



# PORT OF CALL

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

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER  
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK  
September 2014**

**VOL.24 NO.3**

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

*IF YOU SEE \*\*\*\* SAY SOMETHING*

From the Desk Of Our



**President  
Elaine Berman**

So, here we are again, together after what I hope was a good, healthy summer respite. Certainly here in the east we had as good a summer weather-wise as we have ever had, more akin to California's San Diego or Bay Area expected climactic conditions. But now on to our "scheduled" year; yes, we are programmed that way - we still have our scheduled days, hopefully more divergent and exciting than those of yore! And, speaking of us, of schedules and related matters - - -

*See \*\*\*\* Say to:*

PENNY - Thanks for all your work as our treasurer - monthly accounting, yearly budgets always perfect under auditing scrutiny, winning smile!

RITA, TESSA - Thanks for keeping membership lists always up to date, annual membership directories, address labels as needed, fees collected.

SUE - Thanks for survival coffee at meetings, chairing and overseeing annual NYSUT Making Strides Against Breast Cancer campaign, getting *PORT OF CALL* collate-and-mail team on the job, being always helpful and agreeable!

MARY ANN, TESSA - Thanks for VOTE/COPE collections, reminders and thank you's, record keeping.

JOAN GERKEN - Thanks for all the cards to our members and/or their families recognizing family illnesses, deaths et.al.

GAIL - Thanks for doing a great job in a task *not* your first choice, i.e., as PWRE secretary.

DON - Thanks for prompt email notifications.

BARBARA MAYER- Thanks for always current and thorough website information.

and a HUGE THANK YOU to all who contribute to our scholarship fund, write articles and/or send pictures to *PORT OF CALL*, and contribute in many other ways to the well being of our organization.

Elaine

**Editor's Note:** And a huge Thank You to you, Elaine, for all that you continue to do.

# POLITICALLY SPEAKING

At its endorsement conference, NYSUT opted to endorse Bishop, Israel and Rice for Congress; to make no endorsement in the gubernatorial race nor in some of the LI NYS senatorial races (including non-endorsement of our local 7th S.D. Senator Jack Martins and Sen. Skelos) but they did endorse LI Senators Lavallo, Esposito, Marcellino and Dennenberg among others). Tom DiNapoli and Eric Schneiderman were endorsed for state Comptroller and Attorney General as well.

In the state Assembly Races, endorsed were Zove, Saladino, Lupinacci, Kim Jean-Pierre, Raia, Levine, McDonough, Montesano, Schimel, Mc Kevitt and Ra on LI.

For more detailed information on the conference, either await the next issue of NYSUT UNITED or contact Louise Levine, Rosemary Catanzariti (RC 19 co-presidents), PWTA president Christine Vasilev, or PAC delegate Paul Wolski. (Retiree chapter presidents are not included in the endorsement conference; and having resigned from my PAC coordinator position I no longer attend.)

Our always-on-our-side Assemblywoman in the 16th A.D., Michelle Schimel, was heartily endorsed, as were many other LI Assembly members. Apropos of Michelle - she had been asked to read essays of pre-college members of local AYW (auto workers) families and to select six as recipients of \$1000 college scholarships (with another \$1000 to follow in three years). There was to be an evening of presentation of these honors. Michelle, however, had a conflicting speaking engagement, and asked if I would represent her in making the certificate presentations which I was happy to do. For me the most interesting part of the evening was chatting with the AYW workers' families at dinner and listening to their remarks from the podium, bringing home to me the significance of our being at one with our fellow AFL/CIO brothers and sisters. Not one to let an opportunity go by without reminding *them* of this fact, I must admit I used the podium to "build a few bridges" by citing a few of our own NYSUT battles to win the kinds of small victories we all seek, to remind them that we *all* have to negotiate, fight for retiree benefits etc - and, of course, to remind them how hard Assemblywoman Schimel works for us all. It may not have been exactly what Michelle had intended, but she did say as a union activist I was a good person to represent her . . .

