

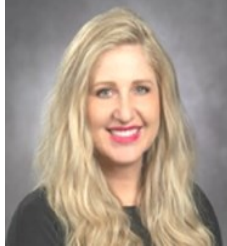
# SCRTA NEWS

Summit County Retired Teachers Association

THE SUMMIT COUNTY AFFILIATE OF Ohio Retired Teachers Association May - June 2024



Lynn Hoover



Christina Elliott

## *STRS LEADERSHIP TO SPEAK AT JUNE 4 LUNCHEON*

STRS Acting Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer **Lynn Hoover** and **Christina Elliott**, Deputy Executive Director-Member Benefits and Chief Benefit Officer, will join us at our June 4 luncheon meeting.

The State Teachers Retirement Board named Lynn Hoover acting executive director in November 2023. A 30-year veteran of the pension fund, Ms. Hoover is also serving as the chief financial officer, deputy executive director of Finance. Prior positions have included being the controller; and director, investment performance, among other roles. Before joining STRS Ohio, she was an auditor with Deloitte & Touche. Ms. Hoover is a certified public accountant. She holds a bachelor's degree (summa cum laude) from Capital University.

Christina Elliott serves as Deputy Executive Director – Member Benefits, Chief Benefits Office for the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio. Christina joined STRS Ohio in 2022. Her responsibilities include strategic planning for member benefits and directing department operations with a team of 130 associates who consistently rank in the top tier of retirement systems in providing exceptional services to members. Before joining STRS Ohio, she was executive director of the Ohio Deferred Compensation. Ms. Elliott holds a bachelor's degree from California State University, Sacramento and a master's degree from the University of Southern California.

We expect Ms. Hoover and Ms. Elliott to address STRS' strategy to place a bill before the Ohio General Assembly to increase the employer retirement contribution, explain recently approved benefit improvements for active teachers, and perhaps briefly mention a report released April 11 by the Ohio Retirement Study Council. Ms. Hoover addressed the Council at that April 11 meeting. She thanked members for publishing a detailed report on the challenges faced by the state's public pension systems between 1998 and 2022. The report concluded that STRS has been "effectively managed" and characterized its long-term investment returns during that time as "remarkable." Ms. Hoover informed the Council that STRS officials are meeting with legislators to secure sponsors for a bill to raise the employer contribution from 14% to 18% over an eight year period, or .5% per year. Ms. Elliott will be available to answer questions about the new prescription plan, the Board vote to make the 34 year requirement for unreduced retirement benefits permanent instead of increasing it to 35 years in 2028, and lowering reduced retirement benefit eligibility from 30 to 29 years of service.

Members are encouraged to watch for a page on the STRS website dedicated to the Employer Contribution Rate Increase Initiative. The site will include details on the efforts to pursue the increase and how members can help. *Bill Siegfert*

## President's Message



Greetings to all SCRTA members and, as always, it was so nice to see many of you at the April meeting.

Our Board team is moving forward with plans and ideas to become more effective in providing information and activities for you. We are inviting members to consider volunteering time to help with upcoming activities and projects. Some opportunities are mentioned below.

- Plans are under consideration for a "SCRTA Summertime" special gathering with some fun activities in July/August.
- The pull-tab collection to support the Ronald McDonald House is ongoing. Keep saving your tabs and bring them to the meetings.
- There are board positions open: Members-at-Large, Public Relations, and Trips / Excursions.
- Membership would appreciate help in updating phone numbers, e-mail and home addresses. Contact Jackie Hovey at: [jhoveysue@gmail.com](mailto:jhoveysue@gmail.com)
- Greeters are needed for the luncheon meetings. Contact Chris Bean at: [clbean@neo.rr.com](mailto:clbean@neo.rr.com)

These are just a few volunteer opportunities. Contact our Marketing Committee Chair, Elaine Jarvis, with questions or additional information at: [emjarvis37@gmail.com](mailto:emjarvis37@gmail.com)

Woodridge Elementary Teacher, Kim Zeiner, sent a thank you note to SCRTA for selecting her as a Teacher Grant recipient. The grant was used to purchase new books for the school's vending machine. The students were so excited to see the variety of books. She added "We are so thankful to have the support of such a wonderful group and as retired teachers, we just know they loved supporting kids and reading! It definitely has had an impact on

our school!" Thanks again to Bill Siegerth and his committee for the work done on this year's Teacher Grant program.

