



# APSURA

*Newsletter of the Austin Peay State University Retirees Association*

Volume 2, Issue 1  
November, 2010

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## Upcoming Events

**November 7, 2010**  
Brunch in the APSU cafeteria, 11:00-1:00

**December 4, 2010**  
Music Department Holiday Dinner, 7:00

**December 7, 2010**  
Reception for all retirees hosted by President Hall, Archwood, 3:00-4:30

**April 7, 2011**  
Dinner and The Nashville Symphony, Nashville

## APSURANS invade Fall Creek Falls

Meredith Gildrie

The weekend of October 17-18, four Clarksville cars converged on Fall Creek Falls State Park. The first carried Phil and Kathryn Kemmerly who arrived Saturday after enjoying a side trip to wine country near Cookeville. (No, Phil has not retired, but he is anticipating the perks of that state and wanted to test the benefits of membership in APSURA.) Next to arrive were Al and Tanya Bekus who checked in Sunday before noon and got settled in plenty of time before discovering the Gildries chatting with the Kemmerlys along the lake.



Dick and I had found our way to the park after attending a history conference in Cookeville. Perhaps the Kemmerlys had the better idea about what to visit in route; however, the Gildries also enjoyed a half day at Cookeville's version of Frolic on Franklin and a tour through its train depot. (My father was a railroad brakeman, and I rarely miss a chance to visit a train exhibit, particularly if I can climb into a caboose.) The three couples gathered for the noon meal before the Kemmerlys departed for another side trip into Kentucky on their way home and the others set off on a

toward the falls. Actually, Tanya was the only one of us who did not falter on our treks. Pointing out good photo opportunities, and even balancing her way out over the ravine on a fallen log, she kept us entertained and advancing. However, some knee troubles gave Hester and Dick pause, so they did not go all the way down to the falls. I was just as glad since I had been anticipating (with some reservations) huffing and puffing on the return trek. Al continued most of the way, and Tanya made it to the falls. We all met again for dinner, but, after dinner when the rest of us had retired to our rooms, Hester's indomitable spirit could not be subdued. She and Heidi took their own second stroll.



While convivial conversation and plentiful good food went a long way to making this Fall Creek Falls visit a success, the real reason for coming was the possibility of seeing spectacular fall colors. At first, I feared we would be disappointed on that front, for during our travel to the park, the broad expanses of forests seemed muted in color. Winding down into valleys and up onto ridges did give us many lovely pastoral and mountain-side views, but I still longed for more vibrant reds and oranges. So, I was

leisurely stroll along one of the paved lakeside paths as they awaited the final member of the group to arrive.

greatly pleased during our Sunday morning hike toward the falls when we were greeted at every turn with sun-drenched leaves. The reds peeked out here and there and then seemed to burst forth to cover a whole tree. Next time I mourn the lack of color in autumn, I must remember to get among the trees. Next time, we hope you will be there too.

Last, but not least, came Hester Crews. Valiant woman that she is, she braved the trip through the highlands with only her ever faithful Chihuahua Heidi as a companion and her not-so-trusty GPS to guide her. She arrived, after an 18-mile detour, and met the rest of the group for a delightful dinner in the park's restaurant. She missed the earlier stroll, but she and Heidi did not falter as the group hiked

*Photo: Al Bekus, Meredith and Dick Gildrie, and Hester Crews Photo by Tanya Bekus.*

**About the authors of *A Matter of Conscience* (Wakestone Press, 2010)**

*Dr. Sherry Lee Hoppe was named President Emeritus of Austin Peay State University in 2007 after serving as president almost eight years. Well regarded for her visionary leadership, she was also president of two other colleges.*

*Co-writer Dennie B. Burke served 22 years as executive director of the APSU Office of Public Relations and Marketing, working as the spokesperson with the media as well as the editor and primary writer for the University's national award-winning alumni magazine.*

## ***A Matter of Conscience: A powerful and personal story by Sherry Hoppe***

Around 1 a.m., July 20, 1947, Auburn football star Bobby Hoppe was enjoying a beautiful summer night as he headed home from a date with his girlfriend. He wasn't expecting trouble as he drove down the steep, winding road in North Chattanooga.

When a darkened car—its headlights off—cruised up behind him, he assumed it was just old high school buddies pulling a prank. But as the driver pulled alongside and pointed a pistol at him, Hoppe recognized his sister's ex-lover, a disreputable whiskey-runner. A shot was fired, the car fell back, and Hoppe fled for his life.

