



# THE BELLRINGER

Newsletter of the Lake County Retired Teachers Association

Volume 47, No. 2

March, 2011

## From the Co-Presidents.....

As I presided over my first LCRTA meeting February 8, and being use to public speaking, I wasn't nervous; however, looking out at the faces on my peers, made this a whole new venue for me. Making me feel at ease was the presence of former colleagues and other friends made since my 1991 membership in the organization. Thank you all, who were so supportive.

By now all public employees are embroiled in the conflict with Ohio's new governor. I was pleased that a while back in the Plain Dealer, there were five letters supporting bargaining rights of public workers. We have to clear up misconceptions that the general public has of STRS and our pension fund. More, I'm sure, will be filled in by our legislative chair, Marilyn Decker at our next meeting.

*Greta Pate*

## A HELPING HAND

I'd like to thank everyone for the prayers, cards and get well wishes. They were greatly appreciated and helped tremendously. You are a very caring and supportive group.

I am sure each of you have heard about Senate Bill 5. Please take time to weed out the true facts from the "not so true facts." Our Legislative Chairperson, Marilyn Decker, has a wealth of information on legislation that affect each of us. Please be sure to read her report in this newsletter.

Another way to offer a helping hand; when you are at one of our luncheon meetings or on one of the many trips that the Social/Travel Committee arranges, if there is a new person attending, reach out a hand and say hello.

Thanks to my Co-President Greta Pate for carrying the "load" at the February meeting. I look forward to seeing all of you at the April meeting.

*Joyce Grady*

## Legislative/Trustee Report

*Marilyn Decker*

There are two important legislative problems that face public teachers (current and retired). The first is the **STRS Pension Solvency Plan**. The other is **Collective Bargaining** with the public unions.

In January 2011, STRS was advised that the statehouse would not accept or pass a pension solvency plan that included an increase in the employer (taxpayer) contribution. The board was also advised that all systems' plans must meet the 30 year funding period. Plans approved by STRS in September 2009 and modified in October 2010 had to be revised. The STRS Board passed a new pension solvency plan on January 27, 2011. It has a COLA at 2% for current retirees, beginning in 2012; and 2% for future retirees after 60 months. It also increases the employee contribution for 10% to 13% (or 14%) beginning in 2012.

The ORTA Executive Committee met February 15. At that time a motion was passed to support the STRS Pension Solvency Plan that was approved by the STRS Board January 27th.

HB 69 was introduced by Rep. Wachtmann the first week in February. SB 3 was introduced on February 22 by Senator Faber. The bill is identical to HB69 and provides a uniform starting place for both the House and the Senate.

Karen Butt, ORTA President, made a statement at an STRS Board meeting that ORTA would continue to work with STRS and our HPA coalition partners to preserve the defined benefit pension program, the fiduciary role of the STRS Board and access to affordable health care.

Mike Nehf, STRS Executive Director, presented the STRS Pension Plan to the House Health and Aging Subcommittee on Retirement and Pensions on February 16, 2011. He noted that most of

(Legislative continued from Page 1)

the STRS current plan components are not in HB69, but should be included as amendments. In addition to the five major points in the pension solvency plan, there are multiple corrections that are being proposed. Many relate to purchase of service credit and disability pensions. One technical change requested is for staggered terms of the two retiree seats on the STRS Board. Thus, at a future STRS Board election, one seat would be for a four year term and the second seat would be for a six year term. ORTA has learned that The Ohio School Board Association and Ohio Association School Business Officials gave testimony supporting HB69 with the amendments of the January 27th STRS plan.

Employees with pensions report higher levels of commitment and this result is strongest for younger workers. It is consistent that the Defined Retirement over Defined Contribution show that workers should have a pension to help retirement security. These provisions provide a real and reliable pension, save taxpayers money by keeping teachers out of poverty, provide a stable source of income, including tax revenue for Ohio, is both efficient and economical and finally helps Ohio schools recruit and retain quality educators.

ORTA has not taken a position on SB5 the collective bargaining bill submitted by Senator Jones. At this time the focus for ORTA will be the pension bills. According to the Plain Dealer, SB5 is going to affect 196,000 school workers in Ohio plus other public employees. Gallop polls broadly indicate the Americans are not anxious to see state workers take the brunt of the pain-either in terms of reducing their pay or eliminating their collective bargaining rights. At the same time, Americans are evenly divided over whether state unions are generally more helpful or more harmful to the states. Underscoring the divisive nature of this issue, two-thirds of Democrats consider unions helpful, while two-thirds of Republicans call them harmful.

There are several ways to contact your legislators; writing a letter, sending an email message, scheduling a meeting in Columbus, inviting a legislator to speak to your group, having a casual conversation in a restaurant or other public place. Of these options, a personal meeting has the most impact.

### Tips on Meeting a Legislator

1. Plan your visit carefully
2. Be prompt, patient and prepared
3. Be polite and responsive
4. Be politically astute
5. Ask if he/she supports the proposed changes
6. Follow up!

