



PORT OF CALL

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK
MARCH 2011 VOL.21 NO.1**

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

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Education - and its major component force, teachers - is in its most damaging days ever. AFT and NYSUT group efforts on its behalf have been and continue to be many and widespread. We have met with our state legislators locally more than once, spent an "extraordinary" lobbying day in Albany in addition to those coming up in March and May, have participated in regional rallies, hearings, have written letters, made phone calls. But ALL OF US are needed to take action. Myths are being circulated (e.g. that New York is 34th in educational attainment - it is NOT!); collective bargaining and bedrock earned union rights are under attack everywhere; school boards, including our own, are looking to "save the district money" by urging elimination of part or all of the Triborough Amendment of the Taylor Law (see definitions below), changing the granting of tenure, pension reform - while our Governor suggests that the "millionaires' tax" which brings in substantial financial relief be terminated upon its expiration this fall rather than be continued. You will hear "repeal unfunded mandates" repeated ad nauseum; there are some that could and should be modified or repealed - but NOT Triborough.

Nation-wide cries of "Labor needs to give back" are heard; but, we ask, when was the last time - in good economic times—that contracts were reopened to increase benefits? At a recent Suffolk County "Educate New York State" rally more than 1000 educators, parents and students filled and overflowed the Sacher High School auditorium to fight against the horrendous and brutal cuts to education. In the words of NYSUT V.P. Andy Pallotta "students are told to sacrifice while millionaires are in the back room smoking cigars." (By the time you receive this Nassau may also have held its rally. If it still lies ahead, PLAN TO PARTICIPATE.)

That funds are tight, there is no question. That we all want to maintain quality education we assume to be a given. But to impose crippling tax caps to violate teacher earned rights, is not the way to do so. By seeking additional revenue where it can be found, we may be able to stem the tide, and protect all of those upon whom good education rests - our students, our teaching staff - for the future we want, need and deserve for our state. Please do not sit back and rely on others to do the job; contact your legislators, help with and participate in rallies, approach your school board members to help them to understand all of the issues. We are asking for your help - and we know we can count on you. None of us wants to see taxes go up, nor for that matter LIPA bills, gas for our cars, super market prices... We are retirees, on fixed income, but we know the value of education and are willing to fight to preserve it. Thank you for your help.

Elaine

WHAT'S INSIDE FOR YOU

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of Our President

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PWTA and PWRE Remember Toni



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We Asked to Hear from You and We Did



Nancy Lobell

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Upcoming Events

A Trip to Celebrate National DNA Day at Cold Spring Harbor
See page 7 for details and reply form.

We're 20! Come Help Us Celebrate at our spring luncheon
Reply form and details on page 7

We're 20! Come Help Us Celebrate on May 12th

ITEMS OF INTEREST

“TRIBOROUGH” UNDER ATTACK!

Among the many recent and current attacks on labor unions and their “benefits” is the (1982) Triborough amendment to the Taylor Law. Under the Taylor Law, as you will recall, employees are guaranteed the right of self-organization and representation for collective negotiations. Self-organization rights enable public employees to join (or refrain from joining) employee organizations (unions) of their choice; representation rights enable employees to designate an employee organization as their representative in collective negotiations with their public employer over wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment, and in the administration of grievances arising from their negotiated agreements.

The Triborough Amendment is what is under attack. Triborough requires employers to continue all the terms of an expired agreement until a new agreement is negotiated. Before the enactment of the law, public employers were free to unilaterally diminish benefits as contracts expired. Its opponents argue that Triborough should be repealed so that public employers and employees can be encouraged to work together to achieve labor contracts that are both ‘fair and affordable.’ It should be noted that prior to Triborough Boards had no reason to settle in a hurry, dragged out contract negotiations; strikes, therefore, were not uncommon, disrupting education, leading to community unrest and the taking of sides which impacted the community for years following. Despite the opponents’ argument that the existence of Triborough “discourages compromise, putting New York’s taxpayers at extreme disadvantage,” lack of a Triborough would in effect cause havoc and do just the opposite. (“It was, in fact, school boards that encouraged

the introduction of Triborough in order that pay raises be staggered over a lengthy periods of years.”)

