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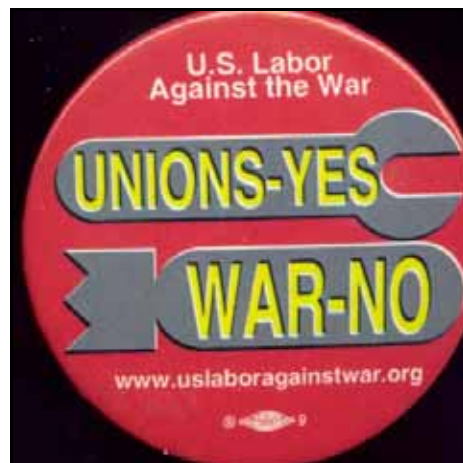
OSARC newsletter

WAR, WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING

Edwin Starr's anthemic 1970 anti-war hit "War" (referenced in the headline) should bring back memories of the sixties anti-war movement. Today, 45 years later, US foreign policy remains militaristic. Join us September 14th as we launch the 2016-17 OSARC club year with guest speaker Tom Gogan, National Organizer for US Labor Against the War (USLAW), who will present an overview of federal budget priorities and the lopsided impact that our outsized military spending has on our nation's ability to provide for our society's needs. With the Pentagon taking 55 cents of every tax dollar, USLAW seeks to be "the organized voice within the labor movement for peace and new priorities." USLAW also acts as a liaison between labor and broader movements for peace and social needs within the United States and with labor movements around the world.

Gogan has worked with USLAW since 2006 and also as an organizer and staff rep for the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (later UNITE) in New York and New Jersey. He has also done organizing and representation work with the American Federation of Teachers, Communications Workers of America and Service Employees International Union. A longtime Brooklynite, before joining the labor movement, he was a housing/community organizer.

Following Gogan's presentation and a Q&A period, we'll have the opportunity for the latest incarnation of the occasionally observed "round robin," in which OSARCers spend time sharing their recent activities with one another – what they did this summer, the hobbies or work they're doing in retirement, or any topic of current concern – even politics.



Next Organization of Staff Analysts' Retirees Club Event
Wednesday • September 14, 2016 • 12:30 - 2:30pm

Round Robin & Guest Speaker:

Guest: Tom Gogan, US Labor Against The War

OSA Union Office • 220 East 23rd St • Suite 707 • Between 2nd & 3rd Aves

OSARC Officers 2016-2017

Chairs.....Ed Husbands, Ted White
 Vice-Chairs..... Sybil Allen, Jane Kelly
 Treasurer..... Jean Anmuth
 Asst Treasurers.....Hattie Thomas, Judy Berg
 Secretary.....Jane Kelly
 COMRO Representatives.....Mark Lewis, Ted White, Jay Warshofsky



Newsletter Editor/Photos.....Rob Spencer
 Reporter/Writers..... Meghan Dunn, Jane Kelly, Mark Lewis

We'll Be Seeing You In All The Old Familiar Places

Eighty-Six (86) OSARC members and friends attended the June gala luncheon at Tony's DiNapoli in midtown:

Sybil Allen, Adrienne Alpert, Gilberte Ambroise, Jean Anmuth, Rafiu Balogun, Mike Barbarotto, Jean Barry, Renee Bash, Shirley Bonadie and guest, Renee Boyce, Wayne Brelowski, Marcia Brown, Patricia Burton and guest, Joan Capel, Frank and Elizabeth D'Aversa, Delois Evans and guest, Richard Fink, Sheila Gorsky, Sally Gaudons, Sheila Green and guest, Richard Greene, Al Gundersheimer and guest, Betty Henderson, Norma Henderson and guest, Marvel James, Ingrid Johnson, Roslyn Jones, Glenn Joseph, Jane Kelly, Kaye Lee and guest, David Lehmann, Rosanne Levitt, Mark Lewis, Cirino Lotta and guest,, Eloise McDuffie, Lillian Ngai, Erwin Nied, - John Ost, Eileen Pentel, Marilyn Percy, Bob Pfefferman, William Pfister, Edward Platt, Wendy Richards, Cora Ross, Nancy Russell, Verneice Rutledge, Sylvia Sands and guest, John Sellers, Reasa Semper and guest, Andrew Sessa and guest, Valerie Sheafe, Dorothy Skelin, Trudy Stone, Sallie Stroman, Madeline Taylor and guest, Edward Tennant, Hattie Thomas, Patricia Tucker, Ruth Verbit, Nona Volk, Dorothy Wallace, Jay Warshofsky, Barry Washington, Saul Weber, Teddy White, Dolores Wilson, Carol Yost, and Leoila Zeigler and 3 guests

If you were there and we missed you, let us know and we will acknowledge you in the next issue.

We look forward to seeing *you* at our next meeting!



In Memoriam

With sadness, we report the deaths of fourteen retirees. **Robert Adamenko** retired in 2002 as an Administrative Staff Analyst with the Department of Transportation. **Janice Cerra** retired in 1991 as an Associate Staff Analyst at the Human Resources Administration. **Sylvia Bell** retired in 2000 as a Staff Analyst at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services. **Martina Elam** retired in 1995 as an Associate Staff Analyst at DOT. MEBA member **Edward Ortiz** retired from the DOT's Staten Island Ferry. **Judy Friedman**, OSA delegate at DOHMH retired in 2016 as an Administrative Staff Analyst. **John J. Kelly** retired in 2000 as an Associate Staff Analyst at HRA. **Salvatore Rainone** retired in 2012 as an Administrative Staff Analyst at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services. **Robert Hansen** retired in 1992 as an Associate Staff Analyst with the NYPD. **Ernesto Gonzalez** retired in 2010 as a Systems Analyst at HHC's Kings County Hospital. **Burton Carlin** retired in 1995 as a Staff Analyst with the Department of Environmental Protection. **Wallace Williams, Jr.** retired in 2014 as a Sanitation Chief with the Department of Sanitation. **Stephen Chenenky** retired in 1996 as an Associate Staff Analyst in the Human Resources Administration. Finally, **Robert Angarola** retired in 1994 as an ASA at the Community Development Agency.

