

PARTA

PA-RTA.WEBLY.COM

SOUNDINGS

DECEMBER 2023

PEORIA AREA RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

PARTA LUNCHEON & MEETING

Barrack's Cater Inn
December 4 11:30 A.M.

Luncheon: \$14.00

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

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

GREETERS

-  Catriona Ritenhouse
-  Chris Mangold

PLEDGE / Invocation

-  Jeff Vallosio

LUNCHEON

"HOLIDAY" DINNER
Apricot Glazed Ham
Potato / Vegetable
Assorted Salads
Dessert

PROGRAM

HOLIDAY MUSIC

-  Denise Adams,
Organizer

MEETING

Dixie Wheeler, chair
PARTA President



Soundings Editor
Roger Hampton

PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS GREETING

Holiday Greetings, PARTA members and friends,
At our last meeting I asked for hours of community service that I can put in our unit questionnaire. Please just give me a slip of paper with what you do and how many hours this past year. Give it your best estimate if you are not sure. PARTA has received \$250 in the last two years for filling out our questionnaire with 18 or more "yes" responses out of 24. Let's go for three years! If you are not sure what you do will qualify, turn in your hours anyway. Most any community service would qualify – I know a guy in Henry who fills up birdfeeders at the nursing home there!



I would be remiss not to mention the holidays. I think they started just before Halloween this year. While this brings me much dismay, I do love the time for giving and thinking about others. For some of us it is Christmas, others Hanukkah or Kwanza, and some folks just enjoy being with family and friends. However you celebrate, I wish all my PARTA and IRTA friends a wonderful holiday season. See you all in February 2024!



Dixie Wheeler, PARTA President

2024 PROGRAMS

FEBRUARY 5

Dr. Bernice Gordan-Young
Peoria City Council At-Large Member



MARCH 4

Elizabeth Crider
Regional Superintendent of Schools



APRIL 1

Mike Rucker
HISTORY OF BICYCLES / Children's Books



MAY 6

Roberta English
CEO of Wildlife Prairie Park



JUNE 3

Kay Price
Storyteller for the Young at Heart



SEPTEMBER 9 | OCTOBER 7 | NOVEMBER 4 | DECEMBER 2

UPDATES AND INFORMATION ONLINE: PA-RTA.WEBLY.COM/
SALLY WEBER, WEBMASTER

The PARTA meeting for November convened at the Cater Inn on November 6, 2023. Dixie Wheeler, the President, presided over the meeting, at which **88** eighty-eight members attended. **4 NEW MEMBERS** Amy Flynn, Beth Sullivan, Carolyn Faulkner, and Beth Thomas were the new members. President Wheeler thanked the meeting greeters, Rhonda Kokos and Deloris Turner. The Pledge and Invocation were led by the President.

The members were reminded the treasurer's report was on the table, and there was a book table and a battery recycling box. Special recognition was given to Cater Inn for its continued hospitality. President Wheeler introduced the program guest, Greater Peoria Honor Flight, with Gene Wallace, Aline Wallace, and Bob Reed. The Honor Flight Program is open to all veterans. Veterans are encouraged to sign up for the program. Special consideration is given to veterans with extreme medical challenges. The Honor Flight Program is in 44 of the 50 states.

The membership was educated on the Greater Peoria Honor Flight activities, from the flight's takeoff at General Wayne A. Downing Airport to visiting all the various war monuments in Washington, D.C., to its landing at General Wayne A. Downing Airport. What does leaving a coin on a military headstone mean? A coin left on a military headstone lets the deceased soldier's family know somebody stopped by to pay respect. If you left a penny, it means you visited. A nickel means you and the deceased soldier trained at boot camp together. If you served with the soldier, you left a dime. A quarter is very significant because it means that you were there when the soldier was killed.



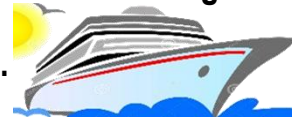
BUSINESS MEETING:

President Wheeler recognized the IRTA Convention attendees: Deloris Turner, Valda Shipp, Pat Hampton, Roger Hampton, Dixie Wheeler, Peggy Shane, John Rathbun, and Kathy Simpson.

Kathy Simpson was honored at the convention as PARTA's Honoree for 2023. Valda Shipp reported that one of the convention's highlights was meeting with the Area Regional Representative and discussing rule and constitution changes. Roger Hampton highlighted a few changes that were approved:

- Life membership will increase from \$2.50 to \$3.50 (monthly dues deduction) and an increase from \$400-\$600, lump sum.
 - All active state members will be allowed to vote for officers and all issues relative to IRTA. **INCLUSIVE**
 - Members will have the ability to vote electronically or by paper ballot.
 - The Nominating Committee will now be the Leadership Development Committee.
 - The Finance and Leadership Committees will have a representative from each region.
 - Each Unit is allowed to have a representative on the Legislative Committee.
- The reduction of the size of the thirty-three-member IRTA Board was not approved. Roger will address the IRTA dues increase in the December *Soundings*.

Unit of Distinction - PARTA has been recognized as a Unit of Distinction for two consecutive years. President Wheeler charged members to start tabulating their volunteer hours, which is a contributing factor in maintaining a Unit of Distinction status.



IRTA Cruise - President Wheeler reported that the IRTA cruise was enjoyable. She was able to connect with IRTA members within the state and out of the state. It was a great time of camaraderie. President Wheeler asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roger Hampton moved that the meeting adjourn. Peggy Shane seconded the motion.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

DELORIS TURNER, SECRETARY

It's friends we meet along the way that help us appreciate the journey.

SOUNDINGS

PARTA'S ILLINOIS CENTRAL COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

Earlier this year we were informed that Katrina Johnson was one of the recipients originally awarded our scholarship. This student recently decided she was unable to fulfill her courses and withdrew. The scholarship advisor was made aware of this and had her removed from the award database.



Our new recipient is **TRENTON SPANGLER** from Washington, Illinois.

In his letter he states, "I have been privileged to have some great teachers and coaches throughout school and I hope to make the same positive impact on students in the future."

VALDA SHIPP, SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

IRTA FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

The 2024 application and current guidelines for the IRTA Foundation Scholarships will be available December 1, 2023. Applications and current guidelines will be posted on the IRTA website at: www.irtaonline.org/foundation/scholarships. One \$2,000 scholarship is available in each of the six IRTA Areas of the state. These scholarships are only available to incoming juniors or seniors in college enrolled in a certified teacher training program. The deadline to postmark or email applications is March 7, 2024.



Other scholarships available in 2024 are the Moler-Austin Scholarship which offers two \$4,500 scholarships to Kendal County High School graduates that will be entering their Sophomore, Junior, or Senior year of college with a declared major in Education. The Helen Kennedy Scholarship is a \$2,000 scholarship and is available to graduates of any Illinois High School that will be entering their sophomore, junior, or senior year of college with a declared major in Education. Finally, the Rose Sandstrom Scholarship is for \$2,000 and is available to one incoming senior in college attending either Western Illinois University or Monmouth College with a declared major in Physical Education.

If you have any questions or need assistance in obtaining an application or to send an application, please contact Susan Goetz at susan@irtaonline.org or call 1.800.728.4782.

DECEMBER 2023 TOTAL PARTA FINANCES: \$58,968.85

Investment Balance	53,918.64	Working Cash (cash boxes)	100.00
Savings Balance	4,052.80	Post Office Bulk Mail Fund	155.85
Checking Balance	679.46	Post Office Returned Mail Fund	62.10

JEFF VALLOSIO, TREASURER

MOBILE PHONE:

It may bring you closer to those who are far away,
but it will also take you away from those sitting next to you.



The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up. ~ Mark Twain

The elevator to success is out of order.
You'll have to use the stairs... one step at a time.



SOUNDINGS

TIME FOR PARTA 2024 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues for PARTA Annual and Associate Members

\$15.00

Dues may be paid at a regular PARTA meeting or sent to:

Jeff Vallosio, PARTA Treasurer
406 Woodcrest DR
Washington, IL 61571-1640



If you have a question about your PARTA membership, please contact:

Roger Hampton
PARTA Membership Chair

roger.hampton11138@gmail.com

309.360.6190 (cell) Text or Call

Checks should be made out to "PARTA".

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

When joining as an annual member now, your membership includes all of 2024.

PARTA LIFE MEMBERSHIP

For anyone wishing to be a Life Member, the one-time fee is \$120.



ROE ADULT LITERACY NEEDS YOUR HELP!

ROE Adult Literacy is in desperate need for volunteers to tutor adults in our community. When we visited PARTA last year and spoke of our needs, several responded. We need more! The good news is, because of the great demand, teachers no longer have to go through the full training in order to volunteer. If you would like to help a learner for one hour per week, or if you need more information, please contact:

John Meisinger at 309.472.2468 or email jmeisinger@peoriaroe.org
Your time and expertise would be greatly appreciated.



Two little boys were at a wedding when one of them leaned over to the other and asked, "How many wives can a man have?" His friend answered, "Sixteen...four better, four worse, four richer, four poorer."



