

the HHHART BEAT

Newsletter of the Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers
Fall, 2013

Volume 27, No. 1

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

WE ARE ACTIVE HHHART

(Can be sung to the tune of *We Are Family*.)

Teaching with Teachers in Ethiopia

by Rhoda Koenig

Last March, thanks to a friend who is working in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with the Ministry of Education, I was able to visit schools and present workshops to teachers there on the teaching of reading. Here are the highlights of that amazing month-long trip, which I hope will be the first of many.



The doorways to the government school classrooms appear to be nothing more than intermittent black rectangles on a train-size stretch of turquoise walls. However, they are in fact, nothing less than gateways to a future of either failed or fulfilled possibilities. Inside, classes had just begun for a portion of the 2,800 students attending Alemu Woldehanna Primary School #3, a rural Ethiopian school in Hosanna, six hours south of Addis Ababa.

The rest of the students attend successive sessions or shifts, the last of which extends into the hours after dark when Hosanna's menacing hyena population emerge from their dens in search of anything they can catch from springhares to hapless humans. In the continuing movement towards realizing universal education, two or three school sessions a day has become common place for the approximately 20 million school-age children in the second poorest country in the world.

[You can access the full article under the link to this newsletter on www.hhhart.net, the HHHART website.](http://www.hhhart.net)

HHHART Fall Luncheon

by Elaine Hoffspiegel

Thirty seven HHHART members eagerly and happily met on August 12th in a large, sunny room overlooking the golf course of the Stonebridge Country Club community to meet, greet, eat, and be informed. We were welcomed by Joan Petroske, our President, who introduced four new retirees to our group, and also presented the hardworking board members Eileen Lohrey, Vice President, Malinda Dobrins, Secretary, and Ellen Keuling, Treasurer, Betty Volpe who is HHHART webmaster and coordinates online information from NYSUT Albany, and HHHTA, and Alice Langholz who asked that any changes that need to be made for the database be sent to her for updating.

Richard Hess, the TA Union President, spoke to the issues of district declining enrollment, the possible closing of two schools in the 2013-2014 school year, and the resulting impact on staffing numbers. Mel Stern addressed the other "hot item" in education, high-stakes testing, and its negative impact on both students and teachers.

After a tasty and leisurely-presented lunch, Joan closed the meeting with a thank you to Dick Lee for his careful attention on our behalf to the Welfare Trust Fund. She also reminded all of us of the need for volunteers to take part in all aspects of the HHHART business and asked that anyone interested in lending a hand in any of the suggested areas on the sign-up sheet, check that area of choice (planning trips, working on the website, welcoming new members, other) and submit to the board. A parting reminder was of the CORTLI luncheon October 17th at the Crest Hollow Country Club. The guest speaker is Tom DiNapoli, NYS comptroller. The fee is \$30.00. Contact Eileen Lohrey 516-352-8486. (Continued on page 4)

-----The President's Message-----

The Fall season is suddenly upon us and with it came our Annual Luncheon. We were fortunate to meet the new retirees and hear from TA President Rich Haase and Mel Stern who gave us insights into the turmoil created by the SED (State Education Department) testing in the Spring which was based on the new Common Core Learning Standards. NYSUT, AFT, and NEA support the potential of these standards, but protest the rushed and flawed implementation of the tests without adequate resources, curriculum, and support.

As a result, scores were much lower and, as Dick Iannuzzi stated, K-12 teachers have returned to their schools confronted by state test scores for students and their own individual composite scores – meaningless scores based on bad data that in isolation are misleading and hurtful for both teachers and their students. The new retirees said they had received their scores. For more information on what happens next to teachers after they received their composite scores and ratings, see the article on page 9 of *NYSUT UNITED*, September-October edition.

As retirees, we face the threat of constant efforts to reduce the federal deficit by cutting our Medicare, Social Security, and other benefit programs. The Consumer Price Index to determine monthly Social Security and other benefit payments is one such effort. This would change the formula used to calculate Cost of Living allowances, payment rates and thresholds for means testing that determine when a person is eligible for benefits. The CPI doesn't account for the increased amounts retirees spend on health care. The oldest retirees and disabled would see a benefit cut of about \$500 annually after 10 years and \$1000 after 20 years. NYSUT is opposing this, as should all of us.

Enjoy the beautiful weather ahead and stay informed and active!

