



NEARO Outreach



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Joel Gewirtz

Throughout most of my life, retirement was touted as a noble goal—payback, literally, for a lifetime of working. It was intended to be a stress-free period of freedom and relaxation, a time to receive benefits after decades of contributing to Social Security, Medicare,

a pension and/or individual savings plan. These were to be the golden years, free from job demands and the daily irritations of toxic bosses and annoying colleagues (obviously, that part has no relevance to those of us who worked for NEA).

Yet somehow, now that we've finally reached this plateau, it seems a tad less secure than we'd expected. We look around and sense that, for those still on their way here, and even some who've already arrived, the rules are changing. A tepid economy causes many to postpone for years their plan to retire. Seemingly sacrosanct promises to employees, both public and private, are routinely modified or broken by business and government. Even Social Security and Medicare are threatened by those so shortsighted as to imagine they won't need them.

These days, one might easily get the impression that retirement as we've known it is under assault, or even—dare I say it?—that the basic concept of retirement is no longer working. And so it was with great satisfaction that I received the news that this besieged institution had suddenly gotten an unexpected shot in the arm, that it had been recognized and sanctified by the highest authority; I mean, holy retirement, Batman ... the Pope is joining us! Well, okay, he's probably not actually going to join NEARO, but still.

And speaking of actually joining NEARO, I trust you

have all received our gentle reminder to renew your membership, and we look forward to hearing from you. If, however, you previously signed up for more than one year—an option we definitely encourage—then we didn't send a reminder, and please accept our thanks for your foresight. One other request: if you need to correct your e-mail or home address on the membership form, please PRINT as clearly as possible. On a different subject, please take a couple of minutes to respond to our recent e-mail survey about your political activity.



GET TERRIFIC TRAVEL TIPS AT NEARO MARCH MEETING

If you'll be in the DC area on Wednesday, March 13, plan to attend NEARO's next general membership meeting, where the focus will be on international travel (see also pages 6-8 of this issue). Our guest speaker will be Larry Swerdlin, president of the Central Atlantic chapter of the American Society of Travel Agents. We've asked him to share expert advice on such topics as—

- * Tours or independent travel: how to know which is right for you?
- * How to pick a tour company
- * The secrets of traveling light
- * Ways to make long flights more bearable
- * Special tips for seniors -- and for solo travelers
- * When should you use a travel agent?

As usual for these quarterly gatherings of the tribe, we'll start at the very civilized, post-rush-hour time of 11 a.m., in the News Conference Room at NEA headquarters (1201 Sixteenth St., NW, Washington, DC in case the address has slipped your mind). Coffee, tea, cookies, and fruit will be available. New retirees are especially welcome.

NEARO's board of directors will meet in the same room at 9:30 a.m.

NEARO has again asked NEA Executive Director John Stocks to meet with us to discuss retiree representation on, and formal access to, the Retirement Board. As you may recall, NEA has eliminated the NEARO-nominated delegate to the Board. Their explanation was not persuasive, and we sought a meeting with Mr. Stocks to discuss our concerns—and our great disappointment at the way retirees had been treated.

We were asked to meet first with NEA’s director of Human Resources, which we did. That late-September meeting, while useful, did not offer any solution. Mr. Stocks had said he would meet with us after we met with HR if we still wanted him to, and we await his response to our January request.

Meanwhile, all meetings of the Retirement Board are open to Plan participants, and you are welcome to attend and observe your Board in action (except for rare, generally brief, executive sessions). The next two meetings are scheduled for March 12 and May 14 at NEA headquarters.

Finally, for those of you who haven’t been keeping track, NEA will celebrate its 156th birthday this year. That is surely an impressive age, and to have gotten this old it’s clearly been doing lots of things right. Congratulations, Mother NEA—stay strong, keep smiling . . . and remember not to forget your old friends.

MEET NEARO’S TWO NEW OFFICERS

The terms of all five NEARO officers and three of the six board members expired Dec. 31, 2012. All but two of these incumbents sought reelection to new two-year terms—and were declared elected by acclamation at the December membership meeting since their seats were uncontested.

The two officers who stepped down after four years of great service to NEARO were vice-president Rosemary Rathz and treasurer Heidi Steffens. Nominated and elected by acclamation to succeed them were Donna Gold and Steven Martinez, who introduce themselves here.



