About Our Pensions

By Nancy Wardwell

Back on page 6B, below the fold and next to the crease, the September 17 issue of the Columbus Dispatch printed some good news about Ohio’s public pension systems.

“Thanks to robust stock market returns and more fiscal discipline, pension systems across the country are in the best financial positions that they have seen in more than a decade.” – according to a new report from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

We can count on the fact that the market cannot sustain its “once in a generation” surge – but what is encouraging is that state retirement systems have become more disciplined about managing pension finances and states have enacted benefit reforms that lower costs.”

The five Ohio systems sound flourishing when we read that, combined, they have assets of $218 billion as of January 1, 2020. They serve 67,000 government employees, 11 million inactive members and 485,000 beneficiaries – with staggering complexity. Sometimes the moving parts to keep the funds adequate and sustainable are referred to as triggers – and when changes in any are proposed, both active employees and beneficiaries become concerned. Recent issues have included the COLA, changes to health plans, and most lately, a “forensic audit” commissioned by ORTA (Ohio Retired Teachers Association). A more concerning factor is the fear and rumors that arise from fearful members.

OSURA closely monitors the two systems (STRS and OPERS) to which Ohio State employees belong – and members receive the good news – and the concerns. (see Newsom, pg. 3)

While it may seem like “faint praise,” what we need to also keep in the forefront is that, compared to pension systems in some other states, our pension systems have provided good, regular benefits of the members. They are still good for the participants – and good for Ohio.

Some examples:

- 90% of OPERS retirees and 84% of STRS retirees stay in Ohio – where they spend their benefits. They purchase goods and services and pay Ohio taxes.
- The security provided makes it less likely that retirees will deplete their savings and slip into poverty.
- Studies show that of every dollar of taxpayer contribution and employee contribution, $2.85 is returned to the Ohio economy.
- And perhaps, most valuable to the OPERS and STRS retiree is the fact that you cannot outlive your pension!
FROM: The President

Hello, All,

I pulled into a spot at the Westerville Community Center and noticed a sign. “This space is reserved for Elderly Persons and Pregnant Women.”

I started to back out, then I realized – I am the Elderly Person. My entire psyche shook with shock.

This is not the first disconnect between my internal version of self and external opinions. A few years ago, I was admiring my son’s new family vehicle. He said, “I know what you’re thinking – turn middle aged and buy a minivan.” That’s not what I was thinking. I was thinking, “He can’t be middle aged. I’m middle aged!”

Now we’re both buying sports cars. I’m not sure what that says about the life cycle.

An essayist asked his friends, “How old is old?” My favorite reply was, “My age plus four years.” I could go for that.

I hope you enjoyed the Annual Conference last month, which was designed to inform us on how to keep lively in all the phases of aging.

Almost 200 attended, close to our normal enrollment. So good to see so many OSURA members again. I congratulate the Planning Committee, led by Sally Dellinger, for a wonderful event. Thanks to all the volunteers who worked day-of, also. You can learn more about presentations in this Newsletter’s summaries.

Stay well,

Gemma McLuckie
President of OSURA

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CONTINUE YOUR JOY
By Renewing Your OSURA Membership

An OSURA Annual Membership helps you relish life.

Social connections are important for an older persons’ mental and physical well-being, studies show. Renew your Annual Membership to maintain those all-important connections. Join with fellow Buckeyes through OSURA’s creative programming. Dues for your 2022 renewal are still only $25.

You’ll soon receive a flyer with details on renewing for 2022. The preferred submission date is December 1, 2021. If you have questions, email osuramembership@gmail.com or call Sandy Bell, Membership Chair, at 740-625-9716.

Ready to renew now? It’s easy! There are many options:

✓ Go to OSURA.osu.edu and hit “Renew Membership” to make your $25 annual donation to Fund #315499 via credit card.

✓ Give Engagement Services your credit card information at (614) 292-2281 or (800) 762-5646. Tell them it is for Fund #315499.

