

PMEA Retired Member Network

eNEWS

September 5, 2021

Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Retired Members

"There's never enough time to do all the nothing you want." – Bill Waterson, Calvin & Hobbes.

Happy Labor Day!

FEATURES

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I hope you noticed we took a break from monthly eNEWS! To continue with this project, we will need your input. What "happenings" are going on in your area? How have you been spending your time? Instead of making your Retired Member Coordinator search on social media, please send photos of your activities, awards, concerts, hobbies, vacations, and family!

Launch of the Quarterly eNEWS and a New Look!

Welcome to the latest edition of **eNEWS** – the PMEA Retired Member Network – an informal alliance and forum for interconnecting retired, soon-to-retire, and active music educators, sharing their ideas, stories, successes, news, and views! Thanks for lending your support and staying involved in the profession!

But... We Need YOUR Help!

The value of any association's e-publications is *collaboration...* to promote communication of highlights and information among its members. To continue the printing of eNEWS, we need to hear from you... your ideas, tips, and feedback! Share strategies on transitioning post-full-time employment with your colleagues!

Jokes from the Internet

Thanks to <https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/56216/school-jokes-for-kids/>

We'll continue "our tradition" of safe ha-ha's you can share with the grandkids. Have you heard a good one lately?

Why does your teacher wear glasses? Because the kids in her class are so bright!

Why would a music teacher need a ladder? To reach the high notes.

How do you get straight A's? By using a ruler!

Why didn't the sun go to college? Because it already had a million degrees!

Do you know how bees get to school? On the school buzz!

What is the difference between a teacher and a train? A teacher says, "Spit out that gum" and the train says, "Chew! Chew!"

What kind of school do you go to if you are...

- *A surfer? Boarding school.*
- *A giant? High school.*
- *King Arthur? Knight school.*
- *An ice cream man? Sundae school.*



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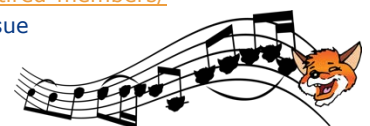
<https://www.pmea.net/retired-members/>

Deadline for the winter issue

December 1, 2021

Send "stuff" to:

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Those Were the Good Ol' Days:

The "E" in RETIREMENT is for Energy, Engagement, Excitement, and Endurance

Abridged article by Paul K. Fox posted in its entirety at <https://paulfox.blog/2021/08/14/those-were-the-good-ol-days/>

THIS BLOG IS ALL ABOUT HOW TO STAY YOUNG AND VIBRANT – BECOMING A VOLUNTEER! GEARED TO THOSE OF US WHO HAVE RETIRED, THIS IS VERY PERSONAL AND UNIQUE TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL, NO MATTER WHAT THE AGE!

Do you remember the song, "Those Were the Days" performed by Mary Hopkin (1968), the Fifth Dimension (1969), and even Dolly Parton (2000)?

*Those were the days my friend
We thought they'd never end
We'd sing and dance forever and a day
We'd live the life we choose
We'd fight and never lose
For we were young and sure to have our way.
La la la la
Those were the days, oh yes those were the days*



In June 2021, I went back to work. Well, not exactly full-time... but it felt that way!

Remember the times as music educators we spent 15-18 hours a day or more thinking, planning, creating, teaching, problem-solving, schlepping stuff, sweating, and working out beyond the regular school day and during summer months with major music projects like the marching band, spring musical, music adjudication trip, etc.?

Asked by my friend and current Upper St. Clair School District performing arts curriculum leader/HS band director Dr. John Seybert, I signed on to the newly expanded extracurricular activity (ECA) position as administrative assistant and announcer of the marching band for the school from which I had retired. Filling in the gaps, taking attendance, handling mounds of paperwork, interacting with a whole new generation of music students, and learning a few new software applications along the way like FamilyID, Canvas, Remind, and the district's Blackboard website, I threw my hat in the ring, not just to continue to serve as the voice of the "Pride of Upper St. Clair" at football games halftime shows (now in my 36th year), but to manage the full schedule of rehearsals, meetings, performances, and blessedly (?) exhausting 24/7 week-long band camp. I forgot how it felt to get up at 6 a.m. and return home around 9:30 p.m.

It has been exhilarating. It has been exhausting!

On another stage, when the local COVID stats fell two months ago, I was invited back to our local community hospital to serve as a volunteer – discharging patients from their rooms or escorting them from the outpatient surgery or endoscopy units. Yes, I was called upon to somehow restore the physical demands I (used-to) place on my personal stamina. Fully fatigued and expended after a shift of 4-7 hours of driving my wheelchair taxis (sometimes carrying over-sized people even though we're only supposed to move those weighing 250 pounds or less), I find myself yearning for a retiree "power-nap," only to regroup for the next day's challenging schedule and another early-morning wake-up.



