



# PostScript

## SDSU Retired Faculty/Staff News

Fall/Winter 2011  
Volume XXVI No. 1

WHAT'S IN A NAME



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*Norma at the beach*

### WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

*Norma Jean Adams Summersgill,  
Personnel Services*

My last name was Adams, and I was told I was a descendent of John and John Quincy Adams. I don't know if that is true but I did have a great-uncle Quincy Adams. I also had double second cousins—my Grandpa Adams and his sister married a Pennington and his sister. I always thought that was “ha ha” funny when I was a child.

During my school years the students were placed in alphabetical order, giving me the first seat, first row. Just behind me from second grade through our senior year sat Thomas Beasley and Billy Joe Black. We have stayed in touch over these many, many years and have a special close feeling for each other. When I was nineteen, I gave up my nice simple name for the name Summersgill. I have now had that name for 63 years and almost always have to spell it when I provide my name to others.

I have lived in the San Diego area since 1955 and have never found another Summersgill in the telephone book. They do exist because my niece by marriage researched the genealogy of the Summersgills and prepared an ancestry book for us all. She even found a history of a Lady Summersgill in England.

So, what's in a name? Your name was very important to us in Personnel Services. It got you on the payroll, named your beneficiary, enrolled you in a health plan, identified your department or place of work and now cuts a check from CALPERS. Because we no longer see you as often, your name can recall your face and the association we had

with you during our working life. But now in these days that go by so quickly, your name disappears from my memory. Woe is me!♦

### ONLY YESTERDAY MUSEUM TOUR

*Mary E. Nelson, Aztec Shops*

On September 15, a group of members toured Only Yesterday, a private museum of classic autos and military memorabilia. The museum is owned by Chuck Spielman, a US Army veteran and retired commercial real estate executive, who opened the museum in 2001 after the terrorist attack of 9/11, privately funding the museum as a way to pay tribute to war veterans. The museum contains a private collection of approximately 30 to 40 vintage automobiles, including a 1946 Pontiac GTO convertible, a 2010 Corvette ZRI with a supercharged V8 engine and a 2010 Ferrari.

The Hall of Heroes emphasizes WWII and Vietnam Wars with artifacts also from WWI. There are such items as Eva Braun's fork and spoon and several autographed pictures of Eisenhower and Truman, as well as letters signed by Hitler and other historic figures. There are jeeps from WWII, a helicopter from Viet Nam, and a room with military radios. There are so many artifacts it would take several days to see them all, explained docent Bob Rabourne, who asked that veterans present sign a poster with their name, rank, and field of service. These will be placed under glass and displayed.

Spielman is currently working on a 3<sup>rd</sup> phase honoring women in the military and also our allies of WWII. What a wonderful honor to our military and all of those who served or are now serving.♦



### OUR MISSION

To serve the mutual benefits and interests of retired and near retired faculty and staff. To facilitate continuing contributions by members to the furtherance of the scholarly and other professional objectives of San Diego State University.



*Aunts Sylvia, Ida, and Marion, 1943*

### **AKA GOLDA ZAHAVAH IRENE WEISS**

*Gloria Irene Ross, Teacher Education*

A Jewish child is usually named after a deceased relative or close family friend. I am named after my great-grandmothers, Golda and Irene. The child is also given a Hebrew name. My Hebrew name was Golda. I say *was* because at the age of ten I started attending Hebrew School to begin preparing for my Bat Mitzvah. The first day, my teacher asked me my Hebrew name. (All the children were called by their Hebrew name and were taught to write that name on all their work papers.) When the teacher asked for my name, I replied, "Golda."

Batya, my teacher, took a long and careful look at me and said, "You don't look like a Golda to me. From now on your name will be Zahavah!"

And so it was.

In 1914 my father was born on the Lower East Side of New York to immigrant parents. The language used in their home and neighborhood was Yiddish. My father's mother named him Meyer William Weiss. My grandfather disliked that name and called him Victor. Soon he became Victor to everyone and the name Meyer William was forgotten.

Years later, however, when he and my mother went to apply for a marriage license he had to present his birth certificate. It was then that my mother discovered that she was engaged to a stranger—Meyer William. My mother liked everything in its correct order. She told my father that before they were married he would have to legally change his

name to Victor. He agreed, and was known as Victor Weiss for the rest of his life.

Victor Weiss had three younger sisters. There was a nine year difference between the youngest, May, and her older sister Sylvia. When the time came for May to register for kindergarten, Sylvia was given the task of enrolling her. Now Sylvia secretly did not like the name May, although she loved her sister dearly. So when the kindergarten teacher asked her name, Sylvia spoke up, "Her name is Marion." And so May Weiss was registered as Marion Weiss (with an *o*) and that became her legal name. My aunts, Sylvia, age 90, and Marion, age 81, are still close and talk on the telephone daily. Their older sister, Ida, passed away in 2007. ♦



*Paul Erickson, Sr., age 23*

### **SON OF ERICK**

*Paul Erickson, Education*

I arrived in this world in Pittsburg, Kansas, the first child of Paul Erickson and Mabel Gumersell Erickson.

After Dr. Church asked for the birthplaces of my parents—Dad's was Helsinki, Finland and Mother's was New York City—Dr. Church commented, "You two sure came a long way to have a baby in Kansas."

Two days later, Dr. Church was back. My parents had not yet agreed on a name for the baby. He said, "OK, I am sending in the Birth Certificate. This is Paul Erickson, Jr." I was the first baby born with this new Erickson name.

My father was born Paavo Heikkila in Finland. When my grandfather, Mauno Heikkila, was offered the job as head blacksmith at the new oil refinery being built by the Standard Oil Company in Sugar Creek, MO, the family immigrated to the USA. In Finland, Grandfather worked as a cannon maker for the Russian Army. Finland was a part of Russia until 1917.

After a few years in the USA, Grandmother Heikkila decided that the children in the schools in Independence, Missouri found our Finnish names just too foreign for the folk in Missouri. So, she decided on a new name. Grandfather's father was Erick Heikkila. Mauno was Erick's son, hence Erickson would be the new name. Mauno Heikkila became Magnus Erickson, Paavo Heikkila became Paul Erickson. Eighteen years later I came along—Paul Erickson Jr.

End of story. ♦

### **SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE**

*Joan F. Curry, Scholarship Chair*

The SDSU Retirement Association announces the availability of scholarships for SDSU students whose parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, aunt or uncle was or is a full-time employee with a tenure track or permanent appointment. Current and former auxiliary employees' children are also eligible to apply.

#### *Requirements*

\*Applicants must be related to a member of the SDSU Faculty or Auxiliaries.

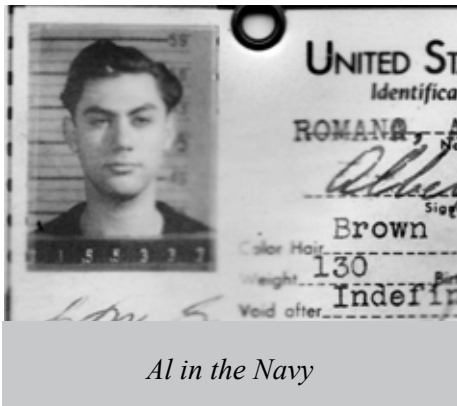
\*They must have completed at least one semester at SDSU or a college/university.

