



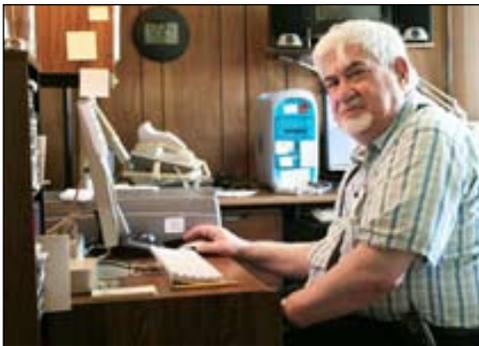
## Lunch form on page 6

5 College Park Office Bldg., BGSU, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0201 • (419) 372-9696

E-mail: [retirees@bgsu.edu](mailto:retirees@bgsu.edu) • [www.bgsu.edu/retirement](http://www.bgsu.edu/retirement)

### September profile

• In a jungle-like setting, a young Joe Baker in the BGSU greenhouse in 1980.



• This doctor makes house calls . . .

### Computer troubles?

**P**ROBLEMS with your computer or connecting to the Internet? With Vista, XP or Mac OS? Microsoft Office? How about the upcoming new Windows? Call Charlie Applebaum, 419-352-0777, or e-mail [applebau@bgsu.edu](mailto:applebau@bgsu.edu).

The BGSURA expert begins his 10th year helping retiree association members with balky hardware and software. His services are made available by the office of the provost.

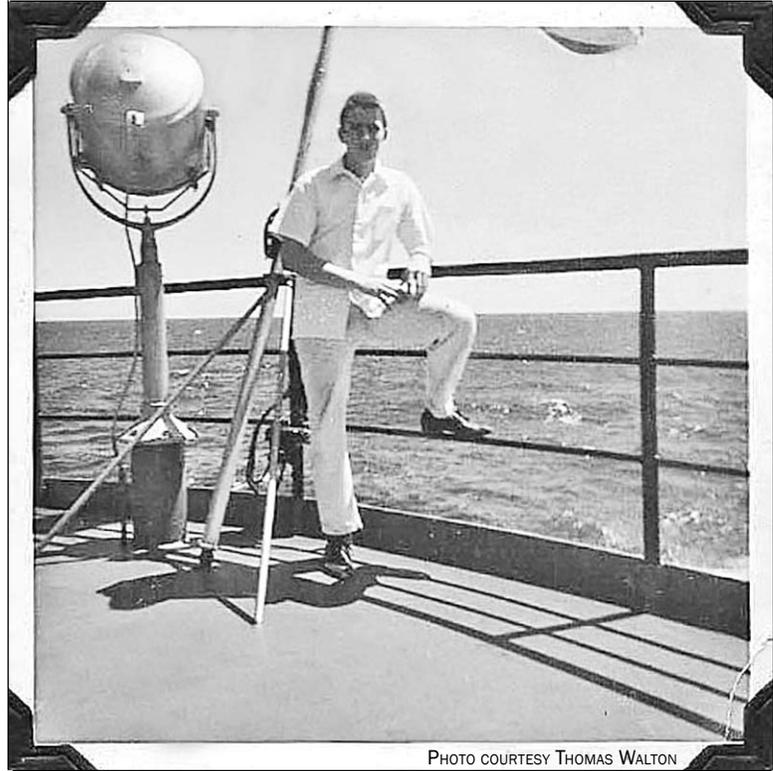


PHOTO COURTESY THOMAS WALTON

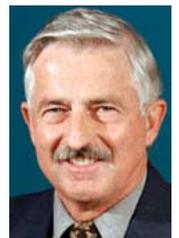
• Tom Walton aboard the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald during his summer job as a crewman in 1963, before starting his junior year at BGSU. Twelve years later, the 711-foot bulk freighter broke in half during a storm on Lake Superior. All 29 crew members, including Walton's uncle, Ralph Walton, of Fremont, perished.

## Former Toledo Blade editor to speak at 15th annual BGSURA Convocation

**A**SKED by Ted Groat, BGSURA's vice president/program chair for a title for his talk, Tom Walton, replied with a grin, "So Many Stories, So Little Time." The BGSURA's Convocation will be Wednesday, Sept. 16, at 11:30 a.m. in the Sky Bank Room 201 of the Bowen-Thompson Union. Reservations are due Friday, Sept. 11.

