

# OSURA News & Views

Spring 2015

## OSURA Members Tour Albany Carousel Project



OSURA members Les and Diana Dunnington pose with volunteer painter Sue Johanson (left) next to carousel animals Harriette and Cricket. Johanson was the primary painter for both animals.

Harriette the Frog has a story. She wears flour-sack bloomers and carries a canning jar of flies. Why? Because her namesake loved frogs and canning, plus grew up during the 1930s Depression when she sometimes wore clothing made of flour sacks.

Standing next to Harriette is Cricket the Pony, who started as a 10-year-old girl's first horse in 1940. Now Cricket is memorialized with her original saddle and blanket in a figure of hand-carved linden basswood with a total of 12 layers of primer, paint, and lacquer. And Cricket's young girl? She's now 85 and living in Albany.

These were just two of the many fascinating and whimsical stories that 30 OSURA members and guests heard during their tour of the Albany Carousel Project on April 9, learning that all of the 52 sponsored carousel animals - like Harriette and Cricket - have unique stories linked to their sponsors.

Tyson Brown, Operations Manager for the Carousel project, gave an overview of the project and its history, then led the group through the carving studio to demonstrate the various steps of an animal's creation - from donor idea to finished product. OSURA members were able to examine sketch designs, raw blocks of linden wood, and different stages of glueing and carving.

The all-volunteer Carousel Project started with a concept and a dream over 11 years ago. Since then volunteers have contributed over 170,000 work hours to complete 30 different animals as well as other pieces of the carousel design.

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## Spring Meeting Features Scholarships, President and Barbershop

Announcement of student scholarships, guest speaker OSU President Ed Ray, and barbershop harmony will highlight OSURA's 13th Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 6, 2:30 pm in the OSU Foundation Board Room.

The OSURA Scholarship Committee will award \$1,000 scholarships to each of five outstanding OSU undergraduate students. These students were selected from 15 competitive applicants in fields leading to careers that promote healthy aging. This now marks the third year in a row that one of the scholarships is completely funded by earnings from the OSURA endowment established in June 2012.

OSU President Ed Ray will be the meeting's featured speaker, presenting *University Updates*. He will allow time after his remarks for questions from OSURA members. Other agenda

items include remarks from the out-going OSURA president Gerry Olson, presentation of the financial report, election of new Board members, and announcement of the Volunteer(s) of the Year. The event will conclude with entertainment by *The Investments*, a popular local barbershop group on a return engagement to OSURA's Annual Spring Meeting. Refreshments are available before and after the event.

For the second year, Annual Meeting invitations were sent via e-mail to OSURA members, with a simple electronic RSVP return. Please RSVP by May 1 if you plan to attend. E-mail: [RSVP@oregonstate.edu](mailto:RSVP@oregonstate.edu).

The OSU Foundation building is situated at the corner of SW Western and 35th Street. Parking permits are not required. 🏠

### OSURA Board Members 2014-2015

**President:** Gerry Olson  
**President-elect:** Gordon Reistad  
**Past President:** Tom Savage  
**Secretary:** Barbara Moon  
**Treasurer:** Cheryl Lyons

Roy Arnold  
Sue Borden  
Dave Chilcote  
Jack Drexler  
Helen Polensek

Terri Tower  
Tony Van Vliet  
Jack Walstad

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# President's Message

University. Our social and professional activities were well attended, and our Committees worked hard to ensure meaningful and enjoyable sessions.

Come help us celebrate! Yes, the Annual Meeting is more celebration than meeting, and we have much to celebrate. As always, our scholarship winners will be with us, and you will be impressed with their accomplishments and plans for the future. President Ray, a major fan of OSURA, will bring us OSU News. This is also a great time to see friends and colleagues, and meet special University guests. Your new and continuing Board members look forward to seeing you and hearing your ideas. Make your reservation the minute your invitation arrives so you don't miss out on the fun.

