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LATEST STRS UPDATE

The following statement was made by ORTA Executive Director, Dr. Robin Rayfield at the monthly STRS Board Meeting held on April 18, 2019.

“Greetings STRS Board of Trustees and Staff. My Name is Robin Rayfield and I represent the Ohio Retired Teachers Association. I am a STRS beneficiary, having retired in 2011 after 30+ years of service.

I want to acknowledge the Board’s recent discussion regarding the Funding Policy at STRS and this policy’s impact on current retirees; specifically COLA. ORTA members are encouraged by the board’s decision to discuss this policy and encourage more detailed discussions on this policy and its implications.

The current Funding Policy and the notion that benefit enhancements/COLAs are not feasible until the system reaches a level of 100% funding are of great concern. Let me be clear, ORTA supports the Board’s desire to achieve a funding status of 100%. ORTA disagrees, however, that this desire should be a policy. It is unacceptable for ORTA members to be denied increases in benefits until 2034. Under the current Funding Policy a great % of current retirees will not be alive in 2034 when STRS will achieve a level of 100% funding.

Instead, ORTA believes that progress should be made toward the goal of reaching 100% funding, but that this goal or guiding principle should not prevent retirees from receiving what was guaranteed at the time of their retirement.

Certainly, retirees have been patient and have demonstrated this patience over the last few years of losing their benefits. However, now is the time for the Board of Trustees to abandon the 100% status as a policy and, instead, view 100% funding status as a goal or guiding policy. Progress towards this goal is reasonable, adherence to this as a policy resulting in a failure to meet obligations is not acceptable.

ORTA suggests that the Board review historical funding levels STRS has experienced as a guide to determine policy development, not an unrealistic 100% funding level. I’m sure that you will determine that STRS has rarely achieved a 100% funding level and has historically been at a level nearer to where we are at currently than 100%. In closing, I suggest that STRS use the following analogy as this discussion unfolds:

Comparing STRS’s funding levels to our current levels of CO2 and their impact on climate change makes sense to me. We should reduce carbon emissions as it is good for our planet, just as making progress on reaching 100% funding is good for our pension system. However, we need fossil fuels to heat our homes, provide power to our factories, and to power our vehicles. The US has reduced emissions and have policies in place to reduce emissions, however, we all drove here to this meeting today. STRS should develop policies that allow retirees to continue to receive what they were promised, while making progress towards a 100% funding status.”

FROM OUR PRESIDENT



2018-2019 ORTA President,
Bee Lehner

Post-Easter greetings, ORTA Members!

pray that you all survived the spring storms this weekend! Many counties were hit hard with wind and hail, but thankfully, no snow! With Easter just a week away, we need SUNSHINE!

This past week I was invited to attend and speak at the Muskingum County-Retired Teachers Association meeting at St. Ann's Rectory in Dresden, Ohio. President, Paula Harsh, welcomed around 80 members and guests this spring meeting. She encouraged her members to remain active in our association and applauded their accomplishments as they serve their community. P.S. The enormous chicken dinner, with all the trimmings, was also a fantastic way to ensure a sizable attendance! Yum! Yum!

On Friday, I attended my own chapter meeting here in Coshocton County! President Jane Crow and her executive committee had invited two members from Ohio State University Alumni Tours to speak to the 50 members in attendance about their tour offerings for 2020. I was amazed at the selection of "adventures" one can take! Cuba, Morocco, Tanzania, the Nile River, Japan, Oberammergau Passion Play, Northern Lights, National Parks and Lodges, an Ohio State at Oregon football game and many, many more offerings! Their website is go.osu.edu/travel or call **800-852-8687**. This was a wonderful program if you're looking toward next fall's program agenda!

Your ORTA Executive Director, Robin Rayfield, is still searching for a current member to serve as a Northeast Regional liaison. The basic responsibilities of a liaison are to lend support to approximately 6 chapters in your region, visit these chapters once in the spring and once in the fall, and work together as a team member with the other two liaisons. Also, your mileage is reimbursed. Twice a year, you will meet for an ORTA Board meeting at our office location in Columbus. You meet so many wonderful and interesting people at all of these meetings! Please give the ORTA office a call and let us know that you are interested!

We have been in the discussion phase of coming up with a better incentive plan to help you increase your membership AND to be recognized for it! This year we're going to make it more attainable for chapters to receive acknowledgement for progress made in membership gain! We'd like to see you come out ahead at the end of 2019! Even ONE member gain over last year's membership total will be recognized in our newsletter! We want you to have your due reward! A planned retirement meeting this summer for your county's retiring teachers is a wonderful way to get new members AND to get the word out about ORTA! This past year, Coshocton County gained several new members that way! Go for it! Make it a successful year for your chapter!

Although we are at the of Holy Week, I wish you a bright and shining post-Easter week, filled with spring sunshine.

Finally, "Easter is the only time of the year when it is safe to put all you eggs in one basket!"

Yours truly!
Bee Lehner, ORTA President

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA
Executive Director

Spring Greetings ORTA Members,

STRS News

The STRS Board is continuing discussion of 'enhancements of STRS benefits', a.k.a. COLA. At the February and March meetings of the STRS Board the topic of COLA and or increases for retirees was discussed, briefly. STRS Board members discussed the possibilities for increases to retirees when the funding ratio reached 85%. The concern from STRS staff was that, with the current assumed rate of return on investments at 7.45%, it will be 17+ years until the pension fund is at a 100% funded level. Any increases to retirees will lengthen that time. Historically, the funding ratio has been between 80% and 90% at STRS and retirees received their annual, promised COLA. The 'problem' with restoration of COLA is directly tied to funding policy. The STRS Board has adopted a funding policy that places a value on achieving 100% funding as its priority. The discussion around this policy is that, in today's market environ-

ment it is much riskier to achieve the 7.45 assumed rate of return than it was a few years ago. ORTA has made comments to the leaders at STRS that, while reaching a level of 100% is a goal that should be pursued, it should not be the priority of the board. Perhaps it is appropriate to 'make progress towards that goal, but the living standards of retirees must also be factored into funding policy development and implementation. The STRS Board will meet on April 18, with, hopefully, more discussion on this matter.

ORTA Board Meeting

The ORTA Board met on March 27, 2019 at the ORTA offices. At this meeting ORTA elected a new President Elect, Kara Mendenhall. Kara currently serves as a Liaison for the Central Region and has served as a Local RTA officer for several years. Kara's duties as President Elect will begin August 1, 2019. Welcome Kara Mendenhall!

Job Opportunities

From time to time people contact the ORTA office to inquire if any ORTA members are interested in part-time work. This month I received such an inquiry from the Yeshiva High School of Cleveland, a private charter school. They are looking for a part-time math teacher. The contact is Jason Kustron and his number is 440-667-4959.

Visits at local Retired Teacher Associations

I have been busy visiting local RTAs this spring. So far ORTA has visited 8 local chapters around the state. Please feel free to contact me at the ORTA office if you would like me or one of our Executive Committee members to attend your local RTA.

Best Regards,
Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA Executive Director

NEW LEADERS IN TRUMBULL CO.

Trumbull Retired Teachers Association recently announced new officers. Carol Senne is recording secretary; Linda Cowin, treasurer; Sue Datish, president; Marilyn Stanton, Program chair; and financial secretary, Dee Sullivan. TRTA meets bi-monthly, dedicated to enriching lives of retired teachers, serving the community and offering scholarships to future educators.

Visit the Trumbull Retired Teachers Facebook Page or web page at

<https://trumbullrta.wixsite.com/trta>.



Pictured left to right: Carol Senne, Linda Cowin, Sue Datish, Marilyn Stanton, and Dee Sullivan



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MORE IN MORROW CO.

Family Search volunteers **Lynn** and **Judy Webb** presented the program when the **Morrow County Retired Teachers Association** met for lunch April 1 at Trinity UM church.

The Webbs recently completed a 15 month service mission of digitizing Morrow County wills and guardianship documents dating from 1848 to 1935. Sponsored by the LDS church, which places great emphasis on family history, the information is now stored in the Granite Mountain vault in Salt Lake City and is available to genealogists on the Family Search website. Several retired teachers assisted with the project including **Joan Myers, Mary Kay Myers, Ruth Logan, Barbara Brewer** and **Janet Rhodebeck**.



MCRTA special guest speakers Judy and Lynn Webb of Family Search

Past-president **Bonnie Hildebrand** conducted the business meeting. She announced the recipients of MCRTA's recently awarded grants to county classroom teachers to assist with special projects: **Leslie Keddle,, Northmor; Katie Schohy, Cardington; Tom Lewis, Mt. Gilead** and **Jennifer Reid** and **Brett Behnfield**, Highland.

Membership chairman **Sharon Kincade** welcomed two new members, **Bonnie Beiler** and **Janet Bixler**. MCRTA now has 87 members, 63 of whom are also ORTA members.

Mary Kay Myers was thanked for the lovely table decorations of potted pansies, vintage photos and family tree place mats and also for ordering the items for Teacher Appreciation Day on May 7th.

A maple pecan creme pie, baked by **Pat Rinehart**, was auctioned to benefit the Teacher Grant Fund.

Upcoming events include: Executive Board meeting-April 29th, 10:30am, Edison UM Church; Seniors-Strut Your Stuff, May 9th, County Fairgrounds; 11:00a.m. - 3:00p.m.; Luncheon meeting-June 2nd, Trinity UM Church.

To learn more about the Morrow Co. chapter, please visit their [website](#).



The award -winning Rasin' Canes performers

JOIN THE GREATER CLEVELAND CHAPTER FOR "GREAT" FUN!

The award-winning **Raisin' Canes** from Smallwood Activities Center (formerly Parma Senior Center) will entertain the **Greater Cleveland RTA** chapter at their May meeting. This group of 20 volunteer dancing seniors, from 72 to 89 years of age, will present their vaudeville show. It's a complete show with soft shoe, tap dance and novelty dance routines, great old songs, Charleston, cane twirling and much more.

Join the Greater Cleveland chapter for the fun at the Holiday Inn Independence. If you haven't already made your lunch reservation, use the form on their [website](#).

SCHOLARSHIPS (AND THEN SOME) AWARDED IN HANCOCK CO.

2019 Hancock County Retired Teachers Association has recently awarded it's new Scholarship recipients. Congratulations to **Carrie Below** from Van Buren High School, **Olivia Willeke**, **Hannah Post** both from Findlay High School, **Martha Foltz**, **Kylee Crist** both from Arlington High School. Each received a one-thousand dollar scholarship and to everyone's surprise a member of the HCRTA added and additional one-thousand dollars to each scholarship. WOW—how generous!

Two of the scholarships were given in memory of Helen Acocks, and one scholarship was given in memory of Fannie Dauterman past chairman for 25 years of the HCRTA scholarship committee.



From left to right: Carrie Below from Van Buren High School, Olivia Willeke, Hannah Post both from Findlay High School, Martha Foltz, Kylee Crist both from Arlington High School

PUTTING THE “SPRING” BACK IN ORTA’S STEP!

On March 27th, **Ohio Retired Teachers Association** hosted our annual Spring Board Meeting for our Regional leaders and Executive Board members. With nearly every region represented, there was lively discussion about our goals for 2019, technology updates and better membership practices throughout the state. We welcomed our special guests from our partner **AMBA**, **Richard Rawland** and **Sudi Naraine**, who both shared compelling solutions to reach new members, ways to involve the community with ORTA and more. Stay tuned as we roll out future plans with AMBA!

The group also took time to install our new 2020 President-Elect, **Kara Mendenhall**. We are so grateful to gain her valuable leadership, and are excited to have her as a part of our Executive Board. Her term will begin officially on August 1st, 2019 as **Gale Adkins** begins his elected role as 2019-2020 ORTA President. Current President Bee Lehner will then serve as ORTA Past-President through August 2020.

While other doors are opening, others are coming to close. ORTA **Past President Randy Overbeck** (2017) will have finished his time on the board by August. He was presented with a personalized box, commemorating his year with the ORTA board. We will miss his dedication, leadership and passion for ORTA.

A special thank you to our Administrative Assistant **Mia McLean** for organizing our meals for the day, and making the space welcoming to all of our ORTA leaders.



