

S.S.R.A. NEWSLETTER

SMITHTOWN SCHOOLS RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

DUES ARE DUE
See
back cover



Volume 23 / Issue 2



December 2022



The end of the year is a time to reflect.
We assess where we started the year,
and what we have accomplished.



We think about where we are going as the new year
opens up with new possibilities and dreams.
May your new year be all that you hope for,
and filled with love and friendship.



Happy Holidays!

from the Executive Committee
of the Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association.

Patty Stoddard, President



As another new year begins, why not



Join Our Board!

Do you have a special talent
you'd like to contribute to our SSRA Board?

Are you good with computers?

Would you like to volunteer to present scholarship
awards to our winners,
be a Committee member, or perhaps attend NYSUT
retiree meetings as a delegate?

There's lots to do, and we need you!

We are all slowly getting back into the swing of things after two years of
quarantining and restrictions, and we could use your help and input.

Afterall, we're not getting any younger!

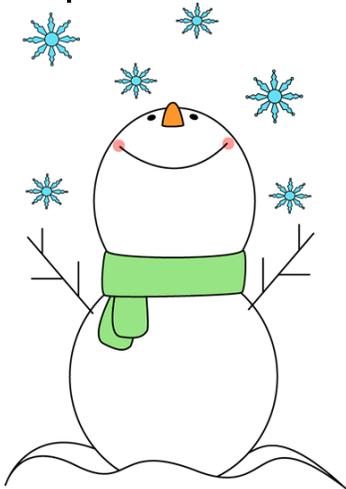
Drop me a line at ssraeditor@gmail.com

Let's talk!

Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association

26 New York Avenue ♦ Smithtown, NY 11787 ♦ (631) 585-8316

Email: ssraeditor@gmail.com



President	Patty Stoddard
Vice President	John Pettit
Treasurer	Susan Fink
Recording Secretary	Donna Milgrom
Membership Coordinator/ Social Committee	John Pettit
SSRA WebMaster	Richard Davis
NYSUT Liaison	June Smith
Communication Liaison	Bobbi Miller
RC Delegate	Lou DeBole
Alternate RC Delegate	Donna Milgrom
Sunshine Committee	Karen Van Dover
Newsletter Editor	Mary Mills Desjeunes

The Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association is affiliated with the **Smithtown Teachers' Association**, the **New York State United Teachers**, and the **American Federation of Teachers**, and is comprised of members from all of the bargaining units in the Smithtown Central School District.

Monthly meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 10:00 AM at the STA office

Visit our website at: myssra.com and Like us on **facebook**



All members are invited to attend.

We encourage your input and newsletter submissions.



Best wishes to our friend and colleague

Karen Makris

for continued good health after her recent surgery.

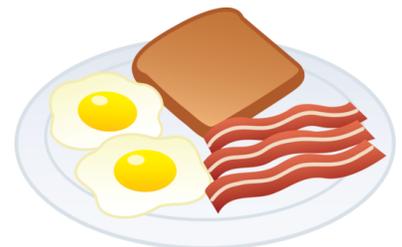
WELCOME

Karen Van Dover

the SSRAs NEW Sunshine Committee Chairperson!

Wakey! Wakey! Eggs and Bakey!

Join your retired Smithtown School friends and colleagues for breakfast every Wednesday morning beginning at 10am at the Hauppauge Palace Diner
525 Smithtown By-Pass, Hauppauge, New York 11788



NYSTRS/NYSLRS Cost-of-Living Adjustment

The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for September 2022 through August 2023 benefit payments is 3%.

As a result, an eligible retired member with a maximum retirement benefit of \$18,000 or more received a maximum increase of \$45 per month beginning with the September 30, 2022 payment. (Eligible members receiving a maximum retirement benefit under \$18,000 received a lesser monthly increase.)

New York's permanent, automatic COLA is designed to help offset inflation's adverse effects on the fixed retirement benefits of the state's public retirees. By law, the COLA can be no less than 1% and no more than 3% annually and is applied only to the first \$18,000 of the retirement benefit. The COLA percentage is calculated by taking 50% of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase from one March to the next and rounding up to the nearest tenth. The CPI increased 8.54% from March 2021 to March 2022.