Several highlights of the year deserve special mention. Our Fall Kickoff event was held at the Corvallis Country Club this year. Featured speaker, Marian Vydra, shared ways in which the OSU Athletic staff works with student athletes to address a broad range of concerns and help them become leaders both in and outside of sports. The OSURA Board held a number of meetings with University Administrators, seeking ways to keep OSURA current and vital. The outcomes of these meetings will result in continuing and future ways to interact with the

OSURA is over 300 members strong, and we want more! An active membership assures that OSU retirees are seen and heard. Our volunteer efforts and scholarships connect us with students, and our professional and social activities serve to engage us with each other and OSU. This year, for the first time, OSURA is offering a complimentary membership to 1st year retirees. We are also enclosing a 2015-16 membership renewal form with this Newsletter, just to make things a bit easier for continuing members. Of course you can bring that form to the Annual Meeting and save a stamp!

It has been an honor to serve as OSURA President this year, and to work with all of you to keep OSURA "alive and kicking." OSU retirees are a special group, with a bond to OSU and its mission that keeps us active and involved. And, from recent research on aging, we know this also helps to keep us young. 

Gerry Olson, President of OSURA, 2014-15  
**Beaver Nation**

## OSU Trivia

\*What was the first animal mascot adopted by the school [then the Oregon Agricultural College (OAC)] in 1893?

\*OSU is a land-grant, sea-grant, space-grant and sun-grant institution, making it one of only two US institutions to obtain all four designations. What other US university has these four designations?

Check OSURA's website for the answers: <http://oregonstate.edu/osura/>

## It's Time To Renew!

Being an OSURA member is a great way to stay connected to OSU and to your university friends, plus your membership dues and separate tax-deductible contributions help support OSURA student scholarships. Your membership renewal form for 2015-16 is enclosed as an insert with this newsletter mailing. OSURA's membership year is July 1-June 30. Please mail your renewal or bring it to the Annual Meeting on May 6.

Memberships are \$20 for an individual retiree and \$30 for a household (retiree and spouse/partner). Make checks payable to OSURA/OSU Foundation. Membership forms and membership status can also be found on our website at: [oregonstate.edu/osura](http://oregonstate.edu/osura).

# Strauss Addresses GMO Topics



Confused about GMOs? What they are, where they are, and how they have become a hot political topic? You will learn about these and other topics related to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) if you attend OSURA's April 22nd program featuring guest speaker Steve Strauss, a University

Distinguished Professor in OSU's College of Forestry.

The goal of the program, *GMO Crops: What are They, Where are They, and Why All the Fuss?*, is to provide unbiased and balanced information in an educational context, not to advocate or debate the merits of GMOs. Dr. Strauss, acting on his own time, presents his own views and is not speaking as a university employee or representing OSU policies. The program is sponsored by OSURA's Member Services Committee.

Dr. Strauss summarizes the basic science, use, and controversy about the technique of asexual genetic modification. His topics include what GMOs are, the different kinds in the marketplace, and how they are

regulated for safety in the United States. He also addresses GMOs and their potential effects on human health and the environment, if they cause problems for some farmers or crop breeders, and when labeling of GMO products is required. Dr. Strauss also will respond to questions about Benton County's upcoming ballot measure (2-89), which seeks to prohibit the cultivation of GMOs in the county.

Dr. Strauss is in OSU's Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society and has a joint appointment in the interdepartmental Molecular and Cellular Biology program. He conducts research in biotechnology and genetics, using genetic engineering and other advanced genetic analysis methods. 

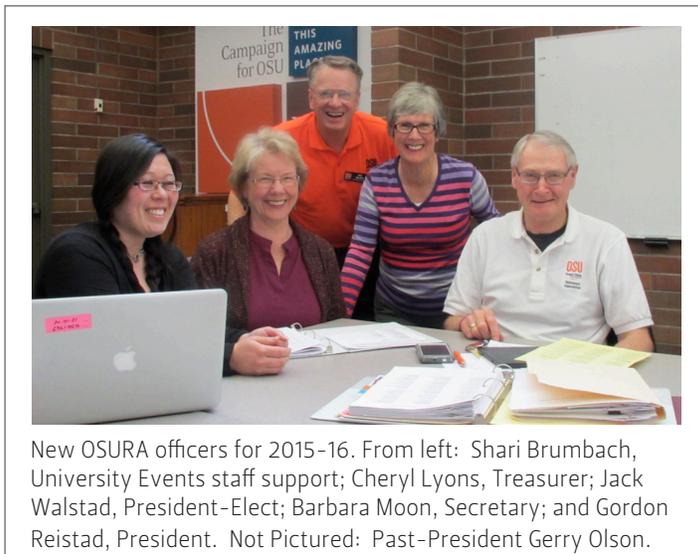
## Board Approves Nominees and Officers for 2015-16

Seven members will stand for election to the OSURA Board of Directors at the May 6 Annual Meeting.

