



FALL 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 IL

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

### SEPTEMBER 8: "WELCOMING NEW RETIREES TO IRTA"

**9:00 AM – Breakfast at Oakwood Country Club**  
Speakers: Jim Bachman, Doug Strand, John Flaherty & Mike Schmidt  
Introduction by Joe Vermeire  
Greeters: Gloria Wisley, Virginia Payton, & Bobbie Lastrapes

### OCTOBER 8: "AMBA and IRTA Benefits"

Speaker: Nancy Cramer, AMBA Benefits Representative  
Introduction by Gloria Wisley  
Greeters: Lynne Rumler & Mary Ellis  
Servers: Alice Traylor & Joan Beck

### NOVEMBER 10: "Appreciation & Recognition Service for Veterans"

Speaker: Honor Flights/Quad City Veteran  
Introduction by Scott Turnipseed  
Greeters: Kathy Bekel & Nancy Luckenbill  
Servers: Elaine Hofman, Connie Nehlsen & Janet DeDecker

### ATTENTION MEMBERS:

Please note and support Unit 21 at the Breakfast for Retirees and help build our membership.

**THANK  
YOU!!**

Newsletter  
Winter

Articles Due  
11/15/21

Mailing Date  
11/22/21

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT – JOE VERMEIRE**

Fall, 2021 Issue and more challenges lay ahead for Blackhawk Unit IRTA. After two great In-person May and June Chapter meetings, we are excited about our September New Member Breakfast at the Oakwood Country Club. A delicious breakfast, friendly faces and informative program await your attendance. Grab a friend and please get your reservations in using the information found in the newsletter. We need your participation to make this a safe and successful event.

Our Fall and Winter meetings continue to be scheduled at the Quad City Botanical Center and Vice-President Scott Turnipseed has put together fun and educational programming. You can be assured that your safety and well-being will be foremost in our planning. We look forward to seeing many of you returning to friends and IRTA. Yes, IRTA goals are as vital and necessary as ever and we value your involvement and membership.

Involvement and Membership are very important. At the recent monthly August Board Meeting, I was informed that there are 984 pension annuitants in Rock Island County and 663 of them are Blackhawk Unit 21 IRTA members! Wow... Terrific!!! 663 retired Rock Island educators understand the importance of Membership in an Association that continuously Fights to protect their pension and benefits. And don't be naïve; constant vigilance is Necessary. We can't all be down in Springfield looking through thousands of bills and checking politicians looking to balance budgets. IRTA is there and our involvement and membership support those efforts. \$15 in dues to Blackhawk Unit is a small, yet good investment to keep informed and your numbers help local politicians see your voting power. Please continue that support and let's get that membership up to 984!

God's Blessings, Joe

## **SEEKING BHU DELEGATES FOR IRTA STATE CONVENTION**

The 2021 IRTA State Convention will be held at the Crowne Plaza (217-529-777) in Springfield on October 18-19, 2021 (see Convention Agenda, page 7). Our Blackhawk Unit is entitled to 24 delegates per our membership type and numbers. All members are eligible to be delegates. To encourage participation and reduce individual costs, the Board has voted to pay for the delegates' \$45 Registration fee and the four Convention meals. Each attending convention member needs to make his/her own hotel reservation (\$112 plus tax) with the Crowne Plaza IRTA Block. If you are interested in representing our unit, contact President Joe Vermeire (309-269-2631) for additional required Convention information. Sign-up Deadline: September 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **IN VINO VERI-PAC – MICHAEL SCHMIDT**

Every two years the IRTA holds its State Convention in Springfield. And every two years our Blackhawk Unit contributes a basket to the Convention's Silent Auction. The proceeds from the auction go toward the IRTA Political Action Committee. Among other things, the PAC is vital to making sure that the state's elected officials do no harm to us retirees.

This year's Blackhawk Basket will be a variety of wines. But to do so, we need a variety of wines! If you would like to donate *an unopened* bottle of wine for the basket, you can bring it to the September breakfast (another reason to attend) or you can contact Mike Schmidt at 762-4650 to make arrangements. THANKS, hic, hic.

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



Dear Retired Educators and Administrators,

Congratulations, to the educators and administrators who are recent retirees! Thank you for your many years of dedicated service. Upon retirement, it is important to update your ELIS account to indicate your employment status as “Retired”.

When you retire, but have worked in a position which requires Educator licensure during your five-year licensure cycle, then you will be **required** to submit professional development hours for the year(s) of active status time (time under contract). The professional development hours would be required to be entered prior to renewing for another licensure cycle. After the professional development has been entered and the hours remaining indicate 0.00, then you may change your status to "Retired". If only a portion of the five-year licensure cycle was provided in active status, then the required number of professional development hours would be prorated based upon the number of years/semesters that active status was provided.

After completing renewal and registration with “Retired” status in your ELIS account, then you would be eligible to serve as a substitute teacher. If you have indicated retired status in your ELIS account and return to a position that requires educator licensure, then you must change their licensure status to active, register your license, and pay the registration fee. In turn, the requirements for completion of professional development for each year working 50% or more will be intact.

To change or update your Professional Development or Employment Status, you may log into your ELIS account, look for the Profile section and change your PD/Employment status to retired for each applicable school year for your licensure cycle.

As a retiree, please note that there is not a fee to renew your license. However, you must have the retired status indicated in the profile section in your ELIS account in order to not incur the renewal fee. Please contact our office at 309-736-1111 if we may be of assistance to you regarding your licensure. We are happy to lend assistance to you.

I greatly appreciate your continued support of our office and the services that we provide to our communities. Wishing you all the very best and good health,

Tammy Muerhoff

### IRTA FOUNDATION – MICHAEL DALY

At this time, our August bank statement has a balance of \$2,112.83. The 2021 "Birdies for Charity" pledges totaled \$1,865.00 with 31 members participating. There were 1,905 birdies made and we had two winners – Mike Schmidt and Stephen Haines. They will each be awarded \$25.00 after I receive our check from the John Deere Classic Tournament which will also include a bonus payment. Congrats to the two gentlemen. The final accounting with the actual amount will appear in the Winter Newsletter. One last item is to inform you that all the January 2021 Grant Recipients thanked the Foundation for our support both in writing and in phone calls to me.

**SEE YOU SEPTEMBER 8th – AT OUR ANNUAL BREAKFAST**

It will be September in no time at all and school will be in session...WITHOUT US! Instead of looking forward to lunching in the School Cafeteria, why not look forward to breakfast with us retirees at Oakwood Country Club on September 8th? That’s the Club near Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley. (Be assured that there will be NO zoo critters on the menu).

Featured at this year’s September Breakfast will be IRTA’s Executive Director, Jim Bachman, who will bring us up to date on the actions taken by this year’s Legislature (which are many) and some of which definitely affect us retirees. Also scheduled to attend and coming all the way from his home in Coal Valley is the IRTA State President, John Flaherty, who will gladly share his vision for our organization. Our own Doug Strand will also bring us up to date on TRS issues as he is one of the two retirees elected as a TRS Trustee.

If you have any friends who do not yet belong to IRTA, bring them along for a free breakfast so that they can learn the value of IRTA Membership. Although we will be sending letters of invitation to this school year’s retirees, should you know any of those educators from districts in Rock Island County bring them along, too. We are also inviting the retirees from 2019 and 2020 who have not yet joined IRTA. If you know any of them you might as well bring them also. (As a current Blackhawk Unit member your cost for the breakfast is only \$20.00.) Just fill out the form below, mail it in with a check, and look forward to breakfast in what has become our favorite Country Club location. By the way, you may notice that this year’s cost is slightly higher than our last breakfast in 2019. That’s due, of course, to rising inflation and the increasing cost of food that we’ve been reading about and experiencing.

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE IRTA SEPTEMBER BREAKFAST**

DATE: Wednesday, September 8, 2021  
PLACE: Oakwood Country Club, Coal Valley, Illinois  
TIME: 9:00 AM  
PROGRAM: Welcoming New Retirees to IRTA

**RESERVATION PAYMENT IS DUE BY SEPTEMBER 3, 2021**

Please complete the form below and send it with check payable to BLACKHAWK UNIT – IRTA to: Virginia Payton, 8815 – 19th Street W, Rock Island, Illinois 61201. If you have any questions call Virginia at 309-787-5932 or Mike Schmidt at 309-762-4650

NUMBER of Breakfast Reservations: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
\*ANNUAL 2022 BLACKHAWK UNIT DUES @ \$15.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
(\*No further dues are needed for Local Life Members)  
AMOUNT Enclosed (**Check ONLY**) TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

List additional names if necessary:

## TREASURER'S REPORT – NANCY McMANUS

As of August 11, 2021, IRTA's Blackhawk Unit 21 has 663 members. Since the Summer newsletter was published in May 2021, we have welcomed one new member, Bonnie Lawhorn – Moline and lost two members: C. Natalie Davis, who passed in May 2021, and Nancy Johnson, who passed in July 2021.

Starting with the Breakfast in September, we will be collecting Blackhawk Unit Dues for 2022. To be included in the 2022 Directory, local Blackhawk Unit Dues (\$15.00) must be paid by December 31, 2021. Dues can be paid at any of the General Meetings in September through December, or may be mailed to the Treasurer at:

Nancy McManus  
3620 – 33rd Avenue  
Rock Island, Illinois 61201

Make checks payable to: **Blackhawk Unit – 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 2021 or 2022, please notify Nancy McManus at 794-0490. At age 90, both Local and State IRTA Memberships are credited as LIFE, and no further dues are collected, BUT the State IRTA office must be notified with birthdate verification.

## DIRECTORY COMMITTEE – MICHAEL DALY

Attention Snowbirds! When school starts in our area, many retirees begin planning their winter getaways. As we make plans to deliver the 2022 Directory in January, a reminder is useful for those who leave without sending our Directory committee a winter forwarding address. If the post office cannot deliver your Directory to the address in the Directory, it is discarded. In order for you to receive a replacement, we must pay a postage notice and have another Directory printed for you. There are three easy options to avoid this:

- If you prefer to have the Directory mailed to your winter address, please notify us of that address.
- If you prefer to have the Directory held until you return to your home address, please let us know the date on which you plan to return and we will mail it then.
- If you prefer to have the Directory held until you return and you will pick it up at a monthly meeting, please specify which spring meeting you will be attending.

Contact persons are Nancy McManus at [nancymcmanus12@mediacombb.net](mailto:nancymcmanus12@mediacombb.net) or 309-794-0490, and Mike Daly at [mjd@yahoo.com](mailto:mjd@yahoo.com) or 309-721-6005. Thanks to those who have followed these suggestions – we appreciate the time you have saved 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.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – JOHN FLAHERTY

Our state legislature is currently on break. They are next scheduled to meet in October. The new Illinois Legislative Maps will show that about half of the Republicans have found that they now live in a new district and they need to run against another incumbent Republican. Our current State Senator (Neil Anderson) is in this situation. Since he no longer lives in his district, we will have others running for the 36<sup>th</sup> District. State Representative Mike Halpin is still in the 72<sup>nd</sup> district but he may decide to run for State Senator in the 36<sup>th</sup> District. We will be watching to see who files to run for those jobs.

We believe that things are safe, for now, with our pensions and benefits. Our IRTA staff is keeping a close watch on the bills and talking with legislators whenever they get the chance. Your dues are being well spent and we are getting our moneys' worth.

The IRTA is currently checking into the newly recertified amount for our Teachers Retired Insurance Program (TRIP). We believe that the new amount is less than what the legislature appropriated and we are speaking with TRS and CMS to explain that our lawyers believe that the new amount is not legal. There will be more information about this later. For now, our premiums are set and are not supposed to increase by more than 5% next year.

Watch your email and if something changes you will receive word to contact your legislators. Thank you all for being IRTA members!

