



PORT OF CALL

NYSUT NO. 19 080R

AFT NO. 9591-R

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

THE WORST OF TIMES? CERTAINLY NOT THE BEST!

It has been a hectic, but largely distressing spring. Our heads are spinning from the intake of information, the processing of the factual and not-so-factual, the assimilation of all that has been gleaned from our many sources, i.e. the NYSUT leadership through emails, newsletter, R.A. and



FROM THE DESK OF OUR PRESIDENT

local meetings; the AFT and AFL-CIO; Alliance for Retired Americans; meetings with state and U.S. legislators and - always! - the media. So where are we now?

RACE TO THE TOP Legislation and CHARTER SCHOOLS

The possibility of seeing \$700 million in federal grant money awarded to New York State in the second phase of a state-wide competition has led to months of angst as educators and state officials have labored to alter education laws to meet established criteria. Increasing the number of charter schools (a current ceiling of 200) and changing criteria for teacher evaluation have been foremost in discussions. If one were to believe the "propaganda" being spread by statewide TV ads, slick multi-color mailings and email messages to "friends" being promulgated at a cost of millions by hedge funds involved in profiting from charter schools and by the legislators whom they support, one would have had us believe erroneously that NY would have been able to use the funds to "stop devastating budget cuts" and that our professional organization was standing in the way. In fact, NYSUT has supported all along the lifting of charter school caps but only if critical reforms were to bring fairness, accountability and transparency to the charter school law. (Data has in fact shown that charter schools do not do better than traditional schools overall, that they divert money from the public trough and frequently skim off the most motivated students without consistently producing better results. See **THE DEATH AND LIFE OF THE GREAT AMERICAN SCHOOL SYSTEM** by Diane Ravitch, an early proponent of charter schools who has changed her mind based upon fact.)

Yesterday - May 28th - the NYS Assembly passed a charter school bill by a vote of 93-42 which raised the cap from 200 to 460. While the bill did include some reforms (e.g. excludes for-profits in the future, allows comptroller audits, includes reporting on how charters will meet enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities thereby making charter school management more accountable for its use of taxpayer dollars and its shortfall in serving students at risk), it did not go far enough in the areas of funding, saturation and prohibiting conflict of interest for which NYSUT had been arguing. The bill was then passed by the Senate 45-14 and signed by the Governor in time to make the June 1 deadline for RTTT funds. The Senate then also passed the teacher/[principal evaluation Bill (see S7991) unanimously 59-0 and the statewide early retirement Bi(S7909). The 55/25 early retirement option which has been threatened with litigation will in all probability stand as enacted.

Elaine

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ITEMS OF INTEREST



In 2009, Vote/COPE in New York State raised almost 8 million dollars.

Our retiree chapter was among the highest of the retiree chapter contributors. Your contribution really matters. We need to support those with whom we can agree on substantial matters and fight those who undermine our efforts. (FYI - We have had individual and/or small group meetings with Congressman Ackerman, Sen. Gillibrand and NYS Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel among others, elected officials all, who are our friends; while they are not singlehandedly able to repair the broken economy, they do understand the priorities of health and welfare and of education, and will continue to work in the best interests of us as educators and as retirees. Sen. Schumer, who addressed the R.A., continues to be our friend as well.) **So please give until it hurts - in order to continue to make known our position on both state and national levels and to support our friends, our organization and our future depends upon our - and your - help.**

WE CAN'T SAY IT OFTEN ENOUGH

It's only six letters - but packs a wallop. Of course I am referring to **"thanks,"** and for starters this time it goes to the telephone callers who helped to pass the school budget: Joan Brinkhuis, AnnMarie Benzinger, Bernadette Dempsey, Barbara Blum, Sue Mittelstaedt, Stella Thymius, and Anne Burkard.

The good news is that our budget at 1.97% increase did pass by a considerable margin. The three incoming Board members are incumbents Karen Sloan, Bill Hohausser and new addition Bob Ryan.



Also, a "muchas gracias"

to our VOTE/COPE go-getters, Mary Anne and Tessa, for doing all the "grunt work" to make our



Mary Anne

drives the success that they are. We have been recognized as top achievers - but the funds are so badly needed and wisely expended, that we cannot rest on our laurels.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY - increase your contribution if at all possible, and if you have not yet discovered the ease of making your contribution through pension deduction, please request a form from either Mary Anne, Tessa or myself and make your giving a "piece of cake."



