

S.S.R.A. NEWSLETTER

SMITHTOWN SCHOOLS RETIREES' ASSOCIATION



2024
DUES ARE DUE!
SEE BACK COVER FOR MORE INFO

Volume 24 / Issue 2



December 2023



Welcome, Rich Hurley! *SSRA New Membership Roles Coordinator*

We would like to introduce Rich Hurley, our new Membership Roles Coordinator. Rich is a newly retired High School teacher who started teaching in 1996. When he retired, he was teaching the TAC Program for students who are at risk to graduate. However, in his career as an educator, he has taught Inclusion and Self-contained English in Grades 10 through 12.

Rich has also served the Smithtown Teachers' Association in various other capacities throughout his career. He was a delegate to the NYS Teachers' Retirement System; a NYS United Teachers delegate from the STA; and a STA building representative for 26 years.

I can tell you from first-hand experience when I ran the STA office, that Rich was one of my most conscientious and dedicated building reps; always a go-to person for results. In fact, he still continues to attend STA Executive Committee meetings as a retiree, and is still substituting, tutoring, and proctoring for the district.

Because of his gregarious nature and great personality, he has many good friends and close colleagues in the Smithtown School District. We consider ourselves lucky to be able to add our names to that list.

But, Oh Boy! Our SSRA meetings are going to get a lot livelier! He is best known for cutting the ties off of several Administrators and Superintendent's at their retirement parties!

Welcome aboard, Rich!



You can Join Our Board, too!

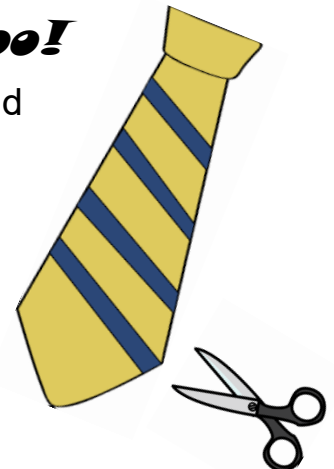
Do you have a special talent that you would like to contribute to the SSRA?

Are you good with computers?

Would you like to volunteer to present scholarship awards to our winners and help to make decisions about our philanthropic contributions?

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

Drop me a line at ssraeditor@gmail.com -mmd





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	Rich Hurley
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 VanDover
Facebook Master	Joan LoPardo
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.



Happy New Year!

Yucks Submitted by Lou DeBole

♦ The officer said, "You drinking?" I said, "You buying?"
We just laughed & laughed.... I need bail money.

- I told my wife she should embrace her mistakes... so she hugged me.
- My wife says I only have 2 faults. I don't listen and something else....
- At my funeral, take the bouquet off my coffin and throw it into the crowd to see who is next.
- I told my wife I wanted to be cremated. She made me an appointment for Tuesday.
- Scientists say the universe is made up of protons, neutrons & electrons. They forgot to mention morons.
- The adult version of "head, shoulders, knees and toes" is "wallet, glasses, keys and phone."
- I won't be impressed with technology until I can download food.
- My doctor asked if anyone in my family suffers from mental illness. I said, "No, we all seem to enjoy it."
- I've reached the age where my train of thought often leaves the station without me.
- The world's best antidepressant has 4 legs, a wagging tail and comes with unconditional love.



Our Deepest Sympathy:

◆ To Rose Delee and Family

We are saddened to report that Rose Delee's husband, Jack, passed away on October 15. Although Rose is not a member of SSRA, she is known and loved by many of our members.

She was an aide at Nesaquake and the Freshman Campus and retired in 1999. In addition, Rose's daughter is currently a teacher aide at St. James Elementary.

Condolences can be sent to Rose Delee, 296 Terry Road, Smithtown 11787.

Give Gratitude to Get Healthier

Submitted by Claudia Manzella, Sr. Field Account Manager, United Healthcare

Did you know that people who regularly show and feel gratitude tend to be more optimistic and satisfied in life, have higher self-esteem and sleep better? They also tend to have stronger relationships and communities. And they may even have improved physical health. That's because people who show more gratitude are more likely to have fewer trips to the doctor and exercise more often.

How gratitude works?

By actively focusing on the positive things in your life, you can reduce negative thoughts and feelings. When you show and feel gratitude, it helps you think of the goodness in your life, and the sources of this goodness. This can help you keep perspective and bounce back more quickly after stressful and difficult times. Gratitude also can bring "pay it forward" benefits to others. It helps you, and those you share your gratitude with, get a boost of positive reinforcement, so they may feel more inspired to express thanks as well.



