



August/September 2023

## Direct Line

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

### Vice-President's Message

The IRTA Biennial Convention is being held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, October 16-17 this year. WLSU is allowed to have 38 delegates attend the convention. As a member of WLSU/IRTA you are invited to become a WLSU delegate. WLSU will pay for your registration fee and your convention meals. You are responsible for the cost of your room at the Crowne Plaza, which is \$112, plus tax per night. To make reservations, call the Crowne Plaza at 1-800-589-2769.

To register for the convention, contact me at narfp@yahoo.com. I will send you the registration form via email. Our convention in 2021 was held virtually. The 2023 Convention will be a great chance to meet in person IRTA members from around the state. You will experience speeches, floor debates, legislative highlights, raffles, silent auctions, a lovely banquet, and social interactions. Spouses and significant others are welcome, but you must pay their registration fee and meals. This can be done with a **check made out to West Lake Shore Unit** and mailed to me (8613 Thistlewood Ct., Darien, IL 60561) after you have chosen the options from the form I will send.

This year WLSU will receive a Unit of Distinction Award at the convention. Also, important amendments to the IRTA constitution will be discussed and voted upon. The highlight of the convention will be our keynote speaker, Tom Morris. Mr. Morris is noted for being one of the most active public philosophers in the world. He is a former professor at the University of Notre Dame and is the author of several books, including *Plato's Lemonade Stand* and *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*.

Our IRTA Executive Director, Jim Bachman, is retiring at the end of 2023. The convention will also be a good opportunity for members to express their appreciation for his dedication to IRTA for the last 20 years.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

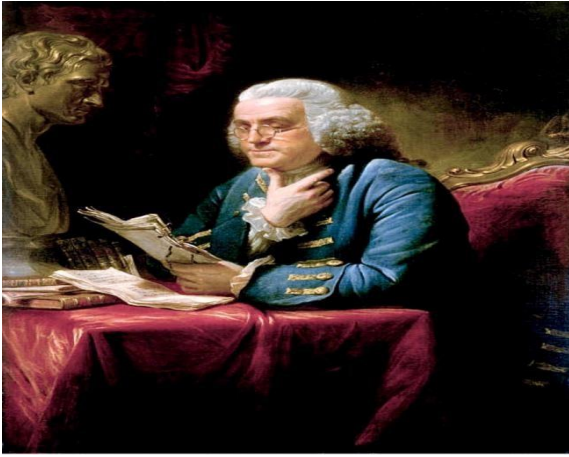
**August 17, 2023: Andy Warhol Exhibit at COD. The event will include a docent presentation at 2 p.m.**

**September 13, 2023: Membership Meeting with special guest Benjamin Franklin, portrayed by Terry Lynch. Meeting will be held at 10 a.m. at the Hinsdale Community House. Refreshments will be served.**

**December 1, 2023: Holiday Luncheon at Crystal Sky**

WLSU will have two board openings in 2024: President and Vice President. This may sound daunting to some of you, but I personally know how helpful the members of the board are in guiding a new person through the responsibilities. Please consider accepting one of these positions. Contact me for information regarding duties and responsibilities.

**Fran Pettersen**



**WLSU MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
 WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 2023, at 10 A. M.  
 HINSDALE COMMUNITY HOUSE  
 415 WEST EIGHTH STREET, HINSDALE IL 60521**

**SPECIAL GUEST: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

**Portrayed by Terry Lynch**

**Refreshments will be served.**

**COST: MEMBERS ARE FREE. NON-MEMBERS ARE \$5**

**MEMBERS AND GUESTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING ITEMS FOR OUR  
 “ADOPT A SCHOOL” PROGRAM**

**A LIST OF NEEDED ITEMS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 5 OF THIS NEWSLETTER**

**MEMBER NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_**

**MEMBER EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_**

**MEMBER PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

**# OF MEMBERS ATTENDING \_\_\_\_\_**

**# OF NON-MEMBERS ATTENDING \_\_\_\_\_**

**NAMES OF NON-MEMBERS \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_**

**MAKE CHECKS OUT TO WEST LAKE SHORE UNIT**

**RETURN REGISTRATION FORM AND ANY NEEDED CHECKS TO:**

**FRAN PETTERSEN, 8613 THISTLEWOOD COURT, DARIEN IL 60561**

**QUESTIONS? CONTACT FRAN AT [narfp@yahoo.com](mailto:narfp@yahoo.com) or 708-302-2129**

**RSVP BY AUGUST 28, 2023**



## How to Replace Lost Documents

In the previous *Direct Line* I gave you some suggestions for replacing important documents which you may have lost. Here are more suggestions for replacing documents. (All courtesy of the *AARP Bulletin*, December 2022.)

