



SOUTHERN GERONTOLOGIST

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Luci Bearon, Constance L. Coogle, and Christine J. Jensen, Co-Editors

Jill Hellman and Jenni Mathews, Editorial Assistants

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A Message from the Outgoing President

What an extraordinary gathering we had in Nashville. I want to take the opportunity to thank each of you for your contributions to making the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Southern Gerontological Society a success! Many of you had the chance to meet our opening session musicians, Roland Smith and Diane Bouska, during the Presidential Reception. What a great opportunity to see, hear and understand how creativity changes across the lifespan. The next few days were full, with stimulating symposia, interesting paper sessions, fantastic posters and provoking workshops. I am



Pictured are SGS President Dana Bradley with Nashville performers Roland White and Diane Bouska

indebted to Dr. Keith Dooley, our fearless program chair. His attention to detail truly helped make the conference a reality. Though I'd like to take the credit for planning spectacular sunshine for our scheduled "unscheduled" down time on Friday after-

noon, I got lucky. Fortunately, the weather was pretty cooperative. Feedback on the scheduling was positive, though I've heard from a few who prefer a more tightly organized agenda. I'm sure that the 2013 Program Committee will look at the conference evaluations in earnest in the coming months.

A warm thank you to our Local Arrangements Committee headed by Dr. Ruth Garrett and Dr. Grace Smith and Ms. Brittany Singhas who did a fabulous job of helping our members feel welcome. I was thrilled to hear that the Fun Walk/Run yielded so much energy at 6am as did the Student Mentoring Moments reception at the end of the day. I hope all of you had a chance to stop by, bid often
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A Message from the Incoming President

I am honored to take the reins of SGS this summer. I look forward to serving the organization in this way over the next year. While the economy is still a significant problem, we have seen over the past few years that we are still a strong organization with a steady involvement and com-

mitment to aging in the South. The theme for next year's annual meeting (held in Charlotte, NC) will be "Transitions." I'm working on developing the "Call for Presentations" and it should be available online within the next month. We are in a time of transitions, hence the

theme. We are looking at a number of transitions today; transitions related to health care, occupations, academics, the economy, technology, and more related to aging.

Two particular foci I have within the next year are increasing the participation of
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A Message from the Outgoing President (Continued from Page 1)

(and higher) for our silent auction. Many thanks to Dave White and Dr. Jan Vinita White for their leadership and Joy Whittington and our many volunteers for help in making the Auction a success.

I'd like to thank Dr. James Peacock (President-Elect) for his awesome job coordinating the work of the Awards Committee. Congratulations to our winners: Dr. Christine Jensen for the Best Practices Award, Ms. Carrie Frye for the Media Award, Ms. Andrea Shamaskin for the Student Paper Award, Ms. Beverly Patnaik for the Applied Gerontologist Award, and Dr. Mary Altpeter for the Gordon Streib Academic Gerontologist Award. I was particularly warmed by the reac-

A Message from the Incoming President (Continued from Page 1)

students and practitioners in the field of aging. Students are the next generation of our academics and practitioners, and we as an organization should foster this. Our practitioners are the "front line" of serving the aged in the South. This too should be fostered. One of the special qualities of SGS is the seamless collaboration between academics and practitioners. I want to make sure this connection is maintained.

Again, I look forward to serving SGS as President for 2013. If you have ideas to increase the involvement of students and practitioners, please feel free to send suggestions to me (peacockjr@appstate.edu).

James R. Peacock, Ph.D.
Appalachian State University

tion of the room to our first GRITS brunch and to our honorees, Dr. Vira Kivett, Dr. Wiley Wagnum, and Dr. Jo Ann O'Quinn. Didn't Dr. Wayne Moore, Dr. Jennifer Craft Morgan, Dr. Janice Wassel, and Dr. Ed Rosenberg do a great job of capturing what makes gerontologists rooted in the south so special?

