

Spotlight 21

SERVING RETIREES FROM

Bay Shore Brentwood East Islip West Islip
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Visit our webpage: <http://ny.aft.org/rc21> for the expanded color version of the Spotlight.

A Message From

President Louisa Eiermann



WHAT MY CELL PHONE'S GPS TOLD ME

The events of the last few weeks have caused me many a sleepless night. I am certain that I am not alone in this as many of you, no matter whom you voted for, also, are thinking and asking, "What's next?" Many answers appear to that question every day. I then ask myself other questions, like "What do I believe?" and "What do I do about what I believe?" as the realities of the election results take hold. I must admit that I was in shock as the outcome of the election became very clear. I had believed what seemed to be the inevitable, that our endorsed candidate would win. Of course, there was always that nagging feeling that she would not win, and so, she did not.

You will know what the title of my article means soon enough but first it is necessary for me to share with you my experiences while away on our recent vacation. Michael and I headed for Texas right after our Retiree Brunch. Our son, Michael, is stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, which is in El Paso. He is attending Sgt. Major Academy and will only be there for the year. We saw his being there with his family as an opportunity to explore a part of the country where we had never been.

We first spent a week in San Antonio and it was love at first sight! Our hotel was one block from the Alamo in one direction and one block from the Riverwalk in another direction. Wherever we went, whether to the moving experience of the Alamo or the Missions, or the day trip to the humble LBJ homestead and then to his Ranch, or the wonderful celebrations of the Day of the Dead, (Dia de Muertos), or walking riding and dining on the Riverwalk, we were overcome with the beauty and history of this amazing

city. Everywhere we went we felt the graciousness of the citizens of the MANY cultures that helped create the essence of San Antonio. Every day became an eye-opening opportunity.

We then drove the 500-plus-miles from San Antonio to El Paso. I was very anxious since we had been warned to fill up the gas tank whenever we could and bring food and water, just in case! Michael teases me now because none of that was necessary but I will tell you that the entire distance encompasses ONE Congressional district. Thus, there is a scarcity of populated areas along that route (10) and there is a need to be prepared. Only when we arrived in El Paso did we discover that our rental car did not have a spare tire! Our adventure, however, enabled us to experience a landscape that was awesome in its vastness. Then, because of the geography of that part of Texas, as we got closer to El Paso, so did the border with Mexico. Eventually, we saw the Rio Grande and knew that Mexico was just on the other side. No fences or walls appeared when we first saw the river. In fact, if you looked to the other side of the river, you saw exactly what was on the US side: no difference. ***Both sides looked the same.***

Our time in El Paso was wonderful. We loved our time with our son and his family. I always find life on a military base very interesting and sometimes unsettling, with jets taking off, military personnel, signs of a nation ever preparing to protect. El Paso itself is divided by the mountains and, on a ride through the mountains, I realized that they are as lovely in their barrenness as the mountains of the east are with their forests. When we set off to explore the city we discovered that the people were as gracious as in San Antonio, with the influences of the Mexican and

Mexican-American and Native American cultures strong, as in the city of San Antonio. I often thought to myself, without the people from these cultures, there would be no San Antonio or El Paso. Yet, each is as American a city as any other in our country: posters all over El Paso were advertising the weekend event at the convention center saying, “Feliz Navidad, Y’All”. That is south Texas in one simple phrase!

With the background filled in I now get closer to explaining the reason for my title. There is a border crossing in El Paso into the Mexican city of Juarez. There are fences and walls there, and also for miles on either side of that crossing, with a strong border patrol presence. Two things happened while travelling near that crossing. First, as we were using my phone’s GPS to direct us around the city, it suddenly started marking distance in kilometers. The second thing was that as we were returning from visiting several Missions in the area, the phone’s GPS told us that the fastest way back to Fort Bliss was to make a left, cross into Mexico and then eventually return to Texas. No hoopla! The GPS did not detect a border change or people change or any change. The man-made border had no influence on the GPS. With a switch to kilometers, the border could have been anywhere. In fact, there were times in history when the border was fluid and followed the changes in the

course of the Rio Grande. Remember, too, that both sides of the river look the same.

