

# Great Neck Ties

Volume 35, No. 1

Fall 2014

## A Homecoming

Maureen Newman



Judi Bosworth, Bill Toto

Great Neck's own Judi Bosworth, now the North Hempstead Town Supervisor, was our guest speaker at the September luncheon. The atmosphere in the room had the spirit of a homecoming. Her address to the

group shifted gears as she spoke about the philosophy and principles she has employed and continues to employ in meeting the demands of public service. Noting that while many skills are required, she emphasized the importance of communication, especially open communication. Those communication skills were much in evidence as she spoke not just about governance in general but about education issues in particular. In dealing with any issue, she cited the importance of commitment to the individual communities being served; the importance of recognizing the hard economic realities of daily life for many constituents; the importance of understanding a community's needs and appreciating the impact and intricacies of achieving these goals.

Illustrating the importance of communication with constituents, Judi shared the story of the hurdles Great Neck parents once faced to learn their child's standardized test scores. Individual conference appointments were required. In concert with the then Superintendent Bill Shine, the policy was changed and scores were subsequently mailed home to families. The operating principle was that information should be shared, not cloaked in complexity. Judi has carried that same principle to all her elected positions, from GN Board President, to Nassau County legislator and now to Supervisor of the Town of North Hempstead. She has always been approachable (she received 100 emails during the course of our luncheon) and, more importantly, knowledgeable. Her acute political sense and people

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## Free Lunch - Still Expected

Maureen Newman

The latest anti-worker blow has come from the Supreme Court in its Harris v. Quinn decision. In the usual 5-4 split, the conservative majority decided that a small group of home health care workers in Illinois did not have to pay a "fair share fee" (union dues)



even though the majority of their fellow workers had voted to join a union, and even though they would reap the benefits of the collective bargaining agreement between the State of Illinois and the health care workers union (SEIU HCII).

Across the nation, home health care workers are among the lowest paid workers. To remedy this, the majority of Illinois workers voted to join a union and begin negotiations on salary and work conditions. The union did negotiate a contract that included improved salaries: a \$13 hourly rate by year's end. As for the several who did not want to pay dues the 5 justices ruled that requiring payment was a violation of "free speech rights." The non-paying workers would, in effect, get a "free lunch." How such low paid workers were able to finance this lawsuit (it began in 2011) is disturbing and telling. Funded by the ultra conservative Koch and Walton families, the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation paid the fees.

Does this case give lie to the wisdom that there is no such thing as a free lunch? In the Harris v. Quinn case a price was paid, but not by the several workers that brought the suit. Instead, those workers let their colleagues, who were struggling just as much as they, do the heavy lifting. There are real attacks and threats against organized labor. There are real threats waged against economic safety nets. There are real challenges

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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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Affiliated with the  
Great Neck Teachers Association,  
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& American Federation of Teachers



## President's View

Bill Toto

During the Thanksgiving and December holidays the REC Executive Board wishes you peace and good health. I wish to extend my gratitude to all REC members who continue to join the Retired Educators Chapter, our union in retirement. Your support for preserving retiree hard-earned benefits and your willingness to embrace retiree issues and concerns is of the utmost importance and is well appreciated. We work for and care about present and future retirees.

### Random Political Musings

- Only about 1/3 of New York's eligible voters actually cast ballots.
- According to the New York Times, it was estimated that about 4.1 billion dollars was spent on campaigning. The largest amounts of money came from wealthy donors and special interest groups. These large donors are considered "pay for play" contributors who expect special treatment when the candidate wins.
- New York's Governor Andrew Cuomo blames his small margin of victory and the low voter turnout on dissatisfaction with President Obama. The Governor was expecting a landslide or mandate win. To many people I know, his policies and actions were a big disappointment.
- After the election, Governor Cuomo labeled public education in New York State a monopoly, vowing to break it with public monetary support for more charter schools. In response, NYSUT President Karen Magee proclaimed New York State's public schools a centerpiece for democracy.
- New York State Republican Senate Majority Leader, Dean Skelos said that more tax dollars will be used for charter and parochial schools.
- The House of Representatives Budget Committee Chairman, Republican Paul Ryan, the architect for privatizing Social Security calls his budget, a "Path to Prosperity." The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare calls it a "Highway to Hardship."
- The Democratic Party, the traditional supporter and defender of our retiree agenda, appears to be dysfunctional and in disarray from the White House Oval Office to the State Capital in Albany. The Republicans who oppose retiree earned benefits used that Democratic disunity, along with big money from special interests, to move their agenda. And they won.
- Republican Senator Mitch McConnell, just re-elected and most likely to be the new majority leader, pledged to end gridlock and dysfunction, two strategies his party created and utilized relentlessly to stop any improvements in health care, Social Security and Medicare and to shut down the government.

