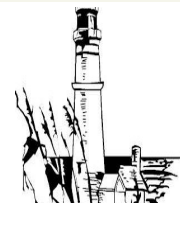




THE BEACON



The Official Newsletter of the Bellport Teacher's Association

Summer 2015

FAREWELL 2014-2015

Farewell 2014-2015! Does anyone else feel, that we have lived about half a decade all within this year? If you reminisce about this year, you will need quite a bit of time just to get through the first half.

Each year, as new retirees begin their 'endless summer' we think not only about their careers as a whole but specifically their retirement year. This year, without a doubt, is one for the record books. We were in a constant uphill battle, feeling each trial deeply with much tribulation.

During this year, we constantly heard about how teachers would be evaluated and what student tests would be utilized. Each conversation had to do with percentages, independent observers, SLO's, developing, effective, highly effective, etc. Throughout this, teachers wondered when and how they could shift the conversation to quality student assessments and effective best practices.

Cuomo decided that it must be 'baloney' for most of NYS teachers to be deemed effective by the guidelines he set-so he set out to change them. Now, teachers evaluations will be strongly tied to student test scores. Any tenured teacher who receives 2 scores of ineffective, can be fired from their district. New teachers will have to wait four years to receive tenure, but only if they have 3 effective or highly effective ratings.

Underperforming schools, will be given 1 or 2 years to make 'demonstrable improvement.' If they do not show improvement deemed acceptable,

they could be taken over by a non-profit organization or a charter school.

If we gave a dollar to retirees each time someone uttered 'Common Core', they would have quite a bonus. We spoke of how the standards are developmentally inappropriate, how they were never field tested, and how the state tests are often 2 years above their intended level.

Often we heard, "Don't worry, you need a little less than 70% of your class to reach their goals -in order to be deemed effective." This statement makes most cringe. Who wants only 3/4 of their class to walk away with adequate knowledge? Teachers want appropriate high standards to hold themselves and their students to. Teachers want students to feel successful and teachers want support in doing so. We should hear this often, "Your children are really making great progress. Most of them are hitting their targets. Let's discuss how we can specifically target those who need additional supports."

Hopefully the conversations and our goals will shift. The state will stop looking at getting rid of teachers through some contrived process. Instead, we will discuss (together) how to strengthen the educational system to support our students. In order to fight for this, we as educators must be vigilant. Be educated, be prepared, and be ready. Retirees-don't go far, our students are going to need you!

Have a wonderful summer and congratulations to those beginning their 'endless summer!'

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CONGRATULATIONS

GRADUATES OF 2015!

GOOD LUCK!

HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!



Bellport Teachers Association



A Letter From Our President, Mr. Wayne White

Dear Fellow BTA Members,

On July 4 1776, 56 members of the Second Continental Congress voted to declare their Independence from the British Empire. In doing so, these 56 patriots banded together to form a new country that stood up for the inalienable rights of man and the birthing a new country. These brave men and women who stood up to the very powerful British Empire, set a standard in the newly formed United States of America; they stood up for the rights of the many. On July 4th, our founders declared to the world that man has the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We remember every day when at work that it is our right to stand up for these values from our bosses, for our co-workers to the benefit of our families. Although the holiday was first celebrated in 1777, it did not become an official holiday until 1870. Now 239 years later, we celebrate the birth of our nation with fireworks, barbecues and parades. The purpose of the Fourth isn't to celebrate a day off, it's a day for us to celebrate all the freedoms that living in this country has given us. On behalf of all the staff and Executive Board here at Bellport Teachers, we hope you have a fun and safe Fourth of July and you share with your young ones its true meaning.

Yours in Unity,

Wayne White

Congratulations to the 2015 BTA

Spartans. It was an exhausting, exhilarating journey.

Please join us next June for Spartan 2016. Start training!



HONORING OUR RETIREES

The BTA proudly honors Alice McAleese

With certifications in both elementary education and K-12 music, I began my career in Pat.-Med. on a grant as a part-time remedial writing teacher with computers. I also home-taught and subbed in 3 districts. After the grant expired, I served as a leave replacement for a music teacher at Brookhaven Elementary School which led to a probationary music position at the Middle School. Although every career has its challenges, I can honestly say that I have truly loved my job as a middle school choral director/ music teacher. I have been blessed with the opportunity to teach thousands of enthusiastic & talented young students, work with amazing colleagues, support staff, parents and community members, started the South Country Singers and worked on all aspects of musical theater. Our South Country family has always been supportive of the arts and I am honored to have been a part of that for the past three decades.