\*They must have a GPA of at least 2.75.

\*They must write a 500 word essay telling about themselves, their scholastic endeavors, their community service, their hopes for the future.

\*They must have an interview with the Scholarship Committee.

The deadline for the 2012/2013 applications is February 10, 2012. Scholarships will be awarded at the annual Spring Luncheon. ♦



*Al in the Navy*

## LUCKY LUCIANO, AL CAPONE AND ME

*Al Romano, Mathematics*

I remember reading about Lucky Luciano and Al Capone in the 1930's. But I was a kid growing up in Brooklyn and never figured that either one of them would have even a slight effect on my life. I thought this in spite of the fact that a man down the street was machine gunned down one evening by a passing car as he walked up the steps to his tenement building. It was committed by Murder, Inc. because this guy was trying to organize the Blake Street shopkeepers and pushcart owners to not pay extortion to the racketeers (as we called them in Brooklyn in those days). At least that's what the papers said.

At any rate, I never paid real attention to the newspapers' pictures of Luciano and Capone. But then some odd things happened to me when I was stationed in Chicago in 1945. Whenever I had to show my Navy ID, people looked at me funny and treated me with a kind of deference that I could not account for. After all I was only 18 years old, 5 foot 7, and of slight build. And then one day there was a picture of Luciano in a Chicago newspaper and when I looked at it I was startled. I looked at my Navy ID picture and I looked at the newspaper picture and I thought, "Holy Cow, we look like family."

When I went to Washington University in St. Louis in 1950, I was permitted to live in the dormitory even though I was a graduate student. I roomed with a young fellow whose name was Al Bonnano (I believe I have the spelling correct). Here you have Al Bonnano and Al Romano living in the same room. That coincidence was a mind blaster to the other guys in the dormitory, and it was compounded by the fact that there was also a crime family in the St. Louis area named Bonnano. So here, they thought, were two Italian guys who very well could be related to two possibly compet-

ing Italian crime families. And these two Italian guys were not only living in the same dorm but also in the same room!

But I'm not Italian. And I had a devil of a time convincing the other guys in the dorm of that fact and I also had a devil of a time convincing Al Bonnano. I don't know if I ever convinced him; I suspect not. But I finally did convince the other guys in the dorm. Al and I each did suspect the other was a member of a crime family even though we never broached the subject. I still don't know about Al. He never told me otherwise. But I never asked him. Our doubts about each other with respect to that matter we kept in abeyance. At any rate, he left Washington University at the end of that school year.

And, just for the record, I was not born into nor have I ever been a member of a crime family. ♦



*Four generations*

## SOME UNUSUAL FAMILY NAMES

*Marydale Merrill Dessel, Natural Sciences/Physics*

My mother's best friend was named Mary and my father's name was Dale, so I became Marydale. My relatives all lived in southern Iowa, where combined names were then common—BillyBob, etc.

My grandfathers had fairly usual names, Phillip Merrill and Elmer Van Horn, but my grandmothers had interesting names; Ivy Imogene Taylor Merrill—Ivy, and Minnie Medelsia Randolph Van Horn—Delia. Grandma Van Horn loved unusual names. My mother explained that Grandma got them from books she liked to read, and since she and Grandpa had 13 children, she was

kept busy picking out names. My aunts were LaRue, Lala, Icle, Mina, Neva, Pauline (Polly) and Mildred (Millie, my mom)—the last two fairly common names, but then, Aunt Polly and Mom were kids # 9 and 10, and perhaps Grandma was running out of reading time by then. The uncles were Andrew and Earl (male relatives' names), followed by Leith, DeWitt, Garold, and Derward. Grandma must have been back in her books for these last four. No Johns or Janes for her!

My mom's great uncle Hezekiah (aka Hezzie) Randolph devoted many years to tracing the family history, clear back to 800 AD. His books make fascinating reading. The names are mostly biblical, the Bible was the only book most families had, if any, or typical family names passed from generation to generation. Since this was all before modern medicine, it is common to see names of infants and children who did not survive to adulthood, listed in the family history.

All my aunts and uncles, however, lived into their 70's, 80's, or 90's, and that probably speaks well for healthy life on Iowa farms in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. ♦

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR MEDCO MEMBERS

*Gloria Irene Ross, Teacher Education*

Beginning January 1, 2012, CVS CareMark will administer the prescription benefit portion of your PERS Select Choice/Care health plan for CalPERS.

1. You will receive new cards from Anthem Blue Cross during the first two weeks in December.

2. You will receive a welcome packet from CVS CareMark in Mid-December.

3. All Medco prescriptions will be automatically transferred to CVS CareMark mail order.

4. If you have any questions about this new plan, please call CVS CareMark at 877-542-0284. ♦



*Leif in the third grade*

## WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

*Leif Fearn, Teacher Education*

There are many stories about my name. “What in the world were your parents thinking?” is a popular one. “You should have been a botanist” is relatively common. “I could call you twig (branch, grass, tree)” occurs about as often as the botanist one. “What?” used to come up during roll call in college. I’ve heard, “You’ve got to be kidding” several times. Years ago when I lived in The Valley in Arizona and acted (badly) in university and community theater, people asked if it was a stage name. Later, when I began writing, some folks said it would be a great writer’s pseudonym. Many years ago, my friend Sig Stautland asked how I pronounced it, and I said that when two vowels go walking the first does the talking, so it’s “Leif” with long /e/. He said it should be “Leif” with the vowels pronounced long /a/. When I told him there isn’t any Scandinavian blood I know of, he said then it’s okay to pronounce it any way I want.

In elementary and junior high school, I remember preferring if it were pronounced “Jimmy” or “Bob” or “Nick”—anything but Leif. I remember as a boy about that age deciding that if I ever had a son, I would name him Eric. In high school, there was a guy named “Rip.” He had it all—great name, pretty girls, good quarterback, and bowed legs that everybody thought looked sexy in football pants. If I got what he got, I’d have been “Rip,” if I could. But his last name was Teasenfitz. You can imag-

ine what kids did with that, so I figured Fearn worked fine.

Fearn was a better name than Teasenfitz for newspaper stories. He got his in the fall; I got mine in the spring. That capital /F/ stood out well in newsprint. After I got out of public school, the name got better. It was distinctive. People didn’t forget it. I was always the only Leif Fearn. I have run across several people named Leif. One was a second grader in the school where I taught sixth grade. I told him I love my name. I don’t know whether he believed me.

There is no middle name. My father didn’t like middle names. He didn’t have one. My mother had one, but she didn’t like it, so she never used it. My two sisters (Lynne and Jan) don’t have middle names, either. Notice, as well, that Bruce (father) and Jeanne (mother) are one-syllable names; so are Lynne, Leif, and Jan, in order from oldest to youngest.

I asked once why they named me Leif, especially with Fearn as a last name. My father said, “Don’t you like it?” When my father appeared to be asking a question in that tone, he wasn’t. So I said sure I like it. He said that’s good, and that was that. None of us asked anything twice back then.

