Emerities Newsletter, Summer/Fall 2009

Georgia State University Emeriti Association

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The wonders of living in Australia
By Dr. Ben Oviatt

I retired from GSU’s Robinson College of Business in 2007, but soon found an opportunity to teach at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. It was one of those places my wife, Judy, and I had always wanted to visit. So for 15 months, until June 2009, we had a great adventure in the Land Down Under!

Let me first answer the question everyone asks who hasn’t been there. Does the toilet water in Australia really spin the opposite way? Well, since I never noticed which way it spins in Atlanta, I don’t really know, but I’m assured it’s one of those silly myths. Second question: Is Vegemite really an acquired taste? Answer: No, that’s mythology, too.

Here’s a couple of non-myths. The Fire Brigades were called out a couple times in the neighborhood to disentangle a python from the local power lines. I’ve seldom seen that on Peachtree Street. And although Decatur has sand shipped in for its regular summer beach party, it doesn’t quite match up to the 40,000 Aussies spread out on Sydney’s beautiful Bondi Beach, especially on a hot Saturday afternoon in January!

The most difficult thing about teaching was designing assignments that competed favorably with the surf at the beach and the beer at the pub. I don’t believe I ever scored well in that competition.

Everyone has seen pictures of the Sydney Opera House, but you gotta see it in person! It extends into Sydney Harbour, which must be the most beautiful in the world. And the Opera House, where there are daily performances of far more than opera, is one of the few places on Earth where man’s architecture truly enhances nature’s. Of course, once there, you must cross Circular Quay and climb the Sydney Harbour Bridge! Carolyn and Tom Clark, who also retired from the Robinson College, visited us and climbed it. For the engineer in Tom, being at the top was heaven, and he was ready to return home after that! If you’re interested take a look at http://www.bridgeclimb.com/, where you can see lots of pictures, including a 360 degree panorama. It’s a gentle slope walking up to the top, not a difficult climb, and the way they strap you to the Bridge, it’s impossible fall. So just enjoy the view!

Of course, there’s lots more to Sydney, to Australia, and to New Zealand. If you are thinking about a visit and want a Hotlantan’s point of view, send me an e-mail (BenOviatt@gsu.edu). I’m happy to reply, mate!

Welcome and Congratulations to our New Emeriti

Our recently retired faculty colleagues have now become Emeriti colleagues. We welcome them as members of the Emeriti Association of Georgia State University:

Marjorie L. Girth    College of Law
William A. Gregory   College of Law
We want to recognize Dr. Skipper for his dedication to his work:

- Recipient of the John S. Bickley Founder’s Award for 2009 for "singular creative or innovative contribution to insurance thought, product, practice or education which has been adopted by the industry or society," presented by the International Insurance Society at its annual conference, Amman, Jordan, June 8, 2009.

- Plenary Session Speaker on impact of financial crisis on world's insurance markets (titled "We're Not in Kansas Anymore") at the annual conference of the Asia-Pacific Risk and Insurance Association, Beijing, PRC, July 20, 2009.


Congratulations, Dr. Skipper!

We want to recognize Emeriti

If you know of Emeriti who have achieved great things, please share the story with us. We want to know Emeriti achievements, service and leadership. We want to recognize your contributions. Please contact Teresa at tkibler@gsu.edu.

Got Skype?

By Bob Stallings, rstallin@usc.edu

If you have a computer and a high speed Internet connection (via DSL, cable, or satellite), then you might be interested in Skype.

Skype is a free downloadable application that allows you to make (free) voice calls over the Internet to anyone who is also running Skype on her/his computer (including multi-party conference calls), (free) video calls, and (inexpensive) calls to landlines and mobile phones almost anywhere in the world.

With an inexpensive Webcam and headset (or Webcam with a built-in microphone), you can see and hear - and be seen and be heard by - anyone with a similar setup. Skype runs on all three major operating systems (Windows, Mac OS X, Linux) as well as selected mobile phones such as the iPhone. Note that, like all VOIP (voice over Internet protocol) applications, there is no 911 capability through Skype.

Check out Skype and its numerous features at www.skype.com/welcomeback.

