Retirees Association NEWSLETTER
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Reservation form page 8

Songs by BGSU choral group on the menu for Jan. 16

• At a December performance for the alumni of the Leadership BG program, the HeeBeeBGs wore tuxedos and white gloves.

THE HeeBeeBGs, a chamber ensemble of the BGSU Men’s Chorus, will perform at the Wednesday, Jan. 16, meeting of the BGSU Retirees Association. The luncheon will be held at First United Methodist Church, 1526 East Wooster St. Cost is $9 per person. Socializing starts at 11:30 a.m.

In the spring of 2007, graduate students Matt Young, from Stoughton, Wis., and Andrew Schultz, from Defiance, co-founded and directed the group with the blessing of advisor Dr. William Skoog. The two students held auditions for the HeeBeeBGs, knowing members needed to be able and willing to take on the challenges entailed in starting a men’s a cappella group.

A dedication to rehearse for multiple hours a week and the ability to perform a variety of songs in multiple genres were essential. With the HeeBeeBGs assembled, the group was successful in spring semester with performances for sororities and other student organizations, the Dance Marathon, BGSU sporting events, and local and civic groups like churches and local high schools.

What’s ahead

• March 12, 2008 — Annual luncheon with Wood County Retired Teachers.
• April 16, 2008 – BGSURA hosts the joint meeting with the University of Toledo Retirees Association. Speaker is Dr. S. Amjad Hussain, retired Toledo surgeon and columnist for The Blade, Toledo.
• May 14, 2008 – BGSURA Luncheon. Kevin Maynard, City of Bowling Green director of utilities, is scheduled to speak.

On the BGSURA Entertainment Highway

THREE events for BGSURA members have been scheduled by Diane and Wally Pretzer. Phone or e-mail Wally Pretzer (419-352-8057) or send an e-mail to dpretze@bgsu.edu at least three days in advance of the activity.

• Jan. 5, Saturday, 4 p.m., Anderson Arena. BGSU men’s basketball team playing Ohio University. Dinner afterward at the Old Town Buffet, 1216 N. Main St., BG. Pay for your ticket at the arena and for your buffet (Asian and American foods) at the restaurant. Deadline for notification, Jan. 2.
• Jan. 17, Thursday, 7 p.m. at the home of Evan and Shirley McFee, 1205 Bourgogne Ave. Let’s play euchre and enjoy their refreshments. Deadline for notification, Jan. 14.
• Feb. 22, 4-6 p.m., Friday, at the home of Roger and Betty Jean Anderson, 463 Truman Ave. (south off Conneaut). Let’s celebrate Washington’s Birthday at a cocktail party. Please bring your favorite hors d’oeuvre. Beverages will be provided by the Andersons and the Pretzers. Then, at 8 p.m., we will attend the Black Swamp Players’ production of “South Pacific.” Buy your tickets in advance at Grounds for Thought. Deadline for notification, Feb. 19.
LARRY WEISS has served the University in various capacities from 1973 to 2007 — a full 34 years. Most recently he served as associate vice president for University Relations and Governmental Affairs, and as a member of the President's Cabinet, working closely with Dr. Sidney Ribeau to establish and lobby for BGSU’s economic and political agenda at the local, state and federal levels.

Additionally Larry played a critical role in putting more northwest Ohio individuals in touch with the University and assisted in carrying out BGSU’s agenda with community and service organizations.

A native of Canton, Larry graduated from BGSU in 1967 with a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism and a specialization in public relations.

Following graduation, he began his business career in the press relations department of Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Co. in Toledo. During his time at L-O-F (1967-8), he served as a loaned executive for the United Way and was president of the Maumee Jaycees.

In August 1968, he joined the cre-

• Larry fires a pitch during the annual Legends of Baseball Tournament in Cooperstown, N.Y. Players from all over the country, who must wear major league uniforms, make the annual trek to Cooperstown to participate in these summer tournaments. Larry has been participating every summer since 1996.

• Larry bats at Abner Doubleday Field in Cooperstown. This field is supposedly the oldest baseball diamond in the United States. The opportunity to play on this field is one of the reasons so many players return each summer.

• Last August, Larry Weiss (right) and another BG resident and BGSU journalism graduate Tom Walton were inducted into the Legends of Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. This HOF honor is a baseball “Lifetime Achievement Award” much revered by all those participating in the Legends of Baseball program.
Larry Weiss continued

ative advertising department of
Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. in
Akron. During his five years there,
he held a variety of positions in ad-
vertising and sales promotion.