### Questions, But No Answers

What might be the fallout in the future for seniors?

- For a third year in a row, will Governor Cuomo continue to propose the elimination of Medicare Part B IRMMA reimbursement?
- Will Governor Cuomo and the state legislature support the 2017 call for a New York State Constitutional Convention, placing our New York State pensions in danger?

- If the incoming Republican majority in both houses of the U.S. Congress stay true to their agenda, will they tamper with Social Security in part, or will they completely privatize it? Will they turn Medicare into a voucher system?
- Will the Republican agenda in Congress continue to include tax cuts for wealthy Americans and large profitable corporations, paid for by the dwindling middle class and cutting senior earned benefits?

### Solidarity Forever

Should we feel the situation is hopeless? Should we feel trapped and helpless? Should the voices of doom and gloom consume us? Absolutely not!!! To quote the president of AFT, "We must fight back! We must fight forward! We must move forward!" Notice the "we." That's what union is all about; working and fighting to reclaim the dream. Our Vote-Cope campaign each year helps our NYSUT and AFT lobbyists move us forward toward reclaiming the dream. Have you given to Vote-Cope this year? There is still time to contribute to our union's safety net to protect our retiree benefits

and to improve our important agenda. Together we move ahead. Divided we lose; give up and give in. "Solidarity forever; for the union makes us strong."

## Debbie Arkus

### 1929 - 2014

Last month, Debbie Arkus passed away after succumbing to pancreatic cancer. Debbie was a valued colleague and friend on the Retired Educators Chapter Executive Board. Her charming smile, her warm and caring personality, her generosity and her personable manner defined her. Debbie's community spirit and involvement were well known in Great Neck as evidenced by her staunch support for the education of young children, for the ideals which embody the goals of Great Neck's Retired Educators Chapter and for many progressive and humanitarian causes. Debbie will be remembered for her devotion to family, to friends, to education and for her good will.

### Mark Your Calendar:

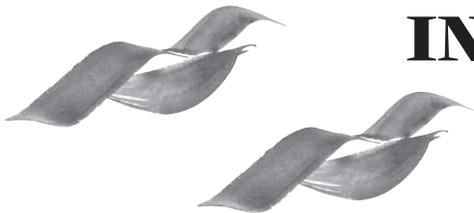


December 1, 2014  
 December 11, 2014  
 December 15, 2014

May 14, 2015  
 May 27, 2015

VOTE/COPE contributions due at The Cottage  
 Holiday Luncheon, Westbury Manor  
 Medicare Reimbursement form returned to  
 Great Neck Health Benefits Department  
 Spring Luncheon, Swan Club  
 GNTA End of Year Reception

## IN MEMORIAM



*Debbie Arkus*  
 J.F. KENNEDY SCHOOL

*Joan Konowitz*  
 EM BAKER

*Art McDonnell*  
 NORTH MIDDLE

*Maren Ranhofer*  
 SPOUSE OF LOU RANHOFER

*Sylvia Winston*  
 SADDLE ROCK

*Elaine Wolf*  
 J.F. KENNEDY SCHOOL



*Howard Yasbin*  
 SPOUSE OF BEVERLY  
 WARSHOWSKY

*Dave Zamchick*  
 SOUTH HIGH



## *Ties That Bind*

*Maureen Newman*

If ever we doubted that our fellow retirees wanted to keep in touch, the latest response to our request for brief updates removed all doubt. Included with the latest membership renewal forms were over 100 “tweets.” In format, a tweet is but 140 characters, including spaces! But many of the responses we received exceeded that limit and newspaper space. They are good stories, so we are looking into other options, such as Facebook (**REC Members**) and our web page on the Great Neck Teachers website (**gnteacher.net**). Until all that is functioning well, we are expanding to two pages and offering these somewhat abbreviated updates. In general, we note our colleagues have moved around the country, mostly to be with family or they split their time between New York and some other hospitable place. The overall number of retiree grandchildren is enough to populate a small city. The volunteer work done by our colleagues is truly extensive and must be credited with keeping so many programs alive in this time of budget cuts. Then there are, of course, the constant travelers for whom travel is the adventure. Still others just have the energy or entrepreneurial spirit either to begin new careers or continue their pre-retirement ones. In short, Great Neck alumni remain an outstanding group of creative, spirited professionals who continue to bring much to the worlds they grace.

In the category of new locations: Since 2005 **Ruth Borovicka (NM)** is in Athens, Ohio, singing in the Ohio U. choir and doting on 2 grandsons. **Daisy Schott (NH)** now resides in California near family and volunteers at Cedars-Sinai. **Shirley Mourges (SH)** sends regards from Lauderdale. **Phil White (SH)** now lives, fishes and canoes on a lake in Chester, PA. He and his companion boast 20 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. **Patricia Stafford (SR)** is still in Florida but now in The Villages. To be near her children and grandchildren, **Merri Gelbard (SM)** has moved to

California. A new grandson and a new Hastings-on-Hudson home brings joy to **Elaine Weiss (NH)**. **Pat Meyersfield (Phipps)** divides her time between Florida and Riverhead while still making time for her grandson. **Gail Kempton (SR)** has 10 grandchildren and is building a new home in Cutebogue on the North Fork. **Pat Sullivan (NM)** has gone south to Wilmington, NC, but his grandson lives in Okinowa. Pat, and so many grandparents, rely on Skype and FaceTime to stay connected.

The grandchildren tally is impressive **Elaine Wolf (JFK)**, a 1983 retiree, shares that a good life and attitude give much happiness as do her 39 great-grandchildren. **Elaine Sonenberg (SR)** voices the same sentiment as she celebrates her two grandchildren. **Susan Grant (Homebound)** now has 7 great-grandchildren. **Geri Pentecost (SHS)** takes time from her manager’s position at H&R Block to indulge 6 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. **Babette Eckstein (SMS)** sends good thoughts and notes she now has 10 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. **Sylvia Samuels (EMB)** adds 2 grandchildren to the “grand” tally. **Mary Macchio (SHS)** speaks of downsizing but not in the grandchildren department; she has 6. **Phyllis Zuckerman (EMB)** just moved to Florida and reports a new grandchild. A fall Israel trip is planned. **Karen Burden (SHS)** reports 5 grandchildren, and with her partner Richard the total is a baker’s dozen. **Marie O’Connell (JFK)** is a first time grandparent as is **Tom Neyland (SHS)**. **Bob Baratta (SHS)** uses his track experience to keep up with 11 active grandchildren. **Norma Gastwirth (SMS)** grandmother to 8, still travels extensively, most recently to Normandy Beach, returning on the Queen Mary. **Anita Friedman (VS)**, when not enjoying her grandchildren, is off to Bali, Java and Dragon Island. Another traveler, **Joan Solow (NHS)** has 5 grandchildren to bring souvenirs from Russia, Italy and Alaska. **Joe Zanchelli** celebrates his 63rd wedding anniversary and the first of 8 grandchildren’s weddings.

Other celebratory news: **Dorothy Wylie (LS)** had a big “bash” for her 99th birthday. **Vincenza Jackowski (EMB)** celebrated her 90th. **Lorraine Reit (NHS)** [3 grandchildren] celebrated her 85th before heading to Istanbul and the Black Sea. **Ed Corley (SHS)** is ready to celebrate his 40th year as Pastor of Mt. Olive Church and his 80th birthday. He adds 5 grandchildren to the tally. **John Thomas (NMS)** has returned to NY and will celebrate a 50th wedding anniversary. **Edie and Bill Ryall (the Cottage and NMS)** celebrated their 55th with 6 grandchildren in attendance. Congratulations to **John Liotta (SMS)** on his recent wedding. **Evelyn Arenella (LS)** celebrated her son’s California wedding and the two grandchildren that joined the family. **Miriam Chatinover (SMS)** is to be honored for her 20 years as president of the Lakeville section of the National Council of Jewish Women. Her volunteer work continues with the Great Neck/Manhasset Child Care Partnership.

