

Direct Line

Newsletter of West Lake Shore Unit, Illinois Retired Teacher's Association

WLSU and IRTA...Your Voice in Springfield

www.wlsu.weebly.com

March 14 Membership Meeting

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On January 2, Northern Illinois Jobs With Justice held a pension forum at Aurora East High School. Speakers included John Laesch of Jobs..., State Representative Linda Chapa LaVia, Maria Owens, Fred Klonsky, Dr. V. Gaddis, Dr. R. Baiman, Dr. B. Barclay, Dr. Jean Pierce, and Representative Elaine Nekritz.

The panel made a watertight case for the problem being a revenue problem rather than a benefits problem. You can view their data in power points and video of the forum on www.nijwj.org in "Media" menu item. Then scroll to "Other Media" and look for "power points and video." You can also find a summary of the event with commentary by Fred Klonsky on his blog—just Google him. All of this information is worth reading because it provides talking points for your meetings with legislators.

Representative Chapa LaVia, though she is a sponsor of HB6258, seemed amenable to investigating progressive income tax, closing tax loopholes, and avoiding the cost shift. I don't know if it was a case of "good cop/bad cop because Representative Nekritz did not recognize the points made.

Unfortunately, Representative Nekritz seems to have turned a deaf ear to all the facts because she has already made up her mind. She mentioned that **any** legislation will have to go to the courts, so in my mind, implying that she knows it is unconstitutional, but feels the courts may uphold it because they rely on the legislature in situations regarding law.

I didn't see any press there, so the facts will again elude the public. That is why we have to keep our voices and faces in front of the legislators.

Rally in Springfield

January 3 and 4 We Are One held a pension rally in Springfield. At least 3000 people attended on January 3 and 4. Speakers from Illinois AFL-CIO, IFT, IEA, Illinois Police Benevolent and Protective Association AFSCME, Illinois Nurses Association, and SEIU encouraged the crowd in the rotunda to make our voices heard to legislators. Some legislators watched from the rail.

Again no press coverage. What happened to the Fourth Estate which Edmund Burke felt was more important than all the others? Where is balanced journalism? If we cannot count on the media to get our message across, it is vital that we do so ourselves to our friends, neighbors, family, and legislators. See our website: www.wlsu.weebly.com for pictures. Also, check the website for contact information for key legislators or call or email me at sucansky@comcast.net.

Nekritz and Biss have promised to bring up the pension issue and their ill-conceived proposal again in the new legislature and in the spring session. The battle has been won for a while, but the war is far from over.

Many thanks to Glen Brown, John Dillon, and Fred Klonsky for keeping board members and others informed in almost a minute to minute fashion about the events of the lame duck session. These three warriors have been fighting every battle with logic and reason. Check out their blogs for more information—just Google each man, and you will be directed to their well-thought out, moral, ethical, and just views of our plight.

If you live outside of Illinois, you can still contact:

Michael Madigan at 773-581-8000, 217-782-5350.mmadigan@hds.ilga.gov

Governor Quinn at 217-782-0244, Pat.quinn@illinois.gov

Tom Cross at 217-782-1331, 815-254-0000 tom@tomcross.com

The value of life does not depend upon the place we occupy. It depends upon the way we occupy that place. St. Therese of Lisieux

Marge Sucansky, President

Events

Mark Your Calendar

March 14	Membership Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m
March 19	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
April 18	Area 3 Conference	Bradley, Illinois	
May 2	Membership Luncheon	Willowbrook Holiday Inn	11:15 a.m.
May 14	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
June	Bus Trip		9:00 a.m.
August 6	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
September 12	Membership Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m.
September	Bus Trip		9:00 a.m.
October 17	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
October 21-22	IRTA Convention	Springfield—Abraham Lincoln Hotel	
December 6	Membership Luncheon	Willowbrook Holiday Inn	11:15 a.m.

March 14 Membership Meeting

Plan to attend the meeting to be held at Plymouth Place, Dole Hall, at 10:00. Our speaker will be a doctor who will present information about pain management.

