

Newsletter of West Lake Shore Unit, Illinois Retired Teachers Association

WLSU and IRTA...Your Voice in Springfield
WLSU—OVER 60 YEARS OF SERVICE TO RETIRED EDUCATORS
www.wlsu.weebly.com

President's Message: Kate Singletary



"In the late 1930s-1940s, Michael Bond, author of *Paddington Bear*, saw Jewish refugee children (Kindertransport children) walking through London's Reading Station, arriving in Britain escaping from the Nazi horrors of Europe.

Mr. Bond, touched by what he saw, recalled those memories 20 years later when he began his story of Paddington Bear. One morning in 1958, he was searching for writing inspiration and simply wrote the words: "Mr. and Mrs. Brown first met Paddington on a railway platform..."

"They all had a label round their neck with their name and address on and a little case or package containing all their treasured possessions," Bond said in an interview with *The Telegraph* before his death in 2017. "So, Paddington, in a sense, was a refugee, and I do think that there's no sadder sight than refugees."

Paddington Bear - known for his blue overcoat, bright red hat, and wearing a simple hand-written tag that says "Please look after this bear. Thank you," Paddington embodies the appearance of many refugee children. His suitcase is an emblem of his own refugee status.

"We took in some Jewish children who often sat in front of the fire every evening, quietly crying because they had no idea what had happened to their parents, and neither did we at the time. It's the reason why Paddington arrived with the label around his neck". -- Michael Bond

Michael Bond died at 91 in 2017. The epitaph on his gravestone reads "Please look after this bear. Thank you."

Please look after all the young Bears in Ukraine."

Credit : Ava Lenet

RESERVE NOW!



JOIN US FOR A DAY AT WRIGLEY FIELD

Friday, June 17, 2022

CHICAGO CUBS VS ATLANTA BRAVES; 1:20 PM

Tickets: \$55 Members/ \$60 Guests

Bus, tickets and snacks included in ticket price

Seats are in Section 230, Rows 22-25, 3rd base side

Bus leaves from Lyons Township High School South (parking lot), 4900 Willow Springs Road, Western Springs at 11:30 AM and leaves Wrigley Field at 4:30 pm.

WLSU DEFRAYS THE COST OF TICKETS FOR MEMBERS AND GUESTS



Registration Form and Ticket Request

Cubs vs Atlanta Braves: Friday, June 17

NAMES(S): _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

NUMBER OF TICKETS PURCHASING? _____

(\$55 MEMBERS/\$60 GUESTS)

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO WLSU

RETURN TO:

Kate Singletary

422 Commons Circle

Clarendon Hills, IL 60514

CONFIRMATION WILL BE SENT BY EMAIL

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JUNE 6

Things to Do in '22

Friday, June 17, Bus leaves at 11:30 a.m., *A Day at Wrigley Field*. Bus Trip (snacks and beverage provided to a 1:20 p.m. Cubs game. \$55 members, \$60 guests. Bus location: Lyons Township High School South campus parking lot, 4900 Willow Springs Road, Western Springs.

Tuesday, September 13, Noon at The Community House, Hinsdale: *Paint and Lunch*...Join us to create your own masterpiece with instructors from Pinot's Palette. Enjoy a gourmet boxed lunch while painting. Art materials, your canvas and lunch included in ticket price. \$45.00 members, \$50 guests

Friday, December 9—11:00 a.m. Delta Marriott, Willowbrook. *Annual WLSU Holiday Luncheon*. \$30 members, \$35 guests

All ticket prices reflect a discount. Details and signup information on each event will be in 2022 newsletters and special mailings.

Mark June 14 on Your Calendar and watch for the zoom invitation to attend the Area 3 conference. This is your opportunity to hear from IRTA and local leaders without having to drive to the location. Get the latest updates on the lawsuit and other information vital to you.