The Newsletter extends its condolences to the family and friends of these retirees.

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OSARC Calendar For 2016-2017

This year, OSARC's officers are trying to outline the full Club year in advance. Although all of the programs are subject to change if developments warrant, you should mark your calendar for the following monthly program dates:

<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Program Topic</u>
September 14	Intro to the OSARC year, Round Robin, Speaker: US Labor Against the War
October 19	Speaker: Road Scholar - Educational Travel Tours (<i>meeting is a week later than usual because of Yom Kippur</i>)
November 9	Speaker: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
December 14	Retiree Holiday Gathering
January 11	Speaker: Genealogy
February 8	Speaker: Tax Preparation
March 8	Speaker: National Action Network
April 12	Annual Trip—Destination To Be Decided
May 10	Officer elections and Speaker
June 14	Gala June Luncheon at Tony's DiNapoli Restaurant in Midtown

The Big One Percent



No, we are not talking about income distribution this time, we are talking about your pension cost-of-living adjustment. For the fourth year in a row, the pension COLA for eligible retirees will be 1%, with the COLA being applied to the September pension payment.

A reminder that COLA is calculated at 50% of the CPI for the year ending March 2016. The minimum is 1% and the maximum 3% and applies to the lesser of eligible retirees' retirement allowance or \$18,000. The maximum COLA adjustment (again for the fourth year in a row) is \$180 or \$15 a month. Retirees must be at least 62 years old and retired five years or at least 55 years old and retired 10 years or more. COLA is available to certain disability retirees, surviving spouses and other beneficiaries.

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AARP Ends Not-Very-Smart ALEC Alliance

by Meghan Dunn

If you blinked, you might have missed it. We didn't. This summer, AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons), the senior lobby, came under heavy fire from many of its members and a range of watchdog and advocacy groups for their unholy alliance with the Koch Brothers-affiliated, billionaire-funded and extremely right-wing American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).



ALEC specializes in developing a portfolio of "model" legislation serving the interests of corporations and the wealthy which it then pushes in state legislatures nation-wide.

A remarkably effective blitz of online campaigning and petitioning led AARP to quickly withdraw its support for ALEC about one week after that support was uncovered by the Center for Media and Democracy (CMD) in a featured investigation entitled "Revealed: AARP is Funding ALEC," by authors Nick Surgey and Calvin Sloan.

CMD reported that AARP was a "trustee's level" sponsor of ALEC's 2016 Annual Meeting and noted that AARP had been supporting ALEC since at least 2014.



Lisa Graves, CMD's Executive Director said, "almost 98% of ALEC's funding comes from corporations like Exxon Mobil, corporate 'foundations' like the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, or trade associations like the pharmaceutical industry's PhRMA."

Michael Phelan, Deputy Director of Social Security Works, which advocates for the preservation and expansion of America's social safety net programs, urged their members to "repudiate" AARP and its actions: "ALEC's agenda includes many proposals that would be a nightmare for seniors, including privatizing Social Security, gutting pension plans, and turning Medicare over to insurance companies. ALEC also supports laws that would make prescription drug prices even higher." Phelan concluded that "no organization that claims to represent retirees should be anywhere near ALEC, let alone funding them."

Social Security Works was just one of the many activist groups that put together the campaign to pressure AARP into withdrawing its involvement with ALEC.

While AARP describes itself as "a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social welfare organization with a membership of nearly 38 million that [sic] fights for the issues that matter most to families — such as healthcare, employment and income security, and protection from financial abuse," their support of ALEC seemed to violate the interests of AARP's core constituency: seniors, retirees, and their families.

This is not the first time that AARP has been criticized for actions and policies seemingly at odds with the best interests of its claimed constituency. As we reported in the November and December 2003 *OSARC Newsletters*, AARP was a major supporter of the flawed Medicare Part D drug benefit pushed by the Bush administration. Aside from the creation of the "donut hole," in which Medicare recipients have been saddled with high drug cost pass-throughs, the bill also prohibited negotiations with the pharmaceutical industry on drug pricing, significantly inflating the cost of drugs to Medicare and its beneficiaries. That earlier episode of questionable AARP action led to the formation by the national labor federation

AFL-CIO of its own senior lobby, the Alliance for Retired Americans.

AARP initially defended itself by saying that “AARP’s engagement with ALEC is NOT an endorsement of the organization’s policies either past or present,” and that “AARP paid a fee to ALEC, which gave us an opportunity to engage with state legislators and advance our members’ priorities from a position of strength at ALEC’s annual meeting.”

However, days after receiving a torrent of protests from advocacy groups and AARP members, AARP announced that it would be dropping *its membership* in ALEC. AARP wrote: “After hearing from many of you, we’ve decided not to renew our membership to ALEC. We would never work against the interests of older Americans.”

Michael Hiltzik, writing in the *Los Angeles Times* observed that “initially, the relationship seemed to amount to a contribution to help sponsor ALEC’s annual meeting... The new statement, however, indicates that AARP had gone further by actually becoming a member.”

It would appear that AARP members need to keep a watchful eye on AARP’s political stands and alliances going forward.

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OSARCer Honored As “Woman of Distinction”



In late May, OSA retiree and statistics instructor extraordinaire, Dr. Sybil DeVaux, was chosen as a “Brooklyn Woman of Distinction,” along with 24 other Brooklyn women, by *Brooklyn Daily* magazine. The magazine has honored female Brooklynites annually for the past six years. The magazine was included in the *Bay News*, *Mill Marine Courier*, *Bay Ridge Courier* and the *Downtown Brooklyn Courier* newspapers and DeVaux was honored at a June gala.

Since 2008, DeVaux has taught a broad range of classes on subjects including statistics, economics and intercultural communication, for which she draws on her Jamaican heritage (as anyone who has taken her union statistics seminar can vouch).

