



RETIREES NEWSLETTER

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2017 SUNY RETIREES CONFERENCE AGENDA and Related Details Revealed

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

The agenda has been set for *Stronger Together: Building Bridges among SUNY Retirees, Campuses and Communities*, the fifth biennial conference for SUNY retirees which takes place on Friday, October 13th at Farmingdale State College (FSC) in Farmingdale, NY.

Stronger Together is open to current 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 conference program offers something for everyone. A variety of notable speakers will address diverse topics, including: issues related to **Elder Law** (such as long-term care and estate planning); **Medicare: Things Retirees Should Know**; **Social Security: Widows, Widowers & Other Survivors**; **Tips and Tricks for Retirees to Safely Navigate Social Media and the Internet**; and **Lifelong Learning Options for SUNY Retirees and NYS Residents Over 50**. A panel discussion on **Campus Retiree Organizations and Campus-Sponsored Retiree Programs** will examine creating and maintaining a positive public presence on campus and in the community.

Continued on page 2

2017 SUNY Retirees Conference Agenda and Related Details Revealed, continued from page 1

Stronger Together will include several **networking opportunities** between conference attendees, presenters, and representatives of campus retiree programs and organizations who attend the October event.

“This will be the first time that the system-wide SUNY retirees conference is being held at one of our colleges on Long Island,” said Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Curtis Lloyd, “and we’re thrilled that Farmingdale State College will be the venue. We’re hoping for a big turnout.”

Farmingdale State College is co-sponsoring *Stronger Together* with the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC). The RSC is a unit of the University-wide Human Resources office at SUNY System Administration in Albany.

“We are very grateful to the campus administration and Conference Planning Committee for their support of this event,” said Julie Petti, Director of University-wide Human Resources. The Committee consists of representatives from each of SUNY’s Long Island campuses: Nassau Community College, SUNY Old Westbury, Stony Brook University, Suffolk County Community College, and FSC.

In addition to the various presentations, the \$25 conference registration fee includes continental breakfast, a hot lunch, multiple networking opportunities, handouts, and an optional guided tour of Farmingdale’s acclaimed Department of Urban Horticulture and Design Teaching Gardens and Greenhouse.

The *Stronger Together: Building Bridges among SUNY Retirees, Campuses and Communities* program brochure, which contains conference details and registration information, may be viewed online by visiting <http://www.suny.edu/retirees/conferences/> and selecting “2017 SUNY Retirees Conference program and related details.” You may register online at <https://fs9.formsite.com/zetadonut/form103/index.html>. The registration deadline is **Friday, September 29th**.



Department of Urban Horticulture & Design Greenhouse at Farmingdale State College

Conference- and registration-related questions may be emailed to retirees@suny.edu or call 518-320-1354.

*For more, see **Seven Good Reasons to Attend the Fifth Biennial SUNY Retirees Conference** by Curtis Lloyd on page 20.*



SUNY RETIREE VOLUNTEER SUCCESS STORY

Alvin Magid, P.h.D.

Emeritus Professor of Political Science, University at Albany,
and Founder/Executive Director of The Reading is Fun Program

Editor's Note: Dr. Magid is an example of how SUNY retirees can do personally rewarding work that serves the public/community interest. This article updates one he published on pages 12-13 of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*, [Volume 5, Issue 2 \(Fall/Winter 2016\)](#).

The Town Supervisor in Niskayuna, NY – where my wife Sally and I live – nominated me to the Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services to be considered for their 2017 Senior Citizen of the Year Award.

Among the nominations submitted by the various towns and villages in Schenectady County and by the city of Schenectady, I was one of three seniors designated to receive the award.

The Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services, in turn, submitted two names, one of them mine, to the NYS Office for the Aging to consider for receiving that agency's 2017 Senior Citizen of the Year Award.

Both the county and the state awards are for recognition of senior-citizen volunteerism; in my case, for founding **The Reading Is Fun Program** in the city of Schenectady in 2012 and serving as its executive director since then.

Several events were held pertaining to the above. On May 9, a senior-citizens awards luncheon was held in the Hart Pavilion of The Egg at Empire State Plaza in Albany for 200 guests from around New York State; among them were 80 local senior-citizen awardees from 35 NYS counties who were given general recognition. The speakers included NYS Lieutenant Governor Hochul (as keynote), the acting director of the NYS Office for Aging, and the chairs of the NYS Senate and Assembly Committees for Aging.

Among the 80 county-level senior-citizen awardees, three were highlighted at the luncheon in speechmaking and a film based on interviews of them, as deserving of special recognition – one by the chair of the Assembly Committee for Aging; the second by the chair of the Senate Committee for Aging; the third by a representative of Governor Cuomo. The first two awardees, from counties outside the Capital District, received citations from the respective state-legislative committee chairs. I received from Governor Andrew Cuomo's representative the Governor's signed and handsomely printed and framed citation, which praised my "Exemplary Service" regarding The Reading Is Fun Program. [Editor's Note: To see the profile of Al Magid in the 2017 Older New Yorkers' Day event program, go to <http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/Older-New-Yorkers-Day-2017---Al-Magid-profile.pdf>]



[suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/Older-New-Yorkers-Day-2017---Al-Magid-profile.pdf](http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/Older-New-Yorkers-Day-2017---Al-Magid-profile.pdf)]

During the evening of May 9, three Schenectady County residents, including me, received 2017 Senior Citizen of the Year Awards bestowed by the county legislature in their chamber.

On May 24, the three of us received further recognition from the Schenectady County Office for Senior and Long Term Care Services at a reception in the Fenimore Gallery of Proctors Theatre in Schenectady.

What's most important to me about the town, county, state, and gubernatorial recognition I have received as a senior-citizen volunteer is that it underlines the importance and continuing success of The Reading Is Fun Program in the area of early-childhood education/literacy, keyed to especially needy youngsters in the city of Schenectady.

CAMPUS RETIREE PROGRAM PROFILE

The Lifetime Learning Institute at SUNY New Paltz

by Marilou Abramshe, Past President



This month is the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Lifetime Learning Institute (LLI) at SUNY New Paltz. Although in 2007 there were two other LLIs in the Hudson Valley, one had a long waiting list and the other was on a campus that limited its membership. Under the leadership of Lyn Mayo, the founding president, the assistance of Helise Winters, the Dean of Extended Learning for SUNY New Paltz, and a core group of interested community members, LLI at SUNY New Paltz launched its first operating semester in September 2007 with 161 people taking classes. Membership today is 246 and still growing.

Open primarily to adults aged 55 and over, LLI's mission is to *"promote diverse and enriching learning experiences for older adults, provide opportunities for social interaction and to encourage individuals to use their knowledge and skills in creative ways."*

Although most of its members come from the New Paltz area, the Lifetime Learning Institute welcomes anyone who wishes to join, resulting in membership stretching up and down the Hudson Valley as far south as Peekskill, north to Saugerties, and as far

west as Middletown.

LLI at SUNY New Paltz is strictly a volunteer, member-run organization, headed by a council elected by the membership at the annual meeting. The council, composed of elected officers, committee chairs, members-at-large and a liaison from SUNY New Paltz, meets ten times a year and is responsible for the affairs of the organization. Council meetings are open to interested members who may attend but do not have a vote.

Two sessions of courses are the mainstay of LLI – the fall session, which runs from September through November, and the spring session, which runs from March through May. On an average, 30-35 courses are offered each session, giving members a wide variety of interests to study. The courses run either four or eight weeks. Some of the more recent classes included Current Events Discussion, Fitness for Seniors, Uncorking the Mystique of Wine, The Beauty of Math – A Course you can Count on, Psychological Astrology, and Opera as Politics. Classes are held on the SUNY New Paltz campus on Wednesdays and in other locations on other days of the week.

Membership is required in order to take courses. Annual membership is \$115, which does not include books, transportation, entrance fees, or special events fees. New (non-returning) members may join in the spring session for a one-time reduced fee of \$75. Members may take as many as six courses per session.

Besides the regular classes, every six weeks a brunch is held for members (and guests) which offers a guest speaker and time for social interaction. Game Days are held periodically throughout the year for all who enjoy board games. Other events include day trips to places of interest and an intersession film series.



Game Day

A catalog is published for each session and mailed to members and posted on the LLI at SUNY New Paltz website (<https://www.newpaltz.edu/lifetime>) as well as other pertinent information about the organization. A semiannual newsletter, *LLI Matters*, keeps members informed about upcoming events, messages from the current president, biographies of presenters and other items of interest to the membership. The newsletter is sent globally via email to our membership. Current and past issues are also posted at <https://www.newpaltz.edu/lifetime/newsletter.html>.

