

Editor: Henny van Dijk

www.uthro.org

December, 2022

The December Event ...

Moody Gardens Buffet



The event Committee has chosen December 13 for a bus trip to Galveston's Moody Gardens' "Festival of Lights" and "Ice Land" as the December Event.

The county bus will leave OCB at 4 PM arriving at the venue at 5 PM for a buffet dinner; afterwards the plan is to visit the Festival of Lights and Ice Land starting around 6PM. The cost of this trip is \$40 per person for the Festival, and the Buffet .

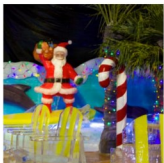
The bus will arrive back at OCB at around 9PM.

We currently have 23 bus riders for the Moody Gardens trip; the cut off is 28 as we can't get a larger bus and that's the max. So space is limited.

Call Gill Rittman 713-542-1865 to be sure a space is available before mailing money to Margaret. The cut off date is December 1st

Let us know you are coming on this trip (and pay for it), call or text to Gill Rittman at 713-542-1865 or email her at: uthro@uth.tmc.edu. by **December 1**.

Please Zelle at zambrano1123@gmail.com or send your check for \$40 p.p. made out to UTHRO and mail to Margaret Zambrano, 20903 Imperial Ridge Lane TX 77379.





Festival of Lights

Buffet 2022

THE GARDEN RESTAURANT

HOUSEMADE SOUP
WARM BREAD & BUTTER

SALADS

Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Balsamic Glaze (V-GF)
Honey Glazed Butternut Squash with Texas Pecans & Dried Cranberries (V-GF)
Pesto Bowtie Pasta with Sundried Tomatoes (V-GF)
Seasonal Fruit Salad (V-GF)
Tossed Field Greens with Salad Additions including:
Sliced Cucumber, Shredded Carrot, Grape Tomatoes, Sliced Olives & Mushrooms
Choice of Dressings: Ranch, Vinaigrette & Caesar

ENTREES

Seafood Pasta
Chicken Cordon Blue
Sliced Roast of Ribeye with Au Jus (GF)
Oven Baked Salmon with Lemon Caper Butter Sauce (GF)
Ham with Brown Sugar Glaze (GF)

KID'S FAVORITES

Chicken Nuggets
Mac & Cheese Supreme (V)
Tater Tots (V)

SIDES

Parmesan Potatoes (V) (GF)
Steamed Vegetables (V) (GF)

CHEF'S DESSERTS OF THE NIGHT

Tea & water service included.

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The Benefits Meeting

UT CARE Medicare PPO.

I don't believe I've ever seen the Rio Grande with "standing room" before, but on October 27 there were no seats free anymore as the UT retirees were anxious to hear about that change from UT Select to UTCare which is basically a Medicare Plan C. So from this day forward (actually as of January 1, 2023) our Medical Benefits Meeting will probably be in November/December.

Both the Office of Employee Benefits (OEB) and Blue Cross Blue Shield did send a pretty good size contingent to explain the new plan and to try to dispel any anxiety and in general I think they succeeded.

Two immediate changes for all retirees who have Medicare A & B and Plan D because they will get 2 new ID cards – UTCare to replace the traditional red/white/blue Medicare card and an new Express Script Card. When visiting a provider, doctor, specialist, hospital or any other provider you now must show your new UTCare card. The provider will no longer bill Medicare but BCBS TX directly which will then pay the provider, so one less step for them and probably faster payments.

The program also features some extras not original available in UTSelect like hearing and dental care. The magic number for those new services is \$0 co-pay either in or out of network. My personal question was about their original "global plan" now replaced with a worldwide Emergency Care coverage, so if you end up in an ER or hospital outside the US you still are covered – it says 100% but that depends a bit if the country accepts that; you might have to be reimbursed.

The basic idea was to replace without loss any program UTSelect gave us with some additional benefits. However the audience was pretty critical initially but because their questions were answered on the spot (or even via zoom for some) It seemed to me that in the end the retirees did start to accept the change.

Another major announcement was that MDAnderson Cancer Center is now in the network.

So first study the BCBS package that you should have received in the mail and see for your self; If you don't need to change your current Medical benefits the new plan will just roll over and the monthly payments stay the same. However if you carry dependents on your plan, or have Vision or Delta coverage that will still be done in July like always. It gets you twice out of the house.

I've tried to summarize the plan, but don't take my word for it, take a good look at the new plan and its benefits so you know what you're getting..

Henny van Dijk

The UTHRO Annual Meeting



UTHRO's new slate of Officers elected for two years at the Annual Meeting on Nov. 10. Portrayed from left to right: Barbara Kelly, President, Efen Pena, Vice-President. Daun Gray, Secretary and Margaret Zambrano Treasurer.

Photo: Michael Thompson



The idea for changing from the Excellence Fund to an Endowment came from Barbara Kelly and me when I was President. Rick Bebermeyer was the committee chair that first year. He and I met with UTHealth people to get the Endowment established and all of the legal stuff done. Rick was an energetic fund raiser and wrote letters to a number of people who were responsible for getting that first \$25,000 raised in the first year and now 6 years later...

We made it!! The UTHRO Endowment has reached **\$100,000!** Thank you to each of you who have contributed to get to this point, but don't stop!! This year's appeal letter was sent out the end of October, and if you have not yet responded to that, please consider doing so. Remember that you can give in honor or memory of someone, and any amount is appreciated. The more that is collected for the corpus of the Endowment, the more interest is generated and the more UTHRO can give grants to young investigators doing geriatric research that will benefit all of us.

