

News to Share

Henry County Retired Teachers Association
O.R.T.A. Chapter Since 1968

HCRTA Meets on the Second Monday of March, May, July, September, November, and December at Oberhaus Park, Napoleon, Ohio

Website: henrycountyrta.weebly.com

Volume 29, Issue 3

July 2023

Mission Statement

The Henry County Retired Teachers Association continues its mission of encouraging scholarship, fostering volunteerism, providing an informed voice for retired teachers on issues relevant to their well-being, and presenting significant information in a congenial social setting.

Vision Statement

Within five years, HCRTA will move to a position among the top five chapters in Ohio, as it builds upon its legacy of encouraging scholarship, fostering volunteerism, promoting, and protecting retiree interests, supporting advancement of public education in Ohio, developing a proactive membership.

Next Meeting – July 10, 2023

The next meeting of HCRTA will be Monday, July 10th at 5:30pm. As usual the meeting will be held at Oberhaus Park in Napoleon.

PROGRAM - Book grant winners and their families will be guests at our dinner. Steve Kryder of the Napoleon Library will be present to share about plans to expand library services and restore a building so it is useable again.

MENU – Remember that this meal will be a potluck. There will be no charge for the meeting. The men are asked to bring a dessert and the women a main course or a side. Bev will have the table service. Gregg Merrill will bring bottled water and iced tea packets. Even though it is a potluck, we will still do reservations, so we know how many to plan on. REMEMBER, our book grants winners and families will be at this meeting. We hope to see you there!

IMPORTANT REMINDER



The people who contact members before each meeting to gather reservation numbers ensure that we have a correct count for the caterer in plenty of time. Please help your caller (emailer) by responding to them by the deadline, with a **yes or no reply**. That way, they know that their

message to you was received.



Meal Reservations

Linda Klamer handles reservations through a group of callers who email or phone 10 people each. We need to have your reservation back to your normal caller **by July 3rd** or contact her directly if you cannot reach your caller. 330-671-8252.

Hosts/Hostesses

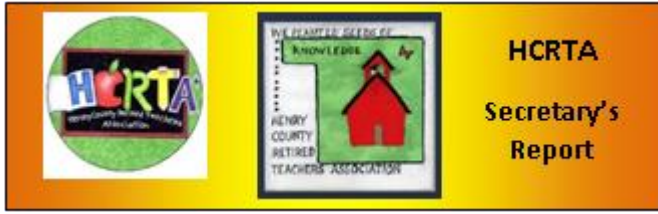
The hosts/hostesses bring a centerpiece for the tables and are responsible for the meal prayer. It can be seasonal or related to the program topic or it could be a collection or hobby that a member has. Table coverings are provided. We do have openings for some of the months. If you would like to volunteer, call Bev! If everyone takes a turn it would be great!

July 10th - Meeting Volunteers

More volunteers are needed. If you can help, call Bev. 419-256-6142

Set Up (Doors unlocked at 4:30pm)		Hostess Committee	
Gregg Merrill	Charlie Meyer	Janice Rettig	Roland Rettig
Help needed	Help needed	Help needed	Help needed

Volunteers are needed after the meeting to put away tables and chairs.



Henry County Retired Teachers Association Secretary's Report – May 8, 2023

The Henry County Retired Teachers Association meeting for May 8, 2023, was called to order by President Bev Wittes. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, President Wittes thanked the setup volunteers Rich Hurst, Charlie Meyer, Greg Merrill, and Faith Hurst for hosting.

Tables were called by drawing numbered flowers from the Q & U wedding.

Following the meal Don Allison spoke about Northwest Ohio's involvement in the Underground Railroad.

President Bev Wittes then called the meeting to order.

The Secretary and Treasurer's reports were approved as printed in the newsletter by Rosalee Ashenfelter and Terri Witt.

Committee Reports:

Community Service: Patty Hill and Gene Grime were recognized for the most reported volunteer hours.

Education Foundation: Griffith Scholarship winners were announced by Terri Witt.

Legislative/Membership: Steve Seagrave reported that the new member of the STRS board won overwhelmingly.

Historian: Faith Hurst reminded those present to bring in news articles and pictures of members.

Old Business:

A sample of a new brochure created by Steve Seagrave to promote recruitment of new membership was reviewed. The idea is to give brochures to members to pass out to active or retired teachers they know. Greg Merrill made a motion for Seagrave to print 200. Charlie Meyer seconded the motion.

Please see Bev Wittes if you would be willing to help with hosting or setting up.

New Business:

Bev Wittes recognized Steve Seagrave for his election as ORTA President Elect, term to begin September 1, 2023.

Charlie Meyer reminded members that the July 10, 2023, meeting will be a POTLUCK. Greg Merrill offered to bring bottled water. The scholarship winners will be present.

Lifewise Donations for the four county schools was \$143.00.

50/50 drawing was won by Pam Schwiebert.

Rosie Ashenfelter made a motion to adjourn. Rosemary Pfau seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Schwiebert
Secretary

NOTE OF CHEER

If anyone knows of a member who needs a "note of cheer" due to illness, struggles, or loss please contact our cheer coordinators. Sandy Honemann (419-274-7194) handles members south of the river and Marlene Jones (419-533-4788) handles those north of the river.

DO NOT CALL LIST - RESERVATIONS

If you are on the "Do Not Call List" but plan to attend the next HCRTA meeting, you can phone your reservation to Linda Klamer at 330-671-8252 or email her at LKlamer51@yahoo.com.

From the President's Pen – Bev Wittes

When I was teaching, I always thought of July Fourth as marking the halfway point of the summer. It was that point when the exhilaration of freer schedules and summer fun began to turn into anticipation of a new year to come. It was time to begin planning the theme of the room for the year and think about getting those first day of school welcome letters ready to send. It was that time between end of the year craziness and beginning of school craziness!

By staying involved at school as a volunteer, I can say that I look forward to a new school year, ready with craft ideas and other "fun things" that I can offer to the teachers and students-- when they can fit it into their hectic schedules! As we all know, teaching can be challenging, more so now than ever. So, as summer wanes and the new school year approaches, think about how you can offer support to our active colleagues, whether it be helping them to prepare their room, sending a cheery good luck note or just offering a supportive ear. I am sure they would appreciate it!

Bev

STRS UPDATE – Steve Seagrave

For those following events, the reform candidate (Pat Davidson) was elected in May which would have given the reformers a majority when he takes office. He won with over 20,000 votes vs Laird with 8,000 votes.

Unfortunately, Governor DeWine (illegally) removed Wade Steen from the board giving the “old guard” continuing control. The state law is clear on the fact that Steen’s term is for a set time and his term is not “at will”.

In response, ORTA has created a “Pension Defense Fund” and is asking for donations to be used to continue the fight to restore the COLA and return the retirement age to 30 years. Wade Steen has filed a lawsuit to challenge the governor and ORTA is helping using donations that have come in so far. If you are in a position to help, go to the ORTA web site and use the donation link. Additional information is posted there.

Regardless of how the court case turns out, we all need to keep active in spreading the word till ALL the board members opposing reform are replaced.

GET INVOLVED!

- WRITE TO STRS
- CONTACT YOUR STATE SENATOR
- CONTACT YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE
- On Facebook, join the STRS Ohio Watchdogs and the Ohio STRS Member Only Forum

REPORT YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS

If you were NOT at the May meeting and have not already done so, please add up your volunteer hours since January 1st and email these to Jan or bring them to the next meeting.



For 2023 we had 1154.4 hours reported through May. Top reported were Tom Jenny and Bev Wittes. One of the things we try to do is to keep track of the number of volunteer hours our members contribute to our community. You can submit your numbers at the meeting, or you can email them to our coordinator, **Jan Schlade**. So, what should you count? Include any unpaid activity to benefit others or your community. If you miss a meeting, just email your numbers to Jan!

jj Schlade@gmail.com

MEMBER INFORMATION UPDATE

Sue Mohr has moved to a different nursing home. Genacross Lutheran Services, 1036 South Perry Street, Napoleon, OH 43545, Room 116 A.

2023 PROGRAMS

- **July 10** - Book grant winners and their families will be guests at our dinner. We will also hear a presentation on The Napoleon Library.
- **September 11** – We will have a panel interview of three area cross country coaches.
- **November 13** Morgan Parcher, Henry County 4H Agent will be our guest speaker.
- **December 11** – Christmas Party – Bring a “White Elephant” gift (no expensive gifts) for a fun-filled gift exchange. Tune up your musical ear and compete for big prizes as you attempt to identify Christmas Carols and bring your singing voices as we conclude the year singing a couple of your favorite Carols.

2023 DIRECTORY

The new directory has been emailed to those members with an email address. A small number of paper copies are available for \$5 each at the next meeting. If your address, phone, or email changes please be sure to notify our newsletter editor, Steve Seagrave so we can be sure the directory gets updated, and you get association meeting and program information.

50/50 RAFFLE

Remember to bring some extra cash for our usual 50/50 raffle. The profit all goes to our general fund which is used to cover the rental of our meeting place.



NEWSLETTER COSTS

We would like to have your email address if you have email. That way we can email the newsletter to you and save postage and printing costs. Just email Steve to make the change.

HENRY COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION				
	Gregg Merrill, Treasurer	Duane Ressler, Asst. Treas.	May 30, 2023	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Ck #/payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Balance</u>
4/1/23		starting balance		\$3,696.56
5/8/23	CK #1411 Napoleon City	Rental of Shelter at Park	(\$90.00)	\$3,606.56
5/8/23	CK #1412 Don Allison	Presenter Fee	(\$100.00)	\$3,506.56
5/8/23	CK #1413 Hill's	Meal Costs	(\$374.00)	\$3,132.56
5/10/23	Deposit	Meal, 50/50, LifeWise donations	\$667.00	\$3,799.56
5/14/23	CK #1414 Steve Seagrave	Brochure printing costs	(\$74.93)	\$3,724.63
5/30/23	Civista	Service Fee	(\$10.00)	\$3,714.63
5/30/23	Deposit	interest	\$0.18	\$3,714.81
		Balance =		\$3,696.50
5/30/23	CD Balance	Civista Bank		\$1,392.13
	Deposit	Interest	\$5.66	\$1,397.79
4/1/23		BALANCE ALL ACCOUNTS =		\$5,094.29

ORTA UPDATE 6/15/2023

By Robin Rayfield, Executive Director

Pension Defense Fund – ORTA recently established a separate fund for advancing ORTA's mission of pension advocacy and pension protection. Because our organization is not wealthy, ORTA does not budget for things and events that fall outside of the normal scope of our operations. By establishing the Pension Defense Fund ORTA can accept donations from our members for doing work that was not planned for in the annual budget. What kinds of things, you may ask? Well, our first effort will be to assist STRS board member Wade Steen with his challenge to Governor DeWine's attempt to fire him from the STRS board. As you may already know, Wade Steen was appointed to the STRS board by Governor Kasich in 2016 and re-appointed by Governor DeWine in 2020. Mr. Steen takes this appointment very seriously and asks a lot of questions about the way STRS management operates. For example, Wade has been critical of the lack of transparency at STRS. He has also questioned STRS management about the loss of COLA and when COLA can be restored. He has been critical of the PBI (bonus payments for STRS employees) system and that the benchmarks used to award these bonus payments are unclear and inappropriate. Needless to say, Wade Steen was well liked by all STRS members (active teachers and retired teachers) but not so by the STRS staff and the STRS board members that blindly support the outrageous workings of our pension.

Mr. Steen began as one of two members on the STRS board that dared to ask questions and press the STRS management on their answers to these questions. The other person that asked questions was Yoel Mayerfeld, appointed by the Treasurer of the State of Ohio. Mr. Mayerfeld was not reappointed to his seat, no doubt, because he didn't follow lock step with STRS management. Mayerfeld's replacement was probably telling, and we probably should have expected something like what has happened to Mr. Steen.

