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# HALLOW HILLS BEAT

Newsletter of the Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers  
Winter, 2014-15

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



## Where Are They Now?



I am Brian Biederman, one of your former students. I am not sure if you remember me, but I had you at West Hollow Middle School, and I'm a trumpet player (if that rings any bells...). I hope all is well with you and your family and that you are in good health. I also hope you are still practicing your scales! I'm writing to you for two reasons. Firstly, to give you a quick update on me.

During my time at High School East, I auditioned for and was accepted into the Manhattan School of Music Pre-Collegiate division where I studied classical and jazz trumpet. I primarily focused on jazz and, from High School East, I ended up getting into Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. That was in 2006. So fast forward to now and it's 2014. I have a Master's Degree and I'm a Middle School music teacher here in Nashville.

I'm not sure if you remember, but during my time at West Hollow, both you and my father really pushed me to attend summer music camp in upstate New York. That summer music camp was one of the most important things that could have happened to me to this day. It inspired me to open my own music camp here in Nashville which will be entering its second season next week. We expanded to St. Louis earlier in June and our program was featured on National Public Radio. It's my hope that in a few years I'll be running a few full-time programs around the country.

The second reason I'm writing to you is really to thank you. I can't begin to tell you all the ways that music has changed my life. You and my parents were the ones who held me accountable and made me see the importance of music. You had high expectations for me and you held me to them. I really appreciate that. Without music, I never would be where I am today; even all of my friends are musicians!

Lastly, I wanted you to know, that at the end of our summer music camp, which is July 18th, we are going to be giving an award of a full-scholarship to our camp titled the *Gerard Catalanello Award* in your honor.

As a fellow music teacher now, I often say, "If I can reach JUST ONE kid..." and I want you to know, you did.

Please feel free to write back whenever you get a chance, I'd love to hear from you.

*Brian Biederman*, Director, Littlestone Summer Music Festival



Ed: This article was sent in by Tony Cuzzucoli and we were sure you would be interested in the meaningful message it conveys to us as teachers.



The holiday season is almost upon us and we will be busy with all kinds of preparations. I wish you all a wonderful time! Just before this hectic time, I attended the

NYSUT Regional Conference in Woodbury. There were 3 other HHH members there — Mel Stern, Joan Vanecek, and Keith Bantz.

We had the opportunity to see and hear from NYSUT's new officers and were impressed with their knowledge and interest in Retirees. The first speaker was Matt Jacobs, the Suffolk Office Staff Director, who spoke about the attack on public schools. He said that it is basically motivated by economics — a way to make money. He pointed out that many NYSUT members didn't vote and when we don't vote those forces feel we don't care, so they don't have to care about us.

Lena Ackerman, NYSUT's Asst. General Council, addressed the threat against Tenure. Tenure does not provide a permanent job, but gives teachers and other state, municipal, private, and other union members, protection from arbitrary dismissal through the right of due process. The Constitutional Convention in 2017 poses a threat to tenure. We must be vigilant.

Kyle Belokopitsky, NYSUT's Legislative Rep, spoke about the increasing pressure on children and teachers from the new testing. Testing is supposed to improve instruction, not evaluate teachers! There is a new bill, sponsored by Congressman Gibson, #HR4172, which would put testing back to Grades 4 and 8 and not Grade 3, which he urged us to support. And did you know that Charter Schools only have 5 years before they must apply to renew their charters?

The last speaker was Karen Magee, NYSUT President. She is a resident of Westchester Co. and long time union supporter. She spoke about NYSUT's ongoing legal actions and upcoming court dates. She also emphasized the importance of retiree support for the union's activities and the in-service teachers and recognized our long history of activism. Three retirees with 40 or more years of service were given an award.

*Joan Petroske*

On a day in October, CORTLI (Coalition of Retired Teachers of Long Island) held its luncheon at the Crest Hollow Country Club. The room was filled with hungry educators waiting to learn about the state of NY State education. By the end of the afternoon, we were happy that we had worked and retired from the State of NY.

Roger Tilles, who is currently a member of the NY Board of Regents representing the 10th Judicial District Nassau and Suffolk counties, was the guest speaker. His interesting and varied professional life included involvement with educational departments in Michigan as well as NY. He helped develop the new standards in NY State and would like the Regents to adjust and correct some outcomes that arose with the rollout. Some of the issues that are being discussed are pre-k funding for everyone, new rules for English learners, and multiple pathways to graduation.

Mr. Tilles shared his personal and professional life with us as well as giving us a glimpse into the politics of NY and how the education department works.

