

Coles County Retired  
*Teachers* **NEWS**

December 2011

## Luncheon to feature holiday piano duet

*The most "wonderful time of the year" has returned and it's time for the annual CCRTA Christmas dinner to be held at the First Presbyterian Church in Mattoon on Tuesday, December 13th at noon.*

Suelyn-Garner and Helen Krehbiel Reed will provide the entertainment by performing piano duet selections of the season's favorite Christmas music.

For a modest \$8.00 per person, members and their invited guests can enjoy a delicious Christmas buffet with desserts provided by your CCRTA board of directors.

Silverware and plates will be provided.

Reservations need to be made by Friday, December 9th, by calling Jo Swick at 234-3200. You can leave a message if Jo is not available to answer the phone. Those making reservations by phone may pay for their dinner when they arrive.

In the event that someone making reservations (for some unforeseen reason) is unable to attend, he or she should send the money for the dinner(s) to Jo at 1207 Bell Avenue, Mattoon.

Officers for the positions of president and vice president will be officially installed and CCRTA members who passed during 2011 will be honored.

A representative from IRTA will be on hand to answer questions about some of the member benefits the organization offers.



Suelyn Garner, left, and Helen Krehbiel-Reed will provide some festive music at the annual CCRTA Christmas dinner, December 13th.

### Christmas Fun

*The tempting gifts are tantalizing;  
About opening them, we are fantasizing.  
The holiday foods are appetizing;  
Our excitement and joy are growing and rising;  
Our hearts and minds are harmonizing;  
Jolly Christmas fun we're maximizing!*

*By Joanna Fuchs*

## As term ends, president thanks helping hands

*There are a lot of "thank yous" that should go to CCRTA members in this final column of the year and my final one as your president.*

First of all, I would like to thank members Kathy Hummel and husband Dick, Judi Heckel and husband David, and Vickie Baker who prepared and have already presented programs for us this year.

Also, thanks to Helen Krehbiel-Reed and Suellyn Garner who will present a Christmas music program for us at our December meeting. I know the preparation is a lot of work for all our presenters, and we certainly appreciate your efforts.

To anyone who suggested programs from sources outside our group, you gave good suggestions. Thank you.

I appreciate those on the board, especially Bill Van Keuren, who covered for me when I was unable to do things that needed to be done when my husband was so ill this past year. (Incidentally, he is doing ok at the moment.)

Thank you to Don Starwalt and Madeline Van Keuren who see that our great newsletter arrives in your mailbox or on your computer monthly. Your efforts are appreciated.

Thank you as well to the social committee, Mary Lou Gaskill, Eloise Buffenmeyer, Marie Nielson, and Marge Meenen, for providing coffee and tea for us and to anyone else who brought cookies. Ladies, your service for drinks, and bakers, your yummy efforts, were thoroughly enjoyed.

To anyone else I may have omitted who deserves thanks, I did

not intend to omit you.

Be sure to attend the Christmas luncheon. It will be at the Presbyterian Church in Mattoon at noon on December 13th.

We will have a catered luncheon. Make a reservation with Jo Swick for you (and a guest if you wish). The board will make desserts as usual.

If you have suggestions for programs for next year, be sure to turn in those suggestions at the December meeting. Some of you have heard presentations at other functions that would make good programs for our group.

We will need programs for seven meetings. Yes, we meet 10



Juanita Sherwood

times, but we have two where we eat, and since next year is an election year, we will have a candidates' forum in October.

We have a charitable situation that we will be collecting donations for at the Christmas meeting. It is the Pathways Program that is sponsored by Lake Land College. Several sites are housed throughout the Lake Land district, but the one which will receive our contribution will be the one housed in Mattoon in the building to the west of Cross County Mall.

I had occasion to be involved in this program a couple of years past and found that many of the youngsters in the program do not

have money or food for lunch. (None is provided there.)

Althea Pendergast, the director, said that if they have funds to do so, they quietly provide cards for places such as McDonalds so that those who are in need can have something to eat at noon.

This is a program to assist students who need another chance to get a high school education. We all worked in public education long enough to be aware of some of the sad situations that surround the young people in this program. This is a most worthy cause.

If you would like to donate and can't come to the meeting, send donations to Jo Swick. As always, if you can't donate, feel free to pass.

Thanks, again, for all of your assistance and support these past four years. They have gone quickly.

### Merry Christmas, Happy New Year!

## Coles County Retired **Teachers Board**

### President

**Juanita Sherwood**, 345-7997  
jsherwood@consolidated.net

### Vice President

**Bill VanKeuren**, 797-6313  
wmv1000@yahoo.com

### Secretary

**Bonnie Tipword**, 348-8175  
catslady@peoplepc.com

### Treasurer

**Jo Swick**, 234-3200  
jksjs64@yahoo.com

### Membership

**Karen Stone**, 234-8096  
kageston@aol.com

### Legislation

**John Swick**, 234-3200  
jksjs64@yahoo.com

### Retirement Education

#### Open

### Member Benefits

**Bill VanKeuren**, 797-6313  
wmv1000@yahoo.com

### Information Services

**George Stone**, 234-8096  
kageston@aol.com

### Newsletter

**Donald Starwalt**, 345-4303  
drwalt@charleston.k12.il.us

### History and Archives

**Candy Tate**, 234-8320  
cdret1070@hotmail.com

### Courtesy and Outreach

**Jill Bell-Adkins**, 235-5791  
**Pat Randolph**, 235-1537

### Social Committee

**Eloise Buffenmeyer**, 234-9859

**Mary Lou Gaskill**, 345-3798

**Marie Nielsen**, 345-4582

**Marge Meenen**, 345-5496

### Website manager

**Madeline Van Keuren**, 797-6313  
mvankeuren@frontiernet.net

See this newsletter online at  
[www.colescountyrta.org](http://www.colescountyrta.org)

