



# RETIREES NEWSLETTER

Published by the SUNY Retirees Service Corps  
SPRING/SUMMER 2017 • VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 1

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## CAMPUS RETIREE ORGANIZATION PROFILE Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff at SUNY Fredonia

by Barbara Mallette, Co-Chair

**E**meritus faculty and staff at the State University of New York at Fredonia have been an active group – The Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff – since 1977. The association consists of a diverse group of individuals, some of whom may not be considered emeriti on some campuses. Our philosophy is inclusive, with group membership open to faculty and professional staff who have served Fredonia. Minimal dues are collected annually and a lifetime membership fee based on age is also available.

The association’s newsletter, *Emeritus News*, is published quarterly through coordination within the President’s Office, Graphic Designer Lori Deemer, and Editor Dan O’Rourke (Emeritus). The newsletter always includes a piece by the University’s President as well as news items submitted by members. Our



Barbara Mallette (left) and Cathe Kilpatrick (right), Co-Chairs, the Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff at SUNY Fredonia

Secretary, Carolyn Briggs, prepares minutes for each gathering; these minutes appear in subsequent newsletters. Although some members receive the newsletter electronically, mailed newsletters are available to a number of individuals. More than half of our group resides in Chautauqua County, which is relatively close to the University. The rest of our membership is spread across 28 states, Canada, and Finland.

The Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff sponsors an Emeritus Scholarship in the Fredonia Foundation from membership dues and donations.

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## *Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff at SUNY Fredonia, continued from page 1*

Two students, Kerri Williamson, a senior dual major in biology and dance, and David Stedge, a senior in music education and music performance, received Emeritus Scholarships this past fall. The students submitted information about themselves; the biographical summaries and photographs were included in their spring newsletter.

Currently, Barbara Mallette, Emeritus Professor from the College of Education, and Cathe Kilpatrick, Emeritus Professional in the Office of Sponsored Programs, are co-chairs of the association. They follow Dr. Kevin Fox, Emeritus Professor of Biology,

who provided leadership to the group for over seven years. Kevin also developed a summary of the history, purposes, and policies of our association, which has been helpful to the new officers.

The Fredonia Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff meets four times annually. Traditionally, a luncheon is held around St. Patrick's Day at a local country club. Spring and fall luncheons are booked in June and early October either at the College Lodge or a local restaurant. If her schedule permits, Dr. Virginia Horvath, University President, joins us at our luncheons to update us on University initiatives. The University President hosts a holiday Open House for us each December. This event is the perfect way to wrap up the year. At President Horvath's suggestion, members bring canned goods to donate to the local food pantry. In December 2016, Emeritus members donated over 100 pounds of canned goods.

Members report that they enjoy the social aspects of our gatherings. Peter Komada, resident photographer for the group, captures pictures of those attending each gathering. These photographs highlight each newsletter and chronicle the maturation of our association as time progresses.

A number of our members remain active on campus and in the greater community. Mac Nelson (English) regularly pens an

article for the UUP retired members newsletter. Cathe Kilpatrick works in the School of Music scheduling auditions, while Barbara Mallette is closing a five-year Department of Educa-

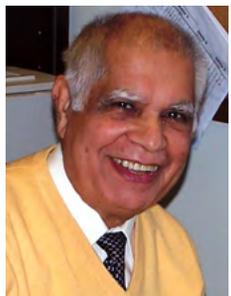


*Association members Kevin Fox, Biology (left); Minda Rae Amiran, English (center); and J. Denis Bolton, Admissions (right)*

tion Office of English Language Acquisition project with Holly Lawson of Chemistry. Minda Rae Amiran (English) has been active in the local Literacy Volunteers Association in Dunkirk, NY. David Tiffany (Fredonia Foundation) just ended a stint as grants writer for the village of Fredonia. Carol Blanchard-Rochelleau is a part-time faculty member in the School of New Learning at DePaul University. Tom Regelski (Music) lives in Finland, where he retired again from teaching but still consults and advises students. Steve Rees served as the Project Shepherd for the Rockefeller Arts Center Addition and Renovation Project at SUNY Fredonia. Steve's work on this project has produced significantly more space for faculty and students in the Visual and Performing Arts. The Phillips-Ulrich Community Trail on the University's campus was named this past summer for two Emeriti faculty and coaches: Jim Ulrich and Everett Phillips. This 1.5-mile loop is a regular on locally-scheduled track events as well as for local hikers.

## Update: Lessons from Retirement Experiences Survey

by Ram L. Chugh, Ph.D., Distinguished Service Professor of Economics (Emeritus)



### Editor's Note:

Dr. Chugh was Executive Director of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps from its inception in 2008 through September 2012.

**H**ow do SUNY retirees make a transition from a well-structured full-time employment to retirement? Retirement is a life-altering experience for many retirees. But with time, most retirees make adjustments to this new lifestyle.

To understand how retirees make this transition and what activities they engage in to stay busy and challenged, an online survey was sent to retirees about four months ago via the listserv maintained by the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) and with the assistance of campus retiree organizations as well as a link in the Fall/Winter 2106 *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*.

We were delighted with the number

of respondents and the quality of their answers. While we are still analyzing the survey results, an initial reading of the responses indicate that SUNY retirees remain involved in a wide variety of activities. For example, many travel and explore new places, some are busy doing research and writing books, some are taking care of their sick family members, and others are involved in a variety of civic activities in their communities. Most of the retiree responses are quite inspirational.

Our goal is put together a report, **The Power of SUNY Retirees: Lessons from 100 Retirement Stories**. This report, when published, will be widely shared with retirees and SUNY campuses. It is hoped that these stories will inspire other retirees and those planning to retiree to explore various avenues to make their retirement a fulfilling experience.

Share

Your Story

Additionally, the report will contain examples of what the survey respondents' campuses did to help prepare them for retirement as well as respondent suggestions on what more our campuses could do that would better prepare future retirees.

In the meantime, this issue of the *Newsletter* contains the retirement experience stories of two survey respondents, Dr. Murray Block, a retiree of SUNY System Administration (see the following page), and Lee Ann Grace, a Buffalo State retiree (see page 16). More Retirement Experiences Survey responses will be featured in future issues of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*.

I suspect that their stories will inspire you as much as they inspired me.

## Campus Retiree Program and Retiree Organization Contact Information

### Editor's Note:

There are approximately 20 SUNY campuses with a retiree organization or retiree program.

Go to [www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/Campus-Retiree-Program-and-Retiree-Org.-Contact-Info-\(Spring-Summer-2017\).pdf](http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/Campus-Retiree-Program-and-Retiree-Org.-Contact-Info-(Spring-Summer-2017).pdf) to view and print a list of contact persons for each program or organization.

The SUNY Retirees Service Corps is providing this information in the event that representatives of these programs want to network with their counterparts and as a resource for campuses or retirees interested in starting their own retiree program or organization.

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# RETIREMENT STORY

## Dr. Murray H. Block

### Deputy to the Chancellor for Campus Liaison (Retired), SUNY System Administration

**Editor's Note:** Dr. Block's story is the first of two examples of submissions received in response to Dr. Ram Chugh's **Lessons from Retirement Experiences Survey**. It will become part of Ram's upcoming report, *The Power of SUNY Retirees: Lessons from 100 Retirement Experiences*. Additional stories will be featured in future issues of the SUNY Retirees Newsletter.

I "first" retired in May of 1983, at the age of 59. I had been Deputy to the Chancellor of the SUNY System first under Chancellor Ernest Boyer and then under Chancellor Clifton Wharton. Two days after my retirement, Chancellor Wharton called me to ask if I might fill in for four months for a SUNY Central staff person who was on assignment elsewhere. I agreed and took on the first of seventeen different temporary assignments over almost 33 years in a number of SUNY colleges and at Excelsior College, from which I finally "retired" on December 31, 2015, six weeks before my 92nd birthday.

My late wife would introduce me as her "husband who can't hold a job." In my "retirement" years I served as Interim President of The College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Orange County Community College (twice, ten years apart), Broome Community College (and later returned as Interim Academic Vice President), Columbia-Greene Community

College (and later returned four times as Interim Academic Dean). After a brief respite of two years, I was invited to join Excelsior College (formerly Regents College) as its Interim President. I was 82 at the time.

When the new President was appointed, he asked me to stay on as Interim Provost, and later Interim Chief of Staff, Interim Dean of the School of Business and Technology (twice, five years apart), and Executive Director of the Leadership Center. On my 90th birthday, the Leadership Center at Excelsior College was named in my honor, and I was made Dean Emeritus of Business and Technology.

During these "retirement years" I also found time to write many memoir stories about my family, my work, my extensive travels between these interim assignments, and people I have met over the years. For my 90th birthday, my son, Paul, surprised me by taking 90 of my stories and publishing them in my name. The book is called *"The First Ninety – 90 Years-90 Stories."*

Now that I have retired "again," I hope to find time to continue writing memoir stories. I finally decided that I needed to slow down at the end of 2015. Not only was I to turn 92 in six weeks, both my sons were retiring in 2016 and I could not let them beat me to the punch.

In all, it was a glorious "retirement" – working both in SUNY units and in



*Dr. Block with the Mud Men Tribe in the hills of Papua New Guinea*

Excelsior College. Although now finally "retired," I still do volunteer work at Excelsior which is, thankfully, very close to the senior residence where I now live. I am a mentor to a number of Excelsior colleagues, have chaired search committees, and attend important functions.

I am often asked for my secret on how I stay active in my advanced years. There is no secret formula. I just kept doing it and it got easier year after year. I have enjoyed working with my colleagues – and I suppose they felt the same way about me. My reputation for doing a good job on these interim assignments led from one assignment to another. I never had to apply for one. I enjoyed the prospect of meeting and working with new people in new communities in my post-retirement second career. Living temporarily in new communities around New York State was most invigorating for both my wife and me.

