A new academic year has begun with some return to normality, although with restrictions. For example, the University has returned to in-person teaching, but students, faculty, and staff must be vaccinated or undergo weekly COVID-19 testing, and everyone must wear a mask when indoors on university property. Our intent was to return to in-person programs this semester but with the surge in cases due to the delta variant and the fact that we emeriti are at high risk given our age and health status, we decided to continue offering only remote programs as Zoom webinars. Hopefully things will improve by the spring semester.

The 2020 presidential election remained an important issue in our spring 2021 schedule, with a talk by Dean Robert Griffin of the College of Homeland Security, Emergency Preparedness, and Cybersecurity on the insurrection of January 6. Dr. Donald Levy of the Siena College Research Institute spoke about why polls nationwide failed to accurately predict the results of the election. Another interesting presentation was offered by Justin Maine of Magic Wig Productions Inc. and Paul Grondahl, Director of the Writers Institute, on the region’s first large scale projection mapping show “Passages”, offered as part of the inaugural Albany Film festival and sponsored in part by the Emeritus Center. See articles elsewhere in this newsletter for a summary of each program from the spring 2021 semester and go to our website https://www.albany.edu/emerituscenter/emeritus-center-programs.php for links to their video recording.

In other news, we awarded six grants totaling nearly $7,000 through our Three Voices Program for 2021 – 22. Beginning with this issue, Carol Whittaker and Bob McFarland are the new co-editors of the Emeriti Voice. Sorrell Chesin resigned as Vice President as he and his wife have relocated to NC. We thank him for his many years of service to the Emeritus Center and wish them well in their new home. Jim Van Vorst has replaced Sorrell as our new Vice President.

We have an exciting schedule of programs for the fall 2021 semester. It begins with presentations by Professors Eric Block and Gary Kleppel, who are our new Fellows for 2021. Another highlight is a talk by Dr. Benita Zahn, who was previously a news anchor for WNYT television and is now a health and wellness coach. The semester ends on December 6 with a presentation by Dr. Chris Gibson, President of Siena College, with an introduction by UAlbany President Havidan Rodriguez.

Be well and stay safe.

Ed. Fitzgerald, Ph.D.
Dr. Sanjay Goel, Professor in the School of Business and Director of Research in the NYS Center for Information Forensics and Assurance, gave a very detailed presentation about current threats and how they have changed and escalated in the last decade. Much has changed in that time. Social media has become the primary source of information for many and has become a source of conflict. The internet is an information source and a sensor network. Artificial intelligence is now more popular since we now have the computing power to really make that possible.

Threat actors have changed and the attacks have changed. In the 80's and 90's, hackers were in it for fun and the bravado. Now hackers are crime syndicates, large commercial organizations and the hacks are more sophisticated and skilled. Their presence is at a higher pace and operated from areas of weak or corrupt law enforcement. Fake data is promoted. Information is a blend of activism and hacking to cause financial and/or social damage. The SONY hack in 2014 is an example. Nation States are incorporating cyber warfare as part of their military strategy. Insiders in organizations are causing negative impacts. It has become difficult to tell the difference between valid intelligence agencies and terrorists. Websites are being exploited, firms are being hacked to steal proprietary information, malware is being installed and there are advanced persistent threats of espionage on companies and individuals. The “dark web” apparently provides an abundance of hacking tools.

There was an attack on the DNC which took sensitive data from Hilary Clinton. It is suspected that Russia was behind this and behind the Solar Winds software supply. This was the most sophisticated hack so far. It is a major challenge to defend national security. At UA, a new master’s program was created to support students toward developing methods to protect our national security.

IoT – Internet of things. Incorporates sensors built in for smart farming, smart energy, smart cities, smart grid – managing renewable sources which are not consistent. Internet systems can manage variable implanted medical devices and other medical devices. We are in the fourth industrial revolution based on sensors, robotics, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Malware is also being inserted in systems for future use. Some examples are STUXNET which affected reactors in Iran, the German steel mill attack and the Mirai Botnet attack that took down sites like ETSY and Twitter.

Okay, what about AI? It has grown and redefined intelligent machines. It can never be perfect as it lacks human consciousness. AI systems take in data, compares data, and makes a decision based on those data. However, those data can be biased, can be out of date, and can be manipulated. As an example, surveillance cameras take in millions of images. Without human review/intervention, decisions can be made to target people or groups. Lethal drones can make life and death decisions. People can be influenced on information from social media. Ransomware has become pervasive, perhaps being inserted in software or hardware and called upon at the most opportune and damaging time. Think about an implanted medical device being so controlled.

Dr. Goel concluded the following:
- IoT attacks could become the arsenal in cyber warfare.
- AI attacks will change the game for hackers.
- Currently, security restrictions are reducing productivity and innovation.
- We should have a goal of reducing the security burden on the users.
- We need international cooperation in reducing security risks.
- We need to better understand human cognition, motivation and decision making.

