



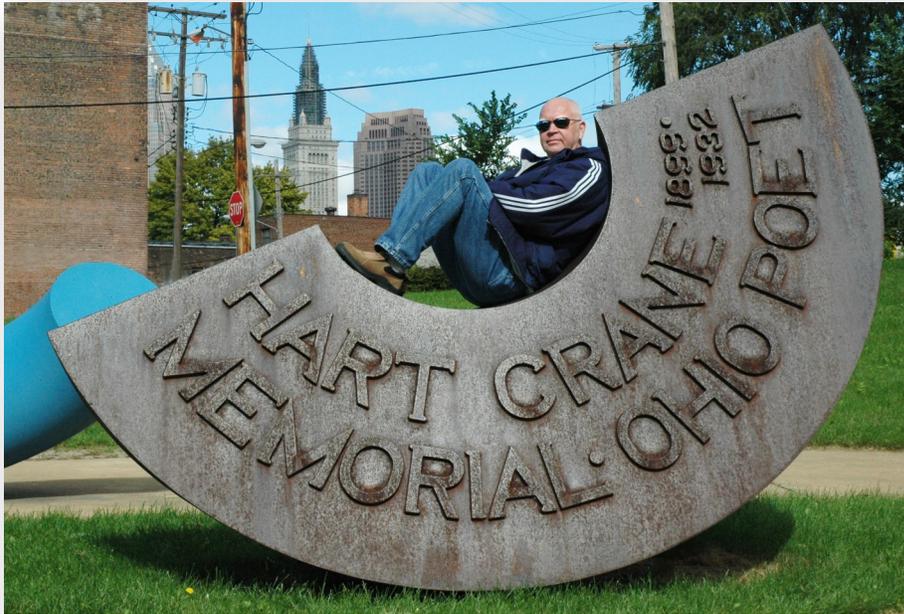
RFPSA

RETIRED FACULTY &
PROFESSIONAL STAFF
ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

June 2019

Editor: Edward G. Thomas



The *Hart Crane Memorial* was completed by Gene Kangas in 1995 and is located in a park on the Cuyahoga River. See the “Life after Retirement” article by Professor Kangas that begins on page 12.

President's Message

Greetings to All!

The 2018-2019 academic year has ended, and it was a wonderful year. The Retired Faculty & Professional Staff Association (RFPSA) was able to have a program each month and this was due to the dedicated work of each officer. Thanks to Vicki Plata (vice president), Carol Stolarski (secretary), Judith Richards (treasurer), Lee Makela (immediate past president), and Edward Thomas (communications coordinator). These individuals were awesome in their efforts to present quality and interesting programs. The commitment to maintain a working and meaningful organization provided motivation and energy for successful presentations.



Programs for the spring semester included a tour of the public art in the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, a presentation on Cleveland Metroparks, and a tour of the Washkewicz College of Engineering's new building. We finished the year with our Annual Banquet at Acacia Reservation. These programs received good attendance, indicating a level of satisfaction with the programming. It would be exciting to see additional growth in retirees attending monthly programs. Please share your ideas for programs you would like with your officers as they would welcome your recommendations.

One of the highlights of this academic year was having a conversation with the new president of Cleveland State University, Harlan Sands, who shared his vision and hopes for CSU. He also answered questions raised by members of RFPSA and this exchange was good for getting acquainted with President Sands, as well as enabling retirees to have current knowledge about CSU. In the question-answer period, President Sands was asked the question, "Why did you want to come to CSU?" In his response, President Sands mentioned CSU's mission, which is to make a "transformational difference" for students. He indicated that this is a mission he loves. We deeply appreciated the openness demonstrated by President Sands.

Edward Thomas has earned special recognition for outstanding service as the communications coordinator for RFPSA. The newsletter has been an outstanding tool to provide you with timely information of interest to retirees. Ed truly has done a magnificent job in developing the newsletter.

As a result of the recent election, we will welcome the following officers and board members for the 2019-2020 academic year: Vicki Plata (president), Lloyd Snyder (vice president), Carol Stolarski (secretary), Jeannine Louie (treasurer), Maggie Jackson (immediate past president), and Edward Thomas (communications coordinator). Our representatives to Faculty Senate are Edward McKinney (two years) and Mike Wells (one year). Representatives to OCHER are Joyce Mastboom, Rodger Govea, David Larson, and Jeffrey Ford.

