Summer is the time.
The time to take a breath, look towards the heavens and simply sigh. Throughout the year, some of us seem to hold our breaths. We are holding our breaths waiting for our students to look at us with understanding. Our breaths are held as they fly solo and we wonder if we did enough. The year feels both extremely long and extremely short all at the same time. We have all the time in the world and no time at all.

Summer is the time.
The time to give back to ourselves. Throughout the year, we give. We give our time to lesson plans, to school events, to communicating with students and families in countless ways. Summer is the time for rejuvenation, to give back to yourself. Take some time to relax and reflect. Schedule it in, make it a priority. If this seems impossible, lean on a friend.

Summer is the time.
The time to reconnect. During the school year, we are on a constant mission to make connections. Connections between content areas and disciplines. Connections with students, families and colleagues. Often, we need to reconnect to our loved ones. The summer is the time to make plans and get together with those we’ve missed.

Summer is the time.
It’s the time to yell, shout and to not use your ‘inside voice.’ Go outside and SHOUT IT OUT!

Summer is the time.
The time to retire (well, for some)! Congratulations to our retirees. Summer is now the time for you to start a wonderful journey that is just for you. Create, carve out your own path for this journey. And PLEASE, let those behind know how it’s going!

"Smell the sea, and feel the sky. Let your soul and spirit fly." - Van Morrison

"Endless Summer"
Dear Sisters and brothers,

Happy end of the school year! I hope you get well needed rest and relaxation with your loved ones and family this summer!

First of all, I would like to thank our retirees for all of the service they have given to the students in our district and the BTA. They will be truly missed in the classroom as well as the faculty rooms and the halls of the school.

It has been a busy year for all of us and we remained active in our fight on many fronts. We have pushed for legislation through the Correct the Tests campaign. We also fought for changes to the infamous APPR. Even though we did not get everything we wanted from the state, we made positive movement to set up further changes in the future. Our voices were heard from our attendance at events such as Committee of 100 to NYSUT RA to our successful campaign for the new school board trustees this May. Our success is based on your involvement to help us-help you and we continue to ask you to be vigilant in the future.

While many of you will be enjoying your time off, we are working to represent you even better. We are working with the new board on a variety of our concerns including negotiations. We also are meeting with our local affiliates as well as our state and national associations to help alleviate some of the pressure put on many of us, especially our elementary sisters and brothers.

Once again, I want to congratulate all of our retirees and I hope you enjoy yourselves with family, friends, and loved ones. I look forward to seeing all of you on Superintendent Conference day on August 31st. As always, I am proud to represent all of you.

In Unity,
Wayne White
Catherine Mulligan has been in the district since 2000. Currently she is a speech teacher at Kreamer Elementary. During her career, she also worked at the high school level.

She grew up in Plainview with 3 siblings Diane, Annette and Nicky. Now, she has 4 children; Regina, Jason, Nicole and Jimmy. She is also a proud grandma of 3 grandchildren. She has two grandsons; Tyler and Justin. She also has one grand-daughter just born this year, Elise Grace.

She started at Eastern Suffolk Boces during the early 1980s as an aide then as an assistant. She completed her masters in 1997 and spend a year in private practice. She then got a job at Nassau BOCES in 1999 at the Jerusalem Avenue School. In June, 2000, she was asked to interview with South Country for a special program at the Annex.

Catherine Mulligan

Cathie will not miss paperwork and data tracking.

Jean is one of 5 children. Her whole family has relocated to Florida. Both her brother John and Jean are holding out in New York with no intentions of moving. They are die hard Long Islanders! She lives in West Islip with her two children, Marissa (30 years old) and her son Peter (27 years old). She is in a wonderful relationship with her boyfriend Al.

Jean started teaching in 1983 as a teaching assistant in Sachem School District at Sachem South High School. After two years as an assistant, she secured her first teaching job at Eagle Hill School; a private school for Learning Disabled children in Lloyd Harbor. After 4 years of teaching there, the school closed. In 1990, she was hired in South Country for a self-contained kindergarten class. It was a drastic change from teaching secondary students. She thought she would hate it but the little ones really captured her heart and she has been a Brookhaven ever since. Briefly she served as the Special Education Department Chair at the middle and high school. She also spent one year at Verne Critz.

Jean’s advice to new teachers, “My advice is to not let the small stuff weigh you down. Keep your passion for teaching and the children. Administrators may come and go and with that comes many changes. Keep doing what you know is best for the children and keep true to your beliefs. Believe it or not, you will be surprised how fast 30 years have passed when it is your time to retire.”

