

# LOCAL DO'S



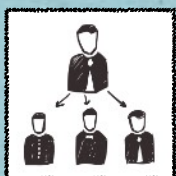
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**"MY UNION BROTHERS & SISTERS"  
ROB WALSH, BMUST PRESIDENT**

**Holy cow!** What an incredibly challenging and difficult three months it has been. Words can not express my gratitude, appreciation and admiration for all of you and the work you have done on behalf of our community. Thank you for the incredible job you have done compassionately educating the students of our community while living in a world that we never could have imagined. Before the pandemic hit, I was so very proud of the time and energy spent by BMUST members in support of the Community Cupboard. You have helped put food on the table of the members of our community most in need. To those of you who have continued to volunteer, collect and organize for the Cupboard throughout this pandemic, well, you amaze me.

Finally, to all of you who have helped our BMUST community by donating to the BMUST COVID-19 Relief Fund, thank you. Nearly \$9,000 has been collected and dispersed to members who found themselves in dire financial need.

If I may take a moment to address the current state of affairs in our country and in our community. Let me state, unequivocally, that BMUST stands in opposition to racism in all of its manifestations. We stand opposed to injustice, intolerance and acts of violence and intimidation. Let this time and these events be a call to action. Donate your time, energy and money to organizations that foster a just, fair and equitable society. Within each of our

schools you have the opportunity to join in the work of clubs and organizations that educate around issues of justice, acceptance and equality. Let your voice be heard and support those who are peacefully assembling. Perhaps most importantly, register and vote on November 3rd.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all of our retirees, to whom we dedicate this issue of Local Do's. We thank you for your many years

of service to all of our communities, but most especially to all of us, your BMUST brothers and sisters. We are

all better because of you. May this next leg of your journey be full of much joy and happiness.

***In Solidarity,  
Rob***



**Rob Walsh,  
President, BMUST**

**"Thank you for the incredible job you have done compassionately educating the students of our community while living in a world that we never could have imagined."**

***Thank  
you***



## “MAKING AN IMPACT”

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

**The Calhoun Family** has been focusing on the positives and looking for ways to be good to each other. Teachers are providing assignments via on-line platforms. They have met challenges with a level of enthusiasm; Calhoun teachers and staff are trying to maintain normalcy and trying to provide instruction and feedback in novel ways. Zoom and Google Meet seem to be a home-run and have been widely commented on as very helpful by staff and students. Parent emails have been pouring in thanking Calhoun staff and teachers for all they are doing for kids. Google classroom, Nearpod, edPuzzle, Instagram, TikTok....whatever platform it is, our teachers are trying new things and asking kids to be creative. Reaching out and communicating with them is helping them through this very strange time in all our lives.



To help maintain the sense of community within her 9th grade Global 1 Social Studies classes, Ms. Finneran encouraged on-line class discussions via Google classroom. In these discussions, students not only reconnected with each other, but compared and contrasted the Coronavirus pandemic with the Black Plague epidemic and NYS Regents exams with civil service exams in Tang and Song China. Ms. Finneran also sought to make real world connections when studying global trade along the Silk Road during the Mongol rule in China and students shared in class discussions the favorite products they use in their everyday lives that come from China. To help keep students from getting bored while isolated and to give them something to do off the computer, she encouraged them to do some extra credit and relieve stress by going outside into their yards. There they were painting, drawing, or writing poems about something in nature, the way people in China did during the Tang and Song Dynasties.

In Ms. Finneran and Ms. Sacco's 11th grade U.S. History and Government classes, students learned the research process and researched primary and secondary sources to write a script and create a video on one character from the 1920s that they were interested in. Students submitted their videos on flipgrid and the class will get to “reunite” with each other next week when they all view each other's videos. For extra credit and something fun to do over the weekend, Ms. Finneran and Ms. Sacco encouraged students to use flipgrid to submit videos of themselves doing the Charleston, singing or playing a jazz song, or speaking using 1920s slang.

[Watch the incredible performance](https://youtu.be/02e0Cgz2buw) from the Calhoun Choral Program COVID-19 Can't Stop the Music! The 2019-2020 Calhoun HS Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, PULSE, performing "Take On Me"... remotely from their homes. <https://youtu.be/02e0Cgz2buw>

On May 6th Heather Lohr, Lisa Loonie, Dan Ortiz, Melanie Picchioni, and Melissa Rohr were celebrated for receiving tenure in a Zoom Board Reception for this special accomplishment. The Calhoun family congratulates them for reaching this first of many milestones in their career. They are extraordinary people and fantastic educators.

The Calhoun family congratulates and honors the retirees for the outstanding work and service. They will be greatly missed!

