



PORT OF CALL

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

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK
Booster Time Winter/Spring 2022 Vol. 32 No. 1**

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

Tigers in the Trees - Jim Jones

Winter is not the season in which people normally spend *more* time outside, but for a nature enthusiast like myself, there are wonders to discover regardless of low temperatures and less daylight. Amazingly enough, there is a warm-blooded creature that actually chooses this most inhospitable of seasons to reproduce! Today, at Bethpage State Park, I go looking for that animal despite the stiff breeze and 18 degree chill. I seek a tiger, the 'winged-tiger'. I am looking for great horned owls.

My search began weeks ago. Owls begin their reproductive efforts by living up to another of their nicknames, Hoot-Owl. At dawn and dusk, they hoot to a cadence of 'don't shoot owls, help owls' in an effort to stake out their territory and attract potential mates. Normally solitary predators, they begin to hang out together, even perch on the same branch, as they establish the pair-bond that will cement them for the next few months.

Even for dedicated nature watchers, owls are difficult to find. Nocturnal by nature, during daylight hours owls use their beautifully effective camouflage and secretive nature to become winged phantoms. However, years of experience, persistence and good luck are a very effective trio. Great horned owls do not build their own nests, so they often seek out those vacated by red-tailed hawks, and I know where these are. And, the owls have shown a very strong attraction to our human constructed owl-nesting-cones, structures built of tar-paper, chicken-wire and vines and placed in numerous trees throughout the park. Our resident owls have used them in about 70% of their nesting endeavors over the years. So, despite the weather, I check out the old hawk nests and nesting cones to search for our phantoms. I also inspect areas of the park where there are groves of conifers. With the barren branches of deciduous trees offering no concealment, owls love to vanish in the multiple needles of our pines.



A very benevolent status quo had settled in over the past few weeks. I found two pairs of owls staying in the same area (groves of white pines) and perching close together. One pair, over on the Yellow Course (Bethpage has five golf courses) at one point could not possibly have been any closer, short of actual mating. To demonstrate their commitment, they even deposited a pair of well formed owl pellets at the base of their tree. The season was progressing at a pace dictated by nature.

The owls have done their very usual 'change-of-scenery' activity, that being where they move from the place I have seen them together to a potential nest sight. So, today I check out nests, both natural and artificial. I start out in an area that had been owl free this winter but does have a nesting cone. I see nothing as I wander around the grove of white pines. Then, a very typical and telling sound begins and quickly intensifies. A group of blue jays are mobbing - something! They are experts at finding, verbally assaulting and locating (for interested birders) - raptors! They did that work for me today! I did look at the nest cone when I arrived, finding nothing, but as I wandered to the other side, I was greeted by one of the most beautiful and highly anticipated visual signals at the park - a pair of feathered tufts (the horns), gently swaying with the subtle, cold breeze. We have our first great horned owl nest of the season!

Less than a week later, our other pair of owls (on the Red Course) had also settled in to one of our nesting cones. A great start to 2022!

From “Shining Stars” to “Signing Stars” - Merry Gilbert

Adventures in American Sign Language

Seven months ago, in mid-September, almost incidentally, I offered to teach ASL to three of my shining star neighbors: two fifth graders and a second grader. There had been more potential participants, but other children had schedules that were harder to work around. “My three” have learned the importance of ASL to enable deaf or hard of hearing people to communicate with each other. Importantly, when hearing people learn ASL they can communicate with deaf community members.

I, aka Miss Merry, learned ASL from a consultant to my Challenge Center program in Kings Park. The consultant, who worked with me for several years, had been a teacher at Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf. Oddly, her initials are MM as well.

The girls have been engaged and enthusiastic learners. I am thrilled at the connections they make and the questions they ask. My little teacher heart beats with pride. It is thrilling for me to work with these wonderful girls. I am so happy to be teaching again!



A Benefit Trust Newsletter was Recently Emailed to Retirees

If you are not on the list you can view the newsletter on the pwretirees.org. The newsletter contains an opportunity for retirees to enroll in the Davis Vision plan, open to all PWRE members who were never enrolled or who have



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 alternating 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:Barbara.Mayer). (blmayer3@gmail.com)

Date: Tuesday, April 5, 2022 - Zoom or In Person TBD
Time: 1:00 PM
Book: The School for Good Mothers by Jessamine Chan

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2022 - Zoom or In Person TBD
Time: 1:00 PM
Book: Faye, Faraway by Helen Fisher