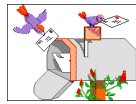
After a lovely lunch, we heard from David Keefe, the retired teachers representative of the Board of Trustees of NY State (NYSTRS). Mr. Keefe shared a great deal of information on the solvency of the NY retirement system. There are more than \$106 billion in assets with a return of about 18.9%. Since last July, \$6.3 billion was paid to retired teachers with about 82% of it going to addresses in NY State, adding to the economic engine of the state. At this time, there is no economic danger to our pensions. He spent some time discussing the political ramifications.

Mr. Keefe was named NYSUT's Retiree Member of the Year for 2014. It was easy to see why. He is an intelligent, knowledgeable representative for NY State Retired Teachers.

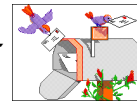
The day was filled with socializing, lunching, and stimulating our brains.

*Barbara Arbuss*





---Keep In Touch---



Enjoying retirement, watching my grandchildren grow up. Grace is 51/2 and Caleb is 18 months old. Volunteering at a free clinic in Hilton Head and loving it.

*Linda Julia*

I'm happy living in Georgia, enjoying every day of retirement. Bill and I are very active, playing tennis, playing Bridge, and best of all, seeing our 4 grandsons!! We are happy about heading to Austria and Germany for a vacation in Fall 2014.

*Frances Hugunine*

Going to Ireland (early July) to visit with family in Galway. This trip will include children and grandchildren. We will be visiting with cousins by the dozens. We were the only members of their families to come to the states.

*George Barrett*

Still enjoying lovely Tennessee and all it has to offer. Nashville – Music City was just recently voted one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. It is in the top ten of many major areas.

*Ronald Wright*

I alternate winters, spending three months with my son and his family near Perth, Australia, then spending three months in various parts of Florida in the "off year". It was great to stay with Judy and Dick Adler, as well as with Colin Parker last winter in their homes on Duck Key. It was also a treat to see Carol Roseman Parker's daughter, Robin, who was visiting Colin. Needless to say, some of the history of the HHHTA was reviewed, recalling many fond memories we shared.

*Bill Walters*

Life is great! Retirement is great! Grandbaby #6 is due any day. We're taking a family "Wild West" tour (July) and another trip to Disney in November. I am still volunteering at Planting Fields and at Huntington Hospital.

*John Murr*

Still enjoying retirement and anxiously waiting for the arrival of our fourth grandchild. My wife Michele and I went on a river cruise from Paris to the Normandy Beaches. It was a wonderful experience. I am lucky to be able to continue playing golf and softball and spending time with my growing family.

*Joseph Goonan*

Still living in Salem, S.C., for the past 25 years. Met a wonderful gentleman, after 15 years of my beloved husband's passing. All my children graduated from HHH and are leading productive lives. Two are still living on Long Island, one in Arizona. One granddaughter is teaching in Deer Park. Life is good and filled with blessings. HHH is very much alive in my memories.

*Josephine Leibfried*

John and I spend summers on Candlewood Lake in Sherman, CT., and winters in Fort Myers, FL. It's great living in two vacation spots. On Christmas Day 2013, our daughter and son-in-law gave us the best present ever, a beautiful granddaughter and grandson. We are so blessed.

*Marie Kossman*

I've just published my second book of poems. It's called *Celebrations* and is available from Amazon (paperback or kindle). The seasons, the people, the moments of our lives, — a day at the beach, a walk in the woods, a realization that life is passing by, a memory of those already gone. From thinking about cleaning the garage to deciding not to empty the dish rack. From a meteor shower to a missing dish at a family meal. From Biblical lessons to our bewilderment reading today's newspaper. All these are there to be celebrated, for they make up the fabric of living.

*Bill Batcher*

Thank you for the recommendation to Health Advocate. It has been a real help.

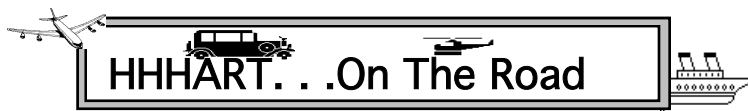
*Ron Beattie*

## **Attention All HHHART Retirees**

**Our *Keep in Touch* column is empty after this issue. It's the most popular part of this newsletter. So please, please send us more stories of how things are going in retirement. We all want to hear from each other.**

E-mail: [barbuss@aol.com](mailto:barbuss@aol.com) or snail mail to the TA office.





## *From the Great Wall of China to the Peaks of Denali*

By Dick Lee

A unique bond was formed fifteen years ago when a representative group of the HHH School District went to Beijing, China, to establish a mutual teacher and student exchange program with the West School District of Beijing. The HHH team included School Board members (Stuart Pastrich and Hal Austein), Administrators (Kevin and Alida McGuire, Jim McCaffrey and Maxine Arqiz), Community Resident (Henry Teo) and Teacher (Dick Lee).