Don't forget to send in your reservation for the next general meeting and luncheon on **June 4, 2024**, at Guy's Party Center. **Doors open at 11:30 am.** *Johnnette S. Curry, President*

## Travel Opportunity



Tom and Diane Vukovich, University of Akron retirees, have invited SCRTA members to take advantage of a guided group trip in 2025. For every SCRTA member and traveling companion who registers and joins them, they will donate \$100 to our scholarship program. The trip is *Ancient Kingdoms: Thailand, Laos, Cambodia & Vietnam*. The departure date is **February 18, 2025**, and the return date is **March 9, 2025**. The SCRTA Management Board received details on the trip, and you may phone Becky Moore with your questions (330-497-9362).

You can also get details at the Overseas Adventure Travel (OAT) website: [www.oattravel.com/lvc](http://www.oattravel.com/lvc) or telephone Tom and Diane 330-733-4608. Their email is [tv1@uakron.edu](mailto:tv1@uakron.edu). At the time this newsletter was printed, two double rooms and two single rooms remained for a total of six travelers. Reservations may be made by calling OAT at 1-800-955-1925. Mention the group code G5-11220. A deposit of \$500 is required. Please make your reservations before **June 1**.

### Address Changes Temporary, Permanent,

Whether you are changing your address temporarily, permanently or you are a snowbird, please contact **Jackie Hovey, Membership Chair**, with your new address via email: [jhoveysue@gmail.com](mailto:jhoveysue@gmail.com)., phone: (330-940-9147), or postal address: 1085 Cookhill Circle, Akron, OH 44312. Let Jackie know if you have added or changed your email address; the SCRTA Board will soon be using email to send important information to members between the publication of newsletters.

## Legislative and Legal Updates



Bill Siegfert

**Federal efforts to repeal** the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) rules face yet another uphill battle. WEP reduces Social Security benefits for those who earned a benefit but also collect a public pension. GPO does the same to survivors' benefits if a survivor collects a public pension. Bi-partisan repeal has been proposed in the past several legislative sessions but has never made it to a vote on either the House or Senate floor. Two reasons contribute to the biennial stalls. First, the number of states in which public employees do not pay into Social Security is small. Roughly, only 3% of Social Security recipients have a public pension. Secondly, there is popular bi-partisan support as well for not repealing WEP and GPO but instead, changing the formula by which a recipient's Social Security benefit is reduced. The Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act and the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act are two such bills under consideration in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. The problem here is obvious... those supporting repeal and those favoring modification of the formula have yet to come up with a compromise that both sides can support. It is comforting, albeit little more than that, to know that both the Ohio House and Senate approved House Concurrent Resolution 6. The Resolution was passed as a means for Ohio to express its support for the repeal of WEP and GPO.

**Vouchers Hurt Ohio** is a growing coalition of public school districts that have come together to sue the state over the unconstitutional and harmful private school voucher program. The voucher

program has grown from costing \$42 million in 2008 to more than \$600 million in the current two-year budget. The costly EdChoice voucher program amounts to little more than a rebate or refund program for parents who never intended to send their children to public schools to begin with, and in many cases whose kids are already in a private school. No one objects to parents sending their kids to private schools; doing so at the expense of the state's public schools and local property owners is another matter.

**Vouchers Hurt Ohio** is led by **Bill Phillis**, the Executive Director of the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding. Many retirees will remember Mr. Phillis as the gentleman who spearheaded the legal battle which began in 1991 over the constitutionality of Ohio's school funding formula. That effort resulted in the **DeRolph** decision whereby the Ohio Supreme Court determined the formula unconstitutional, a decision the Ohio legislature has largely ignored for years. Coalition membership is growing; districts currently pay \$2 per student per year. Nearly 160 Ohio districts have joined, including 5 in Summit County (Barberton, Hudson, Woodridge, Nardon and Twinsburg). Only three of the state's eight largest districts have **not** joined – Akron, Cleveland and Youngstown.

