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RETIREES
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AFTerwords

NEWSLETTER • LOCAL 2373

ROWAN UNIVERSITY
201 Mullica Hill Rd., Glassboro, N.J., 08028

“From sea to shining sea!”

The Garrabrants' Adventurous Journey through the Pacific Northwest

A family wedding in Portland, Oregon at the end of September was the catalyst for Bill and me to take a trip to the Pacific Northwest, where neither of us had ever been. We planned to see Washington's three national parks: Rainier, Olympic, and North Cascades, and to visit Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia.

We had two weeks of unusually clear weather for viewing the great scenery – dense green forests, huge glacier-covered mountains, the blue waters of Seattle and the Olympic Peninsula. Our drive into Mount Rainier National Park took us through farmland surrounded by mountains. Rainier, a “sleeping volcano” was massive with glaciers, waterfalls, and a visitor center appropriately called Paradise. Wildflower meadows flourished at the foothills and color was aglow in the red foliage of vine maples. I had a wonderful time doing a large drawing of Rainier.

Next we drove past the Hood Canal west of Seattle to Port Angeles on the Olympic Peninsula. In Sequim, (pronounced Skwim), there was a beautiful gallery of Northwest Coast Indian art, a major interest in this region of many reservations and galleries of Indian art.

An Olympic National Park entrance is a short drive from Port Angeles, so we

spent the day at the rugged Hurricane Ridge mountains and then drove past brilliant blue Lake Crescent surrounded by high peaks. In the little town of Forks we saw many Twilight references because the

seeing the Pike Place vendors, including the original Starbucks. Seattle has many different coffee shops – I think they may have to be caffeinated to walk the steep, hilly streets. The Seattle Art Museum, designed

by Philly's Robert Venturi, had a large gallery of more coastal Indian art – some things like ceremonial masks, but also pieces by today's Indian artists who follow the historic design traditions of large abstract shapes symbolizing a variety of animal motifs.

The other great Seattle attraction was the Seattle Center where the iconic Space Needle towers, and the museum and garden of glass art by their most famous artist, Dale Chihuly. His glass sculptures of all kinds of natural forms are truly amazing. Near this is a museum of rock and roll music – The Experience Music Project designed by Frank Gehry, which like the Indian art and the Chihuly glass, is based on the curvilinear forms with which he has revolutionized

architecture – making buildings look like they might collapse.

The last national park was the North Cascades, northeast of Seattle and largely inaccessible by road. To get there we drove through the beautiful Skagit River Valley, the river a source of hydroelectric power for the Seattle region. A wonderful view of a mountain above the river was one of the best

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On a recent trip to the Northwest, Bill and Carol Garrabrant enjoyed many breathtaking vistas, including that of El Dorado Peak in the North Cascades as seen from the Skagit River Valley.

Photo by Carol Garrabrant

book series was based there, as was the film. The famous Hoh Rain Forest of the park was 25 miles farther on, so we spent the late afternoon on a strange Pacific beach of coarse gravel and blasted tree trunks like giant driftwood. There were weird rock outcrops extending outward all along the beach.

The next day, after a pleasant ferry ride, we reached Seattle where we enjoyed

To Broadway and Back:

Joseph Robinette Reaches New Heights in Writing for Children's Theatre

Joe Robinette's recent Broadway success, the book for the musical version of *A Christmas Story*, is one more accomplishment in a career spanning 40 years of acting, teaching, directing, and writing. Joe has written or co-authored 55 published plays and musicals, most notably in children's theatre. His works have been produced in every one of the 50 states, as well as in 17 foreign countries.

Former Glassboro students and colleagues wonder what took Broadway so long? Plays produced in prestigious venues as Lincoln Center, the Goodman Theatre, and the BBC, does not suggest beginner's luck. Joe also collaborated with E.B. White on the dramatized version of *Charlotte's Web* and wrote the book for the musical version.

Joe credits his father's efforts to encourage a somewhat diffident ten-year old for his career in theatre. In 1950, the family lived in Jasper, Georgia, where his father ran a combined dry goods and ten-cent store. His father read of a drama group in Atlanta that needed two boys for a performance of *On Borrowed Time*. When Joe, at first reluctant, learned that he could miss school and would live in a hotel during the performance, he agreed to try out for the part.

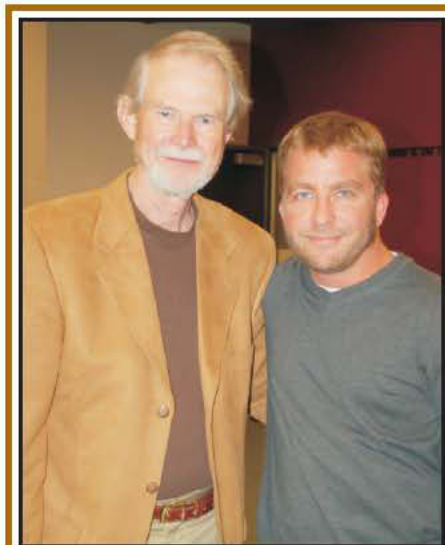
Joe described the advice he received from his non-theatrical father as, "the best ... I ever received about acting: 'Talk loud enough so they can hear you and talk clear enough so they can understand you.'" Combining that advice with some obvious native talent, and perhaps also with what some might call *chutzpah*, Joe was cast as one of the boys. At the end of the run, he had earned \$25.00 for the opportunity to appear with a group of professional actors that included Boris Karloff.

Apparently, that was all the encouragement he needed. After graduation from college, he taught English at Knoxville High School. The next summer he undertook graduate work in children's theatre at Southern Illinois University, which led to a position in a community college in Kansas.

Since his new teaching position required additional credits in education, Joe opted to pursue a master's degree at Southern Illinois University. Writing his thesis on children's literature, Joe completed his master's degree in 1966, and continued in the University's doctoral program in theatre, pausing only long enough to marry the attractive blonde he had met there. Forty-eight years, five

children, and nine grandchildren later, Helen and Joe are still happily together.

Southern Illinois University permitted Joe to satisfy the dissertation requirement by writing and producing three plays, to be



Joseph Robinette wrote the book for *A Christmas Story, The Musical*, the adaptation of the motion picture. Pictured with Joe is Peter Billingsley, who played Ralphie in *A Christmas Story, The Movie*.

Photo courtesy of Joseph Robinette

performed in their laboratory theatre. Meanwhile, Joe and Helen served as residence hall counselors, receiving free residence along with a paid assistantship for Joe.

Joe took a leave to teach at the University of Hawaii for a year. Browsing through a bookstore in Hawaii, Helen found a copy of Mark Twain's *Letters from Hawaii*, an early work in which Twain describes a trip with an imaginary sardonic character. Twain's book inspired *A Savage in the Sandwich Isles*, a two-character play that served as part of the three-play requirement for Joe's doctoral program. His next play, a history of a town near Carbondale about to celebrate its sesquicentennial anniversary, was titled *River Out of Eden*. Two plays done, and when someone asked, "What next?" Joe was ready.

For the third play, Joe wanted to write a musical. He found a composer, and the two worked on the poetry and early life of Vachel Lindsay, producing *Trumpet of the New Moon*. By spring 1971, Joe had a completed doctoral thesis: *The Adaptive-Creative Process in Readers Theatre: Three Original Manuscripts*. He also had three completed plays and his Ph. D. in theatre.

Now, what next?

Next was a notice, on the Placement Office's bulletin board for a job opening at Glassboro State College in New Jersey for someone qualified in children's theatre, readers theatre, oral interpretation of literature and creative dramatics. Joe met with then drama department chairman Mike Kelly and department member Bill Kushner in New York City, and the rest is history.

Joe had a great career at Glassboro/Rowan; it was a perfect match of personality, temperament, talent, and resources. Mike Kelly asked Joe to consider producing plays for the department's summer Children's Theatre program. In 1972, Joe's musical, with composer Tom Tierney, *Mr. Herman and the Cave Company*, followed in 1973 by *The Fabulous Fable Factory* was produced. During his career, Joe also wrote five musicals with his late colleague, Jim Shaw, of the department of Music.

Respected and admired by his students, "Doctor Joe" was awarded the Lindback Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2002. Joe appreciated the support of his department and Glassboro/Rowan and of his union as well. A long-time member of Local 2373, he promptly joined the AFT Retirees Chapter when he retired in 2005.

