CRA Enjoys SPRING Luncheon in Spite of the Weather!

On Thursday, April 7, the Cornell Retirees Association gathered for our Annual Spring luncheon…the day was cloudy, rainy and not very spring-like! After a nice mild winter, one wonders why we seem to have winter in April this year.

Gary Stewart, Director of Community Relations for Cornell, was the featured speaker. He saw that we were well-prepared for learning about the Office of Community Relations (OCR) by sharing a very informative handout explaining some of the interesting things this office is involved with each day. Various activities of OCR were highlighted including acting as a liaison between Cornell and the community, representing each to the other. They meet regularly with local governments, schools, non-profits, businesses, and special interest groups. Participation with the United Way campaign is one of their very special projects. The handout also included a local economic impact – 2015 snapshot, a release from the CU Media Relations Office regarding the Cornell Store opening on the Ithaca Commons this spring and an article from the Cornell Chronicle celebrating the 2015 Town-Gown Awards. Gary also provided a nice “Cornell Pin” for all attendees!

Gary is a very engaging and humorous speaker. His original background was in newspaper writing and editing. He is interested in connecting with students and their curiosity in searching for a sense of on- and off-campus challenges and opportunities. In pursuing this interest, he has become involved with many local campus and community groups. Trying to stay a step ahead of life at Cornell and the surrounding area is a great challenge in which he delights!

Calling his presentation the “Rides of March,” Gary chronicled most of his March activities including the Maplewood Project, which he referred to his Deputy Director, Susan Riley for details. This is a major housing project which will add 900 beds to Campus Housing, aimed at the graduate level population, and will hopefully be ready in the summer of 2018. He also mentioned a Campus Housing Master Plan which is supposed to be presented in September 2016. He told us there are 10,000 parking spaces on the campus…but he didn’t say where!!

Gorge Stewards is another example of town-gown relationships. Cornell Outdoor Education coordinates the program in cooperation with Cornell Plantations. Gorge ambassadors walk the gorges from May to September to provide information about trails, safety rules, natural history, activities, and swimming alternatives. Guided tours are available weekly from late June through late August.

Cornell and the City of Ithaca have an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) which is proposed to be in place until at least 2024. Cornell gives money to the ICSD as there is an interest in the city schools, both for the children of graduate students, and possible school attendance for future Cornell staff and faculty. Cornell needs to communicate their news to the community and vice versa.

Gary was most gracious in answering many questions at the end of his talk. The audience seemed to be very interested in what is happening at Cornell.

~ Jeanette Miller
Retiree Spotlight: The CRVIS Program

Volunteer Program Celebrates 20 Years!

Over 50 people gathered at the Kendal Auditorium on a sunny and warm Thursday afternoon, May 12, to celebrate 20 years of the Cornell Retirees Volunteering in Schools program, known as CRVIS. Linda Croll Howell, Director HR Analytics and Work/Life, welcomed volunteers, teachers, principals, and guests by sharing a personal story of her daughter coming home from school excited about a Cornell teacher in her classroom who brought in a snake skin and skulls she got to touch. She said her daughter became excited about science and even said she wanted to become a veterinarian. Linda roughly estimated that over 8000 students have been helped in the community by CRVIS over the years. A teacher commented that it was probably double that number.

CRVIS Chair Elaine Quaroni shared some early history, as compiled by Gloria Howell, CRVIS Historian, who was instrumental in organizing the group and has been involved with CRVIS since the beginning. Gloria was president of the Cornell Retirees Association in 1995 when several retirees got together and wanted to give back to the community. They met with representatives from the National Retiree Volunteer Coalition and created the Cornell Retirees Volunteering in Service program. A steering committee was formed with Bill Paleen as chair. It was decided that Cornell retirees would help students in elementary schools, and after several years, it was clear the group’s focus would be in area schools, and the name was changed to Cornell Retirees Volunteering in Schools.

In 1996, Randy Ehrenberg was principal of Cayuga Heights Elementary School, the first CRVIS school. She spoke about her recollections of the CRVIS volunteers. It was a process of pairing grandparent-age retirees with needy children and served both generations well, she said. “The greatest gift of the retiree volunteers was their undivided attention to the students. The program impacted countless young people.”

Many years ago, Howard Evans, Veterinary College emeritus professor, was asked to fill in for the late George Poppensiek, who was volunteering in Cayuga Heights. Dr. Evans said all it took was that one day and he kept coming back. He found the children got excited and paid attention and many discovered a love for science. Children wrote him “thank you” notes and cards. Did you know snakes have toes? Dr. Evans shared his goody basket of specimens with us, including a 12-foot tanned Burmese python skin and a rubberized python tail with toes. Watch a video here: http://www.cornell.edu/video/did-you-know-snakes-have-toes.

Susan Murphy, vice president emerita, shared her thoughts on what the CRVIS program meant to her husband, the late Gerry Thomas, a faithful and devoted volunteer who went to the Enfield school every day. Susan said, “There are two decisions of retirement: 1) to retire from something, and 2) to retire to something. Although Gerry enjoyed his 30-year career at Cornell, it was the CRVIS program that changed his retirement life.” He loved kids and was a grandfather and mentor to them. Following the same group of kids in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, he was honored to be asked to speak at their “moving up” ceremony. Gerry treasured his work at Enfield. He especially enjoyed helping the children learn about Mars and the Cornell Rovers.

