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# HHHART BEAT

Newsletter of the Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers  
Spring, 2012

Volume 25, No. 3



## HHHART General Meeting

This spring HHHART will hold a General Meeting which will include election of officers.

The candidates are:

President:	Joan Petroske
Vice President:	Eileen Lohrey
Secretary:	Malinda Dobrins
Treasurer:	Ellen Keuling

The General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 9, 2012, at 9:30 a.m. in the Dix Hills branch of the Half Hollow Hills Library.

# VOTE!



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

As of April 18th, we have deleted thirteen members from HHHART because they did not pay dues. After about five attempts to reach these members without success, we have concluded that they are no longer interested in being associated with HHHART, NYSUT, and AFT and do not want or need the benefits of those associations. We thank Cathy and Karen in the Teachers Association office for helping us in this effort.

Since January, we have been working to update our membership list and have sent e-mails, posted reminders on our website, and used the Teachers Association computer list and our spread sheets to contact these members. It has taken a lot of effort on all our parts. Therefore we are going to have a cutoff date starting on July 1, 2012, the beginning of our new year. Dues are actually due on that date and many of you are very prompt, but others set the request aside—and forget about it! We are establishing a sixty-day grace period to September 1, 2012, before the deletion process is begun. If you do not want to maintain membership, a note to that effect sent to me or the Teachers Association office would be *greatly* appreciated. Also, reminding retired friends to pay their dues would be helpful.

We are now focusing on our upcoming General Meeting on May 9th and election of officers. Candidates have submitted their resumes to the Elections Committee composed of Chairman, Dick Lee, with Alice Langholz and Norma Smith. Those resumes have been posted on our website, [hhhart.net](http://hhhart.net)

The candidates are:

- President: Joan Petroske
- Vice President: Eileen Lohrey
- Secretary: Malinda Dobrins
- Treasurer: Ellen Keuling

The HHHART General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 9, 2012, at 9:30 a.m. in the Dix Hills branch of the Half Hollow Hills Library. Hope you will come out to support the new slate. Refreshments will be served. *Joan Petroske*

**Union activism makes a difference in budget outcome**

(ed.: The following internet article is from the *NYSUT Leader Briefing 3/28/12*. The state budget was passed but we thought this article would be of interest.)

State lawmakers are in the process of approving a \$132.5 billion state budget, ....

NYSUT leaders noted that \$805 million in school aid was restored from last year's historic \$1.3 billion in cuts to K-12 schools. And in higher education, SUNY and CUNY four-year campuses were held harmless from cuts, while community colleges received a significant increase of \$150 per full-time equivalent student. SUNY hospitals also received much-needed additional funding in the amount of \$27.8 million. This was all thanks to nonstop activism on the part of NYSUT's grassroots lobbyists and legislative staff.

Nonetheless, this spending plan does not go far enough to put New York back on track to restore the quality programs that students have lost in recent years. "In fact, because of the property tax cap passed last year, districts across the state are cutting programs and laying off even more educators," said NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi.

**Your VOTE-COPE contribution helps us to fight for our RIGHTS and BENEFITS. The VOTE-COPE year runs from January 1, 2012, to December 31, 2012.**

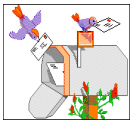


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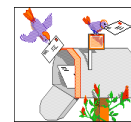


We hope many HHHART members will attend the general meeting on May 9th. Since we are not having an end-of-year party or a trip this year, this is the perfect opportunity to socialize with your wonderful colleagues

*Sandy, Barbara & Norma*



--- *Keep In Touch* ---



I have been retired from Candlewood for 21 years. My wife and I have been blessed with six wonderful and successful children: Richard, Christopher, Marilyn, Irene, Patrick and Douglas. They have blessed us with thirteen grandchildren, four of whom are in college. As you can see a family gathering is quite an event, and getting a seat on a bus is difficult.

*Richard Friend*

Enjoying playing golf and bridge and social dancing with my husband. Our five grandchildren keep us busy.

*Margery Skalka*

Red Willow Digital Press has accepted for publication, "This Mobius Strip of Ifs", a collection of essays published over the decades. Go to my writer's blog, [www.mathiasfreese.com](http://www.mathiasfreese.com) for additional details.

*Mathias Freese*

Since retirement our family has settled in semi-rural Mt. Pleasant, NC, on a 7 2/3 acre mini-farm. We're not really farmers, just homesteaders enjoying a 50'x200' vegetable garden, pumpkin patch, fruit trees, a new barn and eventually some animals to complement the farm life. Occasionally enjoying a round of Shank O Potamus golf.

*Robert Krusinski*



Living it up in Panther Valley, N.J., and traveling.

