



# PORT OF CALL

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER**

**PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK**

**SEPTEMBER 2010**

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Visit Our Website at: [www.pwta.us/Retirees](http://www.pwta.us/Retirees)

FROM THE DESK OF OUR PRESIDENT



As an eternal optimist, I have always seen the glass half full. Not Voltaire-ian enough to believe that this is the best of all possible worlds, I always believed that we could help make it better. As educators, we started each new school year in the belief that those under our tutelage would progress, would succeed, and that with our faith, hope and help we could make it possible.

As I look around today, I still remain optimistic - but the glass half full is a smaller glass. There are multitudes of people engaged in good deeds and good thoughts. As NYSUT members, untold numbers of us will volunteer to contribute to and participate in the Oct. 17th MAKING STRIDES walk for breast cancer; we will travel to Washington, D.C. for a one-day march on Oct. 2nd to support the ONE NATION goal of preserving public education and access to health care, jobs for all, a stable economy, and - yes - unity, not division. As members of the Port Washington community we volunteer in Residents for a More Beautiful Port Washington, in the Community Chest, in North Hempstead's Project Independence to make life better for those with whom we share our daily lives.

Beyond our more parochial affiliations we reach out to support those who are losing jobs and benefits (see item herein re Mott's strike), we participate in events championing social security (see also item re 75-year celebration), we support those legislators who are for, not against, us. But we are reminded daily by the media that there are still some ugly people with some ugly sentiments: those who would make war, not peace; who would seek to divide, not unite; who prefer intolerance to tolerance; who are egotistical and egocentric; who are greedy.

As we start a new school year, as we usher in a new year on the Jewish calendar, let us all strive to make that glass half full and a little larger once again by being positive ourselves in our quest for a better tomorrow and in bringing others along with us in the pursuit.

*Elaine*

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*From Jim Jones*



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...And We Did!*

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*First Day of School Breakfast*



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# ITEMS OF INTEREST

## YES - NOT MUCH, BUT A 1.2% COLA!

Thanks to a rise in the CPI, eligible retirees will see their benefit payment increase by 1.2% beginning this fall - a whopping \$18 per month!

To be eligible for the COLA you must be either:

- 62 and retired at least 5 years;
- 55 and retired at least 10 years;
- a retiree receiving a NYSTRS disability benefit for at least 5 years - regardless of age - or
- a surviving spouse if an eligible retiree receiving a lifetime benefit. The spouse receives an increase of one-half the retiree's COLA.

Those eligible for the COLA after September will receive an adjustment when first eligible. When the COLA beginning in September is factored in, the cumulative maximum monthly increase since the state's COLA legislation took effect in 2001 is \$210.



## Making Strides against Breast Cancer Walk Sunday, October 17, 2010

The American Cancer Society will be sponsoring its annual five mile walk at Jones Beach on Sunday, October 17<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 17th. We will all meet at Jones Beach, Parking lot 5 at the NYSUT tent. The early birds will meet at 7:30 AM. It's an easy walk on the boardwalk. If you prefer to walk later, it is best to go around 10AM, as by then the parking lots are starting to empty out and traffic should be less. We would really like to have more walkers from our retired educator's 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.

If you have any questions, please call me. 516-883-6399 or @ [artsuemitt@aol.com](mailto:artsuemitt@aol.com).

Sue Mittelstaedt  
39 Shadyside Ave.  
Port Washington, NY 11050



## More from Elaine's Desk

## NYSUT ENDORSEMENT CONFERENCE - AUG. 9-10

The NYSUT Endorsement Conference always follows procedures whereby all candidates for federal and state offices are discussed in full forum discussions by the statewide political action committee (PAC) members and local presidents; recommendations are then made to the NYSUT Board of Directors, who make or withhold the final endorsements.

In view of this bizarre year in the state legislature, plus the nature of the views of some of the candidates, there were fewer endorsements this year than in the past. Party affiliation does not matter. In the LI state races, only Kenneth LaValle (S.D.1) received endorsement in the Senate; Assembly members fared better (including Michelle Schimel of the 16th A.D. and Chuck Lavine of the 13th (see Elaine for total list). NYS Comptroller (and our former 16th A.D. Assemblyman) Tom DiNapoli, referred to by Dick Iannuzzi as a "dedicated and experienced public servant who has expertly managed the state's pension funds during tumultuous economic times while clearly demonstrating an understanding of the concerns facing retirees and all New Yorkers," received enthusiastic NYSUT endorsement. No position was taken yet in the Governor's race. Possibilities will be revisited at a later date.

U.S. Senators Schumer and Gillibrand were endorsed, as were all of our LI Congressmen with the exception of Peter King. In the endorsement process, candidates' voting records are examined; also very strongly considered this year was advocacy, or lack of advocacy, of issues important to our members.