The presentation was well received by the audience and many comments and questions were raised. Significant thoughts from the discussions are these:
- There weren’t as many cyber attacks during the 2020 election as there were for the 2016 election since cyber security was improved and propaganda was lessened.
- We should expand tactics for counter-radicalization.
- The fear of electric blackouts has been mitigated by building in more resilience and creating micro grids which can function independently.
- How do we protect ourselves at home – do frequent backups, change passwords frequently and use a malware cleaning tool.
- Suggest having a trained volunteer cyber security presence in communities to help protect communities.
- The US has the best cyber offense in the world.
SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION BY AMY KLEIN ON MARCH 1, 2021

“WHY GOOD FOOD SHOULDN’T BE A PRIVILEGE” Amy Klein, Chief Executive Officer, Capital Roots

Summary by Carol Whittaker

On March 1, 2021 Amy Klein, Chief Executive Officer of Capital Roots spoke on “Why Good Food Shouldn’t Be a Privilege.” Capital Roots, a non-profit organization established in 1975, has grown from a community garden movement to include many new services to carry out its mission which is to nourish healthy communities by providing access to fresh foods.

Ms. Klein believes access to fresh food should be recognized as a right, not a privilege. The United Nations’ charter declared the right to adequate food a fundamental human right. Food access involves both direct access (the ability to produce one’s own food) and economic access (the ability to purchase the food necessary for health and well being).

Food security is defined as access by all people at all times to sufficient nutritious foods (although fresh foods are harder to find by many). The term “food deserts” is not one Ms. Klein likes but it applies to areas where people have little access to fresh foods. These tend to also be areas where people have higher rates of diabetes and other serious health conditions. Having access to healthy foods corresponds with good diets and fewer health problems.

The Capital Roots approach involves:

- Easy access
- Making it affordable (not necessarily free)
- Top quality
- Provided with dignity

What started as one community garden has grown into 55 gardens in 4 counties. All of the gardens are organic and people can grow foods of their own preference which is very helpful for immigrants who wish to grow produce they are used to. Because Capital Roots is an Urban Land Trust, they own the land for these gardens and that protects green spaces in many communities.

In the early 1990’s Capital Roots started a program called Squash Hunger which distributed produce from gleanings and volunteer donations. The Veggie Mobile was started in 2007, delivering affordable produce in 7 cities at 37 stops. The produce costs about one-half what it would cost in a supermarket and people can use their EBT/SNAP (Food Stamp) and other similar benefits to pay for it. The Healthy Stores program was the next addition to services: providing produce to 20 small convenience stores in 5 local cities to store owners who pay wholesale prices for these items. The Virtual Veggie Mobile serves 80 plus schools and other institutions and the Farm to School program provides schools with fresh local produce. Additional Capital Roots programs include The Produce Project to get young people interested in gardening and farming and The Tastes Good program to introduce young children to veggies they might not have tried.

Capital Roots is now involved in a 4-year research project to assess and identify gaps and opportunities related to food access in the greater Capital District. One thing they have already learned is the need for more small stores in urban and rural areas to carry fresh produce items. Also there is a need for larger food budgets among the less well off and the need for transportation to stores to purchase fresh foods.

Questions from the audience included one about adding protein items like eggs and meat; Ms. Klein said the Veggie Mobile does offer top quality protein items now. Another question was about the impact of Covid, was it a negative impact on the supply or access? On the contrary, SNAP (Food Stamp) benefits were increased so demand was increased.

We should be pleased to be served by this organization in the Capital Region; Capital Roots is a unique organization marrying all the pieces required to provide improved access to high quality fresh foods at affordable prices to those most in need and ensuring healthier communities.
The William L. Reese II, Ph.D. Emeritus Center at the University at Albany
Fall 2021 Program

Note: Due to conflicts, this schedule does not follow the “every other Monday” format typically used in previous semesters. Given the continuing pandemic, all presentations will be held using Zoom.

September 13
Dr. Eric Block - Carla Rizzo Delray Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at The University at Albany and William L. Reese Memorial Fellow 2021; “Sixty Years of Smelling Sulphur”

September 27
Dr. Gary Kleppel - Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University at Albany and William L. Reese Memorial Fellow 2021; “Regenerative Agriculture: How Producing Food in Sync with Nature Can Prevent Disease, Improve Health and, Maybe, Save the Planet.”

October 18
Dr. Benita Zahn - Health and wellness coach at Capital Cardiology and former news anchor and health reporter at WNYT in Albany, NY; “Happiness: The No Cost Way to Health”

October 25
Tammis Groft, Executive Director, Albany Institute of History & Art; “Upcoming Exhibition Highlights at the Albany Institute”

November 1
Paul Grondahl, Director of the New York State Writers Institute at the University at Albany and L. F. Tantillo, Well-known local historical and marine artist, Fellow of the American Society of Marine Artists, Fellow of the New York Academy of History; “The Albany Waterway Project”

November 15

December 6
Dr. Christopher Gibson, President, Siena College; “From the Military to Congress to College President - A Conversation with Siena College President Chris Gibson with Introduction by UAlbany President Havidan Rodriguez”

“Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man.”
Benjamin Franklin

“Home is a notion that only nations of the homeless fully appreciate and only the uprooted comprehend.”
Wallace Stegner
Dean Griffin previously served a long career in homeland security at both the Federal and local levels of government in Washington DC, Virginia, Florida, and New Orleans and has held several senior positions in the Department of Homeland Security. President Obama recognized him with the Presidential Rank Award (Distinguished). His areas of expertise include Emergency Preparedness, Uber Security, Internet of Things/Smart Cities, Sport Violence and Stadium Security, American Federalism, and State and Local Governance. He said that his passion is to devote his efforts to making our National and local communities safe and secure.

