

PARTA

SOUNDINGS

APRIL 2024

PEORIA AREA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Roger Hampton
Soundings Editor

PARTA LUNCHEON
APRIL 1ST | 11:30 A.M.
Barrack's Cater Inn

GREETERS

- ◆ Mary Nelson
- ◆ Carol Rogers

PLEDGE / INVOCATION

- ◆ Melvina Haynes

LUNCHEON

\$15.00

RESERVATIONS

Entée:

- Honey Glazed Ham
- Potato / Vegetable
- Assorted Salads
- Dessert
- Tea/Coffee/Water



PROGRAM

Mike Rucker
History of Bicycles /
Children's Books

MEETING

Dixie Wheeler, *chair*
PARTA President

Keep Informed
pa-rta.weebly.com
Sally Weber
Webmaster

Hello April

A beautiful month ahead
full of renewal, hope, growth
and blessings. I pray your days
are filled with sunshine, joy,
love and light.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello, PARTA/IRTA members,
Some of you may know that I also belong to the Marshall/Putnam Retired Teachers Association. This small unit is made up of teachers I worked with before coming to Peoria. Today we had a planning meeting and part of the time was dedicated to efforts for being a Unit of Distinction this year. I loved listening to their ideas of what the unit should be doing to attain that status. MPRTA is a small unit but still plugging away and wanting to serve the educational community. Programs are mostly fun and informative like having a physical therapist visit or an impersonator such as Lizzy Borden that is coming up later in the year. I am proud to be a member of MPRTA as well as proud of being a PARTA member. Dixie Wheeler, PARTA President

If there is a need to cancel your reservation for your PARTA lunch, please call 309.697.3385 by the Thursday before the Monday luncheon. Reservations are turned in days ahead of the luncheon. If you have missed a luncheon for whatever reason, please send a check to the chairperson by mail. It is too confusing to take luncheon money and cash handed in at the same time for missing luncheon meals. Thank you for your support and consideration in this matter. Patti Monks, Calling Committee Chairperson

SPRING MEETING PROGRAMS

MAY 6

Roberta English
CEO of Wildlife Prairie Park



JUNE 3

Kay Price
Storyteller for the Young at Heart



NO MEETINGS IN JULY OR AUGUST

IRTA KEEPING YOU INFORMED

THE MONTHLY BRIEF

APRIL 23 | 9:30 A.M. | ZOOM

IRTA Executive Director Jessica Hoselton

and Illinois House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER ~ KOFI ANNAN

SOUNDINGS

PARTA LUNCHEON MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024

The March PARTA meeting was held at the Cater Inn on March 4, 2024, with President Dixie Wheeler presiding. Sixty-four (64) members were in attendance. There were no new members. President Wheeler thanked the volunteers at the "Back Table" and announced the treasurer's report was on the tables. The greeters were also thanked. John Rathbun led the pledge and gave the invocation.

Beth Crider, Superintendent of the Regional Office of Education, was the program guest. Beth highlighted a litany of challenges facing teachers.

- Teaching during COVID-19 and its impact on learning: COVID-19 was exhausting for teachers and students, resulting in behavior and Mental Health issues.
- Teachers need a new level of thinking.
- Teacher shortage and teacher retention.
- The curriculum has stymied teacher creativity due to social issues and how they can or cannot be addressed in schools.
- Literacy is a concerning issue. An assessment tool named, *Kids Assessment*, is being used to address literacy. It is administered at the beginning of the year to kindergarten children to measure readiness for school in math, English, language, and Social-Emotional Skills. The goal is 100% readiness. Students are not ready above 40%. The lack of kindergarten readiness contributes to literacy issues later in school.
- The misalignment of jobs that make money contributes to workforce issues.
- Exposure is a big issue in these job misalignments. Schools are not designed for exposure.
- It has been documented that due to COVID, students' learning loss has decreased by 30%.
- Attendance never rebounded post-COVID.
- Early childhood is significantly lacking. Childcare is not quality, and childcare workers are poorly paid. It is also a struggle to find fully licensed teachers.
- 4th graders are the direct issue of poor early childhood exposure.



• Artificial Intelligence (AI) is another challenge for schools.



BUSINESS MEETING

Jane Glover announced that Peoria Kiwanis will give high school and middle school teachers a Teacher of the Year Award. They are given on April 10 and April 24. She listed the schools receiving the awards and is requesting PARTA members who taught at the schools to please attend. Contact Jane Glover for details.

PARTA has been designated an IRTA Unit of Distinction. IRTA awards Units meeting organizational, community, and programming criteria a monetary award of \$250. We have the check which has been given to the treasurer, Jeff Vallosio. There were no committee reports for March.

President Wheeler reported that she attended a webinar by the IRTA Executive Director with Nikki Budzinski as a guest speaker. Nikki is the U.S. representative for Illinois's 13th congressional district.

Representative Budzinski emphasized that Bipartisan representation decides for seniors. If we have an opportunity to talk to our Representatives and voice our concerns, don't use "entitled to," use the language "what's owed" when addressing our concerns. She also encouraged participants to involve other frontline workers involved in our cause.

Irene Pritzker reminded everybody not to forget to vote. Dave Barnwell announced the Audit Committee meeting after the adjournment.



President Wheeler asked for a motion to adjourn. Peggy Shane moved to adjourn the meeting. Mike Olson seconded.




RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

DELORIS TURNER, SECRETARY

I'm on two diets now. I was NOT getting nearly enough food on just one!!

SOUNDINGS

REPORT 	April 2024 TOTAL PARTA FINANCES: \$ 64,131.41		Jeff Vallosio, Treasurer	
	Investment Balance	\$ 57,528.37	Working Cash (cash boxes)	\$ 100.00
	Savings Balance	4,069.93	Post Office Bulk Mail Fund	340.86
	Checking Balance	2,038.08	Post Office Returned Mail Fund	54.17

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST THAT IRTA SUPPORTS

HB 4580 (REPRESENTATIVE RYAN SPAIN)

SYNOPSIS: As Introduced Amends the State Employees Group Insurance Act of 1971. Provides that the eligibility of an annuitant or TRS benefit recipient to participate in the program of health benefits established under specified provisions of the Act shall not be suspended for any period during which he or she accepts employment from a school board or other employer in accordance with a provision of the Downstate Teacher Article of the Illinois Pension Code that allows annuitants to accept employment as a teacher without impairing retirement status if certain conditions are met, including a limit on the number of paid days the annuitant may work, or a provision for annuitants returning to teach in a subject shortage area. Provides that an annuitant or TRS benefit recipient shall not be deemed an active teacher based solely on the annuitant's or TRS benefit recipient's employment exceeding the limit on the number of paid days an annuitant may work without impairing retirement status. Amends the Downstate Teacher Article of the Illinois Pension Code to make conforming changes.

HB 4662 (REPRESENTATIVE AMY ELIK)

SYNOPSIS: As introduced, it amends the Downstate Teacher Article of the Illinois Pension Code. In a provision defining "eligible employment" for the purpose of allowing a teacher to return to teaching in subject shortage areas without impairing his or her retirement status or retirement annuity, changes the ending date of the employment from no later than June 30, 2024 to no later than June 30, 2029. Effective immediately.



HB 4972 (REPRESENTATIVE BRANDUN SCHWEIZER)

SYNOPSIS: As introduced, it amends the State Employees Group Insurance Act of 1971. Provides that, at least 120 days prior to making any changes to the health benefits for TRS benefit recipients, the Department of Central Management Services shall post those changes on its website and shall submit the planned changes to the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. Provides that at least 120 days prior to making any changes to funding for the Teacher Health Insurance Security Fund, the Department shall post those changes on its website and shall submit the planned changes to the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability.

- *I always knew I'd get old. Although, how fast it happened was a bit of a surprise.* ~ anonymous
- *I'm at an age when my back goes out more than I do.* ~ Phyllis Diller
- *There's an old saying, 'Life begins at forty.'*
That's silly. Life begins every morning you wake up. ~ George Burns
- *We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress.* ~ Will Rogers



SOUNDINGS

2024 IRTA EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES CONTINUES – APRIL 24 (10:00 A.M.) EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN ILLINOIS

Accidents don't just happen when you travel. In fact, over 80% of ambulance rides take place within just a few miles from home. The biggest shocker is when the bill comes afterwards, and you thought your health insurance paid for all of it. Surprise - it doesn't. Join the webinar to learn why and how you can eliminate that worry.

REGISTER https://ambabenefits.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_An06mJsuQ_KNFu-HAefCVw

IRTA SETS SAIL FOR ALASKA IN 2024

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) has announced an exciting group cruise to Alaska in 2024. The 7-day inside passage cruise aboard the *Majestic Princess* will depart Seattle on September 22 and return on September 29, 2024.



"We are thrilled to offer our members this incredible group opportunity to explore Alaska by sea," said Nathan Mihelich, IRTA's Director of Membership & Marketing. The cruise features four amazing ports of call, spectacular glacier viewing, and special onboard experiences. The *Majestic Princess* will visit the Alaskan ports of Ketchikan, Juneau, and Skagway, along with Victoria, British Columbia. Highlights include cruising through the breathtaking Endicott Arm and viewing the massive Dawes Glacier.

Cruise fares are \$836 for an inside room and \$1,660 for a balcony room. Fares are based on double occupancy, taxes and fees are additional. Roundtrip airfare may be added from your airport of choice. Just a \$250 deposit per person reserves your spot on this once-in-a-lifetime IRTA member event. The balance is due by May 24, 2024.

"We invite all IRTA members to join us for an incredible 7-day journey amid Alaska's natural splendor," IRTA Member Services Coordinator Tricia Klim added. "With an IRTA exclusive event, you can explore Alaska with your fellow retired teachers. It's the trip of a lifetime!"

Go to <http://form.jotform.com/233183253235148>
to learn more and reserve your 2024 Alaska adventure today!

2025 PARIS TO NORMANDY IRTA CRUISE

Enjoy Paris and Normandy Treasures. Dock in the heart of Paris, admiring views of the Eiffel Tower and a replica of the Statue of Liberty from your ship. Experience history firsthand at the Normandy beaches and delight in Rouen's Gothic architecture. Explore Giverny and the charming house and gardens where Claude Monet lived and worked, the setting inspiring many of his masterpieces. This voyage celebrates history, art, food, and customs in France's most alluring urban and pastoral settings.



Go to <http://form.jotform.com/240444316001137> to learn more.

I want to be like a caterpillar. Eat a lot. Sleep for a while. Wake up beautiful.

SOUNDINGS

PARTA Teacher Grant Recipients 2024

JENNIFER HOBEN (ELMWOOD ELEMENTARY—SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST)

Acoustic Pioneer, an evidence-based computer program that targets reading ability, language development, and hearing and auditory processing in children with language and reading difficulties, will be utilized in her speech sessions with students. The program is supervised by a Speech and Language Pathologist.



ALYSSA WALSER (BRIMFIELD HIGH SCHOOL)

Her students complete an ecology unit where they observe nature to analyze interactions between animals and their environment. She will add more classroom animals to fish tanks for a longer-term observation. She currently has two ten-gallon tanks with goldfish and tetras. The grant will help her add crustaceans (shrimp), mollusks (snails), and live plants to the tanks to show a more complete and natural freshwater ecosystem.

SISTER MARIE KENNEDY (ST. JUDE CATHOLIC SCHOOL)

The funds from the grant will be used to purchase additional durable readers for her kindergarten class, which focuses on a specific skill for students. It will support the cost of the digital file for the decodable set, an additional license to share the file with her co-teacher, and enough paper to print batches of books.

ELLIE SADLER (PLEASANT VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, DISTRICT #62)

The grant will buy her students a copy of their classroom book, which they will send to be published with Studenttreasures. Last year, the project was done with a smaller class, and the money was successfully raised. This year, there are 18 students. The price for the books is \$23 each.



ANGIE SNEERINGER (BRIMFIELD GRADE SCHOOL)

The money will enhance the Science Discovery Center in her Kindergarten classroom with additional hands-on science materials. The center encourages independent, student-led exploration of science materials and concepts. The students study insects and magnets and use microscopes throughout the school year. The items would transform student learning from observing books and videos to placing items in their hands.

TRS REMINDERS

RECENT LIFE CHANGE? REMEMBER TO CHECK YOUR BENEFICIARY DESIGNATIONS.

Some events that may require a beneficiary update include marriage, divorce, births, deaths, or dependents reaching adulthood. To update your beneficiary designation, download your personalized form by logging into your secure member account.