**Birth Certificate:** Contact the vital records office of the state where you were born. If you were born overseas to American parents and they registered your birth with the American embassy, you can get a birth record from the State Department. If you were born on a military base abroad, you will need to contact the hospital where you were born.

**Marriage Certificate:** Contact your state’s vital records office. They will tell you how to proceed and what documents you will need to provide. If you were married abroad, contact the embassy or consulate where you were married, and they will assist you in obtaining a certified copy of your marriage document. If you were married abroad before 1989, and the wedding was witnessed by a consular officer, the State Department should also have the documents on file.

**Social Security Card:** You may not need a replacement card as long as you have your number safely stored. If you are starting a new job, or live in Pennsylvania, you’ll need your card to obtain a Real ID. To get a new Social Security Card, you’ll need a birth certificate, driver’s license or state issued ID card OR simply your passport. You may get and print an application on the Social Security website (ssa.gov). Mail or take your application and document to your Social Security office (locations available on website.)

**Will:** Laws pertaining to wills and estate planning vary from state to state. In general, if your will was lost or destroyed, but not revoked, it still represents your wishes. Upon death a copy of the will can be submitted to the court. However, there must be clear evidence that it has not been revoked, which means that there must be evidence it was lost or destroyed or testimony from an impartial third party stating that you didn’t plan to change it.

P.S. The REAL ID deadline has again been extended. The new deadline is May 7, 2025

### **Barbara Grabowski, FYI Committee**

#### **Log in to irtaonline.org For the Latest Information**

The Member Portal located in the Member’s Only section of the IRTA website has been revamped. IRTA members’ usernames are now their email, and they need to establish a new password. Members can review their own personal information, pay their dues, see when their membership is up for renewal, donate or review their donation history, register for an event, and update their profile information. The Member’s Only section of the website looks similar to how it did in the past, but it has been updated to use with the new IRTA database. Check it out. There is a lot of good information there, including information about TRAIL and TRIP.

**Coffee With Jim Dates** Watch your email for a zoom invitation 9:30 a.m.  
August 17    September 21    October 12    November 9    December 14

#### **Exciting News—Get Better Informed**

**This year IRTA will be hosting all of its Area Conferences virtually, and you can get access to all of them. They will be spaced throughout the year, so you will get the most up-to-date information. The schedule is below, so mark your calendar. You will receive a ZOOM invitation to each.**

**August 9    Area 5 Virtual Conference    9:30 a.m.**

**September 6    Area 6 Virtual Conference    9:30 a.m.**

**Local Unit Forums begin at 8:30 a.m. All are invited.**



If you are new at retirement or are an old hand at it, we all share at least two major concerns. Possibly the more concerning of the two is the state of our health. The second worry is will our money last as long as we do. I'm sure we have other concerns that may cause sleepless nights, such as worrying over an aging or ill parent or spouse, strained family relationships, the changing environment, growing crime and violence, concerns about grandchildren and their future, etc.

We may enhance our health and live longer, according to experts, by controlling our diet, getting exercise, trying to get enough sleep, staying in touch with our health care provider, staying away from alcohol, drugs and tobacco, and avoiding isolation. Fortunately, as a retired Illinois educator, you have access to subsidized health care.

Will your income meet your needs well into retirement? We all wish to live comfortably in our senior years. Besides supporting those groups such as IRTA, IFT and IEA who offer to protect our pensions, we need to pay attention to our spending. One plan used by some retirees is the 50/30/20 rule. This is a budgeting technique that involves dividing net earnings into three primary categories. Fifty percent is to go to pay for needs (food, housing, transportation, etc.), 30 % is to go for wants (dining out, vacations, gifts, etc.), and 20 % is to be saved or go for debt payments (credit card payments and taxes). According to the advice of those who major in personal finances, it is always wise to spend less than your pension allows and don't neglect building an emergency fund in case you need to pay for a new furnace, roof, unexpected condo assessment or unforeseen medical expense. Fidelity Investments recommends that if you retire at age 60, you should have 8 times your income saved. Fortunately, if you don't have this much saved or invested, your defined benefit pension is your lifeline to your retired future.

