

# CONNECTIONS

NEWSLETTER #4

Fall 2013

## Fall Luncheon CSU-ERFA Speaker

The Friday November 15 luncheon will be held at Marie Calendar's restaurant (Cedar at Shaw) from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. As usual, the 'meet and greet' session is during the first half hour before we sit down to order lunch. The meal is free for members of the Emeriti & Retirees Association (ERA), the local campus chapter of the CSU Emeriti & Retired Faculty Association (ERFA). Prospective joiners are welcome as guests for lunch. No formal business meeting of the membership is scheduled following lunch, but the Q&A session after the luncheon speaker will be expanded for likely updates on CalPERS related issues including health care.

Dr. Alan Wade, Professor Emeritus of Social Work at CSU, Sacramento, is the featured speaker. He has been Director of CSU-ERFA's Legislative Affairs Committee for the past few years. Its task is to be 'watchdog' for bills introduced and policy proposals made in the State Legislature that could affect retired CSU retirees and CalPERS program participants. His presentation will cover the importance of CSU-ERFA's role in tracking policy discussions and proposed laws and its collaboration with allied groups of the public sector. He will be talking about some current matters on the political front that potentially could affect ERFA members regarding pensions and health care.

Alan earned his A.B. and A.M. degrees at the University of Wisconsin, where he lettered in track and field, and his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago (1960), where he eventually taught in the School of Social Service Administration for 8 years. He is a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II, after which he began his collegiate studies and became a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army Reserve during the Korean War. His Wisconsin roots are deep, being a descendant of a designated "Wisconsin Pioneer Family." He came to Sacramento State College in 1967 as Dean of the School of Social Work to set up this new program and gain accredited status. His primary teaching area was 'public social policy'. Professor Wade served as Chair of the campus Academic Senate, and he became President of the faculty union (CFA). He represented CSU, Sacramento in the statewide Academic Senate in Long Beach before retiring in 1992. His community service on behalf of the "Save the American River Association" was recognized by the Salmon Trophy awarded him in 2012. More of his interesting biography will be shared during his introduction at the luncheon.

## Henry Madden Library Instruction and Tour

As a result of a discussion with Library Dean Peter McDonald at our Spring 2013 luncheon, two follow up events have been scheduled. The first, from Ross La Baugh, is a one-hour workshop specifically designed for emeriti on accessing library holdings from remote locations. The second, from Allison Cowgill, is a tour of the library. If there is sufficient interest, we are looking to hold these events next spring. Please let Dave Quadro know if you are interested in either or both of them. Responses can be made by e-mail ([davidq@csufresno.edu](mailto:davidq@csufresno.edu)) or phone (559) 322-8256.

Emeriti faculty continue to enjoy their same library privileges in retirement. Your Fresno State ID card can be used to borrow books, DVD's, music scores, CD's, and more. From off campus, your campus e-mail username and password can be used to search over 200 databases, retrieve journal articles and read eBooks.

Reference assistance is also available around the clock. If you have a quick question, call (559) 278-2174 or text (559) 492-TEXT. For more complex queries, use the email or IM service from the home page ([www.fresnostate.edu/library](http://www.fresnostate.edu/library))

## **PROFILE: Professor Emerita Susan Shanks, Speech Pathologist**

Dr. Shanks, now 83, was a practicing speech pathologist for three decades, of which 22 years were spent at CSU, Fresno. She earned Ph.D. and M.A. degrees in Speech Pathology at Louisiana State University and Bowling Green State University respectively, following completion of her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education at the University of Toledo. This was accomplished against all odds after being stricken with polio and placed in an iron lung in 1949 at the end of her freshman year at Michigan State University. Susan subsequently spent 10 months in Georgia at the F.D.R. Warm Springs Foundation polio facility for intensive treatment and therapy. After 5 years of extensive physical therapy with very little muscle return, she decided to resume her collegiate studies. Therein lies the amazing tale of her personal life and professional quest, which she described in her autobiography entitled "CHOSEN... To Never Walk Alone: An Inspiring Story of a Disabled Christian Woman's Life." Hers was an arduous path toward physical rehabilitation and academic achievement, whereby -- with the dedication of her mother, Martha Shanks, and with the stalwart support of friends and "angel" caregivers -- Susan's determination and perseverance overcame wheelchair obstacles, societal barriers, and a dysfunctional family to reach her goals. Most important throughout her struggles was the guidance provided by her abiding faith in God. Sprinkled throughout the book are passages from the Bible and a hymnal that speak to the specific challenges and choices Susan confronted as her extraordinary life unfolded on a "journey with God."

Hired by Fresno State in 1970, Professor Shanks served five years as chair of the then Department of Communicative Disorders and was active in the Academic Senate, being elected to the position of Chair of the Academic Policy & Planning Committee. Professionally, Dr. Shanks edited two books about 'nursing and communicative disorders' regarding children and adults. The career contributions made by Dr. Shanks to the field of Speech Pathology were recognized twice: once by District V of the California Speech-Language-Hearing Association for outstanding achievement in the area of academic excellence in teaching at the university level (1984); and then by the statewide California Speech-Language-Hearing Association, which bestowed upon her the prestigious title of 'Fellow' of the organization (1989).

In retirement, Susan's journey entered a new phase of accomplishment - - one she calls her "Christian Ministry" focusing on the value of prayer by writing booklets (1995-2005) on "Facing Death with Hope," "Facing Grief with Hope," and "Facing Life's Trials with Hope" as well as "Prayers for Seniors." Each is written with suggestions on how best to approach the general subject via contemplation of pertinent verses from Scripture that encourages meditation and brings comfort to the afflicted. These booklets have been distributed in the thousands to hospices across the nation, helping people in distress to cope with their circumstance and offering solace to their families. Recently, Susan has facilitated the formation of a Bible study group at the request of residents in her condo complex. In addition, she continues to meet weekly with the Spanish conversation group that grew out of a circle of like-minded friends in the early 1980s. And she is active in her Village Garden book discussion club.

With her mother suffering strokes and eventual blindness before passing in 1995, Susan retired from the university in order to help take care of her in their home. Over four decades Susan had

been dependent upon Martha for meeting her personal needs; but now a role-reversal was occurring and Susan became aware of the skills she had acquired in having to live independently by managing a team of personal assistants. This eventually led her to write a source book for others in similar situations entitled "House of Angels: Living Independently with a Family of In-home Caregivers (2011)." This was yet another opportunity for Susan to "serve others in God's name." The intent is to identify personal care options for readers and to pass along her knowledge of how to find, interview, select, train, utilize, and schedule good caregivers for the frail and disabled - - based on a decade of successfully employing 115 such personal assistants. This fruitful and commendable life of teaching, service, and ministry, which has extended well into retirement, has brought Susan much satisfaction and fulfillment.

[NOTE: To purchase "House of Angels" (\$12.75) you may order directly from Susan Shanks by phone (559-439-9450) or through Barnes & Noble at the website bn.com. It can also be found at the 'faculty author' section of the Kennel Bookstore on the campus of CSU, Fresno. Her "Hope" series of booklets (\$1.50 each) may also be obtained by contacting Susan directly. Susan's autobiography "CHOSEN... To Never Walk Alone" (\$17.99) is also available directly from Susan or via the internet from the publisher @ inspiringvoices.com as well as @ bn.com and amazon.com websites.

## **Annual E.R.A. Business Meeting, Summary of Minutes: May 10, 2013**

At the Spring luncheon at Marie Calendar's restaurant, with 30 members in attendance, the newly elected officers of the E.R.A. were introduced. It was also announced that in accordance with the recently adopted "Mission & By-Laws" document, these officers will appoint members to fill other specified positions and at-large positions to complete the composition of the Executive Committee after July 1, when their 2 year terms begin. [See the complete listing of the full Executive Committee officers (elected and appointed) elsewhere herein.]

Volunteer members of the local E.R.F.A. chapter, who generously gave their time to revitalize the organization -- dormant for almost two decades -- were thanked for their efforts in successfully re-establishing this association of retired faculty. [See Spring 2013 issue of "Connections."]

