

## *The Grapevine*

*A Newsletter to SC State Tech Retirees  
from the SCTEA Retirees' Chapter Coordinating Committee  
Fall, 2007 Volume VI, Issue 1*

From the Chair

### **Greetings!**

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as Chair of the Retirees' Chapter of SCTEA (SCTEA-R) for fiscal year 2007-2008. I will support this Chapter and its goals to the best of my ability.

Plans are already underway for the 2008 Annual SCTEA Conference, which promises many interesting topics for retirees as well as active employees. The theme for the 2008 Conference is "Pathways to the Future: Bridging the Educational Gap." Retirees will not be charged a registration fee for conference attendance. Only the cost of the Awards Luncheon or Dinner will be charged to retired members of SCTEA.

One of this Chapter's ongoing goals is to increase participation of retirees in the Annual SCTEA Conference and SCTEA-R activities, including the biennial SCTEA Retirees' Rally. For a membership fee of only \$5, retirees can enjoy the benefits of SCTEA and SCTEA-R – what a deal!

Please feel free to offer comments or suggestions for the SCTEA-R to your local retiree representative. I look forward to seeing you at our Annual SCTEA Conference at Myrtle Beach in February. Have a wonderful year.

Lena McCoy  
Chair, Retirees' Chapter

### **HELP!**

We are making great progress writing the Retirees' Chapter history. But we are still missing the minutes from four meetings: Nov 18, 1994; Feb 14, 1997; Nov 13, 1998; Apr 26, 2001.

I'm sure someone out there has a copy just gathering dust somewhere in the attic...go ahead...rummage in that closet and find it. Call or email me (or any local rep) if you can help us out. Tnx.

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### **TRANSITIONS**

Two years ago, on the eve of his retirement as President of the SC Technical College System, Dr Jim Hudgins offered comments on the history of the Technical College System. Speaking about his first position as a counselor at what was then called Greenville TEC Center, he wrote: "But the college had three dynamic leaders in the persons of Tom Barton, Lex Walters and Don Garrison, who.....never met an opportunity they would not embrace." Some might call them the three horsemen (not apocalyptic) of South Carolina technical education — and Dr Hudgins himself is probably the 4th horseman. Drs. Garrison and Hudgins recently retired and now the remaining two riders have announced that they will join them in retirement. Dr Tom Barton, the longest serving college president in the United States, has announced his intent to retire June 30, 2008 after 45 years at GTC. Dr Lex Walters will complete 39 years at the helm of Piedmont Technical College when he retires January 31, 2008. Both Drs. Barton and Walters joined the Technical College System at Greenville Tech in early 1962, the first year of the system and prior to the enrollment of the first students. They have both been most active in the development of the system from the very beginning. Their leadership placed South Carolina at the forefront of American technical education.

We shall miss them both...we shall miss them all, these leaders of yesteryear. (Ed.)

## BOOK REVIEW

Rather than review one book, I've chosen to review one author who has written the ten books stacked here on my desk - and he has more than fifty others that I have not read. Some of you who live around Hilton Head just may be his neighbors...he claims to be a resident of South Carolina as well as Florida. John Jakes, born in Chicago and a graduate of De Pauw University, received his MA in literature at Ohio State University. He's the author of more than two hundred short stories and over sixty books.

Many years ago I read my first book written by John Jakes. It was entitled The Bastard, and in 1974 was the first in the series, The Kent Family Chronicles. I was fascinated with the most beautiful story-telling I had ever read and looked forward to each new volume. The series carries the story of an American family forward from its beginning in Revolutionary times to the 200th anniversary of our Republic. I read the books - long, detailed and captivating — in the following order: Furies, The Titans, The Warriors, The Lawless, and lastly, The Americans.

Another series, The North and South Trilogy, includes North and South, Love and War and Heaven and Hell. With this series I was thrilled with the "magnificent saga of families swept into the fires of passion, battle, and undying dreams in a desperately divided nation."

Most recently, Jakes has made history come alive in three separate books: Charleston; Savannah; and earlier this year, The Gods of Newport, where the Astors, Duponts, and Vanderbilts constructed twenty room mansions of marble and stone and called them cottages.

The Myrtle Beach Sun News says that John Jakes is "arguably the most accomplished writer of historical fiction of our time" whereas The New York Times Book Review says "He is, quite simply, a master of the ancient art of story telling." In case you have not noticed, I like John Jakes - not to mention his books!! As thick and long as most of his works are, I am spellbound until the last page.

Jimmy Stewart, Greenville

## AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### **SCSEA's Outstanding State Retiree**

Congratulations to our own Dean Flansberg! The South Carolina State Employees Association recently recognized him as its 2007 Outstanding State Retiree and presented him with the Larry G. Ellis Outstanding State Retiree Award. Dean has been an active and retiree member of SCSEA since 1983 and has served on their state Board of Directors since 1986. Dean has also served as O-C Tech's representative to the SCTEA Retirees' Chapter since 1998, has twice served as its Chair and is our 'eyes and ears' in the State House in his role as legislative liaison. Hats off to an outstanding retiree!!!