As my term ends, I want to thank all members of the Executive Board and the representatives to Faculty Senate and OCHER for their ongoing involvement with RFPSA. Without your hard work, we would not have had a successful year. You are dedicated retired professionals with a willingness to remain involved with CSU.

Maggie Jackson, Ph.D.

President, 2018-2019

RFPSA People's Page

*New Emeriti Faculty**

Jeremy Genovese, Assoc. Prof., Curriculum & Foundations
Ralph A. Gibson, Assoc. Prof., BGES
Vijay K. Konangi, Prof., Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
Paul P. Lin, Prof., Mechanical Engineering & Assoc. Dean
George A. Mauersberger, Prof., Art & Design
Glenda A. Thornton, Librarian Emerita, Director, Michael Schwartz Library

*New Associates of the University**

Cassandra Baker, Library Assoc. 1, Law Library
Christopher Barrow, Coord., Mail/Receiving
"Anne" Nancy Ciganko, Academic Advisor, Education, Student Services Center
Julian Earls, Special Advisor to the President
Barbara Gauthier, Library Fiscal Agent, Michael Schwartz Library
Priscilla Green, Admin. Secretary 1, Course Scheduler, Urban Studies
William Shepard, Director, Operations & Technical Support, IS&T

*Retired/Retiring Faculty & Staff**

Faculty

Peter F. Meiksins, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Prof. CRIM/ANT/SOC – May 9, 2019
William R. Morgan, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professor. CRIM/ANT/SOC
Gregory M. Sadlek, Dean and Professor, CLASS

Staff

Valerie Hinton Hannah, Dir. Student Conduct & Advocacy – May 1, 2019
Berinthia R. LeVine, Vice President for Advancement and Executive Director of the CSU Foundation – June 30, 2019
Linda Ryan-Allen, Supervisor, Dispatch Communication Office, University Police

RFPSA Officers, Executive Board Members, and Staff

Academic Year 2018-2019

Executive Board

Maggie Jackson, President
Vicki Plata, Vice President
Carol Stolarski, Secretary
Judith Richards, Treasurer
Lee Makela, Past President
Edward G. Thomas, Communications Coordinator

Representatives to Faculty Senate

Doug Stewart
Vacancy

Representatives to OCHER

Rodger Govea
Jeff Ford
David Larson
Joyce Mastboom

Violet Lunder, Administrative Coordinator

*In Memoriam**

Faculty

Sunderesan Kondagunta, Prof. Emeritus, Mathematics – February 16, 2019
John E. Blank, Prof. Anthropology – April 17, 2019
Michael R. Baumer, Assoc. Prof. Emeritus, Philosophy – April 18, 2019
Jack A. Soules, Prof. Emeritus, Physics and Dean, Arts & Sciences – May 1, 2019
Georgia Lesh Laurie, Prof., Biology; Dean, Arts & Sciences; Dean, Graduate Studies; and Interim Provost – May 9, 2019

Staff

Calvin M. Knight, Jr., Coord. Technical Support & Services, Michael Schwartz Library – Feb. 16, 2019
Daniel John Hapiak, Student Services Specialist, Campus411 – May 27, 2019

Note from the Newsletter Editor

Please direct comments, questions, and article ideas to Edward G. Thomas, Newsletter Editor, at the following email address: e.thomas@csuohio.edu.

* Lists from Board of Trustees and HRD

February 21, 2019 Program: Tour of College of Law Art Collection
Professor Patti Falk, Tour Leader

On Thursday, February 21, 2019, RFPSA members and guests toured the art collection in the Cleveland-Marshall Law Building. Law Professor Patti Falk was the tour leader, and the attendees saw and heard about the public art housed in the building. As Professor Falk explained, most of the holdings came as a result of the State of Ohio's Percent for Art program, which provides funds for the acquisition, commissioning, and installation of works of art for new or renovated public buildings. More specifically, 1% of the amount appropriated for such construction is set aside for the purpose of acquiring and installing artworks in public buildings. During the tour, more than two dozen works of art were highlighted by Professor Falk. On this and the next page, photos of several pieces of art are presented along with captions concerning the artists and the media used.



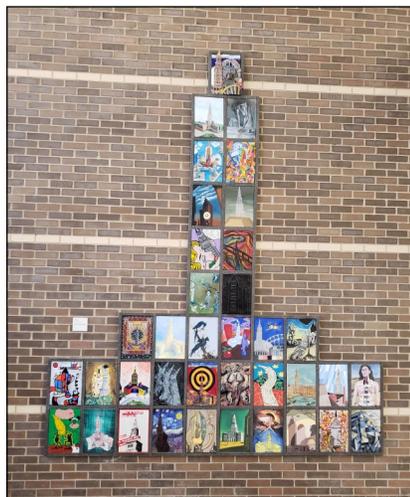
Bronze bust of John Marshall by Felix deWeldon



Professor Patti Falk led the tour. She is a Professor of Law, and she has served for some 20 years on the Law College Art Committee.



One of a series of bronze tablets comprising the *Manuscript Pages* by Washington, DC, sculptor Jim Sanborn. The pages reproduce excerpts from significant legal documents. Purchased in 1988 through the Percent for Art program.



Homage, a 13-foot, 36-panel collage with each panel imitating the work of a single well-known artist with the panels mounted to form the outline of the Terminal Tower. Created by CSU art students.



Portrait of *The Honorable Ann McManamon* of the Ohio Court of Appeals by Cleveland artist Shirley Aley Campbell



Law Revue, one of the 2002 citywide "Guitarmania" exhibits by Cleveland artist Maura Kinsella Paige.

February 21, 2019 Program: Tour of Law School Art Collection (Continued)



The Guardians of Traffic Pylons, Lorain-Carnegie Bridge.
Four large photographs by Jennie Jones



Cuyahoga County Court House, a photo collage of the “old” Court House on Lakeside Avenue by CSU artist Masumi Hayashi.



Man Who Lived in a Refrigerator, by CSU Professor Emeritus Ken Nevadomi. On loan from CSU Galleries.



RFPSA members and guests gathered in the Law Building lobby prior to the art tour.



Justice Louis Brandeis, screen print by Andy Warhol. Signed and numbered.



London Stock Exchange, a serigraph by LeRoy Neiman



Little Italy, page from the 1980 Cleveland Calendar by Viktor Schreckengost



Path, oil on canvas by Jeff Coryell. Donated by Patricia J. Falk



At left: *I Have a Dream*, oil on canvas painting by Kirsten Bowen. The painting utilizes excerpts from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech. The work was commissioned by the College of Law and completed in 2013.

March 21, 2019 Program: “History of the Cleveland Metroparks”

Doug Kusak, Historical Interpreter, Cleveland Metroparks



RFPSA's March program featured a presentation on the history of Cleveland Metroparks by Doug Kusak, who has been a historical interpreter at Cleveland Metroparks since 2007. A 1990 graduate of John Carroll University with double majors of communications and English, Mr. Kusak has also served as a visitor and school engagement specialist at the Great Lakes Science Center since 2002. He is also an actor and voice-over artist.

ist at the Great Lakes Science Center since 2002. He is also an actor and voice-over artist.

Mr. Kusak began his presentation by noting that much of the material covered came from a book entitled *The 100 Year Trail: A Centennial Celebration of Cleveland Metroparks 1917-2017*. Published in 2016, the book was compiled by lead author and content editor Judy MacKeigan, Cleveland Metroparks historian/archivist, along with the Metroparks staff.

In order to convey an understanding of why the Metroparks system was developed, Mr. Kusak covered the early history of the Cleveland area, starting with the arrival of surveyor Moses Cleaveland in 1796, whose job it was to survey the region known as the Western Reserve. After exploring the lakeshore and discovering the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, Moses Cleaveland ascended the east bank of the river and discovered a flat area covered in a luxuriant forest. He decided that it would be a good location for a new settlement, and he and his men mapped out several “town lots.” Of course, the rest as they say, is history. After an early period of slow growth, the city that came to be known as Cleveland grew into the fifth largest city in the United States by 1920, with a population of 796, 841.

With regard to the founding of the Cleveland Metroparks, a seminal event was Cleveland Mayor Tom L. Johnson’s appointment of William A. Stinchcomb as chief engineer of parks in 1902. The mandate was to

popularize and expand the existing parks. Previously, Bill Stinchcomb had served as assistant city engineer in charge of bridges, harbors, and docks.

