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**Remember:**  
*Workshop for members on  
smartphone apps at 3:15,  
Tuesday May 7, in the  
Public Library*  
**And:**  
*Our annual membership  
meeting on June 4 at 3  
p.m. in MUC 310. Please  
come!*

**Photo:**  
*Amundsen? Byrd? Nope.  
Just Al Bekus on a good  
day in the Canadian  
Rockies.*

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## Newsletter of the Austin Peay State University Retirees Association



### A special greeting to new retirees

**Aleeta Christian**

**D**o you realize that APSURA's fifth birthday is coming up? It is hard to believe that we are this old. When a small group led by Al Bekus met to talk about forming this organization, I never dreamed that in five years, we would be knocking on the door of a membership of almost 100 and have so many activities going on, both for fun and service.

This year has been especially eventful and good: two trips to Nashville Symphony concerts in Nashville, representatives attending and learning from the meetings of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education in Chapel Hill and the Tennessee Higher Education Retirees Association at Fall Creek Falls, followed by Christmas Open House at the Halls and the first of our very successful electronics workshops. Anybody besides Floyd and me buy a new smartphone? We are also exploring anew the benefits to which retirees are officially entitled.

Plus, and most important, thanks to the membership fees and other contributions of APSURA members we this year will be giving a \$500 book scholarship to a descendant of an APSU employee or retiree. We are especially proud of that.

I have recently read that most people at least twice in their lifetimes get to reinvent themselves. The first is when they go off to college or into their first job. The second is the day they retire. That is definitely true of me. One of the best days of my life was the day my parents took me and a trunk to Birmingham. They left me standing on the sidewalk at Birmingham-Southern College, which proved to be the first of many very new and very happy days. In a little over two years, Floyd and I married, which put me on a path in higher edu-

*Continued on page 2*

*Our first workshop on smartphones with AP-SURAN Bob Privett, March 8*



cation. Our family landed here in 1986, Floyd in the APSU mathematics department, Lea as a freshman, and Daniel as a 7<sup>th</sup> grader.

And then 25 years later with some trepidation I made the leap into retirement. I soon discovered that my concerns about budgeting my time, perhaps losing my connection with the university, and—worst of

*We heard Russian pianist Olga Kern with the NSO last fall.*



all—boredom, were unfounded. I have recently heard another APSU retiree say that if he had known retirement was going to be so much fun, he would have done it ten years ago! That is me too. In two years, I have never had a dull day, and I am happy to tell you that one of the primary reasons for my satisfaction in retirement is APSURA. Again, I never imagined that APSURA would grow into such an exciting and fulfilling organization.

So here we are, five years old, going strong. I want to wish our newest retirees, all 16 of

them, a warm welcome. You are provided a free membership the first year, and I hope you jump right into as many of our activities as you can manage, and that you choose to continue your membership in succeeding years. We only sponsor activities that promote fun and service, with no long and tedious meetings to bog us down. The board of directors meets monthly for one hour to set directions and plan events. And then, only once a year, in June, we have a gathering of all members to elect a new board of directors and to discuss matters of common interest. I hope everyone will come to that event this year on Tuesday June 4 at 3 p.m. in MUC 310. The new board would especially like to greet you and to discover what new directions you believe the group should take.

*APSURANS at Sole Mio in Nashville on April 18 preceding another NSO concert*





## A visit with Olen Bryant and Marian Anderson

Jim Clemmer

**O**n a Tuesday in late April partner Bob and I traveled to New Deal to visit Olen Bryant. We were happy to find him looking healthy and in fairly good spirits in spite of the loss last year of his long-time colleague and partner Tom Brumbaugh. His home looked much the same, the house and yard dotted here and there with his work along with a few pieces from other sculptors. On the table toward the middle of his sun room was the usual collection of small objects probably holding some special significance for Olen.

I offered to drive to lunch, as he had taken us on our former visit, but he said, "I'll drive—I'm a control freak." So we boarded his old gray Accord and proceeded down Hwy 52 into Portland. But instead of heading directly for *5 Chefs*, where we were to dine, Olen said "I thought we'd look at something." He began to describe a series of gigantic heads of early civil-rights leaders created by noted Nashville sculptor Alan LeQuire, one of Tom's former students at Vanderbilt and the

creator of the famous Athena in the Parthenon and the Musica on the roundabout near Music Row. LeQuire had entitled his series *Cultural Heroes*, and it included heads of Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, Woody Guthrie, Paul Robeson, Lead Belly, and Marian Anderson.

Olen said he had chosen one of these enormous heads, the one of Marian Anderson, to cast in bronze and place in the new Portland Public Library both in honor of Tom and to commemorate

the opening of the Library. And that was where we were going.

