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Summer 6-1-2021

2021 June - East Tennessee State University Retirees Association Newsletter

Retirees Association, East Tennessee State University

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ETSURA President's Report

Greetings Fellow Retirees:

I hope that you are experiencing fresh shades of freedom as we slowly withdraw from the apex of the pandemic and warmer weather invites us outside to engage in springtime activities---whether it be planting a garden, traveling, or participating in a myriad of other events. We have been waiting for this transition a long time, and I think all of us are looking forward to seeing the pandemic in the rear view mirror. However, to be on the safe side, even as our activities return to a more “normal” state, your ETSURA Board, as reported earlier, has made the decision to hold the Annual Summer Luncheon via a zoom format on June 11, beginning at 11:30.

We are most excited to have Todd Barber, Jet Propulsion Laboratory senior propulsion engineer, as our luncheon speaker. Todd was lead propulsion engineer on the Cassini mission to Saturn, following part-time work on the Mars Exploration Rover (MER) mission, Deep Impact mission, and the Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) mission, which landed the large rover Curiosity on the red planet on August 5, 2012. Cassini was launched on October 15, 1997 on its two-billion-mile, seven-year journey to the ringed planet. It “took the plunge” into Saturn’s atmosphere in 2017 after thirteen years in orbit around Saturn. He is now supporting the Voyager mission as well, more than forty years after launch.

The title of Mr. Barber’s talk is “Red Rover, Red Rover: Send Curiosity Over.” Curiosity's mission to the red planet will be covered in detail. Topics to be discussed include a bit on the history of Mars rovers at JPL, the scientific motivation for Curiosity,

and the preparations for launch two days after Thanksgiving in 2011. The science suite on board this one-ton mega rover will be presented, as well as the engineering challenges involved in getting Curiosity to the launch pad, traveling 352 million miles to Mars over 8.5 months, and surviving the so-called ‘seven minutes of terror’ on August 5th, 2012. Early mission science results will be presented as well, followed by pop-culture reaction to the rover landing.

Mr. Barber will also play the piano for us prior to his presentation. You have by now received a zoom link to join the meeting. I hope you will mark this date and time on your calendar and plan to join us for this special event.



Jack Rhoton
ETSURA President, 2021

Bucky's Food Pantry

Donations can be made to the Bucky's Food Pantry. The mission of the Bucky's Food Pantry is to diminish or end hunger on ETSU campus for students and others who face food insecurity. If you wish to donate, please make check to ETSU and write Bucky's Food Pantry in the check's memo line and mail to:

University Advancement, PO Box 70721, Johnson City, TN 37614.

ETSURA Annual Summer Meeting



ETSURA Annual Summer Meeting

Date: Friday, June 11, 2021

11:30 a.m.

Speaker: Mr. Todd Barber

Location: Via Zoom Format

Title of Talk: Red Rover, Red Rover: Send Curiosity Over

Mr. Barber is a native of Wichita, Kansas, and attended MIT between 1984 and 1990, obtaining B.S. and M.S. degrees in aerospace engineering, with a humanities concentration in music. He is also a composer of church choral music, with two pieces published to date. His hobbies include singing charitably and professionally, playing the piano, snagging degree confluences (exact integer latitude/longitude intersections), visiting all the U.S. tri-state corners and national parks, playing basketball (though it's been a while), and amateur astronomy.

Date and Time	Event	Speaker	Topic
June 11, (11:30-1:00) via Zoom	Summer Luncheon	Todd Barber, Senior Propulsion Engineer, Jet Propulsion Laboratory	Mars Expedition
September 9, (11:30-12:30) In person	Eat and Chat, location to TBD	Dr. Keith Johnson , Chair/ Professor College of Business/Technology, VP Equity & Inclusion	Equity & Inclusion at ETSU
November 5, (11:00-1:30) In person	Fall/Annual Luncheon, Culp Ballroom	Dr. Robert Pack, Professor of Community and Behavioral Health	University-Community Collaboration to Address Substance Use Disorder in our Region.