We ARE special, in large part because southern gerontologists (whether applied or academic) understand the value in honoring one's roots and have a deep appreciation for nurturing others in order to leave a rich legacy. A warm thank you to the Southern Gerontological Society Board of Directors, our Administrator, Lora Gage, and a special thank you to volunteers Urmila Tokekar, Viral Upadhyay, Jennifer Szakaly and Lee Ann Ferguson.

See you in Charlotte, if not before!

Dana Burr Bradley, Ph.D.
Western Kentucky University

SGS Member Jon Sanford is Author of New Book on Universal Design

Jon A. Sanford, M.Arch., SGS member and member of the Publications Committee, recently published *Universal Design as a Rehabilitation Strategy: Design for the Ages* (Springer Publishing, March 2012). The book stresses that universal design is not solely for people with disabilities, but is about usability and inclusion for people of all levels of ability. It examines key social ecological models in rehabilitation for aging and disability, and sheds new light on health and disability at both the individual and population level. Particular attention is paid to the medical, functional, and environmental implications of disability, health care and disability systems, and the psychosocial and cultural issues pertinent to rehabilitation counseling.

Mr. Sanford is the Director of the Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA) and an Associate Professor in Industrial Design in the College of Architecture at Georgia Tech where he teaches courses on universal design and design for healthy aging.

Healthy and Successful Aging Website Goes Live

SGS has recently received the following announcement from Dr. Lennie Poon: A conversation about the meanings of healthy and successful aging, how to define and measure it, and public health implications can be found on the following web blog, Facebook, and Twitter:

<http://healthyandsuccessfulaging.wordpress.com/contact-us/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Healthy-Successful-Aging/333876853332717>

<https://twitter.com/successinaging>

The conversation, initiated among peers, students, and laypersons, will provide constructive new directions as well as the opportunity to input and critique ideas.

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Now in the *Journal of Applied Gerontology*

- *Improving Hypertension Control in a Population of Low-Income Frail Older Adults: An Evaluation of the Just for Us Model* by Mina Silberberg, Richard Sloane, Kimberly S. H. Yarnall, Audrey McKinnon, Rupal Patel, and Mary Champagne
- *Factors Influencing Intention to Move into Senior Housing* by Hui-Chun Huang
- *Readiness for Technology Use with People with Dementia: The Perspectives of Significant Others* by Lena Rosenberg, Anders Kottorp, and Louise Nygård
- *Older Adults and the "One-Size-Fits-All" Medical Home Model* by Timothy Hoff
- *Review of the Literature on Older Lesbians: Implications for Education, Practice, and Research* by Paige Averett and Carol Jenkins
- *Willingness to Use Mental Health Services Among Older Residents in Assisted Living* by Nan Sook Park, Yuri Jang, Beom Seok Lee, Lawrence Schonfeld, and Victor Molinari

Annual Meeting Highlight: Massages!



New this year at the Annual Meeting in Nashville was massage therapy, generously provided by Yolanda Biggs, LMT, of White River School of Massage. The SGS Leadership would like to extend their thanks to Ms. Biggs for her time and generosity.

SGS Member enjoying a complimentary massage from Yolanda Biggs

The Past Presidents' Symposium: Opening a Dialogue on Successful Aging



Pictured is Dr. Lennie Poon

One highlight of the April conference was a symposium on successful aging, a concept and model expounded on in Jack Rowe's 1987 article in *Science* entitled "Human Aging: Usual and Successful and popularized in the 1998 book *Successful Aging* by Rowe and Robert L. Kahn. The topic of successful aging has spurred much research over the past 25 years and continues to spark debate about values, goals, definitions, measures, findings and directions for future research and practice.

Past SGS Presidents Lennie Poon and Jim Mitchell and UNC scholar Mary

Dr. Mary Altpeter Receives University Research Council Grant and Attends Prestigious NIH Training Institute

SGS's newest winner of the Gordon Streib Distinguished Academic Gerontologist Award and Senior Scientist at UNC's Institute on Aging, Dr. Mary Altpeter, has received a University Research Council grant to support her project *Bringing Walk with Ease to the Workplace* to assist employers in adopting and implementing an evidence-

based physical activity intervention program at worksites. Dr. Altpeter co-authored a chapter "Disseminating an Evidence-Based Disease Self-Management Program for Older Americans: Implications for Diversifying Participant Reach Through Delivery Site Adoption" in the book *Public Health - Social and Behavioral Health* which has been released online. This chapter can be accessed by clicking on the following link: <http://www.intechopen.com/articles/show/title/assessing-evidence-based-programs-for-older-americans->

and apply it in education, policy and practice.

