

Retirees Newsletter

Published by the SUNY Retirees Service Corps

Volume 1, Number 3

September 2012

Editorial: Adjusting to Retirement: SUNY Retiree Perspectives

As with many major life-changing events, retirement brings its share of mental and emotional excitement and fulfillment, and in some cases, turmoil. Moving from a full-time structured life to an unstructured one can be challenging for any retiree. Depending on how we deal with it, retirement can be an enjoyable experience—a time filled with new opportunities and challenges—or a painful transition that brings boredom, a lack of purpose, and discouragement.

The process of transitioning to retired life varies from one person to another. No two experiences are exactly alike. However, studies indicate that most retirees go through a variety of phases as they adjust to their new lifestyle.

First is the **preparation phase**, where individuals start planning for their retirement, including when to retire and what to do afterward. Then comes the **honeymoon phase**, where the newly-retired person

thinks of doing fun and recreational activities such as exploring and travelling. Some—but not all—retirees also experience the **disenchantment and reorientation phase**, where, having done fun activities such as taking cruises and travelling, they start questioning their decision to retire and ultimately decide what to do for the rest of their retirement, such as embark on another career or volunteer. And finally, there is the **contentment phase**, wherein the retiree settles into a routine and is ideally at peace with what he or she has achieved during life's ups and downs.

“Today, retirement is not the retirement of our parents. Remaining active is key... having a purpose other than taking up space.”

The SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) wanted to identify ways to help retirees be more content throughout these phases. We asked respondents to a 2011 RSC survey what SUNY and the campuses can do to enhance their retirement experience and that of future retirees. This open-ended question elicited significant feedback from respondents, generating more than 250 suggestions.

Many respondents indicated that they missed their former colleagues and wished their campuses would do more to maintain social connections. One retiree wrote, “Campuses should communicate with their retirees on a regular basis and offer programs and activities which encourage retirees to remain involved as members of the college community.”

Several respondents said that recognition for their contributions was an important factor in making the retiree experience more

Ram Chugh, Ph.D.
Executive Director,
SUNY Retirees
Service Corps



rewarding. One retiree said it is “important to make retirees feel they still belong to the campus, are valued, and can still contribute.”

To maintain that connection, many respondents felt it was important to retain access to services and facilities at their former campuses. Access to campus library collections, meeting/office space, campus email addresses, and reduced-rate parking and admission to campus events were popular suggestions, as were requests for lectures, workshops and courses of interest to retirees.

Numerous retirees said they wanted to remain useful to their former campuses. “Retirees have a great deal to offer—,” wrote one respondent, “develop programs to utilize their talents for the greater good of the public and for retirees themselves.”

Another objective of the retirement enhancement survey was to find what respondents felt SUNY campuses could have done to better prepare them to retire. Many urged campuses to provide more extensive assistance to employees before and following retirement, beginning with pre-retirement seminars and workshops—“not just to review pensions and Medicare,” said one retiree, “but to discuss the meaning of retirement and the emotional changes and adjustments that people should anticipate and prepare for.” One possible way to accomplish this is to have a panel of campus retirees share their retirement experiences with those planning to retire.

Continued on page 2

In this Issue

Editorial: Adjusting to Retirement	1
AROHE Captures Trends in Retiree Privileges	2
Connecting with Grandchildren Where the Wild Things Are	3
Campus Profile: University at Albany Emeritus Center	4
Campus Profile: SUNY New Paltz Retired Faculty Organization	5
Observations on Elder Abuse and an Age-Integrated Society	6
Governor’s Service Commission Launches Statewide Volunteer Recruitment Initiative	7
Always Retire to Something, Not from Something	8
Do You Have a Retirement Story to Tell?	8
When a Budget Becomes a Plan	9
About the SUNY Retirees Newsletter	9
SUNY Retiree Volunteerism	10
The Last Word: The Retirement Dilemma	11

Editorial

Continued from page 1

Not all survey respondents felt the need for outside assistance to enhance their retirement experience. "Things have worked out fine and SUNY prepared me for the transition," one retiree wrote. Another said, "I believe that a person makes his own life meaningful. It is not SUNY's responsibility."

Some respondents offered advice to fellow and future retirees. "Today, retirement is not the retirement of our parents, i.e., playing golf and watching TV," stated one retiree. "Remaining active is key, be it a part-time job, volunteering, or having a purpose other than taking up space."

Having been retired for more than ten years, I can still relate to how tough it is to adjust. It was a period of great emotional conflict and it took me several years to reach the contentment phase. Now, however, I am very active and happy. I found my niche at the SUNY Retirees Service Corps and am still able to enjoy life with my friends, family, and especially my beloved grandchildren.

Based on the findings of studies similar to the RSC's, comments made by SUNY retirees, and my own personal experience, it is evident that staying busy and connected are two important factors in a fulfilling retirement experience.

Given the advances in medical science, most individuals retiring at 65 today can expect to live for another 20+ years. Sound personal and financial planning before and during the retirement years is critical to ensuring a smooth and enjoyable retirement. A positive attitude is equally important.

Once all is said and done, hopefully each of us will be able to echo these words of wisdom from Norman Vincent Peale: *"One of the greatest things you will ever be able to say in your lifetime is this: 'I have realized the potential that Almighty God put into me.'"* ■



AROHE Captures Trends in Retiree Privileges

Janette C. Brown
Executive Director
Association of
Retiree Organizations
in Higher Education

For five years, AROHE has collected information about various aspects of retiree organizations in higher education. One of the most informative questions included in the 2012 AROHE Survey of Retiree Organizations in Higher Education was: "Are there institutionally granted privileges for retirees [on your campus]?" Campus privileges refer to services that campuses offer to their retirees.

The chart below shows the top ten privileges offered by 107 retiree organizations in North America who responded to our survey.

The survey also shows that 38% of campuses offer designated office space for retirees; 32% provide formalized opportunities for involvement at the institution; 28% offer health care subsidies or stipends to offset health costs; and 21% offer individual office space for personal/academic work.

Newly-formed campus retiree organizations might find the privileges list helpful in advocating for their retiree populations.

Complete findings from the 2012 AROHE Survey of Retiree Organizations in Higher Education can be viewed "live" on the AROHE password-protected web site (www.arohe.org).

