



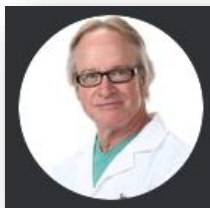
# SCRTA Newsletter



Shelby County Retired Teachers Association  
November 2023  
Volume 10 Issue 4

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

## President's Message



Greetings to all our dear Shelby County retired teachers. It's hard to believe that only a couple of months remain in 2023! The leaves are changing color to give us beautiful vista views everywhere. The chill is in the air, but yard maintenance has diminished giving us time to prepare for the upcoming holiday season. I hope that all of you are doing well and realize that you have a strong friendship established with the members of SCRTA. If there is anything we can do to assist you, all you need to do is reach out.

The officers of SCRTA have been quite busy preparing for our final regular meeting of the year on November 1, 2023 at 9:00 am at the Lake Shelbyville Visitors Center. We are gearing up for the second year presenting mini grants to the six school districts in Shelby County. We have had some fantastic fund raising events, one hosted by Possum Lodge this past August and the upcoming Monical's Community Day on 11/1/23 that we hope you will do your best to promote.

LaVonne Chaney, Kimberly Sparks and I attended the Biennial IRTA Convention at the Crown Plaza in Springfield, IL on October 16th & 17th. The focus of the convention was on proposed constitution changes. The keynote speaker was Mr. Thomas Morris, an American philosopher and former professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. His message to us all focused on making lemonade when we are given lemons in a very moving way. Hopefully we might have a chance to share his presentation at one of our upcoming meetings. We honored Ione Elliot as our unit's special stand out member this year. LaVonne Chaney was elected as the IRTA Executive Secretary.

I wish you all well and I am proud to represent our little neck of the woods in Springfield. Please feel free to reach out with any questions, concerns or needs that you may have.

Jim Sparks  
[jsparks7914@gmail.com](mailto:jsparks7914@gmail.com)  
(217) 259-2669

## November Meeting

**Wednesday, November 1**

**Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center**

8:45 - Snacks/Visiting

9:00 - Program

Our program will feature  
Sen. Steve McClure who represents  
us in the Illinois General Assembly

## SCRTA Meetings

In September our program featured two speakers – Joe Houk from the Shelbyville Police Department and Rep. Brad Halbrook. Members brought school supplies to donate to elementary special ed classrooms in the six Shelby County school districts. A slate of officers was announced by the Nominations Committee and the Possum Lodge fundraiser was discussed.

Officer Joe Houk spoke to us in April 2022 about purchasing a dog to serve as a new K-9 unit. He came back to our September 2023 meeting with SPD's dog Chip to give us an update. He told us about the process of choosing a dog and the 10-week ISP Academy they attended last fall, where Chip graduated at the top of his class. In the 10 months since then the K-9 has led to the seizure of cannabis, \$4309 in cash, and meth with a street value of \$17,268. He has taken part in evidence searches and no-bite apprehensions. We got to see Chip in action outside.



(1) Earlier Joe had hidden something near the building and it didn't take long for Chip to find it. (2) Joe had put his keys in the grass before getting the K-9 out of his vehicle. He let Chip loose and asked him to find the keys. Way out across the grounds (in the white circle) Chip is kneeling to indicate he found them. (3) Sgt. Paul Bennett volunteered to be attacked by Chip. When he leapt at the protective gear, it knocked Paul to the ground.

Rep. Halbrook's presentation, Pension Changes for the Education Sector, covered several topics. He showed maps of the new district boundaries and talked about how the 107th District had changed. He asked us to encourage students in junior high and high school to participate in the Page for a Day program. He discussed the millions of dollars in unfunded pension liability, the Edgar pension ramp, and House Bill 4098 which he thinks will come up during the Fall Veto Session and will eventually be passed. His belief is that the best way to bring pension costs under control is to begin a 401K program for new teachers.







Norma Walters and Alta May Fry delivered school supplies to Cowden-Herrick schools

## November 1 Meeting Information

Bring along your favorite beverage and join us at the Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center. We will have light snacks and bottled water. After the program featuring Sen. Steve McClure, we will vote on officers for 2024-2026.