Joan Petroske



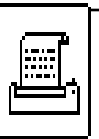
Joan and Dick at the HHHART Fall Luncheon



A few of our new retirees



Input / Output



In this issue, we are emphasizing how wonderful it can be when our retirees take part in our HHHART activities in addition to their other interests. We enjoy getting together, learning about current ideas, elder issues, and problems in education and our union. Needless to say, we enjoy socializing.

We used to have trips that were very well attended. In the past few years, interest has waned. What can we do to get more of you interested and involved?

On occasion, HHHART can use a helping hand to plan and/or organize a trip, work with our webmaster on the website – *the hhhartline*, meet with new members on a welcoming committee, help with our newsletter mailing (four times a year), and so on. Contact the following to get involved:

Barbara – barbuss@aol.com;
Sandy – RGSG6H@aol.com, or
Norma – enjages19@aol.com

We were happy to welcome new retirees to HHHART at our recent retiree luncheon. We would like to motivate more of you to join us and hope some of you can give us suggestions for functions that you would enjoy.

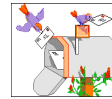
The HHHART Board truly hopes to see new faces at meetings, parties, trips.

Sandy, Barbara & Norma

Joan Petroske is recuperating from hip surgery. If you'd like to send her a greeting, her address is: 36 Lakeview Drive, Manorville, NY 11949.



---Keep In Touch---



I look forward to the arrival of the paper. Now we are attending grand's college graduations and PhDs, and great grandchildren's graduation from kindergarten. Grands keep you younger. Gave up my driver's license because I broke my left arm last year and no longer have full use of it. Although I have a driver, it's as if I lost a leg.

Kathleen M. Blank

Joe and I celebrated 60 years of marriage on February 14, 2013. We were in Florida and two grandchildren were still in college, so we had a Valentine's Day celebration in May at The Woodlands in The Greens, where we live. One hundred three family and friends came. In lieu of gifts, we asked for contributions to the Dianne M Toal Endowment for Cancer Research, in memory of our daughter Dianne. Sadly we lost her to breast cancer in 2004.

Fran Mercolino

Alan and I are still enjoying our lives here in Saratoga Springs, NY. It is a year-round fun place to be – plenty of music, art and theatre to keep us busy. Our grandchildren are grown. The youngest, Sophie, is off to Vassar in the Fall. Our oldest, Susannah, (remember when she came from Korea?) is married and a practicing attorney. Her sister Lila is a talented violinist, a graduate of Eastman and the Royal Academy of Music in London. Jeremy is a choreographer and dancer and now lives in NYC. It's hard to believe, but I have been retired for as long as I worked in Half Hollow Hills.

Gloria Arnold

In mid June of 2013, I moved from a rental home in Old Field to my permanent residence in Setauket that had been recently restored after a devastating fire on April 30, 2012. I lost 90 percent of my home to this conflagration.

Certainly, more tragically, my beloved husband passed away rather suddenly on November 21, 2012. During a three and a half week time span, he had been diagnosed with lung cancer, and plummeted rapidly.

During this time, I was and still am a senior lecturer in the English Department of St. Joseph's College in Patchogue.

Joan M. O'Hanlon

Our son, David, was ordained to the Priesthood on May 25, 2013, in the Diocese of Paterson, NJ. His first assignment as a Priest will be at St. Joseph's Church in Mendham, NJ.

Anthony J. Monteleone

News from Virginia: 2013 has been a truly blessed year for our family. We welcomed two new grandchildren into our family. Samuel David Fogg was born in January to our daughter, Christiana and her husband, James. He joins his sisters, Elizabeth (7) and Katherine (2). Our daughter, Jennifer, and her husband, Lance, had Juliette Marie Raymond in March. She joins her brother, Douglas. All are doing very well.

Michael and Jeannette Root

Life is good! I've been volunteering at Planting Fields Arboretum and Huntington Hospital and am enjoying our grandchildren. We have planned a trip to Disney World (in June) and, in September a trip to Nova Scotia.

John A. Marr

Retired from HHH after 32 years in Special Education. We are going to travel, winter in Florida, and go on a cruise. Hopefully, we will go to Sochi, Russia for the Winter Olympics, where my nephew is competing in an extreme sport, head first luge.