VICE-PRESIDENT DONNA GOLD

“ I look forward to serving NEARO as your new vice-president. Come visit me at the mansion sometime. Downton Abbey has

nothing on this place (except a few hundred fewer rooms).

Oops. . . You mean I don’t get the vice-presidential mansion with the job? Hmm. Perhaps I should reconsider. Well, anyway, on with my bio.



After retirement in 2008 I did some organizational development consulting. However, I soon discovered that just getting the work was a full-time job (spoken like one of those spoiled salaried consultants). So now I do occasional OD work pro bono in the community and mainly focus on giving back in more basic ways: volunteering in the college and career center at my daughter’s high school, teaching and chairing the Lifespan spiritual growth council at the Unitarian Church I adopted, playing PTA leadership roles, and being politically active in season. I always make time for yoga, art, social science or language classes, and family travel. See more about me on page 4 of this issue. OK, are you sure I don’t get the mansion? ”

TREASURER STEVEN MARTINEZ

“ I’ve been retired for a bit over two years, but I was a CPA (certified pain in the....oh, you know what I mean) in a former



life and helped develop and track the budget for the NEA. Last year I made the mistake of showing up at a NEARO board meeting (not that coming to a meeting is a bad thing). Little did I know the treasurer had moved to Oregon and an acting treasurer was needed to complete her term. Before I realized it, I was being recruited to take on that appointed position. Not, mind you, because of my accounting background, but because I was a live body that mustn’t have enough to do with my newly found free time. Seriously, though, I’m looking forward to helping the organization as (now officially) treasurer and working with some new folks.

Work for me was always the means to the end and not the end, so I’ve had no trouble finding things to do in retirement. Last fall I took on the position of chief financial officer for a small start-up company, which has taken another bite out of all that



free time. But now I get to sleep in every morning, instead of heading right to the office. I spend my first moments with a cup of coffee and a good book. And sleeping in means I can finally stay awake and even hold an intelligent conversation past 9 p.m., something my wife, Karon, has grown to appreciate.

A wise friend once told me it is better to wear out than to rust, and I have every intention of following such

sound advice. I have always enjoyed the great outdoors, so I'm spending a lot of my time cycling, hiking and backpacking. My most recent adventure was a nine-night trip backpacking in the Grand Canyon. I also took up yoga, and that is a very enjoyable part of my day. It has helped me become more flexible than I've been in years and opened my mind to new possibilities.



I'M GRATEFUL TO AMERICA'S TEACHERS

by Bob Harman (worked in NEA Communications and GR; retired in 1987)

If you can read this. . . You know the rest. Love it or hate it, that old saw of a bumper sticker recycles every couple of decades. It still strikes me as a bit needy. But I do thank NEA members just about every day. Don't you?

Here are some of the things that working for NEA gave me:

- Respect and appreciation for people who do the toughest, most important work in the world, often without the support, resources, or pay they deserve
- Endless learning and change
- Opportunity to work on issues that mattered: bargaining rights, education funding, the 18-year-old vote, unification, school integration, federal lobbying by members at the congressional district level, the endorsement of presidential candidates
- Exceptional co-workers—smart, creative, hard-working, fun (even zany), and committed to the NEA cause
- Awareness that it takes diversity—of culture, gender, skills, styles, and opinions—to be and do the best
- A liberal perspective about the role of government and a personal conviction that taxes are good and necessary
- A seat in the cheering section as teachers took control of their organization, merged segregated southern state affiliates, fretted about competition (then out-organized, out-bargained, and outran the AFT), welcomed education support personnel into their ranks, and became a nationally respected, effective, member-led union.

- Events and moments large and small to cherish: Independence Days in convention halls across the country. . . spontaneous marches by RA delegates to protest various forms of injustice. . . night flights home with fireworks visible from the air. . . NEA leaders and staff at the White House with Jimmy Carter to celebrate creation of the Department of Education. . . the excitement of an NEA member selected for a space mission—and then the devastating loss of the crew that included Christa McAuliffe.

Last but hardly least, from 1960 to 1987 NEA members put a roof over my family's heads and food on our table. I was paid the way members deserved to be paid—even when they were not.

And for many years now I've received generous retirement benefits and health care coverage—even as today's governors try to claw back those commitments from public employees. Carol and I enjoy a comfortable life in reasonably good health and with the resources to choose where and how we live, travel, and spend our leisure time.

