

Great Neck Ties

Volume 34, No. 2

Spring 2014

Invitations Front and Back

Roberta Rosenberg

This Great Neck Ties issue begins and ends with an invitation. By tradition, the last page invites members to the luncheon. By way of a new tradition, REC now invites members to take a bold step into the Internet world. This past fall, with the help of the Great Neck Teachers Association, and especially GNTA's webmaster, Vice President Jim Daszenski, REC established a presence on the GNTA website (gnteachers.net). That was a first step. For REC, the GN Ties and the luncheons have been the cornerstones of communication with members. That tradition will continue. But REC also has a continued commitment to provide more timely communication. With the guidance of the REC Technology Committee, the second step, an expansion of the website, is meant to meet that commitment.

For a bit of historical perspective, safe to say that all REC members were born before the widespread use of personal computers. Although the first programmable computers date back to 1936, more widespread use of computers in industry only began in the 1950's with UNIVAC and IBM leading the way. Then, in the 1970's, personal computers were introduced

by Apple and IBM. From that time until now, the pace of change has been staggering, with each new piece of technology spurring the creation of still other technologies. The new technologies have had social, political, cultural and economic impact. Once strange sounding words are now part of our everyday lexicon: WiFi (1985), ebooks (late1990s), Google (1996), Skype (2003), Facebook (2004), Twitter (2006), and Facetime (2010). Many REC members are already using computers to Skype with children and grandchildren, buy online, research on Google, check in with friends on Facebook, play games (Candy Crush?), read ebooks, pay bills, send and receive emails. One member noted her grandchild had proudly announced she was the designated "Googler" in her class. Clearly, the technology is in every day use.

As planned, the site will have both the current and archived editions of the GN Ties. Under the **Info** tab, members will still be able to access dental, excess medical forms and view the list of participating dentists. New will be the option to view **REC News/Information** under the **REC** tab. As envisioned, a member will have access to more current news relevant to retirees. Members are invited to visit the website. No RSVP necessary.

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INFORMATION

GNTA REPORT

REC

75 YEARS STRONG

NEWS BLOG

**The RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER
of the Great Neck Teachers Association**

A Brief History

The Retired Educators Chapter was formally established by the GNTA Delegate Assembly in September 1979. Zita Areman was GNTA president. REC is an affiliated unit of its parent local, the GNTA, and is included in the GNTA Constitution and Bylaws. As part of the GNTA, Chapter members enjoy lifetime membership in NYSUT (New York State United Teachers) and the AFT (American Federation of Teachers). Additionally, REC is an active member of NYSUT's local Retiree Council 19.

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Great Neck Ties

The Retired Educators Chapter
Great Neck Teachers Association
343 Lakeville Rd, Great Neck, NY 11020
516-829-9070

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GNTA/REC

Affiliated with the
Great Neck Teachers Association,
New York State United Teachers
& American Federation of Teachers



President's View

Bill Toto

Spring appears to have infiltrated the harsh winter of snow, ice and freezing temperatures. The only remnants of the depressing weather are the small mounds of sand left by the roadsides. Enjoy Mother Nature's spring rebirth!

Praise, Politics and a Perplexing Predicament

Ruth Bertman and I wish to thank and to applaud each of the 236 REC members who contributed to 2013's Vote-Cope Campaign. You recognized the urgent need to protect our pensions, Social Security and Medicare and responded in kind. The only regret I have concerns the 490+ members eligible to give to Vote-Cope who did not heed the call to action. 'Tis a puzzlement! The threats to retiree benefits, public employees and public education are real and immediate. Vote-Cope funds are designed to permit lobbyists to be proactive as well as reactive at the state and national levels. What are some of the current retiree issues in which Vote-Cope is involved?

- For the past two years NYSUT has successfully fought back NYS Gov. Cuomo's punitive attempts to eliminate the reimbursement of the IRMAA (Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount) Medicare Part B premium that benefits many REC members.

- With the staunch support of NYS Comptroller Tom Di Napoli, NYSUT lobbies for the continuation of defined benefit pensions while Gov. Cuomo has proposed various 401K type contribution plans.

- NYSUT will oppose vehemently the unnecessary call for a NYS Constitutional Convention in 2017. Since 1938, there has been a constitutional amendment protecting pension benefits. A convention subjects this provision to alteration and/or elimination. (Think Detroit)

- NYSUT's legislative department is introducing and lobbying for the following pension related bills intended to:
-increase the COLA available to retirees from 50% to 100% of the CPI (Consumer Price Index) from one year to the next;
-increase the ceiling amount of inflation used for calculating the COLA from 3% to 5%; and
-increase the maximum retiree benefit used in calculating the annual COLA benefit from \$18,000 to \$25,000.

