

OSURA News



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

April 2022

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We Need a Little Springtime – Right this Very Minute*

By Nancy Wardwell

There already are a few hopeful signs that spring will finally come – seed catalogues are in the mail, snowdrops and crocus, robins are arriving looking for last year's berries until earthworms make an appearance - and now we have Daylight Savings Time (a curse to those with early-rising pets).

Spring officially begins in the Northern Hemisphere on March 20, even if the weather in Ohio is oblivious. Spring is officially known as one of the four temperate seasons following Winter and preceding Summer. At the moment it is little comfort to know that when it is Autumn in the Northern Hemisphere it is Spring in the Southern Hemisphere.

Astronomically speaking, Spring started for us March 20 (The Vernal Equinox) - that's when, in the Northern Hemisphere, Earth begins to tilt toward the sun – which means longer, sunnier days. If you'd really look ahead, the Summer Solstice will be June 20!

Back to Ecological Spring – the biological indicators that raise our hopes – the blooming of certain early plants like sweet-smelling arbutus, witch-hazel, and winter aconite – animal activities including sightings of migrating birds on their way to summer homes – oh, and the wonderful smell of the soil when it reaches the temperature for micro flora to flourish – and to the joy of the robins!

The celebrations are throughout the Northern Hemisphere. The pranks and jokes of April 1 are celebrated worldwide! In Laos, housecleaning and washing of statues of Buddha turn into massive water fights. Annual music festivals break out, too – big ones are in Coachella, California, a blues fest in



Byron Bay, Australia, and the famous Jazz and Heritage Fest in New Orleans. Holy Week and Easter are cherished occasions and Earth Day (April 22) calls attention to environmental protection.

Perhaps the most ancient is the Iron Age Celtic fertility festival of Beltane. Beginning the evening before May 1, it has been revived and most famously celebrated in Edinburgh, Scotland. It is filled with music, dance – and fire. A procession, driven by drums, leads to a huge bonfire signifying the birth of Summer.

Just the thought of Spring and Springtime bring hopeful feelings and thoughts of new beginnings, rebirth, rejuvenation, renewal, resurrection – HOPE. And, if ever there was a period where we survive on hope, it is the Spring of 2022.

**Paraphrase with appreciation to Jerry Herman and MAME!*

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FROM: The President



Gemma McLuckie

Hello,

About 2:30, my restless nights and “may cause drowsiness” meds catch up with me. Recently, I saw “Everything you need for the perfect couch nap,” by Jackie Reeve, a columnist for Wirecutter, the NYT’s version of Consumer Reports.

The Wirecutter website promises

“...you’ll find our best recommendations,

including advice on ways to optimize your habits for

better sleep.” I was ready for optimizing. Ms. Reeve assured me that I just need a “few cozy essentials” to make my snooze into a treat.

Begin with a plush throw, “... the blankets we race to get to first.” She has two suggestions, depending on your budget: \$30 or \$100. And a sleeper must have an accompanying \$170 “couch-friendly” pillow (an indulgence, the author admits). Because “cold feet can be an absolute bummer,” she recommended toasty socks, with a \$14 or a \$125 version. Nappers also must pull on comfy sweatpants or long johns. At least they’re in the 30-dollar range.

I’m ready to lie down. But wait! Ms. Reeves notes that I have forgotten the essential oils and a diffuser with hypnotic light changes. Another \$50. Now I need to get up off the couch and prepare a tea, hot chocolate, or latte. A rechargeable warmer (\$130) keeps my beverage at the recommended temperature.

All this preparation is wearing me out.

Ms. Reeve now insists it must be totally dark. Add a \$15 eye mask. I may need to listen to a \$70 calming app via a \$100 sleep phone or use a \$50 white noise machine to block out arriving delivery trucks.

We have come to the crème de la crème of naps!

The chairs of OSURA committees are oversleeping. They are planning more and more in-person activities. As well, committees are looking at ways to attract you to join in. There are low-cost and no-cost options, with topics of interest. My advice, look at the current newsletter and the website for details.

Here’s wishing you sweet dreams,

Gemma McLuckie

President of OSURA



OSURA Fall Conference *Update*

This year the conference will not only feature an excellent and varied program in the breakout sessions, but also look for a special performance by the **OSU Men’s Glee Club** during lunch. This way everyone gets to hear one of Ohio State’s treasures.



