



WINTER 2022

Wise Owl News

from the Tree of Knowledge



ROCK ISLAND COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION
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 IL

Board Meeting 8:15 AM
Social Hour 9:15 AM
Business Session 9:45 AM

DECEMBER 14: "Holiday Program"

Moline Instrumental Music Department

Mr. Zack Morton Director

Introduction by Scott Turnipseed

Greeters: Pam Gross and Jane Schmidt

Servers: Karen Anderson and Gloria Wisley

JANUARY 2023: BOARD MEETING ONLY

FEBRUARY 8: "GIDDY UP - New Kingdom Trail Riders"

Kelly Krieter, Executive Director

Introduction by Scott Turnipseed

Greeters: Nancy McManus and Dick Cole

Servers: Bobbie Lastrapes and Virginia Payton

ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS:
Please let us know ASAP how you want us to handle your 2023 Directory - hold it until you return or mail it to your winter address.
THANK YOU!!

Table with 3 columns: Newsletter, Articles Due, Mailing Date. Rows include Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter with corresponding dates.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – JOE VERMEIRE

Winter 2022 Issue and Blackhawk Unit IRTA is on the move. Ecclesiastes tells us “To everything there is a SEASON and a TIME for every matter or purpose under heaven”. Well, November is a month of Season and Time CHANGES! Weather changes, political changes, Health Insurance changes, religious season changes, sport changes, clothing changes, food eating changes, etc. ... You get the point; we are entering the exciting Wintertime and I for one am looking forward to a mild, snowy winter, the removal of political ads from TV and my mailbox, the smooth transition from UnitedHealthcare to Aetna insurance, the wonder of the arrival of the Christ Child, the exhilaration of basketball games in gyms, sweaters, and long pants, and hearty stews, soups, and pies!

Come join your IRTA friends at the December 14th Christmas meeting at the QC Botanical Center at 9:45 am. The Center will be decorated for the Season, the Moline High School Band will be playing Christmas music for our entertainment, hot coffee and delicious donuts will spice the air, good information to learn, and, of course, friends and colleagues to join! We look forward to being with you.

As usual, we will not have a January meeting, but Vice President Scott Turnipseed has the February, March, April, May, and June meetings all planned out to entertain and educate us. Why don't you phone another retiree to join you at those meetings? We'd like you here to talk about old times and future days to come! Remember that the IRTA is the ONLY organization that has as its main purpose continuing to protect your pension and assuring you of future benefits. Join Us!

God's Blessings,
Joe

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENT of SCHOOLS – TAMMY L. MUERHOFF



Dear Retired Educators and Administrators,

As we approach the upcoming holiday season, I hope you can spend quality time with family and friends. A substitute teacher shortage is still pervasive throughout Rock Island County. Please consider becoming a substitute teacher. If interested, you may serve as a substitute teacher for 90 days in place of a contracted teacher or, during the school year 2022-2023, you may serve as a substitute teacher for up to 120 days. For more information, contact our office at 309-736-1111 or connect with Brandi Schwanke, Licensure Specialist, by email at brandi.schwanke@riroe.com.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season!

Tammy Muerhoff

IRTA FOUNDATION – MICHAEL DALY

The Foundation checking account has a current balance of \$4,873.78. We received two checks from the 2022 "Birdies for Charity" golfing event at the John Deere Pavilion Center on October 31st. The check for Pledges was \$2,325.00 and the 7% Bonus check was \$162.75 for a total of \$2,487.75. Thanks to all of you who participated in this event.

The annual Foundation Board will meet on January 11, 2023, at the RIROE building and determine grants for achievement programs in our local secondary schools and non-for-profit community organizations. If you have an organization you wish to nominate for a 2023 IRTA Foundation grant award, please email your request by December 31, 2022, to Michael J. Daly at mjd7104@yahoo.com or submit it by mail to 3324 37th Avenue Drive, Moline, IL 61265. Thank you again for your support and participation!!

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE – NANCY McMANUS

As of November 9, 2022, the Blackhawk IRTA Unit has 655 members. Since the August newsletter was published, we have welcomed five new members: Scott Kave – UTHS, Lynn Keck – Rock Island, and David Strafford, Michele McKee and Cynthia Sue Ervin – Moline. We thank them for joining our efforts to protect the benefits of retired Illinois educators. During the same time three members have died: Patricia Henneman, Mary Honaker and Sally Rylander.

Blackhawk Unit Dues for 2023 are now being collected. At present 504 have already completed their renewals for 2023. To guarantee inclusion in the 2023 Directory, local Blackhawk Unit Dues (\$15.00) must be paid by December 31, 2022. Dues should be mailed to the Treasurer at:

Nancy McManus
3620 – 33rd Avenue
Rock Island IL 61201

Make checks payable to **Blackhawk Unit 21 – IRTA**. Please include the following information with your checks:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

NOTE: If you will be 90 or older in 2022 or 2023, please notify Nancy McManus at 1-309-794-0490. At age 90, both State and Local Memberships are credited as LIFE and no further dues will be collected, **BUT** the State IRTA office must be notified with birthdate verification. In 2022, Barbara Steigman, Herb Thompson, Bev Coder and Kathy Medhus took advantage of this opportunity.

DIRECTORY COMMITTEE - MIKE DALY

Attention Snowbirds!

Many retirees are planning winter getaways. As we organize the 2023 Directory for January publication, a reminder is needed for those who leave without sending us a winter address. If the Post Office cannot deliver your Directory to the address in the Directory, the Directory is discarded. For you to receive a replacement, we must pay a postage notice and have another Directory printed for you. There are options to avoid this issue:

If you prefer to have the Directory mailed to your winter address, please send us that address. If you prefer to have it held until you return to your home address, please tell us the date you plan to return, and we will mail it then.

Contact: Nancy McManus by email - nancymcmanus12@mediacombb.net, or call (309) 794-0490; or email Mike Daly at mjd7104@yahoo.com, or call (309) 721-6005. Thanks to those who follow these suggestions – we appreciate the time you save us.

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 copies.

BLACKHAWK UNIT OFFICERS FOR 2023

The Nominations Committee presented the slate of 2023 Officers at the October Board and Membership meetings. Since no new candidates were nominated from the floor at the November Membership meeting, the current officers were unanimously re-elected. Formal installation of 2023 Officers and Board Members will occur at the December 14th Blackhawk Unit IRTA Membership Meeting. Officers are President – Joe Vermeire, Vice-President – Scott Turnipseed, Secretary – Nancy Licko, and Treasurer – Nancy McManus.

Congratulations and thanks are given to these Officers and Board Members for their efforts on behalf of their fellow colleagues. A special thank you to those monthly volunteers making the meetings run so very smoothly. Additional volunteers are always encouraged to help.

TRAIL MAP MOVES TO AETNA INSURANCE

Beginning January 1, 2023, Aetna Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MAPD) PPO Plan will replace your current health insurance plan. **No need to enroll, unless you have a change, or wish to opt-out of the plan.** You should have received information concerning the changes from State of Illinois Central Management Services and from Aetna MAPD as well. If you have questions, you may contact the MyBenefits.illinois.gov website on your computer, smartphone, or tablet. Or contact the MyBenefits Service Center at 1-844-251-1777 with inquiries. Representatives are available Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM CT.

NECROLOGY COMMITTEE – KATHY KILLAM

November is a time for us to reflect.

During the November 9, 2022, Blackhawk Unit 21 IRTA Membership meeting Kathy Killam and Kathie Bekel recognized 20 local members (active or inactive) who died between November 2021 and October 2022. During the ceremony, a tribute poem written by David Collins was read and then candles were lit for each of those listed below. A larger candle was lit in the memory of those teachers who were not Blackhawk Unit 21 members but had given many years to the education profession.

“To the lesson plan of life there is an end, and in the past year 20 of our 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.”

(Excerpt from TEACHER by David Collins)



In MEMORIAM

Rick Amy	Dec. 2021	Pat Shannon	Apr. 2022
Ruth Potter	Dec. 2021	Marilyn Sieben	Apr. 2022
Lisa Toalson	Dec. 2021	Sandra Ellis	Apr. 2022
Charles White	Jan. 2022	Herb Thompson	July 2022
D. Richard Jennings	Jan. 2022	Karin Kahler	July 2022
Dorothea Duncan	Jan. 2022	Rick Shannon	Aug. 2022
Carlyrae Clinge	Feb. 2022	Thelma Bromley	Aug. 2022
Pamela Young	Feb. 2022	Patricia Henneman	Sep. 2022
Marjorie Turnbull	Mar. 2022	Mary Honaker	Oct. 2022
Les Truelsen	Mar. 2022	Sally Rylander	Nov. 2022

PLEASE READ AND SIGN DOUG'S ELECTRONIC PETITION

November 4, 2022

Dear IRTA Unit Presidents and Blackhawk IRTA members,

The Teachers Retirement System, commonly referred to as TRS, administers the pension accounts for retired teachers and administrators. They collect, invest, and disperse the money. TRS is governed by a 13-member Board of Trustees. Trustees include the State Superintendent of Education; six trustees appointed by the governor; four trustees elected by contributing TRS members; and two trustees elected by TRS annuitants.

