



KEEPING ORTA MEMBERS APPRISED OF HAPPENINGS AND EVENTS

8|20

## IN THIS EDITION:

- Update from Executive Director
- Chapter Scholarships
- Listen Up Members!
- ORTA Chapter Leader Survey



Kara Mendenhall, ORTA  
Executive Director

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello ORTA members!

After a brief break in July, the members of the Executive Committee are back at work for you! I think it sounds odd to say, because we are meeting remotely, but the break has refreshed my enthusiasm. Maybe, it is also that the weather is cooling down a bit around Ohio, and fall is close--that always makes me feel renewed! The start of school is a time of great excitement for me, even now.

It is difficult to watch my friends and former colleagues work to make it possible for students to attend school in person. I have applied to be a substitute again this year, but I don't know if I will need extra training going in, or what I will encounter as I enter the changed world of school. I wonder, also, if this crisis will cause students to value school more now that they have had to be away from friends and teachers as long as they have. I am a bit anxious about all the changes and hope I can learn to adapt quickly.

To respond to the need to be apart, ORTA has begun a podcast series. Our Executive Director, Robin Rayfield, is the speaker on the first installment. He shares some insight into what he does for the ORTA members as he advocates for us before STRS and the Ohio Legislature. It is worth a listen--and this is from someone who has heard it before! The beauty of the podcasts is that we can re-listen as much as we want to make sure we understand what is being said. We hope to make the first one public very shortly.

I hope you are all well and keeping safe as this pandemic drags on through the summer. It appears likely that there will not be a vaccine until next year. Most of our local chapters have suspended in-person meetings to ensure the safety of our members, but not meeting adds to the feeling of isolation for many members. The lack of other community activities solidifies the need for reaching out to those we often see in volunteer situations, or just in our occasional meetings at the same grocery or hairdresser. Please remember to let folks know you are thinking of them, it means a great deal to hear from a friend.

We are hoping to have a virtual state-wide meeting this fall. More information will be coming as the time draws near. Please know that we are still working to move our group toward a return of the COLA, and preserving our other benefits. I wish you a pleasant end to your summer. If you garden, I hope it is fruitful. If you are a birder, I hope you spot the one to complete your list. Whatever you do, please be safe, wear a mask, and remember to wash up when you are done. We all want to be here when this is over!

Warm Regards,  
Kara Mendenhall, ORTA 2020 President



Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA  
Executive Director

# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings ORTA Faithful!

## **ORTA Meeting News**

As you may already know, ORTA meetings across the state have been postponed with the pandemic conditions. I have heard from several chapters that have decided to cancel all ORTA activities at their individual RTA until 2021. As much as this pains me, I understand the wisdom in being cautious. I am hopeful that this will all be behind us as we move into the spring of 2021 and that I am able to visit chapters again. It is truly the best part of being Executive Director of ORTA. I have learned so much about our state and I have made so many friends in this position I feel blessed!

## **STRS News**

As I write this note for the newsletter, I have been monitoring what is taking place at STRS via ‘attendance’ at the monthly meetings. By attendance, I mean that I have listened to the meetings on my computer or device as there are no visitors allowed at the STRS meetings. As such, I am not able to share ORTA concerns in person, however, I do provide comments to the Trustees via email. Of course, our hope is that we all get back to normal sooner than later and anyone that wants to attend these meetings may do so. STRS has hired a new Executive Director to replace Mike Nehf. Bill Neville has assumed this role. You may recall that Mr. Neville had served STRS Ohio as the Chief Legal Counsel. With his previous role with STRS Mr. Neville should hit the ground running. ORTA wishes him the best of luck in his new role. ORTA did reach out to all of Ohio’s legislators asking them to assist STRS retirees. The note included a review of Ohio’s five public pension systems. Our letter pointed out that despite STRS being in the best financial shape of the 5 pension systems, our retirees have suffered the most with regards to loss of promised benefits. Our hope is that the legislative bodies may offer support to our cause. This fall ORTA will provide a list of ‘talking points’ to our membership and ask that ORTA members or ORTA chapters contact their legislators with information regarding the loss of our promised benefits.

## **ORTA Podcast**

I was asked about the possibility of ORTA offering a podcast on a regular basis. This request came at a good time as ORTA was recently provided a grant from the NRTA. This grant, called the We Care grant provides a bit of funding to support ORTA offering such a podcast. Alissa Burton and I worked on this project and have begun the process of recording a podcast that we will place on ORTA’s website. Each podcast will offer an in depth look at issues that are importance to our members. Our hoe is to have the podcast up and available by the end of August.

