

# SUNY Retirees Newsletter

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## 2015 SUNY Retirees Conference Agenda and Related Details Revealed

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

The program has been finalized for **Creating New Connections**, the fourth biennial conference in SUNY retirees which takes place on Wednesday, October 21, 2015 at Schenectady County Community College (SCCC) in Schenectady, NY. The registration deadline is **Monday, October 5.**

Creating New Connections is open to current and future retirees of all 64 SUNY campuses, individuals who oversee existing campus retirement programs, and those interested in starting or expanding a retiree organization at their campus.

The conference agenda offers something for everyone. A variety of notable speakers will address diverse topics, including: the New York Cradle to Career Strategic Alliance; Retiree Health Insurance Regulations and Options; and Financial Markets and their Potential Impact on SUNY Retirees. A panel discussion and open forum will examine challenges and best practices faced by SUNY campus retiree programs and organizations regarding maintaining and furthering connections between retirees, their former colleagues and campuses. Creating new connections will be facilitated by networking opportunities between representatives of campus retiree programs and organizations who attend the October 21st event.

“This will be the first time that the system-wide SUNY retirees conference is being held at one of our community colleges,” said Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Curtis Lloyd, “and we’re thrilled that SCCC will be the venue.” Schenectady County Community College and the Retirees Association of SCCC



SCCC School of Music

(RASCCC) are co-sponsoring **Creating New Connections** with the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC). The RSC is a unit of the University-wide Human Resources office at SUNY System Administration. “We are very grateful to the campus administration and the RASCCC for their support of the conference,” said Julie Petti, Director of University-wide Human Resources.

In addition to the various presentations, the \$20 conference registration fee includes lunch, refreshments, networking opportunities, a tour of SCCC’s acclaimed School of Music, and a performance by the SCCC Jazz Combo. The combo is a small group that performs bebop, cool, funk and other jazz styles.

The conference luncheon will be prepared and served by students of SCCC’s prestigious School of Hotel, Culinary Arts & Tourism. “How often can one say they’ve had a gourmet meal, a top-notch conference program, a behind-the-scenes look at one of SUNY’s top music schools, and a jazz performance in honor of SUNY retirees as part of the

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## 2015 SUNY Retirees Conference Agenda and Related Details Revealed *Continued from page 1*

same event?," asked Pierre Radimak, SUNY RSC Coordinator and SUNY Retirees Newsletter Editor. "Attendees will definitely be getting their money's worth and then some."

The *Creating New Connections* program brochure, which contains conference details and registration information, may be viewed online by visiting <http://www.suny.edu/retirees/conferences/> and selecting "[The Conference program and related details.](#)" You may also register online at <https://fs9.formsite.com/zetadonut/form67/index.html>. The registration deadline, once again, is **Monday, October 5th**. Conference- and registration-related questions may be emailed to [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu) or call 518-320-1354.

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

## Retirement Story/ Campus Retiree Program Profile

### Richard "Bud" Meade and The College at Brockport



Richard "Bud" Meade (Photo credit: Richard Black, The College at Brockport)

**Editor's Note:** Richard is Director of Human Resources (Emeritus) for The College at Brockport (SUNY Brockport)

Except for a year as a bank teller and three years in the Marine Corps, I have been associated with the State University of New York as a student or a public servant since 1959 in roles as undergraduate student, graduate student, graduate intern, financial aid officer, personnel officer, interim facilities officer, consultant and volunteer. During those 52 years of association, the highest compensation I have ever received in any of these roles is for my work as a volunteer on behalf of emeriti/retirees. That compensation is the camaraderie I have enjoyed with a group of people with whom I have shared my career and my life.

While The College at Brockport, State University of New York, does not have a formally-established Emeriti/Retiree Club, it has in place many ways to communicate with emeriti/retirees, and to include them in the life of the campus.

In 1970, when I became Personnel Officer at Brockport, there were only a handful of retirees from the Normal School days. Yet I was impressed when one of them, a former art teacher and chair, the late Robert Skelton, frequently came by the office to pick up health insurance claim forms and other things for a couple of retirees who were household. I was impressed with his service commitment and noted it.

As Brockport continued to transform from a Teachers' College to an Arts and Sciences College, the size of its retiree group started to grow and a couple of retirees, the late Marguerite "Peg" Hare Browne, formerly an outstanding educator; and the late Harold Rakov, formerly an exceptionally versatile professor and administrator, started working out of the president's office to try to develop a few programs to provide service to retirees.

One outcome of their work in the 1980s was to establish an office in the library with equipment such as computers and printers where retirees could work in lieu of retaining scarce office space in their departments. While the creation

of the Internet rendered this retiree perk obsolete (no longer utilized), it was a start. Around the same time I was prompted by two other retirees who were interested in preserving the history of the College and its relationship with retirees to create a database of retirees or their surviving spouses or family members. I did so and that database continues to be maintained today. The two prompters were retirees from the Education and Human Resources departments, Frances Moroney Whited and Jeanette D'Agostino Banker, who remain stalwart supporters of emeriti and alumni relations to this day.

Marguerite "Peg" Browne and Jeanette D'Agostino Banker had also convinced me in 1970, when I started my work in the Personnel Office to include a section for emeriti or their surviving spouses in the Faculty-Staff Directory when it was published each year. This, of course, was an invaluable resource in the days before computers as we began our efforts to stay connected to retirees.

One of the jobs created by including retirees in the directory was to ensure the accuracy of retiree information in the publication before it came out each year. This was accomplished by sending Brockport College retirees a note with the information we had in our files that requested them to reply if changes/corrections were necessary. As computer applications were developed, these notes were soon computer-generated.

By the mid-1990s, Brockport's retiree population had become significant and I had the thought that it might be nice to include a letter outlining some things that were happening at the College with the annual request to update retiree directory information and I decided it would be nice to have students write the letter from their perspectives and to include a thank you to the retirees for their service that laid the foundation for what Brockport College had become. As you might imagine, the office received wonderful responses to this initiative and all retirees were appreciative of being brought closer into the loop. While most of them had been receiving copies of publications aimed at alums and copies of the Faculty Staff Directory, the personal attention

they received in the form of personalized notes from students made the retirees feel more a part of the Brockport family.

As the Internet and email became readily available around that time, I decided to start building a database of retiree email addresses and use that

vehicle for capturing their news and sharing it, as well as for sharing news about what was going on at the College. This has grown into an email distribution list of

nearly 450 emeriti/retirees who receive an e-newsletter called (appropriately enough) "Update" periodically as events warrant (shared information of mutual interest, deaths of retirees, etc.). Unfortunately, as our retiree group has aged up, far too many "Updates" are now prompted for distribution by deaths.

In 2001, an emeriti website was created (<http://www.acs.brockport.edu/~rmeade/emeriti.htm>) as an outcome of my taking a web development course after retirement. The website contains links to pages of interest such as Brockport College News, Medicare, Social Security, the retirement programs, etc.; how the emeriti directory is maintained; some memorials and remembrances and a "Your News" link where many of the email "Updates" are posted then later edited to delete expired information or are removed altogether; and a listing of benefits and privileges currently available to emeriti/retirees.

Inclusiveness for emeriti/retirees was a hallmark of the presidency of John Halstead and his wife Kathy (2005-2015). Beginning with their first year at Brockport they hosted a well-attended annual emeriti reception at their home each fall. While emeriti/retirees have always been invited to campus events,

under the Halsteads' leadership there were many special events planned just for emeriti such as preview tours of new buildings (e.g. the Special Events and Recreation Center as well as the Liberal Arts Building) and presentations about the future of the College and Higher

Education, usually followed by luncheons. Emeriti/retirees extended a lot of gratitude to the Halsteads for their service to emeriti and for their extension of emeriti benefits and privileges

to other retirees during their tenure at Brockport.

Emeriti and retirees are also grateful to Roxanne Johnston, Senior Development Officer and former Vice President for Advancement, and to Mike Andriatch, former Associate Vice President for Leadership and Planned Giving and current Vice President for Advancement, as well as their staff for following the Halsteads' lead in ensuring that emeriti/retirees continue to be a part of the College community and welcome participants in all that the College has to offer.

As an emeritus looking back over 52 years of association with SUNY, and in particular with the staff and retirees at Brockport, I count myself very lucky to be able to continue relationships well into retirement. People make a difference and I strongly encourage SUNY retirees to keep in touch with other people – including their former colleagues and institutions – as it has been proven that, not only are such connections enjoyable, they are beneficial to maintaining mental and physical health.

Stay connected via your campus or other organizations such as the SUNY Retirees Service Corps ([www.suny.edu/retirees/](http://www.suny.edu/retirees/)).



