

The Old Apple Tree



*East Ohio Conference Retirees Association
Winter 2019*

Message from Betsy Stewart, Benefits Manager for the East Ohio Conference

As I consider the Benefits Office workload for the New Year, I'm certain, I am not alone in looking forward to spring. The old year's load will be tucked away soon and the outcome of February's Special Session of General Conference will be known. Most of the conversations I have had over the last year with active and retired clergy typically include a question of 'what happens to my pension after the Special Session'. My answer is always the same 'nothing, all is good'.

For retirees and surviving spouses, your pension income continues to be secured by the denomination's general agency, Wespeth Benefits and Investments and the East Ohio Conference (EOC). The conference remains in a 'funded' status for a participant's pension annuity; this includes Pre82, Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) and the defined benefits of the Clergy Retirement Security Plan (CRSP).

For active clergy, applicable pension plan(s) continue as intended and are earned by years of service. It is by action of General Conference 2020, that the pension plan of *active* clergy is expected to change. Most likely that change would be implemented in 2022 or 2023. What that will look like is unknown, we can speculate... but truly my crystal ball is foggy that far out...

What I do know with certainty is that retiree health care coverage must change. The Board of Benefits (BOB), formerly the Board of Pensions, has highlighted over the years the conference's retiree health care liability of \$54 million. The denomination is requiring that conferences fund their retiree health care liability. For East Ohio, that is very concerning; therefore, we must reduce that liability. This can be done primarily by changing the retiree premium-sharing policy for retirees.

Currently, most Post 65 retirees pay the minimum premium amount of \$76.80 per month, which is 30% of the conference Post 65 base rate of \$256. Currently, Board of Benefits hopes to maintain the current 2019 premiums for 2020 but expect to change the United Health Care (UHC) plan design; increasing the out-of-pocket for participants. Presently, UHC plan design for medical coverage has a \$200 deduction and \$500 co-insurance (\$700 total out-of-pocket for medical). This medical plan design has not changed since 2002. The Board of Benefits will also carefully consider changes for prescriptions drugs as they are the primary driver of health care costs. Other changes are expected with time, and I will do my best to communicate changes as determined and approved by Annual Conference.

Presently, you all continue in my thoughts and prayers, and may your lives be blessed with good health – take care!

Connections

We tell each other our hobbies, new ventures, and various ways of serving Christ within and beyond “appointment” ministries. We may be retired, but we are still alive in Christ and active in the church and in the world. We also ask for prayer in the challenges of elder years.

Mahoning Valley Cluster

By Ken Kubichek



Mahoning Valley Retiree Picnic at Bucey Home, August 2018.

From L to R: Jean & Ken Kubichek, Jean & Tom McFarren, Donna & Karl Bucey, Jeanie & Chuck Ready

Jean & Ken Kubichek visited their son Mark & family in Colorado during October. While there, Ken was able to have a meal with **Mike Somerville**, retired clergy of our conference. **Mike & Linda** are active in the Wilson U.M.C. of Colorado Springs. This fall Linda was leading a 16-week class at the church on healing care. Mike plans to return to Bryansk, Russia on a mission trip next January; this will be his 27th year of going to Russia. He plans to go with people from the Wilson Church on mission trips to Haiti in the spring and then to Costa Rica in June. It has been

a dream of Mike's that when he retired, he would be able to do more mission trips and God is answering that prayer. Their daughter Emily teaches kindergarten and son Nathan works at the Air Force Academy, both living in the Colorado Springs area. Alex, their son adopted from Russia at age 15, has graduated from Toledo University and lives in Ohio.

Gary Rinker, retired local pastor, died on Oct. 23. His memorial service was held on Nov. 10 at Upper Room Fellowship Church in Columbiana.

At our September gathering, **Ken Kubichek** shared quotes from C.S. Lewis' books Mere Christianity and Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer. (He had been inspired by Jerry Root who talked at Lakeside in August about C.S. Lewis.) To quote from Lewis' book on prayer: "We must lay before God what is in us, not what ought to be in us. The prayer preceding all prayers is 'May it be the real I who speaks. May it be the real Thou that I speak to.'"

