

PARTA SOUNDINGS

APRIL 2023

PEORIA AREA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Roger Hampton
Soundings Editor

PARTA LUNCHEON
11:30 A.M.
APRIL 3RD

Barrack's Cater Inn

LUNCHEON
\$14.00
RESERVATIONS
REQUIRED

Please call Patti Monks
309.697.3385
if you did not get called
for your reservation.

GREETERS

- ◆ Chris Stevens
- ◆ Joyce Trompeter

PLEDGE / INVOCATION

- ◆ Abby Humbles

LUNCHEON

Entée:
Honey Glazed Ham
Potato / Vegetable
Assorted Salads
Dessert

MEETING

Dixie Wheeler, *chair*
PARTA President

Keep Informed
pa-rta.weebly.com

Sally Weber
Webmaster

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, Everyone!

The PARTA finance committee met with our financial advisor on March 20. Happily, Trent Strong sees 2023 as a modestly positive year! With his advice he has helped to keep PARTA funds safe for us. Trent commented that the unfortunate recent bank failures should not have happened. I so appreciate Trent's frankness! To make sure PARTA is kept up to date with the markets, the finance committee meets with Trent every three months.

PARTA Unit Goals for 2023 are included in this issue of *SOUNDINGS*. I know our membership goal of 25 is very optimistic. Letters were mailed to Peoria County retirees; however, I have learned that the Dunlap and SEAPCO central offices did not forward the letters to their retirees. In order to help reach our goal, we need each of YOU to talk with any retirees you know who are retiring this year. Tell them about Cater Inn's great meals, our informative programs, fun time with friends, and belonging to a purposeful organization!

Dixie Wheeler, PARTA President



MEETING PROGRAMS

APRIL 3 WHEELS OF TIME MUSEUM

MARCIA JOHNSON, SITE MANAGER

MAY 1 IRTA UPDATE

WILLIAM FUNKHOUSER, IRTA PRESIDENT

JUNE 5 NAVY LIFE PART II

CAPTAIN WRIGHT & JEANIE WRIGHT

NO MEETINGS IN JULY OR AUGUST

SEPTEMBER 11 (2nd Monday)

IRTA / AMBA PRESENTATION

OCTOBER 2

IN MEMORIAM – CELEBRATION OF LIFE

NOVEMBER 6 TBA

DECEMBER 4 MUSIC PROGRAM

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

SOUNDINGS

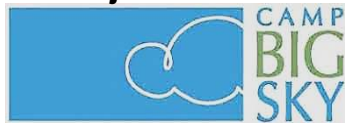
PARTA LUNCHEON MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2023

The March PARTA meeting was held at the Cater Inn on March 6, 2023. President Dixie Wheeler presided. Sixty-nine members were in attendance. There was one new member, Lori Fairfield. President Wheeler thanked Vice-President Valda Shipp for filling in for her at the February meeting. She also thanked the meeting Greeters, Ann Christophel, and Denise Smith. Denise Adams led the Pledge and Invocation.

Jeannie Blane introduced the guest speaker, Doug Strand, TRS (Teachers Retirement System), Board of Trustee member. Doug provided the membership with the following points of information:

- There are two retired educators on the TRS Board; they support teacher benefits and pensions.
- Even though the TRS funding is 42%, it is still safe and secure.
- The TRS Board manages over 60 billion dollars. The State owes 80 billion dollars to TRS.
- The teachers' rate of return, -1.18, is significantly better than our peer groups' rate of return.
- IRTA needs more members to join. A lifetime membership is \$400.



BUSINESS MEETING

President Wheeler announced there are volunteer opportunities at Camp Big Sky to assist in revamping their curriculum. One doesn't have to be Special Education certified to help. IRTA continues to inform its members through ongoing webinars. Members were



encouraged to attend some of the webinars for helpful information. Members can view the IRTA Webinars by going to Members Only Videos where many topics are addressed.

→ The *Treasurer's Report* was on the table.

→ A *Suggestion Box* for ideas on upcoming programs was on the back table.

→ Information from the Regional Office of Education for literacy tutors was also available.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AUDIT:

Dave Barnwell reported the Treasurer's books were audited. They were in impeccable shape.

MEMBERSHIP:

2023 retirees' list was placed on the tables. Members were encouraged to contact any new retirees and invite them to join PARTA and IRTA. President Wheeler and Pat Hampton are working on sending invitations to recent retirees with information about PARTA and IRTA.



TRAIL INSURANCE INFORMATION:

Roger Hampton informed the membership that if anyone needs hearing aids, Beltone is working with Aetna. They will send information for approval so patients will not have immediate out-of-pocket expenses.

STATE BUDGET NEWS INFORMATION:

Roger reported that the State is backlogged by 17 billion dollars. There is 2.3 billion in a Rainy-Day Fund. Even though our pension is fully funded by 9.8 billion, it is still underfunded by 200 million for the fiscal year. President Wheeler asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Peggy Shane moved to adjourn, and Jim Christiansen seconded the motion.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

DELORIS TURNER, SECRETARY

There is a new machine at the gym. It's truly awesome! I almost threw up after using it for an hour, it really has it all – cookies, chocolate bars, chips, sodas.

SOUNDINGS

2023 PARTA TEACHER GRANT RECIPIENTS

PARTA grants a total of \$1,000 to area teachers for classroom projects.

KATHY GILLES (Wilder-Waite Grade School)

Kathy will purchase social-emotional tools and resources. These resources and tools will help students learn life-long skills to help them recognize emotions and self-regulate.

KATIE MCKOWN (Hickory Grove Elementary School)

Katie will use the grant funds to subsidize the activities culminating in the fraction unit she uses with her students. Every year she transforms her classroom into Mama Mia's Pizzeria. They do a fraction pizza project using actual pizza boxes, wear chef hats and mustaches, and then order pizza for lunch. The room is decorated to look like a restaurant with red and white checkered tablecloths, string lights, and background music. In past years she had to chip in her own finances. The grant money will be used for the project.



MELISSA GRANDSART (Banner Elementary School)

Melissa will use the grant money to incorporate social language groups in each life skills classroom. Her vision is to have 3 to 5 typically developing students come into the life skills classroom to play games and participate in language activities that she would run with teachers and aides.



Teacher Grants

ELIZABETH DISHMAN (Dunlap High School)

Elizabeth will use the grant money to purchase a classroom set of *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand. The book allows her to focus on IL Social-Emotional Learning Standards, specifically 1C.4a, 2B.4b, 2D.4b, and 3A.4b. The book will be used for lower level students who struggle to enjoy reading.

VALERIE ROCKE (Banner Elementary School)

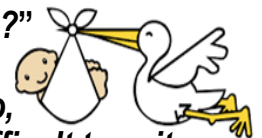
Valerie's purpose for the grant funds is to encourage a love of reading, share various reading material, and provide more reading styles through audiobooks to her 4th graders. She will purchase the Yoto mini, a portable device that allows students to have the freedom to explore what inspires them by inserting a playing card and a set of headphones and turning a dial into a mini device. Her reading library will be enhanced by purchasing the Yoto mini player and card option.



Thank you, PARTA Grant Committee members, for your work in this endeavor.

Deloris Turner, Chair | Abby Humbles | Valda Shipp

A boy is writing a paper about being born and asks his grandma, "How was I born?" His grandma awkwardly answers, "The stork brought you." "Oh," says the boy. "Well, how were mummy and daddy born?" "Um, well, the stork brought them, too, and your grandpa and I." The boy begins his paper, "This report has been very difficult to write due to the fact that there hasn't been a natural childbirth in my family for three generations."



Why did the golfer bring two pairs of pants? In case he got a hole in one.

SOUNDINGS

REPORT	March 2023 TOTAL PARTA FINANCES: \$ 58,221.36		Jeff Vallosio, Treasurer	
	Investment Balance	\$ 50,486.26	Working Cash (cash boxes)	\$ 100.00
	Savings Balance	7,036.92	Post Office Bulk Mail Fund	269.99
	Checking Balance	1,257.68	Post Office Returned Mail Fund	67.52
	LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND: \$ 35,031.61			
<i>This is not an additional amount. It is included within the Investment Balance.</i>				

IRTF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION GRANTS FOR TEACHERS

The Illinois Retired Teachers Foundation is making \$42,000 in grant money available statewide in Illinois. This special grant money will provide additional funds to public school educators (Pre-K through 12) so that their students will have the means to participate in special projects.



You can download, complete, and submit the application by going online to www.irtaonline.org and look under the “Foundation” section (Grants). All proposals must be submitted by June 1, 2023.

ILLINOIS TEACHER SHORTAGE

State Superintendent of Education Tony Sanders stated that Illinois State Board of Education data shows Illinois schools reporting 3,558 unfilled teaching positions as of October 2022.



As of February 2023, a study found that there were still 2,728 teacher, special education, and support staff positions either vacant or filled with someone less qualified. While schools across Illinois are struggling to fill positions, towns and rural areas, especially in east-central and west-central Illinois, had more vacancies.

Illinois school leaders from 690 school districts reported:

73% have a teacher shortage problem,	93% say the shortage is as bad or worse than last school year,	95% report receiving the same or fewer applicants for vacant positions,	92% say they have a substitute teacher program.
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In addition to a staff teacher shortage, school districts across the state are dealing with a substitute teacher shortage, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sources: www.capitolnewsillinois.com/ & chicago.chalkbeat.org/

- ✓ I put my grandma on speed dial the other day. I call it *Insta-Gram*.
- ✓ Well, to be Frank with you, I'd have to change my name.
- ✓ My wife traumatically ripped the blankets off me last night, but I will recover.
- ✓ There are two words that will open a lot of doors for you: *Push* and *Pull*.



