TCAA Fall Newsletter - 2015

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TRITON COLLEGE ANNUITANTS ASSOCIATION
TCAA October  2015
Web Site:  www.triton.edu/tcaa

FALL LUNCHEON - TUESDAY - OCTOBER 20, 2015

Time:  11 AM – 2:00 PM

Place: Triton College
Second Floor - College Center Building - Hospitality Center
Room B 203 (Just left of Cafe 64)

COST: $12.00 - Includes buffet, beverage, dessert (Tip not included)
Payable at the door (Lunch and Program)

Program
Registration B 203: 11:00 - 11:30 AM
Meet and Greet/Luncheon: 11:30 - 12:45 PM
Program and TCAA Business Information: 12:45 – 2:00 PM

Program Topic - "What We Learn From Art."
Michael Gong
Art explains civilization, what we came from, what we are now, and where we might be in the future.

Reservations
Carol Bibly, 708-466-1093 or cbibly2002@yahoo.com

2. Letter from the TCAA President - Jens C. Nielsen

Welcome to the fall 2015 TCAA Luncheon/Meeting. I assume that you have heard the good news about the legal outcome of the Pension Case which was brought forward by the Attorney General, Lisa Madigan. This is good news for all that would have been affected along with saving SUAA much needed funds. Furthermore, this should put an end to the litigation with regard to Senate Bill 1 and the state in that pensions will remain protected under the constitution.

“De” DeGrado, at the recent SUAA Annual meeting in Springfield, was elected to the position of SUAA Executive Committee Secretary - “CONGRATULATIONS” “De”. This enables us to have three votes instead of two on matters where voting is required. The SUAA Annual Meeting this year went very well in that it was void of interference from some participants experienced in the past.

At our most recent TCAA Board Meeting it was commented on by a member who felt, as I do, that as a group we are fortunate to have dedicated individuals who freely offer their time and services for the benefit of all. This is what’s it all about and I hope, if your time permits, you will offer your service as well. Thank you.

Again, please share with us topics/programs you would like to see at our bi-annual meetings. Just mention it to anyone on the board and it will be included in future planning. Thank you.
3. Minutes TCAA Spring Luncheon – April 21, 2015 – Carol Bibly

President Jens Nielsen gave a warm welcome to the approximately 30 attendees at the 2015 TCAA Spring Luncheon. The luncheon was held at Pescatore Palace in Franklin Park. A thank you to Vito Barbanente (HIA graduate) and his staff for a wonderful lunch.

Scheduled speaker, Mr. Tom Olsen, Triton Foundation President, was not able to attend due to a scheduling conflict. However, Eleonore Weber and Linda Brookhart were introduced by President Nielsen as the speakers for the meeting.

As of this date, Linda stated that the pension issue is still in the Illinois Supreme Court and although we are waiting for their response, there is a good feeling that it will be positive for the retirees. A decision from the Illinois Supreme Court is expected by May 1, but may be as late as July 15. However the outcome, contributions to the SUAA Legal Fund and SUAAction Fund are needed. Clarification between the two funds was given and Linda stated the SUAA Legal Fund is the one that is in need of contributions now to pay legal bills. Members are encouraged to contribute any amount they can. (SUAAction Fund contributions are used for political initiatives for state legislators.)

Governor Rauner is considering a constitutional amendment in 2016, depending on the Court’s decision, but he is working with top legislators on a pension fix. Nothing much else is being done with increasing taxes, perhaps on services and progressive taxes, but that is not being actively pursued at this time. A note for those who are eligible for insurance coverage: open enrollment is May 1 – May 31 with coverage beginning July 1. There could be more changes in regard to insurance coverage. CIP is bankrupt and no money is being budgeted for CIP. It is not clear what, if anything, will happen with the Advantage plan, as far as cost. That will come later.

Eleonore Weber stated that there is and will continue to be more cost sharing with insurance plans. The best defense is to stay healthy – exercise, eat properly to maintain healthy weight and preventive exams. Eleonore is available to give us a cost analysis on LTC. Contact her at 312-952-1706.

Jens closed the meeting with a thank you to our attendees for their support and interest.

Next TCAA Luncheon will be October 20, 2015. Mark your calendars. More information will be in the September newsletter.

4. TCAA Membership News

You are receiving this important newsletter because you are a current member of SUAA/TCAA and you enjoy, I am sure, the information that keeps you updated about the years we spent in careers at Triton and our present and future pension situation. The best way to get the accurate information we need to make our decisions in our working and retirement years is through SUAA/TCAA, who are OUR advocates for our future benefits. Continuation of membership and bringing in additional members is critical.

