

SJSU ERFA Newsletter
Spring 2023 Volume 36 Number 3
A Newsletter of the SJSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

Mark your calendar:

- Friday, May 19, 11:30-1:30
 - Annual Business Meeting/Luncheon at The Villages with Featured Speaker SJSU President Cynthia Teniente-Matson
 - Reservation information to come
- Also, look for Spring Zoom program to be announced soon

ERFA Delivers! Travel help from the Advocate

By Arlene Okerlund

Remember when Lonna Smith facilitated the ERFA program featuring Christopher Elliott, travel advocate? And Chris Jochim and crew streamed it to us at home? That ERFA event paid off!

In January 2020, a friend and I purchased a river cruise in Portugal with Vantage Deluxe Travel. After COVID struck, the September departure date was rescheduled to 2021, then postponed again to 2022. By that time, my friend's arthritis had progressed to the point where walking was too difficult to keep up with the pace of group travel. We canceled the trip.

Having purchased travel insurance with a "cancel for any reason" clause, we each filed for a refund of our \$500 deposits. Our insurance premium of \$899 was gone forever, but that's how insurance works.

First cautionary note: Consider delaying the purchase of travel insurance until investment in the trip itself exceeds the cost of the insurance premium. We were inveigled into buying insurance early by the promise that "pre-existing conditions" would be covered.

Second cautionary note: "Cancel for any reason" travel insurance is not necessarily what it seems. Reimbursement frequently comes as vouchers for another trip, not the cash you paid. Collecting is not easy. Timelines for refunds are not specified. Refunds are avoided if possible.

Our trip cancellation in February 2022 began a year-long dispute with Vantage Deluxe Travel and Trip Mate Insurance. Reimbursement of our deposits was delayed. And delayed again. And again. If our experience will help others, here is part of what we learned.

Insurance companies have mastered the art of passive-aggressive niceness. Phone calls were pleasant and responses positive: my cancellation request was approved, but I had to jump through hoops that stretched my agility to its limit. Providing proof of my

friend's physical disability was reasonable, of course, but the process was tedious. Her Kaiser physician verified her arthritis, and I scanned, uploaded, and emailed pages of documents to Trip Mate Insurance.

Problems began immediately. Trip Mate Insurance insisted that I was "scheduled to travel alone," despite every invoice from Vantage Deluxe Travel stating that I was "sharing accommodations" with my friend, whose name appeared on the invoice itself. I scanned, uploaded, and emailed copies of invoices. Trip Mate Insurance responded in May 2022, stating that they could cover only \$300.00 of my \$500.00 deposit. Vantage Deluxe Travel would have to refund the remaining \$200.00. (I have never yet figured out the bifurcated, convoluted, Byzantine collaboration of those two entities.)

When contacting Vantage Deluxe Travel, I encountered dropped phone calls, eternal holds, and endless voicemail loops. I resorted to the chat room [I hate chat rooms], where Courtney wrote simply: "There is no timeline for return of your deposit." I returned to phone calls where Jim told me that I was in a "queue": "You must wait until your turn in the queue comes up." He had no knowledge about the length of the queue. I did not ask Jim if he reported to Franz Kafka, but at his suggestion, I sent an email to Vantage Deluxe Travel's "PT Quality Division." PT Quality Division confirmed that I was in a queue but that refunds were currently delayed—with no indication of the length of the delay.

In early November I contacted Christopher Elliott, the travel advocate ERFA featured. I received immediate assistance. Dwayne Coward at Elliott Advocacy reviewed my timeline chart and read my long trail of emails. He intervened on my behalf, and on November 30, Vantage Deluxe Travel refunded \$200.00 of my deposit. But Trip Mate Insurance still had not paid its \$300.00 share, claiming in multitudinous phone calls that it needed approval from Vantage Deluxe Travel. Back I went to Elliott Advocacy. I do not know what magic Mr. Coward wrought, but in January 2023, Trip Mate Insurance finally mailed a check to me.

The insurance premium of \$899.00 still resides somewhere in the Vantage Deluxe Travel/Trip Mate Insurance bank accounts. But since it was my decision to buy travel insurance, I can't complain about that.

The time and energy spent sending emails and clicking through phone trees frequently can be enormous. I calculate that my time was worth about 23¢ per hour in retrieving my \$500.00 deposit. As Lonna assures me, however: "It's the principle." She's right about that.

