



# S.S.R.A. NEWSLETTER

SMITHTOWN SCHOOLS RETIREES' ASSOCIATION



## DUES are Due!

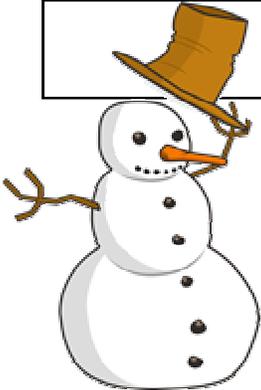
SEE PAGE 3  
FOR MORE DETAILS

Volume 21 / Issue 2



December 2020

## Adios 2020 — Good riddance.



I'd like to tip my hat and say good-bye to 2020, for good. Get outta here! I have never, not ever, wished for a year to be over like I do this year. On January 1st, 2020, New Year's Day, a friend of mine optimistically announced that 2020 was going to be the year to beat all; a year of clarity—so to speak; a year of "20/20" vision; of seeing things crystal clear, if you will; a year when everything came together and all the loose ends tied up. Yeah!.... **No.**

We have lost so much this year—people we loved and freedoms we took for granted. Some of those we lost were due to the Covid-19 virus, and some, not at all. But the shock and loss of both still broke our hearts, all the same. Our lives were forever changed, its true, due to the Pandemic and the inability to live normal lives without the constraints of a mask and gloves. But, in addition, so many lost so much across the country due to devastating hurricanes and wildfires. We've certainly learned that life can change in the blink of an eye. So I've decided to use this horrific year to chart a new path for my life, realizing just how volatile things can be.

Here are things I think are important to remember (in no particular order) going forward:

- Be happy for what you have. Count your blessings.
- Kiss your kids and grandkids every day (even if its on *Facetime*), and even if they drive you crazy, because you might not see them for the next 7 months.
- Don't put off that ride, or that trip anymore to see something or someone (after Covid, of course.)
- Slow your life down a little, and enjoy the small things. I fell this year and fractured 2 vertebrae in my back. It set me back for 3 months. My brother, half-crazed, admonished me saying, "*Slow down! We are at the age where we are a fall away from a nursing home!*" Not exactly the comforting words I wanted to hear, but it was the truth.
- Don't put off creating or amending a will, a power of attorney, a living will, or a health care proxy. Stop thinking about creating a Trust, and just do it.
- Don't pass up the opportunity to do something nice for someone.
- Be less judgmental, and more patient of others with differing opinions. 'Live and let live.'
- Rid yourself of stressful situations. Simplify your life — *you know* what has to go, and what has to stay.
- And finally, wash your hands often, wear a mask, and pay your SSRA dues on time. (*Just seeing if you're paying attention. There's going to be a quiz later!*)

We all want to be heard, but we have to come together as a people, and as human beings. Everyone has been through hell this year, but we need to listen and learn from each other. [*"God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason"*— another quote from my brother!] We have to acknowledge that we ARE all different, and that we come from differing backgrounds. What may be important to **you** right now, may not register with **me** for a while. Seriously, it's a matter of simply putting yourself in someone else's shoes. As we sing "Auld Lang Syne" this year, with tongue in cheek, we will hope for a better 2021. And while it may not have the same 'clarity' as 2020— even blurry, anything is better than these good old days!

So let's STAY WOKE and fight for the pursuit of happiness for all of us to enjoy. And please, Stay Safe.

*Peace out, Mary Mills Desjeunes*

## Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association

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

Email: [ssraeditor@gmail.com](mailto:ssraeditor@gmail.com)

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<b>Newsletter Editor</b> .....	Mary Mills Desjeunes

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  
Visit our website at: [myssra.com](http://myssra.com) and Like us on **facebook**

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

### *Our Deepest Sympathy :*

#### ♦ To Friends and Family of Erna O'Connor

Erna passed away on August 27th. She was a guidance counselor at Smithtown High School West.  
Donations may be sent in her memory to:



St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Attn: Pastor Will  
4826 Sweetwater Vonore Road  
Vonore, TN 37885

OR

Habitat for Humanity  
238 Hwy 70 W.  
Lenoir City, TN 37771



#### ♦ To Carol Bedell

On the loss of her husband, Irwin, in early October.  
Carol taught in Nesconset Elementary and Tackan Elementary. Irwin taught in New York City.  
Condolences may be sent to Carol at: 16 Pennaquid Road, Coram, NY 11727



#### ♦ To Carol Siegel

On the loss of her husband.

