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*Newsletter of the Austin Peay State University Retirees Association*

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## APSURA “Dream Team” looks to the future

**H**ow should APSURA look five years from now? What should we be doing then that we aren’t doing now? What good things are we doing now that should be extended and expanded? What new or revised roles should we be playing in the lives of our members, our school, our community? And what can we do to bring about needed changes?

These were among the questions our “Dream Team” of 15 forward-looking members pondered at their first meeting on April 21 at the home of former APSURA president Aleeta Christian and current vice president Floyd Christian. Those attending were Margaret Dietrich, Hester Crews, Nancy Smithfield, Jeannie Randall, Inga and Joe Filippo, David Kanervo, Jim Clemmer, Phil and Kathryn Kemmerly, Eloise Weatherspoon, Pam Pickard, Allene Phy-Olsen and Floyd and Aleeta.

The basic direction of the conversation at the meeting was toward the same goal as that set by many of today’s retiree associations: the redefining of retirement away from the image of the rocking chair and toward a picture of lively and engaged post-employment pursuits. Both because of an increase in healthy longevity among our seniors and the existence of a number of exemplary models, both distant and local, for full post-retirement engagement in life and learning, APSURA can foresee a new day of creation and accomplishment for our organization and its members. We even see a definite trend away from use of the word “retirement,” with some groups referring to themselves as “learning communities” and “associations of senior professionals.”

A number of our own retirees are, of course, already serving as ideal models of accomplishment for us: George Mabry and his many beautiful new musical compositions, Larry Hoehn and his continuing and famous work with higher mathematics, Richard Gildrie and his excellent historical writings and reviews of books, Jim Diehr and his new outpouring of sculpture, Allene Phy-Olsen and her new books on evolution and same-sex marriage—and her very successful new seminar with Eloise Weatherspoon on C. S. Lewis. And many of us are devoting much time and energy to the work of active civic and campus groups including the library and historical associations, the Arts and Heritage Council, the Downtown Artists Cooperative, Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, the Roxy Re-

*“The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time” Photo by Brinkhoff-Mogenberg.*

AP354/6-19/450  
Austin Peay State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/ expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs and activities sponsored by APSU. <http://www.apsu.edu/files/policy/5002.pdf>.

**Nancy Smithfield, Jeannie Randall and Joe Filippo**

gional Theatre, the Gateway Chamber Orchestra and Community Concerts, the Clarksville Writers Conference, APSURA and many others.

So it is not as though we are starting from scratch in trying to build a more effective and supportive APSURA. The base is already there—an established record of dedication and accomplishment by many of our members and other retirees. Rather, the Dream Team wants to broaden this base to include many other APSURA members who have valuable information and insight to offer and a willingness to share, and to build bridges of crosstalk and mutual support around and among them.



Even a casual look at our roster of members reveals a wealth of knowledge and experience from which others would be eager to learn. A few obvious topics mentioned were the history of Clarksville, memories of crucial but forgotten events occurring during our lifetimes, Fort Defiance and the literature of the Civil War, historical Islam and Christianity, Jane Austen and other writers,

advice on investing, and the mysteries of mathematics and physics including a group trip to witness the total eclipse of the sun on August 27 of next year.

**Pam Pickard, Floyd Christian and Allene Phyl-Olsen**



Several members presented examples of other retirement groups which have redefined themselves in the direction of increased and broader activity. Margaret Dietrich talked of attending a program at the University of Georgia called Summer Coffee and Conversation which included travel talks, museum visits, learning to play musical instruments and paint and lectures on investment. Jim Clemmer talked about the long-standing program of the Association of Senior Professionals at Eckerd College, comprised of over forty interest groups led by members on such diverse topics as the works of H. L. Mencken, the Tuesday

science sections of the New York Times, Complexity Theory, French culture, yoga and tai chi, Italian movies, boat building and even dental materials.

**Allene Phyl-Olsen, Joe Filippo, Kathryn and Phil Kemmerly, and David Kanervo**

While the meeting was devoted largely to the basic strategic matters of purposes and goals, we also began a discussion of the tactical and practical dimensions of implementation: advertising, times and days for meetings, locations and accessibility, costs and, most importantly, outreach to other groups who would be interested and could cooperate in our efforts—especially the Office of Continuing Education, which has approached us with similar goals.



We look forward to additional meetings of the Dream Team this summer and fall, and we invite the input and attendance of any and all members who would like to join in this effort.



*Aleeta Christian, Helga Browder, Hazel Irwin, Joan and Durward Harris, Thelma Watson, Dewey Browder and George Pesely.*

### Garden Walk with the Browders caps spring events

**M**aster Gardeners Dewey and Helga Browder escorted a fascinated group of APSURANS on a tour of their beautiful flower and vegetable gardens on May 28. Following a social and informational session on their deck overlooking the gardens, with mimosas and strawberries to grease the ways, Helga led a leisurely walk through four distinct island gardens named the “Gazebo Surround,” the “APSU” bed, the “Northern Boundary Island” and the “Rockery.”