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Eric grew up in Northern Michigan on his family farm in the very small town of Rogers City. The farm was settled by his German ancestors in 1877, and both his parents grew up in that same German farming community on their family farms. His father went to college on the GI Bill after returning from the army, and eventually finished his master’s degree in Chemistry.

His father worked for a few years as a chemist at Dow Chemical in Midland MI, but teaching called to him so he became a chemistry, physics and mathematics teacher in various high schools throughout Michigan.

After many moves my father returned back to his roots when Eric was 4 years old with his mother and 4 other older kids to run their family farm and teach at the local high school.

Eric learned how to work hard by watching him teach all day, do farm work after school until 8:00 pm, then create lesson plans and grade papers often until 11:00 pm.

After graduating from high school Eric went on to earn his Bachelor of Music Education, Master of Music Performance, and he taught for 2 years in Michigan before moving to Bellport (he didn’t even know where Long Island was until he flew here for the interview).

About 12 years ago he began branching out into the other area he loves and after 4 ½ years Eric earned a Master’s Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Over the next 4 years, he finished the required 3000 hours of supervised clinical work, completed a 3 year certification program in Gestalt Psychotherapy, obtained a certification in substance abuse counseling (CASAC-T), passed his written Clinical Exams, and is now a Licensed Psychotherapist (LMHC) with a private practice in Bellport and a substance abuse counselor at Seafield Outpatient in Riverhead.

When describing his career as a teacher, “I love to share what I love, so teaching has always been an extension of that. Making music with students and co-workers has been a great joy of mine for many years.”

The advice he would give to those new to teaching or still teaching, “Even though you have many other things to do as a teacher, make it a point to continue cultivating your love of the subject you are teaching, and your role as a teacher. Make your relationships with your students a top priority and treat your colleagues like family. The kind words and passing smiles you consistently give to others will pull you up on the days you are down and really don’t want to be at work. Also, bring as much as your authentic self as you can into the building (kids benefit from interacting with a whole person), meditate daily, exercise lots of self-care, and find a good therapist when you need one.”

Highlights of Eric’s career are, “Making music with students has always been the highlight and I will miss that.” Things Eric will not miss are, “Any paper work and staff developments that had nothing to do with helping me make music with my students.”

As for his plans for retirement, after his mother’s and father’s death in 2013 and 2014 respectively, he decided to take over the family farm in Michigan and in 2015 became the 5th generation Roeske to own and operate it. He now has a steady crop rotation of corn, soybeans and wheat, and has made it into an extremely peaceful and exceptionally beautiful place to retire. He will move there full time in about 4 years, and in the meantime he will continue to grow his private practice here on Long Island, he’ll work more frequently at Seafield Outpatient, and focus much more on furthering his professional development and spiritual growth.

Jayne Johnsen-Seeberger

Jayne’s message to those still teaching or new to teaching, “Join and participate in your union as insurance against a rainy day and for the family it offers. Talk to the new librarian to see what she can teach you and your classes.

Put down the device and have conversations face to face with fellow teachers and students. If you live by google, you will die by google. Don’t be a google head. Search further. Count to ten before clicking send!”
Jackie ends her career of 31 years split between the BMS and Kreamer. Her professional career spans from educational to clinical. Her degrees are in Elementary Education, Elementary Level School Administration and Speech Pathology.

Jackie is from a big Italian family. She believes her family reflects the rituals and values presented in the popular ‘Growing Up Italian’ essay. These family orientated values stayed with all 4 of her siblings and have been passed down to her children as well, where they are treasured.

In her early career she taught 4th and 5th grade. After pursuing her administration degree, she decided to specialize in a medically related area. She went on to study doctorate level coursework in Speech Pathology.

She worked as a speech pathologist at Brookhaven Elementary and then later at Frank P. Long. Jackie went on to be a part of the faculty at BMS. She ended her career providing services to students at BMS but spent most of her time at Kreamer Elementary.

Her advice to new teachers or those still teaching, “Enjoy your students, for the children they are.”

Some highlights for Jackie are during her doctoral study she served as a speech pathologist at a V.A. medical center, where she saw a need for a hospice center and wrote a proposal for it. It was supported and a hospice center was established. Another highlight was being part of the speech department in the district, she will miss the dynamics of working within this department. Another highlight was working with her students and encouraging critical thinking through storytelling and instilling the value of grammatical correctness.

Jackie will not miss the long hours of lesson planning, test scoring, report writing, particularly on the weekends.

Upon retirement, “I hope to enjoy a more flexible time schedule; yet, continue to provide speech therapy services. I look forward to completing my ‘new’ home renovation, to visiting friends far and near, and to welcoming new adventures.”

Sheila grew up in Sayville, the middle of 5 children. Her parents were both teachers. She studied accounting at Shippensburg University, got her teaching certification from Dowling College and her Masters at Stonybrook University. She has 5 children and 2 grandchildren.

