



PORT OF CALL

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

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK**

March 2015

VOL.25 NO.1

NYSUT NO. 19 080R Visit our website at: www.pwta.us/PWRE AFT NO. 9591-R

COULDA, WOULD, GLAD WE DIDN'T!!!

From the Desk of Our



**President
Elaine Berman**

I refer to the meeting of our RAC (Retiree Advisory Committee) NOT held in Albany on Blizzard Day, January 26th! Instead, planned in advance, was a three-hour Webinar attended by all or most of our numerous committee members - clad comfortably by the computer, telephone attached to ear, in p.j's or sweats or whatever one hangs out in when one hopes NO WAY, NO HOW, to be seen! And a successful confab it was.

At these events, one signs in and then during or after each speaker one can "raise one's hand" to speak, comment, ask questions etc. which can then be commented upon by others and/or responded to by the speaker. The meetings are co-chaired by NYSUT V.P. Paul Pecorale and retiree Rod Sherman, with NYSUT Retiree Staff Floyd Cameron,

Joyce Smith and GERALYN O'Reilly running the show. RAC represents interests of NYSUT retirees state-wide, so whereas many of our concerns are universal, many regions and retiree councils and chapters throughout our large and diverse state have concerns unique to their own circumstances; thus a forum such as this, run either in person or electronically, gives us all a chance to share problems, concerns and potential solutions.

Our first presenter was Pete Savage, NYSUT Legislative Representative, who had a wealth of information to report, given that the Governor's unfriendly-to-teachers State of the State/Budget speech had been given only a few days earlier. Highlighting the high (low?) points of the Governor's speech and citing the deleterious effects upon our educational system, Pete pointed out the urgent need for coalitions of teachers (in-service and retired), parents, community groups etc. to work together to inform all of their potentially devastating effects and to defeat many of these ill-thought proposals. Community teams are being formed, rallies planned - but an immediate avenue always open to all is the sending of FAX's to legislators through the NYSUT.org MAC website. In 2014, 268,538 MAC FAX's went out to NYS legislators, of which 2746 went to Sen. Jack Martins and 2655 to Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel in our local district.

We next heard from Kate Sweet, Assistant Director of Information Technology for NYSUT, who reviewed the processes for obtaining, formatting and processing new retiree information as it is received from the Teachers' Retirement System. Many times when new retirees do not receive mailed information in a timely manner, or are not notified of loss of benefits if they are not members of their local retiree chapter, or their names are not culled from the system upon their demise, or their addresses have changed and they fail to receive their mail, the problem emanates from the local teacher association who has failed to notify NYSUT-ALBANY of the changes. Many questions were addressed.

Following were presentations by VOTE/COPE staff specialists Linda Herron and Karen Rhatigan, who introduced via PowerPoint presentation new materials that would be going out to retirees as well as some changes in the structural organization. VOTE/COPE recognition awards are now given for an average of \$100 per member (Shanker), \$75 (Lyn Costello), \$50 (June Smith) and \$25 (Blattman). YOU CAN UP YOUR PENSION DEDUCTION AMOUNT BY REVISING YOUR FORM (available from Tessa or Mary Anne) or by adding an additional amount by check made out to VOTE/COPE and sent to Tessa. Certainly we should all be able to continue to give what we gave while we were still in-service - and given what vast funds are accumulated by politicians through other far wealthier sources, perhaps we can increase our contributions somewhat this year . . .

As always, if you have suggestions, questions etc. for me to bring up at or between these meetings, please let me know.

Elaine

Proposed 2015-2016 PWRE

2015-2016 Officers Slate

Co-Presidents	Elaine Berman Mary Anne Cariello
Vice President	Sue Mittelstaedt
Co-Vice President (Membership)	Rita Auerbach Tessa Jordan
Vice President (Newsletter)	Erlyn Madonia
Vice President (Webmaster)	Barbara Mayer
Treasurer	Penny D'Antonio
Recording Secretary	Gail Femmel Harriet Englander, alternate Mary Anne Cariello
Corresponding Secretary	Jackie Heinemann

PWRE Standing Committees

Board of Education	Elaine Berman, Tessa Jordan
Email	Don Voss
Excursion Planning	Barbara Blum, Carol Kratenstein
Newsletter Distribution	Linda Eckhardt, Sue Mittelstaedt
Political Action	Elaine Berman, Mary Anne Cariello
PWTA Executive Council	Elaine Berman, Tessa Jordan
Refreshments	Sue Mittelstaedt
Retiree Council Delegates-at-Large	Elaine Berman, Mary Anne Cariello
Scholarship	Norma Ziegel, Gail Femmel
VOTE COPE	Mary Anne Cariello, Tessa Jordan



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

All are welcome whether you've read the book or not. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to the host. (check member directory for address & phone number, or email.)

