

LOCAL DO'S

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Why we must



to a NYS Constitutional Convention

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NEW YORK STATE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION VOTE, NOVEMBER 7, 2017

BY MARK STEINBERG,
BMUST PRESIDENT

Question: What can I do to make sure the pension I'm counting on in retirement will be there for me?

Answer: VOTE NO!

According to the New York State Constitution, every 20 years the people of New York are asked the following question on their November ballot:

“Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?”

This question will appear at the top of the ballot November 7, 2017 and how the vote goes will have a significant impact on not only NYSUT members but every citizen of the state of New York. A “yes” vote will trigger a multi-year process involving: The election of delegates, a convention in Albany in 2019 where delegates will deliberate and suggest constitutional amendments, the submission of the proposed changes to the voters, and finally a public referendum vote to either ratify or reject the proposed constitutional changes.

So what's at stake for us and why must we mobilize and educate every member as to the need to **vote NO?**



Mark Steinberg,
President, BMUST

The New York State Constitution establishes the fundamental rights you enjoy as a citizen of New York State and as a public employee, whether you are active or retired. For example, The New York State Constitution prohibits any reduction in public pension benefits. A “yes” vote would allow delegates, which could include members of the state legislature, political party leaders, or other office holders, to craft constitutional amendments which could alter or reduce the pensions we were guaranteed when we became teachers. The police and fire departments would also be affected by these amendments so we will have allies in our efforts to mobilize our members to **vote NO!**

In addition to our pensions, the constitution provides us with other rights vital to us as citizens and public employees. These include:

- The right to workers compensation
- The right to a free public education
- The right to be a member of a union and bargain collectively.
- The requirement that the state provide for social welfare needs.

Our opponents are intent on pushing an anti-union, anti-public school agenda that we must be prepared to confront and challenge. Everyone anticipates a variety of ad campaigns aimed against us and encouraging a “yes” vote in November. Public and private organized labor, environmentalists, conservationists, social welfare advocates, and even fiscal conservatives who want to keep existing debt limits in place and who do not want to see an estimated 350 million dollars spent on a

Continued on next page

constitutional convention, will likely work together to get out a NO vote in November.

Of course confronting our opponents will require money, lots of it. VOTE COPE dollars will be used locally and around the state to produce our own campaigns against the convention. **Every member** should be contributing to VOTE COPE – **EVERY MEMBER**. This is not about being Republican, Democrat, or pro-Trump, or pro Clinton. This is about our jobs! Personally it is astonishing when members refuse to participate in VOTE COPE. This is not about the Presidential election. It is about preserving our rights, our pensions, and our livelihood. We can't rely on others to fight for these things for us. We must be prepared to do it!

We must all work to educate voters, family, and friends to make sure they understand the bad things

that could happen if we open up the state constitution to drastic changes through a convention. The constitution can already be amended legislatively. We don't need an expensive convention to do it. With 2017 being an off-election year, voter turnout could very well be low. Every vote will be vital. If we mobilize and organize our efforts with multiple constituencies around the state I'm confident we can shut this constitutional convention down in November. Failing would be an absolute disaster and cannot be an option.

Remember to **VOTE NO** this November!

In solidarity,

Mark

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

It's ALIVE! Big congrats to John Boyle, Tiffany Rzempoluch, Jennifer Weinstein-Ondras, Eric Arlin, Darlene Boden, Geisha Kwiatkowski, Michelle Troici, Susan Ellinghaus, Catrina Christensen, MAPster Jordan Ladd (not pictured), and someone named Abby Normal for their electrifying performance of "Puttin' on the Ritz" from *Young Frankenstein* at the Faculty Follies! Voof!

Mary Sweeney has taken over this year as MAP's hallway representative to BMUST. She thoroughly enjoys all she is learning and recently attended the NYSUT conference. The conference focused on leadership skills, coalition building, and how to mobilize union members. As Mary teaches Science, we are all a bit concerned about what forms of mobilization she may concoct.