Since his 2007 retirement, Tom Walton has:

1. Celebrated his retired status after 42 years with the Block organization with a party at Snook's Dream Cars.
2. Adopted an orphan dog named Bailey (as in George Bailey, played by Jimmy Stewart in *It's A Wonderful Life*) at the local Humane Society's first adopt-a-thon last year at Woodland Mall.
3. Suffered a concussion last month playing second base during one of his league's hardball games at Lucas County Rec Center.
4. Made his annual trek to Cooperstown, N.Y., to play ball



• Tom Walton

(to page 6)



### BGSURA's Retirement Assistance Program

**W**ITH the start of a new year, Chris Sexton reminds BGSURA members about the BGSURA assistance program:

"Retirement Information Volunteers are ready and willing to help prospective retirees navigate the pile of paper work and all the decisions needed to successfully retire," Sexton points out.

"Remind your friends and former co-workers who are thinking about the big "R" word they can reach us by leaving word at the office number, 372-9696, or by sending us an e-mail at [retirees@bgsu.edu](mailto:retirees@bgsu.edu). People need to leave their name and a phone number where they wish to be reached and a volunteer will return their call as soon as possible."



*September profile*

• Fond of Studebakers since childhood, Baker hunted for, and finally bought, a 1950 model, in part, because he liked the bullet-nosed styling.

• Top left: Caring for plants remains a passion for Baker as he tends one of the many varieties he has around his home.  
 • Above: With music always a large part of life, his garage is a practice venue for the JoeBob Duda trio. Joe performs vocals as well as composes many of the group's tunes.

# Joe Baker is equally at home in a garden, performing music, cooking, or tinkering with his 1950 Studebaker

Story and Photos by Clif Boutelle

## He's no ordinary Joe

LIFE sometimes takes odd twists and turns and that's what happened to Joe Baker almost 40 years ago. He came to Bowling Green with the intention of becoming a history teacher. "I've always been fascinated with history, so that was a natural life plan for me," he recalled.

However, his plan took a detour just before his senior year. Short of finances, Baker decided to work for a year before continuing his studies. He saw an advertisement in the Green Sheet for a position as the caretaker of the Greenhouse, operated by the biology department.

With the experience of working two summers for the City of Dayton Greenhouses, part of the city's parks system, he applied for the BGSU job. Dr. T. Richard Fisher, a biology faculty member who was in charge of the Greenhouse, hired Baker on the spot.

That was in 1973. What was intended to be temporary turned into a full-time career for Baker, who retired last April after 35 years of developing one of the finest botanical collections on a university campus in the Midwest.

"I loved working in the Greenhouse. It gave me the opportunity to work and learn," he said. He took botany courses to learn more about plants and absorbed as much knowledge as he could from books, botanists and horticulturists. He forged close relationships with faculty like Fisher, Bill Easterly, Rex Lowe and Bob Romans.

"I wanted to know what they were teaching so we could create a collection of plants for students to study and research. Having the live plants in the Greenhouse supplemented what they were learning in the classroom," he said. At any given time,

*(continued next page)*

## *No ordinary Joe* (continued)

the Greenhouse contained about 60 plant families and several hundred different genera of plants.

Easterly remembers when he and Baker offered classes in horticulture. "I gave the lectures and he worked with the students in the Greenhouse. We made a good team, I thought, and I learned a lot from him. His knowledge of plants was very impressive."

A good ambassador for Bowling Green, he reached out to the community, especially school children. The Greenhouse became a popular campus tour destination and he also took his plants and knowledge to area schools. A guest lecturer in botany at Bowling Green High School, he taught students how to grow bonsai plants. "Here it is years later and I still hear from some of them telling me their plant is growing and doing fine," he said.

His outreach paid off in 1986. Nearly all of the Greenhouse plants were destroyed when the boiler ceased to function during a severe storm. "By the time I arrived, the temperature was about 25 degrees and it was too late to save most of the plants," he recalled.

"I'll never forget the way people responded. Through the years I had given lots of cuttings to people to start their own plants and when they heard about our problems, they brought in cuttings from the same plants I had given them. School kids raised money to buy replacement plants and area nurseries we had worked with donated even more plants," he said.

He is known around Bowling Green for his expertise with plants and has been conducting Master Gardener classes for about 15 years. The program provides intensive horticultural training to people with a passion for learning about gardening. Master Gardeners have played a key role in the creation of the Simpson Garden Park.

He often serves as a professional judge for the annual Beautiful Bowling Green competition.