*Richard Furrisi*

Have finally visited every continent in the world! What a cultural experience. Still working with drug addicts, ages 21-59, who wish to receive their G.E.D. Very rewarding. In remission for two years with endometrial cancer. I feel healthy and grateful.

*Virginia Kennedy*

Finally finished Physical Therapist Assistant program at Suffolk County Community College – Graduated. Now to buckle down to study for licensing exam and then – FINISHED. Already enjoying more free time again.

*Karen L. Bath*

Still enjoying good health. Please keep up the good work maintaining our benefits. Thank you.

*Edna Luggero* -3-

Hildy and I moved to Bucks County, PA eight years ago and are enjoying the best things both NYC (70 miles NE) and Philadelphia (40 miles south) have to offer. In addition, NJ is in our "backyard", the Poconos 70 miles to the north, and the Pennsylvania Dutch Country 70 miles to the west. Yes, life is good off Long Island. We just recently became grandparents for the fourth time, a granddaughter named Emilia Ann. Another reason to keep visiting our son Michael in Royal Oak, MI. We wish you all good health and a happy retirement.

*Ed Koehler*

It isn't well known but my father was the "Iron Worker/Welder" who helped build the Signal Hill and Paumanok Schools. I've been retired since July '91. Just celebrated my mom's 100th birthday. Good stock the last four generations. Many healthy 100+ year birthdays!!

*John Bilitsky*

I have started my own business, Educatix of America, Inc. It provides professional development, consulting services, as well as conferences and workshops. Also, I adjunct in the English Department at St. Joseph's College, New York. Essentially, I feel that retirement's greatest challenge is that a retiree never gets a day off!

*Joan M. O'Hanlon*

Gary and I are still seeing the world, (most recently the Baltic, Easter Island, and Mongolia.), as well as maintaining antique mall booths in West Virginia to market some of our collections of vintage books and paper ephemera. There just isn't enough time to go everywhere and see everyone we would wish to see.

*Paul Kreyling*

Not much has changed. We are still active in our church and in community affairs. I am still a member of the School Board and we continue to travel in our motor home with our club. Miss playing golf but haven't given up yet.

*George R. Robinson*





## **Welfare Trust Benefits by Dick Lee, Trust Fund Administration**

In the last issue of *HHHART Beat*, I listed the wrong phone number for the New York State Teachers' Retirement System. The correct number is **800-356-3128**. If you clipped and saved the important contact numbers from my article, please correct the phone number for the NYSTRS.

Retirees who have maintained one or more AFT, NEA or NYSUT Member Benefit programs (i.e.: Life Insurance Catastrophic Coverage, Car or Home Insurance, etc.) should be aware that those benefits end, for eligible dependents, when the HHHART retiree dies. However, eligible dependents may continue those policies if they apply for **Associate Membership**. Usually the Benefit vendor contacts the eligible dependents, of the deceased member, and offers them the opportunity to apply for Associate Membership. The yearly premium for this membership is currently \$35.00 for one year or \$60.00 for two years.

If eligible dependents are not contacted by the vendor they should call NYSUT Member Benefits at (800) 342-9810 to ask for an Associate Member application. **Your one yearly premium covers all NEA, AFT and NYSUT benefit policies.**

We've gotten very positive feedback from our members who have used the services of Health Advocate. I, personally, have been very impressed with their confidential, professional and helpful services.

Your Health Advocate benefit is provided **at a minimal amount** and offers you unlimited access to your own Personal Health Advocate (PHA) to help you resolve a range of healthcare issues.

Health Advocate can help with a wide range of retiree issues including:

- Finding the best doctors, specialists, hospitals
- Clarifying your benefit plan
- Untangling insurance claims
- Assisting with eldercare
- Addressing medication issues
- Navigating Medicare...and more
- Locating in-home care, adult daycare, assisted-living, long-term care

As an eligible employee, please remember that our union Health Advocate benefit covers you, your spouse, your dependent children as well as your parents and parents-in-law. You can call Health Advocate at **1-866-695-8622** (toll-free) anytime that you need help with a healthcare or insurance-related problem.

Their website is [www.HealthAdvocate.com](http://www.HealthAdvocate.com)

HHHART will receive the Abel Blattman Award for 2011 Vote-Cope contributions at the Representative Assembly. Bravo to us!

HHHART received a thank you from the NYSUT Disaster Fund for our contributions.



## Know Your HHHART Board

**Our interviewee this issue is Marlene Flanagan, a valued member of our Programs/Social/Hospitality committee.**



Marlene grew up in the Bronx and Queens. After she graduated from Bayside High School (having loved many of her excellent math teachers) Marlene was fortunate to be able to attend Queens College where she majored in Math and minored in Physics and Economics.

