

Spotlight 21

Bay Shore
Bayport-Blue Point

SERVING RETIREES FROM

Brentwood East Islip West Islip
Central Islip Islip Sayville
Connetquot



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July-August, 2015

Eleanor Eckman of Bay Shore Retired Teachers honored with NYSUT 2015 Outstanding Community Service Award

Speech by Joseph D'Antoni

At our Awards Luncheon on June 23rd RC 21 recognized Eleanor Eckman as the NYSUT 2015 Outstanding Community Service Award winner. Some of her many service activities were outlined by Bay Shore President, Joseph D'Antoni introduction speech printed below.

"Like most of you sitting here this afternoon, Eleanor was a dedicated educator for more than 30 years. She taught physical education and coached several team sports. She was an inspiration and a close friend to many of her students and athletes and still remains in contact with many through the social networks. She was highly regarded and respected by all of the staff at Bay Shore High School, and she inspired all with her dedication and professionalism. So how does Eleanor come to us today for special recognition? When Eleanor retired from teaching, she turned her attention to helping form the BSRTA. She became the first vice-president under Betty Siegel who was our first president. She helped write our constitution and initiated many programs. She served as our scholarship coordinator and ran our annual raffle fund raiser. A few years ago she organized and coordinated a volunteer symposium for our members to encourage their getting involved with a number of volunteer organizations.



Eleanor pictured with Mike & Louisa Eiermann and Frank D'mico, BSRTA president.

Beyond that, she initiated and helped create the volunteer program at Brookhaven Memorial Hospital in Patchogue. She wrote the guidelines for the intake interview for potential volunteers. She recruits, educates, and maintains communication with her team of volunteers. She has also conducted clothing drives for patients and is a member of the Patient Advocacy Board.

These days Eleanor devotes a lot of her "free" time to the Make-a-Wish program. She is a wish grantor and does the initial interview with potential recipients and their families. To hear Eleanor talk about one of "her families" it almost sounds as if she has personally adopted each one of them. She takes such pride in seeing their wishes fulfilled and works tirelessly to make sure that each wish is perfect down to the smallest detail. As the president and CEO of Make-a-Wish wrote in her letter of recommendation for Eleanor, 'We are humbled by the continuous amount of kindness Eleanor shares with us and our local children. We are fortunate to have such a compassionate and caring individual as part of our team. Eleanor does a wonderful job uncovering the story behind a child's chosen wish which allows us to deliver a personal and unique experience to each child.'

I believe the manager of volunteer services at Brookhaven Hospital sums it all up very nicely. 'Eleanor embodies the best of what Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center represents and exhibits a true dedication to serving her community.'

Along with the Bay Shore Retired Teachers' Association and its members, the RC 21 proudly commends Eleanor's work and hopes many of us will follow her call to enjoy the rewards of volunteering within our own communities.

"The only effective answer to organized greed is organized labor."

Thomas Donahue, Report to the Convention from the AFL-CIO Executive Council

A Message From Co-President Mike Eiermann



Will We Learn from History?

As a retired social studies teacher, I tend to see happenings in terms of their historical perspective. Our younger son is working on his PhD in economics. We were talking about the 2008 financial crisis back at that time, and I mentioned that I could see parallels with the 1920's – stagnant middle class wages, maxed-out credit, and an investment speculation bubble (housing prices & new investment strategies) that burst. Of course the wisdom of our 20-something son dismissed the ramblings of his 60-something father. But fortunately for me, it was not long after that some commentators were making the same observations.

If circumstances are such that thrift, energy, industry, and forethought enable the farmer, the tiller of the soil, on the one hand, and the wage-worker on the other, to keep themselves, their wives, and their children in reasonable comfort, then the State is well off, and we can be assured that the other classes in the community will likewise prosper. On the other hand, if there is in the long run a lack of prosperity among the two classes named, then all other prosperity is sure to be more seeming than real. Theodore Roosevelt, April 5, 1905

As I look at today's landscape, it reminds me of the late 19th/early 20th century Age of the Robber Barons – men like Rockefeller, Carnegie, Morgan, Vanderbilt – who made their fortunes by creating monopolies at a time when business regulations and tax laws were practically non-existent. Granted, the extremes of that time period no longer exist – the 12 to 16 hour work days, the use of script that could only be used at the company store to pay wages, child labor, the use of private police forces, the national guard, and federal troops to break strikes, etc. It was Progressive politicians and union activists who fought to change these egregious abuses. Teddy Roosevelt gave unionism a boost in 1902 when he forced coal mine owners to negotiate with striking workers by threatening to nationalize the mines. But now the social safety net that evolved through their efforts over the past 100+ years seems to be fraying as a cloud hangs over its future. The most recent addition, the Affordable Care Act, is decried as 'socialism' – the same pejorative used by opponents to describe Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, minimum wage laws, disability insurance, etc. when they were first introduced. What were once considered 'earned benefits' that would secure the future of workers and retirees are now characterized as 'entitlements' that are an onerous burden on the U.S. economy. Working class and middle class wages have not kept pace with inflation while the salaries of CEO's, compared to their workers, have increased by 1,000% since 1950. (*Keep in mind that a CEO is an employee, just like the rank-and-file*

