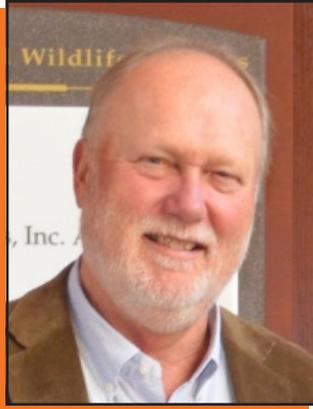


AURA news

SPRING 2023



MESSAGE *from the* PRESIDENT

Larry Teeter

Is Spring finally here? I guess so, because we are currently planning the Spring Luncheon and Business Meeting. Time flies when you

are retired!

AURA has been busy since our last newsletter, hosting the Fall Dinner with Bruce Pearl as our guest speaker, contributing to AERA's statewide effort to acknowledge volunteerism on the part of its members, contributing to food drive efforts, hosting a tour of the Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center, getting to know our neighbors at AUM and learning about efforts to encourage the legislature to provide future COLAs and bonuses to our members.

In this newsletter you will find articles relating to several of these activities. Nancy Bernard, recently elected District 10 Director, reports on AERA's efforts to monitor current legislative activities and how we can be more proactive regarding the funding of the Education Retirees Trust Fund. Dan LaRoque reports on our members' visit to GPAC in January, and there is

also a short review of our Fall Dinner.

A big part of my message in the last newsletter was about growing our membership. If we hope to be proactive and encourage the legislature to support the interests of education retirees, our voices need to be heard. More members are key to realizing that goal. Since August 1 of last year we have added fifteen members to our ranks. That's impressive given the fall-off we had during Covid, but it's not enough. Our numbers only represent a small fraction of the current retirees from Auburn and AUM. Talk to your retired friends and encourage them to join! At only \$25, AURA membership is still a bargain, yet it allows us to keep engaged with AERA on our fellow retirees' behalf while providing social opportunities that are interesting and fun.

Finally, the AURA board is currently assembling a slate of new Board members to be voted on before the Spring Luncheon. The voting this year will be done by email, so be sure to check your inbox for an introduction to the candidates and a ballot requesting your vote around mid-April.

2022-2023 AURA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Larry Teeter – President (2023)

Art Chappelka – Vice-President (2024)

Nancy Bernard – Past-President (2023)

Anne Adrian – Treasurer (2023)

Furman Smith – Secretary & Membership Chair (2024)

Joe Albree (2023)

Jim Killian (2024)

Marie Kraska-Miller (2024)

Leanne Lamke (2024)

Deborah Owens (2024)

Paul Hollis (2025)

Dan LaRoque (2025)

David Moncus (2025)

AERA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by Nancy Bernard, Immediate Past President
District 10 Director Elect

An AERA Advocacy Training meeting was held on February 23rd in Montgomery in preparation for the 2023 legislative session that began on March 7th. AERA board members Joe Albee and Nancy Bernard attended the meeting and throughout the morning session heard from Jill Jackson, Executive Director of AERA and others involved in the leadership of the association. The key legislative objective for AERA members and all education retirees is the funding of the Education Retirees Trust Fund that was established by the legislature in 2021. Many people worked tirelessly to get this fund established in order to provide a resource for future incentives for retirees such as COLA raises and bonuses. Without this funding, retirees can only hope for small incentives every four years at best. AERA is calling on all retirees to lobby their state representatives to allot a portion of the extra billions of dollars in the state budget available to fund the ERTF. Please contact your legislators and encourage them to allocate money to this fund and ask them to please fund the Education Retirees Trust Fund!

You can find your senators and representatives at the following website: <https://alison.legislature.state.al.us/> Note that Jay Hovey, Senator for Lee County is on the State Finance and Taxation Committee, and can be reached at

Jay.hovey@alsenate.gov, 334-261-0865 and Debbie Wood, House Representative for Lee County, is on the House Ways and Means Education Committee and can be reached at Debbie.wood@alhouse.gov, 334-261-0532. In your communication you should first introduce yourself, then emphasize that pensions have not kept up with inflation over the years and that 35% of education retirees live at or below the poverty level and strongly encourage them to fund the ERTF.

You may be interested and shocked to know that 35% of all TSA retirees qualify for poverty level with a pension of \$14,580 per year or less. This is 35,000 retirees living at or below the poverty level. Regular COLAs and bonuses are essential for these individuals and will not be possible on a regular basis in the future without the funding for the ERTF. PLEASE do your part to and contact our senators and representatives as they move through the 2023 legislative session. We were told that email is the most effective method of communicating with these individuals so let's get going and flood their in boxes with messages!