John

<p><b>Governor: JB Pritzker</b> 207 State House, Springfield IL 62706 Phone: 217-782-0244 Email: Governor@illinois.gov</p>	<p><b>US Senator Dick Durbin</b> 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><b>Representative Emanuel Chris Welch</b> (Dist. 7) 10055 W. Roosevelt Rd., Suite E, Westchester IL 60154 300 Capital Bldg., Springfield, IL 62706 Phone: 708-450-1000 / 708-450-1104 Email: repwelch@emanuelchriswelch.com</p>	<p><b>US Senator Tammy Duckworth</b> 104 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington DC 20510 1701 E. Woodfield Rd., Suite 704, Schaumburg, IL 60173 Phone: 202-225-3711/847-413-1957</p>
<p><b>State Senator Neil Anderson</b> (Dist. 36) 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</p>	<p><b>US Representative Cheri Bustos</b> (Dist. 17) 1009 Longworth HOB, Washington DC 20510 2401 4th Avenue, Rock Island IL 61201 Phone: 202-225-5905 / 309-786-3406</p>
<p><b>State Senator Brian Stewart</b> (Dist. 45) 50 W. Douglas St., Suite 1001, Freeport IL 61032 M105-C Capitol Building, Springfield, IL 62076 Phone: 815-284-0045 / 217-782-0180 Email:</p>	<p><b>State Representative Mike Halpin</b> (Dist. 72) 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</p>
<p><b>State Representative Tony McCombie</b> (Dist. 71) 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</p>	

## 2021 IRTA STATE CONVENTION AGENDA

Monday – October 18, 2021

8:00 – 4:00 pm	Registration Exhibits Open Exhibit Drawings – 9:30am, 10:30am, & 2:30pm IRTA PAC Silent Auction
9:00 – 10:35 am	Wellness Programs
11:00 – 11:45 am	Lunch Buffet
12:00 – 12:15 pm	Pledge of Allegiance
12:15 – 1:00 pm	Keynote Speaker
1:00 – 1:10 pm	Welcome Address
1:10 – 1:30 pm	<u>Opening General Assembly</u> Call to Order of 2021 IRTA Delegate Assembly Opening Remarks by IRTA President, John Flaherty Delegate Assembly Rules and Procedures – Chris Dickey, Parliamentarian 2019 Convention Minutes Approval
1:30 – 2:00 pm	<u>Reports and Procedures</u> Nominating Committee Report – Roger Hampton, Chairperson Introduction of Candidates – IRTA President, John Flaherty Certification of Candidates – Parliamentarian Proposed Constitutional Amendments – Bill Funkhouser, Chairperson
2:00 – 2:45 pm	Break – Visit Exhibits & Silent Auction
3:00 – 3:30 pm	Breakout Sessions
3:40 – 4:30 pm	Breakout Sessions (Repeated)
4:45 – 5:30 pm	Area Caucuses – Elections in Areas 1, 3, & 5
6:00 – 7:00 pm	President’s Reception
7:00 pm	Silent Auction Bidding Closes
7:00 – 9:00 pm	Banquet and Recognitions
9:00 pm	Reception

Tuesday – October 19, 2021

8:00 – 9:00 am	Registration
8:00 – 9:00 am	Breakfast Buffet
9:00 – 9:20 am	<u>Second General Session</u> Call to Order – President Flaherty Election of Candidates (if necessary) – Roger Hampton
9:20 – 9:35 am	President’s Report – John Flaherty
9:35 – 9:50 am	Investment Reports
9:50 – 10:45 am	<u>Committee Reports</u> Finance – Donnie Ostrom Legislative – Norb Wolter Membership – Mike Schmidt Information Services – Reinhard Taylor Member Benefits – Pat Hampton IRTA PAC – John Flaherty Foundation – John Flaherty
10:45 – 11:15 am	Break
11:15 – 11:35 am	TRS Report
11:35 am – 12:15 pm	Proposed Resolution and Constitutional Amendments Discussion and Vote
12:15 – 12:30 pm	<u>Election Results</u> Installation of Officers – Roger Hampton Incoming President’s Acceptance Speech
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Lunch Buffet
1:30 – 2:00 pm	Closing Remarks and Adjournment – John Flaherty



**BLACKHAWK UNIT**  
IRTA 3324 37th AVE.  
DRIVE MOLINE IL  
61265

**PRESORTED STANDARD**

**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**

Rock Island, IL 61201  
Permit No. 294

*CHANGE SERVICE  
REQUESTED*

## **Wise Owl News**

**Blackhawk IRTA Unit 21, Volume MMXXI, Issue No. 51**

**Editor: Michael J. Daly**

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](mailto:wiseowlnewsletter@gmail.com)**

*Thank you*

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