



# S.S.R.A. NEWSLETTER



Volume XIV, Issue 2

November-December 2014

## Help Us Be Aligned With Other Districts Pay Your Dues Now!

### From the Editor's Desk

The year 2014 is ending and it is the time to take a look at the major issues faced by our schools at this time both in New York state and on a national level. In



the Board of Regents is considering a plan which they hope will raise graduation rates. The Board would like to add some flexibility to the current regents standards. Instead of the mandatory five regents students would have the option of taking more courses for career training, in the arts, or in what has been designated as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics). Those in the top 10% would be offered a full CUNY or SUNY scholarship. Currently, students must take both the Global History and Geography and the U.S. History and Government regents. Under this new plan, only one of these regents would be required for graduation. The vote on these changes is expected sometime in January.

On the national level, retaining tenure has become an issue. Three states and the District of Columbia have already eliminated tenure while three other states were unsuccessful in their attempts to eliminate tenure. Just last month a judge in California ruled that tenure deprived students of their rights to an education.

Charter schools continue to increase in number and thus divert more money from the public sector. In the past five years, the number of charter schools has grown by 80%. In 2014, more than 600 of these schools have begun operating and there are at least 6400 public charter schools enrolling over 2.5 million students.

is ending and it is take a look at the by our schools at New York state and on New York, the

We can't forget the issue of Common Core (which even had its own line in the NY state gubernatorial election) and has made headlines throughout the country. In a recent Gallup poll, two-thirds of the public schools have concerns about Common Core, up from 44% in an earlier poll. This issue is far from being resolved.

To all our SSRA members and their families a happy and healthy 2015.

Carl Haymes  
Editor

### President's Message

As another year comes to a close I want to wish all of our members a very happy New Year. Your SSRA Board along with our members have worked very hard to keep you apprised of news relating to your retirement as well as your fellow retirees. Very shortly we will have our own website up and running (see article on p. 6) with information for all our members. Then, as we do every other year, we will have a new Members' Directory out in the Spring. However, we need your help to have as up-to-date a Directory as possible. Kindly pay your SSRA dues before the end of the year.

Have a happy New Year everyone and stay healthy.

George Makris

## Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association

50 Route 111– Suite 216

Smithtown, NY 11787

(631)265-4218

Email: [ssraeditor@optonline.net](mailto:ssraeditor@optonline.net)

President.....George Makris  
Co-Vice Presidents.....Florence Martin  
..... 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

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  
at the STA office

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

### PLEASE DONATE TO ESTABLISH A SCHOLARSHIP FUND IN MEMORY OF BRUCE MILLER

Make your check payable to:  
**Smithtown Teachers' Association**

Mail to Laura Spencer  
STA President

Smithtown Teachers; Association  
50 Route 111 - Suite 216  
Smithtown, NY 11787

Please help establish a scholarship fund in Bruce's memory as a tribute to the work he did that affected our careers, teaching lives, and retirement.

Bruce served as president of the STA on several different occasions and as the STA's chief negotiator was responsible for negotiating the first groundbreaking collective bargaining

agreement with the District.

Bruce was a positive influence on the relationship between the Smithtown School District and the teachers' union that continues to this day.

We hope to award two scholarships to graduating seniors — one from each high school — to honor his memory and celebrate his life.

THANK YOU to those who have already donated to establish this scholarship in memory of Bruce who passed away this spring.

**PLEASE NOTE** : The STA has agreed to collect the checks and deposit them in a tax-free account until directed to award the scholarships. Therefore, please write your check payable to **Smithtown Teachers' Association**. (the bank will not honor checks made out to "STA")

# 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.*

**Bobbi and Al Mastrangelo** — Al sings bass in the Sound Burst Barbershop Quartet. They have many singing gigs in the Orlando area. They opened one of the Houston Astros spring training games with the Star Spangled Banner. (see photo below)

Bobbi exhibited her art work at an Orlando Engineering firm. Lennie Arnold, the Florida Regional Manager of Littlejohn Engineering Associates saw Bobbi's art exhibited with the "Best of the Best" of Orlando's Museum's 1st Thursday Winners at the Mayor's Gallery in Orlando City Hall. He contacted Bobbi about displaying her art at the Littlejohn Office. Read more on her blog:  
<http://bobbimastrangelo.com/MyNews/?p=4511>



Al Mastrangelo is standing next to the Astros' Mascot at the Silver Spurs Arena in Kissimmee, Florida



"Three Sewers" (Stickball Tribute), one of four works on exhibit

**Eileen Carlsen** - It is amazing to me that 16 years have passed since I retired from teaching. They were wonderful years and I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Smithtown School district teaching at Accomsett Elementary and later at Tacken Elementary. Many of the teachers from Tacken still get together each month for breakfast. Of course that is impossible for me, as I have lived on Marco Island, Florida for the past 12 years. However, we do get together each year after the Christmas holidays for a holiday luncheon. When I return to Long Island for Christmas and New Years, I am able to connect with my Tacken friends and relive good memories and catch up what has been happening in our lives. It is important to stay in touch with friends.

