**President’s Message**

TURFA - What does it mean to you? Well, it might mean lots of things. It is a way to stay connected to TU. It is a way to benefit from the many services and activities the association offers. It is a way to volunteer and remain active as a retiree. It is a way to continue supporting the academic endeavor at TU. And, possibly, much more.

Whatever TURFA means to you now, this is probably a good time to pause and reflect on how much more this 5-year old organization can be an even more important and valuable part of your life. Here are some topics for reflection and engagement:

- Watch our programs and events currently in video and online. Better yet, join our "Members Speak Out" series and become a presenter with a topic of your choice.
- If you are doing some scholarly research, apply for a TURFA grant for support. Better yet, join the TURFA committee that reviews grant applications.
- Watch the already recorded video interviews of several retired faculty vis-a-vis our Oral History Project. Better yet, advise the committee choosing interviewers and interviewees.
- Tutor students who are taking TU classes in your areas of expertise. You can do this online or by phone. Or, help mentor transfer students with general advice.
- Help our Public Relations Committee spread the word about TURFA.
- Let us hear from you about what TURFA should be doing to enrich, not only your life, but the lives of others too.

TURFA has many new irons in the fire of which you should be aware. They are as follows:

- Our first annual report is being published this Fall. It will be widely distributed around campus.
- We offer discount rates for those wanting to enroll in Osher programs.
- We have an Emeriti Status and Faculty Rights Task Force examining various rights and privileges that we have and/or should have.
- We are building a bridge to the Gerontology Program on campus.
- We have voting TURFA representatives on the Academic Senate, FACET, and the Search Committee for a Graduate Dean.
- We maintain an information link to the State Legislature and other sources about what is going on with retiree drug coverage.

You might ask: "Where can I get more information about all of the above and much more?" It's easy. Just go to the TURFA website at www.towson.edu/retiredfaculty. That site is very well maintained by Peg Benner, TURFA's Online Information Coordinator. In addition, twice a year, this wonderful newsletter, *The Advocate*, is prepared by editor Florence Newman. Thanks to these two people for routinely keeping TURFA information afloat.

This has indeed been an unusual and, far too often, difficult year. As you can probably tell, the Towson University Retired Faculty Association remains vibrant and quite active. Nevertheless, despite unexpected challenges, we look forward to when we can again get together in person sometime in 2021. For now, the real purpose of my message here is for you to contemplate how TURFA can be even more meaningful to you than it is now. I'd love to hear from you so we can share thoughts about how to make that happen. You can reach me at rmatlon@towson.edu.

Meanwhile, stay safe and well. My best to you.

*Ronald J. Matlon, Ph.D.*
The Retired Faculty Brunch: Welcome to the New Normal

Florence Newman

The Retired Faculty Brunch was held virtually via WebEx on Friday, June 12. Vice Provost Maggie Reitz, serving as host and moderator, welcomed guests to the online meeting room: “It’s good to see so many faces” (an appropriate greeting given that participants on WebEx appear as thumbnail pictures, Hollywood Squares-style). She complimented attendees on their success at navigating the log-in process, commenting, “This is the first meeting I’ve been in where everyone followed the suggestion to mute microphones.” After being introduced by Reitz, President Kim Schatzel also welcomed the audience and congratulated those who had just retired, with a nod to the challenges posed to academia by the coronavirus: “You picked a good year to become newly retired.” Given that Maryland had moved into Phase 2 of its reopening plan, Schatzel said that she was enjoying simple pleasures, such as getting a haircut, and that she was looking forward to seeing us “in person and on campus.”

Provost Melanie Perreault then took the microphone to add her congratulations to new retirees (expressing “extreme jealousy” of those who chose this year to retire) and to greet TURFA members. Using PowerPoint, Perreault introduced or had deans/department members introduce retirees from each college. All were wished “a happy, healthy, and productive retirement.” The Provost then accepted questions from the audience with regard to plans for in-person teaching in the fall. Perreault said that the entire campus would be a low-density campus, with about half of normal capacity, to maintain safer social distancing. Technology would be put into classrooms so that sessions could be simulcast and recorded for remote learning. Perreault emphasized that TU was “not compelling faculty or anyone else to come to campus, although she was hopeful that “a number will feel comfortable coming back.” She indicated that “for some students, the TU campus is the safest place they’ve ever lived,” and she wanted to make of a “good on-campus experience for them.” Asked about faculty preparedness for online teaching, the Provost noted that the university was providing significant support. Hundreds of faculty had already completed training through FACET, and hundreds more had signed up. In reply to the question “What can TURFA do to help the University in this new and challenging environment?,” Perreault noted that the University needed volunteers to work with students by providing academic advising and that mentoring faculty would be “a great role for TURFA members.”

