

In this Issue

SUNY Retirees Conference Creates New Connections.....	1
Monroe Community College's "Retirees: Advocates for Education" Program.....	3
SUNY Retiree Profile: Brian Betz (Oswego)	4
SUNY Retiree Profile: Roger J. Cheng (UAlbany)	4
Do You Have a Story to Tell?.....	7
New York State's Historic Sites: George & Martha Washington at Newburgh, NY	7
The Retired Public Employees Association.....	9
AROHE's 8th National Biennial Conference Set for Seattle.....	10
Surgery for Solos.....	11
Campus Retiree Organization Profile: SUNY Oneonta Retired Faculty, Professionals and Administrators Association.....	13
How to Stop Worrying	15
Top 10 Scams Targeting Seniors.....	15
Campus Retiree Organization Profile: The Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College	18
About the SUNY Retirees Newsletter	20
Campus Retiree Program and Retiree Organization Contact Information	20
Health Matters: The Challenge of Family Caregiving.....	21
Penmanship: An Art or a Relic?.....	22
Movies Now and Then.....	23
Comments, Content Suggestions?	23
The Last Word: NYSUNY 2020 by SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher	24

SUNY Retirees Conference Creates New Connections

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



President Steady Moono welcomes attendees to SUNY Retirees Conference at Schenectady County Community College

Nearly 70 attendees from 24 SUNY campuses and three non-SUNY organizations converged on [Schenectady County Community College](http://www.sccc.edu) (SCCC) on October 21st, 2015 for the fourth biennial SUNY Retirees Conference. The Schenectady, NY campus served as the backdrop for **Creating New Connections**, which was co-sponsored by the SUNY Retirees Service Corps, Schenectady County Community College, and the Retirees Association of Schenectady County Community College.

Conference participants included SUNY retirees, campus HR and benefits administrators, individuals overseeing the existing SUNY campus retiree programs and organizations, and retirees and staff interested in starting a retiree organization at their campus.

A variety of notable speakers addressed diverse topics of interest to retirees and current SUNY employees alike. A panel discussion examined the challenges

faced and the best practices utilized by SUNY campuses' retiree programs and organizations regarding maintaining and furthering connections between retirees, their former colleagues and campuses – the overarching theme of the conference.

Attendees networked, re-connected with former colleagues, and explored the creation of new retiree programs. See the "Highlights" article on the SUNY Retirees Service Corps website at [http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/2015-SUNY-Retirees-Conf.-Panel-Discussion-Highlights-\(web\).pdf](http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/retirees/2015-SUNY-Retirees-Conf.-Panel-Discussion-Highlights-(web).pdf) for details regarding the conference panel discussion on retaining and expanding retiree involvement in SUNY campus retiree programs and organizations.

Below are summaries of the three *Creating New Connections* conference presentations. The accompanying PowerPoint slides from each presenter are available on the SUNY Retirees



The 2015 SUNY Retirees Conference gets underway

Service Corps website at www.suny.edu/retirees/conferences/2015-suny-retirees-conf-powerpoint-presentations/.

SUNY Cradle to Career

Vanessa Threatte, Executive Director of the New York State Cradle to Career Alliance, described how SUNY views education as a continuum that begins at birth and is carried on through school, college, career, and even into retirement.

She said SUNY's Office of the Education Pipeline is establishing a series of systemic and sustainable regional education networks across the state and bringing together partners who have signed on to strengthen this educational continuum.

SUNY's partners include leaders in Pre-K-12 schools, higher education, business and industry, community organizations, government leaders, parents and other stakeholders who are committed to helping children succeed from birth through careers.

Threatte told how SUNY, through its partnership with StriveTogether (www.strivetgether.org), is helping communities all around the state to [adapt a framework for civic infrastructure](#) to serve as the foundation of their cradle to career efforts.

Partnerships have officially launched in Albany, Astoria/Long Island City, Clinton County, Geneva, Harlem, Rochester South Bronx and Yonkers; Threatte said many more are starting to take shape. Together these local partnerships form the **New York State Cradle to Career Alliance** at SUNY, which is the first statewide network of its kind in the nation.

To learn more, go to <http://www.suny.edu/cradletocareer/> or see Vanessa Threatte's PowerPoint presentation on the SUNY RSC website.

Retiree Health Insurance Regulations and Options Update

Michele Howe, Member Services Unit Supervisor from the New York State Department of Civil Service's Employee Benefits Division (EBD) and EBD Program Manager Travis Clause gave a presentation and Q&A session on the New York State Health Insurance Program, more commonly known as NYSHIP.

New York State and some local government employees and retirees are provided health insurance benefits through NYSHIP. There are two types of plans available through the program: The Empire Plan (four parts) and NYSHIP HMOs. Howe and Clause described the features of each type of plan and explained how the New York State Department of Civil Service Employee Benefits Division administers NYSHIP.

Questions on enrollment, eligibility or billing should be directed to EBD. See the slide below for Employee Benefits Division contact information. Questions on claims and how they are paid should be directed to your carrier, either the Empire Plan or the HMO you are enrolled in.

To access NYSHIP on your computer, go to the web address above, click on the

To Contact EBD

Phone: 518-457-5754 or 1-800-833-4344

Address: NYS Department of Civil Service
Employee Benefits Division
Albany, NY 12239

Fax: 518-485-5590

Web site: www.cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits

olive-colored "Retirees" icon on the right of the screen, click on "Health Benefits," and you will be brought to the NYSHIP Online page. From there, you can learn about health benefits and option transfer, using your benefits, Medicare, find forms and providers, and use the MyNYSHIP – Enrollee Self-Service feature.

To learn more about the New York State Health Insurance Program, see Michele Howe's PowerPoint presentation at www.suny.edu/retirees/conferences/2015-suny-retirees-conf-powerpoint-presentations/.

Retirement Income and Estate Planning

Ryan Lambert, CPFR, Senior Financial Planner/Functional Manager, Lambert & Spratt Financial Partners, came to the SUNY Retirees Conference with a PowerPoint presentation prepared and ready to go, but ended up spending his entire session answering numerous audience questions about retirement



SUNY Retirees Conference attendees network at the luncheon banquet in Schenectady County Community College's elegant Van Curler Room

income, TIAA-CREF [now known as TIAA], and estate planning.

The Latham, NY-based financial planner advised retiree attendees to keep in mind the following:

- Make sure you have both long-term and short-term investments. In many cases, being totally conservative with all of your retirement assets just means you will have very little volatility...as you run out of money.
- Remember the tax implication of your withdrawals. Money coming from a 403b, Traditional IRA or 401k are all taxable as income. When it passes to the next generation, the proceeds will be added to their income.
- Have an updated Estate plan. With Estate planning, there is only one chance to get it right. Speak to an attorney and a financial planner to make sure all of your accounts, insurance policies and legal

documents have the correct beneficiaries. If you die with no will, New York State has a process that must be followed for how your estate will be distributed.

Readers with questions or comments may contact Lambert at rlambert1@metlife.com. Also feel free to visit his firm's website – www.lambertandsprattfp.com.

In addition to the various presentations and forums, the SUNY Retirees Conference featured a luncheon banquet prepared and served by students of SCCC's prestigious [School of Hotel, Culinary Arts & Tourism](#) and a tour of SCCC's acclaimed [School of Music](#) as well as a performance by the SCCC Jazz Combo.

The SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) will explore the possibility of holding future SUNY Retirees Conferences in different regions of the state.

MCC retirees return to help students succeed

Monroe Community College's "Retirees: Advocates for Education" Program

by Janet Ekis, College Relations Specialist, Monroe Community College

Thirty-three year old Sandra Rogers, a native of Liberia, enjoys her work with the elderly residents of a local nursing home. She began taking MCC courses a few years ago without declaring a major. However, Rogers eventually decided to build upon her easy rapport with the people she cares for and pursue a nursing career. That decision was a monumental one. "I suddenly knew why I was here," she said.

Rogers also knew she would have to conquer math and chemistry – two subjects that she's never considered strengths. That's when she signed up for tutoring through MCC's "Retirees: Advocates for Education" program and began to work with Professor Emeritus John Cullen.

Professor Cullen spent more than 20 years teaching chemistry at MCC. After retiring in 2006, he decided to return and resume a part of his career he'd always loved: helping students learn. These days, he spends part of two days a week tutoring them in chemistry and lower-level math courses. "The students are eager," he said. "They want to be there. Their enthusiasm makes the experience rewarding – rewarding and fun."



MCC Prof. Emeritus John Cullen tutoring student Sandra Rogers

Last year, 13 MCC retirees-turned-college volunteers helped more than 100 students from 23 different programs. They proctored tests for students with disabilities, coached non-native English speaking students in conversation and led 356 one-on-one and small group tutoring sessions.

"I wouldn't have passed chemistry without Professor Cullen's help," said Rogers. "I have a lot of responsibilities outside of school. It's hard. But I have more confidence now. I'm a different person – a more determined one."

