

# Great Neck Ties

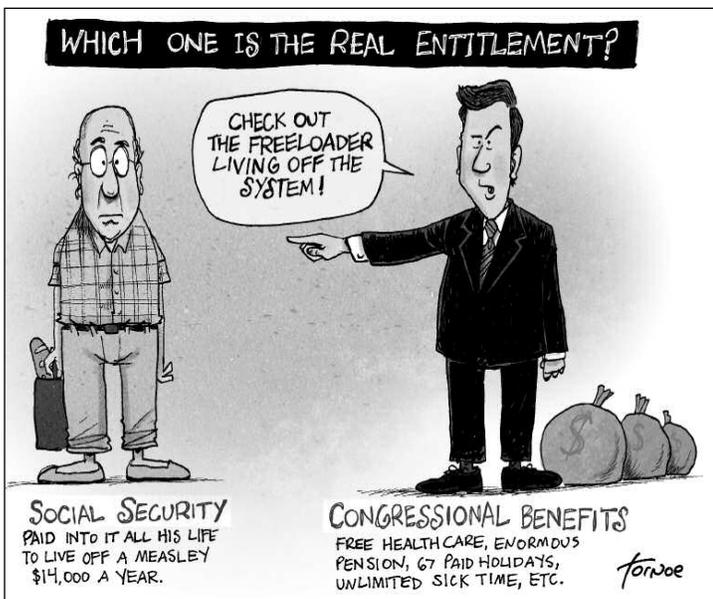
Volume 35, No. 2

Spring 2015

## Troubling Times

Bill Toto

In the midst of the debate about the solvency of Social Security, facts are extremely important, and lies and half-truths are most harmful. With a new majority in Congress, unless we are vigilant and



lobby for the truth about Social Security, we will be short-changed and future retirees, including children and grandchildren, will not see this well-earned benefit.

### Social Security Works

- In 2014, Social Security had about \$3 trillion in surplus funds;
- The Social Security Administration has never missed a payment to a beneficiary since its inception on January 1, 1937;
- By law, Congress borrows all the surplus funds each year, for the general budget. In reality, that borrowed money will never be paid back, in full, to the Trust Fund;
- Administrative costs for Social Security are only 0.8% of total expenditures;
- Social Security has never contributed to the national debt;
- The quick fix to any problem with Social Security is to raise the contribution rate on earnings beyond the present limit of \$118,500;

- Social Security is a bank account for beneficiaries that was funded during their working years; and
- Tampering with the current system would betray the promise of collecting Social Security, thus impairing seniors, disabled veterans and those with disabilities.

Yet, the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans reported that in the November 2014 elections, more than 1/2 (57%) of senior voters supported candidates who want to cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

### Navigating Murky Waters Ahead

- With the new Congress in Washington we will see demands to reduce senior earned benefits, while protecting the wealthy, large corporations and providing less regulations for Wall Street where the global recession began.
- A report from the Center for American Progress (CAP) showed that the increasing inequality in income in the country can have long-term, dangerous effects on the fiscal well-being of Social Security. The CAP analysis illustrated that benefit cuts and any type of privatization are unnecessary if more money was collected from higher wage earners;
- In March, Sen. Sanders introduced the Social Security Expansion Act (S.731). The title includes enhancing Social Security benefits and ensuring the long-term solvency of the Social Security program. However, the Republican agenda precludes such a bill. *Govtrack* gives it a 1% chance of being enacted.
- In April, Congressional Reps. John Delaney (D-MD) and Tom Cole (R-OK) filed for legislation to create a bipartisan commission to ensure the long term solvency of Social Security. The 13 member commission would include 12 members  
Recommendations must be provided to Congress within one year of its creation. A minimum of nine votes is required before recommendations would be sent to Congress and the President. Remember the disastrous Simpson-Bowles Commission? Another waste of time and taxpayer money being proposed when the solutions are simple:
- One of the most devious solutions being promoted by politicians in Washington to cure the so-called

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

Cont'd from pg 1

existing problems of Social Security is called the Chained CPI (Consumer Price Index). Presently, the Social Security COLA is connected to the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners (CPI-W), which looks at price changes in the average set of goods purchased by urban wage earners. The formula does not protect seniors' purchasing power, especially not recognizing that seniors spend two to three times as much of their budget on medical care than younger people. However, those in Congress who want to cut Social Security benefits would do so by tying the COLA to the chained CPI (C-CPI-U), an even smaller measure of inflation. The chained CPI assumes that a lower COLA is acceptable because seniors substitute cheaper products when prices go up. Health care costs, however, cannot be substituted for a cheaper version. The first clue or red flag that this new method is going to hurt seniors is that it is projected to save about \$230 billion. Seriously! That savings belongs in my pocket and your pocket. It comes from our Social Security bank accounts.

