1. With masking protocols over, in what situations would you still want to be masked?

There are numerous situations people may want to put on a facial mask during the post-pandemic era. In general, a facial mask serves two types of purposes, protecting ourselves, or protecting people surrounding us.

(1) If you have severe immune compromised conditions, such as undergoing treatment for cancer, you may want to wear a facial mask in indoor public gatherings and public transportation.

(2) If you are infected with COVID-19 or flu, you may want to wear a facial mask when you have close contact with people, to protect them.

(3) If you are meeting with someone who is infected with COVID-19 or the flu, you may want to wear a facial mask to protect yourself.

(4) If you are meeting indoors with someone who has severe immune compromised conditions, you may want to wear a facial mask to protect that person.

(5) One important situation many people neglect is the importance of wearing a facial mask. That is air pollution. When the air quality is poor, you may want to wear a facial mask outdoors. When the air quality is hazardous (such as smog from wildfires), if you have to go outdoors, you may want to wear an N-95 facial mask (respirator) to protect yourself.

2. Will there be a once a year vaccine available similar to flu vaccine?

The SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 will be with us for a while. To minimize its impact on our health and life, we may need to have an annual COVID-19 vaccination in the foreseeable future. For a none-mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, it may be feasible to develop a mixed vaccine that includes both COVID-19 and flu.

3. Is the virus continuing to weaken as it mutates? If so, will there come a time when it will be noworse than a common cold?

Both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the CDC are closely monitoring the new mutations of SARS-CoV-2, especially its ability to cause severe conditions. So far, we have not found a new mutated variant of SARS-CoV-2 that causes more severe conditions than the previous Omicron family of viruses. At the same time, many new variants are more contagious and more capable of immune evasion. This is similar to variants of flu viruses. Each year the vaccine developers will try to predict the trend of new variants and modify the COVID-19 vaccine accordingly. While we cannot rule out the possibility of a new variant that will cause severe conditions, such likelihood is very small. It is highly likely that with the effective vaccines and treatments, coupled with the overall mild infection of COVID-19, it may become more like a common cold.

4. Are there times when a mask is actually detrimental?

A properly fitted facial mask is always beneficial for the situations described in Question 1. The only exception is for people who have severe asthma or breathing issues, who may obtain advice from their doctor on the alternative to a facial mask. Also, if you use a cloth facial mask, it is very important to maintain its hygiene by properly cleaning and disinfecting it. Wearing a polluted facial mask can be detrimental. To reduce waste, even disposable facial masks can be properly disinfected (either with a UV device or under sunlight) and wear for 5 – 10 times before you discard them.
5. With climate change, it seems that weather can play a significant role in how this virus moves from population center to population center. How should we prepare for this change?

All major health authorities, from the WHO, and the CDC, to state health authorities, are monitoring how COVID-19 is developing and evolving. I recommend everyone to be aware of any major changes by obtaining news. The CDC website provides very reliable and timely information. At the same time, always have a stock of facial masks at home in case you will need to wear them. In Oregon, there is an additional need for a facial mask during the wildfire season.

6. Are there countries in the world we should avoid right now?

In terms of COVID-19 infection risks, the vast majority of countries around the world are fairly safe. However, to assess your risk, you need to take into consideration of your vaccination, and the local healthcare capacity. If the country has a good quality and high capacity for healthcare, then the travel risk is relatively low. Given that we are in a post-pandemic era, the health risk assessment is the same as pre-pandemic.

7. Can we donate to an organization that helps get vaccines out to the most marginalized countries?

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) has been the leading international organization dedicated to providing various vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines to the world, especially low-income nations. It also leads the global effort of COVAX, together with the WHO, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovation (CEPI), the European Commission, and the Government of France to organize and fund the global mechanism to distribute COVID-19 vaccines equitably since 2020 during the early stage of this pandemic. Below is the website of GAVI. [https://www.gavi.org/](https://www.gavi.org/)

8. Can the current mRNA vaccines be modified indefinitely to match the current virus mutation? Or will scientists need to come up with a different vaccine?

