



**Welcome** to the latest edition of **eNEWS** - the **PMEA Retired Member Network**... an informal alliance and forum for interconnecting retired music educators, and sharing their ideas, stories, successes, news, and views. Thank you for staying involved in PMEA!

### **Clean Halloween jokes and quotes (but are they funny?)**

Courtesy of <http://www.guy-sports.com/humor/halloween/index.htm>

What's a monster's favorite play? Romeo and Ghoullet.

What do ghosts serve for dessert? Ice scream.

What is a vampire's favorite holiday? Fangsgiving.

Why do demons and ghouls hang out together? Because 'demons are a ghouls best friend!' (Diamonds... Girls!)

"If you haven't found something strange during the day, it hasn't been much of a day." - John A. Wheeler

"Where there is no imagination, there is no horror." - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

"Those who believe in telekinetics, raise my hand." - Kurt Vonnegut

"Ghosts, like ladies, never speak till spoken to." - Richard H. Barham

"At first cock-crow the ghosts must go back to their quiet graves below." - Theodosia Garrison

"If a man harbors any sort of fear, it makes him landlord to a ghost." - Lloyd Douglas

"We live in a Newtonian world of Einsteinian physics ruled by Frankenstein logic." - David Russell

What do you call serious rocks? Grave stones. What do you call pretend rocks? Shamrocks.

What did the mother ghost say her children? 'Don't spook until you're spooked to.'

What do skeletons say before they begin dining? Bone appetite!

What do fishermen say on Halloween? 'Trick-or-trout!'

Where do spooks go to post a parcel? The ghost office.

What did the vampire say to the Invisible Man? 'Long time, no see!'

Why is Dracula so unpopular? Because he's a pain in the neck!

What runs around a cemetery but doesn't move? A fence!

What do you call a witch who lives at the beach? A sand-witch.

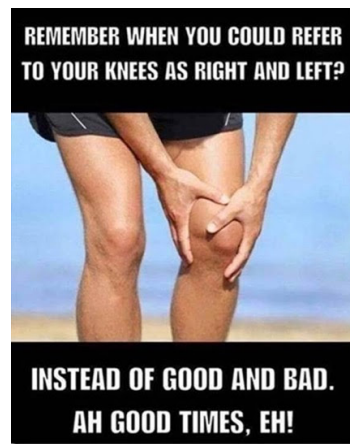
Who won the skeleton beauty contest? No body.

Who was the most famous French skeleton? Napoleon bone-apart.

What's a skeleton's favorite musical instrument? A trom-bone!

What do the birds sing on Halloween? Twick or tweet.

Why do witches fly on brooms? Vacuum cleaner cords aren't long enough.



Submitted by John D'Ascenzo





### Your final lap

by Edwin Newell, Retired Band Director, Hackett Middle School and Arbor Hill Elementary School, Albany NY  
From the Retired Member community forum of the NAFME social media platform *Amplify*

This actually is for those who may be thinking that this is the year they take that final bow. In June, I may have done some bragging about how the end of the year turned out for me. My last Spring Concert turned out to be a bit humbling, with way too much fuss over me. It got me thinking about two things.



One, most teachers don't get a Spring Concert, with applause and accolades and former students showing up to hang out one last time with their middle school teacher. We teachers of the performing arts have an enviable opportunity to make a memory that will stay with our students (heck, our whole communities) and it is a very unique gift.

Two, I have seen too many teachers leave in the middle of the year, or even unexpectedly not return in September, due to health or personal reasons. Some just didn't want any fuss made and they packed up & left without saying goodbye to students and colleagues. Even with those who left on their own terms, I felt sad at not being able to say goodbye.

So, if you are heading into this year thinking it may be your last, I would like to encourage you to make it your best. My own decision was cemented the summer before, and I went in and announced on day one that this would be my last year. I told my students right up front, and I insisted it was because I could not imagine having a better group of kids. (It was the truth...) I told them this would be like a victory lap for all of us; only the best music, only the best effort would be accepted, every day, every event.

The first day of band (after handing out the usual pile of paperwork & reading of the rules) I told them that this felt like waking up with your family on vacation at Disney World & realizing that you only had one more day to go and do your favorite things, because the next day you would be leaving, and you might not ever come back. (I stared a bit too long at my 8th graders and we all became a bit teary. Keep in mind, these are tough inner-city kids!)



For me, it made for an awesome year that I will never forget. Naturally this may not be for everyone, but give it some thought. You may thank me come June.

Even if this is not your last year, go ahead and make it a victory lap, nothing-but-the-best, last-day-at-Disney kind of year anyway. You never know.

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## **“Retirement...” a perspective**

by John H. Beck, Professor Emeritus of Percussion, Eastman School of Music

From the Retired Member community forum of the NAFME social media platform *Amplify*

I retired from playing timpani in the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra after 43 years. I retired from teaching at the Eastman School of Music after 49 years.

