FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear ORTA Members,

Can you believe we’re halfway through February? It seems like only yesterday I was serving up pork and sauerkraut for New Year’s Day, assure good fortune might come my way for 2018!

Looking ahead to the 10 months which remain of 2018, I want to remind you once again, to call the ORTA office via phone 614-431-7002 or email Mia at admin.asst@orta.org to schedule a chapter visit. Robin Rayfield-Executive Director; Randy Overbeck-Past President; Gale Adkins, President-Elect or I will be happy to attend one of your meetings and address your membership with a short presentation. We already have over 20 chapter visits scheduled between today and this coming November. Please call right away!

Our Executive Director, Dr. Robin Rayfield, began a successful liaison training program in January with the folks from the Northwest, Northeast, and Southwest Ohio Regions. His next training session will take place with the Central Ohio Region. We’re still in need of liaisons to represent the Southeast Ohio Region. I have contacted several former ORTA state officers from the Southeast Region, and they have offered to help out by making some calls. If you are called, I encourage you to accept the challenge of becoming a liaison for “our” region! Just as a reminder, there will be three liaisons per region, each visiting around 6 counties at least twice a year, and holding this position one, two, or three years. As a liaison, you will meet some terrific people and see some beautiful Ohio countryside! Please say, “YES!”

This past November 2017, Dr. Rayfield and I attended the “AMBA Roundup” in Austin, TX, which was courtesy of AMBA (Association Member Benefits Advisors). During the sharing sessions among state presidents and their directors, we heard from the state president of Georgia. What an energetic ball of fire! She shared, in detail, an incentive program initiated in their state, which encourages chapters to increase their membership by at least 10% a year. Once a chapter has met this challenge, that chapter receives $100 to go toward any program or project they may choose. The chapter gaining the highest percentage of membership in the state, also receives a greater amount at the end of the year. This incentive program will be discussed in more detail when our executive committee meets on February 14th. Stay tuned for more info!

As I close, here’s a weather forecast for you: Holy moly! “I can’t feel my face” degrees!

Warmer regards!
Bee Lehner, ORTA President
ORTA Reorganization

I trust that the winter we have experienced in Ohio is beginning to break and spring is on its way. As you are probably aware, ORTA has undergone a transformation in its organization and these changes will take effect on April 1, 2018. The change to Regions (Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Central) from the 11 Districts will enable ORTA to connect more closely with the many Local Chapters. You can find out more about this organization change on the ORTA website at www.orta.org.

Local Chapter Leadership Crisis

As the many Local Chapters prepare for a new year I am hearing that many are facing challenges finding leaders willing to serve their local chapter. I often hear statements like ‘I have served as the President for several years and I am simply unable to serve any longer. Nobody has stepped forward to serve our chapter’. This ‘leadership void’ is becoming more and more common. What is most troubling about this issue is that when I meet with people at local chapters I often hear that those in attendance are committed to the success of their chapter and place a great deal of value on their local chapter. People tell me that they enjoy the fellowship and sharing of information at local chapter meetings. They also make it a point to tell me that their local chapter does wonderful things in their local community. Why then, do local chapters find it difficult to identify and put into place people willing to lead their local chapter? Common responses from those ‘drafted’ to serve as a local chapter officer include:

- I don’t have the time
- I could never do what our current leader does
- I have never been in charge of a group like this
- I don’t want to mess our chapter up

Well, I certainly can’t do anything about the time issue other than say ‘We are all time challenged. No man knows what tomorrow will bring. I do know that the time commitment for serving as an ORTA local chapter officer is often overestimated. You probably would be surprised to learn that you can fit helping to lead your local chapter into your schedule’. As for the other ‘reasons’ listed I would say ‘As a teacher you were in charge of a classroom full of our children. There could be no more important task in this world that what you did so efficiently for many years. You do possess the talent and characteristics to lead a group. I urge you to share your talents with your fellow retirees’.

Finally, on the local leadership issue I would like to remind everyone that your local chapter is yours! I am aware of a few local chapters that struggled with finding people to serve in the traditional President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary positions. These chapters determined that their local chapter would be best served by putting into place a Leadership Committee.
These chapters are led by a small group of people that share the burden of leadership. No one person is responsible for leadership. It seems to be working well for these chapters. If your local chapter is experiencing a leadership crisis, please contact me at the ORTA office. I will offer suggestions on how ORTA might assist you.

ORTA Membership

We are receiving membership dues at the ORTA office from many individuals and local chapters. ORTA’s membership remains constant, however, it is imperative that we grow our membership. I often say that the voice of STRS retirees is only as strong as our membership. As the only recognized voice of STRS retirees, our advocacy is important to every STRS beneficiary’s future. Attacks on our pension system come from every angle and from many directions. Although our pension system is stronger today than it was last year, we must continue to press our case for continued strengthening of the system. ORTA is present at every meeting of the STRS Board of Trustees and every meeting of the Healthcare Pension Advocacy Group for STRS (HPA). I can say, with firsthand knowledge, that ORTA provides input advocating for all STRS recipients at the working meetings of the HPA and, when appropriate, provides input to STRS Trustees. Of course, I am preaching to the choir when addressing ORTA members. You recognize the value of ORTA membership. What I am asking of all ORTA members is that you encourage your non-ORTA local chapter members to join ORTA, thus increasing the strength of our voice.

New Partnership with EFCU

ORTA is happy to announce that we have entered into a partnership with Education First Credit Union. This partnership will offer ORTA members additional benefits. Education First Credit Union is a financial institution that works with people connected to education. In a sense they are a financial institution that takes deposits from educators and former educators and lends to educators and former educators. With 16,000 locations available in Ohio EFCU is a viable option for all ORTA members. Some of the benefits of this partnership include:

- Higher interest rates on CDs for ORTA members
- Lower loan rates for ORTA members
- Payment of ORTA dues for qualified ORTA members
- And coming soon... a low interest ORTA credit card for ORTA members only

Check out the link on our ORTA web page to learn more about these great ORTA members only opportunities.

Regards,

Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA Exc. Director
“Welcome to 2018. The Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans officers, board and regional leadership see the new year as an opportunity for all of us to advocate and campaign for continuing the American asset we all created --- retirement, a-life-after-a-life-of-work. In 2018, our attention and advocacy for retirement security must become more focused and constant with and among our members, our families, our friends, our acquaintances and our contact with the general public.

It is easy for all of us to look at and become distracted by the daily soap opera going on in Washington DC. That Reality-TV drama being played out within our national government by those we elected to work for us is so much deflection and delay from the essential work we sent them to do.

Now we are nearly one third of the way into the federal fiscal year that began October 1. The Congress has yet to do its primary constitutional job – creating a budget (revenue and expenditures) to meet our common needs. We are threatened with sequestered funding of Medicare and Medicaid, reductions in service from Social Security, and cuts to vital services from the Older Americans Act, let alone the failure to of Congress to secure pensions, IRAs, 401K and other retirement savings.

As retirees and retirees-in-training we can keep the American ideal of a life-after-a-life-of-work alive not just for ourselves but for generations to come by inviting conversations about the specifics of what makes retirement viable: adequate income, health care, decent housing and community connections. The follow-up conversation that must take place is about the women and men who, in our collective view, will work with us to stabilize and grow these issues into mature tangible realities. In evaluating and deciding who will work in our interest for retirement security, an old union-organizing tool is useful. Have we seen visible evidence in a posting, policy paper, or willingness to be with retirees? Have we heard in a campaign speech, town hall radio interview support for retiree issues? Have they acted on our behalf, actively engage with us, sponsored and fought for our issues? Or, has the opposite position been seen, heard, or acted on.

The Alliance for Retired Americans in Ohio is an organizing voice to use in our campaign for retirement security. Our experiences and work to build voice and justice in the workplace is our advantage and the source of credibility. We’ve done this and been successful. Our union institutions were not and are not perfect but our collective efforts gained us dignity, respect, a measure of economic progress and some justice in the workplace.

We look forward to organizing with you in this new-year to secure the benefits of a life of work that built our country’s standard of living and a future for our children and grandchildren.”

To learn more about Alliance for Retired Americans, please visit their website.
The Medina County Retired Teachers Chapter celebrated their 50th chapter anniversary. During the meeting, past chapter presidents were recognized to honor their contribution of service to the chapter over the years. Congratulations to the Medina Co. Chapter on their milestone, and we can’t wait to see what the next 50 years will bring.

Please make note of the chapter 2018 meeting dates below:

April 10, June 12, August 14, October 9

To learn more about the Medina Co. Chapter, please visit their chapter web page.
HAVE YOU PAID YOUR YEARLY ORTA DUES?

A friendly reminder that if you have not paid your 2017 dues, or would like to renew your ORTA dues ($30) for 2018, now is the time!

You can now pay online (click here) with credit card, making it faster and more convenient than ever. We can of course still accept checks mailed to the office at:

8050 N. High Street
Suite 190
Columbus, Ohio 43235

Your membership is important! We are here to serve you. Your membership helps keep us going, so we want to say thank you for your loyalty to ORTA, and we wouldn’t be here without YOU.

*PLEASE SEE THE BACK PAGE TO FILL OUT YOUR RENEWAL DUES FORM TO SEND TO US WITH YOUR CHECK PAYMENT
Exchange Program Local Coordinator

If you could affect the life of one person in a positive way would you do it?
Hi, I am Jennifer, Regional Director with Greenheart Exchange, and that is exactly what we seek to do every day, affect lives. We are a non-profit organization which brings international exchange high school students to the US to study and learn about us and share about themselves.
We are looking to fill a number of Local Coordinator (LC) positions in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. We are seeking individuals who enjoy the freedom and flexibility of a Part-Time position, and who enjoy interacting with people, who can work from home as independent contractors.

Training Provided for the following:
• How to recruit volunteer host families who will provide a home to our pre-screened exchange students
• How to obtain permission from the local high schools for the students to attend
• How to supervise students during their time in the US
• How to help volunteer Host Families get involved

Compensation:
• Greenheart LCs receive monetary compensation for each student placed into a Host Family and supervised.
• As an LC, the monetary compensation is based on the duration of the program (there are several programs available).
• $1100.00 is paid for each academic year times the number of students placed and supervised; and $900.00 for each academic semester student. We also have a variety of short term programs available.
• Paid Travel Opportunities are also available depending on your personal success. (An all-expenses paid trip for a week in Cancun, Mexico can be earned for the 2018/19 Season).

Required Qualifications:
• You need to be at least 26 years old
• You must be able to pass a Criminal Background Check
• You must have solid computer skills with exceptional oral and written communication abilities
• You should be, motivated, self-starter with the ability to work independently
• You must be willing to go into your community to ask people if they would be interested in learning about hosting an exchange student
• You must own a computer and a car
Please Note: Single males who live alone are ineligible.

Please follow this link to apply: http://www.ccigreenheart.org/arearepinquiry.aspx
From Executive Director, Dr. Robin Rayfield:

STRS Update

I attended the January STRS Board of Trustees Education and Planning Meeting. This was a meeting of our Board of Trustees that was comprised of many educational presentations and offered opportunities for STRS Trustees to set goals and determine the success of the previous year’s efforts. A couple of observations from my time watching the work of our Board of Trustees:

• STRS intends to concentrate on the Financial Health of the system. Discussions included a desire to reach a 100% level of funding for the system. Currently we are at about a 79% funding level. Simply stated, this means that the contributions from active teachers and employers is less than the level of payments that we all receive. This is not necessarily a crisis. Our investments currently make up much of the gap. However, it is in everyone’s best interest to strive towards the 100% funding level.

• STRS wants to have Engaged Customers. This goal includes increasing communication with all stakeholders, including beneficiaries. The current level of communication and ways we can communicate with STRS were highlighted, and suggestions for ways to increase this communication were discussed.

There were, of course, other goals suggested and discussed, however, these two seemed most appropriate to be mentioned in this newsletter.

Website news

ORTA is committed to finding ways to efficiently communicate with its thousands of members. Our website (www.orta.org) has a tremendous amount of information about what is going on at ORTA. Most recently ORTA has placed interactive links on the website. You may have seen the survey on our front page seeking your input on how we are doing with our efforts to engage ORTA members on the website. We will, from time to time, continue to collect information from ORTA members through our surveys on the website. Most recently we noticed an uptick in people visiting the ORTA website. Nearly 1000 people visited our webpage in a one-week period in early February! Thanks to Alissa Burton for managing our webpage and helping to promote ORTA to all STRS recipients.

Best,

Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA Exc. Director
Several years ago, Clark County Retired Teachers’ Association Scholarship Committee decided to try a new fund raiser – a Book Sale. An area community has an annual outdoor Book Fair each August, and the association members decided to give it a try. One thing is for sure, teachers have books! So, the donations for the sale came in and over $600 was raised for their Scholarship Fund. Now, what to do with left over books? First, another charitable group was contacted and they would take them and use them in a different book sale. The next year, the group realized that to promote reading, another organization had placed “Book Birdhouses” around the city. What better use for the remaining children’s books? The Scholarship co-chairs Jerry Laub (Librarian) and Carl Ahlm (English) decided to help fill the eight “Book Birdhouses” with the remaining children’s books. The second year, they added a small book sticker saying that each book was donated by the Retired Teachers. The members of Clark Co. have done this for over three years, and have added Young Adult books too. The Clark County Retired Teachers’ Association has donated over 600 Elementary through Young Adult books during 2017.

Incidentally, four (4) $1,000 Scholarships have been awarded during that past four years thanks to generous member support.

To learn more about the Books for Scholarships program, please visit the Clark County chapter web page.
WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We here at ORTA want to hear what you think! We have constructed a brief survey of ten multiple choice questions, to better meet your needs as members. This survey mainly deals with ORTA communications and social media, and the results will allow us to see where we can take our organization into 2018. This questionnaire is completely anonymous, and free.

We hope you take a few moments and complete the survey!

Thank you so much for your contribution to ORTA and our cause.

Please follow this link to take survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J52NJ57

WHAT’S ORTA UP TO?

Take a look at what’s coming up in March and where our Executive Director and Executive Committee will be! The calendar is always available on our website. Follow the link to view: http://www.orta.org/calendar.html

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 20</td>
<td>STRS Monthly Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00am</td>
<td>ORTA Southwest Liaison Meeting</td>
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<td>Wednesday, February 28</td>
<td>Green Co. Chapter Meeting</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 8</td>
<td>ORSC @ State House</td>
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<td>10:00am</td>
<td>HPA @ STRS</td>
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<td>Monday, March 12</td>
<td>Napoleon Oberhaus</td>
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<td>Wednesday, March 14</td>
<td>ORTA Monthly Executive Board Meeting @ ORTA Office</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 15</td>
<td>Mtg @ STRS</td>
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<td>8:30am</td>
<td>Portage Co. Robin Rayfield Attending</td>
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<td>Saturday, March 17</td>
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Ohio Retired Teachers Association has joined with Education First Credit Union to ensure a strong membership that advocates for your benefits. You can earn up to a lifetime ORTA membership with a qualifying certificate or loan product with some of the best rates in the state!

Get Started Today! When you call or visit be sure to let us know you are an ORTA member!

- Money Market Savings Accounts
- Certificates of Deposit
- Retirement & Investment Services
- New & Used Auto Loans (refinancing is available)
- Mortgages (pre-qualifications are available)
- Home Equity Loans & Lines of Credit
- Visa Credit Cards (no balance transfer fee)
- Free Credit Review

Credit Union
Bonus Rewards -

Earn .25% More
On Certificate Accounts

Earn Up To $250
On Home Equity Loans & Mortgages
Exclusively For ORTA Members-
And Earn Up To A Lifetime ORTA Membership!

ORTA Members who open a new certificate of 36 months or greater, with new money can earn .25% more than the current stated rate. New money means funds not currently on deposit with Education First Credit Union. Mortgage and Home Equity loans are subject to underwriting guidelines, NMLS #111209. Home Equity Loan and Mortgage Loan offers are valid for 1/2 of 1% of the balance of loan, not to exceed $250. Funds will be deposited to Share Account or applied as a closing cost credit. For certificates $25,000-$49,999 you will earn a one year paid ORTA membership. For certificates $50,000-$99,999 you will earn a two year paid ORTA membership. For certificates greater than $100,000 you will earn a lifetime paid ORTA membership. For home equity loans or mortgages $25,000-$49,999 you will earn a one year paid ORTA membership. For home equity loans or mortgages $50,000-$99,999 you will earn a two year paid ORTA membership. For home equity or mortgages $100,000 or greater you will earn a lifetime paid ORTA membership. Some restrictions may apply. Offer is subject to change at any time and without advance notice. Offers cannot be combined with any other credit union offers.

Federally Insured by NCUA.

The Smart Choice In Banking.

www.educu.org • 614-221-9376
ORTA WORD FIND

Looking for something to do to pass the winter blues?
Print out this page to play our ORTA word find!

TRY TO FIND:

RETIREMENT
CHAPTERS
STRS
CURRICULUM
TEACHERS
STUDENTS
PROFESSORS
ADMINISTRATORS
CLASSROOM
SCHOOL
MATH
HISTORY
ENGLISH
SCIENCE
COLLEGE
SENIORS
PENSIONS
ALUMNI
LEARNING

Y K T E A C H E R S T Z T M B Z R
G L B J B U M O O R S S A L C V R
T K B P G R D R Y D Q Z L Y T E Q
S R O T A R T S I N I M D A T Y T
V R W Z N I K D B N R D R I J W B
S M R J T C Z Y M D Z Q R Y Y N S
N T Y V D U G P R O F E S S O R S
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T N G T L U Z R I J M M J L C L E
A Q G B N L L Y S R Y D Z Y J S X
M Y L M R M Y A H G X Y R B N R

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Do you know an ORTA Centenarian member? In upcoming newsletters, we will be honoring those turning or have turned 100 years or more. Please email birthday information to Alissa at publications@orta.org
TELL YOUR CHAPTER MEMBER FRIENDS!

22 REASONS TO JOIN

- Promotes quality healthcare coverage through leadership with the Health Care and Pension Advocates (HPA)
- Represents Ohio retired educators at STRS committees and meetings
- Represents retired educators in Washington D.C.
- Supports the repeal of the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Preservation (WEP)
- Opposes mandatory Social Security for Ohio Educators
- Participates in the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA)
- Represents retired educators at Ohio’s General Assembly
- Testifies at state legislation hearing committees
- Monitors and tracks all legislation affecting retired educators
- Maintains a staffed state office to coordinate statewide activities and support chapters and regions
- ORTA is committed informing its members of benefits news and developments from STRS
- Assist with leadership training at regional and local chapter levels
- Keeps an up-to-date website with current ORTA news and information; www.orta.org
- Publishes a monthly newsletter with ORTA state news and local chapter coverage that is emailed to thousands of members
- Developed a social media presence including a Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to promote the retired educators voice
- Encourages chapter and local development by providing resources for local volunteer and job opportunities
- Represents ALL educators including collegiate instructors
- Provides membership options for educator spouses’ (who receive STRS benefits)
- Serving Ohio’s retired educators for over 70 years
- Has partnered with one of the largest association benefits providers (AMBA) to offer exclusive supplemental dental, vision, health coverage plus numerous other advantages to ORTA members.
- Developed a relationship with Education First Credit Union to create new banking opportunities with retired educators including competitive loan rates, CDs and credit card options.
IN MEMORIAM: A SPECIAL 2017 REMEMBRANCE

It is with great sadness we announce that these are ORTA members that have passed away in 2017. Some of these members may have already been recognized earlier in the last year, but should we have missed anyone, they will be remembered here.

**Paulding County**
- Marge Hoelrich
- Gary Lipp
- Shirley Gordon (2018)

**Madison County**
- Sue Bock
- Lori Carnevale
- Robin Priday

**Wayne County**
- Laralynn Arnold

**Darke County**
- Jane Dardourff
- Marian Brown
- Lowell Dickason

**Pickaway County**
- Rosemary Hughes
- Betty Karn
- Mary K. May
- Anthony Paudicz
- Charlotte West

We send our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones as we share in their memory.

*Do you know deceased members you would like ORTA to list in this section? If so, please see our new page on our website (click here).*

“It’s hard to forget someone who has given you so much to remember.”
– Unknown

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...AND THE ORTA TRIVIA CHALLENGE WINNER IS:

Congratulations to our first ORTA Trivia Challenge winner! A big round of applause to **Nancy Harris** of **Lucas Co.**!

Be sure to look for our next Challenge coming up at the end of February on our website and Facebook, with our next winner announced in March!
ORTA endorses Vision Service Plan (VSP) for members to receive the eye care you need. VSP is not a traditional plan: no ID cards, no claim forms...just savings! Plus, you'll have access to a large network of thousands of doctors throughout the nation.

Benefits include:
- WellVision exam and glasses covered every 12 months after copay
- Contact lens exam every 12 months with no copay
- Up to $170 allowance for new frames
- Extra discounts, and more!

To find out more, visit myambabenefits.info/orta or call 800-258-7041

VSP MEMBERS: GET AN EXTRA $40 TO SPEND

Choose a frame from any of these brands, and $40 will automatically be applied to your purchase when you use your benefits.

Available only to VSP members with applicable plan benefits. Coupon not required to redeem offer. Void where prohibited. Offer good through April 30, 2018.

©2017 Vision Service Plan. All rights reserved.

VSP is a registered trademark of Vision Service Plan. All other brands or marks are the property of their respective owners. 10629 VCCM.

Benefits made available through:
WHAT’S NEW WITH YOU?

We want to put you and your chapter in the monthly newsletter!
Contact Alissa at publications@orta.org, or download a submission from our website (click here) and send all submission materials to:

Ohio Retired Teachers | Suite 190
c/o: Publications
8050 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43235

We can’t wait to share your stories!

VOLUNTEER AT ORTA!

Have some spare time and would like to help in the ORTA office?
We are always looking for help on projects, and we would love to see you here! Please call the office during normal business hours, **7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.** if interested:
614.431.7002 | 8050 North High Street | Suite 190, Columbus Ohio 43235

Happy Valentine's Day!
# OHIO RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

(PLEASE PRINT, TYPE OR USE PERSONAL NAME AND ADDRESS LABEL)

PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT TO:

OHIO RETIRED TEACHERS ASSN.

8050 N. HIGH STREET | SUITE 190 | COLUMBUS, OHIO 43235

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<td>☐ ORTA LIFE MEMBER $500</td>
<td>☐ ORTA LIFE MEMBER (1/4 LIFE) $125</td>
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<td>☐ ORTA LIFE MEMBER (1/2 LIFE) $250</td>
<td>☐ ORTA NEW MEMBER DUES $40</td>
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COUNTY/LOCAL | TOTAL

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**NEW MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM**

(PLEASE PRINT, TYPE OR USE PERSONAL NAME AND ADDRESS LABEL)

PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT TO:

OHIO RETIRED TEACHERS ASSN.

8050 N. HIGH STREET | SUITE 190 | COLUMBUS, OHIO 43235

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COUNTY/LOCAL | TOTAL

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Please print, cut out, complete and send for your **yearly** payment.

Please print, cut out, complete and send for your **NEW ORTA** membership.