



# PORT OF CALL

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

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER  
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK  
JUNE 2012 VOL.22 NO.2**

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

Dates  
to  
Remember

**June 30th**  
Meet and  
Greet  
Steve Israel  
the new  
member of  
Congress  
for the  
3rd  
District.  
See  
page 4 for  
details.

**Sept. 4th**  
Come to  
Our  
Annual  
"You  
Don't  
Have to  
Go Back  
to School  
Brunch"  
and  
Welcome  
our  
Newest  
Retirees.  
See  
page 3 for  
details.

## WE'RE 2012 WINNERS!



Left to Right: NYSUT Vice-President Maria Neira, Jean Sellers, Elaine Berman and Mary Anne Cariello

For the fourth consecutive year, PORT OF CALL, our quarterly newsletter and its contributing columnists and website have entered the NYSUT annual Journalism Contest. In each of those years some or all of us have won either First Place Awards or Awards of Merit in the Retiree II category (Membership up to 500).

At the June 9, 2012 Journalism Awards Ceremony held at the NYSUT Headquarters located in Latham, NY, NYSUT Vice-President Maria Neira presented plaques to Editor Jean Sellers and contributors Elaine Berman and Mary Anne Cariello. Our webmaster, Barbara Mayer, was also honored for the superiority of the PWRE website but was unable to attend.

### "TRIBOROUGH" UNDER ATTACK!



Elaine's article on the dangers facing the Triborough Amendment won a First Place.



More from the Desk of Our President

TONI SALERNO  
AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF PWTA  
A FOUNDING MEMBER OF PWRE  
by Mary Anne Cariello



Mary Anne's description of Toni Salerno's contributions to both PWTA and the founding of PWRE won a First Place



Our P.W.R.E. website, [www.pwta.us/Retirees](http://www.pwta.us/Retirees), due to the continued maintenance and creativity of our webmaster, Barbara Mayer, won an AWARD OF MERIT



The Summer (June) 2011 issue of Port Of Call won an AWARD OF MERIT



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ANOTHER WINNER**  
Annemarie Benziger was the recipient of the St. Agnes Medal in recognition of her service to St. Peter Alcantara parish. She has taught in St. Peter's religious education program for about 30 years. Currently she teaches the confirmation class as well as a class for children with developmental disabilities to prepare them for First Communion.

# GET INVOLVED! BE CONNECTED! TAKE A STAND!

From the Desk of  
Our President



Elaine Berman

## ATTACKS ON EDUCATION AND EDUCATORS CONTINUE

Having recently re-viewed the 1935 Dickens classic "A Tale of Two Cities," I can't help mulling over "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" as it applies to 2012 America.

For us as retirees, if we have our health and can enjoy the "good life," we are grateful for the good, if not the best, of times. We retired under the umbrella of Tiers I, II, III or IV, far from wealthy but with access to what was promised us as we began our underpaid but cherished careers: a degree of security for our later years with defined pension benefits and Social Security and health insurance coverage. We are all the more blessed if we have healthy, loving families and friends with whom to share our lives.

Educators currently in service are faced with an alphabet of woes: APPRs (annual professional performance review) with their endless discussions, confrontations and attempted agreements, and SLO's (student learning objectives); a vale of tears as they confront new Tiers V and VI; Tax Caps threatening to invite a long-term drain on economic activity and consequent impact on educational programs and opportunities. The classroom has become a testing ground - literally - as test preparation replaces creative teaching, and outcomes - however imperfect and biased - seek to evaluate program, student and teacher success. To quote Billy Easton, Executive Director of Alliance for Quality Education, "Around the world countries with the top performing schools, like Finland, Singapore and Canada, all emphasize equity in school financing... also ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality curriculum and providing

all teachers with support to continuously improve their skills - instead of forcing teachers and schools to compete for artificially limited pools of money."

Attacks on teachers - on motives, salaries and union affiliation - are rampant. In the past few months, NYSUT has increased its efforts to form coalitions with other groups interested in good education for all - parent advocacy groups like AQE and Citizens' Action, student groups, school board and administrator organizations - in an effort to educate the public about the impact and damage caused by the combination of cuts in education aid, the tax cap, a cap on future state school aid, and - yes - to counter attacks on teachers and enable them to do their very best in the classroom. In addition, of course, NYSUT PAC (political action coordinators) and delegates continue to meet with legislators, both at Committee of 100 and in local contacts, to enlighten and encourage pro-education action.

