



San Francisco State University *Retirement Association* Off Campus Bulletin

Winter
2015

Annual

St. Patrick's Day Luncheon

March 17, 2015

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We were honored to have President & Mrs. Wong
join us for Corned Beef & Cabbage



Decked out with the
"Wearing of the Green":
Bill & Janice Mason
with Gloria Tseng



Larry Ianni talking with
President Wong, while Bruce &
Dede Heiman look on



Where We've Been & Plan to Go

Bob Cherny led us on a terrific tour of Coit Tower on Friday, February 6th. With his extensive knowledge of the murals, the artists, and the historical context, he led us through the transitions of California life showing agriculture, *from the fields, to cultivation, to harvesting, to use in meals*, industry, railroads and shipping, power transmission, mining and dredging. Woven into these murals we learned about the complexities of various aspects of the social and political mood of 1933 when these murals were executed under the auspices of the WPA.

The photos show our two groups listening to Bob share his vast knowledge with us and having a wonderful lunch at Original Joe's. If you are interested in this "insider's tour" of a very special San Francisco icon, a second tour is planned for Thursday, April 30th. Space is limited. To reserve your spot, contact Zelinda Zingaro at 415.602.8433 or zeezingaro@gmail.com.



Tour guide, Bob Cherny, Dan McGough, Al Willard, Ray Silverman, Rachael Kahn-hut, Kay McGough, Elogeanne O. M. Grossman, Don Casella, Zelinda Zingaro, Bruce & Dede Heiman, Marjorie Seashore, and, *out of picture*, Barb Silverman,



Fresco artist, Ben Cunningham



Above: Zelinda Zingaro, Kay and Dan McGough, Don Casella, Barb and Ray Silverman, Photographer Jim Gomes

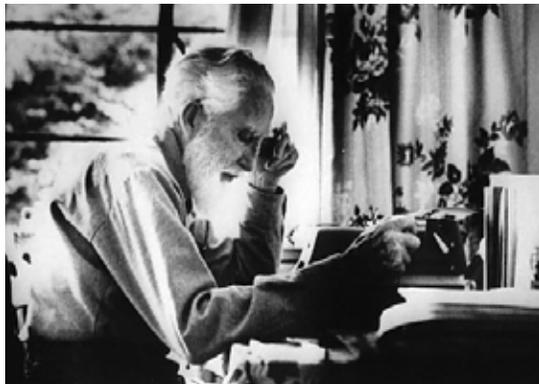
Below: Al Willard, Rachel Kahn-Hut, Bob Cherny, Marjorie Seashore, Elogeanne O. M. Grossman, Bruce & Dede Heiman, Photographer Jim Gomes





John Beecher: Pragmatically Principled

By Prof. Larry Ianni, 2014



In the midst of the anti-communist hysteria of the late 1940's and early 1950's, the California legislature instituted an onerous loyalty oath required of all CSU employees. Several San Francisco State College faculty refused to sign it and were terminated. In 1975, the legislature decided to make amends for the long before disposed of law. The public universities were urged, but not required, to offer re-employment to the dismissed faculty if their former departments

(or some other in which they might have qualifications) would accept them. The task of making these arrangements fell to me (my first year of employment at SFSU in a position then called Dean of Faculty Affairs – a title which prompted Stuart Hyde to greet me with the question, "We even have a dean for that?")

Despite the gap of over two decades, two of the former faculty were interested in returning to their former departments. In the case of one of them, the situation was quickly concluded since she was still known to her department, and it had a place for her. The other case proved more difficult despite the ample qualifications of the aspirant in question. He was the highly respected and nationally known poet, John Beecher. If the name strikes you as having a familiar ring, it is that he is a descendant of the family that includes the well-known nineteenth century abolitionist preacher Henry Ward Beecher and his sister Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the woman Abraham Lincoln greeted once with the description, "The little lady who caused the big war." Distinguished though he was, Beecher was past seventy years of age and the English Department H RTP committee said that if it was a matter of choice they declined to support the offer of a position. The Department Chair, Graham Wilson, who is remembered by all who knew him as a paragon of fairness and administrative effectiveness, said he would find one course. The same offer was forthcoming from the chairs of World and Comparative Literature, and two departments in the School of Social Sciences, who shared the feeling that they should give what help they could to right a long-standing wrong. I was not optimistic that the aged poet, who lived at the other end of the continent, would be eager to take on a four-preparation teaching load that would frazzle a young man fresh from graduate school.