LEGISLATIVE VETO SESSION

Legislators convened in Springfield at the beginning of November for the veto session and acted on several major initiatives – and left without addressing some others. A list of these initiatives can be found on the "Members Only" portion of the IRTA website. Both chambers adjourned until January 16, 2024, and released calendars for the 2024 Spring Session.

The controversial *Invest in Kids Scholarship Program* will expire on December 31, 2023. This is a scholarship program where low-income kids are sent to private schools using tax-deductible donations to a charity. About 9,500 kids are taking part in the program this year.

THREE STAGES OF A MAN:

He believes in Santa Claus. He doesn't believe in Santa Claus. He IS Santa Claus. 



STAGES OF CHRISTMAS SHOPPING:

1. Plenty of Time 2. Oh No!!!



SOUNDINGS

PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO YOUR PARTA DIRECTORY

Amy	Flynn	1201 W Northmoor RD #301	Peoria	IL	61614-3466	309.439.6459
		ajflynn51@gmail.com				
Carolyn	Faulkner	1407 W Hanssler PL	Peoria	IL	61604-2562	309.232.9195
		carolynfaulkner79@yahoo.com				

Jeanne St Julian (89) Deceased: September 25, 2023

If you know any PARTA members who are recently deceased,
PLEASE send that information to Roger Hampton.



PARTA Members: PLEASE HELP keep the database current.
PLEASE contact **Roger Hampton** with **ANY CHANGES** to your status.
Email: roger.hampton11138@gmail.com *or* Text: 309.360.6190



I stood waving to my neighbor
for 10 minutes this morning before realizing
she was just cleaning her windows.



IRTA DUES INCREASE BEGINNING JANUARY 2024

CURRENT DUES AMOUNT (2023)

- Annual – \$40 since 2014
- Dues-deduct – \$2.50 a month (\$30 a year) since 2014
- 5-year – \$175 since 2014
- Life – \$400 since 2008
- Annual Recurring – \$38 since 2018
- Annual Associate – \$25 since Inception
- Associate Life – \$125 for over 20 years

BEGINNING JANUARY 2024

- Annual Dues – \$50 per year
- Dues-deduct – \$3.50 per month (\$42 a year)
- 5-Year Dues – Not Available
- Life Dues – \$600
- Annual Recurring – \$46 per year
- Annual Associate Recurring – \$35 per year
- Associate Life Dues \$200 per year

- Increases in dues were approved by delegates at the biennial convention in October 2023.
- IRTA has maintained the same dues amount for a period of nine to over twenty years.
- Increases were warranted due to the rising costs to serve its members.
- IRTA would like to continue to improve and add to the services offered to its members.
- Changes in staff will be needed to keep up current services and technology innovations.



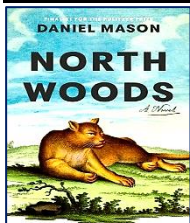
IRTAPAC SILENT AUCTION

During the IRTA biennial convention the IRTA Political Action Committee (IRTAPAC) held its annual silent auction. This was another successful event in which the PAC raised a total of \$6,380 to support its initiatives. The Silent Auction has become a mainstay at the Biennial Convention. Without the support of IRTA Local Units and IRTA members, IRTAPAC could not be effective in making campaign contributions to candidates for local and state elected offices. These contributions and endorsements of candidates make it possible for IRTA to be a voice at the Capitol when retiree pension and healthcare benefits are being discussed. A huge thank you to everyone who participated!

SOUNDINGS

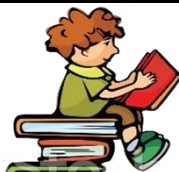
PARTA BOOK EXCHANGE – EACH MEETING

SUGGESTION: When you return a book, include a note stating how you rate the book.



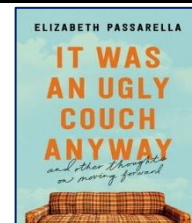
PARTA MEMBERS READ & RECOMMEND ***NORTH WOODS***

by Daniel Mason



IT WAS AN UGLY COUCH ANYWAY

by Elizabeth Passarella



A sweeping novel about a single house in the woods of New England, told through the lives of those who inhabit it across the centuries – a daring, moving tale of memory and fate.

When a pair of young lovers abscond from a Puritan colony, little do they know that their humble cabin in the woods will become home to an extraordinary succession of inhabitants. An English soldier, destined for glory, abandons the battlefields of the New World to devote himself to apples. A pair of spinster twins survive war and famine, only to succumb to envy and desire. A crime reporter unearths a mass grave, but finds the ancient trees refuse to give up their secrets. A lovelorn painter, a conman, a stalking panther, a lusty as each one confronts the mysteries of the north woods, they come to realize that the dark, raucous, beautiful past is very much alive.

Traversing cycles of history, nature, and even literature, *North Woods* is an unforgettable novel about secrets and fates that asks the timeless, “How do we live on, even after we’re gone?”

A collection of refreshingly honest and hilarious essays from *Southern Living* columnist Elizabeth Passarella about navigating change –whether emotional or logistical – and staying sane during life’s unexpected twists and turns. In this new collection of essays, Elizabeth explores the ups and downs of moving forward – both emotionally and logistically – with her welcome candor and sense of humor that readers have come to love. She enters into a remarkable (and strange) relationship with an elderly neighbor whose apartment she hopes to buy, examines her own stubborn stances on motherhood and therapy, and tries to come to terms with a family health crisis that brings more questions than answers. Along the way Elizabeth reminds readers that when they feel stuck or their load feels heavy, there is always light breaking in somewhere. *It Was an Ugly Couch Anyway* will make readers laugh, cry, and feel a little less alone as they navigate their own lives that are filled with uncertainty, change, and things beyond their control.



JOIN IRTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JIM BACHMAN

December 14, 2023, at 9:30 A.M.

for his last “*Coffee with Jim*” before his retirement on December 31, 2023.

Coffee with Jim was built to connect, listen, and share topics for retired educators and retirees in general.

CHRISTMAS FROM MOM’S PERSPECTIVE:

Christmas is the best because I can shout,

“Don’t come in here!” and my kids assume I’m wrapping their presents ***instead of just wanting to be left alone.***



What’s every mom’s favorite Christmas carol? ***SILENT NIGHT!***

SOUNDINGS

2023 IRTA/AMBA EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES CONTINUES

December 13, 2023, at 10:00 A.M.

HOLIDAY DISCOUNTS FOR IRTA MEMBERS

The Holidays are here and whether you're shopping, dining out, or planning travel to a warm weather location, IRTA has a way for you to save money.

Join us online for the latest **DISCOUNTS** that are **FREE**

as part of your IRTA membership. Register at:

https://ambabenefits.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_k0UyjuCsSzO_qi-lr-47mg

SPOTLIGHT ON IRTA MEMBER BENEFITS

myAMBAdiscounts

MyAMBAdiscounts offers IRTA members access to thousands of discounts from local and national merchants – all from your smartphone. Benefits include travel, dining, electronics, sports, entertainment, and so much more.

Activate your new free myAMBAdiscounts membership by following 3 easy steps!

Directions are on the IRTA website under "Members Benefits".

Provided through Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA)



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. The cruise features four amazing ports of call, spectacular glacier viewing, and special onboard experiences. IRTA has secured exclusive promotional cruise fares starting at just \$577 per person for an interior stateroom and \$997 per person for a balcony stateroom. Fares are based on double occupancy, taxes and fees are additional. But act fast! The special low fares are only available if booked by December 10, 2023. Just a \$250 deposit per person reserves your spot on this once-in-a-lifetime IRTA member event. To learn more and to reserve your 2024 Alaska adventure today go online to: <https://form.jotform.com/233183253235148>

TRS: 1099-R ADDRESS CHANGE REMINDER

The deadline for retired members to submit an address change to TRS for the 2023 1099-R mailing is December 13, 2023. Address changes cannot be made over the phone. For an immediate change without paperwork, it's preferred that retirees update their addresses in their secure online accounts. Login to: <https://member.trsil.org/>. After logging in, select "Update" on the home address section from the main page. A *Change of Address* form may also be completed by retired members. You may access the form from the TRS website or by calling TRS Member Services at 877.927.5877.

Celebrate endings for they precede new beginnings. ~Jonathan Lockwood Huie
I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past. ~Thomas Jefferson

**PEORIA AREA
RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**
406 Woodcrest
Washington, IL 61571

Address Service Requested



Nonprofit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit 378
Peoria, IL



PEORIA AREA RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Unit #32 of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association



PARTA OFFICERS 2023 - 2024

- Dixie Wheeler, *President*
- Valda Shipp, *1st Vice President*
- Jeannie Blane, *2nd Vice President*
- Deloris Turner, *Secretary*
- Jeff Vallosio, *Treasurer*

**SERVING
RETIRED TEACHERS
FOR 68 YEARS**

online @
PA-RTA.WEEBLY.COM/
Sally Weber, *Webmaster*