However, something was always on my mind during these years - the history of percussion. I always wanted to teach it but a full 8 service week playing in the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and a 26 hours of teaching per week at the Eastman School of Music didn't allow me much time to pursue that interest. However, once I retired from both the playing and the teaching, I know had time to pursue this interest.



Since my retirement in 2008 from the Eastman School of Music, as Professor Emeritus of Percussion, I have been teaching my History of Percussion class for two hours a week in the first semester. I am really enjoying it and look forward to my two hours with them each week. We cover percussion from the early days when it was simply foot stomping, beating wood and scraping things together to communicate with each other. This knowledge transgresses into the Ottoman Empire and their Janissary Music, it's influences on Beethoven and Mozart and the Classical Period to Contemporary Music + Jazz and Rock. The two-hour class discusses percussion and its influence on music from all periods.

So, retirement for me meant freeing up my life to continue to pursue my interest in percussion. It did not mean freeing up my life to watch TV, play golf, hang out at the beach, or sleep late. It provided me with a new lease on life. Oh, I still watch TV, play golf, go to the beach, and sleep late now and then, but my preparation for my class and my time with them gives me a focus on life that I enjoy.

Another thing that I now have time to do is present master classes, workshops, adjudicating at percussion competitions, and some solo playing around the world.



Retirement for me opened up new avenues that I enjoy. My philosophy is: "If you are doing something that you enjoy doing, why stop doing it?" I am a happy percussionist.

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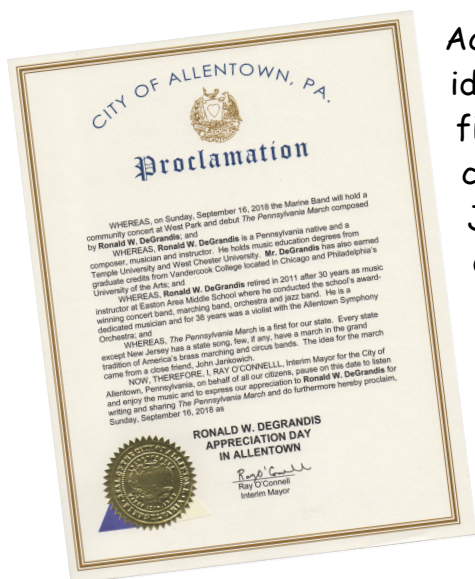






## Premier of "The Pennsylvania March"

Ronald W. DeGrandis has done it again! Inspired by the Commonwealth's diverse cities and landscapes, Ron composed "the first march dedicated to the state of Pennsylvania." On September 16, 2018, the inaugural performance of "Pennsylvania March" was performed for a crowd of over 250 people by the **Marine Band of Allentown**.



According to Ron, the idea for his march first came from a close friend, the late

John Jankowich, for whom he dedicated the work. "I was on an emotional high as I listened to the Marine Band of Allentown play my "Pennsylvania March," remarked the 2011 retiree from the Easton Area School District.

Check out the media coverage Ron received:

<http://www.wfmz.com/news/lehigh-valley/marine-band-of-allentown-unveils-the-pennsylvania-march-/795928209> and

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180915005007/en/March-State-Pennsylvania-Composed-Lehigh-Valley-Musician>.



Allentown Mayor Ray O'Connell presents Ron DeGrandis a proclamation for the "Pennsylvania March" as the Marine Band and Conductor Tom Heinick looks on.

## SmartMusic blog: "Finding Work-Life Balance..."

by Paul and Ann Kimpton <https://www.smartmusic.com/blog/work-life-balance-music-educator/>

"In announcing his retirement, music legend Paul Simon told The New York Times: *It's an act of courage to let go. I am going to see, who am I? Or am I just this person that was defined by what I did? And if that's gone, if you have to make up yourself, who are you?*"

"Many music educators struggle with Simon's dilemma - are we defined solely by our musical careers? Whether we are at the beginning, middle, or near the end of our career, will we only be known as 'the band director at XYZ school,' and is that enough?"

"Let's face it, many music educators believe their jobs are 24/7, leaving little time for outside interests unrelated to music, including personal and family time. But does it have to be that way? I hope not, because learning how to save time for yourself not only makes you a better person, but it also makes you a better teacher. So how do you create a life outside of music?"



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## Did you see this “on the Web?”



### “Fired or Retired? What Happens to the Aging Orchestral Musician”

Submitted by Donna Fox, Story by Jeremy Reynolds, Shared from the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Slide App*

<https://share.newsslide.com/ppg/story/34d8422d-7160-4507-b569-f447644443d0/?EditionId=0e567aef-be14-4a35-a95c-f44a18243687&SectionId=8c83dbe3-a575-4fb3-9614-6e8a21e65596&IncludeChrome=True>

“In 2016, during an otherwise typical Atlanta Symphony Orchestra concert, bass player Jane Little died onstage at the age of 87 after performing with the orchestra for a remarkable 71 years.” Her final tune? There’s No Business Like Show Business.”

