

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

UUP will be holding elections for the NYSUT Retiree Council representing Election Districts 40, 41 and 42. UUP is entitled to three seats for each election district, for a total of nine seats.

Council members meet once a year, usually in October, and during the Representative Assembly every spring.

Nominations are open to all eligible retirees. Submit nominations by July 15 to jwishnia@notes.cc.sunysb.edu. Elections will be held after nominations are closed.

ARA conference focuses on Social Security, Medicare

By Judy Wishnia
COARM Chair

On Mother's Day, Jo Schaffer and I left the bosom of our families and traveled to Philadelphia to join more than 150 delegates at the Eastern Regional meeting of the Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA).

The main concern of the three-day conference was how to reach retirees with information that would encourage them to vote for the maintenance and improvement of Social Security and Medicare.

Unfortunately, many seniors, led astray by a barrage of falsehoods about these programs, have voted against their own interests. In 2008, 62 percent of union members voted for Obama and 53 percent of seniors did the same. By 2010, their allegiance shifted: 59 percent of seniors voted for Republican candidates, many of whom attacked the very social programs that protect retirement security. Today, polls show that among seniors, Obama and Romney are in a statistical tie, with Romney leading Obama, 47 percent to 44 percent.

Another problem is the expected loss of

senior voters in states where restrictive voter ID laws were passed. It is estimated that 18 percent of seniors do not have the necessary photo IDs for voter eligibility. Speaker after speaker emphasized that since seniors vote in large numbers, Obama cannot win without the senior vote.

Of crucial importance to all Americans, current and future retirees, is the maintenance of Social Security. This is especially important as there is an increase in the number of retirees without secondary pensions. In 1980, one half of retirees had pensions other than Social Security. Today, only 20 percent can depend on such pensions. Thus it is vital that we reach retirees with a message that explodes the false propaganda about Social Security. Contrary to the assertion that Social Security is driving up the federal deficit, Social Security has not added a single penny to the deficit. Remember, Social Security is not an "entitlement." It is funded, not by the federal government, but by you and me, the American worker.

see ARA MEETING, page 16

Federal lawsuit:

UUP back to court on behalf of retirees

In April, attorneys for UUP went back to federal court in Albany and filed a 25-page response to the state's motion to dismiss a lawsuit brought by UUP and other state public employee unions.

The unions filed lawsuits in December 2011 on behalf of retiree members after the state unilaterally increased the contribution percentage that retirees must pay toward the cost of their health insurance. UUP called the move unconstitutional, arbitrary and capricious, and a breach of contract.

In its response, UUP countered the state's contention that the federal court lacks jurisdiction, arguing the federal courts have the power to act in cases where state officials violate the U.S. Constitution.

UUP also challenged the state's assertion that the union didn't state its case. UUP responded by saying the state's move to unilaterally raise the percentage retirees must pay is a substantial impairment of UUP's contract.

A decision on the response filed by UUP and other public employee unions is not expected for several months.

Newsletter awarded for excellence

By Karen L. Mattison
UUP Publications Specialist

The *Active Retiree* adds five journalism awards to its growing collection of accolades.

The newsletter picked up two awards in UUP's annual contest and three from NYSUT for outstanding writing, photography, design, websites and electronic publications.

Both contests are judged by professional journalists from the Capital District.

UUP KUDOS

"Our retiree newsletter editors and contributors do an excellent job of keeping their sisters and brothers informed

about what matters to them most," said UUP President Phil Smith. "Congratulations on these well-deserved awards."

The *Active Retiree* received an Honorable Mention for Best Editorial/Column, "Memories of a Depression childhood," by COARM Chair Judy Wishnia of Stony Brook.

"A sobering reminder of the dangers of forgetting our past," the judges wrote. "Well thought out."

An Honorable Mention was also awarded for Best Photo, "Whodathunk" by Jo Schaffer of Cortland.

"This photo has originality and interest," the judges wrote. "Very cute!"

see EXCELLENCE, page 5

The Active Retiree

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Jamie F. Dangler/VP for Academics
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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily the opinions of United University Professions.

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Life as I see it ...

Contagion—you're it!

By Henry Geerken
 Cobleskill



Geerken

One would think that by the time you hit your mid-70s you would be immune from catching a cold for at least two reasons: 1) You have been around so long that you have run out of bacteria that would be “new” to your system, and 2) you’re no longer spry enough to “catch” anything. I got sick. I wish I could have said, “I caught a cold,” and be like everyone else who live normal lives but as usual I went two or three leaps beyond “a cold,” well past “I caught the bug,” and went directly to “I think I’m going to die.” (Cough, cough, hack, blow nose twice and moan softly.) I went past GO, did not get paid \$200 and knew this was not going to be an easy battle. (Cough, cough, hack, blow nose twice and moan softly.)

I will digress for a moment to break the word “contagion” down to its root parts. First there is C-O-N, which we all know means to confuse or fool. Contagion starts out with all the symptoms of a “summer cold”—you know, a few sniffles, a listless day, a good night’s sleep and you’re cured. This is very similar to “the stomach bug,” which strikes epic proportions the day before a math test in high school. (Cough, cough, hack, blow nose twice and moan softly.)

Then there is T-A-G, which simply means YOU’RE IT! A tag cannot be removed easily—contagion has the grip of I-O-N, which is almost indestructible. The only thing lacking is a source—a Typhoid Mary-type who will kiss and run.

Enter stage left, Diane (a.k.a. Typhoid Mary) Geerken. She was substitute teaching a class of 30 kids who we all know are just petrie dishes of disease. She came home and announced, “I’ve got a scratchy throat.” With those words

the family moved to isolated corners of the condo like Moses parting the Red Sea. “This is your side, Diane and this will be our side. We want isolation as best we can.” (Cough, cough, hack, blow nose twice and moan softly.) Benji, our 10-pound terror attack dog, hid under the bed.

After a few days it was my turn. My nose started to run like Niagara Falls. My plumbing started to build pressure, which was released like Old Faithful about two feet short of the “porcelain goddess.” Not only do I look bad, I feel bad, and now I smell bad. I’ve hit “Life’s trifecta!” Tag, I’m it! (Cough, cough, hack, blow nose twice and moan softly.)

To prevent me from contaminating others, we developed novel ways to feed me. For example, my two poached eggs in the morning are substituted with two firm fried eggs thrown like a Frisbee to me. Oatmeal is a mess. (Cough, cough, hack, and blow nose twice and moan softly.)

Then there are your “friends,” who come to see you and perk up your spirits. They tell you that “you look great, just great; you can’t keep a good man down.” In an aside to my wife, meanwhile, they say in a voice that could be heard 10 miles away, “He looks like he’s going to die. Can I have dibs on his golf clubs?” They say this as they stand on the hose coming from my oxygen concentrator. (Cough, cough, hack, blow nose twice and moan softly.)

Part of my problem was that I had started to exhibit signs for congestive heart failure. I got an I.V. injection of liquid Lasix. The doctor smiles and says, “I wouldn’t go far from the bathroom—this stuff will dry you out.” He wasn’t kidding. Within three days I looked like a raisin.

