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May 2012

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Photo by Nancy Irby

Newsletter of the Austin Peay State University Retirees Association



From the President

Al Bekus

Please mark Tuesday, June 5, 3-4 p.m. on your calendar for our annual Association membership meeting in the Cumberland room in the MUC. The Nominating Committee composed of Joe Filippo and Nancy Irby and chaired by Aleeta Christian, will make its recommendations for new officers and board members to replace those who have completed their terms in office. The membership will vote on these recommendations. We also need your input for future activities and programs. This meeting will mark the end of our third year in operation, so please try to join us to support the Association. Also remember the Greenway nature walk with Dr. Estes on Saturday, May 12. We will meet at the Pollard Rd. trailhead at 9:15 a.m.

Since these are my final comments as outgoing president, I would like to thank the many individuals who have been responsible for making the Association the success it is today. Although limited space makes it impossible for me to name everyone who has had a hand in our success, there are several individuals who deserve special thanks and recognition: President Hall gave his enthusiastic support from the very first time I mentioned to him that I was interested in starting a retirees association at APSU, and we appreciate his generosity in allowing us to fund the newsletter through the University.

In our first organizational meeting Roy Gregory, Executive Director of University Advancement, gave his full support in ac-

cepting responsibility for our association's becoming a part of his office and for helping to fund some of our early activities. At this first organizational meeting Mitch Robinson, Vice President for Finance and Administration, was appointed by President Hall to become the University's representative on the Board of Directors. Mitch has been absolutely outstanding in this position, generously giving his time and expertise, often volunteering to take on tasks concerning University policy and protocol.

It is also important to mention Carlene Smith (retired) and Angela Judish of Human Resources for their excellent work in organizing our annual retirement seminars, certainly one of our most important

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Austin Peay State University, a TBR institution, is an AA/EEO employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its program and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Director, Affirmative Action, P.O. Box 4457, Browning Building Room 7A, Clarksville, TN 37044, Phone: (931) 221-7178.

*Tanya and
Al Bekus,
Dec. 15,
2011*

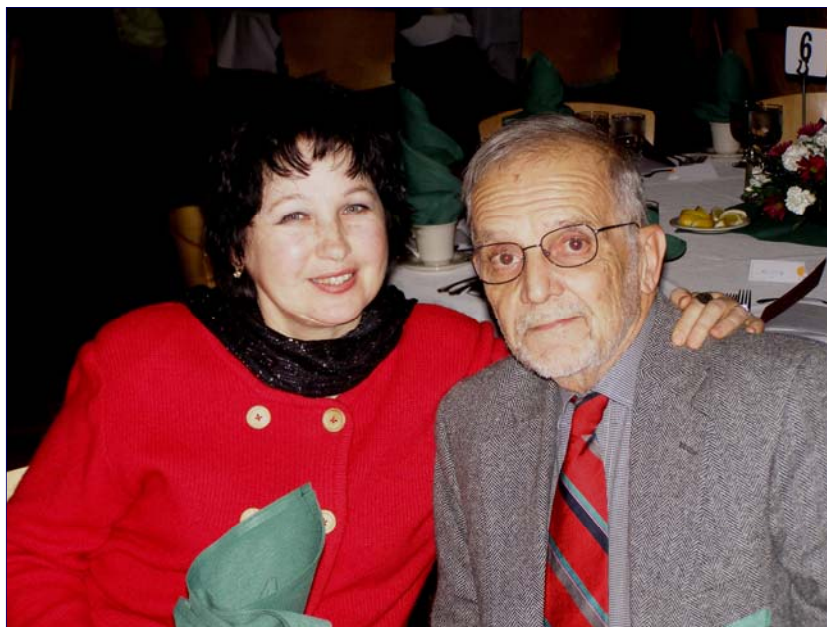
activities. I am happy to say that in every instance the Association has had complete cooperation from every University office it has called upon for information, advice, and suggestions. This fact clearly illustrates the caring attitude of University administrators, faculty, and staff for retirees of the University.