Lois Stafford

Kathy and I are camping again. Enjoying grandkids (6) and frequent visits to Erie, PA, to see Dennis Jr's family. Son, Mike, is Scoutmaster for Troop 12 (my old job) with two sons in the Troop. My daughter is a teacher in Sayville. She always impresses me with her professional, hard working skills. I completed 40 years with the Asharoken Police. (Still active)

Dennis Magerle

I'm having a fun-filled retirement in Albuquerque, NM: golfing, hiking, kayaking, river rafting and touring the beautiful southwest. Come visit me!

Bunny (Bernadette) LeBlanc

Playing keyboard with the Swingtime Big Band. Check our website for various free concerts throughout the summer on Long Island.

Richard Miranda

VOTE ON NOVEMBER 5th
Be sure you're registered to vote.

HHHART Fall Luncheon continued

Again, the afternoon provided us with a chance to visit with old friends, and former work mates, catch up on the latest gossip, and eat the forbidden dessert of our choice. For those who haven't attended this cheerful event-- try it, you'll like it.



For more pictures of the HHHART Fall Luncheon, go to the HHHART Web Site at <http://www.hhhart.net>



HHHART Summer Theater Party

A small group of HHHART members went to see a show, "Frank and Franklin," at the Olmstead Theater in Adelphi University's Performing Arts Center. First we lunched at the Seventh Street Café in Garden City, where we were able to chat about our families, friends and favorite vacations.

Written by Peter Pantina, a Manhasset school district retiree, the show was set in 1938 and the story line included many historical references to the second Joe Louis–Max Schmeling fight in June of that year. The stage design was interesting with many antiques from the late 1930s. Many thanks to Ellen Keuling for organizing the lunch and show. *Betty Oolpe*



It's that "Strides" time of year....

Last year marked the sixth consecutive time NYSUT raised more than \$1 million for cancer research through the **Making Strides Against Breast Cancer** campaign.

This year's events are slated for October 20 in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Corning, Brookhaven (Dowling College), Hudson Valley, Jamestown, **Jones Beach**, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and Westchester (Purchase); ... "The dedication of our members to raising money to find a cure for breast cancer is truly amazing," said NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira, who leads the union's efforts.

from **NYSUT Leader Briefing for September 6**

To donate go to www.nysut.org/makingstrides.

Change to Member Benefits-endorsed Defensive Driving Program

Due to the cost associated with classroom-style defensive driving courses, NYSUT Member Benefits has decided to offer its endorsed Defensive Driving Program exclusively online as of Sept. 1. NYSUT members and their family members will be able to take the course online at the reduced price of \$21.95 per person

from **NYSUT Leader Briefing for August 9**

Know Your Benefits

By Dick Lee, Welfare Trust Fund Administrator

The officers, trustees and the administrator of the Welfare Trust Fund have been reviewing, analyzing and evaluating the cost effectiveness of our benefits program. We have interviewed several third party administrators and received many competitive and creative proposals. We hope to vote on these proposals in October. Any changes in retiree benefits will be explained in a future *HHHART Beat* publication.

VOLUNTARY EXCESS MAJOR MEDICAL/VISION CARE POLICY

Excess Major Medical/Vision Care coverage is often misunderstood and there is some confusion in what is covered and when to file for medical reimbursement. This inexpensive policy, \$46.20 individual coverage, or, \$110.40 family coverage, is an optional benefit billed annually to participating retirees. The following is an explanation of the Plan's benefits:

VISION CARE BENEFIT

Under this plan, one may purchase a pair of eyeglasses (including eye examination) once each two policy years. The policy year starts each January 1st through December 31st. For example: If one purchased glasses and/or had an eye examination on May 15, 2012, one would become eligible to purchase another pair of glasses (including eye examination) on January 1, 2014.

CO-INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT BENEFIT

In order to become eligible for co-insurance reimbursement from First Rehabilitation Insurance Company (your excess major medical carrier) one must satisfy Incurred Allowable Expenses of \$1,625. For example:

1. You submit \$2,500 of **out-of-network** expenses to Empire.
2. Empire "ALLOWS" \$1,800 of your submitted medical expenses.
3. Empire pays you 80% or \$1,400 of the "Allowable Expenses".
4. You are now eligible for E.M.M. reimbursement.
 - a) Take the \$1,800 of "Allowable Expenses".
 - b) Deduct \$1,625 (Amount you must first incur to be eligible for E.M.M. reimbursement).
 - c) That leaves \$175 you may submit to E.M.M.
 - d) Your E.M.M. policy will pay 20% of the \$175 or \$35 reimbursement.

