

# After School...

## The Newsletter of Minneapolis Retired Teachers Inc.

**Website**  
[www.mrti.org](http://www.mrti.org)

### Board of Directors

#### President

Becky Grover - 612- 408-2284  
[rlgrover14@gmail.com](mailto:rlgrover14@gmail.com)

#### President - Elect

Janet Kujat - 612-269-5784  
[heartladyk@yahoo.com](mailto:heartladyk@yahoo.com)

#### Recording Secretary

Christine Poppe - 612-588-8722  
[chpop001@gmail.com](mailto:chpop001@gmail.com)

#### Corresponding Secretary

David Rolek - 952-894-4925  
[drnrd@aol.com](mailto:drnrd@aol.com)

#### Asst. Recording Secretary

Joanne Lambrecht - 952-212-2255  
[joanne.lambrecht@yahoo.com](mailto:joanne.lambrecht@yahoo.com)

#### Asst. Corresponding Secretary

Deborah Smith - 612-721-1109  
[debcottsonsmith@gmail.com](mailto:debcottsonsmith@gmail.com)

#### Treasurer - Jennifer Schneider

651-247-1173  
[jennlynnsch@gmail.com](mailto:jennlynnsch@gmail.com)

#### Asst. Treasurer / Scholarship Chair

Sylvia Farrells - 952-888-8771  
[angelseyf@gmail.com](mailto:angelseyf@gmail.com)

#### Legislative Chair -

Ed Andersen 763-577-9699  
[ea5377@gmail.com](mailto:ea5377@gmail.com)

#### Membership Chair -

Denny Lander 612-718-2564  
[dlander222@gmail.com](mailto:dlander222@gmail.com)

Cont p. 7

## Hi-ho, Kermit the Commencement Speaker Here!



University commencement speakers are often notable members of the community or even famous celebrities that can inspire graduates with a blend of wisdom and humor. This spring, the University of Maryland invited someone who is all of those things and very green: **Kermit the Frog.**

Kermit will deliver the commencement address on May 21, the University announced Wednesday.

“Nothing could make these feet happier than to speak at the University of Maryland. I just know the class of 2025 is going to leap into the world and make it a better place, so if a few encouraging words from a frog can help, then I’ll be there!” Kermit said in a statement shared by the University and The Muppets Studio.

In a promotional video, the University touted the achievements of its 2025 commencement speaker, describing Kermit as an environmental advocate, Peabody Award winner and “friend to all creatures.”

“An international superstar and best-selling author who - in many ways - got his start right here on our campus,” the University said. “From humble beginnings, he has gone on to become one of the world’s most beloved and enduring cultural icons—all while sharing a message of optimism and believing in yourself.”

cont. page 4



# Spotlight on TRA Board of Trustees



## **TRA Board of Trustees Retiree Representative Report**

### **Executive Director Search**

TRA conducted a wide-reaching search in our work to hire a new Executive Director in the wake of Jay Stoffel's retirement. This search brought in 77 applicants. Of those, 8 met the minimum qualifications as posted for the position. After several special meetings and training related to the hiring and interview process, we selected 2 candidates to interview from those 8.

At our special Board meeting on February 5th, the Board voted to offer the position of Executive Director to our interim Executive Director, Tim Maurer. We are pleased to be able to continue our work with Tim at the helm.

### **TRA Annual Valuation and Financial Reports**

At the January 8th TRA Board meeting, our Actuaries presented the 7/1/2024 Actuarial Valuation report. The July 1, 2024, Actuarial Value of Assets shows TRA with a 79.9% funded ratio. The funded ratio based on the Market Value of Assets is 82.1%. These are improvements in our financial position over last year.

Here are a couple of other facts related to the valuation report.

- Almost 50% of TRA members are retirees.
- Only 3% of Active TRA teachers are "Tier 1" teachers (hired before July 1, 1989).

Our actuaries also led us in a detailed discussion about possible upcoming changes to the amortization policies for the 3 state retirement systems. There has been an LCPR Work Group looking at this for the past few months. I feel the proposed changes would bring more transparency and clarity to understanding our unfunded liabilities going forward.

