



# THE AUAR NEWSLETTER

The Association of The University of Akron Retirees

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello fellow retirees! I cannot believe I am entering my final year as your president! That first year went by so fast, my head is still spinning a bit. I hope all of you are enjoying our toasty summer days. I am trying to get my ducks in a row for my next AUAR marathon on the horizon. I hope all of you have renewed your membership by now! I jumped at the option of a lifetime membership! I'm planning on making it past the 10-year mark! Great bargain in my book!

We had a fabulous year of events last year! Speakers were varied and interesting. We even were able to resurrect our fun and informative Road Trip adventure and our delectable Lobster and Suds event too! Let's hope that 2022-2023 brings us more of the same. I read somewhere that the worst of COVID should be behind us...let's hope that is accurate. I, for one, am still taking precautions. I hope you are too!

I am happy to report that we have a full slate of officers for the coming year as well as a complete Scholarship Committee. We've welcomed new faces to both the Board and the Committee. That is always good news; many hands make light the work. While we sadly lost many AUAR members last year to the "heavenly call," we have also gained many new retirees as well who will be enjoying their first free year of membership with us. We are looking forward to widening our reach and helping to keep the University and ourselves as vibrant as possible. It looks like we have a wonderful year shaping up. Don't be shy! I'll be looking for you!!



**Rita Klein**  
**President 2022 – 2023**

## In Memoriam

*We honor our colleagues and friends for their many contributions in making The University of Akron a better place.*

**Dr. Kay Alderman**, 86, was a professor in the College of Education. She taught at UA from 1979 to 2006. She donated generously to student scholarships, felt strongly about good research, and fought for fairness and justice.

**David Barr** died on January 24, 2022, at the age of 86. He was an associate professor in the College of Education and taught there from 1967 to 1993. Dave was a military company Commander at Fort Leonard Wood. He was very artistic and loved landscaping his yard. Dave is survived by his wife of 63 years, Linda, a daughter and two grandsons.

**Bob Blankenship** died at 93 on April 28, 2022. He received his bachelor's degree from UA, served in the Army, and then got his master's degree from Indiana University. He worked in the Audio-Visual Department of the UA Library from 1965-1982. He was active in AUAR and served as treasurer. Bob was a member of the Northampton Historical Society and Northampton United Methodist Church. He enjoyed photography. Bob is survived by nieces, nephews, a great niece, great nephews, and many friends.

**Merlin Briner** passed away at 86 on December 21, 2021. He grew up in Kansas and was a graduate of the University of Wichita. He earned his J.D. from UA and then was a professor of tax for 26 years, retiring in 1996 with Emeritus status. He was honored by former students who funded the naming of a room after him. After retiring from the School of Law, he taught part time in the School of Accountancy for a year and a half and then moved to Florida permanently where he served as a volunteer at the Sheriff's Department and the Juvenile Arbitration Program. He leaves his wife Linda, two daughters, two granddaughters, and three great-grandchildren.

**Marguerite Codian** passed away on December 13, 2021, at 97. She retired from the College of Business where she worked from 1973 to 1989. Her husband of 68 years, Louis, predeceased her. She is survived by her three children, five grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She spent many of her retirement years volunteering. She loved to bake and listen to polkas.

**Gilbert "Gil" Corvin** passed away on July 4, 2022, at 97. He served in the U.S. Army during WWII. Gil was a custodian at UA from 1970 until his retirement in 1992. He was a longtime resident of Cuyahoga Falls and was also a longtime member of his church. Gil was preceded in death by his wife Eleanor and is survived by numerous nieces and nephews.

**Leona Farris** died in February 2022 at 104. She studied vocational home economics at Ohio State where she helped integrate the dorms in the late 1930s. She was a charter member of the OSU Alpha Kappa Alpha chapter and earned her bachelor's degree in 1940. She taught high school in Cleveland for several years and moved to Akron in 1946 after marrying Dr. Melvin Farris. They integrated Stow and she and a white neighbor established the first integrated Girl Scout troop in Stow. After returning to school in the 1960s, Leona earned a master's degree in Child and Family Development from Kent State and then joined the UA faculty to teach Home Economics. Leona worked at UA from 1969-1988 and retired as Director Emeritus. She served on the boards of 16 local agencies and received many honors. Preceded in death by her husband and oldest child, she is survived by her three children, ten grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

**Dr. John Frola Sr.**, died at 84 on May 1, 2022. He graduated from Waynesburg College and earned his Ph.D. from West Virginia University. He joined the UA faculty in 1971 and retired as an associate professor of Biology in 2006. He was a founding member of his church. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Cynthia, two sons (one has since died), and three grandchildren. He loved his family and teaching.

**Betty Grandy** passed away at 90 on April 3, 2022. She started working at UA in 1971 and retired in 1989 as clerical supervisor in the Cashier's Office. Betty was preceded in death by her husband Roy and is survived by her daughter, two grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

**Dr. George Makar**, 87, passed away on July 27, 2022. He earned his undergraduate degree at Penn State, his master's at Duquesne, and his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh. George served in the U.S. Army infantry at Fort Knox, Kentucky. He was a professor at Point Park Community College and Dean of Students at the Community College of Beaver County before joining the faculty of UA in 1973. George taught Business Technology and retired in 1996. He is survived by his wife Esther, four sons, and four grandchildren, who all loved his corny jokes!