Brief presentations were made about Long Term Care (LTC) insurance options offered by CalPERS (by Frank Powell) and City of Stockton's bankruptcy proceedings in Federal court with implications for state constitutional protections of CalPERS pensions (by John Shields). A discussion of mandated on-line courses provided by private vendors under contract with CSU campuses was raised as a threat to traditional 'shared governance' (by Richard Nordstrom).

<b>ERA NEWSLETTER STAFF</b>	<b>FRESNO STATE ERA CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	
Writer/Editor: John Shields Producer: William Stock Contact editor at: johnshi@csufresno.edu	Our new mailing address is: Emeriti & Retiree Association P.O. Box # 25873 Fresno, CA 93729 – 5873	Questions, concerns, or ideas about ERA should be sent to: Dave Quadro by email <a href="mailto:davidq@mail.fresnostate.edu">davidq@mail.fresnostate.edu</a>

## **E.R.A. Executive Committee Composition**

[July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015]

PRESIDENT (Elected): David Quadro, Communication

VICE PRESIDENT (Elected): Ronald Johnson, Theater Arts

SECRETARY/TREASURER (Elected): Joanne Schroll, Kinesiology

HISTORIAN/NEWSLETTER EDITOR (Appointed): John Shields, Agri. Economics

REPRESENTATIVE TO CSU-ERFA STATE COUNCIL (Appointed): David Quadro

AT-LARGE OFFICER (Appointed): Judith Kuipers, Child and Family Development

AT-LARGE OFFICER (Appointed): Judith Chibante Neal, Literacy & Early Education

AT-LARGE OFFICER (Appointed): Frank Powell, Psychology

---

### **NOTICE:**

This four page newsletter should contain a special insert entitled "TRANSITIONS - Long Term Care Insurance and Dementia Fears" on one side. On the other side is an Alzheimer's Association article entitled "Ten Signs of Alzheimer's", which is distributed statewide and locally as part of Family Caregiver Resource Guides.

This sheet is easily separated from the newsletter for your convenience. If it is missing from your copy of "Connections" contact the editor and a copy will be sent to you.

## **TRANSITIONS: New LTC Insurance Options & Dementia Fears**

The Fall 2013 “CalPERS Long Term Care Program Update” newsletter (September) lays out a “new generation of benefits and plan designs” as a follow up to the recent Spring 2013 offering of options with reduced coverage and lower premiums. Now, policy holders who elected to retain lifetime benefits with inflation protection will be able to switch to intermediate term 10 year or 6 year benefit periods with inflation protection. In deciding whether or not to change plans, consider the information herein.

A common reason why some participants report anecdotally they were reluctant to give up life-time benefits is the fear of developing some form of debilitating dementia (including Alzhiemers) that will seriously incapacitate them much longer than reduced period coverage plans. This is often sound thinking based on such factors as: (1) having a family history of the disease; (2) being identified as a carrier of an Alzhiemers genetic marker; (3) getting diagnosed with definite symptoms of early onset dementia; and/or (4) having statistical risk factors like less than 9 years of schooling, never having married, being a smoker, having high blood pressure, suffering obesity, and developing diabetes (increasingly some medical scientists think of Alzhiemers as ‘Type III Diabetes’).

But for others the fear of severe dementia may be unwarranted. First of all, many signs of possible dementia (especially faulty memory and slower thought processing) are also symptoms of other health maladies such as: depression, thyroid problems, vitamin B deficiency, anemia, Lyme disease (stage 3); new medications, sleep deprivations, and head concussions. See a medical specialist to sort these out.

Most importantly, normal age-related “memory lapses” should not be taken automatically as a precursor or prediction of eventual “memory loss” characteristic of severe dementia. A good rule of thumb reported in the literature is: “If you remember that you forgot something, it’s likely not dementia.” A helpful guide in this regard was issued by the Alzhiemers Association (April 19, 2011); it’s called the “Ten Warning Signs of Alzhiemers,” which distinguishes between normal age-related mental decline and unusual mental degeneration where significant and permanent change is exhibited in: (1) Spatial Orientation; (2) Cognitive Function; (3) Executive Decision-Making; and (4) Personal Behavior. Examples of each category abound in press reports of medical studies of dementia and Alzhiemers.

