

S.S.R.A. NEWSLETTER

SMITHTOWN SCHOOLS RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

RENEW!!

DUES are due

December 31st

**SEE FORM on BACK
PAGE**

Volume 20 / Issue 2



December 2019

SSRA NEWSLETTER is moving to **FULL ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

The Executive Board of the SSRA has decided to go green and deliver all newsletters by email, in addition to posting it on our website. It saves paper and is more efficient. This new policy will become effective January 1st.

So many organizations have opted to deliver their newsletters electronically so, in order to keep up with the times, we have decided to do the same.

You will receive an email notification when the Newsletter is available for you and by one simple click, it will be on your screen. You can "Save" it, or you may print your own copy right from your computer/device.



We fully understand that there may be some of you who have special situations that would require a hard-copy. If you fall into this category, please check 'PAPER' on the DUES RENEWAL FORM on the BACK PAGE of this newsletter, or call John Pettit at 631-584-7564 to request a PAPER HARD-COPY.

Remember: The newsletter is now being sent individually to each member who has provided us with an email. In addition, it is also posted on our website, myssra.com, four times per year. If you haven't sent us your email address or need to update it, please do it with your dues payment in order to receive your SSRA Newsletter electronically.



Best wishes for a safe and happy
Holiday season
and a Healthy New Year

filled with

Joy and Happiness!

— from the SSRA Executive Board

Patty Stoddard, President

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
Newsletter Editor	Mary Mills Desjeunes
Membership Coordinator/Social Committee	John Pettit
Communication Liaison	Bobbi Miller
RC Delegate	Lou DeBole
Alternate RC Delegate	Donna Milgrom
Sunshine Committee	Winnie Snyder
Technical Coordinator	Carl Haymes

The Smithtown School 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 9:30 AM at the STA office

*All members are invited to attend.
We encourage your input and newsletter submissions.*

Our Deepest Sympathy :

Linda deBottari



*Linda served as Guidance Chair
at Smithtown High School West.*

Donations can be made to:

Guide Dog Foundation
371 Jericho Turnpike
Smithtown, NY 11787

Important Note:

SSRA is planning its
**ANNUAL
SPRING LUNCHEON**
in April or May 2020.

Date, Time, and Place to be
announced in
February/March issue



News of Members



*As retirees, we have the opportunity to undertake many diverse and interesting activities and trips.
We welcome any stories, poems, adventures or whatever you would like to share.*

Mary Alice Sterbenz: **GET WELL SOON!** Sincere Best Wishes for a speedy recovery!
MaryAlice is in the Smithtown Center for Rehabilitation, Route 25A (near Woodlawn and the RR trestle), Smithtown, NY 11787. Please call before visiting—Cell: 631-258-9883

Grace Pergolizzi: **GET WELL WISHES** to Grace Pergolizzi. She is a truly inspirational woman who is always a joy to be with. Grace was as beloved to her Italian class students as she is to her friends. We are all so blessed with her everlasting smile. Feel better Grace! *Submitted by Connie Antonietti*

Linda deBottari: Linda passed away on November 5, 2019. As a physical education teacher who came to the district in the 1950's, she touched the lives of many students. After an injury, she continued her education and became a guidance counselor, eventually becoming the district's director of guidance. Her brilliant mind led her down several paths: paralegal, talented pianist and mentor, to name a few. She touched the lives and changed the course of many students who may not have succeeded without her guidance and help. She was a credit to the teaching profession and her life was well-lived. This corner of the world is a better place for having had her in it.
Submitted by Carole Palmer

Continued on Page 4



Can you help?

Help our friend
CLAUDIA CHANDLER
with a donation to her

Go Fund Me page.

Some of you may or may not know, (because she tends to be very private), but just days before Christmas of 2016 Claudia was diagnosed with Stage III multiple myeloma. Multiple myeloma is a blood cancer of the bone marrow. Claudia, her brother, and her father (retired) are all teachers in Smithtown School District.

Please donate at:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-our-friends-claudia-and-scott>

Thank you!

