



IMPORTANT NEWS FOR ALL RETIREES FROM JOAN AND NYSUT

.... *President's Message*

I attended NYSUT's Retiree Council's Silver Anniversary Conference this week. It was extremely well done and full of information. If you missed it, try to attend next year! One of the events was the presentation of *Certificates of Recognition* to members of the various councils who were nominated by their members. HHHART is a member of Retiree Council 20 whose President is former HHH President, Mel Stern. Members of RC 20 who received Awards for working diligently on behalf of Retirees were Manny Darwin, South Huntington; Roy Cuneo, Lindenhurst; Marge Vezzani, South Huntington; Eileen Zinck, North Babylon, and Joan Petroske, Half Hollow Hills. Congratulations to all!

There were several speakers who spoke to the Common Core and its effect on children, teachers, and parents. NYSUT is fighting to change this program because of the emotional toll on children and the change of the curriculum to a test-oriented rather than a learning one, especially in the elementary grades. Science and Social Studies are being neglected or omitted which impacts the Middle School. The teachers are also impacted since they are rated on the children's test scores with no consideration of the makeup of the individual class.

A very powerful speaker was Jeannette Deutermann from the Opt-Out movement. She related some touching stories about children no longer wanting to go to school (who used to love it), of not being able to sleep on school nights, crying and throwing up, and whose grades went down. She also related statistics on the increase in numbers of those opting out in the last few years. Those numbers are increasing pressure on legislators to support change. She received a standing ovation!

Paul Pecorale, NYSUT Vice President, discussed the ramifications of the proposed Constitutional Convention, should it be held. As we know, our pensions and benefits could be lost or reduced, and unions could lose the automatic dues deduction resulting in loss of members and ability to represent us as it does now. The referendum to approve this convention and changes must be voted down. That means we must all vote and we must vote NO!!!

Everyone is urged to vote for candidates who support public education, regardless of Party Label. And don't forget to vote! A copy of the Voter Pledge Card is attached to the end of this newsletter.

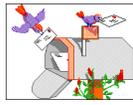
I also attended a workshop on Long Term Care and Elder Law/Estate Planning conducted by Steven Kramer, Esq., which was great and very informative. An item of interest was a Durable Power of Attorney, which you should have, and which should be updated every 5 years. You can change your agent every year if you wish. Another is a way to protect your house by establishing a Trust. It can't be done with a will. I'm planning on asking Mr. Kramer to speak to us at our Annual meeting in the Spring.

I hope you all have wonderful holidays!

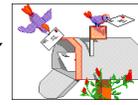
Joan Petroske

NOTE FROM JOAN:

The HHHART Retiree Directory is at the printers now. It has been an enormous job, done over two years, and I want to thank all the volunteers and Board members who helped to accomplish this task.



---Keep In Touch---



Hills on Stage directed by Lucille Kenney will present "The Lion King" on February 5, 6, 7, 2016 at the Half Hollow Hills High School East Eugene Orloff Auditorium. Hills on Stage is a collaborative effort, started in 2002 to bring together school, community, and professional personnel to produce a districtwide fifth grade theater program. Please check the District website for more information. I've attached a photo of last years performance of "Beauty & the Beast"

Lucille Kenney

Retirement has been kind! Spending winters sailing on our boat in the Caribbean, and our summers in Northport. Enjoying being a grandmother of one.

Laura Kelley

Since retiring I have been teaching at Nassau Community College, traveling to several west coast sites and a host of European countries. My wife and I spend our winters in Naples, Florida. If any retirees are there, perhaps we could get together.

Carl Peterson

My husband and I are enjoying following our favorite musical groups at different venues e.g. Larry Campbell and Teresa Williams, Amy Helm and the Handsome Strangers. Music is a wonderful healer for the mind and body. Thank you to the *HHHART Beat* for doing an amazing job. Kudos to you all. Continue on your healing road, Joan Petroske, and all who are on that same path.

Merele Milim

I worked full-time from April to June as a teacher's assistant in a Kindergarten class at the elementary school across from my house. What a change from teaching in high school! I absolutely loved it, and it was the best commute ever! In September, I met up with a childhood friend for four days in Chicago. What a great city, and the deep-dish pie is to die for!

