



MSU RETIREES ASSOCIATION

SPARTAN SENIOR NEWSLETTER

August - September 2018

VOL. 40, NO. 1

Sept. speaker to share MSU theatre season

Kirk Domer will preview the new MSU Theatre season and discuss the many factors that go into planning a theatre schedule that meets the interests of the public while also supporting the education of MSU theatre students.



Kirk Domer

Domer is the chairperson of the Department of Theatre and professor of scene design.

When Monday, Sept. 10, 2018
Time 2 p.m., refreshments at 1:30 p.m.
Where Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing

Oct. meeting to focus on MSU open enrollment

Dan Mackey and Joe Galardi will discuss the upcoming MSU open enrollment period, review any changes to retiree policies and benefits and answer questions from MSURA members. Mackey is the HR Manager Compensation and Benefits, and Galardi is the assistant director at HR.



Dan Mackey

When Monday, Oct. 8, 2018
Time 2 p.m., refreshments at 1:30 p.m.
Where Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing

Retirees hear dramatic story of sinking cruiser from a surviving crew member

A group of 40 retirees and friends listened with rapt attention as World War II veteran Dick Thelen described the sinking of the cruiser Indianapolis and the ordeal of its surviving crew members as they endured several days in the Pacific awaiting rescue.

The Indianapolis, a modern, very fast cruiser in 1945, had been tasked with delivering the final critical components of the first atomic bomb to the B-29 base on Tinian island.

On the return trip from Tinian, it was ambushed, torpedoed and sunk at night by a Japanese submarine.

Amazingly, the U. S. Navy did not know where the Indianapolis was at the time, nor did it know when the ship was expected back in port.

During the days they spent in the water, surviving crew members had to deal with insufficient food and

Surviving crew members had to deal with insufficient food and water, lack of protection from the sun by day, cold temperatures by night and marauding sharks.

water, lack of protection from the sun by day, cold temperatures by night and marauding sharks. Some became so thirsty that they drank salt water and died from its effect. After several days in the water, the group was spotted by an air patrol and rescued.

Thelen was animated as he pointed to a large framed photo of the Indianapolis to illustrate his story.

Please see DICK THELEN on page 7

Looking to work a bit?

Many retirees look for part-time work as a way to stay active and supplement their income. MSU Human Resources has positions available you might be interested in. Check their web site at careers.msu.edu.



Also MSU Culinary Services has part-time positions available perfect for MSU retirees. They offer competitive wages and flexible schedules and complimentary parking. If interested, go to jobs.rhs.msu.edu and click on the tab labeled "Non-student" jobs. If you have questions, please contact RHS Employment at 517-884-0634.

MSU RETIREES ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS AND BOARD FOR 2018-2019

President	Rick Vogt	517-242-1324
Vice President	Roger Baldwin	517-599-3395
Secretary	Jacqie Babcock	517-282-6861
Treasurer	Dave Brower	517-282-4883
Past President	Angela Brown	517-336-0569
At-Large	Mike Gardner	517-290-7090
At-Large	William Anderson	517-290-7750
At-Large	Pam Marcis	517-485-3419
At-Large	Bruce Smith	517-323-9579
Office Mgr	Elizabeth Thomas	517-353-7896
Asst. Office Mgr	Gayle Gower	517-332-0194

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audit	Joe Lessard	517-676-9815
Awards	Angela Brown	517-336-0569
Budget	Dave Brower	517-282-4883
Communications	Rick Vogt	517-242-1324
Health Benefits	Marilyn Rothert	517-393-4364
Information Tech	John Forsyth	517-332-6683
Membership	Nancy Craig	517-351-1391
Program	Roger Baldwin	517-599-3395

SPARTAN SENIOR NEWSLETTER

Editor	Rick Vogt	517-242-1324
Designer	Cheryl Pell	517-214-4845
Underwriting Manager	Jacqie Babcock	517-282-6861
Mailing Labels Manager	John Forsyth	517-332-6683

WEBSITE

Webmaster & Facebook Manager	Anders Johanson	517-974-8994
eNotices Manager	Rick Vogt	517-242-1324

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

Development Fund Coordinator	Dan Chegwiddden	517-884-1068
Old Newsboys	Bruce Smith	517-323-9579
Photographer	Mary Lou Gifford	517-881-3278
United Way	Darlene Wenner	517- 339-1685



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rick Vogt

Welcome to the MSU Retirees Association new 2018-19 season. We have a very good line up of programs and tours set up for the year. Mark your calendars and bring a friend. All MSU retirees and spouses are members and everyone is welcome.