I’m better now (whew!). Stay healthy!

From the COARM chair

Education must be a priority in this country

Events at the recent NYSUT Representative Assembly (RA) in Buffalo made me ponder what is happening to education in the United States, the richest country in the world. Instead of championing education, instead of investing in the future of our nation, we find education under attack. The media reports how American students don't do as well as students in more than two dozen countries, and what is our response: cut funding, fire teachers, stifle creativity, and destroy the public school system by fostering profit-making private charter schools.

In Buffalo, I attended the pre-RA meeting of local presidents that included a very valuable open-mic session where attendees speak to the NYSUT officers. The speakers were frustrated and angry. As budgets are cut and thousands of good and able teachers are fired, the workload and class size of those who remain is increased. And then there are the tests! Teacher after teacher came to the mic to talk about the tests (frequently with questionable answers) that students must take, and how teachers are judged by the results. It should be noted here that there is no such evaluation system in place for the charter schools. The tests do not consider broken and poverty-stricken families, absenteeism, language difficulties for immigrant children. Tears came to my eyes when a special ed teacher described how hard she works with her students who are now at a fifth grade learning level. However, because of their age, they had to take the seventh grade test and, as might be expected, they could succeed at it. The students were deeply distressed by their failures, some were in tears. And the teacher, of course, is evaluated on the results.

But it is not only the preK-12 system that is in crisis. Colleges and universities, particularly state institutions, are facing not only severe budget cuts but, increasingly, the denigration of what advanced

**“What is our response
(to reports of poor student
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Wishnia

learning means. We are all familiar with the erosion of tenure and full-time employment. Thirty years ago, more than 70 percent of faculty was either tenured or on tenure-track lines. That figure has dropped to 30 percent.

In order to save money, full-time educators are replaced by low-paid adjuncts, who may be great teachers, but have no time or space to nurture students. Of course, there is no time to do the research that contributes to the understanding of the world, be it literature or chemistry.

And tuition continues to rise, even at the once low-cost universities of New York and California, where tuition and fees now restrict many students from attending college without incurring enormous debt. Student debt is now more than \$1 trillion, more than all the credit card debt in the United States. To make things worse, millionaires like Donald Trump can declare bankruptcy, but recent legislation took this right away from students!

The very meaning of a college education is also being undermined. Colleges are supposed to expand the mind, to encourage analysis, to promote inquisitiveness and to foster creativity. Instead, more and more emphasis is now on job training, be it hotel management or accounting.

A recent report by Gary Rhoades of the

Campaign for the Future of Higher Education notes that, at the community college level, more than 400,000 students have been denied admission because of budget cuts and higher tuition. At the same time, the curriculum is changing—“rebooted” to put more emphasis on work-force training. At our SUNY system, we can see the squeezing of the humanities and social sciences with mergers or outright elimination in favor of those departments that bring in grant money or train for specific jobs.

Rhoades calls for three important paths for higher education: 1) more public investment, 2) make college available and affordable for all who want to further their education, and 3) maintain a broad and diverse curriculum.

We must encourage the furthering of the life of the mind. We must encourage life-long learning. As we attend meetings and forums in this election year, we should be asking all our politicians about their priorities. It is time to make education a top priority—not by cutting budgets, not by vilifying teachers, not by restricting access, but by investing in the future.

Judith Wishnia

Retirees hard at work at retreat, DA

By Judy Wishnia
COARM Chair

Twenty UUP retirees met Wednesday evening and Thursday morning, April 18-19, to discuss retiree issues and their role in UUP. As might be expected, most of the discussion centered on improving communications among retirees and strengthening UUP's commitment to its 4,000-plus retiree members.

The first task was to determine how the Committee on Active Retired Membership (COARM) could strengthen its work within the regions. It was recommended that each regional chair should have a representative on every campus to aid the regional representative in organizing meetings on campuses and in the region.

It was decided to print an article in *The Active Retiree* asking for names and e-mail addresses.

Retirees have taken preliminary steps to conduct meetings in states other than New York, such as North Carolina, Florida and California, where there is a substantial number of retiree members.

THE ROLE OF RETIREES

A subcommittee (Jeanne Galbraith of Stony Brook HSC, Paul Griffen of Geneseo, and Florence Brush and Jo Schaffer, both of Cortland) was established to put together a report on suggestions for improving the role of retirees in UUP.

The first suggestion was to propose a constitutional amendment to grant a vote to the retiree member of the UUP Executive Board. Arguments against this in the past focused on Executive Board decisions related to the contract; however, most votes do not concern contractual issues. The argument in favor of allowing the retiree board member to vote is simple: retirees represent more than 10 percent of the union and their vote should counted on the other issues.



Above, retiree Ed Alleyne of Stony Brook HSC drops his ballot into the box during spring elections. Waiting to vote is retiree Ed Drummond.

Below, UUP Outreach Chair Gideon Dunkley is joined by COARM Chair Judy Wishnia in discussing a joint resolution on Tier VI.

TAKING ACTION

Retirees also approved motions to:

- Collect suggestions for improving the role of retirees by
 - 1) creating a direct link from the UUP website to retiree issues, such as pension and health information, publications, pre-retirement, etc.,
 - 2) publishing an article on pre-retirement in *The Voice*, and
 - 3) holding leadership workshops for COARM regional and campus representatives.
- Enroll for one year with IContact to create a downloadable listserv for the COARM chair and regional representatives. Messages would be sent to Walter Apple who would send it on to the appropriate list. The annual cost is \$479.
- Work to get more information about what is happening with Part B reimbursements. COARM Chair Judy Wishnia will contact NYSUT for help. (Note: NYSUT reports that Part B will continue to be reimbursed.) In the meantime, members with questions about their individual reimbursement should contact the state Department of Civil Service at (800) 833-4344.
- Rejected a request from the Cortland Chapter for several thousand dollars to



cover the cost of retirees attending local chapter functions (holiday party, etc.) It was decided that it was inappropriate for COARM to pay for retirees attending chapter functions.

- Begin the process of holding elections for the NYSUT Retiree Council representing Election Districts 40, 41 and 42. UUP retirees are entitled to three seats for each election district, for a total of nine seats. A call for nominations will be published in *The Active Retiree* (see page 1). NYSUT will count the votes.

DISCUSSIONS ENSUE

Retirees also discussed:

- The ramifications of the Tier VI retirement plan. Aside from increased contributions, the number of sick days used toward NYSHIP health insurance coverage in retirement went from 200 days to 100.



Above, Ora Bouey of Stony Brook HSC, left, shares her thoughts with the Nursing Professions Work Group, as Pat Stempel of Upstate listens.

Below, RELAG's Harvey Inventasch of Cortland, left, and Jack Richert of Buffalo HSC consider the issues.



NYSUT has ceased sending people and money to fundraisers of legislators who caved in to Gov. Andrew Cuomo's redistricting threats and who voted in favor of the Tier VI legislation.

