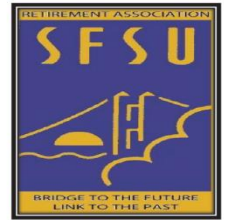


# San Francisco State University Retirement Association Off Campus Bulletin - Fall 2013



SFSU Retirement Assn. c/o Development Office 1600 Holloway Avenue, ADM153, San Francisco, CA 94132 [www.sfsu.edu/~retire](http://www.sfsu.edu/~retire) email: [retire@sfsu.edu](mailto:retire@sfsu.edu)

## President's Message from Tom Spencer

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**Welcome to the new Academic Year 2013-2014. As there is a good deal of news to pass along to members, I will limit my comments to a few brief announcements.**

**Membership Directory 2013** - I trust that you all received your copy of the Retirement Association's new *Membership Directory 2013*. It is as current as we were able to make it. Thanks again to Kay McGough for her hours and hours of work putting the directory together. And a special thanks to proof readers Jim Van Ness and LaVonne Jacobsen. We don't produce these directories every year (due to costs) so keep yours in a safe place and use it to stay in touch with your colleagues and friends.

**Board Changes** - We have had two completely unexpected vacancies on our board of directors suddenly occur. One of the vacancies is due to the untimely death of Judy Ott. The other vacancy is due to the resignation of Bettie Barnes who will be moving to Tahoe. Bettie was doing such a great job as our representative to the statewide organization, ERFA. Thanks Bettie and best of luck in your new home in the mountains.

With regard to the first vacancy and in accord with the bylaws, I would like to appoint Zelinda Zingaro to join us. Zee has agreed to serve and will be spearheading event planning for the association. Those of you who know Zee from her work as Director of Campus Space Administration will be excited she will be joining us.

In regard to the second vacancy, we are actively looking for someone who would like to serve on our board and represent us at statewide ERFA meetings. If you wish to nominate someone or to serve on the board yourself, please let one of the board members know. I'm sure that Bettie Barnes would be happy to brief you on the responsibilities of the position.

**Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon** - Please mark your calendar now for our annual fall luncheon (flyer enclosed). The date is Tuesday, November 19 at the Basque Cultural Center. The social hour begins at 11:30. As is our tradition, turkey will be on the menu along with three other entrée options. As required by the Association's bylaws, this luncheon also serves as our annual business meeting. Hope to see all of you there. Stay well.

# New Vice President for SFSU

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SFSU has a new Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer: Ronald Cortez. On July 2, he took over from Nancy Hayes, who had been interim V.P. since 2011 after serving as dean of the College of Business for six years. Cortez has been associate vice chancellor for administrative services at the University of California, Santa Barbara since 2008, following 14 years in administrative positions for Santa Barbara County. Cortez has a bachelor's degree in business administration from San Jose State University, master's degrees in public administration and organizational management, and a law degree. We welcome him to SFSU.

# Contributors to the SFSURA Travel Grants Endowment Fund

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<i>This fund helps fund travel/professional development for current faculty and staff</i>	
William Perttula	Franklin Sheehan
Laura Ware	Marilyn J. Boxer
Christina Marcopulos	Stephen Rauch
Jonathan Middlebrook	Eula West
Dorothy Molyneaux	Sheila McClear
LaVonne Jacobsen	Lynn Bonfield
Ralph Larson	

# SFSURA'S Past President Lana Thomson's Life Journey

*Excerpts from article by Jean Bartlett, Pacifica Tribune  
Correspondent. Permission given by the Pacific Tribune.*

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"I am probably the only person you will ever meet who was born in Chongjin, North Korea, where Vladivostok, Russia, China and North Korea, come together in a teensy triangle". "It is a part of the world that very few have gone to, except of course the gentlemen who found themselves at the 38th parallel when the Korean War began in June of 1950." This is part of an amazing adventure and an event which would send Lana's family out into the night, leaving all possessions behind, a situation not new to her family, or her family's history. Thomson's mother and father were Natalie and Konstantine Vassilieff. "Which translates unceremoniously to Williams," Thomson laughed. "I was the oldest of three daughters. My younger sisters, both gone now, were Tatiana and Elena."

"My maternal grandmother was Stephanie Mitrofanenko," Thomson continued. "She was pregnant with my mother when the Bolsheviks burst through the door. Her husband was a judge, which made him an enemy of the Red Army. The Bolsheviks pulled her husband, her father and her brothers out of bed and shot them in the garden. Her two young daughters were also killed. They told the still surviving women, "If you want to live, get out", so my pregnant grandmother began the journey from Russia to China that took her two years and my mother was born at a milepost along the way.