Dewey then led us through his carefully tended vegetable garden, labeled a bit less colorfully as “Vegetable Garden,” with discrete sections devoted to potatoes, garlic, onions, corn and lettuce.



The “Gazebo Surround” is a shade garden with ferns, hostas, bleeding hearts and a few flowering plants to add color to a mostly green setting. The “APSU” bed features appropriate red and white flowers, and the “Northern Boundary Island” is filled with larger flowers and shrubs such as hydrangeas, daylilies and ferns which attract a variety of birds. “The Rockery” is a sunny garden with lots of azaleas, daisies and iris.

According to Dewey and Helga the gardens include about 40 distinct species of plants, with 25 varieties of daylilies alone. Two of the varieties carry the names “Dewey’s Star” and “Helga’s Happy Returns,” and others such fanciful titles as “Fond Wish” and “Pardon Me.”

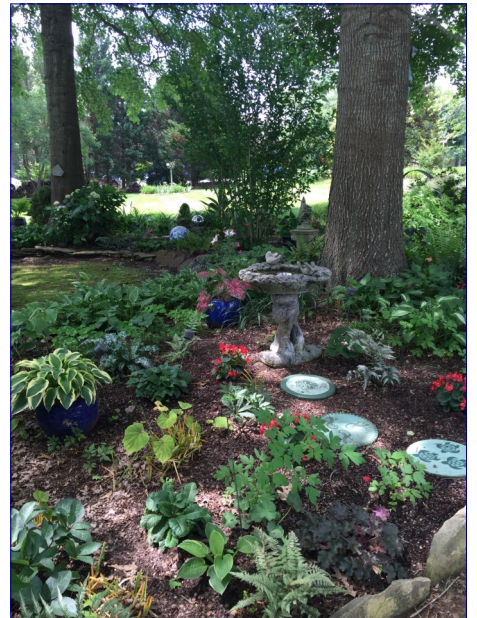
Dewey says he regarded this special APSURA tour as a trial run of their gardens before the big 2016 Garden Tour of six major gardens to be hosted by the Montgomery County Master Gardeners Association on June 18. Information on the tour and tickets are available at the Montgomery County Extension Office, 931-648-5725.

*Dewey  
Browder*

Gallery: The Browder gardens



The Browders' daughter Patty Gabilondo



## Annual members meeting held June 1

The annual APSURA members meeting was held on Wednesday, June 1, following the regular June meeting of the board of directors. Members were greeted by president David Kanervo, other officers and the board of directors, followed by a bit of socializing and catching up by members who had not seen one another for a while.

The main events of the past year were summarized by the president and others, including our support for the Rotary Bike Ride, the Straight Talk about Retirement workshop for faculty and staff considering retiring, presentations on national politics and “aging in place,” several social gatherings, the continuing production of the newsletter, our May 28 garden walk with the Browders and the initiation of a series of workshops by the “Dream Team” of members looking ahead to an expanded program of activities and events for APSURA.

Members were then asked to vote on the board’s proposals of a few changes to the bylaws of the association and a slate of officers for 2016-2017. The changes were designed to reconcile some inconsistencies within the bylaws and to create a new office of membership director, with that director to be appointed and reappointed to the position by the board.

Officers and directors proposed by the board were as follows: President, David Kanervo\*; Vice President, Floyd Christian\*; Treasurer, Nancy Irby\*; Secretary, Barbara Wilbur. Directors at large: Eloise Weatherspoon, Joe Filippo, George Mabry\*. Membership Director: Nancy Smithfield. Parliamentarian: Phil Kemmerly\*. Publicity Director: Jim Clemmer. Immediate past president: Aleeta Christian. University Representative: to be selected by the APSU President.

Only those officers and directors noted by an asterisk\* were up for election or re-election this year. The others were within continuing positions or appointments.

Both proposals were approved by the membership.

## Dues payment time is here again (so soon?)

Jim Clemmer

It is almost time once again for APSURA dues payment by those paying by the year. We greatly appreciate your continuing support of this wonderful organization with your dues and your other contributions to our work. Yearly dues of \$25 for both regular and associate members are due by July 1 to APSURA, Box 4426, Clarksville, TN 37044.

As we have said before, your board believes that the main problem with paying yearly dues isn’t the money--\$25 is not a major hurdle for most. It is, rather, the nuisance factor. Most of us receive renewal requests regularly for everything from AARP to ZZounds, and we tire of the constant hassle of writing and sending checks or going through endless menus online. Often I myself just begin putting them in a pile to “tend to later,” and sometimes “later” never comes.

