

YSU Courier

Youngstown State University
Retirees Association

Spring 2011

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From Your President...



I think it would be safe to say that each of us will be happy to put this winter's snowfall behind us. Personally, my reluctance to embrace winter might just be a sign of old age, but it grows stronger every year. With the coming of better weather, however, the YSURA will again be sponsoring many activities to bring the group out of the doldrums.

For the past few years, the YSURA Board meetings have been held on campus at Kilcawley Center after years of meeting at the Saxon Club. This move has helped Board members reconnect with the University and become more integrated into campus activities. We hope this connection will translate to the retirees' group as a whole.

As most of you are aware, numerous changes have been proposed to all of the Ohio employee retirement systems. During 2010, the executive directors of the systems were given the task of recommending changes which could be made to bring their systems within mandated funding requirements. These recommendations, which appeared to be well thought out, have had little exposure recently. Instead, the new governor has waged an all-out attack on public employees and invited everyone to join in. Many, including most newspaper editors, have seized the opportunity. Most of their articles focus on isolated situations and omit broader facts regarding employee contributions and the fact that these systems supplant rather than supplement Social Security for retirees. It should come as no surprise that the public perceives our retirement systems as extravagant and costly to the taxpayers, since that is all the public hears. Little is written to point out that the majority of funds used to pay retiree benefits come not from employee or employer contributions but from interest, dividends and other funds earned on those contributions over long periods of time. To their credit, the executive directors of STRS Ohio and OPERS have readily responded to editorial attacks with letters to the editors of those newspapers. Granted, few organizations still offer the defined benefit plans that we enjoy, instead having migrated to defined contribution plans. The fact remains, however, that public employees did not cause the budget crisis and reducing or eliminating the bargaining rights of public employees will not solve this crisis. When the facts are studied, public employees provide a value to taxpayers, not a burden as perceived. There is little doubt that some changes will be made to the systems in the immediate future. If the core of the 2010 proposals remains the same, most changes will affect future retirees more than current retirees; however, both groups are likely to be affected somewhat.

Tom Shipka recently represented the YSURA Board at a conference on pension reform sponsored by OCHER and STRS Ohio. His report is printed in its entirety later in this newsletter and not only makes for interesting reading but also contains factual information which should be absorbed by all STRS members. While much of it is also pertinent to OPERS, members can obtain specific information about OPERS at www.opers.org under "Pension Reform." Where we're headed from here it's hard to say. Stay tuned!

Ed James - President, YSURA

Additional information may be obtained by contacting an officer and/or visiting our website at www.ysuretirees.org.

Items for the newsletter should be addressed to Gwen Latessa or Barbara Brothers by March 1 for the spring issue and September 1 for the fall issue.

Past Events

Fall 2010 Casino Trip

The retirees hit the road again on September 29, 2010, for a day of gambling at the Wheeling Island Casino in Wheeling, West Virginia. A full busload of YSURA members and guests enjoyed a day of slots and table games with varying results. Regardless of their gambling success, everyone enjoyed the refreshments and prizes en route as well as the opportunity to mingle with the other travelers.

Fall 2010 Luncheon

On October 14, 2010, the YSURA fall luncheon was held at Cassese's MVR. Ninety-five YSURA members and guests packed the MVR banquet room to hear guest speaker YSU President Cynthia Anderson, making it the largest turnout for a YSURA event in recent memory. Dr. Anderson delighted the group with her candid assessment of the status of the University and her vision for the future, reiterating her position that her administration would be heavily focused on students. She enthusiastically answered a variety of questions from the audience.



The fall luncheon, which also serves as the YSURA annual meeting, was the occasion for change in officers and directors for the coming year. Recognized for their service were outgoing directors Harry Dampf, Becky Joseph and G.L. Mears. Many thanks to Harry, Becky and G.L. Taking their place will be new board members Mary Bodnovich, Gwen Latessa and Don Mathews. Ed James will serve as President with Loretta Liptak serving as Vice President.

George Beelen presented an update on the activities of the Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees (OCHER), particularly those related to the proposed changes in the STRS and OPERS retirement systems. George represents the YSURA at OCHER meetings and provides a valuable link between YSURA and other retiree groups throughout the state.