- The COARM budget, ably prepared by finance subcommittee members Barbara Maertz of Farmingdale, Harvey Inventasch of Cortland and Schaffer. (Special thanks to UUP Director of Finance Tina George.) COARM is in good financial shape, staying within its budget and maintaining its reserve fund.

- Don Cohen of Albany reported on meetings with the Retired Public Employees Association, especially in regard to its lawsuit challenging the state's arbitrary increase in NYSHIP premiums. UUP is also involved in a lawsuit along with other pub-

lic unions (see story, page 1).

- Plans for celebrating the 25th anniversary of COARM.

COARM MEETING

At the COARM meeting, members approved the recommendations noted above and also heard a report from RELAG on advocacy activities.

COARM agreed to co-sponsor two resolutions honoring retiring members of the Legislature, including Ron Canestrari, a former chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

It was also noted that each region should be in contact with Empire State College retiree members in their district.

Finally, COARM approved Bob Kasprak as the 2012 recipient of the Pearl H. Brod Out-standing Retiree of the Year award. Congratulations, Bob!



UUP President Phil Smith poses with journalism award recipients and retirees Judy Wishnia, center, and Jo Schaffer.

Excellence ...

(continued from page 1)

Wishnia and Schaffer received their awards from President Smith during the 2012 Spring Delegate Assembly, April 20 in Albany.

NYSUT HONORS

The *Active Retiree* earned two First Awards and an Award of Merit in the annual contest, including a First Award for Best Publication for the December 2011 issue.

"This is superior—a model for other publications to follow," the judges wrote. "Its mix of graphics and photos is first rate, as is the way the material is written and presented."

Earning top honors for Best Union News Story was Wishnia's article, "Retirees get down to business," about the retirees' annual retreat and recent DA meeting.

"An excellent report of a gathering in Buffalo and the current issues facing retirees," according to the judges. "Top-notch presentation of COARM agenda."

The newsletter also received an Award of Merit for Best Opinion Writing for "What's happening to us isn't right" about public employees as scapegoats for the nation's economic downturn, by Wishnia.

"This column does a very good job of pointing out the public institutions that are under attack, and proposes that the solution is to tax the rich. (It's) a great wrap-up on the trend toward bashing public employees without having any solid facts to back up the criticism. Well presented."

The newsletter has twice won NYSUT's "Best of the Best Award" for outstanding journalistic efforts. This award is given to the one publication that is head and shoulders above all other entries submitted by active locals and retiree councils.

Speakers discuss a range of elder issues

By Don Cohen
Albany

Key connections between ombudsmanship, home care, declining community services for the elderly in a constrained economy, and elder abuse highlighted the presentations of several guests at the 2012 Winter Delegate Assembly (DA) and the Spring DA meetings of COARM's Subcommittee on Elder Abuse (EA).

OMBUDSMANSHIP TOPS AGENDA

February's two guests were Executive Director Mark Miller and Assistant Director Gregory Novak of the New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. Under a directive of the federal Older Americans Act, every state is required to have an ombudsman program. New York state has 1,000 volunteers, in addition to 37 program coordinators, who are the eyes and ears for the 160,000 elderly in nursing homes, and assisted living and adult care facilities. The role of an ombudsman is to address problems faced by the elderly related to quality of care, eviction and discharge notices, negative and harmful attitude, pain not managed, medication lapses, lack of assistive devices, and much more.

EA Committee member and colleague Joseph Marcus of SUNY Downstate Medical University, who has served for more than 10 years as a volunteer ombudsman, chaired a fascinating PowerPoint and discussion presentation.

New York ranks 48th as a state in the number of long-term care beds served by paid staff, hence there is a major need to recruit volunteers to undergo 30 hours of training to become certified as an ombudsman for four hours per month service. The EA Committee will attempt to recruit volunteers among retirees and UUP members. In sum, the ombudsman service helps to prevent elder abuse of the institutionalized elderly.

Also, Frank Maraviglia of SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) submitted his proposed survey of a new development in the nation's workplace—the mounting numbers of “un-retirees,” those who retire, begin receiving Social Security and Medicare benefits, and then attempt to re-enter the workforce. Maraviglia's survey findings have

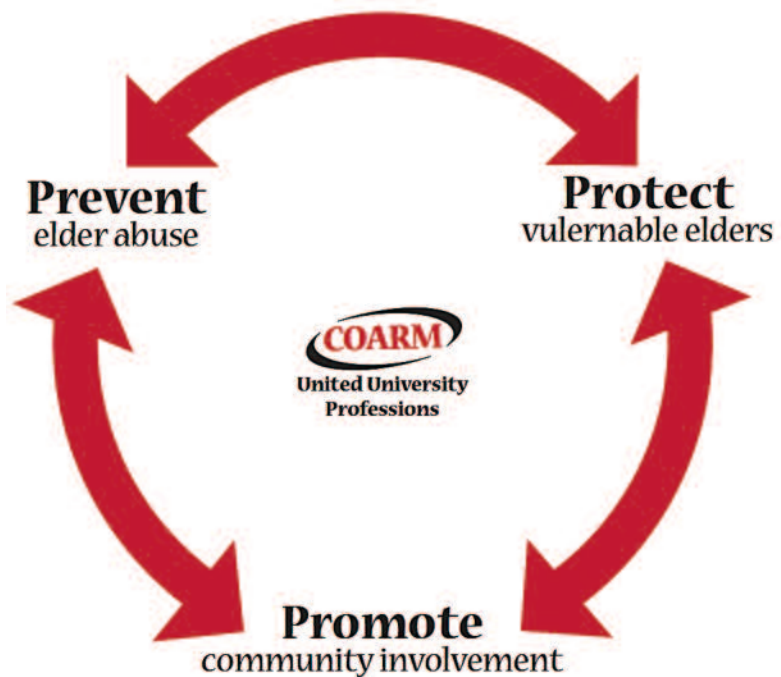
potential implications for UUP active and retiree members and their respective fit in the nation's workforce.

ALBANY DA DROPS IN

Highlighting the Spring DA meeting was a surprise visit by Albany County District Attorney David Soares and a colleague. Soares said he noticed the sign directing people to the Elder Abuse Committee meeting and dropped in to inform attendees that he has instituted a new policy that does not require the elderly to appear at a police station or line up to register an abuse complaint, seek protection, etc. Instead, the DA's office will handle such requests in the home of the older person. Soares agreed to further inform the committee of his office's response to the elder abuse problem.

Representing the new chair of the New York State Assembly Committee on Aging, the Hon. Joan Millman, were her legislative analyst Erin Cunningham and associate counselor Aaron Swugss. They said Assemblywoman Millman has conducted public roundtables to weigh the impact of the New York state budget on community agencies serving the elderly.

Akl Cardillo, executive director the Home Care Association of New York State (HCANYS), detailed how Gov. Andrew Cuomo's newly appointed Medicaid



The above artwork is one of several designs under consideration by COARM's Elder Abuse Committee.

