

The Association of Retired Faculty and Professional Staff

# Emeritus News Summer 2025

## • My Corner - by Barbara Mallette

**"Today, I choose not to take my life for granted...I choose gratitude. I choose wonder. I choose awe. I choose everything that suggests I'm opening myself to the miraculous reality of simply being alive for one moment more."  
Scott Stabile**



Finally, this year the dolphins have returned to the Gulf! For some reason, their return seems later than in recent years. Perhaps the effects of hurricanes Helene and Milton are still creating havoc in the waterways around the Gulf. Or the 67-degree waters are just not warm enough for these marine mammals. Regardless, I relish the mornings that dolphins grace my beach walks. Although I take great pleasure in watching the dolphins frolic in the choppy or calm waters, I have no desire to swim with them.

I have been intrigued by the resilience of the communities impacted by hurricanes Helene and Milton. Some local businesses have not reopened. A number of vacation rentals are still being renovated, particularly first floor and single floor units. Beach access walkways are still being replaced. The office of our community was damaged and has temporarily moved to the complex's clubhouse. Two phenomena seem to affect construction completion for many projects on the key: the time it takes to secure permits, and the availability of crews to complete the work. You can imagine the frustration folks are feeling as tourists arrive. Back home, people lament about having to schedule home repairs/construction at least one year in advance.

We are drawn to astronomical events. Of course, Doug and I had to observe the lunar eclipse on March 13th, setting alarms for 2:30 am. The image of the blood red moon was even better than predicted (although my photo doesn't do it justice). And the tides were incredible as the moon reached fullness. We are thankful that the constellation Orion graces the evening sky above our third floor deck on clear nights.



I have the habit of checking weather at home when I am away. This time I have noticed that Cassadaga was experiencing warm weather, with temperatures in the 60s. But now, winter seems to have returned, with temps in the 40s and 30s, with snow predicted. You may not believe that tonight here in Florida a low of 48 degrees is predicted. I can only guess that on my beach walk in the morning I will see folks in puffer jackets, hats, and gloves. My guess is that the same holds true for folk walking around Cassadaga Lake tomorrow morning – the two areas do have some commonalities.

Each time I receive an email from the President's Office about a colleague that has passed, I am saddened. So many individuals played an important role in shaping Fredonia into a quality institute of higher education. They served as mentors to us newbies, as role models as we adjusted to academia. Like you, I will miss them. Let's hold them dearly in our memories.

**"Well life is short  
And love is rare  
And we all deserve to be  
happy while we're here"  
Litte Big Town**

**Please note: A reservation form for our June event is included in this newsletter.**

## • Additional Information

- As the academic year winds down, the University offers activities that may interest you. Check out the variety of events that are scheduled for the rest of the semester: <https://events.fredonia.edu>.
- Volunteers are still needed for Commencement May 17, 2025. Ceremonies take place at 10 am and 3 pm. If you can help, please contact Registrar Scott Saunders immediately at [Scott.Saunders@fredonia.edu](mailto:Scott.Saunders@fredonia.edu)

## • Update Contact Information

Have you moved, changed your email address or phone number? If so, please let us know so we can update your file. You may email [dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu](mailto:dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu) or call 716-673-3456.

Please email [dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu](mailto:dawn.hunt@fredonia.edu) to receive the newsletter via email—it would help to reduce mailing costs.

## • Save the Date

**Friday, May 16, 2025**

**7:30 PM to 9:30 PM**

Commencement Eve POPS:  
**The Sound of Music**

Rockefeller Arts Center  
King Concert Hall

More information can be found at  
[events.fredonia.edu](https://events.fredonia.edu)

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**Saturday, May 17, 2025**

**10:00 AM and 3:00 PM**

**Commencement**  
Steele Hall Field House

<https://www.fredonia.edu/student-life/commencement>



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**Tuesday, October 21, 2025**

The Emeritus Group will be hosting its fall luncheon at the College Lodge on Tuesday, October 21, 2025. Look for details in the next issue of our newsletter.

## • Emeritus Group Luncheon - Emeritus Group Happy Hour

### Back by popular demand Emeritus Group Happy Hour

**Liberty Winery**  
**2861 US-20, Sheridan, NY**  
**Tuesday, June 10, 2025**  
**3:30 to 5:30 pm**



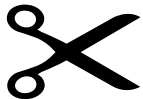
We are hosting our second happy hour at a local winery. Please join members of the Emeritus Group, their partners, and friends on Tuesday, June 10th for our next Emeriti event. We will be meeting at the Liberty Winery Pavilion to mingle, enjoy a wine tasting, and snack on light hors d'oeuvres. Non-alcoholic beverages are available too!