Let me end with one more cautionary note: Ask questions before buying travel insurance. Check out the travel company before sending money. Keep the address of Elliott Advocacy handy: Help Desk help@elliott.org. (And sign up for his free daily newsletter, Elliott Advocacy Today, or subscribe to Elliott Confidential.) Watch the next Zoom meeting that ERFA schedules. And spread the word that "ERFA delivers!"

Cultivating Our Own Garden

By David Mesher

If the arrival of spring makes your thoughts turn to gardening, you may be interested in free resources that are probably available near wherever you live: seed libraries. In the South Bay, there are seed libraries at three branches of the San José Public Library (Almaden, Berryessa, and Vineland), as well as at the Santa Clara County Library's Gilroy and Central Park branches (the latter program is called "Seed Share"). In addition, there are seed libraries at the Santa Clara City Library, the Mountain View Public Library, and the East Palo Alto branch of the San Mateo County Library. According to the web site Edible Silicon Valley, there are also seed libraries at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Woodside Library, and Palo Alto's Rinconada Library. Before going, you should check with the specific library for dates, hours, and other information. Silicon Valley Seeds and BASIL (Bay Area Seed Interchange Library) are organizations with similar interests, but unaffiliated with libraries.

Seed libraries distribute garden seeds, usually at no cost. Such seeds may include those for vegetables, fruits, flowers, and other ornamental or native plants. Though the Almaden and Vineland branches of the SJPL list specific dates of operation (from June to September) for their seed libraries, the seeds and other materials were still available over the winter.

Shih-Fa Kao, the knowledgeable and enthusiastic librarian in charge of the Berryessa branch's seed library, confirmed that it operated year round, and stressed that they sourced their seeds from a commercial grower. Some seed libraries also distribute seeds collected by volunteer gardeners, though in many cases it is hard to guarantee the reliability of such donations, because collection methods may vary, and plants grown in close proximity to others (as is common in backyard gardens) may be subject to cross-pollination, leading to hybridization.

There is no seed library at the joint University-City MLK Library on campus, which seems a pity in several respects. Downtown San José is often described as a healthy food wasteland, with few grocery stores selling fresh produce. Some local groups and organizations have tried to set up public gardens on unused land, with limited support and mixed results. On campus, students have pushed for fresh fruits and vegetables to be sold in the dorms or near Tower Hall. But there are numerous departments and programs at SJSU that could lend their expertise to expand support for fresh food and gardening, from Biology, Environmental Studies, and Nutrition to student organizations. An MLK seed library could be an important first step, for both the campus and the community—and, possibly, a very visible ERFA project. If you have an interest in pursuing this with me, please email me at d.mesher@sjsu.edu.

Chat Room; Special News from and about our members

Steve Achtenhagen (Marketing, '97) proudly reports that his daughter Erica, CEO of Silk Road Medical, has been recognized by the Silicon Valley Business Journal as one of the Bay Area's most influential business leaders in its inaugural list of 100 People in Silicon Valley That You Need to Know.

Jill Cody (Recreation & Tourism, '06) continues to host the radio show "Be Bold America!" every other Sunday at 5:00 p.m. on KSQD 90.7 FM. The station achieved its \$400,000 fundraising goal and will air throughout Monterey County, thereby tripling its listener base! To learn more about Jill's show, visit ksqd.org/be-bold-america.

Paul Douglass (English & Comparative Lit, '14) reports that a concert was staged on Dec. 14, 2022, in which his composition for wind quintet titled "The Wasatch Range" was performed on the Utah State University Campus. Here's the link for the 23 min. long composition: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OICoEByUDMI>. It was inspired by the beauty of the Cache Valley, in Utah, Paul's new home. (See photo right)

Laurie Drabble (Social Work, '22) continues to publish prodigiously, even in retirement. Her latest publications, with co-authors, include these titles: "Examining the differential protective effects of women's spirituality and religiosity on alcohol and marijuana use by sexual identity," "Comparing substance use outcomes by sexual identity among women," "Impact of the policy environment on substance use among sexual minority women," and "Family before anyone else: A qualitative study on family, marginalization, and HIV among Hispanic or Latino/a/x Mexican sexual minority males."

