

Licking County Retired
Teachers Association



NEWSLETTER

Affiliated with Ohio Retired Teachers Association



Excerpts from December 2011 Meeting By Linda Leffel



Program:

Following lunch, everyone was treated to a delightful Christmas Program presented by very enthusiastic John Clem Elementary Third Graders! Many thanks to students, as well as Music

Teacher Lee Ann Lugar and Gym teacher Jane Krueger for their hard work with these children.

Business Meeting:

Following the program our business meeting was called to order by President Fred Ciminello who dispensed with a full, regular business meeting due to the longer program and Memorial Service today.

Minutes

Minutes from our October meeting were not read at this time—members are reminded to see full minutes on the LCRTA website, and send any corrections to Eileen or Linda.

Treasurer's Report

Our treasurer's report through November is as follows:

Checking Account: \$1134.96 Savings Account: \$3330.98 Scholarship Account: \$1470.92

CD Account: \$1628.59 Totals: \$7565.45

Public Relations/Communication:

Fred noted-the address for our new Vice President was written incorrectly in the booklet, and had her correct address for us: Janet Simross, 81 Fieldpoint Road, Heath, Ohio 43056.

Community Services:

David Green shared that he and a local committee are currently working on a project to obtain an improved public transportation system for Newark and Licking County, which would include a regulated route and stops. The minimal system which currently exists is very inadequate in meeting the needs

of many of our citizens, including lower income, the elderly, etc. At present they are seeking support from area organizations and community members in form of a resolution to be presented to our County Commissioners. David will keep us updated on the progress of this project.

The resolution is as follows:

Transportation is a basic need of people to get to medical services, employment, shopping, school and social services. Current services in Licking County, which include on-demand transportation for the elderly and disabled, are severely inadequate to meet the needs of all our residents. We strongly support the immediate development of an additional dependable and inexpensive fixed route bus system with regularly scheduled stops in Licking County, and urge our elected officials to take the necessary actions.

A motion to approve our support for this initiate and resolution was made by Sandy Holcombe, and was seconded by Bob Pallagi, and was approved by the membership.

In Memoriam:

As Karen Wolford was absent, Eileen led this year's "In Memoriam" moment for members deceased in 2011. A moment of silence and thoughts were shared about our members who died this year: Doris Barrick, Mary Beatty, Dale Kern, Rosanna Moore, and Paul "Hoss" Starr.

Old/Unfinished Business:

Thanks to everyone who has participated in the Food Pantry project this year-we have had much positive feedback, and it has been successful. Thanks to everyone who brought peanut butter today, and who have brought items all year. We will definitely continue this program next year.

New Business:

Nothing else was reported.



Inside this Issue

Excerpts from December, February and April Minutes

Leadership Team

A message from President Fred Ciminello

Membership update from Mary Ellinger

Take Note

STRS May Board News

Poem



LCRTA LEADERSHIP TEAM

JOIN US! We meet the Monday before each luncheon, 2 pm at Trinity Episcopal Church on East Main.

President - Fred Ciminello

Vice-president - Janet Simross

Secretary - Linda Leffel

Treasurer - Sharon Koppert

Ad Hoc Committees

Auditing - Karen Birtcher & Sandy Stoker

In Memorium - Karen Wolford

Luncheon Reservations & Data - Judy Patterson

Luncheon Desk - Wanda Gainer & Barb Bibler

Scholarship - Mary Ellinger & Joan Rittenhouse

Web Master & Newsletter Editor - Eileen McNally

Standing Committees Chairs

Community Services - David Green

Informative & Protective - Judy Pflaumer

Legislative - Bob Tharp

Membership - Mary Ellinger & Mary Kaschak

Public Relations - Eileen McNally

Pre-retirement Planning - Eileen McNally



Contact anyone on the leadership team.
Email them at
emcnally2535@lickingcountyteachers.org

EXCERPTS FROM THE FEBRUARY 2012 MEETING

LCRTA met for lunch at Stacey's Buffet in Heath on February 8, 2012

Approximately 40 were in attendance. After enjoying their lunch, members heard an inspiring program given by David Alianiello from Licking Memorial Hospital. A lot of valuable information was shared regarding exercising. **If you go to our web site <http://www.lickingcountyteachers.org> you will see some of the ideas that David shared.**

Treasurer's report:

Checking: \$1419.26 Savings: \$3331.39

Scholarship: \$1841.30 CD \$1628.59

Member, David Greene, shared more information about the permanent bussing proposed for our area. It is moving forward

with support from a number of organizations. City Council is now looking into the matter. We can help with this initiative in a number of ways. He invited us to join him at meetings, but more importantly, contact council members to ask that they support the issue. For more information you can contact David at 740-641-2328.

It was noted that the executive board voted to increase the scholarships that LCRTA awards from \$600 to \$800. A student from Licking Heights will be awarded the scholarship. A reminder that each year our scholarships rotate to different districts.

A new member, Bill White, was in attendance and recognized. Welcome aboard, Bill!