Membership Report

“A Retirement With Dignity.” This doesn’t refer to your TRS pension, although it can and should. This is a reference made by the Illinois Treasurer, Michael W. Frerichs, to the program titled “Secure Choice.” This is a program created by the Illinois General Assembly requiring employers to offer either a retirement savings plan or Secure Choice. It was created for a good reason. According to the Economic Policy Institute, nearly half of all working-age families have \$0 saved for retirement. In addition to this sobering detail, according to the Georgetown Center for Retirement, 23% of Illinois residents rely on Social Security for at least 90% of their retirement. Although Secure Choice is under the auspices of the Illinois Treasurer, the savings are managed by a private-sector financial services firm and kept in a trust outside of state government and its finances. Secure Choice recently went over 100,000 + savers, and there are 6,421 registered employers across the state. Secure Choice is a defined contribution pension plan. Defined contribution plans are funded primarily by the employee. Employers can match the contribution up to a certain amount if they choose. When the employee retires, the employer typically ceases making any further contributions and the retiree takes over the management of the fund.

Your TRS pension, however, is a defined benefit plan. You can’t run out of money because it’s guaranteed by the state with a cost-of-living-adjustment of 3% yearly. The Illinois Supreme Court confirmed unanimously that there cannot be changes that diminish or impair your benefit. Your defined benefit pension is rare in today’s work world. However, it is still common in the public sector such as a teaching position in any Illinois public school.

Now you may be wondering why this is even mentioned here. If you are, here is the explanation. Your TRS defined benefit pension is the gold standard when it comes to pensions. However, it is not guaranteed if the state reneges on making payments to the pension fund. Likewise, it is only guaranteed if the Illinois constitution’s pension protection clause remains in place. Forces opposed to your pension would like to change or remove the pension protection clause. This is what we must be wary of as TRS stakeholders. The IRTA/WLSU and other public sector groups share this common bond. However, only the IRTA/WLSU is devoted solely to the protection of retirees or those close to retirement. The IEA and the IFT, and rightly so, first look to the needs of their active teachers.

Your continued membership in IRTA/WLSU is needed to safeguard against any encroachment on our pension and benefits. Your recruitment of new members is critical. Your signing up of your spouse as an associate member is critical. Do your part to keep your pension and pension benefits protected by working to increase our membership number. There is strength in numbers. Our IRTA membership number stands at 39,531. This is a large number of members, but still only a fraction compared to the total number of TRS recipients. We need many more members to add pressure on Illinois politicians to protect our interests. The IRTA has lobbyists in Springfield protecting your pension rights. We could give them a stronger voice with more members. Look at your pension as your financial lifeline to be protected at all times.

Joining the IRTA online is very simple. Go to www.itraonline.org. Click on ‘Association’ followed by ‘Join Now.’ Scroll down and choose one of the 4 red/white options. Any questions you may have can be answered by calling 800-728-4782. Our WLSU treasurer, Louise Sterett, can also help you with questions. See the contact box. You may contact Tom Szot at jtszot@comcast.net or 630-852-3138 for help also. Mailed applications may be obtained by contacting Louise or Tom. If you wish, we can mail an application directly to a prospective member.

We need your help to stay strong. Think how your TRS pension is more beneficial to you than a defined contribution pension. As Yogi Berra said, “The future ain’t what it used to be.” Protect your financial future because you never know what will come along to disrupt it.

Thank you for being a member of WLSU. **Tom Szot, Membership *emeritus***



WLSU/IRTA WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS

Marcia WilseyBrewer Alison Redding Patricia Olderr Michael Durkin
Lea Anne Frost Donna Bronner Lucia Carrera Sonya Raymond

Know Someone Who is Retiring Soon?

Don't forget that IRTA/WLSU has a pipeline for those who have signed a letter of intent to retire in the next 4 years. Those who sign up for the pipeline and deduct receive free IRTA and WLSU membership until they retire. That entitles them to information about legislation and issues concerning health insurance and their pension, receipt of both newsletters and member benefits, and invitations to special events. Contact a colleague who is planning to retire and explain the benefits of belonging to IRTA/WLSU, the only organization devoted solely to retired educators and protecting their pensions and health benefits. Help them fill out the application on this newsletter, or have them go to irtaonline.org to sign up.

Giving Back

Some years ago, WLSU ran a program in which we partnered with various schools to provide school supplies. Sometimes the requests were very specific; we provided supplies that were needed for the Westchester Middle School hands on science program, but other requests were for the general supplies needed in classrooms, supplies that often were purchased by active teachers themselves: construction paper, pens, pencils, markers. We all knew the essentials required to make it through a school year. This program was very well received by our members. For people who had spent their careers teaching, it was a great fit, and while we were helping a particular school, it made us, the donors, feel wonderful to give back and help active teachers.

