

Shelby County Retired Teachers Newsletter

September 2021



Findlay High School

President James Sparks
Vice-Pres. Nancy Wilhelm
Secretary Ione Elliott
Treasurer Kim Sparks

Volume 8 Issue 2

Greetings Shelby County retired teachers,

I hope that you have been enjoying your summer which was much better than the last due to lifting of most of the Covid-19 restrictions as infection rates had greatly decreased. Recently the appearance of the delta variant has raised infections and hospitalization again bringing us back to taking familiar precautionary measures to protect ourselves and those around us. The SCRTA officers are keeping these things in mind as we attempt to safely come back to face-to-face meetings after over a year of meeting online.

A Message from the President



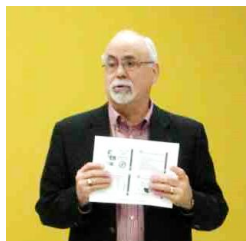
On September 1, 2021 we will return to the Army Corps of Engineers' Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center for a TRS update. We are excited to see you in person again. Please rest assured that we have reserved the large meeting room that will allow us to socially distance ourselves safely. We also ask that everyone wear a face mask per CDC recommendations.

The state IRTA convention is scheduled for October 18 & 19, 2021. Several of the SCRTA officers are planning to attend to represent our county and vote on issues that pertain to our membership. We are also bringing a silent auction basket featuring donated items from local businesses to showcase our area and raise money to protect our retirement with legal representation. We are very grateful to Lithia Springs Marina, Robin Hood Woods, Monical's Pizza, Starbucks, Willow Ridge Winery and Arpeggio Winery for their generous contributions totaling nearly \$500 in value!

Finally, we have begun discussions for future meeting presentations that will include local entrepreneurs sharing their expertise and experience. Please do not hesitate to contact any one of the officers with suggestions or questions regarding retired teachers of Shelby County. We are here to serve you and assist you in any way we can.

Rich Frankenfeld

Director of Outreach
Teachers' Retirement
System of Illinois



Rich will speak to us about:

- TRS Investment Return
- State Revenues
- State Programs to Reduce Unfunded Liability
- Legislative updates
- Retiree Health Insurance

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association could well be in the middle of another lawsuit. We last sued Governor Quinn for trying to reduce the pension of Tier I recipients by signing Senate Bill 1. The case went all of the way to the Supreme Court and we won. Another battle may be ensuing concerning our insurance. No worries for you as your insurance is safe and the state is paying their share of your premium. At question is whether enough money was put into the health insurance system. LaVonne Chaney, Legislative Chair, will have an update at the September meeting.

SCRTA Meeting

**Wednesday,
September 1
9:00 am**

Lake Shelbyville
Visitor Center
Program: Rich
Frankenfeld

Feel free to bring your own
beverage. We will provide snacks.



News from TRS

Financial

>>> In recent months, assets in the TRS Investment Portfolio have reached record levels, taking advantage of a surging national economy that broke free of last year's COVID-19 downturn. As of May 31, TRS managed **assets totaling \$62.2 billion – a record for the System** and a 23.1 percent increase in assets in the last year. TRS held \$50.5 billion at the end of May last year and closed fiscal year 2020 with \$51.5 billion. For the 12-month period that ended in March, TRS performance was a positive 24.3 percent, net of fees.

>>> All public pension systems lost money during the January-March quarter of fiscal year 2020. But compared to similar public pension systems, TRS ranked among the nation's leaders in its ability to preserve assets.

Leadership

>>> R. Stanley Rupnik, an 18-year veteran of TRS, was appointed June 25 as the new TRS Executive Director and Chief Investment Officer (CIO) by the System's Board of Trustees. Rupnik has served as acting executive director since August of 2020 while retaining his previous role as CIO. He joined TRS in April 2003 as director of investments and was named CIO in November of 2004. He previously served TRS as acting executive director between 2009 and 2011. The Board voted unanimously to appoint Director Rupnik and conclude a nationwide search for a new leader at TRS, which is the 40th largest public pension system in the United States.