Finally, there is a growing body of evidence (much of it statistical correlation, but some based on brain experiments) that people may be able to slow the progression of their potential disposition toward developing dementia until later in life. The positive actions recommended fall under three broad categories: (A) Healthy Life Style; (B) Social Engagement; and (C) Mental Stimulation. [Note: Brain researchers caution that the earlier in life that preventative steps are taken (i.e., that these conditions are established and these activities become habits), the better. And it is never too late to start!]

- (A) **HEALTHY LIFESTYLE:** (1) lose weight; (2) exercise regularly; (3) reduce sugar and fat intake.
- (B) **SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT:** (1) Delay retirement, remain active in one’s professional field; (2) Avoid living alone and having few social contacts; (3) be engaged with people through social networks and organized activities.
- (C) **MENTAL STIMULATION:** (1) Perform multi-tasking; (2) Learn new tasks and develop new abilities and skills; 3) Play challenging mental games.

[Note: See also “TRANSITIONS” article on LTC insurance in Spring 2013 E.R.A. CONNECTIONS.]

# Signs of ALZHIEMERS

## 1. **Memory loss that disrupts daily life**

One of the most common signs of Alzheimer's is memory loss, especially forgetting recently learned information. Others include forgetting important dates or events; asking for the same information over and over; relying on memory aides (e.g., reminder notes or electronic devices) or family members for things they used to handle on their own.

*What's a typical age-related change? Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later.*

## 2. **Challenges in planning or solving problems**

Some people may experience changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers. They may have trouble following a familiar recipe or keeping track of monthly bills. They may have difficulty concentrating and take much longer to do things than they did before.

*What's a typical age-related change? Making occasional errors when balancing a checkbook.*

## 3. **Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure**

People with Alzheimer's often find it hard to complete daily tasks. Sometimes, people may have trouble driving to a familiar location, managing a budget at work or remembering the rules of a favorite game.

*What's a typical age-related change? Occasionally needing help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a television show.*

## 4. **Confusion with time or place**

People with Alzheimer's can lose track of dates, seasons and the passage of time. They may have trouble understanding something if it is not happening immediately. Sometimes they may forget where they are or how they got there.

*What's a typical age-related change? Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.*

## 5. **Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships**

For some people, having vision problems is a sign of Alzheimer's. They may have difficulty reading, judging distance and determining color or contrast. In terms of perception, they may pass a mirror and think someone else is in the room. They may not realize they are the person in the mirror.

*What's a typical age-related change? Vision changes related to cataracts.*

## 6. **New problems with words in speaking or writing**

People with Alzheimer's may have trouble following or joining a conversation. They may stop in the middle of a conversation and have no idea how to continue or they may repeat themselves. They may struggle with vocabulary, have problems finding the right word or call things by the wrong name (e.g., calling a "watch" a "hand-clock").

*What's a typical age-related change? Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.*

## 7. **Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps**

A person with Alzheimer's disease may put things in unusual places. They may lose things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. Sometimes, they may accuse others of stealing. This may occur more frequently over time.

*What's a typical age-related change? Misplacing things from time to time, such as a pair of glasses or the remote control.*

## 8. **Decreased or poor judgment**

People with Alzheimer's may experience changes in judgment or decision-making. For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money, giving large amounts to telemarketers. They may pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean.

*What's a typical age-related change? Making a bad decision once in a while.*

## 9. **Withdrawal from work or social activities**

A person with Alzheimer's may start to remove themselves from hobbies, social activities, work projects or sports. They may have trouble keeping up with a favorite sports team or remembering how to complete a favorite hobby. They may also avoid being social because of the changes they have experienced.

*What's a typical age-related change? Sometimes feeling weary of work, family and social obligations.*

## 10. **Changes in mood and personality**

The mood and personalities of people with Alzheimer's can change. They can become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious. They may be easily upset at home, at work, with friends or in places where they are out of their comfort zone.

*What's a typical age-related change? Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.*