



MCRTA Newsletter

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August 25, 2022

President's Comments

By Larry Thompson



Greetings Members,

There are a number of beginnings we celebrate from the new year, opening day of baseball season, the beginning of the planting season and the beginning of the football season, but as educators, our favorite beginning has always been the start of the new academic year. I recall each year returning from a summer family vacation and going immediately into my classroom to prepare for the

new year.

As a Chemistry teacher, I joined Verle Monical, Steve Velloff, and Leo Wools straightening the store rooms, unboxing the new materials, and preparing new solutions to be used in laboratory experiments. When I started teaching Biology, Macy Pruitt authorized a budget of \$8,000 for the science department to upgrade equipment and materials in the Biology classrooms. Marv Mondy, Denny Ford and I enjoyed spending that money. One item purchased was a battery powered electronic calculator for about \$70.00.

While the preparation was necessary, the most important part of the new academic year was meeting the new students for the first time. All of us established lifelong friendships with many of our students as we pushed through our curricula to accomplish the goal to instill understanding of the academic areas we were challenged to teach.

John Cunningham wrote in the August 2019 newsletter, "While I was working, I willingly carried picket signs and walked picket lines to get a fair salary. During my career, I have been privy to negotiate from both sides of the table. When I retired I thought the vigil was over, but it seems the struggle for fair treatment never ends. Someone has to remain vigilant to ensure that our insurance and pension will remain protected." We observe the need to remain vigilant and IRTA President Bill Funkhouser at our unit meeting on September 8, will bring us up to date on efforts our state organization uses as it continues to protect our retirement benefits.

Frequently, I receive emails from the IRTA on issues which pertain to my health insurance benefit, state legislative considerations, and the IRTA PAC actions. Since the message is sent from a list, it is not possible for me to know who also receives these emails. I am going to prepare a list to be printed in this newsletter you can use to check to see if you also are receiving the same emails.

Larry Thompson
President Madison County I Unit 73 Retired Teachers Association

Calendar



- Sep 8** **Best Western Premier**
Breakfast, 8:30 a.m.
- Oct 13** **Liberty Bank**
Board Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- Dec 8** **Julia's at Eastgate**
Christmas Luncheon - 10:30 a.m.
- Mar 10** **Liberty Bank**
Board Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- Apr 13** **Castelli's**
Spring Luncheon - 10:30 AM

IRTA Mission Statement

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization of retired educators. The Association serves the needs and interests of its members through advocacy, education, cooperation and socialization in a flexible organizational structure.

Officers

- PresidentLarry Thompson
- Vice PresidentRon Mayhew
- SecretaryDebra Sheary
- TreasurerCheryl Champa

IRTA Breakfast Buffet

Date: Thursday, September 8, 2022
Place: Best Western Premier Hotel,
3559 College Ave, Alton, IL 62002
Price: \$17.00 includes tax and gratuity
Registration: 8:30 A.M.
Breakfast: 9:00
Meeting: 10:00

Program: Welcome New Retirees
Speaker: Elaine Kane, Assistant Superintendent,
ACUD#11
Speaker: Bill Funkhouser, President, IRTA
Menu: assorted pastries
fresh fruit salad
scrambled eggs - bacon - sausage
breakfast potatoes
biscuits and gravy
orange juice, coffee, tea

**If you are not on a calling list, call Bev Curlovic by
Monday, September 5 (618-466-0668) for a reservation.**

Phil Robbins Memorial Scholarship Committee Report

May 4, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

The committee met at The Post Commons. Members present: Ed Gray, Debbie Sheary, Larry Thompson, and Mary Pat Venardos. Kathy Bredenkoetter was absent. Cathy Droste attended representing The Alton Educational Foundation.

The committee agreed to take up a donation for a memorial for Phil Robbins through the Alton Education Foundation in the form of either a Brick, \$50, Block, \$550, or Bench, \$1500, dependent on the amount collected. The items are provided by Alton Memorial Sales. The committee will take up the collection at the next meeting of the local IRTA chapter at the Breakfast on September 8, 2022.

Larry Thompson will introduce under New Business the option of an annual donation to the Alton Educational Foundation in memory of those IRTA members who have passed the previous year.

Meeting adjourned 3:00 p.m.

