



# NETWORK

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New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation Network SUMMER 2004

## Happy Independence Day!

**JULY 4**

This is one of the big ones in our country—the day the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence and signed it in 1776.

Other interesting things that happened on July 4<sup>th</sup>...

★ **1831** *America*, the song, is first introduced.



**1883** *The Statue of Liberty* was presented to the nation.

★ **1895** *America the Beautiful* is first printed.



Especially during this patriotic holiday, all of us at the NHHEAF Network offer our prayers and heartfelt thanks to those defending our freedoms on foreign soil.

None of us who have always been free can understand the terrible fascinating power of the hope of freedom to those who are not free.

- Pearl S. Buck

## Interest Rates Drop...Again!!

Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, federal student loan interest rates drop to their lowest levels ever! The new rate on the Stafford loan for current students and recent graduates drops to 2.77 percent, and the rate for borrowers already repaying loans issued on or after July 1998 goes to 3.37 percent. The rate for the Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 1998 falls to 4.17 percent. Interest rates for the Federal Family Education Loan Program are variable and are adjusted annually based upon the bond equivalent of the 91-day Treasury bill, plus a margin of interest set by federal regulation. These new rates will remain in effect through June 30, 2005. "This is wonderful news for students," said René A. Drouin, President & CEO of the NHHEAF Network, the state's only integrated provider of student loan services. "These new, low interest rates will help students realize their higher education goals and will ease the debt burden for many borrowers," continued Drouin.

These record-low rates translate into substantial savings for borrowers. For example, borrowers who owe \$20,000 in student loan debt with a 10-year standard repayment plan pay \$9,437 in interest costs over the life of the loan under the interest rate cap of 8.25 percent. With the new interest rate of 3.37 percent, they would pay \$3,587 in interest costs, a savings of \$5,850 over the life of the loan.

Additional savings can be realized for borrowers with a loan disbursed from the New Hampshire Higher Education Loan Corporation (NHHELCO), the funding arm of the NHHEAF Network. By participating in the company's automatic payment plan, a borrower becomes eligible for an interest rate reduction; and Stafford loan borrowers with loans disbursed on or after July 1, 1999 qualify for a two percent (2%) interest rate reduction after 36 months of on-time payments.

*Continued on page 4*

## NHHEAF Continues to Waive Guarantee Fee

The Board of Trustees of the New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF), the New Hampshire-designated guarantor for the federal student loan program, announced earlier this year that for the fifth straight year, the one-percent (1%) up-front guarantee fee for all federal Stafford and federal Parent PLUS loans will be waived for the 2004-2005 academic year.

Under federal law, the 36 student loan guarantee agencies operating in the United States are authorized to charge borrowers a guarantee fee of up to one percent of the loan principal.

"Since NHHEAF began waiving the one percent guarantee fee in 1999, the costs to New Hampshire college students and their families have been reduced by over \$6 million," said René A. Drouin, President & CEO of the NHHEAF Network.

*Continued on page 4*

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# Celebrating 25 years of

René A. Drouin, president and chief executive officer of the NHHEAF Network, began his service to the organization on December 26, 1978 as Manager of Claims and Recoveries. From 1980-85 he served as Associate Executive Director, followed by 11 years as vice president and chief operating officer. In July 1997, he was elected president and chief executive officer. During his career with the Network, Drouin has led efforts to expand the organization's services from a guaranty function to loan servicing, lending, and community outreach. In the late 1990's he negotiated, sought financing, and oversaw the construction of a new office facility which today houses the Network staff and a number of partner organizations. He guided operations from manual to web-based application, and shepherded loan volume serviced to over one billion dollars, while consistently maintaining one of the nation's lowest default rates.

Drouin promoted the state's first two higher education summits, which led to the formation of the NH Forum on Higher Education, a partnership to improve economic and workforce opportunity through higher education. He has championed projects such as the NHHEAF Network's Initiative for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education, which has awarded more than \$600,000 in efforts to encourage higher education institutions in the state to work together on ways to increase access to postsecondary education, and Teachers for New Hampshire<sup>SM</sup>, a loan forgiveness program aimed at students interested in becoming teachers and developed to help address the critical shortage of school teachers in New Hampshire.

