

CLINTON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS

MARCH MEETING AT TRENTON HOUSE



FROM CCRTA PAST-PRESIDENT, DON OSTROM

Website: www.weebly.ccrta.com

February 8, 2024

Volume 9, Issue 1

CCRTA's next meeting: Thursday, March 7, 2024



Teachers' Retirement System
of the State of Illinois
2815 W. Washington Street
Springfield, IL 62702
www.trsil.org

March Meeting is at the Trenton House in Trenton, IL

This will be our first meeting of the new year. Please encourage other retirees to attend and be part of CCRTA. If you have questions, comments or have an idea for a program please contact Pat Bringaze our President.

If you are going to attend, please text or call Mary Ann Kauling at 618-973-4373 and let her know you will attend the meeting. This provides the restaurant the ability to bring in enough staff and set up the meeting room. Please call by March 1, 2024.

CCRTA Officers for 2024

President:

Pat Bringaze

Vice President:

Margo Schaefer

Secretary:

Kay Ostrom

Treasurer:

Pehg Zeller

Membership Chair:

Mary Ann Kauling

Legislative Chair:

Kelley Kesterson

Foundation Chair:

TBD

Members Benefit Chair:

Don Ostrom

MARCH MEETING PROGRAM:

We are honored to have Jessica Hoselton, the IRTA Executive Director, as our speaker at the March 7th meeting of CCRTA. Jessica assumed her new role on January 1, 2024. She has a background in associations and working with the Illinois Legislature..

She will bring a new perspective to the IRTA with her background. You will find her approach fresh and interesting. She will answer your questions and provide an overview of her leadership.

SAVE THE DATES

2024 Meeting Dates

1. March 7, 2024 at Trenton House

2. June 6, 2024
Knotty Pine, Breese

3. Sept. 5, 2024 at Trenton House

4. Dec. 5, 2024 at Bretz's Winery, Carlyle

All Meetings Begin at 11:30 am

2024 PROGRAMS

MARCH 7, 2024
IRTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JESSICA HOSELTON

JUNE 6 2024
LORI BELL, AUTHOR FROM
TRENTON

SEPT. 5, 2024

DEC. 5, 2024

LETTER FROM THE CCRTA PRESIDENT

As I start my term as president of the Clinton County Retired Teachers Association, I would like to introduce myself to all of you and share with you some of my goals for the association in the next two years.

I grew up in Belleville and went to Belleville West High School. I got my Bachelor of Science Degree in Music Education in 1980 from Quincy College and started my teaching career in August of 1980 in Palestine, Illinois, which is in Crawford County, near Vincennes, Indiana. After three years in Palestine, I came back to St. Clair County and worked for the next seven years at both private, (St. Peters Cathedral), and public, (Whiteside), schools in Belleville. In the summer of 1990, I took a position as a music instructor at Wesclin Community Unit #3 in Trenton and New Baden, Illinois, where I remained for the next twenty-nine years, until my retirement in May of 2019.

During my teaching career, I earned a Masters in Music degree from SIU-Edwardsville and took the required classes to earn my administrator's certification for the State of Illinois. I also served as secretary, president and as a negotiator at different times for the Wesclin Teachers Association during my tenure at Wesclin.

I believe my goals as the new president of the CCRTA are really twofold. The first, is to present interesting and diverse programs and guest speakers at our meetings that highlight the mission of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association and the benefits and resources that are available to all its members, as well as programs that are fun and/or of general interest to our members. I also want to find ways to reach out and share the purpose and benefits of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association with other retired teachers in Clinton County, who are currently not members of the Association.

I look forward to seeing and meeting all of you at our next meeting this March.

Pat Bringaze
CCCRTA President

TIER 2 INFORMATION:

Several members of both parties have held meetings around the State to assess what is needed to fix the issues with Tier 2 members. The biggest issues are 1) they can't collect full retirement until age 67, 2) if they retire before age 67 they will lose 6% per year off of their retirement, 3) they will literally pay more into retirement than they will receive and fail to meet the Federal "Safe Harbor" requirement for pension plans under the Social Security Act. The Executive Board has had its lobbyist speak to this group of legislators about how this can be fixed. There are only 26 people retired under Tier 2 at this time, therefore the problem has not been fully felt.

Please Support The IRTA Foundation by Giving in 2024:

In 1985, after identifying many former educators who were experiencing financial difficulties because of low pensions and rising inflation, the Illinois Retired Teachers Association established the **Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation, Inc.** The initial purpose of the Foundation was to build an endowment to provide assistance to retired educators. It now provides scholarships and grants to teachers as well as assistance to retired teachers.

HELP THIS GROW	2024	2023	2022	2021
Fund Raising Donations	\$0.00	\$204,531.00	\$228,940.00	\$231,612.00
Total Donation From All Sources	\$0.00	\$262,791.00	\$754,571.00	\$327,397.00

EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS PROVIDED BY AMBA:

The AMBA is providing webinars on multiple topics. There will be a webinar each month highlighting different topics that affect retired teachers. The topics range from finances, healthcare, insurance and many other topics. Please look through your e-mails from IRTA on upcoming webinars.

