
HCF A/CMS

ALUMNI NEWS

FALL 2008 (Vol. 14 No. 4)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, the summer is long gone and the Holidays are fast approaching. Speaking of Holidays, enclosed with this newsletter is a flier for the Alumni Holiday Luncheon at the Turf Valley Country Club on Wednesday, December 10. Cut off the sign up sheet and send it in to register to attend. A great time is always had by all and we look forward to seeing some of you there.

Completely separate from that, the newsletter contains a flier announcing the 31st annual CMS (the old OPOP) Holiday Party at the Lodge on December 5. That is NOT an Alumni function but retirees are welcome to attend. Since they are on different date, you can take in both.

I am pleased that the association continues to attract new members, and on page 2 you will see a list of 3 new members. The current membership stands at 526. **Membership renewal forms for 2009, only for the 261 of you who need them, are enclosed with this newsletter.** If your mailing label shows an expiration date of 12/31/08, you need to renew. If it shows 12/31/09 or later your dues for 2009 are paid up and you do not need to renew at this time. Dues remain at just \$5.00 per year and we hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to renew at this time, while it is fresh in your mind. And you can now renew for any number of years.

In this issue you will also find items about the 5.8% COLA, FEHB Open Season and new premiums, new Medicare premiums and co-pays, the latest in CMS senior staff and organizational news, and the usual popular KomedY Korner. The newsletter is chock full of lots of other items that hopefully will also be of interest to you as well.

I want to wish you all a Wonderful Holiday Season 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

Winter Issue – December 26, 2008

Fall Issue – March 27, 2009

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NEW MEMBERS

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

Paula A. Kolick
Melissa A. Sterling
Marinos Svolos

We now have 526 active members.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AND PAYMENT OF YEAR 2009 DUES

It is again time to begin the collection of the annual dues, this time for the year 2009, covering the period of January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009. Enclosed with this issue of the Alumni News is the re-enrollment form (**but only for those 261 members who need it**). Dues remain at just \$5.00 per year. When using the form to mail in your dues, please note any changes in information so we may update our records (i.e. address, e-mail, phone number, etc.)

For your convenience, we have included a pre-addressed envelope to send in your 2008 dues. **If you have already paid your 2009 dues you should NOT find an enrollment form included with this issue.**

Also responding to popular request, we continue to accept membership enrollment (or re-enrollment) for multiple years. Dues are \$5.00 per year and members can sign up for any number of years. Because the dues are nominal, there are no discounts for multiple year enrollments and there is no "lifetime" membership. Multiple year enrollments are available as a convenience to members. To facilitate keeping track of individual enrollment periods, the mailing labels used to send the HCFA/CMS Alumni News contain the member's I.D. Number and the date of expiration of enrollment, i.e., 12/31/08. **Those with a date later than 12/31/08 do NOT need to renew at this time.**

NEW MEMBER DIRECTORY UPDATE

At the back of this newsletter you will find a 1 page Member Directory Update. It includes all additions (i.e., new members) and reported changes since the Summer 2008 Edition of the Member Directory was issued. We will continue to include updates from July 2008 on in each issue of The HCFA/CMS Alumni News. The update in this issue is a complete one and can replace all prior updates. **Since this is an update, you will NOT find yourself listed in it unless there has been a change in your membership information or you became a new member since the full Member Directory was issued in July 2008.**

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 (as the office e-mail is only accessed weekly).

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://ssaeaa.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

With all twelve months of the counting period in, the January 2009 federal retiree cost of living adjustment (COLA) is set at 5.8 percent. The annual COLA count measures the change in the index's average from one third calendar quarter to the next. The 5.8% COLA is the highest since 1982. This year's 5.8 percent COLA will result in Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees and survivors receiving a 5.8 percent adjustment to their annuities. Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) retirees over the age of 62, as well as FERS disabled retirees, FERS special category employees and FERS survivors, will receive a 4.8 percent COLA reflected in their FERS defined benefit annuity and a 5.8 percent adjustment to their Social Security benefit.

