

SCRTA NEWS

Summit County Retired Teachers Association

THE SUMMIT COUNTY AFFILIATE OF **Ohio Retired Teachers Association** August September 2023

President's Corner



I hope that everyone is enjoying this summer season and staying cool. It was also good to see so many of you at the June 6th luncheon and special thanks goes to Mark Grabowski, the guest speaker for this event.

In his presentation, Mark spoke on behalf of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northeast Ohio and how all sick children deserve quality care. This organization believes that a big part of a child's healing process is in having their family close by. Providing living quarters, meals, and supplies is exactly what is given to families at the Ronald McDonald House. Parents are not required to pay for their stay. I recently had the experience of taking a tour of the facilities on W. State St., in downtown Akron and I was quite impressed with what I saw. Christine Bean, the Chairman for our Community Services, shared a wonderful article in the March/April SCRТА Newsletter, about this organization and she is also managing the current community activity that was kicked-off at the luncheon. The collection of pull tabs or ring tabs has begun. These pull tabs can come from any aluminum can. I encourage all members and friends of SCRТА to collect as many of these as you can during the summer. More fun details will be shared later. All collected tabs will go towards our

efforts in supporting the Ronald McDonald House. Remember, that the more tabs collected, the bigger our donation. We need everyone's help.

It takes committed people working together as a team to help move SCRТА forward and I have been blessed with great volunteer workers on the Management Board. One such person is Rebecca Moore. As our Chaplain, Becky always provides inspirational poems and prayers to begin each luncheon/general meeting. She is a very talented and skilled person who so willingly shares her time for SCRТА. Becky has recently spent hours going through the archives of old records, pictures, and newspaper clippings. She has found some very interesting, humorous, and golden nuggets from SCRТА's past history. I've asked her to help come up with ways to share this history at some of our future meetings.

Welcome aboard to the new members who have joined SCRТА and thanks to those who renewed their membership. Invite a friend to the next general meeting and luncheon on Sept. 5th. This will be an

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important meeting and elections will take place for board members. We need you to be there.

Stay safe and healthy.

*Johnnette S. Curry,
President*



MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING

The Summit County Retired Teachers Association (SCRTA) will hold its 3rd General Membership Luncheon Meeting of this year on Tuesday, **Sept. 5, 2023**, at Guys Party Center, 500 East Waterloo Rd. Akron, Ohio 44319 at 12 noon. Reservations are required. (See newsletter Insert page.) **Come join us!**

September 5th Program



Everyone will receive an index card. The goal will be to walk around the room and meet the members who you do not know very well. The idea is to write down their name and something special about them.

I will start it out and model the idea. The person who reaches the most new people in their life will receive a prize from me. If there is a tie, they will have to guess a number that I have hidden in my purse. When someone says that number, or is the closest to it, he or she will be declared the winner.

Thanks,

Mary Lou Swartz, Program Chairperson



2023 MANAGEMENT BOARD

- President** - Johnnette Curry (330-699-4123)
- 1st VP/ Prog.** - Mary Lou Swartz (234-678-0747)
- 2nd VP/Legislative** - Bill Siegferth (330-819-4123)
- Past President** - Mary Lou Swartz (234-678-0747)
- Administrative Assistant** - Judy Mervine (330-745-7587)
- Treasurer** - Paul Green (330-733-7311)
- Asst. Treasurer/Membership** - Jackie Hovey (330-940-9147)
- Public Relations** - Micki Lavis (330-854-3054) and Phyllis Lewis (330-342-3550)
- Newsletter Editor** - Elaine Jarvis (330-607-0226)
- Travel** - Carolyn Vogenitz (330-645-9928)
- Web Master** - Leroy Martin (330-666-3984)
- Nominating Committee: 3 elected members**
Carol Caughron (330-606-6900), Micki Lavis (330-854-3054) and Phyllis Lewis (330-342-3550); **2 Members at Large: Chaplain** - Rebecca Moore (330-497-9362); **Community Service** - Christine Bean (330-784-4575)
- Scholarship Committee** - Vicky Shaw (330-773-5862) and Judi Hill (330-688-2512) Co-Chair
- Bulk Mailing** - Rozanne Emich (330-603-7660)



"The quality of your life will be determined by the quality of your contribution. When you work to improve the lives of others, your life improves automatically." – Kurek Ashley