✓ Send checks payable to The Ohio State University Foundation to PO Box 710811, Columbus, OH 43271 (note OSURA Fund #315499 in the memo line).
Welcome New Retirees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department/Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Clinton Avis</td>
<td>OCIO—Enterprise Applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Herndon Bailey</td>
<td>Chemistry and Biochemistry Administration</td>
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<td>Patricia Heintz Brinkman</td>
<td>OSU Extension</td>
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<td>Timothy John Carlson</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>Michael Allen Chandler</td>
<td>Infrastructure Administration</td>
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<td>Douglas Edward Critchlow</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
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<td>Karen Ann Feasel</td>
<td>Student Life</td>
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<td>Kalpana Ghoshal</td>
<td>Pathology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dennis Anthony Goodin</td>
<td>Telecommunication and Networking</td>
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<td>Nadie Lee Holmes</td>
<td>Alumni Association</td>
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<td>Greg Paul Jones</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<td>Mary Louise Marshall</td>
<td>Center for Human Resource Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rebecca Joan McCauley</td>
<td>Speech Hearing Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ehud Mendel</td>
<td>Neurosurgery</td>
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<td>Deborah Jones Merritt</td>
<td>College of Law</td>
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<td>Cynthia Sue O’Connor</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
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<td>Kristina Marie Reber</td>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Becky Sue Short</td>
<td>University Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johna Smoot</td>
<td>Health Shared Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Becki Renee Soller</td>
<td>Dentistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria A. Valladares</td>
<td>Facilities Operations and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diane K. Vollrath</td>
<td>James Cancer Hospital</td>
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FROM: The Benefits Committee

**STRS News**

By Jerry Newsom

At the August STRS Board meeting, the staff presented a detailed rebuttal to claims of bad management contained in the “forensic investigation” sponsored by the Ohio Retired Teachers Association (ORTA). Example: the ORTA report accused STRS of violating the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) section 3309.15; however section 3309 applies to the School Employees Retirement System, not STRS. The dispute continues, but my scorekeeping of errors has STRS staff looking much better than the ORTA report.

Restoration of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) is the driving force behind the attacks on the STRS Board. The problem for STRS is that its ratio of assets to liabilities (based on various assumptions provided by actuarial consultants) is well below 100%, and legislation (ORC 3307.512) requires that consultants agree that STRS policies put the plan on track to reach 100% funded within 30 years. Reinstating a COLA would likely breach the 30-year limit, which would require STRS to inform their legislative oversight body (ORSC) how STRS will get back into compliance. It’s not obvious that they would be able to do that.

But it may be worse than that. The retirement formula was changed a few years ago to reduce the pension for a newly retired teacher; i.e., STRS pensions for future retirees are less generous than what many of us receive, yet active teachers are contributing more than we did. Currently, employee and employer contributions to STRS are much larger than what will be needed to fund the employee’s future pension (according to plausible projections). As one memo from ORSC put it, current teachers are subsidizing the pension of current retirees. Should the financial outlook of STRS improve, the memo suggests that cutting current employee contributions should take precedence over funding a COLA.
**COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

October 5 – VIRTUAL
Benefits Committee

Time: 9:30 a.m.

October 12
Board Meeting

Time: 9:30 a.m.
Place: Longaberger – Mount Room

**MONTHLY ACTIVITIES**

**October 14 (Thursday)**

Photo Society

Program: Putting Thought into Each Photo, presented by Joan Pearse

Members’ Theme: Images that could have been improved with thoughtful planning

Time/Place: 5:15 p.m., cocktails; 6 p.m., dinner; 7 p.m., program; OSU Faculty Club. You MUST make reservations for dinner by calling 614-292-2262 by October 11.

Cost: on your own

Arranger: Nancy Verber (nwverber@gmail.com – Photographic Society SIG)

**October 16 (Saturday)**

Walking/Hiking Group

Challenge Level 2-4

Everyone welcome. Lace up your shoes and join us at Sharon Woods Metro Park, 6911 Cleveland Ave., Westerville.

