The "Soon-to or Recently Retired" Resource Library

Sample past articles in PMEA News about preparing for, transitioning, or cultivating a happy retirement.

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PAUL K. FOX PMEA Retired Members Coordinator



OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

for "hands-on" participation in community theatre, volunteering as an actor, singer, dancer, musician, props or scenery painter, make-up artist, costume seamstress, stage technician, usher, box office sales or marketing staff, etc. As you can see below, there are numerous amateur groups throughout the state.

The payback of theater involvement (for all ages, full and part-time workers, soon-to-retire, and retired members) is well-documented. For example, according to the www.openartsalliance. com, "Theatre is one of the oldest and most influential art forms. It combines interpersonal skills with intrapersonal awareness. Just think about ALL the benefits that theatre can offer artists young and old alike!"

- Self-confidence and risk taking
- Imagination and creative selfexpression

"ACT WELL YOUR PART; THERE THE HONOR LIES... IN AMATEUR THEATRE

- Empathy and tolerance
- Cooperation and collaboration
- Concentration
- Communication skills
- Emotional outlet
- Problem solving
- Fun and relaxation
- Self-discipline
- Trust
- Memory
- Social awareness
- Aesthetic appreciation
- Physical fitness

With the help of PMEA State Director of Member Engagement Joshua Gibson, PMEA retired members researched and compiled a PA community theatre directory, to join the listings of bands, orchestras, and choruses posted on the PMEA retired members' website.

This project was daunting! Just because a group advertises as serving as a local "civic theater," it does not mean there are "open" auditions for non-Equity actors, or volunteers can lend a hand in making the sets/costumes or running the stage tech (although everyone usually asks for money or unpaid ushers!). It was found that some semi-professional companies act very "community" oriented, while others are really "closed shops!" Even if it was hard to discern their "amateur" status or opportunities for nonprofessionals, most PA organizations and contact information were included... to allow PMEA members to find out for themselves if the association would accept non-union actors, etc.

Another problem was that many small theatre groups do not maintain a webpage. We had trouble confirming they were active (names or locations changed a lot, too). Scores of amateur drama companies are likely missing. Please consider this a "first draft" and send all corrections to paulkfox.usc@gmail.com. For retiring and retired PMEA members, good advice comes from Ernie J. Zelinski, author of the book How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free.

"Two essentials for successful retirement are sufficient funds to live on and sufficient things to live for. You may have the funds and a list of interests, hobbies, and leisure activities that will keep you busy. Nonetheless, if you want your retirement to be satisfying, these activities may not be enough. You may need an overriding purpose.

"While describing retirement, George Bernard Shaw concluded, 'A perpetual holiday is a good working definition of hell.' Shaw was right in that retirement can be hell for those who don't put any purpose into it. On the other hand, for people who have some major purpose to their lives, retirement can be heaven."

You have heard it before... For a happy, healthy, and meaningful retirement, revisit your "creative roots," the reason you went into music in the first place. Have you always wanted to explore or nurture the "thespian" in you? Here's your resource to get started today! Get out there! "Bring down the house." "Break a leg!"

Additional sources of information:

- http://www.auditionsfree.com/ theater-resources/pennsylvania-theater-companies/
- http://www.carnegielibrary.org/research/film/theater/companies.html
- http://www.curtainrising.com/usa/ usa_pa.html
- http://www.dmoz.org/Arts/Performing_Arts/Theatre/Community_Theatre/United_States/Pennsylvania/
- http://www.openartsalliance.com/ the-benefits-of-theatre.html
- http://www.metaperformingarts.org/benefits-of-theatre-arts.html
- http://www.aact.org/community-theatre-history

Amateur/Community Theater Companies in Pennsylvania (For an updated listing with city, county, and website, go to http://www.pmea.net/retired-members/.)

- 1812 Productions
- · Act II Playhouse
- Actors and Artists of Fayette County
- The Actors' Net
- AGRA Community Theater
- All An Act Productions (A₃)
- Allenberry Playhouse
- Allen's Lane Theater
- Alpha/Omega Performing Arts Center
- Altoona Community Theatre
- Alumni Theater Company
- American Historical Theatre
- American Music Theatre
- Anthracite Citizens' Theatre
- Apple Hill Play House
- Arden Theatre Company
- Armstrong Community Theater
- Avon Grove Community Theater
- The Barley Sheaf Players
- Barnstormers Theater
- Bedford County Players
- Blue Ridge Theatre Guild
- Blue Rose Moon
- The Brandvwiners
- Brat Productions
- Bricolage Production Company
- Bristol Riverside Theatre
- Bryn Athyn Community Theater
- Bucks County Playhouse
- Catasauqua Area Showcase Theatre
- Celebration Theater
- Center Stage Productions (formerly Chichester Community Theater)
- Chambersburg Community Theatre, Inc.

- Civic Theatre of Allentown
- Clearfield Arts Studio Theatre
- Colonial Playhouse Community Theater
- Community Theatre League, Inc.
- DCP Theatre
- Delaware Valley Community Theatre Message Board
- The Drama Group
- The Dramateurs at the Barn Playhouse
- Dreamwrights Youth & Family Theatre
- Enchantment Theatre Company
- Erie Playhouse
- Ephrata Performing Arts Center at the Sharadin Bigler Theatre
- Fat Hat Productions
- Fleetwood Community Theatre
- Forge Theatre
- Fulton Theatre
- Gamut Theatre Group
- The Gemini Theater Company
- Genesius Theatre
- Gettysburg Stage
- The Geyer Performing Arts Center in Scottdale
- The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Chester County
- Green Light Theatrical Productions, Inc.
- Gretna Theatre
- Greensburg Civic Theatre
- Hedgerow Theatre
- Heritage Players
- Hershey Area Playhouse
- Indiana Players
- Jewish Theater-Studio of Music and Drama
- King of Prussia Players
- Lamp Theatre in Irwin
- Lebanon Community Theatre
- Little Lake Theatre
- Little Theatre of Mechanicsburg
- The Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre
- McKeesport Little Theater
- Media Theatre for Performing Arts
- Methacton Community Theater
- Montgomery County Cultural Center
- Montgomery Theater Project
- Mountain Playhouse
- MunOpCo Music Theatre
- · Music Box Players
- Narberth Community Theatre
- New Kensington Civic Theatre
- Nittany Theatre at the Barn
- Old Academy Players
- Old Schoolhouse Players
- Open Stage of Harrisburg
- Opportunities for Youth Productions
- Oyster Mill Playhouse
- Pennsylvania Playhouse

- Pennsylvania Theatre of Performing Arts
- Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival
- Philadelphia Theatre Company
- Pig Iron Theatre
- Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre, Inc.
- Pittsburgh Musical Theater
- The Pittsburgh New Works Festival
- Pittsburgh Savoyards
- Playcrafters
- Players Club of Swarthmore
- The Playhouse at McConnellstown
- The Playmasters
- Quantum Theater
- Rainbow's Comedy Playhouse
- Reading Community Players
- Reitz Theater
- Roadhouse Theatre for Contemporary Art
- Rose Valley Chorus and Orchestra
- Saltworks Theatre Company
- The Savoy Company
- The Shawnee Playhouse
- Showcase Theatre
- Sight & Sound Theatres
- South Hills Players (formerly Baldwin Players)
- South Park Theatre
- Split Stage Productions
- Stage 62
- Stage & Steel Productions
- Stage Right
- Stage Right Productions at Columbus Square
- The Stagecrafters
- Stages of Imagination
- State College Community Theatre
- Stone Arch Players of Lewistown
- Storybook Musical Theater
- Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center
- Theatre Company of Port Richmond
- Theatre Exile
- The Theatre Factory
- Theatre Harrisburg
- Theater of the Seventh Sister
- Throughline Theatre Company
- Totem Pole Playhouse
- Town and Country Players
- Tri Arts at the Sharon Playhouse
- The Unseam'd Shakespeare Company
- Valley Players
- Veronica's Veil Players
- Village Players of Hatboro
- Village Productions
- Warren Players TheaterThe Wilma Theater
- York Little Theatre





Dust Off Your Chops! Participate in a Community Band or Orchestra.

Paul Fox PMEA Retired Members Chair

- "Music lasts a lifetime!"
- "Music makes me !"
- "Make time for music!"
- "Music touches lives!"
- "Music is basic!"

M

ore than titles of PMEA/NAfME/MENC conferences or past themes of Music in Our Schools' month, these concepts bring us back to the roots of why we became musicians and music teachers in the first place.

When a music educator retires, among the many joys and fruits of his/her career-long investment in labor is a sudden life-style change – the glorious transformation of being set free from those things you no longer want nor need to do (routine day-to-day drudgery, paperwork, etc.) and embarking on new journeys to explore and embrace revised personal goals – hopefully including a renewed refocus on making your own music!

Besides being personally fulfilling and simply "fun," regular sessions of making music are good for you! Citing numerous sources in her Association of Concert Bands (ACB) President's Message "Enriching Lives Through Music" in The Journal of the Association of Concert Bands (Vol. 31 No. 2 June 2012 – see http://www.acbands.org/shellenberger-letters), PMEA Retired Member and ACB Past President Judy Shellenberger spotlights the importance of singing or playing music at any age, and its effect on "our brain's system of neural pathways that improve our general measure of intelligence and longevity." According to the Society for Neuroscience, one example of this is that "learning to play a musical instrument refines the entire neurological system. It demands precise movement of muscle groups and combinations of physical processes such as breathing, fingerings and articulations all at the same time."

Additional quotes from Shellenberger's letter include a contribution from Dr. Katrina McFerran, Melbourne Conservatory

of Music, reminding us of the value of creative expression and ensemble participation in our lives. "Making music allows you to put your real self out there and be heard. Group music making is truly empowering and should be an essential part of the human experience," she said. "For those performing in community bands, making music has a stronger relationship to health than listening does, and performing enables us to make stronger social connections."

Shellenberger goes on to say, "In order to function optimally, we need to nourish our brains with nutritious food." In his book, Use Your Brain to Change Your Age: Secrets to Look, Feel, and Think Younger Every Day, Dr. Daniel Amen states, "We must exercise and challenge our brains. Doing crossword puzzles are great but not enough, we need to stimulate our memories." Shellenberger concludes with the essential justification that "new music challenges our brains. Every time we learn a new rhythm pattern we challenge our brain, and when we memorize the passage it increases our brain circuitry to a higher level."

The late June Hinckley, former MENC President, lamented the tragedy when people fail to make music a vital component of life beyond the school years. In her April 2000 article "Music for a Lifetime" in MENC Teaching Music, Ms. Hinckley affirmed her view that music is a life-skill worth nurturing. She said, "I believe we need to be as concerned about community music programs as we are about school music, and to work with leaders to help them understand the vital role each plays in the cultural, social, and aesthetic fabric of our towns and cities as well as in our preschools and K-12 institutions. If music is basic, then it is basic to life's many ages and stages, before, during, and after school for toddlers, school-age youngsters, and adults." And retired members!

So, which pretext do you use to put off joining a community instrumental ensemble?

The top ten (most likely) excuses for not participating in a community band or orchestra:

- I haven't played for years.
- My spouse's "honey-do" list is too long.
- I can't find my instrument.
- I turned my clarinet into a lamp.
- My dog howls at me when I play.
- 6 I'm too busy! My calendar is full
- I have arthritis, or the pressure is changing, so my shoulder, wrist, leg, arm (or whatever) hurts.
- I need new reeds... strings... drum sticks... some valve oil.
- I haven't practiced all week (or month).
- There are no opportunities to perform in my area.

Retirees, hopefully a few of these are not nostalgic – bringing back memories of the justifications for not practicing you may have heard from your own students!

For some of us, the biggest obstacles of re-awakening our love of music and seeking hands-on experience playing in a band or orchestra are overcoming a little inertia, avoiding the blind acceptance of (bad) habits, and not being resigned to the myth that "our busy days and nights won't allow us enough time" or that "we just have not played lately and feel very rusty!"

What is it about amateur music making that seems to be so intimidating? Why do so some people think they have to be a virtuoso or "perfectly prepared" before participating in an ensemble? A few groups like the Community Band South (based in Upper St. Clair, Pittsburgh) generally have a "no student instrumentalists" membership policy (with their hours of in-school rehearsals every week, most high school players have "major chops" and can usually play circles around "the seniors!"). Did you know there is a group in PA called RTO, which literally means "Really Terrible Orchestra?" (but before you jump to any conclusions, better ask the members how they sound today). Finally, does anyone remember Portsmouth Sinfonia, the "spoof" ensemble whose members earned recognition performing (badly) on non-major instruments?

The first big step about getting involved in a community band or orchestra is simply going out and doing it. Dive in! Remember how much FUN it was to surround yourself with likeminded and motivated musicians, all "making connections," "coming together" and collaborating in an "ensemble," exploring and interpreting new music and the classic band and orchestra masterworks, and regularly learning new skills of technique and expression on an instrument?

o facilitate finding an ensemble in your area, please look on pages 36 and 37. This directory of PA community bands and orchestras will be updated (new groups added) from time to time, and new revisions will be posted online (two lists, one sorted by title and the other by location) in the retired members' section under "specialty areas" of the PMEA website: http://www.pmea.net/retired-members/. Please send any corrections or additions to paulkfox.usc@gmail.com). Another excellent resource (especially for contact information) is a link posted on the Association of Concert Bands website: http://www.community-music.info/.

Happy trails, retired members, and enjoy the resurgence of your renewed personal music making! ■

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THE Myths_{of} Retirement

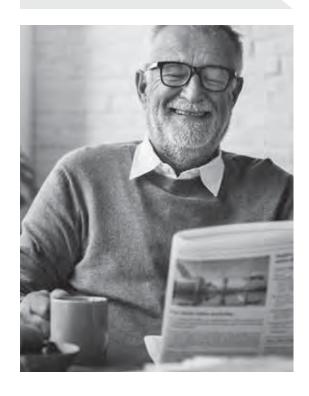
PAUL K. FOX // PMEA Retired Member Coordinator



"We work all our lives so we can retire - so we can do what we want with our time - and the way we define or spend our time defines who we are and what we value."

SOUND ADVICE

- Bruce Linton in *Fatherhood*: The Journey from Man to Dad



DISPELLING FOUR MISCONCEPTIONS INVOLVING ONE OF LIFE'S GREATEST TRANSITIONS

Throughout my travels in presenting at music educator conferences and local workshops, I hear the acceptance of these "top four" preconceived notions about retirement from soon-to-retire music teachers and other professionals.

You retire FROM something.

It's an easy transition.

It takes little time to prepare.

It's completely different from anything you're doing now.

To support or refute these claims, let's "troll the Internet" a little and check-in with a few leading authorities on retirement planning.

You should retire to, not from, something.

"Most people today view retirement as "They are trying to figure out new ways an opportunity to begin a new chapter to be productive. 'Many are wondering: in their lives, 'not a time to wind down What can I do with this stage of and move off the playing field, says my life that is perhaps my highest gerontologist Ken Dychtwald, the CEO of Age Wave, a research think-tank on a psychologist. He has written 16 books aging issues."

purpose?' says Dychtwald, who is also on aging, health, and retirement issues."

- "How to Reinvent Yourself in Retirement" by Nanci Hellmich, USA TODAY: https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/2014/10/12/five-stagesof-retirement/16975707/

"You really should retire to something, not just retire from something... Having a notion of what you are retiring to is also a necessary early retirement planning activity. One that everyone should complete."

"I would say that I just want the freedom to do whatever I want to do. To spend time in the garden, exercise, travel, pursue opportunities that interested me, learn new things, meet new people, etc. I had done the necessary steps of making sure that I had budgeted for my hobbies and our travel wishes. I thought that was enough. However, that wasn't going to occupy all of my retirement days."

"Now I do want and enjoy free time where there are no obligations just as much as the next guy, but I needed to look at what I was really retiring to, so I wouldn't end up one of those unfortunate retirees who say they are bored and wished they had never retired. That is why you should plan to retire to something, not just retire from something."

— "Retire To Something," Leisure Freak Tommy: https://www.leisurefreak. com/non-financial-aspects-of-earlyretirement/retire-to-something/

For many, retirement may not be an easy transition.

"50% of retirees will suffer some form of acute emotional distress. This is potentially a very large problem given the fact that 10,000 people are becoming eligible for Social Security every day for the next 20 years in the US alone."

- Dr. Robert P. Delamontagne in Retiring Mind, Fairview Imprints, 2010: http://www.theretiringmind.com/

"Throughout your working years, you have probably viewed your retirement as a destination. It is a goal you are saving for and will hopefully reach one day. But once you reach this destination, then what?"

"The perception of retirement as a destination may be why some people approach retirement with dread rather than anticipation. They view retirement as a finish line or as the end of the road."

"But retirement is simply a milestone you pass on your journey. It's like crossing the border from one state to the next. The road will continue to unfold before you."

"Your life has changed in countless ways from the time you graduated from school and entered the fulltime work force until the present. You have probably changed jobs and perhaps changed careers. You may have lived in numerous places, gotten married and raised a family. Friends have come and gone, your hobbies and interests have evolved, and your body has changed."

"Your retirement could easily last two or three decades. It won't be a one-dimensional, stagnant state of being. Your life will continue to evolve in many ways after you retire. You may move, the people in your life will continue to shift and you will probably travel to new places and engage in new activities."