*“René understands the challenge and complexity of modernizing student aid delivery. His expertise in student financial aid will be invaluable in helping the Committee clarify the central issues involved in improving the federal student financial aid system and facilitating access to higher education for all.”*

U.S. Senator Judd Gregg

On both the national and state level, Drouin has served as a strong advocate for reform and simplification of the student loan and financial aid processes. He served as Chairman of the Board of the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs from 1999 to 2000. He also served as Chairman of the Council's Program Operations Committee from 1988 to 1990. He serves as a Board Director for the NH Bankers Association Insurance Trust, Campus Compact NH, and the NH Forum on Higher Education. Most recently, Drouin was nominated by U.S. Senator Judd Gregg to serve a three-year term on the U.S. Department of Education's Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance.



*U. S. Senator Judd Gregg presents Drouin with a framed Congressional Record insert on his appointment to the U.S. Department of Education's Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance.*



*Three generations of NHHEAF leadership. Left to Right: Mildred L. Dustin, Executive Director 1978-1983, President 1984-1997; René A. Drouin, President/CEO 1997-present; and Eleanor Provencher, Administrative Secretary 1963-1969, Executive Director 1970-1978.*

# Dedicated service 1978-2003

Leader - Boss - Partner -

Earlier this year, staff planned a celebration to recognize their president's leadership over his 25 years of service to the NHHEAF Network, and for a life-long career devoted to ensuring that financial assistance for higher education be available for those who are prepared and desire to attend college.

During the celebration, Drouin said, "I am extremely proud of how far we have come, and I am excited to see where we will go in the future. Our continued growth and success would not be possible without the support of the Network's boards of trustees, a strong and skilled workforce, students, parents, higher education institutions, the continued investment of the lending community, and the cooperation of all education related organizations with whom we share common ground. Driven by your continued enthusiasm and support, I remain steadfast in our commitment to excellence and to our mission of making college dreams come true!"

## A stroll down memory lane...in 1978...

- the average income in the USA is \$16,975
- the average cost of a new house is \$54,749
- the average cost of a new car is \$5,405; and
- the price of a gallon of gas is 63 cents!!

*Drouin being sworn in as a member of the U.S. Department of Education's Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (ACSFA) by Mr. Clare Cotton, Chair, and Ms. Judith Flink, Vice-Chair of the ACSFA.*



*NHHEAF Network President & CEO, René A. Drouin, talks with Scott Spradling of WMUR-TV Channel 9 about the importance of the Teachers for New Hampshire<sup>SM</sup> program. (March 2003)*



*NHHEAF Network staff presented René with a signed deskpad and hand-crafted captain's chair in honor of his 25 years of service.*



PHOTO BY DEB YOST

*René A. Drouin addresses attendees at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Destination College Convention. Seated Left to Right: Governor Craig Benson, John Fuhrman, Keynote Speaker; and Scott Power, NHHEAF Network staff.*



*"I have recently been made aware of the impressive numbers surrounding the New Hampshire student loan default rate for 1996. You and your staff have set up some very beneficial programs, controlling an issue that could easily get out of hand. You are to be congratulated for your efforts, and I want you to know how much I appreciate your accomplishments."*

(Former) Governor Jeanne Shaheen  
Letter dated December 30, 1998



*Cyndi Drouin (seated, right), and daughter, Julie, made a surprise visit with grandsons, René and Caleb, to help celebrate René's 25 years of service to the NHHEAF Network.*



*Standing Left to Right: Thomas Rath, Millie Dustin, Governor's Representative, René A. Drouin, Keith Claffey, James R. Reynolds, Chris Spirou, and Governor John Sununu (seated). (Circa 1983-87)*

Mentor - Executive - Colleague - Friend

## Interest Rates

*Continued from page 1*

Another option for students to consider in today's attractive interest rate environment is loan consolidation, wherein eligible borrowers can lock in the record-low rate for the life of the loan. Consolidation is designed for borrowers who have multiple federal student loans and are looking to combine them into one new loan with a single, lower monthly payment. To be eligible, borrowers must be out of school and have at least \$7,500 in federal student loan debt. In addition, recent graduates can benefit from applying for consolidation during their student loan grace period, which would contribute to a lower interest rate.