Several years ago, Harry Dampf organized a food drive to benefit the Youngstown VA Outpatient Clinic Food Pantry. His initiative led to food drives being held at the spring luncheon, fall luncheon and summer picnic. Attendees at last fall's luncheon continued to generously support this effort by donating \$435 in food and cash. The need is great and the VA Clinic is very appreciative of our efforts.

YSU Night with the Phantoms

On January 28, 2011, several retirees attended YSU Night at the Covelli Centre when the Youngstown Phantoms played the Muskegon Lumberjacks. It was an exciting evening, with the Zoldan family (of Phantom Fireworks) presenting YSU with a check for \$100,000, President Cynthia Anderson dropping the first puck, and the game going into overtime with the Lumberjacks winning in a 4-3 shootout. Over 700 alumni, family and friends attended the YSU-sponsored event along with a live penguin named Elvis, compliments of the National Aviary in Pittsburgh.



Photos by Bruce Palmer, YSU Photographer

Introducing the Newest Board Members

A Boardman native, **Mary Bodnovich** joined the YSU staff in April 1974 as a clerk/typist in Student Data Services. She became secretary to the University Librarian in 1980, transferred to the Bookstore and served as the textbook buyer from 1984 through 1987, and returned to Jones Hall and the Records Office in November 1987 where she remained until her retirement in May 2006. After two months at home, she returned to campus on a part-time basis in July 2006 as a project specialist in the Registrar's Office where she assisted with the implementation of the Banner system.

Now completely retired, she is serving as secretary to the YSURA Board and as secretary to her condo association (old habits die hard). Additionally, she enjoys visiting with friends and family, traveling to any beach, walking her dog, YSU tailgating, and spending more time with her five-year-old godson.

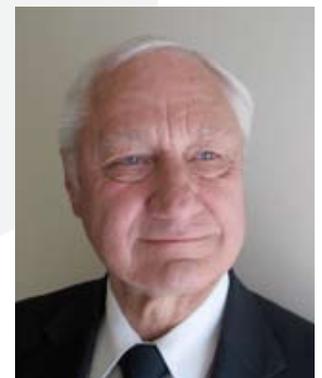


Originally from Meadville, Pennsylvania, **Gwen Latessa** began her YSU career in 1979 as a steno in the Physical Plant, working with the maintenance department and motor pool; moved to Classified Personnel in 1980 where she was personnel aide in the employment/testing area and later the secretary to the director; and lastly, joined the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs in 1986, retiring in 2008 as an administrative assistant.

Since retirement, Gwen has been socializing with friends, selling items on eBay, assisting with the YSURA newsletter and attending lots of concerts. She and her husband Phil, who has been in education for 27 years, reside in Poland and work together on numerous home improvement projects, including the renovation of a rental property. In addition, they enjoy attending baseball games across the country, having gone to a dozen or more major league stadiums, and are also fans of the Super Bowl Champion Green Bay Packers (sorry Steeler fans).



Donald Mathews grew up in Salem, Ohio, and began teaching marketing at Youngstown University in 1964. He earned his BBA from Baylor University, MBA from Southern Methodist University and his Ph.D. from Union Institute and University. His concentration of studies was marketing, statistics and economics. He went through the academic ranks of instructor to full professor and retired as professor and chair emeritus in 1990. Since retirement, he has continued to teach at YSU and on various campuses at Kent State on a part-time basis. He also started a chocolate company after retirement and sold it in 2005.



Don met his wife Deborah (Deb) in Washington, D.C. on a blind date. She was working with the Commission of Civil Rights after serving a tour in the Peace Corps. They have three children and have lived on the Northside in the same house for over 40 years. They also have five grandchildren, all living in different parts of the country. Don and Deb enjoy traveling and have been on all seven continents. Both also enjoy volunteering and serve on several boards in the community. Don enjoys being a docent at the Salem Historical Society during the summer. Don says, "It is easy to give tours because I experienced and lived it. So many of the artifacts displayed in the museum were a part of my everyday life growing up in Salem."