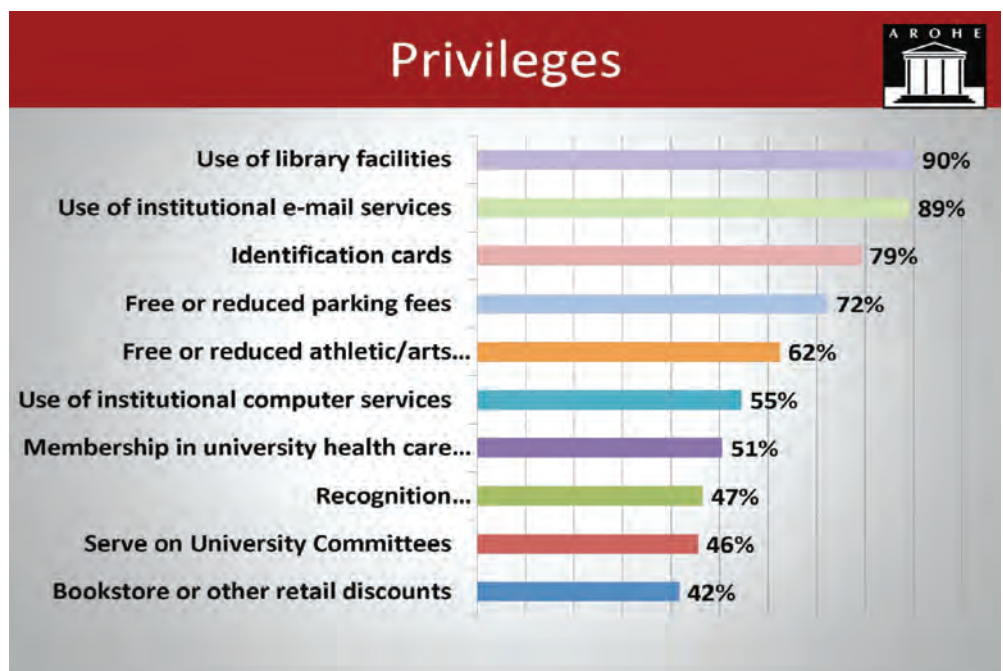
Additional information regarding the survey findings and our organization can be obtained by contacting AROHE at info@arohe.org.

AROHE was happy to sign an agreement with SUNY System Administration whereby individual SUNY campuses can join AROHE no cost to them.

The membership is good through June 30, 2014. We hope most SUNY campuses will take advantage of this special offer. For additional information on this agreement, contact the SUNY Retirees Service Corps at retirees@suny.edu.

We also encourage all SUNY campuses to send at least one or two representatives to the upcoming AROHE Conference in North Carolina.

The 10th Anniversary Conference is shaping up to be the best ever. Please join us October 21-24 in Raleigh. For further information go to: www.arohe.org. ■



Connecting with Grandchildren Where the Wild Things Are

Bob Pompi
Associate Professor of Physics (Emeritus)
Binghamton University

Editor's Note: Bob Pompi, a member of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council, found a novel means of connecting with his grandsons after he retired from Binghamton University. This is his story.

It is often a fact of life that when one's children depart for college, they are not going to return to the region in which they grew up. Our three sons followed this approach and consequently we did not have as close contact with their children as we would have liked. Retirement, however, afforded my wife Karen and me the chance to change that situation in a rather unique way.

During the summer of 2010, we had the opportunity to bring our two oldest grandsons with us on a safari to Africa. We were able to connect more strongly with them through the safari experience. Quin (15) and Clemens (17 on departure and 18 upon return) were the gentlemen who accompanied us to South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Botswana. Karen and I had visited this African Cape region before and felt that this adventure was one of the best that we had ever experienced. It was Karen's idea that we invite Quin and Clemens to accompany us on a revisit when they became old enough to both appreciate and benefit from the travel experience.

We extended the invitation, had it accepted, and eventually were on our way. We traveled with Overseas Adventure Travel, the travel company we have used for our 22 international trips. The flight from Philadelphia to Johannesburg was long and daunting. Eventually we arrived in South Africa at the same time the World Cup was being contested. After a one-night layover we flew to Zimbabwe and the actual adventure began.

We stayed in four remote lodges located in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Botswana. There were 15 people in our group including ourselves. We would fly in multiple five- to six-passenger planes from one small landing strip some distance from the lodge we were staying at to a strip in the vicinity of the next lodge destination. The lead plane would buzz the landing strip to displace any resident animals. Fire control

was a red bucket filled with sand. The weather service was a torn windsock and, above all, warthogs had the right of way.

We would then be picked up in four-wheel drive vehicles and brought to that next lodge. We stayed in each lodge on the average four days. All supplies for the lodges were flown in. The nearest grocery store was 170 mile away. Inside of each lodge compound we stayed in individual two-person tented cabins. The roofs were permanent but the walls were fabric.

Once we were settled we would have two game drives each day. We would rise at 5:30 to the sound of beating drums for a 7:00 AM departure. Returning at 11:30 we would be greeted by a very substantial brunch. There would be lectures in the early afternoon, afternoon tea, and a 4:00 PM game drive until dark.

Quin and Clemens were absolutely entranced by the herds of elephants, lion prides, solitary leopards, hippos, and all the other wild life. Three of the pictures we took accompany this article. Yes, we were that close to the male lion.

A salient feature of the game drive was at 6:30 PM, when all game drives would cease, and sundowners would appear. These sundowners were a full bar and snacks the lodge had prepared for us. Clemens turned 18 while in Botswana. Eighteen happens to be the legal drinking age there. Our guide informed us that a rite of passage in that country involved an elder providing a suitable beverage. We had an elder, a young male, and the suitable beverage. Clemens also was told that this rite of passage only applied to Botswana and would have to be delayed another three years in the USA. I think the phrase was spoken that "What happens in Botswana stays in Botswana."

Quin and Clemens enjoyed the meals and related extremely well to the other eleven members of the group. They were very low maintenance and the time we were able to spend with them in such close contact made the venture very memorable.

One particularly memorable event was when Clemens showed up at our tented cabin door at 6:40 AM with eyes as big as saucers. He had come face to face with a Cape buffalo while following the



Quin, Karen, Bob, and Clemens Pompi before a game drive in Chobe National Park, Botswana.



elevated walkway between cabins. We think the Cape buffalo was more startled than was Clemens.

We visited a school in Zimbabwe and helped the students practice English and math. It was rewarding to see our two grandsons relate to students just slightly younger than themselves.

All too soon our adventure was over and we returned to the larger cities after spending some time in Victoria Falls. The Falls were spectacular and watching Clemens lead a young adolescent male lion by the tail in a rescue preserve was something we did not think that we would ever see.