Since your "Incurred Allowable Expenses" has now been satisfied during the policy year (January through December) any other allowable expenses would be reimbursed at the level of 20%.

PLEASE BE AWARE you MUST include **copies** of all **Explanation of Benefits** when you submit for Excess Major Medical Co-Insurance Reimbursement. No claims will be processed without this information and it will create a delay.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR EXPLANATION OF THIS PLAN,
PLEASE CONTACT
THE FIRST REHABILITATION LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY OF AMERICA
(516) 829-8100**

**VOTE ON NOVEMBER 5th
Know where your polling place is.**

First and foremost, let me thank all of you for years of dedication, commitment and hard work to keep each one of us informed about Union issues as well as our personal lives and interests. I read "We really want to hear from you" and I was touched by your interest and caring. I am responding to that call.

Bill and I have 6 grandsons ranging in age from 22 years to 12 years. The oldest, Brian, just graduated from Syracuse University and his brother will graduate next year, also from Syracuse. Their best friend, who also graduated, mentioned that his dream was to go to Germany someday. My response was, "we will take you". Needless to say, they could not believe their ears.

We just returned from a two week stay: first in my home town to see all my relatives. We usually were 20, traveling through the city of Mainz seeing museums, cathedrals, and best of all touring the vineyards in a wagon filled with rolls, cold cuts and wine -- all of us singing and laughing until tears rolled.



The next stop was Munich, same country but with completely different culture and costumes. The festivals seem to be ongoing. While we were there, Munich won the Europe Cup in Soccer. There was a crowd to rival Times Square on New Year's Eve.

Our last city was Madrid, Brian studied in Madrid last summer and felt compelled to share it with us. He guided us through all parts of the city with great pride and knowledge. *Anita Thomas*

Traveling to see our grandkids in NY, Maryland, and Seattle. Also went to Italy and planning a trip to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Loving retirement here at Myrtle Beach.

Mary Ann Baillargen

Paul and I enjoyed our Fall trip to Turkey and a winter trip to Mexico. We also made a trip in June to Arizona to see our daughter, Nicole, a High School West graduate, receive her PhD in Education Technology. Life is good! Joan Simon

I'm off to another Grand Circle river cruise from Berlin down the Elbe to Prague with daughter Kathie. Probably my last. I hate the long flights.

Nancy Cooper

John and I went to Cuba last January, for two weeks with Roads Scholar, on a People to People tour. The people were friendly and the accommodations, very good. Transportation for locals were bicycles, horses, horse drawn wagons, and old trucks converted to buses --



not many cars except for American, mostly 1950's, which were used as taxis. The

owners are very proud that they have

been able to keep them going for sixty years. They have painted and shined them to look like new. We saw so much of their culture: dancers, musicians and art. We saw many elementary schools and so much more. *Lillie May Cummings*

Glimpses

by Norma



Would you like pretty shoes for the party, honey?
Yes, mommy.

Then I'll get you Mary Janes.

Mommy, I want my own shoes.

The benefits of an *online* bank

Have you heard of online banks? These are banking institutions that do not utilize actual "brick and mortar" branches; instead, they offer banking services that are predominantly done online.

So why consider using one of these types of banks? Online banks are often able to offer superior rates and incentives since they don't have physical locations -- thereby passing these savings along to their customers.

Many people decide to utilize online banks in conjunction with their current traditional bank to secure higher rates for supplemental accounts, such as term-based certificates of deposits (CDs), savings accounts or IRAs.

The Member Benefits Corporation endorses the GE Capital Retail Bank Deposit Program, which is an online banking service that allows NYSUT members and their families to take advantage of some of today's most competitive interest rates.



GE Capital Retail Bank

*4 reasons to use the
GE Capital Retail Bank Deposit Program:*

1. Earn preferred interest rates on Money Market Accounts, High-Yield Savings Accounts, CDs, and IRAs.
2. Access your money and account information 24/7 by phone or online.
3. Grow your funds, finance a vacation, save for retirement, and much more!
4. All GE Capital Retail Bank Deposit Program customers receive free identity theft resolution services.

Learn how the GE Capital Retail Bank Deposit Program can help you save by calling toll-free 866-226-5638 or visiting gecrbatwork.com (enter "NYSUT" in the company or association name box).