Public pensions are another area receiving unprecedented media coverage nationwide, encouraging negative perceptions – when, in fact, public pensions have proven to be a good investment for taxpayers, governments, employees and the economy. In New York State, for example, according to the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS), expenditures from NYS public pensions supported \$24 billion in economic output, \$4 billion in tax revenue, 137,000 jobs accounting for \$10.5 billion in income. Each dollar paid in NYS retirement benefits supported \$1.41 in total economic activity; for every dollar contributed by taxpayers toward these pensions, \$9.61 in economic activity was generated. Historically, on the national scene, over a 25-year period (including three economic recessions and four years when median public pension investment returns were negative) ending 12/31/09, public pension plans had a 9.25% rate of return.

(FYI- NYSUT has prepared a 22- page document dispelling myths about public pensions in New York State and arguing that “defined benefit pensions work” which may be accessed through NYSUT LeaderNet, through local presidents, PAC coordinators and NYSUT Board of Director members.)



FRIENDSHIP/ REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE



Joan Gerken

Get Well Wishes Were Sent to:
Joyce Finizio
Bette Stetson

Condolences Are Sent to:

Chris Alley on the death of her mother
The family of Naomi Gelfand Cook
Lorraine MacGowan on the loss of her husband
Arlene Murray on the loss of her husband
The family of Grace Sorice

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

Naomi Gelfand Cook
Grace Sorice

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P.W.R.E. CHAPTER NEWS

TONI SALERNO

AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF PWTA/ A FOUNDING MEMBER OF PWRE



There is no doubt that Antoinette Salerno was a superb teacher. Equally important was that she was a valued and important member of the Port Washington Teachers Association and the Port Washington Retired Educators. It is not a surprise that an excellent teacher was also a devoted and hardworking member of the Association.

Toni, as everyone called her, lived in Port Washington all her life and knew a great deal about the community. Her father was the chief of police, and she graduated from Port Washington High School. After college she returned to Port as an elementary teacher. She became the first E.E.L.P. (later renamed PEP) teacher and traveled to all the elementary schools to work with the gifted and talented students. When more teachers were added, she also became a mentor to them. As a member of the Professional Growth Committee she helped to develop the curriculum and guidelines for the program. She was the leader in the development of environmental education as her interest began long before that of others. She as creative and innovative in every aspect of her teaching and had a deep commitment to the education of children.

It is not a surprise that an excellent teacher like Toni would also be a devoted member of the Port Washington Teachers Association. She served on the Executive Council and many committees. In 1973 she opened the family home, which she shared with her sister Bernice and her niece, to the members of the PWTA negotiating team as they struggled through the long summer of 1973. Early in the morning or late at night, team members could be found at Toni's house, just a few doors away from Superintendent McGuigan's house. Toni's house became a planning and meeting place for the team. It was at her house that a team member who was away for the summer learned that a strike vote would be taken even if he were opposed. There would

always be delicious food, coffee, and a welcoming place available to keep the team going during the months of negotiating which led up to settlement of a contract at 6 am on September 4, the first day of school. After negotiations Toni along with Mary Rose Dennis, George Williams and Bob Bracken organized a collection to fund a four-day trip to Bermuda for every member of the Negotiating Team and their spouses. This collection was kept secret from the team until the General Meeting when they received the gift and a poster signed by every member of the Association.

Even when Toni retired in 1989, she did not stop her work for teachers and the Association. Toni met with Mary Mc Williams and Port retirees, George Williams and Betty Stetson, and from that meeting the Retired Educators, a chapter of the PWTA, was created. Toni recognized the need for retirees to be organized just as active teachers were, so that retirees could continue to work to benefit teachers and education. In 1992-93 Toni became vice president and in 1993-94 Toni was the president. At end of her tenure, the PWRE had 239 members and was a well-established organization. She continued to be active in the organization until illness prevented her from participating.

Toni represents the epitome of Port Washington teachers. She was a dedicated and innovative teacher who was devoted to the education of young people and she was an active and hardworking Association member who recognized the need for teachers to be organized so that they could better work for the benefit of students and education. We salute her. May she always be an inspiration.