Male teenagers are not very effusive but we have been pleasantly surprised when we would visit Philadelphia and make contact with parents of our grandsons' peers who would tell us how the boys shared both the pictures they took and their experiences on the game drives.

We were thrilled to be able to get back to a part of the world we had enjoyed. It was wonderful that we were able to share this experience with two young men who we got to know and appreciate to a much greater extent than was possible prior to my retirement. For us, this venture became one of life's unique moments. ■

More SUNY Retirement Stories
are available at:

[http://www.suny.edu/retirees/
retiree_experiences/experiences.cfm](http://www.suny.edu/retirees/retiree_experiences/experiences.cfm)



George Hastings
President

Campus Profile: University at Albany Emeritus Center

An Emeritus Center at the University at Albany is an idea that had been discussed for more than a decade before the Center was actually created. In a letter dated December 14, 1999, Professor Bill Reese (Philosophy) summarized his own efforts: "I have been concerned with this project for quite a number of years, and have shepherded two documents with this concern through the relevant university committees and councils. [Both were approved] by the Executive Committee of the University Senate, and recommended to President Patrick Swigert. President Karen Hitchcock has also expressed her support."

Six years later, persistent lobbying by Reese finally paid off: On December 10, 2005, President Kermit Hall announced the creation of the Emeritus Center during a reception for Emeriti and Professionals. Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs William Hedberg became the Center's "mentor," and Sidney Decker became "University Liaison." President Hall provided a space—a former mail room—in the University Administration Building on Western Avenue, and a modest budget. On November 1, 2006, Officer-in-Charge and Provost Susan Herbst presided over the Grand Opening of the Emeritus Center, sadly without the presence of President Hall, who had died in a swimming accident on August 13. A plaque in grateful memory of President Hall was placed on the Center's wall.

Early on, Founding President Bill Reese gathered an executive Board of emeriti, and on March 30, 2007, the first By-laws were approved by the Board. High among the goals of the Center is recognition of the achievements of Emeriti in retirement. The By-laws includes the following sentence: "To encourage Emeriti to continue research, teaching, and university services, with a strong sense of community." As an example, "Emeritus Center Research Fellows" are recognized for their post-retirement publications, which are proudly displayed on the Center's bookshelves.

In July 2008, the Center and the University at Albany Office of Institutional Research launched a wide-ranging online survey to determine how Emeriti felt about the Center, and how to make our activities even more relevant to them. Among the findings: 71% of the Emeriti who responded live in the Capital District all or most of the year; 77% of them were interested in attending our lectures and/or entertainment events; and 70% were interested in receiving emails telling them what their fellow Emeriti were up to.

Also in 2008, the Emeritus Center established ties with the SUNY Retiree Service Corps (RSC). The Center sent representatives to the 2009 and 2011 SUNY retiree conferences sponsored by the RSC. This gave us opportunities to network with retirees from other SUNY campuses and, at the 2009 conference, Bill Reese had a chance to speak about the Emeritus Center during a panel discussion on how to start a campus-based retiree organization.

In the same year the Center became high-tech with a digital camcorder, with which we videotape most of our events. We then transfer them to DVDs that we make available, upon request, to the 200 or so Emeriti with whom we are constantly in touch through email. Subsequently we acquired more equipment: a large television set, a projector and a sound system—enhancements to our varied programs.

As for the Center's teaching mission, the room which the University at Albany provided to us has become a venue for numerous activities, to which Emeriti, the University at large and the general public are all invited.

Our "Conversation Series" began as soon as the Center opened and has continued to

the present. The Series involves a broad range of speakers who give short talks and then engage in question-and-answer sessions with the audience. There are five or six such meetings a semester covering a large range of topics, from biology, mathematics, and technology to visual arts, literature, poetry, theater and film.

Our forthcoming Fall 2012 Program might be one of the most exciting ever. It includes conversations with Casey Seiler on *Capitol Confidential*; Bertand Faye on *Tennessee Williams*; Eric Block on *The Sense of Smell*; Bruce Miroff on *Prognosticating the Elections of 2012*; Iliana Semmler on *The Magic of Old Time Radio*, and Joseph Levinger on *Nuclear Energy, Nuclear Weapons*.

Also, several members of the Emeritus Center Board have organized exciting "Creative Series." For example, Grayce Burian (Theatre) planned and directed single drama presentations and a Series on American Drama. Iliana Semmler (English) and Ray Ortali (French) created three ambitious Series on opera: *Opera 101-Discussing and Exploring Opera*; *Bel Canto Opera*; and *An Exploration of French Opera, Melodie and Chanson Populaire, from Debussy to Piaf*. And almost every semester, Ortali offers a Film Series, often focusing on a single film director (Truffaut, Bunuel). The first of the Series, called Hollywood on the Hudson, was held at the Spectrum Theater in Albany.

This fall, our "Creative Series" is *The Artist and Society-Patching the Quilt of Time through Cross-Cultural Multimedial Dialogue*, presented by Mahmood Karimi Hakak, a poet, author, translator and film artist who has created 50 stage and screen productions in the U.S., Europe and his native Iran.

Continued on page 12



University at Albany Emeritus Center Board with Ram Chugh of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps.



Campus Profile: SUNY New Paltz Retired Faculty Organization

Alan Dunefsky
*Special Assistant
for Projects,
Development Office;
Chair of the
Retired Faculty*

Editor's Note: Alan is a member of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council.

History of the Organization

Back in the mid-nineties, a small group of retired faculty members at SUNY New Paltz initiated a weekly breakfast gathering at one of the local diners. It was at these informal get-togethers that the seeds of our present group were sown.

At first, the idea was to create a list of their retired colleagues, with whom they were friendly, for the sole purpose of mailing out holiday cards. As the list grew, it was decided upon to expand the "directory" to encompass all retired faculty. It wasn't long before they realized that some unforeseen research was necessary. They wanted the compilation to be comprehensive, and not exclude any individuals. It didn't take long to realize the enormity of the task.

The first obstacle they encountered was the discovery that the college didn't maintain a list for them to share. This forced them to go by word-of-mouth from their colleagues to come up with names of people from memory. That's when they realized the need to come up with guidelines, e.g. whom to include, etc. They didn't want the directory to be an official document so they decided to include anyone who taught at the college. That meant that some faculty members that didn't officially retire from New Paltz and may have moved on to other institutions would be included. (Keep in mind that the original goal was a directory for the sole purpose of communicating with one another.)