That said, membership has remained rather constant over the past few years. So this is the time for all of us to contact our colleagues to join. Easy to do – just go the SUAA website, look under “Membership” and the information is there – it’s easy and a bargain at only $40/year. Of course, you can contact me and I will help.

Carol Bibly, Membership Chairperson cbibly2002@yahoo.com
5. Member & Financial Update

In Memorial

Retired Triton employee Janet Jaback passed away in Feb. 2015, at the age of 69. Janet had taught in the Hospitality Program at Triton, and later was the Co-operative Education coordinator. Janet retired in early 2014.

Retired Triton English instructor Thomas Meehan passed away in June, 2015. Tom had been a cross country coach in the early years of Triton, and had formerly been an English teacher and Hall of Fame Track Coach at DePaul. He was an also an avid bicycle rider.

Retired Triton faculty member Robert Hlavin died in July 2015, at the age of 83, in Rockford, IL. Bob had been a Professor of English at Triton from when the college opened in 1964 until his retirement in 1992. He had also been a playwright and an independent Hemingway scholar. Bob had served in the US Army from 1953-55, and received a military burial in Sturgis, SD.

Financial Update – As of September 8, 2015, the balance in our account was $1,628.00.

6. Nominations for Executive Committee Positions

Carol Bibby and Connie Allekian have agreed to serve as a nominating committee to prepare a slate for the elections which will take place at the April 2016 luncheon. Some of the current members of the committee have agreed to continue but we will need to find candidates for Vice-President/President Elect and possibly one or two Director Positions. We hope that some of you will come forward to participate with the committee. Those of us who have participated with the committee over the past several years have enjoyed the work we have done together and we invite others of the membership to share this experience. Please let Carol or Connie know of your interest by calling or sending an e-mail. (Emails listed on pg. 8)

7. Update on College Insurance Program - Bob Witherspoon

Some of you may have read or heard on the news information on what the Governor is attempting to do with the State Health Insurance program. SUAA has sent out information on this explaining this does not impact the CIP program at this time. The last SUAA mini briefing, September 18, 2015, explained this in detail and I went through and picked out the items which impact those of us on the CIP program. Hopefully this will give you a better feeling of what is
happening now and what will be happening in the next month.

The following are excerpts from the September 18, 2015 Mini-briefing:

First, as stated in our last correspondence, the College Insurance Plan (CIP)* is not involved in this health insurance funding. **So again, if you retired from a community college you are not included in this round of health insurance problems.** In fact the good news is that due to legislation signed into law this summer, CIP will receive its funding from the State as provided by the Illinois Statutes.

At this time, the Medicare Advantage Program (TRAIL)** is continuing to be paid. Coming up is the Medicare Advantage Program enrollment for Medicare age eligible retirees.

- Open enrollment for January 2016 is October 15 – November 16, 2015
- Seminars will begin October 13th and run through October 30th.
- Retirees and survivors who became eligible for the TRAIL Medicare Advantage Program over this past year should have received a letter printed on canary yellow paper by mid-September.
  You (and your spouse) had to turn 65 by September 30th, 2015 to be eligible.
- all currently enrolled TRAIL members along with newly eligible for the program will be mailed an Open Enrollment Kit during the first week of October.
- for more information go to the CMS website

  [http://www.illinois.gov/cms/Employees/benefits/trail/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.illinois.gov/cms/Employees/benefits/trail/Pages/default.aspx)

*College Insurance Program (CIP) – health insurance plan providing benefits for annuitants receiving a monthly benefit or annuity from the State Universities Retirement System (SURS) who prior to retiring, were an employee of an Illinois community college.

**Medicare Advantage Program (TRAIL) – this is a type of Medicare offered by the State of Illinois. The State contracts with Medicare to provide you with all of your Medicare Part A and Part B benefits. This plan is for people who are Medicare age eligible and their dependents. The medical providers include both Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO)
and a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO). The State’s HMO providers are Health Alliance MAPD, Coventry Advantra, Humana Benefit Plan and Humana Health Plan. Many of these are only available in certain counties. However, the PPO plan provided by UnitedHealthcare is available in all Illinois counties and throughout the United States. At this time, the Medicare Advantage Program (TRAIL) *** is continuing to be paid.

8. Ken Piwowar’s Summer Trip to the United Kingdom

When Ken shared details of his summer trip at our recent board meeting, we found it so interesting that we asked him to write an article for our newsletter.

This past July we had the chance to take a 3-week trip to the United Kingdom. It was my wife and I along with our 26-year old daughter, who is a high school teacher and off for the summer. The three main places we visited were London, Liverpool, and Scotland.