Those good salaries and benefits didn't happen by magic, of course. Some of you old timers may remember that in the early days, NEA management didn't support collective bargaining rights for either teachers or association staff. But elected leaders did, so things eventually changed. Our staff organizations—NEASO, AFSE, NEAMMO, NSO, and NEARO—all played a huge part in achieving the financial security our generation is lucky enough to have today.



As a special ed teacher in Ohio, my daughter-in-law works nine- or 10-hour days during the week and 10 hours more over the weekend, responsible each year for a few more students than the mandated maximum, while keeping up with the also mandated Individualized Educational Plan (or IEP for short). She loves it. She has good health care coverage now and a

pension promised in the future. Will she have all that when she retires? I hope so.

My granddaughter has a brand-new M.A. degree in education from The Ohio State University. I'm optimistic about her career. About her retirement? Not so much. She'd better save big bucks.

PENSIONS, PEANUT BUTTER, AND PARENTAL ANGST

by Donna Gold (worked in NEA Government Relations, the National Center for Innovation, and various incarnations of Education Policy and Practice; retired from NEA Affiliate Learning and Effectiveness in 2008).

Compared to most of my retired and retiring colleagues, my entrance into the world of retirement had a distinctly different flavor: that of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, to be precise.

While many of my retired friends were going on cruises, attending lectures on the mating habits of the Abyssinian lovebird, sleeping until noon, or having high tea to the sounds of chamber music, I was making school lunches, running soccer carpools, and trying to keep my sanity despite the blaring beat of New Kids on the Block or "High School Musical" pounding in the background.

OK, kidding aside, I know many of you happy retirees are committing time and effort to very worthy and important causes and aren't just sitting around eating bonbons and reading *People* magazine. That's not in the nature of most former Association staffers, who came to the organization because they were committed to social causes from the get-go and never lost their enthusiasm for making the world a better place. But there is no question it is a very different world that you operate in now from my world as a full-time parent.



It's fun to see you spoil and coo over your grandchildren—until you've had enough and hand them back to their parents for the dirty work. My own days and months are framed by school and sports calendars. I spend a lot of my time watching field hockey and soccer games with other parents half my age.

My daughter Tatiana was ten—just entering 5th grade—when

I retired four years ago. My husband, David, and I were both 58. Tatiana's appearance in our lives had not been due to any particular miracle of fertility science or accident of reckless abandon. We had adopted her later in life (she was 13 months, we were 49). The road to that decision was long and circuitous. Having mothered two stepsons in my first, "practice" marriage, I certainly had an inkling of what parenthood would mean. But let's face it: Do most people really know what they're in for when they initially choose to become parents? And despite the many surprises that our later-in-life parenting has brought, I feel now as I felt then: It was the absolute right decision, no matter what the numbers on our birth certificates say.

The maxim that as an older parent you will also be a wiser one must have been coined by someone who never tried it. Watching my daughter emerge over this past year into a full-blown teenage mutant ninja high school kid leaves me feeling distinctly unwise almost daily. It doesn't help that she's drop-dead gorgeous and the boys are beginning to circle. My husband's response is to head to the closet for the proverbial shotgun while pointing out that he knows what every 14-year-old boy is thinking about 24/7 and he'll be damned if they'll get near his daughter. And there are those nights when trying to help with homework when my school years seem like a few millennia ago. Thank heaven that David can handle the math.

All those years of meditation and spiritual retreats seem to melt away in an instant when Tatiana is standing in front of me in her tight jeans and navel-revealing top saying, "Mom, all we want to do is go out and hang together for a while," referring to a boy I've never laid eyes on. Fright Night live and in person!!

Yes, these retirement years that David and I are experiencing feel quite different from the norm. But I enjoy the surprised looks I get when I say I'm 62—and I attribute my youthful appearance to the fact that parenting helps me stay young at heart.

Although I provide countless volunteer hours



to the PTA and in-school programs, I do still find the time for an art or language class, lunch with friends, and live theatre and concerts—things that were sometimes hard to squeeze in when I was working full-time. True, we can't take off for Fiji in September, but we have the joy of family vacations with the added interest of one or two of Tatiana's BFFs (teen talk for Best Friends Forever, even though it may be the friend-of-the-month) coming along—a great recipe for

staying young and on your toes. I treasure these times and know it will be tough to face that empty nest a few years down the line.