In the fall of 1957, Marlene began working as an engineering aide at Sperry Gyroscope rather than looking for a teaching position, which she knew would require many additional hours of prep time. As a female in the fifties, she was not eligible to be a full engineer and found being a "secretary" to the department very boring.

Marlene's thoughts returned to teaching. When she called the local High School (Martin Van Buren) right after the launch of Sputnik, she was offered a job for the following January. Marlene had to take a pay cut from industry salaries even though there was a shortage of math teachers in New York City. She had to work very hard to learn teaching techniques and the curriculum, but she really enjoyed it. Then in November, 1960, Marlene had the first of three children and began ten fun years of family child-rearing and community involvement.

In 1970 when her youngest child was in full time nursery school, she returned to teaching – at High School East. Again it was a joy. Especially rewarding was the opportunity to encourage young women and men to overcome anxiety, enjoy math, believe in their math ability, and to pursue careers in engineering and related fields. Marlene found lifelong friends on the faculty, and served in the HHTA as well.

After 25 years it was time for a new passage – into retirement. Marlene has enjoyed this time immensely. She and her husband, Ed, did lots of traveling culminating in a 50th anniversary cruise with their family to Bermuda. After that they cruised in Alaska and then from Barcelona to Venice.

Most recently Marlene and Ed have traveled to Denver to see their four-year-old youngest grandchild as well as to Philadelphia, Vermont, and Boston for family visits to three older grandchildren, a niece, and a nephew. Marlene also enjoys her new hobby of pasteling with instruction, lots of trips to New York City for shows and museums, reading with a book club, and staying strong with exercise and Pilates. Family and friends are a great pleasure to her and, with the help of computers and smart phones, she gets to share her life. Marlene has really been smitten by all the technology available these days.

She cherishes the time she spent at High School East and feels very fortunate to have found such an opportunity for rewarding work amongst good friends. Now she serves on the HHHART Board which she believes is very important in keeping our collegial connections as well as informing us about our many benefits and the challenges to them, especially in these times.

*Barbara Arbuss*

## Trekking and Touring in Central Asia

Previously, I had visited the Silk Road countries of Iran and Afghanistan (1977), Syria (2000) and trekked in the Altai Mountains in Mongolia (2008). These experiences and the Silk Road exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History were an impetus to explore this area further. Six of us traveled the countries of the Silk Road: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, which comprise Central Asia. Dostuck Trekking, a local Kyrgyzstan company, assisted us in planning and implementing the twenty-eight day itinerary.

Populations, conquerors, cultures and ideas have traversed the region's steppes, deserts and mountains for millennia. This is the land of the conquerors Alexander the Great (330 BC), Genghis Khan (1220), Timur (14th century) and the USSR in the 19th and 20th centuries as well as the explorer Marco Polo. Touring in the Stans countries is a revisit to the culture, religious beliefs and political climate from the 4th century BC remains of Alexander the Great and 2nd century petroglyphs to modern monuments. Our brains were infused with epic events and legends of the Silk Road as we marveled at the restored mosques and madrassas (Islamic colleges) from the 15th to 19th centuries with their breathtaking blue ceramic tile and exquisitely decorated ceilings, towering minarets, mausoleums, yurts, monuments of historical significance and museums that displayed artifacts of different periods and traced the history.

What fun to explore the remnants of the Silk Road caravans – the bazaars with their spices, dried fruit, nuts, and other food products, as well as kiosks for tradesmen such as blacksmiths and tin-forgers. Incongruous were the modern-day import of commercial goods from China. Bactrian camels, however, were only occasionally viewed. Our trekking was in Kyrgyzstan, in the lush, forested Tian Shan range with its spectacular mountain scenery. We hiked in grand rugged gorges with snow-covered peaks in the background. In the Ala-Archa Canyon on the way to a waterfall, a bridge posed a challenge. One cable side had fallen and there were slats missing in the wobbly, metal bridge while the water below roared.

Our most challenging hike with an altitude gain of over 2000' to 10,200' was in the Altyn Arasham Gorge. With the rushing waters of the gorge below and tall juniper trees, we hiked the steep trail, encountering only horses, sheep and goats. A lone herdsman hospitably invited us into his tent for tea and home-baked bread. When we reached our destination, a rock area and a green, glacial-fed lake surrounded by high peaks, we marveled at the magical spot.

Traversing mountain roads with precipitous edges and no barriers, our van ascended to Kojo Kelen, a remote village (not in Lonely Planet guide book or any other). The one-room only guesthouse in the rural village was our base for day hiking. Sleep was on colorful mats in a row on the floor, and the ethnic food of plov (rice, carrots and meat), noodles, and dumplings cooked in a primitive brick oven outside was delicious. We were less enthused by the eastern toilet – a hole bounded by two planks with no cover, even the night it rained. However, the hiking with the spectacular red rocks, waterfalls, grottoes and the herders' animals to share the trail was worth it.

