

# Friends of ORNL

2020

## Annual Report

### Friends of Oak Ridge National Laboratory

March 2021

The officers and board of the Friends of Oak Ridge National Laboratory are pleased to report on the activities of FORNL for the calendar year 2020.

The mission of FORNL is to provide

- A mechanism for members to keep in touch with co-workers, retirees, and current ORNL activities,
- For ORNL, an organization whose members can serve as knowledgeable volunteers for ORNL related activities, and
- Community-wide presentations and events for the public, centered on outstanding scientific and engineering developments, awards, and special topics of national interest.

**We are scientists and engineers, as well as individuals from varied backgrounds, who believe we can increase the nation's technological awareness by providing information to teachers, students, and the general public.**

For three-quarters of CY 2020 FORNL was adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with its necessary social distancing, hence the inability to conduct many of the normal community and ORNL support activities we normally support. Among those affected were:

- The Dick Smyser Community Lecture Series, a series of free lectures on a wide range of topics of interest to the local community. (Dick Smyser, now deceased, was founding editor of *The Oak Ridger* newspaper, president of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association from 1973 to 1974, president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors from 1984 to 1985 and a community leader for many years. He also had a strong love of science.) We already had a Texas-based speaker that was to present a public program on "The Science of Whiskey" in May, but we had to cancel this event.

- FORNL volunteer support of "in-house" laboratory walking tours for school and other interested parties and support of "half-day Oak Ridge Reservation Bus Tours" for the public. It is not known when ORNL Management and USDOE will allow these activities to resume.
- FORNL member volunteer support of the Tennessee Science Bowl and the Southern Appalachian Science and Engineering Fair. The organizers of these two activities converted them to virtual activities that did not require as much in-person volunteer support. The usual festivities held with such events such as the Annual Banquet and Recognition Ceremonies were also cancelled. FORNL did support both STEM-related activities with monetary contributions of \$1500 and \$500 respectively in CY 2020.

FORNL also hosts a series of monthly meetings for lunch, socializing, and learning about topics of interest to our members at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and other local science and technology- ventures. The meetings are normally held starting at 11:30 am on the second Tuesday of each month, except December, at the UT Resource Center in Oak Ridge. The first three meetings were held as usual; however, due to the pandemic it was decided by the Board to convert to virtual meetings until it is safe to resume ETEC-based meetings. Fortunately with "ZOOM" virtual meeting software we were able to webcast monthly lectures from our speaker's location to any members with wi-fi and a web browser. This turned out to be a successful venture with anywhere from 50 to 80 persons "signing-on". It also allowed members now living or vacationing outside our region to participate. Our monthly Board of Directors meetings were also held with ZOOM, which allows for interactive conversation. The screenshot figure below shows the ZOOM windows with several of our Board Members.



As shown in the following table, in 2020 eight speakers from ORNL or with a UTK/ORNL joint appointment were included in our eleven luncheon lectures.

## The 2020 FORNL Luncheon and Virtual Lectures - Speakers and Topics

<b>January</b>	<i>Neutron Scattering Investigations of Molecular Interactions with Nanomaterial Surfaces</i> ; J.Z.Larese; UTK/ORNL
<b>February</b>	<i>Nuclear Space Science at ORNL</i> ; Mike Smith; ORNL
<b>March</b>	<i>A Domestic Supply of Crucial Medical Isotopes: An Inside Look at Coqui's Race to Build It</i> ; Carmen I. Bigles; Coqui Pharma
<b>April</b>	<i>Grid Eye: Driving the Power Grids with Eyes Open</i> ; Dr. Yilu Liu; ORNL/UT Governor's Chair (ZOOM lecture)
<b>May</b>	<i>Measurements and Modeling, the Science of Climate Change</i> ; Peter Thornton; ORNL (ZOOM lecture)
<b>June</b>	<i>Corona Virus Research: How to Rapidly Discover Drugs Against COVID-19</i> ; Prof Jeremy Smith; UTK/ORNL (ZOOM lecture)
<b>July</b>	<i>Oak Ridge Local and Regional Natural Assets: A Natural Assets Guidebook for Oak Ridge and the Surrounding Area</i> ; Carol Evans; Exec Director legacy Parks Foundation; (ZOOM lecture)
<b>August</b>	<i>Addressing COVID-19 at ORNL: Leading in a Time of Crisis</i> ; John Powell and Bart Iddens; ORNL (ZOOM lecture)
<b>September</b>	<i>Evidence for a Nuclear Reactor at the Center of the Earth</i> ; Dan Hollenbach; retired ORNL (ZOOM lecture)
<b>October</b>	<i>Transformational Challenge Reactor Program at ORNL: 3D Printing a Nuclear Reactor</i> ; Dr. Kurt Terrani; ORNL (ZOOM lecture)
<b>November</b>	<i>How the Universe Got Its Wrinkles: the Cosmic Microwave Background and Baryon Acoustic Oscillations</i> ; Dr. Mike Guidry; UTK (ZOOM lecture)
<b>December</b>	No meeting in December

