



PORT OF CALL

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

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK
Winter/Spring 2016**

VOL.26 NO.1

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

LET'S CELEBRATE! IT'S OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY!

The Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter was born 25 years ago under the leadership and direction of a steering committee dedicated to its success. George Williams, Toni Salerno and Betty Stetson met first with Mary McWilliams (Great Neck activist and organizer of Great Neck retiree chapter) and Mary Anne Cariello, then added to their steering committee Audrey Minard, Lynn Schreiber, Bea Lawrence, Selma Gordon, Betty McNally, Babette Harper and George Kesner.

We have come a long way this quarter of a century! Think back to writing our By-Laws, starting our Port of Call newsletter tradition, establishing a dues structure, gaining voting representation on the PWTA Executive Council, compiling annual Directories, granting scholarships, contributing time and dollars to local organizations; then, of course, add the "fun" socials - Book Club, start-of (non)school year brunches, luncheons, excursions. You name it, we've got it. We have also participated in the annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer by walking at Jones Beach and with substantial monetary contributions.... We support our local school budget and bond issues by voting ourselves, encouraging others to do the same and taking out ads. The list does go on. . .

And we have been *very* politically active. NYSUT refers to its retiree members as "our daytime union" - visiting and communicating with local and federal legislators, joining picket lines when asked, sending FAX'es, making phone calls. To quote NYSUT V.P. Andy Pallotta when he spoke at our 20th Anniversary luncheon, "Victories for our retirees have been sweet. We secured a permanent COLA; . . . a law to safeguard retiree health insurance from unilateral reductions... Retirees are integral now and will continue to be in the future." We are under constant siege by those determined to get rid of unions (watch for the outcome of Supreme Court's decision in California-brought Friedrichs case), to eliminate Defined Benefit pensions, to so deplete membership ranks that negotiations become untenable. We contribute generously to VOTE/COPE, without whose dollars we cannot fight in the political arena and win the victories so desperately sought and needed.

ALL 500+ of you have made us what we are today - deeply concerned about education, about a palatable way of life for *all* from youth through old age, about civil rights - and willing to work to support these ideals. We have seen seven of our members serve as our president (George Williams, Margot Fletcher, Toni Salerno, Lou Tremante, Matt Scott, Betty McNally and Elaine Berman) and *many, many* others in a variety of capacities as officers, webmaster, newsletter editor or happy to say "yes" when asked to help. Thank you all, for all you have done to build and encourage our wonderful chapter. NOW - Set aside Thursday, May 12th (see information to follow here) and join us in celebrating our past and vowing as "tough" unionists to weather the very tough times ahead. This celebratory event will mark our past successful history, encourage us to look ahead to what we may continue to do in the future, and - by no means least! - give us a welcome opportunity to enjoy each other's company in a warm social setting.

OUR 25th ANNIVERSARY TO BE A "WOW" CELEBRATION!!!

Date: Thursday, May 12th, NOON - 3 p.m.

Place: LEONARD'S - 555 Northern Blvd., Great Neck, New York

Special Invited Guest: *Jeanine Tesori*, 2015 Tony Award-winning composer of BEST MUSICAL FUN HOME - and Port Washington School District graduate!

Full Meal Service: butler service passed hors d'oeuvre, wine or soft drink, salad, entree selection, dessert, coffee/tea

Cost: \$50

Checks should be made payable to PWTA, sent by April 26th to Penny D'Antonio
1425 Port Washington Blvd.
Port Washington, New York 11050



FRIENDSHIP/ REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE



Norma Ziegel

Condolences were sent to

Rita Auerbach on the loss of her husband
Jane Diaks on the of loss of her husband
Erlyn Madonia on the loss of her mother
Robert Moore on the loss of his mother
Kathryn Stewart on the loss of her sister

Family of William Berry
Family of Marjorie El-Kadi
Family of Peter Faiella
Family of Audrey Genader
Family of Pearl Green Greenbaum
Family of Ruth Haugaard
Family of Angela Katz
Family of Joy Timko

A \$100 contribution has been sent to the PWRE Scholarship Fund in memory of each member

