

Bellmore-Merrick Retired Teachers Association

# HIGHLIGHTS

Volume 41 Issue 3 Spring 2024

## *Welcome New Retiree Party*

Jacqueline Frank

Ashley Johnson

Maria LoVerde

Carol Marx

Josephine Parlagreco

Jerry Ritaccio

*Wednesday, May 22*

*2:30 to 4:30*

*Bourbon & Brews*

*361 Merrick Avenue*

*Merrick*

Anne Ruvolo

Sal Salerno

Lois Schiavetta

Lawrence Schiralli

Jody Tsangaris

## *BMUST End of the Year Celebration*

*Monday, June 24*

*6:30 to 10:00*

*Westbury Manor*

*1100 Jericho Turnpike*

*Westbury*

*The invitation is on page 7.*

*Sharon Wisla will be honored with the Patricia Christy Award.*

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS



### Joan Kleinman and Mike Dolber

Our first year as your BMRTA Co-Presidents has flown by, and it seems like a good time to thank some of the people who have helped us in so many ways. Thanks to our officers – VP Susan Stamile, Treasurer Pat Riew, Recording Secretary Ellen Johanson; to our Representatives Sal Bommarito, Henry Dircks, Jane Kline, Roberta Mohr, Ellen Weiss, and Harvey Wiener; to Jane Sanacora for her work as Membership Chair and

editor of this great newsletter; to Barbara Baier for sending cards and condolences when needed; to John Mazzarella for sending out all of our emails; to Rob Walsh and the BMUST Board of Trustees for always treating BMRTA as an integral and valued part of our union; to Meg Hirsch for helping with everything we asked, and with many things we did not even have to ask; and to Sharon Wisla for all of her advice and support.

We have tried to communicate with you as much as possible with emails, and through our Facebook group (we again encourage Facebook users to join the group), and we hope that this communication has been informative and helpful. Of course, we welcome you to attend our BMRTA meetings. Next year's meetings will take place in the Boardroom at Brookside at 1 pm on October 16, March 12, and May 14.

Conversations have been taking place in BMUST and BMRTA about ways to encourage members to get more involved in union activity and leadership. We, as retirees, need to bring more people into active roles in our group, but even more importantly, we need a new generation of teachers to start to assume leadership roles in BMUST. Newer teachers need to understand our history, and to know how the benefits and contractual protections that they have were obtained by those who came before them. That is why we have sent our oral history of the 1974 strike to all the members of BMUST.

In addition, we have encouraged political action as much as possible. It starts with giving to VOTE COPE, to help elect people who will support our goals as educators and unionists. BMRTA does very well with VOTE COPE contributions, but we can always do more. Moreover, we need to be as involved as possible in the November elections. We encourage people to join the NYSUT phone banks if they can, or to do canvassing or even just talk to friends and family about our issues. There is so much on the line – including protecting Medicare, Social Security, labor rights; women's autonomy over their own health care, and democracy itself. We encourage you to support NYSUT-endorsed candidates in whatever ways you can.

Thanks to everyone for your membership and support. Have a happy, safe, and healthy summer.

## BMRTA 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon

On Wednesday, May 8, 2024, BMRTA members attended a lovely luncheon celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Stella's Restaurant in Bellmore. Mike Dolber and Ken Ulric spoke about the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the strike in 1974. The business of the Spring Meeting was conducted. The point was made that our medical reimbursement checks were the result of our long standing support of VOTE/COPE. Mike reminded everyone to keep politically active by voting in local as well as national elections. Volunteers are needed to man phone banks for school budgets. Elections were held for BMRTA officers for the 2024-25 year. Sharon Wisla read the slate of nominees, which passed unanimously. Special thanks were given to Sue Stamile for organizing the luncheon and to Sharon Wisla and Meg Hirsch for the slide show. Pictures from our past activities as part of BMRTA flashed on the restaurant wall adding to our remembrances of the past 40 years.



