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Newsletter of the Austin Peay State University Retirees Association

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Photo: Membership Director Nancy Smithfield discussing our newly increased membership with the Board.

A special welcome to new members

Jim Clemmer

Your officers and directors are happy to announce that the addition of a number of new and returning members has brought our total APSURA membership to 90. We warmly welcome these new and returning members, and we hope you will enjoy and benefit from your association with APSURA and each other as much as we do. We will especially welcome your active involvement with APSURA events and activities. Please let us know of your interests and send us your ideas for new directions APSURA might pursue.

APSURA maintained a hectic pace of activities through the fall, so these more relaxed winter months provide a good time to reflect on the purposes of our organization and the ways we officers and directors are trying to address those reasons for our being. Not just for new members, who might need an introduction to APSURA, but for us established members who might welcome a refresher discussion of why we are here and what we are supposed to be doing. Upon this examination we might find, as did Robert Browning's chauvinistic Duke about his late Duchess in "My Last Duchess," before he killed her, that "here you miss, or there exceed the mark." We members of the Board are not perfect, but, unlike the Duchess, we do try. If we do not produce satisfactory results, members may decide to do away with us, preferably by voting us out of office.

The mission of APSURA, as stated in our bylaws (available in full on our website, www.apsu.edu/retirees-association) is "to advocate, to educate, and to serve." Our purpose is "to promote the welfare of retired faculty and staff through various programs and activities, to support continued investment with the university, and to participate in activities that benefit our community in general."

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Austin Peay State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs and activities sponsored by APSU. APSU Policy 6:003 Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination.

Board members with representatives of ETSURA, UTCRA, and UMAR at THE-RA conference, November 2017

These are three lofty, if a bit vague, purposes, but some of our activities seem to fulfill all three. The reports on recent events in this newsletter will speak for themselves in that respect. Just to single out one good example, our Connections events provide a unique forum for retirees to share their experience and knowledge with other retirees; they contribute to the university by providing still another source of information and inspiration for staff, students and faculty; and members of the community often take advantage of our open invitation to share in the information and camaraderie Connections provides.



We serve the interests of retirees in a most basic way by providing a defined and describable identity as a continuing member of the APSU community. Being referred to simply as a “retiree” of APSU says little about any continuing interest in or association with the University. Joining APSURA, on the other hand, publicly signals that we have actively chosen to continue our identity as a defined member of the university community. Other obvious ways to achieve

or maintain general visibility and recognition are to rise to prominence as a supporter of particular programs—the library, athletics, the arts—and to donate large amounts of money to the Foundation, and many APSURANS do these things.

Those sources of identity, however, sometimes have as much to do with particular talents and abilities, luck, or the depth of one’s pocketbook as a simple desire to continue as an active and official member of the university community. APSURA is for everybody in equal measure—administrators, staff, faculty. There is no pecking order or elitism here. The 25-dollar yearly dues supports our coffers, of course, but it also serves as affirmation that each member has actively chosen to belong to this association. And we can, and often do, talk with pride about the achievements and contributions of our members.

Secretary Eloise Weatherspoon with Jean Dake, president of the UTC Retirees Association, at THERA

The first big job for our founders in 2008 was to ensure that the acronym “APSURA” and its positive connotations would come to be recognizable across the university, which we seem to have accomplished fairly well. The worlds of advertising and politics have taught us more than we ever wanted to know about the necessity and power of “branding,” the elevation of certain words or logos and their connotations to a level of instant recognition sufficient to elicit a desired response from a target audience. But for the acronym or logo to carry any weight it has to be coupled with a set of images that establish a full and positive conception of the product or organization. For APSURA, our personal and warm contacts with new retirees probably provide the main encouragement for them to join, while the newsletter writers and editor also try to present detailed and warm pictorial accounts of who we are and what we do.



Again, a warm welcome to our new and returning members. We hope to hear from you, and to see you at upcoming events! Let us know if you would like to serve on our Board.

Recent Connections presentations

A recap of our most recent Connections presentations illustrates well the diversity and uniformly high quality of these events. There was truly something for everyone among them—retirees, the University, and the community.