### If you are writing to a legislator:

1. Keep your message short
2. Do NOT send a form letter
3. Include a commendation for past actions by the legislator
1. Ask his/her position on the initiative
2. Include your name and address
3. Follow up if you receive a reply

### MEET THE NEW LCRTA TREASURER

Barbara Temple, retired mathematics teacher from Willoughby-Eastlake Schools, taught at Willowick Jr. High for 12 years and North High School for 14 years. Previously she taught at Mentor Ridge Jr. High for 2½ years.

Barb is active in both the community and at her church and with LCRTA. From January until April 15, she is involved with the TaxAide Program sponsored by AARP and the IRS as a volunteer tax preparer for low to middle income citizens. At her church she has been active on the Finance, Food Basket and Rummage Sale committees.

Previous to becoming LCRTA's new treasurer, Barb has served on the Social/Travel, Yearbook, Public Relations, audit Committees and has served as Second Vice-President.

Her interests include genealogy, her flower garden and babysitting her 3yr. old granddaughter.



LCRTA Luncheon Reservation Form

DINO'S

DUE APRIL 1, 2011

Mail to: **Elaine Courtney 7300 Arbor Glen Place Concord, Ohio 44060**

**Make checks payable to**

**LCRTA**

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_(s) for the Tuesday April 12, LCRTA luncheon at \$15.00 each.

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Menu( Choose one): \_\_\_\_\_Chicken Parmesan \_\_\_\_\_Eggplant

Lunch includes: Green Beans, Rigatoni, Assorted Pastries, Coffee, Tea

## LCRTA LUNCHEON

**TUESDAY, APRIL 12**

**DINO'S**

**4145 State Route 306, Willoughby**

**Social time 11:00, Lunch served 11:30**

**Program:**

**Lynne Leffel**

**Tai Chi Presentation**

**Attendees are invited to join in the activities.**

**To participate dress in loose clothing and comfortable shoes.**

### Membership

Thank you to everyone who returned our new membership card. You may receive a call later to clarify some of the information. If you know a retired teacher that would be interested in joining, please let me know. I will send the information.

Pat Newyear-440-946-8381 [prnewyear@oh.rr.com](mailto:prnewyear@oh.rr.com)

### THINGS ARE GETTING WORSE! PLEASE SEND CHOCOLATE!



As the oil prices soar and the housing market plummets with little hope of change soon—I turn to chocolate.

I admit it—I'm a chocoholic! Chocolate is as addicting as coffee (which I heard is going to double in price). Why would anyone choose a cup of coffee over a cup of hot chocolate?

In it's defense, chocolate contains beneficial substances that can improve mood and brain function. Traces of the neurotransmitter anandamide, also known as the "Bliss Molecule" produces feelings of euphoria. Studies show that because of chocolate's estrogen-like compounds, men who eat chocolate tend to live longer than those who do not.

A standard chocolate bar and a glass of wine contain the same amount of anti-toxins, ultimately reducing your risk of heart disease, cancer, and other ailments.

Now, in what store did I see that bottle of chocolate wine? *Bette Pollino Info/Protective Services*

**VOLUNTEER HOURS : MAIL TO Marge Westman 473 Scarborough Lane, Painesville, Ohio 44077**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ January– March 31, 2011

Caregiver \_\_\_\_\_ All other hours \_\_\_\_\_



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A Publication of  
Lake County Retired  
Teachers Association

9399 Ridgeside Drive  
Mentor, Ohio 44060



STATE TEACHERS  
RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
OF OHIO



## FREE PROGRAM OFFERING

### “Spring into Auburn”

On Tuesday, May 3rd, Auburn Career Center is having a “Spring into Auburn” event. The focus of this event is for adults to have a fun, hand-on-learning experience that promotes continued learning for a healthy, positive lifestyle. The students of Auburn will be conducting many interactive activities: Hand and Arm Massages, Stretching for Fitness, Memory Lane Games, Efficient Lighting-Cost of Energy, Blood Pressure/Pulse Oxygen; Tablescape for Mother’s Day, Make Your Own Labels and Home Safety Bingo. Attendees will also be able to see the Mini Home and Garden display. Jenn Harcher, Channel 19 Meteorologist will be the special guest speaker. There are two separate sessions: 8:15-11:00 or 11:45-2:40. Door prizes will be offered.

This is a **FREE** event, however, you must pre-register by calling Paulette Howell at 440-357-7542 ext. 8239 or by email at [phowell@auburncc.org](mailto:phowell@auburncc.org).

## SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

Recommendation forms for the LCRTA Scholarship will be available from **Barbara Strumbel** at the April meeting. Forms must be returned by May 1. Upon the return of the recommendation form, scholarship applications will be sent to the recommended students. Any senior attending a high school in Lake County and planning a college major in education is eligible. All student applications must be returned by June 1.

*Barbara Strumbel, Scholarship Chairman*

## YEARBOOKS MAILED

The 2011 yearbooks will be mailed in late March to all members. Please check the accuracy of your listing in the membership section. For any updates or corrections contact :

Ann 946-2512 or Bonnie 352-0174

Yearbook Editors

Or

Karen 255-0764     [sawitke@oh.rr.com](mailto:sawitke@oh.rr.com)