



S.S.R.A. NEWSLETTER



Volume XV, Issue 1

September-October 2015

From the Editor's Desk

A big welcome to all our new members from Smithtown's 2015 retirees. We are certainly glad to welcome you into the fold. The SSRA (Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association) was established a little more than 20 years ago to assist our retirees in making the transition into retirement as simple and enjoyable as it should be. Through the SSRA we try to keep you in touch with former colleagues, make you aware of any legislation affecting your retirement, as well as, keep you apprised of any changes in benefits that occur once you are retired.



An example of this is a vision plan for you and your family only available to retirees. Details of this plan can be found on page 8. It is an annual plan with no permanent obligation.

As 2015 retirees, you are complimentary members of the SSRA for the remainder of this calendar year. We operate on a calendar year in conjunction with the other retiree districts in RC #23.

It appears that the 30,000 emails sent to the Regents has generated some rethinking on their part. In a split vote, the Regents has approved a 30 day delay to overhaul the flaws in the APPR (Annual Professional Performance Reviews) regulations. The Regents has acknowledged the claims by educators and parents that the current system of testing and evaluations in conjunction with the Common Core does indeed contain many flaws. Consider this.....testing is done only in Math and English//Language Arts. Yet, somehow all

teachers are evaluated based on these scores, in subjects they do not teach and by students they may not even know. In NY last year, more than 200,000 students opted out of the Common Core testing. Yet, somehow, these scores are still considered valid for evaluation.

Albert Einstein once commented, "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life thinking it is stupid," Is this going to happen to children today because of its emphasis on test scores?

Much has or will happen for our Smithtown retirees. Our **SSRA** (STA) office has recently moved to its new location at 26 New York Avenue. Our newly developed website is now up and running with a much easier means of accessing it. Our annual Fall luncheon at St. George's Golf and Country Club will be held on October 14th. Our thanks to Marilyn Harris for securing this popular location for us and to John Pettit for making the arrangements. Our RC #23 has a new President, Ellen Burke, replacing Dennis Flamenbaum who has relocated to sunny Florida.

More details on most of these topics can be found elsewhere in this edition.

I wish all our members a healthy and active retirement. To Smithtown's 2015 retirees..... welcome aboard.

Carl Haymes
SSRA Editor

Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association

26 New York Avenue
Smithtown, NY 11787
(631)265-4218

Email: ssraeditor@optonline.net

President..... George Makris
Co-Vice Presidents..... Florence Martin
..... John Pettit
Treasurer..... Susan Fink
Recording Secretary..... Donna Milgrom
Newsletter Editor..... Carl Haymes
Membership Coordinator/
Social Committee..... John Pettit
Communication Liaison..... Bobbi Miller
RC Delegate..... Lou DeBole
Alternate Delegate..... Donna Milgrom
Sunshine Committee..... Winnie Snyder

The Smithtown School Retirees' Association is affiliated with the Smithtown Teachers' Association,
The New York State United Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers

Monthly meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 9:30 AM
at the STA office

All members are invited to attend. We encourage your input.



New Website Up and Running

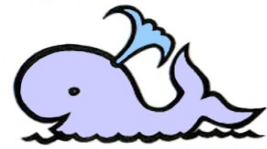
For the past few months we have been asking our members to respond to our request for input into our website and the availability of accessing the Newsletter online. We told you about a website developed by former science teacher Rich Davis. We appreciate his expertise as well as the input we have received from our members. We have considered the many suggestions.

Thanks to Rich, accessibility to the site is even easier. You no longer have to type in our organization's full name to access the website. Just type in: myssra.com, and you are there. You might want to add this site to your browser. This website contains links to the SSRA, STA, NYSTRS, SSEA and even the Smithtown CSD itself.

If you would like to see past editions of our Newsletter, they are also included on the website beginning with October 2014. As of now, and through this December, we will send you both an email copy and a paper one. After that, the choice will be yours.



News of Members



As retirees, we have the opportunities to undertake many diverse and interesting activities and trips. Why not share them with us? We welcome any stories, poems, adventures or whatever you would like to tell your former colleagues.

Gail Chiavaro - This past May, I joined my daughter in Seattle and caught an Amtrak train for a short trip to Vancouver. There we boarded a Princess Cruise Line ship for a seven day Alaskan tour. Schools were not yet out, so there were few children on this excursion, and because it was early May, we were usually the only cruise ship in each port which made shopping and sight-seeing a pleasure. We were lucky enough to enjoy a week of 70 degree temperatures.

The salmon were not yet running so there were few eagles to be seen. But we did spot a mother and her cubs, moose and other wildlife. On board ship, a naturalist lectured about various whale species. Then, on a whale watching excursion, we were fortunate enough to find a pod of orcas playing and feeding. We watched in amazement as these huge creatures shot out of the water as gracefully as dolphins and then dove deep. Another evening, the first winner of the famed Iditarod Race, Libby Riddles, spoke about her experiences. We visited a dog team training center and were able to take a simulated run.

The highlight of the trip was of course, the glaciers in College Fiord and Glacier Bay. As the ship idled in front of the glaciers an enormous piece broke off (calving) with a thunderous crack and sent a plume of water shooting 250 feet into the air. A three day land tour took us to Denali (Mt. McKinley). It is rare that you can see the top of the mountain and unfortunately, this was the only overcast day we had. There is no argument in Alaska over what is the tallest peak in North America. It was "Denali" wherever we went. There is so much more to see in Alaska. I am sure I will visit again, perhaps later in the season, to see the salmon run, the wildflowers, and other natural wonders of this vast and beautiful state.

Joyce McLaren - Ron and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary with 100+ friends and family members. The evening consisted of dinner, dancing, and a funny game designed by our DJ, who is a close friend. It's a night we'll fondly remember. Bobbi and Bill Stoddard and Hank and Gilmary Crisci traveled to NC to celebrate with us. Bobbi, Hank and I taught at Mt. Pleasant Elementary school in the 1960's and were together again at the middle school in the 1990's. We were delighted that they celebrated with us.

Eleanor Brocia - wishes to express her gratitude to the SSRA readership for all their kind wishes following her fall which resulted in a brief hospitalization and somewhat extended recovery from bruising and lacerations. The notes, cards and visits were so welcome and strengthened appreciation for our retiree community.

Susan Seiler - This has been a busy year for Sue and Rob Seiler. Our eldest son, Evan, was married in Mt. Hood, Oregon. Our middle son, Matt, received his MBA in June from Michigan University.

(Cont. on p.4 - Members) .

Members (cont. from p. 3)

We're so proud of all our three kids!! At the end of the month we will be going to Israel for almost three weeks. We've never been there and look forward to a very meaningful experience.

Kathy Simon-McDonald - Kathy won the Susan Lattner Lloyd Gold award (best in show) at the 2015 Florida Watercolor Society's annual show. The Florida Watercolor Society is the largest watercolor society in America. This year's show had over 3,000 entries from which approximately 100 paintings were chosen. The exhibition will run from September 6th to November 1st at the Leepa-Rattner Museum in Tarpon Springs, Florida and can be viewed on the Florida Watercolor Society webpage. Kathy began painting in watercolor five years ago. She has won numerous awards for her realistic watercolor paintings. She and her husband, Roy, now reside year-round in Florida.

Al Chandler - Life is good, retirement even better...I can hardly believe it is already 15 years that I am retired. When people ask me what I do all day I reply with, "what ever I want." I always add that I loved my job and I enjoyed working with some fantastic kids and we managed to achieve a record that has still to be broken by any other team in all of Smithtown history. My Smithtown High School East baseball team won the 1990 States. That will always be my pride and joy.

