





Volume XIV, Issue 1

September—October 2014

From the Editor's Desk

he school year has new begun and your would like once again welto come 2014's retirees. Along with the teachers who retired in June, we would also like to welcome our SSEA retirees.

It seems the Common Core has now entered access the site at: next month's Gubernatorial race in New York. Incumbent Andrew Cuomo appears to be ahead to view it. You will need to log on to a in virtually all polls but in an attempt to lure form that will allow you access the parents disillusioned by all the testing their website and possibly view future or Core, Rob Astorino has gathered more than enough signatures on a petition to have a Stop Common Core party listed on the ballot. NYnor in 2010 and is doing the same this year. Not portunity but the choice will be yours. until recently, did Andrew Cuomo admit that the students' test scores were flawed and should not be used to evaluate teachers.

The 2% tax cap is an issue that has had ramifications in many districts. In an effort to remain under the tax cap school districts found themselves cutting programs or staffing. While this might result in restraining rises in the tax structure it comes at a cost. More and more federal and state mandates are being instituted on our schools with no guarantee that additional financial aid will be given to implement these mandates and compensate for the loss of revenue.

Stay well and take care of yourself.

Carl Haymes SSRA Editor

President's Message

Hi everyone and a special welcome to SSRA our new retirees. Hopefully, you have all enjoyed this glorious, cool summer.

> *I'm happy to report that a Home Page* website for SSRA members is almost ready. In fact, you'll soon be able to

www.smithtownschoolsretirees association.com

children are subjected to under the Common past Newsletters. If you prefer, we will certainly continue to mail you hard copies. We hope that those with computers will avail themselves of the op-See the article on page 6 if you think you might prefer an online copy.

> Enjoy the fall, stay well, and keep enjoying your retirement. Remember to inform us of your latest news, travels and adventures.

> > -George Makris

Congrats 2014 SSEA Retirees

A hearty welcome from all the retirees in the SSRA to:

Sharon Catalanotto Marie Cirillo Laura Cundari

Carol Hauser Josephine Lo Russo **Diane Zach** Carol Ward

Smithtown Schools Retirees' Association

50 Route 111– Suite 216 Smithtown, NY 11787 (631)265-4218 Email: <u>ssraeditor@optonline.net</u>

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.

Congratulations! New Grand-babies! How Wonderful!!





LEFT: Bobbi Miller's two great-grandsons, born in June a week apart. On the left, Elijah (Eli) Todd and on the right, Jake Grayson.

ABOVE: Wendy Erdman-Surlea, her husband Peter, and daughter-in-law Gina, with new grandson, Jack Sawyer Surlea.



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.

Phyllis Heinen — I gave into my fears that I would get seasick if I took a cruise. After all, the ferry ride across Long Island Sound left me feeling "not so fine." However, this was not just any cruise, it was a Rhine Riverboat trip. I booked it with my friend Janet. We flew into Amsterdam, boarded the Viking Helvetia and began our journey down the Rhine from the Netherlands to Breisach and the Black Forest. Highlights of the trip included a visit to the windmills in Kinder-dijk, Netherlands, the Schokoladenmuseum (Lindt Chocolate factory in Cologne) where we could actually design our own candy bar, and the Asbach Uralt (German brandy) distillery in Rudesheim.

In Rudesheim, we were treated to a sauerbraten dinner and folklore entertainment along the Drosselgasse. Our journey continued down the mid-Rhine sailing past the Lorelei — with new traffic lights and control towers to direct the riverboat and barges. To visit the cathedral in Strasbourg, France we docked in Kehl. This is the hometown of my late husband Peter's family. I had a wonderful afternoon visit with the cousins at their home in Auenheim bei Kehl. Our journey ended with a post-cruise extension to Lucerne, Switzerland. Hope all of you had an enjoyable summer. Do check out Vikingcruises.com

Connie Antonetti — My son, Lou, has published his first book, "Monday Messages, Reflections on Life and Learning in Our Schools." The book is dedicated to his father, Lou Antonetti, who was a teacher and coach in Smithtown.

Marie Ruth Walls — I wanted to pass along information about our sons for SHS faculty who might remember and be interested in them having had then in their classes. Most briefly, there is Timothy, with many years in a responsible position at the United Nations; Jeremy, after retiring from the successful jazz band Spyro Gyra, is a satisfied and happy composer. producer, keyboard performer and especially as a full time music professor at SUNY Oneonta; and Benjamin, a graduate of Yale, has two Masters degrees from the London School of Economics, is happy and for many years has been a resident of Switzerland and is the father of three grown children.

