



# PORT OF CALL

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

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER  
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK  
Winter-Spring 2023 Vol. 33 No. 1**

**NYSUT NO. 19 080R Visit our website at: <http://pwretirees.org/>**

## Teaching in Port Today - a 25 year reflection - Trish Rex

Excerpted from the celebration of our association's 90th birthday at which the 25 year teachers were honored.

### How has teaching in Port Washington changed since you first joined the staff 25 years ago?

Teaching has changed in so many ways, the curriculum level has become so much more challenging for students in the elementary grades. Some of what was second grade work is now first grade work. But the biggest change beyond all others is the implementation of individual computers for students. The expectation for 5 and 6 year olds to learn and practice skills daily through a computer screen has its benefits. But it is also a challenge to balance the use of the computer with what we know about how a young child develops physically and emotionally. As a teacher of young children it is important to offer students many different modalities of learning. It's important for primary teachers to remember that you can do more than the screen can. Your students will need you to help them develop communication and social skills, provide them with sensory-filled activities, build stamina to increase attention and reading skills and be fully present and attentive in order to learn.

### What is your most rewarding experience in your 25 years of teaching?

I think my most rewarding experience happens every year, when my students and I "transform into a community." When the students arrive they are nervous and awkward (and so am I!) and aren't sure what to expect. You work on routines, get to know each other, work through some friction as you navigate first grade together and then somewhere around October, you hit a stride together and become one strong team. You start to understand who they are as humans and they start to trust you. And from that point on you really set off on your learning journey together.

### As you see it, how did your being a teacher make a difference to a particular student?

Over the years I have had several students who challenged conventional practices and required additional help from many sources to succeed. I am hopeful that I made a difference in the lives of these children. But more importantly it was these students who made a difference in my life. From these special students I learned patience, and how to push myself to go beyond what was expected of me or what I expected of myself. I had to dig deeper to find approaches that reached them. I had to use every resource I could find, especially the help of other colleagues. Some days there were tears....from me.....there were moments when I questioned if I was doing everything I could and doubted if I could truly help. There were times when that quiet voice at the start of the year would whisper "I don't know if I can do this." But then somewhere along the way with repeated attempts as successes and failures occur, the tides turn and you establish rapport and work from mutual respect and together you reach your shared goals.

### Discuss a teacher who has had an influence on you, personally and/or professionally?

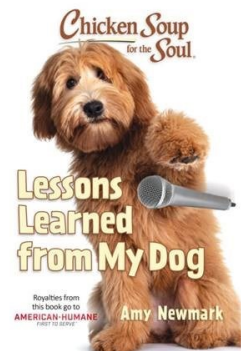
When I started teaching at Manorhaven School I was 26 years old. I had some teacher training, a few years experience, and a passion for teaching my kids. But when I first started in Port I was lucky to have a group of smart, strong, women as my informal mentors. They taught me what it meant to be part of a team. They showed me the benefits of working in a collaborative community and the understanding that we were a family. They taught me the importance of supporting each other professionally and personally. They have all since retired (leaving me to take their place as one of the veteran teachers) but they absolutely deserve a place in my words. Kathy Reilly, Christine Vasilev, Pat Lynch, Jane Tafarella, and Marilyn Gilbert, thank you for your time, valuable lessons, and friendship.

## My Volunteer Experience - Deanna Glassmann

I definitely recommend volunteering. Though I am no longer gainfully employed as a speech-language pathologist, that part of me that enjoys being in a “professional” setting still exists. Therefore, when one of the directors at the community center where I swim asked me if I wanted to volunteer with a group of individuals who have Parkinson’s Disease, I immediately said yes. This group, which is run by a social worker, meets weekly. It focuses upon the participants’ mutual experiences and aspects of the disease, one being reduced voice projection, often making it difficult to hear some of them when they are speaking. It has lead me to research and learn about speech and voice intervention for Parkinson’s Disease, something of which I was unfamiliar. It was stimulating and enlightening to learn something new, reinforcing the fact that we are never too old to learn. I have now been able to speak with those in the group for whom speech is a difficulty, as well as give them strategies and materials related to their speech issues. I look forward to this weekly meeting and while not gainfully employed, I still maintain, through volunteering, that sense of professionalism.

