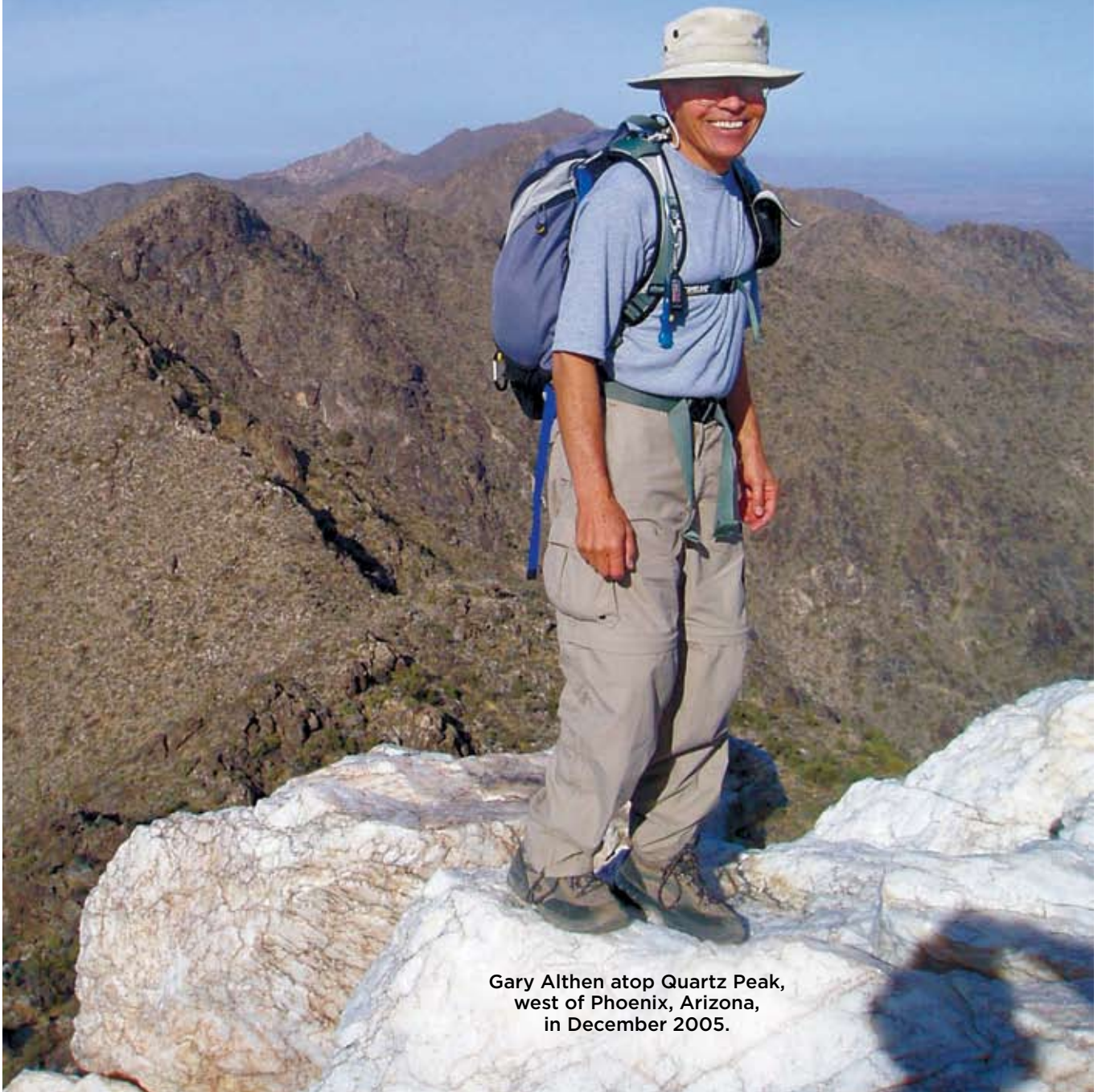


# RETIREMENT IS BOOMING



Gary Althen atop Quartz Peak,  
west of Phoenix, Arizona,  
in December 2005.