COFFEE WITH JESSICA:

Each MONTH IRTA Executive Director Jessica Hoselton has a question and answer ZOOM call with IRTA members. If you have your e-mail address on file with IRTA, you should receive an e-mail with the dates and times. Please check your e-mail from IRTA for time and dates.

TRIPS THROUGH THE IRTA:

The IRTA has several trips planned at fair prices for members, if they wish to travel. These trips can be found on the IRTA website (www.irtaonline.org). If the IRTA has your correct e-mail address, you should be receiving this information in your "Action" newsletter or e-mail notifications.

IRTA REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOUND:



Our new Regional Director is Pat Bringaze. Yes, the President of CCRTA has also assumed the position in IRTA as Region 16 Director. Pat was in Springfield on February 1st for training and to take her place on the Board of Directors of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association. Please congratulate her for taking this leadership position.

As a regional director, Pat will visit other local units within her region.

It is important that retirees show and use their abilities to protect retired Illinois educators pension and benefits.

Minutes of the Clinton County Retired Teachers Association

December 7, 2023 at Bretz Winery, Carlyle, IL

The meeting was called to order by President Don Ostrom at 11:30 am. The Carlyle High School Chorus performed Christmas Carols a cappella. Members of CCRTA were delighted to hear carols from other countries as well as all time favorites, such as Silent Night and We Wish You a Merry Christmas.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Kelley Kesterson led the group in prayer.

Assistant Regional Superintendent John Consolino was introduced. He greeted the members and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. New CCRTA members were introduced: Joan Grams and Vicki Moylan.

News about IRTA from IRTA Treasurer Donnie Ostrom:

Trail Insurance premiums have a small increase, the plan itself has few changes. Ostrom encouraged all members to read the Good Dog News letter as well as legislative news from IRTA. He reminded members that the IRTA Executive Director has a monthly zoom meeting, Coffee with Jim, is very informative and allows members to ask questions. IRTA members should check their email for information. IRTA has hired a new executive director who will begin January 1, 2024.

Old Business: Minutes from the September, 2023 meeting as printed in the newsletter were approved. Treasurer Pehg Zeller collected dues at the meeting. She reported that she sent \$20.00 each for memorials to the IRTA Foundation in memory of Leon Luber and Donald Stalcup. She sent \$40 to Janet Wilsey for over payment of past dues. CCRTA bylaws require that the checking account is audited each year. Milton Luginbuhl agreed to complete this audit.

New Business:

President Report: President Ostrom encouraged members to “bring a friend” to our next meeting. He encouraged members to stay informed by reading information from the IRTA office. He asked if anyone had issues with the AETNA insurance. Rosann Horstmann is having difficulty getting reimbursement from AETNA for new hearing aids. Ostrom will address this issue with the IRTA staff.

Membership Report: Mary Ann Kauling thanked members for contacting her about attendance at a meeting because it really helps the restaurant to be prepared. She talked to member, Jan Wilsey, who really appreciated the phone call. Mary Ann and Rosemary Huelsmann are working to get an up-to-date list of members with address, email, and phone. This will be published in a CCRTA Directory that will be distributed to all CCRTA members.

IRTA Legislative Report: Kelley Kesterson reported that there is no new legislation pertaining to retired teachers. His next IRTA legislative meeting is March, 2024. The election cycle is the big news in Springfield. There are 82 judicial seats open. News on WEP/GPO is that more legislators have signed on. This legislation would not affect teachers who have already retired, but they are trying to get that wording changed. The “Return to Work” legislation allows retired teachers to return to the classroom for up to 120 days without affecting their pensions. John Consolino added that if any teacher needs help, please contact his office. He will help you renew your license. There is no fee and you do not need to complete the professional development requirements. If you need help logging into your ELIS account, he will help with that also. Please just call his office.

With no other business, motion to adjourn by Kelley at 1:11pm. The next meeting will be March 7, 2024 at 11:30am at Trenton House, Trenton, IL

Respectfully submitted, Kay Ostrom, Secretary



CCRTA Financial Report: February 1, 2024

CLINTON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
Treasurer's Report

Checking Account

February 1, 2024 Current Balance \$932.96

Savings Account

February 1, 2024 Current Balance \$3404.42

Audit completed January 2024 by Milton Luginbuhl.

CCRTA AND IRTA DUES FOR 2024, Please send to the Treasurer

CCRTA is accepting 2024 dues. The cost for a one year membership to CCRTA is \$10.00. The cost of a lifetime membership to CCRTA is \$100.00. Dues are payable at a meeting or you can send a check to our Treasurer, Pehg Zeller. Pehg's address is as follows:

Pehg Zeller
432 North Maple
Trenton, IL 62293

Please make checks payable to the CCRTA.