January 6, 2021 (1/6) was one of the most unbelievable and terrifying days in America’s storied history: graphically shocking, chaotic, chilling, ugly, and genuinely frightening. Those are just a fraction of the negative adjectives that can describe that “horror show”. A majority of Americans wholeheartedly support this assessment and wonder if such another terrorist attempt on our democracy is in the future.

Dean Robert Griffin in a blisteringly passionate analysis of the events of January 6th admits that he was “shaken to the core” by its unfolding and aftermath, and offered his thoughtful and provocative reflections on that cataclysmic unfolding.

First, to set the stage, he emphasized 14 essential characteristics of fascism detailed by D. Lawrence Britt:

1. A powerful and continuing nationalism;
2. A distain of human rights;
3. An identification of enemies as an unifying cause;
4. A supremacy of the military;
5. A rampant sexism;
6. A control of mass media;
7. An obsession with national security;
8. An unholy mating of religion and government;
9. The protection of corporate power;
10. A suppression of labor’s power;
11. A disdain of intellectuals and the arts;
12. An obsession with crime and punishment;
13. A rampant cronyism and corruption; and
14. The holding of fraudulent elections.

Strike a bell? Sound familiar? For many of us, most, if not all, of the above disgraceful characteristics have been vividly present, and, indeed, have been expanding on the national and international scenes in the last several years. They are still with us.
A son of immigrants, Dean Griffin asked, “What is the meaning of America?” To address that question, in a salute to our recent history, he began by listing with key words and nostalgic pictures (many by Norman Rockwell) a roll-call of America in his youth and early manhood: service to the country’s military; sense of devotion; commitment to America’s long standing principles; loyalty and duty to one’s community; nobility and generosity; respect of authority; bravery in expressing beliefs; a (sometimes) rebellious behavior; rugged individualism; a hard working and industrious workforce; freedom of religion; freedom of expression; a melting pot; and, finally, American exceptionalism.

Dean Griffin then pivoted sharply by noting that Americans have been shaped also by a different cast of characteristics: anger; cruelty; contemptuousness; lawlessness; disrespectfulness; hate and vilence; extremism; allegiance to white nationalism; expressions and acts of neo-Nazism, glorification of the Confederacy and its symbols; arrogance and hubris; and violence and sedition. Obviously, most or even all, of these characteristics were on full display at the Capital on January 6; and they are definitely not those of American patriots, mere tourists, or friendly sightseers.

Turning to the events of January 6, Dean Griffin has concluded that the 1/6 orchestrated rally and subsequent mayhem were the end game of a delusional manipulation of the former president’s rabid followers, one that led to the ferocious Capital attack. Furthermore, it was a planned insurrection that began back on December 19, 2020 with the former president’s exhortation to his followers to “Be wild”: show up for a big protest rally on January 6 as a call to arms against “the swamp” and the Biden election. This desperate exhortation was followed by days of continuous, fiery misinformation and senseless rants, all leading to widespread organized planning, fundraising for the January 6 invasion, and alt-right local and regional rallies that rejected the result of the presidential election of November 3, 2020. (As Voltaire so cogently predicted, “Those who can make you believe in absurdities, can make you commit atrocities.”)

That fateful day, fortunately, Vice President Pence showed great courage (as did the brave Capital Police) in adhering to the Constitution and their duty; all the members were safely led from the Congressional Chambers; and the seditious rioters abandoned the building early that evening, leaving a distraught nation in disgust, trauma, and mourning. In our need to understand fully what transpired on that uniquely mind-boggling day, Dean Griffin proposed that answers to the following questions be unflinchingly sought:

1. Who were the insurgents: associates, background, occupations, organizations, previous political activities, residences, criminal records, travel history, financial transactions, etc.?
2. Who and/or what organizations funded these rioters and their travel and living expenses in Washington?
3. Were any members of Congress and their staff involved?
4. What was planned to take place on January 6? Where? The final outcome?
5. If the VP and any members of Congress had been captured, what would have then happened?
6. Why was mutual law enforcement aid in the area so unusually slow in responding to this instantaneous and widely media-covered crisis at our nation’s Capital?
7. Will the mob’s organizers be charged and vigorously prosecuted?
8. Are RICO charges applicable to this illegal action?
9. What role did active-duty and retired military and law enforcement members play? How many?

continues on next page
Furthermore, Dean Griffin suggests the following actions be undertaken:
1. A special, non-partisan, blue-ribbon panel be empowered to investigate and report on this event, possibly even invite the United Nations to be involved;
2. Enforce those insurrection laws on the book;
3. Create a special court to speed up any investigations;
4. Utilize the Gitmo facility by placing charged 1/6th terrorists awaiting trial there;
5. Charge all identified, involved organizations with RICO violations;
6. Research, prepare, and make public a transparent analysis of potential future threats by military members and police officers; and
7. As a nation and as individuals, never forget the enormity of January 6; and as citizens, fulfill a day of community service, thereby showing the world that we have learned much from this tragedy.