Thank you to MSU President John Engler for speaking to the MSU retirees on June 26.

The MSU Retirees Association is a social and active group. We offer variety of special interest groups and create new ones as people request. Special Interest Groups are a great way to get to know people who have similar interests. Check out the list on page 3 of this newsletter or the MSU Retirees website.

The MSURA is an all volunteer organization. Your fellow retirees help make all we do possible by donating their talents and time, which we very much appreciate. If you would like to share your talents and some time, please give us a call, 517-353-7896.

We look forward to another year. Please join us and bring a friend. Good time to get together with old friends and make new ones.

Go Green!

MSU Interim President John Engler speaks to retirees, Tuesday June 26, 2018. He provided an update on University events and said good things are happening and he sees a bright future for MSU, despite the tough situation the University community has endured during the Larry Nasser ordeal. The talk, sponsored by the The MSU Emeriti Association and Office of Institutional Outreach, was open to all retirees.



MSURA Interest Groups

An interest group is a great way to get involved with MSURA. It's also a great way to meet new people who have similar interests. To get started, send an email to a group leader listed below and let her or him know you're interested in getting on the e-mail list to hear about future meetings and events.

Bike Riders Contact Tim Potter at pottert@msu.edu

Bowling Contact Patrick Scheetz at Scheetz@msu.edu

Dire Human Needs Overseas Group Contact Bill & Linda Schoenl at schoenl@msu.edu

Family Genealogy Contact Cathy Estrada at cje1026@yahoo.com

Flying Club Contact Fred Honhart at honhart@msu.edu

Knitting Call Rosemary Pavlik at (517)882-2030

Local Jazz Events Contact Albert & Beth Cafagna at cafagna@msu.edu

Motorcycle Contact Dan Chegwiddden at chegwidd@msu.edu

MSU Faculty/Staff Golf Contact Robert Wenner at wenner@msu.edu

Quilting Contact Ann Booren at boorena@msu.edu

Sherlock Holmes/Greek Interpreters Society Contact Shari & Jim Conroy at jconroy45@gmail.com

Square Dancing Contact Ron Hamelink at hamelin2@msu.edu

Tennis Contact Heather Mactaggart at mactagga@rhs.msu.edu

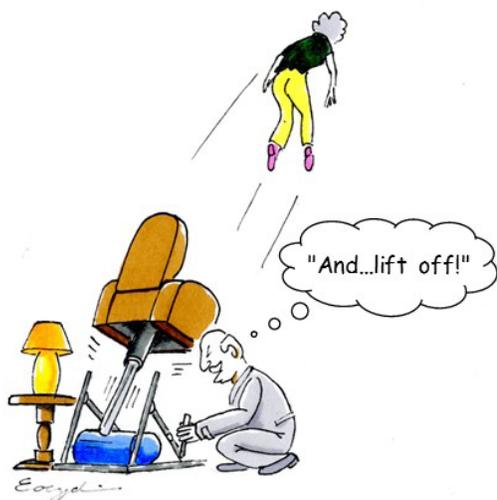
Travel Discussion Group Contact Al LeBlanc at aleblanc@msu.edu

US Military History Discussion Group Contact Al LeBlanc at aleblanc@msu.edu

Walking Group Contact Rick Vogt at vogtrick@comcast.net

Retirement is Work!

By Tom and Kevin Coccozzoli



**NEVER LET A RETIRED AEROSPACE ENGINEER
TRY TO FIX YOUR LIFT-O-MATIC CHAIR**

EARN MORE WITH A GREAT CERTIFICATE RATE

2.10% APY

2-Year Certificate

With terms from three months to five years, there are many options to help you reach your goals.