Altpeter presented diverse perspectives on the factors which can constrain or promote optimal or healthy aging. Mitchell started with big picture considerations of how the interactions of time, natural and man-made environments, culture and social policy affect the potential for optimal aging. Altpeter used a systems change perspective to illustrate the multiple organizations, actors, resources and strategies which must be engaged in order to implement evidence-based programming to promote healthy aging. Poon drew on his extensive research on centenarians to present a set of variables which could be used to shape policy in the design of public health initiatives for healthy and successful aging. Taken together, the presentations raised challenging questions that sparked a lively discussion, moderated by Luci Bearon, which focused primarily on how to take what has been learned about successful aging

and apply it in education, policy and practice.

Slides and a handout from the session have been posted on the SGS website:

www.southerngerontologicalsociety.org/annualmeeting/archive/2012/index.html.

Additionally, Dr. Poon is heading a team of researchers who have embarked on an NIA-funded project to generate dialogue with "peers, students, and laypersons about the meanings of healthy and successful aging, how to define and measure it, and public health implications." (Links to these conversations can be found in page 2 article "Healthy and Successful Website Goes Live.")

A set of five papers and an invitation for review and comment can be found at:

www.healthyandsuccessfulaging.uga.edu

[implications-for-diversifying-participant-reac.](#)

Dr. Altpeter was also recently accepted by a competitive application process to the 2012 NIH Training Institute on Dissemination and Implementation Research in Health held in San Diego July 9-13. For more information, visit:

<http://conferences.thehillgroup.com/OBSSRinstitutes/TIDIRH2012/index.html>

IT'S TIME AGAIN FOR GRITS...2012



Pictured are Dr. Jo Ann O'Quin and Dr. W. Richard Moore

Marking the second year of a new tradition, SGS recently recognized three of our distinguished GRITS - Gerontologists Rooted in the South. On April 22 at the Closing GRITS Brunch of the annual meeting in Nashville, Vira R. Kivett, Ph.D., Professor Emerita at the University of

North Carolina at Greensboro; Wiley P. Mangum, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus at the University of South Florida and Jo Ann O'Quin, Ph.D., Professor of Social Work at the University of Mississippi, were inducted into the SGS Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame seeks to recognize individuals who have made important contributions to SGS and to the field of gerontology through research, teaching, administration, advocacy or applied practice. Dovetailing with this year's conference theme, "Gerontology: A Legacy of Commitment," the Hall of Fame was established to honor past and present members who serve as role models for future generations interested in the advancement of knowledge and practice in the field of aging.

Please read more about these leaders and their legacies at:

<http://www.southerngerontologicalsociety.org/annualmeeting/grits.html>

Nomination Guidelines

The selection committee requests a letter of recommendation [two to four pages] which describes the significant and innovative contributions made by the nominee to the Southern Gerontological Society and field of gerontology. This may reflect one or more areas of service through teaching, administration, research, advocacy, applied practice or leadership positions within SGS or both.

Further information is available on the SGS website. The committee requests nominations for 2013 Hall of Fame be submitted by Dec. 30, 2012. Please forward to W. Richard Moore, Ph.D. at wmoore@ncat.edu.

And the Winner of the Bidding is ... SGS!

BOOKS!
CHOCOLATE!
T-SHIRTS!
WINE!
JEWELRY!
CERAMICS!
HAND-CRAFTED
ITEMS!
BASKETS!

