

MARCH 2024



IOWA RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION

From the President Jeanne Handeland

When you're from Iowa it's hard to start an article without talking about the weather! January sure gave us some extremes with near record-breaking cold and near record-breaking warm temperatures. Many of you, I'm sure, had lots of snow to shovel, but our area didn't get much this time. I don't have a lot of faith in the forecast of Punxsutawney Phil, but an early spring keeps us hopeful.

The IRSPA Board has met a few times via Zoom. We are trying to reach out to those who are IRSPA members but not members of a local unit. We feel there are many benefits to joining a local unit: social interaction with your peers, lifelong learning through programs and trips, legislative advocacy that protects IPERS, and leadership opportunities to name a few.

In case you're not a member of a local unit, you can find one easily by going to the IRSPA.org webpage and under the About tab, select Directory. You'll find a state map; just click on the county where you live and it will open to your district. Select a local unit you prefer, and contact information will appear.

Thanks to Jean Hoffman and Alex, from Vilocity, clicking on the map works now! They have also been updating the webpage and have solved some of the glitches with it. It's a work in progress; and to be useful, it needs to be updated continually.

Do you get a lot of phone calls every day? I do. On the news this morning it said that millions of Americans receive multiple scam calls a day and some



President:
Jeanne Handeland
4181 230th St.,
Wallingford, IA 51365
(712) 260-0943
Email: jhandy@rvtc.net

of them can be pretty convincing. My cell phone number is listed in the directory. You are welcome to call me, but I have pretty much stopped answering calls if I don't recognize the phone number because of all the robocalls. Please leave a voice mail or text if you need to reach me, and I will return your call.

We are still in need of a district coordinator in District 1 and District 5. It isn't terribly time consuming, and you are reimbursed for your expenses. If possible, you would visit each unit once a year, help them with their district meetings and assist with the state meeting every six years. A side benefit is the chance to work with other fantastic board members.

There is an executive board meeting coming up in April. One of the topics at the board meeting will be the newsletter. Once again, we are asking you to let us know if you are willing to read it electronically. We know that they're some who want to continue to receive it by mail, and we are more than willing to do that. We have received a number of members, especially those who are members of local units, that will read it on the website. We certainly don't want to lose contact with those of you who are not involved in a local unit.

We will also be confirming where district meetings will be held. They are in the north half of the state on May 7, 8 and 9 and in the southern half May 21, 22 and 23. Please try to attend your district meeting. They are very informative and one of the main benefits of belonging to a local unit.

Our legislative lobbyists: John Cacciatore and Christopher Rants are busy keeping us informed of legislation that IRSPA may want to support or disapprove. Another benefit of membership in IRSPA. I'm looking forward to catching up with you this spring. I'm beginning to recognize many of you and that's always a great feeling. Remember our motto.....Proud to Serve.

Jeanne Handeland, IRSPA President



HARDIN COUNTY HCARSP

We meet at Edgewood in Iowa Falls. This is an historical building which was originally built as a school for the domestic arts. The Edgewood Board of Directors is a group of women who supervise, maintain, and promote the use of their building. Each month they cater a delightful and filling meal for our group in the meeting room available for rent to the public. We celebrate with them the successful completion of an exterior chair lift in October, making it possible for several of our members to resume attending safely!



September Program - Nikki Adair

Our September program was "Association Member Benefits" presented in a lively fashion by Nikki Adair. Her "audience participation" activities kept us thoroughly engaged. It's so important that we use the resources and services available to us, which are only a phone call or email away at any time.

In October, Richard & Gretchen Hartwig and Trisha Adams brought their work with "The Orphan Grain Train" to share with our members. The Central Iowa



Branch is one of 29 regional locations across the USA who gather clothing and other relief supplies for destitute people around the world. They also accept financial relief funds to send these goods where most needed.

The supplies are distributed through orphanages, schools, churches, and hospitals.

Paul Hackbarth, of the Iowa Falls Historical Society, gave a program called "Hard Lessons" in November. His presentation reflected on the profiles of seven former teachers in the Iowa Falls area.

