

# LOCAL DO'S

## THE FALL EDITION



**A FUN FALL SEASON AT GRAND AVE, pg. 3**



**CLIMBING HIGH AT MEPHAM, pg 5**



**CELEBRATING COLTFEST AT CALHOUN, pg. 6**



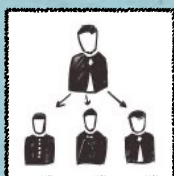
**K-9 CRACKS THE CASE AT M.A.P, pg. 8**



**ACADEMIC FIELD DAY AT J.F.K, pg. 9**



**BASES LOADED AT MAMS, pg 10**



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**"A GOOD START!"****ROB WALSH, BMUST PRESIDENT****MY UNION SIBLINGS,**

**Greetings!** I hope this edition of Local Do's finds you and your families well. We have had a really good start to the school year here in Bellmore-Merrick. For the first time, in what seems like forever, our summer was not taken up in meetings trying to figure out how to open our schools safely. We did not have to expend all of our energy thinking about masks and social distancing and COVID sick leave and vaccinations and testing. Instead, throughout the summer and into the start of the school year, we have been able to focus our energy on planning and preparing for great teaching and learning. It has been awesome!

hope that we can soon present the revised Constitution and By-Laws to the membership for approval.



**Rob Walsh,  
President, BMUST**

While we are most definitely on the road to normalcy, let there be no doubt that we have a tremendous struggle in front of us. It is going to be a real challenge helping our students recover from the academic loss and the emotional trauma of the past two years. We have a great deal of work to do to get our students to where they are able to meet our high academic standards and are properly prepared for the

**"It is going to be a real challenge helping our students recover from the academic loss and the emotional trauma of the past two years. We have a great deal of work to do to get our students to where they are able to meet our high academic standards and are properly prepared for the world that lies beyond our walls."**

In contract news - we have already had a new mother take advantage of the additional week of leave and a non-birthing parent take 10 days to be with their newborn - both important gains in our new contract. Mr. Gomez, the new Assistant Superintendent of Personnel and Administration, and I have reviewed, what we hope to be, the final draft of the new contract. My hope is that it will soon be posted to the BMUST website and be sent off to the printer so that you all may have your own copy.

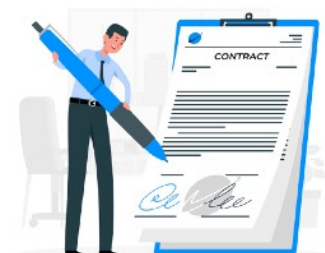
The Representative Assembly is now in possession of the latest draft of our Constitution and By-Laws. Updating our Constitution and By-Laws has been a project started before, and derailed by, the pandemic. Revising the Constitution and By-Laws became necessary after the Supreme Court's Janus v. AFSCME decision in 2018 and the pandemic driven practice of holding our elections online. It is my

world that lies beyond our walls. But we are now on that road, and this is a good thing. Continue to do the incredible work that you do everyday in your classroom and we will eventually get them there. Slowly, perhaps, but surely, we will get them there.

As much as we wish this pandemic gone, it is not. Continue to take good care of yourselves and of your families. Continue to look after one another. I wish you and your families a happy and healthy holiday season.

In Solidarity,

*Rob*



## "A FUN FALL SEASON AT GAMS"

BY KIM FRIEDMAN (GRAND AVE M.S.),  
LOCAL DO'S WRITER

Fall is really FUN at Grand Avenue! In October, Grand kicked off the month with Spirit Week and our yearly Pep Rally, organized by Athletic Director (and veteran Spanish Teacher), **Ben Fisher**. Spirit Week dress up days included NY Pride (dress in your favorite NY sports team jersey/ gear), red white and blue day, Grand school colors day, and wear pink for breast cancer awareness day. The Pep Rally was a huge success! It opened with the Star



Spangled Banner, performed by 2 students from Grand Voices, led by music director **Amanda Cantwell**. Next, the cheerleaders and kickline teams both gave epic performances to get the Grand students excited. The majority of Pep Rally was a battle of the grades- 7th vs 8th! Both grades competed in various activities on our beautiful turf field, culminating with limbo, in which the 7th graders stole the win! It was a fun afternoon for staff and students!

Next up, students in **Mrs. O'Connor** and **Mr. Doherty's** 7<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish classes had an opportunity to learn about important Hispanic figures in history, as they celebrated Hispanic Heritage

Month. They viewed a video that showcased famous people from Hispanic backgrounds and participated in a Gallery walk that allowed them to read about each individual's accomplishments. Students worked on a "Find Someone Who..." activity to learn about important figures within the Hispanic community. Students were able to use the vocabulary learned in class to comprehend the short paragraph about each figure. As students walked around the hallway they wrote down the person's name on their sheet. When they arrived back in class they discussed the correct answers and played a true or false trivia game with the kids. The kids had a great time, while they learned about some inspirational people!

