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(ERFA) Newsletter

The SJSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty
Association

Winter 11-2018

SJSU ERFA News, Winter 2018

San Jose State University, Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

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SJSU
ERFA
News

Inside . . .

Joanne Rife tells us what backpacking at an advanced age is like, and Irma Wagner-Guzman describes her new life in a Hawaiian paradise, pages 4 and 5.

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



The Fall Luncheon

Having a great time at the Fall Luncheon are four librarians: Celia Bakke, Mengxiong Liu, Judy Reynolds and Edith Crowe.

Photo by Dennis Wilcox

SJSU ERFA’s Faculty Awards program in the “Spotlight”

Our Faculty Awards program, of which we are very proud, was recognized in the November issue of *Academic Spotlight*, the Newsletter from the Academic Affairs Division of the Provost’s Office. Here’s what the article said:

“For the fifth consecutive fall semester, SJSU’s faculty will have the opportunity to apply for an internal grant from the Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association. The organization—comprised of former SJSU faculty . . . provides grants of \$2500 to selected faculty members to further their research, scholarship and creative activities

agenda. Last year’s recipients say ERFA’s . . . Awards have been a boon to their research. Though the program has typically made two such grants annually, a larger budget last year allowed for three awards. They were made to Ruma

Chopra, professor of History; Ninkun Wang, assistant professor of Chemistry; and Alan Soldofsky, professor of English, Comparative Literature and Creative Arts.”

We are pleased that our program is being more widely
(Continued on Page 3)

calendar

Friday, December 7, 2018

Holiday Celebration

ML King, Jr. Library
Rooms 225-29
(See Enclosed Flyer)

Friday, May 10, 2018

Spring Luncheon

Location: The Villages
(Speaker: TBA)

University and Academic Senate News

Growth and Change on Campus

By Peter Buzanski
(ERFA Senator)

The campus already looks different from my last report in the ERFA Newsletter. The small parking lot just north of the Duncan Hall of Science exists no more, as the ground is being prepared for the anticipated Science and Innovation complex for which the Chancellor's office has already authorized funds. The old Schaller House, which sits on that site and now impedes the proposed structure, is scheduled

to be moved to the parking lot just north of the Business Tower in January. Fifty eight parking spaces in both lots will cease to exist. Administrators announced that additional parking will be available at the South Campus and shuttle busses will travel more frequently during the morning and late afternoon hours.

The other major change, one that is quite impressive, is the new Spartan Recreation and Aquatic Center (SRAC), across the street from Sweeney Hall. SRAC will

be completed by the beginning of the Spring, 2019, semester. It is an immense structure that creates a new visual landscape, completing the four corners of the Event Center, the Health and Wellness structure, Sweeney Hall and SRAC with its Olympic-size swimming pool. There is also other construction continuing on campus. Hugh Gillis Hall, once the Speech and Drama Building, is getting a new roof, which one might think could be accomplished in a matter of days, but was in fact begun more than a month ago and is still not completed.

At the Academic Senate's Budget Report meeting we learned that SJSU currently has over 35,000 students, amounting to a headcount of 31,929 Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES). It should also be noted that currently the State of California provides 46.2% of our budget, while tuition and fees paid by students amount to 45.1% and non-resident students contribute 7.1%. It's no wonder that our campus, like others nationwide, welcome foreign students. It is also significant that given the attitude of our current federal government, the number of foreign students seeking higher education in the United States is diminishing.

We also learned from the Report that in addition to our SJSU President, our administrative structure now has six Vice Presidents, twelve Associate Vice Presidents, eight Deans and the head of the Martin Luther King Library, whose position is equivalent to a Dean. All that's missing is a partridge in a pear tree. While numerous faculty members question the necessity for so many highly paid

SJSU ERFA Officers, 2017-18

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Secretary -- Dennis Wilcox

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Bill McCraw

Jo Bell Whitlatch

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SJSU ERFA Office

MacQuarrie Hall 438D

email: celia.bakke@sjsu.edu • Telephone: (408) 924-2478

Visit the SJSU ERFA Website at www.sjsu.edu/emeritusfaculty

Views and opinions expressed in this SJSU ERFA Newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the editor or of San Jose State University.

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University and Academic Senate News *. . . and a Swan Song sung*

(Continued from Page 2)

administrators, President Papazian is further reorganizing the administrative structure, which will create additional vice presidents.

When the Chancellor of the California State University (CSU) issues an Executive Order, all 23 Campus Presidents must enforce it. Within the last year the Chancellor issued two executive orders, virtually without faculty input, to the dismay of faculty at all the campuses. An attempt by the Chancellor's Office to remedy faculty discontent has not been successful, and further efforts are being made on both sides. As for our own campus, a new anti-bullying policy is currently being designed, and it appears that the policy is meant not only to protect students, but will involve the behavior of department heads, possibly deans, and of bullying faculty members as well.