If you cannot travel to Central Asia but want to simulate this experience go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see their new Islamic wing with 1200 artifacts displayed in galleries built by artisans from Islamic countries. *Elaine Schwartz*



## Is Level Term Life Insurance right for you?

With the cost of consumer goods such as gasoline rising at an alarming rate, we're all trying to cut back on expenses any way that we can. Cooking at home instead of eating out? Smart (and healthier)!

Consolidating and paying off debt as quickly as possible? Great decision! "Saving" money by not purchasing life insurance? Not so good. Ask yourself this... would your family be protected if something were to happen to you?

If your answer is "no," you may want to consider purchasing the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Level Term Life Insurance Plan – a new insurance offering available to NYSUT members and their spouses/certified domestic partners.

This plan offers life insurance in force for either a 10-, 15- or 20-year period. Your individual premium is scheduled to remain the same during the term period; you cannot be singled out for a premium increase due to your age or a change in health status; and coverage will not decrease during the term period.

Your rate for Level Term Life is based on your age at the time that you are approved for coverage. Keep in mind that the insurance company reserves the right to change rates for all insureds only once in a 12-month period.



When the term ends, you have a few options. You can renew for another term with proof of insurability, during which your benefits will remain the same. Or, you may renew directly into the Member Benefits Trust-endorsed annual renewable Term Life Insurance Plan with no medical underwriting (depending on age). You can also convert to an individual permanent life policy at a higher cost.

*For more information about this new program, please contact Marsh U.S. Consumer, a service of Seabury & Smith, Inc. – the plan administrator – toll-free at 888-386-9788. Feel free to also contact Member Benefits with any questions at 800-626-8101 or visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org).*

## Need help getting your financial house in order?

It's spring time... and spring cleaning time! Take advantage of this opportunity to go through your home and get rid of those items that you no longer need. And, while you're getting your home in order, why not make sure your financial house is in order as well?

Do you have questions about how to properly invest your assets to build a college savings or retirement fund? Maybe you want to purchase or refinance a home, or simply pay off some debt?

These are important questions to ask of a professional you can trust who can put your mind at ease and help you avoid financial mistakes. The NYSUT Member Benefits Corporation-endorsed Financial Counseling Program – provided by Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. – offers unbiased, objective advice customized to specific financial situations such as the ones mentioned above.

*For more details, please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 or visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org).*

For information about programs or 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.

Mar./Apr. '12

**MEMBER  
BENEFITS**  
**nysut**  
Working to Benefit You



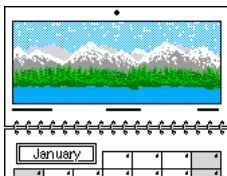
The HHHART Newsletter is a publication of the Half Hollow Hills Active Retired Teachers

631-499-4240

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

E-mail Correspondence	Malinda Dobrins
E-mail Data Base	Alice Langholz
Webmaster	Betty Volpe
RA Delegate	Joan Petroske
AFT Delegate	DickLee
Political Action Coordinator	Mel Stern
Newsletter Publisher /Co-Eds	Barbara Arbuss
	Sandra Glickman
	Norma Smith
HHHART Web Address	<a href="http://www.hhhart.net">http://www.hhhart.net</a>

## Mark Your Calendar



**2012**

**Wednesday, May 9th**

**General Meeting**

**July 1st**

**HHHART annual dues are due**

**Wednesday, September 12th**

**HHHART Fall Luncheon**

**August, TBA**

**Engeman Theater Matinee**

Please notify Alice Langholz, [aelang@optonline.net](mailto:aelang@optonline.net), if you wish to be added to our e-mail list. We will continue to keep you informed.

### **Changes & additions for HHHART Directory**

#### **Irwin Becker**

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#### **Charlotte Winkler**

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#### **Arlene Schreiber**

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Boca Raton, FL 33433

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### **IN MEMORIAM**

Joseph Internicolo  
March, 2011  
GU

Eleanor Schwartz  
February, 2012  
BU

William Ruf  
April 2012  
EL

The **2012**  
continues.

# **Vote** **COPE**

drive

**\$25 or more suggested.**

**Vote-Cope** helps strengthen political action at all levels. The single largest expenditure is rebates to locals for their own communities for support with school budget votes and local campaigns. Funds also go toward political action expenses. NYSUT and **Vote-Cope** are non-partisan and intend to remain non-partisan providing funds to pro-education and pro-labor candidates of all parties. Issues matter, not party.

**Please** send a check made out to **Vote-Cope** to the TA Office or you may opt to use the convenient NYSUT automatic pension deduction. (Contact NYSUT if you are interested) The 2012 **Vote-Cope** drive began in January and ends in December.