



February-March 2015  
**Direct Line**

Newsletter of West Lake Shore Unit, Illinois Retired Teachers Association

WLSU and IRTA...Your Voice in Springfield

[www.wlsu.weebly.com](http://www.wlsu.weebly.com)

### March 11 Membership Meeting

#### President's Message

Happy 2015 to you all. I hope your New Year has begun well and will continue to be happy, healthy, and prosperous. This is a big year for IRTA/ WLSU. We will be celebrating our 60<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, respectively. The board is planning some projects to commemorate these events—more to follow. This year is, also, a convention year, so mark your calendars for October 26-27 when we will be seeking delegates for the event in Springfield. We are usually allowed about 30 delegates, and welcome members to participate.

You might notice that this year we will be having three member luncheons and one non-luncheon membership meeting, and we are investigating new venues. We were pleasantly surprised at our December luncheon at Ashton Place which was able to accommodate us on short notice after Willowbrook Inn was unable to meet its obligation to us.

With regard to SB1, we are still in a wait and see mode. Judge Belz deemed it unconstitutional, and it moved on to the Illinois Supreme Court. Lisa Madigan, Attorney General, has asked for an expedited hearing of the bill and was granted such. That means that our attorneys will have less time to study the state's arguments, with oral arguments scheduled for the March 2015 term of the court.

In the meantime, the temporary tax has expired, leaving Illinois with a \$2.2 billion deficit in the final six months of the fiscal year's budget unless new revenue is found and agreed upon by both chambers and Governor Rauner. In next year's budget there will be a shortfall of \$4.1 billion as a result of the reduced revenue. Some legislators have sent me surveys, asking where to make cuts. If you get such surveys, please respond to them. Governor Rauner must present his budget by February 18.

As always, continue to keep in touch with your legislators as there were several issues unresolved at the end of the veto session among them the minimum wage increase and the graduated income tax. If you have questions about contact information for your legislators, please don't hesitate to contact me via email or phone. Contact information for board members is in this edition of *Direct Line*. **Marge Sucansky**

**IRTA HOTLINE--For the latest news about pensions, health care, or other vital information, check the IRTA Legislative Hotline at 1-800-660-3326. This site is especially beneficial to those of you who do not have access to the internet and do not receive Voter Voice calls to action. During times of crisis, call the Hotline to keep abreast of events. WLSU will do our best to keep you up to date concerning events, but don't hesitate to check out the Hotline as well.**

## Membership Report

We are proud members of the IRTA and our local unit, WLSU. Why? It is always satisfying to stand up for a principle that is right. Our TRS pensions are a contract entered into at hiring. Political, corporate, and misguided forces seek to change that contract without our agreement. They fail to understand a basic tenet of contract law. It is that one party can't unilaterally nullify or change the conditions of a contract without the agreement of all other parties to that contract. The IRTA was the first group to file in court against SB 1. This law would limit drastically your COLA. It would hurt active teachers even more. The IRTA also stood alone when the We Are One Coalition negotiated, without our consent, SB 2404. We would have been forced to choose between our COLA or our health care coverage. No matter how the Illinois Supreme Court rules this year on SB 1, the attacks on our pension rights will continue. Please continue to stand with the IRTA and WLSU as they work to protect what is contractually and constitutionally yours. According to our adversary Eden Martin, past president of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, in regard to pension reform, "[This is] not about the law at all, it's about the politics and arm-wrestling over money." Your help is important in combating thinking like this.

Last October the membership committee began our annual IRTA-WLSU renewal campaign for 2015. Typically, more than one-third of our WLSU members need to renew. Are you one of them? You should have received a renewal reminder. If you are unsure, check the address label on your newsletter. Your dues status is indicated there. For those who fail to renew, this will be your last newsletter, and all other communication from our organization will cease in March, 2015. Renewing your membership will guarantee the continuation of these benefits and services:

### IRTA-WLSU Membership Provides:

- Legislative representation, advocacy, and information for protection of your TRS benefits.
- Member Benefits (discounted insurance like vision, dental and much more).
- Quarterly Newsletters from both IRTA and WLSU.
- Organized system to inform members, provide leadership, and encourage retirees to function as a bloc of motivated voters.
- A variety of membership functions to encourage communication and socialization.
- Free one-year membership for the remainder of the calendar year for new members who use dues deduct.

Since IRTA-WLSU works to safeguard your pension and healthcare benefits, your continued membership is vital to our success. Our strength is in our numbers. In addition to renewals we also need to focus on recruiting new members to join our ranks. Any Illinois retired teacher, spouse, relative or friend, is eligible.

### One-Bring-One Membership Drive!!!

The IRTA has initiated a membership drive which will end on December 31, 2015—our goal is to have 40,000+ members!

It's an easy process: each member needs to bring a new member into IRTA. IRTA currently has over 36,000 members. If we (every member) each brought ONE new member to join, we could have 70,000 members (wow!). Our goal is definitely attainable.

Current members can use the list of benefits above when talking with prospective members. This is NOT a staff/officer activity...it is a membership activity...so let's all join together and ONE-BRING-ONE! Have you found your ONE yet?

To support this initiative WLSU is offering a rebate on local activities when you bring in a new member to any WLSU event.

Finally, take heart. Winter is more than half over, right is on our side and we will prevail, but don't think you can sit this one out. Ponder the words of comedian George Carlin, "The real reason that we can't have the Ten Commandments in a courthouse: You cannot post 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' and 'Thou shalt not lie' in a building full of lawyers, judges, and politicians. It creates a hostile work environment."