NYSUT RA: Changing of the Guard

The 42nd NYSUT RA (convention) took place at the beginning of April drawing about 2,500 people to Manhattan's Hilton Hotel. Delegates were present to debate 55 resolutions sent in by inservice locals and Retiree Councils throughout the state.

For the first time the state education commissioner and members of the Board of Regents were not invited because of their failure to address the pressing concerns of parents and educators about the flawed implementation of the Common Core standards, the obsession with premature testing and the teacher accountability attached to the testing. Delegates also voted unanimously a no-confidence resolution against State Education Commissioner John King and

President's View - Cont'd from pg 1

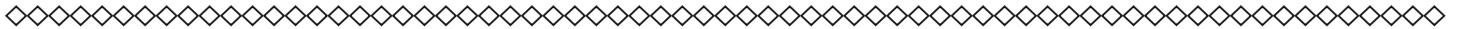
called for his immediate removal. But what really dominated all delegates' thinking was the contested election of NYSUT officers and Board of Directors. The campaigning by the opposition group was extremely contentious and they won on a platform promising to be more aggressive than the incumbents in their approach to dealing with the Governor, the legislature, the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Regents regarding controversial educational issues in New York State. The GNTA delegation supported the incumbent slate because of their experience and professional manner of working on difficult issues during difficult times. The election had the highest delegate participation in the union's history.

Your Call to Action

Meanwhile, Washington continues to discuss

decreasing the Social Security COLA using the Chained CPI, and the Ryan Budget in the House continues to call for privatizing Medicare and using vouchers instead. Clearly we must stay the course: fighting the good fights, educating ourselves and others, lobbying our legislators and voting to preserve our earned benefits. Let's use the NYSUT themes: Voice and Vote to Be Heard and Reclaim the Dream.

At the next luncheon on June 5th at the Swan Club, Dennis Tracey, President of the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans will be our featured speaker. He has spoken about Social Security and Medicare legislation throughout New York State and is aware of and knowledgeable about these matters. I hope to see you on June 5th.



Mark Your Calendar:

May 28, 2014

June 5, 2014

September 17, 2014

December 11, 2014

GNTA End of Year Reception, Westbury Manor

REC Spring Luncheon, Swan Club

REC Fall Luncheon, Jolly Fisherman

REC Holiday Luncheon, Westbury Manor

IN MEMORIAM

 <i>Jerry Kleinberg</i> SPOUSE OF ELAINE KLEINBERG, JF KENNEDY SCHOOL	<i>Ruth Brown</i> LAKEVILLE SCHOOL	 <i>Phil Seidenberg</i> NORTH HIGH
<i>To Gallo</i> SOUTH HIGH	<i>Tom Mattia</i> SOUTH HIGH	<i>Carol Shallow</i> MOTHER OF BOB SHALLOW, SOUTH HIGH



Retiree Tweets – Part 2

Mike Golden

Last summer, many responded to our call for “tweets” – brief updates on your lives. Our last Great Neck Ties issue shared a number of them, but limited space restricted the number we could include. Here now is “Retiree Tweets-Part 2.” A Part 3 will appear in our summer issue.

In the spirit of once a teacher, always a teacher: **Naomi Penner (NH)** when not teaching Latin dance, lectures on the classical etymology of the English language. **Phyllis White (SM)** reports that she just “couldn’t stop teaching” so is now a regular substitute in the history department at the Spence School in NYC. **Adele Bildersee (NH)** is Director of Libraries at the Dalton School in NYC. **Ellen Greenberg (L)** volunteers as an assistant in an adult ESL class connected with the community college near her home in the Berkshires. **Martha Cohen (SR)** is an adjunct professor at the College of Old Westbury, Queens College, and Adelphi University. **Terryl Lawrence (GNS)** is a professor at Digital Media College in Boca Raton, teaching drawing, art history, and mythology. **Mitzi Witkin (NM)** has worked as a Professional Development Consultant and Literacy Coach in New York City schools. Last year she helped to score the New York ELA tests in grades 6, 7, and 8.

Still other retirees have lent their talents to creative, artistic, and political endeavors. **Barbara Masry (P)** recently had her short film, “A Wake-up Call,” screened at the Great Neck Library’s main branch. The film will be the opening sequence of a full-length feature in development about two women living in the aftermath of breast

cancer: one with medical insurance, one without. **Naomi Schlessel (NH)** now a Dallas resident, plays in the Town Village Concert Band every Monday evening; the group gives free concerts to the public every two to three months. **Linda G. Andrews (JFK)** takes art, writing, and Shakespeare classes on Bainbridge Island in Washington State, and is active in local groups and events. **Jacci Tutt (SH)**, now a Sarasota resident, has just been awarded The Elisabeth Schilder Award for Courage in Religious Tolerance. Her activism in pursuit of tolerance and social justice is a lifelong commitment. Fifty years ago she joined the March on Washington. Presently, at 81, she serves as co-chair of the Women’s Interfaith Network of Sarasota-Bradenton.