No one in town wanted to believe the hometown hero was a killer. The authorities turned their heads, allowing the case to become another unsolved homicide. But for Bobby Hoppe, it was a moment seared into memory, plaguing him constantly. He returned to Auburn, to the football field where he could exorcize his demons by running and hitting, and where he helped lead the 1957 Auburn Tigers to its only national championship.

As the years passed, Hoppe struggled to appear normal. No one saw into his dark conscience or knew he was constantly seeking penance but never able to forgive himself.

In an historic indictment, Hoppe was charged with first-degree murder—31 years after the killing—although witnesses had died, police records had been lost, and memories had faded. Finally, Hoppe's demons were exposed, and loved ones saw

for the first time what lay behind his stoic mask.

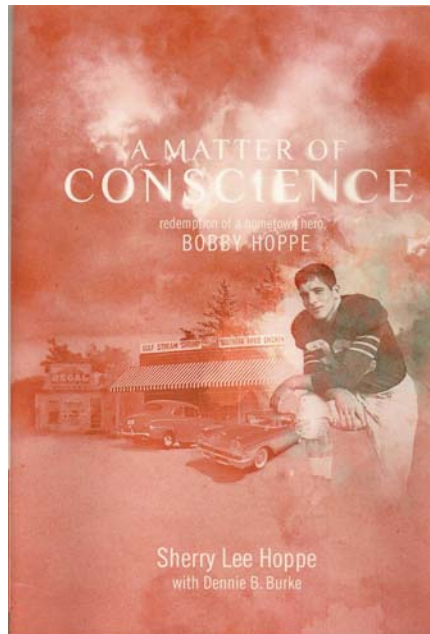
Sherry Hoppe and her husband shared a deep love, but until the eve of the indictment, she did not know his innermost secret—he had killed a man.

Through reliving the dramatic trial, where one of America's legendary attorneys, Bobby Lee Cook, defended her husband with all the skill he could muster, Sherry tells the story of her love and the mystery submerged in Bobby's conscience as he faced the consequences of that fateful July morning.

In the weeks before his death in 2008, with Bobby's blessing, Sherry began to write his story, pouring through more than

1,000 pages of trial transcripts, combing through boxes of old newspaper clippings, and interviewing family, friends and witnesses.

Fifty years have passed since that traumatic event, and mystery still surrounds Bobby Hoppe. His demons have been banished, but what really happened that night?



### **APSURANS attend Roxy's *SHOUT!***

On September 25<sup>th</sup> several APSURA members and their guests attended the matinee performance of *SHOUT!* at the Roxy Regional Theatre. *SHOUT!* is a "Mod Musical" by Phillip George and David Lowenstein that brings back the pop culture and the beautiful women singers and smashing sounds of the 60's.

Following a brief greeting by Roxy founder and artistic director John McDonald, who reminded the audience of the 1000 x 1000 fund-raising campaign for an expanded Center for Arts and Education, this production certainly lived up to its advertising. It was a rollicking good time with its "irresistible blend of hip-swiveling hits, eye-popping fashions and psychedelic 60's dances." Although mod music was not my favorite of that time, I remembered the original singers from Dusty Springfield to Petula Clark, and the composers, from Carol King and Burt Bacharach to Hal David. Throughout the songs, from "To Sir With Love" to "Downtown" and

### **Meredith Gildrie**

"Son of a Preacher Man," I could lip-sync long sections, even while clapping my hands and tapping my foot!

Tom Thayer and Thad Wallus, on piano and drums, and the world-class all-female cast of five were superb. Their vocal articulation brought out the meaning of some of the lyrics I hadn't comprehended in my late teens and early twenties. Although this production was close to 90% singing and dancing, each young woman's story was told and the telling gave depth to the music and vice versa.

Those of you who were not able to join us missed a fun time, and not just because of the musical. Before and after the play several of us met at Front Page and Blackhorse for food and talk. We hope others can join us for the next downtown event!

## From the President

As we move into our second year we have a variety of activities going on and some exciting plans for the future. First, we have Jim Clemmer to thank for our more professional and attractive format in this issue of the newsletter. Jim has volunteered to be our editor, and the Board cannot thank him enough for taking on this responsibility. Jim has used his expertise and time to give us a first-class look in his initial role as editor.