LLI participates in the SUNY New Paltz Foundation scholarship program



Bike Riding Group

by offering a scholarship each year to a non-traditional student attending SUNY New Paltz focusing on students who have returned to college after a hiatus or who have decided on a second career.

Through its association with SUNY New Paltz, LLI members enjoy certain benefits including select discounts at any Fine Arts presentation, discounted membership at the campus gym, and reduced parking fees. Presenters also have the assistance of the college IT department for audio and visual equipment support as well as use of “smart rooms” for their classes.

It takes many volunteers to make a successful organization. LLI has over 130 each year including presenters, classroom assistants, and liaisons from SUNY and off-campus sites; committee members who plan curriculum, work on membership, produce the catalog listing course offerings, and develop the newsletter; and volunteers who do mailings, plan affairs such as brunches, game day and the yearly Appreciation Luncheon. Each year the Luncheon is held in recognition of the contributions of the many who volunteered their efforts to assure a successful year at LLI.



Day trip to Phillis Bridge Farm in New Paltz, NY (Community Supported Agriculture)

For the past two years, LLI at New Paltz has hosted a Hudson Valley Mini Conference for the six lifetime learning institutes located in the Hudson Valley. The conferences are a way of offering the various Hudson Valley LLIs a chance to discuss the nature of their programs and practices and to share common problems, identify possible solutions and find ways to support one another.

Information about the Lifetime Learning Institute at SUNY New Paltz can be found on LLI's website (<https://www.newpaltz.edu/lifetime>) or by contacting Marilou Abramshe at lifetime@newpaltz.edu.

Campus Retiree Program and Retiree Organization Contact Information

Editor's Note:

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

Go to [http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/Campus-Retiree-Program-&-Retiree-Org.-Contact-Info-\(Fall-Winter-2017\).pdf](http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/Campus-Retiree-Program-&-Retiree-Org.-Contact-Info-(Fall-Winter-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.

SUNY Retiree Volunteer Success Story, continued from page 3

Apropos, along with continuing to build the cadre of volunteers to work with such children in the Schenectady City School District, The Reading Is Fun Program, to promote that mission, is currently planning its First Annual Grand Reading Jamboree in the city of Schenectady, to be held sometime in the summer of 2018.

A major objective of the Grand Reading Jamboree will be to encourage and mobilize parents and other caregivers to join with RIF in helping the School District get and keep the city’s four-to-nine-year-olds on the reading track. In these ways, RIF hopes to achieve a permanent place in the civic firmament of Schenectady.

If you would like to learn how you can start a program in your community that’s similar to The Reading Is Fun Program, feel free to contact me at magid2@juno.com. And if you live in the Schenectady, NY area, we’re always looking for volunteers. Either way, you will truly make a difference in children’s lives.



Is it Time to Revisit Your Retirement Income Option from the SUNY Optional Retirement Program (ORP)? Part II

Fidelity, VALIC and VOYA: How are funds distributed?

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

Our last segment (on page 6 of the Spring/Summer 2017 [SUNY Retirees Newsletter](#) issue) took a look at the SUNY ORP and the many ways SUNY employees are receiving their retirement benefits from TIAA. For this segment, we asked Fidelity, VALIC and VOYA – the other approved ORP vendors – how their SUNY participants were receiving benefits.

These financial services firms agree longer life expectancies can lead to a retirement that can often last 25 years or more. So understanding the retirement income options you have available through the SUNY Optional Retirement Program (ORP) is important and understanding the flexibility all the approved ORP vendors offer to you is a valuable benefit.

In 2016, over 900 distributions were taken by retired SUNY employees who

WITHDRAWAL TYPE	VALIC	VOYA
Systematic Withdrawals	43	266
Required Minimum Distributions	33	157
Rollovers	31	78
Cash Distribution	26	170
Transfers	63	78
Other	19	48

had VOYA and/or VALIC contracts. VOYA and VALIC were added as approved vendors to the ORP in 1994. Above is the breakdown for each company.

Required Minimum Distributions are mandatory distributions when you reach the age of 70½ and are no longer employed at SUNY. Rollovers are typically

funds transferred directly to another type of plan outside the ORP, such as an IRA. Transfers are typically funds transferred to another ORP approved vendor. As you will note, the Systematic Withdrawals option is selected quite frequently. Systematic withdrawals can be a more flexible alternative to monthly

annuity income because it allows you to periodically withdraw a portion of your assets. The withdrawals are flexible and can be designed to begin and end at your discretion.

Fidelity recently became an approved SUNY ORP vendor in 2015. There are no statistics as of yet on their ORP distributions. It is important to note that Fidelity offers annuities through Mass

Mutual, an insurance company. If you are considering systematic withdrawals, Fidelity suggests structuring cash withdrawals using four key guidelines: a yearly savings rate, a savings factor, an income replacement rate, and a sustainable withdrawal rate to help create your retirement road map.

The advantages and disadvantages of each approach tend to complement each

other, which is one argument for diversifying your sources of retirement income and dividing your savings between both or other approaches. You'll be best served if you learn about the pros and cons of each approach and consider which approach, or combination of approaches, best suits your goals and circumstances.

Additional information about retirement income options within the SUNY ORP can be found on the Retirement Planning web page at:
<http://www.suny.edu/retirement/distributions>

COMMENTS, CONTENT SUGGESTIONS?



We value your input and want to hear from you! Please drop us a line at retirees@suny.edu if you have anything you'd like to say about this issue of the SUNY Retirees Newsletter or if you have something you'd like to see us include in future issues.

Whether it be events listings, retiree accomplishments, an In Memoriam section, or other type of content, let us know and we'll see what we can do!

NEW YORK STATE'S HISTORIC SITES

Duffy Square: Emblematic Tribute to the NYS National Guard 69th Infantry "Fighting Sixty-Ninth"

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.

New York City's Duffy Square is a narrow, triangular-shaped Midtown Manhattan block bordered by 46th and 47th Streets to the north and south and by 7th Avenue and Broadway to the east and west. Prominent at the site is the Father Duffy statue. The sculpture honors the beloved World War I Chaplain, U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Francis Patrick Duffy (1871-1932). The statue was unveiled in 1937, and the entire block was officially named "Father Duffy Square" in 1939. Located at the epicenter of the Times Square theater district, the site is now simply called "Duffy Square."

Four decades ago, Times Square was notoriously known for "sleaze and crime." This changed when NYC Mayor Edward I. Koch began a determined effort to "Clean up Times Square!" The area is now a focal point of attention amidst a mile-long canyon of office buildings bedecked with brilliant light shows.

Walking through the area, one is awed with dazzling animations that flaunt the latest high fashions via electronic images. The cacophonies of lights also include news bulletins, cinema and TV show excerpts, and theater announcements, not to mention innumerable advertisements for a myriad of consumer products. The Times Square district is known for "Lighting up Broadway!" Some blocks south of Duffy Square, the world-famous "Times Square Ball" annually drops, signaling the New Year. Duffy Square has received much attention with the recent

addition of the multi-tiered "Red Seats Arena" that renders the site on par with ancient open-air Greco-Roman amphitheaters. The City of New York website provides for user feedback. A frequent online comment is that Duffy Square provides "The best view of the Big Apple and the world!"

With all the glitz and pizzazz, it is easy to overlook the underlying meaning of Duffy Square – that is, to honor heroic U.S. Army Chaplain Francis P. Duffy and his cherished regiment, "The Fighting Sixty-Ninth." The New York 69th Infantry Regiment, established in 1861, was originally composed of destitute immigrants fleeing the Irish Potato Famine. With nativist prejudice prevalent at the time, many worried that the 69th Infantry soldiers, predominantly Roman Catholic, would be insufficiently



NYC Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia (1937) in front of the Charles Keck (1875-1951) statue of U.S. Army Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Francis P. Duffy and the Celtic Cross. In 1939, a NYC Municipal Ordinance officially named the site, "Father Duffy Square."

loyal to the U.S.A. These New Yorkers utterly disproved this unfounded bias with their unbridled valor at key Civil War battles



Present-day "Fighting Sixty-Ninth" soldiers in Civil War uniforms marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

including: 1st and 2nd Bull Run, Seven Days, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, and Appomattox Court House. With the huge number and deadliness of these battles, the 69th Infantry sustained shocking casualties including the majority of its officers. Replacements were constantly needed to sustain the fighting strength of the regiment. Fortunately, based on its glorious reputation, the New York regiment had a constant flow of eager enlistment volunteers.

