



MICHIGAN STATE
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SPARTAN SENIOR

A Newsletter for Michigan State University Retirees

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Old One Room Schoolhouse Restored by Retirees

Not too long ago a team of retiree volunteers completed the restoration of the old Branch School on Sherwood Road in Williamstown Township. **Tom Johnson**, retired from MSU human medicine, **George Eyster**, retired from MSU veterinary medicine, and **Fred Campbell**, a retired minister, carried out the three year project. There are still a few details remaining to be done.

Branch School was built in 1864, during the Civil War. It was originally called the "Little Africa School" and was part of the Africa School District, so named because of the number of dedicated abolitionists who lived nearby. The school closed in 1962, and the building became the Williamstown Township Hall until construction was completed on the current township hall at the intersection of Germany and Zimmer Roads. During its period of occupancy, the township installed a modern drop ceiling and fluorescent light fixtures. The building is still owned by Williamstown Township, but was unoccupied after the township government moved out.

The first big challenge for the restoration crew was getting rid of the smell caused by two skunks which had gotten into the well that used to supply water to the school and had died. The restoration crew found a calendar for the year 1922 in the school, and decided that that would be the target date for the restoration. In other words, they would try to have nothing showing in the restored school that was more recent than 1922.

That meant that the drop ceiling and fluorescent light fixtures had to come out, and Tom Johnson has wry memories of using a power sander to smooth the original wood ceiling while working flat on his back. He wisely made use of goggles and a respirator.

The biggest expense of the project was the purchase of a set of period school desks. A number of local contractors donated their time or gave discounted prices on their work in order to help the project along. The ultimate goal of the restoration team is to have the restored school listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Johnson, who had attended a one room school himself, must have enjoyed the project because he now lists himself as a "Restorian" on his business card. **What have you been doing in retirement? Send e-mail to aleblanc@msu.edu or leave a phone message at (517) 655-6454 to let us know.**

--Al LeBlanc



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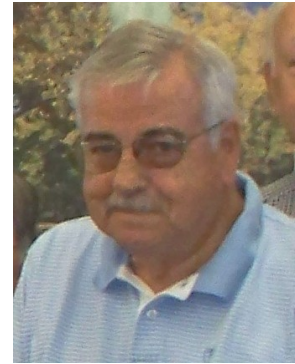
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President's Message

The MSURA Office



Let's talk about the office, not the popular TV show that is ending a long run this year but rather the MSURA office located at 22 Nisbet in the lower level. We are open with volunteer retirees from 9a.m.-Noon Monday through Friday, Fall and Spring Semester. The telephone number is (517) 353-7896. We have voice mail so we can respond to you if nobody is in the office when you call.

What information can we give you? We can give information about the next meeting, how to subscribe to the newsletter, and how to donate to the Association. What information can we not give you? We will not try to answer your question about benefits, parking or other University matters. Instead, we will refer you to the proper person or office that can give you the most up-to-date information. We might think that we know everything about the University because we worked there for a long time, but things change daily. We will not tell you that we will get the answer and get back to you. We all know that things tend to get misinterpreted if it goes from one person to another and then to a third party. We hope you understand our position.

Best wishes for the New Year!

—Ron Smith



MSURA is making arrangements for a tour of the new Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum. We will keep you posted.



Nominations Requested for Volunteer of the Year Award By L. Patrick Scheetz, MSURA Past President

The Awards Committee of the MSU Retirees Association requests your nominations for the **Spartan Senior Volunteer Award of 2013**. This is the only award presented annually by MSURA. It is the most significant achievement award in the retirement community of Michigan State University. The MSURA established this award to recognize persons whose volunteer activities have provided a positive influence and an important impact on the MSU retiree community, the University, and as a service to others. This award will be presented during the annual MSURA luncheon meeting at noon on Monday, May 6, 2013 in the Lincoln Room of Kellogg Center.

Please answer the following questions and submit your nomination by e-mail or by postal mail as instructed below.