NEWS of MEMBERS continued from Page 3

Yvette and Larry Hohler: The Hohlers are amazed that so many years have passed since they teamed with Joseph Kirima, Larry's former student, to open the Jerusha Mwiraria Hope Children's Home in Meru, Kenya to AIDS affected street children in 2005. Kirima was then a primary school headmaster, and he emphasized from the beginning that the only route to self-sufficiency was the pursuit of education. **"Education is the Key"** became the motto of the orphanage. All of the surviving young people who joined the Home when it opened are now adults, and most are doing well. Among them are several beauticians, a doctor's assistant, a cook, a pharmacist, a driver, an engineer, a musician, a salesman, and Doreen Gatwiri, who will receive her MD degree in November!

Doreen, then a malnourished 9 year old when she entered the Home, never knew her father, and her mentally ill mother abandoned her. She internalized the Home's motto, and became one of the most academically talented residents at the Home. When Kirima became Headmaster at Meru Primary, a larger school in the center of town, Doreen was brought along, and continued to thrive. In 2009 she passed the test that enabled her to enter the prestigious Yururu Girl's Secondary Boarding School. While there she not only continued to excel academically, but also became so proficient in football (Kenyan for soccer) that she was part of a team that competed at the national level.

After graduation from Yururu, Doreen was accepted in the pre-med program at Jomo Kenyatta University, her fees paid by her mentors, a doctor in California and an office worker here on Long Island. After years of hard work, Doreen will receive her diploma this November, and begin her residency in gynecology early next year.

Doreen is an example of what happens when a disadvantaged young person is provided with the means to achieve a lofty goal. The Hohlers and their friend Joseph Kirima are especially pleased with Doreen's progress, as well as the other youth who have taken to heart the belief that **"Education is the Key."**



During this holiday season, please consider a donation to Hope Children's Home by visiting hopechildrensfund.org.



When shopping at Amazon: Go to smile.amazon.com and register **Hope Childrens Fund** as the organization you wish to support. Each time you shop, you begin at smile.amazon.com, but your registration and all Amazon prices and benefits (ie, Prime) remain.



DOREEN GATWIRI, MD and YVETTE HOHLER

Your continued support has made a world of difference in the lives of these children and young adults.

**Thank you
so much !**

OFF THE CUFF

by John Pettit



NOTE: Our NEW DELIVERY Method - Please review the **front page** of this issue for details of the transition we are making to E-mail delivery of your SSRA Newsletter. With the exception of those members who have indicated that they have "a need" for the Printed/Paper format, beginning with the Feb/March issue, we will be using your e-mail address to send the Newsletter. You will be surprised at how easy it is; how convenient to read; and if you wish, you can print your own copy.

Membership/Dues: A very big thank you to those many members who have already mailed in their dues renewal for next year; if you've not gotten to that yet, kindly do it before Dec. 31.

Luncheon: I will soon select a location for our Annual Spring Luncheon. So as to accommodate even the Snowbirds, I am seeking a date in late April or early May. In a departure from past practice and in response to some of the revisions/changes in our Health Care coverage, I am seeking a Speaker for the Luncheon. Details will appear in the Feb/March Newsletter.

Ramblings & Rumbings: With the change of seasons and the arrival of cold temperatures, I have transferred my operations from sitting outdoors to sitting indoors – this is where all my practice pays off. I'm watching more TV and have noticed a significant change: At virtually every commercial break, there are ads for drugs – for all of which you need a doctor's prescription and for most there are some horrible, possible side-effects. I am fully aware of the benefits and necessity of prescribed medications for specific conditions, however, to the casual viewer, it would appear that there are pills for everything. Is this the right message to be giving youngsters? Moreover, many of the TV ads don't even specify what malady they address; just "ask your doctor if it's right for you". I kept a pad handy and jotted the name of each drug advertised; I gave up when I hit fifty in one month. Meanwhile, the nation is spending millions in an effort to combat the rampant, often lethal, use of drugs many of which are found in the family medicine cabinet. Whatever happened to: Just Say No to Drugs, Kids. Hypocrisy in pursuit of the almighty dollar?

A Thought:

Americans will always do the right thing,
after exhausting all the alternatives.

~ *Winston Churchill*





Resurrecting THE TREE of KNOWLEDGE

Some of you may remember the Tree of Knowledge that was prominently displayed in the lobby at High School West. The SSRA, thanks to Susan Fink and Patty Stoddard, has decided to take part in resurrecting this memorial with the help of a few administrators and the Smithtown School District Buildings and Grounds Department.

