

IN THIS ISSUE:

- * Save the Date: Panel Discussion on “What to Expect in Retirement” *
- * Annual Retiree Reunion and Recognition/What’s on Your Bucket List? *
- * Retention of eligibility for USG stipend for retiree healthcare *
- * Keeping Us Informed of Any Contact Information Changes *
- * What Retirees Are Doing in Their Retirement *
- * Cybersecurity Tips *
- * Puzzle: UWG Places Word Search *



SAVE THE DATE!! Panel Discussion on “What to Expect in Retirement”

March 31, 2026, UWG Campus Center, room 303. Come hear retired UWG faculty and staff members talk about their experiences and what they have found to be important aspects of retirement. Bring your questions! All are welcome, but the focus of this event is on UWG employees who are getting close to retirement. Lunch will not be served but attendees may bring their own lunch if they wish.

HAS YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGED?

Please let us know.

If you are on the ARFS listserv and have a change in your email address, please contact Anne Richards. If you receive *THE REJUVENATOR* via postal mail and have a change in your mailing address, please contact Anne Richards.

(Contact for Anne: 770-301-1589 or arichard@emeriti.westga.edu) We want to maintain contact with you!

If you have a change in email address, postal mail address, and/or

phone number, please also keep UWG and the University System updated by contacting the USG Benefits Office at (844) 587-4236 or online at oneusgconnect.usg.edu.

Retaining your University System of Georgia Stipend for Retiree Healthcare



At the August meeting of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, the stipend provided to Medicare-eligible retirees and their Medicare-eligible dependents was reduced from \$2,640 to \$2,484 in the coming year - a 6% reduction. This was due to increases in healthcare costs related to increased utilization, higher medical costs, and the rising costs for prescription drugs. The stipend is provided to defray at

least some of the costs of healthcare coverage that go beyond what Medicare provides. **In order to retain eligibility for these funds, however, a retiree MUST secure either a healthcare plan or a prescription drug plan (or both) through the ALIGHT RETIREE HEALTH SOLUTIONS exchange.**

During open enrollment periods, television advertisements abound that are designed to encourage

retirees to consider new healthcare plans. Please be mindful that if you are Medicare-eligible and receive the stipend from the USG, you CAN NOT simply sign up on your own for a plan you have come across that appeals to you.

At least one of the plans you sign up for must be processed through ALIGHT. [Phone: 1-866-212-5052 (TTY 711). Monday-Friday 8 am – 8 pm CT]

2025 Retiree Reunion and Recognition of Retirees

The retiree reunion event was held on the UWG campus on Saturday, October 18, 2025. The following 2024-2025 retirees were honored at this year's reunion reception:

David J. Boldt
Felton Buchanan
Nancy Capponi
Swarn Dutt
Camilla Gain
Scott Groninger

Donna Haley
Catherine Hendricks
Michael Hester
Susan Horton
Perry Kirk
Brenda McCrary

Faye S. McIntyre
Paula M. Neild
Tamra W. Ogletree
Alvin Jerome Page
Sonja J. Pitts
Jenny Schuessler

Sharon Seneca
Spencer J. Slattery
Sherry Shelnut Smith
Robin Strain

Nine of this year's group were awarded their medallions in person. Cecilia Lee again read the poem she wrote for our 2023 event, "A Toast to the New UWG Retirees." (The poem was published in the Summer, 2024 issue of the ARFS newsletter, The Rejuvenator.)

In addition to formally recognizing retirees with the ceremony involving presentation of medallions, event attendees participated in an interactive activity; perused display tables for Library Special Collections (Jean Cook), Alumni & Friends Travel Program (Kristy McAdam), and ARFS; met the new staff member in University Advancement who is now serving as a liaison to ARFS (Julia Key, Assistant Directory of Alumni and Constituent Relations); ate a yummy continental breakfast buffet provided by Dine West; and heard about the Alumni & Friends Travel Program from Kate Petty, Director of Alumni and Constituent Engagement. We also celebrated Claire Jennings, Retiree legacy Scholarship awardee for 2025-26 (see article below). Thanks to Council members Rolanda Farmer and Ann McCleary, as well as the UWG photo booth background supplied by Advancement, attendees had the opportunity to take pictures, complete with retirement props. Probably most importantly, retirees had the opportunity to socialize and chat. Thanks also to Valeyna Renteria-Silva for taking professional photographs at this event; and to Meg Cooper, Rolanda Farmer, Ann McCleary, Anne Richards, Francie Taylor and Trish Wells, members of the Programs/Events Committee, who contributed so much in different ways to the success of this event.