ETSURA Officers 2021

Panel of 2021

Susan Burkey
Charles Moore
Norma Hogan
Fred Tudiver

Panel of 2022

Chu-Ngi Ho
Donald Gotterbarn
Scott Champney
Cynthia Burnley

Panel of 2023

Gail Bureson
Jack Rhoton
Bonny Stanley
Jeff Wardeska

Executive Committee:

Membership Committee: Cynthia Burnley, Chair
 Communications Committee: David Kalwinsky, Chair
 Finance Committee: Gail Bureson, Chair
 Program Committee: Fred Tudiver, Chair
 University/ Community Service Committee: Jack Rhoton, Chair
 Liaison Committee: Dr. Priscilla Ramsey, (Faculty Senate Report)

Life After Retirement by Dr. Diane Nelson

“How did I ever have time to work?” That’s what I’ve heard from several retirees, including my husband, Jack. When you retire, you may ask, “What will I do?” As my friend Judy Johnston always said, “Whatever I want, whenever I want, and with whomever I want.”

My retirement has come in various stages and continues to evolve. For a while, I continued to teach “Marine Biology,” a course I had developed and always loved, using my underwater photographs from our diving expeditions around the world. I was privileged to work with Dr. Eugenie Clark for many years, publishing our research on the behaviors of marine fishes in the tropical Pacific, from whale sharks in the Sea of Cortez to convict fish and venomous catfish in Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, and our last publication on triggerfishes in the Solomon Islands, shortly before Genie died of lung cancer in 2015. If you are not aware of her accomplishments in marine biology, I invite you to Google the “Shark Lady” and to read her autobiography “The Lady and the Sharks” (in which she talks about coming to our house in Johnson City to work on our manuscripts) and the inside stories of her life by our colleague and friend José Castro, “GENIE The Life & Recollections of Eugenie Clark.” I was honored to be acknowledged for my collaboration with José on his book.

Once Genie introduced us to diving in Indonesia, we were “hooked” and continued to lead groups of dive friends on expeditions, especially to the famed Raja Ampat, the most diverse tropical marine ecosystem in the world. Our favorite dive boat is a three-masted schooner, the Dewi Nusantara (“Goddess of the Sea”), where we made lifelong friends and memories, photographing thousands of marine critters in their native habitats. In fact, Jack and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary by renewing our vows underwater on a Dewi trip with our dive buddies! Unfortunately, that stage of my retirement ended when I was diagnosed with a respiratory condition (unrelated to diving) that



forced me to retire from scuba diving and underwater photography. However, given any opportunity to share my stories of marine critters, I am always willing to do a presentation for various groups, ranging from seniors to kindergarteners. I still love to teach!

In addition to my marine biology career, my original (and ongoing career) involved the study of tardigrades, commonly called “water bears.” My PhD work focused on the ecology and distribution of tardigrades on Roan Mountain, Tennessee-North Carolina. For the past 20 years, I’ve been working with Dr. Paul Bartels at Warren Wilson College on the “Smoky Bears”—tardigrades of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and we have published numerous papers on these amazing animals.

I have also been working on tardigrade projects with other colleagues from Poland, Germany, Denmark, Finland, and Japan. Recently with my former grad student, Dr. Rebecca Adkins Fletcher, now a faculty member in Appalachian Studies at ETSU, we published a research article describing two new species tardigrades that live on the campus of ETSU in the moss on the concrete caps of the brick fence posts behind Brown Hall! The international symposia on tardigrades have been held since 1974, including one at ETSU in 1980. I have attended all of them. Our 15th symposium was scheduled to be in Poland in 2021 but was postponed until 2022 due to Covid-19. I’ll be there too!

Today I am proud to assist younger tardigradologists with their English grammar, to review research papers for international journals, and to continue publishing with my international colleagues.

Bored? Never!

Alliance for Continued Learning by Dr. Scott Champney

The Executive Committee of ACL met in February to discuss the restarting of ACL programs. We plan to begin again in September of this year (2021) with sessions during September and October. We have an agreement with Food City to use their meeting room again. The Committee will meet again in June to begin selecting speakers. ACL members will be notified by email and with a printed program.

A Review of the April 21st Eat and Chat by Dr. Jeff Wardeska

Our April 21 Eat and Chat Zoom meeting featured Dr. Blaine Schubert who presented a fascinating talk about “The Evolution and Paleobiology of Short-faced Bears”.

