Presidents Message

Winter gave up its grip very slowly this year, but spring is finally here and the semester is coming to end. Our spring programs featured a global theme, aptly begun with a presentation by Dr. Harvey Charles, Vice Provost for International Education and Global Strategies, who gave an excellent overview of international education and other related outreach activities at the University. Faculty from across the University talked about their research and teaching activities in Vietnam, Thailand, Turkey and other countries. Gina Volynsky of the Center for International Development spoke about how money empowers women in developing countries, and Diana Reiner introduced us to Jaja's Kids, a culturally-sensitive home and teaching program for homeless children in Uganda. Galina Evtushenko, a noted Russian filmmaker who is here at the University on a Fulbright Scholarship, presented her film “The Hall,” which documented the history of a famous government building in Moscow.

In other news, we recently announced the 2018 Three Voices small grant program. Applications are due by May 15, with awards to begin on July 1. See our website for more information. Carol Whittaker, our Program Committee Chair, is preparing the list of speakers for the Fall 2018 semester, which will be shared with you once it is finalized.

Enjoy the summer, and see you in September!

Fine Words

“Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but great actions speak to all mankind.” — Theodore Roosevelt
Editorial: Laughter is the Best Medicine.
Ram Chugh, Ph.D. Distinguished Service Professor of Economics (Emeritus)

We often hear that laughter is the best medicine or that one should have a good sense of humor. A good laugh can be relaxing and reduces stress. Reading funny stories and jokes, looking at funny cartoons, and sharing jokes with others can be fun. I am using this column to include some funny cartoon and jokes to bring some humor and laughter to our emeriti readers. Have a laugh below and jump to page 11 for more smiles.

The New Hearing Aid

Seems an elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%. The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, “Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again.” To which the gentleman said, “Oh, I haven’t told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I’ve changed my will three times!”

Get Better Soon

A retired man who volunteers to entertain patients in nursing homes and hospitals went to one local hospital in Brooklyn and took his portable keyboard along. He told some jokes and sang some funny songs at patients’ bedsides. When he finished he said, in farewell, “I hope you get better.” One elderly gentleman replied, “I hope you get better, too.”
Galina Evtushenko Ph.D., Visiting Fulbright Scholar at UA

On April 16, the Emeritus Center hosted a special program featuring Galina Evtushenko. Galina is a Russian filmmaker noted there and abroad for her documentaries. In fact, five of them have been shown by the Emeritus Center in the past. She is here in Albany on a Fulbright scholarship, and for the first time was able to present one of her films in person.

“The Hall” featured the history of the Pillar Hall of the House of Unions. It is in Moscow not far from the Kremlin and Red Square. From the Eighteenth Century to the Revolution, it served as the Assembly of the Nobility, and as their private club. In the Soviet Union, it housed Communist Party Congresses and state funerals for both Lenin and Stalin. It was the scene of the Moscow Trials of 1936-38, and also the trial of Gary Powers, the American U-2 pilot convicted of spying by the Soviets in 1960. A unique feature of the film was the fact that the Hall itself was the protagonist, and recounts its splendors and history from its own point of view.

The event was well attended, and followed by a lively discussion, led by Galina herself, who was able to give us her personal perspective and insight.

UA Retirement Story

Ray Ortali Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of French (UAlbany)

In 1996, I took advantage of early retirement, leaving UAlbany to start Prime Technologies, a high-tech company that manufactured CD-ROMs, DVDs and websites for local businesses in the Capital Region.

But ten years later, tired of being a company President, I discovered the UAlbany Emeritus Center, newly created by then-President Kermit Hall, an organization designed to encourage retirees (emeriti) to continue pursuing the University’s mission of teaching, research, and service. I became the Emeritus Center Program and Communications Director, sponsoring a rich variety of speakers and ambitious series of educational and cultural programs, free and open to the public. I loved music, but I never had a chance to study and even less to teach opera before. Here, I had a chance to create several exciting series that showed excerpts of various operas, explain how an opera works, and discuss its historical evolution. That was a great success!

In June 2016, I resigned that dual position at the Emeritus Center. I have recently taken a new challenge. Just like at the beginning of my career, I have come back to books and have become a publisher, this time of an e-magazine (an online magazine) called We Love Books and Company. It’s a publication that is attempting to do something that has never been done before: bringing together readers, writers, publishers and distributors. It’s high-tech. It’s multi-faceted, it’s interdisciplinary, it’s international, and it’s fun.