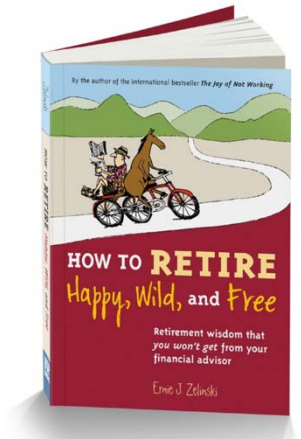
The best part of these 8-15 hours per week? Choosing one of the finest medical facilities in our metropolitan area – St. Clair Hospital (now "Health") – I have the chance to meet former music students (grown up), their kids, parents and grandparents, friends, and other acquaintances at their greatest need. And, there's almost no finer escort "call" than going to the family birth center and bringing to the car a new mommy and two-day-old baby... sharing that special moment with an alum or school staff member!

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WHAT

In past articles on a satisfying retirement, I often quote the book *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free*, the search for self-reinvention and new avenues for fulfilling those essential needs of “purpose, structure, and community” that employment had previously provided us. Author Ernie Zelinski’s definition of “purpose” are these goals:

- To make a difference in people’s lives
- To make a contribution
- To find creative expression
- To take part in discovery
- To help preserve the environment
- To accomplish or achieve a challenging task
- To improve health and well-being



We learn from *Revitalizing Retirement: Reshaping Your Identity, Relationships, and Purpose* by Nancy Schlossberg that for retirees it is important to feel “needed” and that pursuits that foster “mattering” are crucial to a positive self-esteem, good mental health, and stable life balance.

It has been suggested that one problem of retirement is that one no longer matters; others no longer depend on us...

The reward of retirement, involving a surcease from labor, can be the punishment of not mattering. Existence loses its point and savor when one no longer makes a difference. – Rosenberg and McCullough

The opposite of “mattering” is feeling “marginalized.” I would rather feel worn-out than useless/ignored/discarded!

In his book *Design Your Dream Retirement*, Dave Hughes recaps with his four essential ingredients of life balance:

- Physical activity
- Mental stimulation
- Social interaction
- Personal fulfillment

I think all would agree. Mission accomplished! I’ve made myself extremely busy. (Perhaps I “matter” a little too much?) “It’s a good thing I am retired... I would not have enough time to do all of these things if I still had a job!”

Yes, it FEELS good!

WHY

Now some rationale from the online pundits. First, review the article “Why Elderly People Should Volunteer” at <https://aginginplace.org/how-to-volunteer-as-a-senior/>. According to the “experts,” volunteering is:

- Socially beneficial
- Good for mental cognition
- Giving back to the community
- Physically engaging
- An opportunity to learn something new
- Flexible
- A strategy to fill up your day
- The reason you get out of bed in the morning



Of course, one has to be careful and follow your doctor’s advice on what tasks will not overwhelm you! The CDC and other medical professionals urge adopting a “safe” routine of regular physical activity as a part of an older adult’s life. Check out websites like <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/activities-olderadults.htm> and <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00001482.htm>.

Besides keeping your mind active, increasing your physical activity while “living the dream” in retirement will:

- Reduce the risk of serious illnesses (heart disease, type II diabetes, and depression)
- Help you manage a “healthy weight”
- Improve your balance and coordination
- Decrease the risk of falls or other injuries

Volunteering is all about being more eleemosynary (adjective defined as “generous, charitable, gratuitous, or philanthropic”). In my workshops on retirement transitioning, I frequently quote two gurus on the benefits of giving back.

With a frequently untapped wealth of competencies and experiences, older people have much to give. This fact, coupled with fewer requirements for their time, gives them unique opportunity to assume special kinds of helping roles. – Mary Baird Carlsen – *Meaning-Making: Therapeutic Processes in Adult Development*

Our increased longevity and generally better health have opened our eyes to new and increased opportunities to contribute to the betterment of society through civic, social, and economic engagement in activities we believe in. – Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO of AARP – *Disrupt Aging*

HOW

But you already knew all of this, right? There are so many ways to “bring it on” and “make a difference” in your “golden years.” (Wow – three cliches in a row!) There are so many directions you can go to offer your free time to volunteer:

- Escort at local hospital or nursing home
- Walk dogs at animal shelter
- Serve in charitable fund-raising projects
- Assist food banks and meals-on-wheels agencies
- Enlist as special advocate for abused or neglected children
- Work as hospice volunteer
- Maintain parks, trails, nature habitats, or recreation centers
- Host an international student
- Become a youth director, mentor, or scout leader
- Teach summer school, night classes or Performing Arts workshops
- Give guided tours or lectures as a docent at a local museum
- Apply office management and clerical skills to benefit libraries and other nonprofit associations
- Run a school club (share your hobby)