COLA LAWSUIT TABLED FOR AT LEAST A YEAR

We began reporting on the COLA lawsuit when it was filed by two retired Cincinnati teachers way back in 2019. One of the teachers is STRS Ohio Watchdogs alpha male Dean Dennis. The case was initially filed in U.S. District Court where it remained until Judge Timothy Black adopted his magistrate judge's recommendation to dismiss the case in 2021. (Yes, Black is the judge who recently sentenced former House Speaker Larry Householder to 20 years in prison for his involvement in the First Energy illegal bribery scheme.) After being dismissed in federal court, the case was filed in Franklin County Court of Common Pleas on October 26, 2021. In the meantime, Dean Dennis was elected by the eight-member ORTA Board to serve first as president elect, then as ORTA president beginning in August.

The case hasn't progressed much over the nearly two years since it was filed in Franklin County. At present, the trial date is set for July 29, 2024, more than a year away. Motions to extend the trial date have been filed jointly, i.e., both parties (STRS and the Plaintiffs) agreed to petition the Court to extend dates. Three important dates scheduled for the coming months are the disposition of the Plaintiffs' Motion for Class Certification scheduled on September 29. While we've referred to the lawsuit as a class action suit in the past, a class has apparently not yet been certified in Franklin County. A second important date is February 9, 2024. That's when the Court plans to hear The Plaintiffs' Initial Settlement Demand. We're guessing this is when the plaintiffs will float suggestions about what STRS needs to do to settle the case short of proceeding to a full-blown jury trial. The third date is March 8, 2024. At that time, STRS is

expected to respond to the plaintiffs' settlement proposals.

The relief sought by the plaintiffs includes a resumption of the annual 2% cost of living payment, an award for damages and/or restitution representing the amount of retirement benefits lost since the COLA was suspended, interest on lost benefits and payment of attorneys' fees and case-related expenses.

We've not yet seen a price tag attached to the relief sought, but it might be something that teacher labor unions may want to take a close look at in the interest of their active members. The Ohio Treasurer of State is the custodian of all STRS funds. Any judgment in this case must come out of STRS funds; no other funds held by the Treasurer may be used to supplement payment of a judgment. Such circumstances certainly should raise questions among active teachers of the consequences an adverse judgment may hold for their retirement benefits.

Steen Removed from STRS Board by Governor, Files Legal Challenge

Gov. Mike DeWine has removed and replaced his appointee to the STRS Board. Under Ohio law (ORC 3307.05 C.) the governor of Ohio appoints one member to the eleven member STRS Board for a four-year term. Wade Steen was first appointed to the Board by John Kasich in 2016 and then reappointed by DeWine in 2020. DeWine offered as reasons for replacing Steen in the midst of his second term his meeting attendance record and concern over the impression that Steen was acting as an advocate for a specific investment firm. Steen has filed a legal challenge to the Governor's decision in the Tenth District Court of Appeals, claiming the law does not permit his removal in the middle of a term and that DeWine's characterization of his attendance record is inaccurate.

Steen is among ORTA's "favorites" on the STRS Board, so much so that the organization has opened a

See Legislation, Page 4

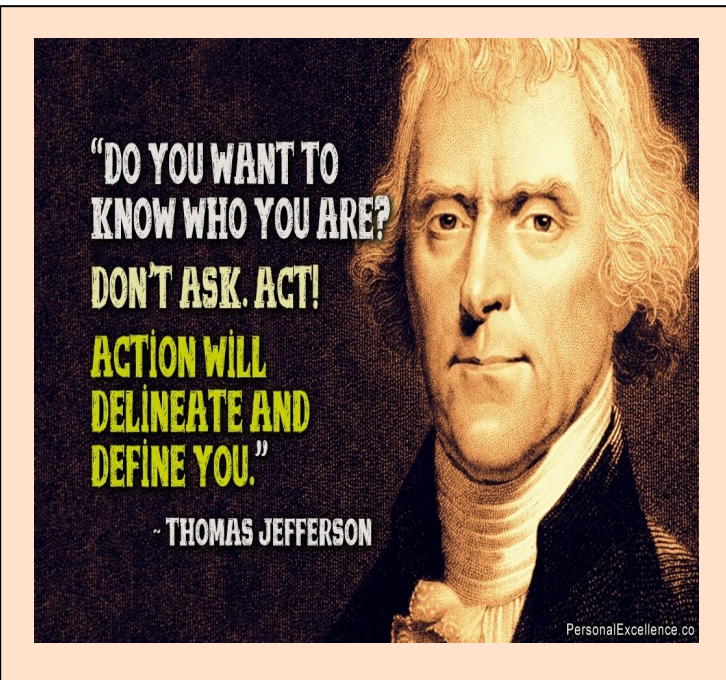
Legislation Continued from Page 3

defense fund to help pay his legal fees. The decision to start the fund was made by a small circle of policy makers known as the ORTA Executive Committee which includes the president, the past president and the president elect. ORTA is soliciting contributions from its members to bankroll the fund.

