

the

HALLOWART BEAT

Newsletter of the Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers
Winter, 2012-13

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HHH Teachers Association, 6268 Jericho Turnpike, Unit #10, Local 2701, NYSUT/AFT/AFL-CIO, Commack, NY 11725-2810

.... *President's Message*

The fall seems to have flown by and all the concerns we had about the teacher evaluations and APPR, the elections, and the changes in our prescription coverage are now in the (immediate) past.

The Teachers Association has negotiated a satisfactory evaluation plan and we did not lose a large number of teachers as we had feared. Difficulty with the budget for 2013 remains a significant problem to be dealt with next year due to the tax cap restraints.

The elections went down to the wire for many candidates, including the President. NYSUT's endorsements of those who were pro-education helped President Obama and Representative Tim Bishop, as well as others, to win.

Currently the changes to our prescription plan are being thoroughly explained via the large mailing we all received recently from United Healthcare. I urge you to scan these booklets. Any question or concern that you have is probably covered there. The Abridged Formulary lists drugs alphabetically as well as by health condition. It also indicates what tier each drug is in (generic, preferred, and non-preferred) which determines the amount of co-pay. Also very helpful is the Pharmacy Directory which lists the pharmacies in the Empire Plan Medicare Rx network.

If you are an Empire Plan member, you should also have received your new prescription cards in the mail. If you have not, you should call them at 1-877-769-7447, twenty-four hours any day. These cards, a separate one for each member covered by your policy, are to be used starting January 1, 2013.

A new feature of this plan is that we will receive a monthly "Explanation of Benefits" statement for each month in which we purchase prescriptions. This will help to keep track of your purchases and give info and phone numbers to call for help.

As the year ends, I wish you all a wonderful holiday time and good health in 2013.

Joan Detroske

Our hearts and prayers go out to the families and friends of the victims in the Newtown, shootings.

As teachers and human beings, we all feel a connection with the events of that terrible day.

Know Your HHHART Board

Our interviewee this issue is Norma Smith who is a publisher of the *HHHART Beat*.



When people reminisce about their elementary school teachers, I'm a little envious. I attended eleven elementary schools in my youth. (My dad was in the Air Force.) So when I think of my teachers, I see a rotogravure of faces. It did not give me a "model" upon whom to base my own teaching. But, in addition to Spelling and Math, I did learn Adjusting and Acclimating. I did go to the High School of Industrial Art without moving. There, I was able to nurture my love of art.

With the war over, we settled in the Bronx and I commuted to the city for High School and then Hunter College.

I married and then lived with my first husband in Stuttgart, Germany. (You guessed it ... he was in the army.) It did give us an opportunity to travel and visit other wonderful European cities. Upon our return, I began my teaching career in Plainedge in grade one and then stopped to have my three lovely daughters.

When I returned to teaching, it was to Half Hollow Hills, where I taught reading, fourth grade, and drama while attending Long Island University at night. I also taught Language Arts Methods in addition.

Drama was an extracurricular activity that I loved. We produced wonderful plays such as *Fiddler*, *Oliver*, *Annie*, and so on. Tom, my second husband, was very supportive of this aspect of my teaching career. He even helped me make costumes for the children.

After retirement, we did a great deal of traveling, now scheduling trips before a new grandchild was due. We have six beautiful grandchildren with whom we have had wonderful and varied relationships. One of my joys has been working on the newsletter with Sandy and Barbara.

Tom passed away two years ago leaving me and our children and grandchildren with wonderful memories.

Norma Smith



CORTLI Luncheon, Fall 2013

The Coalition of Retired Teachers of LI (CORTLI) held its fall luncheon on Thursday, October 18th at the Crest Hollow Country Club. The guest speakers were Caroline McCarthy and Tim Bishop whose talks were very impressive. They both spoke of their accomplishments as representatives in Congress and made it apparent that they were worthy of the NYSUT endorsement they had received. Fortunately, they were both re-elected. It was a very informative afternoon. Half Hollow Hills was very well represented and, hopefully, you will consider going to the next CORTLI luncheon.

Sandy Glickman



Input / Output

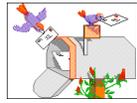


A short time after our fall issue was published, our area was devastated by Super Storm Sandy. Few of us went on with normal lives. The lack of a home and/or essential services was overwhelming. Shortages in basic foods and gas added to the discomfort.