Books included some of Gordon Streib's professional books, many

All this and more was found at the SGS Silent Auction, an exciting corner of the SGS conference. Is this a great way to raise money for your favorite organization or what! Wonderful donations abounded!

filled with his handwritten notes or letters, and the AGHE award-winning children's book. Several attendees donated items purchased during their international travels. Eight fashionable shoulder bags were Jan White's contribution. Wayne Moore brought 2 huge gift boxes of local food delicacies. North Carolina and Virginia wines were popular items, and vintage and new jewelry attracted many bids. A total of about 50 items created a wide diversity of bidding opportunities. It was personal shopping at its best, in a friendly atmosphere, chatting with colleagues, all to benefit SGS.

The Silent Auction in Nashville raised about \$800, and we are so grateful to those of you who donated and purchased items. Special thanks go to Dave and Jan White who volunteered during much of the sale and to James Peacock who closed the auction in his inimitable style. As you travel, create, and shop in special places in the coming months, think about what you could bring to Charlotte next year. And then, as the saying goes, "Bid high, bid often, and bid against yourself!"

Joy L. Whittington
Burke, VA

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Remembrance Event for Gordon F. Streib and Ruth B. Streib

On Saturday April 21 at the 2012 annual meeting in Nashville, members of SGS held a special session to remember and reminisce about Gordon Streib and his wife Ruth Streib who both died in February 2011. Gordon Streib, a sociologist and gerontologist best known for his research and writing on families, retirement and shared housing, was a founding member of SGS (in the first group to be named GRITS of Distinction) and an outstanding scholar for whom SGS' Distinguished Academic Gerontologist Award is named. The remembrance,

deferred to the 2012 meeting because of a weather emergency which disrupted the 2011 meeting in Raleigh, was organized by SGS members Wiley and Ann Mangum, Ed Folts and Lennie Poon. The program included readings by Wiley and Ann Mangum via speaker phone from Florida, a showing by Lennie Poon of video clips about the Streibs and their family, a photo display provided by the Streib family and spoken recollections by SGS members. Gordon Streib was remembered for his achievements, mentorship, collegiality, humor, and

legacy to SGS. Ruth was remembered for her active involvement in many SGS functions over the years and the couple were admired for their long marriage (67 years) and mutual support.

*For more information on the Streibs, you can read their obituaries in the Spring 2011 *Southern Gerontologist* <http://www.southerngerontologicalsociety.org/newsletter/SoGe23-1.pdf>, beginning on page 9.

Closing Remarks by Ed Rosenberg at the SGS Meeting in Nashville

**"MY NAME IS ED,
AND I'M A
GERONTOHOLIC.
I'D LIKE TO TELL
YOU MY STORY "**

This presentation was made at the Closing Brunch of the SGS meeting in Nashville. Dr. Ed Rosenberg shared with us the joys, sorrows and addictive qualities of working in

gerontology and belonging to SGS.

Good morning. My name is Ed, and I'm a Gerontoholic. I'd like to tell you my story. None of us is born a Gerontoholic, although researchers think some may have a predisposition to

Gerontoholism. As evidence, they note that some know, without a doubt, as soon as they have their first taste of Gerontology, that being a Gerontologist feels good, it's what they were meant to do, it will be their focus and passion. For some, becoming a Gerontoholic is nearly instantaneous, a sudden realization.

Others become Gerontoholics gradually. We may think WE could never become one of THEM. In fact, often we're certain of it. Sure, we can take a gerontology course, or volunteer in a nursing home, but it's just a way to get through school, we don't really like it

all that much, we're in control, we'll quit once we get our degree. But then we take another course, and, okay, maybe another; we decide, well, why not, one more and I'll have a minor. And we volunteer to deliver Meals on Wheels. But we're doing that for those lonely, malnourished old folks. It's not like we personally GET anything out of it. We watch *Waiting for God*, and re-runs of the *Golden Girls*, but not because those are shows about old people - they're just really funny, well-written shows. And how many of those ARE there these days?