Redesign Team (MRT) has set in motion massive reimbursement cuts, an unfunded wage mandate and a series of policy changes that leave the state's home care system in a “perilous state.”

HCANYS is a not-for-profit agency that oversees day-care arrangements for more than 50,000 elderly.

For more than 30 years, Cardillo has played a key role in the development and implementation of major legislative and human service programs, including the landmark “Nursing Home Without Walls” provision. During the meeting, he cited examples of how the governor's legislative actions will imperil New York's certified home health agencies that have set the national standard and model in preventive, post acute, rehabilitative and long-term care of individuals at home.

(Editor's note: Complete copies of the minutes of both meetings are available by contacting UUP Retiree Member Services Coordinator Walter Apple at 518-640-6600 or at wapple@uupmail.org.)

Regional meetings

COARM meets for first time on Stony Brook campus

By Barbara Maertz
Farmingdale

I'm late, I'm late for reporting on a very important date—the very first COARM meeting on the Stony Brook HSC campus. I haven't even got an excuse and I feel a lot like the White Rabbit.

A huge crowd of 58 members gathered in the North Dining Room Oct. 18 to meet, greet and learn about what is happening with UUP.

COARM Chair Judy Wishnia urged the retirees to sign up for the listserv run by Claire Meirowitz so they can stay informed about health care and Social Security issues, and the Alliance of Retired Americans (ARA). Wishnia urged members to get involved with the ARA and visit its website at www.ara-usa.org.

Maertz and Wishnia remembered Pearl Brod, a former statewide chair of COARM. The resolution that passed at the 2011 Fall Delegate Assembly was read—re-naming the annual retirees

award to the Pearl H. Brod Outstanding Active Retiree of the Year in her honor. A collection was taken to send funds to the UUP College Scholarship fund in her name. Maertz announced that a plaque honoring Brod's achievements is planned for the University Club at Farmingdale.

Stony Brook HSC Chapter President Carol Gizzi shared a little info about the current state of negotiations between UUP and the state, as well as some of the activities of her chapter. While meetings of the UUP Negotiations Team are taking place, it is still early and no firm proposals are in place. UUP President Phil Smith is visiting campuses to keep members informed.

Walter Apple, UUP's retiree member services coordinator, was introduced. He passed out lots of benefits information and answered a number of questions. The members were especially glad to get the UNUM cards to carry for travel.

Maertz and Wishnia spoke about

changes to the health insurance premium and UUP's lawsuit (see page 1). The lawsuit challenges the state's right to impose the 2 percent increase, but it will take a long time for any resolution. Meanwhile, retirees are urged to let their legislators know what is happening.

Jeremy Young came from TIAA/CREF explained the company's Wealth Management Program. Several members signed up to take advantage of this service. Young said retirees sometimes need more advice due to the many life-changing decisions they will face, such as where to live, who will take care of them, and how to structure their income for the rest of their lives.

Maertz thanked Sharon Hines for her help in arranging the brunch location and menu and the parking vouchers, and Debby Amato for handling the invitations and recorder keeping. We could not have an event without the expert help of UUP's chapter assistants.

Long Island retirees hear from detectives, doctor

By Barbara Maertz
Farmingdale

Do you examine your credit report three times a year? Do you use your credit card at a gas station? Do you give your Social Security number to a salesperson?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you need to listen to the detectives from the Suffolk County Police Identity Theft Unit, like our Active Retirees did last month.

Both the Stony Brook and Farmingdale meetings held this spring were highlighted by the information that Detectives Jim Crayne and Tom Gabriel offered to prevent one of the most common crimes in our communities today. The police catch only 8 percent of these types of criminals, so we have to be proactive to protect ourselves.

Many of our attendees shared some of their unfortunate experiences, and we all learned ways to protect our finances—most notably to check bank balances frequently and never give money or information in response to Internet or phone requests.

On April 24, our Stony Brook HSC members learned from Dr. Donna Heinemann which vaccinations to get prior to trips to exotic locations or, better yet, how to stay healthy at home.

Do you know how often elder citizens need to get the pneumonia vaccination? Do you know that older Americans could benefit

from a pertussis booster shot? It was also nice to hear that the few "regular" tests we all thought we would need forever can be discontinued. At least there is one benefit from growing older. Thank you, Dr. Heinemann, and thanks to Doris Weisman for arranging the presentation.

Also a big thanks to Sharon Hines, who arranged a terrific brunch that included lovely pastries made by the hospital chef. There weren't any of those left over!

Farmingdale State College is celebrating its 100th anniversary and our members were entertained by librarian Karen Gelles, who presented a picture show of the early days of the college—in mud plains and unpaved roads.

Gelles shared a photo of the first woman who attended the college in 1912—a rare event in those days. We were also treated to scenes from the days of cows and chicken barbecues, right up to the days of student unrest in the '60s and '70s.

Attendees were asked to share their memories. We heard about the Log Cabin parties, the living in the dorms for the faculty, soap suds in the fountain and, mostly, about the wonderful "family" atmosphere among the faculty and staff in the Sinclair Dining Room and the great three-course meals for \$3. It was nice to relive those moments.

see LONG ISLAND REGION, page 8

Regional meetings

Lunch & Learn: A report on NYS elder abuse study

By Bob Fluck
Upstate Medical

The Upstate Medical University Chapter hosted a March 16 Lunch & Learn presented by Art Mason, who is a principal at Lifespan of Greater Rochester Inc.

The program was open to retirees and active UUP members.

Mason began by handing out a True/False quiz for participants to test their knowledge of elder abuse. The questions are below. See how well you would do. (The correct answers are at the end—no cheating!)

1. Most older adults live in nursing homes.
2. New York has the third largest number of people over the age of 65 in the U.S.
3. New York is one of only four states that do not have mandatory reporting of elder abuse for older adults living in the community.
4. Financial exploitation of older adults primarily involves scams.
5. A “typical” elder abuse victim is a female over the age of 80 with a physical or cognitive impairment.
6. Adult Protective Services documents all cases of elder and adult abuse in New York state.
7. The most prevalent form of elder abuse in New York state is physical abuse.
8. Only 1 in 24 cases of any form of elder

abuse is reported to authorities.

9. Adult children are the most frequent perpetrators of elder abuse.

Mason then described the methodology of the study and the results of the self-reported incidence of abuse versus documented case data; the ratio of self-reported to documented cases is as high as 57:2! The major findings of the study include:

- There is a dramatic gap between self-reported abuse and the number of cases served in the formal elder abuse service system.
- Overall, the incidence of elder abuse in New York state is 24 times greater than the number of cases referred to social service, law enforcement or legal authorities.
- Psychological abuse was the most common form of abuse reported by agencies providing data to the study. This is contrasted with the results of the self-reported study in which financial exploitation was the most common form of abuse.
- Applying the incidence rate estimated by the study to the general population of older New Yorkers gives a figure of 260,000 older adults who had been the victim of at least one form of elder abuse the preceding year.

