

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

~Margaret Mead

This supplementary issue of *The Beacon* is devoted to the hardworking, BTA members who go above and beyond their daily duties by volunteering, organizing and going that extra mile for the South Country Community. It is our pleasure as editors to feature all of your great accomplishments with our colleagues. Stay tuned for the next full edition of *The Beacon* in June. Thank you again for all of your support.

Chris and Steph, editors



The Beacon “Lite”

APRIL, 2010

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BELLPORT
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

“Math Around the World” in South Country

By Aimee Volk

Book Blogs Sweep the District

Every first grade class in the district has been working on their Book Blog project during the current school year. This was made possible through a grant from the South Country Education Foundation awarded to Computer Lab Assistants Maryanne Brandi & Laura Earl, Kreamer Street teachers Fran Dunton & Vicki Williams, and Verne W. Critz Principal Kathy Munisteri. Throughout the year, the children throughout the year write and illustrate stories to coincide with the Houghton Mifflin Reading Series. They type their stories and scan their drawings which are compiled into hard covered books. These books go home to their families to read, enjoy and enter their comments or blogs. The children are thoroughly excited about this project and enjoy sharing their work with other families.



The fifth annual Family Math Day took place on Saturday, March 13th, 2010. Over 300 students accompanied by family members were on hand for an amazing morning of math. This year’s theme, “Math Around the World” challenged all those who attended.

A committee of teachers worked for months to coordinate and encourage the participation of numerous community businesses and individuals to get involved in this exciting opportunity for our students and their families.

Thanks to everyone who helped to make this day a success

Special thanks to our committee members for their endless hours, optimism and patience! Connie Havens and Aimee Volk were co-coordinators for the event. Nicole Albrecht, Maryanne Brandi, Corrine Figueroa-Camacho, Peggy Heotis, Kandy Kane, Joe Tortora, Danielle Gulotta, Cheryl Ittig, Fran Dunton, Beverly Regnier, Bill Pettit, Jill De Rosa, Lisa Nabi and Brenda Tejada rounded out the committee.

An additional thank you to those individuals and businesses in our community that participated to show math in the “real world” and made this our best Family Math Day yet: Bellport Head Start, South Country Ambulance, Best Bargain Books, Island School and Art Supply, Jaclynn Brandi – Massage Therapist, Monti’s Auto Works, Bellport Jewelers and Galleries, Oliver West Day Spa, Relay for Life, and The Variety Mart.



First grade teachers spent their staff development day learning how to make book blogs. The project was funded through a grant from South Country Education Foundation.

Grade level appropriate workshops were presented by Jennifer Gonnely, Deana Fortunato, Jackie Wohl, Krista Giordano, Danielle Gulotta, Debbie Gurney, Meghann Kumm, Lisa Marchese, Lauren Masem, Joe Tortora, Lauren Brennan, Cheryl Ittig, Stephanie Maffei, Karen Saffari, Stephanie Testa, Cheryl White, Vicki Williams, Laura Heaton, Melissa Masullo, Mike McGovern, and David Perkins.

The Bellport HS Art Club, headed by Lisa Conk, had students create the murals that were displayed and used for estimation activities. The students and their families enjoyed the culminating activities performed by Mark Rothstein, who demonstrated physical strength through his jump roping and its connection with mathematics.

Over 50 volunteers from throughout our district were available to hand out t-shirts, folders, and snacks throughout the morning. Student volunteers representing the HS Interact Club and Future Teacher’s of America assisted in different ways to benefit our younger students.

Funding for Family Math Day was provided by the South Country Central School District, the South Country Teacher Center, Brookhaven Elementary PTA, Kreamer Street PTA, Verne W. Critz PTA and Frank P. Long PTA.

Thanks to all for helping to make Family Math Day a true South Country math tradition!



A Message from the Vice Presidents

Over the past few months the leadership of the union has been faced with making decisions that affect the entire membership. These decisions have not been without controversy. We are all participating in activities and events that may take us out of our comfort zone for a common goal. This is a necessity! We must stand in solidarity for RESPECT for our prestigious profession.