## Baby Boomers are beginning to reach retirement in their record numbers and many are following the example of their recent predecessors by remaining active in international education through second careers or volunteerism.

BY KAREN LEGGETT

**H**OW DO YOU WALK AWAY FROM A CAREER? SOMETIMES, YOU JUST CAN'T. Especially in international education. This year, the first Baby Boomers turned 60. Some have already retired. Some will be working for years to come. But one thing is clear: the face of retirement has not only changed, it's been redefined. It's not just sunbathing, walking the dog and visiting grandchildren anymore. It's not a "cold turkey" exit from the workforce. These days, some Boomers across many fields have to continue to work for financial reasons—they simply haven't saved enough for retirement. But there are other people—like many in international education—whose motivation to continue working is entirely different. Although some international educators still choose the conventional retirement route, many upcoming and new retirees are launching new chapters in their lives with second careers or they are finding ways to stay involved in the profession by working part-time or volunteering. And it's their passion that keeps them doing it—not the money.

### **Working Longer, Working Harder**

Former NAFSA president Lee Ziegler has been retired for almost 20 years but shows no sign of slowing down. He launched his career at Stanford University in a temporary position as a foreign student adviser. After a few years directing the international student office at the University of Hawaii, he was invited back to Stanford where he stayed in international education for almost 20 years. As soon as he retired as director of Stanford's Bechtel International Center in 1987 at the age of 60, people discovered he was available. For several years, he was a NAFSA consultant, analyzing international programs at a variety of colleges and universities. He joined a review panel to consider USAID grant requests and for more than a decade *after* he retired, Zeigler taught workshops on American higher education for overseas counselors in South America and Europe. The National Liaison Committee on Foreign Student Admissions, which sponsored the workshops, was a government-funded consortium that included NAFSA. Later, Zeigler started a hospitality program for for-

eign students in San Francisco and also helped launch Northern California Advocates for Global Education, devoted to globalizing campus life, building international curricula, and expanding education abroad programs.

"And then I got very interested in Cuba," says Ziegler, barely stopping to catch his breath, so he went to Cuba to learn about foreign students there, including Cuba's role in educating students from developing countries. He has returned to Cuba half a dozen times, twice leading NAFSA educational trips. Ziegler has rounded out a very full retirement with service on several boards, including the Executive Director's Leadership Council for Amnesty International and the boards of the Washington Office on Latin America and the Immigrant Legal Resources Center in San Francisco. When he's not traveling to board meetings, he's taking classes, traveling to Europe with his wife or heading to Zimbabwe, where his daughter is in the education office of the U.S. embassy. "It's the best time of my life," he says, "I can't remember working."

## Recently Retired

Gary Althen is much newer to the retired life but enjoying it just as much.

Ending his career at the University of Iowa as director of the Office of International Students in 2002, he retired on a Friday and moved to Arizona on Saturday. His daughter and grandchildren are in Arizona and he summers at a cabin in Colorado with his wife. Althen never expected to retire early but is glad he did, “because I still have the energy to do the things I’d like to do,” like hiking and square dancing.

Like many in his generation, Althen fell into the field of international education. His graduate program required an international living experience so he went to work at a binational cultural center in Peru. When he returned to continue his graduate studies at the University of Iowa, he took a “short term” position as a foreign student advisor and ended up spending 30 years in the field. He relished “the variety of people and the variety of tasks and responsibilities. People often expressed appreciation for what we did and you could see the benefit of your work.”

## Career Evolution: The Enforcement Factor

Like several international educators who left soon after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Althen feels administrative positions like his have become more difficult and less rewarding because of the need to follow so many more immigration rules. “The university is perceived as law enforcement. Dealing with the INS was always an extreme challenge,” says Althen, “but it became much more difficult right after I retired.”