Date: Thurs., March 26th @ 12 pm Brown Bag Lunch
Book: All the Light We Cannot See - Anthony Doerr
Hosted by: Seth Ehrlich

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March 2015 Vol. 25 No. 1
Published by the Retired Educators Chapter
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FRIENDSHIP/ REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE



Joan Gerken

Condolences were sent to:

The Family of T Aschenbrenner
The Family of Tess Cosgrove
The Family of Eileen Halliday
The Family of Loretta Molk

A \$50 contribution, in memory of each, has been sent to the PWRE Scholarship Fund.

T Aschenbrenner
Tess Cosgrove
Eileen Halliday
Loretta Molk

Remembering Tess Cosgrove - Sally Reinhardt

Tess Cosgrove started teaching home economics at Weber Junior High in 1954. She moved to Sousa Junior High in 1962 and taught there until she retired in 1982.

Tess Cosgrove was my mentor, mother at school and dear friend. I admired and loved her. I was hired at 8:30 in the morning and began my first teaching job at 10:00 at Sousa Junior High School. Talk about being thrown into the frying pan, literally, because I taught Cooking! I could not have done it without Tess. I learned so much from her. I never forgot it and tried to honor Tess by helping new teachers throughout my career.

Tess and I carpoled for over three years. We met across the street from the Uniondale Library which was named after her late husband. Tess was widowed when all three of her children were in college. She never complained or felt sorry for herself. She grew up on a dairy farm in Vermont with nine siblings. I enjoyed hearing all her stories and felt like I knew her whole family!

Tess was Irish and had a St. Patrick's Day party for the Sousa staff every year. Everyone was Irish that day! There was delicious food and great music. To this day, I doubt that any of us don't think of St. Patrick's Day without remembering Tess.

In May 1982, Tess was thinking about retiring the following January after turning 65 in October. I was filling in on a maternity leave and the person was coming back. I told her that there was an opening in Oceanside and I was going to apply for it. About two days later, a ninth grade boy told Tess that his grandmother said hi. Tess asked him how she knew his grandmother. He replied that his grandmother was one of her former students. The very next day Tess told me she was going to retire in June. She wanted me to be able to stay teaching in Port Washington. And I happily did, for the next thirty-two years!

That was Tess at her best - unselfish, looking out for others, loving and caring. She was a wonderful role model for me and for so many others. As the Irish blessing says, "Tess, until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand."



Spring Luncheon - Thursday, May 14, 2015

Location: Harbor Links Golf Course, Port Washington

Time: Noon—3:00

Cost: \$37

This includes butler served hors d'oeuvres for the first hour, one drink, appetizer, salad, choice of main course, desserts and coffee/tea. All at a beautiful location and with the very best of people. Not only will we be electing officers at this meeting we will also have an exciting speaker, Schreiber graduate, author and professor at Brown University.

Please join us for a great afternoon with old friends and hear our very special guest speaker. So make a call and bring a friend. The spring luncheon form is on our website. Or simply send your check made out to the PWTA and mail it to Penny D'Antonio, 1425 Port Washington Blvd, Port Washington, NY 11050.



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Merry-Go-Round by Merry Gilbert

Jean Piaget Introduced Me to My Husband

Enjoy another episode in the *Adventures of Merry*

Looking all the way back to 1966, as I was finishing up my student teaching at a paired school—with students from both Lincoln Center Houses and Lincoln Towers- I had either to accept an assignment from the NYC Board of Education (no choice of where), or receive a request from my student teaching school to retain me for a permanent job. Since there was no kindergarten class available (the grade I really wanted), I threw the dice, and landed at PS 48, the Joseph Rodman Drake School, on Spofford Avenue in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx. Surprise! There was no kindergarten class available there either! *Iacta alia est*. It was too late to go back. I crossed Bruckner Boulevard, and so the adventure began.

I received a first grade assignment- my class was one of 10. There wasn't room for all the eligible students to have attended kindergarten, so first grade, at age 6, was their introduction to school. Actually, there was no room for first grade either. In order to accommodate all the classes, rooms had to be shared. I had prep and lunch from 9:00-11:00, then took my class of 36 students (not the same 36 I had from September to June), to another teacher's room from 11:00-1:00, and then from 1:00 to 3:00 to yet another classroom to finish out the day: another layer of organization for a new young teacher to cope with. Naturally, there were times when the materials I needed were in another of the rooms. (A subsequent "improvement" the Board implemented was to initiate small classes. Sounded great. BUT--this was done by assigning a second teacher to the group, which, for my class, was a person with no teacher training—both of us in the same room. I would be able to handle that now but not in my second year!)

