



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2022

## 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

### President's Message

#### Special Thanks to Special People!



I want to send special thanks to a group of WLSU members who have really worked to make a difference in our lives. For the past year and a half, the holders of our various databases: **Tom Szot, Vic Corder, Louise Sterett, Marge Sucansky and Steve Yurek** have worked tirelessly on a data merge project to bring all WLSU information into one central master database. They have discussed and tried many different approaches and products, spent time in meetings, and most recently, met with our new computer/Google docs expert, **Lyndsay Mynaugh**, to bring all our ideas and approaches together into one well-working whole.

I am happy to say the new master system is working very well. It is because of the care and commitment of this group. What used to take each member of the group considerable time to complete, now is accomplished in a matter of minutes. I am so grateful for this dramatic improvement to our operations as a local.

Bravo and applause to these dedicated members!

#### In other news:

Thanks to all members who joined us for the Cubs outing on June 17. A good time was had by all! And the Cubs organization was especially gracious and helpful with ticket entry, bus location, and seating.

Hope you all will consider joining us for our next event: Paint and Lunch on Tuesday, September 13. All supplies will be provided for you to create a fall-themed masterpiece with some basic instruction. Also a box lunch will be provided. Noon to 2pm at the Hinsdale Community House, 415 W. 8th Street, Hinsdale. Registration Form in this newsletter. This is for the first time painter or those of you who would like to improve your skills. Please join us!

Gratefully,

**Kate Singletary**

#### Things to Do in '22

**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. \$50.00 members, \$55 non members

**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.

**FIND YOUR INNER ARTIST**



**PAINT AND LUNCH  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022  
NOON - 2 PM  
HINSDALE COMMUNITY HOUSE  
415 WEST 8TH STREET  
HINSDALE IL 60521**

**JOIN US TO CREATE YOUR OWN MASTERPIECE WITH INSTRUCTORS FROM PINOT'S PALETTE.**

**ENJOY A GOURMET BOXED LUNCH WHILE PAINTING. ALL ART MATERIALS, YOUR CANVAS, AND LUNCH ARE INCLUDED IN THE TICKET PRICE.**

**COST: MEMBERS \$50. NON MEMBERS \$55**

**MAKE YOUR CHECK OUT TO WEST LAKE SHORE UNIT.**

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**# of MEMBER TICKETS** \_\_\_\_\_ **# NON MEMBER TICKETS** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**RETURN TO : FRAN PETTERSEN  
8613 THISTLEWOOD COURT, DARIEN IL 60561**

**QUESTIONS: CALL OR TEXT FRAN AT 708-302-2129**

**RESERVATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 1**  
All confirmations will be sent by email.

# WLSU Help Cubs bring home a win!



## JOIN US FOR A DAY AT WRIGLEY FIELD

On June 17, 2022, the WLSU program committee organized a day at Cubs Park. WLSU members and guests boarded a charter bus to the park to see the Cubs snap the Atlanta Braves win streak at 14 games. The following pictures are of the day's event.



The day began with Charles, the driver, helped load guests onto the bus.



Once loaded we were on our way to Wrigley Field!



We were dropped off at the entrance to the park



Here the group is lining up to be escorted into our seats.



And off to our seats we went: Section 230



Kate Singletary, WLSU Presidents, checks the seats that were assigned to the group.



46+ WLSU members and guest attended sat in row 23 & 24.



WLSU Members, Sam Urbain, Bob Hertel, Fran Pettersen and Kate Singletary enjoying the game.

***The group wishes to thank the WLSU program committee, Kate Singletary, Julie Jeter, Fran Pettersen and Marie Trankina for organizing this activity. The program committee would also like to invite members to view the web site and sign up for upcoming activities***



At the end of the game we were picked up at the main entrance for the smooth trip home.



## Membership Report



Since you are a current member of IRTA/WLSU, you see value in being part of an organization whose main purpose is protecting your pension. Your defined benefit pension is a valuable gem. Valuable gems are normally protected by the owners. Unfortunately, approximately two-thirds of TRS annuitants rely on politicians to protect their valuable asset. They don't see a purpose in spending a tiny amount of money protecting their pension. There is no insurance that can be purchased to protect your pension. Your pension can't be put into a safe like a valuable gem. Your only protection comes from activism and membership in the only organized group whose primary aim is to protect your pension, namely IRTA/WLSU.

In addition to your membership, activism is also needed. Activism means participating in some way to ensure that your pension continues in its current form far into your retired future. According to TRS, retirement lasts about 30 years. It's safe to assume that you'd like your pension to continue for as long as you live; consequently, it is important that you consider taking an active role by volunteering on your WLSU board, so we can continue to fight to protect your pension and health benefits. We have positions that are not covered due to a lack of volunteers. A few IRTA locals have shut down and dispersed because no members were willing to be on the local boards. Without volunteers, the entire IRTA/WLSU structure would probably collapse. State offices are filled by local members. For example, the IRTA Board of Directors is primarily made up of volunteers from the locals. Our former president, Marge Sucansky, represents your interests on that state board.

