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SAVE THE DATE



"Knowledge is Power"

RIFT Summer Institute

June 19 - 23, 2000

Details coming soon

Union Forces Rollback in Certification Fees

Because of heavy lobbying by the leadership of the **RIFTHP**, which was backed up by member phone calls, letters and e-mails to the Board of Regents and the intervention of the leadership of the RI House of Representatives, the huge increases in certification renewals were dramatically rolled back. The extent of the

overall savings to teachers is approximately \$2 11,000 each year.

The chart below will show the comparisons of the current fee schedule, the commissioner's proposal, and the schedule which the Board of Regents adopted.

Many thanks are extended to our union members who

took the time to express their concern to Rhode Island policymakers on this issue. This is another indication that your voice makes a difference.

And a tip o'the hat to Reps. Rene Mcnard and Steve Anderson who took their valuable time to learn the details of this issue and to help bring about a fair result to the problem.

Category	Current	Commissioner's Proposal	Enacted
Initial Certification	\$25	\$100	\$ 25
Each Additional Certificate	\$ 0	\$75	\$ 0
Regular Renewals	\$10	\$75 each	\$ 100 5-Yr. Professional \$ 25 3-Yr. Provisional
Renewals (1 Year)	\$10	\$25	\$50 Emergency \$ 10 Substitute \$ 25 Other
Transcript Evaluation	\$10	\$25	\$25
TOTAL ENACTED INCREASE			
5173,750			

Current Revenue from Certification Fees			\$ 102,500
Revenue from Commissioner's Proposal			5487.250
Proposed Increase			\$384,750
Revenue from Enacted Fee Schedule			\$276.250
Enacted Increase			\$173,550
TOTAL ANNUAL SAVINGS TO TEACHERS			\$211.000

Bits and Pieces...

Max and I Are Aging Together

My cat Max is twelve years old in people years. According to his doctor, that makes him about fifty in cat years. She, that is, his veterinarian, says



that he is middle-aged.

Max and I are spending a lot of time with Dr. Link,

DVM. Max just isn't the kitten or young guy he once was. His teeth are a wreck. Some can be saved, but some have to be pulled. His digestive system isn't functioning all that well. Sometimes he doesn't hold food well. Now he is on a special diet made up of hypo-allergenic foods. The food cost 98 cents per can. Cat lovers will know that the least expensive foods may be around 25 cents a can. Slightly more upscale 5 1/2 oz. cans are perhaps 47 cents.

We have to watch his weight. I'm supposed to restrict his intake, but he has big blue eyes that stare at me from his food station in the kitchen. He can sit still, staring, for longer than I can resist opening another can.

So why should you care about Max's problem. The acorn doesn't fall far from the tree. As I am older than Max in cat years, I am rapidly leaving middle age behind me. And like Max, my body parts are more frequently needing individual attention from the doctor. I am fortunate that I have health care coverage. Max does not, except for my checkbook. I worry that he

and I will end up with inadequate health care. I won't be able to access or afford good care for either of us if the policies coming out of Washington are neither thoughtful or sensible.

I worry that my social security will be decimated if the policies coming out of Washington are not thoughtful or sensible.

I worry that my state retirement will be changed so that I will not have a meaningful cost-of-living adjustment. Decisions from the Rhode Island General Assembly must be thoughtful and sensible.

As you have read in this column before, politics is inextricably intertwined with our union and our work. The people who are elected are the people who make decisions about health care policy, social security funding, and state pensions.

It is likely that Max will predecease me, as cats age faster than humans. Meanwhile, I have to be around with the resources to keep him fed, toothed and allergy free. If I go before he does, there has to be a bequest to whatever friend draws the short straw and inherits him.

He or she will be able to take comfort in one fact. Some antibiotics which are prescribed for cats are also prescribed for people. But when prescribed for cats, the meds are considerably less expensive.

Max is less expensive to maintain than I when it comes to pills.

Marcia Reback

RIFTHP Celebrates Nurses Week

National Nurses Week is May 6 - 12 and the RIFTHP is planning a dinner meeting celebration.

Rep. Robert Weygand, who with Rep. Patrick Kennedy sponsored a bill to provide for the substantial reduction in the price of prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries, is invited to address the members and explain the bill,

It has been discovered that drug manufacturers discriminate against Medicare recipients who represent a huge consumer group. Medicare recipients pay more for prescription drugs than "most favored customers", such as health insurance

HMOs and the Federal government. Federally funded health care programs obtain prescription drugs at low prices while Medicare beneficiaries are denied this benefit. The Weygand/Kennedy bill, HR 664, is designed to end this discrimination.

In other FNHP news, if you are on-line and interested in the FNHP Professional Issues Conference, go to www.aft.org and then FNHP You will find the agenda for the June 1- 4, 2000 conference which will be held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC.



The people who are elected are the people who make decisions about health care policy, social security funding and state pensions.

If we could shrink the world's population to 100 people with all human ratios remaining the same, the world would look like this:

- 57 Asians
- 21 Europeans
- 14 from Western Hemisphere North & South America
- 8 Africans

- 52 female
- 48 male

- 70 would be non-white
- 30 would be white

- 70 would be non-Christian
- 30 would be Christian

- 89 would be heterosexual
- 11 would be homosexual

- 6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all 6 would be from the U.S.

- 80 would live in sub-standard housing

- 70 would be unable to read

- 50 would suffer malnutrition

- 1 would be near death
- 1 would be near birth

- 1 would have a college education

- 1 would own a computer

When one considers our world from such a compressed perspective, the need for understanding education and acceptance becomes glaringly apparent.

Philip M. Harter
Stanford University
School of Medicine

Take a Walk for Literacy

On Saturday, May 6, you are invited to burn off some calories, strengthen your leg muscles and strike a blow for literacy...all at the same time.

On May 6, the annual Walk for Literacy will raise money to support nine non-profit agencies which work with children and their parents, limited-English-proficient adults and adults who have little or no literacy skills. These agencies have multiple missions. Their programs concerning literacy are highlighted below.

* The Dorcas Place Parent Literacy Center is an adult education agency specializing in literacy education, work readiness training and career/academic counseling classroom work and individual tutoring.

* The Genesis Center is a multi-service, family-based school and support center that assists immigrant and refugee families by providing English classes, GED preparation and job training programs.

* The Institute for Labor Studies and Research is a non-profit labor and adult education organization that provides a wide range of educational programs for working people.

* The International Institute of RI is a community based, non-profit agency that provides educational programs and social services to immigrants and refugees.

* Literacy Volunteers of America and its affiliates supply trained volunteers to provide individual and small group tutoring in basic literacy or conversational English.

* Project Learn, Adult & Family Literacy Programs, is a non-profit agency which provides adult education, lifeskills and pre-employment training programs.

* The Providence Public Library offers literacy support and assistance to Rhode Island residents through instruction that includes reading, writing and basic computer literacy for ESL/ABE learners.

* The Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates is a statewide organization that seeks to improve the lives of all Rhode Islanders by supporting libraries of all kinds through advocacy, education and public awareness.

* The Washington County Adult Learning Center provides educational services in English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education and GED preparation for adults throughout southern Rhode Island.

The Providence Teachers Union is coordinating the RIFTHP's participation in this year's walk for literacy. Please let Phyllis Tennian know that you are interested in helping out the adults who are new to our country and who need help learning English and those who have been here but never learned how to lift words from the page and put meaning to the words.

Phyllis has designated Jack MacManus to coordinate the effort. He can be reached at 278-0522 during the day and 421-5716 in the evening. He can also be reached by FAX at 456-9275.

The Providence Teachers Union is coordinating the RIFTHP's participation in this year's walk for literacy.

RIFTHP Makes Its Presence Felt at Assembly

As the months grow closer to summer, the RI General Assembly begins to heat up.

The deadline has passed for new bills to be introduced, and as this is Being written, various committees of both the House

and Senate are hearing hundreds of bills.

The chart will give you a partial picture of our program.



Purpose of Bill	Primary Sponsor	Bill	Committee
Alternative Schools Funding	Rep Steve Smith	H 7610	H Finance
	Sen. Donna Walsh	S 2663	S Finance
Student Behavior Plans	Rep. Steve Smith	H 7612	H Finance
All Day Kindergarten	Rep. Paul Moura	H 6798	H Finance
	Rep. Frank Montanaro	H 7225	H Finance
	Sen. Bud Cicilline	S 2160	S HEW
Educational Standards Bd.	Rep. Bea Lanzi	H 7271	H HEW
	Sen. Jon Oster	S 2191	S HEW
	Sen. Tom Coderre	S 2757	S HEW
Pension Contribution 1 % Reduction	Rep. John Barr	H 7021	H Finance
	Sen. Tom Coderre	S 2754	S Finance
Health Care Networks	Rep. Paul Moura	H 7674	H Corp
	Sen. Maryellen Goodwin	S 2718	S Corp
Eliminating Residency Requirements	Rep John Barr	H 6708	H Finance
	Rep. Paul Crowley	H 7517	H Corp
	Sen. Hanna Gallo	S 2292	S cot-p
Needlestick Prevention	Rep. Elizabeth Dennigan	H 6832	H Hew
	Rep. Michael Pisaturo	H 6949	H Labor
Post Retirement Employment - 100 days for absent teacher	Rep. Rene Menard	H 7246	H Finance
	Sen. Dominick Ruggerio	S 2590	S Finance
Post Retirement Employment - Increase § 10,000 cap	Rep. Thomas Palangio	H 7485	H Finance
	Rep. Paul Crowley	H 7495	H Finance
	Sen. Leo Blais	S 2376A	H Finance
Define Arbitrator's Authority	Rep. Paul Moura	H 7412	H Labor
	Sen. Dominick Ruggerio	S 2581	S Labor
5-Year Vesting	Rep. Joseph Faria	H 7168	H Labor
	Sen. Catherine Graziano	s 2515	S Finance

Houlihan Leaves Board: Bielecki Confirmed as Regent

Patricia Houlihan, who has been the COPE Director for the RIFTHP for 25 years, and who has served on the RI Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education since 1991 has left the Board because her allowable term of office under the law has expired.



Pat Houlihan

Originally appointed by Governor Bruce Sundlun, Houlihan brought an interesting perspective to the Board. In addition to being sensitive to the needs of the people who work at the Department of Education and to the individuals who work in schools, she was always a real child advocate on the Board. She had been a fourth grade teacher and guidance counselor in some of the poorest and toughest schools in the City of Providence.

Her viewpoint wasn't above the clouds in bureaucratic and lofty policy papers. Houlihan, along with a few other Regents, was the conscience of the Board, reminding them that real children face real hardships and can only be tested so much, pushed so much, and produce so much. All the grandiose goals and plans in the world **will make no differ-**

ence for these children unless solid and meaningful investments are made to better their well-being.

Colleen Callahan Bielecki has some tough shoes to fill. Governor Lincoln Almond nominated Bielecki to join the Board of Regents, presumably in Houlihan's stead, and she was interviewed by the RI Senate Judiciary Committee on March 21, and confirmed by the RI Senate on that same afternoon.

Bielecki has been the Director of Professional Issues for the RIFTHP since 1991. She has as much knowledge about professional development, vocational education and school to work as any individual in Rhode Island, if not the country. Bielecki, like Houlihan, is also grounded in practice. She began her career teaching special education in Lincoln before becoming a sixth grade teacher.



Colleen Bielecki

Having staffed the RI Skills Commission since its inception, she is a well-known education leader throughout the state, especially in the area of teaching teachers about standards-based instruction, curriculum and assessment.

Although from two very

different teaching backgrounds and professional engagement, both of the appointees are Affiliated prominently within both the RI teacher and labor movement and are among the best and the brightest from our ranks.

Retiree Luncheon Scheduled

The Rhode Island Federation of Retired Teachers is having its Spring Luncheon on May 10, 2000 at the West Valley Inn, 3 Blossom Trail, West Warwick, RI. Election of officers will take place at this meeting. The current officers are Robert Doorley, President; Robert Brennan, Vice President; Ernest Guglielmo, Treasurer; Patricia Houlihan, Secretary; and Ida Bonde, Hospitality Chair.

Invitations to the luncheon are in the mail. If you are interested in attending, please contact Charlene Lee at 273-9800 for details.

The Retiree Chapter now boasts 805 members, breaking all previous records for membership.

If Your Certificate is Up for Renewal, Renew It Now

Teachers whose certificates are up for renewal and who have completed the work necessary for recertification are strongly advised to get to the Certification Office at the RI Department of Education in advance of June 1, 2000. Recertification fees are scheduled to increase and early action on your part will save you money.



Rhode Island Federation
of Teachers and Health
Professionals

Marcia B. Reback, President

Robert F. Casey
Field Representative

Michael Mullane
Field Representative

James Parisi
Field Representative

Diana Casey
Staff Representative

Diane Thurber
Executive Assistant

Patricia Houlihan
Director of COPE Activities

Colleen Callahan Bielecki
Director of Professional Issues

Carol Santangini
Assistant Editor

Support the Tenth Annual Walk for Literacy



Date: Saturday, May 6, 2000

Start/Finish Line: Rhode Island State House
in Providence

Registration: 8:30 A.M.

Walk Starts: 9:30 A.M.

Distance: 5-K (3.1 miles) or the
1-mile "Fun Walk"

Note: Allow approximately 1 1/2 hours to walk the 5 kilometer (3.1 miles) route. The 1-mile "Fun Walk" should take about 15 to 20 minutes to walk. For your own comfort, wear socks and sturdy walking shoes. Water, snacks and restroom facilities will be provided along the Walk route.