

S.S.R.A. NEWSLETTER

Volume XVII, Issue 3

March — April 2018

Who Says There's NO Such Thing As A

FREE LUNCH?

(see Luncheon Details — page 10)

SSRA Election of Officers

(see Nominating Form — page 12)

Dues Are Free for 2018

(see page 7)

President's Message

Hi Everyone,

Here's wishing you an early spring and a Happy Easter and Passover. I don't usually write a President's Message because Carl and John cover everything so well, my comments would be redundant. However, the recent murder of students and teachers in Florida is so upsetting that I feel I need to say something.

We are living in very frightening times . I worry because our grandkids do not have a safe environment to grow up in. Arguing about gun control gets us nowhere. We should be dealing with issues like poor parenting skills, too much exposure to technical devices and violence in movies, TV and video games, and a desensitizing of our youth. Also, most importantly, a poor mental health system that lets children slip

through the cracks because of a lack of personnel and money.

Not to say that there are no longer good kids. There are still kind, loving, caring, soulful children, but they were guided by loving, caring people who set examples for them and we were not their best friends. These adults made them follow rules like be kind to others, respect one another, be tolerant of others, be honest et al.

What's the solution? Who knows? But, we can be less divisive, talk not scream at each other, be more understanding, listen, and most of all love and be kind to one another.

*George Makris
SSRA President*

Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association

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Smithtown, NY 11787
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Email: ssraeditor@optonline.net

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

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

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

From the Editor's Desk



It was February 14, 1929, St. Valentine's Day. A black limo pulled up to a garage on the north side of Chicago. Four men in a black limo leaped out, ran into the garage, forced seven men outside, and lined them up against a wall. Then, using two Thompson sub-machine guns executed all seven men. This murder quickly became known as the St. Valentine Day Massacre. Public outcry subsequently resulted in the repeal of Prohibition and had a profound effect on our nation's gun laws. In 1934, Congress passed the National Firearms Act to specifically take the Tommy Gun out of private hands.

This Valentine's Day another massacre occurred. It was at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Fourteen students and three adults lost their lives because of an assault weapon. Our legislators all responded with "Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families." These were the same responses we heard after Columbine, after Virginia Tech and after Sandy Hook. Thoughts and prayers but no action.

Since Sandy Hook in 2012, our nation has seen 239 school shootings, resulting in 438 people shot, with 138 deaths. And yes our legislators still verbalize their thoughts and prayers but little else.. Our state laws are geared for the expression of sympathy alone. In Florida, for instance, an 18 year old can legally buy an AR-15 but can not buy a handgun until age 21.

In 1994, a bipartisan Congress actually banned assault weapons in our country. The ban lasted until 2004, when Congress let the ban expire. Only New York, California, Washington, DC, and five other states still ban the sale of assault weapons. No parent should ever have to send a child off to school, never to see him or her alive again. Thoughts and prayers are not enough! Hopefully, the current outrage fostered by students including a National School Walkout on March 14 and a March for Our Lives on March 24 will be a start.

Carl M. Haymes

Editor



News of Members



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

Mary Jane Casey - Jim and I just returned to our Encore condo in Lake Grove from our annual cruise of Irish Stars with Andy Cooney and Father Pizzarelli from Hope House in Port Jefferson. It is an unbelievable time and we've signed up for the cruise in 2019. If anyone is interested please contact me for more info. We are enjoying our growing family and welcomed our newest Casey Clan member, Bradley in February. He was our third great-grandchild. Our granddaughter, Casey Ward, is expecting our fourth great grandchild in September. We are also enjoying our grandson, James, playing defense as #5 for Penn State's hockey team. Hope you are all enjoying your retirement and making each day special in your own way. God Bless!

Marilyn Harris - I spent almost a month doing a self-guided tour of new Zealand and Australia . I saw all the tourist sites by small planes, seaplane, helicopters, sail boats and ferries. I snorkeled and did an introductory dive at the Great Coral Reef (new sport added to my life). However, the best was a 5 hour tour of Sidney and its environs **ON THE BACK OF A MOTORCYCLE**. I hadn't been on a Harley since I was 18 years old. It was just as thrilling as it was 60 years ago. However, I don't think I'll take up biking through Smithtown.



