The Ohio State Fair

By Nancy Wardwell

Last year, 2023, more than one million folks attended the Ohio State Fair. It is one of the largest fairs in the United States. It contributes more than $685 million to the state's economy. The Midway and Concessions alone contribute more than $3.2 million. Exhibitors and participants are from all 88 counties and tickets were purchased from all 50 U.S. states and Canada and Mexico!

Love Fair Food? 46,818 scoops of Velvet ice cream were sold in the Dairy Building (I prefer the Ohio Swiss on rye myself – learned from my dad who attended The Fair every day – every year).

36,733 corn dogs, 27,759 hot dogs and almost 23,000 funnel cakes were consumed in 2023.

The 360-acre fairgrounds has not always been in the center of Columbus! The first celebration of Ohio's products, people, and accomplishments was held for 3 days in 1850 – in Cincinnati. In 1846 the Ohio Legislature created the Ohio State Board of Agriculture, and its first act was to establish a district fair in Wilmington in 1847 and in Xenia in 1848. The 1849 fair was planned but cancelled due to an outbreak of Asian Flu. Starting in 1850 the 3-day event (judging was held on Day 1 and the public was admitted the 2nd and 3rd day) was held in various sites including Dayton, Cleveland, Newark, Sandusky, and Zanesville. When in Columbus, it was held on the site of Mt. Carmel Hospital, Schiller Park. In 1886 the final home became what we now know as The Ohio Expo Center and State Fair Grounds. By the way, in 1896 the Ohio State Fair became the first fair to be lighted with electricity!

Railroads were an important part of the fair, moving animals and other exhibits, not to mention participants, from around the state. In the 1890s at least 16 railroad companies served Columbus and the fair.

The butter cow and calf were first featured in 1903. Other sculptures were added beginning in 1960, and vary every year.

The Board of Agriculture cancelled the fair from 1916 to 1919, during WWI and again from 1942-45. The Department of War used the grounds and buildings for storing airplane parts and equipment. (Curtiss-Wright Corporation had a plant in Columbus.)

Contemporary fairs are so different from the earliest fairs that showed off Ohio's Agriculture and products. The recent fair program includes concerts, sports competitions, horse shows, and many commercial vendors – but if you look around the edges of the grounds you can still find animals from commercial farms and 4-H kids showing their projects. Christmas trees are shown where the vegetable and grain displays once were – but the honeybee exhibit is exactly where it has been for the 80 years I know about!

The 2024 Ohio State Fair is being held July 24 – August 4. For retirees the admission is only $12! See you there!
FROM: The President

Stay informed and updated!

Are you receiving email communications from OSURA regarding upcoming events?

It has come to my attention that there are members who feel they should be receiving these email notifications but are not. Recently, notifications were sent announcing the 2025 trips and an informational session in August as well as an announcement about the trip to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in August.

If you did not receive these email notifications and feel that you should have, please let us know by emailing me at sib9716@outlook.com so that I can look into this issue.

In addition to the email notices and newsletter, you should also be aware that there are several other ways of staying informed of what is happening. You can

1. **CHECK** for current activities and news on the OSURA website. (osura.osu.edu)

2. **JOIN** the Facebook group where many activities are posted as well as reminders about upcoming registration deadlines for events and trips.

3. **SUBSCRIBE** to our listservs for notices about the Dinner Series and Cultural Arts activities.

To subscribe to the dining and/or cultural arts listserv, send an email to goerler.1@osu.edu, providing your full name and indicating the listserv you would like to join. There is no charge. All addresses are accepted including gmail, aol, att.net, etc.

Even though it is summer, we have a lot going on: hikes, day trips, informational meeting on 2025 trips, and the annual fall conference, just to name a few. Be sure to check out the full listing on the website. I look forward to seeing you somewhere soon.

Sandy Bell
President of OSURA

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**Conference Registration will begin on August 5 at 10 a.m.**

There is something for everyone at this year’s conference,... see for yourself by checking out the array of offerings described in the June Newsletter.

Come hear the keynote address given by Melissa S. Shivers, Senior Vice President for Student Life, who will bring along a few students who will share their experiences.

**Remember, there are two ways to register:**

Go on-line to https://osura.osu.edu and find the event registration link – OR

Contact the Engagement Center at the Alumni Association to register and pay over the phone at either 614-292-2281 or 1-800-762-5646.