**Jane Noble** passed away at 87 on February 10, 2022. She met her future husband, Dr. Allen G. Noble, a UA retiree, while employed at the National Security Agency. They were world travelers. Jane loved tea, teacups, and mystery novels. She was preceded in death by her husband and daughter. Jane is survived by two sons, five grandchildren, and three great-granddaughters.

**Jean Questel** died on February 10, 2022, at 95. She earned a B.A. in 1948 and an M.A. in 1984 from The University of Akron. She taught English in several school systems and Developmental English at UA. She volunteered at Stan Hywet, Project Learn, First Night Akron, WEYE Seeing Eye Radio, Weathervane Theatre and Good Neighbors. In 2006, she was named volunteer of the year by the Ohio Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Jean served as president of the Akron League of Women Voters and the Silver Lake Garden Club. She was in several bridge and book clubs and traveled the world. Preceded in death by her husband John, she is survived by three children and three granddaughters.

**David Pierson**, 72, died on March 24, 2022. He earned a B.A. in Architecture at the University of Cincinnati and then worked for Curtis and Rasmussen Architects. David became the architect for Facilities, Planning and Design at Kent State University and in 1999 joined UA. He retired in 2014 as assistant vice-president of Capital Planning and Facilities Management. David was an avid fisherman, golfer, and railroad enthusiast. He enjoyed taking trips on narrow gauge steam lines. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Lisa, and their two sons, three grandchildren, and 34 nieces and nephews.

**Bob Ritchie** died at 88 on February 16, 2022. He retired from Babcock and Wilcox where he was a project manager. Bob worked part time as a UA academic advisor from 1974 to 1996. He was a member of many clubs and was a lifetime member of the Ohio Western Music Association. Bob and his wife of 50 years, Georgia, attended many AUAR luncheons and events. He enjoyed taking care of his home and six acres, playing euchre, and spending Friday nights at the Music Barn in Sharon Township. In addition to Georgia, Bob is survived by three sons and a granddaughter.

**Dr. Atef Saleeb** died on November 10, 2021, at 68. Before joining UA, he worked as a consulting engineer for Battelle, Ford, Swanson Analysis Systems and General Tire. He retired in 2020 as a distinguished professor of Civil Engineering. He published 90 journal papers and three books. Dr. Saleeb loved solving problems and was extremely intelligent and focused. He performed work with devotion, integrity, and joy. He was dearly loved by many and is survived by family in Egypt, Australia, and the U.S.

**Blin Scatterday**, 93, died on December 25, 2021. He graduated from UA and served in the U.S. Army ROTC and Reserves. He taught math at Woodridge High School and was principal of East Liberty Elementary School and Green High School. Blin joined the faculty at UA in 1964 and retired in 1989 as professor and chair of the Department of Associate Studies. He loved teaching, golf, tennis, and social gatherings. He was preceded in death by his wife of 56 years, Suzanne, and is survived by a son, a daughter, and two grandsons.

**Charmaine Streharsky** died at 75 on April 24, 2022. She worked full time and raised her children as she slowly took classes at UA to obtain an associate degree in Business Management Technology, a bachelor's degree in Technical Education and then more quickly got a master's in Technical Education and her Doctor of Education degree in Higher Education Administration. Charmaine worked at UA for 30 years, retiring in 1996 as Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs. She then worked as a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies at UA and had another career at Kent State for 17 years. Charmaine was a devoted Christian and helped several refugee families through her church. She loved genealogy and was an active Daughter of the American Revolution. Preceded in death by Robert, her husband of 56 years, she is survived by her son and his wife, her daughter, and many beloved cousins.

**Dennis Sullivan** died on June 5, 2022, at the age of 76. He earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees at UA. He served his country as an Army reservist and devoted 37 years to the University as a professor of Manufacturing Engineering Technology. He served on faculty advisory committees and as an academic adviser. Dennis supported UA through financial contributions and established scholarships in Marketing and Music. He loved cars, animals, music, and Cleveland sports. Dennis was funny, witty and a great storyteller. Preceded in death by his wife of 51 years, Linda, he is survived by a son and a daughter.

**Jean Williams**, 97, died on March 12, 2022. She grew up on a dairy farm and got her bachelor's degree in Institutional Management. She worked at Kent State University in Child Development and the Deaf Education Lab. She joined UA in 1972 as assistant head teacher and Director of Curriculum for the lab school. Upon obtaining her master's in Special Education in 1972, she became an assistant professor and assistant director of the lab school, in charge of the day care and nursery school curriculum. Appointed by the Governor to the Department of Human Services' Day Care Advisory Council, Jean served as chairman. She helped pass legislation to improve operations of the childcare centers and licensing of home day care centers. Jean retired in 1990 as Associate Professor Emeritus. She and her husband Roger traveled extensively, and Jean was an avid snorkeler. She volunteered with many groups and enjoyed the arts. Preceded in death by her husband, she is survived by her two sons, a daughter, and five grandchildren.