Dean Griffin concluded with a moving memorial tribute praising the dead, courageous police officers who defended the members of Congress and the irreplaceably beautiful Capitol.

President Fitzgerald thanked Dean Griffin for an insightful, extensive, and stimulating analysis of a truly catastrophic event in our history (when the survival of our democracy hung in the balance). ...with other members of the Board of Directors echoing enthusiastically his accolade. He led off a lively Question and Answer session with his own recap of the blatant misinformation advancing falsehoods about the ‘benign intentions and orderly behavior of the rioters’ espoused by Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin. Dean Griffin provided added relevant information about Senator Johnson’s Senate career and noted that both Senators Johnson and Ted Cruz were eager apologists for the mob. They also, shamelessly, without any evidence, blamed antifa for the riot. And as Dean Griffen retorted, antifa means ‘against fascism’, not against America. And, therefore, ‘shouldn’t we all be antifascists’?

William McColl wanted to know why the police didn’t fire at the rioters. Dean Griffin said that, even if gunfire had been used, there were not enough police resources to stem the mass attack in any manner or to launch a counter offensive. Bob Jarvenpa asked if any members of Congress were aligned with the invaders, and secondly, who monitors hate groups. The Dean responded that we only know at present that congressional staff members gave Capital tours to some of the rioters immediately before January 6. The Department of Homeland Security and the FBI currently monitor hate groups and how their activities radicalize new members. He said that former President Trump forbid this monitoring when he was in office, thus creating a clear and present danger to democracy.

Gary Kleppel, a 2021 Emeritus Center Fellow, wondered how Merrick Garland will act as the new Attorney General (AG). Dean Griffin is confident that Mr. Garland will act properly in his tenure as AG and will to investigate this insurrection, possibly with another Commission. He will restore the office to its former high standards and conduct—and a favorable reputation, one it did not possess in the previous administration.

Carol Whittaker expressed concern that the rioters might escape all punishment and felt strongly that there were surely insurgents there who should be punished. There exists broadly a sense that an unfair system of justice is in evidence: across the country lenient sentences to violent white mob members, but harsher sentences to minority members of civil rights protest groups. She also cited the striking difference in the large police presence at the Black Lives Matter rallies as compared to the small police presence guarding the Capital.
SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION BY DEAN ROBERT P. GRIFFIN ON MARCH 15, 2021 (finishes)

Jon Bartow asked if we are safer now due to the TikTok monitoring. Dean Griffin said he didn't trust the government completely as it had not been monitoring radical groups aggressively, but believes it may do so now under the new administration. Additionally, our leadership in the military and law enforcement have not been forthcoming in their actions leading up to January 6. 1/6 may not be a “one-off” or “one and done” affair, since there are great resources supporting hate groups. He is fearful of the undeniable growth, funding, and arms of the numerous alt-right groups.

David Wagner reiterated the possibilities of a blue ribbon panel, a special court, and a thorough investigation, any or all of which might lead to a conflict involving the three branches of government, as happened during the “Watergate” presidential crisis. Dean Griffin said that a full investigation must be undertaken to get to the bottom of this complex, murky national tragedy. We live in a ‘grey world’, not ‘a black and white one’. He thinks that we are not better off today in regard to the strength of our national security. As to any mitigation of the growth of internal extremist groups and their potential for violence, he lamented that little so far has been achieved. He also championed the teaching of civics in our schools and to fostering extensive campus dialogues about the complexities of the Constitution and the protection of our civil liberties.

The final questioner, Undine Giguere, is concerned about the fact that Republicans are so solidly behind the former president, his lies, and the GOP’s present corrupting actions and agenda. Dean Griffin expressed his deep disappointment with the current Republican Party, its members, and actions. It and they seem only to be interested in holding onto power and being re-elected...not devoted to the principles of a democracy and the well-being of the nation and the vast majority of its citizens. It has always prided itself as being the “law and order” party; but, tellingly, it has not revealed any concern or sympathy for the deaths of the five policemen who guarded the Capital.

In closing, President Fitzgerald again thanked Dean Griffen for a valuable and captivating presentation that clearly engaged and enlightened a very attentive audience.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION BY DR. DONALD LEVY ON MARCH 29, 2021

“Understanding 2020 Pre-Election Polling and the Road Ahead”
Presented by Dr. Donald Levy
Summary Prepared by Edward Fitzgerald

Dr. Donald Levy, Director of the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI), spoke to the emeriti on March 29, 2021. The SCRI conducts polls on political, social, cultural, and economic issues in New York and nationwide both solely and on behalf of clients such as the New York Times, Albany Medical Center, and AARP. SCRI is a highly respected polling organization that was rated “A+” by Five Thirty-Eight for their 2020 polling done jointly with the New York Times and “A” for their solo work.