Perreault was asked to elaborate on the fall’s low-density campus. She said that there would be social distancing in the dorms and that residence halls would not be full. Questions about the Library were addressed by Debbie Nolan: ILL and loans from across the USM would soon be available, digital loans and resources were currently available, faculty might be given access to the stacks using an appointment system in the next couple of weeks, and the library was scheduled for a soft opening on August 3. The Provost took the opportunity to thank Nolan for her years of excellent service to TU (since 2006) and for her forty years in the field of
library science (“Notice the gray hairs?,” Nolan joked, “I earned them.”) Returning to the subject of the low-density campus, Perreault pointed out that the priority for on-campus housing would be given to freshmen, students living 25 miles or more away, and students with disabilities. The University was contracting for 300 more beds at nearby private housing. Although the University “can’t accommodate everybody who wants to live on campus,” it would “work hard with individual students to meet their needs.” As to whether the gym and pool would reopen, Perreault said that academic work would be the number one priority and that athletic facilities would “probably not be opening soon.” During the next week, she said, the return of research faculty (50-100) would commence, with other people gradually phased in over time.

Before she had to leave the meeting, the Provost said that if there were to be a second Covid-19 wave in the fall, the University “would follow science and local, state, and federal guidelines: we are preparing for all scenarios.” Asked about the budgeting impact of the pandemic, Perreault admitted that there would be “a loss of revenue,” but they “feel prepared to take it.” Martha Siegel offered Provost Perreault thanks on behalf of the campus, and the Provost signed off with “Take care, be safe, see you again, hopefully next year, in person, with real mimosas.”

Vice Provost Reitz told retirees that if they were interested in remote tutoring to email her at mreitz@towson.edu. For those needing to be brought up to speed on teaching software, instruction would be provided. Asked about TU’s sports programs, Dr. Reitz said that the national organizations would be looking into it. Q and A ended with brief exchanges regarding faculty access to the library archives (virtual) and TURFA access to the TURFA Suite (the Enrollment Services building is being renovated; under low-density campus rules, members would visit the suite only by appointment).

At the TURFA meeting following the brunch, outgoing president Tracy Miller introduced the 2020-2021 Executive Committee (consisting of fourteen people) and welcomed TURFA members and TURFA members-to-be (as we like to think of the not-yet-joined). Miller reviewed many of the TURFA activities over the previous year. She also thanked Peg Benner for updating the TURFA website, turning it into “a thing of beauty.” She noted that retirees are now able to join TURFA, renew membership, and pay membership fees on line. Don Forrester was congratulated for completing three more interviews for the Oral History Project, and the Research and Scholarship Committee for awarding its first scholarship for faculty continuing research in retirement. Finally, Miller observed that the Executive Committee had organized phone calls to TURFA members, checking in with them about how they were faring during the pandemic.

Incoming TURFA President Ron Matlon thanked Miller for her “careful guidance in moving TURFA forward” and noted that he had “very big shoes to fill” following the leadership of past presidents. He said that he looked forward to serving as TURFA President but emphasized that “most of what we offer comes from retired volunteers.” TURFA, he said, is a “rewarding way to make friends among TU colleagues.” Urging individuals to make a commitment to TURFA by volunteering, Matlon quoted Maya Angelou on becoming a volunteer: “ain’t nothing to it but to do it.” The event concluded with Past President Miller thanking everyone in the Provost’s Office and on the Executive Committee: “You made what could have been a terrible year into a wonderful year,” adding “‘Go Towson!’” Vice Provost Reitz thanked all of the attendees, expressed anticipation for the next real (as opposed to virtual) meeting, and then released us “to the outdoors and fun in the sunshine.”
PANDEMIC LIFE

After the first shock of lockdown gave way to the growing realization that life was not going to be the same for a long time, TURFA members—like other retirees who planned to spend 2020 traveling, attending cultural events, volunteering, and socializing with friends and family—began to ask themselves, “What now?” For some, unforeseen free time offered an opportunity to undertake or complete postponed household projects. Some embarked on entirely new activities or developed new skills. Some scaled down their expectations for the year and found the result sufficiently satisfying. And some—as psychologists reassured us was perfectly all right during a global pandemic—accepted that they didn’t have to be doing anything deemed productive, but could instead hunker down and simply be until the “all clear” signal has sounded.