Finally, San Diego State is currently proposing to offer PhD degrees. The CSU campuses have already been given the authority to offer some practical doctoral degrees, such as Doctor of Nursing Practice, of Occupational Therapy, and Educational Administration. To be allowed to offer traditional PhDs would require not only legislative abandonment of the 1960 Master Plan of Higher Education but also a change in the California Constitution, which currently allows only the state-funded University of California to offer PhDs. Faculty sentiment at SJSU is overwhelmingly opposed to the San Diego proposal. While there are several reasons for this opposition the most obvious is that when the CSU began offering practical doctorates, the Community Colleges began asking

to offer upper division courses leading to a baccalaureate. If a CSU campus were allowed to offer PhDs, the Community Colleges could argue in favor of offering Master of Arts degrees.

MY SWAN SONG:

Having served on the Academic Senate since 1965 (before it even had that name—it began as the Academic Council), I observed what is needed for an Academic Senator to adequately represent our Emeritus organization. Most important, that individual should have previously served on the Academic Senate so that he or she knows the intricacies of parliamentary law, and therefore can represent SJSU-ERFA in the most fruitful manner. I personally observed my predecessor Professor Jim Smart, who had served on the Senate prior to retiring, and I followed in his capable footsteps. Having



Susan McClory

served in this capacity for nearly twenty years, I feel it is now time for me to go. It therefore gives me great delight to be able to announce that after my resignation, effective December 11, one day after the final Academic Senate meeting for this fall semester, the ERFA Board has selected Susan McClory to be my replacement. Susan has been a long-term member of the

Mathematics Department who served for many years on the Academic Senate, even becoming the Associate Chair. I use the

word “even” for a specific reason: Susan has never held a tenure track position because she lacked the doctoral degree. But Susan, who took both her undergraduate and Master’s degrees from SJSU, has built such a distinguished academic record that she was the first lecturer to be honored as the Outstanding Lecturer of the Year. I look forward to seeing her represent our

organization on the Academic Senate.

ERFA Awards program in Provost’s “Spotlight”

(Continued from Page 1)

recognized on campus and that we’ve been able to expand the awards through the generous support of our members. As we approach the 2018 holiday season we are again making our annual appeal to ask you to consider a donation to our fund. We created this program in 2014 and housed it in the SJSU Tower Foundation, a 501C (3) organization. As a result, all donations are tax deductible. You can help keep the momentum going for this initiative by sending a check made out to “Tower Foundation” (on the Memo line simply write “ERFA Faculty Award”). Please send your check to our Treasurer, Abdel El-Shaieb, 5032 Wilma Way, San Jose, CA 95124. We thank you for your consideration of this request.



Travel Adventures



Backpacking at Advanced Age: *What Was I Thinking!!*

By Joanne Rife
(University Relations)

Someone asked me once, regarding backpacking along the 211-mile John Muir Trail, why I didn't just run an Ultra Marathon instead, and get it over with. "Ah," I said, "because an Ultra doesn't have scenery like this, nor air like this, nor pikas or marmots, nor golden trout flashing in water as clear as glass, nor vistas that open the world at your feet and take your breath away as much as the elevation, nor people who stop and talk and tell stories of bears, nor sweet grass and bouquets of wildflowers tucked into granite gardens. That's why."

I tried to remind myself of these words last summer as, at age 86, I labored and labored and labored some more up a Sierra trail at 11,000 feet, carting my house/food/clothing/bedding (read: leaky tent, beef jerky, change of underwear, damp sleeping bag) on my bent back.

"What in the hell am I doing?" I thought. "I must be crazy. I AM crazy. Just give this up. It's been a good run and now it's time to climb into that proverbial rocking chair and nod off over a dull book."

My first backpack trip, at age 19, was with my father, a heavy smoker, age 52, and my younger brother, age 12. The year was 1951. We started on the east side of the Sierra and crossed to the west side. We had no idea what we were doing. We had army surplus backpacks. Mine ate a hole in my back just below my waistline. I have no memory

whatsoever of even breathing hard, of having aching muscles, of fatigue. I do remember having to climb back down Muir Pass (11,955 feet elevation) with my fleet-footed brother to help my exhausted father up the pass by taking his backpack, which weighed 65 pounds and included a full-sized axe. My father, a proud man with a Napoleonic sense of himself, was furious at his physical failure. He lightened his pack by leaving the axe at the Muir Hut at the top of the pass and tried to lighten mine by throwing away my paperback copy of Lawrence Durrell's novel, *Justine*. I had to scramble over a snowbank to rescue it. I gave him the hairy-eyeball. He did not protest.

So here I am, again, at 11,000 feet and the only things different are my age and I am solo.

You see, I decided to try it one more time. Just one more time. What would it be like to backpack solo? Could I make it? It was only for two nights. A kind of old-age experiment. After all, with everything on my back I could stop and set up camp anywhere. My objective was Cottonwood Lakes, 11,200 feet. My starting point was Horseshoe Meadows, 10,200 feet. Only one thousand feet of elevation-gain over a six-mile-long trail. Back in the day . . . ah yes, back in the day it would have been a cinch. But now it was not a cinch. It was, to tell it



Joanne at high elevation with her home-away-from-home in the background.

straight, damned hard. It was one step followed by another, followed by a rest.

It took me six hours and I questioned my intelligence, my common sense for that matter, the entire time. But I got there, into this magnificent bowl of granite mountains that drop sheer into deep blue lakes. I set up my little camp under a twisted fox-tail pine, with a sweeping view out to towering mountains and a shining lake, staggered around in a daze of fatigue to boil up a pot of water to make tea, and pulled out my book. This book was the lightest book I found on my bookshelves. It weighed a compact 6.2 ounces—Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Collector's Library, Barnes and Noble, Complete and Unabridged. Later I would walk down to the shoreline and, on the eighth cast, catch a gleaming trout on a dry fly.

Maybe I'll try another trail, another lake, next summer. I'll only be 87. God willing.

Living in Hawaii

By Irma Guzman Wagner
(Foreign Languages)

Living in Hawaii after retirement was not on my Bucket List. I actually didn't have a list and if it weren't for my two serious medical surprises in San Jose with a worried family living in Kauai, I might still be in Willow Glen. Two years ago, I moved to Kauai and rented a cottage that my kids had found for me when I arrived. It was lovely! After that first rental, finding permanent housing was a matter of luck and help from the island network—informally called the “Coconut Wireless.” Now, after moving five times, I am here on the south side of Kauai living in a condo I bought in 2017. My small unit was a “diamond in the rough,” making me wonder if I'd made a real-estate mistake. But my son, Scott, took over a remodeling project and transformed it into a bright and comfortable home in the middle of a tropical garden. That's when I knew I'd made the right decision to move to Paradise! Many people helped me make the transition and I can't thank them enough. Mahalo!

The reason I was able to find a great place to rent in a nice neighborhood before I even arrived on Kauai is that my son and daughter-in-law are part of the island network. My daughter-in-law, Ellen, had a former yoga student whose brother owned a rental cottage. He and his wife offered me a contract without even asking for references. Of course, I signed it.

Ellen and Scott have lived here for fifteen years and made many friends and those friends have friends and relatives who are all connected and/or related. So far, I've met a lot of these people, who have taken me under their wings. Hawaiians are a diverse population holding common values. Caring

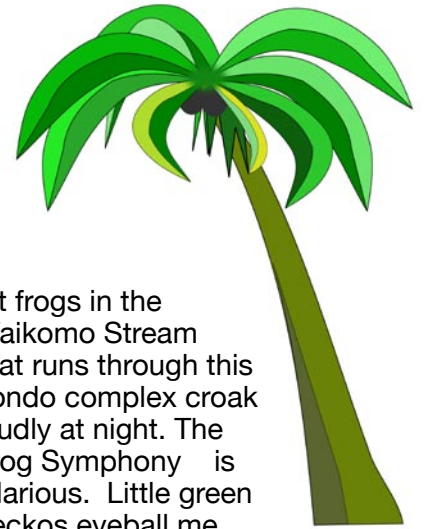
is the Hawaiian way! I have found that when a person needs assistance, someone always steps up to help.

Soon after moving into the cottage, my new neighbors walked across the lawn to bring me fruit and flowers. We sat down on the lanai and began to chat. I learned that I was now living next to a stained-glass artist and his wife, a former community college librarian and a poet. She asked politely to see my legs, which were under the table. I was a little surprised because my legs don't usually get much attention, but then Mrs. Lo said, “Oh good, you'll be OK.

Your legs are tanned.” In the two years I've been here, I have seen many legs that could be Shark Bait—white as snow, or coconut gelato. I'm tempted to laugh when I see them, but remember some advice these neighbors gave me. They told me that “Talking Story,” as we were doing—chatting—was fine. However, “Talking Stink” could get me into trouble since people are so connected. Nasty words fly faster than mosquitoes. I'll be careful; I don't want to get bitten. Instead, I'll hold my tongue and not aim derogatory remarks, like “Shark Bait” or “Shark Snacks,” toward people heading to the beach,

When I was living in the Bay Area, I heard that medical care might not be as available in Hawaii. The Kauai newspaper reported that this island needs more doctors, but I've not lacked for good care. I've gone one time to Honolulu for a special procedure and have been treated by doctors from other islands. The doctors are also part of my support system, which one M.D. laughingly calls my “staff.”

I'm learning to live with little critters around my home that encourage me to chuckle. Funny,



fat frogs in the Waikomo Stream that runs through this condo complex croak loudly at night. The Frog Symphony is hilarious. Little green geckos eyeball me and squeak when I try to shoo them out the door. They run past me, but are harmless and eat insects, so I let them stay. What must go, however, are the scary centipedes! Centipedes are the Imelda Marcos' of small arthropods. And they bite! Wild chickens and roosters are everywhere, but not in cookpots. I'm told they are tougher to eat than lava rocks. It's fun to watch the roosters—beautiful, but so arrogant! Yet they're very caring—they usually keep their chicks close by. Hawaiians protect family members! Even the crowing birds know this!

My favorite creature has been the sea turtle—a wondrous animal. I walk to a turtle cove to watch them play and swim toward the ocean. Caring for the land, plants, animals and the ocean is another Hawaiian attribute. Thankfully, sea turtles are protected and humans must keep their distance. One day, I saw ten turtles gathered among some rocks and two of them were mating. A local man assured me that it was, indeed, sex in the cove. I felt like an intruder and walked away.

If you come to visit, we can sit under a beach umbrella with our feet in the sand and “talk story!” Aloha!

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

• **Lee Neidleman** (Marketing, '02), obviously a man of few words, described his recent activities simply: "Traveled to Sicily and Israel w/ spouse. 6/18."

• **Marjorie Craig** (Counseling Services, '92) continues her volunteer work with Kenyan children. She writes: "Very fulfilling, enjoyable. Coordinated a mission team of eight in July. Four were educators. They were impressed with the students' engagement and excitement with learning. We have already planned for June, 2019, for three weeks and one week in Egypt! Anyone interested in joining us? Contact me."

• **Angela Rickford** (Education/SERS, '14) has been busy attending Conferences over the past year: Rockefeller Center, in Bellagio, Italy (2 ½ weeks); University of the West Indies, at Cave Hill, Barbados; University of Guyana, in Guyana; Social Innovation Carousel Conference (Presentation), at The Hague, Netherlands.

• **Joanne Rife** (University

Relations, '92) traveled to Australia with her son and daughter-in-law in the Fall of 2017 to visit her granddaughter. They snorkeled near the Great Barrier Reef off the Whitsunday Islands. "The reef was heavily damaged the preceding spring by a cyclone, and from climate change. The corals were a uniform light beige color, and on some islands pieces of broken coral, bleached dead white, were piled two feet thick, like stacks of bones. A sad sight. The fish of the Great Barrier Reef remain colorful and worth the trip."

• **J. Benton White** (Religious Studies, '92) has been fully retired 26 years now. "Seems like another lifetime," he says. "Most of our friends have passed, but Mary Lou and I remain in good health and though we travel less, we are still active in our Church and try to make ERFA events as often as we can."

• **Sheila McGann Tiedt** (Assoc. Member) visited Ireland this past August with her whole family. "As we are (mostly) of Irish descent," she says, "we visited the place our

great-grandparents left to come to America."

• **Jonathan Lovell** (English, '18) writes, "I just concluded my final semester of teaching, after 45 years in the field of English Education, 31 of them at SJSU." Jonathan's not finished, however: "I'm moving over to the SJSU Research Foundation where I'll be a Project Manager, directing the San Jose Area Writing Project for the next four years." He says he's stolen an actual title from Stanford Univ., referring to himself as a "Professor Emeritus on Recall" — which "sounds like something akin to a defective refrigerator, but it conveys my present position fairly well." At his last act before retiring, he served as the inaugural mace bearer for the College of Arts & Humanities at their May, 2018 graduation ceremonies in the SJSU Event Center.

• **Jill Steinberg** (Undergrad Studies/Psychology, '17) continues her research and presentations on Successful Retirement — to UCSC and Google, e.g. — and will be teaching the class at Boston Univ. in the fall. She'll be teaching live online, "using zoom so all the students can see me and each other wherever they are in the world — in the hospital or rehab. Check out my website: myretirementworks.com."

• **Tim Hegstrom** (Communications Studies, '10) presented a paper entitled "Bodily Communication: Multiple Modalities or One" at the Univ. of Marburg (Germany) in August, at a conference on Multi-modality in Communication, addressing the work of semiotician Gunther Kress.

Call for Nominations to the SJSU-ERFA Board

At the next SJSU-ERFA annual business meeting to be held in conjunction with our Spring Luncheon on May 10th, 2109, the Nominations Committee will be recommending a slate of candidates to serve on the Executive Board and members in attendance will cast their votes.

The elective positions to be filled this year are: Vice President (to serve as President in the 2020-2021 year), Secretary (2-

year term), Academic Senate Representative (1 -year term), as well as two Member-at-Large positions (2-year term).

If you are interested in being a candidate for any of these positions, or would like to submit a nomination, please email Chris Jochim at christian.jochim@sjsu.edu for details.

Nominations close on February 1, 2019.

In Memoriam

• **Mario Federici** (Foreign Languages, '89) passed away on September 5, 2018, at the age of 100 in his current home near Mantova, Italy. Born and raised in Italy, Mario studied Latin for eight years and Greek for five, developing an early talent for foreign languages. He would, in time, earn a doctorate in International Law from the *Universita' Cattolica* in Milan and practice import-export law for a brief time. Dissatisfied, he then decided to take a second doctorate in Spanish Literature from the *Universidad Interamericana* of Mexico in collaboration with the University of Chicago. He taught French, Spanish and Italian languages at Loyola University in Chicago

before coming to SJSU in 1963, where he headed the Spanish graduate program until he retired 26 years later. But before all this, his education had been seriously interrupted by WW II, when, in his final year of college (1941), he was drafted into the Italian Army and sent to Tunisia, in North Africa. There, he was taken prisoner by the British. They gave him a choice of where he wanted to be imprisoned and he chose America—"because I felt closer to Americans, since many of them were originally from Sicily and other parts of Italy." He was interned as a POW in Tennessee, and later sent to San Bernardino, CA. After the war he became an American citizen, completed his education

with a Fulbright scholarship and began teaching. His two major publications included one book in Italian on the wartime occupation in Milan, and another in Spanish on the poetry of Unamuno. He also worked closely with his (late) wife and colleague at SJSU, Carla Federici, on her successful college textbook, *Ciao!*, which went through multiple editions. Mario was an active member of too many foreign language associations and honorary societies to mention. Mostly he loved teaching students, who were attracted to his colorful personality and his enthusiastic love of languages. Some of them helped him celebrate his 98th birthday two years ago, just before he returned to live near his only niece in Italy.



The Fall Luncheon . . .

Gathering at the Fall Luncheon are (clockwise from top): Denise Murray and Manjari Ohala; Chris and Bauchin Jochim with Mary Lou White in between; and Lonna Smith, Cindy Margolin and Katharine Davies Samway.

Photos by Dennis Wilcox

Newsletter of the Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0210

Return Service Requested

CalPERS Information

Reimbursement for IRMAA Premium

By Joan Merdinger (Social Work)

In late November of each year, every Medicare recipient receives a letter from Social Security informing him/her of the rate for the Medicare deduction from his/her Social Security check to pay for Medicare Part B and Medicare Part D benefits for the upcoming year. As retirees in CalPERS, we are reimbursed each month – in our retirement CalPERS check – for the basic Social Security Medicare Part B premium. For 2018, the standard Medicare Part B premium reimbursement was \$134 per person.

You may be eligible for additional reimbursement if you have an IRMAA (income-related monthly adjustment amount) which increases your premiums due to a higher income. If you think

that you are eligible for additional reimbursement for Medicare Part B due to higher income, you may be eligible for partial or full reimbursement for your IRMAA amount. If so, you must notify CalPERS in writing, and this must be done each year. You are also able to apply for IRMAA reimbursement for prior years.

If you have an IRMAA amount itemized in your November 2018 Social Security Administration letter, how do you apply for additional reimbursement from CalPERS? Mail your written request along with a copy of your November 2018 letter from the Social Security Administration which describes your benefits for the upcoming year (make a copy of each and every page). If you are married, include

a copy of the complete letter to your spouse, if s/he is included in your CalPERS benefits. Send the required materials to: CalPERS Member Account Management Division, Attention: Medicare Administration, P.O. Box 942715, Sacramento, CA 94229-2715. Alternatively, you can Fax all the required materials to the following: (800) 959-6545. Expect a response from CalPERS within a few weeks. After the response to your request to CalPERS, it will take from 30-90 days before the additional reimbursement is reflected in your CalPERS retirement check. See [Medicare Enrollment Guide](#), August 2016, pp. 27-28 (CalPERS Health Benefits Program, Publication HBD-65).