

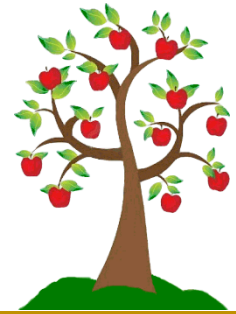


WINTER 2020

Wise Owl News

From The Tree Of Knowledge

BLACKHAWK UNIT 21 IRTA



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BLACKHAWK RETIRED TEACHERS MEETINGS

ARE HELD AT THE QUAD CITY BOTANICAL CENTER

2525 FOURTH AVENUE ROCK ISLAND

Board meeting 8:15 a.m.

Social hour 9:15 — Business Session 9:45

DECEMBER 9: "CHRISTMAS PROGRAM"

JANUARY 13: "BOARD MEETING ONLY"

FEBRUARY 10 : "WELCOME NEW RETIREES TO IRTA"

ALL PROGRAMS ARE CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

IRTPAC AND IRTA HIGHLIGHTS

IRTPAC is pleased with the outcome of 2020 Illinois Election. We support candidates who understand the importance of retired educators pensions and health benefits, along with many other issues that affect our members.

IRTA is over 39,000 members strong in membership. There are over 80,000 potential new members that need to join. Please help us get those people to support and be involved in IRTA.

Newsletter	Articles Due	Mailing Date
Spring	2/15/21	2/19/21
Summer	5/24/21	5/28/21
Fall	8/23/21	8/27/21
Winter	11/15/21	11/22/21

2021 DIRECTORY WILL BE MAILED BY FRIDAY JANUARY 21. PLEASE NOTIFY US NOW IF YOU HAVE CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL. WE MUST BE NOTIFIED NOW IF YOU WILL BE AWAY FROM HOME THIS WINTER.

PRESIDENT— Annie Robinson

As President of Blackhawk Unit 21 Retired Teachers – Rock Island County, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the officers, members and Executive Board who have supported me for the last two years. We have accomplished much together in these years that seemingly passed too quickly, even with the COVID virus. As I make my departure, I am asking you to please support our new President, Joe Vermeire, and new Vice President, Scott Turnipseed who will be installed with other officers on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at the Zoom Board meeting.

Our last person-to-person membership meeting was held Wednesday, March 11, 2020. The April meeting was cancelled because of COVID-19, and from May until the present, we haven't held any person-to-person meetings. All Board meetings have been via Zoom, and very successful. Since we were unable to meet in person with the membership, our consultant, Phil Dennis, suggested making contact with the members by telephone. This was done on two occasions and it worked very well. Most members were very excited to hear from us. I would like to thank the Board members who agreed to make phone calls to the members. I also thank the members who so graciously accepted our calls.

Unit 21 is an organization that has several members who have positions with the State, including our State President, John Flaherty, who is an active member of Unit 21 and is chairman of the Legislative committee; Michael Schmidt, State Membership chairman and chairman of Public Relations for Unit 21; Loryann Eis, State Finance committee member, and By-Laws chair-person for Unit 21; and Doug Strand, Vice President for Unit 21 and State TRS Representative. Thanks to all of you for your expertise and support. I should not forget Nancy McManus, Unit 21's Super Woman. She is our Treasurer, Membership chairperson and one who actively gets involved wherever she can be of service. And there's Nancy Licko, our very efficient Unit 21 Secretary. Thank you for creating our much needed website: <https://blackhawkirta21.weebly.com> Many thanks go out to Michael Daly who wears many hats for Unit 21, including Chairman of the Finance, Foundation, Directory and Newsletter committees.

Critical to our success is the business of the Unit. We are fortunate to have men and women who are willing to serve on the Board to help make decisions that allow Unit 21 to run effectively. Thanks to all of the Board members and committee chairpersons who serve so faithfully, including Gloria Wisley, Jan Corsaro, Sheree Rogers, Virginia Shaffer, Bobbie Lastrapes, Virginia Payton, Kathy Killam, Linda Powell and Lynne Brandenburg. Also, special thanks to Joanne Nelson, Area 1 Representative and Gail Wright, Region 8 Representative for joining us at our monthly Zoom Board meetings. They have truly been assets to our Unit. We thank Michael Halpin and Tony McCombie who retained their positions during the November Illinois elections and are staunch supporters of the goals and objectives of Unit 21 and IRTA.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Nancy McManus

We are in the process of collecting 2021 dues for the Blackhawk Unit. To guarantee inclusion in the 2021 Directory, please submit dues and data changes before December 31, 2020. There will be no general membership meetings for the remainder of 2020, so dues need to be mailed to: Nancy McManus 3620 33rd Avenue Rock Island, Illinois 61201

- 1) If you will be 90 or older in 2021, notify Nancy McManus of your name and birth date. At age 90, both local and state memberships will be designated as LIFE, with no further dues collected, but a birth date must be sent to the state IRTA office.
- 2) We are asking you to be certain that we have an accurate email address and phone number for you. Our 2021 Blackhawk Unit Directory will be going to press in January and some information needs to be updated. If you would prefer we list the number of your cell phone, please notify Mike Daly or Nancy McManus.

ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS:

One of the Blackhawk Unit's biggest expenses is the printing and mailing of the Directory. This becomes even more expensive if the Post Office cannot deliver your 2021 Directory in January because you are spending the winter away from the Quad-Cities. The Post Office will discard Directories that are undeliverable, so in order for you to receive a Directory, we need to pay "Postage Notice" and have another Directory printed for you. Each year we try to do better, but we need your help to improve the process. If you plan to be away for the months of January and/or February and want us to mail the Directory to your temporary address, send that address to Mike Daly or Nancy McManus. We can hold your Directory until you return – just notify us.

Mike Daly : 309-721-6005 or mjd7104@yahoo.com Nancy McManus : 309-794-0490 or nancymcmanus12@mediacombb.net

IN MEMORIAM - Members We Have Lost



Darrell Biggs - Jan 20

Dorothy Voyles - May 20

Robert Nixon - May 20

Louise Maloney - July 20

Kathleen Anderson - Aug 20

Marilyn Cartwright - Aug 20

Joan Wierenga - Oct 20

Black Hawk Unit of IRTA had 36 members (active or in-active) who died during the period of November 2019 - October 2020. A tribute poem written by David Collins - "To the lesson plan of life there is an end, and in the past year these colleagues in this organization have left us. Just as we have been enriched by their presence, we are diminished in their absence. It is only right that we reflect on how that special person so many called TEACHER, brightened the lives of young people."

Pat Maynard - Nov. 19

Elaine Matthews - Jan 20

Maxine Land - Feb 20

Carroll Hultgren - Apr 20

Byrl Weiss - June 20

Alison Puffer - May 20

Patricia Mortier - Aug 20

Karen Techlin - Sept 20

Eleanor Pettit - Oct 20

Mary Jane Nelson - Nov. 19

Ron Pustelnik - Jan 20

Esther Morford - Feb 20

M. Louise Schmidt - Feb 20

Carol Johnson - May 20

Amanda Keller - Mar 20

Jacqueline Erickson - July 20

David Miller - Sept 20

Jack Wheeler - Sept 20

Gail Gibbons - Jan 20

Robert Zesiger - Nov. 19

Charlotte Grymonprez - Jan 20

Helen Gehring - Feb 20

Jean Downing - Feb 20

Linda Lentz - Aug 20

Audreen Herrera - April 20

Steven Radovich - Aug 20

Lawrence Dussliere - Sept 20

Bernice Wille - Sept 20

Mary Ellen Strupp - Mar 20

IRTA FOUNDATION - Michael Daly

2020 BLACKHAWK UNIT PLEDGES ARE STRONG DURING PANDEMIC

One hundred percent of Blackhawk members pledges for “Birdies for Charity” were collected resulting in \$1,375.00 for the foundation. Add to that the “Birdies Bonus” and the final contribution was \$1,443.75. On 10/30/20 this amount was put into Business checking account which has a balance of \$4,527.83

The Annual Meeting of the Executive Board will be on January 13, 2021 right after the IRTA Unit 21 Board Meeting. In attendance will be Michael Daly, Executive Director; Annie Robinson, Past President; Nancy McManus, Treasurer; Scott Turnipseed, Vice President; Joe Vermeire, President; and Nancy Licko, Secretary.

There will be a decision which non-profit organizations will receive 2021 awards and the amount of the grant. If you wish to suggest a new agency or charity, please forward a summation of the mission statement to Michael Daly for Board consideration.

CONSULTANT - Phillip Dennis

PRESIDENT ANNIE ROBINSON LEADS BLACKHAWK UNIT DURING COVID PANDEMIC

Nearing the end of her outstanding two years of service as our local President, Annie Robinson continues to lead our Unit’s Board of Officers during these stressful, unusual times of COVID. She has faithfully and carefully kept our Unit on track with good meetings containing reports of various committees via ZOOM conferencing. Annie organized a phone calling project which was used twice informing all of our nearly 670 members about key information as well as checking on their well being. Her concern for each member has been a hallmark of her term. The Blackhawk Unit has been fortunate to have a great team of leaders who are working regularly to protect the pensions and benefits of all retired educators, locally and in the state.

Thanks for your leadership, Annie.



