

- Note from our Executive Director and Monthly STRS Update
- Job Listings
- ORTA Calendar
- Memorial Section

FROM OUR PRESIDENT



2018 ORTA President, Bee Lehner

August greetings, ORTA Members!

Can it be true that school will be starting up again in just a week or two? As a child, I remember the excitement as my brother and I searched through the local general store for just the right school supplies! Mostly, I remember the “Goldenrod Paper Tablets”! Do you remember these “yellow paged” tablets from the ‘50s and ‘60s? Oops! I’m showing my age? You know, I googled “Goldenrod Paper Tablets” and found near to nothing on the worldwide web! Hard to imagine something so basic to our needs as a kid is now nonexistent! Just food for thought.

I want to send out a verbal “thank-you bouquet” to Bruce Hodges for his energy and enthusiasm in this year’s membership drive for ORTA! Bruce held a Membership Committee meeting this past Wednesday at the ORTA office, and I was privileged to attend and “catch” some of his enthusiasm.

As many of you may know, Bruce and his committee dedicated last year to collecting ideas from ORTA Chapters all over Ohio, on how they’ve GAINED new or former members, have KEPT those members, and ENCOURAGED members to serve as officers of their local chapters. The Membership Committee sorted through those ideas and assembled them in a handbook for YOUR CHAPTER!!

The title of this resource is, Ohio Retired Educators Association Membership Growth Handbook. As the committee states, “The purpose of this handbook is to share ideas to stimulate and support an effort to grow your association’s membership....Each association must consider what their local leaders feel will be best for their organization.” You can find a copy of this “Membership Growth Handbook” on the ORTA Website at www.orta.org

Some issues discussed at Wednesday’s Membership Committee meeting were:

- to create better lines of communication between the ORTA office and local membership
- to create an “action plan” to increase ORTA membership
- to look at incentives for not only recruiting members, but also incentives for those who are willing to step up as leaders of local chapters
- to offer liaison’s current membership more information in a more expedient manner

Bruce will be delivering a 20-minute presentation on ways to increase ORTA membership at the Fall ORTA Board meeting on Wednesday, October 10, 2018. Attending liaisons will be able to walk away with some very valuable information to share with their chapter officers!

(con’d on next page)

My next two “bouquets” go out to Alissa Burton, our Publications Coordinator, and Robin Rayfield, our Executive Director! Can you believe how quickly time has passed? They’ve both been a part of our ORTA team for one year now! What an outstanding job these two have done promoting ORTA and keeping current with information that effects us all as retired teachers. AND, just like Bruce, their enthusiasm is contagious to the rest of the team. “Thank you” to you both for a job well done!

Thought for the Day:

“The difference between school and life? In school, you’re taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you’re given a test that teaches you a lesson.”