Jim Lynch, retired from Penn State, agrees that international education administrators have been “shoe-horned into an enforcement role.” Like Althen, Lynch appreciated the opportunity to “meet really bright, interesting people” recalling that he “very seldom went to work without wanting to go to work.” He retired as director of the Office of International Students and Scholars at Penn State—an office he had been asked to create. Lynch, Althen and Slind exemplify the best of NAFSA networking: Lynch and Slind were awarded NAFSA life memberships together in 2004; Lynch and Althen were colleagues through their Big Ten association. While Lynch said his colleagues have generally not retired as early as he did, he said there are only four directors left from the middle and upper management group he knew well in the Big Ten schools.

## Priority #1: Good Health

Lynch retired at 57, five years after he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. While he was recuperating, he had made a list of what he still wanted to do in his life, concluding that “I had to stop working as soon as possible if I wanted to do even half of what was on my list.” Lynch’s list included everything from more time with family and friends to reading and writing, volunteering with animals and taking out the canoe that sat unused too much of the time. He has been checking off activities on his list for a year and a half. The canoe

still isn’t finding its way to water as often as Lynch expected, but “I have become an avid chef and that wasn’t even on my list.” Lynch admits he doesn’t tackle lists the same way he used to. “I don’t put myself on a schedule that requires me to do something. If I were going hunting but the wind chill was 40 below, the old Jim would have done it anyway. Not now.”

Lynch did take long trips to visit family and friends and he is volunteering—but not only with animals. Lynch grew up in an Army family and served in Vietnam; he is now a docent at the Pennsylvania Military Museum. He walks for the American Cancer Society Relay for Life and is engaged in wildlife rescue work.

Lynch’s business card identifies him as a consultant in international education, but he says he is not promoting himself or seeking work. He expressed no interest in pursuing a second career. “From the time I was a second lieutenant at age 19 until I retired at age 57,” said Lynch, “I was in charge of something. I was The Man. I expected to be bothered by not having that when I retired—but I don’t mind it at all. In fact, I’m rather enjoying being an Indian and not a chief.” He did chair NAFSA’s Working Group on International Student and Scholar Advising and Programming.

Health concerns contributed to Mickey Slind’s retirement decision as well, but in a different way. She needed to look toward a job that didn’t require traveling up to 40 weeks a year when she developed unexpected physical limitations. She announced her retirement at the 2004 NAFSA conference and was immediately offered new jobs. But first, “my gift to myself was time. I indulged myself. I slept late, I worked out and lost weight, I visited grandchildren. I was free to travel where I wanted to so I visited friends and relatives.” Throughout this time, Slind’s longtime friends and



**Mickey Slind, former field director for the Institute of Study Abroad at Butler University in Indianapolis, is now a part-time consultant for Anglo American Educational Services of London.**

# The New Retirement

**A RECENT STUDY** by Putnam Investments estimated that seven million previously retired people, or about 10 percent of the work force over the age of 40, are now back at work or looking for jobs—whether it is a “hobby job” or work that provides needed income.

At the same time, personal preparations for the transition from work to retirement also need to be addressed. A recent Investors Group survey in Canada, completed by about 600 working Canadians 45 years of age or older, showed that 37 percent of working Canadians approaching retirement are not well prepared for

the change in lifestyle that follows retirement. Retirees, according to the survey, felt that the most important factors to ensure a happy retirement are health, financial independence, friends, and a passion for life.

The real-life experiences of international educators who have planned for and transitioned to retirement are the focus of a session on Wednesday morning, May 24 in Montreal. Hear about their personal retirement readiness plans and come prepared to ask questions. Learn also how they prepared their offices for transition, their relationship to their successors, etc.

The session is sponsored by the

New Century Circle, NAFSA’s planned giving program. The New Century Circle is a special group of uniquely dedicated international educators who, through their wills and other means of special giving, extend their support of international education and exchange beyond their own lifetimes. Every planned gift, no matter what size, becomes part of the donor’s legacy to the field. For more information, visit [www.nafsa.org/NCC](http://www.nafsa.org/NCC).

