



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

SPARTAN SENIOR

A Newsletter for Michigan State University Retirees

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How Economic Challenges at MSU Will Affect You

by Brent Bowditch, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources

People all over the United States continue to face challenging economic times. The Michigan economy in particular has taken some devastating blows over the last few years including the collapse and restructuring of the auto industry and unprecedented levels of unemployment. With tax revenues falling short of goals, state lawmakers are scrambling to come up with a balanced budget plan.

All indications are that MSU will face significant additional cuts to higher education state appropriations on top of the cuts we've already experienced. MSU is in the process of making some tough changes that include decreasing health care costs, eliminating or restructuring programs and more. MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon has described this critical planning process as "Shaping the Future: meeting challenges, maintaining commitment to values and vision." The President's office has set up a Web site where you can read more about these and other changes currently being considered and in some cases already being implemented. The site is www.shapingthefuture.msu.edu.

GENERIC PRESCRIBING PROGRAM

One change that will likely affect you soon is the Generic Prescribing Program **which becomes effective on March 1, 2010**. All employees and retirees received information in the mail about this program in November. Please remember that as of March 1, using generic drugs instead of brand name drugs whenever medically appropriate can help you personally avoid paying significantly more for your medications. If you have questions about this program, call MSU Benefits at 800-353-4434 or check out a Web page about the program at www.hr.msu.edu/generics.

Additional changes to MSU health plans are still expected. We will communicate with you directly about any additional changes as information becomes available. You can expect to receive detailed information about your health care options for the coming year in the form of an open enrollment packet that will be mailed in April.

It's been said that the only constant in life is change. As the financial landscape of Michigan, higher education state appropriations and the nation continue to shift and change, Michigan State University will need to keep adapting to continue shaping a positive future for MSU and its employees and retirees. Please be assured that we will always collaborate with the MSU Retiree Association and other groups and will keep you informed of any upcoming changes.

Notice of Membership Vote Re: Incorporation of MSURA

Transfer of Assets

At the May 10, 2010, MSURA membership meeting, a membership vote will be taken on a resolution approving the incorporation of MSURA and authorizing a related transfer of MSURA assets to the new corporation. A copy of the pro-

posed resolution may be obtained by contacting the MSURA office at 517-353-7896. The MSURA Board of Directors supports the transition of the MSURA to a not-for-profit corporate form, with the same governance structure and purposes as the current unincorporated asso-



Marilyn Rothert, MSURA Health Benefits Chair with Brent Bowditch MSU Asst. VP for Human Resources

ciation. The goal of incorporation is to limit the liability of MSURA members, managers and volunteers in accordance with law and to provide a more formal structure for MSURA's future. (**Gale Arent, President**)

MSU RETIREES ASSOCIATION

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President	Gale Arent	517-669-8985
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Offic Asstr	Brenda Spackman	517-651-9101
Offic Asst	John Roetman	517-349-1090
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Internat/Local W. Fred Graham 517-332-6184
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Website: <http://www.retirees.msu.edu>

Webmasters Patrick Scheetz 517-351-7538
John Forsyth 517-332-6683

Notice the Change in the name
of our website!!

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## Come and HEAR interesting Speakers at our MSURA Meetings

**March 15, 2010:** (NOTE: THIS IS THE 3RD MONDAY, NOT OUR USUAL 2ND MONDAY GATHERING.) **Our own Brent Bowditch, Assistant VP for Human Resources** at the U. Here, finally, will be your chance to hear and engage with the one who knows the most about your health benefits!

**April 12, 2010: Robert Groves, VP for University Advancement.** Last summer this new unit was created with the inclusion of University Development and the Alumni Association under this new umbrella. He tells folks that such events as the U.S. Department of Energy's decision to put its rare isotope beam facility here, as well as IBM's recent move onto campus, and the success of athletic programs has made the U a prime place for innovation and growth. Bob comes to us from the school down in Ann Arbor where he was campaign director for University Development.

**May 10, 2010: Our annual luncheon Meeting. Former President Gordon Guyer** will give his "Ten Top Memories of Michigan State University." Gordon came about the time the Dead Sea took sick, so this should be a walk through memories for many of us. (This meeting will be held in Kellogg Center.)

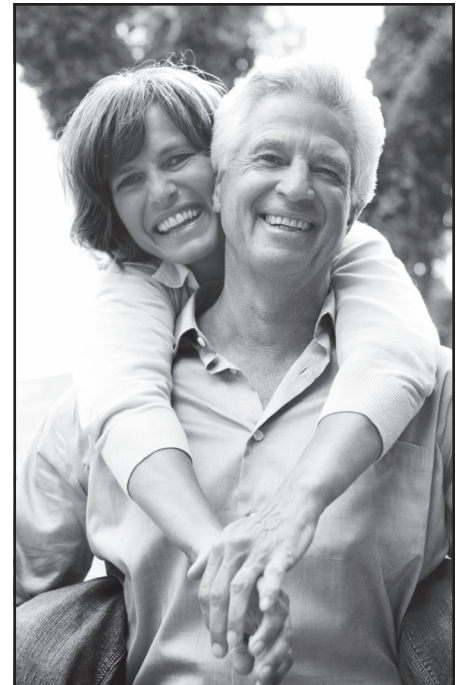
## An Apology!