### **Legislative Priorities**

The TRA Board and our actuaries have been examining cost and impact estimates for various benefit improvement scenarios. We continued these discussions at our meeting on March 5, 2025, and will form the basis for any future action by the Board regarding legislative proposals for this session.

Our next meeting will be held on April 9, 2025.

If you have any questions or input for me as your MN TRA Retiree Representative, please reach out to me.

**Mary Broderick TRA Board of Trustees Retired Representative**  
**mary.broderick99@gmail.com**

*The purpose of the TRA defined-benefit pension plan is to provide retirement, disability, and survivor benefits for all eligible members for the rest of their lives. The TRA Board owes a Constitutional fiduciary duty to active, deferred, and retired members of the plan, the taxpayers of Minnesota, and the State of Minnesota. The trustees owe a duty of loyalty to ALL TRA participants, not specific subsets such as actives, retirees, or employers. Our primary duties are to provide authorized benefits and to protect the financial stability and integrity of the pension fund.*

*Reprinted with the permission of Mary Broderick.*

###

# Bill of Fare

**April 15** - Tacos with “fixins”, fresh fruit bowl & cookies

**May 20** - Sloppy Joes with chips, potato salad and strawberry shortcake cups

**The dining room opens at 11:30**  
A vegetarian option is available;  
include the request when making your reservation. No other options are possible.

**The lunch price is \$22.00**, which includes the lunch, tax, tip and the program.  
We happily accept cash or checks.

**Phone callers record** both names and phone numbers for reservations, which will be checked off at the ticket table.  
Should you need to cancel your reservation, call **Gayle Marko** by the Sunday prior to the meeting or be billed for your non-attendance.

If you have **NOT** been called by **Monday, a week before the luncheon**, and you wish to attend, please **call Gayle Marko** to make a reservation.

If you make your reservations by email with JanWahl, **please do not make one with a caller.**

**Any questions or concerns, please call Gayle at 952-920-1395.**  
**See you for lunch!**

## Did You Know...

MRTI contributes to many programs that support Minneapolis children? Your dues support annual contributions to:

- **The Assistance League**
- **Mary's Place**
- **Boys and Girls Clubs of Minneapolis**
- **Jeremiah Program**
- **Harriet Tubman Center**
- **Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Twin Cities**
- **People Serving People**
- **Minneapolis Recreation Development**

**This month's MRTI Luncheon email reservations will come to you from the following address:**

**Janwahl @comcast.net**

If you requested an email contact for lunch but did not receive one, please do the following **BEFORE April 7:**

1. Check your spam folder
2. Send an email to the above address
3. Call Gayle Marco at 952-920-1395 to reserve a spot at the upcoming luncheon.

## **Interested in political activity?**

**Retired Teachers Council 59  
(RTC 59) 10 AM**

**“Gathering, Learning and Action ”**  
**April 22 & May 27 meetings will be**  
**in- person at the**  
**Local 59 office 67-8th Avenue NE.**  
**Watch for notices in your email ....**

# Spring Program Schedule



April 15, 2025  
Bango Games



May 20, 2025  
Malt Shop Melodies

I, **Ed Andersen**, longest serving member of the Minneapolis Teachers Committee of Thirteen, join with **Brian Vats-Fournier**, active teaching member of the Committee of Thirteen, to urge MRTI members to vote for **Randy Edinger** for the retiree seat on the TRA Board.

Randy Edinger says, "I qualified for Rule of 90 - my wife did not. I see first-hand the difference. I will advocate for a system that fixes the problems and makes a Minnesota teacher pension an incentive to be a teacher in Minnesota. Unfortunately, the current system became unfair and treats teachers differently based on their age or years in the system. I am willing to ask tough questions, and I look forward to the opportunity to do so."

Randy Edinger retired after teaching for 38 years in the Anoka-Hennepin, Forest Lake and Fridley Public Schools.

## Clutter Clearout

What to do with all that electronic gear you've accumulated?