Steen is perceived by many as advocating along with Board member Rudy Fichtenbaum for the controversial "investment firm" known as QED. According to reliable sources, the firm has no clients and no experience investing money for clients. Efforts last year by Steen and Fichtenbaum to consider a "trial" investment with QED were quashed by a majority on the retirement board. The pair ultimately wanted to hand over about two-thirds, or \$65 billion of STRS's investment dollars to the startup company.

ORTA has been criticized as a supporter of the same firm and its investment "strategy" by an editorial board member of an Ohio newspaper. The writer accused Fichtenbaum and ORTA and "the teachers who support them" as having "materially misrepresented this proposal from day one."

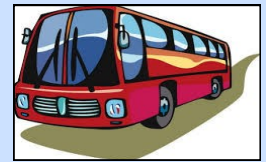
Bill Siegfert, Legislative Chair/2nd Vice President



TRAVEL SURVEY RESULTS



- Attend a Cleveland theater - 29**
- Attend a play & lunch in Amish Country - 20**
- Historical/government area - 14**
- Shopping - 13**
- Sports game - 11**
- Casino - 8**
- Tour a stadium - 5**
- Good time boat - 3**

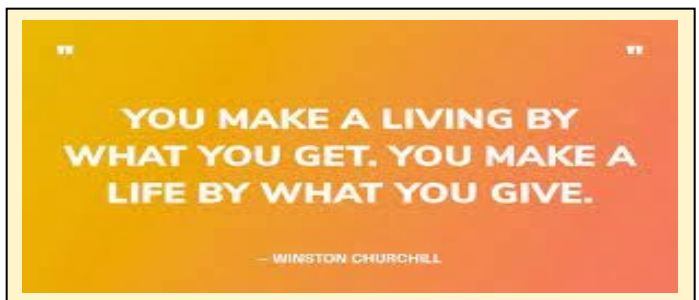


- Ready to go - 11.**
- Depends on What & Where - 21**
- Not interested - 2**

Bus - 27, carpool - 3, train - 12

Comments on back of survey results: Other places of interest - Cleveland Zoo, Historical sites & museum, Pittsburgh, Niagara Falls, Columbus, German Village lunch, Tour STRS building.

The survey was taken at the June 5th General Luncheon meeting. Not everyone filled out the survey. Please contact Carolyn Vogenitz if you have any questions or comments. Telephone - 330-645-9928 or 330-329-9929 (cell); Email: wtsdpub@aol.com



Scholarship News

Membership

Greetings SCRTA Members!

Scholarship season never ends and it's time to "gear up" for our next scholarship fundraiser. Whether it's the sale of Double Good Popcorn, donation cups at our luncheon meetings, basket raffles, etc., with your help it is possible to award the worthy recipients to be selected next April 2024! Please feel free to offer suggestions. Thank you for your willingness in supporting the educators of tomorrow.

Vicky Shaw & Judi Hill
Scholarship Co-Chairmen




We welcome our new members: Carrie Fox, Shiela Hill, Kim Joseph, Marje Fogle, and James Jackson.

It is time for many to renew membership! If there is an * by your name on the newsletter, you need to send me your membership dues. Thank you in advance. Your renewal will help us achieve our goals, benefit educators new and old and ensure that you will continue getting our newsletter.

There is always room for members to be involved. We welcome help ... a little or a lot!

We also want to thank those lifetime members who have contributed to our worthy causes.

To learn more about SCRTA visit our website: <https://www.summitcountyrta.org/> and invite your friends to our Facebook page Summit County Retired Teacher Association. Click the  at the bottom of our website pages.

If you have any questions about your membership status, please contact me.

Jackie Hovey, Membership Chair
jhoveysue@gmail.com 330-267-9731

WE'VE GOT
BIG EXCITING
(can't hold it anymore)
B NEWS!