Contact MSUFCU to open your Certificate today.

www.msufcu.org
517-333-2424

**MICHIGAN
STATE
UNIVERSITY**
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
Building Dreams Together



Rate valid as of 7/21/18. Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is the total amount of dividends paid on an account, based on the dividend rate and the frequency of monthly compounding for a 365-day period, and expressed as a percentage. This rate assumes that a set amount is on deposit at the beginning of the dividend period, that no deposits or withdrawals are made during the dividend period and funds remain on deposit for one full year at the same dividend rate. Fees may reduce earnings. A fee may be charged for early withdrawal of a fixed-term certificate or IRA. Rates for accounts are variable and may change after account opening. Federally insured by NCUA.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



Please cut out this calendar and use it to help you keep track of MSURA activities!

MSURA MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

are at the MSU Federal Credit Union Community Room, Farm Lane & Mt. Hope Road, 1:30 p.m.–Refreshments, 2 p.m.–Program

DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC	EVENT	LOCATION
Monday, Sept. 10 2018, 1:30–3 p.m.	Kirk Domer, Chairperson, Department of Theatre	The Show Must Go On: Preview of MSU's New Theatre Season	MSU Retiree Association Membership Meeting	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Monday, Oct. 8, 2018, 1:30–3 p.m.	Dan Mackey, Human Resources Manager, & Joe Galardi, Assistant Director of Human Resources	Open Enrollment and Related Policy and Benefit Changes	MSU Retiree Association Membership Meeting	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2018, 1 p.m.	Frank Telewski, Ph.D., Professor of Plant Biology, Curator, W.J. Beal Botanical Garden and Campus Arboretum	Trees of MSU	Dr. Telewski's tour will introduce a variety of MSU trees, providing interesting information on each tree's characteristics and its history at the university	Meeting Place TBA
Monday, Nov. 12, 2018, 1:30–3 p.m.	Stacy Slobodnik-Stoll, Head Coach, MSU's Women's Golf Team	Building a Big 10 Championship Women's Golf Team	MSU Retiree Association Membership Meeting	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2018, 1:30–3 p.m.	TBA	A Musical Program	MSU Retiree Association Membership Meeting	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Monday, Jan. 14 2019, 1:30–3 p.m.	Eric Freedman, Knight Chair in Environmental Journalism and Professor in the MSU School of Journalism	Environmental Challenges in the Great Lakes Basin	MSU Retiree Association Membership Meeting	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019, 10 a.m.–Noon	AARP	Fraud Watch Network	Please check eNotices for details	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Monday, Feb. 11, 2019, 1:30–3 p.m.	Laura Bix, Ph.D., Professor of Packaging, MSU	Those Pesky Packages: Efforts Underway to Make Packaging Safer and More User-Friendly	MSU Retiree Association Membership Meeting	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2019, 10 a.m.–Noon	AARP	Emergency Preparedness	Please check eNotices for details	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Monday, March 11, 2019, 1:30–3 p.m.	Scott Counts, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Translational Science & Molecular Medicine, MSU College of Human Medicine	Recent Developments in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease	MSU Retiree Association Membership Meeting	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Tuesday, March 12, 2019, 10–11 a.m.	AARP	Getting to Know Apps	Please check eNotices for details	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Monday, April 8, 2019, 1:30–3 p.m.	Melanie Helton, Professor of Voice (soprano) and Director of the MSU Opera Theatre	From Performer to Professor: A Life in Opera	MSU Retiree Association Membership Meeting	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Tuesday, April 9, 2019, 10 a.m.–Noon	AARP	Good Form Walking	Please check eNotices for details	Community Room, MSUFCU Branch, Mt. Hope & Farm Lane, East Lansing
Tuesday, May 7, 2019, 11:30–2 p.m.	TBA	Luncheon: MSURA Elections & Business Meeting	MSU Retiree Association Annual Meeting	MSU Kellogg Center, Room TBA



Please support our sponsors. They do a lot to help us defray the cost of printing and mailing this newsletter.

IN MEMORIAM

This list shows deaths of MSU retirees from July 1, 2017, to June 15, 2018. In publishing this notice to mark their passing, we honor them for their contributions to improve MSU and the Greater Lansing community.