**Cheryl Lyons, Gordon Reistad and Tony Van Vliet** have served one three-year term and have agreed to stand for a second term. **Bill Becker, Dick Clinton, Betty Miner and Tom Plant** are new nominees for vacant Board positions. These nominations were approved by the current Board at its April meeting, additional nominations will be accepted from the floor. New Board members are elected by the general membership at the Annual Meeting.

In other action at the April meeting, the Board elected new officers for 2015-16. **Gordon Reistad** will move into the President's position, and **Jack Walstad** becomes President-Elect. **Barbara Moon and Cheryl Lyons** will continue for a third year in their present positions of Secretary and Treasurer. Current President **Gerry Olson** will transition to immediate Past-President.

Three current Board members, **Roy Arnold, Helen Polensek and Terri Tower** are completing their terms of service and will be leaving the Board. Roy has served a three-year term, including a year as Chair of the Scholarship Committee. Helen is finishing her sixth year on the Board, serving four years as Chair of the Program Committee. Terri joined the Board in January 2009, serving first as Volunteer Chair and subsequently in positions of President and Newsletter Editor. In addition, **Tom McClintock**, who left the Board in January after serving four and a half years, filled various roles with the Newsletter/Communications and History committees. Thank you Roy, Helen, Terri and Tom for your valuable contributions to OSURA. 



New OSURA officers for 2015-16. From left: Shari Brumbach, University Events staff support; Cheryl Lyons, Treasurer; Jack Walstad, President-Elect; Barbara Moon, Secretary; and Gordon Reistad, President. Not Pictured: Past-President Gerry Olson.

### Albany Carousel - Continued from Page 1

Another significant feature of the Albany Carousel is its 1909 platform "mechanism", one of the last created by Gustav Dentzel, who brought the first carousels to America from Europe in the 1800's. The mechanism, donated to the Albany project by the Dentzel Family, is approximately 50 feet in diameter and 25 feet high. It currently is set up

in a separate location and available for public viewing on Saturdays from 1-2 pm.

The Carousel Project has reached \$5.1M of its needed \$6 M for the building that will house the Carousel. The projected time range for demolition of the existing building and construction of the new one is 2015-2018. 

# OSURA Connections

## The OSU Center for Healthy Aging Research

The OSU Center for Healthy Aging Research (CHAR) was established in 2005 to conduct scientific research and use the results to inform policy, create programs and develop strategies to meet the needs of older individuals, their families and society at large. The Center is part of the College of Public Health and Human Sciences.

CHAR recently sponsored a conference on aging research held on the OSU campus. OSURA President Gerry Olson attended the event and offered these remarks for the newsletter.

Do you know CHAR? Well, I didn't until OSURA members were invited to the first ever conference on aging research. I'll pass my impressions on to you, and hope you might get to know CHAR too. The Center for Healthy Aging Research (CHAR) at OSU is 10 years old – not very old in “aging” terms. But from what I heard at the conference, they'll be getting older – and wiser as their research continues!

The conference was fast paced, and I heard about work being done by research faculty at OSU, PSU, OU, and OHSU. Believe me, these folks are doing fascinating and important work. PSU is doing research that focuses on person-centered care, as well as age-friendly communities and cities. This initiative is global in scope, with Portland being the first U.S. city to sign up. In these cities, the aging population is seen as a resource, but with potential need to reduce barriers to housing, transportation, shopping, etc.

The U of O has documented the altruistic characteristics of the aging population. As people age, they become more benevolent. This may be something you have experienced, and it may be that being “generous” is good for you, based on neurological brain scans. This scientist titled his talk, “Looking for the Heart in the Brain!” Other work at

### How OSURA Members Can Be Involved Sign up for the LIFE Registry!

As part of its program, CHAR maintains a LIFE Registry – Linking Individuals, Families, and Environments (LIFE) – to recruit volunteers aged 50 and over to participate in the Center's research efforts.

**Volunteer Eligibility.** Any adult aged 50 or over, residing in the State of Oregon, is welcome to volunteer for the LIFE Registry. That covers almost all OSURA members, except those living out of state.