## Campus Retiree Program and Retiree Organization Contact Information

*Editor's Note: There are approximately 17 SUNY campuses with a retiree organization or retiree program of some sort. Below are the 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.*

### STATE-OPERATED CAMPUSES

#### University at Albany

University at Albany Emeritus Center  
Sorrell E. Chesin, President  
[schesin@albany.edu](mailto:schesin@albany.edu) or (518) 439-1471  
Website: <http://www.albany.edu/emerituscenter/>

#### Binghamton University

Retiree Services Program  
Corinna Kruman, Retiree Services Coordinator  
[ckruman@binghamton.edu](mailto:ckruman@binghamton.edu) or (607) 777-5959  
Website: <https://binghamton.edu/human-resources/retirees/retiree-services-brochure.html>

#### SUNY Brockport

Brad Schreiber, Senior Director of Advancement  
[bschreib@brockport.edu](mailto:bschreib@brockport.edu) or (585) 395-5161  
Website: <http://www.acs.brockport.edu/~rmeade/emeriti.htm>

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**University at Buffalo**

Retired Employee Volunteers-University Program (REV-UP)

Amy Myszka, Director of Wellness & Work/Life Balance

Liaison to the University at Buffalo Emeritus Center

[amyszka@buffalo.edu](mailto:amyszka@buffalo.edu) or (716) 645-5357

Website: [http://hr.buffalo.edu/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE\\_user\\_op=view\\_page&PAGE\\_id=352#rev](http://hr.buffalo.edu/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=352#rev)

**UB Retiree Benefits**

Lisa Jasinowski,

Retirement Administrator

[lm22@buffalo.edu](mailto:lm22@buffalo.edu) or (716) 645-4488

**SUNY Cobleskill**

SUNY Cobleskill Retiree Network

Anne Donnelly, Facilitator

[donnelal@cobleskill.edu](mailto:donnelal@cobleskill.edu) or

(518) 234-7502

Website: <http://cobyconnection.cobleskill.edu/?page=RetireesandEmeriti>

**SUNY Geneseo**

Geneseo Emeriti Association

Donald Lackey, Coordinator

[ndlackey@localnet.com](mailto:ndlackey@localnet.com) or (585) 243-0901

**Morrisville State College**

Morrisville State College

Emeriti Association

c/o Kelly Gardner Williamson, Coordinator

of Public Relations and

Alumni Communication

[gardneke@morrisville.edu](mailto:gardneke@morrisville.edu) or 315-684-

6363

**SUNY New Paltz**

New Paltz Faculty Emeriti Group

Alan Dunefsky, Chair

[dunefska@newpaltz.edu](mailto:dunefska@newpaltz.edu) or

(845) 257-3986 (O), (845) 338-2680 (H)

**SUNY Oneonta**

Retired Faculty, Administrators &

Professionals Association at SUNY

Oneonta Dick Burr, President

[rburr4@gmail.com](mailto:rburr4@gmail.com) or (607) 432-0517

Website: <http://www.oneonta.edu/RFPA/>

**SUNY Oswego**

SUNY Oswego Emeriti Association

Vernon Tryon, Chairperson

[vernon@tryon.com](mailto:vernon@tryon.com) or

(315) 343-9692

Website: <http://www.oswego.edu/emeriti.html>

**SUNY Plattsburgh**

Sarah Reyell, Health

Benefits Administrator

[reyellsg@plattsburgh.edu](mailto:reyellsg@plattsburgh.edu) or

(518) 564-5062

**SUNY Potsdam**

Carol Rourke, Assistant to the President

[rourkecm@potsteam.edu](mailto:rourkecm@potsteam.edu) or

(315) 267-2128

**Stony Brook University**

Stony Brook Emeritus Faculty

Association

Dave Smith, Webmaster

[drsmith36@optonline.net](mailto:drsmith36@optonline.net)

Website: <http://www3.cs.stonybrook.edu/~drs/indexefa.htm>

**SUNY Upstate Medical University**

"The Retiree Associates" Program

John C. Farruggio, Administrator

Benefits Manager, Upstate

Medical University

[farruggj@upstate.edu](mailto:farruggj@upstate.edu) or (315) 464-4942

**COMMUNITY COLLEGES****Hudson Valley Community College**

"Keepers of the Flame" Program

Regina LaGatta, Interim Executive

Director HVCC Foundation

[r.lagatta@hvcc.edu](mailto:r.lagatta@hvcc.edu) or (518) 629-8012

Website: <https://www.hvcc.edu/foundation/keepers/>

**Schenectady County Community College**

Retirees Association of Schenectady

County Community College

Stan Strauss, President

[strauss.stan@gmail.com](mailto:strauss.stan@gmail.com) or

(518) 377-3610

**Suffolk County Community College**

Retiree Association of Suffolk

Community College

Peter Herron, Webmaster

[rc39pete@optonline.net](mailto:rc39pete@optonline.net)

Website: <http://www.rascc.org/>

**Westchester Community College**

Barbara Christesen, Alumni

Affairs Coordinator

Editor, Ink-Link (WCC retirees newsletter)

Westchester Community

College Foundation

[Barbara.Christesen@sunywcc.edu](mailto:Barbara.Christesen@sunywcc.edu) or

(914) 606-6559

The Westchester Community College

Volunteer Corps

Adele Shansky, Director of

Volunteer Services

[adele.shansky@sunywcc.edu](mailto:adele.shansky@sunywcc.edu) or

(914) 606-6805

Website: <http://www.sunywcc.edu/about/volunteer/>

If your campus has a retiree program or organization that is not listed above, please reach out to the SUNY Retirees Service Corps at [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu) and share your program/organization name and contact person so that we may include your information in the next SUNY Retirees Newsletter. Thank you!

## Jefferson Community College Honors Retirees, Emeriti and Members of the Campus Community at Annual Recognition Ceremony

by Pamela J. Dixon, Public Relations Technical Specialist

Jefferson Community College (JCC) observed the retirement of seven faculty and staff, four newly-appointed emeriti, and honored 40 current employees for milestone years of service to the College at its annual Recognition Celebration held on Friday, May 1, 2015. The honorees' combined years of service to the College: 736.

Retiring and Retired Jefferson Community College employees recognized were: **Karen A. Carr** (25 years of service); **Kevin M. Clark** (31 years); **Terry A. Heagle** (25 years); **Kathleen A. Lane** (24 years); **Michael E. Perry** (seven years); **Michele A. Price** (25 years); and **Suzanne W. Wadhams** (20 years).

Jefferson Community College retirees who received Emeriti status were: **B. Patricia Barbalich, Professor Emerita**, Math/Science Division (20 years of service); **Barbara E. Harter**, College Service Emerita, Office of the Registrar (15 years); **Marie A. Hess, Professor Emerita**, Nursing

Faculty (38 years); and **Robert L. Watts**, College Service Emeritus, Library Media Center and Instructional Technology Department (22 years).

Go to the SUNY Retirees Service Corps website at <http://www.suny.edu/retirees/news-events/retirees-in-the-news/jefferson-c-c-honors-retirees-emeriti/> to see mini-bios of each retiring/retired employee and emeriti/emerita honored by JCC.

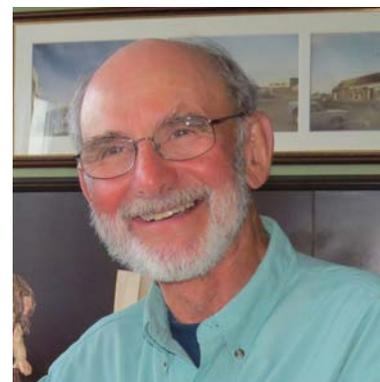
Jefferson Community College also recognized current employees with between five and 35 years of service.



*Jefferson Community College retirees are pictured here with college president, Carole A. McCoy (far left) and David J. Clark (far right), member of the JCC board of trustees, following the Recognition Ceremony at Jefferson Community College held on May 1, 2015. Center L-R: Retirees Terry A. Heagle of Carthage, Karen A. Carr of Watertown, and Michael E. Perry of Watertown. Retirees not pictured: Kevin M. Clark of Cape Vincent; Kathleen A. Lane of Dexter; Michele A. Price of Dexter; Suzanne W. Wadhams of Chaumont.*

## Retirement: "Don't Know How I Had Time to Work"

by P. Jay Fleisher, Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus, Earth Sciences, SUNY Oneonta



Retirement from SUNY is a gift – no campus commitments or obligations, time to pursue special interests, and the unencumbered freedom to delegate time. Now that I am retired (since 2007), I understand the meaning of the phrase “can’t imagine how I ever had time to work.”

