



PORT OF CALL

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

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK
Winter-Spring 2024 Vol. 34 No. 1**

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

PWRE UPDATE

Continue to Avoid Medicare Advantage Ads

Although the open enrollment period for Medicare ended on December 7, 2023, insurance companies continue to advertise their products. It is important to remember that Medicare is not the same as Medicare Advantage. Medicare Advantage is run by private health insurance companies. As retirees we are covered by Medicare and NYSHIP, and there is no need for us to change anything.

For your information: Advantage plans usually have smaller networks of doctors for covered care. The Part D drug coverage can change each year. Although plans advertise extra benefits like vision and dental, these benefits are very limited. Plans with no premiums have high out of pocket costs. Our plan is much better, and we do not have to make changes.

Stay with Medicare and NYSHIP. It is better and easier.

Port Retirees Raised \$3864 for Making Strides

The PWRE again raised a substantial amount of money for Making Strides, the effort by the American Cancer Society to fight breast cancer. Lisa Idol followed in Bonnie Utzig's footsteps in organizing Port's drive and collecting the funds. Like Bonnie, Lisa has done a superior job.

NYSUT Introduces Peer Support Program

NYSUT Member Benefits has introduced a new service, the Peer Support Line. The line can help with finding mental health services and support groups, answering questions about Medicare and Medicaid, sourcing elder care or caregiving services, assisting with marital, relationship, or child rearing concerns, and reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

There is no cost to NYSUT members or their families. Everything is confidential. To receive more information or assistance, call toll free at 844-444-0152.

VOTE-COPE Still Needs You

If you don't contribute to Vote-Cope through pension deduction or by check, please consider doing so. Without Vote-Cope educators and retirees will not have a voice in state and federal legislation which affects education and us. Of course, pension deduction is the easiest and best way to contribute, but a check will do. If you need another form, please contact Tessa Jordan at tjordan084@aol.com.

Vote-Cope is definitely needed if we want to keep or improve pensions and Medicare as we know it. It is definitely needed if Tier 6 is to be reformed, so that newly hired teachers will be able to have the same pensions that we do.

Lighthouse Tour - Sally Reinhardt



It was a spectacular day on August 2nd when fourteen of our members met at Gold Star Battalion Beach in Huntington. We took a boat ride out to the middle of Huntington Harbor to tour the Huntington Harbor Lighthouse. The lighthouse has stood as a beacon to mariners since its completion in 1913. It was added to the National Register of Buildings in

1988. One of our members, Deanna Glassman, is a volunteer there. She had suggested the lighthouse as a possible field trip for our group. Deanna led the tour that was so interesting and scenic. Thanks to Deanna, everyone had a wonderful experience. We even had four members climb a ladder to the top where they were treated to some beautiful views. If you have an idea for a field trip, please contact Sally at (516) 816-0897. Stay tuned for our next adventure!



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)

Date: May 2, 2024 at 2:00 pm EST- **Zoom**
Book: The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese: Parts 1-5
Host: Barbara Mayer

Date: June 17, 2024 at 2:00pm EST - **Zoom**
Book: the completion of The Covenant of Water
Host: Barbara Mayer

Date: September 3, 2024 following our Not Back to School Brunch - in person discussion
Book: TBA
Host: TBA
Please check PWRE website for updates: <https://www.pwretirees.org/>

PORT OF CALL
Winter-Spring 2024 Vol. 34 No. 1
Published by the Retired Educators Chapter
Port Washington Teachers Association
99 Campus Drive
Port Washington, NY 11050

Erlyn Madonia, Editor
emadonia@gmail.com

PWRE Webmaster: Barbara Mayer
blmayer3@gmail.com

SPRING LUNCHEON !!

Thursday, **May 16, 2024**, 12 noon – 4:00
Port Washington Yacht Club
Send your \$57.00 check payable to:
PWTA Retired Educators Chapter
Mail to: Ute Johnson, 5 Grove Place,
Port Washington NY 11050 516-570-0995

Save the Date:

Spring PWRE Field Trip
Planting Fields Arboretum
Monday, **June 10th** - 10:45-1:00
An hour tour of Coe Hall + an hour tour
of the grounds. Followed by lunch, of
course. Watch for more info!



