Yours from the Beginning

By Nancy Wardwell

In 1981 a group of OSU retirees met with then President Ed Jennings and got his support for an organization for the staff and faculty retirees of the University. By the spring of 1983 the first meeting was called, 150 retirees showed up, and the name “OSURA” was chosen!

For almost 35 years, volunteers of The Ohio State University Retiree Association have been providing activities, information, and advocacy for our thousands of retirees.

It is time to renew your membership – and invite your colleagues and friends to join us also!

Annual Members Renew Now!

Renews for 2018 start October 1
Deadline: December 31, 2017

BENEFITS
OSURA Directory • Tax Deduction • Socialize with 3,100 Fellow Retirees • Stay in Touch with Our University • Much More • And All for Only $25!

HOW DO I RENEW?
OSURA.osu.edu makes it easy!

For your 2018 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP go online and click JOIN to make your $25 donation (formerly dues) to support OSURA events and programs. Update your contact information, too.

Interested in upgrading to LIFE MEMBERSHIP? You can arrange your $500 donation at OSURA.osu.edu. If you are already a Life Member, thank you!

Not computer savvy? Contact Customer Service, 800-762-5646, to renew and update your information.

90+ EVENTS!
Learning • Living • Service • Travel • Advocacy • Culture • Fun!
FROM: The President

The OSURA Annual Fall Conference – a GEM of Volunteerism

The OSURA Annual Conference-Meeting on September 20, 2017 is a great example of volunteerism in action. Rachael Turner and her committee of 13 members have planned and assembled an outstanding conference addressing important and interesting topics (e.g., educational, health, informative, entertaining) for our retired members; many will be of interest to you and, certainly, well worth the modest registration fee of $25.00. (By the way, the $25 includes a continental breakfast, sit-down lunch, all-day coffee, and your meeting packet.) We are very grateful for the financial support of our vendors, which allows us to deliver this outstanding conference and its many perks at reasonable price.

This meeting gives me an opportunity to discuss one of my favorite topics: Volunteerism. OSURA has committees and special interest groups to cover virtually all major areas of concern and importance for retirees, and it is likely that one or more of these will nicely match your own interests and/or talents. Bear with me as I present some of these committees. The Benefits committee addresses and monitors your retirement plans, STRS, OPERS, pensions, health insurance, etc; Finance deals with the financial aspects and fiscal health of OSURA; Communications handles much of the OSURA communications (to more than 3000 members) and is responsible for the informative Newsletter; Cultural Arts provides lists of musical events, plays, opera, etc. available to members (and most at discounted rates) and arranges a variety of other cultural activities; Travel assembles local, national, and international tours; Social is in charge of the Holiday and Spring Parties and the monthly Lunch Bunch talks; Membership is dedicated to the recruitment of new members and maintaining a high level of appeal and usefulness of OSURA to all members and generates the Membership Directory; Friendship keeps in touch with members and many others (Bridge/Cards club, Litter-Pickers, Tertulia Breakfast club, etc., etc.); Health and Wellness arranges 3 sessions/year covering related topics in depth; Book Club meets monthly to discuss fiction/nonfiction books of interest to attendees; Walking-Hiking group meets monthly for a comfortable local walking tour led by a world-renowned geologist; and generates the Membership Directory; Friendship keeps in touch with members and their well-being; Special Projects entail “Bucks for Charity,” the “Campus Campaign,” and the annual Tax Seminar, and Special Interest Groups include: the Dinner-Lecture Series offers a monthly dinner and lecture by a world-renowned faculty member or visitor; Health and Wellness arranges 3 sessions/year covering related topics in depth; Book Club meets monthly to discuss fiction/nonfiction books of interest to attendees; Walking-Hiking group meets monthly for a comfortable local walking tour led by a world-renowned geologist; and many others (Bridge/Cards club, Litter-Pickers, Tertulia Breakfast club, etc., etc.). I could go on and on and on. OSURA also has the capacity to add additional areas that may be of interest to you. OSURA has a 24/7 Website.

Of course, none of this is possible without the OSURA spirit of volunteerism. I’m asking you to volunteer for one or more of our committees. Dr. Hal Noltimier and Shirley McCoy recently extracted the following information from the OSURA database. Out of more than 3000 paid members, there are only 73 active Committee and Board members, covering 103 positions. This represents an astounding 2% participation rate.