1. Name and address of MSURA retiree or retiree spouse nominee.
2. Where has nominee been active as a volunteer? (This award emphasizes service to MSURA and to MSU but also notes service in other organizations and "person to person" helping roles.)
3. List specific volunteer responsibilities and activities (including leadership roles, accomplishments, length of service times, etc.)
4. Describe your perspective on how this person's work has brought significant benefits to MSURA and/or MSU, thus meriting special recognition.
5. Your own name, address, phone, and e-mail, as the nominator.

Nomination deadline is April 1, 2013. Send via e-mail to: scheetz@msu.edu or via U. S. mail to L. Patrick Scheetz, 1160 Woodingham Drive, East Lansing, MI 48823 -1860

This award is given only once to any individual. Occasionally, two well-qualified persons have received this award in a single year. Past recipients include: Fred Graham, Charlie Downs, Stephanie Barch, Fred Kletke, Nancy Craig, Bob and Darlene Wenner, Ruth Jameyson, Walker Hill, John Roetman, Clella Dickinson, Russell Hill, Pat Ralston, George Dike, Don Gregg, Erling Jorgensen, Harold Davidson, Lorraine Demorest, Velmer Oakley, Judy Bukovac, Dick Reid, Gary Stone, and Mary McCartney.



Thanks much for assisting with this most important award activity of the MSU Retirees Association. Your attention to this request is seriously appreciated.



ON A SAD DAY, OLD NEWSBOYS WILL HELP MANY CHILDREN – THANK YOU

Thank you to all the retirees and friends of MSU for helping sell the Spooft Edition of the Old Newsboys paper on Thursday, December 6. All money from the sale goes to provide footwear to needy schoolchildren in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties. Those helping included Rudy Abood, Fern Badgley, Kay Butcher, Nancy Craig, Fred Graham, Jim Graves, Sally Harwood, Vern Johnson, Don Jost, Bob Muhlbach, Rosemary Pavlik, Lowell Rothert, Joan Smith, Ron Smith, Brenda Spackman, Sara Stid, and Cassandra Trawitz. This group raised over \$2,400 toward the overall goal of \$150,000. Thank you, too, to the many other retirees who contributed directly to the association. The need is great. Even though the Old Newsboys Association met its goal last year and were able to supply footwear to over 5,600 children, there are many more requests this year.



There was sadness that day because we learned that Mr. Fred Kletke, a retiree of MSU's Salvage Department and well-known recipient and supporter of Old Newsboys, died that morning. He was 94 and he never forgot that the Old Newsboys bought shoes for him and his brother in 1927. He was very pleased when the MSURA decided to help this very worthwhile charity.

Fred was officially known among the Old Newsboys ranks as "Mr. Old Newsboy." He had been a member of the association so long that people are not sure just how long but estimate at least 30 years. He originally sold the newspapers on South Washington dressed as Santa Claus but later moved to Goodrich's Shop-Rite on Trowbridge Road. The morning of the sale, a wooden chair at Goodrich's was empty except for the Old Newsboys' bag and collection container. Nearby was a sign that indicated their favorite "Old Newsboy" had passed away that morning.

Fred would be pleased with the amount we raised this year but he would stress it was never enough.

—Brenda Spackman





WHAT'S NEW AT THE U

BY STAN HECKER

MSU RESEARCHERS—DEPTH AND BREADTH IN EVOLUTION

“A team of researchers at Michigan State University has documented the step-by-step process in which organisms evolve new functions. The results, published in the current issue of *Nature*, are revealed through an in-depth, genomics-based analysis that decodes how *E. coli* bacteria figured out how to supplement a traditional diet of glucose with an extra course of citrate.”

Another science-news press release. Yah-dah, yah-dah. But wait, look at this:

“To decipher the responsible mutations, Zachary Blount, postdoctoral researcher in MSU’s BEACON Center for the Study of Evolution in Action, worked with Richard Lenski, MSU Hannah Distinguished Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics.

“Lenski’s long-term experiment, cultivating cultures of fast-growing *E. coli*, was launched in 1988 and has allowed him and his teammates to study more than 56,000 generations of bacterial evolution.” 1988? Growing FIFTY-SIX THOUSAND generations of science’s favorite bacteria? Wow. In human terms, that’s 1.1 MILLION years of nominal 20-year generations. And this: “The experiment demonstrates natural selection at work. And because samples are frozen and available for later study, when something new emerges scientists can go back to earlier generations to look for the steps that happened along the way.”

