

# SCRTA NEWS

Summit County Retired Teachers Association

THE SUMMIT COUNTY AFFILIATE OF Ohio Retired Teachers Association October November 2023

## President's Corner



It's hard to believe that we are down to the last three months of 2023.

Warm summer days have begun to give way to cooler temperatures and beautiful colors of autumn. It has always been fascinating for me to watch thick green leaves dry up and fall from trees into crunchy piles. This time of year, is also an enjoyable period due to the upcoming holidays. Remember children dressed in Halloween costumes in school parades, Thanksgiving plays complete with Pilgrims and Indians and the grand Christmas musical with a surprise visit from Santa Claus. Oh, the memories.

Congratulations to all newly elected members of the SCRTA Management Board who will serve for the next two years. Those members include:

### Officers:

- President - Johnnette Curry
- 1st Vice President - Elaine Jarvis (Program)
- 2nd Vice President - Bill Sieferth (Legislation)
- Administrative Assistant - Rebecca Moore
- Treasurer - Bill Sieferth
- Assistant Treasurer (Membership) - Jackie Hovey

### Three (3) Elected Nominating Committee Members:

Carol Caughron, Micki Lavis, Phyllis Lewis.

### Two (2) Members At-Large - Nominating

Committee Members: Christine Bean, (Open).

*Note: if you are interested in the At-Large Open position, please let me know.*

The new officers will be installed at the November 14th general meeting.

Many thanks and much appreciation to our outgoing officers, Paul Green, Treasurer, and Judy Mervine, Administrative Assistant, for their many years of dedicated service.

Stay safe and healthy and I look forward to seeing you in November.

*Johnnette S. Curry*  
*President*



"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." – Leo Buscaglia

### **Inside This Issue**

November 14th Program / Management Board .....	2
RMHC Pull Tab Project .....	2
Legislation Update .....	3
Acme Fresh Market Program.....	4
In Memory of SCRTA Members 11/2022—10/2023 .....	4
Scholarship News .....	5
Scholarship News Continued.....	6
Did You Know? .....	7
Community Service and SCRTA Calendar .....	8
Meal Reservations and Membership Form.....	Insert





***STRS, Teacher Unions Favor Employer Contribution Increase***

Public employers in Ohio contribute a percentage of their total employee payroll to one or more of Ohio’s public pension plans. The amount employers must contribute is prescribed in the Ohio Revised Code. For example, ORC Section 3307.28 caps STRS employer contributions at 14% of payroll. Contributions to the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System and the State Employees Retirement System are capped at 14% as well. Employer contributions to the police, firefighters and highway patrol plans are 19.5%, 24% and 26.5% respectively.

The STRS 14% employer share has been law since 1983. As a result of the 2012 pension reform measures, the percentage of earnings paid by STRS members increased in annual 1% increments from 10% in 2012-13 to 14% in 2016-17 where it has remained ever since.

There have been efforts in recent years to increase the employer contribution rate to STRS. Unfortunately, none have gained any traction in the Ohio legislature. During the last General Assembly (134<sup>th</sup>, 2021-2022), for example, HB 601 was introduced by Reps. Mary Lightbody (D-Westerville) and Adam Miller (D-Columbus). The bill would have incrementally increased the employer rate 1/2% per year to 18%. Thirteen representatives co-sponsored the bill but it was an effort entirely along party lines. The proposal never made it out of the House Insurance Committee.

STRS Executive Director Bill Neville is working to have legislation introduced in the current General Assembly (2023-2024) to increase the employer contribution in a similar manner as was proposed by Lightbody and Miller, i.e., 1/2 % annual increments

over an eight year period until the rate reaches 18%. Neville has said the increase will provide STRS with the means to improve benefits for active and retired teachers. Both state teacher unions—the Ohio Federation of Teachers and the Ohio Education Association—share this goal of increasing employer support. The parties are presently working to enlist sponsors for the bill. According to an article in the *Columbus Dispatch*, Ohio School Boards Association chief executive Kathy McFarland is on record as saying her organization would oppose any increase in the employer contribution rate.

We will follow the progress of any bills that are introduced and inform you of their status.

***Insurance Open Enrollment: November 1-21***

Insurance coverage selection for 2024 will begin November 1, 2023 and continue through November 21.

There are a number of significant changes of which members need to be aware. STRS is providing detailed information about the changes through home mailings, on the STRS website and in the enrollment materials that are slated to be mailed late in October. The home mailing currently being sent out includes an excellent FAQ about both medical and prescription drug plan changes. It’s a must read for all members!

Highlights of the changes include moving to one medical care provider (Aetna, two plans), lower premiums for 99% of plan participants and, for Medicare plan members, \$0 in-network annual deductible and \$0 copayment for in-network primary care physician office visits. Prescription coverage will be administered by CVS Caremark.