According to her newspaper insert profile, “her students say they admire her for her expertise, patience and willingness to give of her time, so that they can achieve their full potential.” We extend our congratulations to Dr. DeVaux on behalf of all the members of OSARC.



Anti-Pension Rhetoric Not Backed By Facts

Pensions provide a cost-effective safe and secure retirement for public employees. In many states, those who oppose defined benefit pensions often try to sell pension “reform” as a way to save a state money.

However, a look at states that have actually switched from a defined benefit pension to a defined contribution 401(k)-style plan, show that these “reforms” are ill-advised.

Alaska, Michigan, and West Virginia, all of whom made the switch, demonstrate the failure of defined contribution pensions to provide retirement security for public employees.

The National Institute on Retirement Security released a report in which they examined the consequences of the change in retirement plans for the three states. They found that costs for the existing defined benefit plan exploded after it was closed and new employees were moved to a defined contribution system. Without new employees paying into the plan, the pension was not receiving enough contributions to cover plan payouts. Pension plans work because current workers are paying into the plan at the same time retired workers are receiving monthly payments.

After Michigan abandoned its defined benefit pension, the plan dropped from 110% funded to 60% funded.

In addition, the workers forced into the defined contribution system discovered that their retirement was much less secure than it would have been in the traditional pension, since defined contribution accounts consistently provide lower benefits than defined benefit plans.

The retirement security crisis for teachers in West Virginia became so severe that the state reopened the pension plan to new members

The lesson for other states: closing a pension plan and moving employees into a defined contribution plans is problematic at best.

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Seniors Find Themselves Automatically Enrolled in Medicare Advantage Plans

In what is known in the health insurance industry as “seamless conversion enrollment,” Medicare-participating insurers are automatically converting members in their plans to the Medicare Advantage (MA) version of their plans as soon as they become Medicare-eligible, even though some preferred to go into traditional Medicare. This is leading to confusion and costly consequences.

In a recent *Kaiser Health News* expose, reporter Susan Jaffe recounted the story of Judy Hanttula of Carlsbad, New Mexico, who had surgery before she realized that her traditional Medicare plan through Blue Cross Blue Shield had enrolled her in their private MA plan. Because her surgeon and hospital were not in the MA network, she was left with a \$16,622 medical bill when her new plan refused to cover the costs.

While the “seamless conversion” process requires the insurer to send a letter explaining the new coverage—with an option for members to ‘opt out’ within 60 days—since Hanttula believed herself to be covered, she ignored mail from her insurer which included the notice that it had automatically enrolled her in its MA plan.

In another case study on seamless conversion, another Medicare beneficiary had two surgeries done at a hospital closest to her, but over the state line. Her medical claims were subsequently denied by Medicare because she had been automatically enrolled in a MA plan—without her choosing—and the surgeries had been done at a hospital outside the MA plan’s network.

On the positive side, MA plans were designed to benefit those who want to stay with the same insurance company in which they were enrolled before becoming Medicare-eligible. Mark Mathis, corporate communications director of health insurance giant Humana said “it would simplify administration, eliminating a step in the process, and help maintain continuity with the same company.”

While MA plans offer more inclusive coverage than traditional Medicare, they are also a better profit maker for the insurers. Will this approach ultimately undermine Medicare as a single payer system? That's one of the major questions.

It should be noted that OSA retirees have the choice of MA plans like HIP VIP and are used to being auto-converted to them from the non-Medicare version of their plan when they become Medicare eligible. GHI CBP enrollees get autoconverted to GHI Senior Care when they become Medicare eligible. Senior Care is a Medicare supplementary plan rather than a Medicare Advantage plan. In both cases city retirees have to let the city know they are on Medicare before the conversion happens.



New Medicare Law Mandates Notice to Patients of Loophole in Medicare Nursing Home/Rehab Coverage

by Meghan Dunn

Thousands of Medicare patients who have spent time in the hospital and then sought or received rehabilitation and care at skilled nursing facilities following their hospital discharge are discovering a tragic loophole in Medicare nursing home coverage: Medicare will not pay for subsequent nursing home care for those placed “under observation” while in the hospital. Only those who are formally admitted as an “inpatient” to the hospital are eligible for such coverage.

According to Susan Jaffe in a *New York Times* article, “a Medicare beneficiary must spend three consecutive midnights in the hospital — not counting the day of discharge — as an admitted patient in order to qualify for subsequent nursing-home/rehabilitation coverage. If a patient is under observation, but not admitted to the hospital, she will also lose coverage for any medications the hospital provides for pre-existing health problems. Medicare drug plans are not required to reimburse patients for these drug costs.”

One reason cited for hospitals keeping patients “under





observation” is the fear of being penalized by Medicare for inappropriate admissions. Yet Jaffe says that “admitted and observation patients often have similar symptoms and receive similar care. Six of the top 10 reasons for observation — chest pain, digestive disorders, fainting, nutritional disorders, irregular heartbeat and circulatory problems — are also among the 10 most frequent reasons for a short hospital admission.”

On August 6th, a new federal Medicare law called the ‘Notice Act’ took effect, which requires hospitals to inform patients if they are under “observation,” but not formally admitted to the hospital as an inpatient. Robert Pear in the *Times* writes that “under the new law, the notice must be provided to ‘each individual who receives observation services as an outpatient’ at a hospital for more than 24 hours. Medicare officials estimate that hospitals will have to issue 1.4 million notices a year.”

Judith A. Stein, executive director of the nonprofit Center for Medicare Advocacy, was quoted in the *Times*: “The new law is an important first step, but Congress and the administration need to do more to protect beneficiaries.”

The national legislation builds upon similar legislation implemented in early 2014 in New York State, where hospitals have been required to provide oral and written notification to patients within 24 hours of putting them on observation status. Penalties for violating that law range as much as \$5,000 per violation.



COMRO Report

The Committee of Municipal Retiree Organizations (COMRO) meets monthly, drawing representatives of the retiree sections of various municipal unions, including OSA, for a meeting on subjects of retiree interest. The following report on their June 7th meeting is based on minutes from COMRO Secretary Stu Eber. Mark Lewis, Teddy White and Jay Warshofsky attended for OSARC.

