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Washington County Retired Teachers Association

An Affiliate of the Ohio Retired Teachers Association

March 2014

"The night is mother of the Day; / The Winter of the Spring;
And ever upon old Decay / The greener mosses cling.
John Greenleaf Whittier, *A Dream of Summer*

Dear Teachers and Friends,

I'm sorry I missed our February meeting, but I had a chance to go to Myrtle Beach for a few days, hoping for a break from the kind of weather we've had this winter. No such luck. While I was there, we had an ice storm that closed all the schools. We were fortunate, though, and didn't lose power, especially because we were staying in a twelfth-floor condo. My only way out of there would have been to slide down the bannister, provided I could have found a way to get a leg up over the hand rail. By the time we have our next meeting on Wednesday, April 9, spring will surely have arrived. Plan to attend the WCRTA luncheon at the Lafayette at 12 noon. The menu is ham loaf with mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, along with a garden salad, rolls, and beverage. Dessert this time is pineapple upside down cake. Yummy. The price is \$13.00, which does not include a gratuity. Make a reservation by calling Joyce Ross at 373-2359. You can also make a reservation by e-mail at: joycer1007@gmail.com. Vocal Point, a choral group from Marietta High School, will present the program. Vocal Point has taken the place of the group called "Premiere," who have entertained us several times in the past. My grandson sings with this group, so you can bet that Grandma will be there for sure. This meeting is a great way to celebrate the start of spring, see old friends, and make some new ones. Our charity this time is the Belpre Area Ministries, who operate Belpre's food pantry, and we're asking members to bring personal hygiene items to donate. Cash donations will also be accepted.

Helen Drake, with help from a couple of members and her daughter Bonnie, will have the tables decorated in a spring or Easter theme. We really appreciate the many, many years Helen has been in charge of arrangements for our lunch meetings every other month. Helen's birthday is April 1; she will be 102 years old this year. If you want to send Helen a card, her address is 132 Brant Drive, Marietta.

The deadline for reservations is Sunday, April 6, by 8 P.M.

KB

Numbers

Count!

It is important that we have an active organization with participation from many members. Encourage the retired teachers you know to come to one of our meetings. The April meeting would be a good occasion to invite a friend to join you for lunch. The food is generally good, the price is fair, and the program promises to be entertaining. After the kind of winter we've had, it will do us all good to get out of the house and do some catching up with people we haven't seen for a while. All you have to do is make a reservation and show up—easy enough. I look forward to seeing you Wednesday, April 9, for lunch.

This and That

Something Poetic

Spring is sprung , the grass is ris.

I wonder where the birdies is!

(Offered with apologies to Mrs. Guthrie, my English teacher, who remarked once that she would like her epitaph to be "I done what I could.")

Although this little poem has variously been attributed to Ogden Nash and e.e. cummings, no one knows for certain who wrote it. Both Mr. Nash and Mr. Cummings apparently refused to take credit.

Snow Days

Most of the school districts in the county missed about fifteen days (some more, some fewer) this winter on account of bad weather. Last week, Ohio's legislature added four days to the traditional five calamity days granted to schools statewide. Some districts also took advantage of the "Blizzard Bag" option, which posts lessons online for students to complete at home. This option can compensate for up to three additional days of instruction. And finally, several districts were able to make up a day by changing a day of professional development to a day of instruction. The rest of the missed days will be made up during scheduled spring breaks or at the end of the school year.

Next year, schools will be able to use hours of instruction to meet their required number of days. If the school day in a district exceeds the minimum requirement, the extra time can accumulate to make up for days missed. If any part of this remains unclear, please call the Ohio Department of Education or your representative in the Ohio State House.

Public Schools

I want to take this opportunity to say that I am and always have been a believer in our public schools. I know how hard most teachers work and how much of their time outside of school they devote to preparing lessons, grading papers, attending school activities, and so on. Schools today are taking a great deal of criticism from numerous sources. Some outspoken local critics of our schools, I'm sorry to say, make their living teaching in public schools but choose to send their children to private schools. Laws and mandates come down from people who have no idea what the schools have to deal with. Every employee of the Ohio Department of Education should be required to spend at least a semester in the classroom every four or five years. They would quickly learn to sing a new tune. The same requirement should apply to members of the legislature who serve on education committees, and it probably wouldn't hurt school board members either, especially those on the board of education at the state level. I'll get off my soapbox now, but I get sick and tired of schools and teachers taking the blame for all of society's ills.

KB

In Memoriam

Norma Kleiber passed away in early January. Norma served as school nurse for the Marietta City Schools for a number of years. She was a genuinely nice lady, very much liked by both students and staff.

Doris Lytle retired from the Belpre City Schools several years ago. She was a regular at WCRTA meetings for a long time. She and Dorothy Swanson and Lois Craig (Jim Craig's mother) often came to our meetings together. Doris was 93 when she died in late February.

Vicki Mason, who lived in Williamstown, passed away at the end of February. She had taught in Caldwell in Noble County.

She was not a teacher, but **Friedel Barrett** was also a regular at our WCRTA meetings before the death of her husband David. Mrs. Barrett died in late February following a long illness. We extend our condolences to the family and friends of all these whom we have lost.

As always, we apologize for errors or omissions and will gladly make an effort to correct any that are pointed out.

*The truth as I know it.... Karen Burton
(with editorial assistance from Jim Williams)*
