



PORT OF CALL

PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER

PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK

JUNE 2009

VOL. 19 NO. 2

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

F I don't know about you, but whenever I mention looking forward to the summer
R months I have to chuckle as my in-service friends comment "But you're retired - you're on
O vacation all year!" No, mis amigos, my days will look distinctly different come the end of
M June. There will be a temporary lull in political activities, meetings of retiree council 19,
ED 19 meetings and L.I. Retired Delegates Council, hiatus for trips to Albany revolving
around Retiree Advisory Committee meetings or Committee of 100 activities, even - hope-
fully - vacation from rallies and sudden urgent calls to action.



Elaine Berman

T This has been a difficult year. Because of state budget issues a third Committee of
H 100 session was called, and legislators were contacted via all possible means of communication in order to
E minimize dangers to school support. Efforts were successful in keeping Tier 5 out of the budget (still out
there, however), in urging consideration for circuit breakers in lieu of a proposed cap; other important
issues are still pending, and I urge you to go to the www.nysut.org website for sample letters that you can
write. As you are aware, all school budgets passed in Nassau County, having been kept very low and
D consequently limiting opportunities for the coming year. Although here in Port Washington we supported
E the budget, we did not work tirelessly as we have in other years to promote it in response to a public Board
S of Education statement with which the PWTA took exception. (We urge that contract negotiations proceed
K smoothly, fairly and in the best interests of the youth of our community) Careful monitoring of Federal
stimulus monies will take place to insure that they serve the purpose for which they are intended.

O Ah, beach days, golf days, reading in the park days! A country drive, a long weekend at leisure,
F these are the sights I conjure up for the months of July and August. A chance for all of us to regroup,
rethink our differences in the unhastened summer hours in the hope that all animosities between interest
groups will disappear and peace - on all fronts - will take hold. My best wishes to all for a healthy,
relaxing, ... Undemanding summer!

FOOD FOR THE NEEDY

O At a recent P.W.R.E. meeting, it was decided to
U help with NYSUT's social action efforts and try to
R provide non-perishables for as many of the needy as
possible. Therefore we ask that you help feed those
P in need by bringing non-perishable foods to our

September brunch on September 8, 2009. We will
see that they are delivered to INN or another L.I.
organization that will distribute them to those in
need. (All the chapters in Retiree Council 19 are be-
ing asked to do the same.) Thank you

TAKE ACTION

E Go to www.nysut.org Send a FAX or letter to your legislators opposing Property Tax Caps and supporting
S the Omnibus Property Tax/Circuit Breaker Bill S. 4239 (Krueger)

I Go to www.aft.org Select Legislative Action Center/Take Action/{Protect the Right to Join a Union and
D follow directions. This is the Employee Free Choice Act legislation about which you have been reading.

E Go to <http://propertytaxideas.nysenate.gov/> and vote on the Senate's website against the property tax
N caps and in favor of the Omnibus Circuit Breaker.
T

P.W.R.E. CHAPTER NEWS



Port Of Call Winners

The NYSUT Journalism Contest

Each year, NYSUT sponsors a journalism contest open to all the active and retiree newsletters and websites in the state. PORT OF CALL has entered many times. Our website was entered as soon as it was eligible two years ago.

The contest separates entries into many categories depending on the number of members in the association and whether the publication is for active employees or retirees. PORT OF CALL enters Retiree Category II. Each category contains five sub-categories with three awards given in each. The five sub-categories are General Excellence, Best News Story, Best Feature story, Best Editorial and Best Website. PORT OF CALL won a first award for Best Editorial (Elaine), an award of merit (2nd place) for General Excellence (Jean), and honorable mentions (3rd place) for Best Feature Story (Marilyn) and Best Website (Barbara). PORT OF CALL won in four out of the five possible categories.



Jean Barbara Marilyn Elaine

Important Dates to Remember

The **July 16th PWRE meeting** will be held at 10:00 a.m. in the Teacher Center not at the Port Washington Library.

The **"First Day of School Brunch"** will be held on **Tuesday, September 8th** at 9:45 a.m. at Fish-Ka-Bob on lower Main Street. The cost is \$15. Please send your check, made out to PWTA by Aug. 20th, to Penny D'Antonio 1425 Port Washington Blvd., Port Washington, NY 11050.

A L. I. winery tour is planned for October. Watch the website and your e-mail for information.