## You're In Charge

To repeat, vigilance and lobbying are necessary to protect and preserve this wonderful earned benefit called Social Security. We must be in touch with our federal legislators and the President. Making calls, writing notes and/or letters, signing petitions, faxing and emailing them is important. Our contacts with them show we care deeply about our benefits and the benefits of those who retire in the future. As union activists we must "fight back, fight forward and move forward."

*The GNTS Retiree Community*  
*is cordially invited to the*  
*Great Neck Public Schools*  
*Showcase of Achievement:*  
*Celebrating 200 Years of Excellence...*  
*and the Kickoff for 200 More!*  
*Sunday, April 26, 2015*

*1-4 p.m.*  
*South High School*  
*341 Lakeville Road, Great Neck, NY*

*Reception*  
*Reflections*  
*Presentation of*  
*200th Anniversary Alumni Awards*  
*Showcases of Achievement:*  
*Presentations by district programs & organizations*



# Grace Warner

## 1917-2015

Grace Warner died peacefully at St. Francis Hospital on St. Valentine's Day at age 97 1/2. Grace, a much valued member of the REC Executive Board, served with distinction as the corresponding secretary. As our "Sunshine Lady," she reached out to members during their challenging times. Her thoughtful expressions of either sympathy or support were always well appreciated. But Grace's celebrity status shone most brightly as the program committee designee for receiving responses and checks for REC luncheons. She greatly enjoyed this responsibility for it employed her pleasant business-like manner and attention to detail. We will miss Grace's dedication, her sense of protocol, and, most of all, her support and friendship.

### Mark Your Calendar:



- |                    |                                      |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| April 26, 2015     | GNPS 200th Anniversary Reception     |
| April 27, 2015     | GNTA Elections (NYSUT-AFT Delegate)  |
| May 14, 2015       | REC Spring Luncheon, Swan Club       |
| May 27, 2015       | GNTA End of Year Reception           |
| September 30, 2015 | REC Fall Luncheon, Jolly Fisherman   |
| December 15, 2015  | REC Holiday Luncheon, Westbury Manor |

## IN MEMORIAM



*Arlene Michaelson*

SADDLE ROCK SCHOOL

*Dick Bolger*

SADDLE ROCK

*Sophia Piligian*

PHIPPS

*Madelyn Ciccolallo*

JFK SCHOOL

*Dorothy Prokopowicz*

NOTH MIDDLE

*Marie Devereaux*

EMB SCHOOL

*Marc Ross*

SOUTH HIGH

*Stephen Ingham*

SON OF MARY INGHAM

*Pat Stang*

JFK SCHOOL

*Shirley Greene*

PARKVILLE

*Rudy Kemmer*

NORTH HIGH

*Grace Warner*

JFK SCHOOL



*Sadly, though these deaths occurred many months ago, we have only just been informed of their passing.*

*Mildred Hoffman*

KENSINGTON SCHOOL

*Myrna Leboff*

*Elisa Moss*

*Carmela Mazzola*

LAKEVILLE SCHOOL

*Ruth Zimmerman*

NORTH MIDDLE

*Florence Ravitz*

SADDLE ROCK SCHOOL

*Barbara Simon*

PHIPPS

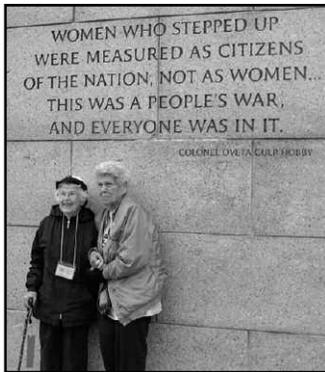


## Ties That Bind

Maureen Newman

Here is the final chapter of retiree news for the 2014-15 school year. For those who have yet to provide a bit of news, our summer membership mailing will include a reminder. If you have enjoyed reading about your colleagues, do not doubt they would enjoy knowing something about you. Hopefully, these TIES snippets will spark renewed communication. Perhaps it is time to whip out the directory, look up the phone number, address or email and make that contact, send that hello. In the spirit of reconnecting, as promised, a Facebook page for REC Members has officially been opened. Consider taking the leap into "the cloud" of social media and check out Facebook. For now, here is the ages old print version of retiree news. Predictably, GN retirees are not an idle lot.