To my surprise, John Beecher quickly accepted my offer and in less than two weeks appeared in my office to teach in the fall semester that was about to begin. John looked fit and energetic and declined my assistance in finding his way to the four departments where he would begin his duties. He was accompanied by his wife, Barbara, who, it became clear, had considerably better mobility than John.

It is no secret that professors of the humanities are chatterers by nature, English professors perhaps foremost among them. (Of my own inclinations, it is best not



to be specific; however, Al Willard and others among my co-workers no doubt recall the difficulty of keeping me on time in going through a daily schedule of appointments.) Perhaps because he had no single departmental home or because of the age difference between him and his colleagues, John was a frequent visitor to my office, where we had many pleasant conversations. One such occurred when I confessed my curiosity as to why he had accepted his arduous labors at such an advanced age. He explained that he and Barbara were not long married, *his third marriage*, and he was hoping to teach long enough to total five years of service and vest his retirement so he could

leave something to Barbara. (He had two years of service before the loyalty oath matter; hence, he hoped to teach three years.)

John's teaching performance in his first year was successful and he was welcome to continue his fulltime heavy schedule for a second and third year if he chose. However, I noticed that his task was further complicated at the beginning of his second year. He now always pulled behind him an oxygen tank with tubes that carried the flow to his nostrils. This additional labor in no way diminished his enthusiasm for his task. My admiration for him increased by the day as I encountered him during his routine and became acquainted with his *Collected Poems*, a copy of which he had been kind enough to give me.

Did John Beecher complete the three years of teaching? I wish I could say he did, after which he and Barbara retired to enjoy their home in the east. However, Barbara made that trip alone. John Beecher died exactly one week following the commencement after he finished his third year of teaching and vested his retirement.

Humor

Students in a Scottish Advanced Biology Class were taking their mid-term exam. The last question was, "Name seven advantages of Mother's Milk." The question was worth 70 points or none at all. One student in particular was hard put to think of seven advantages. However, he wrote:

1. It is perfect formula for the child.
2. It provides immunity against several diseases.
3. It is already the right temperature.
4. It is inexpensive.
5. It bonds the child to mother, and vice versa.
6. It is always available as needed.



And then the student was stuck. Finally, in desperation, and just before the bell rang indicating the end of the test, he wrote:

7. It comes in two attractive containers and its high enough off the ground where the cat can't get it.

He got an "A".

Donations



Contributors to the Retirement Association Travel Grants Endowment Fund to help fund travel/professional development for current faculty and staff: Dan Buttlair

President's Corner

By: LaVonne Jacobsen

Following in the footsteps of my esteemed predecessor, I want to acknowledge all of the fine work of my fellow members that makes the Association such a rewarding organization for all of us. It will be a long message for the start of the New Year – a lot of good people to thank.

First, I must thank Tom Spencer, in particular, for his excellent and dedicated leadership over the past five years. He was pressed into service as President when his predecessor needed to step down early and rose to the occasion. In my time on the Board as Secretary, Tom kept us focused on the goals of financial stability, maintaining the social/networking role of the Association, and contributing to the professional development of working faculty and staff through the Travel Grant program. He is an inspiration to me and a tough act to follow. Fortunately, I will have his knowledge and experience on the Board as Past President.

I could fill the entire newsletter with the details of contributions by others, as well, but I'll aim for a brief overview. There is considerable change in Board membership as terms expire or personal lives change. I am sorry to lose the wisdom and experience of Newman Fisher, *Past-President*, Julian Randolph, *Vice-President & Membership*, Dan Buttlair, *Travel Grants*, Helene Whitson *Nominations*, Ilza Goodfield, *UWA*, and, most of all, Yolanda Thompson, *Hostess Extraordinaire* for our luncheons. We wish them well and hope they will continue to participate in Association events with us.