I contend that our full-time jobs were organized around a schedule that controlled every hour of every day. Add family obligations plus community involvement, and there is little time for anything else. So how did we do it? What makes retirement so full that it would appear we don’t have enough time for everything? Here’s how:

When we worked, all of the professional commitments leading to a sense of accomplishment had to be crammed into evenings, weekends, semester breaks, and even vacations. Once retired, all of this expanded to occupy as much time as we are willing to give them. Add to this the activities we never had time for before, such as travel and community volunteer work, plus the

## Retirement: “Don’t Know How I Had Time to Work”

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pleasure associated with being an active grandparent.

I didn’t retire to get away from campus or my position as Professor of Geology. To the contrary, I liked my job and found teaching incredibly rewarding. Yet I decided to retire. Influential in my decision was a seminar I heard on National Public Radio dealing with late-life planning during which a group of CEOs were told, “you cannot advance beyond CEO, and you are probably financially secure. So if your health permits, and there is anything you ever wanted to do, what are you waiting for?”

Coincident with this, I had just lost two of my closest research associates to health issues. As a result, I decided if there was anything else I wanted to do, this was the time to do it. Like most of you, I now keep very busy. Doing what? Well, in my case, retirement morphed into a variety of new, exciting and challenging experiences that capitalized on my years of involvement as a glacial geologist.

Case in point was a call I received in 2009 from the Foundation for Glacial and Environmental Research (FGER). They wanted me to take control of the Juneau Icefield Research Program (JIRP), an eight-week summer program that operated from remote field camps situated across an Alaskan icefield that spans a mountain range covered by

2,000 feet of glacier ice. I was drafted to replace an 89-year-old man who was losing his ability to effectively run the Program. As I had been involved in JIRP on repeated occasions over the decades and possessed a knowledge and understanding of what it takes to make the Program run, FGER asked me to take over until a full-time replacement could be found. So, for the next two years I ran the Juneau Icefield Research Program, equivalent to being the President, Provost, Dean, and Director of Facilities

all rolled into one. It turned out to be a full-time job! Finally, in 2013 the search for my replacement was successful, and I thankfully got my retirement back.

Meanwhile, another ongoing project required my attention. It all started back in the early 1970s, when a colleague and I began conducting a multi-week, summer fieldtrip course to the Colorado Rockies

and Colorado Plateau. After nearly 20 years of running trips to many interesting places, an Oneonta community member asked why I didn’t run similar trips for community friends and neighbors – sort of like an “informed holiday.” So we started running two-week field excursions for about 20 folks during alternate summers as a community service in adult learning. There were many trips prior to retirement (Alaska, Mexico, Newfoundland, Pacific Northwest, etc.), and since retiring I’ve lead similar

excursions to the Canadian Rockies, Death Valley, the Sierra Nevada, and most recently, Iceland.

As fate would have it, this experience led to a more formal endeavor sponsored by the Geological Society of America, known as GeoVentures, in which geologists and “students of the Earth” gather in places of special interest to share mutual knowledge. Joined by two colleagues with whom I had worked in Iceland, I ran a GeoVenture to Iceland in July/August 2014. Preparation was stimulating and gratifying. Collaborating with others in this way emphasizes the importance of teamwork, such as I experienced when chairing the Earth Science Department at SUNY Oneonta for 16 years through the ‘80s and ‘90s.

Another activity that carried into retirement involves a local organization known as the Council for Community Adult Learning (CCAL). Membership includes about 230 mainly retired professionals from Oneonta and Cooperstown. My involvement with CCAL in recent years has been to offer three-lecture courses on topics such as “Intelligent Design vs. Science,” “Water as a Natural Resource,” “Mass Extinction,” “Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice,” and “Time: The Big Picture” – all of which are on the edge of my comfort zone. This has turned out to be a very stimulating and rewarding experience.

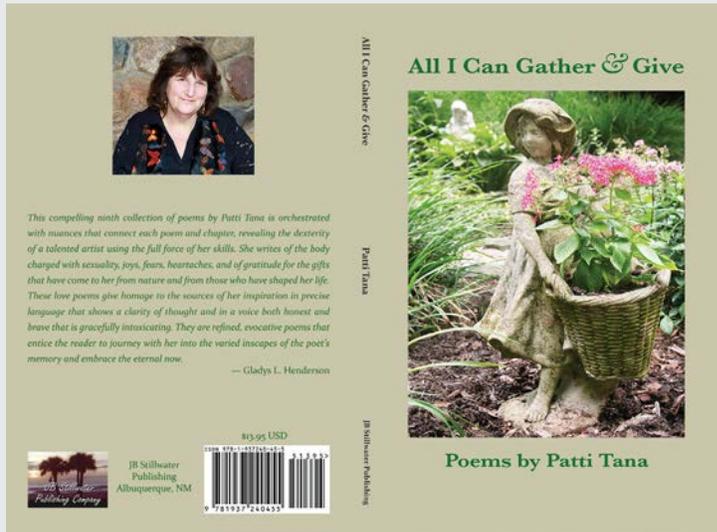
I should also mention that during retirement I continued to publish on my earlier research at Bering Glacier, Alaska. In addition, I continue to present at geologic conferences. Then there is travel for pleasure – trekking the southern approach to Everest in Nepal, Chile and Patagonia, Peru, and most recently, Mexico.

So, you see – retirement isn’t a rocking chair on the porch, at least not for me. However, if that’s what “floats your boat,” have at it!



*P. Jay Fleisher on the Bering Glacier, Alaska*

## SUNY RETIREE AUTHOR NEWS

Nassau Community College Professor Emerita  
Nominated for Poetry Prize

*All I Can Gather & Give* (JB Stillwater Publishing, 2014), Nassau Community College Professor Emerita of English **Patti Tana's** ninth collection of poems, was nominated for The Pushcart Prize. The Prize was named among the most influential projects in the history of American publishing by *Publishers Weekly*.

Below is "*Retired*," one of 75 poems in Tana's latest collection:

In 1903, the first box of Crayola crayons  
contained 8 colors and cost 5 cents:  
red, orange, yellow, green, blue,  
brown, violet, black.  
The box grew to 64 colors by 1958  
and included a sharpener,  
till 1990 when the company "retired" 8 colors:  
lemon yellow, orange yellow, orange red,  
violet blue, green blue, blue gray,  
raw umber, and even the lovely maize.  
In the 1982 film "Blade Runner," set in 2019,  
the authorities "retired" renegade replicants  
(meaning they "destroyed" them)  
after the almost-human robots they created  
had served 4 years of slavery.  
My dog sleeps when she's tired  
wakes when she's rested  
eats when she's hungry  
plays when she's bored  
snuggles when she wants to be stroked.  
That's retired.

Go to <http://www.pattitana.com>, where you can hear Tana read some of her poems and learn about her other poetry collections. Tana is Associate Editor of the Long Island Quarterly since it was founded in 1990. In 2009 she was selected as **Poet of the Year** by the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association. She may be reached at [pattitana@optonline.net](mailto:pattitana@optonline.net).

: SUNY Geneseo  
: Retiree Writes Sequel  
: to Popular Holiday  
: Season Book

**Helen Isolde Thomas**, Grants Writer Emerita from the State University of New York at Geneseo, didn't really have a solid plan for what she wanted to do when she retired in December 2013. Then the phone rang. The caller wanted to know if she still had any copies of a booklet she wrote and self-published 21 years ago. *How to Have a Perfect Christmas* was written in 1994 and self-published the old-fashioned way in 1995; printed at home on cardstock, bound with a length of red silk ribbon and marketed through local bookstores and gift shops.

Boasting local sales of over 1,000 copies that year, Helen's book was purchased and produced in 1996 by Dutton with an added introduction and the lengthened title, *How to Have a Perfect Christmas: Practical and Inspirational Advice to Simplify Your Holiday Season*.

After that, her writing talents were focused on her job when she started at Geneseo as a Grants Writer, except for small pieces she contributed to newsletters, magazines, and other people's books. Helen occasionally considered reviving her Christmas book, but did not do so until she got that call in 2013. The caller, echoing sentiments Helen had been hearing for years, said "We take your book out every year and enjoy reading it as a family." So, did she have any copies left of *How to Have a Perfect Christmas*?

The answer was "No," she didn't, but the question inspired her to begin writing anew, and the result is her recently published collection of eighty essays, *Another Perfect*

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## Popular Holiday Season Book

*Continued from page 7*



**Helen Isolde Thomas**

**Christmas: The Perfect Gift.** Her message: "Your Christmas will be perfect because you are a key part of it, not because you polished the silver to a satiny gleam

or mastered the art of making gourmet butter cookies, but because it is infused with your being, your love, and your presence."