Dr. Blaine Schubert is a vertebrate palaeontologist at ETSU, where he serves as Executive Director of the Center of Excellence in Palaeontology, which oversees the Gray Fossil Site (GFS) and Museum. He is also Professor in the Department of Geosciences where he teaches courses in palaeontology and museology. His research interests focus on late Cenozoic amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Recent areas of interest include the palaeontology of short-faced bears, Pleistocene extinctions, and cave palaeontology.

Professor Schubert began by describing the GFS which occupies about 4-5 acres and is approximately 30 m (100 ft) deep. Originally an ancient sinkhole, it is the only Miocene/Pliocene site in Southern Appalachia, and sediments at the site have been dated from 4.5 – 4.2 million years ago (mya). To date, some 95 vertebrate fossils, including two fish, many lizards and salamanders, and forty-eight mammals; seven invertebrates, and over 37,000 catalogued specimens have been found. Among the mammals found are skeletons of a mastodon and rhino. A tooth identical to a tooth of a red panda found here was also identified in Washington State. Currently, two nearly complete red panda skeletons have been found at the GFS. The site is the largest tapir site in the world. Volunteers work an average of 8,000 hours each year at the site. Archaeological work is also ongoing in Saltville, VA where many partial skeletons of large animals have been identified including a Giant short-faced bear (*Arctodus simus*).

A jawbone of a short-faced bear was initially discovered at the Gray Fossil Site. It has been identified to be the smaller *Plionarctos*, one of the earliest and smallest species of the short-faced bears and represents a new species. Carbon-14 dating show these bears lived from 7 – 2.5 mya. Currently one of the most complete skeletons is at the GFS.

In contrast, the Giant Short-faced bear skeleton found in Saltville is a much larger species; *Arctodus simus*, which lived about 14,850 years ago, and thus was contemporary with the Clovis human population, according to Stone Age tools found in this area. The Giant Short-faced bear is believed to have become extinct during the Pleistocene extinction, some 11,500 years ago. Typical of most species of bears the males were much larger than females.

Collaborative research is also ongoing in the Yucatan peninsula near Tulum, Mexico. An extensive cave system, a Cenote, which is now under water, has yielded large deposits of bones from animals which apparently wandered into the cave and fell into a large pit, known as Hoyo Negro. The caves were formed during the Pleistocene ice age when the ocean levels were 200-3330 feet lower than today. As the ice melted, sea levels rose to today’s levels, submerging the caves and preserving the bones now under water. (A skull of a teenage girl, now known as Naia, was also found and has been dated to 12,000-13,000 years ago by C-14 dating and was the subject of NOVA documentary, “The First Face of America”.) Of relevance here, well preserved bones of the South American short-faced bear were found in the cave, the farthest north they have been observed. The South American Short-faced bear is the largest of the bears and skeletons are found throughout S. America. The skeletons found in Hoyo Negro represent the farthest north they have been found.

The North and South America continents were separated approximately 4.5 mya, when they were joined by the formation of the Panama Isthmus because of tectonic activity. After that bridge was established, both northward and southward migration between the two continents, known as the Great American Biotic Interchange, occurred. For example, our opossum, porcupine, and armadillo originated in South America. Bears, cats, horses are some of the species which migrated southward.

Overall, Dr. Schubert gave a very enjoyable and informative talk on his research in conjunction with the Gray Fossil Site.

Our Condolences

Mr. Jerry T. Vanhoy passed away February 28, 2021, General Maintenance Mechanic Supervisor, Physical Plant.

Mrs. Cathy Butler, employee of James H. Quillen Forensics Center, passed away May 11, 2021.

News From Around Campus by Dr. Priscilla Ramsey

On April 16, the new University Commons officially opened. The Commons extends from the Culp Center to Bell Dr, an area formerly the front parking area and road in front of Lamb Hall and the dorms on the opposite side. The Commons has lots of green and paved space for student activities including a putting green, shuffleboard, a basketball hoop, corn hole toss and now installing horse-shoe equipment. A swing attached to an old tree in front of Hutcheson Hall is a memorial to all those in the ETSU family who have lost their lives or loved ones to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Our heartfelt thanks to Sonia King, daughter of James and Mary B. Martin, who funded the entire project. What wonderful benefactors the Martins have been, and for their daughter to carry on their legacy.