In the foreseeable future, the mRNA vaccines can be continued to be modified to match new virus mutations, albeit with some time lag (i.e., the latest available vaccines may still be a generation or two behind the latest variants). At the same time, the combination of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data may help scientists more accurately predict the direction of virus mutation (similar to flu vaccines). Also, scientists are in the process of researching new concepts and methods of vaccines, such as the concept of a “broad-band vaccine” that can potentially address future variants of the same species of virus.

9. Will there be any international agreements or protocols to help mitigate the next pandemic?

There have been multiple attempts without success. The International Health Regulation (IHR) 2005 was specifically revised and expanded, after the 2003 SARS pandemic, to prevent the kind of pandemic we experienced through COVID-19. Yet it failed miserably. I am pessimistic about the effectiveness of any such agreements. Such agreements are powerless when a superpower violate such agreements. Each nation, especially the United States, has to be vigilant in global surveillance. In 2014 President Obama established a global surveillance program under the CDC. Its purpose was precisely to have early detection of an emerging highly contagious disease like COVID-19. Unfortunately, this global surveillance program was suspended in early 2017. Otherwise, the U.S. might had been able to detect the nature and the spread of COVID-19 much earlier.

10. What are your thoughts and fears of newer pathogens in the environment and where those pathogens would originate?

Climate change and intensifying human economic activities will make the emerging new pathogens unavoidable. Given that the IHR demonstrated the futility of an international agreement, what we need is to find reliable partner nations to collaborate in our global surveillance and research effort. An effective global surveillance mechanism helps us from being caught off guard, like this COVID-19 pandemic. International collaboration in research can strengthen our capacity to respond to emerging new diseases, including prevention, vaccines, and treatment in a timely manner. We need to be proactive to prepare for the unavoidable.
PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

I would like to express my appreciation to our Board members for their valuable contributions to the work of OSURA over the past year. In particular I would like to recognize Bill Young for his work as Past President and Treasurer; Mike Burke for his sterling work as Secretary; and committee chairs Mike Schuyler, Carroll DeKock, Tony Amandi, Larry Pribyl, and Rose Kenneke for their many contributions to OSURA’s success. Special thanks to outgoing Board members Carol Kronstad and Kathy Motley: Carol, as OSURA President, kept us alive in the first difficult year of the pandemic, and Kathy has done splendid work as Newsletter Editor and Webmaster during her tour of duty. And finally, my thanks to Shelly Signs and the University Events Office for their help in everything we do.

Contributed by Bob Smythe
OSURA President

This will be my final (written) word as 2022-23 President of OSURA – the gavel will have passed into the capable hands of President-elect Carroll DeKock at our Annual Meeting on May 8. It’s been an interesting ride this past year, as we emerged from our pandemic cocoon into a full range of activity. The OSURA Board has been able to hold in-person meetings, after two years of Zoom, and our various activities have involved a number of gatherings. The highlights, which are almost too numerous to mention, included summer activities joint with ALL; the revival of our Travel Share program; a talk by women’s basketball coach Scott Rueck, followed by an exciting game; talks on hospice and palliative care, on the import of the 2022 elections, and on the building and remodeling taking place on campus; our first pickleball activity; and tours of the women’s gymnastics facility and the Oregon Hatchery Research Center. And more events are yet to come.

As noted above, our Annual Meeting took place on May 8, in the OSU Foundation Board Room. We were most fortunate that President Jayatha Murthi agreed to address our meeting. Following her remarks there were introductions of our 7 scholarship recipients, all of whom are pursuing studies relating to healthy aging. A brief business meeting followed, at which we elected next year’s new Board members. I hope many of you were able to attend on May 8.
REMEmBERING Jean Peters
Excerpted from the interview of Jean conducted by Teri Tower in the Spring 2017 newsletter.

