

CLINTON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS

SEPTEMBER MEETING AT TRENTON



FROM CCRTA PRESIDENT, DON OSTROM

Volume 6, Issue 1

Website: www.weebly.ccrtacom

August 2, 2021

CCRTA's next meeting: Thursday, September 2, 2021



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

CCRTA Officers for 2019

President:

Donnie Ostrom

Vice President:

????????????

Secretary:

Kay Ostrom

Treasurer:

Paula Williams

Membership Chair:

Mary Ann Kauling

Legislative Chair:

Kelley Kesterson

Foundation Chair:

Cynthia O'Neill

Members Benefit Chair:

Leon Luber

September Meeting Will Be in Person at Trenton House

The September 2nd meeting will be an in-person meeting at the Trenton House in Trenton, Illinois. The start time is 11:30 a.m.

I have spoken with several members who are happy with this meeting being in-person. We are still in a pandemic. **Therefore, I ask that you still continue to wear a mask and do our best to socially distance.** I know many of you have received both of your vaccinations and feel that you are safe. I hope that it is true and new variants (Delta and Lambda) don't set back this country's progress.

I ask that if you are going to attend the meeting, **please call Mary Ann Kauling and let her know you will be attending the meeting.** This allows the restaurant the time to set the room up properly for our meeting.

CCRTA's Basket For the Convention Auction

For the past ten years CCRTA has donated a basket of Goods made in Clinton County for the IRTA Convention Auction.

I ask that if you would like to donate an item or two for the CCRTA Basket, please bring the items to the September Meeting at the Trenton House. Kay and I have donated two bottles of wine made at the winery in Aviston. I would hope that others would find an item made in the county that would help make this a basket to be desired.

Last year's basket had summer sausage, wine, barbeque sauce, cup and saucer from the Trenton coffee house, soda from Excel and beer from Excel bottling. I am sure there were other items, but don't remember all.

SAVE THE DATES

2021 Meeting Dates

1. March 4, 2021 at Trenton House is Cancelled
 2. June 3, 2021
Trenton House
 - 3. Sept. 2, 2021 at Trenton House**
 4. Dec. 2, 2020 at Bretz's Winery, Carlyle
- All Meetings Begin at 11:30 am**

2021 PROGRAMS

MARCH 4, 2021
MEETING CANCELLED
ZOOM MTG.

JUNE 3, 2021
TBA

SEPT. 2, 2021

DEC. 2, 2021
ELECTION OF CCRTA OFFICERS

CCRTA AND IRTA DUES FOR 2021, Please send to the Treasurer

CCRTA is accepting 2021 dues. The cost for a one year membership to CCRTA is \$10.00. The cost of a life time membership to CCRTA is \$100.00. Dues are payable at a meeting or you can send a check to our Treasurer, Paula Williams. Paula's address is as follows:

Paula Williams
14400 Baumann Road
Highland, IL 62249

Please make checks payable to the CCRTA.

I recommend that you also join the Illinois Retired Teachers Association in Springfield. You may go on-

line for information at www.irtaonline.org. The cost is \$2.50 a month and is deducted from your pension check. You can become a life time member with a one-time payment of \$400.00. Members who joined IRTA prior to 2018 can write a \$40 check each year to maintain membership. Since 2019, all new members were 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.

News From The IRTA Office in Springfield



2021 IRTA Area Conferences:

The Area 6 Conference was held on-line on June 24, 2021. There were about 30 people who attended the on-line program. I was hoping to see more members from CCRTA on-line. The program discussed the IRTA's organizational evaluation by Brewer-Pratt Associate. The IRTA is looking to review its procedures and meet the needs of those who are retired and those about to retire. The biggest change would come at how we vote for IRTA officers. The Executive Board would like to give all members of IRTA a chance to vote for officers, instead of it being done by representatives sent to convention. The IRTA Executive Board is also wanting to reduce the size of some of the committees because it is difficult to find members that are willing to serve in those roles. You can go on-line at www.irtaonline.org and view the entire Area 6 meeting.

