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The SJSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty
Association

Spring 1-2-2013

SJSU ERFA News, Winter 2013

San Jose State University, Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

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SJSU

ERFA

News

Remembrance of Things Past

On page four, James Asher offers an inside view of Industrial Psychology. Is that nice, new neighbor really digging up a dahlia bed at midnight?

To settle your nerves, turn to page six for Gene Bernardini's expert tips on shopping shoreside while on an Aegean cruise. He suspects the merchants are looking forward to his return.

A Newsletter of the San Jose State University Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

The MLK Library's Hidden Treasures

By Don Keesey (English)

On November 4, twenty ERFA members were given a two-hour "behind-the-scenes" tour of the campus library. Even those of us who thought we knew the library pretty well came away enlightened, and impressed. We started with a general introduction and some big figures: it's the largest joint city/university library in the country with an average annual attendance of 2.5 million and a collection of 1.3 million print books, 100,000 e-books and 100,000 electronic journals. And, at 475,000 sq. ft., it's the largest library building west of the Mississippi.

The tour then proceeded to demonstrate how this huge enterprise and this vast building worked. In the mezzanine we saw how a large space had been reconfigured to accommodate the current trend toward group study for students. In Acquisitions we learned how rapidly we are moving to electronic reading with the e-book and e-journals collections growing much faster than the print collections. In the Smartboard Classroom we witnessed the



Courtesy MLK Library

The view of the the impressiave MLK Library from Fourth and San Fernando streets only hints at what lies inside.

wizardry that allows an instructor to control several large screens simultaneously, while coordinating the subject matter with individual laptops on the desks. And at each stop we were greeted by the person in charge of that section who gave us an explanation of how that department functioned.

In some ways, the glimpses of spaces the public never sees were the most fascinating parts of the tour. In the Security control room we saw the array of computers that monitor cameras overlooking each section of the library. In the

IT section we saw the workshop where the university's hundreds of computers are kept in working order and the chilly space where banks of servers keep the library's heavy electronic traffic moving. And in Special Collections we were taken behind-the-scenes to an even chillier room where fragile materials are stored in climate-controlled movable shelves.

At the end of the tour we were met again by the department heads, offered refreshments, and heard a brief talk by Ruth Kifer, Dean of the University Library, who gave us an overview of the library's history and plans for the future. In all, it was an eye-opening tour and one highly recommended for anyone curious to see how a great library works. If the library staff offers another such tour in the future, we'll be sure to announce it in the Newsletter and urge you to take it.

calendar

Friday Dec. 6, 2013

3 to 5 p.m.

Holiday Celebration

MLK Library
Room 225-229

Friday, May 9, 2014

Spring Luncheon

The Villages
Speaker: TBA

Turmoil on Campus: A Question of Morale

By Peter Buzanski (History)

Why is the morale on the University campus, among students, faculty, staff, and administrators at the lowest level in the past half century? This is the question the Academic Senate dealt with at its November meeting. There is no one answer to the question, which stems from a long list of problems.

Certainly the budgetary shortfall, which led to a University debt of thirty two million dollars when Mohammad Qayoumi assumed the presidency two years ago, is the

first item on the list. He decided to solve the debt problem over a two year period, reducing it by sixteen million each year. This approach worked the first year, but by the beginning of the current academic year, President Q found it necessary to reduce the appropriations given to academic programs. Deans were forced to raise the enrollment level in lower division classes to a minimum of twenty, rather than the previous fifteen, during the Spring, 2014 semester. This forced the cancellation of many

classes, preventing students from enrolling in courses necessary for their majors or for graduation.



Temporary faculty were assigned fewer classes and many were given no assignments. As a result, students and their families, faculty members and academic deans took their complaints to the CSU Chancellor and Board of Trustees. The Chancellor then requested that the SJSU President rescind his order and find other ways to deal with the indebtedness. The president quickly found other sources, but his sudden reversal startled the Campus and brought critical articles in the local press.

A second factor was the attempt to resort to MOOCs, online instruction, for lower division courses. That approach not only infuriated large numbers of faculty and departments, but seems to be failing in the effort to save money while increasing learning opportunities. The former Stanford professor who pioneered the Udacity program has not only abandoned it for university use, but blamed SJSU students for its failure because of their lack of computer

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Turmoil on Campus: A Question of Morale

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sophistication. In addition, since the faculty are charged with curricular decisions, the fact that the online Udacity and edX programs were implemented by the administration without faculty consultation raised the issue of transparency and collegiality that formerly existed and has seemingly vanished with the current administrative structure.

In the present campus environment, rumors and conspiracy theories abound. For example, there is a question of the relationship between the SJSU President and the CISCO Corporation. The CEO of CISCO was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University while SJSU entered into a no-bid contract with that establishment for a new telephone system costing twenty million dollars. It seems that the other CSU campuses, following the California laws that require competitive bidding, financed the entire CSU phone system, it is rumored, for a sum equal to that spent by SJSU alone.

These were only some of the issues which the Senate confronted at the November meeting. It resulted in a Sense of the Senate Resolution

Research Grants for Retired Faculty

By Carol Christensen
(Kinesiology)

CSU ERFA has allotted up to \$6000 for grant awards for 2013-2014. CSU-ERFA members in good standing may apply for funds to support research and creative projects that are in accordance with the following goals: 1) Scholarly research on issues important to the retiree as a continuing member of an academic discipline or community; 2) Research and scholarly projects that contribute to the quality of

life of the retirees in the University system; 3) Research and creative projects that contribute to a given academic discipline; and 4) Research pertaining to the retirement concerns of faculty within the California State University System. For more information and an application form go to http://csuerfa.org/services.html#Grant_Awards_Program. The deadline for the submission of proposals for the 2013-14 grant award cycle will be December 16, 2013.

drafted by the elected faculty members of the Senate's Executive Committee. The Resolution, in which 45 Senators voted by secret ballot, resulted in a vote of 38 in favor, 2 opposed, and 5 abstentions. It asks that CSU Chancellor Tim White "undertake a prompt review of SJSU governance." The Executive Committee made certain that no one, not the President, the Chief Financial Officer, or any other administrator was blamed. Before the vote was taken, President Q addressed the Senate with an unusual, emotional speech. He spoke of his parents in Afghanistan who had not had much education, mentioning that his father had died when the President was very young and that his mother always emphasized the importance of education. With that, the President told the Senate that the resolution had his support.

Against the backdrop of this troubled situation, it may appear anticlimactic to mention other Senate actions, yet there were some of importance. One new policy recommendation, after much deliberation, was to provide students the right to timely feedback on class

assignments. The Senate learned that in some classes, students received no faculty feedback on assignments and, given the absence of University policy, the Student Fairness Committee was unable to aid complaining students. Another resolution dealt with the current lack of a faculty member on the CSU Board of Trustees. There has not been a faculty trustee since June 1, 2013, and California's Governor has not appointed one. An earlier system-wide resolution had urged the Governor to remedy this deficiency; meanwhile, this second resolution recommends allowing a faculty trustee whose term has expired to retain the seat until a new appointment is made.

In conclusion, I want to express my personal sentiment regarding the current campus climate. I have great respect for our President, and speaking to the Senate in favor of the resolution, I referred to my knowing him when he spent a decade as the head of what was then called Buildings and Grounds. We often had lunch together in the Faculty Club, where I found him to be a very forthright, accommodating administrator. It is my hope that the Chancellor's intervention will result in improvement in University governance and thus, in Campus morale.

Editor's note: Since this Senate Report was submitted, there's been a new crisis on campus which has received national attention. A few SJSU students have been accused of psychologically and physically abusing their African-American roommate on campus. The handling of this situation will undoubtedly come to the attention of the Senate and be covered in our next report.

Remembrance of Things Past

Sharing memories with our members . . .

So you want to be an Industrial Psychologist... and how about your sister?

James J. Asher (Industrial Psychology)

Most people have no idea what an industrial psychologist is, or does. Of course, every occupation has its secrets, and industrial psychology is no exception. But let me start with three little-known facts.

First, I never met two industrial psychologists who do exactly the same work.

Second, the word “industrial” suggests manufacturing, or business. This is much too narrow. The discipline is concerned with “work,” and “work” applies to everyone everywhere—in business, government, education, the military, medicine and engineering.

If the word “industrial” has too narrow a meaning, the word “psychologist” has even broader associations. For example, I have been summoned for jury duty many times and discovered that if the word “psychologist” comes up in the screening, I can be assured of being dismissed. The last time, I couldn’t help myself when one of the attorneys asked me, “If we select you for the jury, will you be psychoanalyzing us?”

Realizing that my chances of being selected were about the same as winning the lottery, I said, “Sir, you pay jurors five dollars a day for their service, correct?”

He said, “That is correct.”

“Well, sir, for five dollars a day, you aren’t going to get any psychoanalysis.”

More seriously, a third important fact is that industrial psychology can give us a set of tools based on theories, experiments, case histories and some mathematics. These can help people make

their work more successful and enjoyable, less stressful and safer.

Now let me tell you two of the best kept secrets in industrial psychology.

First, most people are separated from organizations not because they are incompetent, but for personality issues.

Second, personnel managers who make decisions about hiring applicants often use the least reliable source of information available to them. Despite having a candidate’s history, references and written tests to analyze, these people say, “I have the most confidence in the impressions I get from an interview with the job applicant.”

Yet, almost every study in the past 100 years has shown that the most unreliable source is the personal interview. The most reliable is an accurate history of the individual. That’s why, I suppose, police officers want to take a look at the “rap sheet” of someone they arrest. The premise: Tell me where you have been and I will tell you where you are going.

So why this unshakable confidence in the interview? I call it the “good judge of character” illusion. We all feel strongly that if we just meet a person, we can “size them up,” or “read” them accurately. A personal example suggests otherwise: As a faculty member at SJSU, I served for years on many selection committees. In the interview phase of one finalist, I watched the applicant sitting quietly, nodding in agreement as committee members asked and answered their own questions. Afterwards, Dean James Brown, who chaired the committee, stopped me to

ask, “What do you think of our selection?”

I said, “I feel uncomfortable. I don’t think we got anything out of that interview.”

He said, “I was about to call and make him an offer. What do you recommend?”

I said, “I’d feel better if you called some of his former employers to see if you can get some impressions of the man.”

Later the dean phoned me to say, “I am still in shock. This man is in litigation with all his former employers. And the person at his last place of employment told me: ‘Off the record—and if you quote me I will deny it—this guy will sue you at the drop of a hat.’”

Who makes the best impression in an interview? Without a doubt, “con artists,” either male or female. Their gift is likability. A classic example is Bernie Madoff. Some of the most intelligent people in our society—doctors, lawyers, corporate CEOs—lined up to give Bernie their savings to invest, and felt fortunate that Bernie honored them by accepting their money.

Even monsters make a good impression in the interview. The poster boy in this category was the charming, good-looking Ted Bundy. First responders to his horrific crime scenes had nightmares for months after. When Bundy was caught and later interviewed by a team of psychiatrists, they were bewildered. Bundy saw their expressions and said, “Don’t try to find an explanation. Even I do not know why I did it.”

If interviews are worthless, what is better? One of the top industrial psychology consulting firms in the country, the Humm

Consulting Firm in Los Angeles, never uses interviews in designing hiring processes for their clients. “Why waste precious time and money for information that is often no better than chance,” they say. Instead, they concentrate on personality traits. Having devised a scale based upon statistical analysis, they have had an 85% success rate. They’ve identified specific personality types that are either good or poor prospects for successful employment.

In one case, before signing a contract with a corporate client, the firm first insisted that everyone in the company from the president to the janitor take their test. When the results were in, the firm identified two individuals who rated high in the dishonesty category and asked the president if the two of them worked together. The president said “Yes, but they’re the most trusted people in the company.” He was advised to investigate their activities further

and he soon discovered that they had embezzled thousands and thousands of dollars from the company over the years. “They never took a vacation at the same time because they didn’t want anyone else looking at the books.”