The next bump in the road was the discovery that some of their colleagues were deceased. Many moved out of the area (Florida, Arizona, etc.) and communication was lost, making it difficult to be informed of their passing. The Internet was not as comprehensive as it is now, so once again word-of-mouth information was all they had. This led to the addition of an "In Memoriam" page in the directory.

After a few years and constant updates, the present directory is very accurate. We are constantly receiving new data. With the aid of the Internet, we are finding "lost" emeriti all the time. By researching old yearbooks and other documents we are able to retrieve people who had been "forgotten." Now, through the local UUP chapter, the Human Resources Office, and Alumni Office, we are able to better keep track of retirees.

The unofficial retired faculty directory is now used around campus as a guide to facilitate the use of facilities by retirees. Areas such as the library, parking office, ID Central, and the Wellness Center rely on our publication.

The establishment of this directory was the genesis of the "Retired Faculty" organization. This unofficial group—we have no official name—meets twice a year at a luncheon. The College President attends as many of these as possible.

Membership

All retired academic and professional faculty are considered to be members of the Retired Faculty. (At New Paltz, we refer to our professional staff people, or non-teaching professionals, as Professional Faculty members. Other campuses may not be doing this.) As mentioned above, we have included some colleagues who moved on to other campuses but have remained close to our faculty.

Support from the Campus

The administration at SUNY New Paltz is very cognizant of the value of our retired faculty.

Whether it be teaching as an adjunct, presenting as a guest lecturer, participating in Reunion weekend, attending alumni events, or simply being a donor, our retired faculty members contribute to the college. As a result, we receive campus support in several ways:

- ▶ Free photo IDs are available for all faculty retirees. This gives access to the library and Wellness Center. (There is a fee attached to usage of the Wellness Center.)
- ▶ All retired faculty may obtain a free parking permit each academic year.



New Paltz Retirees Luncheon, November 2011.

- ▶ We have a page on the college's website that is dedicated to retired faculty. We use it to post photos and announce events.
- ▶ A 'listserv' exists for communication with those retirees who use email.
- ▶ The college, through the Foundation, pays for the printing of the Retired Faculty Directory each fall. They also handle all our photocopying and postage needs.
- ▶ Copies of *News Pulse*, the college's bi-weekly newsletter, are sent electronically to retirees.
- ▶ Our alumni publication, *The Observer*, is mailed to all emeriti.

Something we started from almost nothing has become a powerful social networking tool among New Paltz's retirees and strengthens their connection with the campus.

If you have questions regarding the SUNY New Paltz Retired Faculty organization, feel free to contact me at dunefska@newpaltz.edu.

To learn more about SUNY New Paltz, go to <http://www.newpaltz.edu/>. ■

Campus Retiree Organization Contact Information:

For a list of primary contact persons at select SUNY campus retirement organizations, go to http://www.suny.edu/retirees/campus_programs/select_suny_campus_RO_contacts_12-11.cfm



Donald L. Cohen
Professor Emeritus,
Graduate School of
Social Welfare,
University at Albany

Observations on Elder Abuse and an Age-Integrated Society*

This essay aims to place the issue of Elder Abuse (EA) front and center on the national priority agenda. Its thesis is that the EA issue is a violation of human rights of the elderly based on the following evidence:

1. Article 3 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person."
2. Article 25, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and family including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services. Furthermore, the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond one's control."
3. The U.S. Older Americans Act of 1965, which has been renewed every ten years, states that "It is the duty and responsibility of federal, state and local governments to assist older people in retirement in securing health, honor and dignity after years of contribution to the community."

Has America fulfilled these legal obligations? A *New York Times* editorial of March 17, 2011 headlined Broken Trust states: A national study of the elderly showed 14% have been neglected, abused or exploited. There are nearly six million cases of elder abuse that occur every year, approximately one case every five seconds. Yet for every reported case of abuse, it is estimated that five or more case go unreported.

Regrettably, New York State, which has the third largest number of people over the age of 60 in the country, is one of the only four states that does not have mandatory elder abuse reporting.

Yet, New York ranked third among five states (California, Florida, Texas, and Pennsylvania) that accounted for the greatest number of elder abuse cases in the U.S.

4. In a 2010 research study, aptly titled *Under the Radar*, the epidemic nature of EA was starkly revealed. This first U.S. study conducted by experts from Cornell University and the New York City Department of Aging investigated the incidence and prevalence of EA experienced by all senior citizens living in New York's 62 counties. Among its findings:

- ▶ One out of 12 New Yorkers over the age of 60 will experience elder abuse in any one year.
- ▶ The typical EA victim is female over the age of 80 with a physical or cognitive impairment who suffered physical abuse, the most prevalent form of EA, with adult children being the most frequent perpetrators.
- ▶ The study's personal questionnaire self-reports by older individuals identified financial exploitation as the most common form of abuse. A 2009 U.S. Senate reported study estimated that elderly victims lost at least \$2.6 billion a year to fraud and abuse.
- ▶ All told, the incidence of elder abuse in New York State is 24 times greater than the number of cases referred to social service, law enforcement, or legal authorities.

The *Under the Radar* study was undertaken by Lifespan, a multi-service social welfare agency for the elderly based in Rochester, NY. Staff member Art Mason, a professional social worker and the research study project's organizer, first reported its findings to COARM, United University Professions' retiree group, in 2011. Mason concluded that elder abuse was "under-recognized, under-reported, and under-prosecuted."

5. The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, chaired by Herbert Kohl, reported in 2011 that elder abuse is a growing problem that far outmatches the resources available to fight it. Commenting on the Senate Committee findings, the *New York Times* Broken Trust editorial concluded "that older people in society have only a threadbare of protection and resources to combat the growing number of elder abusers."

The most poignant testimony before Senator Kohl's committee viewed nationally on C-SPAN was delivered by an unexpected victim: 90-year-old actor Mickey Rooney. Rooney related that the isolation and loss of power that comes with age and infirmity make elders especially vulnerable to abuse not only from caregivers, but also from unscrupulous family members.

"I felt trapped, scared, used, and frustrated", Rooney told the committee, saying he had been defrauded by someone close, a member of his family. His money was taken and misused. "I was unable to obtain any information from the family to help myself," Rooney said. "Above all, I felt helpless."

One conclusion I draw from the facts cited above is that the culture of our society suffers from "ageism." The suffix "ism" is defined by Webster as a basis of discrimination or prejudice. It follows that "ageism" is a cultural, political and social disease of which EA is called an "abomination" as cited in the *Under the Radar* report.