Another feature of the Commons is an old fashion, free standing clock commemorating the 110th anniversary of the founding of ETSU. Engraved on the base are the names of 110 current longest serving employees of ETSU. Retirees need to visit to see if their name is listed among the others, but many will recognize a lot of those listed. In addition, in the basement corner former dorm room of Carter Hall, a candy shop is planned with a paved seating area surrounding the front doors. I hope they add ice cream to their menu in that I travel through the Commons on my daily, or semi daily, walk around campus, and that would be a great stopping place to catch my breath and get a snack.



The last feature of the Commons that is planned but not yet installed is a giant slide for student to use when coming from the hill in the back of the Culp Center to the Commons. The slide is located between the entrance to the Culp Center and the Stone Hall. Students frequently used that hill as a shortcut in the past, so it was just a fun substitution to add another option to get from one place to another. This slide was dedicated to the Noland family as Noland's Canyon.

While the students are on summer break, parking is plentiful, so come and visit the Commons and the newly renovated Culp Center.



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Congratulations to Retirees

March Retirees

Mrs. Debbie Frakes, Office Coordinator, Experiential Programs
Mr. Eddie Harkleroad, Executive Director of Construction
Ms. Kathleen Moore, Director of Sustainability
Ms. Carolyn Sliger, Rural Programs Coordinator, College of Medicine Rural Programs
Ms. Tonya Ward, Information Research Tech 1, Biomedical Sciences

April Retirees

Mrs. Joy Hoover, Executive Aide, Arts & Sciences CASE
Mrs. Cheryl Moore, Research Specialist, Biomedical Sciences

If you have recently moved or have an email address you would like us to use, please be sure and update your information with
Tisha Harrison:

**ETSURA
Box 70564
Johnson City, TN 37614-1707**

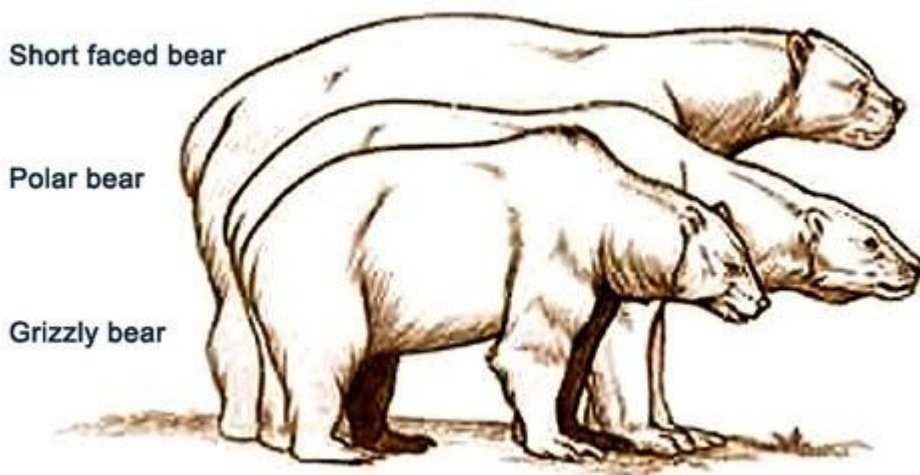
423-439-6145

Email: harristc@etsu.edu.

Volunteer Opportunities to Come...by Charles Moore

When Dr. Schubert spoke at Eat'n'Chat in April he mentioned the praiseworthy amount of time put in by volunteers over the life of the Gray Fossil Site.

Most of us probably can remember in 2000 when the Gray Fossil Site appeared almost by magic out of the roadway between Gray and Sulphur Springs. There was a lot of excitement then and still is a lot of excitement over this world-class discovery. If you are thinking about volunteering this summer, Gray Fossil Site is a rare chance to do something new while exploring something that is very old.



"The Evolution and Paleobiology of Short-faced Bears" review Page 4

It looks to me like the site could offer an assortment of opportunities to explore the world beneath our feet. If you have ever wondered what's down there or are intrigued with the pain-staking detail of cataloging or if you'd rather just get muddy, the GFS will probably meet one of your goals. Here's a chance to do one of those things everyone else dreams about.