#### ♦ To Lynn Oill

On the loss of her mother.



# OFF THE CUFF

by John Pettit



**Membership/Dues:** As you probably recall, we collect annual dues (\$15.00) as of the first of each year -- **please clip and include the form below** with your dues payment . THANK YOU to all those who have already sent in their dues for 2021. Remember to keep us up-to-date with any changes to your contact info: address, email and/or phone numbers. (While we will utilize your *primary home address*, we will include your cell number also.)

**Luncheon:** Our Annual Luncheon will again be held on a Wednesday, in the Spring. A few suggestions have been offered for possible sites and I am looking into each of them. Prime considerations include: menu, convenient location, size of room and cost (prices have risen significantly). Given the current restrictions on gatherings, I really can't make reservations until the new year, but I will keep you informed.

**Rumblings & Ramblings:** While I may be the only one, I usually look forward to writing this column, however, in what is probably a result of "isolation at home" and inactivity, I am totally devoid of ideas. We had extensive travel plans for last spring, but those were cancelled and are yet to be re-booked. Family gatherings which took place outdoors in the summer have been shelved now that the season has changed, and meanwhile, the holidays are upon us. Phone calls and Facetime just don't do the job. I wish everyone a Healthy and Happy Holiday -- May the New Year 2021 bring us back to some manner of "Normal".

**A Thought:** When half the people get the idea that they do not have to work because the other half is going to take care of them, and when the other half gets the idea that it does no good to work because somebody else is going to get what they work for, that is the beginning of the end for any nation. - *Brian Rogers*



## ***Time to Renew your Membership for 2021!***

Complete the form below and mail it with a check for **\$15** made payable to the **Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association** by **DECEMBER 31, 2020**. 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 your **PRIMARY** one only)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Retired : \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. #: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email : \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation: Circle one: 

**STA**      **SSEA**      **SSAA**

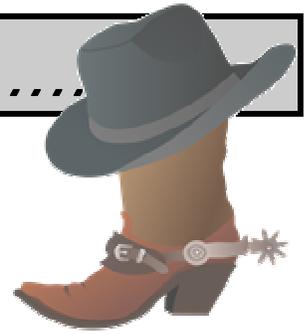
**Security Guard**      **Nurses**

### ***Special Circumstance***

Regarding ***ELECTRONIC DELIVERY?***

Call **John Pettit** at **631-584-7564** or email him at **[grumpyof@optonline.net](mailto:grumpyof@optonline.net)**

## *On the minds of our members.....*



- **An American Story Behind the Wave Across the Ocean**  
**By Victoria Windisch-Templeton**

My very good friend Francine is a retired French teacher. I have always admired her effortless ability to travel the world, attempt multiple languages, and most importantly to my limited brain, exchange foreign currency. And so, in the early 2000's I decided to emulate the wanderlust of my dear friend, Francine, and engage in a trip to France. Traveling with some friends in a tiny French car, I limited my luggage to two small carry-on cases. Francine went through those cases and took out half my clothes and deemed them inappropriate for travel abroad. But I stood firm on one pair of favorite shoes. So off I went to the French countryside in search of wine tasting in the Atlantic Loire Valley. However, before I left, I visited my mother who lives very close to the Atlantic Ocean on the south shore of Long Island, New York. "So, Ma," I said to her as we stood at the ocean's edge, "Next week I'll be across the ocean in France and I want you to come here and wave to me. I have no idea where I will be at that point, but hopefully at the Atlantic Ocean as well, and I'll make sure to wave back."

Never could I have imagined as I wove my way through the French countryside, that I would unexpectedly arrive at Omaha Beach; location for the Allied invasion of Normandy, France. That's the beauty of travel, one cannot possibly anticipate all the sites and experiences of being in a far-off land. Upon entering the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, I was awestruck by the 9,388 white marble crosses perfectly aligned and immaculately kept with the names, dates, city and states of the World War II soldiers that had fallen during the allied invasion at this historical site. Many of them so young, little more than boys. To this day, this memorial is the place of most reverence that I have ever had the privilege of viewing and visiting. Facing the grave sites is a majestic bronze statue that stands 22 feet in height and is called, "The Spirit of American Youth Rising from the Waves." Behind the statue is a memorial garden with the names of the missing soldiers carved into the garden wall. I stood in this silent natural, sacred place, and thought of the stories my mother told of her cousins and uncles who came home from the war and the time it took for their injured hearts, bodies and souls to heal. I stood there, and the teacher in me thought that every American teenager needed to come here and witness what a true sacrifice for one's country looks like in real time.