—Gail A. Hochhauser,  
Senior Director,  
Organizational Advancement  
NAFSA

colleagues at Anglo-American Educational Services kept calling to offer her a part-time job. After nine months, Slind said yes, warning Anglo-American that she couldn’t travel the way she used to. With a laugh, she says the organization told her, “We’re hiring your head, not your hip.” So her head works as a consultant about ten hours a week, work she was able to take with her when her husband became a Viking specialist at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

## Retiring Women

Slind believes early retirement is a luxury many people may not be able to afford and she is realizing that there really isn’t much data yet on how women approach retirement, especially women who’ve reached the pinnacles of administration in higher education. She believes retirement issues may be different for these women, in part because they seem less defined by their careers than men and may have developed greater skill at juggling and balancing different parts of their lives, especially if they have combined a career and a family. Slind does see a trend toward phasing into retirement with part-time work. She is pleased with her own opportunity to work with Anglo-American Educational Services, in part because “when you work in your field, you don’t have to build respect all over again.” Yet Slind also believes in defining the field very broadly, especially in retirement. As an example, she volunteers for the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, designing materials and leading tours with her husband.

Slind had never planned on a career in international education.

In fact she majored in medieval history and raised four children before seeking a job as a transcription clerk at Hamline University in St. Paul when she was 43. She applied for an opening as Assistant Registrar but the job went to the Dean’s wife instead. After Slind gave her flowers and a note of congratulations, Slind herself was asked to take a job in the university’s International Studies Center. She was told the position called for someone who could be very diplomatic, so her reaction to the disappointment of losing the first job had actually been a critical element of the selection process! The experience not only gave Slind a story she tells repeatedly to college students in the job market, it also established her career path. Over the next 25 years, she would travel to 30 countries and work in all four study abroad professional tracks, as a study abroad adviser, program administrator, resident director and program representative. She retired in 2004 as field director for the Institute of Study Abroad at Butler University in Indianapolis, having become the first woman to receive NAFSA’s Education Abroad Leadership Award and the only person to receive all three NAFSA leadership awards.

## In It for the Long Haul

Richard Reiff, a former NAFSA president, planned to retire from the University of Georgia as soon as he was eligible and then ended up working full-time an extra five years. In fact, Reiff says many of his colleagues in the field are working longer rather than retiring early. For Reiff himself, “it was an extremely busy time; so much was happening that I didn’t want to leave.” International education was

finally coming into its own. More students were studying abroad and the university was devoting more resources to international programs. By the 1990s, international education had become a presidential priority at UGA. “We worked for so many years on internationalizing the campus,” said Reiff. “It was just beginning to happen and that was not the time to leave.”

Reiff’s original career goal was to become a vice president of student affairs. He thought a couple of years experience as a foreign student adviser at the University of Georgia would look good on his résumé. Within six months, he was sold on a career in international education, ultimately retiring as executive director of UGA’s Office of International Education. He had worked full time in the field for 40 years, including six as the coordinator of study abroad programs for post-secondary students throughout the state of Georgia. He spent a final year working part time with Phi Beta Delta, the honor society for international scholars. Reiff has chosen a quieter retirement of tennis and reading coupled with caring for his mother in Orlando and pleasure trips to Asheville, North Carolina.

### A Taste of Student Life in Retirement

Diann Stewart, on the other hand, chose to get just about as far away from home as possible when she retired, at least temporarily. Stewart joined the Peace Corps after her career in international education. “I had never been engrossed in a foreign culture. I really wanted that experience. I wanted to get an idea what these kids go through on a gut-wrenching level.” Stewart started the paperwork for the Peace Corps well before she retired from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah in January 2004. She hoped to be assigned to the Middle East, where she had enjoyed a six-month sabbatical in Israel and Jordan. The closest she came was the Central Asian country of Uzbekistan. Stewart joined 50 Peace Corps volunteers for two-and-a-half months of training and learning Uzbek. At 56, “I was the youngest of the oldest,” she laughed. One volunteer was 71, two were in the 60s, most were in their 20s. An advantage of being older? “I wasn’t harassed as the younger women were and because there is a culture of respect for older people, I always got a seat on the subway in Tashkent.”