Your new Board of Directors is another great group, also filled with wisdom and experience and full of energy for the year ahead. Jim Van Ness has graciously accepted the Treasurer



Your Board of Directors for 2015

appointment as the office transitions from an elected one to one appointed by the Board. He personifies the rationale for this change given his expertise in the mysteries of University financial policies and procedures. Jim Kohn was elected as Vice-President and will coordinate membership activities, including recruitment. The best recruitment method, by the way, is one-to-one. Do you know someone who was at SF State and might enjoy our activities? Suggest they join.

Mamdouh Abo-El-Ata will continue his passionate advocacy for the travel grants and Bob Cherny is keeping us in touch with the CSU ERFA, *retired faculty and staff group*, and purveyor of Coit Tower tours. The recent COIT Tower tour and other social activities are the excellent work of Zelinda Zingaro who has taken on the responsibilities of Yolanda Thompson with great energy. Check this issue for more news of activities. You see the great work of Kay McGough and I don't know where we would be without her cheerful pursuit of content from a herd of cats. Nancy Noble will continue with the design and layout of the newsletter for the Off-Campus Bulletin. Speaking of content, thanks are also due to Meredith Eliassen, Librarian for the University Historical Archives, who regularly contributes a historical note about the University.

There are five new members on the Board and I want to thank all of them for being willing to serve as well. Dede Heiman has jumped right in as Secretary and Donna Ryan rejoins the Board to provide liaison to the University Women's Association. Two other newly elected members are recent retirees Krish Krishnan and Sheila McClear. With one remaining vacancy on the Board, we appointed Dan McGough who will stand for election the next time, if he is willing.

Enjoy reading our Bulletin. Happy summer everyone. Stay safe and stay well. See you on the Rosie the Riveter tour?????



San Francisco State's History Corner

By Meredith Eliassen

Fisher on Otters: Our Pioneering Female Biologist

Long before San Francisco State's Romberg Tiburon Center for Environmental Studies was established as the only academic research facility located in one of the largest estuaries on the west coast of the United States in 1978, Edna M. Fisher was introducing students to field work to study sea otters. Fisher was a pioneer; she was the first biologist to describe the tool-using behavior of the California sea otter in her groundbreaking article: "Habits of the Southern Sea Otter" *Journal of Mammalogy* 20: 1 (1939): 21-36. According to her successor Dr. Robert I. Bowman, "The observations described in this paper were often overlooked with credit for a 'first' falling on some later biologists not affiliated with SFSU." Fisher also took small groups of students to Bixby Canyon, south of Carmel, California, on camp-out field trips when she collected data for her papers.



Edna Fisher was a vertebrate zoologist out of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at U.C. Berkeley; she earned her B.A. in 1920 and M.A. in 1921 from the University of California, *her thesis was on medical knowledge and practice in New Spain during the sixteenth century*, along with advanced studies from Stanford University and University of California. Fisher started at San Francisco State as an Associate Professor of Biological Sciences in 1930, but we do not know details of her life.

Miss Fisher wrote in the preface to her book, *The Osteology and Myology of the California River Otter*, Stanford University Press 1942: "I have been interested in the identification of the animal bones to be found in the Indian shell-mounds along the California coast both for the study of the food habits of the natives, and for the records they afford of the species formerly abundant that are absent today..."

In January of this year, some of Fisher's papers found their way back to San Francisco State in a shoebox. The modest size of the archive is no indication of its importance, the shoebox contained documents, correspondence, and original artwork by Fisher. The Edna M. Fisher Archive highlights the pioneering research efforts of women in the marine sciences. Some of Fisher's artwork can be seen in the article, *Habits of the Southern Sea Otter*. Interestingly enough, it is like these papers have returned home after being out of state for sixty years.

Today the Fisher Archive resides in the University Archives at the J. Paul Leonard Library where researchers can rediscover Fisher's adventures, and smile when coming across sketches done on napkins as they imagine the adventures that Miss Fisher introduced students to. Meanwhile her quest continues at the Romberg Tiburon Center, which serves as a multidisciplinary instructional and research facility for the study where graduate and undergraduate courses as well as field programs are offered in marine and estuarine science.