Jan, my youngest sister, wanted to know the origin of “Fearn,” so she did the work, part of which was a trip to England where she found a tiny hamlet called “Fearne.” My grandfather, whom I never knew, immigrated from England early last century where he had been a lace weaver, by hand. So I am satisfied that there is a connection to England on my father’s side. My mother was Pennsylvania Dutch, which means German. There was no name connection to Germany, or Holland, for that matter, until 2001 when my daughter Bridget, who lives in Germany with her German husband, gave me a grandson they named Maximillian Alexander. They figured he’d be ready if ever there were a king again in Germany. And my son Eric was 2011 Teacher of the Year in his school district. ♦



*Leoné and her Papa*

## NAMING RITES

*Leoné D. McCoy, Teacher Education*

I am fortunate to have many names: mother, grandmother, aunt, cousin, friend, artist, imaginer and teacher. But when I came into this world, I became Leoné.

My father was Leonard, ne’ Hjalmer Leonard Anderson, named for an early prime minister of modern-day Sweden. My parents decided that I would be named after my father, a kind, considerate and loving man. We are seen together in our Easter attire in the accompanying photograph.

The spelling of my name with the diacritical mark or accent aigu was, I believe, a response to the era in which I was born. Nestled between the wild, no-holds-barred Jazz Age and the suffocating Great Depression, my parents decided that the accented *e* in my name was an appropriate flourish and added verve, but in no way derived from my stolid English and Scandinavian ancestry.

An early beau of mine, an explorer who traversed forests and jungles, thought my name fit my father’s Norseman’s heritage. He would talk about the schemata of scientific nomenclature conceived of by the great Swedish botanist Linnaeus, which my friend scrutinized and concluded was my name, less the letter *s*.

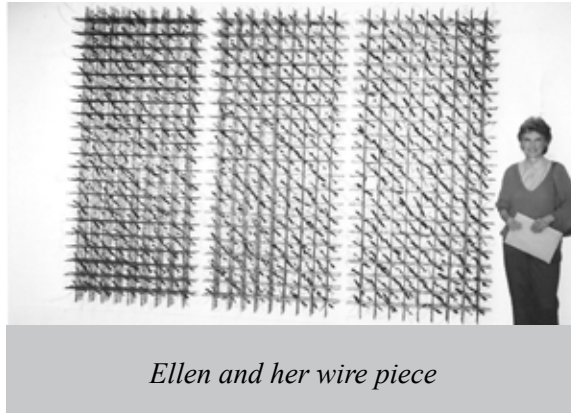
In all, my name has been a conversation-starter and a special and enduring way to always remember Papa. ♦

**PASSIONS, PART II**  
*Ellen Phillips, Physical  
 Education*

I loved to draw and paint as a child, but then a 4<sup>th</sup> grade art teacher told me I wasn't an artist. I believed her and stopped. Sad. I learned to sew, knit and crochet as a teenager. Years later, with a friend's encouragement I began a woodworking class in Adult Ed and built furniture for our apartment. And loved it. I tried ceramics and found I was good at it—and could sell it. Then I took a stitchery class which took me back to my sewing years—but I wasn't making clothes, I was making art! That was scary. My work was seen in a little bookstore in Pacific Beach by some members of the new Stitchery Guild, and I was asked to join a small group that ended up becoming California Fibers. I'm still a member.

By now, I knew I had to go back to school to get the background I needed to be an artist. I was scared to death, but I started with a ceramics class second level. I figured I knew enough not to flunk out. But I was introduced to clay as art—a whole different thing from plates and bowls and cups and my small steps into decorative clay objects. Those years in college were wonderful growing years as I took as many classes as I could in different areas of the arts and crafts. I ended up with a MFA in sculpture.

That year I sent a proposal to the Lausanne Biennial in Switzerland—and it was accepted. Jerry Dumlao, my good friend and one of my sculpture professors at SDSU, helped by building the



*Ellen and her wire piece*

frames for my wire pieces. The months flew as I twisted wire using fiber techniques till my three forms were done. It took another month for me to build three crates to ship the piece. My first fiber teacher and I traveled together to Lausanne to hang my piece. And stay for the show opening. Very exciting times for a fiber artist!

I started making proposals for public art after I finished my Masters, and was chosen as a finalist along with Jess Dominguez, another close friend and sculpture professor, for the City of San Diego. We were not picked, and the piece picked was never built—which often happens in public art. Public art is an up and down field. But you go on.

Jess Dominguez and wife Mary Lynn and I joined forces to build the Children's Wall at Children's Hospital in 1993. It was great fun working for children—lots of color, bronzes that they could manipulate, tile in a yellow brick road. And then on to a young peoples' library in Los Angeles where we built a fifty-foot painted and stained wood

mural—not much money but great fun. I was asked to be artist for a road/canal project in Phoenix and to work with a landscape architect. Another new world even though the piece was never built.

Soon after Mary Lynn and I were chosen to do the Birds piece on Washington Street for Mission Hills. At the same time I was hired to work as an artist with Kercheval Engineers on Dairy Mart Bridge in South Bay for the City. A bridge from scratch—what a challenge! It took six rather than the projected two years. It is wonderful to see a bridge go from drawings to holes in the ground to steel girders and pillars and finally a road/bridge crossing the Tijuana River. Plus art in the entries and the overlooks and benches with granite pictures and quotes from the huge 1915 flood thanks to the "rain makers" hired to end San Diego's drought. Would you believe wine barrels were found floating in San Diego Bay! I had a good time using the history of the river valley which tied the bridge to its site.

Mary Lynn and I were tapped to join four other artists to do three Oncology Gardens for Children's Hospital. More fun building big strange animals covered with bright tile, one with a wing, and a tiled river for the kids to float boats, a tiled fountain and wonderful big bugs and dragon flies. My last three public art projects ended in 1999 and 2000. I decided no more public art. It had been a heady and busy last five years, but I wanted to get back to my own art. ♦

**A DAY AT THE RACES**

*Charles J. Stewart, Chemistry*

A demanding editor must I mollify,  
 About events held in Del Mar, last July.  
 He wishes me to speak of horses racing by,  
 Of wagers won, and others gone awry.

Tis true, this reporter must sadly state  
 An adventurous group of thirty-eight  
 Were placing bets and tempting fate  
 As horses were led to the starting gate.

I have a tale which must be told  
 Mary Nelson had truly struck gold  
 On a longshot wagered she quite bold  
 And won a nice sum too large to behold.

Now the tale of last July is near complete  
 After eight races run, to home we did retreat.  
 The gloom of wagers lost we shall easily defeat  
 Fear not, come next July, this fest we will repeat.

## CAREGIVER WAY TO VOLUNTEER

*Judith Sowder, Mathematics*

After retirement from San Diego State, I began exploring ways to volunteer my time. Knowing how much hospice had done for two close friends, I decided to investigate volunteering for San Diego Hospice and The Institute for Palliative Medicine (SDHIPM). I was impressed from the beginning. I attended a very informative two-day workshop and was assigned to my first position as a patient care volunteer, providing caregiver relief to those caring for a loved one on hospice. The couple was elderly, the husband dying gracefully, his wife overwhelmed with his care. She was so welcoming and grateful, not only for time to shop for groceries and run errands, but to attend religious services again. He always looked forward to my visits because I had time to read to him and talk with him about what I had read. His favorite book was Stephen Ambrose's *To America: Personal Reflections of an Historian*, a book I also enjoyed. He died shortly after we completed the book.