In order to understand adult development and healthy aging, the Center is interested in men and women of any race/ethnicity, religion, physical capability or social position. People who are taking medications are welcome to volunteer for the Registry.

**How to Volunteer.** Go to the Center's website: [health.oregonstate.edu/healthy-aging](http://health.oregonstate.edu/healthy-aging) and click on the link for the LIFE Registry. Follow the instructions for sign-up.

**Where Studies Are Done.** Depending on the study and the research questions being addressed, studies may take place in different OSU buildings, community locations, in home settings, over the phone, or online.

**Length of Volunteer Time.** Studies vary in time length, some can be done in less than an hour, others may last for several months or longer.

**Kind of Research.** The Center conducts research in four core areas – diet and genetics; musculoskeletal; population, social and individual health; and gerontechnology.

the U of O is focused on personality as a predictor of health and aging, and the vehicle for this research is blood samples. I had never heard of “telomeres” but they are caps on the ends of chromosomes in our DNA that get shorter as we age. Well, don't quote me on this! If you want to know more, you'll need to talk with an expert.

OHSU research is directed toward Alzheimer's disease, with special emphasis on change in brain cells and the effect of “FDA approved” drugs. One goal is to catch “changes” long before behavioral symptoms can be seen. They are also interested in the effect of diet, smoking, and diabetes on changes in the brain. One little factoid—our brains have 400 miles of blood vessels, and use 20% of our oxygen intake. Maybe you can find a way to use that information in a conversation! OSU researchers reported research related to skeletal biology, with one outcome that supports the moderate use of alcohol for bone health of the aging population. (The opposite is true for

youth.) Apparently alcohol consumption is related to bone turnover, or “restructuring” related to micro-fractures that occur regularly, leading to a 20% reduction in bone loss. I also learned about the use of the “Naked Mole Rat,” an ugly but useful critter, that is useful in the study of chronic diseases, primarily because it has a long life-span.

As you can see, this is the report of a lay-person and is only an “over the top” view. But I was proud of CHAR, and its director, Carolyn Aldwin, for staging this important conference, and hope it won't be the last of its kind in Oregon. This work will contribute to healthy aging – something we all have a stake in. 🏛️

Contributed by Gerry Olson



A small inventory of OSURA volunteer polo shirts with the old-style logo will be available at the May 6 Annual Meeting. A contribution toward the scholarship fund is encouraged for all who take these items. Shirts with the new logo will be purchased for new volunteers beginning Fall Term.

All OSURA members can purchase baseball caps, visors, or polo shirts with the new-style logo [see photo on back page] by ordering directly from Shirt Circuit at 1411 NW 9th in Corvallis. The OSURA logo was redesigned last year to be consistent with OSU's branding. More details are posted on OSURA's website: [oregonstate.edu/osura](http://oregonstate.edu/osura).

## OSURA Year in Review 2014-2015

The following summary highlights some of this year's OSURA activities and accomplishments.

- \*Dinner and speaker kicked off the year at the Corvallis Country Club.
- \*Informational programs presented on financial and estate planning, commercial applications of nanotechnology, traveling smart and light, living with earthquakes in the Pacific Northwest, and genetically modified organisms.
- \*Guest speakers and buffets prior to Bard in the Quad, women's basketball and women's gymnastics.
- \*Tour of the Albany Carousel Project.
- \*TravelShare Interest Group featured travelogues on Antarctica and the Basque regions of France and Spain.
- \*Membership Committee developed new member flyer, implemented free membership for first year retirees, and updated OSURA listserve files.
- \*OSU administrators (Donna Chastain, Steve Clark, Jock Mills and Sabah Randhawa) met with OSURA Board.
- \*Board members represented OSURA interests at the national AROHE conference in Minneapolis, for the Northwest Regional Retirement Association's meeting at the University of Washington, on a retiree panel for OSU Training Days, and in a conference on healthy aging in Corvallis.
- \*Volunteers filled over 97 separate time slots to assist with University Day, Benefits Fair, three Career Fairs, Employee Training Days, and OSU District Plan open houses.
- \*Member contributions and interest from the OSURA endowment will fund \$5,000 in student scholarships for 2015-16.