In 1973, during the presidency of
Hollis Moore, Larry was recruited
by Jim Lessig ‘57 to return to his
Alma Mater as assistant director of
Alumni Affairs, where he served as
one of three staff members to work
on a $2.2 million campaign to build
an alumni center on campus — the
Mileti Center. Larry was named di-
rector of Alumni Affairs in 1978 and
accumulated further responsibilities
and job titles during ensuing years.

In 1998, he added state govern-
ment relations to his responsibilities
while still alumni director. In 2000,
he moved to the President’s Office.

From 2000-2007 Larry was a
member of Sidney Ribeau’s staff for
government relations at the city,
state and federal levels.

During his tenure in the alumni
office, Larry also served as chair of
the BGSU’s 75th Anniversary cele-
britation, was one of three alumni ad-
ministrators in the United States
selected by the Asian Institute of
Management for travel to Manila to train
Filipino educators, served as chair of
the 1993 Summer Institute in
Alumni Administration sponsored
by the Council for
Advancement and Support of
Education (CASE),
was selected as editor of the
first-ever CASE publication on par-
ent programs, and was host of the
weekly “Time Out” on WBGU-TV.

Larry served on the boards of
trustees for the Bowling Green
Chamber of Commerce, the Bowling
Green Community Development
Foundation and the United Way of
Greater Toledo. He was also a Uni-
versity representative on the Toledo
Symphony Board. Last fall he
chairs the Wood County United
Way Campaign.

Larry’s avocation remains playing
baseball. Each summer he plays in
an adult baseball league and, one
week annually, in the Legends of
Baseball League in Cooperstown,
Centennial Anniversary Commis-
sion to plan for the celebration in
2010.

Then, too, Larry has been asked
by President Ribeau to write the his-
tory of women’s basketball at BGSU
and he will also participate in the
history program on WBGU-TV’s
“Northwest Ohio Journal.”

Larry is married to the former
Frances Geiger, who worked at the
University for 21 years. They love to
travel, especially in the United States,
and have two married sons and four
grandchildren.

• Dr. Pallister, PhD, LD, is Distinguished
University Professor Emeritus of Ro-
manic Languages. Her address is jpallis@dacor.net.

**80 on BGSURA Life Members Honor Roll**

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• List current as of Nov. 25.
RAYMOND TUCKER, a two-time Master Teacher Award winner at BGSU, died Oct. 25 in Texas. A professor emeritus of interpersonal communication and department chair for six years, he taught at BGSU from 1968 to 1995. He was a pioneer in statistical research in the field of interpersonal communication and presented more than 1,200 seminars and consulted for more than 300 corporations, including General Mills and American Movie Classics.

PATRICIA SMITH, 89, professor emeritus of psychology, died Oct. 26 in Bowling Green. Internationally known in the field of organizational/industrial psychology, she was on the faculty from 1966 to 1980. Widely considered a leader in her field, she was recognized for her contribution in developing the Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale, which provides ways to rate employees based on behaviors important to the job, and the Job Descriptive Index, an instrument to measure job satisfaction in organizations.

ERIK F. GRAUBART of Perrysburg died Oct. 19. He had taught at the University in the department of German and Russian languages and was director of the Foreign Language Laboratory until his retirement in 2001.

ARMIN JOHN “PETE” RIESEN, former assistant football coach and head wrestling coach at BGSU, died Oct. 13 in Findlay. For the 1982-83 wrestling season, he was named the Mid American Conference coach of the year.

CHARLES SCHULTZ of Bowling Green died Nov. 4. He retired from the University in 1993 as assistant director of University Computer Services.

REBECCA MEEK, who retired after working 20 years as the athletic ticket manager at BGSU, died Nov. 8 in Bowling Green. She had been named an honorary BGSU alumna in 1995.

EDITH PELTON, who served as assistant to the dean of the Graduate College, retiring in 1978, died Dec. 3 in Findlay.

MAXINE ADAMS of Neapolls died Nov. 26. She retired from the University, where she was a cook at Kreischer Hall for 15 years.

DALLAS BRIM, who retired as purchasing agent for the University Bookstore, died Oct. 16. As a student at BGSU, he was the drum major for the marching band.

JULIE BURKE, 54, chairman of the department of interpersonal communication, died Oct. 31. Just nine days earlier, she had been presented with the Faculty Distinguished Service Award. She previously had served as interim director of the School of Communications Studies. She came to BGSU as an associate professor in 1992.

DANIEL STURGES, 57, died Oct. 26 in Rudolph. He had worked in the University maintenance department for 30 years.

