



PORT OF CALL

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK
MARCH 2010 VOL.20 NO.1**

NYSUT NO. 19 080R

AFT NO. 9591-R

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

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State political wrap-up to date: Once again, my thanks to those of you who made phone calls, sent FAXes and e-mails in recent months, particularly prior to the state's application for RTTT (Race to the Top) funds and the prolonged discussion of charter schools. With our help, the Governor's proposal regarding charter schools did not go through. It is difficult to assess why a relatively few legislators favored raising the cap on the number of NYS charter schools to more than double the current number. As you have read in the NEW YORK TEACHER, NYSUT's position would require that charter schools serve the same population as regular public schools (including English language learners and students with disabilities), that their operators disclose how and where they spend taxpayer dollars, where other support comes from, and who is enriched by their operation. "Kids must come before corporate profits." These fairness, transparency and accountability measures were not addressed in the Governor's proposal. There will be a second round of RTTT applications in June, so this topic is not dead. Stay tuned - and actively involved.



Elaine Berman

We now have the Governor's Budget before us, with a proposal to slash \$2.7 billion from education and health care. Funding for Teacher Centers would be eliminated, operating aid to classrooms, educators and programs cut; SUNY/CUNY would lose \$181.6 million - and so on. These are among the agenda items that will be discussed with our legislators at the March 16th Committee of 100 meeting in Albany.

Locally, school districts feel the pain. Port teachers do not yet have a contract, with negotiations now ongoing since last spring. The district is making every effort to bring in a low budget which they hope the community will support - but as we all know, keeping our high academic standards should preclude cutting programs and staff. We must all support a budget which will maintain the quality and integrity of our Port Washington educational system. The community whose education goes downhill takes a nosedive in every other direction as well. It is trite but oh so true - kids are our future and our hope.

Elaine

STILL NO NEW CONTRACT

Despite the announcement last fall by school board president, Karen Sloan, that an agreement with the teachers on a successor agreement to the contract (which ended on June 30) was imminent, negotiations have not yet been concluded. In solidarity with our colleagues who work so diligently to teach the youth of our community, we wish them an early and successful conclusion to this long drawn-out process.



We Want You....

to join us for the annual
PWRE Spring Luncheon at 12 Noon
on April 22nd, 2010

at the George Washington Manor in Roslyn.
The cost is \$35 per person.

See page 7 for the reply form.

The election of PWRE officers for the next two years will be held at this luncheon. See page 3 for the names of the candidates and nominating instructions.

We were saddened to learn of the recent passing of both Ruth Brown and Mary McWilliams, long actively involved in the affairs of our local teachers' unions. Ruth and Mary were active organizers of our own retiree chapter. Each was a fighter for what she believed was right as an educator and political activist. In addition, Ruth was a gifted photographer and world traveler. Their involvement and frequent evidence of deeply caring commitment will be greatly missed.



P. W. R. E. CHAPTER NEWS



Jean
the Editor

HUZZAH! AND HURRAH! PORT OF CALL

takes first place in NYSUT's annual journalism competition! Additionally, merit awards go to our website and to a feature story entry. Have we got a newsletter staff or what?

Editor Jean Sellers, webmaster Barbara Mayer, story writer Marilyn Gilbert – hugs, kisses, and a huge thank you for being the best! The official recognition ceremony will take place in Troy, N.Y. on March 27th, where our winners will take the (non-monetary, alas) spoils! *Elaine*



Barbara
Webmaster



Marilyn
Feature Writer

Important Dates to Remember

Legislative Breakfast Buffet April 9th

We are ecstatic to report that **Tom DiNapoli**, NYS Comptroller, will be our keynote speaker at the April 9th **LINYSUT legislative brunch!** This is a chance not only to hear Tom speak first hand about NYS finances, our pensions, et al, but a chance to meet personally a terrific state leader. Hear also from some of our state Senators and Assemblymen their take on what is going on in Albany - and judge for yourselves how to vote in November. **Cost to you: \$15** (balance being subsidized by PWRE). **Send check payable to LIRDC (Long Island Retired Delegates Council) to Elaine at 12 Marlin Lane, P.W.** as soon as possible. The brunch will take place from 9:15 - 12:15 at the Delano Mansion, Woodbury (carpools can be arranged). For more information about the Legislative Breakfast, including the menu, refer to page 7 of the December 2009 issue of Port of Call.