Both Gerald Beavers, our first-year vice president (who was also responsible for creating our outstanding website) and Wayne Chaffin, our first-year treasurer, made timely suggestions and recommendations in our formative first months of organization.

Finally, I cannot say enough about our present and outgoing officers and board mem-

bers for their dedication and hard work as our third year draws to a close: Aleeta Christian, Al Irby, Meredith Gildrie, Ann Harris, Phil Kemmerly, and Jim Clemmer. In addition, I am sure that everyone who has read our newsletter since Jim became editor can appreciate his creativity and expertise. His work is simply outstanding—which brings me to an important point.

Over the past three years I have been continuously impressed by the excitement, creativity, and enthusiasm of our Board of Directors. Retirees, Senior Citizens, an Over the Hill Gang of wonderful people who always have a great time being involved, and this is especially why I wish more retirees would become active in our Association. I can only imagine the talent, creativity, and expertise other retirees could bring to the Association by becoming active. I am especially inviting all of our dues-paying members to join in the excitement. We're just having a good time, so come be a part of it.



With new leadership come fresh ideas to make the Association more attractive to retirees. In retirement it is perhaps sometimes easier for us to sit back and simply relax, but it is also rewarding to meet with friends and former colleagues and contribute to the University and to the community in a variety of ways. In the Newsletter we have also continued to solicit suggestions and recommendations to improve our Association and articles about what you have been doing in your retirement.

I think that our retirees would really be interested in reading about your activities. (A recent study emphasizes that the single most important characteristic of healthy longevity is to be mentally and physically active.)

Over the past three years the

Board of Directors, the membership, and the University administration have joined together to make the Austin Peay State University Retirees Association an organization that we can enjoy and be proud of. Our website and newsletter describe our programs and activities, so I do not have to recount them here.

We have come a long way and have learned a great deal. We have our sights focused on the future as we continue to actively explore new ways to serve our retirees, the University, and the community. Please help us welcome our new officers and board members by attending the membership meeting on June 5 at 3 p.m. in the Cumberland room in the MUC.

Remember that annual dues of \$25 for regular and associate memberships for the new year are due by July 1, payable to treasurer Al Irby at APSURA, Box 4426, Clarksville, TN 37044.

The fellowship of the ROMEOS

Malcolm Glass

Ed Irwin's account of the formation of our version of ROMEO perhaps best reflects the informality that still characterizes the group: "Soon after I retired in 1997, I had a phone call from Ken Wibking, who wanted to know whether I had any interest in helping to start up a group of retirees from the Peay to meet on some kind of regular basis. I replied yes. We called several other retired folks, especially from the University, and the ultimate result was to set up a breakfast get-together at Shoney's for the first Thursday of each month. That group came to be known as ROMEO, Retired Old Men Eating Out. We now know that there are hundreds of similar groups across the country, most of them unaffiliated with one another, who have adopted the same name."

Ken Wibking, Carleton Stedman. Harvey Blanck. Aaron Hutchison, Jim Corgan. These men were names when I was teaching at APSU.



Malcolm Glass and Hazel Irwin



I knew them when I saw them walking across campus. We rarely spoke. I never had a true conversation with them.

Aaron Hutchison and Virginia Tenney

Now that I am retired and no longer on campus very often, these men are friends, as are many other retirees I had not known before. I see them monthly at breakfast when we meet together as the ROMEOs. We inquire of each other how our lives are faring. We ask, with genuine concern, "How are those knees holding up?" We talk of spouses, children, grandchildren, and their trials and triumphs. These men are new-found friends. Had we not retired,

had we not thought it a good idea to meet together once a month, I would not know them at all.

Many of the other members of our group—Dave Till, Ed Irwin, Charlie Boehms, to name a few—have been my colleagues and friends for nearly half a century. Also Dot Smith and other women. As Ed puts it, "Dot Smith was an early member, rendering meaningless the gender declaration of the group's title." We have all renewed and enriched our friendships at these gatherings.



