



# The EVERGREEN Newsletter

Editor: Henny van Dijk

[www.uthro.org](http://www.uthro.org)

March, 2022

## Where do the talks stand...

I've gotten several inquiries about the negotiations on a new contract between Blue Cross/ Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) and MemorialHermann (MHHS) As I made you aware in the January newsletter of negotiations between BCBSTX and MHHS the deadline for resolving their conflict is near, March 1 and both parties have stated their positions as of Feb.26. The person I talked to at BCBS told me that no progress has been made so far which leaves the distinct possibility that as of March 1 you would be wise to find other options for your health care needs at other facilities than MemorialHermann as you would have to pay deductibles and co-pays which up till now are not the case. If I look at my own situation my wife and I are using a large number of MHHS facilities like the hospital, day surgery, labwork, Xrays and other radiological tests. Just one small example I was charged \$7,000 for a surgical assistant who was not in the network. Luckily BCBS took care of that as I of course had no idea who would be in the OR, but those are the kind of surprises you wouldn't want. I understand that many of our UTPhysicians do refer for those services to MemorialHermann facilities and sometimes you might not realize the connections—TIRR is one of those. I believe that all our members enrolled in UTSelect will get your health care with the MemorialHermann facilities I would think it might be important to take the time and read about their differences. With both BCBSTX and Memorial Hermann looking to secure an arrangement which best benefits their members/patients and the clients they serve, both entities have provided informational websites to educate their constituents. To review this additional information, the BCBSTX site is [www.bcbstx.com/memorialhermann](http://www.bcbstx.com/memorialhermann) and Memorial Hermann's site is [www.memorialhermann.org/about-us/bcbstx-negotiations](http://www.memorialhermann.org/about-us/bcbstx-negotiations)

Talk to your doctor or caregiver about options as they are available. We can also find out more specifics during the July Benefits Meeting in which my Austin contact told me they will be present.

Henny van Dijk

## New: Member's Korner



Hi, Henny, I decided to give you a few more details on life up here in Crossland in the cold (8 degrees right now). I joined the staff of our newsletter here and am now the managing editor. I will send you our latest copy and you will see what we do here. A new resident here has taken over the formatting from me for which I am extremely grateful. Besides the newsletter, I work as an "actor" in the stage plays we put on



here (twice a year) and you would be amused by the fact that we do not have to memorize our lines (we are all too old to do that reliably) but carry our scripts. I help monitor the blue bird population weekly (spring and summer), play water volleyball (no one gets hurt when you fall down). Because of the pandemic, large gatherings (to hear music and attend lectures) are now intermittently curtailed and our audiovisual team has figured out how to put them on our closed-circuit television. They feed us here, but pandemic rules have closed the dining room so we must walk down and pick up our meals and come home, but are allowed to join a friend in their cottage to eat together. All of us can't wait for the pandemic to ease (or vanish) so that we can resume social gatherings. We live in the midst of an arboretum (proposed and engineered by residents here) and it is now registered nationally. We have many trails through the arboretum, and acres of woods. Because it is deer-hunting season right now (bow and arrow only) we are not allowed to walk in the woods except between 9:30-3:30 pm until after Feb.1.

Lots of other stuff going on too, but now you can probably see why I like it so much here! I miss my friends in Houston, but I do not miss the political climate in Texas.

My best to all!

Julie K

### In this Issue

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#### From the editor:

Julie Knobil has been a longtime UTHRO member, lives now in Pennsylvania and send me this note. While in Houston she helped me with the newsletter and it seems she liked it enough to do the same in Crossland, her new home for the past couple of years.. It's the inaugural article in UTHRO's attempt to stay connected with those we used to work with as colleagues or have known from events.

**“Brookwood Community Center...**



Now that we are slowly getting back to normal in our daily lives, the Event Committee has organized a field trip to the Brookwood Community Center in Brookshire on Thu. April 7. It will be a bus trip and we plan to have lunch on the premises.

Brookwood provides an educational environment that creates meaningful jobs, builds a

sense of belonging, and demands dignity and respect for adults with disabilities. The campus consists of eight group homes, two single-family staff homes, a residential Inn, a health and dental clinic, Worship Center, enterprise building, activities and administration building, 47 greenhouses, Gift and Garden Center and the Café at Brookwood, and several other support buildings. The programs serve: 110 resident adults (known as Brookwood “citizens”) who are functionally disabled and live at Brookwood 24/7. Another 80 plus adults participate in our day program. The range of diverse needs we help include people with autism spectrum disorders; intellectual disabilities; developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury; dual diagnosis; and/or aging care needs. We also serve as a resource for families. Brookwood’s outreach program actively shares our innovative concepts and techniques with other professional caregivers across our nation and around the world.