Even if your passion is different from mine, let me make the following suggestions. First, be aware of the top ten reasons why people flunk retirement. Second, don’t retire, rewire! Third, learn about the ten ingredients for a successful rewiring. And remember that rewiring might be the last chance you’ll have to go for your dreams. Be curious (learn Chinese), be current (learn computers), be relevant (connect with your community), and above all be unique (what sets you apart?).

All these ideas are mine, of course, but they are also discussed at length in a terrific book I highly recommend to present and future Emeriti: Don’t Retire, Rewire! 2nd edition, by Jeri Sedlar and Rick Miners, Penguin 2007. Free publicity for the authors – and happy retirement for all of us!
University at Albany Retiree Services

Below is contact information for services provided by the University at Albany to retirees. For services with no specific contact information, please contact the Office of Human Resources Management:

**Office of Human Resources Management**
University at Albany
Albany, NY 12222
(518) 437-4700

**Services and Privileges**

- **E-mail Access for Emeriti**
  Information Technology Services Website
  (518) 442-4000

- **Parking Decals (renewable annually)**
  University Retirees Vehicle Registration Application

- **Listing in Campus Directory**
  Faculty and Staff Online Directory Website

- **Retiree Organization on Campus**
  Emeritus Center Website
  (518) 439-6917

- **Library Privileges (including inter-library loan and online research databases)**

- **Office Space (if available in the department/school)**

- **Campus Publications and Events**

- **Campus Facilities (e.g., gym, meeting spaces)**

- **Consideration for Adjunct Teaching Opportunities and Campus and Community Service Opportunities**

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**UA Emeriti in the NEWS**

4. **From: Julie S Abramson (School of Social Work)**
   - I am providing executive coaching services to directors of non-profit organizations as well as sorting out conflicts among employees at various organizations. On occasion, I work with units or departments of organizations which either need or want to improve their collaboration and overall functioning. In addition, I have been working with faculty at one school of social work to write for publication and have also done editing for faculty at several schools. I am also on the Board of a small local (Hampshire County) Latino organization and am actively participating in Northampton Neighbors which is a local representative of the Village to Village movement that is helping elders remain in their communities. I continue to garden at home and at a community garden where there is more sun for growing vegetables and cutting flowers. My interest in gardening has led me to participate in the committee that puts on an annual garden tour in Northampton in support of the local library.

5. **From: Hans Toch, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Criminal Justice**
   - Living on Death Row: The Psychology of Waiting to Die Edited by Hans Toch, etc. (www.apa.org). This book synthesizes scholarly reflections with personal accounts from prison administrators and inmates to show the harsh reality of life on death row.

6. **From: Jean-Francois Briere, Professor Emeritus of French Studies**
   - My article « La Révolution haïtienne dans les manuels scolaires français, 1857-2011 » has just been published in the Fall 2017 issue of the Journal of Haitian Studies (vol. 23, number 2.)
UA RETIREMENT STORY

Alvin (“Al”) Magid, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Political Science, University at Albany

My retirement process was very smooth--mostly because I thought and pre-planned over several years before I retired: I met several times with TIAA-CREF personnel to discuss my post-retirement finances and just before retiring participated in a useful pre-retirement orientation session conducted by the SUNY Albany HR office.

I've always been a strategic pre-planner, about retirement and just about everything else in which I'm involved or which is likely to impact me, my wife, and our three children and eight grandchildren.

My life since retiring has evolved in unanticipated ways. All told, I've been much busier in retirement than before I retired; I'm enjoying all the activity as I approach my 80th birthday in mid-December.

Principally, I spend an immense amount of time, 30-40 hours weekly, as unpaid executive director of The Reading Is Fun Program (RIF) in Schenectady, which I founded in December 2012. RIF and my role in it are detailed in two articles in the SUNY Retirees Newsletter (vol. 3, issue 2, Fall/Winter 2014, pp. 8-9; and vol. 5, issue 2, Fall/Winter 2016, pp. 12-13.

CLICK HERE

I also do a lot of serious reading, mostly in the wee hours of the morning, and, with my wife, travel a lot in the US and abroad.

Think seriously about retirement and its manifold implications for the retiree and his/her family and perhaps others before taking the decision to retire and acting upon it.