Legislator Visit Committee

The Legislative Committee has created a sub-committee of interested members who would like to get trained to visit legislators. Our goal is to build a network of relationships with legislators as their constituents who are willing to offer our 1000's of collective years of experience in the field of education. We would like to have a rational dialogue with legislators, especially the new unjaded ones, to present the facts and contradict all the propaganda that has been spread about pensions and the unfunded liability. Eventually, we hope they would listen to our ideas about such things as charter schools and high stakes testing. Kate Singletary, a new addition to the Legislative Committee, will be conducting training for anyone interested in being on the Visiting Teams. Our first training was on January 23, but more will follow. If you are interested, please contact me at sucansky@comcast.net.

WLSU Contact Information

President	Membership	Membership	Treasurer	Foundation
Marjorie Sucansky	Tom Szot	Darlene McNamara	Louise Sterett	Frances Pettersen
630-985-2620	630-852-3138	773-429-1779	630-325-6470	708-246-2128
website: www.wlsu.weebly.com				

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Try as they may, the legislators have not been able to bring down the ax yet. The Illinois Legislature did not pass an unconstitutional bill in the guise of “pension reform”. The Governor who said he was placed on earth to solve this pension problem failed to get a bill to sign during the lame duck session. “Shared sacrifice” in Illinois is a meaningless phrase to be used as the politicians see fit. They want only public employee/teacher sacrifice. Also, don’t be fooled by those who say that teacher representative groups such as the IRTA, IEA and the IFT were consulted along the way. This is far from the truth. The IRTA and We Are One Illinois explain that the pension problem is a revenue, not a benefits, problem; however legislators did not once consider revenue ideas as part of the pension fix. In addition, they thwart ways to earn more revenue. Consider that SB 282 did not even get out of committee to the House floor. The bill, if passed, would have identified corporations that pay no Illinois taxes. Leaders like Senator Cullerton and Representative Currie stated they did not know which corporations did not pay taxes. They still won’t know.

It is incumbent on us all to stay vigilant. We are already gearing up for the next battle during the spring session. Continue to let legislators know we are not happy with our appointed role as scapegoats for all of Illinois’ fiscal problems, and we want them to negotiate with our teacher groups. You can count on WLSU and the IRTA to keep you informed.

Thanks should go to all members who helped by making calls, going to Springfield, sending emails, visiting legislators and mailing letters. The strength of an organization is not only in its number but also in how many members can be counted on to contribute in times of crisis. Plato many years ago made a poignant point in this regard. He said, “One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferior.” Inferior in this case being those legislators who have closed minds and would not negotiate with teacher groups or those who are directed by wealthy interests who would benefit by a bill that would hurt public employees.

The current membership of the IRTA is over 34,500 members and WLSU has currently 1115 local members. Since we are in the new year, our treasurer has been collecting dues for 2013. A number of our members have not renewed yet. Please check your label to see your dues status. Members who receive the newsletter online can contact Tom Szot, Darlene Mc Namara or Louise Sterett for an update. See the contact information box in this issue which will be the last for anyone who has not paid 2013 WLSU dues.

If you owe dues you may pay by sending a single check made out to IRTA/WLSU. WLSU dues are \$12 annual, \$30 for 3 years, \$45 for 5 years or \$125 for life. IRTA dues are \$35 annual, \$150 for 5 years or \$400 for life. Most IRTA members choose to pay via dues deduction. It is the easiest and best way to keep your membership current. You don’t miss the money, and it saves the membership committee time and postage not having to bill you annually. The small sum of \$2 is taken monthly from your TRS pension check. If you wish to pay in this manner, use the blank application in this newsletter. Write “RENEWAL” on the top. All dues are mailed to Louise Sterett, WLSU Treasurer, at 770 57th St., #2, Clarendon Hills, IL 60514.

Please help us stay strong by remaining a member and recruiting others. Again this year the IRTA is offering a full year free membership to all non-members. To qualify for this offer, one must be a non-member, send in an application with the WLSU unit name on it and sign up for Dues Deduct. When this is done, the new member will have a free membership for the rest of 2013. In January 2014, the IRTA will begin deducting \$2.00 from the new member’s pension check. Please pass this information onto your non-member friends.