Jean Peters packed a lot of punch in a small body.

Jean was “hell bent on a career gal life,” and a visit from OSU professor Clara Storvick opened a door for her. Oregon State afforded her the opportunity to pursue her graduate degree and to work closer to home, offering her a combined teaching and graduate study position. That’s how Jean McLeod landed in Corvallis in 1958, never suspecting that Corvallis would become her home for the next 59 years.

Jean married Allen “Pete” Peters in July 1959, and their two children Kathy (1960) and Steve (1963) were born in Corvallis. Jean’s third child - her hard-sought masters degree - was awarded the year after Steve was born.

At OSU Jean had much fame to claim in her 33 years prior to retirement in 1991. Her teaching was stellar. Of her many awards and recognitions, the one Jean valued the most - the Elizabeth Ritchie Teaching Excellence Award - was presented to her in 1981 based on student support. Jean primarily taught large classes of 150+ students, yet her reach was to every one of those students, remembering that each was unique. She was well known as being “tough but fair,” a reputation which she carried the rest of her life.

She was often “Jean at the ready” in other OSU roles, as well. In the early 1970’s Acting President Roy Young asked her to chair the President’s Commission on Human Rights & Responsibilities, putting Jean in the middle of heated discussions on discrimination. In the 1980’s she chaired the Baccalaureate Core committee. In addition, Jean’s research contributions ranged from the analysis of vitamin B-6 for the benefit of humans to the composition and nutrient content of elephant milk - a must for zoos pursuing an elephant breeding program.

Jean was one of the founding members of OSURA and ALL (Academy for Lifelong Learning) and has served as presidents for both organizations. She was a strong advocate for lifelong learning and encouraged retirees and seniors to make an effort to keep up with technological change. “It’s all very well to say we are not smart enough for a smart phone or a computer,” Jean said, “but that is a cop out...we need to make the effort to stay as current as possible. It keeps life stimulating!”

RETIReMENT EXPO

OSURA participated in the 1st Annual Retirement Expo. We arrived early and had a prime table with a great poster board (pictured) which indicated some of the many activities we have done. There was a constant flow of people. While many were too young for retirement, some indicated they had co-workers who were close to retirement and they would tell them about us. We had a trifold brochure that said what OSURA was and membership forms to pass out. We also had a small gift of a gadget that included a letter opener, magnifier glass and ruler. Two oral presentations were given by Bob Smythe and Carroll DeKock that were well received.
LETTERS FROM FORMER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

OSURA recently contacted former recipients of our student scholarships and asked them if they would be willing to answer a few questions about their current situations and how OSU and our scholarship played a role in their careers. Here are three responses we’ve received so far.

OSURA is so proud of any contributions we have made to the outstanding former OSU students, and it is wonderful to see how things are going for them now.

A. David Shumway, DO, Capt, USAF

What is your current occupation?
I am an Internal Medicine resident in an active duty military program in Biloxi, MS. The patient population I primarily work with right now is military/DOD retirees. Additionally, I hold several leadership positions in osteopathic medicine, being involved at the national level in the American Osteopathic Association, and National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners, and I am a recurring columnist for The DO, publication of the American Osteopathic Association.

Have you furthered your education after graduating from OSU?
After graduating OSU, I attended A. T. Still University of Health Sciences where I obtained my Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) using the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) through the US Air Force. I am currently a post-doctoral trainee in graduate medical education. The views here expressed are my own and not those of the US Air Force or DOD.

How well did OSU prepare you for your future?
If not for OSU, the Honors College, and more specifically professors like Kevin Ahern and Indira Rajagopal, I would not have gotten into medical school.

What are your future plans?
I am currently planning on doing several years of general Internal Medicine/Operational Medicine in the Air Force and then hopefully to pursue a Cardiology or Gastroenterology fellowship.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?
I got a lot of support from many different people and groups during my pathway to medicine, but I firmly hold my selection for the OSURA scholarship and meeting the members at the reception as being one of the most distinct memories of being recognized for my future potential during undergraduate. I have the utmost gratitude to OSURA for believing in me, and thank you for helping me get to where I am now.