worker. Stockholders are the true owners of a company.) Attempts to tax extreme wealth are dismissed as 'socialist attempts to redistribute wealth' even though 95% of new income over the past 10 years has gone to the top 1% of the American population. Efforts to raise the minimum wage and changes in overtime rules to protect against the abuse of low wage workers are opposed as too expensive for business. While that may keep prices low at certain retail outlets, there is a real cost. As much as \$1,500.00 of your health insurance premium is accrued by hospitals to cover the cost of caring for the uninsured, and government agencies spend about \$150 billion each year in supplemental benefits for the working poor. Mergers have reduced competition among companies, and families now have had to deal with ever rising costs. One area that directly affects many seniors has been the increased prices for medications, even generics. The list of adverse conditions for the working and middle classes goes on and on. Meanwhile, the top 10% of American society controls wealth equal to that of the other 90%.

When CEOs switched from asking the question of 'how much is enough' to 'how much can I get,' investor capital and executive talent started scrapping like hyenas for every morsel. Roger Martin, dean of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management

Capitalism may be an economic system for the production and distribution of goods, but it does not dictate how the profits are to be shared among those involved. Who speaks for the common man? Where are the unions that once stood strong, balanced the influence of executive power, and created the middle class? They have fallen prey to the same negative propaganda that is slowly trying to unravel the social safety net. Witness how one state legislature after another has passed 'right to work laws.' And now the Supreme Court is considering the constitutionality of 'agency fee' regulations... even though a prior court Supreme Court ruling found that they passed constitutional muster. Much of this onslaught against labor and union rights is the result of *Citizens United* which gave large corporations unprecedented freedom to use their power and wealth to pursue their goals. *The death-knell of the Republic had rung as soon as the active power became lodged in the hands of those who sought, not to do justice to all citizens, rich and poor alike, but to stand for one special class and for its interests as opposed to the interests of others.* Theodore Roosevelt, April 5, 1905

This September we will start a discussion as to ways that you can help turn back the tide... Till then keep abreast of the candidates and the issues, both in local elections as well as the general election in 2016. And stand strong with NYSUT with your contributions to Vote-Cope.

Paul Pecorale Speaks at June Awards Dinner

RC 21 President, Louisa Eiermann, started by reminding us of the strength in our numbers when voting in support of our inservice members as well as on retiree issues. She introduced Paul Pecorale, Vice President of NYSUT, who talked about the consequences of elections. With anti-teacher sentiment, led by Governor Cuomo, there are fewer recruits and more teachers leaving the profession. Tenure evaluations using 50% based on test scores are unacceptable. He stressed that with our numbers we could carry every election. We can educate the public and win elections for candidates who are public education and teacher friendly.

Some of the issues facing our state are: rent control, Education Investment Tax Credit (Vouchers by another name) charter school cap removal while many charters are under utilized, tax cap legislation, Supreme Court case regarding Agency fee collection, NYS Constitutional Convention, Medicare funding and more. Paul urged us to reach out to State Senators and legislators by email, letter or phone. **NYSUT.org** has all the contact information ready for you to access. We must act to be heard. If you have any questions or need help Paul's number is 631 321-0306.

RC 21 June Luncheon Celebrates Local Winners of NYSUT Communication Awards 2014 -15

Fourteen members from RC 21's locals won awards for their contributions to their local newsletters and one award went to a local website. The importance of keeping members informed of issues and keeping members in touch with each other is recognized by NYSUT and appreciated by our colleagues. Support your local efforts by contributing articles for your newsletters and become a union communicator.



Phyllis Goodwin for Best Graphic Design, Claire Geraci for Creative Writing, Adrienne Eastman for Best Photo or Illustration, Carmela Criscione for General Excellence, Gloria Hannemann for Best Website, and John Sherin for Best Article on Local Issues.



Nancy Libert for Best Photo or Illustration, Irene Spero, President, Brian Roethgen for Best Photo or Illustration, Mark Newhouse and James Nohe were unable to attend.



Mike and Louisa Eiermann with Marion Skirbe for General Excellence and Tom Bernagozzi for Best Creative Writing, Dave Phillips was unable to attend.



Methel Gale for Best Overall Graphic Design, Marilyn Gutierrez for Best Column, Pauline Slowey for Best Photo, Carolyn Caamano could not attend.