From your editor: The tribute to Toni that appeared in the December 2010 *Port Of Call* was written by David Brackett and was read by him at Toni's funeral. *Port Of Call* is formatted in text boxes and pictures which can be moved around. When those boxes or pictures are re-arranged at the last minute, they can cover something in another text box. That is what happened to David's name. It was really there, but hidden under one of those text boxes. My apologies to him.

Jean

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE (pwta.us/Retirees) WEEKLY FOR TIMELY INFORMATION. Look for up-to-date information related to legislation, NYSUT items of importance, see NYSUT.org - then click on whatever link to the left is of interest.

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



From Nancy Lobell:

I was very proud to have Adelphi University recently profile me in their alumni online magazine. Since my colleagues in Port were such a big part of my career (and my life), I wanted to share this with them.

Nancy Lobell '73

Clinical Associate, Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP), Stanford University

Nancy Lobell has worked in the field of education longer than she hasn't, and the key to her longevity has undoubtedly been her aptitude – and eagerness – to learn from others. “After 41 years in education, I’m still learning,” she says. “My career has been long and fulfilling because I’ve learned from other people and passed that learning along to others.”

Today you can find Ms. Lobell, a former teacher in the Long Island public school system, at the Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP), preparing graduate students for a career in teaching. While other master's programs often have students focus on theory first and then fulfill the student teaching portion of the requirement, the STEP program integrates the practical and the theoretical at the same time for an entire year.

“STEP is an intense program, but it should be because teaching is also intense,” says Ms. Lobell about the 12-month program leading to a Master of Arts and a preliminary teaching credential. “The reality is that teaching is hard work and a very complex task.”

Today as a clinical associate at STEP she mentors other university supervisors as well as beginning teachers at Stanford University's partner schools. Every Wednesday evening she conducts a small seminar with four of the STEP graduate students. “We just get together and talk,” she says. “The students have the opportunity to discuss the experiences they are having in their classrooms and they learn to be professional colleagues to each other.”

At Port Washington, she savored the opportunity to team teach and engage with fellow teachers in collaborative, interdisciplinary planning. She attributes this experience to fueling her continued growth as an educator. “My colleagues were smart and they challenged me intellectually on a daily basis,” she says. “The cohort of teachers with whom I have worked has played an integral role in my life.”

“My career at Stanford has been very rewarding,” she says of the last decade she has spent at STEP, working among a community of new and experienced teachers, mentors, and professors who are committed to helping further the professional growth and development of teachers. “The vision of STEP captures the essence of my beliefs about education,” she says, “and it describes my life's work.”

“When I came to Stanford I learned much of the theory that I had already internalized it in the classroom... I learned some of the language to describe what I had been doing for 25 years.”

In her free time, Ms. Lobell enjoys gardening, swimming, and jogging, but her favorite hobby is by far spending time with her family and being a grandmother. Ms. Lobell and her husband live in Portola Valley, California and have a son, daughter, and five grandsons. When they shoot hoops at the local schoolyard, they practice learning their percentages with Grandma.

To read the entire article on Nancy go to:
alumni.adelphi.edu/profiles_professionals.php

Nancy Heller to be Honored by the Port Washington Children's Center

Nancy Heller, retired art teacher from Salem and Manorhaven, will be one of three accomplished artists/educators to be honored by the Port Washington Children's Center on March 13th at The Clubhouse at Harbor Links. Nancy, raised and educated in Port Washington, retired from 35 years of teaching art in 2006, but is still actively involved in art in the community. It was she who painted the beautiful new mural in the children's room in the Port Washington Library; she also offers private art classes several days a week. Daughter Katie followed in Mom's footsteps - she teaches art at Great Neck High School - while daughter Caroline is a managing director at Goldman Sachs. We join with the entire community in honoring Nancy and wishing her many artistic years ahead!

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



Looking for Classroom Volunteers

Do you miss the best parts of classroom teaching, working with enthusiastic kids? Maybe I can offer you a couple of hours of fun.

Every year the Port Washington HarborFest includes a model sailboat race on one of the Port Ponds. As some of you know, the sail boats for this race are made by Port Washington third graders out of recycled juice cartons collected by the students with additional parts supplied by the Port Washington Chamber of Commerce.

We are always 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 Mondays through Fridays starting Monday May 9 through Friday June 3, 2011. The culmination of this activity is the Model Boat Regatta on Sunday, June 5, 2011.