Unfortunately, the pandemic brought the program to an end as schools were closed, and virtual learning became a part of the newest educational jargon. As a Board, we have discussed how we might resurrect this program or develop another project that would benefit our communities. To that end, I am writing to see what interests our members may have, regarding other ways to volunteer their time and talents.

One possibility stems from the pandemic which has impacted many people financially, making it necessary for them to utilize food pantries to feed themselves and their families. I contacted the Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry and was told they are always in need of workers and donations. My guess is that there are a number of food pantries that are in the same situation. Perhaps, WLSU could organize a team of people willing to work at such a location. For those members who may not feel comfortable doing this type of volunteering, we could ask our membership to bring donations of food supplies which then could be brought to a food pantry. My thought is that some of our members may already be doing this type of work. Might we be able to have multiple teams working at various locations and even doing different types of volunteering?

Much depends on you. If you are interested, I ask that you email me and let me know your thoughts. As a Board we will try to match people to their interests and give them an opportunity to meet like-minded members, as well as participate in a worthy cause. Please feel free to email me with your insights and interests. I will work on pulling together some opportunities by which we can give back.

I can be reached at jj149@aol.com. **Julie Jeter, Past President**



May they rest in peace, and may their memory be a blessing.

For each of our recently deceased members , WLSU donates \$25 to the IRTA Needy Teachers Fund.

John Wheeler Elaine Pawlak LeRoy Pollina Anthony Erman Ruth Vorwick Charmaine Stilinovich

WLSU Contact Information

Website: www.wlsu.weebly.com

President	Membership	Treasurer	Foundation
Kate Singletary	Steve Yurek	Louise Sterett	Fran Pettersen
508-737-1336	630-991-1123	630-325-6470	630-985-7508
singletarykate@gmail.com	mathgreat34@comcast.net	lasterett@yahoo.com	narfp@yahoo.com



IRTAPAC

The IRTAPAC is a way to protect our benefits. It provides financial support to legislators who support us and thus prevents impairment of our benefits. Many of you may make a yearly contribution to the PAC; however, if you opt for deduct of \$1 per month, from your pension check, that allows the PAC committee to know exactly what to expect as far as funds are concerned. It is a more reliable measure of what funds can be disbursed for lobbying and protection of benefits. Currently, only 13% of WLSU members are on PAC Deduct. Look for the form on the website: www.irtaonline.org, and sign up for deduct of PAC donations. If you would like to be a member of the PAC committee to help screen candidates for donations, please contact Marge Sucansky at 630-887-6407.

Planning to Attend a Political Fundraiser?

If you are planning to attend a fundraiser for a legislator you support, contact Kate to give her the date, place, time, cost, and politician information at least two weeks prior to the event. IRTA will send a check to you which you can present to the legislator/candidate at the event after introducing yourself as a member of IRTA.

Since the Primary is not until June 28th—IRTAPAC candidate questionnaires will not be sent until the final week of Jul

News From IRTA



There is no news regarding the health insurance lawsuit other than the suit has been filed in Sangamon County and assigned to a judge. Regarding legislation, IRTA is pushing for the legislation to pass increasing from 120 to 140 days that a retiree can substitute in the classroom with no penalty to her pension. This will, hopefully, be passed before the end of the legislative session.

Members are encouraged to establish a line of communication with their state legislators to pass on information regarding issues that affect retired teachers.



IRTA HELPING EDUCATORS—PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Retired Teachers: We are currently assisting 7 retired teachers with monthly stipends that total \$3125 a month for an annual total of \$41,100. Checks range from \$200 to \$650. The total includes property tax for one person. Applications for assistance are found at irtaonline.org by going to Foundation and clicking on Financial Assistance or by calling IRTA at 1-800-728-4782.

Foundation Scholarship Results: Working for the future: 27 applications were received for the \$1500 scholarships. Total qualifying applications: 26 as compared to 23 in 2021. Four applications were received from Area 3, and the recipient of the scholarship for Area 3 is Ryan Thiele of Naperville. He is an incoming senior, majoring in Technology Education.

Beginning in Spring of 2023 the amount of the scholarships will be raised to \$2000 each.