Sharon Pitcher represents the enviably enterprising end of this quarantine response spectrum: “During the pandemic, I decided to teach myself how to paint on clothes. I belong to the Society of Decorative Artists, so I downloaded some of their learning packets. Then I watched some YouTube videos. During the quarantine time, I painted three tote bags, four jeans jackets, and three blouses . . . I now have many one-of-a-kind clothes to wear in the fall. I have now moved on to learning more about painting with watercolor.” Peg Benner (whose essay appears elsewhere in this issue) applied her energies to imposing order on entropy: “I gathered together all of my photos from the Kodachrome Decades, mercilessly weeded out the extras and rejects, and then reorganized the final collection.

Mary Blann and John McKusick both took advantage of today’s technology to reach out to others. Blann says, “It took a few times, but I learned how to Zoom in order to visit with friends around the country. It’s a great way to stay connected.” McKusick found that the pandemic broadened his horizons: “In an odd way, the isolation of the pandemic combined with the ready availability of conferencing technology have enabled me to participate in meetings and workshops that I might not have attended in person. Some opportunities to learn, collaborate, and unite with others with common interests and concerns seem to be greater now than prior to the pandemic.”

Naturally, the closures and restrictions of quarantine led to disappointments. Our TURFA members proved adaptable, however. Ron Matlon found that when one door closed, another (virtual) door opened: “I used to exercise 2 or 3 days a week at the Towson YMCA. During the pandemic, I learned that YouTube has a great collection of exercise videos for seniors. While not quite as good as in-person instruction, it’s a worthy substitute to keep one limbered up and moving.” Tracy Miller scaled back travel plans but still managed to get away: “For me, the major impacts came early in the pandemic. My birthday is in March, and we were not able to take our planned trip to Hawaii. Then, in June, I cancelled the Rhine River cruise I had planned with my husband. In late July, we did take a trip—to Iowa and Minneapolis. Not quite so exotic!” Wry humor and an ability to adjust to changing circumstances are clearly important traits to have when life hands you lemons.

Finally, some TURFA members have taken a philosophical approach to social distancing and sheltering in place. “One take-away from the pandemic,” says Barbara Bass, “is that I am very happy to stay at home. I’ve been allowing myself lots of reading and jigsaw puzzle time, and I’m OK not doing errands. It’s been an opportunity to look inward—both inside my house and my self—and leave the outside to itself.” And for Lynda Anozie, the main lesson of the pandemic cannot be found on line or in Zoom conferences: “Silence is not necessarily absence. It can be the presence of peace.
Research and Scholarship Committee Report

David Larkin

The Scholarship and Research Committee awards grants to support the scholarship and research of TURFA members. The grants are small, typically no more than around $200. This past year the committee awarded one grant to cover the cost of registration at a professional meeting where the TURFA member was presenting a research paper. More information and application forms for grants can be found on the TURFA web site, www.towson.edu/retiredfaculty. Grants are processed throughout the year as they are received. The Committee encourages TURFA members to explore this resource and submit applications.

TURFA Activities and Hobbies: Choose Your Passion

Florence Newman

This virtual event, held on August 21, organized by Jim Paulsen, and kept smoothly running online by OTS specialist Christine Tennes, featured presentations by five TURFA members or spouses who have followed their creative, aesthetic, and intellectual passions into retirement.

Pat DeLany started things off with “Thistle and Rose Woodworks,” aka “Woodworking in Retirement,” aka “How to Avoid Housework.” He showed images of furniture, cutting boards, toys, decorative items, even an entire entertainment center, all meticulously and beautifully crafted from woods such as clear pine, cherry, maple, walnut, red oak, and ambrosia maple (soft maple invaded by ambrosia beetles, leaving unique colorful streaks). Mr. Delany explained the history of these pieces, the challenges of constructing them, and the features that distinguish them. His “3-D” works, such as a cutting board, were particularly fascinating, created with contrasting woods arranged in such a way as to give the illusion of depth. Seeing “in process” pictures alongside “finished product” pictures of the different tables Delany had built brought home how labor-intensive the art of woodworking can be. In addition to things he has created from scratch, he showed items he had repurposed or restored, such as a 1900’s sofa back transformed into a headboard, a circa 1860 doctor’s cabinet (disassembled, cleaned, restained, varnished, and rotten wood replaced), and a vintage Coca-Cola frame for a weather thermometer. Many of the works Mr. Delany has made were commissioned or were gifts for friends and family, including a toy airplane model of an A-10, a coffee table incorporating hockey sticks used by the client, and a storage shelf wedding gift with the initial of the couple’s last name built into the design. The highlight of the works displayed was the “Thistle and Rose” home bar resembling that in a British pub, with a bar, back bar, sink, wine rack cum glass holder, and a “for real” brass bar rail—“my pride and joy,” confessed DeLany.