SUNY Retiree Profile**Brian Betz, Ph.D., SUNY Oswego**

by Tyler Edic, Associate Director of Communications (Oswego Class of '13)



Prof. Emeritus Brian Betz, Ph.D., sits on the shaded porch of the Oswego home he shares with his wife, Beth

Brian Betz, Professor Emeritus of Communication Studies, started his storied career as a clergyman.

Born Richard Ferdinand Betz, he took the name Brian when he became a monk. He entered the seminary when he was 14 years old to become a priest, and later a monk, where he started on his path to education, teaching speech correction and language in the monastery in St. Meinrad, Ind.

Betz left the priesthood to pursue master's and doctorate degrees in communication studies at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., and married his wife, Beth. The couple later had Brian (Oswego Class of '95), and the family moved to Oswego in 1977. Betz interviewed for teaching jobs around the country, but ultimately arrived at SUNY Oswego's communication studies department.

Then-chair, Lewis B. O'Donnell, Ph.D., after whom the annual Media Summit is named, assigned Betz some of the more challenging tasks, like mentoring a student who had been incarcerated. "He figured because I had been a priest, I could deal with difficult situations," Betz said.

O'Donnell was right. During Betz's appointment as chaplain of the Woodmere State Mental Hospital in Evansville, Ind., a disturbed man walked into his office with a loaded gun. "He said, 'Are you a priest?'" Betz recollected. "And I said, 'Yes, I am.' Then he pulled out a handgun, which looked like a double barrel shotgun at the time." Betz remembers being scared, but recalled the Catholic belief of "Refugium Peccatorum," or the refuge of sinners, as he calmly talked with the man and successfully convinced him not to take his own life.

"All of those experiences, talking about conflict and so forth, helped me teach," he said.

At SUNY Oswego, Betz taught various communication classes in the department. He said that, as a curriculum, "Communications isn't burdened with a long history. It provides a flexibility, which I think is good." Betz was known for his humor and compassion toward his students as well as his coworkers.

He served as president of SUNY Oswego's chapter of United University Professionals (UUP), the union for faculty on campus, advocating for benefits and negotiating contracts.

Part of his legacy at Oswego is the development of the peer review center.

Since retiring in 2001, Betz has enjoyed traveling with his wife, Beth. The couple enjoys the occasional drive through campus on their way to Rudy's, and relaxing at Breitbeck Park in Oswego.

- SUNY Retiree Profile
- **Roger J. Cheng,**
- **Research**
- **Associate**
- **(Emeritus)**
- **Atmospheric Sciences**
- **Research Center,**
- **University at Albany**

- In 1957, I borrowed money for a one-way plane ticket from Taiwan to the United States looking to further my education and opportunities. To me, it was the chance of a lifetime. I was born in 1929 among millions of peasants in the poor farm country of Kaifeng, China. As a boy, I loved to take electronic devices apart and then reassemble them. I also loved photography. Both of these interests would become pivotal talents in my adult career. During the Communist Revolution in 1948, I left for Taiwan to expand my educational horizons.

- I was very fortunate and honored to be mentored by TWO GIANTS in the field of Atmospheric Science during my 50-year professional career in the United States.

- First, at Florida State University (1960-1965), where I became a technical assistant working for **Dr. Seymour Hess**, head of meteorology and an expert on the atmosphere of Mars. I helped design very sensitive equipment (hygrometers) to measure "water vapor" in the Martian atmosphere in an experiment to confirm that the white caps on Mars were ice (water) and not frozen carbon dioxide. This was a part of a NASA project for future Martian exploration. Fast-forward to 2015, and NASA confirmed the existence of water on Mars thanks, in small part, to my research some 50 years ago.

- In 1966, I came to New York as a research assistant for \$1.25 per hour, working for 10 hours a week at the



Atmospheric Sciences Research Center (ASRC) at UAlbany. I served as the research assistant for **Dr. Vincent J. Schaefer**, the Center's founder in 1960 and director from 1965 until his retirement in 1976. One year after I joined the ASRC, Dr. Schaefer gave me the opportunity to create and manage the **Laboratory for Atmospheric Particulate Analysis** where, for over 30 years, I used the light microscope and the scanning electron microscope to study the unseen secrets of the weather, the ocean, and the environment.

A major project funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) done in cooperation with ASRC Director Dr. Volker Mohnen, the Chief Scientist of the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and a professor at RPI allowed me to use the new modern equipment from my lab in a detailed investigation of the emissions from oil-and coal-burning power plants, acid rain formation and their impact on our environment.

I was the primary author for four major reports published as a result of the study. All were featured as cover articles in: *Journal of Air Pollution Control* (1976, 1984), *Analytical Chemistry* (1987), EPA Report (1979) and the Chinese book *Air Pollution and Control* (1985).

Also based on this study, I was co-author of two major publications on Power Plant Emissions and Climate Change authored by **Dr. Petr Chylek**. He has published over 100 scientific papers and his work has been cited more than 4,000 times. Chylek is best known for his work in remote sensing, aerosols and climate change.

China Connection

At the suggestion of Dr. Schaefer, I coordinated a science exchange program for UAlbany between the ASRC and Chinese atmospheric and environmental research institutions. This program was in place for 35 years (1980-2005), and many of the connections I established still exist today.

I was invited as one of the Chinese-Americans in a 35-member American delegation attending the first U.S./China Conference on Energy Resources and Environment in Beijing in 1982. I was also the only Chinese-American in a 14-member American delegation participating at the U.S./China Air Pollution Technology Workshop in Nanjing and Beijing in 1985.

At the request of the Director of the Taiwan Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), I arranged and led a delegation to the Workshop on Indoor Air Pollution and Environmental Health at National Taiwan University in 1989 with three top US scientists from Harvard (Dr. John Spengler, who graduated from the ASRC), MIT and the U.S. EPA.

Recognition and Honors

Dr. Walter C. McCrone, chairman of the International Conference on Microscopy (INTER/MICRO), presented me with two first-place awards for my presentations at INTER/MICRO in 1970 and 1972. This meant a great deal to me because Dr. McCrone was my teacher and mentor. As director of the McCrone Research Institute, he trained me how to use a microscope and he opened my eyes to the "Micro-World in the Atmosphere."

The State University of New York recognized me in 1978 with the first SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service to be received by a member of the UAlbany Atmospheric Sciences Research Center (ASRC).

I was also awarded "The Outstanding Alumnus Award of the Year 2010" from National Taiwan Normal University, from which I graduated in 1954.

While working in the lab at the UAlbany ASRC, I made observations utilizing photomicrographs in three major research fields: environmental science, through the study of acid rain; cloud physics, based on the study of frozen water drops; and marine aerosols, which I discovered were hollow and not solid as formerly believed. Each of my discoveries has been confirmed by recognized authorities in the field – often years later – leading some of my colleagues to call me a visionary ahead of many of my peers. I found this most humbling.

My discoveries have been recognized both nationally and internationally, not only for the science revealed by my photographs obtained by the light microscope and the scanning electron microscope, but also for their elegance and beauty. For years these photographs have been in wide demand by editors of both popular and scientific magazines. One graced the cover of *Science* magazine. My photomicrographs have also appeared on the cover of more than 30 international science journals and magazines and have been cited in *National Geographic*, *Scientific American*, and *Smithsonian*.

Community Service and Life after Retirement

Although I retired from the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center in 2000 after 34

Roger J. Cheng continued from page 6



Dr. Vincent J. Schaefer (Mentor, Teacher & Friend) and Roger J. Cheng

years, it did not decrease my enthusiasm for science. Quite the contrary:

I still visit my contemporaries in China whom I had met as part of the scientific exchange program between the ASRC and the Chinese scientific community. I continue to call Guilderland, NY my home.

Following Dr. Schaefer's life-long goal, I have continued to dedicate myself to community service and science education for talented, young students.

My first taste of American-style community service and science education was through the Natural Sciences Institute summer program, which gave hundreds of high school students from all over the United States the opportunity to work with scientists and on their own to do field research and experimentation. Dr. Schaefer developed the Institute, which he ran under the auspices of the ASRC between 1962 and 1968. I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Schaefer's teenage budding scientists when he was working in the field.

That experience inspired me many years later to put together a major, two-month long exhibition of my photomicrographs at the Schenectady Museum and Planetarium/ New York Science Center in 2007. Called

"The Story of Three Water Drops," the exhibit showed how the study of a single drop of water could challenge existing knowledge, and illustrated the very essence of the Museum's mission: to inspire a sense of wonder about extraordinary scientific and technological developments – past, present and future. As part of the program, I had the opportunity to discuss my work with attendees while they explored the exhibit and enjoyed special children's activities. My objective was to open people's minds

and hopefully inspire the next generation of scientists.

During my retirement, I have continued to embrace technology in a big way. I created a website – www.rogerjcheng.com – containing all of my research papers, magazine covers, and many hundreds of my photographs. It is a science education project for the science teacher, student and researcher who wants to know more about the atmosphere and who cares about the preservation of our environment.

I produced a full-scale profile on LinkedIn – <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rogerjcheng> – which contains links to eight presentations I posted in 2014 and 2015.