Dickens ends his Tale with "It is a far, far better thing I do..." Our attempts to restore the "best of times" to replicate the educational practices we used to know can strive to make this a far, far better thing we do, as retirees we can summon up our knowledge, experience (and even dollars!) to help overcome whatever lack of understanding and knowledge an unknowing audience may be perpetrating.

*Elaine*

### Inside PORT OF CALL June 2012

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### Keeping up the pressure on privacy



Maria Neira and Andrew Pallotta before State Senate Educ. Committee

### Leader Briefing: June 16, 2012

In testimony before the State Senate Education Committee this week, NYSUT officers Andy Pallotta and Maria Neira called for lawmakers to act now on legislation that prohibits media access and exploitation of teacher evaluations.

As we head into the weekend, it is clear that our non-stop advocacy is moving the issue forward. With only days remaining in the legislative session, watch this weekend for possible news to break. Please urge your members, friends and family to keep up the pressure on the need for privacy legislation.

**TAKE ACTION: Tell Albany to Protect Teacher Privacy.**

(Courtesy of NYSUT.org)



## CHAPTER NEWS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

COME TO OUR ANNUAL "WE DON'T HAVE TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL BRUNCH"  
AND CELEBRATE OUR NEWEST RETIREES

Joan Biscaro (clerical), Arlene Braverman,  
Pat Burr, Lynn Couture, Vicki Field,  
Mark Graham, Jack Grande, Chris Haring,

Nancy Keegan (paraprofessional), Pat Lynch,  
Louise Pennisi, Gail Schreiner (paraprofessional)  
and Grace Stoessel.

**Congratulations and best wishes for good health and much enjoyment in the days ahead!**

**Date:** Tuesday, September 4th

**Time:** 9:45 a.m.

**Where:** Fish Kebab Restaurant on Main Street in Port Washington

**Cost:** \$20.00 per person

Please make your check out to the *Port Washington Teachers Association* or (PWTA) and mail it,  
by August 23rd, along with the completed form below to:

Penny D'Antonio  
1425 Port Washington Blvd.  
Port Washington, NY 11050

Cut along the dotted line



Please list your name as well as the names of any others who will be attending with you.  
Please include a check, in the amount of \$20 for each person included on this form.  
Send this form and the check to Penny's address above.

will attend the "We Don't Have to Go Back to School Brunch" at the  
Fish Kebab Restaurant on September 4th, 2012. Enclosed is my check to cover the \$20 cost

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

**Date:** Thursday, September 13th

**Book:** *On Canaan's Side*

**Author:** Sebastian Barry

**Where:** Barbara Mayer's home

*The PWRE Book Club is an informal group and all are welcome, to any or all of the sessions. If you've read the chosen book, great; if not, come for the company. Please RSVP to the host. You can call, (check your member directory for address & phone number, or email)*

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### FRIENDSHIP/ REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE



Joan Gerken

**Get Well Wishes Were Sent to:**  
*Stella Thymius*

**Condolences Were Sent to:**  
*Marion Casteleiro on the death of her Mother*  
*Don Jones on the death of his Partner*  
*Jean Sellers on the death of her Sister*

**A Thinking of You Card was Sent to:**  
*Ron Costello*

# YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEW 3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND GREET CONGRESSMAN STEVE ISRAEL**  
**SATURDAY, JUNE 30th, 10 - 11:30 A.M.**

**An informal chat has been arranged with Congressman Steve Israel**  
**at the Jericho Public Library,**  
**1 Merry Lane, Jericho**  
**on Saturday, June 30th, 2012**



## WHY SHOULD WE MEET STEVE?

As the congressman from the 2nd District, Steve represented mainly Suffolk County towns. As the representative from the 3rd Congressional District, his new constituencies will include:

**the whole North Shore of LI - i.e. half of Jericho, Glen Cove, Great Neck, Port Washington, Carl Place, E. Williston, Syosset, Roslyn, Manhasset, North Shore, Oyster Bay,**

**\*Whitestone, \*Beechhurst, \*Little Neck, \*Douglaston \*Ft. Totten, \*Bay Terrace, and part of \*Bayside.**

Although most of the towns involved are in Nassau County,

seven of them\* are in Queens County and, therefore, within the New York City limits and subject to city rules and regulations rather than those set by townships, smaller governing bodies.

**If you vote in any part of the new 3rd Congressional District, come - bring family and friends - to meet Congressman Steve Israel.**

We need to get some kind of advance count, so please do RSVP to Elaine (erberm@aol.com).

## YOU NEED TO BE CONCERNED!

### If you have had Dental Insurance through the PWTA Benefit Trust -

We have learned that while retirees were spared the large dental fee increases last year experienced by the in-service staff, because of dramatic rate increases and loss ratio, retiree dental rates will now rise by \$50 per individual, \$175 with one dependent, and \$250 for multiple dependents - resulting in new annual rates of \$700/\$1350/\$1750.

This is for your advance notification; you will be contacted directly.

### ATTENTION NEW RETIREES

If you should ever get a mailing from an organization called the NYS Retired Teachers' Association suggesting that you join that group

**- YOU DO NOT WANT TO JOIN!!**

You continue to be a member of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) at no further cost; this other group should NOT contact you, but if they do just

**- IGNORE THEM**  
 and do let me know.

### ATTENTION ALL RETIREES

Beware mailings or contacts from a group known as "The Seniors Coalition." The title is misleading; they foment ugly MISinformation about Social Security, Medicare etc. Also - if you are in doubt about your Medicare coverage for hospital visits "screenings" are at no cost, whereas "diagnostic" visits are charged.

*Elaine*

## WHEN IT'S SPRING...P.W.R.E. HAS LUNCH ...Here we are at the Swan Club on April 19th



Ellen, Rita and Joan



Elaine and Penny



Anne and Jean



Annemarie and Eryln



Barbara and Marcia



Elaine and Tessa



Kathleen, Mary Anne and Maria



Elsie, Joan and Dot



Mary Ann, Nance and Merry



Marilyn and Gail



Glen and Rosemary



Sally, Jane and Harriet



Stella, Sue and Ute



Toni and Norma



George and Ernie



Marylyn and Dorothy



Alan and Bob



Barbara

Jean



## P.W.R.E. ON THE MOVE

# A Walk in the Park

PWRE WALKS THROUGH CENTRAL PARK ...by BARBARA BLUM

P.W.R.E. has learned that tours of parts of New York City led by Mike Nicoll introduce facts that even very few native New Yorkers know.

Take the tour with Barbara as she recounts the sites visited and the little-known facts that Mike revealed

Central Park is two avenue blocks wide, but a walk from the west side to the east side can take at least 2 hours. This is just what a group of retired teachers did on May 23rd. Our group was led by Mike Nicoll of Gotham Tours. Although I have lived in the New York metro area my entire life, I was amazed at how much I didn't know about Central Park. We started our walk on

96th street and Central Park West and quickly learned that the only straight path in the park is the mall. Central Park was built as a place for poor immigrants to get away from the dirty congested city. Everything in the park, except for the stones, was created. There are three different kinds of paths: one for pedestrians, a riding path, and a carriage path. People's input resulted in baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, a swimming pool and skating rink, and man made lakes in which one can fish providing that the catch is thrown back.

Our meander took us through the Loch. It is bordered by two beautiful arches which support bridges. Each bridge is different and interesting. The Loch has a waterfall and is home to several turtles. It is serene there and people come to watch birds. We saw two hawks!

Our walk through the ravine was pastoral, until we came upon an imposing building housing the pool and

skating rink. From there we walked to the Harlem Meer - a tranquil 11 acres of water surrounded by trees. The walk back to the west side took us into the Conservatory Gardens. These are the only formal gardens in the park. They are quiet and calm - no runners or bicyclists. The six acres are divided into three different styles - an English garden, a French garden and an Italian garden. In the English garden we saw a statue of Frances Hodgson Burnett, lilac trees and magnolias. The French garden surrounds a sculpture of three dancing maidens, while the Italian garden had a fountain and a wisteria pergola. After the gardens we went to view the reservoir. It is now a secondary reservoir - only to be used in an emergency. It was larger than I expected and afforded beautiful views of the skyline of Central Park West. I went home with a new regard for Central Park and a desire to explore more of it on another day! I think the others in our group shared this desire!



The P.W.R.E. Tour Group

Oh yes... of course Mike arranged an east side lunch stop - we try to feed all needs on our excursions.