Mike Dolber, Joan Kleinman,  
Sharon Wisla, Sue Stamile



Sue Stamile, Pat Riew,  
Jane Sanacora, Meg Hirsch

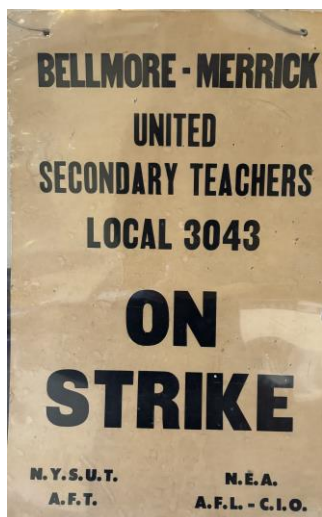


Gail and Tom Auletta



Bernie and Marlene Stein





Poster from 1974



Fred Harrison, Ellen Johanson, Pat Riew, Sue Stamile



Jane Kline, Roberta Mohr, Ginny Johnson



Rob Walsh, Harvey Wiener, Ken Ulric



Terry and John Westervelt, Ann McDonough

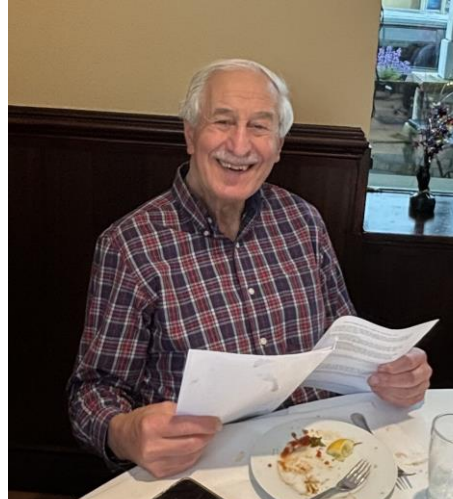


Mark Steinberg, Pia Santodonato-Schnauffer





Bob Chalmers



Sal Bommarito



Paul Cohen



Pat Frenz, Ellen Robilotto



Ellen Weiss, Maxine Geller



Carolyn Lippmann, Cheryl Loverro



Mary Lambert



Chance Vought

## Our Year of Living Dangerously

Henry Dircks

Sometimes the stars align, destiny deals you a full house, and life rewards you in a way that was neither planned for, nor expected. When I “graduated” from Mepham in 2020, I was accompanied by my daughter, Mia, who was then a high school senior. Later that fall, Mia headed off to college at SUNY Oswego. My son, Patrick, graduated in May, 2023, and started his freshman year at SUNY Stony Brook last August. Astute readers, especially those of you who are parents, may have already guessed how these graduations are connected to the title above. That’s right, my wife and I were rewarded with a “gap year” of no children at home. We were veritable “empty-nesters!”

It has been quite enjoyable going out on dates with my wife, Christina, this year – Saturday afternoon matinees or midweek movies were ours for the taking, now that we no longer had to drive someone home from track practice, to be at a parent-teacher conference, or to attend an orchestra concert. *The Holdovers* and *Anatomy of a Fall* were favorites. We made a point of eating at new restaurants, rather than cooking at home or going out to predictable eateries catering to convenience. In fact, we took our first foodie road trip to Grano Arso, voted the #1 Italian restaurant in Connecticut, this past month. Four stars!!!

Our year of bliss was interrupted periodically by our kids coming home for Thanksgiving, “winter-session”, and spring break. We appreciated their visits, enjoyed conversations about their latest accomplishments or concerns, and provided reassuring hugs as they headed back to campus. In the back of my mind was something my dad used to say: “Here’s your hat, what’s your hurry?” One particular threat was Patrick speculating that since Stony Brook was so close to home, he could spend weekends home, rather than at a deserted campus. This threat was averted by our encouraging him to become more involved in dorm activities, and by our claims that sticking it out would be “good for you”.