I put my "50 Years Anniversary – Atmospheric Research & Science Education" and ten other presentations on SlideShare at <http://www.slideshare.net/ROGERJCHENG/>. I was notified on October 5, 2013 that The White House had started following me on SlideShare. What an honor!

I'm even on Google+ (<https://plus.google.com/+RogerJCHENG>) and Twitter (@ROGERJCHENG).

Retirement is better than I had imagined. It has allowed me to do many things I wanted but didn't have the time for before. If you are a recent SUNY retiree, here's a little advice: Just do everything you always wanted to do!



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, State University Construction Fund, and affiliated organizations.

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.

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/newsletters/>.

New York State's Historic Sites

George & Martha Washington at Newburgh, NY

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



Editor's Note:
The SUNY Retirees Newsletter is pleased to welcome its newest columnist, Dr. Daniel Marrone. He is a professor emeritus of Business and Management Technology at Farmingdale, where he spent the last 28

*years of his teaching career before retiring in 2015. Dr. Marrone started his SUNY career at Hudson Valley Community College, where he worked from 1984 to 1987. He has written 18 articles for the SUNY University Faculty Senate Bulletin. Last year, he completed his first book, **New York Heroes: Herkimer, Lincoln, TR, & La Guardia**, which is available now on www.amazon.com. During the last several months, Dr. Marrone has been researching and writing **Theodore Roosevelt & Cecil Spring Rice in WWI**. He may compile enough new content in about a year for a second book.*

Pulitzer Prize-winning George Washington biographer James Thomas Flexner (1908-2003) referred to the iconic figure as the "Indispensable Man." While Flexner was eminently correct in his tribute, Martha Washington's enduring care for her husband enabled him to serve with his troops at battlefields and encampments for more than eight arduous years during the American Revolution. Martha helped the General emotionally and physically in withstanding the huge stresses brought upon by warfare, battlefield losses, and, at times, ill health.

Though George Washington is invariably depicted as a towering figure – both in terms of physical height and prestige – the Virginian's health, although in the main

robust, was at times very poor. During the war and the 16 years that followed, George suffered from croup, quinsy, Ludwig's angina, Vincent's angina, diphtheria, streptococcal throat infections, and acute bacterial epiglottitis – any one of which could have proven fatal. In fact, debate has continued concerning which of these maladies did indeed cause his death in 1799. Without Martha's nurturing efforts during his times of illness, George Washington may have been incapacitated or even died during the Revolutionary War. Who, then, could have taken his place in the critical roles of general-in-chief and later as this nation's first commander-in-chief?

Among the general's many admirable traits was his insistence that he stay with his troops throughout the war. Except for a very brief visit to his Mount Vernon home in Virginia in fall 1781, Washington led his troops "out in the field." Thus, Martha's regular visits during the Continental Army's winter encampments proved essential. Blustery weather, especially during typical northeast snow and ice storms, made primitive roads nearly impassible. Yet Martha left Mount Vernon to be with her husband nearly every year. At these encampments conditions were harsh. More Continental soldiers died from the cold and from disease than in battle. George, with the help of his wife, endured winter after winter in these encampments.

Deep within George Washington was a seemingly boundless fortitude and indomitable spirit. Martha Washington was also a factor enabling his strength and endurance. She not only supported her husband during the war years; Martha also contributed to the war effort by boosting morale at these encampments. Each time she arrived at the camps, officers and

George and Martha Washington continued from page 6

soldiers of all ranks joyously welcomed “Lady Washington.”

The final and lengthiest encampment of the Continental Army was in New York State at the New Windsor Cantonment located in today’s Vails Gate, NY. Here, 7,000 increasingly restless Continental officers and soldiers were stationed between 1781 and 1783. Nearby, General Washington established his military headquarters at the Jonathan Hasbrouck House, a small “Dutch-style” stone structure in Newburgh situated on a steep hill strategically overlooking the Hudson River. This modest house provided General Washington some physical distance – six miles – from the fuming Continental Army troops camped at New Windsor.

In the months following the decisive victory at Yorktown in October 1781, the Continental Army was idle. While idleness may seem more palatable to soldiers than deadly warfare, the

opposite turned out to be true. At this time, Washington faced a mounting crisis when officers and soldiers complained bitterly about not being allowed to return home and being owed months of back pay. On March 10, 1783, General Washington was informed of a possible military coup about to take place in New Windsor. Leading the mutiny was Major General Horatio Gates and Major John Armstrong, Jr. They intended to send troops to Philadelphia and force the Continental Congress to issue back pay.

Before the march on Philadelphia commenced, Washington interceded. On March 15, the

general faced Gates, Armstrong, and the other disgruntled officers at the “Temple” building in New Windsor. Washington began addressing the angry officers by reading a letter from a Congressman explaining the difficulties the newly-formed government was having in gathering funds to pay the troops. Washington had trouble reading the letter. Thus, he reached for his eyeglasses. In perhaps his most poignant words he ever uttered to his officers, General Washington delivered what has been subsequently named the “Newburgh Address.” The general-in-chief began by lamenting: “Gentlemen, you must pardon me. I have grown gray in your service and now find

myself growing blind.” He then read the letter and concluded with his own remarks.

Washington left the “Temple” with many of his battle-hardened officers in tears. Through his humility and respectful words, the general-in-chief prevented what may have been a military coup that would have

destroyed all that was won in the crucial eight-year-long War for Independence. After two years of prolonged negotiations between the Americans and the British, a peace accord, the “Treaty of Paris,” was concluded on September 3, 1783.

made with purple and white embroidered cloth shaped in the form of a heart to be worn over an honored soldier’s heart. The “Badge of Merit” is on permanent display at the Newburgh headquarters and is considered the forerunner of today’s “Purple Heart.” Martha Washington was an expert seamstress during the time and place when and where the sewn-cloth “Badge of Merit” was established. This writer researched at the Newburgh site on- and off-line for a linkage between Martha and the “Badge.” No such link was found. Nevertheless, given the pivotal role Martha had supporting her husband and for raising morale during the war, she certainly earned the “Badge of Merit.”

George and Martha Washington were married for over 40 years. At his beloved Mount Vernon, George passed away on December 14, 1799 at the age of 67. Martha died on May 22, 1802, 11 days before her 71st birthday.

Washington’s Headquarters, Newburgh, NY

Realizing the importance of General Washington’s Newburgh headquarters, New York State purchased the Jonathan Hasbrouck House in 1850. It was the first time in U.S. history that a government entity would designate a house or site an “official historic place.” The New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation website offers the address, directions, and interesting facts about the Washington’s Headquarters State Historical Site at <http://nysparks.com/historic-sites/17/history.aspx>. Visit America’s first – and certainly one of its most important – historic sites!



Jonathan Hasbrouck House in Newburgh, NY - George Washington’s Military Headquarters 1781-1783



Martha Washington and the Badge of Merit

Before leaving Newburgh, General Washington authorized an award for enlisted soldiers called the “Badge of Merit”



The Retired Public Employees Association

by Edward C. Farrell, Executive Director



The Retired Public Employees Association, (RPEA) is a powerful advocate for current and future public service retirees. Founded in 1969, RPEA

has approximately 30,000 members, including retirees and pre-retirees from New York State and local governments, SUNY campuses and community colleges, school districts, public authorities in New York State, and their spouses. There are 19 local RPEA Chapters, 13 of which are in New York, with the remainder in Florida and the Carolinas. We are a not-for-profit entity.

As New York's only public retirement advocacy agency, we work exclusively on behalf of public service retirees and deal entirely with the protection and enhancement of your retirement benefits. RPEA is not a union. We do not represent those who are still employed, nor do we have affiliations with political parties or candidates, financially or otherwise.

As a public employee, you contributed to a system that you trust will provide both financial and medical benefits in retirement. However, you should not take your benefits for granted. The benefits of public retirees are under scrutiny as all levels of government face serious budgetary issues. Your health insurance, Social Security and Medicare benefits are increasingly at risk. Many who retire from government move on to other jobs, start new careers, relocate, or are able to pursue their hobbies or other interests. Whatever your situation, the retirement income and benefits you earned are absolutely essential to your economic security.

One way we help preserve these benefits is through legislative advocacy. RPEA employs a Legislative Representative who closely monitors legislative activities to identify, track and analyze issues affecting public service retirees today and in the future. Our efforts are carried out through an effective two-part strategy; one utilizing our strong regional presence in our local chapters and the other focusing on activities in the Capitol itself. Perhaps even more importantly, we have Member Benefits Representatives who can help you with personal issues including Medicare or health insurance.



Additionally, as an RPEA member, you become eligible for discounts on dental, vision, and hearing instrument plans; long-term care insurance; and auto, renters, and homeowners insurance.

Be Proud! Remember that Retirees Build a Strong New York. As baby-boomers hit retirement age, a growing segment of the population is giving back to our state: public service retirees. The pension money paid to retired state and local employees flows directly back into our communities, stimulating and growing our local economies.

As of March 2015, there were 430,000 retirees of the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) – 78 percent of whom have chosen to live here in New York. They are former employees of New York State, the university system, public authorities, local governments and schools, and many of them give back to their community as volunteers and supporters of charitable causes. Also, retirees pay taxes

in New York. In 2014, retirees paid \$1.6 billion in real property taxes – that's five percent of the total collected in New York. NYSLRS retirees paid an estimated \$514 million in state and local sales tax in 2014.

Retirees also create jobs. Business sectors that cater to the needs of retired consumers are booming. In the coming decades, industries such as health care, restaurants, and entertainment are predicted to be areas primed for growth – and retired public employees will be an important part of its customer base. Spending by NYSLRS retirees and their beneficiaries generated an estimated \$514 million in state and local sales tax in 2014, and retirees and their beneficiaries spent \$10 billion within New York State in 2014.

RPEA has a lot to offer for very modest annual dues of \$30. However, for new members, I am offering them a reduced fee of \$15 for the first year. If you are not already a member, please join.

Remember, as retirees, we are all in this together. I look forward to welcoming even more SUNY retirees into our membership.

Additional information and a registration form are on the Retired Public Employees Association webpage, www.RPEA.org, or feel free to contact us at (518) 860-2542.

AROHE's 8th National Biennial Conference Set for Seattle

by Patrick C. Cullinane, MS, President, Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education



Join us for the 2016 AROHE (Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education) conference, "Transforming Retirement: Re-Writing Life's Next Chapter,"

at the University of Washington in Seattle from Sunday, August 14th through Tuesday, August 16th. Become a leader in transforming retirement on your campus and in your community.

At this conference you'll strategize with peers about changing the role of later life to one that fulfills retirees, enhances universities and makes a difference on and beyond the campus. Come away inspired by institutions and visionaries who outline a new way.

Who better to lead the charge to change institutional and cultural attitudes than our own staff and faculty retirees?

Keynote Speaker

Fernando Torres-Gil, Professor of Social Welfare, Professor of Public Policy, and



University of Washington Campus

Director of the Center for Policy Research on Aging at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs will keynote the AROHE conference. Prof. Torres-Gil is also an Adjunct Professor of Gerontology at USC. He has written six books and over 100 publications, including *The New Aging: Politics and Change in America* (1992) and *Lessons from Three Nations, Volumes I and II* (2007).

Prof. Torres-Gil's academic contributions have earned him membership in the prestigious Academies of Public Administration, Gerontology and Social Insurance. His research spans important topics of health and long-term care, disability, entitlement reform, and the politics of aging.

Participants

Forward-thinking staff and faculty leaders from your Chancellor/Provost's offices, HR/Benefits, Alumni Associations and Advancement/Development and

retirees are welcome to attend, exchange new and effective practices that enhance retirement transitions and engagement of university retirees.

Conference Sessions

The following topics are on the program agenda for the AROHE conference:

- Changing expectations and challenges in retirement planning and services
- Addressing the needs and interests of changing retiree populations
- Supporting the transition to retirement
- Strategies for institutional support of the retirement organization and retirees
- Best practices, problem solving and collaborative partnerships
- Membership development
- Recruiting and retaining volunteers

Setting

We'll gather in a lovely setting on the University of Washington campus in Seattle, hosted by the University of Washington

Retirement Association (UWRA), whose members look forward to welcoming you.

Exciting Travel Options

AROHE and the UWRA encourage you to combine this conference with the chance to explore the region. Now is a good time to start planning your visit to Seattle and the Pacific Northwest. Seattle's local wonders,

mountain and water views will lead you to Mount Rainier, ferries across Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula beyond. Venture north (maybe by float plane!) to the San Juan Islands. Vancouver, British Columbia is less than a three-hour drive away; so is Portland, Oregon. Wine country in eastern Washington and the Pacific coast in Oregon are beckoning, too!

We hope 2016 is the best year yet for you and your colleagues. We look forward to seeing you at the eighth biennial AROHE conference as we address *Transforming Retirement: Re-writing Life's Next Chapter*.

Conference Registration

To learn more about the AROHE conference and to register, go to <http://www.arohe.org/>.

Surgery for Solos

by Sharon F. Cramer, Ph.D., SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Emerita, SUNY Buffalo



The list of times when being a solo is difficult (e.g., Valentine's Day) is augmented for widows or widowers by dates special to each married life. I recently learned a whole new universe of challenges for the solo – recovering from surgery alone. In my journey through this maze, I developed some solutions which might benefit other solos. I will comment about the particular issues that are part of this experience for a widow/widower, even though my suggestions pertain to anyone alone (either actually solo or whose partner is unable to provide assistance).

Getting ready for surgery

After getting the news that major surgery (hip replacement, in my case) is required, one must take the initiative throughout one's health odyssey. This means reorienting to focus on regaining strength or functionality rather than self-pity. I recommend the following:

• Prepare your home

Examine your home. Depending upon your surgery, you will have to make different types of adjustments. With my expected mobility challenge, throw rugs needed to be picked up and put away. I had railings put in for the steps between my garage and my home. If shoulder or hand surgery is anticipated, then think through hygiene and cooking routines. Because I wouldn't be able to bend below 90 degrees, my dish washer went on vacation, and I set up my dish drying rack. I moved things in my refrigerator to higher shelves that did not require me to bend.

Similar adjustments are needed in the bathroom and living room. For example, I rearranged my reading area, replacing my favorite soft chair with a dining room firm chair with arms. Doing this and clearing paths (to make sure a walker could be used) took help from others.

I also had an outside security code box installed, so that I could enable friends to use it to let themselves into my garage/home. That way, I wasn't worried about jumping up to get to the door when they arrived, making everything easier. When you are solo, there is no one to answer the door but you.

Everything was done before I left for surgery, making it easier to return home.

• Plan ahead to receive help

Realize that during your recovery period, you will need to get help to make all purchases. I cashed a check to ensure that

I had 50 singles on hand, as well as other small bills, so I could reimburse friends who helped out by picking up things on my shopping list. If the people who will help you live nearby, you could purchase a "debit" card for your local supermarket, so the helpers can pick up your list and card before going to the store, and bring everything back to you.

Six weeks before surgery, I recommend putting together a help network, using family, friends, or paid care givers who can provide assistance to you once you return home. I asked friends to sign up for a day to help me – with the understanding that they would stop by sometime on that day to lend a hand. What they did to help me depended on the time they had available, and what they liked to do. I tailored my requests to what I thought I would need, and how comfortable I felt asking each particular person for help.

Before my closest friends arrived, I would put together a written list of what I needed help to do – it could be as big as laundry, or as small as picking up things from the floor (off-limits for me). Having the list meant that I didn't think of something I needed after the person left (though, of course, that happened sometimes, too).

Another recent patient chose not to call on friends, and instead contracted with a local agency for home health services. Family members of an acquaintance relocated to our area for several weeks to give him supports during his recovery. Any model that fits your needs and your budget can work.

Surgery for Solos continued from page 11

The establishment of my “Care Team” (as one of my friends named it) meant peace of mind for me. Additionally, they were reassured to know that I was receiving help. I stocked up on thank you notes and stamps, promptly expressing my appreciation. And, as I talked with my friends about this whole process, I learned that my friends felt useful by helping me.

Surgery and time in the hospital for Solos

Being a patient is never easy. For those widows and widowers who spent time in hospital with their loved ones, there is a challenging layer of memory that crowds in, to drape the time with a particularly sticky gauze. But being a surgery patient is different from being a spouse-in-waiting, and (unlike a terminal illness) elective surgery is likely to lead to improved quality of life. However, there is not too much time to ponder the past, because surgery has its own relentless progress, ripping away the memory wrappings. Since, as a solo, you have to think all this through on your own, here are some recommended strategies:

- **Improve your stay in the hospital**

Whatever your level of pain and distress, the time in the hospital goes by in a blur. Hospital routines – taking vital signs, providing meals, helping with activities of life – move you along. You can make your stay a bit better if you bring your own robe, slippers, reading glasses, and various things to read. Cell phone bans have been lifted in most hospitals, and Wi-Fi is generally available, so you can stay in touch with family and friends while you are in the hospital, via phone, laptop or other portable devices. Bring along phone numbers, too, just in case, along with cords you need to recharge your devices.

- **Seek out advice from hospital personnel about what you will need at home**

Depending on your surgery, you will need to plan for navigating your home

(either directly, or following time in a rehab facility). The “discharge planners” in the hospital will help you, and provide the equipment you need. Realize that when you go home, you will require assistance getting your equipment (e.g., a walker, cane, and/or commode) into your home and situated strategically. (If you live on two floors, you might find it very helpful to have a complete set of borrowed equipment from a friend, so that you have everything you need on each floor – e.g., walker, commode).



If you have made arrangements with a rehab facility, have the relevant information to share with the discharge planner, so that you can discuss both your immediate move, and the follow-up move back home.

- **Prepare emotionally for being a patient**

You will need help. And being physically vulnerable is hard for everyone. Realize that everyone is different in the way they feel physically and emotionally, following surgery; this is okay, and to be expected.

Ideally, you’ve set up supports so you can focus on getting better. For widows and widowers whose spouses’ decline was an escalator down, being a patient can be uniquely challenging. In the process of being a patient en route to recovery, there

is a mental part of the process that must be engaged. You can intentionally use memories of your loved one’s life, rather than death, as your companion as you recover.

Ready yourself for each of the stages of recovery, and commit to a positive outlook.

Returning home after surgery

Re-entering your own home after surgery is surreal; things you took for granted (such as reaching for an item on a lower shelf in the refrigerator) suddenly become impossible. When returning home, consider having not only your driver, but another friend, at your home when you return. A pair of friends or family members waiting for you when you arrive can be very helpful. Between them, they can help get you situated, and then distribute the equipment you brought home from the hospital or rehab facility. Only one of the pair needs to stay on with you, as you will be tired.

- **Get your “at-home” OT or PT assessment as soon as possible after you return home**

Likely, at the hospital, you talked with a discharge planner, to make arrangements for assistance at home through the Visiting Nurse Association or other home health agencies. The day – or day after – you return home, you will get a phone call to set up a preliminary assessment of you, your home, and recommendations for what you need in terms of physical and occupational therapy. Accept the appointment for as soon as possible, even if you are worried you will be tired or in pain.

If possible, via this assessment, seek out the services of an occupational therapist. Ideally, this service could be provided as soon as possible after you return home. This person can help you look at how you can live your life as a solo. Even if you initially have help with some things from people visiting or staying with you, you will want advice on showering, dressing, and moving around your home on your own.

Oneonta RFPAA continued from page 14

activities consistent with the needs of the members.

There are no dues to be a member of the association. Attendees at programs are charged for expenses such as meals, and the hat is passed when money is needed to pay for expenses such as covering the expenses of guests at our functions and other expenses such as postage. The college president's office has provided considerable assistance in helping prepare invitations and communications with our members.

The RFPAA has two main functions a year, plus other activities which provide additional opportunities to stay involved with former colleagues and the campus. Each June the annual meeting of the

Association is held at the 284-acre College Camp, located about four miles from the main SUNY Oneonta campus. The camp became a reality in 1952 and has been used for many purposes through the years. The lodge at the camp provides a convenient setting for our annual meeting, which usually has an attendance of forty to fifty people.

A buffet lunch precedes a presentation by Dr. Nancy Kleniewski, President of the College. She provides updates covering the entire spectrum of what's been happening during the previous year, as well as information about future plans. Additional members of the college administration attend as well and have provided information on areas such as budgets,

construction and academic programs. In addition to their prepared presentation, they all welcome and respond to questions from the retiree attendees. Following these presentations, the RFPAA's yearly meeting is held. It is at this meeting that elections for the Board of Directors take place.

The Association sponsors a luncheon each fall, prepared by students in Oscar Oberkircher's Restaurant and Catering class. Menus reflect cuisines from different countries and are selected, prepared and served by students. The two most recent

activities each year. Recent outings have seen the group trekking the short distance to Cooperstown for a tour and presentation at the college's state-of-the-art Graduate Program facility located on the shores of Otsego Lake, which serves as the home base for the nationally-recognized Master of Arts in Museum Studies program. A luncheon visit to Brewery Ommegang in Cooperstown was also a popular activity.

Getting a larger number of members to participate in activities remains a challenge. We are currently conducting a survey,



Members of the SUNY Oneonta Retired Faculty, Professionals and Administrators Assn. tour newly-renovated Fitzelle Hall classroom, office and snack bar

years had menus reflecting food from Ireland and Scotland. This is a popular activity of the association, with a full house of 60 attendees and a waiting list is not uncommon.

Following the luncheon, a campus tour is conducted by Tom Rathbone, Associate Vice President for Planning and Safety. Tom combines a sense of humor with a wealth of knowledge and experience as he shows retirees the campus updates and new construction.

The SUNY Oneonta Retired Faculty, Professionals and Administrators Association sponsors several other

seeking the thoughts of our members about what activities they would like to pursue in upcoming years.

The RFPAA Association's website contains much useful information and may be accessed at www.oneonta.edu/rfpa. Our yearly newsletter, edited by Arleen Benedict, is on the site, which also contains a calendar of events, names of those on the executive board, and our constitution.

How to Stop Worrying

by Hedi McKinley, LCSW, Professor Emerita of Social Welfare
University at Albany



Editor's Note:
Hedi, at 95, is a practicing clinical social worker who writes on mental health and other issues and maintains an office in Albany, NY.

We've all heard the

saying, "Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday." Not a bad thought! Let's have a look:

WHAT IS THE WORST THAT CAN HAPPEN? Most of the time (alas, not always), even the worst is something we can deal with. Instead of worrying and tugging at your worry as a dog does at a bone, ACT. Make a decision and stick to it, all the time realizing that it just might be the wrong one. It is impossible to think two thoughts at the same time, so get excited about the presidential election instead of your mortgage.

Don't brood about trifles, little hurts, and insults. Instead, ask yourself: "IN THREE YEARS, WILL THIS MATTER?"

When you worry about crazy matters like the bridge you are crossing collapsing, ask yourself: "What are the odds of that actually happening? One million to one?" Make your brain skip that one.

Don't expect happiness. Remember – happiness is not a state to arrive at, but a mode of traveling.

Don't expect that life owes you something. Who promised that life was fair? Your mother? It's time for another talk.

Accept the inevitable: You will die. Everybody will die. Think of your life as being on a thread held by whatever you'd like to put there – God, the Three Fates, a Loving Being; at some time, someone will cut the thread. You might be one, 10 or a hundred years old. The great business of life is to be, to do, to do without, and to depart!

Every once in a while, repeat to yourself: "If I die, I die." The universe is vast. Realize

that nothing gets lost. There is an order to things and you are part of it. Billions have lived and died before you – so it must be OK. Right?

Don't expect gratitude. If you want to raise grateful children, be a grateful person.

If you feel that you are "giving too much" and not getting enough back, it might be true. However, don't keep tabs.

"No one ever kicks a dead dog." That means that no one bothers with people who are unimportant. Remember, the higher up you move, the more visibility you have, the more criticism will come your way. Here is a good saying: "PUT UP YOUR OLD UMBRELLA AND KEEP THE RAIN OF CRITICISM FROM RUNNING DOWN THE BACK OF YOUR NECK."

And here is another little thought to help us along: Reinhold Niebuhr's "God grant me the serenity to accept things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE."

Top 10 Scams Targeting Seniors

Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted here with the permission of the National Council on Aging. For additional information and resources, go to their website: www.ncoa.org.

Financial scams targeting seniors have become so prevalent that they're now considered "the crime of the 21st century." Why? Because seniors are thought to have a significant amount of money sitting in their accounts.

Financial scams also often go unreported or can be difficult to prosecute, so they're considered a "low-risk" crime. However, they're devastating to many older adults

and can leave them in a very vulnerable position with little time to recoup their losses.

It's not just wealthy seniors who are targeted. Low-income older adults are also at risk of financial abuse. And it's not always strangers who perpetrate these



crimes. Over 90% of all reported elder abuse is committed by an older person's own family members, most often their adult children, followed by grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and others.

Review the National Council on Aging's list below so you can identify a potential scam.

1. Medicare/health insurance fraud

Every U.S. citizen or permanent resident over age 65 qualifies for Medicare, so there is rarely any need for a scam artist to research what private health insurance company older people have in order to scam them out of some money.

Continued on page 16

Top 10 Scams continued from page 15

In these types of scams, perpetrators may pose as a Medicare representative to get older people to give them their personal information, or they will provide bogus services for elderly people at makeshift mobile clinics, then use the personal information they provide to bill Medicare and pocket the money.

2. Counterfeit prescription drugs

Most commonly, counterfeit drug scams operate on the Internet, where seniors increasingly go to find better prices on specialized medications. This scam is growing in popularity—since 2000, the FDA has investigated an average of 20 such cases per year, up from five a year in the 1990s.

The danger is that besides paying money for something that will not help a person's medical condition, victims may purchase unsafe substances that can inflict even more harm. This scam can be as hard on the body as it is on the wallet.

3. Funeral & cemetery scams

The FBI warns about two types of funeral and cemetery fraud perpetrated on seniors.

In one approach, scammers read obituaries and call or attend the funeral service of a complete stranger to take advantage of the grieving widow or widower. Claiming the deceased had an outstanding debt with them, scammers will try to extort money from relatives to settle the fake debts.

Another tactic of disreputable funeral homes is to capitalize on family members' unfamiliarity with the considerable cost of funeral services to add unnecessary charges to the bill. In one common scam of this type, funeral directors will insist that a casket, usually one of the most expensive parts of funeral services, is necessary even when performing a direct cremation, which can be accomplished with a cardboard casket rather than an expensive display or burial casket.

4. Fraudulent anti-aging products

In a society bombarded with images of the young and beautiful, it's not surprising that some older people feel the need to conceal their age in order to participate more fully in social circles and the workplace. After all, 60 is the new 40, right?

It is in this spirit that many older Americans seek out new treatments and medications to maintain a youthful appearance, putting them at risk of scammers. Whether it's fake Botox like the one in Arizona that netted its distributors (who were convicted and jailed in 2006)



\$1.5 million in barely a year, or completely bogus homeopathic remedies that do absolutely nothing, there is money in the anti-aging business.

Botox scams are particularly unsettling, as renegade labs creating versions of the real thing may still be working with the root ingredient, botulism neurotoxin, which is one of the most toxic substances known to science. A bad batch can have health consequences far beyond wrinkles or drooping neck muscles.

5. Telemarketing

Perhaps the most common scheme is when scammers use fake telemarketing calls to prey on older people, who as a group make twice as many purchases over

the phone than the national average. While the image of the lonely senior citizen with nobody to talk to may have something to do with this, it is far more likely that older people are more familiar with shopping over the phone, and therefore might not be fully aware of the risk.

With no face-to-face interaction, and no paper trail, these scams are incredibly hard to trace. Also, once a successful deal has been made, the buyer's name is then shared with similar schemers looking for easy targets, sometimes defrauding the same person repeatedly.

Examples of telemarketing fraud include:

The pigeon drop

The con artist tells the individual that he/she has found a large sum of money and is willing to split it if the person will make a "good faith" payment by withdrawing funds from his/her bank account. Often, a second con artist is involved, posing as a lawyer, banker, or some other trustworthy stranger.

The fake accident ploy

The con artist gets the victim to wire or send money on the pretext that the person's child or another relative is in the hospital and needs the money.

Charity scams

Money is solicited for fake charities. This often occurs after natural disasters.

6. Internet fraud

While using the Internet is a great skill at any age, the slower speed of adoption among some older people makes them easier targets for automated Internet scams that are ubiquitous on the web and email programs. Pop-up browser windows simulating virus-scanning software will fool victims into either downloading a fake anti-virus program (at a substantial cost) or an actual virus that will open up whatever information is on the user's computer to scammers.

Their unfamiliarity with the less-visible aspects of browsing the web (firewalls and built-in virus protection, for example) make seniors especially susceptible to such traps. One example includes:

Email/phishing scams

A senior receives email messages that appear to be from a legitimate company or institution, asking them to “update” or “verify” their personal information. A senior receives emails that appear to be from the IRS about a tax refund.

7. Investment schemes

Because many seniors find themselves planning for retirement and managing their savings once they finish working, a number of investment schemes have been targeted at seniors looking to safeguard their cash for their later years. From pyramid schemes like Bernie Madoff’s (which counted a number of senior citizens among its victims) to fables of a Nigerian prince looking for a partner to claim inheritance money to complex financial products that many economists don’t even understand, investment schemes have long been a successful way to take advantage of older people.

8. Homeowner/reverse mortgage scams

Scammers like to take advantage of the fact that many people above a certain age own their homes, a valuable asset that increases the potential dollar value of a certain scam.

A particularly elaborate property tax scam in San Diego saw fraudsters sending personalized letters to different properties apparently on behalf of the County Assessor’s Office. The letter, made to look official but displaying only public information, would identify the property’s assessed value and offer the homeowner, for a fee of course, to arrange for a reassessment of the property’s value and therefore the tax burden associated with it.

Closely related, the reverse mortgage scam has mushroomed in recent years.

With legitimate reverse mortgages increasing in frequency more than 1,300% between 1999 and 2008, scammers are taking advantage of this new popularity. As opposed to official refinancing schemes, however, unsecured reverse mortgages can lead property owners to lose their homes when the perpetrators offer money or a free house somewhere else in exchange for the title to the property.

9. Sweepstakes & lottery scams

This simple scam is one that many are familiar with, and it capitalizes on the notion that “there’s no such thing as a free lunch.” Here, scammers inform their mark that



they have won a lottery or sweepstakes of some kind and need to make some sort of payment to unlock the supposed prize. Often, seniors will be sent a check that they can deposit in their bank account, not knowing that while it shows up in their account immediately, it will take a few days before the (fake) check is rejected. During that time, the criminals will quickly collect money for supposed fees or taxes on the prize, which they pocket while the victim has the “prize money” removed from his or her account as soon as the check bounces.

10. The grandparent scam

The grandparent scam is so simple and so devious because it uses one of older adults’ most reliable assets, their hearts.

Scammers will place a call to an older person and when the mark picks up, they will say something along the lines of: “Hi Grandma, do you know who this is?” When

the unsuspecting grandparent guesses the name of the grandchild the scammer most sounds like, the scammer has established a fake identity without having done a lick of background research.

Once “in,” the fake grandchild will usually ask for money to solve some unexpected financial problem (overdue rent, payment for car repairs, etc.), to be paid via Western Union or MoneyGram, which don’t always require identification to collect. At the same time, the scam artist will beg the grandparent “please don’t tell my parents, they would kill me.”

While the sums from such a scam are likely to be in the hundreds, the very fact that no research is needed makes this a scam that can be perpetrated over and over at very little cost to the scammer.

If you suspect you’ve been the victim of a scam...

Don’t be afraid or embarrassed to talk about it with someone you trust. You are not alone, and there are people who can help. Doing nothing could only make it worse. Keep handy the phone numbers and resources you can turn to, including the local police, your bank (if money has

been taken from your accounts), and Adult Protective Services (<http://www.napsa-now.org/get-help/help-in-your-area/>).

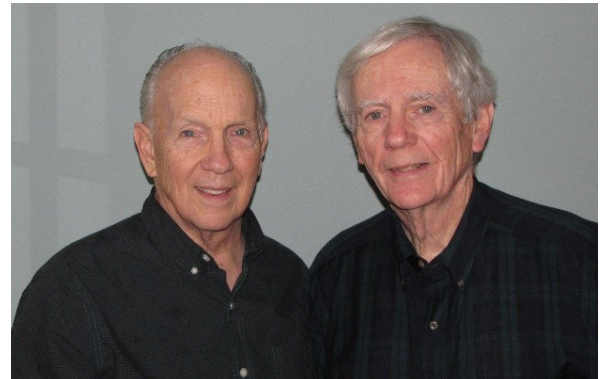
To obtain the contact information for Adult Protective Services in your area, call the Eldercare Locator, a government-sponsored national resource line, at: 1-800-677-1116, or visit their website at: www.eldercare.gov.



Campus Retiree Organization Profile

The Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College

by Professor Emeritus Bud Macy, President of RASCC,
and Professor Emeritus Pete Herron, RASCC Webmaster



The Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College (RASCC) was conceived in January 2002 by Pete Herron. Many Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) retirees felt totally disconnected from the college once they retired. Colleagues retired, were promoted, got sick, and even died without any notice being sent to retirees. A few of us realized that there were many retirees feeling the same way and who wanted to reconnect with the college.

In 2002 Pete made some informal inquiries, contacting the college president's office, the three unions, the college's foundation and as many former colleagues as he could. With the help of a few retirees and the SCCC foundation office, letters were sent to all retirees who lived locally and for whom we had a mailing address. This letter invited them to several organizational meetings. Out of these meetings a core of very enthusiastic retirees spent close to a year establishing the Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College.

By-laws had to be written, reliable workers had to be identified and mailing addresses had to be obtained and entered into a database. This all sounded so simple. Many thought the idea was great as long as someone else did all the work.

There were those who only wanted retired faculty as members. Others were

willing to include some administrators. In the end, all Suffolk County Community College retirees – no matter what position they had – were eligible to be members. We also included adjuncts. Being all-inclusive turned out to be crucial. It was the office staff retirees who were able to overcome institutional hurdles in getting resources essential to the formation of the RASCC. Once we obtained the addresses of most retirees we were able to notify them of the

a questionnaire which was mailed to more than one hundred retirees. Many enclosed appreciative notes with their questionnaire responses. These results guided us in determining what activities we would initially plan and how the organization would be structured. We formed four committees: Governance Structure, Newsletter, Mentoring, and Activities Planning.

We defined the purpose of the Retirees

Association of Suffolk Community College, which is to:

- Provide a central source of information relating to changes in the law or in political positions that could adversely affect the benefits of retirees.
- Give members a platform from which to make their concerns known to the college and to fellow members.
- Develop opportunities for retirees to volunteer their time and talents to assist the college foundation in its various activities and promote the welfare of SCCC.
- Provide social events to encourage interaction between members, not only at events at the three campuses, but at numerous venues away from the College.

The Governance Structure Committee decided upon the offices of President, Vice

President, Secretary, and Treasurer, plus three at-large members who would serve as executive council. The webmaster, the newsletter editor and assistant editor have



RASCC day trip to "The Cloisters," a branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art located in Fort Tryon Park in Upper Manhattan.

RASCC's existence. The college provided postage and the foundation provided paper, copying and envelopes. The retirees provided the labor.

Over the next few weeks we developed

since been added to the executive council. The Governance Structure Committee also developed the by-laws and the RASCC membership application form.

Once we were able to communicate with retirees, we could proceed with getting retirees together and formally approve by-laws and elect officers. One union, the Guild of Administrative Officers, gave us seed money to have refreshments at some of the initial get-togethers. Food always attracts people! The college's theatre department provided a wine reception for retirees at one of its productions. In 2003, RASCC became a formal organization of the college. It took several more years before RASCC had sufficient funds to support various college and foundation fund raising events. In the meantime, the RASCC provided volunteers at those events.