Lana was born in September of 1934. Her first languages, learned simultaneously, were Russian, Korean and Japanese. Along with those languages, both of Thomson's parents additionally spoke Mandarin and her mother also spoke some English (which would later save the family).

"North Korea was paradise in the summer," Thomson said. "wild lilacs, wild peonies, lilies of the valley, and incredible fauna. But in the winter it was freezing, with huge drifts of snow. We had to dig a tunnel to get to the cook's house. We would spend our winters in Seoul".

In the winter of 1942, Lana's father received a letter in Seoul, from the Japanese Emperor. It thanked her dad for donating the family's home in North Korea, as a rest and recuperation center for the Japanese military. "All of our things were confiscated and you can't do a thing about it", remembered Lana.

Thomson was one of five "white" children in Seoul at the time, and she was tutored by a local Russian Orthodox priest. During that time, Lana's "handsome father with a wonderful sense of humor," came down with tuberculosis and he died in Seoul on November 11, 1945 at the age of 38.

Following the War, American troops occupied South Korea, and Lana's widowed mom found immediate work as a translator. Thomson learned English to add to her knowledge of languages. Her family was befriended by American Presbyterian Missionaries, from Illinois, who had a daughter Lana's age (they are still friends). It was a time of peace, a five-year respite from war.

"On June 25, 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. "We were taken from our house that night, by the military advisors my mother was working with and we were so grateful. Had we not been rescued, we would have been taken on a forced march north, and no one in Pacifica would have ever met me"!

Thomson, her mom, her maternal grandmother, her two sisters, and the driver, packed themselves into a jeep and took off for Inchon Harbor. They, with 700 others, were put on a Norwegian ship which had arrived with a cargo of chemical fertilizer, "goods" still on board due to the new war. They were placed in the hold of the ship, just above the fertilizer. Despite the hard journey, Thomson especially remembers the the kindness of the Norwegian crew who keep their newly acquired passengers supplied with delicious, fresh baked bread.

During the Second World War, food was scarce. Thomson remembers having meat once, when the Americans bombed an island in the Philippines, killing all the monkeys, whose remains were immediately shipped to Korea. Another time, a whale was torpedoed and there was whale meat. Living conditions were very difficult.

The passengers disembarked in Southern Japan, in Fukuoka. Thomson's family then traveled to Tokyo, where her mother had a friend. While they had previously obtained papers to immigrate to the United States (a family friend had immigrated to San Francisco, before the War), all their documentation had been left in Korea, and the process had to be started from scratch in Tokyo. Her mother again found work as a translator and 2 ½ years later, they got their U.S. visas and headed off on a cargo ship to San Francisco. "I was almost 18, when we arrived," Thomson said. "It was amazing. It was wonderful, and it was also very hard." Thomson entered Lowell High School as a senior. She grabbed top honors in her graduating class of 376 students, but she didn't know a sole. "It was a very unpleasant time".

Following graduation, she went right to work to help support the family. She worked for the law firm of Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro, and the Western Pacific Railroad, where she met Mr. Thomson, a Scotsman from Scotland. They married in 1954, and moved to Santa Clara where their two daughters were born. The couple split in 1967 and Lana and her daughters moved to San Francisco for a few years, and then to Pacifica. She was hired at San Francisco State, and among her job duties, she worked as a Japanese translator for the Canadian-born, SFSU President and future U.S. Senator, Samuel Hayakawa. She retired from SFSU after 30 plus years. Both of her daughters live quite close by in Pacifica, and Lana has two beautiful grandchildren. She was recently the subject of the Pacifica Historical Society's award-winning television show "Footprints of Pacifica," episode 132.

"To me, my life is not unusual," Thomson said. "It was the life lived by everyone I grew up with. But one lesson has remained constant throughout. Give back to the community you live in — they provide so much for you. Take nothing for granted."

See the complete article at [http://www.mercurynews.com/ci\\_23587364/pacifican-lana-thomsons-journey-through-history?](http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_23587364/pacifican-lana-thomsons-journey-through-history?)