Our December meeting opened with delicious hors d'oeuvres and Christmas



**Paul Hackbarth,
Iowa Falls Historical Society**

punch, accompanied by carols softly playing in the background as we gathered. Cynthia Knight shared her vision, design, and implementation of "Choice



Cynthia Knight

Charter School" to fill an unmet need for Iowa students. This is a rigorous online independent study program for students needing an alternative to the traditional classroom approach. We closed as member Lois Nassen continued to delight us with a "Christmas Sing" including many old-time favorite songs and carols. Our meetings will resume in

March upon the return of our "snowbirds."

Mary Lou Kirkdorffer, Secretary

Newsletter Deadline

Articles for the June Newsletter are due no later than Friday, May 17, 2024

**Get info to Toni Hood, at
E-mail: tonihood@q.com
Home Telephone: 515-332-5819
Cell Phone: 515-269-3823**

District 4

COUNCIL BLUFFS IRSPA

The Council Bluffs Retired School Personnel met on November 15, 2023 at the Council Bluffs Country Club with 29 members and 4 guests in attendance. Our speaker was Mr. Larry Gray, Executive Director for Heartland Christian School. He presented an overview of Heartland Christian from its beginning to what it is today. Heartland Christian, located in Council Bluffs, is an independent accredited Christian school, not directed by a church



Larry Gray

or any denominational group. It serves around 275 students from pre-k to 12th grade. They work with area school systems to provide additional opportunities for their students.



Students from Heartland
Christian School

Students of Mrs. Sarah Leavitt from Heartland entertained us with three songs from their musical "Once Upon a Mattress."

Members were reminded to be thinking of donations for our Scholarship Fund Raiser held at our April

17, 2024 meeting. Donations in the past have included baked goods, craft items, quilts, wreaths, wine, plants and gift cards. After a winter break, we will resume our meetings on March 20, 2024.

Julie Dillehay, Secretary

District 5

DAVIS COUNTY IRSPA

Davis County Retired School Personnel Association met on November 14 at the Bloomfield Public Library with 23 members and 1 guest. We enjoyed a lunch from Subway. Our program was presented by Nikki Adair from Association Member Benefit Advisors (AMBA). Nikki told us about Retirement Benefits offered through Iowa Retired School Personnel Association.

Davis County Retired School Personnel Association met December 5 at The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with 19 members present. We enjoyed a luncheon with soup provided by our program committee and members brought salads and desserts to share. Our program was presented by the Davis County High School Instrumental Music Department under the direction of Jeff Cook, Instrumental Music Instructor. They performed several Christmas music selections for our enjoyment. Mr. Cook gave us updates of the high school band activities this fall.

We will take January and February off and meet next on March 5, 2024.

Rebecca Shively



www.irspa.org

Check it out!

District 5

JASPER COUNTY IRSPA

Greetings to all our retired school personnel friends!

When last we reported (Dec '23 issue) we said we were striving to meet our goal of 50 members present at our November meeting honoring our 50th anniversary of our existence. We tried and actually got several members who usually don't attend. We were thrilled... but we also had several members who usually DO come, but couldn't make it that day. (A repair man who didn't show up on time detained two of our usuals and sickness played a role too!) So, on balance... we were 6 short of our desired 50... close but alas not 50. Regardless, we continue to enjoy each other's company and our fabulous programs and food! As noted last time our



Librarian from Monroe, IA "The Real Conversation Around Banned Books"

November program was about banned books and that generated much good discussion! In December we held our first 'Christmas Carols and Cookies' social. THAT was great fun, we had creative holiday themed games and prizes in addition to the cookie exchange and the singing! Coming up the end of Feb-



Games and prizes!

ruary we will have another social where we will



Co-presidents D.Bontrager and L.Wohlers

meet at a local restaurant for lunch and 'hot goss' (LOL) The program for March will be about a local Early Childhood Center, but more about that next time!

Until then, everyone take care and be kind!

Denise Bontrager and
Lana Wohlers
Co-presidents JCRSPA

District 5

APPANOOSE AND WAYNE UNITS

The event was held at CD Restraunt in Moravia, Appanoose County, Iowa.