Respectfully Submitted, Eileen McNally
(for Linda Leffel)



Our website is a valuable source of timely information. Updates from STRS and the legislature is posted as soon as it is received. Eileen McNally, webmaster then alerts the members with email that a new posting has occurred. Don't be left wondering. Keep up to date. Visit our website.

<http://www.lickingcountyteachers.org>



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, FRED

Hi Everyone,

Here we are ready for our third meeting of the year-the half way point for 2012.

Our community service project for the Food Pantry Network in April brought in 96 pounds of food items, which helped to feed over three thousand families. The FPN has provided over 1,060,500 meals this year which is an increase of 30.2% over last year. Keep up the good work and thanks again.

A special thanks also goes to Joan Rittenhouse and Mary Ellinger for their

outstanding work on the Scholarship Committee this year. Our winner, Gabrielle Palombaro, is from Licking Heights. She and her parents plan to join us for lunch June 13, so I hope you will take the opportunity to meet her. She plans to attend the Ohio State University this Fall pursuing a degree in education.

Thanks to Bob Tharp and Eileen McNally for keeping us informed on STRS and legislative matters taking place at the state level.

We need a President for LCRTA for 2013-14. If you have a person in mind or are willing to serve in this capacity, please let me know.

Fred

Membership

We appreciate everyone who has renewed their dues for 2012. Please keep in mind that you can send both ORTA and our local dues to use and only have to write one check! We would also like to thank those who sent money for our scholarship fund. We just awarded an \$800 scholarship to a very deserving and qualified student from Licking Heights High School. Our goal is to reach the point where we can offer \$1000 each year.

Our membership stands at 250. Information is being sent to new retirees in all districts. You can help by spreading the word about LCRTA to any new retiree. This also applies to those who have already retired but have not joined us. Personal contact always works best.

We need your help! We also would like to know if a member has a serious health issue or if someone would like to attend a meeting but is in need of transportation. This information can be given to any LCRTA officer or chair person. You have those telephone numbers in the 2012 red chapter booklet.

Who are our oldest members? Please help by letting me know which of our honorary members are over 90 years of age. We also need to be aware as folks turn 85 so we can put them on the honorary list (and local dues will be free!)



Mary Ellinger

EXCERPTS FROM APRIL 2012 MEETING

Welcome/Invocation/Guest Introduction/Lunch:

LCRTA President Fred Ciminello welcomed everyone to the April spring luncheon meeting. A delicious lunch was then served by church kitchen staff of Heath United Methodist.

Program: Following lunch everyone adjourned to the sanctuary for our program—valuable information presented by STRS representative Tamla Cole. A packet with latest updates was handed out. Although no resolutions have been passed, she reviewed the 5 major changes questioned since 2009. Proposals made at 3 times—9/09, 10/10, and 1/11—have not yet been decided. Discussions—still on-going—will likely go to 4th proposal, with possibly more changes.

*First: area of Eligibility—change to working 35 years/minimum age 60, with the option to phase this in over years (30/55, 31/56, 32/57, 33/58, 34/59, 35/60).

*Second: Enhanced benefit formula—above 30 years—changing to only a gradual rate increase each year of teaching beyond 30.

*Third: Salary calculations of highest 3 years changing to the highest 5 years of teacher's salary.

*Fourth: Increased contributions—10% now, going up 1% each year until reaching 13%.

*Fifth: The COLA adjustment—now stating retirees prior to 2012 will go to a COLA of 2%, while those retiring after 2012 will still receive 2%, but until after 5 years of retirement. Another consideration is to have a possible “black-out” of our COLA for one year as of July 2012—but the likelihood of this happening at this late date is very minimal.

Another area of prime concern of course is health care. STRS Healthcare is based on 30-year funding with a goal of customer satisfaction, Tamla said. Future changes may include: possible reduction of options currently available; more out-of-pocket expenses for those under 65; basic plan going from \$1,500 deductible to \$1,750; may add an increased co-pay—with variance if in-or-out of network; a reduction of options in drug coverage from “4-tier” to “2-tier” (generic & covered/preferred); some drugs no longer covered at all would probably be “grandfathered in” for those currently prescribed those drugs. You would probably be responsible to verify whether your physician is “in-network”.

Etna “proactive programs” would still be available and encouraged (gym memberships, etc.).

Changes forthcoming are to stabilize & increase the solvency of STRS healthcare & pensions.

Business Meeting:

Following the program our business meeting was called to order by President Fred Ciminello who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Fred thanked Tamla Cole for her presentation, and then thanked everyone for continuing to support the food pantry with donations brought to each meeting.

Meeting Reports, Announcements & Notes from the Executive meeting:

Minutes

Minutes from our February meeting were not read at this time—members are reminded to see full minutes on the LCRTA website, and send any corrections to Eileen or Linda.

Treasurer's Report

Sharon's treasurer's report to date: Checking Account: \$1616.06 Savings Account: \$3331.39 Scholarship Account: \$2049.38 CD Account: \$1628.59 Totals: \$ 8625.42

Membership:

Thanks to those who have their dues current. Those not paying as of today will have individual statements sent to them.

Public Relations/Communication:

Some of our Executive Officers recently attended the ORTA Spring Conference held in Athens. Received some good ideas and others were very intrigued with our current Program Booklet and all that it includes. It was suggested that we include our website address in the book, & one chapter's booklet contained members' names. This led to discussion of whether we should include them in our book. There were definitely pro and con feelings about this. It was suggested that instead of making our booklet so big with the addition of names, we have a “supplement” listing with names, addresses, phone, & emails of all members wanting to have their information in a listing for members to have. Executive Officers will discuss.

Scholarship:

Fred is very pleased with the contributions made to our scholarship fund, knowing that with ever-increasing college costs, it will be much appreciated by our recipient. We have been in contact with this year's school, Licking Heights, to have their recipient chosen by early May.

STRS May Board News Ohio Senate Passes Pension Reform Legislation; STRS Ohio Hopeful That House of Representatives Will Take Action

Executive Director Michael Nehf reported at the May Retirement Board meeting that the Ohio Senate passed STRS Ohio's long-awaited pension reform bill (Sub. Senate Bill 342) on May 16 by a 31-2 vote, paving the way for the House to hopefully take similar action yet this year. Retirement Board Chair Jim McGreevy expressed appreciation to the Senate and to the bill's co-sponsors, Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) and Senate Minority Leader Eric Kearney (D-Cincinnati) for taking action on pension reform. McGreevy also complimented STRS Ohio stakeholders for their work in support of the bill.

On May 8, the co-sponsors introduced four pension reform bills that were assigned to the Senate Insurance, Commerce and Labor Committee. In testimony that afternoon, Nehf told Committee members that the changes represent "the first time in STRS Ohio's history that benefit reductions were being sought," and that the changes are "necessary to preserve the pension fund and for the plan to meet its funding obligations." The executive director's complete testimony is available on the STRS Ohio website.

Additional testimony from STRS Ohio constituents in support of the bill acknowledged that the pension reform changes are necessary to strengthen the financial condition of the retirement system. The

Committee passed the bill on May 15 in an 11-1 vote.

STRS Ohio first addressed pension reform in 2009, when the Retirement Board approved a plan to modify benefits in September of that year. In response to constituent and Statehouse input, the board amended its proposal in October 2010 and January 2011. The reform package went through one more revision in April 2012 following additional review and study by the Retirement Board — steps that were vital in creating a clear picture of the system's financial condition. The plan's components include:

- Increasing age and service requirements for retirement.

- Lowering the benefit formula.

- Increasing the number of years in the final average salary calculation.

- Increasing the member contribution rate.

- Lowering the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for current and future retirees; freezing the COLA for one year for current retirees; and deferring the COLA until 60 months after the date of retirement for new retirees.

A more detailed list of the changes is available on the STRS Ohio website.

The bill also includes provisions that the Retirement Board approved at a special meeting on May 15. These provisions would give the Retirement Board authority in the future to adjust member contribution

rates, the COLA, and age and service requirements without legislative approval — on the condition that these adjustments would not materially impair the fiscal integrity of the retirement system or are necessary to preserve the fiscal integrity of the retirement system.

Retirement Board Approves Changes to Regional Health Care Plans

At its May meeting, the Retirement Board approved health care program changes that will affect benefit recipients enrolled in the AultCare and Paramount regional plans beginning January 2013. These changes are in response to changes the board approved in April to its national plans (Medical Mutual, Aetna and Express Scripts). Enrollment in the regional plans is about 6% of the total STRS Ohio health care enrollment.

Highlights of the approved 2013 regional plan changes include:

- Applying the Express Scripts pharmacy changes (approved by the board in April) to the AultCare and Paramount plans. Additional 2013 plan information will be provided in the July issue of *STRS Ohio News for Benefit Recipients* and in open-enrollment materials. There are no changes to the 2013 Kaiser plans. In June, Member Benefits staff is expected to present final 2013 health care premiums for board consideration.

Camaraderie

Working together every step of the way



We can make history,
Explore the world beyond
boundary,
We can soar the unlimited sky;
Spread our wings and fly.

Different interests, yet aiming for
one;

Glow like silver brighter than the
sun,
Mark the time with blazing hearts,
Help the ruins to make a brand
new start.

Social insect is like what we are;
Ambassadors of peace not war,
Handymen of the mischief of our
elders;
Making the best things more
better.

In the table of brotherhood we'll
dine;
Variety of races will intertwine,
The banner of love will be unroll.
All for one, one for all.

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Calendar

August 8, 2012

Stacey's Buffet 12 Noon

Speaker: Jo Fedor from United Way

October 10, 2012

Utica United Methodist 12 Noon

Speaker: Dave Gynn, President of ORTA

December 12, 2012

Central Christian Church 12 Noon

Holiday Music by the Land of Legend
Barbershoppers

<http://www.lickingcountyteachers.org>



Licking County Retired Teachers Association

% Eileen McNally

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED