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## FROM OUR PRESIDENT



2019-2020 ORTA President,  
Kara Mendenhall

Hello ORTA members!

Our neighbors just got a new puppy. They recently buried their former dog and now are again in “training mode” with the new addition to their family. I mention this because I feel like that puppy right now. I am gangly and teetering a bit on new legs and in unfamiliar territory with my new ORTA duties. I am still learning how to navigate some of the responsibilities of president. Thank you to all those in my local chapter and other friendly members who have wished me well and have offered help and advice.

With the new year having begun in earnest, I hope each of you feel connected to those around you in some way. The more I read about the concerns of retirees, the more I am convinced that the best way to stay healthy in retirement is to surround ourselves with folks who are uplifting to our spirits and encouraging us to keep striving for new achievements. One of the best reasons to join groups like ORTA is the members who are familiar with the issues that face us as we age. We can rekindle former friendships and begin new ones with folks with similar experiences.

There is an interesting article in the January AARP magazine about ageism in the workplace. It speaks about the bias of ageism and how widespread that bias is. The article laments that workers who have a length of experience are often NOT those who are promoted to positions where their knowledge can be used by the whole organization, but that they are let go to make room for younger, less experienced workers. This change is often prompted by a savings to the company via the reduced salary paid to the new employee, but the experienced person leaves with a wealth of skills and institutional knowledge that cannot be replicated in a short time.

The reality of our country and much of our world is that the population is aging and living longer. We all need to refresh our ideas of what “old” is, and what we are able to accomplish in our retirement years. There are multitudes of people who are successful at second careers—at any age. We owe it to ourselves not to discount our abilities just because we have retired. The wisdom gained through decades of work can save time and energy in situations common to many workplaces.

Often when retirement comes, we are shy about what we know. We may feel there are new and better ways to handle problems. However, what good is that wisdom if it isn't ever applied where it might help? With a willingness to keep learning, many retirees have thrived in workplaces where their experience is valued. Moving forward, may we be pleasantly surprised by those with whom we dare to share part of ourselves!

Wishing you warmth and cheer,

Kara Mendenhall  
ORTA President

# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA  
Executive Director

Greetings ORTA Members!

I hope that you all received the ORTA Yearly mailer last month. As you recall, ORTA does not send a 'hard copy' of the newsletters each month due to the costs involved. If you have friends that would like to be added to our email list for monthly newsletters, please have them contact us at the ORTA offices 614-431-7002.

## **STRS News**

The STRS Board of Trustees met last week for a monthly meeting. The investments were reviewed as well as the expenses. STRS is currently funded over 76%. As you may recall, the benchmark for consideration of the restoration of the COLA was set at 85%, so there remains some work to do before we will receive our promised COLA increases. Previously this month the ORSC (legislative group that oversees all 5 pension systems) met to receive an update from each pension system. One member of this influential group (Representative Cera) asked several questions about COLA increases. Perhaps this is a positive sign that the legislators overseeing our pension systems are hearing from retirees on this matter. The STRS Board will have an election for members to sit on the board of trustees. The seat for STRS Trustee Dale Price is up for election. Dale is an OFT 'contributing member' and is being challenged by contributing members from the OEA. ORTA does not specifically endorse candidates as a rule. We ask each member to carefully consider these important votes for a seat on our pension system board. Retirees do not vote for contributing member seats on the board of trustees, but we probably do have influence with contributing members that do vote. I have talked with Dale Price and personally, find him a good listener and sympathetic to the need to restore COLA for retirees.

## **Voucher and EdChoice in Ohio**

No doubt, many of you have followed the news regarding Ohio and the voucher programs being proposed. As a retired superintendent from a public school it always frustrated me to lose money earmarked for my public school that was sent, instead to a private school. In discussions with my colleagues that are still working, I have found NO support for the plans that are being proposed. From what I understand, vouchers will cost public schools significant money that will be sent to private schools. The EdChoice plan that is currently being considered place 1/2 of the public schools at risk for losing money through the voucher system. What is worse, is that the private schools that would receive the money diverted from public schools would not be subject to the same standards for success that are placed on public schools. In fact, the private schools do not have a 'report card' so that taxpayers do not know whether the money is accomplishing its intended goal of improving education. The House version of the voucher legislation (HB9) reduces the number of schools targeted to lose money to a more manageable number (about 425) for the next three years, but it provides vouchers for more children through income eligibility. This version allows families to obtain a voucher at 300% of the poverty level. Finally, the Senate legislation (SB89) reduces the income eligibility to a level of 250% of the poverty level. This voucher system will also divert public school funding to private schools; however, the damage will be decreased. As a former public-school educator, I support public schools. I have nothing against private schools. However, I do not believe that public school children should 'pay' for the private education of children that want a private education.

I offer these comments because any loss of public funding to public schools has a significant impact on the STRS pension system. With fewer students in the public system, the contributions to STRS will decrease as fewer students translates to fewer contributing members. Private school teachers do not contribute to STRS.

# NEW ERA OF LEADERSHIP IN ERIE CO.



Just before the close of 2019, the **Erie County Retired Teachers Association** held it's installation of new officers for 2020. Leaders include: President **Diane Haler-Johnson**, First Vice-President **Judi Graham**, and Second-President **Judi Horchler**. **The Vermilion High School Chorale** provided the program with singing an excellent assortment of holiday songs.

A great end to the year of 2019 with ECRTA, and a good way to kick off 2020!

To learn more about the Erie Co. chapter, please visit their [website](#).



Above Left:ECRTA's new officers are President Diane Haler-Johnson, First Vice-President Judi Graham, and Second-President Judi Horchler

Above: The Vermilion High School Chorale performs for the group

# LAST YEAR IN LOGAN CO.

**Logan County Retired Teachers** met in October at the Friendly Senior Citizens Center in Bellefontaine with over 30 people in attendance. The noon meal was prepared by the center and members could bid on items in a silent auction to help the scholarship fund.

After lunch the group was entertained by Les Fons. The show choir is directed by **Stacy Calton** from Bellefontaine High School. The group performed twelve numbers for the retired teachers.

The program was presented by member, **Pat Orтли**. She chose to educate the group about famous pirates. Pat, dressed as a pirate, had members **Nadine Tussing**, **Wayne Wickerham** and **Katie Amidon** read about three famous pirates to the group.

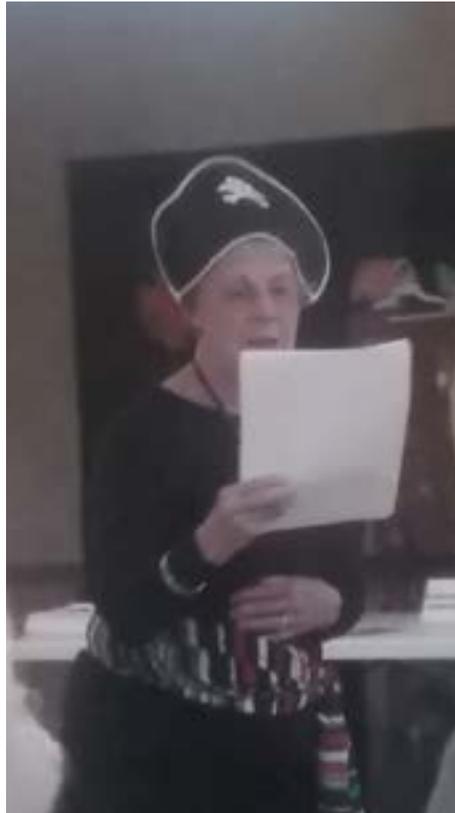
After the program, President Emerson Brown began the meeting. ORTA area representative, B J Woodruff talked to the members about the state group and their current activities. Member **Bill Davis** discussed officer nominations for 2020, which will be voted on at the December meeting. The group wished president **Emerson Brown** a happy 90th birthday.

Anyone needing information about Logan County Retired Teachers can call Emerson Brown at 937-404-9433.

The group has a Facebook page available called Logan County Retired Teachers.



President Emerson Brown talks to the state ORTA representative, B J Woodruff



Member Pat Orтли presents information on pirates to the Logan County Retired Teachers.



Les Fons from Bellefontaine High School is led by director, Stacy Calton



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**\*\*Remember, the date we process your payment is your new due date for the following year (i.e. 02/20/20, new due date is 02/20/21). If you pay your ORTA dues to your local chapter, your payment is applied upon receipt to our office.**

*Thank you!*



# MORE IN MAHINING CO.

Mahoning Retired Teachers Association met in December for the last chapter meeting of 2019. For the Holiday luncheon, Drakes Landing Canfield provided a delicious meal, and entertainment was courtesy of the Boardman High School Jazz Ensemble. Over 100 members attended, and the Salvation Army Coordinators Majors Sherry and Paul Moore expressed gratitude for the donations and monetary gifts given by MRTA. Carol Kinsey, a Northeastern ORTA Liaison installed new officers for 2020; those assuming new roles are: Phil Butto, President; Susan Harris, First VP; Ruth Frankenburg, Second VP; Barbara Ade, Secretary; and Debra Mattee, Treasurer.



Accepting Decembers Community Service Project monetary doantions were Mjs. Paul and Sherry Moore, Community Service Chair Kim Pontuti and President Phil Butto

Next MRTA meeting is on **March 11** at Drakes Landing Banquet Center, 2177 Western Reserve Rd. Social hour will begin at 11am with lunch at 11:45 followed by the program and meeting presided by Phil Butto. The program will feature **Friendly Squares**, a square dancing demo by **Frankie and Gene Hammond**. Grilled chicken, or buffet lunch: Parmesan cod, pasta with meatballs, will be featured.



Mr. Tom Ruggieri leads the Baordman High School Jazz Ensamble; the group has perform for MRTA for 8 years in a row!

Community Service project will donations to **Sleep in Heavenly Peace** an organization that builds and delivers beds to children who do not have them. All area educators are welcome to attend. To make a reservation contact Maggie Skripac 330-953-1200 by March 4. For more info visit the MRTA website at <http://www.mahoningcountyretiredteachers.com/>.



Carol Kinsy, a Northeastern ORTA Liaison installed new officers for 2020; those assuming new roles are: Phil Butto, President; Susan Harris, First VP; Ruth Frankenburg, Second VP; Barbara Ade, Secretary; and Debra Mattee, Treasurer.

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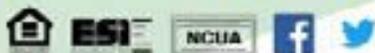
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# IN MEMORIAM

## **Fairfield Co.**

***(Some members may not have had recognition at time of passing)-***

### ***2018***

George Finnen (March 1, 2018)  
Barbara Fouch (April 23, 2018)  
Veneta Thropp (May, 2018)  
Joan Crumley (December 14, 2018)

### ***2019***

David Cattran (January 29, 2020)  
Carol Kessler (November 6, 2019)  
Helen Neel (May, 2019)  
Kathy Bailey (November 18, 2019)  
Loretta Duffy (December 16, 2019)  
Ruth Sharp (January 5, 2020)

**Lake Co.-**Margaret Barb,  
ORTA and Lake Co. Member  
(January 26, 2020)

**Miami Co.-**Stewart King,  
ORTA and Miami Co. Member

**Stark Co.-**Donald J. Rice,  
Life ORTA & Stark Co. Member  
(February 1, 2020)  
George G. Dey  
Life ORTA & Stark Co. Member  
(January 24,2020)  
Nancy L. Taylor  
Life ORTA & Stark Co. Member  
(December 27,2019)  
Frances R. Layton  
Life ORTA & Stark Co. Member  
(December 26, 2019)  
W. Edward Welker  
Life ORTA & Stark Co. Member  
(December, 26, 2019)

**Trumbull Co.-** Richard Thomas Raidel,  
ORTA & Trumbull Co. Member  
(February 12, 2020)  
Guy Joseph Vendemia,  
ORTA & Trumbull Co. Member  
(February 5, 2020)

**Wood Co.-** Margaret Amy McClure Hastings,  
ORTA & WCRTA Member (January 10, 2020)

***\*Deceased Member submission Policy update:  
If you submit member(s) passing, please forward any  
obituary or funeral arrangements for our records.***

***“When our time on Earth has been complete,  
Our spirit moves on, more mysteries to seek.  
Celebrate what this person meant to you,  
Cherish the memories when this life  
you review.”***

***—B.J. Woodruff***