2021 IRTA Biennial Convention in October:

The Board has moved forward with having an in-person convention in October of 2021. It is hoped by then the COVID-19 virus will be under control and that most things will be back to near normal. The Convention Committee is meeting and planning all the activities for the convention scheduled for October 18th and 19th. I will again be running for the Office of Treasurer of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association. Our former Area 6 Director and now Vice-President of IRTA, Bill Funkhauser will be a candidate for the of President of IRTA. Clinton County will need three people to attend and vote for officers and possible changes in the constitution.

Teacher Health Insurance Security (THIS):

Recently, the TRS Board certified \$97,722.920 as the required FY 2022 state contribution of the THIS fund. This recertification was asked for by CMS (Central Management Services). Previously the TRS Board certified the contribution rate 1.30 percent of pay, now they have set that rate at 0.90. This will cause a deficit in the insurance fund. Jim Bachman, Executive Director of IRTA, has been in contact with the two retired members on the TRS Board and has also asked our attorney about the legality of this move by TRS and CMS. There is a strong possibility that this change could cause a greater increase in our premiums and a delay in payments to our doctors and hospitals. I will keep you informed as this issue progresses. We may be back in court defending our insurance benefit.

LATEST NEWS ON WEP AND GPO

Jul 22, 2021

We now have 193 co-signers on the Social Security Fairness bill, H.R. 82 (the repeal bill). We need 97 more Members of the House of Representatives to co-sign the bill to force a floor vote on the measure. 290 is the magic number! Last year we got 264 votes of the 290 that we needed. You can help right now!

HERE IS OUR PROJECT

Check to see if your Congressperson is one of the 193 who have signed on.

Here is the link to the list: [Cosponsors List for full repeal](#)

If they have already signed on—call or write them a thank you note. (If you haven't set up a direct link to your Member of Congress, here is a link to find their official webpage: house.gov
If they are not on this year's list, check to see if they signed onto the Social Security Fairness bill last year.

Here is the list of co-signers from last year: [2020 Cosponsor List](#)

Remember: you can use the tool on the upper right of the list to sort by state or alphabetically to find your Rep.

IF THEY SIGNED-ON LAST YEAR, but not yet this year.

- Call their office. (the general House number is 202-224-3121. Or call your House Member directly. Put their office numbers in your phone's address book)
- **Say to them**, your version of: "Gee, I know you are really busy and things have been crazy, but Congressperson _____ hasn't yet co-signed this year's Social Security Fairness bill, H.R.82. S/he signed onto the bill last year, and I know the Congressperson is really supportive of teachers/police/seniors. Can you please remind them that we are expecting/hoping for their continued support."

IF THEY DIDN'T SIGN ONTO THE REPEAL BILL LAST YEAR:

- Thank YOU for continuing to remind them that we need their assistance!
- Enlist family and neighbors to write letters.
- Try to get an appointment with their staff, if not with them, and plead your case.

Show up at a town hall, and listen to the gasps in the crowd when you tell the legislator loudly across the room that you are losing nearly \$5,000 in Social Security benefits every year. Tell them that you paid for those benefits when you sold shoes in the summer to supplement your teacher salary. Tell them about your friend whose husband died after 42 years of marriage and who gets no widow's benefits that her husband paid for because she taught for 25 years.

2021 CCRTA MEETING SCHEDULE

CLINTON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION MEETINGS 2021

	<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
1.	March 4, 2021	ZOOM Meeting		
2.	June 3, 2021	Trenton House	Trenton, IL	
3.	Sept. 2, 2021	Trenton House	Trenton, IL	
4.	Dec. 2, 2021	Bretz's Winery	Carlyle, IL	Election of CCRTA Officers

These dates and locations are subject to change by the group.

Election of Officers is usually done in September, but this year we will do it at the December meeting. We need four individuals to step up and be active in CCRTA.