Mr. Delany took another few minutes to illustrate the steps of furniture construction, using a dining room table as an example. Viewers watched as rough-cut lumber was smoothed, positioned, clamped in place, glued up provisionally, flattened, glued up again, supplemented with a bottom layer of oak to bring the table top to its final thickness, finished with stain and varnished, and finally assembled outside the workshop. The audience got
passing glimpses of the tools DeLany used to work his magic, but a longer introduction to “Major Shop Tools” would have to wait for another day.

This tour through (mostly) larger samples of home woodworking was followed by a presentation of woodworks on a smaller scale by John Miller (otherwise known as “Jane Wolfson’s husband”). Miller had prepared a video of the wooden boxes he had made over the years, with narration describing how he chose the wood and crafted the boxes with an eye for the natural grain of the wood: “flaws give it beautiful character,” he said of a jewelry box of tigerwood maple he had made for Jane. He admitted to having a big supply of wood that he had “dragged around for years,” waiting for the perfect project for each piece. In his current location, a farmhouse with 100 acres of trees around it, many of them ash trees dying ash worms, he started saving pieces of firewood to craft. He showed how he took a 1” piece of cherry, ran it through a table saw, used a planer and sand paper to smooth the surfaces, cut dovetails with a self-made jig, cut slots for the top and bottom on a router table, and glued the top and bottom together to produce a lovely box with a sliding lid. Miller implicitly endorsed “Quick and Thick” glue for affixing veneer and “Tried and True” wood finish (it’s “old-fashioned and slow to dry,” but the ultimate effect is worth it). The finishing touch is a final coat of beeswax. Throughout the video, it was clear how meticulous and exact each action in the process had to be, such as using a drill bit with a beveled top to center a screw in a hinge. Like Mr. Delany, Mr. Miller unabashedly admired and respected the materials, the methods, and the products of the woodworking craft. He chose a cherry box made from figured wood to close his presentation: “This is my favorite piece,” he said, adding with satisfaction, “really solid.”

Bill Smith introduced himself as a forty-year faculty member in Management at TU whose lifelong passion has been chess. He pointed out that when you see players in a chess tournament, they will fall into one of two groups—the young folks and the older guys—because most middle-aged people are too busy to compete. As a fifteen-year-old, Smith belonged to the first group, and today he remains involved in teaching and coaching chess. Prof. Smith promised his audience that he was not going to get into strategy in his presentation but instead would share some pictures and give “a super-quick outline” of the game’s history. Chess emerged in the 5th or 6th century, and 1500 years later many of the original elements remain the same, for instance, a board with 64 squares, 2 opponents across from each other, a row of pawns and other ranks guarding the king in their midst. As trade moved the game from the East to Europe, the piece next to the king, originally a male vizier, was changed to a female queen, to better mirror the organization of a medieval Western court. The most remarkable aspect of the game, according to Smith, is that no chance is involved: every advance and defeat is the result of choices made. Furthermore, the physical abilities of the players do not matter. Female or male, able-bodied or handicapped, anyone can play...
Chess Championship against Boris Spassky in 1972. Here is where Prof. Smith’s personal history of chess intersects with the game’s history as a whole. He played in the U.S. Open in 1969 and was at the World Championship in Iceland when Fisher took the title for the U.S. Today, Smith coaches the Baltimore Kids Chess League and serves on its Board of Directors. The League has sent as many as five teams to participate in national tournaments, and in 2017, the League produced its first individual U.S. Chess Federation National Champion.

The game is at a critical period because of the Covid virus, said Prof. Smith. The reasons are obvious: two players directly across from one another for an extended period of time, touching the same board and the same pieces, plus these players traditionally begin and end every game with a handshake. The situation does, however, present an opportunity to move chess games online. We have already had twenty years of computer chess, Smith pointed out. The pros of computer chess are that it is accessible to more people and you can play whenever you want. One con is that online games increase the potential for cheating. Another development in recent years is that things have speeded up and timed games are more common, a feature that may work well with the migration of chess online. Some forms of rapid chess limit each player to 30 minutes for all the moves. But the game of chess, as Smith described its history, is not to be rushed: the standard time limit gives each player two hours for fifty moves.

Collecting fountain pens might seem an esoteric pursuit, but Prof. Jim DiLisio of the Geography Department conveyed its appeal by showing a few of the 200 or so examples he has acquired over the years, mostly on site from around the world, each unique in its colors and pattern. DiLisio admitted that his short video could only “scratch the surface” of this hobby. He categorized pen owners as one of three kinds: users, accumulators, and collectors. DiLisio writes with the fountain pen every day and has obviously accumulated quite a few, but he considers himself a collector, specializing in Conway Stewart pens from the 1920’s through the 1960’s.