San Francisco State University Women's Association 2015 Scholarship Cruise

ISTANBUL to BARCELONA

Mediterranean & Aegean Medley

June 27 – July 11, 2015

UWA

Our friends and colleagues of the SF State University Women's Association still have limited space for their 2015 Princess Cruise, June 27 – July 11, 2015 which begins in exotic Istanbul and ends in colorful Barcelona, stopping at ports in Greece, Malta, Italy, Sicily, Tunisia and France. It's not too late to contact Lin Ivory at 415.721.7432 or linivory@comcast.net for the latest detailed information.



Photo of Istanbul



Photo of Istanbul



2014 UWA Cruise — Barcelona



Larry Ianni — The Right Man at the Right Time

By: Richard Giardina

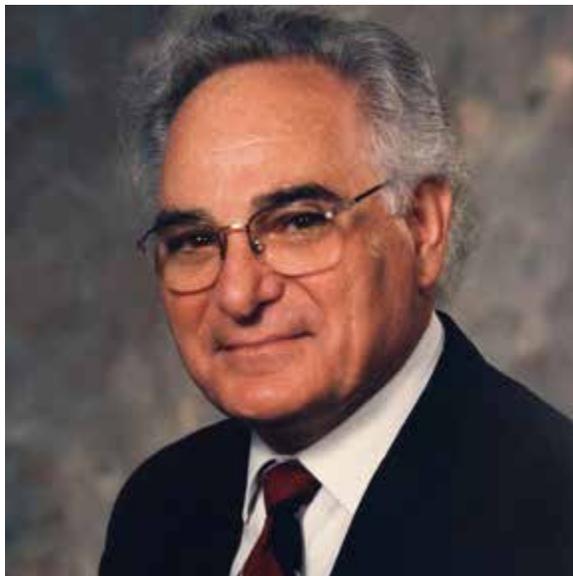
Ianni Hall! Has a nice ring, doesn't it? Think perhaps a manor house in the Cotswolds or a villa in Tuscany or maybe a palatial mansion in Woodside or Aptos. But, no, it's actually a brand new residence hall on the campus of the University of Minnesota, Duluth, UMD. And on Friday, September 16, 2011, at 11:30 AM, it was dedicated as a residence hall in honor of Lawrence Ianni, UMD's Fifth Chancellor.

We, of course, know Larry well from his years at San Francisco State. He was hired by then Provost Don Garrity in Fall 1975 as Dean of Faculty Affairs. When Garrity left in Fall 1978 to become President of the Central Washington University, Paul Romberg appointed Larry as interim Provost. Larry was anointed as permanent Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs in Fall 1979, remaining in the position until the end of the 1986 – 87 academic year, at which time he became Duluth's Chancellor, with his wife Mary Ellen gracefully assuming the position of UMD's first lady.

According to University of Minnesota President Kenneth H. Keller at the time of Larry's appointment: "Lawrence Ianni's the right person for the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and the University of Minnesota. I was looking for a leader, an aggressive person with high academic standards and a commitment to public education. These are all of the things we wanted in the Minnesota system, and I think we have found all of them in Dr. Ianni."

Larry received his bachelor's degree from Clarion University of Pennsylvania and then went on for his M.A. and Ph.D. in English from Case-Western Reserve University. It was at Clarion that he met his wife-to-be Mary Ellen; they married in March of 1952. *Note to all their friends: the big 60th anniversary was in March 2012!*

Larry's first teaching job was at Conneaut Valley High School, about 35 miles south of Erie, PA. Then, after moving to Mentor, OH to teach high school and start his graduate work at Case-Western, he and Mary Ellen, *with daughters Laura and Beth*, moved back to Pennsylvania so that Larry could teach English at Indiana



University of Pennsylvania. At Indiana U., Larry was a department head, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and finally collective bargaining agent for the administration vis-à-vis the faculty. In 1975, Larry and the family moved to San Francisco, with Larry continuing to climb the educational administration ladder leading ultimately to the UMD Chancellorship. SFSU colleague Nancy McDermid has these words to offer about Larry:

As a member of the 1975 selection committee, I was privileged to

recommend the initial hiring of Larry Ianni. In 1979, he became Provost and I started serving my 23 years as Dean of the College of Humanities. I have always admired the clarity, courage, and honesty with which Larry states his opinion; such a voice is a valuable one, especially in the university. Larry made significant contributions to the humanities: the creation of the Women Studies Department; the beginnings of the Japanese, Classics, and Museum Studies MA's; the dream of a new Humanities Building; the hiring of cadres of outstanding faculty; the support of the Poetry Center and Forensics; respect for academic freedom even when tested and taunted by Golden Gator headlines; and his own delight in designing a course on "beatnik poets." Throughout the 36 years of our friendship, Larry has never been too busy to listen, or to be leaned on.

