



Faculty Emeriti Association
NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2021, VOLUME 15, ISSUE 2

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From the President's Desk

by Shelia A. Moorman, President,
Faculty Emeriti Association

Greetings JMU Faculty Emeriti
Association members,

As I mentioned in December, the challenges of the time remain, however there is now a brighter light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. The promise of a vaccine is now a reality, CDC guidelines are ever changing, and the temperatures are warming. I know that we all are anxious and excited for the opportunity to spend time with our emeriti friends at the wonderful, familiar events and groups the association sponsors; it requires great patience for us to wait for the safe and appropriate time to do so. However, we have determined that it would not be appropriate for the FEA to sponsor, sanction face-to-face gatherings at this time.

We have encouraged the Groups who have been using Zoom to meet, see and hear each other to continue to do so if they wish. Thank you in particular to Mary Lou Wylie for organizing and facilitating the wonderful Zoom presentations listed below. Our members are talented, interesting, and do a great job sharing their topics with us.

"Better With Age" is a collection of stories and poems edited by Bob Bersson and Jack Greer. After their introduction to the collection, we were treated to readings by Tom Arthur, Dave Pruet, Chris Bolgiano, Robin McNallie and Chris Edwards.

Writing During the Pandemic featured Bob Goebel, Esther Minskoff and John Stone who spoke about their writing and gave a brief reading from recently published works. Fascinating and well done!



Please make sure to join us on Tuesday, April 13th at 3:00 p.m. as Chef Violet Allain teaches us how to prepare baklava, the delicious dessert that is a part of Mike & Violet's famous Greek dinners. You can cook along with Violet in your own home if you wish.

I'm happy to announce a CELEBRATION! The Faculty Emeriti Association was formally recognized by President Linwood Rose on November 2, 2001. The FEA Executive Board, Sherry King & staff are now in the process of planning a fabulous event to be held in early December to celebrate our 20th Anniversary! We are excited to combine the warmth of the holiday season with remembrances of our history and leadership. Plan to be there!

In December I introduced you to our Board and what each of them contribute in their position. I hope you will enjoy today's article submitted by Mary Lou

Wylie and me, Interest Group History. As we approach our 20th Anniversary I hope it gives you a peek at when and how these Groups were started. Our Interest Groups are the heart and soul of the Association, and we greatly appreciate the Coordinators who keep them going.

Sending you all a virtual hug and wishes for a happy and healthy spring.

Warm Regards,
Shelia



JMU Faculty Emeriti Interest Group History

by Mary Lou Wylie, Interest Group Coordinator, Faculty Emeriti Association and Shelia A. Moorman, President, Faculty Emeriti Association

The JMU Faculty Emeriti Association began making plans to add Interest Groups in the fall of 2006, and the first groups began meeting in 2007. The first groups included the Breakfast, Wine, Book Groups, and Emeriti Friends. In 2009, we added the Lunch, Dinner, Bridge Groups, and the Play Reading Group. The Play Reading Group died out after a couple of years, but was revived in 2015, and then again in 2018. There were attempts to start the Theater Group in 2009, but it became more consistent after merging with the Film Group. After a couple of attempts in 2010 and 2013, the Beer and Hard Cider group was established in 2014. The newest Interest Group is the Whisk(e)y Appreciation Group, which started in 2017.

There were groups that never quite got established, such as the Walking Group, which met twice in 2009 in downtown Harrisonburg and at a local park but then lost out to bad weather, and the Travel Group, which had trouble finding a Leader to coordinate the group.

The Beer & Cider Tasting Club

Attempts to launch an Emeriti Beer Tasting Club were first made in the fall of 2010 and again in 2013. An additional attempt was organized with an initial meeting at Mary Lou Wylie's house on November 1, 2014.

Everyone brought some Boulevard Beer, which had just opened delivery to this part of the country. At the end of this gathering, Bill Ingham, Clarence and Dean Geier were drafted to serve as coordinators for the group. The group began checking out local microbreweries such as Three Brothers Brewery, with

a small but interested group. After Bill stepped down, Ed and Barbara McKee joined Clarence and Deane as coordinators.

Bill's initiative has produced a club that enjoys each other's company, while trying various beers and ciders for over thirty occasions at this date. The roster includes over seventy individuals, with two to three dozen attending most events. Recognizing Oktoberfest and St. Patrick's day in particular, we gather about every other month. Thanks to Deane, Clarence and Barbara for coordinating the Club.

The Book Club

The original effort to organize this club was initiated on January 24, 1997 by Rex Fuller, with several members involved in determining the essential issues, and volunteering to host, lead the

discussion. The Secret Life of Bees was selected as the first book to be read and discussed.

The group has read fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, as the meeting sites have gone from member's homes and the public library, to a coffee shop in Dayton. The Book Club has continued to meet virtually during the pandemic. Mary Atkins is currently coordinator of the club.

The Breakfast Group

Eileen Nelson was asked to organize the first meeting of the Emeriti Breakfast Group, which was held on January 30, 2007 at the Courtyard by Marriott. Their buffet breakfast included fruit, pastries, waffles, and eggs cooked to order for \$7.95. After several years, the Courtyard determined that they would serve to their clientele only. After trying several venues, the group has settled on regular monthly gatherings at the Hotel Madison.

The group numbers around 20 members and meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 9:00 a.m., with around a dozen



Members enjoy each other's company in August 2019 during a Beer & Cider Tasting Club get-together.

people eating and enjoying the company. Spouses and guests are always welcome and Eileen continues to be the Leader.