Evidence of my enjoyment of this “gap year” revealed itself while I was designing this year’s family Christmas card. My original design included a picture of my wife and me toasting mimosas (taken at the end of a trip to Bermuda last summer), flanked by photos of Mia and Patrick holding up their respective dorm keys and surrounded by duffel bags at college drop-off. Christina nixed that design, rightly so.

Mia will be graduating this month, and has already begun her search for a job in broadcasting in New York City. Her base of operations will be our address. Patrick is toying with commuting to Stony Brook during his junior and senior years, claiming it will save us money (touché!). As our “gap year” comes to a close, we look forward to welcoming the kids back to family dinners and hanging out. We love them, after all. But being an “empty-nester” was good while it lasted.



You are cordially invited to attend the  
Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers

# End of Year Celebration

MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2024

6:30 PM - 10:00 PM

## Westbury Manor

1100 Jericho Turnpike Westbury

\$85 per person

Includes sit down dinner and open bar

**PLEASE RSVP BY MAY 31, 2024**

Either scan the QR code or return the  
slip through interoffice mail or mail to:  
BMUST

1260 Meadowbrook Rd.  
N. Merrick, NY 11566



Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

School or Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method:  Check (payable to BMUST)

Venmo (@BMUST)

Cash

Please seat me with: \_\_\_\_\_

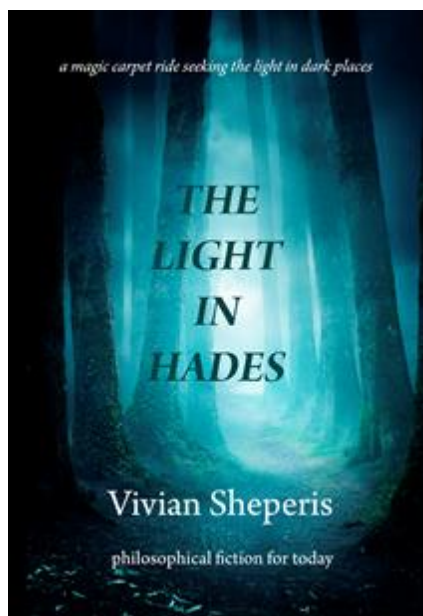
## Heard Here and There

VOTE -- School budget votes Nassau County will take place on Tuesday, May 21. Vote to keep public education strong.

POLITICAL ACTION NEWS – The New York State budget was recently passed. Of particular interest to us was the rejection of the plan to eliminate reimbursement for the Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amounts (IRMAA) for “higher” income state retirees. Retroactively discontinued, the IRMAA Medicare Part B reimbursement would cost affected retirees anywhere from \$694 to \$4,164 annually. The success that NYSUT had in fighting this is proof of the importance of VOTE/COPE contributions. Lobbying legislators is a critical function of union political action supported by VOTE/COPE money.

BMRTA won the Abel Blattman Award for VOTE/COPE contributions. Well done! Let’s keep it up for next year.

Congratulations to Joan and Jerry Kleinman on the birth of their first grandchild. Jacob Asher Byer was born on May 9, 2024.



Vivian Sheperis, who retired from teaching English at Mepham in 2000, has recently published a book. It is titled *The Light in Hades* and is available on Amazon.

*Ride with the author and her Angel Muse as they slip through wormholes, seeing the joys and pains of what it means to be a human.*

### In Memoriam

We are sorry to report that Barbara Engelhardt, the wife of Ronald, passed away on March 4, 2024. Ron was a social studies teacher at Grand who retired in 1992 and passed away in 2022



# Official Results of the BMRTA Elections

Held on May 8, 2024

Co-President	Mike Dolber		
Co-President	Joan Kleinman		
Vice President	Susan Stamile		
Treasurer	Pat Riew		
Recording Secretary	Ellen Johanson		
Membership	Jane Sanacora		
Representatives	Sal Bommarito	Joan Kleinman	Susan Stamile
	Henry Dircks	Jane Kline	Ellen Weiss
	Mike Dolber	Roberta Mohr	Harvey Wiener



Calm is an app available on your smart phone. NYSUT offers premium Calm service as a benefit to retiree members.

