In an era of regulatory and prosecutorial hysteria, the term “Conflict of Interest” incites accusations of malfeasance and failure to act in the best interest of the stockholder, investor or depositor. “Conflict of Interest” suggests that a decision-maker labors under the discrepancy of a decision which may benefit either himself, or the person whose welfare the decision-maker is compelled by promise and law to protect, but not both. I and many of my colleagues are required to annually sign a number of “Conflict of Interest” declarations.

In the management of the retirement plan, however, I note a fairly significant, and probably quite positive, conflict of interest. Most of the denominational administrators who vote on various plan policies have a very real focus on protecting the long-term strength of the plans. I have to imagine that at least a part of their motive is that they too, should time last, will someday join your ranks as retirees. With all their hearts, they wish to protect the plan that will someday provide them with the means of maintaining a standard of living. The conflict of interest is not a conflict, because the interests of the voter lie parallel with the interests of the plan beneficiaries. Protect the plan!

I’m told that an old tombstone admonished passersby with the following words:

Remember folks as you pass by,
as you are now so once was I;
As I am now you’ll someday be,
So be prepared to follow me.

Some pilgrim with a felt pen had pondered those words etched in stone, and carefully scrawled on the gravestone:

To follow you I’m not content,
Until I know which way you went.

The various funds which make up the various plans administered by this office continue to strengthen. The graph shows the steady strong growth during the 1994-1999 era. It also shows the market declines during 2000, 2001 and 2002, and the recoveries of 2003 and 2004.

(Cont. on page 3)
Spouse Allowance Disclosure

Some retirees are eligible for, and are receiving, a Spouse Allowance. Eligibility for that benefit enhancement include:

- 20 or more years of service credit,
- Marriage to current spouse at least one year before your retirement benefits began
- Spouse is not receiving an employer-provided retirement benefit or did not receive an employer-provided lump sum retirement payout

Eligibility for this benefit would have been determined during the initial application process—before your benefits started—and would not be added at a later time.

The Spouse Allowance portion of a retirement benefit is a conditional benefit and is subject to reduction or discontinuance under certain circumstances. As long as the marital status* of the retired participant remains the same as it was on the benefit effective date and the spouse does not receive employer-provided retirement benefits of his/her own, the retiree remains eligible to continue receiving the Spouse Allowance. (*A divorce or death of a spouse would constitute a change in marital status.)

However, should any of these circumstances change at any time, it is the retiree’s responsibility to provide that information to the plan office as soon as possible to avoid any benefit overpayments that would have to be recovered. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us to administer plan benefits according to policy.

ACTIVE RETIREES From time to time we hear about on-going ministry involvement of our retirees. Retirees bring with them a wealth of information, experience, and know-how. They love the Lord and His church. For instance, the Voice of Prophecy, which has just passed its 75th year of service to the church, recognizes the ministry of Maurice Bascom, Vern Bretsch, Steve Gifford, and Jack Clarke, just to name a few. Voice of Prophecy is presently talking with Jack Harris and several retired health professionals about future evangelistic initiatives beginning in the Philippines in the spring of 2006. Interested? Contact Walter Arties at manager@vop.com or by calling 805-955-7739.
REFLECTIONS

NEWS NOTES FROM MORT
Contributing Editor, Mort Juberg

Silver Spring, Maryland. Gradual changes will be taking place in the Adventist Church during the next five years according to a random survey of several church leaders by Adventist News Network. One change is the election of women to the top tiers of the church. Another is the renewed emphasis on reaching out to those in countries not friendly to Christianity. The leaders noted that the church is adaptable especially in giving the gospel message through the use of the Internet, television and radio.

Silver Spring, Maryland. A challenge has been issued by GC President Jan Paulsen who urged church leaders on every level to include more young people in their planning. Gary Krause, director of Global Missions, added that the rate of young people leaving the church is appalling. He said leaders need to include youth in the life of the church, making them feel welcome and loved even when they do and say things differently.

Silver Spring, Maryland. The world church has a new General Counsel as of September 1. He is Bob Kyte, an attorney and formerly president of Pacific Press. He was planning to establish a private practice but was elected to the new post by the GC Executive Committee. He succeeds Robert W. Nixon who has served as General Counsel for the past 33 years and is retiring. Kyte is a veteran of non-profit and corporate law.

Silver Spring, Maryland. A new group called the Forum has been established to make better use of the Internet. Mark Finley, vice president of evangelism, said the Forum is a group of mostly young professionals who want to utilize the latest technology, particularly the Internet. Dan Houghton of the Hart Research Center noted that Internet evangelism gives those who work at the computer an opportunity to be frontline evangelists.

Silver Spring, Maryland. The next General Conference Session will be held in Atlanta, Georgia. Three main criteria entered in the selection of the site. They included: a good international airport, allowing delegates to fly from any part of the world, a good convention center with facilities for exhibition and meetings, and sufficient hotels. Atlanta was selected after an examination of 20 cities across the U.S.

Pyongyang, North Korea. ADRA has opened a bakery/cafe as a Swiss-style bakery shop and Western restaurant. It can serve more than 30 customers at a time and also has two private meeting rooms. The project is linked to ADRA’s bakery in North Korea which produces 11,000 pounds of bread, rolls and nutritionally enriched biscuits daily for two school feeding projects.

Source: Adventist News Network

(“Conflict of Interest”, cont. from page 1)

which grew the total assets managed to over $1.5 billion.

Our auditors have given us clean opinions on the seven different plans that we manage. The hospital plans appear to be fully funded. The church plans are not fully funded, and will rely on continued contribution by conferences and other church employers long into the future.