At our gathering in late October, we all shared about saints that we knew personally. At our November gathering, **Karl Bucey** shared some things about how Thanksgiving is celebrated around

the world, seeing that most cultures have some kind of thanksgiving or harvest celebration. The most interesting one he attended was in Hawaii where he was invited to have a meal in the fall over the family grave to celebrate their ancestors.

Western Reserve Cluster

By Fred Bell

Recent attendees at our break-fast at Mary Yoder's in Middlefield were **George & Joan Knotts**, **Bill Wolfgang**, who gave the prayer to begin our session, **Fred & Jane Bell**, and **John & Cherrie Wolfe** accompanied by their granddaughter, Marley. No one wrote news, but I can tell you that everyone one in our group that has been attending are having health problems and we do not wish to recite all that.

Copeland Oaks

By Sandy & John McLachlan

On September 5th **Janet Weiland**, who for many, many years chaired the Thursday morning Bible study here at Copeland,

made her great transition to the life eternal. She is missed!

On December 10 we lost two long-time residents of Copeland Oaks, **Marie Bibbee** and **Doris Mauck**. Ken and Marie Bibbee came in 1998. Don and Doris Mauck came in 2000. Both built homes here, both have been very active in the life of this community. They leave a big hole.

Polly Waggamon has moved from her villa to assisted living, Apt. 8204.

Jean Smith had a knee replacement on December 3rd.

Beth McGuire is enjoying her new retirement status and a chance to do things she didn't have time to do before, like auditing the class, Intro to Gender Studies, at the University of Mount Union and singing in the Mount Union Chorale.

Les Peine, who was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame in 2010, will be a part of the MAPS museum's upcoming special display on military chaplains. Les is also beginning a new ministry at the SAM (Serving Area Military) center in Massillon where he will be facilitating a weekly Bible study and support group.

Mary Lu Warstler writes once again the year is quickly coming to an end. If we stop long enough to think about it, it is fitting that we have so many holidays to celebrate as we close out one year and burst into another. We celebrate endings and beginnings; new milestones of life, endings of weeks of practice for special events. **Rodney & I** have celebrated all our children,

many grandchildren, and great-grandchildren – from Akron, to North Carolina, to Mississippi – all gathering at our home for two days of Thanksgiving celebrations. Christmas will find the children all scattered from Ohio to Mississippi to New Mexico, but we will be joined in heart as we sing “Silent Night” and other carols of Christmas Eve. As always – even in a world of turmoil, fear, and uncertainty – we begin the New Year with resolutions, good intentions, and high hopes for a world of peace and goodwill. “May God Bless us everyone.”

Mid-Ohio Cluster

By Joe Platt

Because of a “glitch” in Joe Platt's computer the Old Apple Tree articles for the Mid-Ohio retirees did not get published in the last edition of the news-letter. Therefore, this edition will include both the missing articles and those that are current.

A big “SHOUT OUT” to **Carl & Jeannie Beighley** who celebrated their first wedding anniversary on May 16th. According to both of them it has been one wonderful year of getting to know each other and adjust the “country girl” with the “city boy.” In June the two traveled to New Haven, Conn., to enjoy playing in the sand on the beach of the Atlantic Ocean. They also had the opportunity to enjoy Carl's 4 grandchildren and his son's new house which is located on the ocean. They also stopped in Bath, New York, to see Jeannie's sister who provided an excellent meal as they had to stay overnight

in the only motel in town. They also celebrated Carl's 89th birthday at the manor House in Wedgewood Estates. Honored guests were Dave and Beth Mansperger, Terry and Gloria Loughman and Gere and Blake Wagner. Carl's daughter came from Michigan and took both Jeannie and Carl to Youngstown to visit relatives and on to Lancaster to celebrate Carl's birthday with son and wife. Interestingly, Jeannie says that Christmas is finally over for them as the children have all gone home. She says it was wonderful to see the children, especially the grand baby, who entertained them by the hour, but it is time for her and Carl to relax and get back to their lives; watch TV or just sleep in for a few days. Jeannie has been resting after major surgery and is slowly getting back into life. Her job during the holidays was to relax and get back on her feet. Jeannie and Carl discover-ed that Christmas is no time to have major surgery but in her case there was no choice. Everyday there is improvement in her health.