Another milestone has occurred in my life. My husband and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary this past August. It was a wonderful celebration on a cruise around the Hawaiian Islands on the Pride of America. We were joined by our daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughters. It seemed as if everyone enjoyed the  
(News of Members continued on p.4)

*News of Members* continued from Page 3

trip. The scenery in Hawaii was awesome with lots of waterfalls and beautiful plants and flowers. Some of the trip highlights included the helicopter ride over Kauai (my first time in a helicopter) and the movie tour we took on Kauai to see some of the movie locations shot there such as Jurassic Park, The Descendants and South Pacific to name only three. The beaches were beautiful and there was an abundant amount of fish to see while snorkeling. The Volcano National Park was like being on Mars and the Arizona Memorial was touching and educational. Driving the road to Hana in the rain was quite an experience as it has over 617 curves and 56 one way bridges. The trip was an experience that we will never forget. One more place can now be checked off our bucket list. Life has been good to me and I feel such gratitude, happiness and love as we celebrate this, our 50th year of marriage.

**Gail Chiovaro** - Are you looking to fill a few free hours? Want to learn something new? I recently discovered the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI, for short) at Stony Brook University. There are a myriad of classes taught by volunteers. Each semester's choices vary according to requests and the ability to find someone with the expertise to teach it. I am currently taking a foreign language, photography and line dancing. Most classes meet for one morning a week. An annual fee of \$320 fee allows you to take as many as eight classes per semester...if you could fit them all into your life. What's your pleasure? Creative writing? History? Bridge? Music? You may find something that interests you. OLLI's website is: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/olli/>

**Jo-Ann Goldwasser** - I've started a DOGGIE READING CLUB through PRATT (Patchogue Rotary Assisted Therapy) and the paragraph below was in a local newspaper.

The DOGGIE READING CLUB continues to grow. We're now involved in the North East Elementary School in Brentwood as well as in Rocky Point Middle School. There are six PRATT volunteers "working" the program along with their dogs. We work one-on-one with a child who reads to the dog and gains more confidence each session. When we arrive at the schools, we are greeted as celebrities with wide smiles from the teachers and faculty as well as from the boys and girls! The children who are involved in the program feel special that a reading dog is in their classroom.

The benefits of the program are great—for the children involved, the volunteers, and the dogs. We're working on developing a research model to measure the impact of the volunteer and the dog on the reading gains the children have achieved. More volunteers are needed so the program can continue to expand. Please email [jogold4311@gmail.com](mailto:jogold4311@gmail.com) to find out more about the program. We'd love to have you get involved and you'll love being involved!!!

**Larry Hohler** - Anticipation is in the air at Hope Children's Home! Eight of our Standard 8 students have just taken the test that will determine whether they will enter Secondary School in January. Seven of our form 4 young people await the results of the test that will determine whether or not they qualify for admission to a public university. Seven of our older kids are already pursuing university studies, so we are struggling to raise funds for their tuitions. (twenty-one year old Betty Gakii has already graduated and will soon be teaching and paying back to the Home, over time, the amount we invested in her education.

In order to meet our increasing tuition bills, we have launched a program that will soon be producing school uniforms and a welding operation that will manufacture iron gates and window guards. The profits generated by these activities, along with the sale of produce from our farm, will hopefully help us to meet the educational aspirations of our kids.

**Get well wishes** to **John Pettit** as he recovers from "minor" toe surgery. John does so much for our SSRA. He is the one who arranges both our Spring and Fall luncheons and sends out the reminders for both. In addition, John keeps our membership lists in order...not an easy task. John's column will resume in the next edition of the Newsletter.