Gail Evans (Kinesiology, '13) took a scuba diving trip to Roatan, Honduras, in January. She says it was the first time she had dived in 30 years, and it was as amazing as she remembered! She reports that Roatan is a beautiful island with wonderful people. It seems the animals were also quite wonderful! (See photo left)

Michael Fallon (Sociology, '17) has been in demand to talk about Ulysses Abridged by a variety of Irish groups including the Irish Cultural Center in San Francisco. SJSU will host the American Conference for Irish Studies, at which Michael will present a paper titled "Howdarei Abridge Ulysses!?" Watch, too, for the story of the book in The Irish Herald on St. Patrick's Day. Ulysses Abridged is available at www.schulerbooks.com/chapbook-press and at Amazon.

Anne Fountain (World Languages & Literature, '12) taped a video presentation (available on YouTube) for the Cuban Cultural Center of New York, which aired in January. She discussed how the works of Cuban writer/patriot José Martí have been translated into English, with examples of successful and less successful versions. Anne and husband, Mike Conniff, returned from a February cruise through the Panama Canal and have two South American cruises scheduled for March. As a historian of Panama

and Brazil, Mike is given these travel opportunities in exchange for lectures to the travelers.

Jo Farb Hernández (Art & Art History, '19) has won a CSU-ERFSA Charitable Foundation Award to complete her book *Singular Spaces II: From the Eccentric to the Extraordinary in Spanish Art Environments*. This thousand-page encyclopedic publication presents the work of 99 Spanish self-taught builders of unique art environments. It will be published in 2023 by 5 Continents Editions of Milan.

Christian Jochim (Humanities, '15) was asked to write a chapter on Confucianism and Modern Culture for the *Oxford Handbook of Confucianism* which has now been published. The handbook consists of 38 chapters on various aspects of Confucianism broken down by topic, region, historical period, etc., which are written by experts in each area.

Michael Kimbarow (Communicative Disorders & Sciences, '19) was selected as a CSU-ERFSA Charitable Foundation Award winner. His grant enabled him to travel to the 2022 American Speech, Language and Hearing Association Convention. What he learned will be incorporated into the 4th edition of his textbook *Cognitive Communication Disorders*.

Sigurd Meldal (Computer Engineering, '15) reports that 2022 was deeply rewarding for him because of his accreditation work with ABET. After virtual visits to Colombia, Qatar, and “exotic” Baltimore, he traveled to Chandigarh, north of New Delhi. Besides work, the team found ways to have fun. Sigurd claims to have a video of an unnamed SJSU faculty member joining a national championship Bhangra dance team on stage! Next came a visit with family in Norway to name a newly arrived family member in a winter-wonderland of snow. Now he is back to his usual routine of “shooting down bad patents and defending good ones,” and meeting with the ABET EAC ExCom.

Greg Payne (Kinesiology, '13) traveled with his wife, Linda Galdieri, to Greece just before the holidays. They spent a week on the peninsula before heading off to the islands and Turkey. They've started this year with a three-week cycling trip to Viet Nam and Cambodia. Greg reports that peddling through the small villages, rice paddies, and markets was unforgettable. He says, “The folks in Viet Nam were incredibly welcoming, the food was just delicious, and the sites were amazing; it's a beautiful country.” They wrapped up in Siem Reap, Cambodia, home to Angkor Wat. On the professional front, Greg has just begun the 11th edition of his textbook on human motor development.

Rob Vitale (Marketing & Business Analytics, '20) is rebuilding the model railroad layout he had in his parents' basement in 1970. It's been in boxes ever since. Once a kid, always a kid—despite a few grown-up procedures like cataract surgery.

Dennis L. Wilcox (Journalism & Mass Communication, '05) reports that Pearson Education has now published the 12th edition of his major textbook, *Public Relations*

Strategies and Tactics. It is available in paperback and as an interactive digital edition for the classroom.

Academic Senate Business

By Chris Jochim

The February 6, 2023, Senate meeting was the first one for President Teniente-Matson. Among other things, she will focus on these key areas: (1) a recalibration of the SJSU Transformation 2030 Strategic Plan and (2) enrollment. She noted that the CSU Board of Trustees will be looking at a new model for both enrollment and allocations to campuses.

Next, Senators turned to unfinished business, namely, debating Senate Management Resolution AS 1832, which concerns the Senate Standing Rule about meeting modalities. The proposal in AS 1832 was for all meetings to be held in accordance with the results of voting by the members of each committee (including members of the Senate for full Senate meetings). Ultimately, an amendment was narrowly approved requiring meetings of the Executive Committee and the full Senate to be in person, while meetings of policy and other committees could be decided by a vote of the members. The amended motion easily won approval.