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More Highlights from the 2012 Annual Meeting in Nashville

SGS member Victor Marshall shared with us these reflections from the annual meeting:

One of the highlights of the conference was the frantic, and ultimately successful, attempts to locate Mary Altpeter in time for her to receive her Academic Gerontologist Award. She had not been informed that she would receive any award. She was late for the luncheon, and I had been asked if I would receive it on her behalf, as we

had worked together for years at the UNC Institute on Aging. Fortunately she showed, up, and when told she would be receiving an award, her reaction was, shall we say, happy but unprintable.

A second highlight for me was Ed Ansello's presentation on humor and aging. I told him I was going to use some of his jokes (he kindly provided a handout), and I have also sent him a few that I have accumulated

over the years. I think it is an interesting but understandable phenomenon that social gerontologists generally love to tell jokes about aging and the aged, most of which are quite politically incorrect.

I can also say that at the conference, the food was great, and the level of general service at the hotel, including front desk and concierge, was very high. Good job on site selection there.

Events Calendar—New SGS Website Coming Soon! Stay tuned!

Note: SGS members are invited to submit notices of Southern regional and statewide non-profit educational/research events. Please send dates, organization, theme, city, state and website information to Luci Bearon at luci_bearon@ncsu.edu

August 5-8, 2012 “Building a Bridge to a New Culture of Aging”

12th Annual Conference of the Pioneer Network

Hyatt Regency, Jacksonville, FL www.pioneernetwork.net

For student scholarship information, contact sonya.barsness@pioneernetwork.net

August 13-15, 2012 “Enjoying the High Tides of Life: Sailing the Waves to Dynamic Aging”

Georgia Gerontological Society

Sea Palms Resort, St. Simon’s Island, GA www.georgiagerontologysociety.org/conference.htm

August 15-17, 2012 “13th Annual Conference on Alzheimer’s Disease and Psychiatric Disorders in the Elderly”

Mississippi Gerontological Society

Whispering Woods Conference Center, Olive Branch, MS www.dmh.ms.gov

August 20-22, 2012 “Aging: New Game, New Rules”

Florida Conference on Aging

Grande Lakes Ritz-Carleton, Orlando, FL <http://www.fcoa.org/2012%20FCOA%20Conf%20Reg%20Broch.pdf>

September 9-12, 2012 “Artisans of Aging Crafting Tomorrow”

Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging (SE4A)

Grove Park Inn, Asheville, NC <http://www.se4a.org>

September 10, 2012 Consumer Voice 2012 "Advocacy in Action" Training

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

(Formerly the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform)

Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Washington, DC www.theconsumervoice.org/advocacyinaction

October 24-25, 2012 “Enabling Caring Communities: Promoting Evidence-based Programs Across the Lifespan “

25th Anniversary National Summit & Training Institute

Georgia Southwestern State University

Americus, GA <http://rci.gsw.edu/>

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Events Calendar— Continued from page 9

November 5-6, 2012 “Aging and Society: An Interdisciplinary Conference”

2012 Special Theme: Cognition in Aging
University of British Columbia Robson Square
Vancouver, Canada. <http://agingandsociety.com>

November 14-18, 2012 “The Gerontological Society of America 65th Annual Scientific Meeting”

San Diego Convention Center
San Diego, CA www.geron.org/annual-meeting

November 29-December 1, 2012 “Many Journeys, Many Destinations”

International Council on Active Aging
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, LA <http://www.icaa.cc/convention.htm>

February 28-March 3, 2013 “Waves of Change: Charting the Course for Gerontology Education”

Association for Gerontology in Higher Education
Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront, St. Petersburg, FL
<http://www.aghe.org>

Student Reflections on SGS Conference

I am graduate student pursuing my master's in Healthcare Administration. Working as a graduate assistant at the Center for Aging at Western Kentucky University gave me an opportunity to attend the annual meeting of Southern Gerontological Society (SGS) held at Nashville this April. Being a physician, I have the medical knowledge about older adults, but there are more than just physical problems. This is what I learned after attending this conference. I was really excited to be at the conference and know more about the aging, as it is not a developed field in my country. This conference helped students like me to understand different aspects associated with aging. Being an international student, I am not aware of all the benefits of Medicare and Medicaid. But after attending the session on benefits of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid under the track of intergenerational programs, it gave me and others a detailed history about these laws and changes it has gone through from the time they were formed until today. As a graduate student it was one of the most important and informative sessions.

