

UNIT 1 MADISON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS NEWSLETTER



**Kathy Bredenkoetter
&
Sherry Rexford
Co-Editors**

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2020**

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President's Message

Kathy Bredenkoetter

Dear Members,

Hello All! I hope this newsletter finds you in good spirits and in good health. We recently had an Executive Board meeting via Zoom and want to keep you informed on the work of our Local IRTA.

Sadly, the passing of Phil Robbins is on our minds. He was a man of unfailing community spirit and selfless dedication to the students and teachers in the Alton School District. His passing has been felt by many as we recall his determination as our Union President, ALT Board Member, State IRTA President and local IRTA president. He was willing to take on any job that could positively impact his community.

Donna Massey sent me a beautiful reflection on Phil's contribution to education and educators. With her permission I have included her words in my comments.

Calendar of Events

General Membership Meetings:

- ◆ April, 2021 TBD
- ◆ Thursday Sept 9, 2021 TBD
- ◆ Thursday Dec 9, 2021 TBD

Reflections on the Life of Phil Robbins

I am especially saddened by the passing of Phil Robbins. I sat beside him at the negotiating table for 20 as we negotiated contracts for the AEA. We stood at the Stratford Hotel looking out the window with tears in our eyes wondering what to do when the Board threatened to pull our insurance during the eighteen-day strike.

Phil was a teacher advocate like no other! He would go into negotiations with his briefcase bearing a sign which read, "My heart is in public schools and so are my children" forcing the chief negotiator for the Board to continually look at that sign.

Under Phil's leadership the AEA negotiated the first wall-to-wall contract which included ALL staff.

After retirement, Phil became the President of IRTA. He never stopped advocating for teachers.

If a union is needed in heaven, Phil Robbins is "already on it!"

Donna Massey

Beautiful Sentiments, Donna.

The Executive Committee has discussed the possibility of making a permanent tribute to Phil. Recommendations would be welcomed. If you have an idea, please let us know.

We also discussed the possibility of holding a General Membership meeting in late April 2021. We are looking into outdoor venues. We are optimistic (hopeful) that Covid will be addressed by that time.

If you have an opportunity to speak with recent retirees, please encourage them to join the local and state IRTA. Both organizations are working to ensure your retirement benefits.

Stay safe, stay positive and look for the joy in the moment.

Kathy

Minutes: Brenda Vernatti, Secretary

Madison County 1 Unit #73 Executive Committee of IRTA Meeting November 12, 2020 Zoom Meeting

In attendance: Kathy Bredenkoetter, Ron Mayhew, Larry Thompson, John Cunningham, Cheryl Champa, Sherry Rexford, Patricia King, Jan Dunbar, Brenda Evans, Brenda Vernatti

- Kathy Bredenkoetter shared a letter that was written by Donna Massey regarding the passing of Phil Robbins. Cheryl Champa sent memorials for three members that have died.
- Cheryl Champa, Treasurer, provided information on the most current budget information. The report will be shared in the Newsletter.
- Discussion was had about a give-away for student(s) in Phil Robbins' name.
- Legislative Report – IRTA/PAC has reported that 5,567 annuitants presently have \$1.00 deducted from TRA for PAC.
- Membership as of 10/28/2020 – 163,115 active members from across the state. FYI – the oldest retiree is 109 and the oldest active teacher is 81.
- Information Services – New State website: irta-infoservices.weebly.com
- Foundation Advisory Report - \$318,259 has been raised since September 2020.
- General Membership reminders will be sent to pay dues.
- Dates, locations and possible adjustments to General Membership Meetings were discussed. Information will be provided at a later time.
- Website: Madco1RRTA.weebly.com

Treasurer's Report: Cheryl Champa

February 1, 2020-July 31, 2020

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Balance brought forward (checking): | \$3,893.64 |
| Total Received: | \$1,766.07 |
| Total Disbursed: | \$1,131.89 |
| Balance on hand: | \$4,527.82 |

August 1, 2020-October 31, 2020

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Balance brought forward (checking): | \$4,527.82 |
| Total Received: | \$ 130.58 |
| Total Disbursed: | \$ 90.00 |
| Balance on hand: | \$4,568.40 |

Many of you usually pay for your dues at our meetings. At this time when we are not able to meet, I am requesting that your 2021 dues be sent to me by mail at my home address. Annual dues are \$10, Lifetime membership is \$100 or \$90 for current year retirees, and \$50 for members 75 of age or older. Please make your check payable to Madison County RTA #1 and mail your check to:

Cheryl Champa
224 Maywood Dr.
East Alton, IL 62024

If you have questions, please call me at my home phone number: 618/258-0653.

Website Update

Larry Thompson

Our local IRTA unit has a website to provide information to our members. Our newsletter also provides information and both methods of communication should contain the same information. The web address is on the first page of our newsletter and clicking on the URL takes a viewer directly to the Unit's website (<https://madco1irta.weebly.com>). There is also an email address at the top of the newsletter.

You will find information on recently deceased members on the NEWS page.

Ron Mayhew is maintaining the email list with a data base of all members and sends the newsletter and other messages to this list.

Recently the Unit's By-Laws were retyped to make an electronic copy. The By-Laws will be posted to the website. They may be printed out, however, the electronic version should be just as useful for reference.