Given that American culture associates and tends to define being old as akin to a social disease – one rent with illness, repeated hospitalizations, loneliness, job discrimination, uselessness, social isolation, family sadness, nursing homes, hopelessness and, finally, death—it is, in sum, regarded as a dead end.

Today's time calls for a refocusing of goals to fulfill a national destiny proclaimed for all peoples and societies. I propose that we move towards eliminating Elder Abuse with a goal of creating a just and age-integrated or anti-ageism society.

One aim of a just society is to integrate all the aged into its ranks and to provide for the elderly all the benefits available to other sectors of society.

A just and age-integrated society builds bridges through intergenerational digital communication and cooperation. The elderly of all cultural heritages should have available to them at least as many choices or options in any given sector of society as any other age group.

In a just or age-integrated society all elderly should have ready access to all resources available to other age groups.

Continued on page 12



Mark Walter
Executive Director,
New York State
Commission on
National &
Community
Service

Governor's Service Commission Launches Statewide Volunteer Recruitment Initiative

Editor's Note: Mark is a member of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council. SUNY retirees interested in volunteering can locate the Regional Volunteer Center nearest them via the website at the end of this article.

Last September, the New York State Commission on National & Community Service, through the New Yorkers Volunteer initiative, announced the establishment of 10 Regional Volunteer Centers across the State whose goal is to foster the recruitment of one million new volunteers Statewide through partnerships with thousands of non-profit organizations. Just seven months into the initiative, the Commission has completed a survey of all the Centers and reports that significant progress has already been made.

The survey results show that more than 50,000 new volunteers have been recruited throughout New York State during the first six months of the program. These new volunteers join many New Yorkers in service and represent caring citizens from all walks of life, including: seniors and college students, corporate volunteers and skilled workers. New Yorkers taking the time to help their neighbors and develop their communities is inspiring and impactful.

New York State's Regional Volunteer Centers will operate as a hub for resources, training, and information to help New Yorkers become involved in their communities through service, and build the capacity of local agencies that are critical to addressing a variety of human needs every day. This is another example of how State Government is providing solutions to make New York State stronger. By leveraging federal resources, we've operationalized a statewide network of resources that help meet the needs of local community agencies that serve New Yorkers and their families.

The following chart provides the highlights of a 2011 survey conducted by the State Commission on National & Community Service and Siena Research Foundation regarding the civic health of New York State, including volunteerism.

Highlights of the 2011 New York State Civic Health Index Report

- ▶ Despite high unemployment and troubled household finances, people remain committed to their communities by volunteering, participating in local government, and helping their neighbors.
- ▶ The efforts of the State Commission on National & Community Service to convene a council of regional volunteer leaders and supplying them with resources to manage volunteers can lead to increased meaningful volunteer activity and impact. This effort should be supported and expanded.
- ▶ Eighty percent of New Yorkers feel that volunteering is important to addressing community needs and 80% feel that volunteering changes lives. However, only 15% indicated that they are satisfied with what they have done to address the needs in their community. In short, New Yorkers are caring individuals, but need additional structure to get involved.
- ▶ It is critical that elected officials and nonprofit leaders effectively marshal the efforts of citizens to address local needs. The State Commission is a leader in understanding and shaping how organizations recruit, train and utilize volunteers to maximize their contribution. In this time of scarce resources and growing need, careful planning, effective communication and thoughtful engagement is critical.

It provides information and training opportunities for local volunteer organizations. It also provides a marketing and media campaign to promote volunteering. And it educates New Yorkers about state and federal funding opportunities for national service and volunteer programs.

The State Commission on National & Community Service works collaboratively with the Corporation for National & Community Service and New York State Education Department to administer 240 national service programs that engage more than 80,000 volunteers annually in the State of New York. The State Commission and its partners leverage the impact of AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Senior Corps programs to address the needs identified in the State's service and civic engagement agenda in the core areas of education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, disaster services, veterans and military families, and economic opportunity. In addition, the State Commission leads the efforts of a statewide network of ten regional volunteer centers that partner with community-based organizations to deliver training and resources that build volunteer management capacity in order to more effectively meet state and local needs.

To locate the Regional Volunteer Center near you, visit: <http://www.newyorkersvolunteer.ny.gov/VolunteerOrganizations/Overview.aspx>.



In 2008, the *New Yorkers Volunteer* website was launched at www.NewYorkersVolunteer.ny.gov as a statewide initiative to engage more New Yorkers in volunteering and community service.



Senior New York volunteer.

Always Retire to Something, Not from Something

Pete Herron, *New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) Retirees Council 39*

Editor's Note: Pete is a member of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council.

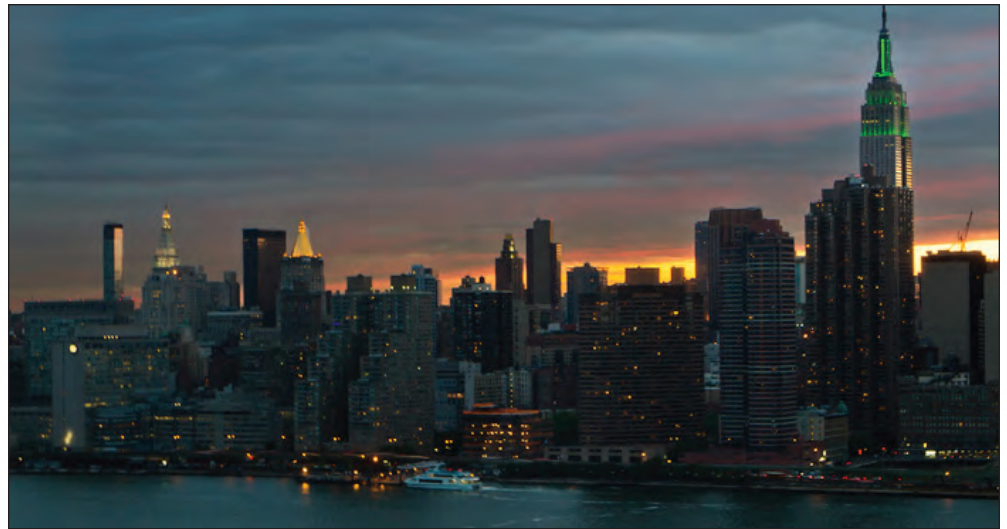
“Always retire to something not from something” was the advice Howard Stevens was given when he considered retirement after 36 years of teaching and being the TV/Radio/Film department chair at Suffolk County Community College. Howard says that SCCC had been a place that gave him great satisfaction during that span of his life. He enjoyed contact with the hundreds of students that entered the TV/Radio/Film department, but he felt it was time to move on. He pondered what many entering retirement consider, “What could I do that would give me as much satisfaction as my teaching career?”