Dubbed the "anti-Martha Stewart" by a Rochester, NY newspaper in 1995, Helen insists that her goal is not to diminish the holiday, but to enhance it. Her inspiration comes from the fact that she really loves Christmas and hates to see people get too stressed out to enjoy it.

Helen's daughter, Emily A. Daniels, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor at SUNY Plattsburgh, says this about the new book; "Part pop culture, part trivia, part memoir, part critique, and part practical advice, *Another Perfect Christmas*, touches a chord in all who have ever celebrated the holiday in grand or less-than-grand fashion. Thoughtful and thought-provoking, it brings the reader around to a mindful review of all that we do that makes this annual festival a good or not-so-good experience for ourselves and all around us."

*Another Perfect Christmas* is available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). New and used copies of her first holiday season book, *How to Have a Perfect Christmas: Practical and Inspirational Advice to Simplify Your Holiday Season*, may also be found on the site.

Now Helen is thinking about what she might do next year.

## Hudson Valley Community College Emeritus Professor Writes Family/House History Spanning Nearly 400 Years



**Professor Staats in front of his family homestead**

The Staats family goes back a long way in Rensselaer County, NY – a really long way.

Thankfully, Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC) Accounting Professor Emeritus W.L. "Bill" Staats took the time over the past three years to recount the lives of all 11 generations of his family who have occupied the family homestead since 1696.

*Three Centuries on the Hudson River* is an historical account of the home, known as Hoogebergh, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The fieldstone house was built on land deeded by patroon Killeen Van Rensselaer to Joachim Staats, whose father Abraham came to America in 1642.

The book recounts the lives of the earliest residents of Hoogebergh but also include Staats' personal anecdotes about the ninth generation to live in the house, which survived the Great Depression, despite the death of his father. Staats' widowed mother and seven children led a perilous life and survived, in part, only due to the generosity of an unwed uncle and maiden aunt.

Staats was a graduate of Van Rensselaer High School and the Albany Teacher's College. He spent more than four decades teaching at Hudson Valley and was the recipient of the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in 1994. He retired from SUNY in 1995.

More information about his book can be found at [www.onedutchhouse.com](http://www.onedutchhouse.com).

## World War II Book Has SUNY Retiree Connection



**Editor's Note:** Professor Iorizzo was named to the SUNY Oswego Faculty Hall of Fame in August 2013.

**Luciano J. Iorizzo**, emeritus professor of history at SUNY Oswego, is the editor of a recently-published book that offers a wide-ranging account of World War II through the eyes of Italian soldiers who were held as prisoners of war around the globe.

***Italian POWs Speak Out at Last: Italian Prisoners of War Break Their Silence*** by Carlo Ferroni is published by Teneo Press.

The book consists of four sections, with Italian veterans telling of their experiences before and after the war in Italy, the fighting in North Africa, Greece, Yugoslavia, Russia and Italy itself, and their time as prisoners in the United States, Germany, Britain, India, South Africa, Australia and other countries.

The former POWs recall their constant wartime hunger, homesickness, and hellish vulnerability to death, disease and parasites, but one said he still felt he benefited from his capture and imprisonment.

"I learned a lot from the ordeal. You could see reality," he said. "It was

a great experience, an experience that taught you what man was really like when naked and stripped of everything."

The author and Iorizzo have been long acquainted through the American Italian Historical Association. Iorizzo is a founding member and past president of the association.

Ferroni taught at Ashland University in Ohio for 30 years. He received his doctorate in history from Kent State University.

Iorizzo taught history at SUNY Oswego for 30 years. The emeritus professor earned his doctorate in American history from Syracuse University. Iorizzo is an authority on organized crime and has published extensively. His books have been translated for readers around the world.

Professor Iorizzo can be reached at [luciano1.iorizzo@gmail.com](mailto:luciano1.iorizzo@gmail.com).

## SUNY Retiree Profile

### Lewis Putnam Turco, Professor Emeritus of Writing Arts and Founding Director of the Program in Writing Arts, SUNY Oswego

by Linda Loomis, Adjunct Instructor, English and Creative Arts

**Editor's Note:** Professor Turco was named to the SUNY Oswego Faculty Hall of Fame in April 2014.

Nose stuck in a book, wandering in words while his feet trod the streets of Meriden, Conn., Lewis Turco walked deliberately on a path that led to his career as a poet and professor.

"I loved to read when I was a kid," he says. "I felt that I would like to give to others the delight those authors gave to me. I decided to try to become a writer myself."

Having defined his course, he set out. At 15, while in prep school, he took third place in a local newspaper's high school poetry contest. A job as student correspondent and newspaper morgue clerk ensued at that same paper; he began submitting poems to the local poetry column, and his literary career was launched.

Four years in the U.S. Navy after high school put Turco on the *USS Hornet* for two years and a round-the-world cruise. Before his discharge in 1956, he married Jean Houdlette and made plans to attend the University of Connecticut, with two scholarships from the Meriden newspaper at which he had worked to augment his GI Bill funding. With Navy-earned academic credits and an impressive list of publications, Turco completed the U. Conn. program and used the remaining funds for a master's from the Writers' Workshop of the University of Iowa.

Teaching at Fenn College after graduation, Turco founded and directed what is now the Cleveland State University Poetry Center, an accomplishment that brought him to the attention of SUNY Oswego's Dr. Erwin Palmer, who was chair of the English department.

"Dr. Palmer wanted an actively publishing poet, and he wanted me to start a poetry center modeled after the one in Cleveland," Turco says. "I had to tell him it was impossible in a city the size of Oswego."

Turco offered an alternative. "I said I could begin a program in writing arts if he wanted it." With that, Oswego became the site of one of the premier undergraduate

## SUNY Retiree Profile

*Continued from page 9*

writing programs in the nation. Genre-specific and workshop-oriented, the program demands academic rigor with commitment to creativity and publication. As director and professor, Turco shaped student authors for 31 years, nurturing them as they acquired basic skills and advanced techniques and helping them prepare their work for submission.

"I loved my students," says Turco, who retired in 1996. "Many of them continue to stay in touch through Facebook or in person."

He speaks with pride of his former students who have succeeded in writing careers as novelists, educators, software developers, poets and Oswego faculty members.

Poets around the world have been initiated into the principles of formal poetry through Turco's *The Book of Forms*, now in its fourth edition. Wesli Court (an anagram of his name) published *Epitaphs for the Poets* in 2012, and Turco in 2013 finished an epic poem titled "The Hero Enkidu."

Fifty-two books, chapbooks and monographs, in addition to hundreds of poems, stories, plays and essays in journals and anthologies are evidence of his status as a writer. Generations of former SUNY Oswego students attest to his effectiveness as a professor.

Nose stuck in a book, hands on the keyboard, directing a program and teaching developing writers; Lewis Putnam Turco reflects that he has met his goal to live a useful literary life.

## Do You Have A Retirement 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. The requested story length is between 500 and 1,000 words.

Please share your retirement story or tell us about a retired colleague's story by contacting the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) at [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu). Articles may be sent as Microsoft Word email attachments.

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

## Reducing Your Risk of Heart Disease and Stroke

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

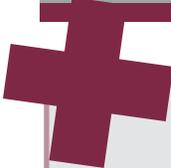
Although doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals can help improve your level of wellness, you – more than anyone – are in charge of your health. Only you can choose whether or not to live a healthy life style.

Modification of known risk factors for heart disease and stroke can significantly decrease your chances of developing these conditions. Some risk factors are beyond your control: gender, age, and family history. However, awareness of these factors should encourage you to seek appropriate health care and motivate you to control other risk factors that can be modified.

Here are the most significant modifiable risk factors for heart disease and stroke:

**Lack of physical activity:** Regular aerobic exercise is a must for a healthier heart. Physical activity helps strengthen the heart muscle, control your weight, control your blood pressure, and reduce stress.

**Being overweight:** Carrying excess pounds is not healthy for your heart, and is associated with conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, and diabetes. Where you store extra body fat is also an important factor. Individuals with an "apple" shape carry fat in the abdominal area. This pattern tends to be associated with cigarette smoking and alcohol use. People with "apple" shapes are more prone to high blood pressure, diabetes, and



certain types of cancer. “Pear”-shaped individuals carry fat in the lower body – hips, thighs, and buttocks. People with “pear” shapes may be at less risk than those with “apple” shapes, but keep in mind that excess weight of any kind is not good for your health.

**High blood lipid [fat] levels:** Know your lipid profile: total cholesterol, LDL, HDL, and triglyceride levels. A total cholesterol level of less than 200 is desirable. LDL, or “bad cholesterol,” sticks to the walls of arteries and clogs them; optimal levels are below 100. HDL, or “good cholesterol,” helps carry fats away from the walls of your arteries; aim for a level at or above 40. Triglycerides are another form of “bad” fat, and should be below 150.

**High blood pressure:** Regular exercise, a healthy weight, and a healthy diet all help to keep your blood pressure under control. Sometimes medications are needed as well, and these should be taken as prescribed and on a consistent basis. If you are having trouble with side effects of medications, speak with your health care provider – do not simply stop taking the drug. A systolic (“top number”) reading of 120 or less, and a diastolic (“bottom number”) reading of 80 or less are desirable.

**Diabetes:** High levels of sugar in your blood can damage blood vessels. Early detection of diabetes and normalization of blood sugar levels can reduce the risk of serious complications such as heart attack and stroke. Take all the measures your health care provider recommends to control diabetes.

**Cigarette smoking:** Smoking substantially increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Smoking impairs circulation in a number of ways, causing

blood vessels to constrict, increasing your heart rate and blood pressure, and decreasing the amount of oxygen in the blood. It also contributes to lower HDL levels.

**Stress and behavior:** We cannot eliminate all sources of stress from our lives, but we can change our responses to stress. The ways in which we react to our environment are very important. When it comes to dealing with stress, we can learn to alter it, avoid it, or accept it. Build resistance to stress through measures such as exercise, adequate sleep, recreation, relaxation techniques, and humor.

It is important to note that risk factors do not have a simple additive effect. Having more than one risk factor multiplies your chances of developing cardiovascular disease. For example, smoking is known to increase risk by 3.6 times, and high cholesterol by 4.0 times. The “relative risk” of these factors occurring together is not 7.6 times, but rather 15-20 times!!

Recent research has identified several new and important risk factors:

**Inflammation:** When cells are damaged by various agents, an inflammatory response occurs. Inflammation is the body’s defensive reaction, designed to control or eliminate the offending agent and to prepare the site for repair. However, the sequence of events that occurs with inflammation can become chronic and can then cause harmful effects in the body. For example, inflammation can be associated with changes in the blood vessel walls, which can precipitate heart attack or stroke. Chronic inflammation in the body can be detected by measuring the levels of two markers in the blood – C-reactive protein [CRP] and homocysteine.

**Periodontal disease:** Recent studies of individuals with gum disease found a significantly higher risk of cardiovascular problems in these individuals. Periodontal disease is often a sign of inflammation and is also associated with a higher oral bacterial load. In fact, bacteria that are commonly found in areas of dental inflammation have been isolated from fatty plaques in diseased coronary arteries. Good oral hygiene, regular dental checkups, and early treatment of gum disease are essential. And here’s yet another reason not to smoke – cigarette smoking greatly increases the incidence of periodontal disease.

**Omega – 3 fatty acids:** These substances have anti-inflammatory properties and have been shown to inhibit the growth of fatty plaque in the arteries. Research to date has proven that Omega – 3s reduce the risk of recurrent heart attacks, and the federal government is now launching a new study to see whether they can also lower a healthy person’s risk of developing heart disease in the first place. Consult your health care provider before starting an Omega – 3 supplement, especially because high doses can cause excessive bleeding.

**Vitamin D:** Individuals with lower blood levels of this nutrient have been shown to be at increased risk of heart attack and stroke, particularly in those with high blood pressure. Just how much Vitamin D we need is a subject of debate. Current thinking suggests a dosage of between 1,000 and 2,000 IU daily may be needed. Vitamin D will also be studied as part of the same federal research that is looking at Omega – 3s. Again – consult your health care provider. Higher doses of Vitamin D can be toxic, sometimes causing heart rhythm abnormalities.

## SUNY Retiree Discount Program\* Updates

by Gina Blume,  
University-Wide Benefits Specialist  
SUNY System Administration

For over five years, the State University of New York (SUNY) has offered three FREE discount programs to employees and retirees alike to help them save money on everyday purchases, large and small. These three programs (SUNY Corporate Perks, SUNY PerksCard, and the SUNY Benefits Discount Program) continue to be available; however, two of them have recently undergone some minor updates worth sharing. Below is a brief description of each program.

### (1) SUNY Corporate Perks (new company access code: suny2015)

Also known as “SUNY Perks” or simply “Perks,” SUNY Corporate Perks offers discounts from nationwide web-based merchants and service providers. Members are awarded “WOW Points” for purchases made through the online platform, which can be used towards future Perks purchases or donated to charity.

In addition to featuring everyday savings opportunities, Perks offers seasonal promotion events, such as the Back-to-School Savings Fair and the Holiday Savings Fair.

Register for Perks with a SUNY email address or a personal email address by visiting <http://suny.corporateperks.com>. Click “Register Now” and “Don’t have a SUNY email address?” if you don’t have an email address ending in “suny.edu”. Enter an email address of your choosing, along with “suny2015” as the company code when prompted.

### (2) SUNY PerksCard

Also known as “PerksCard,” the SUNY PerksCard Program offers discounts from locally-operated businesses, organized into 13 regions across New York State, including restaurants, auto dealerships & service centers, jewelers, health & wellness providers, legal & financial offices, entertainment venues, and more. Discounts can be accessed online, or in person by presenting the applicable

region’s PerksCard, which can be printed from your online account.

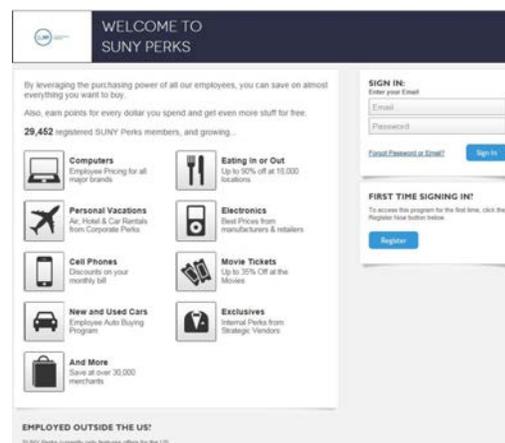
Register for PerksCard in your region by using the appropriate regional access codes, all located on the SUNY PerksCard website at <http://www.suny.edu/benefits/employee-discounts/perkscard/>. PerksCard also offers a mobile app for smartphones that allows you to look up and access the special offers while on-the-go.

### (3) SUNY Benefits Discount Program (new location and search function, new online request form)

The SUNY Benefits Discount Program features many other discounts exclusive to members of the SUNY family, including all retirees. This program is now located at <http://suny.edu/benefits/discounts/index.cfm> and can also be accessed from the main SUNY discounts web page – <http://www.suny.edu/benefits/employee-discounts/> – and features a new tool to search for discounts by category, audience, or keyword. Special offers are added regularly, so it pays to visit the SUNY Benefits Discount Program page often to see what’s new. Some of the more recently added discount offers are from iCanvas, the American Academy of CPR, Orlando Vacation Homes 360, Monarch Rain Chains, The Ski Bum, Island Trends, and Dibsies.

The SUNY Benefits Discount Program web page now also offers a fillable online/printable Discount Request Form for businesses that are interested in becoming part of the program. If you receive inquiries (or wish to invite local businesses to participate), please direct them to this form at <http://www.suny.edu/benefits/discounts/discountrequest/>. You are also welcome to print and distribute the Discount Request Form link to businesses you would like to invite to become part of the program.

*\*Please note that SUNY does not endorse, support, or benefit from any of the programs listed, and that this information is provided strictly for your information and further exploration.*



(1) Screen Capture of SUNY Corporate Perks Program home page (company access code: suny2015) <http://suny.corporateperks.com>



(2) Screen Capture of SUNY PerksCard home page <http://www.suny.edu/benefits/employee-discounts/perkscard> <http://suny.corporateperks.com>



(3) Screen capture of SUNY Benefits Discount Program home page <http://www.suny.edu/benefits/discounts/index.cfm> or <http://www.suny.edu/benefits/employee-discounts/> <http://suny.corporateperks.com>

## Don't Postpone Joy

by Sharon Cramer



**Editor's Note:** Sharon F. Cramer, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Emerita at Buffalo State, has been amazed at the variety of opportunities there are in Western New York.

When growing up, I was taught that there were many things to save for special times – in our family, this was shortened to “save ‘for good.’” This category included items such as treasured clothing, dress shoes, dishes that had belonged to a deceased relative.

Whenever my sister and I were given permission to wear or use one of these things, we thrilled at the opportunities: our posture changed, and we became very, very careful. Even though few of these treasures were breakable, we handled each gingerly – we prevented damage the best we could.

After my mother's death, when we were cleaning out her dresser drawers, we found many items wrapped in tissue paper. Some even had the tags still on, meaning that she had gone so far in saving things “for good” that she died before she got to enjoy them. At the time, nearly 35 years ago, I was somewhat startled to discover her habit of delay. Only now, five years older than she ever was, can I penetrate the error of her ways.

My new motto, “Don't postpone joy,” encourages me to take things out of the drawers, and use them gleefully. So many of the objects (clothes, jewelry, books) whisper their stories – of the person

who gave them to me, of a place or time in my life that had slipped into shadow, or of a moment of celebration around which many pleasurable feelings were clustered. While this philosophy has not given me license to replace fruit with cupcakes, I purposefully connect with things that make me smile.

Seeking and experiencing joy is not limited to using things. Just as I had to educate myself in how to cook (still remembering the mistake I made by whipping cream so long it turned into butter), I had to make some mistakes in learning how to relax in the bubble bath of joy. Slowly, I learned to allow into my routine the doing of things that might seem to be “too special” for everyday.

Whether it be peppering my solitude with photo opportunities, volunteering with a new organization, going to a mid-day movie, or spending uninterrupted days reading a new book, I've found many new ways to live in the now. Instead of waiting for a momentous occasion to get together with friends, I follow my motto, going out of my way to stretch my predictable daily circle out of shape to include them.

I become even more confirmed in my new motto when I think of a story told to me by my friend Judy, born in 1940, summing up pain we experience when we shortchange ourselves. When young, she had polio. As a rare treat for the children confined to the polio wards, each patient was given a bottle of Coca Cola. So precious was it that she didn't give herself approval to drink it. Instead, she imagined getting well, picturing herself slowly drinking from that bottle in the sunshine, outside the hospital. However, due to the contagious nature of her disease, when she got well, the bottle could not leave the hospital with her. Her sorrow at abandoning it reverberated years later, in the telling of this loss. Regrets like hers have multiple lives in the telling, with “if only” lingering for years.

How much better for us all if we stopped “saving for good.” Instead, let's give ourselves green lights to do what will make us glad. Try a month of “no regrets,” and you are guaranteed a surfeit of smiles.

## How to Be a Guest

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.

OK, let's start at the beginning: We open the mail and there is a gaily-colored card announcing: “You are invited!” Our first reaction might be pleasure; “Good, someone wants me!” The next reaction might be “What'll I wear?” or “Will anyone at the party talk to me?”

If the invitation is a bit formal there might be an RSVP in the corner, sometimes a “Regrets Only” (assuming that we will be regretting not to go).

When I was young, I NEVER said “no” to an invitation; nowadays my first reaction is ALWAYS to say “no.” If you are the same way, you have to decide how to say “no.” It's especially hard to do that on the phone if the host asks you “What are you doing on Saturday that you can't come to my event?”

It's generally difficult to say “I'm busy” if one is not. Writing a little note seems to be easier but some of us are really poor liars and it shows. Then there is the worst-case scenario – we've waited too long, it's the day of the party or dinner, and now we have to come up with heavy-duty lies such as “Max has a 104 degree fever” or “Our grandson just dropped in

*Continued on page 14*

## How to Be a Guest

*Continued from page 13*

with three friends and needs to be fed.”

Well, let's assume we decide to attend the party and we are safely inside your friend's home, the obligatory "How are you?" queries have been exchanged, and the problem of whether the guests ought to remove their shoes or boots on arrival has been solved.

But what about introductions to new people? Introductions seem to be a little like tipping – people WORRY about them excessively. During the whole ride to your friend's event, guests might have rehearsed: "What's Helen's husband's name?" and "WHAT, for heaven's sake, is the name of Bill's new girlfriend?"; "How should I introduce Philip, my POSSLQ (Person of Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters)?"; or "How should I introduce my new love who is 30 years younger than me and will be taken for my daughter if I don't watch out?"

My main problem (and maybe yours) is that I DON'T REMEMBER ANYONE'S NAME. Name tags, God bless 'em, are of no use to those of us who wear glasses with bi- or tri-focal lenses, which force us to peer at the name tag in a most embarrassing manner. We have all learned the right way to get around this obstacle – introduce the less important person TO THE MORE IMPORTANT PERSON – BUT THAT IS FAR too taxing, so some of us CHEAT. We do know the name of the person we came with and, sometimes, it's simply enough to say "This is my friend Marge" – assuming that the other person, in taking Marge's hand, will automatically mumble their own name – and we're off the hook.

Well, let's assume the party has gotten off to a great start and everyone is sitting down to dinner. The hosts have obviously

been working for days and the table is covered with dishes, none of which ever has fewer than 1,000 calories. You, as a guest, have recently decided to go on a diet, state that much and set off an avalanche of guilt feelings around the table.

Some dieters have learned good guestmanship in this respect to avoid such awkwardness. They either allow the hosts to put whatever they want on their plate and the dieters simply eat five tiny bites while having spirited conversations all around. Or, when food or drinks are being passed, say "Not quite yet" for the first part of the evening, and "Thank you, no more" for the second part.

A word about special eating problems: Many a hostess (and host) spends sleepless nights wondering whether Mary, who is diabetic, will be able to eat fruit salad; Frank, who is Jewish, will eat fettuccini; or Bob, who is known for his love for animals, will eat a sauce flavored with chicken bouillon.

A good guest worth his or her salted peanuts informs the host(s) of their dietary restrictions ahead of time, reassuring the host(s) that vegetarians generally find plenty to eat at a party, or that having had a heart attack 10 years ago doesn't prevent you from eating a

piece of meat once in a while.

What to say when the party winds down and it's time to go home might pose another challenge. Shall we be safe and say "Thank you for a lovely evening," launch into "You must come and visit us real soon," or just say "Goodbye" and let it go at that? A great guest might take a certain item from the gathering and comment on that, such as "I especially enjoyed meeting your cousin Ralph from Idaho" or "The zucchini bread was really an experience."

So much for the easy stuff. Just wait until you are a weekend guest! Forty-eight hours of good behavior and intelligent conversation! The problem of "What to bring" weighs heavily unless you are willing to buy what so many stores call "hostess gifts," WHICH ARE MOSTLY QUITE UNUSABLE except for the hosts to take along the next time they are invited somewhere.

Many hosts collapse under the problem of sleeping arrangements. Many of you have had the experience of a college-age child arriving with a lover (One room or two?). What about the couple who fight all the time (Do we give them a double bed??) Blessed are the guests who work these things out before

## COMMENTS, CONTENT SUGGESTIONS?

We value your input and want to hear from you! Please drop us a line at [retirees@suny.edu](mailto: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!

they get there. This includes the question of “Are the children invited?” Assume nothing!

A lovely guest is one who absents him or herself frequently. “I think I’ll take a walk or a nap” and who asks straightforward questions like “What time am I expected for breakfast?” or “Is there a shortage of hot water that I should be aware of?” Nagging questions persist: “Do I use their soap? Do I take my towel into my room? Can I use their toothpaste? Who else uses the bathroom? Do I clean the tub?” Don’t be afraid to ask!

I should end this article with a thought about visits to our children. Visiting children is like walking through a field dotted with live land mines.

I have now lived for a very long time and also for a very long time I have counseled people and families. And my thought is that “NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, YOU WON’T DO IT RIGHT.” I think the worst thing is to be AFRAID and WORRIED ABOUT doing it right. Children are constitutionally programmed to criticize their parents. Grandchildren at a certain age are constitutionally programmed to answer in monosyllables. “Helping” is a can of worms – except if you are an expert on fixing electronic gear of stuffed-up toilets.

I think the best advice I have to give is to encourage you to be the eccentric, weird individuals you and we all are.

## Eavesdropping through the Ether

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



Eavesdropping was once considered a crime, if not punishable by prison, then at least by the perpetrator being marked as a social pariah. You didn’t need to consult the Ethics columnist of the Sunday Times to know that if a private conversation was within earshot, you

were obligated – by traditional etiquette – to continue reading about the latest body count in Syria or to continue racking your brain for a four-letter noun that is a relative of the emu. You were prohibited from listening, surely from active listening, and most definitely from writing down what you had heard.

But the world has changed. And with it, apparently, has the etiquette involving eavesdropping.

Today the thing to do is to ride on buses and stand in crowded elevators with your pencil at the ready transcribing quickly (I suppose a mini voice recorder would serve as well) and then rush to have it published on the Web.

Two new sites – [overheard in new york.com](#) and [overheard in the office.com](#) – have recently surfaced. If they become as popular as their founders think, they may yield a revolution by the thousands office workers whose desks (and telephones) are divided merely by Lucite cubicles.

One would be much less likely to damn a co-worker (even one NOT within

earshot) if she knew that her disparaging remarks would reach the Web within minutes. One would be less likely to feign a headache as an excuse for breaking a dinner engagement if he knew that his subsequent call to his mini-skirted



legal aide proposing after-office drinks would be on the Web before the spurned woman’s tears could be dried.

“What hath God wrought?!” said

Alexander Graham Bell at the end of one of his first phone transmissions. We’ve taken personal intrusion to a new height by broadcasting – without consent – overheard personal tidbits.

Since Emily Post is no longer a best-selling author

(her name is hardly recognized today), I suppose this latest onslaught on privacy will gain full acceptance faster than it takes to click the “send” button, ushering private words into public virtual space.



## MOVIES NOW AND THEN: Madame Bovary

by Ann Fey, Professor of English (Emerita)

Rockland Community College

MADAME BOVARY was published in 1856 as a serial in *La Revue de Paris*, and then as a novel. Author Gustave Flaubert was tried for insulting public morals and offending decent manners. After his acquittal, his novel took off. The work's popularity has persisted through multiple translations, films, and TV series. Among the most successful film adaptations were Vincent Minnelli's (1949), starring Jennifer Jones in the title role, and Claude Chabrol's (1991), starring Isabelle Huppert. Both of these entertaining films warrant another look. Now there is a newer version (2015), directed by Sophie Barthes, starring the Australian actress Mia Wasikowska, and if this merits a look it would be for a different reason: to see how far it misses the mark.

Recalling the novel's general plot before viewing these films can add dimensions to the viewing. Basically, the story centers on Emma, a lovely young girl tantalized by romantic dreams as she manages the house and cares for her widowed father on the family pig farm. When her father's broken leg requires a

doctor's house call, she endows the visiting doctor with a my-prince-has-come identity, marries him, and moves to his small town with idealistic plans for glamour, prosperity, and excitement.

Emma's doctor/husband is romantically disappointing, personally dull, professionally and financially limited, and generally clueless. The town falls far short of her expectations; they move again, but the same situation prevails. Bored and frustrated with the banality of her conventional middle-class existence, unmoved and unresponsive to the needs of her new-born baby, Emma is tempted by dreams of otherness. Self-centered naiveté and romantic idealism blind her to life's realities. She falls victim to the greed and deceptive opportunism of others, and goes deeply into irresponsible debt and adultery. Financial ruin follows, as does increasingly desperate adulterousness. Her self-destructive values expand to suicide by arsenic.

Minnelli's 1949 MADAME BOVARY is so Hollywood, romantic in style. We see Emma's wedding, and the rare aristocratic ball where she waltzes gloriously as wiggled servants fight the heat by smashing elegant windows with chairs, her dalliances with supposed upper-class men, her desperate ending. The film is essentially a romance, free from explicit sexuality, the hugging and kissing scenes ending there, characteristic of the Hayes Office/Motion Picture Production Code, for whose approval Minnelli had to make cuts. The film opens and closes with a short scene of Flaubert, played by James Mason, defending himself at trial, including his now famous statement: "Madame Bovary, c'est moi." Emma as Everyman, rising towards middle-class, her unsatisfied dreams and desires looking further up,

heading for self-destruction, chooses the arsenic.

About 40 years later, Chabrol's 1991 MADAME BOVARY, true to the novel's plot, takes a sterner tone. It has a seriousness enhanced by the sets, a darker mood, and an outstanding characterization of Emma by Isabelle Huppert. Realism replaces romantic style, climaxing in a shocking suicide by arsenic sequence.

The latest MADAME BOVARY, Barthes' 2015 version, opens as Emma, running along a country road, drops dead. So much for narrative build-up. Apparently, she has already taken poison. The story goes back, but not far, and not deeply. We learn nothing about her earlier life, her rural background, or her romantic dreams and plans. Mia Wasikowska is nicely costumed. Her Emma seems



spoiled, sort of whiney, self-centered, out to be looking good, to have stuff, and to meet guys: the familiar high school movie persona. Likely, most of the viewings of this work will occur on a three-inch screen in the back of a classroom.

GEMMA BOVARY (2014), is a contemporary tale directed by Anne Fontaine, based on a graphic novel by Posy Simmonds, with Gemma Arterton



in the title role, about a romantic middle-aged man in a French town who, in his imagination, sees a new neighboring couple as the characters in MADAME BOVARY, and sets about to save them from their situation. There is much humor and satire of current social and behavioral stereotypes, as the character Gemma, with her Kardashian-like characteristics, makes modern uncensored versions of Emma's moral transgressions: maxing-out her credit card like a shopping addict, and conducting her extra-marital affairs like that liberated character in "Sex and the City." And what a clever, funny ending! This is an enjoyable and broad comedy that uses the story of MADAME BOVARY to comment on contemporary society.

**An opinion question:** Which of all these versions of the adventures of Emma does the best/worst/most interesting, sympathetic or harsh job, etc. on Charles, her husband? This could be an interesting conversation!

Email your opinion to me at [moviesnowandthen@yahoo.com](mailto:moviesnowandthen@yahoo.com). If I receive several responses, I might spotlight some of them in a sidebar accompanying my next column in the Spring/Summer 2016 issue of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*.

## The SUNY Retirees Service Corps Website Gets a Facelift

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

If you haven't visited the website of the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) – the publisher of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter* – in a while or if you've never checked the site out before, now would be a good time to visit and explore it.

The RSC website recently underwent a complete re-design to more closely match the template currently being used by other SUNY System Administration sites. Despite the changes, the site address – <http://www.suny.edu/retirees/> – remains the same.

So what's different? For starters, the RSC down-sized the number of category links on the site from over 20 (six at the top and 16 on the left-hand side of the page) to just eight links on the new RSC website.

The site's changes are more than cosmetic; they include many functional improvements as well. By simplifying the layout, the objective was to make the site as appealing and user-friendly as possible for retirees and SUNY campuses – such as easier-to-read pages and a simpler way of finding desired content.

The home page, for example, now gives a more detailed overview of the purpose of the Retirees Service Corps, its constituency, main objective, and the many features of the website. What is known as the "left-navigation menu" of the site was re-configured to reflect some of the most useful services offered by the RSC. Besides the traditional "About Us" section, these links include:

- An online repository of the increasingly-popular *SUNY Retirees Newsletter* and *Retirement Stories* submitted by SUNY retirees. Retirees are encouraged to submit their retirement stories and stories of interest to fellow retirees to [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu).
- Updates on **retiree conferences** such as the fourth biennial SUNY Retirees Conference at Schenectady County Community College on Wednesday, October 21st (see story on page 1).
- A new **Retiree News, Photos, Events and Publications** section, where campus-submitted items about SUNY retirees and their accomplishments are posted as well as campus events for retirees. Campus public and media relations officers are encouraged to submit such items to [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu).
- A **Retiree Resources, Information, and Benefits** section with links to documents, articles, and information for the use of SUNY retirees and SUNY employees considering retirement. It includes a **Campus Connections** sub-section with links to campus-maintained retiree directories, an RSC-produced guide to starting a campus-based retiree organization, and a list of existing SUNY campus retiree programs and organizations. One of the links in the Benefits sub-section lists benefits and discounts that are available to all SUNY retirees (see benefits story on page 12).
- The new **Campus Resources and Information** section is designed for campus officials (HR directors, benefits officers, chief academic officers, etc.) who are interested in starting a retiree program or organization at their campus. This section provides links to existing

## RSC Website

*Continued from page 17*

SUNY campus retiree programs and organizations, a comparison of the benefits and privileges campuses offer, and campus volunteer opportunities. Campuses can submit volunteer opportunities to [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu).