Dot Smith



Once a month we visit our memories together with stories of our lives today, and, of course, of our teaching careers, the mishaps and adventures of former students and of other colleagues, some of them no longer among us: Joseph Asanbe, Felix Woodward, Dave Snyder, Medford Bowman, Lew Tatham, Harry McLeod, Charlie Holt.

Ed Irwin

After a life filled with syllabi, administrators, class rolls, students, chalk dust, exams, and grade sheets, we need not leave our lives at APSU behind us. It is salutary, even necessary, to keep alive all that has meant so much to us in our careers. But in our fellowship we fill our lives with more than mere memories. We unravel our tangled histories and put them together again with new meanings. Our lives are filled by the lives of others, friends of those years, new friends of these years.

Boarding the
Island Princess, Fort
Lauderdale

Nancy Irby



Cruising to Panama on the *Island Princess*

Nancy Irby

In January Al and I went on our first cruise. We traveled to Panama on an eleven-day trip arranged by the Senior Center of Clarksville. There were 11 in our group including Aleeta Christian, Ann Harris, Leah Foote, and Anne Medlock. We boarded our wonderful ship, the *Island Princess*, in Fort Lauderdale. Our first stop after two get-acquainted days at sea was Aruba, where four of us took a submarine expedition and saw sea-life and ship wrecks in a beautiful journey 140 feet under water.

On day four, we arrived in Cartagena, Columbia. As you can imagine, we were shown an entirely different side of the city from that recently made famous by the Secret Service. Aleeta, Ann H., and we Irbys took a bus trip thru the Old City. The walled historic center is beautiful with streets bordered by colorfully painted Spanish Colonial architecture. Las Murallas, considered by many the most impressive city wall in the world, was constructed after an attack by Francis Drake at the end of the 16th century. The Castillo de San Felipe de Barajas is a fortress that majestically stands guard on a hillside overlooking the city and harbor, built by the Spanish for protection against pirates while



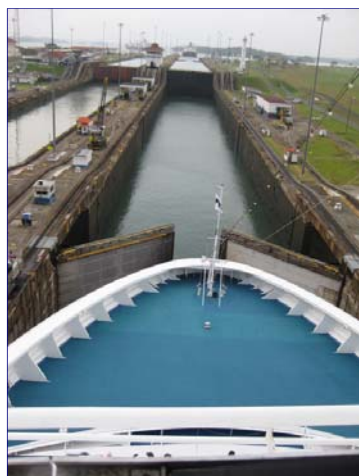
Ann Harris
and Aleeta
Christian

shipping gold out to Europe. As a different perspective on history, the Spanish considered Sir Francis Drake one of the most evil of pirates. We also visited Las Bovedas, dungeons inside the Old City initially built for military purposes, now home to boutiques and tourist shops.

On the fifth day we arrived at 5 a.m. at the Panama Canal. Many of us got up in time to go on deck to watch as we passed thru the three locks at Gatun. As the sun rose, we saw the precision required to orchestrate the passage through the locks. Our ship had a clearance of two feet on each side. Taut cables attached to mules (train engines) on each side kept the ship from touching the sides. As the ship maneuvered into Gatun Lake to turn around, we took a train excursion to the Pacific Ocean and Panama City. Our guide was very open and blunt about the political situation in Panama and gave us insight beyond the normal sightseeing tourist chatter. We stopped at a viewing site for the Bridge of the Americas, which until a few years ago provided the only way to drive from North America to South America. We re-boarded the ship in Colon.

On day six we arrived at Limon, Costa Rica, where we boarded a 1930s open-air narrow-gauge train to a banana plantation and then through a rain forest. The process of raising and harvesting the bananas was fascinating, and the rain forest was beautiful. We spotted howler monkeys and a tree sloth. The train stopped several times so we could observe and take pictures. Huts and hovels of extreme poverty beside the tracks belonged to people who worked the plantation;

according to our guide many of them came from Nicaragua to escape the guerilla fighting.