The highlights of my career are all the “ah-ha” moments students have, whether in class, on stage, during a lesson, at a rehearsal or during a performance. It is that incredible moment when their faces light up and their eyes sparkle with heartfelt understanding of the concept at hand. I will miss the moments when the notes on paper suddenly turn into a beautiful song and the singers realize that the music came from them -- that they made it happen. I will miss opening nights, closing nights, long, but fruitful rehearsals, heartfelt class discussions, teachable moments and impromptu conversations with colleagues, parents and community members. I will miss the days that students come into class grumpy and leave singing—all the way down the hall...

I will not miss the fly-by-night theories created by people who never entered a classroom. I will not miss the frustration of losing teachable moments to testing and paperwork that will not have a positive impact on a child's life.

Family Pride: This coming September my husband and I will celebrate our 29th anniversary. We were blessed with three remarkable and loving sons, all of whom attended South Country Schools and then continued on to college to pursue their respective careers.

Retirement Plans: I am not “officially” making plans! It is time to live life one day at a time and pursue new interests as they occur. I am looking forward to being able to focus on my family 100% and maybe actually take out a little time for myself!

Words Of Wisdom: Teach because you care about children and truly want to make a difference in their lives. These are turbulent times and more than ever we need to provide our youth with the tools to be successful and build upon their individual talents and strengths. Every child matters. Always remember that the manner in which we deliver our lessons and the words we speak linger long after the lessons are over.

The BTA proudly honors Barbara Blackford

I was born in Bayside, Queens then moved to Aberdeen, Maryland. From there we moved to Fayetteville, North Carolina until the age of seven. We moved back to New York where I grew up in Shoreham and met my future husband.

I've been married to my high school sweetheart, Michael, for 33 years. We have three sons; Ryan, Jarryd and Zachary. Our eldest son, Ryan is a pilot for JetSelect Aviation and lives in Springfield, Illinois with his wife Chelsea. Our middle son, Jarryd, works at Custom Computer Specialists as a Product Coordinator and our youngest son, Zachary is a sophomore at Eastport-South Manor High School.

I attended Georgian Court University where I completed my Undergraduate degree in Elementary Education with a minor in Early Childhood Education in 1982. By 1987 I completed my Masters degree from C.W. Post.

I started my teaching career in 1982 as a kindergarten teacher split between Brookhaven Elementary and Kreamer Street. The following year I was full time at Brookhaven Elementary and continued to teach kindergarten for the next seven years. After that I taught third grade for nineteen years and the last six years as a Remedial Math teacher at Brookhaven Elementary.

Believe it or not, there are some things I will miss when I retire. I will miss the interaction with students; the many greetings, smiles, handwritten notes and the hugs I've received throughout the years and the reward of seeing the difference you make in a student's life. Mostly, I will miss my colleagues and the friends I have made over the years and the making of “work memories.” I have two highlights during my career, completing M+75 and making it to the #1 spot on the Seniority List!

I definitely will NOT miss hall duty, meetings, endless paperwork, being pulled to cover a class because there weren't enough subs, PDP's and APPR's.

My advice to those still teaching - take care of yourself and be good to yourself! It's not often you get a pat on the back so you have to give yourself one and it's difficult to do your job effectively if you're not feeling at “the top of your game” because you are stressed-out! I recommend taking “mental health days” and spa treatments!

As for my plans for retirement I can tell you what I won't be doing – **Subbing!** Seriously, I look forward to not being a slave to the clock or calendar and I'm just looking forward to doing whatever I want, whenever I want.

HONORING OUR RETIREES

The BTA proudly honors Gail Williams

I was born in Brooklyn, New York. I attended Brooklyn College and obtained a Bachelors of Arts degree in Speech Pathology in 1976 and received my Masters of Arts degree in Speech Pathology in 1978 from New York University. I am married to my husband Ronald Williams for 27 years. We have a son, Christopher Williams who is 19 years old and attends Suffolk Community College.