Bobbi Stoddard - Retirement is a wonderful life. It is a full life for me with my homemaker's groups, but we did manage to get away. We did a return trip to Cape Cod in June and explored the Mashpee Indian part of the Cape. It was so interesting. September brought my husband's Navy reunion in New Orleans. What a hoot! Needless to say, the night life and entertainment was super. My daughter and I visited Ireland in December and had an amazing trip. I would go back in a second. This year is getting very busy, too. Navy reunion in Rhode Island in September and a Williamsburg, VA trip in December so far.

And I always enjoy my quilt retreats with my daughter on Shelter Island, Harve d' Grace, Lancaster and Hershey, I hope everyone is enjoying the new year.

Walt Vogel - Alice and I, along with our son Scott and daughter-in-law Dory, spent ten days in Pasadena to follow the exploits of the UMASS Amherst marching band. Earlier in the year, at one of their football games, the band was invited to march in the Rose Bowl parade and to perform at Disneyland in Anaheim. They were the only college band other than the two football teams in the Rose Bowl. The other bands were from high schools near and far. Our granddaughter Emma Kate is the section leader of the 19 tubas in the band of 410 members. The parade route was 5.5 miles, Emma Kate's Fitbit measured 57,000 steps. Watching the assembling of the floats two days before, gave us an appreciation of the labor involved in making the floral



(cont. on p. 4 see Members)

Members continued from Page 3

floats so spectacular.

One highlight for me was Scott talking me into taking some rides at Disneyland. Those of you who are familiar with the “Luge Run” and “Thunder Mountain” can guess they were a little “hairy” for this old timer.

The shocker was leaving LA in 80 degree weather and arriving in Boston in 8 degree weather. We had a wonderful time.

Joseph Gilkey - On March 1, 2018, I presented my next travel talk to the members at Oak Hammond. The title of the talk was “These Canaries Don’t Sing...Then and Now in the Canary Islands.” It is the story of a trip I made to the Canary Islands in 1974. To update it, I searched the internet for pictures of the same scenes I shot then for how those scenes look now. The difference is as startling as you can imagine.

I am also working on a future presentation that is titled, “Kangaroos, Kiwis, and Devils.” As the title suggests, it is about a cruise that went from Australia to Tasmania to New Zealand. Included in the presentation are additional pictures and commentary about Sydney and Auckland as we spent additional time in both of these wonderful cities before and after the cruise. I do have to say, however, that this flight from Auckland to Orlando is a killer. Since this presentation is still in production no date has been set for its presentation.

Bobbi Miller - Bobbi sends her best wishes to all with a lovely photo of her and 6 great grandchildren.



From left to right: Jake, Ronin, Leo, Eli, Katarina, Bobbi and Sienna

Carmelina Trifiletti - My husband, Sal, and I moved to Williamsburg, Virginia in November 2017. Sal retired from the banking world in June 2017 and has formed a consulting practice called Paladin. Consulting whereby he advises commercial banks in problem loan resolution and organizational issues. I am interested in joining Rotary International and have volunteered to be trained for Literacy for Life through the college of William and Mary. Literacy for Life teaches adults not only literacy through reading and writing but also computer skills and other related life skills. I hope you are all well and enjoying life!

Larry Hohler - A pretty good year came to a less than perfect conclusion at our Children’s Home in Kenya. A good harvest early in 2017 enabled us to sell over \$7,500 worth of flour and provide our kids with a large part of their consumption of porridge, ugali, and maize and beans. We began the September planting season with then hope of bringing in another bumper crop.

(cont. on p. 5 - see More Members)

More Members cont. from p. 4

However, in early December the entire Eastern Province was devastated by an infestation of army beetles and we were forced to spend over \$2,000 to defeat them. In January, we eagerly awaited rains that never came. The lack of rain drives up the cost of food and too many poor people are experiencing a food deficit. Kenyans, however, are a particularly resilient group. Our kids continue to eat on a regular basis because we were able to store maize meal before the drought. All of our young people started a school year in January and several of the orphans we took off the streets in 2005 are employed and living independently. Two have married and become mothers.



A rented tractor prepares the ground for planting last September.

To further the goal of helping our kids to achieve free standing supporters and adulthood, we held a “Passion for Education” fundraising gala at the East Wind Club in Wading River on February 18th. We had an evening of food, music, and dancing, and Skype communication between our Long Island supporters and the kids at the Home. We’ll let you know how we did in the next Newsletter.



