

PARTA

SOUNDINGS

MARCH 2022

PEORIA Area Retired Teachers Association

PARTA LUNCHEON & MEETING

*Barrack's Cater Inn
March 7 at 11:30 A.M.
Luncheon: \$12.00*

*Please call Patti Monks
309.697/3385
if you did not get called
for your reservation.*

VIRTUAL OPTION via ZOOM

*Zoom Meeting Access
Information on Page 2*

GREETER

- Sherry Perez
- Ann Christophel

PLEDGE / INVOCATION

- Scott Montgomery

MENU

- Corned Beef & Cabbage
- Assorted Salads
- Assorted Desserts

PROGRAM

TOPIC:

AMEREN ILLINOIS

SPEAKER:

KENNY BLUM

*Community &
Public Relations*

MEETING

Dixie Wheeler
PARTA President



Roger Hampton
Soundings Editor



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings PARTA Members,

Some Good News to Share: PARTA proved to be successful in answering our unit questions sent out by IRTA. There were eighteen units that participated, and all answered questions with no more than six (6) "No" answers. We had five (5). That means PARTA will be receiving a **check for \$250**. All qualifying units will be recognized at the IRTA Biennial Convention, in IRTA Action, e-newsletter, and on the IRTA website. This program is a voluntary program based on the honor system. Our whole board participated. The results are used to guide local leadership and recognize the best IRTA units in the state. How about that!!



Dixie Wheeler, PARTA President

UPCOMING MEETINGS

APRIL 4

**OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE
AT BRADLEY UNIVERSITY (OLLI)**

MAY 2

**FOR THE LOVE OF NAVY LIFE
DOUG WRIGHT,
SUBMARINE COMMANDER**



JUNE 6 & SEPTEMBER 12 (TBD)

Check PARTA's Website
for Information and Updates
pa-rta.weebly.com/
Sally Weber, Webmaster



AN IRISH BLESSING


*May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sunshine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields,
and until we meet again
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.*






SOUNDINGS

PARTA LUNCHEON MEETING MINUTES

11:30 AM MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022

The February PARTA meeting was held at Cater Inn on February 7, 2022, with President Dixie Wheeler presiding. There were fifty-eight (58) members in attendance and three (3) members on Zoom. 61 President Wheeler thanked the meeting Greeters, Ann Christophel and Susan Bartlow. She also thanked Cater Inn for their continued hospitality and thanked Deloris Turner for assisting with the meeting Zoom in the absence of Roger Hampton. Laura Shane offered the Pledge to the Flag and prayer. New members Kathy Krippel and Mary Ann Kaufman were recognized.  Carla Stokowski encouraged members to fill out the cards on the table to participate in the *Secret PARTA Member Activity* for the meetings. The person(s) chosen table will be first to go through the serving line for lunch.

INFORMATION TO NOTE President Wheeler shared the recent survey sent to Units from the IRTA to assess goals, programming, and membership participation. One crucial statement included was whether PARTA had 80% of its members with IRTA membership. The response was "No." She highly encourages all PARTA members to become IRTA members.  Jeff Vallosio had applications for PARTA members to start that process.

 At the meeting, information from various law firms was on the back table for members to consider when needing legal advice. Trent Young from Legacy Investment Services was the meeting's program guest. Legal Investment is the firm handling our organization's financial portfolio. He informed us that our portfolio is unique 

because it is specific. He said volatility in the market should not be a cause for panic. It is now the new normal. The information was well-received considering the slight decline in the investment account.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS President Wheeler informed the membership that officers and committee chairs are in the process of developing job descriptions for their respective positions. The reason for completing a job description is to provide a written explanation for interested members considering leadership roles.

LAWSUIT President Wheeler LAW SUIT clarified that the pending Lawsuit lodged against the State by IRTA is not about our pension. It is about their effort to reduce our health insurance. Dan Walthers thanked IRTA for filing the Lawsuit.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
Finance Committee: Dave Barnwell announced that the Finance Committee would be conducting an audit in March.

DIRECTORY Denise Smith asked Directory members to check information for correction to include in the directory. Denise passed around a sheet for corrections. Dixie thanked Denise for her diligence in completing this document.



GREETERS Ann Christophel is seeking Greeters for the upcoming meetings.

TREASURER'S REPORT The treasurer's report from Jeff Vallosio was on the tables. President Wheeler asked whether there was other business for discussion. There was none. She requested a motion for adjournment. Peggy Shane made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dan Walthers seconded the motion.

RESPECTIVELY SUBMITTED

DELORIS TURNER, SECRETARY

ZOOM OPTIONS FOR ACCESSING MEETINGS

<u>EMAIL - EASIEST OPTION</u>	<u>WEBPAGE</u>	<u>BROWSER</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
A Zoom link will be sent to all PARTA members for whom we have an email address.	Click the Zoom link on the PARTA webpage.	Go to: https://zoom.us Click on: "Join A Meeting"	(Voice Only Option) Dial: 1 312 626 6799
		 Enter Meeting ID 812 522 6549	

We may not have it all together, but together we have it all. Together, we are stronger!

SOUNDINGS

PARTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES 10:00 AM MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2022

President Dixie Wheeler called the ZOOM meeting to order at 10:00 AM. She led the members in the pledge to the flag. Members present were Dixie Wheeler, Jeff Vallosio, Sally Weber, Jeannie Blane, Peggy Shane, Dave Barnwell, Roger Hampton, Deloris Turner, John Rathbun, Kathy Simpson, Valda Shipp, Abby Humbles, Denise Smith.

President Wheeler addressed the recent lawsuit filed by the Illinois Retired Teachers Association against the State of Illinois. The lawsuit is seeking to correct an unconstitutional move by the State which dramatically reduces contributions made to the Teacher Health Insurance Security Fund. Please go to the IRTA website to see the video by IRTA President Bill Funkhouser.

PARTA officers and committee chairs were encouraged to complete the job description for their respective office and committee. The officers' and chairs' responsibilities will become part of the record and posted on PARTA's website. At the next Board meeting the job descriptions will be submitted and tweaked before placing them on the website. A timeline will be included in the report to reflect the completion of the activities required of the positions.

Denise Smith is in the process of completing the PARTA directory for this year. She thanked Roger Hampton for his assistance. Pat Hampton will assist in the proofreading as to grammar and mechanics but will not verify the accuracy of the historical information placed in the directory. Dixie will provide updated changes to the by-laws for the directory. Denise Smith went through the sub-sections included in the directory. There was additional discussion regarding the extent of advertisement and ads in the directory. It was decided a conversation with Trent Strong from our investment firm will take place after the February meeting to seek assistance from them in purchasing an ad in the directory. The finance committee members will follow up on talking to Trent Strong about the purchase of the ad.

Dixie shared the IRTA Survey with the Board. Units that complete the survey will receive \$250. There were five (5) questions in which our Unit had a "no" response. We still met the required responses to receive \$250. Thanks to President Wheeler for completing the survey.

JOB DESCRIPTION



COMMITTEE REPORTS

ALTRUISTIC (Denise Smith) - No Report
It was suggested the list of deceased members be sent to Jeff Vallosio, and he, in turn, will submit to IRTA.



ATTENDANCE & RESERVATIONS (Patti Monks) - No Report
FINANCE (Jeff Vallosio & Dave Barnwell) - Overall, the yearly investments are very favorable. However, the market has been somewhat volatile in the last few weeks, with some losses. They were confident that the Organization's financial advisors would steer us in the right direction regarding our investments.

TREASURE REPORT (Jeff Vallosio) -
Posted in the Soundings

FOUNDATION SERVICES & SCHOLARSHIPS (Valda Shipp) - Valda reported that one of the two scholarships had been awarded. It is hoped that the other scholarship will be given soon.

MEETING GREETERS/INVOCATION

(Peggy Shane & Ann Christophel) - No Report

History/Archives (Susan Leighty) - No Report

LEGISLATIVE (Dixie Wheeler) - No Report

MEMBERSHIP (John Rathbun) - John reported that PARTA membership was affected by the pandemic. The increase is not at the level it was before COVID. Dixie suggested the membership committee explore the number of members who need to pay dues. The committee has a procedure in place to get that done.

PROGRAMS (Jeannie Blane) - February 7:

Trent Strong, Investment Advisor

GRANTS

TEACHER GRANTS (Deloris Turner)

The recipients have been selected, and the treasurer, Jeff Vallosio, has distributed checks. The grant recipients have cashed the checks. We received pictures and thank-you notes from Jennifer Lawless's class. Photos are on the PARTA website.

PUBLIC RELATIONS (Kathy Simpson) - Kathy is still trying to post our meeting dates in the Journal Star. The paper has downsized considerably. However, we are on the WMBD calendar.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Audit meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2022.



President Wheeler asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Peggy Shane moved to adjourn the meeting, and Dixie Wheeler seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

RESPECTIVELY SUBMITTED

DELORIS TURNER, SECRETARY

How does the moon cut its hair? Eclipse it! 😊 If you're cold, go sit in the corner. It's 90 degrees!

SOUNDINGS

NEW PARTA 2022 DIRECTORY



The directory will be going to the printer on March 14th. All corrections or additions need to be made before this date. Copies of member information (name, address, e-mail, phone number) will be available at the March 7th meeting. Please check the information and highlight any changes that need to be made.
Denise Smith – PARTA Directory Editor

PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO YOUR DIRECTORY

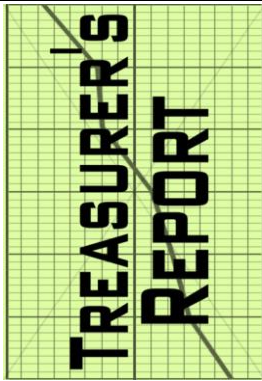
Friedman	Judy	illskir@aol.com				New email	
Giger	Sue				309.829.1561	New phone	
Hanlin	Mary Ann				309.231.6718	New phone	
Kaufman	Mary Ann	308 E Essex ST Box 398	Glasford	IL	61533-0398	309.678.5487	New member
		cubmaster5656@gmail.com					
Krippel	Kathleen	4723 N Laurel DR	Peoria	IL	61614-5533	309.635.5974	New member
		kitkatkate920@gmail.com					
Swanson	Barbara	6901 N Galena RD APT101	Peoria	IL	61614-3158	919.397.1963	New address & phone #

William Brunner, 95

May 22, 1926 – February 29, 2022



Please submit any changes or additions to your information.



TOTAL PARTA FINANCES	INVESTMENT BALANCE	\$ 53,770.81
	SAVINGS BALANCE	9,021.57
	CHECKING BALANCE	801.94
	WORKING CASH (CASH BOXES)	100.00
	POST OFFICE BULK MAIL FUND	92.39
	POST OFFICE RETURNED MAIL FUND	178.78
	GRAND TOTAL	\$ 63,965.49

**Jeff Vallosio
Treasurer**

NOTE FROM ONE OF OUR PARTA MEMBERS:

Hello and greetings to our PARTA friends. We so enjoy the news and monthly letter we can read online. It helps us to stay informed and connected, since now living in Colorado with our Peoria friends. Thank you and best wishes!
Susan & David Keene



Few things are more delightful than grandchildren fighting over your lap. I used to think I was too old to fall in love again, then I became a grandparent. The simplest toy, one which even the youngest child can operate, is called a grandparent.

SOUNDINGS

TRS REMINDER: SIGN IN AND VIEW YOUR BENEFITS REPORT AT:

<https://member.trsil.org/subsections/secureaccountaccess/security/signin.aspx>

Member Information	Member Services	My Claims	Schedule
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> My Account <input type="radio"/> Contact Information <input type="radio"/> Beneficiary Information <input type="radio"/> Beneficiary Refund <input type="radio"/> Monthly Benefits <input type="radio"/> Earnings Statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Forms & Reports <input type="radio"/> Document Upload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Available Refunds <input type="radio"/> Check Claim Status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Bring TRS to You

The Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Illinois is the 42nd largest pension system in the United States with assets of \$66 billion as of December 31, 2021.

PRITZKER'S FY2023 BUDGET REAFFIRMS A COMMITMENT TO TRS MEMBERS

Source: <https://www.trsil.org/news-and-events/Pritzker-FY23-Budget-Affirms-Commitment-to-TRS-Members>



Governor Pritzker's plan to appropriate more money than the minimum requirement to Illinois' public pensions in fiscal year 2023 was praised by TRS leaders as a commitment to improve the retirement security of the state's teachers.

"Pritzker's proposal to allocate \$10 billion to public pensions in the coming year's state budget reaffirms his strong partnership with generations of Illinois teachers," said TRS Board President Matthew Hunt. "Since taking office, Pritzker has proven to be very supportive of our 432,000 members and their futures." In his FY 2023 state budget proposal, Pritzker said he wants to add \$500 million to the minimum annual contribution required by law to TRS and the other pension systems. In FY 2023, the state's minimum statutory payment is \$9.6 billion, with \$5.9 billion dedicated to TRS. With the additional funds, the state's total contribution to the pension systems will be \$10.1 billion. It's expected the payment to TRS will total \$6.16 billion.