The most recent Connections event was a presentation on Jan. 30 by Dr. Carl Stedman entitled “Genealogy: A Complex and Rewarding Journey.” Carl took us deep into the passion and preoccupation dedicated genealogists bring to their searches for accurate and complete sources of information, and the personal involvement they can come to have with distant and otherwise forgotten relatives. Carl related a story of standing in a field reimagining the environment of an ancestor who had fought in the Revolutionary War. Off in the distance Carl saw two joggers dressed in red advancing rapidly toward him, providing a vivid reminder of the Redcoats his ancestor encountered in the same field. This was genealogy truly made visceral. Carl also took us into the role DNA studies now play in determining ancestry, showing how the coincidence or displacement of chromosomes on strands of DNA from two people can prove or disprove relationship.



Carl Stedman addressing Connections audience, Jan. 30.

The four Connections events taking place last fall, like Dr. Stedman’s, had in common a strong autobiographical and personal component. The first was Ted Jones’ “Playing with Light and Shadow,”



presented at the Roxy. The “Light” to Ted was making and working with a great many friends in the artistic and musical communities of like souls he found in New York in the 1970s, and later in the 80s the joy of striking out on his own to create and find intellectual and spiritual realities within which he could live, grow and contribute to his community. The “Shadow” was the darkness of AIDS that fell upon his friends and his world in New York, and his inability to find a ready-made social and spiritual base for his existence in Clarksville. His narration was accompanied by a complementary musical track he created on an electric harp.

Ted Jones in performance of “Playing with Light and Shadow,” Connections presentation for August, 2017

The second Connections event, on Sept. 26, was staged by Richard Gildrie and George Mabry as a sophisticated distillation of key political personages and concepts from the 19th Century brought to life in ways illustrating their relevance to the political quandaries of our time. The focus was on a new musical drama by George and Richard, “An Elegant Obsession,” which brings to the fore the violent clash of temperaments, wills and beliefs of the powerful “Great Triumvirate” of Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and John Calhoun. Passages of music illustrated some main components of the work.

On Oct. 22 Eloise Weatherspoon delivered a summary of the life and work of Martin Luther upon the 500th anniversary of the nailing of the Ninety-Five Theses to the church door of Wittenberg, the de-

Display of material on Martin Luther provided by Carl and Janet Stedman for Eloise Weatherspoon's Connections presentation

Pg 5. APSURA rest stop, Rotary Bike Ride, Sept. 16

Pg 5. Mike Miyamoto of the ETSU Retirees Association at THE-RA, November.

Pg 5. THERA meeting, November 5-6

Connections audience for Carl Stedman, Jan. 30

fining moment marking the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Eloise explored this revolutionary development as it affected both the common understanding of Biblical truth and the mindset and culture of the known world, and as it affected the personal life of this young monk, who had taken a vow of celibacy but was to marry a runaway nun and father six children.

As the Connections presentation for November, APSU student Sarah Eskildson delivered an inspirational look at her work last summer with Free For Life International, an anti-trafficking nonprofit, and other agencies to help Nepalese women and girls escape the ravages of human trafficking. Her talk provided information both on the dimensions of human trafficking and efforts underway to help women and children caught in the traps traffickers set for them. Eskildson, a sociology and journalism major, is embarking upon a career in this area following her graduation in December.



The next Connections presentation will be delivered by me, Jim Clemmer, on Tuesday, February 27, in MMCS 242 at 7 p.m. My topic will be "Sugar Wars 1974, and The Sensuous Woman." My talk begins with a supposedly routine 1974 glucose-tolerance test gone very wrong and my landing within three weeks on the threshold of a mental institution. Through several bizarre twists I wound up in the middle of a major war raging at that time within the medical profession about the nature of and criteria for diagnosing reactive hypoglycemia, commonly called "low blood sugar," about which there is still much confusion and misinformation today. My talk also provides a historical look at the relatively primitive state of access to scientific resources just prior to the explosion of digital information. A lively episode featuring the author of the best-selling 1969 book "The Sensuous Woman" provides comic relief for an otherwise serious technical presentation.



