



April/May 2021
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
www.wlsu.weebly.com

President's Message

Try Something New With WLSU.....Volunteer!

In the past eighteen months WLSU has promoted our *Try Something New* endeavors to encourage all of our 1311 members to join us for a program, meeting, or event. Hopefully, 2021 will allow us to finally gather again in limited number, socially distanced. If you are fully vaccinated, we hope you will join us at one or more of the exciting activities we have planned.

In this issue you will find the invitation to sign up for **A Travel Lunch to Greece** on May 6. On June 22, WLSU presents a guided docent tour of the **Frida Kahlo: Timeless** exhibit at the Cleve Carney Museum of Art at College of DuPage. Ticket reservations are available now.

In September we are planning our own **Antiques Roadshow** at The Community House in Hinsdale.

In December we will hold a festive holiday luncheon at the William Tell/Holiday Inn in Countryside.

Try Something New is alive and well in 2021!

However, there is another aspect of our **Try Something New** effort that I would like you to consider this year—Volunteer to help WLSU. Being of service to your local organization is a rewarding activity and is important to the viability of our Unit. Lily Tomlin famously said, “I always wondered why somebody doesn’t do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody.” We are looking for 3 volunteers to step up and become a part of the newly restructured Membership Committee. WLSU is one of the largest locals in the IRTA state structure. We need help to manage and serve our 1311 members properly. After a task force study, your Executive Board decided to break membership tasks into 3 areas, Recordkeeping, Renewals, and Recruitment. We thought if we made the tasks smaller for each member of the committee, we would be able to recruit some of you into a leadership position, but also give you the benefit of working collaboratively with a small committee and the Executive Board. You need no special background or training. Our fabulous Membership Chairperson *emeritus*, Tom Szot, will train you well. And the rest of us will welcome your participation and assist you whenever you need it.

So **Try Something New With WLSU**—Join the new Membership Committee. Please contact me if you are interested in more information. Our great group of leaders at WLSU will welcome and help you immediately.

Kate Singletary

Taking a look at the WLSU web site: <http://wlsu.weebly.com>

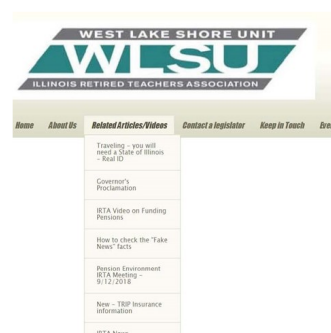
Part II

The last issue of the *Direct Line* introduced you to the Web Site and the tabs located on the banner bar below the WLSU logo. This issue of the DL will continue to review the tabs:

When you click on the WLSU web site link, you will initially see the opening page:



By clicking on the 'Related Article/Videos' tab, you will see 13 sub links that contain information related to the following: Real State ID: Gov's Proclamation; IRTA Funding Pensions; Check "Fake News"; IRTA Meeting; TRIP Info; IRTA News; Adopt a School; Understanding Fair Tax & Pensions; State Ins. Info; Be Careful Out There; Wealth Inequity; Confused about Acronyms



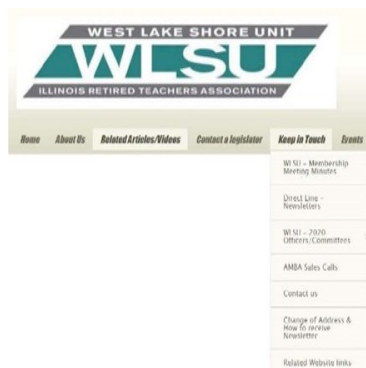
As these links are updated periodically, members should check back often for updates.

By clicking on the 'Contact a Legislator' tab, you will see 4 sub links that contain information related to the following: Write the Governor; Legislative Contacts; Find a Legislator; Voter Voice



Want to know your legislative contacts or want to write the Governor, follow the appropriate link.

By clicking on the 'Keep in Touch' tab, you will see 7 sub links that contain information related to the following: Membership Meeting Minutes; Past Issues of *Direct Line* Newsletters; WLSU Officers & Committees; AMBA Sales Call; Contact WLSU; Member Change of Address Form; Related Web Site Links



I would invite you to go to the WLSU link: <http://wlsu.weebly.com> and view all of the helpful information that is available to WLSU members. The next issue of the *Direct Line* will continue to investigate the other link tabs on the web site and the information located in each.



News from IRTA

The Legal Defense Fund contributions in FY20 were \$3,171, a decrease of \$2,126. The balance was \$153,412 at the end of FY20. The end of year total membership was 39,171, an increase of 487 members... During FY2020, IRTA added 1,800 new members.

During FY20 the General Assembly met on a limited basis due to the pandemic. The IRTA supported the full funding of both the pension system and Teachers Retirement Insurance Plan. Both were funded at their certified amounts. Andrew Bodewes, IRTA lobbyist, believes April and May will be busy months legislatively and IRTA should be vigilant.