A quarter century of frozen bacteria? Classified, annotated, sorted, and categorized?

Wow. Here’s the point, and it’s not about this specific research: *you need a major research university—several of them—to do this work.*

Imagine keeping *anything* frozen a quarter-century. What would you need?

- Electricians, refrigeration mechanics, alarm systems monitored 24/7, reliable power.
- Consider wave after wave of students nurturing new generations of bacteria—passing along a torch, so to speak, for research.

Same procedures, same routines, same records, same labels: “*Generation 44,215, July 16, 1995*” or whatever.

Think about the quiet dedication of scientists growing something—ONE thing, a simple thing—for decades, to find changes. The discipline to establish standards, and hold to them, decade after decade.

You need buildings and utilities; a virtual university has no way to nurture bacteria and freeze samples. You need tenure; an adjunct-faculty system wouldn’t sustain such a program.

You need an infrastructure built for the long haul—decades and centuries, not fiscal years and academic semesters alone.

Consider Dr. Lenski. There was not time to interview him before deadline, but consider him, in 1988, as he started a longitudinal process of subjecting a simple bacteria to a changing environment. Setting up the processes; dealing with standardization, sampling, safety, and all the other details of long-term biological research. We’ve known, since Darwin, that things happen; but *how*? So, Dr. Lenski keeps samples of the generations. He thought, perhaps, “someday, this will be useful.” And he kept it going. For a quarter century. Now, a new generation of researchers, armed with new knowledge and tools, probe into the molecular and genetic foundations of evolutionary change. They stand on his shoulders.

For this work, you need a real University. With a capital “U”, deep roots and long-term strength. No, you need more—Dr. Blount’s colleagues brought other skills, knowledge, and tools to the work from other universities. This was a collaboration among MSU and other research institutions.

“All Hail” to the major research institutions—MSU among them—who create the environment of research and learning.

Continued next page

WHAT'S NEW AT THE U, continued

MULTI-MEDIA UN-HEALTHY?

New research in the Department of Turn-It-Down-This-Makes-Me-Crazy:

Using multiple forms of media at the same time – such as playing a computer game while watching TV – is linked to symptoms of anxiety and depression, scientists have found for the first time.

Michigan State University's Mark Becker, lead investigator on the study, said he was surprised to find such a clear association between media multitasking and mental health problems. What's not yet clear is the cause. "We don't know whether the media multitasking is causing symptoms of depression and social anxiety, or if it's that people who are depressed and anxious are turning to media multitasking as a form of distraction from their problems," said Becker, assistant professor of psychology.

While overall media use among American youth has increased 20 percent in the past decade, the amount of time spent multitasking with media spiked 120 percent during that period, Becker said.

For the study, which appears in the journal *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, Becker and fellow MSU researchers Reem Alzahabi and Christopher Hopwood surveyed 319 people on their media use and mental health.

Participants were asked how many hours per week they used two or more of the primary forms of media, which include television, music, cell phones, text messaging, computer and video games, web surfing and others. For the mental health survey, the researchers used well-established measures, although the results do not reflect a clinical diagnosis.

GROWING UP—LINGUISTIC CONFORMITY

That pressure in becoming an adult? We went through our own. Saw it in our children and maybe didn't understand it. Now we see it in our grandchildren—and it's no small thing. Read on.... As adolescents transition to adulthood, the pressure to meet adult expectations – such as speaking properly – may be greater than expected, according to a new study by a Michigan State University researcher.

Suzann Evans Wagner, assistant professor of linguistics in the College of Arts and Letters, has proven for the first time that language changes with age in addition to community pressures. And, surprisingly, college and post-high school ambitions play a huge role.

"It seems as if in high school, students who want to go to a good college are the ones who early on begin to dial back their use of nonstandard language," Wagner said. "And the ones who have no aspirations to leave their local community, or who have no particular aspirations to raise their social class, are the people who have no obvious social incentives to change the way they speak."