AURA VISITS AUM

For years AURA leadership has stressed the need to develop closer ties to our members from AUM. On February 16th we held AURA's first Board of Directors meeting on the AUM campus. I want to thank



Dr. Carl Stockton, Chancellor of AUM and Dr. Jean Leuner, Dean of the College of Nursing and Human Sciences for agreeing to host our group and providing all the materials (and snacks!) we needed for a productive meeting. I especially want to thank Dr. Stockton for generously sharing time with us to bring us up-to-date regarding campus accomplishments and the current vision and growth plans for AUM. As a result of this positive experience, AURA plans to schedule at least one board meeting per year at AUM, most likely in February.

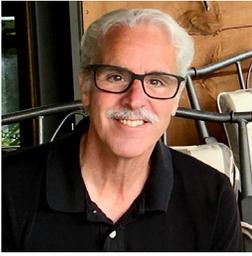
FALL DINNER

AURA hosted its annual fall dinner on November 1. About 120 members and guests attended the event held at the Auburn University Alumni Association building on Auburn's campus. AERA guest attendees included John Paul Jones (current President) and Debbie Lane (District 10 Director). Mr. Jones briefly outlined two of AERA's outreach programs that included the recognition of the time spent by education retirees volunteering in their home communities and an organized effort to donate food items and cash for food to the regional food banks in the state. The need is great.

Our delightful guest speaker for the evening was Bruce Pearl, Head Coach of the Auburn men's basketball team. He talked about NIL (Name, Image and Likeness) initiatives, the team's trip to Israel, and the team's prospects for the season. A great time was had by all!



GPAC TOUR - DAN LAROQUE



The Auburn University Retiree Association hosted a backstage tour of the Jay & Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University on January 25, 2023. 40 AURA members and guests participated in the event that offered an overview of the facility as well as a backstage tour of the scenic and costume support spaces, dressing rooms, orchestra pit, and staff support areas of the theatre.

Participants also enjoyed standing onstage of the Woltoz theatre where they were introduced to the process of transforming the mainstage space from a Broadway performance venue to a state-of-the-art music performance space; and treated to a demonstration of lighting and sound systems by tour guides Abraham Sheckels and Mindy Street. The tour culminated with an overview of plans for the newly dedicated Bill and Carol Hamm Amphitheatre conducted by GPAC Executive Director Christopher Heacox.

A box lunch was provided by AURA at the conclusion of the tour where members interacted with GPAC Development Staff members to learn about sponsoring opportunities and future events at the Gogue. Our heartfelt thanks to Executive Director Heacox, and our hosts Cherwanda Jones, Bram Sheckels, and Mindy Street and staff for a fascinating behind the scenes look at this extraordinary venue.



Mark Your Calendar

AUBURN UNIVERSITY RETIREE ASSOCIATION

28TH ANNUAL MEETING

*Welcome this year's Wilford S. Bailey Award Winner -
Jill E. Jackson, Executive Director,
Alabama Education Retirees Association*

**FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2023
SAUGAHATCHEE COUNTRY CLUB**

(3800 BENT CREEK RD., OPELIKA, AL 36804)

**BEGIN GATHERING AT 11:30 AM WITH BUFFET STARTING AT NOON
COST IS \$25.00 PER PERSON (MEMBERS & THEIR GUESTS)**

Please direct questions to auretireassoc@gmail.com

Please send your check (\$25/person) to:

**AURA
PO BOX 1436
AUBURN, AL 36831-1436**

**TO PROVIDE SAUGAHATCHEE REQUIRED LEAD TIME FOR PLANNING
OUR EVENT, THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS MAY 10TH.**



P.O. Box 1436
Auburn, Alabama 36831-1436

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Opelika, AL
PERMIT NO. 505

AU-AUM Retiree AURA Membership Form

Name: _____ AU _____ AUM _____

Check One: Dr. Mrs. Ms. Mr. Other (*please list*): _____

Spouse's Name (*if applicable*): _____

Check One: Dr. Mrs. Ms. Mr. Other (*please list*): _____

Retirement Date (month/year): _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Spouse E-mail: _____

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Single Retiree.....\$25.00 | Surviving Spouse.....\$10.00 |
| Retiree & Spouse.....\$25.00 | Sponsor (an individual or an entity).....\$25.00 |
| Retiree & Retiree Spouse.....\$25.00 | Gift Contribution \$ _____ |

Please direct questions to auretireeassoc@gmail.com.

Please make checks payable to **AURA** and mail to:

AURA
P.O. Box 1436
Auburn, AL 36831-1436