Elaine



## 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., October 9 @ 11 am  
Book: Unbroken—Laura Hillenbrand  
Hosted by—Trish Burr-Peters

Date: Thurs., November 20th @ 12 pm after the PWRE mtg  
Book: The Dinner—Herman Koch  
Hosted by: Brown Bag Lunch—PWPL

Date: TBA  
Book: Lowland—Jhumpa Lahiri  
Hosted by—TBA

Please consult our web site for updates.

## FRIENDSHIP/ REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE

Joan Gerken

### Get Well Wishes were sent to:

Ellie Irish

### Condolences Were Sent to:

Annemarie Benzinger, on the loss of her husband

Howard Erlich, on the loss of his mother

The Family of Al Jessen

The Family of Joan Kujan

The Family of Joan Stankiewicz

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

Al Jessen  
Joan Kujan  
Joan Stankiewicz

### PORT OF CALL

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## Look Who Attended the Party



You'll recognize Pete Faiella and Bill Allen in the front, and Hal Champol and Charlie Smith in the back. Bill celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with a party of family and friends at his home on June 29, 2014. Thanks so much to everyone who sent cards, notes, gifts, and good wishes. Each brought back wonderful memories of good times and the very special people from the Port Washington school system.

This photo and caption was sent to us by Bill's daughter, Dot.

## Sad Passing of Bob Johnson

Don Voss received this note from Bob's daughter, Pam,

"I am Bob and Vi Johnson's daughter, Pam and am writing to tell you that my dad died on Sat. Aug. 23. He was at home with hospice services and died very peacefully with all of us with him. Ever the planner and wanting to make things as easy for us as possible when the time came, he always said, "Be sure to contact Don." I have attached the obituary that appeared in the 8/29/14 CT Post that includes information about the service we have planned for Sat. Sept. 20 at 1pm here at the Oronoque Country Club where he played golf up until 3 years ago. He loved his years in Port. Last summer we drove Mom and Dad to Port and we had lunch at Louies' with Mr. Allen and his daughters. They had such a wonderful time and we even reached Bill Berry by phone so they could talk with him...one last meeting! I have attached a photo of them together. Dad was very sorry to miss Mr. Allen's recent 100 year birthday party. Dad recently spoke with Jay Grosmark, Pete Faiella, and perhaps Blaine Bocarde...not sure. My mom will continue to live in their home in Stratford. My sister, Teena, is 20 minutes away, and I visit often from Richmond, VA, as does Steve who lives near Dallas. Mom's address: 757A Quinpiac Ln., Stratford, CT 06614, [203-375-9636](tel:203-375-9636). Thank you for sending an email to let people, who may remember him, know about his death." Read Bob's obituary on our web page



## Who or What is ALEC ????

Perhaps you have heard by now of ALEC - the American Exchange Legislative Council. This is a nationwide group seeking to influence state legislatures on such matters as taxes, workers' rights, pensions, gun control, air and water quality etc. At its annual convention of some 300 corporate and 2000 state representatives task forces were chosen to draw up "model" legislation to be introduced to state legislatures. Legislators then introduce Bills as their own, with no reference to ALEC. Corporate participants (e.g. Exxon-Mobil, Wal-Mart, UPS, AT&T, Koch Industries, Verizon etc.) pay tax deductible membership fees of \$7000-25,000 and state legislators pay \$100. Claiming not to be lobbyists, ALEC is instead a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization "educating" members and therefore not subject to lobbying laws and regulations. They claim responsibility for writing 1000 Bills per year and having 200 pass in state Houses. Corporate access to and manipulation of legislative goings-on of American democracy? **You betcha!**

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Think of the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe and the back of the closet; of Alice and Wonderland and the looking glass; of Harry Potter and the seemingly impermeable brick wall entrance to the train track to Hogwarts—all have in common the magical entry through a portal, which opens for admission to an otherworldly place.