I worked for United Cerebral Palsy of New York when I graduated from New York University in 1978. I worked there for 2 years. Then I worked for OMRDD (Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities). I worked there 3 1/2 years as a Speech Pathologist. In 1988, I moved to Suffolk Long Island and began working for South Country Central School District in September 1988, 28 years ago as a Speech Teacher. I started in Hampton Ave, which is now F.P. Long, South Haven and Bellport High School. Then after I was granted tenure I was assigned to Hampton Ave (FPL) full time for the rest of my teaching career until September of 2015. I presently teach in F.P.Long and Bellport High School.

My advice to new teachers and those still teaching, would be to always be professional and stay true to your beliefs and morals. Always keep the students in mind; they are really an extension of you. You have a lot of influence over them and you can change their lives for the better. Also get involved in your BTA on a higher level. Just don't be a member, be an active member. We need to be unified and stay together.

The highlight of my career was this year 2014-2015 when I was transferred to the H.S. for 2 days a week. I was able to see the influence I had on the students that I had at F.P. Long when they were in 4th and 5th grade. Now they are at the H.S. in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. I am able to see the progress they have made with their speech/language skills and how they have grown up to be fine young men and women. And they all remember me when I taught them at Frank P. Long.

I will miss working with the students improving their Speech and Language skills. I will also miss working with my fellow colleagues. I will miss the intelligent conversations we had about education and the comradery. I will miss the innocence of the students and their eagerness to learn something new. Their minds are so open at the elementary level. I will not miss all the paperwork we had to do and turn in, the state testing, and the meetings we had to attend.

Retirement Plans: I plan to relax, travel and do all the things I didn't have time to do when I was working .

Final Thoughts: I have been very active in the Bellport Teachers' Association all the years I've been working in the district. I started out as a Building Rep at South Haven School. Then I became a building Rep at Hampton Ave for many years. I was on the Executive Committee of the BTA as The Recording Secretary for about 4 years. I was Senior Building Rep for one year at F.P. Long. I was the Assistant Editor of the External BTA paper for one year. I was on the last Negotiations Team for 5 years. And now I am a Building Rep at F.P. Long. For years I have also served as a member of the District Wide Health and Safety committee representing F.P. Long. I also have to say that I have worked with some awesome administrators as well during my 28 years here at South Country Central School District.

The BTA proudly honors Joseph Desiderio

I am happily married to my wonderful wife, Jennifer, and have two wonderful sons, Frank (18) and Joseph (16). Frank will attending the University of Maryland as a music education major in the fall of 2015. Joseph is an eagle scout.

I have had a great career here at Bellport High School. Playing piano and working with kids are two of my passions in life. I will miss the energy that the students bring to my life. I really enjoy their enthusiasm that they have for singing and music. I will not miss the following: grades and gradebooks, new evaluation procedures, and excuses for why work is not done.

Advice to Others: Enjoy your career and always be there for the students. We have a great opportunity to help shape society in a positive way.

Retirement Plans: CHOCOLATE!

HONORING OUR RETIREES

The BTA proudly honors Lori Klamut

My years in South Country began when I was 6 years old and in first grade at Dunton Ave School, now known as Verne W. Critz. At the end of first grade, I lost my mother to breast cancer. That event shaped my future. My family and I had wonderful support from the school staff including the teachers, secretaries, custodians, and bus drivers. Many days I was dropped off early at school and stayed late when participating in sports. My positive school experiences influenced my career path.

I graduated Bellport High school in 1978. I earned my Bachelors of Science in Physical Education at SUNY Cortland in 1982, and Master of Arts in Liberal Sciences from SUNY Stony Brook in 1986.

During my first years of teaching, I paid my dues. My first year I primarily substituted in South Country, and I home tutored in many households (some very interesting situations). The second year, I became a bobble head and said yes to whatever jobs they were willing to give me. I signed four different contracts that year - not including my coaching positions. I started at 4/10's of a teaching position, which equaled a salary of \$6,308. By January, I was 150/164's of a probationary teaching position, which brought me up to \$13,118.17 and received one sick day a month. I worked in four different schools starting at the earliest elementary school, ended at the latest, and only worked four days week. I thought it was crazy not to make a fuss about my overstuffed four days without one prep period. The union president asked, "Do you want a job next year?" I got the message, dealt with it and 32 years later, I realized that was the best advice the union ever gave me!

I will miss seeing the joy in a child's eyes and smile when he/she finally learns how to do something that was very difficult for him/her whether it be jumping rope, tying shoes, or scoring a basket. I will not miss waking up to the alarm clock! I will not miss traveling during the most expensive times.