KATHLEEN HILL died Nov. 24 in Weston. She had been a secretary in the sociology department at the University some years ago.

Compiled by Joan Gordon

HeeBeeBGs from page 1

The group officially became a student organization last fall. Dr. Joseph Oravecz, associate vice president of Student Affairs, became an additional advisor.

With his guidance and that of Dr. Skoog, the group has continued their success on campus and in the surrounding area. Young, who received his bachelor’s from Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, graduated with his Master’s in Music Theory from BGSU and continues to arrange music for the HeeBeeBGs as he works on his doctorate at the University of Texas. Schultz, who has his bachelor’s from Ohio Northern, continues to direct the group while working on his Master’s in Choral Conducting and Business Administration.

Eric Watts has taken on the role of President for the HeeBeeBGs organization providing leadership as the group grows in popularity.

Five new members, including two freshmen, have helped to continue the new tradition of providing audiences with a superb quality of music and outstanding entertainment.

Computer troubles? PROBLEMS getting connected to the Internet for e-mail and surfing? The services of Charlie Applebaum have been made available by BGSU Executive Vice President Linda Dobb. Applebaum may be reached by calling 419-352-0777 or by sending an e-mail message to applebau@bgsu.edu.

Applebaum has responded to more than 1,000 calls for help — three-fifths to retirees’ homes. McAfee’s VirusScan for Macintosh is available for installation on Intel Macs. The new Microsoft Office software for Mac may be available during the first quarter of 2008.
public pension funding in an effort to
we're occurring at the time in private
pensions revealed that, generally
avoid the significant benefit losses that
and Baucus to examine the state of
report requested by Senators Grassley
little concrete actions have been taken.
the Government Accountability Office
and extensive political campaigning,
recognition given of the problem by the
chair of the Senate Finance Subcommit-
tee on Social Security, Pensions and
Financial Institutions, Real Estate and Se-
Health Care Program, has been re-
ferred to the House Committee on Fi-
nancial Institutions, Real Estate and Se-
curities (also known as the FIRES Com-
mittee). HB152 relating to Alternative
Retirement Plans also has been referred
to the FIRES Committee.
• The importance of clarifying the
perceptions of STRS reported in the
Fordham Report released last June
will be addressed at the March 18
OCHER meeting. STRS Ohio said the
Fordham report contains “glaring mis-
takes and misstatements.” A PDF with
highlights of the report accompanied
by an STRS Ohio response is at
www.strsoh.org/pdfs/fordham.pdf

FEDERAL

With continued divisional bickering
and extensive political campaigning,
little concrete actions have been taken.
On a positive note, the release of the
Government Accountability Office
report requested by Senators Grassley
and Baucus to examine the state of
public pension funding in an effort to
avoid the significant benefit losses that
were occurring at the time in private
pensions revealed that, generally
speaking, the systems are on sound fi-
nancial footing and are well managed.
A hearing was held on the Social Secu-
rety offset impact legislation with
recognition given of the problem by the
chair of the Senate Finance Subcommit-
tee on Social Security, Pensions and
Family Policy (Kerry). He noted that
the existing formula is irrational, un-
fair, and doesn’t work, but that fixing it
due to the cost is still a major challenge.

STATE

While action to exempt veterans
military pensions from state income
taxes and waiving probate fees for fam-
ilies of military personnel killed in
combat zones were addressed, action
on legislation directly affecting retirees
such as H.B.270 and H.B.240 related
to re-employment, and H.B.151 dealing
with divestment were not considered.
These are issues of concern to PERS
also. Earlier action had OK’ed the sale of
future tobacco settlements and appro-
val to do away with the reduction of
unemployment compensation based on
the amount received in Social Security
benefits.

H.B. 190 relative to teacher miscon-
duct has been addressed and calls for
criminal background checks for teach-
ers every five years. Attempts to repeal
a new state law limiting damages in
consumer lawsuits and prohibiting
public nuisance lawsuits ran out of
time. Efforts to get a school funding is-
sue on the ballot continue as do efforts
to thwart gambling and smoking bans.

STRS

At its October meeting the Board
established a voluntary process for di-
vestment of active direct holdings in
Sudan and Iran, which will occur only
when substitute investments with simi-
lar quality, return and safety can be
identified.

To address what was described as a
“recurring point of contention” be-
tween the STRS Ohio Board and Dr.
Damon Asbury, executive director, the
STRS Ohio Board will hold a January
planning retreat. Dr. Asbury noted dif-
fering interpretations of the current
board policies and perceived direction
they provide. He said the senior staff
has become unsure of what the
board’s expectations are for their role
in the administration and operation of
the system.

