

SCRTA Officers *School's Out!*

President – James Sparks

Vice-President – Nancy Wilhelm

Secretary – Ione Elliott

Treasurer – Kim Sparks

June 7 Meeting

Our program features Paul Strid from AMBA and county teachers who received our mini grants last year.

Region 13 Director LaVonne Chaney will report on new legislation that affects retirees and our pending lawsuit.

Our meetings are open to retired educators, whether or not they belong to our local organization, SCRTA.

Shelby County Retired Teachers

June 2023

Newsletter



June Meeting

Wednesday, June 7

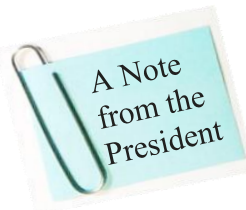
Lake Shelbyville
Visitor Center

Social Time - 8:45 a.m.

Program - 9:00 a.m.

Followed by business meeting

Bring along your beverage of choice. We will provide bottled water and snacks.



Greetings retired teachers of Shelby County! Now that the wind has quit howling, it has been quite nice outdoors. The birds are singing and everything is growing. I hope that this note

finds you happy and healthy. Pollen allergies have been a bit of an issue in our household, but the worst of it seems to have passed for now.

The SCRTA officers and I are anxious to see you soon at the June 7, 2023 meeting at the Army Corps Of Engineers Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center starting at 9am. We have quite a few guests that will be joining us. Paul Strid will be here to share AMBA's offerings to retired teachers as well as both SCRTA mini grant winners and an IRTA grant winner. Please join us and enjoy the camaraderie with fellow Shelby County retired teachers. We will have light snacks and bottled water available.

The United States economy continues to struggle as we try to avoid a recession. Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted nearly everywhere since the number of new infections have taken a dramatic fall. Gasoline has been very expensive, but prices have fallen a bit lately. We all must take the "good" with the "bad" and make the best of things. Be ever so thankful for your family and friends. Reach out to them often to see what you can do for them, along with asking for help when you need it.

I wish you all the best and I'm always happy to lend an ear anytime you want to reach out. Remember that individually we are but a drop, but together we are an ocean.

Shelby County Retired Teachers News

SCRTA Mini Grants

Last year SCRTA began a program to support current county educators. Applications for the mini grants were submitted and judged last fall, and we gave six awards of \$100 each in January. We included the grant recipients' pictures in the April newsletter. We did not include any information about their projects because we planned to invite them to our



June 7 meeting to tell members in person how they used the funds. With recipients coming from each county district, we hope to have a good turnout at our meeting so that these teachers will be supported by members of their own communities. These pictures give you a preview of two projects – one that LaVonne and Jim visited at Central A & M and one that, believe it or not, is a math class at Okaw Valley.

Tom Shoaff, facilitator of the Shelby County CEO program, and Phil Manhart, Lake Shelbyville Assistant Operations Manager, spoke about local opportunities for students to learn outside the traditional classroom.

Shoaff brought two students from Windsor who are members of the county CEO class. Students visit local businesses, hear from guest speakers, and are mentored by members of the business community. They are immersed in real life learning experiences as they develop their own businesses. We heard about the history of the program here, their curriculum, and several businesses created by students.

Shelby County schools partner with the Corps of Engineers on many activities. Manhart spoke about the Youth Ambassadors program where high school students work on improvements around the lake. Aquatic Ecology Day held in April at the lake gave students a chance to learn about macroinvertebrates, fisheries, and water quality. Recently Main Street School in Shelbyville won a national "Every Kid Outdoors" grant. Students visited the lake to learn about outdoor activities like water safety, fishing, archery, and camping.

=== SCRTA April Meeting ===



AMBA Benefits

Paul Strid will be with us on June 7 to go over the many benefits available to IRTA members through AMBA.



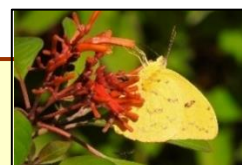
IRTA has partnered with Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA) to offer benefits to its members. For your health, AMBA offers Dental and Vision Insurance, Flexible Choice Cancer, Heart Attack & Stroke Policies, Long-Term Care, and Medical Air Services. To grow and protect your nest egg, there are various annuities and life insurance policies. And to save money right now, MyAMBAdiscounts offers members access to thousands of discounts from local and national merchants including travel, dining, electronics, sports, entertainment. Save \$\$ on Dell computers, Apple products, rental cars, and Orlando vacations. They even offer Veterinary Pet Insurance. Paul will touch on some of these and will be glad to schedule a private appointment with you if you want to learn more. Some of us can share with you at the meeting what products we have gotten through Paul.



SCRTA Officers

According to SCRTA bylaws, a Nominations Committee of three members will be appointed by the president at the June meeting in odd-numbered years. This committee will present a slate of proposed candidates at the September meeting. At that time other nominations can be accepted from the floor and the election will take place.

Don't skip the June meeting for fear you will be coerced into serving on the committee or taking an office you don't want. On the other hand, if you would be willing to serve, please submit your name.



You are getting this newsletter because you are a member of IRTA. We encourage you to also become a member of your local organization, Shelby County Retired Teachers Association. Dues are only \$5 a year. (\$100 lifetime memberships are also available.) You can pay Ginnie at the next meeting or mail it to her at Ginny Hostetler, 1014 W. N. 4th Street, Shelbyville, IL.

We have been notified of only 2 retirees in Shelby County in 2023 – Mary Bolinger (English) and Katie Moll (Science), both from Moulton Middle School in Shelbyville. Please welcome them to the ranks of retired educators. And if you are aware of any additional retirees, please notify LaVonne Chaney.

