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Current News of Special Interest to State Retirees

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July 2009

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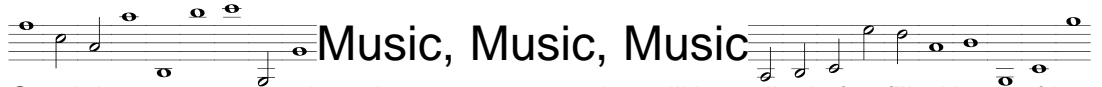
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Alice Griffith
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Holiday Luncheon

Shirley Dillon
Joanne Riedesel
Dorothy Tuxhorn
Welcome

Bill Pierce
Website Maintenance



Our July program promises that our next meeting will be a lively fun filled hour of local musical talent. Ken Bradbury and David Zink will play the piano-the same piano-and at the same time. Both of these men are well known entertainers in Central Illinois and elsewhere. I'm told that Ken never tells David what song he will be playing on his half of the piano and it is up to David to pick up the key and jump in on his half. Until recently, Ken was a teacher at Triopia High School for 35 years, and now is an instructor at Lincoln Land College. He is a resident of Arenzville, Illinois. He's a native of Perry, and while attending school there was personally responsible for losing many ball games to the Payson team. Since 1995, he has been named the most-produced author of speech contest material in the United States, his material having won top honors in nearly all fifty states and Puerto Rico, as his name has appeared in more contests than any other author.

Ken is the Author of "The Coonridge Digest", a newspaper column which has won the Associated Press Award for "Best Humor Column." The column appears in fourteen newspapers in Illinois and Missouri including the Hillsboro paper. He's also the author of four books, The "Coonridge Digest Around the World with Frieda Marie Crump", "The Coonridge Devotions", "Homerville", and his most recent book, "Soup Town".

He's been "up the river and down" on the showboats of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers and has been known to make even Presbyterians tap their feet.

Ken's written music for five recordings by Shiloh, A Christian singing group, and is a founder and director of the Green Pastures Performing Arts Camp. The author of

Continued on Page 4

THIS MONTH

Wednesday, July 29, 2009
1:30 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church
Family Life Center
2477 W. Washington St.
Springfield, Illinois

"Music, Music, Music"

Ken Bradbury and David Zink

COMING ATTRACTIONS

August 26, 2009

"Sister City Assn. of Springfield"
Speaker: Carol Zerkle

September 30, 2009

Annual Legislative Update

October 28, 2009

"Deployment to Iraq"
Speaker: Jim Watson
State Representative

November = No Meeting

December 4, 2009

Holiday Party





I know there's a song called, "June in January," but is there one called "Christmas in July?" If there isn't there should be, because this is the month that some 6300 survivors will see a substantial increase in their retirement checks. This of course, will happen because the Social Security offset on their benefits will be lifted, thanks to a long time legislative initiative by RSEA.

That's the good news. The bad news is that the fiscal year came to a close without a budget agreement. Of course, the bad news comes with a kind of ho, hum, been there, done that, before. Despite cries that the sky is falling, the wolf is at the door, and all those other doomsday predictions, we who have been through this before know that there will probably be no massive layoffs of state workers, no babies left unfed, no senior citizens thrown out onto the street. Maybe, after all the blustering, after all the threats, the four leaders, and the governor, will calm down and decide that life goes on, or at least realize that the average citizen simply wants them to do what they have to do. Once that is decided, the other

members of the General Assembly will quietly approve whatever the leaders decide, probably without even knowing exactly what it is that they are approving.

Of course, we could be wrong this time, and maybe there will be massive layoffs, babies left unfed, and senior citizens living in cardboard boxes. One thing we can be sure of is that any settlement will be bad news for the pension systems. As always, there are a multitude of suggestions ranging from the continued underfunding of the retirement systems, to an outright raid on retirement system funds. It goes against the grain of legislative and elected officials that there should be all that money in the retirements systems, which they could use for their own purposes, for their own glorious new programs. No matter that a goodly share of that money came from the pockets of state employees, meeting their share of the contributions to the retirement system, while the state did not.

Sure, we understand that times are tough, that tax revenue is down, but we cannot help but remember that even in the best of times, our elect-

ed officials always had better places to put tax money, than into the retirement systems. Now, just like the family who splurged on things they should have known they couldn't afford, the state is stuck with giveaway programs that elected officials should have known the state could not afford. So, unable, or unwilling, to dump these programs, we, the taxpayers, are being asked to sacrifice, in order to fund the excesses of previous officials.