Come and enjoy this informal gathering on a late spring day! And enjoy the ambience of Liberty's pavilion.

**To cover the cost of hors d'oeuvres and wine tasting, please send your reservation and check payable to Emeritus Group for \$18.50 per person by May 31st to:**

Barbara Mallette  
PO Box 328  
Cassadaga, NY 14718

We look forward to seeing you all.  
—Barbara and Doug



Detach here and mail to Barbara. -----

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

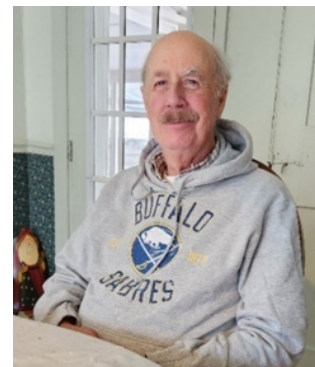
Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check (payable to Emeritus Group) for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
by May 31, 2025

## • Emeritus Spotlight - Jack Croxton by Barbara Mallette and Jack Croxton

"And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."  
Abraham Lincoln

One might believe that it's kismet that Jack Croxton settled in Fredonia. He was born and raised in Angola, Indiana, one block from US Route 20; since 1979, he has lived one block from the same Rt. 20! Jack attended public schools in Angola. His father was an insurance salesman; his mother taught ballet part-time. (Jack didn't seem to have her dance talent!). His one sibling, a sister, was 7 years older. She favored the music and trends of the 1950s while Jack was a child of the 1960s.



Jack attended Miami University of Ohio, pursuing a degree in General Business. He found out that Miami University of Ohio was near a women's college (Western College), which increased the likelihood that he would meet young women. He considered law school and even was accepted to Indiana University. But after taking several psychology courses late in his undergraduate program, Jack thought it best that he finish his Business degree and then take some time to reconsider his options. He spent 3 years exploring these options: hitchhiking around Europe, living in California working as a delivery boy in Beverly Hills, and working in an Oriental rug store. He also recalled working in a doctor's office as a health accountant, reviewing patients' records to determine if the diagnosis given agreed with the guidelines for that diagnosis (well before HIPAA).

Jack's prediction about the chances of his meeting women while at Miami was accurate. In his senior year, Jack had arranged a first date with a young woman. When this woman backed out, a blind date was arranged. When Jack went to pick up this unknown woman, he could hear loud noises coming down the stairs. His blind date, Mary, was wearing wooden shoes! Jack must have been smitten, as he and Mary have been together since that date. Mary joined Jack in California; she even attended a doubleheader at Candlestick Park with Jack after driving all night. They were returning from a trip up the west coast and into Canada before heading to Glacier, Yosemite, and Yellowstone National Parks. Because Mary was still a college student, Jack had to consider his options. Jack's cousin was an actress in California. While he was there, Jack tried out for acting and was accepted at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Simultaneously, he had performed well on the GRE and had been accepted into the Social Psychology Graduate Program at Miami University. Lucky for us, Jack selected the academic path!

Jack became immersed in research in his doctoral program. He was a research assistant at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health doing experiments that examined the proper exposure to chemicals; that is, the interaction between drugs and certain chemicals on human behavior and cognitive processes. During this time, Jack was able to secure two tickets to a World Series game in Cincinnati. You are probably thinking that of course Jack would take Mary, the love of his life. No, he invited his dissertation advisor instead!

Jack had a great deal of teaching experience as a Teaching Assistant and Teaching Fellow. With degree in hand, Jack began to seek a tenure track position. While at the Midwestern Psychological Association's conference in Chicago, Jack was interviewed by Dave Hess and Tom Rywick for a position in the Psychology Department. The interview was successful; Jack, Mary, and two children, Jessica and Jennifer, headed to Fredonia in Fall 1979. Both the University and the small-town flavor of Fredonia suited the young Croxton family. A son, Joshua, was born shortly after they moved to Fredonia. They moved to Gillis Street when they first arrived, only to buy the house across the street when it became available for the price of \$30,000. Mary worked at Brooks Hospital and later served as the School Nurse at Fredonia Central Schools while Jack acclimated quickly to academia. He received the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1991. Most folks on campus know Jack either for his work as Chair of Psychology for 4 terms, his stint as Interim Dean, his lead on the Office of Campus Assessment, or his directorship of the Office of Student Creative Activity and Research (OSCAR). All of us can attest to the impact OSCAR has had on Fredonia students. The annual OSCAR event grew exponentially under Jack's guidance. His service on many campus committees is testament to Jack's commitment to Fredonia and its faculty, staff, and students. In 2010, the SUNY system recognized this commitment when Jack was awarded the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Service. Two years later (2012), SUNY promoted Jack to Distinguished Service Professor. Locally, the campus presented Jack the President's Heart of Fredonia award in 2014 for meritorious service. Additionally, Jack has completed program reviews for SUNY Potsdam and Old Westbury, as well as Tallinn University in Estonia.