Howard has always been fond of traveling and of taking photographs. Retirement would provide him the opportunity to combine his two passions. And so, that is what has occupied his time for the last eight years.

The digital age has been a true god-send for Howard. He used to develop his photographs in the traditional wet darkroom, but there were two problems with that: the environment and his health. He tells me that he felt guilty about disposing the chemicals into Long Island’s near-surface aquifers and breathing the fumes was not helping his bronchial asthma.

A point-and-shoot digital camera started his new adventure and he began developing the images in Photoshop. One thing led to another and Howard progressed to a Canon 7D camera with a Tamron 18-270mm lens and he is completely happy with the time spent in the field and at the computer with none of the ill effects of a wet darkroom.

Not locked into any theme or form, he enjoys exploring composition and color and hopes to bring new vision to ordinary subjects for the viewer. Howard is constantly looking for new visual experiences to share with others through his photographs. To him, photography is not meant to be “literal reality,” i.e. a documentation of the event, but rather his interpretation of the scene. After all, a photographer selects the location, time of day, angle of view, lens expo-



Above, NYC Skyline at Dusk. Below, Tear Drop Arch.

(Photos by Howard Stevens)



sure, focus and the moment to click the shutter. All of these elements direct the viewer’s attention to a particular point of interest isolating it from its surroundings.

“Get it right in the camera” is the maxim of many photographers and that is what Howard tries to do. When he falls short of the goal, he uses Photoshop as a darkroom employing the same techniques as other photographers in a “wet darkroom:” cropping, lightening, darkening, and adjusting contrast in the image; however, he tries to remain faithful to the composition, light and color that he saw in the original scene.

When Howard went digital in 2008, the potential of high-tech photography inspired him to study learn more about it from the masters. He studied with such renowned photographers such as Peter Cox in County

Kerry, Ireland; Chuck Lawsen in Phoenix, AZ and Mark Citret in Yosemite, CA.

Howard is a member of the East End Art Council, Art League of Long Island, North Shore Art Guild, Smithtown Arts Council, and the Southampton Artists. The success of his photographic efforts has been demonstrated through the exhibition of his award-winning photographs in a dozen galleries, including Gallery North in Setauket, NY; Guild Hall in Easthampton, NY; and Christopher Gallery in Stony Brook, NY. Howard Stevens’ Moroccan “Saffron Dye Workers” photo appeared in the Long Island Arts Section of the *New York Times* on April 29, 2012.

You can enjoy many of Howard Stevens’ photographs by going to his new website, www.howardstevensphoto.com. ■

Do You Have A Story to Tell?

One of the objectives of the SUNY Retirees Newsletter is to share activities of SUNY retirees. We know many of you are doing great things in retirement. Your story can inspire others. Share your and/or a colleague’s retirement story by contacting Pete Herron at rc39pete@optonline.net or 98 Rocky Point Landing Road, Rocky Point, NY 11778.

When a Budget Becomes a Plan



Brian G. Hutzley
Vice Chancellor for
Financial Services and
Chief Financial Officer



Curtis L. Lloyd
Vice Chancellor for
Human Resources

Editor's Note: Curtis Lloyd is a member of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council.

For the first time in a long time, the New York State budget brings great news for SUNY. Not only were the promises of maintenance of effort and rational tuition upheld, SUNY also gained some ground in what have become top budget priorities for the State. The continued support of SUNY, especially our community colleges and academic medical centers, ensures that all New Yorkers will continue to have access to an affordable college education of the highest quality. We are grateful to Governor Cuomo and our legislative leaders for this unprecedented level of support. Less than one year ago, we were facing a budget cut and no near-term opportunity to rationalize tuition.

Despite all the cuts and the unknowns, we ended up stronger. We met the challenges over which we had no control and proved our commitment to our students, their parents and families, and the State of New York. Under the leadership of Chancellor Zimpher, SUNY has become a true partner with the Governor and Legislature, with public higher education becoming a top priority for the State of New York once again. We must also acknowledge our Board of Trustees and Chairman McCall for their dedication and focus. To quote our Chairman: "Not only did SUNY submit a budget request, we had a budget strategy." We worked with each other and with State leaders to achieve what was once viewed as unachievable.

Now, we must turn toward future opportunities for our students and campuses. If before all the reductions started we were

told we would be cut \$1.4 billion dollars over the next five years, we would have planned and been more strategic. Instead, we had to react, one cut at a time, seven different times in total. But now, with critical reforms in place and an on-time budget, we have that chance to plan, and we can begin to focus on our mission, our strategic priorities, and new allocation models to better serve our system and campus needs.

The teams that are working on the principles, models, and the roll-out process include representatives from each of the sectors of SUNY: presidents, business officers, provosts, student life administrators as well as the President of the University Faculty Senate, and representatives of System Administration (the offices of the Provost, Finance, Strategic Planning, and Institutional Research). The goal of this process is to create a model and a process that acknowledges where we are but, more importantly, where we need to go. A model that is fair and equitable is one that:

- ▶ Optimizes the System's limited resources
- ▶ Is responsive to strategic goals
- ▶ Acknowledges our differences
- ▶ Is sensitive to each campus' needs and its retention of tuition
- ▶ Is rational and data-driven
- ▶ Is predictable and useful for long-term planning

This process has been very open. The committee has been hard at work and its meetings have been open to all campus

presidents as well as members of the State University Business Officers Association (SUBOA) and Chief Academic Officers. It has followed up with a memo asking each campus president for a written response to the models discussed by the committee.

As we design and roll-out this model, we must be willing to go the extra mile, to be collaborative and inclusive, engaging every campus in an open transparent process. We need to also be sensitive to the fact that \$1.4 billion of cuts has left campuses out of breath, but we are in a position to plan strategically for the longer term.

This process must also be thorough. Going forward, we are looking at every single allocation, every University-wide program. We will focus funding on SUNY-wide priorities and needs, those that provide the greatest and broadest opportunity to our students and state. Our goal is to improve accountability, ensure transparency, and create a process that will continue into the future. In other words, this is not a one-time effort.