Peggy O'Neill

Another Event Returns...

Our speaker for this event furnished me with a little biography "Born on a Klondike style alluvial goldfield in German East Africa (now Tanzania) Brian Tulloch's family moved to a large cattle ranch in Rhodesia then considered a "Jewel of Africa".

After a boyhood of horse riding, bird watching and sailing he read Biochemistry at Natal University before being awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford.

There while he studied Medicine he sailed competitively with Ocean Races to Holland, France and Denmark, particularly enjoying the long post-race yacht deliveries thru Holland's spectacularly beautiful canal system.

Long a Nature lover he has developed his interest in Wildlife photography above and below the water, and now can share a life's collection of his special views of species met on these travels.



We are able to revive the Lunch & Learn event for January 19 when Dr Brian Tulloch will tell us about his most recent adventure with images and narrative: The event will be held at the Rio Grande Room starting at 11 AM. A light lunch will be served and we hope that we can count on your participation, which could lead to a number of future events.

"The Great Wildebeeste Migration of the Serengeti"

The World's greatest wildlife migration was the Buffalo on the North American plains, but the likes of Buffalo Bill put paid to that.

So when 52,000 African Wildebeeste trekked over 350 miles following the Equatorial rains Dr Bernard Grimezeck, curator of Frankfurt Zoo persuaded President Nyerere to declare the Migration pathway a National Park.

Now nearly 3 million strong the migrants offer sustenance to countless residents along its path, from the lowly Scarab beetle rolling it's dung to Prides of nonmigrating lions feasting on the great biomass as it passes by. Hyenas, jackals and vultures clean up His Majesty's kill, while colorful birds feast on flies and flowers propagating in the rich pastures.

Brian Tulloch will describe his adventures following the Migration, camping in tents and recording up close the many birds and beasts that flourish on its varied African Savannah.



A Christmas Story...

We have a Christmas treat in the form of John Henry Faulk's "Christmas Story." Born in 1913, the native Austinite was a radio personality, satirist and playwright. In 1974, John Henry Faulk read the story for NPR's "Voices in the Wind", and it's since become a holiday classic.



The day after Christmas a number of years ago, I was driving down a country road in Texas.

And it was a bitter cold, cold morning. And walking ahead of me on the gravel road was a little bare-footed boy with non-descript ragged overalls and a makeshift sleeved sweater tied around his little ears. I stopped and picked him up. Looked like he was about 12 years old and his little feet were blue with the cold. He was carrying an orange. Here is his story: "Papa had warned to not get their hopes up in case the promised Christmas dinner didn't happen. But papa came home with two chickens and "bags of stripety candy and apples and oranges and sacks of flour and some real coffee, you know, and just all tinselly and pretty and we couldn't say nothing."

Then papa sees Sam Jackson a-leading that old cripple-legged mule of his up the lane. And papa said, "Sam Jackson, did you get in town to get some Christmas this year?" Sam Jackson, you know, he sharecrops over there across the creek from our place. And he shook his head and said, "Well, no, sir, Mister. Well, I didn't go in town. I heard about that, but I didn't know it was for colored folks, too. I thought it was just for you white families."

Papa, he broke out in a big grin again. He said, "Dad-blame-it, Sam Jackson, it's a sure a good thing you come by here. Lord have mercy, I liked to forgot. Old Santa Claus would have me in court if he heard about this. The last thing he asked me if I lived out here near you. Said he hadn't seen you around and said he wanted me to bring part of this out here to you and your family, your woman and your children."

"We played Christmastime till we just wore ourselves out," the white child recalled. He sat "right next to Willy Jackson, you know, and he just rolled his eyes at me and I'd roll mine at him." Sam Jackson led the prayer, "Lord, I hope you having as nice a Christmas up there with your angels as we're having down here because it sure is Christmastime down here."

"Like I say, Mister, I believe that was the wonderfulest Christmas in the United States of America."

John Henry Faulk



UTHRO

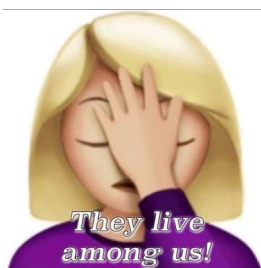
The University of Texas Houston Retiree Organization

1851 Crosspoint, Suite 1.204,
Houston, TX 77054

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

And Now For Something Completely Different...

Laugh With Grannies ... (my thanks to Margaret for this jêwel)



My husband and I went through the McDonald's driveway window and I gave the cashier a \$5 bill. Our total was \$4.25, so I also handed her 25c. She said, 'you gave me too much money.' I said, 'Yes I know, but this way you can just give me a dollar back.' She sighed and went to get the manager who asked me to repeat my request. I did so, and he handed me back the 25c, and said 'We're sorry but we don't do that kind of thing.' The cashier then proceeded to give me back 75 cents in change..

We had to have the garage door repaired. The repairman told us that one of our problems was that we did not have a 'large' enough motor on the opener. I thought for a minute, and said that we had the largest one made at that time, a 1/2 horsepower. He shook his head and said, 'You need a 1/4 horsepower.' I responded that 1/2 was larger than 1/4 and he said, 'NOOO, it's not. Four is larger than two.' We haven't used that repairman since...

I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked, 'Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?' To which I replied, 'If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?' He smiled knowingly and nodded, 'That's why we ask.'

UTHRO OFFICERS 2023

President Barbara Kelly

Vice-Pres Efren Pena

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. This is a "forwarding" email that will send copies to both the UTHRO president and Efren 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