Luverne Hinkle spent some time this summer with her son and his wife who live in Mass. According to Luverne they traveled to Michigan to spend a few days with her daughter and husband. She also continues to enjoy her new home at Wedgewood Estates where she has made many wonderful friends. Luverne is looking for-ward to her special trip to New Zealand in the near future to visit her son but she is not looking forward to the 24 hour plane ride.

Bill McCartney is happy to report that his wife, **Judy**, is doing well in the Memory Care Unit of the

retirement community where they have lived for the past 11 years. Bill says that Judy still recognizes him, calls him by name and still has a good sense of humor. Bill also continues to find opportunities to travel. Last January he went with relatives to Yellowstone National Park. He reports that it is wonderful in the winter. Traveling alone, Bill also took a "bucket list" trip to Europe last September to visit friends in Germany and Sweden and relatives in Northern Ireland. Bill's host in Germany, Horstman Stauber, met Bill in 1952 at Allegheny College when Bill was a senior. Horstman was a leading business man in Germany and served many years as CEO of the Frankfurt airport. Bill's host in Sweden, Stefan Berg, was an exchange student who lived in their home in the 70's. Stefan is a leading expert in pediatric immunology and rheumatology being consulted by doctors in Europe and North America. Bill's host in Northern Ireland is involved in the Irish Methodist Church. While there Bill visited the family homestead where his grandfather was born and he met with 10 different cousins. Two special attractions thrilled Bill: in Gothenberg, Sweden, he toured an 18th century replica of a trading ship that went back and forth to China and in Belfast he toured a remarkable Titanic exhibit that portrays everything from planning to construction, sinking and investigation of the sinking. He came back to Penn Hills, Pennsylvania, which is near Pittsburgh, to speak at a church where he was the founding Pastor 60 years ago.

Allen & Beverly Rose have gotten settled in their new garden home at

Wedgewood in Mansfield. They sold their home of 22 years in Mansfield and relived many years of their lives while packing and unpacking all the moving boxes. They are looking forward to this new chapter in their lives. As of this writing they have finally gotten "adjusted" to their new home. All in all it has been a busy time with all the packing and unpacking along with some health problems for Allen. The one big highlight was their annual Mallarncce farm reunion at Beverly's home farm with 78 family members enjoying the weekend together.

Blake & Gere Wagner returned from Florida and spent the summer at their home in "Beautiful Ohio". Their son, Blake Jr., who lost his wife 8 years ago, was married last December 30th. His son, Blake Jr., graduated from the University of Nevada and is now a nurse practitioner. Brandon, his brother, graduated from Ashland University, May 5th, with a nursing degree. They did sell their home of 25 years and purchased a garden home in Wedgewood estates in Mansfield where Blake will be supervising the behavior of Carl Beighley and assisting Jeannie with this awesome task. This will lift the supervising burden from the shoulders of Luverne Hinkle, and Al and Beverly Rose who also live in Wedgewood Estates together with a dozen other friends. Next door to them are the Fishers, parents of Cindy and Mark Freer, missionaries to Indonesia for many years. Blake and Gere plan to leave for Florida after the first of the year.

Beth & David Mansperger attended their grand nephew's

wedding in Canton, Georgia in May. According to Beth and David, it was a beautiful occasion and joy abounded, but the icing on the cake, so to speak, was traveling from Ohio with David's brother, Clare and Claudia, and sister, Marilyn and Bob Sacks. The six of them visited various landmarks along the way down south and back: Biltmore, Gibb's Gardens and Tybee Island light house. According to David, this was the first time in more than 57 years that the three siblings were together for more than three consecutive meals. This time they were able to eat together with spouses, for 24 meals over 8 days. This was the 50th anniversary for Marilyn and Bob and Clare and Claudia. The latter couple's marriage was solemnized by David in 1968 at Orange, New Jersey.