Registration is not complete until payment is made, so have your credit card at the ready. **See you on the 18th of September!**
## Welcome New Retirees

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Michael Bisesi</td>
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<td>Debbie Bowman</td>
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<td>Karen Crabbe</td>
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<td>Bryan K. Dirke</td>
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<td>Theresa Early</td>
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<td>Lynda L. Fox</td>
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<td>Ben Givens</td>
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<td>William Houser</td>
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<td>Marcella Hughes</td>
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<td>Jay Kasey</td>
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<td>Beth Kaufman</td>
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<td>Shawny Kaufman</td>
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<td>Tondi Kneeland</td>
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<td>Cindy Kratzer</td>
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<td>M. Melissa Marburger</td>
<td>ASC-Evolution Ecology and Organismal Biology</td>
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<td>Douglas D. Marshall</td>
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<td>Sandra Masters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martey Masterson</td>
<td>Veterinary Preventive Medicine</td>
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<td>Bruce McPheron</td>
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<td>Christina Miller</td>
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<td>Michele L. Morscher</td>
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<td>Richard Noll</td>
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<td>Mary Parrish</td>
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<td>Karen Swan</td>
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<td>Mesfin Tadesse</td>
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<td>Alice Teall</td>
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<td>Marianne Weber</td>
<td>Center for Automotive Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kay Wolf</td>
<td>Academic Affairs Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regina Wright</td>
<td>Business and Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glen Yoder</td>
<td>FOD Design and Construction</td>
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**EXTRA SPECIAL: Optional Tours connected to Conference Sessions!**

**T1 - Energy and Advancement and Innovation Center:** If you are planning to attend Session 15 – “The Next Frontier of Radiation Therapy: Proton Therapy and FLASH,” this tour would be an excellent follow-up.

**T2 - Driving Simulator Laboratory:** If you are attending Session 4 – “Driving as We Age,” this will be a fun tour where you will have an opportunity to test your current driving ability.

**T3 - Department of Theatre and Film, and Media Arts:** Regardless of which sessions you decide to attend, this new building is amazing and well worth your time. If you choose to attend Session 16 – “The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence,” you may get some examples of how these departments think about how they might utilize it.
Committee Meetings

August 6 (Tuesday)
Benefits Committee
Time: 9:15 a.m., Longaberger Alumni House

August 13 (Tuesday)
Board Meeting
Time/Place: 9:30 a.m., Longaberger Alumni House

August 16 (Friday)
OSURA Travel Informational Session
Time/Place: 1-3:00 p.m., Longaberger Alumni House

August 28 (Wednesday)
Membership Committee
Time/Place: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Longaberger Alumni House

Monthly Activities

August 3 (Saturday)
Walking/Hiking Group
Spring Valley Nature Preserve
Challenge Level 2
Join the OSURA Hiking/Walking group for a moderate hike through the woods. There will be a few hills and several stream crossings. Pets are welcome....come meet Colby and Gibson. And of course, there will be an opportunity to sit down, relax and take in a local restaurant afterwards. Questions? Contact Sandy Bell...info below
Time/Place: 11 a.m., 1539 Columbus Rd, Granville
Arranger: Sandy Bell (sib9716@outlook.com/cell 740-833-6374 – Walking/Hiking SIG)

Lunch Bunch
No gathering this month, see you in the fall.
Arranger: Elenore Zeller

Photo Society
See you in September; but in the interim visit our exhibit in the Faculty Club gallery and see what our members have created.
Arranger: Nancy Verber (nwverber@gmail.com – Photographic Society SIG)

Book Club
Gen Z, Gen X, or a Millennial, they are always in the news for something exciting, revolting, or.... Find out who they are, and why you should know about them, by reading Generations: The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents—and What They Mean for America’s Future. The Book Club is currently on summer hiatus, so this will be our September book. To join the club, please email Lee Hill (SIG Leader) at rmlhmh@att.net. If you have Gmail, send her your direct Gmail address as forwarded emails do not work.
Contact: Lee Hill (rmlhmh@att.net – Book Club SIG)

Craft Group
Our group has a varied schedule, if you’re interested in obtaining more information contact Mary Cull at marycull.4@gmail.com.
Arranger: Mary Cull (marycull.4@gmail.com – Craft Group SIG)