2014 marked the 70th anniversary of D-Day. Included in the commemorations was the fact that there are just over one million WWII veterans still alive. In 1984, there were 10.7 million. **Eleanor Shafanda (JFK)** and **Bettie Wallach (SM)** shared



Bettie Wallach (L)

their stories of two vets. Eleanor's husband Richard served 4 years in the Pacific on an LST. Only upon retiring and moving to Spring Hill, Florida did they meet up with shipmates with whom they had long ago lost touch. Their bond was renewed and from 1990 to 2001, the vets held weekend reunions in 14 states. But by 2001, their numbers, too, had dwindled to seven including surviving spouses. Eleanor and Dick, both now 90, have moved near family in Virginia Beach. They send their hello's and their blessings. Bettie Wallach was a vet herself. She joined the Navy WAVES when she was 21 and still recalls when the recruiters, the sailor in his best "blues" and a female yeoman in her dress whites came calling at the Aurora, Illinois news office where she worked. Together they

wrote the copy publicizing all the reasons for-joining the Navy: 247 different paying jobs, food, shelter, medical care and ADVENTURE. Bettie was persuaded. Along with 18 other young women, she signed up and was sworn in at Chicago amphitheater during half-time at a football game. The Navy knew how to advertise. This past year, Bettie joined other vets on an Honor Flight to Washington, DC. Her daughter April (a GN grad) accompanied her as a volunteer. In 2011, she had learned from a TIES article about Gil Blum's honor flight. With connections made, Bettie flew to DC with other vets being honored for their service.

**Roberta Rosenberg (SR)** has developed a website [www.destinationaccessible.com](http://www.destinationaccessible.com) providing detailed mobility-related accessibility information for leisure locations, primarily throughout Long Island and metropolitan New York. She has been kept busy publicizing the site at libraries, civic centers, museums and the like. Site access is free but the information invaluable. **Joan Loeb (SH)**, who retired in 1987 as an ESL teacher, is now an immigration attorney. Presently, though, there are thoughts of another retirement and a move to West Palm Beach. In the first four years of retirement, **Natalie Fulwinder (PPS)** taught in the School Psychology program at Nova Southeastern University. In "re-retirement" she does adjunct work online, plays the oboe and babysits four grandchildren. **Martha Cohen (SR)**, too, has continued to teach. Recently, she applied for an early childhood facilitator's position with NYC schools. She sends a "cha-cha-cha" to all. **Peter Suchmann (SM)** started a new 3D printing company. His company sells the printers and trains users. **Joseph DeRiso (PPS)** and **Ilene DeRiso (SH)** continue in their special ed field by providing school districts with planning for transitional services. Almost fully recovered from the damages of Superstorm Sandy, when not working they enjoy golfing in Massachusetts and Florida. **Barbara Sarah (NHS)** retired from GN in 1994, and is retiring again after 14 years as director and founder of the Oncology Support

Program at a Kingston, NY hospital. **Glenn Pollock (NH)** was the Director of Counseling at Purchase College for several years. He continues his private practice and volunteers with the American Red Cross. **Bernie Looks (SH)** happily residing in Boca Raton, has been writing and publishing books on the internet. **Barbara Olsen (SR)** traded the teacher's desk for that of a student, a student at Oxford University. She crossed the pond, to take seminars in history and literature. Between cruises, **Naomi Katcher (NM)** works on an education committee focusing on Common Core Standards and limiting public funds to private schools. **Phyllis White (SM)** has completed 13 years at the Spence School in NYC and has, for the past four years, volunteered at the Bottomless Closet. This organization helps low income women prepare and dress for interviews and new jobs. Since relocating to Florida, **Kathie Walter (NM)** has immersed herself in a number of volunteer efforts from coordinating a music program (Kids Rock the Nation) to after school tutoring in the rural community of Espanola and helping organize the donation of computers, books and school supplies to a community center. **Sam Brenner (NM)** just celebrated his 80th birthday. By his count, he has taught for 55 years, ending his career at a college in Joshua Tree, CA. Now, when not journeying, he tutors at the local library. Sam would love to hear from you. He is just north of Palm Springs, CA. Another California resident, **Andrea Rosen (Phipps)** extends an invitation with the added incentive of a possible chocolate on the pillow? Introducing a romantic theme to the retirement years, Andrea reunited with a college sweetheart; they married and moved west. She still visits her four grandchildren in Germany and Minnesota. Another retiree with grandchildren on foreign soil is **Norm Wheeler (SH)**. Norm began retiring in 2004 and finally made the complete break in 2014. As promised, he now attends the luncheons, none of which interfere with his visits to Buenos Aires and his two grandchildren. To return to the romance theme, **Bertha Siegel (SR)** now living near her family in San Francisco, confides that she has been keeping pleasant company with a retired dentist she met at her senior residence. She sends sincere regards to all her old friends.

