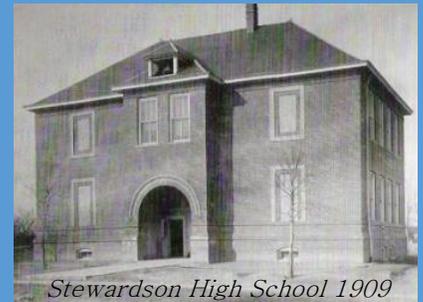




Shelby County Retired Teachers Assoc. Newsletter



Shelby County Retired Teachers Association
June 2022
Volume 9, Issue 2

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

A Note from the President

Happy Spring everyone. I hope that you are enjoying the rollercoaster ride of some of the latest weather we've been having lately in central Illinois. 90+°F one day and 50 °F the next. We continue to have escalating fuel and grocery prices, but as retired teachers we generally don't have to be driving much and are eating a lot of our meals at home. Hopefully things will get better sooner than later. Try not to be overwhelmed with the news and political chaos. Focus on those things that make you happy and your loved ones. These things give me a great sense of accomplishment and joy.

Our June 1st meeting is right around the corner and promises to be a great one with two presenters focusing on some school history & well-being. We encourage not just retired teachers from Shelby County but also Christian County to join us at the beautiful Army Corps of Engineers Lake Shelbyville Visitors Center. You can join us virtually through a Zoom meeting invitation that will be emailed out soon and can be found on our webpage. The Area 5 Virtual Conference scheduled for 6/29 will have messages from many of the IRTA officers besides a prize drawing for those in attendance. A link for registration and agenda will be emailed out soon and on our webpage.

Finally, we are encouraging your involvement for our first ever Monical's Pizza fund raiser on July 19th. There will be flyers distributed in June that can be brought to Monical's all day on July 19th that will signify a donation of 20% of sales to the Shelby County Retired Teachers Association. We plan to utilize these funds to help teachers in the classroom.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any of our officers should you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or needs that we should know about. We enjoy your involvement in our cause to keep our retired teachers informed and to promote creative teachers in today's classrooms.

Sincerely,
James Sparks

June Meeting

Lake Shelbyville
Visitors Center

Wednesday, June 1

**Social Time at 8:45
followed by
9:00 program and
business meeting**

**Light refreshments
provided**

Our speakers will be Donna Lupton and Cheri Burcham. Donna is with the Shelby County Historical Society and will be talking about the history of schools in Shelby County. Cheri is the Family Life Educator for the 5-county U of I Extension Office. She will speak on "Happy Hacks for More Positivity and Improved Well-being".



Shelby County News

Dates to Remember:
Meetings: Sept. 7 & Nov. 2
SCRTA Fundraiser: July 19

Welcome to New Members

Paula Bitzer
Sarah Gentry
Sheryl Rincker

April Meeting

SCRTA met on April 6 at the Lake Shelbyville Visitors Center with members joining us in person and through Zoom. John Van Voorhis won the door prize of a Monical's family pleaser. The program featured two speakers.



Yolanda Nation, the U of I Extension Youth Development Program Coordinator, works with nearly 400 children around the county through 4-H as well as outreach activities in schools. She showed us many community service projects that county youth are involved in.



Joe Houk spoke about Shelbyville Police Department's new K-9 unit. The dog will be chosen soon, then go through extensive training with its handler. Its duties include sniffing out drugs and other evidence as well as tracking suspects and missing persons. We hope to have Joe's new K-9 partner back for a program in 2023.

SCRTA Fundraiser

SCRTA is working to raise money to help support Shelby County teachers in their classrooms. On **July 19** Monical's Pizza in Shelbyville will donate 20% of their sales to our cause. Diners will need to present a flyer (paper or digital), which we will be distributing. We may need volunteers to help that day as well as to distribute flyers ahead of time (possibly just by sharing on your Facebook page). Let Jim Sparks know if you would be willing to help. You can also help by spreading the word or just by eating at Monical's on the 19th. Take a moment right now to mark it on your



Stay informed by visiting state and local websites. The SCRTA website has information on our county meetings as well as IRTA, TRS, and current legislation.

- <https://www.shelbycountyretiredteachers.com>
- <https://www.irtaonline.org/>
- <https://www.trsil.org/>

In Memorium

Tom Brachbill passed away on May 13. He began teaching Biology at Shelbyville High School in 1963 and later served as principal at the high schools in Beecher City and Cowden-Herrick.

A donation to IRTA Foundation will be made in his honor.



Coffee with Jim

Coffee with Jim was built to connect, listen, and share topics for retired educators and retirees in general. It is hosted by Jim Bachman, Executive Director, Illinois Retired Teachers Association.

If you'd like to join the monthly Online Video Meeting via Zoom, go to www.irtaonline.org for the link. Upcoming meetings are at 9:30 on 7/14, 8/11, 9/8, 10/13, 11/10, and 12/8.

Subscribe to IRTA's newsletter "Good Dog News". In addition to Legislative Updates and other news from IRTA, it includes articles reprinted from outside sources that are of interest to retirees. This month's articles included "High inflation continues to point to bigger Social Security cost-of-living adjustment in 2023" from CNBC Personal Finance, as well as articles from Personal Finance, Nerdwallet, and Forbes.