William Berry
Marjorie El-Kadi
Peter Faiella
Audrey Genader
Pearl Green Greenbaum
Ruth Haugaard
Angela Katz
Joy Timko



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: Tues. March 8 at 11:00
Book: Americanah—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Hosted by: Barbara Mayer

Date: Thurs. April 14 at 11:00 am
Book: The Sense of an Ending—Julian Barnes
Hosted by: Marilyn Gilbert

Date: Wed. June 1st at 11:00 am
Book: Between the World and Me—Ta-Nehisi Coates
Hosted by: TBA

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Remembering Ruth Haugaard - Sally Reinhardt

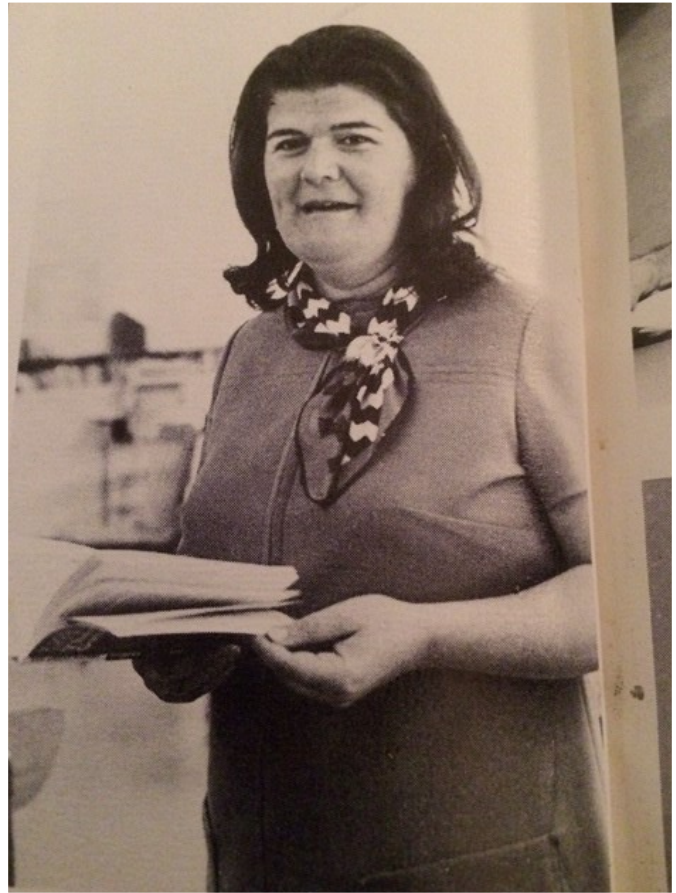
When I went up to Schreiber in 1987, my friend Colleen Newell said to me, "You have to meet Ruth Haugaard. You will really like her." That turned out to be an understatement. It was the start of a beautiful friendship filled with love and admiration.

Ruth was a dedicated and well-loved English teacher. She had a command of the language, as well as a love of high school students. The desks in her classroom were always in a circle. When I would walk by her classroom, everyone was engaged in the class. You could hear raised voices from a heated discussion or the sound of laughter, often from a comment from their teacher.

Ruth was an advisor for the Schreiber cheerleaders and also was in charge of Sports Night for years. She had infinite patience dealing with all the drama from over 200 adolescent girls. After weeks of practice, it always led to one of the biggest and most successful nights of the Schreiber school year. Ruth was a Class Club advisor and took her students on many trips including a white water rafting trip. I am sure her students never forgot that adventure. Ruth still spoke about it years later. And then there was the challenge of building a float each year for the Pride in Port Parade. Ruth would agonize with her club for weeks, but they always managed to have the best float.

Ruth had a wonderful sense of humor and was a great storyteller. You wanted to go to the teacher's cafeteria for lunch if you knew that Ruth and her sidekicks Bill Strafino and Jackie Marshall were going to be there. They would put on a comedy routine that would have you laughing in the aisles.