B. Ben Kong, PharmD

What is your current occupation?
I am currently a clinical pharmacist specialist working at the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute.

Have you furthered your education after graduating from OSU?
I attended and graduated from OSU between 2005-2008 with an Honors BS of General Science and a minor in chemistry. Thereafter, I went to OSU College of Pharmacy from 2008-2012.

My post-graduate studies include 1st year pharmacy residency (“PGY1”) at Providence Portland Medical Center and a 2nd year pharmacy residency (“PGY2”) at University of Florida specializing in clinical pharmacogenomics.

How well did OSU prepare you for your future?
I thought well overall. I felt that the combination of College of Pharmacy advisors and Honors College courses/professors/thesis provided a well rounded skill set. Additionally, the experience I gained as a math TA and mentor helped enhanced teaching skills and communication.

What are your future plans?
To continue to apply personalized medicine to improve health to the individual patient and community at large.
C. Lizzy Ragan (OSU ’13)

What is your current occupation?
I am currently based in Washington, DC and am a member of the current class of presidentially-appointed White House Fellows, a program I will be in through August of this year. For my fellowship, I am placed at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy where I support implementation of the American Pandemic Preparedness Plan and National Biodefense Strategy.

Have you furthered your education after graduating from OSU?
Following graduation from OSU, I completed a Masters of Public Health at Boston University.

How well did OSU prepare you for your future?
OSU was foundational to where I am today, including in finding and exploring my interest in global health and infectious disease. I have had a career that has taken me all over the world, allowed me to have impact on issues that better the lives of those most in need, and to now pursue leadership roles at the highest ranks of our government. I am proud to be an OSU alumna.

What are your future plans?
I am exploring opportunities to continue in service in leadership roles in the federal government, both through appointed and career positions.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?
I relied heavily on scholarships to get through my undergraduate education and am very thankful for the support provided by OSURA.

What is the OSURA Scholarship?
The OSU Retirement Association provides scholarship support to undergraduate students at Oregon State University who are pursuing a course of study that may lead to a career promoting healthy aging. That term includes all aspects of health - physical, emotional, social or financial.

Currently enrolled OSU undergraduate students who have completed at least one academic year at OSU, have a cumulative GPA of 3.4 or above and at least one year of study remaining towards their first bachelor’s (B.A. or B.S.) degree are encouraged to apply.

These scholarships are funded entirely by the generous contributions of OSURA members. Please consider a donation to our OSURA scholarship fund.

The scholarship amount may be up to $2,400 per person and will be awarded at the OSURA annual meeting in May 2023. Funds will be distributed into student accounts for the 2023-2024 academic year.

To apply or for more information, visit osura.oregonstate.edu/osura-scholarship
On March 17, John Gremmels, Campus Planner from University Facilities, Infrastructure and Operations, Capital Planning & Development spoke about the new construction and remodeling projects happening on the OSU campus and around the state.

John discussed current new construction and remodeling projects as well as projects projected into year 2033. A few projects mentioned were Reser Football Stadium expansion which will be completed for the first game of the 2023 season on September 9; to the new upper division undergraduate and graduate student housing center that just started construction on 11th Street and Madison Avenue.

Projects statewide include the first phase of the innovation district development at OSU Cascades; a PaceWave Energy Test Facility south of Newport and seven miles off the coast; and a new OSU Ship Operations dock in Newport before the arrival of a new regional class research vessel, the RV Taani due to arrive in 2023. To learn more about all the projects and view his presentation go to the OSURA website, https://osura.oregonstate.edu/ Select Events and scroll to the bottom of the page and select List of Past OSURA Events for John’s presentation titled, Campus Update with John Gremmels.