So we find that the wide gap between our age and our daughter's is filled with moments that are terrific, hair-pulling, fun, back-talking, and technomaniacal. Our golden years in the traditional sense are yet to come. But having this wonderful child in our lives at this stage in our story is indeed golden.

EDNA FRADY IN ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Proudly casting one of Virginia's 13 electoral college votes for President Obama was NEARO membership secretary and longtime Democratic activist Edna Frady. Edna was selected last May to represent her congressional district in the electoral college, which of course is a process, not an actual place.



In each state, two slates of electors are chosen to cast the official ballots, depending on which candidate wins the state's popular vote.

"A friend asked me to run for the position," she explains. "As it happened, no one ran against me." So citizens in Virginia's 8th congressional district (a DC suburb) who voted for Obama and Biden on Election Day were actually voting to appoint Edna as an elector pledged to those candidates.

Since Obama won Virginia, Edna and the state's other 12 Democratic electors went to the state capital for the Dec. 17 electoral college vote, which took place in the House of Delegates chambers. If Romney had won the state, 13 Republican electors would have made the trip instead.

The electoral college ceremony, run by the state board of elections, was "very precise," Edna reports. "We had assigned seats (mine in the front row), and everyone was given a book spelling out exactly what we had to say and do. The governor and one of our U.S. senators spoke. Then we voted for the President and Vice-President on separate ballots and signed the proper documents, which were sent to Congress and the National Archives. The morning concluded with a luncheon for the electors and their guests, hosted by the state Democratic party."

STILL BULLISH ON THE CREDIT UNION

While we were working, many of us belonged to the Education Associations Federal Credit Union (EAFCU). And a lot of us still belong, even though we're retired. Is that a good idea?

"Stay," urges Tomas Saucedo, 2012 retiree and EAFCU treasurer. "The credit union continues to be there when we retirees need it, just as it's there for current employees." Other retirees at the CU helm are Kitty Johnson, Marilyn Hutton, and Pam Wilson.

The CU has three main concerns at present: retaining membership among the large number of recent retirees, increasing the number of new loans, and improving dividend rates. With nearly 80 of its members retiring in 2012, the CU could have been negatively affected, but fortunately, most of those new retirees left money in their accounts.

Ample funds are available for loans, Tomas reports, and members are starting to borrow—but there are

fewer staff in the NEA building now, and they tend to be fiscally conservative. Retirees may make the most of their assets by tapping into a share-secured loan with a low 3 percent rate, to pay off much more expensive credit card debt. The loan limit is currently \$10,000, and members regain access to the pledged amount as they pay off the loan in monthly installments.

CU dividends are on par with what Vanguard money market savers receive. "Dividends are small everywhere," Tomas notes, "but the credit union continues to pay one each quarter."

All in all, Tomas says, "EAFCU works for you—in a personal way that has your interest at heart—unlike other well known financial institutions of recent infamy. Stay with EAFCU. It's a good thing."

And if you retired from an NEA state or local affiliate and were in a credit union, be sure to check with them to find out the benefits of remaining a member.

ADVENTUROUS NEARO MEMBERS . . .

NEARO members tend to be enthusiastic travelers, whether inspired by curiosity about other cultures or a desire to see the wonders of the world now that they finally have the time and wherewithal. Among those who enjoyed international adventures in 2012 or early 2013:

Boyd Bosma: Around-the-world cruise (Poland, Spain, Egypt, Jordan, Dubai, UAE, India, Malaysia, Singapore, China), Central America (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize), Africa (Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, Tanzania, Namibia)

Joel Bradshaw: United Kingdom

John Conway: Canada

Warlene Gary: Egypt, Spain

Joel Gewirtz: Canada

Gerry Gripper: Australia, Azores (Portugal), Bahamas, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, England, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, New Caledonia, Russia, Sweden, Vanuatu

Brad & Elke Herrington: Germany

Linda Hill: Cayman Islands

Ned Hopkins: Mexico, Ethiopia

Ron Houston: Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar

Nancy Kochuk and Carl Luty: Spain, Vietnam

Jean Kornfeld: Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia

Ann Kurzius: Portugal, Morocco, Ukraine, Turkey

Sheri Lanoff: Italy

Barbara McGrew: Ukraine

Malinda Miles: Costa Rica, Nicaragua

Pat Orrange: New Zealand, Australia

Tomas Saucedo: Mexico

Sheila Simmons: China

Carole Sund: Puerto Rico, St. Kitts, Dominica, St. Maarten, Barbados

Evelyn Temple-Giebel, Delores Rozier: The Bahamas

Rozanne Weissman: Italy

Sondra Williams, Gerry Gripper, Barby Halstead-Worrell, Steven Martinez, Wayne DeMeyere, John Thurston: Costa Rica