Membership Report

Each Spring the Membership Committee gears up to recruit new retirees from our 39 WLSU school districts. If you know anyone who is retiring this year or who may have retired before school opened in the Fall due to Covid 19 fears, they are good candidates for membership. Even if the retiree is from a district outside of our West Cook area, we should recruit them. It is super simple to join online at the IRTA website, and the year of retirement is free. You may also forward the name and address of any prospective member to Louise Sterett or Tom Szot.



Do you ever wonder or question why you are a continuing IRTA/WLSU member? Is there some value to you in being a member? Check off the reasons that apply to you:

A Powerful Retirement Voice

Your IRTA and WLSU stood alone against Senate Bill 2404 that would have forced current teachers and retirees to choose a compounded 3% COLA or subsidized health care. The IRTA also took the lead against Senate Bill 1 that was declared unconstitutional by the Illinois Supreme Court in May 2015. This would have opened the Pension Protection Clause to changes that would have not been in your best interests.

Strength in Numbers

The IRTA has just under 40,000 members. Legislators see this as 40,000 reasons for protecting teacher rights and benefits. Retirees do vote.

Consumer Benefits

The IRTA offers group rate dental and vision insurance as well as multiple discounts on all types of goods, services, and activities. The list of benefits can be easily accessed on the IRTA website, irtaonline.org.

Lobbying and Political Action

The IRTA employs lobbyists who work to protect your interests in Springfield. The IRTA communicates with you via your email to alert you of relevant events in the state capital. Call-to-Action alerts notify you when to contact legislators about your retiree concerns. Beside these alerts, you receive updates regarding significant events in Springfield such as the Budget Address posting on February 17, 2021.

Opportunity to Share

As an IRTA member you promote a stronger sense of community through the IRTA Foundation. The Foundation provides grants to current teachers, financial support for teacher retirees in need, and scholarships to Illinois students majoring in education. WLSU also continues to sponsor "Adopt a School," where educational goods are provided to one "adopted" school each year. Unfortunately, the program was put on hold for one year due to the pandemic.

Communications

As a member you receive the quarterly issue of the IRTA's *Action* newsletter and the WLSU's *Direct Line*. In addition, if you have email, you get the IRTA alerts and WLSU Constant Contact updates.

Undoubtedly for retirees, pension and health insurance protection is key. However, as shown, this is only part of why you continue to be a member. We as your WLSU Board earnestly wish that you as members would go a little further and volunteer a little time by serving as a board member and/or helping us recruit new members. Your retiree organization cannot survive and thrive if only a few of us work for the good of the whole. St. Therese Lisieux who only lived to be 24 years old said, "The value of life does not depend upon the place we occupy. It depends upon the way we occupy that place."

Best of health in 2021 and thank you for being a member. **Tom Szot, Membership Emeritus**



WLSU/IRTA WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS

Gloria Weisensee Joanne Mniszewski



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.

Grace Jarasius Cathy Preston Susan Bonnevier Lois Malcak John Unterfranz

WLSU Contact Information		Website: www.wlsu.weebly.com	
President	Membership <i>emeritus</i>	Treasurer	Foundation
Kate Singletary	Tom Szot	Louise Sterett	Fran Pettersen
508-737-1336	630-852-3138	630-325-6470	630-985-7508
singletarykate@gmail.com	jtszot@comcast.net	lasterett@yahoo.com	narfp@sbcglobal.net



The IRTA Foundation is pleased to announce the 2020 winners of the Excellence in Education Active Teacher Grants. Of the 247 applications that were received, nineteen were from Area 3. Sixty-five Grants have been awarded for a total of \$36,489. Ten of those grants have been awarded to active teachers in Area 3.

Among the Area 3 winners are Alan Holtz, who teaches at Brooks Middle School in Bolingbrook, and Josephine Lewis, who is an educator at Jefferson Elementary

School in Berwyn. Alan plans on using his award money to fund a "Battle of the Book" competition, which will motivate reluctant readers. Josephine will use the grant money to purchase STEM kits for the school library. These kits will enable students to engage in critical thinking and problem solving and also foster creativity and teamwork.

The applications for the 2021 Excellence in Education Grants can be found on the IRTA website (irtaonline.org). Go to the Foundation link and click on Grants. The completed application must be submitted online by June 1, 2021. **Fran Pettersen, Foundation Chair**

A Message from Bob Lyons

TRS recently sent out a press release calling attention to the status of the fund at the end of 2020. Even though their fiscal year ends at the end of June, TRS still does a deep dive and counts all of their money in every financial instrument, including real estate and private equity, at the end of the calendar year. TRS starts 2021 with \$57.2 billion in the fund. That is the most money that TRS has ever had. They have a positive growth of 7.9% in their investments for the last six months of 2020. **Bob Lyons**

SPECIAL COVID MESSAGE:

WLSU encourages members who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to sign up for this luncheon. Full COVID precautions are in place at the restaurant: temperature checks, face-masks required, social distancing in place. Our limit is 50 members in the room we have reserved. If State of Illinois guidelines are expanded, we will open reservations to a larger number. Due to limited numbers, no guest reservations will be taken for the luncheon. A single plated entrée will be served.