Please Support The IRTA Foundation by Giving in 2021:

In 1985, after identifying a large number of 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.

You should have recently received the first letter from the IRTA Foundation asking for a donation. Please donate. The money for the IRTA Foundation **ONLY** comes from the yearly fund raiser and donations from IRTA members and Units. Please contribute today to the IRTA Foundation.

Your support is much appreciated AND NEEDED.

HELP THIS GROW	2021	2020	2019
Fund Raising Donations	\$106,346.00	\$261,124.00	\$196,741.00
Total Donation From All Sources	\$132,628.00	\$360,837.00	\$292,758.00

Minutes of the Clinton County Retired Teachers Association

June 3, 2021 at Trenton House Restaurant

The meeting was called to order by President Don Ostrom at 11:36 am. Twenty-two members were in attendance. After the Pledge of Allegiance, CCRTA officers were introduced. President Ostrom explained that CCRTA Treasurer Paula Williams has serious health issues and if she is not able to continue in the office of Treasurer, Pehg Zeller has volunteered to step into that position. Milton Luginbuhl led the group in prayer.

Guests attending the meeting were introduced: John Harlan, IRTA Area Director, Ron Daniels, Regional Superintendent of Schools and his assistant, Matt Renaud.

IRTA Treasurer Donnie Ostrom reminded members that they should have received information from CMA about the TRIP Insurance. The TRAIL insurance program includes hearing aid benefits and Kay Ostrom explained how easy it is to use that benefit by calling United Health Care. She encouraged all members who need or already have hearing aids to use this benefit. President Ostrom informed members that the IRTA building in Springfield is now open again to visitors and the IRTA Convention is October 18-19, 2021 at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Springfield. He encouraged all members to attend and CCRTA needs 4 members to attend the convention as delegates.

President Ostrom called for approval of Minutes of March 3, 2021 Zoom meeting as printed in the newsletter. Motion by Kelley Kesterson, second by Milton Luginbuhl and vote by acclamation. Treasurer Paula Williams reported \$471.14 in Checking account and \$3394.19 in savings. Motion to approve Treasurer's report by Muriel Barber, second by Kelley Kesterson and vote by acclamation. Paula will continue to collect dues for the 2021 year.

John Harlan, IRTA Area Director, was welcomed to the meeting. John had a long drive, but was happy to attend an in-person meeting. He encouraged members to recruit new retirees to join the local and state organization and also encouraged members to volunteer for offices at the local and state levels. The IRTA Foundation 2021 scholarship Winner was Brianna Thronton, who is a graduate of Johnson City. She is a junior attending SIUC, whose major is agricultural education. She received the \$3000.00 Shirley Dodds scholarship. The \$1500 IRTA scholarship was not awarded because Brianna was the only applicant. The Active Teacher Grants applications closed on June 1. In 2020 over \$36,500 was awarded to 56 teachers and 15 of those grants were in Area 6 (our area). Area 6 had only 39 applicants. The IRTA Foundation continues to help 9 retirees each month as well as helping members with one-time grants for such things as real estate taxes and home repair, allowing those members to stay in their homes.

John reported that IRTA rents the building it owns on Walnut Street and it is in good condition. IRTA was able to rent ½ of the 3rd floor of the building on Second Street. That building still has space for additional renters. Audits of the Foundation, PAC, and IRTA funds found no exceptions. John encouraged all members to register and attend the June 24th Area 6 Zoom meeting. Everyone is welcomed, but you must register on line. He also encouraged members to attend the Convention in October.