SOUNDINGS

* * * AVAILABLE EACH MEETING * * *

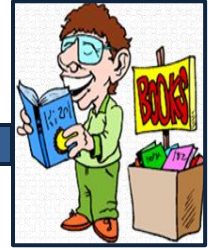


BATTERY COLLECTION

Please bring your used batteries to be recycled to any of our upcoming fall meetings.

BOOK EXCHANGE TABLE

Bring books, calendars, magazines, and other paper goods to share with our members.



Better to take a book and not have time to read, than have time to read and have no book to read!

ILLINOIS HOUSE PASSES BILL PROHIBITING BOOK BANS

The Illinois House passed a bill that would prohibit libraries from banning books, or other materials, because of partisan or doctrinal pressure. The bill next goes to the Senate for consideration. House Bill 2789 is an initiative of Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, whose office oversees the Illinois State Library and administers several grant programs for public and school libraries, as well as adult literacy programs throughout the state. The bill would require that as a condition of qualifying for those grants in the future, libraries or library systems would have to adopt a written policy prohibiting the practice of banning books. Alternatively, they could adopt the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which includes a statement that materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.



The bill came in response to a wave of high-profile controversies throughout the country, including at least one in Illinois. School districts and public libraries have come under pressure to remove certain material from their collections, often material dealing with issues involving race, sexuality, and gender identity.

SOURCE: [HTTPS://CAPITOLNEWSILLINOIS.COM/](https://capitolnewsillinois.com/)

DO APRIL SHOWERS REALLY BRING MAY FLOWERS?



IT'S TRUE: Rains in April, the month that kicks off the growing season, provide spring-flowering plants with the nutrients needed to thrive in the months ahead.

And while scientists have proven that spring's warming temperatures are also a key ingredient, recent studies of fruit trees, including flowering peaches and apricots, have shown that blossoms aren't as fussy about temperature as are leaf buds. So, when it comes to flowering alone, it seems this centuries-old saying gets it right!

Source: www.farmersalmanac.com/

INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURNS DUE APRIL 18, 2023

The filing deadline to submit 2022 tax returns or an extension to file and pay tax owed is Tuesday, April 18, 2023, for most taxpayers. By law, Washington, D.C., holidays impact tax deadlines for everyone in the same way as federal holidays. The due date is April 18, instead of April 15, because of the weekend and the District of Columbia's Emancipation Day holiday, which falls on Monday, April 17. Taxpayers requesting an extension will have until Monday, October 16, 2023, to file. More than 168 million individual tax returns are expected to be filed.

Source: www.irs.gov/

Isn't it interesting that the month income taxes are due begins with "April Fool's Day" and ends with cries of "May Day!"

SOUNDINGS



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY FOR RETIRED TEACHERS



If you are looking for a way to help others, you may want to consider helping Camp Big Sky. Located in Middle Grove near Farmington, this camp serves people with disabilities. The camp offers general camping experiences, but their curriculum needs some revamping and here is your opportunity. You don't have to have special education experience to help. You just need to be willing to offer curriculum knowledge.

If interested contact Sue Carrescia at: sgcarrescia@gmail.com



PRINCIPAL RESIGNATIONS SOAR

State data reveals that the number of Illinois principals leaving their jobs has nearly doubled over a five-year span. Administrators say an overload of work and lack of support is a leading cause for departures. In 2021, 103 principals throughout the state resigned, according to State Board of Education data. The following year, that number shot up to 198. The state figures are lower than the actual number of resignations since schools are not required to report that data but do so voluntarily.

While some turnover is normal, the surging number of principals leaving

— and the declining number of teachers interested in moving up — worry state education leaders about the disruption it can cause schools and communities. Many principals say they are leaving their jobs because they lack the support, time and resources to do their work effectively and avoid burnout. Those pressures only increased during the pandemic.

Nationally, the numbers reflect the same realities that Illinois is experiencing.

Nearly four out of 10 or 38% of surveyed principals intend on leaving their jobs within the next three years, according to a 2021 report by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The survey also finds that principals' job satisfaction dropped from 63% in 2019 to 35% in 2021.

State Board officials said they are concerned that the number of applicants completing principal programs, a required step in gaining the administrator license, has dropped more than 75% from 2011 to 2020. To boost interest and increase retention, Illinois has used Elementary and Secondary School Relief Funds, also known as ESSER funds, to create a mentorship program. A recruitment program has also been created with different state money.

Source: <https://illinoisanswers.org/2023/>



SON: "Ok Dad, I think I deserve half of your Father's Day gifts?" DAD: "What makes you think that? I'm the Dad." SON: "Yes, but without me you wouldn't be a Father!"

SOUNDINGS



PARTA MEMBERS READ & RECOMMEND

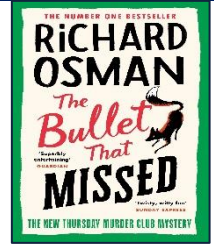
In the Time of Our History

by Susanne Pari

Inspired by her own Iranian-American heritage, the acclaimed author weaves a beautifully crafted story of mothers and daughters, secrets and lies, and defying expectations—even when those choices come with an irrevocable cost. Alive with the tensions, sacrifices and joys that thrum within the heart of every family, *In the Time of Our History* is also laced with the richness of ancient and modern Persian culture and politics, in a tale that is both timeless and profoundly relevant.

The Bullet that Missed

by Richard Osman



Except trouble is never far away where the Thursday Murder Club are concerned. A local news legend is on the hunt for a sensational headline, and soon the gang are hot on the trail of two murders, ten years apart. To make matters worse, a new nemesis pays Elizabeth a visit, presenting her with a deadly mission: kill or be killed... While Elizabeth grapples with her conscience (and a gun), the gang and their unlikely new friends (including TV stars, money launderers and ex-KGB colonels) unravel a new mystery.

SPOTLIGHT ON IRTA MEMBER BENEFITS

IRTA GROUP FINAL EXPENSE WHOLE LIFE POLICY

With this whole life policy, your premiums are guaranteed never to increase, and your coverage is guaranteed never to decrease.

Death benefits paid to your beneficiary are tax free.

“Benefits” are discounted options such as insurance policies, annuity plans, products, and services that IRTA members have requested we provide. IRTA has been able to accommodate requests through our association with Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA). In addition, there are thousands of discounted items available through myAmba Discounts Program, managed by Passport Unlimited, which is designed to connect you with exclusive savings on a wide range of products, goods, and services at many local and national vendors, both online and around town.

IRTA hopes you take full advantage of your free myAmba discounts membership!

INFORMATION ONLINE MEMBERS ONLY SECTION IRTAONLINE.ORG

**Lori Fairfield, AMBA benefits representative,
will be available at PARTA meetings to answer questions you may have.**

A couple was lying in bed one morning when the husband says, “How about you go brew us some coffee?” The wife replies, “That’s your job.” The husband, a little taken aback, says, “Says who?” The wife replies, “The bible; it’s on just about every page.” The husband says, “No it isn’t! The bible doesn’t say anything about brewing coffee!” The wife gets her bible from the bedside table and flips through the pages as she says, “See, all these pages: **HEBREWS, HEBREWS, HEBREWS.**”



SOUNDINGS

PARTA UNIT GOALS FOR 2023

1. WAYS TO GET INPUT FROM PARTA MEMBERS:

- Encourage members to visit our website PA-RTA.WEEBLY.COM
- Ask members their thoughts about programs, business meetings, etc.
- Remind members through *Soundings* their input is important.

2. MEMBERSHIP GOAL FOR 2023:

- 25 new members.
- Everyone is responsible for finding new members; emphasize benefits of IRTA/PARTA.



3. OUR MONTHLY GATHERINGS:

- Make sure members, potential members, and guests feel welcome.
- Continue to see that small projects like the book table and battery recycle are carried out.
- Provide educational programs geared to retirees' needs and interests.

4. IRTA GOALS:

- Maintain communication with IRTA through unit officers, legislation, programs, communications such as Good Dog News, Coffee with Jim Bachman, committees, workshops, conferences, conventions. Communicate information to PARTA membership on a regular basis.
- PARTA members participate in IRTA membership and its activities.

PARTA MISSION STATEMENT

Organized to promote the Social, Professional and Economic status of Retired Teachers and to Serve the Community as Volunteers.

IRTA MISSION STATEMENT

The association is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization of retired educators. The Association serves the needs and interests of its members through advocacy, education, cooperation, and socialization in a flexible organizational structure.

**NEXT PARTA BOARD MEETING REMINDER:
10:15, APRIL 24, 2023, AT LAKEVIEW LIBRARY**

A DISH OF ICE CREAM In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. "How much is an ice cream sundae?" "50 cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins in it. "How much is a dish of plain ice cream?" he inquired. Some people were now waiting for a table and the waitress was a bit impatient. "35 cents," she said brusquely. The little boy again counted the coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said. The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier, and departed. When the waitress came back, she began wiping down the table and then swallowed hard at what she saw.



There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were 15 cents – her tip.
The moral of the story: *No matter what the situation is, always treat others as you would want to be treated.*