Announcing A New Website

YSURA is pleased to inform you of a new website, www.ysuretirees.org. Currently in the development stage, the site will contain news and announcements, activities and events, a newsletter archive, links of interest and general information about YSURA, among other things. Reservation forms for events will continue to be mailed to members; however, those forms will also be available for download at the site. Please visit often for updates on important issues affecting retirees as well as the latest planned social activities. Thank you to Bob Hogue, ex officio member of the YSURA Board, for his assistance with this endeavor.



YSU Centennial Circle



YSU has a new campus landmark — the Centennial Circle. Located at the entrance to the campus core, its centerpiece is a bronze statue of YSU's first president, the late Howard W. Jones. The Circle was dedicated in November 2010 and features 500 commemorative bricks engraved with messages from faculty, staff, alumni and friends. YSURA contributed \$300 to the brick campaign and received an 8" x 8" brick (pictured left). The University raised approximately \$90,000 for this campus beautification initiative.

In Memoriam

Nick Tabak passed away on June 11, 2010, at the age of 86. A World War II paratrooper in the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne, Nick worked as a contractor in the early years and built many homes in the area. He joined the Youngstown State University Physical Plant in 1972 where he worked as a locksmith until he retired in 1983.



John Yemma passed away on January 24, 2011, at the age of 77. A YSU alumnus and U.S. Army veteran, he dedicated 37 years to YSU, joining the faculty as a biology professor in 1971. He was the first chair of the Allied Health Department when it was formed in 1976 and served briefly as dean of the former College of Applied Science and Technology before it was restructured. He then served as dean of the Bitonte College from 1992, the year it was created, until he retired in July 2008.

29th Annual Faculty & Staff Awards Dinner

Youngstown State University invites you to attend the 29th Annual Faculty & Staff Awards Dinner. Please join fellow retirees, employees and friends in honoring the Heritage Award recipients; administrative and classified Distinguished Service Award recipients; and faculty, administrative and classified staff retiring or completing milestone years of service in 2010-2011.

The dinner will be held on Friday, May 6, 2011, in Kilcawley Center. The reception will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the Ohio Room and the buffet dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Chestnut Room.

Reservations are required and will be limited to the first 300 guests. The cost is \$15 per person. The reservation deadline is Friday, April 29. Please contact Heather Belgin at 330-941-1591 or e-mail habelgin@ysu.edu to make your reservation.

Conference on Pension Reform

On March 15, 2011, the Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees (OCHER) and STRS Ohio co-sponsored a conference at the STRS building in Columbus on reform of public pension plans. Over 100 retirees attended. The two principal addresses were given by Terri Biederman, Director, Governmental Relations, STRS Ohio, and Tom Lussier. Lussier is former Executive Director of the Massachusetts teachers retirement system; head of a lobbying firm in Washington, D.C., which represents public employees retirement systems; and chair of the Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security. The following are some of the highlights of their presentations:

1. There is a national campaign headed by right-wing ideologues, such as Grover Norquest, President, Americans for Tax Reform, to persuade legislatures, the media and the public that public pension systems are financially unsustainable and too costly, that defined benefit plans need to be replaced by defined contribution plans, and that public pensions need to be privatized. Norquest and his allies have planned the attack on public pensions for 20 years (see *The Nation*, April 26, 2001) and are exploiting the revenue crisis faced by governments to advance their agenda. Norquest also hopes to shrink government and “kill unions.”
2. The mantra of those who have launched the attack on public pensions is that public pensions are a fiscal train wreck waiting to happen and that pension systems will soon seek a federal bailout. (Joshua Rauh, a professor at Northwestern University, is a prime source of such claims. He will not disclose the source of grants supporting his research.) Indeed, three members of Congress have submitted a bill—The Public Employee Pension Transparency Act—to prohibit a federal bailout of public pension plans. To make their case, they project long-term earnings on investments of public pension systems at 3% to 4% a year despite the fact that over the past 30 years the norm has been 8% to 9% a year. The fact is that not a single public pension plan is insolvent, that problems caused for public retirement systems by loss of investment income due to the Wall Street meltdown and the recession can be solved within each state without federal intervention, and that not a single public pension system has sought or plans to seek a federal bailout.
3. Critics of public pensions include conservative taxpayer groups, the American Legislative Exchange Council, Congressional Republicans (especially newcomers), Republican governors and legislators (especially newcomers), the conservative press, Pharma, Fidelity, and the banking and investment industry.
4. Defenders of public pensions include the National Association of Counties, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems, the National Public Pension Coalition, the National Institute for Retirement Security, and public sector labor unions.
5. Those who harp about the cost of public pensions to the taxpayers exaggerate. The cost of public pension plans to governments is less than 3% of their budgets. Nearly all public employees contribute to their retirements, typically 5% to 10% (STRS members pay 10%), and recipients of public pensions don't slip into poverty and require costly public assistance. The problem is not that public pensions are gold-plated but that private pensions are inadequate and need to be improved. The fears and insecurities of private sector workers feed the attack on public pensions, giving us “pension envy.” 401K retirees earn one-quarter of what they need to sustain their standard of living. The retirement income bar needs to be raised for the entire work force as a national priority. Further, it should be remembered that the greed of Wall Street, not public employees, got our states and cities in the fiscal mess that they face today.
6. Critics of public pensions in Ohio don't fully appreciate the impact of pensions on the Ohio economy. Earned pensions provide a stable source of revenue, including tax revenue, for Ohio's local economies. In calendar year 2010 alone, for instance, STRS pension benefit payments exceeding \$4.3 billion were distributed to retired teachers living in Ohio's 88 counties. Of the more than 133,000 individuals receiving benefits from STRS Ohio, 83% live in Ohio. Mahoning County is one of 11 Ohio counties in which STRS pension benefits paid in 2010 exceeded \$100 million. (Source: STRS Ohio)
7. For information about public pensions, Google the websites of STRS Ohio, the National Association of State Retirement Administrators, the National Council of Teacher Retirement, and the National Institute for Retirement Security.
8. Neither Ohio H.B. 69 nor S.B. 3, which propose reforms in Ohio's public pensions, reflect the reform plans adopted by the five Ohio public pension systems. The STRS Ohio reform plan raises the employee contribution, maintains the employer contribution, has a 2% multiplier for all years, bases the FAS (final average salary) on five years, pegs retirement at age 60 or older with 35 years of service at 77% of FAS, imposes a penalty for early retirement, drops the COLA from 3% to 2%, and reduces benefits for future retirees.
9. To preserve public pensions in Ohio, retirees need to contact legislators and write letters to the editor. Before doing so, they need to have accurate information which they can get from STRS.

Submitted by: Tom Shipka

What Our Members Are Doing Now

JEAN ABOUL-ELA—Traveled to Egypt in July to visit in-laws, accompanied by two daughters, one son-in-law, and four grandchildren

JAMES AMRICH—Working part time

MARIANNE ANDERSON—Reading, traveling, working

MARY BELLOTO—Enjoying family gatherings

EDWIN BISHOP—Part-time teaching, three decades of deferred house maintenance, handling affairs of mother and brother

PATRICIA BLEIDT—After a hiatus of nearly two years to have double hip replacement and cataract surgery in both eyes, I returned to tutoring first graders at Williamson Elementary. How rewarding it is!

JANET BOEHM—Extended teaching

NORMA BROOKE—Some traveling

RICHARD BURDEN—Teaching ETS and writing, also involved in OEA-R and HEAC

DONALD BYO—Teaching part time at YSU, Grove City College and Westminster and making music

JOHN CAMPBELL—Say hello to everyone for me

LOUIS CASSIMATIS—Traveling

LOIS CATHELIN—Worked Census, enjoying grandchildren, casino gambling, card clubs, YSU friends

THEODORE CHROBAK—Teaching ETS

DENNIS CLOUSE—Living 50% in North Carolina, golf, tennis, Second Harvest Food Bank, beach living

GEORGE CONNER—Living in Copeland Oaks, involved in several committees, including president of resident's association

JAMES CONSER—Teaching part time, community service

CAROL COOK—Traveled to California, Florida and throughout the Southwest and the Rocky Mountains. The Rockies were my favorite.