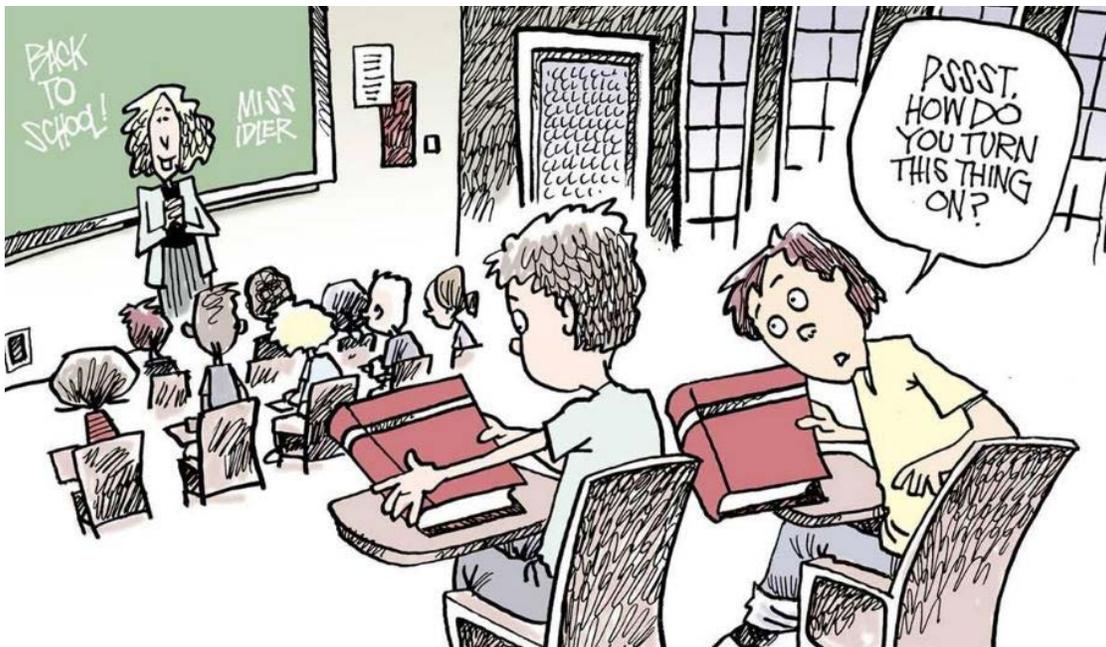
- Tom Bodett

Have a relaxing remainder of summer! See you in September!

Yours,
Bee Lehner, ORTA President

LAUGH OF THE MONTH

Kids today on the first day of school...



FROM THE DESK OF OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings ORTA Members!

STRS News

As mentioned in previous newsletters ORTA is working with STRS to develop a Pathway to COLA. ORTA has asked STRS to provide a list of the conditions that must be present for benefit enhancement to take place for STRS recipients. Pensions systems are very complex with many 'moving parts' however, ORTA members deserve to have such a pathway to COLA. We need to understand where we are and what must happen so that STRS recipients are able to receive increases in our benefits.



Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA
Executive Director

ORTA Protecting our Defined Benefit from Attacks by Congress

ORTA has been monitoring what is taking place with regards to our pension program at both the state and national levels. Recently, Representative Nunes from California launched yet another attack on public pensions across America. His introduction of PEPTA (Public Employee Pension Transparency Act) was reintroduced. This is something that has been attempted previously. Rep. Nunes is attempting to gain co-sponsors for his legislation that would have a devastating effect on public pensions across America. There are several public pension systems across the U.S. that are in financial crisis, however, none of Ohio's public pensions are in this category.

The pension systems that are in trouble are those that have not been fully funded. Ohio's public pension systems (most importantly STRS) are fully funded and are NOT in financial distress. As STRS members (both active and retired) already know, pension reform within our system has taken place insuring that STRS does not fall into dangerous financial shape. ORTA has sent a letter to the entire Ohio delegation expressing ORTA's opposition to Rep. Nunes' PEPTA proposal. You can see a copy of the letter in this news letter and on ORTA's website. Additionally, ORTA is issuing a 'Call to Action' to all ORTA members urging members to contact Senators Brown and Portman and share ORTA's concern with PEPTA. You can see the 'Call to Action' in this newsletter.

ORTA Board Meeting October 15, 2018

ORTA's Board will meet for its fall meeting on October 15, 2018 at the OTRA offices in Columbus. Regional Liaisons from all five regions will meet to discuss matters of importance to ORTA such as:

- Changes to the Bylaws
- Membership
- Ways to increase ORTA's voice in securing COLA increases
- Legislative issues facing retirees

(con'd on next page)

STRS ‘Payday’ Occurs Over a Holiday Weekend

A reminder that September 1, 2018 is a Saturday. Worse yet, September 1 occurs over the Labor Day Holiday. STRS reminds us that our direct deposit may not be available until the next business day following the 1st of the month. ORTA has asked STRS to take this into consideration as it prepares to pay benefits for STRS beneficiaries.

Best,
Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA Executive Director

ORTA CALL TO ACTION!

ORTA has learned that Rep. Devin Nunes of California is preparing to introduce legislation in Congress that would require public sector defined benefit pension systems like STRS to calculate their liabilities using the rate of return on U.S. Treasury bonds.

The legislation, known as the Public Employee Pension Transparency Act, (PEPTA) would artificially inflate unfunded liabilities of pension systems such as STRS to much higher levels than what the plans actually face. Despite what is taking place in other states with regards to public pensions in crisis, STRS remains well funded. The requirement to use the ‘risk free’ rate of returns as suggested in this legislation is unnecessary. As ORTA members already know, previous pension reform efforts within the STRS system has already strengthened our system.

The real design of this type of legislation is to do away with defined benefit programs such as STRS and force conversion into ‘defined contribution’ pension systems. This would likely force active members and retirees of the public pension systems to be responsible for managing their own investments and for any losses they might incur as a result of individual plan performance.

Rep. Nunes has, on several occasions, attempted to force this kind of legislation before. ORTA is concerned that, every time he introduces legislation such as PEPTA his efforts may become a reality. PEPTA is yet another attempt to cast public pension systems in the worst light possible. If successful in gaining support for PEPTA Rep. Nunes’ bill will have a devastating effect on otherwise healthy public pension plans such as STRS. Our system uses current actuarial data to determine the rate of return on investments. Being forced to use the rate of return on U.S. Treasury bonds would be neither accurate nor realistic.

ORTA is concerned that Rep. Nunes may attempt to have PEPTA included into the legislation under consideration by the Congressional Joint Select Committee on Pensions. This congressional committee is currently working on a fix for public pension systems that are in trouble across many states. These systems are in trouble, not because of inaccurate actuarial investment projections, but because those systems are UNDERFUNDED. STRS is not underfunded and should not be forced into a ‘fix’ that is not necessary.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO **NOW!**

ORTA is asking its members to contact Senators Sherrod Brown and Rob Portman and voice opposition to any elements of PEPTA that are introduced to the Joint Select Committee on Pensions. Both of Ohio's senators serve on this committee and have the necessary influence to oppose this legislation. ORTA members are encouraged to write (or call) both Senators Brown and Portman at the addresses below:

WHAT TO SAY AND WHAT TO WRITE:

- Do not allow Rep. Nunes PEPTA language to be added as an amendment to any legislation proposed by the Joint Select Committee on Pensions
- Ohio's public retirement systems are prudently managed and overseen by a board of trustees, the Ohio Retirement Study Council and ultimately, the Ohio General Assembly
- PEPTA is an unreasonable solution that is not necessary for Ohio's well-funded public retirement systems. It would simply result in additional costs, administrative burdens and negative publicity for these systems
- STRS is not in financial distress but would be if forced to comply with the unreasonable standard mandated by PEPTA
- If financially evaluated in this manner, it is likely STRS retirees would face extreme financial hardships that are unnecessary
- STRS retirees contribute billions of dollars into Ohio's economy. The economic impact of PEPTA would threaten the financial outlook for hundreds of thousands of Ohioans.



SENATOR SHERROD BROWN: 713 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510 Phone: (202) 224-2315



SENATOR ROB PORTMAN: 448 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510 Phone: (202) 224-3353

ORTA CONTACTS WASHINGTON!

Below is a copy of the letter issued on behalf of ORTA from Executive Director Robin Rayfield.

*The Honorable
Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515*

Dear Congressman_____,

On behalf of the Ohio Retired Teachers Association (ORTA) I am writing you to express ORTA's opposition to the legislation proposed by Congressman Nunes referred to as PEPTA. The Public Employee Pension Transparency Act is touted as legislation that would make the reporting system for public retirement systems such as the State Teacher's Retirement System in Ohio (STRS) more transparent. This is not an accurate description of what PEPTA would accomplish.

Instead, PEPTA would require STRS to report actuarial liabilities of our system based on a risk-free rate of return, suggesting that the actual assumed rate of return is not realistic.

STRS has, at least every five years, evaluated the actuarial assumptions used to calculate the pension system's liabilities including the rate of return on its investments. This is evidenced by the action taken by the STRS Board of Trustees to reduce the rate of return on investments to 7.45% from the 7.75% rate previously established. This action was taken as a result of the work done by investment consultants in 2017. The requirement to use a 'risk-free' return on investment would not be accurate nor realistic.

STRS of Ohio provides regular reports to its members and to the legislative bodies in Ohio providing oversight of the public pension systems providing detailed information on the financial health of the system. These reports include annual actuarial valuations of assets and liabilities, status of the health care fund, and annual financial reports. Oversight provided by the Ohio Retirement Study Council (ORSC), the Office of the Governor, and the General Assembly insure that the reporting of the STRS Board of Trustees is accurate and transparency is assured. The ORSC conducts a biennial review of each of the public pension systems in Ohio including a fiduciary audit, and an actuarial audit. These reviews are presented at public meetings.

ORTA is concerned that PEPTA does not protect defined pension programs, nor does it save tax dollars. PEPTA would impose federal mandates to a system that has historically demonstrated responsible stewardship of the public pension systems.

For these reasons ORTA strongly urges you to oppose Representative Nunes' legislation. We appreciate your prior support of Ohio's public retirement systems and ask for your continued support.

Please contact me at Ohio Retired Teachers Association 614-431-7002 or rrayfield@orta.org should you have additional questions/concerns.

Kindest regards,

*Dr. Robin Rayfield
Executive Director ORTA*

A LIFETIME OF EDUCATION—REWARDED

Veteran educator, **Frances Ritz**, of Poland, Ohio, was one of the distinguished guests of honor this past May at a banquet at Youngstown State University. YSU's Beeghly College of Education held its annual alumni awards ceremony and presented the "**Lifetime Educational Service Award**" to Frances.

At **101**, Frances continues to be a member of service organizations such as **Delta Kappa Gamma**, a professional society of women educators. Delta Kappa Gamma contributes to the YSU fund, which helps support the teacher education scholarship program. DKG also supports "Schools for Africa" program done through UNICEF.

ORTA would like to thank and recognize Frances for her years of service to our education system, and continued inspiration for educators and students alike.



Frances Ritz, accepting the YSU Lifetime Educational Service Award in May.

KNOX CO. CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS



2018 Scholarship Award Winner, Savannah Gilmore and Carol Sue Owens



Knox Co. Memorial Books pictured with Carole Tannehill

Knox County Retired Teachers recently presented a \$1,000 scholarship to **Savannah Gilmore**, a graduate of East Knox High School and the Teacher Academy at Knox County Career Center — **Carol Sue Owens**, scholarship chair, made the presentation. The group also honored 13 educators who had passed away during the year. A book was presented to the local library for each of them — **Carole Tannehill** made the presentation.

Congratulations to Savannah!

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

HARD WORK PAYS OFF IN PORTAGE CO.!



Pictured from left to right are five of the scholarship winners: Elizabeth Noland (Southeast High School), Kelsey Titko (Theodore Roosevelt High School), Hannah Welling (Field High School), Rory Franks (Bio-Med Science Academy) and Grace Gretz (Bio-Med Science Academy).

The scholarship winners not shown are Grace Klein (Southeast High School) and Hannan Miterko (Field High School).

The Portage County Retired Teachers Association awarded **\$1,500** scholarships to seven recent high school graduates who are planning to enter the field of education this fall.

The recipients were chosen by the PCRTA Scholarship Committee consisting of Chairman Jim Montaquila, Jan Fencl, Darlene Fetterhoff, Dave Gynn, Ria Mastromatteo, Ron Snowberger and Kay Wise.

Congratulations to all of the recipients!

To learn more about the Portage Co. chapter, please visit their website.

SCHOLARSHIPS IN TRUMBULL CO.

Trumbull Retired Teachers Association presented scholarships to five deserving area students. The recipients for 2018 are **Donna Cherry, Michael Cline Jr., Madison McGuire** and standing are **Erika Sitch and Gabriella Miller**. The TRTA presents the scholarships every year with money donated by TRTA members.

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



Pictured Above: Donna Cherry, Michael Cline Jr., Madison McGuire and in back row: Erika Sitch and Gabriella Miller

SPENDING A SUMMER DAY IN STARK CO.

Members of the **Stark County Retired Teachers Association** recently enjoyed a family day picnic at Beech Creek Gardens and Nature Preserve.

The event followed the May luncheon program presented by SCRTA member Bobbi Pugh. Pugh, a volunteer at Beech Creek Gardens, presented a slide program highlighting the many hands-on educational opportunities available to young folks at the location near Alliance, Ohio.

Bobbi introduced members to the new “**Nature Playce**” where children can play with natural elements such as sand, wood, water and living plants. Among the many adventures available are a zip line, life-size Lincoln Logs, mud kitchen and an ADA compliant tree house. Signs at each station inform parents of the educational benefits at each activity.