Welcome New Retirees

Laurie E. MacNider
Health System—Shared Services

Sheila Anne Mapes
Health System—Shared Services

James Walter McCauley
Health System—Shared Services

FROM BENEFITS COMMITTEE | ELDER CARE

By Meg Teaford

Preventing Elder Abuse Fraud

As we know, if we scan our e-mails or answer the phone, you can't be too careful about security and preventing criminal fraud. Even the most savvy of us can be caught off guard and end up disclosing information that we should have kept private.

Here are some recent tips from AARP that can help remind us of how to stay safe. This can apply to helping friends and family members as well as protecting ourselves.

1. Start the conversation, if possible, before fraud has occurred. If it has, never blame the victim — it's the criminal who is at fault.

If a son or daughter has a strained relationship with a parent, they could ask a parent's friend, other relative or professional to step in.

Also, an older person seeking guidance can initiate the discussion by showing this story to someone who can help.

2. Speed and silence will hurt you. The ruses vary: A purported problem with Social Security benefits; a grandchild "in jail" and in need of cash; or a sweepstakes prize "waiting to be claimed" once taxes or fees are paid.

During such deception, crooks often urge you to act fast. Instead, slow down. Many times they insist on secrecy, but the last thing you should do is keep quiet. Instead, talk things over with someone you trust.

3. Safeguard your assets. Never send funds to a stranger — not cash, gift cards, wire transfers, bank payments or, as increasingly is requested, crypto-currency, no matter how convincing the spiel.

4. Safeguard personally identifiable information (PII), such as your Social Security, Medicare and credit card numbers and information about other financial accounts.

5. Stay safe online. Use unique, complex passwords for each online account. Ensure antivirus and security software is up to date on devices.

Never click on links or attachments in unexpected texts or emails. Beware of look-alike websites with logos and language "cloned" from legitimate sites.

If a pop-up ad appears on your computer or an alarm sounds to warn of a supposed technical problem, take a photo or a screen shot of the warning — and turn the computer off. That alert might be phonier than a \$3 bill.

Ensure your anti-malware is up to date and run a system scan. If that's a challenge, get help from an acquaintance or computer technician.

6. Stay safe on the phone. Prepare a "refusal script" and post it in a convenient place so you're ready if a shady person calls. It could read: "No, thanks," "Do not call again," or "I do not send money or disclose information by phone."

Another tactic is to hang up — and save your manners for people who deserve them.

7. Monitor credit card and other financial statements. Ask your card issuer for real-time alerts whenever the card is used or when card use meets specified criteria, like hitting a certain dollar amount.

8. Get free copies of your credit reports from the major credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. Set up a credit freeze to prevent a crook from establishing accounts or borrowing in your name; you can lift the freeze at any time.

9. Be social media savvy. Check privacy settings to restrict who can view your posts — and never accept a friend request from someone you don't know.

And don't overshare: There's no need to reveal your birthday or tell the world you're off beachcombing in Bora-Bora.

10. Report the crime. If you or a loved one has been victimized, report it to law enforcement and the Federal Trade Commission. You'll be taking a stand and, hopefully, sparing another person from suffering.

Calendar of Events

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

April 5 (Tuesday) Benefits Committee

Time/Place: 9:30 a.m.,
Longaberger Alumni House

April 12 (Tuesday) Board Meeting

Time/Place: 9:30 a.m.,
Longaberger Alumni House

April 27 (Wednesday) Membership Committee

Time/Place: 10 a.m.,
Longaberger Alumni House

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

April 14 (Thursday) Photo Society

Program: *Antarctica* by Mary Beth Wise
Member Theme: *Anything Cold*
Time/Place: 5:15 p.m. reception; 6 p.m. dinner; 7 p.m. program; OSU Faculty Club. You MUST make reservations for dinner by calling 614-292-2262 by April 11.
Cost: on your own
Arranger: Nancy Verber (nwverber@gmail.com) – Photographic Society SIG

April 16 (Saturday) Walking/Hiking Group

Challenge Level 2-4
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Everyone welcome. Ah, Spring!!! Join us as we trek Char-Mar Ridge Park, 7741 Lewis Center Road (Rt 3), Westerville.