### Where's Betty?...

### BETTY HAS MOVED TO FLORIDA

We are finally getting settled in our new home in Lakeland, FL, but it seems there is always more to be done. We are beginning to become active in the community's offerings and, like most retirees, we find that all the time in the world is not enough to accomplish what you want to do. Charley is as happy as a lark. Our house is located on the seventeenth fairway of Grasslands Country Club's golf course. Need I say more?

As for our plans, our youngest granddaughter is graduating from the College of Charleston in May. Another grandchild will graduate from DePaul University in Chicago in June. We are planning to take a Danube River cruise in August and in

September we will attend the wedding of a third grandchild in Chicago. Finally, in October we will attend our traditional family reunion in Skytop Lodge in Pennsylvania. I think you can see that we will be pretty busy for the foreseeable future.

I miss our REC meetings and look forward to issues of the newsletter. Please extend my regards to all of my friends at your next meeting. Please know that I appreciate hearing from you and all other members of our Chapter.





# Merry-Go-Round by Merry Gilbert

Merry reminds us of the beliefs that so many of us held as new teachers but soon learned that they were myths designed to disguise a flawed system.

## Wishes, Lies and Dreams

*(Title thanks to Kenneth Koch, author of a book by that name)*



### Lies

#### Lies I told my students

(that I actually believed when I told them):  
The stock market is a level playing field.\*  
*A trial is a search for truth. \*\**

#### A lie told to me that I believed:

Standardized testing will upgrade curriculum.  
*(Can you say "gullible"?)*

### Wishes

- Classroom teachers are freed from the tyranny of standardized testing
- Teaching returns to fostering love of learning and knowledge, rather than geared to "passing the test."
- Creativity is encouraged for teachers and students.
- "Fun" in learning is not a curse, but a benefit. \*\*\**

### Dreams

- \_\_\_-Classroom activities are geared to emphasize critical thinking, not just to learning known answers to questions that are increasingly irrelevant.
- Citizens understand that an educated population is the foundation of our democracy; they support it even if they no longer have (or never had) children in school.
- Teaching as a profession is revered.*

**\*I figured this out for myself.**

**\*\*A visiting law professor, uncle of one of my students, told me and my class that a trial is not a search for truth, but about who uses the evidence best.**

**\*\*\*A parent went straight to the superintendent claiming that all the kids did in PEP was have fun—so they couldn't possibly be learning. I taught them to say PEP is "challenging," and "fun" became "our" dirty word. Since linguistically words derive meaning from a shared understanding, we all got it.**

## ANOTHER ONE OF OUR "WHERE IN THE WORLD IS..."

### **.....HAS BEEN ANSWERED!**

An art exhibit at the local Sands Point Center finds our **Ronnie Jones** putting her latest artistic talent on display by working, for the past year, on acrylic paintings as part of a five-member group. Says Ronnie, former Manothaven teacher now long since retired, "It allows me a level of concentration that nothing else does."

**Go for it, Grandma Moses Jones - we expect to read and see lots more of your creative art talent!**

*Ronnie Jones  
at work*





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## Attention Locals: Don't miss out on a special prize drawing!

We know that your Local Association's newsletter is a great vehicle to find out what is going on in your region, meet the members of your local and learn about exciting opportunities available to you.

Along those lines, we have a great opportunity for you! NYSUT Member Benefits has launched a special prize drawing for all NYSUT members in an effort to encourage greater participation in our free MAP Alert email service.

MAP Alerts are sent approximately once every three weeks to your email inbox and contain information about new endorsed Member Benefits programs, changes to current programs and reminders about existing programs. And, you have our word that you will not be bombarded with email messages.

You will receive one entry into the drawing for every MAP Alert that you open and read before August 15. Winners will be announced on August 16 on the Member Benefits website!



If you are not already a MAP member, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) and click on the MAP graphic in the upper right hand corner of our homepage to join this free service.

*Please note that you must be a NYSUT member to be eligible to win any of the prizes in this contest. Only one prize per winner. Current or retired NYSUT employees, NYSUT Member Benefits vendors, or their family members are not eligible to win.*



**All current and new MAP members who open at least one MAP Alert before August 15, 2012 are eligible to win the following prizes:**

### Grand Prize

Bose Home  
Theater System

### First Prize

iPad

### Second Prize

Kindle Fire

### Third Prize

Bose Noise-Canceling  
Headphones

### Fourth Prize

\$50 Powell's Books  
Gift Card

For more information about this drawing, call **800-626-8101** or visit the Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org).

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For information about programs or about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