Dr. Levy’s presentation focused specifically on how and why their polls systematically overestimated support for Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election. He began by noting that this was an industry-wide problem, with 53 of 57 pollsters overestimating support for Biden by an average of 5%, while only four overestimated Trump support by an average of 2%. A similar effect was observed in the 2016 presidential election.
Although the national results were generally accurate, the results for many battleground states were uncertain, and tended to overestimate Clinton support in the upper Mid-west. Reasons for the discrepancy included last minute changes in voter preference, overrepresentation of college graduates in the polling samples, and voters not revealing themselves as Trump supporters until after the election.

The SCRI uses a very detailed methodology to ensure the accuracy of their results. They sample from voter registration lists and consider both the reported and historical likelihood that each respondent votes. They also stratify by region, age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, and probability of voting and continue sampling until they have enough respondents in each group rather than weighting to adjust for fewer for than expected numbers. Their results for the 2018 midterm congressional elections were 93% accurate and highly praised by media nationwide. The results for the 2020 presidential election, however, were not as accurate. Specifically, support for Biden was overestimated by 7% to 10% in a SCRI June 2020 poll when compared to the actual election results for key battleground states including AZ, FL, MI, NC, and WI. The error in favor for Biden was lower in their October 2020 poll by still overestimated Biden support by an average of between 5% and 6%. Interestingly, an early October 2019 poll by SCRI was the most accurate. In fact, it predicted that NC (correctly) and MI (incorrectly) would vote for Trump, and that the error in favor of Biden for the other three states averaged only 3% to 4%.

Dr. Levy acknowledged that the SCRI received media criticism for their 2020 predictions and reiterated that it was an industry-wide problem. He cited nine other highly respected polls that also overestimated Biden support nationwide by an average of 5%. Each poll used different methods, so it is more likely to be the result of a wide-spread phenomenon than a common error in procedure. For example, considering likely voters who did not vote did not substantially alter the results. He argued that a more likely explanation is that Trump supporters were less likely to participate in their polls than were Biden voters. For example, the proportion of “ardent” Trump supporters was the same as “ardent” Biden supporters in the pre-election polls, even though post-election polls indicated that Trump voters overly reported that their support was a vote in favor of Trump rather than against Biden. In contrast, Biden voters were equally divided regarding whether their vote was in favor of Biden or against Trump. In fact, Dr. Levy believes that they overestimated Biden support by 10% and underestimated Trump support by 10%, so an adjustment of 20% would have correctly predicted the final election results.

There was a vigorous question and answer period, much of which focused on how to correct for the errors in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. Dr. Levy discussed how they do not believe that a simple adjustment of 20% to correct for the “Trump effect” is appropriate, but they are experimenting with a variety of other options to increase accuracy and will strive to be transparent and forthcoming in their methods.

“There are no military solutions- dialogue and diplomacy are the only guarantee of lasting peace.”- Martin McGuinness
SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION BY GRETCHEN MOORE SIMMONS ON APRIL 12, 2021

“It’s OK to Get Old: It’s Not All Downhill From Here”
Gretchen Moore Simmons
Summary by Carol Whittaker

Gretchen Moore Simmons, the Assistant Executive Director of LifePath, formerly Senior Services of Albany, told us on March 12, 2021 that it is okay to get old. She started by quoting George Clooney (who seems to be aging very well) who claimed the alternative (death) was not good compared to growing older and she showed a clip of a George Carlin video on the euphemisms we use to disguise growing older and dying.

LifePath provides supportive services to older adults in Albany County including the Meals on Wheels program and Caregiver Support Services; both the Community Dining and Social Adult Day Care programs were suspended during Covid restrictions but may be restored soon. Their focus is on adults 60 and older. They raise money from fundraisers like the Travers wine tasting event held each August and other community-based events to recognize older adults who continue to contribute and they receive funding from the Albany County Office for the Aging as well as from grants and contracts.

The statistics are remarkable: we are living 30 years longer than we were four decades ago. 1 in 5 Americans who are now age 65+ will expand to be a population of 80 million by 2050, a result of the baby boom generation. If you are now 65, you can expect to live 19 or more additional years. The oldest old, those 85+, are the most rapidly growing age group. But this comes with a downside: older individuals have more chronic health conditions--

- 85% have at least one chronic health condition
- 56% have two such conditions
- 23% have 3 or more chronic health conditions.

Dan Buettner is the author of How to Live to Be 100. He studied three populations of older adults in places known for longevity: Sardinia, Okinawa, and a group of Seventh Day Adventists in California. There seemed to be 4 critical factors involved in their longevity:

- They moved naturally: through daily exercise like walking and gardening (not working out at the gym).
- They had the right outlook: they ‘downshifted’ to a slower lifestyle, stayed positive, and had a purpose.
- They ate wisely: many, except the Seventh Day Adventists, enjoyed wine, they ate a primarily plant-based diet, and ate ‘meaningfully’ and until they were only 80% full (a Japanese concept).
- They stayed connected to loved ones and friends and had a sense of belonging.