A Mont Blanc was the first “serious” fountain pen Prof. DiLisio acquired, but eventually he came to focus on Conway Stewarts, a British brand known for its creative use of colored plastics. The names for various styles and colors devised by collectors indicate their striking appearance: “tiger’s eye,” “marbled,” “herringbone,” “cross-hatched,” and “cracked ice.” DiLisio displayed marbled, gold, and cracked ice examples. He does have other brands in his collection. Some of his favorites are the Italian fountain pens, “which are well made and beautiful,” like a Visconti Voyager in a pearl pattern and a red Montegrappa done in acrylic and silver.

Unless you are an initiate, you probably don’t know that our region hosts three major pen shows each year. In January, there’s the Philadelphia show; in March, a Baltimore-Washington show; and in August, the Washington show, the largest in the world. Everything a potential pen collector might want can be found there, from new modern pens to vintage pens, inks, inkwells, and pen cases. Prof. DiLisio opened up to viewers this whole universe of pen afficianados, which has existed all along our very noses.

Last but not least, Prof. Jim Paulsen of the Art Department rounded off the presentations with “The Journey of Making Sculpture.” “Conveniently,” he said, “my hobby is also my profession.” His earliest works were oriented toward anatomy and combined wood and metal. He produced a series of works on wheels, some small and some large. Not only was he always interested in combining materials, he was also “always interested in the combination of geometric and organic.” As a result, many of his sculptures are a study in contrasts, such as being simultaneously...
“sinister and lovely.” The City of Baltimore commissioned a piece on wheels about children and pets, a large piece on which every one of the lines is a welded seal. Paulsen’s “Lifescap” series reflects an increasing involvement in the craft movement, where the finish of the sculptures were particularly important to the artist. The sizes and shapes of these pieces vary from “insect-like” to “sentinel.” Sentinels play a major role in Paulsen’s “Totem” series. Made of treated timbers and metal beams, some fourteen feet tall, sentinels appealed to his impulse to “work large”:

“It’s a thrill to walk under my pieces.” Color also interested Paulsen during this period. Paulsen explained that when he was trained in art in the ’60’s, the vogue for artists was to develop a concept and stick with it,” to “push an idea as far as you can.” Hence the tendency of his oeuvre to consist of series. “The American Landscape” represents another such series, with the image of an anvil symbolizing America, played out as far as an anvil combined with a hotdog, also an iconic American image.

Paulsen ended his presentation with pictures of sculptures commissioned as public works, scattered geographically from the Delaware School of the Arts, to a cycle trail in Bristol, England, to Oldenberg, Germany, to Glasgow, Scotland, to Beijing, China. Alongside these monumental works, Paulsen displayed some “tangents” he created that also do not fit into a series: belt buckles, pendants, hybrid pieces based on an art show’s theme, even a gate to a garden. Paulsen’s “journey” of making sculpture, it became clear, spans genres, decades, and global locales—and it is not finished yet.

Together these TURFA members and affiliates demonstrated that a passion to create or collect or cultivate a skill doesn’t wane over time but intensifies and—even during a lockdown—flourishes.

Nonfiction Book Group

Jo-Ann Pilardi

Our meetings have been virtual, of course. We’ve read Walter Isaacson’s biography, Leonardo DaVinci; Sonia Purnell’s biography of Virginia Hall (a Baltimorean who did “spy” work in France during World War II), A Woman of No Importance; and journalist Elizabeth Flock’s The Heart Is a Shifting Sea: Love and Marriage in Mumbai.

Our late September reading is Anthony DePalma’s The Cubans: Ordinary Lives in Extraordinary Times. DePalma is a seasoned journalist who has worked for the New York Times and other publications. This book is his attempt to present the Cuba most people don’t see—the Cuba of contemporary everyday life—through the lives of a group of people he features.