**Dan Williams** died at 79 on April 15, 2022. He graduated with a bachelor's in math from Westminster College and went on to get his master's and doctorate in business from Kent State. He joined the UA faculty in 1969 and retired in 1998 as Professor Emeritus in Finance. He had served as Assistant Dean and Director of Graduate Programs in the College of Business Administration. Dan was chairman of the Hudson Park Board and a councilman on the Hudson City Council. He enjoyed volunteering as the official timer for the Hudson High varsity basketball team for 26 years. Dan's faith was very important to him, and he was a deacon at his church. He is survived by his wife of more than 57 years, Laurie, their two sons, and four grandchildren.

**Monique Perisse-Zavinski** passed away at 77. She was born and educated in France. She obtained her License (B.A.) at the University of Poitiers, France, attended the University of Birmingham in England, and got her master's degree in Languages from Kent State. She taught French at both Kent and UA. She joined the UA faculty in 1989 and retired in 2015. She and her husband of 42 years, Dennis Zavinski, traveled the world and he preceded her. Monique loved animals, especially cats and dogs, and Rock and Roll music.

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# FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

## - *DON'T BECOME A VICTIM* -

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**Melanie Hart and Tania Nemer**

There were three great presenters at the AUAR luncheon held on February 16. All three work for the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. Each has a distinct role in providing assistance to area citizens. We were introduced to Tania Nemer, Melanie Hart, and Avery, the office's facility dog.

Melanie Hart has worked for over 28 years in the Prosecutor's Office and has been the primary facility dog handler since 2013. She partners with Avery, a golden lab, to serve "as a calming presence for anxious and traumatized victims and witnesses." They function mainly by accompanying children and adults with disabilities to meetings, trials, sentencing, and various court appearances. Avery knows 40 commands and is innately aware and sensitive to a variety of human emotions. He even knows when and how to obtain a tissue to offer to a crying individual who is in distress during an interview.

Summit County Prosecutor, Sheri Bevan Walsh, got the idea of a facility dog at a conference several years ago. Now Melanie and Avery are serving as an example to other county prosecutors who wish to add such a unique service to their operations. (Avery had little to say, deciding to just stretch out on the floor as the program continued.)

Tania Nemer is the Community Outreach Prosecutor for Sherri Bevan Walsh. Prior to joining the prosecutor's office, she managed a private law practice, was an attorney at the International Institute of Akron, and a Magistrate for the Akron Municipal Court. In her present position, she focuses on prosecuting and preventing crime by building effective relationships between law enforcement and the community.



**Mary Jo McCracken,  
Marsha Main, and Linda Marx**

Her presentation, "Senior Scams and How to Prevent Them," was well received by the audience. She gave us some valuable "tips."

**TIP #1 Trust your gut.** If you feel something is amiss, not right, too good to be true, think twice before you take any action.

**TIP #2 Be aware and pay attention.** An example is in "distraction crimes," which are very common. For instance, never leave your purse unattended in a shopping cart. She suggests strapping it to the cart using the "seat belt" many grocery carts have to secure toddlers. And never leave your purse open or unattended while leaving your cart and walking through the aisles. Also watch out for individuals who work in tandem – one who will distract you while the other goes after your valuables. When going to your car, have your car keys in hand. Fumbling with keys and purchases takes time and attention and could make you an easy target. Ask a store employee to help you to your car, especially at night.

**TIP #3 Be alert to "transaction crimes."** These attempts to "fleece" you out of your funds often come by telephone or computer. Everyone has heard of the "grandchild" calling from jail or in another dire situation and needing money. Also watch out for calls from the Internal Revenue Service, Social Security Administration, or a "law enforcement agency" demanding you send a payment immediately via bank transfer or gift card or asking you to confirm your Social Security Number or some other personal information. The IRS, Social Security, or the FBI will never call you. They will always send a letter.

**TIP #4 Never call back on a number given to you over the phone.** Look up the number and call the agency directly to check the validity of the claim(s) made by the initial caller. The best way to handle most telephone calls that you immediately determine are "bogus" is to just hang up. Do not answer any questions or engage in playing along with the scammer. (During the Q&A, we heard from several retirees that they or their spouses liked to "mess" with the caller.) Tania does not recommend this charade.



**Avery**

**TIP #5 Lastly, if a stranger comes to your door, do not open it.** Rather, engage in conversation with the door still closed and locked. Not answering a knock or doorbell ring could signal that no one is at home and "invite" a burglary attempt.

After a big yawn from Avery and a lively discussion of scamming instances personally experienced by members of the audience, the meeting was adjourned.



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# MARCH LUNCHEON

## - THE HOUSE ON PERKINS HILL -

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**David Lieberth and Tom Vukovich**

At the March 16 luncheon, AUAR members and guests were treated to a much sought-after presentation about Akron's past by well-known UA alum and community leader, Dave Lieberth. Most Akronites know of Dave and his long career as a broadcast journalist, lawyer, historian, and civic activist. A two-time graduate of The University of Akron, Dave majored in Speech and received his BA in 1969 and his J.D. from our Law School in 1977.

On February 1, 2022, Dave was appointed by Akron's Mayor Daniel Horrigan to be the Executive Secretary for the City Bicentennial Commission. The Commission is charged with planning Akron's 200th anniversary celebration to be held in 2025. UA retiree, Dr. Cynthia Capers, will serve on the Commission as one of four Honorary Chairpersons.