1. London

During our week in London, we did a lot of the regular London tourist things such as the Tower of London, London Eye (huge Ferris wheel), Westminster Abbey, and the Big Ben clock tower. The Tower of London was especially enjoyable. A tour is given by the uniformed "Beefeaters" (officially "yeomen warders"), who take great relish in recounting the nefarious deeds of Henry VIII and others in the castle’s 1000-year history (since 1066 AD).

We also went to Buckingham Palace for the Changing of the Guard, which takes place daily at 11 am. By an amazing coincidence, Queen Elizabeth made an appearance on the palace’s balcony that day, waving to the crowd along with her husband Prince Philip, Prince William (the new royal dad), and several others in her entourage. It is extremely rare that the Queen actually makes an appearance; we were just fortunate to be there on the right day.

We attended a play in London’s Theatre District, known as the West End. The play we saw was “The Mousetrap,” a murder mystery based on an Agatha Christie story. This play has been running continuously in London since 1953, making it the longest-running play in the history of the planet! It’s a great play! Recommended!

Other stops in London included a visit to the Sherlock Holmes Museum (at 221 Baker Street), also Charles Dickens’ restored London home, the British Museum, and Abbey Road. The Beatles recording studio was located on Abbey Road in northern London. The famous album photo was taken at the corner about a hundred feet away from the studio. This intersection still draws hundreds of tourists a day snapping pictures of themselves crossing the street as in the famous album cover. And yes, my wife did snap a picture of my daughter and me crossing Abbey Road, the same spot as the Beatles in 1968.

Rather than get a hotel room, we were able to rent an apartment for 7 days in a nice area of London, about a 2 block walk from a Tube stop (London Underground Subway). This worked out well. We got a lot more room than being crammed into a hotel room, and it was actually less expensive. We had a spacious apartment with a separate bedroom, living room (with sofa bed), fully equipped kitchen, dining area, bathroom, and even an English garden in back. This is a great way to go as an alternative to the expensive (and frequently small) London hotel
rooms; we rented this apt through a web site.

2. Liverpool.

When the Beatles made their historic appearances on the Ed Sullivan show in February, 1964, I was a freshman in high school. So the "Beatle era" dominated my high school and college years. I still remember watching wide-eyed as Ed Sullivan intoned "From Liverpool, England - the Beatles!" as the crowd screamed. I always wanted to visit Liverpool, and I finally made this happen. Liverpool is now "Beatle city", as they celebrate their favorite sons. The Liverpool airport has even been renamed the "John Lennon Airport".

We took two different Beatle tours. One was called the Magical Mystery Tour, and consists of a 2-hour bus tour of Beatle spots in Liverpool, such as Penny Lane, Strawberry Field, the Beatles homes (outside only), the Cavern Club area, and much more.

The other Beatle tour was one which takes you inside the boyhood homes of John Lennon and Paul McCartney, where they lived in their teen year's right up to the time they became famous Beatles before moving to London in early 1964. These two homes are now owned by the National Trust (i.e. the government), and on these tours you are actually allowed to go inside the homes, as a tour guide shows you around. The homes have been restored with the look and furnishings of the late 1950's and early 1960s. In Paul's home, you can sit in the living room near the piano (owned by Paul's father), where Paul and John composed many early Beatle tunes, such as "I saw her standing there" and many others. Paul's is a row house with two floors, not very large, but adequate. John's house, where he was raised by his Aunt Mimi, is actually a pretty nice two story stand-alone home on Men love Avenue.

In each house, you can go into the rooms on each floor, including John's room and Paul's room, restored to how they looked back in the day. For a Beatles fan, this is a very fun tour. Note: George and Ringo's boyhood homes (both row houses) are now owned by private individuals. You can't go inside, but you can look and take pictures from the outside.

The Cavern Club in Liverpool, where the Beatles played hundreds of gigs in the early 1960s, is still operational. This is where they were discovered by Brian Epstein, who became their manager and got them a recording contract. The Cavern Club, as the name implies, is a couple of floors below street level, in a room with arched ceilings and a very unique ambience. Every Thursday night, they have a concert put on by a Beatles tribute band, called the Mersey Beatles. We went to that, and the band was quite good. It was really an experience hearing the famous Beatles songs played "live" in the actual Cavern Club.

In Liverpool, we stayed in a hotel right alongside the Mersey River - and yes, there is still a Ferry which crosses the Mersey.