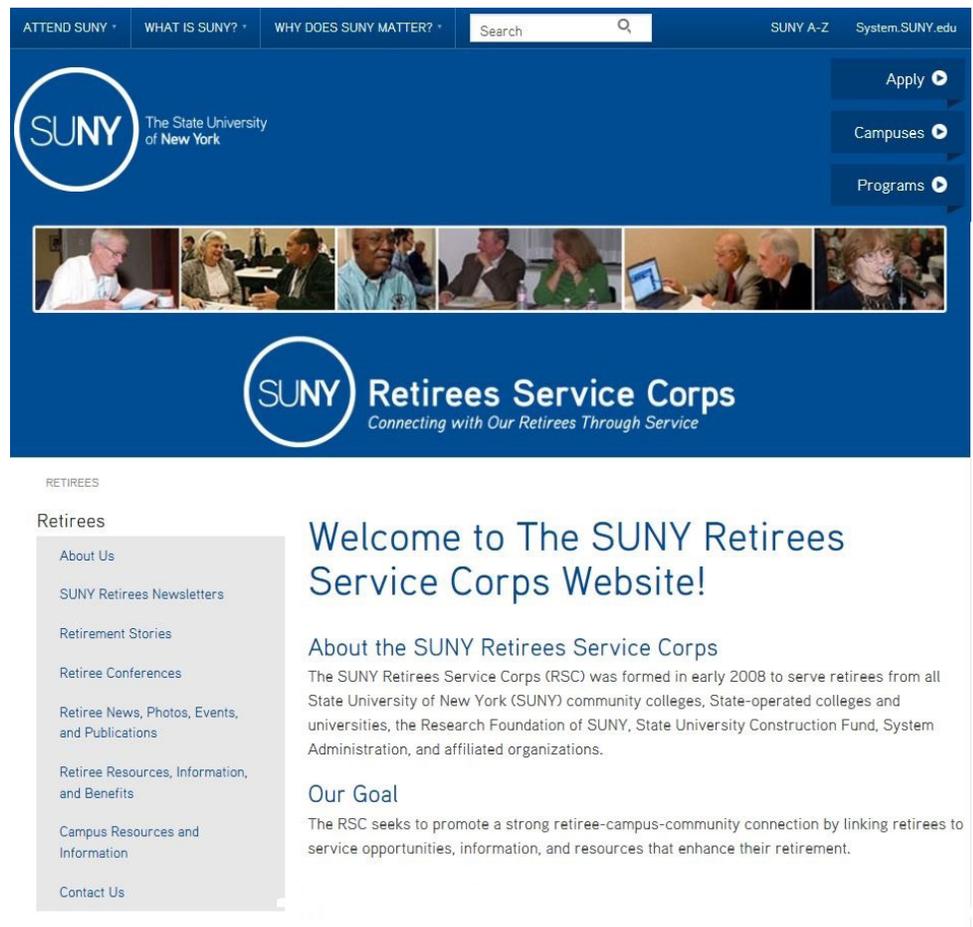
- You can see a screen capture of the “new and improved” SUNY Retirees Service Corps on the right side of this page.

There are more improvements to come for the SUNY Retirees Service Corps website. The **Coming Soon** section of the RSC home page describes the elements of the upcoming **SUNY Retirees Network (SRN)**, an expansion of the RSC website which is designed to connect SUNY retirees with each other, their campuses, and their communities. The SRN will include the following secure, password-protected services:

- An **online directory** of participating retirees from throughout the SUNY system;
- A **chat room** where retirees can interact and exchange information (list events, post scholarly papers for review, etc.) and discuss topics of mutual interest; and
- A **volunteer matching service** for those retirees who indicate an interest in volunteering on campus and/or in their community

Updates regarding the launch of the SRN will be posted on the RSC website (<http://www.suny.edu/retirees/>) and here in the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*.

SUNY retirees who are on the *Newsletter* electronic distribution list will automatically be made aware of major Retirees Service Corps announcements, including the launch of the SUNY Retirees Network. If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please email your request to [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu).



*Top section of the re-designed SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) website home page*

<http://www.suny.edu/retirees/>

## 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:

**Dave DeMarco**

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SUNY System Administration

**Anne Donnelly**

Member, SUNY Retirees Service Corps Advisory Council  
Professor of Biology (Emeritus), SUNY Cobleskill

**Jim Kalas**

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**Pierre Radimak**

Editor, SUNY Retirees Newsletter  
Coordinator, SUNY Retirees Service Corps  
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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*.

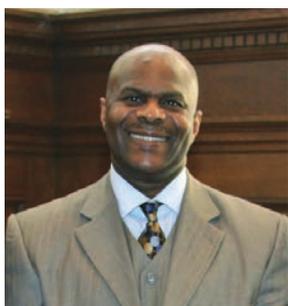
The Retirees Service Corps welcomes content submission from retirees and campuses for inclusion in the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter*, which is distributed electronically system-wide twice annually (spring/summer and fall/winter). For more information, contact Pierre Radimak at [retirees@suny.edu](mailto:retirees@suny.edu) 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](mailto:retirees@suny.edu).

## The Last Word

### Seven Good Reasons to Attend the Fourth Biennial SUNY Retirees Conference

by Curtis Lloyd, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources



SUNY retirees and campus administrators who read the cover story for the *Creating New Connections* retirees conference in this issue of the *SUNY Retirees Newsletter* might be asking themselves, "What's so special about this event?" or "Why should I register?" To help answer those questions, I have compiled the following list of seven good reasons to attend the October 21st conference:

1. **Location, Location, Location:** The fourth biennial conference on SUNY retirees is being held at **Schenectady County Community College (SCCC)** in Schenectady. The College, which is adjacent to a major interstate, is centrally located; twenty-nine SUNY campuses are within a two-hour drive of SCCC.
2. **Relevance:** The inspiration for *Creating New Connections* stems in part from a 2010 Retirees Service Corps survey where most SUNY retiree respondents indicated that they wanted to stay connected with their former campus and colleagues. Similarly, representatives of several campus retiree programs and retiree organizations approached the SUNY Retirees Service Corps (RSC) seeking ways to connect and re-connect with more of their former employees. This conference will explore campus efforts to reach and serve SUNY retirees.
3. **Dual Appeal:** *Creating New Connections* is designed to appeal to current and future retirees as well as to current or would-be organizers of campus retiree programs and campus-

based retiree organizations at all SUNY institutions – community colleges, state-operated campuses and university centers.

4. **News You Can Use:** The *Creating New Connections* conference will offer useful content for campus staff and retirees. For example, a panel discussion featuring representatives from the **Retirees Association of SCCC**, the **SUNY Cobleskill Retiree Network**, and **Upstate Medical University's "Retiree Associates" Program** will show conference attendees what those programs and organizations are doing to reach out to their campuses' retirees. An **open forum** will further examine **challenges and best practices** faced by similar SUNY entities. Among the several timely retiree-oriented presentations: a workshop on the financial markets and an update on health insurance regulations and options. For a description of all of the conference sessions, go to <http://www.suny.edu/retirees/conferences/> and click the **"Conference program and related details"** link.

5. **Networking Opportunities:** Where else will you have the chance to network with retirees and retiree program and retiree organization coordinators from all across SUNY? The October 21st *Creating New Connections* conference includes several opportunities for attendees to compare experiences. There will also be display tables containing helpful literature from various campuses and retiree organizations.

6. **Outstanding Cuisine:** The noon meal at *Creating New Connections* won't be your typical conference lunch. The luncheon banquet will be prepared and served by students of SCCC's prestigious **School of Hotel, Culinary Arts & Tourism**. Attendees will be able to select from two gourmet entrée selections as well as a vegetarian option when they register for the conference. The SCCC culinary students will be graded not only on the food preparation but on the service and presentation, so you're guaranteed to

have a first-rate dining experience. And it's all included in the \$20 conference registration fee.

7. **Tour of the SCCC School of Music:** Interested attendees will be able to go on a guided tour of SCCC's acclaimed **School of Music** and enjoy a performance by the SCCC Jazz Combo. The Music School features state-of-the-art facilities including the Vianna-Brignola Recording Studio, specialized rehearsal spaces, and digitally-equipped classrooms. SCCC music graduates regularly transfer to many of the nation's finest music schools and conservatories.

You can register for the *Creating New Connections* conference online at <https://fs9.formsite.com/zetadonut/form67/index.htm>. Be sure to register by the **Monday, October 5th** deadline. You won't regret it.

*Creating New Connections* is in keeping with the fine tradition of former Retirees Service Corps Executive Director Ram Chugh, who organized the first two biennial SUNY retiree conferences – *Reimagining SUNY Retirement and The Power of SUNY Retirees*. Both of these events – and 2013's *Connecting SUNY Retirees in the Digital Age* conference at the SUNY College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) in Albany – brought SUNY retirees and administrators together to learn about the potential of SUNY retirees and actions they could take to connect them. This year's conference promises to expand on those opportunities and connections.

I commend the co-sponsors of *Creating New Connections* – the SUNY Retirees Service Corps, Schenectady County Community College, and the Retirees Association of Schenectady County Community College – for coming together to host such a thought-provoking and timely event. **I hope to see you there!**