Since then, I've continued to provide caregiver relief for others and have met many fascinating people. Some of the patients, knowing that their time on earth is ending, are pleased to be able



*Judith*

to share stories from their lives—some funny, some sad, but always interesting. We could always find ways to entertain ourselves during my visits. In one case, the patient loved catalogs. One day I picked up her mail and there were 14 catalogs! We had fun going through them and picking out what we liked and laughing at things that were ridiculous. Every week we would spend some time with catalogs. Another patient received an iPad, but her daughter-caregiver didn't have much time to work with her on learning to use it. So, the two of us explored using the camera on the iPad to take pictures of the family pets and send

them by email to her relatives in another state. She also enjoyed YouTube, and was charmed to be able to see and listen to Ella Fitzgerald sing "Stormy Weather."

Other patients were too sick to talk very much, but grateful to have someone with them while giving their caregivers a break. Only one case, spending some hours with a very sick small child who needed someone with her around the clock, was truly difficult for me. But I had elected to do that. In every case I've been informed about the patient and family and asked if I was willing to volunteer for that assignment.

Once a month volunteers meet to talk about their efforts. I hear so many stories! I always come away feeling fortunate to be working with such a wonderful, generous, diverse group of people. Many feel, as do I, that hospice work gives back to us more than what we give to those with whom we work. There are many roles to play as a hospice volunteer. I've described just one. Perhaps you are interested in this type of volunteer work. If so, I know you will be welcomed.

For more information about the volunteer program at SDHIPM go to [www.sdhospice.org/volunteer](http://www.sdhospice.org/volunteer) or contact Volunteer Resources via email at [volunteer@sdhospice.org](mailto:volunteer@sdhospice.org) or by phone at (619) 278-6451.♦

## MORTAR BOARD HONORS CHARLES J. STEWART AND KENNETH PERRY

*Jane K. Smith, Administration*

On Saturday, November 5, 2011, Mortar Board hosted the Twenty-Sixth Annual Emeritus Faculty, Administrator, and Staff Outstanding Service Awards Ceremony and Brunch. This year's honorees were Kenneth Perry and Dr. Charles (Jack) Stewart. The purpose of the award is to annually honor retired administrators, faculty, and staff who gave generously of themselves to the University, its students, and the community. The honorees who receive the award are memorialized through the placement of a bronze plaque at the base of a campus tree.

The ceremony this year was held in the Mortar Board Grove between the Administration Building and Love Library. President Elliot Hirshman spoke about each honoree and unveiled the plaques. Prior to the ceremony, Dr. Terry O'Donnell played the 244-Bell Sym-

phonic Carillon.

Following the ceremony and brunch, Provost Nancy Marlin spoke on the "State of the University." Among other things, she pointed out that SDSU is in excellent condition, but the State of California is a mess! Everyone enjoyed hearing Pat Koppman describe Jack's career, including the fact that he worked his way through school baking pies! His specialty was making 80 pie crusts which included 10 pounds of flour, 6 pounds of lard, 1-1/2 quarts of ice water, and a handful of salt!

Dr. Stewart has served SDSU in many ways beyond the classroom, including Chair of the SDSU Academic Senate, assisting in the development of the Ph.D. program in Chemistry, and serving as President of the SDSU Retirement Association. As pointed out by Thomas B. Day, President Emeritus, "Perhaps his most remembered service to the University community was as Chair of the Academic Senate. In good times and hard, Jack was calm and courteous to all. The Senate is a very important forum at

SDSU, and Jack's service grounded it firmly for the betterment of all."

Kenneth Perry, Emeritus Associate Vice President for Financial Management, was honored for his 31 years of service to SDSU and to the CSU. As pointed out by Sally Roush, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, "For all of his 31 years, Ken was a source of wisdom, discipline, strength, and leadership. Ken was a supervisor with uncompromising concern for his employees, a colleague of uncommon devotion and a leader among his peers at SDSU and within the CSU system."

The SDSU Chapter of Mortar Board is proud to sponsor this event each year which brings together faculty, staff, students, and community people to recognize, as pointed out by Dr. Robert Metzger, those individuals "who have helped to lay the groundwork for the evolution of SDSU from a four year college to a small research University."♦

*Note: See photos on back cover*

**AN INTERVIEW WITH  
MARGARET MCKERROW**  
*Interviewed by Ramon Royal Ross*

**R:** Maggi, we've been talking about your early childhood in England. Was it there that you were first attracted to plays and acting?

**M:** My parents loved theatre. They got married when they were twenty-one but didn't have children for ten years. They enjoyed the arts, traveling—they lived in London and told a wonderful story of going to go see *Romeo and Juliet*, with John Gielgud, and when they got there they were so disappointed. Lawrence Olivier was playing the role! Second best!

**R:** What about your own first acting experiences?

**M:** I remember that my parents thought I had an interesting speaking voice, so I took elocution lessons when I was eleven or so. I still have the written critiques on my recitations. That was my first exposure to getting up in front of people. It was a little like sending your child to soccer—instead I went to elocution lessons.

**R:** You came to the United States in 1951, if I remember correctly, so those lessons occurred in Chicago. Tell me a little more about that time.

**M:** I remember TV. We didn't have TV until we got to the United States, and then only because my brother, who was eight at the time, fell and broke his leg and was stuck at home.

**R:** Do you remember any favorite programs?

**M:** *Kukla, Fran and Ollie!* I also remember something else very interesting. My mother's sister Ella, back in England, was an ardent socialist. Her husband John was a communist and ran a communist bookstore in Hastings. My parents disagreed with Ella and John's politics. When we got a TV, the McCarthy hearings were being broadcast, and I remember that my mother was fascinated by the hearings. In retrospect, I realize how shocking she must have found them. After all, she had a relative who was a communist.

**R:** That would have been about 1952—high drama, and happening right in front of your eyes.

**M:** I remember watching the hearings, but don't remember them having much impact on me. But my mother! Years later I got really fascinated by the event because the hearings strongly affected theatre and film. It was a long time before I thought back to my mother,

and the effect they must have had on her.

**R:** What books do you remember reading back in those days?

**M:** I have always had very eclectic tastes in books. A childhood favorite was *Swallows and Amazons* and the rest of the Arthur Ransome books. My parents were avid readers and my mother was always giving me books to read. I loved *Jane Eyre*, and books by Jane Austen. Mother gave me *The Scarlet Pimpernel* once when I was sick in bed. But I also remember reading *Sue Barton, Student Nurse*—that kind of tacky series. What else was I reading? I loved *Wind in the Willows*. Mole was absolutely my favorite character.

**R:** What did I just read recently? Oh yes! *Black Swan Green*.

**M:** Isn't that a stunning book! I gave



*Maggi, age 6, with pigtails*

it to my brother. I told him that as a boy who had grown up in England, he had to read that book. It was about his life.