I was able to attend the conference for all four days. This gave me an opportunity to attend many important sessions like one on disparity in nursing home care. This session was about the significance of race and place on the quality of care provided in long term care. Along with this, there were many other informative sessions like conflicts in care giving and relocation, massage and the elderly and many more. The SGS conference had poster sessions for both the days and many participants displayed their recent research and findings. This was a good opportunity to see the research being done in the gerontology field. This also gave the attendees to meet and interact with each other. I personally met many students and faculty members from different universities. This conference proved an excellent networking place for many students like me. Not only did I meet new people, but also became aware of many universities offering graduate and post graduate courses in gerontology.

The best part of the conference was the Remembrance of Gordon and Ruth Streib. As a student volunteer, I was in charge of this session. To be

honest, I had very little knowledge about this couple and that was through the internet. But at the session when I saw the CD provided by the family and heard everyone talk about them, that is when I realized their importance. Everyone spoke about the immense work done by Gordon and Ruth Streib and the influence they had on the SGS members was commendable. I wish they were still alive to bless and guide students like me to shape our careers in Gerontology.

I am looking forward to the next annual meeting to be held at Charlotte, North Carolina. Unfortunately, I was unable to present at the Nashville conference, so I am working on a project to be presented at the next annual meeting. Attending this conference not only was informative, but also an opportunity for students to decide their career option as gerontologists.

Urmila Tokekar
Graduate Assistant
Center for Gerontology
Western Kentucky University

SGS Contact Information

Lora Gage, SGS Executive Director
Office Phone: 239-541-2011
Fax: 239-540-8654
Email: lgage4sgs@aol.com
Web address:
www.southerngerontologicalsociety.org

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Publications: The Journal of Applied Gerontology, The Southern Gerontologist Newsletter. A free subscription to the **Journal of Applied Gerontology (JAG)**, the official journal of SGS is included with membership. The Journal is devoted to the publication of contributions that focus explicitly on the application of knowledge and insights from research and practice to improvement of the quality of life of older persons. Particular emphasis is placed on manuscripts and editorials that enhance dialogue among researchers, policy makers, and practitioners. In addition, members receive the **Southern Gerontologist**, a quarterly newsletter that complements JAG by providing updates on applied projects, member activities and emerging issues, and informing members of new books and videos of interest to the field of aging.

Student privileges: Membership discount, Conference registration discount, Networking & Leadership opportunities

SGS Committees are member friendly and provide an excellent opportunity to enhance one's professional development. By adding your voice to SGS you can help ensure that dialogue and cooperation maintain the balance between research and practice, through the guiding principle of SGS-- the alliance of practitioners and academicians to enhance the lives of our elders.

For more information contact **Lora Gage**, SGS Executive Director, at Lgage4sgs@aol.com.

She will gladly send you an application and information. Don't miss the opportunity to become a member of a group of the South's most respected gerontology professionals.

JOIN TODAY!!!

Welcome New Members!

Anita Savell - CA

Cheryl Cooper - VA

Michael Brazda - MD

Richard Berthelot - AR

Myoung-Yong Kim - NC

Shamola Greene - MD

Crystal Bastress - PA

Laurence Solberg - TN

Pradumna Singh - TN

Laurel Bieler - TN

Sarah Gilbert - VA

Michael Gallagher - KY

Kate deMedeiros - OH

Stephanie Nmashie - NC

Jessica Vincent - AR

Candace Carrie - AR

Jiang Jian - NC

Charla Long - TN

Chauncey Darden - TN

Anna Vandenberg - GA

Linda Beuscher - TN

Closing Remarks — Continued from page 8

That's more like my story. Really, I was going to be a Sociologist. But then, in graduate school, at the University of Southern California, I needed an elective and took a Gerontology course. Just one. It wasn't bad - in fact, I got my first conference paper out of it. What a high! If I even noticed that all the Gerontologists hung out together, at the Andrus Center, it didn't bother me. I never thought they might be self-conscious, maybe even ashamed of their attraction to the study of aging and older people.