Time/Place: 11 a.m. at the first Ranger Cabin

Arranger: Hallan Noltimier (noltimier.2@osu.edu – Walking/Hiking SIG)

**October 28 (Thursday)**

Dinner Series: The Middle East: Where to next?

Rick Hermann, former Director of Mershon Center for International Security Studies, will discuss the developments that will guide future decisions by the United States.

Time/Place: 5:15 p.m., social hour, dinner at 6 p.m. and program at 7 p.m.; OSU Faculty Club

Cost: $35 (service charge included)

Registration Deadline: Register at osura.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281 by October 25.

Arranger: Carol Newcomb-Alutto (clhotak@gmail.com – Dinner Series SIG)

**October Lunch Bunch**

No program this month. Plan to join us via Zoom on November 3 (Wednesday) when we welcome Keith Myers, Vice-President of Construction Planning, when we will learn about the decisions that are made regarding Campus Construction. Keith will give us information about the current construction and plans to enhance the campus area.

Time/Place: 11:30 a.m.

Contacts: Steven D’Ambrosio (Steven.dambros@gmail.com) & Elenore R. Zeller (zellerej@prodigy.net – Social Committee)

**CHALLENGE LEVELS**

1. Light – may include a few stairs.
2. Moderate – may include a few sets of stairs.
3. Moderate + – may include climbing many stairs and/or uneven terrain.
4. High – may include lots of walking, climbing stairs, hilly walkways and/or extended weather exposure.

**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. Your registration is not complete until payment is made, so have your credit card ready. Checks are no longer being accepted.

2. Registrations NOT requiring payment: Registrations will be made through the Arranger’s email provided in the description of the event.

**UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS**

October 3 – 17
Exploring Greece and its Islands

Arranger: Alabelle Zghoul (azghoul4660@wowway.com – Travel Committee)

November 4 (Thursday)
Amish Adventures

Arranger: Steven D’Ambrosio

Registration Deadline:

NEW

November 19 (Friday)
OSU Veterinary Medical Center Tour

1900 Coffey Road
Challenge Level 1
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Behind-the-scenes tour of the OSU Veterinary Medical Center (VMC) and the new Veterinary Clinical and Professional Skills Center in the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) lead by the Dean, Dr. Rustin Moore. The VMC’s three hospitals collectively had over 40,000 patient visits last year!

Meet by: 9:45 a.m., 1900 Coffey Road, Columbus
Return: approximately 12 p.m.
Cost: No cost unless one uses an OSU parking garage.

Registration Deadline: Register at OSURA.CulturalArts.Travel@gmail.com by November 1.

Arrangers: Ron Currin (rcurrin6209@gmail.com – Cultural Arts Committee)
Dinner Series

RICK HERMANN, former Director of Mershon Center for International Security Studies, will discuss The Middle East: Where to next? at the October 28 meeting of the OSURA Dinner Series.

Join us!

December 10 (Friday)

La Comedia – A Christmas Story

765 West Central – Springboro, OH
Challenge Level 2
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

A buffet luncheon followed by the classic play A Christmas Story (www.lacomedia.com)

Meet by: 9 a.m., Tremont Center (Tremont Road, opposite Upper Arlington Library)
Return: approximately 5:30 p.m.
Cost: $75; cost includes, buffet lunch, the show admission, motor coach transportation, snacks, tips.
Registration/Refund Deadline: Register at osura.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281 by November 9.
Arrangers: Jessica Pritchard and Alabelle Zghoul (alabelle.zghoul@gmail.com – Travel Committee)

OSU Retirees Association
Fall Conference

A little rain – or a LOT of rain couldn’t dampen the spirit of the OSURA Fall Conference.