It is a fact of life that we all get older. That fountain of youth that Ponce DeLeon supposedly searched for in Florida centuries ago has still not been found. It's vital to have newly retired volunteers replace older board members to ensure that our pensions will be protected. Most roles on the WLSU Board require very little expenditure of time and some can be done from home. No one needs fear that he/she will be stuck in a position inundated with hours of work. Contact our President Kate Singletary by phone or email. See the WLSU Contact Information box. Contacting Kate is just an inquiry and not an obligation to serve.

Volunteering provides many benefits to both mental and physical health besides protecting your pension and the continuation of the IRTA/WLSU as a vibrant organization. Volunteering helps counteract the effects of stress, brain drain, boredom, anger, and anxiety. The social contact aspect and working with others can have a profound effect on your overall psychological well-being. It can provide a healthy boost of self-confidence, self-esteem, and satisfaction. We've all heard the phrase, "Use it or lose it." Volunteering keeps your brain active and gets you out of your comfort zone. You will build bonds and connections with people and avoid social isolation. We need your help. Email Kate and ask how you can help. Remember: Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless. Your help is priceless as is your membership.

This issue of your *Direct Line* kicks off the membership renewal season for 2023. Please look at your newsletter label to see if you owe WLSU dues. If there is a "22" on it, that 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—[lasterett@yahoo.com](mailto:lasterett@yahoo.com), 630-325-6470 or [jtszot@comcast.net](mailto:jtszot@comcast.net), 630-852-3138. 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. The WLSU Board does appreciate your continued membership.

We'd appreciate it even more, if you were to ask retired teacher friends if they are members of IRTA. It is simple to join online. Tell 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.' 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. WLSU thanks you in advance for your effort on behalf of all of us. **Tom Szot, Membership *emeritus***

**If you missed the Area 3 Conference, you may view it at [irtaonline.org](http://irtaonline.org). You may have to set up a new account since access has changed. Then look for the Video section. Lots of good information.**



## WLSU/IRTA WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS

Suzanne Scott Kathleen Motherway Mark Holder Lisa Groves Mary Riske  
Rita Perri Vicky Schorsch Julie Metz Lianne Musser Kevin McClean Joanne Clancy  
Heidi Wagreich Ann Kadela Jane Glick-Coleman Janet Hornung Jamie Emanuel-Bley  
Susan Strons Vita Pipes

### Read Your Label

WLSU paid thru: 2022                      IRTA pd thru: Deduct  
Rose Petal  
15 Hybrid Way  
Flowerfield, Illinois 60442

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

Note: Rose will need to send in her WLSU dues for 2023.

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— [lasterett@yahoo.com](mailto:lasterett@yahoo.com) or 630-325-6470.

### 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](http://irtaonline.org) to sign up.



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 Fundation

Claudia Murdock Betty Lou Bunert Charles Bolton

**Do you want to have IRTA and WLSU information at your fingertips? Add the IRTA and WLSU websites as icons to your phone's home screen or to your tablet. Here is how.**

#### Directions for Android

1. Launch Chrome for Android and open the website or web page you want to pin to your home screen.
2. Tap the menu button and tap Add to the home screen.
3. You will be able to enter a name for the shortcut (IRTA), and then Chrome will add it to your home screen.
4. The icon will appear on your home screen like any other app shortcut or widget, so you can drag it around and put it wherever you like.
5. Chrome for Android loads the website as a "web app" when you tap the icon, so it will get its own entry in the app switcher and won't have any browser interface getting in the way.

#### Directions for iPhone, iPad, & iPod Touch

1. Launch the Safari browser on Apple's IOS and navigate to the website or web page you want to add to your home screen.
2. Tap the Share button on the browser's toolbar—that's the rectangle with an arrow pointing upward. It's on the bar at the top of the screen on an iPad and on the bar at the bottom of the screen on an iPhone or iPod Touch.
3. Tap the Add to Home Screen icon in the Share menu.
4. You will be prompted to name the shortcut before tapping the Add button.
5. The shortcut can be dragged around and placed anywhere, including in app folders—just like a normal app icon.
6. When you tap the icon, it will load the website in a normal tab inside the Safari browser app.

**You can do this for [irtaonline.org](http://irtaonline.org) and with the WLSU website: [www.wlsu.weebly.com](http://www.wlsu.weebly.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](http://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—I RTAPAC candidate questionnaires will not be sent until the final week of July.