The 69th Infantry "Fighting Irish" soldiers distinctively displayed a green sprig on their Union Army hats. Though officially designated the New York 69th Infantry Regiment, this military unit became renowned as "The Fighting Sixty-Ninth" based on praise offered by arch-nemesis General Robert E. Lee. The Confederate military icon stated after the Civil War that "Never were men so brave as 'The Fighting Sixty-Ninth!'"

"THE FIGHTING IRISH" IN WORLD WAR I AND LATER CONFLICTS

During the Civil War, approximately 95 percent of the 69th Infantry soldiers were born in Ireland or had Irish heritage. Thus the unit was frequently called the "Fighting Irish" – many decades before Notre Dame University's football team. The stellar military reputation

earned by these New York soldiers during the Civil War was replicated with bravery and sacrifice in World War I. During the Great War, the "Irish" proportion of its soldiers dropped to roughly about half. The ethnic backgrounds of its soldiers now included Americans of German, Italian, Jewish, Lithuanian, and Polish heritage – and this is just a partial list. From 1917 to 1918, the 69th Infantry was led by U.S. Army Major William Joseph "Wild Bill" Donovan (1883-1959). At the time, the unit had three Captains, all of whom had a Central or East European Jewish heritage. When queried about his Jewish second-in-command officers, Donovan responded, "Hey, they are more Irish than the Irish!" As a unit of the WWI American Expeditionary Forces, the New York 69th Infantry Regiment fought at the battles of Rouge Bouquet, Champagne, Châteaux-Thierry, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne.

Besides standing six-foot, four inches tall, Father Duffy was also a towering figure of spiritual strength. The Chaplain's heroism and that of the others in the regiment are accurately depicted in the 1940 Hollywood film, "The Fighting Sixty-Ninth." Though considerably shorter in height, actor Pat O'Brien faithfully portrays Father Duffy's pivotal role as a WWI frontlines Chaplain. The most moving scenes in the film accurately recall the Battle of Rouge Bouquet. Here, on March 7, 1918, a German artillery shell landed directly on the "Fighting Sixty-Ninth" underground trench headquarters. Twenty-two members of the regiment were buried alive in the blast; only two could be rescued. In the next scene, Father Duffy (Pat O'Brien) holds a memorial honoring those entrapped at Rouge Bouquet, during which American author/essayist/poet laureate Sgt. Alfred Joyce Kilmer (portrayed by actor Jeffrey Lynn) recites his poignant ode, "The Wood Called Rouge Bouquet." The lines in the poem follow the cadence of

the reflectively sorrowful tune of "Taps." On July 16, 1918, 31-year old Sgt. Kilmer was felled by sniper fire while on reconnaissance patrol.

The 69th Infantry Regiment played key roles in World War II, especially at the critical Battle of the Bulge. These New Yorkers displayed unflinching valor again and again when deployed during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. While still proudly nicknamed, the "Fighting Irish," the regiment today includes many soldiers with African-American and Hispanic heritage.



New York 69th Infantry Regiment shoulder insignia patch - a unit of the WWI American Expeditionary Forces Rainbow Division.



U.S. Army Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Francis P. Duffy aboard a ship returning home from WWI France in 1918.

New York State's Historic Sites, continued from page 9



Photograph of the site in France where 22 "Fighting Sixty-Ninth" soldiers were entrapped from the blast of March 7, 1918 German artillery shell. Only two soldiers could be rescued.

"THE FIGHTING SIXTY-NINTH" HELPS CLEAR THE NEW "ROUTE IRISH" IN IRAQ

The 69th Infantry Regiment continues to defend this nation. During the Second Iraq War (2003-2011), the "Fighting Sixty-Ninth" was tasked with the grueling and dangerous assignment of helping clear the road from Baghdad International Airport to the center of Iraq's capital city, Baghdad. The city center is shown on the geographical map as the "Green Zone." This is not just any highway. Rather, it is the key U.S. military supply route (MSR). Before the 69th Infantry was deployed, this 7.5-mile stretch of highway was a magnet for countless terrorist attacks. This perilous thoroughfare has been infamously called the "most dangerous road in the world."

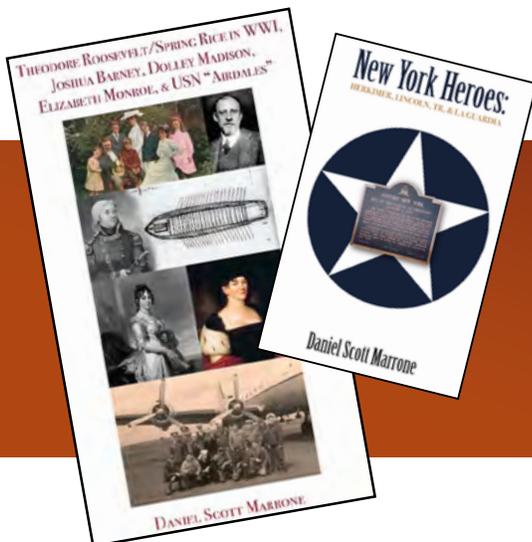
Once in-theater, the New York National Guard entered into months of deadly combat with insurgents. The unit had to contend with drive-by shooters, mortar barrages, roadside bombs, improvised exploding devices (IEDs), rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), and incessant sniper fire. Amidst significant casualties, these New Yorkers "got the job done." They assisted other military units, including those from other nations, in killing terrorists while at the same time the MSR was repaved, straightened, and fortified. While still not "safe" – lest we forget the "War on Terror," which frightfully continues – the road now includes numerous blast-walled safety checkpoints and is heavily guarded. These measures provide at least a modicum of protection. The highway also has a new name: "Route Irish."

Officially, this new designation refers to the color of "Green Zone" Baghdad. One cannot dismiss, however, the obvious coincidence that an Irish-origin U.S. regiment from New York served nobly there! Thus, let us assign to the road's new name a profound tribute to the "Fighting Irish" regiment.

U.S. Army Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Francis P. Duffy was deeply proud of his New York soldiers during WWI; he would feel equally gratified with today's "Fighting Sixty-Ninth."



Multiethnic heritage National Guardsmen of today's New York "Fighting Sixty-Ninth" marching up Fifth Avenue.



*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.*

RETIREMENT STORY

Bill Goergen

Regional Director of Design (Retired),
State University Construction Fund

Editor's Note: Bill's story is the first of two more examples of submissions received in response to Dr. Ram Chugh's *Lessons from Retirement Experiences Survey* that was described on page 3 of the Spring/Summer 2017 [SUNY Retirees Newsletter](#) issue. 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*.

Retirement was not what I expected. The first two weeks were wonderful – a vacation. I stayed up late. I slept late. By week three the novelty wore off. Years of routine and structure were not letting go. At that



point I decided that, after 40 years, my wife needed help – big mistake. Ask, but never cross that line unless asked. Then I started to do things I never had time to do.

I started a large vegetable garden.



House projects were completed after years of procrastination. I honed my fly fishing skills and put them to use. For the better part of a year, I worked at one of the SUNY campuses and then with the [Construction] FUND. Both were fulfilling because I was able still able to contribute. Working full-time, however, is not fun. Part-time is much better. Having one's cake and eat it too is a wonderful place to be in life.

After family obligations allowed, we took some wonderful trips, with more in the offing. I also spend time on political campaigns and with political action groups. Both are challenging. The involvement is great and you get to meet some wonderful people. Working for something you believe in is very rewarding.

If you have the time and opportunity, volunteer for whatever cause fits your comfort level. There is a huge need in our society for good people to do good things. It keeps you mentally and physically active – both are imperatives.

ADVICE TO CURRENT SUNY EMPLOYEES WHO ARE PLANNING TO RETIRE:

As soon as possible, learn the benefits you earn in the Tier you are in. If you are a Vet, you may be able to buy back service time.

Learn to strike a balance in life between the here and now and the future. Life is a journey that should be enjoyed, but retirement will be there before you know it. Enjoying retirement versus surviving retirement is a world of difference.

Starting a savings plan early goes without saying. I also found the Deferred Comp Plan offered by the state especially helpful. It is an excellent vehicle for saving money while getting a tax deferral. The mutual fund offerings in the plan back then were less than stellar, but monies accumulated can be rolled over into an IRA with no penalty and much better investment options.

Thoroughly check out any new investing firms. This is a whole different world that you must understand.

A long life with financial security is useless if you can't enjoy it. Get into an exercise routine immediately. Keep the mind active and move every muscle God gave you. Low-impact, high range-of-motion exercises, with some cardio, allows me to do what I want to do.

THE NYS LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM:

Educating, Empowering, Advocating

by Claudette Royal, State Ombudsman

What are those things that make us who we are as individuals? It is our ability to make choices, to exercise our rights, and remain as independent as possible while maintaining our dignity. Many of us envision living our lives in this manner, surrounded by family and friends in our own homes and community. The reality, however, can be very different. Unforeseen circumstances such as a fall or illness can change a person's life plan, creating the need to be placed in a nursing home or adult home. Residents in these facilities deserve to continue to live their lives as independently as possible and often are able to accomplish this by utilizing their advocate, a certified ombudsman.

The New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is available in all long-term care facilities across the state to assist individuals in keeping their sense of identity, self-worth, and ability to make choices regarding the care they are receiving. Simply put, the ombudsman program is resident-directed and resident-centered. Ombudsmen provide assistance to individuals and their families to understand and exercise their right to good care in a safe environment that promotes and protects their dignity and quality of life in the facility they now call "home."

At the heart of the NYS Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is its corps of specially trained and certified volunteers. Many volunteers are retired professionals from various back-



**Office of the State
Long Term Care
Ombudsman**

These dedicated ombudsmen spend several hours

per week in each of their assigned facilities, advocating for the residents by providing information and resolving complaints.

Little things make a big difference in everyone's lives. The certified ombudsman volunteers are a "regular presence" in facilities. Because of this "regular presence," these volunteers get to know residents, their needs, and those things that make a difference in their everyday lives. For residents without any



family or loved ones, the ombudsman may be their only socialization from outside the facility and also may be the only advocate they have. The ombudsman becomes a "voice for the voiceless" and a lifeline for those who need assistance when they feel like they have nobody to turn to.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is dedicated to educating, empowering and advocating for the residents in long-term care settings. Sometimes the role of the certified ombudsman is simply to empower residents and their families with education and knowledge so that they can advocate on their own behalf. An ombudsman can also advocate for residents by investigating and resolving complaints made by or on behalf of them, always with the residents' consent. Ombudsmen are committed to maintaining resident confidentiality, which is a cornerstone of the program. They represent residents and work on their behalf with facility administrators, staff, and family members to achieve a satisfactory resolution of their complaint and improve their quality of life.

At still another level, certified ombudsmen engage in systems advocacy by promoting the development of resident and family councils within facilities and by informing government agencies, providers, and the general public about issues and concerns impacting residents of long-term care facilities.

Throughout the state there are approximately 800 volunteers who provide residents with support and advocacy. The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is always in need of more dedicated volunteers to provide this needed and beneficial service to the residents of long-term care facilities.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or are in need of the assistance of a certified ombudsman, please call 1-855-LTCOP NY (582-6769) or check out our website at www.ltcombudsman.ny.gov.



SURPRISING BENEFITS OF REPEATING

by Sharon F. Cramer, Ph.D., SUNY Buffalo State



Editor's Note: Sharon Cramer, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Emerita of Exceptional Education, has enjoyed mixing up the old and the new for many years.

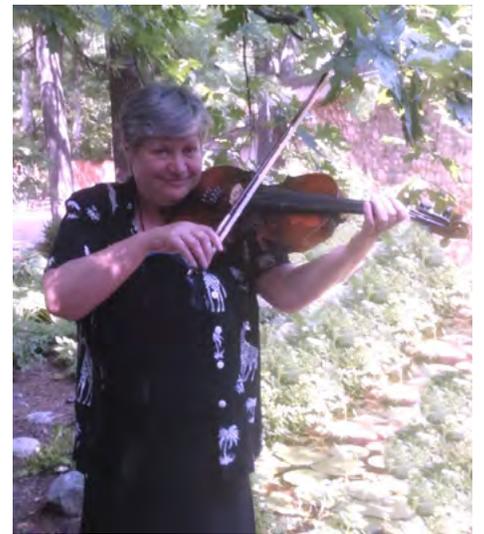
When first learning to read music, I asked what the phrase “da capo al fine” meant. I remember being puzzled when I learned its translation – “from the head to the new ending.” This was how composers tell musicians to return to the start of their piece and play it again until a notation showed where to stop. Repeat what had just been played? As a young person who enthusiastically searched for the new and different, “da capo” was unappealing, redundant.

However, as time passed, my view of “da capo” has changed. I realized that, before recorded sound, audiences had

to be in the room – together with the musicians – to hear music. The chance to re-experience the distinctive sounds of instruments turning the beauty of a quiet musical phrase into a full musical rejoicing made me appreciate why a re-prise was of value. And, I realized, I had incorporated “da capo” into many parts of my life.

Why travel back to a familiar place, re-read a book, or re-watch a movie, when there are so many new options available? While I do the new – places, books, movies – I found that, in every type of re-visiting, I find something undiscovered and startling. Perhaps the tug of nostalgia pulls stronger as the years pass, or we’ve just become wise enough to welcome the whispers from memories of our past, of times otherwise lost.

Travel is a chance to hear the whispers, to balance the familiar and the new. I enjoy returning to many cities, be-



cause they offer reassuring comfort as I explore. I realized that I had developed a da capo travel strategy, especially within museums. I grew up near the Art Institute of Chicago, and always connected with certain paintings and sculptures, which I came to think of as “friends.” When I revisit them, they never disap-

Surprising Benefits of Repeating, continued from page 13

point. This is a routine I've established at other museums I re-visit. I always first view my touchstone pieces before seeing new exhibits. Although I think I perfectly remember each piece of art, something new usually intrigues me.

Art forces us to look again, da capo. I helped to organize several photography shows at the CEPA Gallery in Buffalo (www.cepagallery.org). These have given visitors a chance to see the Richardson Complex (www.richardson-olmsted.com) through the eyes of contemporary photographers. The 2017 show, "Exterior Views," featured 50 photographers' captures of the complex – day and night, in all seasons. The buildings, with history stretching back to 1871, are like a work of art. See for yourself (scroll down to the bottom of this link to view the photos): <http://www.cepagallery.org/portfolio/>

[exterior-views-the-richardson-olmsted-complex/](#) Photographers invited us to see the endless angles, textures, shadows. I have been a docent at the Richardson Complex since 2013, and the photographers enabled me to see the buildings anew. Who would think there could be so many surprises?

Revisiting the familiar is not dull. Re-reading books I love is a scavenger hunt for the new. Checking out the year of the copyright, I reflect on that year in my life. If I have read subsequent novels by the same author, I search for evidence of how the novelist laid the groundwork for future plot twists. My favorite discoveries are previously ignored sentences, ones that make me think the author snuck into my book in the night and planted words just for me. I mentally touch these pristine jewels,

taking pleasure in them, knowing that on the next reading, something else will be uncovered.

Why re-watch movies, television series, or documentaries? Now, well-known faces and scripts are my dinner companions. Preparing dinner, and eating it alone, can be hard. After the death of my husband, sitting down at the dinner table was the presence of his absence. Internet options changed my table: now (via internet streaming) I welcome company each night. Like my well-read books, within these frequently-watched shows I can pay attention to lighting, sets, dialogue or forgotten storylines, along with the "comfort food" of familiar faces in my kitchen. Although sometimes I watch new things (accepting that I am as likely to be satisfied as be disappointed), I am happiest dining "da capo."

CAMPUS RETIREE PROGRAM PROFILE

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Rockland County

by Gerri S. Zabusky, LMSW, ACSW, Director

Established in 1971 and now one of the largest senior volunteer organizations in the nation, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) engages Americans age 55 and older in a diverse range of volunteer activities. Volunteers tutor and mentor children, teach English to immigrants, assist victims of natural disasters, provide independent living services, recruit and manage other volunteers, serve at congregate meal sites and food pantries, deliver meals to the homebound and serve their communities in many other ways. RSVP volunteers choose how, where, and how often they want to serve, with commitments ranging from a few hours to 40 hours per



RSVP

Lead with Experience

week. Volunteers do not receive monetary incentives, but RSVP programs often provide mileage reimbursement and supplemental personal accident and liability insurance while volunteering.

In 1973, Rockland Community College became the first community college in the nation to sponsor an RSVP program. Currently, RSVP of Rockland County is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the New York State Office for the Aging, the Rockland County Office for the Aging, the Rockland County Legislature and several Towns. We also receive many "in-kind" services from our Sponsor, Rockland Community College.

The mission of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Rockland County is to help address community needs by recruiting volunteers 55 and older to lend their time and expertise in community service to non-profit agencies and proprietary health care facilities and, in so doing, provide them with meaningful ongoing volunteer opportunities.

At the present time, we have 425 registered members who are actively assisting 97 local nonprofit and County government agencies. During 2016, 60,500 hours were served, which is calculated to have a value of \$1,669,195!! I estimate that 25 of our volunteers are retirees of the SUNY system or are retired Rockland County employees.

The following is a list of agencies and their volunteer assignments that have

the largest number of RSVP volunteers serving there: Childcare Resources of Rockland (Tales for Tots-Reader and

Liaison), People to People (Food Collection Assistant, Bookkeeper and Client Services Support Counselor), Rockland



Rockland County RSVP volunteers at the 2017 Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service celebration held at Rockland Community College.

Literacy Project Coordinator), Helen Hayes Hospital (Gift Shop Salesperson, Patient Assistant and Group Leader), Helping Hands Interfaith Coalition (Congregate Meal Preparer and Volunteer Coordinator), Literacy Solutions NY, Inc. (Reading Tutor), Meals on Wheels of Rockland (Bookkeeper, Food Deliverer), NAMI-FAMILYA of Rockland County, Inc. (Fundraiser, Bookkeeper, Family Support Counselor), Nyack Hospital (Thrift Shop Salesperson, Special Projects Assistant, Patient Advocate, Receptionist, Pharmacy Assistant, Pastoral Care Assistant, Clerical Assistant and Patient

County Office for the Aging (Mailings, Clerical and HICAP Advisor), Rockland Community College (Administrative Assistant, Career Center Assistant, Evening Ambassador, Fundraiser, Receptionist, Resource Navigator, Survey Proctor and Tutor), RSVP Clowns R Us (Friendly Visitor), RSVP Independence Project (Shopper and Medical Transportation Driver), Summit Park Elementary School (Program Administrator, Fundraiser, Technical Support Assistant, Tutor - STEM and Club Coach), and United Hospice of Rockland (Pianist, Outreach Assistant and Direct Care Volunteer).



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Campus Retiree Program Profile, continued from page 15

It takes just a few easy steps to join our RSVP family:

- Contact our Volunteer Coordinator at (845) 304-8770 to make an appointment for a one-on-one “get to know you” meeting where you will learn about mileage reimbursement, supplemental accident and liability insurance, free door-to-door transportation to your volunteer “job,” quarterly newsletter, as well as workshops and our volunteer recognition events
- Tell us about your former career, current likes, dislikes and any special interests you may have so that we can help you find a fulfilling and interesting volunteer opportunity and how much time you have available to volunteer (daily, weekly, monthly or several times a year)
- Let us match you with one of our almost 100 community partners
- Keep in touch with us and let us know how things are going with your placement

If you would like additional information, just visit our website at www.sunyrockland.edu/community-and-business/seniors/rsvp where you can click on our links and get connected quickly.

If you are reading this and you don't live in Rockland County, it's very easy to find an RSVP program in an area near you. All you have to do is Google “RSVP” and add the county you are interested in (for example search “RSVP of Herkimer County”). If there isn't a program in your county, then it's very likely that there is one nearby. If you prefer, you could search www.nationalservice.gov/ and click on your state and then you can follow the links to search out numerous volunteer opportunities in your area.

HEALTH MATTERS

Vitamin D Deficiency

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

Editor's Note: *This article first appeared in the March/April 2017 issue of the NYSUT Retiree Council 39 Newsletter.*

Since 1921, when it was first identified by research scientists, Vitamin D has been known for its important role in the body's calcium balance and maintenance of bone health. Vitamin D is essential for strong bones, mainly because it is necessary for the body's ability to absorb calcium and phosphorus - two elements that help develop the structure and strength of bones.

It is now known that Vitamin D is also important for many other reasons, including immunity, muscle strength, cardiovascular function, healthy lungs, anti-cancer effects, and brain development in children. Low levels of Vitamin D are associated with increased mortality from cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment in older adults, cancer, and increased severity of asthma in children. Research is also showing that this vitamin may play a significant role in the prevention and management of several medical conditions, such as hypertension, diabetes, and multiple sclerosis.

Your body can manufacture Vitamin D when the skin is exposed to sunlight. Following sun exposure, a number of chemical processes within the body then change this vitamin into a form that can be utilized by the cells. The liver is very important to these processes. Both the Vitamin D produced from skin exposure to sunlight, as well as any Vitamin D ingested in foods or dietary supplements, are converted by the liver to a substance called 25 (OH) D. When you have blood tests to measure your Vitamin D levels, these tests actually indicate the amount of 25 (OH) D present in the bloodstream.

Vitamin D deficiency can result from a number of different factors:

- Inadequate dietary intake of Vitamin D. This often occurs in people who adhere to a vegan diet, because such diets do not include common animal-based sources of the vitamin (fish, eggs, fortified milk, and beef liver).
- Limited exposure to sunlight. This has become more prevalent because of the attention being brought to sun exposure as a cause of skin cancers. More individuals are avoiding the sun and/or applying sunscreen, which blocks Vitamin D production. Other factors involved are the geographic area in which you live (especially distance from the equator and altitude) and the color of your skin (darker pigmentation means more melanin in the skin, which allows less absorption of UVB light and therefore less Vitamin D production).
- Pregnancy
- Being very overweight or obese, conditions which impair absorption of Vitamin D from the gastrointestinal tract.

The symptoms of Vitamin D deficiency are often quite vague, and may include fatigue and generalized aches and pains. A number of individuals experience no symptoms at all. As the deficiency becomes more pronounced, definitive symptoms often appear, including bone pain, weakness, and frequent infections. The only sure way to tell if you are deficient in Vitamin D is to have a blood test which will measure the level of 25 (OH) D. If this level is below normal, you will need Vitamin D supplements, with the exact dosage dependent upon the degree of deficiency detected.

Vitamin D DEMYSTIFIED



FOODS RICH IN VITAMIN D

- Sunlight
- Milk
- Salmon
- Caviar
- Eggs
- Cheese
- Oatmeal



RESOURCES

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HOW TO STATE THE OBVIOUS:

Why Retirees Are of Value to Their Institutions of Higher Education and How Retirement Organizations Translate That Value into Action for the Institution

by Carl A. Huether and Caroline M. Kane, Board Members, Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROE)



It is well known that higher education institutions face many crises/challenges. What possible advantage could administrators find in supporting retired faculty and staff to stay engaged when the pressures are so profound in “other” areas? In fact, the “other” areas can be addressed by engaging retirees who have many years of experience and service.

Those 200-plus institutions in the United States (and several more in Canada) with Retirement Organizations (ROs) understand their value (1). There are 2,800 or more known Bachelor’s degree-granting institutions without ROs (2) whose faculty and staff ALSO retire, many with an interest in continuing an association with the institution that was the center of their professional lives. In addition to making the case to campus administrators about ROs, making the case to government, the media and the

public is just as important. The arguments for administrators will be the focus of this article.

“Why should administrators care? After all, retirees are seen as finished with their academic life.” Tenured faculty who are active in fulfilling their responsibilities may not wish to change anything at all by retiring. The conundrum for the institution is profound; these senior faculty are very expensive (if the institution pays their salaries, and in public institutions, this is the norm). These senior faculty occupy space for labs and offices that are unavailable for new hires. Yet, if they are productive in research and teaching, why should they get “out of the way?” And if they retire, how can they continue to do that which they love, and which may keep them healthy, vital and engaged in the institutional community?

Paying more attention to the needs and desires of retirees allows institutions to have their cake and eat it too. Creating a Retirement Organization provides a framework for managing and administering to the needs and desires of retirees at a fraction of the monetary cost of salaries and benefits while reaping the substantial strength of continued engagement of these experienced colleagues (3). This value accrues for both retired faculty and retired staff.

For example, at the University of California, a ten-campus system, the Council of UC Emeriti Associations surveys retired faculty every three years, asking what they have been up to, on- and off-campus. The results of the latest survey indicate that the teaching, research and service (and grant funding and philanthropy) of the retired faculty would be the equivalent of a full eleventh campus at the University of California (3).

