



THE BELLRINGER

Newsletter of the Lake County Retired Teachers Association

Volume 60 No. 2

March, 2024

From the President...Cathy Szuter

I like to garden and already have some seeds to sow for vegetables and flowers. It made me think of the many ways Lake County Retired Teachers Association helps sow the seeds for educators by offering scholarships, grants, and enrichment money to help students, who receive benefits, grow. As we get ready to pick scholarship winners and grant and enrichment benefactors, we are again sowing seeds. What seeds are you sowing?

LCRTA Luncheon
Tuesday April 9, 2024 - 11:00AM
Sausalito Kirtlander
9270 Chillicothe Road, Kirtland

PROGRAM
The Great Lakes Top Ten:
Our National Story

The National Museum of the Great Lakes, located in Toledo, Ohio, reveals the varied and fascinating history of our treasured Great Lakes, which make up 84% of all the fresh water in North America.

Visitors can explore the history of the world's greatest natural resource--from canoes and schooners to early steamers and freighters-some of which ply the mighty Maumee River right next to the Museum.

You will hear ten of the most important national stories that came from the Great Lakes. Learn more about the National Museum of the Great Lakes with their very own Top Ten list from Christopher Gillcrist, Director Emeritus, of the National Museum of the Great Lakes and former Executive Director of the Lake County Historical Society.

ALL RESERVATIONS FORMS AND CHECKS NEED TO BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 29, 2024.

SEE RESERVATION FORM ON PAGE 3

Legislative Report...Tom Moscovic - Legislative Chair

PrivateSchools-Billion Dollars-Lunches-Meals and Teacher Pay

One billion tax dollars per year will be going to private schools with no public audit

In addition to non-public administrative cost reimbursement, auxiliary services, and student transportation services, the state will be providing a billion dollars per year for private school vouchers. There is no provision in Ohio law to audit private schools. Is this the way state government should treat tax payers? Voucher expenditures will escalate year after year and the state is giving private schools an open checkbook without any financial accountability.

It gets worse! Some state officials are planning to authorize the use of tax funds for private school facilities with no public oversight. What are the state officials thinking?

Ohio taxpayers need to wake up to chicanery concocted by state officials in Ohio. Lack of regulations contributes to charter school industry fraud and corruption. Time to regulate. The charter school industry is rife with fraud and corruption primarily due to lack of regulations regarding accountability and transparency. Had Ohio charter schools been held to the same laws, standards, and regulations as public school districts, the ECOT man, Bill Lager would never have been able to steal hundreds of millions from Ohio taxpayers. The ECOT theft is not an isolated incident. It is commonplace in the charter industry in Ohio and other states. A North Carolina charter case is typical of the industry nationwide.

Public school districts are highly regulated and should be highly regulated for the protection of all concerned-students, parents, taxpayers, employees, administrators, and boards of education. The regulations have been formulated to correct problems that have arisen over time. Of course, some mandates have been adopted by state officials in search of a problem that is nonexistent.

Charter school advocates tapped into the public treasury by promising better student outcomes, creativity, innovation, lower costs, etc. Three decades with this experiment have shown beyond doubt that the charter promises have fallen flat on all accounts. Since the charter school promise of better results with less funding is a betrayal, the state of Ohio should not exempt charter schools from any regulations required of school districts.

Legislative continued...

Ohio Democrats Introduce Ed Bills for Universal School Meals, Teacher Pay Raises

Two new education bills have been introduced by Democrats in the Ohio House: One to ensure school meals for students who request them, and another to increase base teacher salaries to \$50,000 per year. The future of the proposed laws is uncertain with Republican supermajorities controlling both the Ohio House and Ohio Senate.

A bill introduced by state Rep. Darnell Brewer, D-Cleveland and Rep. Ismail Mohamed, D-Columbus would “require public schools to provide meals and related services to students,” even beyond changes made in the latest operating budget.

“Regardless of whether a student has money to pay for a meal or owes money for earlier meals, each school district shall provide a meal to a student who requests one,” the new bill, House Bill 408, states. The bill also prohibits a requirement that a district discard a meal after it has been served “because of a student’s inability to pay for the meal or because money is owed for previously provided meals” Or “publicly identify or stigmatize a student who can not pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt.” In 2019, a 9 year old Ohio student’s hot lunch was taken away over a \$9.75 unpaid balance, a Uniontown family told NBC.

The bill comes after changes were made in the most recent state operating budget to provide no-cost meals to any student who qualifies for reduced-price or free meals. After the budget was passed, advocates praised the improvements to eligibility, but said more could be done to reduce the categorization of children and the visibility of those who have meal debt. Nearly half of Ohio’s students qualified for reduced-price or free lunches for the 2022-2023 school year, according to the Children’s Defense Fund of Ohio, up from 46.6% the year before. Qualification is based on household income, and children are eligible at up to 185% of the federal poverty level.

Brewer and Mohamed’s bill also requires the districts direct “communications about a student’s meal debt to a parent or guardian and not to the student, except...if a student inquires about that student’s meal debt.

Wrong Ideas about Teacher Pay, Happiness May Keep Students from the Profession

In a separate bill, state Rep. Joe Miller, D-Amherst, seeks to increase the base pay for teachers with a bachelor’s degree to \$50,000 per year state wide. That would be an increase from the current base salary of \$35,000 for teachers with a bachelor’s degree. Teachers with less than a bachelor’s degree would have a base salary set at \$43,250, while teachers with five years of training but no master’s degree would start at \$51,900 and teachers with a masters degree or higher would start at \$54,750, according to the bill, House Bill 411.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.....

By Louise Bennet



DONATIONS:

Let us stand united at our April meeting in giving aid to the United Way of Lake County which is holding its annual food drive. Listed below are the most needed. Please try to bring at least one item to help others in the county.

Cans of tuna, chicken, corn, fruit, or soup
Juice, cereal, or powdered milk
Pasta and sauce
Peanut butter and jelly

“One CAN make a difference.”

VOLUNTEER HOURS:

Please complete the Volunteer Hours form for the months of November through March, found on Pg. 3 of this newsletter, and bring it with you to the April meeting. Each year ORTA asks for the total number of hours from the Lake County chapter and the completed forms are used to track the information.

PULL TABS:

The collection of pull tabs from ALUMINUM beverage cans continues and are passed on to the McDonald House. These can be brought to any of the meetings and left in the designated red plastic box. Thank you in advance for any of the ways you choose to help others.

Legislative continued...

Ohio’s average teacher salary has remained lower than the U. S. average since 2014 according to an analysis by the Legislative Service Commission, which showed an 11.2% increase in Ohio salaries from fiscal year 1012 to 2021, where U.S salaries grew by 17.9%.

A 2022 study by the Economic Policy Institute found that the average weekly wages for teachers have remained “relative flat” since 1996, with teachers making more than 14% less in Ohio when compared with other college-educated workers.

Salaries will still be determined based on years of service under the newest House bill, including a maximum of five years active military service.

Both bills are led by Democratic sponsors, meaning the way forward will be rocky in a Republican supermajority Ohio General Assembly, especially when this General Assembly has had a lack of legislative action reaching historic levels.

The bills still need to be assigned to a committee for consideration before public comment and votes can take place.

LCRTA Luncheon Reservation

Sausalito Kirtlander
9270 Chillicothe Road
Kirtland, Ohio 44094

Due MARCH 29, 2024
No Exceptions

Please cut out and return this
Reservation form with payment to:

Karen Sawitke
9399 Ridgeside Drive
Mentor, Ohio 44060
440-255-0764

PLEASE REMEMBER TO MAIL YOUR CHECK

Without your reservation form and check, your lunch is not guaranteed!
\$22.00 per person

Please reserve _____ (s) for the Tuesday, April 9, 2024 LCRTA luncheon. 11:00AM

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____
Please list names of all attending on this line

Amount enclosed: _____

Lunch: (Choose 1) Tomato-basil Soup, Salad, Beef Sandwich on Sourdough Bread
 Tomato-basil Soup, Salad, Turkey Sandwich on Nine Grain Bread
 Tomato-basil Soup, Salad, Vegetarian Wrap

All meals include: House Salad, Balsamic and/or Ranch Dressing, Chips. Water, Coffee, Iced Tea, Lemonade, Cookies

If there will be more than 1 person on this reservation, please indicate who will be having each meal.

PLEASE PARK IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING AND ENTER BY FRONT DOOR

Information and Protective Services

Erma Bombeck, American humorist, said it, "Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another."

Volunteering is one way to contribute to building a better world, while also building a better you. Some benefits include:

- ◆ Volunteering helps you make new friends and establish community.
- ◆ Volunteering boosts self-confidence.
- ◆ Volunteering helps you create a positive self-identity.
- ◆ Volunteering is a natural antidepressant.
- ◆ Volunteering can enhance your career.
- ◆ Volunteering can be fun and a great creative outlet.
- ◆ Volunteering benefits people of all ages.