Advice to Others: You spend a lot of time with your "school family," respect them all for their differences and treat them well, they will be with you a long time. Always be willing to take that extra step and be a team player. Be true to yourself. Although we do not know why things happen the way they do, there is always a lesson that can be learned from a situation. Be opened to it! Be positive! Life is short, play hard!

Memorable Moments: February 2001, Verne W. Critz Primary School was awarded a \$3,000.00 from the Fleet All-Star Community Service Award for beautifying the school with the Secret Garden. We were able to take forty students to a banquet and award ceremony that was held at the Downtown Athletic Club in New York City. NY Yankee Derek Jeter and the President of Fleet Bank presented the check. Every student had the opportunity to meet, have an item signed and a picture taken with Derek Jeter. It was a very exciting day for the students and teachers who were able to attend! District-wide Winter Sports Festivals for the elementary schools held at the high school were always a lot of work but lots of fun for all. Our first year, the elementary physical education department held an equipment building night and with the help of many colleagues, we made bobsleds, skis, skates, and snowshoes. We designed an Olympic torch and flame that lit and flickered like real fire for our opening ceremony. Over the years we had various themes that the classroom teachers would use as social studies lessons - the students learned about states and countries, we even had a replica of the Berlin wall the year it came crashing down - we were integrating across the curriculum well before it became a popular phrase. We were a little overzealous our first year. The custodians banned us from tossing tons of confetti as snow because it took hours to clean up and remnants of confetti were found weeks later. Other opportunities have been the Bellport Clipper Classic 5k Run (over 24 years) and initiating the Bellport Clipper Classic Kids Mile Fun Run. I was the coordinator of SUCCEED for Youth, Inc. which provided activities to students including Open Gym Nights at the High School and Middle School on weekends. I managed thousands of Long Island volunteers for the Goodwill Games, met Olympic athletes, worked with the Olympic Drug Testing Committee and the FBI. I worked with the NYC 2012 Olympic Bid Committee at various locations throughout New York City. Other special FUN programs/activities – Field Days, Spirit Days, Fun Runs, Wee Deliver program, hallway hoedowns, and the monster mash. The Critz Kokomos team once won the districtwide 'Anything Goes' competition sponsored by the HS Student Council. Working on the district-wide 'United We Stand' fundraiser for the district families affected by 9-11 was a very meaningful experience. Putting together the Back to School and End of Year PowerPoint shows were a way of sharing with students, parents and colleagues all the good and fun things that we did. Hosting the annual Back to School Get Together for the staff was always a good time.

Retirement Plans: My key to life which continues into retirement is to be open to whatever new experiences come my way. I will be moving and splitting my time between Florida and Virginia. I will be spending more time with family. I hope to travel, maybe even a cross-country trip.

Final Thoughts: I am grateful for the many colleagues that taught me and led the way. I am thankful for the many friends that have made the journey with me – we've had some great times. I hope I have influenced students and staff in a positive way and they pay it forward.

HONORING OUR RETIREES

The BTA proudly honors Marge Kryl

I grew up in Pt Jeff the oldest of a family of 4. My dad was a salesman and taught me how to interact with people and my mom always wanted me to teach and do something with nutrition. I graduated from Comsewogue HS in 1978 and then went on to get my BS in Biology and Chemistry and certifications in Secondary Ed and coaching from SUNY Geneseo in 1983. I went on to get my MS in Medical Biology and Nutrition from CW Post in 1987. I met my husband Tony in the hallowed halls of BHS and we married in 1991. We have a beautiful 12 year old daughter Michelle.

I started teaching in Jan 1983 as a leave replacement in a small school just northwest of Syracuse called Cato-Meridian. There were only 4 teachers in the science department and I only made about \$6,000! It turned into a full time job where I was the only bio/gen sci teacher along with coaching softball and volleyball. After a couple of years upstate I realized that I missed my family and the ocean and moved back to LI in 1986. That same year I was interviewed by Art Cooley, who was the department chairperson at the time in the HS, at his home over ice tea and some fresh picked mint from his garden! Little did I know that this was to be my introduction to one of the electives I would be teaching called gardening and wildfoods. (That in itself is a whole other story!) I have taught Regents Biology (my love), Regents and Honors Chemistry, Regents Earth Science and electives such as Psychology, the Incredible Human Body, LI Environment, Gardening and Wildfoods and Mystery and Crime. I have also coached both JV and Varsity Tennis(2000 league champs!) teams as well as JV Softball and JV Soccer. I have also coached the 7 and 8th grade softball, volleyball and basketball teams.