Some photos from our Jan-Mar 2020 ETEC-venue 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday Luncheon Meetings



As noted above FORNL normally offers its members a number of opportunities to participate in the community. Al Ekkebus has faithfully served as FORNL's coordinator of volunteers for the Bus Tours, AMSE Docents, and Tennessee Science Bowl judges and assistants. We look forward to the volunteer activities restarting post-pandemic.

In 2020, FORNL provided crucial support to an exciting and ongoing Weinberg initiative. Many of Alvin Weinberg's personal papers were donated by his family to the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge (CMOR). Rhonda Bogard, the daughter of the CMOR founder, Selma Shapiro, has undertaken the task to ensure that the Weinberg papers are preserved for future generations. ORNL volunteer support for this activity continued in 2020, with a FORNL Board member Connor Matthews, serving on the Project's Board of Directors. Phase I scanning and digitization is nearly complete. Other FORNL members are available to assist the archivist in understanding the context and significance of the documents.

With the formation of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MPNHP), FORNL is participating in planning events, encouraging volunteers, and adding support of the Park to our list of activities. "Scientific and Technological Advances", of which our membership has historical familiarity, continues to be a focus area for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

*"Scientific and technological advances made during the Manhattan Project in the pursuit of nuclear weapons contributed to progress in many areas, such as materials science, biology, nuclear medicine, nuclear energy, the nuclear Navy, supercomputing, precision machining, astronomy, and the Department of Energy's National Laboratory System."*

In 2020, FORNL paid membership was 101, including 48 life members. FORNL membership is open not just to retirees from ORNL, but also to others (there are over 200 on our email distribution list). Former and present employees of ORNL, and any other person, organization and company who have an interest in the Laboratory, its welfare, and its programs are welcome members. Many community members attend the luncheon lecture series, and some utilize our brief pre-lecture business meeting to promote important community activities.

One of the services that FORNL provides its members is arrangements for an Annual Visitor's Badge to the ORNL site. This enables our members to attend seminars and Distinguished Lectures at ORNL without needing to arrange access for each visit. Typically 40 to 50 of our

members avail themselves of this service every year. Early 2020 saw a change in the conduct of this program, with the Badge Requestor working directly with ORNL's electronic visitor control system. FORNL provides ORNL with a list of eligible names. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions ORNL suspended all visits to the Laboratory starting in March of 2020, so no new badge requests have been processed and existing visitation privileges have been suspended temporarily.

FORNL is supported by Financial Contributions from UT-Battelle, gifts, members' dues (still \$20 annually or \$200 for life), and in-kind contributions from *The Oak Ridger*, AMSE and The Soup Kitchen which caters the events. FORNL also now has the capability to accept matched donations from employers (such as Apple) which use Benevity Causes as a platform for employee giving. FORNL members greatly appreciate the continued support by UT-Battelle. During a normal year we would verbally acknowledge UT-Battelle as the sponsor of the Community Lecture Series in programs and announcements. Financial responsibility is maintained by FORNL's registration with the State of Tennessee and the IRS as a non-profit organization, and FORNL's promise in its Mission Statement to use our income to support activities of benefit to the community and ORNL.