Image courtesy of Kate Petty. From left to right: Micheal Crafton, current President of the ARFS Coordinating Council, with retirees Suzanne Horton, Scott Groninger, Sherri Shelnut Smith, Tamra Ogletree, Donna Haley, Camilla Gant, David J. Boldt, and Alvin Jerome Paige.

The meeting concluded with the ARFS annual general meeting, led by Micheal Crafton, President of the ARFS Coordinating Council, who updated the group about ARFS and its activities. Anne Richards, Past President of the Council and chairperson of the Nominating Committee, introduced the slate of candidates for next year's ARFS Coordinating Council. All were duly elected.

Additional photos from the 2025 reunion are available on the ARFS website: <https://www.westga.edu/hr/arfs/index.php>

Officers

President – Micheal Crafton (2024-2026)
Past President – Anne Richards (2024-2026)
Vice President/President-Elect – Clois Reese (2024-2026)
Secretary – Meg Cooper (2024-2026)
Treasurer – Rolanda Farmer (2024-2026)

At-Large Members

Lisa Ledbetter (2024-2026) Erma Shooks (2025-2027)
Mike Renfrow (2024-2026) Jerry Mock (2024-2026)
Cecilia Lee (2024-2026) Francie Taylor (2025-2027)
Sally Roberts (2025-2027) Patricia Pinkard (2024-2026)
Ann McCleary (2025-2027) Trish Wells (2024-2026)

RETIREE LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP awarded to Claire Jennings

The 2025-2026 awardee of the UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship is Claire Jennings. Claire is a junior studying Foreign Languages – on the education certification track with a French major. She reported an early interest in French, a dream to travel to France, and a desire to become a teacher. UWG ended up being a perfect fit. She is the granddaughter of retiree Dr. Chester Gibson, best known at UWG for Debate. She attended the 2025 retiree reunion, along with some family members. She also spoke to the attendees, thanking them for the scholarship and telling the group a little about herself. Congratulations, Claire!



What's on Your Bucket List? [summarized by Ann McCleary]

During our annual meeting in October, we asked retirees this question, and wanted to share with you some of the ideas mentioned. Maybe these responses will inspire you to consider some new places to go or to try something you've never considered before!

How many people have asked you if you wanted to travel in retirement? Many of our retirees have plans to travel or have already been to some pretty exciting places. Here are some of the places our retirees listed on their bucket list: England, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, California, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Washington State, the Grand Cavern, Malawi, and Iceland. One ambitious retiree wants to visit all 50 states, and another wanted to travel overseas, anywhere.

Other retirees wanted to travel for specific reasons, including hiking the Appalachian Trail, going to Grand Old Opry, seeing a Broadway place in New York, or traveling across the country or on a cruise. One listed attending a mass at Notre Dame! Another one of our retirees wants to join a travel group to go to "interesting places." If you know of any such groups, share them with us!

Many want to continue to grow by taking classes. We all know that the USG allows us to take classes for free after age 62, and one of our retirees listed auditing UWG classes on their bucket list. Another wanted to learn to speak Spanish, which seems quite practical these days.

Others hope to become more engaged in the community through activities such as full-time ministry. Another wants to take a leadership role in a civic organization and another to teach Sunday School. One wants to volunteer!

Are sports your thing? How many of you have been playing pickle ball? One wants to learn and another wants to master the game! How about ziplining or karate? One retiree took a hip hop class, and another wants to officiate a basketball game. One retiree wants to go sky diving and another hopes to ride their horse at the International Olympic Horse Park in Conyers.

Several retirees mentioned writing. One hoped to complete a memoir of her husband's life, and another wants to write another book, but this time for children.

Others wanted to read, especially novels! That's become one of my favorite activities!

Several are hoping to continue research and publish a paper.

A number of retirees want to spend time with grandchildren – one mentioned ten! Enjoy them all!

And then there were several funny but many serious items in a few bucket lists. Many of us can relate to cleaning out unneeded paper. And even a splurge – to buy a Paganini sports car!

We hope that you have time and opportunity to do some of the things on your bucket list. Maybe you'll add a few more from our group "bucket list!" If you do something exciting, be sure to share your story with us!