Paul Wolman: Netherlands, France, Spain

Betty Yates: South Africa



Erupting in smiles at Costa Rica's Mt. Arenal volcano are (from left) Gerry Gripper, Steven Martinez, Marcia Thurston, Barby Halstead-Worrell, John Thurston, Sondra Williams, Pam Barnett, Tom Worrell, and Wayne DeMeyere



Sheila Simmons strolls the peaceful gardens of the Summer Palace in Beijing, China



Pat Orrange and John Dornan atop Mt. Eden, overlooking Auckland, New Zealand

...EXPLORE WORLD'S SCENIC TREASURES



Warlene Gary takes a breather outside Barcelona, Spain



Ann Kurzius cruises the Black Sea from Yalta to Odessa, Ukraine



Sheri Lanoff savors the fruits of her labor in a Tuscan cooking class near Arezzo, Italy



Boyd and Madeline Bosma among the long-lost ruins of Petra, Jordan.



Gerry Gripper pauses by the Harbour Bridge in Sydney, Australia



Joel Bradshaw with the Tudor Roses at England's Hever Castle

TRAVELING WITH A TRIPOD

by former NEARO Outreach "grouchy old man" columnist John Conway, who retired from NEA Government Relations in 2000



When I decided to retire, I first planned on becoming a travel agent. But shortly after I completed travel agent school, 9/11/01 put a major crimp in Americans' travel plans. Many brick-and-mortar travel agencies went out of business overnight, and my effort to forge a new career soon died also.

As I examined other arenas for my newfound time and energy, I focused on my love of photography and my continued love of travel. Eileen and I had planned for years to be able to afford the luxury of excursions of various types as part of the retirement experience, so I dragged my cameras and lenses and tripod to most of the places we went. Along the way, I discovered my own inadequacies as a photographer—but rekindled my love of the art form and just kept clicking along the digital path.

All journeys begin at home, of course. This photo of our backyard in fall captures much of why we moved from Washington, DC to Tennessee for our retirement years. In east Tennessee there are four distinct seasons; the hills and mountains nearby offer an unbelievably varied panorama of Mother Nature at her best; with a relatively low cost of living, new arrivals can afford a plot with enough space to have peace and quiet and a comfortable home; and a slower, simpler lifestyle lets us engage in activities and relationships more deeply than ever seemed possible in the workaday world.



This isn't a perfect place, but we have been able to create a home here and reinvent our lives to satisfy that romantic notion that retirement is what you make it. We've decided to make it fun and rewarding, with no regrets about leaving our former world.



But when the urge to travel strikes, for us there simply is no more intriguing destination than Europe. When Eileen and I first made our respective "bucket lists," we both put our forebearers' continent at the top. We knew that all the political and social parts of our culture emanated from there, and we wanted to explore them for ourselves. We wanted to discover both the old and the new

of Europe: the majesty of the Swiss Alps as well as the familiarity of the Eiffel Tower.

In the 13 years since my retirement we have made several trips there: cruises, independent wandering, extended living in villas, driving as recklessly as the

natives in very small cars, and partaking of wonderful food and drink. While we have no intention of becoming expatriates ourselves, it's easy to see why so many Americans permanently settle "across the pond."

Closer to home, we've discovered the unparalleled beauty that Canada offers its visitors from the south. Whether one pauses to appreciate the quiet wonder of Jasper National Park or physically engages the powerful drama of Niagara Falls, Canada's nature is truly awe inspiring.



If we were to pick someplace else to live, it would be Canada. We'd have to learn how to survive in the cold and snow, but in natural beauty, friendliness, and cultural diversity, only Canada can match the

United States. Canada's emphasis on bilingualism, its accommodating social structures, and its abundance of natural resources make it an ideal candidate for a second citizenship.

Whenever wanderlust—or the heat of a Tennessee summer—sets in, our visions turn to the picture postcard loveliness of Canada. There is much to enjoy in the fishing villages of both coasts and the rural serenity of the heartland, as well as in the dynamic cities of each of the provinces.