As I aged, I was too busy to notice the aches that accompany old age. And earning the extra income was most beneficial

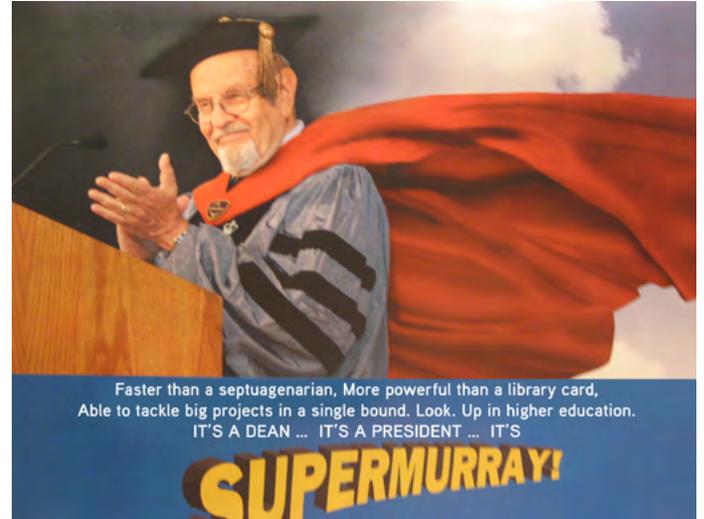
in giving me the opportunity to feed my great passion for travel, especially to exotic and far-away places. Work and travel combined to put off feeling old. I guess that is my “secret”: keep busy, keep involved with people, keep on the move as long as physically able to do so, and most of all – enjoy being with people.

### ADVICE TO CURRENT SUNY EMPLOYEES WHO ARE PLANNING TO RETIRE:

I am probably the wrong one to give such advice. I had no idea what I would do when I decided to retire, but fortunately it all worked out wonderfully for me.

I did realize, however, that it would have been very difficult for me if I did not have these unexpected opportunities. I loved my work as “SUNY’s hired gun” (as one Community College notable referred to me). And I still love work and miss it, even at this advanced age.

So, I guess my advice would be to be sure you have an idea how you will be occupying yourself in the years ahead.



Poster presented to Dr. Block by Excelsior College on his 85th birthday

## SAVE THE DATE!

### SUNY Retirees Conference to be Held at Farmingdale State College on Friday, October 13, 2017

by Pierre Radimak, SUNY Retirees Newsletter Editor and SUNY Retirees Service Corps Coordinator

**M**ark your calendars! The SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) is proud to announce that its fifth biennial conference on SUNY retirees will take place on Friday, October 13, 2017. **Stronger Together: Building Bridges among SUNY Retirees, Campuses and Communities** will be held at Farmingdale State College (FSC) in Farmingdale, NY – the first time the state-wide event is being held on Long Island.

The retirees conference agenda is currently being developed by a planning committee representing each of SUNY’s Long Island campuses – Nassau Community College, SUNY Old Westbury, Stony Brook University, Suffolk County Community College, and FSC – as well as the SUNY RSC.

*Stronger Together* will be open to retirees of SUNY’s 64 campuses, System Administration, the Research Foundation, individuals who oversee existing campus retirement programs, and those interested in starting or expanding a retiree organization at their campus.

The event, which is co-sponsored by Farmingdale State College and the SUNY Retirees Service Corps, will include panel discussions, breakout sessions, networking opportunities, and an optional tour of Farmingdale’s Department of Urban Horticulture & Design Teaching Gardens and Greenhouse.

Once the retirees conference details have been finalized, they will be announced via the SUNY RSC’s electronic distribution lists and in the Fall/Winter 2017 issue of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*, which will come out in August.

Agenda and registration information will also be posted in the Retiree Conferences section of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps website ([www.suny.edu/retirees](http://www.suny.edu/retirees)).





## Is it Time to Revisit Your Retirement Income Option from the SUNY Optional Retirement Plan?

### *TIAA Brochure Offers Insight and Assistance*

by F. Brenda Griebert, Assistant Benefits Director, SUNY System Administration

**W**hether you're already enjoying retirement or it's right around the corner, understanding the retirement income options you have available through the SUNY Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) is important. Longer life expectancies and potential new careers after retirement can lead to a different lifestyle than once envisioned when you planned for retirement.

If you are a member of the SUNY ORP, more than likely you participate with TIAA-CREF, now known as TIAA. It is important to note that a retiree or active employee can still participate with any of the other three SUNY ORP approved vendors – Fidelity, VALIC and VOYA – by transferring assets as well as use more than one vendor if additional distribution options and investment options are desired.

In 2016, over 24,000 distributions were taken by retired SUNY employees who had TIAA contracts. 1,462 of these distributions were taken in the form of a lifetime annuity. The chart in the next column is a breakdown of which annuity income options SUNY retirees chose. The balance of the other distributions were cash withdrawals to the retiree or beneficiary.

Please keep in mind that there is no single “right” approach or income distribution option across the board. It's important to stay flexible by adjusting your approach over time as your investment performance and life circumstances change. Some employees use more than one option to create the income stream appropriate for their needs.

ORP PAYMENT/INCOME OPTIONS SELECTED BY SUNY RETIREES IN 2016	
Payment/Income Options	SUNY Retirees Choosing One or More of These Options
Interest Only Option	58 (4%)
Minimum Distribution Option	158 (11%)
Transfer Payout Annuity Option	805 (55%)
Lifetime Annuities (Single or Joint Life Options)	441 (30%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,462 (100%)</b>



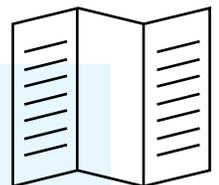
The SUNY University-wide Benefits office asked TIAA to create a brochure to focus on the information needed to help you understand your income options in *The SUNY Optional Retirement Plan - Making the Most of Your Retirement* (available at [https://www.tiaa.org/public/pdf/2016\\_SUNY\\_Retirement\\_Plan\\_Income\\_options\\_FAQ.pdf](https://www.tiaa.org/public/pdf/2016_SUNY_Retirement_Plan_Income_options_FAQ.pdf)).

*This brochure includes key questions and answers that help explain:*

- **What to consider before taking income from the plan**
- **How “milestone ages” can affect the timing of your retirement income strategy**
- **Potential advantages and/or disadvantages of each income option**
- **Which options offer annuities and lifetime income**
- **Why you may want to consider one - or a combination of - income options**
- **Who may qualify for New York State and City tax exclusions**

Additional information about the ORP can be found at the SUNY Benefits website (<https://www.suny.edu/retirement/orp/>).

The Fall/Winter 2017 issue of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter* will include an article about SUNY Optional Retirement Plan vendors Fidelity, VALIC and VOYA.



## Unmasking the Connections between New York and the Arctic

by Dr. Margaret Blackman, Professor Emerita of Anthropology at the SUNY College at Brockport and Mayor of Brockport, New York



### Editor's Note:

Based on her research, the U.S. Department of State invited Dr. Blackman, who retired from SUNY Brockport in 2007

Image credit: Dianne Hickerson

after 30 years of service, to write an entry for a blog entitled "Our Arctic Nation." The blog features entries from each state of the union on its connection to the Arctic. She was asked to write the following piece for New York State.

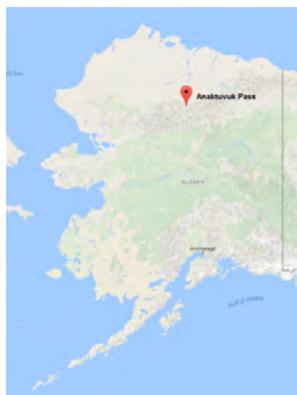
**S**horebirds in New York Harbor, Arctic plant life in NYC, and the venerable NYC-based Explorers Club (<https://explorers.org>), founded by Arctic explorers in 1904, are just three of the many eclectic and historic connections the great state of New York has to the Arctic. Of particular note among today's polar connections is the Arctic research generated at the expansive State University of New York system (SUNY).

Thirty years ago, SUNY Binghamton's Utqiagvik (pronounced Ut-ki-AH-vik) archaeology project at Barrow, Alaska captured worldwide attention as its researchers, working with the local native elders and benefiting from their indigenous knowledge, sought to interpret material from the excavation of a pre-contact and early contact period village that was eroding from the sea bluffs. That material included a house catastrophically collapsed from an avalanche of sea ice overriding the shore. The house contained well-preserved organic material and the frozen remains of five bodies,

dubbed by archaeologists and the media as "the frozen family."

In the small village of Anaktuvuk (Uhn-uk-too-vuk) Pass, Alaska, in the road-less Brooks Range 250 miles southeast of Barrow and 250 miles northwest of Fairbanks, the native Nunamiut (Noon-uh-mee-oot) Eskimos have been sharing their indigenous knowledge of the Arctic environment, its animal and plant life with North American scientists since the mid-1940s, several years before they settled in their present location. Pilot Sig Wein and the airline his Fairbanks family established, Wien Airlines, was the conduit that brought most of the early scientists to northern Alaska. At that time – and not unlike today – much of Alaska is only accessible by air, making airplanes an essential part of any plan for scientists conducting research in remote areas of the state.

Despite the close collaboration between scientists and the Nunamiut, the latter weren't even counted in the U.S. census until 1950 when a determined census taker traveled by bush plane and dog team to reach them – not an easy task. At that time they were nomadic inland hunters of caribou, whose seasonal movements took them in an annual circuit of a few hundred miles, from the Arctic tundra south to the tree line and back. "Like the wolf, we follow the caribou,"



Anaktuvuk Pass: (Image credits: Google Maps / National Parks Service)



one elder reminisced about their pre-settled life.

As scientists, missionaries, teachers and others arrived in Alaska,

changes came to the Nunamiut – some at their behest. Like many indigenous peoples of the Arctic, they no longer live a nomadic lifestyle. By 1950 they were more or less settled in Anaktuvuk Pass, along a major migratory route of the



A Wien Airlines DC-3 in typical surroundings (Image credit: Ed Coates)

caribou; there they managed to secure a post office in 1951, assuring the periodic delivery by bush airplane of goods and supplies.

By the time I, a cultural anthropologist at the SUNY College at Brockport, arrived in Anaktuvuk Pass in the fall of 1984 with

## *Unmasking the Connections between New York and the Arctic, continued from page 7*

a SUNY archaeologist and an archaeology graduate student to document native land use patterns in the new Gates of the Arctic National Park, Anaktuvuk Pass had been an incorporated second-class city for 14 years; its 200+ residents enjoyed electricity and a state-of-the-art K-12 school; villagers had television and some phone service, along with daily bush plane service, weather permitting. But at 80 miles from the nearest road cradled in the gray shale of the Brooks Range Mountains, Anaktuvuk was, and is still, remote.