First-year teacher Zach Gosse had one of those great experiences recently where an exciting unit turned out even better than expected. The



students in [his] skills class participated in a debate discussing whether or not the United States should accept Syrian refugees. The students worked in pairs to develop and research their arguments for one week. On debate day they presented all of their research and data. Both sides of the debate were well-prepared and presented themselves in a professional manner. Fist bump, Mr. Gosse!

“IN LOVING MEMORY” JESSICA ARTUSO CIMMINO

In January, Jessica Artuso Cimmino passed away unexpectedly in a tragic car accident. Jessica taught Home and Career Skills at Grand Avenue Middle School, and her warmth and enthusiasm touched the lives of many of her students. Jessica is survived by her husband Ralph and two young children, Gabby, age 5 and Ralph, age 3. We honor the impact Jessica made to our profession with these reflections.

Jessica was probably the most honest person I've ever met in my life. She was not the kind of person to sugarcoat things. In fact I think it was her brutal honesty that people loved most about her.

My first memory of Jess was this beautiful, stylish, cool teacher. She joined the Bellmore-Merrick family in February 2004. I guess you could say I was sort of her mentor, but she definitely wasn't a new teacher that really needed one of those! In 2011 Jessica and I became roommates at Grand Avenue. I took her under my wing and showed her "the ropes." From that point on we grew closer and closer not only as colleagues but as friends.

Jessica got married to the love of her life, Ralph in 2011. Then her beautiful daughter Gabriella was born in June 2012 and later in 2013, little Ralphie was born. Let's just say Jessica kept baby Burberry in business!

Jess was an avid shopper. She was my go to girl for advice on any shopping-related or beauty-related topic. Anybody that really knew her know that Jessica loved her Tory Burch flip-flops and leggings. As stylish as her feet were out of school (Louboutin!!), she was very simplistic at school.

Jessica's extraordinary culinary skills were her "bread and butter." She ran the culinary program at Mephram for years. Once that program ended she brought those skills to Grand Avenue and MAMS. In and out of the classroom Jessica was a fabulous cook. Her creative side shined on the occasion of her friends' birthdays. Her skills in fondant and cake-making made you feel truly special on your birthday!

She decided that we would start a "cupcake wars" program at Grand. What a great idea to bring that

pop culture show to our class! She never ceased to bring real life events into our classroom. Her students always appreciated the invaluable nature of their Family & Consumer Science class!

Jessica's savvy style, sense of humor and love of her profession made her an awesome woman to work with and an even better woman to be friends with. I will miss our trips to the Cheesecake Factory and our long talks. But most of all I will miss the best conversation we had on last day of your beautiful life.

You know the friend that just "gets" you? The friend that does things for you just because she knows that you're having a hard day and you're not going to get around to it? The friend that thinks about you and knows how to be a good friend to you? That's what I cherished most in Jessica Ann Cimmino.

**-REGINA LUNDQUIST,
GRAND AVE, (Home & Career
Skills)**

Jessica will be missed among the Family & Consumer Science Department. She had a creative spirit and was certainly passionate about the content she taught especially baking. Jessica was always someone you could talk to and was great at remembering your birthday or important events going on in your life. We are truly saddened by her loss and send our thoughts and prayers to her family especially her two young children.

**-SARAH NORTON & MICHAEL DIGIOVANNI,
KENNEDY H.S., (Family & Consumer Science)**



“IN LOVING MEMORY”

JESSICA ARTUSO CIMMINO

REMEMBERING JESSICA

Jessica always had a warm smile, a friendly hello. She made you feel welcome a mere 5 minutes after you met her and became a friend forever.

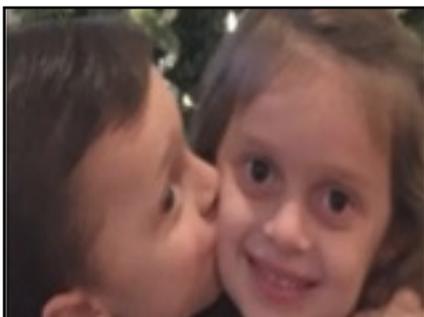
She was tireless when it came to preparing, shopping and finding new and fun recipes and projects for her students. She inspired her students to continue enjoying the culinary arts and some even went on to pursue careers in the culinary arts field.

