

CLINTON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS

DECEMBER MEETING AT BRETZ'S WINERY



FROM CCRTA PRESIDENT, DON OSTROM

Website: www.weebly.ccrta.com

November 5, 2023

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CCRTA's next meeting: Thursday, December 7, 2023



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

CCRTA Officers for 2023

President:

Donnie Ostrom

Vice President:

Pat Bringaze

Secretary:

Kay Ostrom

Treasurer:

Pehg Zeller

Membership Chair:

Mary Ann Kauling

Legislative Chair:

Kelley Kesterson

Foundation Chair:

TBD

Members Benefit Chair:

TBD

December Meeting at Bretz's Winery in Carlyle, IL

This will be our fourth meeting of the 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 incoming 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 December 5, 2023.

DECEMBER MEETING PROGRAM:

We are very happy to announce that the Carlyle High School Band will perform at our December meeting at Bretz's Winery. A special thanks to Kelley Kesterson who arranged for the band to play at our meeting. The band is under the direction of Ms. Register and she was happy to accommodate the CCRTA. I would like to see as many members in attendance as possible. The band students put in many hours of practice and rehearsal to provide the audience with a great show.

SAVE THE DATES

2023 Meeting Dates

1. March 2, 2023 at Trenton House
2. June 1, 2023
Bretz's Winery, Carlyle
3. Sept. 7, 2023 at Trenton House
4. Dec. 7, 2023 at Bretz's Winery, Carlyle

All Meetings Begin at 11:30 am

2023 PROGRAMS

MARCH 2 2023
TRS BOARD MEMBER
LARRY PFEIFFER

JUNE 1 2023
CARLYLE POLICE DEPT..
ON PERSONAL SAFETY &
STUDENT SAFETY

SEPT. 7, 2023
ELECTION OF OFFICERS &
LIFE-TIME EDUCATOR
AWARD

DEC. 7, 2023
THE CARLYLE HIGH
SCHOOL BAND

IRTA CONVENTION NEWS

The convention was held in Springfield on October 16th and 17th. Delegates from 71 of the 89 units were in attendance. The delegates voted on changes to the IRTA Constitution, Area Directors and Officers of the IRTA. The new President is Michael Schmidt, Vice-President is Rainy Kaplan, Treasurer is Donnie Ostrom and the Secretary is LaVonne Chaney. The new Executive Director, Jessica Hoselton, was introduced. CCRTA officers, Pat Bringaze, Pehg Zeller, and Kay Ostrom attended the convention as delegates.



BASKET FOR IRTA CONVENTION

A special thanks to those members that contributed items for the basket auctioned off at the IRTA Convention. The funds raised by the basket will be used by the IRTAPAC to endorse candidates that support Retired Teachers views on pension and benefits.

A letter was received from the IRTA thanking members for their contribution to the PAC. The different baskets auctioned off raised over \$6,000. The Clinton County Basket brought \$110.

The IRTAPAC does not choose a political party to endorse. The PAC's role is to help candidates who protect our pension and benefits. The candidates represent both major political parties. Candidates fill out forms and provide the IRTA with their positions on pensions and benefits. They are selected and reminded that they received funding from IRTA.

QUILT RAFFLE:

Glenda Flarherty, from Rock Island, and Kay Ostrom made a quilt and donated it to the IRTA Foundation to be raffled at the convention. Ticket sales brought in \$2,200 for the IRTA Foundation. I am sorry to say no one from our unit won the quilt.

Please Support The IRTA Foundation by Giving in 2023:

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	2023	2022	2021	2020
Fund Raising Donations	\$204,531.00	\$228,940.00	\$231,612.00	\$261,124.00
Total Donation From All Sources	\$262,791.00	\$754,571.00	\$327,397.00	\$292,758.00

EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS PROVIDED BY AMBA:

The AMBA is providing webinars on multiple topics. Several have been presented already this year. The topics range from finances, healthcare, insurance and many other topics. Please look through your e-mails from IRTA on upcoming webinars.

COFFEE WITH JIM:

Each MONTH IRTA Executive Director Jim Bachman 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. The next ZOOM meeting is December 14th at 9:30 a.m.

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HIRED TO LEAD IRTA:

The IRTA Executive Board hired Jessica Hoselton to be the new Executive Director of IRTA starting January 1, 2024. Her bio is on the IRTA website and in the Good Dog Newsletter. It is my hope that we can have Jessica at one of our meetings in 2024. A special thanks to Jim Bachman who led IRTA for the last twenty years.