Many of our colleagues used this opportunity just to say hello and express appreciation for how the *TIES* keeps us connected. Those sending greetings include: **Mary Ingham (SHS)**; **Ann Mendoza (SMS)**, who splits her time between Delrey and NY, still subs; **Betty Meron (LS)** when not enjoying the morning paper in bed or traveling, works in real estate; **Barbara Scheid (NMS)** still enjoys her Port Washington waterfront; **Belle Sokoloff’s (SMS)** husband Harold sends greetings; **Bob Sholitan (Adult Ed)** writes [bobs-theatre-blog.blogspot.com](http://bobs-theatre-blog.blogspot.com); Frank Cusack, spouse of **Edie Cusack (SHS)**, likes keeping in touch through the *TIES* as does **Mitzi Witkin (NMS)**. Other members of the “hello” chorus include **Joyce Bernard (SMS)** and **Barbara Barry (Phipps)**. **Jerry Levine (SHS)** has taken up photography; a good thing given his extensive travels to exotic places like Tanzania and Morocco. Then, too, there is the grandson who is picture perfect.

More greetings were sent by **Barbara Leibman (LS)**. She and her husband now reside full time in their Lake Success home. **Sharon Culianos (JFK)** lives in Naples, Florida but continues to travel to Europe and always includes an annual two week stay in NYC. **Bill Reilly (NHS)** moved from Great Neck to Sag Harbor. For 8 years, he served as an EMT in their volunteer ambulance corps. From that, he has moved to Habitat for Humanity volunteer work and happily reports helping build 3 houses. When not volunteering, he is enjoying his children and grandchildren. **Al Pinter (SJHS)** and his wife divide their time between Maine and Florida but have included travel to 120 countries over 28 winters. **Dick Sadlo (NHS)** and his wife just completed a round trip crossing of the Atlantic on the *Queen*

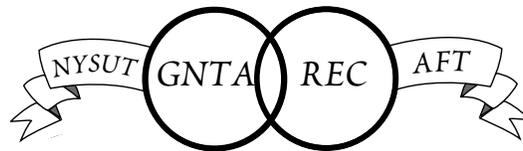
*Mary 2*. They proudly report their son’s retirement from the Air Force with the rank of colonel. **Ronda Callucci (LS)** sends her hello from the Blue Ridge Mountains. She feels thankful each day. Her retirement, her family and her volunteer work fill each day. Then, from Birmingham, Michigan, **Annette Berson (JFK)** sends a joyful hello and good wishes to all. **Dutch Hess (SHS)** and his wife of 63 years enjoy their life in Fort Myers where they volunteer in community affairs and outreach programs. Dutch also sings in a men’s chorale. Five children and nine grandchildren keep them busy. **Bernard Villemaire (NS)** retired in 1986 and at this juncture is happy to report no major changes, just a reduction in the energy to travel. **Jerry Richards (SMS)** is still a professional actor. His last film was *The End*. He and his wife divide their time between Manhattan’s Chelsea and Rockville Centre. **Fran Gordon (SR)** in addition to extensive travel, continues her volunteer work with Nepal Program for Progress. **Marcia Weinberg’s (SHS)** love of the musical stage has continued into retirement in Arizona. Recently she wrote and appeared in a musical revue based on Lorenz Hart. She and fellow performers call their group Broadway Babies. When they take their show on the road they often perform at retirement homes -to rave reviews! Also still creating and performing is **Dave Bobrowitz (SMS)**. As composer /arranger he has compiled over 100 published works.

Overall, while most of us are still very active, there are challenges that have come with age. Despite these, their view of life and their attitude speaks to the quality of their character and their spirit. **Helen Segal (NMS)** continues to thrive in the backyard of Lincoln Center but husband Alvin has had medical issues and most sadly her beloved son Josh died this past March. **Joseph Tursi (LS&SRS)** says hello from Florida where he and his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Parkinson’s Disease has hampered his travel but not his spirits. **Arnold Messner (NHS)** too, continues to travel despite some short hospital visits. **Don Samuels (SH)** sends greetings from Arizona. Sadly, he reports his struggle with Parkinson’s. **Jacci Tutt (SHS)** while garnering awards for her volunteer efforts has become the primary care giver for husband Sam. **Janet Ullmann (Phipps)** is as high spirited as ever despite a debilitating muscular disease. She reports she would rather be still working! And some of our colleagues are doing just that, but that is for the next issue.

sense continue to serve her effectiveness as a leader.