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not been in the plan for over three years. The rates are \$96.12 per year for the member, \$173.16 per year for a member plus 1 dependent. Details on the Davis Vision Plan can be found at PWTABT.org Log in as 2021retiree and use the password of \$alem11050 (the first character is a dollar sign). If you wish to take advantage of this plan, simply email Chris Haring at haringjc@gmail.com

FRIENDSHIP/REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE



Norma Ziegel

Condolences Were Sent:

To Barbara Blum upon death of husband, Leonard
To Trish Burr upon death of husband, Ken Peters
To Evelyn Faude upon death of husband, Norman
To Kathy Stanco upon death of husband, John
To Mary Lou Wright upon death of husband, Peter
To the family of Jim Lyman,

A \$100 contribution was sent to the PWRE Scholarship Fund in memory of:

Jim Lyman

Some Ideas For Those Who Love NYC as I do - Seth (Ray) Ehrlich

Fotografiska on 23rd and Park.....5 doors of photography. A beautifully renovated building with lots to see and even events too. The cafeteria there is expensive but there are places all around there to eat.
<https://www.fotografiska.com/nyc/>

ICP,,,International Center for Photography...originally was uptown, then moved to 43rd St...then to the Bowery, and now they are on Essex St. in the Lower East Side. Interesting place to see photography because it is a large open space with few interior walls so they have to do more innovative displays. Right across the street from the Essex Market which is also fun. <https://www.icp.org/>

Japan Society.....very close to the United Nations.....a lovely small display space....they are only open on Thursday to Sunday <https://www.japansociety.org/>

The Little Island....Pier 55 on 13th St.opposite the Whitney Museum....beautiful new park area with hills and views all over. Definitely worth a visit.... <https://hudsonriverpark.org/the-park/piers-and-places/>

Immediately next to the Little Island another pier is being built which is going to be the largest stand alone pier park with 5 acres of forest and fields. Won't be open for a while.

If you take the LIRR to Penn Station you can walk the Highline from 34th St to the Whitney Museum and then the Little Island pier.

In the same area you can go gallery hopping in Chelsea. Most streets between 19th and 29th and 10th and 11th avenue have galleries.... I have done all of these things during Covid.....all seem safe.

We Asked to Hear from You



Ruth Haukeland:

Our fall of '21 and winter of '22 were full of adventures. Last September, my husband Einar and I set off from New York by motorcycle and traveled to Alaska. The Alaska-Canadian Highway was breathtaking. However, weather-wise we did experience snow and sleet in the mountains!

Returning home to New York, we started from the Redwoods traversing the country on Highway 50' also known as the "loneliest" highway in the U.S. Crossing America made me fall in love with my country all over again. Upon returning to Long Island, a week later we set out on our boat (now our home) for Florida and the Bahamas. Currently we are wintering in the Abacos.

Three and a half years ago, we gave up our home and cars. We haven't looked back. Our motorcycle and boat have given us so many exciting opportunities.

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Reflections On A Rewarding Career - Mike Koenig

I taught JHS science in Queens from 1966-68 and was then hired to teach 7th and 9th grade science in Sousa JHS in Sept 1968. The new teacher classes of Sept 1968 and Sept 1969 were very large. Probably 25 new teachers were added to the faculty. I taught 7th and 9th grade science from 1968 to 1971, and then my professional life changed.

One of our senior teachers mentioned that his daughter could not wait to get to school every day to join her 7th grade classmates. She was excited and delighted to go to school. Apparently, she was part of a 7th grade team that included science, English, and social studies. He shared this with us and suggested that perhaps our school could develop a 7th grade team. Another senior teacher agreed and investigated the possibility of developing a similar program in Sousa. These teachers were Bill Norwood, father of the 7th grader, and Don Berkowitz.

Erlyn Madonia, a recent faculty addition to the social studies department and the inspiration for the Energizer Bunny, liked their ideas and started the ball rolling. She asked me to join as the science teacher, and a senior faculty member, Kay Mayo, agreed to join as an English teacher. Bill arranged a visit to his daughter's school Oldfield JHS in Greenlawn, wherever that was, in the Town of Huntington in the Harborfields School District. Erlyn, Kay, Bill, and I visited and liked what we saw. I recognized the science teacher/chairperson as a teacher in at Salk JHS during my years growing up in Levittown. We hit it off immediately. Their program had regular classroom instruction. Part of every day's schedule included Workshop time. This was unstructured, and the students were free to work on projects and assignments and walk between classrooms. The three classrooms were located next to each other.