Ruth was passionate about her family, her friends, her church, the Jets and the Yankees. She was a very caring person and a dear friend and colleague to so many of us. We will all miss her, but I truly believe that she is up in Heaven entertaining the masses. God Bless You, Ruthie!



What's Inside Port of Call Winter/Spring 2016

Its Our Silver Anniversary.....	Page 1	Taking Part in the Sharing Economy.....	Page 5
Our 25th Anniversary to be WOW Celebration	Page 2	We Asked to Hear from You and We Did.....	Page 6
Come to the P.W.R.E. Book Club.....	Page 2	More pictures from Labor Day Luncheon.....	Page 6
Friendship/Remembrance Committee.....	Page 2	Getting Together.....	Page 6
Remembering Ruth Haugaard.....	Page 3	A Visit to the Green-Wood Cemetery.....	Page 7
Merry-Go-Round.....	Page 4		



E Pluribus.....

by Merry Gilbert

Enjoy another
episode in the

*Adventures of
Merry*

It was extremely fortunate for us both that my student Liz Kass made it to the nationals of National History Day (twice). As all the other finalists from Port were in Middle School and High School, I was asked to accompany her, an elementary student, to the events, where students from all over the country displayed their presentations, videos, and papers to the judges, both to demonstrate the depth of their knowledge and the accuracy of their research. Depending on the category, students had to be prepared to undergo questioning, as well.

Liz was a fine, motivated student, and put her heart and soul into her research in both years she entered from Manorhaven School. The competition began in Port, at the Library, where students were judged for the first time by local experts. An excellent feature of the judging was feedback from the assessor as to how the entry could be improved. Students who were judged ready to advance to the Nassau County, then the NYS level, then the nationals, had a chance at each step to revise their entry, do additional research, and fine tune the medium of their presentation. As you can imagine, as Annmarie Benzinger always said, "... from beginning to end, this is an excellent process for learning research skills."

One year the topic for the competition was "Rights in History." Liz's subject was Alfred Dreyfus. Her category was solo performance, and she did an outstanding job. As expected, all the work of the entrants displayed and performed at the nationals was stellar. I was impressed that so many young people were motivated and committed to put so much into their entries. It was wonderful for me to see the end products: it made me a better guide for the students at the local level in subsequent years.

What stuck with me most of all, however, about that Rights in History event, was the common thread of how the rights of individuals and groups were systematically abridged or outright denied all through history. What struck me then, and as it does now, is how there was always so much "us" and "them" which made it possible for some **not** do unto others as you would have them do unto you. As a teacher, I have celebrated how the public schools act as a crucible for making Americans out of those of different races, religions and backgrounds, particularly in Port.

When I taught in Kings Park, I always organized a nominating convention in presidential election years. This was a time, not very long ago, when the nominating convention did not appear to be a coronation, but an actual process. (Perhaps this is too naïve of me.) Students had to choose a party, create a platform, be ready to make speeches, stage a campaign, conduct votes, etc. A vivid memory of the speech of presidential candidate Michael VanScoy, a 6th grader, who had to stand on a box to be seen. In his slight pre-adolescent voice, he said, in 1988, that the most important issue facing America was race relations.

In the Sunday Times, there is a section "One hundred years ago, 75 years ago, 50 years ago." It is sobering to see how often wars are going on, different wars, different places, still—perennial conflict. Us vs Them, time and time again.

I am not sure I will live to see east side access to Penn Station, the Second Avenue subway, the rise of the Bronx (although this seems to be happening slowly), and most importantly, a truly integrated society with the knowledge and understanding that we really are one people.

Peace on Earth, good will to all—more than just a greeting card sentiment.

Taking Part in the Sharing Economy - Carolyn Jacobson

For the past ten years Joel and I have exchanged our house with different families from Europe. This encourages us to do a lot of reading and planning in advance of our stay. We learn about the countries we plan to visit and the sites we want to see. Our exchanges usually last three to four weeks which gives us the opportunity to explore and learn about a specific area in greater detail. Along the way we have made many friends who have shared their homes and ideas with us as well.