*Bill Siegfert, Legislative Chair/2nd Vice President*



## Save Those Acme Fresh Market Receipts!



We have joined Acme Fresh Market's Community Cash Back program. You can help fund our scholarship and teacher grant programs by saving your Acme grocery receipts that show Community Cash Back value at the bottom of the receipt.

Acme will rebate to us 5% of the total cost of eligible products purchased between now and **February 15**. The eligible product brand names are: Top Care \$ Food Club \$ Acme Fresh Market \$ Crav'n \$ Tippy Toes \$ Simply Done \$ Sweet P's Bake Shop \$ Full Circle market \$ Over the Top \$ Wide Awake Coffee Co. \$ Pure Harmony \$ That's Smart! \$ Cape Covelle Seafood Market \$ and Paws Happy Life.

### Here's how the program works:

Shop at any Acme Fresh Market between now and February 15.

When you purchase any of the participating brands above, you'll see a note at the bottom of your receipt which says "Community Cash Back Earned Today."

If you earned cash, save the receipt regardless of how small your earnings are. We will pool all member receipts when we apply for the cash back reward.

We are asking that members mail receipts during the first week of each month with the exception of the last mailing which should be made on or soon after the final date of the program which, again, is February 15. Please mail receipts to:

Vicky Shaw  
1372 Hammel St.  
Akron, OH 44306.

For more information and to view the program flyer, please visit the SCRТА website ([www.summitcountyrta.org](http://www.summitcountyrta.org)).



### Deceased SCRТА Members Nov. 2022 - Oct. 2023

Our memories build a special bridge when loved ones have to part, to help us feel we're with them still and soothe a grieving heart. Our memories span the years we shared, preserving ties that bind, they build a special bridge of love and bring us piece of mind.

*William Cline 11/26/22 Akron*

*Marie Holt 11/29/22 Cuyahoga Falls*

*Michelle Nichols 12/23/22 Akron*

*Elizabeth Hershberger 1/3/23 Akron*

*Sharon Hall 1/16/23 Akron*

*Alberta Schumacher 1/19/23 Akron*

*Hedy Jones 2/17/23 Akron, Revere*

*Joanne Holland 4/12/23 Akron*

*Alma Hose 8/7/23 Akron, Norton*

*Irene Blike 8/26/23 Akron, Silver Lake*

---

If you know of any deceased SCRТА members not on the above list (**Nov. 2022 - Oct. 2023**), please call Christine Bean at 330-784-4575, or e-mail her at ([clbean@neo.rr.com](mailto:clbean@neo.rr.com)). Thank you!



# Scholarship News

As promised, the Scholarship Committee always likes to highlight those young people who have been scholarship recipients. The first update is on Nicholas Ratay, 2018 graduate of Barberton High School and the second update is on Shirrell White, 2020 graduate of Firestone CLC.

**Nicholas Ratay, SCRTA 2018 & 2021  
Scholarship Recipient (center, tie)**



This past school year was wonderful! I was very blessed to have wonderful kids, and a wonderful senior class, to help me as I navigated through my first year of teaching. Walsh Jesuit is a great school with good kids, parents, and staff. I love my job and look forward to many more years! Last year, I was part time, with duties including teaching concert band, string orchestra, and marching band. This year, I have been promoted to full time! I will still teach concert band, string orchestra, and marching band, but will also get to teach jazz band, a music theory class, and will get to help with the show choir!

The past two weeks have been our marching band camp. It feels very good to be leading a camp that I planned out, and seeing how much the students are accomplishing in such a short amount of time! I am looking forward to a great school year!

Thank you again SCRTA for the scholarships that I received!

## Senior Grateful for Life-Changing Trip Through Rocket Kids

([https://news.utoledo.edu/index.php/08\\_03\\_2023/senior-grateful-for-life-changing-trip-through-rocket-kids](https://news.utoledo.edu/index.php/08_03_2023/senior-grateful-for-life-changing-trip-through-rocket-kids))

August 3, 2023 | [International](#), [News](#), [UToday](#), [Alumni](#), [Student Affairs](#), [Judith Herb College of Education](#)

### Shirrell White, SCRTA 2023 Scholarship Recipient



### **Shirrell White is one of three U Toledo education students working with children of U.S. military families in Vicenza, Italy, through the new U Toledo program, Rocket Kids.**

The University of Toledo's Rocket Kids program is a fresh, new, one-of-a-kind program that allows education majors the opportunity to travel internationally while working with children through the United States military.

Being someone who had never been on a plane before, I knew that it might've been a really big jump to fly 4,000 miles away from everything I have ever known, but as they say, you never know until you try. Gratefully, I did try.