Our Second Annual Retirees Reception at the Pace Center at Emerald Hills in July was again a great opportunity for retirees to get together and meet friends and former colleagues. There was a nice turnout, and the food preparation and table setting by Aleeta Christian and Ann Harris was simply exquisite. Those of us who attended the convocation and picnic on August 24 had a good time catching up and remembering things past. The president, I might mention, gave an excellent address highlighted by his enthusiasm and confidence for the future of APSU. It was an exciting moment, and I enjoyed being a part of it. In my forty plus years of attending the convocation address, it was the first time that I recall the president receiving a standing ovation. Other activities include trips to the Roxy and to Fall Creek Falls highlighted elsewhere in the newsletter.

Please make plans to attend our brunch for all retirees in the APSU cafeteria in the Morgan University Center from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, on Sunday, November 7. And mark your calendars for the president's annual Christmas reception for retirees in Archwood on December 7 from 3:00 pm to 4:30.

Please notice also that this issue of the newsletter again contains a **Membership Registration Form**

## Al Bekus

for retirees who are non-members. We have said many times that we wish to represent all faculty and staff retirees, and now would be a great time to join and take part in the activities and events we are planning. Check out Mitch Robinson's comments in this newsletter which capture the spirit of what APSURA is all about. We're going places, being active, and having fun. And this is an excellent opportunity for me to thank Mitch publicly for all the work he has done and the interest he has shown as a Board member representing the University.

In other areas of interest, I will attend the annual meeting of the Tennessee Higher Education Retirees Association on November 7 and 8 at Fall Creek Falls State Park. One major item on the agenda will be a presentation on how the new national health bill will affect seniors and retirees. What is important and exciting about this annual meeting is that we learn and exchange ideas about what the other Tennessee institutions are doing in their retiree associations. Since I first began attending these meetings a few years ago—when I was primarily learning how to organize an association at APSU—I was primarily gathering information and advice from the other institutions. Now I hope I can start contributing some ideas and experiences that we have had at APSU. I will make a full report to the Board on my return, and we will publish any information that is relevant to retirees—especially on the Health Care bill.

In conclusion, I wish to make two suggestions: Check out our website, and if you are not already a member of APSURA consider joining. As I mentioned, the convenient membership form is enclosed. Take care.

## Letters

I continue to be enormously encouraged by the formation and ongoing activities of the APSU Retirees Association. Retirement is an important career milestone, but it need not sever all of the connections forged through years of service at Austin Peay as a faculty or staff member. I'm glad we have now taken concrete steps to keep these connections with our retirees in good condition and appreciate their efforts to stay connected to the university.

[President of APSU] Tim Hall

If I were still in Clarksville, I would be an enthusiastic supporter of the group. I moved to Irving, Texas, last August to be very near my daughter just five miles from the very fine retirement center where I now live. I surely miss friends in Clarksville, some of whom are on your email list, as well as others who should be on it. I will be glad to remain on that list and will gladly sup-

port by any membership fees that may be established. This being a Wednesday, my daughter and I will spend the day together exploring the new Audubon park under construction. Thanks for keeping me on your distribution list and I will contribute in any way I can. Cheers! >Jim<  
[Former dean of A&S] James D. Nixon

Travel has been a significant item since retirement. I spent a month in Istanbul, teaching a family English and visiting mosques, palaces, bazaars, theatres, and eating more kabobs than are imaginable. I also enjoyed spending time in Costa Rica. This year, I'm President of the Montgomery County Historical Society, so my local time is filled with train station and preservation projects I feel privileged to retire when I did, with APSURA waiting around the corner, promising adventures for all of us. Keep up the good work!

[Professor Emeritus] Joe Filippo

## Officers

Al Bekus, President  
Gerald Beavers, Vice-President  
Al Irby, Treasurer  
Hester Crews, Secretary

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Aleeta Christian  
Ann Harris  
Meredith Gildrie  
Mitch Robinson

## Newsletter editor

Jim Clemmer

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## On the Web

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

## A greeting to all retirees

To those of you that I have not had the opportunity to meet yet, my name is Mitch Robinson, vice president for finance and administration but more importantly the university's representative to the APSU Retiree's Association board of directors. It is indeed my pleasure and honor to serve on this board and to have the opportunity to assist and serve the needs of our retiree community.

Just the other day someone asked me about a rumor they had heard, that APSU had a new Retirees Association. They wanted to know if it were true that such an organization existed and would it be worth their time to join. Wow, I told myself, what a wonderful opportunity to let someone know about all of the good things going on with the association and how they can become a part of the fun. I immediately told them it was not a rumor but indeed it was true that APSU not only had a retiree's association but it was very active and vibrant. I also mentioned that the APSURA Board was working very hard to build the association into a premier retiree organization primarily created to serve the interests of our retiree community and to provide retirees a pathway to stay connected with the university and one another. As each of us knows, retirement should never be looked upon as a time to-

## Mitch Robinson

cut ties with your employer. In fact, retirement is a time when connections to the university can and should be strengthened through the activities and opportunities provided by the Retirees Association.