FEHB OPEN SEASON

The Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) program open season will be from November 10 to December 8, 2008. During this time employees and retirees may elect to change their health insurance coverage. Premiums will be increasing significantly for many of the plans and decreasing slightly for a few. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Basic Self Plan is increasing by \$7.65 to a monthly cost of \$92.44, and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Basic Family Plan is increasing by \$17.87 to a monthly cost of \$216.48. The share paid by the government for us will be \$277.32 and \$649.45 respectively for the two plans. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Standard Self Plan is increasing by \$17.40 to a monthly cost of \$152.06, and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Standard Family Plan is increasing by \$42.12 to a monthly cost of \$356.59. The share paid by the government for us will be \$337.26 and \$763.88 respectively for the two plans.

The new premium rates for 2009 for all health plans can be accessed at the OPM web site (<https://www.opm.gov>). Just click on Health Insurance under Most Requested on the right side of the page and proceed from there. The rates will come up in Adobe Acrobat Reader format.

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

As mentioned in the President's Message and the enclosed flier, the Holiday Luncheon will be on December 10, 2008 at the Alexandra's Restaurant in the Turf Valley Country Club. The Restaurant itself will be the location and we will have the entire restaurant if needed. Last year some 109 alumni members and friends came to the Holiday Luncheon and everyone had a wonderful time. Everyone enjoyed the event and the place was abuzz with happy people renewing old acquaintances. And an HCFA/CMS Alumni subsidy, being repeated again this year, kept the cost at a very reasonable level. This was a record setting crowd by far and attendance has been increasing each year. We hope to have a similarly great experience and see even more of you at this year's Holiday Luncheon.

As it was last year, the luncheon will be a buffet. The menu follows.

Starters: Salad Maison, Classic Caesar Salad or Seasonal Crab Soup.

Entrées: (One fish, one beef, one poultry – exact preparation subject to change) Pan Roasted Salmon, Tournedoes Alexandra and Chicken Marsala.

Desserts: 3 or 4 different Chef's Choice of Desserts Displayed.

MEDICARE PREMIUMS & CO-PAYS

The standard Medicare Part B monthly premium will be \$96.40 in 2009, the same as the Part B premium for 2008. This is the first year since 2000 that there was no increase in the standard premium over the prior year. Since the enactment of Medicare, there have been five prior years for which no Part B premium increase was required because the contingency reserve was more than adequate.

As required in the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003, beginning in 2007 the Part B premium a beneficiary pays each month is based on his or her annual income. Specifically, if a beneficiary's "modified adjusted gross income" is greater than the legislated threshold amounts (\$85,000 in 2009 for a beneficiary filing an individual income tax return or married and filing a separate return, and \$170,000 for a beneficiary filing a joint tax return) the beneficiary is responsible for a larger portion of the estimated total cost of Part B benefit coverage. In addition to the standard 25 percent premium, such beneficiaries now have to pay an income-related monthly adjustment amount. These income-related Part B premiums have been phased-in over three years, beginning in 2007. 2009 is the first year in which affected

Part B enrollees will pay the full amount of the income-related premiums. About 5 percent of current Part B enrollees are expected to be subject to the higher premium amounts.

The 2009 Part B monthly premium rates to be paid by beneficiaries who file an individual tax return (including those who are single, head of household, qualifying widow (er) with dependent child, or married filing separately who lived apart from their spouse for the entire taxable year), or who file a joint tax return are:

Beneficiaries who file an Individual tax return with Income:	Beneficiaries who file a joint tax return with income:	Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount	Total Monthly Premium Amount
Less than or equal to \$85,000	Less than or equal to \$170,000	\$0.00	\$96.40
Greater than \$85,000 and less than or equal to \$107,000	Greater than \$170,000 and less than \$214,000	\$38.50	\$134.90
Greater than \$107,000 and less than or equal to \$160,000	Greater than \$214,000 and less than \$320,000	\$96.30	\$192.70
Greater than \$160,000 and less Than \$231,000	Greater than \$320,000 and less than \$426,000	\$154.10	\$250.50
Greater than \$213,000	Greater than \$426,000	\$211.90	\$308.30

In addition the monthly premium rates to be paid by beneficiaries who are married, but file a separate return from their spouse and lived with their spouse at any time during the taxable year are:

Beneficiaries who are married but file a separate tax return From their spouse:

Less than or equal to \$85,000	\$0.00	\$96.40
Greater than \$85,000 and less than or equal to \$128,000	\$154.10	\$250.50
Greater than \$128,000	\$211.90	\$308.30

The Part B deductible was increased to \$110 in 2005 and, as a result of the Medicare Modernization Act, is currently indexed to the annual percentage increase in the Part B actuarial rate for aged beneficiaries. In 2009, the Part B deductible will be \$135, the same as it was in 2008.