THEODORE CUBBISON—Traveling, gardening

MARLENE DAILEY—Enjoying life

RICH DELISIO—Teaching marketing class (YSU), working in Kent/Akron area as a procurement technician assistant helping companies bid on government contracts

TOM DOBBELSTEIN—Travel, yard work, woodworking, auto restoration

JOE DUBOS—Golfing

JOSEPH EDWARDS—Extended teaching/Dana/theory (clarinet); 2010-11 interim chair of the YSU Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology and Leadership

MARY ANNA EVANS—Enjoying retirement

BETTE FAJACK—Traveling

SHARYN FEES—Lots of volunteer work at St. James Episcopal Church, gardening, recently started making handmade cards

ROBERT FLEMING—Guest conducting

SUZANNE FLEMING—Community volunteer work, visiting grandchildren, golf, tennis, skiing, traveling
ELMER FOLDVARY—13 trips to Europe, reading and lots of walking. Trying to keep our home and landscaping in decent shape. Interacting with our grandchildren and trying to stay out of trouble. Volunteer custodian at our church.

BOB FOULKES—Doing ETS

RALPH GOLDICH—Nothing major, just enjoying it to the fullest!!

RONALD GOULD—Councilors for Education, American Guild of Organists, Stambaugh Auditorium Board of Directors, co-chair of Skinner Organ Restoration, VP of Youngstown Opera Guild, classes at YSU

JEAN ANNE GOVE—Gardening, needlecrafts and crochet, golfing, home remodeling and repairs

CHARLOTTE GRANT—Nothing at all—just enjoying it; active in my church and also several organizations

STEVE HANZELY—Volunteering for Habitat, tennis, ping-pong and taking long naps

BRIGITTA HANZELY—Watercolor painting, gardening and listening to books on tape. Our “honeymoon”—just completed 48 years.

LARRY HARRIS—Teaching at Dana, director of music/organist at First Presbyterian Church in Youngstown, composing music

JEAN HASSELL—Traveling abroad and visiting with family

RAY HATALA—Pastoral associate plus administrator for Holy Family Parish in Poland, Ohio

INEZ HEAL—Volunteer work, traveling, enjoying myself
RAYMOND HESS—Babysitting two grandkids, reading, exercising, gardening

LOIS HOPKINS—Taught 15 years at Westminster College, enjoy singing, needlepoint, grandchildren, not necessarily in that order!

PEI HUANG—Reading, writing, traveling

EDWARD JAMES—Golfing, boating, Habitat for Humanity of Mahoning County, traveling

LINDA JOHNSON—Golfing, some fishing, traveling, but no working

JAMES KARAS—Fixing odds and ends around the house
DOROTHY KENNEDY—Doing church work

MARG KENNEDY—Spending time with grandchildren and traveling

IKRAM KHAWAJA—Back to being “unretired”

JOANN KNAPIC—Volunteering at Butler Art Museum, visiting grandchildren in Cincinnati, Silver Lake and Texas. Fall foliage cruise to New England and Canada. Also, Vegas trip to see sons and, of course, gamble.

FRIEDRICH KOKNAT—Traveling, teaching
ANASTASIA KOUTSOUNARIS—Taking care of grandchildren; visited sister overseas
MARY ELLA KRONSTAD—Moving, getting rid of “stuff”
OLGA KRUPA—Traveling, gambling, doing charitable work when needed
LOUISE LEONE—Traveling, enjoying my grandchildren and great grandchild, reading
NICK LEONELLI—Gardening, keeping house and whatever else needs repaired or fixed (not dogs!)
SUSAN LEWIS—Golf, golf, golf! Also enjoy spending time with family and friends. Travel to Ft. Myers, Florida.
LORETTA LIPTAK—Executive Board of YSURA, YSU Women’s Group Committee, VP Friends of Boardman Library, co-chair of Ways & Means Committee
WILLIAM LIVOSKY—Enjoying life!!
GORDON LONGMUIR—Travel, family, golf, bike riding, cross-country skiing, etc.
MARVIN LUKIN—Reading, studying mathematics
PEGGY LYON—Pet sitter for eight years (take care of pet and home while people are away)
PEG MAGMORE—Enjoying all the retiree functions, enjoying life and my six great-grandchildren
JOE MALMISUR—Part timer in athletic department, tending our flower garden (fighting the deer)
GERTRUDE MARINELLI—Church work, house work, yard work, and I intend to retire one of these days
TOM MARTINDALE—Enjoying great sunshine and blue skies
GUS MAVRIGIAN—Enjoying retirement, volunteer efforts
ELLEN McQUADE—Totally enjoying myself. I should go back to school and learn to spell!
G. L. & VIRGINIA MEARS—Busy with gardening, Ruritan Club, local United Way
ROCCO MEDIATE—Loving retirement
BRENDAN MINOGUE—Teaching ETS, enjoying my grandchildren, memorizing poems
PATRICIA MORELL—Having fun golfing and gambling
CLEO NASTOPOULOS—YMCA member, golfing, church volunteer
RAYMOND ORLANDO—Working as a consultant
PIETRO PASCALE—A lot of woodworking
HELEN PAVLOV—Visiting my sister, children and grandchildren in California, New York, Boston and Texas
LEONARD PERRY—Teaching and spending
PEGGY POTTS—Traveling, golfing, gardening, volunteering, reading, etc.
ANN RAUB—Traveling, volunteering, bowling, golfing and enjoying time with family and friends
NORMA REMIAS—Cruise to Alaska, adoption trip to China, grandparenting
JEAN ROMEO—Working part time at National College