POST-RETIREMENT LIMITATIONS FOR RETIREES IN 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR

Track days and hours worked on the Post-Retirement Days Worked Form for the 2023-24 school year. Retired TRS members are limited to 120 days or 600 hours per school year in a TRS-covered position. The 120 days/600 hours limit is in effect through June 30, 2026. Retired members are responsible for keeping track of their days and hours worked on the Post-Retirement Days Worked Report: trsill.org/post_retirement_days_worked_2023-2024

Among the things that are so simple even a child can operate them are parents.

SOUNDINGS

<i>Please make these changes to your PARTA Directory</i>			
VALLOSIO	JEFF	309.219.4601	<i>PHONE NUMBER</i>
SULLIVAN	GARY	sullivan1216@SBCGLOBAL.NET	<i>EMAIL ADDRESS</i>
Ann Steinau, 102		February 27, 1921 - February 26, 2024	
IN MEMORIAM			
<i>Please send updated information to Roger Hampton at: roger.hampton11138@gmail.com</i>			

PEORIA WOMEN'S CIVIC FEDERATION (PWCF) REPORT



The PWCF was founded in April 1905 and is a coordinating organization representing women members of 41 local organizations. It informs delegates about what is happening in the community and encourages and promotes projects for improving the Peoria area. Individual members and guests are



also welcome. They usually meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month at the Peoria Public Library Lakeview Branch at 10:30 A.M. but do adjust for the holidays. Valda Shipp and Sally Weber are going to be co-presidents for the next two-year term.

AETNA MEDICARE ADVANTAGE REFERRAL INTAKE



The Helper Bees created America's Aging-in-Place Platform, a sustainable model for aging-in-place that connects millions of families with transformative services in and around their homes. Our unique combination of service and technology provides the infrastructure needed for payers to access, deploy, and scale quality non-medical services into the home. With this innovation, we are transforming independent aging for millions of Americans.

The Helper Bees is supporting Aetna members with discounted access to In-Home Support through our vetted and credentialed network of non-medical home care providers. While Aetna plan members have access to discounted services rates, all members will self-pay for services through The Helper Bee's secured platform. Let us know what you're looking for!

IN-HOME SUPPORT OFFERINGS

PERSONAL CARE Ongoing assistance with bathing, dressing, walking, feeding and light housekeeping, includes some transportation as needed.

HOMEMAKER / COMPANIONSHIP Includes light cleaning of various rooms, managing linens, preparing and serving meals and / or companionship provided in the home or via phone or video conference, also available as a bundle in some locations.

HOUSEKEEPING ONLY Housecleaning services such as changing linens, laundry assistance, cleaning floors, etc.

For more information go to: <https://health.aetna.com/healthprograms>

A telephone greeting I hope to never hear:

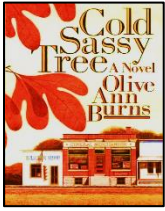
Thank you for calling the Incontinence Hotline. Can you hold please?



Before you marry a person, you should first make them use a computer with a slow Internet connection to see who they really are.

SOUNDINGS

PARTA MEMBERS READ & RECOMMEND

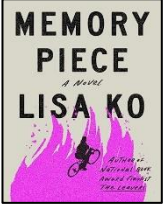


COLD SASSY TREE

by OLIVE ANN BURNS

The one thing you can depend on in Cold Sassy, Georgia, is that word gets around – fast. On July 5, 1906, scandal breaks in the small town of Cold Sassy, Georgia, when the proprietor of the general store, E. Rucker Blakeslee, elopes with Miss Love Simpson. He is barely three weeks a widower, and she is only half his age and a Yankee to boot. As their marriage inspires a whirlwind of local gossip, fourteen-year-old Will Tweedy suddenly finds himself eyewitness to a family scandal, and that’s where his adventures begin.

Cold Sassy Tree is the undeniably entertaining and extraordinarily moving account of small-town Southern life in a bygone era. Brimming with characters who are wise and loony, unimpeachably pious and deliciously irreverent, Olive Ann Burns’s classic bestseller is a timeless, funny, and resplendent treasure.



MEMORY PIECE

by LISA KO

In the early 1980s, Giselle Chin, Jackie Ong, and Ellen Ng are three teenagers drawn together by their shared sense of alienation and desire for something different. Allied in the weirdest parts of themselves, they envision each other as artistic collaborators and embark on a future defined by freedom and creativity. By the time they are adults, their dreams are murkier. As a performance artist, Giselle must navigate an elite social world she never conceived of. As a coder thrilled by the internet’s early egalitarian promise, Jackie must contend with its more sinister shift toward monetization and surveillance. And as a community activist, Ellen confronts the increasing gentrification and policing overwhelming her New York City neighborhood. Over time their friendship matures and changes, their definitions of success become complicated, and their sense of what matters evolves.

SPOTLIGHT ON IRTA MEMBER BENEFITS.

GROUP HOME CARE PLUS BENEFIT PLAN

Aetna’s plan gives you the freedom to choose when and where you recover. Whether working or retired, it’s important to consider and plan for the impact of rising healthcare costs for hospital and at-home recovery. A Home Care Plus insurance plan can help you manage your expenses and recuperate at home by covering medically necessary treatments. Benefits are paid directly to you! To find out more about this benefit available through IRTA, consult with Lori Fairfield at one of our PARTA luncheon meetings or call 815.674.8716.

INFORMATION ONLINE MEMBERS ONLY SECTION IRTAONLINE.ORG

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

😊 Housework won’t kill you...But why take the chance?

😊 I’m the type of person who gets more cleaning done in the 30 minutes before someone comes over than I do in a week!



SOUNDINGS

NEW TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM (TRS) STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL A "ONE TRS" CULTURE TO ENGAGE, INSPIRE & MOTIVATE

Details online at: www.trsil.org/news-and-events/Winter2024-Topics-and-Report



"During the fiscal year, TRS embarked on an important journey to shape our long-term future. We reached out to you – active members, retirees, beneficiaries – seeking insights for what you expect from TRS. That input was instrumental in guiding our strategic planning process and we are grateful for your participation. "Internally, we sought input from TRS's dedicated staff and the Board of Trustees on how to best align the organization to meet your expectations. Based on those discussions, TRS adopted revised mission and vision statements, along with new core values designed to define the qualities staff seeks to embody within their workplace. "Importantly, TRS staff set a goal of creating a 'One TRS' culture that engages, inspires, and motivates. It recognizes the strength of the TRS organization is our dedicated staff working together, across departments, to serve our members. And it represents a staff that supports one another and lives its core values. "Our new Strategic Plan is designed to strengthen our foundation for the future while upholding our unwavering commitment to acting in the best interests of our members. We are eager and optimistic about what the future has in store."

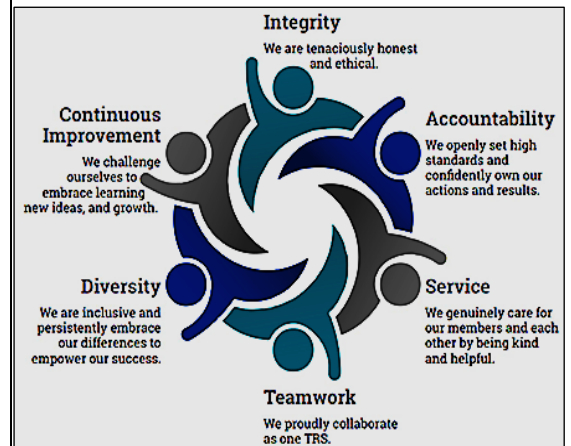
TRS MISSION

Delivering expert pension service to Illinois public educators as they earn their promised retirement security.

TRS VISION

Working together as the trusted retirement resource for generations of our members.

TRS CORE VALUE



Johnny had just passed his driving test and inquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car. His father said he'd make a deal with his son, "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car." Johnny thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer, and they agreed on it. After about six weeks his father said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut." Johnny said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed that in the Bible, Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair." (You're going to love Dad's reply!)

"Did you also notice they all walked everywhere they went?"

REASON TO BE AN IRTA MEMBER

The Spring 2024 legislative session is underway and is scheduled to adjourn on May 24th.

IRTA's government affairs team peruses hundreds of bills and identifies those of interest to IRTA members and looks forward to representing IRTA members on these important matters.

**UNITED
WE CAN
STAND
STRONGER**