



# *R-UTN Newsletter*

Volume 30 Number 3

August- September 2017

## **ANNUAL PICNIC**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2017**

**11:30 AM**

### **VANDERBILT MUSEUM**

180 Little Neck Rd,  
Centerport, NY 11721  
(631) 854-5579



### **BUFFET PICNIC**

**WITH WRAPS AND HOT AND COLD DISHES**  
(Only water, soft drinks and beer will be served)

**FREE FOR PAID UP R-UTN MEMBERS** (guests \$10 per guest)

**RSVP BY AUGUST 29, 2017 ON MEMBERSHIP FORM MAILED TO YOU  
SEPARATELY**

JOIN COLLEAGUES TO WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

ENJOY THE BEAUTIFUL VANDERBILT GROUNDS

PARKING IS FREE

RENEW FRIENDSHIPS

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE    FRANCES LA DUCA**

**Welcome** to a new year of R-UTN activities. Your membership renewal form is in the mail. Please fill it out and send it in with your dues as soon as possible. Your voluntary donations to the scholarship fund can be included with your dues. Remember that you can also select the option on the form to get our newsletter as an attachment to email in place of a paper copy.

Welcome also to our new retirees – **Pam Van Yahres**, Pulaski; **Angela Mislowack**, High School Special Education; **Pam Waldroup**, High School Art; **Margaret Minardi**, High School Art; **Shelly Brischler**, East Northport 6<sup>th</sup> grade; **Mary Ann Lehanka**, Ocean Ave. Special Education and **Ellen Comisky**, Pulaski Special Education. We are looking forward to you joining us as an active member, attending our social events and perhaps helping on one of our committees.

**Our Annual Picnic** will be September 12th at the beautiful Vanderbilt Mansion Museum. The front page flyer has all the details. The tram will be available to take those in need to the tent. The picnic is a great opportunity to meet with colleagues and to catch up with news. The Museum has generously invited us to attend the Planetarium 2 pm show again this year. Hope to see you all there on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Great news** – thanks to the work of webmaster **Linda Quinn**, our website has earned a certificate of distinction from NYSUT in their annual communications contest. We were competing with retiree units from around the state – so this is quite an honor. Please remember to check the site regularly for up to date information – and send items of interest for our member activities section to Linda at [lsquinn@digitalalquinn.com](mailto:lsquinn@digitalalquinn.com).

**To acknowledge** the great work **Suzy Travis** has been doing on our newsletter, we hope to submit it in next year's competition. We need your help – send us items ([suzytravis@optonline.net](mailto:suzytravis@optonline.net)) on your social and community activities, travels, accomplishments, etc., to be shared with your colleagues. You may encourage others to also get involved.

**Many thanks** also go to the rest of the Executive Board members. Our Social Committee – **Irene Eckert**, **Ed Nostrand**, **Jane Flood** and **Teddy Emanuel** – plans get together, **Hank Kasven** continues to provide information on Health care insurance, **Roseann Giovina** keeps our records, **Judy Bensimon** takes care of membership, **Dave Hosie** balances our books, **JoAnne Kroon** serves as vice president and VOTE/COPE chair, **Bobbi Scott** runs our email alert system send her time sensitive items ([utn-r@optonline.net](mailto:utn-r@optonline.net)) and emeritus members **Miriam Feinstein**, **Gloria Hall**, **Frank Kondrich** and **Larry Ryan** are always available to pitch in where needed. They all work for the success of our organization.

Contact me [laduca@aol.com](mailto:laduca@aol.com), or any of us with ideas for future organization activities. Better still, come and join us. We announce our Board meetings by email and on the website.

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION - What's it all about

*Frances La Duca*

By law, every 20 years we get to vote on whether we should have a Constitutional Convention to open New York State's constitution for review, changes and updates. The Constitutional Convention proposition is **on the ballot for this November 7<sup>th</sup>**.

I urge you to **VOTE NO** on this proposition. WHY?