For the teachers and students, who participated in this valuable educational experience, they received an enriched appreciation and understanding of each other's respective cultures. Unfortunately, the exchange only lasted for three years. However, the first groups to establish this program, have been meeting periodically for the past fifteen years and have established a unique comradeship. This year, five of these Chinese trail blazers - Kevin, Alida, Jim, Stuart and Dick travelled to Alaska to experience the beauty and diversity of "America's Last Frontier", along with their respective spouses, the delegation enjoyed the abundance of wild life, the native cultures of the Northwest, the enormous glaciers, and plenty of whales and spawning salmon.

If you're a lover of outdoor adventures, the beauty of nature and the challenges of the wilderness, this is definitely a trip you should consider taking.



## Protecting your family for the future



It's important that your family members are financially protected throughout their lives. Have you stopped to consider what would happen to your spouse and/or children if you were to suddenly pass away?

**Would your loved ones be able to continue to live in their home, pay regular bills and maintain a comfortable lifestyle? What about your final medical, burial or funeral expenses?**

And it's not a question of just having a life insurance policy... make sure you have *enough* coverage to provide for your family. Find a plan that's right for you and your specific financial situation.

### *Plans designed specifically for NYSUT members*

As NYSUT members, it makes prudent sense to look into the Term Life or Level Term Life Insurance Plans endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits. Both of these plans offer specific terms and rates designed exclusively with NYSUT members and their families in mind.

The **Term Life Plan** is available for NYSUT members and their spouses/domestic partners under age 85. If you are under age 65, you can apply for coverage from \$25,000 up to \$1 million at premiums negotiated specifically for NYSUT members.

Meanwhile, the **Level Term Life Plan** offers terms for 10, 15 or 20-year periods. The premium that you start with is projected to remain the same and the benefit amount will not decrease throughout the term – regardless of your age or health condition.

You can enjoy an **additional savings of 15%** on published rates if your local association has approved automatic deductions from your paycheck or pension check and you sign up for that benefit.

To learn more about the Member Benefits-endorsed Term Life or Level Term Life Insurance Plans, call 800-626-8101 or visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org).

## Member Appreciation Month is coming!

NYSUT Member Benefits wants to start the New Year off right with a celebration of the entire NYSUT membership.

**These offers will continue into February 2015, which has been designated as Member Appreciation Month!**

It's the strength of the more than 600,000 NYSUT members that makes it possible for Member Benefits to offer approximately 50 endorsed programs & services designed with you in mind.

This special celebration will be kicking off in January 2015 with the arrival of your new membership cards. This mailing will include a variety of special offers only available to NYSUT members.



This will be a month filled with a series of special prize drawings for items donated by our endorsed program providers. To be eligible for these drawings, all you need to do is be a participant in our voluntary MAP Alert email service.

We will announce the winners of these special prize drawings exclusively on the Member Benefits website throughout the month of February.

For more details about this exciting event, visit the Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101.



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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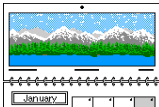
Sandra Glickman

Norma Smith

HHHART Web Address

<http://www.hhhart.net>

## Mark Your Calendar



2015

Annual Meeting: TBA  
Spring Event TBA



**Don't forget your 2014-15 HHHART dues and 2015 VOTE/COPE donation. Thirty dollars is suggested for VOTE/COPE.**

### IN MEMORIAM

Claire Mahoney-Haeg  
November, 2014  
FL

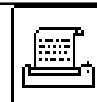
### CREDITABLE COVERAGE LETTER

An important notice was sent in 2014 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 from 2011 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.



## Input / Output



To recap some of what has been going on at HHHART this year:

During our general meeting in June, Joan Petroske gave us updated information, Dick Lee gave a short talk about health and welfare issues, and the current Teachers Association President, Richard Haase, passed on information regarding in-service teachers. He also told us about the closing of Forest Park and Chestnut Hill. Mel Stern informed us about the election and asked for us to stay involved.

At that meeting, the NYSUT Communications Award, the Ted Bleeker, "Best of the Best", was awarded to Rhoda Koenig for her outstanding article "Teaching With Teachers in Ethiopia (which appeared in the Fall, 2013, issue of *The HHHART Beat*). Plaques were also received by *The HHHART Beat* and the Retired Teachers Association.

Our Fall Luncheon was very well attended. Cathy Rossello, the Office Manager for nine years, was honored.

We blinked our eyes and another year is drawing to a close. We wish you all a very good, healthy 2015

*Sandy, Barbara & Norma*