One thing you can rely upon is the backing and support of the IRTA/WLSU. The number one priority of the IRTA is the protection of your pension. IRTA also has a stake in protecting your state-sponsored health benefits. For example, recently the IRTA sued the state of Illinois challenging the underfunding of the Teacher Health Insurance Security Fund. The initial response from the state appeared to mean that it believed teachers have a constitutionally protected right to participate in some type of health insurance program, but not to any particular level of benefits. This is to be determined by the state, and this is why the state decided to put less into the security fund than in previous years. The IRTA strongly disagreed with this argument, sued and pledged to continue to advocate for your rights. This important issue has been resolved thanks to the IRTA leadership. There will be more to come on this from Jim Bachman, the IRTA director. This is an example of your dues at work. However, dues only go so far; we can do more to help by being multi-year members, recruiting new members, and volunteering to hold an office or some other board role.

*This issue of **Direct Line** begins our membership renewal season for 2024. Please look at your newsletter label to see if you owe WLSU dues. If there is a "23" behind WLSU, it means dues are owed. WLSU dues are 1 year @ \$12, 3 years @ \$30, 5 years @ \$45, or Life for \$125. You may contact Louise Sterett or Tom Szot with any questions or concerns. See the WLSU Contact Information box in this newsletter. If you wish to be an early bird, and we'd really appreciate it, send your check made out to West Lake Shore Unit to Louise Sterett, 770 57<sup>th</sup> St., #2, Clarendon Hills, IL 60514. Otherwise, you'll receive a notice of WLSU dues owed sometime after September 1. If you receive no notice, you don't owe any WLSU dues.*

Please remember that dues owed to the IRTA are separate. If you owe IRTA dues, you'll be billed by them. By the way, if you are considering becoming a life member of IRTA, now is the time before the dues increase.

Be reminded of the quote by Kurt Vonnegut in *Cat's Cradle*: "In this world, you get what you pay for."

*Protect your pension and health benefits by renewing, recruiting, and resolving to help your local unit. Help by telling a friend or family member to Google IRTA. The website will come up. Go to it and click on Association. Scroll down to 'Join Now,' or text the word "JOIN" to 70678. Email the person's name to us to guarantee he/she is placed in our WLSU local. Please remember the old saying about there being strength in numbers. Invariably, a group has more influence than one person. We thank you for being a member of WLSU. **Tom Szot, Membership emeritus***



### WLSU/IRTA WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS

Gary Shepek Cath Ann Nestlinger Melzine Raymond Kathy Pisano Gloria Pelt  
Christiana Joyce Gianna Galante Irene Scanlan Marybeth King Karen Harris  
Lorraine Kakida Six Douglas Brown Kyle Schumacher Patricia Vonder Heide  
Denise Dohman Julie Ann McGovern Kathie Robinson Maria Kurtz Core' LaVersa  
Christine Nykaza Stephen Co Kay Lewellyan Nyoka Caldwell Sarah Dewitt Moore

#### ...and from an IRTA Life Member—some thoughts

I'm approaching age ninety one and am able to live well in my own condo, hiring help as needed since I can no longer drive. My next of kin, who is a lawyer, is amazed at how wealthy I happen to be. I suspect she didn't encourage her five offspring to enter the field of education because she felt teachers just didn't make enough. Yes, my pension has been a worthy one and I'm truly grateful. I can only pray and be vigilant so that future educators can also have a secure financial retirement. **Mary Richie**



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 Foundation

David Byrne Deborah Neuman James Gowlett Ruth Ann Holecek Kathleen Holzmeister

### Adopt-a-School Project 2023-2024

The Adopt-a-School project is underway again after two years of being dormant due to the pandemic. It was exciting to once again send out letters to schools located in the footprint of WLSU's borders to elicit a potential partnership. As in the past, letters went to schools that had very high percentages of low income students. This year we will be working with Thurgood Marshall School in Bellwood. This school serves students in grades K-5 and currently has 270 students enrolled. The principal, Jeremy Burnham, and I have had a number of conversations regarding how we can be of assistance to both his staff and students.

**They are open to receiving the school supplies listed below.** He also mentioned a need for volunteers that might be willing to come into the school to work in small groups with students. We had a lengthy discussion about these needs at our last Board meeting and decided that I would present all the needs and let members decide how they would like to proceed.

The Adopt-a-School project has been well received by our members. It has given them the opportunity to help school communities with a variety of needs. My hope is that this tradition will continue into the 2023-2024 school year. **I will be collecting donated items at WLSU functions, or you can drop donated items at my home at 427 N Waiola, La Grange Park. We have a large front porch, so feel free to place items there. If you have questions, feel free to email me at [jj149@aol.com](mailto:jj149@aol.com) or call me at 708-352-7115.**

**Items Being Collected:** School supplies such as tissues, paper towels, sanitary wipes. pocket folders, backpacks, pencils. markers, crayons, constructions paper, etc. White polo shirts in sizes 4-16. It is part of their school uniform and many of the families have trouble purchasing them. Keeping a supply of them available at the school would be helpful.

