



SPARTAN SENIOR

A newsletter for Michigan State University Retirees

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Left to right: MSU President Lou Anna Simon; April Clobes, from MSU Federal Credit Union, which hosts our meetings; and January 2015 speaker Etta Abrahams.

President’s Speech Well Attended; January Speaker to Explain Why She Spends Summers in Maine but Returns to Michigan’s Balmy Climate for the Winter

MSU President Lou Anna Simon spoke to a capacity audience at our December 8, 2014 meeting. She described the challenges faced by the university in recent years and the strategies the university is employing to move forward despite them. Our January speaker is former Vice President of MSURA and current Program Chair Etta Abrahams. The title of her talk will be “Why I Chose to Move from Michigan to Maine and Back to Michigan: A Short Study in the Importance of Staying Where You Belong.”

Future Meetings of MSURA

January 12, 2015, Etta Abrahams, see above; February 9, Ann Harrison on the War of 1812; March 9, Gary Hoppenstand on How World War II is Depicted on the Big Screen; April 13, Steve Terry on MSU Postcards; May 4, Annual Luncheon in Kellogg Center, Entertainment by Folk Singer Sally Potter. All regular meetings in Community Room of MSU Federal Credit Union at Mt. Hope and Farm Lane. Refreshments at 1:30, program at 2:00.

Florida Chapter Meeting

March 2, 2015 MSU Retirees Club of Florida will meet at the Bradenton Country Club, 4646 9th Avenue West, Bradenton. 11:00 am check in and social hour, lunch at noon. The speakers this year will be Fred Poston, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (and former VP for Finance), Sharon Butler, Assistant VP for Human Resources and Renee Rivard, Director of Benefits. For further information, contact Marsh Hestenes at hestenes@msu.edu or 941-918-8150.

We wish you a fine holiday season and a very happy new year!
—MSU Retirees Association

President's Message: eNotices Editor Needed

For more than five years, Gordon Williams has very capably performed the assignment of eNotices editor for the MSU Retirees Association, but he has just learned of some serious health issues, and has decided to step down. Please thank Gordon so much for performing this task so well. Gordon's email is: gw349y@gmail.com

A replacement is needed. The **eNotices Editor** writes short announcements for bi-monthly email messages sent to all MSU retirees; maintains a listserv for all email addresses of MSU retirees, communicates monthly program announcements, notifies retirees when newsletters are available online, and is a member of the Board of Directors and the MSURA Communications Committee. This is a Board appointed position.

Send recommendations to Patrick Scheetz at: Scheetz@msu.edu or call: (517) 351-7538. Interested persons are encouraged to volunteer. Thank you. Until a replacement is selected, send all requests for eNotices to me. **L. Patrick Scheetz**



Introducing the new Clinical Questions column in Spartan Senior

Welcome to this new column in the Spartan Senior! Please submit clinical health questions for which you think other Spartan Seniors would like to know the answers to Al LeBlanc, Editor, at aleblanc@msu.edu. We will select from your questions top priority topics most relevant to seniors, provide a summary of current evidence from the medical literature, and make specific recommendations or take away points. In each appearance of Clinical Questions in the Spartan Senior, we will focus on a key question. We look forward to hearing from you. Our Clinical Questions Editors are **Raza Haque, MD**, MSU Associate Professor and specialist in geriatrics, and **William Wadland, MD, MS**, MSU Professor emeritus and former chair of Family Medicine in the College of Human Medicine. **Today's Question: What is the appropriate use of probiotics for seniors? Who should use them? For how long?**

Summary of the evidence: Probiotics are organisms such as bacteria and yeast which are available in supplements and foods. The normal bacterial flora of our digestive systems can be disrupted by infection, inflammatory diseases, and use of antibiotics. Probiotics may improve intestinal function by restoring the normal bacterial balance. Studies (1-3) have shown that probiotics have a range of effectiveness in treating or preventing these conditions: inflammatory bowel diseases, antibiotic-induced and infectious diarrheas, post-surgical bowel infection, vaginitis, and eczema. Probiotics may be dangerous for persons with weakened immunity, serious illnesses, and severe pancreatitis.

Recommendations:

- 1) Ask your physician if probiotics would be helpful for your condition including what type and specific dose.
- 2) The FDA does not regulate probiotics, so choose products tested in studies from well-known companies.
- 3) Duration of use depends on your specific condition and the recommendations of your physician. Continuous use without specific indications is not recommended.

References:

- Floch M.H., Kim A. S. Probiotics A Clinical Guide. SLACK Inc.; Thorofare, NJ, USA. 2010
- Hickson M, D'Souza A.L., Muthu N, Rogers T.R., Want S., Rajkumar C, Bulpitt C.J. Use of probiotics Lactobacillus preparation to prevent diarrhea associated with antibiotics: randomized double blind placebo controlled trial. BMJ. 2007; 355:80.
- Goldenberg J.Z., Ma S.S., Saxton J.D., Martzen M.R., Vandik P.O., Thorlund K, Guyatt G.H., Johnston B.C. Probiotics for the prevention of Clostridium difficile-associated diarrhea in adults and children. Cochrane Database Syst. Rev. 2013;CD006095.



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Popular Lecturer on Historical Topics Will Speak to Us About the War of 1812

Professor Emerita Ann Harrison, who has earned a wide following among seniors for her evening classes at the Burcham Hills retirement center, will speak about the War of 1812 at our February meeting. Harrison shatters the myth of the boring professor, consistently finding amazing tidbits in places as unexciting as the history of Second Empire France or the Byzantine Empire. She brings a sense of curiosity to the topics that she works up, and there is never a dull lecture. Many seniors have followed her teaching for years. The War of 1812 was largely a comedy of errors, unless you got maimed or killed or you were a civilian whose house got burned down. We have all heard of incompetent generals, but the defense of Detroit was entrusted to an officer whose performance was so bad that some Americans considered him to be a traitor. He was later placed on trial and sentenced to death, but was fortunate enough to eventually have that sentence commuted. Some historians argue that he was made a scapegoat for America's unpreparedness for the war. For your information, this general, William Hull, was also the first governor of Michigan! Many events took place along the Canadian-American border. Join us on February 9 for refreshments and fellowship and a fascinating look at an almost forgotten war.

We Hear from Retirees

I just went to an Oktoberfest when I was in Germany three weeks ago; not in München though, but in the second largest Oktoberfest in the south, which is Bad Canstatter, just about 15 minutes away by train to Stuttgart. I love the old folk songs so I went to the Hofbrauhaus, the Beer halls, where one can listen to the music, old, that is.

—Irene Haug

Editor's Note: Irene is also an accomplished musician herself. She played her electric piano during the local Oktoberfest held by the Military History Study Group, and also led the singing!

Ordering Prescription Refills from MSU Pharmacies

Many seniors have taken the same prescription medication for a number of years, and will continue to do so unless their doctor decides otherwise. However, many doctors write prescriptions to run no longer than six months so that the patient will come in and the doctor can determine how well the prescription is working at that time. A problem arises when your doctor has sent in a new prescription for the same medication to the MSU pharmacy, but neither the web site nor the telephone system we must use for ordering refills can see that there is a new prescription waiting for you. The web site will simply not allow you to proceed, and the phone system will tell you to contact your doctor's office, which is something you don't need to do. **We have alerted the MSU pharmacy to this problem, and they have advised us to use the phone to speak directly to a pharmacist when our old prescription allows no further refills but our doctor has already sent in a new prescription.**

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