The premium Calm subscription provides members with unlimited access to the full library of content at calm.com and in the Calm app. It can be utilized on a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile device. Calm features meditations, stories, music, soundscapes and more, all meant to lead listeners to being calm.

Members can add up to five dependents (age 16 or older) to receive their own premium Calm subscription. Dependents can only be added through the calm.co site (not the Calm app). Visit this web site to create your Calm account now.

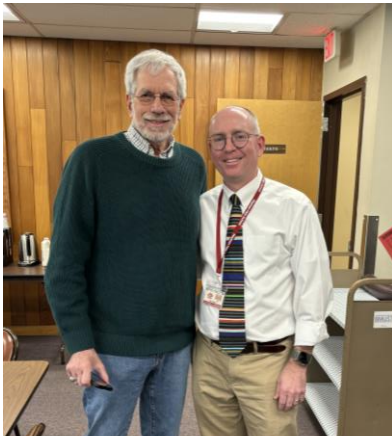
<https://www.calm.com/b2b/nysut-member-benefits/subscribe>

This is a dedicated URL for NYSUT members. You need your NYSUT ID number. I followed the instructions and now I am able to access the music, meditations, yoga movements and more. I saw the app advertised on TV but I didn't want to pay for it. I am very happy to have it as a NYSUT benefit.-- Jane



# Winter Meeting

BMRTA's Winter Meeting was held on March 13, 2024 at Brookside. About 15 members attended. The guest speaker was Helen Cernigliaro whose topic was *Being Positive in Tough Times*. One of her main points was to maintain a group of friends and join groups with shared interests. Research indicates that having many social connections leads to longevity. We hope you will attend our meetings and parties.



Mike Dolber and Rob Walsh



Judy Horvath, Pat Riew and Sue Stamile



Helen Cernigliaro



Art Schnee



Dan Viafore



## Dates to Remember

### 2024

May 22	BMRTA Spring Meeting	Brookside Board Room 1:00 pm
May 22	Welcome New Retiree Party	Bourbon & Brews 2:30 to 4:30
June 24	BMUST Dinner/Dance	Westbury Manor 6:30 to 10:30
October 16	BMRTA Fall Meeting	Brookside Board Room 1:00 pm

### 2025

March 12	BMRTA Winter Meeting	Brookside Board Room 1:00 pm
May 14	BMRTA Spring Meeting	Brookside Board Room 1:00 pm

#### F.Y.I.

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Jane Sanacora  
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Newsletter  
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Deborah Molloy  
Medical and Insurance Questions  
Human Resources  
516-992-1017  
[dmolloy@bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us](mailto:dmolloy@bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us)  
Meg Hirsch  
BMUST Secretary  
516-992-1068  
[bmustsecretary@bmust.net](mailto:bmustsecretary@bmust.net)

### We would like to hear from you!

In future issues, we would like to include any news you would like to share. E-mail [jsanaco@aol.com](mailto:jsanaco@aol.com) or text 516 610 7956 with the information and picture. And join us on Facebook!





# WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS THIS SUMMER?

NYSUT Member Benefits offers a variety of endorsed programs & services that can help you enjoy today, while planning for tomorrow.

As a NYSUT member, you have access to participate in a number of programs and services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits. These products have been carefully cultivated to provide members with quality programs at competitive prices, including insurance programs to help you protect your family; legal and financial plans to help you plan for the future; and shopping, travel & personal services to help save you money.

Member Benefits also offers a number of benefits available free of charge to members such as the premium Calm service, Peer Support Line, Financial Learning Center, and more.

Participation in our endorsed programs features the added protection of having a trusted advocate on your side. Our staff take great pride in stepping in to support members with any questions, concerns, or issues that may arise.

**No matter what your plans may be, NYSUT Member Benefits is a great place to start. Explore all that your union membership has to offer!**



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left, visiting [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org), or calling 800-626-8101.

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



May/June 2024