

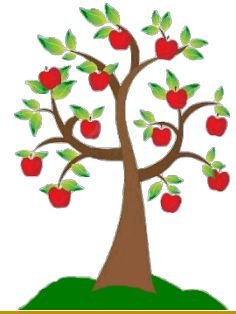


SPRING 2021

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

**MARCH 10 & APRIL 14 Programs
ARE CANCELED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

MAY 12: "TRS CHECK UP - THE LATEST INFORMATION"

Doug Strand TRS Representative

Introduction by Joe Vermeire

Greeters: Barb Parker & Paul Parker

Servers: Kathy Bekel & Nancy Luckenbill

"WE HOPE EVERYONE IS SAFE AND HEALTHY". MAKE SURE YOU CHECK OUT THE IRTA GRANT AND SCHOLARSHIP ARTICLES.

Like so much of the world, your State and local IRTA board has been doing its business by ZOOM each month. Realizing that we are all in the Risk category, we unfortunately have had to cancel our monthly meetings and annual New Retirees Breakfast. As the country and our Governor loosen up the COVID regulations, we will determine our direction. We will always keep your safety foremost. Until then, Be Safe!

Thanks, Joe Vermeire

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

PRESIDENT— Joe Vermeire

Spring, 2021 Issue is my first Black Hawk Unit 21 IRTA President's Message. Spring??? We are in the clutches of a severe Winter Cold Spell! Yet we move forward, keeping our eyes on the goals. More of that later.

Fall, 1969 was my first year in teaching. As a Science/Social Studies teacher at Moline's Wilson Junior High, I was enthusiastic and eager to be part of the education of kids. Loved IT! As I got educated, I also worked with the Moline Education Association. As it's President and Chief Negotiator, I was enthusiastic and eager to be part of that affiliation. Loved IT! Later, I was proud to be your Rock Island County Regional Superintendent of Schools, working with ten school districts and staff. Loved IT! Now, I am pleased to be your President of this IRTA unit. Loving IT!

During those previous 45 years, I was privileged to work with thousands of dedicated teachers, administrators and staff. Now, I see that same dedication in your local leadership of your IRTA, who work so hard to protect those benefits that you earned in your education careers. Protection of those retirement benefits, monetary and health, is what IRTA is all about! Yes, we support our current teachers with grants, student teachers with scholarships and have fun when we can get together, but looking after RETIRED educators is foremost. I'm proud, enthusiastic and eager to be a part of that Goal.

Our own John Flaherty, current President of the State IRTA, says it best: "IRTA is working tirelessly to make your retirement better! If you are already a member, we thank you for joining us! If you're still considering joining the association, there is no time like the present. Join today!" Right now, we're looking forward to being COVID-safe together... warm and safe SOON!

ROE SUPERINTENDENT - TAMMY MUERHOFF

I write to you hoping that this finds you healthy; as well as, your family to have good health. As we look to the upcoming spring, I share a reminder to check your ELIS account for your licensure expiration date. The renewal of educator licensure begins annually on April 1st. If you are in need of any assistance with renewing your license, please contact Brandi Schwanke at our office at 309-736-1111 or by email at brandi.schwanke@riroe.com.

Thank you for your continued support!



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE - MIKE SCHMIDT

As of February 10, 2021 the Blackhawk Unit has 662 members. Since November 2020 we have welcomed four new members: Dale Bartlett - Rockford, Lyle Goldensoph - Moline, Ron Jacobs - Riverdale and Frances Viers - Rock Island. Sadly, seven members have died: Linda Davis, Hazel Lundeen, Richard Miller, Lou Nachbauer, Henry Pawlus, Edward Short and Arthur Young.

Members who have reached their 90th birthday are entitled to complimentary LIFE Memberships in both the state and local IRTA organizations. If you are turning 90 this year or are already 90, contact Nancy McManus at 309-794-0490 or at nancymcmanus12@mediacombb.net so she can process the necessary information. Daphne Brown took advantage of this on January 23, 2021 and Richard Carnes will do so on September 10, 2021.

DIRECTORY COMMITTEE - MICHAEL DALY

Copies of the 2021 Blackhawk Unit Directory were mailed to members on January 27, 2021. If a member did not receive a Directory, contact either Mike Daly or Nancy McManus. Directories put on hold for SNOWBIRDS will be mailed in mid-May to home addresses unless otherwise directed. If errors are found in the new publication, please notify one of the following:

- 1) Mike Daly at 309-721-6005 or mjd7104@yahoo.com
- 2) Nancy McManus 309-794-0490 or nancymcmanus12@mediacombb.net

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE - LYNNE BRANDENBURG

Our committee is proud of our newly installed officers. They were formally installed by our IRTA State President, John Flaherty, at our December Zoom meeting!! Technology pays off!! Thanks to John!!

Many thanks to our Past-President, Annie Robinson, who wonderfully got us through the early part of the Pandemic via Zoom meetings, as well!! Well done, Annie and your 'team'.

Our Board members are looking forward to the time we can all really meet in person!! Stay tuned and Be SAFE!!

TREASURER - NANCY MCMANUS

The Finance Committee (Mike Daly, Joe Vermeire, Scott Turnipseed, Carlene Matern, Annie Robinson, Nancy McManus) met January 7, 2021 to audit accounts for the year 2020 and to create a budget for 2021. Because of the unusual circumstances of 2020/2021 little change was made to the proposed 2021 budget (see below). The report was presented to the Board January 13, 2021 and approved. State By-laws require that the budget be presented to the general membership for approval at the February meeting. Since there is no in-person February meeting, we are asking members to send their vote to ACCEPT BUDGET or REJECT BUDGET to Nancy Licko by email: nlicko@gmail.com or by mail: 2638 - 5th Street Court, East Moline 61244 by March 8, 2021. If a REJECT BUDGET response is given, please indicate what the objections are. Thank you.