Donald L. Abbot	10/16/17
Paul R. Abramson	2/12/18
Joy Adcock	5/15/18
Mariella Aikman	10/12/17
Ramona Alegria	8/20/17
Thelma Arnette	12/5/17
Richard Au	10/6/17
Betty Baltzer	12/25/17
Jean Bennett	9/6/17
Richard A. Blue	2/6/18
Robert C. Britson	8/15/17
Lynn Brumm	2/16/18
Joan Brunette	1/8/18
Orlena Cagle	12/29/17
Deborah Carpenter	12/18/17
Terence M. Casey	12/7/17
Sharon Catey	12/10/17
Carroll Conn	12/6/17
Marsha Cook	1/6/18
Judy J Coppola	3/18/18
Lynwood Cotton	1/20/18
John C. Crockett	12/21/17
Robert Daniher	4/8/18
Lana Dart	11/30/17
George Davies	4/28/18
W. Richard Dukelow	1/1/18
Robert K. Fairbanks	7/4/17
Ann M. Feldman	3/23/18
Anna Fowler	11/16/17
Fred E. Freiheit	1/4/18
Fred A. Froehlich	3/29/18
Gary Fry	4/21/18
Gerald Fuller	1/4/18
Wanetta Fuller	2/23/18
Moises Garcia	10/25/17
John L. Gill	7/21/17
Richard F. Gonzalez	10/19/17
Jean Ann Grahek	10/19/17
John C. Gray	8/17/17
Virginia L. Gruhn	4/20/18
Don E. Hamachek	1/3/18
Kathryn Harmon	8/27/17
Michael J. Harrison	4/7/18



Florenc Harvathlee	9/17/17
John Haslem	12/5/17
George M. Heathcote	8/28/17
Harry Hedges	6/7/18
James B. Henry	12/28/17
Barbara Hill	9/6/17
Albert Holloway	3/30/18
Francis John Jane	12/19/17
Thomas A. Kaplan	12/30/17
Kenneth K. Keahey	4/11/18
Jean Schlater Kennedy	10/6/17
Aleda T. Knol	11/15/17
Donald F. Koch	3/22/18
Oraina Kopulos	1/25/18
Mordechai Kreinin	2/9/18
Patricia Laflame	2/19/18
Keith L. Lamkin	7/7/17
Inez Joan Lamport	9/8/17
Carl Lautzenheiser	11/27/17
John Leech	2/18/18
Arletha Logan	1/30/18
Maurice Cecil Mackey Jr.	2/8/18
John F. Martin	2/3/18

Rebecca McCavit	1/19/18
Alice M. McElroy	10/21/17
Kennetha McFadden	10/26/17
Hugh McManus	3/30/18
George C. Mead	11/5/17
John D. Molloy	3/27/18
Juanita Nathan	9/26/17
James F. Niblock	1/3/18
Eleanor Noonan	3/8/18
Mary Jane Northrup	12/25/17
Alden Olson	3/30/18
Ronald C. Oneill	4/29/18
Ralph F. Otten	2/23/18
Hironobu Ozaki	1/6/18
David Parisian	11/1/17
Margaret Parmelee	1/20/18
Forrest Peake	12/19/17
Roger Pixley	8/4/17
Alvin F. Root	1/12/18
D Savage-Burris	11/27/17
Peter Schroeder	2/25/18
Jack Seibold	5/8/18
Jay Siegel	9/27/17
William T. Sledd	7/6/17
Stanley Smith	1/29/18
Victoria J. Smith	11/12/17
Betty Spangler	11/21/17
Terry Stein	11/17/17
Margaret Stryker	9/1/17
Bennett M. Stutsman	11/10/17
Mae Sunderlin	9/18/17
Oscar Taboada	7/13/17
Joseph Thompson	9/3/17
Mary Jo Tormey	2/3/18
Irvin E. Vance	12/31/17
Neil Vandevord	4/12/18
Nancy L. Veenstra	5/18/18
Leland Warschefsky	9/21/17
Doris Wetters	9/2/17
Charles Williams	11/28/17
Virginia Wiseman	8/10/17
Doris Woodman	10/5/17
Donald Yates	10/17/17

CLINICAL QUESTION

What is brain health?