A major finding of the study (which was conducted by interviewing 4,156 older adults) was that 141 out of 1,000 older adults have experienced an elder abuse event since turning 60. (That would be

14.1 percent or approximately 1 in 7!)

The findings of the study suggest that more attention should be paid to the following issues in elder abuse services:

- Consistency and adequacy in the collection of data regarding elder abuse across service programs.
- Emphasis on cross-system collaboration to assure that limited resources are used wisely to identify and serve elder abuse victims.
- Greater focus on prevention and intervention in those forms of elder abuse reported by elders to be most prevalent, particularly financial exploitation.
- Promotion of public and professional awareness through education campaigns and training concerning the signs of elder abuse and the resources available to assist elders who are being mistreated.

This report was produced by Lifespan, Weill Cornell Medical Center of Cornell University, and the New York City Department for the Aging.

Should you want to see the six-page Executive Summary or the entire 142-page report, go to www.lifespan-roch.org and enter “New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study” in the search box. The Executive Summary can be found on pages 9-14 in the report.

The correct answers are: 1, 4, 6, & 7 are false. All the rest are true.

Long Island Region ...

(continued from page 7)

COARM Chair Judy Wishnia urged retirees to support the advocacy efforts of NYSUT and UUP by faxing their legislators on the unions' issues, such as the Freedom of Information Law (members can send letters via the UUP website at www.uupinfo.org. Look under “Take Action”) and the minimum wage law. She also discussed UUP's legislative agenda, the results of the Tier VI pension fight, and the Medicare reimbursement program.

Please watch for your invitation to this fall's meeting.

One of our members asked about the early days of the UUP meetings and marches/rallies. We will try to present the UUP story at our next brunch.

Special thanks to Debby Amato, UUP chapter assistant at Farmingdale, for her help in arranging these events. I think she personally knows every Long Island retiree member, and I could not do this without her.

WNYers learn of Brasilia, bad behavior on the web

By Harvey Axlerod
Buffalo Center

Who doesn't love a birthday? And a 50th one at that! On May 5, Western New York retirees were treated to a wonderful presentation by professor Ivani Vassoler of SUNY Fredonia on the history and political background of the 50th birthday of the city of Brasilia.

Brasilia is one of the few cities in the world with a complete master plan and purpose. Its primary designer is Oscar Niemeyer, a communist-leaning architect who believed a city design could have a cultural impact on the disparity between the wealthy and the poor in Brasilia in the early 1960s. (Sort of an early version of the 99 percenters.) Virtually all housing was apartment, thus integrating the rich and the poor.

Vassoler said Brasilia was designed as the governmental headquarters for Brazil. No industry, no factories and, hence, no pollution. It is located in the central part of Brasil, which keeps it secure from military threats from other countries.

The city has an unusual architecture: from the sky, it looks like the outline of an airplane, and is divided in the North section and the South section, according to Vassoler.

So what has happened after 50 years?

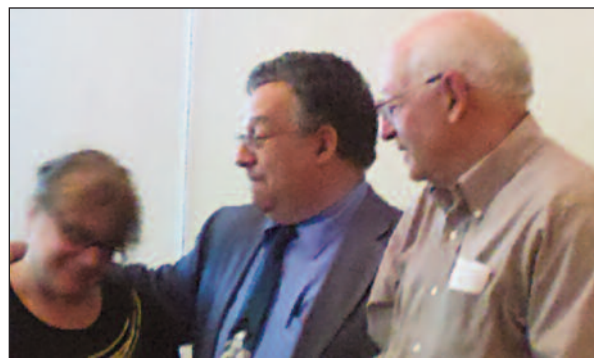
The city has regressed in the rich and poor areas. Why? It seems the traditional Brazilian culture of slow local regulation and other cultural aspects have allowed the city to deteriorate. One example: originally designed to have a maximum population of 500,000, the current population exceeds 2 million; in other words, urban blight.

So maybe we are celebrating the noble idea of Brasilia, but its reality is a different story.

The presentation was refreshing and exciting.

The business part of the meeting was also exciting. Instead of the usual 15-minute report of the 2012 Spring Delegate Assembly, WNY retirees engaged in vigorous discussions about cuts in insurance coverage for retirees, the politics of Albany and its impact on older Americans, and some forward vision of enhanced online communications coming soon.

The second presentation was given by Harvey Axlerod, retired computer discipline officer at the University at Buffalo.



Guest speaker Ivani Vassoler, left, is greeted by COARM's WNY rep Harvey Axlerod. At right is door prize winner Herb Fink of Brockport.

He discussed nine case studies of campus-based Internet activities, ranging from poor taste and inappropriate behaviors, to legal issues such as violation of the Mann Act, to online distribution of child pornography. Each case had some kind of lesson to be learned.

I wish I could evaluate the quality of the talk, but since I am both the presenter of the talk and the author of this article, I think not.

Finally, as is our tradition, a door prize was awarded. Herb Fink of Brockport won a CD entitled "Brasilia Cafe." Professor Vassoler assured us that these were well-known songs, but declined to sing for us.

Old Westbury, Farmingdale retirees get vital updates

By Barbara Maertz
Farmingdale

It was a lovely fall day Oct. 26 when the UUP retirees from Old Westbury and Farmingdale (along with a couple of Stony Brook colleagues) met in Knapp Hall on the Farmingdale campus.

A stirring memorial to Pearl Brod, given by Russ Tuthill, started the meeting and all attendees were invited to donate toward the purchase of a plaque to be placed in Knapp Hall in Brod's memory. Any extra funds collected would be donated to the UUP College Scholarship Fund. The members were very generous and, along with the funds collected at the Stony Brook meeting, nearly \$400 will be donated in Brod's name.

The introduction of Walter Apple, UUP's

new retiree member services coordinator, was next on the agenda. Apple is a really personable young man who is helpful and energetic. He shared lot of information and is willing to advise on pre-retirement seminars as well.

UUP Farmingdale Chapter (UUPF) President Yolanda Pauzé brought members up to date on the status of negotiations between UUP and the state. Pauzé related that UUPF members recently met with UUP President Phil Smith and the standing-room-only crowd was in full support of the UUP Negotiations Team.

Pauzé is an enthusiastic leader who asked for the support of retirees in educating state legislators on the issues most important to union members and state retirees.

In an unrelated matter, several questions were raised about the increase in retiree health insurance premiums—the result of the CSEA contract agreement and the subsequent pay bill approved by the Legislature. The 2 percent increase—which has resulted in a lawsuit being filed by UUP (see related story, page 1)—took effect Oct. 1. The premium contribution for retirees is now 12 percent.

In addition to UUP, other state employee unions and retiree groups have filed lawsuits to overturn the increase. However, a resolution is expected to take a long time.

On a brighter topic, Jeremy Young from TIAA-CREF spoke about the Wealth Management Program, which is a

see **UPDATES**, page 11

Regional meetings

Capital District looks at Occupy, Tea Party movements

By Al Magid
Albany

From time to time since the founding of the United States, a wide array of social and political movements and minor political parties have formed to try to wield influence on politics and public policy at the local, state and national levels. Contemporaneously, the Occupy Movement and the Tea Party have gained especial prominence in this regard.