**Doris Gribbin (Wiles)** has kept busy traveling to various and sundry corners of the world: Europe, Africa as well as US travel to Kentucky, California and Florida. Additionally, she volunteers at a food pantry and visits nursing homes. **Mary Ann Bamberger (NH)** is planning some major travel this year beginning with an African safari in Nairobi and then onto Australia and New

Zealand. In an understatement, she reports, "Life is good." **Elizabeth Cordes (NM)** and her husband racked up many travel miles this year cruising around South America for 49 days and then taking a river cruise from Moscow to St. Petersburg. **Maureen Miletta (SR)** altered her usual month long Italy visit by staying in one place, the Tuscan town of Castiglione della Pescaia. What did not change was the search for the best food and restaurants.

Closer to home, warm congratulations to **Al Ruesch (SHS)** and **Ann Reusch (SHS)** who are celebrating their 50th anniversary. **Gil and Sondra Blum (SHS)** will celebrate their 60th anniversary. **Joan Schussheim (LS)** sends greetings from NYC though she still commutes back to Great Neck for rehearsals with the Great Neck Choral Society and book club. With the NYC Cecilia Chorale, she sings alto at their concerts in Carnegie Hall. **Angela Cozzi (NM)** sends a New York hello. **Gene Trimboli (NH)** confides he has been beset with ruminations on mortality and swears Pinelawn is sending him real estate options. These thoughts, he adds, may have been triggered by such time demarcations as the recent death of his sister and the family's oldest grandchild heading off to college. From Texas, **Ellen Bryant (VS)** sends regards as she continues to enjoy good health and travel adventures. From Florida, **Preston Provost (NH)** now 82, continues to sail, bike and play a mean game of tennis. He and his wife will celebrate a tenth anniversary this year. In a variation of "Life is good," he says, "I have no complaints"! **Stu Joseph (SH)**, continues to share his musical talents by playing in four bands and performing in nursing homes in Florida. **Mimi Schorr (SH)** stays very active in Delray Beach though she still misses sharing those activities with her husband Don, her partner for 59 years. **Stanley Shulman (NM)** splits his time between Florida and Long Island. Until 2010, he frequently served throughout the country, as an expert witness in athletic injuries. Now he reports spending time swimming, reading and worrying! His children are thriving in their careers and wife Bunny is working on her sixth novel. **Pat Zibulsky's (SR)** daughter Jamie has published a readers guide for parents. **Frances Bartholomew's (SH)** son Michael is now a pastor in West Hampton Beach. **Linda Alexander's (NH)** son Caleb is now a doctor of veterinarian medicine. **Leslie Gussin's (LS)** three children, graduates of the GN schools are all well. Randy in NC managing a restaurant; Gerri in NJ, a full time mom; Ronni in NYC a VP at QuarterSpot.

# Benefit Trust Fund News

Maureen Newman

The offerings of the GNTA Benefit Trust Fund (BTF) are valued by both inservice staff and retirees. The means of participation are, however, different for retirees. While active, all inservice staff are covered for all the various benefits without the payment of premiums. Instead, the District, as part of the negotiated GNTA contract, annually deposits the negotiated sum into the Benefit Trust Fund to cover benefit costs. In retirement, continued participation in the GNTA/ BTF, requires retirees to pay their own individual annual premiums for the specific coverages they elect to continue, i.e. excess medical, dental, legal benefit. The high level of fund participation by retirees speaks to the continued value a majority of members place on these coverages.

This high retiree participation is expected to continue. Going forward, there is a need for more information about how retirees use the fund and how retirees may be best served. That information is optimally culled from the annual auditor's report. Each year, GNTA authorizes and requires an audit of the Benefit Trust Fund. The fiscal year for GNTA /BTF is July 1 thru June 30. For purposes of a single but expanded audit that would include more details of retiree participation and usage, we need to align retiree coverage periods with the GNTA fiscal calendar. By using the same fiscal year, the annual audit will prove especially helpful. The expanded detail will provide clear and comprehensive information that can be used to inform and determine future decisions about premiums and benefits.

## Present BTF Coverage Period is:

September 1 thru August 31. Renewal forms have been sent in June with payment due by August 15.

## New BTF Coverage Period will be:

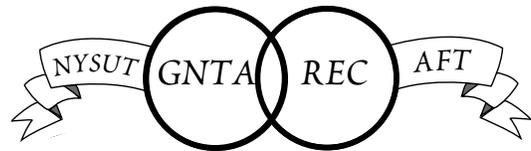
July 1 thru June 30. Renewal forms will be sent in April with payment due by June 15.