Financial expertise customized for your situation



Looking to learn how to properly invest your assets to build a college savings or retirement fund; what to look for when purchasing or financing a home; or maybe tips for getting your credit under control?

The NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed Financial Counseling Program provided by Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. offers unbiased, objective advice customized to your specific financial situation.

The program offers:

- Up to six hours of objective toll-free telephone consultations with a certified financial planner or registered investment advisor.
- In-person consultations at least once per calendar year at your NYSUT Regional Office or Stacey Braun's New York City office
- Access to Stacey Braun's password-protected website and a 24-hour email helpdesk for basic financial questions.
- NYSUT members can purchase the Financial Counseling Program for an annual fee of \$260; a 403(b) Limited Plan is available for an annual fee of \$185.

For more information, call **800-626-8101** or visit **memberbenefits.nysut.org**.

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

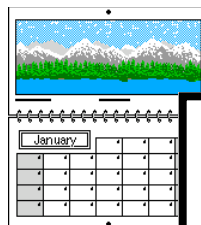
President	Joan Petroske
Vice President	Eileen Lohrey
Treasurer	Ellen Keuling
Secretary	Malinda Dobrins
RC 20 Representative	Joan Petroske
Programs/Social/Hospitality	Rowena Book

E-mail Correspondence

E-mail Data Base	Alice Langholz
Webmaster	Betty Volpe
RA Delegate	Joan Petroske
AFT Delegate	Dick Lee
Political Action Coordinator	Mel Stern
Newsletter Publisher /Co-Eds	Barbara Arbuss
	Sandra Glickman
	Norma Smith

HHHART Web Address <http://www.hhhart.net>

Mark Your Calendar



**Don't Forget
To
Vote!**

2013-14

Thursday, October 17th Cortli Luncheon
Crest Hollow C.C., Woodbury, NY

Tuesday, November 5th Election Day

May (TBA) HHHART Annual Meeting



E-mail Corrections and Additions

Michael Ward michaelward@optonline.net
Daniel Nickla jnickla@yahoo.com
John Sauer JohnJoanSauer@optonline.net
Bob D'Agostino DAGS34FORD@Yahoo.com
Douglas Mayer mayer431@optonline.net
Barbara Oldenburg oldenburgba@aol.com
Anastasia Nicolaou YiayiaAN@yahoo.com
Marie Faas fpmc65@optonline.net
Cynthia Nieratka cnieratka@yahoo.com
Ellen Tobiassen ellenbakes@gmail.com
Michael Sher kyderby1@optonline.net
Catherine DiGennaro digenp@optonline.net
Cathy Colligan colligan@optonline.net
Gordon Hodgson ghodgej@optonline.net
Maureen Dickson Maureen.dickson1@gmail.com
Melissa MacCormac memaccorma@aol.com
Lou Ann Roche bilouchka@aol.com
Lois Stafford cbiscuit@hotmail.com
Patrice DeStefano writeonpd@verizon.net
Patricia Carr paumanok8@yahoo.com
Barbara Beck cbeck2optonline.net
Linda Strickler linmusic@optonline.net
Mary Lee Kane JMKR0453@optonline.net
Susan Hirschmann hirschmarine@aim.com
Jane DeStio janelizabeth1130@yahoo.com
Kim Langendorfer gundawunda@live.com
Marilyn Veglia marilynveglia@gmail.com
Nancy R. Cooper nancooper3@verizon.net
Anne Mundy anniedress@aol.com
Bill Doon ladyt13650@msn.com
Joan Simon nixxe@hotmail.com
Lois Stein loisstein79@gmail.com
Rick Keller rickkeller375@gmail.com
E Todd Richter janetrichter@me.com
Nancy Ott nanott1@yahoo.com

IN MEMORIAM

Marilyn Wanger
TA
August, 2013

Dr. Julie McAlduff
HL
September, 2013

Francis Roach
LA
Date Unknown

Please notify Alice Langholz, in charge of data base, and/or Malinda Dobrins, HHHART secretary, when you change your e-mail address. This will keep you in the loop of the news concerning our retirement group. We don't want to lose you due to changes.

Alice: aelang@optonline.net
Malinda: lotsofdimples@optonline.net

VOTE ON NOVEMBER 5th
Check the voter ID laws in your state.

Did you forget to pay your dues? HHHART dues run from July 1st to June 30th. Send a check for \$30 to the TA payable to HHHART.