

FALL 2020



Wise Owl News

From The Tree Of Knowledge

BLACKHAWK UNIT 21 IRTA



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting Dates	1
President's Note	2
ROE Superintendent	2
Treasurer Report	3
Directory Committee	3
Membership Committee	4
IRTA Executive Director	4
Secretary Report	5
Legislative Update	6
New Retirees	7



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

SEPTEMBER 9: "WELCOMING NEW RETIREES TO IRTA"

OCTOBER 14: "IRTA BENEFITS"

NOVEMBER 11: "APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION SERVICES FOR VETERANS"

ALL PROGRAMS ARE CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

New Shortcut to Web Page

Since we have been spending lots of time at home, may I suggest visiting the official Blackhawk IRTA Unit 21 website. If you have a smart phone, tablet or computer with Internet connection, you can access the Blackhawk Unit 21 web page by typing <http://tiny.cc/slggkz>. This short version takes you to <http://blackhawkirta21.weebly.com/>, which is the official address for the web page. We hope you will find the information useful and informative. On the Home Page you will find links for membership information, newsletters, our local foundation, minutes and budgets, and other important retiree resources. Take time to explore and suggest.

What can we do to make this a better communication tool for you? Please make suggestions for additions and changes you would like to see. This is your page. It should reflect your needs and interests. Go to the Contact Page and send your suggestions. Would you like a Member Highlight page? How about a recipe exchange? Are there skills or knowledge you would like to share with others? What other information would be helpful? We look forward to hearing all your ideas and suggestions.

Newsletter	Articles Due	Mailing Date
Winter	11/18/20	11/25/20

ATTENTION MEMBERS: PLEASE BE SAFE AND STAY HEALTHY!! YOUR BLACKHAWK UNIT 21 IRTA IS HERE FOR YOU. WE WILL BE STRONG AND STAY CONNECTED!!

PRESIDENT— ANNIE ROBINSON

Summer is almost gone. Fall is rapidly approaching. A derecho left us without power, and devastated, with trees and power lines down. Covid-19 is still torturing us. When will this madness end? We're not sure, but we are sure of one thing. We are all in this together and it is going to take all of us working together to get through it. For Covid-19, we have to continue to be safe by social distancing, washing our hands and wearing masks and gloves.

As an organization we are making changes also. The Board has been meeting monthly via Zoom and decided that, because of the pandemic, we will not have any membership meetings, including the September Breakfast meeting, until (possibly) February of 2021. Board Meetings will continue to be held via Zoom through December of 2020. We are doing this to help protect our members from the Covid-19 virus.

Members of the Board have made telephone calls to check on all members of Blackhawk Unit 21 Retired Teachers. I would like to thank all of the Board members for cooperating with us in this effort. The Board thanks each member for accepting and responding to our calls. By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will have checked on you once again. We encourage you to continue to "be safe and stay healthy."

I am eternally grateful for all of the work that is being done by the Board during this dreaded Covid-19 pandemic. You've continued to stay involved, and you have taken on responsibility to do whatever needs to be done. I am confident that we will come out of this pandemic stronger and more deeply connected than we were before it began.

ROE SUPERINTENDENT - TAMMY MUERHOFF

Dear Retired Educators and Administrators,

While summer is coming to a close and fall is coming upon us, that means school is coming to session. Although the last quarter of the prior school year presented many challenges and this school year is starting in a different format than we are accustomed, educators and administrators in our region, the state, and the nation are working diligently to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of students upon their return to the classroom and/or remote learning. It is a very trying time indeed for many. I extend my appreciation for your ongoing support of students, educators, administrators, and the many others who work to lend their expertise each day among the schools.

As a reminder, if you have not yet renewed your license and it expired on June 30, 2020, then please be sure to log into your ELIS account and renew your license.

I would like to share that our office is ready and available to lend support and resources. We are available to answer your questions and provide assistance. Please contact us at 309-736-1111 if we can assist you.

TREASURER'S REPORT -NANCY MCMANUS

Blackhawk Unit dues for 2021 are currently being collected. **Local Blackhawk dues are \$15.00 and must be paid by December 31, 2020** for members to be included in the 2021 Directory. Since there will be no general membership meetings in September, October, November and December, dues need to be mailed to the Treasurer at **Nancy**

McManus 3620 –33rd Avenue Rock Island, Illinois 61201 Checks are to be made payable to **Blackhawk Unit – IRTA**. Please check your 2020 Blackhawk Unit Directory for your name, address and telephone number as listed. Include the following information with your checks:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

If you will be 90 or older in 2021, notify Nancy McManus at 794-0490 of your name and birthdate. At age 90, both local and state memberships will be credited as LIFE, with no further dues collected, **BUT** a birthdate must be sent to the state IRTA office.

DIRECTORY COMMITTEE

One of the Blackhawk Unit's biggest expenses is the printing and mailing of Directories. This becomes even more expensive if the Post Office cannot deliver your 2020D Directory in January because you are spending the winter away from the Quad-Cities. The Post Office will throw away Directories that are undeliverable – so, in order for you to receive a Directory, we need to pay a postage notice and have another Directory printed for you. Each year we have been doing better, but we need your help to improve the situation.

There are three easy options to avoid this:

- If you would like to have the directory mailed to your winter address, please notify us of that address.
- If you would like to have it held by us until you return to your home address and have it mailed at that time, please let us know the date on which you plan to return.
- If you would like to have it held until you return and you **will** pick it up at a monthly meeting, please let us know that and we will bring your directory to that meeting.

Contact person is Nancy McManus at nancymcmanus12@mediacombb.net or 309-794-0490.

NOTE: The Directory Committee will mail only **one Directory to an address that reflects a husband and wife membership unless we are notified of the desire for two Directories.**

SECRETARY - NANCY LICKO

We will be voting in a new way this year. Due to the Covid-19 virus, the Board voted unanimously to cancel all in-person General Membership meetings for October, November, and December. Since our By-laws require us to hold a Board election in November, we will vote using on-line ballots for those members with email and paper ballots will be mailed to those without. Voting will take place between October 14 and November 10, 2020. You may notice that several Board members offered to continue for another term in these difficult times. If you or someone you know is interested in this or any other position, please contact any board member and we will add your name(s) to the ballot. A sample of the paper ballot is below. To receive a paper ballot, please call any board member or mail a request to:

Nancy Licko, 2638 5th Street Court, East Moline, IL 61244

*Since in-person general membership meetings have been cancelled for the remainder of 2020, the elections will be held using this form submitted by mail or by email using the form on the Blackhawk Unit 21 Website (<http://blackhawkkirta21.weebly.com/>). For your vote to be valid it must be submitted between October 14, 2020 and November 10, 2020 by mail or email. Mark an X on the box of your selections for the Blackhawk Unit 21 Board and mail your ballot to: **Nancy Licko, 2638 5th Street Ct., East Moline, IL 61244.***

President

Joe Vermeire

Vice President

Scott Turnipseed

Secretary

Nancy Licko

Treasurer

Nancy McManus

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - JOHN FLAHERTY & ART YOUNG

The Illinois legislators are not meeting now. Some committees have met by Zoom but nothing will happen in the near future.

The main item for discussion seems to be the Progressive Tax that will be on the November ballot. There are many pros and cons to this and the IRTA has not taken a position on this since we do not pay state taxes on our pensions or retirement investments. If this does pass, it will not affect taxing retirement income. The legislature can decide to try to tax retirement whether it passes or fails, but we do not believe that they will try this unless something drastic happens to change their minds.

Speaker of the Illinois House, Mike Madigan, has been under fire and it is rumored that the Fed's are looking into his activities. Mr. Madigan does not use email or own a cell phone and unless some people are willing to testify to any illegal activities there does not seem to be any evidence to indict him.

Many of you will choose to vote by mail in the November election. Make sure that you return the form to the county clerk to request a ballot. We do not know what the Coronavirus situation will be in November, so play it safe. If you are at all concerned about your health, then request a mail-in ballot.

For now, everybody just stay safe!

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
Phone: 309-736-7084 / 217-782-5957
Email: Senatorneilanderson@gmail.com

Senator Tim Bivens
629 N. Galena Avenue, Dixon, IL 61021
M103-A Capitol Building, Springfield, IL 62076
Phone: 815-284-0045 / 217-782-0180
Email: Senatorbivens@grics.net

Representative Tony McCombie
9317B IL Rt. 84, Savanna, IL 61704
205A-N Stratton Office Bldg., Springfield, IL 62706
Phone: 815-632-7384 / 217-782-3992
Email: McCombie@ilhousegop.gov

Senator Dick Durbin
711 Hart Senate Bldg., Washington D.C. 20510
1504 3rd Avenue, Suite 227, Rock Island, IL 61201
Phone: 202-224-2152 / 309-786-5173

Senator Tammy Duckworth
104 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington DC 20510
1701 E. Woodfield Rd., Suite 704,
Schaumburg, IL 60173 Phone: 202-225-3711 /
847-413-1957

Representative Cheri Bustos
1009 Longworth HOB, Washington DC 20510
24014th Avenue, Rock Island IL 61201
Phone: 202-225-5905
Phone: 309-786-3406

Representative Mike Halpin
1504 3rd Avenue, Rock Island, IL 61201
242 A-W Stratton Office Bldg., Springfield, IL 62706
Phone: 309-558-3612 / 217-782-5970
Email: RepHalpin@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE - NANCY MCMANUS

As of August 16, 2020 the Blackhawk Unit of IRTA has 670 members. It was discovered that Gail Gibbons died in 2017 and Linda Lentz died in 2019. Since May 15, 2020 Lois Radovich has joined as an Associate Member and five members have died – Dorothy Voyles, Louise Maloney, Jackie Erikson, Steve Radovich and Patricia Mortier.