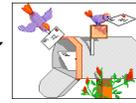
We hope you will consider donating to the NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund (see p. 4).

We hope 2013 will bring good health and joy to us all.

Sandy, Barbara & Norma



---Keep In Touch---



We went on a tour of the California coast, Sonoma and Yosemite – beautiful! At the end of June, we are headed to Disney World with grandkids. I volunteer at Planting Fields Arboretum every Thursday morning and at Huntington Hospital on Friday mornings. Life is good!
John A Marr

This past May, Fred and I traveled with our good friends, Merele and Alan Milim, to Atlanta, where we attended our daughter's Ph.D. graduation ceremony at Emory University. We were proud to see Heather as she was "hooded". The next day we visited Stone Mountain, GA and took a tram to the top of the mountain. The view was breathtaking. We continued and made stops at various natural habitat and historical sites in Tennessee and Virginia. All in all, it was a fun-filled, adventurous trip and to our pleasant surprise, the weather even cooperated. Our daughter just completed her first year teaching as an assistant professor in the Sociology and Criminal Justice Department at Towson University in Maryland.
Roberta Scheuerman

A very important thing that I've learned in retirement is that you must have good health to be able to do all that you want to do. Just reading about all the places traveled and things that HHH retirees continue to do is amazing and tiring at the same time. I do try to keep up with my alumni status eBoard for the HHH school district. I really hadn't enjoyed retirement due to some unforeseen health issues that I developed. But now, I am hopefully on a better road to recovery and will start to enjoy what I've worked for... "the golden years of retirement"! My husband and I had the privilege and pleasure of going with my dear friend Roberta and her husband to participate in viewing the "hooding" of their daughter, Heather, as she received her Ph.D. from Emory University. It was a beautiful honor and a spectacular event. We then enjoyed sites in Atlanta, viewing the Blue Ridge Mountains, Stone Mountain, Natural Bridge in Virginia and many battlefields. There is so much history to enjoy. Wishing you all good health and beautiful days in retirement.
Merle Milim

I retired in June and am traveling to Africa.
Susan Mandel

Thanks for all the great work you do on our behalf!
Fondly, *Peggy Cunningham*
Published two new books, *Conversations on La Playa*, about my life in Colombia, SA, and *Pilgrims' Steps* history of St. James and his way, available through iUniverse. My son, Paul completed his service with the Peace Corps in Micronesia. Christopher is off to L.A. to pursue a career in cinema and Ryan lives in VA as a lobbyist for green initiatives. All are happy and healthy.

Robert Hodum
My father was the welder and steel erector for Paumanok and Signal Hill. An error in measuring the foundation of Signal Hill caused each room to be one foot larger.

John Bilitsky Jr.
Will be traveling within the year to Okinawa and Japan, for 10 to 12 days with a karate demonstration group of 10 people, accompanying Sensei Jerry Figgiani from East Coast Black Belt Karate DoJo. Can't wait!

Lou Di Blasi
Busy with ballet classes, OLLI classes at Stonybrook, an Italian study group, volunteer gardening at Planting Fields, and helping my son with the rare degenerative neuromuscular disease, Friedreich's Ataxia.

Diane Streuli
I enjoyed a Road Scholar trip to the Barrier Islands on the inland waterway between Jacksonville and Charleston this spring. My travel companion is a music teacher (retired from Syosset) and summers we often come back to LI to relax in her condo at Greenport.

Nancy Cooper
My wife, Paula, and I are happy to announce that our son, Benjamin, will be married this summer (2012) in Hawaii on the island of Kauai.

Michael Sher
Our daughter, Jaci, will be married this summer (2012). Our son CJ has completed his first year at Penn State. My wife, Terri, has retired after 34 years as a teacher. Many blessings. Looking forward to our golden years ahead!

Bill Coon
Enjoying the good life with my wife, Michele—golf, traveling, playing softball and enjoying our grandchildren Keily five, James Patrick three, and Joey two.

Joseph Goonan

Thousands of NYSUT members were harmed by super storm Sandy and hundreds remain homeless and in dire need. We can meet that need for urgent assistance -- the largest in NYSUT history -- only if members and locals who were more fortunate step up.

NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi voiced that urgent appeal this week in a letter sent directly to all NYSUT bargaining unit and Retiree Council presidents urging them to mobilize support for the NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund.