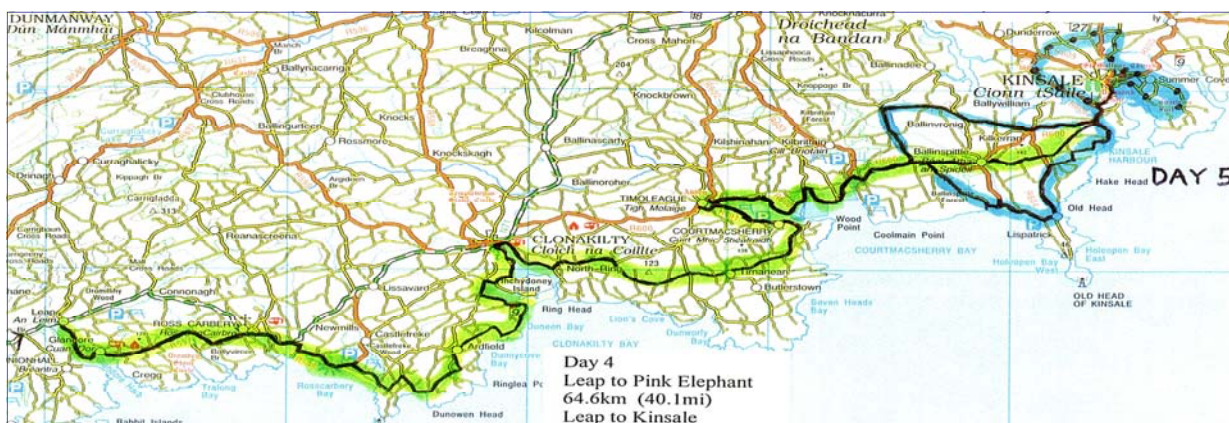


*Nancy Irby
(front), Al
Irby and Ann
Harris*

After several days at sea we stopped at Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands. Although some of our group went to a turtle farm and others snorkeled, Aleeta, Ann Harris, and Al and I chose to visit the town. This was the cleanest port we visited and also had some very nice shops. Our other stops and tours gave us insight into the local sites and history. Some shops were designed just for tourists, and we thoroughly enjoyed the rum cakes.

On board the ship, we saw some fabulous shows, watched movies and games, relaxed, and people watched. We also ate some fantastic meals and quickly learned that we could ask for more than one entrée just to try them, and share three or four desserts with the group.

*Entering the
Gatun locks,
Panama Canal*



*Route from
Baltimore to
Kinsale, Ireland*

*Photos by
Jim Clemmer*

Lost on the road to Clonakilty

Jim Clemmer

Emboldened by having survived a wild 40-mile descent of Maui's Haleakala, 29 switchbacks through clouds from 10,000 feet to sea-level, and by several sessions on the Leipers Fork leg of the Natchez Trace, partner Bob and I decided a couple of years ago that biking 300 miles through the hills and along the seacoasts of southwest Ireland would be a piece of cake. I had always wanted to see Ireland up close and personal, and, anyway, the Backroads brochure offered photos of smiling elderly cyclists traversing green pastures of tranquil sheep, informative lectures by whiskey experts and storytellers, and encouraging words such as "your own pace" and "relaxing." There was to be a plethora of leisurely fire-side pub meals and cozy conversations with convivial locals. Sure.

So we booked a June tour beginning in the village of Kenmare and proceeding onto the wind-swept barrens of the Beara Peninsula, over the Caha Mountains to Glengarriff and Bantry, along the southern coast to Baltimore and Clonakilty, and ending in the Kinsale of Lusitania fame. We envisioned a week of immersion in the emerald landscape, the stone huts of Synge's "Riders to the Sea," and especially the spookiness of Yeats' collection of folk tales, many of which are set in the southwest.