**Alana Baard – Calhoun – Cosmetology**  
**Richard Diodati – Calhoun – Dean/Social Studies**  
**Cynthia Leung – Calhoun – Para President**  
**Peter Magnuson – Calhoun – English**  
**Cynthia Tellekamp – Calhoun – Guidance Counselor**



## “MEPHAM - NOT MISSING A BEAT!”

BY LINU CHACKO (MEPHAM H.S.), LOCAL DO'S STAFF WRITER

**BMB (Bellmore-Merrick Broadcasting)** has **not missed a beat** covering all the COVID-19 news in the community and around the world. On the last day of classes, the morning announcements for Friday, March 13th updated us on the information available at that time. Since then, a lot has changed and BMB has covered it all with weekly shows, PSAs on social distancing, and a series of tutorial videos to support students with remote learning.

In addition to disseminating news, BMB took up the job of entertaining the Bellmore-Merrick community as well!

**Lisa Kalish, Matt Russell and Stu Stein** led our incredible **BMB crew** through two game nights, live on YouTube. Thank you for taking such good care of us during this lockdown period!



### Virtual Enterprises

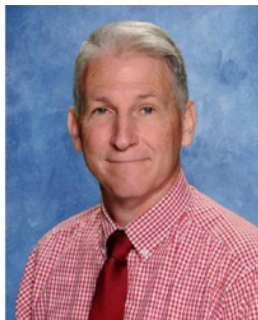
Much of life as we know it seems “cancelled” but Mepham continues to shine and give back even in lockdown! **Lisa Federici and the amazing Art Department** will hosted a [virtual Art Show](#) with work from students and staff on June 1st!

**Kerri Dennis and Chris Patten** are calling all heroes to Mepham's 10th Chop Your Locks for Charity event to benefit the St. Baldrick's Foundation. On Friday, June 5th, shavees will show solidarity for children who continue to battle cancer. The event will be streamed live on the BMB YouTube page. Viewers will also be able to share their head shaving via Instagram and Twitter.

## YOU WILL BE MISSED!



Michele Ackerman,  
English



Henry Dircks,  
Social Studies



Bill Leacock,  
Science

Mepham honors our new retirees and all the years of dedication and service. While we did not have a chance (yet!) to formally celebrate their rich legacies, we are already missing each of them dearly! Thank you to Michele, Henry, and Bill for everything they contributed to our Mepham family! Each one is a respective powerhouse in his/ her department and we wish them the very best in their retirement! Mark your calendars - we'll see you on June 14, 2021 for the big celebration:)

## “A LITTLE ELBOW GREASE!”

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

### Greetings from Meadowbrook Road!



This year we welcomed a Senior at MAP who has been a wonderful addition to our school. (We are very sad to see him go!) Maximus Santana is a participant in the Electrical Training Program, which is finishing its inaugural year in the Brookside building. In his spare time, Max is an all-around good guy who likes to help out.

A few years ago, Karen Gliebe donated a pool table to MAP, which was refurbished by our staff and students. The pool table's popularity has caused some wear and tear over time. When John Boyle became concerned about the condition of the table, Max stepped up and volunteered to refurbish it.

He worked on it single-handedly: removing the felt, which had become ripped and stained; applying a fresh coat of beeswax to the seams between the three pieces of slate that form the table; perfectly sizing, fitting, gluing, and stapling the new felt on the table (which was very difficult because of the degree to which the felt had to be made taut); re-installing the four bumpers; and installing six brand-new, beautiful leather pockets.

According to John Boyle, Max “did a great job! His work has allowed a regular crowd of students to play pool during lunch.” Bravo, Max! And viva la pool table!

*Best regards,  
Laura*



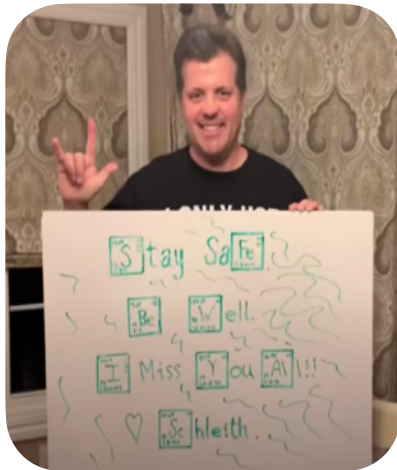


## "STAYING CONNECTED"

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

### "Can't Stop the Feeling"

THE JFK FACULTY collaborated to create a video to the students of JFK H.S. with a positive message of hope and encouragement. **Mallory Freely and Colleen Conroy** collected video segments from a wide variety of teachers and combined them into a seamless video presentation for the school. Teachers can be seen holding posters and messages to communicate how much they are missed and appreciated. The ["Can't Stop the Feeling"](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF6Tb1qHHek&feature=youtu.be) video can be viewed using this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF6Tb1qHHek&feature=youtu.be>



### JFK Student Government Supports Healthcare Workers

Under the supervision of **Brad Seidman** (Social Studies) JFK's student government has sought to support those on the frontlines of the pandemic.