FRIENDSHIP/REMEMBRANCES COMMITTEE

Norma Ziegel

Condolences Were Sent To:

Barbara Dermody on the death of her mother
David Israel on the death of his wife, Ann
Phyllis Keogh on the death of her son, Steven
Robert Keogh on the death of his mother, Phyllis
Erlyn Madonia on the death of her husband, Richard
Patricia Lynch on the death of her mother
Susan Melchior on the death of her husband, Tim
David Pelhke on the death of his wife, Karen
Magaera Regan on the death of her mother
Judy Rayfield of the death of her husband, Michael
Adi Sutarno on the death of his wife, Arlene

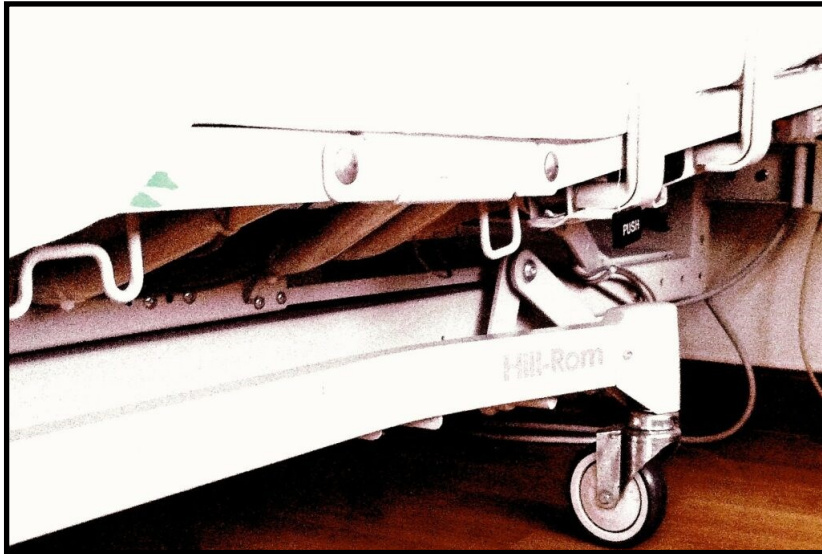
The family of Elaine Ajello
The family of Anne Jessen
The family of Sue Mittlestaedt
The family of Beverly Rubin
The family of Sally Slater
The family of Susan Trinchitella
The family of June Wood

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

Elaine Ajello
Ann Israel
Anne Jessen
Phyllis Keogh
Sue Mittlestaedt
Karen Pelhke
Michael Rayfield
Beverly Rubin
Sally Slater
Arlene Sutarno
Susan Trinchitella
June Wood

It's Not Hospice - Jeffrey G. Moss

The hissing from the cannula. The murmuring and gurgling of the portable dialysis machine. The high-pitched beeping from the apparatus tracking vital signs. The cacophony is not so distracting that I miss the social worker's pitch for end of life palliative care, the second in as many days.



"What do you serve over there?" Mom asks.

"Pardon?"

"Food. Is the food good?"

"Oh, well, it's the same menu as here," she replies. "Your visitors can bring in whatever you want. No more special diet for your kidneys so, you know, enjoy what you love," she concludes with a tender smile.

"So... no more dialysis?" Mom asks glancing at the machine, her poker player brain cleaving through the haze. "You're talking about hospice, aren't you? No. No, I'm not doing that."

The same response as yesterday. The disruptive Dada noises – Kurt Schwitters and Hugo Ball

wailing sound poetry, last quintet Coltrane squealing horns, pounding piano chords, flailing drumsticks, slamming bass – flood in. Discordant. Dissonant. Deafening.

Her room smells like shit; the colostomy bag leaked, again. Clean it up. Change the bag, change the bedding, change her position.