Years ago, when Santa Clara Valley was still the Valley of Heart’s Delight, when orchards and canneries dominated the landscape, I asked a man who was in charge of hiring applicants to work on line in the cannery, “How do you decide which job applicants to hire?” He said, “I conduct an interview and ask myself one question: ‘Would I want this guy to work next to my sister?’ If the answer is yes, I hire him.” That strategy sounds like common sense and sounds highly reasonable, except for this: If he depends upon the interview to make his selection decisions, it is possible that his sister could be working next to a charismatic monster like Ted Bundy.

Blogging along together?

What’s the online future of the SJSU ERFA News?

By Clyde Lawrence (Journallism and Mass Comm.)

Just as the Warner–Pathe News and Life Magazine gave way to the technology of television’s broadcast electron beams, publishing on paper is gradually giving way to the Internet’s pixels.

We shouldn’t complain. In most cases, we can still view the print product as it always has existed (although subscriber-interest in paper versions is gradually moving toward electronic delivery). For crossover traditionalists, many

publications can be found as pdf documents any time we want on the publisher’s website. But for news junkies who want their news from a valid news source yet in the form of an interactive, multi-media smorgasbord, the newsblog is the answer: <http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/>; or, perhaps, something closer to home: <http://www.sjsu.edu/wsq>.

But what about SJSU’s ERFA News—our newsletter? We currently provide two choices for our readers—the printed-

Sciatica

“Time will say nothing but I told you so.”

--W.H. Auden

Mr. Pain has moved in again, uninvited of course, and made himself quite at home. He’s thoroughly disheveled and reeks of rotting flesh. He insists on following me from room to room, always pulling up a chair right next to mine wherever I go.

Mr. Pain isn’t much of a conversationalist. In fact, he’s a bloody bore. And whenever I politely inquire as to how long he intends to stay, he just grins at me with his ugly, yellow teeth, and says not a word.

--John Pollock

on-paper version mailed to a member list and a pdf document available at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/emeritusfaculty/newsletter/>.

Each end product starts out as the same digital entity and it takes only a small amount of tweaking to create both versions. Our online version, posted as a pdf, allows our readers instant access to websites and email addresses directly from the news columns.

So, what’s so hot about adding a blog version? Check out the

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Innocents Abroad, Once More

By Gene Bernardini (Humanities)

A year or so ago, our cruise from Istanbul to Athens went off without a hitch (if you don't count the trip to SF Airport in a van that showed up about an hour late, and a driver who drove like a maniac to get us there on time). But we arrived in Turkey, *in corpore sano*. Istanbul, where we spent our first two days, is a city of more than 16 million. As a result, the traffic is horrendous: the streets in the colorful old section of Sultanamet where our hotel was, were mostly twisting alleys filled with cars half-parked on the narrow sidewalks, and taxis, tourist busses and scooters desperately fighting their way through. The Turks drive like Italians—fearless daredevils—pretty much the result of too many people, too little space and everyone pressed for time. In fact, I thought the Turks and Greeks seemed very much like Italians—they're vivacious, garrulous, graphic gesticulators and shrewd bargainers. In fact, I think all the Mediterranean peoples, the Spaniards, Italians, Greeks, Turks and Middle Easterners share many of the same cultural characteristics.

The ship experience was good. The food was out of this world. *Oceania* emphasizes excellent food and service: Jacques Pepin, the renowned French chef, is their culinary designer, and I was told that the ratio of cruise staff to passengers was one to 1.6. Amazing if true, but it certainly felt like it! There were no children on board and very few young people in their twenties or thirties. The average age was somewhere between 50 and 90. With a few exceptions, our fellow travelers seemed healthy enough, prosperous, and had a relatively adventurous spirit.