And, of course, there are calls to increase taxes, mostly from groups who depend on state contributions to fund their operations. Somebody suggested, maybe not entirely in jest, that there should be a box on the Illinois Income Tax Form, which could be checked by anyone favoring an increased tax contribution. That way, only those favoring an income tax hike would see their taxes increased. Sounds like a winner to me!

A SWEET PROGRAM



It's indeed an ill wind that blows no good. Our scheduled speaker for the June meeting was unable to attend and we had to make do with a substitute. We were scheduled to hear State Representative Jim Watson who represents the 97th District in the General Assembly. He is also in the US Marine Reserves and has recently been deployed to Iraq. He was to answer questions about his experiences in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was, however, unable to attend as he was back in session at the latest overtime session of the longest running tragic comedy in the history of mankind. (Interpret: Another unproductive called overtime session of the Illinois Legislature) We still hope to have Jim with us at a later date.

The good news: On short notice, with little preparation time, Carolyn Gerberding and her family came representing the Lincolnland Beekeepers Association to present a wonderful Power Point program on Bees, honey and beekeeping. Carolyn was assisted by her husband Fred, daughter Chelsea, son Gabe, and a beautiful and talented granddaughter, It was a family effort and they all pitched in to make our program very enjoyable.

Obviously very knowledgeable about the science of beekeeping, Carolyn used slides to explain many interesting yet unknown facts about these little insects that are so important in our food production.

For example, did you know that one third of all the world's food plants depend on bees for pollina-

tion? Or that if all the bees suddenly disappeared, we would all starve within ten years? She pointed out how highly complex bee society is and how each one of the 2000 or so new bees that can be hatched in a hive every day has a specific job assignment planned for every day of their lives. Bees live about six weeks and die because they simply wear out. They start life in the hive as housekeepers, then are moved up to higher ranks such as comb builders or honey producers. They only become pollen gatherers during the last weeks of their lives.

Everyone has heard the expression "Busy as a bee". When we consider that it may take as many as thirty visits to a cucumber bloom before it is pollinated and will produce a future pickle, we begin to get a better understanding of that expression. These industrious little bits of life are so important to us and we take them so much for granted, if we think about them at all. I am personally experiencing a bee "shortage" at my home. I have summer squash planted in my garden that keep producing beautiful blooms, but to date, no squash. I have not seen a single honeybee in my garden or on the clover in my yard all summer, and I now have a better understanding of their importance. Carolyn pointed out that mites and fungus have wiped out bee colonies in some areas and it looks like it may have happened to us.

Hats off to Carolyn Ackley for arranging such a fine program on such short notice. And to Carolyn Gerberding and Company for the "sweet" program.

- Don Grammer, Publicity & Education

...Continued from Page 1... over 100 plays and musicals, he and co-author Robert Crowe recently won the Lincoln Library Award for the play, "The Shadow of Giants", which appeared on Public television. Their newest play, "Why Spot Ran", premiered last year in San Diego. He was the winner of the downstate Playwrights Award at the University of Illinois in 1998. In 2000 his work, "Cries of Faith", was performed at Illinois College and the University of Illinois. His most recent project is "David; You and I", which he co-authored with Roger Wainwright, is the retelling of the story of King David.

Bradbury is the winner of scholastic honors and Degrees almost without number. In addition to all his many other accomplishments, he also plays the bagpipes, much to the chagrin of his Arenzville neighbors.

David Zink plays with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, The St. Louis Ramblers Dixieland Band and for the past eight years has been named the Best Mechanic in Jacksonville by a poll of the local newspaper readers.

July's program should be one you will not want to miss.

- Don Grammer, Publicity & Education

FROM THE PREZ...

Normally, this time of the year, I would be writing about the approach of the "Dog Days of Summer". However, since June 17 we have been experiencing them in central Illinois. Temperatures in the mid 90's and high humidity equal a triple digit heat index. This is August weather or State Fair time. There does not seem to be any relief in sight!

By the time you read THE REPORTER, the Fourth of July will be over. I hope everyone enjoyed the three day holiday and had a great time! Did everyone remember to slow down in construction zones? Beginning July 1st, there will be cameras at construction zones taking photos of your face and license plate number. The fine for the first offense is very high. For following infractions, it is extremely high. However, if lives of construction workers can be saved, it may be worth it. Time will tell which will happen. Lives being saved or the law being repealed.