## MOTT'S STRIKE

Mott's (apple juice, Snapple, 7 Up, Hawaiian Punch, Dr. Pepper et al) is a company in good financial health, earning record profits, yet seeking \$1.50/hour wage cuts, a freeze on pensions, citing the "good fortune" of their workers in having jobs in the face of high blue-collar unemployment in the Rochester area. 305 hourly workers have been picketing for 90 days under broiling sun, knowing that if they lose this showdown it could prompt other profitable companies to push for major labor concessions also. "Labor" has become a dirty word among companies - and even among some individuals - whose greed surpasses concern for the livelihood of others. Mott workers - indeed all workers - deserve our support.

## Our New Retirees Came for Breakfast

Thirteen of Port Washington Public School's newest retirees attended the Port Washington Retired Educators "Not Back to School Brunch." This was the largest group of new retirees to join us since the first day breakfast (Brunch) was begun in September 2003.



## Antoinette E. (Toni) Zummo

Toni Zummo passed away on July 9, 2010. She had been both a teacher and Director of Elementary



Education for the Port Washington School District and was the sister of Sr. Anna Louisa Zummo O.P., Vincent, Margaret Xenakis, Anthony and the late Elizabeth Harris and Pat Zummo. She was also the cherished aunt of 25 nieces and nephews.

*Published in Newsday on July 10, 2010*

F R C  
R E O  
I M M  
E E M  
N M I  
D B T  
S R T  
H A E  
I N E  
P C E

**Condolences Are Sent To:**  
Joel Belser on the death of his wife  
The Family of Christine Murphy  
Rocco Nofi on the death of his mother  
Don Voss on the death of his mother  
Mary Jane Walsh on the death of her husband  
The Family of Antoinette Zummo

A \$50 Contribution Was Sent to the PWTA

Scholarship Fund in memory of:  
Christine Murphy  
Antoinette Zummo

**Get Well Wishes Were Sent to:**

"T" Aschenbre nne r

Elaine LaBrocca

Ann Murray

Arlene Sutarro

Merle Colchamiro

Joy Lichten

Eileen Ronell

Lou Tremante

**A Thinking of You Card Was Sent to:**

Marty Hamburger

Dolores Scott

Lou Tremante

Matt Scott

*Joan Gerken*

## Book Club Dates

Friday, November 5th at 11:00 a.m.

Book: *Agaat*

Author: Marlene Van Niekerk

Where: Home of Linda Bracken

Wednesday, January 12, 2011 at 11:00 a.m.

Book: *The Warmth of Other Suns*

Author: Isabel Ilkerson

Where: To Be Announced.

Monday, November 29th at 11:00 a.m.

Book: *Olive Kitteridge*

Author: Elizabeth Strout

Where: Home of Barbara Mayer

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

*From: Barbara Blum*

On June 10th, 7 members of our retired teachers association went on a tour of a Manhattan highlight: the High Line, an elevated park that currently begins at Gansevoort Street which is just south of 14th Street.

The High Line was originally built in the 1930's by New York Central Railroad as a substitute for the street level train that ran on Tenth Avenue. The train serviced the meat packers, the National Biscuit Company and other factories. 10th Avenue, prior to the building of the High Line, was often called Death Avenue because it was so treacherous to travel there. The elevated train

on the High Line made 10th Avenue much safer.

The growth of trucking caused the decline of the railroad. The last time the High Line was used to deliver goods was in 1980 - a delivery of frozen turkeys. The High Line railroad, no longer in use, became neglected and was slated to be torn down. The Parks Preservation Commission helped bring about the restoration of the High Line into a park. It took two years of construction to convert the railroad trestle to a public park. We toured the High Line from Gansevoort Street to 20th Street with tour guide Mike Nicoll who is a retired Social Studies teacher from the Carle Place School District.

The guide met us at Penn Station and escorted us, by subway, downtown to 14th Street. He showed us the new and famous Gansevoort Hotel and pointed out the different architectural styles you can observe on just one block.

Before walking up the stairs at Gansevoort Street where meat slaughterhouses and plants lined the streets, our tour guide pointed out the property where the Whitney Museum is planning their new building. The new museum is slated to open in 2012.

The High Line Park is unusual. Because it is an elevated park, you get a third floor view of the surrounding area, not the usual street level view nor the rooftop view. From the High Line you can see the boarded sides of buildings where trains used to pass through. You see the Hudson River and the Statue of Liberty. There are vestiges of the old rail, taken out and treated and then returned and integrated into the flower beds. The many varieties of trees and flowers make it a garden. There are places to rest: stadium seats, benches, and even lounge chairs.