2 GALS AND A BUS
**** One Day Fun Days ****



SCRTA BUS TRIP

**(See the flyer in this newsletter
for more information)**



YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS...
STAY CONNECTED.



President – Johnnette Curry

1st Vice President (Program) **OPEN**

2nd Vice President – (Legislature) Bill Sieferth

Administrative Assistant - Rebecca Moore

Treasurer – Bill Sieferth

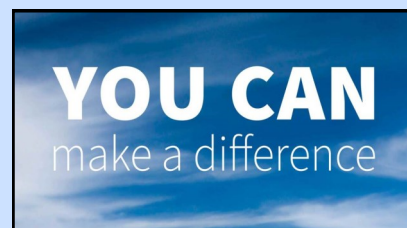
Assistant Treasurer (Membership) - Jackie Hovey

Three (3) Elected Nominating Committee Members:

1. Carol Caughron; 2. Micki Lavis; 3. Phyllis Lewis

Two (2) Members At-large - Nominating Committee

Members: 1. Christine Bean; 2. **OPEN**



SCRTA works to ...

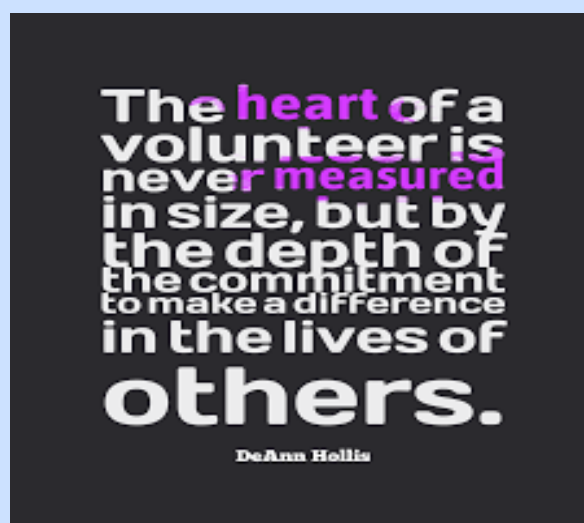
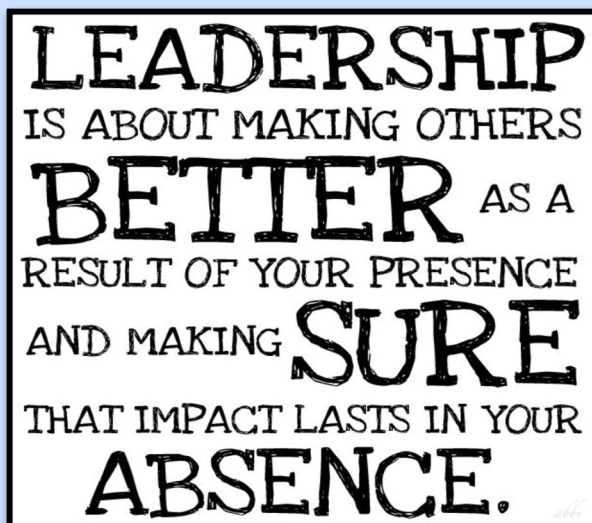
Improve your community and the world through service projects for children and families

Participate in fun and fellowship while building enduring friendships through service to others

Address local issues that impact all teachers

Attain a greater appreciation for your own talents and successes

Sharpen leadership skills by overcoming challenges



GET INVOLVED IN SCRTA! HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



The Summit County area is a great place to live and work for many reasons. Here are a few. Did you know about the Take Me Home program? It is a secure database created by the county prosecutor's office. Only law enforcement may access the information. The program allows for quick identification and safe return of children and adults who find it difficult to communicate and who may wander from home. The program is free and easy to use. You can contact the coordinator, Leslie Knoblauch at knoblauch@prosecutor.summitoh.net or 330-643-2800 or download an application from <https://prosecutor.summitoh.net/programs/Take-Me-Home.html> to help protect those who would need additional assistance in an emergency.