Medicare Part A Deductible: Medicare Part A pays for inpatient hospital, skilled nursing facility, hospice, and certain home health care services. The \$1,068 deductible for 2009, paid by the beneficiary when admitted as a hospital inpatient, is an increase of \$44 from \$1024 in 2008. The Part A deductible is the beneficiary's only cost for up to 60 days of Medicare-covered inpatient hospital care in a benefit period. Beneficiaries must pay an additional \$267 per day for days 61 through 90 in 2009, and \$534 per day for "lifetime reserve days" that can be used for hospital stays beyond the 90th day in a benefit period. The corresponding amounts for calendar year 2008 are \$256 and \$512, respectively. Daily coinsurance for the 21st through 100th day in a skilled nursing facility will be \$133.50 in 2009, up from \$128 in 2008. Supplemental health insurance may cover all or part of these costs.

Approximately 99 percent of Medicare beneficiaries do not have to pay a premium for Part A services because they have at least 40 quarters of Medicare-covered employment (or are the spouse or widow(er) of such a person). However, other seniors and certain people under age 65 with disabilities who have fewer than 30 quarters of coverage may obtain Part A coverage by paying a monthly premium set according to a statutory formula. This premium will be \$443 per month for 2009, an increase of \$20 from 2008. In addition, seniors with 30 to 39 quarters of coverage, and certain disabled persons with 30 or more quarters of coverage, will pay a premium of \$244 in 2009, compared to \$233 in 2008.

SUMMER COOKOUT

Some 30 Alumni members and friends came to the summer cookout at the home of past president Walter B. Schauer mann on September 9 and everyone had a wonderful time. As always, Walt Schauer mann was a most gracious host and we can never thank him enough for his hospitality each year. Sheila Frank brought a loaf cake, Camille Grant brought a fantastic Pasta, Sausage and etc. hot dish, Maude Byrd brought a yellow cake, Don & Bernadette Joy brought a homemade apple pie that their son had made, Darlene Summerfield made potato salad, deviled eggs, a vegetable tray and fresh cut up peaches. Food was plentiful and fantastic. Walt Schauer mann cooked up the meat in fine fashion and the liquid refreshment was in good supply. The weather was threatening enough to dissuade about a half-dozen people from attending, but turned out not too rainy and the picnic was held outdoors and indoors in beautiful and spacious surroundings. A lot of reminiscing, story telling and just great conversation filled the air. Many people commented that this was the best picnic ever and we agree that it just gets better and better every year, and so we intend to have a summer picnic again next year! We hope to see even more of you then.

CFC COOKBOOK SALE

The holidays are coming! The CMS/CFC cookbooks make excellent gifts, and they are only \$5 each, all for the benefit of the CFC! Cookbooks have been prepared each year with recipes submitted by CMS employees and their families, **and by HCFA or CMS retirees**. There are

three editions of cookbooks in surplus from 2005 through 2007 waiting for interested buyers. The Cookbook Team checked its inventory and decided to defer this year's production of a new cookbook until 2009. The team was in favor of selling books already stored in areas of limited workspace instead. These are a great buy and by buying a CMS/CFC Cookbook, you will definitely be giving hope and helping a charitable cause.

Contact Deborah Kidd, either by phone at (410) 786-7204 or by e-mail at Deborah.Kidd@cms.hhs.gov, and she will be happy to process your order or provide more information.

DONATION TO CFC



Bill Saunders & Bill Engelhardt

The Alumni Board of Directors again decided that a donation to the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), a most worthwhile cause, would be appropriate. The CFC sponsored a Talent Show in October and alumni President Bill Engelhardt took advantage of the opportunity to publicly present a check for \$1,500 to Bill Saunders, 2008 CFC Chairperson, on behalf of the alumni. Some 300 CMS employees attended the Talent Show and Bill Engelhardt was able to make a strong pitch for the Alumni Association. His pitch and the donation were well received.

CMS ENHANCES PROGRAM INTEGRITY EFFORTS TO FIGHT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE IN MEDICARE

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), in a press release on October 8, 2008, announced aggressive new steps to find and prevent waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare. CMS is working closer with beneficiaries and providers; consolidating its fraud detection efforts; strengthening its oversight of medical equipment suppliers and home health agencies; and launching the national recovery audit contractor (RAC) program.