Susan would like to *Thank* all of our members who responded to her mass email when she requested background information on the Tree.

The feedback was wonderful!

We expect to have a detailed article (pictures included) in the next newsletter.

MEDICARE PREMIUMS INFORMATION SHEET

Monthly 2019 Premiums are based on 2017 Income

2019 Premiums

2017 Income		Monthly Premium	
Single	Joint Filing	Part B	Part D
<\$85,000	<\$170,000	\$ 135.50	\$ -
\$85,001-\$107,000	\$171,000-\$214,000	\$ 189.60	\$ 12.40
\$107,001-\$133,500	\$214,001-\$267,000	\$ 270.90	\$ 31.90
\$133,501-\$160,000	\$267,001-\$320,000	\$ 352.20	\$ 51.40
\$160,001--\$500,000	\$320,001-\$750,000	\$ 433.40	\$ 70.90
>\$500,000**	>\$750,000	\$ 460.50	\$ 77.40

****NOTE: New Premium level for incomes above \$500,000/\$750,000**

Annual 2019 Premiums are based on 2017 Income

2017 Income		Annual Premium	
Single	Joint Filing	Part B	Part D
<\$85,000	<\$170,000	\$ 1,626.00	\$ -
\$85,001-\$107,000	\$171,000-\$214,000	\$ 2,275.20	\$ 148.80
\$107,001-\$133,500	\$214,001-\$267,000	\$ 3,250.80	\$ 382.80
\$133,501-\$160,000	\$267,001-\$320,000	\$ 4,226.40	\$ 616.80
\$160,001--\$500,000	\$320,001-\$750,000	\$ 5,200.80	\$ 850.80
>\$500,000**	>\$750,000	\$ 5,526.00	\$ 928.80

****NOTE: New Premium level for incomes above \$500,000/\$750,000**

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**

NYS Senior Medicare Patrol

FRAUD ALERT!

Submitted by Patty Stoddard

MEDICAL BRACES SCAM: BE AWARE!



THE SCAM: You are bombarded with phone calls at home, often from Robocallers. If you pick up the phone, they will say things like, “We hear you need a back brace. Medicare will pay for it.” A few days later, you receive boxes of knee and back braces that you did not order and did not need.

The NYS Senior Medicare Patrol sees many cases where back, neck, and knee braces are ordered from out of area providers and doctors that the beneficiary has never heard of.

REMEMBER: Only your Doctor can prescribe any type of medical brace for you. If you answer the phone and hear a Robocaller, DO NOT STAY on the line. HANG UP immediately. And DON'T ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS or give out any personal information or your Medicare number!

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU RECEIVE ANY BRACES?

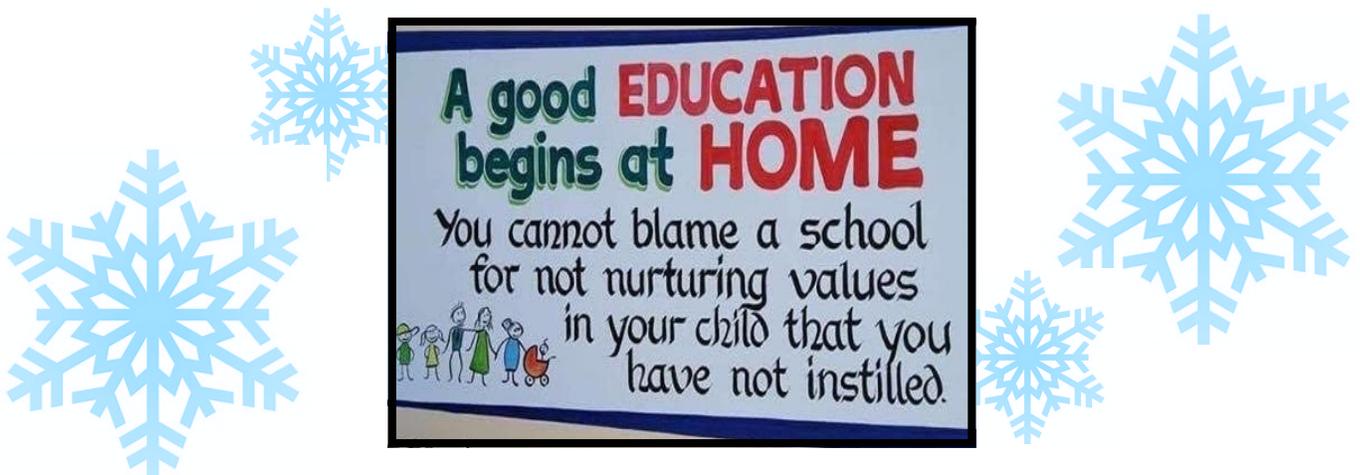
- Contact StateWide, your NYS Senior Medicare Patrol at **800-333-4374**. They can help you with what to do next.
- Report receiving the braces as fraud to Medicare at **1-800-MEDICARE** as soon as possible. Tell them the name of the ordering provider.
- Contact the Supplier about returning the braces. You should not have to pay for them.
- If you return an item, keep the mail receipt and tracking number.
- Review your Explanation of Benefits paperwork for items that appear that you did not order or receive and report them immediately.