New! Like Us on Facebook
by Patty Stoddard



Thanks to retiree, Joan Lopardo, the SSRA is now on Facebook! Please like and follow us to get information and find out what’s going on. We look forward to hearing from you. To access the site please go to:

<https://www.facebook.com.Retired.and Active/>

or search Google or Facebook for “Smithtown Schools Retirees’ Association”.

You will also be able to access the SSRA Facebook page directly from our **MySSRA.com** website.

Welcome, NYSTRS Retiree!

The *Retired Members’ Handbook* is intended to assist retired NY State public educators in understanding their NYSTRS retirement benefits. It is an important part of our commitment to assure you have all the information you need to have a secure retirement.

The information in the *Handbook* is not intended to encompass all aspects of the Retirement System, or the laws and regulations that govern it. The purpose of the publication is to provide general information and address questions you may have about NYSTRS benefits. The most current version of this *Handbook* will always be found on NYSTRS.org.

**Additions & Changes to
Directory**

New Members

Michael Chicvak
23 Twin Oaks Drive
Kings Park, NY 11754
631-332-7490
chicvak@gmail.com

Mary Ann Moeller
2005 Lake View Drive
Belle Vernon, PA 15012
724-872-5114

Margaret Schmit
29 Glenridge Avenue
Stony Brook, NY 11790
631-689-9252
mschmit104@aol.com

Changes to Directory

Vincent Amato - 24 Suffolk Avenue,
Shoreham, NY 11786
Carole Coloe - 3395 SW 73 Avenue,
Miami, FL 33143
Henry Elias- 115 No. Bleeker Street,
Port Jefferson, NY, 631-474-5530,
hraymondliias@hotmail.com
George Harsch - 631-473-2811

After extensive debate on the pros and
cons of publishing Additions and
Changes to our Directory both
online and in the paper copies,
we have decided to publish them
in both forms.

If for some reason you do not want
your information in the online copy,
just let us know and we will gladly ac-
commodate you.

Our Deepest Sympathy to:

**Fran Kaszuba on the loss of her
husband, Bob.**

**June Hochberg on the loss of her
husband, Donald.**

**The family of Karen Engelman, a re-
tired district Social Studies teacher,
who passed away in January.**

**The family of Betty (McMasters)
Cravotta, a Principals' Secretary at
both high schools, who passed away
in January.**

**The family of Leslie Edelman, former
Director of Curriculum, who passed
away in February.**

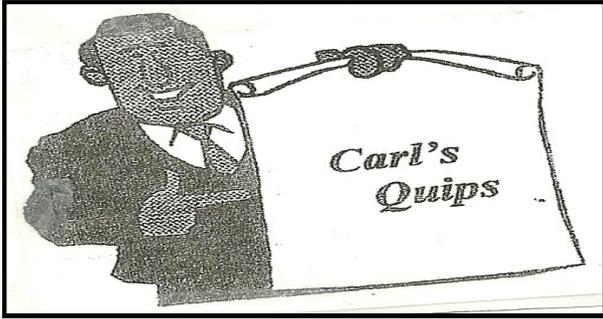
My Living Will

*Last night, my kids and I were
sitting in the living room and I
said to them,*

*"I never want to live in a vegeta-
tive
state, dependent on some machine
and fluids from a bottle. If that ev-
er happens, just pull the plug,"*

*They got up, unplugged the com-
puter and threw out the wine!!*

Geezer Planet



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

●●●●Clulow●●●●

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

Germination is when someone applies to become a German citizen.

Two terms of the Versailles Treaty were Spring term and Autumn term.

Q. Where can you find the Andes Mountains?
A. Using Google earth.

One reason for the collapse of the Bronze Age was rust.

An example of a "fragile environment" is a glass house.

The cause of the Industrial Revolution was when people stopped reproducing by hand and started reproducing by machines.

Classified Ads

Vacation rental: Ludlow, Vt., Lake Rescue; ideal for families, sleeps 14, 2-1/2 baths, 4 bedrooms king, 2 twin bedrooms, full, loft with queen futon, double and twins, living room, den dining area, 2 fully equipped kitchens, washer and dryer, two large decks overlooking gardens and lake, swim to private float, canoe available, easy access from Route 100. Nearby golf, tennis, shops and restaurants. Call Mary Jane for availability and rates. (516) 971-5101.

