

# MCHENRY COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

## IRTA AREA 2, REGION 2, UNIT 13



[www.irtaonline.org](http://www.irtaonline.org) | [www.mcirta.org](http://www.mcirta.org)

### 2023 Meetings

July/August—no meetings

September 20—31 North

October 18—JB Moose

November 15—31 North

December 13—MCC

#### Upcoming Programs:

Sept: Bob Frenz  
Historic Schoolhouses

Oct: Jerry Gudauskas  
Bee Keeper

Nov: Annie Ballin  
Cellist

Dec: Woodstock Carolers

**Suggestions for future venues  
or speakers are welcome.**

Please contact Beth Miller  
[millerfam80@sbcglobal.net](mailto:millerfam80@sbcglobal.net)

Programs subject to change

#### September Menu—\$25

Homemade Bread and Butter  
Signature 31 North Salad  
Beef Stroganoff  
Trio of vegetables  
Assorted Desserts  
Coffee, Hot Tea, Iced Tea

## President's Message

*Joann Jazak*

The joys of summer weather are truly invigorating and rejuvenating for me. It is the perfect time to enjoy outdoor activities and catch up with family. Life seems to be less hectic in this season and also gives a person time to enjoy the simpler things in life. Hope many of you are enjoying the later part of summer. Before we know it, the season of Fall will be upon us.

**Our next meeting is September- North 31 in McHenry.** This is also when the **REACH OUT** jar will have its last showing.

Remember the jar is holding members who have brought individuals with them to a meeting, the guests themselves, new individuals who have joined, as well as members that we have not seen in a while. Be sure to be present for the drawings. Names can still be added in September. The next time you locate the Red Pen given to you in June think of someone to invite to our meeting—a new retiree, a person who has not been in a while.

**Norb Wolters** also will be discussing at the September meeting, the changes we will be voting on at the convention. Please come and get involved in our decisions.

## September Program

*Beth Miller*

One of our own members will be speaking at our September luncheon. **Bob Frenz** will do a presentation on school houses in McHenry County. Bob W. Frenz, M.A., earned a master's degree in history from Northern Illinois University and taught at Huntley (IL) High School for thirty - five years. He is the author of [Historic Country Schools of McHenry County, IL](#), (M.T. Pub. Co., 2008) and "Inquiring into Northwoods Country Schools," Country School Journal (2013). Bob is a past president of the McHenry County Historical Society where he works as a volunteer archivist. Visit him at [lakesideantiques@netzero.net](mailto:lakesideantiques@netzero.net).



## BOARD MEMBERS

### Elected Members

President: Joann Jazak  
 Vice President: Linda Young  
 Board Secretary: April Shouse  
 Unit Secretary: Cathy Schiller  
 Treasurer: Dick Seaborn

### Appointed Members

Membership: Marlene Griffith  
 Programs/Venues: Beth Miller  
 Scholarship: Mary Noe  
 Member Benefits: Rose Turk  
 Information: Kathy Speaker  
 Legislative: Norb Wolter  
 Public Relations: Peggy Hart  
 Nominations: Olivia Santarelli  
 Constitution: Lois Shartiag  
 Finance: Olivia Santarelli  
 History: Robert Frenz  
 Budget: **TBA**

## Need to Cancel?

### Need to Cancel?

If you cannot show the day of the meeting, call Linda Young at 847-209-8047. We do need you to pay for your meal if you do not cancel with one week's notice.

**Reach us at:**  
**PO Box 1776**  
**Crystal Lake, IL 60039**

# Membership News

*Marlene Griffith and Linda Young*

Here comes summer... and teachers retiring. As always, I am trying to encourage non-members, especially new retirees, to join us. Some districts, however, are making it very difficult to get the names and addresses of those newly retired. If you happen to know someone who is retiring, please let that person know about us or send me the name and address so I can make contact. You can also tell them about our wonderful website: [MCRTA.org](http://MCRTA.org).

YOU CAN HELP US TO REMAIN A STRONG AND VITAL GROUP BY ENCOURAGING RETIRED EDUCATORS TO JOIN OUR LOCAL ORGANIZATION (MCRTA) AND OUR STATE ORGANIZATION (IRTA).