## Changes & Additions to the 2013-14 Directory

### New and Returning Members

Gertrude Gelo  
108 Rhoda Avenue  
Nesconset, NY 11767  
[geloczar@optonline.net](mailto:geloczar@optonline.net)

Maureen Smilow  
21 Village Way  
Smithtown, NY 11787  
631-361-9538  
[mmsmilow1@gmail.com](mailto:mmsmilow1@gmail.com)

Georgia Wallace  
61 Shore Road  
East Setauket, NY 11733

### Changes to Make in Members' Directory

Gerald Bushart - "optonline" is misspelled  
Kathleen Capozzi - 631-806-8196  
Barbara Codere - [bacodere@optimum.net](mailto:bacodere@optimum.net)  
Elizabeth DeGennaro - correct spelling of street to "Selden B'lvd."  
Doris Diamond - [dorisdiamond@gmail.com](mailto:dorisdiamond@gmail.com)  
Patricia Dolan - correct spelling of "Stuyvesant Lane," [patdolan@optonline.net](mailto:patdolan@optonline.net)  
Anne Dragos - [dragosanne@gmail.com](mailto:dragosanne@gmail.com)  
Alice Dunne - [aldunne03@gmail.com](mailto:aldunne03@gmail.com)  
Alan Gleicher - 631-757-2757  
Barry Kane - 803-396-2757  
Tony Lacertosa - [tlacertosa@maine.rr.com](mailto:tlacertosa@maine.rr.com)  
Susan Lee - PO Box 548, Davidson, NC 28036; 980-406-4793  
Warren Parnell - [asis4@comcast.net](mailto:asis4@comcast.net)  
John & Brett Pinto - just add Brett's name  
Roger & Joan Renke - 35 Applewood Lane, Falmouth, ME 04015; 207-747-5396  
Fran Renna - 53 Hamlet Drive  
Suzanne Wallace (nee: Rippert)

### *Our Deepest Sympathy to:*

Maris Lidecis on the loss of his wife, Jennifer, retired Spanish teacher, who passed away in October

The family of John Pessala, district Social Studies teacher in the 1970's who passed away in October

Kay Newell, on the loss of her sister, Florence, and also a cousin, Frank, (Fr.Groshell)

Karolin Acunto on the loss of her mother, Gloria O'Malley, in November

To Bob Krebs on the losds of his father

### More on Catamaran RX

The article written by Joe Gilkey really caught my attention. ("Do You Have the Same Friend?" October 2014) Yes, I do have the same annoying friend! Catamaran RX is a strange name for a pharmacy and I find them to be very irritating. They keep switching my medications even after I phone them and express my desire and my physician's directions (perhaps not written to dispense as written) to have a particular brand name but they refuse to send me the medication that I requested. They very frequently switch the generic brands and I end up with three white pills that look very similar but are for different parts of the body.

I call Catamaran RX and they tell me there is nothing they can do. So I have to sit with a magnifying glass to look for identifying numbers when I do my weekly pills. There are even certain medications which I have been taking for several years that now need pre-approval before they will fill the prescription. This really delays getting the medication on time. They also think they have the right to manage my medications and constantly call or send letters asking me to sign up and they will go over all of my medications and contact my physician with their findings. I think NOT! Who do they think they are? My doctor monitors all my medications and I do not need an outside company trying to do that too.

It has not been a joyful relationship. I enjoyed dealing with Optum Rx as they were much more accommodating and sent you the prescriptions that were requested.

Eileen Carlsen

### Website Will Soon Be Up and Running

At our monthly board meeting in November, Rich Davis, former district science teacher, did a presentation on the progress of a website for our SSRA members.

We discussed the general appearance of the home page and the tabs to click on along with what types of information should be included on the website that our members might find useful and interesting. Besides information for both NYSUT and SSEA members, the SSRA Newsletter, anything pertinent to our retired members will be available online. As for the Newsletter, we are still asking members who would prefer to receive their Newsletter online **only**, to please let us know. Send a quick email to:

**[SSRAeditor@optonline.net](mailto:SSRAeditor@optonline.net)**

If that would be your preference and if there is more interest in this method of distributing the Newsletter, than we have seen so far, we will try to accommodate you.

### Interested in a Cruise? Why not try this one?



Best spring 19 day cruise value. Cruise the Panama Canal, on the Norwegian Sun. Depart the Port of Tampa, Florida on April 18th, 2015.

10 port highlights: Daytime Transit of the Panama Canal, Cartagena, Carbo San Luca, L.A., San Francisco, Victoria, B.C., and more.

Picture window cabin for 2, \$3,960 includes taxes.

Balcony Cabin for 2, \$5,820 includes taxes.

Both cabins include a \$50 Shipboard Credit.

Disembark at Vancouver, British Columbia on May 8th, 2015.