— "Your Retirement is a Journey, Not a Destination" by Dave Hughes, RetireFabulously: http:// retirefabulously.com/2017/05/15/ your-retirement-is-a-journey-nota-destination/

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"For some people, retirement planning conjures up images of languid days free from the demands of the daily grind, but for others the prospect of leaving the workforce may be a daunting or even frightening transition."

"For most, this major milestone will elicit a mixture of emotions that fall somewhere between anticipation and apprehension. Retirement is, in fact, a complex experience for almost everyone, characterized by gains and losses and tremendous shifts in identity and routines."

"Unless those challenges are addressed and dealt with, the so-called 'golden years' can be tarnished," says Irene Deitch, PhD, psychologist and professor emeritus at the College of Staten Island, City University of New York. "Even those who may have thought they were prepared can find that the transition is tougher once they're actually in the throes of it."

—"Eight Ways to Ease into Retirement" by Katherine Lee, Everyday Health: https://www.evervdayhealth.com/ longevity/future-planning/happyretirement.aspx

"After the last school bell rings, retired teachers have a leg up. Opportunities cut a broad swath from tutoring to substitute teaching to jobs a little further afield, such as fitness training."

"Teachers have a combination of tools in their kit that many retirees don't - solid degree credentials, expertise in a specific field, and a passion for helping people learn something new."

- "Great Jobs for Retired Teachers" by Kerry Hannon, AARP: https:// www.aarp.org/work/working-afterretirement/info-04-2011/jobs-forretired-teachers.1.html

Preparation to retirement is essential for you and your family members.

"Most gerontologists agree that a period of 1 Sit down with your spouse if you are adjustment will occur during the first years married (and other family members) and of "interning" as a retiree. Even more crucial is the "pre-retirement" or "imagination" stage of retirement, involving your preparation six to ten years prior to "taking the big leap" to FREEDOM!"

"Have you considered a few 'terms of 3 Decide where you want to live after you transformation' below that are all-tocommon to soon-to-be-retirees undergoing that life-changing transition to 'living their dream?' How should you unravel these "conundrums" or mysteries of transitioning to retirement?

- Self-Identity and Change
- Free Time
- Energy and Fortitude
- Losing Control and Perpetual Care"

"The only solution to 'softening the blow' of the possible turmoil and incongruity brought on at this time is to follow the flexibility, and adaptability. Boy Scout rule... BE PREPARED."

Educators by Verne A. Wilson (MENC attorneys, living wills, etc.)" 1989), at least three years before you leave your full-time employment:

plan ahead carefully.

2 Decide when you want to retire. Estimate as accurately as possible what your economic situation will be after you retire.

retire. This means not just the neighborhood, city, or state, but also the kind and style of residence... retirement community, onefloor ranch, apartment, etc.

4 Set some goals regarding how you want to spend your retirement time. Focus on your talents and abilities instead of looking at the handicaps that may come with the aging process.

5 Be prepared for "change" and learn how to accept it and be willing to embrace new opportunities for personal growth,

6 Be sure your intentions are clearly "According to TIPS Retirement for Music stated in writing (wills, power of

— "New Dreams and Horizons" by Paul K. Fox and other sources: https://paulkfoxusc. wordpress.com/2017/08/03/new-dreams-and-horizons/

PMEA is here to assist you in transitioning through all phases of your career and professional growth, surprised to hear that more than 400 active members of PMEA have served never fully retire... and that's perfectly little support and "helpful hints" during retirees! this major "life-changing passage."

What is a good first step? Visit the Retired Member focus area on the PMEA website and view the "How-toincluding preparing for "living the Retire-Guide" video at https://www. dream" in retirement and personal youtube.com/watch?v=LluJ_0ctC4o. self-reinvention once you leave your Also, check out the other resources full-time employment. You may be and retirement articles in past issues of PMEA News and the Retired Member Network eNEWS which are archived at 30 or more years in teaching. Some may https://www.pmea.net/retired-members/.

okay! However, many of you may need a Happy trails, soon-to-be and current

"We were fortunate to have Dr. John V. D'Ascenzo join the PMEA Retired Member Coordinator at the last PMEA Summer Conference, assisting on the session "Retirement 101 - Retiree Stories and Strategies," which was held on July 17-18, 2018 at the Red Lion Hotel in Harrisburg, PA."

"John provided a lot of interesting perceptions and coping tips for the 'soon-to-retire!' He shared new segments for consideration with references."

"The evaluating of personal and professional paths prior to and at the time of retirement leads to behavioral changes that promote positive outcomes (Krawulski, de Oliviera Cruz, Medina, Boehs & de Toledo, 2017). Activities would include:

- Giving and/or receiving education/training.
- Volunteering roles: leadership, followership
- Pursue different career paths for remuneration or gratis."

Retired Member Network eNEWS, August 2, 2018: https://www.pmea.net/wp-content/ uploads/2018/07/Retired-Member-Network-eNEWS-080218.pdf

"Once you've decompressed sufficiently,

you might want to consider doing a career

redesign. Unlike many other careerists,

retired teachers have the freedom and the

financial ability to put together a 'second-

act' career, tailored to the life they want.

Keep in mind, U.S. pension policies have

restrictions on post-retirement income, so

"If you're feeling ready to begin again,

here are ten opportunities you should

keep a close check on those caps."

definitely consider.

2. Specialized Test Prep

3. College Application Support

4. College Adjunct Teaching

8. Educational Consulting

1. Tutoring

9. Translator

"Most teachers spend their first year of "retirement" decompressing from the full-time teaching gig. It's that special time you've looked forward to for years. You do some traveling, catch up on all those books you never had time to read, and just relax. Your days are free of ringing bells and reports. Plus, you get to spend a much larger part of your day in your pajamas. Yay! You earned it. You know you've arrived when Labor Day stops feeling like D-Day."

"After a year or so, however, you may start to realize you actually miss working. Not that you miss the standardized tests, parent conferences and grade reports. But something in that work stimulated you in a way nothing else comes close 5. Career and Life Coach to doing. Perhaps you miss the pleasure 6. Tour Guide you felt creating learning units, or the joy 7. Writing and Editing of introducing students to a new author, or the collaborative bonds with fellow teachers. These were true enjoyments and 10. International Schools" now they are gone."

— "Ten Great Encore Careers for Retired Teachers" by Peter Spellman, Nextcalling: https:// nextcalling.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/10-Great%E2%80%98EncoreCareers %E2%80%99-for-Retired-Teachers.pdf

"Prior to retiring, you should make a concerted effort to prepare for 'life after work, including:

- Cultivate interests outside work
- Lead a healthier lifestyle
- Revitalize family relationships
- Spend more time with spouse
- Embrace spirituality or meditation
- Nurture friendships and make new friends"

- "Retire Happy: What You Can Do Now to Guarantee a Great Retirement" by Richard Stim and Ralph Warner, USA TODAY/Nolo Series: https://www.amazon. com/dp/141330835X/ref=rdr_ext_tmb

"Many people want to continue to work. In fact, 72% of pre-retirees, age 50 and older, say they want to keep working after they retire, according to a recent survey sponsored by Merrill Lynch in partnership with Age Wave. Almost half (47%) of current retirees either are working, have worked, or plan to work in retirement, the survey found."

— "Work in Retirement: Myths and Motivations," by Merrill Lynch in partnership with Agewave: https://agewave.com/wp-content/ uploads/2016/07/2014-ML-AW-Work-in-Retirement_Myths-and-Motivations.pdf

Retirement may or may not be completely different to what you are doing right now.

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Now What?

COL. THOMAS H. PALMATIER // U.S. Army (Retired)

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At some point, every band or orchestra director will either retire or move to another career. While there is much emphasis on mentorship and other ways to assist new directors, there are almost no programs to help us with this potentially more difficult transition. The U.S. Army has a mandatory program for anyone leaving the service to prepare them for the next phase of their life. Even with assistance, leaving a job you love is tough for everyone. I want to share some of the lessons learned in the research I've done into this issue.

In my case I had, over 37 years, established an identity as a music director and a soldier. Prior to retirement from the Army, I was the senior music director in the U.S. Armed Forces and was on "speed dial" of many officials in the Department of Defense, the Congress, and of course, the media. I received 500 to 600 emails daily from all over the world. By the way, I also was leader and commander of the US Army Band "Pershing's Own," one of the largest (and busiest) military music units in the world. Then one day I was no longer in the Army; my phone wasn't ringing constantly, the email stopped, and my schedule was

mostly free. Sounds great, right? As a band or orchestra director, you were probably the most well-known and well-liked person in your community. You had students, parents, and administrators who relied on you. And then suddenly, you are not that person any longer. For each of us, there are emotional/psychological, social/family, and financial impacts of this transition.

The identity you developed over the years is now essentially gone. I was fortunate to have a colleague warn me that about six months after retiring I would hit a wall of depression. And he was so right. Because I had been warned about it, I was able to act with my health care provider. Now imagine if, upon your transition, you are now spending more time with your spouse/ partner then you would ever have before, but then find yourself unhappy. Studies show increased divorce rates soon after retirement or a career transition because people make the mistake and/or assumption that their depression is related to spending time with their spouse.

Brett Favre reportedly said when ending his first retirement from pro football that the one thing about having nothing to do is that it doesn't take long to do it. To overcome boredom (and depression) it's important you know how you see yourself now and how you want others to see you. For many years, your identity was band/orchestra director. What's your identity going to be now?

The impact on your social relationships can be equally challenging. Most of us develop a circle of friends in the music and education communities. When you are no longer "in the biz," who will your friends be? What will you talk about besides the awesome halftime shows you are no longer writing? This all goes back to who you are now, not who you used to be.

The financial impacts of retirement or transition are unique to every individual. However, if you intended to become self-employed, be serious about it. Create a limited liability company (LLC). Most states let you do it online and it usually costs no more than \$100. Keep meticulous records and don't mess with the IRS. Done right, you can legally deduct lots of things

as business expenses. Remember, you don't have a music library anymore, so you will be buying lots of scores (don't be one of those folks whose library is full of illegal photocopies!).

If you're going to follow the self-employed path, be aware that self-marketing, maintaining a website (see mine @ thomaspalmatier.com/), and bookkeeping take a lot of time.

There is one terrific way to stay relevant in our profession – being a mentor. I encourage you to read my article in the August 2018 issue of SBO Digital Magazine called "Be a Mentor – Get a Mentor." ■

Col. Thomas H. Palmatier (USA-Retired) is the former leader and commander of the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" and commander and conductor of the United States Army Field Band. He holds degrees in music education from the Crane School of Music (SUNY/Potsdam) and Truman State University, as well as a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the US Army War College. He is an active clinician, adjudicator, and guest conductor of concert bands, orchestras, British-style brass bands, jazz ensemble, and marching bands. He is a Conn-Selmer clinician and a member of the American Bandmasters Association.

Top 5 takeaways for those approaching retirement or a career transition

Start preparing as far in advance as possible

Be prepared for the inevitable challenges. If you are unhappy or depressed, get help!

You get to define yourself now

Stay relevant - be a mentor

Enjoy it!

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One Happy but **Solitary Retiree**

PAUL K. FOX // PMEA Retired Member Coordinator

WRITTEN FOR RETIRED AND SOON-TO-RETIRE PMEA MEMBERS **DURING THE PANDEMIC**



as the onset of COVID-19 fostered within us newly acquired "habits" of self-isolation and social distancing? For example, during the "red" and "yellow" phases of the PA state quarantine, with the exception of healthcare appointments, grocery pick-ups, and mail deliveries (as well as a few other essential services), weren't we banished to staying indoors for the most part, allowing only an occasional excursion to pick up take-out food or walk the dogs?

And, did many of us begin to feel a bit claustrophobic and worried about the future?

Desiree Dickerson at https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00933-5

Do not underestimate the cognitive and emotional load that this pandemic brings, or the impact it will have on your productivity, at least in the short term. Difficulty concentrating, low motivation and a state of distraction are to be expected. Adaptation will take time. Go easy on yourself. As we settle into this new rhythm of remote work and isolation, we need to be realistic in the goals we set, both for ourselves and others in our charge.

The purpose of this article is to reflect on measures which can bolster our sense of well-being, stimulate new directions of personal growth, and help us endure the unpredictable "ups and downs" connected to this period with the gradual re-opening of businesses, schools, leisure and volunteer activities, and life as we knew it before the pandemic.

SELF-CARE AND THE CORONAVIRUS

Geisinger Health at https://www.geisinger.org/healthand-wellness/wellness-articles/2020/03/18/17/56/selfcare-during-quarantine

According to mental health providers and experts in wellness such as Geisinger Health, it is important to your overall health to make time for personal self-care.

From watching the news every hour to scrolling social media a little too much, it's easy to get lost in the noise of what's going on around us. And you're not alone in this... There are some simple steps you can take to protect your mental health, in addition to your physical health.

Geisinger recommends these practices of self-care during a quarantine (applicable to any major emergency):

- ➤ Make time to unwind.
- **Exercise to promote good health.**
- ➤ Be mindful to support your immune system.
- ➤ Take breaks from the news.
- ➤ Remind yourself why you are in isolation.

Here are a few more websites which may help if you are feeling depressed, confused, or just not coping well with the "corona chaos..." (like us all):

- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/ daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html
- https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00933-5
- https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/03/26/822114301/covid-

19-self-care-tips-from-the-world-health-organization

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? JUST MAKE MUSIC!

If truth be told, as a writer and a musician, I personally don't mind having all of this extra time to focus on creative self-expression. Think about it... What have you always wanted to explore... play... sing... compose... record... conduct... create? When will you finish your own "Mr. Holland's Opus," prepare the parts, and eventually have it taught, performed, and/or recorded? When are you going to publish your next song, article, book, warm-ups, instrumental method, essays on pedagogy, musical, drumline feature, or halftime show...or write your personal memoirs?

Well, what's stopping you from devoting yourself to it RIGHT NOW?

COSTS AND RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ALL OF THIS "SOCIAL DISTANCING"

Robert Hall at https://ifstudies.org/blog/avoiding-a-rela- tionship-pandemic

Yes, we have ways to stay in touch electronically - via text, email, videoconferencing, and social media, but it is not the same. In fact, many studies indicate that the more time we spend on social media, the less happy, less empathetic, and more envious we are.

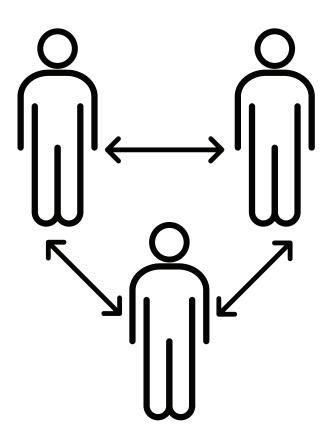
The very act of meeting face-to-face, making eye-contact, and physically touching nourishes us but also exposes us to the coronavirus. We all know of the infant mortality research showing that babies deprived of physical touch experience development limitations. It is no different for adults. The Atlantic quotes Tiffany Field, the founder of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami, in describing the power of physical touch:

"...any pressure or movement on the skin helps increase the activity of the Vagus nerve, which connects to every major organ in the human body. Touch from another human slows down the heart. It goes to the GI tract and

helps digestion. It helps our emotional expressions—our facial expressions and our vocal expressions. It enhances serotonin, the natural antidepressant in our system. That vagal activity can also lower a body's levels of the stress hormone cortisol; cortisol is known to harm the "natural killer cells" that can fight viral, bacterial, and cancer cells."

Field concludes by noting that as people are now especially stressed over the consequence of the virus, they have even greater need of these valuable effects of touch, now that they are afraid to hug or shake hands as usual.

Indeed, what I miss most is the human interaction ... the ability to share two-way verbal and musical communication in an ensemble. I long for sharing music with the players in my community orchestra - the South Hills Junior Orchestra - who, before the outbreak, rehearsed every Saturday for two hours at my former employment placement, the Upper St. Clair High School. I have to settle for sending them more of my "howto" music articles ("Fox's Firesides") and basically low-tech "distance learning opportunities" discussed in one of my blogposts here: https://paulfox.blog/2020/04/02/engaging-mu- sic-students-online/









GO-TO-MEETING, **GOOGLE MEET, OR** ZOOM.COM

Zoom is not a great vehicle for a "free and easy" exchange of ideas nor being able to "monitor and adjust" the learning of a class-size group of students. We use it, and other choices like Go-To-Meeting and Google Meets, because we HAVE to use them. It's better than nothing. It's important to at least "check in" with the members of your community, church, or school band, orchestra, or choral ensemble, and give them a chance to talk to one another, if only by allowing the use of the chat feature or unmuting all of their mikes at once. (But, get ready for a loud cacophony of sound!)

Zoom offered a package that is free as long as you stay under 40 minutes for your virtual meetings of more than two people. The sound (delayed and designed for voice, not music) is not great, and you will need to do a quick study of how to adjust the technology to fit your needs. Several websites offer some advice on adaptations for music educators:

- https://youtu.be/vH0GwfVFJlc
- https://theonlinemusicteacher.com/teaching-music-online-with-zoom/
- https://youtu.be/bqF7XUnin2Q
- https://doublebassblog. org/2020/03/the-newbiesguide-to-teaching-online-music-lessons.html

being solitary is not being alone

DON'T BECOME A "COUCH POTATO!" GET ACTIVE AND STAY ACTIVE!