WLSU SPRING LUNCHEON

A TRAVEL LUNCH TO GREECE

Join us on **Thursday, May 6**, at **Greek Islands in Lombard** from **11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** and enjoy a **plated Greek lunch** and listen to a **travelogue on Greece and the Islands**. A short business meeting will follow the program.

Cost is **\$25.00** per person. Due to limited seating because of social distancing, we are limited to 50 members. Please fill out the form below and return ASAP with your check to Marie Trankina.

WLSU May 2021 Luncheon: **A TRAVEL LUNCH TO GREECE**

Thursday, May 6, 2021, at **Greek Islands Restaurant, 300 E. 22nd Street, Lombard, Illinois**
Phone; 630-932-4545

-Return this form **or a piece of paper with the information** and a check for **\$25** to Marie Trankina, 400 W Butterfield Road, Apt. 465, Elmhurst, Illinois 60126. Phone 708-306-6747. Reservations must be received by **April 26, 2021**. No telephone reservations. Make checks payable to West Lake Shore Unit. Plated lunch includes soup, salad, chicken entrée, sides, dessert, coffee, tea, soft drinks. Please alert Marie to any dietary restrictions. No extra meals may be ordered.

Member Name (s)

Member email address and phone number _____

Confirmation of receipt of your reservation will be done by email only.



It's Not a Good Idea to Post Your COVID-19 Vaccination Card!

So, you have received your vaccination and are relieved and anxious to share the news with your family and friends. AARP and the Federal Trade Commission (in recent online articles cited below) advise that it's not a good idea to post a photo of your vaccination on social media. As we hear so often, this too may contribute to identity theft and scams. The card contains valuable information such as your full name and complete date of birth. The FTC article says that your identity information may be compared to a puzzle. Identity thieves gather pieces of information about you, and when they have it all, then you may become a target. Even where you received your vaccination needs to remain private as the AARP article says that scammers are producing and selling fake vaccination cards.

Here's what is advised as safe ways to share your good news:

1. Post a picture of your arm with the band aid over your injection site.
2. Or post a photo of the white or orange vaccine stickers that are available:
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/sticker-covid-19-vaccinate-white.pdf
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/sticker-covid-19-vaccinate-orange.pdf
3. Or use one of the new vaccine status frames for your Facebook profile photo.
www.facebook.com/profilepicframes

Good for you! Stay safe!

Sources:

Skiba, Katherine. "Don't Flaunt Your COVID-19 Vaccine Card on Facebook." *AARP* (<http://aarp.org>), February 2, 2021. Gressin, Seena. "Social Media Is No Place for COVID-19 Vaccination Cards." Federal Trade Commission (consumer.ftc.gov) February 5, 2021.

Barbara Grabowski, FYI Committee

Mark Your Calendars

Thursday, May 6: Spring Luncheon: Greek Islands	11 a.m.	Greek Islands, Lombard
Tuesday, June 15: Area Conference		ZOOM
Tuesday, June 8,: Exec Bd. Mtg.	10 a.m.	TBA
Tuesday, June 22: Frida Kahlo Exhibit Trip	11 a.m.	College of DuPage
Tuesday, August 3: Exc Bd. Mtg	10 a.m..	TBA
Tuesday, September 14: Membership Mtg: Antiques Road Shoow	10 a.m.	Hinsdale Community House
Tuesday, October 12: Exec Bd. Mtg	10 a.m.	TBA
Mon/Tues, October 18, 19: IRTA Convention		Springfield Crowne Plaza
Friday, December 3: Holiday Luncheon	11 a.m.	Holiday Inn/Countryside

Details to follow

"I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished...The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." Franklin D. Roosevelt.

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.

**TICKET SALES RESUME NOW!
ONLY 60 TICKETS LEFT! RESERVE TODAY!**

WLSU presents: FRIDA KAHLO: *Timeless*

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

ADMISSION AND GUIDED TOUR



TICKETS PREVIOUSLY SOLD FOR THIS EVENT WILL BE HONORED.

EMAIL CONFIRMATIONS WILL BE SENT TO ALL TICKET HOLDERS.

COST: \$21.00 for ADMISSION AND GUIDED TOUR

**LOCATION: CLIVE CARNEY MUSEUM OF ART, COLLEGE OF DU-
PAGE, 425 FAWELL BLVD., GLEN ELLYN, IL 60137**

**TIME: TOUR TIMES ARE ASSIGNED ON YOUR EMAIL CONFIRMA-
TION FROM 11:00AM-12:30PM.**

DATE: TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE EXHIBIT AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS, PLEASE GO TO:

theccma.org

FRIDA KAHLO RESERVATION FORM

NAME(S) _____

HOW MANY TICKETS @\$21.00 EACH? _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: WEST LAKE SHORE—IRTA and send to:

Kate Singletary/422 Commons Circle/Clarendon Hills, IL 60514

PLEASE CALL KATE AT 508-737-1336 WITH QUESTIONS



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.

We must especially beware of that small group of selfish men who would clip the wings of the American Eagle in order to feather their own nests. **Franklin D. Roosevelt**

Try going GREEN with your next newsletter.

“Investing in the FUTURE of retired teachers”

DIRECT LINE

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