If you subscribe to the *Akron Beacon Journal*, you know about their consumer columnist and medical reporter, Betty Lin-Fisher. This reporter is a gem. She researches and reports on many topics including our utility rates and gives valuable information to readers. Here is a link to columns and stories on popular topics Lin-Fisher has written. (www.tinyurl.com/ABJBettysBestTips)

Did you know long-ago summertime meetings of the Summit County Retired Teachers were often picnics held in local parks? Summit Metro Parks, established in 1921, manages 15,000 acres, 16 parks and more than 150 miles of trails. They have eight open-air shelters and seven beautiful enclosed lodges available for rental. One catch is that you must reserve a shelter or lodge a year in advance. Still, it is worth a try to see if the shelter you desire is available on the date you prefer. (<https://www.summitmetroparks.org>)

The three nature centers are wonderful places to take grandchildren or to spend a couple of quiet hours. Liberty Park is located at 9999 Liberty Road, Twinsburg. F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm is located

at 1828 Smith Rd., Akron, and Summit Lake Nature Center is located at 411 Ira Ave., Akron 44301.

Numerous activities and hiking programs are offered throughout the year, and, of course, the trails are always waiting for you to walk or run at your own pace. If you prefer to not walk in the woods, the parks have large amounts of greenspace to walk across. In the open areas picnic tables and grills are often available.

Lately some publications have reported that sitting is the new smoking. Not so, say the researchers at the National Institute of Health. They report that the two are not comparable. Yet we all know walking is good for our health.

Have you discovered that googling a question does not always lead to the answer you were hoping for? I recently asked for quick ways to relieve stress. Up popped pictures of fifteen bottles of pills. Below that were several sources that had links to good information. Never choose the first results on the page after searching because those will be advertisements – not the information you want.

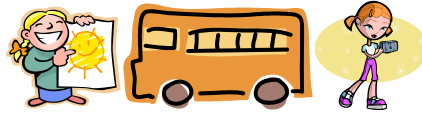
Did you know that drinking plenty of water and green tea and eating healthy food like fruits and green leafy vegetables frequently are effective in managing stress? Adequate sleep, regular exercise, and meditation help as do reading good books, going outdoors for fresh air (on non-fire smoke days) and avoiding smoking and alcohol consumption. Laughter can lessen stress and anxiety.

Children were in line in a Catholic school cafeteria. At the start of the line there was a big bowl of apples. A nun had written a note. It said, "Take only one. God is watching." At the end of the line there was a big bowl of chocolate chip cookies. One of the children had written a note. It said, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples." If you have a good joke, please consider sharing it during lunch at the September 5th meeting at Guy's.

Becky Moore, Chaplain

2 GALS AND A BUS

** One Day Fun Days **



Thursday, NOVEMBER 30, 2023

COME ALONG WITH YOUR FELLOW RETIRED TEACHERS TO ENJOY **THE OHIO STAR THEATER AND AMISH COUNTRY**

Join your fellow retired teachers as we gear up for Christmas and head to the Sugarcreek area for a great day out. We will visit/tour the Behalt-Amish Mennonite Center before heading to the Ohio Star complex for some shopping time, a buffet lunch at Der Dutchman and see A CHRISTMAS TREE SHIP, an inspiring musical show based on a true event. Last stop will be the Tis the Season shop where it is Christmas all year!

Our motor coach will load at the Staples on Arlington Road at **8:00 am** and leave at **8:15 am**. We should return back around 5:30 pm. As always, there will be fun, games, and prizes on the bus with time to visit with friends!

The price per person is **\$130.00** which includes venue entrances/tours, show, lunch, taxes, tips, all gratuities, and fun! Make checks out to SCRTA.

Your reservation with full payment is due by **Monday, October 16**. All reservations are non-refundable less than 30 days prior to the trip but can be transferred to another traveler.

To reserve your seat on the bus for the Ohio Star Theater trip, fill out the form below and mail it with your check for \$130/per person to: Carolyn Vogenitz 3326 Waterside Dr., Akron, Ohio 44319; Phone: 330-645-9928 or 330-329-9929 (cell); Email: wtsdpub@aol.com

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Number of Reservations: _____ Amount enclosed: _____

Please Note: 2 Gals and a Bus reserves the right to modify tours if dictated by necessity or circumstances beyond our control.

Phone: 330.575.9588
www.2galsandabus.com
Facebook – 2 Gals and a Bus

SCRTA GENERAL LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

Guy's Party Center

500 East Waterloo Road, Akron, OH 44319

12 Noon

Price: *\$23.00

***The rise in cost is due to the increase in food prices for the restaurant.**

DOOR PRIZES AND A SPECIAL PRIZE

Bring 5 or more items for the Community Service Project and receive an extra chance to receive a gift card.

There will be a special prize for the person who brings the most guests to this meeting.

