

- A note from our President
- Update from our Executive Director
- Chapter updates



2018 ORTA President, Bee Lehner

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Holiday greetings, ORTA Members!

One last inspirational story for 2018! Looking forward to chatting in 2019! “Once upon a time a daughter complained to her father that her life was miserable and that she didn’t know how she was going to make it. She was tired of fighting and struggling all the time. It seemed just as one problem was solved, another one soon followed.

Her father took her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Once the three pots began to boil, he placed potatoes in one pot, eggs in the second pot, and ground coffee beans in the third pot.

He then let them sit and boil, without saying a word to his daughter. The daughter impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing.

After twenty minutes he turned off the burners. He took the potatoes out of the pot and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the boiled eggs out and placed them in a bowl. He then ladled the coffee out and placed it in a cup. Turning to her he asked. “Daughter, what do you see?”

“Potatoes, eggs, and coffee,” she hastily replied. “Look closer,” he said, “and touch the potatoes.” She did and noted that they were soft. He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. Its rich aroma brought a smile to her face.

“Father, what does this mean?” she asked. He then explained that the potatoes, the eggs and coffee beans had each faced the same adversity– the boiling water. However, each one reacted differently. The potato went in strong, hard, and unrelenting, but in boiling water, it became soft and weak. The egg was fragile, with the thin outer shell protecting its liquid interior until it was put in the boiling water. Then the inside of the egg became hard. However, the ground coffee beans were unique. After they were exposed to the boiling water, they changed the water and created something new.

“Which are you,” he asked his daughter. “When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a potato, an egg, or a coffee bean? “

Moral of the story: In life, things happen around us, things happen to us, but the only thing that truly matters is what happens within us. Which one are you?

Yours, this Happy Christmas Season!

Bee Lehner, ORTA President

Thought for the Day: “One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don’t clean it up too quickly.” ~Andy Rooney

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Merry Christmas!



Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA
Executive Director

It is hard to believe but I have just completed my 14th month working with the great people of ORTA. Much has been accomplished in the last year, but probably most important to note is what ORTA has done with regards to the COLA situation. ORTA has been active in its work with the STRS Board of Trustees and with the Ohio Legislative bodies on the loss of COLA for STRS retirees. As, Executive Director I have addressed the STRS Board of Trustees at three public meetings, two private meetings, and ORTA hosted a team from STRS in October where the topic of conversation was COLA. In my time with ORTA, I have also met with legislators in private meetings and attended all Ohio Retirement Study Council meetings, lobbying for legislative support for retirees. In addition, ORTA has worked with the grassroots group ‘STRS Members Only Forum’ on Facebook to restore COLA. If you haven’t checked out this Facebook Group page, please do so. There is an opportunity to sign the www.restoreoureourcola.com petition to help reinstate our COLA within that group page. On the healthcare front ORTA successfully worked with the Healthcare Pension Advocates for STRS committee to maintain the \$29.90 monthly stipend for Medicare insurance participants. Currently, the STRS healthcare fund sits at **153%** funding!

Most ORTA members already know what ORTA does on behalf of STRS retirees, however, it might be beneficial to remind everyone of what ORTA does. ORTA has a primary focus on protecting the pension benefits of STRS retirees, including COLA and healthcare. Beyond pension advocacy, ORTA works with local county retired teacher associations to help enhance the lives of retired educators at the local level. Although ORTA is separate from the local RTAs we are committed to supporting the many wonderful things local retired teacher groups do for their communities. Please remember, your membership in ORTA helps with ORTA’s advocacy for YOUR PENSION. Our voice is only as strong as our membership. Your continued support of ORTA has enabled ORTA to place pressure on both the legislators and STRS Trustees. ORTA also needs leaders. We need new people to step up and get involved with fighting for what we were PROMISED at our retirement! If you haven’t volunteered at your local RTA please consider doing so.

Best Holiday Wishes,
Dr. Robin Rayfield, ORTA Executive Director



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PICKAWAY CO. BIDS HIGH AT SILENT AUCTION



Pictured above: Silent auction items getting the highest bids!

The **Pickaway County Chapter of the Ohio Retired Teachers Association** met December 5. Thirty-two members and guests enjoyed a catered meal by Elegant Eats and entertainment by the Circleville High School Choir. Items donated by members for the Silent Auction Fundraiser brought in **\$335.50**, to be split between the Education Grant Fund and general expenses.

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



Pictured right: The Circleville High School Choir performs for the group

SCHOLARSHIPS IN STARK CO.



Pictured above: Angel Makowski, Jessica Agnone and ; Kailee Humbert

Stark County Retired Teachers' Association awarded five scholarships at their September meeting. Scholarship recipients are juniors or seniors in college who are working toward a certificate in education. The recipients are **Jessica Agnone**, Kent State University; **Brianna Boehlke**, University of Mount Union; **Kailee Humbert**, Kent State University; **Angel Makowski**, Walsh University; **Tyler Stewart**, University of Mount Union.

Each recipient received a \$1,750 scholarship award and a booklet, *Legacy: Stories from Teachers*. The booklet contained submissions by Stark County retired educators detailing their experiences in the classroom. It also included advice, educational quotes, and humorous quips.

Jim Cain from **Association Members Benefits Advisors** shared insurance options available to retired educators. Carol Kinsey, Northeast Ohio Regional Liaison for Ohio Retired Teachers Association, reported on important issues.

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

MORE IN MAHONING COUNTY



Pictured above: YSU students Lindsay Soltis and John Rozum, both selected winners of the MRTA Scholarship Awards are pictured with President Susan Harris and Scholarship Chair Sonia Tsvetkoff.

The Mahoning Co. Retired Teachers Association gathered in November to pay tribute to our Veterans, and to announce the two winners of YSU's School of Education Scholarship award.

Over 110 members attended to hear Dean Deluca speak on "Mindfulness and Meditation", which was a presentation of stress relief techniques.

Congratulations to the scholarship winners **Lindsay Soltis**, who is studying Early Childhood Education, and **John Rozum** who is studying as a Integrated Language Arts Major, with a linguistics minor and holds a certification in Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.



Pictured above: MRTA President Susan Harris stands with honored guests and Veterans from the Canfield American Legion Post, Mike Kubitz and Matthew Lewis, along with MRTA's webmaster, Debbie Haverstock who played taps.

President Susan Harris also made time to congratulate Mary Wilder, Jane Hallos, Emily O'Dell, Doreen Parilla and Doreen Hunter on joining the MRTA group as Lifetime Members.

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



Pictured above: Guest Speaker Deana DeLuca with Program Chair Phil Butto and MRTA President, Susan Harris

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!