IRTA BLACKHAWK UNIT BUDGET INFORMATION

EVENT	2019 BUDGET	2019 SPENT	2020 BUDGET	2020 SPENT	2021 PROPOSED BUDGET
Hospitality Room	\$2,500.00	\$2,440.00	\$2,500.00	\$696.63	\$2,500.00
Hospitality Food	\$900.00	\$632.42	\$900.00	\$140.36	\$900.00
Program	\$750.00	\$650.00	\$650.00	\$100.00	\$650.00
Travel/Convention	\$2,000.00	\$2,111.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Directory	\$1,000.00	\$1,460.20	\$1,000.00	\$1,512.35	\$1,000.00
Newsletter	\$1,000.00	\$257.51	\$1,000.00	\$365.00	\$1,000.00
Office Expenses	\$300.00	\$121.97	\$300.00	\$40.00	\$300.00
Membership	\$300.00	\$144.55	\$300.00	\$155.19	\$300.00
Area 1 Conference	\$250.00	\$180.00	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$250.00
Cheer/Benevolence	\$100.00	\$32.00	\$100.00	\$44.00	\$100.00
IRTA Necrology	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
IRTA Scholarship	\$500.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
IRTA Foundation	\$200.00	\$500.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00
Miscellaneous Exp.	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
Legal Defense Fund	\$700.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$0.00
RICRTA Foundation	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$700.00
RICRTA Foundation/ Riverbend Food Bank				\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Transfer to CD					\$600.00
Total Expenses	\$11,450.00	\$9,629.65	\$10,450.00	\$5,453.53	\$11,050.00

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION - JAN CORSARO

The Illinois Retired Teachers Foundation offers a \$1500 scholarship to one full-time student each year in each IRT Foundation area. All applications must be postmarked by March 7, 2021 and mailed to the Foundation office.

Students must be a junior or senior in college and accepted in a Teacher Certification Program. Applicants must be a resident of Illinois or have graduated from an Illinois high school. They may attend school in any state as long as the school maintains an accredited Teacher Training Program. Applicants must have and maintain a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The recipient must furnish a copy of the university or college official transcript prior to receiving funds.

This information and application form are available online at irtaonline.org.

If there are questions or concerns contact Susan Goetz at 1-800-728-4782 or susan@irtaonline.org

IL GOVERNOR BUDGET ADDRESS - J.B. PRITZKER

Today, February 17th, Gov. J.B. Pritzker laid out his proposed budget for fiscal year 2022, which he described as a plan of “painful choices,” due to what Illinois has endured during this past year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite those painful choices that Gov. Pritzker was forced to make, the Illinois Retired Teachers Association is pleased to announce that the Teachers’ Retirement System (TRS) and the Teachers’ Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP) are both being fully funded.

- Teachers' Retirement System of Illinois: \$5,693,707,000
- Teachers' Retirement Insurance Program: \$143,369,000

Illinois Retired Teachers Association strives to protect your pensions and healthcare, and to be the voice for retired educators.



2021 Excellence in Education Grants for Teachers

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation continues to work toward the future by offering \$36,500 in grant money to educators.

Being an educator, do you often think of this phrase — Extra Funds Needed — when it comes to planning special projects for your students? You may be finding that revenue sources are not available for such unique activities.

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation is making \$36,500 in grant money available to ALL counties in Illinois. This special grant will provide additional funds to public school educators (Pre-K through 12) so that their students will have the means to participate in special projects. The funds are not intended to provide regular curricular materials.

Please visit the IRTA website at www.irtaonline.org for further instructions. You can download, complete, and submit the application online from the IRTA website. All proposals must be submitted by June 1, 2021. A special committee will select the recipients of the grant money over the summer. Grant awards will be presented in the fall.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) Office by phone at 1.800.728.4782 or by e-mail at irta@irtaonline.org.

Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation, 828 S. Second St., 4th Floor, Springfield, IL 62704

** Chicago Public School employees are not eligible for this grant program. Printed January 2021*

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - JOHN FLAHERTY

I am writing this in early February. We now have a new Speaker of the Illinois House, Emanuel Chris Welch. Mike Madigan is still a member but most people expect to see him to resign before long. Speaker Welch has already named his leadership team and has signaled that he would like to work collaboratively to achieve solutions for the many problems facing Illinois.

The most pressing problem is the budget. Illinois overspent by about \$4 billion for this year and has about a \$7 billion backlog in paying the bills. Many politicians are blaming the problem on the failure of citizens to pass the Progressive Tax amendment. Even if this had passed, no additional tax money would have come this year. It would not have come in until next year.

The House only met for one day in February, the 10th to adopt rules. The Senate has already adopted rules to allow them to meet remotely. I haven't seen that the House has done this yet, but expect them to follow suit.

The Governor's combined Budget and State of the State addresses will be on February 17th. That will be over by the time that you read this. As of today the Governor is proposing a flat budget, the same as last year. This could mean a deficit of over \$3 billion. I expect pension funding to take a hit but Illinois already has a problem with their bond ratings and any cut to pension funding will only hurt that problem. TRS has about \$53 billion currently so there is probably enough money to fund our pensions for the rest of our lives, but we need to keep the funding up for people currently working.

Everyone just stay safe and stay home!

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Scott Turnipseed & Sally Rigeman**

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

wiseowlnewsletter@gmail.com Thank you

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