Useful Links for Retirees

- Medicare Information
- NY State Commission on National and Community Service
- TIAA-CREF
- NYSUT Retirees and Retirement
- ULIP
- AROHE

FOR FUN:
- Think like a 94 year old genius
- 50 Ways to live longer
- How to live to 100 and enjoy it

News You Can Use

‘Still Dreaming’ Shines a Spotlight on Creative Aging
NextAvenue
The dreams of a group of former actors and performers, all over 70, are re-awakened as they collaborate to mount a production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream at the Lillian Booth Actors Home, an assisted-living facility.

This App Lets You Create A Digital Time Capsule For Aging Relatives
FastCompany
GreyMatters gives the elderly a link to their past, to help them connect with family members and caregivers.

No Age Limit on Tech Benefits
AARP California
Jacobs Institute for Design Innovation at UC Berkeley brought together 15 older residents and 16 undergraduate design students to create effective solutions for people as they age.

New Emeriti

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of our new adopted community. Our kids are still surprised at how busy we are. But it's great to be able to be that way, and to feel that we contribute positively to the social fabric and having four grandchildren living less than 10 miles away: and a fifth just five hours away, we have plenty of reasons to get up each morning. With all these activities and others, like two choirs and doing mathematics (me), coordinating all of our neighborhood’s social activities (Rhonda) and we’re also monitoring a possible County highway project that could displace his small neighborhood. Based on that plan the Town was able to get sidewalks constructed on McKown Road, Johnston Road, Fuller Road, Carman Road and in Guilderland Center.

In VA, Rhonda began by getting involved in fundraising with a local chapter of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), serving for some time on their board. But most of her recent volunteer opportunities have opened up with or through St. Edward Catholic Church (STED). She became involved with a group of parishioners that worked with Richmond Friends of the Homeless (RFOH), an organization that provides free lunch each weekday to about 100 of Richmond’s least privileged residents, and served for a time on their board. She now coordinates the STED group that provides and serves a lasagna lunch on the fourth Friday of each month. She is involved with helping to raise money for scholarships for All Saints Catholic School, a K-8 school which serves a predominantly low-income minority population in Richmond. We help at a food pantry in Powhatan County, the rural county just west of us. She is a member of a group that raises money to support Catholic education in the Hinche province of Haiti. At STED she almost single-handedly runs “Pew-to-Pew”, an outreach program for the 100 or so predominantly senior regular attendees at the daily morning mass at STED. (For many of the attendees the activities around daily mass are their main or only social interactions of the day). And in part because of all this involvement, she is now serving her second term as chair of the STED Parish Council.

When I came to Virginia, I saw immediately that Chesterfield County (the smallest unit of local government) was just as challenging for pedestrians and bicyclists as the Town of Guilderland. So I signed up for a "Bike-Walk Academy," where we learned how County government works, and ways to advocate for improved bike/pedestrian infrastructure. County planning staff had drafted a new “Bikeways and Trails" chapter of the County comprehensive plan, and the Academy graduates and others made enough noise advocating for the chapter that it managed to pass (by a 3-2 vote of the County Board of Supervisors, in the fall of 2015). Since then we’ve continued to try to remind the County, by letters, showing up at public meetings, blog posts, etc. of the continued need to pay more attention to safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Progress is slow.

The county has miles of sidewalks, but only 13 of the nearly 200 signalized intersections in the county have pedestrian signals with countdown timers, so the sidewalks are little used.

Here is a not untypical example of an unused sidewalk:

Perhaps the volunteer activity we look on with the greatest satisfaction is James Morris. Around 15 years ago a disabling electrical accident caused James to lose his ability to do physical work, his family left him and he became homeless. He was panhandling near the above intersection and living in a tent in a wooded area of a city park when Rhonda first encountered him, and over a period of months got to know him and his story. His situation became a project of some of the folks at daily mass.

Beyond providing some basic needs (replacing his tent when it was stolen, getting him long underwear and other warm clothes, and, of course, money for food), over a two-year period we managed to get him an address so he could receive mail (the church parish office), health care, a bank account, and government documents so that he could get a social security disability payment (of $750/month). After 11 years of being homeless, he was able to find a place to live (a 1940's "tiny house", for $550/month). A group of four of us take him out to lunch every other month or so and make sure he is doing OK--last fall we arranged some dental work for him, some of the daily mass people continue to augment his income a bit, and we’re also monitoring a possible County highway project that could displace his small neighborhood.