The long ride home, the steady whir of tires, rain, the rhythm of the wipers. At one point a radio preset picks up a local college station. The student DJ is in the middle of an effusive monologue about the splendors of doo-wop. Her grandmother's music, she calls it. "The voices, the harmonies ... and the stories the songs tell!" she gushes. "I'm going to spin this platter," she says and giggles. "This is 'Dedicated to the One I Love.'"

I remember Mom's album of 3X3 square, black and white photos; teenage Mom in a tight sweater, poodle skirt, Bobby socks, saddle shoes, like the characters in *Grease* or *Back to the Future*. Whenever a doo-wop number played she'd snap her fingers, sway her hips, chair dance, glow.

"We gave her a little something a few hours ago," the nurse says when I come in. "She should be up soon." He's been with her the last couple weeks. He knows.

Continued on page 4

What's Inside Port of Call Winter-Spring 2024

PWRE Update.....	Page 1	Hello from Vicki Field.....	Page 4
Lighthouse Tour - Sally Reinhardt.....	Page 2	A Walk Back In Time - Jim Jones.....	Page 5
Spring Luncheon.....	Page 2	Hello from Evelyn Garofalo.....	Page 5
Save the Date - Field Trip.....	Page 2	Merry-Go-Round.....	Page 6
Come to the PWRE Book Club.....	Page 2	Special Memories, a SPECIAL Person: Karen Pehlke	
Friendship and Remembrances Committee.....	Page 2	-Barbara Mayer.....	Page 7
It's Not Hospice - Jeffrey G. Moss.....	Page 3	Hello from Jerry Izzo.....	Page 7
It's Not Hospice Continued.....	Page 4		

It's Not Hospice, continued

I drop my stuff and locate a YouTube playlist promising over 300 doo-wop tracks on her phone. I press play, set the volume, take a seat.

It's easy to note which songs spark in her hippocampus, eyeballs shift under gossamer lids. Sometimes an ever so slight smile appears. I list impactful titles in my notebook, look up the artists.

It's "Under the Boardwalk" by The Drifters that fully rouses her.

"Oh, Jeffrey," she says when she sees me. "It was so beautiful and wonderful summers in Coney Island." Her voice is raspy, weak.

I offer some water through a straw. She's thirsty.

"The ocean was so clear you could see the little fish swimming around your feet," she says. "We lived on sunshine and air."

Her semi-toothless smile a warm, setting sun.

When the song ends she asks, "Where am I? What happened to me?"

I've experienced her amnesia before. Doctors say this coming in and out of awareness is typical of early onset Alzheimer's coupled with hospital delirium. I tend to think of it as a minor blessing.

I explain, as I have before, sure to add, "...but it's not hospice."

"At least they play good music," she says.

Next up is "Book of Love" by The Monotones. "Wonder, wonder who ..."

She whisper-sings and head bobs along.

Many dozens of numbers later, some she is barely awake for, some sound asleep, it's time to head home. If this were the palliative care wing I could stay over. I reset the playlist, kiss her on the forehead. She doesn't stir. The nurse agrees to keep the music going.

Mom is cremated and, per her wishes, we scatter her ashes, with her beloved yellow flowers, along the shoreline of Bay 33, Coney Island, her girlhood paradise. To family I call the gathering an unveiling, the Jewish ritual of revealing a grave marker a year after one's passing. The Cyclone, Wonder Wheel, and Parachute Jump are now her headstones. The waves and winds and seabirds are part of her eternal soundtrack.

I cast some of her remains under the boardwalk, exactly where she wants to be.

<https://hippocampusmagazine.com/2023/07/it-s-not-hospice-by-jeffrey-g-moss/>



Hello from Vicki Field

This painting titled "Lake Reflections" won third prize in a gallery show titled "Trees". It is hanging in the Firefly gallery in my home town, Northport.

A Walk Back in Time - Jim Jones

It had been a long time, far too long. I had a late summer afternoon free from obligations, and a relaxed nature walk sounded perfect. But where to wander? I had passed by Hempstead Harbor Park many times on my way to play golf, thought about checking in, but abandoned the idea as I drove home. Not today, however. I knew that there was a shoreline walking trail, in fact I had helped begin the process of its creation. Today would be a great time to witness just how that trail had progressed.