Not only did Baker find a vocation at the University, he found a hometown in Bowling Green. "My



• *Joe and Peg Baker live in a beautifully landscaped stone home on Eberly built in 1946, one of the few stone homes in Bowling Green.*

father was in the Army and Air Force and we moved around a lot so I never really had a hometown while growing up. I was looking for a place to put down roots (no pun intended) and Bowling Green was the perfect place for me. I felt very comfortable at the University and living in the city," he said.

**R**etirement has given Baker the time to become more involved with several interests, especially music, something he absorbed from his father, who played and sang with Army and Air Force bands. When he retired, he played in dance bands and Joe often went with him to listen and interact with the musicians. "It was a great experience," he said.

Baker learned to play guitar in high school and sang in various school choirs. He and his wife, Peg, are frequent attendees at University and Toledo Symphony Orchestra concerts.

During his BGSU student days, he and his friends performed at coffee houses. "We were big into folk music, then," he recalled. He got to know local musicians and played with them on weekends. "We played bluegrass, rock and roll, all kinds of music," he said. He formed

a trio with Tony Duda and Bob Manley and they've played together off and on for 30 years and now go by the name of JoeBob Duda.

Baker plays guitar and performs the vocals and has composed music for the group. Duda is a guitarist, and Manley handles the keyboard, several horns and flute that adds some smooth sounds to their music. The talented trio can be seen at various venues around Bowling Green.

A few years ago, Baker toured Europe with the BGSU-organized Community Choir, under the direction of Bill Skoog. "That was fun," he said, "but one of my most enjoyable music trips was one where I didn't sing or play a note." That was when he accompanied his son, Nate, on a Bowling Green High School Madrigals tour of Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Nate is carrying on the Baker family music tradition in New York where he is carving out a performing career in various clubs and other venues.

His love affair with Studebaker's goes back to his grandfather's 1953 model. "We called it 'The Red Goose' and I recall just sitting at the wheel, pretending to drive," he said. When his grandfather died, the car went to Baker's father, who eventually sold it.

"That disappointed me, so I decided that one day I'd have a Studebaker for myself," he said. He learned all he could about the once popular car that ceased production in 1966 and set his sights on a 1950 or 1951 model because he "liked the bullet nose." With the help of his father, he found a 1950 car for sale and promptly bought it.

"It wasn't in real good shape. It is still a work in progress and I enjoy working on it."

Cooking is another passion. He researches foods and their origins, and recreates old recipes as well as trying out new ones. Fortunately, he says, Peg likes to taste different foods. "She says I spoil her because I prepare a lot of our meals." □

• *Clif Boutelle retired from BGSU in 1999 as associate vice president for University Relations. He's on the BGSURA Board of Directors. clif5761@verizon.net.*

## PASSINGS

■ **KENNETH A. ROBB**, an associate professor emeritus of English, died July 23 at his home in Bowling Green. He became a faculty member at BGSU in 1970 and taught courses in linguistics, Victorian literature, and fiction. He also taught courses in how to teach English as a second language and grammar to prospective teachers. After his retirement in 1991, he pursued his passion for gardening and became a Master Gardener. He was a member and past president of the Black Swamp Herb Society. He worked in the gardens at the Wood County Historical Center and at the Simpson Arboretum, and helped tend the butterfly garden at the Wood County District Public Library. The family formerly lived just outside Bowling Green, where he grew day lilies and irises and planted 300 fruit trees.

■ **DAVID B. MERONK** of Bowling Green, a professor emeritus of mathematics at the University for more than 37 years, died July 30. For nearly 30 years, he taught algebra to BGSU students. Initially a physics major while a student at Marquette University, he found that he had a love for numbers and became an algebraist. He was at the vanguard of the home computer age. In the 1980s his children were among the first at school who had written their

papers on a computer. As he became interested in programming, he spent two years writing a computer program for the swim meets of the Bowling Green Swim Club. The programs later were adopted by high school district and Mid-American Conference meets.

■ **WILLIAM D. HANN**, a microbiologist and a long-time leader in Boy Scout groups, died May 31. He retired in 1992 as an associate professor after 25 years in the BGSU department of biological sciences. He had helped begin programs in medical technology and blood banking. Active in Scouting for 48 years, he was the immediate past president of the National Lutheran Association on Scouting. He was the recipient of the Lamb Award of the Lutheran Church, the Wood District Award of Merit, and the Silver Beaver Award. A veteran of the Korean war, he served in the military for 37 years and retired with the rank of colonel in the Medical Service Corps. He enjoyed coordinating the work of the "Dawn Patrol" for the Black Swamp Arts Festival.