### **The John A. Price Award for Exemplary Chaplaincy**

In June, the International Conference of Police Chaplains presented The John A. Price Award for Exemplary Chaplaincy to Chaplain Richard E. Sale of Florence, SC. Chaplain Sale has served as a volunteer Chaplain to the Florence Police Department since 1980 and holds the honorary rank of Captain in that department. He is an ordained minister, a charter member of FBI Chaplains, assisted in setting up the South Carolina SLED Chaplain program and in developing the SC Law Enforcement Chaplain's Conference. He is the first Chaplain in the Carolinas and the mid-east region of the United States to receive this prestigious award since it was created in 1984 to recognize ministry done on behalf of law enforcement personnel. Chaplain Sale retired from Florence-Darlington Technical College in 1995 after 27 years of service there and at Midlands TC as an administrator and Criminal Justice instructor. Congratulations Chaplain!!!

## A PIPER'S ODYSSEY

*Give the piper a penny to play,  
and tuppence to leave.*

-Old English Proverb

During World War II, my mother purchased a set of “78” records of bagpipe music as a Christmas present for me. An unusual gift, you’re probably thinking. And, to this day I don’t know why or how she knew that I had any affinity for pipe music. Her father was of Scots descent and she perhaps thought that a thread of *Scottishness* lurked somewhere in my gene pool. In the event, I came to love the skirl of the pipes and over time, I literally wore the grooves off of those old slab-like recordings.

Fast forward through school, college, army service, marriage, family, and a long and rewarding career in higher education. Throughout that span of years and events I continued to enjoy the music of the Great Highland Bagpipes, to give them their proper title. I attended concerts presented by touring pipe bands of some of Scotland’s most historic and honored regiments. My tape – and later, CD – collections were rife with pipe music. I guess that I should interject here that I’d never played a musical instrument or had any training in music. My closest brush with formal music was a three-year stint in my high school glee club. That being said, family and some friends knew of my love of pipe music.

In November of 2004, I retired as executive vice president of an international continuing higher education organization. At the final banquet, the association presented me with a set of lovely bagpipes, thereby issuing something of a recognition of my love of pipe music and a challenge – to me - to do something about it. The gift came as a complete surprise, as I can’t recall ever telling anyone that I wanted to be a piper.

Knowing that I was retiring from Trident Technical College in January of 2005, I set about finding out about piping lessons. A bit of research led me to basic instruction sponsored by the Charleston Police Pipes and Drums, a pipe band sponsored by the Charleston PD. And so, I started lessons in February 2005. An immediate dose of reality came when the instructor started us on a practice chanter; not real bagpipes. The practice chanter is a recorder-like instrument with finger holes that mirror those of the chanter on the bagpipe. After several weeks went by, I ventured to ask when would I actually start on the pipes. She all-too-quickly replied, “About a year from now.” I must tell you that her answer was not what I wanted to hear. She was, as it turned out, a bit optimistic.

Having never had music instruction of any sort, my learning curve was long and slow to rise. Frequent and ample doses of humility often leavened my zeal to be a piper. I learned a lot in a short time and sometimes felt like I was drinking from a fire hose. The Great Highland Bagpipe is a wind instrument that uses a double reed to create melodies via a nine-note chanter. It also has three single-reed drones that create the harmonious and resonant background humming tone. The piper inflates the bag by blowing through a blowpipe, which has a one-way valve that prevents back-flow of air. Then, by squeezing the bag with the proper arm technique and sustaining a constant pressure on the bag, the piper forces air through the chanter and drones, thus creating the music. [And, yes, I know that some people say that *bagpipe music* is an oxymoron.] A bagpipe’s notes are pure and constant, and the piper can’t manipulate them by varying wind pressure or tongue position. There are no chords, sharps and/or flats.

By Fall, I had moved from scales to a few simple tunes. Perversely, they weren’t “in my head” as they weren’t tunes with which I’d grown up. Raise your hand if *you* grew up singing *Mairi’s Wedding*, *Bonnie Charlie*, *Johnnie Scobie*, or *Skye Boat Song*. Also, I was immersed in the arcane lore of musical notations: half-notes, quarter-notes, cut-notes, 4/4 time, 2/4, time, 3/4 time and the like.

Spring 2006 brought with it hordes of tourists to Charleston, delicate blossoms, fragrant flowers and budding hopes of actually learning to play the bagpipes. True to her word, in April, my

instructor began teaching me how to blow, squeeze, and finger the chanter. All that gave new meaning to the old canard about *chewing gum and walking*. [I've left out learning to *tune* the drones to the chanter; but that's another story in itself.] By May, however, I was playing passable renditions of *Amazing Grace* and *Going Home*.

And so, from childhood exposure to pipe music, my piper's odyssey has brought me to the Fall of 2007. It has been a wonderful journey; more rewarding than I'd ever imagined. I continue with weekly lessons and have attended three week-long piping summer camps. I've met and studied with some internationally-known pipers. I've made friends with many fellow retirees who – like me – are pursuing their *pipe dreams* late in their lives. I've played at funerals, churches, reunions and special programs. Two of the most moving experiences have occurred during my two trips to Gulfport, MS, to do Katrina re-building. I took my pipes and played each evening in the church in which we were staying. My play list now includes traditional Scottish tunes as well as some familiar old hymns and some personal favorites. Santa Claus brought a kilt and the proper piping accoutrements. And, I've learned that there are as many *under the kilt* and *pipe music* jokes as there are lawyer jokes. [Q. Why do pipers walk while they play? A. They're trying to get away from the noise. Q. What's worn under the kilt? A. Nothing. Everything's in perfect working order.]

*Slainte!*

Dr. Wayne L. Whelan, Trident