- A convention is one way to amend the Constitution to address provisions that need review or updating. The second way to amend the Constitution is through the legislative process. An amendment is proposed by a legislator, if passed by the legislature, it is then on the ballot at a general election for public approval or rejection.
- The last Constitutional Convention cost the public SEVERAL HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS. It presented 10 changes to the public – all were voted down. Over 90% of the delegates were also members of the State Legislature – they collected two salaries for the year. In today's dollars – a convention is estimated to cost A BILLION DOLLARS or more!

Over 200 amendments have been made through the legislative process – most recently the amendment to allow casino gambling. These amendments were enacted at no additional cost to the public.

There are several provisions in the Constitution that are under attack by private and for profit organizations.

- “Forever Wild” protections for the Adirondack State park and other wilderness areas – numerous commercial companies have been lobbying to open these areas for “development” – building of private for profit resorts, spas, hotels, casinos, etc.
- Right to a free public education and the Blaine Amendment – the Charter school movement wants free rein in establishing schools and gaining access to state aide.
- Right of public employees to unionize – if removed it means the end of Taylor Law protections for public civil service employees.

Lastly – our pensions. They are not safe – consider – if the guarantee of our defined pension benefit is removed and changed to individual IRS, ROTH, etc. investment plans – current employees no longer contribute to the pension fund – it will eventually go bankrupt and our pension checks will stop coming.

**Please consider these points and vote NO on the Constitutional Convention proposal Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>.**

## Member News

**CHRIS PENDERGAST, retired Bellerose Elementary teacher**, Founder and President of Long Island's **Ride for Life**, an organization that has raised over six million dollars for ALS research, is still riding after 24 years of fighting and besting this disease. This past May he and two fellow patients along with a core of volunteers headed by retired Northport teacher, Charlie Catania (retired Northport Phys. Ed teacher), began the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary wheelchair ride from Yankee Stadium to Washington, D.C. They braved a monsoon across the George Washington Bridge for starters.

When not planning the May Ride, Chris, with fellow patients and volunteers, delivers effective and moving school presentations to all grade levels in districts throughout the metropolitan area. Last winter, teams presented over 70 assemblies. I am one of Chris's co-presenters, serving as his voice for most of each program. Using an age-appropriate script, Chris and I exchange delivery (he with an artificial voice from his eye-controlled computer), telling his story, informing students of the disease while instilling a sense of determination and perseverance. A video showing former Rides and school visits from many years ensues. Then come the questions from the kids, a torrent of them from elementary, a good number from middle school, and a few from high school. The programs are universally well received.

Chris is welcomed and honored by teachers and administrators wherever he goes, adding new schools each year. Northport - E. Northport schools are well-represented. Our presentation with the video motivates students and staff to join the fight to make a difference by fund-raising for a cure. They look forward to a visit from Chris and other patients during the Ride in May.

Now in my 70's, I did not expect to return to the classroom and auditorium, but here I am, with Chris and other co-presenting patients, in Teacher Heaven.

Glenn Baldwin

**PETE WHITE, retired NHS Social Studies teacher**, will be leading his 63rd delegation to Nicaragua from August 15-21, 2017. There are 11 members in the group including two doctors (brain surgeon from Pt. Jefferson, his wife and two sons; GP from Stony Brook and his son), one alumnus from Northport HS class of 2005, and four members of my not-for-profit charitable organization called Friends of Students for 60000. While there they will be funding and helping construct two sturdy houses for homeless families. These two will bring our total since 2013 to 27 houses. They will also be furthering work on a large, much-needed park they've been constructing since 2014. Presently it has regulation size baseball and soccer fields, and they are now adding a Little League size field for younger players, male and female. While there, the doctors will also assist in the health clinic built by Northport HS's Students for 60000 in 1996 and in the hospital in Leon. Anyone interested in further information, see their website: [www.fsf60k.org](http://www.fsf60k.org), or contact Pete White at [pedro831@optonline.net](mailto:pedro831@optonline.net). If interested in helping, as several R-UTN members do regularly, please make check to: Friends of Students for 60000 and mail to me at 16 Stony Hollow Rd., Centerport, NY 11721 or see PayPal option on website. Gracias.