This is also exemplified concretely at the University of Cincinnati. It has recently established an Emeritus Center based upon concerted efforts of the Emeriti beginning in the spring of 2013. Convincing the administration of the Center’s value emphasized two fundamental levels. First, the Emeriti worked with their UC Foundation to determine that from FY04 to FY13 Emeriti contributed an average of \$1.6 million annually. In FY14 that increased to \$1.8 million, and in FY15, to \$2.2 million, at least suggesting a role increased Emeriti activity at the university may have played in these significant increases.

Also, working with the Research Division, University of Cincinnati Emeriti were able to determine for FY15 that 44 Emeriti received 77 external grants for which they were given \$45 million in intellectual credit. Second, Emeriti offered

to oversee numerous university-related activities: e.g., having an annual Recognition and Appreciation Dinner for new Emeriti, annual Undergraduate Mentorship Awards to work with active Emeriti on research and scholarship, development of an oral history legacy project, provide Emeriti for mentoring of both undergraduates and graduates, improving the Transitions to Retirement Progress through developing a comprehensive Transitions Checklist, improving a monthly Luncheon Speaker Series for both active and retired faculty, and beginning an Emeriti Community Services Corps. These contributions resulted in the University of Cincinnati Provost increasing the Emeriti budget from \$2,000 in FY13 to \$20,000 in FY16 and \$30,000 in FY17.

There are many other examples of Retirement Organizations and regional consortia that engage retirees to positively impact the communities in which many have worked for so long.

Senior retired staff must not be overlooked. Their historical memory and diplomatic experience with academic personalities provide invaluable resources for current staff and administrators and faculty. The retired staff have already experienced current challenges and the many different ways solutions have been implemented (some successful, some abysmal failures). Having a staff Retirement Organization (or a joint faculty-staff RO) allows a fruitful sharing of

strategies as well as keeping valued staff engaged and appreciated as they partake in activities beyond those for which they had time as full-time employees.

Administrators for institutions without a Retirement Organization may be thinking these efforts are all well and good, but how are they established? In addition, how do senior faculty and staff become convinced that retirement allows their continued involvement in higher education activities and issues, as well as participation with their active and retired colleagues? Provosts and Human Resources leaders who work with ROs can be in touch with their own colleagues across the continent about how and why they support ROs.

The Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) can assist with the logistics of exploring the interest in an RO as well as setting one up through its consultation services expertise. ROs across the United States and Canada have very varied funding levels as well as activities, all specifically matched to the particular institutions. The lessons from these institutions can be shared by AROHE leaders and Board Members. Indeed, AROHE members are available to talk with their colleagues at non-member institutions, and they are also ready to consult on how to talk with reluctant administrators to set up ROs that work within one's own institution. Learn more at <http://arohe.org> or contact AROHE by emailing info@arohe.org

or calling (213) 740-5037

Convincing active faculty and senior staff that retirement is just another



of life's productive chapters requires the assistance of current retirees as well as the implementation of Retirement-Friendly Policies at institutions of higher education. These policy implementations are not only cost-effective, they are very frugal. As but one example, see the "Bill of Rights" of retired faculty at the University of California, Berkeley (4). The stories of retirees are the most convincing, especially when their institution values their service while actively employed and their engagement after "retirement."

Retirees from higher education need not "go away" from academia. While some choose not to engage in any activity with their institutions, many do prefer to continue intellectual enrichment, camaraderie and professional identity in their "fourth quarter of life."

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SEVEN GOOD REASONS TO ATTEND THE FIFTH BIENNIAL SUNY RETIREES CONFERENCE

by Curtis Lloyd, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources

SUNY retirees and campus administrators who read the cover story on the *Stronger Together: Building Bridges among SUNY Retirees, Campuses and Communities* retirees conference in this issue of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter* might be asking themselves, “What’s so special about this event?” or “Why should I register?” To help answer those questions, I have compiled the following list of seven good reasons to attend the October 13th conference:

- 1 LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION:** The fifth biennial conference on SUNY retirees is being held at **Farmingdale State College** (FSC) in Farmingdale, NY. The College, which is adjacent to a major interstate, is centrally located; eleven SUNY campuses are within a two-hour drive of FSC.
- 2 RELEVANCE:** The inspiration for *Stronger Together* stems in part from many SUNY retirees telling the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) that they want to stay connected with their former campus and colleagues. Similarly, representatives of several campus retiree programs and retiree organizations approached the RSC seeking ways to connect and re-connect with more of their former employees.
- 3 DUAL APPEAL:** *Stronger Together* is designed to appeal to current SUNY retirees as well as to current or would-be organizers of campus retiree programs and campus-based retiree organizations at all SUNY institutions – community colleges, state-operated campuses and university centers.
- 4 NEWS YOU CAN USE:** The *Stronger Together* conference offers useful content for campus staff and retirees. For example, a panel discussion featuring representatives from **Stony Brook Emeritus Faculty Association**, the **Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College**, and the **SUNY Retirees Service Corps** will show conference attendees what those organizations and program are doing to reach out to campus retirees and the community. Among the several timely retiree-oriented presentations: a workshop on **Elder Law** and breakout sessions on **Medicare, Social Security, Social Media and Internet Safety**, and **Lifelong Learning Options**.
- 5 NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES:** Where else will you have the chance to network with retirees and retiree program and retiree organization coordinators from all across SUNY? The October 13th *Stronger Together* conference will include several opportunities for attendees to compare experiences and speak with presenters/panelists.
- 6 OPTIONAL TOUR OF THE FARMINGDALE DEPARTMENT OF URBAN HORTICULTURE & DESIGN TEACHING GARDENS/ GREENHOUSE:** <http://www.farmingdale.edu/business/urban-horticulture/teaching-gardens.shtml> - Just indicate your interest to take the tour (at no extra charge) on the online conference registration form.
- 7 MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK:** You’d be hard-pressed to find a better value for the modest registration fee of \$25. You’ll get continental breakfast, first-rate presentations, practical handouts, a hot lunch, networking opportunities, and information you can bring back to your campus to improve the connection with your retirees and community.

MOVIES NOW & THEN: NORMAN

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

In *NORMAN* (Joseph Cedar, 2017) and in *PRETTY WOMAN* (Gary Marshall, 1990), Richard Gere is cast as very different characters. But these films, made and set twenty-seven years apart, and attracting different sections of the movie-going audience, seem to share an important basic commonality: each invites the viewer to look kindly at the central character and to ultimately overlook his unkindness.

The earlier film, *PRETTY WOMAN*, has a happy ending. It is a modern version of the basic plot of the *CINDERELLA* story. At its surface, it is a romantic and ultimately a somewhat positive love story, but it is a deep deterioration of the version of the story we know from fairytale films and current children's texts. Here, Cinderella (Julia Roberts) is a prostitute with her heart of gold intact, a streetwalker on Hollywood Boulevard who meets and connects with the classy contemporary Prince figure (Richard Gere), a match that might last.

The fairy-godmother figure is played by the manager of the hotel she frequents. His task is to transfer her into a figure acceptable to the elegant Prince's social strata. The hotel manager (Hector Elizondo) shows her how to set a proper table, polish silverware, and act a bit refined. His magic-wand function continues: to change her tacky street-ware into beautiful outfits. The wand works in the form of a note he gives her, a pass to employees he knows in an upscale clothing boutique where previously they wouldn't help her. She goes, gets service and advice, and emerges with great outfits. She is looking good, and her full,

relatively respectable access to things classy is well on its way.

Gere plays the Prince as a self-satisfied wheeler-dealer, whose high status is not hereditary but monetary. He reigns in the kingdom of riches. He builds confidence with owners of less than top-drawer big businesses, smashes them into small ones, and sneakily



sells them for big bucks. He swaggers in his savvy style. Money is his main interest. He is a less than admirable person. Gradually, Cinderella's sweetness etc. seems to win him over, but his career line seems to stay the same: rising over everybody. In retrospect, the happily-ever-after part of this Cinderella

experience seems vague, but the leads do wind up together and the happy-ending played well to more than forty-two million moviegoers.

Actually, an earlier print version of the Cinderella tale, Grimm's (1815), is much rougher – such as toes on big feet going under the knife to fit the glass slipper.

In *NORMAN*, Richard Gere plays a fixer. He has an appearance that in its frequency almost becomes iconic: face worn-looking, wooly cap with ear flaps pulled down, eyes glancing back and forth as he walks the busy streets of the Big Apple in a classic shoulder-padded prep-schooly camel's hair coat with a hand-stitched collar. His ear plugs connect to the phone and computer and whatever in the black bag that's slung over his shoulder. He uses Internet information to find when and where important meetings are bringing influential people to town, walks around big-money neighborhoods like the Upper East Side, where important people could be run into, looking to make contacts and arrangements with them; some kind of deal, something he could fix for some powerful person in their influential socio-political bubble and accordingly gain something: maybe money, or maybe some prestige? Or respect?