Time/Place: 10:30 a.m., meet in the parking lot.
Arranger: Hallan Noltimier (noltimier.2@osu.edu) – Walking/Hiking SIG

April 21 (Thursday) Lunch Bunch – All-Sky Automated Survey for Supernovae (ASAS-SN): Big Science with Small Telescopes

Innovative ideas can lead to major advances. Learn how OSU astronomers

developed a simple but powerful way to help understand some of the most violent events taking place in the heavens.

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.
Contact Person: Elenore R. Zeller (zellerej@prodigy.net – Social Committee)

April 28 (Thursday) Dinner Series

Tanya Berger-Wolf, professor of computer science and engineering, and ecology, evolution and organismal biology at Ohio State and faculty director of the Translational Data Analytics Institute, states we are losing the planet's biodiversity at an unprecedented rate and in many cases, we do not even have the basic numbers. Photographs, taken by field scientists, tourists, citizen scientists, automated cameras, incidental photographers, and collected from social media are the most abundant source of data on wildlife today. She will show how data science and machine learning can turn massive collections of images into high resolution information database about wildlife, enabling scientific inquiry, conservation, and policy decisions.

Time/Place: 5:15 p.m. reception, 6 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. lecture; OSU Faculty Club
Cost: \$35 (service charge included)
Registration Deadline: Register at osura.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281 by April 25.
Arranger: Carol Newcomb (newcomb.28@osu.edu) – Dinner Series SIG

Book Club

April's book is *The Answer Is...: Reflections on My Life* by Alex Trebek. In this moving memoir, TV's much-beloved host of *Jeopardy!* (1984-2020) reveals what the viewers had always wanted to know of his private life and thoughts, thus causing reflections by both the author and the reader. Due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, we will again be meeting via email using the *You Are There Play* format in lieu of an in-person meeting.

Arranger: Lee Hill (hill.30@osu.edu) – Book Club SIG

SPECIAL EVENTS

April 8 (Friday) BalletMet – *Cinderella*

Challenge Level 2
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

The race is on against the clock in Edward Liang's enchanting production of *Cinderella*. Set to Prokofiev's jubilant and lush score, this classic fairytale will captivate all ages.

Time/Place: Box office opens at 9:30 a.m. Seating is general, so plan to arrive early for best seats. Performance begins at 11 a.m., Ohio Theater, 39 E. State St.
CAPA UPDATE: Masks will continue to be required during this performance at the Ohio Theatre. However, vaccination and/or testing will no longer be required.
Cost: \$26.50 (admission ticket) includes extra fees.
Registration/Refund Deadline: Register at osura.alumni.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281 by March 31. Credit card preferred. Tickets will be held at Will Call.
Arranger: Marilyn Blackwell (blackwell.4@osu.edu) – Cultural Arts Committee

April 14 (Thursday) – Virtual Coffee Hour for New Retirees

Time/Place: 9 – 10 a.m.
Arranger: Sandy Bell (sib9716@outlook.com) – Membership Committee

May 20 (Friday) BalletMet – *Director's Choice – A Collection of Short Ballets*

Challenge Level 2
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Presenting five ballets in one performance. Featuring an excerpt from *After the Rain* by Christopher Rain, Balanchine's classic *Tschaikovsky Pas de Deux*, Benjamin Millepied's *Appassionata*, Kyle Abraham's *When We Take Flight*, and a brand new work by internationally acclaimed Francesca Harper.

Time/Place: Box office opens at 9:30 a.m. Seating is general, so plan to arrive early for best seats. Performance begins at 11 a.m., Davidson Theatre, 77 S. High St.
Cost: \$24.50 (admission ticket)
Registration/Refund Deadline: Register at osura.alumni.osu.edu or call 614-292-2281 by May 12. Credit card preferred. Tickets will be held at Will Call.
Arranger: Marilyn Blackwell (blackwell.4@osu.edu) – Cultural Arts Committee

Upcoming Events

Look for more information
in future newsletters.

May 3 (Tuesday) Day of Giving

June 16 (Thursday) OSURA Annual Meeting

September 21 (Wednesday) OSURA Annual Conference



OSURA Spotlight

Meet **Pamela Thomas**!