**Darlene Mc Namara & Tom Szot, WLSU Membership Chair**

### Read Your Label

Can't remember whether you have paid your 2015 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 2015. 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 Darlene McNamara 773-429-1779, Louise Sterett at 630-325-6470 or Tom Szot at 630-852-3138.

<b>WLSU Contact Information</b>				
<b>President</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Foundation</b>
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
<a href="mailto:sucansky@comcast.net">sucansky@comcast.net</a>	<a href="mailto:jtszot@comcast.net">jtszot@comcast.net</a>	<a href="mailto:darcarmac@aol.com">darcarmac@aol.com</a>	<a href="mailto:Lsterett@joimail.com">Lsterett@joimail.com</a>	<a href="mailto:narfp@sbcglobal.net">narfp@sbcglobal.net</a>
Website: <a href="http://www.wlsu.weebly.com">www.wlsu.weebly.com</a>				

### Two Scam and Safety Warnings

During the last several weeks there have been two news items from the suburbs that our members, as well as everyone, need to be reminded of. A number of suburbanites have received calls saying that they owe money to the IRS, and in order to avoid immediate legal action they need to follow instructions to authorize payment over the phone. Of course, this is a scam as the IRS, and all reputable agencies, will not ask for any payment via a phone call. The scammers are hoping that with income tax season approaching just the mention of IRS will upset someone enough that the ends up revealing personal financial information that the scammers can then take advantage of.

Also, there have been a number of wallets snatched from purses left open in shopping carts, especially in grocery stores. The snatch happens so quickly that often the shopper doesn't realize anything has happened until reaching the checkout counter. Always remember to close your purse once you've taken out your list, and never place a purse in the child seat of the shopping cart.

Both of these are common sense warnings, but these scams and thefts have occurred enough and resulted in enough calls to suburban police departments that they subsequently ended up as TV news items. Always pay attention to your purse or wallet when you are out in public. **Barbara Grabowski—FYI Committee**

### Reminder to Members

If you change your contact information, be sure to let us know.

### 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

### Dear Fellow Retirees,

There was recently an article in the *Chicago Tribune* Business section that you should read. It concerns the State's EDGE (Economic Development for a Growing Economy) program. It has had and continues to have an impact on our pensions.

In the past I've been writing in general about the State's dire financial situation, and occasionally about the State's EDGE program. In short, EDGE is intended to bring jobs to Illinois or to encourage companies to retain jobs in our state. The State will lower a corporation's taxes if it participates in EDGE. The State had good intentions, but corporations quickly found many ways to abuse the program.

For example, Ford is allowed to retain the state income taxes paid by its employees. That's right, monies that the state desperately needs to maintain roads and to contribute to TRS is diverted to Ford's bottom line. Why would Illinois allow such a gross abuse?

The reason is simple: The state unemployment rate was/is high, and other states were/are offering similar programs. Corporations became very adept at playing the states against one another. Archer Daniels Midland, the gigantic agricultural products corporation, was particularly avid. The point is that the state's ability to contribute to TRS is imperiled by these *give-aways*."

**Al Popowits--Legislative**

### Complimentary Over 90 IRTA Membership

To qualify for free membership, one must meet the following criteria:

1. You must already be a State Member. A complimentary state membership will not be given to a state non-member or local only member.
2. The member or the unit can request a complimentary state IRTA membership as long as the member is state annual or state dues deduct. The member's name, address, and date of birth must be given with the complimentary request.
3. IRTA will notify the member that he is now receiving a complimentary membership for IRTA and will receive a Life Membership Card for his use.

### In Memoriam

For each of our recently deceased members, WLSU donates \$25 to the IRTA needy teachers fund.

**Marlene Kreutzig**

**Robert Lindhorn**

**Michael Stimac**

**Patricia Trunt**

## WLSU WANTS YOU!

Now is the time to get involved. Many of our board and committee members have served for multiple years. We are looking for additional people who are willing to spend a few hours of their time providing our membership with the service and information they have come to expect. The few cannot do it all. It is time for others to step up. We are looking for co chairs for Membership.

## Mark Your Calendars 2015

March 11	Membership Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m.
March 18	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
April 29	Area 3 Conference	Bradley, Illinois	
May 7	Membership Luncheon	Via Bella	11:15 a.m.
May 13	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
June			9:00 a.m.
August 5	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
September 15	Membership Luncheon	Ashton Place	11:15 a.m.
September			9:00 a.m.
October 14	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
October	IRTA Convention	Springfield	
December 4	Membership Luncheon	William Tell	11:15 a.m.

## IRTA Foundation Scholarship and Moler Austin Scholarship Program

Applications are now available for the IRTA Foundation scholarship program for 2015. Six scholarships worth \$1500 each will be awarded to one full-time student in each of the six IRTA areas. The applicant must be a resident of Illinois or have graduated from an Illinois high school. The applicant may attend any school in any state as long as the school attended maintains an accredited Teacher Training Program. General information about the scholarship and an application can be found on the IRTA website by going to "itraonline.org." Click on the IRTA Foundation link at the top of the home page and follow the link to scholarship information. Applications may also be obtained by contacting Fran Pettersen at 630-985-7508 or [narfp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:narfp@sbcglobal.net) and by visiting the WLSU website at [www.wlsu.weebly.com](http://www.wlsu.weebly.com). Applications are due in the IRTA Springfield office on or before March 7, 2015. Recipients of the scholarships will be notified by April 21, 2015.

## Fran Pettersen-Foundation

## March 11—Don't Miss It

Rich Frankenfeld from TRS will be at Plymouth Place, 315 LaGrange Road, to bring us up to date on pensions and legislation. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. with a short business meeting and the presentation by Rich will follow.



# 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

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.



## 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 11 Membership Meeting—Rich Frankenfeld from TRS