The Bridge Club

The Bridge Club is a relative newcomer to the association interest groups. After searching in vain for a meeting place, day and time around 2016 we decided to merge with the JMU Women's Club bridge group. It has long met the first Wednesday of each month at VMRC. We brought new life to the club which was suffering from a drop off. We now have 19 members (including two men). Kay Knickrehm coordinates this group.

The Dinner Group

The first gathering of emeriti who expressed interest in a dinner group were invited to a potluck at Lenny Echterling and Mary Lou Wylie's home on January 9, 2009. The group meets every couple of months for potluck-type dinners in member's homes. Some of the dinners have had themes, such as a cook-out or a tapas dinner, while most are simply organized with the hosts

Interest Group History continued...

providing a main dish and others signing up and indicating what they plan to bring. Doris Pye and Ron Wyanko serve as coordinators.

The Film and Theater Group

First in 2009, there was an attempt to organize a Theater group, and again in 2012, Ed and Barbara McKee coordinated a Movie Group. When Ed and Barbara stepped down, the two groups merged with Violet Allain serving as coordinator of the Film and Theater Group. Currently, it exists as a loosely structured group that meets when a member suggests a play or film which is then communicated, along with relevant information to the interested list. The option of going to a restaurant for a meal before or after the event to discuss the play or film is also offered. Late afternoon matinees followed by a meal at a local restaurant is a popular option.

The Friends Group

Originally known as the Emeriti Volunteers program in 2006, the members of this group will, as needed, provide other Faculty Emeriti help with such things as transportation for medical care, meals, funerals, and general support. We also have several pieces of medical equipment (raised toilets, a walker, a cane) that can be loaned out on an as needed basis. Violet Allain and Mary Lou Wylie coordinate this effort.

The Lunch Group

Under the leadership of Bill Voige the emeriti lunch group has been meeting monthly (except for August and December) since 2009, with an organizing lunch at Blue Nile Ethiopian Restaurant. They have visited 54 different restaurants at last count. Typically 15-20 emeriti are in attendance, and guests are always welcome. Lunches are rotated through the days of the week, so that members with commitments on particular days can attend.

At each lunch, attendees choose where we will eat the following month. They emphasize ethnic restaurants, but we've also been to the Dayton Tavern and Macado's. They avoid national chains.

As mentioned, they do not officially meet in August or December, but in 2019 we decided to try eating at Our Community Place's Friday Lunch Restaurant. A good time was had by all.

The Play Reading Group

The Faculty Emeritus Play-Reading group was first initiated in 2009, again in 2015 for two years and is currently meeting once more at present, led by Kay and Tom Arthur. They read a play a month, discuss it and, taking parts



A July 2018 outing led by the Whisk(e)y Appreciation Group.

ourselves, read the plays out loud. The playwrights whose works have been read recently and will be read in the immediate future include Edward Albee, Beth Henley, William Shakespeare, Arthur Miller, Susan Zeder and Oscar Wilde.

The Whisk(e)y Appreciation Group

Led by Rex Fuller, this group started in 2017 for the purpose of learning about distilled spirits, especially whiskey in all its various forms. While whiskey is the focus distilled spirits such as rum, gin, vodka, etc. are included in their "research".

The group meets irregularly several times a year. Activities include meeting in member homes to taste and learn about specific spirits and visiting distilleries to tour facilities and learn about the process of making distilled spirits. There are currently over 50 distilleries in Virginia producing an impressive array of distilled spirits.

This group is small but committed to their educational mission. All members interested in the subject of this research are welcomed.

The Wine Social Group

The first Emeriti Wine Social was on January 26, 2007 at Mary Lou Wylie's house, with a wine tasting led by Cameron Nickels. During the early years tastings and socials were alternated, with the group meeting at houses of members. In 2011 we switched to primarily having socials each month. The group has grown tremendously, with 40-50 members and guests attending each month. Members bring food or wine as assigned by the coordinator, Mary Lou Wylie, and the socials rotate at volunteered homes every month.

As the group grew, Doris Pye volunteered in 2015 to prepare a photo directory of members, which she has

Interest Group History continued...

updated every couple of years. It has been beneficial to new members, and as many of us experience senior moments of blocking on names.

The Wine Group has continued to meet virtually during the pandemic, occasionally with musical entertainment by members. Depending on the situation with the pandemic, the group would love to meet outdoors in the fall. This vibrant group has been active for a fun 14 years!

Emeriti Lecture Series

The Emeriti Lecture Series started as a partnership with the Madison Institute and the first events were held in Memorial Hall. There were two lectures scheduled for April 14, 2011 to begin the series.

Cameron Nickel's lecture was titled "Civil War Humor". On this the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the civil war, he shared stories from his new book about humor during the period 1861-1865. Greg Verson and Bob Berrson's lecture was titled "A Narrative and Musical Introduction to the Blues." This lecture introduced and discussed this

decidedly American musical genre, its place in our history, and its contribution to our culture.

Also in 2011, Joe Hollis presented an author talk about his book and photographs from the Korean War, in 2014, Kay Arthur led the gallery walk and talk about her exhibit in the Lizanby Museum on Rembrandt and the Mennonite Community, and in 2015 Judith Flohr presented on Wine, Walking and Chocolate: Good vices for a Woman's Heart and Anyone Who Wants Her Heart.

Beginning in 2016, in collaboration with the Office of Outreach and Engagement, two Emeriti Scholar lectures have been presented each year at the Ice House, with invitations extended to the public for some lectures. These scholars have included Greg Verson, Bill Ingham, Clarence Geier, Anne Henriksen, Louise Loe, David Pruet, Chris Bolgiano, Esther Minskoff and Brad Roof speaking on topics including Black Holes, genetics, politics, the environment, the writing and publication process and all about wine. Martha Ross and Steve Smith are coordinators.