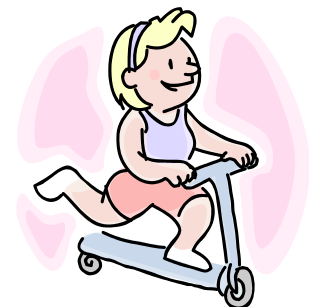
## Words of Wisdom from the Younger Generation

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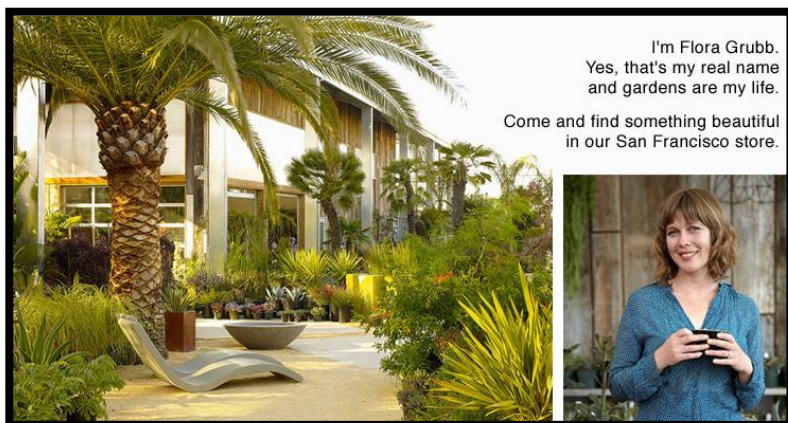
A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though a very large mammal, its throat is very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said, "When I get to heaven, I will ask Jonah". The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" The little girl replied, "Then you ask him".

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note and posted on the apply tray. "Take only ONE. God is watching." Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples".

The children had all been photographed for the individual pictures and the teacher was trying to persuade them to gather for a group picture. She said to the children, "Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, 'There's Jennifer, she's a lawyer,' or 'That's Michael, he's a doctor.'" A small voice in the back of the room rang out, "And there's the teacher, she's dead."



# Another Upcoming Event



I'm Flora Grubb.  
Yes, that's my real name  
and gardens are my life.  
Come and find something beautiful  
in our San Francisco store.

**Flora Grubb Gardens**  
1634 Jerrold Avenue  
San Francisco, CA  
<http://floragrubb.com>  
Thursday, October 17, 2013 10:00 am through lunch

Recently retired, and our newest Board Member, Zelinda Zangaro, has graciously arranged for a special October event for our organization. Like plants and gardening? Join us for a special outing to **Flora Grubb Gardens**. Located in the Bayview, on Jerrold off 3rd, **Flora Grubb Gardens** is a haven in the city offering lots of great plants to purchase and wonderful containers. Advice from her staff abounds and everyone is friendly and nice. So bring your own gardening questions for some expert help. "Last year **Flora Grubb Gardens** was selected as one of Sunset's top 10 gardening innovations - nurseries made cool." The owner is quoted as indicating that her "goal is always to provide a fascinating encounter with the natural world....I want people to leave more peaceful, connected, relaxed and inspired than when they arrived."

## Schedule for the Day

**(ARRANGE YOUR CARPOOL IN ADVANCE - PLENTY OF PARKING BOTH INSIDE THE GATES AND ON THE STREET)**

**10AM** - Meet **at Flora Grubb Gardens** - enjoy a cup of Ritual coffee (Ritual Coffee is a local coffee house located right inside the garden center) and visit with friends (buy your own). Select what you want to order for lunch from the All Good Pizza menu (they have salads and sandwiches too) and we will order it and it will be delivered after our presentation (buy your own). Check out their website for an advance peek at their menu at (<http://allgoodpizza.com/menu>).

**Remember...coffee and lunch are at your own expense.**

**11AM** - Flora Grubb 101 - This is the "Introduction" to a Flora Grubb class! It will be presented by Flora Grubb, (the owner) or Jim Kumiega, (her marketing and outreach representative).

**12 NOON** - Lunch on site - Our order, from earlier in the day, will be delivered to us on site.

**Our Group Will Be Given A 10% Discount For Purchases On This Day.**

**Yes**, I am excited to be able to join SFSURA for this event at the **Flora Grubb Gardens**. What a special treat...lunch from a menu, local destination, plenty of parking and lots of time to socialize with our colleagues!! There will be a small fee of \$10, per reservation, to cover SFSURA costs (including printing and mailing). Please let us know how many in your party will be coming so we can advise the Garden staff. Reservation Form and check due as soon as possible but **NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 4<sup>th</sup>**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Number in your party \_\_\_\_\_ Amt. Enc. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail the above form and your check (payable to SFSURA) to:  
**Zelinda Zingaro 19164 Christensen Court Castro Valley, CA 94546**



## Friends of the Leonard Library

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The Friends of the Leonard Library invites retired faculty and staff to join the organization. For information see [www.library.sfsu.edu/about/depts/fol.php](http://www.library.sfsu.edu/about/depts/fol.php). The Friends seeks volunteers for the cashier's desk in the bookroom, once a week for 3 hours, 11 to 2 or 2 to 5 during the weekday. Time to read a book and talk to students. Also, the organization seeks volunteers for a substitute list for periodic volunteering. Contact Dede Heiman at 415-338-2408, or at [fol@sfsu.edu](mailto:fol@sfsu.edu). The Friends are dependent on the generosity of the university community's book donations. We do pick up. Contact the Friends.