TRS trustees are instrumental in setting policy for the agency to carryout. They approve the investment strategies and provide oversight. The two elected TRS annuitant trustee positions have always served as the voice of IRTA members on the board. Right now, an online petition drive is occurring to put names of candidates on the ballot for the Annuitant Trustee position.

After successfully completing his first term representing retired educators, the Association recommends that IRTA member & East Moline resident Doug Strand of the Blackhawk IRTA Unit be the endorsed candidate.

Strand's considerable qualifications include:

- knowledge of the TRS Board and the System
- working for a time with an accounting firm in Chicago
- teaching business and consumer economics United Township High School
- serving on the East Moline Police Pension Board
- serving on the Black Hawk College Board of Trustees
- writing reports and making informational videos for IRTA members

For Doug to appear on the ballot, he needs 500 electronic signatures of eligible TRS members. As an annuitant, you will need to use your TRS login to vote in the secure area of the website. **Use this link to add your signature:**

<https://vote.escvote.com/trsilannuitant/default.asp?NomName=Douglas%20Strand>

“It is vital that members add their signatures for Doug Strand to get him on the ballot,” IRTA President Bill Funkhouser said. “We cannot and must not leave our pension investments to chance. I urge all members to click the link and add their signature for Doug. Adding your signature is easy and only takes a couple of moments.”

Thank You!

Illinois Retired Teachers Association/Blackhawk IRTA

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – JOHN FLAHERTY

Elections are finally over! Breathe a sigh of relief but campaigning for the next election will start soon.

There will probably be a short “Veto Session” in Springfield. Very little will likely be done in this session. Many people are expecting changes to the new SAFE T law, as was promised in many campaigns. This law eliminates cash bail for many offenses. It seems that it was written in haste and will need some changes to be effective and easily interpreted. Legislators may wait until after January 1 when it becomes law to determine what changes can be negotiated.

We have a new State Representative in district 72, Greg Johnson, who takes over for Mike Halpin who won the 36th Senate district. Both legislators were endorsed by our IRTA Political Action Committee (PAC). If you do not know these people, please take the time to meet them and let them know that you are a retired educator and a member of our IRTA unit.

THE IRTA/PAC should have something on their web page by the time you read this. They are compiling a list of November election candidates endorsed by IRTA and how each did. If you login at <https://www.irtaonline.org/> you should see how we did statewide.

Thank you for belonging to our Blackhawk Unit and the state IRTA!

John Flaherty
Past President, Illinois Retired Teachers Association

<p>Governor: JB Pritzker 207 State House, Springfield IL 62706 Phone: 217-782-6380 Email: Governor@illinois.gov</p>	<p>US 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</p>
<p>Representative Emanuel Chris Welch (Dist. 7) 300 Capital Building, Springfield, IL 62706 10055 W. Roosevelt Rd., Suite E, Westchester IL 60154 Phone: 708-450-1104 / 708-450-1000 Email: repwelch@emanuelchriswelch.com</p>	<p>US Senator Tammy Duckworth 104 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington DC 20515 1701 E. Woodfield Rd., Ste. 704, Schaumburg, IL 60173 Phone: 202-225-3711 / 847-413-1957</p>
<p>State Senator Neil Anderson (Dist. 36) M103-D Capital Building, Springfield, IL 62706 1523 47th Avenue - Suite 2, Moline, IL 61265 Phone: 217-782-5957 / 309-736-7084 Email: Senatorneilanderson@gmail.com</p>	<p>US Representative Cheri Bustos (Dist. 17) 1009 Longworth House Office, Washington DC 20515 2401 4th Avenue, Rock Island IL 61201 Phone: 202-225-5905 / 309-786-3406</p>
<p>State Senator Brian Stewart (Dist. 45) 105-C Capitol Building, Springfield, IL 62706 50 W. Douglas St., Suite 1001, Freeport IL 61032 Phone: 217-782-0180 / 815-284-0045 Email: Senatorbrianstewart@gmail.com</p>	<p>State Representative Mike Halpin (Dist. 72) 242 A-W Stratton Office Bldg., Springfield, IL 62706 1504 3rd Avenue, Rock Island, IL 61201 Phone: 217-782-5970 / 309-558-3612 Email: RepHalpin@gmail.com</p>
<p>State Representative Tony McCombie (Dist. 71) 205 A-N Stratton Office Bldg., Springfield, IL 62706 9317B Illinois Rt. 84, Savanna, IL 61704 Phone: 217-782-3992 / 815-632-7384 Email: McCombie@ilhousegop.gov</p>	



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Committee Members: Nancy McManus, Virginia Shaffer, Annie Robinson, Sheree Rogers,
Scott Turnipseed & Joe Vermeire

Send your comments or notify us of any name, address or email changes to:
wiseowlnewsletter@gmail.com
Thank you

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