Stewart lived with a family in western Uzbekistan where she worked with an NGO that served low-income women. Stewart helped the organization obtain a grant to buy computers so the women could learn computer skills. She offered seminars on program development, fundraising, strategic planning. She enjoyed her family, which included toddler as well as a grandfather who was her age. Her Uzbek was good enough to haggle in the market but not always good enough to know what would be entailed when she accepted an invitation for a day trip to a different part of the country.



Diann Stewart, joined the Peace Corps during retirement. Here she is in Bukhara in front of Ulug Beg Madrassah.

One such day included a long bus ride with women and children who didn’t speak English and a sheep which would later be slaughtered. By the time the bus headed home, “everyone was singing and dancing with their hands and it was a lot of fun.”

Then suddenly it was over. In June 2005, Stewart was writing a grant that would help the women’s organization study domestic violence in the town of Urgansk when the Peace Corps suspended operations in Uzbekistan because the government had not renewed volunteer visas. Stewart came home 10 months early. Between difficult flight connections and required debriefing sessions, the flight home took her from Tashkent to Estonia to LaGuardia to Washington, D.C. and West Virginia before she slept in her own bed again in Utah. Stewart had never felt in danger personally but the evacuation had been traumatic nonetheless and she wasn’t ready to tackle another assignment—at least not a Peace Corps assignment. Instead she is planning to start a consulting business to help colleges develop or improve their international education programs.

### From Job-Sharing, to Part-time Consulting, to a New Career

Back on the East Coast, Maryélise and Sterling Lamet like to say they met in the sixteenth century. They were pursuing graduate degrees in history at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst when they were given a job-sharing opportunity long before the term came into vogue. It was the late 1970s and they quickly made themselves indispensable to the growth of international education at the University of Massachusetts. Twenty-five years later, they were still sharing a job and a title as associate director of international programs at the

University of Massachusetts, but it was time for a change.

Maryélise phased out more slowly, providing staff development at Boston College three days a week. After an entire career in one institution, she was a newcomer at Boston College and “it allowed me to discover that I knew some things I never knew I knew!” Maryélise was also able to work on another pet project—curriculum integration. She wanted to encourage more students to study abroad by fitting the courses into their academic major. She also developed curriculum for students before and after their study abroad experiences. Four years after retiring, Maryélise still has not left the field completely. She consults from home for the Centers for Academic Programs Abroad (CAPA), providing what she calls “academic quality control” for CAPA programs.

Sterling, meanwhile, stayed at UMass providing computer services for the study abroad programs until Georgie, Jasper and Little Dinosaur entered the picture, literally. Sterling had long enjoyed sketching in the woods. When friends in Amherst needed an illustrator for their series of children’s books, Sterling began “drawing in ways I never imagined.” He traded realistic drawings of nature for watercolor illustrations of Georgie the Giraffe, Jasper the Fat Cat and Little Dinosaur. The publisher, Literacy Footprints, is enjoying some success, says Sterling, and he is regularly asked to illustrate sequels, so “it’s a part-time job but I’m engaged with it a lot.” He does stop painting long enough to learn new music for the jazz band in which he plays and oh yes, there’s the hour he spends everyday chopping wood to heat his house.

