

SCRTA Officers >>

President
James Sparks

Vice-President
Nancy Wilhelm

Secretary
Norma Walters

Treasurer
Kim Sparks

Wednesday, April 3 SCRTA Meeting

Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center

8:45 am – Snacks & Social Time

9:00 am – Program followed by Business Mtg.

Feel free to bring along your beverage.

Light refreshments and bottled water will be provided.

A drawing for a door prize will follow the meeting.

Shelby County Retired Teachers Newsletter

April 2024

Volume 11
Number 1



"Sheepshead" used for high school – Strasburg 1920's

It looks like Spring is trying hard to get going this year. I noticed that the daffodils were blooming everywhere nearly three weeks ago. Since then we have had some freezing temperatures and a hail storm. However the grass has turned bright green and many have been out rolling down mole hills and doing their first mowings. Mother Nature is always in control.



A Note from the President

I hope that all our members are doing well and certainly hope to see you at our first meeting of the year at 9:00 AM on Wednesday April 3rd at the Army Corps of Engineers Lake Shelbyville Visitors Center. The SCRTA executive officers met recently to work on plans for our four regular meetings in 2024. We have focused on not only bringing you important retired teacher information from IRTA, TRS, CMS and AMBA but interesting Shelby County community presentations. It's always great to see you and gather your thoughts on making our organization interesting and strong.

Please feel free to email me or our other officers should you have questions, concerns, or some great ideas for future meetings.

Jim Sparks

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(217) 259-2669

Visit our website:

<https://www.shelbycountyretiredteachers.com/>

April 3rd Program

You might be surprised by all the things that Shelby County Community Services is involved in throughout the county. **Kathy Readnour** will join us to talk about this organization.

You might also be surprised that a Shelby County business takes travelers on nearly 100 trips each year – as close as a day trip to Moonshine for a hamburger or as far away as a 2-week trip to Italy and Greece. We will learn about **Timi's Tours** out of Moweaqua.



Shelby County Retired Teachers News

Shelby County Retired Teachers Association is a local chapter of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association. We meet four times a year for a program and business meeting to get updates on our retirement and benefits. We maintain a website and send newsletters to all county IRTA members. We encourage members to belong to SCRITA in addition to IRTA to support our local projects. Dues are \$5 a year or \$100 for a lifetime membership. Dues can be paid in person at a meeting or by mail to Treasurer Ginnie Hostetler, 1014 W. N. Fourth Street, Shelbyville, IL 62565.

2024 SCRITA Meeting Dates:

April 3 September 4
June 5 November 6

You are welcome to join us whether or not you are a member of SCRITA. And you are always welcome to bring a guest with you. If you aren't able to join us in person, join us through Zoom. A link will be provided in an upcoming email and on the SCRITA website.

In Memorium -

Vincent Zuber passed away December 12, 2023. He was a former math teacher, teaching for over thirty years in the St. Thomas School in Newton and the Assumption & Central A&M school districts.

Former SCRITA president **Noble Wright** began his teaching career in Allerton & Villa Grove and served as Principal in Villa Grove, Homer, and Arcola schools. He retired from the Assumption School District as Superintendent. He passed away in January one day after his 101st birthday.

A donation will be made to the IRTA Foundation in their memory.

Shelby County Democrats Donate to SCRITA

The Shelby County Democratic party recently took up a collection and raised over \$300 to donate to the SCRITA for the purchase of school supplies for students in the six Shelby County school districts. For several years SCRITA members have brought school supplies to their September meeting then delivered them to the districts to give to students needing them. The donation will enable us to be even more generous in one of our projects to help students and teachers across Shelby County. Their gracious act is much appreciated.



Cari Rincker, representing Shelby County Democrats, presents the funds to IRTA Executive Secretary LaVonne Chaney and SCRITA President James Sparks.

In our recent Executive Committee meeting we discussed the possibility of adding a few get-togethers in addition to our 4 yearly meetings. We thought about visiting some area businesses, restaurants, or attending programs in neighboring towns (maybe garden centers, Little Theater, etc.). If there is an interest in this, we will need some great ideas to get it going. If you have any, contact any of the SCRITA officers.

June 2024 Meeting

We have confirmation that **IRTA President Mike Schmidt** and new **Executive Director Jessica Hoselton** will join us at our June meeting. We are hoping for a large turnout to meet them and hear about the state organization. We will also have grant recipients from the six Shelby County school districts present.

Mark your calendar for June 5 and plan to attend!



November 2023 Meeting

Our November program featured Sen. Steve McClure, our new state senator. He spoke on legislation affecting education and legislation special to him as well as answering questions and listening to our concerns.

SCRTA 2024 Mini Grants

Another SCRTA project to help students and teachers in Shelby County was started in the fall of 2022. Last year we gave six \$100 mini grants to educators, one in each of our county districts. This year, thanks to the fundraisers sponsored by Possum Lodge and by Mark Shanks at Monicals, we were able to double the grant money. Teachers submitted proposals in November and the mini grant recipients were selected and notified by the grant committee in December. During the first week of January, as teachers returned to the classroom, President James Sparks presented the six \$200 mini grants. The recipients will join us at our June 5 meeting to tell us about their programs.

Jim is shown in each picture with the recipients and their principals.