The Lake County Teachers Association is seeking volunteers to be on the Executive Board for the positions of Treasurer and Secretary beginning in 2025. Can you fill one of these positions? Please give it some thought. Our present Secretary and Treasurer will be willing to work with you at the beginning of your term to explain the positions and tasks. You can check on page 15 in the 2023 yearbook for the job descriptions. Please consider volunteering for one of these positions. Contact: Cathy Szuter—cathytr424@gmail.com

Volunteer Hours Sheet for the months of :
November 2023 through March 2024

Name_____

Phone#_____

Volunteer Hours: _____

Cut Out and Mail to:

Louise Bennet
7995 Burgundy Court
Painesville, Ohio 44077

OR Email to:
bnlbennet@yahoo.com

OR Bring to the next luncheon-April 9, 2024
LCRTA



Jeanette Crislip
Vickie Stacy



THE BELLRINGER

A Publication of the
**LAKE COUNTY RETIRED
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

LCRTA
9399 Ridgeside Drive
Mentor, Ohio 44060

Website

<https://lakecountyrta.weebly.com>



STATE TEACHERS
RETIREMENT SYSTEM
OF OHIO



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 9, 2024 11:00 A.M. Luncheon/Business Meeting
Program: "The Great Top Ten: Our National Story"

Christopher Gillicrist, Director Emeritus

National Museum of the Great Lakes

May 24, 2024 Lake County Captains Baseball Game

June 11, 2024.... 11:00AM Luncheon/Business Meeting-Scholarships, Grants & Mlaker Fund

June 27, 2024 "Tuesdays with Morrie" - Rabbit Run Theater

Are you moving? Do you have a new phone number? or a new email address? **PLEASE** let us know.

Call: 440-255-0764 or Email sawitke@oh.rr.com

2024 – 2025 SOCIAL/TRAVEL CALENDAR

MAY 24, 2024 – LAKE COUNTY CAPTAINS BASEBALL GAME

JUNE 27, 2024 – “TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE” – RABBIT RUN THEATER

AUGUST 11, 2024 - “BEAUTIFUL, THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL” –BECK CENTER

AUGUST 29, 2024 – CRUISE ON THE GOODTIME III

OCTOBER 10 THRU 19(20), 2024 – HAWAII CRUISE VACATION

DECEMBER 3– 4, 2024 - CHRISTMAS AT TARA MANSION

TBD 2025 – CANADIAN ROCKIES AND VANCOUVER

TBD 2025 – FINGER LAKES AND ROCHESTER, NY

SOCIAL/TRAVEL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Gail Allcock, Sherry Barbiere, Kathleen Kling, Lynn Miller,
Sherry Niederkorn, Sarah Reinhard, and Vickie Zablotny

IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR TRIPS, PLEASE CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER OR
OUR EMAIL ADDRESS: oh.lcertasotrav@gmail.com

PLEASE CHECK the LCRTA website for any changes.

ALL FLIERS AND REGISTRATION FORMS ARE ON THE LCRTA WEBSITE.

www.lakecountyrta.weebly.com

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 CHECKS!

MAY 24, 2024

LAKE COUNTY CAPTAINS GAME (Classic Park)

DUE: May 10, 2024

Show your spirit for the Lake County Captains as they go against the West Michigan Whitecaps at Classic Park Stadium in Eastlake. The first pitch begins at 6:35 PM, but gates open an hour earlier. Download the order form from our website. **COST:** Tickets are \$12 each and parking passes (regular and handicapped) are \$10 each.

Checks made payable to **L.C.R.T.A.** and should be sent to **Sherry Niederkorn, 6988 Weatherby Dr., Mentor, OH 44060.** Transportation is not included.

JUNE 27, 2024

“TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE”- RABBIT RUN THEATER

DUE: MAY 30, 2024

“**TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE**” is the autobiographical story of Mitch Albom, an accomplished journalist driven solely by his career, and Morrie Schwartz, his former college professor. Sixteen years after graduation, Mitch happens to catch Morrie’s appearance on television and learns that his former professor is battling Lou Gehrig’s Disease. Mitch is reunited with Morrie. Simple visits turn into a weekly pilgrimage and lessons in the meaning of life. **COST: \$28 per ticket.** Join us for an optional dinner at Jennifer Williams’ home in Madison and then drive to the Rabbit Run Theater for the performance. (If you wish to attend the dinner, an additional fee of **\$10** will help defray the cost.) Order form for the performance and dinner is on the website. Contact person is **Sherry Niederkorn, 6988 Weatherby Drive, Mentor, OH 44060.** Transportation is not included.