Richard H. Keilig Jr.
President



Christmas Bell Ringers and songs



December 7th Pre Christmas picture

District 6

JEFFERSON COUNTY IRSPA

The beautiful carol O Holy Night was beautifully sung and accompanied by pianist Zach Reider, the vocal music teacher at Fairfield High School, but have you ever heard O Come All Ye Faithful jazzed up and accompanied by drums? As odd as the idea of a religious carol jazzed up may sound, the Fairfield High School Jazz Choir pulled it off—and the members of the Jefferson County School Personnel really loved it. Those and other Christmas songs that Mr. Reider and his group sang, sometimes with some dancing added, was a perfect ending to a good meal at the Addington Place, our present location for our meetings.



The music got really lively with a jazz version of "Oh Come All Ye Faithful."



Jefferson County members visit before eating while waiting for others to arrive. Scotland, Wales, and Ireland.



The FHS Jazz Choir opened with the beautiful carol "O Holy Night" with their teacher, Zach Reider at the piano.

It's now March, and the Health report from the article "Stay Warm & Avoid Falls" from Consumer-Reports On Health (January 2020) was given at the Christmas meeting in Fairfield before we really needed it and—hopefully— don't need in March. However, there are a couple of key points in it that still might be useful to those of you in some unlucky areas in Iowa.

Probably two of those points are well-known to most of us by now: layers are better than just one heavy coat and avoid scarves that could trip you up or get caught in a car door. However, there are a couple points that are not so well-known. One is to wear wool or synthetic socks to better keep your feet dry and warm—not cotton, which will absorb the moisture and trap it right next to your feet. A second point not so well-known involved cleats and spikes that can be clipped over shoes. They are good to help you get a grip on ice and help prevent falls. However, do NOT wear them inside on smooth floors. Besides making you rather unpopular with the owner of the floor, those cleats and spikes can cause you to fall on that type of surface.

Michele Weber, secretary

District 6

JOHNSON COUNTY IRSPA

We ended the 2023 year with a party at the Courtyard Marriott. We closed the year with a musical presentation from education students of the U of Iowa Music Department, thanks to Mary Mascher. She is pictured enjoying the quartet with Patti Burgher, auditor, on one side and Dave Ulrick, treasurer, on the other. They obviously are enjoying the carols and songs.



December was a busy month with an opportunity to attend two Heartlanders's Hockey games at the Xtreme Arena. Thanks to John and Beth Hieronymus, we made the best of their space enjoying the game and each other.



delighted to enjoy these five women sing, play the piano and share their talent, Music educators of the future give hope to the future.

State President Elect Beth Hieronymus, membership chair Lyn Adams who phones and writes and keeps our membership around 170, visit with our tech communicator, Cathy Schiele, who makes sure we get emails about meetings and events and our newsletter.



Art Museum Fun on a cold day

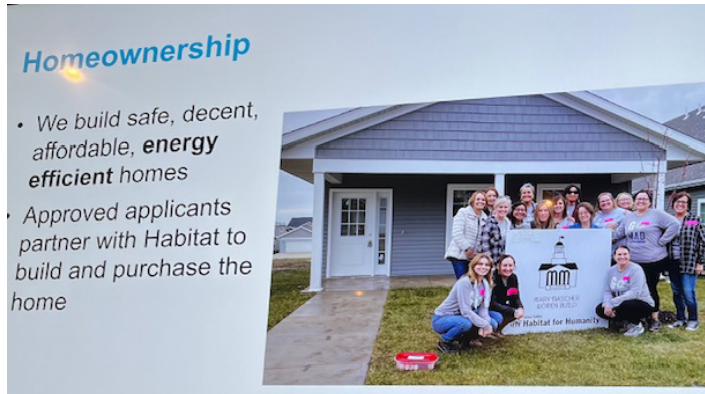


Kathy Wyatt-Hanes has been our secretary since covid time. She brought a new member to our December meeting, Volunteers make it happen. We are lucky to have a great and talented group.

Our meeting was held at the Blackstone Restaurant with a presentation by Tami Bonnet from Habitat for Humanity. Mary Mascher was the recognized person of the year to support Habitat, having been recognized as the contributing citizen for Johnson County, always giving so much of her time and talents. With her 28 years of ser-



vice in the Iowa Legislature and, of course, being a educator in the ICCSD, she's always been a busy woman. Mary has jumped into many leadership roles with her newfound time, but Habitat has been right up front. She had a lot of us volunteering. It's amazing that even a novice can help build a home. Of course hearing about Lisa Bluder pitching in and pounding down roof shingles, with her team working hard, too, is a fun story to picture. You can be assured Caitlin Clark was not allowed to use a saw! Volunteers can help the world go 'round!