**Contact Bill Benzinger, '05 retiree, at: 516-381-4081**



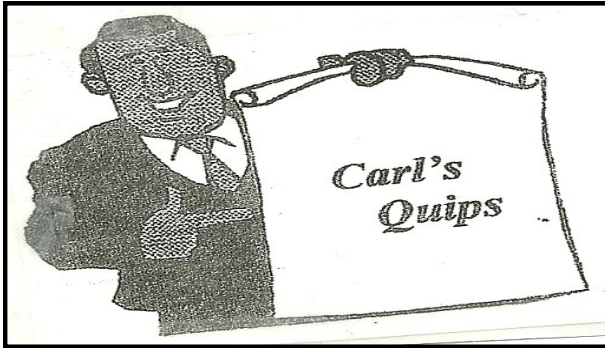
### SSRA Fall Luncheon a Big Success!

On a lovely day in late October, with the autumn leaves starting to put on their annual display, approximately 60 retired SSRA members assembled at the St. George Golf and Country Club for their Fall luncheon. The setting, the food and the company were all superb. We owe a big vote of thanks to Marilyn Harris for getting us into this location and to John Pettit who made the actual arrangements for this and all other recent luncheons.

Those who attended got to spend time with old friends and colleagues and one could tell by the constant level of conversation that a good time was being held by all. A collection for the food bank which is always part of our luncheons yielded just shy of \$600. This money was donated to St. Vincent De Paul at St. Joseph's in Kings Park. There were some non-perishable food contributions as well and they went to Long Island Cares Food Bank.

A hearty thank you to all who participated. For those who did not attend this affair, please join us in the spring for the next luncheon. Bring your retired friends or come alone. You will feel welcome and we would love to have you there!

Florence Martin



**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.*

Many colonists wanted no involvement in the French and Indian War because they did not want to fight in India.

The Boston Tea Party was held at Pearl Harbor.

The Davy Jones Index crashed in 1929.

A common denominator is when two children have the same mother and father.

Joan of Arc was burnt to a steak.

Ancient Egypt was inhabited by mummies.

**Dues For 2015 Are Requested**

Thanks to the many who have already paid their dues for 2015. In order to align ourselves with other RC#23 districts and to meet NYSUT requirements all dues should be paid by the end of December. This will all assist us in the preparation of a new Membership Directory which will be out in the spring. Once again the usual reminder, if you receive any of NYSUT's benefits other than your pension, you are required by law to belong to your local retiree association. As mentioned in the previous Newsletter please note once again the following:

1. **If you were a member for all of 2014, kindly pay \$15**
2. **If you retired in June, 2014, your complimentary membership will end on December 31, 2014. Kindly pay the \$15**
3. **If you paid 2014's dues after Sept. 1 2014, it will be applied to 2015. Do not pay!**
4. **Married retirees from Smithtown must pay individual dues**

**Kindly cut out the form at the bottom of this page and mail with your check for \$15 payable to the SSRA and mail to:**

SSRA  
c/o STA  
50 Route 111 - Suite 216  
Smithtown, NY 11787

**Membership Renewal Form**

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

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle any of the above if it is NEW to us.

# Protecting your family for the future



It's important that your family members are financially protected throughout their lives. Have you stopped to consider what would happen to your spouse and/or children if you were to suddenly pass away?

**Would your loved ones be able to continue to live in their home, pay regular bills and maintain a comfortable lifestyle?** What about your final medical, burial or funeral expenses?

And it's not a question of just having a life insurance policy... make sure you have *enough* coverage to provide for your family. Find a plan that's right for you and your specific financial situation.

### ***Plans designed specifically for NYSUT members***

As NYSUT members, it makes prudent sense to look into the Term Life or Level Term Life Insurance Plans endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits. Both of these plans offer specific terms and rates designed exclusively with NYSUT members and their families in mind.

The **Term Life Plan** is available for NYSUT members and their spouses/domestic partners under age 85. If you are under age 65, you can apply for coverage from \$25,000 up to \$1 million at premiums negotiated specifically for NYSUT members.

Meanwhile, the **Level Term Life Plan** offers terms for 10, 15 or 20-year periods. The premium that you start with is projected to remain the same and the benefit amount will not decrease throughout the term – regardless of your age or health condition.

You can enjoy an **additional savings of 15%** on published rates if your local association has approved automatic deductions from your paycheck or pension check and you sign up for that benefit.

To learn more about the Member Benefits-endorsed Term Life or Level Term Life Insurance Plans, call **800-626-8101** or visit ***memberbenefits.nysut.org***.