At the meeting there was also heated debate about AS 1840, Amendment A to University Policy F17-3, Selection and Review of Department Chairs and Directors, prior to its adoption by the Senate. Henceforth, according to that new policy, an interim chair will be chosen from among "willing" as well as "viable" full professors (as determined by the provost and college dean), and an associate professor will be selected only in rare circumstances.

As these matters were debated hotly and at length, there was not time for the reports traditionally given by the University's various vice presidents.

At the February 27, 2023, Academic Senate meeting, the agenda was amended specifically so that the vice presidents could make reports and answer questions. Although this took up most of the meeting, it was very worthwhile. Senators showed keen interest in matters relating to efforts to face declining enrollments, to provide campus safety, to achieve ethnic and gender equity, and to recruit new faculty in a climate of tight budgets and faculty retirements. The Associated Students President made a particularly moving presentation in response to a senator's question about the possibility of an exhibit or monument near Uchida Hall in memory of SJSU's role in the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. With student leadership and presidential support, SJSU is hoping to have commemorative installations that may include an outdoor mural, a walk-through indoor exhibit, and a monument outside the building at which Japanese American internees were forced to gather. The building is, of course, Uchida Hall, named in honor of one of Yosh Uchida, SJSU's legendary judo coach and centenarian.

After presentations by VPs and the AS President, The Professional Standards Committee presented AS 1842, "Sense of the Senate Resolution, In Opposition to the Exclusion of Faculty Early Retirement Program Faculty From Pandemic Compensation." Senators voted unanimously to pass the resolution, joining CSU ERFSA, the CSU Academic Senate and others who have passed similar resolutions. Although the contract on which the CFA and CSU agreed calls for ALL faculty to have up to \$3,500 of extra compensation for work involved in the transition to new modes of instruction during 2020-2021, CalPERS has stood in the way of giving compensation to FERP faculty. So far CalPERS has failed to revise its position, despite the facts (1) that paying FERP faculty would not violate the CalPERS rule that FERP faculty not exceed 960 hours and (2) that Governor Newsom had issued an executive order waiving the 960 hour rule during 2020-2022. All involved hope the increased political pressure on CalPERS will have an effect.

Return of the Film Group

By Karl Toepfer

Welcome or welcome back! Beginning in April, the ERFA Film Group will convene on the first or second Sunday afternoon of each month to discuss a movie all members have been invited to see. The group will convene on Zoom, but occasionally members may see a film in San Jose in person and gather afterwards at a nearby cafe for a short discussion. The group will initially use Amazon streaming as the platform for viewing the selected films, because that platform is probably the most widely accessible to club members. Viewers are encouraged to suggest films for club viewing. Historically, the club has favored films that are outside the mainstream or unique for their treatment of important themes in serious or comic modes. Such films may include, for example, documentaries, foreign films, old films, films in academic settings, films dealing with social issues, and films that are aesthetically, politically, or technologically innovative. If you would like to be added to the membership list, please send an email to Karl Toepfer at karl.toepfer@sjsu.edu. He can also answer your questions about the group.

Musical Connections

By John Pollock

Touched.

The last public event my wife and I attended before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the world was a concert presented in the Jewish Community Center in Berkeley as part of the "Violins of Hope" exhibit which was touring the country at the time. "Violins of Hope," as you may know, is a collection of stringed instruments once owned by Jewish musicians, many of whom died in the Holocaust. The instruments were collected over a number of years and, in many cases, painstakingly restored by Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein, father and son craftsmen in Tel Aviv.

During the concert intermission the audience was invited to examine some of the instruments on display at the back of the auditorium where a docent spoke of the historical background of the exhibit. As she was speaking, I felt an urge to touch one of the violins. I considered asking her permission to do so, but not wanting to draw

attention to myself, waited until she concluded her talk and the people crowded around the table had dispersed. When I was confident no one would notice, I reached out and for a brief moment let my fingers gently graze the side of the instrument.

.....

Gifts.

According to Joshua Bell, the violin he uses for his recordings and public performances is a Stradivarius which, of course, is nearly priceless. He said the instrument was a gift on loan to him by a generous and wealthy benefactor. He joked that his relationship with the violin is the opposite of the social distancing we all were practicing during the pandemic: that he's never more than six feet away from it.