Here are a few Random acts of kindness:

- ☑ Donate food, toys or clothes
- ☑ Call a friend or relative.
- ☑ Hold open the door for someone.
- ☑ Volunteer
- ☑ Do something nice for someone.
- ☑ SMILE!

Editor's Note: I understand that this note is sort of 'preaching to the choir,' having worked with and around children for our careers striving to make the educational experience for the children of Smithtown the absolute best, but I just thought it important to remember that our aches and pains, the world situation, or a cranky store clerk should not push us into being curmudgeons this holiday season, or at anytime!



The 6th Annual Douglas J. McDonough



Rotary
Rocky Point



Passion for Education

to benefit **2024 Gala**
Hope Children's Fund

March 9, 2024

6pm - 11pm \$199 per person

*Join us for an evening of live music, cocktail hour,
a plated dinner, raffles and silent auction—all supporting
the education of the children of the Jerusha Mwiraria*

*Hope Children's Home,
Meru, Kenya.*

Every ticket pays for a
trimester of secondary school
for a child from the home.

Northampton Ballroom,
The Inn & Spa at
East Wind, Wading River

Formal attire preferred.
Discounted overnight
accommodations available for \$119.

Please RSVP: HCFgala@gmail.com or to

Hope Children's Fund, PO Box 1345, East Northport, NY 11731

hopechildrensfund.org

Thoughts from our Members.....

A Peaceful Time by Joe Gilkey, Ed.D

In the October issue of the **NY State Retired School Administrators and Supervisors** newsletter, readers were solicited to write to the paper an answer to the question, "What gives you peace?" I wrote the following response:



"Have you ever stood high at the top of a mountain, gazing down at Magen's Bay and as you gaze down at the scene, you raise your eyes to look out to the horizon? There across miles of azure and cobalt seas, the waters are dotted with islands. You can see Tortola in the British Virgin Islands where Buccaneers once roamed. This scene soothes me with its beauty and seductive visual presence. I can spend hours relaxing and looking out at these kinds of vistas, because of the colors of the waters, the vastness of the space you see and the calmness of the seas about you. It is peaceful, quiet, and beautiful - it is soothing."

Looking down at Magen's Bay from high above is not the only vista in the U.S. Virgin Islands that gives me a sense of peace. While Magen's Bay is on the north shore of St. Thomas, the other site I want to write about is on the smallest of the U.S. Virgin Islands, St. John. After you arrive in Cruz Bay, a short drive along the coastal road into the National Park will take you to a pull off along the road. The vista before you overlooks Trunk Bay. Gazing down you will see the startling contrast between white sand and some of the most beautiful blue, turquoise, and cobalt seas in the world. You are looking at one of the most photographed scenes in the world. There, in that sparkling sea, a short distance from the white sand beach, is a very small island, and looking beyond to the horizon is Drake's Passage. Your eyes don't know which part of the scene to concentrate on. I could stand there taking it all in for a very long time. It certainly is a serene place to find peace. This place, like overlooking Magen's Bay, is peaceful, quiet and beautiful - it is soothing.

Now just what does this have to do with educators. Well those in education today are under fire from politicians and parents almost daily about any number of things. It makes the workplace one filled with depressive thoughts, lower productivity, and poor morale. According to the website *Fotoviva*, reporting on a number of studies, it has shown that "viewing natural scenes is enough to remind us of how expansive and soothing a direct experience with nature is." They go on to indicate that visual experiences with natural scenes can help with depression. This was confirmed with the CDC's 2007 study with a report entitled "Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System". Other studies have shown that spending time with such scenes gives your brain a break, patients heal faster, it gives a boost to your immune system, helps to restore your focus, improves your mood, and helps to stave off the effects of dementia.

All of these positives harken back to my answer to the question, "What gives you peace?" and my answer of descriptions of viewing Magen's Bay on one hand and Trunk Bay on the other. Both views so relaxing, so peaceful that you want to repeat seeing them over and over again. I know being there is a healthy prescription for me and for our beleaguered colleagues.

Continued on Page 9



F. Y. I.
We are currently planning our
Annual Spring Luncheon.
Stay tuned for more information.

Holiday Gift to you.....

ALL YEAR 'ROUND!



Free Member Benefits



NYSUT Member Benefits appreciates everything that NYSUT members do on a daily basis to benefit those in the education and health care industries.