**R:** You went off to Lake Erie College after you'd graduated from high school. What made you decide to go there?

**M:** My family lived in Park Ridge, which is a suburb of Chicago. I went away to college in 1957 when I was seventeen. Since I had gone to a gigantic high school I wanted to go to a small college. Lake Erie College was small—maybe 500 students—a girls' school that had a program where everybody in the college went to Europe for four months in their junior year. That sounded wonderful to me.

**R:** Had you decided by then that you were going to major in theatre?

**M:** I was a history major, but I quickly got involved in Lake Erie's College/Community Theatre, beginning in my freshman year. I played The Golux in

Thurber's *Thirteen Clocks* and was in *Under Milkwood*. I stage managed *The Diary of Anne Frank*. And then in the middle of my junior year I said to myself, "This is just ridiculous, I should be a theatre major." So for the last three semesters of college I just took theatre classes. Lake Erie College was very good for me. Two people from my graduating class had careers in theatre. I taught theatre at San Diego State, and a good friend of mine became business manager at Arena Stage Theatre in Washington D.C. That speaks to what a good theatre program the college had at that time.

**R:** What about your experience abroad?

**M:** I absolutely loved it! I went to Dijon in France in 1960 and lived with a family in an old apartment building, right by the market place in the center of the old town. I spoke French all the time. There were ten other Lake Erie College students in Dijon, all living with French families. We took classes at the University in Dijon that were specially designed for foreign students. We had to do a research project and keep a journal. So I studied a local regional professional theater company and saw all their productions. It was a transforming experience. Our senior class was totally different because we'd had this international experience. It changed us for life.

**R:** We had somewhat the same experience, thirty years ago, living for a brief time in a small town in Mexico, San Miguel de Allende. The whole pace of life was different. Small things became important.

**M:** Exactly. The food in France was wonderful. The food! The woman I lived with was a wonderful cook.

**R:** Was that where you got your interest in cooking?

**M:** No, I was always interested in cooking. My father was a pretty adventurous eater. He was an insurance executive and ate out a lot in good restaurants, and he would come home and tell us about the wonderful things he'd eaten. I'd try to make them. My parents liked to entertain a lot, and I'd always cook for their parties. I'd make quiche, tons of quiche, and nobody had ever eaten quiche before. They called it McKerrow Pizza. I come from a family that eats everything. Well, for years I didn't eat brussel sprouts. In my school in England they cooked washtubs full of sprouts, cabbages, cauliflower. The smell pervaded everything! I hated it. But other than that, I eat everything.

**R:** You came to San Diego State, if I remember correctly, in 1971.

**M:** That's right. I was finishing up my Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. For my dissertation I studied the work of a Russian actress—Alla Nazimova. She was born in Odessa, on the Black Sea, and then moved to Moscow where she worked with Stanislavsky early in his career. She came to New York City in 1906 with a Russian Company. She played Nora in *A Doll's House* in New York, and was probably the first person to do realistic, rather than grandiose, acting in that role. And it stunned—just stunned—everyone who saw it, and she was a huge hit. So she got invited to stay in the United States, and had a successful career in theatre and film. She never really lost her accent, so while she was superb in Ibsen and Chekov, she couldn't play Americans.

She made some interesting films—one with Rudolph Valentino. You can see her in the 1942 film *Since You Went Away*, with Claudette Colbert. Colbert's husband, played by Fred McMurray, is at war so she goes to work in a factory, where she meets Nazimova, who plays a woman who has immigrated to the United States. At lunch in a diner she recites the pledge that's on the Statue of Liberty. You can see what a terrific actress she was.

**R:** What are your favorite movie-movies you can see again and again?

**M:** I almost never see movies again and again. And about eight or nine years ago I made a New Year's resolution that if I wanted to go see a movie I would see it in a theater. I would not see it on TV.

**R:** It's certainly a different experience when you're not sitting in a movie house with that big screen in front of you, and sound pouring out all around you.

**M:** That's right. You sit there. You don't go out for popcorn. You sit there engrossed in the film.

**R:** But I can't see *Since You Went Away*, in a theater.

**M:** No. But if you see it at home, you should follow the same rules. Sit there and watch it. Don't stop in the middle and take a break. I don't watch any movie on TV that has commercials. But you can always watch great movies on the Turner Classic Movie channel or on premium channels like HBO and Showtime...



*Maggi on her way to Flagstaff*

**R:** Getting back to your career at SDSU, a good part of your work focused on theatre for children. Did you make plays of any children's books while you were teaching?

**M:** Not very often. Usually I tried to find well-written plays that had something to say to young people—to anyone, actually.

**R:** Just like a good children's book, which has something to say, not only to children, but to adults as well. *Tuck Everlasting*, for instance.

**M:** That's a wonderful book. Sometimes we did plays that are based on well-known children's literature, for the same reason you do with adults—to bring in an audience. But my first choice is always a play with an original story because the author is creating, and not trying to re-create. And it's fresh. I try to find the very best plays I can because they're more interesting to design, for students to perform in, for the audience to see, and more interesting for me, because I have to direct them!

**R:** You've been involved with ASSITEJ. Can you tell us a little about that?

**M:** ASSITEJ is an international organization of professional theatre companies that perform for young people. They hold an international festival every three years where you can see first class performances of plays for children, sometimes in English, often in their native language. I've been to ASSITEJ Festivals in Prague, Moscow, Lyon, Stockholm,

Adelaide, etc. I love to go because you get to see astonishing theatre. And it's a great way to see a city. The performances can be anywhere; in a school, in a tent in a plaza, in a small theater on a side street, and it makes for a great travel experience.

**R:** Along these lines, you started the Theater of the World Festival here at San Diego State.

**M:** That's right. I had been to ASSITEJ Festivals around the world, and I thought to myself that we ought to be able to have an International Theatre Festival at San Diego State that would give the San

Diego community an opportunity to see high quality theatre from other parts of the world. It was hard work but we did it!

**R:** I never attended, but from what I've read, it was a real treat. Is it still going on?

**M:** No, the Festival lasted for ten years but was axed because of the budget cuts. But it achieved a lot of my goals. We brought brilliant international theatre to SDSU for ten years and enriched the lives of students and the community. I am proud of what we accomplished.♦

*Editor's Note. Maggi McKerrow has a B.A. from Lake Erie College, an M.A. from Northwestern University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan—all in theatre. She taught Theatre at SDSU from 1979-2009, starting the Child Drama Program and the Theatre of the World Festival. She was the first SDSU faculty member to receive the prestigious Wang Award. Now retired, she loves yoga, travel, going to the theatre and movies, reading, cooking, and talking to friends. She misses working with students and chatting with colleagues about the state of theatre and of the world.♦*



Carol and wife Helen

**MY MOTHER THOUGHT IT WAS A LOVELY NAME**

*Carol M. Charles, Education*

It's 11 a.m. at the doctor's office. The receptionist calls for Carol Charles, and a familiar scene ensues: her eyes dart about and she addresses Helen, who is with me. "That's me," I say, standing up. Helen goes in with me. We sit and wait, as usual, and chat:

Me (vexed): Same old story. Can't tell you how tired I get of it.