## Moro Case Update

*The following article is excerpted from the Oregon PERS Retiree, Inc. (OPRI) website, [www.opri.org](http://www.opri.org). The Oregon Supreme Court is expected to rule on this case in April 2015, so the case may be decided before you receive this newsletter. This article gives a brief description of the major arguments on each side.*

The Oregon Supreme Court listened to oral arguments before the Court for October 14, 2014. The litigants had filed their written arguments framing the claims and issues they wanted the Court to consider, and presented oral arguments. There are 13 law firms representing the litigants and "friends of the court" in this court challenge.

"The Bennett Hartmann firm represents the PERS Coalition, including OPRI. They argued that SB 822 and SB 861, which reduced the COLA and eliminated the tax remedy for out-of-state retirees, violated the Oregon Constitution and the U.S. Constitution. Hartmann argued that both bills impair the statutory PERS contract, and that these two bills are unconstitutional takings of the private property of PERS retirees without just compensation. Finally, he argued that no legitimate public purpose justifies impairment of the PERS contract.

The **State of Oregon**, argues that neither the tax remedy nor the COLA is

part of the PERS contract, therefore, SB 822 and SB 861 do not impact the PERS contract. Furthermore, even if SB 822 and SB 861 are part of the contract, these bills did not impair the contract for the only duty under the contract is to annually determine the amount of the COLA, and elimination of the tax remedy for out-of-state retirees is consistent with the statutes.

Alternatively, even if SB 822 and SB 861 do impair the PERS contract, the impairment is not "substantial," a test the State argues the Oregon Supreme Court should adopt and apply on a case-by-case determination. Impairment of the PERS contract is justified by the public good in freeing up money for local governments and schools. The Oregon school districts argued there is no impairment or breach of the statutory PERS contract. And even if there is an impairment or breach, it is lawful for it is done as a reasonable and necessary means to address a significant and legitimate public purpose—funding public education.

Bennett Hartmann, in its rebuttal argument, stressed the legislative history, the legal precedents, and the reliance of most PERS members who joined the system after the COLA was enacted, all of which, the PERS Coalition attorneys say, support the COLA as part of the PERS contract. 

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## Calling All OSURA Golfers!

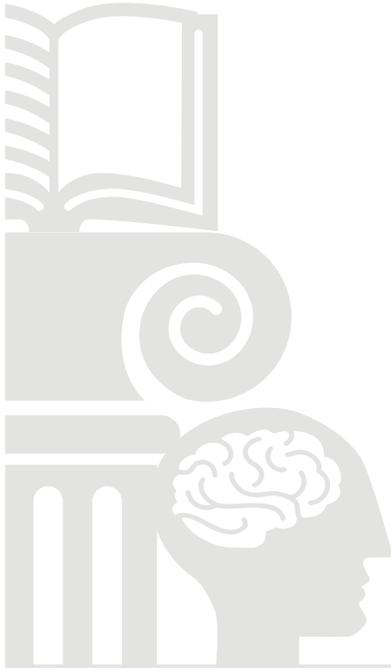
The OSURA Golf Interest Group will start playing again at the Trysting Tree Golf Course later this month. If you're interested in playing, contact Jim Krueger, e-mail: [jkrueger@proaxis.com](mailto:jkrueger@proaxis.com). All OSURA members and their guests are welcome.



# OSU Retirement Association

Oregon State University  
205 Adams Hall  
Corvallis, OR 97330

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Gear up for spring! OSURA members can purchase polo shirts, baseball caps and visors with the new-style OSURA logo [photo above] by ordering directly from Shirt Circuit at 1411 NW 9th in Corvallis. More details are posted on the OSURA website: [oregonstate.edu/osura](http://oregonstate.edu/osura).

## 13th OSURA Annual Meeting Agenda Wednesday, May 6 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. The OSU Foundation

- 2:30 p.m. Registration and Refreshments  
Dues renewal and Scholarship donations accepted
- 3:00 p.m. Business Meeting  
Welcoming Remarks  
Treasurer's Report  
Election of New Board Members  
Volunteer-of-the-Year Award
- 3:15 p.m. OSURA Scholarship Awards  
Recognition of Board Members and Committee Chairs  
Introduction of New Officers
- 3:45 p.m. Speaker: OSU President, Dr. Edward J. Ray  
*University Update*
- 4:15 p.m. Entertainment: Barbershop Harmony by  
*THE INVESTMENTS*
- Adjournment: Refreshments and socializing