Dave's presentation featured recently acquired research into the first home of *Akron Beacon Journal* publisher, John S. Knight. In 2020, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of its founding in Akron, the Knight Foundation granted \$637,500 to restore the historic house where Knight and his wife, Katherine McLain Knight, lived from 1923 until Katherine's death in 1929. After a year-long renovation, the property at 400 South Portage Path became the headquarters of Summit County's Land Bank the week of November 15, 2021.

Dave's presentation, "A Romance on Perkins Hill ... The Gatsby Era in Akron," included rare archival photographs of Knight and his young family. His PowerPoint presentation began with a review of the early life of John S. (Jack) Knight, best known as the publisher and editor of the *Akron Beacon Journal*.

Jack's father, Charles Landon Knight, purchased the newspaper in 1903. *The Akron Beacon Journal* became the cornerstone of the nationwide Knight Newspaper chain. The company eventually grew to include 15 newspapers and was merged in 1974 with Ridder Publications to form Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Inc. By 1981 the company consisted of 32 newspapers in 17 states, employing 15,000 workers and boasting a circulation of 3.6 million daily.

Dave's research was enhanced by documents stored in the Archival Services Department of The University of Akron Library. The John S. Knight papers consist primarily of material relating to his life as a newspaper editor and publisher. The collection includes correspondence, speeches, scrapbooks, "Editor's Notebooks," photographs, and memorabilia, including two hand-written diaries by his first wife Katherine.

We learned that Jack graduated from Central-Hower High School after earlier attending boarding school in Maryland. He attended Cornell University before joining the Army during WWI and served as a lieutenant when stationed in France. During this time, Jack Knight, the son of a congressman who liked to shoot craps and drink bourbon, was considered a handsome, dashing young man.

After WWI, he returned home to Akron, which was now thriving with newly formed rubber companies, high employment, and a growing population of wealthy, "high society," A-listers" as residents. Several neighborhoods in Akron had been established for these new "captains of industry," many of whom are considered to have made Akron what it is today.

One such new enclave was Perkins Hill, just west of downtown Akron. In the 1920s this area became the anchor of Akron's elite business leaders. Dave showed us several pictures of these early mansions with names like "The Oaks" and "Rosewill Manor." Most do not exist today. G.M. Stadelman, the President of Goodyear in 1922, owned a home in this neighborhood known as "Grey Lodge." This 21-room structure still exists and since 1946 it has been the home of the Akron Woman's City Club.



**Knight home**

*cont. page 4*

Dave gave us a view of life in the 1920s in Akron, during which there appeared to be endless parties and social activities. The period was aptly chronicled in the novel "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

After this review of the life of Akron's "movers and shakers" and the "social set," Dave returned to the John S. Knight story. We were introduced to Katherine McLain (1895-1929), whom Dave described as a "head-strong," independent woman who drank, smoked, rode horses, and loved to play golf. Katherine (Kate) was born and lived in Massillon, Ohio and graduated from Wheaton College located near Chicago. She was attracted to and pursued the young managing editor of the *Akron Beacon Journal*. After all, Jack was wealthy and considered a "good catch." Their huge wedding, in November 1921, was held in Massillon. There were 6 ushers and 6 bridesmaids, and 500 guests in attendance. One of Jack's ushers was Harvey Firestone, Jr.

Their first residence was at Belvedere Apartments and later in a rented home while waiting for their new house to be built at 400 South Portage Path. The new stucco house was designed by architects Good & Wagner, who also designed the recently completed club house at Portage County Club. The new residence for the young couple featured 6 bedrooms, 4 full baths, 4 fireplaces, and a magnificent, curved staircase. It was equipped with all the modern appliances of the time.

Soon after moving into the house, it became the center for parties and the venue for Akron's social set. Using Katherine's two diaries (1924-25) and one obtained from a niece (1926), we learn how she managed the house with her "girls" (young female servants), hosted prominent guests such as Clarence Darrow and partied with Akron families who had power and influence, such as the Robinsons, Seiberlings, Raymonds, and Firestones.

Along with hosting social events, the Knights were also involved in civic activities. Katherine was president of the Junior League of Akron and in 1926 a central figure in an effort to build the new Children's Hospital for the city. The Knight Foundation's contributions to education and The University of Akron are numerous. Today the Knight Convention Center in the heart of downtown Akron is another example of their legacy.



**Bob Gandee, Dan Sheffer, and Rita Klein**

While living in their new home, Katherine and Jack had 3 sons – John S. Jr (1922) Charles Landon II (1924), and Frank McLain (1928). After the birth of her last son, Katherine never seemed to recover from debilitating fatigue and blinding headaches. Jack sent her to a warm climate and then to New York City for diagnosis and treatment. Katherine passed away of a brain tumor on January 16, 1929, at the age of 34. She left her sons, ages 6, 4, and 1 year old.

Later Jack married Beryl Zoller Comstock, a family friend. She passed away in 1980. Lieutenant John S. Knight, Jr. was killed in action near Munster, Germany, during WWII. Landon, who suffered from polio his entire life, passed away in 2000. Their youngest son, Frank, died at the age of 30 in 1958 following surgery for a brain tumor. Jack died on June 16, 1981, at age 86.