**Eric Giannaris and Dylan Lipman** took the lead in organizing a collection for local healthcare workers and set up collection tables so that people could donate food, drinks, and masks. The collected items were delivered to Mt. Sinai South Nassau Hospital for a Grab-and-Go supply table for healthcare workers.



### Senior Decision Day Parade

To highlight National Decision Day for the Class of 2020, the JFK faculty and staff showed their resiliency by hosting an on-campus Senior Decision Day Parade. Seniors and their families decorated their cars and proudly displayed their college choices. Over 100 JFK staff members lined the parking lot with their cars to cheer on the Class of 2020. The event was featured on ABC News, Newsday and the Bellmore Herald. Bellmore

Herald Article on JFK's Senior Decision Day Parade: <https://www.liherald.com/bellmore/stories/kennedys-seniors->

## “PRIDE @ MAMS”

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

**Merrick Avenue had quite a year. And that was before we were hit by a pandemic.**

We used to have a principal who was a firm believer in Murphy's Law; if anything could go wrong, it would go wrong. While this sentiment rings true on so many levels, perhaps it could even be this year's theme for the nation. I can say with confidence that many things actually went right this school year despite Murphy showing up and crashing the party.

Merrick Avenue finally feels right. There is a level of comfort that much of the, shall we say, more mature (older) staff can recall that goes back to over ten years ago. Back then, while we had calm amidst chaos, we knew what to expect and we had each other. Of all the changes we have experienced inside those concrete walls, we have always had each other, so it was no surprise that when the doors were closed in March and we sought shelter at home, the Rams continued to be a valuable support system for so many of us. Maybe it's because we finally have an administrative dream team that is rock solid. They “get it” and that makes going to work on a daily basis (when we actually leave the house) that much easier. Already functioning as a team has made it that much easier to adapt relatively quickly to our new normal. I don't mean to speak out of turn, but I would put that in the win column for 2020.

I could dwell on how difficult this has been, as a teacher, a mom, a human, but I would be preaching to the choir. As I write this, I lack that usual end of year excitement that runs rampant among the adults and the kids as soon as we flip that calendar page over to June.

different meaning right it. And Covid-19 did not over around us has not continued to do what we do

**“At this moment in time, I think teachers  
have shown that we don't back down when  
the work gets tough.”**

“We made it” has a whole now, but we did. We made win. The unrest boiling won. Merrick Avenue has best; come together.

We took our show on the representatives, under the leadership of Amanda Myles-

parade from North Merrick to South Merrick. Fortunately, none of us got any tickets for moving violations. There were no fender benders & we did not interrupt any students taking the AP exams (we ceased honking at the start of the test). However, I personally think honking really makes the parade. If you're local, you may have spotted the Ram mascot, a.k.a. Ms. Altman's son. Standout moments from that day were when we all saw each other and gave faux social distancing hugs, pooled our resources to go all out with our car decor, and saw the community gathered outside with signs and cheers for us. For us! That was an added bonus because this little bit of cheer was for them.

road, literally. Our building strong and dedicated McAnally, organized a wave

We delivered lawn signs to our 8th graders. Staff volunteered at the Community Cupboard. Others starred in the Bellmore-Merrick Game Night & Faculty Follies. Carly Gould got the weight gain ball rolling when she created cooking class videos for students (that were shared with staff) to complete in their free time. The videos included dishes such as apple crisp, garlic knots and hummus. Scott Byers, our Band Teacher, had his students compile music to create multiple “MAMS Band Class” playlists based on the different genres that the students like listening to. You can listen to these as they are now available on Spotify. Additionally, Mr. Byers' students are working on a final project where they will have the opportunity to record themselves playing a singular duet part. He will then record himself “playing” with them over their recording to make virtual duets for them to enjoy. We are looking forward to enjoying these duets, too. Mrs. Schleith & the International Buddy Club, to honor and show gratitude to some of our “heroes” on the front lines during this pandemic, made cards/signs for two different hospitals, North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset where one of her Club member's father is a nurse and Plainview Hospital. Cards were prepared so that they would receive them during National Nurses Week. The representatives were so grateful to Mrs. Schleith and the Club members for their effort. Club members also made thank you cards/signs for our school nurses. PRIDE Club hosted a virtual PRIDE day and Mr. Schwartz managed to get the Rampage out, digitally of course. Lauren Beinert, sent out inspirational videos every Friday and there were mainly “reply all” moments via email. Many of our teams will be hosting a food drive for the Cupboard which will give us an opportunity to provide some closure to our students by saying goodbye to them, face to face instead of through a computer, while they drop off non-perishable items.

This spring, our Ram family grew too. Dan Bowker and Caitlin Eliopoulos became first time parents and Sarah Norton welcomed her third child!!!