## **Membership**

Mia McLean has been updating ORTA’s membership throughout the COVID 19 pandemic. I am happy to report that many chapters and individuals have been sending in their memberships to our office. We have engaged in an effort to reach out to ORTA members that may have allowed their membership to lapse during the 2018 and 2019 years. This effort included a letter being sent to all ORTA members whose membership expired in 2018 or 2019. This effort has been successful as over 100 members renewed their membership. Several more ‘batches’ of these letters will go out over the next month so we anticipate that this will result in more members! We also encourage each ORTA member to reach out to their retired friends and colleagues to encourage ORTA membership. Thank you for your support and encouragement over the last several months. ORTA is only as strong as the people that make up this great organization!

Best Regards.

Robin Rayfield, ORTA Executive Director



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**\*\*Remember, the date we process your payment is your new due date for the following year (i.e. 06/20/20, new due date is 06/20/21). If you pay your ORTA dues to your local chapter, your payment is applied upon receipt to our office.**

*Thank you!*



# LISTEN UP!

We're on the air! ORTA has started a podcast to further our connection and communication with our members. We're planning on releasing our first episode at the end of the month, and plan on recording monthly. We will supply a link to listen on our website, and we will be available on all streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Podcasts, just search "ORTACast"! We're excited to begin this new platform to continue to grow our outreach and membership. Thanks for listening, and we hope you enjoy what you hear!



# ORTACAST

THE ONLY PODCAST THAT ADVOCATES, SERVES AND BUILDS  
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## ORTA CHAPTER FEATURED SCHOLARSHIP



Congratulations to **Summer Dice** on receiving the **Greene County Retired Teacher Association** Scholarship presented in honor of **Gale Adkins**. Gale was a long time Xenia teacher / administrator who was very active in the GCRTA as well as the current President of the Ohio Retired Teacher Association at the time of his passing. **Janet Adkins** and GCRTA leadership presented the scholarship to Summer. She will be attending Wilmington College in the fall with a double major in history and education.

## ORTA CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

*While so many of our chapters have been unable to meet in person or conduct volunteer activities, they have been successful in awarding many scholarships to our next generation of educators. Take a look!*



The **Pickaway County Retired Teachers** Association recently awarded Grants-in-Aid to 3 Teays Valley graduates majoring in Education. Two of the grants were funded by donations made in memory of PCRTA and ORTA member Mary Lou Partee. Pictured are **Julia Nace**, a Senior at OU, **Ally Roberts**, a Junior at OU, **Heather Tucker**, a Senior at OCU, PCRTA Treasurer Alice Harker, President Patricia Beathard and Grant Committee Chairman Carol Ann Bowling.. For more information about the PCRTA you may E-mail: [perta@gmail.com](mailto:perta@gmail.com) or Facebook: Pickaway County Retired Teachers.



**Butler County Retired Teachers Association** presented three \$1000 scholarships to graduating seniors who plan to become teachers. **Michaela Ann Ferguson** will attend Ohio University to major in general music. **Marissa King** is planning to attend Miami University in Oxford to major in primary education. **Elijah Walter** will attend Miami University in Oxford to major in history. Dianne Aiken, chair of the Scholarship Committee along with Scholarship Committee member Beverly Worley selected the recipients. Due to the novel coronavirus, Dianne, Beverly and BCRTA President Deloris Hudson delivered the scholarships along with a certificate to each recipient.

## ORTA CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS (CON'D)



The **Highland County Retired Teachers Association** has awarded three scholarships for the 2020-2021 school year. **Ciara Colwell**, Hillsboro, will receive the \$500 Harold W. Spargur Memorial Scholarship. Miss Colwell is the daughter of Anthony and April Colwell of Hillsboro. She is a graduate of Fairfield Local High School and plans to attend Ohio University in the fall to pursue a degree in Music Education. **Sara Free** and **Heather Parker** will each receive a \$500 HCRTA Scholarship. Miss Free is the daughter of Craig and Stephanie Miley of Greenfield. She graduated from Greenfield McClain High School and plans to attend Wilmington

College in the fall to pursue a degree in Early Childhood Education with a minor in Special Education. Miss Parker is the daughter of Chris and Sherry Parker of Greenfield. She graduated from Greenfield McClain High School and plans to attend The Ohio State University in the fall to pursue a degree in English Education. Heather also looks forward to coaching during her career. Congratulations to these deserving future educators. Anyone wishing to support the HCRTA scholarship program can do so by contacting Mary Black at [mblack45150@cinci.rr.com](mailto:mblack45150@cinci.rr.com)



The **Clark County Retired Teachers Association** has awarded five scholarships to students earning their degrees in education.