>>> After eight years on the TRS Board, Trustee Mark A. Bailey of Palos Park is retiring. Trustee Bailey will be replaced on the Board this summer by Trustee-elect Joseph Blomquist of Elgin. Incumbent trustees Fred Peronto of Elmhurst and Larry Pfeiffer of Carlinville will begin new four-year terms on the Board this summer. Both were unopposed for re-election to new terms this spring. **(Pfeiffer attended Shelbyville High School.)**

Insurance

>>> The annual Benefit Choice Period for Teachers' Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP) participants was held May 1 through June 1, 2021. The TRAIL Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MAPD) Open Enrollment Period for the 2022 plan year will be held this fall from mid-October through mid-November. Most TRIP members who are eligible for Medicare Parts A and B are required to enroll in one of the TRAIL MAPD plans offered in her/his county of residence in order to keep TRIP insurance coverage. In the fall, CMS will send out information about the TRAIL Program. If you are already enrolled in TRAIL, you have two options. **If you want to make a change to your TRAIL insurance coverage** or add a dependent, the fall Open Enrollment Period is the time when you can make that change. **If you want to maintain your current TRAIL coverage**, you don't have to do anything. Your insurance coverage will automatically continue as it is in 2022. Visit the Total Retiree Advantage Illinois (TRAIL) Program page on the Central Management Services website at MyBenefits.illinois.gov for more information.

In June it was announced that the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) and Teachers Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP) will both be receiving the amounts proposed at Governor Pritzker's budget address:

- Teachers' Retirement System of Illinois: \$5,693,707,000
- Teachers' Retirement Insurance Program: \$143,369,000

Stay informed by visiting both state and local websites.

<https://www.shelbycountyretiredteachers.com> and <https://www.irtaonline.org>



The annual **Area 5 Conference** was held on June 22. We normally meet in Effingham, but this year the conference was held via Zoom. If you are interested in watching a video recording of the conference, you can find one on the IRTA website. It lasts 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Under the Members Only tab go to Trips and Activities. Click on Area 5 Conference Presentation Recording.

Speakers included IRTA President John Flaherty, Vice President Bill Funkhouser, IRTA Executive Director Jim Bachman, IRTAPAC chair Ed Wollet, and TRS Trustees Larry Pfeiffer and Doug Strand. Larry Newman, AMBA Regional Vice President, discussed benefits offered to our members, highlighting the new Fixed Income Annuity.

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation awards **six \$1,500 scholarships** to incoming juniors or seniors in college that are pursuing a degree in education. Our Area 5 recipient is Madisyn Dickens of Sullivan, IL. She is a senior at Illinois State University where she is pursuing her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education.

The 2021 **IRTA biennial convention** will take place this year at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, IL on October 18th and 19th. Topics to be covered include information on vaccines, how to help protect your identity, and information on Making Changes to Move into the Future. Please contact Jim Sparks or LaVonne Chaney if you would be interested in attending.

SCRTA News

We hope you will join us for our **meeting on Wednesday, September 1** at the Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center. Our next meeting will be November 3, also at the Visitor Center. We hope to have our legislators, Chapin Rose and Brad Halbrook, at that meeting. Any changes will be announced on our website and in the November newsletter.

You are receiving this SCRTA newsletter because you are a member of IRTA. Thank you for your continued support through your **membership**. (If you pay your dues annually and would like to save \$8 a year, you may want to switch to "Dues Deduct" on the IRTA website.) Several years ago IRTA financed the court battle to save the 3% cost-of-living for all retired teachers. The time may come again when we will have to finance another fight to keep our pension and benefits intact. Consider checking with your retired colleagues to see if they are also contributing by being a member of IRTA, the only state-wide organization solely dedicated to protecting your pension.

I'd like to ask you to consider also becoming a member of SCRTA. We work hard to keep you informed of news that affects your pensions. We only ask for \$5 in return. Work on the website and the 4 meetings a year are donated, but other expenses such as postage for newsletters and the memorials for deceased members are covered solely by our local dues. Local membership is often something you just put off until later. Why not take a minute right now and send your local dues to Ginny Hostetler at 1014 W. N. Fourth Street, Shelbyville, IL 62565. Dues are \$5 a year (or you can pay \$100 for a lifetime membership).

If you are getting this newsletter through the US Postal Service and are willing to get it by email, please let Nancy Wilhelm know (njwilhelm@yahoo.com).

It would be a great money-saver for the local organization.

We would like to welcome **new members** from the past few years:

John Erwin
Brenda Bogart
Ben Caplinger

Connie Dotson
Tammie Vickery
Carol Bressner

Janet Schultz
Melinda White

In Memorium

Phyllis Mathias passed away on June 21, 2021. She taught for 8 years in Decatur & 26 years in Moweaqua. She also held several offices in the SCRTA.

A donation will be made to the IRTA Foundation in her honor.