Regional Superintendent Ron Daniels explained that it has been a difficult year trying to meet state requirements for schools. The biggest challenge for schools has been to reduce "learning loss". Some schools in Illinois never went back to in-person attendance, and it was difficult for teachers and administrators. The good news is that there is \$78 million in federal money to help schools keep students in class. There is a need not only for teachers, but all school staff: aids, bus drivers, cooks, and administrators. Ron introduced his assistant, Matt Renaud, who is working to help schools find staff. If a teacher has certification in another state, he can help them get certified in Illinois. Ron reminded everyone who wants to keep their license to make sure that you have a current email in your account. If you have any issues, please call his office. With a new update of software, retirees were changed to "active" status and were not able to update their license until status was changed to "retired". He informed the group that he is retiring at the end of the month and Matt will be appointed to finish his term. He thanked all the members for their support of his office and staff. Matt Renaud has been Superintendent at Racoon School before accepting the position as assistant regional superintendent. He wants CCRTA members to push for legislation for education and he will inform the CCRTA President when important legislation is to be voted on. There were questions from the members to Ron and Matt concerning average starting salary in Illinois schools as well as a health curriculum on sex education.

CCRTA member Carol Moeller introduced the books that she has published. She shared stories of her experience as she has read her books in classrooms and at libraries. Her books are available at Amazon. She encouraged all of us to write stories to our children or grandchildren and to read daily.

Under New Business, President Ostrom asked members to contribute to the CCRTA basket for the IRTA Convention. Members should bring items for the "Taste of Clinton County" basket to the September meeting. He reminded members to please send or call if you have a change of address, email, or phone. He informed members that Leon Lubers is doing better and hopes to attend the next meeting.

Kelley Kesterson serves on the IRTA legislative committee. He reported that the current budget included payments to the TRS fund as well as our insurance fund. IRTA sent an email with complete information about the state budget.

Kay Ostrom reported that retiree and former CCRTA member, Don Jones, passed away. She asked that CCRTA send a donation to the Foundation. Motion by Ben Fuehne, second by Betty Von Bokel to send \$20.00 to the IRTA Foundation in memory of Don Jones. Motion carried by acclamation.

With no other business, Meeting was adjourned at 1:40 pm. Next meeting September 3, 2021, 11:30pm at Trenton House Restaurant. Respectfully submitted, Kay Ostrom, Secretary



CCRTA Financial Report: 5/3/ 2021

Checking Account Balance: \$411.14
Saving Account Balance: \$3,393.33
Several CCRTA members have mailed a check
for 2021 dues.

Please mail your check today to
Treasurer Paula Williams.

NEWS FROM THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM (TRS)

TRS has updated several items on its website including benefit reports for active and inactive members. By signing into the secure [MEMBERS ACCOUNT SECTION](#) of the TRS website, retirees can access the following individual information:

- Ability to print income verification letters
- Ability to print insurance premium verification letters
- Ability to update certain demographics
- Access to printable forms and brochures
- Access to past TRS benefit reports (service credit and earnings history, 2.2 status, beneficiaries, sick leave from former employers and more)
- Access to accounts receivable statements if balances are owed
- Access to monthly and year-to-date earnings statements

If you need help in establishing an account or signing into your account, contact TRS at 877-927-5877.

CCRTA Officers:

The election of CCRTA Unit Officers will be in December. It is time for some of our members to take a leadership role in the CCRTA. I have been President and Vice-President twice. There is a great cadre of members who can and will assist and help in the planning of meetings and activities. Please be a real participant and consider running for one of the offices in this organization.

The IRTA is moving toward a more active role in the Units. After several discussions between the Executive Board and IRTA staff an on-line training was held for Unit treasurers. It is the goal of IRTA to help each of the 92 Units be more active in the IRTA 's goal setting and working to protect the retired educators pension and benefits.

Changes are coming to the IRTA's operations and communications. It is imperative, if the IRTA is to be a sustainable organization, that more members take an active role in its operations. These changes will be part of the discussion at the June CCRTA meeting. Your ideas are important and I will take them to the next Executive Board meeting of IRTA.

CCRTA members who attended the June meeting were greeted with a Hawaiian lei to help celebrate our in-person meeting.

Thanks to Mary Ann Kauling and Rosemary Hueslmann for the festive table decorations.