What Retirees are Doing in Retirement

CORRECTION of error in previous issue of the REJUVENATOR: The Fall, 2025 issue of The Rejuvenator contained an article about **Elaine Heath-Ward** which misidentified her as a retiree. She is still an active employee with UWG and we wish her good health and a successful continuing career with UWG. Although we anticipate she may join us in retirement at some point in the future, we apologize for the error in indicating she was already retired.

Ely Elefante, recently retired Director of Auxiliary Operations at UWG serves as a Board member of the West Georgia Autism Foundation, which recently presented local law enforcement officers with sensory bags for patrol vehicles to prevent negative experiences in the event that a person with autism is dealing directly with an officer or first responder. Autism spectrum disorder, according to the Mayo Clinic, is a condition of the brain that affects how people see and socialize with others. It's usually identified in early childhood. One symptom can be an intense focus on activities or objects. The sensory bags contain items that allow individuals with autism to feel safer and more secure during an emergency situation: a stress ball, sunglasses, a soft blanket, ear muffs, and textured items. They also contain an Autism Safety Form which can be filled out by parents and guardians, giving them the opportunity to explain calming techniques as well as specifics about medications and any other diagnoses that might be helpful for officials to know. For more information, visit wgaautism.org/about.

WEST GEORGIA AUTISM FOUNDATION



Ely Elefante

Rolanda Farmer has found her volunteer service at the Georgia Aquarium, a non-profit organization, to have been a rewarding experience. The volunteer program has provided a wide range of opportunities to support the aquarium's mission while deepening her understanding of marine ecosystems, conservation, and guest engagement. Through comprehensive training, volunteers are empowered to serve in a variety of capacities – from engaging with daily visitors to contributing behind the scenes. Overall, Rolanda says she has gained a greater appreciation for marine life and the important work being done at the aquarium.



Rolanda Farmer

On November 5, 2025, the **4th Annual John Ferling lecture** was held on the UWG campus. This time, instead of a lecture being presented by someone off campus, John himself was interviewed by Keith Pacholl, Professor of History at UWG, about numerous topics related to the American Revolution.

John had just completed his 16th book, *Shots Heard Round the World. America, Britain and Europe in the Revolutionary War*, a comprehensive account of America's battle for independence and its impact on the rest of the world.

Pacholl invited John to reflect on the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and to share insights and experiences that stood out to him about the American Revolution. John proceeded

What Retirees are Doing in Retirement (cont.)

continued from page 4

to provide a detailed account of perspectives taken at the time by such known figures as John Adams, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and several others whom he saw as critical to an understanding of this period in American history. He also participated in a question/answer session open to those in the audience.

Asked which of the books he has written on the American experiment was his favorite, Ferling cited *Almost A Miracle: The American Victory In the War of Independence* (published in 2007) as likely fitting this category.

It was also announced at this event that John has a new book, on a much different topic, coming out in April 2026, entitled *Baseball As It Was. Building Champions Before Free Agency Changed Everything*.



Michael Hester

Brad Yates, Dean of the UWG School of Communication, Film and Media (left) presented the 2025 Distinguished Service Award – Campus Partner to Dr. Michael Hester, right, at UWG Media Night, October 9, 2025.

Photo by Douglas Salter

Cecelia Lee

On Friday, September 26, 2025, Dr. Cecilia Castro Lee presented her newest collection of poetry at the Carrollton Center for the Arts. She read from her book “Con el Fuego en las Manos,” which translates to “With Fire in Their Hands.” “The book deals with all the creators who have fire in their hands,” Lee said. “Musicians, poets, writers – even women weaving – create.” Her book contained about 35 poems about different countries and periods of time to pay tribute to those creators. In her address to the reader, she wrote: “Can you imagine a world without art, without poetry, without any creation?”



Dr. Cecilia
Castro Lee

CYBERSECURITY TIPS:

Use strong, unique, complex passwords that include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Avoid reusing passwords across different accounts.

Remain vigilant. Phishing scams are a constant threat – designed to trick you into divulging personal information such as your login ID and password, social security number, banking or credit-card information. These scams often take the form of emails pretending to be from people, departments or organizations related to the university. Check out the online “Phish Tank” Archive from UC Berkeley for various examples.

Puzzle: UWG Places Word Search

submitted by Rolanda Farmer

UWG Places Word Search



Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden →, ↓, and ↘.

AYCOCK
BONNER
BOYD
CALLAWAY
COBB
COLISEUM
EDUCATION

GREENBELT
HUMANITIES
LIBRARY
MELSON
MURPHY
QUAD
RICHARDS

ROW
STADIUM
STARBUCKS
STROZIER
TLC
TYUS