One of our favorite destinations is France. We have traveled along Provence and the southern coast as well as throughout the Alsace-

Lorraine area, Normandy, the seaside of Brittany, the Bordeaux area. After a while we started setting out themes for our visits in Paris: the markets and cuisines of the different arrondissements; the parks large and small of Paris and the surrounding countryside; the art museums, historical sites and architecture, of course. Paris is a great walking city and it was not long before we could find our way around minus the GPS or map.

With the luxury of time we were able to explore many sites and villages that were not so well known to tourists. In Rome our host introduced us to places and districts that we might otherwise have missed. One day we traveled to a small medieval village in the hills outside of Rome where many Italian movies are filmed, and we enjoyed a lunch in a little restaurant complete with homemade wine.

We specifically planned our exchange in the Netherlands to coincide with the height of the tulip season. The fields and parks were opened primarily for the beautiful tulip color and display, but, unexpectedly, we joined into the celebration of the Queen's birthday, unlike any birthday party we could imagine. The canals were filled with boats of revelers as were with the streets of Amsterdam.

We have visited lots of other fun places: Freiburg, Germany with side trips to Bruges and Basil; Marbella and the south of Spain as well as the Basque country to the north.

In earlier years, we often went to Ecuador to visit my two American-born grandsons and stayed with different members of their family. Now they are in 7th and 8th grade and can travel on their own to visit me. Last summer we spent a week in Washington DC. They wanted to visit the White House and I wanted to take them to the Congress Building and the Supreme Court as well as to the many monuments commemorating our history.

I guess you can take the teacher out of the classroom but you can't take the classroom out of the teacher.



We Asked To Hear From You And We Did



Bobby Baker and Sally Reinhardt: Still friends after 37 years. We climbed up to the top of Diamond Head.



Lois Baslaw . While on a South African safari to Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, I visited four national wildlife parks. Overseas Adventure Travel arranged for us to stay in tented camps and ride in open jeeps during early morning and late afternoon game drives. It was marvelous to see so many animals, birds and plant life in their natural surroundings. It was a wonderful and enlightening cultural experience.

More Pictures From Our Annual After Labor Day Brunch



Getting Together - Barbara Blum



A second trip has been scheduled to The Cow Neck Historical Society's wonderful Costume & Culture Exhibit sponsored by Brooks Brothers. I have scheduled a private tour for Wednesday, February 10th in the afternoon. You can log onto their website for more information about this exhibit. It should be of interest to everyone. <http://cowneck.org/>

They have generously allowed us to pay on that day. The fee is \$15 or \$12 for seniors. Please email me to let me know if you are interested: LBBLUM67@gmail.com

A Visit to the Green-Wood Cemetery - Barbara Blum

The Port Washington Retired Educators tour of Green-Wood Cemetery in Sunset Park, Brooklyn was fascinating and informative. We passed through the gorgeous gates of Green-Wood Cemetery in time to take a two-hour trolley tour of just a small part of the cemetery. Our guide took us to the historical highlights. On the trolley and at each stop, the guide, Marge, regaled us with historical facts and stories. The stories certainly made history come alive.

We walked down tree-lined paths, saw a stunning view of the Statue of Liberty, the harbor and Manhattan from Battle Hill, viewed beautiful sculptures, and had a history lesson on the Revolutionary War. George Washington and his troops fought the Battle of Brooklyn on these grounds in 1776, just after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Battle Hill is the highest natural point in Brooklyn and at the top is a sculpture of Minerva looking out into the harbor.



Stories abounded about some famous and infamous people buried in this cemetery - the permanent residents. We stopped at Leonard Bernstein's grave. There are two other cemetery trolley tours covering other parts of the hilly grounds and I would love to go on them all.

At the end of the tour, we were all given coupons for a cup of coffee at a lovely bread bakery across the street from the cemetery. It was a warm ending to a lovely day.





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.

2016 Meeting Dates

February 11 @ 11:30 am - Lapham Room

March 10 @ 10:30 am - Hagedorn Room

May 12 - PWRE 25 Year Luncheon Party

<http://www.pwta.info/PWRE/index.shtml>

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

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PORT WASHINGTON, NY 11050

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