Our purpose is: To provide opportunity through education so that Brookwood citizens will acquire meaningful job skills and hold real jobs in the Community’s own business enterprises and will experience the pride that accompanies the ability to contribute to one’s own support as well as grow socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

**“Like most things, Brookwood grew out of necessity.”**

When parents are faced with a child with a disability, the agony of finding appropriate resources for that child can be overwhelming as there are not too many options. People with disabilities, like all people, have a basic need to feel useful and feel they are contributing to the world. There is a real difference between sitting around the house in a wheelchair all day doing nothing and sitting in a wheelchair and making something of value for someone else to enjoy. Hence, The Brookwood Community was founded in 1985. It was built on 475 acres of rolling hills in Brookshire. Brookwood provides a safe environment with proper nutrition, plenty of activity and productive challenges.

**UTHRO Audit for 2020/2021...**

Marilyn Wells and Barbara Kelly conducted an audit of the fiscal years 2020 and 2021 Finances. Margaret Zambrano, Treasurer, presented all financial documentation for the 2 years. Marilyn and Barbara would like to thank Margaret for providing all documents and compliment her on contributions to UTHRO. Margaret’s records are complete and detailed. The audit findings and recommendations are as follows:

Due to the pandemic UTHRO has been operating with minimal expenses for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. In fiscal year 2019, most of UTHRO’s social event costs were offset with reimbursements from Vantage Travel as a recruitment tool for the UTHRO sponsored France River Cruise. This allowed UTHRO to maintain a surplus of cash in its bank balance. With the pandemic stopping all UTHRO events and with minimal expenses anticipated the UTHRO Executive Committee voted to not actively seek the payment of dues for the last two fiscal years. The result, as anticipated, has significantly depleted UTHRO’s bank balance.

Revenues for fiscal year 2020 amounted to \$2,170.00 and expenses amounted to \$1,358.36 with a net income of \$811.64. Revenues for fiscal year 2021 amounted to \$2,210.00 and expenses amounted to \$3,888.85 for a net loss of (\$1,678.85). Expenses in fiscal year 2021 increased as UTHRO resumed events on a limited basis. The Annual Budget Review Documents with details are provided as a separate document as an attachment to Henny’s email.

As we are now three months into fiscal year 2022 and the UTHRO Executive Committee is beginning to plan future events, it is imperative that we once again pursue the collections of membership dues. Without the support of the membership through the payment of membership dues, UTHRO will not be able to maintain the financial health required to operate. Membership dues support costs for the Newsletter, Social activities, the Annual Health Symposium, the UTHRO Endowment, and minor miscellaneous expenses. If UTHRO is to return to normal activities, it is of the upmost importance that the membership support UTHRO by paying their dues in a timely manner.

Marilyn Wells  
Barbara Kelly  
Margaret Zambrano, Treasurer

Have you renewed your UTHRO membership?  
The form can be found at our website  
**www.uthro.org** The cost of renewal is \$15.  
Please mail your information and a check  
made out to UTHRO and send to  
Margaret Zambrano  
20903 Imperial Ridge Ln., Spring, TX, 77379



### What does the TSHL do ...



As many of you know I have been a long time member of UTHRO along with my late spouse Dr. Joseph Streckfuss. I am honored to relate some issues being faced by the Legislature brought to them by Texas Silver Haired Legislature (TSHL). TSHL was founded in 1985 therefore the list of legislation that has been fostered and supported by that group is a long, long list...even the Resolutions that have been written by TSHL are a phenomenal one and very many have been placed into Bills by our elected State legislators and signed by Sitting Governors. At this time I am on the Health and Human Resources Committee and have been a State Officer of the organization four times and member of several committees. Right now the entire organization is in the process of writing Resolutions, which are the beginning draft form to petition others to support their own State Legislator.

Betty Streckfuss



The nonpartisan group is modeled after the Texas House and comprised of 87 representatives, 60 years of age or older, who are elected to serve two-year terms by the 28 Area Agencies on Aging from across the State. The charge for TSHL is to address the needs and concerns of older adults in Texas through the legislative process. Since

1985, well over 200 bills have passed the Legislature that were directly influenced by the work of the TSHL. Fifteen TSHL resolutions were accomplished, partially or fully, by laws enacted in the 2021 Texas Legislative Session. The TSHL works through a committee structure of eight legislative issues committees similar to the Texas Legislature. It is through these committees that the majority of the work gets done. TSHL representatives achieve this by:

- ◆ Listening to concerns of older Texans
- ◆ Identifying public policy issues
- ◆ Researching the issues
- ◆ Informing state legislators of concerns of older Texans
- ◆ Testifying at Senate and House Committee Hearings

Eighty-seven self-funded volunteers currently comprise the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature. The state is allocated a total of 123 members. Harris County currently has six TSHL representatives serving as advocates for older adults in this region. The TSHL will meet on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives in its upcoming Legislative session May 1-6, 2022. There they will debate and vote on resolutions submitted by individual members, and the results of their deliberations will be presented in a Legislative Report delivered to the Governor, Lt. Governor, and all members of the State Legislature.

For more information on the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature, to submit issues/concerns of older Texans that the TSHL might address, or to learn more about membership opportunities, visit the TSHL website at [www.tshl.org](http://www.tshl.org)

Viola Hebert.