The High Line passes into Chelsea, with its many art galleries. It now ends at 20th Street, but will continue to 34th Street by the end of 2011. There are stairs and elevators to get onto the High Line and in the evenings the park is illuminated by LED lights.

*From: Jim Jones*



### **Volunteers for Wildlife Needs Teachers**

Being retired has allowed me to do many of the things that I could not do before; however, I still enjoy teaching when I get the chance. I wanted to see if any of the talented retired teachers from Port Washington would

be interested in teaching, one or two days a month, for Volunteers for Wildlife, the wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and education center soon to be relocated at Bailey Arboretum in Lattingtown (check out our website at [www.volunteersforwildlife.org](http://www.volunteersforwildlife.org)). If you enjoy teaching, and working with wildlife, then volunteering for us could be a great fit! We would provide all of the necessary training (which for former teachers is minimal), and then volunteers would teach our assorted programs to a wide variety of audiences. If anyone is interested, they can contact me by e-mail or phone: (516-628-2149).

If you need any other information, do not hesitate to contact me. Thanks, in advance, for your help.

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

From: *Deanna Glassmann*

## Visit to a Speech-Language Classroom Lesson in Australia



While planning our trip to Australia, I thought "Wouldn't it be interesting to visit a school there and see how a speech language program operates in a country on the other side of the world". On June 15, 2010, my husband and I had just that opportunity. We were driven to the Austral Primary School, a low sprawling building in a suburb of Sydney, by our liaison, Kate Short, a speech language pathologist at Liverpool Hospital. Speech language pathologists are not hired directly by the schools in the Sydney area, so

individual schools have contracted with the speech department at Liverpool Hospital to provide speech language services for their students. Entering a kindergarten classroom, we met Anna, the speech language pathologist, and two other adults namely the classroom teacher and a learning specialist. The room looked similar to our kindergarten classrooms with groupings of small tables and chairs for the students and letters, numbers, words, days of the week, months of the year and students drawings decorating the room. The students, all dressed in blue school uniforms, were gathered with Anna at the front of the room ready to embark on a phonemic awareness lesson where the students were engaged in "stretching out words" in order to determine how many sounds were in a particular word and to identify those sounds. Anna began the lesson with the class as a whole, asking for volunteers to come to the front and help her stretch out words such as fish and lip. She indicated that "sh" was the new sound for the day, and while it contained two letters, it made only one sound because "S and H got married and made a new name, SH". After many examples with the entire class, Anna told them that "Now we will do something tricky: stretch out the word – count the sounds – and write the letters". She indicated that they were to go back to their tables, get laminated picture cards and markers, and work on writing words. She reviewed the strategy with them which was Say – Stretch - Count - Write and then said "Let's have a go at it". During the seat work, the SLP, teacher and learning specialist walked around to tables to work with children, both helping those having difficulty and praising those who had succeeded. The students were extremely enthusiastic, completing picture card after picture card. One student was heard to say "I want to learn how to spell ring". The classroom speech language lessons at Austral Primary School are true collaborative lessons. The SLP is in the classroom for an hour once a week but the classroom teacher reinforces the lesson throughout the week. There were posters around the room with the special sounds that the class is learning, as well as a strategy chart illustrating Say – Stretch – Count – Write for the teacher to refer to as she incorporates what the SLP has brought to the classroom into her reading lessons.



"sh"  
the sound  
for the day



Retired Educational Assistant Grace Bellomo and her husband, Michael, celebrated their 45th Wedding Anniversary on August 7th with their three children and their families, including seven grandchildren.



John Sficas, retired Guggenheim teacher, proudly shows off his two granddaughters shown sitting between their mother, John's daughter Linda and their grandmother, John's wife Madelene.



### Yet Another Retirement

With back to school advertisements starting in July, I'm glad anew that I no longer keep a countdown to the first day of school. Not that I didn't love my job. In fact, I probably had the best job ever for the last 17 of my 35 years. As sort of an academic "aunt" to an entire school, I thrilled to see students' growth from year to year. I loved collaborating with my colleagues, who generously welcomed me to share their classrooms and students.

But, what makes a job work, no matter how wonderful, is that you have to do it every day.

For the last six years or so, I have been living a different dream. As part of a "Math Coach" team for resource room and special ed teachers in high needs school districts, I worked maybe Tuesday-Thursday this week and Monday -Wednesday next. Not only did I love the schedule, I loved working with the responsive and appreciative teachers. Some tentatively, some wholeheartedly, embraced what we taught in our monthly daylong workshops. Each year we had at least one person who told us that "My students could never do that!" and then, over the six or eight months we worked together, marveled at the progress their students made as a result of their bravely trying approaches and materials new to them.