The entertainment in the evenings was only second rate, mostly the cruise ship staff who sang and danced, and an Irish comedian who did nothing but tell old jokes circulating on the internet for the past several years. But the accommodations were first rate: the mattress and pillows unbelievably soft, bed sheets like satin and the bathrooms immaculate and well appointed. And always, everywhere, staff people to cater to your every wish. Even at the buffet, someone would step forward to take your full plate and accompany you to your table. That made me feel silly and superfluous, though for those with canes or difficulty walking, it was a godsend.

We took our first-ever Turkish baths in Istanbul. Surprisingly, I found it rather satisfying—my wife, Genie, not so much. (She had bursitis in one shoulder and the rigorous massage was, at times, painful.) On Crete, she volunteered to sit for a weird foot massage, where you place your feet in a small tank of water and let tiny fish nibble at ankles and toes. She said that wasn't very satisfying, either. Not vigorous enough—barely even tickled.

We bought a few items in local shops: a hat, shirt, sandals, and a dress or two. Genie hates to bargain and left it up to me to handle that chore. I willingly took charge, being armed with a good grasp of the basic principle: never

pay the asking price. "Offer one third," we were told on board ship, "and negotiate up from there."

On our first attempt at buying a shirt, I ventured to offer a more reasonable two thirds of the price and the shop owner refused. We shook our heads, mumbled appropriately to each other and turned to leave, expecting him to stop us and begin negotiating in earnest. Instead, he smiled

and said, "have a nice day, sir." Defeated, I lost my confidence. From then on when given a price, I would offer slightly less and the salesperson would immediately say, "OK." We'd leave, knowing I had caved in too early. When we bought two bejeweled toe rings for Genie, the woman accepted my feeble counteroffer with

only the briefest pause: "You're taking the bread from my children's mouths," she said with a faint smile that told me I'd been had again. Genie alternated between laughing and remonstrating with me.

Most important, we got to see all the sights we targeted: Hagia Sophia, the Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, a boat ride through the Bosphorus (Istanbul spans two continents: Europe and Asia), then Delos, Ephesus, Santorini, the palace of Minos at Knossos, and in Athens, the nearby ruins of Delphi and, of course, the Acropolis.

The city of Athens was, as everyone warns, disappointing. The buildings were non-descript, insubstantial and rundown, with



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Chat Room . . .

Special news from and about our members.
Edited by Gene Bernardini

This edition contains news about travels and activities taken from the membership renewal forms. Members are invited to send additional news about themselves to Gene Bernardini at geebernard@comcast.net or by snail mail at 775 Seawood Way, San Jose, CA 95120

• **K.C. Leung** (Foreign Languages, '01) and his wife, Alice, visited Jordan and Israel, including Petra and the Dead Sea, in March. They had an enjoyable dialogue with members of the Israeli Army while there. In July, the Leungs also visited Greenwich and Stonehenge in England, and Lake Como in Italy.

• **Kim Uhlik** (Recreation and Leisure Studies, '11) coached the Roosevelt High School women's tennis team to its fifth consecutive Portage Trail Conference championship this past fall in Kent, Ohio. The team compiled an 11-1 conference record, 12-4 overall, earning Kim the PTC Coach of the Year award.

• **Joanne Rife** (University Relations, '92) continues on her four-year project of hiking the length of the John Muir Trail (211 miles total). She and her son Dan (aka "Sherpa Dan") completed half the trip in August, 2012—Yosemite Valley to the vicinity of Florence Lake. This year, August, 2013, they decided to backpack from Florence Lake to Road's End in Kings Canyon/Sequoia Nat'l Park, a total of 91 miles. "It exhausts me to think about it," she said, before setting out.

• **David Smith** (Marketing/ Decision Sciences, '10) and his wife, Patricia, are pleased that their son, Zachary, a neurosurgeon, married Cathy Hunter, a pediatric surgeon, this past May, 2013. Both have academic positions at Northwestern University in Chicago.

• **Patricia Villemain** (widow of Francis Villemain) recently moved to the Ida Colver House, a retirement home in Seattle. She writes, "I left a two story house

for a two room apartment with my two cats and my dog. I'm still getting my bearings." Patricia's new address is listed in the current ERFA Directory.