Michael S. Rosenwald at https://www.washingtonpost. com/local/these-are-boom-times-for-boredom-and-theresearchers-who-study-it/2020/03/27/0e62983a-706f-11ea-b148-e4ce3fbd85b5_story.html

hat we don't want to do during this crisis is to spend most of our time watching television. Besides being totally unhealthy, sitting in your easy chair like a lump and watching hours upon hours of generally, in my opinion, totally uninspiring programming will drain the gray matter from your brain. I don't know if I could stand watching another PBS broadcast rerun, "National Geographic" episode, or "Nature" program.

The bottom line: being solitary is not being alone. And even if you are left alone at a given moment, you should never be bored!

"Boredom isn't good or bad," said John Eastwood, who runs the Boredom Lab at York University in Canada

and is co-author of Out of My Skull, a forthcoming book on boredom. "It's what we do with that signal."

That's a confusing moment, especially amid the pandemic, with news outlets and social media publishing endless lists of things to do with all the new-found time, from the juiciest TV to downloading hours of podcasts — a digital bounty that Newton, thankfully, didn't encounter.

"When you don't have a lot going on, you might say, 'Wow, I'm going to binge watch Netflix. This is perfect." Eastwood said. "That will get rid of the feeling in the short term. But treating yourself like an empty vessel to fill with a compelling experience makes you more ripe for boredom down the road."

Why?

"Because what you've done," Eastwood said, "is you've failed to become the author of your own life."



List for Retired and Soon-to-Retire Music Teachers

So, here are my ten things-to-do when stranded at home during any period of forced inactivity or voluntary self-quarantine:

- **1.** Use Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, etc. to "call" several loved ones, friends, coworkers, or neighbors in your life, and "check in" with them to see how they're doing. They would appreciate hearing from you!
- **2.** Feeling lonely or a little down yourself? Reach out to someone. Studies show that when we connect with someone, we release the hormone oxytocin, a chemical that can actually help repair your heart. Simply talking about our problems and sharing our emotions (positive and negative) with someone you trust can be profoundly healing—reducing stress, strengthening our immune system, and reducing physical and emotional distress.
- **3.** Practice. No matter your choice of instrumental or vocal self-direction, or exposure to the self-exploration of other art forms like painting, drawing, sculpture, sewing, woodworking, photography, or writing, now is the perfect time to develop greater levels of personal artistry, proficiency, and self-confidence... even to establish new goals/pursuits. I have found that mornings work best for me with anything that requires creativity. (Brainstorming for this article occurred at 8:20 AM one morning,

- after sleeping-in a little, watching the news, and having my breakfast and coffee).
- **4.** Go outdoors and exercise. Get your body moving... a little every day! If you are lucky to have a furry pet or two, venture into the neighborhood with them...of course, wearing a mask, maintaining "safe social distancing" (even the dogs have to stay feet apart from the two-legged mammals), and adhering to the essential rules of pet walking etiquette and citizenship (mentioned here: https://paulfox.blog/2017/03/17/ pet-ownership-retirement/).
- **5.** Return to those "old fashioned" leisure activities: listen to your favorite music or read a book. Revisit something from that Hornblower (C. S. Forester) or Tom Clancy series (my frequent "gems"). When I needed a break in college (100+ years ago?), I took the afternoon off, ordered myself a medium pizza (yes - I ate it all!), and then walked to the Oakland branch of Carnegie Library to sit in those wonderfully comfortable high-back leather chairs and pull out one of my "old friends" to read.
- **6.** In other sections of my blog site (https://paulfox.blog/category/

- creativity-and-education/), I have already discussed avenues for developing the right side of the brain, mainly our innate creativity and curiosity quotient. Visit these notable sites: https://nationalcreativitynetwork.org/, https://curiosity. com/, http://sirkenrobinson.com/, https://www.theodysseyonline. com/10-websites-for-creative-people, http://curtbonk.com/bobweb/ r546/modules/creativity/bob handouts.html, and https://www. danpink.com/pinkcast/.
- **7.** Working or making puzzles can be a relaxing pastime. Some people like to create them (I drew mazes when I was in grade school), while others try to solve them. My wife can sit for hours completing crossword puzzles or assembling the pieces of a virtual jigsaw puzzle on her iPad. If you like making word games, look at websites like http:// puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation. com/ or https://www.puzzle-maker.com.
- **8.** If you are in a "tidy mood," now would be a great time to reorganize, de-clutter, or sort through your closets, cupboards, or drawers. Put aside unused or unneeded clothing for Goodwill or the Salvation Army. Have you indexed your record/CD/

DVD collection? One year, I alphabetized (by author) and reordered the entire collection of sea books on the shelves in my library (100's of fiction and nonfiction editions). Do librarians or data base managers get bored easily?

9. If you are lucky enough to be a pensioner and can rely on a somewhat safe monthly income coming in, you might be surprised that this might be a good opportunity to save money. My wife and I have suddenly stopped going out to our favorite restaurants, which was our usual practice 3-5 times a week. Cooking and eating at home, although raising our grocery budget, has brought down our overall

food expenses. "Put away a little green every month while eating those healthy greens!" (You may quote me!) And, if you can tolerate the stock market doing it's "roller coaster ride," consider planning a few new long-term investments if/ when you decide the prices are low or discounted enough during the economic crisis.

10. Finally, schedule a virtual field trip. During our careers and now retirement, my wife and I were never much into traveling around the country or the world. Professional responsibilities (string camp, music workshops, youth orchestra tours, and the extended marching band season) usually precluded taking

cruises or long vacations. There are a lot of places on the planet to which we have not journeyed. One thing a lot of people have discovered during these shelter-in-place restrictions is the amazing number of FREE online resources that transport us to museums, galleries, architecture "wonders of the world," online films of Met operas and Broadway musicals, etc. Plan to take a handful of these wonderful "Internet trips." Thanks to the advance "legwork" done by Andrea Romano, many of these destinations are easy to find: https://www.travelandleisure. com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours).

opefully we will not have a re-emergence of SARS-CoV-2 with the corresponding return to the mandated stay-at-home orders! But if it becomes necessary, here are a few more websites with suggestions about conquering boredom or avoiding sliding into a sedentary lifestyle during these "challenging" times:

- ➤ "50 Things to Do on a Boring Day at Home" by Daniel Hatch: https://www.danielbranch. com/50-things-to-do-on-a-boring-day-athome/
- ➤ "How to Stay Busy at Home During the Coronavirus Outbreak - and Support Small Businesses at the Same Time" by Olivia Harrison: https:// www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/03/9552059/ things-to-do-at-home-during-coronavirus-ac-<u>tivities</u>
- "30 Fun Things to Do at Home" by Charlene https://www.lifehack.org/articles/life-Tops: style/30-fun-things-home.html

- "15 Ways to Practice Self-Care in the Time of Coronavirus" https://qz.com/1818622/how-to- practice-self-care-during-coronavirus/
- "10 Things to Do if You're Stuck at Home" Nina Eyu https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=qD-x0SoiTaE
- "100 Things to Do While Stuck Inside During a Pandemic" by USA Today https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/health-wellness/2020/03/16/ coronavirus-quarantine-100-things-do-whiletrapped-inside/5054632002/

So, now it's your turn. The world is your oyster. Get out there and crack it!

Best wishes for your continued good health, safety, happiness, and finding a little music and meaning in every day!

Paul K. Fox is a retired music teacher and administrator from the Upper St. clair School District. Paul is currently the PMEA State Retired Members Coordinator and Chair of the PMEA State Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention.

AROUND THE STATE



PAUL K. FOX PMEA Retired **Members Coordinator**

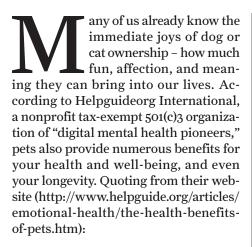












"Dogs in particular can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, ease loneliness, encourage exercise and playfulness, and even improve your cardiovascular health."

Studies have found that dogs improve our mood and health:

 Pet owners are less likely to suffer from depression than adults without pets.







- · People with dogs have lower blood pressure in stressful situations than those without pets
- Playing with a dog or cat can elevate your levels of serotonin and dopamine, which calm and relax.
- Pets can help lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels (indicators of heart disease).
- · According to the American Heart Association, heart attack patients who have dogs survive longer than those without.
- Pet caretakers over the age 65 make 30 percent fewer visits to their doctors than those without pets.

Once you reach full retirement, you may find yourself with a lot more "freedom" and time "at-home" to share with your spouse, other loved ones (babysitting grandchildren/nieces/nephews?), friends, personal music-making, hobbies, and pets! Indeed, this may be the first chance you have to go out and rescue a dog from an animal shelter. Full-time music teachers with those incredibly packed schedules of after-school/evening marching band practices, choir, band, orchestra, jazz, musical, and/or dance rehearsals and performances, their own concert gigs, private lessons, etc. may not be able to properly care for a dog by themselves. The only reservation to bringing a new dog into your home is if you plan to take a lot of long trips in retirement. Perhaps then, you can revisit the option of animal adoption after taking several cruises, safaris, and cross-country road trips. Pets need your love and attention!

Having a dog or cat as a retiree will support many healthy lifestyle changes, such as (from HelpGuide.org):

- Increasing exercise
- · Providing companionship
- · Staying connected and meeting new people
- Reducing anxiety
- Adding structure and routine to your day

- Providing sensory stress relief
- Helping you find meaning and joy in life
- · Boosting vitality

You need to read the entire HelpGuide. org blog-post and Harvard Health Publications for more information about dog ownership and issues dealing with heart-health, weight-loss, boosting your immune system, bipolar disorder, PTSD, Alzheimer's patients, and children with learning disorders. They provide additional tips on choosing a pet, and the costs and commitment associated with them. Other excellent online resources include:

• Humane Society of Canada:

https://www.humanesociety.com/images/pdfs/ silverpawshealthreport.pdf#sthash.mgy17Fnv. dpuf

• Live Science:

http://www.livescience.com/35463-seven-surprising-health-benefits-dog-ownership-110209.html

• USA Today:

http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/2014/09/02/owning-pets-in-retirEment/14436947/

• The Seattle Times:

http://www.seattletimes.com/health/ pets-can-reduce-stress-cholesterol-obesity/

The New York Times:

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/14/business/retirementspecial/retirees-love-their-pets. $html?_r=0$

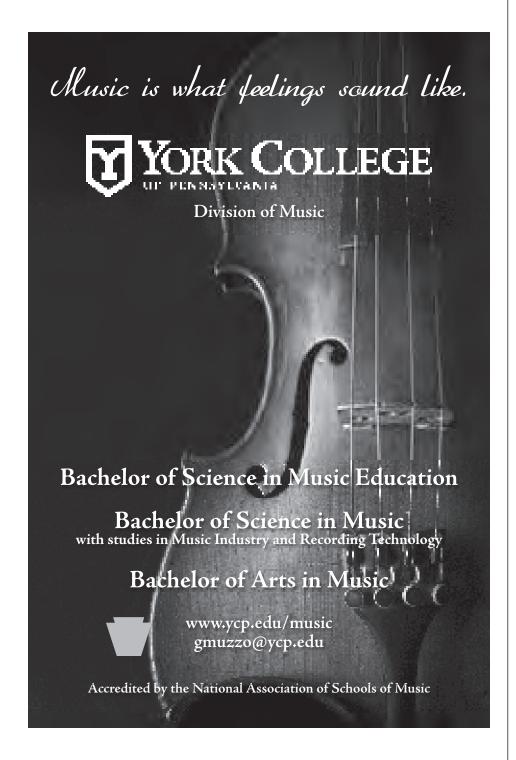
Several of my own experiences learning and growing with Brewster (a yorkie-poo) and Gracie (a bichon frise), "new children" added to my household immediately after retirement, are shared at https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/2015/09/22/what-i-havelearned-from-my-dogs-in-retirement/. Here are a few of the intangible..... some "rules for healthy living" our pets model and we realize by having them:

- Life is all about taking a long walk, smelling the roses (and everything else), bamboozling another treat from "daddy," and getting your ears scratched or belly rubbed.
- Live enthusiastically in the "here and now."

- Forgive unequivocally and immediately, and always run to greet loved ones when they come home.
- Whenever possible, fearlessly explore the fringe (almost beyond the reach of the leash).
- Relax and snuggle with someone you love as often as possible.

So for what are you waiting? Go out and find a dog or cat to rescue... or at least pet one! You'll be glad you did!

Paul K. Fox is a retired music teacher and administrator from the Upper St. Clair School District. Paul is currently the PMEA State Retired Members Coordinator and Chair of the PMEA State Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention.





Reaching Out to Retired and Soon-to-Retire Music Teachers:

Retirees - Help Shape the Future of Music Education

PAUL K. FOX // Retired Member Coordinator

reetings to all retired PMEA members! Hope this retired member column finds you well and successfully engaged in the pursuit of creative self-expression and inspiring music-making!

The good news is that our numbers are increasing exponentially, and PMEA retired membership renewals are recovering nicely since the COVID shutdowns. And even more positive, a larger percentage of our retirees are actively engaged in the profession and contributing to PMEA. THANK YOU!

I was most gratified to see so many retired members register for the PMEA Annual Conference at Kalahari Resort, the site of "the world's largest indoor water park!" We had more than 37* retirees, the majority of whom were able to "break bread" together during our annual retired member breakfast on the Friday morning of the conference. It was GREAT catching up with everybody. But another remarkable surge of participation came from our collegiate members – more than 400* preservice students were in attendance. It makes you stop and ponder. That's a ratio of better than 10 college music education majors to 1 retiree.

That brings up the main point for this article. Anticipating an onslaught of perhaps the greatest number of new music teacher recruits entering PA classrooms for the first time over the next 1-5 years, we need to connect those enthusiastic but inexperienced "rookies" with our truly valuable retired member resource. My opinion? Every new hire throughout the Commonwealth in 2023-24 and beyond should be introduced to a PMEA retired member "advisor." We could serve as the ultimate "phone-a-friend" that would be available to provide

mentoring help as needed – at least a shoulder to lean on or suggestions for a place to go for more assistance.

Are you up to this challenge?

When I retired in 2013, the PMEA Mentor Program was not available to retired members. Guess what? The "rules" have changed. After all, aren't retired members who spent three decades or more qualified to help? A resounding YES! For example, my retired wife and I may be ten years away from full-time teaching, but we were still able to share our "secret tips and insights" at the *Plucking Our Minds* session during the PMEA District 5 Professional Development Day in February. (Our slides are available at https://paulfox.blog/becoming-a-music-educator/.) To us, our full-blown jobs seemed like yesterday...

With a little training, all PMEA members actively engaged in music education can now become mentors. Currently, PMEA has trained mentors available in every specialty area, instructional level, and demographic region. Why don't you consider joining this force of exemplary professionals who have shown they are ready to answer questions music teachers may have about lesson planning, instructional methods, classroom management strategies, curriculum, assessment and data collection, communication, music technology, the SLO process, purchasing of music, media, and equipment, etc., and to discuss problems both beginning and experienced music teachers may be facing in their teaching situation.

To take that first step, please contact one of the PMEA Mentor Program Co-Coordinators:

Lisa Endler – <u>endlli@whsd.us</u> – Woodland Hills SD Eric Plum – <u>eplum@gcasd.org</u> – Greencastle-Antrim SD

Another way to make a difference would be to signup for the <u>Retiree Resource Registry</u> (R³). More than 145 retirees have volunteered to serve as "informal consultants" for no charge and have provided their contact information. Check out the first section of the retired member focus area on the PMEA website www. pmea.net/retired for links to find an R³ assistant. Retirees and those who are soon-to-retire can sign-up for R³ on this page. The R³ will also reserve a place for you in the history books – online archival of your career assignments, accomplishments, and current activities in music.

What's a-Happening in Your Lives?

As a follow-up to the excellent reunion during the conference, we seek to reach out to all PMEA retired members and learn more about what's going on in your neck of the woods! Please share any new music

or teaching gigs, volunteer activities, hobbies, trips, household projects, family member news, etc. and send photos of these "happenings!" These narratives will make interesting additions to our semi-annual PMEA *Retired Member Network eNEWS*. Your colleagues just want to know how things are going!

Send an email to Retired Member Coordinator Paul Fox at paulkfox.usc@gmail.com or type this link into your browser and complete the Google Form: https://forms.gle/3tgG3jq7zpgwKBZXA

Let us hear from you TODAY!





Your Retirement is a Journey, not a Destination

DAVE HUGHES Author

Ihroughout your working years, you have probably viewed your retirement as a destination. It is a goal for which you are saving and will hopefully reach one day. But once you reach this destination, then what? The perception of retirement as

a destination may be why some people approach retirement with dread rather than anticipation. They view retirement as a finish line or as the end of the road. But retirement is simply a milestone you pass on your journey. It's like crossing the border from one state to the next. The road will continue to unfold before you.

Your life has changed in countless ways from the time you graduated from school and entered the full-time work force until the present. You have probably changed jobs and per-

haps changed careers. You may have lived in numerous places, gotten married, and raised a family. Friends have come and gone, your hobbies and interests have evolved, and your body has changed.