By 1905, Stinchcomb had developed and presented to City Council a plan for the establishment of a metropolitan park system, which would utilize the Cuyahoga River valley to create parks in outlying areas to be connected to existing city parks by a network of boulevards. Mr. Stinchcomb then worked to support legislation that would allow for the creation and development of such a system. In 1912, Mr. Stinchcomb ran for the position of county engineer, and he won the election. As county engineer, he still worked toward his dream of seeing a metropolitan park system come into existence. Mr. Stinchcomb’s dream eventually came true, and the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District became a reality in 1917. Mr. Stinchcomb then served as an unpaid consulting engineer to the first county park board. In 1921, Mr. Stinchcomb was named as the first director of the newly created park system. He served in this position until 1957, when he had to retire because of health reasons.

During his 50 plus years in working with the city and county on the park system, Mr. Stinchcomb led efforts to build a network of connected parks or “reservations” that eventually came to be known as “The Emerald Necklace.”

In the remainder of his presentation, Mr. Kusak highlighted the major events in the 100-year history of the organization now known as Cleveland Metroparks.

1920s

For most of its first decade of existence, the park system concentrated on accumulating tracts of land to be converted to parkland. By the end of the 1920s, some 9,000 acres of land had been assembled at a cost of \$3.9 million. These holdings consisted of the following nine unconnected reservations: Rocky River, Huntington, Big Creek, Hinckley, Brecksville, Bedford, South Chagrin, North Chagrin and Euclid Creek. Included also were the Sleepy Hollow, Little Met, and Big Met golf courses.

March 21, 2019 Program: “History of the Cleveland Metroparks” (Continued)

1930s

When the Great Depression came along in the 1930s, the park system was able to take advantage of federally sponsored work relief programs—i.e., the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA)—for the purpose of building and maintaining infrastructure on the parklands. The park system hosted two CCC camps, one at the Euclid Creek Reservation and the other at the Brecksville Reservation. CCC and WPA workers at these two camps built an estimated 55 miles of auto roads, 60 miles of bridle paths, 53 miles of foot trails, 10 shelter houses, three trailside museums (nature centers), two public golf courses, 33 picnic grounds, and 14 group camping centers.

1940s

The CCC and WPA programs came to an end as World War II necessitated the drafting of most able-bodied young men. However, the park system was able to grow a bit as the private Manakiki Golf Course was donated to it in 1944.

1950s

As the Baby Boom generation was well underway in the 1950s, the use of park facilities increased rapidly. The Emerald Necklace newsletter began publication in 1952. While the park system had been interconnected with the Museum of Natural History for many years by contracting with the Museum’s education department to manage the park system’s naturalists program, by 1954 it was decided that the system was ready to employ its own naturalists, and it created its own education department.

1960s

In the early 1960s, Manakiki Golf Course and Sleepy Hollow Golf Course both became public courses. The Trailside Museum in North Chagrin Reservation began year-round operations in 1964. Mastick Woods Golf Course opened in 1965, and two refrigerated toboggan chutes in Mill Stream Run in Strongsville went into service in 1967. In 1968, the city of Cleveland transferred ownership of the Zoo to the parks district.

1970s

In 1975, the park district’s name was changed to Cleveland Metroparks System, and the Metroparks assumed responsibility for managing the Zoo, replacing the Cleveland Zoological Society.

1980s

The Cleveland Metroparks Zoo became accredited in 1982 by the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums. In 1986, the Metroparks assumed responsibility for managing Cleveland’s Garfield Park Reservation.

1990s

Cleveland Metroparks Institute of the Great Outdoors was introduced in 1990 for the purpose of offering classes associated with outdoor activities. In 1992, the \$30 million RainForest building opened at the Zoo. The Zoo’s Wolf Wilderness Exhibit opened in 1997. In 1999, the Metroparks opened the Ohio and Erie Canal Reservation and the CanalWays Center, which provides exhibits and programs to highlight the natural and cultural history of the surrounding area.

2000s

The Australian Adventure at the Zoo opened in 2000, the First Tee Program Cleveland was introduced at Washington Park Golf Course in 2003, and the Sarah Allison Steffee Center for Zoological Medicine opened in 2004.

2010s

In 2011, the African Elephant Crossing opened at the Zoo. In 2012, the Acacia Country Club was donated to the Metroparks and later was redeveloped as Acacia Reservation. In 2013, the Metroparks assumed responsibility for managing the Lakefront Reservation under an agreement with the state of Ohio.

