KINDNESS AND DEDICATION TO HER SECRETARIAL POSITION AND THE PWRE! Joan has been sending on our behalf get well cards, condolences and contributions to the PWRE scholarship fund in memory of our colleagues. You have set our standards high, Joan, and we can not thank you enough !

We have a new secretary in Norma Ziegel, so please contact her with news of our members for which cards should be sent. Please also notify Don Voss, Barbara Mayer and Elaine.

## FYI - Your Pension

**Coming in September: A COLA Increase** - Eligible retirees receiving a monthly benefit of any amount from NYSTRS will see a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 1.0% on the first \$18,000 of their annual benefit payment beginning this September, the result of legislation enacted in New York 15 years ago.

**NYSTRS Remains a Top-10 Fund** - NYSTRS is once again ranked among the top-10 pension funds in the nation according to trade publication *Pensions & Investments (P&I)*.

**Pensions Are Guaranteed**- NYSTRS retirees have received benefits in full and without fail since 1921.

## Retirees to be Welcomed

Mary Anne and Elaine "hosted" an information-sharing get-together at the Teacher Center on May 27th to introduce those about to retire to the awesome world of the P.W.R.E. Invited were Joan Andors, Leslie Anesta, Doris Behrens, Fran Clark, Pat Kosiba, Paul Kosiba, Joan Lisecki, Rosanne Matty, Lisa Meade, Marilyn Rodahan, Don Schaefer and Trish Wright. We look forward to sharing the "good life" with our newest colleagues.



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

*All are welcome whether you've read the book or not. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to the host. (check member directory for address & phone number, or email.)*

Date: Tues., Sept. 8th @ 12:00 (after the brunch)  
Book: My Antonia by Willa Cather  
Hosted by: Ute Johnson

#### PORT OF CALL

June 2015 Vol. 25 No. 1

Published by the Retired Educators Chapter  
Port Washington Teachers Association  
99 Campus Drive  
Port Washington, NY 11050

Erlyn Madonia, Editor  
[emadonia@gmail.com](mailto:emadonia@gmail.com)  
(518)392-2201

PWRE Webmaster: Barbara Mayer  
[blmayer3@gmail.com](mailto:blmayer3@gmail.com)

### FRIENDSHIP/ REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE



*Norma Ziegel*

#### Get Well Wishes were sent to:

Joan Gerken

Dr. Kathleen Mooney

Penny Zangas

#### Condolences were sent to:

Rose Bonanno on the loss of her husband

Patricia Cantelmi on the loss of her husband

Patricia Reed on the loss of her mother

The family of Irwin Krive

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

## A Walk On The High Line— Barbara Blum



On a breezy day in May, sixteen PWRE members went on a walk of the newer northern segment of the High Line, had lunch at a restaurant on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, walked past the Chelsea Market (which we toured on our last walk on the High Line), and went into the Gansvoort Market. Some of us had delicious gelato and then toured a beautiful cobblestone pedestrian area at the corner of little 12<sup>th</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The cobblestone corner had a European feeling that beckoned you to linger and window shop.

The walk was led by Mike Nicoll of Gotham Tours. As always, Mike shared his wealth of knowledge about the city. We learned that the Post Office on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street will become an Amtrak station, but the beautiful facade will remain. Madison Square Garden has sold air rights to the building it

is in, so the building will grow taller. The Garden may or may not move. Mike also shared a lot of information about architects and architecture and the history of the High Line.

The High Line is a 1.45 mile long aerial walkway and park built on an elevated railway line. The railway line has not been used for years. The plantings along the walkway pay homage to the wild plants you could find along the unused train tracks. The change in the neighborhoods abutting the High Line is astonishing.

The northern section is becoming integrated with the new Hudson Yards development. The area above the current train yards will be developed leaving the yards beneath the new buildings. The northern end of the High Line widens (responsive to requests by people), and has a play area made up of rail ties, beams, and many benches and tracks you can walk between. There are also benches that make sounds when tapped and seesaw like benches.