The June 10, 2016 issue of the civil service newspaper *The Chief* had a story on Governor Cuomo’s signing of a bill that will give public employees who are military veterans the opportunity to buy additional pension credits.

The June COMRO guest speaker was Barry A. Kaufman, President of the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans, the state affiliate of the AFL-CIO connected national retiree lobby/activist group, the Alliance for Retired Americans.



Kaufman retired after a 34-year teaching career in Poughkeepsie. The NYS Alliance has 440,000 members, who are members of the New York State AFL-CIO, Local 1199 and the Teamsters, among other labor organizations. Their website is www.newyorkstateara.org.

Kaufman said that the NYSARA Educational Foundation just completed a very successful founding convention. As a 501(c)4, Kaufman says NYSARA will “be able to advocate for the needs of our members and to influence the discussion... We will have the opportunity, as never before, to educate our members on issues and candidates that are important to them and to seniors as a whole.”

Kaufman noted NYSARA participation in efforts to pass a paid family leave bill in New York State and a minimum wage increase. Both were successfully completed during the budget process. NYSARA lobbied State Senate Republicans by standing in front of the door to their caucus room on March 28, doing “personal” lobbying on behalf of the “Fight for 15.” Also successful were efforts to defeat elimination of Medicare Part B reimbursement for retired state employees

enrolled in the NY State health plan and increasing their health premiums.

Kaufman said safe medical staffing should be an issue that engenders universal support. Extensive research shows that safe staffing saves lives and improves patient outcomes by ensuring nurses have time to complete necessary nursing tasks. In fact, 86% of those polled support a minimum number of nurses on duty at any given time. Safe staffing standards are particularly important for the sickest patients requiring constant care.

A 2007 analysis combining data from 28 studies found that adding one full-time RN per patient day was associated with a 6% drop in the odds of death for medical patients, a 9% drop for ICU patients, and a 16% drop in those dying with a complication in surgical patients.

A patient's risk of death increased by 2% for every short-staffed shift to which he or she was exposed. Risk was even higher for patients exposed to short staffing in the first five days of hospitalization.

Kaufman said significant challenges remain ahead. There are national threats to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid such as proposals to turn Medicare into a voucher program, raise Social Security full retirement age to 70 over the next 30-35 years, means testing Social Security benefits (which would undermine popular support) and the institution of "chained CPI" (which would reduce the yearly COLA).

There is the threat of a Constitutional Convention in New York State, which has the potential to gut programs for the elderly, change or gut the State and City pension system and negatively impact the quality of life for seniors.

NYSARA will be educating members about the potential harms that convening a constitutional convention could cause so they are informed and can share information with neighbors, friends and family.

Kaufman also talked about NYSARA's efforts in Washington to defeat the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Among many horrible impacts, the TPP will cause the price of prescription drugs to increase substantially as patent protection will be renewed with only minor changes to the drug.

Worst of all, the TPP institutes a transnational corporate hegemony in which the laws of all of the participating nations could be overridden by TPP. If a corporation says another country's environmental or labor regulations, for example, have cost them profits, an arbitration would ensue in which the panel would be staffed by three arbitrators, one selected by the country challenged, another by the accusing corporation and a third "neutral corporate attorney."

Nineteen of the 26 members of the New York State congressional delegation have told the White House that they



are voting "No" on TPP, but the Obama administration continues to push for a vote either in the lame duck session later this year or after a new administration is in place next year.

Kaufman was asked whether NYSARA supports the bill that would raise the ceiling on pension payments covered by COLAs from \$18,000 to \$25,000. He said NYSARA advocates for issues, but does not support specific bills.

NYSARA opposes increasing the age for full Social Security benefits and opposes means testing because high income earners will no longer receive benefits and their support for the program will be eroded.

Kaufman agreed it would be a good idea to sponsor a NYSARA conference in New York City to discuss issues that will galvanize seniors and "scare the crap out of politicians." He was not familiar with proposed Federal legislation to protect public employee pensions in state and municipal bankruptcy proceedings.

Kaufman agreed that AARP doesn't always reflect the needs of all seniors and is often motivated by its own insurance business. Nonetheless, NYSARA works with AARP when they agree on specific issues.

Finally, Kaufman announced that NYSARA is establishing chapters in various regions of the state.

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Mark and Ann's Excellent Adventures in Israel

By Former OSARC Co-Chair Mark Lewis

From June 24 to July 10, my wife Ann and I took a wonderful trip to Israel. The following is a (not so) brief diary:

June 24: Ann and I flew coach on El Al. The seats were the smallest I have ever occupied during any flight I've ever taken, with the least amount of leg room. Our knees literally touched the seats in front of us. Upon landing, we took a cab to the Tel Aviv Hilton, where we stayed for six days. We had a great view of the Mediterranean from our window and balcony and were eligible for free meals in the executive lounge.

June 26: We visited the Palmach museum, where we got a history of this elite element of the Haganah, the underground Jewish army during the British Mandate. It was fascinating. Dinner in the hotel's executive lounge featured the same amazing Mediterranean view as our room.

June 27: At the Diaspora Museum, we viewed exhibits on Ethiopian Jewry and synagogues around the world, as well as a retrospective marking Bob Dylan's 75th birthday. The Ethiopian exhibit featured Ethiopian Jews speaking about their lives in Ethiopia and Israel. The synagogue exhibit showed models of European synagogues, many destroyed by the Nazis. Some of these historical sites have been restored, but are no longer in religious use since the local Jewish population was wiped out during WWII. Videos showed synagogues around the world and the different people who pray in them. The Dylan retrospective traced the route of Robert Zimmerman from Minnesota native to New York bohemian and his transformation into legendary folksinger Bob Dylan. It explores his conversion to Christianity, followed by his return to his roots with the Lubavitcher Grand Rebbe Menachem Schneerson in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.



Modest home of first Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion.

June 28: We took a Rent-a-Guide tour, Pearls of the Western Galilee. We drove along the coastal road to Caesarea, the ancient capital and port. We were given a history lesson on the port and the impact of severe earthquake damage over the years. We toured the Roman Theatre, the



Makhtesh Ramon crater in the Negev, south of Beersheba

Herodian Amphitheatre, and the Promontory Palace. A large artificial harbor was built in Caesarea during Herod's time.

Next, we visited Megiddo (also known as Armageddon) a national park where we saw a movie about the site (which rises 60 meters above the surrounding area). During biblical times, Megiddo was an important city and control of the city allowed control of the entire area from the Iron Valley to the Jezreel Valley. An inner stairway permitted access to water at the bottom of the site. If the city was under siege, inhabitants of the fort at the top of the hill could get water at the bottom of the hill. To accomplish this, they carved 180 steps into the middle of the mountain. The site is still being excavated. The view of the surrounding valleys from the top is quite remarkable.

Afterwards, in Akko, we ate a lunch that featured various salads, humus and babaganush, a choice of sandwiches, lemonade, and Turkish coffee. We then walked over to the Old City of Akko and toured the fortress.

Then, it was on to Haifa, where we had a scenic view of the city and port. We also saw the magnificent Bahá'í Gardens and Shrine. The gold dome was remarkable, set in a beautiful garden.

June 29: We had planned on taking it easy, but we were forced to take it even easier than expected when Ann's knee became swollen.

June 30: Ann's swollen knee improved. She packed and I arranged for a wheelchair to take her to her seat on the plane to Tel Aviv. We checked in to the Royal Beach hotel, where we rested and met our group for what seemed like a 12 to 15 course dinner.

July 1: We had an early breakfast and were on the bus at 8am for an Urban Culture Tour of Tel Aviv. We went into Jaffa, the oldest part of Tel Aviv, and looked at street art and

graffiti in a guided tour with a local resident. Jaffa turned out to be a hotbed of gentrification. Next was the LaDa' at Ethnic Tasting Tour. We tasted food sold by emigres from Greece, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Georgia who had all opened shops in this area. It was a little like going to the Lower East Side, followed by a stop at Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue for Arabic food. We tried stuffed grape leaves, cheese, babaganush wrapped in eggplant, a Turkish pastry, and some of the best Halvah I ever tasted.

Late in the afternoon, we went to the boardwalk in Tel Aviv. There, the group Beit Tefilah Israeli held an outdoor Shabbat service overlooking the Mediterranean at sunset. It was beautiful, full of songs and prayers.

July 2: In the artists' quarter in Jaffa, we talked to the curator of a building filled with ceramics who explained that she inherited the building from some friends who asked her to turn it into a workshop and showroom for ceramic art.

At our second stop, a young artist exhibited large paper sculptures that looked like white clouds or landscapes. He also had a wrecked car as part of his exhibit.

At our third stop, the artist offered various paintings, one of which was Theodor Herzl standing next to an elephant. Two others featured scenes at soccer games and another depicted Jonah in the belly of a whale.

After lunch, we headed out to Founders Square where we talked about the first and second aliyahs, which took place between the 1880s and 1914 as Jews escaping pogroms in Russia fled to Palestine. We followed that up with a discussion of first



Grandma's Kettle restaurant.

Israeli Prime Minister David Ben- Gurion declaring Israel an independent country in 1948. We also discussed architecture in Tel Aviv and why it is called the "white city."

Our last stop was Yitzhak Rabin Square, where we discussed the late Israeli Prime Minister Rabin's efforts to make a lasting peace with Palestine Liberation Organization head Yasser Arafat, as well as his assassination after a speech at a rally in the square.

July 3: We headed out to the town of Kiryat Gat and met with members of Atachlit Farm, run by emigre Ethiopian Jews. While raising various crops, they are teaching their children to speak and write the Ethiopian language, as well as Hebrew. They had us write our names in the Ethiopian

alphabet, which is totally different than Hebrew or English. It was quite a challenge.

From there, we went to the community of Ramat Shalom in Be'er Sheva, where we met with Naomi Efrat, a community activist and organizer, who set up both a pre-school and elementary school. Efrat also founded an egalitarian synagogue and will be attending Hebrew Union College

(the campus of the Reform Movement) this fall to become a rabbi. She and some friends also opened a restaurant where they take at-risk teens and teach them how to cook. After a year of restaurant work, the teens get a certificate that allows them to become chefs in other restaurants. Ann and I had pepper and eggplant pizza and it was very good.

Our next stop was at Sde Boker in the Negev Desert, where we visited the gravesite of David Ben-Gurion, overlooking the Wilderness of Zin. We continued on to Mitzpe Ramon, where we checked into the Beresheet hotel and had a Moroccan-style dinner at the Orlyya farm in the Negev.

July 4: We remembered that it is both Independence Day and the 40th anniversary of the Raid on Entebbe Airport, where Israeli soldiers freed Jews who were being held captive by the PLO and German terrorists.

We took a two hour jeep ride to explore the geological wonders of the Makhtesh Ramon Crater.

We then met Hadas Meir, the owner of Lasha Bakery, a boutique bakery that makes fabulous breads and cakes. Hadas discussed how she got started baking bread in her house and eventually opened her bakery as she outgrew home baking. She now has nine women working for her.

We walked around the block from the bakery and went to a natural food restaurant called Hadasa'ar. We ate various salads. The owner talked about how he opened a natural food market and then expanded to a restaurant as well. He talked about the community and how they buy fresh products from 50 farmers, as well as display and sell pottery and other artwork. They had a pictorial display of women at various stages of natural childbirth.

We then went to an overlook at the top of the rim of the Ramon Crater.



Samir Restaurant in Ramle

July 5: We headed toward Jerusalem, making three stops. The first was at the modest house David Ben-Gurion lived in during his later years on a kibbutz in the Negev Desert.