Wagner's study, published in the journal *Language Variation and Change*, is based on the language trends of a group of 16- to 19-year-old females from Philadelphia. She measured how often they used "ing" vs. "in" in words such as "runnin" vs. "running" from their high school senior year into their college freshman year.

Wagner found the students who attended or planned to attend a national research institution increased their use of the more socially acceptable "ing" pronunciation – rather than "in" – the most. Those who attended a community college, a liberal arts college or a regional small school showed only a slight increase in the use of "ing," if at all.

That's because students who attend major research institutions, which attract students from around the country, will find a happy speech medium that's acceptable to society, Wagner said. But in a regional or a two-year college, most students are drawn from the local area and often feel pressured to sound, and remain, local.

What Retirees are Up To

Options Available to Keep Moving

One morning, while walking in Jenison Field House, we met Patrick Scheetz, Past President of the MSU Retirees Association. We started talking about exercises that we as Seniors do or do not do. Then Patrick invited us to write up a short review of the facilities that MSU retirees and their spouses have available to them. Besides Jenison Field House, we can walk in Munn Ice Arena and IM Sports East on the campus. Of course, the trails and sidewalks on and off campus can be used when the weather is suitable. We also know that MSU retirees play tennis, handball, and golf in or on MSU facilities. Some retirees may spend winters in the East, West, or South and use facilities available in that area for exercising. In addition, the Hannah Community Center and other Community Centers in the area including the YMCA provide a large variety of organized exercise activities such as Active Senior Exercises, Clogging, Line Dancing, Walking, Water Aerobics and Zumba. Meridian Mall also provides space for Seniors to do exercises as well and walk. Of course, there are several fitness facilities in the area that one can use. One can also purchase a treadmill, stationary bicycle, elliptical machine and other devices that can be used in the home for exercising. Some of you may argue that hunting, fishing, and gardening provides us with relaxing exercise. We hope this short story prompts all of us to keep moving.

—**Clarence and Loretta Suelter** Retired Faculty Member of Science & Mathematics Education Division, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Hello

Hello: you asked what we are up to: seeing Spartans in Scotland! On four occasions, wearing my MSU sweatshirt, I was called out with Go GREEN or Yea Spartans! One in Edinburgh Castle, one outside of Stirling Castle. Spartans are everywhere, enjoying their interesting world.

—**Patricia and Robert Miller**

Correction

Diane K. Hutchens, who wrote the excellent article about World War II veteran Dick Crum in the Fall 2012 International Edition newsletter, writes to report that she is enjoying retirement. We regret the incorrect spelling of her name in the by line of that article.

Chuckle of the Day – What Retirees do for Historical Accuracy

Tom Johnson, who headed up the restoration of Branch School described in our cover article, tells this story on himself: The other team members had made a good buy on Phillips head screws, and as a surprise for Johnson they fastened the old fashioned school desks to the floor with these screws. Johnson was pleasantly surprised when he saw this, but something just didn't seem right. An internet search revealed that the Phillips head screw was not invented until 1936, 14 years after the 1922 target date for the restoration. You guessed it – Johnson went out and bought historically accurate slot head screws for the restoration and changed every screw that was fastening every desk. Some of us old retired guys just have to get everything historically accurate!

Savoring Historical Fiction

This is the season for top ten book lists and of gratitude for friends who give or recommend good books to us. So I'm departing from my usual practice to write about historical fiction, a genre I've enjoyed and one that may appeal to those who read this section of the Spartan Senior Citizen.

Historical fiction has a dubious reputation. Considered less serious than narrative history and biography, less creative than "real" fiction (because it's limited to real people and events), it is also tainted by association with the slim volumes and plump bodices of historical romance. But some very fine writers have been moved to write books that evoke the language and emotion of earlier times and to do so with fidelity to actual events and persons. Here are two of my favorites.

From the Court of Henry VIII

I've just finished Wolf Hall and Bring Up the Bodies, the first two of Hilary Mantel's three novels (the last has not yet appeared) on Henry VIII, his court, and at least three of his wives. This is an epoch well covered by historians and biographers but Mantel's unique approach is to place Thomas Cromwell, Henry's counselor and enabler, at the center of the story.