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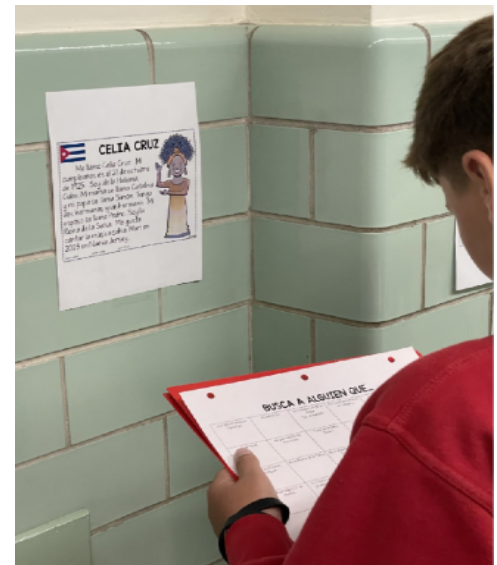
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Finally, the last week of October was quite a busy one at Grand Avenue! The SADD Club, led by school psychologist **Dr. Rachel Aguilar**, and Math teacher **Julia Motley**, hosted a week of events for Red Ribbon Week, which is centered on drug prevention and standing up to bullying. Monday began with students creating “Positive Chalk Messages” in front of the school, for the entire student population and staff to see as they entered Grand. Students decorated the front and back sidewalks with positive affirmations and messages about choosing a drug-free life. On Tuesday, the 7th grade students watched a play performed by the Drama Club, which depicts middle school students faced with peer pressure and their journey to make positive choices. On Wednesday, both grades

participated in a “Banner Signing Pledge” (Strong

together against bullying and drugs) during their lunch periods. Students pledged to say no to drugs and to stand up to bullying when they see it. On Thursday, the SADD Club hosted a bake sale, and they also sponsored a fundraiser on Halloween, a Costume Contest Fundraiser, which students had to pay \$1 to enter. All proceeds for both fundraisers will be donated to a charity that SADD club members vote on. It certainly was a week of positive messages that meant a lot to our students!





## “MEPHAM PRIDE”

BY EDWARD GROSSKREUZ (MEPHAM H.S.), LOCAL DO'S STAFF

### A Tribute to the Heroes and Victims of 9/11

On Thursday, November 10th, Mepham students climbed the stairwell of Mepham in a replication of the tower climb hosted at NYC's Freedom Tower each June by the **Tunnel to Towers Foundation** in a touching and symbolic tribute to the the heroes and victims of 9/11. Students climbed a total of 2,977 steps: one step for each victim of that tragic day. Proceeds raised from the Stairway Climb, Mepham's Flag Field of Honor, and Battle of the Classes will help to support all Tunnel to Towers initiatives including providing mortgage-free smart homes for our most catastrophically injured veterans and first responders.



### Operation Smile Makes a Splash!

Mepham's **Operation Smile Club** has been working on several service projects, such as get well cards, “smile bags,” friendship bracelets, and sock puppets to send to aid healing children post-surgery, but the Club's ultimate goal is to help these children afford surgery in the first place. The students decided to host a dunk tank at **October's Pirate Fest**, and it was a huge success! In just two short hours, the club raised enough money to provide life-changing surgery to four children in need.

### No Place for Hate at Mepham

**Superintendent's Conference Day** was not a typical school day; it created an opportunity for Mepham to reaffirm its commitment to being a No Place for Hate school, a designation it enjoys from the Anti-Defamation League. Students reflected on their identities and how they relate to their pathways, path, and purpose by spending time in their various classes considering how who they are makes them both unique as individuals but also alike to their community members.

### English Department Shares Its Innovations

Recently Mepham hosted teachers from MacArthur and Division Avenue High Schools who have heard of Mepham's adoption of and its successes with the reader-writer workshop model and with books of choice. Mepham teachers shared their best practices with these visitors and answered all of their questions. Mepham is happy to help other districts move the needle in English instruction.



## “COLTFEST AND HOMECOMING: BUILDING COMMUNITY AT CALHOUN H.S.”

BY BETH FINNERAN, (CALHOUN H.S.), LOCAL DO-S WRITER

The Calhoun Community showed its spirit as teachers and students came together to celebrate Coltfest and Homecoming in September. Before the Homecoming football game, various clubs set up booths with drinks, snacks, and various activities. Many of the funds raised went to support the clubs or charities supported by the clubs.