Visualize Uncle Sam pointing out from a poster, “We need you to volunteer” to allow for OSURA to continue to function at the level expected of OSURA. While no one should expect anything in return (other than a warm, fuzzy, sense of satisfaction) for volunteering anywhere, OSURA does offer all the above (and refer to our Newsletter contents) to its members. And how many times during your retirement (or anytime during life, for that matter), can you favorably affect, influence and positively impact more than 3000 people?

Please contact any of the Board Members, listed in the Newsletter, OSURA Website, and the Membership Directory, to volunteer for the area of your choosing. You can always contact me at carl.leier@osumc.edu for questions, sign-up, and other matters.

For the privilege of sending this personal letter to you, I remain voluntarily yours,

Carl V. Leier
President, Executive Board
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*OSURA Board Representatives were: L-R Shirley Flowers, Shirley McCoy, Carl Leier, Steven D'Ambrosia, Gemma McCluckie, and Jerry Newsom*

*Shirley McCoy received the well-deserved “Pay it Forward Award” and OSURA received a check for $1000 and recognition for innovative program – the Annual Fall Conference*
Calendar of Events

October 18 (Wednesday)
Book Club
A Brilliant Death, by Robin Yocum. A really clever mystery, by a local author, that wonderfully portrays life in the small town of Brilliant, Ohio. Amanda Baron died in a boating accident on the Ohio River in 1953. Or, did she? Her body was never found. What happens when her son grows up and investigates the circumstances surrounding her death?
Time/Place: 1:30 p.m., Carriage Hill of Arlington Party House, Lafayette Drive. Call Lee Hill (614-459-4743) for directions.
Arranger: Lee Hill (Book Club SIG)

October 19 (Thursday)
Lunch Bunch:
Why Don’t Stars Explode (Except When They Do)
REGISTRATION REQUIRED
You’ll have stars in your eyes after hearing our speaker, Dr. Jerry Newsom, Professor Emeritus of Astronomy.
Time/Place: 11:15 a.m., MCL Cafeteria, Kingsdale
Cost: On your own, order through cafeteria line starting at 11:15 a.m., program at approximately 12 noon.
Registration Deadline: Register at OSURASocial@gmail.com or call 614-292-2281 by October 17
Arrangers: Jerry Newsom, Diana Vanek, and Elenore Zeller (Social Committee)

October 21 (Saturday)
Walking/Hiking Group
Challenge Level 2-4
Everyone welcome. Join us on the trails at Blendon Woods Metro Park, 4265 E. Dublin-Granville Rd, Westerville. Hope to see numerous migratory birds at the Walden Waterfowl Refuge and have a good hike through the park.
Time/Place: 11 a.m., we’ll meet at the Nature Center near the parking lot.
Arranger: Hallan Noltimier (Walking/Hiking SIG)

October 24 (Tuesday)
Tertulia Breakfast
Join fellow OSURA members and friends for breakfast and conversation.
Time/Place: 8 a.m., OSU Faculty Club
Cost: on your own
Arranger: Jerry Dare (Tertulia Breakfast SIG)

October 25 (Wednesday)
Bridge Group
Join us; new members always welcomed. There is no membership fee and it costs only 25 cents for prizes the day you play. Come enjoy the fellowship, and have fun playing a good game of bridge at the same time.
Time/Place: 1 p.m., Friendship Village of Dublin, North CR
Arranger: Steve Miller (Bridge Group SIG)

October 26 (Thursday)
Dinner Series:
A Dreadful Childhood: The Long Shadow of American Slavery
REGISTRATION REQUIRED
Richard Steckel, OSU Historian, will discuss the extreme childhood deprivation young slaves endured, including high mortality rate, short stature, and poor nutrition, which had negative implications for cognitive development. These issues had important implications for post-emancipation experiences of Jim Crow law and lynching.
Time/Place: 5 p.m., social hour (cash bar), followed by dinner at 6 p.m. and program at 7 p.m.; OSU Faculty Club
Cost: $23 (service charge included)
Registration Deadline: Register at osura.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281 by October 23
Arranger: Howard Gauthier (Dinner Series SIG)
Registration Instructions

1. **Registrations requiring payment:** Registrations can be made by going on-line to osura.osu.edu or by calling 614-292-2281 or 1-800-762-5646. You can pay by credit card (preferred), or if you mail in a check make it payable to OSUAA. Put the name of the trip in the Note/Memo section of the check and send or drop off to:
   Customer Service
c/o OSURA
Longaberger Alumni House
2200 Olentangy River Road
Columbus, OH 43210
*The reservation is not made until payment is received.*

2. **Registrations NOT requiring payment:** Registrations will be made through the Arranger’s email provided in the description of the event, or if you do not have computer access call 614-292-2281.