COLA Eligibility

To be eligible for a COLA, you must either be:

- At least age 62 and retired at least five years; or,
- At least age 55 and retired at least 10 years; or,
- A retiree receiving a NYSTRS disability benefit for at least five years (regardless of age); or,

A surviving spouse of an eligible retiree receiving a lifetime benefit. (By law, the spouse receives an increase equal to one-half the COLA the retiree would have received.)

Retirees who become eligible for the COLA after September will receive their adjustment when first eligible.

2023 Social Security COLA

The 2023 COLA, also announced Thursday, is 8.7% — the highest bump in more than 40 years. On average, Social Security benefits will increase by more than \$140 a month in 2023.

In addition:

Medicare premiums are going down and Social Security benefits are going up in 2023.

This year's substantial Social Security cost-of-living adjustment is the first time in over a decade that Medicare premiums are not rising.

Part B premium, deductible, and coinsurance rates are determined according to the Social Security Act. The standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B enrollees will be \$164.90* for 2023, a decrease of \$5.20 from \$170.10 in 2022. The annual deductible for all Medicare Part B beneficiaries is \$226 in 2023, a decrease of \$7 from the annual deductible of \$233 in 2022.

*Individual AGI ≤ \$97,000

*Joint AGI ≤ \$194,000



Submitted by Lou DeBole

***Remember to send your
Social Security Statement
for reimbursement of your
Medicare Payments***

to:

**Smithtown School District
ATTN: Employee Benefits
26 New York Avenue
Smithtown, NY 11787**

Health tip: Understanding diabetes

Diabetes signs and symptoms

- Fatigue
- Frequent urination
- Increased thirst and hunger
- Weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Slow healing of wounds or sores

If you have any of these signs and/or symptoms you should speak to your health care provider

Diabetes risk factors

Risk factors you cannot change:

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Family history of diabetes

Risk factors you may impact:

- Being overweight
- Being physically inactive
- Having high blood pressure
- Having high cholesterol



People living with diabetes are at higher risk of serious health complications:

- Blindness
- Kidney Failure
- Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Loss of toes, feet or leg

Managing diabetes and reducing your risk



Eat healthier by including a diet with lots of non-starchy vegetables; whole grain foods, lean cuts of meat, poultry, and non-fat dairy products. Include fatty fish (salmon, trout, sardines) 2-3 times per week.



Get daily exercise by aiming for 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week.



Maintain or obtain a healthy weight defined as a body mass index (BMI) measurement between 18.5 - 24.9.



Monitor blood glucose regularly. Most people with diabetes should aim for an A1C of 7 or less.



Take medications as prescribed.



Don't smoke.



Learn ways to lower your stress.



Obtain routine care with your health care provider.

Based on a study by the Diabetes Prevention Program, a moderate weight reduction of 5 percent can help reduce the development of type 2 diabetes by 58 percent.²



If you have pre-diabetes and lose weight by eating healthier and being more physically active you may **cut your risk of becoming a type 2 diabetic in half.**

Having pre-diabetes means your blood glucose (sugar) levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Pre-diabetes may lead to heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. Pre-diabetes may often be reversed by making healthier lifestyle

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 8. (Diagnosed Diabetes in the United States, <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/images/story/visualizing-diabetes-infographic.jpg>, accessed June 2021).

² Diabetes Prevention Program Outcome Study, <https://diabetes.jhu.edu/wwj/03p01/03p01.htm>, accessed June 2021.

The information provided in this flyer is for general informational purposes only and is not intended nor should be construed as medical advice. Individuals should consult an appropriate medical professional to determine what may be right for them.

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News from Members

Grate Wishes, Bobbi Mastrangelo

Dear Art Enthusiasts,
I hope this finds you all doing well.
Here is the latest news featured on my blog.
Your comments on my blog are appreciated.

