
HCFA/CMS

ALUMNI NEWS

SPRING 2014 (Vol. 20 No. 2)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Winter has finally released its tentacles and now Spring has actually sprung, so we thought we'd celebrate with another issue of the HCFA/CMS Alumni News. I'd like to thank all of you who have renewed your membership for 2014 (and in many cases beyond that as well). Dues remain at \$5.00 per year and those of you who did not avail yourselves of the opportunity to renew your membership based upon the renewal information released with the WINTER 2014 issue of the HCFA/CMS Alumni News can still do so now. **Anyone whose membership expiration date on the mailing label, if they received the newsletter in the mail, or in the Member Directory if they received the newsletter electronically, is 12/31/13 or earlier needs to renew. Those with a date of 12/31/14 or later are paid up and do not need to renew at this time.**

I am also pleased that the association continues to attract new members. On page 2 you will see a list of 11 new members, bringing the membership up to an all time high of 735. By providing a Member Directory, a quarterly newsletter, and e-mail messages about happenings at CMS, we promote a continuing connection between CMS (formerly HCFA) and its retirees, both at the central office and regional office levels. We try to provide information of interest to all retirees.

In this issue you will also find items about the COLA Count (looks like we might actually get one again in 2015, so far 0.97%), the Alumni Spring/Summer Cook-Out, the latest in CMS senior staff and organizational news, including a message from CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner about the Affordable Health Care Act. The ever-popular KomedY Korner appears as usual. There are lots of items that hopefully will be of interest to you.

I want to wish you all a Wonderful Spring and continued happiness, good health and prosperity in retirement.



William L Engelhardt

HCFA/CMS ALUMNI NEWS

Published four times a year for the members of the Health Care Financing Administration /Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (HCFA/CMS) Alumni Association

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DUE DATES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

Summer Issue – June 30, 2014
Fall Issue – September 30, 2014

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<http://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Career-Information/CMSAlumni/index.html>

NEW MEMBERS

The Association extends a hearty "Welcome Aboard" to the following new members:

M Kelly Buchanan
Bruce & Jackie Carroll
Duva Clyburn
Tzvi M Hefter
Anne Elizabeth Tayloe Hauswald
Katherine L "Kathy" Lochary
Marie Margiottiello
Mary Minnick
David Parker
Ana L Salerna
Armen H Thoumaian, Ph.D.

We now have 630 active members.

MEMBERSHIP SEARCH

As always, we acknowledge that there are many HCFA/CMS retirees that we have not been able to reach to tell them about the Alumni Association and invite them to join. We continue to ask for your assistance in spreading the message about us to them. If you know of any retiree that is not a member, please let them know about us and tell them how to contact us by telephone, snail mail or e-mail (all of that information can be found on page 2 of this issue). We will be very happy to send, either electronically or via snail mail, anyone the enrollment form and further information about membership. And Bill Engelhardt says you can always e-mail him personally at wengelhardt@comcast.net for faster response.

**SOCIAL SECURITY ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION**

We'd like to again remind members that we also have a link to our sister alumni, the Social Security Alumni Association, web site on our web site. The actual URL for it is "<http://www.ssaanational.org>" but you can just click on the link on our page. Many HCFA and/or CMS retirees also worked for the Social Security Administration somewhere along the line, and are eligible for membership in both alumni associations.

**SOCIAL SECURITY ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION BLOG**

Joe Vaughan, President of the Social Security Alumni Association (SSAA) has reminded us again that HCFA/CMS folks are certainly welcome to participate in any Social Security Alumni activity. Many of us are eligible to, and some of us actually do, belong to both alumni associations. The SSAA has developed a blog. Go to <http://ssaanews.blogspot.com/> to check it out. If you are a former SSA worker you just might be interested enough to join the SSAA.

**SOCIAL SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION RETIRED
PERSONS**

There is also a web site created by and for Social Security Administration Retired Persons. It is a website for SSA retirees and employees who worked for SSA, but retired from other agencies (like CMS). Current employees are also invited to visit often and to join the mail list. The ssarp.org administrator is Stanley LeBlanc, Dallas

Region, who retired June 3, 2003. The site was begun by retirees with the support of SSA employees, but it is not an official SSA site. There is an email communication list for those who subscribe. The ssarp.org administrator is Stanley LeBlanc, Dallas Region, who retired June 3, 2003. A username and password is needed to access some of the sections and you can obtain it by sending an e-mail to request to retired@ssarp.org. Check it out at:

<http://www.ssarp.org>

SSAEAA

We'd again like to remind members that we do have a link to the Social Security Administration Employee Activities Association (SSAEAA) on our web site. The actual URL for it is "<http://ssaeea.org>" but you can just click on the link on our page. HCFA/CMS retirees are automatically members of the SSAEAA and are eligible to participate in discount purchases.

COLA COUNT

Through six months of the counting period toward the January 2015 federal retiree cost of living adjustment, the inflation index used to set that adjustment stands at +0.97 percentage points. The new CPI-W figure for March 2014 was 232.560, 0.97 percent higher than the average CPI-W for the third-quarter of 2013, which was 230.327. The 2013 third-quarter average is the reference figure for determining the 2015 COLA. October and November saw modest drops in the COLA count but December, January, February and March each saw a monthly

COLA COUNT (Continued):

increase, with an increase of 0.02% for December, increase of 0.38% for January, increase of 0.36% for February, and increase of 0.73% for March, ending up with a net gain of 0.97% for the counting period. There are six months left in the counting period.

SPRING/SUMMER COOK-OUT

As indicated on the flyer enclosed with this newsletter, Lillian Lehnert is graciously hosting a Spring/Summer Cook-out at her home in Fulton MD on Wednesday, June 25, 2014. Some 31 Alumni members and friends attended this event last year and everyone had a wonderful time. See the enclosed flyer, sign up and come for an “afternoon delight” from noon to 4PM.

**SENIOR MANAGEMENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

CMS ADMINISTRATOR’S MESSAGE

The last four years have been very busy and exciting as we’ve worked to implement the Affordable Care Act. And, as expected, CMS stepped up and met the demands of this work. On Tuesday April 1, the President announced to the nation that more than 7.1 million individuals signed up for health care coverage. Yes, the beginning of open enrollment didn’t quite start off the way we had all hoped, but we pulled together and we were successful enrolling millions of Americans in new coverage. We still have work to do and need to prepare for the next year by taking our lessons learned

and applying them to make the 2015 open enrollment even better.

I send this to all of CMS, because as we know, this was a huge team effort. Staff was pulled from offices all over CMS to assist in the Marketplace work. Some components picked up extra work to cover for those that were now working on the Marketplaces. Staff worked tirelessly to ensure that our annual regulation deadlines were met, while others worked hard to make sure we continued our normal Medicare, Medicaid and CHIP business. Staff all over the Agency were called on for casework and outreach and most staff worked late nights, weekends and holidays to make sure the Marketplaces were up and running. At times, I know it seemed as though the endless hours of work and all the criticism would never end. But I believe by helping over 7.1 million individuals get coverage, all of you can hold your heads high and be very proud of your hard work and all that we have accomplished since the affordable care act became law.

I hope that we can all take a deep breath and take some time to enjoy our accomplishments, enjoy our families and know that you have made a huge difference in the lives of the American people.

I’ve said it before and I believe it’s worth repeating – I am constantly reminded of the dedication and commitment by the staff at CMS and I am proud and honored to work with all of you.

Marilyn Tavenner

**SENIOR MANAGEMENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS (Continued):**

**CMS PRINCIPAL DEPUTY
ADMINISTRATOR LEAVING**

Jonathan (Jon) Blum, Principal Deputy Administrator, has decided to leave CMS to pursue new opportunities. Jon was the first political appointee to come to CMS under the Obama Administration in March 2009. He spent most of his time at CMS as Deputy Administrator and Director of Center of Medicare (CM). In August 2013, Jon was appointed to be CMS's Principal Deputy, helping to coordinate much of our payment reform and cost-reduction strategies across the agency.