If you're like me, you have gone through several generations of computers, electronic note-books, phones, printers, and even tv sets, all of which came with one or more sets of cables, mice, instruction books, remote controls and cds. When you move on to the new generation of items, what do you do with the old ones?

**Recycling** is the answer, but it's not as simple as putting items in the recycling bin for the garbage man to take away. Most electronics contain components which must be handled separately from others.

**First**, check with your family and friends to see if outdated but still usable items can be passed along for children's use.

**Second**, check out specialized electronics recycling centers like **FreeGeekTwin Cities** (2537 25th Ave.S), **Electronics Recycling of Minnesota**(1034 3rd Ave. NE) or **Repowered: Electronics Recycling** (860 Vandalia Street, St. Paul).

**Finally**, some electronic retailers like **BestBuy** will accept used items for recycling and **Hennepin County** has two drop-off centers for used electronics: 1400 W. 96th Street,Bloomington or 8100 Jefferson Highway, Brooklyn Park

Let's keep those computers and cables out of the trash and out of the landfills!

*Kermit cont.*

Kermit is no stranger to the university. The frog was created by alumnus Jim Henson when he was a student. The creative genius of the Muppets, who died in 1990, graduated from the university in 1960.

Henson is memorialized with a bronze statue of the puppeteer with Kermit that stands on campus in front of the student union.

This won't even be Kermit's first commencement address. The friendly and soft-spoken film and television star delivered a speech to the 1996 graduating class of the former Southampton College of Long Island University, according to Frank Reifsnyder, a spokesperson for The Muppets Studio. At the time, Kermit was awarded an honorary doctorate of amphibious letters degree.

"I am sure that when you were children growing up back in your own particular swamps or suburbs, you never imagined you would sit here on one of the most important days of your life listening to a short, green talking frog deliver your commencement address. All of us should feel very proud of ourselves... and just a little bit silly," Kermit said during the 1996 speech.

*cont. page 5*



*Kermit cont.*

“In any case, congratulations to all of you graduates. As we say in the wetlands, ‘Ribbit-ribbit-kneedeep-ribbit,’ which means ‘May success and a smile always be yours... even when you’re knee deep in the sticky muck of life.’”

The Muppet continued, “I say to you, the 1996 graduates of Southampton College, you are no longer tadpoles. The time has come for you to drop your tails and leave this swamp... Enjoy life!”

Kermit’s other brushes with higher education include a speech at the University of Maryland’s winter commencement in 1996, an appearance at the university’s College of Arts and Humanities last fall, and lecturing at Harvard University in 1982, according to Reifsnnyder.

Adam Hawley, 21, a graduating senior studying theater, said the announcement was exciting and called Kermit a “great choice.”

“It’s not often that a 70-year-old frog speaks at your graduation,” Hawley said. “Despite being a frog and puppet, it’s remarkable how relatable and human Kermit is. He laughs and he makes mistakes just like us, but what’s truly special is how he learns from his experiences and shares with us a deep wisdom on how to be kind to ourselves and to treat one another with care,” Hawley said

Originally voiced by Henson himself, “the world’s most famous amphibian” in May will be voiced and performed by Matt Vogel, the puppeteer who took over for Steve Whitmire in 2017, according to The Muppets Studio.

“I am thrilled that our graduates and their families will experience the optimism and insight of the world-renowned Kermit the Frog at such a meaningful time in their lives,” University of Maryland President Darryll J. Pines said in the announcement.

by [Chris Boyette](#), CNN



## Looking forward

One of the special joys of attending the monthly MRTI luncheons is the wide variety of programs presented to us over the course of the year. This doesn’t happen by chance. It is the result of the efforts of our hardworking Program Committee:

**Deb Smith, Chair, Denny Lander, Diane Penn, Janet Kujat, and Lorraine Spies**

They are already working on some great programs for next year. Among them:

Sept - The Floras

Oct - Laurel and Hardy speaker

Nov -?

Dec - ?