From the feedback my team of coaches got (unlike me, who is a faux math teacher, the other team members are "real"), we know we changed lives of teachers and their students. When first introduced to each school group I visited, the kids were very excited to meet one of the people who was giving their teacher all the exciting math manipulatives (and lessons on how to use them) that they brought back to their classes.

Too, I got my kid fix when I visited the classrooms. "Good, we get all the fun!" was how one of the students reacted when he found out I visited his class and not another. "Are you coming back next year?" was another heart warmer for me.

Despite the success of this program, anecdotal and statistical (although I wonder how "our" teachers fared when the State recently recalculated the test scores), we are no longer funded.

My last gig was working with teachers of homeless children, whose program was called MEOP (Migrant Education Outreach Program). These teachers worked by area, and could be responsible for helping children grades K-12 with all their subjects, math among them. They found the strength, after traveling around and teaching all day, schlepping from their trunk full of classroom "stuff," to be lively and interested from 4:00 to 7:00PM, even volunteering to eat the dinner we provided as they worked, so as to learn as much as they could. (I, on the other hand, am now too old to fire up at 4:00!!)

So here I go, I'm retiring again. The first time, I had no qualms about filling my days. When asked how I was keeping busy, I would reply "I'm busier than I want to be!" Let's see how I do the second time around. But this time, I'm anxious.

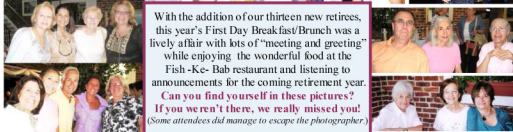
# We Gathered Together...the First Day Breakfast/Brunch



With the addition of our thirteen new retirees, this year's First Day Breakfast/Brunch was a lively affair with lots of "meeting and greeting" while enjoying the wonderful food at the Fish-Ke- Bab restaurant and listening to announcements for the coming retirement year.

**Can you find yourself in these pictures?  
If you weren't there, we really missed you!**

*(Some attendees did manage to escape the photographer.)*



## Social Security Celebrates its 75th Anniversary



### ***This Month in History***

Social Security turned 75 in August, and some of us attended the Diamond Anniversary Celebration at Hunter College on August 19th. Among the speakers were FDR grandson David Roosevelt, Cong. Anthony Weiner, Mike Burgess (NYS Office of the Aging Director), Denis Hughes (AFL-CIO/NYS president), Andy Pallotta (NYSUT Executive Vice-President), and a number of senior citizens whose very existence depends upon the receipt of their Social Security checks. As Cong. Weiner pointed out, Social Security (insurance, not entitlement) is the life line of millions of Americans; in NYS alone it provides disability benefits for more than 453,000 workers, provides survivor benefits to more than 252,800 widow(er)s, and is the most important source of income for more than 409,000 children living in households headed by a non-parental relative.

Its 75th anniversary should have been a joyous occasion; the program has brought dignity and decency to multitudes. Instead, it is under attack. Pres. Obama's deficit commission - headed by Social Security attacker Alan Simpson - may be looking at deep benefit cuts - a hostile attitude not really about dollars and cents, but about ideology and posturing, plus indifference or ignorance of the realities of life for many Americans. Going broke is NOT a clear and present danger. For the past 25 years Social Security has been running surpluses, banked in a special trust fund; if at all, the trust fund could not be exhausted until at least 2037, and probably not likely then. Those who would propose "strengthening" Social Security suggest raising the retirement age to 70; but it is the more affluent, white-collar workers who need Social Security the least who are not too burned out to work later in life; those engaged in manual labor, frequently over-worked and/or ill, would find this most onerous. Other suggestions include cutting benefits, raising the cap on contributions (now capped at slightly above \$100,000 of earnings). Claims of crisis rely to a large extent on bad-faith accounting. We need all to be cognizant of an unfair and cruel attack upon working Americans and help to beat it back; big cuts in a program of social insurance should not be on the table.



Louise Levine-Rosenthal, David Roosevelt and Elaine.



**Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter**

Meetings will be held at 10:30 a.m. on **Tuesdays** in the downstairs (Lapham) room of the Port Washington Library on the dates listed below unless otherwise notified,

**2010 Meeting Dates**

September 28, 2010

October 26, 2010

No meeting in November

December 14, 2010

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

**EDUCATION FOUNDATION EVENT**

On the evening of Saturday, October 23rd, the Port Washington Education Foundation will offer an adult "scavenger hunt," "THE AMAZING RACE", in which teams of 5 or more will participate in tasks on Main Street - followed by cocktails and dinner at Om Sweet Om. Clues will tell you what to do!

Let's form our own team(s) of retirees, support the Education Foundation (\$75 per person) and have a blast of fun at the same time! You can give me (e.b.) your 5-person team names and fee payable to P.W.

Education Foundation, or contact Paula Whitman (organizer) at whitman1@optonline.net.

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