With all these activities and others, like two choirs and doing mathematics (me), coordinating all of our neighborhood’s social activities (Rhonda) and having four grandchildren living less than 10 miles away: and a fifth just five hours away, we have plenty of reasons to get up each morning. Our kids are still surprised at how busy we are. But it’s great to be able to be that way, and to feel that we contribute positively to the social fabric of our new adopted community.
On a Slow Boat to China

By Donald B. Stauffer, Associate Professor of English Emeritus, ret. 1994

It was a cold gray wintry afternoon in Inchon, South Korea, as my wife Morag and I stood on the pier where a large ocean-going ferry was moored. We watched helplessly as our red plaid luggage was gobbled up and deposited in the hold. Would we ever see it again, we wondered. We were at the beginning of a journey to China across the Yellow Sea to the port of Weihai, on a peninsula of Shandong Province. At that time, 1991, South Korea and China did not yet have diplomatic relations, as a result of the 40-year conflict between North and South Korea. So the only way to travel to mainland China was to fly to Hong Kong and go in from there: awkward, time-consuming and expensive.

We had been living in Seoul since August, where I was a Fulbright lecturer at Seoul National University. We wanted to return to China, where we had taught at Beijing University ten years earlier, in order to visit friends and do some touring. We had recently heard from friends that they were planning to travel with a new overnight ferry service from Inchon to Weihai that had begun as a result of thawing relations between the two countries. With their help we obtained visas to China and bought passage on the ferry.

The first leg of the journey was a “subway” ride from Seoul to Inchon. Our stop landed us in the basement of a department store, through which we struggled with our luggage until we reached a taxi, which took us to the dock in an industrial part of town.

When we boarded the ship we were shown to our private cabin: a smallish cubicle furnished with two tatami mats on the floor and a dubious-looking TV set. We came to appreciate our relative comfort when we walked around to look at the less expensive accommodations. One of the choices was a room with four double bunks. Only problem was they were built for Koreans, whose average height is about five and a half feet. The other, economy, class was a large low-ceilinged room full of people crowded together with their bundles of possessions and food, barely discernible through a thick cloud of cigarette smoke.

Back in our stateroom our loudspeaker barked out a staccato announcement, which was, of course, in Korean. Having no idea what we were being ordered to do, I searched out an English speaking crew member. There was only one such person aboard, it turned out. He was the purser, an obliging fellow who translated for us throughout the journey, reassuring us that usually we were being called to meals or some such, and not being ordered to abandon ship.

As we sailed out of the harbor it was interesting to look north at some islands, which were actually in North Korea, and to recall the extraordinary landing of US forces under General MacArthur, which turned the tide of the Korean War.

When we went to dinner we were able to look over our shipmates. They were a mixture of Chinese and Koreans; we were the only non-Asians aboard. The Chinese were mostly men, who had traveled across with various goods, including handicrafts and herbal medicines, to sell on the streets in Seoul and elsewhere. Some Koreans were going to China to visit relatives in the ethnic Korean areas of northern China. All were friendly, and we were greeted with smiles and thumbs-up signs. The food was edible if unidentifiable: plenty of rice, with some vegetable and meat on top of it in plastic bowls. Breakfast was similar.

The passage across was pleasant and uneventful. We slept surprisingly well on our little mats. The ship did not arrive in Weihai until late afternoon, and by the time we were off the ship and reunited with our luggage it was dark. We were greeted by a contingent of young English-speaking people who claimed to be part of a travel service and who wanted to know where we were going. Our plan was somewhat vague: we had thought we would get to a small city west of there and take a train to Beijing. They put us in a taxi and we started out over some very icy roads. The driver was as frightened as we were, especially since he felt responsible for these foreigners he was carrying. He hailed a truck coming from the other direction, and apparently learned that the road was impassable. He turned around and took us directly to a new-looking hotel in the middle of town.

At the reception desk we asked about our friends from Seoul who had helped us with the trip. The clerk excitedly told us there was an American family staying there with nine children. “So many children, so beautiful,” she said. We realized these could only be Susan and Bill and their kids, a Christian family who were returning from a short-term mission trip around China—a truly amazing experience for them. At dinner with them we learned that they would be on the ferry the next day for its return trip.