Patti Surico

Our daughter, Jacqueline, was married at the Northport Yacht Club. After their honeymoon, Jackie and Bob will reside in Connecticut. She was a beautiful bride and they are a most happy couple.

Lois Rossotham

Busy past year. I am still tutoring many students from HHH and my husband Ronnie and I have travelled. Last year was our Tauck Tour to Italy . Then we did side trips to Newport, Rhode Island, Lancaster, The Montreal Jazz Festival, and then relaxing at Lake George at the Sagamore Resort. We are on our way to Memphis, and Nashville. This winter we will be away in Scottsdale, Phoenix and Sedona with a couple of short trips to Del Ray Beach, Florida. In June, 2016, we'll take another Tauck tour to the Canadian Rockies.

Once a month, I get together with other Candlewood retirees. Missing all my wonderful friends at Candlewood. Retirement is so far, a dream come true. We are so blessed and hope all of you retirees are enjoying retirement, as well. We have worked so hard for so many years, giving back to our students.

Now it is time for us.! Hope you are all well and enjoying all of your adventures. Fondly,

Clare Bogart Katz

My book, *I Truly Lament: Working Through The Holocaust* was one of three finalists chosen in the 2012 Leapfrog Press Contest out of 424 submissions. Published in 2015, it has won the Indie Excellence Finalist Book Awards, the Beverly Hills Winner Book Awards, and the Readers' Favorite Five Stars. Additionally it was honorably mentioned in the Amsterdam Book Festival and in the Paris Book Festival.

Mathias Freese

My daughter Suzanne (recently deceased) left quite a legacy. She had been a math teacher in middle school and also worked with special needs students. One of her sons is currently teaching high school math and another son is an Associate Professor of math. Her granddaughter (my great-granddaughter) was married on August 1st, right after graduating from college. She was hired for a math and special education position in an elementary school in Pennsylvania. We have gone full circle – counting me four generations in education. You could say that in our family teaching really rocks.

Connie Rossoff



Know Your Benefits
Dick Lee
Welfare Trust Fund Administrator

“Your Most Valuable Benefit Could be in Danger”

Your pension is among the many protections and benefits that could be altered if New York State votes to approve a constitutional convention in 2017. Every 20 years, the New York electorate must vote whether to hold a constitutional convention. Thanks largely to the efforts of the CSEA and other groups, voters rejected a convention in 1997. Next year a referendum to hold a constitutional convention will be presented to the people of our state on Election Day. In recent years, some individuals and interest groups have expressed support for a constitutional convention because of frustration with recent political scandals and misguided state policies.

A Siena College poll reported that 69% of respondents supported a constitutional convention. They believe that this is a good chance for the public to have a real voice in the state’s future direction. In reality, such conventions are often costly, run by political insiders and could jeopardize many of the protections and benefits essential to so many New Yorkers, including their pension and civil service rights. Corporate interests have repeatedly attacked the rights of retirees and workers in recent years, and a constitutional convention could further erode the rights that workers and retirees have fought to achieve. Many business interests want to change the state’s pension system to a defined contribution, or market earnings based system. The state’s current defined benefit system, in place for 95 years, guarantees retirees the pension payment they have earned.

The N.Y. Teachers Retirement System is fully funded, fiscally sound and independently governed. If there was ever a better time to support the efforts of Vote Cope, in fighting changes to our pensions and constitutional guarantees, it is now. Don’t sit this fight out. It could affect your most valuable benefit forever.

I want to help our local, state, and national unions fight for meaningful educational reforms and the preservation of our union benefits by supporting **VOTE/COPE**.

Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____ (\$50 suggested donation) to add my voice and support for these union objectives.

Please make separate check payable to **VOTE/COPE** and mail with this form to our office.

HHHTA – Vote/Cope
6268 Jericho Turnpike, Suite 10, Commack, NY 11725

The Value of NYSUT Membership

You may not be aware that your NYSUT membership allows you to enjoy the benefits of the more than 40 programs & services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits, including a variety of quality, competitive insurance plans.

Member Benefits strives to provide the highest-quality programs for NYSUT members and closely scrutinizes all proposals from reputable vendors before any endorsements are given.

While we work continuously to maintain quality benefit programs at competitive prices, you are encouraged to shop and compare before making any purchasing decisions.