The October report noted that “the
executive director will ensure that new
employees will begin their employ-
ment at STRS Ohio without the transfer
of sick leave from a prior employer.”
Further, awarding of severance checks
and payments or benefits to STRS Ohio
employees “will not occur absent a for-
mal approval by the Board by a majori-
ty vote in public session.”

The Columbus-based executive
search firm, Hudepohl and Associates,
has been chosen to assist the Retire-
ment Board in its search for STRS
Ohio’s ninth executive director. An ad
hoc committee of the board, consisting of
Jeffrey Chapman, Craig Brooks,
Mary Ann Quilter Cervantes, John
Lazaress and Mark Meuser, reviewed
proposals, checked references and con-
ducted interviews of several firms be-
fore recommending Hudepohl and As-
sociates to the full board. The commit-
tee determined that this firm offered
the best overall combination of work
plan, qualified staff, experience and
cost structure to assist the board.

Retirees should have received infor-
mation from Express Scripts who are
replacing Caremark beginning Jan. 1.
This spring there will be an election for
replacement of the contributing
member seat held by John Lazaress
whose term is expiring. To date five
have submitted petitions. The deadline
for return of petitions is Feb. 29.
Members of the Terquasquicentennial Planning Committee roll down South Main Street during the Bowling Green Holiday Parade Nov. 17.

City prepares to salute its 175th birthday

THE City of Bowling Green will celebrate its Terquasquicentennial Anniversary (175 years) in 2008. The planning committee, chaired by BGSURA secretary Joan Gordon, has scheduled several events for the beginning of the year. Community residents are invited to attend the Falcon men’s basketball game with the University of Toledo Sunday, Feb.10, at 4 p.m. in Anderson Arena. During the intermission of the game, a foul-shooting contest will be held between Mayor John Quinn and Mayor Carty Finkbeiner of Toledo (he has been invited, but has not confirmed as of this printing).

On Saturday, Feb. 23, from 1 to 4 p.m., a Big BG Birthday Party will be held at Woodland Mall and planned as a family-centered event. Barbara Keller, BGSURA’s representative to Administrative Council, chairs the major events committee.

The activities and events of the committee are funded by the sale of commemorative items and donations from businesses, individuals, and organizations. The committee is currently selling a coffee mug, a glass ornament etched with the 175th logo, and an enameled pin by Marge Meserve, featuring the Clough Street windmill and a wind turbine. Items may be purchased at the Chamber of Commerce and selected retail outlets. For more information: jhgordon@dacor.net, 419/354-6648.

Great Decisions series

THE popular series of weekly talks on world issues, “Great Decisions,” will begin Saturday, Jan. 26, at the Wood County Senior Center from 9:30 to 11 a.m. The series continues Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23, and March 1.

The speakers are usually BGSU faculty members with expertise on the topics and countries under review. All sessions are free and open to the public.

Specific topics and speakers will be posted soon. Some of the topics under consideration are “Iraq End Game,” “Talking to Our Enemies,” “U.S.-China Trade Policy,” “Russia,” and “European Union at 50.”

Active for Libraries

BGSURA members volunteer with Friends of the University Libraries, which supports programs and activities of the Libraries. Janet Parks, chair of the Board’s Outreach Committee, encourages retirees to submit their research and work in the Authors and Artists Reception, an annual program to honor faculty and staff for scholarly and artistic achievement. The awards are presented at a special reception each fall.

Other BGSURA members on the Board include Roger Anderson, Beth Hofer, Beth Casey, and Joan Gordon. Details on membership are available from Parks atjparks@bgsu.edu.
Baskets generate $139 toward book fund at luncheon

THE BGSU Retirees Association continues its quest to endow its $15,000 Golden Book Award. Ten baskets placed on tables at the November luncheon at the Elks Banquet Center members generated $139 in cash for the fund. The baskets will reappear on tables at the Jan. 16 luncheon.

Members are reminded that contributions to the Book Award through the BGSU Foundation count toward BGSU’s Family Campaign as well as counting toward President’s Club pledges.

More than $6,500 has been contributed to the Golden Book Award since the program began last year, said Ramona Cormier, BGSURA president.

The first recipient, junior Angela Dawson, of Brunswick, Ohio, received $500 last year with funding from the Golden Book Award escrow account.

The BGSURA Board has decided not to have a silent auction to raise funds for the endowment.