I began a doctoral dissertation in Gerontology. It wasn't supposed to be that way, but my Sociology one fell through, I needed a new topic, and my advisor - I thought, at the time, he was a well-meaning friend - sent me back to the Andrus Center - back to what we in the program call the nouns - the people, places and things I'd been able to put behind me - and I was back among the Gerontologists again. How easy it was!

So despite knowing, as a 20-something doctoral student, that I didn't really like old people, or need 'em, and certainly didn't want to STUDY them, there I was. And enjoying it. Fortunately for me, my supply dried up. The grant that was funding me ended, I wrote my dissertation in a different area, and I felt relieved, liberated and ready to live life as a newly-minted PhD, without Gerontology.

But you know, it's everywhere: you can run, but you can't hide. Sure, Western Washington University hired me as a Sociologist, but right away my Dean asked me to design and direct an undergraduate minor in Gerontology. Certainly I could handle that. It wasn't much. But it doesn't take much. Immediately I was hooked again. Hospice, nursing homes... and then the Dean sent me to my first AGHE meeting. I hadn't even known there WAS such a thing! Hundreds of peo-

ple, Gerontoholics just like me.

Still, I knew something wasn't quite right. I made half-hearted efforts to stop. My focus on Gerontology education made it easy to justify ignoring "real" sociological research and publishing. My work performance suffered, and I lost my job.

But I wasn't close to hitting bottom. A small college in Bradford, Pennsylvania hired me to... do just what I'd been doing in Washington! And for more money! After three years there I knew I was doing such a good job that I was shocked, SHOCKED when the college president didn't renew my contract. He said it was due to budget cuts, but I knew he really thought my Gerontoholism was clouding my academic judgment, making me feel I was more accomplished than I really was. I told him I could stop any time, but he didn't believe me. I'd lost another job.

But there is this... brotherhood, all over. All I'd wanted to be was a sociologist, but somehow along the way I'd become a Gerontoholic, and even if I wanted to be something else, I couldn't. You see, there are enablers everywhere. Like the small college in Pittsburgh that hired me to pretty much... do what I'd been doing in Bradford. And the impersonal anonymity of a big city makes it easier to hide what one really is.

And I kept going to AGHE. And then GSA - talk about hard core Gerontoholism! I even managed to quit Gerontology, cold turkey, for three years, when I worked in a hospital, helping treat... don't laugh... addicts. I'm not making that up.

And you'd think that, not having had a gerontoholic thought for three years, I'd have kicked the habit, the craving would be gone, I'd have closed that chapter on my life. But then Appalachian State University called. Come to North Carolina! Give up your hospital

job despite the CEO offering to double your salary. Uproot your wife, who also has a great job, and infant son, leave behind some of the best friends you've ever had, and move someplace that's twice the distance from your parents, three times the distance from your wife's parents! (Well, that could have its advantages.) And for what?!? To be a Gerontologist again. It's true - the craving for Gerontology never goes away.

Things went steadily, and predictably, downhill. After a decade I'd been tenured and promoted, locked into my Gerontoholism, my obsession with Gerontology. I was asked to direct the Gerontology program - a program that had nearly destroyed my predecessor. Oh great, give me the keys to the Gerontohol cabinet! Didn't I SEE that? Of course I did. Did it make a difference? You know it didn't.

Everyone knew by now I was a Gerontoholic. My wife stayed with me, but that's probably because I was still a good provider, and I was able to leave my Gerontology at the office, or at conferences. I'm what you'd call a functional Gerontoholic. Colleagues and alleged friends were probably laughing at me behind my back. They even elected me President of a regional association of Gerontologists! Look at him! He's taking it so seriously! He just doesn't get it!