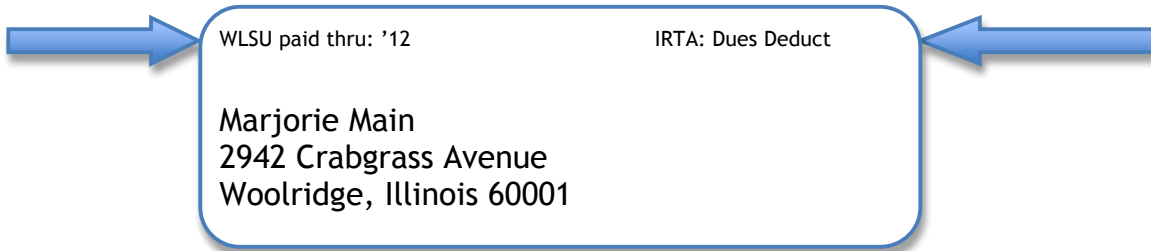
Finally, we should remember what the great Yankee catcher, Yogi Berra, said, “It ain’t over till it’s over”. We have a lot of fight left in us. Our pensions are our lifeline to economic stability. We won’t give in but neither

will the opposition. We will fight them again in the spring session. Tom Cross, the Republican Minority Leader, recognized our strength during the lame duck session when he said, “These have never been easy votes. The opposition is incredibly strong.” We should all be proud of our effort, and let’s stay “incredibly” strong.

Tom Szot & Darlene Mc Namara, WLSU Membership Chairs

Read Your Label

Can’t remember whether you have paid your 2013 dues? Check the label on your newsletter or on any other correspondence from WLSU. Your dues status is indicated:



Note: Marjorie needs to send in her dues for WLSU 2013.

Her IRTA dues are paid through dues deduction. If your label reads “deduct,” that means your IRTA dues are deducted from your pension check, and you don’t have to worry about payment.

If at any time you have questions regarding your dues, please feel free to call Louise Sterett at 630-325-6470, Tom Szot at 630-852-3138, or Darlene McNamara at 773-429-1779.

IRTA Establishes Legal Defense Fund

To be prepared in the event that unconstitutional legislation is passed, IRTA is asking members to contribute a Legal Defense Fund. You can find information about how to contribute at www.irtaonline.org. on the Home Page. Here is the address for sending donations to the Legal Defense Fund: IRTA, 620 N. Walnut St., Springfield, IL 62702. *Please write "Legal Defense Fund" on the check memo line.*

Register for VoterVoice

VoterVoice is a vital tool; however, Jim Bachman said sometimes fewer than half our members respond when all they have to do is push “submit.” Get excited about our organization! Let’s sell ourselves. We represent retired teachers and educators. As in the lame duck session, time is of the essence, and VoterVoice allows you to contact legislators in a timely fashion.

For quick access to your legislator and to receive CALL TO ACTION notifications:

1. Go to www.irtaonline.org
2. Go to “Member Login”
3. Select “VoterVoice”
4. Choose “Please click here to go to VoterVoice”
5. Create a profile if you have not already done so to allow the program to identify your legislators.

After your initial login, you will only have to put in your email address to log on once you are in VoterVoice. Then you may respond with a Call to Action prewritten message or write your own at any time. If you have difficulty, call Tricia at 1-800-660-3326. She will be happy to help you register, or send me your name, and I will get you registered. Marge Sucansky – sucansky@comcast.net

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. The number is 800-728-4782



IRTA State & Local Unit Membership Form

620 North Walnut Street • Springfield, IL 62702 • 1-800-728-4782
e-mail: irta@irtaonline.org • webpage: www.irtaonline.org

State Dues

- Dues Deduct** - \$24 a year (see left side of form)
- Annual - \$35
- 5 Years - \$150
- Life - \$400
- Membership Free for the Calendar Year of Retirement

State Associate Dues (non-certified)

- Annual - \$25
- Life - \$125

Local Unit Dues

- First Year Free

Dues Deduct – I hereby authorize the Teachers’ Retirement System to deduct my IRTA dues in monthly installments at an initial rate of \$2.00 or as subsequently established by the Delegate Assembly.

Association Dues are Not Tax Deductible

(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
PHONE ()	E-MAIL	UNIT	West Lake Shore	SCHOOL DISTRICT
				RETIRED FROM

Please mail to IRTA.

West Lake Shore Unit Direct Line Newsletter

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Direct Line mailers: Trudy O’Reilly
Rosemary Pietrzak

DIRECT LINE

“Investing in the FUTURE of retired teachers”

March 14 Membership Meeting—speaker is