Congratulations and nothing but well wishes to Helen Dove, one of paraprofessionals, who is retiring this year. Helen has made such a difference in the lives of the students she has worked with and will certainly be missed.

On a personal note, I have learned, like many others, that life doesn't always turn out as we expect it to. But we have choices. We can wallow in what wasn't or what was supposed to be OR we can adapt. We can adjust our expectations and make the most of what we have. There is beauty in each day. We are stronger and more capable than we give ourselves credit for. Don't get me wrong, this has been difficult. But you know what? Doing difficult things makes us stronger. And at this moment in time, I think teachers have shown that we don't back down when the work gets tough. How many times have we said that to our own classes? Wishing everyone a wonderful summer.



## “GOODBYE TO RETIREES”

BY STACI PEKUSIC (GRAND AVE M.S.),  
LOCAL DO'S WRITER

This year has certainly brought some unexpected changes, but June has returned, as it always does, and with it we must say “good-bye” to some of our colleagues. This year, Ken Abbott and Pia Santodonato are moving on from Grand Avenue Middle School to new chapters in their lives.

**Ken Abbott** is a Science teacher, wrestling coach, and Honor Society advisor. He began his career at Bellmore-Merrick in 1990, teaching at Mephram, until transferring to Grand in 1997. His most memorable teaching moments include being here when the planes hit on 9/11 and the life-changing phone call of his organ donor match. Ken will miss the friendship of colleagues, the support of the district, and the sight of his students' faces, but he has big plans for retirement: as much travel as possible, volunteer work as an advocate for organ donation, and hopefully competing at the World Transplant Games. We will miss Ken's enthusiasm and energy, but wish him the very best.



**Pia Santodonato** has been teaching Health at Grand Avenue since 1990. She has been the SADD advisor for 29 years, building rep and head building rep; Fitness Friday and Aerobic Intramurals advisor; and supervisor for homework help, the after-school program, and the cafeteria. Pia received the New York Health Teacher Award in 1995, the BMUST Outstanding Professional Award, and PTA Founder's Day Award. Most of all, her work with SADD includes extensive community service donations to several local charities. We will miss Pia's endearing smile and sense of humor. Her plans for retirement are, in her words, “unlimited!”

We wish Pia and Ken the best and hope they will continue to look back upon their years at Grand with love and laughter. They have made our workplace feel more like home.



## “CONGRATULATIONS TO RETIREES”

BY BILL MORRIS (MEPHAM H.S.),

BMUST 2ND VICE PRESIDENT

**Congratulations to The Retiree Class of 2020!** The truth is, when it comes to the effectiveness and strength of Our Union, our Retirees have built our organization and continue to support us long after they have retired. So, to The Retiree Class of 2020, once you catch your breath, we hope to see you back soon!

I have decided to start a project this year, where I have asked our members, active and retired, to share their Union stories with me so that I can create an archive of sorts to post to our website. (*Please keep the stories coming.*) The response from our retirees is a testament to the work they have done, and continue to do, on our behalf. So far, I have received some wonderful stories from our BMRTA President, Sharon

Wisla (Class of 2005), our former BMUST President, Mike Dolber (2013), and Pat Christy (1982 and our 1st BMRTA President). I would like to take this opportunity to share this story from Ellen Weiss (2006).



### MEMORIES OF THE 1974 STRIKE

In September of 1971 I began my career with BMCHSD (then called Central High School District #3), having been hired only 2 weeks before the start of the school year.

In August of 1974, my husband and I purchased our first home, in the East Meadow School District (you don't want to know what we paid for it). I watched the Watergate impeachment hearings as I unpacked our boxes. We also got our first dog.

On the first day of school in 1974 I became a tenured teacher, at the start of my 4<sup>th</sup> year as a teacher. In October of that same year I lost tenure, as the BMUST went on strike. I picketed with my fellow teachers outside the school I taught in at that time, Merrick Ave. Junior High School (no middle school then). I remember garbage trucks driving past the school honking their horns in solidarity. We were in precarious positions, but there was a feeling of camaraderie amongst us. On a couple of occasions I brought my new puppy to picket with us. On the second day, another teacher (Edith Olsen, Science) brought this coat for the dog. A dog lover herself, she had made it the night before so our dog would not be cold in the early morning air. She wore it proudly as she walked the picket line with us.

While there was a tremendous sense of solidarity and a determination to see this thing through, protecting class size, there was great fear. We knew we were sacrificing 2 days' pay for every day we were out. How would bills be paid?



During these unprecedented times and in the face of incredible adversity, each of you continue to sacrifice and dedicate yourselves to our children, our families and our communities.

We thank all of the educators, school-related professionals, nurses and other health care workers who continue to demonstrate their unwavering compassion, dedication and commitment to our communities on a daily basis.

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