Earlier, I mentioned the State Fair. I do hope everyone makes

an effort to attend. It is a fantastic time and it is an affordable admission price. The price this year is \$5. I believe there is a senior citizen discount, however, I am not old enough to receive the discount. If you live in southern Illinois, think about attending the Du Quoin State Fair. It is like a mini State Fair. I have attended this fair three times and found it to be very clean with many of the same exhibits as the fair in Springfield. The big difference is that Du Quoin State Fair has great barbecue! Great pork chop sandwiches can be found at the Springfield State Fair. The Du Quoin State Fair usually begins one week after the State Fair in Springfield is over.

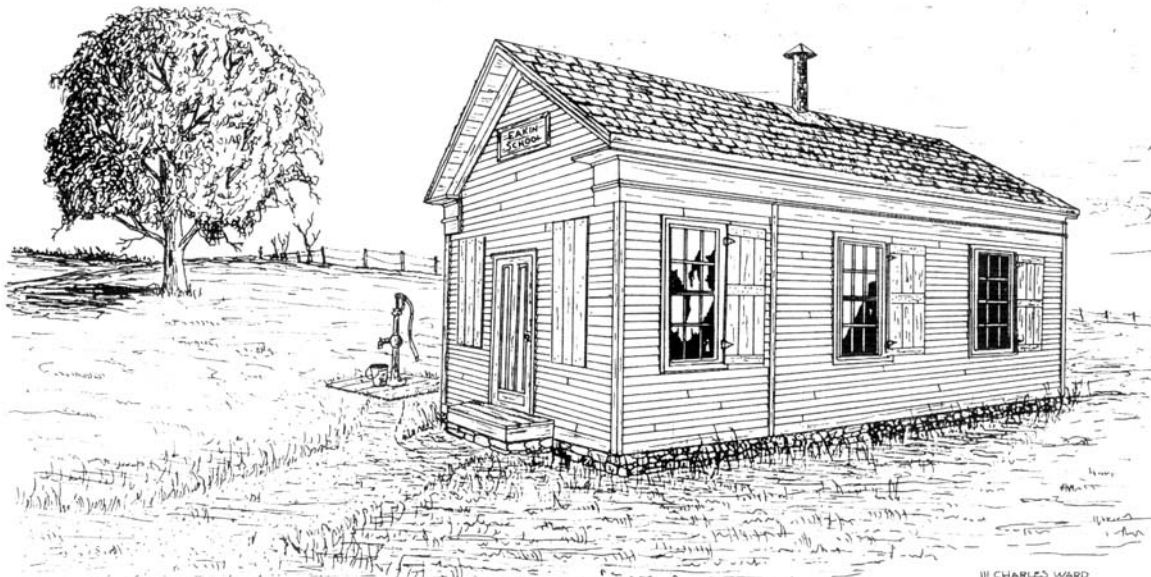
To the citizens of Illinois, take a week off and attend one of the fairs. If possible, attend both. I think you will be happy that you did. In this economic environment, checking out the many sights of Illinois, is the thing to do! All of the parks and historic sights are open. If you do not make the fairs, try attending

some of the other great events in Illinois!

So far this year, the gasoline prices, while high, have not approached the levels of 2008. Remember, I am writing this June 24th for July publication. So it is possible, by the time you read THE REPORTER, that gasoline prices may be at the \$4 level. I hope not. Anyway, my point is, that there is no excuse to stay home this summer! Get out and see Illinois!

While you are seeing Illinois, remember our membership meeting in Springfield, Il. Our next meeting is July 29, 2009. It is held at St. John's Lutheran Church, 2477 West Washington, Springfield, Il. Our meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. Afterwards, there is coffee, cookies, and conversation. To our new members, I would like to extend an invitation to attend. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

G. William Curry
President, RSEA





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CHICAGO METRO CHAPTER

Hello to Chicago Metro RSEA members! No meeting is planned for July or August. A road trip to Springfield to attend their July 29 meeting is in the works. SO, if you would like to join us, give me a call ASAP.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 16 and our guest speaker will be a representative from the Social Security Administration. October and November subjects to be announced. In December we will, of course, be attending the world famous Holiday Luncheon in Springfield. In the meantime have a great summer, stay safe, and see you at our next meeting!

Sylvia Schluter, Chairperson