Jim Hawtrey waits in the lobby of the Stanley Museum for members to arrive for our visit. Jim is holding his sketch book full of work he has done. Last semester he taught an art class at the Senior Center. Jim continues to create a great cover for our Directory, We're so fortunate that Jim continues to share his talent.

District 6

DAVENPORT AREA IRSPA

MARCH NEWSLETTER

Our November luncheon meeting welcomed a guest, Linda Miller, our DISTRICT 6 IRSPA coordinator. She spoke of the IRSPA newsletter...and also gave us info on what was happening at the state level. After lunch and our business meeting, our speaker was Dale Hachtel...who spoke about the Popular Astron-



Dale Hachtel from the Popular Astronomy Club

omy Club in our area. We learned a lot about what they do! Our local is also discussing establishing a scholarship fund for high school students.

In December, Jo Lawson (a member) entertained us on the piano with seasonal songs as we arrived for our luncheon. Sue Berger, our museum committee chair, always has a nice table display of items in our check-in area from the Davenport Schools museum. This month the display honored Anne Jochum, a past DARSPA president, and her beautiful artwork.



North High School Chamber Choir

Our entertainment after lunch was the North High School Chamber Choir - with lovely holiday tunes. Our meeting concluded with our annual white elephant gift exchange. In February, our speaker will be author, Bill Mueller.

Cheryl Sly

Website: www.irspa.org

It's News to Me . . .

by Toni Hood

When you receive this March issue, school will be dismissed in about two months. The end of the school year is an ideal time to contact newly retired school personnel and encourage them to join IRSPA. Here are some recruiting ideas that units have found to be effective:

- Remember IRSPA membership is not only for teachers. Any retired school employee is eligible to join.
- If IPERS has end-of-the-year meetings for new retirees, set up a table at that location and pass out brochures.
- DID YOU KNOW that "Friends of Education" are able to join IRSPA? Anybody who wants to support our efforts can purchase a membership and attend meetings.
- Be visible in your local schools. Give school supplies to elementary schools. Schools appreciate mittens, hats, and socks as well as classroom supplies.
- Organize a book drive and donate age appropriate books to local classrooms.
- Consider giving a membership to a friend as a gift. The recipient will be able to take advantage of many IRSPA benefits while enjoying the available social opportunities.
- Depending on your unit's budget, consider giving a one-year membership to as many retired teachers as you can afford; invite them to attend a meeting. One unit draws the names of two new retirees each year.
- Send congratulatory retirement cards to new retirees, invite them to a meeting, and encourage them to join IRSPA. Perhaps treat them to a meal or a snack.
- Consider hosting an informal coffee for new retirees.
- Challenge your members to recruit new members; give prizes to those who have helped grow your unit.
- Unit coordinators could challenge their units to enroll new members. A prize could be given to the unit(s) that were successful.
- Submit your unit's news to the local paper and include information about how to join IRSPA. Send your unit's volunteer hours report to your local paper with an explanation that emphasizes IRSPA's local and state contributions. It's free publicity.
- Send "thank you" goodie trays to teacher lounges to celebrate the end of a successful school year, or send "Welcome Back" goodies in the fall. Include information about IRSPA.
- Stress the IRSPA member benefits. The insurance benefits are well worth the unit's dues.
- Emphasize that we have lobbyists who work for retired personnel; there is strength in numbers, and protecting our benefits is important.
- There is strength in numbers; IRSPA's ability to "serve and not be served" benefits so many communities.

**If everybody recruited one new member,
our membership would double.**



Dear AMBA,

My husband and I are in our late 60's, early 70's and I am starting to worry about the cost of care when it comes to in-home care or a nursing home. We watched our parents go through most of their savings. Mom was in a nursing home for almost two years, and we spent over \$80,000 for dad, for one year in a decent nursing home. Like everyone our age, we have some health issues, and who doesn't. We have been pricing Long Term Care, but at our age it is just too expensive. How can we protect our money when the time comes for us to receive help at home or in a facility, like assisted living or a nursing home?