Outside of school, Sheila owns a seasonal Italian Ice business, Poppa Mia’s Ice House. Her husband owns Mr.Nick’s Barber Shops and her son owns Sobol, Inc. which has enabled her to use many real life examples in her lessons. She also has a catering business for many years which gives her some culinary background.

She began her career as a student teacher and then as a leave replacement at East Islip HS. She spent the last 32 years teaching various business classes at BHS including Virtual Enterprise, Marketing, Accounting, Microsoft Office, Career and Financial Management, College Prep, Fashion Merchandising, Keyboarding and many more!
Sue has been in the district for 33 years. She ended her career working in Verne Critz but has also worked in the Brookhaven Anex and Kreamer.

Sue grew up in Huntington where she raised three children, 2 girls and 1 boy. Both girls have graduated from college. They live and work in Connecticut. Her oldest will be married in October, and her middle daughter will graduate with her Masters from University of Hartford School of Music in May. Sue’s son graduated from Binghamton last June and has been working for Lockheed Martin as a computer scientist.

Sue is remarried and living in Montauk with her husband. They publish a newspaper and produce music festivals there.

In 1986 she began as a special education teacher working with developmentally disabled 5-7 year olds at the Annex along with three other teachers and also with students up to age 21. Eventually they mainstreamed the program into the age appropriate district.

Don’t want to say it was a while ago, but there was no busing at the time!”

Before long, it was time for college and she headed to SUNY Cortland. After her undergraduate college years were done, she took a few months off before graduate study and Sue visited her mom’s family in England. Upon her return to New York, entering the work force did not seem to be Sue’s calling so, it was time to continue with more education. Sue and her brother moved out to California. Her California years, twelve in total, were busy with graduate studies, teaching at the middle school level and eventually finding her niche as a school psychologist. Meeting her husband, to a class that was so difficult I had to remind myself that they really did need me and I needed to try to make a difference for them. Other years it was exploring and guiding a class through the newest computer developments that changed quickly and drastically through the middle of my career. Seeing them learn and create, with the then new technology, which enhanced their earning was fun and exciting. I think the best part of my career came when a parent of a third grade child with ADHD and no medication, thanked me at the end of the year for letting Calvin be Calvin. I will miss being in my class each day guiding and facilitating the students for that one year through their education journey

Sue will not miss, “I won’t miss the unending time in and out of school needed for prep, and the continuous pendulum of curriculum changes, with each new administration.”

Upon retirement she plans on spending more time with her kids and traveling. She will also continue to work with her husband on their newspaper, the Montauk Sun, as well as continuing to produce the Montauk Music Festival each May, and holding summer concerts at the lighthouse.

Marc, on a summer vacation in Westhampton led her back “Home”. She always knew she would eventually come back to the East Coast. They have a 22 year old daughter, Brooke, who appears to be following her lead, as she is a doctoral student in psychology. Balancing time with family and work, has always been her personal challenge. Their twenty-five year marriage has allowed for the work to get done but still allow for communication, joy and the willingness to evolve. Given her culinary skills, Marc has been a very patient individual! (continued on the next pg)
SUSAN SMITH-ALPERT
(CONTINUED)

For many years, she had the pleasure of speaking at Career Day, held at the Bellport Middle School. Sue would tell the story of how life can have us take some unexpected turns. Sue had been a Physical Education Major and yet ended up never teaching PE, but instead being a psychologist in schools counseling, testing, collaborating with staff, supporting parents and guiding children.

In total, she has been in education for 40 years. In those four decades, she had the opportunity to spend time with so many children, had so many good conversations, counseling sessions, fun times playing board games etc. She had the honor of working with so many beautiful, nurturing, people with the staff at Kreamer Street, at the top of her “shout out” (as the kids will say) her building principal, social worker and her interns, building nurse and responders are unsurpassed anywhere. The special education department especially at Kreamer Street are all so very special with the additional recognition of her fellow psychologists and all the staffing at Student Support Services, who have been an integral part of her career day in and day out.

Her advice for new teachers or those still teaching, “Teaching is so very meaningful, powerful and exhausting all in one chubby package. The core element needed is for each educator to find balance in their lives. One needs to pay attention to the time and energy that is put into our day-to-day lives. I can only say what often has worked for me-a combination approach beginning with spiritual work, being part of a book club where you are now finally reading for pleasure (without a highlighter in hand), sprinkled with holistic practices: mindful activities, meditation and landscape design. We live in a complicated society and yet WE can make a vast difference starting with our little ones. As we build the connections and relationships with each child we encounter, believe that each of us are making an difference in that child’s life.