<https://bobbimastrangelo.com/wp-admin/post.php?post=7479&acti>

"Don't Go Soft on Terrorism" sculpture relief
on view until January 8, 2023 in Ft. Lauderdale FL
grateworks@aol.com ♦ www.bobbimastrangelo.com



*Nothing can dim the light
that shines from within — Maya Angelou*

Kathy Simon-McDonald, retired Special Education teacher, now an internationally competitive watercolor artist, has received second place for her watercolor painting, **The Chalk Artist XV**, at the Englewood, FL Art Center, in addition to the Duyke Award for Transparent Watercolor for her watercolor painting, **The Chalk Artist XIV**, at the Philadelphia International Works on Paper Competition.



Vince and Donna Amato recently returned from Sicily from a 15 day tour of the island. It was my third time there and we truly enjoyed every aspect of the trip. We spent time in Taormina, Catania, Siracusa, Agrigento, Corleone and Palermo. It was great speaking not only Italian every day, but the regional language—Sicilian— quite different from the official language. The food, the landscape, and the people were wonderful.

I had the chance to visit my cousins in Palermo. We recommend the trip to all especially in October when the weather is beautiful and the crowds are gone.

Set up your annual SSRA dues payment online as a **RECURRING payment** with your bank, to be made **annually** on December 1st of each year, for our \$15.00 dues, payable to the **SSRA**. It can be cancelled or changed at any time. Your bank will need to know where to send your check.

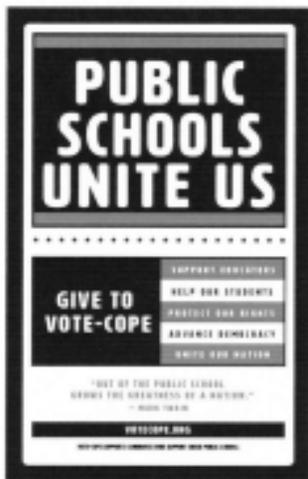
Please include our address:

Smithtown Schools Retiree's Association
26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, NY 11787



VOTE-COPE DRIVE IS ON!

You can contribute by Direct Contribution (check) or monthly Pension Deduction.



Please read pages 7 & 8 carefully and complete the appropriate section and instructions on the form.

Name _____

Address _____

Local # **#23-050 Smithtown Teachers Association**

Member ID # _____

Count me in!

I want to support educators, help our students, protect our rights, advance democracy and unite our nation — all through my voluntary contribution to VOTE-COPE.

There's no easier way to support VOTE-COPE.

Direct Contribution Card

Email: _____

Home phone number: (____) _____ - _____

*Mobile phone number: (____) _____ - _____

**By providing my mobile phone number I am expressly consenting to receive autodialed and/or prerecorded calls and/or text messages from, or on behalf of, AFT, NEA, NYSUT, AFL-CIO and/or the local union at the wireless number provided. The scope of this consent relates to any purpose for which any of the above entities may call.*

Name _____

Address _____

Local # **#23-050 Smithtown Teachers Association**

Member ID # _____

Amount of Contribution: \$ _____

Check enclosed # _____

(Please make check payable to VOTE-COPE.)

Credit card option:

Please visit votecope.org to make a secure one-time contribution online.

It is important that we receive the original form so we can accurately credit your contribution.

Pension Deduction Authorization Card

Name _____

Address _____

Local # **#23-050** Member ID # _____

Smithtown Teachers Association

I belong to the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS)

I belong to the New York State Employees' Retirement System (NYSERS)

I hereby request monthly withholding of union deductions from my monthly benefit as permitted by Section 536 of the Education Law and Section 110-b of the Retirement and Social Security Law. NYSTRS or NYSERS is authorized to continue taking such deduction until NYSUT receives written notice from me to the contrary. I understand that NYSUT VOTE-COPE is my agent and all requests to begin, modify or revoke deductions must be submitted through NYSUT VOTE-COPE.

Please provide your email address: _____

NR 202103

Please read and sign the Pension Deduction section on page 8.

