



THE BELLRINGER

Newsletter of the Lake County Retired Teachers Association

Volume 57 No. 2

March, 2021

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE.....

Happy Spring to each of you!

As I look out of my window, I am thankful I see a blue and sunny sky, birds fluttering at the feeders, and the other pre-signs of nature's awakening. Although it may be quite different when you read this newsletter, for you may be seeing a foot of snow with grayish skies. March can be an unpredictable month in some ways.

However, as members of L.C.R.T.A., we are very predictable as to our commitment to the purpose of our organization. In case you don't have Article 1, Section 2 memorized (just kidding), (a) we foster good fellowship among retired public school teachers; (b) we promote the interests and welfare of retired public school teachers; (c) we provide scholarship opportunities to public high school students; (d) we maintain affiliation with other retired teacher associations; (e) we encourage community volunteerism and donations to charity. That is who we are and will continue to be and do.

At this time, I'd like you to meet a member of our Board of Directors who will be functioning in another capacity. Connie Irvin is our new Program Chair, replacing Dave Morse. Connie has an article for you to read and, after reading it we hope that you will respond to it. On behalf of the membership, we thank you, Dave Morse, for providing us with very informative and entertaining programs throughout the past years. KUDOS to YOU!

By now you have gathered that I like to conclude with a reflection of some sorts. Here it is: Talk to yourself. There are times you need expert advice.

"See" you at the General Membership meeting on April 13, 2021 at 11:30am on ZOOM.

Ginny Keller, President

PLEASE NOTE:

If you have received a card from ORTA concerning NON-PAYMENT of dues for 2021, please IGNORE IT. ALL dues have been paid to ORTA. The situation at ORTA has been corrected. Your dues were there on time, just not recorded properly. Everything has been corrected..

Beginning with this newsletter, some members will be receiving the "Bellringer" by email. If you would like to help us save a little money, please send your name and email address to sawitke@oh.rr.com. Just include "Send newsletter by email" with your name and email address.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT.....Tom Moscovic Covid-Can't Believe it is One Year Later

COVID-19 Restrictions To Be Partially Lifted for Spring Events

"This is the start," Lt. Gov. Jon Husted said. "If conditions on the ground improve, we can do even more. (On March 4th Governor DeWine announced that all restrictions will be lifted if the cases go down to 50 per 100,000 populations for two weeks.)

Employees and customers must continue to wear masks, seating in pods will continue, and facilities should have walkways which allow social distancing. General admission (lawn seating, bleachers, etc.) are allowed as long as social distancing is followed. Amusement parks will follow the same guidelines laid out by the state in 2020. If COVID-19 numbers continue to fall and vaccination rates rise, larger crowds will be allowed at all events, the governor said.

"The goal is to get back to what life was before the pandemic. There's a bridge to that life and we have to take that bridge. The bridge is built on two things: vaccinations and to continue to wear masks," DeWine said. "There will be a point in the future, when we have herd immunity, when we won't have to wear masks."

Ohio officials are working with leaders of fairs and festivals to determine unique protocols for those upcoming events. Protocols for proms, banquet centers, wedding receptions and other events are being developed and will be released soon.

Fewer and fewer Ohioans are entering hospitals for COVID-19 treatment, Gov. Mike DeWine announced. 1,262 Ohioans were in hospital beds being treated for COVID-19, the governor stated. That's down from 1,338 the week before and has been steadily dropping for weeks, the governor noted. The decrease in COVID-19 hospitalizations has largely been driven by the state's vaccination strategy, DeWine argued. Ohio health officials have been vaccinating older Ohioans and Ohioans with long-term, chronic medical illness.

At the peak of the pandemic, Ohioans 80 and older make up approximately 25 percent of all COVID-19 related hospitalizations. As of Thursday, of the state's 1,262, only 18 percent were people 80 or older.



Legislative continued...

Revamped Testing Bill Heads to Senate

On Thursday, March 4, 2021, a substitute version of House Bill 67 was voted out of the House and will head to the Senate. The bill addresses state testing for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. The bill passed 93-1. However, the bill's emergency clause did not have sufficient votes with most House Democrats voting against the measure. Without an emergency clause the bill will not take effect for 90 days, after the end of the school year.