Of course, "retired" is just a relative term for Joe, who keeps on writing and producing wonderful plays for children. *A Christmas Story* was so well received during its recent two-month run on Broadway that it wouldn't be surprising if it became a regular offering for the Christmas season--something to see as well as *The Nutcracker Ballet*.

Perhaps Broadway ought to look at some of the other gems in Joe's repertoire; they really shouldn't let another 40 years go by before they catch on to something else that good.

—by Rose Glassberg

Mark Your Calendars!

March 13

12-2 p.m. - Don and Pat Stoll Travelogue

April 10

11-12:15 Musical Recital - Wilson Hall

April 11

1-3 p.m. Special Presentation by
Dr. Jaime Torres, Director of District Two,
Health and Human Services, on the
Affordable Care Act - Eynon Ballroom

May

End-of-Year Party



AFTerthoughts from Rose

by Rose Glassberg

I surprised myself this week by remembering that March 2013 marks the fortieth anniversary of my initial election as president of Local 2373. Forty years! And while incredible changes have taken place in public sector collective bargaining in that time, some people prefer to ignore history.

Before coming to Glassboro, I taught in the Philadelphia public schools. I remember hearing the principal of one of my schools urging us to join the Philadelphia Public School Council. Dues for the Council were ten cents per month. As a point of honor, I never paid one cent to that organization. It was not clear to me then, nor has it become any clearer sixty-plus years later, just what that organization did for teachers, but just as I knew was true of the familiar but hopelessly inaccurate and unhelpful mnemonic, neither was the principal's recommended organization my "pal."

I do remember that my starting annual salary of \$2400.00 in 1951 was not enough for me to live in my own apartment and contribute something at home, so I lived at home. I also remember that when I was hospitalized for about a week, my two-week net pay for the period including my hospitalization was \$78.00 because our sick pay rate was 50 % of our regular inadequate salary. Pregnant women in those days had to take maternity leave for no compensation by the time they started their fourth month of

pregnancy, lest innocent eyes be exposed to the "tummy bump." When I discussed this with my nephew, Dr. David Glassberg, who teaches American history at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, he suggested that the administrators probably thought they were being progressive, since in the 1920s, pregnant teachers were promptly fired.

In 1964, when I left to come to Glassboro, I was making \$8300.00 per

"If they were interested in real educational reform, they would turn to AFT's substantial record in this area and get something positive started."

year. By this time, I had an excellent teaching record of thirteen years, including advanced senior classes, a master's degree in English from Middlebury College, and substantial work in doctoral-level English courses at Temple University. My starting salary at Glassboro, despite all of this, was \$7300.00.

Single women coming to Glassboro often received lower salaries than "married men with families" – even if the women had equal or even superior qualifications. Equally qualified women married to men hired to full-time contracts were denied regular contracts themselves, under the discriminatory anti-nepotism policy utilized at that time. Nor was Glassboro unique in these practices; when AFT became our bargaining agent, we still

filed anti-discrimination grievances. Since 1974, however, we had a contract with provision for real enforcement and won several arbitration awards in this area.

So when I hear state officials wail about the "excessive power" of public sector unions, and our "Cadillac" pensions (even when they neglect to pay their share of contributions), I think they miss the good old days when they were free to hire and fire at will and at whatever salaries they chose.

It isn't concern for the health of public schools and public colleges and universities that moves governors to kill collective bargaining rights and pensions for faculty and other educational employees—far from it. If they were interested in real educational reform, they would turn to AFT's substantial record in this area and get something positive started. No, improving public education would be too empowering for that pesky 47% Mitt-who? was caught talking about.

Well, perhaps you already remember all this history, or perhaps, in putting on my Reminder-in-Chief's hat, I'm jogging your memories. AFT President Randi Weingarten talked at our last convention about "solution-based unionism." Just remember that we are not the problem; rather, because of our experience, our history, our commitment, we still are part of the solution. Wherever you are, and our Chapter is spread all over this country, "Make Them Hear You!"