I probably could've slid farther, deeper and deeper into Gerontoholism, but my University came to my rescue. Inadvertently. It issued a press release saying my supply, my Gerontology, would be eliminated. The press release was wrong, the university later admitted, but the damage had been done - I'd been shocked as I'd never been shocked before. I don't know where bottom is, but this was low enough for me, having to think about the rest of my career - the rest of my life! - without Gerontology. *Continued page 13*

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I never had been able to give it up on my own. I'd deluded myself about being a sociologist, a health care practitioner, misled my loved ones and friends... it was, and always had been, about Gerontology.

I needed an intervention.

Fortunately a sponsor was available, a recovering Gerontoholic, someone I'd gerontologized with for years, someone who'd been instrumental, 20 years earlier, in introducing me to other Gerontoholics throughout the Southeast, someone who enabled my Gerontoholism. He kicked his habit over 5 years ago, and began a new, gerontology-free life as an administrator. Oh, he'll show up for meetings now and then. He still likes to talk the talk, but he don't walk the walk.

Well, he introduced me to GA - Gerontoholics Anonymous, which some prefer to call the Southern Gerontological Society. With his encouragement, I began going regularly to meetings. It took a while, but I was able to admit my powerlessness to control my attraction to Gerontology. As we in the program say, "Denial ain't just a river in Egypt." I was able to make a "searching and fearless" inventory of myself as a Gerontoholic. I made a list of family, friends and

others who'd been shortchanged by my addiction to Gerontology, made amends to them and asked their forgiveness.

I reconnected with my family, and with my life. I learned other GA mantras, like, "Disengagement ain't just how Tony Soprano announces his intention to marry." As you can see, I've gained control over my addiction to Gerontology. And I still come to GA meetings like this one. It's important to me. Unlike some other programs, GA doesn't believe abstinence is the only cure. We preach what's called "moderation management". We can handle a little Gerontology, and still control it and our lives. We can extend a hand to others we recognize as Gerontoholics, help them back from dysfunctional obsession, show them that, instead, a little can go a long - a longer! - way. We can promote responsible Gerontology to younger people who seem to want a taste. Yes, Gerontology is everywhere - no sense denying that - but we can control its role in our lives, and not let it take over the lives of others, vulnerable because they may be as naively self-assured, perhaps as blissfully ignorant of Gerontology's power, as I once was.

If we can admit to our Gerontoholism, understand it, and bring it under our control, we'll be better people, better family members, better teachers, better practitioners, better volunteers. In doing this for ourselves, we do it for others. In these troubled times, it's important for those sliding toward Gerontoholism to remain responsible, clear-eyed, realistic. GA - sorry, SGS - is a great program, with great people. It provides support and validation for us, and can do so for others. But you have to keep going to the meetings!

So our future depends on our ability to promote "responsible Gerontology", not only to Gerontoholics, but also to those who abstain, who deny the pervasiveness of aging and aging issues, who shun any involvement with Gerontology. In the program, we call them Senili-teetotalers. Compulsive Gerontology has its dangers, but so does ignorance or denial of our aging society and the role "responsible Gerontology" can play. We need, unwaveringly, to do what we can to bring both Gerontoholics and Senili-teetotalers into our GA - sorry, SGS - tent.

We can do that. One day at a time. That's my story. Thank you.

Contact the Editors of the Southern Gerontologist:

Lucille B. Bearon, Ph.D., CFLE
Associate Professor, Department of 4-H Youth Development and Family & Consumer Sciences
Adult Development/Aging Specialist,
North Carolina Cooperative Extension
North Carolina State University
Box 7606 NCSU
Raleigh, NC 27695-7606
(919) 515-9146
luci_bearon@ncsu.edu

Constance L. Coogle, Ph.D.
Associate Professor/Associate Director for Research
Virginia Center on Aging
Virginia Commonwealth University
Medical Center
P.O. Box 980229
730 E. Broad St., Room 2088
Richmond VA, 23298-0229
(804) 828-1525
ccoogle@vcu.edu

Christine J. Jensen, Ph.D.
Director, Community & Health Services Research
The Center for Excellence in Aging and Geriatric Health
3901 Treyburn Drive, Suite 100
Williamsburg, VA 23185
(757) 220-4751
cjensen@excellenceinaging.org