Joe & Mary Platt continue to be busy serving churches. Mary resumed her former position as Administrative assistant at Mt. Zion UMC. You may recall she left that position in 2017, but was asked to return when the new secretary left to serve another church closer to home. Mary says she is happy to be back doing what she enjoys. Joe is still serving as interim Pastor at St. John's UCC in Bucyrus. He jokingly says they hired him for 3 months but forgot to tell which 3 months they had in mind. They took a 30 day driving trip out west to see the "sights" and to visit family and friends. According to them it was wonderful. They did not get to visit the Grand Canyon as planned due to fires that shut down the north entrance and the air at the south entrance was to smoky. Nor did they get to visit Mary's sister in Los Alamos, NM, as her

husband was flown to the Cleveland Clinic with heart problems. They did spend three wonderful days in Salt Lake City and took in all the sights and six days with son, Terry, and his wife, Courtney, outside of Seattle.

Jim Van Meter finished as Interim Pastor for Mt. Zion UMC. He was there for 6 months. In the meantime he sold his home and is now sharing a home with his daughter, Susan. This past summer he went with a group from Mt. Gilead and the surrounding area to Midwest Mission Distribution Center in Chatham, Illinois. Jim also drove out to Centerville, Maryland to visit his daughter-in-law who has been caring for his two great grandsons, 4 and 2 years old. Jim asks that we pray for grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren. He then drove down the east coast staying ahead of hurricane Florence by a day or so. After a day in St. Augustine Florida he visited his longtime friends in Titusville, and then drove across Florida to Naples to visit his grandson before driving the 1,000 mile trip back home.

Phyllis Brown is trying to make the hard decision to leave Mansfield, sell her home and move to southern Ohio or north to live with her daughter and son-in-law who pastors in South Euclid at Garfield UMC second campus. The decision is still pending.

Gloria & Terry Loughman had a wonderful summer trip with their family in Holland, Michigan. The grandsons loved running up and down sand dunes and playing in the parks on the beach. They visited Dearborn and got to see the

Ford Museum and other places. They say that family time is so precious, thanks be to God.

Tom & Kitty Snyder were guests of the Manspergers at our December meeting. Tom is still teaching a course of study at MTSO. Both are involved in supporting (not playing in) the Ashland symphony orchestra. They also are the loving grandparents of Thomas (13), Zoe (10), Liam (3) and Henri (8 months).

Three Rivers Cluster By Martha Stuller

The Three Rivers retirees group met for lunch in October at the Gay Street UMC in Mt. Vernon. **Bill & Ginny Norman** from New Mexico was able to join us. They have been living in Los Alamos County since October 2013. They are glad to be close to their son Ben, wife Deb, and especially their granddaughter Grace. They miss relatives, co-workers and the parishes they served in Ohio. Of interest, they live about 25 miles from the Mc Curdy (charter) School in Espanyola. Bill occasionally does pulpit supply at Santa Cruz UMC, across the road from McCurdy. They enjoy being active in the White Rock UMC which has two teams who serve lunch at a soup kitchen in Espanyola. They are feeling much better now, after recoveries from shingles (Bill) and a hiking fall in August (Ginny).

Also in October **Bill McCartney** told us about his "bucket list" trip to Europe this past September.

You can read details of Bill's trip in the Mid-Ohio sharing section of this newsletter.

Our group enjoyed lunch in November at Watts Restaurant in Utica with our largest attendance of the year. **Paul & Dolores Gerycz** were able to attend following Paul's recent hip surgery. He was doing well and had officiated at the funeral for one of his best friends just a week after the surgery. They now have a new email address: doloresgerycz@gmail.com.