I was apparently so intent to get my taxes in early, that I could only think of April 15 for any April date.

So, I am sorry if I messed up all your calendars. I hope the erasers work and you will all be present on April 12 to hear Dr. Groves.

And don't forget in March we meet on the **third Monday**

As always in March and April we meet at the MSU Credit Union at 1:30 for coffee and donuts and 2:00 p.m. for the meeting; and in May we feast at Kellogg Center at noon. (Stephanie Barch)



## Membership Really Makes a Difference

We're glad we are members at MSUFCU. They offer great options for managing our money and help us to achieve our financial dreams. One of the best options is Senior Class. When we turned 55 we took advantage of:

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# A GREAT DECISION

By Gale L. Arent, MSURA President

During our life journeys, we all make thousands of decisions bringing thousands of results, both trivial and important. We have learned that certain decisions need to be made in a thoughtful manner because their results will be important to many people.

One such decision was asked of me as MSURA President, charged with appointing all of our standing committees for the year. As I prepared the current roster, I saw that this would be a year of probable changes in the health benefits provided by MSU for both current employees and retirees. And Mary McCartney, who had served a decade as Health Info Chair had earned her second retirement.

MSURA Past President Kay Butcher, Vice President Patrick Scheetz and I recognized that increasing costs of health and prescription insurance coupled with diminished state support for MSU would result in efforts to better manage these costs. We decided that, under these circumstances, MSURA needed a particularly knowledgeable and respected chairperson for our Health Benefits Committee. We have found such a person in Dr. Marilyn Rothert, recently retired Dean of the MSU College of Nursing. She is the perfect person to represent all of us as changes in health benefits are considered. I am personally grateful to Marilyn for accepting our invitation to chair our MSURA Health Benefits Committee.

As a community of retirees, our interest remains maintaining affordable, quality coverage with either no or minimal cost increase — a tricky set of goals. We are committed to participate in the discussions and plans related to our future benefits, and believe Dr. Rothert will serve as a credible advocate on our behalf.



Dr. Marilyn Rothert



## *TRUSTEE DON NUGENT AND THE FRUITS YOU BUY*

Full House Enjoys MSU Alum



It all began in the middle 80's when a leaking can of frozen cherries caused a cascade of 250,000 pounds of fruit. With the help of MSU, Don Nugent recovered part of the loss and developed the "infused" dried cherry; the rest (as they say) is history. Graceland Fruits began with three employees and today there are 225, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest corporation in northern Michigan, with operations going on 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, drying 200,000 pounds of food per

day. Beginning with cherries, expanding to cranberries and other fruit, Graceland now processes an ever-expanding vegetable group as well, and you can go to the store and buy trail mixes, baked products, cereals, soups, pasta and rice mixes. 40% of its products are exported around the world. **(Don, thanks for the dried cherries you brought along; great addition to my salad!)**

Don responded to questions and among his sallies: Michigan's taxes are too high, as are the regulations imposed on manufacturing. MSU faces real problems in keeping tuition affordable, fixing 50 year-old buildings, paying faculty and staff fair salaries, while all the time the state's share of the education dollar shrinks every year.

He gave 70+ retirees a fascinating look at a business few of us even knew existed, and we applauded when VP Patrick Scheetz told us that Don had driven all the way from his home in Traverse City with no other business than our meeting. A true Spartan! (The coffee and donuts were excellent, per usual. Thanks, MSU Credit Union staff!) **Sharon Debar, reporter**

**MSU RETIREES ASSOCIATION  
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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

## Second Call for the Volunteer of the Year

The Awards Committee of your association is ready to receive nominations for the Spartan Senior Volunteer Award. This is the only annual award presented by MSURA. It is a significant achievement award in the retirement community of the university.

MSURA makes this award to recognize persons whose voluntary activities have had positive influence and important impact on the retiree community, the university, and service to others. The award will be presented during our annual luncheon meeting on Monday, May 10th.

Answer these questions in this order and submit by email or by mail as instructed below.

### **Spartan Senior Volunteer Award Format:**

Name & Address of this MSU Retiree or Retiree Spouse Nominee.

Where has the nominee been active as a volunteer? (this award emphasizes service to MSURA and to MSU but also service in other organizations and "person-to-person" helping roles).

List specific volunteer responsibilities and activities (include leadership roles, accomplishments, length of service times, etc.). Describe your perspective on how this person's work has brought significant benefits meriting special recognition.

Name, address and phone of you, the nominator.

**Nomination deadline is: April 1, 2010.** Send to Kay Butcher, Awards Committee Chair, 610 Emily Ave, Lansing, MI 48910 or [butcher@msu.edu](mailto:butcher@msu.edu).

The award is given once to any person. Occasionally two well-qualified persons have received the award in a single year.

Past recipients of the award are: Ruth Jameyson, Walker Hill, John Roetman, Ciella Dickinson, Russell Hill, Pat Ralston, George Dike, Don Gregg, Erling Jorgensen, Harold Davidson, Rosemary Pavlik, Lorraine Demorest, Velmer Oakley, Fred Graham, Charlie Downs, Stephanie Barch, Judy Bukovac, Dick Reid, Gary Stone, Mary McCartney and Fred Kletke, and Nancy Craig.