More from Elaine's Desk

Thanks go also to our Treasurer Penny, to our newsletter and website perfectionists, to all those who volunteer (or at least don't say "no" when asked!) for committees, for taking on ad hoc jobs - you are all the cogs without whom our organizational wheel would not turn. (Yes, trite expressions for what is humongous appreciation!)



Penny our treasurer



Barbara our webmaster



Jean our editor

Weather Interferes with Best-Laid Plans...

The HIGH LINE NYC excursion to which about 15 of us were looking forward was cancelled at a late hour when the day's forecast for cloudy, showery and cool conditions indicated that we should put our plans on hold. The trip has been rescheduled for what we hope will be a sunny day in June. (June 10 - if you have not yet indicated you would like to join us, please email Elaine.)



View from the high line

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

As has become our custom, we awarded two scholarships in the amount of \$1000 each to two very deserving Schreiber seniors. One was presented to a young lady in memory of Caroline and George Gillette; she has tutored and mentored youngsters during her years at Schreiber, has a fine academic record, and hopes to go into education/social work/psychology fields. The second scholarship went to a young man who has been supporting himself and working most diligently in the four years since he has been in the U.S., has distinguished himself in many ways and has substantial aspirations for the future. This scholarship was awarded in honor of Lou Tremante, who has always done so much for both the Teachers Association during his in-service years and for the Retired Educators. We wish both of these fine young people success as they continue their education.

There are two websites (among the many!) with which you should stay in touch: Alliance for Retired Americans see arafridayalert@ara.org and the AFT Web site retirees@aft.org. By visiting these sites you will get information on much that affects you on a daily basis - legislation, changes, etc. Also, of course, visit our own Web site frequently for up-to-the-minute news - (pwta.us/Retirees).

P.W.R.E. CHAPTER NEWS

It Takes All of Us to Win!

It's a wonderful feeling to win, isn't it? As we know, however, no winner achieves that goal without the help of many. On March 27th, in very cold Troy, New York, Barbara, Merry and I accepted three of NYSUT's 2010 Journalism Awards. Those award plaques do not contain our names but only the name of our PWRE Chapter and the award category. Yes, we each use our creative skills in our specific roles as editor, webmaster, and feature writer but what we do with those skills depends on all of you. Without the input that comes from our president, Elaine, and our PWRE membership, Port of Call and our website could never have won.

**Congratulations to our PWRE members!
You're all winners!**

Jean



Merry, Jean, Elaine and Barbara with Lee Cutler and Maria Neira



Dr. Hugh Edward McGuigan

12/18/28 - 5/17/10

Hugh McGuigan died peacefully in his home on St Pete Beach in Florida, which he shares with his wife Nancy.

Hugh served our country in the army from 1947- 1950. He was in active duty in Bamberg, Germany and also served as a school teacher at the literary school for GIs and was an entertainer for special service in soldier shows. Hugh enlisted in the navy reserves and served from 1950-1954. Professionally, he served our children as a teacher until 1960 and went on to become Superintendent of Schools in Connecticut, Illinois and Long Island, New York for the next 25 years. He retired from the Port Washington Public Schools in New York in 1985 and moved to St Pete Beach, Florida where his parents lived as well. Hugh was designated as "Superintendent Emeritus", one of two individuals so named in the state of NY at that time. His dedication to education led him to join Guidelines, Inc. a National Educational Consulting Firm. He went on to further his reputation as a keynote speaker at many State and National Education conferences. In lieu of flowers, the family is asking for donations to the Hugh E McGuigan Scholarship Fund, which will benefit students in Port Washington, NY who choose to further their education in the area of Performing Arts. Donations may be sent to Debra McGuigan Seabers, 9375 Hildebrandt Rd, San Antonio, TX 78222.

