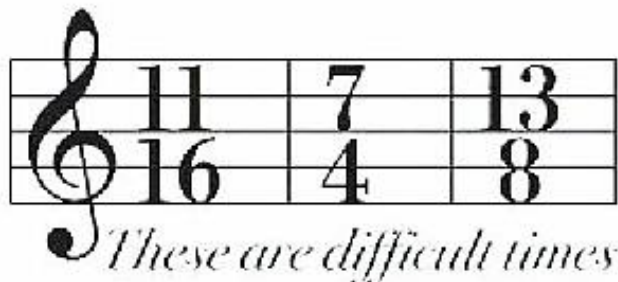


Alumni Association

OBERLIN
 COLLEGE OF CONSERVATORY


A Letter from your Class President:

When we graduated from Oberlin in 1969, we were energized to go forth and change the world for the better. Along with many of our class colleagues, we spent a lifetime serving the public and working for positive change. We worked hard with many successes and setbacks while we looked forward to years of gentle and enjoyable retirement.

But it hasn't exactly worked out as planned. It hardly seems like a good time to "retire" in the classic sense of the word because these are difficult times. A few challenges facing us today include: too many people experience hunger, changes due to climate crisis are producing floods and devastating fires, mental health challenges, increased threat of nuclear proliferation, mass shootings almost every week, and there are many other major problems to solve. What can we do?

During our 50th Reunion, I talked with any student willing to dialogue with me about what they are doing and planning to do to address the world's challenges. I asked them "how can our generation help and support you?" First, they all wanted help getting a job. I am still pondering how to set up a system for that to happen. It seems possible and even has happened. What really moved me were two seniors graduating this year who said they were weary of our generation's "*extreme criticism, skepticism, and negativity about the state of the world. This sense of hopelessness is not helpful and is a big downer,*" one of them stated. This persistent negativity of our generation and its effect on the younger generation was also mentioned in the Women's Breakfast. This comment made a big impression on me and I have worked since then to check my negativity and express more hope and focus on positive outcomes. Several said "*give money to organizations and efforts working for positive change. They all need money.*"

Good suggestions and what else can we do? Here are some suggestions to think about. As a good first step, just pay attention to what is happening in your world, at Oberlin, and around the world. What do you think about what is happening? What do you want to do? Of course, you can't do everything but you can perhaps at least talk about what's happening. We need a substantive increase in honest dialogues, especially with those that don't think like we do, in order to build collaboration and partnership for action or, at least, to build understanding.

Dialogue almost always leads to some kind of action. What kind of action? Mahatma Gandhi said, "*Be the change you wish to see in the world.*" Gandhi's words provide perhaps the best advice for action to create a better world for all of us.

As a reminder and an option for immediate action, it is time to nominate Oberlin graduates for Alumni Association Awards and to nominate alumni-elected trustee candidates.

- Oberlin Alumni Association awards <https://oberlin.wufoo.com/forms/s28574t1086b9x/>
- Alumni-elected trustee candidates <https://oberlin.wufoo.com/forms/mti687q1aumb22/>

In conclusion, I wake up every morning torn between a desire to change the world and just to enjoy it as it is. Oberlin graduates have always been good at multi-tasking and I think it is possible to do both. The Oberlin College website *Oberlin.edu* home page says "*Think one person can change the world? So do we.*"

I invite you to send us your suggestions of what we can do to make a better world while taking the time to enjoy retirement. Your opinion matters! Email me and I will compile the suggestions and share them.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season and a bright and healthy 2020!



Gael "Schwertman" Treesiwin

President of the Class of 1969

treesiwin@aol.com

Oberlin Alumni Association
phone: (440) 775-8692
email: alumni@oberlin.edu
65 East College Street, Suite 4
Oberlin, OH 44074