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**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**October 18** (Wednesday)
**Rare Books and Manuscripts at OSU: Exhibit of the Reformation and a Tour**
Thompson Library (OSU Main Campus)
Challenge Level 2
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Curator Eric Johnson will guide us through a new exhibit, “Publish or Perish.” It commemorates the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. He will also talk about the missions and collections of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department.

**Meet by:** 1:30 p.m., Thompson Library

**Return:** approx. 3 p.m.

**Cost:** Free

**Registration:** Register at OSURA.CulturalArts.Travel@gmail.com or call 614-292-2281 by October 13

**Arranger:** Raimund Goerler
(Cultural Arts Committee)

**October 20** (Friday)
**BalletMet – Parallel Connection**
Senior Dress Rehearsal
Challenge Level 1
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

James Kudelka, William Forsythe, Merce Cunningham, and Ohad Naharin choreograph a collection of dances sponsored by BalletMet, the OSU Department of Dance and the Wexner Center for the Arts. OSU dance students and BalletMet will perform the pieces. Register at osura.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281. Credit card preferred. If by check, it must arrive by October 16. Tickets will be held at Will Call.

**Time/Place:** performance begins at 11 a.m.

Seating is general, so plan to arrive early for best seats. Doors open between 10 and 10:15 a.m., Mershon Auditorium

**Cost:** $19 (admission ticket)

**Registration/Refund Deadline:** October 13

**Arranger:** Les Benedict (Cultural Arts Committee)

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**October 30 & 31** (Mon. & Tues.)
**Berea, KY Tour**
REGISTRATION CLOSED

**Meet by:** 7:15 a.m., Monday, October 30th
back parking lot at Kohl’s, 3360 Olentangy River Road

**Return:** approx. 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 31st

**Arrangers:** Pat James and Alabelle Zghoul
(Travel Committee)

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**November 17** (Friday)
**La Comedia Dinner Theater–“Timeless Memories of Christmas**
Springboro, OH

Challenge Level 1
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Instead of “White Christmas,” La Comedia Dinner Theatre will be presenting “Timeless Memories of Christmas.” Included as always is their wonderful La Comedia’s buffet.

**lacomedia.com**

**Meet by:** 9 a.m. back parking lot at Kohl’s, 3360 Olentangy River Road

**Return:** approx. 4:30 p.m.

**Cost:** $74; includes motor coach transportation, buffet lunch, admission, snacks and tips

**Registration/Refund Deadline:** Register at osura.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281 by October 17

**Arrangers:** Jessica Pritchard and Alabelle Zghoul
(Travel Committee)

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**December 8** (Friday)
**Christmas at Malabar Farm**
Lucas, OH

Challenge Level 1
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Tour Malabar Farm (malabarfarm.org). Learn about Louis Bromfield’s life before and after his arrival to Pleasant Valley in 1939. See where Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall spent the night during their honeymoon. Experience the beautiful Christmas light that flows through the country home.

**Meet by:** 3:45 p.m., back parking lot at Kohl’s, 3360 Olentangy River Road

**Return:** approx. 9:30 p.m.

**Cost:** $58; includes admission, Der Dutchman Buffet dinner, motor coach transportation, and tips

**Registration/Refund Deadline:** Register at osura.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281 by December 6

**Arrangers:** Jessica Pritchard and Alabelle Zghoul
(Travel Committee)
FROM: The Benefits Committee

Report from STRS

By Jerry Newsom

I’ve been learning more history of STRS and how dramatic swings in the economy have affected its funding. The giddy gains in the stock market in the 1990s gave way to the crash of 2000-2002. With investment assets shrinking but pensions mandated by law, STRS seriously considered ending health insurance for retirees. Stakeholder groups of former and current public educators and administrators came together under the leadership of active teacher unions (OEA and OFT) to lobby to continue health insurance. In 2004 they formed an independent coalition called Healthcare Advocates for STRS (HCA) to provide advice and feedback from the consumers of STRS benefits. In 2009, in response to the Great Recession, the coalition expanded its scope of concern to advocate for the pension benefit as well as healthcare. The coalition has since been known as Healthcare & Pension Advocates for STRS (HPA). University retirees are represented on HPA by OCHER, the Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees, of which OSURA is a leading member. Carl Leier and I are the current representatives on HPA, with our newsletter editor, Nancy Wardwell, currently serving as OCHER President.