Memories Sought

As you know, Mary Anne and Tessa have been working on the history of the PWTA since its inception in 1932. There may be things of more personal involvement that never made it into the newspapers, Contact, etc. that you would like to share - e.g. memories of relationships within your buildings, committee workings, negotiations, anecdotes, etc. that would contribute immeasurably to an overall picture. You can email these to Mary Anne and/or Tessa just as random thoughts and memories, not as a doctoral dissertation - make it easy for yourself! They will be happy to meld these into a final historical "document."

PORT OF CALL

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Joan Gerken

Condolences Were Sent to:

The family of Caroline Gillette
Dr. Geoffrey Gordon on the loss of his Father
Jackie Marshall on the death of her mother
Betsy Rice on the death of her husband
The family of William Schafer

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

Caroline Gillette
William Schafer

Get Well Wishes Were Sent to

Neila Farber
Elsie Wikstrom

Thank You from Annette Mione

Annette wishes to thank all who sent expressions of sympathy on the death of her husband, Anthony. She found them most comforting.



Mary Anne, Elaine and PWTA President Christine Vasilev represented Port Washington at the NYSUT Progressive Income Tax Rally in Albany on March 5th.

Inside PORT OF CALL June 2009

Chapter News... Port of Call Winners	page 2
Important Dates to Remember ... Memories Sought	page 2
Friendship/Remembrance Committee...Joan Gerken	page 2
PORT OF CALL contact information	page 2
Welcome to Port's Newest Retirees...Vote/Cope Awards	page 3
Single-Payer Health Care Plan ...Stella D'Oro Strike	page 3
NYSUT R.A. Buffalo...Retiree Dental Plan	page 4
What It's All About...Barbara Mayer	page 5
May Luncheon Pictures	page 5
Merry-Go-Round ...The March of Time	page 6
A Celebration of George Kesner's Life...Mary Ann Leonard	page 6
Reminders And Requests...ARRA Glitch	page 7
P.W.R.E. Survey for Future Events	page 7

... AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

Welcome to Port's Newest Retirees!

Eric Begun
Myra Bloom
Joan Brinkhuis
Ken Case

You've earned your retirement! Your membership in the AFT while you were working has made you a lifelong retiree AFT member. You will also remain an (active, we hope) important member of our P.W. Retiree Chapter, your membership of \$20 being paid for the first year by your

Lisa Donaj
Gail Femmel
Lenore Ilberg
Evelyn Schonbrun

association, and by yourself in subsequent years; this will entitle you to maintain your NYSUT insurance benefits, receive our PWRE publications, membership directory - and, most important, continue the valued friendships you have developed over the years. You are also grand-parented into the Alliance for Retired Americans, the organization which works for us and all labor to strengthen Medicare, improve its benefits, works tirelessly for national health care reform, preserve pension benefits and stay on top of myriad other issues which affect us. Stay informed via the many publications you will be receiving; you can always also contact our NYSUT Retiree Consultant, Kathy Lyons, in the NYSUT Nassau office, or myself with specific questions, subscribe to the www.aft.org/retirement website, the www.NYSUT.org website, for other informative material; and participate actively in FAX-ing, 'phoning, e-mailing and/or letter writing campaigns on a multitude of issues that affect our well-being. There is a good reason why we do not refer to those still working in the school environment as "active;" they are "in-service," we are "retirees." We all remain "active!"

Single-Payer Health Care Plan Explained

In a recent Act Two column in Newsday, Saul Friedman compared several health care plans, and included a well-defined explanation of the most prominent single-payer proposal thus far:

"H.R. 676, called the 'U.S. National Health Care Act,' is subtitled the 'Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act.' As proposed by Rep. John Conyers, it would provide comprehensive medical benefits under a single payer, probably an agency like the current Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which administers Medicare. But while the benefits would be publicly financed, the health care providers would, for the most part, be private. Indeed, profit-making medical practices, laboratories, hospitals and other institutions would continue. They would simply bill the single-payer agency, as they do now with Medicare. The Congressional Research Service says Conyers' bill, which has dozens of co-sponsors, would cover and provide free 'all medically necessary care, such as primary care and prevention, prescription drugs, emergency care and mental health services.' It also would eliminate the need, the spending and the administrative costs for myriad federal and state health programs such as Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program....And it could replace Medicaid to cover long-term nursing care."