In 2017, the Cleveland Metroparks celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the system. Cleveland Metroparks now consists of 18 reservations spanning more than 23,000 acres with more than 300 miles of trails, 8 golf courses, 8 lakefront parks, and a nationally-acclaimed zoo.

April 18, 2019 Program: Tour of Washkewicz College of Engineering

Dr. Paul P. Lin, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Tour Leader

On Thursday, April 18, members of the RFPSA and their guests attended a guided tour of the new Washkewicz Hall in the Washkewicz College of Engineering. Conducting the tour was Dr. Paul P. Lin, associate dean for academic affairs in the college. Dr. Lin began the program by answering questions about the College, its students, and its programs. He then led the group on a tour of the building's five floors.



Washkewicz Hall opened in December 2017. It was made possible through a \$20 million gift from Donald and Pamela Washkewicz and the Parker Hannifin Foundation.



The attendees gathered first in a fourth-floor classroom for a question-and-answer session with Associate Dean Lin.



Students at work in the Transportation Simulation Lab



Dr. Paul Lin



The Biomechanics & Tissue Engineering Lab



The view onto Chester Avenue from the building's fourth floor



The Advanced Manufacturing & Materials Processing Lab

April 18, 2019 Program: Tour of Washkewicz College of Engineering (Continued)



Fenn Academy is a consortium among Cleveland State University's Washkewicz College of Engineering, local school districts and industry partners that collaborate in educational activities designed to encourage high school students to pursue post-secondary education and careers in engineering.



The building features a number of lounge areas.



Some of the classrooms are designed to facilitate group discussion and project collaboration.



The lounge and student study areas have charging stations for laptops and cellphones.



Parker Hannifin Motion & Control Lab



The Engineering Freshman Design Lab is also known as the Lawrence J. Cawley Innovation Laboratory.

May 16, 2019 Program: "Annual RFPSA Dinner at Acacia Reservation"

On Thursday, May 16, members of the RFPSA and their guests attended the Annual Dinner at Acacia Reservation. The weather was a little cool, so most of the attendees enjoyed drinks and conversation with others indoors instead of on the patio before assembling in the dining room for the meal. In the photos below, all captions name the attendees from left to right.



Sandra Phillips, Carla the bartender, and Peter Phillips



William Atherton & Carol Stolarski



Ed Briskey & Alice Smith



Madge & Roger Marty



Maggie Jackson, Jim & Lynne Kweder



Joyce Zabor & Delia Galvan-Sanchez



Catherine & Michael Wells



Anita Stoll & Pete Clapham



Judy & Doug Stewart



RFPSA members and guests at dinner



Tom Frew, Dawn Frew, & Barbara Green

May 16, 2019: "Annual RFPSA Dinner at Acacia Reservation" (Continued)



Glending Olson & Hester Lewellen



Ruth Bonner, Sharon Norman, & Kathy Speigner



Benoy & Sue Joseph



Lee & Heidi Makela



Jim Bell & Debbie Hubbard



Violet Lunder & Marie Rehmar



Margaret Terry & Lloyd Snyder



Jack & Vicki Plata



Rasul Khan and Wendy & Ron Reminick



Ed & Cathy Thomas

Life After Retirement

By Gene Kangas, Professor Emeritus, Department of Art

Nineteen ninety-eight. That's the year I retired. It seems like yesterday. Three years earlier, my *Hart Crane Memorial* was installed on two acres and dedicated in the Flats where Columbus Road crosses the river. I consider that particular sculpture as an important legacy statement. In warm weather, Goodtime tour boats pass close by the sculpture site. It has been seen by thousands of visitors.

Numerous additional public works, like *Door* on CSU's campus across from Trinity Cathedral and *Snow Fence* at CWRU, are scattered around Ohio and other states. Some are part of the Lolley the Trolley tours. You might Google – Outdoor Sculpture in Ohio/Kangas – to see some of them, as well as insightful commentary.

Prior to retirement, the preoccupation with meetings, teaching and art research left my computer skills non-existent. My studio was in CSU's spacious but old Chester Avenue facilities. That changed at retirement, causing me to completely re-evaluate what was next. Retirement, therefore, forced me to think in new ways and experiment with different materials and techniques. Since my undergraduate training had been in printmaking, creating digital imagery attracted my attention. Through considerable self-taught trial and error, I became quite proficient in Photoshop. Various samples are shown at www.CreeksideArtGallery.com – Kangas art.