**The STRS Employer Contribution Increase** campaign is about to begin. Please see the front page article about this June's luncheon speakers.

**An Ohio 10<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals** three-judge panel has accepted a Magistrate's ruling that Governor DeWine did not have authority to remove STRS Board member Wade Steen. Steen walked into April's in-progress Board meeting with ruling in hand, announcing that he was back on the Board and announcing that his replacement should leave. The Board appeared to be unaware ahead of time of Steen's theatrics and as a result, Chairman Dale Price, a Toledo teacher and Akron Ellet grad, walked out of the meeting. The meeting then ended without the

**Please see legislation, page 4**

### Legislation continued from page 3

agenda having been fully addressed. Price issued a statement addressing the situation which can be viewed on the STRS website. We will address this situation further as more information becomes available. Moving forward, it will be interesting to see if the Ohio Ethics Commission looks into the matter of Steen's personal legal fees being paid for by ORTA. *Bill Siegfert*

### SCRTA HISTORY

The Summit County Retired Teachers Association was formed in the early 1950s by combining the Akron Retired Teachers Association (begun in 1935) with the Cuyahoga Falls Retired Teachers Association. All retired teachers in Summit County were invited to join.

The meetings were held at South High School, East High School, the Summit Federal Credit Union, the Cathedral Buffet in Cuyahoga Falls, the Tangier restaurant in Akron, and Guy's Party Center where they are currently held. Picnics were occasionally held in Goodyear and Sand Run Metropolitan Parks in Akron.

The following members have served as president: Guy Swartzel, John Wagner, Charles Querry, John Griffith, Harland Horton, Virginia Ocasek, Charles Schifano, Faith Sherman, Oliver Ocasek, Martha Keisler, Blin Scatterday, Bob Frutchey, Sue Frutchey, Bob Dengler, Paul DiMascio, Mary Lou Swartz, and Johnnette Curry.

Many SCRTA members have done outstanding things in the community and state. Here are a few of their accomplishments in the earlier days of the Association. Buchtel High School teacher Willis Neuenschwander helped Akron become one of the first cities in the nation to offer driver education. At Akron's West High School, Henry M. Horst started a Student Tutoring System that found advocates from coast to coast. Jim Elderkin was very active in the Weathervane Theater in Akron. Faith Sherman,

**Please see History, page 5**



### 2024 SCRTA MANAGEMENT BOARD

- President** - Johnnette Curry (330-699-4123)
- 1st VP/ Program** - Elaine Jarvis (330-607-0226)
- 2nd VP/Legislative** - Bill Siegfert (330-819-4123)
- Administrative Assistant** - Rebecca Moore (330-497-9362)
- Treasurer** - Bill Siegfert (330-819-4123)
- Asst. Treasurer/Membership** - Jackie Hovey (330-940-9147)
- Past President** - Mary Lou Swartz (234-755-1490)
- Membership Luncheons** - Micki Lavis (330-854-3054) and Phyllis Lewis (330-342-3550)
- Newsletter Editor** - Elaine Jarvis (330-607-0226)
- 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**
- Member at Large: Community Service** - Christine Bean (330-784-4575)
- Member at Large: OPEN**
- Scholarship Committee** - Vicky Shaw (330-773-5862) and Judi Hill (330-805-5550) Co-Chair
- Bulk Mailing** - Rozanne Emich (330-603-7660)
- Travel/Excursions** - **OPEN** (330-645-9928)





### Continued from page 4

Elizabeth Smith, and Eileen Knapp were presidents of Northeastern Ohio Teachers' Association. Willis Eckert was instrumental in forming the Summit School Employees Federal Credit Union. Minnie Spuller pioneered an education program for handicapped children. Arthur Peoples was president of Classroom Teachers of the Ohio Education Association. Oliver Ocasek was a state senator and on the State Board of Education. Horace Jellison was a pioneer in organizing the internationally known All American Soap Box Derby, one of the nation's summer highlights. Betty Ocasek Peters served on the State Teachers Retirement Board as one of our retired representatives. Gladys V. Arbogast was one of the earliest citizens to promote preserving Stan Hywet Hall. Lila Wagner started a program for Ohio children to save Malabar Farm.