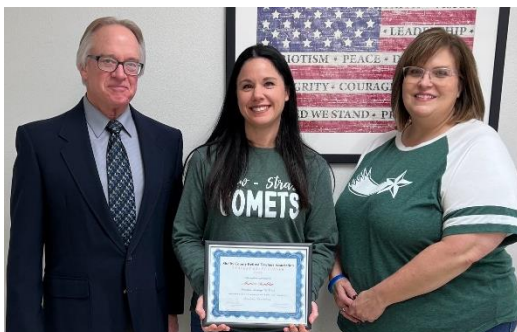
Okaw Valley Elementary School
Principal Heidi Vander Burgh
Teacher Kathy Doty
"Orff Hand Chimes & Yarn Mallets"



Cowden-Herrick Elementary School
Principal Brett Boehm
Teacher Jaclyn Golding (picture in frame)
"K-5 Art Show Dynamic Display"



Shelbyville Main Street Elementary School
Teacher Jill Briggerman
Principal Ryan Scott
"Wobble Stools"



Stewardson-Strasburg CUSD 5A
Teacher Monica Tomblin
Principal Penny Hill
"Reading Revolution"



Windsor Jr/Sr High School
Principal Bart Wiedman
Teacher Bailey Leasher
"Kitchen Lab Utensils Update"



Central A & M Bond Elementary School
Teacher Kaitlin Villanueva
Principal Courtney Hiler
"Children's Book Focused Little Library"

News from IRTA and TRS

Following is information you may find interesting. These are excerpts or summaries from the two websites: <https://www.irtaonline.org/> and <https://www.trsil.org/> . If you would like to read more, follow the links.

Legislative

The Spring 2024 legislative session convened on January 16 and is scheduled to run through May. In Governor Pritzker's February 21 Budget Address, he requested full funding for TRS pensions and TRIP/TRAIL insurance programs. He is pursuing over \$5 billion to help reach a target of 100% pension funding by 2048. He also expressed concern about benefit shortfalls for Tier II employees.

Three bills supported by IRTA:

HB 4580 and HB 4662 concern benefit/insurance for retirees who return to teaching. HB 4972 provides that CMS post changes to TRS health benefits at least 120 days prior to making any changes.

Find more details, go to IRTA website/Members Only/Legislative Issues/Under the Dome

= Zoom meetings hosted by IRTA provide comprehensive updates regarding the association and legislation, ensuring you are well-informed on all fronts

4/23 - The Monthly Brief – Updates & More w/ Executive Director Jessica Hoselton 9:30 a.m.

5/23 - The Monthly Brief – Jessica Hoselton & Congressman Darin LaHood 2:00 p.m.

= AMBA Webinars (all at 10:00 a.m.)

4/24 - Emergency Transportation Issues in Illinois (Ambulance)

5/15 - Preparing for Summer- Discounts and Benefits

Registration for all the above is on the IRTA website under Events.

6/1 – Application Deadline for Excellence in Education Grants for Teachers

7/10 Virtual Area 5 Conference – 9:30 AM

Dates to Remember

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association has announced an exciting group cruise to Alaska in 2024. The 7-day Inside Passage cruise aboard the Majestic Princess will depart Seattle on September 22 and return on September 29, 2024. The deadline for payment is May 24.

And if you'd like to travel abroad with fellow retired teachers, plan ahead for a Paris and the Heart of Normandy Cruise August 28- September 4 or October 8-15, 2025.

Information on both cruises is on the IRTA website.

Travel

IRTA Excellence in Education Grants for Teachers

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation is making \$42,000 in grant money available statewide in Illinois. This special grant will provide additional funds to public school educators (Pre-K through 12) so that their students will have the means to participate in special projects. A special committee will select the recipients of the grant money over the summer. Grants will be awarded in the Fall.

If you know current teachers who might benefit from this program, guide them to the application form on the IRTA website. All proposals must be submitted by June 1, 2024. 2023 winners from Shelby County were Hope Kirkwood and Erin Barker from Okaw Valley Elementary School and Jill Briggerman from Main Street Elementary in Shelbyville.

TRS News

If you received a TRS benefit in 2023, the Office of the Comptroller mailed you an IRS Form 1099-R earlier this year. This form reports your income received from TRS during 2023. If you did not receive the form or you need a duplicate, log in to the secure Member Account Access area.

If you would like to change your withholding election, you must complete a new Form W4-P. You can call your local Internal Revenue Service office for a blank form or download the blank form from the IRS website: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4p.pdf>. A new Form W4-P replaces any former withholding on file with TRS.

If you have not yet set up your online member account, please watch this video to learn how: <https://www.trsil.org/videos/accessing-your-trs-member-account-online>. Your Member ID is required to set up an account.

Your compounded 3 percent annual increase is first effective on Jan. 1 following either your first retirement anniversary or your 61st birthday, whichever is later. Retirees may log in to the secure Member Account Access area to view their monthly and annual earnings statements.

On March 12, TRS presented webinars on topics of interest to retirees. If you didn't attend, you can download the slides from the presentations at <https://www.trsil.org/Luck-of-the-Irish-Webinars> (scroll to the bottom of the page). Topics are "Death Benefits," "TRIP/TRAIL," "W-4Ps & 1099Rs" and "Who Can Talk to TRS About My Account?"

If you know educators in Shelby County who are retired or are planning to retire this year, please encourage them to join IRTA. In his February budget proposal Governor Pritzker fully funded the Teacher Retirement System and its insurance program, but with the financial problems that plague the state we can't depend on this forever. IRTA's prime purpose is defending the pensions and insurance of Illinois' retired teachers. In the past they have fought off attempts to take away our 3% compounded COLA and our health insurance. The stronger IRTA is, the better our chances of holding on to our benefits. Please keep up your membership and encourage others to join too.