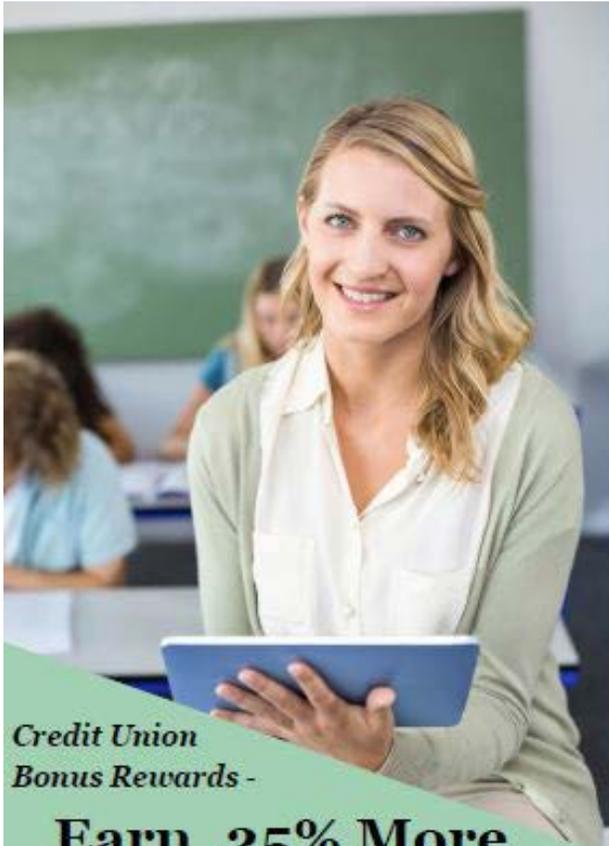
A Butterfly House, Caterpillar Nursery, and the Amazing Garden plant science center are also featured attractions at Beech Creek.

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

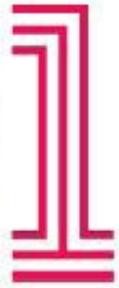


Myra Mehl (pictured above and below), granddaughter of SCRTA members Sharon and Paul Hobe (SCRTA President), prepares and bakes a cake for her father’s birthday at the mud kitchen at Beech Creek Garden’s Nature Playce during the family picnic there.





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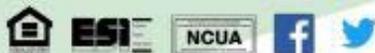
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MAKING NEWS IN MADISON CO.

On June 11, 2018 **Madison County Retired Teachers Association** held their meeting at Der Dutchman Restaurant in Plain City, Ohio.

Recognized, were the 2018 MCRT Scholarship recipients: **West Jefferson graduate, Cole Howard** and **Serenity Kurtz from Jonathan Alder** (unable to attend). Both students will be pursuing a degree in education this fall.

Guest speaker was **Dana Engle**, CEO of Madison Health. The topic “Right Choice, Right Here - Staying local for healthcare”, updated on the new hospital additions and renovations. A new emergency department, a state of the art oncology floor and a refurbished birthing wing are all part of the plans due to open December 2018.

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



MCRT members enjoying lunch at Der Dutchman



2018 scholarship winner, Cole Howard w/ his mother, a teacher at London City SD



Guest speaker, Dana Engle CEO of Madison Health

MORE FROM MAHONING CO.



Pictured above: President Susan Harris and guest speaker Dr. Jay Brock of Cleveland Clinic (and President Harris' son!)



Guests at the MRTA summer meeting included Carol Kinsey, ORTA NE Liaison (pictured above in front left), pictured with MRTA President Susan Harris, Membership Chair Phil Buto, and Treasurer Debbie Mettee.

The Mahoning Co. Retired Teachers Association held its summer meeting at Drake's Landing in Canfield, Ohio in June.

President Susan Harris welcome those who attended and conducted a brief business meeting.

Guest speaker **Dr. Jay Brock**, a staff scientist at Cleveland Clinic, presented a program on cancer and treatment and research in the era of Genomic Medicine: Understanding DNA to treat patients.

The Community Service project was a collection for the Potential Development Center.

Regional Liaison, **Carol Kinsey**, presented the latest from ORTA and STRS.

Later in the meeting President Susan Harris also congratulated **Margarita Rodriguez, Barbara Gray, Carolyn Eltibi and Carol Glenn** on becoming MRTA life members.

The next meeting will be on September 12, featuring the YWCA Young Women with Bright Futures Program. Newly retired educators of Mahoning Co. will also be honored.

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



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**PREPARE
FOR THE BEST**



**HAVE YOU PAID YOUR ORTA DUES
THIS YEAR?**

A friendly reminder that if you need to renew your ORTA dues (\$30), now is the time!

You can now pay online ([click here](#)) with credit card, making it faster and more convenient than ever. We do 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 to 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**

A PUBLISHED AUTHOR AND MORE IN MORROW CO.