The meal entrées are Beef Tips, Chicken Paradise, and Rigatoni with Meat Balls. Along with the entrées, they will be serving potatoes, green beans, salad, rolls/butter, and desert. Coffee, tea or lemonade are included with your meal. Tax & tip are included.

**Clip this reservation form and send to: Rozanne Emich 1595 Juniata Rd., Akron, OH 44305
Phone: (330-603-7660)**



NAME _____ PHONE # _____

Please make checks payable to **SCRTA** and send to **Rozanne Emich**. She must receive this reservation form and your check by **Friday, September 1, 2023**.



**MEMBERSHIP FORM for
SUMMIT COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**

NAME _____ PHONE # _____

ADDRESS _____ / _____ / _____
Street City Zip

SCRTA MEMBERSHIP DUES **\$20** _____ YEAR YOU RETIRED _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____ EMAIL _____

**MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO SCRTA. CHECK # _____
BRING OR SEND THIS FORM WHEN PAYING SCRTA DUES.**

FOR ORTA MEMBERSHIP: VISIT <https://www.orta.org/plans-pricing>

I would like to volunteer: Scholarship _____ Luncheon _____ Leadership _____

BY MAIL SEND TO: JACKIE HOVEY 1085 COOKHILL CIRCLE, AKRON, OH 44312

**GUIDELINES AND INCENTIVES FOR
THE SCRTA
RMHC PULL TAB PROGRAM
(2023 Kickoff)**



To participate in the Ronald McDonald House SCRTA, Pull Tab Incentive Program, please turn in your pull tabs at general luncheon meetings. We would like to track SCRTA members' participation. *Rozanne Emich will collect the tabs at the meetings and deliver them to the Akron Ronald McDonald House, at her convenience, on behalf of SCRTA members.*

- 1.** Bring the pull tabs in a quart or gallon sized zip lock or zipper bag to a General Luncheon meeting. Print your name and phone number on the bag. Please do not bring the tabs in the little cardboard houses, glass jars, etc. *(Note: We will provide a supply of quart and gallon sized plastic bags at the General Meetings for members who are participating in the program.)*
- 2.** If you sign up on the tracking list and/or print your name and phone number on the full plastic quart storage bags, you will automatically be entered into a drawing for a free lunch or gas card at a future luncheon meeting.
- 3.** Also, each time you bring your tabs to a meeting in a full plastic storage bag, you are invited to take one item from the SCRTA Pull Tabs Goody Basket. One item per bag of pull tabs per general meeting at the April, June, September, or November meetings.
- 4.** Collect aluminum pull tabs from a variety of sources. You are encouraged to invite relatives, neighbors, friends, and businesses to help you collect the aluminum tabs.
- 5.** Arrangements may possibly be made to pick up larger quantities of pull tabs from someone who cannot attend the General Meetings. Also, we are offering a non-prize option for people who collect pull tabs but over time don't have enough to fill a bag. If a member wants to donate anonymously, loose tabs can be brought to a SCRTA General meeting and put into a special RMHC collection house or box.

Every pull tab really helps the RMHC Pull Tab Program!

Questions? Contact: Christine Bean ... 330-784-4575 / clbean@neo.rr.com; Rozanne Emich 330-603-7660 / rjohn68186@aol.com; Elaine Jarvis ... 330-607-0226 / emjarvis37@gmail.com

Summit County Retired Teachers Association
452 Herbert Rd.
Akron, Ohio 44312

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
AKRON, OHIO 44309
Permit No. 418

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

August/September



2023

SCRTA Website
www.summitcountyrta.org

Leroy Martin - Webmaster
lmartin561@gmail.com



Thank you for showing so much interest in the Ronald McDonald pull tab program. You were very generous with the donations of toiletries, cleaning supplies and food. We always receive thank you letters from Ronald McDonald House and Shelter Care (Safe Landing for Boys and Girls). You should be proud of yourselves for doing so much to help others.

Christine Bean, Community Service Chairperson



September 5, 2023 (Tuesday) ... SCRTA General Luncheon Meeting ... 12 noon at Guy's Party Center

October 3, 2023 (Tuesday) ... SCRTA Management Board Meeting ... 10 am at the AEA Building.

November 14, 2023 ... (Tuesday) SCRTA General Membership Luncheon Meeting ... 12 noon at Guy's Party Center

"A Teacher's Heart Never Retires"