IRTA REGIONAL DIRECTOR NEEDED

According to the IRTA Constitution, a Regional Director shall be selected from each region to serve a term of two years and no more than 2 consecutive terms. The present director for Region 16, Diane Kunkel, will complete her term of office at the end of 2023. The responsibility to select a Regional Director automatically passes to the next unit in alphabetical order. In the case of Region 16, that responsibility passes to Clinton County Unit 71 Retired Teachers Association. If the Unit declines to select a Regional Director, they must notify the Office in Springfield.

I would hope that someone from Clinton County Unit 71 would step forward and take this position. The Regional Director would visit, one time, each unit in their Region and pass on information to the units and help them in any way possible. I held this position for 6 years before being elected Treasurer of the IRTA. I would assist the person taking this position in any way possible.

Minutes of the Clinton County Retired Teachers Association
September 7, 2023 at Trenton House in Trenton IL

The meeting was called to order by President Don Ostrom at 11:30 am. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Tom Ritzheimer led the prayer. Guests were introduced. We welcomed John Consolino, Assistant Regional Office of Education, and new member Lisa Wiegmann.

News about IRTA from IRTA Treasurer Donnie Ostrom:

IRTA now has 40,492 members. The search for a new Executive Director is down to two candidates. The Executive Board will interview and select a new Director next week, September 15, 2023. The IRTA lawsuit against the State of Illinois has been settled and dismissed. The biennial IRTA Convention will be October 16 & 17 in Springfield. CCRTA officers will be attending as delegates. IRTA lobbyists testified in Chicago concerning WEP and GPO, and the IRTA Grass Roots Coordinator testified in the legislature about the Tier II retirees.

Old Business: Minutes from the June, 2023 meeting as printed in the newsletter were approved. Treasurer's report as printed in the newsletter was accepted. Treasurer Pehg Zeller collected dues at the meeting.

Assistant Superintendent John Consolino reported on legislation affecting teachers: 1. Anyone who is retiring is able to buy 2 years of credit from teaching at a private school. 2. Anyone who is in the last year of teaching before retirement who has had excellent evaluations can get a waiver to not have an evaluation the last year of teaching. 3. As of July 1, 2023, teachers receive tenure status after 3 years of continuous teaching (previously it was 4 years). 4. Teachers in the last year of continuing education requirement and last year of teaching do not have to complete CE. John is responsible for verifying that teachers throughout the region hold certification for their teaching position. He reviews records for at least 300 teachers each year. Any retired teacher should log into their ELIS account and make sure that they have checked the box for "retired" so that they no longer have to complete CE to remain in good standing and keep their license up to date. The office in Carlyle is getting additional space because the Health Department is moving. Anyone with questions or if you need help with your ELIS account, don't hesitate to call the office: 618.594.2432.

Lifetime Educator Awards were presented to Janice Kauling and Milton Luginbuhl. Janice was introduced by Kelley Kesterson. Jan was a classroom teacher and Title I teacher in the Carlyle District. She volunteered as a reading teacher for adults at the library. She is a past President and Treasurer of CCRTA. We celebrate her service to teaching and to the CCRTA. Milton was introduced by Pehg Zeller. Milton retired from Wesclin High School as a math teacher. Milton also taught at Kaskaskia College, BAC, SWIC, and McKendree College. He served several terms as CCRTA President and Vice President. We commend Milton for his years as an educator and for his service to CCRTA.

Election of Officers: Current Vice President Pat Bringaze accepted the nomination for President. Pat introduced herself to the membership. She retired from Wesclin as the music/band teacher. During her tenure at Wesclin she held offices in the local union as well as serving as a negotiator. Margo Schaefer was nominated for the office of Vice President. Margo retired from Breese District 12. Pehg Zeller agreed to continue as Treasurer, and Kay Ostrom agreed to serve as Secretary. With no other nominees, officers for the 2024-2025 term were approved by attendees.

IRTA Legislative Report: Kelley Kesterson reported that legislators have not been meeting in Springfield so there is no legislation to report on. The IRTA lobbyists have testified concerning WEP and GPO. There will be a VETO session in October. CCRTA members can reach out to him with questions at any time.

Membership Report: Mary Ann Kauling thanked members for contacting her about attendance at a meeting because it really helps the restaurant to be prepared.

With no other business, Kelley motion to adjourn at 1:30pm. The next meeting will be December 7, 2023 at 11:30pm at Bretz Winery in Carlyle.