Principals of several CRVIS schools expressed gratitude to the program and volunteers. One principal noted, “Retirees were more like co-teachers.” Another commented, “The retirees are part of the fabric and culture of our schools. They make our world brighter with their incredible smiles, laughter, and patience.” One principal commented that he knows what he wants to do in retirement—be a CRVIS volunteer!

The audience enjoyed a very moving performance by Vitamin L, a singing group for youths, grades 5-11. Jan Nigro, Vitamin L director, commented that a principal in attendance was a “Vitamin L girl.” A project of Cornell’s Center for Transformative Action, Vitamin L’s mission is to reach and positively influence as many children as possible. This ties into the mission of CRVIS: to make a difference in the lives of school children by enhancing and enriching their educational experiences.

Thank you volunteers, past and present, for helping CRVIS accomplish its mission. YOU make a difference! Thank you speakers for sharing your thoughts with us. The event ended with the celebratory cutting of the “CRVIS 20th Anniversary” cake and distribution of a commemorative gift. Many thanks to program sponsors: Cornell Human Resources, CRVIS Steering Committee, and Kendal at Ithaca.

~ Kathee Shaff
**Upcoming Cornell Health Plan Changes for Endowed Retirees**

Paul Bursic, senior director, Cornell Benefit Services, has announced to the CRA Board that in the fall, there will be changes to the Retiree Health Plan for endowed retirees. There will be a new Medicare plan available, called the Medicare Advantage Plan. There are no changes at this time for the contract college health plans.

Communications about the plan changes will go out to all endowed retirees with letters to your home address in late August/early September. There will be an annual Open Enrollment period during the month of October for endowed retirees for this new plan.

Announcements about upcoming informational meetings, to be held off-campus, will be sent out via email and USPS. If you have moved or have a different email address, other than your Cornell email, please let us know by changing your information and completing the form at: http://tinyurl.com/Retiree-Update or by calling 607-255-0388.

Please stay tuned to your email for further details.

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**Cornell Family Helper List**

The Cornell Family Helper List is a wonderful website to check out. It’s a rich resource designed especially for Cornell folks seeking to hire individuals to perform various services. The website is a directory of those who would like to be hired to perform jobs such as pet care/sitting, companionship, errand running, housecleaning, house sitting, transportation, and yard care, to name a few.

The service helps Cornell faculty, staff, retirees, and students find those who are interested in being hired for these services and can only be used by those with a Cornell netID.

A profile of all potential helpers is available on the website, which include helper’s previous experience and availability. It is up to the person hiring and the helper to negotiate the rate of pay.

If you are interested in being hired to provide these services, you may complete an application online at the website.

The Cornell Family Helper List can be viewed by logging in with your Cornell netID and password at: https://www.hr.cornell.edu/life/support/helper/index.html.

For more information, please contact Work/Life via email at worklife@cornell.edu or call 607-255-0388.

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**Election Ballot for the 2016-2017 CRA Officers**

I approve this slate: YES NO
Signed: ________________
For write-in candidates:
I vote for: ________________
for office: ________________
Send email vote to: cornellretirees@cornell.edu
Mail paper ballot to: CRA Vote, Attn: Kathee Shaff, 337 East Hill Plaza, Ithaca, NY 14850

Suggestions for program topics, luncheon speakers, newsletter articles or spotlights, seminars & more:

If you spend winters in another city/state, include your address so we can invite you to events in your area.

If you would like to help coordinate a Retiree Event in your city/state, please let us know: ☐YES ☐NO
Are you interested in becoming a CRA Board member? ☐YES ☐NO
Name: __________________________ Phone: __________ Email: __________________________
Sunshine and warmer temperatures are finally here in Ithaca. We look forward to spring and summer, which means it’s time once again for another retiree luncheon. Please join us for the Cornell Retirees Association’s Annual Business Meeting on June 23. Our speaker will be Carol Hockett from Cornell’s Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art. Carol is the Coordinator of School and Family Programs at the Museum. **Deadline to RSVP is June 15.** Our luncheon menu includes a choice of:

- Chicken Francaise (Lemon Sauce), Garden Salad, Rice Pilaf, Peas, Cheesecake with Seasonal Berries
- Vegetarian and Gluten-Free Option: Large Garden Salad, Italian Dressing (No croutons or eggs), and for dessert: Seasonal Berries

Rolls/Butter. Coffee/Decaf/Tea/Ice Tea. Call 607-255-0388 if you have special dietary requirements.

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**Cornell University**

**Cornell Retirees Association**

337 East Hill Plaza

Ithaca, NY 14850

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**CRA 2016 Annual Business Meeting and Luncheon**

Thursday, June 23, 2016, 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Ramada Inn, 2310 N. Triphammer Road, Ithaca (in front of Mall)

Doors open 11:30 a.m., lunch served at noon, speaker at 1:00 p.m., business meeting at 1:30 p.m.

**Total reservations __ @ $10.00 each = $ ____** Please make check payable to "Cornell University."

Mail form and check to: Cornell Retirees Association, P.O. Box 431, Ithaca, NY 14851

Luncheon reservation deadline is June 15. We hope to see you there!