In every place we travel, we admire the colorful flowers. From Portland and San Francisco to Idaho's Snake River valley to the lake region of Italy to our own backyard, the glory of blooming plants is not to be denied. To me, as a photographer, flowers are as important a subject as landscapes. They are frequently overlooked, I think, because they lack the grandeur of a snowy mountaintop or the power of a rushing river. But in the subtle engineering of petal and stamen and the range of hues that many species offer, there is a special insight into nature that only a close-up view can provide.



From the desert dryness of the west to the rugged rockbound heights of North Carolina, from the snow drifts of Idaho to the picturesque foliage of New York, there is no more beautiful place on earth than the North American continent, especially the United States.



Even as we recognize how limited our natural resources may be, there is seemingly no end to the scenic beauty of the flora and fauna and terrain of our place. Even if our history was not replete with outstanding achievements and a plural society the envy of people worldwide, we would still be sought out for our wealth of beauty and our abundance of scenic wonders.



Without trying to sound cynical or political, I hope future generations recognize the value of our natural surroundings and take precautions to secure their future. What does it hurt in the total scheme of things to put a hold on mountaintop mining, or to limit clearcutting of forests, or to diminish the onslaught of paving and urban sprawl, in order to guarantee a future for the natural wonders of our homeland?

FAMILY CRISIS CENTER NEEDS YOUR HELP



Malinda Miles, who retired from NEA Human Resources in 1994, is now executive director of the Family Crisis Center of Prince George's County, MD, an emergency shelter for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

The center serves over 2,500 people and houses over 650 women and children annually.

"People don't generally associate older women with domestic violence," she says, "but each year we see about 15 women aged 50 to 70, who stay from one day to 90 days, and that number has continued to rise over the past two years."

If you're a knitter or crocheter, please consider making and donating a scarf, shawl, or hat (adult or child size) to bring a smile to someone who's hurting. Getting a special handmade garment will lighten these women's considerable burdens as they reclaim their lives.

"Even if you're not a crafter, you can still help the shelter," Malinda says. "We need money, and we take every opportunity to ask for individual (fully tax-deductible) donations to supplement our grants."

The center provides everything residents need on a daily basis—food, clothing, hygiene products, disinfectants, detergents—plus holiday items and clinical and therapeutic counseling, transportation, case management, outings, and limited dental and medical assistance. Volunteers provide one-on-one counseling, group counseling, and counseling for children through play therapy, and they mentor and monitor children during safe visitations.

"You don't have to be local to help," Malinda adds. "No matter where you live, you can answer the crisis hotline and participate in the Lethality Assessment Program."

Send crafts or checks (payable to the Family Crisis Center, Inc. of Prince George's County) to Malinda at the Center's address: 3601 Taylor St., Brentwood, MD 20722. To find out more about volunteering, phone her at 301-779-2100.

Besides heading the crisis center and serving as mayor of Mt. Rainier, MD, Malinda is responsible for the shelter's website. "It's not yet perfect," she says, "but it works, and it will tell you all about this remarkable facility." Check it out at familycrisiscenter-pgco.com.



FILM CRITIC'S CORNER

by Rozanne Weissman (worked in NEA Communications in 1970s, now a film reviewer and food writer for DCdigest.com).

A real plethora of good movies recently . . . rejoice! (The reviews that follow were all written pre-Academy Awards.)

ARGO

A must-see, substantive political thriller directed by and starring Ben Affleck as Tony Mendez, a CIA expert in disguises and extricating captives from tough situations. It's based on a little-known true story at the height of the 1979 Iran hostage situation. Mendez comes up with a harebrained scheme to get six American diplomats—who had escaped to the Canadian ambassador's residence—out of Tehran. The scheme: Mendez impersonates a film producer who arrives in Iran with his crew to scout locations for his alleged upcoming, off-the-wall science fiction film. Amusing scenes show

him dealing with the revolutionary government's cultural ministers and "rehearsing" the Americans to play members of the film crew as a strategy to get them safely out of the country. Well-written script by Chris Terrio. Superb cast.