CCRTA Unit 55 is an affiliate of  
the Illinois Retired Teachers  
Association, 620 North Walnut,  
Springfield, IL 62702

## Members enjoyed playing team trivial pursuit

*President Juanita Sherwood called the meeting to order at 1:34 and the pledge was given.*

During the business meeting, a vote was taken to fill the offices of president and vice-president.

Bill VanKeuren was elected president and Vicki Nevius was elected vice-president. They will be installed at the December 13 meeting.

Member concerns included Jo Swick who had knee replacement surgery and is doing well and Judy Chapman who has been getting treatment for leukemia since August.

Insurance: Bill VanKeuren said open enrollment ends December 8 for anyone wanting

to change insurance carriers. We will probably be told in February or March what the insurance choices will be as of June 30, 2012. Christie Clinic reportedly will no longer accept PersonalCare.

There was a session at the convention about pensions. Current retirees will have their pension. Other information is a result of scare tactics. Currently working teachers may take the hit. TRS has done a good job managing the pension fund, but they have had to sell off some assets to make payments. No retirees in Illinois pay taxes on their pensions, but this may change.

It was suggested that we consider changing the date of our Christmas luncheon so it doesn't conflict with the LifeSpan brunch.



The program was team trivial pursuit and was organized and presented by Vickie Baker and ably assisted by Linda Fleming. It has been three years since trivia was played at a meeting.

Pieces of different kinds of candy were placed on each table. Each person at the table chose a piece of candy. Players with the same candy comprised the teams.

The rules were: 1. get our brains working; 2. random teams break up usual groups; and 3.

have fun.

There were six categories with 10 questions in each category. At the end of each category, the teams have a few minutes to review their answers before turning in their answer sheets.

The categories were: City Nicknames, Who Am I?, Movie Lines, Illinois, Math and Science, and Cars. It was an engaging game with everyone having a great time.

Prizes of a free meal at the Christmas luncheon were awarded to the teams with the 2 highest scores. It was a wonderful experience and great fun. Thank you Vickie for preparing the questions.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Bonnie Tipsword, secretary**

## Tips to help you enjoy the holidays

*These holiday tips for seniors can help you to enjoy the holiday season.*

The real bonus of these holiday tips for seniors is that they are just the beginning of your holiday survival plan.

**1 It's Not a Sprint It's a Marathon:** Actually you don't have to do everything, at all. Avoid the pressure, make a list in advance of all the things big and small that you want to do to prepare for the holidays. Then prioritize your list. Give each item a number depending on its importance to you. Spend your time working on the things that are most important and forget about the rest. And take your time doing whatever you do. Too much effort up front will leave you exhausted and irritable when it's time to do

the things you really want to enjoy.

**2 Take as many naps as you can:** One of the most important things that you can do for yourself and those around you is to be rested. Overdo too much and you will pay the price and so will those around you if exhaustion leaves you out of sorts or grumpy as a result of being off your personal schedule.

**3 Eat Healthy:** There are just too many opportunities during the holiday season to overeat, eat the wrong things, or eat at crazy hours.

**4 Wash Your Hands A Lot:** Signs in many doctors offices warn about the ease with which disease can be spread. Your hands touch all kinds of surfaces and can bring you in touch with all kinds of germs.

**5 Don't Shop Beyond Your Means:** The holidays make

us all a little crazy. We want to buy for those grandchildren, dear friends, spouses, the list seems endless. A good holiday tip for seniors is to remember that your supply of money isn't as endless as your gift list.

**6 Share a Holiday Tradition:** You know that the holidays are a lot more than just shopping for gifts. Take a little time to share something special during the holiday season with friends or family—something drawn from your own holiday memories. It can be making cookies, creating decorations, arranging a center piece or taking a simple walk in the snow.

**7 Keep a Song in Your Heart:** A really helpful holiday tip for seniors that are feeling the melancholy of the season is to break the cycle by listening to some happy holiday music. Nothing slow or overly sentimental but something

upbeat, sparkling and fun will get rid of the blues and keep you humming.

**8 Connect with Joy:** The holidays can also be kept bright by making a connection with old friends and relatives who live at a distance and whom you seldom see. Sending a card can get the job done and an e-mail will definitely get read, but hearing the voice of an old friend on the phone is a gift you can give yourself with only a slight tweaking of your budget.

**9 Enjoy Everything:** Don't let yourself get so centered on one holiday gathering that you miss some of the smaller joys of the season.

A quiet visit with a dear friend, a concert at the high school, carolers at the mall, checking out the local holiday lights these are simple joys, they don't cost much but they fill the season with memorable moments and bring you out of your own holiday seclusion or obsession.