STATE WIDE

New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc.

275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210 800-333-4374 www.nysenior.org

Empowering Seniors to Prevent Healthcare Fraud





Act now to become part of the NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed Heat USA heating oil savings program. HEAT USA Members Receive:

1. A free or discounted service contract on their heating system (worth approximately \$300 annually) that includes 24-hour emergency service during the heating season.*
2. Extensive parts and labor coverage on their heating system.
3. An annual cleaning and tune-up of their heating system during the spring or summer.
4. A discount of 15 to 25 cents per gallon on the heating oil price.
5. A membership service staff on call to help you with any questions or issues you may have.
6. High-quality heating oil suppliers that are the top of the industry.

All Heat USA members can always reach out to Heat USA with any questions, issues or problems.

Call toll-free 888-HEAT-USA (888-432-8872) today

to shop their prices and see how much you could save or visit the Heat USA website.

**Free or discounted service contract is dependent upon area; contract & cleaning coverage require a minimum consumption of 600 gallons per year.*



ARE YOU PREPARED TO NEED CARE?

40% of long-term care claims are for people under the age of 65.

Call Toll-Free Today for your FREE Long-Term Care Guide at

[888-884-0077](tel:888-884-0077) and use **CODE OCT2020 or visit advisorsib.com/nysutmb**

The New York Long-Term Care Brokers program is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 2.5% of first-year premium and 1% of renewal premium received in years 2-10. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at [800-626-8101](tel:800-626-8101) if you experience a problem with any endorsed program.

**National/New York Long-Term Care Brokers
11 Executive Park Drive Clifton Park, NY 12065-5631
[518-371-5522](tel:518-371-5522) | [800-695-8224](tel:800-695-8224) | Fax 518-371-6131**



**MEMBER
BENEFITS**
nysut
Working to Benefit You

NEW Endorsed Program

Get ready to Access ... big savings!

NYSUT Member Benefits is pleased to announce the launch of our newest endorsed program -- **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals provided by Access Development!**

This money-saving benefit is available exclusively to NYSUT members and features the nation's largest private discount network.

These deals can be accessed either online or from the palm of your hand through Access Development's MB Deals mobile app. Visit mbdeals.enjoymydeals.com to learn more.

Register your account on the Access website with your NYSUT ID number using the URL above. You will then be able to enjoy exclusive access to savings of up to 50% on shopping, restaurants, movie tickets & entertainment, travel, oil changes & vehicle maintenance, and much more.

Have a favorite local business?

One of the best features of the MB Discounts & Deals program is the ability to recommend your favorite local business, restaurant, coffee shop, etc. to potentially join the Access Development network.

Register your account on the Access website by March 31, 2020 to be eligible to win prizes -- visit the Member Benefits website for more information!

Learn more by calling **800-626-8101** or visiting **memberbenefits.nysut.org**.