In this first year of transition, since members have already paid for July/August coverage, the premium for 2015-16 will be prorated accordingly.

## What stays the same:

- Coverage is still for a 12 month period.
- Membership in the Retired Educators Chapter is still required for participation in the BTF.
- REC Membership renewal forms will still be mailed in June. Dues payment for REC membership will still be due August 15.
- Dental renewal forms will still be sent by DH Cook.

DH Cook will still administer the insurance claims for Excess Medical and dental claims.



## *REC Elections - May 2015*

In accordance with the Retired Educators By-Laws, voting for elected officers of REC for a two-year term, starting September 1, 2015, will occur during the business meeting of the May 14th General Meeting and Luncheon at the Swan Club in Glenwood Landing. The Nominating Committee, Jane Alwais and Shelly Stern, announce the following slate of officers:

President: William Toto  
Vice President: Bill Ryall  
Treasurer: Carl Ring  
Recording Secretary: Geraldine Pentecost  
Corresponding Secretary:  
Member-at Large: Jane Alwais  
Member-at- Large: Maureen Newman  
Member-at-Large: Elaine Sobel  
Member-at-Large: Lainie Sternin

Other nominations will be accepted from the floor at the May 14th General Meeting

# *GNTA/REC Holiday Luncheon*

*Bill Ryall*

Our December holiday luncheon at the Westbury Manor gave us another chance to greet each other and catch up on the latest news. At the business meeting, Bill Toto provided an overview of education state-wide and nationally. Information on Social Security and other articles on our pension and health benefits were made available. Immediately after the Social Hour, South Middle School's music chair, Alan Schwartz, introduced an outstanding seventh grade chamber music quartet: Ann Zhang, violin; Alexandra Woroniecka, violin; Michael Song, viola; Jeffrey Ma, Cello. Their presentation included both holiday favorites and classical selections. Alan took the opportunity to thank us all for his own wonderful Great Neck school experiences. He continues that tradition with his own students.

The guest speaker, Superintendent Dr. Thomas P. Dolan, acknowledged his future retirement. Taking poetic license, Dr. Dolan offered some alternatives to the usual "to do" holiday list: be present ... think, laugh; be involved; wrap someone in a hug; send peace using phone calls or handwritten notes; donate food & time; make someone happy (not just with cookies); be the light -not just a gazer. He closed with a thank you to GNTA/REC for always giving him a warm welcome.

GNTA President Sheila Scimone followed by expressing concerns with the direction our education "leaders" have taken, from US Education Commissioner Arnold Duncan and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's declaration of war on teacher unions and public education, to NYS Education Commissioner John King and our Board of Regents' lack of full support for public education and attempts to weaken tenure. She noted that only 19% of NYSUT members voted in the last election; since two seats are up in the Great Neck Board of Education this May, we need a good turnout for candidates who fully support public education and teachers. Despite this backdrop, Sheila wished us all the very happiest of holidays!



1. South Middle Chamber Quartet; 2. Sue Miller, Maureen Miletta, Bea Schutzer; 3. Eileen Kehoe, Maureen McPartland, Pat Callaghan; 4. Abby Brown, Fredda Guilbert; 5. Arlette Sanders, Shelly Stern, Nancy Chauvin; 6. Bill & Edie Ryall; 7. Bill Toto; 8. Carl Ring, Paul Rafuse; 9. Gil & Sondra Blum; 10. John Cave, Sheila Scimone, Carl Ring, Leon Gabia; 11. Vicki Merton, Arlette Sanders



12. Leon & Carol Gabia; 13. Norm Wheeler, Tom Neyland; 14. Shelly Stern, Bill Toto, Joan Goldman; 15. Beverly Zeldin, Betty Meron, Barbara Raber; 16. Perry & Denise Eisner; 17. Betty Jo and Luritz Larson; 18. Tom Dolan, Bill Toto; 19. Tom Russell, Joan Eannaccone

# *Spring Luncheon & Meeting*

**Thursday, May 14, 2015**

**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

Fruit Plate, Garden Salad, Prime Rib au Jus, Herb Roasted Chicken Breast, Stuffed Sole

Newburgh, Vegetarian Plate, Ice Cream Eclair or Fruit. Coffee or Tea

Program: Viewing of "The First 200 Years" a video commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Great Neck Public Schools.

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

## ***Thursday, May 14th 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 6th to:

**Bill Ryall, 318 Rushmore Ave.,  
Carle Place, NY 11514**

Cancellation requests must be made to Bill by May 11, @516-333-9423

*Rose Grabelsky  
Program Chair*