**Reading Materials:** Treasure Bay Books 60 of each title *Dinosaurs, About Bats, International Space Station, Space 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, When I Grow Up, What Would You Do, Well Mannered Monster*

Flash Cards 60 sets of each

Flash Cards by Scholastic

Target First Word Flashcards

Target Sight Words Flashcard

If you are interested in volunteering in the school, please contact me so that I can assist in setting this up and getting you connected with the principal. My hope is that come August I will be delivering many of the items to Thurgood Marshall School. I thank you in advance for your generosity.

**Julie Jeter, Foundation**

Those of you who did not attend our June luncheon missed a delightful event. Here are some of the highlights.



Members were greeted by VP Fran Pettersen and Program Committee member Phyllis Fatigato



A highlight of the event was the presentation of the \$2000 scholarship to Christy Arreci of Berwyn. She will be a senior at UIC in the fall, majoring in the teaching of English.

Pictured: Marjorie Sucansky, Area 3 Rep, Caryn Graham, Foundation Member at Large for Area 3, Christy, her parents, Vanessa and Rodolfo Arreci, Kathleen Stoch, WLSU member and one of the people who recommended Christy, and Fran Pettersen, WLSU Vice-president



Martina Mathisen entertained us by portraying the Six Wives of Henry VIII.





## Helping Educators: Past, Present, Future



This year the Area 3 \$2000 scholarship was awarded to Christy Arceci, who is a student at the University of Illinois, Chicago. The first half of the scholarship was presented to Christy at the June luncheon, pictured with Vice President Fran Pettersen, Area 3 Rep, Marjorie Sucansky, and Area 3 Foundation Member at Large, Caryn Graham. Christy and her parents, Vanessa and Rudolfo Arceci, were guests at the June luncheon.

In addition to helping future educators, IRTA also provides aid to retired educators who may have particular needs. In 2022 the Foundation assisted 11 people who were in need. A total of \$54,810. was distributed to these individuals. Currently the Foundation is helping 10 retirees at a monthly cost of \$4625. Please remember that these monies are there to assist any retired Illinois teacher (one does not have to be an IRTA member to apply).

Another aspect of the Foundation’s efforts focus on Grants to active teachers. This year there were 32 applications in Area 3. Caryn Graham and Marge Sucansky recommended the \$4000 allotted amount for Area 3 be divided among 6 of those worthy applicants. Final evaluation will be done in August, and the grants will be awarded in the fall. Watch the next *Direct Line* for information about the recipients.

Please note that the Foundation’s monies come entirely from donations, not dues. The primary fundraiser for the Foundation will be in the mail soon, so please be on the lookout. Last year the fundraiser generated \$228,938. Any contribution would be appreciated. **Julie Jeter, Foundation**



### Read Your Label

WLSU paid thru 2023    IRTA pd thru Deduct  
 Rose Petal  
 15 Hybrid Way  
 Flowerville, Illinois 60000

Check the label on your newsletter to see your dues status, or email/call Louise Sterett if you receive the newsletter via snail mail.

Note: Rose will need to send in her WLSU dues for 2024..

Her IRTA dues are paid through dues deduction. This means IRTA dues are deducted from her pension check monthly. She doesn’t send any dues or need to reapply annually. **However, payment of IRTA dues does not cover her WLSU dues.**

Please contact Louise Sterett with any questions. See the WLSU Contact Information Box.

## WLSU Contact Information

Vice President	Membership	Membership	Treasurer	Foundation
Fran Pettersen	Steve Yurek	Keith Bailey	Louise Sterett	Julie Jeter
708-302-2129	630-991-1123	630-926-0742	630-325-6470	708-370-3929
narfp@yahoo.com	mathgreat34@comcast.net	kmldbailey@ameritech.net	lasterett@yahoo.com	jj149@aol.com

**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>

**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.

## Mark Your Calendar

August 8	Executive board Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m.
August 17	Andy Warhol Exhibit	COD	
September 13	Membership—Ben Franklin	Hinsdale Community	10:00 a.m.
October 10	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m.
October 16-17	IRTA Biennial Convention	Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield	
December 1	Membership Luncheon	Crystal Sky	11:15 a.m.

May you have enough happiness to make you sweet,  
enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep  
you human, and enough hope to make you happy.

Do things for people not because of who they are, or what  
they do in return, but because of who you are.

**Bring school supplies for Adopt-a-School to the September event**

**Try going GREEN with your next newsletter.**

“Investing in the FUTURE of retired teachers”

DIRECT LINE

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