## • Emeritus Spotlight *continued* - Jack Croxton

During the interview, Jack stopped to mention the influence of Ted Schwalbe for sparking an interest in the Fulbright Program. This interest was cemented when Jack was awarded a Fulbright Scholar Award to Bulgaria (2000) and then again, an award to Russia (2007). Jack remarked that the opportunities provided by a Fulbright Scholar Award were immeasurable. And the chances to visit other cities, countries, and cultures while on a Fulbright are unrivaled. The Croxtons' tales of illegally leaving Russia when Jack was invited to give a lecture at Tallinn University and being stranded by the side of the road outside of Istanbul without their luggage were reminders that other countries handle travel differently than America.



Jack and Mary are committed travelers. They have been to many European and Asian nations while on the Fulbright Programs. They also have a small group of former colleagues, including Steve and Mary Rees, Jack and Mira Berkley, Joy Bilharz, Ellen Litwicki, and Clara Beier who have ventured with them on some of their travels, such as trips to Peru, Machu Pichu, the Galapagos Islands, Cuba, and Ireland.

In retirement, Jack is working on a podcast with a student graduate. They are interviewing Fredonia alumni to identify what these folks are doing, what were the highlights of their time at Fredonia, and their favorite teachers, etc. Jack and the student are editing what interviews they have completed to date. The results will go live on YouTube soon. He hopes to golf more in retirement as well as spend time with family and family dogs. Jack summed up his status with two phrases: "Living the good life" and "A life well lived."

"Happiness is not out there for us to find.  
The reason that it's not out there is that it's inside us."  
Sonja Lyubomirsk

## • Emeritus Newsbit - The Reiffs in Egypt

In 1953-54 my father had a teaching Fulbright for two universities in Cairo- and so we all spent that academic year enjoying (and learning about) Egypt! I was in 7th grade which meant, in American schools those days, one studied "state history". Well, at the Cairo American School, that meant *Egypt*! Throughout the year we, and other Fulbrighters, were able to go on tours and visits to various historic sites throughout the country. One of our favorites was Sakkara, near Cairo, where the very first pyramid, Zoser's Step pyramid (architect: Imhotep) was erected about 2780 BC. Not a "major tourist site" even today, it is thus not inundated daily by dozens of tourist busses (and hundreds of tourists) as other major sites, like the Great Pyramids (visited by thousands of tourists daily); something of the "remote isolation" and quietude that is so magical about these sites can still be experienced here. This was on a two-week Viking Cruise ("serious business": no passengers under 21!), that included many of the main sites of lower and upper Egypt. At the end of the cruise we were joined in Cairo by our son Nick (currently working in Senegal, and often coming to Cairo) for a week of additional visits, including Alexandria (Janet loved our tour of the new, vast *Library*!), and the Fayuum. It was quite an adventure!



Janet and Dan Reiff in Sakkara  
March 12, 2025

## • In Memoriam

Charles R. "Chuck" Erbsmehl passed away on April 21, 2025. Chuck met his future wife, Shirley, at the State University of New York at Fredonia. And together they established the Charles R. and Shirley M. Erbsmehl Music Scholarship fund with the Fredonia College Foundation. A full obituary can be found here:

<https://www.observertoday.com/obituaries/2025/04/charles-r-erbsmehl-2/>

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Michael J. Jackino passed away on April 11, 2025. Mike joined the State University of New York at Fredonia in 1999 as the Facilities Management Information Systems Technician and in 2009 became Assistant Director of Facilities Services. In 2014, Mike was awarded the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service. He retired in 2015 with Emeritus status. A full obituary can be found here:

<https://www.observertoday.com/obituaries/2025/04/michael-j-jackino-2/>

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Philip Stabler Morse passed away on March 31, 2025. Dr. Morse began his career at the State University of New York at Fredonia in 1972 as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education. He was promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education in 1978; and promoted to Professor in 1993. Dr. Morse retired in 2002 with the Emeritus status. A full obituary can be found here:

<https://www.observertoday.com/obituaries/2025/04/philip-stabler-morse/>