With that little bit of history as a background, Ohio law states clearly that once appointed by the governor to the STRS board, Mr. Steen serves a term of 4 years. He does not serve at the pleasure of the governor. Mr. Steen's appointment could only be terminated 'for cause' (malfeasance, criminal behavior, etc.). Therefore, Wade Steen is challenging DeWine's action to replace him in court. ORTA's Pension Defense Fund will assist with the expenses of his legal challenge. Interesting to note that DeWine replaced Steen with a person who has contributed \$100,000 to the governor for re-election. Why did DeWine replace Steen?

At any rate, it is good for folks to know that the tide is turning at STRS. In fact, the last 5 elections at STRS have seen a reform minded candidate win each election against a status quo incumbent candidate. Clearly, the people want change at STRS. ORTA is doing its best to get the word out about the shenanigans going on at STRS. STRS members do not trust the leadership at STRS. What happens next? We will have to wait for a court to decide what will happen with Wade Steen's challenge. In the meantime, members can continue to voice their opposition to the current leadership at STRS.

Send a Friend a Note of Good Cheer!

Robert C. Baker c/o West Chester Assisted Living & Memory Care Center, 6267 Glen Hollow Township, OH 45011

If you know of updates needed to this list, contact Sandy Honemann or Marlene Jones.



DONATION OPPORTUNITY

We would like to give those of you that can't attend meetings the chance to contribute to our chapter's causes. At the December 2022 meeting we decided to continue support for the **LifeWise Academy**. Members who do attend regularly might also want to consider writing a check to simplify things and to have a record of your giving. Thanks for considering this worthwhile project!

Enclosed is a check for my donation to support this cause.

\$ _____ to be donated to _____

Gregg Merrill
 HCRTA Treasurer
 1500 Thershan Drive
 Napoleon, Ohio 43545

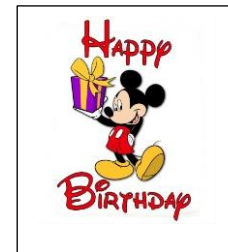


We have lost one of our members:
 Gerry Denny on May 3, 2023



Birthday List – Here is the list for those who like to send birthday wishes.

July 14	Wesche, Mary Kay *	Aug. 10	Schall, Nancy A *
July 16	Klamer, Linda	Aug. 11	Shepard, Jan
July 17	Gerken, Kae	Aug. 13	Agler, Carol
July 19	Schink, Nancy C	Aug. 13	Baldwin, Nancy
July 24	Ashenfelter, Rosalie A	Aug. 19	Meyer, Diane
July 25	Buchhop, Diane	Aug. 19	Meyer, James
July 31	Conrad, David L	Aug. 21	Krueger, Marilyn
Aug. 01	Osborn, Jerri	Aug. 21	Rosebrook, Judy
Aug. 02	Joseph, Mary H	Sep. 04	Schroeder, Jack
Aug. 02	Johnson, Lucinda	Sep. 06	Wade, Mary Ann Wade
Aug. 06	Myrice, Mary Jane	Sep. 08	Weaver, Sally J
Aug. 07	Krugh, W. Tennyson *	Sep. 10	Wittes, Beverly Ann



HCRT FOUNDATION – Donation Form

The Foundation solicits, receives, and invests gifts of money and property of every kind. Members are encouraged to promote memorial and honorary gifts to the Foundation. Gifts to the HCRT Foundation are tax deductible.

NOTE: Gifts to the Foundation may ONLY be used for our book grants and associated costs such as postage, etc. They may NOT be used for regular HCRTA expenses or programs.

The HCRT Foundation is a 501C3 organization.

I would like to help a future teacher by donating to the Book Grant program of the Henry County Retired Teachers Association.

Send donations to Gene Grime, HCRT Foundation Treasurer, 192 Old Creek Drive, Napoleon, OH 43545.

Make checks payable to “**Henry Co. Retired Teachers Foundation**”.

My donation preference is:

Lois Griffith Book Grant

Roger King Book Grant

Margaret & Lucille Sherman Book Grant

Karen Brubaker Book Grant

Undesignated

HCRTA

735 Sheffield

Napoleon OH 43545

postage

Member

Address