Members enjoy an outing during Summer 2017.

Membership Report

By Kay Knickrehm, Vice-President, Faculty Emeriti Association

Regular members of the Faculty Emeriti Association are retired faculty and professional administrative staff who have been granted Emerita or Emeritus status by the Board of Visitors. Currently we have 283 regular members, 14 associate members and 4 honorary members.

We are pleased to welcome our new members for 2020 and we regret that due to pandemic restrictions, we were not able to meet and greet them in person.

- Dr. Bruce Johnson, English, retired 8/24/20
- Dr. Lamont King, History, retired 8/24/20
- Dr. James Liu, Mathematics and Statistics, retired 8/24/20
- Dr. Marina Favila, English, retired 8/24/20
- Dr. Marilou Johnson, Academic Affairs, retired 9/24/20
- Dr. John Marafino, Mathematics and Statistics, retired 7/24/20
- Ms. Mary Morsch, Career and Academic Planning, retired 6/24/20
- Ms. Tammy Woods, Administration and Finance, retired 8/1/20
- Mr. Mack Moore, Administration and Finance, retired 6/24/20
- Ms. Patricia Kennedy, Education Programs, IHHS, retired 8/24/20
- Ms. Shari Scofield, Student Activities and Involvement, retired 7/24/20
- Mr. Derek Dye, Madison Union, retired 7/24/20
- Ms. Tracy Hakala, Career & Academic Planning, retired 6/24/20
- Mr. Craig Melton, Audit and Management Services, retired 3/24/20
- Dr. Ashton Trice, Graduate Psychology, retired 12/24/20
- Dr. Gary Juhan, Hart School of Hospitality, Sport & Recreation, retired 12/24/20
- Dr. Steven Purcell, College of Education, retired 7/24/20
- Dr. David Fordham, Professor, College of Business, retired 8/24/20
- Mr. Drew Davis, Director of Computing Support, Administration & Finance, retired 12/31/20
- Mr. Pete DeSmit, Applications Manager-Information Technology, Administration & Finance, retired 1/24/21
- Ms. Cheryl Henderson, Principal Investigator/Co-Director, Training/Technical Assistance Center, retired 8/24/20.
- Dr. Josh Bacon, Dean of Students, retired 11/24/20.
- Ms. Darlene Quackenbush, Director of Information Technology Planning, retired 8/24/20
- Dr. Ramon Mata-Toledo, Computer Science, retired 8/24/20.
- Dr. Norman Garrison, Biology, retired 8/24/20.
- Dr. Karen Ford, director, Strategic Leadership, retired 8/24/20.
- Ms. Diane Smith, assistant director-business operations, University Health Center, retired 1/24/21.
- Mr. Inman Majors, professor, English Department, retired 12/24/20.
- Mr. Mark Graham, lecturer, Department of Finance & Business Law, retired 12/24/20.
- Ms. Cynthia Allen, WRTC Instructor, Internship Coordinator and Minor Advisor, retired 12/24/20
- Ms. Sherry Summers, Athletics
- Dr. Teresa Harris, College of Education, retired 07/24/20
- Ms. Cathy Cook, College of Education, retired 07/24/20
- Dr. Robert (Ed) Lee, Mathematics and Statistics, retired 08/24/20
- Dr. Cole Welter, Art and Art History, retired 08/24/20

Did You Know?

by Violet Allain, Immediate Past-President, Faculty Emeriti Association

The JMU Library's Special Collections houses many documents which includes, according to the Library's website, "Manuscripts and personal papers: Collections that document faculty research, or the personal papers of faculty and alumni."

Please consider donating your important documents to the Library's Historical Collection. A number of Emeriti Association members have made contributions to Special Collections and they've been very satisfied with the results.

If you have any questions regarding making this donation, contact library-special@jmu.edu. However, currently the Special Collections staff have limited availability so response time may be slow.



Catch Up with Out of Town Member Tony Eksterowicz

by Steve Smith, Member-At-Large, Faculty Emeriti Association

An Update from Tony Eksterowicz....from Hawaii:

"I retired in 2010 after 25 years of teaching. My wife Nancy retired from UVA health care systems from nursing in January of 2017. Over the years we visited the Hawaiian islands and decided long ago to retire there. We moved to Wailuku Maui on Labor Day of 2017. We thoroughly enjoyed island life, the beach, restaurants, concerts, magnificent views, and visitations from family and good friends like the Knickhrens. We have made many friends in our new neighborhood.

During these difficult times we have been doing much reading and viewing movies and TV series. We are doing lots of zooms with family and friends. Nancy has been doing puzzles and I have been writing and trying to finish a book of poetry entitled, Prose, Poetry and Pie.

There is much we miss about JMU. Most of all I miss the students, the regular interaction with faculty along with researching and writing with them. I have had regular contact with faculty who retired with me for we go back to 1985.

We are keeping up with various artistic events and sporting events at JMU. I miss strolling along that wonderful, beautiful campus especially in Spring. I look back with so many fond memories of JMU and have come to appreciate it even more in retirement. I would not have wanted to teach anywhere else. It was a near perfect time in our life. I know many of my colleagues feel the same way. It has been a privilege. Not a day goes by without reflecting upon the many wonderful moments at JMU."

Faculty Emeriti Field Trips

By Elizabeth Ihle, Chair, Special Events Committee, Faculty Emeriti Association

We are looking forward to rescheduling day trips as soon as it is safe to do. We had to cancel Lewis Ginter Gardens, but it's still on our list. We have had a request to visit the Phillips Collection near Dupont Circle in Washington. This lovely museum is celebrating its hundredth birthday this year with an exhibit called "Seeing Differently," drawn entirely from its own collection Of 4700 works plus a couple special exhibits, including one of Jacob Lawrence's paintings.