My prep and lunch, my first year, were with the 4 other women on my time schedule. They were lovely, and it seemed, at the time, that their average age was 60. I knew there were some young teachers out there, but on still another schedule, so I hadn't had the chance to spend time with them.

When I had the opportunity to tell my principal how much I wanted to meet other young teachers, she assigned me (you could do that in that school climate) to create a presentation on Jean Piaget with a sixth grade teacher. This meant that the sixth grade teacher and I had to meet several times outside of school to create our presentation. We became friends. Her boyfriend had a best friend, whom I dated and later married. Funny how things happen.

Back to Jean Piaget, a psychologist whose work on learning has important implications for educational practice. I learned from his work that pressure on early academic achievement is less important over time than encouraging creativity, strengthening interest in learning, and providing time for imaginative play. Hands on learning, at the pace appropriate for the child, lasts longer than paper and pencil. Knowledge and understanding is not about ingesting and regurgitating a bunch of facts—ruining childrens' creative intitative, and which is not real knowledge or true intelligence, just rote learning and not comprehension.

I recently referenced The Plowden Report done in the 60's in England, an evaluation of primary education policy, which incorporates many ideas from Piaget's work.

In a 2004 article appearing in Pediagogies for Change, citing the 1967 Plowden Report, article author Derek Gillard (specialist in curriculum studies and management and administration of education in the UK, and web-master of "Education in England") indicates that the Report's recommendations are grounded in Piaget's theories, and concludes: "When politicians realise that what is measurable is (continued on next page)

Getting Together - Barbara Blum



January 14: A group of us from the PWRE spent an afternoon at the Brooklyn Museum, a beautiful Beaux Arts building designed by McKim, Mead, & White. We started out viewing the Killer Heels exhibit: The Art of the High Heeled Shoes. We read about the heels' impact on culture and society from the 16th century to today. There were so many heels to view and six films inspired by the exhibit. Oh those Killer Heels – some were courageous, some were outrageous, all were extraordinary – this exhibit did not disappoint!

The tour started, and a docent took us to see the Egyptian art collection where we saw antiquities spanning more than 3,000 years. She also spoke about and showed us Assyrian reliefs, rooms from old New York filled with period furniture, and American art. Each time we stopped, she shared a story about either the art form or the artist.

Judy Chicago's Dinner Party was our next stop. She is a feminist artist who commemorates important women from history by either arranging an appropriate place setting for that person, or by inscribing their names on the tile floor below the table. The Dinner Party was unexpectedly captivating.

Next we went to see another special exhibit titled Bound and Rebound. The riveting background story about the artist Judith Scott made her fiber art compelling to view. Her work was original and complex. She used thread, fabric, yarn, and even paper towels in her art works, adding things she would find.

We had lunch in the Counter Café. My soup was delicious. The café is overseen by the chef Saul Bolton, who also runs Saul's, a restaurant in the museum. He is a well renowned chef.

Many years ago, when I was growing up in Brooklyn, the museum played a role in my education, and it was so nice to see that it still maintains a strong relationship to Brooklyn residents and anyone interested in art.

Two More PWRE Excursions

Tuesday, March 17th - Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory & DNA Learning Center. 10:30 tour of lab, 12:00 lunch in the Lab cafeteria, 1:00 at the DNA Learning Center. Car Pools will be arranged. It will probably be about \$10 or less a person. Lunch is extra.

Mon, May 18th(full) and Wed, May 27th Tour of the entire High Line with Mike Nicoll of Gotham Tours. Mike can only take 15 of us, so if you are interested, let me know. The High Line is the elevated walkway where the freight trains ran for many years. It extends from Gansvort Street in the meat packing district to the Harbor Yards at 34th street. It is a beautiful walk with historic sights and new architectural structures. If you have any questions, please email Barbara: LBBLUM67@gmail.com

Piaget cont.

not all that is valuable, when teachers begin to notice that children learn nothing by being tested, when parents are sick of their young children suffering from exam-induced stress, when the public begins to realize that the results of national tests can always be manipulated to achieve politicians' targets, and when decent people decide to stand up against the name-and-shame culture of failure, then someone, somewhere, is going to remember "at the heart of the educational process lies the child."