I am sure that it is no surprise to many of you that the driving force behind the creation of this association was Al Bekus. Al has worked extremely hard and done an outstanding job leading the way to establish this organization and nurturing it to one that has a solid membership base. The variety of activities and ideas for member involvement continues to grow with each meeting of the board of directors. Thank you Al for all that you are doing for this organization.

It is truly a joy to see how this organization has grown and it is amazing to see the daily e-mails flowing into my e-mail inbox about new events and ideas for retiree involvement. Trips to Fall Creek Falls, outings to the Roxy, dinners and future trips to the Nashville Symphony are just a few events planned by your board of directors. This organization is doing just what Al envisioned -- reconnecting and engaging our retirees with the university community.

Not a member? Join today and reconnect with your friends and colleagues but most of all enjoy all of the wonderful activities this organization has to offer.

## APSURA to hear The Nashville Symphony

## Jim Clemmer

We are planning for spring an APSURA trip to Nashville for dinner and a Nashville Symphony concert. Our tentative date is April 7, for dinner at Sole Mio restaurant two blocks from the Schermerhorn and a concert featuring Giancarlo Guerrero conducting the most famous of the Rachmaninoff piano concertos. We will send you more specific information about registration early in 2011.

We were in the middle of planning such a trip last May when the Great Flood drowned the beautiful new Schermerhorn Symphony Center, sending 24 feet of water into the lower floors and causing over \$50 million in damage. Two big new Steinways and the organ console were destroyed. While the Symphony has managed to keep going full-steam in other places such as the War Memorial Building, other facilities

and TPAC, they are moving back to the Schermerhorn for a big re-opening event on December 31. The Center should be in full operation for the winter and spring seasons. Several of us APSURA members have attended a number of NSO performances in the Schermerhorn, and we have learned a few tricks that will make the trip easier for those who plan to go. As you might know, the Schermerhorn is in a difficult location just off Lower Broad between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues, crammed among the Bridgestone Arena, the Pinnacle complex and the Country Music Hall of Fame, where parking and civilized dining are at a premium. Our trick, basically, is to sneak into the area the back way via the Shelby Ave. exit and to park for the evening at Sole Mio. We walk the easy two blocks to and from the Schermerhorn.

We hope that you can join us for this trip.

Photo: the Turner Recital Hall, Schermerhorn Symphony Center, Nashville



## Allene Phy-Olsen: A 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Catwoman

Jim Clemmer

### An interview

Consider any of the major challenges the modern confluences of literature, science, and religion have thrown at us, and chances are that one way or another emeritus professor of English Allene Phy-Olsen has already been there. Whether Mary Shelley's fascination with her Frankenstein, the crosscurrents of Christianity and Islam and their great books, the dilemmas posed by same-sex marriage, or the possibilities of spiritual life for extraterrestrials, Phy-Olsen has pondered the quandaries and tried to clarify the arguments. Her recent explorations have resulted in major studies entitled *Same-Sex Marriage*, and *Evolution, Creationism, and Intelligent Design* (Greenwood Press, 2006 and 2010).

On a recent Thursday afternoon I sat down with Allene over kung pao chicken at the Harbor to try to learn more about her background and the factors that had led her to tackle these big issues.

**JC:** Over the years you have dealt with a number of hot-button topics. Were there some early influences that led you to be a bit ahead of your time in so many areas?