To view the active projects on the OSU Capital Planning and Development website go to, https://beav.es/TJE
On February 24, OSURA members welcomed David Bernell, Associate Professor of Political Science in the School of Public Policy at Oregon State University.

David talked about the 2022 midterm elections, what happened and why. David’s presentation covered a wide variety of topics from how surprised he was that the democrats did so well in the midterm election to the economic growth of China.

Also discussed were both major parties, their current attributes and the role independents play in elections; the abortion rights reversal; the current political vitriol and whether our culture has lost its sense of shame; China’s role as an international peace maker; and the aging of our political leaders and society.

David Bernell’s presentation was streamed live as a Webinar and recorded. To view his presentation go to the OSURA website, https://osura.oregonstate.edu/ Select Events and scroll to the bottom of the page and select List of Past OSURA Events for David’s presentation titled, The 2022 Midterm Elections: What Happened and Why.
TRAVEL SHARE: GREECE

On the afternoon of February 9, 2023, Bob and Pat Smythe presented a talk to the OSURA Travel Share crowd on their October 2022 excursion in Greece and Turkey. The trip was offered by the Road Scholars travel organization, and the group traveled in what Bob called a “small ship.” He emphasized that their Greek guide was passionate about sharing his knowledge of his home country.

The trip began in Athens, explored the Greek Isles, moved across to the western side of Turkey, and reached Istanbul, flying home from there. The time period overlapped the destructive Turkey-Syria earthquake, but that event did not impact the Smythes’ travels.

After exploring Athens, the Parthenon statuaries and after a 300-foot climb to the Acropolis, the visitors established their quarters on the ship and left for a tour of some of the Isles. The tour had selected several favorites, including Hydra, Santorini, Mykonos, and Delos. Features of the islands included white houses galore, a caldera from a volcano that erupted in 1613 (Santorini), vineyards much drier than those in Oregon, well-preserved excavations (Delos), and an intricate web of narrow, bustling streets that were nearly impossible to figure out (Mykonos) – intentionally, so as to make it difficult for pirates to navigate. Trying to avoid overlapping the frequent large cruise ships and their hordes of customers, the tour led this much smaller group from island to island, working their way eventually to the Turkish shore via a stopover on the island of Samos, a location now housing many Syrian refugees.

Once in the Republic of Turkey, the group visited the ancient Greco-Roman city of Ephesus, where they toured the excavations, trying to avoid the cruise ship crowds. Much of the remarkable ancient library of Ephesus still stands, and considerable art work has been excavated in the Roman-era apartments. These and other remnants of the city have been receiving loving restoration since around 1967. One interesting nearby site was the House of the Virgin Mary, where Saint John the Apostle allegedly sheltered her in her last days, near Ephesus.
As the group headed north towards Istanbul in the Dardanelles Strait, they could see Gallipoli to the left. Once in Istanbul, the group visited the Blue Mosque, but couldn’t enter due to the crowds. The Hagia Sophia also had two-hour lines, which deterred many. But they did visit Topkapi Palace and the Harem of the Sultans. (Road Scholars offered a modest refund for the lack of access to some advertised sites.) The stop in Istanbul ended with an unscripted drive-by featuring Turkish President Erdogan and his entourage, with motorcycles blasting and sirens screaming.

Bob and Pat reported to be happy with Road Scholars as a tour group provider. Of course, tours of the Greek islands will not always follow the same itinerary as is described here. Some experience the sights in the reverse order, or visit a different selection of islands.
TRAVEL SHARE: MACHU PICCHU & THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Contributed by Andy Ungerer & Bobbi Conard

Bobbi and Andy participated in an OSU Alumni Association Tour, November 23 - December 5, 2018. They presented a Travel Share talk to OSURA at the OSU Foundation on Friday, April 28, 2023. Forty-five members attended in-person and two viewed it virtually. The entire talk may be viewed at the OSURA website: https://beav.es/TkL

Bobbi and Andy both worked for CEOAS for over 40 years. Oceanographic cruises provided opportunities to travel to many parts of the world. Andy’s first work day (July 1, 1977) at the School of Oceanography was in Newport, unloading the RV Wecoma that had just returned from a research cruise off Peru. Almost all of the scientists on that cruise had gone to Machu Picchu, so Andy added Machu Picchu to his travel bucket list.