NYSUT NEWS

NYSUT has let it be known that:

..... The ability to apply for retirement online was added to MyNYSTRS.

..... NYSUT paid out \$6.9 billion in retirement benefits during the fiscal year 2017. 80% of this amount was paid to residents of NY state

**A total of 163,000members
receive one or more of NY
SUT benefits**

INFORMATION FORM - for 2017 Retirees and/or prior members with changes

(Since this is a **dues free year** use this form **ONLY** to update your information if we do not have it or if there are any changes to be made)

Name _____

Year Retired _____

Street Address _____

Apt. # _____

City/Town _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____

Email Address _____

Membership has its privileges!

Your union is steadfast in its fight for better contracts, safer working conditions, fair pay, advocacy, and upholding the labor rights of the dedicated women and men proudly working in the education and health care industries on a daily basis.

But your NYSUT membership does so much more! It also provides you with the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of more than 40 endorsed programs & services offered by NYSUT Member Benefits, including a variety of quality, competitive insurance plans.

Endorsed By:

**MEMBER
BENEFITS**



As an Example: With the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed MetLife Auto & Home insurance program, NYSUT members receive special group rates on auto insurance, homeowners insurance as well as motorcycle, boat, personal property and other types of insurance -- rates that are NOT available to the general public.

That is why we encourage you to always look for the “Endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits” logo before you or your loved ones make any purchasing decisions.

Visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or
call **800-626-8101** for specific information about this program.



Newly endorsed Member Shopping Program available for use!

We heard the requests of the NYSUT membership and spent months diligently researching new member shopping program options. The NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation is pleased to announce that the Purchasing Power Member Shopping Program is now available for use by eligible NYSUT members.

Purchasing Power is an online shopping option that offers another way to purchase brand-new, brand-name products and pay for them over time through the ease of payroll deduction or ACH withdrawals. Eligible NYSUT members can enjoy access to products such as computers, appliances, jewelry, furniture, televisions, electronics, travel packages and much more.

While Purchasing Power is not a discount program, it can save you money and stress compared to high-interest credit cards or rent-to-own stores. As always, you are encouraged to shop and compare before making any purchasing decisions.

Visit nysutmbc.purchasingpower.com or call **800-537-3135** to learn more.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



Your monthly bills won't stop if you become unable to work

Insurance is the type of product that you hope you never have to utilize. In the event that you need to use it, though, it's important to have the insurance product that best meets your individual needs.

The NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed voluntary Disability Insurance Plan -- provided by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company -- provides valuable income replacement benefits to help meet your living expenses if you become partially or totally disabled and are unable to work.



Disability insurance can be customized to fit within your budget and still provide peace of mind until you are able to get back on your feet and return to work. Applications for the new NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed Disability Insurance Plan are now available, with coverage effective dates on or after Jan. 1, 2018 from the Plan Administrator, Mercer Consumer.

For more information and/or to get an application, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101** for specific information about this program.

Call to Action: Proposals requested for NYSUT *Educator's Voice*



New York State's classrooms are among the most diverse in the nation. In recognition of this, NYSUT is currently seeking article proposals on "**Culturally-Responsive Teaching**" for consideration in its annual edition of *Educator's Voice*, a *Journal of Best Practices in Education*. **The deadline for proposals is June 15, 2018.**

Do you have a project or practice that works well in your classroom, something you are passionate about and would like to share with other educators across the state? This is a great opportunity to write about it and become published in NYSUT's member journal, a publication created by NYSUT members for NYSUT members. No previous experience is needed nor do you need to be a professional writer to be published in *Educator's Voice*.

Once accepted, authors receive a great deal of editorial support and writing guidance throughout the year-long publication cycle. The result is a professional, research-based publication that can be shared with your colleagues and used for professional development. Authors or author teams can collaborate across schools or with partners in higher education; at least one author must be a NYSUT or affiliate member.

For more information and/or to download the author submission form, visit <http://www.nysut.org/educatorsvoice>.