Signed,
Worried Sally

Dear Sally,

Your concerns are justified. More than 70% of people over the age of 65 will need long-term care services and support at some point. The average cost of a nursing facility can be over \$90,000 per year while help in the home can be as much as \$46,000 a year. If you think about it, the largest part of our population, the "Baby Boomers," are at the age where they are all filing claims for long term care. Space is becoming more limited while the demand is increasing, which is driving prices higher. Insurance companies are making it more difficult to qualify for traditional long-term care. Who wants to insure someone with health problems, anticipating they will need help soon, for a long time? The good news is, we now have a product that can help people who are a little older and have some health issues. It is more affordable and easier to qualify for coverage. It is called Short Term Care. The plans provide people with up to 4 years of nursing home protection or home health care. Plus, underwriting is a lot less strict, making it easier to qualify for. The plans are also adjustable to fit your needs and budget. We are helping thousands of retirees with peace of mind, knowing they will be comfortable later in life and able to protect their estate, so they can pass their hard-earned money on to their church or their favorite charity or even their grandchildren. Please note that if you have any questions about your long-term care needs, reach out to Paul Strid, our AMBA representative, at 708-347-7081 or by email at paul.strid@getamba.com.

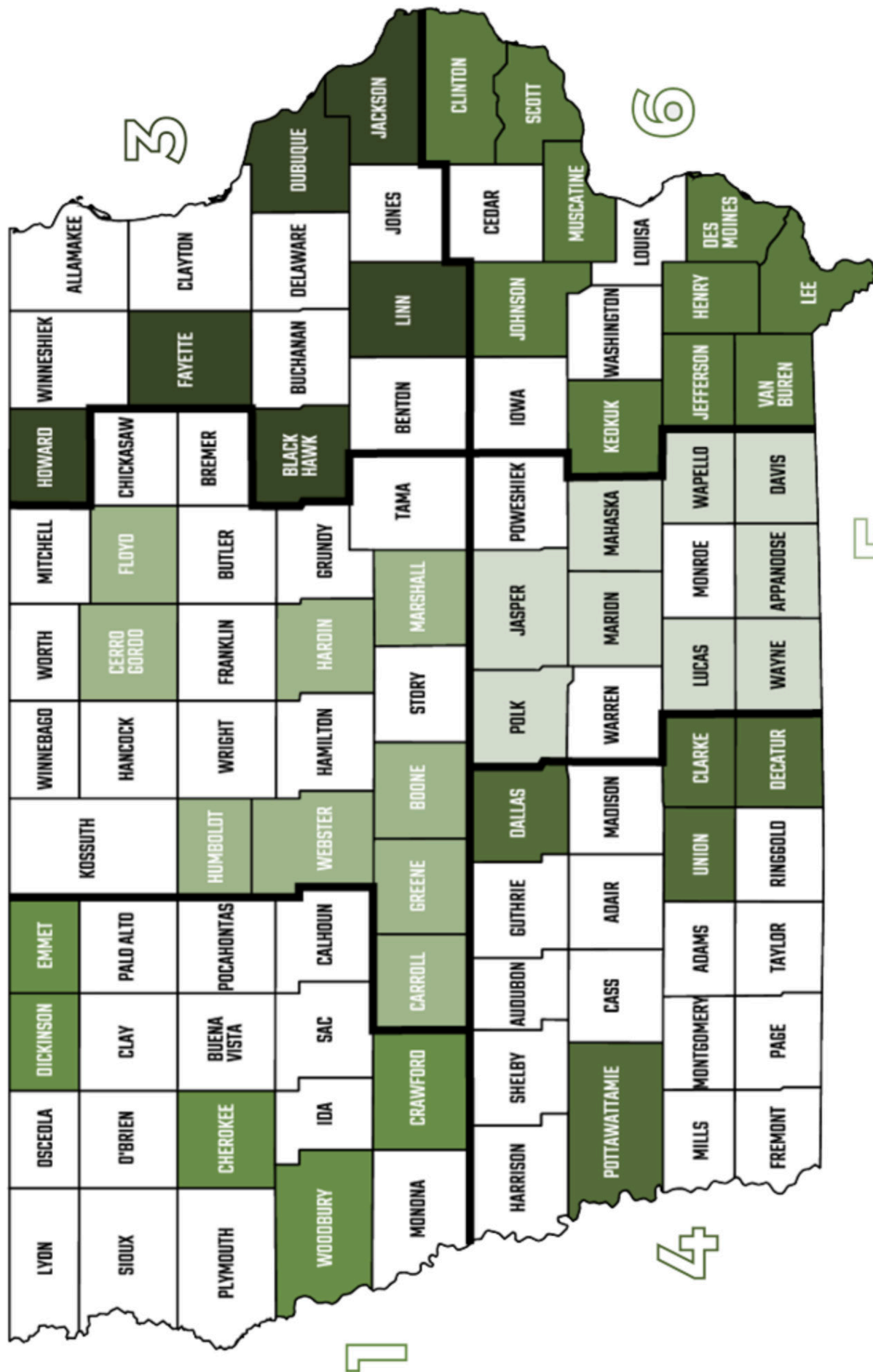
Thank you for your inquiry,
AMBA

Paul Strid

**AMBA Senior Benefits Representative
PH. 708-347-7081 • email: paul.strid@amba.info**

Local IRSPA Units

2





REMINDER

As you solidify your yearly program, please send a PDF copy to Jean Hoffman at 42teacher@gmail.com so that it can be added to the website. This serves many purposes: a resource for your members, an advertisement for potential members, and a resource for all for program ideas. Also send your Constitution and By Laws in PDF format to be added to the website. District 6 is almost complete! Thanks Linda Miller for your dedication to this task.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please e-mail articles & pictures if at all possible to avoid retyping.

*Articles for the **June**
Newsletter are due no later than
Friday, May 17, 2024*



*Get info to Toni Hood, at
E-mail: tonihood@q.com