In one of many fixer moves, he identifies, waits for, tags along and shops with a potentially good future connection – a politician visiting from Israel – and buys him a gift of the special shoes the man



Movies Now & Then, continued from page 21

needs but cannot get at his home. Norman's face tells us he has paid a price that empties his pockets.

As the film goes on, (avoiding spoilers here,) we see him lying, flattering, and deceiving the innocent, promising the improbable and even the impossible. But there are moments when he seems almost nice, when strong sympathy intrudes. In one powerful, moving moment, Gere holds a long silent lasting close-up that seems the best moment of his performance, when theatre audiences' glad feelings might run high. We see our fixer meeting with hearty applause from a large, high-level assembly of important people. And he gets that trending millennial gesture of affection and achievement: a big hug, with back taps.

What is the combination of greedy, needy, nasty, lonely, and weak that could describe Norman? To what extent is Israeli director Cedar's background suggestion of the existence of a secretive multi-national political and financial fixer class eclipsed by the distracting movements of his main character?

There is disagreement among viewers over whether Norman can or should be looked on with any kindness, and whether his bad stuff can be overlooked. Either way, he is no Prince of a guy.

The compelling conclusion of NORMAN and Richard Gere's outstanding performance are among many reasons to view this film. It has a subtitle: THE MODERATE RISE AND TRAGIC FALL OF A NEW YORK FIXER.

AS VIEWERS SEE IT

Did you see NORMAN?

Tell us what you thought about it by completing a brief SurveyMonkey online poll at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LTWZ2MX>

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



AS VIEWERS SAW IT

"LA LA LAND": A Brief Viewers' Survey Synopsis

In the Spring/Summer 2017 issue of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*, we asked readers who saw LA LA LAND to complete a brief online survey. Here are the results:

- Film buffs liked it better than regular movie goers, but no raves.
- Sebastian's sister was considered an insignificant minor character, totally forgettable.
- Not everybody was charmed by LA LA LAND's music.
- The restaurant manager who fired Ryan Gosling from his mood-music piano job was identified by a viewer as J.K. Simmons and pointed him out as a player on LAW AND ORDER. (*Simmons was Dr. Emil Skoda, the psychiatrist, on all three versions of that program. He can now be seen in Farmers Insurance TV commercials which feature images of strange and unusual accidents – "covered!" And he co-starred in LA LA LAND director Damien Chazelle's earlier film, WHIPLASH, as the orchestra leader, for which Simmons received the Best Supporting Actor Oscar.*)
- The ending of LA LA LAND was called contrived, pleasant, unexpected, and the best thing about a predictable film.

Seven Good Reasons, continued from page 20

If you're now convinced that the **Stronger Together** conference is worth attending, you can register online at <https://fs9.form-site.com/zetadonut/form103/index.html?1498760242587>. Be sure to register by the **Friday, September 29th** deadline. You won't regret it.

I commend the co-sponsors of **Stronger Together** – the SUNY Retirees Service Corps and Farmingdale State College – as well as the Conference Planning Committee for putting together such a thought-provoking and timely event.

We hope to see you there!

YOUTH VS. AGE: A 21ST CENTURY GUIDE

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



Not long ago it was easy to spot a senior citizen: his hair was gray; his vision, poor; his hearing diminished; his gait, slowed.

All this has changed. Clairol

makes gray locks easy to conceal; cataract surgery makes the newspaper obits a snap to read; minuscule hearing aids allow even faint sounds to be heard, and due diligence on the treadmill erases the stumbling gait.

But there is still much to distinguish Seniors from Millennials. It is not only the storehouse of memories that we have, but the habits that we maintain.

Most AARP members still use a telephone to share good news with family, hoping to bring unexpected joy into their lives, or, to impart sad news to a friend, hoping to glean comfort for a new disappointment that's come their way. Not so with today's generation. The cell phone is a part of their necessary apparel, but

it is seldom used for telephone calls.

TEXTING is the preferred mode. They text one another in the classroom, in a bar, in their home, everywhere. To do this speedily, they've acquired a skill that most seniors do not have: they text with their thumbs. No longer is the keyboard used with the 10 fingers we were given at birth; touch-typing is non-existent. Thumbs rule the day.

THE CAMERA, as most of us know it, is something the younger generation is acquainted with only from hearsay. Cell phone photos have replaced Kodak's prints. They shoot endlessly with their iPhones, and instantly email the photos to friends in the next room or the next state.

The treasured photo album with the black corner adhesives is something for which they cannot even imagine a use.

THE PHONE BOOK, too, is something they know not of. There is no need to lug out of the back closet the 300-page phone book, long famous for both its heft and its tiny print. Want to order a pizza? Check Google. Want to look up an old girlfriend? Check Google. The

INFORMATION 411 Operator is something they know of only from history books.

MAPS fall into the same category. We remember when paper maps were folded neatly and stored in the glove compartment of our cars. No longer so. If the GPS can't find it, there is always GOOGLE MAPS. Their benefits are many: presumably they are always current, do not tear, and cannot be misplaced.

BOARD GAMES such as Monopoly or Trivial Pursuit have also waned in popularity with this generation. Their allegiance to electronics carries over to games: video games such as "Angry Birds" have spawned new millionaires for their developers. Thousands and thousands of young folks sit before a



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computer and try to destroy pigs with a slingshot.

TELEVISION is also on the wane amongst this population. Why wait a week to see if the mansion at Downton Abbey will really be sold? This cohort would rather wait a season and then get the entire series from Netflix. Why ruin a good soccer game to watch the President's press conference? They'll stream it the next day on HULU.

WRISTWATCHES have lost their glamour; the cell phone – always on hand – serves as a perfect timepiece. It's propped beside them while they drink their lattes at Starbucks and while they do their homework at their desks. When in the gym, they affix it to an armband or a pocket. It is an essential appendage and if lost, it is immediately replaced. Imme-

diately.

The most startling difference between the Millennials and the more senior amongst us is the way they view PRIVACY. This used to be a value to safe-guarded. Children were taught not to reveal too much about their family's habits, quirks, battles, food preferences, leisure pursuits, religious beliefs, etc. For incidences that might embarrass the family, the guideline was "Don't air your dirty laundry in public." Not so today. All is fair game for the public, and one need not wait until someone asks.

The 21st century has put its hex on privacy, and heralded transparency in all of one's ventures. The young people today Tweet to the world where they are having lunch, when they have digestive problems, with whom they've made a sexual

conquest, when they've arrived at the pizza store, and even what

sort of topping they've ordered. "Who's interested?," we might say. But obviously many are, or Twitter and Facebook would not have captured so many devoted adherents who would sooner give up their wallets than lose their Facebook walls.

It's not the Medicare card that distinguishes Us from Them; it's the Facebook account.

Now in retirement in Portland, Oregon, Sivia Kaye enjoys her hobbies of trying to master both Bridge and the computer. She is frustrated in both, but refuses to give up.



ABOUT LONELINESS

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.

More people would rather suffer considerable physical pain than the excruciating feeling of loneliness. It is a strange feeling. Something we can't put our finger on, something most of us want to avoid at all cost. It creeps up on us unexpectedly early in the morning, in the middle of a party, even while vacationing in Florida.

Different from solitude, which can often be a good feeling, loneliness is the cause of many illnesses and suicides, especially among teenagers and the elderly. We try to escape it by overeating, heavy drinking, pathological shopping, unnecessary trips to doctors and, especially, by burying ourselves in work. All of these are short-lived cures.

In addition, because our lives tend to isolate us from each other through cars, computers and television, we have fewer opportunities for any kind of physical contacts. We have almost grown afraid to touch one another. And yet, someone who holds our hand when we are scared or lonely often provides a great deal of comfort and well-being.

Even petting a dog or cat has proven an effective means of lowering heart rates and blood pressure.

Real friends – people who know our faults and still like us – are a precious source of comfort. Reaching out to people is worthwhile at any age. Fear of rejection should not keep us from trying. There is some truth in this Persian proverb: "It is better to be in chains with friends than in a garden with strangers."

RETIREMENT STORY

Dr. Jennifer G. Sneed

Senior Vice President (Retired), Charter Schools Institute



Editor's Note: Jennifer's story is the second of two additional examples of submissions received in response to Dr. Ram Chugh's *Lessons from Retirement Experiences Survey* that was described on page 3 of the Spring/Summer 2017 [SUNY Retirees Newsletter issue](#). 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.