Tom DiNapoli,
Sheila Goldberg,
Daphna Arms,
and Elaine at the
Oheka Castle fund-raiser.



Book Club News

Date: April 14, 2010 at 11:00 a.m.

Where: Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay
at the Roosevelt Facility Conference Room

Book: *Mornings on Horseback*

Author: David McCullough

Note: This is a new date since the original March 1st date would have occurred during icy conditions after the recent snowy weather.

Please e-mail Elaine: erberman@aol.com if you plan to attend to give Howie an idea of how many to expect.

The April 19th Walking Tour in New York City has been cancelled with no new date at this time.

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Joan
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Condolences Are Sent To:
The family of Dorothy Darress
Jim Jones on the death of his father
The family of Gerry Scillitani
The family of Bonnie Soldano
The family of Ed Sweeney
The family of Mary Weissman

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

Dorothy Darress
Gerry Scillitani
Bonnie Soldano
Mary Weissman

A Get Well Wish was sent to:
Jacqueline Bendick

A Fiftieth Anniversary Card was sent to:
Ralph and Mildred Pascucci

A Thinking of You Card was sent to:
Matt Scott



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PORT OF CALL

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blmayer@optonline.net

... P.W.R.E ELECTIONS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

ELECTION OF P.W.R.E. OFFICERS

The following candidates have been selected to be our officers
for the period from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012.

President	.....	Elaine Berman
Co-Executive Vice Presidents	.....	Betty McNally Sue Mittelstaedt
Co-Vice Presidents(Membership)	.....	Rita Auerbach Tessa Jordan
Vice President (Newsletter)	.....	Jean Sellers
Treasurer	.....	Penny D'Antonio
Co-Recording Secretaries	.....	Dorothy McDougald Mary Anne Cariello Stella Thymius
Corresponding Secretary	.....	Joan Gerken
Webmaster	.....	Barbara Mayer
Electronic Communications	.....	Don Voss
Nominating Committee	.....	Sue Mittelstaedt Stella Thymius Betty McNally

Each PWREC member in good standing has the right to make nominations and be nominated. If you would like to nominate a member for any of these positions, please list the position(s) and the name(s) of your nominee(s) and- since no one may be nominated without his/her consent – be sure to state that those named have consented. Your nomination should be mailed to:

Sue Mittelstaedt
39 Shadyside Ave.
Port Washington, NY 11050

to be received on or before March 25, so that secret ballots can be prepared and mailed to each member to be returned by April 5th to be counted before the April 22nd general meeting and luncheon. If no additional nominations are received, a recording secretary will announce an election by acclamation at the general meeting.



2009 Vote Cope Campaign- A Great Success!

Port's retirees understand why educators must have a voice in state and federal legislation. They proved it last year when they made the VOTE-COPE campaign a great success. Port averaged over \$25 per member making Port one of the best retiree chapters in the state.

Soon the 2010 campaign will begin. If you are not already contributing through pension deduction, you will be asked to make a cash contribution. VOTE-COPE makes a difference and you help make that difference possible. As usual your understanding and contributions are very much appreciated.

Mary Anne Cariello

TOWN OF NORTH HEMPSTEAD PROJECT INDEPENDENCE

Project Independence is designed to support and assist residents of the town age 60 and over to remain in their own homes and communities. This is accomplished through a staff of social workers, nurses and others who connect seniors with the services they need, such as caregiver support, counseling, monitoring chronic conditions, and some assistance with transportation and minor household repairs. Offices are located in Clinton G. Martin Park in New Hyde Park, in the Great Neck Senior Center and in the Senior Community Center in Manorhaven. For further information, call 311 or 869-6311.