## Hello from Lisa Castillo

I have a story in a recent (January, 2023) book in the **Chicken Soup for the Soul series, Lessons Learned from My Dog**. My contribution to the anthology describes our adoption of our dog Piper, a pug-mix, eight years ago, and how she made herself at home. One dog bed morphed into about six, all situated in different rooms in the house, accommodating her desire to always be where her people are. Animal shelters and rescue organizations do amazing work, and I am grateful for the volunteers



who donate so generously of their time to place dogs and cats in their forever homes. Since retiring, I give back in small measure by helping a rescue organization in Brooklyn with virtual home visits/interviews of potential adopters. Also this month, we became a two-dog family, again choosing to adopt. Rufus, a Westie, is still learning the ropes, taking his cues from Piper, and getting to know the neighborhood. As for me, I am learning that you can never have enough poop bags!



### Come to the PWRE Book Club - Join us

The PWRE ZOOM Book Club began in March 2021 and transitioned in July 2021 to a HYBRID Book Club, with some months of Zoom and In Person meetings. All PWRE members are welcome to attend. If you are not on the book club list and would like to be, email [Barbara Mayer](mailto:blmayer3@gmail.com). ([blmayer3@gmail.com](mailto:blmayer3@gmail.com))

**Date::** Sept 5, 2023 about 11:30 -right after “Not Back to School Brunch”

**Book:** Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver

**Host:** Barbara Mayer

**Date:** Oct. 6, 2023 at 11:00am

**Book:** Master Slave Husband Wife by Ilyon Woo

**Host:** Harriet Englander

**Date:** November 6, 2023 at 11:00am

**Book:** Walk the Walk by Neil Gross

**Format:** TBD

**Date:** Dec. 1, 2023 at 11:00

**Book:** Mad Honey by Jodi Picoult

**Format:** TBD

### PORT OF CALL

Winter 2023 Vol. 33 No. 1

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99 Campus Drive  
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### FRIENDSHIP/REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE

Norma Ziegel

### Condolences Were Sent To:

Mary DeNisco on the death of her son

Mary Duane on the death of her son

Dom Granto on the death of his son

### Condolences were sent and a \$100 Contribution was made to PWRE Scholarship in Memory of:

Augusta Allen

Elias Gomez

## Books for Dessert - Marian Weissman

“Books for Dessert” is a weekly book club for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. The Port Washington Library has been offering this remarkable program for almost 20 years. Books at appropriate reading levels are selected to be read aloud in the groups and discussed. There are also word games and questions to spark conversation and of course, refreshments. Presently, there are two 2 hour-discussion groups of about 10-15 adults: one group meets on Monday mornings and the other meets on Thursday evenings. The two groups are led by two retired Port Washington teachers, Annmarie Benzinger and Evelyn Schonbrun and they are looking for help.



“Books for Dessert” is such a successful program they are looking to expand by adding another daytime group. Someone who has experience working with small groups and enjoys the interaction of group discussion will find this program great fun.

If you are interested in becoming a discussion leader for “Books for Dessert” please contact Kate Monsour at the Port Washington Public Library: [monsour@pwpl.org](mailto:monsour@pwpl.org) 516-883-4400 x1302. Leaders are compensated for each 2 hour session. Check out the description on the Port Washington Library website: <https://pwpl.org/books-for-dessert/>



I have been a “sub” for Annmarie and Evelyn for many years and really enjoy the groups. The participants are engaged, care about each other and enjoy their time together in the group. As a retired teacher I find my experiences delightful, engaging with the group is like the best parts of my classroom experiences. Just ask Evelyn and Annmarie, they will tell you how much they enjoy the program!