**OFFICE OF HEARINGS AND
INQUIRIES (OHI)**

Randy Brauer has agreed to serve as the Acting Office Director of the Office of Hearings and Inquiries (OHI). Randy comes from the Center for Medicare (CM) and brings over a decade of CMS experience to his new role including, most recently, as Deputy Group Director for the Medicare Enrollment and Appeals Group. Prior to that, Randy served the agency in a variety of management and technical advisory roles

James Slade has agreed serve as Acting Deputy Office Director of OHI. He most recently served as the Director of the Division of Medicare Enrollment Coordination in CM and, prior to that, as the Acting Director of Policy for the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program, an interim health care reform program. Before joining CMS in 2005, Jim was the Deputy Director of the Office of Governmental Affairs for

the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, as well as a legislative and regulations officer and staff attorney for the Maryland Board of Pharmacy.

Kevin Simpson has agreed to serve as Acting Director of the Office of Marketplace Eligibility Appeals (OMEA). Kevin has been with CMS since 2004, most recently as the Acting Director of the Insurance Programs Group in CCIIO, a group that includes the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program, Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Program, and the CO-OP program. He has been a member of the PCIP team since its inception in 2010 and has served as that Division's director since 2012. Prior to joining CCIIO, Kevin worked in the Center for Medicare on SHIP program grants in the Office of Communications. Earlier in his career, before coming to CMS, Kevin was the Executive Director of the Health Assistance Partnership (HAP), a non-profit national technical resource center for health care consumer assistance programs. He has also served in the Maryland Office of the Attorney General as Director of the Health Education and Advocacy Unit in their Consumer Protection Division.

ALUMNI MEMBER AUTHORS BOOK

HCFA/CMS Alumni member John H. Foertschbeck is also a prolific author. He recently got his fourth self-published book back from the printers. *German Catholic Parishes of Maryland and Pennsylvania* is a 258 page, full color book, that traces German Catholic immigration and settlement from early Pennsylvania parishes down to Maryland. Much of the book focuses on the Redemptorist Fathers and Baltimore parishes. Chapters are also

ALUMNI MEMBER AUTHORS BOOK
(Continued):

dedicated to the German immigrant experience in Baltimore, highlighting the Highlandtown and Canton neighborhoods.

We are happy to note that the book has received very great reviews and initial sales are going well.

The book lists on John's webpage at <http://www.germanjohnsworld.com> for \$39.95 (paperback) and \$54.95 (hard cover). Check out the web site for more information about this and his other books.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER
Submitted By Mike Blank

New Years Eve, either 1960 or 1961, my wife and I decided to have a very special New Years Eve. We made reservations for dinner and for a play. Since we were still living in our rent controlled apartment in Brooklyn, New York, we also decided that we would also go to Times Square after the show to witness the ball coming down at midnight.

We made dinner reservations at an upscale Manhattan German restaurant with a Chinese sounding name, Luchows. The dinner reservation was for 6PM, giving us plenty of time to make the 8PM curtain call, which, in turn, would give us plenty of time to get to Times Square before midnight. We had picked a German restaurant because we had recently returned from spending almost two years in Germany, because I had been in a tank battalion, which was our first line of

defense in case Russia invaded the Allied sector of Germany during the Cold War. My wife had been there with me during that time and we had both learned to love well made weiner schnitzel.

Our diner went off very well and on time, so we were able to get to the Circle In The Square Theater well before 8PM. However, the curtain did not go up on Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" play at 8PM. It became 8:10, 8:20, 8:30, the curtain did not go up and there was no announcement about the delay. A little after 8:30 there was a smattering of applause even though the curtain did not go up. The applause became louder and more persistent but we couldn't see why this was happening. Then, suddenly, there was a standing ovation, and Eleanor Roosevelt walked in. We both joined the applause.