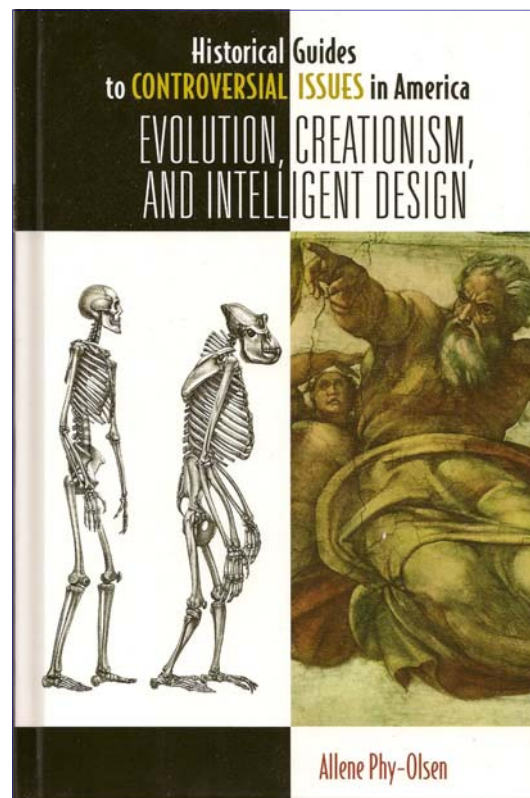
**APO:** I didn't exactly choose these "hot button" issues to write about. I was asked by the publisher to write about them, and I wanted a good retirement project. All my writings have been under contract. I'm not one to write something and then look for a publisher. One reason I welcomed the opportunity to write about these subjects was that I would be motivated to read scientific materials and try to make up for an earlier deprivation. My public education in the state of Tennessee, up to university years, did not equip me to deal with science, and to some extent I have been playing "catch-up" in the world of science.

**JC:** Your most recent books present, by all accounts, unbiased histories of the issues that dominate these discussions. Are they really as objective as they seem? Most of us skeptical humanists are always looking for hidden agendas in books about these subjects.

**APO:** No, I had no hidden agenda in writing these books. I wanted readers, especially the public-school students who are the main target audience for this Greenwood series, to examine the issues and make their own determinations. When I published the first book, *Same-Sex Marriage*, I expected to have two angry factions pounce upon me. It didn't happen, and so far, everyone has felt I was balanced and fair. I do believe that there are two sides, and more, to the issues I have discussed and that reasonable, well-meaning people may differ.

**JC:** How did you come by your abiding love of books per se and your belief in their power? Have you answered to your own satisfaction the question you once posed, "Why do books occupy such an exalted position in many religions of the world?"

**APO:** I certainly haven't resolved all the issues for myself. But I can say that of all the subjects I taught, I loved comparative religions best. When I was asked to take part in a Carolina panel on traditional books versus electronic books, I chose to look at the way literacy has seemed almost magical to ear-



lier people and how books in so many religious traditions have come to be regarded as sacred objects. I asked the question would electronic books ever be able to achieve this spiritual quality. I pointed out that one big transition had already been made, from scrolls to printed books, and that the spirituality of these works had certainly survived that change.

**JC: I know you have worked extensively with electronic databases, but have you begun reading with a Kindle or iPad ?**

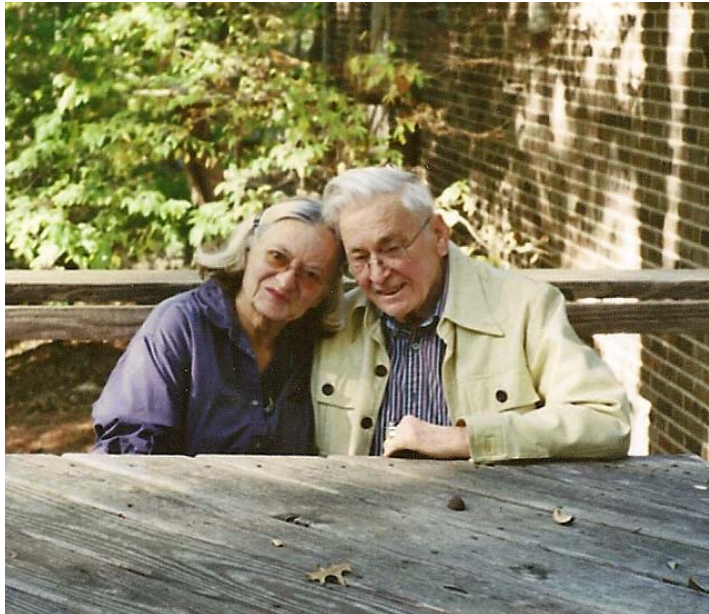


Photo:  
Allene  
with hus-  
band  
Bruce  
Olsen

**APO:** Yes, I do take part in the digital revolution, although clumsily. And I recently purchased a Kindle, on the advice of my grandson. I've enjoyed it and wasted too much time playing games on it. But my whole house is a library and I've no space left for more books, even after building a library-office on my back lot. So far, I've only read free books on the Kindle, but I do enjoy new gadgets, if I can figure out how they work!

**JC: Of your professional groups, you seem to have identified most closely with the American Library Association. Has the ALA kept up with the times?**

**APO:** I admire and respect librarians. I think they are ahead of professors in their policies and procedures, and I always learn something new when I talk with them. I have directed some of my best students toward library careers, and some of them have become distinguished in this field. I am in constant communication with them.