Initially, retirement felt like "free-fall." Moving from a job that demanded my full attention, that filled my days (and often evenings, nights and weekends) with time-sensitive activities and tasks which had immediate effect(s) on young people's lives to an almost blank slate was both exciting and challenging. Trying to find my footing probably took a few months, and I had to give myself permission to experiment. One of the benefits of being retired is that should you try

something and it is not fulfilling, you can stop doing it and try something else.

My church, the Macedonia Baptist Church in Albany, NY, has been a significant part of my life for over 25 years. However, my work schedule had prevented me from contributing as much as I might have wanted over many of those years. My retirement happened to coincide with the church moving to a different and larger facility as the result of the growth in membership. It was at a critical transition juncture and there was a need for additional people to support leadership and strategic planning as it moved forward. I joined the team working on those areas.

involved not only the non-profit affiliated with my church (Macedonia Initiatives in Community Development - MICD) but over 300 community volunteers. The result is a playground that now stands next to the church for use by the community (2012).

Another project that has pushed me to grow in an unexpected and surprising way is the expansion of the audiovisual system in the church. I've always enjoyed technology, i.e. loved computers since their early days; I was an early adopter of internet communication (Prodigy) and online banking, etc. The church was looking to expand its reach, beyond the four walls. The leadership



One of the projects I was able to play a lead in was the writing of a successful grant to the KaBOOM organization, a non-profit that works with communities to build playgrounds for children. I co-wrote the grant with an individual who worked on the Pediatric Bereavement team of the Capital Region Community Hospice. The project was several months in the planning and ultimately

team knew the church needed to upgrade its sound system and discussions led to not only upgrading the sound but expanding to include visual elements and online streaming. I provided the leadership in researching what would best fill the audio, visual and streaming needs of the church and then led the project to design and install that system. The project began in 2012 and the system was

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installed in 2014. As of this writing, we have been streaming now for over three years. We have an Audiovisual Ministry with almost 20 people. At this point, I recruit, coordinate the training, and schedule people to cover the audio and visual needs for services and programs throughout the facility...and it is a very busy facility with many community organizations utilizing the space for meetings and other activities.

The church's Music and Arts Ministry has also always been a part of my life, but since retiring my involvement in that arena has also grown. In working on the Music and Arts Ministry's leadership team, I was able to help design the Summer Music and Arts Institute. The Summer Institute provided classes (open to the public) in voice, instrument and liturgical dance. The Institute took place on four consecutive Saturdays and culminated in an abbreviated performance as part of the final Saturday. We conducted the Summer Music and Arts Institute for four years. In 2015 we decided to fold these classes into the church's growing schedule of classes and workshops throughout the year.

Although it seems that I have totally left the educational field, in addition to the church activities I have had the opportunity to consult with schools, both charter and traditional, regarding their effectiveness in increasing student learning. I have consulted in areas

across the country, i.e. Denver, Chicago, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Charlotte, Louisiana and Indianapolis. Typically I have worked through another organization to lead teams of educators into schools to evaluate instruction, assessment, professional development, organizational leadership and other key areas. These visits have ranged from two to four days and often culminate with an action planning session. Other areas in which I have consulted include charter school authorizer evaluations, charter applicant coaching, and providing expert analysis of charter application award decisions.

In addition to the church and consulting activities, I've always been physically active and continue to keep activities like kayaking, hiking/walking and biking in the schedule. Since retiring, however, I've also been able to commit to the practice of yoga. I tried several studios and finally found one that worked for both my schedule and my location. Yoga is the one class that I try to never miss and it's now been seven years! My overall strength and flexibility have increased,



as well as my ability to remain more balanced mentally.

Last, but by no means least, I love traveling and experiencing different sights and cultures. We have taken the opportunity to travel domestically to see parts of the great United States, such as the Thousand Islands region of New York State, Illinois, California, and Colorado. Internationally, since retiring we've taken some time to visit China, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Jamaica, Barbados, England, Scotland, Wales, Puerto Rico, Aruba, Costa Rica, Columbia and Panama. Being retired has also provided me with the opportunity to visit my mother in Illinois as often as I like. She's 92.

Retirement life is quite full and satisfying. I'll see what new and exciting projects may come my way in the future.

Advice to current SUNY employees who are planning to retire:

Realizing that we are all different and that there is no one way to retire (or practically anything else), I would offer the following pieces of advice:

- Give yourself permission not to know exactly what you're going to do every minute.
- Feel free to try something and then say you don't like it or it's not what you expected.
- Have many experiences - activities, classes, adventures.
- Exercise is really important. If you don't have one, find some type of physical activity that you enjoy doing and do it consistently.
- If it isn't bringing you joy, laughter, excitement, peace, let it go.

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 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 or (518) 320-1354. To learn more about the SUNY RSC, visit 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.

THE LAST WORD

FIRST, AND LASTING IMPRESSIONS OF SUNY

by Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor Emerita

Editor's Note: Dr. Zimpher stepped down as SUNY chancellor recently after serving in that role for eight years. She was the first female leader of New York's 64-campus public university system and SUNY's longest-serving chancellor since the mid-1980s. Dr. Kristina M. Johnson became SUNY's thirteenth chancellor on September 5th.



I met The State University of New York in 2009. In June of that year I became the sixty-year-old system's twelfth chancellor, and I immediately embarked on a campus-by-campus

tour to get to know the state and the institution, to discover how we could elevate SUNY across the board to a new level of excellence.

On the road, over the course of one hundred days, I met a university system that felt like a loose constellation of schools. There were heralded colleges, universities, and programs among them, and many of them were doing a good job producing skilled, knowledgeable graduates. But it quickly became clear to me that we weren't making the most of being a system. We weren't thinking or acting in the kind of coordinated, disciplined way that could empower us to do the best job we possibly could to serve the people of New York.

In New York State today, about 70 percent of jobs require a college degree

but only 46 percent of adults have one, putting millions of New Yorkers at a disadvantage that translates into fewer career choices, limited mobility, and low income. It doesn't have to be this way. Frankly, it *can't* be this way: New York's strength and vibrancy depend on closing that gap.

Eight years ago, SUNY looked in the mirror. We assessed our strengths and our students' and New York's needs, and we set clear goals for improvement. Together, we forged and followed a bold strategic plan. We advocated for and won a rational tuition plan. We created from the ground up multiple initiatives – seamless transfer, Smart Track, Open SUNY, applied learning, and dozens more – to make SUNY more accessible and to help students finish their degrees on time and protect them from debt. We are reinventing and elevating teacher training. We made history in sexual assault prevention and diversity-building measures. We increased transparency and accountability. We built working partnerships with our colleagues in K-12 to create seamless education pipelines in New York and to make sure that when students finish high school, they're ready to succeed in whatever comes next.

All of this system-defining, progressive, transformative work happened at the hands of many – because of the care, expertise, and dedication of thousands in the SUNY family, and that includes you, our SUNY retirees.

Public higher education is in the business of creating opportunity, of creating knowledgeable, skilled, conscientious citizens and professionals. We know that with more education, people are more likely to be more civically engaged. Countries with more educated citizens have stronger economies, more stable

governments, and an over-all higher quality of life. This is the picture of a society that we at SUNY envision and that we work toward realizing together every day, every year.

SUNY's mission does not change. It is forever grounded in our unwavering, solemn commitment to serve all New Yorkers – to put higher education within reach for everyone, to offer the widest spectrum of courses and degrees, and to ensure that any and everyone who attends a SUNY school feels safe, welcome, and hopeful for their future.

What I have learned for certain over the last eight years, what I have been more convinced of every day, is the inexhaustibility of SUNY's potential to do good for the state and good in the world. So, thank you.

Thank you to the members of our Board of Trustees for their confidence in the vision we forged together. Thank you to SUNY's tens of thousands of faculty, for sharing their expertise in the thousands of fields, disciplines, and initiatives our system encompasses.

Thank you to our impressive retiree corps, this legion of experts and support who have remained engaged in the SUNY community past their time of official service. Thank you for being strong voices, speaking to the truth of the necessity and value of public higher education. Thank you for your dedication to your colleagues and communities, your students and your research, to elevating SUNY to new levels of excellence. Thank you for all of this, and for your partnership in building The State University of New York that we know today—a cohesive, focused, dynamic, and coordinated system that is ready to meet the challenging needs of a changing world.