A number of our members informed us of new additions to their families; others are celebrating various milestones. **Elaine Sonenberg (SR)** became a grandmother to “a beautiful girl,” Billie Maple Sonenberg. **Lee Friedman (EMB)** became a great-grandmother last May to Rose Miriam Herman. **Bea Schutzer** became a great-grandmother to twin boys, Spencer and Austin. **Deborah Arkus (JFK)** became a great-grandmother in September with the arrival of Dylan. **John Thomas (NM)** and his wife, Phyllis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in August. **Stuart Joseph (SH)** is now remarried to Arlene Joseph. **Ildi Catuogno (NMS)** informs us that her son Sean was married last June; he and his wife Nicole are in a residency program in the Emergency Department at NSUH/LIJ Manhasset. Congratulations to all!

A Spirited Holiday Luncheon

Bill Ryall



Gerri Pentecost, Grace Warner, Ruth Bertman



Carl and Helen Ring



Elaine Sobel, Joan Eannaccone



Florence Wyche, Charlotte Schiffman

Over ninety of us attended the December 12, 2013, GNTA/REC Holiday Luncheon at the Westbury Manor. At the business meeting, President Bill Toto gave a detailed summary of the state of education state-wide and nationally. Common Core implementation and teacher evaluation were major issues. During the luncheon, the very talented South High School Choral Group (directed by Pam Levy) and Jazz Band (directed by Michael Schwartz) performed holiday favorites and other selections.

The special guest speaker, Superintendent Dr. Thomas P. Dolan, spoke on *Our Collective Need to Keep the Debate Alive*. He stated that public education needs our assistance - we must keep

state legislators and senators informed about our concerns and potential solutions. The Governor, with the exception of charter schools, has removed himself from education debates. Dr. Dolan drew parallels between Santa's leadership skills and our own approach: *build a wonderful workshop (our GN Schools); choose reindeer wisely; listen to the elves (teachers, parents); check lists twice; note who's naughty and nice; and get beyond red wagons (keep up with changes)*. President Sheila Scimone followed by expressing concerns with the direction NYS Education Commissioner John King and our Board of Regents are taking regarding implementation of the new mandated reforms.



Bob Abrams, Carolyn Minionis, Ilene DeRiso



Carmen Cuadrado, Joyce O'Connor, Gil Blum, Vicki Merten



Eileen Kehoe, Maureen McPartland, Barbara Chaudhry, Mary Ingham

Thank you, Evelyn



Evelyn Willard has announced her second retirement, this time as REC name tag calligrapher. Over all these years, we have not used stick on labels. Instead, Evelyn has used her skill to create elegant name tags. We are relieved that she timed this retirement to coincide with the availability of a computerized calligraphy font. While Lainie Sternin has assumed responsibility for creating new name tags, we still need a volunteer to collect the tags at the end of each luncheon and then bring them back to the next luncheon. Please inform a member of the Executive Board of your interest in this important task.



Karlene Reilly, Ronnie Beecher



Sherry Scher, Sue Miller, Sandy Jaffee



Pam Levy and South High Chorus



Michael Schwartz



South High Jazz Band

Spring Luncheon & Meeting

Thursday, June 5, 2014



The Swan Club Overlooking Scenic Roslyn Harbor
90 Glenwood Road, Glenwood Landing, NY 11547 • 516 621-7600

10:45 Registration • 11:15 General Meeting

12:00 Social Hour: Cash Bar & Hors d'oeuvres • 12:40 Lunch
Garden Salad, Penne a la Vodka, Prime Rib au Jus, Herb Roasted Chicken Breast,
Filet of Sole Oreganata, Vegetarian Plate

Dessert: Almondine Royale or Fruit
Coffee or Tea

Program: What's Happening With Social Security?

Dennis Tracey, President, NYS Alliance for Retired Americans

Special Guest: Barbara Berkowitz, President, Great Neck Board of Education

June 5th Spring Luncheon Reservation

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ for _____ person(s).

Name _____

School _____ Telephone _____

Guest(s) name(s) _____

Make a check payable to GNTA/REC for \$38 per person and send it with the form by May 27th to:
**Grace Warner, 19 Travers Street,
Manhasset, NY 11030-2223**

Cancellation requests must be called in by June 2nd to Grace, 516-627-5687.

*Rose Grabelsky & Adele Wolfson,
Program Co-Chairs*