As trained music educators, we can share our precious skills in creative self-expression:

- Accompany, coach, or guest conduct school/community groups, college ensembles, or music festivals.
- Run for office or chair a committee or council of your state or local MEA association
- Serve as presiding chair or member of the PMEA planning committee or listening/screening committees for the annual music in-service conferences
- Participate as guest lecturer or panel discussion member at a conference, workshop, or college methods program
- Judge adjudication festivals
- Help plan or manage a local festival or workshop
- Assist the local music teacher in private teaching, piano playing, marching band charting, sectional coaching, set-up of music technology, instrument repair, etc.
- Write for your professional organizations' publications (like PMEA or NAFME)

If you are a retired music teacher and member of PMEA, sign-up for the Retiree Resource Registry to serve as an informal consultant to others still “slugging it out” in the trenches. Go to the PMEA retired member focus area for more information.



Quarterly Book Review: *Encore! A Boomer's Guide to Rocking Your Retirement*

by Marilyn Myrick Watson <https://encorethebook.com/>

From the back cover:

*Did you just cash your last paycheck? What now? Watch TV all day? Teeter on the front porch? Totter towards obsolescence? Not on your life! **This ain't your grandma's retirement.***

Today's baby boomers are the fastest growing retirement population in history. They're healthier than ever, and retirement will never be the same. Get ready to rock your Second Act.

With great sensitivity, insight, and good humor, author Marilyn Watson promises you will discover in her book:

- Techniques for evaluating what you like to do now and how to keep doing it.
- Tips for eating right and being active so you can live your best life.
- Tools for staying engaged with your friends and making new ones to heightened connection.
- Traditions to hands your spirituality.

She also shares unique and stirring stories of people experiencing what she calls "the Groundhog Day syndrome," as well as "others trying to keep a spouse from alphabetizing the spice shelves."

It looks like she knows what she's talking about! Practicing what she preaches, Watson has been a teacher, librarian, and aerobics instructor. "In her retirement thus far, she has traveled to Peru, Galapagos islands, Iceland, Africa, Ireland and Scotland. She's tried piano, drums, tap, golf and numerous volunteer activities sharing what she's learned in both the reflective and upbeat way."

For an outline of her work, here's the Table of Contents for *Encore*:

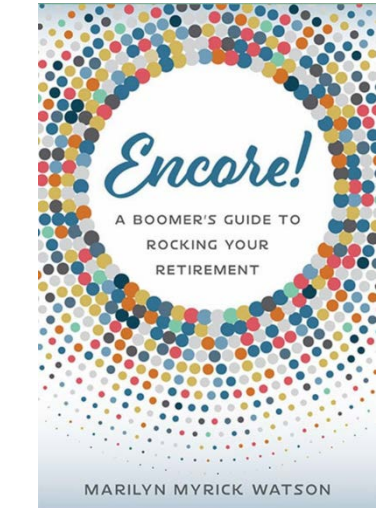
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| 1. <i>Your Story So Far</i> | 4. <i>To Work or Not to Work</i> |
| 2. <i>Transition into Retirement</i> | 5. <i>Five Friends & a Hobby</i> |
| 3. <i>Big Mac or Tofu</i> | 6. <i>Why Are We Here?</i> |
| | 7. <i>Wrapping It Up</i> |

You will note that, like the PMEA professional development workshops on retirement hosted by PMEA Retired Member Coordinator, the topics of financial planning, Medicare, or taxes *are not* covered in the book. Watson *does* explore five important areas for living one's life to the fullest:

1. Personal growth
2. Wellness
3. Spirituality
4. Relationships
5. Work

Check out her website

<https://encorethebook.com/>



Rock Your Retirement

Encore! looks at "how to" rock your retirement. Not a financial guide, you get ideas on health, connections, travel and activities in retirement.

Future Books to Review

Get a head-start on your reading!



Photo Gallery: Heard Through the Vintage Grapevine



1. Guess who forgot his tutu?



2. What do you call this, Mr. Fox's next Halloween costume?



3. Where did Fred and Rebecca Danchenko go on vacation?



4. Can you name these two very happy grandfathers?



5. Who plays French Horn for the Bravura Woodwind Quintet?

Answers: 1. Chuck Neidhardt; 2. Walking Bass Line; 3. Lake Como in Lombardy, Italy; 4. Drew Podnar (left) and Mark Jelinek; 5. Jim Scanga

Happy Trails, retirees! Hope to hear from you soon!