Capital Region COARM's Executive Committee deemed it important to underscore that development. Its May 10, meeting, held in the Alumni House on the University at Albany main campus, focused on the topic "Understanding the Occupy Movement and the Tea Party." Two speakers, Colin Donnaruma and Kevin McCashion, were invited to address that topic.

Donnaruma, an organizer with Occupy Albany, is a member of its direct action, facilitation and legal working groups. He is president of the board of the Capital Region Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union, an affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union. Donnaruma earned a B.A. degree in philosophy and government at Hamilton College and a J.D. degree at Albany Law School. Currently, he is a Ph.D. student in the philosophy department at the University at Albany; his major interests are in political philosophy, metaethics, the philosophy of law, and epistemology.

McCashion is a small-business owner in Albany and a community organizer in the Capital Region. His activism began in the fall 2008 in opposition to the Bush Administration's bank bailouts and has continued with the Tea Party movement. An unofficial spokesman and lead organizer for the Albany regional Tea Party



Capital District COARM members heard from NY Civil Liberties Union local leader Colin Donnaruma, Tea Party member Kevin McCashion, center, and COARM Capital District elected representative Al Magid.

movement, he has projected that interest with appearances on local TV news programs and National Public Radio and in newspaper articles in the *Albany Times Union*, the *Schenectady Daily Gazette*, and the *Troy Record*. McCashion is also a co-founder of The Uptown Initiative, a nonpartisan neighborhood group focused on improving the area of north-central Troy. He earned a B.A. in history at Holy Cross College.

Donnaruma and McCashion remarked about the origins, organizational character, strategies, and tactics respectively of the Occupy Movement and the Tea Party, at the local, state, and national levels. Each speaker drew attention also to important similarities and differences between the Occupy Movement and the Tea Party, including a shared antipathy to U.S. involvement in costly foreign wars and the Tea Party's preference for wielding direct influence in Republican-Party affairs in contradistinction to the Occupy Movement's reluctance to be directly involved with the political-party system.

Together, Donnaruma and McCashion spoke for about an hour. A robust hour-

long Q-and-A followed.

The meeting ran from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It began with an opportunity for SUNY academic and professional retirees (from the campuses at Albany, New Paltz, and Cobleskill) and others to socialize and consult printed materials provided by UUP Member Benefits and Services.

Walter Apple, UUP retiree member services coordinator, updated the gathering on retiree benefits and reported on retiree issues dealt with at the UUP Spring Delegate Assembly.

A brunch was provided by the statewide COARM for those attending the meeting.

The Capital Region COARM Executive Committee is in the process of organizing the semi-annual meeting to be held in October 2012. Details will follow.

Capital Region COARM urges the more than 300 SUNY academic and professional retirees in the area to participate in its lively and informative semi-annual meetings. All meetings include guest speakers and are keyed to timely issues, such as educational and political/policy, the latter domestic and international.

Souther Tier retirees meet on Cortland, Oneonta campuses

By Jo Schaffer
Cortland

The fall meetings for Southern Tier retirees were scheduled following the 2011 Fall Delegate Assembly and the COARM retreat to ensure that the most up-to-date information was shared with regional members.

JOINT MEETING IN CORTLAND

A brunch meeting on the Cortland campus was held Friday, April 27. At Cortland, UUP retirees have negotiated, over the years, a joint COARM and college administration program. The turnout is always large, and this year was no different. There were 66 folks in attendance. COARM organizes the program and hosts the meeting from the podium. That is how issues of importance can be shared with retiree and active members.

Central NY ARA news just a contact away

I have been part of the Central New York Chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) for years. The ARA, an organization of retired union members, is an incredible source of information and powerful direction for retiree activists.

Each week, I forward ARA news to a distribution list of Southern Tier retirees. If you want to be included on our regional list, send me a message at schafferj@cortland.edu.

— Jo Schaffer

As a special part of the program, COARM tries to have interesting and pertinent speakers. This year, Laura Gathagan, newly appointed medievalist in the college's history department, was invited to share her research on the *Domesday Book*—a 1992 science fiction novel by American author Connie Willis—in a talk entitled, "When Men Were Women."

By examining the use of pronouns in the document, Gathagan was able to discover that women did, indeed, hold property, goods and titles at a time when it was presumed they had little or no power.

Having faculty present their research to an interested audience of former colleagues is a treat for both.

RETIREEES WELCOMES IN ONEONTA

The meeting in Oneonta for the Oneonta/Delhi group was Friday, May 18. It was a different venue and a different set of circumstances, but a really good chance to present the important information and have a rousing give-and-take on the issues.

The presence of Oneonta Chapter President Bill Simons and Chapter VP for Academics Rob Compton in the discussion was fabulous. The retirees were reminded that their presence, their history, their participation and their energy were heartily welcome.

Compton shared his insight and work on "Social Security and Social Insecurity"—an analysis of our society that would diminish benefit and respect for its elder citizens.

Retiree co-writes book for vets

UP Active Retiree John Meyer of SUNY Plattsburgh has co-authored a book on effective communication for veterinarians.

Meyer and Carolyn Shadle, who earned her Ph.D. from the University at Buffalo, co-wrote *Communication Case Studies:*

Building Interpersonal Skills in the Veterinary Practice (American Animal Hospital Association, 2011).



MEYER

Employee retention, performance and business profits depend on effective communication. Through case studies drawn from real-life situations and suggestions on how to learn from them, this book deals with common communication challenges that arise in any workplace.

Meyers and Shadle worked with parents, working professionals, university students and non-profit groups.

The book also contains a communications skills overview, guidelines, questions for discussion, and quizzes to test understanding. Employees will gain quick tips and problem-solving skills to immediately improve communication.

Meyer earned his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in communications studies. Building on a career of teaching at SUNY Plattsburgh, he shares his considerable experience through case studies, as well as stories, poetry and music.

For more information about the authors or speaking engagements, contact commcases@gmail.com.

Updates ...

(continued from page 9)

cost-free financial planning service. Since it is so difficult to "read" the market in these volatile times or to know which investments to make, it is important to have a flexible, comprehensive plan to carry us through the retirement years.

Finally, Dawn Miller spoke about the Silver Sneakers exercise program. This program is open to all seniors and includes 45 minutes of yoga, stretch, cardio, balance, and light weight training up to five days a week with a certified trainer. No laying on floors and no machines. Many local gyms offer the program and some insurance plans (not the Empire Plan) cover the cost. Miller urged attendees to sign up for a healthy, fun activity. Information is available at silversneakers.com.

Goodbye, Ed

UUP says so long to founder, leader, parliamentarian

By Karen L. Mattison
UUP Publications Specialist

Edward J. Alfonsin of SUNY Potsdam passed away Jan. 7 in New Jersey after a long battle with cancer.