Brian Joyce & the Class of 2025 at their Coltfest booth. The Sophomores sold Calhoun Colt reusable plastic cups filled with popcorn & candy to support their class.



Carly Sacco and Brittney Peterson advise the Class of 2026 at Coltfest & Homecoming.

**Heather Glick and Nikole DeLuca** encouraged international students to be part of Coltfest so they could feel part of the school community. Many international students went to the Homecoming Dance, as well as, Coltfest. Heather Glick initiated a global learner initiative in her ELL classes. Learners are required to attend two events per quarter, so they can become more aware of what's going on at school and



Mike Pisano and Brian Joyce supervised the Class of 2025 booth at Coltfest.



Calhoun's International Buddy Club members attended Coldest.



Nikole DeLuca and Heather Glick advise the International Buddy Club.

become part of the community. Nikole DeLuca brought her own children to Coltfest, so they could learn what community means and to encourage them to become part of the school community when they enter middle school and high school.

**Carly Sacco and Brittney Peterson** supported the Class of 2026 with their

booth. Carly Sacco said, "This year we are selling water bottles and chips, so people can stay hydrated while they are enjoying Coltfest and Homecoming." Peterson added, "We have food trucks, pizza and ice cream here, so we figured we'd have something savory. Peterson and Sacco started the club on the second day of school and it keeps growing every week. They are looking forward to seeing how their students grow up over the years.



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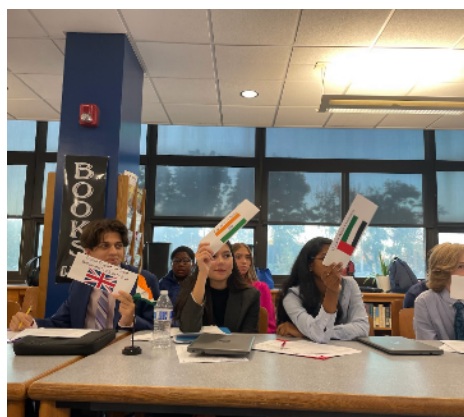
The Racial Equity Club used the opportunity of Coltfest to raise money for their "Hope for Haiti" fundraiser, which will support those struggling in Haiti. Beth Finneran advises the Racial Equity Club and supported them with their booth.



Collaborative partners Mike Pisano and Beth Finneran at Coltfest.



Ms. Khan and Mr. Formato (Calhoun) & Ms. Bencosme (Mephram) advise Model U.N. students as they debate policies and draft resolutions in global affairs.



On November 2nd, Calhoun and Mephram Model United Nations students came together in the Calhoun library to deliberate on women's rights issues in Iran.



Calhoun's Model U.N. students debate Iranian domestic policies.



## “K-9 LEAH SHOWS OFF HER SUPERPOWERS”

BY LAURA SHERIDAN (M.A.P.), LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITER

In June, MAP was visited by members of the NC Fire Marshal's Office at the invitation of Science teacher **Emily Abma**. Division Supervisor Captain Kevin Lang, K-9 Handler Matthew Kern, and Accelerant Detection K-9 Leah came to do a presentation about fire, arson, and forensic arson investigation. They also offered a demonstration of K9 training in detecting arson accelerants. They were invited to MAP specifically for Emily's Forensics students but, as often happens, other faculty and students piled in to watch as well.

The purpose of their visit was for the Forensics class to discuss arson investigation techniques, to learn about K-9 training regarding criminal investigations, and to observe K-9 training to find arson accelerants. As with any visit like this, it not



only enriched the students' knowledge of class curriculum but exposed them to a career path that was both interesting and challenging. Captain Lang and Mr. Kern taught the students much that enhanced what they had been learning in class, but the highlight of their visit clearly was watching Leah do her job as a seeker of accelerants. The scrumptious Leah is a rockstar. She is a seven-year-old Labrador Retriever from Ohio.

Originally raised for service as a Guide Dog for **The Guiding Eyes**

**Foundation**, Leah switched careers when she discovered her “true calling” and went on to work with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. She and her handler are one of 54 teams in the nation.