Since those days of employment I have kept busy as physically possible. I have been blessed to be able to continue enjoying the game of racquetball at least four times a week. My wife, Barbara, says I am the energizer bunny. For this I thank God. This year alone, we traveled to China, South Korea and Japan, Aruba, which we have been doing for 25 years until we get it right and we just got back from taking our eldest granddaughter, Allison to Paris

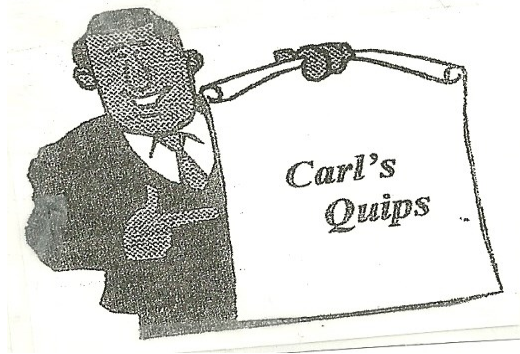
So yes, retirement is a good thing, a very good thing. 99% attitude, 1% **** happens! .

Mary Jane Casey - Hope all are enjoying retirement. The years pass quickly when you are having fun. This summer we had an addition to our family. Our granddaughter, Kelly Bluth and her husband Danny, welcomed their bundle of joy, John James on August 6th. He is our first great-grandchild and needless to say we are in our glory! On July 3rd, at our Vermont home, our granddaughter Casey Gobetz became engaged to Brendan Ward (a substitute teacher in Smithtown). They are a wonderful couple and planning a 2017 wedding. AND next June our oldest grandson Stephen Casey will be married to Lauren Muller and of course they too are just as wonderful. Our grandson, James Gobetz was drafted by a Jr. USHL team, the Tri-City Storm and is in Nebraska for this year playing hockey before college. We are flying out to see him play his first game in late September. Our lives are full and we are truly blessed.

Jim and I love to travel and in February we'll be going on the Andy Cooney CRUISE OF IRISH STARS. We did it last year and it was greatest so we're doing it again!! Happy days to all!

Carmelina Trifiletti - (Follow up to Carmelina's story in June 2015 Newsletter acting as a "Social Minister" through her church and meeting with 97 year old Alice) A few months ago I wrote about my visits to my friend Alice. I am now happy to tell you that Alice celebrated her 98th birthday on September 4th. And what a celebration it was! Alice was showered with balloons, flowers, teddy bears, cupcakes and a most delicious traditional German birthday cake baked by her German (of course) friend. There were seven of us at Alice's house that day to help her celebrate such a momentous occasion and life accomplishment. It is not every day we get to celebrate a 98th birthday! Alice took the day's festivities in her usual stride by lining up all her birthday cards in front of her and admiring the covers and the good wishes contained within. It was as if she were saying, "Life is good!" After many birthday hugs and best wishes I left Alice's house looking forward to next Sept. 4th to celebrate Alice's 99th birthday!

(see Members p. 6 for more)



Language is not properly the servant of thought but not infrequently becomes the master.

◆◆◆◆ Clulow ◆◆◆◆

Answers from students' papers collected over many, many years. Laugh or cry, but enjoy them! If you know of any, and would like to share them, please send them to the Newsletter.

The difference between centipedes and millipedes is that centipedes are found by the hundreds and millipedes are found by the millions.

An inverted sentence is one that makes sense either way.

One cause of avalanches is from people yodeling.

The ancient Egyptians used a system of writing known as hydraulics.

Buddhism is practiced mainly in Budapest.

Ecology is the bacteria in raw beef that makes you sick.

President's Message

A special welcome to our new members. This summer went by so quickly, unfortunately, time does go faster as we get older. Our website is up and running as you read on page 2, The access site is shorter; myssra.com, and you can see past issues of our newsletter. Remember we do have a new address, too.

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving, good health and peace.

~George Makris

World Trade Center Memorial & Museum

Our RC#23 has planned a bus trip to the World Trade Center and Museum on Nov. 30th. After visiting the Memorial, the bus will take you to Little Italy for lunch or shopping on your own followed by a guided trip through Chinatown and Lower Manhattan. Cost is \$85 pp. If you haven't seen the email call: 800-552-6262 for details.