Our second stop was at the Abeer Haela boutique brewery, where we tried two different beers and spoke to the owner Arqam Dekel. He spoke to us about the different careers he and his wife tried prior to opening their brewery. His wife made gold and silver jewelry; then they made goat cheeses.

The third stop was lunch at Grandma's Kettle, where a husband and wife team had opened a small restaurant in their backyard. We had salads, chicken and rice and meatballs -- Indian food with a Sabra twist.

After lunch, we got back on the bus and drove to Jerusalem. We stopped at an overlook, said the traditional Shehechyanu prayer, and discussed some of what is going on with the wall separating Arab Palestine and Israel.



Western Wall excavation site.

Israel.

Back at the hotel, we heard from another guest speaker, Professor Hazan of Hebrew University, who teaches political science and is a guest commentator on various news shows. He gave an explanation of how the Knesset is chosen and a cabinet formed. He explained how the current government was constituted and which parties were included.

July 7: We went to the Ma'aleh School of Television, Film and the Arts, where we saw three films dealing with modern Israeli life. Ma'aleh graduates must produce a 20 minute film before they can graduate. Some of the films have won awards at prestigious film festivals around the world. The school has also developed first-of-its-kind video therapy for at-risk youth, Ethiopian immigrants, terror victims, and adults with special needs.

After lunch, we met with Rabbi Aharon Leibowitz, an orthodox rabbi and founder of a movement to remove responsibility for licensing kosher establishments from the rabbinate. We walked through the neighborhood where the movement was born.

To end the day, we met with chef Talia Friedman, who



Mark Lewis at the Western Wall.

while many businesses were owned by Jews, many of their employees were Arabs. It turned out that Arab employees spoke both Hebrew and Arabic, offering a comfortable shopping experience in their own language for both Jews and Arabs. On the other hand, Jews mostly could speak only Hebrew.

Our second stop was the Old City's Jewish Quarter. We talked about history, walked through one of the ancient tunnels that had been a cistern and viewed some of the excavation sites. Then, we went to the Western Wall, where I said a prayer for Ann to get well and left a paper prayer in the wall.

We visited a food pantry where we packaged foods (rice or lentils) to be shipped to distribution points throughout



Mamilla Hotel - Jerusalem

led us through Machane Yehuda (aka “The Shuk”), an open air market where we tasted various foods and spices, some of which we bought to make our own five course dinner. In Friedman’s kitchen, we had an interactive cooking session. It was a lot of fun and the dinner was great. Friedman agreed to send all the recipes to us so we can try them at home. She is writing a cookbook about modern Israeli cooking.

July 8: In the town of Ramle, we met David Leichman, who said that Ramle is one of the few towns where Arabs and Jews live next door to each other and also work next to each other in the Ramle market. As you walk along the street in the market, you see Jews and Arabs interacting without any conflict. We went to an Arabic restaurant, where David was greeted warmly by the proprietor, for a delicious lunch.

We visited the Beit Eden group home for the developmentally challenged, where we participated in a Kabbalat Shabbat service with people from the Kehillat Yozma synagogue, including our tour guide Uri Friedman. It was a truly uplifting experience to see the children participate in the service. We were tugged and hugged by the children as we helped out. The congregants from Kehillat Yozma have been doing this every week for the past 17 years. They also participate with the children on the various Jewish holidays. Today, Uri led the service and we watched as his face lit up with joy as he led the children in songs, candle lighting and prayers over the challah and wine.

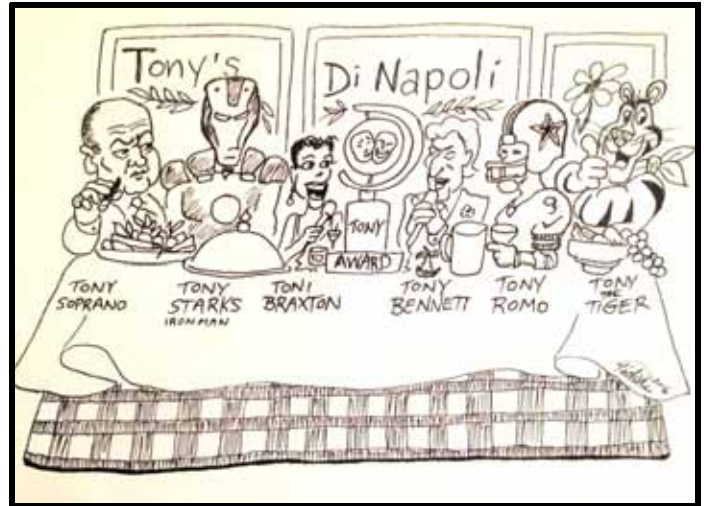
We attended Friday evening services at Kehillat Yozma in Modi’in. We were welcomed to the synagogue by its president. She gave us a brief history of the congregation and religious school. After the service, we joined host congregants at their homes for Shabbat dinner. A vegetarian dinner started with watermelon and feta cheese, followed by salad and a main course of bolgar wheat with mushrooms. For dessert, we had homemade cheesecake and tea. The meal was delicious, the discussion interesting and, most important, we got to know four Israelis.

July 9: Ann and I walked over to Hebrew Union College, a block away from our hotel. The day featured two roundtable discussions in which we shared our thoughts about our trip with each other. After stuffing ourselves once again at dinner, we had a Shabbat service outside the hotel.

July 10: As we left for home, we concluded that it has been an interesting trip that has given us lots to think about. Israel is a vibrant country that is growing by leaps and bounds. Construction cranes are seen all over Israel as new housing is built. The Israelis we talked to are confident in the future of their country.

Food, Glorious, Food

by OSARC Secretary Jane Kelly



Art by OSARC Co-Chair Ted White

The annual OSARC gala June luncheon was held Wednesday, June 8, at Tony’s Di Napoli restaurant on West 43rd Street in midtown and was well attended by 86 members and invited guests. The event was held in an elevator-accessible lower floor banquet room. Photos from the event appear throughout this *Newsletter*.