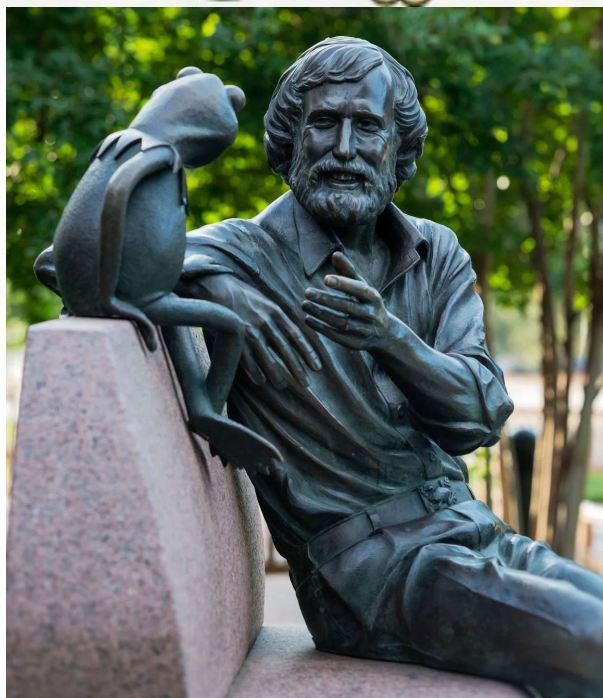
Jan - Doug Ohman - Schoolhouse memories

Feb. - David Jones - the US right after Lincoln died

April - Bango games?

May -?

The months where there are question marks means that a program hasn’t been finalized for that month as yet. But, this is an opportunity for you, our members, to suggest possible programs. If you have attended a program (music, a lecture, a book talk, a demonstration) that you think we all would enjoy, please contact Deb Smith or any member of the Program Committee to share your ideas.





## The Committee of 13 - A Short History

by Ed Andersen

Twenty years ago, the Committee of Thirteen led the successful efforts at the Minnesota Legislature to merge the Minneapolis Teacher Retirement Fund Association (MTRFA) into the Minnesota Teacher Retirement Association (TRA). Denny Lander organized a Minneapolis Day at the Legislature to arrange appointments

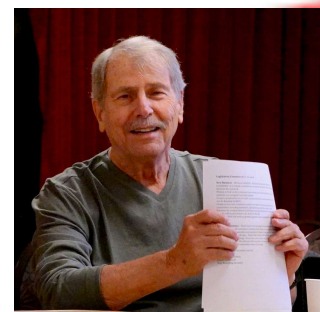


*Norm Moen*

for Minneapolis teachers to speak with their legislators to urge passage of the merger bill. Norm Moen, Louise Sundin, I and others held letter stuffing sessions where we asked Minneapolis teachers to group their \$50 campaign contributions in one envelope for personal delivery to selected legislators to get their attention. Many C-13 members manned the phones at Local-59, calling on Minneapolis teachers to call their legislators urging passage. Several of us organized coffee parties in our homes, inviting our legislators to meet their constituents to discuss this issue. As President of RTC-59, I invited Speaker Steve Swiggum to a packed house at Local-59 to hear the views of Minneapolis educators. The merger bill passed during the final minutes of the 2005 legislative session. Cooperation and a concentrated effort led to success. On July 1, 2006, we became part of the Minnesota Teachers Retirement Association (TRA).



*Dr. Ed Andersen*



*Denny Lander*

Now, twenty years later, the Committee of Thirteen has voted to restructure as a 501c(5) non-profit corporation. Our new legal documents were filed today with the Minnesota Secretary of State. The non-profit corporation's name is Minneapolis Educator Pension Advocates inc. The certificate of Assumed Name is Committee of Thirteen.