Our timetable for field trip resumption is still unclear, but we'll be sure to let everyone know that we can travel again safely.

One Ringy-Dingy, Two-Ringy-Dingy...

by Violet Allain, Immediate Past-President, Faculty Emeriti Association

No, it's not Ernestine calling from the old Laugh-In TV show but rather some dedicated members from the Emeriti Friends Interest Group [Mary Atkins, Kay Arthur, Tom Arthur, Susan Barnes, Anne Henriksen, Becky Myers, Judy LePera, Mary Lou McMillin, Mary Lou Wylie, and Violet Allain] who made the commitment to call all of the Association members in order to touch base during the Covid pandemic. We know how isolating this year has been so we're calling to say hello, to see how you're doing and to let you know that the Emeriti Association is thinking of you and we hope it won't be too long before we see you face-to-face at an Emeriti event.

Faculty Emeriti Travels in the Olden Days

By Kay Knickrehm, Vice-President,
Faculty Emeriti Association

Back in ancient times (before the pandemic) there were many emeriti members who traveled both before and after retirement – some for conferences and some for fun and enlightenment. To help you remember what travel was actually like – it is starting to seem like a distant memory at this point -- and to give you a bit of vicarious enjoyment, here are a few of their stories. Some are amusing, some are inspiring, some show how resilient we can be when pushed. Regardless, nearly all, in my opinion, show how people everywhere can be helpful and kind. I hope you will enjoy these tales until we are able to travel freely again.

Chris Bolgiano, Craig Abramson and Esther Minskoff each found travel in Communist or former Communist states particularly memorable as well as enlightening.

Esther remembers: My husband, Jerry, was the Faculty Member in Residence in London in Fall, 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down. Jerry, our 15-year-old daughter Sandy, and I flew to Berlin for a weekend to witness history.

When we got to the wall, we saw masses of people hacking at the wall with all kinds of tools. A man from Belgium gave Sandy an axe and she got busy doing her part to bring down communism.

“There was a feeling of joyous exhilaration in the crowd. The experience of seeing history made as the Iron Curtain was destroyed was life-changing.”

There was a feeling of joyous exhilaration in the crowd. The experience of seeing history made as the Iron Curtain was destroyed was life-changing. I have pieces of the wall in my living room and remember our trip whenever I look at them.

Chris writes: “Don’t worry about the land mines,” said Holger Galonska, district forester for the former East German state of Mecklenburg. “They’ve all rusted away by now.” He turned the Trabant from the old border road along the Elbe River into an open field that once was a death zone.

My German was good enough to understand him, which did not reassure me. It was the summer of 1991, not yet two years after the Berlin Wall fell and less than a year since reunification.

Guard towers still stood along the Elbe, perverse monuments to nearly one thousand people killed trying to escape. It was a time of existential uncertainty, and that’s when this German-born American nature writer decided to make a tour of German forestry.

Forestry was the modern world’s first step toward what has become known as “sustainability.” Germans began developing forest management principles after deforesting the country so completely by the early 1700s that peasants froze for lack of firewood. Holger explained his management approach of “Nachhaltigkeit,” the practice of, literally, holding something back, for the future to grow on. A bumper sticker over some of the rust spots on his Trabi proclaimed the value of “Artenvielfalt,” species diversity, which we now call biodiversity.

He graciously introduced me to his wide circle of family and friends in this very rural area, where the Stasi seemed a distant force. I was corrected when I asked about their lives under communism. “We are socialists,” they said proudly, and explained that no one was homeless or jobless, everyone had access to childcare and health care, and everyone loved their forests.

By tramping through the woods that socialism left behind, and by visiting again over ensuing decades, I learned a lot about propaganda – theirs, and ours.

Craig writes: In the Spring of 2001, while on a sabbatical, I spent several weeks in Cuba interacting with people living in poverty in an attempt to understand what life was like for the typical citizen of that country under the rule of Fidel Castro. I felt intimidated when I first came into their country, and within a day I became relaxed and intrigued by what I was experiencing.

I rode my bicycle throughout the countryside under the guidance of the International Bicycle Fund. I was able to stay with various families for a large portion of my stay, and I found that the typical Cuban was friendly and very willing to share their stories of their life experiences (adults & children), and I must say that it was a lifetime learning experience for me.

One day a man and his wife asked me if I would like to go hear Fidel give one of his 'talks', and I of course went with them. The gathering was in a park like setting, with several hundred residents sitting comfortably with their families and friends on the grass.

What I found amazing was that Fidel appeared to be making a connection with each and every individual in attendance. What was even more profound was that his talk lasted for well over seven hours, and it was a very friendly exchange on every level that I could comprehend.

Being in Cuba was a 'mind opening' experience for me on many levels, and yes, their poverty was severe. I of course took many photos, and I put together a photo exhibit titled: 'Faces of Cuba', containing 101 framed photos, and I am currently looking for an organization to donate it to. Any suggestions?

Many wrote about particularly memorable places in terms of beauty, the kindness of strangers, or just pure serendipity. The Galganos remember, fondly, their trip to Norway. Mike writes:

During the summer of 2017, we visited Norway from Oslo and Bergen in the south to North Cape in the Arctic Circle, enjoying full days and nights of sunlight. Though Italy remains our favorite over the years, the days in Norway still resonate.

The fjords, waterfalls, and woodland walks remain vivid in memory, but our days in the Arctic Circle stand out. We were less than two hundred miles from the North Pole, but the daily temperature stayed in the high 70s. In Tromso, we visited the world's northernmost botanical garden. The flowers were in spectacular bloom. If I close my eyes, I can still recall their scents and see the multitudes of yellows, golds, and especially reds.