Foundation Advisory Report August 4, 2022

From March to August 2022, 14 cards were sent to our members and colleagues.

We received a Thank You card from Dr. Norman Showers' daughter, Carole, for our donation in his memory to the IRTA Foundation

Get Well cards were sent to Harry and Cindy Mack.

Vernetta Caffey was congratulated on her selection to the 2022 YWCA Women of Distinction. Well deserved!

CONDOLENCES were sent to the Jan Hansen family on the loss of their son, Jesse; Pam Youngblood on the passing of her mother, Mary Lou McClain; Connie Durham on the loss of her sister-in-law, Patricia Taylor; Terry and Kay Durham for the loss of Terry's sister, Patricia Taylor; Patresa Parker and family on our loss of Gloria (3-11-22); the Bramstedt family on the passing of Christine (4-10-22); the Showers family on the loss of Norman (4-9-22); Jan Dunbar on the passing of her niece, Jamie Kindle; Shirley Aszman's family on our loss of Shirley(4-29-22); Larry Montgomery's family on our loss of Larry (5-20-22); Fran Shirrell on the passing of her husband, Roy; and Yvonne Mossman and family on our loss of Duane (5-30-22).

Our next gathering is our Breakfast meeting on September 8. It's our opportunity to welcome the new retirees!

Please call Susan Hansberry (618-466-1661) if you have information about our members. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Unit 1 Madison County Retired Teachers

Madison County I Unit 73 Retired Teachers Association Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2022 10:30 a.m.

Moonlight Restaurant, Fosterburg Road, Alton, IL 62002

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a flag was waved by IRTA President Bill Funkhouser.

A moment of silence was held to remember those who have passed since our last meeting: Larry Reid, Robin Lehr, Carolyn Lloyd, Paula Koliste, Rose Rhetta, Susanne Liles, Gloria Parker, Norman Showers, and Christine Bramstedt.

Recognition of our guests of honor was made by Larry Thompson: Dr. Kristie Baumbartner, Bill Funkhouser, Newly Retired Teachers (none present) and Newly Retired School Service Personnel (none present).

The meeting was called to order by President Larry Thompson at 11:00 a.m. Kristie Baumgartner was asked to attend and present an update on events and progress in the Alton Community School District #11. Kristie reported the following:

- \$18 Million project using working cash and Health Life Safety funds to renovate buildings. 3 year project includes:
 - Stadium adjacent to West Elementary: turf field, added scoreboard and 6 lane track.
 - Alton Middle School
 - Olin Building renovations to expand use of the building
 - Main Building – 1st/3rd floors renovated with ½ of 2nd floor to be finished this summer. Auditorium – expand the stage, new floor, new seating, new curtain
 - Auxiliary gym newly constructed and recently opened for use
 - Alton High School
 - Auxiliary gym more like a pole barn for practice and spill-over games.
- \$32 Million in ESER Funds – Cares Act due to COVID-19
 - Godfrey School renovations to return Early Childhood program to the building with the exception of the two EC classes held at Alton High School
 - Classroom Additions (2 each) at Gilson Brown and Lovejoy, eliminating portables
 - After school programs for K-8
 - Summer School for K-12 with high school being credit recovery focused.
 - Freshman on track classes creating smaller classes to support needier students.
 - K-1 lower class sizes
 - Truancy Case Managers to work with families to provide support
- Credit given to the board for their good stewardship of community tax funds, keeping the tax rate lower.
- Alton Education Association contract completed in 2 months.

Larry Thompson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2022 Executive Board Meeting. Larry noted a correction stating Gloria Lawrence is the membership chairperson. Donna Massey moved to approve with the correction and Pat King seconded. The motion was approved.

Larry Thompson asked Debbie Sheary to share the results of the committee for the Phil Robbins Memorial. Debbie Sheary explained the committee met twice and asked her to seek information regarding the options for a scholarship being developed through Alton High School or the Alton Educational Foundation. Debbie briefly explained the options available. The committee believed the scholarship was out of the realm of possibility for this organization as a perpetuating scholarship would require a great sum of money. Debbie read the committee's recommended motion: "for the Madison County I IRTA Unit 73 to take an annual collection (at the Spring meeting) to be donated to the Alton Educational Foundation." John Cunningham seconded the motion. A member asked what happened to the Phil Robbins Memorial? Larry Thompson suggested an amendment be added to include Phil Robbins' name to the IRTA donation. Larry clarified this would be only for this year. Other comments were made regarding when the donation should be taken. Some felt December was a better attended meeting and it should be then. Larry Thompson told the members the committee would take these suggestions back and return with another motion for the memorial. John Cunningham was asked to rescind his second and did so.

