



Greater Bridgeport Retired Teachers Association

Bridgeport Easton Fairfield Milford Monroe Shelton Stratford Trumbull

December 2017

From the President's Podium

In the midst of this busy holiday season, I hope that each of you, in your own tradition and custom, are able to pause for a moment to give thanks and in some way express appreciation for the blessings that have come your way.

As I write this, the budget battle is over and, considering the way things were going, we are probably fortunate to have maintained our 25% income tax reduction! The 50% reduction is still on the horizon (2019) and we will need to continue to advocate for that when the next round of budget adjustments occurs.

The new budget increases the pension contribution of currently employed teachers from 6% to 7% putting Connecticut about in the middle with 24 states having a higher level of contribution. Interestingly, Oregon and Utah teachers contribute nothing to their pension funds while Missouri teachers contribute 15.47%.

A date for *Retired Teachers Lobby Day* has not yet been announced but it is usually towards the end of March or the beginning of April. This is a chance to meet face to face with your legislators and advocate for our position on topics that affect our health and welfare.

As soon as the date is scheduled, we will pass that along to you. and we will arrange bus transportation for those who do not want to drive to Hartford – let's have a record turnout!

Bob Pitzschler

State Budget Defers 50% Exemption

With the State budget finally resolved, the 2017-2019 Connecticut budget delays, by two years, the scheduled increase in the CT Income Tax exemption on teachers' pensions. The budget bill maintains the exemption at 25% for 2017 and 2018 and increases it to 50% beginning in 2019. While the delay is disappointing, the fact that the Legislature included plans to increase the exemption in 2019 is encouraging.

Less encouraging is the reduction in the State's share of TRB retiree health costs from 33% to 25%. Previous legislation had required that the State, the Health Insurance Premium Account (HIPA) and Retirees each contribute one-third of health costs. The State's record in payment to the Health Fund has been erratic with no payments from the State in 2010 and 2011 and less than its one-third payment in five of the following six years. As a result, it has been estimated that the Health Fund will be insolvent in 2020.

Another section of the budget increases teachers mandatory

Cont'd on page 2

THANKS ROZ, FOR 46 YEARS OF SERVICE

In 1961, Rosalyn (Roz) Schoonmaker went to her first meeting of the Teachers' Retirement Board as a representative of active teachers. The door was locked; the TRB did not welcome teacher participation on its Board.

She persisted and became a voice for active teachers. On her retirement from the Bridgeport schools 30 years later, she was elected to represent retired teachers. On October 1, 2017, having completed 46 years of service, Roz resigned from the TRB.

Her career as a Bridgeport teacher began and ended at Barnum School, with stops along the way at four other elementary schools.

Cont'd on page 2



Roz Schoonmaker with GBRTA President
Bob Pitzschler

GBRTA Trips

A Holiday Musical December 10, 2017

Tashua Knolls 12 noon \$53.
 Now in its 31st year, this annual holiday show offers a four course lunch served family style, between three acts featuring holidays themes and music.

Payment by 11/20/17 to
 Angela McKelvey
 273A Agawam Drive
 Stratford, CT 06604

Checks payable to GBRTA. Please include your phone number on the check. Transportation is not provided.

Beginning in January 2018 the GBRTA will use the services of T & A Travel in scheduling, reserving and paying for trips. Reservations and payments will be made directly to T & A. Buses will pick up passengers in the commuter lot off of Exit 40 on I-95 and in Fairfield near Kohl's.

Edward Kennedy Museum Jan. 20, 2018 Boston, MA \$122.

The Edward M. Kenney Institute is designed to bring the history of the Senate to life, using state-of-the-art technology. Prior to the afternoon visit, there will be a family style lunch at Maggiano's Restaurant. The tour includes transportation, admission to the Institute, lunch and the driver's gratuity.

Payment due by 12/20/17

Make your check payable to and mail to:
 T & A Tours

72 Northford Road Branford, CT 06405
 203-483-6330 www.tatoursonline.com

Save the Date

April 6 or April 27, 2018 - Washington, DC
 4 days/3 nights at the Holiday Inn, Alexandria
 \$559-double, \$549-triple, \$729-single

April 28, 2018—Grand Central Station \$92.

June 9, 2018—N.Y. Botanical Gardens, *Georgia O'Keefe: Visions of Hawaii* Price TBD

Thanks Roz Cont'd from page 1

Driving from her home in Oxford to her school in Bridgeport proved challenging. Bridgeport schools rarely closed because of snow and, as Roz learned, snow in Oxford made for a treacherous drive. One snowy day she ended up in a ditch on the side of the road. She informed her principal that she would not be in school on snowy days—she would take the days as personal days.

Roz is proudest of her advocacy for teachers, particularly her championing of applying the COLA to the pensions of retired teachers. She has been a problem solver, helping retired teachers work their way through the Health Insurance system. As GBRTA's chairman of the Health Insurance Committee she has been our "go to" person when questions about our Health Insurance or Pensions arose.