Joseph Gilkey — I love reading what former colleagues write in the Newsletter and to discover what they are up to. That thought stimulated me to send along a note about what has been going on in the Gilkey household. As most of you know, Heather and I live in a Continuous Care Retirement Community that is affiliated with the University of Florida - Oak Hammock. The community is approaching its 10th anniversary in October. Both of us are serving on a committee to plan the festivities the community will engage in to celebrate the occasion. It will be a week

(Cont. on p. 4 — see News of Members)

News of Members continued from Page 3

long affair during the week of October 6 with the culminating events on October 10th. The town's mayor, university president, president of the management company, and dignitaries will be on hand. Our theme for the celebration is, "Fleet Week." A large cutout of a cruise ship has been provided to each of 12 entities that make up the complex. Each of these entities will decorate their ship and build a home port for it. Naval officers from the university's naval ROTC will then judge who does the most creative work in those decorations. A regatta will then be held in the main lobby where these ships will race in a board game-like setting, moving with a throw of dice. The winning ship will be awarded the "Tin Cup" because tin is symbolic of a 10th anniversary. Lots of events are planned for the week ranging from a parade, to a casino night, barbeque lunches, open bar, and nautical movies. Joe has been narrating videos shown on our in-house channel 71 the 10th of each month since February, outlining the history of Oak Hammock and and highlighting the upcoming events.

On the travel side of life, Joe will lead Oak Hammock members on the 8th and 9th Caribbean cruise he has planned and arranged for the community. The 8th will be to Central America for seven days, stopping at Key West, Honduras, Guatemala, and Costa Maya, Mexico in November. This will be Joe's 84th cruise. His 85th will be in March to San Juan, St. Thomas, Grand Turk and Half Moon Cay. Joe and Heather will have a personal five day getaway for Christmas - also on a cruise ship - bringing Joe's total when this cruise ship season ends to 86 cruises.

We will have a blast from the past when Dr. Alan Gaynor will visit us for a few days beginning Oct. 26th. Alan and Joe were teaching colleagues at New York Avenue Junior High in the early 60's. Alan went off to NYU for a prestigious fellowship and his doctorate before becoming a professor of school administration at Boston University. Alan, now professor emeritus is free to travel so he is coming to Gainesville. Joe, Heather, and Alan haven't seen one another in more than 15 years so it will be great to reminisce about the old days. Al Zoller was also one of this trio that are the same age and who worked together. It is hoped that Al's schedule will permit him to be also be a part of this reunion. Isn't retirement fun!

Larry Hohler - The day after our arrival in Kenya, we visited eight of our young people at various universities. Moses Miangi began his studies at Nairobi Technical; Kelvin Mutuma, Ken Muthuiya, Edwin Muguna and Peter Mugambi are freshman at Mt. Kenya; Caroline Kathuri is in her third year at Chuka; Kelvin Koome and Jane Mwendwa are pursuing medical studies at Kenya Methodist.

These young scholars lived on the streets in Meru, Kenya until they were rescued by educator Joseph Kirima and his caregivers at Hope Children's Home. Since 2005, over 80 street children have been saved from lives of poverty. In order to finance the Home, a maize milling operation has been launched and a tailoring business manufactures and sells school uniforms. A 10 acre farm provides much of the food the children consume. The funds generated by these activities do not begin to meet our growing needs. As our orphans grow older, they become more expensive and we struggle to pay the bills. A secondary education is not free in Kenya, and universities, though much cheaper than in the US, average about \$2,500 a year. Through fundraisers and a mentorship program we continue to provide a path to self-sufficiency for the children in information about For more Hope Children's Home, our care. access www.hopechildrensfund.org.