Since the play started and ended late, we were very late rushing to the subway trying to get to Times Square before midnight. We got there just a few minutes before midnight. There were literally many thousands of people jammed cheek to cheek. You couldn't fall down even if you fainted. It was freezing; there was a howling, blowing wind. Our teeth were chattering. After the ball came down and people started leaving and we were able to move, we were never so happy to leave a place.

We vowed we would never again subject ourselves to such voluntary torture. We vowed to watch all future New Years Eves from the warmth and comfort of our living room.

A warm and wiser Grandpa Mikee.

HEALTH EXPERTS LINK

HCFA/CMS Alumni member Rod Benson and CMS retiree Charlene Frizzera have established Health Experts Link LLC to connect HCFA and CMS retirees with potential employment opportunities.

The message from Rod Benson follows. We suggest that any interested parties contact Rod directly via telephone or e-mail.

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Charlene Frizzera and I have established Health Experts Link LLC. The purpose of this company is to connect people who possess healthcare-related expertise with organizations that have a need for assistance in connection with healthcare matters. We are sending this email to make you aware of the Health Experts Link and to reach out to CMS and HCFA alumni to invite them to join our organization as a health expert.

Charlene and I have each established consulting practices. Many of Charlene's clients are healthcare providers, payers and healthcare professional organizations. My clients are primarily Federal Government contractors, most of which provide services to CMS and other Federal agencies involved in healthcare. We established the Health Experts Link to provide a flexible platform for our former colleagues at CMS to work on a full or part-time basis while, at the same time, helping organizations that require assistance with Medicare or Medicaid policy and operational matters.

We are frequently asked by our clients to identify individuals with healthcare-related expertise. We would like for fellow alumni to join our roster of health experts.

Participating in Health Experts Link will not impose any obligation on you. When we identify an opportunity for you as a health expert, we will make you aware of the opportunity and provide you with information regarding the length of time your services would be required and the number of hours you would need to work. You can then decide whether you would like more information and to possibly pursue the opportunity. We will also help with the billings and providing any other assistance you may require.

I would be happy to speak with you to explain in more detail how the Health Experts Link works. I have included my contact information below. I hope to hear from you.

Rod Benson
BensonAdvisoryServices@gmail.com
410-746-9387

KOMEDY KORNER

DON'T TOUCH ME!

An elderly couple were both lying in bed one morning, having just awakened from a good night's sleep. He took her hand and she responded, "Don't touch me." Why not," he asked? She answered back, "Because I'm dead." The husband said to her, "What are you talking about? We're both lying here in bed together and talking to one another." The wife said, "No, I'm definitely dead." Her husband insisted, "You're not dead. What in the world makes you think you're dead?" His wife answered, "I know I'm dead because I woke up this morning and nothing hurts!"

KOMEDY KORNER (Continued):

CHEERIOS LOVE AFFAIR

So, as everyone knows, two different species (flavors) of cheerios cannot mate, right? That is, if one is honey-nut and another is blueberry, they cannot mate.

Anyway, there was this one normal cheerio that was in love with a blueberry cheerio. Unfortunately, he could not mate with her. He couldn't even communicate with her because they were of different species.

So, he invented a machine that changed all of his CNA (Cheerio DNA) into whichever type of cheerio that he wanted. However, this machine performed a process that was extraordinarily painful, because that sort of thing would hurt.

Anyway. He did it, and the normal flavored cheerio became a blueberry cheerio. Unfortunately, this girl cheerio hated him so much that she invented an identical machine and did the process on herself in order to become a cinnamon-apple cheerio, just so she could avoid this creeper.

So, she did it. The boy cheerio was starting to get upset at this because he really wanted her. So he told himself that he would go through the pain for her, and became a cinnamon-apple cheerio. She then changed to a honey-nut cheerio!

He decided that this was the last time that he would change cheerio type. He did it, and she changed one more time, into a normal cheerio - the kind he originally was.

So he said out loud, "Okay, this is really the last time. If she changes again, I will just

stay back with my family." So he became a normal cheerio again, and she didn't change fast enough to prevent him from putting his moves on her.