ZERO DARK THIRTY

Another must-see docudrama, about the decade-long hunt for Osama bin Laden. The title refers to the darkness and secrecy of the lengthy hunt for bin Laden as well as to the timing of the raid at half past midnight. Director Kathryn Bigelow, the first woman to win a directing Oscar (for 2008's *The Hurt Locker*), weaves together an emotional tale, opening with phone calls to 911 from people trapped in the World Trade Center on 9/11/01—audio only against a blank



screen. Cut to a riveting and troubling scene in a putrid prison two years later, where a CIA official interrogates and tortures—including water boarding—a detainee. Politicos and others have been up in arms over these graphic torture scenes—excuse me, ahem, “enhanced interrogation”—claiming they distort the role torture played in ultimately finding bin Laden. The scenes are no more graphic than the water boarding scenes in 2007’s thriller *Rendition*—but not as many people saw that film.

Ten years of bureaucracy, wading through documents, following leads, and analyzing voices and “chatter” to detect patterns could make for a tedious film. So “Zero Dark Thirty” focuses on Maya (Jessica Chastain), a young single-minded CIA operative who spends all her time tracking bin Laden. The pace speeds up in later scenes leading to the U.S. Navy SEAL team 6 striking bin Laden’s Pakistan compound and killing him. No spoiler alert here: we all know how it ended. I found it hard to relate the SEALs in this film to those depicted in the Navy-sanctioned film *Act of Valor*.

LINCOLN

Another must-see film. Of particular interest is its depiction of the political machinations behind enactment of the 13th amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery. The behind-the-scenes lobbying and arm-twisting weren’t so different from today’s (minus digital and social media). Daniel Day-Lewis inhabits the spirit of Lincoln. His performance is superb.

QUARTET

I loved this film! It’s a delight directed by Dustin Hoffman and starring Maggie Smith. In a home for retired British musicians, the geriatric set is getting ready for the annual concert to celebrate Verdi’s birthday. The acting, opera, and classical music are wonderful. It’s almost as much fun as 2011’s *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*. Ronald Harwood adapted his play to the big screen. And, it’s Hoffman’s directorial debut—at age 75. Hard ever to forget the young Hoffman in *The Graduate*.

DJANGO UNCHAINED

As a freed slave turned bounty hunter, Jamie Foxx is terrific in director Quentin Tarantino’s southern

revenge spaghetti Western. Of course, with Quentin Tarantino, there will be blood—and lots of it. And, in this film, also guts, gore, and whips. If you can’t stand violent movies, this one’s not for you.

SAFE HAVEN

Based on the Nicholas Sparks novel, this film features Dancing with the Stars champion ballroom dancer and choreographer Julianne Hough, who flees from an abusive marriage to a policeman and encounters widower Josh Duhamel, with two winsome kids. I took lots of Kleenex, expecting a tear jerker. It turned out to be more tense thriller than chick flick.

SIDE EFFECTS

This is a psychological thriller directed by Steven Soderbergh and starring Rooney Mara as a young depressed New Yorker, Jude Law as her psychiatrist, and Channing Tatum as her husband, an inside trader recently released from prison. And then there’s the beautiful Catherine Zeta Jones as her former psychiatrist. Sex, drugs, greed, murder, pharmacological sales pitches for psychiatric drugs, including antidepressants such as the fictitious Rx Ablixa—all wrapped up into one film full of unexpected twists and turns. Interesting but implausible; perhaps it needs a quick fix Rx.

GANGSTER SQUAD

Off-the-book cops fight dirty to keep mob outta old LA. Video game shoot-’em-up feel; Sean Penn, Ryan Gosling star. Great cinematography and luscious 1949-era costumes. Mob: 0, cops 2, film 2-1/2.

ON THE ROAD

Based on Jack Kerouac’s 1957 beatnik novel. Pot, sex, experimentation. Strong cinematography and music, but actors seem miscast. Brought back memories of my old manual typewriter!

THE GUILT TRIP

Barbra Streisand plays Seth Rogen’s overbearing Jewish mom. She ‘kvetches’ about her son on cross-country road trip. Oy vey!



DIRECTORY CHANGES

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WELCOME, NEW RETIREES!