President – James Sparks  
Vice President – Nancy Wilhelm  
Secretary – Norma Walters  
Treasurer – Kim Sparks

A committee will be formed to judge mini-grant applications.

Jim and LaVonne will report on the IRTA 2023 Convention.

If you'd prefer to join the meeting through Zoom, a link will be sent out early next week.

**Senator Steve McClure** represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District. Formerly Asst. State's Attorney for Sangamon County, he was elected to the Illinois Senate in 2018. He serves as Asst. Leader and Asst. Floor Leader for the Senate Republican Caucus. Steve is also the leader for Senate Republicans on criminal law issues and the Republican leader on the Criminal Law Committee.



According to his biography, Sen. McClure has helped pass bills that aid with the public school teacher shortage, the COVID-19 student learning gap, and the bus driver shortage. He also passed legislation to protect citizens from internet exploitation and to provide more job opportunities for veterans. Most recently, he passed legislation to allow DCFS frontline workers to carry pepper spray for self-defense purposes.

This will be Sen. McClure's first visit with SCRTA. We got to know Sen. Chapin Rose well during his many visits when he was senator for our district. Take advantage of this chance to meet Sen. McClure and to make him aware of our concerns as retired educators.

Learn more about Steve McClure at <https://senatormcclure.com/>



More  
SCRTA  
News

### Mark Your Calendar

### 2024 Meeting Dates

April 3      September 4  
June 5      November 6

### SCRTA Mini Grants

In August we raised over \$1600 at a Possum Lodge Saturday sandwich sale. As a result we have raised each of the six individual mini-grant awards to \$200 this year. Applications were sent out to all county building administrators to share with their staff. Applications are due on 11/1/23, so **we will need to have a committee to meet after that date to make our selections. We will develop that committee at our November 1 meeting. Please consider volunteering.**

Recipients will be announced in December and the awards will be presented in January 2024.

**Important!**

**Please Read!**

## Monical's Community Day Fundraiser

We are hoping to help even more teachers with a mini-grant fundraiser at Shelbyville Monical's on November 1st. Helping couldn't be easier – Just eat pizza (or anything else on their menu)!

You will need to show them the enclosed flier when you order (either the paper form or a picture of it on your phone) for SCRТА to get the donation. For each sheet they get, Monical's will donate 20% of that total bill to Shelby County Retired Teachers Association.

Be sure to tell your friends, family, and neighbors! (It's easy to do when you use social media like Facebook.) It will help students in all 6 Shelby County school districts.

**A copy of the Community Day flier is attached to this newsletter.**

- In the fine print at the bottom it says "No Carry-out or Delivery". Mark Shanks has kindly made an exception and WILL ALLOW CARRY-OUT AND DELIVERY for us. Just mention it when you order and show the flier on paper or on your phone when you get your order.

**Spread the Word!**



### **IRTA Convention Highlights**

State Officers were elected at the Convention:

President Michael Schmidt from East Moline  
Vice President Rainy Kaplan from Westmont  
Treasurer Donnie Olstrom from Mascoutah  
Secretary LaVonne Chaney from Shelbyville

They will serve 2-year terms.

Congratulations LaVonne!



Kim and Jim Sparks represented Shelby County

The focus of the convention was on proposed constitution changes.

*As voting delegates we were presented with proposed constitutional changes. We were allowed to move to a microphone to express our thoughts on each proposal. One of the proposals presented was to remove the Regional Directors, immediate past present, and chairs of standing committees from the Board of Directors. I was first of several delegates to go to the microphone and oppose this proposal because of the excellent guidance we get from our Regional Director. Regional Directors like LaVonne Chaney are those most directly in touch in all of the county units to speak out for us. Fortunately, the measure to remove the Regional Directors did not pass, missing the 2/3rd required approval by only 8 votes. If the measure had passed Regional Director positions would have been also eliminated for the whole state. – Jim Sparks*

The constitutional change voted on at the IRTA Convention that affects you most directly is a change in dues. Treasurer Ostrom has pointed out that the IRTA has always maintained a balanced budget and has been frugal with our dues. IRTA dues haven't been changed in ten years. Ostrom said, "The costs of operations and lobbying have been impacted by increases in salaries, inflation, mailing, travel, utilities, and technology. If the IRTA is to continue to be successful in securing our pension and insurance benefits, this proposal's passage is imperative." Most of us will see the following changes: Lifetime - \$400 to \$600

Monthly deduction - \$2.50 to \$3.50

Annual dues - \$40 to \$50

Annual Recurring dues - \$38 to \$46.