Their home on Portage Path eventually became unoccupied with boarded windows, down spouts and gutters stripped away, deteriorating exterior stucco, and a collapsed porch. The Knight Foundation and the Summit County Land Bank stepped in, and renovations were completed in 2021.

Dave concluded his presentation with before and after pictures of the exterior and interior of the house showing the restored woodwork and windows, a large conference room, and that fabulous, curved staircase. The Land Bank plans to open the facility for public use at some point. Your visit will be special now that you know more about John S. Knight and his family.

### **UA PRESS DISCOUNT OFFER FOR AUAR MEMBERS**

**In appreciation of the many AUAR supporters of The University of Akron Press, we would like to offer another benefit to add to membership in AUAR. This offer is a standard 30% off the price of any book we publish using the discount code of AUAR30 when ordering from us on our website. There is no time limit on this discount.**

**Over the years we have provided many programs for your meetings and want to recognize and support a strong retirees group by making this offer.**

**Julia Gammon, Marketing Manager**



**Martha:** *First, a big welcome to you as an at-large member of our AUAR Board and a thank you, Connie, for agreeing to be interviewed for our fall newsletter. Let's begin with your association with UA. I know that you last worked in the Registrar's Office.*

**Connie:** Yes, I began working at UA in 2005 in Residence Life & Housing as assignment coordinator, which was essentially assigning students to rooms and handling student concerns. I enjoyed working with students because I enjoy helping people. Occasionally, I interacted with parents who had concerns, and often it was a matter of talking through their issues. After eight years in this job, I moved to Student Life and Scheduling, which meant going from scheduling students in rooms to scheduling classrooms for courses. A computer did the first run of schedules, then I dealt with any conflicts and special requirements. For example, it was necessary to accommodate handicapped students according to the ADA.

From later in 2013 until 2016, I continued scheduling, only in the Registrar's Office. I retired in 2016.

**Martha:** *Did you interact with students when you were in the Registrar's Office?*

**Connie:** Not in that job. Students talked with staff assigned to handle their questions and concerns. My job was behind the scenes.

**Martha:** *Prior to your work at UA, did you work for other companies?*

**Connie:** With an accounting degree, I worked for General Tire in the early '70s. After my daughter was born in 1975, I focused on my home life. I went back to outside work in 1988 at Technipower, a temporary-employment service in technical fields, and did its accounting for nine years. Then I went to J.D. Williamson Construction, where I helped on bids for bridge and road construction.

**Martha:** *Have you always lived in northeast Ohio?*

**Connie:** I'm from West Virginia originally and that's where I went to college. My first now-deceased husband's sister lived here and suggested my husband come to work for General Tire.

**Martha:** *Tell me more about your family.*

**Connie:** I have one daughter; after her father passed, I was a widow for many years. Then I met my second husband, Richard, on a dating site. Like me, he was a single parent, with two sons. Richard was a reporter on TV and movies for the Akron Beacon Journal. He is retired from the Beacon Journal but teaches in the English department at UA.

**Martha:** *I would be interested to know about your daughter.*

**Connie:** My daughter Kristin is a biomedical engineer with undergrad and graduate degrees from the University of Toledo. She lives in New York State and works for the ProPharma Group as a consultant to medical device companies, especially on regulatory strategy. She's married and the mother of a six-year-old daughter – my favorite (and only) grandchild.



**Martha: And your stepsons?**

**Connie:** The older one works in academia in New York and has his master's. The younger one is in business in Virginia and is a former combat medic who served in Afghanistan.



**Martha: What have you been enjoying in your retirement?**

**Connie:** I stay very active with various interests. We are very supportive of UA sports, attending games in person as well as watching them on TV and online. Soccer is my favorite, but we have season tickets to five sports. We are kept busy with our yard and gardens. Over the years we have visited many zoos, including most of the Ohio ones. I enjoy animals; we have two Russian grey cats, Linus and Lucy, who are rescues from the Summit County Humane Society, and who helped me cope during the COVID lockdown.

We go to movies often, are avid readers and love beaches. Give us a book and a beach, and we are in heaven.

**Martha: Besides your work at UA and your support of sports, do you have any other involvement with the university?**

**Connie:** We try to help wherever our schedule allows. For example, we endowed a scholarship which supports two liberal-arts students each term.

**Martha: You and Richard are most generous to support UA students by helping them financially.**

**Thank you, Connie, for your service to UA and for the ways that you continue to support the University in retirement.**



### SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Three students awarded the AUAR Scholarship for the 2022-23 academic year, in the amount of \$2,000 each, divided half fall, half spring:

**Paul Calaway**

Junior

Mechanical Engineering

3.117 cumulative GPA

**Emma Leway**

Senior

Early Childhood Education

3.125 cumulative GPA

**Anita James-Brown**

Junior

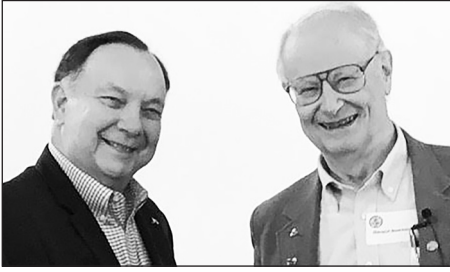
Computer Information Systems/Cybersecurity

3.376 cumulative GPA

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# APRIL LUNCHEON PRESENTER GAVE STRS REVIEW

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**Tom Vukovich and Dr. Gerald Newsom**  
for STRS.

On April 20, the luncheon speaker was Dr. Gerald Newsom, retired Professor of Astronomy at The Ohio State University. His topic was “A Retiree’s Observation of STRS” (State Teachers’ Retirement System).

For the past three years, Dr. Newsom represented Ohio higher education retirees as an observer of the STRS Board. He shared with us what he has learned, how the Board operates, and what issues are facing this system, which provides many UA retirees with pension services. Through his association with OCHER (Ohio Council of Higher Education Retirees), of which AUAR is a member, he is also an active observer as part of the Healthcare and Pension Advocates (HPA)

How does STRS work? Dr. Newsom provided us with an overview of the income and expenses associated with the STRS system. Investment returns generate most of the income, along with contributions by employers and employees. In Ohio, employer and employee contributions are identical. However, nationwide employer contributions to similar pension plans are about twice that of employees.

The vast amount of money that comes in goes to benefits with very little covering operating expenses. The Board operates on the assumption of a 7% return on investments. Of course, that amount is uncertain; and if the pension fund gets too low, Board action is necessary to continue with the “defined benefit” plan structure of the pension fund.

**To keep the system solvent, the Board must consider certain measures such as:**

1. increasing contributions
2. decreasing pension payouts
3. getting higher investment returns (a risky and uncertain path)
4. reducing or stopping Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)

The STRS Board has limited power to change income and expenses due to Ohio Revised Code stipulations, however; and the 14% contribution by both employers and employees is set by the legislature. The Board can change the formula for initial retirement (i.e., age, years of service) and decide on the mix of investments with the help of financial experts. STRS does employ financial experts to provide professional services regarding investment strategies. The main concern is that the fund doesn’t run out of money. STRS Board members act in a fiduciary capacity and hold to strict rules to avoid conflicts of interest.

In recent years and currently, a hot topic among candidates for seats on the STRS Board is COLAs. Some think STRS should grant COLAs every year. Others argue that such action could cripple the entire State Teachers’ Retirement System and is not fair to current employees now paying into the system.

Dr. Newsom suggested that a concept called “intergenerational equity” should be considered. A COLA structure should not reduce funds for active teachers. COLAs have a large financial impact on the pension fund because it affects both active and retired members of the STRS system. Presently, the STRS Board has agreed to a one-time 3% COLA for 2022. The increase will be added to the base benefit on the retirement date anniversary and each month thereafter. Most UA (STRS) retirees will receive their increase in June, July, or December of 2022.

Will STRS remain solvent? Dr. Newsom explained that the STRS Board assumes a rate of return on the investments and the consultants estimate future pension payouts. Currently STRS has \$92.3 billion in assets with liabilities (mostly pension payouts) of \$104.6 billion. The Ohio Revised Code (ORC) sets rules about what STRS can and cannot do, such as giving COLAs that would impair the system and specifying that investments must be diversified in order to keep the system financially healthy.

Including Ohio, thirteen states have pension systems for teachers who do not pay into the U.S. Social Security System. Independent consultants rank Ohio’s STRS investment returns among the best in the country (top 11% over the past 5 years) and with less risk than the median of other funds.

Another issue that currently is hotly discussed is the STRS investment portfolio. Some current STRS Board members have supported major alternative investment strategies. One side says that by law and sound financial practices, the STRS investment staff have and are being good shepherds of the pension fund. Others, however, say the staff is “threatened” by new concepts and that the STRS Board should adopt different investment strategies to increase the return on funds deposited by educators and their employers.

*cont. page 8*



The major issue is risk vs. reward. Such controversies are not new to our state pension plan. Someone or some group is always looking to get a “piece of it”! As members of STRS, you should become aware of the issues and how various decisions will not only affect your retirement but also that of the active educators who are looking forward to enjoying their future retirement as well.

Your AUAR Board of Trustees has consistently taken seriously the issues facing STRS and other pension plans in which UA retirees participate. With the help of concerned and knowledgeable retirees like Dr. Newsom, your retirees association (AUAR) will provide you with straight facts about the health and stability of our pension systems.

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## ROAD TRIP 2022

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The return to the Road Trip for UA retirees and guests was to places close to home in the spring of 2022. AUAR program committee co-chairpersons, Diane & Tom Vukovich, contracted with Barbara Abbott to develop an “Experience Canton Tour” for April 22, 2022.

Barbara, a UA graduate, launched “Canton Food Tours” in 2012. Since then, she and her team have taken thousands of people on tours of Canton restaurants. However, for our retirees’ group, she expanded the itinerary to include a six-hour guided experience of downtown Canton. The route was created to learn about city history and public art and to include visits to the McKinley Monument, the National First Ladies’

Library, McKinley’s historic church, a few art galleries and the Canton Palace Theatre. Lunch was at Canton’s famous Bender’s Tavern. Unlike past “Road Trips,” which included a chartered bus, the group participants formed car-pools to drive the short distance to Canton.