Mail the form to:

**VOTE-COPE
POBox 295**

Canajoharie, NY 13317-0295



Dear NYSUT Member,

These unsettling times have shone a light on a fact that we have always known: **Public Schools Unite Us.**

Educators, school-related professionals, and health care heroes have all come together to support our public schools and the students they serve. We need your help today to make sure our schools, colleges, and hospitals have the resources they need to navigate our future. Since no local dues dollars are used to support political parties, candidates or campaigns, your voluntary contribution to VOTE-COPE is the only way to ensure elected leaders in Albany and Washington D.C. stand up for public education, hear our voices and understand our needs.

Through a thorough endorsement process, VOTE-COPE supports candidates for public office who have a proven record of championing public education and health care while sharing our union values:

Great **public schools** that are safe and welcoming and prepare young people for life, careers and affordable higher education.

Good jobs that pay a decent wage, allow a voice at work and provide a secure retirement.

Affordable, accessible and high-quality **health care.**

A strong and vibrant democracy that embraces the **voice** of labor, unrestrained rights to vote, a **free press** and an **independent** judiciary.

A commitment to **justice**, fighting discrimination, hatred and bigotry.

Public schools unite us and together that makes us stronger. Please do your part and support our educators, help our students, protect our rights, advance democracy and unite our nation. SUPPORT VOTE-COPE.

In solidarity,



Andy Pallotta

NYSUT President
Chairperson of VOTE-COPE



It is important that we receive the original form so we can accurately credit your contribution.

Please keep a copy for your records.

VOTE-COPE is the New York State United Teachers' political action fund.

Contributions or gifts to VOTE-COPE are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

To contribute through pension deduction, please complete the bottom section.

If you wish to make a direct contribution by check, please use this middle section.

FOR DIRECT CONTRIBUTION BY CHECK:

- Complete the form on page 7, and sign it.
- Enclose your check made payable to **VOTE-COPE**
- Mail it to:

SSRA
ATTN: Mary Mills
26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, NY 11787

or send it directly to:

VOTE-COPE
Post Office Box 295
Canajoharie, New York 13317-0295

vote COPE Pension Deduction Authorization Card

The undersigned authorizes the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) or the New York State Employees' Retirement System (NYSERS) to deduct from each of my regular defined-benefit pension payments the sum of \$10, \$5 or Other \$____ (per month) and to forward that amount to VOTE-COPE, c/o NYSUT, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110. I understand that this monthly amount will continue to be deducted until revoked by me in writing.

Such guidelines are merely suggestions. NYSUT members are free to contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest, and NYSUT will not disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or decision not to contribute. Contributing to VOTE-COPE is voluntary, and NYSUT members may refuse to contribute to VOTE-COPE without reprisal. Contributing to VOTE-COPE is not a condition of membership in any labor organization. VOTE-COPE may use the money it receives to make political contributions and expenditures in connection with federal, state and local elections.

I expressly acknowledge and understand that the deduction, as specified above, be withheld monthly and that NYSUT will transmit this authorization to the appropriate retirement system. I hereby certify to NYSTRS and NYSERS that I am a member of NYSUT, an employee organization entitled to receive union deduction payments as provided by law.

Name _____ Pension # _____

Phone # _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Local from which you retired **#23-050 Smithtown Teachers Association**

votecope.org

VOTE-COPE is the New York State United Teachers' political action fund.

Contributions or gifts to VOTE-COPE are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Life is complicated. NYSUT Member Benefits can help.

PEER SUPPORT LINE



The Peer Support Line is a new service available through NYSUT Member Benefits that's offered at no cost to all NYSUT members and their families.



The Peer Support Line can help with:

- Finding mental health services or support groups
- Answering questions about Medicare and Medicaid
- Managing work-related stress
- Providing support to new members
- Sourcing elder care or caregiving services
- Assisting with marital, relationship or child rearing concerns
- Reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness

The Peer Support Line is a partnership between NYSUT Member Benefits and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care.

For more information or assistance, call toll-free 844-444-0152.