Dozens of SCRTA members were delegates to National Education Association representative assemblies throughout the years. Others served in offices of the Ohio Retired Teachers Association and were active with its national counterpart.

SCRTA has awarded many thousands of dollars in scholarships to Summit County graduates and has had numerous community service projects. Members have volunteered countless hours to the Association and the community in various schools, places of worship, and other organizations. The largest long-time project and the one receiving the most generous donations was that of helping to furnish the new Ronald McDonald House (now called Ronald McDonald House Charities) at Akron Children's Hospital beginning in 1985. SCRTA recently resumed support of the Akron house through the RMHC. Newsletter items provide details about current SCRTA community service and scholarships. *Rebecca Moore*



We welcome our new members: **Gene Haas**, who taught in Akron Public Schools and **Sheree Winn**, Barberton Schools. It was great to see them and so many familiar faces at the April luncheon. Attending our luncheons is only one way to become involved with our worthy causes. There is always room for members to be involved with awarding scholarship, grants and currently, SCRTA supports two community organizations ... Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) and Shelter Care ... primarily by giving them toiletries, cleaning and paper products that are donated by our members at our General Luncheon meetings. We welcome help, a little or a lot!

We want to send out a big "Thank You" for the 22 members that volunteered at our April meeting to call members and update our email list.

We are grateful for our Lifetime Members that have made contributions towards our Teacher Grants and Scholarships.

Your dues and contributions will help us achieve our goals, benefit current and future educators and ensure that you will continue getting our newsletter.

If there is an \* by your name on this newsletter, your dues are due!

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

*Jackie Hovey*

[jhovaysue@gmail.com](mailto:jhovaysue@gmail.com)





Last summer, the SCRTA Board started talking about ways to increase awareness of our Association while at the same time helping teachers and kids in the seventeen Summit County school districts. We came up with the idea of offering grant opportunities to teachers in every district. Because the project started so late in the calendar year, the time we had to solicit contributions from our members to Association funds to finance the grants was short. Time pinch aside, eight very generous members contributed nearly \$1,000; combined with a \$1,000 gift from Acme Fresh Markets and SCRTA funds, we were able to award 12 grants from among the twenty-three applications we received. Each grant was for \$300, or a total of \$3,600!

Four teachers who were awarded grants were featured in the last newsletter. Just recently we heard from another. If you're wondering how teachers and students are reacting to landing a grant, read this note from Mrs. Kim Zeiner, a kindergarten teacher at Woodridge Elementary School:

*"Hello! I wanted to send you a quick update on the grant that our school received from Summit County Retired Teachers Association. We are very thankful for this grant and the books that we were able to purchase with the money.*

*Last spring, Woodridge Elementary received a book vending machine thanks to generous donations to a Donors Choose project. It was quite an exciting time! Tokens to get books from the vending machine were added to the Bulldog Boutique. Since then, students have been earning bulldog bucks for being respectful, responsible and ready. Each month, they have the chance to buy a book token with their bulldog bucks. The tokens are a popular item and the students love seeing the new books that are added to the vending machine.*

*Thanks to the generosity of the Summit County Retired Teachers Association, WES received a grant to purchase more books for the book vending machine. The students were so excited to see a variety of titles added! Magic Treehouse, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Dog Man, Junie B. Jones and the I Survived series are just a few of the many books that were received. We are so thankful to have the support of such a wonderful group and as retired teachers we just know they love supporting kids and reading!*

*Thanks again for the opportunity to receive this grant. It definitely has had an impact on our school!"*

Mrs. Zeiner's words do nothing but make us more determined to continue and expand the program for the 2024-2025 school year. In order to do that, we need more financial support from the membership than we received this year! As the year progresses, we will be asking members to support SCRTA's Grant Program in one of three tax-advantaged ways: (1) at any age, make a tax-deductible contribution from your personal funds; (2) if you are 70½ and own an IRA, make a contribution directly from your IRA, lowering your Adjusted Gross Income; (3) if you are 73½ and own an IRA, make a contribution directly from your IRA which counts toward your Required Minimum Distribution and lowers your AGI. Methods (2) and (3) both fall under IRS's Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) rules.