Machu Picchu
The first part of the trip began in Lima, Peru. Photos were shown as Bobbi described their visits to museums, churches, and government buildings. The tour then moved on to Cuzco, Peru, which is sort of a jump-off town for those headed to Machu Picchu. Although Machu Pichu is the most well known, there are many more Inca ruins to visit. In Cuzco they explored the Sacsayhuaman ruins. Of particular interest were plentiful stone walls unique to this area of Peru. Marvelously built out of dramatically irregular but superbly fitted stones, these walls were quite tall and showed hidden designs that take careful viewing to discover the patterns.

One way to Machu Picchu is to hike the Inka-Inka trail for the very hardy. It is a 3 day trek up the mountain to the site. The tour group took the train, which was quite an experience in its own right. Most people stay in Agua Calientes at the bottom of the mountain, but there is one hotel, Sanctuary Lodge, at the entrance to Machu Picchu and it was booked for the tour group. This allowed the group to spend parts of two days exploring the ruins. This was fortunate as the first day was lovely, but the second day was foggy and rainy. The photo shows the site map.

One feature of the site is the terraces. The upper terraces were mostly housing, and the lower terraces agricultural. One of the main reasons the site has survived is the extensive drainage system throughout the complex, which is still functional today.

The tour spent an entire day exploring the Sacred Valley of the Inca’s, the highlight being a visit to Ollantaytambo, once a ceremonial center. The map shown here shows the area.
Of particular interest is the room with the water mirrors, which served an astronomical function and the Condor’s temple which is a stylized Condor with beak and head on floor and wings on the walls.

On returning to Cusco, the group explored more of the elaborate stone walls, including the ones at the Church of Santo Domingo which is built on the ruins of the Incan Temple of the Sun. A particular highlight was lunch with a local Cusco family, hosted in their home.

After a flight to Quito, Ecuador, time was spent exploring the historic areas and the equator park, where they also had a chance to reach across the equator, with Bobbi in Southern Hemisphere and Andy in the Northern Hemisphere.

From Quito, the tour group flew to the Galapagos. The flight landed on the island of Baltra, followed by a short ferry ride to Santa Cruz island. There are 19 major islands in the archipelago, but only 4 are inhabited; Santa Cruz is the most developed but not the largest.

The tour group hotel was on Santa Cruz and travel to two other islands was on a small privately chartered yacht. Amazingly, the various islands have almost microclimates that differentiate each of them from the others. Some are rocky desert, some are semi-tropical; the variety of wildlife observed included Giant Tortoises, marine and land iguanas, and many species of birds such as frigate birds, blue footed Boobies and flamingos. The islands are volcanic, and Andy and Bobbi explored a lava tube on one. Additional areas of interest were visits to the Charles Darwin research station that houses the breeding program for tortoises and to a Giant Tortoise preserve. You know that you are near this preserve by the number of Giant Tortoises along the road.
Of the original 15 species of Giant Tortoises there are now just 11 remaining. A very successful rewilding program has resulted in several thousand tortoises reared in captivity being released to the wild in the Galapagos.

Upon returning to Quito, the tour visited the Botanical Garden de Quito to view Ecuador’s stunning biodiversity followed by a visit to a giant market offering every fruit or vegetable imaginable.