In late October, we’ll discuss a book much in the news: Isabel Wilkerson’s Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents, a study of American racism being called “an instant American classic.” The date and time are TBA. Those interested in joining the group, or just interested in reading and discussing Caste in particular with our group of six,
If your idea of fun is teaching grad courses at night and taking law courses during the day or holding two professional jobs simultaneously (and commuting to D.C. for one of them) or spending your retirement doing the most meticulous research of your career or trying to reason calmly with hostile callers on a weekly radio show, then we have the role model for you. Tom Maronick came to Towson University in 1987 with two advanced degrees, a doctorate in Business Administration from the University of Kentucky at Lexington and a law degree from the University of Baltimore, which he earned while teaching graduate courses there. Tom has always loved education and “knew it was going to be [his] passion” from the beginning. He moved from the Montana to the East Coast to become a faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University, where he taught business administration and where he met his future wife, Nancy. As for also becoming a lawyer—why not? After grad school at Kentucky, rather than return to VCU, Tom joined the faculty at the University of Baltimore, where he taught mostly graduate night courses, leaving his days were free to pursue a law degree. Such a run of higher education is enviable to those of us for whom graduate school was (as Zonker in Doonesbury put it) “the best eight years of my life.” Perpetual studenthood has its limits, however: at his law school commencement, his wife jokingly warned, “If you so much as think about getting another degree . . . .”

Prof. Maronick’s dual degrees in business and law proved ideal preparation for becoming an in-house marketing expert at the Federal Trade Commission in the Bureau of Consumer Protection in 1980. What was supposed to be a one-year position became a permanent job as Director of Impact Evaluation when President Reagan imposed a federal hiring freeze. By 1987, when Prof. Maronick began teaching at Towson, the FTC position had converted to part-time, so that he was commuting to Washington, D.C., only two days a week. What for many would be a recipe for stress, Tom found to be a fun experience: the advantage of holding his government job while also being a Business professor, he says, was that he had access to an enormous amount of federal data upon which he could base his academic scholarship. By coincidence, the current Dean of the College of Business and former chair of the Marketing Department, Shohreh Kaynama, was one of Prof. Maronick’s students at the University of Baltimore. Comments Maronick, “I broke the cardinal rule of lawyers: ‘Never let your student be your boss.’”

One drawback of teaching in the Business School, says Maronick, is that it is “very insular,” with some faculty having little knowledge of what is going on in the rest of the University. Maronick took advantage of opportunities to gain a larger perspective, such as serving on the University Senate for 12 years and serving on the search committee for a new University President in 2015. Dr. Kim Schatzel, who was ultimately selected from among the many well-qualified candidates, has a background in marketing, which resulted in College of Business faculty attributing that part of the search outcome to Tom’s presence on the search committee.

Meanwhile, way back in 1997, Dr. Maronick had started a consulting practice as a survey designer and expert witness in advertising cases. To illustrate the sort of work he does, Tom described being hired by a law firm assigned by the court to monitor the consent decree adopted by the
City of Ferguson, Missouri, following the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown. (Although Merronick clearly valued his role in the enforcement of police reform in Ferguson, his “Trip Advisor” review of the city itself is lukewarm: “If you have an opportunity to visit, pass it up.”) Maronick has continued his consulting work even after his retirement from teaching three years ago. The “fun part” of consulting, according to Maronick, is the rigor of the research required: “You have to be more careful in terms of research because you’re going to be challenged by some very smart lawyers.”

While writing for peer-reviewed journals is daunting enough, “when you’re sitting at a deposition, you have to be able to defend” your methodology and conclusions against a team of legal experts “with an incentive to prove you wrong.” At the Bureau of Consumer Protection, Dr. Maronick honed the skill of recognizing deceptive advertising which he continues to use as an expert witness. For instance, if Kraft Foods claims that each of its cheese singles is made with two cups of milk, Maronick might be hired to determine 1) Is that claim true? And 2) How important is its truth to consumers? Maronick shared some of his insights about false advertising in a TURFA talk on October 13.

As for Dr. Maronick’s side gig as a radio host, you can hear his hour-long show on Saturday nights on WCBM. He took over the current events call-in show when his son gave it up a couple of years ago. The station and its audience are for the most part politically conservative, and Tom is decidedly not. That difference makes for some interesting, animated conversations. After he introduces one of six or seven topics he has drawn from national news, the phone starts ringing. Tom treats his callers with respect and gives them a forum for their ideas, but he doesn’t let those ideas go unchallenged (e.g., Caller: “President Trump has been great for the economy”; Maronick: “Actually, the GDP hasn’t changed since the previous administration”). At this point you may have guessed that Dr. Maronick describes these on-air interactions as “fun”: “All I’m doing is reading The Wall Street Journal—which can hardly be accused of being a liberal rag—and bringing facts to bear” on the subject.

Does Dr. Maronick ever want to take a vacation from all this fun? Well, in the pre-pandemic past, he traveled with Nancy and taught abroad, but it’s obvious that purely idle pleasures have little appeal for him. And he encourages his fellow retirees to remain “actively involved” and “maintain an intellectual life.” That sounds like excellent advice: it seems to have made Tom Maronick a happy man.