We could go by Minneapolis Educator Pension Advocates continuing as the Committee of Thirteen (MEPA-13). Another way could be Committee of Thirteen continuing as Minneapolis Educator Pension Advocates (C-13: MEPA). We are developing By-Laws to clarify



*Louise Sundin*

operating procedures for our new non-profit corporation that meet the rules of the IRS and the Minnesota Campaign Finance Board. During this legislative session, we will send out a letter through TRA requesting contributions to our Minneapolis Educator Pension Advocates, Inc. These funds will allow the Minneapolis Educator Pension Advocates to continue our efforts to represent both the approximately 3000 actively teaching Minneapolis educators as well as our approximately 5200 retired Minneapolis educators at the Minnesota Legislature. Our continuing efforts seek to maintain and improve our Defined Benefit Pension system so that all Minnesota educators can work effectively in our public schools.

cont. from page 1

Program Chair

Deb Smith - 612-721-1109

[debcottonsmith@gmail.com](mailto:debcottonsmith@gmail.com)

Email Lunch Coordinator

Jan Wahl

612-718-7218

[janwahl@comcast.net](mailto:janwahl@comcast.net)

Investments Chair & Grants

Committee Chair

Larry Risser - 612-922-6596

[lerisser10@gmail.com](mailto:lerisser10@gmail.com)

Past President -

Roma Lee Rasmussen-

612-861-6654

[rl.rasmussen@comcast.net](mailto:rl.rasmussen@comcast.net)

Lunch Coordinator- Gayle Marko

952-920-1395

Newsletter - Chris Poppe

612-588-8722

[chpop001@gmail.com](mailto:chpop001@gmail.com)

Directors at Large:

Bruce Hansen

218-728-1308

[bruce.hansen060@gmail.com](mailto:bruce.hansen060@gmail.com)

Barbara Kuenne

763-542-9890

[BGKWOW1@gmail.com](mailto:BGKWOW1@gmail.com)

Diane Penn - 651-332-4675

[penndiane@hotmail.com](mailto:penndiane@hotmail.com)

Lorraine Spies - 612-345-4997

[lcspies323@yahoo.com](mailto:lcspies323@yahoo.com)

Mitchell Trockman -

763-545-7500

[mitch.trockman@comcast.net](mailto:mitch.trockman@comcast.net)

\*\*\* Cut this out and staple into your Yearbook \*\*\*

## Yearbook Update

These membership listings were received after the Yearbook had gone to press:

**Kathleen J Cooper**

25 Moore Farm Cir. NW.

Huntsville, Alabama 35806

256-489-2620

[kathleenc21c@icloud.com](mailto:kathleenc21c@icloud.com)

**Shirley A Keating**

3820 E 26th Street

Minneapolis, Mn 55406

612-618-6281

[shirleya1960@hotmail.com](mailto:shirleya1960@hotmail.com)

**Robert G Noble**

5800 Columbus Ave. So

Minneapolis Mn 55417

612-296-6245

[rgnoble@mac.com](mailto:rgnoble@mac.com)

**Michele S Dunn**

3600 Xerxes Ave N

Minneapolis, MN 55412

612-521-3826

[dunnx024@alumni.umn.edu](mailto:dunnx024@alumni.umn.edu)

**Kathy O Kinser**

140 Creekside Dr

Sanger, Teas 76266

763-242-6620

[kgoriginals@msn.com](mailto:kgoriginals@msn.com)

**Nancy A Ostmoe**

8400 Pennsylvania Rd #224

Bloomington, MN 55438

763-464-2294

[nancyostmoe@gmail.com](mailto:nancyostmoe@gmail.com)

**Rita L Fox**

5985 Rowland RD #306

Minnetonka, MN 55343

612-670-2692

[ritalfox@gmail.com](mailto:ritalfox@gmail.com)

**Timothy J Leach**

2112 26th Avenue So

Minneapolis, MN 55406

612-382-1383

[t.lea001@hotmail.com](mailto:t.lea001@hotmail.com)

**Alice A Van Amerongen**

3663 Park Center Blvd #815

St. Louis Park, MN 55416

952-405-8187

[lavaname@gmail.com](mailto:lavaname@gmail.com)

**Steven R Gerber**

2730 Norwood Lane No

Plymouth, MN 55441

612-597-1196

[sgerbermn@earthlink.net](mailto:sgerbermn@earthlink.net)

**Karen M Mellenberndt**

1931 Cloud Dr NE

Blaine, MN 55449

763-757-3731

[k.mellenberndt@att.net](mailto:k.mellenberndt@att.net)

**Annie P Wade**

4544 Columbus Ave. So

Minneapolis, MN 55407

612-296-3868

[ap3wade@gmail.com](mailto:ap3wade@gmail.com)

**George S Hewitt**

2501 Fair Oak Ave #111

Anoka, MN 55303

651-645-3005

[hewitt1952@yahoo.com](mailto:hewitt1952@yahoo.com)

**Nancy A Miller**

5005 Goldenrod Lane

Plymouth, MN 55442

612-201-5240

[nancy.miller.mn@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.miller.mn@gmail.com)

**Lourdes V Yu**

6016 5th Ave. So.