Governor Pritzker said the added \$500 million will reduce the future long-term liability of the state's pension systems by an estimated \$1.4 billion. The total long-term liability of all of the state's five pension systems currently stands at \$236.5 billion. The TRS unfunded liability is \$80 billion.

BEST THINGS TO BUY IN MARCH

Focus on seasonal deals this month in the absence of a major shopping holiday.

Source: <https://www.aarp.org/money/>

As seasonal discount shopping goes, March isn't the biggest month for bargains. Retailers are more focused on making the transition from winter to spring than they are on hosting huge sales or extending at markdowns.

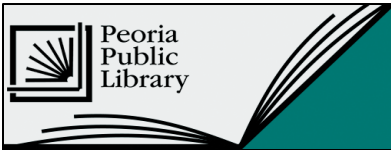
"There is no major commercial spending-focused holiday in March, like the winter holidays or Presidents Day, or even back-to-school shopping," said Rebecca Gramuglia, a consumer expert.

The absence of a major shopping holiday, however, doesn't mean no good deals can be had in March. Look for freebies and discounts on pizza and pie on Pi Day as well as some sales on green apparel for St. Patrick's Day. Otherwise, retail experts say the best sales will reflect inventory that retailers want to clean out to make room for new stock.

eBay is so useless. I tried to look up lighters and all they had were 13,749 matches.

A recent study found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it

SOUNDINGS

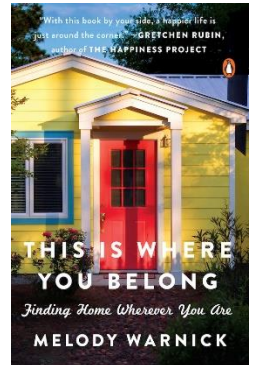


PEORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

[HTTP://WWW.PEORIAPUBLICLIBRARY.ORG/](http://www.peoriapubliclibrary.org/)

ONE CITY. ONE BOOK. DIFFERENT MINDS.

Each year, Peoria Public Library (PPL) features an important book through our annual Peoria Reads! One city, One book project. Now 20 years strong. For 2022, PPL has chosen a book that helps us celebrate where we are in life — something that perhaps we all need during this ongoing global pandemic. *This is Where You Belong: Finding Home Wherever You Are* by Melody Warnick will inspire you to love where you live — whether you are a lifelong Peorian or a new transplant.



PEORIA READS EVENTS 2022

Panel Discussion at 7 p.m. *March 31*

Love Where You Live: The Peoria Transplant Experience

McKenzie Room of PPL North Branch | 3001 W Grand Parkway

Four panelists, all transplants to the Peoria area, will provide their insights into moving to Peoria, their experiences here, and how they have learned to make Peoria their new home. Insights about their former places where they lived, and how that has informed their Peoria experience, will also be presented.

Melody Warnick's book, *This is Where You Belong: Finding Home Wherever You Are*, will also be discussed in relation to these panelists' first-hand experiences and insights.

More information online at: <https://peoriapubliclibrary.org/peoria-reads/>

In every day, there are 1,440 minutes.

That means we have 1,440 daily opportunities to make a positive impact.



INFLUENCES OF A MOTHER AND A TEACHER

Source: <https://www.goodwill.org/blog/my-story/my-story-diondre-ouzts/>

Growing up, Diondre Ouzts says he was never motivated or inspired by learning. For him, school was always more about sports and socializing than academics. By the time he made it to high school, his athletic talents were his primary reason for attending. Several setbacks and mistakes caused him to become academically ineligible to play high school football.

Feeling defeated and disappointed in his fate, Diondre ultimately decided to drop out of school and never imagined he would obtain his high school diploma.



Inspired by his mother's positive experiences with *The Excel Center*, a charter high school operated by *Goodwill of Greater Washington* (DC), Diondre enrolled to obtain his high school diploma. He says enrolling in the College and Career Readiness program changed his life tremendously. Inspired by one of his instructors, he developed a love for learning, which led to a passion for teaching. That desire carried Diondre through his tenure at The Excel Center, and he made it his mission to graduate. During his time there, he honed his leadership skills and felt led to help other youth like him learn and prepare for life. Diondre graduated and is now working with *The Literacy Lab*, tutoring young minds.

Continued on Page 8 - INFLUENCES

SOUNDINGS

IRTA LAWSUIT IN THE NEWS (ONE OF SEVERAL ARTICLES)

Source: <https://www.chicagostarmedia.com/news/state/retired-teachers-group-sues-illinois-over-looming-health-insurance-cost-changes/>

A group of retired Illinois educators is suing the state over what they say is a diminishment of promised benefits. Some see it as another example of the need for constitutional pension reform. The state is reducing by around \$100 million per year what taxpayers pay for retired teachers' health care starting July 1, 2022. The Illinois Retired Teachers Association said it filed a lawsuit against the Teachers Retirement System Board of Trustees, the Pritzker administration, Illinois comptroller, Illinois treasurer, House Speaker, and Senate President in Sangamon County Court.



Retired teacher Pat Hampton said the reduced state contribution would mean increased costs for retired teachers like herself. "It would just be financially, physically, mentally, in so many ways devastating to me," Hampton told WMAZ Monday. The IRTA is seeking to require the state to pay a "sufficient" amount. "Our actuary has come forth and said anywhere from one to four years the fund could go belly up," IRTA Executive Director Jim Bachman said.

Wirepoints President Ted Dabrowski said the unfunded health care liabilities are a real concern for beneficiaries. "The state has grossly underfunded its obligations," Dabrowski told The Center Square. "By the same token, taxpayers should be really scared too because they're going to be on the hook for over \$70 billion in these unfunded retiree health insurance costs that nobody seems to know how to pay for."



IRTA officials also said the state's reduction would be a diminishment of promised benefits protected by the Illinois Constitution. Dabrowski said all of Illinois' public sector pension funds are \$140 billion unfunded and this latest lawsuit highlights additional unfunded taxpayer costs for retiree health care. "It's a \$70 billion shortfall," Dabrowski said of the unfunded health care costs for public sector retirees. "So, it's back to the same discussion of we need a constitutional amendment to reform all these debts that we have that the taxpayers are going to be on the hook for eventually." Such proposed amendments at the Illinois statehouse have never advanced.

The Teachers Retirement System declined to comment on the pending litigation.

INTERESTING IRISH SAYINGS

Why should you never iron a four-leaf clover? You don't want to press your luck.

He who keeps his tongue keeps his friends.

Who gossips with you will gossip of you.

Stop acting the maggot. (*acting in a foolish manner*)

You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was.

A quarrel is like buttermilk: once it's out of the churn, the more you shake it, the more sour it grows.

As you slide down the banister of life, may the splinters never point in the wrong direction.



SOUNDINGS

SPOTLIGHT ON IRTA MEMBER BENEFITS DISCOUNTS ON YOUR TAX RETURNS



\$25 off professional tax prep (new clients).

Free Tax Identity Shield (with professional tax prep) for prior/existing clients.

20% off H&R Block Online.



Save up to \$20 on TurboTax! Get your taxes done right with the #1 best-selling tax software. Easily file federal and state income tax returns with 100% accuracy to get your biggest refund, guaranteed.



Save 25% on Federal and State Tax Returns.

Online tax filing solutions for every tax situation at a great value.



SIX MISTAKES THAT WILL DELAY YOUR TAX REFUND

Take your time and fill out your return correctly — or wait and wait!

Source: <https://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/>

1. Filing a paper return
2. Forgetting to sign your return
3. Claiming dependents incorrectly
4. Not waiting for all your 1099s or W-2s to arrive
5. Incorrectly reporting the Child Tax Credit and stimulus payments
6. Sending your return to the wrong IRS processing center

INFLUENCES (Continued from Page 6) Diondre and his peers at *The Literacy Lab* are called Leading Men, and they tutor students in the subjects of reading and writing. The *Excel Center* prepared Diondre for his future through a comprehensive curriculum in business administration and communication skills that focuses on developing high-level communication skills and confidence in each learner's abilities. Diondre is now preparing to start his own nonprofit organization for youth who face disadvantages in their lives.

As a result of the services *The Excel Center* provided, Diondre was able to refocus on his academics and receive the support he needed to reach his goals. Through his nonprofit, Diondre will use sports as a metaphor for education and envisions other more academically focused clubs like chess and robotics.

"Through [*The Excel Center*], I met so many new people willing to help me work and get my organization off the ground," he says. "I thank the Goodwill community for everything." In addition to his full-time fellowship at *The Literacy Lab*, Diondre received a full-tuition scholarship to attend Catholic University to pursue early childhood education. He was also recently awarded *Goodwill Industries International's Kenneth Shaw Graduate of The Year Award*. Diondre is a shining example of what hard work, perseverance and commitment can do to propel someone to the next level.



Help others to see themselves better than they are, until they believe. ~ Eleanor Roosevelt.