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. New volunteers will be paired with experienced volunteers. Volunteers sign up for at least one day of 2 or 3 sessions, and many sign up for several days. You choose from the schedule which sessions you want to teach. The teachers and the students all really enjoy this activity and it is a lot of fun for the volunteers.

Please join me and fellow retirees, Annmarie Benzinger, Bernadette Dempsey and Bob Meyer in this uniquely Port Washington event. Email me at snee.weissman@gmail.com if you are interested in coming aboard. I hope to hear from you soon.

Marian Weissman Retired Weber English teacher

From Walter Chaskel:

On the assumption that many of you know that I had complete right knee replacement surgery on 18 November 2010 at the Hospital for Special Surgery -- Dr. Michael Parks, attending surgeon -- on the Isle of Manhattan, NY, and have expressed curiosity and concern about my progress; and the distinct possibility that some of you still may not have heard of this event, and may be

equally curious and perhaps even concerned, let me take the presumptuous liberty to include you all in an updating of my condition in one mass communiqué.

I am about three to four weeks ahead of anticipated recovery, with great flexibility and range of motion, increasing strength and agility, and a prognosis of significant return to reasonable and full activities in the very near future.



From Elaine: Harry Reid's comment on NBC *Meet the Press* program is worth repeating. Reid stated that means testing or raising the retirement age was a "backdoor method" of going after Social Security; he stated that "One of the things that always troubles me is when we start talking about debt, the first thing people do is run to Social Security...Stop picking on Social Security."

Another friend of labor, former Department of Labor Secretary Robert Reich, stated that "Public servants are convenient scapegoats." The average local government pension, he reminded his audience, typically amounts to only \$19,000 a year, a sizeable portion of which is not on taxpayer shoulders inasmuch as most public employees contribute a portion of their salaries into their pension plans while they are working; in the end, this makes taxpayers directly responsible for only about 14% of public retirement benefits. FACT, not fiction, is always worth knowing!

PROJECT INDEPENDENCE

Residents of the Town of North Hempstead may telephone 311 for information regarding help for seniors in their own homes - e.g. how to obtain specific services, locate help with tasks, etc. There are monthly lectures on a variety of topics - e.g. How to Prevent Falls & be Safer at Home, Mouth Health - Care of Gums & Teeth, Speaking with Adult children about Sensitive Issues, Common Back Problems and Treatment Options, etc. There are several locations at which meetings take place; the one with which I am most familiar is at the Port Washington Senior Center in Manorhaven. Calling 333 or 869-6311 will net you further information about all that is available through North Hempstead's Project Independence. There is, incidentally, a group known as the ROMEOs Social Group for retired males aged 60 or above looking for an informal group-lunch, stimulating discussion, camaraderie. (The name is an acronym for **Retired Old Men Eating Out** - nothing more, so don't get your hopes up too soon!)

Merry-Go-Round

by Merry Gilbert

You Can't Weld Aluminum and Other Lies

This chronicle began with my "six month" home renovation, which actually took three years.

Let's skip over the saga of the kitchen cabinet man, who abandoned us after building two out of ten cabinets, but kept our money (until two years later when he needed to remove our lien against him, and then needed to repay us and get a notarized letter from us IMMEDIATELY so he could get a second mortgage), which left us in the middle of a project no one was interested in finishing. (My husband and I finished it ourselves.)

Then, let's not go into the painter, who for a five figure fee, got paint all over everything, until I fired him, leaving me a year's worth of paint drips and spots to clean up. How amusing it was, when post firing, his assistant brought over a trellis he'd painted for us, and asked for \$90.00. Amusing now!! (I finished the painting.)

(In case you're wondering—all our contracted workers were recommended by friends and relatives for whom they did great work!! Was it me?)

Now we are up to the part where the workers will tell us anything, even if it's not true.

It begins with our central air conditioning unit, damaged in its move to safety during the construction. The repairman told us "You can't weld aluminum," but since we were such good customers, he'd see we got a new unit for a good price. "Hmm," my husband thought, "since you can't weld aluminum, I guess I'll have to immediately contact the owners of 300 welded aluminum yachts I've had a hand in designing, and tell them to immediately head for safe harbor." Another AC guy welded the broken part. It still runs great 4 years later.