2022 Excellence in Education Grants for Teachers—DEADLINE IS JUNE 1

The IRTA Foundation continues to work toward the present by offering \$36,000 in grant money to active educators. If you know actives, encourage them to apply for this grant to achieve a special project they might wish for their students. They can submit their application online at irtaonline.org All proposals must be submitted by June 1, 2022. Last year 65 awards were made, and we had nine winners in Area 3, with two of them from the WLSU area.. Grant awards will be presented in the fall.

HAVE YOU RECEIVED YOUR FUNDRAISER MAILING? If not, contact IRTA. The money raised is one of the sources of funds for the programs above.

Want to Vote By Mail?

Go to the website for your county and search for Absentee Voting. In some counties you may register to vote by mail in all elections.



Spring Update

The Illinois Secretary of State has extended the expiration date for drivers' licenses, ID cards, and learner permits until July 31, 2022. A road test is required at every renewal starting at age 75; 4 years between ages 75-80; 2 years for drivers 81-86; and every year for those 87 and older.

Appointments at drivers' license facilities are being accepted 10 days in advance. Veterans, seniors, and individuals with disabilities may walk in, but be aware of possible waiting time and closing times.

The Real ID deadline remains May 3, 2023.

The latest information is always available at www.ilsos.gov.

A WLSU member has brought to FYI attention that the United Health Care Trail Plan has some new benefits as of 2022. They include meals, transportation, and in-home personal care after a hospital or skilled nursing facility discharge. While these benefits are specific to UHC, this brings to your attention the need to keep up to date with the benefits of your particular insurance plan. Be sure to read all the informational mail or email that is sent, and don't hesitate to call your carrier if you don't understand a benefit or would like more information about it.

With many sports and concerts returning to in-person attendance, it's a good time to remind members to be cautious when ordering tickets online. Be sure you are ordering from the official website, or if you are ordering through a broker, be sure that it is a legitimate one. Most tickets have a service charge, but if you feel it is exorbitantly high or something doesn't seem right, then reorder at another time. The Better Business Bureau is reporting many ticket scams. You may always check with them at www.BBB.org. **Barbara Grabowski, FYI Committee**

An Afternoon With *West Side Story*

The excellent concert event featured 12 soloists, a 75 piece orchestra, and a do-cent lecture about Sondheim and Bernstein



IRTA HOTLINE—Members who wish to hear the latest information about legislation regarding pensions and health insurance should telephone the IRTA office at:

1-800-728-4782, irtaonline.org.

Other helpful numbers:

Teachers' Retirement System 1-877-927-5877, email— members@trsil.org website: <http://www.trsil.org>

Central Management Services 1-800-442-1300 or 1-217-524-3438

Membership Cards Many AMBA and other IRTA endorsed benefits require proof of membership in IRTA. Please call the Springfield office to request a membership card: 800-728-4782

ALERT: 90 Years Old and Above—You qualify for free Life Membership in IRTA & WLSU. To qualify, you must contact us—Act Now. Contact Louise Sterett.



IRTA State & Local Unit Membership Form
 828 S. Second St., 4th Floor • Springfield, IL 62704 • 1-800-728-4782
 e-mail: irta@irtaonline.org • webpage: www.irtaonline.org

- State Dues
- Dues Deduct - \$30 a year (see left side of form)
 - Annual - \$40
 - 5 Years - \$175
 - Life - \$400
 - Membership Free for the Calendar Year of Retirement

Dues Deduct – I hereby authorize the Teachers' Retirement System to deduct my IRTA dues in monthly installments at an initial rate of \$2.50 or as subsequently established by the Delegate Assembly.
Association Dues are Not Tax Deductible

- State Associate Dues (non-certified)
- Annual - \$25
 - Life - \$125

- Local Unit Dues
- First Year Free

 (Signature required for Dues Deduction)

Social Security # _____
 (Only required for Dues Deduction)

Please print or use your return address label.

NAME LAST	FIRST	MI	DOB		
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP	RETIREMENT YEAR	
PHONE ()	E-MAIL	UNIT West Lake Shore	SCHOOL DISTRICT	RETIRED FROM	

Please mail to IRTA.

One ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words. Johann W. von Goethe

Try going GREEN with your next newsletter.
Check your spam or junk inboxes if you are not receiving the newsletter.

"Investing in the FUTURE of retired teachers"

DIRECT LINE

West Lake Shore Unit
 Direct Line Newsletter
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