The Activities Planning Committee is the most active RASCC committee. It is responsible for providing an ongoing selection of interesting activities for member participation. Among the myriad activities arranged by this outstanding committee are day trips to such venues as Macy's Fireworks Dinner Cruise, Long Island Ducks baseball games, Peconic Bay Lighthouse Cruise, Lincoln Center, World Trade Center Memorial Museum, the Boston Pops Orchestra, New Jersey's Sculpture Garden and many other local historical and cultural sites. We have also enjoyed overnight trips to Cape Cod (including Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard), a Vermont Fall Foliage Tour (including the Von Trapp family home), a Duck Boat Tour of Boston, and more recently to Lake George, NY.

When we realized the RASCC needed a logo, a contest was held. Bud Macy won the contest with the design in column two.

Learning who is retiring and when has been and still is a problem. We have worked with the college's Human Resources office to learn who is currently anticipating retirement but because of privacy concerns they are not able to

provide us with any information we could use to directly contact retirees. Many retire without our knowledge, resulting in missed opportunities of increasing RASCC membership. We have created a tri-fold brochure on the RASCC to be given to retiring employees that will allow them to sign up for our organization if they are interested.

RASCC annual dues are \$25. New retirees do not pay dues the first year of their retirement.

The Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College communicates with its members by email, newsletter and website. Recent copies of the newsletter and pictures of recent RASCC events, planned



activities, RASCC by-laws and much more can be found on its website, www.rascc.org. The annual RASCC membership directory enables members to keep in touch with former colleagues. RASCC also recently launched a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/sccretirees>) for existing and prospective members.

The RASCC faces many of the same challenges as most organizations do: There are never enough members getting actively involved. The most popular events are the spring luncheon in May and the holiday party in December. However, for most activities the response is minimal. Of course, we don't expect the 20% of the members who live out-of-state to attend local events.

In November of each year the RASCC has its membership renewal drive. This drive is followed up in January with a reminder letter to those who have not paid their current dues. Often there are nice notes of appreciation accompanying the renewal forms, especially from those living out-of-state.

By far, the greatest challenge lies in attracting new members and getting them involved. We are especially fortunate to have a college administration which supports us wholeheartedly. In fact, Suffolk County Community College President Shaun McKay is our most ardent supporter, constantly championing our cause and including the RASCC in many college events.

RASCC sponsors numerous activities at the college, including the Salute to Excellence, the major fund-raising event at SCCC; the SCCC Foundation annual golf outing; and the Governance Awards Luncheon, which recognizes individuals whose college-related performance has been deemed superlative. In addition, the RASCC contributes to support Embracing Our Differences, an organization dedicated to overcoming discrimination.

While the challenges involving the Retirees Association of Suffolk Community College are great, the rewards are far greater, and it has been an honor and a privilege for both of us to be a part of this outstanding organization.

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). It is created with the assistance of the following people, who constitute the Editorial Committee:

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The Committee thanks Amanda Bobel in 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 or (518) 320-1354.

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.

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-and-Retiree-Organization-Contacts--Spring-2016.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.

Health Matters

The Challenge of Family Caregiving

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

In the words of former First Lady Rosalyn Carter, "There are only four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who currently are caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers."

The family caregiver role has become increasingly important for health care delivery in the United States. While the "typical" family caregiver has been a woman in her late forties, caregivers have become more diverse, with older individuals and men increasingly represented. Family caregiving has become more complicated and demanding, with caregivers now expected to take on medical tasks which are usually thought of as reserved for health care professionals. (Common examples include injection of medications, dressing changes and wound care, administration of tube feedings, or insertion of urinary catheters.)

Recipients of care are living longer with chronic medical conditions, thus making the caregiver role more long-term. Caregivers who are themselves older adults often must cope with their own health problems, and the challenge of being a caregiver may worsen those problems.

The caregiving relationship often represents significant changes from the usual patterns of a close relationship between the involved parties, especially when they are spouses. In addition, the caregiver may need to take on responsibilities that were previously handled by the patient, such as household tasks and financial management.

When the caregiver is also employed outside the home, the situation becomes even more complex, and the caregiver role can become more difficult. Factors such as sleep deprivation and lack of social support add to the burden and can lead to the caregiver's inability to adequately meet the patient's needs.

The demands of caregiving may lead to negative health issues, both physical and psychosocial. Specific problems which have

been linked to the stresses of being a family caregiver include:

- Sleep disturbances and fatigue
- Elevated blood pressure
- Impaired immune system functioning
- Increased anxiety
- Anger issues
- Depression (seen at rates twice as high as non-caregivers)
- General decline in energy levels and state of health
- Risk for abuse towards the recipient of care

Family, friends, co-workers, and health professionals associated with the caregiver should be alert to signs of caregiver overload. These signs often include the following:

- Decreased energy/excess fatigue
- Difficulty completing routine tasks
- Increased anxiety or sadness
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Interference with other roles (work, parenting, spouse, etc.)
- Expressions of anger/frustration
- Changes in dress, grooming, or personal hygiene
- Changes in condition of household

What can the caregiver do to help prevent excessive stress and burnout?

- Try to get adequate rest/sleep; balance rest and physical activity
- Maintain good nutrition and eating habits
- Avoid the use of tobacco or drugs (including alcohol) to manage stress (Limit alcohol to one drink per day for women or two per day for men.)
- Make time for leisure activities and "alone time"
- Cultivate sources of support
- Take measures to maintain your own health, including regular visits to health care practitioners
- Acknowledge your limitations – you cannot do it all! Ask for help and delegate some tasks to others
- Learn and practice relaxation techniques

- Try journaling to express thoughts/feelings
- Maintain a sense of humor
- Seek spiritual renewal
- See a counselor or therapist if needed
- Investigate the possibility of respite care

Fortunately, there are many resources available to caregivers that can provide information and support. Use of these resources has been proven to give caregivers an increased sense of control over their situation. Be cautious about internet resources and assess them for credibility; try to stay with proven sources and well-known organizations.

Here is a list of the most helpful caregiver resources:

- *AARP Caregiving Resource Center*
888-687-2277 or www.aarp.org/relationships/caregiving
- *Caregiving.com*
www.caregiving.com
- *Family Caregiver Alliance: National Center on Caregiving*
800-445-8106 or www.caregiver.org
- *National Alliance for Caregiving*
www.caregiving.org
- *Roslyn Carter Institute on Caregiving*
229-928-1234 or www.rci.gsw.edu
- *Strength for Caring* (sponsored by Johnson & Johnson)
www.strengthforcaring.com

Also of note is the recently-enacted **New York State CARE (Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable) Act**. This law makes sure that family caregivers are recognized as such when their loved one becomes a hospital patient. It requires that designated caregivers are noted on the patient's medical record, and that caregivers are properly advised when the patient is to be released from the hospital.

The Act also ensures that family caregivers are given the necessary instructions to adequately care for the patient at home.

For more information on the New York State CARE Act, go to <http://states.aarp.org/aarp-millions-of-ny-family-caregivers-in-line-for-help-as-lawmakers-pass-care-act/> or www.nysenate.gov. The bill number is S-676-2015.

Penmanship: An Art or a Relic?

by Sivia Kaye, Professor of English (Emeritus)
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We've lost a good deal of our past when we moved to computers.

We've lost the experience of going to the library — and letting our fingers meander through the large oak card catalogues. What fun to explore

the 3x5 cards, each coded with their own Dewey Decimal System.

When we found the book title and location we were looking for, we navigated the silent but welcoming stacks and were rewarded with a special sense of accomplishment upon locating the book — just where it was supposed to be.

We've lost the awe we felt when a friend knew the answer to some esoteric question; now we all know it — thanks to Google.

We've lost the joy we felt when we received a hand-written letter and could intuit — before opening it — from whom it was sent. Now it's email every day by the dozens, all looking the same and all assigned one line in our IN box.

We've lost the happy sense of recognition that we felt when receiving a phone call from a distant relative. Their "Hello!" jiggered our memory and we knew who was calling. Now, our temporal lobe is no longer challenged: his name appears on our caller ID.

We've lost the boasting rights we had if we typed quickly (albeit with 10 fingers) and attained a certain accuracy. Now, if we're in the loop, we press our thumbs on the tiny keyboard of an iPhone.

But most of all, we lost the joy of penmanship.

Ovals, push-pulls, moving from printing letters to writing in cursive, and then from cursive with pencils to cursive with ink-dipped pens; each step was a landmark.

When I saw the picture of penmanship letters (illustrated here), I was thrown back to Miss Bosh's 4th grade class where we learned cursive.

The yellow letters were writ large, with dark green background.

They were posted successively — from A to Z — above the blackboard. This was the best real estate in the classroom because it could not be concealed by maps rolled down in a geography lesson, or by weather charts hung on special hooks to teach us about the eye of a hurricane. Nothing could block these letters.