Teresa Baker 9/1/95 - 1/1/13 Florida Education Association	Wilma Jenkins 12/1/12 (deferred vested) NEA Conference & Facilities Management	Annie Pullins 5/12/68 - 1/1/13 Georgia Association of Educators
Sherry Brantley 9/1/77 - 1/1/13 Florida Education Association	Brian Kilroy 12/11/89 - 1/1/13 Maine Education Association	John Roystone 5/10/00 - 1/1/13 NEA Information Technology Services
Gregory Burns 12/1/07 - 1/1/13 North Dakota Education Association	Vivian Lee 11/1/12 (deferred vested) National Education Association	David Sperling 5/16/06 - 2/1/13 NEA-New Mexico
Paul DeArmond 10/4/85 - 6/2/11 Arizona Education Association	Steven Lemken 10/2/95 - 12/1/12 NEA Education Support Professional Quality	Margaret Tracey 10/1/10 (deferred vested) Georgia Association of Educators
Darrel Drury 9/8/03 - 1/1/13 NEA Research	Denise McKeon 1/4/99 - 1/1/13 NEA Research	Vernell Walker 11/2/70 - 1/1/13 Hillsborough (FL) Classroom TA
Karen French 10/1/99 - 12/1/12 NEA Financial & Member Services	Linda Neal 4/28/86 - 10/1/12 Kentucky Education Association	Howard Weinberg 6/1/00 - 1/1/13 Delaware State Education Association
Jerry Fultz 3/1/10 (deferred vested) NEA-New Mexico	D. Marshall Ogletree 6/15/09 - 1/1/13 Florida Education Association	Claudia Williams 4/1/91 - 1/1/13 North Carolina Association of Educators
Laurel Haapanen 2/12/01 - 1/1/13 Maine Education Association	John Polidori 1/5/09 - 12/1/12 NEA Campaigns & Elections	Stanley Wisniewski 7/25/95 - 2/1/13 National Education Association

FAREWELLS

Margaret (Peggy) McCormick, 65, died Jan. 2 at her home in Bethesda, MD. She joined the NEA staff in 2003 as an attorney in the Office of General Counsel and later worked in Campaigns and Elections; she retired in 2009. She is survived by her husband, Dr. James N. Ramey, two children, two stepchildren, two sisters, three brothers, and a newborn granddaughter. Contributions in Peg's memory may be made to Jewish Social Service Agency Hospice Program, 200 Wood Hill Road, Rockville, MD 20850 or to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 6030 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Floye Perkins, 86, died Jan. 13 in Louisville, KY. She retired from the Kentucky Education Association in 1987 after a long career with responsibilities in training and research. Floye specialized in the analysis of school district income and expenses. She will be remembered for her quiet generosity, her deep concern for the less fortunate, her love of animals, her quick sense of humor, her exceptional hand work, and her devotion to her church, family, and friends.

Raymond Randels, 89, died on Jan. 7 in East Lansing, MI. Following service in World War II, Ray became a teacher in Ohio and Michigan, then director of the Michigan Education Association Conference Center and later MEA's associate executive director for UniServ. After retiring from MEA, he joined the NEA staff, serving in various capacities and accepting short-term assignments in Montana, Ohio, and Florida; he retired in 1987. Ray served as supervisor of Readmond (MI) Township, where he helped establish a 911 dispatch authority for the area. Ray is survived by his wife of 69 years, Marian, as well as a son, a daughter, and several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. Condolences may be posted at www.greastlansing.com.

Roger Stephon, 75, died Feb. 14 in Maryland. He was respected as an "elder statesman" in NEA Human and Civil Rights after his many years as a UniServ staffer in Livonia and elsewhere in Michigan. In both his professional and personal lives Roger dedicated his time and energy to countless causes that championed equal rights and access to quality education. Upon retirement in 2002 he focused his energy on serving his community, dedicating himself to help those who had less and were in need, especially through the Oxon Hill (MD) Food Pantry. Roger is survived by his wife Sandra, his stepson Michael, his children Chris, Sue, Vicki, and Doug, and their mother, Barbara. Donations to continue his legacy of service can be made to the food pantry (ohfp.org), and expressions of sympathy may be sent to Sandra Stephon at 13212 Park Lane, Ft. Washington, MD 20744-6513.

Eric Jon White, 67, died suddenly Feb. 7 in Acworth, GA. Jon retired from NEA in 2001 but continued to work full-time, first for the West Virginia EA and later on contract with associations in Texas, Louisiana, and most recently Knoxville, TN. Originally a junior and senior high school teacher and coach, Jon began his 43-year association career in 1970. He served as executive director of large locals in Brevard County (FL) and Fairfax (VA) and later as NEA regional director for the Midwest and Southeast. Survivors include his wife of 46 years, Helen, four sons and a daughter. Condolences may be posted at www.legacy.com/guestbooks/atlanta/guestbook.aspx?n=eric-white&pid=162941629&cid=full.

NEARO

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