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# Antarctica: Our SEVENTH Continent - Barbara Mayer

We planned a trip to Antarctica for 2020, then the pandemic canceled it. Then, we planned it for December 2022, and my pickleball injury canceled it. But, not to be deterred, we FINALLY got to take this long-awaited and much-anticipated trip of a lifetime in February!

We flew south to Buenos Aires where the temps were in the 80s. After three days there, we flew south to Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world. Temps were in the 40s, but the winds howled. We began to see gorgeous mountains, just a "taste" of what was to come. We boarded our 300 foot ship, Hebridean Sky, for nine days to Antarctica.

From the Beagle Channel, we entered the dreaded (for good reason) Drake Passage southbound. We, unluckily, got the "Drake Shake" as opposed to the "Drake Lake." But what we saw and experienced at the end of the very rough and roiling seas was worth it!

We were able to take numerous landings on islands and the Antarctic Continent. We walked among (and in the guano of...) Gentoo, Chinstrap, and Adelle penguins. We hiked up to their rookeries on ice and snow. It was exhilarating! And we did Zodiac Cruises to see the most incredible glaciers, icebergs, whales, fur and leopard seals. AWESOME doesn't begin to describe it!

Our northbound crossing of the Drake was just as rough, but the memories, photos, friendships, and experience far outweigh it. We also got Covid (after three years of avoiding it in NY!), though we figure we were exposed in Buenos Aires. Again, NOTHING compared to the STUPENDOUS experience. Want to know more? Contact me!

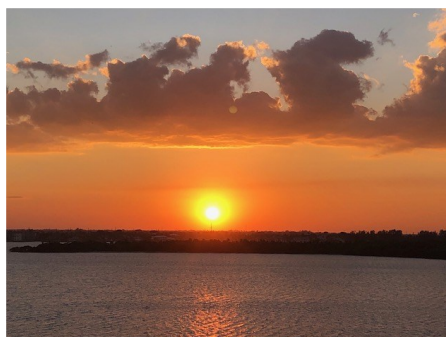


## Hello from Allison Hood



This is me with our oldest grandson who graduated in June 2022

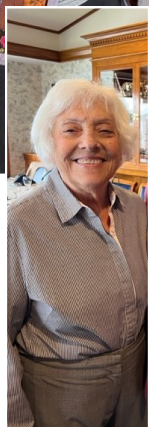
## Hello from Carol Kraterstein



Sunsets have become a hobby of mine. These are one of my favorites – taken in Florida on Singer Island where I winter with my husband and where we recently bought a home where we will be moving.



# Our Long Awaited Spring Luncheon



We hope you will join us in September for "I Don't Have To Go Back To School Brunch"





## Merry-Go-Round by Merry Gilbert

### Hitting the Wall

“I write because I don’t know what I think until I read what I say,” a quote by Flannery O’Connor, about being a writer, cited in a book by author Letty Pogrebin.

Here’s what I’ll say but stick with me to see what I think.  
It’s a bit circuitous.

I have recently been telling my origin story as follows: I was born a robot 1947. There was no such thing as amniocentesis, so my mom was quite surprised at my appearance at birth. But she did her best and turned me into a real girl. (You may remark on the influence of my having seen Guillermo DelToro’s Pinocchio.) This explains why, in part I have no patience for or liking of “self” things such as self checkout, self help at the gas pump, self downloads of medical records, etc. I had enough of that self-stuff in utero where I had no choice. As I write this, I realize that “Help yourself” used to be a gracious invitation uttered by one human being to another, not code for find it/do it yourself.

If you know me, you know I love to talk to people (*cf* origin story). At the supermarket, I like to speak to the checker: how’re you doing, haven’t seen you for a while.... At the craft store: look what I found!! (at AC Moore I was well enough known to show the clerks photos of creations I had made out of the supplies I bought there.) By the way, yesterday at Michael’s there were exactly two people in the whole store: one human cashier (next to the automatic check out array) and one person on the floor. As I paid, I remarked to the lone cashier, “You did pretty good for a robot.” At Bloomingdale’s or Macy’s I usually have questions. Good luck. There’s hardly anyone to say, “Just what’s out” or “Cash or charge?” the annoying shopping canards of years past.