The new version of the bill emerged in committee this week after the announcement the U.S. Department of Education would not grant waivers of federal testing requirements. The new version of HB67 would do the following:

- * For the 2020-21 school year, permits students to use course grade in lieu of scores on end-of-course exams to satisfy conditions for a high school diploma.
- * Permits schools to grant a diploma in the 2021 school year to a student on track to graduate and for whom the principal, in consultation with teachers and counselors, determines the student has successfully completed high school curriculum or individualized education program
- * Exempts schools from administering the state required American History end-of-course exam
- * Extends testing windows later in the school year and requires deadline extensions related to assessments
- * Requires ODE to seek a waiver from Federal accountability and school identification requirements
- * Pushes back the school deadline for school district/building report cards to October 14

OEA supports HB67. The lack of a federal waiver of testing requirement was hugely disappointing. However, HB67 attempts to make the best of a bad situation.

The bill offers some additional flexibility and, importantly makes sure that test results on this year's end-of-course exams are not a barrier to graduation. Even those who support testing have stated that this year's tests shouldn't be tied to punitive measures or high-stakes decisions.

For our high school students, their pathway to graduation has incredibly high stakes. HB67 will need to pass as an emergency measure in order to have an impact. HB67 is scheduled for its first hearing in the Senate on Tuesday, March 16, and OEA will testify in support of the bill.

For additional information on the Department of Education's announcement on Monday, February 22, 2021 on the K-12 school testing please go to the LCRTA website under Legislative. All of the legislative news is available in its entirety on the website.



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

By Louise Bennet

A LITTLE OF THIS, A LITTLE OF THAT

VOLUNTEER HOURS

At the most recent LCRTA Board Meeting, I suggested we consider a change in the way Volunteer Hours are recorded. Other chapters use various methods of collecting the information. During this year of transitioning "back to Normal," it seems it would be a good time to make a change. A decision on the new procedure will be forthcoming. In the meantime, if you have opportunities to volunteer your time, please keep track of it. One way is to simply jot the hours on your calendar.

WELL DESERVED RECOGNITION

Over the years, we have collected items for an organization here in Lake County called **End 68 Hours of Hunger**, which provides children with food to cover them over the weekends. In February, their work was acknowledged in a piece shown on Channel 3. This served as the introduction of Meredith Everett and Tracy Stanek to their ZOOM appearance the next day on THE TODAY SHOW which was highlighting best friends and the good work that they do together. The bonus was that Meredith and Tracy were each rewarded with a vacation.

HARVEST FOR HUNGER

This annual campaign is going on now. In doing a little research, I learned that there are four food banks involved which serve 21 counties in Northeast Ohio. Lake County is aided by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. These food banks are all members of Feeding America. Sadly, Ohio ranks tenth in the nation for food insecurity and the thinking is that this situation could take two years to improve. Please consider making a donation the next time you are at the grocery store.

INFORMATIVE & PROTECTIVE SERVICES

By Terri Herbert

Hope that all have been successful in getting scheduled and or/received a COVID-19 vaccine. Along with the spread of the virus, is spread MISINFORMATION about the vaccine. Below and on the next page are some myths you may have heard.

Myth 1: The COVID-19 vaccine can cause infertility.

Though not a concern to most of us, you may have family members who have heard this. There are claims the antibodies to the spike protein of COVID-19, produced by the vaccine, will bind with placenta proteins and prevent pregnancy. There is no evidence of this.





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A Publication of the
LAKE COUNTY RETIRED
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

LCRTA

9399 Ridgeside Drive
Mentor, Ohio 44060



STATE TEACHERS
RETIREMENT SYSTEM
OF OHIO

(ODA information-continued from page 3.)

After multiple failed attempts, a call will be made to the non-emergency services line of the local police or sheriff's office.

