



THE BELLRINGER

Newsletter of the Lake County Retired Teachers Association

Volume 53 No.3

May, 2017

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.....

I am wondering when the rains will stop and the sun will reappear. Hopefully sooner than later. My column this printing will be used to inform the membership of some of the recent happening at ORTA in Columbus.

Many of our members enjoyed our last luncheon at the Auburn Career Center and heard Dr. John Cavanaugh, Executive Director of ORTA. He provided an update on the happenings at the state level. He spoke of the STRS Board and the four retirement systems in Ohio and answered many questions from the members attending.

I had been informed of some difficulties that were occurring at ORTA when I attended a meeting a while back, but chose not to say anything until I had more definite information.

I have been informed that Dr. Cavanaugh was terminated as the Executive Director of ORTA on Monday, May 1, 2017, effective immediately. Many suggestions had been made for improvement and opportunities to establish a better working relationship with both staff, Executive Committee members and ORTA members in general. According to information that I have received this could not be accomplished with Dr. Cavanaugh in the Ex. Director position.

An interim Executive Director, Pat Bateman, former ORTA District VI Director, began on Tuesday morning. She will hold the position until a replacement can be found. The goal is to hire a replacement by September 1.

I will keep you informed on what is happening at ORTA. Improvements will be made, but there is much to be accomplished.

Don't forget our next membership luncheon/meeting—June 13, 2017, St John Vianney Social Hall. The registration form is on page 3 of this newsletter. Please note the St. John Vianney Church is on Bellflower Road in Mentor. The Social Hall is **BEHIND** the church. There is plenty of parking. Hope to see you there!

Karen Sawitke


PS> If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, please contact me at sawitke@oh.rr.com. Also, if you have moved or are moving, please send us your new address. We would hate to miss you with important news from STRS or ORTA. This also applies to new email addresses also. Please let us know. Thanks

BITS and PIECES of LEGISLATIVE STUFF RELEVANT to RETIRED but REALLY CARING TEACHERS by Tom Moscovic

By the time you read this the school year will be coming to a quick end for many districts. Most of us were teaching into June. With the legislative changes and incessant testing forced on our students, it seems to be necessary to start the school year in early to mid August instead of closer to Labor Day. This has created a lot of complaints and consternation for our active teachers as the August heat permeates the classrooms!

My article will concentrate on the new initiatives proposed by the current Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos. Her agenda includes the increase in funding to Charter Schools and more Vouchers for Private Schools. The money spent on these programs is money lost to our Public Schools. The consequences of these effect all of us and the students in Public Education.

“President Trump and Education Secretary DeVos for their proposed FY2018 budget would slash Department of Education funding by 13.5%, eliminating programs that reduced class sizes, provide after-school enrichments and help make college more affordable for low income families.” (National Education Association) In addition, from the same source, “Any lingering questions over how aggressively the Trump administration was going to pursue school privatization were answered on March 16 with the release of its FY2018-19 budget proposal. If approved by Congress, federal education programs will be slashed across the board, all to pay for an initial down payment of \$1.4 billion this fiscal year on a national expansion of private school voucher programs. The eventual price tag for the program will be \$20 billion annually.” This is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to school funding.

We all know that Ohio is unconstitutionally reliant on local property tax for a majority of school funding. Even though the DeRolf (March 24, 1997) decision ruled more than once, twice or even three times that this was unconstitutional, nothing changes! I have been told many times, “If nothing changes, nothing changes!” Unfortunately, this defiance has a direct affect on students and the quality of education they receive. “President Trump’s budget would hinder every state’s ability to deliver critical services and resources to their K-12 students.” Trump’s elimination of the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants and the 21st CCLC (21st Century Community Learning 

Centers) after-school program alone would mean a loss of nearly \$3.6 billion in funding, impacting thousands of teachers and millions of students. Ohio would lose \$86,890,608 in Effective Instruction Grants and \$43,122,620 in After School Program money under the proposed budget. (Center for American Progress 3/17/17). This is enough money to hire 1564 teachers and service 65,254 students.