Your retirement could easily last two or three decades. It won't be a one-dimensional, stagnant state of being. Your life

will continue to evolve in many ways after you retire. You may move, the people in your life will continue to shift, and you will probably travel to new places and engage in new activities. You may not see your life changing much on a day-to-day basis, just as it didn't seem

"Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul."

> to change much during your working years. But whenever you stop and reflect back over a year, five years, or ten years, you will be amazed at how much has changed and how your life continues to evolve.

> Your retirement journey will probably pass through several phases. They won't be delineated by specific events or ages,

but by gradual transitions. The phases will overlap and some will last longer than others.

THE GO-GO YEARS

If you retire in your mid-50s to mid-

60s, you will probably still be in reasonably good health and be able to live an active and independent lifestyle. Despite your chronological age, you don't feel old yet. In fact, you're not even sure what "old" is supposed to feel like. These are the years you will probably fill with traveling, physical activities, and organizations to join. You'll have plenty of time for gardening and home projects, and you may move to a different place to enjoy your retire-

ment. Your schedule may seem as full as it was when you worked, but being busy and active at this stage of your life is good for you both mentally and physically.

THE SLOW-GO YEARS

After a while, age will start to catch up to you. You will probably still travel, but your suitcase will seem heavier and your daily itinerary will be lighter. You'll probably favor shorter trips to closer destinations. While you may not be able to engage in as much physical activity, there's still plenty to do. You can continue to stay mentally engaged by taking classes and enjoying concerts, theatre, and museums. There are still many hobbies and crafts you can enjoy which do not require strenuous activity. You will probably appreciate more time for relaxation.

THE NO-GO YEARS

Ultimately, you will reach a point where you will have to curtail many of the activities you have enjoyed up to this point. You may require some assistance from family members, friends, or hired help, or you may need to move to an assisted living or continuing care facility.

Fortunately, there are still things you can do. You will have more time for reading, enjoying your music or movie collection, or working puzzles. If you like to write, you can create your memoir, document your family history, or write poetry or fiction. With all of today's communication media, it is easier than ever to stay in touch with your family and friends and keep up with what is happening in the world.

Knowing that your retirement will change over the course of many years will raise your awareness of the possibilities you have for the rest of your life. If you have a long list of things you want to do after you retire, you will be better able to plan for what you should focus on during each phase of your retirement. On a more philosophical level, you will be able to appreciate the passage of time and the gifts that each phase of your life has to offer.

This article for PMEA Retired (and soon-to-retire) Members, guest-authored by Dave, is an excerpt from his book Smooth Sailing into Retirement: How to Navigate the Transition from Work to Leisure. The complete book is available from Amazon in paperback or Kindle format.

Dave Hughes is a leading authority on retirement lifestyle planning and writes about the non-financial aspects of living a happy, healthy, and fulfilling retirement on his website RetireFabulously.com. Dave has contributed articles to U.S. News, Next Avenue, and lgbtSr.org, among others. His previous book is Design Your Dream Retirement: How to Envision, Plan For, and Enjoy the Best Retirement Possible.



SOUND ADVICE



Sailing Through a **Proverbial Sea of Self-Help Books on** Retirement

OOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS. Do you still read them? Are "best sellers," "new releases," or "rare finds" still on your "wish list" radar? (And don't you continue to enjoy the feel and smell of a leather-bound hardback?)

As for non-fiction printed matter, there are several ways to learn something new by reading about it. One is the tutorial format, a.k.a. an instrument of "programmed learning." Another approach is the comprehensive reference manual or user-guide. Finally, many people prefer a narrative story, perhaps a fictitious account that features characters exploring and revealing insights on the topic you are studying.

Do you recall the first time you had to learn a complicated new computer application? After installing it to your computer and some initial nail-biting, you trotted down to the bookstore to purchase "something" to illuminate how to use Corel WordPerfect for DOS or Adobe Pagemaker for Mac (two historic examples no longer available today). Usually you were greeted with a choice for the same software package... a comprehensive user manual or a tutorial workbook!

> The goal for all of us soon-to-retire and already retired teachers should be to "learn the ropes" and "cruise" through strategies for transitioning to a happy, healthy, and meaningful retirement, coping with life-style changes/ altered expectations, and finding creative new ways to self-reinvent and thrive. I am applying this "travel plan"

> > for you to "map out" a voyage of several mini-book reviews. Now all that is needed is to focus on your favorite learning style, pick up a few inexpensive paperbacks, turn off the music or TV, lie back in your "hammock," or "jump in!"



If you were looking for a reference manual, I continue to recommend Ernie Zelinski's How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free (2016). The chapters are laid out by general concepts you need to understand. However, as in many user guides, you could turn to almost any page in the volume, skim it or skip around (in any order) to specific areas on which to focus, e.g. tips on travel (page 165) to health/wellness (page 109), and not lose the overall meaning.

How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free is one of the easiest-to-read and most humorous publications on the market and among the best resources for a frank discussion of the emotional aspects of "Crossing the Rubicon" and "living the dream" to post-employment bliss. Quoted from the book's Preface:

"Retirement can be both exciting and demanding, bringing new challenges, new experiences, and new uncertainties. Regardless of how it turns out, retirement normally turns out far different from what people first envision. For some, it is a big disappointment. For others, it is merely a big annoyance. And still for others - much to their delight - retirement becomes an opportunity to live life like never before."

As you may recall from the Summer 2017 retired members' column in PMEA News, Zelinski's "anchors" his book with the three essentials that work fulfills and that everyone must find themselves in retirement:

- 1. Purpose (life-fulfilling goals)
- 2. Community (social interaction)
- 3. Structure (format and schedule)

The tutorial's approach is a logical progression of chapters/how-to sections that usually must be read and completed in order. There are often worksheets, exercises, or activities to complete at the end of each chapter. The hierarchy of these "units" builds a sequential set of competencies which you must master one by one, a prerequisite before going on to the next section. Julia Cameron's book It's Never Too Late to Begin Again (2016) is a perfect example of this method. It is based on her earlier work, The Artist's Way (also a tutorial), plus 25 years of teaching artists to "unblock their creativity" using her tools "Morning Pages" (stream-of-consciousness writing) and "Artist Date" (reserved weekly block of time to nurture your creativity). Perhaps both editions should be consumed/and worked chapter-by-chapter.

In It's Never Too Late to Begin Again, Cameron's introduction is her "mainsail" and sets the tone for her lessons on "defining and creating the life you want to have aws you redefine and recreate yourself."

In this book, you will find the common problems facing the newly retired: too much time, lack of structure, a sense that our physical surroundings suddenly seem outdated, excitement about the future coupled with a palpable fear of the unknown. As a friend of mine worried recently, "All I do is work. When I stop working, will I do... nothing?"

The answer is no. You will not do "nothing." You will do many things. You will be surprised and delighted by the well of inspiration that lies within you - a well that you alone can tap. You will discover you are



not alone in your desires, and that there are creativity tools that can help you navigate the specific issues of retirement.

inally, in the inspirational style of creating characters that act out a story, the book Refire! Don't Retire (2015) "moors the fleet" with an easy-to-understand narrative, specifically how to "make the rest of your life the best of your life."

The fictitious "Larry and Janice Sparks" share anecdotes of their experiences, modeling potential opportunities of retirees enhancing relationships, stimulating minds, revitalizing bodies, growing spiritually... basically rekindling passion in every area of their lives.

Co-authors Ken Blanchard and Morton Shaevitz relate their chance first meeting on a business trip:

"So, what are you into and what's new in your life," was the beginning of our plane conversation. For the next fifteen minutes, we spoke with growing enthusiasm and animation. We talked about the things we were doing, and especially what we were excited about. When Morton mentioned he was working in the area of older adults and looking at aging from a new and different perspective, Ken piped up and said he'd been thinking about similar issues. The term he was using was "refire" - an attitude of embracing the years ahead with enthusiasm rather than apathy. At that moment, this book was born.

Their story, a parable on coming to grips with retirement, is organized in five key sections:

- Refiring Emotionally
- · Refiring Intellectually
- Refiring Physically
- Refiring Spiritually
- Putting It All Together

Don't "abandon ship!" If you need additional ideas for your reading "voyage," I have taken the "liberty" to add a few more recommendations:

- Design Your Dream Retirement: How to Revision, Plan For, and Enjoy the Best Retirement Possible by Dave Hughes (Prickly Pair Publishing, 2015)
- Disrupt Aging: A Bold New Path to Living Your Best Life at Every Age by Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO of AARP (Perseus Books Group, 2016)
- Happy Retirement The Psychology of Reinvention: A Practical Guide to Planning and Enjoying the Retirement You've Earned by Kenneth S. Shultz (Penguin Random House, 2015)
- Honey, I'm Home How to Prevent or Resolve Marriage Conflicts Caused by Retirement by Robert P. Delamontagne (Fairview Imprints, 2011)
- How to Survive Retirement: Reinventing Yourself for the Life You've Always Wanted by Steven Price (Skyhorse Publishing, 2015)
- The Joy of Retirement: Finding Happiness, Freedom and the Life You Always Wanted by David C. Borchard (AMACOM, 2008)
- Purposeful Retirement How to Bring Happiness and Meaning to Your Retirement by Hyrum W. Smith (Mango Publishing Group, 2017)
- The Retiring Mind How to Make the Psychological Transition to Retirement by Robert P. Delamontagne (Fairview Imprints, 2010)
- Shifting Gears to Your Life and Work After Retirement by Carolee Duckworth and Marie Langworthy (New Cabady Press, 2013)
- TIPS: Retirement for Music Educators by A. Verne Wilson (Music Educators National Conference, Rowman & Littlefield, 1989)

The "ship's log" of all retirement sources, the Ultimate Retiree Resource Guide, is "docked" on the Retired Members' section of the PMEA website: https://www. pmea.net/retired-members/.

To sum it up, I will echo "Captain" Ernie Zelinski's final thoughts:

"The way I see it, you will have attained true freedom in this world when you can get up in the morning when you want to get up; go to sleep when you want to go

to sleep; and in the interval, work and play at the things you want to work and play at - all at your own pace. The great news is that retirement allows you the opportunity to attain this freedom."

[This article was revised and expanded from its original releases "Three Exit Lanes to Self-Help Retirement Guides" at https:// paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/2016/06/27/3exit-lanes-to-self-help-retirement-guides/ and NAfME Music in a Minuet "Post-Employment Prep: New Places to Go" at https:// nafme.org/post-employment-prep-newplaces-go/.]

Paul K. Fox is a retired music teacher and administrator from the Upper St. Clair School District. Paul is currently the PMEA State Retired Members Coordinator and Chair of the PMEA State Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention.

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For Retired or Soon-to-Retire Members: Self-Reinvention and Service in Retirement

PAUL K. FOX // PMEA Retired Member Coordinator

o, what do you want to be when you grow up? I won't grow up I don't wanna go to school *Just to learn to be a parrot and recite a silly rule* If growing up means it would be beneath my dignity to climb a

I'll never grow up... not me!

I won't grow up I don't want to wear a tie And a serious expression in the middle of July And if it means I must prepare to shoulder burdens with a worried air

I'll never grow up... not me! So there!

— Excerpt from "I Won't Grow Up" song by Mary Martin from the musical Peter Pan.

Perhaps a better question to ask yourself: Where do you see yourself in five years? A decade? Or more? If you are about to reach that magical milestone of post-full-time employment - now sometimes referred to as "second beginnings," "next chapter," "rest-of-life," or even "rewirement," congratulations, and WELCOME to "living the dream!"

YES! And if you have recently "Crossed the Rubicon" into this blissful new freedom from the daily grind, you deserve a break - a prolonged rest or vacation - to go off and do something new, glorious, or on your "bucket list."

However, as cited by numerous sources and media (example "What Retirement Means Now" by Eilene Zimmerman in the New York Times), "the vision of life after [age] 65 for American workers has changed."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, by 2028 there will be 43 million people 55 and older in the work force.

Eighty-six percent of 5,168 workers across three generations who

participated in an online survey by [the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies] had positive associations with "retirement," citing words like "freedom," "enjoyment," and "stress-free." And although their retirement plans include the expected, like travel, hobbies, and spending more time with friends and family, they also include working. — The New York Times

Many people want to continue to work. In fact, 72% of preretirees, age 50 and older, say they want to keep working after they retire, according to a recent survey sponsored by Merrill Lynch in partnership with Age Wave. Almost half (47%) of current retirees either are working, have worked, or plan to work in retirement, the survey found. — Ken Dychtwald, Age Wave

Gerontologists and retirement experts alike will tell you that the first three stages of retirement - "imagination" (5 to 15 years before leaving your job), "anticipation" (1 to 5 years before "freedom"), and "liberation" (first year of retirement) provide opportunities to rethink, recharge, reinvent, and retool new ways to redefine one's life-purpose and meaning, become productive, and begin that new chapter in their lives.

People move towards retirement in a myriad of ways. According to Ida O. Abbott in her guided workbook Retirement by Design ((Ulysses Press, 2020), "sometimes they start using one approach then shift to another." A few common patterns:

- **Ease in.** Some people just want to relax. For decades, they have had busy schedules and worked extremely hard. Now they have the time to take it easy and do just what they want without feeling guilty about it
- **Stay involved.** Many professionals want to stay active in their field but on a modified basis or in a different way...
- **Start an encore career.** Many people want to keep working but not in the same field. They might become entrepreneurs, go into public service, or take a job in a field that interests them.
- Seek new adventures. Adventurers view retirement

- as a chance to try something completely new. They might pursue an unrealized dream or recently discovered passion...
- ➤ Study. Professionals like to learn, and there are any number of programs and courses in most communities and online that feed that desire...
- ➤ Search. For many people, the best way forward isn't at all clear. They spend time exploring and experimenting, trying out new ideas to see what sticks.... The journey itself can be fulfilling.
- From Retirement by Design by Ida O. Abbott

This "life passage" is totally unique to every individual. Author and 2019 PMEA State/NAfME Eastern Division Conference guest speaker Dave Hughes confirmed that "retirement is a journey not a destination," and for many practitioners, may usher into their lives a constant state of flux.

One model for extraordinary personal growth as a "senior citizen" may be the "retiring" Ben Franklin:

Having worked as a successful shopkeeper with a keen eye for investments, Franklin had earned his leisure, but rather than cultivate the fine art of indolence, retirement, he said, was "time for doing something useful." Hence, the many activities of his retirement were scientist, statesman, and sage, as well as one-man civic society for the city of Philadelphia. His post-employment accomplishments earned him the sobriquet of "The First American" in his own lifetime, and yet, for succeeding generations, the endeavor that was considered his most "useful" was the working life he left behind when he embarked on a life of leisure..."

https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/09/how-americalost-track-of-benjamin-franklins-definition-of-success/400808

There are so many ways to "bring it on" and "make a difference" in your "golden years." For example, the website https://www.volunteermatch.org offers a glimpse of many volunteer opportunities, which can be refocused on a search of your specific location:

- ➤ Escort patients at a local hospital or nursing home
- ➤ Walk dogs at an animal shelter.
- ➤ Serve in a charitable fund-raising project.
- ➤ Assist food banks and meals-on-wheels agencies.
- ➤ Enlist as special advocate for abused or neglected children.

- Work as a 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, tutoring sessions, or performing arts workshops.
- Give guided tours or lectures as a docent at a local museum.
- ➤ Apply your office management and clerical skills to benefit libraries and other nonprofit associations.
- ➤ Run a school club (share your hobby).

As a trained music educator, you can share your skills and experiences 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 PMEA District or at the State level.
- ➤ Serve as presiding chair or member on the PMEA planning or listening committees for PMEA inservice conferences
- ➤ Participate as guest lecturer or assist on a panel discussion group at a conference, workshop, or college methods program.
- ➤ Adjudicate music festivals or assess seating/ placement auditions.
- ➤ Help plan or manage a local festival or workshop.
- ➤ Assist the local music teacher (if asked) with teaching privately, playing piano, charting marching bands, coaching sectionals, setting-up music technology, repairing instruments, etc.
- ➤ Write articles for professional organizations' publications (like *PMEA News*).

Finally, as you approach retirement and after a suitable break from all the nonstop, "24/7 action" with which you surrounded yourself as a music teacher, revisit your own creative pursuits of making music, rekindling your uniquely personal expressiveness. Ask yourself these questions:

- ➤ Why did you go into music and education in the first place?
- ➤ What have you always wanted to... play, sing, compose, conduct, explore, learn, or create?
- ➤ When will you finish your own "Mr. Holland's

- Opus," and have it performed and recorded?
- ➤ When are you going to publish your next song, musical, article, book, set of warmups, instrumental method, essays on pedagogy, drumline feature, halftime show... or write your personal memoirs?
- When do you plan to join a community band, orchestra, chorus, dance troupe, or theater group? Lists of PA amateur/community ensembles are posted on the PMEA website under the retired members "focus area" http://www.pmea.net/retiredmembers/.

So, what are you waiting for? Retirement prep is not all about the finances. It's more about "dreaming big" and reinventing yourself for the next half-century. What do you want to be when you grow up?

