



February-March 2014

Direct Line

Newsletter of West Lake Shore Unit, Illinois Retired Teachers Association

WLSU and IRTA...Your Voice in Springfield

www.wlsu.weebly.com

March Membership Meeting—March 12, Plymouth Place

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As you know, SB1 passed this December, despite Herculean efforts by WLSU/IRTA members to inform legislators about the facts with regard to Illinois' REVENUE problem. Many of us were disappointed by the votes of legislators who we thought would vote NO because of the constitutionality issue and because they recognized that Illinois' problems did not stem from the pensions of public workers but rather from the mismanagement of the legislators throughout the years and from Illinois' regressive income tax. For a list of those legislators who voted YES check out the WLSU website and remember them when election time rolls around.

The fight for constitutionality and justice continues now in the courts. There is speculation that judges have been omitted from the consequences of the bill to make them more amenable to voting in favor of its constitutionality. There is also evidence that many of the judges have received funds from the Democratic Party which is governed by Michael Madigan who claimed responsibility for the passage of the bill. We can only hope that the judges follow moral and ethical values, constitutionality issues, and the knowledge that once the Constitution is breached, their benefits will be on the chopping block along with additional theft from those of other public workers.

No one negotiated for retirees and no "consideration" has been offered for the slashing of our COLA. Active workers have also been severely hurt with no real "consideration." It is clear that the Constitution has been nullified with regard to pensions. IRTA's former president, Gary Elmen, has vowed that "we will sell our shoes" to finance a court battle, and IRTA was first to file suit. Please continue to give what you can to the legal defense fund to save what you have earned, paid for, and been promised.

Now that the election period for the new state insurance plan is over, I want to thank all phone tree callers and other members who took on the responsibility of informing those WLSU members who had been unaware of the changes planned for their health care and that they would have to make an election or be without. Many of you went above and beyond to help those members who would otherwise have been left with no insurance when they need it the most. Bob Lyons has emailed that all but seven retirees that need to make an election for their health care insurance have done so, and TRS is still trying to reach those seven. "Over 41,000 elections were received and just under 2000 annuitants did not return their form." TRS is calling them to confirm their final choice. "For those of you that have made a choice that will result in a different amount being taken from your pension check, you will see the difference show up in your bank account on March 3, 2014."

Thanks to all of you who have emailed or called me about our efforts on your behalf. We all need to continue the fight for rule of law.

Continue to contact your legislators with your feelings about the REVENUE and health care problems. Check out our website for contact lists.

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

Jim Durkin 217-782-0494, 708-246-1104, repdurkin@hotmail.com

Marge Sucansky, President

Membership Report

The pension theft bill, Illinois Senate Bill 1, passed in early December by the barest majority. It was good to see that a number of legislators knew that a vote against the bill was the correct choice. However, it still passed, and subsequently the IRTA filed a lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court on December 27th challenging the constitutionality of SB1. Since lawsuits are expensive, the IRTA is asking all who will suffer financially from this law to contribute to the IRTA's Legal Defense Fund. Send a check for what you can afford to the IRTA at 620 N. Walnut St., Springfield, IL, 62702-9980. Make the check out to the IRTA and put 'Legal Defense Fund' on the memo line. Go to irtaonline.org to follow the suit as it evolves. Also, when seeking pertinent information, bloggers Glen Brown, John Dillon and Fred Klonsky, all retired teachers, do a great job of keeping retirees informed on pension issues. Simply Google the name to be directed to the blog.

The writing on the wall did indicate that at some time a pension bill would pass. This should not have been a surprise. The real surprise is the one-sided nature of the new law. There is no shared sacrifice. Public employees alone have been made to pay for the years of mismanagement and theft by various legislators and governors. Even the Chicago Sun-Times in an editorial stated, "The bill kicks ordinary working people--secretaries, clerks, teachers and the like--in the teeth. Much of the bill's \$160 billion in savings comes from reducing the cost-of-living increases to their pensions and pushing back their retirement age." Nevertheless, according to Governor Pat Quinn, the passage of the bill means "The people of Illinois have won." Apparently the hundreds of thousands of public employees and retirees are not included in the Governor's state population.

Thanks to all members who have fought this battle for nearly four years through their calls, visits, letters, and emails to legislators and the Governor. The battle is far from over, but it enters a different phase. You can still do your part by contributing to the IRTA Legal Defense Fund, staying informed on the issues, remaining a member of the IRTA and WLSU, and recruiting new members. Unfortunately, a number of our current members have not renewed their membership for 2014. Please check your label to see your dues status or contact membership or the treasurer. See the WLSU Contact Information box contained in this issue. An email renewal reminder was also sent in late January to those owing dues. For those who do not renew, this will be your last issue of the newsletter.

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 \$40 annual, \$175 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 \$2.50 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 be reminded that payment of your IRTA dues does not pay for your WLSU dues. WLSU must collect its own dues.

Finally, take heart. Winter is more than half over, right is on our side, and we will prevail. Like Yogi Berra said, “It ain’t over till it’s over.”