Another consequence of the voucher proposal is the negative effect that it has on our Special Needs students. Anna Caudill, a parent of a Special Needs child in Tennessee, told the CAP audience that vouchers *do* give students a choice: "You can trade your child's federally-protected civil rights under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for a one-time monetary amount to pay for private school tuition." After her son fell too far behind academically in public school, Caudill looked for another option. Her family was offered an "Individual Education Account," the state's version of a voucher. The Caudill's would have received \$6,300 - **as long as their son waved his rights under IDEA.** The best solution is for Congress to fully fund IDEA, Caudill said. "I believe in public schools. I believe that general and special education teachers with support from their districts and their states are the best equipped professionals to address the unique learning needs of students with disabilities."

Finally, in Ohio, according to the *Toledo Blade* access to taxpayer-funded vouchers for students to attend private and religious schools would be expanded, regardless of whether their current public schools are failing, under a bill about to be introduced. State Senator Matt Huffman (R-Lima), the proposal's sponsor, said he hopes the move will make students and their parents better education consumers. Ohio's statewide EdChoice voucher program requires that the participating 21,000 or so students come from schools that are classified as poor performers. An expansion of that program, like Mr. Huffman's broader proposal, bases additional scholarships on family income.

"We should take care of our unconstitutional funding of our public schools," said State Rep. Teresa Fedor (D., Toledo), ranking Democrat of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee and a former public school teacher. "Let's take care of that so there is no undue burden for property owners to fund our public schools. I see this bill as another way to funnel our money from our traditional schools into schools that have not been proven to not perform any better. Doing choice for choice's sake is not a wise way to go."

We often thought we had tough times in our classrooms but with the current movement in Ohio and nationwide to siphon taxpayers money, your money and mine, is only making it more difficult for our educators today.

Community Participation.....Louise Bennet

Perhaps you do not enjoy shopping. Maybe you could not find time to pick up a suggested item or two to donate for one of our recent meetings. Well, for the June gathering, we have something different for you!

Project Hope for the Homeless, located on Freedom Road in Painesville, has launched a campaign to raise funds to be used to sustain the growth it has experienced in recent years. While it is a sad situation that our community has the need for such an organization, the services it provides are paramount to those who use it.

In a letter received from Project Hope, it is stated that the cost to offer a hot meal, a warm bed, as well as emotional, mental and spiritual support is \$39.11 per night. Thus, you are being asked to make a monetary donation toward this goal. One suggestion is to use a math equation (teachers can "figure" this out) as a guide: Number of years you taught + number of years of retirement = total donation in pennies, maybe even dimes. Or, just place some loose change in an envelope and bring it to the meeting. If you choose, checks may be written payable to: Project Hope. "Hope"fully, as a group, we will donate enough to support one guest for one night's stay.

Please remember to record your VOLUNTEER HOURS for April and May on the tear-off found on page 4 of this newsletter and bring it to the meeting or mail it to the address on the tear-off.

Information & Protective Service

Marilyn Decker



Almost everyone is a little afraid of something and that's good. Having a certain amount of fear has helped us survive.

Today, many of these fears have little to do with reality and everything to do with how we are wired. Fear starts in the part of your brain that alerts the body when we see something potentially dangerous. The big part of fear is also lack of control. The less predictable we feel something is, the more anxious we may become about it.

The encouraging news is that most fears can be managed. It boils down to understanding how realistic a fear really is, then taking steps to minimize risks that are in your control and calm anxiety.

The fear of public speaking can be helped by accepting being anxious and exercising before taking the podium and practice. The fear of riding in elevators is very real to some people but in reality very few accidents ever happen. Part of these fears involve claustrophobia. Research shows relaxation techniques work to calm claustrophobic patients.

If you have a fear of driving over bridges, despite well-publicized accidents, major bridge collapses are extremely rare. Exposure therapy is your best bet. Might try driving toward a small bridge or park, then walk across and eventually drive across while practicing positive self talk.

LCRTA Luncheon Reservation

**ST. JOHN VIANNEY SOCIAL HALL
7575 Bellflower Road, Mentor**

DUE BY June 2, 2017

Please send reservation form with your payment to:

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO L.C.R.T.A.