Nowadays, there is another kind of portal, a medical one, but not so magical, and for me, not so magically easy to enter and use. Meant as a storage place to easily access all of a patient's medical records, this portal for the rest of us is meant to unify a patient's information, to provide access to the "total person" both for the patients and doctors. Interestingly, I have been "invited" by medical groups affiliated with two different hospitals to join each hospital's portal, thus seemingly defeating the purpose of providing access to everything in one place. Additionally, now asking for a copy of the test I have just taken now elicits this response: "You can easily access your information on our portal."

Whoa, maybe not quite so easily! To access the portal, an account has to be set up which includes the answer to a security question. How many of you remember the month, day and year you graduated from High School? Your best friend's birthday? Your parents' birth dates? I had to consult with a person over this—and found myself explaining at length that I graduated 51 (!! ) years ago, in January some time; that my parents birthdays are in the same month and I always mixed them up; and that two of my best friends have been gone for about 14 years or so. I am finally able to find something to use, finish the process, and then attempt to use the portal to obtain my most recent blood test results to add to my records, as I have been tracking them over the years.

Proudly I enter the portal!! Snafu #1 emerges: Since I cancelled and have not yet reinstated my fax number, nor have I gotten a new printer linked to my computer yet, I request that a copy be sent to me by (gasp!) *mail*. Surprise! First I have to be sent a HIPPA form to get my own results!! Mailed, of course, and then mailed back. I finally got the copy of the lengthy blood test results, including tests new to me, and need them explained. Luckily, I was able to connect with a portal-less person, and did not take for granted the time she took with me to explain the tests and the results!!

After office or hospital procedures, the patient frequently receives by mail post-medical service questionnaires (I guess they don't want to use their own portal). Some of the questions ask the patient to evaluate the amount of dignity with which s/he has been treated. I can't wait to suggest on my next questionnaire that before the patient leaves the physician's office there is an offer to assist with setting up the portal, including instructions of how to access it. That would be helpful and keep ones dignity in intact.

Now, I turn to Physical Therapy, another medical matter, where in the background, there is usually some mindless talk show on the TV, complete with endless weather and traffic reports. As a group, we feel that we are more interesting than these bland, repetitive TV offerings. So my fellow PTers and I would like to pitch a TV show that would really resonate with our generation. To wit: picture the PT weatherman who dispenses with accuweather and instead reports what the weather will be based on how his back feels; the PT lie down comedy segment (not stand-up), as jokes are exchanged by prone patients during heat, ice and stim; the moving PT human interest stories full of dramatic moments and brave struggles toward recovery, of friendships forged, support offered and advice given. Now that's modern medicine.

Enjoy another episode in the

*Adventures of Merry*

## VOLUNTEER HELP SOUGHT

NYSUT's pre-election phone banks will be operative as usual again this fall. P.W. retirees will be making calls from the **Woodbury office from noon - 3 p.m. on Oct. 21 and 23**. As before, we will be calling NYSUT members, there will be a short script reminding our colleagues to be sure to vote, and letting them know who NYSUT has endorsed in their own and in state elections. Please let Elaine know that you can spare a little of your time to help. [erberm@verizon.net](mailto:erberm@verizon.net)) Thanks.



## Retired or Not Here We Come....

to the aid of the right known as *tenure*. A suit filed in California challenging seniority and tenure rights was backed by a judge ruling that tenure has led to a concentration of incompetent teachers in impoverished areas and that teacher protection laws violated children's rights to a sound basic education. Spurred on to action in New York State, Campbell Brown (former news anchor) and the Partnership for Educational Justice (with its ties to Students First and Success Academy Charter School) backed a suit filed by seven parents in State Supreme Court on the same basis; however, it is interesting to note that whereas headlines and attention are focused on the tenure issue, discussion focuses upon the need for better qualified and better paid teachers, and help for the economy of impoverished areas and needy youngsters. California's Gov. Brown has already filed an Appeal.

"Tenure," we should all remember, simply means that a teacher is entitled to the fundamental right of due process and cannot be terminated without formal charges being presented. It is *earned* during the probationary period, as state law it is NOT negotiated by local unions. And it is most certainly NOT a cause of low student achievement.

## Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk

The American Cancer Society will be sponsoring its annual five mile walk at Jones Beach on Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup> to raise funds to fight breast cancer. NYSUT supports and urges all members to become involved in this effort.

Please sign up to walk on October 19, 2014. We will all meet at Jones Beach, Parking lot 5 and walk at 8 AM. It's an easy walk on the board walk. You can get sponsors, but there is no set amount that you have to have to walk. We would really like to have more walkers from our retired educators' group. It is a nice way to support this together.

If you can't walk, then please donate whatever you can to support us. Make the check out to the American Cancer Society and send it to me so we can turn in all contributions together. Last year we collected over \$2000 just from our group. If you have any questions, please call me. 516-883-6399 or @ [artsuemitt@aol.com](mailto:artsuemitt@aol.com). Please send your check made out to the American Cancer society, to me:

Sue Mittelstaedt 39 Shadyside Ave. Port Washington, NY 11050



## Make YOUR Voice Heard

There was a time when educators rejected the idea that state and federal legislation had any effect on schools and education. Today there is little doubt that it does. Because educators are not billionaires, they must pool their money so that they can have some voice in decisions made in Albany and Washington. That is why so many contribute to VOTE-COPE-the voice for teachers in education. If you care about education, teachers, and retirees and you have not yet contributed to VOTE-COPE, please do it so your voice can be heard.

If you have misplaced the contribution form that you were sent, call or email Mary Anne or Tessa and one will be sent to you. Their email addresses and phone numbers are in the directory. Join with the other Port retirees to make your voice heard.

# We Asked To Hear From You And We Did

## Warm Memories of Port

From Ed Berkowitz

As an Assistant Supt. for Instruction it was always a delight to get out of my office and visit schools. It reinforced for me the high quality of learning that was going on in Port Washington.

On a more personal note, this story of a chance meeting may have happened due to a visit to Guggenheim.

After we retired my wife and I relocated to Maryland to be near our children. However whenever we get a chance we try to return to NYC. We had just completed a cruise to the Canadian Maritimes, seen two wonderful shows, toured the Met, and were finishing up with a visit to the Jewish Museum to see the Chagall exhibit. We were on an elevator leaving when I was asked if I was an educator. Of course you know my reply. I was thrilled to have been remembered after more than 20 years by Carol Kratenstein who had just been written up in the Port of Call for her fine art work.

## A Recent Visit to Colorado

From Janet Cusa

Our oldest daughter, Debbie lives in Colorado and has for many years. On this trip we decided to take our oldest grandson, Del (short for Delaware) with us; he is almost 11.

Debbie has a little girl, Lili, who is 21 months old. The two cousins have not seen each other since last summer and watching them interact together was the most heartwarming time for Al and myself!! He took her under his wing and she followed him everywhere.

Colorado is a beautiful place with very friendly people. Since this was a kid-friendly visit for us, it included the local street fair in Louisville, where Debbie lives, a visit to the "beach", which is the Boulder Reservoir in Colorado, complete with a small sandy area, lifeguards and a concession stand, a visit to the local "rec" center, complete with a great water slide for kids, a great diving pool and a wonderful indoor (as well as outdoor) walking tract for grandma and more work-out machines that I could count!!! We also visited and ate at Pearl Street, which is a must when you visit Boulder; always something going on, either music, magicians or kid-centered activities. All and all, a wonderful visit was had by all, and we were sad to see it end.



## Hello Port Washington Survivors.

From Edd and Shirley Shalett

The entire Shalett family spent some time in the Northwest as sort of a reunion. The 11 of us met in Seattle where Deborah and Rachel, their significant others, my five wonderful grandchildren, joined Shirley and I for a super celebration. We had 2 high school graduations/college acceptances (ASU and Winona State, Minn.) Shirley's big Birthday, and our 48<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

We explored Sooke BC, 10 miles west of Victoria, Vancouver was great especially on Canada Day, and Seattle on July 4<sup>th</sup>. I especially enjoyed being in the Pacific old

growth forest and the relief from Phoenix Summer.