Helen: What? The confusion about your name? Have you considered using your middle name?

Me: No benefit in using "Morgan." My dad was forever called Charles Morgan, until he got so fed up he changed his name to Joe. After that, his name was no longer an issue. But even when he was Morgan Charles or Charles Morgan, nobody thought he might be a girl.

Helen: Didn't you once tell me you'd become comfortable with your name and now took a perverse pleasure in it?

Me: Yeah, well, I did say that.

Helen: You also said your mother named you. Was the name Carol special to her? History or family significance?

Me: No. She just liked it. Maybe Carol wasn't a common girls' name back then. Who knows? That reminds me of an amazing coincidence. There were about 300 people in the Texas village where I was born, but get this—on that very day of my birth, another boy was born there and he also got named Carol, spelled the same. What are the odds of that?

Helen: Is that true?

Me: True as true can be. I didn't know about it until that boy and I ended up teaching in the same school in New Mexico, 25 years later. He was called Guy. He told me he had the same first name I

did, but for obvious reasons didn't use it. I didn't ask him what the obvious reasons were. Later, I asked where he was born and could hardly believe what he said. I checked with my mother. She didn't remember him, but remembered his family quite well.

Helen: I like your name. I guess when you were young you were teased about it?

Me: Nope. Never any of that. I'd tell

you why, but I prefer you think of me as mild-mannered.

Helen: Aha! You were the Boy Named Sue who slugged it out in the blood and the mud and the beer.

Me: Sand. Not much blood, and no beer at all—couldn't get it out there until you were old enough to know a bootlegger.

Helen: When we first met you were using the name C. M. Charles, professionally and for signatures and such.

Me: Just to cut down confusion. Nobody ever thought I was Ms. C. M. Charles. But I showed you, didn't I, that my recent Kohl's card identifies me as Mr. Charles CM. People still try to correct my name for me, but mostly they just forget it.

Helen: Ha. Do you remember when we were playing golf with that fellow who could not, for the life of him, remember your name? I told him to think of Christmas—Christmas Carol. A few minutes later you hit a good shot and he exclaimed, "Good one, Chris!"

Me: Yeah, I remember that. But by now I'm okay with my name. Just plain old Carol Charles. No ifs and buts. No exceptions. Devil take the confusion.

Helen: All right. I'm with you on that. I therefore resolve to help spread the word that you are indeed Carol Charles, a male personage of certain age and humanoid appearance. What title, if any, might you prefer?

Me: I'll have to think about that.

Submitted by Mr. (or Ms.) C. M. Charles, or Carol Morgan Charles, or Professor Charles CM. Take your pick.♦

**WITH AN "A" AS IN FLAVOR**

*Flavella G. Orton, Accounting Services*

My name is Flavella, pronounced with a long "a" as in flavor. Whether or not this is the correct pronunciation only the hat designer knew. My mother lived on the Colorado prairies from 1909 to 1921. When snowbound she perused the Sears-Roebuck Catalogue, where Flavella appeared as the name of the person who designed their hats for women.

I know the designer was a man from a conversation I overheard years later between my nephew and one of his acquaintances. But I do not know if Flavella was the designer's first or last name.



Flavella and brother Donny

There is a snake charmer and a party club in Rio with the name, and the slums in Rio are called "favelas." Charles Dicken's *Nicholas Nickleby* has a minor character "Lady Flavella," and Agatha Christie uses "Flavelle" as a last name in *Mystery of the Blue Train*.

There are over 1500 Flavellas in the United States. I once heard of another one in San Diego, and one in San Francisco but I've never met either one. At least the name is an ice breaker when meeting new people.♦



Cap & sorcerer

## OKTOBERFEST SPONSORSHIPS

During the 25-year history of the SDSU Retirement Association, we have always sought to provide scholarship support to promising students. In these difficult times, the need has never been greater. During the last 25 years, Student Fees, now called Tuition, have gone from a few hundred dollars a year to approximately \$5,000, with substantial increases on the way. The SDSURA Board of Directors would like to thank the following individuals for their generous support of Retirement Association's Oktoberfest scholarship fundraising effort.

One-Half of Beer	Sponsored by Kendall Home Team
One-Half of Beer	Sponsored by Ed Deaton
One-Quarter of El Monte Park Rental Fee	Sponsored by Henry Janssen
One-Quarter of El Monte Park Rental Fee	Sponsored by Nancy Carmichael & Jack Stewart
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One-Quarter of El Monte Park Rental Fee	Sponsored by Janis & Gordon Shackelford
Strudel & Whipped Cream	Sponsored by Dean Popp
One-Half of Bratwurst	Sponsored by Steve Williams
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**NOT WITH AN 'A'**

*Marion Belefant Kahn, Social Work*

My father collected misspellings of our name. The list was long. Sometimes I wished for a name like Smith, familiar, easy to spell and pronounce, but mostly I liked Belefant. Except for Uncle Charlie, ours was the only listing in the New York City telephone directory and I've never found one in another city. Dad used to tell people "it's like elephant with a B in front of it" and that's how my elephant collection began. I loved it when my favorite French teacher called me *Mademoiselle Belle Enfant*. I enjoyed the mystery of a Romanian heritage which I knew virtually nothing about. In those days, in the '30s, when I was growing up in what should have been the rich cultural mix of New York, everyone was busy being "American" and denying heritages. This was a time of disdain for everything ethnic.

All I knew was that my father's parents came from Jassy (pronounced Yosh) in Moldavia in Northeastern Romania, almost in the shadow of Russia. Perhaps they were Russians who lost their way some generations back, but to me they were gypsies—colorful, dark, roman-

tic wanderers. When I was a child, for Halloween I wore purple and red and turquoise skirts and fringed scarves and gaudy bangle jewelry. With my long dark hair and dark eyes, I was a very authentic gypsy! At least that was what I believed! Decades later I still wear purple and red and turquoise—and have done my share of wandering.

When I visited Romania on a Cambridge Art History tour I remember a magical visit to the tiny Sibiel village church known for icons painted on glass. At the beginning of the service each of us lit a candle from the candle extended by the person beside us until the entire church was bright. The women of the village, dressed in white blouses with fine black embroidery, began to sing "Mária, Mária." To me, absurdly, they were celebrating my grandmother for whom I was named and who probably never set foot in a church.

My real Grandma Mária—accent on the first syllable—died a year before I was born. According to my mother, they named me Marion because people would mispronounce Maria (i.e. it was not American). When I asked, "Why Marion with an 'o'?" my mother replied, "Because that's the correct spell-

ing." To this day, hardly a week goes by that I don't get a letter addressed to Mr. Marion Kahn.

There are stories about names in my mother's family too. Many people my age are children of first generation Americans who straddled two worlds, and names symbolized this shaky identity. Names were often "Americanized" by their owners or others. My mother, Flora Jasper—a name bestowed upon her by her English mother—was renamed Florence by her elementary school teacher. The teacher simply announced, "Flora's not a real name." And Florence she remained for the rest of her life.