## Shelby County Teachers Awarded IRTA Grants

This Fall the Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation awarded \$42,000 in grant money to public school educators from across the state. This grant money will allow these educators to enrich their instruction with materials not otherwise available to them. Fourteen of the winners are from Area 5, with three of those being from Shelby County:

- Erin Barker, Okaw Valley Elementary School, Bethany (the former Erin Yockey)
- Jill Briggerman, Main Street Elementary, Shelbyville
- Hope Kirkwood, Okaw Valley Elementary School, Bethany

The link below will take you to the name of each winner, along with his/her school, IRTA Area, and a video about each project in the winner's own words.

[https://www.irtaonline.org/foundation/2023irtafgrantwinners/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=rasa\\_io&utm\\_campaign=newsletter](https://www.irtaonline.org/foundation/2023irtafgrantwinners/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=rasa_io&utm_campaign=newsletter)

### Meet the New IRTA Executive Director: Jessica Hoselton

The IRTA Executive Committee is honored to introduce Jessica Hoselton as your new Executive Director. Ms. Hoselton was chosen amongst many qualified candidates that applied for the position. Jessica founded Bold New Strategies, LLC in 2018. The firm provides legislative and association management services to statewide associations. In addition to providing legislative representation to several associations, Ms. Hoselton also serves as the Executive Director for those associations.



Jessica received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern Illinois University and a Master of Arts degree in Public Policy and Administration from Purdue University.

We look forward to many years of her leadership at the IRTA!



By now you should have received your TRAIL Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MAPD) Program Decision Guide through the mail.

The Open Enrollment period is October 15 through November 15, 2023

It covers the plan year January 1 through December 31, 2024

**Your Aetna plan will automatically renew. No action is needed unless you want to make a change or you wish to opt-out of the plan.**

Additional help is available to you -

For information on your TRAIL health insurance:

Visit the website at <https://mybenefits.illinois.gov>

Or contact MyBenefits Service Center (toll-free) 844-251-1777  
Representatives are available Mon- Fri, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm CT

View an informational video about TRAIL insurance program:  
<http://cms.illinois.gov/thetrail>

Other helpful numbers –

[Aetna Member Services](#)

1-855-223-4807

<http://stateofillinois.aetnamedicare.com>

[Medicare COB Unit](#)

1-800-442-1300

<https://cms.illinois.gov/benefits/stateemployee/medicare.html>

[TRS](#)

1-877-927-5877 <http://trsil.org>



# MONICAL'S PIZZA® invites you to participate in a Community Day!



This is one of the many ways we help area organizations, and is a great opportunity for us to say "Thanks!", and give back to our loyal customers and the communities that we serve.

It's easy and tasty! You, your family, friends and neighbors bring this flier to your local *Monical's Pizza®* restaurant and enjoy a delicious meal. In return, *Monical's Pizza®* will donate 20% of your bill\* to the designated organization.

Don't miss your opportunity to help out! Please remember that this special is ONLY good on the date (11 am - Close) listed below. Tell everyone to join in! With *Monical's Pizza®*, you're raising money by eating great food! What could be easier?

### Guest copy...

Organization: Shelby County Retired Teachers Association

Special Day: Wednesday, November 1st, 2023, All Day

Guest Check Total \$\_\_\_\_\_  
(before sales tax)

20% Contribution \$\_\_\_\_\_

### Monical's Pizza® copy...



Organization: Shelby County Retired Teachers Association

Special Day: Wednesday, November 1st, 2023, All Day

Guest Check Total \$\_\_\_\_\_  
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### *Monical's Pizza® of Shelbyville*

1900 W. Main St.

Shelbyville, IL

(217) 774-4100 [www.monicalspizza.com](http://www.monicalspizza.com)

**FLIER MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER FOR DONATION TO BE APPLIED**

\*Not valid with any other coupons or discount offers. Offer valid only on date listed.  
Not valid for Carry Out or Delivery. Not valid on alcohol purchases. Other restrictions may apply.