"Solidarity is forever," he wrote. "What would it mean to you to receive this kind of support from your union sisters and brothers at a time of such great personal despair and need?"

Requests for assistance continue pouring in. The NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund, established to help members meet needs other resources don't cover, seeks to provide grants to the maximum number of members as resources allow. It depends on voluntary donations.

And watch your e-mail: in lieu of a holiday card, NYSUT is providing a way to donate to the fund in honor of a friend, colleague or loved one, with a certificate to forward to the recipient noting the donation.

For information about how to donate, visit www.nysut.org/disasterrelief.

from *NYSUT Leader Briefing* December 7th.

My wife, Marie LaBianca, passed away after a very lengthy illness on October 2, 2012. It was heartwarming to see how many of her friends and colleagues from Otsego and Forest Park came to the wake and funeral to pay their respects. I wish to extend my sincerest thanks to them. Their care, concern, support and sympathy were a great comfort to my family and me.

Warmest regards, *Dan LaBianca*

While wintering in Florida, I discovered NYSUT Retirees' Council 43 called TRIF (Teachers Retired in Florida). There are over 15,000 NY teachers living in Florida plus "snow birds" like myself. There are 17 chapters across the state, most in need of new members to carry on including mine in Daytona Beach. *John Hewlett*

Welfare Trust Fund Benefits

by *Dick Lee*, Fund Administrator

From the many phone calls I've received in the past month, there seems to be a lot of confusion with the 2013 changes in the Empire Plan/United Health Care Prescription Drug Plan program. For most of us it will just mean an extra prescription drug plan card that we will have to present to a participating pharmacy when getting our prescriptions. Below is an explanation of the major changes to our Empire Plan that will take effect on January 1, 2013.

Effective January 1, the NYSHIP Empire Plan is making changes in prescription coverage. Those who are Medicare Primary and their dependents will be enrolled in **EMPIRE PLAN MEDICARE Rx**, a Medicare Part D prescription program. This change applies only to the Empire prescription drug coverage; it is not a part of the federal Prescription Part D. Changes are being made as part of the Affordable Care Act, designed to reduce drug costs for brand name and generic drugs.

- 50% discount for brand name drugs;
- 14% for generic drugs
- There will be a separate prescription ID card
- Co-pays will remain the same as or better than in-service enrollees
- Formularies will remain the same or better than in-service enrollees
- There will be no donut hole
- Each Empire enrollee may have only one Empire Medicare Rx Part D benefit. If both spouses have family coverage, they will have to choose which plan to stay with. If no choice is made, Empire will cancel the plan that has been in existence the longest. Where there is dual coverage for family and also an individual coverage for one of the partners, the individual cannot continue to receive coverage if the family plan continues.

• High income Medicare retirees (\$89,500 individual, \$170,000 family), will be subject to a premium surcharge. If the district pays for a retiree health plan (i.e. 25%/35%) that will continue with prescriptions. However, unlike Part B premiums, the district is not required to reimburse the surcharge.

For questions or further information, please contact: Dot Zuckerman 631-273-8822 (Suffolk) or Kathy Lyons 516-496-2035 (Nassau)

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In November of 2011, I went on an 18 day nature trip to the South Island of New Zealand (NZ is made up of two islands and smaller ones nearby) and Stewart Island (which is south of the southern tip of the Island). There were five of us from different states and two naturalists/guides - talk about personal attention.

The trip was fascinating! It is such a lovely country and the people are so open and natural. It is also very environmentally conscious. Sheep and cattle are grass/hay fed and stay out of doors all year long; no barns and little if any use of hormones. The chickens are free range and there is no use of hormones. The salmon is farm raised just off the coast, but there is no problem with pesticide run off as in the states; most farmers try to avoid using it.

They even have deer ranches - a way to solve the problem of introduced species & explosion of population. The only native mammals are three kinds of bats and marine mammals. They have many native birds and reptiles and plants. No matter where I went it was always very clean; not a scrap of paper or cigarette butt etc. to be seen. They have a big recycling program even in hotel rooms. At least 25% of the land area of the and Islands is made up of national parks, wildlife refuges etc.