### Spain & Portugal in 2023 ...



#### UTHRO Travels is once again traveling!

This time we are off to Portugal and Spain on the Douro River. We will also spend a little time on land exploring Madrid and Lisbon. You and your family and friends are invited to join our UTHRO Travels group trip on the **Portugal & Spain: Treasures Along the Golden Douro** river cruise with Vantage Travel. The base tour departs on September 22, 2023 for an overnight flight to Madrid, Spain where we will be met at the airport by Vantage Travel and transfer to a 5 star hotel. We will spend 3 days exploring Madrid and then onto Salamanca, Spain to board the ms Douro Serenity for 7 nights. As we are traveling during peak grape harvest season, we will have the enhanced experience of picking and stomping grapes during a full Harvest Celebration at Quinta da Avesada Winery. On day 12 we will disembark in Lisbon and transfer to a 5 star hotel for 4 nights. The base trip has a total of 15 travel days. Our group rate for cabins begins as low as \$5,749 which also includes all port charges, hotels, transportation, most meals and all tours. Airfare is offered at a two for one cost of \$724 per person. There are also opportunities for discounts up to 10% based on early payment.

Our group has the opportunity for a pre-trip excursion to Barcelona and a post-trip excursion to Madeira. The pre-trip to Barcelona is for 4 days. For this pre-trip we depart Houston on September 19, 2023. The cost is \$1,499 per person which includes transportation, hotel, some meals and all tours. The post-trip excursion to Madeira, Portugal is also for 4 days. The cost is \$1,099 per person and includes transportation, hotels, some meals and all tours. I hope you will join me on these pre and post trips to these colorful and exciting destinations!

Although September of 2023 seems a long time from now, it is important that you make plans now and book early to ensure that you reserve your space on the trip as space is limited and sells out quickly. Ten UTHRO Travels members have already booked their space!

For more information contact me at [bkelly0127@gmail.com](mailto:bkelly0127@gmail.com) or 832-465-1040. The full itinerary and costs can be found on UTHRO's website at [www.uthro.org](http://www.uthro.org) or on UTHRO Travels Facebook page. If you are not a member of UTHRO Travels Facebook page, send me a request to join through Facebook. *Barbara Kelly*



# UTHRO

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To update your address or phone number  
please contact us at 281-655-1983

## And Now For Something Completely Different... A International Twist on the Washington Post Challenge

*My Canadian friend sent me these hilarious common "foreign" sayings slightly altered in a New York magazine competition where they asked competitors to change one letter in a familiar non-English phrase and redefine it.*

Harlez-vous francais? -- Can you drive a French motorcycle?  
Ex post fucto. -- Lost in the mail.  
Idios amigos. -- We're wild and crazy guys!  
J'y suis, j'y pestes. -- I can stay for the weekend.  
Cogito eggo sum. -- I think; therefore, I am a waffle.  
Rigor morris. -- The cat is dead.  
Repondez s'il vous plaid. -- Honk if you're Scots.  
Que sera serf. -- Life is feudal.  
Le roi est mort. Jive le roi. -- The king is dead. No kidding.  
Posh mortem. -- Death styles of the rich and famous.  
Pro bozo publico. -- Support your local clown.  
Monage a trois. -- I am three years old.  
Pardonnez-mot. -- That wasn't funny. Sorry.  
Felix navidad. -- Our cat has a boat.  
Veni, vidi, vice. -- I came, I saw, I partied

Haste cuisine. -- Fast French food.  
Quip pro quo. -- A fast retort.  
Aloha oy. -- Love; greetings; farewell; from such a pain  
you should never know.  
Mazel ton. -- Lots of luck.  
Apres Moe le deluge. -- Larry and Curly get wet.  
Porte-kochere -- Sacramental wine.  
Ich liebe rich -- I'm really crazy about having dough.  
Fui generis -- What's mine is mine.  
Visa la france -- Don't leave chateau without it.  
Ca va sans dirt -- And that's not gossip.  
Merci rien -- Thanks for nothin'.  
Amicus puriae. -- Platonic friend.  
L'etat, c'est Moe. -- All the world's a stooge



### UTHRO OFFICERS 2022

**President** Kathryn Bradley  
**Vice-Pres** Barbara Kelly  
**Secretary** Daun Gray  
**Treasurer** Margaret Zambrano  
**Web Administrators** Henny van Dijk, Pat Grealy & Glenn Schreyer

To protect our officers' personal information on our website, UTHRO has instituted a new general purpose email address: [uthro@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:uthro@uth.tmc.edu). This is a "forwarding" email that will send copies to both the UTHRO president and Efen Pena who will then forward the email to the appropriate person. Including the recipient's name in your subject will be very helpful; e.g. Subject: For Barry, BBQ lunch. If UTHRO members already know the phone number or personal email address of an officer then by all means continue using that for your communication needs.

**Newsletter Editor** Henny van Dijk