Other fall activities and events

Fall began for us on Aug. 23 with the Convocation and the following picnic in the Red Barn. President White's Convocation address was inspiring, as always, and during the picnic Dr. White came to our tables several times for extended conversations about our planned activities and her hopes for the year ahead. As before, we had staked out several tables just inside the door for our members, with our APSURA logo prominently

displayed for those entering to see—the first of the year's social occasions and a good opportunity to remind employees of our existence.



For the sixth year in a row, we staffed a rest stop for the Sunrise Rotary Bike Ride, serving close to 600 riders as they came through Trenton, Kentucky. The ride had been delayed two weeks because of the flooding that had inundated the area during the Labor Day weekend, which necessitated re-recruiting new members to prepare and manage the site. The day was sunny and cool, which made for an enjoyable and uneventful experience for ten of us. The Rotary Club usually rewards APSURA for our participation with a generous contribution to the Foundation.

Angie Judish, HR Benefits Manager, again asked us to participate in the Benefits Fair on Sept. 26, where we provided information and advice to many employees thinking about or preparing for retirement, and we invited them to consider joining APSURA. We told them of our new policy encouraging current employees to join APSURA as Associate Members, paying the regular \$25 fee in anticipation of the free year of membership to which they will be entitled upon retiring. We encouraged them to attend the STAR program in November.

On Sunday and Monday, Nov. 5-6, APSURA hosted the 13th annual meeting of the Tennessee Higher Education Retirees Association (THERA) at Fall Creek Falls State Park. Fourteen of us welcomed representatives of the retiree associations of ETSU, UTC and the Univ. of Memphis for round-robin discussions of issues of current importance to all groups. Aleeta Christian delivered our first presentation, highlights of our Connections events. APSURAN Ted Jones presented a slightly abridged version of his Roxy show "Playing with Light and Shadow." Angie Judish discussed the contributions our STAR seminar had made to the wellbeing of staff and faculty preparing to retire. The theme of the meeting was "Deepening Sensibilities and Broadening Horizons."



The annual Straight Talk about Retirement (STAR) seminar jointly sponsored by HR and APSURA was held on Nov. 15, with more than 50 attendees undergoing or looking ahead to retirement. The program consisted of three parts, Food, Been There and Done That, and Fast and Furious. Attendees were treated to Chartwell's heavy hors d'oeuvres, followed by personal accounts of life in retirement by APSURANS Carl Stedman and Sharon Silva. This was followed by detailed presentation of the retirement process by Benefits Manager Angie Judish and representatives of Retire Ready Tennessee (TCRS) and TIAA-CREF. This event has become very popular among those anticipating retiring, and it is now on the official yearly calendars of events of both HR and APSURA.

From the Bookshelf

Review: Rachel Dickinson, *The Notorious Reno Gang: The Wild Story of the West's First Brotherhood of Thieves, Assassins, and Train Robbers* (2017).
Richard P. Gildrie

Crime stories, of course, have long been staples of popular culture. It's hard to imagine movies, television, and even literature without murderers, robbers, con artists, and other assorted felons. For academic historians, patterns of criminality and contemporary reactions to them reveal much about social stresses and cultural change. Few works successfully combine these popular and academic themes.

This book, however, manages to merge them rather well, albeit with a barely controlled tendency toward the sensational. The prose is crisp and lucid while the organization is clear, which helps prevent excess. The temptation to excessive use of adverbs and speculation beyond evidence must have been huge, given the topic. The author, who often writes for the Atlantic and the Smithsonian, clearly has a leg in both the academic and popular camps and obviously enjoyed the research and labor. The bibliography and notes build confidence in her knowledge and judgment. This is no potboiler.