UPCOMING BOOK REVIEWS

featured in the *Retired Member*Network eNEWS winter edition
(January 2022):









> SOUND ADVICE

Sing Your Heart Out... **Now and in Retirement**

Paul K. Fox PMEA Retired Members Coordinator

Isn't the Internet a wonderful place to validate something you have always known? After only a brief Google search, the research seems overwhelming! Here are my top five reasons all of us should participate in a choir... throughout our adult lives!

1. SINGING PROMOTES A HEALTHY IMMUNE SYSTEM.

If you've ever been in a choir, you've probably been told that the proper way to sing is from your belly.

The idea is to use your diaphragm - the large muscle that separates your chest and abdominal cavities - to push air out through your vocal cords.

Using your diaphragm to sing is a good way to promote a healthy lymphatic system, which in turn promotes a healthy immune system. - Dr. Ben Kim at http://drbenkim.com/articles-singing-for-health.htm.

2. SINGING SOOTHES THE SAVAGE BEAST... AND MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER!

As the popularity of group singing grows, science has been hard at work trying to explain why it has such a calming yet energizing effect on people. What researchers are beginning to discover is that singing is like an infusion of the perfect tranquilizer, the kind that both soothes your nerves and elevates your spirits.

Group singing is cheaper than therapy, healthier than drinking, and certainly more fun than working out. It is the one thing in life where feeling better is pretty much guaranteed. - Stacy Horn at http://ideas.time.com/2013/08/16/singing-changes-your-brain/

3. DON'T YOU WANT TO LIVE LONGER? SINGING IS "HEART HEALTHY!"

Regular exercising of the vocal cords can even prolong life, according to research done by leading vocal coach and singer Helen Astrid, from The Helen Astrid Singing Academy in London. "It's a great way to keep in shape because you are exercising your lungs and heart."

Singing... helps you live longer according to the findings of a joint Harvard and Yale study, which showed that choral singing increased the life expectancy of the population of New Haven, Connecticut. The report concluded that this was because singing promoted both a healthy heart and an enhanced mental state. -

Heart Research UK at http://heartresearch.org.uk/fundraising/ singing-good-you

4. THINK "KARAOKE!" SINGING BUILDS "CONNECTIONS" WITH EACH OTHER AND SOCIAL CONFIDENCE.

Colette Hiller, director of Sing The Nation, is convinced that singing builds social confidence by helping individuals connect to each other, and to their environment. "Think of a football stadium with everyone singing," she says. "There's an excitement, you feel part of it, singing bonds people and always has done. There's a 'goosebumpy' feeling of connection."

Chorus America, an organization of singing groups in the United States of America, conducted a survey a few years ago, and found that more people in the U.S. and Canada take part in choral singing more than in any other performing art, since they feel that singing in a chorus builds social confidence. Nikki Slade, who runs The Priory, a chanting and voice-work class, believes that the benefits of singing are linked to the primacy and power of the human voice - and that it is our basic instinct to use it. "People are naturally free and expressive," she says, "but it's something that has been lost on a day-to-day basis." Singing can help restore that lost connection. - http://www.shankarmahadevanacademy.com/ community/articles/view/6/

5. SINGING REDUCES STRESS AND PAIN, AND BENEFITS "SENIOR CITIZENS" ESPECIALLY WELL.

Studies have linked singing with a lower heart rate, decreased blood pressure, and reduced stress, according to Patricia Preston-Roberts, a board-certified music therapist in New York City. She uses song to help patients who suffer from a variety of psychological and physiological conditions.

"Some people who have been traumatized often want to leave the physical body, and using the voice helps ground them to their bodies," Preston-Roberts says. "Singing also seems to block a lot of the neural pathways that pain travels through."

Singing, particularly in a chorus, seems to benefit the elderly particularly well. As part of a three-year study examining how singing affects the health of those 55 and older, a Senior Singers Chorale was formed by the Levine School of Music in Washington, D.C.

The seniors involved in the chorale (as well as seniors involved in two separate arts groups involving writing and painting) showed significant health improvements compared to those in the control groups. Specifically, the arts groups reported an average of:

- 30 fewer doctor visits
- Fewer eyesight problems
- Less incidence of depression
- Less need for medication
- Fewer falls and other injuries

The seniors themselves also noticed health improvements, said Jeanne Kelly, director of the Levine School of Music, Arlington Campus, who led the choral group. The seniors reported:

- Feeling better both in daily life and while singing
- Their everyday voice quality was better
- The tone of their speaking voice did not seem to age as much
- Easier breathing
- Better posture -

http://www.sixwise.com/newsletters/06/06/07/how singing improves_your_health_even_if_other_people_shouldnt_hear_ you_singing.htm

Okay, besides that crack about "elderly" in that last article (I'm not old, yet!), the evidence seems conclusive! For our general health, feelings of well-being, improved social connections, and "just having fun," we should all be motivated TODAY to go out and find a community choir and start singing regularly in a group. Enough said?

Similar to the "nearly comprehensive" listing published by PMEA retired members in the Fall 2015 issue of PMEA News, check out the sample directory of Pennsylvania community choruses on pages 58 and 59. The files of PA community bands and orchestras and choirs will be updated (new groups added) from time to time, and new revisions will be posted online in the retired members' section under "focus areas" of the PMEA website: http://www.pmea.net/retired-members/. (Please send any corrections or additions to paulkfox.usc@gmail.com.) You should go to the website to see the groups separately sorted by ensemble's name and by location.

For both the instrumental and choral groups, we are most thankful to the contributions of our "dream team" of PMEA researchers/editors (as of January 5, 2016): Jan Burkett, Craig Cannon, Jo Cauffman, Deborah Confredo, Susan Dieffenbach, Timothy Ellison, Joshua Gibson, Rosemary Haber, Estelle Hartranft, Betty Hintenlang, Ada Jean Hoffman, Thomas Kittinger, Chuck Neidhardt, Sarah Riggenbach, Ron Rometo, Joanne Rutkowski, Marie Weber, and Terri Winger-Wittreich. Now, what are you waiting for? Go out and... sing!

PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY CHORUSES

- Abington Choral Club Abington
- Abingtones Abington
- Alle Kiski Showtime Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Lower Burrell



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- Alleghney Goodtime Singers (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Coudersport
- Allegheny Sounds Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International)
 Franklin
- · Altoona Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) Altoona
- Ambler Choral Society Ambler
- Andulhea Chorus Hamburg
- Anna Crusis Women's Choir Philadelphia
- Arcadia Chorale Chinchilla/Scranton/Wilkes Barre
- Arbel Chorale Philadelphia
- Armstrong Festival Chorus Ford City
- Bach Choir of Pittsburgh Pittsburgh
- Belle Voci of Pittsburgh Pittsburgh
- Blair Concert Chorale Altoona
- Blazing Star Choral Society Butler
- Brandywine Valley Chorale Kennett Square
- Bucks County Choral Society Doylestown
- Bucks County Women's Chorus Holland
- Bucks-Mont Camerata Chorus Horsham
- Bucks-Mont Squires of Song (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Langhorne
- Butler Notables (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Butler
- Cantata Carlisle Carlisle
- CANTATICA Chamber Ensemble Allentown
- Canto Spianato Greensburg
- Cantus Novus Yardley
- Cathedral Choral Society Philadelphia
- Central Pennsylvania Womyn's Chorus Harrisburg
- Chamber Arts Guild Doylestown
- Ches-Mont Jubilaires (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Pottstown
- Chestnut Street Singers Philadelphia
- Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia Philadelphia
- Choral Arts Society of Upper Perkiomen Valley Pennsburg
- Choral Arts Society of Northeast Pennsylvania Scranton
- The Choristers Lansdale
- Chorus of the Poconos (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Scotrun
- Coal Cracker Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Tamaqua
- Colonial Revelers (Historical Harmonies) Philadelphia
- Conewango Clippers (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Warren
- Cordus Mundi Bucks County
- Country Gentlemen (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Doylestown
- Cumberland Singers Harrisburg
- Del-Chord-ians (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Broomall
- Delaware Valley Show Chorus (Sweet Adeline's
- International) Springfield
- DuBois Diplomats (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) DuBois
- Endless Mountains Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) -
- Tunkhannock
- Ephrata Cloister Chorus Ephrata
- Essence 2 State College
- Flagship City Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) Erie
- Freedom Valley Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) Chambersburg
- Gettysburg Civic Chorus Gettysburg
- Grantham Oratorio Society Grantham
- Greater Cranberry Bogmeisters (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Mars
- Greater Harmony Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International)
 Gibsonia
- Greater Harrisburg Chorus (Sweet Adeline's International)
 Quentin

- Greater Johnstown Community Chorus Johnstown
- Greater Philadelphia Chorale Philadelphia
- Hanover StandardBred Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Hanover
- Harrisburg Choral Society Harrisburg
- Harrisburg Singers Camp Hill
- Hershey Community Chorus Hershey
- Highlands Alumni/Community Choir Natrona Heights
- Horseshoe Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Hollidaysburg
- Hummelstown Community Chorus Hummelstown
- Indi-Anna Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) -
- Indiana
- Jerusalem Singers Allentown
- Keystone Capital Chorus Harrisburg Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society Camp Hill
- Keystone Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Pittsburgh/Whitehall
- King Beaver Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Beaver
- Lake Erie Sound (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Erie
- Laurel Harmony Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) Greensburg
- Laurel Highlands Chorale Somerset
- Lebanon Choral Society Lebanon
- Lebanon Senior Singers Lebanon
- Lehigh Valley Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) Hellertown
- Lehigh Valley Gay Men's Chorus Bethlehem
- Lehigh Valley Harmonizers (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Bethlehem
- The Mainliners (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Exton
- Mansfield University Festival Chorus Mansfield
- Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh Pittsburgh
- Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia Philadelphia
- Mercersburg Area Community Choir Mercersburg
- MFE (Music for Everyone) Lancaster Community Chorus Lancaster
- Mon Yough Chorale White Oak
- Monroeville Community Chorus Monroeville
- Mountain Laurel Harmonizers (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Bradford
- NBC Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) New Bethlehem
- New Horizons Senior Glee Club Clifton Heights
- Nittany Knights Barbershop Chorus State College
- Norristown Chorale Norristown
- North Hills Chorale Allison Park/McCandless
- The North Pennsmen (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Lansdale
- Northampton Community College Chorus Bethlehem
- Northeasters (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Honesdale
- Olde Town Harmony (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Grove City
- Palisades Community Chorus Pipersville
- Parkside Harmony Enola
- Penn-Ohio Singers (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Hermitage
- Pennsbury Community Chorus Bucks County
- Philadelphia Chorus Philadelphia
- Philadelphia Freedom Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) Wallingford
- Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus Philadelphia
- Pittsburgh Boy Choir Pittsburgh
- Pittsburgh Camerata Pittsburgh
- Pittsburgh Concert Chorale Pittsburgh
- $\bullet\;$ Pittsburgh South Keystone Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Pittsburgh
- Pretzel City Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Laureldale
- PRIMA CANTICA York

- Prima Vocal Ensemble York
- PRIMA VOX York
- Reading Choral Society Reading
- Reading Pagoda Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) -
- Red Rose Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Lancaster
- Red Rose City Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) Lititz
- Renaissance Rhythm Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) - Beaver Falls
- Ringing Hills Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) -Douglassville
- Roxborough Male Chorus Philadelphia
- The Sentimentalists Harrisburg
- Shenango Valley Chorale Sharon
- Singing Cedar Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Lebanon
- Singing City Philadelphia
- SLC Community Choirs Quarryville
- Sounds of Liberty (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) -
- Philadelphia
- Sounds of Pittsburgh Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) - Coraopolis
- Spirit of the Alleghenies (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) -St. Marys
- State College Choral Society State College
- Steel City Harmonizers (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Pittsburgh
- Susquehanna Chorale Messiah College
- Susquehanna Valley Chorale Sunbury/ Susquehanna University
- Susquehanna Valley Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) - Bloomsburg
- Sylvan Chorale Harrisburg
- Valley Chorus Athens
- Valley Chordsmen (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Belle Vernon
- Valley Forge Chapter (Sweet Adeline's International) – Villanova
- Venango Barbertones (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) -Franklin
- Village Singers/Tri-County Choir Institute - Sewickley
- Voices of Palmyra Hershey
- Voices of the Valley (formerly known as Lebanon Valley College Alumni Chorale) -Lemoyne
- Vox Ama Deus Gladwyne
- Vox Philia Reading
- Washington Festival Chorale Washington
- West Branch Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) -McEwensville
- West Chester Area Community Chorus -West Chester
- Westmoreland County Community College Community Choir - Youngwood
- Wheatland Chorale Lancaster
- White Rose Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) York
- Williamsport Chamber Choir Williamsport
- Williamsport Civic Chorus Williamsport
- Wyoming Valley Chorus (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) -

Pittston

- Yesterday's Sound (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.) Meadville
- York County Honors Choirs York

Sources for choir contact information:

- American Choral Directors Association: http://choralnet.org/list/choir
- Johnny Appleseed District of the Barbershop Harmony Society (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.): http://www.singjad.com/chapters/pennsylvania/
- Mid Atlantic District of the Barbershop Harmony Society (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.): http://www.midatlanticdistrict.com/
- Seneca Land District of the Barbershop Harmony Society (S.P.E.B.Q.S.A.): http://senecaland.org/
- Sweet Adelines International: http://www.sweetadelineintl.org/ index.cfm?id=84 ■





Soon-to-Retire "Toolbox"

PAUL FOX // PMEA Retired Member Coordinator



reetings to our newest music teacher retirees and those active members contemplating retirement over the next several years!

In case you missed them, here are several guides, articles, and blogposts to help you "weather the transition," analyze, assess, and plan towards "self-reinvention," and find happiness and the essential key elements of "purpose, structure, and community" during the dawn of your post-full-time employment years.

What word is often repeated in these resources? PREPARATION! Don't wait until you submit your "letter of intent" or notify administration to begin consuming these "words of wisdom" from our happy, already-retired members!

Many of these tips have been shared in past PMEA News articles and postings on NAfME Music in a Minuet and Amplify, and are also available for perusal at what should be your "first stop" in getting ready for retirement - the "gold mine" of materials archived at the Retired Member "focus area" on the PMEA website: https://www.pmea.net/retired-members/.

PMEA's top-three tools for your "first response"

- Ultimate Retiree Resource Guide/Bibliography https://paulfox.blog/for-re-
- Prepping for Post-Employment https:// www.pmea.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Retire-Prep-Revised-102219.pdf
- The How-To-Retire Video https://www. youtube.com/watch?v=LluJ 0ctC4o



- "Design Your Dream Retirement" handout from Dave Hughes' session at PMEA/NAfME Eastern Division Spring 2019 Conference https://www.pmea. net/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Design-Your-Ideal-Retirement-by-Dave-**Hughes.pdf**
- "Retirement Planning It's Not Always About the Money" PMEA Summer 2017 Conference https://www.pmea.net/ wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Retirement-Planning-Its-Not-About-the-Money.pdf



- "When Should You Retire? The Skills and Models of a Happy Retirement" https:// nafme.org/when-should-you-retire/
- "T-minus Three Years and Counting... Countdown to a Smooth and Satisfying" https://nafme.org/countdown-smooth-satisfying-retirement/
- "Retirement... It's a Private Matter" https://nafme.org/retirement-private-matter/
- "Post-Employment Prep New Places to Go" https://nafme.org/post-employ- ment-prep-new-places-go/
- "Surviving and Reveling in Retirement" https://nafme.org/surviving-and-reveling-in-retirement/



e hope you are making plans to attend the PMEA's Annual Spring In-Service Conference which will be held on April 23-25, 2020 at the Kalahari Resort in the Poconos. At every conference (summer, too!) we present a "Retirement 101" session for retiring and retired members.

Finally, since the PMEA staff and Retired Member Coordinator cannot begin to "guess" when you are nearing your final year or two "on the job," it is recommended that you get a head start and read the Retired Member Network eNEWS e-publication archived on the PMEA website and linked to every PMEA Update. From bad senior citizen jokes to retiree updates, insights, and book reviews, eNews is sent to PMEA Retired Members every month.

That's a lot of reading material! Good luck on preparing for "living the dream!" As we say after every article and *eNEWS* bulletin: "Happy trails, retirees!" ■

Paul K. Fox is a retired music teacher and administrator from the Upper St. Clair School District. Paul is currently the PMEA State Retired Members Coordinator and Chair of the PMEA State Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention.



SOUND ADVICE

Paul K. Fox PMEA Retired Members Coordinator

URVIVING

AVOIDING TURMOIL. TRAUMAS, TANTRUMS AND OTHER TRANSITIONAL PROBLEMS

How do most retirees face the tumultuous passage of saying goodbye to full-time employment? According to Dr. Yvette Guerrero of the University of California/San Francisco, "Compelling and challenging, the retirement process involves transitioning to a new identity. This process can become self-empowering and lead to creative ways to self-reinvent and thrive." The research of counseling psychologist Dr. Nancy K. Schlossberg is worth reading. She identifies the following approaches to retirement, as quoted from http://www.apa.org/research/action/ retire.aspx:

- Continuers who continued using existing skills and interests:
- Adventurers who start entirely new endeavors;
- Searchers who explore new options through trial and
- **Easy Gliders** who enjoy unscheduled time letting each day unfold:
- Involved Spectators who care deeply about the world, but engage in less active ways;
- **Retreaters** who take time out or disengage from life.