Respectfully submitted, Kay Ostrom, Secretary



CCRTA Financial Report: 10/01/2023

CLINTON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION Treasurer's Report Checking Account

October 1, 2023 Current Balance \$992.96

CLINTON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION Treasurer's Report Savings Account

October 1, 2023 Current Balance \$3402.70

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 makes 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 pension and benefits. These are people who have the knowledge and capability to answer our questions. The IRTA Executive Director, Jim Bachman sits on the CMS insurance Board. So, if there are insurance questions, he can provide the answers to your 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.**

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.

IRTA CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, CONVENTION RESULTS:

President Bill Funkhouser appointed a Constitution Committee to review the IRTA Constitution and make changes that will streamline the organization and make it more efficient. The Executive Board several years ago hired a consultant to review the IRTA procedures and processes to make it a long-term sustainable organization that meets the needs of its members.

The Committee brought forth the following recommendations for changes:

- 1. Remove Article III, Section 4, and place the procedure for changing how dues are increased from passage at the convention to being part of the “Standing Rules”.** The Constitution contains the fundamental operating principles that govern its operation. The “Standing Rules” establish specific rules by which the group is to function. **(PASSED)**
- 2. Change Article VI, Section 1., A. Prior to Convention, active members shall have the ability to elect officers; elect Area Representatives; and Amend the Constitution.** Prior to this proposal, Officers and Area Representatives are elected at the Convention by less than 1% of the members. Under this proposal all annuitant members of IRTA, (in-state and Out-of-State), will vote for officers and Area Representatives and Constitutional changes. **(PASSED)**
- 3. Change to Article VII. Presently the Board of Directors consists of Officers, Area Directors and Regional Directors. That is 33 people.** The proposal suggests that the Board be made up of elected officers and Area Directors. This would be a Board of 10 people. This proposal would do away with the position of Regional Director. This would make the Executive Board the governing body of IRTA. **(FAILED)**
- 4. Changes to Article VIII. This would change the divisions of the Association to read “Areas and Units”.** There would no longer be regions. The Association has found it difficult to find individuals to fill these positions and their role has basically become irrelevant. **(FAILED)**
- 5. Changes to Article IX. This identifies the Standing Committees: Finance, Legislative, Member Benefits, Membership and Leadership Development.** Leadership used to be the Nominations Committee. This changes the committee’s name and includes a new role of finding and helping individuals to take leadership roles. The Legislative, Member Benefits, and Membership committees would be made up of persons from the Units assigned to that role. This allows for a more active role of each unit. **(PASSED)**

These proposals were voted on at the October IRTA Convention. Only those in attendance at the convention will have a role in these changes. And that number was 218 people. By making those changes that passed, ALL members of IRTA will have a say in how the organization functions.

A special thanks to the members of CCRTA who attended the convention. They were Pat Bringaze, Pehg Zeller, And Kay Ostrom.

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	
2.	June 6, 2024	Bretz's Winery	Carlyle	
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	Bretz's Winery	Carlyle	
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

LIFETIME EDUCATORS AWARD

Jan Kauling and Milton Luginbuhl were presented with the CCRTA Lifetime Educators Award at the September meeting. Honorees were chosen not only because of their careers as teachers, but also for service to CCRTA and to their communities.



Congratulations to Jan and Milton

Thank you for all you have done
in service to others.

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS

WEP and GPO NEWS [Alert: Tell Them This Week–It's Time for a Hearing!](#)

Oct 25, 2023 08:29 pm | SS Fairness

Please call your Representative and Demand a Ways and Means Committee Hearing. Despite the fact that there are now 298 co-signers on H.R.82, the bill to fully repeal the WEP and GPO, and there were even more co-signers in the last Congress, **there has never been a full hearing on the offsets and how they work.** Many legislators are still in the dark. We need to back up our Congressional co-sponsors, [Garret Graves](#) and [Abigail Spanberger](#) by telling our own Members of Congress to **demand a full hearing** on the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset.

Find their websites at [house.gov](https://www.house.gov) and email or call their offices by Friday. (We hope you already have their phone numbers, local and D.C., in your address book.) Call them this week!

Whether your representative has signed on or not, give them a couple of reasons to demand a real hearing to answer some questions:

- Why does the **GPO ignore the years a spouse may be totally dependent** and earning benefits before going to work and earning a public pension?
- Why do some people say that **the WEP formula was written incorrectly?**
- Why do public pensions cause the offsets when **other forms of income are not affected?**
- How can Social Security justify cutting people's benefits when they retire **without informing them beforehand?**
- How do they defend the fact that the offsets cause a greater hardship on lower-income people than for those who have larger pensions?
- Add your own questions!

There are questions to be answered. Ask your legislator, co-signer or not, to request a hearing!



Milton Luginbuhl accepts the Lifetime Educators Award at the September CCRTA Meeting.