We arrived at the base of the McKinley Monument at 10:45 a.m. and met our local guide, Barbara. She allowed us to drive up behind the Monument and park rather than walk up the huge stairway. Once everyone gathered, Barbara introduced herself and gave us an overview; we proceeded into the historic and beautiful rotunda, where our 25th President, William McKinley, his wife Ida and two young daughters are buried. After exploring the rotunda, we gathered again and drove a short distance to downtown Canton.

The tour consisted of two “loops,” one before and one after lunch at Bender’s. We began with a stop in the lobby of the historic Onesto Hotel lofts. Here we learned the history behind this elegant hotel and how it was successfully turned into trendy loft apartments. From there we continued on a walking tour of interesting points within the Arts District. We visited two of the newest galleries: “Just Imagine,” which features artists with disabilities and the BZTAT Studio. The BZTAT Studio is a gallery with an independent film theater integrated into the gallery space. Featuring artwork by artist, BZTAT, photography by Ameer Lambes, and films presented by the Cut Cinema, the multi-media fine arts experience is a unique concept to learn about and visit.

Along the way, Barbara offered us a “snack sack” to carry us forward as we visited the Palace Theatre. The Theatre was built in 1926. Akron’s Lowes (Civic Theatre) was constructed three years later. Both were designed by the same architect, John Ebersson, and feature a Spanish courtyard theme interior and the star-studded “atmospheric” ceiling. The Akron building is much larger and has a grand entrance, which is lacking in Canton’s Palace Theatre.

Next came a delicious lunch at Bender’s, which was served in a private room with excellent servers attending to all of our needs. Here we met Jon Jacob, the 4th generation restaurant owner and learned about the history and operation of the establishment. Jon’s great grandfather opened the restaurant in 1902. Originally serving German-style food, today they are known for excellent seafood, which is flown in daily from the East Coast. Many of the guests commented on the freshness of their fish entrée, especially the broiled “ala Foley” Boston scrod.



After lunch, we continued our walking tour by visiting the Birth of the National Football League and heard the story of how and why the NFL got started in Canton. Along the way, we walked through Centennial Plaza, which was completed in 2021. It is used much like Lock 3 in Akron. It has a grassy amphitheater and two stages where a variety of events are held. The plaza features a “salute” to all who played football in the NFL over the league’s first 100 years. The names of over 25,000 players are listed on two semi-transparent glass panels. Also, of interest and in keeping with the deep connection to pro-football is “The Eleven Project.” The “Eleven” is a \$2.2 million project which celebrates the greatest

moments in professional football history with a “walkable” series of 11 pieces of world-class art throughout downtown Canton. Barbara pointed out several of these impressive art objects and murals as we made our way from place to place.

We also toured McKinley’s historic church, today known as Crossroads Methodist. The architecture is amazing outside, and we viewed the seat where President and Ida McKinley sat during services.

From the church, we walked a few more blocks and arrived at the education center of the First Ladies’ National Historic Site for our guided tour. Here we enjoyed an overview of the site and learned how Mary Regula, wife of Congressman Ralph Regula, was instrumental in establishing the historic memorial. Established in 2000 to commemorate all the first ladies’ contributions to the nation, the site is operated by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The site also includes the Saxton-McKinley House. This is the only residence remaining in his hometown of Canton which has direct historic ties to President William McKinley. It was the family home of McKinley’s wife, Ida. He and Ida lived in the house between 1878 and 1891 during the period he served in the U.S. House of Representatives. The public rooms of the house have been restored, complete with ornate historic wallpaper and period furniture.

If you haven’t visited the McKinley Monument, the First Ladies’ Library and the Saxton House, or eaten at Bender’s, you are missing out on some enjoyable and interesting places just a few miles from Akron. Yes, the pro-football connection is very prevalent, but there is much more to see and do in Canton. If you are interested in a food tour, contact Barbara Abbott at [CantonFoodTours.com](http://CantonFoodTours.com) or (330.495.0929).

We look forward to having you join us on the 2023 AUAR Road Trip! Many new adventures await us in areas that are only a short drive from our homes.



**Dia Staniszewski,  
Cynthia Capers,  
Diane Vukovich**

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## SENATE REPORT

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**During the Spring Semester 2022, the activities of the Faculty Senate included the following:**

- Approved a motion from the Academic Policies Committee to approve the use of DSST (Dantes Subject Standardized Test) examinations for alternative credit at the undergraduate level.
- Approved the proposals brought forward by the Curriculum Review Committee and returned proposal 244304BS: Cyber Forensics to CRC for additional review.
- Approved a resolution from the Academic Policies Committee that modifies University Rule 3359-60-02 to include a test optional policy for admission to the university.
- Approved a resolution from the Academic Policies Committee that modifies University Rule 3350-20-05.3 to include a textbook auto-adoption policy.
- Approved the 244304BS: Cyber Forensics program proposal brought by the Curriculum Review Committee.
- Approved a motion brought by Senator Saliga that all programs with specialized, external accreditation be removed from the program review cycle.
- Approved a motion brought by the Executive Committee to endorse the Faculty Congress of Ohio resolution in response to Ohio House Bill 327 ( a bill on legislative efforts to restrict education about what are termed “divisive concepts” such as racism and American History).
- Approved a motion brought by the Computing and Communications Technologies Committee to adopt the Information Security Awareness Training Policy.
- Approved the list of graduates for Spring 2022.
- Approved a motion from the Academic Policies Committee regarding portfolio based prior learning assessment.
- Approved a request from the Accessibility Committee asking faculty to put accessibility statement in their syllabi.
- Approved the recommendation of the criteria to be used in the evaluation of faculty proposals for academic investment by the ad hoc Academic Investment Committee.