I did not know what to expect from such a truncated yet bold representation of a human subject. I was familiar with statues, busts, portraits, photos, and I had seen many of Olen's human faces emerging from elemental substrates of stone, clay, and wood. But the idea of a head both greatly enlarged and thoroughly detached was

new. The thought conjured images of the Wizard of Oz, the beheadings of the Borgias, the somber visages of Easter Island, and even the absurd Shatner portrayal of the Big Giant Head on *Third Rock from the Sun*. I wondered what had led Olen to choose such an unusual tribute to Tom and to the Library.

I needn't have wondered. What we met in the Portland Public Library was not at all a

monstrosity, but rather the essence of the actual Marian Anderson, for all time standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial singing *My Country 'Tis of Thee* in determined defiance not only of the DAR but of the general intolerance and discrimination of that day and time. And the Library itself was a perfect reflection of the values Anderson represented.

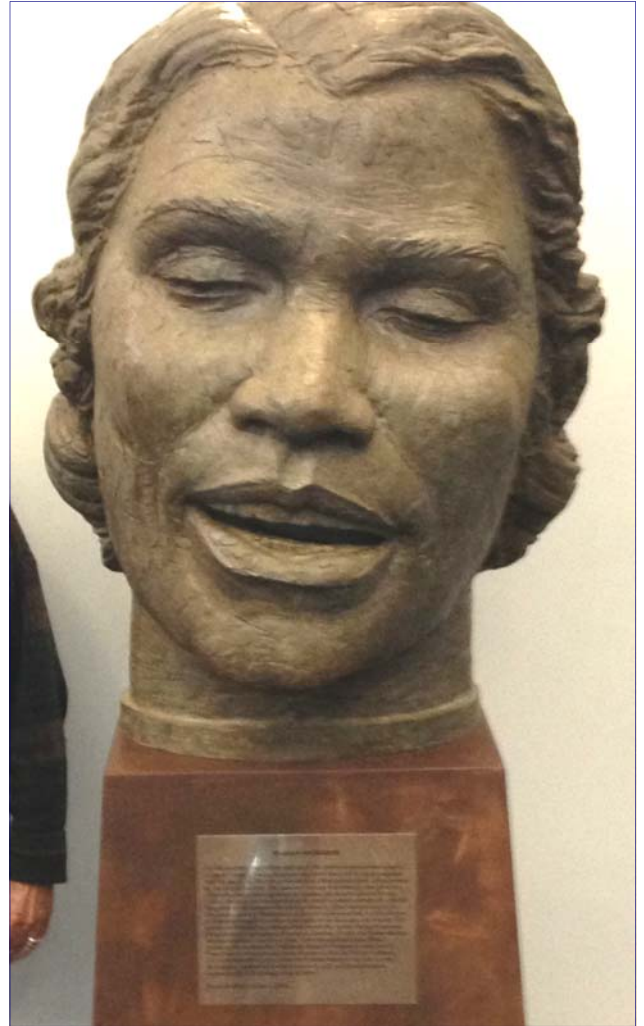
Olen told us that LeQuire had captured each of his subjects in the act of performing, in this case as



*Olen Bryant with Alan LeQuire's sculpture of the head of Marian Anderson, Portland Public Library, April 16*

indelibly recorded on the film of the Lincoln Memorial recital. The critical importance of Anderson's biggest moment was instantly and unforgettably communicated by LeQuire's powerful portrait. An even more personal reason for Olen's choice of this piece for the library was also obvious. Olen's abiding preference for allowing a subject to emerge according to its own rules or whims from an elemental substance was very much in evidence here. This time, though, and perhaps in particular honor of Tom, the substrate from which this visage of Marian Anderson appeared was not clay, nor stone, nor wood, nor any other physical and visible material. The substrate of this piece was the human spirit, from which the soul of Marian Anderson emerged naturally, gracefully, and fully. It was whole, it was entire, it was much more than sufficient. Everything here was very much under control.

*A sculpture by Olen on the front of the Portland Library, and a plaque dedicating the front courtyard to Olen and Tom Brumbaugh*







*Helicopter arriving in the Selkirks as skiers pile together in a "heli-huddle" for protection from blast of the rotors.*

*Photo by skier Stan Zeccolo*

## Twenty-five years of heli-skiing: Mountains full of treasures

Al Bekus

**I**n 1988 for my 50th birthday I gave myself a present by going heli-skiing with Canadian Mountain Holidays (CMH), in northern British Columbia. In heli-skiing a helicopter takes skiers way up into mountains that are otherwise inaccessible, and they ski down. I had started skiing at the resorts in America, Europe, and Canada (and New Zealand and South America in our summer months) only ten years earlier, but I considered myself at least a strong intermediate skier. I knew that I needed to be in top physical condition and hoped I could handle the deep powder and the wild terrain that heli-skiing presented. As I look back it was kind of an insane thing to do, yet it was one of the most fortunate decisions I have made in my entire life.