The next morning we were visited by a woman from the real Travel Service, who helped us make plans to get to Beijing. Unfortunately there was only one plane a week flying out of Weihai, so we had to spend several days wandering around that little city in sub-zero weather looking unsuccessfully for points of interest. When the day of the flight arrived we boarded a bus and traveled through a truly memorable snow-covered landscape in the Shandong countryside.
International marriages (IM), where one spouse moves across borders to marry a citizen of another nation have been discussed before, but usually in popular newspaper articles or in small qualitative studies that focus on female marriage migrants to a single destination country or on a single ethnic group in different countries. Few researchers pay any attention to the aggregate outcomes in multiple nations and regions, by investigating the fluctuating choices that citizens make over time for their spouses’ country-of-origin: gender differences in men and women’s choices or how often women vs. men marry internationally.

Fortunately, a Three Voices grant from the Emeritus Center supported my collaborative research with Professor Minjeong Kim (Sociology, San Diego State University) on the changing international marriage patterns across the regions of Europe and East Asia-Pacific, with a focus on comparative variations from 2000-2015 in the gender and national origin of the migrating spouse. Funding allowed us to add several nations to the sample, expand the time frame through 2015, include new demographic and economic measures for each country, and clarify which nations make the best comparisons to each other.

Why does international marriage occur? Often thought of as a private matter between two people, researchers concur that international marriages are encouraged by several push factors. We selected nations (that collect the kind of data needed) to represent each of these conditions. The first factor is the presence of large, often sex imbalanced, migrant or refugee populations (as in Australia, Germany, and Sweden); second is imbalanced sex ratios among young citizens, often caused by rural women’s migration to cities or by sex-selective abortion (as in Korea and Japan); third are commercial marriage agencies (used frequently in Taiwan) or other transnational networks; and fourth is a nation’s recent connection to a regional economy (e.g. Italy and Poland linked with Eastern Europe and/or the European Union).

Our query is not why couples in these nations marry internationally, but instead who they marry as judged by comparing the top-10 origin countries for men’s and women’s migrating spouses over 15-years. Our objective is to learn how international marriages, which occur due to economic or demographic factors, are shaped by micro-level theories about how individuals choose their mates. These theories consider two dynamics: whether people marry others similar to themselves (called homogamy or in-group preference) or someone different (called out-group choices)—the latter marriages involve status exchanges of unequally valued traits or racial-ethnic stereotyped perceptions. Our findings reveal the complex and intriguing relationship of these patterns.

**Similarities: Homogamous Intermarriage:** Most countries exhibit some form of homogamous intermarriage no matter which demographic factor encouraged IM. In Taiwan (with many marriage agencies) and Korea (with imbalanced sex ratios), China is one of the main sending countries for men’s and women’s spouses because of these countries’ historic ties with China. Next, in Sweden, a country with large immigrant populations, men and women still frequently marry people from neighboring Nordic countries (e.g. Denmark, Finland, and Norway). Similarly, most Australians’ intermarriages are with people from the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Alternatively, intermarriage can be based on racial and socioeconomic affinity: for example, German wives often have foreign-born spouses from other western European or highly developed countries which have comparable occupational or socioeconomic status. The only exception to this homogamous pattern is for nations that have recently connected with their regional economies: Polish and Italian men predominantly marry women from in-transition Eastern European countries who have lesser economic status but share post-Communist culture; similarly Italian women marry men from North Africa or Eastern Europe; but Polish women favor marrying up economically to foreign-born spouses from Western European nations.

**Differences: Stereotypes and Unequal Status Exchanges**

**Racialized and Gendered Stereotypes:** The sex industry is a bridge for women to cross borders, especially to western countries, and often reflects racialized and gendered expectations of both partners. Thai women often meet visiting sex tourists or migrate for sex work and marry native men. Thailand appears among the top-10 spouse-sending nations as a significant source of foreign-born wives in countries with large labor migrant populations (e.g. Germany and Sweden), while it is a small source for those with imbalanced sex ratios (e.g. Taiwan, Korea, or Japan), and insignificant in nations recently connected to regional economies (e.g. Poland and Italy). Such routes are not permanent: the numbers of Thai women decreased in Germany at the same time they surfaced on the list for Sweden (mid-2005), indicating that restrictions in one host country cannot deter out-migrants who can seek alternative destinations.