While Roz remains enthusiastic about supporting teachers, the retirement of Darlene Perez, her good friend and Administrator of the TRB, provided an impetus for Roz's retirement. She simply did not look forward to breaking in another TRB Administrator.

There is no doubt that Roz will continue to be our advocate—even without making that long drive to Hartford!

2017—2018 Officers	
President	Bob Pitzschler 203-723-848 rbpitz@att.net
First Vice-President	RoseMarie D'Aquila 203-261-4693 eaglenest@att.net
Second Vice-President	Barbara Kmetz 203-268-8814 bfkmetz@earthlink.net
Recording Secretary	Marilyn Feranec 203-521-2432 marilynferanec@ymail.com
Corresponding Secretary	Rita McDougald-Campbell 203-459-151 mccamp51@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Helen Scinto

Budget Cont'd from page 1

contribution to the pension fund from 6% to 7%. While this has no effect on retired teachers, it will affect all active teachers.

GBRTA will continue to work with the statewide Association of Retired Teachers of Connecticut to advocate and lobby for retired teachers. Be part of our efforts on Retired Teachers Lobby Day.

Help Wanted

We have several standing committees that are looking for help. Won't you consider convincing a friend to join you on one of these committees? The Health Insurance, Scholarship, and Social Services committees are most in need now. Please sign up at a general membership meeting or email one of the Board members expressing your interest.

Changes

Changed your address, email or phone number?

Please report the change to Ann Block, 203-268-1577; annblock93@gmail.com

Shoeboxes

At GBRTA's November meeting, a total of 58 shoeboxes were collected to be distributed to needy children throughout the world.

The Fund

Did you get your letter regarding the Greater Bridgeport Retired Teachers Fund? The Fund will pay for up to one month of short term nursing care at 10 hours per week. After one month, continued assistance is available (provided a revaluation has been made by *Life-bridge*) for a period of up to three additional months. For a copy of the letter please contact:

Andrew Figlar
203-513-8546
figlar335@att.net

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Dues—\$20

Life Membership \$250

The membership year runs from July 1—June 30. Members whose dues are two or more years in arrears will be dropped from the membership file and must repay two years of back dues for reinstatement.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Year Retired _____ School System _____

New Member _____ Renewal _____ Amount of check _____

Mail form and check, payable to GBRTA to

Ann Block 60 Ridgeview Avenue Trumbull, CT 06611

Join Us For Lunch at Testo's Restaurant in Bridgeport

December 7—\$27

Prime Rib au Jus

Chicken Vadostano (prosciutto, mushrooms)

Broiled Salmon w/dill sauce

Deadline: November 26

Cancel by December 4

- Make check payable to GBRTA with date, menu choice and your phone number on the check. Only one date per check. CHECKS MUST ACCOMPANY RESERVATIONS; NO PAYMENT ACCEPTED AT THE DOOR.
- The Business Meetings begin at 10:30; lunch is served at noon. Members may attend the business portion without staying for lunch; please call to let us know you are coming.
- **Reservations and payment to Trudi Black, 487 Church Hill Rd., Trumbull 06611 (203-261-6576)**

At the December 7th meeting the Trumbull High School Chamber Singers will entertain us with *Music of the Season*. A special raffle will benefit the GBRTA Scholarship Fund.

IN MEMORIAM

Georgina Mateka	4/28/17
Edward Roy	9/11/17
Audrey Beres	9/19/17
Shirley Beresin	9/22/17
Marilyn Badolato	10/08/17



Welcome to the GBRTA

The GBRTA is pleased to welcome the following members who have joined us since July 1, 2017.

Bridgeport: Joyce Diaz-Hennessey, Ellen Frost, Dianne Griffin, Janice Hill, Donna Koolis

Fairfield: Ann Leffert, Peter Maier, Patriciann O'Dwyer, Denise Rehder

Milford: Bruce Bednarsky, Mary Jude Cook, Mary Ellen Minichiello, Louise Uchaczyk

Monroe: Debra Ann Charles, Judy Fusti, Elaine Iannarone, Jerry Stevens,

Shelton: Joann Desrochers

Stratford: Theresa Aurelia, Emily Coppola, Margaret Magdon

Trumbull: Bette Sue George, Linda Goldin, Charlotte Janis, Barbara Laurentano, Jacqueline Norcel, Debra Owen, Rosemary Seaman, Kathleen Seipel, Katherine Stevens, Diane Strever, Lucinda Timpanelli, Diane Toscano

Meeting Dates

General Meetings

December 7, 2017

April 5, 2018

May 10, 2018

GBRTA Board of Directors

November 30, 2017

March 15, 2018

April 19, 2018

May 24, 2018

The Fund

March 7, 2018