## In Remembrance of One of Our Own

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Judith Ann (Judy) Ott, a long-time staff member and administrator at SF State, died on April 23 at her home in San Bruno. Ott was born in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada and came to the United States with her parents in her youth.

Ott served in various administrative staff roles in the Registrar's Office, Division of Graduate Studies and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP). She finished her 37-year career as head of the Curriculum Office where she managed the University Bulletin and all curricular processes. Upon her retirement in 2001, the Academic Senate stated in a resolution, "She retains in her incomparable memory everything about every major or minor program ever offered at this University, including all prerequisites for now-defunct programs". Because of her encyclopedic memory for all facts and figures of the University she was to be "enrolled among the legendary figures of San Francisco State University," the resolution continued, and she was awarded the "domina curriculumum emeriti".

We were honored to have her join the Retirement Association board in November of 2012 and will miss her input as we move forward.



# The Magical Experience of Martial Arts

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Our Retirement Association (RA) has been very fortunate these past couple of years to have the donated services of John Stenson to handle our computer needs. John, Student Services Coordinator for the Psychology Department, and a graduate student in Developmental Psychology, has graciously given his time and talents to the development and maintenance of a website for our association ([www.sfsu.edu/~retire](http://www.sfsu.edu/~retire)).

Professionally, John is also a member of our University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) which reviews and approves all research projects involving human subjects. John has served on this committee for 4 years. Incidentally, John served concurrently with two of our Association Board members, Judy Ott (recently deceased) and Evelyn Ballard (moved out of the area). He especially enjoyed listening to Evelyn's stories of her experiences in medical school in which she was one of only two women in her class.

In his personal time, John enjoys the martial arts (see photo). He recently returned from a trip to South Korea where he traveled with a group from the US showing off his skills. They traveled to Busan and Seoul. John has practiced the martial arts since the age of 12.

While in Korea, John had occasion to use the medical services of South Korea and found these services to be immediate and efficient. And (too close for comfort), some members of a group attending the same conference as John did, returned on the Asiana flight that crashed on its landing at SFO.

Thanks, John, from all of the members of the RA for all of your work with the Association developing and maintaining our creative website. It is much appreciated.



# An Author Amongst Us

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Lynn A. Bonfield, formerly in the Library and after almost two dozen years of research, tells us that her book is out. [New England to Gold Rush California: The Journal of Alread and Chastina W. Rix, 1849-1854](#) is published by the University of Oklahoma Press, edited

with commentary by Lynn. She states that she, "found this husband and wife diary when I was curator at the California Historical Society in the 1970s. Research took me to Vermont and now I own a home in Peacham where Alfred and Chastina lived before coming to San Francisco". The diary alternates entries between this married pair when they lived in Peacham, and then she kept the diary alone for the eighteen months when she remained in Vermont and he came to California. They resumed it for a couple of years when they both lived in San Francisco. Reading their journal reveals life in the nineteenth century and the pull New Englanders felt to California. The book is currently available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) (hard copy only). Take a moment and enjoy this fascinating story.





November 19th RSVP by November 7th

# November Luncheon and Business Meeting



**SFSU Retirement Association**

San Francisco State University  
c/o Development Office  
1600 Holloway Avenue, ADM 153  
San Francisco, CA 94132  
[www.sfsu.edu/~retire](http://www.sfsu.edu/~retire)

**Board of Directors Officers**

*Tom Spencer, President*  
*Julian Randolph, VP and Membership Director*  
*LaVonne Jacobsen, Secretary*  
*Jim Van Ness, Treasurer*  
*Newman Fisher, Past President*

**Members at Large**

*Mamdouh Abo-El-Ata*  
*Dan Buttlair*  
*Ilza Goodfield (UWA Rep)*  
*Bernice Lawry*  
*Yolanda Thompson (Annual Events Coordinator)*  
*Zelinda Zingaro (Special Events Coordinator)*

**Nominating Committee**

*Helene Whitson*

**Travel Grant Committee**

*Dan Buttlair (Chair)*  
*Mamdouh Abo-El-Ata*  
*Julian Randolph*

**Membership Directory/Off-Campus Bulletin**

*Kay McGough*

**Web Page Maintenance**

*John Stenson*