So, what does my story or my GPS’s findings have to do with the questions posed at the beginning of my story? As I reflected on what the cities and the GPS had to offer, my thoughts about the future of our country began to crystalize. The visit to both cities moved me greatly. As a result of that visit, it now is ever more evident that divisions are often man-made and, because of that, we should be discerning as to whom we allow to promote those divisions. If the election appears to have left us a divided nation, we need to ask who created that division and should we give that person or people the power to make us even more divided? This has always been a great country where our disagreements can be aired without fear of reprisal. So, I have decided, shedding the malaise I experienced after the election, to continue to make certain that this continues to be so. ***Believe please*** that we still have the power to ***give*** power or to take it away. Let us be energized as we continue to work ***TOGETHER*** for our common good, our future.

As my cell phone’s GPS told me, don’t be fooled by fences or walls. They often get in the way of following the easiest way to where we need to be.

In My Opinion

I must admit that the election results made me want to insulate myself from any and all news programs in the hopes I would not have to hear any more political talking heads make predictions which were so off base. Then I realized that this would be worse than our President-elect’s nationalistic isolationist bent. So here I am asking that you be vigilant and take an active role in monitoring the actions of the new administration along with its Republican House and Senate.

Both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump ran on protecting Medicare. However Trump selected Representative Tom Price for Secretary of Health and Human Services Secretary. As HHS Secretary, Price will oversee a \$1 trillion budget, including Medicare and Medicaid, which affect over 100 million Americans. This appointment is a clear step toward Paul Ryan’s plan to dismantle Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. Mr. Ryan’s plan, as outlined in his “A Better Way,” promises cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Seniors would use government vouchers to buy insurance on the private market. Tom Price has consistently been an ally in Ryan’s fight to dismantle the Affordable Health Care Act (Obama Care) as well as his plans to destroy the guarantees that seniors will not be denied health care because they can’t afford it.

As seniors we must remain active and vocal in our support of our earned benefits and let those who would destroy these fundamental tools of economic security - Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security - understand that we will not accept “A Better Way” blindly.

You can keep informed by going to **NYSUT.org** and **info@socialsecurityworks.org** (Social Security Works leads the fight every day to expand and protect our Social Security system). The New York State Alliance for Retired Americans (NYSARA) is dedicated to protecting our earned benefits. Their website has great information and action plans for us. The site is **www.newyorkstateara.org**. These sites work diligently to follow and report on issues important to us.

In Unity,
Diana Baranec
Editor

Retiree Council 21
PRESENTS
ALEXANDER HAMILTON TOUR
Thursday, April 27, 2017



Day will include:

Guided Tour of Alexander Hamilton Home
Guided Tour of Morris Jumel Mansion
Narrated Tour of *Hamilton's Harlem* with a Local Guide
Lunch (included) at Babbalucci's of Harlem (3 Course)
Deluxe Motorcoach Transportation
All Tips & Taxes

7:00am – Depart Suffolk ---150 Motor Pkwy, Hauppauge
7:30am – Depart Nassau ----1000 Woodbury Road, Woodbury

****SPACE IS LIMITED TO ONLY 30 GUESTS – RESERVE EARLY!!!****

Cost - \$110.00 - Payment due on or before March 1, 2017
\$115.00 – non-member guests

Send check and form below to:

Jean Economos
25 Durham Lane
Bayport, NY 11705
Jean (631) 472-3811

Alexander Hamilton Tour

Checks made out to: **Retiree Council 21**

Name _____ Chapter _____

Address _____ Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ (for emergency use only)

Guest Name _____ Home Phone _____

Please check where you will meet the bus Suffolk pick-up Nassau pick-up

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____ for _____ (#) people

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Forward changes in addresses/names to NYSUT and/or your local President

RC 21 Meeting Schedule 2017

General Meetings

10:15 AM
West Islip Public Library
Higbie Lane

January & February No Meeting

March 21st

April 18th

May 9th

June 13th - Awards Luncheon
Timber Point Country Club
Great River, NY

Executive Board Meetings

10 AM
NYSUT Offices, 150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY

January 10th & February 7th (if needed)

March 14th

April 4th

May 2nd

June 6th

Next General Meeting
March 21st
West Islip Public Library
10:15 AM

*RC 21 EXECUTIVE BOARD
WISHES YOU AND YOURS*

A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

AND

A HEALTHY HAPPY NEW YEAR