3. Scotland.

The final leg of the trip was Scotland. I am an avid golfer, and of course Scotland is the birthplace and home of golf. Before I left for the trip, I purchased tickets for the Sunday round of the British Open, which was held at the St. Andrews Old Course this year, probably the most famous and historic golf course in the world. At the tournament (which is simply called the "Open Championship" in the UK), I got to walk the entire course as a spectator and see all the famous holes, such as the 17th "Road Hole," the Swilcan Bridge on 18, etc. For a golf fan, being at St. Andrews is like a pilgrimage to the "Holy Grail" of golf. Very exciting.

During the week after the tournament, I rented some golf clubs and got to play golf four times in Scotland. I played several seaside links courses, which are very unique. They are almost
treeless, hilly with rolling mounded fairways, usually quite windy by the sea. They are famous for deep bunkers, some of which can be 10 feet deep and require multiple shots to get out of, depending where your ball lands. Although there are virtually no trees, there is the famous heather and gorse alongside the fairways, if you can't keep your ball straight.

One aspect of golf in Scotland is they don't believe in the driving carts that you see everywhere on American golf courses. The Scottish philosophy and tradition is that if you play golf, you walk the 18 holes (a hand pull cart is OK). So there I was, walking the Scottish links courses, which tend to be hilly and windy. I usually walk the golf courses at home, so I am used to walking 18 holes, but I did get a thorough physical workout in my four rounds in a week. Playing golf in Scotland was a fun and challenging experience, and something on my "bucket list" that I always wanted to do. How did I do? About 3 or 4 strokes worse, on average, than I play back home, which I considered to be a success!

4. Driving in the UK.

We flew round trip to London. But we did not rent a car during the 7 days we spent in London. There is no need to. The Underground subway (called the Tube), is an excellent and comprehensive system that takes you to all the points of interest in the London area.

However, after we left London I rented a car at Heathrow Airport for the duration of the trip, so we could drive to Liverpool, Scotland, etc. Of course, you drive on the left throughout the UK, with the steering wheel on the right side of the car. The car rental companies in the UK will rent you a standard (stick) transmission by default. You have to specifically request and pay extra for an automatic transmission. For those of you who are saying to yourself "Oh, I can drive a stick", remember that you would be operating the gearshift with your left hand, since the steering wheel is on the right. I was very glad I requested the automatic transmission.

Driving on the left can be a challenge, especially when you turn a corner and your instinct takes over and you might find yourself moving to the right, when you have to drive on the left.

But the most difficult aspect about driving in the UK is the hundreds of roundabouts (or traffic circles) that you encounter everywhere. Although these speed up the flow of traffic by eliminating red lights, they can be quite dangerous if you're not used to them. You have to go around them to the left, exit at the correct "spoke," and be in the correct lane so as not to cause an accident. This can get to be quite stressful. I managed to get through 12 days of driving in England and Scotland without an accident, but to be honest, this was the most difficult aspect of the trip. I thought about taking trains instead, but I needed a way to get to all the specific golf courses I wanted to play, with my rented golf gear in the trunk.

5. Dining in the UK.

London is a very international city, with every conceivable type of food. London has a lot of Indian restaurants, stemming from the centuries when India was a colony of England. We ate at an Indian restaurant, as well as a Turkish restaurant, and others. England is also known for its pubs, where we sampled steak & kidney pie as well as fish & chips (along with the traditional pint, of course).

In Scotland, I tried haggis, which is the Scottish national dish. What is it? It's ground up sheep intestines, with spices and chopped onion. Many people (like my daughter) wouldn't even try it, but I thought it was pretty good and tasty. It is certainly popular among the Scots. All the Scottish golfers I played with told me they love haggis and have it frequently. I think it's fun and
interesting to sample different local foods whenever I’m on vacation. When in Rome, do as the Romans.

All in all, it was great trip. There is a lot of history and culture in England and Scotland. One nice thing about visiting the UK is that everything is in English! Of course, you have to deal with the accents. I frequently found myself having difficulty understanding what people were saying, and conversely, they frequently seemed to have trouble understanding me (with my “Yankee” accent). But I would definitely recommend a trip to the UK, if you have never been there. There is a lot to see and do, but my advice is to avoid driving a car.

9. Health/Quality of Life Report — Bob Anthony

The one article I'll share from for this report is from the Icahn School of Medicine Journal on Healthy Aging, October 2015 Issue. The main article focused on avoiding the pain of Shingles by getting vaccinated. The Editor-in-Chief of the journal had experienced the effects of the condition and suggested putting the vaccination at the top of the list for seniors. Shingles is a painful, blistering rash caused by the varicella zoster virus which also causes chicken pox. As immunity wanes with age, the virus can reactivate.

10. TCAA Executive Committee for 2014-2016

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