2023 Meeting Dates

September 6 November 1

Mailing the SCRTA newsletter costs the local chapter around \$120 a year in postage. This comes from local dues, not IRTA funds. If you are receiving this newsletter through the U.S. Postal Service and you would be willing to get it through email, please let us know and we will switch you over. You can call or text Nancy (460-2712) or email (njwilhelm@yahoo.com) Thanks!



Save the Date

- June 8 - Coffee with Jim (Zoom) – 9:30 AM
- August 9 - Area 5 Virtual Conference
- October 16 & 17 - IRTA Convention at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield

IRTA Foundation

2023 IRTA Foundation Area Scholarships - The IRTA Foundation awards six \$2,000 scholarships to incoming juniors or seniors in college that are pursuing a degree in education. The winners were chosen through competition with other applicants from their own area of the state. Area 5 is made up of 23 counties so it is an honor that the winner came from Shelby County. The Area 5 recipient is Sadie Gardner of Shelbyville. Sadie will be attending Eastern Illinois University where she will be an incoming junior majoring in Elementary Education. Area Representative James Barr will be attending our June 7 meeting to present the award to Sadie.

Financial Assistance

The Foundation provides financial assistance to retired educators who are living in times of acute financial stress. If you or anyone you know is having difficulties meeting financial obligations, please download a financial assistance form on the IRTA website, then submit it to Illinois Retired Teachers Association, 828 S. 2nd Street, Springfield, IL 62704, for consideration.

IRTA Webinar Series - Protecting Your Nest Egg June 14 at 10:00 a.m.

You've worked hard all of your career and now you have a pension and a nest egg to protect. In this webinar, we'll explore what a nest egg is, what the top 5 threats are to your retirement nest egg, and some possible solutions to keep you resting easy when it comes to your financial future. The webinar is free, but you must register through the IRTA website ahead of time.

IRTA Sponsored Trips 2023 Panama Cruise

The Member Benefits Committee has approved a group trip in 2023 from Panama City, Panama to Fort Lauderdale, FL from October 20-30 on the VIKING cruise ship Mars. Every stateroom has a balcony and ocean view! All excursions included! Free Wifi! Airfare from only \$899. Time to dust off your passport and get out with fellow retirees! Click <https://members.irtaonline.org/trip-and-activities/> for more information!

Information from IRTA, TRS, and Shelby County Retired Teachers Association can be found on the following websites:

IRTA - <https://www.irtaonline.org>

TRS - <https://www.trsil.org>

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





2023 TRS BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTION VOTING UNNECESSARY; FOUR RE-ELECTED

Four current members of the TRS Board of Trustees were declared elected without any ballots being cast. The voting portion of the election process was unnecessary since there were only as many qualified nominees as the number of positions available.

The trustees elected for the 2023-2027 term are Beth Anderson of Kankakee, Marsha Byas of Marion and Andrew Hirshman of Oak Park. The trustee nominated by annuitants and elected for the 2023-2027 term is Doug Strand of East Moline. The next election for TRS trustees is scheduled for 2025.

DR. TONY SANDERS NAMED AS ISBE STATE SUPERINTENDENT

In February, Dr. Tony Sanders was named by the Illinois State Board of Education as the state superintendent of education, a position that by law includes an ex-officio seat on the TRS Board of Trustees. Dr. Sanders replaces Dr. Carmen I. Ayala, who retired from the post in January after 40 years in public education.

GOV. PRITZKER ONCE AGAIN PROPOSES EXTRA STATE FUNDS FOR TRS

For the third year in a row, Gov. J.B. Pritzker has proposed contributing more to TRS than required by the state's pension funding law – a practice that has helped improve the TRS long-term funded status. In February, Gov. Pritzker said he would commit an extra \$200 million to TRS and the five other state pension systems for the 2024 fiscal year which begins in July. This is in addition to the statutorily-required pension contribution of \$11.1 billion.

For TRS, the proposed extra money in fiscal year 2024 will amount to approximately \$115 million. The added funding, along with a strong commitment to fund pensions as required by statute over the last five years, helped TRS improve its long-term funded ratio to 43.8% at the end of fiscal year 2022. For six years in the last decade, the TRS funded ratio hovered at 40%. The funded ratio is projected to keep trending upward over the next few years. It is projected to be 44.9% at the end of the current fiscal year and 46.1% at the end of fiscal year 2024.

The funded ratio is the amount of money TRS has in the trust fund compared to the amount of money needed to pay, at the same time, all pensions owed to all members for the rest of time. While that scenario would never happen, the funded ratio is one measure of the financial stability of a pension plan.

All Member Benefits Will Be Paid

The System will continue to pay all benefits due to our members in the future. This year, TRS will pay close to \$8 billion in benefits on time and in full to more than 129,000 members and their families. Benefits paid in fiscal year 2022 totaled \$7.6 billion. Total revenue during the period was \$6.3 billion. At the end of December 2022, TRS had \$63.3 billion in assets.

Long-Term Investment Returns Remain Strong

Because TRS has relationships with its members for several decades, TRS focuses its attention on its long-term investment return rate. At the end of fiscal year 2022, the 40-year rate of return was 9.3%, which bests the System's estimated long-term investment rate of 7%.

TRS and TRIP Set to be Fully Funded

The TRS Board of Trustees certified a \$6.04 billion state government contribution for the System. The contribution is a 2.5% increase over the state's \$5.89 billion contribution for the current fiscal year. Both contributions to TRS and TRIP will be fully funded.