Elaine Courtney
7300 Arbor Glen Place
Mentor, Ohio 44060
440-350-1626

Please reserve _____(s) for the TUESDAY, JUNE 13 LCRTA luncheon at \$20.00 each.

Name (s) _____ Phone _____

Amount enclosed _____

Lunch (Choose 1) _____BBQ Chicken _____ Grilled Vegetables

Includes: Potato Salad, Fresh Fruit, Apple Pie, Beverage

Social time 11:00am Lunch served at 11:30am

Fears continued...

One of the biggest fears is the fear of flying. In reality the odds that you will die in a crash are about one in a million. The fears may come from being claustrophobic or nauseated from turbulence. Treatment focuses on demonstrating that you can control your anxiety, often with techniques like muscle relaxation or airport based therapy sessions.

In overcoming your fears, the big question is wanting to do so! This can be done with professional help for your fears. It is recommended that cognitive behavioral therapy which involves challenging negative thinking along with exposure therapy. These methods push you little by little



EASTLAKE LIBRARY SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR SUMMER READING PROGRAM

The Eastlake Library is beginning a new program starting in June 2017 for students in Grades 1 through 5 who may be having difficulty with their reading skills. "Read, Set, Read" would be an opportunity for struggling readers to work with current and retired teachers to try to improve, not only their reading skills, but also to focus on reading comprehension.

This program will be held at the Eastlake Library at 6:00pm on Monday evenings beginning June 12, 2017. (No program July 3rd) the program will feature 20 minutes of reading aloud to a volunteer, followed by a nutritious snack and an activity to reinforce the themed topic. The themes and activities will be created by the teacher.

Questions about the program? Email to the HR coordinator at colleen.kelly@welibrary.info.


PROGRAM NOTES FOR JUNE 13th MEETING

At our June 13th meeting we welcome the recipients of the Jean P. Lentz Memorial Active Teacher Grant Program. These teachers will be presenting the programs created from the grant funds they received. We are also hoping to have some of the past scholarship winners to talk about how the scholarship has helped them and a little about their college life.

In addition, Nancy Niehus, from Lake County council on Aging, will be visiting to talk about their mission to the community and about volunteering.

I encourage you to attend this meeting to find out how the funds you have so generously donated to the Jean P. Lentz Memorial Active Teacher Grant Program and our scholarship program have been used.

This will be our last Luncheon/Business meeting until September 12, 2017. We hope that you have an enjoyable summer and that we will see you at the Elks Lodge in Painesville, September 12. The Mentor High School Top 25 will be performing.



Our sincere sympathies to the
family of
GLORIA GREGORY

In Memoriam



THE BELLRINGER

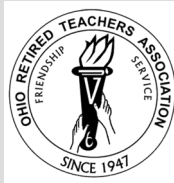
A Publication of the
LAKE COUNTY RETIRED
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

LCRTA

9399 Ridgeside Drive
Mentor, Ohio 44060



STATE TEACHERS
RETIREMENT SYSTEM
OF OHIO



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| June 13, 2017 | Luncheon/Business Meeting | St. John Vianney Social Hall, Mentor |
| June 14, 2017 | “Kiss Me Kate” | Fine Arts Association, Willoughby |
| June 22, 2017 | Informational Meeting | Mentor Public Library |
| | Iceland 2018 | |
| June 27, 2017 | “The Music Man” | Wooster/ Ohio Light Opera |
| September 10, 2017 | Texas Tenors | JB Productions |
| September 12, 2017 | Luncheon/Business Meeting | Elks Lodge. Painesville |
| September 19-26, 2017 | National Parks | Collette Tours |
| December 6-9, 2017 | Philadelphia/Christkindlmarkt/Sands | Great Day Tours |

VOLUNTEER HOURS for April and May Please bring this tear to the meeting or mail to

Name _____
_____ as Caregiver _____ Other volunteer hours

Louise Bennet
9970 Cottonwood Ct.
Mentor, Ohio 44060