Andy and Bobbi gave a big Thumbs Up to the OSU Alumni Association Tour. While this was a 2018 Tour, the OSU Alumni Association has resumed this tour. There was one in February of 2022 and there is another one planned for 2024. Contact Kate Sanders (kate.sanders@osualum.com).
PAST PRESIDENTS LUNCHEON

Contributed by Bill Young

On March 14 OSURA’s past presidents gathered for a luncheon at the New China Buffet in Corvallis. This popular in-person event, organized by immediate past president Bill Young, had not been held since March of 2020 due to COVID restrictions. These luncheons provide an opportunity to renew friendships and share mutual experiences in leading OSURA.

This year’s group consisted of (left to right in the photo): Bob Smythe (current president), Carroll DeKock (president elect), Tom Savage, Mike Schuyler, Terri Tower, Gerry Olson, Susan Poole, Jack Walstad, Ken Krane, Bill Smart, Les Dunnington, Chris Mathews, Bill Young, Jim Krueger and Gordon Reistad.

Regrets were sent from David Eiseman (2005-06), Jo Anne Trow (2009-10) and Tom Plant (2017-18).

Thus, those in attendance ranged from our 1st president, Les Dunnington (2002-03) to our future president, Carroll DeKock (2023-24). We also paused to remember the very recent passing of Jean Peters on February 15, 2023, who was OSURA’s 2nd president (2003-04), and the earlier loss (in 2019) of Kathy Heath, who lead our organization in 2007-08.

Our current president, Bob Smythe, gave a review of the many OSURA-led activates members have enjoyed during the year as COVID has loosened its grip on in-person gatherings. Mike Schuyler, current Scholarship Committee chair (and 2019-20 president), summarized the difficult challenge of selecting awardees from an abundance of qualified applicants for our scholarships.

Continued discussion focused on building support to fund student scholarships geared to “healthy aging” goals. Earnings from our Scholarship Endowment (currently <$100,000) funds (at 4%) approximately $3,800... or less than two of $2,400 scholarships we award. This year we are budgeted to award six scholarships; thus, all additional dollars are from OSURA member donations.

Communicating with our current members... and the challenge of recruiting new members, both recent retirees as well as general efforts to grow the membership were discussed. The past presidents were fully engaged and some great ideas were heard. As we closed, it was awesome to experience the enthusiasm and encouragement of this august group of former leaders.
This is the last newsletter I will be editing so I thought I would detail the evolutionary process that has taken the OSURA newsletter to this current iteration. To get the editor position, I went through a grueling ten minute phone interview with Jack Walstad. He asked me questions like: What did I do in my working life that would prepare me for this job? Would I be willing to put in the time to do this job? All valid questions but I think the answer that got me the job was: YES. I took over the editor job at the beginning of 2017, and had a great mentor in Cheryl Lyons. She introduced me to Shari Brumbach, who, at that time, was the liaison for OSURA. Everything having to do with layout and design was done with an online editing program that Shari used to position articles and photos in a document that would then be transferred to Printing and Mailing where the process of printing and sending out the newsletters to members was finalized.

Newsletters up til then were never more than 5 pages long with a very similar look throughout. As you can see, newsletters contained an article about a current member, a letter from the president and then one or two articles about OSURA events of note.

In my opinion, it was a largely manual, clunky process to get from a batch of member-written articles to a finished, printed newsletter. Lots of constraints on article length and pictures. And the cost was eating up a large portion of our yearly budget!

As I reported to the board about my progress on the newsletter, I started to think about how to contain costs. My first thought was: could this newsletter be digital only? It would only work if the membership wanted it. So, we decided to figure out how a digital newsletter could be published and whether members would accept it. The first task was to look at the membership rolls. How many people had email addresses on file? At that time, we had a membership of around 250 with all their e-mail addresses on a list used by Event Planning for notifying members of events. Only six people did not have email addresses on file. So Jack Walstad, the president at that time gave me permission to try an online newsletter hybrid. Most newsletters would be emailed to folks but there would be a handful of printed newsletters to send to those folks without email addresses. Obviously, this hybrid model was still constrained by the few printed and mailed newsletters. But there was progress! The next newsletter was six pages long!