Condolences Are Sent To:

Eleanor Asher on the death of her husband
Grace Bellomo on the death of her mother
Annemarie Benzinger on the death of her mother
The family of Selma Gordon
Louise Lindemann on the death of her husband
The family of Emily McGrade
The family of Hugh McGuigan

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

Selma Gordon
Emily McGrade
Hugh McGuigan

Get Well Wishes Were Sent to:
Lou Tremante (two times)

A Thinking of You Card Was Sent to:
Millie Vogel

F R C
R E O
I M M
E E M
N M I
D B T
S R T
H A E
I N E
P C E



Joan Gerken

Book Club Dates

Wednesday, July 7th
Book: *South of Broad*
Author: Pat Conroy
Hostess: Jackie Marshall

Important Dates to Remember

Monday, September 20th
Book: *The Help*
Author: Kathryn Stockett
Hostess: Joan Brinkhuis

Retirement Parties

June 14th Schreiber Retirement Party
June 17th Retirement Party for Mary Ann Leonard and Dr. John Sweetland
June 22nd Retirement Party for Elaine Ajello

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September 7th
Annual Back to School Breakfast
(Details to follow)

More Dates

September 16th
PWRE trip-Hudson Valley Artists
(See page 4)

PORT OF CALL

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We Gathered Together...

The PWRE Spring Luncheon ...April 22nd

Port Washington's retirees enjoyed a delicious luncheon at the George Washington Manor in Roslyn. During the luncheon, the slate of officers presented in the **March Port Of Call** was approved by acclamation and will serve from June 2010 to June 2012.



Barbara, Sue and Elsie



Elaine, Penny and Elaine



Stella, Dot, Joan and Jean



Margot, Annemarie and Bernadette



Maryanne, Gail and Judy



Deanna, Barbara, Annette and Georgia



Eileen, Dorothy and Rosemary



Phyllis, Anne and Betty



Joan, Merry and Jane



Bertha and Kay



Tessa, Rita and Lisa



Ernie and Bob



Irene and Maryann



Barbara and Sally



Carla and Eileen



George and Adelia

Another Chance to Gather Together

September 16, 2010 Hudson Valley Artists Trip

Join your PWRE colleagues for a bus trip on Thursday, September 16, to Olana and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in the Hudson Valley. Perched high on a hill surrounded by picturesque grounds, Olana is the Persian-style museum-like home of Frederic Church, one of the most significant of nineteenth-century American landscape painters. After a tour of the home, we'll relax over lunch and then visit Cedar Grove, the museum and studio of Thomas Cole, founder of the Hudson River School.

September is an ideal time to visit the area which inspired



Olana

many of our finest painters. The cost of the trip is \$92 per person, which includes the bus, lunch and tours of these two splendid homes. We need a minimum of 25 people, so sign up and bring a spouse, friend, relative... anyone who will enjoy a rewarding day of art, friendship and beautiful scenery. Or come alone and enjoy the company of a wonderful group of people.

Send your check payable to
Rita Auerbach
140 West End Ave. #12J,
New York, NY 10023

Questions? Call 212-877-0577.



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



At our May 2009 luncheon Walter told us about Elderhostel's one day tours.

The trip that he describes below wasn't one of them.

From Walter Chaskel:

Dear Friends Across the Land:

Here's an update on our latest travel doings.

From 20 February to 19 March we again went off to explore the world, this time to the Middle East: two weeks in Egypt, and one in Jordan. The entire trip was amazing and completely beyond our expectations, despite the thorough advance itinerary from Grand Circle, our travel company.

We began in Cairo and the pyramids, including a one-day train trip to Alexandria. Then on to Luxor, 450 upriver (south!) for a five day Nile River cruise, ending in Aswan. This included a long one-day round trip to Abu Simbel where the huge tomb of the pharaohs was moved to higher ground when the Aswan High Dam flooded the Nile valley. Then on to Amman, Jordan and eventually south to the Dead Sea, Petra, and the vast desert of an ancient sea bed at Wadi Rum (all household names, I am sure.)

We are still sort of recovering from the arduous schedule, but the memories more than make up for the exhausting program. Please forgive the details, but it is fun to share our adventures.

For you birders, I managed to find and identify nearly 20 species, most of them new, and a couple I had seen elsewhere in Africa.

Walter, with Jacqui

From Bob Meyer:

On Saturday, May 1st, Westbury had a park naming for Alphonse Campbell. Mary Campbell, Karen Campbell, Alan Hagel and Bob Meyer were just a few of the speakers. It is a beautiful park and may become the home of a science camp that Karen is trying to get off the ground this summer.