SUNY and the State of New York wrote a piece of history in June 2011 with the enactment of NYSUNY 2020 and the implementation of rational tuition, but it was just the beginning. We are responsible for keeping that momentum going and continuing to make improvements to our funding model, improvements that are in the best interests of our students and campuses while keeping SUNY affordable and accessible for all New Yorkers. ■

About the SUNY Retirees Newsletter

The SUNY Retirees Newsletter is designed to share information about happenings at various campuses and System-wide which are of interest to retirees. The newsletter is put together by the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) with the assistance of the following people who constitute the Editorial Committee:

Ram Chugh (Editor)
Dave DeMarco

Anne Donnelly
Jim Kalas

Curtis Lloyd
Pierre Radimak

The Editorial Committee wishes to thank Esther Klopfer of the SUNY System Design and Printing Department for her excellent work in designing and formatting the newsletter.

The RSC welcomes content submission from retirees and campuses in the newsletter, which will be issued quarterly. For more information, contact Ram Chugh at ram.chugh@suny.edu or (518) 320-1488.

SUNY Retiree Participation in Volunteerism: Survey Findings

Ram Chugh, Ph.D. Executive Director
SUNY Retirees Service Corps

Involvement in Volunteer Activities

In a 2011 survey on the involvement of SUNY retirees in voluntary service, respondents were asked whether they participated in volunteer activities since the time of their retirement. Eighty-two percent (82%) of respondents said yes, and 18% said no. While this high percentage of retiree participation in voluntary service is impressive, it is important to keep in mind that this response came from among those retirees who were sent the survey. It cannot be interpreted to apply to the entire SUNY retiree population.

Age and Volunteerism

This study also looked at whether retired SUNY employees' participation in volunteer activities varied among different age groups. **Table 1** at right illustrates how retirees' involvement did not decline even when they grew older, i.e., when they reached their seventies, eighties and nineties. The findings also show that once retirees got involved in voluntary services, they tended to stay involved in such activities.

Types of Campus-Based Volunteer Activities

The survey respondents who indicated that they had volunteered on campus since retirement were asked to denote the types of activities in which they had participated from a list of 16 campus activities given in the question. **Table 2** provides the top ten answer options and results. The question included a write-in option where the respondents could indicate specific on-campus volunteer activities in which they were engaged. Nearly 51% of the respondents entered comments. Several people indicated that they were involved not in just one but in several different campus-based volunteer pursuits.

Types of Community-Based Volunteer Activities

The respondents who indicated involvement in volunteerism within the community were asked to specify the types of activities with which they were involved. The question provided 20 different community service categories from which to choose. **Table 3** provides the top ten answer options and results. Additionally, the survey question included an "Other (please specify)" write-in option for the respondents to indicate specific community-based activities they were engaged in. Nearly 54% of the respondents entered comments. The write-in responses encompassed an impressively wide array of community activities, from serving on a local or state board to starting a new organization to meet a specific unmet community need.

The entire "SUNY Retiree Volunteers: A Priceless Resource for SUNY Campuses and Local Communities" report is available online at <http://www.suny.edu/retirees/SUNY%20Retirees%20Volunteer%20Survey%20Report.pdf>.

Table 1:
Retiree Involvement in Volunteer Activities by Age Range

<i>Since your retirement, have you been involved in any volunteer activities?</i>	
Age Group	Yes
<60	48.7%
60-64	84.5%
65-69	84.6%
70-74	85.5%
75-79	84.1%
80-84	81.5%
85-89	70.6%
90 and above	85.7%

Table 2:
Types of On-Campus Retiree Volunteer Activities

<i>If you volunteer on campus, use the list below to indicate the activities in which you have been involved. Please check all that apply.</i>	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Assist with special events	40.9%
Serving on campus committees/task forces	31.1%
Guest speaker in courses	27.5%
Fundraising campaigns	15.5%
Union-related activities	15.5%
Advising/mentoring students	15.5%
Speaker for retiree events	15.0%
Collaborative research	13.0%
Teaching (non-credit courses)	11.9%
Clerical and support services	10.4%

Table 3:
Types of Community-Based Retiree Volunteer Activities

<i>If you volunteer in the community, use the list below to indicate the activities in which you have been involved. Please check all that apply.</i>	
Answer Options	Response Percent
House of worship/religious organization	40.0%
Lectures/talks to community groups	26.7%
Arts organizations (theater, galleries, chorales)	21.1%
Social services (Meals on Wheels, Office for the Aging, etc.)	19.4%
Environmental groups (Sierra Club, Audubon Society, etc.)	15.9%
Museums	15.9%
Elementary/secondary schools (mentoring/tutoring)	13.8%
Libraries	13.6%
Local and state government	13.1%
Senior centers	11.5%

The Last Word



John Fisher
Professor of English
(Emeritus)
SUNY Oswego

The Retirement Dilemma: Do I, or Don't I?

In this issue's editorial, Ram Chugh has given us an excellent perspective of retirement. Like Ram, I have been intrigued with how we face retirement, and how we live it. As editor of SUNY Oswego's *Emeriti Newsletter*, I have had a unique opportunity to keep in touch with many of my now-retired colleagues, but even before becoming an emeritus in the late '80s, I observed interesting examples of retirement.

Some of my colleagues have faced retirement with uncertainty. A number of years ago, SUNY offered an early retirement incentive for faculty and staff. Several days later, on my way to mail a package, I noticed a colleague sitting in his car outside the post office. After I had mailed the package, he was still there, just looking at the front entrance with a glazed look on his face. I approached the car and asked if there was a problem. There was. In his hand was an application to take advantage of the retirement incentive. He couldn't make up his mind. "Do I, or don't I?" My colleague did retire—five years later. He enjoyed what he was doing, and he could wait.

Some academy employees *can't* wait for any number of reasons. They dislike their work, their colleagues, their department chairs, the dean, the president. Others *could* wait, but have health issues, want to be near children and grandchildren, or are just ready for a new environment.

What to do now? That's the *interesting* part of the retirement issue. In spite of the different paths our former colleagues follow, many seem to keep their former path in sight.

After a distinguished career at Oswego, colleague Sanford Sternlicht decided not to retire after all, and for twenty years had another distinguished career at Syracuse University. He is now an emeritus from both schools and continues to publish in his field. Another colleague retired from

Oswego and went on to SUNY Geneseo to teach and coach lacrosse. Retired again, he has an emeritus appointment from a second SUNY school. A third colleague retired from Oswego and for quite a few years taught at East Carolina University. A fourth Oswego retiree recently turned down an offer to participate in an emeriti project because she was too busy continuing to teach full-time at the college. Some retirees, with other interests but still dedicated to the task, remain at least part-time in our departments as adjuncts. They can't let go.