From the High Line you can enjoy views of the city and the Hudson River. We enjoyed the day!

## Kudos to Barbara Mayer

We have received word from NYSUT of this year's Communications Awards Retiree Winners, and once again a Triumph!

We did not submit in the journalism category, but Barbara did enter for our amazing website, and the powers-that-be recognized excellence when they saw it. We received the *AWARD OF DISTINCTION* for "Best Overall Graphic Design" and "Most User-Friendly Website." Way to go, Barbara - congratulations to you, and many thanks from all of us!

### What's Inside Port of Call June 2015

From the Desk of Our Co-Presidents.....	Page 1	Merry-Go-Round.....	Page 4
A Great Big Thank You.....	Page 2	FYI –Town of North Hempstead Residents.....	Page 4
Sending Greetings, Condolences.....	Page 2	An Earth Day to Remember.....	Page 5
Retirees to be Welcomed.....	Page 2	Cont from page 1 .....	Page 6
Come to the P.W.R.E. Book Club.....	Page 2	We Missed You But Not As Much as You Missed....	Page 7
Friendship/Remembrance Committee.....	Page 2	We Asked To Hear From You and We Did.....	Page 7
A Walk On the High Line.....	Page 3	Elaine Berman, Judy Keller and Ray Seth Ehrlich	
Kudos to Barbara Mayer.....	Page 3		



# Classroom Cookery

In the mood to cook? Perhaps you'd like to consult a recipe. By following the step by step directions, you are instructed which ingredients to purchase, how much to measure out and prepare. You continue to follow the directions: combine them and cook them in the order as directed. Voila, uniformity of content and process gives you a result for the dish that is pretty much what you expected.

Enjoy another episode in the  
*Adventures of Merry*

If only teaching were so easy. We are all engaged in the creation of **our** dish-- productive Americans, for which the prescriptive cookbook approach just doesn't work. Unlike with specified food, there is little uniformity to the ingredients of a class, other than the grouping by chronological age. Each student's make up reflects a mix of the past s/he has had—parenting, exposure to experiences, level of social, physical and emotional maturity, even physical well-being. Since these complex beings need different levels of “preparation” in our classrooms, there really can be no exact expectation of how long it will take for each child to be “done.” In fact, if we have done our job correctly, the children will never be “done,” because we will have created life-long learners.

The notion that children in a class can be treated as identical beings, to be instructed equally and moved in lock step developmentally and intellectually is invalid. “No child left behind” sounds egalitarian and democratic, but in reality, we are aware that children need to progress at their own rate. Recognizing differences means understanding that learning takes place over a long continuum. Not everyone is ready to be on the same page of the same book . “Let the Kids Learn Through Play, Teaching in Kindergarten Backfires,” an opinion piece by David Kohn in the May 16<sup>th</sup> New York Times, is a call for the kind of education that comes from the root *educere* which means *to bring out*, not stuff in.

We have turned out children who are not uniform in their achievements, but have become productive citizens. Some of these are surprises to me, reflecting development of skills and abilities that I might not have predicted from their elementary school performance. As children progress through school, if we are successful in meeting their interests and abilities, they have a chance to mature, grow and shine.

Here is a list of a few of the current occupations, just the ones I know about, of students we have had in our classes: movie theater manager, phlebotomist, architect, real estate agent, secretary, physician, CPA, interns of various kinds, financier, truck driver, cable guy, gas and electric meter checker, teacher, midwife, marine biologist, nurse, lawyer, landscaper, librarian, IT, singer, composer, dancer, political aide, professor, roofer, researcher, military personnel, parent, pilot, engineer.

Wouldn't it be welcome, if instead of paying homage in our society to chefs as celebrities, society could laud us, celebrity teachers, who are encouraged to use creativity and skills honed over time, rather than lock step procedures, to produce our best product for the benefit of all.

## FYI - Town of North Hempstead Residents

SEPT. 30 - Aging in Place in Suburbia - Living Better Today, Planning for Tomorrow 9 am - 2 pm - N. H. "Yes We Can" Community Center, 141 Garden St., Westbury. To register or inquire call, [516 869-6311](tel:5168696311) .