Alfonsin, a founding member of UUP who served as statewide secretary from 1975-1981 and as statewide membership development officer from 1981-1987, will long be remembered as the “consummate union man” who never missed a chance to cite from Robert’s Rules of Order. Whether a dedicated parliamentarian for UUP’s affiliates, the SUNY Faculty Senate or the Public Employees Federation—or just a guy in the back of a meeting room—Alfonsin was often the voice of reason in the midst of chaos.

“We would be having a very strong give-and-take during a committee meeting,” remembered Albany Chapter retiree Don Cohen. “Then, suddenly, into the conversation would come Ed, who would quote chapter and verse from Robert’s Rules. And the arguing would stop—because who could argue with Ed?”

Alfonsin took pride and pleasure in serving his union, evidenced by his longtime service as a statewide officer, as an Executive Board member from 1987-1997, and as Potsdam Chapter president throughout two decades.

He took even greater pleasure in helping his fellow unionist. He was appointed to eight Negotiations Teams and, as a UUP, NYSUT and AFT delegate, he never wavered in the fight for workers’ rights.

Alfonsin’s service earned him the union’s coveted Nina Mitchell Award for Distinguished Service in 1995, and the Outstanding Retiree of the

Year award in fall 2011.

“Ed and I were on opposite sides of most issues, but we knew we were both working in the interests of UUP and its members,” said UUP retiree Mac Nelson of Fredonia. “We got our Nina Mitchell awards on the same night; it was an honor to share the platform with him, and our hug was long and genuine.

“And though he had to sing from a wheelchair, he joined us in leading ‘Solidarity Forever’ at his last Delegate Assembly.”

Alfonsin wrote that his “greatest honor was at the 2009 spring plenary (of the SUNY Faculty Senate), when the Executive Committee voted to award me a ‘Senator Emeritus’ award—over my protest, since I had never been a senator. But they overrode my parliamentary recommendation.”

That was a first—overriding his recommendation, that is.

Alfonsin had many community and avocational interests. Since 1998, he operated streetcars at the Halton County Radial Railway in Milton, Ontario, and was an avid member and secretary of the local model railroad club, and a member of the Lisbon Depot Museum Committee.

Some of his other community activities included being a member of the Labor Day Solidarity Committee, treasurer of the Franklin-St. Lawrence Educators’ Council, and an officer of the Seaway Valley Prevention Council.

The Active Retiree would like to give Ed the last word. In his recently written “Personal Retirement Story,” Brother Alfonsin quipped: “I’ve always said I was married to the University, but the Union was my mistress.”



“It’s hard to imagine
UUP without Ed.”

— COARM Chair Judy Wishnia

“Finally, heaven will have a
full-time parliamentarian!
Ed may be gone, but he
will not be forgotten.”

— Henry Geerken
Cobleskill

“I met Ed in the early 1980s
when I became active in UUP.
He was always very helpful
to me and had a complete
grasp of union affairs. I used
to jokingly call him ‘Mr. UUP.’”

— Lew Herod
Downstate Medical University



Above, former statewide officer Ed Alfonsin of Potsdam addresses the Delegate Assembly in 1987 and again in 2009, right.



In memoriam

Let us take time to remember the UUP Active Retirees who have passed away:

Paul Andrews, System Administration
Bonnie Arak-Druven, Downstate
Harold Babb, Binghamton
Marvin Bernstein, Buffalo Center
G. Donald Bissell, Buffalo HSC
Allyn Bregman, New Paltz
Floyd Byrd, Downstate
David Caddis, Oneonta
Ram Chaturvedi, Cortland
Arthur Collins, Albany
Eleanor Cushing, Brockport
John Dalland, Potsdam
William Denton, Oneonta
Robert Doyle, Oneonta
Dewitt Ellinwood Jr., Albany
Claude Freeman, ESF
David Friedman, Optometry
Frederick Gearing, Buffalo Center

Ronald Hauser, Buffalo Center
Boris Kornblum, Albany
Peter Kulba, Upstate Medical
William Lister, Stony Brook
Leon Lobdell, Alfred
Arthur Loesch, Albany
Margaret Lutze, New Paltz
Ellen Miller, Oneonta
Richard Nunez, Albany
John Ogden, Cortland
Paul Reitan, Buffalo Center
Herman Roberson, Binghamton
Neil Rudin, Buffalo State
Richard Schadt, Oneonta
Arthur Shedd, Cortland
Wade Thompson, New Paltz
Armgard Von Bardeleben, Purchase
Phyllis Wells, Plattsburgh

Login needed for discount offers

The UUP Benefit Trust and Member Services Trust Fund section on the UUP website (www.uupinfo.org) has a new look—and we're feeling "secure" about it.

Take some time to check out the retail discounts offered through our Member Services Trust Fund. This password-protected section takes you to a list of discounted services and programs that UUP has negotiated for active and retiree members.



To access these discounts, you must select UUP Retirees as the Institution Name and enter the five-digit department ID, which for all retiree members is 06638.

Now that this area of our website is password-protected, retail vendors are more willing to participate in our discount-services program.

Feel free to contact Member Benefits Manager Doreen Bango at (800) 887-3863 or at dbango@uup-mail.org with suggestions of specific vendors you would like to see added.

Your input is greatly appreciated.

Join our e-list

Retirees are invited to join the group's email information network (e-list) as a way to share ideas and to receive information more quickly.

E-list topics are restricted to issues of concern to UUP, SUNY, the labor movement and retirees.

COARM Chair Judy Wishnia said the e-list is an easy way to discuss retiree issues and to post news about regional meetings, benefits and advocacy.

Interested members should contact Old Westbury retiree Claire Meirowitz at cmeirowitz@yahoo.com. Member privacy is protected because the group is considered private and names will not be displayed in Yahoo!'s directory.



MEIROWITZ

Attention Locals: Don't miss out on a special prize drawing!

We know that your Local Association's newsletter is a great vehicle to find out what is going on in your region, meet the members of your local and learn about exciting opportunities available to you.

Along those lines, we have a great opportunity for you! NYSUT Member Benefits has launched a special prize drawing for all NYSUT members in an effort to encourage greater participation in our free MAP Alert email service.

MAP Alerts are sent approximately once every three weeks to your email inbox and contain information about new endorsed Member Benefits programs, changes to current programs and reminders about existing programs. And, you have our word that you will not be bombarded with email messages.

You will receive one entry into the drawing for every MAP Alert that you open and read before August 15. Winners will be announced on August 16 on the Member Benefits website!



If you are not already a MAP member, visit memberbenefits.nysut.org and click on the MAP graphic in the upper right hand corner of our homepage to join this free service.

Please note that you must be a NYSUT member to be eligible to win any of the prizes in this contest. Only one prize per winner. Current or retired NYSUT employees, NYSUT Member Benefits vendors, or their family members are not eligible to win.