Minneapolis, MN 55419

805-470-2815

[lourdesyu1939@gmail.com](mailto:lourdesyu1939@gmail.com)

**Pamela A Holland-Mills**

6617 McCauley Trail So

Edina, MN 55439

952-649-9072

[pamahm@gmail.com](mailto:pamahm@gmail.com)

**John Mundahl**

301 So Washington Ave. Apt 219

St. Peter, MN 56082

507-341-2564

[johnmundahl@yahoo.com](mailto:johnmundahl@yahoo.com)

Funds are available for medical reimbursement.

Give TRA a call to request an application

**651-296-2409**



Limited Medical Assistance Fund (LMAF) administered by the Teachers Retirement Association

Overview	Medical Expenses	Health Insurance Premium Expenses
<p>The Limited Medical Assistance Fund (LMAF) was established in the 1930s through a bequest of a retired Minneapolis teacher.</p> <p>A trust was established to reimburse certain medical costs of retired Minneapolis teachers, and is administered by the Teachers Retirement Association.</p> <p>To qualify for reimbursement, a retiree must have been a Minneapolis Special School District #1 teacher</p> <p>Reimbursements</p> <p>Eligible retirees may request reimbursement for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allowable medical expenses</li><li>• Health insurance premiums (when funds permit)</li></ul>	<p>Allowable medical expenses, if these expenses are not covered by Medicare or any other form of insurance, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• inpatient or outpatient procedures performed at hospitals, clinics or surgery centers;</li><li>• licensed nursing care or prosthetic devices.</li></ul> <p>Expenses that are not eligible include:</p> <p>dental care, nursing home care, medication, therapy, glasses, outpatient services, non-medical items.</p> <p>Reimbursements are reviewed and disbursements made twice a year.</p> <p>How To Apply:</p> <p>Call TRA to request information. If expenses are determined to be eligible, an application will be mailed to you.</p> <p>Complete and return the application to TRA, along with expense receipts.</p>	<p>(when funds permit)</p> <p>To be eligible for health insurance premium reimbursement, a retiree must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• be age 65 or older;</li><li>• have retired after May 1, 1974, but before July 1, 1999; and</li><li>• not be eligible for free Medicare Part A coverage.</li></ul> <p>Reimbursements are reviewed and disbursements made twice a year.</p> <p>Contact us at:</p> <p>Teachers Retirement Association 60 Empire Drive, Suite 400 St. Paul, MN 55103-4000</p> <p>651.296.2409 or 800.657.3669 651.297.5999 (FAX)</p>

### Visit the MRTI Website

One of the services for MRTI members is our website:

[www.mrti.org](http://www.mrti.org)

Check it out for information on our luncheon programs, the grant and scholarship programs, Committee of 13 updates, lists of Board Members, Limited Medical Assistance Fund, lists of deceased members and more.

Use this resource...it's for you!

MRTI Newsletter April, 2025  
Chris Poppe, editor

Articles, opinion essays and  
comments are welcome and  
should be directed to:

Chris Poppe

3851 Queen Ave. N  
Minneapolis, MN 55412  
[chpop001@gmail.com](mailto:chpop001@gmail.com)

### **Our meeting location**

Eagles Club #34 American Legion  
(On the corner of E. 25th St. & 25th Ave. S)  
2507 E. 25th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55406



*Plenty of Free parking*

---

Minneapolis Retired Teachers, Inc.  
P.O. Box 24034  
Minneapolis, MN 55424-0034