Historians and playwrights have generally seen Cromwell as a cynical opportunist who pandered to Henry's serial infidelities to further his own ambitions. He's a much more complex and humane character in these books. The War of the Roses is not long over; the Tudor monarchy's legitimacy is dubious in some quarters and the aging King still lacks a son. The Reformation has begun in Europe, and Henry is not the first Christian Prince to covet the money that flows to Rome. Cromwell has been a mercenary in France, a banker in Florence and a merchant in Amsterdam. He is a modern Renaissance man who, for the sake of England, must keep the King on his throne, unthreatened by civil war or foreign invasion and with a male heir to ensure a peaceful succession of power.

We watch Cromwell at this work through Mantel's relentless use of present tense; we are not so much a fly on the wall at Henry's court but placed somewhere in Cromwell's brain, seeing through his eyes, listening with his ears, and hardly aware of the writer's art which has made it all work.

Renaissance Men on a Man of War

Patrick O'Brian wrote several novels and biographies before turning his literary attention to the British Navy in the Napoleonic Wars. This is also well-covered territory; my hasty search turned up at least a dozen multi-volume series, some, like the Hornblower books, already familiar to readers of a certain age. But O'Brian's energetic narrative, his vast population of richly drawn characters, and the long plotlines which may arc across four or five novels place these works beyond categorization. Critics have called them "the best historical novels ever written," and "the Iliad of the Napoleonic Wars."

O'Brian's range of interests -- music, Irish and Catalan independence, exploration and natural history, enclosure laws and pocket boroughs, insider trading, espionage -- take us far beyond the novel of heroism and adventure. His protagonist, Captain Jack Aubrey, is an amateur violinist whose interest in navigation and mathematics makes him a friend of Caroline Herschel and a member of the Royal Society. His companion, Stephen Maturin, physician and naval surgeon, cellist and naturalist, is fluent in Irish, French, Catalan, Latin and Greek as well as various secret codes of British intelligence.

Thus Maturin, on an all too brief stop in the Galapagos, reflects on curiosities in finch species but unlike his real life successor Charles Darwin, has no time to study them. At the happy conclusion of a later volume, with Maturin and his wife reconciled and Aubrey's reputation restored, all parties burst spontaneously into the latest popular song: Mozart's closing chorus from "The Marriage of Figaro".

There is a much good reading here for those who will enjoy these books. One suggestion however: though single volumes can be read separately it is better with both authors to read them sequentially. Wolf Hall is first in the Henry VIII series, Master and Commander is first in the Aubrey-Maturin series.

—Milt Powell



A HONEY OF A PRESENTATION

For our December 10th meeting retired MSU entomologist Dr. Roger Hoopingarner gave a fascinating presentation on the importance of the honey bee population and the many problems presently confronting it.

One major concern is the steady decline in the bee population due to various diseases. In addition, many predators such as opossum, raccoons and the dreaded black bear are of great concern. One lone bear can decimate an entire apiary in a very short time. The fact that bee keepers are transporting their bees from the eastern states to California, mainly to pollinate the large almond crop in the central valley of California, is causing great stress on the colonies and the queen bees. Unfortunately the queen bee has to be replaced several times a year per colony due to all these factors.

Presently the almond crop is driving the whole bee industry. More bees are used to pollinate the almond trees than all other fruit and vegetable crops together in the United States. The California almond crop produces 80% of the world almonds with the honey bee now called the "keystone" species in the agricultural system.

Many questions were asked with the first one being how can we personally help the honey bee on its precarious journey here in Michigan? Dr. Hoopingarner's advice was to plant a couple of bee friendly plants in your garden such as garlic chives (fall blooming) and regular chives (spring blooming) and the borage plant. He is looking into getting us a quick listing.

There was a good crowd of interested retirees in attendance considering the main speaker was ill and Dr. Hoopingarner stepped in at the last minute to provide us with his expertise on the wonders of the honey bee.