**JC: You once presented a paper with the intriguing title "Religion in Outer Space." What was the central proposition of this paper?**

**APO:** I've given several talks on science fiction and religion and hope to write a book on the subject, maybe soon. Science fiction for the most part is literary trash, but when it is good it is very good and thought provoking. C.S. Lewis said that if he

first encountered aliens he would want to inquire about their language and literature. I would want to find out what their religious aspirations and conclusions are. And I'm also interested in how current major world religions, which claim to deal in universals, would react if aliens turned up to communicate with us.

**JC: To what extent is your current work with Greenwood, *Facts on***

***File* and other reference works an extension of your former life as a university professor? Has retirement cast you into a wholly different world?**

**APO:** I consider my current work a continuation of my career in education. At this time, that is the best way I can answer any vocation I may have. I dreaded retirement, but decided it was time for me to go. So far, it has gone well.

**JC: Some of us know how you came by your fairly unusual name, but some of our group probably do not. How did "Phy-Olsen" come about? And was "Stuart" a family name?**

**APO:** Stuart was my mother's name, which she gave me as a middle name. She was very proud of the name and the family claimed kin with the royal Stuarts. Probably just a myth for this Scotch-Irish family. Phy is a rather unusual name, though well known around Cookeville, Tennessee. Recently I've found Asians in the U.S. also using this name, though without any connection to us. When I married I was well along in my career and had published under the Stuart Phy name. I didn't want to lose my professional identity, such as it was, totally, but I also wanted to take my husband's name. So I used the present form, though it

sounds a little pretentious, like some aristocratic British family, ha!

**JC: I know that you have several cats. Why cats?**

**APO:** Yes, my cats are Ike, Louis (for Armstrong), and Buster (for Keaton). I've always loved cats and had them as pets since I was a child. One of the many things my husband Bruce and I discovered we had in common when we first met was our love of cats. They are an important part of our lives. I like other animals too, but don't try to have dogs and birds when I have three cats. They are mysterious, confident, and affectionate creatures. I admire their independence and identify with it.



Photo: Phy-Olsen with Ike

## Book Reviews

### Two good books on the Italian Renaissance

Two of the most fascinating books that I have read lately are not hot-off-the press publications, but I believe they have both joined the ranks of must reads for those especially interested in the art and architecture of the Italian Renaissance. At the same time Ross King's *Brunelleschi's Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture* and *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*, both Penguin paperbacks, would certainly be enjoyable reading for retirees in general. What fascinated me most in both books is how King is able to capture the genius of these extraordinary artists.

The dome planned for Santa del Fiore in Florence was to be the highest and widest in all of Christendom, and this ambitious scheme was the problem. King emphasizes that building the dome "became the greatest architectural puzzle of the age," and Brunelleschi brilliantly solved this problem and built the dome that today is the defining landmark in Florence, standing next to the baptistry of San Giovanni. In my recent visit to Florence, I again made my climb to the top of the dome and was again amazed at Brunelleschi's achievement. King does an extraordinary job dramatically bringing

### Al Bekus

Brunelleschi's genius and accomplishment to life.

My experience viewing the Sistine chapel in Rome, however, was a little different because I only read King's book after my visit. Yet King's account of Michelangelo's achievement so enriched my experience that I feel I must revisit the chapel to really appreciate Michelangelo's art. Actually, King's account of the relationship between Pope Julius II and Michelangelo is a fascinating story in its own right, but when combined with the artistic challenge that Michelangelo faced, we come to realize just how extraordinary an artist Michelangelo was. The problem seemed impossible to solve: How to "succeed frescoing the vault of the Sistine Chapel." Michelangelo not only completed the task virtually singlehandedly, but did it in four years, and created one of the great masterpieces of Western civilization. One of the drawbacks of King's book, however, is the dearth of photographs of the frescoes themselves. This problem can be quickly solved by referring to Kirsten Bradbury's *Michelangelo*, a sumptuous book of magnificent photos.

# APSURA Membership Registration form

Retired faculty or staff

Associate member

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

Dr.\_\_\_\_ Mr.\_\_\_\_ Ms\_\_\_\_ Mrs.\_\_\_\_ Other preferred title\_\_\_\_\_

Name of member: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Name of spouse: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number and Street (Apartment Number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip Code

Home telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

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, P. O. Box 4426, Clarksville, TN 37044  
Associate Membership  \$25.00