If you have any questions, please contact Marlene at [marlenegriffith@icloud.com](mailto:marlenegriffith@icloud.com) or call/text her at 815.385.3533.

Questions? Email Marlene at [marlenegriffith@icloud.com](mailto:marlenegriffith@icloud.com) or text/call her at 815.385.3533.

## Why Join?

As the voice of Illinois's retired educators, the **Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA)** defends pension and healthcare protection via its lobbying efforts, advocates for retirees, provides group rate dental and vision insurance among other benefits, and provides travel and entertainment options for its members.

The **McHenry County Retired Teachers Association (MCRTA)** is your local connection to IRTA. The MCRTA board is active at the state level as we have members holding positions on their boards/committees. We add our local influence for the passage of favorable legislation in Springfield. We keep our membership informed of current Teachers' Retirement System changes. We also support current and future teachers by giving scholarships and grants.

We are always looking for entertaining/informative programs and fun activities for our members. You can help by bringing new members to our meetings and by bringing us your good ideas!



## Steve Polep Memorial

On July 15th a Celebration of Life was held in honor of Steve Polep. Many family members and friends gathered sharing their special memories of Steve. Jan Polep, Steve's wife, presented Joann Jazak, president of MCRTA, with the official gavel that Steve used when presiding over meetings.



## Open Position—Volunteer Needed

The death of Nancy Tober has left a void in our board and in our hearts. She will be greatly missed. Nancy was the board member in charge of our budget and was one of the four ladies who collect the luncheon money every month.

We are now in need of another individual to step up to her position and help collect our monthly lunch money at the meeting. The three other ladies who give timelessly each month can help you in this area. The main job is to check individuals in and take their lunch money. You would need to arrive around 11 a.m. to get set up and be ready for the first members around 11:15. Please contact a board member if this interests you.

## Election Information for MCRTA

*Olivia Santarelli*

According to the MCRTA bylaws, I am informing the members that the President, Joann Jazak, and the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Olivia Santarelli, shall appoint, with the approval of the Board of Directors, additional members to serve on the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall submit the name of the nominee for each elective office and shall present its report to the Board of Directors and the general membership at the September meetings in each odd-numbered year.

**Nominations for all offices may be made from the floor at the September meeting.** Persons nominated must have given consent to serve.

The officers for the contested offices shall be **elected at the annual meeting of members by secret ballot in October of odd-numbered years.** Officers for uncontested offices shall be elected by acclamation in October of odd-numbered years.

Officers so elected shall be **installed the following December** and shall **assume office the following January** first for a two year term.

Officers are President, Vice President, Board Secretary, Unit Secretary, Treasurer.

## IRTA Convention

As a board, we are looking ahead into the fall. The IRTA Convention will be held on October 16-17, 2023 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, Illinois. At this time we have 12 delegates going from our organization. McHenry County is allowed 41 delegates. If this is something you feel you would be interested in you can register and pay on line at <https://www.irtaonline.org/association/convention-2023/>. Registration will be closing by September 15.

You will find all the necessary links on this page—Registration, Agenda, Meals and Costs, and a Reservation Link if you would like to stay at the Crown Plaza. You can also call the Crown Plaza to make your reservation if you prefer. 800.589.2769 The rate is \$112 + tax and the rooms are being held until September 22.

There is also a link to the proposed amendments to our constitution that will be voted upon by the delegates. <https://www.irtaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-Proposed-changes-with-Rationales-final.pdf>

## A Great Way to Help!

### How can the MCRTA help the Huntley H.S. Medical Academy?

---

Renae St. Clair was the McHenry County Educator of the Year and came to our June meeting. She started a Medical Academy a few years ago for Huntley High School. She also is willing to help other high schools with their medical programs. She has asked for our help in a couple of ways:

- If you have any wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, or most any medical supplies like over the bed tables, patient lifts, gait belts...just about anything we can take them as a donation and use them in our classes to teach students how to work with patients. We currently have a Physical Education class that teaches students how to teach patients physical therapy exercises and we need equipment for that class. We also hope to start our own Certified Nursing Assistant class in the 2024-2025 school year and will need supplies for that. You can email, text, or call me and I will pick it up at your house.
- We need great educators (that's you) to serve as pretend patients for our students to work with. I will pick one day in the fall and one day in the spring (exact dates to be determined) and I need volunteers that would be willing to come work with our students. You would pretend that you have a shoulder injury, knee injury, or have trouble walking and need assistance. We will tell you which injury we want you to "fake" and our students would have to use the skills they've learned to help you. You would be needed from about 8am to 11am at Huntley High School.