### Retirement Options Abound

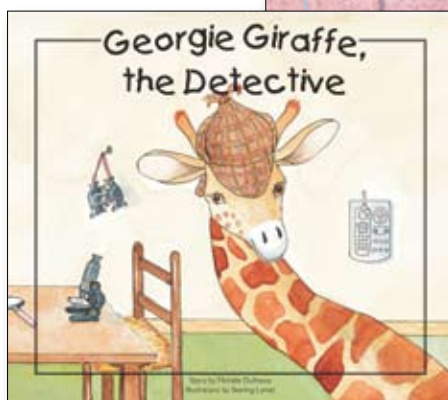
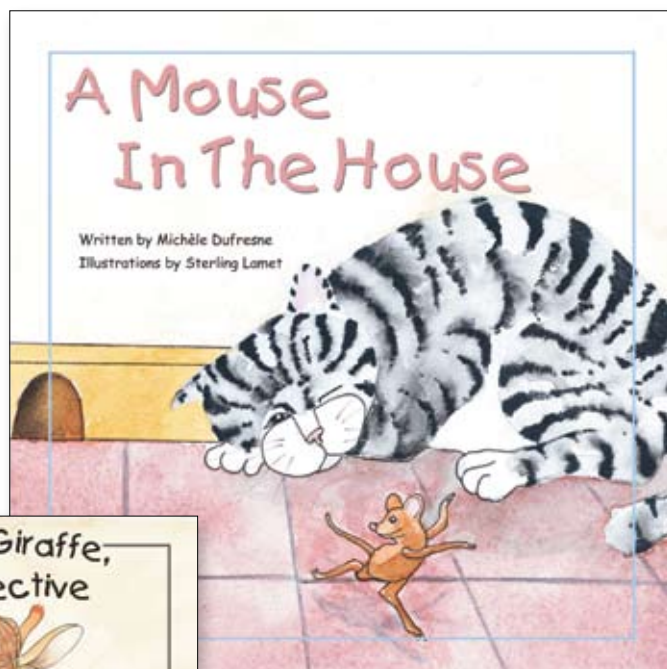
International educators take many diverse paths into retirement. Timing is a very personal decision. “Follow your bliss,” says Maryélise Lamet, quoting the philosopher Joseph Campbell, “but with humility. Stop when physical or mental conditions kick in or you realize that ‘maybe I’m not the authority I thought I was.’” As Mickey Slind decided in her own case, “I wanted to go gracefully and not become a dinosaur.”

The timing of retirement may also be governed by campus politics, personal health, family issues and finances. Jim Lynch believes he took the leap into early retirement with less financial security than most people because he wanted the time. He hadn’t counted on the fact that having time would lead to things that cost money, nor had he expected that every major appliance in his house would need to be replaced within the first six months of retirement!

There is an interesting mix of pre-planning and being open to options in this particular group of international educators. “You can

live your life serendipitously,” says Mickey Slind. “You may not know what’s around the corner, but let’s see—it might be interesting.” Yet Slind was also meticulous about her pre-retirement research, actually talking at length with more than a dozen retired professionals. “The one common thread,” said Slind, “was that people who built a bridge between their work life and their retired life were happier.” Even if it was a bridge of nothing? “Yes, because they stood away from where they’d been and chose what they wanted to do.”

Diann Stewart knew she wanted the Peace Corps but she also had to do enough research to make sure it was a “doable” goal. She knew Peace Corps life would not be what she was used to in Utah,



**Sterling Lamet’s creative spark launched his second career as an illustrator for children’s books.**

but how important was it for her to have indoor plumbing, for example? As it turned out, she was very glad to have been placed with a family in a fully equipped home, even though she knew her adventure required a very open mind.

It may also be important to think ahead about where you want to live in retirement. If you know you want to retire in a particular location, Slind suggests finding a final or

part-time job in that area. That can nurture a process of creating networks and building collegial relationships that should actually be a life-long activity that may yield unexpected post-retirement opportunities.

Reflecting on almost 20 years of retirement, Lee Zeigler encourages colleagues to look forward to the “flexibility of being out of the 8 to 5 rat race and not be so set on what you want to do that you aren’t open to options.” Zeigler is also very glad that he is living in a

vibrant city like San Francisco where options abound.

The educators who followed Zeigler into retirement were the generation that essentially created the field of international education. People like Slind, Althen, Lynch and the Lamets wrote the book on international education—sometimes literally. Gary Althen wrote *The Handbook of Foreign Student Advising*. There were multiple editions before it went out of print quite recently after Althen decided someone else needs to write the handbook that includes SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System). During his 20 years at Penn State, Jim Lynch watched his staff grow by 233 percent. When he and his wife started their careers in Massachusetts, recalls Sterling Lamet, “We had to proselytize. Now kids come to college expecting study abroad as an entitlement.”