We are proud to offer the following programs and services to NYSUT members free of charge. Go to this link to learn more: <https://memberbenefits.nysut.org/free-member-benefits>

NEW: PEER SUPPORT LINE -- Created in partnership with NYSUT Social Services and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care, this confidential helpline can provide answers, resources, and empathetic support when you need it.

NEW: PREMIUM CALM SERVICE -- All NYSUT in-service members are provided with unlimited access to the full library of sleep, meditation, and relaxation content at calm.com and in the Calm app.

NEW: YOURCARE360 -- All NYSUT members (both in-service and retiree) can utilize this helpful service offering online access to caregiving guidance and answers to many of the questions that confront family caregivers.

STUDENT LOAN COUNSELING -- NYSUT members can speak with a Cambridge Credit Counseling loan counselor, attend a NYSUT Student Loan Workshop, or visit the Cambridge Student Loan Portal through this helpful resource.

FINANCIAL LEARNING CENTER -- Powered by Kiplinger's Personal Finance, this platform offers numerous articles designed to assist NYSUT members with achieving their personal financial goals and better understand the nuances of insurance, savings, investing, and more.

CREDIT COUNSELING -- All NYSUT members (both in-service and retiree) are eligible to receive a free, no obligation debt consultation with a Cambridge Credit Counseling certified counselor.

NEW MEMBER LIFE INSURANCE POLICY -- New NYSUT members are eligible to receive a free term life insurance policy providing coverage for up to \$25,000 for one year, guaranteed renewable at the end of the year.

ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE -- All NYSUT members (both in-service and retiree) are automatically provided with a \$5,000 accidental death & dismemberment insurance benefit.

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE SERVICES -- All NYSUT members (both in-service and retiree) are automatically provided with travel assistance services from Europ Assistance that focus on providing coordination services to travelers.

NEW: LEGAL ASSISTANCE PLAN -- NYSUT members in a non-full dues or split dues category are eligible to participate in this new benefit offering limited legal assistance from the law firm of Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C.

NATIONAL AFFILIATE RESOURCES -- Your status as a NYSUT member provides you with access to complimentary life insurance from the National Education Association, along with an accidental death & dismemberment insurance benefit and trauma counseling services from the American Federation of Teachers.

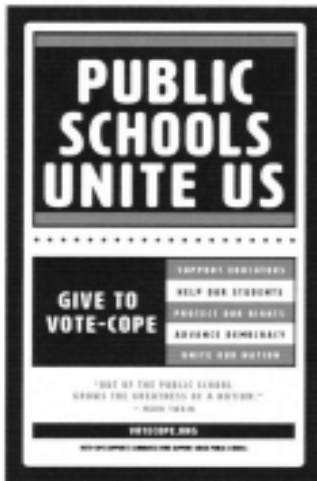
Editor's Note: Article suggested by Alan Gleicher — *Thank you!*

VOTE-COPE DRIVE IS ON!



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

Please read **pages 7 & 8** carefully and then 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.

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.

VOTE COPE 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 202101

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



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.

Thoughts from our Members.....

Continued from Page 5

Dear Fellow Members,

I'm currently working on my autobiography. From time to time, I will share some excerpts with you.

Your comments and suggestions on my website are appreciated.

Wishing you a marvelous autumn season.

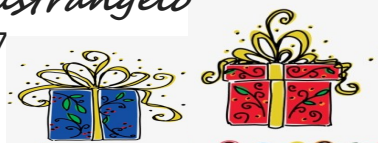
<https://bobbimastrangelo.com/blog/>

www.bobbimastrangelo.com

Regards,

Bobbi Mastrangelo

407-910-7357



Margie and Bobbi working at their Adopt-A-Spot at King Kullen, Saint James, NY



Premium *Calm* subscription now available **FREE** to all NYSUT retirees!

The premium Calm subscription provides members with unlimited access to the full library of sleep, meditation, and relaxation content at calm.com and in the Calm app, which can be utilized via laptop, tablet, or mobile device.

The Calm app -- recognized as Apple's Best of 2018 award winner, Apple's App of the Year 2017, and Google Play Editor's Choice 2018 -- is the #1 app for sleep, meditation, and relaxation with over 100 million downloads.

Members can explore guided meditations and specialized music playlists to help with stress and focus, nature scenes and sounds, specific content tailored for children, masterclasses, and more.