Spotlight 21

A Publication of **NYSUT Retiree Council 21**

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Mike Eiermann, Co-President
Marilyn Aitken, 1st VP
Simonne Harkavy, 2nd VP
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Forward changes in addresses/names to NYSUT and/or your local President

Continuing Education Grants

Each local chapter of RC 21 receives a Grant from our organization. The money may be given as a grant to one of its own member for use in advancing their education or avocation. Many chapters add the grant money to their own scholarship funds and award deserving students scholarships for advanced studies. We are proud to announce this year's recipients.

West Islip awarded seven \$1,000 scholarships to:



Alexandra Munno of Glen Annen, VA will attend Savannah College of Arts and Design for Fashion Marketing and Management



Christine O'Connell of Cary, NC will attend Duke University working towards a degree in Orthodontia



Emma Lyons of Argyle, NY will attend Sage College of Albany to pursue a career as a nurse practitioner in pediatric oncology



Jacob Gaddis of Berlin, MD. will attend Virginia Tech majoring in Business



Heather Manley of New Rochelle will be attending SUNY Binghamton to study Human Development and Psychology



Miranda Hogan of Bay Shore will be attending Hunter College majoring in Biology and Chemistry



Blake Hogan will attend Hunter as a Roosevelt Scholar

Islip awarded a \$1,000 Scholarship to:



Tia McDonald who will be attending St. Joseph's College with a major in Mathematics and Education.

Sayville awarded two scholarships to:

(Pictured with Joanne Hamilton Exec Board Representative)



Jessica Klassert will attend Oswego for education in Social Studies.
Colleen Montemagno won a nursing scholarship

Brentwood awarded two \$1,000 and one \$750 scholarships to:

(Pictured with Mrs. Kathleen Gulekson)



Keyanas Miller has been accepted to LIU Brooklyn Campus & Delaware State; her interests lie in early childhood education as well as film production and theater.
Katherine Escobar has been accepted to St. Joseph's, Hofstra, and Pace College.
Catalina Benavides has been accepted to SUNY New Paltz, Hofstra, and Queens College to major in Secondary Education.

Bay Shore awarded a \$1,000 Scholarship to:



Alexis Cofield a \$1,000 Scholarship. She will be attending NYU to study Musical Theatre.

East Islip gave the grant to Sharon Eckhaus an EI retiree toward supplies for Retired Senior Volunteer Program and food pantries. East Islip also awarded a scholarship to Jeffrey Cifelli of East Islip who will attend SUNY Oswego majoring in Technology Education.

Central Islip awarded two \$1,000 scholarships to Estefani Granados who will be attending St. Joseph's College majoring in Education and Noemi Amadeo will attend Liberty University majoring in forensics/criminal investigation.

Bayport-Blue Point scholarship winner is Amanda Falanga Honors Program at Suffolk County Community College.

RETIREE COUNCIL 21
Welcomes New Retirees to
Our Annual Brunch
Tuesday, October 27th, 2015
Villa Lombardi's
877 Main Street
Holbrook, New York 11741
(631) 471-6609
Guest Speaker
TBA
NYSUT Retiree & Social Services
Cost: \$38.00 for Current Members
Complimentary for New Retirees 2015

- Fabulous Buffet Brunch including Mimosas
 - Distribution of folders containing important information regarding retiree benefits and RC 21 programs
 - Door Prize & Raffles
 - Free Trade items available for purchase
 - Benefits Display
- Please join us in welcoming our New Retirees!**
- To ensure seating with your Chapter, please return your reservation form and check (payable to NYSUT RETIREE COUNCIL 21) ASAP

Name _____ Retiree Chapter _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

RSVP by October 14th, 2015
Mail to: (Check one)

New Retiree 2015: (Complimentary – Our Guest)

Marie Kanzler
204 Piney Street
Islip Terrace, New York 11752
(631) 581 – 5981

Current Member: (\$38.00 Check payable to
NYSUT Retiree Council 21)

Simonne Harkavy
104 Raleigh Lane
West Islip, New York 11795
(631) 661 – 4446

A special election will be held on
November 10, 2015 General Meeting
For Vice President , one Delegate to State Affiliate and two Alternates

Duly elected officers and delegates shall serve a three year term.

Candidates shall submit a letter of intent to the
RC 21 Elections Committee
Mary Schlaikjer
78 Bay Avenue
Huntington, NY 11743

Executive Board Meetings
2015 - 2016

General Membership Meetings
2015 - 2016

West Islip Public Library
Higbie Lane, West Islip

August 4th (If necessary) September 1st October 6th November TBA December 1st January 5th (If necessary)	February 2nd (If necessary) March 1st April 5th May 3rd June 7th	September 29th Oct. 27th (Welcome Brunch) November 10th December 8th (Holiday Brunch)	Jan. & Feb. no meetings March 8th April 12th May 10th June 21st (Awards Luncheon)
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