As a resident of western New York, tied to the academic calendar of a college, I looked forward to summers



*An Alaska bull caribou (Image credit: National Park Service)*

in Anaktuvuk Pass. A project to do in a limited time frame, yes, but the unending daylight, moderate temperatures, slower pace of life and the austere beauty of the Arctic tundra in summer green were a welcome relief from the demands of academic life the rest of the year.

I have returned to Anaktuvuk Pass many times since that first trip, most recently funded by a National Science Foundation Arctic Social Sciences grant (2001–2009) through the College at Brockport to study the relationship between indigenous knowledge, art, and the natural world. In layman's terms, I came north to talk to the makers of the unique caribou skin masks that are the signature piece of craftsmanship and art from Anaktuvuk Pass and to study these works of art.

The first hand-sewn masks were

created in 1951 by two Nunamiut trappers who were inspired by the Halloween masks one of them had seen in a Fair-

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**“ AS A RESIDENT OF WESTERN NEW YORK, TIED TO THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR OF A COLLEGE, I LOOKED FORWARD TO SUMMERS IN ANAKTUVUK PASS. ”**

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banks drugstore. Out on their trap line, they killed a caribou. Thinking it would be fun to make a couple of masks from its hide to wear at the Eskimo dances during the Christmas holidays, they set to work hand-sewing the hide into two masks. They donned their creations a few weeks later at the dances to the great surprise and amusement of the villagers. That masked dance performance was a singular event and the masks eventually passed into the hands of collectors in Fairbanks.

In 1956, villager Justus Mekiana took the idea a step further to create a marketable craft. He developed a technique to create masks by applying wet caribou skins to carved wooden face molds. Cre-



*The first hand-sewn caribou skin masks. (Image credit: Bob Ahgook)*

ated far more quickly than the hand-sewn versions, the masks were marketed to tourists and, by the late 1960s, provided the majority of cash income for most village families.

Today, skin masks fill Anaktuvuk's museum gift shop, hang for sale in the local store (there's only one), and find their way south to shops elsewhere in Alaska and beyond. So emblematic are they of Anaktuvuk that the mask faces have been silkscreened onto T-shirts, etched in glass on the welcome screen at the local museum, and embossed on the letterhead of the local Nunamiut Corporation.

To create an Anaktuvuk mask, the artists must have an intimate knowl-



*Caribou skin mask mold made from spruce from Anaktuvuk Pass in Northern Alaska by Joshua Rulland. (Image credit: Dr. Margaret Blackman)*

edge of the caribou, from its migratory wanderings to the age, sex, and seasonal characteristics of its hide, to the preparation of the hide from the time they are removed from the animal to the time they are cut free of the wooden molds. The art form hinges not only on the knowledge and craftsmanship of its makers, but on the continued hunting of caribou. For now, the place of hunting in the lives of Anaktuvuk people seems secure, and the Western Arctic Caribou Herd population

on which the people depend is numerically stable.

Change in Anaktuvuk marched on through my numerous research seasons there. Waterlines and flush toilets were a welcome capital project at the turn of the millennium, but villagers made fewer masks when they had high-paying jobs on the water project. Cellphone coverage reached Anaktuvuk Pass in 2010, and when the newly-expanded museum opened the following year, villagers snapped photos of the exhibits with their cell phones and eagerly tried out the museum's iPads that guided them through the exhibits.

Back in the fall of 1957, Justus Mekiana wrote a former schoolteacher to inquire about some masks she was selling for him, ending with: "Gee, lots of caribou passing us from north toward south. Gee, thousands of them. I have no more to tell you, only caribou." Spring 2017: villagers still talk excitedly about the caribou migration, only now they share their comments with their hundreds of friends on Facebook.

Most Arctic research in New York today passes through the State University of New York's four university centers



*Caribou skin masks from Anaktuvuk Pass in Northern Alaska. Woman mask by Justice Mekiana, man mask by Joshua Rulland. (Image credit: Dr. Margaret Blackman)*

– Albany, Buffalo, Binghamton, and Stony Brook. SUNY researchers come from diverse disciplines – atmospheric sciences, health, geography, anthropology, geology, biological sciences, as well as marine and atmospheric sciences. From study of the prehistoric human reaction to climate change to the adaptation of Arctic communities to current climate change, from the study of the pre-indus-

trial Arctic atmosphere preserved in sea ice cores to the assessment of the impact of black carbon particles in today's Arctic atmosphere on global climate change, the State of New York continues to leave its mark on Arctic research, much as the Arctic has left its impact on those of us who conduct research there.

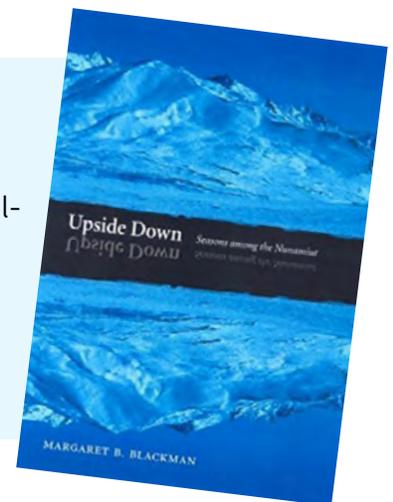


*Image credit: City Newspaper, Rochester, NY*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Margaret Blackman is the author of ***Upside Down: Seasons among the Nunamiut (2004)***, and is currently completing a collection of essays, "Faces of the Nunamiut," on Anaktuvuk Pass mask making.

Since 2013, she has been the mayor of Brockport, NY.



For more photos of the caribou skin masks made by the Nunamiut Eskimos of Anaktuvuk Pass, visit Dr. Blackman's "Our Arctic Nation" blog entry at: <https://medium.com/our-arctic-nation/unmasking-the-connections-between-new-york-and-the-arctic-98239d173d79#.fwjn3d1gv>

# MOVIES NOW & THEN:

## LA LA LAND

by Ann Fey, Professor of English (Emerita), Rockland Community College

**L**A LA LAND (2016), directed by Damien Chazelle, opens with a traffic jam on a Los Angeles freeway, visible for miles. Background music blasts as awkwardly-flailing millennials exit their singly-occupied stalled cars, some climbing and leaping to their hoods and roofs, where they assume one classic ballet pose after another, others running and dancing between lanes. A young blond girl hops, jumps and climbs to down-screen center to face the camera singing, the distracting mayhem in the background, rendering the lyrics somewhat incomprehensible. Song over. Sequence ended. We never see that blonde girl again. The fun scene changes.

The film goes on to present Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling as Mia and Sebastian ("Seb"), strangers who notice each other somewhat unfavorably from afar, later run into each other in a sort of chance encounter, then join in a friendship that becomes a glorious romantic, loving relationship. But further on, the story ultimately ends with situations, moods, and feelings that are not objectively bad, but are quite sad.

A viewer may understandably rate this film YES or MEH, or even FORGET ABOUT IT. But it must be admitted that director Chazelle has used effective classic romantic props: a sweet sentimental background theme song; a long, soft, swirly waltz scene up in the blue sky; hours of hand-holding stargazing; and lingering full-screen images of big faces with big eyes and lips. But he creates a new ending to the romance, which deserves a close look.

As the story goes on, the couple's

mutual commitment is gradually eroded by their intense individual life-wishes for personal fulfillment. They drift into their separate ways, and they part, each working to achieve individual excellence and make a mark in a noticeable public context. And they succeed.

Seb achieves his musical life-goal. After struggling through a job in the band of contemporary musical star John Legend, he gets to manage his own



classic jazz pub in an original classical jazz improv site downtown, where he eschews any modern variation, and any new music that may taint his atavistic obsession with the purity of the old improvisational style. He does it his way, heading towards reasonable success and acclaim.

Mia emerges as a movie-industry star: famous script writer and actress,

chauffeured around movie lots. She fares somewhat better than Seb financially, and socially. Having earlier avoided having a family in pursuit of her career, she comes at last to Seb's pub to see him. She is sporting a handsome husband of arm-candy charm, who speaks lovingly of their children. This is a moving scene: hyper-sentimental, thought-provoking.

So what if Ryan Gosling's hands on the piano keyboard look like a learner, which he is. So what if he dances like Rick Perry on DANCING WITH THE STARS. This is not an unrewarding movie to watch. In LA LA LAND, Director Chazelle has infused a schmaltzy romantic tale with an interesting theme on a contemporary societal trend: the rise of intense desire for public recognition and reward, and the decline of the individual's enduring commitment to another. The fame doesn't have to be achieved through innovation in Silicon Valley. MovieLand Los Angeles is close enough. Probably better.

Ultimately, LA LA LAND took home six Oscars, including for Best Actress (Emma Stone), Best Director (Damien Chazelle), and Best Original Score (Justin Hurwitz). However, the film lost out on Best Film to MOONLIGHT. As the on-stage crowded, confusing situation (correcting the award to MOONLIGHT) was kept on-camera, the Oscar Awards created for its 32.9 million viewers a scene that is better than any in LA LA LAND.



In his previous film, WHIPLASH (2014), Chazelle centers on Andrew Neiman (Miles Teller), a lonely bullied young man, a Buddy Rich wannabe who seeks relief from his ordinariness. Andrew fixates on setting the sheet music aside and becoming a great improvisational drummer. His mentor/conductor, played by J.K. Simmons (who won a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his performance), virtually and possibly unintentionally tortures him into achievement. The young man's ultimate success is in a frenzied, crashing, splashing improvised drum performance, the achievement of his aim of excellence, looking so painful and destructive.

WHIPLASH and LA LA LAND, although very different films, move towards a similar social theme, the latter one packaging it more appealingly. Both deserve a look.

## AS VIEWERS SEE IT

### Did you see LA LA LAND?

Tell us what you thought about it by completing a brief SurveyMonkey online poll at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9BG6VW9>

Results may be summarized and posted anonymously in the Fall/Winter 2017 MOVIES NOW AND THEN column.