Remember to vote for the Port Washington School District Capital Bond Referendum on March 10th at Weber M.S. (or by absentee ballot)

We Asked To Hear From You And We Did



Hello from Zion National Park From Dave Pehlke

Karen and I have lived in beautiful Southern Utah now for 18 years. We go to Zion National Park, which is just one hour away, often to enjoy the scenery, hiking, backcountry exploring, picnicking, and staying overnight. Out-of-town friends and family are always taken to Zion. The park is a big part of their lives. News about Zion is found in the local newspaper almost daily. Half (seems like it) of the businesses in St. George are named Zion this, and Zion that.

Here is a Feb. 4 picture of them in Zion with our daughter, Joy (Schreiber '94,) her husband, and our grandchildren Austin and Ash, visiting from Ann Arbor, Michigan.



A Father and Daughter Publication From John Sweetland

I have two articles to be published in the reference text, "Psychology and Behavioral Health," coming out in 2015. The articles were co-authored with my daughter, Dr. Molly Sweetland, a family practice physician. One article is on autism, and the other is on dysgraphia.

Hello from Susan Trinchitella

I have moved to Gallatin, Tennessee with my daughter Lisa. Gallatin is about 30 miles north of Nashville. We have been here since the end of October and moved into our new home in January. Lisa and I have been coming down here for the past three years for the Country Music Feast in June that last 1 week. Each time I came I fell more and more in love with Tennessee. The area where we live reminds me of the east end of Long Island, open and farms. I have left family and many friends in New York. My sister and her family and my niece and her family have come to visit us. I do have a cousin here with his family. As of now I am not working, would love to do some volunteering either in a school or at an "assistant" living. Lisa is working for Bright Horizon daycare. We are very happy here and are not missing the New York winter.



Bellaggio Art Show

Alan Hagel & Master Studio Potter Charlie Riggs from North Carolina at a Workshop at the Lighthouse Art Center, Tequesta, Florida Jan. 16-17 2015.



Tom DiNapoli

When people talk about politicians, the common perception is that they are fundamentally dishonest and self-serving. However, this is not the perception of those who know of Thomas DiNapoli, New York State comptroller. Attending his inauguration for a second full term as comptroller of New York State brought to mind the many reasons why we as teachers and citizens have supported him as he ran for political office.



Mary Anne Cariello, Tom DiNapoli, Louise Levine Rosenthal., Elaine Berman

Every speaker at his inauguration at Hofstra University on January 1, 2015, including United States Senator Charles Schumer, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, Mario Cilento, president of the New York State AFL-CIO and former US Representative Carolyn McCarthy spoke of Tom's qualities; his honesty, his integrity, his dedication of hard work, and his commitment to public service.

We, in Port, can testify to Tom's honesty and integrity. Tenure is under attack today but this is not the first time. When Tom was an assemblyman from the 16th district he spoke at a PWTA General Meeting and voiced his support for tenure. This was not hard to do because his audience was teachers. However, sometime later he spoke at a rather hostile community meeting where tenure was under attack. In explaining the reasons why tenure is so important, he said the very same things he had said at the meeting of only teachers.

Speakers at the inauguration made some statements about Tom that are worth noting. It was pointed out that Tom believes that government should be fixed, not destroyed. He has worked to fix government through the audits and investigations his department conducts. Carolyn McCarthy, in telling about her life and the lives of many others, stated that unions gave much the way to move forward. Both she and Tom came from union families and gave unions the credit for their families' well being and their own ability to achieve.

It was pointed out that Tom fights for what he believes in whether that is for campaign finance reform, for pensions for teachers, and other state workers. He consistently speaks out in support of defined benefit pensions, like ours, even though this is not the popular view at this time.

Mario Cilento said something significant in reference to Tom. There are others who have risen from ordinary beginnings. Unfortunately, many of those people, especially politicians, see themselves as self-made men who worship their own creator.

We are looking forward to Tom DiNapoli's next four years as comptroller. When he was first elected in 2010, it was a very close vote, but in 2014 he won 39 of New York's 62 counties and received more votes than the governor. Obviously, voters have come to see him as a person of integrity who is a supporter of what is right for the people of New York. - a real public servant.

Mary Anne Cariello



Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter

Meetings will be held on Thursdays at the Port Washington Library on the dates and times listed below, unless otherwise notified. Please check your e-mail or the website for any meeting changes.

These meetings aren't just for the PWRE officers. All members are welcome to attend.

2015 Meeting Dates

March 12 - 10:30 am

April 9 - 10:30 am

May 14th - Noon -3:00 Spring Luncheon/ Elections -Harbor Links Golf Course

**PLEASE NOTE: Checks for contributions to the PWRE Scholarship Fund should be made out to the PWTA Scholarship Foundation and mailed to:
Penny D'Antonio
1425 Port Washington Blvd.
Port Washington, New York 11050**

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