# In Memoriam

**FRANCES AHERN, former Northport High School social studies teacher**, died on February 8 in Manhattan at the age of 91.

With an undergraduate degree in journalism and a masters focusing on the Chinese government, Frances received a Ph.D. in anthropology from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1993, and her dissertation was on the stylistic variations and uses of pottery among the coastal Mixtec and Amuzgo in Mexico. She spent much time in Oaxaca, Mexico where she did research at the archeological site of Monte Alban, driving from New York to Mexico well into her 80's. After retiring she also taught English as a second language and spent several years teaching at universities in Chengdu, Wuhan and Fujian, China

Remembrances in Francie's name might be given to the Instituto de Organos Historicos de Oaxaca (<http://iohio.org.mx/eng/donations.htm>) or to the ACLU (<https://www.aclu.org/>).

**CARMEL BODNAR, retired 2nd Grade Dickinson Avenue teacher**, passed away peacefully at home on Thanksgiving, Nov. 24. Her funeral mass was at Our Lady of the Isle Church, Shelter Island, NY on December 2. She was predeceased by her husband of 63 years. Sympathy cards may be sent to her daughter: Sharon Bodnar 2072 Laurel Ridge Drive, Jefferson Hills, PA. 15025.

Donations in her memory can be sent to the Nature Conservancy.

R-UTN member Bob Shertzer shared his memories of Carmel as both a colleague and teacher of his children —

*Carmel was teaching at Dickinson when I began at Dickinson in 1970. She joined Ruth Flynn, Ilaine Dickerman, Marion Osborne, Jane Anbro, Joan Asplin and others as my mentors. Carmel was always so friendly and cheerful as my colleague. She eventually had my kids in her class and they always loved her and spoke of how kind she was. They were excited to be in her class. I haven't talked to her for years, but will miss the red hair, smile, always positive attitude and her LOVE for the children and her colleagues.*

**HOWIE HAGLER, Middleville Junior High School reading teacher**, passed away in early January. Condolences can be sent to his wife Marilyn at 51D Stratford Lane, Boynton Beach, FL 33436

Paul Fazio, a longtime colleague shared his remembrance of Howie Hagler.

*Howie believed the most effective way to help students with their reading abilities was to assist them as they were involved with their other subjects. He convinced the*

*administration and teachers to give the program a try. The administration would support this concept as long as our reading test scores were equal or better than the other Junior High schools. In all the years Howie was the reading teacher at Middleville, our scores were always as good as or better than the other junior highs. Also, because he was the only reading teacher at Middleville, we were able to add more staff in other subject areas. In this way Howie made a very significant contribution to Middleville's educational program.*

**JANET McKENNA, a longtime teacher aide at East Northport Middle School,** passed away. Janet has served the school community long and well. She was generous with her time and talents and was always willing to do whatever needed to be done for children and the staff. She was an integral part of the ENMS family. She arrived early every morning to photocopy, answer telephones and assist in any way she could. She cheerfully greeted all each morning, remembered birthdays and helped organize the day and all the school's celebrations. She cared for the children and never ceased to encourage them to do their best. She shared "The Spirit" of East Northport Middle School and will be long remembered for her generosity of spirit and goodness. She will be deeply missed.

**DORIS PADE, retired Northport High School librarian,** passed away on September 27th in New Bern, North Carolina. Doris and her late husband Richard moved to North Carolina after retirement. She is survived by her five children, their spouses, seven grandchildren and one great grandchild.