Nov/Dec 2022

CONNECT AMERICA MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEM



Stay independent and
connected to care

ConnectAmerica



Stay independent and connected to care at home or on the go. Feel safe with the Connect America Medical Alert System:

- 24/7/365 access to trained response specialists
- Personal alert button is discreet and easy to use
- Peace of mind for you and your loved ones

Call now: **855-420-0794**

No hidden fees or long-term contracts. Cancel anytime. Call now to speak with a service expert: [855-420-0794](tel:855-420-0794)

LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE



70% of those 65+ will need long-term care. How will you pay for your own? Long-Term Care Insurance is more affordable than you think.

Call [888.884.0077](tel:888.884.0077) for your free long-term care guide.

[Request a Quote](#)

NYLTCB is a nationally-recognized insurance intermediary that offers access to discounted long-term care insurance plans from multiple highly-rated insurance companies (including the New York State Partnership for Long-Term Care) for eligible individuals from 18 to 79 years old.

With NYLTCB, eligible individuals get a long-term care insurance plan designed with their specific needs in mind. And with the discount provided to NYSUT members (along with marital/domestic partnership discounts and potential Preferred Health discounts), this important protection can be far more affordable than you may assume.

Call New York Long-Term Care Brokers toll-free at **888-884-0077**

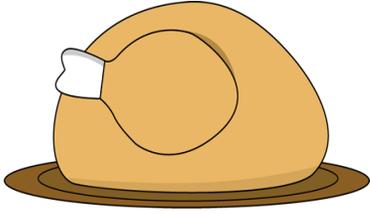
or

Visit <https://www.advisorsib.com/nysutmb>

Your SSRA Board has decided to mail hard copies of this newsletter in an attempt to keep in closer touch with our members. Electronic copies also available at

myssra.com

Shop UNION-MADE for your holiday table!



When you shop for your holiday meal this year, why not support your union brothers and sisters.

By purchasing the products listed below you will be supporting products made in America in union shops.

These purchases translate into competitive wages, better benefits, and better working conditions.

The SSRA as an organization makes a point of supporting the Smithtown community in its many forms of donations and contributions throughout the year.

Let's all band together and support fellow union members in their industries.

Fresh Whole Turkey

- Butterball [UFCW]
- Foster Farms (UFCW)

Ham

- Appleton Farms ham (UFCW)
- Butterball ham (UFCW)
- Cook's ham (UFCW)
- Farmland original pit ham (UFCW)
- Tyson ham (UFCW)



Stuffing

- Manischewitz (UFCW)
- Stroehmann Bakeries' (BCTGM)

Vegetables

- Andy Boy [UFW]
- Birds Eye (UFCW)
- Mann's (UFCW)
- Muranaka Farm (UFW)

Cranberries/Cranberry Sauce

- Dole (Teamsters [IBT])
- Ocean Spray (Machinists [IAM])

Potatoes

- Betty Crocker specialty potatoes (BCTGM)
- Dole Fresh Idaho Potatoes (IBT)
- Mann's Culinary Cuts Sweet Potatoes (UFCW)

Bread

- Aunt Millie's breads (UFCW)
- Pillsbury Crescent Rolls (BCTGM)
- Stroehmann Bakeries' products (BCTGM)

Pie/Dessert

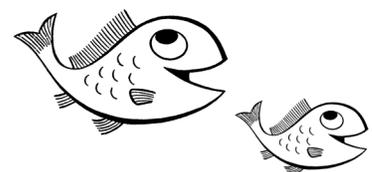
- Banquet fruit pies (UFCW)
- Entenmann's (BCTGM)
- Marie Callender's (UFCW)
- Pillsbury pie crust (BCTGM)
- Sara Lee (BCTGM)
- Betty Crocker frosting (RWDSU)



Murphy's "other" Laws.....

Submitted by Lou DeBole

1. Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
2. A fine is a tax for doing something wrong.
A tax is a fine for doing well.
3. A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
4. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
5. Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.
6. If the shoe fits, get another one just like it.
7. The things that come to those who wait may be the things left by those who got there first.
8. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day.
Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.
9. Flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries.
10. God gave you toes as a device for finding furniture in the dark.
11. When you go into court, you are putting yourself in the hands of twelve people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty!