"The flowers were in spectacular bloom. If I close my eyes, I can still recall their scents and see the multitudes of yellows, golds, and especially reds."

The following day near Alta, we walked in shorts out onto a glacier and felt melting ice through canvas shoes. On our final night near North Cape, one of the most northern points in Europe, we put parkas on over our shorts and short-sleeve shirts to enjoy drinks with friends in an ice bar, carved out of a glacier. Surprisingly, no one asked for extra ice in our drinks.

Throughout our stay in the far north, we were able to face in one direction at midnight and see the sun set, then turn around to watch it rise. We urge anyone who is able, to experience the beauties of Norway and its wonderful people.

Tom Arthur had a very memorable experience in London. He recalls:

At a London bed and breakfast on a self-financed first trip abroad, I noticed an old lady wearing diamond earrings and a mink coat. She seemed theatrical and she later said I did too. We had breakfast together every day for a week.

As we got to know each other, she claimed she'd been a Vaudeville performer and her stage name was "Romaine" (like the salad). She said she was alone now but accepted it, gloried in it, as fair exchange for years of stage triumph.

I thought she was interesting. I wasn't sure her stories were true.

But later I found a reference to a "Romaine" in a book by Joe Laurie Junior, "the Homer of Vaudeville." A male impersonator by that name had existed. The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History lists a late nineteenth-century Edward Solomon, an English composer, conductor, orchestrator, pianist, and bigamist (his famous additional wife was Lillian Russell) whose daughter by his first spouse was singer-actress Claire Romaine, sometimes called "London's Pet Boy."

There are references to Romaine in "What a Drag!", a 2014 book on women performing as men in British music hall and American vaudeville stages, along with some of their songs.

And Kay and Steve Knickrehm had a great introduction to Ireland. Kay writes:

On the first day of a three-week trip to Ireland, Steve and I checked into a B&B in Dublin. At five o'clock we struck out to find a pub in which to enjoy a pint of Guinness. Of course, we had in mind, the quintessential Irish pub.

After walking for some time, all we had found was an upscale bar of the type you would see in any large city. We walked in and were standing there debating whether to stay, when we were approached by a man carrying beers to a nearby table. "I noticed you

are Americans” he said. “Come join me and my friends.” He was obviously inebriated, and we were a little leery, but we followed him to a table nearby with five people gathered around it.

For the next hour, he and his friends bought us beer and entertained us with stories, poems, and songs. They were all employed at an insurance firm and had skipped out for lunch around 2 pm and decided not to go back for the day (it being a Friday, after all!). We asked for dinner suggestions and they recommended a traditional restaurant in the city center.

It was too late to get tram tokens, so they all rooted around in their pockets until they located enough tokens to get us to the vicinity of the restaurant and back. Then, they gave us directions and sent us on our way.

We thanked them profusely for a wonderful introduction to Ireland. “Well, you see,” one of them said, “we could tell you were looking for a real pub, which this definitely is not, and you being fresh from America and all, we wanted you to have a real Irish experience.”

Susan Wheeler and her husband loved Alaska. She notes:

In the summer of 2019, I retired from working at JMU. Three days later, my husband and I boarded a flight to Anchorage to meet his sister and her husband for a two-week Alaska tour.

We started by train from Anchorage to Denali, then by bus to Fairbanks, by plane to Dawson City in the Canadian Yukon, then more trains and busses to meet our cruise ship in Skagway. On land, we panned for gold, saw every kind of Alaskan wildlife imaginable (except a wolf, darn it), and tasted

caribou, moose, and, of course, salmon. On the water, we somehow scored a cabin on the back corner of the ship, with a wraparound balcony giving us a 270-degree view of everything.

Our favorite part of the trip was the rickety school bus tour of Denali National Park. Our guide was a schoolteacher who came to Alaska each summer to make extra money, and he earned it with our group.

At one point, as a huge grizzly bear loped along through the tundra parallel to our bus on the left side, we continuously called out to the driver (as he had instructed) to point out caribou we spotted on the right side of the bus. Finally he stopped, whirled around and said “There are millions of Caribou up here, and I've gone days without seeing a bear! What is it with you people?” If you haven't tried Alaska, we highly recommend it.

“To travel around the Middle East with someone who knew the area was a treat in that he took me to places no tourist would ever find. ”

Israel provided a memorable experience for Steve Smith:

I had the chance to travel to Israel in 2000 to visit a friend (JMU grad) who was a native of Jerusalem and I had the experience of a lifetime. To travel around the Middle East with someone who knew the area was a treat in that he took me to places no tourist would ever find. Plus, he also got me into various religious shrines that he knew I would appreciate.

The children of Israel are beautiful. The land is either city, desert or farmland.

I did find it quite unsettling to enter a restaurant or place of business with military guards toting AK-47 rifles over their shoulders. I was able to see Bethlehem (very commercial), Jerusalem (really old), Haifa (quite beautiful), even bathed in the salty waters of the Dead Sea along with mud packs on my face, allegedly to provide more beauty (didn't work), and took a side trip to the country of Jordan for a visit to Petra (very, very old, like 300 BC).

Surely few places on earth are as exotic as India. Bob Goebel writes:

After seldom venturing outside Arizona until my twenties, I enjoyed forty-some years of revenge, traveling to Israel, Latin America, and Europe. While each experience had its own charm, my dream was to see India. Alas, I had begun to lose hope because my life-mate and travel companion expressed serious reservations.

Then in the spring of 2018, with my retirement around the corner, guess who came prancing up sporting a big smile and brandishing a deal from an outfit called Gate 1. November 4-19 in India and Nepal.