We think this is the main reason our new option of paying \$100 for five years’ membership has become so popular, with many of you choosing that route. This simplifies payment for you, also providing the perk of one year’s free membership, and it also eases record-keeping for our treasurer. The \$100 becomes part of our operating fund, with any remainder after five years going to the Foundation. As the end of the five-year membership approaches, our treasurer will notify members who have chosen that option.

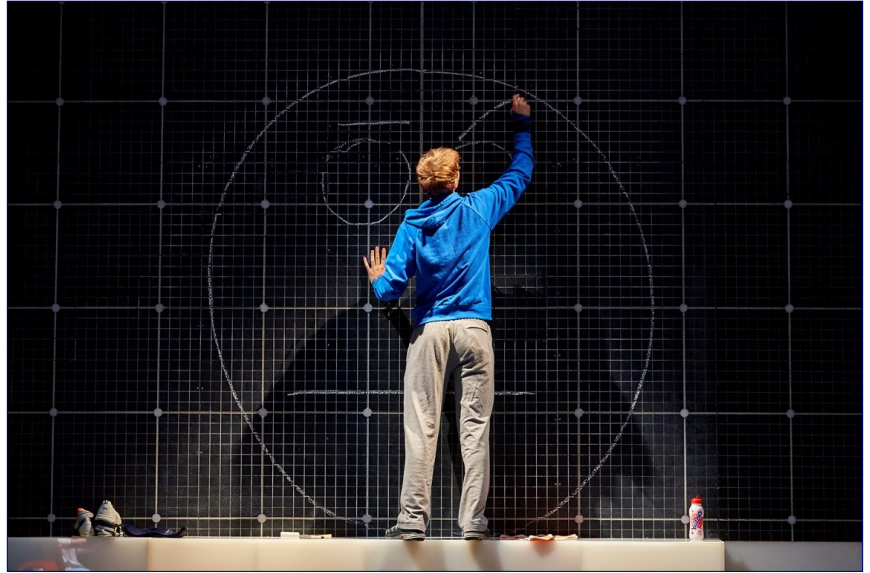
The \$500 lifetime membership is a continuing option, of course, and a number of you have chosen that route. But some have decided they don’t want to do that. One long-time member said, “I just consulted my actuarial tables, and they advise me not to engage in any long-term commitments.” And, as most of you know, the \$500 is a direct contribution to our scholarship fund in the APSU Foundation, and as such it does not contribute to our operating expenses.

However you choose to pay, the officers and board very much appreciate your continued support and endorsement of our efforts. We also want to see more of you at activities and events!

**Review: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Mark Haddon and Simon Stephen, The Ethel Barrymore Theatre, New York. Jim Clemmer**

The premise of the 2015 winner of the Tony Award for best play “*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*,” which will come to TPAC next April, sounds all too familiar: troubled boy-genius tries to grow up in an alien world. We have seen many remarkable incarnations of this story over the years, from Hamlet to Stephen Dedalus, to Holden Caulfield and John Nash, and though I had heard good things about both the novel and the play I thought this new iteration of such an oft-told story might make for a boring evening. Especially as I was seeing it in the middle of a memorable week of new museum exhibits, pilgrimages to Greenwich Village and the site of the 9-11 tragedy, and the raucous musical “*The Book of Mormon*. “

But the play proved to be original, inventive and appropriately disturbing. As in other memorable tellings of the story, “*Curious Incident*” averts cliché with its own unique twists and tricks that make it special. For one thing, the author of the book, Mark Haddon, and playwright Simon Stephen determinedly



avoid making the central character, 15-year-old Christopher, a simple stereotype. We see many strange behavioral peculiarities as we watch Christopher struggle to understand the murder of his neighbor’s dog Wellington, his parents’ divorce and the rush of city life, and we suffer with him as he tries desperately to interpret much of this through the only language he truly understands, that of higher mathematics. But conventional pigeonholes such as high-functioning autism, Asperger’s syndrome and savant syndrome do not adequately describe Christopher.

At every turn, Christopher tells us or shows us that we must understand that he is a real person. He does not think of himself as strange, but rather as acutely clear-eyed: “I see everything. Most other people are lazy. They never look at everything.” And his gestures and movements on stage, while sometimes beyond our total comprehension, are too acutely planned and too orderly and purposeful, to be explained away by a line or two in any manual of mental disorders.

Haddon and Stephen like to refer to Christopher simply as “a boy.” And in many respects that is what he is. He plays with toys, especially a model train he keeps assembling and refining. He has a beloved pet, a white rat (who appears live on-stage) named Toby, who kisses and plays with him. And his continuing worry about the brutal death of the dog Wellington, stabbed with a pitchfork, is the very human and understandable concern that drives Christopher through the play. Of the unexpectedly great success of the play and the 2014 opening in New York, playwright Stephen says “I find it extremely moving that that boy is going so far. I don’t know if I will ever process it.”

