A look past and present by two retirees

Art Ritas: Education that was anything but basic

I began my 32-year career teaching English at Macomb in the Division of Basic Education, a progressive effort that emphasized team teaching and block scheduling. The year was 1967 and the team was composed of four disciplines: natural science, social science, humanities, and English. On Fridays, in the absence of classes, the teams and departments met to develop curriculum and discuss student progress and problems.

Memorably, I worked with and learned from Dennis Thompson (English), Ed Arnfield (Natural Science), Phil Barrons (Humanities), and Jim Jacobs (Social Science)—who later became the College’s president.

I made lifelong friends and developed lifelong interests in science, politics and the visual arts. Of the many vivid memories, one that stands out is taking students and their parents to see Ken Russell’s film The Devils and then discussing it afterwards. It was a level of teaching and learning that I had never experienced before.

Our teaching teams introduced students to some of the most significant books of the century, including Man’s Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl, The Double Helix by Watson and Crick, and The Autobiography of Malcolm X. These books were as much a part of my own continuing education as they were the students’.

Our Division was once called Educational and Cultural Development (ECD). Our students scored low on standardized tests and, for the most part, knew very little about the world outside of Macomb County. We took them to the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) and other museums and theatres in New York, Chicago, and Toronto.

There were also biological field studies/camping trips to Macomb’s former North Campus—who knows where that was? My horizons were continually expanding along with the students.

Continued on page 3

Thank You, Christine

In June, Christine Bonkowski announced her retirement from the Macomb Board of Trustees after six terms and 30 years of dedicated service. Since 1984, Christine has provided quiet guidance and consistent leadership for the College and in the process become a friend to staff and students alike. Christine has always understood the vital role the College plays in the Macomb County Community and this insight was foremost in the guidance she provided. A strong supporter of the University Center Christine played a major role in bringing Michigan State University’s Osteopathic Medical School to the Center.

A strong advocate for education and student success, the Ronald L. and Christine Bonkowski Family Endowed Scholarship Fund will continue to support Macomb students. Christine is also a dedicated supporter of the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts.

At a reception held following the June 16 board meeting, Al Lorenzo, president emeritus, summarized Christine’s contribution by paraphrasing the words of the familiar Bette Midler song:

Did you ever know that you were our hero?
And everything we would like to be?
It might have appeared to go unnoticed,
But we want you to know we know the truth.
We could fly higher than an eagle
For you were the wind beneath our wings.

Chris has agreed to join us as a special guest at our annual retiree breakfast on Friday, Sept. 18, where she will be recognized for her many years of dedicated service to the College and have a chance to chat with many colleagues and friends she has worked with over these past 30 years.
John Wieczerza (John W.)

Retirement has been wonder-filled

I started at the College as a maintenance electrician on 11/7/77, and thus began the lucky streak that I regard as my career at Macomb. John Becker was the maintenance supervisor at the time, and Robert Roelofs was president, and I was taking night classes at Wayne State University. I received my Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering in 1984 and was invited to join the Applied Technology faculty. I was involuntarily transferred to Engineering and Technology about 2008, and remained there until my retirement a couple of years ago.

My wife, who passed away in 2008, and I had already become world travelers. But before I retired I had yet to see all Seven Wonders of the World, which constituted the bucket list I drew up for myself a few years before. That changed in March of 2014 when I visited the Treasury at Petra, Jordan—which Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade suggested was the hiding place for the Holy Grail. Well, I was there and there is no Holy Grail inside. In fact, there is nothing inside. It is one big empty space.

I’ve also been to Machu Picchu in Peru, from where I flew to Porto Maldonado, a city on the edge of the Amazon rain forest. From Maldonado, I traveled to Lake Sandoval, where I spent three days living in a cabin in the rain forest. Really loved it—no electricity, Internet, TV or cell phone. I was totally cut off from the world. I enjoyed seeing animals in their natural habitat, and there were some strange insects that I came across. My guide told me to give them the right of way. No argument from me.

While I was in Rio De Janeiro, I went hand gliding over portions of the city. What a rush. In Beijing, I went to the Beijing Zoo and visited the pandas. You have to see them in person to appreciate their size. I was also impressed by the Beijing subway, so ultra clean that it actually shines.

In Egypt, I went to the Cairo Museum to see King Tut’s Tomb and, again, pictures do not do it justice. It is extremely intricate in every detail. I also climbed a pyramid at Giza, the one that is to the left of the large one. I didn’t know that you were not allowed to climb them, so when I was spotted by two security personnel, they came running, yelling at me to come down. I did as they said and then my guide told me to grease their palms if I wanted to continue climbing. I gave each a $5 (U. dollars) and they told me not to get hurt.

These are just a few of the fascinating things that happened during my travels.
The Division of Basic Education was dissolved in 1972, and the teachers within it were dispersed to the departments of their respective disciplines. With my colleagues Les Beecher and Lou Baltman, we began incorporating team teaching, collaborative teaching and learning, Socratic method, student writing and presenting as community service into our English classes.

Together we developed the One World Conference, during which students presented to one another and the community on global literature. I watched marginal students become independent learners/presenters with their parents and neighbors looking on.

Les, Lou and I then organized the Conflict, Violence and Resolution Conference. Student panels presented papers with leaders from community organizations serving as respondents. These conferences often drew an audience of more than 1000. Along with students, we began to see that education could have a community impact. I like to think we were stretching the notion of community college.

There were two other things that gave me great gratification during my career at Macomb: developing and participating in the 10-year Mayan Project, interdisciplinary field studies in Yucatan, Mexico; and founding, along with Dawn Roberts, Macomb’s Center for Teaching and Learning.