When we mastered the cursive alphabet, we were given special gold stars and the permission to write to our London pen pals (very popular then) in cursive. Those students who could not yet handle the loops and the slants were slated for remediation in these skills.

It was a big accomplishment for those of us who had earned the gold stars. We had learned how to write like a grownup. By the term's end, everyone had this skill and the class was ready for the next big step: using ink with our dip pens.

This required special handling of the pen. To make an upstroke would cause the ink to splatter — unless you held the

pen at a particular angle. Eventually, we all mastered this as well.

SHOW and TELL was a fixture in elementary grades. Students came to the front of the classroom bringing some item from home and told about it. It might have been a shell from a sandy beach or a pet turtle with your name painted on his shell.

One day — in 6th grade — David Joroff stood before the class and demonstrated a new invention. It was called the ball point pen. We were all enthralled with it.

It didn't have to be dipped into inkwells. Its ink was somehow preloaded. And best of all, you could do upstrokes without holding the pen at a special angle. Each of us wanted to buy it at once.

But it was \$15!! And so we resumed our cursive writing with our pens dipped into

the inkwells which were a part of every classroom desk.

Today, ball point pens — although ubiquitous and very inexpensive — have largely been replaced by the computer.

Surely letter-writing, too, is in its last throes; email has won the battle.

The skills we learned in 4th grade are no longer taught to elementary school students. Instead, they learn "keyboarding," a term which has replaced "typing." I was told that this change was necessitated because typing was considered too sexist, too much associated with female secretaries.

Occasionally, I will get a hand-written note from a neighbor and I am awed by the resurrection of this forgotten medium. The note bears its own personality: the paper chosen, the ink color used, the loops of the Ps and Js. I hunt for a capital "Q." Is it a large "2" or an offshoot of the "O" with a diagonal attachment?

Miss Bosh leaps back into my mind; she preferred the "2."



MOVIES NOW AND THEN

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

There he is again, Al Pacino talking to himself in a mirror. Nobody's looking at him. He's alone, reciting lines from Shakespeare. He is Simon Axler, in Barry Levinson's *THE HUMBLER* (2014), based on the somewhat raunchy Philip Roth novel. Once an egotistical, highly-praised classical stage and film actor, Simon is now aging, isolated and unemployed since a terrible public moment on-stage when he suddenly realized he couldn't do it anymore and leaped off. The once great actor can't act, his acclaimed talent gone "into thin air." He undergoes a voluntary stint in a psychiatric hospital, and he returns to bleakness at home.

A variety of characters affect his sad isolation. His wife, played by Dianne Wiest with touches of that Law and Order District Attorney style, leaves him. The daughter of a couple of distant old actor friends, Poppee, played effectively by Greta Gerwig, visits him bringing their gift. She is a new teacher at a local college. They become involved in an extended relationship. She is gay, and her current partner is the college Dean who recently and generously hired her. Poppee shifts from gay to bisexual and back and forth, accommodating Simon's aging lifestyle and eagerly accepting his glamorous gifts of stylish clothing, jewels and upscale hairstyling, and eventually leaves him. A woman who had befriended him in the psychiatric hospital persistently tries to hire him to murder her husband, who she believes molested their daughter. There is a visit from Poppee's former partner, who is now transgendered. There are wild phone calls and stalking by the Dean, who lurks outside his house. Not a good situation.

Fast forward: friends intervene, and Axler gets on the stage again. In the film's opening, talking to himself in the mirror, he had been backstage in a dressing room, applying make-up for his returning role. The story's ironic comedy, strangeness,

choppy rhythms and changing moods could have been his memories, or dreams, or imagination. Now we see him on-stage: King Lear. Can the great actor act again? Has he made his comeback? This is an ending to see.

The life view in *THE HUMBLER*, a filmic version of the somewhat raunchy novel, is essentially opposite the happier sort of naughty-nice themes in recent films about aging, where some friends, a reasonable bucket list, and maybe even a jaunt to Las Vegas could add a hint of consolation.

Consolation does come to Pacino in his title role in the more recent release, *DANNY COLLINS* (2015). As an aged dissolute cliché pop rock performer, Danny is suffering deep depression. Although prosperous, he is artistically mediocre. But then, he emerges from his glum, selfish, superficial indulgent lifestyle to reconnect with the sweet sadness of his long absent and neglected family. All it took was the discovery that 40 years ago, the legendary Beatle John Lennon had noticed Danny's real artistic musical promise, written to him in a letter that got misdirected, and urged him to stay true to his art. A great musician had recognized his potential! It's as if he could have been a contender. Danny reconnects with his 40-old son and his daughter-in-law and their ADHD daughter, provides for them, overcomes the sadness of his artistic failure, reclaims his satisfaction with life, and enervates his popular performing career, as the Social Security crowd fills his auditorium shows. He has made his comeback. This is a good happy ending in a not-so-good film.

There is another film – entertaining, sensitive, and successful – that plays with some magic moments and treats the desire for the comeback, the reach to reclaim the achievement of younger years. It may have been unfortunately overlooked by some because a quick view of its title on the Now Playing list at the multiplex might have wrongly suggested explosions and zapping weaponry, or worse—squawking cartoons



or smiley egg-faces: it's *BIRDMAN* (2014). It parallels *THE HUMBLER* in basic story, and in some of the moods, but it is superior. It was shot entirely in New York City, and the settings as well as the elemental theme can feel familiar. Michael Keaton is appealingly sensitive and determined as Riggan, the actor reaching for his comeback. It opens with him, like Axler, approaching the backstage, and closes with an ending that is definitely something to talk about.

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!

THE LAST WORD**NYSUNY 2020 – Critical Legislation for SUNY, Our Students and All New Yorkers***by Chancellor Nancy Zimpher*

In his budget, Gov. Andrew Cuomo extended a very important program to SUNY, NYSUNY 2020. This legislation is crucial to the University,

and that's why we are asking all of our stakeholders to urge New York's legislators to "Stand With SUNY" and renew NYSUNY 2020. You, our retirees, are very much included in this important ask.

There are two core purposes of this critical legislation. One, to protect SUNY students from unpredictable changes in tuition, and two, to provide reliable funding that SUNY can count on so we can provide the world-class education New Yorkers need and deserve.

You might recall that until NYSUNY 2020, tuition-setting power was in the hands of the state Legislature, not SUNY. Some years there were no changes at all, but others had unpredictable spikes. The smallest increase was 14 percent (2009-2010), and the highest was a staggering 30 percent (1991-1992) in a single year. To make matters worse, the revenue generated by these hikes only made up for drastic reductions in direct state tax support, closing other budget gaps that had nothing to do with SUNY.

In 2011, with the help of the Governor and our legislators, we did what many thought was impossible: we instituted a

stable, predictable, fair tuition policy for our State-operated campuses. And, thanks to NYSUNY 2020, for five years now, SUNY students have been able to plan for tuition costs.

Today, SUNY's resident tuition remains the most affordable in the northeast and among the most affordable in the nation. SUNY tuition is less expensive than systems in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Massachusetts, Virginia, Ohio, California, and Texas. These are the states with the best-rated public university systems in the country, and SUNY is undoubtedly among them—while being more affordable.

It's important to remember that a reenactment of NYSUNY 2020 is not an automatic renewal of annual tuition hikes. It is a renewal of SUNY's ability to set tuition based on the immediate needs of SUNY's state-operated campuses and the students, faculty and staff they serve. It is also a renewal of our commitment to the state's lowest income, TAP-eligible students and our ability to cover them tuition-free. Nearly a third of new resident undergraduate tuition revenue goes to ensure the state's highest-need students are completely covered. NYSUNY 2020 has the support of the SUNY Student Assembly. We could not, and would not, have done this without them.

Within just a few years from now, 70 percent of jobs in New York State will require a college degree or credential. Right now, 46 percent of New Yorkers have a college degree. There's a big gap there.

Our NYSUNY 2020-enabled policies allow us to take the revenue that comes from any tuition change and put it right back into student services and campuses. We hired 919 new faculty members

and approved over 350 new academic programs. We are perfecting the transfer process so students don't lose a dime of their hard-earned money and finish on time. We've built the world's largest online learning consortium to expand student access and flexibility. At SUNY, we are a thousand percent dedicated to – frankly, we are obsessed with – making sure every single degree earned prepares our graduates for the world and workforce in the 21st century.

NYSUNY 2020 is not just important to us at SUNY and throughout New York State – it is known throughout the country. To my national colleagues in higher education, to other states' policymakers, to our partners in federal government, NYSUNY 2020 is not just a tuition plan. NYSUNY 2020 is a commitment that New York has made to public higher education. That commitment is not something any of us can afford to back away from.

The bottom line is that if New York invests more in SUNY, it will have a direct effect on our tuition needs. Our Board of Trustees, as always, weighs potential tuition increases with campus needs – put simply: more support from the state means less burden on our students and their families. We don't want to have to raise tuition.

I hope you, our retirees, will join us in voicing your support.

Thank you all for your service to the State University of New York.

SUNY Retirees: To show your support of NYSUNY 2020, please click here – <http://www.suny.edu/stand/> – and take action.