Home Telephone: 515-332-5819
Cell Phone: 515-269-3823*

This is the link to view IRSPA newsletters online at irspa.org

<https://irspa.org/index.php/news/newsletters>

The IRSPA newsletter will continue to be mailed to members. If you do not want a mailed copy and prefer to read it online, email rmswanson1936@gmail.com. You can access the online copy at IRSPA.ORG under the "News" tab.

LOCAL JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Junior Achievement, K-12 programming, impacts local students through volunteer led financial literacy and work readiness lessons. In 2022-2023, 40,439 students were reached in Eastern Iowa in 1,636 classes, with 1,384 volunteers in 156 schools!

JA provides the full lesson, materials, talking points and makes connections to participating schools, visiting a partnered classroom 5-6 times, and each visit is approximately 30-45 minutes. The sessions involve a short discussion and activity focused on financial literacy, work readiness and/or entrepreneurship. Volunteers are provided with every resource needed to lead the sessions with ease. If you are interested in getting back into a classroom for this short-term volunteer opportunity, please email: jaei@jaeieducation.org or visit <https://iowa.ja.org/>

You can view all JA volunteer opportunities in Iowa here: <https://engage.ja.org/?site=www>

Thank you!

**Heather Henning | Program Coordinator
Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa**

Little Swan Lake Winery



Little Swan Lake Winery is a family owned and operated business located 1-1/2 miles north of the small town of Superior in Northwest Iowa. In May of 2002 our doors opened to the public. The tasting room, our remodeled 1920's barn, features 35 different wines all produced on site, a selection of gourmet cheeses, and buffalo meat from our own herd which roams nearby. Our vineyard consists of two acres of northern cold hardy grapes. The gift shop features clothing and wine related items. We are dedicated to producing the finest and most enjoyable wines and invite you to spend an hour or an afternoon with us.

Our newest addition, our bed and breakfast, opened in September of 2011. This renovated grain elevator is a great place to relax and enjoy the beauty that is Little Swan Lake!

Scott and Diane Benjamin and Family



Little Swan Lake Winery offers a 10% discount on bottled wine to IRSPA members when you show your membership card or the ad from the newsletter. Offer good at the winery only.