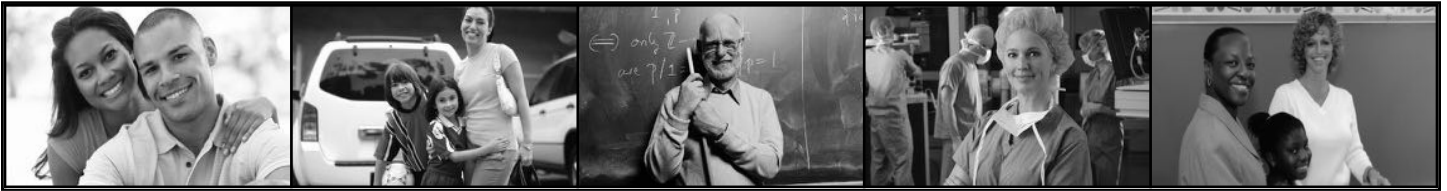
In lieu of flowers, Doris requested a donation to Craven Hospice Care of which she was an active volunteer: Craven County Hospice, 2818 Neuse Blvd. New Bern,, NC 28560

**SUZANNE TAYLOR, a retired Fifth Avenue School teacher,** passed away. Condolences can be sent to her niece Jennifer Thomas, 4 Beach Ave, Northport NY 11768.

**MARY ELLEN UTELL, a retired Bellerose Ave Elementary School fifth grade teacher,** passed away on Wednesday, May 24, 2017.

Mary Ellen began her teaching career in Syosset, New York and later worked at Bellerose Elementary School in East Northport, New York. She lived in Northport for 42 years.

Contributions can be made in Mary Ellen's name to ROAR - Ridgefield Operations for Animal Rescue; 45 South Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877.



## ***NYSUT Member Benefits offers savings, advocacy***

Your union is steadfast in its fight for better contracts, safer working conditions, fair pay, advocacy and upholding the labor rights of the dedicated women and men proudly working in the education and health care industries on a daily basis.

But your NYSUT membership does so much more! It also provides you the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the more than 40 endorsed programs & services offered by NYSUT Member Benefits. Look to Member Benefits for crucial insurance programs such as auto, homeowners, life, disability, or long-term care insurance along with a variety of travel, entertainment & shopping options.

And participation in Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services gives you the added protection of knowing you have a trusted advocate on your side. Each of our endorsed offerings are regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure member satisfaction. Member Benefits is here to help if you should ever have any issues or concerns with any of these programs.

**The following is just a sampling of the endorsed programs & services available to NYSUT members & their families:**

- Homeowners Insurance
- Auto Insurance
- Legal Service Plan
- Financial Counseling Program
- Life Insurance
- Vision Plan
- Abenity Discounts
- Office Depot/OfficeMax
- Car & Truck Rentals
- Wyndham Hotels
- TripBeat by Endless Vacation
- Premier World Discovery



To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit ***memberbenefits.nysut.org*** or call **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



**RETIRED TEACHERS OF NORTHPORT  
45 GARFIELD PLACE  
EAST NORTHPORT, NY 11731**

**First Class Mail**

**TO**

## **Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Walking Tours**

Here's your chance for a 1 ½ hour guided walking tour that explores the past, present, and future of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. Learn about the historic and modern architecture, the Nobel legacy, and the advanced cancer, neuroscience, and plant research taking place at the lab each day. Knowledgeable tour guides include Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

Reservations are required at least 7 days in advance. There is a non-refundable tour fee of \$5 per person that can be paid on arrival. **Cash or checks only.** Checks should be made payable to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

The tour route is primarily outdoors and takes place rain or shine. The tour includes areas of stairs and steep hills. **It is not recommended for people who have difficulty walking.**

Call 516-367-8455 or email [publicaffairs@schl.edu](mailto:publicaffairs@schl.edu) for additional information. A minimum of 10 participants is required for each tour, and your reservation will guarantee that you will be notified if your tour needs to be rescheduled.

Tours begin at 10:00 a.m. Tour dates are August 27, September 10, September 23, October 21, October 28, and November 5.