The Morrow County Retired Teachers met for lunch June 4th at Trinity UM Church. Guest speaker **Sharon Kincade** told of her experiences in writing and self-publishing her first novel, “Cyber Star”, and how Creative writing had been a focus of Kincade’s language arts classes during her 30 years of teaching. Following retirement from Buckeye Valley Schools, she had time to pursue her own writing goals. Inspired by old family photos, Kincade created a story based on real life memories and experiences combined with the imagined lives of deceased family members. The novel takes a science fiction turn as historically accurate events are revealed to the main character by wishing upon the star, Regulus. Kincade concluded her presentation by sharing excerpts from her book and presenting her audience with star-shaped cookies. Copies of “Cyber Star” can be obtained by contacting her.



Pictured above: Published author Sharon Kincade with a copy of her book “Cyber Star”

President Bonnie Hildebrand announced that the recipient of this year’s MCRTA scholarship is **Rebecca Duckworth**, a recent graduate of Northmor High School who will be attending Ashland University.

Hildebrand thanked Joan and Mary Kay Myers for preparing the gifts distributed to active county teachers during “Teacher Appreciation Week”.

Upcoming events include; Executive Committee meeting Aug. 20, 10:30 am at Edison UM Church and general meeting Oct. 1 with election of officers and a presentation on pre-planning by Jamie Brucker from Snyder Funeral Homes.

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

ORTA ONLINE POLL RESULTS:

ORTA asked in a online poll:

Do you think elected officials do enough to protect our pension systems, like STRS?*

YES!

3%

NO!

97%

****THIS IS THE CALCULATED OPINION OF THE 300+ ORTA MEMBERS SURVEYED***

WHAT'S ORTA UP TO?

Take a look at what's coming up in September around our chapters and organization!
The calendar is always available on our website.

Follow the link to view: <http://www.orta.org/calendar.html>

**Would you like to have an ORTA representative speak at your chapter meeting?*

Call the ORTA office today to set up a date!



Wednesday, September 5	
11:30am	Jackson Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
12:00pm	Athens County Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Friday, September 7	
11:00am	Union Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter @ Union Co. Juvenile Detention Center
12:00pm	Stark Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Monday, September 10	
11:00am	Lake Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting Candidates Forum
12:00pm	Richland Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
12:00pm	Hamilton Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
5:30pm	Henry Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Tuesday, September 11	
10:30am	Jefferson Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting Kendra Burger Attending
11:30am	Montgomery Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
12:00pm	Fairfield County Retired Teachers Assn. Meeting
12:00pm	Summit County Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Wednesday, September 12	
11:00am	Franklin Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
11:00am	Mahoning Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Thursday, September 13	
12:00pm	Belmont County Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Friday, September 14	
11:00am	Coshocton Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
12:00pm	Delaware Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Monday, September 17	
11:30am	Ashtabula Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Tuesday, September 18	
11:30am	Mercer Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Thursday, September 20	
11:00am	Clark Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
11:30am	Darke Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
12:00pm	Hardin Co. Chapter Meeting
12:00pm	Ross County Retired Teachers Assn. Meeting
12:00pm	Columbiana Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
12:00pm	Portage Co. Retired Teacher Assn. Chapter Meeting
12:00pm	Meigs County Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Friday, September 21	
11:00am	Harrison Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
12:00pm	Alliance Area Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Tuesday, September 25	
11:00am	Wayne Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
11:30am	Scioto Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Meeting
Wednesday, September 26	
11:30am	Guernsey Co. Retired Teachers Assn. Chapter Luncheon Meeting

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Mater Dei Academy Open Teaching Position

Mater Dei Academy in Whitehall, Ohio needs qualified, part-time math teacher for grades 5 - 8

Hours: 3 hours per day/ 3 days per week Salary is negotiable.

Please send brief resume to: Mater Dei Academy 3695 Elm St. Columbus, Ohio 43213

Contacts: Mary Amorose - 614-231-1984

Linda Reis - 614-432-1541

Job Type: Part-time

Experience: teaching: 1 year

Education: Bachelor's

Required work authorization: United States

IN MEMORIAM:

ORTA would like to pay our respects to the following members who have recently passed on. We are sending condolences to friends and family at this difficult time.

Shelby Co.

Constance L. Droesch

Mahoning Co.

Larry Grist

Helen Kubic

Lena Centofanti

Ted Vestal

Angela Manginelli

Lillian Jacobs

****Deceased Member submission Policy update:***

If you submit member(s) passing, please forward any obituary or funeral arrangements for our records.

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



**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!