As you may remember, Christchurch was hit with a huge earthquake back in February of 2011. The center of town was fenced off. It looked like the end of the world - empty buildings standing and barren streets. The old buildings made of stone or brick (from the 1800's) really fell apart. The newer buildings and high rises were still standing, but many panes of glass had fallen out and some were covered with wood panels. A local told me that 300 buildings in Christchurch have to be demolished before they can rebuild and 5,000 buildings/homes in the suburbs have to be demolished before they can be rebuilt.

The section and lovely hotel I stayed in for two nights across from Hagley Park had no damage. As I walked around the fenced area I could see lower buildings and homes that had postings of no damage on the outside, but damage inside or possible damage inside to be checked. Many people have left the city for jobs and housing in other towns. So sad. It will take .5.

many years for the city to come back to its thriving life. One street outside the fenced area set up box cars so that some businesses and shops could try to maintain a semblance of business, especially for the tourist trade since many well known sights were in the fenced in area. There was a place to sign up for a bus ride into the center of town (with a few hours wait list), and you had to sign a waiver of being responsible for yourself if any buildings should fall etc. I didn't want to waste time standing around waiting. I figured I'd see what I could see outside the fenced area (part of the sight seeing walk) and one could look through the holes made in the fencing at various points to see different parts toward of the center of town.

North of Christchurch is the town of Kaikoura which has a huge underwater canyon about a mile wide and just under a mile deep off the coast. It comes very close to the shore by one of the bays and sperm whales are found in this canyon all year long. The afternoon I was out on the water, the pod which had been in my area that morning decided to move further north. I saw lots of seabirds, of course, and I did see the wandering albatross that have ten foot wing spans as I did in Antarctica.

The Maori (pronounced Mar-ee) people arrived in NZ only 800 years ago. They seem to be pretty well integrated into the white society (unlike the Aborigines of Australia). We spent a half day with one of the descendants, who can trace his lineage back to a particular boat, seeing areas having to do with their history, culture etc. and then were hosted by his wife (of Scottish descent) and learning/partaking in traditional Maori hosting rituals. It was a very interesting afternoon.

Spent many days in temperate rain forests (at eco-resorts) which are very lush and have many birds as do the tropical rain forests, but the birds are not as colorful as they are in the tropics. Spent time at Fox Glacier which doesn't get as many tourists as the popular Franz Josef Glacier, but I'm getting a bit jaded after having seen many glaciers. The Kiwis are having the same quick glacial receding problem as we are having in Glacier National Park

When we were visiting a sheep ranch (stations have much larger acreage), there was a tent set up for the crew that would be filming scenes for the movie THE HOBBIT. Thirty trucks were to be coming the next day. The young policeman on guard was concerned that we seven were undercover photographers staking out a place on our drive up the mountain (the rancher's property). The owner showed where he was taking us and how long we would be.

The tent looked like a wedding tent from the road so neighbors had no idea about the forthcoming filming. But when Elijah Wood and Peter Jackson show up in Queenstown, someone may get suspicious especially when thirty trucks show up.

Milford Sound is a very magnificent place, with views of the mountains rising up from the water with many waterfalls cascading down. However, it was rainy and foggy in many places, which hampered the dramatic views we experienced. On a trip, you have to take whatever Mother Nature gives you.

In the town of TeAnau we took a boat ride to see glowworms in TeAnau Cave. The cave was only discovered back in 1948. First there is the fascinating walk underground where one passes under glowworms on the roof of the cave and then the towboat (the guide does a hand over hand on a rope along the side of the cave) to a grotto where gazing up one thinks of the starry southern hemisphere nights. Just dazzling!

Mother Nature gave us a little twist on our Stewart Island stay. Six of us and the pilot flew over though it was "a bit windy". We landed on the tarmac (didn't know it until I looked out - what a pilot!) and no building, just the little runway - they used to land on a beach in a curved bay. And then for two days it rained on/off with gale winds (two systems colliding - one from Southeast Asia and one from Antarctica). People couldn't leave or arrive as planes were not flying. So we couldn't do two night hikes to see the blue penguin and kiwi colonies as we needed a boat as transport to another island and to the other side of the Stewart Island. We were lucky to manage a little van trip and a short day hike. Three quarters of Stewart Island is a national park.

The little town of Oban has a population of 400 which grows during the summer and has a very good recycling program so that it cuts down on the garbage to be shipped to 'the mainland' (the South Island).