But, as we know, the current dilemma with COVID has crimped a lot of plans and one of those is volunteering at the Gray Fossil Site. For the time being, new volunteering has been suspended.

If, however, you are interested, as the University begins to allow more activities, start with Gray Fossil Site website (<https://www.etmnh.org/support/volunteer>) and talk with Quintin Crumley at 439-3644.

Second Harvest Food Bank and Volunteer Opportunities by Dr. Jack Rhoton

We are pleased to announce that ETSURA volunteering at Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee will resume on Wednesday, June 9th, from 8:00-noon. For those who volunteered pre-COVID, a few changes from our normal routine have been made. Rather than entering the front door and into the foyer, they are requesting that all volunteers drive around to the back of the building and enter the door at the loading dock. They are also asking us to arrive at 8:00 a.m. on the morning of our volunteering. This is a departure from our arrival time last year. In the past we arrived at 8:45 and worked from 9:00 until 12:00. This year we will arrive at 8:00 and work until noon. (All volunteers are required to have both doses of the COVID vaccine.) If you have never volunteered at Second Harvest, we extend a special invitation for you to join us on June 9th. The work is very enjoyable and plays an important role in getting food out to a growing number of children and adults who are experiencing food insecurity in our region. In addition, this is an opportunity to come together, in person, and interact with our retired colleagues after a long absence.

Volunteering at the Second Harvest is one of the signature activities of the ETSURA. The Food Bank is housed in the old Sam's Club building located at 1020 Jericho Drive in Kingsport, within a quarter of a mile off of Interstate 81 North, airport exit 63. The scheduled time ETSURA has coordinated with the food bank for our members to volunteers is during the second Wednesday of each month from 8:00-12:00 noon. The Food Bank provides food to some of Tennessee's most impoverished counties, which are located in Northeast Tennessee. Last summer the food bank provided meals for more than 2500 children, including nearly 7,000 meals, when school meals were not available. The food bank hopes to meet this goal again this year as part of its Summer Food Service Program. When school is in session, children benefit from the food bank's backpack program.

What do Second Harvest Food Bank volunteers do, exactly?

Volunteers are expected to arrive at the Food Bank by 8:00 a.m. on the day of assigned work. Upon arrival, volunteers are asked to sign in so that the organization can have a record of their work. The morning activities are previously planned and one of the food bank's friendly staff members will lead volunteers to the work station with explicit directions on what should be done and how to proceed. Volunteers typically work in an assembly line fashion, having individual jobs to perform, which involves sorting, labeling, and repackaging nonperishable food items, and sometimes including health aids and paper towels for the summer food service program. This work does not require any heavy lifting; however, it does involve standing while working. (For those who cannot stand for a long period of time, chairs will be provided.) Also, a thirty minute break is planned from 10:00-10:30. A breakroom is available where snacks and refreshments are provided. The summer food service program is the only food option for many of the food challenged students in our region.

What should you wear?

The dress code at the Food bank is casual. Comfortable, safe footwear is strongly recommended: sneakers, work shoes, or boots. Open-toed shoes or sandals will not be allowed. Long pants are required. It is recommended that volunteers dress lightly in the summer months, warmly during the winter—layers are suggested, as are jeans, sweatshirts, etc. In addition, no smoking, eating, or drinking is allowed in the warehouse.



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ADDRESS: (Street) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

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FORMER STATUS WITH ETSU: FACULTY STAFF

AMOUNT PAID (\$10 PER PERSON): \$10 \$20

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Johnson City, TN 37614-1707
(Your check will be your receipt)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION FORM

Enclosed is the applicable life membership fee. It is understood that this is a nonrefundable deferred gift to the ETSURA Endowed Scholarship Fund in the ETSU Foundation. The funds will be invested by the university with the income being used for current expenses of the association until my (our) death at which time it (one half if husband or wife) will be transferred to the Endowed Scholarship Fund. It is understood that any benefit received from ETSURA, the university or its foundation or this contribution will be of nominal value and it is fully deductible for tax purposes in the year paid.

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HUSBAND & WIFE: \$150

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