The generation retiring now created a body of knowledge that needs to be passed on both formally and informally, suggests Slind, adding that “we don’t take time to tell real life stories.” Corporations are using storytelling to transfer knowledge and Slind thinks that would be a good idea for international educators as well. She remembers inviting her successor at Butler University to dinner one evening. While she was sharing some of her stories, the young man commented that Slind was writing the first guide book to study abroad the year he was born. In the 1980s, Slind was among the founders of Minnesota Study Abroad Professionals, a casual lunch group meeting on a porch at Macalester College in St. Paul. She still returns to join the group periodically though it has expanded way beyond that Macalester porch. Slind believes mentoring opportunities could actually be institutionalized in many metropolitan areas where international educators now have similar gatherings. She agreed that Internet-based listservs, such as the one begun under SECUSSA auspices, and other online forums like NAFSA’s professional networks (which have discussion boards), may be the high-tech version of brown bag lunches and informal knowledge exchange.

### The NAFSA Knowledge Connection

NAFSA has institutionalized knowledge transfer in a variety of ways. Gary Althen helped design NAFSA’s management development program and has served as the lead trainer on intercultural issues for several years. He sees management training as mentoring on a group level. “People get into management because they are good advisers but they have no training or preparation to be managers,” says Althen. “They struggle with personnel management, budgets, planning. It’s all very different from advising foreign students.” Althen says he learned on the job but it’s helpful to pass on what he learned in a more organized way.

Jim Lynch believes there will be some loss of knowledge as this

**“One reason it’s hard to leave,” says Slind, “is that it is very fulfilling work. You feel as if you are helping change the world with the betterment of the global village.”**

generation retires but there are also ways of doing business that will be lost, ways that Lynch admits have their own strengths and weaknesses. Real letters and face-to-face communications are giving way to instant messaging and email. Will this hurt the field of international education overall? “Yes,” believes Lynch. “It’s weakened anytime you lose options.” Between the altered communication landscape and the increased emphasis on enforcement, Lynch believes international education will begin to draw people more interested in technology, less interested in intercultural connections.

Richard Reiff would like to grow interest in the field by specifically recruiting and attracting young people from targeted groups such as study abroad students, Peace Corps returnees, and members of Phi Beta Delta. That shouldn’t be an impossible task judging from the enthusiasm of this group of educators. “One reason it’s hard to leave,” says Slind, “is that it is very fulfilling work. You feel as if you are helping change the world with the betterment of the global village. Because of that feeling, it’s important to find ways to keep contributing.”

Reiff also believes it’s time to spread the knowledge gained by this generation beyond those immediately working in the field. With the support of NAFSA training, Reiff says he particularly enjoyed running cross-cultural communication workshops for inbound and outbound students as well as university housing and health services personnel and particular faculty groups with the idea of helping them work with foreign students more effectively.

While these retirees have certain specific concerns about the knowledge drain caused by the department of so many people over such a short time, they are also uniformly optimistic about the future of international education. “Young people coming in are so astute and the field is so competitive,” says Lee Ziegler, “I’m not worried about the field at all.” Slind believes there are many mid-career professionals ready to take over and Maryélise Lamet has a good sense of passing the baton to “wonderful new people coming up.”

So now these educators are giving as much energy, forethought and spontaneity to retirement as they did to their profession—resulting in just as many retirement choices as there are study abroad options. It brings to mind Dr. Seuss’ caution in *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!*

“Simple it’s not, I’m afraid you will find,  
for a mind-maker-upper to make up his mind.”  
But there is also Dr. Seuss’ note of encouragement,  
“When things start to happen,  
don’t worry. Don’t stew.  
Just go right along.  
*You’ll* start happening too.”

**KAREN LEGGETT** is a freelance writer in Washington, D.C.