The proof is when they return to Kreamer Street, to visit, years and years later after they have graduated from Kreamer Street and question “Do you have to retire?”

Sue’s highlights are, “My highlights are somewhat on a broader scale. As odd as this looks or sounds, I could start with Mondays and the first day back after each vacation. The children at Kreamer Street let you know how appreciated you are, particularly after a weekend or time away from their school. The children let you know with their words, hugs, cards/pictures they create for you. Some specific personal highlights include: being part of evening events held at Kreamer, having amazing assemblies with famous author/illustrators and seeing the passion children suddenly have for reading and art, dressing up as an elf for our Kreamer/now district-wide Lighthouse Mission event, and lastly, watching the “Moving Up Ceremony” each year for our third graders- is a powerful day! You get to observe the third graders, see how they have evolved and watch their expressions in awe, as they listen to the Valedictorian and Salutatorian speakers share their special words of wisdom.”

When asked about what she won’t miss Sue had this to say, “There is truly one and only one aspect of my career that I will NOT MISS-the paperwork. Well, in actuality it is the computer work that is brought home as the work day is too full to manage the workload efficiently at school. Being able to “stay in the moment”, is my mantra during any meetings, counseling sessions and during the assessment process which often means bringing some of the job home.”

Sue’s thoughts upon retirement, “After 40 years of work as an educator, school psychologist and social worker (in a different setting), I must say, it hugely has defined a large part of me. Everyone hearing that retirement is soon approaching has asked me, “So where are you traveling to?” The funny thing is, travel is not top of my list. Thinking of retirement has a time to redefine purpose and usage of time. Factoring in/exploring employment on some level with my Clinical Social Work License is a resounding thought. In addition, I would love to: make the allowance for more time spent with family and friends, more opportunity to perhaps learn to cook, eat healthier, learn to play the piano given to me as a present some years ago, find more time to be more gentle with myself, more time to pray and expand abilities with interior and exterior design, more time to go for walks, listen to music, dance more and love more, day in and day out.”

EMMANUEL (MANNY) KOSTAKOS

“South Country is an amazing place with decent, dedicated personnel who care about students, their education, and well-being. There is a high likelihood that you will have many good memories at the end of your visit.”
BTA RETIREMENT PARTY

THE RETIREMENT ISSUE
BTA RETIREMENT PARTY
Letter from the Editor

Dear Loyal BTA Members,

Happy Summer! Wishing you a safe, healthy summer! To our retirees, happy ‘Endless Summer’ you deserve it!

Please remember to share good news such as new marriages, births and any other piece of good news. Don’t forget that we love to showcase the great things going on in our district. Our teachers do so much and we’d love to celebrate all these things. Share your good news and the happenings around the district to stephpirozzi@gmail.com so it can be shared through our newsletter. Don’t forget Letters to the Editor are always welcome.

Yours in Unity, Stephanie Pirozzi

Important Links

www.bellportteachers.org
https://www.nysut.org/
https://www.esboces.org/EAP
http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the wonderful retirement party. It was a great time, with great friends! Though I won’t be back again in September, I wish you all a rested summer and hope you get recharged for the new year.

Thank you– A Retiree

Who’s Who in the BTA

Officers:
President: Wayne White
1st Vice-President: Pat Brady
2nd Vice-President: Trish Gallina
Treasurer: Don O’Hanlon
Recording Secretary: Christine Napolitano
Corresponding Secretary: Judi Lindo
NYSUT/Legislative Delegate: Joe Tortora
NYSUT/ED Delegate: Erika Watson

Building Representatives:
High School
Matt Feddern (Senior Rep)
Jayne Johnsen-Seeberger
Alan Kupferman
Adrienne Fernandes
John Romachko
Dennis Pluth

Middle School
Matt Kinigson (Senior Rep)
Ann Metz
Heidi Devito
Jason Burmeister
Jeannine Madrigales
Frank P. Long
Cari Negri (Senior Rep)
Toni Giresi
Bill Freda
Shannon Kulick
Brookhaven
Jean Gray (Senior Rep)
Annemarie O’Sullivan
Kreamer Street
Alissa Walters (Senior Rep)

Corinne Figueroa
Melissa Masullo
Verne Critz
Bill Pettit (Senior Rep)
Bill Champlin
Jennifer Andreopoulos
Chief Negotiator: Matt Feddern
Grievance: Sue Hartmann
Ed Problems: Christine Schlosser, Jill Carrabus
Public Relations: Camille Masem
Beacon Newsletter: Stephanie Pirozzi
APPRe: Dara Hagemeyer, Nicole Casserly, Aimee Volk
Budget: Don O’Hanlon
Community Relations: Jeannine Madrigales
Elections: Jessica Prush