“According to the Pew Research Center, as of 2016, more Americans 65 and older are working full time than in any previous years, undoubtedly including orchestra musicians. Similar to college professors or federal judges, orchestra musicians are awarded tenure after a trial period with the ensemble. These musicians are expected to perform at peak levels no matter their age, but, understandably, as musicians get older, their hearing begins to slip, fingers aren’t quite as fast or accurate as they once were, lung capacity begins to diminish — their performance quality will begin to subtly downgrade later in their career.”

— Read the entire article by clicking the above link.

Although seldom touched on in public discussion by performing musicians and music teachers who regularly “play gigs,” the “elephant in the room” is any serious reflection about “losing chops” or the inevitable gradual decline of tone or technique during those “senior years!” However, perhaps we *should be talking about it!*

The Post-Gazette article brings up two key questions: “How common is it for players to perform past their prime? And at what age do musicians’ skills begin to atrophy?”

Would it surprise you that a German study for the European journal *Musicae Scientiae* (2014) indicated that human muscles begin to slow around the age of 40, though muscle memory built from hours of practicing earlier in life may keep this at bay?

Others have approached the debate with tips on maintaining “peak performance.” For example, on his blog-site (<https://eddielewis.com/houston-trumpet/teacher/lessons/trumpet-articles/the-importance-of-resting-trumpet-chops/>), trumpet-player Eddie Lewis outlines the importance of rest and how to recognize if you are tired or over-practicing.

“Here are some symptoms to watch out for that may mean that you don’t rest enough:

- You practice but don’t make any progress.
- You use too much pressure. (Pressure is a symptom, not a cause.)
- Your playing is hot and cold... you have good days and bad days.
- Your range is getting worst, not better.
- Your tone is very inconsistent.”

The singing voice is just as fragile. Check out “What Happens When a Singing Voice Gets Old” by Justin Davidson at <http://www.vulture.com/2016/10/mysteries-of-the-aging-voice.html>.

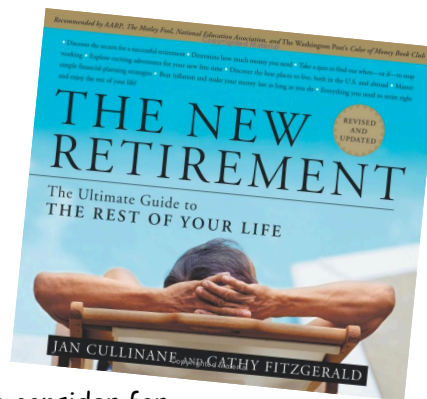




## Book-of-the-month – *The New Retirement*

"When is the right time to retire? Should you relocate, and if so, where? How can you make sure your money will last as long as you do? What kind of lifestyle will best suit your retirement years?" — Google Books

According to authors Jan Cullinane and Cathy Fitzgerald in their colossal book, *The New Retirement - The Ultimate Guide to the Rest of Your Life*, "every 7.5 seconds someone turns 50." Probably the heaviest paperback publication we have ever reviewed (large format/486 pages), it offers "a one-stop resource for the 78 million baby boomers approaching this important transition." From deciding where to live, what to do, when to do it, and more, *The New Retirement* will help readers plan for and achieve their retirement dreams.



The revisions to the updated edition (2007) include:

- More than 30 new recommendations for specific communities to consider for retirement, plus updated home prices and cost-of-living figures for existing communities
- Updated financial and tax information
- New niche lifestyles including club living, spa living, communities that are also cities, and moving where there is free land
- An updated travel section
- An expanded section on second homes

As quoted on the back cover, "Combining sound, author-tested advice with lively anecdotes and worksheets, checklists, and quizzes to help you decide what's right for you," the book encourages the coming wave of retirees to "think outside the box." In short, "this is not your parents' retirement guide!"

Some retirement manuals are "tutorials" (sequentially laid-out) and must be read chapter by chapter, one lesson at a time. *The New Retirement* is a comprehensive reference handbook, with sections which can be read in any order. Contents:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. What Makes Retirement Successful?          | 7. Where Should You Move (outside U.S.)?              |
| 2. How Do You Reprogram Your Time?            | 8. Forever Young?                                     |
| 3. What Are the Opportunities for Travel?     | 9. How Do You Make Your Money Last as Long as You Do? |
| 4. What and Where is Home?                    | 10. What Are the Tax Issues Affecting Retirement?     |
| 5. Where Should You Move (in the U.S.)?       |   |
| 6. What Are Some Niche Retirement Lifestyles? |   |

**Happy trails, retirees.** Please keep connected and share your retirement freedom! PKF

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