I recommend that you also join the Illinois Retired Teachers Association in Springfield. You may go online for information at www.irtaonline.org. The cost is

\$3.50 a month and is deducted from your pension check. You can become a lifetime member with a one-time payment of \$600.00. Members who joined IRTA prior to 2018 can write a \$40 check each year to maintain membership. Since 2019, all new members are required to use **Dues Deduct** from their monthly pension check. Your membership in IRTA has many benefits. It is the State Association that protects your pension and benefits. A member has access to group plans that sell dental and vision insurance, life insurance, and discounts on travel and hotels. These are only a few of the benefits offered by IRTA to its members.

CCRTA PROGRAMS:

If you have an idea or would like to provide a program at CCRTA, please let one of the CCRTA Officers know or whom to contact. Programs are an integral part of the CCRTA meeting and can provide the members with a wide variety of information and entertainment. Your suggestions and information make our meetings worth attending.

It is imperative that the meetings have some substance and also provide individuals with the time to visit with friends. We are not a political organization. The foundations of IRTA and CCRTA are to provide protection and information about pensions and benefits. The CCRTA is here to provide information that will make decisions easier for its members.

I believe it is important to hear from our representatives in political office and those who control our pensions and benefits. These are people who have the knowledge and capability to answer our questions. Never be afraid to call the IRTA office for assistance or help with health insurance issues. **The best thing you can do with insurance questions is to call the number on the back of your insurance card.**

Clinton County Retired Teachers Association Officers



Pat Bringaze
President



Margo Schaefer
Vice President



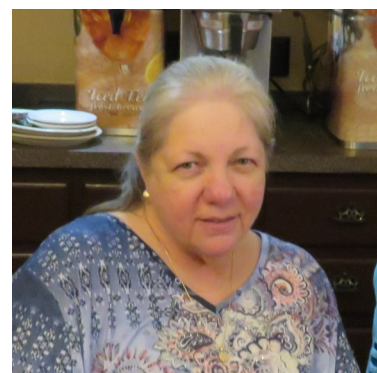
Pehg Zeller
Treasurer



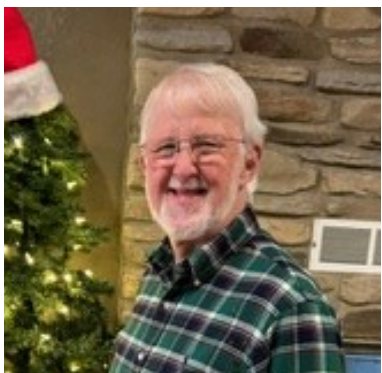
Kay Ostrom
Secretary



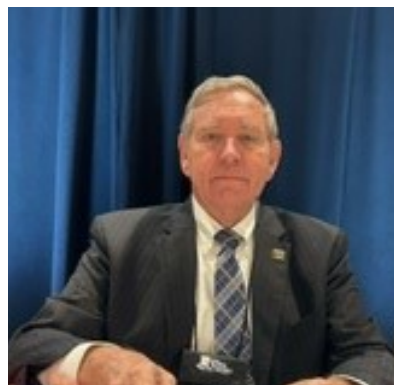
Mary Ann Kauling
Membership



Rosemary Huelsmann
Membership



Kelley Kestersen
IRTA Legislative Committee



Don Ostrom, CCRTA Past President
Newsletter
IRTA Treasurer

CLINTON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

MEETING DATES FOR 2024 and 2025

	<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
1.	March 7, 2024	Trenton House	Trenton	Jessica Hoselton, IRTA E x Direc.
2.	June 6, 2024	Knotty Pine	Breese	Lori Bell, Author
3.	Sept. 5, 2024	Trenton House	Trenton	
4.	Dec. 5, 2024	Bretz's Winery	Carlyle	

	<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
1.	March 6, 2025	Trenton House	Trenton	
2.	June 5, 2025	Knotty Pine	Breese	
3.	Sept. 4, 2025	Trenton House	Trenton	
4.	Dec. 4, 2025	Bretz's Winery	Carlyle	

These dates and locations are subject to change by the officers and members of CCRTA.

PLEASE PUT THESE DATES AND TIMES IN YOUR CALENDAR



3% COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT ON FEBRUARY CHECK:

Each TRS annuitant should have received their annual cost of living of 3% on their February 2024 check. You can thank the IRTA for preserving this cost of living benefit. This annual benefit was protected when IRTA sued the State of Illinois almost 10 years ago. If your February check does not show an increase, you must call TRS and seek an answer to the problem.

CCRTA members enjoyed listening to Christmas Carols performed by Carlyle High School Chorus at the December meeting.





You are Invited...

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) will convene an informational summit on **February 28, 2024**. Join us as we come together to learn the Association's latest movements. Be at the forefront of groundbreaking legislative updates, crucial pension and healthcare insights, and the expansive benefits our association proudly offers. This summit is your opportunity to stay connected, well-informed, and actively engaged. Don't miss this chance to be part of the conversation and shape the IRTA's future together.

The summit will begin at 10:00 AM *Central Time (CT)* and adjournment will be at noon. Please register online by [clicking here](#). On the summit day, please feel free to join the Zoom online platform earlier to test your connection.

Meeting Date

February 28, 2024 (10:00 AM - CT)

If you have any questions regarding the summit, contact the IRTA Office at 1.800.728.4782.