Lslwinery.com • Phone: (712) 858 - 4592

IRSPA CONTACTS

Past President:

Jean Hoffman
1460 470th Ave., Estherville, IA 51334
(712) 209-1780 - 42teacher@gmail.com

President:

Jeanne Handeland
4181 230th St., Wallingford, IA 51365
(712) 260-0943 - jhandy@rvtc.net

President Elect:

Beth Hieronymus
3322 Muscatine Ave., Iowa City, IA 52240
(319) 360-4634 - bhieronymus62@gmail.com

Vice President:

Anne Cowley
413 Eton Court, Sioux City, IA 51104
712-204-5182 - amusicwest@aol.com

Secretary/Historian:

Mary Jo O'Connell
1700 Avoca Street, Dubuque, IA 52201
(563) 557-1451 - moconnell12@msn.com

Treasurer:

Robert Swanson
3221 Cheyenne Blvd., Sioux City, IA 51104
(712) 252-1446 - rmswanson1936@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Toni Hood
1006 6th Ave. N., Humboldt, IA 50548
515-332-5819 Home; 515-269-3823 Cell
tonihood@q.com

Hawkeye Buffalo & Cattle Ranch



<https://www.facebook.com/hawkeyebuffaloranch/>

Hawkeye Buffalo & Cattle Ranch is a family farm in northeast Iowa. Our heritage dates back to 1854 when my great-great-grandparents settled in a sod house just a mile from our farm. The bison have returned, and we invite you to connect with the land, our family, and our farm.

Tours include an informative lesson on the history of buffalo in Iowa and a chance to feed the buffalo. Tours are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children. With an IRSPA membership card or showing your copy of the IRSPA newsletter with the Hawkeye Buffalo advertisement, the **cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.** Tours are set up on an as needed basis so you must call in advance to set up your tour. The Buffalo Ranch is southwest of Fredericksburg next to Split Rock Park and Campgrounds at 3034 Pembroke Ave. Visitors often get a chance to see other wildlife too - deer, sandhill cranes, hawks, songbirds, and occasionally eagles. Buffalo meat is also sold on location.

Check us out at Hawkeyebuffalo.com
Phone: 641-229-6701

Newsletter

Iowa Retired School Personnel Association

3221 Cheyenne Blvd.
Sioux City, IA 51104

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Rockwell City, Iowa 50579
Permit #145

~ WE REMEMBER ~

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Unit</u>
Carmean, Arla	Ames, IA	No Unit
Carter, John	Sioux City, IA	Sioux City Area Unit
Cook William	Iowa City, IA	Johnson County Unit
Cook, Alta	Iowa City, IA	Johnson County Unit
DeBok, Donna	Chariton, IA	Lucas County Unit
DeSalme, John	Solon, IA	Johnson County Unit
Grady, Barbara	Davenport, IA	Davenport Area Unit
Heitland, Alice	Mason City, IA	Mason City Area Unit
Hosford, William G	Marion, IA	Cedar Rapids, Area Unit
Kinne, Janet	Eagle Grove, IA	Webster County Unit
Korwes, Mary Lou	Spirit Lake, IA	IA Great Lakes Unit
Leff, Benita	Sioux City, IA	Sioux City Area Unit
Mullen, Minnie	Chrilton, IA	Lucas County Unit
Rasmussen, Shirley	Spirit Lake, IA	IA Great Lakes Unit

PLEASE NOTE: Send relevant notices, change of address, and/or subscription cancellations to rmswanson1936@gmail.com

LEGISLATIVE FUND

Contributions to the Iowa Retired School Personnel Association legislative fund for the improvement of retirement benefits are being accepted for the current year (Oct. to Oct.) Please make your contributions as generous as possible.

\$5.00 _____ \$10.00 _____ \$15.00 _____ Other _____

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

If Member of Local Unit _____

Unit Name _____

County _____

MAIL EITHER FORM TO:

Robert Swanson, IRSPA Treas. • 3221 Cheyenne Blvd.,
Sioux City, IA 51104 • Make Checks payable to IRSPA

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Iowa Retired School Personnel Association

Name _____
Last First M.I.

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

If Member of Local Unit _____

Unit Name _____

County _____

Annual Dues: \$15 • LIFE MEMBERSHIP: \$300