The **Heartland Federal Credit Union Scholarship** in the amount of \$1000 was granted to Abigail Baucant-Fulk, who graduated from Kenton Ridge High School, and is a senior currently at Wight State University, studying Early Childhood Education.

A **CCRTA Scholarship of \$1000** went to Maria Rinaldi, a Northwestern High School graduate and is going to be a senior studying integrated English and Language Arts at Miami University.

The **Wallace and Enda Smith Scholarship of \$1000** was awarded to Drew Speas, who graduated from the Global Impact STEM Academy in 2018, and she will be a junior at OSU, where she is studying in Music Education.

A **CCRTA Scholarship of \$1000** went to Cheyann Neal, a graduate of Tecumseh High School in 2017, and is soon to be senior at Wright State University, earning a teaching degree in Mathematics and Social Studies.

A **CCRTA Scholarship of \$1000** was also granted to Audri Blackburn, a graduate of Kenton Ridge High School, and is preparing to be a junior at OSU, studying to be an Intervention Specialist.

## ORTA CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS (CON'D)



In June, the **Logan County Retired Teachers Association** chapter presented their \$1,000 Scholarship to recipient **Cheyenne Gluckl**, accompanied by her father, James. A graduate of West Liberty Salem, she plans to attend The Ohio State University in the fall.

Congratulations to Cheyanne!



**Guernsey County Retired Teachers** recently awarded their 2020 scholarship to **Khloe Taylor**, daughter of Brian and Lisa Taylor. This one time, \$1,500 scholarship is funded through donations of retired teachers in Guernsey County and a generous contribution by Judy Humphrey, former GCRTA president. Khloe, a graduate of Cambridge High School, will attend Muskingum University in the fall to pursue a degree in Education. The scholarship is awarded to a Guernsey County resident who is entering the field of education. It is based on recommendations, grade point average, class rank, activities, ACT test scores, and an essay of interest in teaching.

**Tuscarawas County Retired Teachers** recently awarded their six 2020 scholarships to various applicants. The requirements are that they applicant needs to be a child, grandchild, niece or nephew of an association member. These are students that excel in studies, leadership, community activities and are pursuing a college degree, presently. This year the recipients are:

**Laken Young:** A graduate of New Philadelphia High School, and will attend the University of Akron for a degree in Nursing. She is the granddaughter of member Roni Leeper.

**Sadie Hurst:** A graduate of New Philadelphia High School and will attend OSU for a degree in Environmental Science. She is the granddaughter of member Carole Hurst.

**Cole Barnhart:** a graduate of Claymont High School, will be attending University of Akron in pursue of a degree in Political Science and Pre-Law. He is the grandson of member Karen Oswald.

**(Tuscarawas scholarships, con'd)**

**Nathan Walker:** A graduate of New Philadelphia High School, and will attend Kent State University and the University of Akron to study Engineering and is the grandson of member Peggy Walker.

**Steven Ivanek:** A graduate of Firelands High School and will attend Bowling Greene State University for a degree in Communications and Broadcasting. He is the grandson of member Larem Chaney.

**Anna Nacci:** a graduate of Wooster High School, will be attending the College of Wooster in pursue of a degree in Political Science and Pre-Law. She is the granddaughter of member Linda Nacci.

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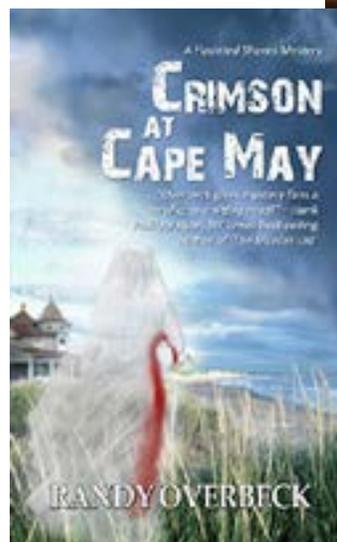
## LOOKING FOR A QUARANTINE READ?