Advice to Others: Take care of your secretarial and custodial staff.... They take care of and run the school. Always acknowledge your colleagues with a smile..... it goes a long way. Lead by example. Take the time to say please and thank you, address your colleagues with respect. Your students will follow your lead. Remember, respect goes two ways. And lastly, Do at least ONE thing for your union each year. Go to union meetings! Show the leadership you care!

Memorable Moments: So many special moments! I love when my students graduate and then send me letters (yes, letters!) or emails expressing how much they enjoyed my class and appreciated the advice that I offered and how much it is helping them in college. I will also miss the painful expressions on my students faces when I first introduce a new topic and then watch over the next few days how each in their own time, lets that "light bulb" dimly light and then finally burn bright with their new found knowledge! I will also miss all of the intellectual conversations with my science colleagues and all my colleagues in the office. But I guess one of my most memorable moments happened the first day of the first class I ever taught. I posed this question to my first biology class, "What is Biology?" A young boy in the front row immediately puts up his hand so proud and sure of himself and he answers "It's the study of human orgasms!"

I will not miss: Enough said! ACRONYMS!! Sunday nights (you all know what I mean) Grading papers. Hall duty.

Retirement Plans: To be on the beach or on my boat fishing with my husband during the month of September, to go to ALL of my daughters events, help my husband and my daughter with the Westhampton Robotics team, to say to myself "I can do it tomorrow" and to get to all the stuff around the house I have been wanting to do for how many years? But the most immediate thing will be our trip to Alaska! Other than that, I still don't know what I want to be when I grow up! I never would have thought I could stay in one place so long! I really do love being in the classroom! I feel truly blessed that I have had a career that I loved and enjoyed the awesome human beings that were a part of each and every day. I just hope that all of you who read this will have the same wonderful feelings that I have at this moment and can say with a smile, "Woo hoo..... what a ride!"

HONORING OUR RETIREES

The BTA proudly honors Michael J. Hoermann

Married to my wife Claudia since 1996. One 13 year old daughter named Rebecca. I grew up in Port Jefferson Station in the Comsewogue School District. Got my Bachelors in Education from Dowling College, an MALS from SUNY Stony Brook and an MSW from Adelphi University.

I never stopped learning how to teach and I learned to see the students as people first and students secondly. My Degree in Social Work/Psychotherapy made me a better teacher. My advice to others;

- A) Learn to understand your kids. See them as people...people with problems like anyone else...follow with compassion.
- B) Support your union and fight for your profession, the powers that be want to degrade teachers and public education in general. Corporations will get their way (to private and profit from education) unless the union fights hard.
- C) Enjoy and celebrate all the little victories.

Highlights. Coaching football and baseball and basket ball at different levels opened my horizons as an educator. My Social Work degree as mentioned earlier made me a better teacher/person...more able to understand others and take things less personally. Meeting former students who are able to express how much they liked having me. Best highlights though are the connections I made with struggling students. It was touching to see the trust and genuine appreciation from kids that let their defenses down enough to let me help.

I'll miss the human beings a lot. The kids, the staff, my administrators. I have felt I've always been treated well by all those people and I will miss the daily interaction with them.

I won't miss; getting up at 5:30 AM, all the new regulations from the state that have nothing to do with making our schools, our kids and our teachers better.

Retirement Plans: Expand my psychotherapy practice, continue learning jazz guitar (and playing live gigs). Catch up on house projects, yard work etc. And just spending more time and more enjoyment with my family. Finish my bucket list.

I truly feel lucky to have had such a long career in a great field and working with great people. I really enjoyed the interactions I have every day.

The BTA proudly honors Lillian Brugel

I was born in the Bronx and moved to Long Island when I was 5 years old. I grew up in East Islip and moved to East Patchogue when I was married. I have a daughter who is 40 and a son who is 38. Both received their education in the South Country School District. I also have 3 amazing grandchildren. I have enjoyed both working and living in this district. I recently downsized and am living in a lovely community on the North Shore.