Over the years, HPA and STRS Staff and Board have developed a constructive working relationship. When the aftereffects of the 2008 financial crisis forced STRS to reduce benefits, HPA worked with the STRS Board on how best to manage retrenchments, and together HPA and STRS provided a united front to the Legislature. While the resulting cuts were not pleasant, in hindsight it is clear they were needed to maintain stability for STRS. Leaders of STRS frequently attend HPA meetings to discuss policies and challenges, and to hear the perspective of HPA member organizations. As near as I can tell, the STRS Board carefully considers HPA recommendations when making their decisions. The goal of course, is to optimize retirement for former teachers and professors, with a free exchange of ideas an important part of the process.

Statement on POP-5 from OSURA

OSURA members have recently received material inviting them to join a group called Protect Ohio Pensions (POP-5). This group claims to represent all five of Ohio’s public pension systems.

The OSURA Board does not recognize POP-5.

The retirement systems affecting faculty and staff at The Ohio State University are STRS (State Teachers Retirement System) and OPERS (Ohio Public Employees Retirement System). Already in place, ORTA (Ohio Retired Teachers Association) and PERI (Public Employees Retirees, Inc.) are long-standing, well-respected watch-dog organizations for our retirement systems. Both work closely with the Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees (OCHER), a group representing all retirees from all 13 of Ohio’s four-year state universities.

Questions? If you have any additional questions regarding this group, please contact OSURA at osura@osu.edu.
OPERS and COLA

By Nancy Wardwell

The purpose of a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is to lessen, but not fully offset, the effects of inflation on pensions. The idea started with Social Security – the first Cost of Living Adjustment was received in 1950.

Ohio has five public pension systems. For the most part, OSURA members who participate are either in State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) or Ohio Public Employee Retirement System (OPERS). Our pension systems work tirelessly to maintain the mandated solvency levels with the effects of longer-lived members and decades of low inflation.

In March STRS found it necessary to reduce its 2% COLA to 0%, effective July 1, 2017.

Ohio PERS is in a bit better financial position, but it too, is considering the possibilities of a change. They have requested feedback from members on the idea of the possibility of basing their COLA on the Consumer Price Index capped at 3%.

OPERS members had access to information sent to them from the Executive Director Karen Carraher, and recently the following from Jeni Reiser, Executive Assistant of External Relations:

“We are continuing to explore changes to the COLA and communicate with and solicit feedback from our members, retirees, and stakeholders. We have added some additional information to the OPERS website https://www.opers.org/retirees/cola.shtml and wanted to make you all aware.”

THE BIG GIVE

OCTOBER 10-11

Donor Matching Opportunity!

For 26 hours in October, donations to OSURA will be amplified. The Columbus Foundation is sponsoring a “Big Give,” which means they will distribute $1.3 million to charities and non-profits in central Ohio. The amounts of the distributions are in proportion to gifts made by donors. THAT MEANS every tax-deductible contribution you make to OSURA will be worth significantly more to OSURA!

Donations should be made by credit card between 10 a.m. on October 10 and noon on October 11; the Columbus Foundation even pays credit card fees, so 100% of each donation reaches its goal. Details and instructions on making donations can be found at https://columbusfoundation.org/giving-events/big-give-2017.

Donations to OSURA are greatly appreciated; the recipient should be Ohio State Foundation, with fund 605419 designated.

The Big Ten Retirees Associations meet annually at the various universities. It is a rich conference for information and the exchange of ideas.

This year’s August meeting was at Purdue University. President Carl Leier and past-President Shirley McCoy are standing in front of the very impressive sculpture of our sun, surrounded by a model our solar system. The monument is at the Purdue Engineering School and is a memorial to Astronaut Janice Voss.
Live for Today While Planning for Tomorrow

Experience the security of a life plan at First Community Village. Enjoy peace of mind for future costs of care, just minutes from all that Columbus has to offer.

Schedule a tour with one of our retirement counselors at 888-467-0618 or visit FirstCommunityVillage.org.

The College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences held the 55th Annual Farm Science Review. It is one of the nation’s premier Agricultural Trade and Education Shows and held at the Molly Caren Agricultural Center, west on U.S. 40.