The NYSUT Retiree Personal Organizer

is available for download. The organizer is a convenient tool for keeping track of personal information including

- union, professional and personal contacts
- financial information
- insurance coverage
- deeds, titles and credit
- memorial arrangements
- wills and personal effects

Go to: NYSUT.org

Vote/Cope Awards



At the March 9th meeting of Retiree Council 19, chapters winning Vote/Cope awards were honored.

**Port Washington's
Vote /Cope contributions
were the highest in
Nassau County.
Mary Anne and Elaine
accepted the award.**



STELLA D'ORO STRIKERS NEED OUR SUPPORT

The strike by 135 bakers at Stella D'Oro is in its ninth month. When the company was bought last year by Brynwood Partners, they demanded a 25% pay cut, an end to overtime, and eliminating 4 holidays and 12 sick days. After fruitless talks the workers began a strike last August. You can help by not buying Stella D'Oro products (which are being made by strike breakers and managers).

Donations may also be made to the workers' local union - "BCTGM Local 50 Strike Fund" - at 145 Talmadge Road, Suite 17, Edison, N.J. 08817 for the benefit of the Stella D'Oro Strike.

NYSUT EVENTS AND MEMBER BENEFITS

NYSUT R.A., Buffalo , April 5th

Elaine and Louise were the delegates from R.C. 19 to attend the NYSUT R.A. and its preceding two-day conference for in-service and retiree presidents. The theme of the R.A. this year was "Speak Up, Speak Out." (A thought that we should all pursue, whether we agree or disagree. Free speech should not be taken lightly; when you have a position in which you believe, defend it! {But I digress!}) In the pre-R.A. sessions, we participated in three workshops, one a guide to health care in retirement, a second titled "Carrots and Sticks: how to get elected officials to feel ownership in our public education services;" and third, a dialogue with the NYSUT officers. (Materials from all of these seminars are available from Elaine.)

The R.A. (37th annual) itself followed the usual format, i.e. committee meetings on Resolutions and Amendments (followed by floor discussion and approval), updates from the NYSUT officers, and greetings from a host of speakers including Comptroller Tom DiNapoli. (Our pensions are safe. Said DiNapoli, "The defined benefit plan in N.Y. must be preserved and protected. We have to stand up for that plan and stand together.") Sens. Schumer and Gillibrand, AFT President Randi Weingarten, outgoing Commissioner of Education Richard Mills were among other guests. In addition to "Speak Up and Speak Out," emphasis was placed on a green theme, e.g. cutting down substantially on the quantity of paper materials (available online) and encouraging members to do likewise. In keeping with NYSUT's longstanding commitment to social justice, all of NYSUT's 1500 locals plus retiree chapters were encouraged to host food drives in their communities (We will do so.), and to purchase fair-trade items where possible. In session at the time of the Binghamton massacre, a collection was immediately taken up in the hall and \$5000 raised on the spot.

The highlight of the convention for Port Washington was the plaque awarded to our PORT OF CALL for excellence in journalism and to its companion website. (Way to go, Jean, Barbara, Elaine and Marilyn!) Approximately 2000 delegates were in attendance at this year's R.A.



Louise and Elaine with the buffalo in Buffalo.

Elaine accepting her award in Buffalo.
*Picture courtesy of NYSUT



Retiree Dental Plan Offers Choice

The Retiree Dental Plan endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits Trust pays benefits for three categories of service: Type A: Preventive (cleanings, exams, X-rays), Type B: Restorative (fillings; simple extractions; crown, denture and bridge repair), and Type C: Major restorative (surgical extractions, general anesthesia, oral surgery, bridges and dentures). The plan is provided by MetLife.

Members have the choice of using a participating MetLife dentist or a non-participating dentist. The plan has more than 117,000 participating dentists throughout the U.S., including more than 27,000 specialists. When a participating dentist is used, members generally receive the greatest benefit and incur the least out-of-pocket expense.

The plan has an annual benefit maximum of \$1,250 per person for covered services rendered by any dentist.

Retired NYSUT members are eligible to apply. Members may also apply for coverage for their spouses or domestic partners and children. Unmarried dependent children are covered to age 23.

If members use pension deduction to pay for the plan, they incur no service fees. A \$4 service fee per billing cycle is applied for quarterly, semi-annual or annual direct billing.

For information, contact member Benefits at 800-626-8101 or visit www.memberbenefits.nysut.org online.

For information about contractual expense reimbursement/endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits Trust or refer to your NYSUT Member Benefits Trust Summary Plan Description.