FORNL also appreciates the American Museum of Science and Energy and ORAU for making their auditoriums available.

Carolyn Krause has been especially helpful in publicizing and summarizing our lecture programs in *the Oak Ridger*. The Board presented her with a Certificate of Recognition for this activity at one of our virtual lecture meetings.

In 2020 FORNL maintained an informative website ([www.fornl.info](http://www.fornl.info)) to keep members apprised of upcoming events and to share scientific and technical news from ORNL. FORNL has had an enthusiastic Webmaster, Shafik Iskander, who along with his son, Yousef, keeps the site up-to-date on at least a weekly basis. Dave McVicker provided interesting archival ORNL News excerpts from the Oak Ridge History Room on a monthly basis. FORNL's membership Team (Gloria Caton and Kathy Gant) also has constructed a display board for public events such as the Secret City Festival, our Community Lectures, and ORNL Employee Fairs. Unfortunately all three of these events were cancelled because of COVID-19.

Because of the hiatus in many FORNL activities the Board took the opportunity to upgrade many of our business practices. Among these are:

- Obtaining a permanent physical address for FORNL using the services of a local Oak Ridge UPS Center (1143 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Suite 107A, Oak Ridge, TN 37830). The UPS Center notifies the Board when mail is received at this address.

- Renewing our status as a non-profit organization with the State of Tennessee Secretary of State's office. This now requires a permanent address.
- Taking ownership of the web address FORNL.org, which will house the new website being designed by member Jim Rome. (At the time of this report's issuance the new **FORNL.org** website has been fully activated.)
- The intent to continue to livestream monthly lectures, even when we are back at ETEC. (Many thanks from Kent to John Gunning and others who helped me through the intricacies of ZOOM meetings and livestreaming!)

FORNL normally maintains an active calendar of meetings and sponsored events throughout the year. Unfortunately only a portion of the ORNL retirees and other community members take advantage of these opportunities. FORNL activities are generally located at ORNL or in the Oak Ridge community. Gaining members from the entire region, particularly Knoxville, is an ongoing and growing challenge. There is discussion of having some meetings in the Knoxville area. Locating retired members is also a continuing challenge. For reasons of privacy ORNL does not share contact lists for retired employees.

In a normal year FORNL participates in the ORNL Benefits Fair each year by providing a representative and a display, and also distributes information about FORNL. ORNL includes a FORNL brochure in the retirement package for each employee.

Finally, FORNL would like to recognize the East Tennessee Economic Council (ETEC) and the University of Tennessee Center in Oak Ridge for their willingness to provide a meeting location for both the monthly luncheon lectures and the FORNL Board Meetings. We are particularly appreciative of the outstanding support provided by Tracy Boatner and Nicole Allen of ETEC. We look forward to returning to this venue post-pandemic. Many of us have missed the opportunities for fellowship and group conversations with former work colleagues.

#### IN MEMORIAM

FORNL members & recent speakers who recently passed are:

David Mason 1/8/20      Dub Shults 1/3/21

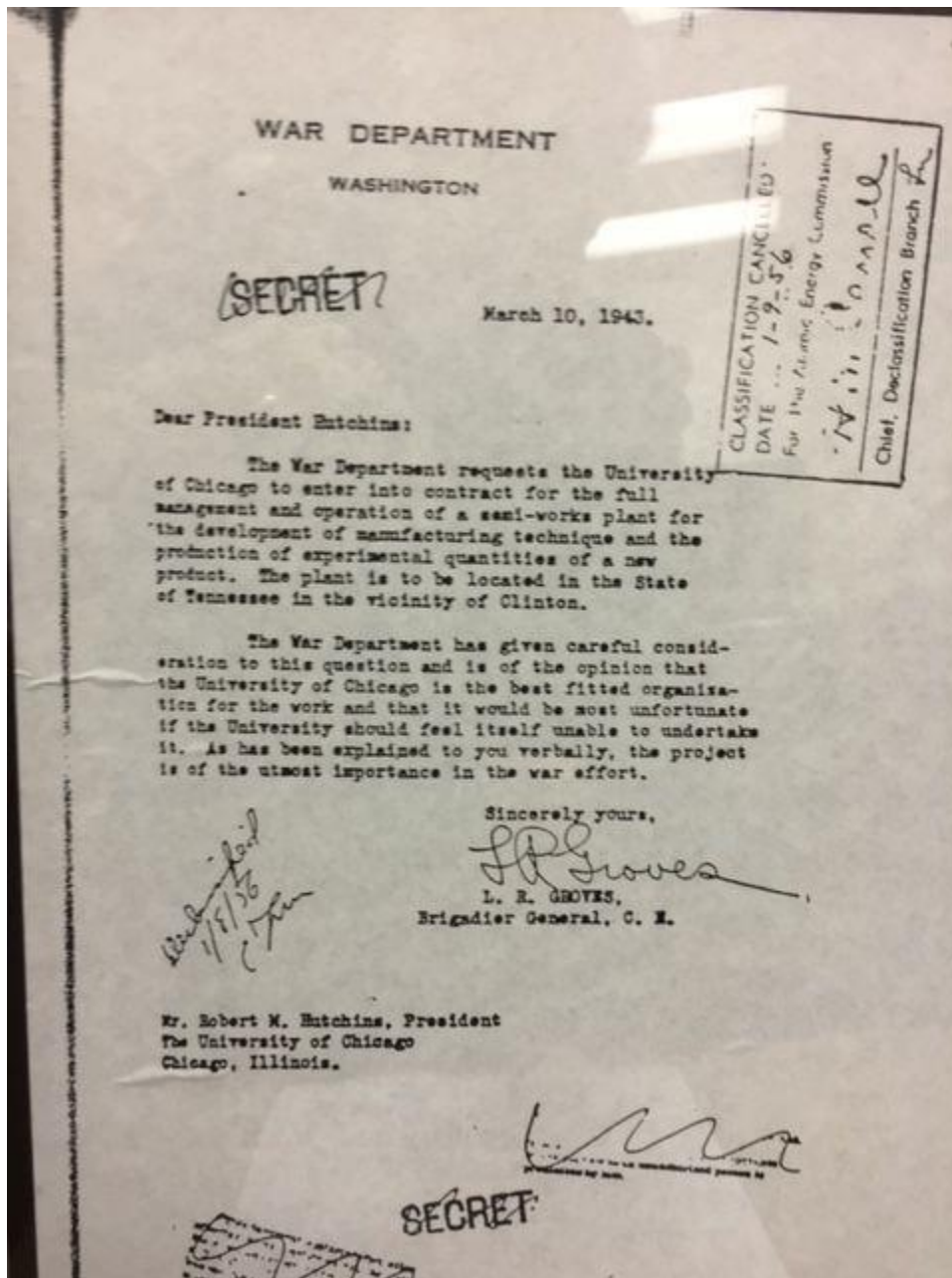
Jerry Olsen 1/5/21      C.W. Nestor, Jr. 1/11/21

Fred Sloop 1/20/21      Joe Lenhard 7/17/21

Emily Copenhaver 5/21/2019

A Special Note of Interest

Steve Stow recently brought to our attention a copy of a letter from the Manhattan Project that is essentially ORNL's "Birth Certificate". It is from General Leslie Groves and directs the President of the University of Chicago, Robert Hutchins, to establish a "semi-works" plant "for a new product" (plutonium) near Clinton, Tennessee. The Board and ORNL representative Wade Creswell are investigating how to display this historically significant declassified document.





## FORNL Officers March 2020 – March 2021

President, Kent Williams

Vice President, Gloria Caton

Secretary, John Gunning

Treasurer, Chuck Coutant

## Board of Directors (At Large)

Bob Compton

Al Ekkebus

Kathy Gant

David Mullins

Ellen Smith

Janet Swift

## Adjunct Board Members

Herb Krause

Robert Hightower Jr.

Dave McVicker

Connor Matthews

Steve Stow

## ORNL Liaison

Wade Creswell

## Webmaster

Shafik Iskander

## Past President

Jim Rushton

Editor: Kent A. Williams    Date: May 24, 2021