Business/finance magazine Barron’s takes aim at state pension funds

EARL Guthrie, retired chair of BGSU’s business education department, calls attention to the Barron’s magazine Editorial Commentary in the Nov. 17 issue: “Losers Win and Winners Lose.” Subject: Ohio’s and other state’s teacher pension funds in which defined-benefit systems may “lock people into jobs they do not like or push people out of jobs that they want to do.”

The Commentary points to a study by researchers Robert Costrell, at Arkansas, and Michael Podgursky, of Missouri, who “wondered what foolishness had been swept under the rug by state governments operating defined-benefit pension plans for teachers.”

Writes Barron’s editorial page editor, Thomas G. Donlan, "We can blame state legislatures that write generous benefit rules without carefully considering the effect on the whole system. But just as in private systems, the big problem is the failure to link contributions and benefits.”

Donlan concluded, "A defined-contribution system is simpler and fairer than a defined-benefit system because it pays in proportion to the contributions made on behalf of each beneficiary. It can be kinder because it does not lock people into jobs they do not like or push people out of jobs they want to do. And it can be as generous as employers make it, without deluding either workers or employers into thinking that the benefits are a free lunch.”

The researchers noted that in 2006, Ohio STRS was underfunded by $19.4 billion, California by $19.6 billion, and New Jersey by $10 billion while the “federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. reported a mere $13-billion deficit for all failed private plans under its control.”

26 years and $14.5 billion to go

• Ohio STRS, in its on-line October report, noted that "overall, the system’s accrued liabilities dropped to about $14.5 billion [in 2007] from $19.4 billion and both the pension system’s funding period and funding ratio improved. The funding period is the number of years required to pay off the unfunded accrued liability of the system. The funding period dropped to 26.1 years with 2007 actuarial gains.

“The system’s funded ratio — the market-related (smoothed) value of assets compared to liabilities — increased to 83%. This means that STRS Ohio currently has on hand 83% of the assets needed to pay all benefits accrued by STRS Ohio members to date — even though the liabilities are not payable all at once.”

STRS on the Web:
http://www.strsoh.org

Barron’s Nov. 17 Commentary:
http://online.barrons.com/article/SB119525673941296335.html?mode=9_0031_b_this_weeks_magazine_main

BGSURA Newsletter editor Jim Gordon: jgordon@bgusa.edu

Mearl Guthrie: lguthrie@wcnet.org

BGSURA: retirees@bgusa.edu
I grew up during the 1920s and 1930s in Breaux Bridge, a small town in the Cajun section of Louisiana. Since this was the time of the Depression, there was not much to do in a community of 1,500 except to get involved in school and church activities.

In the fall, winter, and spring, children went to school from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with an hour off for lunch. There were no cafeterias in schools at this time so we walked home for dinner, the main meal of the day, and returned to school for afternoon classes.

School kept us occupied most of the year but then what was there to do in the summer? With neither a library nor a swimming pool, and the summer heat, we generally stayed inside during the main part of the day playing games and occasionally inventing some.

But my main summer pastime was reading. My father, who was the principal of the town school system, had a library of sorts: Books on education and books in the original language by French literary figures (his undergraduate major), and also some American novels, among them those of Jack London. The books in French I was not yet prepared to read, but I read the London and what French translations he also had in his collection.

When I was engrossed in a novel, my mother had difficulty weaning me away to do my share of the housework. Why is the reading of novels so seductive? The interest is not in the pages with black marks, for that is certainly not the novel. What is the novel then?

The literary art work is given life in the imagination of the reader who lends his/her psychology to the work’s characters. The reader in a sense creates the lives of the characters, pictures the environment, and vicariously experiences the human relationships depicted. Thus the writer needs the reader to give life to his/her work. If a writer has no readers, then his/her books of black marks remain dead and accumulate dust on a library shelf.

I love books. I can take a book I am reading on a plane, to bed, to the beach, to a couch, to a special garden chair, and through my imagination enter the world of the author. What will happen to these experiences in this new world of electronic books and digitized databases being created by Google, Amazon, and Microsoft, companies busy scanning millions of out-of-copyright books for Internet reading and searches?

It may not be so comforting to read Jane Austen, Thomas Wolfe, Shakespeare, or Khaled Hossein from an electronic screen as it is from a printed book. I dare say that in the future reading will take on new practices, and digitized libraries may become great resources for historians and researchers, but may not be so practical as a paperback or hard copy for the person who wishes to capture in his/her imagination the creative vision of a novelist or mystery writer. But then I am old-fashioned. What do you think?

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