Any or all of these are perfectly "okay!" It's really all about "different strokes for different folks." As a very recent practitioner of this journey, I have one observation concerning former Type-A super-scheduled personalities (a.k.a music teachers) facing this momentous life-style change:

You either love retirement or hate it!

In his book, The Retiring Mind, Dr. Robert P. Delamontagne estimates that "50% of retirees will suffer some form of acute emotional distress. This is potentially a very large problem given the fact that 10,000 people are becoming eligible for Social Security every day for the next 20 years in the US alone."

Dr. Guerrero shares the likely (good and bad) emotions during

the pre- and post-retirement process:

- Excitement
- Joy
- Freedom
- Accomplishment
- · Peace of mind
- Optimism
- Ambivalence
- Sadness (re: loss /change in professional identity, collegial community)
- Anxiety (angst)
- Pessimism

So, try to dodge a few of the potential "mental health issues" along the way. (These are my "pet-peeves.")

Amnesia or feeling a loss of identity:

- No one remembers who I am."
- "They took everything away from me" (ID badge, e-mails, master keys).

This is possibly followed by the dreaded ego-centric inferiority complex: "What happened to all the activity?" or "Where is everybody?" or "Who am I?" or secretly thinking "Why am I not the center of attention anymore?" Someone wise once told me not to be alarmed when even your own music students forget you after two or three years. Not having you in class, nor hearing your name on the public address, nor seeing you in the halls, nor watching you direct an assembly, ensemble or musical, it is perfectly natural that your identity will likely fade away as the "graduates" leave and the new enrollees enter the building. However, since I was still working with the marching band (and had been involved in so many other extra-curricular activities), I figured I might have a year or two before disappearing into obscurity. Surprise! One month from step-

ping down, I was walking my dogs at the high school and came upon a junior girl and her mother in a "driving training session." I shouted out "hello" (my yorkie-poo didn't even bark), and the girl immediately rolled up her windows and moved away... "Stranger danger?" A few minutes later, when the opportunity presented itself (mom and driver switched seats), I introduced myself and received a blank look when I reassured them, "I just retired from this school. Surely you remember Mr. Fox?" Nope. Don't expect it. Anyway, there are advantages to losing the spotlight and becoming totally anonymous!

Delusions of grandeur or superiority complex:

"Let me help train my replacement" (in my image).

Big mistake! What's that saying? "It's like trying to teach a pig to sing... it just wastes your time and annoys the pig." The new-

comer to your former position is not you, and probably does not want your blow-by-blow assistance. You will only become frustrated when he/she goes his/her own way, does his/ her own thing, leaving you (appropriately) on the sidelines mumbling to yourself "but that's not what's supposed to happen!"

Denial:

"I'm not retired."

This malady is very common. Unless you have simply changed jobs and moved on to new full-time employment (teaching at the college, etc.), you are retired. PSERS and your mother said so! Retirement is a "state of mind" and now is it the time to "smell the roses," stop living in the past, and start filling and fulfilling bucket lists of new goals and "fun things I always wanted to do!"

Sitting around the house isn't just bad for your mental health; it's bad for your physical fitness as well. Phobias and "the fear of the unknown" limit some retiree's willingness to "venture out," go outside his/her "comfort zone," and try new things - like volunteer, sign-up to do charity work, visit family and friends in other places, share your hobbies and skills with the community, go back to school to learn something new, etc. Of course, retiring from music education does not mean you do not embrace avenues of creative self-expression with greater frequency-singing, playing an instrument, conducting community/church groups, composing, teaching private lessons, etc.

Finally, try to avoid forming any new addictions: too much TV watching, sitting around, over-eating, etc. Amit Sood, author of The Mayo Clinic Guide to Stress-Free Living, writes "This a time of enormous change. You

are leaving your job and friendships with colleagues and finding new things to do." Sood recommends many stress-reduction strategies: "Realize that your brain's reward center likes variety, so give yourself a variety of experiences." He adds, "Let your best friends not be the TV, refrigerator or couch. Let your best friends be real people, books and sports shoes. Treat your first year in retirement as if you are 'interning' to give yourself time to readjust and set new expectations," he concludes. "Find meaning in new passions, including possibly using your work skills in a new job or volunteer work."

Okay, class... any questions?

What should I do with 100 pounds of old lesson plans? Downsize and throw out. Unless you are teaching college methods courses, you will never need them! Besides, you could make



a little extra spending money participating in a garage sale or flea market selling all of those old file cabinets, folders, binders, and other school supplies. Really, how many staple removers or pairs of scissors do you really need?

What is this fascination about getting old? I love the blogs by Sydney Lagier (see http://retiredsyd.typepad.com/about.html) who sums up the "age thing" with the following in her article Retirement: A Full-Time Job - The Unfettered Pursuit of Happiness:

"There are three phases of aging. The first phase is where you feel young because you actually are young. The third phase is where you feel old because you actually are old. And the phase in-between is where you feel young but everyone thinks you need to sit down."

What concrete advice can you offer me in preparation for the big "R?"

- 1. Continue your membership in PMEA (and enjoy those discounts - lower cost membership fee, almost-free registrations to conferences, etc.).
- 2. Peruse articles, past eNEWS issues, and other resources posted on the Retired Members' section under the "Specialty Areas" link of the PMEA website: http://www.pmea.net/ retired-members/.
- 3. Check out these additional websites for more advice on weathering the transition:
 - http://www.fool.com/investing/general/2014/09/27/3tips-for-surviving-your-first-year-of-retirement.aspx
 - http://health.howstuffworks.com/wellness/aging/retirement/10-tips-for-adjusting-to-retirement.htm#page=0
 - http://www.wikihow.com/Survive-Retirement

- 4. Here's your reading list (you are required to read at least one of these):
- How to Retire Happy, Wild and Free by Ernie Zelinski (my personal favorite)
- How to Love Your Retirement: The Guide to the Best of Your Life by Barbara Waxman
- Retire Smart, Retire Happy: Finding Your True Path in Life by Nancy K. Schlossberg, EdD
- With Purpose: Going from Success to Significance In Work and Life by Ken Dychtwald, Ph.D.
- The Healing Journey Through Retirement: Your Journal of Transition and Transformation by Phil Rich, Dale S. Fetherling, and Dorothy Madway Sampson
- My Next Phase: The Personality-Based Guide to Your Best Retirement by Eric Sundstrom, Michael Burnham, Randy Burnharm, Michael Burnham, and Randy Burn-
- The Joy of Retirement: Finding Happiness, Freedom, and the Life You've Always Wanted by David Borchard
- 5. To review past PMEA News articles and other helpful hints, go to the WordPress site "retirement resources" authored by your PMEA State Retired Member Coordinator (Paul Fox) at https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/ category/retirement-resources/.

We always close with "happy trails, retirees!" Best wishes on the preparation to and realization of a safe, happy, healthy, and fulfilling retirement! Please keep in touch: paulkfox.usc@ gmail.com.

After 35 years of teaching, Paul K. Fox retired as Performing Arts Curriculum Leader and String Teacher of the Upper St. Clair SD in June 2013.



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AROUND THE STATE



PAUL K. FOX Retired Members Coordinator

Time Management and Retirement

any decades ago, one of my school colleagues served as a guest writer for a "how to get organized" article for PMEA News, citing a system called Priority Management (PM), methodology and business tools to immediately route every piece of paper and the "to-do tasks" that come into your life to one of the four D's:

- Do it!
- Date it!
- Delegate it! or
- Dump it!

PM's "WorkingSm@rt method" promises to help you "gain control over your day, find balance, prioritize your work, and reach your goals," giving you time to focus on the tasks that are important to you. The bottom line - every post-it-note, piece of mail, receipt, slip of paper, email or other communication - must be "put in its place" on the spot - either done instantly, deferred to another time, given to someone else to do, or THROWN OUT! (See www.prioritymanagement.com/. It is a strategy that seems to improve time management and organizational efficiency, at least for office managers or business professionals, and it did help me survive "the avalanche of paper" and "administrivia" in those early days as a busy, multi-tasking music director!)

This baby boomer never enjoyed that prophesied revolution of a "paperless society." Did you? PM recommends the cre-

ation of a "future reading" file, a subcategory of "date it." Experts on Google Mail will extol the merits of creating a folder and categorizing/storing messages such as emailed issues of MEJ, Kappan, SB&O, and other digital editions of professional newsletters. I have found that this doesn't work very well, even in retirement. The file folder just fills up, and I never seem to get around to reviewing the things I thought were so important to save. The generation of our grandmothers enjoyed clipping articles (and coupons) out of newspapers. Perhaps, just printing a small excerpt of what you want to peruse later and putting it in a letter tray would be a better suggestion? However, perhaps the ideal solution would be to designate a specific daily half-hour or more for something they used to schedule the middle school students I taught: "silent and sustained reading."

If you read one of my favorite books on retirement, How to Retire Happy, Wild and Free (Ten Speed Press 2016), you can revisit Ernie Zelinski's circle of "life/work balanced activities." Imagine pie slices of the exact same size (and priority):

- Job or Volunteer Work
- Family, Relationships
- Friends and Colleagues
- Community Activities
- Self-Care Sports/Exercise
- Religious/Spiritual Philosophical Concerns
- Hobbies/Interests
- Future Plans/Projects

Dave Hughes makes it even simpler in Design Your Dream Retirement: How to Envision, Plan for, and Enjoy the Best Retirement Possible (2015) with his principles for a balanced life: physical activity, mental stimulation, social interaction, and personal self-fulfillment.

Recently "hot off the press," another excellent "retiree release" is the book Purposeful Retirement: How to Bring Happiness and Meaning to Your Retirement by Hyrum W. Smith (Mango Publishing Group 2017). In his third chapter, "Discovered Values, Directed Time," Smith begins by quoting BJ Gallagher, a popular keynote speaker and author of more than 30 books:

"Retirement is not for me. It's for the people I can serve. It's for the friends and family I can help and the younger generations I can teach. Now is the time for me to pass along what has so generously been given to me." - BJ Gallagher

Bravo! I agree wholeheartedly, and most retirees I know say they truly desire to "make a difference!"

To this end, at the conclusion of his chapter, Smith asks several thought-provoking questions:

- 1. Does your management of time reflect your governing values?
- 2. Are you giving the most time to that which matters most?

3. What can you do tomorrow to ensure your time aligns with your priorities?

Watch out for what I will call "the caregiver's anchor." One of the greatest things you can do in retirement is to surround yourself with young people. As many wise people have said, "They will keep you forever young!" However, unless you want it to be the primary focus of your life, your babysitting duties should not take over your entire retirement schedule. It is easy for your loved ones to assume that since you no longer have a full-time job, you can accept the responsibility of serving as the "safety net" or even the number one full-time caregiver for your grandchildren and grandnieces.

f course, dedicating time to "caregiving" of your parent(s) and other elderly relatives may or may not be "free choice." Eventually, almost all of us will have to switch roles and become "the parent" to look after them, especially if you are the only sibling that lives near them or are an only child.

More "timely tips..."

- 1. If you are married, synchronize your schedule with your spouse. You can do this very easily with today's calendar apps. My wife and I know exactly what we're doing every week on dates we place in the Apple calendar. It automatically transfers to our iPhones, iPads, and iMacs.
- 2. Set aside at least 30-45 minutes a day for sustained physical activity. The definition of "exercise" specifically to receive the cardiovascular benefits is to get your heart rate up for 30 minutes or more. Climbing out of your lazy-boy to let the dogs out or to look for the TV remote between the cushions does not count!
- 3. Experts say that watching more than an hour and a half of television per day is not healthy.
- 4. Do something every day that will expand your mind, stimulate your intellect, or increase your curiosity quotient. Check out these "Lessons in Creativity" suggestions: https://paulkfoxusc.wordpress.com/2016/05/01/lessons-in-creativity/.
- 5. Hobbies that focus on self-expression or other creative pursuits are best enjoyed in the morning when you are fresh. You might consider doing your music warmups, practicing, composing, writing, painting, etc. — anything that requires firing up your artistic "right brain" — before lunch and prior to your appointments, chores, and shopping. Besides, if it's something you really look forward to doing, it will help motivate you to get out of bed early in the morning.
- 6. Get enough sleep. Believe it or not, many retirees have re-occurring bouts of insomnia. See the article "Retirement Insomnia" by Claire N. Barnes published at http://www. huffingtonpost.com/claire-n-barnes-ma/retirement-insomnia_b_6395998.html.

Finally, I will leave you with several additional retiree resources on time management. "Happy trails to you," all retired and retiring members! Please enjoy your time wisely!

- Forbes: https://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2013/10/23/time-management-is-crucial-to-a-happyretirement/
- Dr. Rin Porter: http://www.thingscouldbeworse.org/home/ you-can-structure-time-in-retirement-successfully/
- U.S. News and World Report: https://money.usnews.com/ money/blogs/on-retirement/articles/2017-03-23/why-youstill-need-time-management-after-you-retire

ATTENTION ALL RETIRED **AND SOON-TO-RETIRE PMEA MEMBERS:**

Be sure to update your online profile with a nonschool email address, if you have not done so already.

If you know you are going to retire over the next several years, please send an email to paulkfox. usc@gmail.com. Be sure to check out the retired member section of the PMEA website for resources on preparing for a smooth transition to post-employment and "living the dream!"

Also, issues of Retired Member Network eNEWS are being emailed to retired members once-amonth. If you do not see them in your mail box, check your "spam" or "promotions" folder. Archives are posted at https://www.pmea.net/retired-member-network-enews-archive/.

Whatever you do, never "unsubscribe" to a notification from PMEA... it will eliminate all future PMEA election emails, important updates, and other timely "e-alerts."

Paul K. Fox is a retired music teacher and administrator from the Upper St. Clair School District. Paul is currently the PMEA State Retired Members Coordinator and Chair of the PMEA State Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention.



A Special Message to Currently Active Music Teachers: To Retire... or Not! It's Your Choice WHEN, but If You Are Truly Ready, Get Prepared!

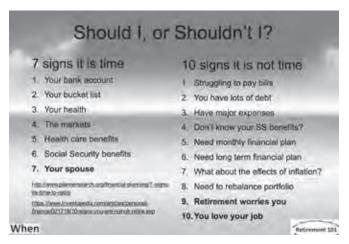
PAUL K. FOX // Chair, Teacher Training, Recruitment & Retention Council

It's not my sandbox.

reetings to all active and retired PMEA members! I hope this mini-epistle finds you well and successfully engaged in the pursuit of creative self-expression and inspiring music-making!

This longstanding PMEA retiree column is focused on those who may be considering retirement over the coming months (or even years) and less on our colleagues who have already happily managed their own unique passage of Crossing the Rubicon into post-full-time employment. Admittedly, I am a little reticent about this annual message or "pushing the issue" of leaving the profession during this time of a great potential shortage of qualified music educators. And by all accounts, this will get even worse. So, the disclaimer? If you love what you are doing, have no idea what you would "retire to" in your next chapter, and/or you feel a little nervous about the state of the economy or your retirement investments, stay in your job! Keep up the good fight!

Regardless, for some of you, the decision to retire may come sooner rather than later! Most school employment contracts require educators to submit advance notice of their intentions prior to the next school year (I had to notify my superintendent in February) if they want the full benefits of a "golden handshake" (e.g., paid for unused sick days, etc.). "To retire... or not" is a personal decision and may depend on a number of factors. For example, here is a slide from my recent PMEA retired member session at the spring conference.



I am thinking that one of the crucial questions you must ask yourself is, "Are you psychologically prepared to retire at this time?" Consider these reflections from the excellent book *Happy Retirement: The Psychology of Reinvention* by Kenneth S. Shultz (DK Publishing, 2015):

- 1. How important is your job when it comes to getting a sense of life satisfaction?
- 2. How many non-work activities do you have that give you a sense of purpose?
- 3. How do you imagine your life to be once you stop working?
- 4. How do you think retirement will affect your relationship with family and friends?
- 5. How much energy for work do you have these days?

That is not to say that when you retire, you won't continue doing what you love most, rather usually on your own terms. Our PMEA Retired Members move away from full-time school teaching to a variety of part-time jobs:

- Performing gigs locally
- Directing community or church ensembles
- Accompanying community or church ensembles
- Coaching/assisting local music programs
- Teaching college music education methods or supervising student teachers
- Composing/arranging music
- Adjudicating or guest conducting music festivals
- Serving in the music industry

The best part of retirement is you can say "NO" anytime you want! You can cut out any perceived drudgery, routine "chores," and excessive paperwork that "the institution" may demand, but still assist in collaborating and sharing your experience/expertise/vision in working with "the kids." You can continue to develop your own personal artistry (now with more time to practice) and leave your "musical stamp" on other programs and projects whenever and wherever you please.

However, at your "graduation ceremony," all retirees should be given a bumper sticker that says, "It's not my sandbox." Once you make the break, you will no longer have to be the on-the-spot "agent of change" and "personin-charge" modeling the moral professionalism of fixing things that don't work well or coming up with multiple Plan B's. You can (and should) avoid getting frustrated in your avocations and pastimes, and for some of us (e.g. former leaders) that is not always so easy. I recall my concern over what I perceived was a lack-of-training for wheelchair attendants during my volunteer shifts at our local hospital. It is not my sandbox! Let someone else sort out the problems. Just ENJOY what you are doing, finding meaning and contributing your part to any cause(s) that matters to you.