Another reason for the impact of the play is Marianne Elliott’s staging, full of novel uses of technology and physically demanding choreography to reflect and amplify Christopher’s struggle to solve the mysteries of Wellington’s death and his own life. The floor and walls of the set constitute an enormous grid upon which Christopher uses chalk to draw perfect geometric shapes and equations as metaphors for the realities he can interpret in no other way. Pinpoints of light often lead or follow Christopher’s geometric movements around the stage, while the other actors in addition to playing many characters serve to lift Christopher into the air in various poses and to transport him around the set.

Finally, though, the main ingredient bringing this play home as an unforgettable dramatic event has to be the heroic work required of the actor playing the role of Christopher, currently Tyler Lea, a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.



Lea is on stage for the entire two and one-half hours, living through Christopher's wrenching changes in mood and behavior and engaging in gymnastics and acrobatics suggestive of Cirque de Soleil performers. Lea says, "I went into the first rehearsal knowing all my lines because I knew it would be impossible to do all the choreography without knowing the lines and being ready to go." This play is indeed "ready to go" in many ways, including on tour to Nashville in April of 2017. I recommend it highly.



## Publication Information

*The APSURA Newsletter is published quarterly by the Austin Peay State University Retirees Association. A supplement to the Newsletter, the APSURA NewsNotes, is published occasionally to update APSURA members on time-sensitive coming activities and events, both those in which APSURA is participating officially and others recommended by APSURA members. Both the Newsletter and NewsNotes are available at [apsu.edu/retirees-association](http://apsu.edu/retirees-association).*

*We invite APSU retirees to send us specific information about coming activities and events you believe will be of interest to APSU retirees. Please send to Barbara Wilbur at [8wi18ur@charter.net](mailto:8wi18ur@charter.net), to Jim Clemmer at [clemmerj@apsu.edu](mailto:clemmerj@apsu.edu) or to APSURA at the physical address below, and include exact dates, times, locations, deadlines, costs, etc. We also welcome the submission of original articles for possible publication in the newsletter, especially descriptions of your accomplishments, travels, discoveries and other experiences as APSU retirees.*

*Submissions are limited to 500 words and a maximum of three high-resolution photographs. Send texts as regular email (no tabs) or Word attachments to Jim Clemmer at [clemmerj@apsu.edu](mailto:clemmerj@apsu.edu) with photographs sent individually as separate .jpg files. Or you may submit typed manuscripts and good-quality photo prints to APSU Retirees Association, Box 4426, Clarksville, TN 37044.*

*Please let us know of retirees who for some reason are not receiving the Newsletter, and of errors or needed changes in your own name and address. If you would prefer not to receive the printed copy of the Newsletter, please notify Membership Director Nancy Smithfield ([smithfieldn@apsu.edu](mailto:smithfieldn@apsu.edu)). If you are not a member of APSURA but would like to receive the Newsletter via email, please notify Nancy Smithfield and provide her your preferred email address.*

## Officers

*David Kanervo, President  
Floyd Christian, Vice-President  
Nancy Irby, Treasurer  
Barbara Wilbur, Secretary*

## Directors

*Eloise Weatherspoon  
Nancy Smithfield  
Joe Filippo  
Mitch Robinson  
Phil Kemmerly  
Aleeta Christian (ex officio)*

## Publicity Director

*Jim Clemmer  
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## Address

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Clarksville, TN 37044*

## On the Web

*[apsu.edu/retirees-association](http://apsu.edu/retirees-association)*

*See our website for current and past issues of our Newsletter and NewsNotes, a retirement checklist, and information on retiree benefits.*



## APSURA Members Registration Form

New member   
  Renewing member   
  Retired faculty or staff   
  Associate member  
 Check both of the above-right boxes if your spouse or partner is joining or renewing as an associate member.

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ Ms \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of member: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last                      First                      Middle

Name of spouse/partner: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last                      First                      Middle

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number and Street (Apartment Number)

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

Telephones: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail addresses: \_\_\_\_\_

Former department: \_\_\_\_\_ Years of service \_\_\_\_\_ Year you retired \_\_\_\_\_

Activities in which you would like the APSURA to be involved (check all that apply):  Group travel;  Athletic events;  Cultural events;  Social events;  Scholarship activities;  Seminars;  Community work;  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues for Austin Peay State University Retirees Association are:

Regular (APSU Retiree) Membership     \$25.00    Please send to APSURA, Box 4426, Clarksville, TN 37044  
 Associate Membership                       \$25.00     5 years for \$100  
 Additional donation for Scholarship Fund \_\_\_\_\_  Lifetime Membership \$500