In my 25 years of heli-skiing I have accumulated over three million vertical feet, skiing some of the best powder in New Zealand and Canada and in the most spectacular mountains in the world. The Canadian Rockies in particular are rugged and pristine. There are hundreds of square miles of snow-covered peaks above tree line. I have skied glaciers above the clouds as well as lovely gentle glens of softly rolling hills, and perhaps the most challenging—skiing in the trees, that takes complete concentration and precise execution to avoid hitting a tree or falling into a tree well. The names of the mountain ranges that I have skied in BC carry their own stories and ring out like poetry: the Monashees, the Bugaboos, the Cariboods, the Gothics, the Selkirks. . . .



*Al coming through the trees in the Cariboods*



In *Stones of Venice* John Ruskin said that mountains “seem to have been built for the human race, as at once their schools and cathedrals.” The mountains, where I have experienced serenity and embraced solitude, have taught me who I am. Exhilaration and satisfaction replace pride and ego after a difficult run. And to experience such extraordinary beauty in remote wilderness is beyond description. A skier accepts the mountains on their own terms. Although there is an experienced, professional guide leading a small

*Skiers pondering a route in Monashees*

*Photo by Al Bekus*



group, the skier is essentially on his or her own. A skier must be able to handle all types of snow conditions in all types of terrain and in all types of weather. Sometimes the smallest mistake can have serious

consequences. One of the cardinal rules of heli-skiing is: “If you can’t see over it, don’t ski over it.”

*Skiers descending in the Bugaboos*

*Photo by Al Bekus*



This is adventure skiing, and to me adventure is an important part of life. But with adventure there is always risk and danger. In my case risk has been minimal, since my only injury has been a dislocated right shoulder. I have also been fortunate to avoid any life-threatening avalanches, though I have experienced a few minor ones. In my second year of heli-skiing nine CMH skiers were killed in

a massive avalanche just a few peaks over from my group. I always felt that our fallen friends would want us to keep skiing, so that is what I have done. On a less tragic note, just three years ago skiing in the Cariboo my partner was briefly buried in an avalanche which I managed to escape. He quit heli-skiing after that experience. So there is always danger.

Riding in the helicopter is also a thrilling aspect of heli-skiing. On a clear, windless day viewing the mountains from the helicopter is a wonderful experience, and there are few problems taking off and landing.

On cloudy days with lower elevation fog, the pilot tries to poke through the holes in the clouds to find skiable terrain in the Alpine sun. When that is simply not possible we must find visibility below the clouds where the pilot has some definition because of the trees. This process can become worrisome, primarily because it very difficult to see, and we simply put our faith in the pilot.



When the pilot puts down to pick up skiers, he lands inches from the group, called a heli-huddle. The rotors literally cause a whiteout, so it is very important to remain still until it is safe to board the helicopter. As the heli lifts off, the skiers relax, exchange smiles, already anticipating the next run. Landing the group can also be tricky, especially at 10-12,000 feet. Mountain wind currents, flat light, swirling snow, and precipitous slopes to land on, all tax the pilot's skill. In such conditions the Bell 212 is a very reliable helicopter that is also used for fire-fighting and air rescue.

There is also a very satisfying social side to heli-skiing: excellent dinners in the evening at the lodge with conversation about the day's skiing and getting to know the other skiers. Many of

the heli-skiers I have met over the years have become life-long friends. I have skied with people from all over the world. All of us have a great passion for the mountains and the wonderful skiing that the helicopter provides.

My present ski season has drawn to a close. What are my future heli plans? I do have a reservation at CMH for next year, and I have bought a new pair of heli powder skis. But now at seventy-five I have a decision to make for the future.

## 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](http://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 Christa Beckner at [ayyez5m@yahoo.com](mailto:ayyez5m@yahoo.com), to Hester Crews at [crewsh@charter.net](mailto:crewsh@charter.net), to Jim Clemmer at [clemmerj@apsu.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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.*

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## On the Web

*[www.apsu.edu/retirees-association](http://www.apsu.edu/retirees-association)*

*See our website for current and past issues of our Newsletter and NewsNotes, and late-breaking information on upcoming events, schedule changes, retirement benefits, and background information on the Retirees Association.*





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## APSURA New Members 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)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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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 \_\_\_\_\_ Lifetime Membership ☐ \$500