



# Great Neck Ties

Volume 35, No. 3

Summer 2015

## *Congratulations & Welcome Retiree Class of 2015*

<b>Donna Bognacki</b>	Lakeville	<b>Christina Kearney</b>	Phipps
<b>Paul Bott</b>	South High	<b>Judith Kohn</b>	Parkville
<b>Ellen Bronheim</b>	North Middle	<b>Helen Kramer</b>	South High
<b>Nella Caravetta</b>	South High	<b>Lilian Krowne</b>	North High
<b>Joan Cassazone</b>	South High	<b>Eileen Kurinskas</b>	Parkville
<b>Sultana Christie</b>	Parkville	<b>Linda Litvack</b>	North High
<b>Victoria Cimbalo</b>	South Middle	<b>Frank LoPiccolo</b>	North Middle
<b>Seth Cohen</b>	North Middle	<b>Jane Maher</b>	North High
<b>Thomas Dolan</b>	Phipps	<b>Christine Montllor-Gil</b>	South High
<b>Ronnie Elias</b>	South High	<b>Linda Musmeci</b>	South Middle
<b>Arlene From</b>	South High	<b>Maria Pardo</b>	Parkville
<b>Maureen Ganes</b>	JF Kennedy	<b>Anthony Pontone</b>	South High
<b>Thomas Ganes</b>	South High	<b>Ellen Roisman</b>	South Middle
<b>Andrea Gerson</b>	Lakeville	<b>Andrea Rosenblume</b>	South Middle
<b>Harriet Goldstein</b>	North High	<b>Barbara Scordo</b>	Lakeville
<b>Michael Greenberg</b>	North Middle	<b>Marcia Stone</b>	EM Baker
<b>Sheryl Holtzman-Doyle</b>	South Middle	<b>Linda Ullman</b>	Lakeville
<b>Nancy Jacobson</b>	South High	<b>Cheryl Walder</b>	Lakeville
<b>Andrea Kay</b>	Lakeville	<b>Sydell Zelanko</b>	Lakeville

## *Be Aware! The Free Lunch Bell Is Ringing*

The 2015 retirees join what is fast becoming an endangered species-retirees with secure pensions. But there is a caution to be heeded. The unexpected happens; change comes unbidden. The earned benefits we do have come not from good luck and happenstance, but from the hard work and advocacy by our state and local unions. History has shown us that in New York State more than one elected official has greedily eyed our pension fund as a money source for budget gaps and "other" projects having nothing to do with providing pension security. Over the years, their attempts to divert funds or defer pension payments were thwarted through litigation by the union and state comptrollers. The lesson - we must continue to guard our pension funds. Across the nation, city and state legislators continue to address their stressed pension funds by calling for benefit cuts. Today's political environment yields numerous, well organized and well funded attacks on public education, public school teachers and public funded pensions. The courts are often the scene of these battles and litigation is expensive. So, even if the union wins, their financial resources are diminished. The latest litigation challenge meant to weaken unions is the Supreme Court case: Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association. In a previous issue of *The Ties*, we reported the results of the Harris v Quinn Supreme Court case. There, health care workers formed a union to negotiate improved salaries. The Koch and Walton families funded litigation by a few who did not want to pay dues but did want the improved salary. They maintained that dues were a "violation of their free speech rights." They won. The same reasoning is being used in the Friedrichs' case, but instead of a health care union, a teacher union is the target. Again, the contention is that some collective bargaining is actually lobbying, thereby violating the right of free speech. The 1977 Abboud decision held that teachers who declined to join a union could still be required to pay union fees since they equally benefitted from collective bargaining agreements. Now, the Free Lunch crowd is expanding and shamelessly dining at the same table as paying guests. The tide against unions is perilously shifting; we must remain aware and vigilant.

## Great Neck Ties

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

### REC Executive Board

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Bill Ryall .....Vice President  
Carl Ring.....Treasurer  
Geraldine Pentecost....Recording Sec'y  
Edie Ryall ..... Corresponding Sec'y  
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Elaine Sobel.....Member-at-Large  
Lainie Sternin..... Member-at-Large  
Donald Barry.....Mailing  
Leon Gabia..... Mailing  
Shelly Stern.....Membership  
Rose Grabelsky.....Program



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Lainie Sternin ..... Photos  
Lou Di Rico ..... Layout  
Arland Printing..... Publication

### GNTA/REC

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



## President's View

Bill Toto

As we celebrate our 36th year as a retiree chapter, 38 staff members of the Great Neck Public Schools celebrate their retirement. Welcome to the wonderful world of retirement with its many opportunities. May each of you embrace this phase of your life with fulfilling choices and good health.