AUGUST 11, 2024

“BEAUTIFUL, THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL”

DUE: JUNE 14, 2024

Join us for “**Beautiful, The Carole King Musical**” at the Beck Center followed by an optional dinner (on your own) at the Market Street Family Restaurant in Mentor. Meet at the restaurant, ride the limousine, and return after the show. This show tells the story of the early life and career of Carole King using songs that she wrote including “You’ve Got a Friend,” “I Feel the Earth Move,” “You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman,” and many more. **COST: \$66 per person (based on 20 participants) and includes show ticket, transportation, and gratuities.** Contact is **Sherry Niederkorn, 6988 Weatherby Drive, Mentor, OH 44060.** Reservation form is on the website. (**MAX of 30**)

AUGUST 29, 2024 GOODTIME III CRUISE AND LAKEVIEW CEMETERY DUE: AUG. 10, 2024

Join us along with Great Day! Tours for a cruise on the Goodtime III from the Port of Cleveland and learn the history of our city and its Lake Erie and Cuyahoga River waterways. After a delicious meal onboard, we will disembark to travel by bus to one of the few “Garden Cemeteries” known as Lakeview Cemetery. This 285-acre cemetery is the final resting place of many Cleveland notables including President James Garfield and Eliot Ness. Plan to learn the history of this “outdoor museum” from our knowledgeable guide. This trip provides two tours in one day! **COST: \$172 per person. Contact Kathy Kling 440-487-3806.** The reservation form is posted on the website. (Willoughby pickup with 10 or more LCRTA participants.)

OCTOBER 10 THRU 19(20), 2024 HAWAII CRUISE VACATION (DEADLINE EXTENDED)

We have a total of 36 registered for this trip to paradise. Since we still have a couple of cabins let, the deadline has been extended. Those of you who have thought....A \$500 deposit per person will secure your reservation. When traveling with friends you have quite a few perks added to the mix, such as: transportation to & from the airport provided, support from people you know, a chance to meet new friends and a discount on travel because of the numbers. Plus...We will have our own personal Tour Director from Nowak Tours onboard with us. She will be planning private excursions and special occasions just for our group. We will spend two nights on Waikiki Beach then board Norwegian Cruise Line's The Pride of America for a trip to PARADISE. **More details and the flier are available on the website.**

PRICING: (To view staterooms, visit their website at <https://www.ncl.com/cruise-ship/pride-of-america>)

Inside Stateroom: \$5,149 Balcony stateroom: \$5,949 Outside stateroom (picture window): \$5,679

Payment Policy: A \$500 deposit per person is due to secure your reservation. Final payment is due no later than June 14, 2024. Optional trip cancellation/interruption insurance is available at \$373 (for all stateroom categories) and is strongly recommended. The Insurance premium is due with your deposit and is fully refundable up to the final payment date. Please choose your stateroom category, make your check payable to **“Nowak Tours”** and send registration form with payment to **Nowak Tours, 1395 Barn Run Drive, Valley City, Ohio 44280.** You can also pay by credit/debit card (no additional fees) by calling Nowak Tours at 330-483-4900. Flier and Registration form are available on the website. Contact Sherry Niederkorn with questions at 440-477-1198 or sherry.niederkorn23@gmail.com to let her know that you are interested.

DECEMBER 3-4, 2024**CHRISTMAS AT TARA MANSION****DUE: SEPT. 27, 2024**

Step back into time at a home befitting the lifestyle of those in “Gone with the Wind”with Southern Belles taking us on a tour. Tara Mansion is a Country Inn near Sharon, PA in the Greek Revival-style that’s decorated with fascinating pieces of Civil War memorabilia. We will be served a delicious holiday dinner and breakfast among the beautiful Christmas decorations and lights. In addition, we will have afternoon tea. For more holiday festivities, on the trip home the bus will stop at the “Chocolate Kingdom” and Hermitage, PA. **COST: \$364 PER PERSON DBL OR \$394 SGL. Contact Sarah Reinhard 440-567-9515.**

TBD 2025**FINGER LAKES AND ROCHESTER, NY**

Based on the responses to the Travel Information Survey, the committee is looking into a multi-day visit to the Finger Lakes region and the city of Rochester, NY. To further investigate tour options, the social/travel committee has decided to delay this trip until 2025.

TBD 2025**CANADIAN ROCKIES AND VANCOUVER**

The social/travel committee is reviewing different itineraries and tour companies. More information will be forthcoming as we look at the possibilities.

WELCOME ABOARD!!

The Social/Travel Committee would like to extend a “Welcome Aboard” to its newest member,
Vickie Zablotny!

DINING FOR DOLLARS

LAKE COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Bring this voucher on 4/11/2024 between 11:00am and 10:00pm and 10% of your check will go to LAKE COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Voucher required to participate. Dine-in only. Tax and gratuity not included. No cash value. Not valid with any other offer.

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440-449-4833
780 Beta Drive
Mayfield Village, OH 44143

FUNDRAISING DINE-IN OR TO-GO

Support

Lake County Retired Teachers Scholarship Committee

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

11:30AM-10:00PM



15% DONATION NIGHT

Support the Lake County Retired Teachers by presenting this flyer via phone or hard copy to your server and Alfredo's will donate 15% of your total food purchases!



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