After having my children, I went back to college and received my B.A. at St. Joseph's College. I was then hired at FPL but at that time it was called Hampton Avenue School. While teaching, I went to Dowling College and received my Master's Degree in Reading. I was fortunate to work in Cluster C with an amazing group of excellent teachers. As each year passed and more teachers retired, I was fortunate to meet and become friends with the newbies of Cluster C. Now after 30 years, I am no longer the new kid on the block. I am the mature kid on the block.

We are facing very difficult challenges in education. Never have there been so many changes and not necessarily for the better. My advice to all teachers is to believe in yourself, stand up for what you believe is right and support one another. We are trying to make sense of all these changes and the fact is-we can't. This has created so much stress and pressure on each and every one of us. It makes us question our ability to teach and our self worth. Very sad.

I have worked with an incredible staff throughout my career and have had many wonderful administrators. I have made life-long friends with many of my colleagues. The highlight of my career was to have taught so many incredible children and to see them grow throughout the year. There are so many students that have a place in my heart and make me feel successful as a teacher.

For me, teaching is not teaching anymore and it hasn't been for a long time. It is all about constant testing throughout the year which definitely limits actual testing time. I believe there is no academic freedom or autonomy. Now we are told when to teach, how to teach, and what to teach despite what we know is best for our children. As teachers we are told to teach to the strengths of our children but as teachers we are no longer able to teach to our strengths.

Play, travel, read for pleasure and most important-spend time with my family and friends!

HONORING OUR RETIREES

The BTA proudly honors Al Nolan

Al Nolan grew up in Suffolk County in Brookhaven Hamlet. He attended Brookhaven Elementary, Hampton Avenue, Bellport Middle School and Bellport High School. Al got his Associate's degree from Suffolk Community College, Bachelor's degree from SUNY Cortland in Physical Education and a Master's degree in Elementary Education from SUNY Stony Brook.

Al has been married to his wife Pattie for 31 years. Al has two sons, Kyle and Sean who graduated from Bellport H.S. in 2005 and 2007. Kyle attended SUNY Westbury and SUNY Cortland and received a bachelor's degree in Sports Management and is currently employed by National Business Capital since 2009 as an Account Manager. Sean also attended SUNY Cortland and received a bachelor's degree in Math and Physics and a Master's degree in Physics. He is currently employed by SUNY Cortland as a Lecturer I and Planetarium Director in the Physics Department.

Al has worked in South Country for 31 years. His first year in South Country was 1984 where he worked in all the schools as a traveling Adaptive Physical Education Teacher. He landed a fulltime position in the fall of 1985 as an Elementary Physical Education teacher at Brookhaven and Kreamer Street. In 1986 Al became the fulltime PE teacher at Kreamer Street where he remained until 1994. In 1995 Al transferred to Frank P Long where he has taught for the past 20 years.

Al has coached several athletic teams over his 32 year career. The athletic teams include: Junior High and Varsity Girls Cross Country, Junior High and Varsity Boys and Girls Track and Field, 9th grade JV and Varsity Basketball, Junior High, JV and Varsity Baseball. When asked about highlights and difficulties in his career, Al had this to say, "If I had to pick some memorable moments, Boys and Girls Cross Country invitational trips to Van Cortland Park NY, Guilderland NY and Brown University, 1985-86 Suffolk Country Varsity Basketball Championship, 1991 Basketball Game at MSG vs Bay Shore, 1988, 1989, 1992 and 1995 Elementary Winter Festivals, 1996 Jump-a-thon at BMS and the 2004 invention and successful production of the game 'Planet Balls' through Sportime Catalog. In 2011, Al received the "Above and Beyond" Teacher Recognition Award.

For first year teachers, Al gives this advice; "I would advise teachers to be flexible, stick to what you believe in, be organized, be on time and enjoy what you do."

When asked about what he will miss about teaching, Al will miss the interaction with both the students and his colleagues. What he will not miss about teaching is 'baby sitting' the students who opted out of ELA and math testing. Upon retirement, Al is keeping busy. He will continue to work at his family farm 'Deer Run' with his brother Bob, his sister-in-law Janet and niece and nephew Valerie and Samuel. He is planning on building a workshop in his basement where he can start his next passion in life, woodworking. Al plans on traveling a lot and continuing his long distance bicycling with his wife Pattie. Al will also be relaxing and hanging out with his two dachshunds, Mick and Jodi, on his lap; especially in the winter months.