• **Ruth Yaffe** (Chemistry, '90) continues to travel for fun. She went across Canada by rail this past summer. Her tenth Great Dane, *Kyra*, keeps her company.

• **William Barrett** (Computer Engineering, '04) remains active in History San Jose and in the Santa Clara County branch of Move to Amend. See mta.org.

• **Lonna Smith** (Secondary Ed/LLD, '04) and her husband Michael went to Paris this past spring, from where they departed on a Seine River cruise to Normandy and back. They followed up with

a week in Ireland where they especially loved hearing lots of music.

• **Pat Nichols** (Linguistics & Language Dvlpm't, '00) was honored as a 2013 Woman of Distinction, Promoting Healthy Lifestyles, by the Campbell City Council. Pat is a member of the Santa Clara County Food System Alliance, representing Slow Food South Bay.

• **Richard Post** (Math/Computer Science, '84) continues as a volunteer docent at the Point Sur LightStation.

• **David McNeil** (History, '05) and his fiancée, Faye Anglin, spent May in their Tuscan hideaway and "ten fascinating days in Budapest."

Innocents, Once More

Continued from Page 6

graffiti everywhere. (They probably can't afford to clean them up these days.) But the Acropolis was breathtaking (particularly after climbing all the way to the top). It was everything I expected—except for the hoards of loud and clueless tourists whose shouting and photo-taking undermined the almost sacred, awe-inspiring experience. Pericles had to be churning in his grave.

While there, I was reminded of what my Greek colleague, Beata Panagopoulos, once told me. She said that in the early 60s, when tourists began going to Europe in droves, many who visited the Acropolis couldn't resist picking up and pocketing small pieces of marble and limestone to take home as souvenirs. As a result, the Greek government began

regularly trucking in stones from nearby quarries to replenish the supply: a perfect solution that satisfied everyone's needs.

All things considered, we had a very good trip, with excellent weather. But Genie says she's almost through with travel abroad. The long lines through airport security and passport control and the cramped flying experience take all the fun out of it. (One leg of our flight, from SF to Frankfurt, was more than 11 hours straight.) And she's never much appreciated ancient ruins, which could easily pass for rubble. She enjoys the museums, but mostly likes the people-watching, the exotic foods, and of course, the browsing in shops. That's the part I'll have to emphasize next time. Otherwise, it's Rick Steve's *Travels to Europe* on our local PBS station.

What's the online future of the SJSU ERFA News?

To blog or not to blog

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Spartan Daily's web address at: <http://www.spartandaily.com>. In the bottom right corner of the opening page, the Daily's blog-style home site offers its readers an opportunity to view the printed version of that day's issue as a pdf. The two other publications used as examples, The Sentinel and Washington Square Magazine, currently offer or are in the process of offering readers the same choices. But for their tech-savvy market, all three examples start out with a blog-style format that appeals to the market's preference for multi media and interactivity.

What should the ERFA News do? Most organizations use blogs for the same reasons they establish a

newsletter. The address below will show a page with a directory of blogs hosted through SJSU: <http://blogs.sjsu.edu/directory/>. Utilizing much of the digital information used in producing the ERFA News, an ERFA News blog could be created on the SJSU blog site and could also contain a pdf of the latest print edition. If that isn't enough for some of our readers, there's still the subscription by U.S. Mail list.

Each morning I have breakfast with my dog, Frank. He waits for his toast crusts as I finish each slice. It's a morning tradition, just as is propping my daily newspaper on the bowl of fake fruit in the center of the table as I look over each page.

Pulling away from tradition can be fun, however, as the blog format allows for a lavish use of color and the interactivity of nearly instant commenting, video replay and quick selection according to reader interest. So I keep my iPad right next to my newspaper and sometimes a brief look at a blog turns into an all morning look. But, then, I'm retired. So is Frank.

One of the reasons Frank and I are becoming a minority in morning ritual is that I have to use my iPad to enter the sites I have read about in the newspaper. That's just like what you had to do to get through this article unless you're reading this online. Big difference! Big audience attraction.

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Newsletter of the Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

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