LOIS ROMITO—Golfing, working one day a week at a church, weaving, spinning
RITA RONCONE—Spending winters in Florida, enjoying grandkids, water aerobics, traveling, spending time with good friends
NICK ROSS—Diet and exercise program resulted in a loss of 101 pounds; gained 25 back but holding steady the past six months
JAN SCHNALL—Working part time in president’s office doing policy revision work
JOSEPH SCOTT—Spending time with my grandchildren
MATTHEW SIMAN—Visiting MDs of various varieties and learning how to properly use a four-prong cane
CHARLES SINGLER—ETS, interim Associate Provost
BONNIE SMILEY—Looking for a part-time job, crafts, care-giving for parents
ANTHONY SOBOTA—Enjoying myself!
LEONARD SPIEGEL—Volunteer work, some gardening, traveling to see friends, children and grandchildren
SANDRA STANHOPE—spoiling grandchildren (seven), swimming, traveling, teaching Sunday school
GEORGE SUTTON—Very little!!
FRANK TARANTINE—Keeping busy with yard and house maintenance, golfing, working out, consulting
MARY PLACE THOMAS—Traveling and volunteering at church and community, President of Women’s Committee for Children’s Concert 2010-2012
TOM THOMPSON—Working part time
WES TRAYLOR—Taking it easy
RICHARD ULRICH—Visited Europe in July 2010, building a model train layout for the Museum of Labor and Industry
DAN WATHEN—Traveling
RALPH YINGST—Reading, gardening
WARREN YOUNG—Gardening, traveling, teaching, skiing, running
EVELYN YOURSTOWSKY—Volunteering at church, making pyrohy
BEN YOZWIAK—Involved with YSURA (trips to Columbus, etc.) and with a variety of things
BETTY YUHASZ—Taught until 2009; now taking care of husband with chronic health problem. I intend to write some articles when time allows me to do this.



Upcoming Events

YSURA Spring Luncheon

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2011
 Time: 11:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
 (tour at 11:15, followed by lunch at noon)
 Place: YSU's New Williamson
 College of Business Administration
 Cost: \$14 per person



YSU Women Retirees

Dates: April 14, May 12, June 9, September 8, October 13,
 November 10 and December 8 (2nd Thursday of the month
 except January, February, July and August).
 Time: 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
 Place: To be announced in each mailing
 Dues: \$10 (helps support scholarship program)

We look forward to seeing you at our next luncheon. If you need a notice of luncheon menu or want further information about joining the group, please call Jeanne Tydings (330-542-2415) or Mary Belloto (330-549-0592).

Freetimers' Breakfast

Date: First Tuesday of every month
 Time: 9:00 a.m.
 Place: Denny's on 224 in Boardman except April
 and October which are at Dutch Haus
 in Columbiana
 Cost: Whatever you spend for breakfast

YSURA Summer Picnic

Date: Tuesday, July 19, 2011
 Time: 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 Place: Saxon Club Ballroom
 Cost: \$12 per person

For information on future activities/events, please visit
www.ysuretirees.org.