## Survey on Services Offered to Retiring Employees & Retirees by SUNY Campuses

by Pierre Radimak, SUNY Retirees Newsletter Editor & SUNY Retirees Service Corps Coordinator

**W**hat services does each SUNY campus provide to its retirees and retiring employees? That's what the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC), publisher of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*, aims to find out through an online survey being emailed to human resources directors at all 64 SUNY campuses.

The objective of the study is two-fold: to help identify and publicize the ser-

vices (such as retirement workshops) and benefits (e.g., library privileges for retirees) already available to SUNY retirees and employees approaching retirement through their campus; and to allow administrators to see what low- and no-cost services/benefits other SUNY campuses are offering to enhance the retirement experience – and possibly adopt some of those options at their campus.

The aggregate results of the Survey-

Monkey survey will be distributed to all SUNY campuses once all responses have been received and analyzed. Those findings and the list of services and benefits provided to retiring and retired employees approaching retirement will also be broken down by individual campuses and posted on the SUNY RSC website ([www.suny.edu/retirees](http://www.suny.edu/retirees)) as well as be the subject of a story in the Fall/Winter 2017 issue of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*.



**Retirees Service Corps**  
*Connecting with Our Retirees Through Service*

# RETIREMENT: TIME TO DISRUPT AND TRANSFORM

by Caroline Kane, President, and Patrick Cullinane, Immediate Past President, Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education



**D**isrupt and transform were two words that carried the tone of the AROHE (Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education) 8th biennial conference at the University of Washington in Seattle. Plenary sessions on Transforming Retirement: The Big Picture – What’s Coming, and Why and Transforming Retirement Programs and Services challenged participants to confront the realities of aging higher education faculty and staff and the pathways for retirement planning, transitions, and next-chapter lives seriously needing infrastructure repair.

## MUCH MORE THAN BENEFIT ADVOCACY NEEDED

In our transformation efforts, Fernando Torres-Gil, UCLA Professor of Public Policy and former director of the US Administration on Aging, warned against retirees and retirement associations, including AROHE, becoming solely benefit advocacy groups. Society already believes that higher education faculty and staff have much better financial and other benefits than most citizens. Instead, Torres-Gil advised us to reassess and redefine the role of active and retired faculty and staff in ways that show value to the public, to society, and to governance.

## RETIREMENT LIAISON

Responding to this call-to-action, Carole Goldberg, Vice Chancellor of Academic Personnel (Emerita) at UCLA, addressed the need to rethink and transform retirement in academia. Colleges and universities are dealing with a large professoriate of baby boomers who are tenured, enjoy improved health and face no mandatory retirement. By rethinking faculty/staff retirement, universities can open positions to an increasingly diverse population of university graduates and upcoming Ph.D.s, while retaining the talent, contributions and institutional knowledge of longtime faculty and employees who wish to remain engaged. This experienced employee population can provide a resource for dealing with the problems that higher education and society face.

In order to rethink retirement, it is important to acknowledge reasons for the reluctance of many faculty to retire. They share concerns about loss of identity, finances, resources to continue their work, and a sense of finality. These reasons need to be addressed with a university-expanded role in retirement, reflecting, as Vice Chancellor Goldberg said, “a radical re-conception, a re-configuration of that relationship.” Higher education requires a new vision of the university’s role in retirement. This new role needs

to focus on educating faculty/staff about the potential value of retirement, providing real incentives for retirement (both before and after), providing recognition for the contributions of emeriti and retirees, and creating real opportunities for faculty/staff to continue contributing to the university and society at-large.

To this end, UCLA recently created a Faculty Retirement Liaison position. This person advises, advocates and helps faculty plan for, structure and negotiate pre- and post-retirement arrangements with their departments. The initiative serves as a model in creating individual paths for retirement and includes workshops for faculty on planning for retirement while still maintaining active engagement during emeriti status.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATION ACCESS

Other conference sessions continued to focus on the conference theme of Transforming Retirement: Rewriting Life’s Next Chapter. Roger Baldwin from Michigan State University presented his research findings in Under the Microscope: Investigating the Benefits and Impact of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education. His and other conference presentations can be accessed on the AROHE website at <http://www.arohe.org/2016-Conference-Review>.

## AROHE FUTURE GOALS

Goals for AROHE's future were also presented at the conference:

- 1 Expand active and frequent communication among members, the public, and leaders in higher education through a variety of media. Communication provides AROHE visibility and an advocacy voice. Better communication also provides platforms that showcase contributions of retired faculty and staff in their communities.
- 2 Establish broader connections with regional, national and international organizations that also focus on an aging, retiring population. From AARP and ENCORE through professional organizations, AROHE's interaction shares best practices and helps AROHE members learn other information that contributes to positive retirement in higher education.
- 3 Increase membership nationally and internationally. Greater membership not only increases the voice of AROHE but also engages more institutions that may gain insights for their own retiree populations. Broader engagement helps transform retirement conversations.
- 4 Develop a sustainable funding strategy. While AROHE is an all-volunteer organization, our effectiveness would increase with a small cadre of paid, professional staff focused on each of our goals, helping members collaborate on issues of higher education retirement. Over the next 12-18 months, Board Members will explore income streams enabling staff recruitment even as these Board Members use their own diverse talents to work actively on AROHE's goals.

## COME JOIN US IN TRANSFORMING RETIREMENT

AROHE provides a variety of services to its members and member organizations, including members who are forming new retiree organizations or developing new programs for retired faculty and staff. Membership benefits include: links to useful resources, descriptions of successful practices, results of surveys, profiles of AROHE members, and a new mentoring program which pairs new or less-experienced members with more-experienced members for one-on-one consultation.

Learn more at <http://arohe.org>. You may also contact AROHE directly by emailing [info@arohe.org](mailto:info@arohe.org) or calling (213) 740-5037.

## On the Run

by Bill Powers, Professor of Sociology (Emeritus), Suffolk County Community College



### Editor's Note:

*This article first appeared in the September/October 2016 issue of the NYSUT Retiree Council 39 Newsletter.*

There, virtually exploding off the page, was a muscular man who had just kicked sand in the face of a "97-pound weakling." The pathetic victim's lady-friend, sneering at her puny companion, walked off with the muscle-bound guy.

I was that "97-pound weakling." I could have posed for that ad, only I had thick glasses as well as protruding ribs and scrawny arms and legs. My heart went out to the "weakling," as I quickly turned the page lest one of my friends see what I was looking at and make some cruel comment.

The ad, of course, was for Charles Atlas' body-building course. In the scenario presented in the magazines, the skinny guy goes home, takes the course, and returns to the beach to beat up the muscular guy and reclaim his girlfriend. Wow! What a wonderful outcome.

Only it didn't happen that way with me. Not for another 30 years anyway.

I continued on my nerdy way, fearful of asking girls out, self-conscious in a bathing suit, the last guy completing routines in gym class. Wheaties, "Breakfast of Champions," was a fraud.

**A**s a child and young man I was haunted – taunted – by an advertisement that seemed to be in every comic book and magazine I read.

## On the Run, continued from page 13



Then, when I was in my forties, I joined the increasing army of people who responded to President John F. Kenne-

dy's physical fitness challenge and began "jogging," or as we harriers prefer, "running." Jogging sounds so leisurely. Now running, that's he-man stuff! Let's see that muscle-bound Charles Atlas beat me in a 5K race.

Eventually, I also joined a gym, once again following a growing trend. One thing 97-pound weaklings learn is: never be a leader. It's much safer following the crowd.

At first, the exercise machines were intimidating. And there was that muscle-bound guy again; this time, he was casually adding 50-pound weights to the bar bells and "bricks" to the various machines. Then, oh my God! He walked over to where I was struggling with an arm curl machine. I started to sweat. He looked at the light weights with which I was stressing my sorry excuses for muscles. He shook his head. But this time, instead of kicking sand in my face or even sneering, he said in a kindly voice, "Way to go! Your form is good." I could have kissed his tattoo.

It's odd. When we're young, we want to speed things up so that we become "grown-ups." Then, after a certain age, most people want to slow down the process. Please, I can't be 50, 60, 70, 80.... Believe it or not, I didn't feel that way.

Typically, road race results are tallied in terms of five-year age categories. So, when you are 49, you are competing against those hot shot 45-year-olds. Then, when the magic day arrives when

you can write "50" as your age on the race application, you become the "youngster," the "kid," in your age group.

Also, there is attrition. Look at race results and you find that the number of participants decreases progressively after age 50. So, there I was, climbing the chronological ladder – 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80.... There are so few older participants in most races that the oldest age category is 70+; at times, it's even 60+. I have resigned myself to not being able to compete with youngsters in their 60s. Now my goal is to be the oldest in the race. Frequently, it happens. In such cases, I declare myself the winner.

Now, I can't brag too much. I've got to be humble.... There are octogenarians running marathons. The most I've ever run was a 10K. Oh yes, I did once run an eight-mile race between El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico. We went across the international bridge and back. I joke that 1,200 of us ran across to Mexico, but that, miraculously, 1,500 of us ran back to El Paso. No one was checking citizenship status. (Don't tell Donald Trump about this.)

On another occasion, in Aspen, Colorado, I ran what was called the "Ducky 5K." The course for us humans was on a path along a river in which hundreds of yellow plastic ducks were bobbing their way down stream to the finish line. Real kooky. Each duck had a runner's number. You could win, either by yourself or by your duck finishing first. My duck sunk half way down, and I almost passed out in the high altitude.

Many races have been on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. I like running with all the students. My goal used to be to beat some of the overweight coeds who were braving the course. Now, those hefty gals pass me and say, "Way to go, Pop!"

My routine for many years has been to alternate running days and gym days. But even in the gym I run a mile or two on a treadmill. My goal used to be to run a mile in less than nine minutes. A point was reached when the goal became 10... then 11...now 12. It's humbling. The other day as I dragged my sweat-soaked body from the treadmill, this dear old lady looked at me with admiration and said, "My, how fast you can run. I hope you don't overdo it." I smiled modestly. Actually, she's 88 and pretty good herself with those six-pound barbells.