The following is an article written by Chuck Austin for the Winter 2016 newsletter. He died in an accident at the John Deere Classic Golf Tournament on July 7, 2017.

DO YOU HAVE A NON-CERTIFIED SPOUSE? I DO, AND THIS IS WHAT WE DID ABOUT IT!

I have been an IRTA and Blackhawk unit member for over a decade. By being a member, I know that I am supporting the one organization whose sole goal is to protect the interests of retired Illinois public school educators. My wife, Ann, also benefits from my membership in IRTA, because they are essentially looking out for her benefits, too. If she outlives me, she will still have a TRS pension benefit. In order for her and others to continue with IRTA, an Associate Membership is available for those who are not eligible for a TRS pension on their own.

Associate IRTA Annual Membership is \$25/year and an Associate IRTA Life Membership is available for a \$125 one-time payment. We went the life route. If she outlives me, she will continue to benefit from legislative representation and advocacy for improved benefits, legislative updates, the quarterly IRTA Action news bulletin, and very importantly, uninterrupted access to member benefits. Our Blackhawk Unit has seen a number of members make this same choice.

If you are one of that large group of IRTA members whose husband or wife was not a teacher eligible for a TRS pension, I encourage you to do the same thing that we did and have your spouse also join IRTA as an Associate Member. You could check out the information necessary for this membership at www.irtaonline.org or by contacting one of the Blackhawk Unit Board Members.

IRTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - JIM BACHMAN

We are living in some extraordinary and crazy times. For now, and especially for retirees, the world will be a different place for the foreseeable future. Please know that Illinois Retired Teachers Association will continue to be here for you.

The IRTA will continue to support our members and maintain our goals and objectives using an abundance of caution without placing our members or staff at risk.

The staff is currently at work in the office and has been since June 1st. We are taking precautions by taking our temperature every morning prior to entering the office, disinfecting surfaces, and we are keeping our social distance by staying in our individual offices. I continue to monitor the region's and state's recommendation on whether we should go back to working remotely.

This fall election will soon be upon us. The Illinois Retired Teachers Political Action Committee has made its legislative endorsements. Please remember that the IRTPAC endorses legislative candidates based on their views or past voting record on retirement benefits. We understand that our members cast their vote for many reasons, and we are not suggesting to you how to vote. But **Please Remember to Vote!**

WELCOME THIS YEAR'S RETIREES!

As you probably know, every year we invite the new retirees from Rock Island county to our annual September brunch, which will no longer be annual due to the pandemic. Still, all of us members of the Blackhawk Unit should welcome them to retirement and urge them to join the IRTA, both state and our unit. If you know any of the retirees listed below, why not contact them and do just that?

Andy Richmond - Carbon Cliff

Ann Bowman - East Moline

Meredith Brandt - East Moline

Gina Escontrias - East Moline

Connie Anderson - Moline

Elizabeth Fernandez - Moline

Terrina Gosa - Moline

Stephanie Jordan - Moline

Sally Krantz - Moline

Dinah Leibovitz - Moline

Mary Ann Maere - Moline

Marty Mahieu - Moline

Robin McConnell - Moline

Valeree Pieper - Moline

Mike Resler - Moline

Shelley Rumler - Moline

Diane Fite - Riverdale

Ron Jacobs - Riverdale

Carl White - Riverdale

Kathy Evanchyk - Rock Island

Cheryl Gipson - Rock Island

Laveryne Jordan - Rock Island

Mike Nitzel - Rock Island

Terry Taylor - Rock Island

Lisa Wells - Rock Island

Jo Horscheidt - Rockridge

Allen Hyett - Rockridge

Pam Whittington - Rockridge

Sandy Dingman - Sherrard

Konnie Fry - Sherrard

Brenda Gates - Sherrard

Denise Muck - Sherrard

Marjorie Henseler - Silvis

Jean Houseman - Silvis



BLACKHAWK UNIT IRTA
3324 37TH AVE. DRIVE
MOLINE IL 61265

PRESORTED STANDARD

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

wiseowlnewsletter@gmail.com Thank you

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