We were approved for a workshop during Spring Break 1971. We met for a day each at Don Berkowitz's house in Syosset, my house in Levittown, and Bill's house in Greenlawn. I now live in Northport about 3 miles from that Oldfield school, wherever that is. We came up with a program for 75 students to be shared by the three of us. Don came up with the name 'Pilot 75' to test the waters of this brand-new concept. We wrote curricula based on our subject outlines and came up with many interdisciplinary units.



EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAMS are explained at recent teachers conference day by Port teachers (l. to r.) Katherine Mayo, Erlyn Kneale, Michael Koenig, Howard Ehrlich, and Nancy Lobell. The five described Sousa Junior High's "project 75," and Weber Junior High's cooperative learning center, both open classroom projects. (Neil Rothman Photo)

Class began in Sept. 1971, and it was an immediate success. The following year we expanded to include math as a 4th, class and another team member joined us to complete the 7th grade curriculum. Ed Hansen, a furloughed Grumman engineer, joined us as a math teacher for a year to be replaced by Judy Keller. Kay Mayo retired to be replaced by Kathy Perkowski, who was soon replaced by Steve Shackel, the new kid on the block. Erlyn and Steve had administration knock down the wall between their classrooms and replaced by a sliding curtain for Large Group presentations.

Erlyn had several child care leaves and was replaced by Andrea Mastrocinque Martone, a Sousa alumna. Andrea was replaced by Joan Bernhard, who was finally replaced by Annemarie Benzinger. The team faculty members from '78 to '85 were Judy, Annemarie, Steve, and me. We morphed from Pilot 75 to the B Team to the Green Team. The other 7th grade team was the A Team and then the White Team. The 8th grade later created a smaller version of the 7th grade teams.

The Green Team always finished the year with 2 field trips. We decided that each student would wear a Green Team T-Shirt and it paid dividends locating wandering students. We took 100 children on a field trip every year - Great Adventure, Manhattan, and the Circle Line boat tour around NYC, to name a few. My contribution was the addition of a marine science field trip to one of the beaches in Sands Point. We marched 100 children through the streets, escorted by a Sands Point Police cruiser. The students had much to do and had to provide data and graphs from their day at the beach such as salinity, plankton analysis, types of seaweed and algae among other tasks.



At the end of every academic year we had an awards ceremony during a Large Group session. Every child received an award. We spent days coming up with award titles; Marksman of the Year for a young man who shot himself in the hand with a pellet gun, Batman and Robin for 2 kids who were inseparable, among many. At the end of the ceremony we asked if anyone had not received an award. One hand always went up.

NYSUT RC 19 Director Dies

It is with great sadness that we announce the death on February 6, 2022, of Rosemary Catanzariti, co-president of NYSUT's Retiree Council 19, the Council that the PWRE is a member of. Rosemary was also director of ED 52, which is made up of retirees from Long Island, Westchester, Florida, and higher education. Before retiring Rosemary was a teacher in Glen Cove. When she retired, she remained active and headed Glen Cove's retiree chapter.

Rosemary had a long career in education and in the union. She could always be counted on to support teachers and education. She gave her time and talents to improve the lives of teachers and further the cause of education for students. She will be greatly missed, but her good work will live on.

Ready, Set.... Go..... Save the Date: May 24th

Join us for the trip (postponed from May 2020) to Raynham Hall Museum for a presentation: "Standing Where They Stood," Learning about Slavery in Oyster Bay and New York State. Museum visit: 1:00-3:00 \$8.00 pp

You will discover, among other things:

- * that prior to 1827 slavery was pervasive in New York State, where there were more enslaved persons than in any state north of Maryland.
- * by the 1740's one in every five residents of Manhattan Island lived in slavery.
- * in the mid 1700's 15% of New Yorkers were enslaved African American .

Also included is a visit to the newly opened education center, which features, among many items, dioramas, animated 18th century style portraits, and a digital tapestry.

Lunch will be at Cafe al Dente, close by the museum, before the visit. We'll order off the menu and split the bill, as we have done in the past. **More detailed information will follow as we get closer.**

District Now Informs Members Of IRMMA Disbursement

This year, for the first time, the PWRE no longer needed to send letters to its members informing them that when they sent to the district the appropriate documentation, they would be reimbursed the amount of the IRMAA (Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount). The District was required to provide the reimbursement, but it was not required to inform retirees of this possibility. It did not do so until this year. That is why the PWRE took it upon itself to inform its members of the possible reimbursement. Finally, after many years, the District decided to provide the information to retirees itself.

You are eligible for this reimbursement, if you are on Medicare and you earn \$86,000 or above as an individual or \$176,000 or above as a couple. If you have not sent the required documentation to Jacquie Yorio at the Administration Building, please do so as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please email Mary Anne Cariello at MACNY98@aol.com or call her at (516)775-9077. We are pleased that the District will now inform retirees of this benefit.

Reflections continued from page 4

We presented that student with Most Improved Student award. Every once in a while a tear could be seen.

Due to modern technology I have touched base with many Sousa kids. Their fondest memories are of their 7th grade team. While cleaning out my attic 5 years ago I located 6 old Green Team marine science field trip reports. With the help of Facebook and one of our former students I was able to return each lab to the student who created it over 35 years ago. I retired in 2000 and subbed in Schreiber where I spent my last teaching years. In 2005 I was walking to my car and was stopped by a former student who was picking up his son. He introduced himself , and I had instant recognition. He asked if we, the teachers, had as much fun as he and his classmates had in the 7th grade. I responded with, "We had much more fun than you and could not wait to get to work and could not believe they paid us for what we did."



Merry-Go-Round by Merry Gilbert

Modern Times 2022 Edition

Oxymorons du Jour

Customer Service, One

With old age comes fond memories: remember a live customer service person?

Remember when you could go, say to A&S, and pose a question to a person at an actual physical site who would help you then and there? Bill questions, dealt with on the spot (even paying a bill). Delivery issues, ditto (or at least addressed). True, you had to go to the store, but you left feeling reassured that concerns important to you were taken care of.

Now by the time you press one...or maybe one, then up to nine more, you may find a category that fits your dilemma. Want a person? Good luck, as pressing "O" or saying "representative" is no longer a guarantee of a real person.

Then you do get a real person! Even on speakerphone, it is sometimes dicey to hear what the person is telling you. The outsourced reps are polite and courteous, but don't always understand the issue.

I'm sure vendors are saving lots of money (is this passed along to the consumer?), but the way the issues are handled, generates, at the least, irritation. Even if you get satisfaction, it came with such difficulty you're left with a bad taste.

Customer Service, Two

Around Christmas time, there was an issue with our car: the backup camera wouldn't go off. It was night, and we decided to wait till the next day, by which time, unfortunately, the car was totally dead. Controlled by a fob, the dead car could not be opened to pop the hood to charge it. There were "how to open the car without the fob" directions in the manual, which resides, you got it, in the glove box. After many calls to customer service we were sent a person who helped us open the car and the hood.

The camera was off, but concerned that it might happen again when we were far from home, we called the dealer for an appointment to bring it in to diagnose the problem. Appointment? How about February 22nd? Could the car be towed to the dealer's lot to diagnose the problem? No room.

Finally at the appointment, it wasn't possible to diagnose the problem as it was no longer happening. BUT a miracle (long awaited) occurred. The service manual was produced to verify that the commonly used device my husband installed to monitor his driving (for a discount on insurance) has a tendency to disable features, like the backup camera. What if we still have a problem, we asked, do we need to wait another six weeks? "Well," this lovely customer service rep said, "you have my card, you can call me directly." Ahh.

Charitable Donations (Not an oxymoron)

Made to a cause meaningful to a person in his/her memory or honor.

We donate to further the work of a charity. Once made, the further appeals start: send money send more money. I could probably paper a room with the stickers I am sent. Has the donation worked simply to add the donor to the appeals list? Was my donation used to fund the correspondence/stickers I subsequently receive?

We Asked to Hear from You and We Did



Patti Reed:

On our Bucket List was attending the Pendleton Roundup Rodeo in Oregon. Twenty Airstream Trailers at a City Park where we camped in the parking lot. The Rodeo is the only one held on grass, which made for some crazy action! Native American bareback relay races were the most exciting, followed by bull and barrel riders. The parade went for miles. All the activities left little time for shopping at the Pendleton Store where I did buy a blanket!



Ed Conti: My latest grandchild #5! Four month old born in Phoenix, AZ!



Sally Reinhardt:

I am in Florida and arranged a reunion for today. We had such a great time catching up on our latest news and remembering our Sousa and Schreiber days. Everyone looked fabulous and grateful to be retired.



Gerry Izzo:

I've been living in St. Petersburg since 2015 and have been involved in a variety of volunteer activities. The one that occupies most of my time now is serving as a docent and historian aboard the SS American Victory, a World War II era armed transport ship. It served in the World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. It is now a floating museum and war memorial in Tampa Bay. I've also been involved in collecting materials to display on the ship, such as merchant marine service medals, flags, and uniforms. I have been privileged to escort many Vietnam and Korean War veterans to the ship.



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.

2022 Meeting Dates

Please check our website for future meeting dates.
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
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