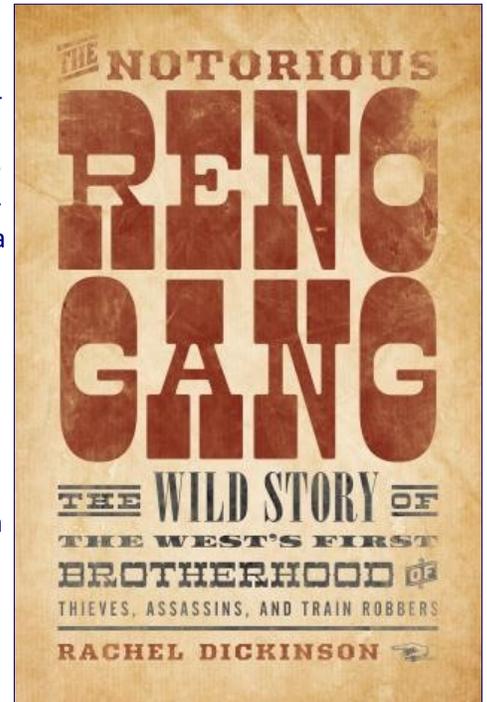
The Reno Gang is an ideal topic for such a project. It is an elaborate tale of multi-faceted sculduggery touching upon a wide range of social, political, and economic trends shaping the Midwest from 1840 to 1880. Criminals are opportunists by definition, but the Reno Gang was more observant, inventive and ruthless than most. The Reno brothers were as much pioneers in their field as John Deere was in his.

Their base of operations was southeastern Indiana, which hardly seems “the West” to us. But if “West” in that era suggests a region rapidly being transformed by the railroad and where legal and political authority was tenuous at best, then southern Indiana fit the bill. An apparently well-planned arson campaign gave the Reno's control over a farming town, which they turned into a refuge for thieves, counterfeiters, prostitutes and pickpockets. Their initial target was a nearby railroad crossing town. Once the local judicial system proved too dilatory, intimidated, and corrupt to suppress the outlaws, they began exploiting the expanding rail network and the movement of Union armies. By 1868 they had extended their criminal enterprises from north Georgia to Canada, and from Pennsylvania to Iowa. While the core group was probably less than forty, their associates may have numbered in the hundreds.

The Reno Gang was the first organized criminal network to grasp fully the multiple opportunities provided by railroads and was thus the inspiration for numerous subsequent outlaw bands who created “Wild West” legends. What is more, John Reno, reputedly the “brains of the outfit,” took as much pride in his role in creating a new enterprise as any other Gilded Age entrepreneur. In 1879, after a ten-year stretch in a Missouri prison, he penned a pamphlet autobiography, “The Life of John Reno: The World's First Train Robber, Written by Himself.” Contrition was never part of his persona.

Given the Gang's geographic reach and diversity of illegal activities, the story not only describes a regional underworld but also includes a large cast of characters. One of the most important was Alan Pinkerton. Pinkerton's reputation and income derived largely from protecting railroads and pursuing counterfeiters. His relentless pursuit of the Reno Gang, and of publicity, reminds me of J. Edgar Hoover's career in the 1920s and 1930s. The book thus provides an excellent account of the methods and organization of the Pinkerton Agency, as well as a portrait of Pinkerton himself. Another major character is a fiery physician and newspaper editor who encouraged and may even have led the huge vigilante group which finally eviscerated the Gang in a series of spectacular jail raids and lynchings, all fully described in the book.

As the author observed, “The rise of any powerful criminal force is a product of circumstances coming together at just the right time to produce an environment ripe for exploitation – personalities, social circumstances, politics, and even geography determine whether an outlaw enterprise gains a foothold.” A good book deftly exploring such a moment in time is worth many novels.



Members as of February 4, 2018

Your officers and directors appreciate each and every one of you. For questions about your membership status, write Membership Director Nancy Smithfield at smithfieldn@apsu.edu or Treasurer Sharon Silva at silvas@apsu.edu.