Lunch was served.

Cathy Droste was asked to speak on behalf of the Alton Educational Foundation. Cathy explained the many ways the 501C3 supports teachers and students in the Alton Community Unit School District #11. She had brochures that detailed some of the projects and options for donating.

Bill Funkhouser, IRTA President said there are avenues to donate through IRTA as well. He explained the nature of the Health Insurance law suit on behalf of the IRTA. The health insurance for retired teachers was certified at a lower rate. The amount paid by current teachers was reduced. IRTA wants to make sure funds will be there for future retirees. Bill noted that Pat King currently serves on the Nominations committee for the state IRTA. John Cunningham asked if the IRTA is endorsing a candidate for governor as elections approach. Bill explained the IRTA is a non-partisan organization and no particular party will be endorsed by rather candidates after they meet with IRTA regarding their recommendations for teacher related issues.

Larry Thompson adjourned the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Debbie Sheary, Recording Secretary.

Unit 1 Madison County Retired Teachers

Minutes

Madison County I Unit 73 Retired Teachers Association Executive Board Meeting

August 4, 2022, 3:30 p.m.

Liberty Bank, 3112 Godfrey Road, Godfrey, IL 62035

Members Present: Beverly Curlovic, Jan Dunbar, Ed Gray, Debbie Sheary, and Larry Thompson

Members Absent: Cheryl Champa, Susan Hansberry, Gloria Lawrence, Donna Massey, and Ron Mayhew

Additions to the Agenda: None presented

Larry acknowledged we did not have a quorum and asked if we should convene at another time. Those present suggested we hold the meeting without conducting business.

Minutes of the previous board meeting: Minutes for the March 10 Board Meeting were approved after a correction was made during the April 14, 2022 unit meeting.

Minutes of the previous unit meeting: Minutes from the April 14, 2022 unit meeting were reviewed. They will be voted on at the September 8 unit meeting for approval.

Treasurer's Report: Larry Thompson presented the Treasurer's Report prepared by Cheryl Champa. The report encompassed February – June 30, 2022. The report will be approved at the September 8 unit meeting. Larry will ask Cheryl about auto deduct for local dues. Also, a question as to when we receive the funds collected by TRS as auto deduct? The audit committee of Jan Dunbar and Susan Hansberry, will perform the audit.

Foundation Advisory Report: Larry presented a report from Susan Hansberry. From March to August 2022, 14 cards were sent to our members and colleagues.

Legislative Report: Ed Gray gave an update on the IRTA lawsuit against IL for not funding health insurance for retired teachers. The key language in the constitution protecting IRTA insurance is “shall not be diminished,” with the key word being “shall.” It is wait and see at this point.

Membership: No report. Larry reminded everyone to invite recent retirees to IRTA meetings.

Information Services: No report.

Meeting locations for 2022: Unit membership meetings: September 8, 8:30 a.m., Best Western Premier; December 8, 10:30 a.m., Julia's at Eastgate Plaza.

Unfinished Business: Phil Robbins Memorial Committee: Minutes from the committee meeting shared and clarified to include designating the September unit meeting for the proposed annual collection for the Alton Educational Foundation. The committee meeting minutes will be included in the newsletter so members will have prior notice of the collection for Phil Robbins' memorial. Recruitment of 2022 Retirees: Larry said he had no responses from the letter he sent to recent retirees. He plans to call each individual retiree.

New Business: Summer Breakfast Meeting will be held Thursday, September 8, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. at the Best Western Premier, 3559 College Avenue, Alton, IL 62002. Bev Curlovic and Jan Dunbar have arranged for 8:30 registration, 9:00 meeting, 10:00 breakfast @ \$17 each.

Meeting adjourned: 4:20 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Debbie Sheary.