Changes & Additions to the 2013-14 Directory

New Members

Marcia Caronia 7 Croft Lane Smithtown, NY 11787 marciacaronia@gmail.com

Mary Jean Desmarais 17 Saddlebrook Ct Middle Island, NY 11953 631-924-1223 Ellen Glaser 15 Reed Street Hauppauge, NY 11788

Ruth Levitt-Berkofsky 20 Deer Lane E. Setauket, NY 11733

Changes to make in Members' Directory

<u>Eleanor Brocia</u> - I Jefferson Ferry, #2314, S. Setauket, NY 11720, 631-650-3114 <u>David Keller</u> - 506 Exeter Place, Apt. A, Coram, NY 11727-5444 <u>Donald Jackson</u> - 6203 River Run Drive, Sebastian, FL, 32958, 772-388-5517

Get Well Wishes

to our members with various ailments, illnesses, or recovering from recent surgeries



Bobbi Miller Marilyn Harris Josephine Ciaravella Robert Krebs Eleanor Brocia Chip Levy (husband of Marilyn Levy)



Doctors are great— as long as you don't need them — Edward E. Rosenbaum *A Taste of My Own Medicine*

Our Deepest Sympathy to:

The family of Larry Keane, former district Guidance Counselor, who passed away the beginning of June.

The family of Barbara Gray, former district Social Studies teacher who passed away in July.

The family of Evelyn Squicciarini, former hallway aide at HS West who passed away in August.

To Mary and Jack Hennessey on the loss of Mary's uncle Bernard D'Orio. Bernard was a hairstylist used by many of our teachers.

Nanette Cuomo on the loss of her brother, Edward Morecraft in September.

The family of Phyllis Anderson, retired Chapter 1 tutor at Tackan Elementary, who passed away in August.

Jeannie Pizanno, science aide for North Country School/HS West on the loss of her husband, Joseph.

To Phyllis Meyers on the loss of her sister Elizabeth Teta in September.

(See more Deepest Sympathy on page 6)

Website in the Works

With the assistance of Richard Davis, former district science teacher, we are undertaking the task of developing a website for usage by all SSRA members.

Since it is still in its early stages there is very little to specifically report. However, one question has yet to be determined. Would some of our SSRA members prefer to receive their Newsletter online instead of a paper copy? If we do this, it would be on a voluntary basis.

If you think you would prefer to receive your Newsletter online only, please let us know. Send an email to:

SSRAeditor@optonline.net

If that would be your preference and if there is enough interest in this method of distributing the Newsletter, we will certainly consider the logistics of doing so.

<u>Congrats</u>, <u>Minnie!</u>

Winnie Snyder, former secretary at Accompsett Middle School, and the SSRA Social Committee Chairperson has been awarded the St. Agnes Medal by the Diocese of Rockville Center for long and distinguished service to her parish. (St. Joseph's Kings Park) The medal is awarded to one person per parish each year.

Are You Interested in a Cruise?



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

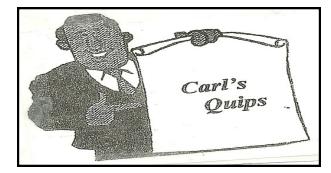
Deepest Sympathy continued from page 5

To Paul Schlesier on the loss of his brother Philip, in September.

Linda Christy, kindergarten teacher at Smithtown Elementary School on the loss of her mother.

To the family of Arthur Miller, teacher at Great Hollow Middle School who passed away in September. Arthur was 36 years old.





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.

Walking close to mobile phone poles might cause ill health because you might walk into one.

The science of classifying things is called racism.

The best solution to overpopulation is Hunger Games.

Complete this sentence. The first cells were probably <u>lonely.</u>

Gravity was invented by Sir Isaac Newton and can be seen in the fall when apples fall off the trees.

The digestive system starts with the right hand and ends with the left.

New Policy on Dues Collection

We usually begin our collection of SSRA dues in December. However, to align ourselves with other RC#23 districts and to meet NYSUT requirements we are beginning a little earlier than usual. Also, we would like to get a head start in the preparation of a new Membership Directory. 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.

Please note the following:

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

Kindly <u>cut out the form at the bottom of this</u> <u>page</u> 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

Member Renewal Form						
Name		Year Retired				
Street Address		Apt. #				
City/Town	State	Zip Code				
Telephone No Please circle any of the	Email Addro above if it is N					

OFF THE CUFF by John Pettit

First, an explanation: As veteran readers will note, the title of this column has changed. The original rationale for "On the Other Hand…" has gone away and there is no longer a need for balance, debate or rebuttal in these pages – we can leave that for cable TV --- no controversy here.

Has anyone else noticed? Now that we are retired ads for "Back To School" items and Labor Day Weekend are a lot less ominous and not nearly as depressing as earlier.