Welcome to this column in the Spartan Senior. Please submit clinical questions to Rick Vogt, editor of the Spartan Senior, vogtr@icloud.com.

CLINICAL QUESTIONS EDITORS

Raza Haque, MD, MSU Associate Professor and geriatrician, and **William Wadland**, MD, MS, MSU Professor emeritus and former chair of College of Human Medicine-Family Medicine.

What is brain health?

Brain health or cognitive health refers to the ability of the brain to perform normal functions and tasks such as: remember, recall, concentrate, process information, make judgments based on logic and solve problems optimally using different faculties as needed. ¹

Does aging affect our brain health?

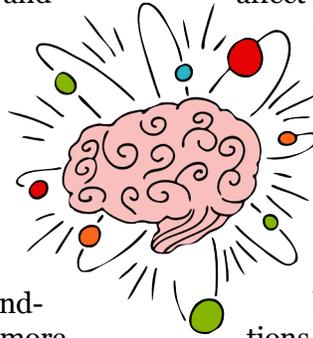
Yes. Some changes in thinking are common as people get older. For example, older adults may have: increased difficulty finding words and recalling names, more problems with multi-tasking and mild decreases in the ability to pay attention. These changes varies in individual to individual based on their education, comorbid health conditions, genetics and other environmental factors.

Does it mean that aging would result in irreversible loss of one's cognitive ability?

No! It is important to know that these changes do not mean the loss of brain functions or clinical dementia. Whereas, some decline in processing information may occur, research shows growing evidence that the brain remains “plastic”—able to adapt to new challenges and tasks as we age. The older adults can still effectively learn new things, create new memories and improve functions such as vocabulary and language skills. ²

What are the known factors that affect aging changes of brain?

Beside good physical health, one should consider other modifiable environmental factors, such as healthy eating, increased blood flow to the brain by optimal physical activity and engaging in ‘brain or cognitive exercises.’ Research points out that physical activity, avoiding alcohol, smoking and maintaining a good sleep cycle is equally helpful in maintaining physical and cognitive health. A robust social life is also a crucial factor in keeping the brain functions.



Do certain medical conditions affect brain health in the long run?

Yes. Diseases like poorly controlled diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and other cardiovascular disease can negatively affect brain health. However, keeping a healthy life style, exercise and activity is still a protective factor for optimizing cognitive health.

What about diet that helps brain health?

Emerging research indicates that the effects of diet on the brain are integrated with the actions of other lifestyle modalities, such as exercise and sleep. ³

Can we exercise the brain like physical body to maintain its health?

Brain and body are connected. Response of physical body to training and exercising is also similar to brain's response. Brain cells called neurons possess the unique ability of plasticity. Neurons can adapt and under the right conditions may even increase their communication through increased connectivity to each other and brain cells of distinct parts to enhance its ability to perform. A complex metabolic process is promoted in the presence of good brain blood flow and oxygen supply among other factors.

Is there a technology or electronic application that can help detect brain health?

In literature, use of electronics and game-based strategies in detection of cognitive deficits is scanty and emerging technologies with robust design have not been reported. Currently, several commercial applications have been developed that purport cognitive training in elderly with risk of impairment, but outcomes of these have not been studied in rigorous trials.

References

- ¹ Cognitive Health - National Institute on Aging - NIH National Institutes of Health (.gov) > nia > ...
- ² <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/how-aging-brain-affects-thinking>
- ³ J Neurosci Res. 2006 Sep;84(4):699-715. Neuroscience. 2008 Aug 26;155(3):751-9. doi: 10.1016/j.neuroscience.2008.05.061. Epub 2008 Jun 17.



World War II vet Dick Thelen told the MSURA military history interest group about the harrowing survival of crew members after their cruiser had been torpedoed

DICK THELEN, continued from p. 1

He also had the book “Only 317 Survived!” on hand. The book contains the first person accounts of crew members who were still alive at the time of its compilation.



The hard cover book is for sale at a price of \$30, with all proceeds going to support the memory of this ship, its crew and their contribution to the American war effort in the Pacific during World War II. Readers interested in obtaining a copy of the book may contact Mr. Thelen's son Dave Thelen at 517-420-2997.