Visit: www.aging.ohio.gov/stayingconnected or call 1-833-ODA-CHAT (1-833-632-2428)



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 13, 2021.....General Membership Meeting 11:30am ZOOM Meeting
Program on Container Gardens

May 6-8, 2021.....Holland Tulip Festival with Shows (RESCHEDULED from 2020)

October 8-13, 2021...Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta (RESCHEDULED from 2020)

December 8-11, 2021...Nashville Aglow

September 25-Oct.3, 2022 'Charms of the South' - Riverboat Cruise

2020 - 2021 SOCIAL/TRAVEL CALENDAR

MAY 6 – 8, 2021 – HOLLAND TULIP FESTIVAL WITH SHOWS
OCTOBER 8 - 13, 2021 - ALBUQUERQUE BALLOON FIESTA
DECEMBER 8-11, 2021 – NASHVILLE AGLOW – OPRYLAND HOTEL
SEPTEMBER 25- OCTOBER 3, 2022 – MISSISSIPPI RIVERBOAT CRUISE

PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO L.C.R.T.A.
UNLESS SPECIFIED OTHERWISE!!

PHONE OR EMAIL THE PERSON IN CHARGE WHEN YOU MAIL YOUR CHECK!!
IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR TRIPS, PLEASE CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER
OR SEND AN EMAIL TO OUR EMAIL ADDRESS: oh.lcrtasoctrav@gmail.com

SOCIAL/TRAVEL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Gail Allcock, Sherry Barbieri, Kathleen Kling, Lynn Miller, Sherry Niederkorn, Sarah Reinhard

ALL INFORMATION, DEADLINES, AND EVENTS are at the mercy of COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines. Be sure to check the website for the most current information.

MAY 6 – 8, 2021 HOLLAND TULIP FESTIVAL WITH SHOWS (RESCHEDULED from 2020)
Join us on a 3 day, 2 night trip with Great Day! Tours. This trip includes a luncheon show, Windmill Island, Dutch Village, a tour of Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, and a tour of Holland, MI. The itinerary was revised by the Festival Committee. A steakhouse dinner, tour of the gardens, and lunch replace the headliner show, and parade. Motorcoach transportation, six meals, and accommodations included. **COST: \$634 pp double, \$774 pp single. Contact Great Day! Tours at 440-526-5350 to make your reservation. A second bus has been added so some additional spaces are available. Please contact Kathy Kling at 440-487-3806 after your seat has been reserved.**

OCTOBER 8 -13, 2021 ALBUQUERQUE BALLOON FIESTA (RESCHEDULED from 2020)
Join us on an exciting 6 day trip to New Mexico with Premier World Discovery. This trip includes 2 nights in Albuquerque and 3 nights in Santa Fe, round trip airfare, and 7 meals. Some of the highlights are the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta – Dawn Patrol and Balloon Glow, Old Town Albuquerque, the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, the Los Alamos Science Museum, a Santa Fe city tour, Loretto Chapel, the High Road to Taos with a Taos city visit and a Taos Pueblo tour. Tour rates are **\$2545 pp double + \$775 supplement for a single**. If your final payment is by **check**, there is a **\$200 booking discount** making your cost \$2345 pp double. A **\$300 NO RISK deposit** will hold your place as long as space is available up until the **final payment due date of July 18, 2021**. Make checks out to **World Premier Discovery** and send to **Sherry Barbieri at 38147 Poplar Drive, Willoughby, OH 44094** with your reservation form. **For more information and reservation forms check our LCRTA website or call Sherry at 440-946-1628.**

FINE ARTS, BECK CENTER, and RABBIT RUN

Our fingers are crossed for “in-person” performances, but until then please check with the websites of these organizations for their virtual performances, which are fantastic. Our Social / Travel Committee is waiting to hear from the **Fine Arts, Beck Center and Rabbit Run**, and we will pass along any news, when it becomes available.

CUT -----

DECEMBER 8 – 11, 2021 NASHVILLE AGLOW – OPRYLAND HOTEL DEPOSIT DUE: ASAP
Registration Form – Please Print

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CELL PHONE _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

SINGLE/ TRAVEL COMPANION _____

ENCLOSED IS MY PAYMENT (payable to **GREAT DAY! TOURS**) OF \$ _____ FOR _____ PERSON(S).