ALMOST THREE YEARS OLD, OUR WEBSITE IS A WINNER

Our Website, My Friend by Barbara Mayer, Webmaster



I had been retired for about seven months when Jean Sellers broached the idea of creating a PWRE website. I immediately "latched on" to the idea as a 21st century way to facilitate speedy communication. Little did I know how many hours that communication would take! And now, over two and a half years later, the website has grown from my baby to my friend. How is that, you ask? Those of you who know me, know that I am a person who loves organization. I'm a filer and a list-maker. I take comfort from organizing, and it's so much healthier than eating for comfort! I cut out articles and file them; I watch health-oriented television shows and take notes. I learn from any and all. With whom do I share these "gems"? My health-conscious friends usually already know (because they're watching/cutting out the same things I am), so the usual recipient is my husband, Joe. He has no choice - he's the one who listens to me, shops with me, cooks for me, and helps me implement these new ideas. He deals with my lists and my filing. And we just celebrated our 38th anniversary, so he's been doing this for a long time!

Now, along comes the PWRE website idea and I have a new place to file and organize all the information on health and travel, etc., that I find. I can rip magazines and newspapers apart and find information and websites that I can share with all my PWRE friends. And they're all in one place for me - an organizer's dream. What a bonus!

So, the website is my *friend* - one that loves (do you know any different?) ALL the information I can include on it. It doesn't complain (we have had some intense technical battles at times). It just grows and grows and provides an outlet for my need to organize and share and help others. It's my friend, a good friend, right? Right!

Does this lighten the "load" for Joe? You'll have to ask him!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR MODEL BOAT REGATTA

From: Marian Weissman...Retired Weber English teacher

After my years at Weber, one of the things that is making my time fun is volunteering in the classroom with third graders and the Model Boat Regatta. I started as a classroom volunteer and now I am one of the organizers. I enjoy all of this and am wondering if any of my fellow retirees would like to share in this satisfying experience.

Every year during HarborFest in Port Washington, there is a model sail boat race on one of the Port Ponds. As some of you may know, these sail boats are made by Port Washington third graders out of recycled juice cartons collected by the students with additional parts supplied by the Chamber of Commerce. We are looking for additional volunteers to go into each classroom and teach the children how to make the boats. It takes two one-hour sessions with each class to complete the boats and discuss what makes a boat "go." The schools will schedule their class sessions Tuesdays through Fridays starting Tuesday May 4 through Friday June 4, 2010. The culmination of this activity is the Model Boat Regatta on Sunday, June 6, 2010.

All new volunteers will be trained on how to build the boats during one of two evening training/refresher meetings scheduled at the end of April and new volunteers will be paired with experienced volunteers. Most volunteers sign up for at least 4 sessions, all on one day or two sessions for two days. The teachers and the students all really enjoy this activity and it is a lot of fun for the volunteers.

Please email me if you are interested in joining us in this uniquely Port Washington event. I hope to hear from you soon. snee.weissman@gmail.com



New Power of Attorney Law Brings Many Questions

The purpose of the law is to ensure that you, the principal, are aware of the powers you are granting to the person you appoint, the agent. The new form also describes the consequences of granting such powers, particularly relating to the ability of the agent to make gifts or asset transfers on the principal's behalf.

Read more at: http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xml/3455_10529.htm?title=Member%20Benefits%20Column

WE ASKED TO HEAR FROM YOU, AND WE DID!



The shamrock is over Bob's home state.



Arlene and Adi (third and fourth from left) became full-time residents of The Villages in August 2009.



My shamrock

From: Bob Acevedo

I moved out to Colorado Springs in the fall of 2002. I love it here and also manage to escape some of the winter by going to my place in Puerto Rico. I remarried in January of 2006 and since my wife lives in P.R. we split our time between the two places. We enjoy taking cruises and last year took two cruises. In January we took a seven day cruise out of San Juan and then in late June a 14 day Alaska cruise out of Seattle. I last visited Port in May of 08 for a retirement party. I try to stay in touch with some of my former colleagues. It's a lot easier thanks to the internet.

Sue Mittelstaedt and her husband Arthur and Arlene Sutarno and her husband Adi, enjoyed the afternoon sunshine while listening to a live band concert at Sumter Landing Town Square in the Villages, Florida.



The shamrock is on Arlene's home state

A Tsunami Refugee, February 27, 2010

While I've always been aware of the danger of tsunamis here in Hawai'i, (I had even packed an emergency kit with clothes, that would never fit now, years ago.) I'd never had to evacuate my home before. Yes, there's always a first time for everything! Like everyone here who lives near the water, I left home at 9 a.m. as directed by the police loudspeaker on the patrol car that came down our street at 8 a.m. Since the center of this island is a chain of mountains, Kohala, Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa and the Hualalai Mountains, it's a short drive to higher ground.