Now, the good part. "We" (PMEA and me) hope you continue in your position for as long as it is possible to meet your goals, needs, and interests. "We" (PMEA and PA) need you as an active music educator. The profession needs you. And face it: you LOVE those students, right?

However, when you are ready, PREPARE YE THE WAY. We have assembled lots of tools for YOU! Probably taking up the lion's share of memory on the PMEA "Retired Member" focus area, look up these valuable "soon-to-retire resources" at https://www.pmea. net/retired-members/.

- Ultimate Retiree Resource Guide
- Prepping for Post-Employment Checklist
- How-To-Retire Video



The decision to retire may come sooner rather than later!



- Past issues of Retired Member Network eNEWS with reviews on recommended retirement books
- A plethora of other helpful articles and links, also accessible at my blogsite: https://paulfox.blog/for-retirees/.

If you are not ready to leave the profession full-time but need a little destressing or health and wellness advice, come to the PMEA Annual Conference at the Kalahari Resort in the Poconos and consider attending



my session, "Self-Care Cookbook - Recipes and Resources for Teachers."

Or, pick up a copy of one of last year's PMEA keynoter Lesley Moffett's books e.g., I Love My Job, But It's Killing Me, or Love the Job, Lose the Stress.

But, if you can even conceive of making that "big decision" over the next three months to two years, you need to peruse this PMEA library of "advice from those who made it to the other side!" In short, don't throw yourself into retirement without advance planning!



What Retirement Stage **Are You In?**

PAUL K. FOX // PMEA Retired Member Coordinator

Ask yourself this essential question: Do you see yourself retiring within the next 10-12 years?

ou must have noticed this regular feature of PMEA News, usually one article on retirement per issue penned by the PMEA Retired Member Coordinator or guest authors. Many people think the coordinator's position which serves on the PMEA Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention ("the life cycle of a music educator") and even the Retired Member focus area on the PMEA website are geared primarily for those who are already enjoying post full-time employment.

Well, that's a bit inaccurate. With the exception of PCMEA members, new or "rookie" teachers just entering the profession, or a minority of veteran educators with less than a decade of experience, most of you reading this column may already be in one of the 5-6 "stages of retirement."

To help retirees better acclimate to the new phase in their lives, AgeWave, along with market researcher Harris Interactive and Ameriprise Financial, conducted a survey in 2005 on the "emotional" aspects of retirement. And like Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' On Death and Dying, which outlines the five stages of dying, the study identified and characterized five distinct stages of retirement:

RETIREMENT **BR 6-15 BR 1-6 AR 1-15** L70S - E80S **ANTICIPATION** REORIENTATION RECONCILIATION **IMAGINATION** LIBERATION

The first stage of retirement begins well before people even reach their retirement day and ranges from 15 to six years prior. At this point, retirement isn't top on their list, and they are most likely concentrating more on pursuing careers, paying bills, or putting kids through college. As retirement day gets closer, however, people in this stage begin turning their attention to their retirement goals and needs. Nevertheless, they still feel they are behind, as [only] 44% of those polled reported they are "on track" in terms of preparing overall for retirement.

"The Five Stages of Retirement" AgeWave at https://agewave.com/the-five-stages-of-retirement/



Other retiree gurus and experts on aging have proposed similar labels, sometimes as many as six or seven "phases" to retirement. One of the earliest references to these is based on the original work of gerontologist and researcher Robert Atchley, also described in many other books including Kenneth Shultz's Happy Retirement: The Psychology of Reinvention – A Practical Guide to Planning and Enjoying the Retirement You've Earned (Copyright © 2015 Dorling Kindersley Limited):

- ➤ Pre-Retirement
- Retirement
- ➤ Disenchantment
- > Reorientation
- Retirement Routine
- ➤ Termination of Retirement

According to Paul G. Ward in his "Thoughts on Retirement" blog, (http://2young2retire.com/wp/category/thoughts-on-retirement/), the concept of reinventing ourselves for retirement requires a focus on the pre-retirement phase. He recommended, "We need to consider our purpose or *calling*, our financial situation, working for a living because we have to or working because we want to, our health, our relationships, and how we can make a difference in the lives of others. Focusing attention on this *now* may help you avoid the phases of disenchantment, reorientation, and retirement routine."

Attorney and life coach Jerry Chasen supports this with his own tip (cited from the Shultz book above): "Retirement is not an event but a process, and one that should begin long before you turn in your retirement papers."

Regarding "retirement – the final frontier," Investopedia wrote in "Journey Through the Six Stages of Retirement" (https://www.investopedia.com/articles/retirement/07/sixstages.asp) that "retirees must face what is essentially the last transition in their lives…"

During the working years, retirement can appear to be both an oncoming burden and a distant paradise. Workers know that this stage of their lives is coming, and do everything they can to save for it, but often give little thought to what they will actually do once they reach the goal—the current demands that are placed upon them leave them little time to ponder this issue.

Many people face retirement like a running back on the football field who dodges or plows through one defender after another until reaching the end zone. It's hard for many workers to think seriously about what their lives will be like in 20 or 30 years when they are trying to stay on top of their mortgage, put their kids through college, and have a little fun in the meantime. They want to reach the end zone, but other issues will tackle them long before then if they don't take immediate action.

The web library of "retired member" advice archived at https://www.pmea.net/retired-members/ is probably more valuable to you *right now*, and may help you plan, transition, and fulfill your upcoming "life passage" for "living the dream" in retirement.

Have you heard the saying, "No good deed goes unpunished?" Once when a special edition (sample copy) of the *PMEA Retired Member Network eNEWS* was sent out to the entire PMEA membership, the PMEA staff and the Retired Member Coordinator received several curt responses: "Why did you send me this? I am not planning on retiring soon!"

So, the ball is in *your* court! As a benefit to your membership in PMEA, you should take advantage of all of these resources, network with your colleagues who have already "Crossed the Rubicon" to a successful and happy retirement, and get ready for "the big event!" Here's a "top ten" checklist on retirement prep:

T-Minus Years and Counting To-Do (before retirement)

10-15 Years

Peruse the entire Retired Member focus area on the PMEA website at least once: https://www.pmea.net/retired-members/.

7-10 Years

Download and read selctions from the Ultimate Retiree Resource Guide from the above PMEA Retired Member focus area.

5-7 Years

View the special video for PMEA members, the "How-to-Retire Guide" at: https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=LluJ_0ctC4o

5-7 Years

Read cover-to-cover several of the retirement books listed in #1-3 above.

3-5 Years

Start intercepting monthly releases of Retired Member Network eNEWS

2-5 Years

Attend a "Retirement 101" spring/summer conference session or view past PMEA workshop materials including "Design Your Ideal Retirement" by Dave Hughes and "Retirement Planning - It's not about the Money" by Paul Fox. (See #1 above.)

2-4 Years

Family Meeting: Sit down with your spouse or other family members and map out the essential "who, what, when, where, and how" of your retirement goals.

1-3 Years

Make an appointment with an estate planner, elder attorney, and financial advisor.

1-2 Years

PSERS members: Attend "Foundations for Your Future" programs, request a retirement estimate (form PSRS-151), and schedule your "Exit Counseling Session."

1 Year

Update your PMEA and NAfME profile, including providing a new email address (your old school email will become inactive)

During that last year, at some point (dictated by your teacher's contract?), you will need to notify your school administration about your intentions, and of course, tell your students before "the cat is out of the bag!"

So, now do you feel you are a bit more ready? Feel free to ask for more help!

Happy trails, soon-to-be-retirees! ■

81 Years of Unparalleled **Opportunities for Exceptional Music Students**



The Philadelphia Youth Orchestra is one of the world's top youth orchestras. Under the direction of Maestro Louis Scaglione and guidance from prestigious faculty members, students from the tri-state area receive superior technical, musical, performance, and life skills instruction through PYO Music Institute's six program divisions: Philadelphia Youth Orchestra for ages 15-21; Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra for ages 13-18; Young Musicians Debut Orchestra for ages 11-17; Bravo Brass for ages 12-21; Prysm Strings for ages 6-14; and Tune Up Philly - Orchestral Pathways Program, an after-school engagement program from 1st-8th grade students.

Audition

The PYO Music Institute hosts auditions throughout the year. For application forms, audition schedules and info visit online: pyomusic.org/audition

Attend

For a full schedule of upcoming performances, please visit pyomusic.org



SOUND ADVICE 43



PAUL K. FOX, PMEA Retired Member Coordinator

IS IT TIME TO RETIRE?

This is a personal question that no one but YOU can answer...not even your PMEA Retired Member Coordinator! By the time you receive this copy of PMEA News, this choice may be uppermost in your mind, especially if you are within a couple years of that so-called "retirement age." Most school districts require advance notification (early in the second semester?) of an employee's plan to retire in order to retain full benefits and exit bonuses, and to allow planning for the job replacement search and screening process. (Check your teacher's contract!)

In music educator conference sessions, director meetings at festivals, and printed in PMEA News and the online e-publication Retired Member Network eNEWS, much has been discussed about the "what," "how," and most recently, "where" of retirement, even issues of "privacy" regarding your decision. For a review of these areas and a bibliography of resources, please visit:

- ► Ultimate Retiree Resource Guide at https://www.pmea.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ultimate-retiree-resource-guide-122218.pdf,
- ► Past editions of our state journal at https://www.pmea.net/resources/pmea-news/,
- ▶ or eNEWS archives at http://www. pmea.net/retired-member-networkenews-archive/.

WHEN Should I Retire?

"Planning to retire? Before you do, find your hidden passion. Do the thing that you have always wanted to do."

- Catherine Pulsifer

"Sooner or later I'm going to die, but I'm not going to retire."

- Margaret Mead

The "why" of retirement is also relevant. There may be a lot of influences for someone to consider leaving their full-time career:

- Boredom or lack of stimulation in the current job
- Changing employment status or responsibilities
- Health problems (yours or other members of your family)
- Spouse retiring
- Your or family member's desire to relocate
- Needs for caregiving (grandchildren, parents, or elderly family members)
- Travel opportunities
- Acceptance of a new position or the start or expansion of an "encore career" (higher education, music industry, travel/ tour planning, or another field)

Other involuntary or more negative motivations may "encourage" you to resign your position:

- Music and/or staff are eliminated from the curriculum or building in which you teach.
- ► You are experiencing a decline in music program enrollment or participation.
- ► You feel unappreciated, unsupported, devalued, or ignored as a professional.
- ▶ You conclude you must retire early

to avoid losing existing contractual benefits.

However, the most important reflection on WHEN to retire should begin with the question, "Are you ready for retirement?" and...

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES FOR A HAPPY RETIREMENT?

A successful retirement is NOT "all about the money." Certainly, you are well-advised to make an appointment with an estate planner, elder attorney, and/or financial advisor (probably all three). Bring a copy of your bank and investment statements, PSERS reports, social security, annuities, and insurance documents. Make sure you have the "big picture" of your net worth and accomplish the following (from https://www.fisherinvestments.com/en-us):

- ▶ Determine your goals, objectives and time horizon;
- Make key distinctions between income and cash flow;
- Develop a basic plan to help achieve your retirement goals.

However, probably even more important, experts say there are many other requirements that foster preparedness to "living the dream" in your post-full-time employment years. For example, proposed by the editorial team of the New Retirement

website, there are eight essential keys to a potential retiree's "happy transition." (Read the entire article for a greater perspective https://www.newretirement.com/ retirement/8-skills-you-need-for-bestretirement/.)

- A Knack for Dealing with Uncertainty
- Resilience: Can You Overcome Adversity?
- Capability to Maintain a Set of Friends
- Cash Flow Mastery
- · Ability to Set Your Own Schedule and Stay Motivated
- · Can You Relax?
- · Capacity to Have a Purpose and Follow Passions
- Do You Know How to Manage an Overall Retirement Plan?

These concepts are supported by the book Happy Retirement: The Psychology of Reinvention by Kenneth S. Shultz (DK Publishing, 2015) which focuses on the inquiry, "Are you psychologically prepared to retire?"

- How important is your job when it comes to getting a sense of life satisfaction?
- How many non-work activities do you have that give you a sense of purpose?
- How do you imagine your life to be once you stop working?
- · How do you think retirement will affect your relationship with family and friends?
- · How much energy for work do you have these days?

Being "psyched" for the "big day" also involves learning personal coping skills, modeling these characteristics of good mental health (from the book The Psychology of Retirement: Coping with the Transition from Work by Derek Milne,

- · Being able to use your talents and energy productively
- Enjoying challenges and gaining pleasure from accomplishing tasks
- Being capable of sustaining a meaningful love relationship

- · Finding meaning in belonging and contributing to your community
- Being responsive, sensitive, and empathic to other people's needs and feelings
- Appreciating and responding to humor
- Coming to terms with painful experiences from the past
- Being comfortable and at ease in social situations;
- · Being energetic and outgoing
- Being conscientious and responsible.

SHOULD I OR SHOULDN'T I GO NOW?

No, this won't be an easy decision... but, you knew that, right? There seems to be a plethora of free advice "out there" to help (?) you deliberate. (Well, you get what you pay for!) A few samples from the Internet:

7 SIGNS IT IS TIME

http://www.plannersearch.org/ (from financial-planning/7-signs-its-time-toretire)

- · Your bank accounts
- Your bucket lists
- Your health
- · The markets
- · Health care benefits
- Social Security benefits
- Your spouse

10 SIGNS IT IS NOT TIME

https://www.investopedia.com/ articles/personal-finance/021716/10-signsyou-are-not-ok-retire.asp)

- · Struggling to pay bills
- You have lots of debt
- Have major expenses
- Don't know your SS benefits?
- · Need monthly financial plan
- Need long term financial plan
- What about the effects of inflation?
- Need to rebalance portfolio

- · Retirement worries you
- You love your job

Happy retirement = busy retirement. We keep going back to what PMEA MIOSM Chair Chuck Neidhardt said about venturing into retirement - also the perfect bumpersticker: "Have a plan!" In almost every case study, retiring music teachers must "move on" to an equally engaging and active life style, finding new purpose and meaning in their "senior years!" Considering that many professionals are "addicted to achievement" and the sudden cessation from work may cause some emotional turmoil (Sydney Lagier in US News and World Report, July 20, 2010), we should study examples of those who have happily "Crossed the Rubicon" ahead of us to "retirement bliss."

Leaving your school employment does not mean you won't continue doing what you have always enjoyed... personal music (or dance or drama) making, performing in or conducting an ensemble, composing, accompanying, etc. The PMEA Retiree Resource Registry - the proverbial "directory of past leaders in PA music programs" - lists many retired members who continue to offer their talents and experience to help others in the profession. This is a good place to start for asking "advice from the experts" on just about any topic... perhaps even tips on deciding WHEN to retire: https://www.pmea.net/ retired-members/.

How about a couple more "models and mentors" who made this "change of life" adjustment and explored new directions towards self-reinvention in retirement?

BEN FRANKLIN, FOUNDING FATHER

"Having worked as a successful shopkeeper with a keen eye for investments, Franklin had earned his leisure, but rather than cultivate the fine art of indolence, 'retirement,' he said, was 'time for doing something useful.' Hence, the many activities of Franklin's retirement were: scientist, statesman, and sage, as well as one-man civic society for the city of Philadelphia. His post-employment accomplishments earned him the sobriquet of 'The First American' in his own lifetime, and yet, for succeeding generations, the endeavor that was considered his most

'useful' was the working life he left behind when he embarked on a life of leisure...."

https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/09/ how-america-lost-track-of-benjamin-franklins-definition-ofsuccess/400808/

2000 - "THE YEAR OF RETIREMENT?" FOR TWO MUSICAL SUPERSTARS

Barbra Streisand, singer, songwriter, actress, and filmmaker:

- "In 2000, Barbra Streisand performed four farewell concerts to mark her retirement from performing live. At the time, she was 58 years old and wanted to focus more on acting, directing and recording albums, reported ABC News."
- "Her retirement ended in 2016 when she returned to the stage for her The Music... The Mem'ries... The Magic! tour, which grossed \$53 million over 16 performances, according to Billboard."

Garth Brooks, country-music singer and songwriter

- "Garth Brooks shocked fans in October 2000 when he announced his plan to retire to Oklahoma until the youngest of his three daughters graduated from high school, reported Billboard. The country music superstar was 42 years old when he began his early retirement."
- "During his semi-retirement, he did a few sold-out stints at arenas and a 186-show Las Vegas residency with wife Trisha Yearwood, according to Billboard, but he largely stayed out of the spotlight. Brooks returned to touring in September 2014 and continued until December 2017, performing a total of 390 shows, reported Billboard. Forbes cited his 2017 earnings as \$60

million. Together, Brooks and Yearwood are one of the richest celebrity couples."

https://www.gobankingrates.com/net-worth/celebrities/celebritieswho-came-out-of-retirement/

Finally, "if money can buy you happiness," supposedly these ten athletes were financially more successful after retirement, as opposed to the total earnings they generated during their original sports careers:

- Muhammad Ali
- · Iim Brown
- · Oscar De La Hoya
- Lenny Dykstra
- George Foreman
- Dwayne Johnson ("The Rock")
- · Magic Johnson
- · Michael Jordan
- Nolan Ryan
- Dave Whelan

https://www.complex.com/sports/2012/01/10-athletes-whomade-more-money-after-retiring/

HAPPY TRAILS, SOON-TO-BE RETIREES!