In other news **Joy & Gary Campbell** filled the pulpit together at the Jelloway UMC during October and November, when Pastor Ruth Douglas was ill. Joy was recently recertified as a Lay Speaker. This coming summer, Gary will once again be teaching in the Course of Study School at MTSO. The couple will fly to Tucson, Arizona in February to help celebrate Joy's brother David's birthday.

Tom & Donna Orr were blessed to be with their family in Canton, Ohio December 1 for their 55th wedding anniversary luncheon and then off to watch their granddaughter play basketball for Walsh University. On December 3 Donna went to Cleveland Clinic to get a brand new knee in her left leg. Tom said this was her anniversary and Christmas gift because he wanted to get her something very expensive. They enjoyed a nice anniversary dinner in Cleveland with daughter Tricia and husband Melvin when they went for the pre-op. Donna is recovering and will start physical therapy after Christmas.

In other news, Alice Bark is recovering from a broken pelvis. **Charlie & Alice Bark** are now at Copeland Oaks.

Martha Stuller will be spending Christmas with her daughter and family in Toms River, New Jersey.

North Coast Cluster

By Linda McCowen

Linda Short and her sister, Robin Kaiser, will be hosting a tour of Ireland with an optional extension in Dublin. The tour begins July 8, 2019. Contact Linda at 9short28@gmail.com if you're interested!

Dan & Debbie Drew led an Educational Opportunities tour through the Holy Land that Dan organized for Lakeside Chautauqua. The tour had 44 guests from 5 different states and included retiree **David Mansperger & wife Beth**, and some of their congregation from Marion Salem UMC. It was Dan's 6th trip to the Holy Land and yet it included several new sites and experiences never experienced before. In October Dan & Debbie, were joined by fellow retirees **Gary & Peggy Streiff**, and **Bishop John & Elaine Hopkins**, on a Seine River cruise from Paris to Normandy, also provided by EO Tours. Bishop Hopkins was the inspirational speaker for the tour and gave wonderful talks on Joan of Arc, and Monet and the impressionist painters. The visit to the Normandy beaches had to be one of the

Canal Cluster

By Martha Baillis

Jack & Judie Yeager planned a "cousin's" get together for the end of October. It was their answer to a family reunion since it was the cousins in their generation who were getting together because the older generation was gone and the younger generations were unable to make the get together. We all agreed we found ourselves in the same place a time or two.

In September **Stan & Carol Wallace** met Carol's best friend and her husband at Lehman's Hardware in Amish country. At the end of the month Carol fell flat on her face in the street as she was taking a walk. One front tooth was broken in half, cut her lips, broke her elbow, and got a concussion. It was weeks healing. However, they spent Thanksgiving in Seattle with their son and family, and had Christmas plans in Cincinnati with their daughter, whose husband (age 49) has terminal cancer, and their granddaughter home from Parson's School of Design.

Paul & Linda Beal are enjoying the Ohio winter appreciating the cold weather but dreaming of the spring and fall. They will see four of their five children over the Christmas holiday. Paul will have finished nine years as Minister of Congregational Care at Hudson UMC in January 2019.

These past months were family gathering times in the **Jim & Mary Lee Wolf** family. They were fortunate to come together and celebrate each holiday and they have plans to vacation

together again this coming summer on the Outer Banks in North Carolina.

Martha Baillis had the chance in October to go to her daughter's home in Mt. Carmel, Illinois for the high school band's performance in a football half time show and two band contest shows. In November she returned for a week at Thanksgiving. Then in December the Illinois contingent came to her house for the week before Christmas when Andrew's family joined them and she hosted a lunch gathering for the extended family over the weekend. Martha spent Christmas day with Andrew's family since Ellen's family had to go home on Christmas Eve.

Our next Canal Cluster gathering will be the 4th Friday in January at the Waterloo at 9:00 a.m. in the back room – that's where all the noise and laughter is coming from so come join us.

Other News

Congratulations to **Bill & Marty McFadden** who were honored with the Drum Award at the 18th Richard E. "Dick" Reeves Legacy society Recognition Dinner on September 17. The Drum Award is the highest honor presented by Africa University. In honoring Bill & Marty, Africa University recognized their effectiveness in sharing the university's story in the East Ohio Conference and across the United Methodist connection. Bill chairs Africa University's Planned Giving Council and the East Ohio Conference has the

highest number of planned gift donors to the institution.