(Left): A great group from our regions, ready to lead ORTA



(Above): Bee Lehner thanking Randy Overbeck for his years of service



(Right): Guest speaker from AMBA, Sudi Naraine



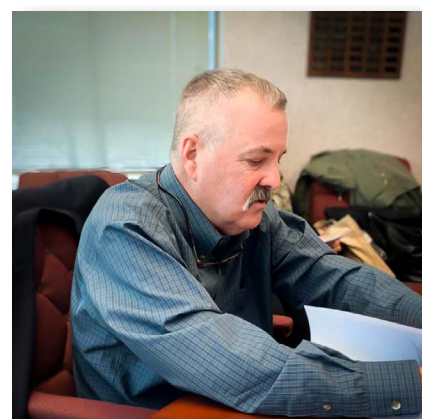
(Above): Mia McLean, Admin. Assistant



(Left): ORTA President Bee Lehner installing our new 2020 Pres. elect, Kara Mendenhall



(Above): Pres. Elect, Gale Adkins



(Above): ORTA Executive Director, Robin Rayfield



(Above): ORTA President, Bee Lehner presenting Past President Randy Overbeck with a gift of appreciation



(Right): NE Regional Liaison, Carol Kinsey



2018-2019 ORTA President, Bee Lehner



(Left): NW Regional Liaisons, Carol Wolfe, Bruce Hodges; SE Liaisons Don Ullmann and Brenda Davis

WHAT'S ORTA UP TO?

Take a look at what's coming up in May around our chapters and organization!
The calendar is always available on our website.
Follow the link to view: <http://www.orta.org/>



Wednesday, May 1

11:30am Tuscarawas Retired Teacher Association Chapter Meeting

11:30am Athens Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

Friday, May 3

11:30am Union Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

Wednesday, May 8

11:30am Pickaway Co. Retired Teachers Association Chapter Meeting

11:30am Greater Cleveland Chapter Meeting

11:30am Mahoning Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

12:00pm Lorain Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

12:00pm Auglaze Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

12:00pm Butler Co. Retired Teachers Association Chapter Meeting

Thursday, May 9

11:00am Huron Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

Friday, May 10

12:00pm Stark Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

Monday, May 13

5:30pm Henry Co. Retired Teachers Association

Wednesday, May 15

11:00am Wood Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

Thursday, May 16

11:30am Ross Co. Retired Teachers Association Chapter Meeting

11:30am Holmes Co. Retired Teachers Association Chapter Meeting

12:00pm Columbiana Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

Friday, May 17

11:30am Harrison Co. Retired Teachers Association

Monday, May 20

10:00am Northeast Regional Leadership Meeting

Tuesday, May 21

11:30am Mercer Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

11:30am Montgomery Co. Retired Teachers Association Meeting

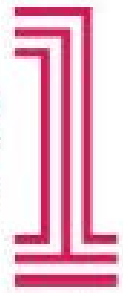
Thursday, May 23

12:00pm Lucas Co. retired Teachers Association Chapter Meeting

12:00pm Meigs Co. Retired Teachers Association Chapter Meeting



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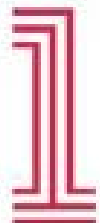
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IN MEMORIAM:

Butler Co.- Delores Mary Brossart, BCRTA and ORTA Life Member

Coshocton Co.- Francis Wade Schuler, ORTA and CCRTA Member

Jefferson Co.- Joesph Karaffa, ORTA and JCRTA Member

Ottawa Co.- Elizabeth Jean Ling, OCRTA and ORTA Member

Pickaway Co.- Sophia Ruth Uland, PCRTA and ORTA Member

Shelby Co.- Ruth Heins, ORTA and SCRTA Member

Trumbull Co.- James Taylor, ORTA and TRTA Life Member; Sarah A. Grant, ORTA and TRTA Member; Mary D. DiLoreto Rossi, Life ORTA and TRTA member.

****Deceased Member submission Policy update:
If you submit member(s) passing, please forward any obituary or funeral arrangements for our records.***

“When our time on Earth has been complete, Our spirit moves on, more mysteries to seek. Celebrate what this person meant to you, Cherish the memories when this life you review.”

—B.J. Woodruff



WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

We want to put you and your chapter in the monthly e-newsletter!

Contact Alissa at publications@orta.org, or download a submission from our website ([click here](#)) and send all submission materials to:

Ohio Retired Teachers | Suite 190
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8050 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43235

We can't wait to share your stories!