Previous editions of this publication are available at <https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/educators-voice>.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

Mar/Apr. '18

SMITHTOWN SCHOOLS RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

Spring 2018

LUNCHEON

At

St. George's Golf & Country Club

134 Sheep Pasture Road, Setauket, NY 11733

(631) 751-0388

Wednesday, April 18th

Noon to 3pm

**There is NO charge for SSRA Members -
non-Members/Guests are \$30 per person
(Send check payable to Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association)**

mail to:

SSRA

c/o STA Office

26 New York Avenue

Smithtown, NY 11787

RSVP by April 12 - Note: This is a FIRM Deadline - No Walk-ins

Directions: From central Smithtown: (7-1/2 miles - 15 minutes) From intersection of Route 111 and Route 25A, follow 25A North (approx. 6.8 mi.) to right turn onto Nicolls Road - then, left at 1st light onto Lower Sheep Pasture Road. You will see the golf course on your right. Make a right turn into Driveway.

Please Note: As has been our practice, we will be collecting donations for the local Food Pantries. Kindly bring a check made out to "SSRA"

Kindly detach the form below and return the slip — please print

Member Name _____ **Phone #** _____

Guest Name _____

Wednesday AM Breakfast Group Celebrate Valentine's Day

By Susan Fink

We spared no expense and celebrated Valentine's day in grand style. After making the needed reservations nearly a month in advance, we managed to snare eleven very limited and greatly coveted reservations. Eleven of the gang from the Smithtown Breakfast Group enjoyed a wonderful time at this acclaimed local eatery. which temporarily upped its game to include table service, tablecloths, and timely decorations. We had a wonderful time at WHITE CASTLE!....."Silly," you say? You bet. and we had a ball!!!! The participants were John & Linda Pettit, Marilyn Harris, Susan & Jerry Fink, Carole Palmer, Dorothy Ascoli, Beverly Daffner, Eleanor Brocia, Karen & George Makris.

Come join us! We meet every Wednesday at the Palace Diner on the Smithtown Bypass and Route 111 at 9:30 AM.



OFF THE CUFF

by John Pettit

Luncheon: Yes, you read it correctly - After considerate discussion, the board decided to further “reduce” our treasury by covering the cost of the luncheon for all members. (Non-members/guests will have to pay \$30.) I conducted a very informal and unscientific survey seeking opinions as to where most members would like to have the luncheon - by far, the most popular response was the St. George Golf and Country Club in Setauket. I am required to furnish the club with an accurate number of expected guests by the week prior to the luncheon and we, therefore, must have your response slip by Thursday, April 12. This is an absolute deadline. **Please see the luncheon page on 9 in this issue - be sure to return the reservation slip.**

Membership/Dues: As was explained in the December Newsletter, we declared 2018 to be a “**Dues Free Year**” — that is, if had paid dues for 2017 (or retired in 2017) your membership is extended through this year. **Please use the Member’s information slip on page 7 (in this issue) to register your membership.**

SSRA Officers Election: According to our Constitution, it is time for officers to be elected by the membership. Below is a nomination form which may be used to offer any member for election to office. The names of the nominees will be published in the June Newsletter along with a ballot so the entire membership can vote. Election results will be published in the October Newsletter. (There will be a gala inauguration celebration on the steps of the STA office.)

For your information, here are the names of those currently holding the elective offices:

President: George Makris
Vice-President: John Pettit
Treasurer: Susan Fink
Secretary: Donna Milgrom

Each of these people has expressed a willingness to stand for re-election to office.

Please remove and send this slip for any other nominee

NOMINATION FORM

FOR
PRESIDENT: _____

VICE-PRESIDENT: _____

SECRETARY: _____

TREASURER: _____

Kindly print your name below (for
book-keeping purposes)

Why I Like Retirement!

Question: How many days in a week?

Answer: Six Saturdays, one Sunday.

Question: When is a retiree's bedtime?

Answer: Two hours after he falls asleep on the couch.

Question: Why don't retirees mind being called Seniors?

Answer: The term comes with a 10% discount.

Question: What is the biggest gripe of retirees?

Answer: There is not enough time to get everything done.

Question: What is the biggest advantage of retirees going back to school?

Answer: If you cut classes, no one calls your parents.

Question: What do you do all week?

Answer: Monday through Friday, nothing. Saturday and Sunday, I rest.



SSRA
c/o STA Office
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Smithtown, NY 11787