For more information on federal Stafford, PLUS, or consolidation loans, borrowers are encouraged to call 1-800-719-0708 to talk with a NHHEAF Network Customer Service Representative Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Voice and/or electronic messages can be left 24-hours a day and will be responded to during the next business day. Information is also available on the Network's website at [www.nhheafnetwork.org](http://www.nhheafnetwork.org).

## NHHEAF Waives Guarantee Fee

*Continued from page 1*

"Eliminating this up-front fee puts valuable dollars back into the pockets of our borrowers, and serves as an example of the NHHEAF Network's commitment to making a college education as accessible and affordable as possible for our students and their families," Drouin continued.

The continuation of the guarantee fee waiver is possible due, in part, to the NHHEAF Network's prudent fiscal management and strong default recoveries. For the fourth year in a row, NHHEAF has ranked among the top three guarantors recording the nation's lowest student loan default rates. NHHEAF's successful default prevention efforts are evidenced in the attainment of a 1.4% and 1.8% cohort default rate for FY2000 and FY2001 respectively. The U.S. Department of Education has designated NHHEAF as having the lowest cohort default rate in the nation for FY2000 and the second lowest rate for FY2001. Drouin said, "By significantly reducing defaults and encouraging successful repayment, NHHEAF is able to reduce costs and pass those savings along to our borrowers."

# Caring

Education is the principal means for preparing people



### Girls, Inc.

The NHHEAF Network was pleased to provide our own "Pure & Simple" water bottles to the 200 runners who participated in the Girls, Inc. of New Hampshire's Third Annual Road Race held in Rochester on April 24<sup>th</sup>. The organization's mission is to help girls achieve their personal best through one-on-one attention, leadership development, and enrichment programs offered in a caring, family environment.



# and Sharing

Our Customer Service team handles an average of 630 calls per day!

people to participate effectively in the development of our communities.



## VanGogh Fashion Show

The NHHEAF Network was pleased to support the VanGogh Fashion Show and Hairstyling Competition by providing a \$1,000 scholarship to the design winner. The benefit for the Eliot Breast Health Center and the "Save a Sister" campaign was held in April at the CR Sparks Restaurant in Bedford. Shown are (left to right) Hair Stylist and Scholarship Winner, Kristen Atkins; Model Kim Bohenko, and NHHEAF Network representative, Christine Williams.

# \$12,000!

## United Way

Again this year, NHHEAF Network employees exceeded their goal in support of local organizations via the United Way campaign. Network employees generously contributed almost \$12,000 to various organizations throughout the state.

# of applause!



## Los Amigos Conference

The Los Amigos Conference is held for Hispanic high school students from Boys and Girls Clubs from all over New England. The conference has been held the past two years at Daniel Webster College in Nashua. It is coordinated by the Nashua Boys and Girls Club and offered free of charge to participants. Over 130 students attended this year's conference held on June 11-13. Pictured are students who attended the first conference, along with our own Chris Seusing (far back, right) wearing college t-shirts donated by the NHHEAF Network.

## Read to Lead

As part of the national Read to Lead program, Sue Beauchesne, the NHHEAF Network's Director of Corporate Communications & Media Relations, spent the morning of March 3<sup>rd</sup> reading with Ms. Landry's sixth grade Team Jaguar at Woodbury Middle School in Salem.

# Fifth Annual Destination College Breaks All-Time Attendee Record!!!

More than 1,200 high school juniors and their parents gathered on Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup> to learn more about getting into and paying for college—the subject of the NHHEAF Network's 5th annual Destination College convention. Attendees represented 115 communities and 74 high schools throughout the state. This year's day-long event was held on the campus of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) in Manchester where all received a warm welcome from Dr. Paul LeBlanc, President of SNHU.

Governor Craig Benson was the featured speaker during the opening session. He stressed the importance of taking risks, and conveyed the message that with hard work and determination, dreams really can come true. Other notables in attendance included Charles Rolecek, owner of C.R. Sparks & Premier Catering; Kate Amara, WMUR Morning News Anchor; Kathy McGuire, Supreme Court Justice; Mike DeBlasi, WNDS Sports Director; and Luke Gutelius, owner of Maax Inc. who made up a panel entitled: College Made the Difference: Local Success Stories.

Join us for our  
**6th Annual  
DESTINATION  
COLLEGE**  
on  
**March 19, 2005**  
at  
**Plymouth State  
University.**

Throughout the day concurrent sessions were held covering a variety of issues, such as, The College Interview & Essay; An Admissions Perspective for Students and for Parents; E-Solutions: A Primer for Parents; The Paths to Choosing a Major; Information For The Student-Athlete; Consider A Two-Year Degree; Know The Score: Standardized Testing; Aspiring Artists: What's In Your Portfolio?; The Performing Arts: Auditions; College Costs & Funding Strategies.

Keith Matheny, a motivating entertainer, provided a high-energy show that combined audience participation, good-natured humor and motivational words that are guaranteed to refresh and inspire. He created and described objects held by audience members while he was blindfolded, and predicted answers to math problems. The memory portion of Matheny's show was simply unbelievable. Matheny's unique brand of motivation was uplifting and his demonstrations of the power and ability of the mind left students inspired.

During lunch, representatives from all New Hampshire two-year and four-year schools were on hand to talk with



PHOTO BY DEB YOST

*Left to Right: René A. Drouin, President & CEO of the NHHEAF Network; Dr. Paul LeBlanc, President of Southern NH University; and Governor Craig Benson pose following their remarks.*

students during a college fair. The highlight of the day was a random drawing for five \$500 scholarships donated by the New Hampshire Higher Education Loan Corporation (NHHELCO).

"Today we were able to give students and their parents an understanding of the college planning and funding processes they might not get otherwise," said Drouin. The NHHEAF Network coordinates Destination College each year at a local college campus in an effort to reinforce the concept that college is possible and educational achievement is important to attaining personal, career, and life goals.

Destination College is principally sponsored by the NHHEAF Network in partnership with the colleges and universities in NH as well as with the generous support of sponsors.



PHOTO BY DEB YOST

*The scholarship winners: Alexander Barham of Milford; Lindsay Wood of Littleton; Kurt Leach of Gilford; Jessica Philibert of Weare; and Mike Segreti of Merrimack.*

*"I just want to say thank you for offering such a wonderful conference. It was extremely informative and very well run. My husband, daughter and everyone I have talked with regarding it were very impressed! Great job! Thanks again.*

Heidi Greenlaw, parent

*"The program was awesome! I loved the panels and thought it was well organized. I know how tough it is to get 1,200 people around campus. Nice job and I look forward to next year.*

Tony Berry, UNH Admissions Office

*"Please extend to all of those working in your office that our parents and students greatly appreciate all that you do. I can't tell you how many parents spoke to me about what a wonderful day they had at Destination College. Students also came back with positive feedback. Again, many thanks for what you do!!"*

Rick Walker,  
Director of Guidance, Merrimack High School

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Since September,  
our Center for  
College Planning  
staff have given over  
350 presentations and  
reached close to 20,000  
people. An additional 500  
individuals sought college  
planning counsel  
on-site.

**NHHEAF Network Welcomes  
New Board Members**

In February, the NHHEAF Network welcomed three new members to two of its three Boards of Trustees. Dr. William G. Simonton, Commissioner of the NH Community Technical College System; Harvey D. Hill, Publisher and Owner of Eagle Publications, Inc.; and Julie L. Dolan, Associate Vice President for Fiscal Affairs at Dartmouth College.