All current and new MAP members who open at least one MAP Alert before August 15, 2012 are eligible to win the following prizes:

Grand Prize

Bose Home Theater System

First Prize

iPad

Second Prize

Kindle Fire

Third Prize

Bose Noise-Canceling Headphones

Fourth Prize

\$50 Powell's Books Gift Card

For more information about this drawing, call 800-626-8101 or visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org.

For information about programs or about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



Advice to the young

Visit Yellowstone National Park before you die

By Mac Nelson
Fredonia

In a delightful half century of teaching, I learned rather early on that the last thing my students wanted from me was unsolicited advice. I made two exceptions, both of which seemed to get through:

— I told them Dylan Thomas's last words, uttered just before he collapsed and died, aged 39, from a massive cerebral hemorrhage: "I've just had 18 whiskies—I think that's the record." Their heads came up. "Try to avoid that," sez I, and they looked solemn. Sober, even.

— And when travel or America or life plans came up, I said: "Don't die without seeing Yellowstone."

I am a Yellowstone junkie, and have honestly lost count of the times I have been there, from 1955 to date. I now go every summer. You don't have to be so maniacal, though watch out—it could happen. So what's to go so far for? Why bother?

Well, everybody knows about the geysers, and they are indeed marvelous. Half of the world's geysers are there, including such icons as Old Faithful, Beehive and Steamboat, the world's tallest. Some folks go geyser gaga and become dedicated geyser gazers. I suppose I might have become a geezer geyser gazer, but I never quite did. I love 'em, and the other great thermal features like Mud Volcano and Grand Prismatic Spring. I always spend some time with these old friends. But I have other priorities.

Then there's the rivers and lakes—for swimming, fishing, boating or just gazing. I have canoed the lakes four times, but you don't have to paddle. There are good boat trips available, or boats to rent to fish from or just piddle around in. I fish only when I am camping on the lakes and want fresh trout. Yum. Add the great waterfalls of the Yellowstone River, and you have a water paradise.

And there's the trails—short easy hikes, long tough hikes, hikes for the seriously fit, hikes for those in wheelchairs, and everything in between. And if even a short hike is not your dish, just get off the road, sit in the

woods, and listen to the silence. Eloquent.

The neighborhood is nice, too. A day's drive away are both Glacier National Park and the Black Hills, and the Tetons are just an hour south. Even if there were no Yellowstone National Park, the five National Forests around it would be prime travel destinations.



Then there's the hotels and the food, especially at Lake Hotel. And if you get there before dinner, you can listen to four

mighty Thunderer Mountain cliff—and they weren't there when I published *TWENTY WEST* in 2008. Forever new, forever fresh.

In 2009, my partner Joyce and I watched a fascinating encounter between a young grizzly and a herd of bison. He had been splashing in a pond, washing, chasing ducks (a comically futile occupation). He got out, shook off and ambled east. There, behind a knoll, was a small herd of perhaps 60 bison, including some recently born reddish calves, easy prey, a good snack. He was most interested. Except that as he

"Some folks go geyser gaga and become dedicated geyser gazers. I suppose I might have become a geezer geyser gazer, but I never quite did."

beautiful kids playing Bach, Mozart and pop tunes—a string quartet, yet, with a view of Yellowstone Lake out the picture window. The Old Faithful Inn, the ur-state-ment of what came to be called Parkitecture, is an amazing five story fantasy of logs and beams and branches, the enchanted forest morphing into the Waldorf.

But what I go for, what gets better every year, what never repeats itself, is the animal watching. Yellowstone is *huge*, bigger than the two smallest U.S. states put together. (I think it should have at least two senators—maybe grizzly bears. That might improve Washington.) The Lamar Valley is America's Serengeti, south of Alaska, at least. Since I published my book on the park, many more wonderful things have happened to me there. Here are two:

Wolves were introduced to the park from Canada in 1995. I've seen an entire pack cross a road right in front of my car. Spine-tingling. That same year, a few mountain goats entered the park on their own and established a home. Last summer, one of the most reliable animal sightings was the offspring of those goats, high up on a

loped toward the herd, seven cows turned to face him, horns ready, in a solid military line. No calf for you! He slowed down. He backed up. Soon he was running away as they moved toward him. He came back and kept moving east, but by that time the herd was long gone and the calves were safe. Just one more fine moment in Yellowstone.

Then last summer (2011) there was the badger den right next to the road, and, the courting pair of grizzlies eating an elk calf kill while the bereft cow elk stood nearby, and the badger and the coyote facing off for half an hour, neither wanting to back down, neither wanting to get hurt ... But you get the idea. There's always something new and fascinating to see in the park, and that's why I go back. You should try it too.

A famous piece of advice about Italy was "Vedi Napoli e poi muori (see Naples and die)." That is, Naples is so beautiful, you must see it before you die.

Don't die without seeing Yellowstone. See Yellowstone and live.

(Mac Nelson is a distinguished teaching professor emeritus, SUNY Fredonia, and author of *TWENTY WEST: The Great Road Across America*, SUNY Press, 2008.)

ARA meeting ...

(continued from page 1)

Another assertion is that Social Security is going broke. Not true! There is currently \$2.7 trillion in the trust fund and it is projected that this will grow to \$3.7 trillion by 2017. While it is true that currently more is being paid out than is coming in, the program is not in the red. Full benefits can be paid until 2033.

Nevertheless, it is time to think about improving that projection. U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) has introduced the Rebuild America Act, which would not only strengthen the middle class with workforce training and rebuilding the infrastructure, but it would strengthen Social Security by gradually removing the cap. Right now, the cap is set at \$110,000; beyond that point, people no longer pay into the fund. The bill also would increase benefits through a COLA formula that would adjust the Cost-of-Living Index to reflect the price of goods and services typically used by seniors.

Senior voters should also be aware of the dangers of the budget plan put forth by U.S. House Budget Committee Chair



Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), which recently passed in the House. This budget would end the current Medicare coverage, replacing it with a voucher plan, where seniors would get a certain amount of money, based on the cheapest plan in the area, with which to search for private insurance coverage. Since private plans are notorious for choosing the younger and healthier subscribers, this would mean that traditional Medicare would be left with the oldest, sickest and most costly beneficiaries, and thus face a real crisis.

In addition to the privatization of Medicare, Rep. Ryan, supported by Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney, also wants to raise the eligibility age to 67. And (surprise!) taxes will be

lowered for the rich.

Finally, there is the propaganda attacking the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare!). The ACA actually benefits seniors, providing free yearly checkups and preventive screening for diabetes, heart disease and cancer, with free mammograms, prostate cancer testing, a colonoscopy, and bone density tests. It also gradually closes the infamous doughnut hole in Medicare Part D prescription plan. The ACA would pay for all this by eliminating the extra funds that go to support the private Advantage plans and stopping waste and fraud. And of course, prevention saves money as opposed to the great cost for treatment of serious illness.

Finally, for those of you who are grandparents, children are now covered by their parents' plan until the age of 26.

Take action. At religious and social gatherings, and in letters to the editor, get the correct information to our senior members and friends. Seniors vote and they must vote for their security and dignity, and for the security and dignity of future retirees.