As a recent retiree from Ohio State, I spent the bulk of my career working in Diversity and Inclusion within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. For the past 20+ years, I commuted into Columbus from Northeast Ohio, a commute of more than two hours each day. I had the excitement of campus engagement while enjoying the tranquility of rural community life.

During my time in CFAES, I incorporated graduate studies as well. The best and most rewarding part of my job before retirement was advising and mentoring a diverse array of students and planning DEI programs and events. I found the ongoing challenges with mentoring, advising and problem solving with each school year to be quite fulfilling. Especially enjoyable were the relationships with students, many of whom I continue to interact with – weddings, baby showers, lunch meetups.

My job separation was sudden for me – I didn't see it coming. I woke up one morning and knew it was time to hand off my job to someone else. It was a pleasant revelation. The gift of time given back to me has been a great blessing and an opportunity



Pamela Thomas

for me to explore and concentrate on my 'to do' list. The list included so many things: yard therapy (an enjoyable outlet to be outside working in my yard), practicing my skills and speaking abilities in Spanish, taking classes and attending to projects at home, something I had always wanted to do but just didn't have the energy to do.

In these past few months, I have resumed volunteering at Mid-Ohio Foodbank and their community partners. I get to continue my service, something I began early as a Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Also, I've started a new and part-time position providing administrative support for my partner's business.

At other times, I explore local spaces and places that I have always wanted to see more of but never quite had the time. There's a lot to see and do in Ohio. It's fun to see the state from a tourist perspective and that's what I am doing! I'm going through my list of places to see: treasure hunting in German Village, Veteran's Memorial, the Columbus Zoo, local wineries, music in the park...my list goes on. I get to do whatever I want! That is what I enjoy!

I've also begun to the travel beyond the local area. I've taken a few road trips and am venturing an out-of-the-country excursion in January. Travel is one of the things I most look forward to. For me, membership in OSURA is one of the ways to provide me with new opportunities and adventures. I look forward to engaging with other Buckeyes.

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.

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.



from The Alumni Association**There is a new OSUAA Membership model!**

Grandfathered Life Members with OSUAA are still considered Active Members of the Association.

<https://www.osu.edu/alumni/membership/your-membership/become-a-life-donor/>

**Elections are Coming in May**

Check your May newsletter for the election ballot and information about the 2022 candidates or watch for an email from OSURA with a link to online voting.

Your vote will help direct the future of OSURA.

This year's positions include:

- ▼ Vice President/President-elect
- ▼ Secretary
- ▼ Three Members-at-large

The vice president/president-elect is an ex officio member of all committees and as president-elect succeeds the president.

The secretary keeps minutes of all board meetings and reports on activities to the Alumni Association.

Members-at-large handle various activities according to the needs of the organization.

✿ In Memoriam ✿

Carolyn Belczyk

February 22 | OSU Extension, 68

Helen Cook

December 27, 2021 | Medicine, 78

Carolyn Crawford

February 24 | Medical Technology, 78

Charles Csuri

February 28 | Computer and Info Science, 99

Ze'ev Davidovitch

February 7 | Orthodontics, 86

Nancy Lou DeLozier

February 25 | Athletics, 88

Claudia Keck

February 23 | OSUMC, 64

Joey Miller

February 6 | 73

Edward Lee Smith

February 28 | OSU Extension, 79

Mary Stiffler

February 12 | University Library, 68

Daniel Struve

February 7 | Horticulture and Crop Science, 70

Marilyn Scott Torrence

February 12 | OSUMC, 88

FROM: The Benefits Committee



STRS News

By Jerry Newsom

It's almost spring, and that means another election for a retiree to be on the STRS Board, filling out the remaining years on the seat to which Bob Stein was elected last spring. The two candidates who came in third and fourth last spring (Rita Walters and Elizabeth Jones) are likely to be the leading candidates. My take on it is that Walters is part of the current majority of the Board, representing the position of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). Jones challenges the current Board policies, close to the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). Walters is likely to favor a one-time 2% COLA, but with further increases for pensions awaiting agreement by actuarial consultants that such a move is fiscally sound. Jones is more likely to support an annual 2% COLA. It's not always that the differences between candidates are so clear cut.