Jessica had a never ending love for her husband Ralph, her children Gabby and Ralphie and her extended family. As they were the loves of her life, she too was the light and love of their lives! Never a day went by that she wasn't doing some great thing to make their lives a little happier.

I know for this writer she is missed and continues to be missed every day. And I am a much better person to have had Jessica, even though for a much too short time in my life.

- DEBORAH SLUTSKY, MEPHAM H.S. (Para)

The Ralphie and Gabby Cimmino Fund



A HEART OF GOLD

Jessica Cimmino was a woman with a heart of gold. She always made time for her friends and family, no matter what she was doing. She spent all of her free time helping those she loved, whether it was her husband, her children, her family or her friends. Jessica would tell me on weekends how she would make pasta from scratch, teaching her kids how to use the pasta machine and shared her love of cooking in the kitchen with them. She never made things from a box, even when she made cupcakes for Gabby's birthday she made them from the heart, making her own vanilla paste from the vanilla beans. She would share her tips and secrets of making everything taste amazing, but I really believe it came from all of the love she put into everything she did. She was truly in the perfect profession for her, she loved children and loved being in the kitchen. Her students loved her because she could relate to them and made them feel special, welcome and cared for in her classroom. As her friend I am so grateful for the mornings we spent together in her classroom, telling stories, laughing together and just talking about life. I will miss her deeply but I feel so lucky to have been able to call her my friend. Her life was taken too soon, she had so much life, love and passion in her which I know will live on with her children.

-ERIN YALTZINDEG, MAMS, (World Languages)



To contribute, please go to:

<https://www.gofundme.com/ralphie-and-gabby>

Your generosity is appreciated!

MAMS FACULTY CONTRIBUTE TO THE CUPBOARD

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

Merrick Avenue engaged in some fierce competition for the MLK Service Day to provide the BMCHSD Community Cupboard and families from neighboring communities with pasta, sauce, and vegetables. Students and staff were motivated to provide those less fortunate with meals and regardless of the come from behind victory by Team 3, the value of helping others far exceeded the prize of a pancake breakfast prepared by our administration. Overall, more than 1000 food items were sorted by our Special Class students and given donated.

Dan Bowker and Dan Stiglitz led their entrepreneurship class in yet another fundraiser, selling Valentine's Day lollipops during lunch periods. Monies raised will be used to keep our school store, The Barn, in business, which continues to foster and develop interpersonal and basic business skills amongst our self contained population.



This past month, we welcome back Lauren Cress from maternity leave and congrats to Brett Schwartz on the birth of his daughter.



Sarah Ritchie (MAMS) & Christine LaTorre
(Paraprofessional) take the plunge this year in Long Beach!

MAKE
A WISH.

LONG BEACH
POLAR BEARS

“CALHOUN SUPPORTS OUTREACH AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE”

BY WENDY SIMSON (CALHOUN H.S.), LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITER

Calhoun participated in the Martin Luther King Day of Service. Students had the opportunity to assemble snack bags of food for local shelters and the Community Cupboard while also learning more about the life of Martin Luther King. Students also wrote notes of encouragement to include in the bags which were impactful to the families.



District ambassadors from all buildings along with a team of teachers, chairpeople, and administrators organized the effort in the district and the team will also be delivered the food from all the buildings to the shelters. Service learning opportunities like this have become routine in the district and we are grateful for all the help that teachers, staff and families provide.

On January 31, Calhoun H.S. hosted the 10th Annual Transition Fair for students with disabilities. This was a great night for parents and students to learn more about eligibility determination, employment opportunities, supported living or self-



direction services and the various organizations and agencies across Long Island that can help target specific needs. It was a great night to hear from our alumni about their experiences since exiting Calhoun. Thanks to Express Yourself for performing and to Ms. Gitlitz, the district transition coordinator who organized the night. Thanks also to SEPTA for their unending support of our programs for students with special needs and for providing a valuable service to our families.