The food selection, served family style, was varied, well prepared, and professionally served. Each table had sangria and soda, a salad, an appetizer of prosciutto and burrata, a selection of three pastas (penne with broccoli, garlic and oil; spaghetti and meatballs; and ravioli bolognese) and three meat and vegetarian entrée dishes (veal marsala, eggplant parmigiana and chicken francese), as well as coffee or tea and delicious Italian desserts (tiramisu, mini cheesecake and cannolis). Dietary adjustments were quickly made for several people.

Ted White, OSARC Co-chair and OSARC co-founder and OSA Executive Director Sheila Gorsky spoke and MC’d.

The outgoing OSARC officers introduced the new 2016-17 OSARC officers. Ted White continues as OSARC Co-Chair and is joined by Co-Chair Ed Husbands. Ed made a presentation on the Buffalo Soldiers for OSARC in honor of Black History Month earlier this year. Jane Kelly and Sybil Allen continue as Co-Vice Chairs. Jean Anmuth steps in as Treasurer, assisted by Hattie Thomas and Judy Berg and, at least temporarily, Jane Kelly has agreed to serve as Secretary.

Finally, a 30-30-30 raffle was held and each winner received \$60! Congratulations to OSARC members Renee Bash, Leoila Zeigler and Patricia Burton who split the raffle prizes.

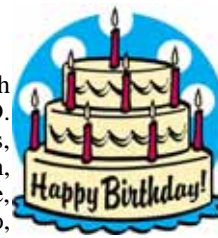
SCENES FROM THE JUNE GALA LUNCHEON





Happy Birthday to OSA Retirees Born in August and September

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS



Marie Abrom, Alfredo Acevedo, George J. Adkins, Adelina Agulto, Hakimah Al-Zahra, Yolanda Alayon, Frederick Alexander, Daniel Ambrose, Arthur D. Aptowitz, Maria Paz Asuncion Arce, Preston Baker, Herman Barrocales, Claudia Bellavia, Joyce Bialik, Jack Blake, Robert Bleiberg, Timothy Bohlen, Edward Braverman, Brian Brennan, Frances Brown, Jeanette Brown, Joseph Burden, Mildred Burgos, Joseph Bushe, John Cala, John Campobasso, Philip Carroll, Michael Chakrin, Dolores Choate, Estelle H. Chodosh, Philip Cipriano, Mary Contessa, Marguerite Cronin, Ila Das, Ellis De Angelo, Kenneth DeJohn, Don Delorenzo, Frantz Desire, Ana E Deya (Lugo), Ailsa Diaz, Marvin Dozier, Joan Dula, Erlinda Duque, Andrea Eisner, Gaber Elhefnaoui, Lillie Z. Farrell, Elizabeth Farrell, Elizabeth Fatigato, Joseph Fidalio, Essie Flynn, Connie Foreman, Renee Fox, Frances Fultz, Armand Gabriele, Anthony Galante, John Joseph Gambardella, Daphney Garrison, Alexander Gelleri, Jo-Ann George, Frank Gerace, Linda Gerwin, Shirley T. Gilliam, Nicholas Gleason, Sydney Goldenberg, Myra R. Goralski, Stanley Granat, Jacqueline Grant-Lucas, Estelle R. Green, Garry Guyer, Phyllis Hailstock, Marguerite Hajduk, George Hansen, Michael Harris, Mildred Hawkins, Iris Hecht, Sandra Henry, Lydia Hernandez, Fred Herschkowitz, Susan A Hill, Perry Hilton, Jerome Hirshman, Sylvia Hodge, Richard Andrew Horn, Lawrence Iannozzo, Gennaro Irace, Christobal Jacques, Calvin Jason, Estella Jenkins, Sehu L.A. Jeppe, James L Johnson, Lorraine Johnson, Wilhelmina Jones, Barbara Jordan, Frances Karst, Fran Kastin, Jeffrey Keller, Charles Kelly, Carol A. Keyser, Charles W Lawrence, Mark Layne, Bernard Leddy, Mark Lewis, Fred Lieber, Gabriele Lioce, Joan Lipton, Marlene Lorraine, John W. Mackey, Rose Maconi, Michael Marino, John A Marsico, Jeffrey Massey, Dorothy Matherson, Verna Maynard, Mary Katherine McEwen, George McLean, Sheila McMahon, James J McQuade, Maureen C Meehan, David Mei, Carol Michaels, Gracie Michail, Natalie Millner, Sandra J Mirabal, Alice Mitchell, Anne Moffitt, Nayeem Mohammed, Nimia Montanez Shipper, Anita Mullin, Michael Murphy, Alan Naider, Anthony Napolitano, Ramon F. Nunez, John O'Connor, Murray Olsen, Joshua Orzeck, Kathryn Pacelko, Martha Palma, Jose Pandarakalam, Frances Pascalle, Linda Pasquali, Sarah Pener, Jack F. Perin, Millicent Perry, John Peterson, Theodore Phillips, Michael Plant, Shirley Pope, Gertrude Porter, Shari Potter, Felix Quezada, Michael J. Quinn, Addie Redman, Jeanette Reid, Vera Reid, Celina Reynolds, Gwendolyn Riley-Roberts, Evelyn Rivera, Harold Robinson, Russell Rodriguez, Albert Roess, Elena Roman, Richard Ronde, Allan H Rose, Dorothy Royal, Esther Ruiz, Dominick Russo, Flora Santana, Veronica Saunders, Ora Savoy, John Schiavi, Charles W Schneider, Marvin Schneider, Ina Schwartz, Jeremiah Schwarz, Barbara Scott, Mary Seabrooks, Myra Seltzer, April Silva, Adele Simpson, Anita Skelton, Allen Smalls, Angela Smith, Dalphine Smith-Cardin, Gaye F. Snyder-Inkeles, Michael Spector, Christine Spencer, Mark Steffens, Mark Steo, Alfredo L. Tan, Mary D Taylor, Luvonnia Taylor, Clement Tetley, Jeffrey A. Thomas, Hattie Thomas, Joanne L. Tormey, Bernard Tuchman, James Tumia, Eliseo Vergara Jr., Nicholas Vero, Adelaide Verponi, Doreen Violet, Rev. Edgar Vincens, Vida Wagner, Thomas M. Walsh, Ellen Warmstein, Barbara Washington-Griles, David Welsh, Sarah Wilborne, Antoinette Witherspoon, Carol Yost, Elsie Zayas