As we all know, after Larry retired as UMD's chancellor, he and Mary Ellen moved back to the Bay Area, returning to the home they still owned in San Bruno. And, of course, Larry now serves the San Francisco State University Retirement Association with distinction as a member of its Board of Directors.

Duluth Budgeteer reporter Dick Palmer summed up Larry's assets in a single phrase headlining a lengthy and glowing article in December of 1994: "He's a likeable, second generation Paisan with a special gift!" His many friends here in the Bay Area, *and especially those of Italian origin*, would certainly agree.



	<p>Edith Arrick, Professor of Biology, counselor/advisor to students, and Assistant to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies from about 1965 to 1990, died in San Francisco at age 89.</p>	<p>Judith Ann (Fox) Bloomberg, Professor of Education from 1990 to 2010, died in Berkeley at age 74.</p>
<p>Judith Breen, Professor Emerita of English from 1969 to 2006, died at age 79.</p>	<p>Arline Castleberry, widow of Don Castleberry, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Graduate Dean, died in San Mateo at age 95.</p>	<p>Anthony Catena, Emeritus Professor of Microbiology from 1971 to 2001, died in June in San Francisco at age 73</p>
<p>James (Jim) Duggins, Emeritus Professor of Secondary Education from 1967 to 2001, died in Rancho Mirage, CA at age 80</p>	<p>Paul Merrill, Purchasing Manager in the 1980's, died in Belmont</p>	<p>Laszlo Varga, Professor Emeritus of Music from 1963 to 1988, died in Florida at age 89.</p>

2015 DUES REMINDER

..... and Other Information

Unless you are a life member, or have already paid your \$30.00 annual dues for 2015, your dues payment is now due. Your dues paying status is shown on the top line of the mailing label. "Life" indicates you are a lifetime member; a number indicates the last calendar year you paid annual dues (e.g. "13" means 2013). We are very much in need of your support to make our programs and activities a success. If you have any questions about your dues status, you may contact Membership Director Jim Kohn at 415.821.7475 or by email at: jjkohn@comcast.net. In accordance with our By-Laws, those who have not paid for two years will be dropped from our membership rolls.

If you have recently changed your address, phone number, or email address, please provide the new information on the below form and mail to Membership Director Jim Kohn, address below, or send an email to jjkohn@comcast.net, so we can keep our membership records current. If you would like to receive SFSU's weekly Campus Memo by email, please complete the form below and provide your email address to Jim Kohn. We now distribute our newsletter, the Off-Campus Bulletin, by email to those for whom we have an email address. If you would prefer an email instead of the printed version, please complete the form below and provide your email address to Jim Kohn. If you wish to make a donation to our Travel Grants Endowment Fund, to fund future travel/professional development grants to faculty and staff, please write a separate check and mail with the below form.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Email address: _____

Would you like to receive SFSU's weekly CampusMemo by email? Yes No

Would you prefer to receive the Off-Campus Bulletin by email? Yes No

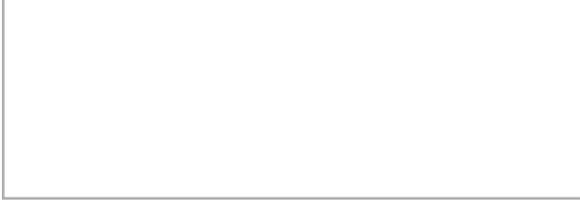
I would be willing to help organize functions and/or serve on the Board of Directors
Yes No

Amount enclosed: _____ \$30 Annual dues for 2015 \$200 Life Membership

Contribution to Travel Grants Endowment Fund: \$ _____ *Please write separate check*

Please make check/s payable to: SFSU Retirement Association

Mail to: Jim Kohn, 23 Topaz Way, San Francisco, CA 94131



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