AROUND THE STATE

(ISAME7)

The 7th International Symposium on Assessment in Music Education (ISAME7) will take place March 19-22, 2019 at the University of Florida Hilton Hotel and Conference Center in Gainesville, Florida. The title of the symposium is Advancing Music Education through Assessment: Honoring Culture, Diversity, and Practice. Previous events have taken place in Florida, Taiwan, Germany, England and Virginia. ISAME7 is returning to the US, and hopefully many stateside colleagues who want to learn more about assessment in music education and how our colleagues from across the world are engaging in this work can and will attend. We have published a volume of selected papers form each of these events – six so far – all published by GIA in Chicago.

The symposium website is http://reg.conferences.dce.ufl.edu/isame.

SOUND ADVICE



PAUL FOX

Retired Members Coordinator

Do you know where you're going to?
Do you like the things that life is showing you?
Where are you going to, do you know?

Do you get what you're hoping for?
When you look behind you there's no open door.
What are you hoping for, do you know?

where you're going to?
things that life is showing you?

Lyrics to "Do You Know Where You're Going To?" and the "Theme from Mahogany" by Michael Masser and Gerald Goffin | Sung and recorded by Diana Ross, Mariah Carey, and Tina Arena



What are the three most important factors to consider before choosing your retirement destination?

- 1. Location!
- 2. Location!
- 3. Location!

Much has been written about the definition (the "what") and strategies (the "how") for a happy retirement. All you have to do is look at past *PMEA News* articles and digital editions of the *PMEA Retired Member Network eNEWS* (the latter archived on the retired member website https://www.pmea.net/retired-members/.) Deciding to retire is a very personal issue, something in which only you and perhaps your closest family members may have a voice at the appropriate time and setting.

According to many advisors, including Melissa Phipps in her *The Balance* blog-post "Find Out Where You Should Retire" (www.thebalance.com/where-should-i-retire-2894254), your deliberation may be affected by a number of influences:

- ⇒ Personal preference: stay local or go elsewhere?
- Mortgage?
- Taxes
- Your health and mobility
- Proximity to family, children/grandchildren?
- Human services, recreation, history/cultural attractions, shopping, transportation, etc.

The US Census Bureau reports that 49 out of 50 people over the age of 65 stay right where they are when they retire. Phipps advises, "If your current hometown is affordable, close to friends and family, and near activities and entertainment you most enjoy, why move for the sake of moving? Instead, consider whether the need for change can be satisfied through more frequent brief vacations, or by purchasing an inexpensive weekend getaway home."

However, are there advantages to downsizing and leaving your current abode?



The world is your oyster once you no longer need to work — you could technically move anywhere.



You may want to read "Should You Downsize in Retirement?" by Casey Dowd of Fox Business at https://www. foxbusiness.com/features/shouldyou-downsize-in-retirement. I also recommend this site: https://www. newretirement.com/retirement/yourcomplete-guide-to-downsizing-for-retirement-12-tips-for-a-happily-ever-af-

Posted on The Motley Fool is Christy Bieber's article "Where Should You Retire? These 5 Factors Will Help You Decide" (https://www.fool.com/investing/2017/09/19/where-should-you-retire-these-5-factors-will-help.aspx). She focuses on that scary "e" word - economics.

"The world is your oyster once you no longer need to work - you could technically move anywhere. But there are, of course, practical considerations in deciding where you'll live - and while dreaming about a mega-mansion on the beach may be enjoyable, it's also important to make a viable plan. Your choice of location can affect how much you need to save, how long your money will last, and even what happens to your health and to your legacy."

Most of the online retirement gurus recommend careful and comprehensive research, even spending time to visit and "live awhile" in the places on your "short list," and educate yourself in these areas:

- ⇒ Population, economy, attractions, and general info (visit the Internet sites of the local Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Agency, and visitor bureaus)
- -> Climate (review interactive climate data tools from the National Climatic Data Center)
- **⇒ Cost of Living** (see "cost of living" comparison calculator" of the Council for Community and Economic Research)
- **⇒ Crime Rates** (read the FBI's annual "Crime in the United States: Uniform Crime Reports")

→ Health Care (check out the U.S. News & World Report "Guide to the Best Hospitals" data base)

If you are still a little "unsettled on where to settle" and enjoy taking online quizzes, check out these links (which, although fun, I cannot vouch for their validity):

- www.best-place-to-retire.com/places-to-retire-quiz
- https://www.nextavenue.org/personality-quiz-live-retirement/

Although geography may play a crucial role in this debate, so does your choice of floor plan. (One could argue that the other three most important factors in choosing a retirement destination are mobility, mobility, and mobility!) When I retired in 2013, I suffered severe pain in my Achilles heels requiring ten weeks of challenging physical therapy. During recovery, I walked my two puppies past numerous one-story ranch structures in my neighborhood, feeling a little jealous that I had to return to a split level with its multitude of stairs – four sets of five steps! The trend in our area for new construction for retirees is a one-floor patio home with a "great room" (kitchen, dining and family/game room areas) that incorporates the safety and ease of future "senior access" while accommodating the needs of multi-generational use of the residence, with these practical design elements:

- Wheel chair access, especially in the bathrooms
- » Pull-out and pull-down shelving
- **►** Multi-level counters
- Remote control blinds and windows
- ⇒ Slip resistance floors
- → Open floor plan
- ⇒ Bright, functional lighting
- ⇒ Flat-panel light switches

(Source: https://houseplans.co/articles/planning-for-retirement-house-plans-for-seniors/)

Finally, this is too important not to throw more a few resources at you for your consideration. Good luck, and *happy trails*, *retirees!*

⇒ How to Pick the Best Place to

Retire (*Kiplinger*) https://www.kiplinger.com/article/retire-ment/T037-C000-S004-how-to-pick-the-best-place-to-retire. html

- ► The Best Places to Retire in 2018 (U.S. News & World Report) https://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/best-places-to-rotice
- Where Should You Live in Retirement (Wall Street Journal) https://www.wsj.com/articles/where-should-you-live-in-retirement-1510542841
- ► Where Should You Live After
 Retirement? (CBS News) https://www.cbsnews.com/news/
 where-should-you-live-after-retirement/
- ►→ 11 Critical Things to Consider When Choosing Where to Retire (MoneyTalksNews) https://www.moneytalksnews.com/11-critical-things-consider-when-choosing-where-retire/

Paul K. Fox is a retired music teacher and administrator from the Upper St. Clair School District. Paul is currently the PMEA State Retired Members Coordinator and Chair of the PMEA State Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention.







WILL YOU Still Need Me **WHEN I Retire?**

When I get older, losing my hair Many years from now, Will you still be sending me a valentine, birthday greetings, bottle of If I'd been out till quarter to three Would you lock the door? Will you still need me, will you still feed me, When I'm sixty-four?

Songwriters: John Lennon / Paul McCartney When I'm Sixty-Four lyrics © 1967 Sony/ATV Music **Publishing LLC**

Mattering vs. Marginality: **Perspectives for Those Leaving the Profession**

PAUL K. FOX // PMEA Retired Member Coordinator

Do you feel "needed" and "making a difference" to others? This is an essential part of what author Ernie Zelinski of the best-seller book Retire Happy, Wild, and Free emphasizes: "finding purpose, structure, and community," goals for which your job and career usually provide but are equally essential in retirement.

"Work structures us and gives us routine in our lives," says psychologist Louis Primavera of Touro College in New York City, who co-wrote the 2012 book The Retirement Maze: What You Should Know Before and After You Retire. "We plan around work. It is part of our identity. We go to a social gathering and people say, 'What do you do?' Clearly, what happens is people say, 'What am I going to do? What am I going to be?' The loss of identity is a major fear."

Retiring is "a series of transitions," says Nancy Schlossberg, a professor emerita of counseling psychology at the University of Maryland, and now of Sarasota, Fla., where she is a consultant and public speaker on life transitions. "Change is very unsettling. There are people afraid because they can't forecast the future," she says, and because they worry "they no longer will have a purpose."

In her 2009 book Revitalizing Retirement: Reshaping Your Identity, Relationships, and Purpose, Schlossberg talks about "mattering," which she describes as "the degree to which you feel you're appreciated, you're noticed, you're depended upon."

Citing the research of Morris Rosenberg and B. Claire McCullough (adolescent studies) at https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1983-07744-001, Schlossberg further defines it as "a universal, lifelong issue that connects us all." Her "four dimensions of mattering" are:

Attention

...the feeling that a person has the interest of another.

Ego-Extenstion

...the feeling that others will be proud of your successes and/ or saddened by your failures.

Importance

...the feeling that others care about what you want, think, and do.

Dependence

...the feeling that a person can depend on someone else.

Schlossberg also describes the opposing term "marginality" as "a sense of not fitting in," which can lead to "self-consciousness, irritability, and depression. For some, these feelings can be permanent conditions." Furthermore, "feelings of marginality often occur when individuals take on new roles, especially when they are uncertain about what a new role entails."

Sound familiar? This might resemble that sometimes tumultuous passage to and emotional ups-and-downs during the initial stages of "life after the work!"

Retirees, do you wake up in the morning feeling like you have an important part to play in the grand scheme of things? According to blogger Carol Larson and life coach Mary Helen Conroy, "During those early months of retirement, folks often try to figure out what their purpose is now that they're not working. They wonder if they matter." They view this concept through the lens of popular culture and the literature of transitions. You are invited to try their shared "recipe for mattering" in the Retiree Rebel free-podcast posted at http://www.retireerebels.com/mattering-matter-retirement-mhc-214/

According to Dr. Amit Sood, author of the Mayo Clinic Guide to Stress-Free Living, "..treat the first year in retirement as if you are 'interning' to give yourself time to readjust and set new expectations." So, seemingly taking his advice, plan a "break" from everything, take extended trips, tours, or cruises, and enjoy some unscheduled time... to literally "go with the flow."

> Susan Woodward, now 75 and living in Tucson, spent four years of her retirement traveling the country in her RV. She visited national parks and the maritime provinces in Canada, and even spent [some] of that time volunteering. What she remembers most is her first trip, when she headed to Deming, N.M. from Raleigh, N.C. "I had such a sense of freedom, empowerment, expansion. I can't even explain it," she said. "It was like the whole world opened up." - Alessandra Malito

But, a "traditional retirement" may not be for everyone. As Alessandra Malito writes in Market Watch https://www.marketwatch.com/story/afraid-of-being-bored-in-retirementconsider-these-options-2017-10-10, "Some can't wait to put in their papers, while others dread the day they give up work for fear of having nothing to do, and no meaning to their name."

> It's true that retirement can be a dangerous time for some. Without a sense of purpose, the risk of depression increases, and what should be a relaxing time becomes an anxious one. Studies show that without anything meaningful to do, and "mental exercises" throughout the day, cognitive abilities diminish in early retirees. They should also engage in social activities and find a leisurely activity they can enjoy if they aren't trying to spend their retirement years still working. - Alessandra Malito

The good news? You have friends in high places... well, PMEA colleagues who have successfully "Crossed the Rubicon" into an active, meaningful, healthy, and happy retirement.

Anyone contemplating retiring over the next three years should visit the Retired Member focus area on the PMEA website: https://www.pmea.net/retired-members/. Take a look at past issues of the Retired Member Network eNEWS, read the Ultimate Retiree Resource Guide/Bibliography, and view the *How-to-Retire* video.

Finding purpose and "mattering" during your post-full-time employment years will be easier if you continue your own pursuits in music artistry and creative selfexpression, as well as your support of music education - be as active as you want - but consider the value of a few of these PMEA Goals/Benefits of Retired Membership:

What music teacher retirees need from PMEA...

• Recognition and archival of past and •

- current professional accomplishments, assignments, interests, skills, and talents.
- Sessions geared for retired members, such as nurturing expressiveness and participation in amateur/community ensembles, retirement planning, etc.
- New "brain-engaging" outlets for learning, leadership, advocacy, "encore career" development, and service.
- Discounts for membership attending festivals, workshops, and conferences.

What PMEA needs from its retirees...

- Mentoring of new/less experienced teachers
- Advising "best practices" curriculum, instruction, assessment, and literature
- Serving as leaders or consultants on local or state councils/boards
- Volunteering at local workshops and state conferences
- Advocating music education to the legislature and general public
- Presenting sessions at workshops or

- conferences
- Conducting, coaching, accompanying students at festivals
- Assisting in technology, teacher training, recruitment, auditions, etc.

Yes, you do matter, and you have a lot to offer PMEA and the profession to which you have devoted your life! Happy trails to all retiring and retired members!

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Paul K. Fox is a retired music teacher and administrator from the Upper St. Clair School District. Paul is currently the PMEA State Retired Members Coordinator and Chair of the PMEA State Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention.

Hello from the "land of the free..." ahem, I mean retirement from full-time teaching! I am here to introduce myself as your recently appointed Retired Members Coordinator.

Kudos and special thanks go to PMEA's "retired" Retired Member State Chair, Ben Holste. Serving in this capacity for (can you believe it?) ten years, Ben "modeled" the myriad of opportunities a retired music teacher can provide PMEA and the profession. In addition to coordinating retired members' services, he has volunteered huge amounts of time and talents to multi-year terms as PMEA District 1 President, PMEA State President and PMEA All-State Coordinator. His tenure of tireless and priceless contributions to PMEA will never be forgotten... but, as far as I am concerned, "he ain't done yet." No one should "let him off the hook!" I hope to see more of him in future PMEA conferences and retired members' meetings. In the meantime, I don't think he would mind being contacted for appearances in guest conducting, playing trombone, marching band and brass section coaching, adjudications, and (of course) SmartMusic tutoring sessions. He is "ready to help." So am I.

According to President Dennis Emert, the purpose of the Retired Member Coordinator is "to utilize PMEA retired members in a variety of ways, keeping them active and involved in PMEA." My "charge" is try to fill Ben's (incredibly masterful) shoes and somehow "dance" through the following job responsibilities:

- 1. Organize annual meeting of retired members at In-service Conference
- Survey retired members on possible roles within PMEA which they could fill

- 3. Encourage continuing membership of those active members who are retiring
- 4. Serve as a communications person for retired members
- 5. Serve on the TTRR Council, attend state board meetings when invited by the state president
- Contribute articles to each issue of *PMEA News* and regularly contribute information to be included on the PMEA Website.

To be truthful, I really do not know how to accomplish all of the above (never took dance lessons), nor (more importantly) do I have a solid grasp on what retired or soon-to-be-retired members want or need from PMEA. So, I need input from YOU!

If you are a retired member and are willing to stay involved in PMEA, please visit www.pmea.net and complete the Retired Members Resource survey located in the Retired Members section of the website under the Resources menu option. We will then publish a Retiree Resource Roster to share this wealth of experience.

My new email is paulkfox.usc@gmail.com. Let me hear from you soon! No idea is too small or too crazy! Regardless, "us retirees" are a force to be reckoned with and we stand "ready to help!"



After 35 years of teaching, Paul K. Fox retired as Performing Arts Curriculum Leader and String Teacher of the Upper St. Clair School District (USCSD) in June 2013.

Words Matter

Recently, as I was leaving my local *Eat 'n Park*, a young lady seemed to jump from her table calling my name; "Mr. Holste, I'm Dawn. Do you remember me? You haven't changed a bit!" I did remember Dawn and was certainly surprised to hear, "you haven't changed a bit." (It was almost 17 years since I last saw her in choir.)

"How have you been," I casually asked. "And what have you been up to?" "Well besides work, Mom and I have been going to the theatre," was Dawn's reply. "Remember back when we did that *Les Miserables* montage in choir? And after the concert you were talking with my Mom and suggested to her that she should take me to the theatre. Well we've been going ever since. I have boxes of *Playbills*. Thank you for suggesting the theatre to my Mom."

I didn't remember the conversation, but Dawn did; more than 15 years later.

This encounter brought back another such experience several years earlier. During a lunch conversation with a former student who is now an accomplished choral teacher, I asked, "Steve, what got you interested in going into music education?" "Don't you remember?," he said. "You came to my seventh grade band concert and after the concert you mentioned to me that I should consider taking private lessons. Well I did, and the rest, as they say, is history."

Again, I did not remember the comment, but Steve did; more than 20 years later.

It's amazing the affect a few positive words can make on the students we see every day. Words Matter!

Two very positive words available to us are, "Thank You!" Words I would like to express now.

After 10 years as the Retired Members Chair, I will be stepping down. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all retired members who bravely supported our annual **early** Friday morning breakfast during the State Conference. I am also appreciative of the number of retired members who provided entertaining and insightful articles for the *Encore* page of our journal during this decade.

And a hearty "Thank You" goes out to Margaret, Abi, David and Kelly for their organizational & media skills. They made scheduling and generally getting information out very efficient.

Now, even though any ribbons I may have attached to my conference name badge, will begin with, the word, "PAST." I would like to continue my support & involvement with PMEA. If I may be of any assistance in the foreseeable future, please feel free to contact me.

Once again: "THANK YOU!" for many years of great memories. I look forward to experiencing many more. "Words Matter!"



Ben Holste is our past PMEA Retired Members coordinator, a past president of PMEA and is retired from the Penn Hills School District.

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