Experts on aging tell us how to bring ourselves into alignment by understanding that:

- Biology is not destiny: genetics affect only 5% of our longevity. More important are the environment (and exposures), our metabolism, and lifestyles.
- The basics are very important: adequate sleep, a healthy mostly plant-based diet, and avoiding stress (in a TED Talk, Kelly Gonigal talks about our perception of stress: if we think something stressful is good, it won’t harm us as much).
- Use it or lose it: we must keep our brains healthy; there’s a direct correlation between physical movement and brain power. Learning and curiosity are important at every age.
- Don’t go it alone: stay connected and engaged with others.
- Have a purpose in life: know what that purpose is when you awaken each morning and
- Choose to be happy and positive: Do not reject the joys of growing older, it’s a privilege denied to many!
UAlbany Emeritus Center Three Voices Grant Program 2021-2022

Awards for Research, Teaching, or Service
The William L. Reese II, Ph.D. Emeritus Center

The Emeritus Center encourages you to remain active. Pursuant to that goal, you are invited to apply to the following grant program, designed to assist your professional involvement post-retirement.

The Three Voices Grant Program is made possible by an endowment provided by Dr. William L. Reese, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Philosophy and Founding President of the Emeritus Center Board of Directors. The Awards Program, now in its fifth year, seeks to advance Dr. Reese’s “Three-Voices” vision for the Emeritus Center by providing competitive small grants to support activities conducted by emeritus faculty, administrators and professional staff of the University at Albany, State University of New York. Grant funds are disbursed in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University at Albany Foundation, the endowment custodian.

**2021-22 Three Voices Grant Program Awardees**

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<td>Jean Francois Briere</td>
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<td>“Research on Hopf Galois structures and skew braces”</td>
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<td>Cynthia Fox</td>
<td>“Franco-American French in New York State Digital Archive”</td>
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<td>Suzanne Lance</td>
<td>“Writers Institute Book Festival”</td>
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[Learn More about Emeritus Center GRANTS](#)
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Dean Malatesta joined UAlbany in 1997 to pursue her PhD in Criminal Justice and has been at the university throughout her career. Prior to her current appointment as Dean of Undergraduate Studies, she served as Director of the Academic Support Center and Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Over her career, she has served in a variety of positions at the University at Albany and developed a passion for working with students. She believes that making personal connections and recognizing individual student journeys, challenges, and successes is critical for the growth and enhancement of the overall student experience. This can be accomplished most effectively by developing partnerships and collaborative efforts across the University.

Vice-Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, JoAnne Malatesta, spoke to the Emeritus Center about efforts the University has been making over the past five or six years to create a coordinated University structure designed to support student success from admission to graduation. As at other universities around the country, UAlbany had been seeing gradual deterioration in retention and completion rates for undergraduates over several years. Efforts to deal with this problem began with the formation of a task force to identify areas of student experience that might be improved. The task force then was charged with implementing and assessing initiatives developed to deal with these issues. The areas involved included:

- Introducing some new and more versatile technology to help coordinate information;
- Improving coordination among the various levels of advising in the University;
- Re-envisioning orientation;
- Developing more information and understanding about students' migration between majors; and
- Efforts by individual faculty to improve the delivery of course content in large enrollment courses.

Unfortunately, these efforts had not stopped the deterioration in retention and completion rates. Clearly, a much more systematic review was needed to develop a more coordinated model for dealing with the problem. So the University formed a second task force (with some overlap in membership from the first) to develop these plans. The task force identified a set of guiding principles to pursue this effort:

- Most important, design a student success model based on the student's lifecycle and critical moments (e.g., times with students are most at risk for “stopping out”);
- Improve the delivery of services (e.g., shorten response times);
- Utilize predictive analytics and assessments (e.g., better allocate resources to students who need them);
- Pivot University marketing and information (e.g., make information more accessible and user-friendly to students);
- Refine the student service and support model (e.g., make advising more internally collaborative and student-centered across units); and
- Engage in continual assessment of UAlbany's current practices (e.g., adapt the model as characteristics of the student population changes).

Implementing these principles most basically involved moving from a “campus-centric” model for the delivery of student services to a “student-centric” model. In the former, each of a variety of University units—advisors, student financial services, residence directors, first-year instructors, athletics staff, the Registrar's office, international students services, departmental advisors and faculty—would provide information and advice to students separately. The student would then have to navigate the gaps and inconsistencies in the guidance these units provided. A student-centric model envisions a single connection of the student with the University, which then itself coordinates the delivery of services for the student among all these units.

continues on next page
SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION BY JOANNE MALATESTA ON APRIL 26, 2021 (continued)

The task force identified six key areas that had to be built into the model for it to be successful:

- Campus collaboration;
- Academic support;
- Academic momentum;
- Financial support;
- Purpose and belonging; and
- Student well-being.

With respect to campus collaboration, a number of different initiatives have been implemented. Physical spaces have been made more attractive and dedicated to specific student groups (e.g., transfer student lounges). Communication with students has moved more toward texting (which students now attend to much more than to email). More user-friendly technology for course selection has been introduced. New ways of presenting material in large enrollment classes have been developed to involve students more effectively. Communication bridges have been built across University units to enhance the consistency of the information provided to students.