Many of our members have heard of our ORTA past President, **Randy Overbeck**. But have you read his books?

Take a curious walk through the life of a paranormal-sensitive, Darrell Henshaw. Darrell is a teacher, coach and much to his chagrin, a person who can communicate with the spirits who still walk among us. In the previous book, **Blood on the Chesapeake**, Darrell comes to grips with this “gift”, and begins a journey that reveals a chilling secret that lies within the small sleepy town he chose to settle in on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. Along the way, he makes friends, enemies and more—but not without it’s struggles.

In the follow up story in the **Haunted Shores Mysteries Series, Crimson at Cape May**, we are with Darrell again, this time as he heads for Cape May to coach a summer football camp. The resort town, with gorgeous beaches, rich history and famous Victorian mansions, might just be the getaway he needs. Only, no one told him Cape May is the most haunted seaport on the East Coast. When a resident ghost, the Haunted Bride, stalks Darrell, begging for his help, he can’t refuse, and joins forces with Cassie, another sensitive. As Darrell and the street-wise teen investigate the bride’s death, they uncover something far more sinister than a murder. Can Darrell and Cassie expose those behind the crimes before they end up becoming the next victims?

Buy both stories today on [Amazon!](#)





# ORTA WANTS YOU TO SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS

We're looking for your photos! Many chapters have submitted photos for stories to share about chapter meetings and activities over the years, but now we're looking to show how diverse, unique and active you all are! ORTA is planning a new marketing campaign, and we want you to be the stars. Please submit photos of members doing community service projects, helping others and/or group photos that show members together. We have photos in our archives, but any additional ones would be helpful for the creative process.

*\*We understand that many of these photos will be from past events, and that's OK!*

Please send your submissions to Alissa at [publications@orta.org](mailto:publications@orta.org).

*You will be contacted if your photo(s) are chosen for use in the campaign. You and your chapter will be given credit for the photo.*

# ORTA CHAPTER LEADER SURVEY

During this era of COVID-19, ORTA is committed to continuing to offer support for our chapters leadership and members. We've put together a survey to better assess what needs we can address during this time. Please take a few moments and reply to our questions. We will compile this information, and communicate solutions to assist to any concerns.

*Please reply with your responses to [publications@orta.org](mailto:publications@orta.org)*



- 1)** Are you planning to continue meeting schedules within the next three months? Have you had a meeting within the last month? If yes, what precautions are you taking?
  
- 2)** As a chapter, what are some ways you have kept your members informed and engaged with information or chapter updates?
  
- 4)** What can ORTA do to better support our local chapters at this time? (Host Zoom meetings, online webinars for various topics, virtual regional meetings, etc)
  
- 5)** Can ORTA help put together any materials for your chapter? (Letters, brochures, other mailings)

*Your feedback is important! Thank you for taking the time to reply to this brief questionnaire*



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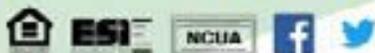
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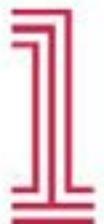


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# IN MEMORIAM

## **Lake Co.**

Joanne Speece, August 5, 2020, LCRTA and ORTA Member

Lynn Kerkel, July 30, 2020, LCRTA and ORTA Member

Ronald Balogh, August 14, 2020, LCRTA and ORTA Life Member

## **Portage Co.**

Earl D. Kilchenman, May 28, 2020  
PCRTA and ORTA Member

## **Stark Co.**

Mary Bailey, June 3, 2020, SCRTA and ORTA Life Member

## **Trumbull Co.**

Sarah Witt, December 24, 2019, TRTA and ORTA Life Member

Guido T. "Mr. Del" DelGarbino, August, 9, 2020  
TRTA and ORTA Life Member

## **Tuscarawas Co.**

Shirley A. Wagner, April 16, 2020  
TCRTA and ORTA Member

Neva "Gerry" Cendening, April 20, 2020  
TCRTA and ORTA Member

Ferne Graff, May 17, 2020 TCRTA and ORTA Member

**\*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**



## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

### **ORTA (Ohio Retired Teachers Association)**

250 E. Wilson Bridge Road | Suite 150  
Worthington, OH 43085  
614-431-7002 | [www.orta.org](http://www.orta.org)

### **AMBA Benefits (Association Member Benefits Advisors)**

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### **STRS (State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio)**

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