## An Earth Day to Remember - Jim Jones

As teachers, we are often asked to develop some bit of curriculum relating to Earth Day; I had an experience recently that was well timed for the event, and I wanted to share it with you.

I do wildlife rescue work for Volunteers for Wildlife, a rescue, rehabilitation and education organization located at Bailey Arboretum in Locust Valley. Trying to help injured, displaced or sick creatures can be heart-breaking; survival is never certain. However, when it works, it is simply beautiful.

I got a rescue call from a woman in Muttontown; she had found a young great horned owl on the ground and needed help. People often misidentify wild animals, so I try to be prepared for anything. However, when I arrived, I was greeted by a two to three week old owl, already placed in a carrier for safe keeping. Most people do not realize it, but this scenario is quite common. Young owl chicks are often found on the ground; their first flight attempts are unsuccessful and their flight power is not enough to get them airborne again. In more natural settings, the chick would remain earthbound, quiet and inconspicuous, while still being well fed and protected by both parents. Eventually, the chicks will climb (yes, they can) or fly to a safer, more elevated perch. However, on Long Island there are cats, dogs, cars and other ground based terrors, so rescuers need options. I examined the chick and it seemed fine, if I could locate the nest then possibly I



could put it back, but no luck. My next option (which we have done before) was to construct a make-shift nest, anchor it in a tree, and deposit the chick out of harm's way. The owner was very helpful, a wire basket was found (I cut some pine branches and weaved them into the wire to make it as safe and comfortable as possible) along with a long ladder and plenty of rope. I selected an appropriate tree with a good spot about fifteen feet high, and lashed it in. I then grabbed the chick, wide-eyed and beak clacking, and placed it in the nest, where it quickly calmed down. Now all that was needed were the parents, but they were absent. I hoped that they were nearby, but just well concealed. I wanted to maximize our chances, so I gave the owner a recording of the hunger screeches of owl chicks. These advertise the presence of the chicks to adults; they might also encourage our chick to start calling as well. I gave the owner as much information as possible and headed home to see what news the night might bring.

A nervous night to be sure, but sometimes the spirits of nature smile on us all! The owner called to say that the parents had responded to the recordings (and to her own owl hoots). I drove over to check on the results; my view of the nest showed the chick looking healthy and active, and it was accompanied in the nest by the greatest sight of all --- LUNCH! (actually, the remains of a previously dispatched squirrel). The parents had done their duty and would probably continue to do so. Some rescues are just better than others, and Earth Day is best enjoyed by helping one creature at a time.



## Continued from page 1

for its level of contributions and has become one of the highest contributing retiree chapters.

Through the years retirees have used their political action skill. Sometimes it was to stop bad things from happening. In 1997 they organized against a proposal for a wasteful Constitutional Convention that might have reduced pension benefits and eliminated the requirement for state aid to education. They also worked against a well-orchestrated movement to eliminate teacher tenure. In 1998 they worked to prevent the repeal of the Tri-borough Amendment to the Taylor Law, which allows the terms of a previously negotiated contract to continue until there is a successor agreement.

Not only have retirees been involved in political action in the state, but also in Port Washington. Beginning in 2003 the PWRE created and paid for ads in the *Port Washington News* in support of school budgets and bond issues. They also phone other retirees to urge them to support education.

From 1991 when the retiree councils were established, Port's representatives were active participants in Retiree Council 19 meetings and activities. Matt Scott served as co-president with Sabrina Brown of Herricks. Margot Fletcher was treasurer for many years. Elaine Berman, as PAC coordinator for the Seventh Senatorial District, served also as a member of RC19's legislative committee.

However, it has not been all work for the retired educators. Until 2002 the PWRE held two luncheons every year. These were always well attended and gave those who came an opportunity to see colleagues. In 2002 the annual Not-Back-to-School breakfast began as an occasion to welcome new members and enjoy the experience of not having to work on the first day of school. There have also been opportunities for education and entertainment, through "field trips" which continue to the present day.