Hawai'i's past experience with tsunami devastation and the state's distance from immediate help, including from its own neighboring islands, has made it possibly the best prepared state in the nation to handle disasters. The island of Hawaii, even more than the others, is constantly on the alert because it experiences

frequent earthquakes that can generate tsunamis and it's the first to feel the effects from a tsunami caused by an earthquake near the coasts of North or South America. Our phone books outline emergency procedures and evacuation routes (Art Mittelstaedt was so impressed with our phone book evacuation and preparedness directions that he copied them for future reference in his work.) and our Civil Defense is quick to break into radio and TV programs with emergency warnings and instructions. Between the TV, the radio and all those sirens wailing near every inhabited area, not to mention the many phone calls from friends and family here and on the mainland, it is hard not to know what is happening. We were luckier here in Hawaii, after the Chilean earthquake, than the islands closer to that country. Not only do we have 24 hour a day worldwide earthquake surveillance personnel on duty both on this island and on Oahu, but we had more than 12 hours to prepare. In addition, our statewide Civil Defense system had run a practice tsunami evacuation drill for emergency personnel just six months before. While the lack of a high wave was disappointing to many anxiously anticipating seeing one, our surrounding ocean was extremely "restless" for most of the following week. This exercise, however, prioritized for me the need to be prepared at all times. The next time, and there will be one with the increasing frequency of powerful earthquakes occurring worldwide these days, there may not be this much of a warning. The next time might not even be caused by an approaching tsunami but a fire or some other emergency. These days, I don't let my car's gas tank go below half full and I keep all important documents together where they are safe but can be grabbed in one hand as I rush to leave.

Your Editor, Jean

P.S. In looking through our Directory of Members just now, I counted 150 of us who do not live on Long Island at any time during the year. For various reasons, some of us have moved far from where we once lived and worked. Because of PORT OF CALL, you hear from me every three months. I'd really love to hear from you (. . . before the June issue would be nice). Tell us a little about your new lifestyle. A special "Mahalo" (thank you) to all those retired members living on Long Island who faithfully contribute pictures and items that update us on their life in retirement. Without contributions from our members, the newsletter wouldn't be half as interesting or as colorful.

Jean

SHARING THOUGHTS



The Flour Trial, Redux

At Martha Puglia's retirement party, then Superintendent Bill Heebink presented her with a T-shirt that proclaimed, "There's No Day Like a Snow Day." In-service or retired, it's still thrilling to have an unexpected day of "stolen kisses," when nothing's planned, and spending a whole day in PJ's comes guilt free.

A blue and white tablecloth represents the ideal snow day for me.

I was lucky to have a second mother, whom I called Aunt Helen, a neighbor who couldn't have children, in whose apartment I was always welcome. She was of Czech descent, and snow, for her, meant making strudel. Not buying the phyllo dough at the store, but mixing it from scratch, and pounding it on the table I'd guess about 100 times till it was just right. (Compare the counter space in our tiny Bronx apartments—which amounted to the drain board next to the sink, with the seeming acres of counter space we have today.)

Next she'd stretch the dough, on that blue and white cloth, until it was so thin that the white pattern of flowers and leaves showed through it. Then the apples she'd sliced, sweetened and mixed with cinnamon, raisins and bread crumbs fried in butter, were spread on the dough, and rolled up. Baked heaven. My Aunt Helen was not only a great, adventurous baker, but she knew how to share.

My mother was a wonderful cook, but everything she baked, cakes, bread, muffins, came out a cookie. This might have been because the real oven in my house was filled with paper grocery bags that she would reuse, and so she baked everything in a top of the stove oven, a primitive-seeming boxlike device that sat on a burner. This worked great for potatoes, or chicken. In fact, the night of a black out, she created what we ever after called black out chicken—cooking it in the dark in that oven. We also had a Roto Broil 400, a portable electric oven. One summer day, she put the hot broiler tray on the table, and, while wearing shorts, walked into the edge of it. She got a rectangular burn on her thigh from where the handle would go, and my dad claimed he'd branded her.