As a fellow educator (she once taught in the NYC public schools), she shared her perspective on education issues affecting all localities. One such topic is the much discussed but little understood tax cap. Judi, displaying again her knowledge of budgets and governance, does appreciate how the cap actually works and the economic strains and challenges it presents to every community. While citizens do not want services cut, they also do not want tax increases- two incompatible stances. Judi noted that even if a community has the will to break the cap, presently such an action is further stymied by the state legislature's election year promise of a tax refund for not breaking the cap. In the political polarization that is the norm today, education has been added to the mix of social and economic issues. Through all this, the Honorable Judi Bosworth, never short of common sense, continues to chart a course to best serve the community.

to the defined benefit pension. And, there are very pointed attacks on the institution of public education. Those attacks and threats are well financed. To answer these threats, there needs to be an equally well financed response team. Lobbyists for NYSUT/AFT are part of that response team, yet, there are so many in our own organization who leave the heavy lifting to just a few. REC has 752 members, but in last year's Vote-Cope drive, only 236 gave. Legislators in Washington and Albany hold sway over the quality of our lives. Those legislators need to know retirees are a force to be reckoned with and NYSUT/AFT lobbyists do that. Nibbling a free lunch now may result in no lunch later. As part of your support for earned retirement benefits and public education, be sure to contribute to VOTE-COPE.



## Membership Memo

Our membership chair, Shelly Stern, thanks members who responded promptly to the last June renewal mailing. She also reports that the new Membership Directory 2014-2015 will be mailed to members by the end of December. All items communicated by November 1, 2014, were included. Please make the following changes and additions when you receive the new directory:

**Change:** Don Barry Email to: dmdonbarry@gmail.com

**Change:** Evelyn Willard address to: 22 Bayview Court, Manhasset, NY 11030

**Add:** Patricia Goodman, 8 Barstow Rd. Apt.4F, Great Neck NY 11021, Tel. 917-769-7263, email, p.goodman46@gmail.com

**Add:** Jayne Rosenberg, 38 Summit Rd., Port Washington, NY 11050, Tel. 516-883-5315, email, jayros1212@aol.com

## REC on Facebook

REC has entered the world of social media with its own Facebook page: **REC Members**. To participate, one must be both a Facebook member and a REC member. Once on the REC Members page, simply make a request to join the group. Mike Golden will act as a kind of web-master and oversee the page. The page is meant to rekindle the sense of community we had while inservice and to provide a place for sharing and keeping in touch with colleagues who are now scattered across the world. If you have questions about the page, or are having difficulty signing on, send an email to: [mgolden21@gmail.com](mailto:mgolden21@gmail.com).



# Fall Luncheon



1. Gail Kempton, Nancy Beckmeyer, Elaine Sonenberg; 2. Freda Guilbert, Kathleen Hyl; 3. Diane Romano, Eileen Kehoe, Maureen McPartland; 4. Amy Ang, Carol Morrison, Roy Viskupic; 5. Cecile Saretsky, John Cave; 6. Mary Ingham, Pat Callaghan; 7. Shelly Sobel, Janet Dansbury, Sue Miller; 8. Bob Abrams; 9. Sheila Scimone; 10. Carole Levitt, Nancy Beckmeyer; 11. Marilyn Sprigman, Meryl Givener; 12. Geri Pentecost; 13. Sherry Scher, Tom Russell, Pat Master, Judy Viskupic; 14. Charlotte Schiffman, Linda Smith, Elaine Sobel.



15. Carol & John Malinowski, Edie Ryall; 16. Bev Zeldin, Joan Goldman; 17. Lynn Rosenstock, Ronnie Beecher, Barbara Singer, Barbara Raber; 18. Bill Ryall, Nancy Chauvin; 19. Ethel Pomerantz, Renee Staal; 20. Rose Grabelsky, Jane Alwais

# *Holiday Luncheon & Meeting*

**Thursday, December 11, 2014**

**Westbury Manor**

**South side of Jericho Turnpike, Westbury, NY • 516-333-7117**

**10:45 Registration • 11:15 General Meeting**

**11:45 Social Hour: Cash Bar & Hors d'oeuvres • 12:30 Lunch**

Garden Salad, Grilled Salmon or Chicken Princess, Dessert, Coffee, Tea or Soft Drinks

**Musical Program presented by South Middle School**

Directed by Alan Schwartz

Guest: Dr. Thomas P. Dolan, Superintendent of Schools

## *Thursday, December 11 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 December 5th to:  
**Grace Warner, 19 Travers Street,  
Manhasset, NY 11030-2223**

Cancellation requests must be called in by December 8th to Grace, 516-627-5687.

*Rose Grabelsky  
Program Chair*