## Member Appreciation Month is coming!

NYSUT Member Benefits wants to start the New Year off right with a celebration of the entire NYSUT membership.

**These offers will continue into February 2015, which has been designated as Member Appreciation Month!**

It's the strength of the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that makes it possible for Member Benefits to offer approximately 50 endorsed programs & services designed with you in mind.

This special celebration will be kicking off in January 2015 with the arrival of your new membership cards. This mailing will include a variety of special offers only available to NYSUT members.



This will be a month filled with a series of special prize drawings for items donated by our endorsed program providers. To be eligible for these drawings, all you need to do is be a participant in our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

We will announce the winners of these special prize drawings exclusively on the Member Benefits website throughout the month of February.

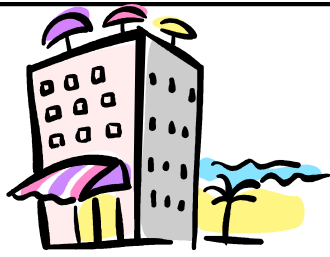
For more details about this exciting event, visit the Member Benefits website at ***memberbenefits.nysut.org*** or call **800-626-8101**.



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.

Nov./Dec. '14





## HOLIDAY INN *for* *Seniors*

No nursing home for me (when the time comes). I am checking into the Holiday Inn! With the average cost for nursing home per day reaching \$288, there is a better way when we get old and feeble. I have already checked on reservations at the Holiday Inn. For a combined long stay discount and senior discount, it's \$49.23 per night. That leaves \$238.77 a day for:

1. Breakfast, lunch and dinner in any restaurant you want or room service
2. Laundry, gratuities and special TV shows are available. Plus, they provide a swimming pool, a workout room, a lounge, washer, dryer, etc.. Most have free toothpaste and razors, and all have free shampoo and soap.

They treat you like a customer, not a patient. \$5 worth of tips a day will have the entire staff scrambling to help you. There is a city bus stop out front and seniors ride

free.

To meet other nice people, call a church and go there on Sunday. For a change of scenery, take the airport shuttle bus and eat at one of the nice restaurants there. While you're at the airport, fly somewhere. Otherwise, the cash keeps building up. It takes months to get into decent nursing homes. Holiday Inn will take your reservation today. And you are not stuck in one place forever, you can move from Inn to Inn, or even from city to city. Want to see Hawaii? They have a Holiday Inn there too.

T.V. broken? Light bulbs need hanging? Need a mattress replaced? No problem. They fix everything, and apologize for the inconvenience. The Inn has a security person and daily room service. The maid checks to see if you are ok. If not, they will call the undertaker or an ambulance.

If you fall and break a hip, Medicare will pay for the hip, and Holiday Inn will upgrade you to a suite for the rest of your life.

No worries about visits from your family. They will always be glad to find you and probably check in for a few days mini-vacation. The grandkids can use the pool. What more can you ask for?

So, when I reach the golden age I'll go with a grin. Just forward all my email to: me@Holiday.Inn.

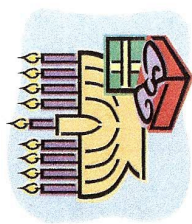
Anonymous

## Groaners for Those Who Enjoy Language\

- 1.. Those who jump off a bridge in Paris....are in Seine.
2. A backward poet writes....in verse.
3. A man's home is his castle....., in a manor of speaking.
4. Dijon vu....the same mustard as before.
5. Practice safe eating - always use condiments.
6. Shotgun wedding: a case of wife or death.
7. A hangover is the wrath of grapes.
8. Dancing cheek-to-cheek is really a form of floor dancing.
9. Does the name Pavlov ring a bell?
10. Reading while sunbathing makes you feel well red.
11. When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I.
12. The definition of a will?...It's a dead giveaway.
13. A bicycle can't stand on its own because it is too tired.
14. In democracy your vote counts. Under feudalism your count votes.
15. A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion
16. With her marriage, she got a new name and address.
17. The man who falls into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.
18. You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
19. When a clock is hungry, it goes back for seconds.
20. Every calendar's days are numbered.

*To all our SSRA members:*

*A happy Hanukkah*

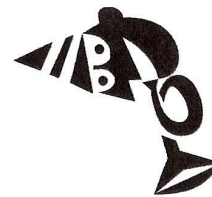


*A merry Christmas*



*And a very, very happy*

*New Year*



**S.S.R.A.  
50 Route 111  
Suite 216  
Smithtown, NY 11787**