The kids fished, crabbed and zip lined. We took the ferries from one place to another. We all had a ball in Stanley Park from bike riding to visiting the aquarium. Being together was the best part.

## More: We Asked To Hear From You



### Tundra's Journey

From Jim Jones

Although I have traveled to many places around the world, I recently completed one of the most quietly eventful trips I can remember. As is true for many retirees, I find my days (and some nights as well) to be near filled with things that I always wanted to get done, and can now do! Working for Volunteers for Wildlife as a rescuer, board member and program presenter has kept me very happily busy, never more so than when I was lucky enough to meet a snow-colored, yellow-eyed beauty from the far north --- a snowy owl!

As some of you may already know, it was a record year for snowy owl appearances in the United States. For reasons that are still not completely understood, the normally rarely seen owls were found in areas of the country, and in numbers in those areas, that have never been witnessed before. On a calm Sunday afternoon for example, I was called to JFK Airport to rescue a snowy that had been trapped in a power plant cooling tower. That rescue went wonderfully; I was able to release the owl at Jones Beach later in the week. However, the owl that I (and all of my co-workers) remember most is the one that was delivered to us by wildlife officials at LaGuardia. He had some injury caused by being sucked up in the back draft of a landing jet; a trip the next day

to one of our consulting veterinarians showed that injury to be a wing broken in at least two places. The owl, determined to be a young male, would spend at least the next several weeks with us at Volunteers, as we began his rehabilitation. The male snowy, soon named 'Tundra' by one of our board members, became an instant favorite among the staff. His recovery went well, but it became clear that although the wing would heal, it would never attain the strength needed to migrate back to the north, or hunt in the wild. As the weeks past and his vitality increased, we began the search for the best place for Tundra. We moved him to one of our outdoor aviaries so that he could flex that wing and move around. Although we limited access to his cage so that he would not be stressed out, we soon found that his favorite place was seated atop a perch where most visitors could see him, and he them. Some of the local newspapers ran stories on him; and a video of Tundra feeding on his daily quota of mice made him an instant celebrity. Although all of us at Volunteers wanted to keep him, Tundra needed to be in a cooler year-round climate, and at a facility that was equipped to care for him thoroughly. After weeks of looking, we decided on The Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences (VINS for short); a beautiful, well-staffed nature and education center located in Quechee, Vermont. Since I had been there many times before, I volunteered to drive Tundra; the trip was close to 300 miles and would take about five hours.

Tundra was a great passenger. He was well fed with a handful of fresh mice and relaxed in his typically quiet 'Buddha-like' fashion throughout the entire drive. At one stop, a pit stop for me, I took his carrier out of the car so that he could get some fresh air. A young woman, spotting the carrier and thinking that it contained a cat or dog, asked to see my 'pet'; she jumped back several feet when Tundra blinked his bright yellow eyes at her. "Oh my God, he is absolutely beautiful", she said. I told her our story and moved on to Quechee.

When we arrived, most of the staff was there to greet us. We walked his carrier to a rehabilitation aviary and opened it up. Tundra jumped right out and stood there calmly looking at us. Both staff members exclaimed, "He is so calm!" It was very evident that our snowy owl had found a good home.

Wild creatures need their freedom; if they cannot be released they deserve to live out their lives in peace and safety; Tundra has both of those things, and more. In August, I went up to VINS to visit and the first aviary that I stopped at was Tundra's. He looked great; calm, confident and perched on the ground as usual. The staff love working with him; his relaxed nature has made the training needed to become a program bird progress ahead of schedule --- he will become a magnificent ambassador for his species, and for all wild things. I miss him, as do all of the staff at Volunteers, but he is in the best place that he can be; I wish him well.





**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.

**2014 Meeting Dates**

October 16th and November 20th at 10:30 am.  
Hagedorn Room

**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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