### Programs and Events Committee Report

**Janet Delany and Jim Paulsen**

TURFA hosted a special virtual presentation of several TURFA members and member spouses on August 21st. Pat Delany showed us many of his handmade objects of fine wood furniture, John Miller showed us many examples of small wood keepsake boxes, William Smith shared some insights into his love of chess, Jim Dilisio treated us to a look at his beautiful fountain pen collection, and Jim Paulsen gave us a glimpse of many of the sculptures he has created down through the years. All of the presenters answered questions about their work.

Presentations concerning TURFA member gardens scheduled for July 31 will be run again in December due to some technical WebEx issues.

On August 25 (Part I) and September 23 (Part II), retired *Baltimore Sun* columnist Fraser Smith and TU Political Science professor Donn Worgs teamed one another in an online discussion of civil rights in Maryland from the mid-twentieth century through the present day. The event was cosponsored by the TU Alumni Association, the Osher Institute, and TURFA. Fraser Smith is a...
former political writer for the Sun, the recipient of numerous press association awards, and the author most recently of Here Lies Jim Crow: Civil Rights in Maryland. Dr. Worgs is a Professor of Political Science at TU who teaches American Politics, Urban Politics, and African-American Politics. He is a co-author of In a New Era: The Politics of Neighborhood Revitalization in the Post-Industrial City, forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press. The lively discussions covered such topics as women’s leadership in the early Civil Rights Movement; militant protests against discrimination in Cambridge, Maryland; the devaluing of black lives a half-century prior to Freddy Gray; the challenge to “separate but equal” raised by UMES; the fight for equal access to public accommodations; similarities and differences between the 60’s Civil Rights Movement and the current Black Lives Matter Movement; disparities in health care highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic; the complexities of effecting justice and equality not only in the law but in institutions and individual behavior; the role of ministers and the church; the militarization of the police and the problem of mass incarceration of Blacks; the need for establishing priorities as a prerequisite to crafting policies and procedures; and recent progress in racial esteem and pride. A recording of “Examining Civil Rights in Maryland, Part I” can be found at YouTube page. Part II will also be posted when available.

Reshaping the Kodachrome Decades

Peg Benner

Exhibit #1 Mid-July 2020

The project was a chore that I had successfully put off for at least fifteen years. But when I found myself imprisoned at home during this virus, I had no more excuses: It was finally time to gather up the harvest of the Kodachrome Decades and put my photos into order.

If I were to report the tangled details of the process I found myself drowning in, I would lose your interest after a few sentences. In short, I pulled together all of my photos from 1978 to 2005, mercilessly weeded out extras and rejects, and then reorganized the remaining photos into a leaner, more ordered final collection.

Skipping most of the minutiae, I can summarize the process as follows:

I. I hunted down nine large photo albums, twenty-three small photo albums, two shoeboxes and three manila envelopes stuffed with photos; then I put them all into what became a very large stack in a corner of the living room.

II. I didn’t touch the stack for a few days: abject fear had set in. In addition, the stack reminded me of many past stacks of English 231 essays – on steroids! Nevertheless, I vowed to sort through every one of the photos and finally reorganize the collection.

III. After a few days of what-have-I-gotten-myself-into paralysis, I finally dived into the project. I sorted photos into throwaways, (duplicates, triplicates, etc., photos of people I could no longer identify, and just plain rejects); piles to send to relatives and friends; and “keepers” to be reassembled into a new, sleek filing system. The throwaways landed on the floor; the other categories ended up in piles all over the sofa (seat, back, and arms) and the coffee table.

Nothing about this job was even remotely simple. Each evening, I sat in my little sorting area on the sofa, with my cat on my lap and a blanket over both of us, and picked up another album. My “tools” were nearby: paperclips, scotch tape, paper for labels, rubber bands for large stacks, Sharpies of various colors, and my trusty magnifying glass. There was entertainment nearby as well: a TV, CD player, radio, iPad, drink, and telephone.

I sorted for several hours each evening, getting up occasionally to rummage through the kitchen for...
a snack. What I saw as I returned from one of these trips to the kitchen became yet another picture: See Exhibit #1.

At the end of each evening’s sorting, I picked up the rejects from the floor and counted them. I stopped counting when I reached 1,000.

Exhibit #2 August 24, 2020

After the sorting was complete, I organized the keepers (several thousand strong) by chronology and topic, then inserted them into four of the now-empty albums and two plastic suitcases filled with sixteen color-coded boxes each (thank you, Michaels!). I labelled each container as I filled it. Exhibit #2 shows the resulting Kodachrome collection; Exhibit #3 shows my living room back in its normal state.