—Rosemary Pavlik

Upcoming Meetings

On January 14, 2013 the Retirees will host **Julie Duesing**, the Program Coordinator of the Michigan Great Lakes Chapter of the **Alzheimer's Association**. She will talk on "Different Aspects of Alzheimer Disease."

February 11, 2013 - Lee Reimann from the law firm of Willingham & Cote PC of East-Lansing, MI will speak on Wills, Living Trust Agreements, Power of Attorneys and How To Handle Your Money in Retirement.

March 11, 2013 - Renee Rivard of Human Resources will give us an update on our health benefits. **Chief Pharmacist Jana Jirak** from the Clinical Center will be on hand to answer any questions about medicines and the Clinical Center.

April 8, 2013 - To be announced

May 6, 2013 – Annual Meeting and May Luncheon – Topic to be announced

Please keep this information for your own future reference!

REMEMBER

The MSU Retirees Association meetings are now held at the Conference Room of the new Farm Lane Branch of the MSU Federal Credit Union, 4825 East Mount Hope Rd, East Lansing. Refreshments are served at 1:30 and the program begins at 2:00.

HOW TO MAKE GIFTS TO SUPPORT THE MSU RETIREES ASSOCIATION

Your association is financially stable because many individuals have chosen to make charitable contributions to the association. These donations are used to pay for the programs and services budgeted by your board of directors. Most expenses incurred by the association are for communication to MSU retirees and their spouses through the newsletter, the website and special bulletins when it is urgent to forward information. Newsletter subscriptions are the other source of income to the association.

Make your charitable contributions to a University Development account as described below. ***This is the only way your gifts can be tax deductible.*** Your gifts also will count toward university donor recognition clubs and societies. You may also make gifts to this account in tribute to deceased or living loved ones or former colleagues.

To make a donation by mail, enclose the following form with your donation and mail to: University Development, 300 Spartan Way, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

This is a charitable contribution to *Michigan State University* to support the educational programs and services provided by the MSU Retirees Association for retirees and their spouses and in support of the university community.

Make your check out to: **MSU — Retirees Association, AB272**

Name(s)

Full address

We thank these recent Donors for their Support

David and Marion Dilley, East Lansing, MI

Harold and Dorothy Riley, East Lansing, MI

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REMINDERS!

MSU Community Club Taste of the Town

On Saturday, April 20, 2013, the MSU Community Club will once again sponsor Taste of the Town. Tickets will be available by about March 15. All proceeds will benefit the club's MSU Endowed Scholarship Fund. Fifteen dollars of the cost of each ticket will be a tax-deductible contribution to the scholarship fund.

--**Gretchen Forsyth**

##

Save the Date:

MSURA will be going to a Lug-nuts game on JUNE 14, 2013. Save that evening for an enjoyable fun time.

—**Nancy Craig**

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION FORM

I wish to renew/start my subscription for the MSURA newsletter at **\$10** per year with the enclosed payment to "The MSU Retirees Association."

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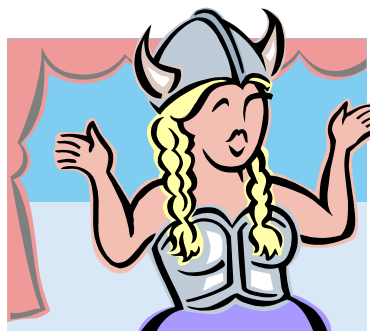
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Make check payable to MSURA. Mail to Bob Wenner, MSURA Treasurer, P.O.Box 203,
Okemos, MI 48805.

Would you prefer receiving the Newsletter by e-mail? Yes _____ No _____.

Opera Study Group Alive and Well

The new MSURA Opera Study Group has held several meetings since it was organized in early Fall, often focusing on one of the forthcoming productions in the Metropolitan Opera Live in HD program. The Live in HD program streams productions to local theaters, and two Lansing area theaters participate in the program. Those who are interested in joining the group should contact Al LeBlanc via e-mail to aleblanc@msu.edu or leave a telephone message at (517) 655-6454. Please give us your name, phone number, and e-mail address if you use e-mail.



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