Tom Szot & Darlene Mc Namara, WLSU Membership Chairs

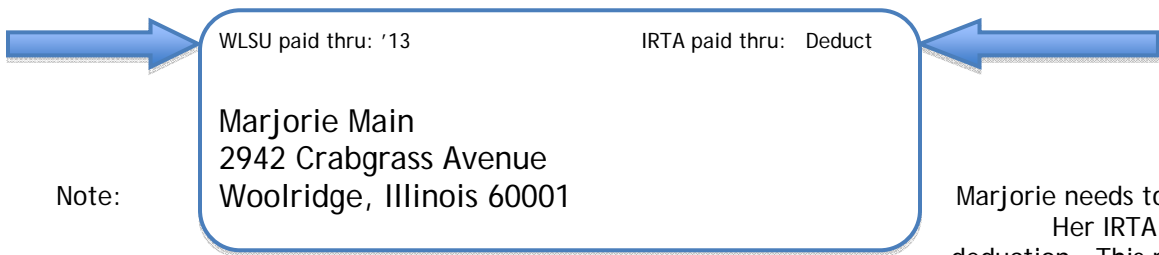
March Membership Meeting

Interested in finding out all about your ancestors—maybe there is someone famous in your family. Plan to attend the March 12, membership meeting, 10 a.m., at Plymouth Place. Our speaker will be Jennifer Holik, genealogist, military historian, and author in the Chicago area. Through her business, Generations, she uses her love of history and 20+ years of research and writing experience to assist people in researching their family histories. Using storytelling, she captivates audiences with tales of war, life, love, and loss.

Her topic March 12 will be “Finishing the Story.” Tracing the life of World War I or II ancestors can be difficult, and everyone thinks all the service records which were kept in St. Louis were burned in the 70’s. There are, however, numerous resources available to tell the stories of one’s ancestors who lived and died in the war. Through three stories of heroes who died in service, learn how to begin tracing and writing the story of your military ancestors.

Read Your Label

Can’t remember the status of your membership 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 2014. Her IRTA dues are paid through dues deduction. This means her IRTA dues are

deducted from her pension check monthly. She doesn’t send any dues or need to reapply annually.

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

Mark Your Calendar 2014

January 21	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
March 12	Membership Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m.
March 19	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
May 1	Membership Luncheon	Willowbrook Holiday Inn	11:15 a.m.
May 13	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
May	Area 3 Conference	Bradley, Illinois	
June	Bus Trip		9:00 a.m.
August 5	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
September 9	Membership Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m.
September	Bus Trip		9:00 a.m.
October	Possible legislative forum	Plymouth Place	
October 15	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
December 5	Membership Luncheon	Willowbrook Holiday Inn	11:15 a.m.

Bill Karlblom Resigns

Bill Karlblom's term of service as Region 4 member of the Informational Services Committee will be ending this year. The committee has been reinventing itself in line with modern technology which provides a faster way of transmitting important information to IRTA members. The number of members on the committee has been reduced from 18 to 6, as determined by a vote at the Delegate assembly in October. This means that the committee will no longer have a member representing each of the 18 regions, but rather one representative from each of the six areas of the state. We thank Bill for his dedication to providing West Lake Shore with the most recent changes coming out of the committee for the last three years.

In Memoriam

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

Malcolm Anderson	Larry Gervais	Carol Mach	William Rahn	Charlotte Schwartz
Russell Mueller	Donald Lund	Christine Polito	Edwin Lyons	
	Barbara Angarola	Mildred DeVilbiss		

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 will listen to our ideas about such things as charter schools and high stakes testing. Kate Singletary, of the Legislative Committee, will be conducting training for anyone interested in being on the Visiting Teams. Our latest training was on July 19, 2013, but more will follow. In light of the passage of SB1 we will have to regroup and strategize, so all existing teams will be meeting as well. 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 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

December Luncheon

December 6, 2013, the winter luncheon hosted Representative LaShawn Ford, who voted NO on SB1, and Representative Chris Welch, who voted YES. Both men explained their reasoning with regard to their votes.



Representative Ford, Marjorie Sucansky, Kate Singletary, Al Popowits, Chris Welch



Mary Richie and Representative Ford

Jo McCann and Margaret Gorman with
Representative Ford

Officers Elected

At the December luncheon
the following officers were
elected:

President: Marjorie Sucansky
Treasurer: Louise Sterett
Recording Secretary: Judy Mengel



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 - \$30 a year**
(see left side of form)
- Annual - \$40
- 5 Years - \$175
- 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 \$2.50 or as subsequently established by the Delegate Assembly.

Association Dues are Not Tax Deductible

(Signature required for Dues Deduction)

Social Security # _____

Please print or use your return address label.

(Only required for Dues Deduction)

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.



West Lake Shore Unit

Direct Line Newsletter

Marjorie Sucansky, President
 2942 Crabtree Avenue
 Woodridge, Illinois 60517

Direct Line mailers: Trudy O'Reilly
 Rosemary Pietrzak

DIRECT LINE

"Investing in the FUTURE of retired teachers"

March 12 Membership Meeting at Plymouth Place—10 a.m. "Finishing the Story"