Lawrence Baggett	Nancy Hancock	Chris Nussbaumer
Mary Emma Barnes	Rae Hansberry*	Ronald Oakland
Gerald Beavers	Carlette Hardin	Allene Phy-Olsen
Al Bekus*	Ann Harris	Pam Pickard
Barbara Blackston*	Durward Harris	Bob Privett**
Dewey Browder*	Joan Harris	Albert Randall
Richard Brown**	Camille Holt	Jeannie Randall*
JoeAnn Burgess*	Cheryl Holt*	Jim Ridenhour*
John Butler*	Sherry Hoppe*	Sharon Ridenhour*
LuAnnette Butler*	Cicero Alvin Hughes	Mitch Robinson
Don Carlin	Lynda Hunt*	Shelia Ross
Jane Chitwood	Al Irby**	Linda Rudolph*
Aleeta Christian**	Nancy Irby**	Sharon Silva
Floyd Christian**	Hazel Irwin	Linda Sitton*
Jim Clemmer**	Ted Jones	David Smithfield
Hester Crews**	David Kanervo**	Nancy Smithfield*
Linda Davis	Ellen Kanervo**	Diane Sperry
Margaret Dietrich	Kathryn Kemmerly*	Carlton Stedman
Arthur Eaves	Phil Kemmerly*	Janet Stedman
Joe Filippo**	Thomas King	Bill Taylor**
Inga Filippo**	Betty Lambert*	James Thompson
Solie Fott	Carolyn Lander**	Linda Thompson
Meredith Gildrie	John Lander**	Gerald Van Dyke
Richard Gildrie	George Mabry*	Thelma Watson
Malcolm Glass	Betty McClain*	Eloise Weatherspoon*
Sara Gotcher*	Leon McQueen*	Jerry Weatherspoon*
Kenneth Grambihler	Harriett McQueen*	Robert Wibking*
Roy Gregory	Malcolm (Kip) Muir	Barbara Wilbur*
Helen Griffin	Anna Murray*	
Mark Griggs	Linda Nichols	
Jim Hancock	Joan Niles	

*=5 yr **= Lifetime

Officers

David Kanervo, President
Floyd Christian, VP
Sharon Silva, Treasurer
Eloise Weatherspoon, Secretary

Directors

Allene Phy-Olsen
Carlton Stedman
Barbara Blackston
Joe Filippo
Mitch Robinson
Phil Kemmerly
George Mabry
Aleeta Christian (ex officio)

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On the Web

apsu.edu/retirees-association

See our website for current and past issues of our Newsletter and NewsNotes (pending), a retirement checklist, and information on retiree benefits.

Publication Information

The APSURA Newsletter is published quarterly by the Austin Peay State University Retirees Association. A supplement to the Newsletter, the APSURA NewsNotes, is published occasionally to update APSURA members on time-sensitive coming activities and events, both those in which APSURA is participating officially and others recommended by APSURA members. Both the Newsletter and NewsNotes will soon be available again at apsu.edu/retirees-association.

We invite APSU retirees to send us specific information about coming activities and events you believe will be of interest to APSU retirees. Please send to to Jim Clemmer at clemmerj@apsu.edu or to APSURA at the physical address below, and include exact dates, times, locations, deadlines, costs, etc. We also welcome the submission of original articles for possible publication in the newsletter, especially descriptions of your accomplishments, travels, discoveries and other experiences as APSU retirees.

Submissions are limited to 500 words and a maximum of three high-resolution photographs. Send texts as regular email (no tabs) or Word attachments to Jim Clemmer at clemmerj@apsu.edu with photographs sent individually as separate jpg files. Or you may submit typed manuscripts and good-quality photo prints to APSU Retirees Association, Box 4426, Clarksville, TN 37044.

Please let us know of retirees who for some reason are not receiving the Newsletter, and of errors or needed changes in your own name and address. If you would prefer not to receive the printed copy of the Newsletter, please notify Membership Director Nancy Smithfield (smithfieldn@apsu.edu). If you are not a member of APSURA but would like to receive the Newsletter via email, please notify Nancy Smithfield and provide her your email address.

APSURA Members Registration Form

New member Renewing member Retired faculty or staff Associate member
Check both of the above-right boxes if your spouse or partner is joining or renewing as an associate member.

Dr.____ Mr.____ Ms____ Mrs.____ Date_____

Name of member: _____
Last First Middle

Name of spouse/partner: _____
Last First Middle

Address: _____
Number and Street (Apartment Number)

City State Zip Code

Telephones: _____ E-mail addresses: _____

Former department: _____ Years of service _____ Year you retired _____

Activities in which you would like the APSURA to be involved (check all that apply): Group travel; Athletic events; Cultural events; Social events; Scholarship activities; Seminars; Community work; Other _____

Annual Dues for Austin Peay State University Retirees Association:

Regular (APSU Retiree) Membership \$25.00 Please send to APSURA, Box 4426, Clarksville, TN 37044

Associate Membership \$25.00(5 years for \$100

Additional donation for Scholarship Fund _____(Lifetime Membership \$500