So, they started dating, and he finally asked her to the Formal Bowl (ahaha, get it, bowl instead of ball). Anyway, they got there and danced intensely for a few hours.

Finally, they got tired and she sent the boy cheerio to the milk bowl (you know, since it's a cereal dance, they have that and punch). He got there and stood in line for ten minutes.

Finally fed up at the really long line, he looked over at the bowl of punch and realized **there is no punch line.**

GERIATRIC DIVORCE!

An old couple came up before the judge in a divorce proceeding. Seeing how absolutely ancient they were, the judge just had to ask their ages.

"Well, your honor," the old man said, "I'm 99 and my wife here is 97."

"Wow," the judge said. "How long have you been married?"

"I married Pearl three days after she turned sixteen, so that would be a little over 81 years."

"Eighty-one years?!" the judge said, incredulous.

"Eighty-one years of pure torture," the old man corrected.

KOMEDY KORNER (Continued):

The judge was stunned. "If it was 81 years of pure torture, why didn't you file for divorce sooner?"

"Well, your honor," the gentleman said, "I guess we have to admit it, we were waiting for the kids to die."

GETTING OLD!

- Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today, it's called golf.

- Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

- The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

- Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want to people to know "why" I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

- How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are?

- When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.

- You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

- One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young.

- One must wait until evening to see how splendid the day has been.

- Ahh, being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

- Old age is when former classmates are so gray and wrinkled and bald, they don't recognize you.

- If you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you are old

- First you forget names, then you forget faces. Then you forget to pull up your zipper, then...Oh, my goodness, you forgot to pull your zipper down!

- If you jog in a jogging suit, lounge in lounging pajamas, and smoke in a smoking jacket, WHY would anyone want to wear a windbreaker?

- I don't know how I got over the hill without getting to the top.

HAROLD!

Submitted by Mike Hoban

Harold was an old man. He was sick and in the hospital. There was one nurse that just drove him crazy. Every time she came in, she would talk to him like he was a little child. She would say in a patronizing tone of voice, "And how are we doing this morning," or "Are we ready for a bath," or "Are we hungry?"

Old Harold had had enough of this particular nurse. One day, at breakfast, Old Harold took the apple juice off the tray and put it in his bedside stand. Next, he was given a

KOMEDY KORNER (Continued):

urine bottle to fill for testing.

So you know where the juice went!

The nurse came in a little later, picked up the urine bottle and looked at it. "My, it seems we are a little cloudy today."

At this, Old Harold snatched the bottle out of her hand, popped off the top, and drank it down, saying, "Well, I'll run it through again. Maybe I can filter it better this time."

The nurse fainted!

DON'T MESS WITH 'OLD' PEOPLE!!

WOULD YOU REMARRY?

"Dear," asked a wife, "What would you do if I died?"

"Why dear, I would be extremely upset," said the husband. "Why do you ask such a question?"

"Would you remarry?" persevered the wife.

"No, of course not, dear" said the husband.

"Don't you like being married?" asked the wife.

"Of course I do, dear," he said.

"Then why wouldn't you remarry?"

"All right," said the husband, "I'd remarry."

"You would?" said the wife, looking vaguely hurt.

"Yes," said the husband.

"Would you sleep with her in our bed?" asked the wife.

After a long pause. "Well, yes, I suppose I would," replied the husband.

"I see," said the wife indignantly. "And would you let her wear my old clothes?"

"I suppose, if she wanted to," said the husband.

"Really," said the wife icily. "And would you take down the pictures of me and replace them with pictures of her?"

"Yes. I think that would be the correct thing to do."

"Is that so?" said the wife, leaping to her feet. "And I suppose you'd let her play with my golf clubs, too!?"

"Of course not, dear," said the husband. "She's left-handed."

OBITUARIES

CARLIS TAYLOR

Contributed by Twila Taylor

Carlisle Taylor has left this world and is sitting at the great council fire with Chief Running Buck, Little Dove and others. He had moved to Haven Hospice after a battle with congestive heart failure. He had just celebrated 53 years of marriage and leaves his wife, six daughters, seven grand children and seven great grand children.

