

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 6

December 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 – December 11, 2023

The next meeting of HCRTA will be Monday, December 11th at 11:30am. As usual the meeting will be held at Oberhaus Park in Napoleon.

PROGRAM – Our Christmas Party will begin with a “White Elephant” gift exchange so bring a wrapped gag gift (no expensive gifts) for the exchange. Then tune up your musical ear as you compete for big prizes identifying Christmas Carols. We will conclude the program by singing a few of our favorite Christmas Carols. Hope to see all of you there as we conclude our 2023 meeting schedule.

MENU— Broasted chicken, roasted red skin potatoes, green beans, salad, and apple or cherry pie. Bottled water will be provided with packets for different flavorings.

Meal Reservations



Meal costs are \$15.00 per person. We do have to guarantee the count to the caterer so if you make a reservation and then do not attend, we still must pay for the meal that was ordered and delivered. That means that you need to either send the \$15.00 or have another member take your reservation. 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. 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 November 4th** or contact her directly if you cannot reach your caller. 330-671-8252.

Hosts/Hostesses

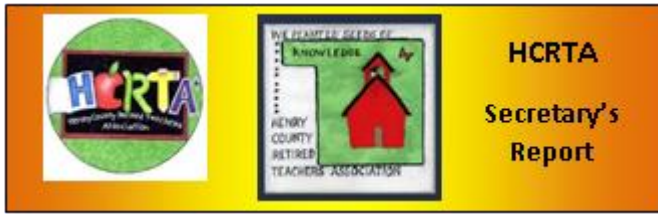
The hosts/hostesses bring a centerpiece for the tables and are responsible for the meal prayer. It can be seasonal or relate to the program topic or it could be a collection or hobby that a member has. Table coverings are provided. Members of the executive board have signed up for some of the months.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

December 11th - Meeting Volunteers

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

Set Up		Hostess Committee	
Faith & Richard Hurst	Help Needed	Nan Bretz	
Help Needed	Help Needed		

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



Henry County Retired Teachers Association Secretary's Report – November 13, 2023

The Henry County Retired Teachers Association meeting for November 13, 2023 was called to order by President Bev Wittes. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, President Wittes thanked the set-up volunteers, Jan and Rolland Rettig and Charlie Meyer, and Patty Hill, Diane Meyer, Linda Wagner, Renee Weaver and Pam Schwiebert for hosting. Patty Hill offered the meal prayer and tables were dismissed by points given for 4H connections.

After the luncheon meal prepared by Hill's Catering, Morgan Parcher, Henry County 4H Extension Coordinator/Agent presented a thorough update on the 4H programs currently in Henry County. There are approximately 700 kids ages 5-18 (160 Clover Buds ages 5-7) are involved in a possibility of 250 4H projects, with 250 kids attending Camp Palmer. Parcher manages around 21 Clubs and 121 Volunteers in Henry County as they branch out into many areas such as STEM, Spa, Sewing, Economic and Technology Spin Clubs.

Committee Reports:

Courtesy South: Sandy Honemann is undergoing surgery for colon cancer. Becky Schindler is recuperating from a broken hip in a nursing home in Grand Rapids.

Courtesy North: Mary Jane Myrice passed away.

Legislative/Membership: Steven Seagrave passed out a spreadsheet showing the amazingly generous raises and bonuses of the STRS Investment Staff for 2023.

Public Relations: Gene Grime

Community Service: Jan Schlade recognized Bev Wittes and Steve Seagrave for their most reported volunteer hours.

Newsletter/Webmaster: Steve Seagrave continues his volunteer work to update and inform. Charlie Meyer has volunteered his services to assist in the HCRTA Website.

Historian: Faith Hurst reports and collects memorable articles of interest.

Old Business: Henry County area schools have appreciated the Teacher Supply Boxes. A thank you card from Napoleon Schools was read.

Nominations Committee: The nominations committee made the following recommendations.

President - Bev Wittes

Vice President – Charlie Meyer

Secretary – Nan Bretz

Assistant Secretary – Faith Hurst

Treasurer – Gregg Merrill

Assistant Treasurer – Duane Ressler

Past President – Charlotte Shrider

The report of the nominations committee has been accepted. Rosalee Ashenfelter made a motion to close the nominations. Seconded by Rosemary Pfau. Election to be held at the December meeting.

Diane Meyer nominated Pam Schwiebert to the Foundation Board. Karen Maassel seconded. Election to be held at the December meeting.

New Business: Steve Seagrave recommended that the HCRTA donate to the ORTA Pension Defense Fund. Discussion followed. Patty Hill made a motion to donate \$500 to the ORTA Pension Defense Fund. Karen Maassel seconded. Motion carried by a show of hands.

Diane Buchhop has volunteered to take over the duties as caller for Nancy Schink.

At the December meeting we will be deciding on our charity for next year. Past charities include Lifewise, Project We Care, Together We Can Make A Difference, and The Humane Society.

Also, at the December meeting we will decide on a caterer for the following year. Terri Witt is gathering information. Hills Catering and Mama Mirr were suggestions.

Charlie Meyer announced details for the December 11th meeting. There will be games and singing and each member is asked to bring a gag gift/white elephant for a fun, unique and possibly humorous gift exchange.

The 50/50 drawing was won by Diane Meyer. Linda Wagner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Renee Weaver seconded.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Meyer
Assistant Secretary

From the President's Pen – Bev Wittes

Another HCRTA year is fast coming to an end, with Thanksgiving in the rear-view mirror and Christmas lights brightening every street corner. We have enjoyed many interesting programs over the past year and look forward to more informative and entertaining times to come. If you have suggestions about topics for meetings don't hesitate to pass them on to any officer, as we will meet early in the new year to begin planning for 2024.

I would like to thank those members who have given their time and talents as set-up volunteers, as well as hosts/hostesses this year. Those little decorative touches add so much to the meeting atmosphere and help with table and chair set-up is definitely an "unsung hero" job! Sign-up sheets for helpers for 2024 will be available at the December meeting, so please consider helping out.

With concerns continuing to surround the handling of our interests at STRS, our chapter is fortunate to have Steve Seagrave as a member. As President-Elect of ORTA, he is a valuable resource to keep us informed of the latest developments in these matters. Thanks to Steve for serving in this role.

We are always on the lookout for new members to join our group. Keep thinking of people you could invite to a meeting... we would like to grow our membership in 2024!

I hope that all of you enjoy time with family and friends this holiday season. Slow down and savor simple, quiet moments whenever you can amid the holiday rush. See you in 2024!

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.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

If your address, phone, or email changes please be sure to notify our membership chairperson, Steve Seagrave so we can be sure the directory gets updated, and you get association meeting and program information.

COMMENTS FROM DEAN DENNIS

ORTA'S PRESIDENT

November 2023

So, what can be done to fix our pension?



First, the current management team needs to be overhauled.

Too many of the current team members were around in 2009 when decisions were made that their investment practices weren't the problem and **cutting promised benefits to members was the answer.** To this day, STRS wants to hang 100% of the blame on the 2008 market downturn for their financial problems and divorce themselves from any responsibly.

The reality is, 15 years later, most pension plans still have inflation protection (COLA) while STRS does not.

The reality is, 15 years later, STRS is the only pension plan in the United States (we can find) where the pension's auditor calculates the active teacher's pension Normal Cost at a lesser value than the Contribution Rate they pay.

The second piece to fixing our pension is the Employer Contribution Rate has been at 14% for 40 years and must be increased.

There are a dozen other non-social security states like Ohio. In these states the Employer Contribution rate averages around 22.5%.

In 2009, an STRS plan was created whereas active members would contribute 12.5% (up from 10%) and employers would contribute 16.5% (up from 14%). This was to be phased in over a 5-year period. However, due to poor lobbying on the part of paid STRS staff, when the 2009 reform plan was passed, active teachers ended up having to contribute 14% and Employer Contribution Rate was not raised at all.

Fixing our pension should not have been this difficult; but STRS management has done a good job handling the only hardship they faced, the public relations piece. However, their arrogance and messaging is catching up with them. Instead of acknowledging that they balanced their books on the backs of teachers and retirees, when they partially

restore a benefit they term it as a part of their "sustainable benefit enhancement plan."

They aren't fooling anyone; they aren't enhancing anything but spinning everything in their favor. This is something they do well. Here is an example, in an [article this week with the Dayton Daily News STRS Executive Director Neville was asked](#); how Ohio can attract new teachers? Director Neville's response was, I think if we can begin educating not just teachers close to retirement, not even just new teachers in the classroom, but the students who are in universities right now about what a robust pension we have, the safeguards and the benefits available to teachers in Ohio through STRS, I think you could really attract more folks to the profession."