Please discuss with your tax advisor and/or IRA custodian beforehand which method of contributing is best for you, and for Summit County teachers and kids!! *Bill Siegfert*



# Scholarship News

The Scholarship Committee is overjoyed that we are able to award two \$1,000.00 scholarships to deserving Summit County students. Thank you SCRTA members for your dedication and contributions to future educators. It is our pleasure to introduce the 2024 SCRTA Scholarship Recipients: **Sydney Peterson** and **Jonathan Fridline**.



Hello, I am **Sydney Peterson** and I am a Senior at Green High School. I was on the volleyball team and swim team all four years of my high school career. In my off time, I coach my local swim team, as well as teaching swim lessons for the YMCA. I love

seeing kids succeed and having fun learning new skills and techniques. Being involved with kids throughout my life helped solidify my decision to major in education and I am super excited for what my future has in store for me. I will be attending Catawba College in Salisbury, NC and will also be a part of the Catawba Swimming Program. This scholarship means a lot to me and my family and I am very grateful. Thank you, Summit County Retired Teachers Association.



Investing in youth is something that I have always felt called to and enjoyed. Some people may view kids negatively because they are "too much," or anything like that. However, I view them as people, just like you and me, who need direction, investment,

and mentorship. They are the future whether we like

it or not. So, I see the importance of mentoring, investing and cultivating relationships with them, for the future's sake. So, with all that being said, teaching is an amazing outlet to do so. To lead, to inspire, and pour into. These kids need leading, and teachers are put in that position.

I graduated from CVCA in May of 2023. I was President of the National Honor Society and was the Commencement Speaker. I currently attend Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. I am in the Honors College with the intent of graduating in 2027 with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics for Secondary Education. Thank you for awarding me this scholarship. **Jonathan Fridline**

*Vicky Shaw and Judi Hill*  
*Scholarship Co-Chairpersons*



**[summitcountyrta.org](http://summitcountyrta.org)**

### **Where you will find info:**

About us, SCRTA Purposes, Events, Community Service Projects, Scholarship and Teacher Grant info and Application Forms, Newsletters (Current and archived), How to Contact Us, and Links to ORTA, STRS, and our Facebook Account.

**Many thanks to Leroy Martin, our SCRTA webmaster. He is truly appreciated!**

**SCRTA GENERAL LUNCHEON MEETING**

**Tuesday, June 4, 2024**

**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: Micki Lavis 6106 Akron Ave., NW Canal Fulton, OH 44614  
Phone: (330-854-3054)**



NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to **SCRTA** and send to **Micki Lavis**. She must receive this reservation form and your check by **Friday, May 31, 2024**.



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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City Zip

SCRTA MEMBERSHP 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  
82 Cedar Woods Dr.  
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44223

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

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

*MAY - JUNE*



**2024**

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

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



Thank you for your generous donations to the organizations we support ... Ronald McDonald House, Shelter Care and Safe Landing for Boys and Girls. Please continue to bring your pull tabs, snacks, health and beauty, cleaning, and paper products to our General Luncheon meetings.



*Christine Bean, Community Service Chairperson*



**June 4, 2024 (Tuesday) ... SCRTA General Luncheon Meeting ... 12 noon at Guy's Party Center. Doors open at 11:30 am**

**July 9, 2024 (Tuesday) ... SCRTA Management Board Meeting ... 10 am at the AEA Building.**

**September 17, 2024 (Tuesday) ... SCRTA General Luncheon Meeting ... 12 noon at Guy's Party Center. Doors open at 11:30 am.**

*"A Teacher's Heart Never Retires"*