**Status Exchange and Citizens “Marrying Up:”** Global geographic hypergamy, viewed as “marrying up,” occurs more frequently among a nation’s female than male citizens—a pattern made visible through directly comparing choices by gender. For example, Taiwan has long historical-political ties to Japan, so Japanese partners are viewed as an attractive form of homogamous intermarriage. But since Taiwanese women enter more marriages with Japanese spouses than men do, the idea that women are more likely to choose a spouse from a country with a higher global economic ranking is supported. Furthermore, both Taiwanese and Korean women more frequently marry spouses from highly developed western countries than do men.
INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES (cont.)

Status Exchange and Male Citizens “Marrying Down:” Male citizens who marry women from less developed countries are often viewed as creating upward mobility for their foreign-born wives—also discussed as global hypergamy. This occurs in all four scenarios that encourage IM. Taiwanese and Korean men frequently marry women from Southeast Asian countries, where they trade their nationality (and the perceived higher socioeconomic status associated with the country) for married status—even though they may not adequately perform the provider role, given their subordinate status at home. Such patterns in newly industrialized countries further highlight the idea that romantic “fantasy” based on nationality influences the choice of a spouse. The trend for men to marry-down also occurs in developed countries with large immigrant populations, especially when immigrant wives’ origin is geographically proximate. In Australia, five of men’s top choices include women from developing nations, generally in East Asia or from local migrant groups. In Germany, women from the large local Turkish-origin population are the favored source of international wives, and six of the remaining top choices are women from developing nations, especially the in-transition economies of Eastern Europe. In contrast, for Swedish men, Thailand is the source of the greatest number of international wives, representing racialized-gendered differences, but most of Swedish men’s other choices are from developed European countries or the US. Men also marry-down in nations that recently connected to their regional economies, and they enter international marriages much more often than women. When Italian and Polish men suddenly had an opportunity to marry wives from nearby Eastern European nations they did so, and 6 or 7 of the top nations for them are from that area. Shifting regional politics and national legal changes facilitated a sex-imbalanced migration pattern and opened opportunities for men to choose internationally.

Status Exchange and Women Citizen’s “Marrying Down:” Unlike the dominant global hypergamy discourse about women “marrying up,” some international marriages are between women from more developed countries and men from less developed countries—a pattern that is best-explained by labor or refugee migrants who change the sex composition of local marriage markets. This “gender inversed pattern” of global hypergamy is correlated with the sex ratio of the migrant population. For example, German women frequently marry Turkish or Moroccan men. Many Australian women marry Indian men due to their high proportion among migrants. As a result, the sex ratio in Australia’s India-origin population jumped from 109 to 140 (2000-2010) due to the drastic increase of such intermarriages. A similar trend occurs in Sweden because, during the Iraq War, men were 70% of asylum seekers and have long made up about 55% of the foreign-born Iraqi population. A comparable situation exists in Italy, where Moroccans are their third largest migrant group. Since women only represent 44% of Moroccans, the resulting marriage squeeze for men results in international marriages for Italian women.

In sum, while demographic or economic forces encourage international marriage, they do not determine whether a couple seeks similarity or difference in their spouse!

On a Slow Boat to China (cont.)

The airport was a small cinder-block affair with a virtually unheated waiting room. Morag and I each went to the restrooms to don long underwear in a feeble attempt to keep warm. The plane was supposed to leave in the morning, but by noon it had not yet arrived. Suddenly there were sounds of excited voices and a movement of our fellow passengers out the door. It turned out that we were being bused down the road to a village where there was a sort of restaurant. There we sat in the freezing cold with a group of Chinese bank employees with whom we communicated using our phrase books while eating some unidentifiable but edible lunch.

We returned to the airport and when the plane finally arrived in the late afternoon a great cheer went up. After takeoff we had an easy flight to Beijing. But what we did not know was that we would not be landing at the regular airport, but at a small military airfield in the city’s northwest.