Retirees have been provided with meaningful activities and events in which to participate. It has given many of its members the opportunity to continue meeting and working together. They have accomplished much, including exercising their influence politically for the good of educators and education. At the same time, they have had many enjoyable and worthwhile experiences.

Mary Anne & Tessa

## And our work continues to make a difference...

The slogan at the recent NYSUT convention was "We are one" - but for the Port Washington Retired Educators, "Now we are two!" I refer, of course, to the fact that Mary Anne Cariello and I will be sharing the presidency henceforth, and that is an awesome positive! Although I am penning the column for this issue of *PORT OF CALL*, we shall share thoughts and space in future issues.

NYSUT has been *very* busy urging the Legislature to prohibit the gag order on educators (S.5139, Flanagan & A.7402 Nolan), amend the tax cap, oppose the Governor's backdoor voucher scheme ("Parental Choice in Education Act"), stop holding school aid captive by decoupling same from the APPR November deadline, support *local* decision-making in the hiring, tenure and disciplining of teachers, etc. and in many other areas in addition to K-12, e.g. higher ed, health field. Under the Parental Choice in Education Act, a tax credit will reimburse wealthy donors who contribute large amounts of money to private schools, and taxpayers will reimburse 75 percent of the donor's contributions, costing the state \$150 million in the first year alone. A coalition of parent, religious, labor and education groups (some three dozen organizations) decry the tax break as one that siphons money from public education and funnels it into the pockets of millionaires and billionaires.

NYSUT also has several suits going. Things change by the day - and with but a few weeks remaining in this legislative session, I URGE you to go to the [NYSUT.org/MAC](http://NYSUT.org/MAC) site for updated information and ways in which YOU can help make the needed changes by contacting your state legislators. We can ALL make things happen - if we don't leave it up to "the next guy." And of course, your contributions to VOTE/COPE help pay the bills!

Elaine

## We Missed You - But Not As Much As What You Missed



Dr. Wedny Schiller and a few of her former Port teachers: Elaine Berman, Eryln Madonia, Judy Keller, Elsie Wikstrom, and Norma Ziegel.

What a gorgeous day we had for our spring luncheon on May 14th! Sun shone brightly, temperature was ideal, and country club setting a delight. As always we enjoyed meeting up with friends not recently seen as we munched on tasty hors d'oeuvres, and then had the pleasure of being enlightened about the political scene past and present by a Schreiber graduate (1982), Dr. Wendy Schiller, professor and department chair at Brown University.

In addition to planned excursions, our next big social event will be the annual day-after-Labor-Day brunch at Fish-Kebabs- - so we will *definitely* see you there!

## We Asked To Hear From You And We Did



### Hello from Judy Keller in Tanzania

Last February, we spent 2 weeks on safari in Tanzania. Highlights of the trip included a sunrise balloon flight, visits to two Maasai villages and thousands of animal sightings. Really wanted to bring a zebra home to Cape Cod, but... Check one adventure off the bucket list.



### Hello from Elaine Berman

Elaine recently enjoyed five days in Bermuda with son Corey and daughter-in-law Sony. Weather was great for land and cave sightseeing, hiking, golfing, eating and enjoying resort accommodations right on the beach. Monsoon-like wind and rain undermined kayaking and whale-watching plans, but who really cared?



### Hello from Ray Seth Ehrlich

This winter's project done in time for kayak season...it is 18' long, weighs 36 pounds and is made of cedar and spruce.



**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.**

**2015 Meeting Dates**

**June 11 - 10:30 am-noon - Hagedorn Room**

**July 30 -10:00 am –11:30 am—Hagedorn room**

**No meeting in August**

**September 8 - 9:30 am at Fish-Kebab**

**October - TBA**

**November 19—10:30am - noon– Hagedorn**

**PLEASE NOTE: Checks for contributions to the PWRE Scholarship Fund should be made out to the PWTA and mailed to:  
Penny D'Antonio  
1425 Port Washington Blvd.  
Port Washington, New York 11050**

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

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL