



PORT OF CALL

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

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

Winter 2018

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UNIONS BRACE FOR SUPREME COURT DECISION

Almost two years ago unions were spared a devastating United State Supreme Court decision in the Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association case. This case dealt with whether or not it was constitutional for public sector unions to charge a fee to non-members for the services they provide to all. Before the court could issue a ruling, Justice Antonin Scalia suddenly died. The remaining justices were deadlocked 4-4, so no new ruling could be made. Unions could continue as they had been previously.

President Obama was stopped from filling the vacancy created by Scalia's death. He tried to appoint a moderate jurist, but was prevented by the Senate from doing so. When Donald Trump became President, he chose Neil Gorsuch, a conservative with more extreme opinions on most issues for the Court. Of course, he was approved by the Senate.

This past September the Court, now including Justice Gorsuch, decided to hear another case, Janus v. AFSCME Council. This case again challenges fair share fees and again threatens public sector unions. Mark Janus is a child support specialist at the Illinois Department of Health Care Services. Although he benefits from union representation in contract negotiations and work related issues, he does not want to contribute anything to receive these benefits. In reality, Mark Janus is just a figurehead. The real power and money behind this lawsuit are right wing groups who want to destroy unions and take away pensions, worker rights, and job security.

Given the make-up of the current court, it is probable that more than 40 years of legal precedent which allowed agency fee will be overturned. Then unions will lose funds and may even have to do such things as collect membership cards every year. This will cost money, time, and effort which would be better used to support members.

Port's retirees knew, better than many others, why paying a fair share of agency fee is so meaningful. In 1978 Port's teachers settled a three-year contract. It had small percentage salary increases, but it provided for an agency fee. When teachers heard that an agency fee had been achieved, they applauded. This was at a time when the PWTA had over 400 members and just six teachers who refused to join. Since the establishment of agency fee the PWTA has not had any non-members. For teachers, this was an issue of fairness and solidarity.

Under current law in New York, public employees covered by union contracts do not have to join unions, and they can opt out of paying for the union's political activities, but they must pay a fair share for the many services they receive.

The Janus case was argued on February 26, 2018, and a decision should be made by the end of June. It is likely that with Justice Neil Gorsuch on the Supreme Court, the majority will side with anti-union billionaires.

Unions, including the PWTA, NYSUT, and the AFT have begun to prepare for the loss of agency fee and other consequences of the coming Supreme Court decision. They are trying to reach every member to explain why being a union member is so important. Right wing groups with lots of money have already begun contacting union members. After all, most of today's school personnel were not around when educators realized that they needed to join together in unions to pool their resources and knowledge in order to become a force in local communities, state legislatures, and the federal government. They have achieved a great deal for educators, and more importantly for students, during these 40 or more years, but there is so much more to do. If there is one good thing that can come out of this, it is that members will talk to one another about why unions are so important. They will understand why they must continue union membership and join together for their benefit, for the benefit of their students, and for the benefit of public education.

PWRE Honors

Toni Salerno and George Williams

The PWRE honored Toni Salerno and George Williams by purchasing bricks recognizing them in the Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society's new colonial garden. The garden is located behind the Sands-Willets House on Port Washington Boulevard.

Both Toni and George were active members of the PWTA and founders of the PWRE. In addition, they were vital members of Port's Historical Society. Among many other contributions, Toni worked to develop educational programs for students. In addition to being a significant member of the Society, George researched and wrote a number of books detailing the histories of several areas of Port. They should be remembered for their contributions to the schools and the community.



A Special Thank You To...

We all know that Erlyn Madonia is the editor of the Port of Call, and we know the authors of the articles and features. But most of us don't know the other people who make it possible for us to receive the Port of Call.

They are the proofreaders: Barbara Mayer, Tessa Jordan, and Mary Anne Cariello. They are the people who put the mailing labels, which are prepared by Tessa Jordan, on the newsletters and stamp them before taking them to the Post Office. In the past, it was Sue Mittelstaedt who did the mailing and now it is Linda Eckardt. Without the work of all these people, none of us would receive the Port of Call.

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: Wednesday, March 14 at 11:30 am
Book: Everybody's Son by Thrity Umrigar
Hosted by Uta Johnson

Date: Friday, April 27 at 11:30 am
Book: This is the Place by M. Kahn & K. McMasters
Hosted by Harriet Englander

Date: Wednesday, May 30 at 11:30 am
Book: The Unexpected Guest by Ann Korkeakivi
Hosted by: Barbara Mayer

http://www.pwta.info/PWRE/pwre_news/news_book_club

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FRIENDSHIP/ REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE



Norma Ziegel

Get Well Wishes Were Sent To:

Jack Grande
Annette Mione
Donna Sanchez

Condolences Were Sent To:

Gail Femmel on the loss of her husband
Andrea Illiano on the loss of her mother

The family of Pat Doyle
The family of Rosemary Lufano
The family of Dominica Racanelli

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

Pat Doyle
Rosemary Lufano
Dominico Racanelli

We Take Another Bite of the Big Apple: Very Sweet, No Pits! - Merry Gilbert

The guided tour of Grand Central Station was wonderful. This is the second time I've taken it this year, once with some Danish visitors and again this fall. Both docents, both volunteer with the Municipal Arts Council, were very informative and presented the information in a lively, engaging way. Each presenter had a personal slant, so although both of the tours I took were somewhat different, they were equally good. In fact, I'd even take another one.

We learned about the history of the terminal, what New York City was like before it was constructed, and how its construction influenced the development of the City, and still does.

Fascinating restoration details included the different techniques, many of which had to be specially created; for example, those that had to be used on each variety of stone. I especially liked the stone that got a "facial." Because it was soft and porous, and scrubbing would damage it, a vinyl masque was applied and peeled off, taking off the layers of dirt and leaving the stone clean and like new.

Our docent was particularly good - turned out he's a standup comic and a tour guide on double decker buses for his "real" job. Ear buds are provided so hearing is not a problem.



Of course, those of us who commute into Penn Station are longing for the restoration to its former glory. It is impossible not to compare the lovely restaurants, shops, varied food courts, and elegant atmosphere in Grand Central with our LIRR facility.

Why is the renovated starry ceiling not entirely accurate as portrayed? What is the importance of the many, many carved acorns and oak leaves? Take a tour to uncover these and other mysteries.

To schedule your "official" tour, go to the Municipal Art Society website, mas.org pull down the tours menu, choose your date, sign up and show up. Note: I used a credit card, and got a "real" receipt, with date, time, etc. If you pay with PayPal, you will get a receipt with no date and time. Just write the info on it yourself, so you'll remember, and show up with your receipt at 12:15 to check in at the ticket window, marked GCT Tours, in the main concourse.

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#MeToo + #HeToo = #WeToo - Dave Hinchliffe

I am involved in a workshop in preparation for giving a TedTalk. It would be my first. It will be posted pretty soon. I'm just finishing up the latest written edition and working on delivery. It will be titled: #HeToo. It is the narrative of my life, and how I suffered as a cruelly treated foster child in a dysfunctional foster home. It recounts what it did to my view of myself and to bodily and psychological functioning. I have to tell some gruesome details in order to get to the "now" part, which involves my healing journey. This male version of #MeToo seems oh-so-timely. It represents probably the scariest thing I've ever done my entire life. Change takes courage. Come along and help me make some changes. For me, this is my version of the Bobsled. I'm at the top of that chute, telling myself that I can do this. And, I'm right. I can. #HeToo + #MeToo = #WeToo. Let's better protect children, all of our children. **Editor's note: In our next issue I will post a link to Dave's TED talk.**

We Asked to Hear from You and We Did



I'm in a new zone. I go to Crunch Gym daily, dancing Zumba daily, and 3 times a week boot camp. It has paid off immensely in my skiing. I ski better now than when I was working.

Jim battled stage 4 melanoma successfully with immunotherapy (not chemo), and the plan is to stop infusions (after 2 years)

and to follow him closely with a possible 90% success rate. He is the statistic so there aren't many future stats they can give us. If you ever saw the Opdivo commercial, he is it!!!

Travel includes the boat with our new Abyssinian cat, Abigail, which means hope. We have been up the river as they say to Lake Champlain, just short of Canada, with the boat and to the east end and Block Island twice. As long as I can dance I will be the deck hand. Oh, I took up SUP, that's stand up paddle boarding. Very relaxing. We have made December our Caribbean escape month. February is for skiing in Maine. As you can see Jim and I are enjoying retirement.

Fran Clark



Patty Barnett

Although New York will always have my heart and my friends, my husband and I made the big move to FLORIDA! We are loving it! We are in the newest Valencia 55+ community: Valencia Bay. Taking a trip down to Florida to get out of the cold northern winter? I would love to see my Weber friends!



Math gathering + Sally



Call from Volunteers for Wildlife - James Jones

“Call from Volunteers for Wildlife” said the electronic voice of my phone. There are a wide variety of possibilities that can occur when our wildlife hospital calls; they are the main reason that my retirement has been anything but dull. This time it was a rescue. Brianne, one of our hyper-committed staff, said that there was an owl stuck in a basketball net at a home in Old Brookville. She also said that if it was, indeed, stuck in a basketball net, then I should bring a ladder; good advice, since my days of slam-dunking are long since over. I hung up, packed the gear that I needed (carrier, net, towel, heavy gloves and ladder). Before I took off for the twenty minute ride I called the number in Old Brookville to let them know that I was on the way and get any additional information. As it turned out, there was; the owl was on the ground - no ladder needed.



As I pulled into the long driveway at the Old Brookville home, I could see the erect basketball backboard, net intact, and no owl. I parked the car, and started to look for the owl while I waited for the caller to come out of the house. It was a short search; only about ten feet away, on the ground and completely snared in a soccer net, was an adult great horned owl. My first view was not a hopeful one; in its attempts to get free, the owl had wrapped himself in numerous layers of the net. Worse still, the raptor had managed to pin and snare both of its wings around its back. They were actually touching.

Stress can kill any creature, especially this nocturnal owl that would normally be well hidden in some pine tree at this time of the morning. Add to the problematic mix the facts that he was on the ground (always dangerous for birds), essentially immobile, and possibly injured, and you can understand why wildlife rescuers like myself must work quickly but never hurry. I put on my kevlar gloves, borrowed a pair of scissors from the homeowner, and walked slowly toward the owl.

Rule number one when dealing with raptors (birds-of-prey) is, if you can, grab the legs. Great horned owls, very aptly nicknamed “winged-tigers,” are immensely powerful birds. Their legs are well muscled, and their feet are armed with four long, sharp talons. I approached quietly. The net cords held him so tightly that he could not retreat. I grabbed his legs on the first try. I got both legs (and those talons) into my left hand, and started to cut the net; unfortunately, I had to drop the glove from my right hand to use the scissors. The owl was beginning to calm down, very typical of raptors when you have them held securely by the feet. He was ‘clicking’ his sharp black beak every minute or so, also typical. He also took every opportunity to try and bite my ungloved hand.

It was going well, but there was so much to cut, and the dense coat of feathers made it difficult to see what to cut. I tried to make the owl and myself, as comfortable as possible and kept cutting. Unexpected issues began to appear; my left hand began to cramp, and the scissors began to come apart. I repaired the scissors, massaged my hand and, thanks to some assistance by the housekeeper, kept cutting. My feathered friend was now becoming noticeably more free. Each cut now produced more movement of its wings, tail and head. Over thirty minutes passed, and then one final cut, a few very tender pulls of some net strings - and the bird was free! And, he was flapping his wings! I put a towel around him to calm him during our trip to the hospital, placed him gently in the carrier, said my thanks to the housekeeper who had started the entire process, and drove back to our hospital at Volunteers for Wildlife.

Wildlife rescue is not for the faint of heart; too many of the animals that we do rescue, do not survive. The shock of being trapped and handled, the extent of the injuries or the infection are simply too much. However, all that it takes to keep your spirits up is one good rescue! As it turned out, my great horned owl adventure was exactly that. Our examination revealed no broken bones, just some soft tissue damage that healed while he spent a week with us recovering (and consuming a large supply of rats). We released him last night; he flew off without looking back or thanking us, but my spirit soared with him as he departed. I am smiling still today. This ‘one good rescue’ turned out to be great!



It's a Strange World After All

We are probably old enough to recall seeing the 1956 newsreel on TV of Nikita Krushchev speaking at a reception held at the Polish embassy in Moscow, standing at the podium, waving his fist and ranting in a speech aimed at the U.S. "We will bury you." As it turned out, this statement was a possible mistranslation from the Russian. His actual words were: "*My vas pokhoronim*" - which can be translated as "we will outlast you," or "we will be present at your funeral." U.S. news sources translated this as "we will bury you." At the time the threat was of nuclear war. Sound scarily familiar? (One of the houses I looked at in Port in 1974 had a bomb shelter. I wonder if it's still available). Sixty or so years later, who could have predicted how destabilizing a cyberwar could be?

We are probably old enough to have experienced air raid drills at our schools where we hid under our desks in case of nuclear attack. Then the powers that be realized that glass from the classroom windows might hit us, so we went out into the halls for duck and cover. Effective, no? We have "progressed" to have students practice Code Red drills to enable them to hide from a shooter with assault weapons of mass destruction. Effective, no? In a recent NYT letter to the editor, a writer sends a suggestion for a revised Second Amendment to include "Freedom to send your children to school and have them come home safely." (I paraphrase.)

We probably remember how scandalous it seemed to have Ronald Reagan, a man who had been divorced, run as a presidential candidate. Now three time's the charm. I cannot leave out President Clinton, whose transgressions while in office were egregious. But check out Foggy Bottom, er, the swamp, now.

Do you remember "commonweal" - defined as the welfare of the people? We don't hear that so much now. Maybe I'm too naïve, but I seem to recall a time when the point of government service (for the most part), was to serve the people and uphold the greatness of our country. I believe that words have meaning, and when speeches changed from "I will work for my constituents," to "I will fight for my constituents," the tenor of government began to change. Add in "corporations are people" and we have another seismic shift. I have a modest proposal. Since it takes money to finance a campaign, and the chance of a candidate's success is often assessed by who is getting the most campaign contributions, why not see who garners the most money and declare that person the winner. Or, reform campaign finance.

My current most hated word is "transparency." My second is "tough choices." (Two words, sorry.) The more transparency is talked about, the more there is that seems to be hidden. Tough choices is redundant. All choices in government are tough, given how much hangs on each one. As you can see my thoughts and prayers are with us all.

Please join Us at the Spring Luncheon

Port Washington Yacht Club, Commodore's Lounge, Wednesday May 2, 2018

12:00 pm Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres

1:00 pm Sit down luncheon including dessert

\$45.00 Please respond by: April 14, 2018

Make checks payable to Port Washington Retired Educators

Mail to: Marilyn Gilbert, 133 Reid Ave, Port Washington NY 11050 Land Line: 516-944-9211

We Asked to Hear from You and We Did

Barbara Mayer



We just got back from a warm and sunny week in Florida, including a PWRE luncheon in West Palm Beach. Organized by Carla Rueck and Eileen Brotman, nine of us had a wonderful time "catching up" with each other!

Left to right: Angela Jaggar, Jo Papaleo, Carla Rueck, Barbara Schmidt, Helena Wresch, Barbara Mayer, Barbara Crisci, Eileen Brotman, Bette Stetson

Trish Wright

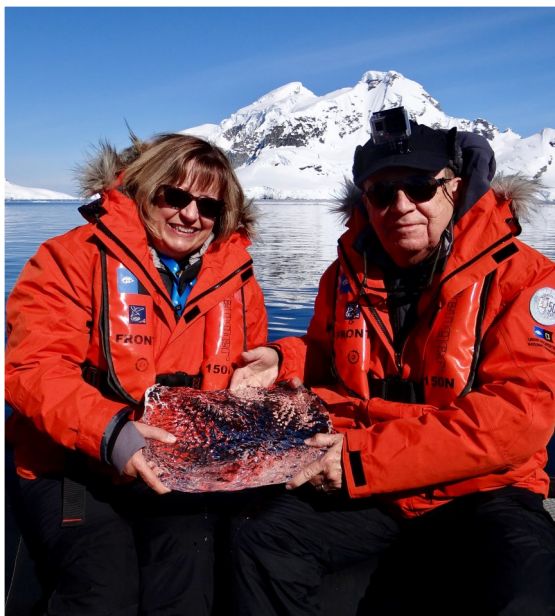


My photo won an honorable mention in the juried exhibit at the Elderfields Preserve in Manhasset, hosted by the Art Guild of Port Washington/Manhasset. The exhibit will be on view through Feb. 25th.

Title: "Striations"

I noticed the beautiful streak of sunlight above and placed the figure in a way that echoes the light, repeated again by the darker geological rock striations below. I love the way the figure morphs with her environment.

Marilyn Rodahan



My husband, Tommy, and I visited the 7th continent, Antarctica, in December 2017.

It was an amazing adventure filled with incredible ice formations, marine mammals, and 23 hours of daylight!



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.

2018 Meeting Dates

Thursday, March 8 at 10:30 am

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

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:

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