The Annual Area Conferences have been changed to virtual conferences rather than live again this year. Our Area 5 Conference will be on Wednesday, June 29 beginning at 9:30. After Opening Remarks and introductions by Area 5 Representative Jim Barr, there will be presentations from the following:

- President Bill Funkhouser
- Executive Director Jim Bachman, Contract Lobbyist Andrew Bodewes, & Government Affairs Coordinator Courtney Hayes - Legislative Update
- Sharon Teefey - IRTAPAC Committee
- Bill Funkhouser - IRTA Foundation
- TRS Trustee Doug Strand - TRS Update
- Roger Hampton - Nominations Committee Report
- AMBA Regional Vice President Larry Newman - IRTA Member Benefits
- Jim Barr - Closing Remarks and Wheel of Names giveaways

Instructions on how to register will be posted on the IRTA website as well as the SCRTA website.

Videos available on the IRTA website:

- Wine Making Video with IRTA Vice President Larry Pfeiffer
- 2022 Out-of-State Virtual Meeting Video

BENEFIT CHOICE PERIOD FOR TRIP HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE PLANNED IN MAY

The annual Benefit Choice Period for Teachers' Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP) participants is planned for May 1-May 31, 2022. TRS will post updates about the Benefit Choice Period on their website.

This open enrollment period **is not for members currently enrolled in the State of Illinois Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MAPD) Plan-Total Retiree Advantage Illinois (TRAIL).** The open enrollment period for TRAIL participants will be held in the fall.

Benefit Choice is the time to make changes in TRIP coverage and to enroll yourself and eligible dependents. TRS members and their dependents who have previously opted out of the Teachers' Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP) can re-enroll in the program if they wish. Re-enrollment is allowed only during the annual open enrollment period. **If you do not want to change your coverage, you do not have to do anything.** Your current coverage will continue.

Remember: This is TRIP coverage for younger retirees not eligible for medicare. The Medicare Advantage TRAIL program that medicare-age retirees participate in will have enrollment in the fall.



The Primary Election on Tuesday, June 28 is an important one. Voters will choose candidates for U.S. Senate & House, State Senate & House, Illinois Governor, other Illinois Executive Offices, County Board, County Offices, and judges. If you are voting in person, check to see if your polling place has changed. The first day to vote early at the county clerk's office and send in vote by mail ballots is May 19. If you are voting early, whether in person or by mail, be sure you know what the rules and deadlines are.

Legislative Update

Activity in Springfield since our April meeting:

Illinois hired over 5,700 teachers, more in a single year than in the past five years combined, the Illinois State Board of Education said. Despite the increase, there are at least 2,100 teacher vacancies, according to the board. "The data show Illinois has accomplished tremendous success in strengthening the teacher pipeline in Illinois and attracting the best and the brightest to this incredible profession," State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen Ayala said.

HB4246 (Scherer) provides that individuals who have a lapsed Professional Educator License need only pay a \$50 penalty, down from \$500, to have their license reinstated. Additionally, it provides that retired teachers returning to the profession are not required to pay a registration fee. The law is effective immediately.

HB4292 (Morgan) extends the pension buyout program through June 30, 2026, with \$1 billion available for buyouts. This allows retirees to receive payments at a faster rate while reducing their annual cost of living adjustments, essentially allowing retirees to access their pension funds earlier. The program was originally set to end in 2024.

Pritzker said the program has already been accessed by 4,500 state retirees, saving the government over \$1.4 billion in pension liabilities, with more savings to come. In addition to the buyout program, the FY23 budget signed in April includes an extra \$500 million payment to the state pension fund on top of their legally required annual contribution. The payments are estimated to save taxpayers \$1.8 billion in long-term liabilities.

On April 19 Gov. Pritzker signed the \$46.5 billion balanced budget into law, which will go into effect July 1st, the start of the fiscal year. The plan includes \$500 million pension paydown; \$1 billion to the state's "rainy day" fund which currently has a balance of just \$27 million; and an estimated \$1.8 billion in tax relief, much of which is temporary. Another \$685 million would fund one-time direct rebate checks at \$50 per individual and \$100 per dependent, up to three, for individuals earning \$200,000 or less or joint filers earning \$400,000 or less. The state's 1% sales tax on groceries will be suspended through June 2023, and a planned increase in the state's fuel tax, which currently sits at 39 cents per gallon, will not take effect until at least the new year. Revenues for the current fiscal year were about \$5 billion higher than originally budgeted last year, creating surpluses that allowed for the flexibility in the FY 2023 spending plan. The certified funding amounts for the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) and the Teachers Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP) are:

TRS- \$5,893,732,209 TRIP- \$106,328,858

SCRTA Finances and Mailings – **Please Read**

If you are receiving this newsletter by postal mail and would consider getting it by email, contact Nancy Wilhelm at njwilhelm@yahoo.com. Our postage bill is over \$100 a year. It would be great to send it for free to as many members as possible.

And usually once a year we check to see that emails are making it into your inbox and not going to a spam folder. We ask you to simply **send a reply now to njwilhelm@yahoo.com saying "got it"**. Later in the summer we'll be making calls to those who we don't hear from to double-check.

If you aren't a member of the local organization, please consider joining. You can send your payment to Ginnie Hostetler, 1014 W. North Fourth Street, Shelbyville, IL 62565. Dues money is used to make donations to the IRTA Foundation in memory of our deceased members. Your dues also make it possible to send out the newsletter 4 times a year. \$5.00 Annual Membership \$100.00 Lifetime Membership