Before too long, I needed to walk to the beach and calm my thoughts. It was then that I began to walk out to the water's edge to wave to my mother back in America. It was low tide, and so I removed my shoes and socks and made the trek to reach the water. For August, the Atlantic was quite cold. I turned to begin my journey back to the shore when I saw some people sitting at the shoreline. I found them enchanting because they consisted of an elderly couple and a young man; seated at a bistro table in front of a striped beach cabana. The older gentlemen waved to me and said, "Madame! S'il vous plait!" I felt like I was in a French commercial, and looked around to make sure they were referring to me. I walked over and they gestured for me to sit. The older gentlemen informed me that he could speak a little English. He introduced me to his wife and grandson. And he was very diligent about informing me that I must go back to my country and tell the Americans that the French have never forgotten what our soldiers, our young boys, had done to save his beloved France. "Tell them the French have never forgotten, and we honor them with our cemetery." I thanked him profusely with a full and proud heart for the American sacrifice made so long ago for the



sake of freedom. As I stood to take my leave, I asked him, "But monsieur, how did you know that I was an American?" With a smile he replied, "Madame (as he pointed to the shoes in my hand) — cowboy boots!"

• **Kenyan and American Fundraising efforts benefit Hope Children's Home**  
by Larry Hohler

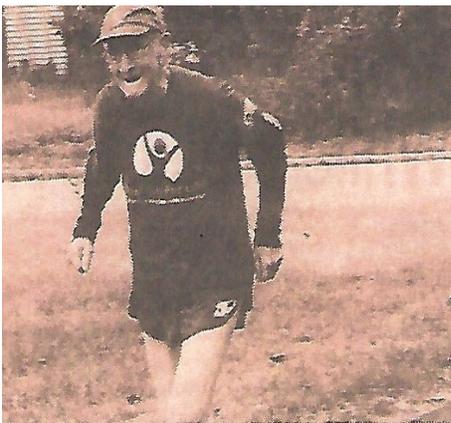
The residents of the Jerusha Mwiraria Hope Children's Home and their supporters from the US are weathering the global pandemic. However, the news from Kenya seems to be that they are doing a better job of containing the virus than we are. Nairobi is a hotspot, but there are very few cases of Covid in Meru, where the Home is located.

Faced with cancellation of our yearly Bi - Continental Run/Walk against the Kenyans, we decided to do a much smaller virtual competition. Three of our most successful fundraisers, HCF Board member Ed Hyshiver and former treasurer Jacquie Coven, and I ran the 5K on the P.J. Station Greenway course measured by Gary Westerfield, who also provided medals for the participants. Board member Vic DeSanctis and SCSD administrator Jen Bradshaw ran independently on a 5K course of their own design. Former Smithtown Middle School social studies teacher Rocco D'Amato was one of the many who pledged their support for my run (or rather, slow trot). My 84 year old friend, John Barker, beat my time by 11 minutes!

The young people in Kenya from Hope Children's Home beat us again, and for the first time the Kenyan community raised \$650 in preparation for their run. American pledges in support of our runners have so far brought in over \$9,000, and we are expecting more donations to come in. This amount will cover operating expenses for the Home for over three months!

We would welcome your support in any amount. Please send it to: HCF, P.O. Box 387, Setauket, NY, 11733, or donate at [hopechildrensfund.org](http://hopechildrensfund.org) Know that your donation will be used to enhance the lives of our Kenyan children. And furthermore, it's a tax deduction for you.

**REPRINTED FROM PORT JEFFERSON TIMES RECORD 10/29/20**



Above, John Barker, an 84 year old resident of Stony Brook, has also participated in HCF's 5K fundraisers for many years; left and below, people in Meru, Kenya also start their 5K to support the setauket charity.

Photos from Hope Children's Fund



## Race to Support Charity Spans Continents

### Relay Supports Local Charity Supporting Kenyan Children

The Setauket-based Hope Children's Fund, a local charity that supports AIDS-affected former "street children" at the Jerusha Mwiraria Hope Children's Home in Meru, Kenya, found a novel way to continue their fundraising effort, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every year since 2005, the Fund has hosted a Bi-Continental 5K Run/Walk to generate income for the Home. The group has been holding the event on the Port Jefferson Station to Setauket Greenway Trail on a weekend day at 10 a.m. since 2014. The Kenyans start their part

of the competition at 4 p.m., seven time zones to the east of the U.S.