NYSUT Members Hold Protest At Sagamore Resort

Last month, Campbell Brown, former CNN anchorwoman, and a proponent of charter schools and anti-tenure laws spoke at a meeting of the New York State Business Council. The meeting was held at the Sagamore Resort in Lake George. NYSUT leaders and supporters protested outside with signs and received quite a bit of news coverage.

Campbell Brown has long been a spokesperson for wealthy hedge fund managers who would like to privatize and benefit from public education.

Brown has officially launched an online news site known as the "The Seventy Four." The name comes from the 74 million children under age 18 in the U.S. Its agenda is to challenge the educational establishment by promoting anti-union and anti-tenure legislation.

Campbell founded the Parents' Transparency Project known as PTP, based in NY City. The organization is, as mentioned before, a strong supporter of charter schools and wishes to change the current tenure laws. Campbell refuses to disclose the names of the billionaire funders for her organization claiming their right to privacy.

New or Returning Members (add these names to the 2015- Directory)

Josephine LoRusso
123 Fifty Acre Road, South
Smithtown, NY 11787
631-265-6559
joslorusso1951@gmail.com

Louise Muse
179 Mt. Pleasant Road
Smithtown, NY 11787
631-265-2916
Louisemuse4@gmail.com

Anton Papp
319 Terry Road
Smithtown, NY 11787
ginger20@optonline.net

MaryTalamo-Geiger
967 Beeper Court
Thye Villages, FL 32163
marytg831@aol.com

**Changes to make in the
2015-17 Directory**

Margarita Goykin - 631-331-5012
mimgmimi90optonline.net

Alan Gleicher - alansaab@gmail.com

Hennessy - (note correct spelling of
Mary and Jack's last name)
jhennessy1111@yahoo.com
theartvark2@yahoo.com

David Keller - 6260 Glen Valley Terrace,
7B, Frederick, MD 21701

Patricia Levine - patlev185@gmail.com

Maureen Smilow - mmsmilow@optonline.net

Mary Staudt -
josephjandm00@gmail.com (2 zeros)

Diane Wetjen - dialwetjen@gmail.com

Members (cont. from p. 4)

Elyse Chanin - is thrilled and overjoyed to announce the arrival of her first grandchild, Max Evan. He was born at 5:23 PM, weighing 6 lbs, 6 oz. and 19-1/2 I" long. Mom Jodi, Dad (son Jason), and baby are doing very well and grandma Elyse and grandpa Richard are beyond words!!!

**OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY
TO:**

The family of Carl Faust, former district science teacher, who passed away in July

Joan DeRosa on the loss of her husband, Mark, former district Math teacher

The family of Nina Chapler, former teacher at Nesconset Elementary School

Patti Dose, on the loss of her mother, Ethel McMullen, in August

The family of Bill Eysaman, former district principal, on his passing in August

Gladys Waldron, district school board member for many years, on the loss of her husband, Thomas.

Maria Bataller, former Nurse Clerk at Accomsett Elementary School on the recent loss of her husband, William

OFF THE CUFF

by John Pettit

I certainly hope that everyone enjoyed a wonderful summer; the weather certainly was terrific.

By now everyone should have noted the change of address for the STA Office, and our SSRA also (26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, NY 11787) – the school district building. Mary Mills cut her summer vacation short and did a terrific job, working many days (some without air conditioning) in order to get the office ready for the opening of school. The email address and fax numbers remain the same as before.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to **June Ferri**, and husband, **Fred**, who celebrated their **60th Anniversary** during the summer.

Fall Luncheon: The printing of this Newsletter is just before the luncheon (Oct. 14) at St. George's G & CC so here I sit, in late September, prepared to report that the day was wonderful, the food was great and a good time was had by all. While I believe that it will be true, I'll have to hold that for our December edition in which there will be photos.