*Bill Powers crossing the finish line of a 4-mile race in Carrboro, NC on July 4, 2016. He placed second in the 75-plus age group. "A young 77-year-old beat me," Powers said, "I was only 2 weeks shy of 82." He completed his race in 44 minutes and 22 seconds, the 497th of 675 finishers.*

On my bathroom wall is a picture of yours truly streaking along (!) in the "Run for the Roses" in Raleigh, North Carolina, seventeen years ago. I'm wearing "Carolina" running shorts and a sweat shirt; it must have been a cool day. I look at that picture and then in the mirror at myself today. Hmm...

Folks say that running will ruin my knees. I say, "When?" I'm 82 and have not had any joint issues. My daughter, also a runner and plagued with knee and hip problems, insists that the reason is that I didn't start running until middle age; I didn't damage still-maturing muscles and joints. Perhaps she's right. However, I attribute it to the fact that I don't overdo it. I shudder at the very thought of running a marathon. Or perhaps it's genes. My parents were great walkers and never mentioned any aches or pains. Then again, they were raised not to complain. There's a lesson there.

At the rate of 20-plus competitive runs per year, I've run in well over 500 races. I don't think Charles Atlas could match that. By the way, the famous strong man was born Angelo Siciliano in Italy in 1892. He came with his family to Brooklyn, New York, at age 13 and changed his name to Charles because it sounded more American. As he became more muscular, someone said he looked like the Greek god Atlas; hence, his last name. Charles Atlas died at age 80 after his daily jog along the beach, leaving behind a son, Hercules, and a daughter, Diana. A family of gods and goddesses.

Of course, none of us are gods – indestructible. We are frail, limited, destined to stop running sooner or later. Might I be jinxing myself writing in such glowing terms about the lengthy road I've been pursuing? Indeed, by the time you read this my running days may have ended. Knowing smiles may say: *So much for that guy's bragging.*

## MAKING PARENTS PROUD A Degree or a Wedding Ring

by Sivia Kaye, Professor of English (Emerita), Nassau Community College



### BROOKLYN COLLEGE GRADUATION June 1956

It was a big day for me, although not for my parents.

They were saddened that I did not have a ring on my left hand. To graduate from college without having ensured a commitment from a prospective life-time partner was tantamount to being a failure in their eyes.

I was not yet 21, but the mores then were such that college was the place to ensure your marital status with a compatible partner. And since I had failed in this respect, the day was diminished for them.

I was graduating Cum Laude from Brooklyn College and was thrilled with the academic honor I had earned. The 3,000 or so graduates were to remain in their seats while their BA degree was conferred; they would be asked to move their tassels from one side to the other, signaling the granting of the degree. Only the Cum Laude graduates were called up on the stage to shake hands with the president and receive their diploma.

The year was 1956 and the dress style was tight-fitted waists with large circular hoop skirts. (No young woman wore pants at that time. NOT one.) The skirts would stand out from the waist by means of crinolines; the more expensive ones came with wire hoops, all the better to have the skirts stand far away from the body.

For this special day, I bought an

expensive crinoline with wire hoops. The dress was navy, simple, and elegant. I arrived on the Bedford Ave. campus early so that my parents could get a prime seat near the stage. Along with the other graduates, I went to the designated area, donned my robe and cap with the tassel on the right, and was ushered into one of the front rows reserved for the Cum Laude graduates.

The requisite speeches were given, and then the honor graduates were called by name to come up on the stage to receive their degree. All was going as planned.

"Sivia Karansky," said the Assistant to the President. I rose, smiled broadly, and climbed the few steps to the raised stage. As I was crossing the platform to shake the president's hand, I could feel something odd between my shoes. The waistline snap securing the crinoline somehow disengaged, and the crinoline had fallen to the floor. But I couldn't step out of it because the hoops held it about two feet from the floor. And I couldn't walk across the stage unless I walked with the hoops encircling my legs like a tire.

I stood, panicked. Motionless. Embarrassed. There were thousands of people in the audience. Were there ubiquitous cell phones then, I'm sure this would have made FACEBOOK, page 1. After what seemed a lifetime, some dignitary sitting on the platform, preparing to give his address to the graduates, got up and helped me out of the crinoline. To accomplish this maneuver, I had to stand on one leg at a time, and raise it in an ungainly manner. Because balance was an issue, this took several minutes, but it seemed like a lifetime.

## *Making Parents Proud, continued from page 15*

When I finally stepped free of the wired hoops, everyone applauded! Someone rushed on stage (I don't know from where) and removed the hoops. I continued across to the president, who put the diploma in my left hand, and grasped my right hand with a firm handshake. A huge applause welled up from the attendees. (This, despite the audience being told to save their applause until the entire round of graduates had received their diplomas.) They clearly sympathized with my embarrassment.

I returned to my seat, and thought that although I had not intended to garner this special recognition, it was mine nonetheless.

The incident was the talk of Brooklyn College graduates for weeks afterwards. I had unwittingly earned my day in the sun, although my left hand's fourth finger was still ring-less.

It was an incident I could relate to my children; it never failed to bring incredulous smiles to their faces.

Probably more astounding to them than the crinoline incident was the attitude of their grandparents toward a needed commitment — during one's college years — for a life partner.

In the 1950s, women were seen as reflections of their husbands: their status was a mirror of their husband's place in the world. To marry a doctor was the highest goal. Other professions might be suitable, but none ranked as high as a doctor. None were even close.

One of the most significant changes in the world today, as I see it, is the ability of women to see themselves as equals to men. They can choose their careers, even aim for president.

A good marriage will still bring them personal fulfillment, but it is not the needed core of a successful life.

# RETIREMENT STORY

## Lee Ann Grace

Assistant Dean for International and Exchange Programs,  
and Associate Professor of Modern and Classical Languages  
(Spanish) (Emerita), Buffalo State College



**Editor's Note:** *Lee Ann's story is the second of two examples of submissions received in response to Dr. Ram Chugh's **Lessons from Retirement Experiences Survey**. It will become part of Ram's upcoming report, **The Power of SUNY Retirees: Lessons from 100 Retirement Experiences**. Additional stories will be featured in future issues of the **SUNY Retirees Newsletter**.*

**P**art of my retirement plan was to teach a course each fall, which I continue to do. This allows me to spend January doing volunteer work on the Mexico-Arizona border, something I had been able to manage only every other year for short periods in the summer (January is DEFINITELY better!). I then spend February and March with family in North Carolina. This much has indeed evolved as anticipated.

I am a dramatic soprano and, when I was working, I managed to perform in local opera productions from time to time. I also served on committees, boards, and guilds of opera companies in the area. So I saw retirement as an opportunity to follow my passion for opera, and little more than a month after my last day of work, I started rehearsals for Gounod's "Faust" with Buffalo Opera Unlimited. A few months later, they asked me to join their board. After several more months, the board president resigned due to ill health, and I was invited to fill that role.

So chairing an opera company with no paid staff has become my new full-time (but unpaid) job. To this post I bring skills developed in more than 30 years in administrative roles in SUNY: strategic planning, grant writing, audience development, and marketing. Even my faculty skills are called into play in educational outreach activities.

It is sometimes hectic and frustrating, but seeing the eyes of children raptly engaged in their first opera makes every moment worth it, though I must confess that I would rather be singing. So my goal is to create an infrastructure for the company that demands less of my attention and indeed get back into the cast; in the meantime, I made a non-singing appearance as the intrusive nun in the 2016 world premiere of the jazz opera "The Fall of Stag Lee" by native Buffalonian Darryl Glenn Nettles.

I do have other outlets for singing — church, concerts presented twice a year



Lee Ann Grace as The Intrusive Nun

by a local opera foundation, and opera education. My current educational outreach includes costumed interpretation of the Countess Almaviva, a character in both “The Barber of Seville” and “The Marriage of Figaro,” as well as Gretel from Engelbert Humperdinck’s\* operatic interpretation of the beloved fairy tale “Hansel and Gretel.”

## ADVICE TO CURRENT SUNY EMPLOYEES WHO ARE PLANNING TO RETIRE:

Take your time to decide what you want to do in retirement. What are your passions? What things couldn’t you do (or do enough of) while working?

Work with a good financial adviser so that you feel financially secure.

If you loved teaching, teach part-time. If you loved working with students (not teaching), volunteer on campus or in local schools.

Know when to say “no”!

\*Engelbert Humperdinck, the 19th-century German composer, not the 20th-century pop singer.



## LOVE: BEFORE & AFTER

by Hedi McKinley, LCSW, Professor Emerita, University at Albany

**Editor’s Note:** Hedi, at 97, is a practicing clinical social worker who writes on mental health and other issues.

### BEFORE

- 1 I love the way he takes charge of things.
- 2 She’s so popular; everybody loves her.
- 3 I love the way she consults me about everything.
- 4 He’s a real man. He keeps his own counsel.
- 5 I love the way she’s happy one minute, sad another – a real human being.
- 6 He comes from a very large family. I know he’ll make a wonderful father.
- 7 She’s so perky, she’s so cute. I love the way she gets excited by everything,
- 8 I really never had a caring family. I love the way his mom took me into hers.
- 9 I like it that he doesn’t want to be a fashion plate like some of his colleagues.
- 10 He loves to make love anytime, anywhere.

### AFTER

- 1 He’s the bossiest person I’ve ever known.
- 2 That woman must own the phone company. She’s never off it.
- 3 What is it now, for heaven’s sake?
- 4 Can’t you ever tell me how you’re feeling about anything?
- 5 Doctor, I know she has PMS. Fix her up, will ya?
- 6 Another baby? Are you kidding? He doesn’t even know the names of the ones we’ve got!
- 7 For heaven’s sake, can’t you stop chattering for one moment?
- 8 Christmas dinner at your folks? We were there Thanksgiving, Easter, Veterans Day, and Labor Day. Do they own us or what?
- 9 Will you change your shirt, for crying out loud? It’s been a week!
- 10 Honey, it’s 11:30. What time did you say the game was over?