**Dr. William G. Simonton** of Concord was appointed to the board of Granite State Management & Resources (GSM&R), the servicing arm of the NHHEAF Network. Simonton is Commissioner of the New Hampshire Community Technical College System, a post he has held since October of 2003. From 1995-2003 Simonton served as President of New Hampshire Technical Institute (NHTI), Concord's Community College. Simonton began his career at NHTI in 1965, serving as an instructor in social science before becoming Dean of Continuing Education in 1968. He holds a Doctorate in Higher Education

Administration from Boston College, and a Masters and Bachelors Degree from the University of Maine.

The NH Higher Education Loan Corporation (NHHELCO) appointed two new members to its board. **Julie L. Dolan** served as a Budget Analyst at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1980s. She spent six years at Tufts University as Senior Financial Analyst, Manager of Financial Analysis, and as Assistant Director of Financial Planning. She then became the Assistant Dean for Finance in the Faculty of Arts & Sciences at Harvard University. More recently Dolan served as the Director of Operations at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee. She moved to Hanover in May 2001 to become Associate Vice President for Fiscal Affairs at Dartmouth. Dolan received her undergraduate degree in Political Science, with honors, from Stanford University and her M.B.A. from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.



**Harvey Hill**, businessman, is currently publisher and owner of Eagle Publications. Early in his career, Hill served as a founder of Whitney-Blake, a coiled cord company with plants in Vermont and Mexico. He co-founded Aviator Footwear, and later co-founded 1 Mind Corporation, a software company that was later sold to Pegasystems, Inc. Hill held various financial positions for Bemis Company, and in 1978 acquired the specialty paper mills from Bemis, forming CPM, Inc. He sold the company in 1995. Hill has served his community in numerous capacities. He once served as a School Board member for the

City of Claremont and the Town of Unity. He served as a Board member and chair of the Charlestown Economic Development Authority and was a City of Claremont Chamber of Commerce member, to name a few. Hill and his wife reside in Charlestown. NH.

"It is a pleasure to welcome such high caliber individuals to our Boards of Trustees," said René A. Drouin, President & CEO of the NHHEAF Network organizations. "We are grateful to all of our board members for their time and expertise and for their service, without remuneration, as strong advocates for increased quality and investment in New Hampshire's higher education," continued Drouin.



## The NHHEAF Network

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Visit us on the web at [www.nhheafnetwork.org](http://www.nhheafnetwork.org)

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Your comments and suggestions on any of the NHHEAF Network programs and services are always welcomed. To provide feedback, update your address or to request additional copies of this newsletter, call 1-800-525-2577, ext. 584.



**HAVE A  
GOOD SUMMER.  
GO SOX!!**



*Congratulations*

**TO THE  
GRADUATES  
CLASS OF  
2004!!**

For answers to your college planning and funding questions, call (800) 525-2577 Ext.119

For answers to your student loan repayment questions, call (800) 719-0708.

# Timeline 2004

- SEPTEMBER 24** Guidance Counselor Training  
*NHHEAF Network Headquarters*
- \*OCTOBER 15** NHHEAF/NHASFAA Training Session  
Financial Aid 101  
*NHHEAF Network Headquarters*
- NOVEMBER 2004** College is Possible Month
- NOVEMBER 6** Discover U Early College Awareness Program  
*UNH, SNHU, Keene State, NHCTC-Berlin*
- \*NOVEMBER 19** NHHEAF/NHASFAA Training Session  
Meet Your Partners in Higher Education and  
Scholarship Searches  
*NHHEAF Network Headquarters*
- DECEMBER 2-3** NHHEAF/NHASFAA Conference  
*Sheraton Harborside Hotel, Portsmouth, NH*

## Mission Statement

To provide funding assistance for New Hampshire residents, parents and students pursuing a higher education; and to provide quality service to not only those individuals, but to the educational and financial institutions which participate in and utilize our programs.

We recognize that the quality of ongoing services is dependent upon our maintaining a sound financial base. Towards that end, we are committed to the ongoing evaluation of current services and the development of new programs which better serve our various constituencies and contribute to the strength of our organization.

\*Contact Beth Cilley, NHASFAA Training Committee Chair, at [beth.cilley@unh.edu](mailto:beth.cilley@unh.edu) with questions.