When I was in Dunedin, there was an Occupy settlement in the town center park. Only seven tents, a small grandstand, but no people. A large sign hung telling what the 1%ers made in 2007 and what they are making now versus the 99%ers. That was it. Not much of a demonstration.

On our last evening we were supposed to go out on a boat, just for us, for dinner and to see various seabirds, but the captain didn't want to take a chance with the strong winds and tide (we might not be able to get back in). So Mother Nature did it again - she really wants me to come back. Needless-to-say, since Mother Nature threw us a few wrenches, the nature tour company has offered monetary credit toward a future trip which I thought was very nice.

So that's it in a nutshell. There were many other experiences, but this is long enough without them.

Joan Vanecek



Milford Sound

Welfare Trust Benefits continued

NOTE: Where the enrollee holds the family plan and is Medicare-primary but the dependents are not Medicare eligible, the dependents remain on the original prescription plan and also receive individual prescription cards.

If the holder of the family plan is not on Medicare but the spouse is, the spouse goes on Medicare Rx prescription coverage while the primary remains on the original plan. They each receive individual prescription cards.

Planning a trip? Let Member Benefits help!

Are you finally looking to book that fantastic getaway to the Caribbean or Europe that you've always been dreaming about? Maybe you've got a business trip that you need to plan? Or, do you need to rent a car to get around town as part of your next excursion?

Let your friends at NYSUT Member Benefits help! We've got a variety of endorsed discount travel programs designed to help you keep a few more dollars in your wallet while enjoying some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

If big savings is your game, the Member Benefits-endorsed travel program offered by Wyndham Hotels & Endless Vacation Rentals is for you! NYSUT members can enjoy savings of up to 20% at nearly 7,000 participating hotels among 15 hotel brands with Wyndham Worldwide; meanwhile, save 25% at more than 200,000 vacation rentals in 100 countries with Endless Vacation Rentals.

Wyndham Hotels has the right hotel for you at the right price – whether it's an upscale hotel, all-inclusive resort or something more cost-effective. With Endless Vacation Rentals, NYSUT members can save on resort condos, villas, homes, and cottages that provide space and flexibility ideal for families and groups of friends traveling together.

These aren't your everyday run-of-the-mill hotel rooms! Accommodations range in size from resort studios to multi-bedroom units. And, many units feature large living rooms, dining rooms, fully-equipped kitchens, and laundry facilities.

Whether you're looking for a multi-bedroom condo in Orlando or Las Vegas, or a luxurious resort in Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe, or Canada, Endless Vacation Rentals offers the space and comforts-of-home to make each stay a memorable time!

Need to rent a car as part of your next trip? NYSUT members can get discounted rates on passenger car rentals with the following companies: Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise,

Hertz, and National. You can even receive 20% off local or one-way truck rentals from Budget Truck Rental.

Finally, don't forget about TripMark.travel if you're looking for great deals on the most beautiful vacation spots in the world. This program provides NYSUT members and their family and

friends with online and offline (toll-free travel agents) leisure travel benefits.

TripMark.travel allows you to effortlessly book flights, hotels, vacation packages, and cruises online for personal and business travel needs. With a simple interface and advanced encryption technology, your information is safe and secure – giving you peace of mind as you plan your next trip.

Learn more about these endorsed programs – including how to access discounts, unique website codes and website links – by contacting Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 or visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org. Happy travels!



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.

The HHHART Newsletter is a publication of the Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers

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Mark Your Calendar



2013

Spring

Annual Meeting: TBA

Spring Event TBA



Our thanks to those of you who manned the phone banks before the elections.

E-mail Additions and Corrections

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Thelma Heit requested that we let our retirees know that her husband, Max, died in November. She lives in Denver, CO, at this time.

CREDITABLE COVERAGE LETTER

An important notice was sent to all retirees with medicare who are covered by NYSHIP (NY State Health Insurance Program/Empire) concerning creditable coverage requirements of the Medicare Prescription Drug Program. A copy of this two-page letter is posted on our web site – <http://www.hhhart.net>.

It is important to hold this letter in the event you have a problem with drug coverage. Contact Barry Corbett if you should have received this letter and did not.

IN MEMORIAM

Norma Xupolos
November, 2012
GU

Don't forget your 2012-13 HHHART dues and VOTE/COPE donation. Twenty-five dollars is suggested for VOTE/COPE.