Contact me anytime.

Renae St.Clair  
Huntley High School Medical Academy  
13719 Harmony Road  
Huntley, IL 60142

Cell: 815-403-6614  
Email: [rstclair@district158.org](mailto:rstclair@district158.org)

# Member Communications

*Kathy Speaker*

This newsletter is being sent via MailChimp without a luncheon sign up since our next one is not until September. We want to keep in touch with you throughout the year and not just on months with meetings.

Finally reach out to us if you are having an issue or question. We found a couple old email addresses last month. You can also reach us on our webpage [www.mcrrta.org](http://www.mcrrta.org) or by emailing us at [mchenryrta@gmail.com](mailto:mchenryrta@gmail.com). I will make sure the appropriate board member gets your inquiry.

# Member Benefits

*Rose Turk*

Hope you are all having a good summer. Here is another reminder of how to get to the benefits that IRTA offers you as members. Follow the instructions on how to get to the AMBA discounts. Then in the future all you need to do is go to the [passportcorporate.com](http://passportcorporate.com) website to find all the discounts IRTA members get from AMBA.

Sign in to the IRTA website, click on Login up in the red and log in. Click on Members Only and then scroll down until you see Members Benefits on the left-hand side and click on this. In the second paragraph of the article click on the blue printing that says "Please click..." Here you will download a 2-page document about benefits IRTA offers. Look at the document. Go to the second page of the document, at the bottom right-hand side of this page you will see myAMBAdiscounts. Follow the 3 steps to activate your AMBA membership. Once you have finished the 3 steps for the AMBA discounts you are able to find all the discounts you want. You are now signed up for AMBA discounts.

Any time you want to see the AMBA discounts go to [passportcorporate.com](http://passportcorporate.com) and put in your email address. You no longer have to go to the IRTA website to find AMBA discounts, but do go to the IRTA website to see what is new with the association.

While you are on [Passportcorporate.com](http://Passportcorporate.com) look at all the discounts AMBA offers IRTA members. For your first time on the website look at all the discounts you can get. Choose from Travel, Dining, Tickets, Shopping, Insurance, and more. Click on one and look at all you are offered. Look at all the things that AMBA offers you. You will be amazed at all the discounts you are entitled to as an IRTA member.

## Scholarship Report

*Mary Noe*

We were honored to have all five MCRTA 2023 scholarship winners attend our June luncheon.

Pictured left to right:

**Olivia Schramm-Huntley HS**-our first Stephen Polep Memorial Scholarship recipient-planning to attend Indiana U. in Special Elementary Education

**Jordan Brogdon-Marengo HS**-planning to attend Illinois State U in Elementary Education

**Lynette Alsot-McHenry HS**-Marcia Wright Memorial Scholarship recipient-planning to attend Oliver Nazarene U. in Special Education

**Mary Martin-Woodstock North HS**-planning to attend Eastern Illinois U. In Elementary Education

**Megan Christy-Crystal Lake South HS**-Marcia Wright Memorial Scholarship recipient-planning to attend Illinois State U. in Secondary Social Science Education



## Grant Report

*Peggy Hart*

The four grant winners also joined us for our June Meeting.

Pictured Left to Right.

**Kathleen Choi**, K-4 music teacher at Algonquin Road School in Fox River Grove, will receive funds to purchase additional instruments.

**Jake Hadden**, organic chemistry instructor at Johnsburg High School, will receive funds to purchase 50 copies of *The Martian* by Andy Weir.

**Aubrey Kuhns**, Pre K-early childhood at Harrison School in Wonder Lake, will receive funds to support the creation of a sensory garden.

**Amy Costello**, 6-7th grade literacy teacher at Harrison School in Wonder Lake, will receive money to buy a class set of the novel, *Wonder* by RJ Palacio.