Snow Fence on CWRU Campus

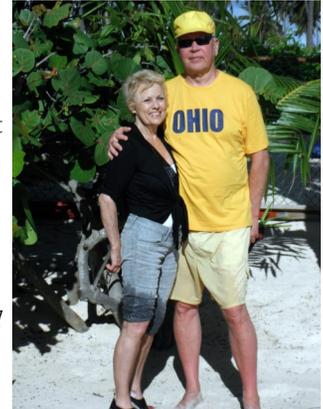
So far, retirement has been an interesting and rewarding journey. International travels with my wife Linda motivated me to consider unexpected directions to explore. For example, a terrifying looking person wearing a full head mask approached me on the shore of a lake in the Philippines. Was he a terrorist? No, he was a fisherman. I was quickly told that his colorful

head mask protected him from hours in the harsh tropical sun, whenever he ventured out in his dug-out canoe to fish. Wives and mothers created flamboyant masks out of clothing remnants. That experience inspired a two dimensional series referred to as *Masked Portraits*.

The creativity of individuals untrained in the arts has always interested me. Academics tend to classify them as “folk artists.” Unfortunately, categorizing segregates and diminishes them, like so many other aspects of life. For over three decades, a wonderful friendship evolved between myself and an untrained Cleveland painter named Albert Wagner. He lived on the near east side. Our powerful mutual bond taught each of us much beyond the norms of the classroom.

In 2017, Linda and I donated 50+ Wagner paintings from our art collection to the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore. Unfortunately, a prevailing “the grass is greener syndrome” caused the Cleveland art community to pay little attention to this incredible local artist. It wasn't long, however, before a professional west coast film group found out about Wagner and produced a feature documentary of his life. *One Bad Cat: The Reverend Albert Wagner Story* can be found for free online.

Wagner's movie was followed by a biographical book that Linda and I wrote and produced. *Water Boy: The Art & Life of Reverend Albert Lee Wagner* chronicles Albert's life, starting as a sharecropper's son in Arkansas through his trials and tribulations after he arrived in Cleveland. Freedom of speech was a major reason he moved north. That publication is just one of about a dozen catalogs and books we have co-written on folk art and waterfowl decoys. In fact, I have researched and written over 200 published articles on the specialty subject. That accomplishment goes against elitist suggestions from art history colleagues. They previously



Linda & Gene Kangas on vacation in the Dominican Republic

Life After Retirement by Gene Kangas (Continued)

indicated I didn't have the proper training, since I was a studio artist. It was bad advice. None of them ever addressed those subjects with such firsthand knowledge. I wondered, if not me, who would do it?

Today, the sad state of affairs caused by divisive politics is causing a very unfortunate and rapid decline in civil discourse. Everyone seems suspicious of everyone else. We point fingers. Trust is disappearing. People are becoming increasingly tribal. We don't listen.

An old phrase, "the wise old owl," reminded me that perhaps living creature symbols might become the best messengers to present difficult social and environmental issues. Many of us have had pets that we adore. If they could speak, we would listen. They have no hidden agendas.

Owls became the most recent and challenging series to date. It was completed by the end of 2018. The series is based on multiple layers of photographic images of different densities arranged in Photoshop. Each combined collage image is digitally printed as a one-of-a-kind artwork on heavy watercolor paper with archival inks. Each owl image in the series of 20 presents an invitation for viewers to exchange their thoughts about sensitive issues such as racism, climate change, drugs, life after death, freedom, the second amendment, etc. The owls take no sides.

That kind of summarizes what I've been doing for the past fruitful 21 years. Every new inspiration or new research theme provides me with excitement for tomorrow. We all need optimism for the future. What's next?



Egg Hunt, which deals with the world-wide plastic garbage plague, is from the *Owls* series by Professor Kangas.

Call for "Life After Retirement" Articles

In past issues of this newsletter, one of our most popular features has been the "Life After Retirement" articles submitted by our retirees. Since the spring of 2011, we have published letters and photos on this subject from 17 retirees, including one in this issue. Since we don't have a backlog of such articles for the Spring 2019 issue, now is the time to send in YOUR contribution.