Last names were often changed as well, sometimes as an arbitrary act by immigration officials, but more often to disguise their ethnic origins in order to "pass" in an Anglo-Saxon society. By the late 1940s, with the glut of World War II veterans applying to universities, especially to medical schools, aided by the G.I. Bill, there were quotas on the number of "non-Anglo" admissions. I remember application forms that actually asked, "What was your name before it was changed?"

What's in a name, indeed!♦

**IN MEMORIAM**

PHILIP GALLO October 2011 SDSU: 1963-1993 Psychology	JAIME L. LUJAN September 2011 SDSU: 1976-2004 Teacher Education	MARIE RUDIGER DEXTER October 2011 Physical Education
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CHARLOTTE B. YESSELMAN August 2011 SDSU: 1967-1986 Education	PAUL J. VANDERWOOD October 2011 SDSU: 1969-1994 History	GUNTHER KIENLE November 2011 Husband of Arlysse Kienle Psychology
VICTOR GOLDKIND September 2011 SDSU: 1961-1992 Anthropology		MARY VAL MARSH TWIST November 2011 Music

## WHAT'S IN A NAME? THUS SAYETH NELSON FRANCIS NORMAN

*Narcisse Francois LeNormand,  
History*

One of my doctoral fields of study was Russian history. The Tsars and other notables always traced their lineage back to Adam. In that spirit, follow me to find the rise of our Norman name.

Milling around as Germans, my forefathers, displaying their eternal itchy heel, wandered northwestward into Scandinavia. That gave them their first recorded name, Northmen, better known as Vikings. Or devilish thugs.

When their expanding population could not be supported in those lands they jumped into their ships and went foraging across seas and oceans, up rivers and lakes. Never welcome, they were not sensitive about rejection, just cruelly murderous. They liked to sack monasteries in the British Isles, and ravage lands along the coasts of Europe. One branch went over to become the first major dynasty in Russia, but we will pay them no more attention.

My Northmen probably came from somewhere around Denmark. Their swords and repeated bludgeonings were aimed successfully at France. The French king, having little choice, bought them off by giving them a huge parcel of fertile lands we know as Normandy. "Northmen" has changed, becoming "Normans."

Stories handed down father-to-son say that our patriarch, Jean Le Normand, became interested in coming to New France (Quebec) because some of his predecessors had sailed with Jacques Cartier in that area. Two plaques on the wall of his church at Ste. Martin d'Ige, Normandy, tell of his departure with a few companions, never to return. But the motto beneath one says, "*Je les souviens.*" (I shall remember them.) Our family publication in Quebec records how the tribe arrived and thrived and flourished widely.

Eventually my great grandfathers moved up the St. Lawrence and, under the name *Narcisse*, down into Pennsylvania. Not strange at all to be called 'Narcissus'—flowery names were much in vogue during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hyacinth was a favorite. But for frontier pioneers perhaps an English approximation would be better. Thus, the flower was cast aside, and replaced by Nelson. Not bad, when compared to the Canadian story of how Jean Baptiste Trudeau was transformed



*Narcisse F. LeNormand*

by the "States" into John B. Waterhole!

And then, in 1917, the year America entered WWI, your humble writer entered this world. Taking my grandfather's name of Nelson was foreordained. But what about a second name, of which he had none? My mother was a good Catholic, so she tried to follow their custom of naming offspring according to the saint's day when they arrived. My October 3 date had a saint named Gerard, but Mother Loretta Malone would have none of that, for my initials would be NGN—No Good Norman. So she took the name for October 4, which was—St. Francis of Assisi. Not bad, eh?

I hated the name Francis, and relatives and people from my hometown of Crookston, Minnesota loved to tease me by calling out, "Hey, Frannie!" But when in 1935 I enrolled as a freshman at the University of Minnesota, entry forms had all three names, and I began being called Nelson. One professor, following the tradition of using last names, called all fall semester for "Nelson." Of course, I never responded. First thing second semester: "Is Mr. Nelson here?" All quiet. "Is Mr. Norman here?" Sure; alive and bright eyed, I could raise a hand. "Well, you are lucky this time. That blockhead Mr. Nelson flunked my class!" Norman must have sat idly and unnoticed in his grade book.

The confusion of having two last—or first—names has cost me dearly. Naming just one: when I worked in Boston radio, a chum and I decided to try for the 'Big Time' in New York. My audition was successful, and the program manager said I would hear from him. When no word came, I tuned into the station only to hear an announcer by the name of Norman Nelson at the microphone. Ah, woe!♦

## OKTOBERFEST 2011

*Barbara Barnes, Administration*

The Twenty-Third Annual Oktoberfest Picnic was celebrated October 7th at El Monte Park on a beautiful San Diego fall day. Skies were blue, the sun was warm, and thanks to Burgermeisters Pat and Jerry Koppman and all the volunteers, the event was successful in every way.

Traditions, of course, were honored. Lederhosen and dirndl skirts were worn, as well as a lot of Aztec red. The sixty attendees enjoyed Bavarian music from the Polka Dots, an all-woman accordion band, and those who brought umbrellas joined others on the dance floor for the Umbrella Strut parade. The Strong-Arm-Liter-Stein contest was held, with Dan Gilbreath winning the men's competition and last year's women's champ Marilyn Kistler claiming the title once again.

Then there was the food, beginning with snacks and all-you-could-drink soft drinks, wine, and beer. Thanks to Biermeister Rick Schulte, the Biergarten well never ran dry. Volunteer Grillmeisters cooked dozens of bratwurst, and crock-pots overflowed with hot German potato salad. Baked beans, sauerkraut, and German breads rounded out the meal, and the feast appropriately ended with apple strudel.

Yet beyond having fun, honoring tradition, and celebrating fall, this year's Oktoberfest had a special theme—the Oktoberfest Sponsorship drive. The fundraiser was led by Gordon Shackelford, and thanks to the generous contributions of the SDSURA membership, raised over \$1500 for the Scholarship Fund.

One last note. After eight years of coordinating Oktoberfest, Pat and Jerry Koppman announced that this year would be their last. Through Pat and Jerry's hard work, Oktoberfest is an event that everyone looks forward to in the fall, a time when members enjoy great food, companionship, and being out-of-doors.

This year's celebration continued that tradition, with the added bonus of raising money for scholarships. But making this event successful is an enormous task and the time has come for the planning of Oktoberfest to be shared by a committee. Pat and Jerry thank everyone who has helped over the years and we thank them for all the wonderful Oktoberfests.♦

**TREASURER'S REPORT**  
*Dan Gilbreath, Business Affairs*

Reported below are balances of accounts as of November 26, 2011. Activity and operations accounts remain stable and adequately funded.

The scholarship account balance has increased by \$6,758 since July 1<sup>st</sup>. First quarter earnings were posted in the amount of \$1,393. Scholarships were paid in the amount of \$3,750. Member and friend contributions made in the amount of \$9,115 have also been posted. These contributions include \$1,533 collected as part of the Oktoberfest celebration – a very welcomed result indeed! In addition, included is a contribution of \$500 made by the Research Foundation in honor of my retirement from the RF in July. A special thanks to the RF for their gift in my honor! It is greatly appreciated.

The endowment fund reflects a first quarter loss of \$23,694. This is due to continued dramatic fluctuations in the market. We have also posted \$1,886 in additional gifts to the endowment fund.