Fall Luncheon: We are pleased to return to **St. George's Golf & Country Club** in East Setauket, on October 22, for our second visit. Those members who attended the Spring 2013 Luncheon have been urging me to return to St. George's as the location is beautiful, the food is outstanding, the room is spacious and the wait-staff is wonderful – this time it is sure to be a terrific autumn afternoon. As has been our practice, Luncheon flyers have been mailed to members living in the NY/LI metroarea. Of course, we hope all members will attend, so if you did not receive a flyer, please call or email me (see the directory) and be assured that you will be most welcomed.

Membership/Dues: In an effort to bring our bookkeeping into conformity with virtually every other retirees organization, we are beginning our membership/ dues renewal a bit earlier this year. It is hoped that our membership renewals would be completed by Dec. 31 --- you can help greatly by sending your check (see the Renewal Form elsewhere in this issue). Based upon our membership count as of Dec. 31, we must pay an "assessment", to the NYSUT Retirees Council. **Please Note:** 2014 retirees are given a "complimentary" membership for the remainder of the current year, however, several have already submitted a check which has been applied to their 2015 dues payment. Also, late renewing members whose check arrived <u>after</u> Labor Day, are now paid up for 2015.

Internet: We are moving along in getting an SSRA Website operational. It's amazing how many decisions and issues have to be addressed before what appears to be an easy development comes "on line". Our hope is to be able to give members the option of receiving this Newsletter on-line or as a print copy through the mail; also to provide more timely news information through the internet. See the article on this elsewhere in this edition.

A Thought: A liberal is someone who feels a great debt to his fellow man – which debt he proposes to pay off with your money. ---G. Gordon Liddy

Living Healthier/ Greener Cleaners by Caryn Iorio

I would like to share a few "do it yourself" concoctions that make excellent cleaners. They are easy on the lungs and skin and don't contain the toxic chemicals found in commercial cleaners. They are better for the environment too. Toxic build-up in the body is cumulative and an overload causes inflammation, endocrine disruption and contributes to disease. Along with pesticides that might be in our food we are bombarded with radioactive waves, toxins in our personal care products and harmful chemicals in the household cleaners we use. If you would like information on the products you use you can go to the *Environmental Working Group* website <u>www.ewg.org/cleaners</u>. EWG is a non-profit organization that periodically reviews and rates more than 2,000 cleaners and gives them a grade of A to F based on the safety and toxicity of their ingredients. I found it interesting that some of the cleaners that are marketed as "green" such as *Greenworks glass and all purpose cleaner* received a grade of C or lower. Scrubbing Bubbles got an F, which was no surprise. Bon Ami powder, Arm & Hammer Baking Soda, Heinze distilled white vinegar and *Whole Foods glass and all purpose cleaner* all received an A. Here are the "do it yourself" recipes that I've been using. The first two are very "green" and have been used for generations; the last two are a little less so but work extremely well and are safer than most of the commercial cleaners. Happy Cleaning!

- White Vinegar Spray on windows, counters, etc. Mix 1 to 1 with Hydrogen Peroxide to kill 99% of germs. Baking Soda -Use as a soft scrub. Spray white vinegar on top of baking soda for a more powerful scrub and disinfectant. This works well in sinks, tubs etc.
- In a spray bottle: $\frac{1}{4}$ cup isopropyl alcohol to 12 oz water and 2 drops of Dawn dish detergent. Great on shower doors, mirrors, counters (not granite) kills germs on faucets and toilet (Don't spray near young children.)

In a spray bottle: $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Dawn dish detergent to 16 oz white vinegar. Amazing - I love this cleaner. I f you do use commercial cleaners it's a good idea to open a window and wear gloves. Also, eating an extra serving of dark green leafy vegetables that day will help your liver clean toxins from your blood. And be sure to include some high fiber foods in your diet to help your body eliminate these toxins more easily. And speaking of fiber, here is a recipe for the delicious high fiber muffins that my dear friend and our colleague Carmelina Trifiletti shared with me.

High Fiber Wheat Bran Muffins/ Carmelina Trifiletti

¹ / ₂ cup + 2 Tbsp Whole Wheat Flour	³ cup unsweetened applesauce
¹ / ₂ cup oat bran	1/3 cup fat free milk
1 ½ tsp baking powder	1 egg slightly beaten
‡ tsp baking soda	½ cup brown sugar or honey
2 tsp cinnamon	2 Tbsp oil -your choice
± tsp nutmeg	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins or other dried fruit bits
1/8 tsp salt	½ cup chopped walnuts
2 tsp flax seed (may be ground)	

 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups any all bran cereal (such as Trader Joe's High Fiber or Kellogg's All Star Complete)

Directions: Preheat Oven to 375 degrees. Grease a 12 cup muffin tin (I used coconut oil or muffin liners.)

- 1. In a medium bowl stir together both flours, baking powder, soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt.
- 2. In a large bowl combine cereal, applesauce, milk and egg. Let stand 2 minutes or until cereal softens.
- 3. Add brown sugar or honey and beat well.
- 4. Add flour mixture, stirring until just combined.
- 5. Fold in raisins/ dry fruit and nuts. Portion evenly in the muffin tin.
- 6. Bake for approx 17 min or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

7. Cool in pan for about 5 minutes. Remove from pan. Serve warm or cold. I like mine warm with a little bit of blueberry jam.

8. ENJOY!!



As NYSUT members, you work hard every day! Shouldn't buying what you want be easy?

Well, now it can be... The Member Shopping Program powered by PayCheck Direct allows eligible NYSUT members to purchase what they want now and pay interest-free over 12 months. Choose from either 12 or 26 payments via automatic checking account withdrawals.

Through PayCheck Direct, all eligible NYSUT members have access to thousands of name-brand products such as appliances, computers & tablets, electronics, furniture, jewelry & watches, home & garden items, children's toys, and recreation & fitness items.

PayCheck Direct offers a 30-day in-home trial on many products; flexible return policy; no interest fees, credit checks, down payments, or finance charges; and toll-free customer service representatives located in the U.S.

NYSUT members are encouraged to shop and compare prices before making a purchase with this program and consider it as an alternative to using their credit card. Please note that PayCheck Direct will have access to certain information from NYSUT's membership files to verify levels of eligibility for those NYSUT members that choose to participate in this program.

For more information about PayCheck Direct, call toll-free 866-441-9160 or visit *memberbenefits.nysut.org*.



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.



Do You Have the Same Friend? by Joe Gilkey





I have a new friend. The friend frequently contacts me in a very redundant way. First an email from them, then a phone call. The phone call is especially interesting because they won't leave a message or give the message to anyone other than the person the call is addressed to. If my wife indicates this is not Joseph, they indicate they will call back. Another phone call! There are days when I get three such calls. My new friend is called Catamaran Rx.

They keep things very private because even though they have called me, I frequently have to identify myself with the demographic information that they compare with what they have on file. They also like to check up on me by questioning my physician's prescription. They feel I shouldn't be taking something and if they don't reach my physician (a difficult task when the physician is also a professor and in class a good bit of the time) they just suspend the prescription never to be heard from again unless I stir the pot.

That generally means my physician has to initiate another script with strong notes that I should be taking this. It is nice to have a friend but sometimes friends can be annoying.

I can't believe that this company is cheaper than Optum Rx, our previous provider, with all the wasted calls and emails. Does anyone else have this annoying new friend?

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

MAKE OUT YOUY CHECK TO BRUCE MILLER SCHOLARSHIP FUND and mail to: Laura Spencer, STA President, Smithtown Teachers' Association, 50 Route 111, Suite, 216, Smithtown, NY 11787

Bruce Miller passed away this spring. PLEASE HELP ESTABLISH A SCHOLARSHIP FUND IN HIS MEMORY as a tribute to the work he did that benefitted us all.

Bruce influenced our careers, teaching, lives, and retirement as he was responsible for negotiating the first groundbreaking collective bargaining agreement with the district. His involvement with the union movement continued through the 60's, 70's and 80's. As a union leader, he not only garnered the respect of the teachers, but of the administration and the Board of Education as well.

Bruce served as the President of the Smithtown Teachers' Association on several different occasions during his career. He was also the STA's chief negotiator for several decades. Upon his retirement, Bruce left a positive mark upon the District that remains to this day.

Throughout Bruce's 33-year teaching career, he was loved by his students, admired by their parents, and respected by his colleagues as a lead in his field.

We hope to award a scholarship at graduation 2015 to honor his memory and celebrate his life.

by Jo-Ann Goldwasser

<u>Reminders</u>	Fall Luncheon	Wednesday, October 22, 2014	At the	St. George's Golf & Country Club	134 Lower Sheep Pasture Road	Setauket, NY 11733	At 12 Noon	Donations for local food pantries will be	collected	2015 SSRA Dues	are being collected earlier this year.	Use form on page 7
	S.S.R. <i>A</i> 50 Rou Suite 2 Smithte	te 111	11787									