“Because Medicare pays for medical services and items without looking behind every claim, the potential for waste, fraud and abuse is high,” said CMS Acting Administrator Kerry Weems.

“By enhancing our oversight efforts we can better ensure that Medicare dollars are being used to pay for equipment or services that beneficiaries actually received while protecting them and the Medicare trust fund from unscrupulous providers and suppliers.”

As part of these enhanced efforts, CMS is consolidating its efforts with new program integrity contractors that will look at billing trends and patterns across Medicare. They will focus on companies and individuals whose billings for Medicare services are higher than the majority of providers and suppliers in the community. CMS is also shifting its traditional approach to fighting fraud by working directly with beneficiaries by ensuring they received the durable medical equipment or home health services for which Medicare was billed and that the items or services were medically necessary.

Medicare is required by law to pay claims to health care providers for services provided to beneficiaries within 30 days after the claim is submitted, as long as the claim meets Medicare’s rules. After the claim is paid, CMS or its contractors can review the claim to ensure that the items or services were actually provided or the services were medically necessary. If the claim was not submitted under Medicare’s rules, CMS checks to see if the claim was submitted in error or may be potentially fraudulent. Those claims that could be fraudulent are referred to law enforcement for further investigation.

Furthermore, CMS will be taking additional steps to fight fraud and abuse in home health agencies in Florida and suppliers of durable medical equipment, prosthetics and orthotics (DMEPOS) in Florida, California, Texas, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina and New York.

The press release can be read in its entirety, as well as other releases at the CMS web site at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>. Just click on “Outreach & Education,” then on “Newsroom Center” under “Browse by Special Topic,” and finally “Press Releases.”

SENIOR MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Steve Heffler has been appointed to the SES position of Director, National Health Statistics Group, in the Office of the Actuary (OACT). He joined CMS in 1994 and has held various senior level positions within the Office of the Actuary, including serving as the National Health Statistics Group (NHSG) Director for the last 4 years. Mr. Heffler has over 13 years of experience developing and estimating the input price indexes or “market baskets” that are used to update Medicare payments to all types of medical providers and estimating and projecting national health expenditures. Moreover, he has an in-depth knowledge of the U.S. national income and product accounts, measures of health sector prices and productivity, health care economics, and other economic subjects applicable to OACT’s work products. Prior to joining CMS, Mr. Heffler worked at the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Department of Labor. He earned an MBA and a BA in economics (with a minor in mathematics).

Jean Moody-Williams, R.N., has been selected as the SES Director, Quality Improvement Group (QIG), within the Office of Clinical Standards and Quality. Ms. Moody-Williams has been with CMS since March 2005 where she has served as the Director, Division of Quality, Evaluation and Health Outcomes in the Center for Medicaid & State Operations. Prior to joining CMS, Jean Moody-Williams held leadership positions with the Maryland Health Care Commission and the National Resource Center. She also served in leadership positions with Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) in Michigan and Pennsylvania, and as the Project Manager for a contract with the Delmarva Foundation for Medical Care.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER'S ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

July 21, 2008

Jacqueline Roche, of the Center for Medicaid & State Operations in Baltimore, MD, Jacqueline is being recognized for this honor for her skillful negotiation of a sustainable federal contribution to health care reform in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Leticia Pillado, of the Dallas Regional Office, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Leticia is being recognized for this honor for her work with the national Pace Team identifying under reporting of sentinel events and developing strategies to address the problem.

In recognition of their accomplishments, those employees from central office each earn the privilege of using a reserved parking space for two weeks. Additionally, their pictures are posted on the CMSNet. Those employees outside central office have their pictures posted on the CMSNet.

August 4, 2008

Chrislyn Gayhead, of the Office of E-Health Standards and Services in Baltimore, MD, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Chrislyn is being recognized for this honor for her hard work and commitment to the South Carolina Personal Health Record project.

Nancy Schmidt, of the Kansas City Regional Office, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Nancy is being recognized for this honor for her skillful leadership and innovations in coordinating education and outreach efforts for our Medicare and Medicaid populations.

August 18, 2008

Denise Fitzgerald, of the Office of Information Services in Baltimore, MD, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Denise is being recognized for this honor

for her commitment in supporting delivery of the HHS email services and agency-wide email broadcast distribution.