We want to know where you are living and what you are doing in retirement. Are you still active in your professional life? Are you engaged in community service activities? What hobbies do you now have time to pursue? Where have your travels taken you? What new adventures have you had? In short, what have you been up to since you retired? Please also send publishable photographs of yourself and your activities. If you wish, you can tell your former colleagues how they can get in touch with you.

Contributions may be submitted to me at the following email address: e.thomas@csuohio.edu. If you prefer to use "snail mail," please send a letter (and photos, if any) to: Edward G. Thomas, 363 Northbridge Ct., Brunswick, OH 44212. We look forward to hearing from you.

OCHER Report for 2018-19

By Jeff Ford and David Larson

Since our last report in the June 2018 newsletter, three of our four RFPFA delegates to OCHER (the Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees), have stepped down. Glending Olson left the contingent at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, and Beth Cagan and Mickey Barnard completed their assignments at the end of the 2018 calendar year. Our new appointees are David Larson, Joyce Mastboom, and Rodger Govea. The RFPFA has been appointing four delegates each year with the aim of assuring that we are represented at each of the four quarterly meetings in Columbus.

As in the past, these meetings provide the delegates with information about the state of the retirement system, legislative and funding issues that are under consideration by the STRS Board, and upcoming changes to the pension and health care plans that affect current active members and retirees. The meetings also provide an opportunity for higher education retirees to present issues, concerns, questions, and suggestions to STRS.

In terms of immediate legislative concerns or upcoming changes to the retirement and health care plans, this, happily, has been a quiet year. The STRS Board is expected to finalize plans for the coming year at its next meeting, but the STRS staff does not anticipate any changes that will significantly affect either current active STRS members or retirees, nor any changes to the health care plans or premiums for the majority of retirees. The somewhat improved funding situation for health care is primarily the result of medical claims coming in below anticipated levels once again this year. The subsidy offsetting Medicare premiums for retirees, which was being phased out over a three-year period and was supposed to have ended last year, was extended at the third-year level of \$29.90 monthly through 2018, and the STRS staff anticipates it will continue to be funded at that level through 2019.

Under this year's OCHER president, Steven Howe from University of Cincinnati, there has been a significant increase in the range of information presented at the quarterly meetings. We have been receiving extensive reports from representatives of other organizations who are stakeholders in public retirement systems and policies in Ohio. In particular, we are receiving regular reports from a representative of OPERS. At the May meeting, we also received reports from John Morrow, the Chief Investment Officer for STRS, and from the new Ohio Chancellor of Higher Education, Randy Gardner. This additional information has been particularly valuable in assessing the performance and situation of STRS during this period of major transitions.

The challenges that the system currently faces are, in part, a consequence of the maturity of the fund. In earlier years the number of active participants exceeded the number of retirees so that the fund was not dependent on investment income to meet its obligations to retirees. At present, the ratio of active participants to retirees is approximately 1.1, and the payments to retirees are significantly exceeding contributions, a gap that will continue to grow. As a result, meeting pension obligations increasingly depends upon investment returns. Furthermore, as John Morrow outlined, the investment situation has changed dramatically since the major 2008 recession. Prior to that, a substantial portion of the investment portfolio was virtually risk free. Treasury bonds were yielding better than 8%. Over the last ten years, it has been necessary to rely on higher risk investments. And, as Morrow outlined in his report, the investment market has changed significantly over this period. As a result, the pension system has been increasingly dependent on the performance of its investment staff. Approximately 70% of STRS investments are managed internally; 30% externally. At present STRS is financially healthy and compares very favorably to other public pension plans in the country, but it is certainly more vulnerable to external forces than in its earlier decades.

Under these circumstances, the STRS Board has been reluctant to consider restoring the suspended COLA in the foreseeable future. In this more volatile and vulnerable financial environment, STRS is anxious to avoid being forced to make changes in the plans for active members or reductions in the benefits to retirees in the face of short-term negative episodes in investment income.

The RFPFA delegates have been impressed by the clarity and transparency the STRS staff has displayed in reporting to our group, as well as in the intelligence and competence of the staff, its commitment to serving the interests of STRS members, and to balancing the interests of current active members and retirees.

Anyone who has questions, would like further information about any of these topics, or has suggestions about issues and concerns that should be brought before the Council, should feel free to contact any of the RFPFA OCHER representatives named above.