Last Saturday, Oct. 24, the group held a much smaller event. A select group of competitors ran or walked over a 5K course on the Greenway Trail. Ryan Filippi, an Interact Club member at Port Jefferson Middle School, and his mother Deirdre Filippi, the Interact adviser, handed out water to participants, meeting them at the turn around point and directing the flow of the competitors.

Meanwhile, HCF has also employed the services of EliteFeats, a company that publicizes competitions that attract fitness enthusiasts, to run independently on any 5K course of their choosing on any day between now and Nov. 1, and donate the contributions to Hope Children's Fund from those who pledged to support our effort.

The pandemic in Kenya has resulted in shortages of food and other necessities, and the income from the event will be used to help keep the Children's Home afloat.

"It was a good day for runners in both Port Jefferson Station, and the Kenyan highlands," Larry Hohler, the president of HCF said. "We are waiting for the East African report on how much they beat us by."



Continued from Page 5—Some Thoughts from our Members .....

• **Anthony R. Cannone Memorial Service Award**



The inaugural Anthony R. Cannone Memorial Service Award was presented to Smithtown High School West senior MaZhu Van Nostrand during a virtual scholarship awards ceremony hosted by the Smithtown Central School District on June 4th. This award was established in memory of Anthony “Tony” Cannone, who was second in command at the Town of Smithtown Traffic Safety Department. Tony passed away in November of 2019 at the age of 51. Cannone’s dedication and love for the people of Smithtown, inspired his family to establish a scholarship in his memory. Recipients of the award must exhibit Cannone’s attributes and have the potential to emulate his achievements and service to the community.

*"I cannot think of a better way to honor the memory of Tony than elevating the next generation through scholarship. He was an unforgettable guy to begin with... this scholarship will ensure his good name lives on for generations to come."* - Supervisor Ed Wehrheim

**About Anthony Cannone:**

Anthony Cannone was the son of Theresa Cannone, a secretary at High School West. He was a dedicated 30-year employee of the Town of Smithtown Traffic Safety Department, where he rose to the highest rank as an Engineer 3. Anthony was dependable, conscientious, thoughtful, innovative, respectful, generous with his time and talents, and very devoted to his family and friends.

Anthony Cannone began his work with the Town of Smithtown as an engineering assistant. Through his hard work and dedication, he became the second in command and the rock of the Smithtown Traffic Safety Department. He was involved in all aspects of the day-to-day operations of the Department, including the operation of the Town’s traffic signals, the design and placement of the regulatory, warning, and informational signs, the design and placement of pavement markings, traffic engineering studies, and more. As a senior traffic engineer, he was an integral part of the engineering and decision making for the department.

Anthony led by example and his work ethic was second to none. He would arrive at work early and often stay late. When he was given a task, he did it promptly and to its completion. Even when he was in a position of authority, he was not afraid to perform all aspects of the work at the Traffic Safety Department. This earned him the respect of everyone in the department.





# Holiday Shopping 2020

**Please Help Support the STA Scholarship Program While Doing Your Holiday Shopping ..... or anytime!**

Simply click on the icon below and for every purchase you make, Amazon will donate a portion of that sale to the STA.

100% of the proceeds will go to fund the

**STA Scholarship Program.**



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# **Social Security Announces**

## **1.3 Percent Benefit Increase for 2021**

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 1.3 percent in 2021, the Social Security Administration announced recently.

The 1.3 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 64 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2021. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 31, 2020. (Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits). The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$142,800 from \$137,700.

Social Security and SSI beneficiaries are normally notified by mail starting in early December about their new benefit amount. Most people who receive Social Security payments will be

able to view their COLA notice online through their personal my Social Security account.

People may create or access their my Social Security account online at [www.\*\*socialsecurity.gov/myaccount\*\*](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

### **2021 Medicare benefits change:**

The deductible generally increases each year. In 2019 it was \$1,364, but it increased to \$1,408 in 2020. And it has increased to \$1,484 for 2021.

The deductible increase applies to all enrollees, although many enrollees have supplemental coverage that pays all or part of the Part A deductible.