24th Fall Conference was exceptional – look for the full report in the November Newsletter.
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Regina Harper

I had worked at OSU for 19 years but am not an OSU retiree. In May 2021 I petitioned successfully to become an associate member of OSURA because I wanted to participate in a variety of travel experiences and meet new friends. In fact, I joined the OSURA Travel and Cultural Arts Committee and am excited to help plan great travel experiences for retirees.

My ties to OSU as a student and as an employee have spanned many years. In 1974, I graduated from Woodward High School in Cincinnati and two weeks later enrolled at OSU, with a major in psychology. After three years of attending classes four quarters each year, I needed a break and took a fulltime job. Years later, I started classes again and graduated from OSU with a Bachelor of Art in Psychology, March 2011. (Later, I earned a Master of Management degree from The University of Phoenix (online) while working at Columbus State Community College.)

At OSU, I had many different jobs that challenged me. When I was a little girl, I always wanted to be a nurse, but I couldn’t stand the sight of blood. Nevertheless, I have always believed that I could do anything that I put my mind to. At the beginning of my second year as an OSU student, I applied for a job in the OSU Hospital Emergency Room as a student assistant and worked in that position until my employment allowance ran out. By challenging myself to take on diverse employment positions at OSU, I grew from those learning experiences.

In 1980 I started my career at OSU in the tax office as a clerk. I was promoted to a variety of departments and positions at OSU: Clinic Business Office (cashier); Student Financial Aid Department (clerical specialist to a verification specialist); Clinic Labs (accountant to a computer operator); Admissions Department. After obtaining my bachelor’s degree, I transferred to the Office of Minority Affairs.

I left OSU to serve as an assistant director and then associate director with the I Know I Can (IKIC) program. We worked with Columbus City Schools high school guidance counselors and IKIC volunteers in guiding students to apply to college and to find financial support. At several local colleges, we helped IKIC students transition to college life and navigate the academic environment.

In the final years of my career, I accepted a position in the Student Financial Aid Department at Columbus State Community College (CSCC). I also worked part-time as an adjunct instructor at CSCC and taught college-success classes. In January 2017 I retired from CSCC.

Like many retirees, I took a few temporary and part-time positions at CSCC before retiring completely. In my retirement, I started to garden and did some traveling, especially on cruises. During the pandemic, I took on some do-it-yourself projects at home that I had put off.

I can’t wait for COVID to be over so I can spend time with family and friends enjoying good meals and live concerts again!
Online Directory

Visit the OSURA Online Directory to look up contact information (phone, email) of other OSURA members. Be sure to authorize your contact information so that others can reach you, too.

Click on the button called DIRECTORY on the OSURA webpage. More details can be found under header of “HELPFUL LINKS.”

If you still have questions, contact Marie Taris: mtaris4@att.net.

IT’S TIME TO ANNOUNCE THE
2021-2022 OSURA BOOK CLUB LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>A Woman of No Importance</td>
<td>Purnell, Sonia</td>
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<td>Oct. 20</td>
<td>Anxious People</td>
<td>Backman, Frederik</td>
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<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>The Body: A Guide for Occupants</td>
<td>Bryson, Bill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>The Book Club is on hiatus for the holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>The Vanishing Half</td>
<td>Bennett, Brit</td>
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<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>The Splendid and the Vile</td>
<td>Larson, Erik</td>
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<td>March 16</td>
<td>The Book of Lost Names</td>
<td>Harmel, Kristin</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>The Answer Is: Reflections on My Life</td>
<td>Trebek, Alex</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>The Guest List</td>
<td>Foley, Lucy</td>
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Again, the list has been carefully curated from many suggestions. The book Club is still not meeting in person, but the Dynamic Duo of Lee and Dick Hill have kept the discussions lively and creative. Join in!
There are two funds that OSURA encourages support –

**OSURA Endowment Fund**

and

**OSURA Fund to Combat Student Food Insecurity**

Both Funds and their respective numbers are always at the left corner of Page 2 in our monthly Newsletter!

There are two convenient ways to give electronically:

[give.osu.edu/osura](http://give.osu.edu/osura) and a new [QR code](#)