Nancy Walker, of the Denver Regional Office, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Nancy is being recognized for this honor for demonstrating initiative conceptually and success practically in succession planning at the team level for effecting a smooth transition in State Performance Standards within WCDSC/Denver.

September 1, 2008

Stacey Bryson, of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights in Baltimore, MD, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Stacey is being recognized for this honor for her work in researching, obtaining and demonstrating assistive equipment for employees with limited mobility, specifically due to her persistence and coalition building.

Rosie Norris, of the San Francisco Regional Office, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Rosie is being recognized for this honor for providing skillful, enthusiastic, and culturally sensitive leadership and assistance, as RO9's Native American Coordinator, to tribal leaders and their communities.

September 15, 2008

Amy Reese, of the Office of Financial Management in Baltimore, MD, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Amy is being recognized for this honor for her vital work in the creation and execution of the FY 2007 Status Report and the Evaluation Report for the entire three year Recovery Audit Contractor demonstration.

Kimquy Kieu, MD, of the Seattle Regional Office, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Kimquy is being recognized for this honor for her excellent work as the Government Task Leader for the CMS special study "Reducing Harmful Over-Utilization in Geographically Defined Areas."

September 29, 2008

Michael Warfield, OIS IT Specialist Liaison to the Office of the Administrator in Baltimore, MD, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Mike is being recognized for this honor for his outstanding customer support resolving OA's many IT related problems. His 24/7 IT support certainly qualifies him to be an honorary member of the OA team.

Molly Long, of the Office of Legislation in Washington, DC, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Molly is being recognized for this honor for her exceptional performance working on a complex portfolio of issues for the Low-Income Program

Analysis Group. She has helped foster a positive working environment in the Office of Legislation.

October 14, 2008

Catherine Jansto, of the Center for Medicare Management in Baltimore, MD, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Catherine is being recognized for this honor for her continued dedication to ensuring accurate payments for Medicare Part B covered drugs and biologicals.

Vanessa Flint, of the Office of Policy in Washington, DC, has been selected for the Chief Operating Officer's Achievement Award. Vanessa is being recognized for her significant contributions to improve the quality of care and reduce costs for dual eligible beneficiaries as well as her outstanding commitment to HHS, CMS and the Combined Federal Campaign as this year's HHS Campaign Manager.

In recognition of their accomplishments, those employees from central office each earn the privilege of using a reserved parking space for two weeks. Additionally, their pictures are posted on the CMSNet. Those employees outside central office have their pictures posted on the CMSNet.

2008 WOMAN'S EQUALITY DAY AWARD

On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granted American women the right to vote. In 1971, Congress designated August 26 of each year as Women's Equality Day. Every August since then, the Nation celebrates Women's Equality Day to commemorate this landmark event and to remember those courageous suffragists who fought to make equality a reality for women. This year's national theme, "American Women: Opening Doors of Opportunity for Future Generations," celebrates the passage of the 19th Amendment and calls attention to our role in advancing efforts toward full equality for women. In honor of Women's Equality Day each year, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services recognizes an employee who exemplifies the spirit of those determined suffragists who worked tirelessly to ensure that all women have the opportunity to participate in our democracy.

Cheryl Wiseman of the Center for Medicaid and State Operations is the 2008 Women's Equality Day Award recipient. Ms. Wiseman is being recognized for her exceptional efforts and advocacy in improving women's health, specifically cytology services, an important program activity related to the Department of Health & Human Services' goal of assuring quality healthcare.

COMEDY KORNER

DOGS

Submitted by both Connie Conrad & Toba Winston

The reason a dog has so many friends is that he wags his tail instead of his tongue. - Anonymous

Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful. - Ann Landers

If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went. - Will Rogers

There is no psychiatrist in the world like a puppy licking your face. - Ben Williams

A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself. - Josh Billings

The average dog is a nicer person than the average person. - Andy Rooney

We give dogs time we can spare, space we can spare and love we can spare. And in return, dogs give us their all. It's the best deal man has ever made. - M. Acklam

Dogs love their friends and bite their enemies, quite unlike people, who are incapable of pure love and always have to mix love and hate. - Sigmund Freud

I wonder if other dogs think poodles are members of a weird religious cult. - Rita Rudner

A dog teaches a boy fidelity, perseverance, and to turn around three times before lying down. - Robert Benchley

Anybody who doesn't know what soap tastes like never washed a dog. - Franklin P. Jones

If I have any beliefs about immortality, it is that certain dogs I have known will go to heaven, and very, very few persons. - James Thurber

If your dog is fat, you aren't getting enough exercise. - Unknown

My dog is worried about the economy because Alpo is up to \$3.00 a can. That's almost \$21.00 in dog money. - Joe Weinstein

Ever consider what our dogs must think of us? I mean, here we come back from a grocery store with the most amazing haul -- chicken, pork, half a cow. They must think we're the greatest hunters on earth! - Anne Tyler

Women and cats will do as they please, and men and dogs should relax and get used to the idea. - Robert A. Heinlein

If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you; that is the principal difference between a dog and a man. - Mark Twain

You can say any foolish thing to a dog, and the dog will give you a look that says, 'Wow, you're right! I never would've thought of that!' - Dave Barry

Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole. - Roger Caras

If you think dogs can't count, try putting three dog biscuits in your pocket and then give him only two of them. - Phil Pastoret

My goal in life is to be as good of a person my dog already thinks I am. – Anonymous

DRIVER'S LICENSE EYE TEST

A Polish immigrant went to the DMV to apply for a driver's license. He had to take an eyesight test.

The optician showed him a card with the letters

'C Z W I X N O S T A C Z'.

"Can you read this," the optician asked?

"Read it?" the Polish immigrant replied, "Hell, I know the guy."

PRIESTS ON VACATION

Two priests were going to Hawaii on vacation and decided that they would make this a real vacation by not wearing anything that would identify them as clergy. As soon as the plane landed, they headed for a store and bought some really outrageous shorts, shirts, sandals, sunglasses, and etc.

The next morning they went to the beach, dressed in their "tourist" garb and were sitting on beach chairs, enjoying a drink, the sunshine and the scenery when a "drop dead gorgeous" blonde in a tiny bikini came walking straight towards them. They couldn't help but stare and when she passed them, she smiled and said, "Good morning, Father" - "Good morning, Father," nodding and addressing each of them individually, then passed on by.

They were both stunned. How in the world did she recognize them as priests?

The next day they went back to the store, bought even more outrageous outfits, these were so loud, you could hear them before you even saw them, and again settled on the beach in their chairs to enjoy the sunshine, etc.

After a while, the same gorgeous blonde, wearing a string bikini this time, came walking toward them again (They were glad they had sunglasses, because their eyes were about to pop out of their heads).

Again, she approached them and greeted them individually: "Good morning, Father," "Good morning Father," and started to walk away.

One of the priests couldn't stand it and said, "Just a minute, young lady. Yes, we are priests, and proud of it, but I have to know, how in the world did YOU know?"

"Oh, Father, don't you recognize me? I'm Sister Angela!"

WHAT RESTAURANT?

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating; the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two gentlemen were talking, and one said, "Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly."

The other man said, "What is the name of the restaurant?"

The first man thought and thought and finally said, "What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know... the one that's red and has thorns."

"Do you mean a rose?"

"Yes, that's the one," replied the man.

He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, "Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?"

HOSPITAL DISCHARGE

Hospital regulations require a wheelchair for patients being discharged. However, while working as a student nurse, a woman found one elderly gentleman, already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need my help to leave the hospital. After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let me wheel him to the elevator.

On the way down she asked him if his wife was meeting him.

"I don't know," he said. "She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown."

YES, I'M A SENIOR CITIZEN!

Submitted by Ted Saffran

I'm the life of the party.....even if it lasts only until 8 p.m.

I'm very good at opening childproof caps... with a hammer.

I'm usually interested in going home before I get to where I am going.

I'm awake many hours before my body allows me to get up.

I'm smiling all the time because I can't hear a thing you're saying.

I'm very good at telling stories, over and over and over and over...

I'm aware that other people's grandchildren are not nearly as cute as mine.

I'm so cared for --- long term care, eye care, private care, dental care.

I'm not really grouchy, I just don't like traffic, waiting, crowds, lawyers, loud music, unruly kids, Jenny Craig and Toyota commercials, barking dogs, politicians and a few other things I can't seem to remember right now.

I'm sure everything I can't find is in a safe secure place, somewhere.

I'm wrinkled, saggy, lumpy, and that's just my left leg.

I'm having trouble remembering simple words like.....