Mr. Thelen's presen-

tation, held on May 16, was sponsored by the MSU Retirees Association American Military History Study Group, which meets once a month for fellowship and the discussion of American military history. Membership is open to all interested persons. There is no requirement to be a military veteran, and the group enjoys the support of both male and female members. Interested persons should contact convener Al LeBlanc at 517-655-6454 or send e-mail to aleblanc@msu.edu to learn more about the group.

—Al LeBlanc

MSU Music

College of Music
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Announcing the 2018/19 Season | MSU Music Presents an extraordinary array of musical offerings | Tickets & Info: music.msu.edu/newseason

9/15 SATURDAY

Fairchild Fanfare
MSUFCU SHOWCASE SERIES
8:00 p.m. Fairchild Theatre
A fast-paced montage showcasing a fabulous array of musical talent featuring ensembles and artists who perform in Fairchild Theatre.
Generously sponsored by Drs. Lou A. and Roy J. Simon.

9/20 THURSDAY

Dark Horse Consort
TAYLOR JOHNSTON
EARLY MUSIC SERIES
7:30 p.m. Fairchild Theatre
This period instrument ensemble of outstanding players from throughout the U.S. will present “The Golden Age of Brass,” music of 17th-century Italy and Germany for two cornetts, three trombones and organ.

9/27 THURSDAY

Wind Symphony
7:30 p.m. Wharton Center
Kevin L. Sedatole, conductor
Featuring works by Strauss and others, including a world premiere by Schonenberg/Davis.

9/28 FRIDAY

Symphony Orchestra
8:00 p.m. Wharton Center
Kevin Noe, conductor
Featuring works by Stravinsky and others, including Suite No. 2, “The Three-Cornered Hat” by de Falla.

10/5 FRIDAY

Jazz Orchestras and jazz saxophonist Melissa Aldana
MSUFCU JAZZ ARTIST IN RESIDENCE
8:00 p.m. Fairchild Theatre
Thelonious Monk Award recipient Melissa Aldana has a unique sound and flair which has led to a range of popular recordings since 2010.

10/15 MONDAY

The Last of the German Romantics, Richard Strauss
JOANNE AND BILL CHURCH
WEST CIRCLE SERIES
7:30 p.m. Fairchild Theatre
An influential conductor as well as composer, Richard Strauss expanded the Romantic palette with daring harmonic exploration.
Generously sponsored by Byron and Dee Cook.

ATTENTION MSU RETIREES:

MSU Benefits Open Enrollment is **October 1 – 31, 2018**



More information will be sent out in September

MSU Benefits Fair

Visit the MSU Benefits Fair at the Breslin Center to ask MSU benefits vendors and MSU Human Resources staff questions about your benefits.

BENEFITS FAIR DATES AND TIMES:

October
16
Noon – 7 p.m.

October
17
7 a.m. – 5 p.m.



Human Resources
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

hr.msu.edu/open-enrollment

Flowerpot area started out as farm

THE HISTORY GUY



BY MILT POWELL

This is the second of two articles about distinctive East Lansing neighborhoods. The first, Lantern Hills (April–May 2018), was a cooperative venture of young faculty families who acting as their own developers and general contractors, finished their project in less than two years. The Flower Pot neighborhood, on Marigold, Lilac, and Daisy Lane, west of South Harrison Road, is the result of a three-generation extended family saga that began before World War I and lasted through much of what we now call “the previous century.”

The story begins in 1911 when Steven Hicks, a 56-year-old Canadian born farmer, needed more farmland and bought 160 acres near Lansing, Michigan. The land was 30 miles from his family’s homestead near St Johns, but the price was right, and he was convinced that the state’s capital city would soon expand eastward. He took little notice of the small aggie college nearby.

The family moved all their possessions, farm implements and livestock during the winter of 1911-12, using three horse-drawn wagons, often converted to sleighs when the snow fell. Sheep and pigs were carried on the wagons but the cattle had to be herded down the dirt or gravel roads along what is now U.S. 127, onto Turner Street, and then by way of Grand River to the narrow road, lined with maples “big enough to come over the road, like a cathedral,” that led south through the old Harrison farm. This arduous journey was mitigated somewhat by emerging 20th century technologies. While much of hauling was done by their children, Steven and his wife had “gone over by the interurban”.* And his son Robert recalls that once when the horses had trouble pulling his sleigh over bare patches “. . . a sort of open chassis truck used to test Oldsmobile motors came up behind me and gave me a shove.”