# NEW YORK STATE'S HISTORIC SITES

## Sagamore Hill: Home to Theodore Roosevelt (TR)

Cecil A. Spring Rice (Author of "I Vow to Thee, My Country") and TR Served Crucial Roles during World War I

by Daniel Scott Marrone, Ph.D., SUNY Distinguished Service Professor (Emeritus), Farmingdale State College



**Editor's Note:** Dr. Marrone's books – *New York Heroes: Herkimer, Lincoln, TR, & La Guardia*; and *Theodore Roosevelt/Spring Rice in WWI, Joshua Barney, Dolley Madison, Elizabeth Monroe, & USN "Airdales"* – are available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

**S**agamore Hill in Oyster Bay, Long Island, served as the home of Theodore Roosevelt (TR) for the last four decades of his event-filled life. Administered by the U.S. National Park Service, the Sagamore Hill National Historic Site includes TR's red and gray-colored Victorian-styled home. On 10 July 2015, TR's home was officially re-opened after a \$3.5 million restoration. The National Park Service website (<http://www.nps.gov/sahi/index.htm>) can assist you in planning your visit with [basic information](#), [directions and transportation](#), [things to do](#), an [event calendar](#), and more.

TR authored 35 books and wrote hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles. In counting his speeches, a precise number is impossible to determine; but it is not an exaggeration to use a four-figure estimate. During his final years, the former U.S. president advocated for America's intervention in the fight against Kaiser Wilhelm's heartless land quest across Europe.

TR's actions paralleled those of his close friend, Sir Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, British Ambassador to the U.S. (1913-1918). Arguably one of the most effective ambassadors in world history, Spring Rice was also an extraordinary poet. Less than a month before his death in early 1918, Spring Rice composed "I Vow to Thee, My Country," which was set to music by British composer Gustav Holst in 1921. The result is a patriotic masterpiece that has become a British Commonwealth of Nations an-

them, second in importance only to "God Save the King/Queen."

### THE NEW YORKER AND THE LONDONER

The 32-year friendship between TR and Spring Rice began when, by chance, they were passengers on the same ocean liner sailing to England in November 1886. TR was traveling to London to be married to fiancée Edith Kermit Carow. Spring Rice was sailing home to England after visiting his brother, Gerald, who, at the time, was living in western Canada. By the time their ship docked in England, TR had convinced "Springy" (TR's nickname for his new friend) to serve as "best man" at his wedding that took place in St. George's Church, London, on 2 December 1886.



*The newly-restored Sagamore Hill National Historic Site in Oyster Bay, Long Island, home to Theodore Roosevelt for the last four decades of his storied life.*

Their friendship mirrored the growing kinship between the U.K. and the U.S.A. The Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 severed the bonds between Americans and Britons. However, this changed with the Spanish-American War (1898). During this conflict, Great Britain diplomatically and militarily assisted

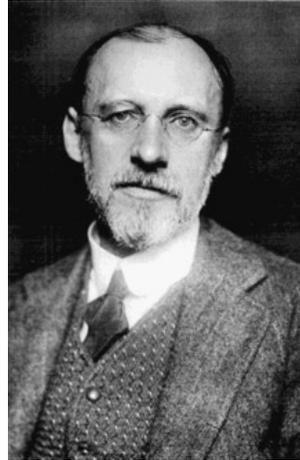
the U.S.A. Thus began the mutually beneficial “Great Rap-prochement” that Winston Churchill later labeled as the “Special Relationship” between these two English-speaking nations.

TR and Spring Rice were outspoken advocates for U.S. involvement in World War I – aiding the *Triple Entente* Allies fighting the Germany-led Central Powers. The brash, energetic New Yorker and the urbane Londoner made countless speeches and wrote dozens of newspaper and magazine articles addressing the brutality of the Prussian King, Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Kaiser (“German Caesar”) proudly called his storm troopers “Aryan Huns.” These marauders first invaded Belgium and killed thousands of its civilians. The “Huns” next invaded and occupied northwestern France. During the first 33 months of World War I (WWI), President Thomas Woodrow Wilson adhered to a policy of strict U.S.A. neutrality. However, this did not stop the German Imperial Navy from sinking dozens of U.S.A.-flagged ships and killing hundreds of American civilian passengers and crewmen.

During the dreadful years of the First World War, the two friends faced the loss of loved ones in battle. Spring Rice’s brother, Gerald, was killed on the “Western Front” in France in 1916. TR’s youngest child, U.S. Army Air Corps Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt, was killed in an aerial “dogfight” over German-held France in July 1918. (In his honor, the Nassau County aerodrome where he learned to fly was renamed “Quentin Roosevelt Airfield.” Today, the largest shopping mall in New York State is located at the site and is named “Roosevelt Field.”) Added to these tragedies was rapidly declining health for both Spring Rice and TR. The London-born British diplomat died on 14 February 1918, just over eight months before the signing of the WWI Armistice on 11 November 1918. The New York-born former president died eight weeks later on 6 January 1919.

## OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR I

One can endlessly speculate on what caused WWI. However, the unquenchable territorial ambitions of Austria-Hungary and Germany were undoubtedly at the center of this massive conflict. Beginning in 1912, the major European powers were increasingly mobilizing for war. By 1914, all that was needed to set the continent ablaze was an incendiary incident. Such an event occurred on 28 June 1914. On that day, a Serbian nationalist assassinated Hapsburg heir Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, while they drove through the streets of Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina—a region within the Hapsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Hapsburg rulers then felt justified in conquering neighboring Serbia and rendering this small nation into a compliant territory within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Serbia’s ally, the Russians, responded



*Sir Cecil Spring Rice while serving as British Ambassador to the U.S., 1913-1918.*



*Theodore Roosevelt delivering an always entertaining, ferociously gestured speech.*

by declaring war on the Austrian-Hungarians. By treaty, France was obligated to defend its ally, Russia. Great Britain was allied to France and as a consequence was thrust into the war. This deadly conflict spread to other continents and has been deemed “The Great War.” Alas, the conflict was also incorrectly labeled as “The War to End All Wars.”

## GERMAN ATROCITIES CAUSE THE U.S.A. TO JOIN THE WWI ALLIES

On 7 May 1915, the British passenger ship *RMS Lusitania* was torpedoed without warning. The ocean liner sank in 18 minutes and resulted in the deaths of 1,198 passengers and crew – 128 of which were Americans. President Wilson voiced complaints to German emissaries stationed in Washington, D.C. Nevertheless, the American president steadfastly held to strict U.S. neutrality. Wilson’s isolationist supporters repeatedly espoused the mantra: “He kept us out of war!” In early 1917, German U-boats torpedoed, in rapid succession, three American-flagged merchant ships. Wilson again voiced a strong complaint for these German atrocities. Yet, he held to U.S. neutrality. However, he could not ignore the intent of the Zimmermann telegram to the Mexican government. In this communiqué, the Germans proposed a scheme whereby Mexico would attack the U.S. In return, Germany would force the U.S. to cede territory to Mexico. With this existential threat to America, Wilson had no option other than to submit a “Declaration of War against Germany” to the U.S. Congress. On April 6, 1917, Wilson’s war declaration was approved. (A more comprehensive and detailed description of World War I and the friendship between TR and Spring Rice is contained in my book: *Theodore Roosevelt/Spring Rice in WWI*, Joshua Barney, Dolley Madison, Elizabeth Monroe, & USN “Airdales”).

## *New York State's Historic Sites, continued from page 19*

### SIR SPRING RICE'S "I VOW TO THEE, MY COUNTRY"

This essay concludes with Spring Rice's majestic poem, "I Vow to Thee, My Country." In 1921, British musician Gustav Holst set the poem to music he previously composed for "The Planets – Jupiter." The combination of Spring Rice's words and Holst's music is a patriotic hymn that has attained the status of a Commonwealth of Nations anthem. In patriotic ceremonies, comparable to those held on "Memorial Day" in the U.S.A., the people of the vast British Commonwealth commemorate "Remembrance Day." At such events, all stand to sing "God Save the King/Queen" typically followed by "I Vow to Thee, My Country." Here are Sir Spring Rice's poignant words:

*"I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,  
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love;  
The love that asks no question, the love that stands the test,  
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;  
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,  
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.*

*And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,  
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know.  
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King,  
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering.  
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,  
And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace."*

## Being "At Home" in Libraries – Then and Now

by Sharon F. Cramer, Ph.D.



**Editor's Note:** Sharon Cramer, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Emerita, calls "home" Buffalo State's E. H. Butler Library, the Elmer C. Bobst Library at New York University, and the Julia B. Rein-stein Library in Cheektowaga, NY. Sharon would like to thank James A. Marotto, Major Gift Officer, Office of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement, University at Buffalo, for his assistance with this article.

**B**y 7th grade, I was a library junkie. Bicycling from junior high to the Glencoe Public Library, I sought the wood-paneled reading room; it be-

came my roost. That room, with comfortable chairs and a fireplace, remains my archetype of the perfect space for reading and thinking. In addition to feeling at home, I got to know people from different centuries via biographies and autobiographies, and befriended many fictional characters, such as Betsy, Tacy and Tib (by Maud Hart Lovelace and Lois Lenski, 1941). Those girls welcomed me into what life was like in the decade of my birth. Long before Harry Potter, I was a book addict.

Miss Jacobs, the children's room librarian, observed my daily library visits and offered me my very first job, shelving

books. Those of us who got our first jobs at pre-technology libraries were thrilled when afforded the honor of getting to use the pencil date stamp (one end a pencil, the other end a daily-changed stamp that showed when a book was due). On special occasions, when the page for stamping due dates was full, we got to replace the page with a pristine one, and enter the first stamp. Pride and care were lessons learned as library workers, as well as peeks at the complexities of keeping a library going. Re-shelving volumes of the encyclopedias – the “Google” of our youth – invited us to imagine worlds distant in time and space.

Since those days at the Glencoe Library, I have felt at home at libraries wherever I’ve gone – ancient, modern, academic, public, noisy, and silent. I’ve been comforted by the presence of books, resource materials, and the norms of libraries throughout my life.

I suspect that many academics reading this article have their own favorite library memories, and could provide details of their favorite library retreats, where they have gone to study, write or recharge. Whether it be the Library of Congress, or the library at the British Museum, SUNY faculty and staff members can navigate libraries.