I'm beginning to realize that aging is not for wimps.

I'm sure they are making adults much younger these days, and when did they let kids become policemen?

I'm wondering, if you're only as old as you feel, how could I be alive at 150?

And, how can my kids be older than I feel sometimes?

I'm a walking storeroom of facts.....I've just lost the key to the storeroom door.

Yes, I'm a SENIOR CITIZEN and I think I am having the time of my life!

YOU KNOW YOU'RE GROWING OLD WHEN!

- Everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work anyway.
- The gleam in your eyes is from the sun hitting your bifocals.
- You feel like you really hung one on the night before, and you were in bed asleep by eight.
- You get winded playing chess.
- Your children begin to look middle-aged.
- You join a health club and don't go.
- You begin to outlive enthusiasm.
- Your mind makes contracts your body can't meet.
- You know all the answers, but nobody asks the questions.
- You look forward to a dull evening.
- Your favorite part of the newspaper is "25 years ago today!"
- You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going.
- Your knees buckle and your belt won't.
- You're 17 around the neck and 42 around the waist.
- You stop looking forward to your next birthday.
- Dialing long distance wears you out.
- Your back goes out more than you do.
- A fortuneteller offers to read your face.
- You turn out the lights for economic reasons rather than romantic ones.
- You remember this week that last week was your wedding anniversary.
- You are startled the first time you are addressed as "Old Timer".
- You answer automatically when someone addresses you "Old Timer."
- You burn your midnight oil after 9:00 p.m.
- You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.
- Your pacemaker makes the garage door go up when you see a pretty girl walk by.
- You get your exercise acting as a pallbearer for your friend who exercised.
- You have too much room in the house and not enough in the medicine cabinet.
- The best part of your day is over when your alarm goes off.
- The thought of getting out of bed never occurs to you.

45 LIFE LESSONS!

Submitted by Connie Conrad

This was written by a guy named Brett who writes columns for The Plain Dealer, a newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio. He wrote: To celebrate growing older, I once wrote the 45 lessons life taught me. It is the most-requested column I've ever written. My odometer rolls over to 70 in August, so here goes:

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others'. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
19. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, and wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
22. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. The most important sex organ is the brain.
25. No one is in charge of your happiness, except you.
26. Frame every so-called disaster with these words: 'In five years, will this matter?'
27. Always choose life.
28. Forgive everyone everything.
29. What other people think of you is none of your business.
30. Time heals almost everything. Give time, time.
31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
32. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.
33. Believe in miracles.
34. God loves you because of whom God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.

35. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
36. Growing old beats the alternative, dying young.
37. Your children get only one childhood. Make it memorable.
38. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
41. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
42. The best is yet to come.
43. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
44. Yield.
45. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

OBITUARIES

WILLIAM DAMROSCH (1930-2008)

Submitted by Don Sherwood, CPA

Deputy Director

Medicare Demonstrations Program Group

Office of Research Development and Information

CMS



Bill Damrosch was a warm, sympathetic friend to many in the research and demonstrations community. His career with CMS began in the sixties and lasted to the new millennium. Knowing Bill, younger employees could tell that the earlier years were a lot more fun. He never passed a person in the hall without a greeting. With a “What d’ya say!” or “Drinking again!” he was always cheerful and uplifting – even on days when there was no other bright spot.

Besides the fabulous picnics and crab feasts that Bill planned and coordinated, he will be remembered for helping hundreds of rural hospitals in a Congressional grant program that ran through the nineties - his personal and accounting skills were the key to its success. After retirement, he would meet his closest friends for lunch. Through them, we heard that he was receiving dialysis.

Bill died on July 5 at age 77. He is survived by his wife Shirley and son Guy. He was loved, and he will be missed.

IN MEMORIAM

**The Alumni Association respectfully acknowledges
the passing of the following
Alumni/Employees/Spouses and expresses its
sympathy to family members:**

**ALICE S. ABRAMOVITZ (Date Unknown)*
WILLIAM DAMROSCH (7/5/08)**
NANCY TIRONE (8/08)*****

*HCFA/CMS Retiree

** HCFA/CMS Retiree. Listed in the last issue with an incorrect date of death.

***HCFA/CMS Retiree from the Denver Regional Office, both Medicare & Medicaid

**If you are aware of any other deaths of Alumni please notify the editorial staff
October 2008**