Volunteers are needed for Sunday June 13 on the boardwalk at Rye Playland for the Westchester Children's Museum.

Please contact Pat Caruso, Volunteer Coordinator by e-mail at iluv2tchl@verizon.net,

cell phone (914) 589-2743, or the Development Office at (914) 421-5050.

I was part of last years program and it was a great day. This year will even be better. **Bob**

From Kathy Mahoney:

I just came across the newsletter which I had saved to send a note updating you on three former students!! Kathy's and John's (Port Washington Water District) three sons, John, Timothy and Kevin attended our Port Washington Schools. Kathy worked at Daly School

John still lives in Port and he and his wife have a 10 year old son and a 2 year old daughter. John is a NYC police officer with 20 years on the job in October. Judy is a stay-at-home mom, JJ (John IV) attends Salem school. Jillian is a petite little girl into everything!

Tim and his wife live in Sterling, VA and they have two sons Duncan 4 and Keegan 2. Tim is an aerospace engineer. His career is on hold at the moment as his wife works for the Diplomatic section of the government. They are currently finishing up their first of two years in Nicaragua. Lisa is attached to the Embassy there and at the moment Tim is also working there and really enjoying it. Duncan and Keegan attend an international pre-school in the mornings and both are now speaking Spanish. We all miss them! By the way, Tim and Lisa and the boys spent a week in Hawaii in January!

Kevin and his wife live in Oceanside, NY and they have a daughter Riley 4 and a son Brendan who is just 7 weeks old. Kevin is the assistant GM of the Brooklyn Cyclones a minor league baseball team owned by the Mets. Check out their Web site ... www.BrooklynCyclones.com.

His picture is a bit old and his bio is probably not up to date! But then it may be...I have not checked it lately.



Kevin

John and I are enjoying our retirement here in Seneca Falls, NY right on Cayuga Lake. We actually live right on the lake...we are on one side of the road and the lake is on the other but we own the property there. That's the way the houses on our end of the road are. So we have a dock with a boat and a jet ski. We just love the Finger Lake area. In the winter we spend two months in Punta Gorda, FL where we rent a condo and our very good friends live there year round.

Kathy

Brendan the Baker



From Sue Mittelstaedt:

Need any help with your baking? Brendan is my helper. I just have to watch the measurements. He's good about taking out the egg shells.

Carol Kratenstein's Granddaughter seems to think along the same lines as Brendan, Sue's grandson.



Max Mayer attended his first Passover Seder. He is definitely a style-setter. Notice his yarmulke fashion statement.



Merry-Go-Round by Merry Gilbert



Merry with
Maria Neira and
Lee Cutler as she
received her
Award of Merit
in the 2010 NYSUT
Journalism Contest

Au Revoir to Our Own Beloved Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy

You ain't seen nothin' 'less you've seen Lee Aschenbrenner, looking svelte and dapper, in his WWII uniform, dancing to the beat of the Manorhaven chorus singing "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy."

I had just joined the Manorhaven staff in the fall of 1989, and this was just one of the eye-opening feats I saw Lee perform. Another was each mind boggling recurring event of seeing him greet every student he encountered by name, and inquire after the members of each child's entire family (by name), almost back to the child's great grandparents.

April 27th 2010 was declared Lee Aschenbrenner Day by the Port Washington Education Foundation. It was fitting that he was lauded for his contributions to education and our community as a principal, teacher, and student mentor on the scene of this, one of many of his steady volunteer gigs—the Educational Support Center at the Port Washington Public Library.

"Town Song," composed and conducted by Doreen Gamell, was enthusiastically performed by this year's crop of Support Center third graders, as they sang how "our town was made for you and me."

Support Center students write and publish books about themselves each year. Parent Elise May, of Storytime Theatre, followed suit. "Believe in Yourself," told of Lee's life, though, and not hers. Based on her interviews, she dedicated it "to the Aschenbrenner family who helped her get to know a very special man who wanted all people to believe in themselves."

"Pay close attention to the details of Mr. A's life in words and pictures as I read," she cautioned the children, "as there will be a quiz at the end."