WE NEED YOU!

Across Long Island, there is an urban myth that teachers are only in education for the money and not the students. We as your leaders know we all entered the field of education with the vision of making a difference in the youth of today and the communities we serve. Throughout the South Country community the BTA continues to make a difference by doing food and clothing drives, raffles for Red Cross, Relay for Life, fund raising for Special Olympics and grant writing for programs throughout the district. These non-contractual

activities are just the tip of the iceberg of community service that the BTA participates in. As the BTA strives to meet their student's needs, we roll out carts of materials and spend hours of our own time planning at home. The dwindling funds for our classrooms have us digging deeper into our own pockets to meet the increasing needs and expectations of our students. **"HOW CAN ANYONE SAY THE BTA IS ONLY IN IT FOR THE MONEY?"**

The lack of movement in negotiations has us feeling angry, disappointed and unappreciated for what we do. **WE SHOULD FEEL THAT WAY!** We should be angry after all some of us are being singled out for exercising our First Amendment Rights. We should be disappointed with statements being spun in public that put us in a negative spotlight. We should feel unappreciated with this never ending tsunami of different administrations that seem to not respect our professional opinions.

As your union leaders we continue to fight on multiple fronts to counter act these negative things that make us angry, disappointed and feeling unappreciated. However we cannot do it alone! **WE NEED YOU STANDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH US IN THESE BATTLES!**

Let it be known we as the BTA leadership will continue to make informed decisions that will benefit us as well as the community. In our hearts we know it is our BTA members that have kept the educational process of the USS South Country afloat through these turbulent times.

THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE AND CONTINUE TO DO FOR THE STUDENTS, COMMUNITY AND THE UNION!!!

YOURS IN UNITY,

Teri and Wayne



Pictured from left to right are Joanna Benavides, Nicole Hamill, Sylvia Glover, Lauren Fujii, Meagan Briggs, Kelly Palace, Tyler Furia, Vanessa Verni, Brittany Miller, Anna Strano and Lauren Staudt

South Country School District is hosting the American Cancer Society Relay for Life at Bellport High School June 18th – 19th, 2010. Ms. Diane Poulos, Health Teacher and Mr. Joseph Cipp, Interim Superintendent co-chairs, have organized this community event to help fight cancer. Ms. Poulos along with her group of volunteer students known as "Team Poulos" are asking the community to participate. For information contact dpoulos@southcountry.org, www.relayforlife.org/southcountryNY or gail.tuohey@cancer.org.

As of April 6th, there are 36 teams signed up and 240 people registered. On Thursday, May 6th from 4 to 10 pm, there will be a fundraiser at Appelbee's on Sunrise Highway in Patchogue. This "Dining to Donate" fundraiser allows for 10% of each bill to be donated back to South Country's Relay for Life. Diners must present a flyer at the time of ordering. Flyers will be distributed prior to the event.

Calle's Friends for Special Olympics

On March 28th, Wayne Caldicott held a fundraiser for "Calle's Friends for Special Olympics" at Painter's Restaurant in Brookhaven. Thanks to the kind hearted and generous people at South Country, the event raised over \$3000. All proceeds went to the Long Island Special Olympics. Wayne's band, The Vagabond Garden sounded great and everybody had an awesome time while raising money for this wonderful cause.

Wayne's network of volunteers included South Country Staff members Laurie O'Hara, Jordan Pepe, Jill Fedge, Vicky DeRosso, Sean Chavious, Kim O'Connell, Theresa Turecamo, Laura Horn, Dawn Reuter, Marie Lunde-Ledgister and students

from Bellport High School Club Athletes Helping Athletes and Wayne's classes past and present. Volunteers collected tickets and donations and were on hand at the raffle display during the event.

Wayne would like to thank the people of the South Country School District, his friends, neighbors and colleagues. Wayne passed along Calle's thanks to everybody who worked so tirelessly, "you are the story: you are people who care about people and wanted to express your care for a very special population, the Special Olympians. I couldn't have done it without you." Thank you Wayne for organizing such a great event!