Improving academic support has involved moving from a de-centralized system in which students had different advisors at different stages of their University careers—a University advisor when they first arrive on campus, a departmental and/or faculty advisor when they choose a major, a different departmental or faculty advisor when they changed majors, and so on—to a 4-year advisement system in which the student has a single advisor throughout his or her time at UAlbany. That advisor could provide personalized support. That advisor could then identify risk factors confronting the student and develop targeted and timely interventions when problems arise, help assure the student is making satisfactory progress toward degree completion, and coordinate information with other units in the University (e.g., departments, schools, and colleges; the financial aid office; and so on). The University advisor would become the point person for all the student’s interactions with student services around the University, serving as the coordinator for a “student success team” for each student. Other advisors may be added to the team as needed (e.g., an advisor from international programs if a student wishes to study abroad). This much more focused, personalized, and collaborative approach is likely to enhance the student’s sense of purpose and belonging and well-being.

Enhancing students’ academic momentum entails recognizing that each student has a unique pathway to graduation, with different potential barriers along the way. Efforts to ensure students’ preparedness for the academic journey include developing a portfolio of assessments available to the student and the student success team that help to identify risk factors—academic, personal, financial, and so on—the student may confront. An academic recovery program provides “advocates” to assist student who are on academic probation or are being readmitted. Tutoring services (include additional peer tutors) have been expanded. In-term alerts are provided to the success team for students at risk of failing a course. The team can then develop a “campaign” intervention strategy with the student to help increase the likelihood of passing the course. Over 2000 students withdraw from the University annually. Again, targeted interventions have been developed to help identify students who are likely to withdraw, reach out to them through their advisors, learn what issues are moving them toward withdrawal, and connect them with University units that can help overcome the issues.

Over 50% of UAlbany students receive some form of financial aid. Improving financial support for students is therefore essential to helping them complete their degrees. Again, the focus has been on personalizing the student’s involvement with financial aid. A financial aid counselor is included as member of the student’s success team. That counselor helps identify “microgrants” (usually between $1000 and $2000) that can help overcome gaps and other problems with a student’s ability to pay for college. Most students are unaware of a variety of scholarships and other financial aids that might be available to them. The counselor can help them identify and apply for those sources of funding.

Dean Malatesta hoped to speak more extensively about student purpose and belonging and student well-being. However, she was running out of time in a fact-filled presentation. She noted that in fact all of the initiatives she had already discussed contributed to accomplishing both of these goals.
SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION BY JOANNE MALATESTA ON APRIL 26, 2021 (finishes)

So, has it been working? Apparently so. The most recent figures available show that retention has increased by about 4%–and this was in the midst of a pandemic. So Dean Malatesta is confident that the University is on the right track in dealing with the problem. Of course, ongoing evaluation and re-focusing is expected as the initiatives being pursued develop over time. During the Q and A session following the presentation, the Dean indicated that:

- Most of the initiatives mentioned in the talk are intended to apply to transfer students, not just incoming first-year students. However, some of the programs are not yet as well-developed for this population of students (over half of UAlbany’s graduates in any particular year);
- The Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) will soon be replaced with a much more student-friendly (and faculty-friendly!) reporting system;
- Faculty are seen as additional advisors on the student success team, not as the primary advisor;
- The University is looking at ways to involve alumni and emeriti in the processes discussed; and
- Some of the newer colleges in the University (most notably, Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security & Cybersecurity) have been quite successful in retaining their students.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION BY PAUL GRONDAHL ON MAY 10, 2021

“Passages: The inside story of the Inaugural NYSWI Film Festival’s landmark projection mapping presentation”

May 20, 2021 Zoom program
Summary by Scott Birge

The Emeritus Center was pleased to welcome Paul Grondahl, Director of the New York State Writers Institute and Justin Maine, President and co-founder of MagicWig Productions, to provide a recounting of the inaugural Albany Film Festival, held April 19 - May 3, 2021. The festival was a 5-day packed schedule of lectures, a drive-in movie night, and a multi-night massive “projection mapping” program that spanned hundreds of years of Capital Region cultural history and covered the entire side of the Science Library.

After being postponed a year due to the Covid pandemic, the film festival's opening night featured several feature films and the festival's juried “shorts” competition in a hard driving rain at the Malta Drive-in theater. More than a hundred hearty folks kept their windshields clear and were treated to the diverse collection of movies ... complete with an open refreshment stand with plenty of hot beverages.

“Passages” debuted Friday evening. For 4 nights (6 showings each night) the area's first large “projection mapping” event awed the attendees with an original animated look at the Capital Region’s rich history. Paul Grondahl and Justin Maine provided an entertaining “inside-baseball” recounting of the rigors of designing, staging, and projecting this titanic video presentation. The project relied on a complex collaboration of philanthropy, technical production skill, and creative story telling. Challenged to tell a story - a “love letter to Albany's film and literary history and culture” - the institute and its production partners launched this massive project using the University Library's 195 feet wide, 45 feet high west wall as its palette. Six huge projectors (each 10 times the power of a theater video projector), mounted on 20 ft. high scaffold towers, and surround speakers - all coordinated by computers and operated by local stage technicians.

The 10-minute film coupled the narrative talents of the award-winning actor Stephan Lang, with paintings from the Len Tantillo collection, Mary Paley's historic photos, and the soundtrack from Albany native composer Joe Kraemer. Dinosaurs, the headless horseman, Moby Dick, and a steam belching locomotive romped across the library façade with impressive scope and power.

To view this presentation, click on THIS LINK to view the video of this program: Please click on or copy the following NYSWI's link to the “Passages” video and further information regarding the Albany Film Festival https://www.nyswritersinstitute.org/post/another-look-at-albany-film-festival-s-passages

The William L. Reese II, Ph.D. Emeritus Center was a proud “Friend Level” supporter of the Albany Film Festival.
A Retirement Story, “Fiction and Memory” by Eugene K. Garber

“Fiction and Memory: Reflections on Maison Cristina”
By Eugene K. Garber

Eugene K. Garber is a Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus of English at the University at Albany. His previous publications include Metaphysical Tales, winner of the 1981 Associated Writing Programs for Short Fiction, and The Historian, Beasts in Their Wisdom, Vienna OO, O Amazonas Escuro, The House of Norquist. He is recipient of awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Fulbright Foundation, and winner of the TriQuarterly's 1992 William Goyen Prize for Fiction.

In early 2016 I read a draft of Rudy Nelson’s memoir, Finding Again the World. Rudy, like me, has continued to write after his retirement from The University at Albany English Department. I found Rudy’s memoir enormously engaging. It traced with candor and eloquence an arc of spiritual quest and transformation. I was inspired to write my own memoir, but as I composed a few passages and turned over in my mind the direction of my memoir I realized that I could not approximate the compelling sweep of Rudy’s journey. My life had no such significant form. Still, I was determined to make fictional use of what seemed to me some interesting life adventures, so I took a different tack. I would write a sort of thinly veiled autobiographical roman à clef, something along the lines of D.H. Lawrence’s Sons and Lovers or, since I’m a southerner, Thomas Wolfe’s Look Homeward Angel. I got forty pages or so into this endeavor before I realized that it, too, was lifeless.

Here the trail grows faint. Somehow Maison Cristina began to take shape in my imagination. It is a tapestried work of four strands all centered around the protagonist, a decayed octogenarian, Peter Naughton, with a history of unrelieved professional and familial failure. We find him in the care of nuns at a small facility for the mentally distressed. The strands of the novel's tapestry are these: Naughton's transactions with a fellow patient, Charlene, whom we find initially in a state of catatonia; Naughton's exchanges with other fellow patients and with the staff of Maison Cristina, particularly with Sister Claire; Naughton's memories of his family life; and Naughton's tussle with his companion demon Vogt. The narrative question: can Naughton, an inveterate spinner of yarns (including some sea stories borrowed from my service in the US Navy), use his storytelling powers to revive Charlene from her catatonic state? Naughton's conversations with Sister Claire help to clarify the spiritual and psychological elements at play in the attempt to resuscitate Charlene. The nun helps Naughton confront memories of his painful past so that he may be liberated from them and empowered to perform his storytelling magic for Charlene. Meanwhile, Naughton’s dealings with Vogt, sometimes comical, sometimes dead serious, represent yet another attempt to wrest from past failure a renewed self.

To return specifically to memory. Family members appear disguised and, I fear, often badly treated, even grotesquely transformed. I have made no pretense of creating accurate portraits. The conversations between Naughton and Sister Claire reflect personal struggles with religious belief. The other two principals, Charlene and Vogt, reflect not so much memories as persistent archetypes, the stricken woman and the demon, both of whom have appeared in previous novels. I don’t know where these come from and I’m not sure I want to know, though I doubt that even on a famous couch in Vienna I could disburden myself of a history of the roots of these figures.

For the fiction writer the use of memory is fraught with dangers. Living family members will be appalled by the disfigurement of beloved remembered relatives. They will not easily allow the writer the prerogatives of imagination. Various literary sleuths—biographers, historians, psychoanalysts—will ply their trades and uncover the subterfuges and dodges of the fictionist. With respect to non-familial commentators I, as a little-known writer, welcome them. As the old vaudevillian says, “I don't care what you say about me as long as you mention my name.” Meanwhile, Mnemosyne, not Fortuna, is my sponsor.

A Message from Dr. Garber:
Dear Emeriti Friends,
There are several ways you can get a pre-publication review copy of Maison Cristina if you are interested. Ideally you can order a kindle copy at the following address: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09J1PLB66. If you don’t read kindle, I can send you a pdf copy of the book. I can also send you an epub, or MOBI if you read on your mobile device. If you are non-digital, I have a few review hard copies left. If you find the novel worthy, I would appreciate it if you could consider writing a brief review on Amazon. The kick-off for the book is October 30. You can post your review any time after that. My email address is egarber1@nycap.rr.com.
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