Bill & Peggy Pierce sent holiday greetings from Phoenix, Arizona where after four years they are still trying to get accustomed to no snow on Christmas! They also report it is hard to believe it has been 49 years Christmas Eve since Bill proposed to Peggy at the Painesville UMC chapel. We were just ready to go forward for communion when I "popped the question". She still mentions that I cheated her out of a scream! They are enjoying their grandsons, Alex in Phoenix just turned 10, and their older grandsons in North Ridgeville, Casey and Bryan, are 19 and 21.

Bill is very pleased to announce the publication of his first poetry book entitled "Life's Carousel." It is available on Blurb.com and Amazon with a brief preview on Blurb.com. It is described as "Poetic reflections of a seeker of God's wondrous mysteries who wears size 16 shoes and is addicted to chocolate chip cookies! A life's carousel journey with God!" Bill's main motivation for writing Life's Carousel is described in its preface available for preview at Blurb.com (<http://blurb.com/b/9099917-life-s-carousel>).

Peggy and I send our very best to friends and colleagues in East Ohio! Our thoughts and prayers are with our denomination in the months ahead!

"Wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age; sometimes age just shows up all by itself."

- *Author unknown*
God's Kids Say & Do the Funniest Things

A mother was concerned about her kindergarten son, Timmy, walking to school. He didn't want his mother to walk with him. She wanted to give him the feeling that he had some independence, but yet know that he was safe.

So she asked a neighbor if she would please follow him to school in the mornings, staying a safe distance, so he wouldn't notice her. The neighbor agreed.

The next school day the neighbor and her little girl set out following behind Timmy and another little neighbor boy as they walked to school. She did this for a whole week.

Timmy's friend noticed this and asked Timmy, "Have you noticed that lady following us to school all week? Do you know her?"

Timmy casually replied, "Yeah, I know who she is. That's Shirley Goodnest, and her daughter, Marcy."

"Shirley Goodnest? Who the heck is she and why is she following us?" Timmy's friend asked.

"Well," Timmy explained, "every night my Mom makes me say the 23rd Psalm with my prayers, cause she worries about me so much. And in the Psalm, it says, 'Shirley Goodnest and Marcy shall follow me all the days of my life,' so I guess I'll just have to get used to it."

- Rev. Dale Schoening
Madrid, IA

Reprinted from The Joyful Newsletter



The East Ohio Conference Retirees Association Executive Committee will be meeting on Wednesday, May 1, at 1:30 p.m. at the East Ohio Area Center. There will be a discussion of the future of our Retiree Association. Any retiree is welcome to attend or send thoughts to John Wolfe at wjohn3614@gmail.com.

If you are willing to receive future TOAT editions by email please notify paulw2800@gmail.com. With price of postage increasing this will assist with costs.

The deadline for submitting materials to be included in the 2019 Spring Issue of TOAT is April 15, 2019. Submit materials to paulw2800@gmail.com.

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Please keep in prayer the families of the following retirees who have entered the church triumphant since September 3:

Janet Weinland, *surviving spouse of Rev. William Weinland*, died September 5, 2018.

Roger A. Norton, *retired elder*, died September 14.

Nancy Lee Greenawalt, *spouse of Rev. N. James Greenawalt*, died October 15.

Gary L. Rinker, *retired local pastor*, died October 23.

David J. Leenhouts, *local pastor*, died October 26.

John P. Benson, *retired elder*, died November 19.

Melissa Sue Stoddard, *spouse of Rev. Everett Stoddard*, died December 8, 2018.

Marie Bibbee, *surviving spouse of Rev. Ken Bibbee*, died December 10, 2018.

Gunievere Y. Legg, *surviving spouse of Rev. Donald Legg*, died December 13, 2018.

James H. Humphrey, *retired Elder*, died December 29, 2018.