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

Nov./Dec. '19

Classified Ads

Time Share—Margot Bay, St. Lucia, the most beautiful bay in the Caribbean, as described by noted author James Michener. Time share is a beautiful duplex, one bedroom villa, available 2 floating weeks per year. Good income potential. Asking \$299 Go to: Oasismarigot.com. Click Vacation Club Villas. Bill Benzinger at: nkeepr@optonline.net

Additions/Changes to Directory

Vince Amato 24 Suffolk Down, Shoreham, NY 11786 631-241-0334	Barbara Huber add cell: 631-672-6881
Dorothy Becker add cell: 401-443-4354	Paula Kaplan add cell: 631-472-9252
Carol Bedell add cell: 631-553-7565	Janice Kaval add cell: 631-372-6846
Margaret Bell add cell: 631-921-3788	Jay Landau add cell: 631-793-8364
Bill Benzinger add cell: 516-381-4081	Anthony Laurino add cell: 631-484-3797
Fran Blatt add cell: 631-265-9525	Marilyn Levy add cell: 631-499-8397
Mary Cahill add cell: 631-220-2471	Patricia Levine add cell: 917-941-4618
Robert Caskey add cell: 631-476-1454	Robert Lynn add cell: 631-793-8086
Terry Causin add cell: 631-672-3653	Amy Mannarino add cell: 631-576-7189
Winnie Ching typo correction: 407-847-8830	Muriel MacLean 214 Harriman Dr. Goshen, NY 10924
Gail Chiovaro gailchiovaro@gmail.com	Deborah Margino add cell: 631-588-6732
Anthony Corbo 12 Silver Spruce Way, Smithtown, NY 11787	Al Mastrangelo add cell: 407-729-6285
Maureen Darress add cell: 516-864-9006	Richard Morabito add cell: 631- 972-7999
Louis DeBole add cell: 516-578-1347	Carol Molack add cell: 631-588-4675
Emma Delia add cell: 631-265-5825	Elizabeth Nixon add cell: 631-697-4899 elizabethlee52@gmail.com
Karen & Arthur Ehlin add cell: 516-398-1659	John Nocero add cell: 631-366-0420
Linda Feltman add cell: 631-220-2812	Barbara O'Callaghan add cell: 516-974-5543
Suzanne Field add cell: 631-398-1123	Anton Papp add cell: 631-834-8318
Paul Flaum add cell: 917-902-6671	Warren Parnell add cell: 603-724-0197
Gertrude Gelo add cell: 631-375-1679	Eileen Pereca add cell: 631-759-0156
Sheryl Gelo add cell: 631-560-6263	Diana Riccoboni add cell: 516-993-3930
John Glaessgen john.glaessgen@gmail.com	Edward Rosenthal earosen@optonline.net
Alan Gleicher 27 Soundcrest Avenue, Northport, NY 11768	Liz Rutigliano add cell: 631-332-2016
Paula Golden 631-813-2570 add cell: 516-476-7356	Irene Shatz add cell: 941-920-2431
Stephen Gordon sjg42@optonline.net	Walter Skretch add cell: 214-422-1330
Margarita Goykin add cell: 631-202-8376	Paul Sullivan correct typo: 631-457-9021
Pauline Hallberg add cell: 631-456-3805	Carolyn Walicki mwalicki@optonline.net
Henry Harms add cell: 609-435-5593	Nancy Wallis add cell: 516-680-2972
John Howe add cell: 631-495-4459	Caroline Watson add cell: 207-620-4127
Marianne Howell add cell: 631-766-0740	Mary Ann Weinfeld add cell: 631-804-1668
	Stephen Weitzman add cell: 631-804-2706

Time to Renew your Membership for 2020!

Complete the form below and mail it with a check for **\$15** made payable to the
Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association by **DECEMBER 31, 2019**

Please note: 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– 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 only your **PRIMARY** one)*

Name: _____ Year Retired : _____

Address: _____ Apt. #: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Home Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Check here if
Special Situation Paper Copy Required:

Affiliation: Circle one: 

STA

SSEA

SSAA Security Guard Nurses

*We're moving to **ALL ELECTRONIC DELIVERY** of newsletter JAN. 1st*

Questions? Concerns?

Call **John Pettit** at

631-584-7564 or email your question to him at

grumpyof@optonline.net



S.S.R.A.

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

Like
us on:
facebook