Interesting how food binds families and memories. When my great nieces and nephew visited from way out in the country in Caldwell, Texas, where there are no baked goods for sale as we know them, a great day on their visit to Port meant going from bakery to bakery, sampling the wares of each. Our family album has photos of Simon with a big smile and bag posed in front of each place (including Let There be Bagels where he ate his first bialy—heaven for him).

Too bad I don't have photos of my kitchen muses, my mom and my Aunt Helen, at work in their domains. But their creations, the smell, the taste, and their devising, are vivid-- and traces probably live on somewhere in my body, as well as in my memory.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS TO LEGISLATORS

From time to time, members are asked to telephone legislators on issues that affect our lives. Here are some additional numbers to add to the ones in the back of our PWRE members directory:

US Capitol: 866-327-8670 also 202-224-3121... also 877-327-5246 (through AFL/CIO)

New York State: 877-255-9417 (through AFL/CIO) **Page 6**

'COUNSELOR' TAKES THE MYSTERY OUT OF MEDICARE



Reprinted from the February 4, 2010 issue of New York Teacher

Anyone who's ever tried to decipher Medicare knows it can be like reading a road map upside down. NYSUT retired members who need help turning that map right-side up can get it through the Medicare Rights Center's Medicare Interactive Counselor. The Medicare Interactive Counselor is an online resource that provides information and answers some of the most frequently asked questions about Medicare.

For NYSUT members, a special version of Medicare Interactive Counselor is available at www.medicareinteractive.org/teachers. Or, go to the NYSUT Web site — www.nysut.org — click on the link on the left for "Retirees and retirement," and from there, click on the Medicare Interactive icon on the right side.

NYSUT retired members who go to the dedicated site for teachers will find information specific to New York state. Once at this site, retirees will see an array of topics they can read about further.

"We know that people sometimes find Medicare issues so complex that they are reluctant to ask questions," said former NYSUT Executive Vice President Alan Lubin, who is a board member of the Medicare Rights Center.

"The beauty of this interactive feature is that people can look up an answer on their own. It's a very comfortable, user-friendly way to familiarize yourself with this complex topic."

Retirees who haven't been able to answer their questions can call the Medicare Rights Center hotline at 800-333-4114 to speak with a trained and knowledgeable person.

The Medicare Interactive Counselor offers users three ways to seek information: By reading "most frequently asked questions" and the answers; by selecting a topic from a list of choices; and by a general search using a keyword.

"The Medicare Interactive Counselor is a wonderful way for retired members to take charge of a challenging subject and come out much better informed," said Kathleen Donahue, NYSUT's vice president who oversees retirement services.

"We hope that NYSUT retired members will make good use of this terrific resource."



Social Services

Life Does Not Come with Clear Directions...

Relationship Issues • Care for aging parents • Substance abuse • Medicare/Medicaid questions •
Chronic illness and Disabilities • Reassurance through difficult times

Contact NYSUT Social Services 1-800-342-9810, ext. 6206 or socsvcs@nysutmail.org

(A free and confidential service of NYSUT)

AFTER THIS VERY COLD WINTER **COME TO THE LUNCHEON** AND ENJOY THE WARMTH OF FRIENDSHIP

The PWRE Spring Luncheon

Date: Thursday, April 22, 2010

Time: 12 Noon

Where: The George Washington Manor in Roslyn

Cost: \$35 per person

Please make your check out to the Port Washington Teachers Association (PwTA) and mail it, 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 all the names of those in your party on the line below and send this blue form to Penny's address above.

will attend the spring luncheon at the George Washington Manor in Roslyn on April 22nd, 2010. Enclosed is my check for \$35 for each person included in this reply.



Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter

**Meetings are held in the Port Washington Library on Thursdays
on the dates listed below unless notified otherwise.**

Please note the differing times of the following meetings.

2010 Meeting Dates

March 25th at 11:30 a.m. in the Hagedorn Room

April 22nd - 12 Noon luncheon ...

This year it will be held at the George Washington Manor in Roslyn.

**Be sure to fill out your response form on page 7 and mail it with your check to Penny D'Antonio.
May and June meeting dates to be announced**

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

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

FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED

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