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

As of our November Blackhawk Unit Board Meeting we have 668 members - 37% of members have yet to submit dues for 2021. We have welcomed 6 new Blackhawk members since September: Terrina Gosa – Moline, Marjorie Henseler – Silvis, Susan Johnson – Hampton, Dinah Leibovitz – Moline, Mary Ann Maere – Moline, and George Fuhr as a Blackhawk Associate member. We thank them for helping to protect the benefits of retired Illinois educators. Since the distribution of the Fall 2020 Newsletter, the following seven Blackhawk members have died: Kathleen Anderson, David Miller, Marilyn Cartwright, Karen Techlin, Jack Wheeler, Bernie Wille and Joan Wierenga.

ROE SUPERINTENDENT - Tammy Muerhoff



Dear Retired Educators and Administrators,

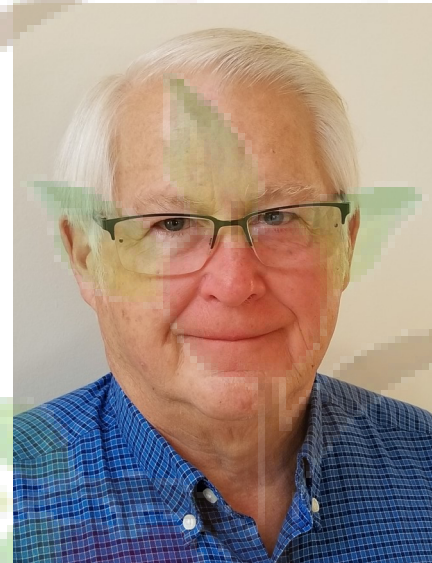
I hope this newsletter article finds you and your family well amid the pandemic. The past eight months have been very difficult indeed; not only among the field of education, but for individuals near and far. Thank you to all who have reached out to lend support. It is greatly appreciated. I am thinking of you all and wishing for you to be safe and healthy.

If the Rock Island County Regional Office of Education can be of assistance to you, please don't hesitate to give us a call at 309-736-1111. For questions specifically regarding licensure, you may reach Brandi Schwanke, Licensure Specialist, by phone at 309-736-1111 or by email at brandi.schwanke@riroe.com.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE



Joe Vermeire - President



Scott Turnipseed - Vice President



Nancy Licko - Secretary

The Nominating Committee is very happy to announce the results of our recent election. The following officers were unanimously elected to these positions for 2021-22:

President: Joe Vermeire
Vice President: Scott Turnipseed
Secretary: Nancy Licko
Treasurer: Nancy McManus

A new Nominating Committee was also unanimously approved, and includes these members: Regina Nelson, Steve Haines, Janet Lockhart-Johnson, Mike Daly, Pat Stolz, Jan Welch, and Lynn Brandenburg.

Congratulations to those members elected by you, and many thanks for voting!!!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - John Flaherty & Art Young

Speaker Madigan has cancelled the legislative veto session for November and he will probably also cancel the session scheduled for December.

The Progressive Tax was defeated in our November election. This means that Illinois will need to make some cuts in its budget. The current budget is projected to have a \$4.3 billion deficit and the back log of state bills will be about \$10 billion by the end of this fiscal year.

When the Illinois Legislature meets in January they will vote on who is to be the Speaker of the House. Mike Madigan is still the favorite but some Democrats have vowed not to vote for him. Someone needs to lead us in Springfield and it will be interesting to see how things proceed in January.

Governor Pritzker has stated that cuts need to be made but that Illinois cannot balance the budget with just cuts. It's possible that Illinois will close some of the corporate and personal tax loopholes. It is estimated that we could save about \$1.5 billion through this.

It seems inevitable that Illinois will need a tax hike but no one wants to lead that charge at the present. For now our pensions are safe. We cannot become complacent! If you see any of our State Representatives or Senators, be sure to remind them that we are counting on them to keep their promises.

Everyone just stay safe and stay home!

Governor: JB Pritzker
207 State House, Springfield IL 62706 Phone:
217-782-0244
Email: Governor@illinois.gov

Representative Michael Madigan
300 Capital Bldg., Springfield, IL 62706 Phone:
217-782-5350
Email: Mmadigan@hds.ilga.gov

Senator Neil Anderson
1523 47th Avenue - Suite 2, Moline, IL 61265
M103-D Capital Building, Springfield, IL 62076
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Senator Tammy Duckworth
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Editor: Michael J. Daly

Committee Members: Ryan Daly, Nancy McManus, Virginia Shaffer, Annie Robinson & Sheree Rogers

Send your comments or notify us of any name, address or e-mail changes to

wiseowlnewsletter@gmail.com Thank you

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