*The costs through December 2009 are: Member only - \$42.59/mo.--- Member plus one (e.g. spouse) - \$94.87/mo
---Member plus family - \$118.17/mo.*



Shopping for Insurance? Keep NYSUT Member Benefits Trust In Mind.

KEEPING IN TOUCH



What It's All About!

by Barbara Mayer, Webmaster

As we all enjoy reading this wonderful newsletter that Jean Sellers puts together for us four times per year, we can appreciate the depth of her articles with all of their information to be shared - and we have it in our hands so that we can refer back to it. The Port Washington Retired Educators Website, (pwta.us/Retirees) on the other hand, has a different goal. It is meant to provide us with *online links* to info we find to be valuable - hopefully! And it can be updated frequently - that is its purpose.

None of this has been more apparent than in these past six months. When Lee Aschenbrenner was injured last December, the clamor for health reports was loud. The Aschenbrenner family was overwhelmed. Barbara Giebel, principal of Guggenheim School and a close friend of the Aschenbrenners, spoke frequently to Lee's children, and forwarded emails about his condition to me, among others. I was able to update the website as often as I heard from Barbara.

The number of visits to the website from that period were record-breaking. One day, alone, we had 99 visitors! Many, many first-time visitors came also. Our usual average number of "hits" jumped from approximately ten to twenty or more daily. Our monthly average number of visits went from about 100 to over 400; in December there were 761! And the number of *new* visitors remains at about 25% of our daily total. Now, almost six months later, the increase in visitors has been continued. It is so gratifying to reach so many people! The website is able to meet a need for updated information and I am so very glad. Of course, I am hopeful that the number of visitors will continue to be maintained AND to increase. Why not? I'm an optimist! So, please, keep visiting. And continue to email me with any suggestions and other feedback that you want to share at blmayer@optonline.net.

The Annual PWRE Luncheon Meeting At The Swan Club...May 28th



Elaine Penny Elaine



Retiree Walter Chaskel spoke about Elderhostel's One Day Tours.



Mary Anne Tessa Joyce



Barbara Nancy Barbara



Lou Joan Dot



Marilyn Kathy Lyons Rita



Kathleen Jean Elsie



Ellen George Adelia Bertha



Sue Pat Grace



Kay Stella



Carla visited but could not stay for lunch.



Standing: Mary Ann, Anne, Eileen, Mary, Dot and Rosemary
Sitting: Mary, June and Mary Lou



Anne Annmarie Bernadette



Matt Bill Charlie

SHARING THOUGHTS



Merry-Go-Round The March of Time by Merry Gilbert

I have begun to identify some of the markers of my encroaching old age.

One sign is white eyebrow hairs, growing long and wiry, where brown ones used to lie smoothly in place. (Comparison with Andy Rooney seems eventually inevitable.)

Another is by my lack of interest, except for occasional pangs of regret, in some modern methods that are all the rage, at which younger people are so casually adept.

One indication crept in on little cat feet. (On little boy feet, actually.) My neighbor, Zayd, now age two and a half, visits me most nice days at about 4:00. At first, he would laboriously climb the three steps up to my porch, then after a breather, he would come in and play with my bird book, which has a battery operated bird call sound that goes with each picture. He began by pressing the buttons at random, then he recognized that different pictures go with different sounds. His system is not perfect yet, but he's a PC, and he's two and half.

Emboldened by his conquest of my porch, he began to branch out in his activities by climbing the steps leading to other porches on our block.

Hmm, I thought, there's a book in here somewhere. So I photographed him on the steps of other houses along with the children who live in each. With a working title of "Zayd Steps Up," I proposed the book idea to his mom. "Great," she said, and showed me a Snapfish real book that a member of her family had created with reunion photos.

I procrastinated as long as I could, since creating it on a computer seemed daunting. (Scary to admit, that when Apple IIe's were first in schools, I was the computer coordinator, and now, I've evolved into one of the very reluctant sorts of people I once instructed!)

But with that beautiful real book as my goal, I sat down to create one. After thumbing through my guide created from an address book, a gift from Marcia Kirschenbaum, a compendium of my usernames and passwords, in ABC order, I signed onto the Snapfish site.

It was all downhill from there. Error message after error message, back and forth from the directions to the "book." Even my photos (beautifully edited with user friendly Picasa) were rejected.

Now we get tohappily ever after.

I made a scrapbook. It came out nice.

I'm not on Facebook, I don't text, and I don't twitter.

Up till recently, I didn't know what a Luddite was.

Now I is one.