As of today we are fifteen retirees short of 15,000 in our retiree payroll, probably the largest payroll anywhere in the church! During 2004 we paid benefits amounting to $125 million. The service credit being paid exceeds 342 thousand years. We processed more than 460 new retirees, and 540 deaths.

Recently a pastor called me and asked me to explain some of the features of our “divine benefit retirement plan.” He had misunderstood. We have a “Defined Benefit Retirement Plan.” But we long for a “Divine Benefit Plan!” When Jesus comes and healthcare and death benefits are a thing of the past.
My wife and I arrived at the La Sierra University Church on Thursday, just as Elder Dan Smith, senior pastor of that beautiful church, concluded his presentation. We immediately saw many friends, who were blessed by Elder Smith’s sermon.

Having left home early that morning after eating a bowl of Cheerios, my biggest concern was “Where do we get meal tickets?” I was instructed to find Elder Jack Harris, who was already at the cafeteria. There is no better organizational team than Jack and Edna Harris. After lunch we went with Jack and Edna to the SHARP presentation, and as I glanced over the convention bulletin, it appeared that every detail was present. Speakers, platform chairs, musicians, food, lodging, and a host of other details were all cared for in such a manner that it looked like nothing was left to do.

The SHARP presentation was sharp. I learned a lot about the retiree plan, and felt the entire trip was worth the effort for that one presentation. Later in the afternoon Dr. John Brunt, pastor at Azure Hills, a SE CA Conf church near Loma Linda, preached. The night meetings were presented by Elder George Brown, retired president of the Inter-American Divi
2006 Retiree Convocation
July 5 - 9
Southern Adventist University
Collegedale, TN
See you there!

Out and About...

Gordon Pifher, formerly Secretary of the Upper Columbia Conference, has been elected and has accepted the position of President of the British Columbia Conference. He replaces Harry Sackett, who has retired.

Michael Wixwat, formerly Treasurer of the Ohio Conference, has accepted the position of Treasurer of the British Columbia Conference.

Van Hurst, President of the Dakota Conference, was elected Associate Youth Director of the General Conference at the Session in St. Louis. He has since accepted a call to be the Church Ministries Director of the Mid-America Union.

Jim Gilley, Vice President of the North American Division, has accepted a call to pastor the Dallas Central Church. This is the same church where his father-in-law, Roy Thurmon, was pastor for many years.

IT IS WRITTEN is using satellite to (broadcast a series of programs called “The Appearing.” Many Seventh-day Adventist Churches have signed up to receive the signal and air the program in their

(Cont. on page 6)

(“Convention Report” cont. from page 4)

sion, whose English is so flawless I couldn’t help but wonder if he really does speak Spanish.

Other seminars were conducted by Dr. Joyce Hopp from Loma Linda University. When I was a student at Southwestern Jr. College, Dr. Hopp spoke at a chapel service. She began, “I circled round and round the fierce beast, knowing I had to attack it, but afraid I would die if I did.” The “beast” was a water ski jump! She is just as interesting and invigorating today as she was in 1960. Dr. Bailey Gillespie reported on the Value Genesis study, intriguing his listeners with analytical studies on the attitudes of our youth toward the church and Christianity.

On Sabbath Dr. Delmer Holbrook captivated his audience with helpful ways of dealing with aging and issues arising out of retirement. Then Elder Lonnie Melashenko gave one of the best Sabbath sermons I have ever heard, animatedly describing the path to Heaven. The afternoon began with the La Sierra University Hour metamorphosing into two hours, which unfortunately cut short the time for the Loma Linda Men’s Chorus and the Loma Linda University Hour.

Saturday night provided opportunity to fellowship with the various world divisions. My wife and I attended the NAD session, and particularly appreciated the story of a nurse of Japanese-American ancestry, whose family was confined in a camp during the war. She attended Walla Walla College and was not confined. Many other interesting stories surfaced.

Sunday morning I gave a presentation, attended the Union College Reunion, and then had to head for the airport because of a Sunday night meeting back in Texas. While sorry to miss the banquet at noon, Beverly and I are looking forward to spending the full time with you at Southern Adventist University, July 5 – 9, 2006.
sanctuary. In addition to the Adventist Churches, ten non-Adventist Churches have signed up to view the programs.

Alaska Conference Secretary Jim Kincaid walked away from a plane crash near Sinton, Texas, Thursday, August 4. He was taking the plane up to test some repairs in preparation for taking it to Alaska when it lost power. He received 2nd and 3rd degree burns to his hands, forearms, and calves and is receiving treatment in the burn unit of a hospital in Portland, Oregon.

“DISNEY’S 2005 TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD” was won by David Vixie, 8th grade teacher at Paradise Adventist Academy. He was chosen from more than 50,000 nominees.

THREE NAD ADVENTIST COLLEGES ARE LISTED in “America’s Best Colleges 2006,” as published by “U.S. News and World Report.” They are Pacific Union College, Southern Adventist University, and Walla Walla College. Go online to www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/rankindex_brief.php to see the lists.


CHURCH SIGNS: Can strangers find your church? - Prices for highway signs are slated to increase October 1. Other church sign prices will remain the same, but shipping costs will rise as fuel prices increase. Order your signs as soon as possible. You will want to get them mounted in time for satellite meetings and entry events which will attract visitors to your church, and before the ground freezes. Contact: www.nadadventist.org/ signs to request sign information. Check your local laws. Permits may be needed beforehand.