Special & Upcoming Events

August 15 (Thursday)
Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Christmas Story House/Museum
Cleveland, OH
Challenge Level 2
REGISTRATION REQUIRED
Learn history of the best-known and influential artists, engineers, producers and other notable figures who have major influence on the development of rock and roll. See the original props, costumes and memorabilia from the film Christmas Story as well as hundreds of rare behind-the-scenes photos.
Meet by: 7:30 a.m., Tremont Center (Tremont Road, opposite Upper Arlington Library)
Return: 7 p.m.
Cost: $138; cost includes admissions, lunch, transportation, snacks, and tips.
Registration: Register at osura.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281 by July 15.
Refund Deadline: July 15
Arrangers: Alabelle Zghoul and Betty Hriesik (alabelle.zghoul@gmail.com - Travel/Cultural Arts)

August 16 (Friday)
OSURA Travel Information Meeting
Get information on two trips being planned for you:
1. South Pacific Adventure
2. Colorado by Rail
Meet at: 1 p.m., Longaberger (parking pass available)
End: 3 p.m.
Arrangers: Bob Furbee and Constance Oulanoff (bob.furbee@gmail.com - Travel/Cultural Arts)

September 4 (Wednesday)
Emeritus Faculty Lecture Series
Avner Friedman, Mathematics, will discuss “Mathematical Biomedicine: Examples from Osteoporosis and Lung Cancer.”
Time: 4 – 5 p.m.
Cost: Free and open to the public
Registration: Register at https://oaa.osu.edu/emeritus-academy-lecture-series-registration
Contact: Mary Jo Fresch (fresch.1@osu.edu)
Come and Walk with the OSURA Walking/Hiking Group

By Sandy Bell

**August 3 (Saturday) at 11 a.m.** – Spring Valley Nature Preserve, 1539 Columbus Rd. Granville. This will be a moderate hike with some hills and several stream crossings. Pets welcome. We will visit a local restaurant for some extra socializing and refueling afterwards.

**September 14 (Saturday) at 11 a.m.** – Alum Creek State Park, parking area on Africa Rd. directly across from Plumb Rd. We will do a pet-friendly 2.2 or 3.6-mile loop hike, depending on how long we want to go, with time for some extra socializing and refueling afterwards at a nearby restaurant.

**October 19 (Saturday) at 11 a.m.** – Mt. Gilead State Park, 4119 Route 95, Mt. Gilead. We will meet in the main parking lot next to the entrance to the campground. This will be a moderate hike up to 4 miles with some hills. Pets are welcome. We will have some extra time to socialize at a nearby restaurant afterwards.

Do you have a favorite place to walk? Is there someplace you would like to explore? I am always open to suggestions of new places to go. If you have one, I would love to hear about it.

If you have any questions, send me an email at sib9716@outlook.com or call/text me at 740-833-6374.
In Memoriam

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Bored? Looking for something new to do?

The OSURA Book Club can help!

- ✔ No dues
- ✔ No money for books? Ours are all available through the library in multiple formats.
- ✔ No book reports! (Thank goodness!)
- ✔ Probably won’t always finish the book? No worries!
- ✔ Can’t host a meeting? All Zoomed out? Busy schedule? That’s OK! We meet exclusively via email, and you can participate as much or as little as you like!
- ✔ So, no more excuses! Join us today!

Research Study at the OSU College of Optometry

Have you ever thought about the benefits of using night mode on your phone?

The Visual Impairment Research Lab is looking for volunteers in their study to examine reading ability with different text settings. You will be asked to complete several tasks to measure your basic visual and reading function in a testing room. The testing session will last 30-60 minutes and will take place on the 5th Floor of Fry Hall on the OSU Columbus Campus. Compensation of $15/hr will be provided in the form of an eGift card.

To qualify, you must:

- • Be 18 years or older
- • Have normal or corrected-to-normal vision (20/20 or better with glasses or contacts)
- • Be a native English speaker
- • Have no neurological/physical disorders which might affect reading and attention (such as ADHD or Dyslexia)

If interested in participating, contact the lab at OPT-VIResearch@osu.edu or 614-292-5799. For questions you can contact the Principal Investigator Dr. Walter Wu at wu.6239@osu.edu.

Questions?