SEND ALL PAYMENTS TO:

SARAH REINHARD, 8677 HARVEST HOME DRIVE, MENTOR, OH 44060.

DECEMBER 8 – 11, 2021

NASHVILLE AGLOW

DEPOSIT DUE: ASAP

Celebrate the Christmas Season on a motorcoach tour to Nashville, TN. This 4 day, 3 night trip with Great Day! Tours begins at the Derby Dinner Theater for a Holiday Musical and a one night stay on the way to Nashville. The next two nights will be spent at Opryland Hotel where the atriums will be glowing with Holiday Lights. Highlights include admission to ICE, Opryland Hotel's Country Christmas Dinner Show, a luncheon and lively holiday show on board the General Jackson Showboat, Delta Boat Ride through Opryland's Delta Atrium, and Grand Ole Opry performance at the historic Ryman Auditorium. Six meals, accommodations, and motorcoach transportation are included. **COST: \$1,242 pp double, \$1,496 pp single. Full refund if cancelled before September 8, 2021 less any money not refunded from suppliers. \$100 deposit holds your spot. Additional payments due 9/10/21 and final payment on 10/25/21.** Rooms overlooking atriums are approximately \$80 extra pp for the two nights and should be requested and paid with the deposit. **CONTACT: Sarah Reinhard at 440-567-9515 or swreinhard4@yahoo.com if interested.**

EUROPEAN RIVERBOAT CRUISE

In response to the results of our Travel Interest Form, your Social / Travel Committee is pursuing a European cruise on The Great Rivers from Vienna to Amsterdam (for travel in October, 2023). Dates (TBA)

SEPT. 25 – OCT. 3, 2022

'CHARMS OF THE SOUTH' – RIVERBOAT CRUISE

Join us on a 9-day "CHARMS OF THE SOUTH" Mississippi River cruise from New Orleans to Memphis on the American Queen Steamboat. The journey takes place from September 25 through October 3, 2022. Ports of call include Nottoway LA, St. Francisville LA, Natchez MS, Vicksburg MS, Port of the Mississippi Delta, and Memphis TN. Visit American Queen Steamboat Company website for more information.

<https://www.americanqueensteamboatcompany.com/river-cruises/mississippi-river/charms-of-the-south/>

Stateroom categories range between \$2,299 pp and \$4,099 pp according to your preference (*based on a minimum group booking of 10 cabins*). Airfare, Local Transfers, Port Fees, Gratuities and Optional Excursions are additional and are yet to be determined. The American Queen Steamboat Company is currently running a "Risk Free Promotion" until March 31, 2021. If you make a \$500 deposit before then, you will be able to cancel up to 121 days before the trip begins, with no penalty. Final payment will be due 120 days before the trip begins. Mike Benz from Professional Travel in Cleveland (mbenz@protrav.com) will be coordinating our flights, transfers, insurance, and cabin reservations. Checks should be made payable to "Professional Travel," but a credit card deposit is recommended. Sherry Niederkorn at sherry.niederkorn23@gmail.com is our group leader. Any new information will be presented at the April general membership meeting.

GAME NIGHT: "WHERE IN THE WORLD IS LCRTA?"

Congratulations to all who participated in this Social/Travel activity, planned to chase away boredom during this pandemic! The winners are Lynn Miller, Terry Weaver, Gail Allcock, Tim Niederkorn, Cathy Trepal, Ginny Keller, Bonnie Lillibridge, Pat Newyear, Kathy Kling, Joyce Dick, Carolyn Arwood, Pat Humphrey & Lois Hosmer. Each participant viewed 20 photos on ZOOM that were taken on previous LCRTA trips, had 30 seconds to identify the location and received extra points if they could also give the year of the trip. We had a wonderful time reminiscing "down memory lane," and had fun socializing as well. Prizes were delivered to the winners. A shout out to *Great Day! Tours, Grand Circle Travel and American Queen Steamboat Company* for donating the prizes.

**COME TRAVEL
WITH LCRTA**



Visit the Social / Travel page at <https://lakecountyrta.weebly.com/socialtravel.html> to download forms and see photos of previous trips.