He once took the violin down to the New York City subway and, standing on the side of the train platform, performed an impromptu recital for the people coming and going there. Apparently none of them recognized him as the world-famous artist that he is, and a few of them dropped some spare change into the empty violin case at his feet.

Did You Know?

By Tim Hegstrom

You need a Tower Card to access campus buildings and, as an emeritus faculty member, you can update your old Tower Card. Because of the pandemic, campus buildings are locked, and you need to have an updated Tower Card for the card readers at building entrances in order to open the door. This wasn't a particular problem when all meetings were done by Zoom, but now that meetings are being held on campus again, it may be a good idea to finally get your Tower Card updated. I have learned this lesson in the past two weeks. On different occasions, I needed to get into Washington Square Hall and Clark Hall and had to wait outside awkwardly for one of my colleagues to show up and let me in. Here's how to get the Tower Card update:

- Be sure you have emeritus status and an sjsu.edu email address. We have covered the topic of obtaining emeritus status and getting IT help in past issues of the newsletter.
- Log in to your one.sjsu account. You will need your employee ID number. You can send an email to myid@sjsu.edu to get information on what to do next. Click on the following link to go directly to the required e-form, the "SJSU Tower ID Mailing Request form." <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdbrKtoTJCs6c7BcbxOM-81-l8ecS80ARw-2oggCrXRSP2dhA/viewform?fbzx=-9130447560216876939>
- The form will ask you to upload a photo. If there is already one on file for you, you will get an immediate message telling you so. The day after I submitted the form I received an email from University Personnel asking me whether I wanted to use the photo on file or upload another one. I replied that the one on file was OK, and I received another prompt email saying they would contact me when my new Tower Card was ready for pick up. You can also have the card mailed to you directly.
- The online information says it could take three weeks. My card was ready for pickup three days after I filled out the form.

- If you need help, you can email university-personnel@sjsu.edu.

There are a couple of public lecture series offered by the university that you can get advance notice about from your SJSU email account. For example, the University Scholar Series is announced by the Provost's Office each month and is typically held on a Wednesday at noon. On April 12, Marcelle Dougan will deliver a presentation entitled, "The Societal Impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic and a Look Ahead to What's Next" online and in the King Library, Room 225.

Update of ERFA Constitution & By-Laws

At the May business meeting at The Villages, your ERFA officers will propose for your consideration and approval some minor changes to our constitution and bylaws. These changes:

- Remove 'he/she' language, which is outdated and avoidable.
- Update 'Webmaster' to "Website Administrator."
- Update the verbiage about the ERFA representative to the Academic Senate. Committee service is optional and our representative can choose to ask to be appointed to a committee but is not required to serve on Senate committees. Documents highlighting the changes will be sent in advance of the meeting.

SJSU ERFA Executive Board

President— Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno

Vice Pres. — Elaine Collins

Secretary — Celia Bakke Treasurer—Bill Campsey

Members at Large-- Lucy McProud, Beth Von Till, Elba Maldonado-Colon

Academic Senator –Chris Jochim

Past President—Jackie Snell

Ex Officio Members

Membership--Joan Merdinger, Beth Von Till, Susan McClory

Consolations - Elba Maldonado-Colon

Newsletter-- Nancie Fimbel; David Mesher (copy editor); Clyde Lawrence (Layout/ Design)

Activities-- Lonna Smith, Elba Maldonado-Colon, Lucy McProud

Archivist—Celia Bakke

CSU-ERFA Reps-- Nancie Fimbel, Chris Jochim, Joan Merdinger

Program Committee-- Barbara Conry, Bill McCraw, Lucy McProud, Carmen Sigler

Web Administrator - Bethany Shifflett

Liaison to the Tower Foundation -- Jackie Snell

Privileges and Advocacy— Tim Hegstrom, Nancie Fimbel, Bethany Shifflett

SJSU ERFA Office MacQuarrie Hall 438D

Email: celia.bakke@sjsu.edu

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

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

~~~~~

**In Memoriam**

Gilbert Guerin  
(Special Education)

Virginia Larsen  
(Marketing & Decision Sciences)

Evelyn Neufeld  
(Teacher Education)

~~~~~

Note: You can read previous editions of the newsletter at <https://www.sjsu.edu/emeritusfaculty/newsletter.php>