Contact Lee Hill, SIG Leader, at rmhlmh@att.net. If you use Gmail, send her your direct Gmail address, because @osu.edu email is blocked when being forwarded to Gmail.
FROM: The Benefits Committee

STRS Report

By Jerry Newsom

There are several reasons for the tight current financial condition of STRS: pensions were made too generous for those retiring early in this century; we have had two major financial crises since 2000; and Ohio, unlike most states, does not increase employer contributions to pension funds when investment returns are poor. The current board didn’t create these problems; they inherited them. The legislature forbids granting annual COLAs for retirees unless an independent actuary agrees STRS can afford it, and in recent years the actuary has said they can’t. Many retirees resent that they are not getting the COLAs they expected. A 14-page anonymous memo released by the governor in May alleges that in 2021 a small group attempted to capitalize on this resentment by trying to convince STRS to invest $65 billion (most of STRS assets) with a new organization called QED. The claim was it would produce an extra $4 billion a year in investment earnings for STRS with very little risk. That could fund COLAs and allow teachers to retire earlier. The two board members most in support of the QED plan were Wade Steen and Rudy Fichtenbaum. One external consultant noted that QED had a strategy much more opaque than how STRS normally operates and would perhaps collect “outsized performance related fees;” the irony here is that critics of the board claim that STRS lacks transparency and pays too much in fees. Investment consultants for STRS gave reasons why QED was a bad idea and a majority of the STRS board agreed and refused to support it. The allegations in the 14-page memo, which remain to be proven, portrayed Steen and Fichtenbaum as doing the bidding of QED; the memo also claimed that QED campaigned to defeat board members who had opposed it. Presumably new members on the board would be more supportive of QED. The Attorney General described this as a hostile takeover. The election campaigns for seats on the board were well financed (source unknown), and one by one QED opponents were replaced by self-styled “reformers” who supported Steen and Fichtenbaum. The Ohio Retirement for Teachers Association (ORTA), to which many of us belong, was a strong supporter of the challengers in the election campaigns. This spring, the “reformers” gained a board majority, leading to concern that STRS would now send most of its assets to the shadowy QED group that had no track record and no meaningful past experience managing large assets. Apparently, members of the STRS staff had been documenting all this, but as long as the board critics were in the minority, there was no reason to publicize it. Once the critics had a majority, the 14-page memo was sent to the governor, who released it to the press. Reaction was swift. The Attorney General filed suit to have Steen and Fichtenbaum removed from the board for violating their fiduciary duties (which have strict rules about keeping investments diversified and acting solely in the interest of STRS members). No one can remember a similar suit involving a state pension fund. The lawsuit is not scheduled to be heard until July of 2025, but some legislators have supported removing some STRS board members, presumably before the court case. The Attorney General also claims that it was illegal when ORTA paid legal fees when Steen sued to be reinstated on the board after the governor tried to remove him. The Secretary of State is investigating the funding for elections to the board, saying the law requires the campaigns to file a financial disclosure form, which they had not done. The legislative oversight body for the state pension funds, the Ohio Retirement Study Council (ORSC), had a meeting devoted to events at STRS, at the conclusion of which they set up a subcommittee to investigate the “STRS turmoil.” I have seen no indications the subcommittee has uncovered evidence yet supporting or refuting allegations about efforts to have STRS invest in QED.

Erratum: In spite of extensive proof-reading efforts, one word was left out of the statement from OSURA I gave at the June STRS board meeting. Unfortunately, the word was “not.” The offending sentence near the end should read, “The STRS board should not be picking investment managers, and external groups with no strong track record of quality management should not participate in such management.”

OPERS

There is no OPERS Report this month. The Board met offsite and without Zoom access. The next meeting is in September. Do check out the OPERS website. It is packed with interesting information. opers.org
Consider Joining Us on One or Both of These 2025 OSURA-Sponsored Travel Destinations

**SOUTH PACIFIC ADVENTURE | February 24 – March 15, 2025**
Join us as we embark on a journey of discovery through the breathtaking landscapes and vibrant cultures of the South Pacific, from New Zealand’s Bay of Plenty to iconic landmarks of Australia’s Melbourne and Sydney. This 13-night Royal Princess cruise promises awe-inspiring experiences. Total cost, including airfare plus 2 nights pre-cruise in Auckland and 2 nights post-cruise in Sydney, is $5,999 per person double occupancy, $7,649 single occupancy, for interior cabins.

**COLORADO BY RAIL | September 4 – 12, 2025**
Follow the historic routes of the Old West with excursions on six different daytime scenic railroads. This tour will visit the Rocky Mountain National Park, Mesa Verde National Park and much more. Total cost with airfare is $4,299 per person double occupancy. And $5,499 single.

Informational meetings on these two trips will be held on Friday, August 16, 1 – 3 p.m. at the Longaberger Alumni House, 2200 Olentangy River Road, Columbus. You can get a parking pass for that day either by emailing Bob Furbee (bob.furbee@gmail.com) or by visiting the Alumni House information desk on the day of the meeting.

For full brochures, please go to worldoftravel.com or call World of Travel at 614-451-4482.