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***



**When you buy union, you're supporting good jobs in American communities, jobs that provide living wages and benefits, safe working conditions, and dignity and respect for work. Look for these products, when preparing for your holiday feast.**

**Fresh Whole Turkey**

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- Foster Farms (UFCW)

**Ham**

- Appleton Farms ham (UFCW)
- Butterball ham (UFCW)
- Cook's ham (UFCW)
- Farmland old-fashioned pit ham (UFCW)
- Farmland original pit ham (UFCW)
- Hormel honey roasted ham (UFCW)
- Tyson ham (UFCW)

**Stuffing**

- Manischewitz (UFCW)
- Strohmann bakery products (BCTGM)

**Vegetables**

- Andy Boy (UFCW)
- Birds Eye (UFCW)

**Cranberries/Cranberry Sauce**

- Dole (IBT)
- Ocean Spray (IAM)

**Potatoes**

- Betty Crocker specialty potatoes (BCTGM)
- Dole fresh potatoes (IBT)

**Bread**

- Aunt Millie's bread products (UFCW)
- Pillsbury rolls (BCTGM)
- Strohmann bakery products (BCTGM)

**Pie**

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

**Pie Filling**

- Del Monte fresh apples (IBT)
- Food Club canned pumpkin (UFCW)

## How to perform CPR on yourself

Submitted by Lou DeBole

*This comes from Dr. Patrick Teefy, Head of Cardiology at the Nuclear Medicine Institute, University Hospital, London Ontario in Canada.*



Let's say it's 7:25 pm and you're going home (alone, of course) after an unusually hard day on the job. You're really tired, upset and frustrated.

Suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to drag out into your arm and up into your jaw. You are only about five miles from the hospital nearest your home.

Unfortunately you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far.

You have been trained in CPR, but the guy that taught the course did not tell you how to perform it on yourself.

### ***HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHEN ALONE?***

Many people are alone and without help when they suffer a heart attack. The person whose heart is beating improperly and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness.

However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously.

A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest

A breath and a cough must be repeated about every two seconds without let-up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it to regain a normal rhythm.

This knowledge may give you the precious minutes you need to get help or to get to a hospital.

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Nov./Dec.'20

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**As a Reiki practitioner**, I can provide a way to help you reach your goals of improved health and peace of mind. We go on this journey together to create a path to more happiness, relaxation and well-being Are you ready? Contact Jeanmarie\_ 631 834-9503 [www.jeanmariewilson.com](http://www.jeanmariewilson.com)

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**FOR SALE: BRAND NEW Weber BBQ** Spirit II E-310 with cover. Purchased in June, used once. Paid \$600. Best Offer over \$450. I have original paperwork and receipts. Call Mary at **631 245.3056**

*You can BBQ in the winter, too, you know...*

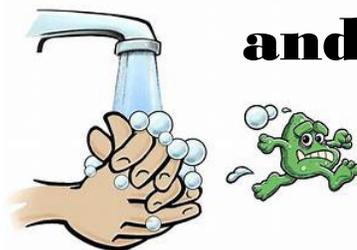


# Additions/Changes to Directory

Susan Brancato      add cell: 631-235-7052  
 Christine Darcy    add cell: 631-764-9273  
 Eileen Carlsen     add cell: 239-272-4935  
 Nancy Dammacco    add cell: 631-275-6633  
 Elaine Deveney     76 Washington Avenue,  
                                  Garden City, NY 11530  
                                  Tel:516-742-2985  
                                  Cell: 516-639-0065  
                                  email: [elainedeveney@gmail.com](mailto:elainedeveney@gmail.com)  
 Stephen Gordon    add cell: 516-810-7645  
                                  email: [sgmg22@aol.com](mailto:sgmg22@aol.com)  
 Henry Harmes        1607 Piccadilly Way,  
                                  St. James, NY 11780  
                                  609-272-1390  
 Marilyn Harris      add cell: 631-834-5657  
 Phyllis Heinen     add cell: 516-449-9663

Caryn Iorio-Fichtelman    360 Greens Farms Rd,  
                                  Westport, CT 06880  
                                  631-901-7230  
 Athena Keena            add cell: 631-664-4522  
 Molly Micciche            add cell: 631-258-0694  
 Carol Molack             add cell: 631-584-4480  
 Erna O'Connor         Deceased 8/27/20  
 Alan Rosofsky            add cell: 631-786-5606  
 Jennie Sardone         add cell: 631-696-3273  
 Naomi Schepp            add cell: 917-887-5857  
 Catherine Sebesta      add cell: 631-663-3713  
 Dolores Seyffert        add cell: 631-624-7825  
 Carmelina Trifiletti    513 Thomas Bransby,  
                                  Williamsburg, VA  
                                  23185-8244

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**and**

**WASH  
ON**

SEASON'S GREETINGS



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for a  
**Happy and Healthy**  
**2021**  
from your SSRA Board  
*Patty Stoddard*, President

---

**S.S.R.A.**

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

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