## **News From IRTA**



### ***Update on Teacher Health Insurance Security Fund Litigation***

Our lawsuit challenging the underfunding of the Teacher Health Insurance Security Fund is proceeding in the Circuit Court for Sangamon County. The defendants, who include the TRS Board of Trustees, the Director of the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, State Comptroller Susana Mendoza and State Treasurer Michael Frerichs, have answered our complaint, and they responded to our requests for discovery shortly before the Fourth of July holiday weekend. Our attorneys and expert witness will carefully analyze the data they have produced about the current fiscal status of the Fund. The answer and discovery responses have pointed to one key legal dispute in this case. The defendants acknowledge that “retired teachers have a constitutionally protected right to the benefits specified in sections 6.5 and 6.6 of the State Employees Group Insurance Act of 1971 (5 ILCS 275/6.5, 6.6),” but they disagree that retired teachers have a constitutionally protected right “to a particular program of benefits that CMS has established under that authority at any given time.” This appears to mean that the defendants believe you have a constitutionally protected right to participate in some type of health insurance program, but not to any particular level of benefits. We strongly disagree with that argument and will continue to advocate for the full extent of your constitutional rights in this litigation.

**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](http://irtaonline.org) by going to Foundation and clicking on Financial Assistance or by calling IRTA at 1-800-728-4782.

### **Foundation Scholarship: .**

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

### **2022 Excellence in Education Grants for Teachers**

The IRTA Foundation continues to work toward the present by offering \$36,000 in grant money to active educators. Grants range from \$50 to \$750. If you know actives, encourage them to apply for this grant next year. This year 17 applications were submitted in Area 3, and we were given \$3000 to meet the chosen projects. The Foundation Member at Large and Area 3 Rep selected 5 recipients to submit to IRTA. Final judging will be in August, and grant awards will be presented in the fall.

The secret of freedom lies in educating people, whereas the secret of tyranny is in keeping them ignorant.

Maximilien Robespierre



The Illinois Secretary of State's Office has changed its web address. The new address is [www.ilsos.gov](http://www.ilsos.gov)

Use the website to find out the latest info regarding renewing driver's licenses, state or real ID's, license plate stickers, and more. You may also make appointments at a local driver's license facility up to ten days ahead (locations and phone numbers are on the website,) or as a senior you may walk in and go to the head of the line. If you don't have access to a smart phone or computer, you can call 844-817-4649 for information.

Government departments such as Social Security and the IRS are again warning people that they and other official agencies will never call or email. If you receive a call supposedly from a government office, it most likely is a scam, especially if it's saying that you owe money. And a sure sign of a scam is if payment is asked for in gift card money. (Any request for payment for anything via gift cards is likely a scam.) Government departments or agencies will only initiate communication with you via postal mail.



Finally, an early, early reminder that if you are satisfied with your TRIP or TRAIL health insurance, you do not have to do anything to renew it for 2023. It seems that each year advertisements for other insurance plans arrive in the mail earlier and earlier and are confusing because many plans have similar wording and titles. **Again, if you are satisfied with your current plan, you do not have to do anything. It will renew automatically for 2023**

**Barbara Grabowski, FYI Committee**

### PROGRAM COMMITTEE

We are looking for WLSU members who are interested in joining the Program Committee. Committee members design programs and events that would be of interest to our members. There are usually four events in one year. This is the Fun Committee!

Contact Fran Pettersen at 708-302-2129(cell #) or [narfp@yahoo.com](mailto:narfp@yahoo.com) if you are interested in becoming a committee member. Looking forward to hearing from you. **Fran Pettersen, Vice-President**

WLSU Contact Information		Website: <a href="http://www.wlsu.weebly.com">www.wlsu.weebly.com</a>	
President	Membership	Treasurer	Foundation
Kate Singletary	Steve Yurek	Louise Sterett	Fran Pettersen
508-737-1336	630-991-1123	630-325-6470	630-985-7508
<a href="mailto:singletarykate@gmail.com">singletarykate@gmail.com</a>	<a href="mailto:mathgreat34@comcast.net">mathgreat34@comcast.net</a>	<a href="mailto:lasterett@yahoo.com">lasterett@yahoo.com</a>	<a href="mailto:narfp@yahoo.com">narfp@yahoo.com</a>

Censorship is the child of fear, the father of ignorance, and the weapon of tyrants. Laurie Hulse Anderson

**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](http://irtaonline.org).

Other helpful numbers:

**Teachers' Retirement System** 1-877-927-5877, email— [members@trsil.org](mailto: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.





**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.

You will make all kinds of mistakes: but as long as you are generous and true and also fierce, you cannot hurt the world or even seriously distress her. Winston Churchill

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

**DON'T FORGET TO VOTE THIS NOVEMBER!**

“Investing in the FUTURE of retired teachers”

DIRECT LINE

West Lake Shore Unit  
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