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The person behind the name “Teresa Kibler”
By Lorene Pilcher

We claim Teresa Kibler as our very own, for she provides vital support to the Emeriti Association; but she actually has other duties at the University besides keeping our organization running so smoothly. We appreciate the University’s generosity in assigning her to work with the Emeriti Association.

Who is Teresa? She grew up in Colombia, South America, but she was born in Massachusetts where her father was doing a residency in pediatrics. Two years later, when the residency was over, she and her parents moved back to Colombia. She grew up and finished a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration at the Javeriana University, Bogotá, in 1988. In 1990 she moved to Atlanta. In 1995, she finished a Master’s Degree in Human Resources in the School of Public Administration and Urban Affairs at GSU.

Teresa was employed by the Archdiocese of Atlanta in 1999. In 2004 she transferred to the Development and Alumni Relations Office at Christ the King School. In August 2008 she started working at Georgia State, under the umbrella of Walter Massey, Associate Vice President, Constituent Programs.

She has been married to Greg Kibler for 17 years. They have a very energetic and smart 9-year-old son named William and a rescued German Wirehaired Pointer named Buster.

If you have not met Teresa, you should get to know her. She enjoys communicating with emeriti, and she is always cheerful and helpful. She regularly sends out e-mails. If she does not have your e-mail address, please send it to her so that you will not miss her messages. Her e-mail address is tkibler@gsu.edu.
Within minutes after my retirement ceremony at GSU in 1992, I was approached by Charlotte McClure who invited me to teach a class at Senior University of Greater Atlanta. I demurred then, but in 1997, when Marvin Weintraub asked me to offer a course on the geography of Africa at Senior University, I accepted and am I glad I did. I taught the class at the Mercer University campus in Atlanta, and I stayed. Since then, I have given eight more courses, and I signed up to take several dozen more. One of my courses saw 160 students enrolled in it. Further, I look forward to the beginning of each term, primarily to see and be with old friends who have the insatiable desire to learn. Almost all of the students are retired professionals, and are certainly the brightest I have had the privilege to know.

Senior University is a life-long learning entity now associated with Mercer University in Atlanta. Normally, there are 300-350 students present in each of the three terms, with about half that number taking classes during the summer quarter. Most of the students are retired professionals – physicians, lawyers, teachers (including university professors), business executives, librarians, and retired military. The talent represented by the student body is awesome. None of the classes are trivial. Courses in philosophy, history, psychology, music, geography, public affairs, art history, architecture, and computer applications are commonly offered, and all are well attended. Long field trips, as well as day excursions around the Atlanta region are organized. During the year, twelve courses of eight weeks’ duration are offered each term. Six are held on Wednesday mornings and the others are taught on Friday mornings. Each class is an hour long, no exams or grades are given, and homework is assigned on rare occasions.

Many of the courses are taught by retired GSU professors. Gerald Davis is a stalwart – he has given classes on World War I, prisoners of war, and the Trans-Siberian Railway (along with his wife, Alice Hankla). Marvin Weintraub teaches annual courses in current affairs, Ellen Evans, until she moved from Atlanta, taught popular classes in European history. Another retired GSU historian, Merl Reed, gives courses in American economic history. Robbie Friedmann has taught at Senior University, John Wright organized a very popular class for years, and Gene Groff and Truman Hartshorn have lent their expertise to well-attended classes. Ed Luck also taught several courses and was an active student before his death. In addition to GSU retirees teaching, many of our colleagues have guest lectured at Senior University. For example, Janice Benario, Mike Mescon, Luciano L’Abate, and Jackie Boles all gave memorable presentations to appreciative students. Barbara Flowers has just been elected President of Senior University, and another person we all know and remember with fondness, Barbara Green, is now a student. Of course, a nice touch that teachers appreciate is that students applaud after every lecture.

If you have retired from teaching, wish to continue intellectual ties, and create new social contacts, I recommend you consider enrolling at Senior University of Greater Atlanta. You will not regret it. sanfordbederman@bellsouth.net, (770) 772-6366.

For information on the Senior University of Greater Atlanta, please contact Ann Stewart at 678-547-6109 or at stewart_al@mercer.edu.