Upon landing there were more incomprehensible announcements; all the passengers got off and quickly dispersed, and we were left standing by ourselves not knowing where we were. A man on a bicycle appeared and tried to be helpful. There was an empty bus nearby, where the driver was apparently waiting for a group of banqueters in a building next to it. Somehow the bicycle man, probably panicked by having to deal with two foreigners, persuaded the driver to take us to the only hotel whose name we were familiar with. After a long ride we pulled up in front of a brightly lighted, inviting Holiday Inn. The glittering lobby was warm and welcoming, complete with a string quartet playing Mozart. Was this really China? We didn’t care, as we went in to the delicatessen, ordered salami sandwiches and beer, and began to plan the rest of our trip.
Another Project Funded through the UAEC Three Voice Grant

Hopf Galois Structures on Field Extensions
by Lindsay Childs (Department of Mathematics)

My area of mathematical research has its origins in the ancient problem: given a polynomial equation, can you write the roots of the polynomial in terms of the coefficients of the equation (like the quadratic formula for a polynomial of degree 2)? In 1830 Evariste Galois found a general method of finding the answer (which is generally "no"), a method that led to the concept of a Galois extension of fields: a field K (such as the field of rational numbers), a field L that is the smallest field that contains K and the roots of some polynomial with coefficients in K, and a certain group G of permutations of the roots of the polynomial. Lidsay Childs

The group G is called the Galois group of the field extension L/K. Galois showed that one can answer the root-finding problem by looking at the Galois group of the polynomial. He did so by obtaining a one-to-one correspondence from the set of subgroups of the Galois group G onto the set of fields intermediate between K and L, a result known as the Fundamental Theorem of Galois Theory (FTGT). For historic conetxt, recall that Galois’ work led to the development of abstract algebra in the 19th century.

The concept of a Galois extension was generalized in 1969 to that of a Hopf Galois extension of fields, by replacing the Galois group G by a Hopf algebra H (a concept from algebraic topology). For a Hopf Galois extension, there is a Galois correspondence from subHopf algebras of H to fields as in the FTGT, but it may not map onto all intermediate fields. My recent work has focused on the Galois correspondence problem: what is the image of the Galois correspondence for a Hopf Galois extension?

A 2012 paper written with Featherstonhaugh (Albany) and Caranti (Trento) obtained a connection between a special class of Hopf Galois structures on Galois extensions and certain radical algebras. In a 2017 paper I translated the Galois correspondence problem for those Hopf Galois extensions into one just involving the structure of the radical algebra, and in a 2018 paper with Greither (Munich) we used that translation to find very general estimates of the size of the image.

In 2015 Guarneri and Vendramin (Buenos Aires) introduced a new algebraic structure, a skew left brace, to study solutions of an equation of interest in mathematical physics. A radical algebra is a very special example of a skew left brace. Then in 2016 Bachiller (Barcelona) showed that if a Galois extension is also a Hopf Galois extension, then there is a unique skew left brace corresponding to that Hopf Galois extension.

My most recent work greatly generalizes my 2017 paper by showing that one can determine the image of the Galois correspondence for any Hopf Galois extension by studying the corresponding skew left brace. I’m currently applying that result to study the Galois correspondence for a class of Hopf Galois structures studied in joint papers with Byott (Exeter, UK), with S. Carnahan and with J. Corradino (Albany undergraduates) between 1999 and 2015.

Work on this project has been strongly motivated by two Three Voices grants. I am most grateful to the UAlbany Emeritus Center for its support.
“I don't trust anyone who doesn't laugh.” — Maya Angelou

“I love people who make me laugh. I honestly think it's the thing I like most, to laugh. It cures a multitude of ills. It's probably the most important thing in a person.” — Audrey Hepburn

“A day without laughter is a day wasted.”
Charlie Chaplin

“I don't trust anyone who doesn't laugh.” — Maya Angelou
Volunteer Opportunities at UA

The University welcomes expressions of interest in volunteer service from emeriti faculty and staff. There are a variety of opportunities for mentoring, sharing your experience through guest presentations, and participating in campus activities. Please contact Willam Hedberg in the Provost’s Office (whedberg@albany.edu) to discuss your particular interests.

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Carol Whittaker, MA, MPA - has had many roles at the School of Public Health since joining as the "Assistant Dean for New Fun Stuff" in 1993. More recently she established and directed the Center for Global Health and now, retired from the NYS Department of Health, is satisfied with teaching on line courses and directing the Global Health Certificate Program at the School. Retirement is not a word she acknowledges.

In Memoriam

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