Congratulations and best wishes are extended to the new superintendent of the Great Neck Public Schools, Dr. Teresa Prendergast. She assumed her new position on July 15th as Great Neck's 11th superintendent and the second woman since 1922 to be selected by the Board of Education. Dr. Prendergast replaces retiring superintendent, Dr. Thomas P. Dolan who served six years in that role. The retiree chapter is grateful to Tom for his support of and respect for the Retired Educators Chapter. We wish him well in all his future endeavors.

### What's In It for Me?

Joining the Great Neck Teachers Association Retired Educators Chapter offers many advantages. Annual dues pay for running the Great Neck Chapter as well as memberships in the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the national Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA). Further, the chapter holds memberships in the New York State Alliance for Americans (NYSARA) and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare (NCPSSM). All of these organizations lobby extensively to preserve retiree earned benefits. Over the years, through NYSUT and AFT, we lobbied and gained the following: a state COLA for our pensions; a permanent Health Care Moratorium preventing Great Neck from singling out retirees should they alter their participation in the Empire Plan; reimbursement of the Medicare Part B premium; reimbursement of the Medicare Part B surcharge (IRMAA); and protection of our defined benefit pensions. All these gains were accomplished through Vote-Cope. Being a member

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of REC also permits us to subscribe to one or more offerings from the GNTA's Benefit Trust Fund and/or from NYSUT's and AFT's Member Benefit programs. GNTA/REC members have an opportunity to reconnect with former colleagues at three annual luncheons where current information is shared about retiree and inservice issues. Members are also mailed three issues of the award-winning newsletter, *The Great Neck Ties*.

## Winning the War With Vote-Cope

Vote-Cope is the voluntary, non-partisan program of the unions dedicated to supporting and addressing retiree and inservice concerns. While NYSUT retirees do not pay dues to NYSUT or AFT, retirement benefits are still actively protected by the state and national unions. The same forces working against public educators, public education and unions are also in pursuit of state defined pensions, traditional Social Security and Medicare. No one knows if health insurance will be in danger. In response, NYSUT is organizing and promoting a 2015-2016 Advocacy Campaign to Defend the Social Safety Net and Earned Income Benefits. Vote-Cope speaks with the group strength of over 600,000 NYSUT members. It is our voice in Albany and Washington. The 2015 Retired Educators Chapter Vote-Cope mailing campaign will begin in September. Much appreciation to the 34% of members who gave to the 2014 campaign, but it is so important for the other 66% in our chapter to contribute to this worthwhile effort. Remember, Vote-Cope supports us; we need to support Vote-Cope.



**Celebrating  
Milestones**



On August 14, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Social Security into law. This well earned benefit has provided income to

retirees and disabled Americans for 80 years without missing a payment; 65% of aged beneficiaries receive at least half their income from Social Security. In order to preserve and increase benefits and to improve the long-term solvency for present and future beneficiaries, we are urged to lobby Congress to support the Social Security Expansion Act (S.731.)

This Act would:

- Leave the taxable income cap at \$117,000 but trigger additional Social Security taxes on incomes above \$250,000;
- Increase the average benefits by about \$800 per year to those who are presently on Social Security; and
- Alter the computation of the annual COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) to more accurately reflect the spending patterns of those 65 and older. Older households spend two to three times as much of their budgets on medical care as younger households. The legislation proposes a distinct CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for Elderly) reflective of senior costs.

*Happy Birthday, Social Security!*

On July 30, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed Medicare into law, providing guaranteed health benefits to senior Americans and those with disabilities. On December 8, 2003, President George Bush signed the Medicare Modernization Act into law, removing some of those guarantees. Most notably, it forbade the federal government from negotiating with pharmaceutical companies for affordable drug prices; created a donut hole for some who need expensive medications; assigned higher copays for various benefits; and introduced means tested income for the Medicare Part B premium. All these provisions placed a burden on the middle class and needy Americans. The law allowed insurance companies and Big Pharma to control the health care of an entire nation. Presently, the ruling party in Congress is further tampering with Medicare, by including vouchers and privatization into Medicare. Federal legislators need to strengthen not weaken Medicare. *Happy Birthday, Medicare!*

# Are We Closer to a Cure?

On Sunday, October 18th, the New York State United Teachers and the American Cancer Society will be sponsoring its annual five mile walk at Jones Beach to fight breast cancer. This is the 17th year the NYSUT Nassau Regional Office has organized the event and strongly urges retirees to become involved in this worthwhile endeavor.

The American Cancer Society's estimates for breast cancer in the US for 2015 are:

- About 231,840 cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women.
- About 60,290 new cases of the earliest form of breast cancer will be diagnosed in women.
- About 40,290 women will die from breast cancer.

It is important to note that statistics of breast cancer in men are being developed. Yes, the need is still there for medical researchers to find a cure.