And there was! Cleverly devised and executed, and assisted by her "Vanna," (who was also set designer and creator parent Katie Lyons), the children played Wheel of Fortune (Mr. A's favorite person (Abe Lincoln), ice cream flavor (vanilla fudge ripple), and signature motto), followed by "Mr. A. Jeopardy" based on his life.

One year, when the children were interviewed about what they liked about the center, many said they liked Mr. A (aka "Mr. Port Washington)," best of all. They weren't alone.

We liked him best of all, and still do.



Welcome New Retirees

Mary Ann Moyer Ray Ehrlich Rene Iselin David Katz Mary Ann Leonard
John Sweetland Elaine Ajello Jean Vogely David Hinchliffe Phil Glover
Gary Silverstein Harry Anderson Mary Lynn Conte-Law Michele Weiden
Henry Tabickman Lynn Kennedy Billie Loria Joyce Bram

You are many this year - and we hope to see you at our functions! Welcome, all, to your new life! If you have been active in your Professional Association before, stay active! If you have not - get active with the retirees! We have lots to offer, and we are always looking for more ways in which to get our members involved. Our **kick-off** will be a brunch at the opening of the school year - more info forthcoming in my letter later this summer. **Bienvenue** from the heart of the old French teacher!

Elaine

Retirees Take Note...Is Social Security in Jeopardy?



New Hampshire Alliance members warn commuters outside **Sen. Judd Gregg's** Concord NH office that he wants to raid **Social Security** to pay down the national debt.

Photos courtesy of  Alliance for Retired Americans www.retiredamericans.org | 1-888-633-4435



Illinois ARA members demonstrate against changes to Social Security.

The Alliance for Retired Americans toured the country with the **Social Security Truth Truck** which then delivered 2.1 million petitions



to Congress protesting the privatization of Social Security.

The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility

In February, President Obama signed an Executive Order creating the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform ("Commission"). The Executive Order directs the commission to recommend how to reduce the annual deficits to 3% of the national economy by 2015. While retirees fully support the President on the critical need to reduce our nation's budget deficit, many are troubled by the incorrect words of deficit hawks who repeatedly claim that Social Security is to blame for the deficit. Stay informed as President Obama's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility takes on the federal deficit. It has been reported that after its second meeting this week Social Security is one of the panel's top targets. In truth, Social Security is fiscally responsible; by law it cannot spend money that it does not have. The S.S. trust fund currently has a \$2.5 trillion surplus that can help pay out benefits for years to come, and, without any changes, SS could cover three-quarters of benefits until 2083. One of the Commission's co-chairs, Alan Simpson, who has called older Americans "greedy geezers," has in the past sought to lower Social Security benefits by changing the formula used to calculate the cost-of-living adjustment.

What's Happening with My Medicare ?

The U.S. House has passed a watered-down version of H.R.4213, "The American Jobs, Closing Tax Loopholes and Preventing Outsourcing Act." It does include funding known as the "Doc Fix," which puts off cuts in reimbursements to doctors (21% cuts) for 19 months; this ensures that Medicare beneficiaries have access to quality and affordable medical care - vital to seniors, as it will ensure continuing service from trusted family physicians and specialists. (Other desirous components were not included; now watch for Senate action.)

Elaine



Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter

**Meetings are held in the
Port Washington Library
on Thursdays on the dates listed below**

2010 Meeting Dates

**No June Meeting
July 1, 2010 at 10:15
in the Hagedorn Room**

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



**Special savings for NYSUT members
If you like to shop and if you like
finding money-saving deals, then
NYSUT Member Benefits might just
be able to make you happy!
Through the NYSUT Member Benefits
Corporation-endorsed discount
shopping programs, you have many
choices available to you.**

**The recently endorsed Motivano
SmartSavings Online Discount Marketplace offers
a slew of shopping opportunities. Other shopping
opportunities are available at Working Advantage and
The Buyer's Edge. A new plan, the EPIC Hearing
Service Plan, provides savings from 20 percent to 50
percent off Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Prices on all
name-brand manufacturer hearing aid technology.
Be sure to access these and other moneysaving
programs through the Member Benefits Web site,
www.memberbenefits.nysut.org and click on
Discounts - Members on the left-hand navigation bar.**

PORT WASHINGTON
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PWTA
99 CAMPUS DRIVE

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

FORWARD SERVICE RE-

FIRST CLASS