

Meeting Minutes:
Highland County Retired Teachers Association
08-01-22

Opening:

The August 1, 2022 General Meeting of the HCRTA, was held at the Hillsboro Church of Christ Fellowship Hall. The meeting was attended by 20 members and 2 guests.

President Faust called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM and opened with welcoming remarks, recitation of the “Pledge of Allegiance” and the singing of “God Bless America” and an invocation. The meal consisted of home cooked Pork Loin, Green Beans, Cheesy Potatoes, Corn Souffle, drinks, salad, rolls, and dessert prepared by church members Donita Everetts, Janet Epley and Darlene Mihalik. The meal was delicious, satisfying and greatly appreciated by the HCRTA members.

Program:

Following the meal, President Faust introduced guest speaker Tim Koehl, a former C.S. Bell Foundry employee, who talked about the history and legacy of the C. S. Bell Company. Mr. Koehl stated that the C.S. Bell Company existed in Hillsboro, Ohio from about the mid 1850’s was sold out of the Bell Family in the late 1960’s and was eventually closed in Hillsboro in the 1990’s. Charles Singleton Bell, the company’s founder was a skilled metallurgist. He began his foundry business in the “Speedwell” factory on West Beech Street. During the company’s history it occupied three other locations: the corner of West Main and South West Streets (in the building that is now home to one of the C.S. Bell Murals); behind what is now the Porch Restaurant, in what was at one time the Hillsboro City Schools Bus Garage; and finally behind The Producers Livestock Auction facility. During its history, in addition to cast iron bells, for which the company is best known, the company produced numerous cast iron products including stoves, plows, and sugar cane and sorghum presses. The company was known for its superior iron formula and was the largest manufacturer of cast iron bells in the world. One little known fact is that most of the bells manufactured by the C. S. Bell Company were not labelled as C.S. Bell products, allowing Bell to produce bells for many competitors.

One of the company’s highlights was the production of over 14,000 communication bells for the US Naval fleet and its Allies during WWII. The naval contract was engineered and brokered by Virginia Bell, a 3rd generation descendent of Charles, and former New York actress. These bells outfitted the Allied naval fleet, including the 4112-landing craft involved in the D-Day operation. The quality of the bells and the efficiency of the workers in the manufacturing process garnered accolades from the US Navy Rear Admiral E. L. Cochran.

Mr. Koehl stated that the original C. S. Bell Company continues production of milling and grinding equipment in Tiffin, Ohio and that “C S Bell bells” continue to be made today at a foundry in Washington State and sold by Prindle Station Bells.

Business Meeting:

During the business meeting Treasurer Doris Pulse circulated the scholarship and service project donation boxes and clarified the \$471 donation to The Highland County Society for Children and Adults (from proceeds collect in February and May). She also stated that one of the CD’s was renewed for an 18 month period at .85% interest. President Faust and Vice-President Bihl reported on a donation to the scholarship fund from the Hillsboro Organization of Professional Educators (HOPE). Secretary Kevin Black reported no changes or additions to the May meeting minutes. Lawrence Dukes moved that the meeting minutes and the Treasurer’s reports be approved. Susan Parker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Leone Bihl reported on the passing of the following Highland County educators: Roberta Gene “Bert” Meredith, GEVS; Judith “Judy” Kay Johnson, HCS; Betty English Claibourne Fenner, Webster Elementary; Lisa Christy Stewart, McClain HS and East Clinton HS; Richard D. Achor, Wilmington HS and SSCC; Herbert J. “Herb” Mihalik, HCS, Bright Local, East Clinton, WCH, Blanchester, Williamsburg, and Batavia schools; Diana Lynn Stevens, Lynchburg-Clay; Beverly A. Carroll, Jefferson, Sinking Spring, Peebles, Blanchester and Western Brown; Janet Hussey Bowman, HHS as well as South Carolina and Florida; Phyllis Ann Jury, Head Start; Joan Louise Acton Anderson, teachers aide; Naomi Bausman, Sycamore HS and Blue Ash; Karen McBee, retired bus driver; Jonathan Milburn, janitor at HHS; Francis “Frank” Brown, retired bus driver at GEVS; Ruth Tucker Baker Lawson, granddaughter of Ruth Tucker, art teacher at Hillsboro Christian Academy; Jo Ann Hale, Blanchester; and Richard Williams, Maintenance HCS.

Other reports included the announcement by Chairperson Mary Black of the 2022 HCRTA and Harold W. Sparger Scholarship recipients Samantha Jones, Zoe Crabtree, Ciara Colwell. Pre-retirement Chairperson Pat Gall announced plans for a pre-retirement meeting for educators anticipating retirement in the next 3-5 years, to be held on October 26th at a location to be announced.

In other business, President Faust commended the efforts of our local HCRTA as well as other local ORTA chapters for the impact they have made on the positive changes happening at STRS- Ohio. Mr. Faust also advised membership of the upcoming ORTA 75th anniversary celebration to be held the Double Tree Inn in Worthington, Ohio on Oct 12th from 4-7 PM. Members were encouraged to attend.

Members were also advised of a fire that destroyed the home of our recently passed member, Charlie Newland, and asked that we keep his widow Jay in our thoughts and prayers.

The final business was the discussion of future HCTRA meetings. Members were invited to attend the Executive Meeting on October 3rd at the Hillsboro Frisch's beginning at 9:30 AM. The November General Meeting will be held on Monday, November 7th at the Hillsboro Church of Christ. Our speaker will be Tamla Cole, with the annual STRS benefits update. It was suggested that the service project be donations to benefit the Highland County Humane Society. President Faust reminded members that officer election would be held at the November meeting and that all members were encouraged to stand for office. We are especially in need of a Treasurer, as Mrs. Pulse will be resigning her position at the end of the year. Ruth Ann Duff suggested that we should invite members from other counties to attend our November meeting. Mr. Faust mentioned that we may need a portable PA system for future meetings. Long term planning included the discussion of possible future program topics including the return of Mr. Koehl to talk about the local ancient Native American World Heritage sites or inviting mural artist Pamela Kellough to speak on the murals she has painted in the area.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 PM.