Fifteen years ago, I joined my wife Susan Calkins, who taught anthropology and sociology at Macomb for 30 years, in retirement in Naples, Fla. I combined my interests in science, environmentalism, and teaching by becoming a Florida Master Naturalist and volunteering with the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. Recently I initiated an environmental readers group, leading off with a book that was new when we used it in Basic Education classes: Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring.

(More on Art’s retirement projects in the next issue of Macomb Connections)
Third Annual Naples Alumni & Retiree Reunion

In March, retirees and alumni gathered to at the Naples Bay Resort to reconnect and hear about what is happening at the college. More than 70 guests came to a panel discussion on Education and the impact on the Economy featuring President Jacobs, Dr. Casandra Ulbrich, vice chair of the Michigan Board of Education and Macomb’s vice president of advancement; and the late Mike Feezy, president of Huntington Bank. The next day, a few retirees and alums got together to enjoy the popular Naples’ St. Patrick’s Day Parade courtesy of host Kim Oulette, partner at Berkshire Hathaway in Naples.

Festivities were sponsored by Huntington Bank. Macomb was fortunate to have a friend in Regional President Mike Fezzy, who passed away suddenly a week after the event.

26th Annual Golf Tournament a Success!

Rico Odorico, retired professor from Macomb reports that the 26th Annual Orris, Campitelle, Ikamas, Robertson Memorial Golf Outing was another great success! The Tournament hosted 104 Golfers and earned $5,520 bringing the scholarship fund to more than $140,000.

Rico adds, “Although there was a rainstorm, all golfers completed their rounds before the torrent, in time to receive prizes and enjoy lunch!”

Scholarships are given each fall and winter semester to Macomb Students in need. Already 43 scholarships have been granted thus far. Three were awarded in the 2015 Academic Year.

Thanks to all who supported this important tournament. Save the date for Friday, June 3, 2016 for the 27th Annual Memorial Tournament!
CULTURAL EVENTS
All programs except Cultural Excursions are free.
Preregistration required for all programs and excursions:
586.445.7348 or www.LorenzoCulturalCenter.com

DIA Lectures—
Featuring Curators from the Detroit Institute of Arts

Being Heard—a survey of how contemporary artists express themselves through painting, video, sound and art installations.
Oct. 14, 11 a.m.

Revolution at Home and on Screen: American Films of the 1960s.
Nov. 4, 11 a.m.

Real to Reel Film Series—
Reality versus Hollywood

The Gorgeous Hussy (dramatizing the Peggy Eaton affair of Andrew Jackson’s presidency)
Sept. 24, Noon

Henry V
Oct. 22, 1 p.m.

The Rosa Parks Story
Nov. 12, 1:30 p.m.

Muhammad Ali’s Greatest Fight
Nov. 19, Noon

Dia de los Muertos Celebration
Experience Mexico’s Day of the Dead traditions through photographic exhibits, altars, presentations, films and workshops.
Oct. 28–31

Boycott! Exhibit and Presentation

Boycott! The Art of Economic Activism: Posters on Historical & Contemporary Boycott Movements—
exhibit Nov. 11–21.

Graphic Design as a Means for Community Engagement—
Nov. 13, 10 a.m.

Cultural Excursions (ticket prices vary)
Transportation provided to and from the Lorenzo Cultural Center

Michigan Opera Theatre, dress rehearsal for La Bohème
Oct. 16, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Ford Piquette Plant and Renaissance Center tours
Nov. 4, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Holiday Walking Tour of Meadow Brook Estate
Dec. 9, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

2015–2016 CALENDAR

September 17
Comedy & Cocktails Gala featuring
The Second City live from Chicago,
Macomb Center for the Performing Arts
Fun begins at 5:30 p.m.

September 18
4th Annual Retiree Breakfast,
9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.,
Assembly Hall, Center Campus,
University Center

September 24
Reading & Writing Studios
Grand Opening

October 8 & 22
Estate Planning Workshops,
University Center

October 15
Retiree Committee Meeting
(10:30 a.m.–noon)
Retiree Center Stage Lunch
For more information contact
Joyce Monte at
joycemonte@sbcglobal.net

June 3, 2016
Orris, Campitelle, Ikamas,
Robertson Memorial Golf Outing
For information, please
call 586.445.7302 or email
golfretiree@macomb.edu
Macomb Community College Retiree Group
Monthly Get Together

Please Join Us!

What started as a group of secretarial/clerical college retirees has grown to include other Macomb retirees. This group continues to gather on the third Friday of each month at a local restaurant for lunch. There are great storytelling, sharing of travel adventures, as well as personal and family stories.

As Macomb College employees, they developed special personal and professional relationships over the years while working with each other. What better way to continue to share and be involved with one another.

Feel free to contact Norene Ketelhut at 586.757.8383 or Rose Kahn at rmschultz_kahn@yahoo.com for additional information if you want to be part of this fun, active group!

ADDRESSES NEEDED!

If you know of someone who is not on our mailing list, please send an e-mail to retiree@macomb.edu or call the MCC Foundation office at 586.445.7302.

Sudoku answer

2 1 3 8 4 9 6 5 7
4 5 6 7 1 3 9 8 2
7 8 9 6 2 5 1 4 3
1 7 2 4 6 8 3 9 5
6 9 8 3 5 7 2 1 4
3 4 5 1 9 2 7 6 8
5 2 4 9 7 1 8 3 6
9 3 7 5 8 6 4 2 1
8 6 1 2 3 4 5 7 9

Back row left to right, Jeannie Adragna, Liz Lusky, Laura Cook, Ann Marie Toerper, Elaine Shinnaberry; Front row (seated) left to right, Rose Kahn, Liz Ferguson, Clara Beatty, Norene Ketelhut