I parked in a quiet lot, and headed for the trail. I was already using my binoculars to scan the skies and waters of the harbor. Memories can be triggered by places, and *this* place evoked many. I am a retired biology teacher from Schreiber High School in Port Washington. One of my many passions was to instill a love and appreciation of nature - especially raptors - in my students. Over thirty years ago, it was rare to see any osprey (fish hawk) in the waters around the island. I decided, as the environmental club advisor, that it would be a great idea to build and install an osprey nesting platform in Hempstead Harbor. There were numerous permitting issues to resolve, but they were minor distractions. My students loved the entire process of building, transporting, and then installing the 18 foot tall pole in the harbor marsh. More good things happened: within a year the pole was occupied by a pair of osprey. It was the beginning of a resurgence of that bird, which are now common throughout the island. It was also the beginning of my second career as an osprey nesting platform builder and installer, I have put up dozens all across Long Island.

It was also the start of a campaign to make the entire area of the Hempstead Harbor shoreline a park. I walked this shore numerous times with town officials to get a feel as to what was wanted and how to get it done. It was understood that it would take a long time, and it did! I started hiking the trail to see just how it had worked out. I was impressed, not only with the condition of the trail and its multiple views of the harbor, but even more so with the memories generated. I was thrilled to see great egrets, cormorants, kingfishers, numerous warblers, green herons, wood ducks, and geese. I was even greeted at the end of my walk by the view of a bald eagle soaring above the harbor. No osprey today, but a wonderful day regardless.

A final note. I was so engaged with all of the nature that surrounded me, that I almost missed it. At the one mile marker, I saw it; an osprey platform. As soon as I got a better look at it, I knew that it was *my* platform, the very first one that my students and I had ever installed. It looked a bit worse for wear, but there was no mistake. I doubted if it had been used by the osprey of late; at the moment it was being used as a viewing perch by a very statuesque great blue heron. A beautiful symbol of my past, and still residing in the present.



the original pole - and still standing



Hello from Evelyn Garofalo

My grandsons, Nick & Joey, and I at the annual Halloween Parade in Hellertown PA - outside of Bethlehem.

Every year my husband Tom & I go to Ogunquit, Maine, in October. Never a disappointment.





Merry-Go-Round by Merry Gilbert

Living for Today

Let's start with modern driving.

Signals

You can't help but notice how people drive nowadays. In keeping with the popular new slogan, "It's no one's business where I'm going," signals are mostly passe. How was I never informed that I could have saved a fortune by not purchasing directionals?!!

Speeding

The speed limits clearly no longer apply to everyone. Just check out the new Indiana Speedway, aka Port Washington Boulevard (and almost everywhere else).

Tailgating

Each driver gets to see lots of whites of the eyes of the driver of the following car. You won't, however, see that car's headlights in your rearview mirror. It's too close.

Changing lanes

You are lucky if the car coming into your lane leaves a few feet between you during the maneuver.

Courtesy

Time was, if a car were merging onto a highway, the car in the right lane moved over. Forget that. The car in the right lane now speeds up. Too bad.

Stop signs

Did you miss the message that the "op" in stop means it's optional to do so?

Prayer

Always an important part of life. Nowadays, I regularly pray that I will make it home safely.

Moving on to modern medicine

With new medical advances, no part is left behind. This also means that your doctors are not necessarily dealing with all of you, just a part.

According to one of my doctors, the "suits" are demanding that they schedule more patients in less time. You are requested to provide your medical history and medications in advance of your appointment. This will save time. (Not your time.) You will be asked about that very information by an assistant when you get to the visit. Of course, you cannot remember the details you've already provided.

Just sign in at the kiosk. Wait to be called.

Next!

My New Approach Grievances

You can probably infer that my mood nowadays mostly ranges from mildly irked to really annoyed. As you can tell, I find reacting to all these issues (on my annoy-o-meter), on a regular basis distressing and wearing.