“MEPHAM SHOWCASES STUDENT TALENT IN THEIR MEDIA LAB STUDIO”

BY BILL MORRIS (MEPHAM H.S.), LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITER

The Bellmore-Merrick Broadcasting program is off to a fantastic start at Mepham High School. The program officially began last year, however, BMB started-off its second year with a brand new media lab studio. Students from all three high schools have applied and are working in this exciting new program. The room is equipped with



Mac computers for video-editing, a sound stage, professional cameras, lighting, and sound equipment.

Under the direction of Feliz Cooney and Stu Stein, the program has really begun to have a positive impact on our students' experience and has made life around Mepham a bit more exciting and well-publicized. Their new Youtube channel was recently opened where you can see the talent of our broadcasters and checkout some of what has been happening around BMCHSD. They currently have 27 videos posted, including Calhoun vs. Mepham basketball games, school concerts, and Man on the Street interviews. The goal of the program is to grow and to gain a presence in all six schools during the 2017-18 school



year. They also are planning to cover more district-wide events, including a baseball doubleheader at SUNY Farmingdale featuring all three high school teams from Calhoun, Mepham, and Kennedy in the Spring. Please check out some of their work here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/BMBCBroadcasting>

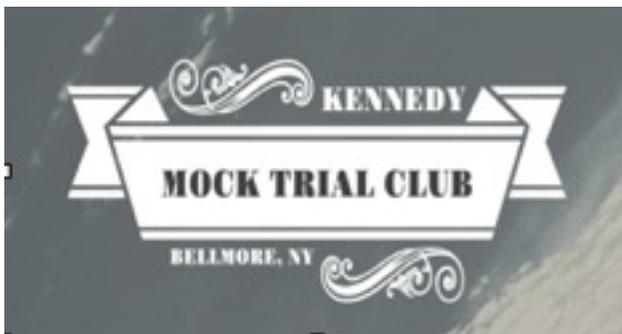


“KEY CLUB SAVES LIVES & SCIENCE TEACHERS BEAM WITH PRIDE”

BY BRUCE REED (J.F.K. H.S.), LOCAL DO'S EDITOR



JFK's **Jessica Chilton** coordinated the efforts of Kennedy's Key Club in the annual Blood Drive. Under Jess' guidance, the students organized the drive, and assisted the donors throughout the course of the day. In total, the Blood Bank collected a total of 55 pints



from among students and faculty alike. Go, Key Club!

JFK'S Russ Lella and Dan Jantzen coached their Science Olympiad team as they competed in the Nassau East Regional Olympiad. The team finished 13th out of a total of 44 teams. The students expressed their skills in a



variety of fields, including microbes, hydrogeology, and coding.

And kudos to **Kara McManus** and **Terry Negron** who's Mock Trial club defeated Valley Stream Christian Academy.

Congratulations!

The BMUST Benevolent Fund

A reminder to all BMUST members, the **Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers' Benevolent Fund** is a death benefit that is free to all in service members of BMUST. In the event of a member's death, a payment of \$2,500 is made to a designated beneficiary.