Exhibit #3 August 25, 2020

I did a lot of thinking as I worked on this project, prompting two questions:

**Question 1:** Was this work worth all the trouble and mess?

**Answer 1:** For a few days, the answer was NO, but now it is a definite YES!

**Question 2:** What have I learned from this unenviable task?

**Answer 2:** I learned that our lives are embedded in time—past, present, and future. The very act of taking pictures merges all three. I concluded that the ability to live-in-the-now—which we all strive for—can become a reality only when we allow all three to live together seamlessly in our perspective as we travel through our time on this planet.

**Solitary Musings**

*Don C. Forester*

It was mid-March during the pandemic and I found myself home alone for the evening. I had poured myself a glass of red wine and was sitting quietly on the patio, as dusk transitioned to darkness. Had Joan, my wife of 54 years, been sitting in the adjacent rocking chair she would have made the following statement several times: “It must be spring!” That is her stock intonation whenever I pull out my harmonicas and begin playing, on or around the vernal equinox. What I hear as sweet harmony, she perceives as fingernails on a chalkboard. So, about the only benefit I could discern in her absence that evening was that it provided me a brief, sarcasm-free, opportunity to reconnect with my Horner “Special 20”s.

I keep a stack of firewood piled on the patio and since we were expecting heavy rain the next day, I decided to have a fire in the fire pit, in order to use up the wood before it got soaked. It was a cool but pleasant evening, and the fire was truly beautiful.

As I sat in solitude, softly playing the harmonicas, I was entranced by the dancing flames and the pulsations of the glowing coals. In short order, my mind began to wander and I soon found myself reflecting on the amazing complexity of
living beings. There I was, an aging mass of organized protoplasm composed of approximately 30 trillion individual cell, molded by evolutionary processes into functioning organs and organ systems. Collectively they constituted the pinnacle of multi-cellular organization—a human being. That human (me) was sitting on a tiny simulated stone patio on one insignificant piece of a medium-sized planet, orbiting a puny sun in the vastness of endless space—watching wood burn. Sensory features of the fire that I was watching were being recorded by specialized photoreceptors in my retinas that, after peripheral processing, sent generic electrical signals to optic nerves exiting the posterior of my eyes and then onward to my brain. The electrical signal stimulated by the visual elements of the fire were no different than the electrical signals generated by the crackling sound of the embers that were, at that very instant, also careening along the auditory nerves from my inner ears to a separate region of my brain. Both signals, indecipherable on an oscilloscope, were somehow interpreted by the cells of my central nervous system as a visual image or as a sound, respectively. Location, location, location! As those tiresome television infomercials incessantly proclaim, “But wait, there’s more!” My auditory and visual perceptions were coded and stored in the protoplasmic databank we call memory, and here I am transcribing them for this missive months later.

And so it is—we observe, we process and we store information of unimaginable complexity. And then one day we die—and all of that organization, and all those data, and all of our musing, and all of our secrets are gone—in a heartbeat!

Remember: wear your mask, wash your hands and social distance. Stay well!

In Memoriam

Richard Preisler, Department of Chemistry, June 2, 2020. Dr. Preisler earned his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Stanford University in 1980 and, after postdoctoral study at the University of Pennsylvania, began his career at Towson University in 1982. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1989. Dr. Preisler taught courses in general chemistry and biochemistry, contributing to curriculum development in both areas. He also served twice as chair of the Chemistry Department for a total of twelve years. According to Prof. Ryan Casey, current chair of the department, “Richard took on the role of chair during a time of disruption and provided a steadying presence in the department.” His colleagues remember him for his kindness, compassion, and wide range of interests. Prof. Ana-Maria Soto writes, “Richard was very generous with his time and never hesitated to help his colleagues. Richard was insightful, clever, and imaginative in our research and teaching, and yet he was so gentle, humble, and open-minded.” Prof. Henry Chen echoes that description: “He was a lovely, gentle man, patient as the day is long. I never heard him say a cross word to anyone.” Dr. Dave Larkin and Dr. Joe Topping, his contemporaries in the Chemistry Department, write, “Trained as a biochemist, he was equally comfortable discussing astronomy, art, history, or his deep love of classical music. He was truly multifaceted and multitalented.” Dr. Preisler retired from TU in 2017. His Baltimore Sun obituary and his coworkers both emphasize his “love of learning and teaching.” Says Dr. Soto, “Richard was a wonderful teacher and scholar and an amazing friend and colleague.”