■ **RICHARD STONER**, retired director of Operational Planning and Support Services at BGSU, died June 21 in Bowling Green. Retiring in 1987 from the University, he had also worked at universities in Wisconsin and Kansas after serving in the U.S. Air Force.

■ **PHYLLIS JOHNSTON** died June 6 in Bowling Green. She had been a

postal clerk at the BGSU Post Office for many years.

■ **JOHN BECK** of Grand Rapids died July 13. He was an electrician for many years at BGSU and retired because of a disability.

■ **CRAIG BEDRA** of Bowling Green died May 11. He retired as a design engineer with the chemistry department at BGSU in 2008, after 26 years of service.

■ **McDONNA "MICKI" DOOLITTLE**, who had been employed as a food service manager at BGSU for more than 40 years, died June 4 in Bowling Green.

■ **MICHAEL BOWEN** of Rudolph died July 28. He worked in the maintenance department of the BGSU Ice Arena and Student Union.

■ **BETTY KLINE-THOMPSON**, who retired from BGSU's maintenance department, died July 9 in Jasper, Ark.

### Helping Hands collection nears

THE next collection period for the "Helping Hands" program will be Sept. 14-17. The program, which aids any former staff member who is in need of some short term help due to the cutbacks, provides donated nonperishable food items, household paper products and cleaning supplies or gift cards for local stores. Donations may be left at Continuing Education (College Park Office Bldg.) or at the BGSU Visitor's Center in front of the football stadium."

More information: [www.bgsu.edu/downloads/sa/file65894.pdf](http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/sa/file65894.pdf).

□

### Reservation for BGSURA's 15th Annual Convocation

Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2009. Reservation Deadline Friday, Sept. 11!

Sky Bank Room 201 Bowen-Thompson Union. 11:30-Noon: Check-in, socializing. Noon: Luncheon

**NOTE: Reservations at \$15 per person MUST BE MADE by Friday, Sept. 11.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Your Guest(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box to sign up to park free in the Union Parking Lot.

Number of veg. meals

Number of reservations

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR \$\_\_\_\_\_. CHECK PAYABLE TO BGSURA.

SEND RESERVATION FORM AND CHECK TO HAROLD LUNDE, BGSURA TREASURER,  
880 COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE, BOWLING GREEN, OH 43402-1602.

PHONE 419 352-3929. E-MAIL: [hlunde@bgsu.edu](mailto:hlunde@bgsu.edu).

**DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS IS FRIDAY, SEPT. 11.**

**MENU:** Chicken Breast with Sherry Sauce, Red Skin Potatoes, California Blend Vegetables, Betty's Salad, Rolls, Coconut Cream Pie/Buckeye Pie, Coffee/Hot Tea/Iced Tea

# Candidates Forum Oct. 25 at 1st United Methodist Church

Candidates running for various offices to be decided in the November elections will appear at a Candidates Forum organized by the League of Women Voters of Bowling Green.



Doors for the event, at 1st United Methodist Church, 1506 East Wooster St., Bowling Green, open at 6:30 p.m. The program starts at 7 p.m.

Also sponsoring the forum are the BGSU Retirees Association, American Association of University Women, Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce and the BGSU Undergraduate Student Government. □

## What's ahead

**Nov. 11** — Dr. David Skaggs, BGSU professor emeritus of history, author and an authority on the War of 1812.

**Jan. 13, 2010** — Dr. Carol Cartwright, president of BGSU and first woman president of a state university in Ohio.

**March 2010** — Joint meeting, Wood County Retired Teachers

**April 14, 2010** — Meeting with Toledo Retirees. Dr. Melissa Miller, of BGSU's political science faculty and a specialist in American politics.

**May 12, 2010** — Honor Flight program, presented by Jim Tichy, retired TV24 sports director and BGSU alumnus, or another speaker, on the program which honors American veterans of World War 2.

### From The Wall Street Journal, Aug. 13

For older drivers, Walter Mossberg, columnist for the paper, reviews software called Drive Sharp (PC and Mac) that the company says can "train the brain to think and react faster on the road" by putting a user through brief, repetitive exercises aimed at bolstering his or her visual processing prowess." More at positscience.com. Mossberg's columns are free at the All Things Digital Web site via walt.allthingsd.com



## Legislative Report

By Genevieve Stang  
ges@dacor.net

### Time to pay attention . . .

IF WE are to know how retirees will be impacted by decisions made or being made, thinking carefully about the information being made available is essential. In addition to concerns about health care and benefits, issues re-occurring include Medicare and Social Security as well as financial markets.