Our Deepest Condolences

◆ To Family and Friends of Grace Pergolizzi

Grace Pergolizzi passed away quietly after a long illness on Sunday, October 16, 2022, at the age of 88.

As a teacher at Smithtown West, Grace taught Italian and Spanish for 30 years. Grace's passing leaves sad empty space at the Wednesday Morning Breakfast Group table.

A memorial service is planned for the spring.

Condolences can be sent to Grace's sister Francesca (Chickie) at: Francesca Bliss, 231 Boulevard, Scarsdale, NY 10583



◆ To Family and Friends of Terry Heedles

Terry Heedles, longtime employee of the district and secretary at Accomsett Middle School, passed away in early November.

Additions/Changes to Directory

Submitted by John Pettit

New/Renewed Members:

- Patricia Castiglione** 30 Revere Circle,
Port Jefferson, NY 11776
631-928-7868
castigp@optonline.net
- Joanne Ceponis** 17 Hobson Avenue,
St. James, NY 11780
631-513-3318
mommajo73@aol.com
- Robin Weisberg** 137 Scarlett Drive,
Commack, NY 11725
631-670-6343
631-871-6660
angelicenergyhealing@gmail.com

Changes/Additions:

- Shirley Aboulaflia** 631-929-6681
631-219-3609
- Cynthia Alcide** add: 631-473-8146
- Marjorie Alley** add: 631902-2618
- Doreen Andersen** aadasala@aol.com
- Maryann Bell** 631-928-8737
- Coleen Catrini** salcol3113@gmail.com
- Sheila Tobin Cavooris** 19 Willow Ridge Dr.,
Smithtown, NY 11787
sheiltc@aol.com
- Flo Chase** add: 772-907-5936
- Alice Cheselka** 1245 Tidewater Court,
Bradenton, FL 34208
631-905-5741
acheselka@msn.com
- Gail Chiovaro** add: 516-314-1971

Olga Crnosija

Correcting typo:
olgacrnosija@msn.com

Claire DiBenedetto

correcting typo:
cdb1214@aol.com

Peter DiGregorio

704-778-2726

Stephen Gordon

sgmq22@aol.com

Richard Herbert

add: 631-291-0774

Kathleen Johnson

add: 631-265-1716

Francesca Kaszuba

2104 W 1st Street,
Ft. Myers, FL 33901
631-495-3153

Mary Keegan

21 Tiffany Way,
Nesconset, NY 11767

Marilyn Levy

add: 631-499-8397

August Lowe

lowecd@earthlink.net

Joyce McLaren

704-287-1246

Phyllis Meyers

meyerssandi581@gmail.com

Lisa Molano

molanol1986@gmail.com

Lynn Oill

631-804-0545

Seth Paster

julieandsethpaster@gmail.com

Tracy Rinker

910-930-1282

Nancy Rymer

add: 631-872-7477

Irene Shatz

add: 941-920-2431

Kathy Simon-McDonald

correct typo:
6460 Mourning Dove Drive

Gwendolyn Thompson

add: 631-487-0324

Jeanmarie Wilson

jmlwil@horizon.net

Jeffrey Woodard

correcting typo:
crtrep101@hotmail.com

Time to Renew Your Membership for 2023!



Complete the form below and mail it with a check for **\$15** made payable to the **Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association** by **JANUARY 1st, 2023**
We operate on a calendar year and these dues are independent of the STA.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you receive any endorsed programs & services from NY state other than a pension, you are **required by law** to belong to your local retiree Association – the SSRA

Kindly cut out this coupon and mail it with your check to:
Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association c/o STA office
26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, NY 11787

*(For those with more than one address please list your **PRIMARY** one only)*

Name: _____ Year Retired : _____

Address: _____ Apt. #: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Home Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Affiliation: *Circle one:* ↘

- STA** **SSEA** **SSAA**
Security Guard **Nurses**

*Please be careful not to send duplicate checks dues payments.
The SSRA Board will consider duplicate checks donations to
our scholarship fund and proceed as such.*

S.S.R.A.

Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association
c/o STA Office
26 New York Avenue
Smithtown, NY 11787