If you can't attend the Jones Beach walk, won't you help with a contribution? Last year three REC members joined the fight to "Make Strides Against Breast Cancer." They are to be commended for their generosity. Please join them by:

- Making out a check to the American Cancer Society and writing Great Neck Retiree on the memo line to give REC credit for participating; and
- Sending the check to GNTA/REC, The Cottage, 343 Lakeville Road, Great Neck, NY 11020.

Any donation, even the smallest amount, will be greatly appreciated.



## Mark Your Calendar:

September 9, 2015	New Retiree Reception
September 30, 2015	REC Fall Luncheon, Jolly Fisherman
October 18, 2015	Jones Beach Breast Cancer Walk
November 19, 2015	NYSUT Regional Conference
December 15, 2015	REC Holiday Luncheon, Westbury Manor

**IN MEMORIAM**

 <i>Bernice Baum</i> MOTHER OF RONNIE SCHULMAN	 <i>Josephine Goldberg</i> SOUTH HIGH	 <i>Lyn (Marilyn) Sipress</i> NORTH MIDDLE
<i>Fran Goldsmith</i> LAKEVILLE	<i>Nell (Jane) Kelly</i> NORTH HIGH	<i>Becky Westbrook</i> NORTH MIDDLE
	<i>Mike Schlesinger</i> LAKEVILLE	

## REC Spring Luncheon A Success

The sunshine of May 14th warmed and brightened REC's spring luncheon at the Swan Club. About 70 members and guests were present for President Bill Toto's brief business meeting which featured short reports from him and several committee chairs. Members also elected executive board members for the coming year (*see new listing of board members on page 2*).

After the usual enthusiastic "cocktail hour" socializing, we were served a delicious and more than ample lunch. So ample, that many of us carried portions home! Our two speakers were Barbara Berkowitz, Great Neck School Board President and Sheila Scimone, GNTA President. Both spoke to the problems today's educators face and the need for us, as retirees, to get involved. Our voting in upcoming school district budgets and school board elections was cited as an immediate "involvement" necessity.

We then viewed a video commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Great Neck Public Schools *The First 200 Years*. In addition to historical footage (a sentimental journey for some of us), classroom activities from most of the Great Neck schools were shown, especially ones that featured programs other than academic core selections, illustrating again the philosophy and objectives of a Great Neck education.

Our next REC luncheon will be at the Jolly Fisherman on September 30, 2015. We will be welcoming a number of newly retired members and would love to have you, our seasoned retirees, present to greet them!

Reminder: Have you sent in your membership renewal? Your update for *Ties that Bind*?



1. Barbara Berkowitz, Bill Toto; 2. Carol Morrison, Amy Eng; 3. Edie Ryall, Elaine Sobel, Sheila DeFazio, Rose Grabelsky, Bill Ryall; 4. Joan DiModna, Karlene Reilly; 5. Linda Smith, Marsha Witten, Marci Tretler, Mike Golden, Norma Gastwirth; 6. Lynn Rosenstock, Arlene Donowitz; 7. Maureen McPartland, Pat Callaghan, Eileen Kehoe, Mary Ingham; 8. Pat Master, Janet Dansbury.



9. Rene Staal, Marian Grief; 10. Sondra Blum, Nancy Barry, Gil Blum, Carl Ring; 11. Tony McQuade, Bob Abrams  
 12. Sheila Scimone, Bill Toto; 13. John and Carol Malinowski; 14. Nancy Chauvin and Linda Novick.

# Fall Luncheon & Meeting

Wednesday, September 30th, 2015

The Jolly Fisherman & Steak House

25 Main St, Roslyn, NY 11576 • 516-621-0055

10:45 Registration • 11:15 General Meeting

12:00 Social Hour: Cash Bar & Hors d'oeuvres • 12:30 Lunch

*Appetizer Choice:* Fresh Fruit Cocktail or Manhattan Clam Chowder or Creamy Mushroom Soup. Jolly Fisherman Salad. *Entree Choice:* Atlantic Salmon Baked in a Macadamia Nut Crust (or simply broiled) or Orange Roughy, Almondine or Sliced Brisket of Beef with Gravy or Boneless Breast of Chicken Saute a la Francaise. Entrees served with Duchess Potato & Chef's Vegetable. *Dessert Choice:* Fruit Cobbler with Fresh Whipped Cream or Chocolate Cream Pie or Classic Rice Pudding.

## September 30th, Fall 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 \$39 per person and send it with the form by Sept. 18th to:  
**Bill Ryall, 318 Rushmore Ave.,  
 Carle Place, NY 11514**

Cancellation requests must be made to Bill by Sept. 24th, @516-333-9423

*Rose Grabelsky  
 Program Chair*