*Clonakilty
at last
(pg. 7)*

*Climbing in
the Caha
Mountains,
Beara Pen-
insula*

*The view
from Healy
Pass,
Beara Pen-
insula*

Most of that happened, but not exactly as planned. What the brochure had not stressed was that these hills went up—way up—as well as down, that many of our fellow cyclists would be hot-blooded yuppies half our age who would be there mainly to race each other from town to town, that the skies would not necessarily remain blue, and that the backroads of Ireland were confusing and poorly marked.

We were happy to see the youngsters disappear just outside Kenmare on the first day, so we and a few other slow-pokes could be left free to pedal the solitudes of Beara and the Caha at our own speed. The roads were narrow, the landscape ancient and tortured, with some new fascination around every bend. We parked our bikes to walk the rhododendrons of the Dureen Gardens on Beara, to take in the views from Healy Pass, and to commune with the cows on Caha. Bob and I traveled by ourselves most of the time, meeting the group for lunch at designated pubs and at inns in the evening. The Backroads SAG wagon checked on us occasionally to make sure we were still alive.



The first three days were gorgeous, with clear skies and easy landmarks of stone houses and bent trees clearly indicated on the route-maps strapped to our handlebars. On the fourth day, however, coming out

of the village of Baltimore we faced a driving rain and a route suddenly full of quick turns, one of which we missed as we waved to one of our group who had paused beside the road. We climbed a long grade to a hilltop intersection of five identical roads that appeared nowhere on our map.



As we were turning to retrace our route, a small man in a green rain slicker swung open a gate in a hedgerow and came toward us. We greeted him and said that we were trying to get to Clonakilty. He laughed heartily, which was a bit unnerving, and then he began gesturing

earnestly toward each of the five roads in turn as he delivered what I presumed to be detailed directions, but in rapid-fire Gaelic. We thanked him, and as he disappeared into the hedgerow we realized that we had forgotten which of the five roads had led us there. We tried one of them, but seeing nothing familiar we returned to the hilltop.



At that point something akin to panic began to set in. We were already an hour overdue in Clonakilty, and here we were stuck in one of Yeats' tales, most of which featured lost souls at the mercy of rain, night, and—worst of all—small creatures who often provided deliberate misdirection. To make matters worse, rain had leaked into our plastic map-covers, and the ink had run, making the maps illegible.

Our misery did not last long, as the next road we tried led us back to a blue church we remembered, and a visit from the concerned SAG wagon further confirmed that we were indeed once again on the road to Clonakilty, where a peat fire and fresh-caught cod at the pub Kitty Macs soon had us ready to hit the road again. We also learned, to our quiet delight, that the SAG wagon had been called upon to rescue two of the fastest cyclists, both lawyers from New York, who had been even more lost than we.

But this experience had damaged our confidence in our ability to tackle the wilds of Ireland alone, and in the process had taught us a new respect for the benefits of traveling in a group. We thereafter warmly welcomed the company, when available, of any of those willing to join us in seeing Ireland from the slow lane.

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 monthly 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 are available at www.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 Hester Crews at crewsh@charter.net, 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.

Officers

Al Bekus, President
Aleeta Christian, VP
Al Irby, Treasurer
Hester Crews, Secretary

Directors

Ann Harris
Meredith Gildrie
Mitch Robinson
Phil Kemmerly

Publicity Director

Jim Clemmer
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Austin Peay
State University
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Clarksville, TN 37044

On the Web

www.apsu.edu/retirees-association

See our website for late-breaking news on upcoming events, schedule changes, retirement benefits, and background information on the Retirees Association.



APSU Retirees Association
Box 4426
Clarksville, TN 37044

APSURA Membership Registration form

☐ Retired faculty or staff

☐ Associate member

Check both of the above boxes if your spouse or partner is joining as an associate member as well.

Dr.____ Mr.____ Ms____ Mrs.____ Other preferred title_____

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 are:

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

Associate Membership ☐ \$25.00

Additional donation for Scholarship Fund _____