Why am I dwelling on this you ask. In a world where people are mostly self absorbed and self directed, it’s easy to forget that there are people out there. Another case in point: I walk at around 6:30 AM. I smile at and greet walkers headed to the train station. If I am noticed at all, most people have ear buds, and don’t respond. On the road, it’s like Road Rage 101. Each driver is focused on his/her/their trip - is there someone in an adjacent car? How about the car tailgating you at high speed or cutting you off with very little room to spare? Signals? In the words of one driver, “It’s no one’s business where I’m going.” Nothing is as thrilling in modern times as looking into the rear-view mirror and seeing the car behind you so close you can’t see its headlights.

Remember going “where everyone knows your name?”  
Is there hope for human relations if we take the humans out?

### Hello from Freda Meltzer

On September 24th my son Craig his wife Maytal and BIG sister Rose welcomed their son Jett Uzi Meltzer  
On October 30th my daughter Jennie and her husband Evan welcomed their daughter Ellie Cassandra Schmidt  
Both Craig and Jennie are Schreiber graduates. The new cousins are 5 weeks apart in age.  
Everyone is happy and healthy.

## Amazon And Caribbean Adventure - Lois Baslow

As anticipated, this Viking ocean and river excursion was informative, scenic, educational, historical and fun. The Viking Sea was our home and transportation for two and a half weeks from late February into March this year. We visited Puerto Rico and two independent island nations; the former French penal colony of Devil's Island off French Guiana; and four Amazon localities ending at the major city of Manaus, Brazil.

Devil's Island, as the island of Cayenne has been nicknamed, is one of a group of islands acquired by France off the coast of South America. These islands were turned into penal colonies for French convicted of certain crimes in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Among those convicted of treason was a French officer Alfred Dreyfus, who was wrongly charged and who eventually was exonerated and freed.

A major highlight included seeing the collection of latex from rubber trees during off shore experiences along the Amazon and learning about the development of the rubber industry giving rise to a rubber baron social and economic society that made Manaus a wealthy, major metropolis and civic center one thousand miles inland from the mouth of the river.

As we progressed from the mouth of the Amazon, just below French Guiana to Manaus, we could appreciate the vastness of this river, the jungle bordering it, and the some of the several tributaries feeding into it. The Amazon is the world's most immense river. The volume of water that courses down it everyday is mind blowing. The tributaries are major rivers in themselves. As they enter the Amazon, the color change is dramatic. The Amazon is quite brown and opaque from the soils it carries to the ocean and the tributaries are relatively clear, reflecting the blue of the sky.

One of the stops on the river was the town of Parintins where we enjoyed an energetic, colorful, wonderful musical production by a group called Boi Bumba. The various numbers, all to a driving samba beat, told a folk story involving animals, people and folklore characters. It was spectacular.



## Hello from Robert Acevedo



I'm happy to say that, since moving to Colorado some 20 years ago, I have managed to stay active working at the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Training Center as well as the new U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Museum. Should anyone plan on visiting Colorado, please let me know so you could be my guest at either or both facilities. In my spare time I still run and do some hiking. This past November I went on my most recent cruise thru the Panama Canal which went from San Diego to Fort Lauderdale. My next cruise, which will be my 28th, I hope to sail from Rome to Barcelona and then continue on a transatlantic cruise. On a personal note, this past July I celebrated my 80th birthday.

May 2023 be a truly awesome year for all of my former colleagues,



**Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter**

Meetings will be held at the Port Washington Library on the dates and times listed, **unless otherwise notified.**

Please check your email or the website: <http://pwretirees.org/> for any meeting changes.

**2023 Meeting Dates**

Please check our website for future meeting dates.  
[pwretirees.org](http://pwretirees.org).

**PLEASE NOTE: Checks for contributions to the PWRE Scholarship Fund should be made out to the PWRE. Put the name of the honoree on the memo line or in a note. Please mail to:**

**Geri Ganzekaufer  
8 Oak Street  
Wading River, New York 11792**

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