Carlisle retired in 1995 after 32 years of federal service. He moved to Florida to be with family and set up a school with the Ocklevuha Yamasee Seminoles.

Any return condolences can be sent to windsong11@cox.net.

Thank you,
Twila Taylor

**PATRICIA ANNNE HORNICK-
REXRODE**



Patricia Anne Hornick-Rexrode, 44, of Hampstead, died Saturday, March 8, 2014.

Born March 1, 1970, in Munich, Germany, she was the daughter of Waltraud Schafer Hornick, of Front Royal, Va., and the late John Francis Hornick. She was the wife of Charles Andrew Rexrode II, her husband of five years.

She was a graduate of George Mason University. She was employed as a contract specialist for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

She was a member of the Shenandoah Longrifles and the Dutch Mess. She enjoyed crafts, gardening, travel and hiking. She greatly enjoyed spending time with family and friends.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Carroll County Humane Society, 2517 Littlestown Pike, Westminster, MD 21158.

Online condolences may be offered at <http://www.elinefh.com/>.

Patricia's co-workers at CMS wrote:

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of such a valued member of the OEM family. Trish was a tremendous person, friend, employee and co-worker to those of us at CMS that had the pleasure of working with her. We will all miss her good-natured ways, her intelligence, her bright smile and her incredible laughter that always seemed to brighten any meeting. Please refer to the flyer for her obituary and links to submit personal stories, photos and online condolences, as well as information for making contributions in honor of Trish's memory.

OBITUARIES (Continued):

DON EDWIN NICHOLSON



Don Edwin Nicholson, 75, of Columbia, Maryland, died at home on March 18, 2014. Don was born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri to Glenn and Opal Nicholson, and graduated from Morehouse High School in 1956. He married college sweetheart Susan McCullagh, graduating from Transylvania College in 1960. Don pursued a government career, starting as a claims rep for Social Security and writing legislation for President Nixon's 1974 health care plan before retiring as a Deputy Inspector General for Health and Human Services. Following early retirement at age 49, he joined the board of directors for an HMO and pursued his passion for barbecue, selling smoked pulled pork for 25 years at fairs and renaissance festivals in Maryland, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. No one loved golf more than Don, playing often with friends in any weather. He also loved travel, poker, cooking, and searching for the ultimate deal. Don was active in church, where he especially enjoyed serving hungry folks at the "supper club" in Baltimore. He loved music and theater and performed with Columbia Community Players in the 1980s. Don was always ready with a joke, a story,

and a good time, betting his friends small change over sports or cards and sharing his southern hospitality at meals and parties. He was much loved and is greatly missed, survived by his wife Susan, daughters Pam and Laura, son Don (Ed) Jr., sons-in-law Bob and Tony, brothers Gary and Chesley, and grandchildren Courtney and Blair.

A celebration of his life will be held at Columbia United Christian Church on May 3rd at 1pm. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to First Tee of Howard County, Maryland Food Bank, or Gilchrist Hospice.

IN MEMORIAM

The Alumni Association respectfully acknowledges

the passing of the following

Alumni/Employees/Spouses and expresses its

sympathy to family members:

WILLIAM GEORGE COLEMAN (3/9/14)*

DON EDWIN NICHOLSON (3/18/14)**

PATRICIA ANNE HORNICK-REXRODE (3/8/14)***

BERNICE H SIMON (2/19/14)****

HERMAN TAUBE (3/25/14)*****

CARLIS TAYLOR (2/24/14)**

* HCFA Retiree

** HCFA/CMS Alumni Member

*** CMS Employee

**** HCFA Retiree, Mother-In-Law of Alumni Member Eric Yospe

***** Father of Alumni Member Bernard Taube, Grandfather of CMS employee Angela Taube

If you are aware of any other deaths of Alumni please notify the editorial staff

April 2014