Things change: now, we often go to libraries to gain access to the internet, or to escape in different ways. A decade ago, I spent a month in my hometown to assist my father, and returning to the library was a respite that took me back in time. My husband (a retired academic library director and 50-year member of the American Library Association) took advantage of the free Wi-Fi. While he emailed, I was drawn to books on the “featured books” shelf, specifically *The Kennedys at War (1937-1945)* by Edward Renehan (2002). I slipped into Joseph Kennedy’s years as an ambassador to England, savoring the many photographs of the Kennedy family. Being back in

my favorite library gave me a way to be home and to time travel.

My thirst for libraries has taken me to libraries near and far. One frigid Friday in January, I went to the John F. Kennedy Museum and Library on the waterfront in Boston. The library had recently categorized the materials from the original Peace Corps volunteers who went to



Ghana, so I spoke with a librarian to ask about the Ghana-One Peace Corps group (because my seventh-grade homeroom advisor was a member). I was awed by the scope of the library’s collection and its inspiring location, overlooking the active water. Pursuing a research goal at the Kennedy Library, realizing that there was a part of my life that overlapped with JFK’s, was a unique library experience.

Over our lifetimes, libraries have been transformed. The fireplace in the library of my youth remains, but what was once the children’s room is now a computer room, in the wireless library. As the library world changed, I have watched, adjusted. Not so long ago, research in libraries involved taking notes on index cards, after finding relevant books or journal articles by searching them out

on stacks within the library’s collection. Now, that approach is as outdated as is film for taking photographs or making movies.

Then as now, not everything is accessible within one’s own library. Interlibrary loan, the once and future life-line for scholars, used to be entirely on paper. Looking at the cover sheet stapled to the pages of each fulfilled interlibrary loan request showed the locations of assisting libraries – across town, the country, or abroad. Now, almost all interlibrary loans are electronic and anonymous. Like the gold spun overnight by Rumpelstiltskin, responses to virtual requests usually appear the next day in email inboxes, provided by anonymous hands. The process used at the University at Buffalo is radically different from searching out an article in the stacks, as shown via the video available at this link: <http://library.buffalo.edu/annex>.

If you wish to seek out an article, book chapter, or book that is not available at your local academic or public library, you can make a request. At each library, there is usually a designated interlibrary loan librarian who can provide guidance on how to make requests – usually electronic options which can be made within the library or from home.

The ultimate contrast between the past and the present/future of libraries was demonstrated at the 2016 reopening of the Oscar A. Silverman Library at the University at Buffalo. Silverman is a multi-floor library that has been used by generations of students; its new incarnation illustrates the dramatic evolution of libraries. 500,000 volumes were relocated, creating a 45,000-square foot bookless space to inspire scholarly pursuits. Students have access 24/7 to work in areas that are removed from non-technological distractions, with 1,000+ electrical outlets for students’ devices. UB has seven other “traditional” libraries, containing books, journals and

## *Being “At Home” in Libraries, continued from page 21*

other items (such as musical scores and maps), but within Silverman, students are book-free. They can work and study within a library that inspires, absorbing the beauty of design all around them. In the light-filled spaces, students can easily mentally transport to alternate places, but they must initiate their own actual treks to grasp printed words.

As UB President Satish K. Tripathi explained at the Silverman Library’s rededication when he shared his own library memories, what once happened by turning pages is now accomplished by clicks on a keyboard. The library of today is welcoming new intersections between the mind and ideas of the past, via the fingers.

Dr. Oscar A. Silverman’s dedication to libraries and influence on UB’s collections can be witnessed to this day. Beginning in 1926, and continuing for nearly 50 years, his service included roles as faculty member, department chair, and library director. Because of his initiatives, the University Libraries’ Special Collections includes works by Robert Graves and James Joyce. Dr. Silverman’s enthusiasm for scholarship led to stunning acquisitions for the library – growing the collection from 350,000 to over 1 million



*University at Buffalo’s Oscar A. Silverman Library (Photo credit: Doug Levere)*

volumes during the eight years he served as director.

Inevitably, one wonders what he would think of the space bearing his name now being book-free. How would he adjust to an environment that facilitates learning not through paper but through electronic questing? As a visionary, his imagination might delight at the thought of students deftly making technology their servants, conjuring their newest resources. This library opens doors that Dr. Silverman

never could have predicted. Hopefully, this new space in the library that bears his name will make love of libraries contagious, and instill in students the belief that libraries – of all kinds – can forever be their homes.

For me, the library remains the home base for my intellectual journeys, and some of my fundamental beliefs.

## WISDOM I LEARNED FROM LIBRARIES:

- Keep on looking – you never know what you will discover.
- Take time to imagine, to learn, to breathe in the air of other times.
- Learn how others have lived, worked and loved, and make use of their experiences.
- Remember to be kind to others, because the person shelving books today might write a book you will read in a transformed library of the future.

# RETIREMENT STORY

## Richard David Hamell

### Associate Professor Emeritus of Geology, Monroe Community College



**M**y decision to retire from Monroe Community College after a career of 39 years with the Department of Geosciences did not close the door on opportunities to continue to teach. Rather than instructing college students on topics of geology and paleontology, I turned my attention to presenting programs on these and other meaningful subjects to local libraries, elementary school children, museum visitors, as well as nature, cultural and historic centers in New York State

This particular subject of personal interest concerns the history and reproduction of wampum belts originally created by the First Nation, particularly the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois). This interest has its base in the period of my youth working on farms where I would find stone artifacts as well as wampum and glass trade beads from the 17th century.

In my early adulthood, I participated in archaeological excavations with the Rochester Museum of Science. Through this association, I came to know a respected authority (Charles F. Wray) on

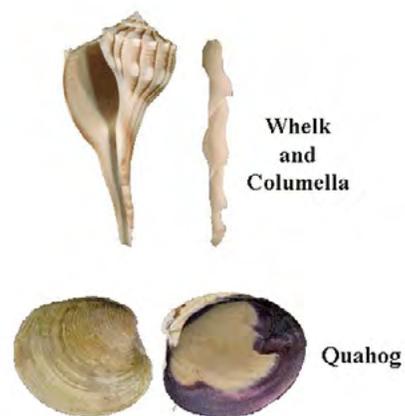
the history of the indigenous people of New York State. Inspired by his mentorship and his teachings, I chose to acquire formal training in geology and archaeology by entering college in 1969. My pursuit began with enrollment in Monroe Community College (MCC), where I received an AAS degree with a concentration in Geology (1971); followed by a BS degree in Geology from SUNY Brockport in 1973. After seven years enrolled as a part-time graduate student at the University of Rochester, I was awarded a Master's degree in Geology (1982).

My academic career began with employment with MCC during my freshman year (1969) when I was hired as a geo-technician. This position carried over to part-time employment while doing my undergraduate degree at Brockport and into full-time in 1974, along with a position as an adjunct geology instructor. By the turn of the 21st century, I joined the Geosciences Department as a full-time faculty member. In the spring of 2008, after 39 years of employment at MCC, I retired to pursue my interest in the history and creation of reproduction wampum belts.

The term wampum is a Narragansett word meaning shiny white shell. The indigenous peoples viewed wampum as possessing spiritual significance. It was the northeastern colonies, including the Dutch, French and British, who used it as a 'currency' along with trade goods to acquire furs from the First Nations

The original white shell wampum was derived from the inner core (columella) of the whelk shells found along the northeastern Atlantic Coast. Beads of

purple wampum were extracted from the outer edge of the quahog (clam). The cut sections of the columella and clam shell were drilled and polished into short cylindrical beads. The wampum beads were then woven on a warp of leather or natural fiber on a loom.



Whelk  
and  
Columella

Quahog

The finished belt design was of varying lengths combining white and purple beads or as a monochrome belt. These patterns incorporated either a single image, such as a pipe, or multiple geometric figures or symbols for the purpose of recording the words spoken at events such as a treaty, a condolence ceremony or, perhaps, a declaration of war. The messages conveyed on these belt-like shell documents were honored as legal documents or laws imbued with spiritual significance.

One such belt involved the formation of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. This belt, known as the Hiawatha Belt, consolidated the original five nations: the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk.

Another important treaty belt was

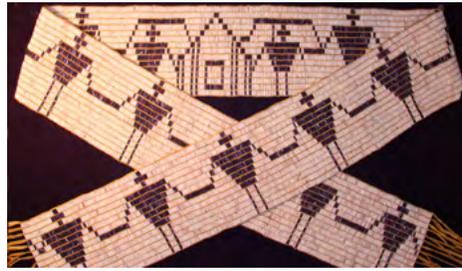
## Retirement Story: Richard David Hamell, continued from page 23



*Hiawatha Belt reproduction*

created for what was to be the Canandaigua Treaty of 1794 to signify an agreement of peaceful coexistence between the thirteen states and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy which would include, by this time, the Tuscarora. The six-foot belt's design of approximately 10,000 beads displays thirteen human figures representing the thirteen states. In the center of these figures is the Haudenosaunee Longhouse. Flanking the ends of the Longhouse are the Keepers of the Western (Seneca) and Eastern (Mohawk) doors. The Canandaigua Treaty is the longest-standing treaty between the Six Nations and the United States and is renewed in a ceremony every year held on November 11th in Canandaigua, NY.

I began making reproduction wampum belts with acrylic clay wampum beads in 2000 starting with the Hiawatha belt. Through considerable research and the vital assistance from authorities, I have completed 115 reproduction wampum belts, probably the largest collection of its kind. This collection is available for the use by the Native American communities in their programs across the United States and abroad. To share this knowledge I created the website, <http://wampumbear.com/>. Photographs of my wampum belts have appeared in several publications: *Iroquois: People of the Longhouse*; *Journal of Ethnohistory*; *Strong*



*1794 Canandaigua Treaty Belt reproduction*

*Stories – Two-Row Wampum*; and other educational material.

Yearly, I exhibited the belts at Haudenosaunee events, historic sites, museums, cultural centers and schools, and for community programs. Along with the display of belts and their history, I perform demonstrations of the methods

used to create shell beads and the wampum belt loom.

When I am not at the loom creating a new belt, I serve as a docent at the Seneca Art and Cultural Center at Ganondagan and as a member of the board. Also, I am an active participant in Ganondagan's White Corn Project.