We flew Emirates, suffering negligible jet lag. The tour manager was not the former Miss India I secretly hoped for, but Bhānu was excellent. Plenty of water, frequent potty stops, no Delhi belly. We stayed in Delhi New and Old, Jaipur (Bhānu's hometown), Āgrā, Khajurāho, Vārānāsī, and Kāthamāndu; naturally there were lunch stops in smaller places along the way.

I couldn't agree with one of the guys in the group who only went for the Taj and Everest. Of course, I couldn't agree with Nixon either, who wrote India off as a “damn miserable place.”



- Harbors full of boats
- Small really unique towns, colorful and modern
- Ports of call named Heimaey, Seydisfjordur, Siglufjordur, Isafjordur and Grandarfjordur
- Lagarflojot Lake 328' below sea level, famous for the mythical "Ness".

Helen's most memorable excursion was a boat trip around the islands of the Snaefellsne Peninsula, seeing beautiful rock formations with many birds nesting, then flying out to the water for food (especially the puffins). The staff hauled in a net of fresh marine life/sushi which we sampled on the boat. It was a sunny but very cold day, but worth it!

Shelia's most memorable excursion was whale watching for humpbacks in the Eyjafjorour Fjord. 12 per RIB boat, we dressed in layers of water proof clothing, and sighted a few although they were off in the distance. I found out quickly how hard it is to anticipate the sighting, take pictures as they breach. The boats flew over the water and it was thrilling. I absolutely loved this adventure!

We are both grateful for the opportunity to visit this unique, wild and wonderful country.

Shelia and Helen's trip to Iceland.

Two regrets: I didn't go sooner, and I couldn't stay longer. So I was near Kuruksetra and Mathura and Vrindavana, but I will have to be content with that. Still, the whole experience was all that I had hoped it would be. I expected Vārānasī to be the highlight, and it was. I doubt there will be a follow-up trip. If there is, it will likely be to the south. And at this point in life, I won't be able to do much more than dabble in Sanskrit, but hey, anything is better than nothing.

A third country beginning with I, Iceland, Shelia Moorman and Helen Moore. As Shelia and Helen tell us:

We did a lot of traveling after my retirement (Shelia); including river and ocean cruises, land tours and a Villa in Tuscany with friends. Undoubtedly the most unique was a small ship Windstar Cruise around the island country of Iceland in July of 2019. We chose this particular trip after reading frequent articles suggesting that travelers visit the "Three I's, Ireland, Italy and Iceland".

I'm certain weather influences each person's experience, and we were fortunate to have sunny days with crisp, cool air much of the time. The sun rose about 4:00 a.m. and set after midnight.

What did we love most about this weeklong trip?

- History of this volcanic island and its original inhabitants
- The fact that gender equity is a reality
- Our trip to the Blue Lagoon with the awesome warm water and walk-up bar
- Beautiful land, sky and water everywhere
- Moss and snow covered mountains, waterfalls, volcanic fields
- Wonderful bird nesting areas, including the largest colony of Atlantic Puffins (Helen fell in love with these adorable birds)
- Fields of purple lupines



Shelia and Helen's trip to Iceland.

Ming Ivory offers us the following amusing story about Nepal:

While working at World Bank in D.C. I met Raaj Sah, a Northern Indian, who became a good friend. As the youngest son, he was destined for a life in religion, but defied family expectations, seeking education in the United States. Over the years we bumped into each other often in Philadelphia, Boston, and D.C. Studying for Ph.D. exams, I rented an off-season house on Cape Cod. Raaj came to visit, and we went for a walk on a foggy moonless autumn night. What surprised him was a revelation to me. He had not realized there were actual dark places in the U.S., with no streetlights or houselights. He had assumed that all of the United States was lit up like the cities he'd visited.

Later, working for the U.S. Agency for International Development, I travelled to Pokhara, Nepal, west of Kathmandu to oversee a reforestation project. It was a half-day's trek up to the project, and well after sundown when we got back. As a farewell, the Nepalis suggested dinner at a restaurant they knew, "not far away." We agreed to the adventure, following them on another cloudy, moonless night.

We trekked for more than an hour in the pitch black, up hills and down, unable to see any landmarks that could get us back to the hotel. I mean it was DARK. My eyes stared into blackness, and I could not see the path. But indeed we ended up at a small restaurant, who's decor, was humorous to us all.

Here, with the great Dhaulagiri (26,795 ft.) and Annapurna (26,247 ft.) looming above us, the mountain posters in the restaurant celebrated the Matterhorn, (14,692 ft.), Mt. Rainier (14,410 ft.) and Mauna Kea (13,803 ft.). Those two events abroad taught me how rare darkness is, and that we must value it.

In lieu of a narrative, Daphne Thomas offers these pictures of one of her most memorable experiences in London in 2020 – touring Wimbledon just before it closed for COVID.



The following stories show how things do not always go according to plan, with consequences that can be amusing, disconcerting, or downright painful. Nevertheless you will note that intrepid travelers manage often with the assistance of strangers.

Norm Garrison tells a somber tale (albeit with good humor) about a dive trip gone wrong.

In the Summer of 2005, my wife Tabitha and I went SCUBA diving on Grand Cayman. Yes, we are Master SCUBA divers. We arrived on Saturday, and made one dive trip. On Sunday, we scheduled a special dive on the other side of the island, which required a much larger dive boat. Apparently, there had been some storms in the Caribbean so once we left the lee side of the island, we encountered 6+-foot seas.