I continued to push for an all electronic version of the newsletter and by Spring of 2018 we were fully digital! At the same time, the Events office was transformed when they were moved into Kerr Admin building and were able to hire a professional layout person: Mark Jacobson. His expertise and experience was so helpful. As the newsletter got longer and longer, it was important to make sure the articles were easy to read (larger fonts) and laid out in a way that made sense to the reader especially for longer articles.

The other big change was pictures! The more pictures, the happier I was. It’s no fun to read about someone or something if you can’t see that person or thing. I relied heavily on Mark to insert pictures in places that made sense esthetically. Mark was with Events for about a year before he had to be laid off because of budget constraints. Fortunately, he was able to get a job at the LaSells Stewart Center. With Mark unavailable, the quest for a new (cheap) way to get expert layout help was on. It turned out that very good help was close by. Students majoring in Graphic Design were working as paid interns in the Printing and Mailing Department and they were very willing to gain experience designing a newsletter. Also they work cheap! The only disadvantage is there is a new intern every year.

It has been a very fulfilling experience, though, working with these bright, motivated students. They have even suggested different formats depending on length and number of pictures. Our longest newsletter, from Fall 2021, debuted the “online magazine” format that we currently use. It is a format that accommodates many photos and is much easier to scroll through.

As I wind down my time as editor, I want to thank so many people who helped and influenced me along the way. A special thank you to Jack Walstad for having faith in our format changes and to Mealoha McFadden who always remembered to make sure our newsletters met the OSU branding criteria. Mealoha also boosted me up when I felt like I was floundering and got me back on track.

I especially want to thank Liz Webb for volunteering to take over the editor job. I know she will be a great fit even though she also put me through a “grueling” interview.
BECOME AN OSURA MEMBER TODAY!

Full membership in the OSU Retirement Association is open to all retirees from Oregon State University for a yearly fee of $20.00 for an individual and $30 for a household membership (spouses and partners are considered part of a household membership). All memberships begin on July 1 and run through June 30. Wondering if you are a member, see lists (https://beav.es/5ST)

Why should you become a member of OSURA?
• Develop and support programs of interest to retirees
• Enhance the lifelong relationship of OSU staff with each other and the University
• Enjoy social connections with former colleagues and new OSURA friends
• Hear presentations on academic research, civic matters, and cultural events
• Help make retirement creative and rewarding through activities and/or volunteering
• Receive information pertinent to OSU and state retirees
• Strengthen and promote ties between retired staff in creative ways
• Support OSURA advocacy for OSU retiree privileges (parking, email, other)
• Support OSURA monitoring of state government retiree benefits
• Take part in educational outings and interest groups

Since OSURA’s inception, members have had an opportunity to tour several university departments and areas of interest, join others in social events, attend presentations, and share their time and talents through volunteering at OSU.

Enjoy a 50% discount on annual parking permits at OSU
In 2019, OSU Transportation Service implemented new criteria for discounted parking permits for retirees. They have notified OSURA that discounted parking permits are only available to emeritus faculty or retirees who reached 25+ years of service prior to retirement and who are also members of the OSU Retirement Association (OSURA).

If you meet the above criteria, you MUST contact TransportationServices at transportation@oregonstate.edu, or by calling 541-737-2583 during business hours (Mon-Fri, 7:30 AM to 1 PM). They will email a special invitation to claim a virtual permit for their zone at 50% off the regular rate. DO NOT purchase a permit directly from the Transportation Services website or you will not receive this discount and may not be eligible for a 50% refund.

OSURA rates will be as follows:
• Zone A (1, 2, or 3) - $319
• Zone B (1, 2, or 3) - $216
• Zone C - $67.50

More information about permits for 2023-24 can be found here - https://transportation.oregonstate.edu/parking/permit-types
CONTACT
Oregon State University Retirement Association
402 Kerr Administration Building
541-737-4717 | OSURA@oregonstate.edu