Retirement makes it possible to volunteer as groundskeeper at our local cemetery. My retirement agenda also includes a weekly golf outing with colleagues and a monthly luncheon known as the R.O.M.E.O.s (Retired Old Men Eating Out).

Retiring and leaving one's place of



*Fort Niagara 250th Anniversary August 1, 2011 (L-R) Belinda Patterson, Rick Hill, Ontario Lt. Gov. David C. Onley, Alan Cordiere, Richard D. Hamell. Photo by Luis Robert Lee.*

employment opens many doors of opportunity to continue learning and to pursue lifelong interests. I am grateful to be able to contribute what I have learned as I believe the greatest gift we can give is to share new learning experiences with others.

Special events to which I have been invited include: Fort Niagara Reenactments (see photo above), Canandaigua Treaty Day, the 2015 World Indoor Lacrosse Championship (hosted by the

# RETIREE EVENT PHOTO SPOTLIGHT

## SUNY Delhi Annual Retired Secretaries Luncheon



SUNY Delhi held its annual retired secretaries luncheon on October 20, 2016 in Alumni Hall.

**Seated:** Dianne Guichard, Peg Haley, Esther Hall (celebrating her 94th birthday), Lucille Frisbee, and Celia Soden;

**Standing:** Dianna VerNooy, Martha Delello, Lucy Wood, Kathy Woodin, Kathy Decker, Loretta Laing, Emily Harmer, Joan Townsend, and Linda Harrington.

**Absent from photo:** Colleen Shackelton and Cathy Francisco.

## A Dog – “I Could Call Him Wolf”

by Lou Rupnick, Professor of Sociology and Psychology (Retired), Suffolk County Community College



Lou Rupnick with his dog, Nick

**Editor's Note:** This story first appeared in the January/February 2017 issue of the NYSUT Retiree Council 39 Newsletter.

It was a cold, gray day during February 2004. I was returning to the North Fork of Long Island on the LIRR after meeting my grad school buddy (from Poland) and his family in NYC for lunch. I hadn't seen him in a few years. It was a good lunch and a good time, too.

The train had left Penn Station, emerged from the dark tunnel and was heading toward stops in Jamaica in late afternoon daylight. Sitting on the cold, plastic seats close to one of the doors with a good read in my hands, I was resigned to a pretty long ride with lots of

stops.

I'm not sure exactly where, but somewhere in Jamaica an interesting character got on board with a very unkempt German Shepherd. The dog's black/brown fur was matted and dirty. The traveler was blind and the animal was obviously his guide dog. It was pretty obvious this fellow was not only blind, but he was also pretty down on his luck. Even the dog's ragged and worn harness had seen much better days. I'd say the man was in his mid-forties, about five-foot-six. His hands were callused and dirty, and his shoes were beyond useful and worn. He was hatless with mussed brown hair, and he wore an old dirty and soiled coat that was ill-fitting and torn in places.

## *A Dog - "I Could Call Him Wolf", continued from page 25*

In spite of its condition, the dog was clearly well-trained in the business of being a guide-dog for a blind person in need. They both looked cold. This formidable dog looked at me, but I really wasn't its concern. The man no sooner sat next to me when the dog obediently laid beneath our seat without a word spoken.

Once the train got rolling, the conductor approached us, searching for new passengers and calling out "Ticket!" This man sitting next to me with his dog curled beneath him fumbled in his pocket and produced a ticket. "This has been used," the conductor said. My traveling companion reached into his pocket a second time and produced another ticket. "This one's been used too." The expressionless conductor was patient and polite; he didn't lose his temper. For a third time the blind man reached into his other pocket and produced yet a third Long Island Railroad ticket. The conductor looked at it, looked at the man – then at me. His eyes fixed back on to the blind man, clicked his ticket puncher without touching the ticket, and then pressed the clearly voided and useless ticket back into the blind man's hand without saying another word. His dog remained obediently quiet and motionless below us, but

indeed alert.

I hadn't read a word in my book since this man and his dog appeared and sat next to me. I couldn't help myself. "That's a pretty handsome dog you have there. What's his name?" I asked. The man was clearly uncomfortable with any sort of interaction with another person. After a pause, and without moving his head as if looking straight ahead of himself, the man said somewhat curtly, "He doesn't have a name." Honestly, I felt uncomfortable and speechless for a moment or two, feeling like an unwanted interloper into this man's private world. Yet, I wanted to befriend this person in some way.

With little effort I took a twenty dollar bill out of my wallet and folded it a couple of times. I leaned toward him and whispered, "Please don't be frightened. I'm gonna put some money into your hand. I want you to know it's a twenty so that when you go to spend it, no one will try to rip you off." I pressed the bill into one of his hands; it closed quickly around the money. "Buy something for yourself and your fine dog."

I had no sooner given him the money than the train began slowing for the next stop. It lurched to a stop at that next station. Without a word, the blind man stood,

and as he did his guide dog came to attention from under our seat. The man walked the few steps toward the door with his dog carefully guiding him. Before leaving the train car, my short-lived traveling companion stopped and turned toward me. The dog stopped, looked up at his master and seemed puzzled. He said to me, "I could call him Wolf – if I wanted to." He paused a moment longer, just long enough for me to say, "Wolf? That would be a very good name for such a fine dog." The blind man and his dog turned away, then disappeared through the door.

As the train's doors shut and the steel wheels began rolling again (to continue on its journey to the North Fork of Long Island), through a window I watched the man cautiously shuffle along as his uncombed and scruffy, albeit noble, dog safely guided him toward the train platform steps.

I hoped they would search for a warm meal together, or perhaps some other shared pleasure. I knew I would never see them again, but I also knew I would never forget them – my blind traveling companion and his worthy dog – called Wolf.

## What's your Story?

**DO YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAVE A STORY TO TELL? WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

One of the objectives of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter* is to share activities of SUNY retirees. We know many of you are doing great, interesting

things in retirement, from scholarship to volunteerism and everything in between. Your story can inspire others.

We welcome stories from retired SUNY faculty, staff, and administrators from any of SUNY's state-operated and community college campuses, System Administration, the Research Foundation, and the State University Construction Fund.

Please share your retirement story or tell us about a retired colleague's story by contacting the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) at [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu).

Retirement stories that run in the SUNY Retirees Newsletter will also appear on the RSC website. For examples of such stories, visit <http://www.suny.edu/retirees/retirement-stories/>.

# ABOUT THE SUNY RETIREES NEWSLETTER

The *SUNY Retirees Newsletter* is designed to share information about happenings, programs, and personalities at SUNY's various campuses and System-wide which are of interest to retirees.

The *Newsletter* is a publication of the **SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC)**, a unit of the University-wide Human Resources department, which is based at SUNY System Administration in Albany. This publication is created with the assistance of the following people, who constitute the *Newsletter* Editorial Committee:

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The Editorial Committee thanks Robyn Diaz of the SUNY System Administration Design and Printing department for her design work on this issue of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*.

**The Retirees Service Corps welcomes content submission from retirees and campuses for inclusion in the SUNY Retirees Newsletter, which is distributed electronically system-wide twice annually (spring/summer and fall/winter).**

For more information, contact: Pierre Radimak at [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu) or (518) 320-1354. To learn more about the SUNY RSC, visit [www.suny.edu/retirees](http://www.suny.edu/retirees).

If you know retired SUNY colleagues who might want to be added to the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter* electronic distribution list, have them say so in an email to [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu).

# THE LAST WORD

## WHY YOU NEED THE SHINGLES VACCINE

by Frances S. Hilliard, RN, MS, Professor of Nursing (Emerita), Nassau Community College

**Editor's Note:** This article first appeared in the September/October 2016 issue of the NYSUT Retiree Council 39 Newsletter.

**S**hingles (herpes zoster) is a condition caused by varicella zoster, the same virus that causes chicken pox. Once you have had chicken pox, this virus can remain dormant in your nervous system for many years. For reasons not clearly understood, the virus may become activated and cause you to have shingles. Conditions that can cause your immune system to function less efficiently increase the chances of getting shingles. These conditions include advancing age, physical/emotional stress, and chronic diseases (especially cancer).

Shingles is characterized by a painful, blistering skin rash that usually appears in a band or strip on one side of the face or body. The infection is particularly dangerous should it involve the eye area, potentially causing vision loss. Patients often describe the associated discomfort as intense burning or painful itching, and the pain generally lasts from two to four weeks. Some patients go on to develop a highly painful and debilitating condition called post-herpetic neuralgia, which can cause chronic pain long after the rash has cleared up. Once you have shingles, treatment options are fairly limited and mostly directed at reducing discomfort.

The shingles vaccine (Zostavax) is

the only way to lower your risk of getting this condition. The vaccine is currently recommended for patients sixty or older. Even if you think you've never had chicken pox, you should still receive the vaccine. (Studies have shown that 99% of Americans over forty have had chicken pox, although many don't remember having the disease.)

And if you've already had a case of shingles, getting the vaccine will lower the chances of getting it again. You should not be given Zostavax if you are allergic to certain antibiotics (e. g., neomycin) or to gelatin; if you currently have a weakened immune system (e.g., from cancer, chemotherapy, or HIV/AIDS); or if you take high doses of steroid medications. Talk to your health care provider if you have any other serious medical conditions or allergies.

For individuals on Medicare, coverage for the shingles vaccine can be somewhat complex. Unlike basic immunizations (such as flu, pneumonia, and hepatitis B), which are covered under Medicare Part B, Zostavax is covered under Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug Plan). The amount you pay out-of-pocket depends upon several factors, including where you get vaccinated (pharmacy versus doctor's office) and your specific Part D plan rules.

It is important for you to check with your Part D insurer or your Medicare Advantage Plan about these rules before you receive the shingles vaccine.

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- Merck, Sharp and Dome Corporation, a subsidiary of Merck and Company. Zostavax Fact Sheet: [http://www.merck.com/product/usa/pi\\_circulars/z/zostavax/zostavax\\_ppi.pdf](http://www.merck.com/product/usa/pi_circulars/z/zostavax/zostavax_ppi.pdf)