Unit 1 Madison County Retired Teachers

**Madison County Retired Teacher Association #1
(Illinois Retired Teachers Association - Unit 73
Treasurer's Report
February 1, 2022 - June 30, 2022**

Balance brought forward (checking):		\$5,489.65
Received:		
6 Local annual dues paid @ \$10.00	60.00	
Meals for April Meeting	930.00	
1 No show meal April meeting	15.00	
Interest received for checking	1.12	
Total receipts:		1,006.12
Balance on hand:		6,495.77
Disbursed:		
#197 Foundation Memorials - D. Adams, B. Starky, C. York, C. Lloyd, P. Koliste, R. Rhetta, and S. Liles	130.00	
#198 Reimbursement to Nancy Leach for dues overpayment	10.00	
#199 Beverly Curlovic - reimbursement for cake and supplies for April lunch	48.21	
#200 Castelli's for meals @ April meeting	931.07	
#201 Foundation Memorials - Dr. Showers, C. Bramstedt, G. Parker, S. Aszman, D. Mossman, and L. Montgomery	120.00	
Total disbursed:		1239.28
Balance on hand:		5,256.49
Investments		
Life Dues Funds:		
1st MidAmerica CU (CD 103)		14,760.88
Dividend received 03/07/2022		81.89
Dividend received 06/07/2022		84.18
Balance: (Matures 05/07/2023)		14,926.95
General Funds:		
1st MidAmerica CU (CD 102)		1,819.59
Dividend received 04/07/2022		2.59
Balance:		1,822.18
Share Account:		5.00
Total Investments:		16,754.13

Madison County I Unit 73 Retired Teachers Association members, This is a list of emails, received by the organization president for the past two months. Please check to see if you are also receiving these emails. If you wish, the email can be forwarded to our entire membership since the information contained could be of interest to all of us.

8/15/22 Illinois Retired Teachers Association
Repeal the WEP/GPO

8/15/22 Illinois Retired Teachers Association
Possible Change in TRAIL Health Insurance

8/15/22 IRTA eNewsletter - Good Dog News
Legislative Update and more

8/10/22 Illinois Retired Teachers
Coffee with Jim Bachman, IRTA Executive Director

8/1/22 Illinois Retired Teachers Association
Informational Healthcare Follow-up

7/29//22 Illinois Retired Teachers
Message from IRTA PAC
Chairperson Sharon Teefey

7/13/22 Illinois Retired Teachers Association
IRTA's Speed Networking/Meet and Greet/Virtual Happy Hour

6/30/22 Illinois Retired Teachers Association
2022 Area 6 Conference (June 30, 2022) Today

Membership

Social Benefits of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA)

- Maintaining friendships with colleagues
- Three delicious meals while we hold meeting in April, September, and December
- Entertainment from the Alton Schools Music program and/or local speakers

IRTA is the only organization that works to preserve retired teachers benefits; an ongoing struggle. Legislative updates are given at meetings, in the state newsletter, on our website, and in our local newsletter

IRTA Foundation

- Provides scholarships
- Provides mini grants to current teachers for classroom projects
- Provides supplemental funding to teachers who receive very low pensions or provides assistance with expenses

AMBA (Association Member Benefits Advisors) is a member benefit program

- A Benefits Review
- Dental & Vision Insurance
- MASA (Air & Ground Ambulance Plan)
- Easy Issue Life Policy
- Fixed Index Annuity
- Home Health Care
- Long Term Care
- Cancer, Heart & Stroke Policy
- Tax Deferred Annuity

Dues Options for IRTA for 2022

- Local Chapter Dues - \$10.00 annually or a lifetime option at \$100
- State Dues Options
 - Dues Deduct Members - have \$2.50 deducted each month from your TRS pension
 - 5 Year Membership - \$175
 - Life Members - one time fee of \$400
 - Annual Members - pay \$38 each year (recurring)
 - Associate Annual Members - pay \$25 each year (recurring)
(available to those not drawing a pension from TRS)
 - Associate Life Members - one time fee of \$125
(available to those not drawing a pension from TRS)

You may do the math, but the local dues lifetime membership is a good deal if you plan to live more than ten years after retirement. The state dues lifetime economic value begins at 13.33 years after retirement. The IRTA prefers members choose the \$2.50 monthly deduction.