Are you ready to answer these questions?

What would happen if you suddenly died? Have you ever considered what would happen to your spouse and/or children? Take a few moments and answer these questions now:

- 1) Would your loved ones be able to afford their current home?*
- 2) Could your loved ones continue to pay regular bills and maintain their medical coverage?*
- 3) Would your loved ones be able to plan for your final funeral expenses?*

If your answer to the above questions is “No” or “I don’t know,” consider enrolling in the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Term Life or Level Term Life Insurance Plans. Both of these plans allow you to select the plan and benefit amount that best meets your specific needs.

Visit the NYSUT Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call 800-626-8101 for specific details about these plans.

The issuance of a Certificate of Insurance or payment of benefits will depend upon the answers given in the application and the truthfulness of those answers. Additional underwriting requirements may be needed.

Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement with its endorsed insurance provider of 7.61% of earned premiums for these programs. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. The Insurer pools the premiums of Member Benefits participants who are insured for the purposes of determining premium rates and accounting. Coverage outside of these plans may have rates and terms that are not the same as those obtainable through Member Benefits. The Insurer or Member Benefits may hold premium reserves that may be used to offset rate increases and/or fund such other expenses related to the plan as determined appropriate by Member Benefits. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program.



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
 631-499-4240
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 Vice President Eileen Lohrey
 Treasurer Fred Seiden
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 RC 20 Representative Joan Petroske
 Programs/Social/Hospitality Helen Chipkin

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 Malinda Dobrins
 Marlene Flanagan
 Betty Volpe
 Dick Lee
 Mel Stern
 Barbara Arbuss
 Sandra Glickman
 Norma Smith
 HHHART Web Address <http://www.hhhart.net>

Mark Your Calendar



Winter

2015-16

Annual Meeting: TBA
 Thursday, June 2 RC #20 Luncheon

IN MEMORIAM

Tarcicio (Tito) Paez
 October, 2015
 FL

Robert Ruffalo
 November, 2015
 SS

Marion Sadick
 December, 2015
 EE

The picture below was taken at the NYSUT Conference celebrating its 25th Anniversary. The people here were each recipients of an award for 25 years (or more) of service and are members of RC #20. Mel Stern and I are representing HHHART. *Joan Petroske*



Input / Output



The HHHART Board made the decision to print and mail a copy of the HHHART Directory of Members to everyone so that we will have a hard copy. After two years of work, it will be mailed sometime in December or January. This has been a difficult, costly task. We encourage you to keep this document in a safe place. There will be no replacements for many years.

On page 4, we have posted the remainder of pictures from our fall luncheon. Enjoy!

We thank those of you who have sent in a wide variety of newsy items and hope you will keep them coming. Your input helps us to publish an interesting, diverse newsletter for which we get very positive feedback.

Our coeditor, Norma Smith, has had a difficult year. She recently fell. We wish her better health and a much, much easier 2016.

Have a healthy, happy New Year.

Sandy, Barbara & Norma

Don't forget your VOTE/COPE donation for next year, January 1 – December 31, 2016. Fifty dollars is suggested.

VOTER PLEDGE CARD

Contrary to claims that our public schools are failing, Long Island's schools consistently place at or near the top of every unbiased ranking of education quality. But the most punishing property tax cap law in the nation and the education "reforms" imposed by the 2015 budget act are having a devastating effect on our public schools, students and educators. As a strong supporter of public education and a **registered voter in your district**, I want you to know that my highest priority for the upcoming legislative session is to undo the harm that's been done to our great public schools. Therefore, I call upon you to

- Stop the misuse and abuse of flawed, high-stakes tests and end the discredited policy of using student test scores to rate teachers
- Amend the tax cap law and increase state education funding so that all public schools can be adequately and equitably funded
- Oppose the diversion of public funds desperately needed by public schools to private schools, corporate charter school operators and private testing companies

I PLEDGE that I WILL VOTE IN 2016 and that I WILL SUPPORT CANDIDATES, REGARDLESS OF PARTY LABEL, WHO WILL ADVOCATE FOR THESE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES to give our kids the education they deserve. Stand with educators and parents by doing the right thing for children and public education!

Signature _____ Name (Print) _____

Address _____ Senate District _____

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Signature _____ Name (Print) _____

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