To learn more -- Visit

<https://www.calm.com/b2b/nysut-member-benefits/subscribe>

to create your Calm account now (Note: This is a dedicated URL for NYSUT members).

Please make sure to follow the steps below:

1. You will need your NYSUT ID number to create an account with your email address (personal email recommended) and password using the dedicated URL above.

Note: Your NYSUT ID number can be found on your NYSUT Membership Card or by visiting

<https://www.nysut.org/memberid>.

2. Once you create your free Calm account on your computer using the URL above, it is recommended that you download the Calm app for your iOS or Android device.
3. After downloading the Calm app for your preferred mobile device, you can then log in with your email address and password to unlock the premium Calm content.

NOTE:

- ♦ *NYSUT Associate Members and NYSUT Student Members are not eligible to utilize this free benefit at this time*
- ♦ *Members can add up to five dependents (age 16 or older) to receive their own subscription.*

Being ready for the holidays can mean a lot of different things:

- Gifts for your loved ones
- Appliances for your home
- Confirming travel plans
- Entertainment for the kids
- Food delivery in case of inclement weather
- Savings set aside for unexpected expenses

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of endorsed programs and services that could help make you as prepared as possible for whatever the holiday season may throw at you.

No matter what your plans may be this holiday season, NYSUT Member Benefits is a great place to start. With a number of shopping, travel and discount programs, you are certain to find something of interest that could benefit you or your loved ones.

Speaking of savings, the **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals** program utilizes the nation's largest private discount network to offer all NYSUT members (both in-service and retiree) exclusive access to savings of up to 50% at 850,000 locations – including more than 21,200 New York State deals. If you have not already done so, head over to mbdeals.enjoymydeals.com to create your account with your NYSUT ID number, preferred email address, and password.

You'll then be eligible to save on restaurant dine-in or take-out, flowers and gift baskets, Bose products, clothing and shoes, oil changes and vehicle maintenance, sporting events, hotels and flights, car rentals, theme parks, movie tickets, and much more. Members are encouraged to download the MB Discounts & Deals mobile app for the best user experience with this program.

Member Benefits also endorses life insurance programs, auto & home insurance, dental & vision plans, legal & financial services, and other programs to help protect yourself and those you care about most.

Participating in Member Benefits-endorsed programs also offers the added protection of having a trusted advocate on their side. Member Benefits staff take great pride in stepping in to support members with any questions, concerns, or issues that may arise.

Explore all that your union membership has to offer!



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org, or calling 800-626-8101.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.
Nov./Dec. 2023

Additions/Changes to the Directory

*Purposely left blank for website posting
Please refer to your mailed hard-copy issue for this information.*

FUN PUNS
Submitted by Lou DeBole

*I once dated a gal who broke up with me because I only have 9 toes. Yes, she was lack toes intolerant.

*You can't blame anyone else if you fall in your driveway...it's your own asphalt.

*I accidentally rubbed ketchup in my eyes. Now I have Heinzsight.

*Singing in the shower is fine until you get soap in your mouth. Then it's a soap opera.

*Then there was the time Fruit of the Loom took Hanes to court... it was a brief case

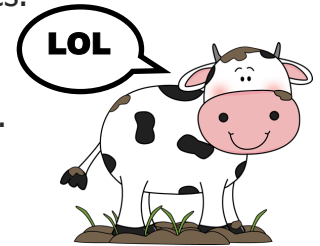
*I want to tell you about a girl who only eats plants. You probably have not heard of herbivore.

*I was struggling to understand how lightning works and then it struck me.

*Six cows were smoking joints and playing poker. That's right. The steaks were pretty high.

*My friend Jack says he can communicate with vegetables.

That's right... Jack and the beans talk.



Best Wishes for

Happy Holidays!

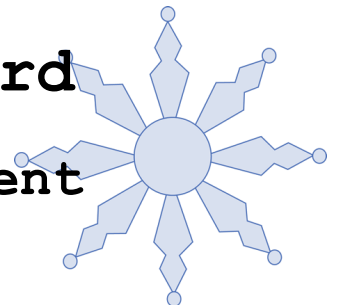
and a very

Happy and Healthy New Year!

from your

SSRA Executive Board

Patty Stoddard, President



Time to Renew Your Membership for 2024!



Please send no later than
JANUARY 15th

Complete the form below and mail it with a check for **\$15** made payable to the **Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association** by **JANUARY 15th, 2024**

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