Many of us, while not continuing to teach or administer, are still bound in spirit to the academic community. The Oswego Emeriti Association, for instance, is an active participant in the mission of the college and offers emeriti an opportunity to serve the college with its variety of programs and projects (e.g., a newsletter that keeps emeriti in touch with academic news and each other, an emeriti scholarship, luncheons on campus and off, the purchase of informative building plaques, the development of a Hall of Presidents with presidential portraits). And retirees continue to serve on committees or boards.

A nearby senior living complex, often termed "South Campus," is populated with emeriti who continue their friendships and their interest in the academic environment. They are often seen at the college—the art gallery, the auditorium for concerts and theatre productions, and in departments to visit with former colleagues.

Vern Tryon, former chair of Oswego's technology department and for several years now the president of the Oswego Emeriti Association, is perhaps typical of retired academics. Still living in Oswego, he tells us, "Besides the usual family and travel activities associated with retirement, I have enjoyed increased opportunities to volunteer with several community organizations—my church, Rotary International, the Salvation Army, the Emeriti Association, and until this year, the Technology Alliance of Central New York. These activities keep me in touch with the local community and with a variety of people and causes."

Like faculty, non-teaching professionals (NTPs), have also gone on in somewhat new directions, determined to be as productive as they were in their careers. A former NTP, an administrator, now volunteers to administer a health and safety program in his new community in Connecticut. Another, still living on the family farm in Oswego, recently noted, "Retirement for me was truly hard. My work at the college was busy, sometimes difficult, but I always felt appreciated. Nevertheless, it seemed time to go. I got my real estate license in order to keep involved, and my husband and I traveled. When he passed away, I continued to work in real estate, became a member of several boards and charities, and somehow it worked." That NTP, Laree Pease, along with two other NTPs, serves as an elected member of the Emeriti Association's board of directors.

Personally, my wife and I, after considering far-flung communities, decided to move only 70 miles away from Oswego to be close to family and within an easy distance to the college and friends. After retirement, we found a summer retreat close to the college. Like many of my former colleagues, I continue my interest in my discipline and in research and writing.

In his editorial, Ram discusses the role that the university can play in the retirement of its staff. As an active emeritus, I have seen that the institution can continue to be a stimulating influence in the life of

Continued on page 12



Oswego Emeriti Sanford Sternlicht and Vernon Tryon lead Commencement.

University at Albany Emeritus Center

Continued from page 2

Many of the past events have been too popular to fit in the small (30 by 20 foot) Emeritus Center space. The Management Services Center in our building has kindly provided space for some of the events.

On the other hand, small groups also regularly use the UAlbany Emeritus Center. For example, Bill Reese organized a philosophy discussion group, and Iliana Semmler started a memoir writing group which continues to this day.

Remember the earlier quote from our By-laws?: "To encourage Emeriti to continue research, teaching, and university services, with a strong sense of community." We must have done something right in that direction since Susan Phillips, UAlbany Provost, has recently posted on the professional social network LinkedIn, for the whole world to see, the following comment, addressed to all of us at the Emeritus Center: "[You have] been an inspirational force in creating a true community in the University at Albany Emeritus Center." To which we have responded: "Thank you, Susan! And we don't plan to stop there!" ■

Elder Abuse

Continued from page 6

In rural communities, special attention and emphasis on the barriers to age integration is needed and should be recognized and defined as a human rights violation.

In multiethnic communities, language barriers to communication must be addressed to excite and build indigenous leadership across all age sectors to deal with the fallout from ageism.

In sum, my motto told often to my wife, friends, and colleagues is: "Come age with me...the best is yet to be..."

*Based on my presentation at the SUNY Retirees Service Corps conference, *The Power of SUNY Retirees*, 11/3/11. Individuals interested in knowing the sources quoted in this article can contact me at Bdonco@gmail.com. ■

The Retirement Dilemma: Do I, or Don't I?

Continued from page 11

a retiree. Oswego's vice-president for development serves as liaison between the college and the Emeriti Association and provides exceptional secretarial assistance for all the activities of the Association.

It is a symbiotic relationship. Her office is instrumental in the publication of the *Emeriti Newsletter*. And the *Newsletter*, as well as emeriti programs, serves as a vehicle for emeriti to continue their interest in the institution. That interest can be measured by the volunteer and financial support provided by emeriti.

Emeriti can also offer support to potential retirees by helping them prepare for life after the academy. Institutions can further smooth the transition to retired life by offering phased retirement. Giving faculty and staff the opportunity to transition from full-time to half-time employment to full retirement allows them to gradually ease into the next chapter of their journeys while remaining productive.

Perhaps, as Ram suggests, we should now join together to help former colleagues move through the "Do I, or don't I?" stage *into* retirement. ■



Card Game

Two elderly gentlemen are playing cards on Saturday evening just as they have done for the past 50 years. Gus, the elder, had been having problems remembering what cards were what, and usually needed help from his wife. At the end of the card game Red said to Gus, "You did very good tonight. You didn't need any help at all. Why is that?" Gus replied, "Why, ever since my wife sent me to that memory school, I haven't had any problems at all." "Memory school? What memory school?" Gus thought for a moment, "Oh, what's that flower that's red with thorns? A really pretty flower . . ." "A rose?" asked Red. "Yeah, that's it!" Gus turned to his wife and mumbled, "Hey, Rose! What's the name of that memory school you sent me to?"



Marry Me



An elderly widow and widower were dating for about five years. The man finally decided to ask her to marry. She immediately said "yes." The next morning when he awoke, he couldn't remember what her answer was! "Was she happy? I think so, wait, no, she looked at me funny..." After about an hour of trying to remember to no avail, he got on the telephone and gave her a call. Embarrassed, he admitted that he didn't remember her answer to the marriage proposal. "Oh", she said, "I'm so glad you called. I remembered saying 'yes' to someone, but I couldn't remember who it was."

104

A reporter was interviewing a 104 year-old woman: "And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?" the reporter asked. She simply replied, "No peer pressure."

Hard of Hearing

Three retirees, each with a hearing loss, were taking a walk one fine March day. One remarked to the other, "Windy, ain't it?" "No," the second man replied, "It's Thursday." And the third man chimed in, "So am I. Let's have a coke."