*For more details, please visit faculty senate web page at [uakron.edu](http://uakron.edu)*

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# LOBSTER & SUDS RETURNS IN 2022

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**The venue**

After a two-year hiatus, the end-of-the-year Lobster & Suds Party was held at Zwisler Hall on May 20, 2022. Attendees were happy to return to this westside location off Mull Avenue.

Among the attendees were newcomers Al and Mary Jo MacCracken, Janice Parish, and Sally Anderson. It was good to see Bob Mravetz, who is still recovering from a tragic automobile accident last fall.

The large Maine lobsters were delivered by Euclid Fish of Mentor, Ohio. Those who did not want lobster enjoyed either chicken marsala or vegetable lasagna supplied by "The Venue," located off the circle in Tallmadge. Thank you to everyone who contributed all the delicious covered dishes, salads, and desserts.

Bob Fritz and Bud Marston cooked the lobsters "on site." Martha Vye took care of checking people in, and Dick Steiner along with Diane and Tom Vukovich handled the set-up and clean-up.

The COVID situation contributed to several cancellations. Costs for the rental as well as for the lobsters increased since 2019. We hope many more AUAR members will be able to join us on May 19, 2023.



**Boiling lobster is hard work**

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## CYNTHIA FLYNN CAPERS

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**Cynthia Flynn Capers**, PhD, RN (2011 UA Retiree) was appointed as an Honorary Chair of the Akron Bicentennial Commission by Akron Mayor Daniel Horrigan. In this role she will serve on the mayoral advisory board to oversee the planning and programming surrounding Akron's Bicentennial celebration that formally begins December 2024 and will last through December 2025. Dr. Capers, a community activist and Emeritus Dean and Professor at the University of Akron, College of Nursing has claimed Akron, Ohio as home for the past 25 years. During this time, she has met and collaborated with several community leaders, served on numerous boards and committees, and enjoyed many professional and personal benefits. Now, during retirement, she is deeply honored to serve the community as an Honorary Chair of the Akron Bicentennial Commission.

*For more details about Akron Bicentennial visit the website of the Mayor's Office at: <https://www.akronohio.gov/cms/site/f5ae455335868fb3/index.html>*





## FALL 2022 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

- Sept. 21** Dean Mitchell McKinney,  
Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences  
*Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences:  
A Foundation for Success*
- Oct. 19** Mayor Dan Horrigan, City of Akron  
*Growing Akron for an Age-Friendly Future*
- Nov. 3** Soup and Chili Supper  
Goodyear Metro Park—West Room  
*A change: Everyone pays \$5.*
- Nov. 16** Christine Curry, Executive Director, OPEN M  
*OPEN M as a Community Leader:  
Breaking the Cycle of Poverty one Person and  
one Family at a Time*
- Dec. 21** Holiday Program TBA



**Seated:** Connie Heldenfels, Mary Schadle, Jo Ann Collier, Bob Gandee  
**Standing:** John Heminger, Ali Hajjafar, Laura Moss Spittler, Richard Steiner,  
Mary Verstraete, Martha Vye Tom Nichols, Rita Klein, Mel Vye, Harvey Sterns

### BOARD MEETINGS 2022-23

Sept. 22 • Oct 27 • Dec 1,  
Jan 26 • Feb 23 • Mar 23 • Apr 27 • May 25 • Jun 22

#### Our Motto

People say interns and new hires are the promise of the future.  
Let's not forget that retirees are promises kept.

### AUAR Membership, Human Resources

The University of Akron • Buchtel Commons, Akron, OH 44325

If you haven't renewed your AUAR membership for the **2022-2023** year, it is time to do so. Don't forget our Scholarship fund where we provide some funding for a worthy student. Please complete the items listed below, and mail your check or checks to the address below.

If you have an e-mail address, please submit it.

Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are **\$12.00**; make checks payable to "AUAR"

Scholarship Donation \_\_\_\_\_; make checks payable to the U of A Foundation

The AUAR Newsletter is a biannual publication of the Association of The University of Akron Retirees (AUAR), c/o Talent Development & Human Relations Department, The University of Akron, Akron, OH 44325-4730.

AUAR members receive our newsletter automatically. Due to COVID-19 concerns, the Board meets on the 4th Thursday in person or on Zoom according to personal preferences.

If you have questions about the organization or to keep abreast of events and issues pertinent to all UA retirees, visit our website at [www.uakron.edu/auar](http://www.uakron.edu/auar). The newsletter editor, Martha Vye, can be reached at [vye@uakron.edu](mailto:vye@uakron.edu) or 330-644-7490.

If you are interested in entertainment within the Akron area, check into our web site and view the events listed under the Special Events Menu. Just Log on to [www.uakron.edu/auar](http://www.uakron.edu/auar) and click on the Menu "Special Events" or type [www.uakron.edu/auar/special-events.dot](http://www.uakron.edu/auar/special-events.dot)

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Akron, OH 44325-4730  
330-972-7096