**Remarks made by  
Kathleen Choi at our last  
membership meeting**

On behalf of myself, my administration and most importantly, my students, I cannot thank you enough for your belief and generosity you have shown to the music program at Algonquin Road School. I am honored and humbled to have been chosen.

I am an elementary k-4 music teacher where the entire district is around 400 students. Last year was my first year at ARS and I walked into a classroom without a single hand drum, 3 xylophones and a smattering of random hand-held instruments. The only thing I had a classroom set of was rhythm sticks. This is not even the most basic equipment that is required for a quality music program, a program that my students deserve. My budget alone could not even get me a class set of hand drums, so expensive xylophones were a pipe dream. Then, I came across your grant application and took a chance. With your generous donation, and some creative shopping, I was able to purchase 3 xylophones, a few maracas and was able to complete that all important class set of hand drums.

I cannot tell you how excited my students were when they showed up. I assure you, that the equipment was put to use right away and my 3rd and 4th Grade students used the xylophones to accompany themselves for their winter performance, an ARS first. My Kindergarteners used the hand drums to learn about beat, while my 1st and 2nd Graders accompanied themselves with the maracas singing the song Tingaleyo for Cinco De Mayo. All of these valuable educational experiences were made possible by your generosity.

All of the instruments purchased with this grant are in the hands of my students daily. With proper care, the lifespan of these instruments can be over 20 years. That equates to thousands of children being affected by the MCRTA. I will finish with one final thank you for supporting me, my students and valuing the role that music education plays in a child's life. I am inspired to be in a room of educators that still seek to make a difference in children's lives, even after the glorious milestone of retirement.

Thank you.  
Kathleen Choi

## Regional Office of Education Pearson Testing Center

A Pearson Vue testing center offering hundreds of professional licensing and certification exams is now open at the McHenry County Regional Office of Education. The center, located at the ROE's office at 408 S. Route 31, McHenry, provides the exams as well as the GED and High School Equivalency Diploma tests.

"Our Pearson Vue testing center is open for business. No longer will McHenry County residents need to travel elsewhere to take a Pearson-administered test to finish their high-school education or attain or renew a professional license of certification – we have that capability right here," Regional Superintendent Diana Hartmann said.

Testing hours at the center are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Friday. Appointments are required, and they can be made by calling the ROE at 815-334-3039. People needing to take the HSE exam can do so for free through Sept. 30.



## An Email from IRTA on Aetna Issues

Hi Joann!

We have received several emails and calls regarding this same issue and that the member has had to appeal the denials from Aetna before having the procedure finally approved.

My understanding is that members should first contact their ordering hospital/physician and request that pre-approvals be sent to Aetna way in advance of the date of the procedure. Secondly, if Aetna denies the test or procedure, they should contact Aetna to appeal the denial or have their physician/hospital contact Aetna regarding the denial and possibly resubmit the pre-approval, sometimes the coding they are using is the issue. Third, the member should also contact the State of Illinois Department of Central Management Services and request the Medicare Unit. They need to file a complaint with CMS as well and ask that they work with Aetna to have the procedure/test approved.

I know this is a lot of steps, but the more retirees that start being proactive in their care and the more complaints both Aetna and CMS receive, will hopefully stop these denials in the future.

I do not have numbers for Aetna, but the member should have contact information on their insurance card. Here is the number for CMS: 1-800-442-1300.

Susan Goetz  
Illinois Retired Teachers Association  
Administrative Assistant  
1-800-728-4782  
[susan@irtaonline.org](mailto:susan@irtaonline.org)

## Membership Application Form

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND YOU WOULD LIKE TO INVITE TO JOIN?

**MCRTA Dues --- You have three choices:**

- 1) Annual dues, \$10 for 2023
- 2) 3-year dues, \$25 for 2023-2025
- 3) LIFE membership for \$150

**I choose to pay (CIRCLE ONE)**

Annual Dues	\$10
3-Year Dues.	\$25
LIFE membership.	\$150

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITE CHECK PAYABLE TO MCRTA. MAIL THIS FORM AND YOUR CHECK TO  
MCRTA  
PO BOX 1776  
CRYSTAL LAKE, IL 60039**