As for the children, they were amazing. I worked with the children of military families from 6th to 12th grade. We did so many activities and field trips with them like gardening, cooking, mountain biking, visiting Murano Glass-making factories and many other things.

The biggest impact I feel that we have made on the children was giving them a sense of comfort and excitement. I say comfort and excitement because when our children saw us happy and welcoming in the morning for camp and was interested in what they had to say, it made them feel good inside. Being in the center with our bright blue shirts and bright personalities every day made the children excited to come to camp and even stay until the center was fully closed.

I am so grateful for this experience, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds for the program and myself. *Vicky Shaw and Judi Hill—Scholarship Chairpersons*





You can order free COVID test kits for your household at <https://www.covid.gov/tests> and read the answers to frequently asked questions including lists of expiration extensions the FDA has given for kits you already have at home.

When you are searching for travel accommodations, fees may be hidden from you only to show up later at checkout. By now, most of us may know this from experience. Hidden fees can be charged especially when you use third-party booking sites that impose non-refundable service fees. To avoid these fees, many experts recommend booking directly through the hotel's website. You can get a better idea about extra costs and perhaps request that some charges, such as the use of a swimming pool, be waived. A good website to use to check on fees is <https://www.resortfee.com> where all sorts of items are listed for specific hotels. You will find not only resort fees, if any, but also costs of valet parking, self-parking, pet fees, a rollaway bed (per day or per night), breakfast, early or late check-in, and wireless Internet.

You can look out for hidden car rental fees to ward off surprises. You may have a travel credit card that covers insurance for rentals or you may just check in advance with your personal insurer to see what is covered on a rental. Be assured that rental car companies will push their insurance. Walk around the vehicle and photograph any noticeable damage before driving off and don't forget to read the fine print to become aware of any add-on costs.

The latest data reported by the FTC shows they received 2.8 million fraud reports from consumers in 2021. The Federal Trade Commission Consumer Advice website is a great resource to combat fraud and more. Go to <https://consumer.ftc.gov> to find numerous articles on protective information, all safe to peruse. When you see the padlock icon and

<https://> at the beginning of the address and .gov at the end, this means that you are connecting to the official website and that any information you provide is encrypted and transmitted securely.

"Advice and Guidance" resources on the FTC website help readers to learn consumer rights and how to use online security to spot and avoid fraud, scams, identity theft, and how to avoid taking unnecessary risks. Examples include how to remove your personal information when you get rid of your computer and tips on checking out a new charity or fundraiser.

The "Healthy at Home" videos from Aetna are worth watching. Each Wednesday a new fitness video is added online. Instructor Curtis Adams features fun and effective workouts for seniors. Many of the episodes are On Demand which means you can click on older broadcasts and can repeat routines you like. Aetna Medicare also offers Healthy Lifestyle and Food webinars. When you sign up, you give your email address to receive reminders. You can always unsubscribe to this service if you decide you no longer want the emails. Go to <https://healthyathome.aetnamedicare.com> to look over the topics. These are not Zoom meetings but are videos about well-being for the mind, body and soul.

On the lighter side, did you know the initials on M&M candies represent the chocolate maker owners Forrest Mars and Bruce Murrie? Their initials appear on about 400 million treats every day!

Chicago is called the Windy City not because of the weather but thanks to newspaper journalists. In the late 1800s a writer for the Cincinnati Inquirer came up with the nickname because he thought politicians who lived in the city were windbags. Journalists from other papers have also been credited with the nickname.

Matthew McConaughey has a new children's book out called Just Because. He shares wisdom for people of all ages. He says, "We cannot fully appreciate the light without the shadows. We must be thrown off balance to find our footing. It's better to jump than fall. And here I am." *Becky Moore, Chaplain*

**SCRTA GENERAL LUNCHEON MEETING**

**Tuesday, November 14, 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, November 10, 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**



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

*October/November*



**2023**

SCRTA Website  
[www.summitcountyrta.org](http://www.summitcountyrta.org)

Leroy Martin - Webmaster  
[lmartin561@gmail.com](mailto:lmartin561@gmail.com)



The Ronald McDonald pull tab program has gotten off to a great start. Thanks to those who signed up to participate. Remember to bring your filled plastic bags with your name and the pull tabs to the next or future luncheons in 2024. Also, we are still collecting cleaning supplies, health and beauty products, and snacks to donate to Ronald McDonald House and Shelter Care Safe Landing for boys and girls.

*Christine Bean,  
Community Service Chair*



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

**February 13, 2024 (Tuesday) ... SCRTA  
Management Board Meeting ... 10 am at the  
AEA Building.**

*"A Teacher's Heart Never Retires"*

**The way to achieve your own success is to be  
willing to help somebody else get it first.**

*Karen Horney*