The BTA proudly honors Donna Spradley

Donna has been in the South Country School District for 20 years now. Prior to South Country, Donna worked in Center Moriches and Copiague School Districts. She started at a salary of around \$24,000. Donna has always been in the field of Special Education. When at South Country, she started at Verne Critz, then moved to Life Skills and finally Science. Donna has primarily been at BMS during her time here at South Country.

Donna graduated from Crisp Country High School in Georgia. She is originally from Kings Park but after getting married in Georgia, she moved back to start a family. She graduated in 1968 and became an LPN before becoming a teacher. Donna returned to college in her 30s intending to be a physical therapist. However, while in college, she started tutoring students in chemistry, which led her to the field of science. Suffolk Country Community College also hired her to tutor and she loved it so much that she changed her major to teaching. She found herself helping those who needed additional help in science specifically. As a result, she received her degree in special education and science from St. Joseph's. She then went on to get her Master's in Special Education and Reading from Dowling.

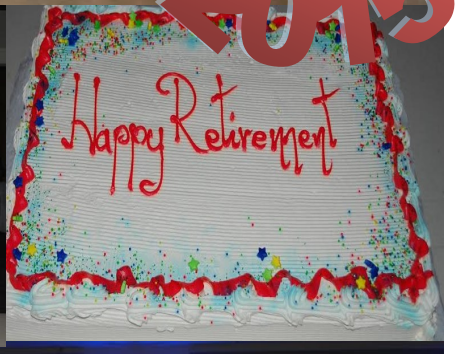
Donna has some great memories here at South Country. One of her most memorable moments is when a student asked her to marry her in front of the entire class. He kept following her around, insisting on asking her something. He literally got down on one knee and asked her to marry him. Donna also had a student at one time that didn't do much. In fact, he did nothing at all. One day, she was in a CSE meeting with the parents and he was attending as well. She told him that if he ever did his homework, even just once, that she'd do a dance. He asked her to the next day if she'd really do it. Well, for the rest of the year, this student did his homework every single day. He ended up passing, which was a long way from where he was. Other teachers joined in the dance because he was doing his homework. Next thing you knew, there were 4 or 5 teachers dancing for this student every single day. This student is still probably telling this story to people, as Donna surely made a connection. While teaching Life Skills, Donna always hosted a Thanksgiving party or feast, where all were invited. This created some great memories amongst students, faculty and staff. Donna really did a great deal to help transition the life skills program and incorporate many trips and functional activities.

Donna has 3 sons and 6 grandchildren. She is expecting her 7th grandchild as well. Donna and her husband reside in Manorville, where she raised her family for many years. Her plans for the future are to travel with her husband and volunteer somewhere. Donna would love to just travel as many places as she can. She and her husband bought an RV and would love to travel the US. She has a cottage on a lake in Canada too, and she already has two trips planned outside of the USA.

CELEBRATING ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!



2014



CELEBRATING ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!



Letters from the Editor



Letters to the Editor

Dear Loyal Readers,

We made it! For those at the beginning of their career, those near the end, and everyone in between-we should all be proud of the accomplishments made. Don't forget to take time to reflect on all the wonderful things you did this year and all the growth your students made.

Enjoy the summer and recharge for the new year. If you are retired or newly retired, enjoy the endless summer!! Hope to join you one day!

As always I welcome "Letters to the Editor" where you can voice your opinion on the happenings in our district. Of course I will respect your anonymity if you wish. Contributions can be sent to Stephanie at stephipirozzi@gmail.com. Please send information from your home email address. I can also be reached by pony at Kreamer Street. Thank you for all of your support and contributions.

Yours in Unity...Stephanie Pirozzi

Dear Editor,

It seems a lot of us are getting bitter at all the changes and unusual things happening in education. I want everyone to remember why we are here and who we are here for. Please remember that those these are trying times, we must stay positive. If we don't, our negativity could seep right into our students.

Help each other stay positive. Lift each other up. Remember what our goals are among all this mess.

See you in September!

ATTENTION BTA MEMBERS

We will need your help in September preserving our student's education. Please get ready to fight the good fight! We will need all hands on deck to make it happen!

BELLPORT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides free services for you and your family 12 months a year and is here for you during school vacations and throughout the summer. Both daytime and evening hours are available by appointment.

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