During the renovation, we decided to replace some items in our basement collection of antique equipment: our 52 year old furnace, and our 50 year old hot water heater. (Imagine our surprise when the best hot water heater we could find has a 10 year warranty!!)

Recently we called in a plumber, because we could not get hot enough water without our new, modern water heater generating lots of overflow in the basement.

The plumber described his (incorrect) solution (to my husband the marine engineer), after carefully explaining to him how water can't expand. (The prior "pro," my husband later determined, had connected the cold to the hot and the hot to the cold on the hot water tank.) And then, this unfortunate, most recent repair person, when questioned as to his solution, uttered these fatal words:

"Because I'm the plumber, and I know my job."

Unbeknownst to him, we have the Gilbert motto, coined after lots of experiences like those above:

"If someone says 'I'm a professional and I know my job'—run like #* @#!"

"I'm sorry," my husband said, politely ushering him out, "you've said the magic words, and I'll have to let you know."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Celebrate National DNA Day Take an exciting two-part trip April 15th, 2011

We'll meet at 9:45 at the Cold Spring Harbor Lab on Bungtown Road to start with an hour to an hour and a half outdoor tour (rain or shine) of the historic Cold Spring Harbor Lab site to learn about the history of the buildings and area. (Described as paved but slightly hilly.) If possible, we may also visit a lab. Lunch will be served in the CSH Lab cafeteria at 11:30.

The second part, from 12:30 to 2:30 is at the Dolan DNA Learning Center on Main Street in Cold Spring Harbor, where we will extract DNA from harmless bacteria, and then visit the computer lab to explore "The Mystery of Anastasia," a scientific search to determine if Anna Anderson was really Anastasia Romanov. Please note that parking is very limited at both sites, so it will be necessary for attendees to carpool—4 to a car if possible.

Cost: \$30.00, which also includes lunch.
(Guests welcome, at the same rate.)

Deadline to send in your check: April 1st.

Questions? Contact Marilyn Gilbert 944-9211, mngmtd@aol.com

**Please cut along the dotted line and send the slip below with a check payable to PWTA to:
Penny D'Antonio, 1425 Port Washington Blvd. Port Washington NY 11050**

For CSH Lab security reasons, we have to submit the names of all attendees; in addition to your name, please list the names of all who are coming with you

We're 20! Come Help Us Celebrate

Our retiree chapter will celebrate its first 20 years of success
at our May 12th spring luncheon.

Let's all meet and greet at the George Washington Manor,
"cocktails" or whatever at noon, lunch at 1 p.m. -

Send your \$35 (per person) check, made out to PWTA to:

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

by April 1, 2011 to guarantee your presence on this momentous occasion.

Hasta la vista, baby! *Elaine Berman*

**Cut along the dotted line and return the form below with your check to Penny
at the address above.**

_____ will attend the
(Name or names of those attending and covered by your check)

20th anniversary Spring Luncheon at the George Washington Manor on May 12, 2011.

Enclosed is my check for: \$ _____



Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter
Meetings will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursdays
in the Hagedorn room of the Port
Washington Library on the dates listed below

2011 Meeting Dates

March 24, 2011

Check our website:

www.pwta.us/Retirees

early in April for the next meeting dates.

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

***Rita Auerbach is planning
a trip to Oheka Castle
in Cold Spring Harbor for June 8th.
Details will be on our website,
www.pwta.us/Retirees,
in the next few weeks

NYSUT MEMBER BENEFITS FOR YOU

New financial education services offer something for everyone

If you're looking for information on financial services available to you as a NYSUT member, NYSUT Member Benefits may have something just for you. Considerable efforts have been put forth in creating new printed material as well as new presentations. Both in-service and retiree members can benefit.

403(b) Field Guide. This booklet covers all aspects of 403(b) plans and includes information pertinent to members not yet contributing to a 403(b) plan, those who are contributing, those nearing retirement, and those already enjoying retirement.

To get the free guide, you can view and print a copy from the Member Benefits website, www.memberbenefits.nysut.org, hit the "Contact" option on the site to send an e-mail request, or call **800-626-8101** for a copy to be sent to you.