## “PUSHING FORWARD AT JFK”

BY BRUCE REED, LOCAL DO'S EDITOR, (JFK H.S.),

The Leadership classes at JFK H.S. planned, organized and executed a well-structured program entitled “**Academic Field Day.**” Under the guidance of **Kristy Faulkner, Erin Leitzel, and Brad Seidman**, the Leadership students coordinated this event which included over 80 workshops for students to attend on Election Day, Nov. 8. Teachers were asked to create workshops that showcased a topic or a talent that would help students learn about their interests. The JFK teachers surpassed all expectations with their engaging and exciting presentations. The following list illustrates just a portion of the talent of the teachers who participated:

# ACADEMIC *Field Day*

- **A History of the SuperBowl**
- **Becoming a SpyMaster**
- **Broadway Musicals**
- **Chakras 101**
- **Cowabunga Surfing 101**
- **The Bittersweet History of Sugar**
- **Guitar: Let's Rock!**
- **The Art of Protest**
- **Talking the Tok**
- **Fashion Police**

Students were happy to leave their binders and textbook home this day as they attended two 50-minute sessions and were able to discuss the highlights of the workshop at the end of each session with the teacher-presenters. Congratulations to all the JFK teachers who shared their hidden talents!



Kennedy H.S. hosted our annual **Safe Halloween** party for the local elementary school students in our community. The event involved the participating and coordination of many of JFK Clubs. The Clubs provided a wide variety of activities for the children, including coloring tables, cupcake decorating, mummy wraps, Halloween Bingo and mask making.

Members of the Class of 2025 teamed up with the Cardz for Kidz charity organization

. Under the guidance of their class advisors,

**Erin Leitzel and Monica Longo**, students created homemade greeting cards that were sent out to children in 40 countries around the world. The students worked hard to produce uplifting greeting cards, hoping to put a smile on the faces of children in need.



## “RAISING SPIRITS AT MAMS”

BY LISA SHAPIRO, LOCAL DO'S WRITER, (M.A.M.S ),

We have had a lot to celebrate here at Merrick Avenue!

In the Spring, Merrick Avenue earned the **2022 NYS Essential Elements Schools to Watch** designation. In March, our faculty, staff and administration shared what was really a large group observation by colleagues from other parts of New York, with a focus on academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structures and processes.

We are about to kick off **Spirit Week** which will culminate with a new fan favorite, the Spirit Rally. Spirit Week is our Pep Rally, reimagined by our ever growing Student Council Club. Students from each academic team will compete in fun relays

and events out on the field. In addition, the Student Council sponsored the first of many fundraisers, and the focus of this one was raising funds for Breast Cancer research. You'll know who the Rams are if you see someone in a pink bracelet! It was great to see the halls filled with pink on October 14th.

**Frank Biamonte**, Merrick Avenue's O.G. security guard, retired during the Summer. Our Extended School Year students applauded his time here with a little celebration in the gym, but we were very happy to applaud Frank's tenure with us during our traditional clap out followed by cake. We wish him all the best and hope that he finds joy in this new stage of life.



You may have heard of this event: The Little League World Series. Congratulations to **Roland Clark**, who is not just an English teacher but also the Little League team manager of the Massapequa Coast. We congratulate him and his team for their hard work and dedication and for being a true example of 'living the dream'. Thanks for making the summer exciting here on Long Island!

On that note, "Don't dream your life, live your dream."





# MAKING STRIDES



# AGAINST BREAST CANCER

OCT. 16, 2022  
JONES BEACH, NY



## "IN MEMORIAM"

BY MICHAEL DOLBER, (BMRTA)

As we mourn the passing of **Pat Christy**, we must not forget to celebrate her life and the impact that she had on our district, our union, and our community.

I met Pat in 1974, when I started teaching at Jerusalem Avenue Junior High School. Pat was one of the people most responsible for my involvement in BMUST starting in my first year, the year we went on strike. She soon became a trusted friend and mentor. Pat, a Phys Ed teacher, was a Head Building Rep, a negotiator, and a respected leader in the building. She understood unionism and understood that ultimately it was about respect and solidarity among its members.

Of all of Pat's accomplishments and contributions to our union, there are two that must be emphasized. Pat took action and led the fight to achieve pay equity for coaches of girls' sports. She courageously acted under Title 9 to make sure that they received fair and equal compensation. Every coach and every student athlete today owes Pat a debt of gratitude.

In addition, in 1984, Pat met with our president, **Lou DeFilippo**, to propose the creation of a retired teachers' group within BMUST, which would have voting representation on the Board of

Trustees and the Representative Assembly. This led directly to the creation of BMRTA. Pat served as BMRTA's first President, and all of us have benefitted from her initiative and leadership.

Pat's legacy is, and will remain, fundamental to our union. It is important that all of our members, even those who never knew her or were not even born when she retired in 1982, understand how much all of us owe her.

Rest in peace and power, Pat.




**Patricia Christy (seated) with Sharon Wisla and Gerald Brynien.**



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Nov/Dec 2022