Internet: As is explained in other places in this issue, our website is up and running; we intend to expand its functions and utility in the future – your suggestions would be appreciated. Of particular note are the links to other sites which should be beneficial; also, you can access back issues of the SSRA Newsletter. Curious Question: Who are those happy people pictured on the HomePage? It's nice to see that, only a decade and a half into the 21st Century, we are moving past rotary-dial phones and into the modern world. Our plan is to provide you with this Newsletter in both formats (print and email) for the rest of this year and then to send only the email version. Of course, we can send a printed copy to any member who requests that (retirees version of an opt-out) – look for a form in the December Newsletter for this.

Membership/Dues: Collecting our annual membership dues by the end of the *calendar* year worked well last year and we will stay with that schedule – in the December Newsletter there will be a form for you to use when mailing your dues. Consideration is being given to using an on-line bill-payer (such as PayPal), but there are issues (costs) which must be addressed first. The SSRA seeks to keep our annual dues as low as possible (especially when compared to similar organizations in the county); the printing and postage savings gained by using emails should help.

A Thought: I've noticed that people seem to read the Bible a whole lot more as they get older? Then it dawned on me – they are cramming for their finals. As for me, I'm just hoping God grades on a curve.

-- Unknown author.

Identity theft protection available for NYSUT members



TRUE IDENTITY PROTECTION™

NYSUT Member Benefits is excited to announce that its newest endorsed program -- ID Watchdog -- is now available to all NYSUT members & their families looking for protection against the growing threat of identity and credit theft.

What Do I Get When I Sign Up for ID Watchdog?

- Credit & Cyber Monitoring
- Credit Reports & Scores
- Individual, Individual/Spouse or Family Coverage Available
- Monthly Credit Score Tracker
- High Risk Monitoring

According to Javelin Strategy & Research, an estimated 13.1 million Americans fall victim to identity theft each year. These individuals are hit with approximately \$7,000 in fraudulent charges per person and spend about 330 hours each trying to recover from the effects of identity theft.

ID Watchdog (founded in 2005 as a theft protection service) uses proprietary monitoring technology that alerts members as soon as new or updated information associated with their identity is detected -- allowing them to catch fraudulent activity immediately.

**To learn more about ID Watchdog, call toll-free 866-513-0823
or visit memberbenefits.nysut.org.**



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.

Sept./Oct. '15



We're pleased to announce a new vision plan, sponsored by the Smithtown School Retirees Association (SSRA) and arranged by Newman Company, through National Vision Administrators, LLC (NVA)

Newman has worked with the Smithtown Teachers Association for decades, delivering value and reliability in the area of member benefits. NVA was founded in 1979 and manages vision benefits for about 7 million members nationwide. Now you have access to this important eye care benefit through membership in the SSRA.

The plan provides reimbursement for an annual eye exam, frames, lenses or contacts either in or out of the large network of providers. Participating providers include Wal-Mart/Sam's Club and thousands of independent eye care retailers. To view network providers in your area, go online to <http://tinyurl.com/ssravisio>.

Username is **smithtownretirees** Password is **vision1**.

In Network benefits include 100% coverage for Lens Options like

- Anti-Reflective Coatings
- High Index
- Standard and Premium Progressives
- UV Coatings
- Blended Bifocals
- Oversized
- Scratch-Resistant Coating
- Glass Photogrey
- Fashion Gradient Tint
- Polarized
- Solid Tints
- Polycarbonate and Transition Lenses

If you should choose to participate in the plan, the premium will be billed annually to you by Newman Company. The rates are:

Individual \$111.12 Retiree and Spouse \$222.36 Family \$344.64

For more information, including a full summary of the benefit and an enrollment form, please contact Newman Company by email at ssravisio@newmancompany.com, or phone them at (516) 488-1100, extension 28.

S.S.R.A.

Won't you forward news about trips you take, activities you are involved in, or any news of interest for the next edition of the Newsletter? Help make this paper more informative with news of our members.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Year Retired: _____

Email Address: (if new or not previously given to us) _____

Information: (Please write legibly.
(Use another piece of paper if necessary))

Mail to:

SSRA Newsletter
26 New York Avenue
Smithtown, NY 11787

OR

Email: ssraeditor@optonline.net

**S.S.R.A.
26 New York Avenue
Smithtown, NY 11787**