The Hicks family’s 160 acres stretched from Marigold, just south of Kep Harrison’s farm, until recently the Michigan Highway Patrol headquarters, to Trowbridge, and west to the Red Cedar river. Except for its presumed future value it’s hard to understand the appeal it had to the elder Hicks. Nearly

half was swampy and forested, fences and barns were dilapidated, the soil too poor and sandy for raising crops. So the family spent the early years trying to make a living any way they could. They went into the dairy business, cooled the milk with spring water and went door to door, ladling from ten gallon cans into each customer’s container. They built a cider mill, imported apples from western Michigan, and delivered their product by wagon to a customer’s home, siphoning the apple juice “. . . with a long hose down through their basement window into their barrel . . . for about ten dollars.” Robert Hicks used the horse and wagon to haul gravel to the IM Sports Circle building site, coal from the freight house south of Trowbridge, and building supplies from the lumber yard near there to build his own home and, in time, the houses he would build for others.

Robert and Zoe built their first home in 1919 at 818 S. Harrison, since torn down and replaced by an apartment house. They hired a carpenter since Robert had only built a barn so far. Yet he did most of the work on their two-story, seven-room bungalow and had it wired for the electricity that would, Robert was certain, eventually make its way down Harrison Road.

The bungalow was new to the Midwest at this time. Derived from rest houses for travelers in India during English rule — the word means “Bengal style” — they were small with generous porches and overhanging eaves. American versions were first built in California and soon spread throughout the country, modified by local climates and tastes. By 1895 Sears and Roebuck was selling bungalow plans and kits nationwide. An entire East Lansing subdivision called Bungalow Knolls was started in 1926, and I lived there for 27 years without knowing that it exemplified the architectural craze of its day.

By this time — around 1920 — expansion, the State Police force and an increased student population at Michigan Agricultural College had created a new housing market along south Harrison. The Hicks family realized

Please see FLOWERPOT on page 10



903 S. Harrison



Rail crossing south of Trowbridge



931 Marigold

that subdividing the land might be more profitable than farming it and, in Robert's case at least, that they could also be their own developers, general contractors and builders. So in 1925 Robert Hicks and his brother Carl together with their parents, Stephen and Fanny, created the Lilac Farms Corporation and began to survey the rest of the property and stake out building lots. They began on Marigold, extending that street a block at a time using a horse-drawn grader and gravel hauled up from and river and, eventually, material from the old East Lansing dump, now neatly covered by the Brody dormitory complex. Other streets were laid out — Lilac, Larkspur, Daisy — names that would eventually give the Lilac Farms its unofficial designation.

The first several years were quite successful. Robert would sit down with plans ordered from catalogs or magazines and discuss them with each customer. Sometimes "pre-fab wall and floor sections were delivered" from St. Johns. Robert built foundations with hand-made con-

crete blocks, framed and roofed the homes and finished them inside, still using lathe and plaster for the walls. In those days, he remembered, "Everything we did sold."

And then the Great Depression struck: no new houses could be built, owners defaulted on mortgages, Robert went back to delivering milk while Carl tried raising crops on the unsold lots. The family struggled just to make interest payments on their own mortgage and didn't build another house until 1935. The family had sold 25 or 30 lots before WWII, but the business really prospered after the war with returning veterans and the concurrent expansion of Michigan State College. The rest of the Flower Pot filled in quickly. Robert and Carl built somewhere between 60 and 80 houses during their active years, "Not what you would call a mass construction business," Robert recalled, because he was personally involved with each owner from initial plans, through construction, to move-in. He built his last house in 1957, in

Florida where, after 46 years, he and his wife Zoe would retire.