Calling the **STRS pension ROBUST** when it **doesn't provide inflation protection (COLA)**, has **one of the highest employee contribution rates in the United States** and arguably makes its **teachers work the longest for full pension benefits**, hardly reflects a "robust" pension system. It does reflect why **current management needs to be overhauled**.

GET INVOLVED!

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.



REPORT YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS

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



If you miss a meeting, just email your numbers to Jan!

jjschlade@gmail.com



Keep the Foundation in mind when giving donations in memory of friends and relatives.



Nov. Speaker - Morgan Parcher, Henry County 4H

HENRY COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION				
	Gregg Merrill, Treasurer	Duane Ressler, Asst. Treas.	November 18, 2023	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Ck #/payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Oct. 10		starting balance		\$3,840.02
Nov. 13	Ck # 1420 City of Napoleon	Rental Fee	(\$90.00)	\$3,750.02
Nov. 13	Ck # 1421 Hill's Restaurant	Meals	(\$468.00)	\$3,282.02
Nov. 13	Ck # 1422 ORTA Defense Fd	Legal costs	(\$500.00)	\$2,782.02
Nov. 14	Deposit	meals, Lifewise donations, 50/50	\$717.00	\$3,499.02
Nov. 18		Balance =		\$3,499.02
	CD Balance as of Oct. 18	Henry County Bank		\$1,409.40
Nov. 18		BALANCE ALL ACCOUNTS =		\$4,908.42

Send a Friend a Note of Good Cheer!

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

Sandy Honeman @ 535 S. First Street, Box 96, Hamler, OH 43524

Becky Schindler c/o Grand Rapids Care Center, 24201 West 3rd Street, Grand Rapids, OH 43522

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 support 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!

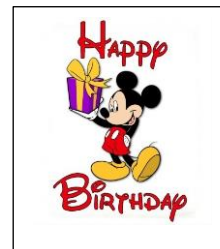
Enclosed is a check for my donation to support this cause.

\$ _____ to be donated to _____

Gregg Merrill
 HCRTA Treasurer
 1500 Thershan Drive
 Napoleon, Ohio 43545

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

Dec. 05	Redd, Betsy	Jan. 31	Hesterman, Phyllis
Dec. 08	Aschemeier, Joseph	Feb. 06	Hill, Patricia
Dec. 09	Fetterman, Patricia	Feb. 09	Nelson, Nancy
Dec. 13	Seagrave, Stephen	Feb. 12	Hockman, Jan *
Dec. 13	Shrider, Charlotte Anne	Feb. 12	Rohrs, Teresa L
Dec. 19	Tietje, Lynette Kay	Feb. 15	Curtis, Beverly
Dec. 20	Sasaki, Bonnie	Feb. 15	Feehan, Deb
Dec. 21	Conklin, Becky	Feb. 15	Honemann, Sandra R
Dec. 24	Rausch, Anne	Feb. 15	Mohr, Sue A *
Dec. 30	Griffith, Charles E	Feb. 17	Buehrer, Donna L
Jan. 06	Snider, Jim *	Feb. 18	Hall, LeAnn
Jan. 09	Vocke, Lawrence	Feb. 18	Northcutt, Heather S *
Jan. 10	Stein, Karen	Feb. 23	Anderson, Morten *
Jan. 11	Fetterman, Max	Feb. 23	Benedict, Joyce E *
Jan. 15	Frederick, Janet E *	Feb. 23	Hurst, Faith
Jan. 15	Meyer, Charles H	Feb. 23	Kern, Thomas
Jan. 18	Follett, David	Feb. 28	Zachrich Dolores *
Jan. 19	Walker, Barb	Mar. 01	Joseph, Robert **
Jan. 23	Schindler, Becky	Mar. 02	Milius, Kevin
Jan. 24	Neuenschwander, Charlene *	Mar. 03	Steed, Joan
Jan. 24	Schwiebert, Pamela	Mar. 03	Warnimont, Bev
Jan. 26	Behnfeldt, Peg *	Mar. 10	Baldwin, Richard Neil



ORTA Web Site

Below is the ORTA web site. Check there for information and links.

- Update your membership information.
- Sign up for email alerts.
- Read ORTA newsletters.
- Check member benefits.
- Contribute to the Pension Defense Fund

<http://www.orta.org/>

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