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In Memoriam

Frances R. Lax, Philanthropist and Former Board of Trustees Vice Chairperson, Dies

Frances Reiner Lax, 90, died January 19, 2012, at her home in Medford Leas, Medford, NJ. A community leader, voter rights activist, and South Jersey philanthropist, Mrs. Lax was widely recognized for her humanitarian and charitable contributions.

In 1980, Mrs. Lax became a member of the Board of Directors of Glassboro State College, and later Vice Chairperson of the Board. She served on the Board during the historic \$100 million dollar donation from South Jersey industrialist Henry Rowan.

Affectionately known as "Fran" by the Glassboro/Rowan University family, she also led the renovation of Hollybush Mansion. She established a much

appreciated fund for faculty development at Rowan University. In 1999, the University recognized Fran's outstanding contributions with an honorary doctorate in humanities.

Fran held a B.A. in economics from Bryn Mawr College and an M.A. in Latin American history from Radcliffe Graduate School of Harvard University. She was involved with the League of Women Voters at the national level and served as its NJ President. She was a member of the Haddonfield Parent Teacher Association, the South Jersey Planned Parenthood Association, and the American Friend Service Committee, among many others. She also served on the SL Industries Board of Directors after her husband and founder

of the company, Stephen Girard Lax, passed away.

Fran is survived by three sons, S. Girard of Pennington; Andrew R. of San Francisco; and Charles R. of Dover, and three grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband Stephen in 1976 and by her first born son Jonathan R. Lax in 1996.

A memorial service was held in Medford, NJ, on March 2; burial was private. Donations may be made to the Lax Fund at Rowan University Foundation, 201 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro, NJ 08028.

Dr. Richard R. Smith Educational Leadership Expert

Richard "Dick" R. Smith, 74, of Glassboro, died November 10, 2012, in Kennedy Memorial Hospital, Washington Township, NJ. Dr. Smith retired from the Educational Leadership Department of Rowan University as Professor of Education in 1999, after 36 years of service.

As an undergraduate at Glassboro State College, Dick was elected president of his class and held this office four years, until his graduation in 1962 with a B.A. in Art. The first graduate assistant ever to be appointed at Glassboro State College, Dick completed his M.A. at the College before earning his Ed.D. at Temple University.

Early in his service at Glassboro State College, Dick served as Director of Resident Students/Assistant Director of Graduate Studies. He founded and served as coordinator of a joint doctoral program with Virginia Technical University, and became coordinator of Rowan's first doctoral program in Educational Leadership.

Widely recognized as an expert on community college education, Dr. Smith served as consultant to numerous community colleges and public school districts and published many articles on this topic. After his retirement in 1999, he served as consultant to Gloucester County College Teachers 2000 program.

Dr. Smith is survived by his wife of 48 years, Nancy; son, Sean Francis; daughter Danene Derrickson and son-in-law Earl; and three grandchildren.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in The Church of St. Bridget, Glassboro; interment in St. Bridget's Cemetery. Donations in Dr. Smith's memory may be made to Rowan University Foundation, 201 Mullica Hill Rd., Glassboro, NJ 08028, or Fox Chase Cancer Center, 333 Cottman Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111.

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places ever to do a landscape drawing. Next was a stop at the turquoise glacial Lake Diablo, surrounded by more alpine mountains and forests of very tall Douglas firs, cedar, and hemlock.

The weather became cloudy and damp in Vancouver, BC, where we saw the famous collection of historic coastal Indian art at the Museum of Anthropology, custom-built to contain very large pieces like totem poles. These intricately carved and painted poles were used mostly as doorposts or memorial monuments. The stylized representations showing mythologies of whales, ravens, hawks, or bears followed certain principles of design, but there were variations among different tribes. In the Vancouver Art Gallery we saw paintings by Emily Carr, who painted the forested environment in styles similar to Georgia O'Keeffe's southwest landscapes.

Our trip was an interesting experience of a region new to us, and to see various artists' interpretations of the landscape only enhanced it further. It was great fun for me to do drawings of this magnificent part of the country, and our more than three hundred photos will help Bill and me remember our trip for a long time. —by Carol Garbrant



Northwest glass artist Dale Chihuly is known for his grand, innovative glass sculptures and use of vibrant colors, as seen here in the Chihuly Garden and Glass at Seattle Center.

Photo by Carol Garbrant

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