I've visited many of the homes in this pleasant neighborhood since our family moved to East Lansing in 1963 and rented, for a year, the house at 903 South Harrison. This lot was one of the first to be sold by the Hicks family and the house was originally owned and occupied, as I have recently learned, by Captain Jack Cleghorn of the nearby Michigan State Police. It now houses the day care program for its closest neighbor, the Islamic Center. Now, after reading memoirs and chronicles of the Hicks family, it's fascinating to drive through the Flower Pot as I did recently, to locate Steven and Fanny's house, the little creek, and the cider mill, and to imagine the Hicks family growing up on this dubious parcel of land where, by perseverance and hard work, they managed to make a living and leave a legacy.

*All quotations are taken either from *A History of the Red Cedar Neighborhood . . .* by Janet Hicks Ronk (2007) or the *Hicks-Thurber Family History*, by Helen Hicks Kilfoy (1982)



CREATE IMPACT *with* *your* **IRA ROLLOVER**

Office of Gift Planning

University Development
Michigan State University

Spartan Way

535 Chestnut Road, Room 300

East Lansing, MI 48824

(517) 884-1000

giftplan@msu.edu

www.giftplanning.msu.edu

Do you have an IRA? Are you over 70 ½ years of age?

If this describes you, a Qualified Charitable Distribution, also known as a charitable IRA rollover, is a great way to make an impact at Michigan State University.

The tax code provision allows individuals 70 ½ and older to transfer up to \$100,000 from their individual retirement accounts directly to MSU without being subject to income taxes on the distribution. Your gift may be applied towards your required minimum distribution. It's a tax efficient way to make a gift, especially if you do not itemize.

Your gift can support your favorite program or scholarship fund at MSU.

Contact the Office of Gift Planning for precise instructions on how to make your "IRA Rollover" gift to MSU.



SPARTANS WILL.



**Suite 22 Nisbet Bldg. MSU
1407 S. Harrison Road
East Lansing, MI 48823-5239**



**HAPPY
FALL!**

Lessons on Investing – Did you know?

StraightLine is a fiduciary that was chosen by MSU to provide professional advice and management to both employees and retirees at MSU. Our experienced advisors and dedicated research staff allows us to offer unbiased information to the MSU faithful. We present the following for your review:

Straight to the Point

Market Update - Despite being in the time of the year when we typically see markets enter a bit of a lull, they have been showing signs of life. After a long period of sideways consolidation domestic markets have moved higher as generally good economic news and a strong start to earnings season is lifting spirits. While various macroeconomic issues continue to create headline risks, there is some hope that those concerns are abating. Recent talks with EU leaders have investors hoping a trade agreement that lessens, or eliminates tariffs altogether, can be achieved. Chinese trade talks remain a key issue, though, and continue to weigh on emerging markets broadly. We are confident that in the coming weeks and months we'll see some movement on these issues, which should yield positive results for not just domestic stocks but equities globally.

Investment Implications - Coming off strong returns in 2017, it appeared that international stocks had turned the corner after several years of underperformance relative to domestic markets. While things got off to a good start this year, they quickly changed with the pickup in trade rhetoric. In recent months foreign equity markets have seen declines as the fear of trade wars with the US, combined with a strengthening US Dollar, have hindered returns. We continue to believe that is a short-term phenomena, and given the difference in performance and valuations, international equities continue to represent an attractive long-term strategic investment.

Our quarterly newsletter (StraightTalk) walks through the macro information that we are utilizing in respect to our near term strategy. Please contact us if you are interested in receiving these newsletters or discussing our macroeconomic views.

From StraightLine Higher Education Services



Headquarters
165 Kirts Blvd, Suite 100
Troy, MI 48084

East Lansing Office
2911 Eyde Pkwy, Suite 100
East Lansing, MI 48823

(877) EDU-403B
info@straightline.com
www.straightline.com



SPARTAN SENIOR NEWSLETTER MSU Retirees Association, Suite 22 Nisbet Building, MSU, 1407 Harrison Road, East Lansing, MI 48823-5239 • **Phone** (517) 353-7896 • **Email** msura@msu.edu
Editor Rick Vogt (517) 242-1324 • **Website** <http://retirees.msu.edu> • **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/MSURetirees> • **Change of address or MSU benefit questions**, contact MSU Human Resources at (800) 353-4434