



▶ CREATING A RETIREE ASSOCIATION – HOW WE GOT STARTED 1



▶ SSURA CONTRIBUTES TO SSU'S COLLECTION FOR OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2



▶ JOINING WITH OHIO COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION RETIREE ASSOCIATION 2

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SSURA news

Working for the wellbeing of SSU retirees by providing and promoting social, recreational, and lifelong learning activities.

"Maybe third time really is a charm," retiree association organizer Marcia Tackett said at the initial meeting of retirees in July 2008.

Creating a retiree association – how we got started



Both John Shupert and Dick Howard had made attempts at getting a retiree association started for SSU, but to no avail. Perhaps it simply took time – time for more employees to retire maybe – or maybe it really was third time's a charm. Beginning in March 2008, a small group of retirees banded together to begin the arduous task of gathering names, dates, and contact information on some 90+ fellow retirees. Initially, a survey was mailed out to about 92 folks and more than 60 responded. With that overwhelming response, work began on making the group official. The first meeting was held July 7, 2008, in the Micklethwaite Banquet Hall. SSU President Dr. Rita Rice Morris provided refreshments for the meeting that was attended by 19 retirees.

Committees were established, including the

Constitution & Bylaws, Activities, Membership, and Newsletter/Web Page. Jim Flavin agreed to head the Constitution & Bylaws committee and promised to have a draft ready for review at the next meeting scheduled for August 28, 2008.

At the August 28th meeting the bylaws were approved and a slate of officers was set and unanimously approved. The Executive Board was thus established and given authority to work on behalf of the retiree organization to help identify its place in the structure of Shawnee State University. That location in the structure of the University was finally identified by Dr. Morris in March 2009. The SSURA is now officially recognized and organized within the Development Foundation – Alumni Affairs Office.



Organizing committee: (1 to r) Kathleen Simon, Marcia Tackett, Judy Nolfi (not pictured: Shannon Kiser) photo by Gary Gemmer



2008-09 Officers: (sitting) President Kathleen Simon; (standing, 1 to right) Marcia Tackett, Communications Coordinator; Stephen Midkiff, Vice President; Judy Nolfi, Treasurer; (not pictured: Mary Tomlin, Secretary) photo by Gary Gemmer

Ramblin' Retirees

Each month we'll take a look at how some of our retirees are enjoying life after work at SSU. In this edition we follow Gary Gemmer on a wilderness adventure in Canada.

When I retired from SSU in June of 2005, I decided that I should plan a special trip to celebrate the end of my career. While I was searching the internet, Alex Hall's Canoe Arctic website caught my attention. Alex, a wildlife biologist based in Fort Smith, guides fly-in canoe trips into the barren lands of the North West Territories in Canada. The words "*paddle the most remote rivers left in the world, deep in the heart of North America's last great wilderness. Teeming wildlife including muskoxen, white wolves (our specialty), moose, grizzlies and caribou herds that stretch to the horizons*" certainly caught my attention. So I was soon on the phone to Alex who had one position left for the August 20-September 1 paddle. I would have my celebration adventure in North America's last great wilderness.



Gary Gemmer (in red at the back of the canoe)



The barren lands of N.W.T. encompass a vast area above the tree line dotted with lakes that are connected by rivers. While there are trees in sheltered areas, most of the land consists of eskers covered by low-growing and colorful plants. It was hard to imagine that animals or people could survive in this area. While we did not see wolves, caribou, grizzlies, or people, we did see their signs (caribou antlers, bear tracks, wolf dens, and the remains of trapper cabins). We saw muskoxen on several occasions and the tundra furnishes habitat for a great variety of birds and fish.

The trip was physically demanding with long daily paddles and several long portages across which all of our gear and canoes had to be carried. We felt privileged to visit this last great wilderness and there was a rewarding sense of accomplishment as we neared the rendezvous with the planes. Although we had mixed feelings that the adventure was coming to an end, we were happy to see the planes that would carry us back to civilization. The first thing the pilot told us was that New Orleans had been under water for four days.



For more information about the barren lands, Alex Hall has written a book, *Discovering Eden: A Lifetime of Paddling the Arctic Rivers*.



Alex Hall





SSURA contributes to SSU's collection for Operation Christmas Child

The first activity SSURA participated in was joining the SSU students, faculty & staff collecting toys, candy, and hygiene and school supplies for the Samaritan's Purse annual Operation Christmas Child shoebox drive. While this was SSURA's first time participating in this activity, it has been a part of Christmas giving at SSU for several years.

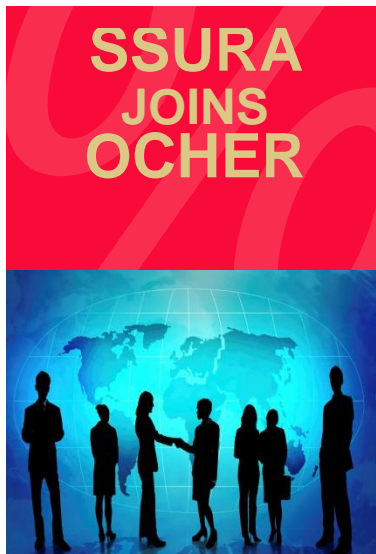
In our initial year of participation we are proud to report that we collected eleven shoeboxes for needy children. The boxes were stuffed, wrapped, and collected in the VRCFA 2nd floor conference room on Wednesday, December 19, 2008. Members participating included Shirley Crothers-Marley, Judy Nolfi, Cathy Chaffin, Steve & Tess Midkiff, Kathleen Simon, and Marcia Tackett. This activity

was suggested by SSURA President Kathleen Simon who was looking for a holiday activity for member participation. With little more than a week of advance notification, she was happy with the contribution SSURA was able to make.

Refreshments donated by Judy Nolfi & Kathleen Simon were enjoyed by the members who joined together to prepare the shoeboxes.

It feels good to come together with friends and know that you're also doing something good for needy children.

KATHLEEN SIMON



On Tuesday, March 17, 2009, SSURA President Dr. Kathleen Simon and Communications Coordinator Marcia Tackett attended a meeting of the Ohio Council for Higher Education Retirees at the STRS Offices in Columbus. A report will be given at the next membership meeting to be held Tuesday, April 21, at 6:00pm in ALH239..

SSURA Committees 2008-09

Constitution & Bylaws

Jim Flavin, Chair
Mary Tomlin

Activities

Cathy Chaffin, chair
Betty Forbes
Jackie Evans
Shirley Crothers-Marley

Membership

Judy Nolfi, Chair
Joyce Kiser
Marsha Walker

Newsletter/Web Page

Marcia Tackett, Chair
Robert Forrey
Gary Gemmer

Gone, but not forgotten

By the time this organization began taking shape, several of our colleagues who had retired had also passed on. John Shupert, who was instrumental in the formation of SSURA, died shortly after the August 2008 meeting. Let us take a moment here to remember those who are gone, but not forgotten.



Betty Cooper



Bob Decker



Louise Elliott



Helen Fagan



Ray Flack



Betty Hodgden



Harold Jones



Eleanor Marsh



John Shupert



Frank Taylor



Jerry Walke



Betty Waller



Paul Winn



Carl Wolfe