I unexpectedly encountered an article in the 10/8 NYTimes garden section, called, "The Challenges Among the Foliage." It tells about a group of students who wanted to share lists of grievances about gardening.

Recounted in this article is a story from Zen Buddhism: Long ago a Japanese Zen Master assigned those students a mantra to repeat twice a day for a year:

"Thank you for everything. I have no complaints whatsoever."

Special Memories, a SPECIAL Person: Karen Pehlke - Barbara Mayer

Karen was one of the most special people I ever knew and one of my very favorite friends. We (the Mayers and the Pehlkes) worked AND played together over the years...

Karen and I met when we brought our older kids, Joy and Jason, to the Port Washington Public Library's Story Hour. The kids were about 3, so our friendship began in 1979. Our families became friends, too. We even babysat for each other's kids over weekends. Sometimes, when Karen and I did school workshops, our kids would stay with our husbands, Dave and Joe. We never knew what we were going to find when we got home, but everyone ALWAYS had fun together! It was a mutually beneficial arrangement, and our kids have lots of fond memories from those early days.

Karen and I worked collaboratively at Guggenheim School for a number of years. We were both teaching fourth grade when I asked her if she'd like to do musical plays with our two classes. She immediately said yes, and the rest, as they say, is history. We produced four memorable plays together from 1993-1996. We only stopped because I started to teach P.E.P after that. We were so fortunate to have Dick Feingold, Vicki Field, and my husband, Joe, help us. What wonderful experiences for the kids and us that were special labors of love! Jean Sellers videotaped the performances for us, and we later moved them to DVDs. Honestly, I still watch them sometimes.



We shared a mutual love of sports. We went to Mets baseball games, watched football, the Olympics (especially figure skating), and had annual Super Bowl parties. We each bet \$1 on the outcome, including the kids. Big spenders, huh? And Karen was always the loudest and most enthusiastic parent or teacher at any of her kids' or students' sports events.

Karen taught me to hike when I went out to visit her in Utah after she retired. I am forever grateful. I'll never forget, and still hear Karen saying it: "Trust your boots!" Karen, Dave, Joe, and I took many trips together over the years, including to Arizona, California, Colorado, New Hampshire, Mexico, and, of course, Utah. Karen really missed the water when she and Dave moved to landlocked Utah, and she never missed a chance to insist we hike to the water anytime it was possible, even if the water was just a tiny stream or even a big puddle!

Karen and Dave moved at a different pace from Joe and me. We're from New York, and they were both from the West Coast, so no surprise there. But when we traveled together, Joe and I learned to slow down (a little...), to "stop and smell the roses", and be more appreciative of the beauty around us, especially while hiking in the United States.

I miss Karen very much. I miss her energy, her zaniness, her ebullience, and her bone-crushing hugs. To be honest, I don't miss seeing her angry so much. Did you ever see that? There was never any doubt about Karen's displeasure. You ALWAYS knew what emotion Karen was feeling, that's for sure. That's another thing I loved about her.

Karen will always live on in my memories. And I am so grateful that I have many photos of her to look back on. They always make me smile. Karen was, most definitely, one of a VERY special kind!



Hello from Jerry Izzo

Danny Krug, who was an 8th grader at Sousa c.1977, looked me up. He was one of 7 kids so I'm sure you'll remember one of them. This was his Facebook post:

"Spent a wonderful and educational day with my wife and my 8th grade teacher. A personal tour of the American Victory, a ship/museum he volunteers at. Lunch in YBOR city and another tour of his home garden. Thank you very much Gerry Izzo."



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.

2024 Meeting Dates

Please check our website for future meeting dates.
pwretirees.org.

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

**Gerl Ganzekauer
8 Oak Street
Wading River, New York 11792**

PORT WASHINGTON
RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER, PWTA
99 CAMPUS DRIVE
PORT WASHINGTON, NY 11050

FORWARD SERVICE REQUESTED

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

FIRST CLASS MAIL