Faculty Senate Report for 2018-19

By Douglas Stewart

The officers of Faculty Senate for 2018-19 were as follows: President William Bowen, Vice President Adam Sonstegard, and Secretary Vickie Coleman Gallagher. Senate President Bowen introduced University President Harlan Sands to the Senate at its first meeting of the year..

As was the case in 2017-2018, most issues presented by standing committees of Faculty Senate were decided during 2018-2019 without much debate. The University Curriculum Committee, University Faculty Affairs Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, and Admissions and Standards Committee all worked diligently behind the scenes to craft motions that were accepted with minimal dissent.

Four matters did provoke significant discussion at Senate this past year: budgetary shortfalls; diversity of students, faculty, and staff; student success; and a statement of free speech.

The most serious issues facing CSU currently and in the foreseeable future are projected budgetary shortfalls. In his last year, President Berkman created an ad hoc “Structural Solutions Committee,” consisting of both faculty and administrators, which presented proposals to President Berkman for reorganizing the university to save money. President Sands picked up the process where President Berkman left off. President Sands released the collaborative work, “Statement of Strategic Priorities for Cleveland State University,” in December 2018. The document is available at <https://www.csuohio.edu/president/strategic-priorities>.

Budgetary issues are projected to become more severe over the next five years because international student enrollment continues to drop, especially in graduate programs, and the state continues to freeze tuition while declining to increase state universities’ subsidy. The state subsidy now pays for only about 25 percent of the cost of a student’s education at CSU. The University faces a projected deficit of \$18 million on a budget of about \$280 million for FY 2020 beginning July 1, 2019. A projected \$8 million carry over may be applied to this deficit.

CSU is taking steps to deal with projected deficits besides restructuring the university. First-year student retention and graduation rates have increased significantly in the last few years, and the Provost intends to ensure that they continue to rise. Both retention and completion rates affect the budget. CSU has adopted a tuition freeze program, ensuring that incoming first-year students will pay the same tuition for four years. The University is permitted by the State to raise tuition for each incoming class and then freeze tuition for that class at that tuition level for four years.

The second matter that drew the attention of Senate members and generated significant discussion was the diversity of students, faculty, and staff. The recently issued 2019-2020 Diversity Action Plan builds on the Pursuing Inclusive Excellence document of 2016 and the 2019-2020 Diversity Report. Faculty Senate heard presentations by members of the President’s Diversity Council. The presenters included Dr. Ronnie Dunn, interim Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. Presentations were based on the 2019-2020 Diversity Report and Action Plan. President Sands stated to Faculty Senate that the diversity action plan is going to be one of the highest priorities. Following is the link to the diversity report and plan: <https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/2019%20-%202020%20Diversity%20Report%20-%20Action%20Plan%20FINAL%20VERSION%20%2025%2019.pdf>.

The third issue that attracted Senate’s attention and generated discussion was student success. Throughout the year, Senators heard about the value of using Starfish to improve student retention and success from various parties including their own Senate colleagues. As reported earlier, Provost Jianping Zhu stated that student retention and graduation rates have improved in the last few years and that he intends for these increases to continue. Professor Debbie Jackson, Chair of the ad hoc Committee on Undergraduate Student Success, introduced Mr. Thomas Geaghan, Director of Institutional Research. Mr. Geaghan presented slides reflecting retention data including comparisons of retention rates for select groups of students. He also listened to comments and answered questions from Senators.

Finally, the Senate in 2017-2018 had been thrust into a controversy over posted flyers that attacked LGBT students. That year, Faculty Senate formed the ad hoc Committee on Free Speech to present a proposed statement. Consequently, the Senate entered 2018-19 in the process of completing a statement on free speech principles that attempted to thread the needle. A resolution was enacted near the end of AY 2018-19. After passage, the Senate considered some changes in the resolution requested by the Administration to allow a joint Senate-Administration Resolution on Free Speech on Campus; the revised resolution received Senate approval. Following is the link to the joint resolution: <https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/Free%20Speech%20-%20Amendment%20to%20Free%20Speech%20Resolution%20-%20March%206.pdf>

Cleveland State University
Retired Faculty and Professional Staff Association
Membership Form

Please complete and return this form with your check for dues payable to CSU RFPSA. Dues are \$10 a year or \$125 for lifetime membership. Mail to Violet Lunder, Berkman Hall 320, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio 44115

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