By now publications from STRS Ohio, OPERS and the Ohio Retired Teachers Assn. have alerted you to health care benefit changes that take effect in January 2010 and to options being considered in efforts to maintain pension and health care benefits. Complete material will be mailed in October to STRS Ohio members prior to open enrollment November 1-24. Informative regional meetings will be held. Watch for the dates.

The most recent OPERS bulletin provides needed information about health care changes and also alerts members to the upcoming elections for three seats on the OPERS board.

Although lengthy deliberations seemed to establish a state budget, there appears to be need for further reconciliation. Just what cuts and how much will be cut are not clear at this time. Also, the Ohio Retirement Study Council, which is the legislative oversight body for Ohio's five public pension systems, has called for plans from each system to meet the state mandated 30-year funding period. It is likely that there will need to be some form of legislative action.

The only federal health care action that has been completed is that by the House. Exactly what is included in the bill is not clear, nor is the content of bills being considered by the Senate. With legislators at both federal and state level in recess now, there probably will be a flurry of action on their return. The interrelationship of subsequent actions suggests continuous monitoring. □

**E-mail, street Address or  
phone number change?  
Please send to retirees@bgsu.edu  
or leave word at 419-372-9696**

## Retirees Association **NEWSLETTER**

Published continuously beginning in June 1995

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### For the birds . . .

By Ramona Cormier

**T**HIS summer my backyard has been a playground for a variety of birds. I have not enticed them with food or water but perhaps with the yard's flora. I love birds but have been troubled by some who have claimed my house as a nesting place for their young. A pair of mourning doves that are, except for their cooing call, not very distinguished, took to building a nest on the west brick window sill of Jan's study. When I noticed the feat it was too late to do anything about it, for the female had already laid two eggs, and I did not have the courage to destroy the nest (and later learned it was illegal to do so).

So I carefully watched the female dove as she peered at me with her fearful black eyes as if to say, "Do not hurt me, I am engaged in my life's work". She sat for at least two weeks or longer without leaving the nest. After the birth of two small helpless chicks the male partner appeared (he was smaller than the female) to relieve the mother, who went off to feed. The nurturing process continued for several days as the young were prepared to leave the nest. I did not see the chicks depart, but one day I looked out and the family was gone.



• *The expectant mother of Brownwood . . .*

Several weeks later the process began anew since I was too late to discourage the maneuver. Again two chicks were born and added to the mourning dove population at 1249 Brownwood Drive and vicinity.

As I deal with the birds and other fauna in the yard I will remind myself of Jan's comment, "We are in this together." □

• *Dr. Cormier, BGSURA president and Trustee Professor Emeritus, is pleased to relate that her window is hosting a third set of chicks. Dr. Cormier's e-mail address: rcormie@dacor.net.*

## Tom Walton *(from page 1)*

with fellow player Larry Weiss in the Legends of Baseball League.

5. Rung the bell of the retired Great Lakes freighter S.S. Willis Boyer during a memorial service for the crew members who died in the November 1975 sinking of the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald (the S.S. Boyer, permanently docked on the Maumee in Toledo, is a museum).

So far, the Tom and Dianne Walton family is all BGSU. Three sets of "Falcon Flames," as Alumni/Development calls them:

**Tom and Dianne**, who also graduated in 1965, with a BA in English, wrote columns for *The B-G News* while Tom was serving as

managing editor. Their son **Justin** '98, a sports management major, married **Liberty** '99, a visual communication major. Daughter **Sheila** '92, with a major in environmental policy and design, married **Kevin McCallum** '91, a finance major.

Tom Walton was born in Tiffin (his mother was a Ballreich, of Ballreich Brothers Potato Chips, the chips with the marcelle) and was raised in Tiffin until Tom's parents (his father was a crewman on Great Lakes ships) moved to Oregon, Ohio. Tom sharpened his baseball skills playing for Clay High School.

After his 1965 graduation from BGSU, Tom was a *Blade* staff reporter until 1972, when he was promoted to *The Blade* Columbus

bureau. Three years later, publisher Paul Block tapped Tom to become publisher of the Block-owned *Monterey County (Calif.) Herald*, a beautiful location on the ocean south of San Francisco. The Waltons stayed 14 years, until Tom was called back to Toledo to become editor of *The Blade*.

Tom now writes a *Blade* column which appears every other Monday. He also takes a monthly turn as host on WBGU-TV's "Northwest Ohio Journal."

And this grandfather of six continues his much-loved baseball playing. But he's moved up from the 48-64 years category to the 65-and-up. He says, "I finally get to play with the old guys." □