On the subject of COLAs, some retirees have been emphasizing to the STRS Board (in no uncertain terms) how much they need the extra money, as if the Board would reinstate the COLA if they just realized how much people want it. This doesn't tell the Board anything they aren't already very well aware of. Board members would love to resume COLAs (retired members of the Board lost their COLAs too), but most feel they have no choice, given the legislative requirements that STRS be on track to be 100% funded within 30 years. In 2012, the funded period was infinite (i.e., the financial condition was headed for a death spiral), and now it's projected to be 10.9 years by June 2022. A 2% COLA would push that very close to 30 years, leaving little cushion for a financial downturn and providing

no relief to active teachers who have had their contributions increased. Averaged over the 4 years ending in 2012, the ratio of assets to liabilities was 56.0% (that's not good), and by last June the ratio was 87.8%. So the pain of increased contributions by active teachers and loss of COLAs by retirees is having the desired effect of greatly strengthening the financial condition of our retirement system.

OPERS News

By Darian Torrance

OPERS Board of Trustees did not meet in January, 2022. So, there are no updates from the Board this month.

OPERS Investment Statistics

Here are some interesting statistics that were reported in the OPERS 2022 Annual Investment Plan:

- In 2021, OPERS Staff produced a 15.34% return for the Defined Benefit Fund, exceeding the 6.9% target return. The results were similar for the Health Care Fund which returned 14.34%, exceeding its target return of 6.0%. As of December 31, 2021, net assets of the Defined Benefit Fund and the Health Care Fund were \$109.3 billion and \$14.5 billion, respectively, exceeding the asset growth targets for both funds. The combined assets of the two OPERS funds achieved an all-time record high market value of \$123.8 billion.
- OPERS Staff estimates the total cost to manage the asset base at 36.5 basis points or \$453.3 million. This is a significant reduction in fees from the prior year primarily due to the elimination of the allocation to hedge funds, a reduction in externally managed public market assets, and

lower management fees negotiated by Staff. Approximately 52% of total plan assets are managed internally, and 48% are managed externally. Average asset size managed internally is \$63.4 billion, with \$60.5 managed externally.

- OPERS Staff will continue its focus on reviewing the existing line-up of managers and portfolios in the context of internal versus external management with an emphasis on reducing management fees by bringing additional assets in-house.

Dental and Vision Vendor Selection

OPERS is in the process of selecting a vendor to administer both group dental and vision plans for the Medicare and Pre-Medicare populations. After reviewing proposals from 8 vendors, OPERS staff have selected MetLife and are currently in contract negotiations with them. If negotiations are successful, as of January 2023, MetLife will administer both dental and vision care benefits for retirees who select the OPERS-sponsored plans. (Currently, MetLife administers the dental plan, and Aetna administers the vision care plan.)

Pre-Medicare Retirees Opting into HRA

As of February 2022, 86% of pre-Medicare retirees previously enrolled in the OPERS Group Plan have opted into the HRA, with 8% opting out. Of those retirees who were deferred from the OPERS Group Plan, 66% have opted into the HRA and 3% have opted out. Retirees who have coverage through their spouse or through another employer should be opting into the HRA. Retirees who did not opt in by Feb. 28, 2022 must wait until open enrollment in the fall to opt into the HRA.



**The Ohio State University Retirees Assn.
Customer Service**

Longaberger Alumni House
2200 Olentangy River Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

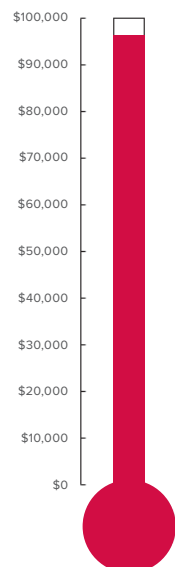


Ring the Bells! Blow the Horns!

We did it!

OSURA members and friends raised nearly enough money to fully fund an endowment to benefit the problem of Student Food Insecurity on the OSU Campus. The OSURA Board voted for OSURA to add enough to reach the required \$100,000 that put it over the top!

The fund will begin helping to combat food insecurity with the new fiscal year, on July 1, 2022.



*Donations
received as of
March 14, 2022*