Apparently, the 20-something dive Captain was suffering from testosterone poisoning, so he proceeded to take the boat full speed ahead directly into the waves. Now any good Captain would know to slow down and cross the waves at an angle so that the boat rolls over the waves. Not this guy. Not only did he handle the boat incompetently, he did so after inviting everyone to come up on the bow to "enjoy" the ride. Fool that I was, I went.

"I was left suspended, feet in the air, as the boat dropped from under me. I hung onto the rail as hard as I could knowing that if I went overboard, I would be turned into shark bait."

As he plowed ahead, the boat crested a particularly large wave then suddenly dropped. I was left suspended, feet in

the air, as the boat dropped from under me. I hung onto the rail as hard as I could knowing that if I went overboard, I would be turned into shark bait. I succeeded, but as I fell back to the deck, the boat rose on the next wave and hammered me with all 40 tons. The foot of my right leg caught next to a stanchion, and the force of the boat swung my body around. Everyone on board heard the loud crack as multiple bones shattered. All told I had 11 breaks: tibia 2, fibula one, one on each side of my ankle, all 5 metatarsals, and my big toe. I have had better dives.

Sandra Hopper has a gentler tale of misadventure:

My husband and I began a much anticipated trip to Paris from Denver International Airport at 6:30 a.m. with one layover in Minneapolis, arriving at Charles de Gaulle the next day. Long lines, long waits, a crowded motor van before finally arriving at our destination. Grand Circle Travel's river boat, the Bizet. With little to no sleep we were in bed the first night by 9:00 p.m. We were to have a safety drill at 9:00 a.m. in the morning.

At 8:45 a.m., we were abruptly awakened by loud banging on our cabin door. We had overslept, did not even hear the Safety Drill claxon. The staff member who woke us said there was no time to get dressed, just get into our life jackets and join everyone in the lounge. We slipped on shoes, helped each other put on the life jackets over our P.Js. Thank goodness the jacket covered my flimsy top. We entered the lounge, looked around. Aghast! All guests were dressed and had eaten breakfast. They stared at us. We were terribly embarrassed.

After the drill, we had ten minutes to return to the cabin, dress and get to the bus for the motor tour of Paris. Needless

to say we made a lasting first impression - no one forgot the two passengers in their pajamas for the remainder of the trip.

And Greg Versen notes how even careful planning does not always work out:

Plans were made for 3 weeks in the UK—May 22-June 12, 2017. All the boxes were checked: passport, tickets, auto rental and B-n-B reservations. This was our first child-free and completely planned trip. Main stops: Lake District, Scotland, Isle of Skye and London.

At the car rental agency, the woman "serving" us said the car we had reserved was too small for our luggage. I disagreed, yet she persisted—and won. Trying to leave the parking lot, I couldn't find reverse! With an attendant's help we were off to Birmingham, taking the M5 which merged into the M3—three lanes into 1. A nightmare.

In Birmingham, we managed to see our hotel. The problem was getting to it. Narrow, one-way streets with the entrance to the hotel on a poorly marked back street. Some bluesmen are familiar with the back door. Not this one.

The next day, off to the Little Town Guest House, a 400 y/o farmhouse in the Lake District featured in Beatrix Potter's Tale of Mrs. Tiggy Winkle. Our route took us on a narrow roadway, no shoulders, and heavily traveled by lorries. My driving was less than stellar. I kept brushing the concrete curbs until I hit a metal culvert and blew a tire. The roadway was lined with fences.

Fortunately, just ahead was an open gate to a house. We entered safely and received a warm welcome from Claudia Dixon. I figured I could change the tire and be on our way. One problem, no

spare tire. No problem, just a couple of lots down was a tire shop. Well, they did not have the right size tire. Claudia was able to call a mobile tire repair service. After about 3 hours, we were back on the road, after paying cash, 200 pounds; just about all we had.

After 2 weeks we dropped the rental off in New Castle (Susie's ultimatum: turn it in or I'm flying home), took a train to London for an awesome week.

Upon our return home, we received a \$60 ticket for taking the wrong street going to the rental office. They have cameras everywhere.

Things have a way of turning out all right if you just persevere as Susan Barnes' tale makes clear:

It was 1999. After a long flight from the US, we boarded a small aircraft in Athens to our destination on Santorini. When we deplaned, the tiny airport was closed. No taxis or hotel shuttles. The public bus was running from the airport to the island villages. We were told to get on and tell the bus driver the name of our hotel. We grabbed our suitcases and hopped aboard. "Hotel Image," Jim Barnes said. The driver looked at us and said "Missaria." "Hotel Image Santorini," Susan said to the driver. "Missaria," he repeated. Exhausted, we took window seats on the nearly empty bus.

It was dark and the villages did not have streetlights, so there was little to sightsee. Dim streetlamps illuminated asphalt crossroads where small signs with village names were nailed to slim posts. The bus abruptly stopped at one crossroad and the driver said, "Missaria."

We looked out the window and saw the little Missaria sign and a modest taverna with two people at an outside table. No

hotel. No shops. No cars. No sidewalk. The driver opened the bus door repeating, "Missaria." Jim said, "Hotel Image." The unsmiling driver looked through the windshield and pointed his finger straight ahead then motioned for us to get off the bus, glancing at the bus stop sign. We grabbed our suitcases and got off, looking ahead in the direction he pointed.

"We saw a dark road with no shoulder, no lights, no buildings. Nothing but stars in the sky and a road that disappeared over the hill. We're stranded, Susan thought."

We saw a dark road with no shoulder, no lights, no buildings. Nothing but stars in the sky and a road that disappeared over the hill. We're stranded, Susan thought. We stared down the road as the bus taillights disappeared before us. Silently, we pulled our suitcases down that road. After about a quarter mile, there it was. A big, beautiful, gleaming hotel. No bus stop.