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Carmelita Almodovar, Pauline Amo-Adu, Beverly Anderson, Samuel Anim-Addo, Leonora Ardila, Denise Austin, Mary Barlow, Renee Bash, Sofia Belenky, Herman Berkowitz, Vincent Berte, John L. Besignano, Andrew E. Bland, Phyllis Blonder, Angela Bongiorno, Renee Boyce, Pamela Brandes, Wayne M. Brelowski, Carol Brown, Marcia Brown, Robert Browne, Douglas Burns, Debra Cali, Milton Campbell, William Capers Jr., Jose Luis Carrion, Jose Casais, Louis Celi, Zi Wen Chen, Peter Cheung, Anthony E Clarke, Arthur C Cohen, Patrick Collins, Theodore Collins, Raymond Conboy, Raffaella Conetta, Teresa Cortes, Colleen Cox, Elizabeth D'Aversa, Pranab Das, Prabhat Das, Judith De Leo, Clive DePass, Constance DeSanti, Richard W. DiBari, Vincent DiGesù, Nicholas Dounis, Thomas Duggan, Joseph Ecock, James Egan, Robert Eilets, Barbara Elstein, Foster Ephraim, Jeremiah K. Feehan, Rosemary C. Fodera, Harold F. Fowler, Irene Foy, Henry Frank, Birchie Frett, Rosalie Frost, Jesus Gagui, Penny Gibson, Joseph Giglio, Frank Glover, Myrna Gonzalez, Minette Gorelik, Sally Graudons, Johnel Green, Sharon Gregg, Thomas J. Griffin, Andrew Grigorenko, Uriel Gunthorpe Jr, Narendra Gupta, Horacio Gutierrez, Estelle Guttbinder, Evans Gyima-Mensah, Henry Haegele, Robert Hanrahan, Katherine Hansen, Sarah Hecht, Lisa Hernandez, Alvin Hill, Isalyn Hinds, Polly Horton, Carolyn Hubbard, Haydee Inclan, Pearl Jackson, Jeffrey A Jacobs, Alonzo Jamison Jr., Ingrid Johnson, Cladie Johnson, Carl Jones, Elroy Jones, Betty Joseph, Ruth Joyner, Phyllis Karasik, Laurie Katz, Joan Kelly, Jeannie Kempson, Betty Kenner, Kathleen Kinney, Gerald S. Koszer, Lizzette La Santa, David Lam, Stanley Landman, Gerald Launer, Rev. Kaye Lee, Victor Lee, Yury Levit, Roger Lew, John Lilly, Chien Sau Lu, Grace Lucas, Gail Lund, Paul Lurie, Patricia J Lynch, Allyson Mackey, Albert Malapit, Sheila Malloy, Rose Mary Mandanici-Yarmak, Barry Mandel, Clarissa Manjarrez, Anthony Marino, Octavio Martinez Jr., Tirso Martinez Jr, Sylvia Martinez Rivera, Anil K. Marwaha, Constance G Maxey, Anita Maya, Morris Mayo, Eric Mayr, Sean McDermott, Jannie M. McGill, Dorothea McKenney, Ralph McKenzie, Velma McLaughlin, Keith McLean, Mark Miller, Lynda Mills, Paul Milora, Theresa Montoya, Dominic Morelli, Jacqueline Morsette, Thomas Murphy, Irene Murray, Kali Ndoeye, Eva C Ng, Erwin F Nied, Veronica Nnabugwu, Donald Nurse, Sheldon Oliff, Haydee Ortiz, Ruth N Paige, Prakash Paingankar, Luiz Pang, James Pappalardo, Johnnie Paylor, Elba Pelaez, Colette Pellino, Mary Ellen Phifer, Susan Piccirillo, Arlene Pitt, Mashere Pride-Rawls, Charles Procida, Morton Pupko, Carmencita Queyquep, Nilda Ramirez, Robert Redmond, Deborah L. Reid, Claus Reinisch, David Robinson, Rebecca Rodriguez, Arnaldo Rodriguez, Milagros Rosas-Marrero, John Rose, Norman Roth, Linda Ryan, Joseph Sanchez, Andrew Sessa, Edna Silas-Marungo, Sandra Smith, Beverly D. Smith, John T. Smith, Anthony Smolenski, Georgette Soliman, Madeleine Soto, Roschel Holland Stearns, Mark Stone, Sallie Stroman, Margaret Suite, James Svrcek, Tuly Tanenbaum, Larry L. Thomas, Joanne Thomas, Daisy Thompson, Joe Toris, Emma Turner, F. Eke Urum-Eke, Mariano Valentin, Cheryl Y Vaughn, Ephraim Veals, David Vogt, Arrie D. Wallace, Rita P. Walsh, John Warner, Ashley A. Webster, Edmund Weinblatt, Olga R. Weiss, Ronald N. West, Yolanda R. Williams, Laraine Williams, Douglas Winston, Lorraine Witzak, Alan Wong, Peggy Wright, Arthur Ziccardi

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Gladstone R. Nicholson
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Norma Nieves-Blas
Janet Nival
Veronica Nnabugwu
Kathryn Nocerino
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Proccesion Obra
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Josephine O'Connell
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Marilyn Reed-Borquaye
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Robert Reeves
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Andrew Sessa
Abdus Shahid
Abdus Shahid
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Nicholas Tisaki
Winston Todman
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Carlos Viguera
Sarah R. Vilar

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Narciso Villafuerte
Robert J. Villiers
Michael J. Vincent
Rev. Edgar Vines
Ana T. Vives
Nona Volk
Florence Wagener
Vida Wagner
Sally Rofosky Waldman
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Karmelita Walker
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