A Celebration Of George Kesner's Life

An Excerpt from the Tribute by Mary Ann Leonard

"I want to tell you about George, one of Port Washington's finest teachers and my dear colleague.

George was an educator: an intelligent, capable, creative and caring person. He guided children to be good students, thinkers and responsible citizens. He helped them feel good about themselves. He was fair, and the children knew he had their best interests at heart. He educated the whole child.

George's enthusiasm for life filtered into his life as a sixth grade teacher. He was an ecologist; therefore, he included bird study in his curriculum. He was interested in the environment and conservation; he especially enjoyed taking his students to Frost Valley. George used the card game of cribbage as a tool to teach math. Of course, he was a Navy officer and demonstrated good citizenship and love for his country to his students. George was a friendly person with a good sense of humor and a twinkle in his eyes. He was a doer and a problem solver. These are important qualities to be a successful teacher. Students, their parents and colleagues admired and respected George for all he achieved as a teacher, both in the classroom and outside in the Port Washington community. George kept in touch with his students and was so proud of their accomplishments."

Can you imagine how many lives George touched during his 40-year career! He will not be forgotten.



REMINDERS AND REQUESTS

Several months ago, after studying the new American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, NYSTRS notified its members of possible income tax consequences that they might face when filing their 2009 income tax next year if the IRS does not alter the new withholding tax tables to reflect pension income.

Glitch May Cause Retirees to Owe Taxes

Reprinted from the article by Kara Smith - New York Teacher - April 17, 2009

The National Education Association, one of NYSUT's national affiliates, is working to remedy an unintended consequence of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that could cause financial hardship for retirees. New tax withholding tables were issued by the Internal Revenue Service to reflect the Making Work Pay credit on earned income that was contained in the ARRA.

While pension benefits are not considered earned income and not subject to the Making Work Pay credit, IRS nevertheless instructed the payers of retirement benefits to use the new federal withholding tables.

This likely will result in under-withholding on pension income, and retirees, most of whom are on a fixed income, may find themselves unexpectedly owing taxes at the end of the year.

If the IRS does not modify its position on this matter, benefit payers, acting on the new IRS directive, will begin withholding using tax tables that are inappropriate for most retirees.

While pension payers have indicated they will do everything possible to notify retirees of the reason for the change in the net amount of their benefit payment and the potential for under-withholding, the only way benefit recipients can

change the withholding amounts is to instruct their pension systems to increase the amount of their withholding. Furthermore, at the close of 2010, they will have to readjust their withholding to reflect the fact that the tables for 2011 will no longer incorporate the Making Work Pay credit.

NEA believes the IRS should allow the use of the old tables for income that is not eligible for the Making Work Pay credit.

NEA is actively involved with AFSCME, the National Council on Teacher Retirement, National Association of State Retirement Administrators, and AARP, urging the IRS to use the old federal withholding tables.

In addition, NEA and its coalition allies are actively lobbying Congress and the Obama administration to take action averting potential problems with the Making Work Pay credit and retiree pension recipients.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Retirees should contact their financial adviser, pension system or accountant immediately to adjust their withholding. Such adjustment is critical to ensure that you will not owe unexpected taxes at the end of the year.

We would appreciate your responding to this brief survey, particularly if you have not been attending our retired educator social events. Thanks. [Please return it to Elaine at 12 Marlin Lane, P.W.]

NAME _____

If you have not attended our spring luncheon in the past two years, could you tell us why

If you have not attended the September brunch at Fish Ka Bob in the past two years, could you tell us why?

If you did not (or will not) join us in June in our trip to the Culinary Institute and FDR Museum in Hyde Park, could you tell us why?

What WOULD you like to do as a social event with our group?

Fall L.I. Winery tour, with lunch

Yes _____ No _____

Walking tour of Manhattan

Yes _____ No _____

Theatre

Yes _____ No _____

Museum

Yes _____ No _____

I do not care for anything mentioned; however, I would be interested in

I do not care to join in any PWRE activities because _____



Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter

Meetings are held in the Port Washington Library on Thursdays at 1:00 P.M. on the dates listed below unless notified otherwise.

Please note the different location (below) for the July meeting.

2009 Meeting Date

July 16, 2009

This meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. in the Teacher Center at Flower Hill

Since the Library is unable to book non-library functions far in advance, future meetings will be announced as soon as the dates and place are established.

Please check the website, www.pwta.us/Retirees, for those days and times.

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

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

FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED

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HERE

FIRST CLASS MAIL