The Halls experienced a truly happy ending on their trip to Ireland as Roger tells us:

It's 2013, and Brenda and I are strolling along the Liffey River in Dublin, Ireland, awaiting the arrival of students for a JMU summer program that Tom McHardy and I are running. When we return to our room at Trinity College, Brenda can't find her wallet, which she thinks was in the backpack she was toting. And now we both recall a couple that was walking behind us. Hmm.

Fast forward a month and a half, past two weeks in Galway and two weeks in Cork. Back in Dublin, we are at a

restaurant celebrating our farewell dinner with the students. Brenda, because her meal is not paid for by the program, gives the waiter a credit card that, fortunately, had been in another bag. Two minutes later the waiter returns to the table with Brenda's lost wallet, which had been left on an outside table at that restaurant six weeks previously. It was minus money, but still had all IDs and credit cards.

The restaurant personnel hadn't known where to look for the owner, but had saved the wallet, thinking perhaps a customer had left it and would return. The waiter recognized Brenda's name from her credit card. What were the chances that we would select that restaurant out of over 2400 in Dublin for our final dinner? Or that the waiter would recognize the name on the credit card and remember the wallet? Without question that was the most remarkable travel moment we ever experienced.

Finally, we have three stories involving academic conference travel. Dave Pruett puts it in context:

Conference attendance is a perk—or hazard—of academic life. It doesn't get much better than the scientific conference I attended in Rome in 1992. On a Wednesday afternoon, the organizers bused all 100 participants to a presentation on the restoration of the Sistine Chapel—in the Sistine Chapel! It doesn't get much worse than the giant aerospace conference I attended in Reno earlier that year, trapped four days in a soulless casino.

But my best conference ever happened recently, in retirement. Unexpectedly in 2019, I received an invitation to speak at a small science-religion conference at the University of Bern. It was organized by Jessica Lampe, a former JMU Honors student, German-American, then a

post-doc in Switzerland. The sponsoring institute picked up all expenses.

Intimate, the conference had only 40 attendees, including Jessica's delightful parents. Each morning we rode a funicular to the conference venue, a mountain-top chateau with a 200-degree sweep of the Alps. The talks were fascinating, the camaraderie wonderful, the food spectacular. Physicist Bernard Carr, an early graduate student of Stephen Hawking, gave the keynote address.

An optional excursion followed the conference. Ten of us boarded a train for a lovely two-hour journey past Interlaken, then an hour bus ride high into the mountains, then a cable-car climb up a precipitous mountainside, snow-covered conifers below. Exiting the car in wind and snow, we walked immediately into ... the mountain itself!

A three-kilometer van ride further inside, past a grotto of crystals, brought us to our mysterious destination: KWO, a Swiss hydroelectric plant deep inside the Alps near the Grimsel Pass. What a magical day!

"Had to pinch myself again. Can this experience be for real?"

Several times during the conference I texted my wife: "Had to pinch myself again. Can this experience be for real?"

Mary Lou Wylie writes about a conference in Poland:

About 15 years ago, Lennie was invited to give the keynote address at a conference in Krakow, Poland. We thought we should learn some Polish but found it difficult and learned only "thank

you." When we exited the train, we didn't find anyone looking for us.

We took the letter with the meeting site to the Information booth, and they directed us to the bus. We walked to the bus stop and showed the driver where we were going. The bus made a few stops, and then headed out of town. After a few minutes of riding in the darkening night, the driver suddenly stopped and told us this was our stop. We got off the bus on a deserted street with one big light at the intersection, and two small buildings.

I walked back to the main street and saw a small sign for the Institute, with an arrow indicating we should walk down the dark street. We did, with our wheeled suitcases, which were useless on the cobblestones, but we carried them and walked. A few cars passed.

After about a mile, we saw a sign for the Institute, indicating that it was up a hill on a road paved with cobblestones, so the suitcases still had to be carried. A couple more cars went by. At some point, I stopped, started to laugh, and said that this would make a good story.

After continuing up the hill, we could see that the Institute was less than a quarter of a mile ahead. Just then a small car stopped and offered us a ride. Lennie started to say that we could walk, but I was exhausted and shoved him out of the way to get in the car with my suitcase, followed by Lennie and his suitcase. Our rescuers were a nice couple from Warsaw who were attending the conference. When we arrived near midnight, there was relief among the people involved in the conference—we weren't lost or dead or no-shows.

After the conference, the woman who had arranged to meet us and had been at the train station when we arrived took

us back to the station. She would not leave our side until we were on the train and had found our seats.

Although we knew only one word of Polish, we had many opportunities to say "dziekuje ci."

And finally, last but not least, Dan Flage gives us the following amusing story of the mechanics of travel.

Other than an occasional trip to visit our daughter (in Bridgewater) or to visit relatives in Iowa, most of my travel has been to academic conferences. These have taken me to many places in the continental United States as well as Iceland, Scotland, Finland, Poland, and Ireland. Once my wife and I tacked on a memorable, if somewhat chilly (even in August), trip through Norway. An event I'll always remember happened on a return trip from a conference in Idaho.

My plane connection was in Portland. This was pre-9/11, so security was not the nightmare it is now, but, when I checked my bag, I was asked, "Was your luggage in your possession the entire time since you left home this morning?" I had about a two-hour layover. I thought being honest could result in seeing parts of the airport that most people don't see, but I didn't think it would significantly postpone my return to Harrisonburg. So, I said, "No." There was an audible gasp. "The security people insisted that I let them run it through their X-ray machine," I continued. "Gee! I guess he's right," I heard someone behind me remark. I caught my plane at the assigned time without seeing any "interesting" parts of the airport.