The fall and winter months are a time to spend quality time with family and friends. Enjoy yourselves and I look forward, as always, to seeing you at the many fun events over the coming months.

Retirement Association Accounts	As of November 26, 2011
Endowment Fund	\$140,297.76
Scholarship Fund	24,711.16
Operating Fund	33,434.82
Activities Accounts	10,859.03
Total Assets	\$209,302.77

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## DO HAVE A LOOK AT THE FINANCIAL REPORT!

*Tom Donahue, Linguistics*

A colleague was taken aback recently at a remark from a CalPERS executive that the next few years would not be as good as the recent ones. “Just what does that mean?” he asked, and I told him that we are being prepared for this in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report available on the internet for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2010. A lingering look at the report provides some fascinating details about current CalPERS investment practices; indeed, I urge that others in the readership here do the same thing, and write to me with your reactions.

Here are some of the pertinent figures found in the most recent financial report at <http://www.calpers.ca.gov/>. The market value of CalPERS assets on June 30, 2010 was \$201 billion [at present, 17 months later, it is \$229.4 billion.] In the 12 months leading into June 30, 2010, the assets of our Public Employees Retirement Fund increased by \$22.7 billion, for an overall 12.7% return—a healthy result when our pension payout sum for the year was \$13 billion. The best-performing CalPERS assets were domestic debt securities—mostly government bonds, returning 21.7% on the initial investment, and “Alternative” Investments, which returned 23.9% on the initial investment.

It is the “Alternative” Investment category which rivets the reader’s attention. The sum invested in this category was \$21.8 billion in 2008-2009, and this total was increased to \$28.7 billion in 2009-2010. What is contained in this group of investments? The answers are to be found in Note 2, p. 50, under funds which “employ specific strategies,” which include “but are not limited to Directional Trading, Event Driven, Fund of Hedge Funds, Multi-Process, Security Selection, and Specialist Credit strategies.” A more specific list appears down the page: “leveraged buyouts, venture capital, growth capital, distressed investments, and mezzanine capital.” Later in this discussion, Note 4, p. 55 includes the following for this group under “Derivatives”: “swaps, options, futures, rights and warrants, and . . . foreign currency exchange and to-be-announced security contracts.” At year’s end, 14.1% of CalPERS assets had been invested in these venturesome instruments.

To the point of the question asked by our colleague: the chart on p. 90 of the report shows a forecast that the 3-year return rate on Alternative Investments and Private Equity will decline from 23.9% to a minus 1% total for this and the next two years. It

appears that spectacular gains with these resources are over at this juncture, and the investment specialists at CalPERS know it.

I am curious to see how others react to the CalPERS financial document. Please have a look, and send me an e-mail saying what you think to: [dunnie10@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dunnie10@sbcglobal.net). ♦

## REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

*Gordon Shackelford, Physics*

### Budgetary Impacts in Academic Departments

As we all are aware, the University has been subjected to a series of large budget reductions over a period of years. In fact, the reductions over the last few years, as a percentage, are much larger than the budgetary reductions that occurred in the early 1990s. The reduction in state funding for CSU is so large that SDSU’s budget has been reduced substantially, despite increases in tuition to about \$6,000 per year! To get an idea of the impact of budget reductions on the academic departments, one can look at the class schedules for your department on the SDSU web site. In addition to much larger class sections and less frequent offering of some courses, many courses are no longer offered.

### Structural Deficits in the Academic Colleges

Despite the budget reductions in the academic departments described above, the Colleges are operating in structural deficits, spending \$6 million to \$8 million above their ongoing funding. As a result, even as poor as academic departmental funding is at this time, we are using one-time reserve funds to operate. Academic Affairs has a large reserve of one-time funds. However, these resources cannot last forever, especially if additional funding reductions hit the University. While I fully support the University Administration’s budgetary approach and its avoidance of faculty layoffs, the situation is quite worrisome. While I do not know the precise budgetary situation in Business Affairs and Student Affairs, I suspect it is similar. ♦

### PATHS NOT TAKEN

*Ramon Royal Ross, Teacher Education*

One spring morning when I was in college, where I was an English major, I woke up and thought to myself, “I believe I’ll get a degree in hotel and restaurant management and start a restaurant.”

It wasn’t the first time I’d had such a

thought. When I was in high school, where I was a desultory student and socially backward, I had visions of owning and operating a big restaurant, rather fancy. It would sit about a mile from our house on a slight knoll on the Washington side of State Line Road with a view of the Blue Mountains to the east, a big, comfortable restaurant, built of stone and logs, with a fireplace in the middle of it, deep red naugahyde banquettes with white linen tablecloths lining the walls, lamp light reflecting on silver service and wine goblets, and soft classical music playing. It would be called Ray’s Place. I’d be the genial host, very suave, wearing a tuxedo and dispensing beautifully charred steaks and whiskey sours—whatever they were!—to sophisticated patrons.

I didn’t have a class that morning so I got dressed and hurried over to the registrar’s office where I consulted with an advisor who told me that Central Washington College didn’t have such a program, but they’d be glad to recommend to me some pre-requisites: business practices, accounting, home economics, etc. By the time I left that conference, my dreams had begun to fade.

I’ve had other plans over the years. I’d restore an abandoned brick-fronted livery stable on Chestnut street in Walla Walla and sell hand-tooled saddles, harness, Sam Browne belts, fine shoes—tan wing tips would be one of my specialties—ladies’ hand bags, suitcases. Or I’d buy a farm and become a farmer, just like my father. (I followed through on that plan, buying a small farm next to my parents’ farm, planting prune trees, raising a few head of cattle, shingling the roof of our old two-story house and painting the house barn-red with white trim, slowly going broke.) For one weekend when I was, say, forty-five years old, I dreamed of restoring old and beautiful American cars—specializing in 1941 gun-metal gray Cadillac sedans, because I saw such a car pull into Lee’s Market, on State Line Road, once, when I was ten years old.

Our next *PostScript* will be devoted to some of these paths not taken. Tell us about the job you almost got. The loved one you longed for in silence. The failures that helped you become who you are. The plans you made that drifted away like smoke in a winter sky.

Write to us. We want to hear from you. ♦

*Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.*

*Oscar Wilde*

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**THE NEXT *POSTSCRIPT* WILL FEATURE “PATHS NOT TAKEN”**

*Above:  
Photos from the Mortar  
Board Outstanding Service  
Awards Ceremony,  
November 11, 2011*



*Save the Date  
Valentine's Day Luncheon,  
Tuesday, February 14, 2012  
Borrego Desert Escape  
Sunday, March 18 through  
Thursday, March 22, 2012*

**DEADLINE: 4-10-12**

**Please e-mail your double-spaced article of approximately 400-500 words to [ramon.r.ross@gmail.com](mailto:ramon.r.ross@gmail.com). If you have no access to a computer, mail your typed or clearly printed article to 9227 Virginian Lane, La Mesa, CA 91941. Scanned photos may be sent as an attachment or mail photos to Ramon Royal Ross at the above address. Photos are appreciated and will be returned.**

*PostScript* is published by the San Diego State University Retirement Association  
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