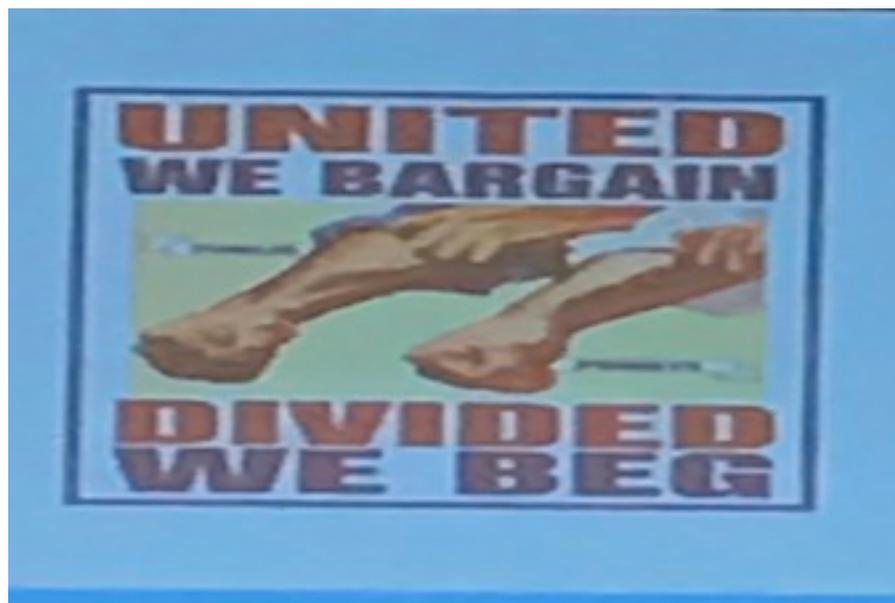
If you have not filled out a Designation of Beneficiary form, or if you need to update the form currently on file, please do so now and return it to the union office as soon as possible. The form is available [here](http://www.bmust.org) on the BMUST website (www.bmust.org, under Member Services - Designation of Beneficiary).

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the Union Office at ext. 1068. Thank you, Rob Walsh (2nd Vice- President, BMUST).

Con Con Bingo- Can we Risk It?

Reduce Your Pension	Protect Funding for Mentally Ill	Fracking	Lose Workers Compensation	Eliminate Right to a Free Public Education
No more Collective Bargaining	Eliminate Tax Exemptions	Make NY a "Right-to-work" State	Allow Open Carry of Fire Arms	Clean Air and Water
Raise State Debt Limits	Term limits for Politicians	Make the Tax Cap Permanent	Ensure Access to Public Hospitals	Legalize Marijuana
Right to Affordable Housing	Expand Casino Gaming	Ban Abortion	Strengthen the Safe Act	Free College
Protection of Public Land from Development	Publicly funded Campaign System	Allow Public Funding of Religious Schools	Address Unfunded Mandates	Protect Same Sex Marriage

myfreebingocards.com



Simplifying your life insurance options

As an educated consumer, you realize the earlier in life that you purchase life insurance, the cheaper the premiums will likely be. You're also aware that life insurance offers financial protection for your dependents upon your death, helping to cover the costs of funeral and burial expenses; assistance to help with your children's education; and offering financial assistance with paying debts and other expenses.

It can be overwhelming, though, trying to determine the best type of life insurance policy. Let's take a look at some of the different types of life insurance options available.

#1: Whole Life Insurance

– This type of insurance is usually the most costly since policies are guaranteed to remain in force as long as premiums are paid. Whole life insurance offers permanent protection with premiums that never increase and builds cash value you can borrow against while you are living (like a loan). **Important:** Understand that you will reduce your death benefit if you don't repay loans with interest and will no longer have coverage if you surrender the policy.

#2: Term Life Insurance – This type of insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specified term, offering a fixed rate of payments during that time period. Once that period ends, coverage at the previous premium rate is not guaranteed and the insured would need to get

further coverage. Term life insurance (and its level term life cousin) is designed only to protect your dependents if you were to die prematurely -- offering NO cash value.

#3: Level Term Life Insurance – Like term life insurance, level term life insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specific time period. Premiums may not be

increased during the time period due to change in your age or health status.

#4: Universal Life Insurance

– This type of insurance offers a way to protect your dependents while building tax-deferred cash value. While the cost of a universal life plan needs to be covered so the policy remains in force, the policyholder has the option to adjust how much he or she will pay in premiums each year. Policyholders can also access a portion of the balance without affecting the guaranteed death benefit as the cash value accumulates over time.

Keep in mind that NYSUT members & their spouses/certified domestic partners can help protect their dependents from life's uncertainties with a variety of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed life insurance plans. Many of these plans offer group rates not available to the general public along with additional convenience and savings opportunities.

“Term life and level term life policies are often popular options for those individuals with young families since there is a greater need for life insurance protection. They also tend to be much less expensive than their whole life counterparts. If you are considering a term or level term life policy, make sure to consider how long you would need the coverage.”

For more information about these plans, visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.