



February-March 2018

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

Don't forget the March 6 Membership Meeting

Presidents' Messages

Hanging a new calendar that now reads 2018-- filling in birth dates; anniversaries; and other significant details to be remembered throughout the next twelve months, these are probably actions that many of us have in common as we begin a new year. WLSU will experience a change in leadership as the calendar advances from 2017 to 2018. After more than ten years of leading our organization, Marge Sucansky is stepping down from this role. We all owe her a debt of gratitude for all she has done for our organization, and for many of us individually, over her tenure. Finding someone to assume her role appeared impossible, as hers are very big shoes to fill. As it turned out, it took four feet to fill her two. Vince LaPaglia and I will be co-presidents during the next years. Hopefully, between the two of us we will be able to keep WLSU up and running.

I have been active in WLSU since shortly after I retired in 2011. Like many of our Board members, I shared a career at Morton District 201 where I had been a social worker for some twenty-five years. It was a personal invitation to come to a WLSU meeting which started me down the path to involvement. During those first years after my retirement there was much going on in terms of threats to our pensions; thus, legislative action was front and center. With others, I visited a number of legislators and made trips to Springfield to ensure our pensions would remain intact. I seemed to find a niche and an outlet for some of my energy in my

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Vince LaPaglia, and I will be serving as co-president of WLSU for the next two years. My wife, Antoinette, and I have resided in Berwyn for the past 30 years. She is a retired teacher from the Chicago Public School system. We have two daughters, Kim and Kelly. Kim is a social entrepreneur who also travels the world delivering life-saving bone marrow, and Kelly is a 2nd grade teacher in South Berwyn's District 100.

I taught Advanced Placement Psychology at Morton High School, District 201 and served as Assistant Athletic Director at Morton College. Included in my education résumé is 30 years of coaching high school and community college athletics. I also served as an executive board member of the Morton Council Teachers Union under three different presidents in District 201. I am most proud of designing and implementing the Advanced Placement Psychology Curriculum and my involvement with numerous clubs at Morton. My education includes a B.A in Behavioral Science from National Louis University and a M.A. in Educational Administration from Concordia University.

Prior to teaching, I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1971 and worked in Logistic Operations. From 1973-1985 I worked as a laborer and on other construction jobs, including work at the *Chicago Tribune*. While at the *Tribune*, the

involvement. Perhaps much like other retirees, my transition into retirement was not smooth, and I found myself wallowing in unstructured time. Since that first year I have busied myself volunteering at my local parish, working as an educational surrogate for ISBE, and I even found a part-time job at the College of DuPage. Couple those activities with the birth of four grandchildren over the last two and a half years, and my life has suddenly become quite busy, and at times hectic. Assuming the role of president, even co-president, was not something I desired, but stepping up at the time seemed the thing to do.

Vince and I know each other from our active teaching days at Morton District 201. We are hoping that we will be a good fit. Both of us share a strong interest in education and the needs of both retired and active educators. We want to see our annuities and health care continue and realize that staying politically active and in the know is crucial for this. We also share a desire to assist retirees, especially members of WLSU, by being a conduit for questions and concerns that impact them.

Julie Jeter, co-president

union authorized a strike, during which employees walked out and were not allowed to return. This lost opportunity was the final push I needed to fulfill by destiny as a teacher. After losing my job at the *Tribune*, I stayed home to help raise my daughters and started college part time at night to get my teaching degree.

I have always been interested in the pursuit of knowledge and truth. I have enjoyed motivating and encouraging others by my positive example of giving 100% in everything I do. Being a mentor for so many young minds has kept me excessively happy. I have never been afraid to say, “I don’t know,” or admit I am wrong.

I have the necessary time and commitment to help WLSU and the IRTA to continue to protect the hard earned benefits we so rightly deserve. I promise to live up to the expectations of all our sister/brother members: past, present, and future.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me with any question or concerns at vlapaglia@yahoo.com

Vince LaPaglia , co-president

IRTA HOTLINE—Members who wish to hear the latest information about legislation regarding pensions and health insurance should telephone the IRTA office for information—1-800-728-4782. Other helpful numbers: Teachers’ Retirement System 1-877-927-5877, email address members@trsil.org, website—<http://www.trsil.org>; and Central Management Services 1-800-442-1300 or 1-217-524-3438; and irtaonline.org

Reminder to Members

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

ALERT-90 Years Old and Above- If you are 90 or older and are a current member, you qualify for free Life Membership in IRTA & WLSU. To qualify for this perk, you must contact us. If you are 90 or older, act now. Contact Tom Szot or Louise Sterett with your date of birth. See WLSU Contact Information box.

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

WLSU Contact Information

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jj149@aol.com
vlapaglia@yahoo.com

Membership

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630-852-3138
jtstot@comcast.net

Treasurer

Louise Sterett
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louisesterett@att.net

Foundation

Frances Pettersen
630-985-7508
narfp@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.wlsu.weebly.com

Mark Your Calendars 2018—

January 17 Wed.	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
March 6 Tues.	Membership Meeting	Ashton Place	10:00 a.m.
March 14, Wed.	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
April 26	Area 3 Conference	Bradley, Illinois	
May 10 Thur.	Membership Luncheon	Ashton Place	11:15 a.m.
May 8 Tues.	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
August 2 Thurs.	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 a.m.
September 12 Wed.	Membership Meeting	Ashton Place	10:00 a.m.
October 25 Thurs.	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	9:30 p.m.
December 7 Fri.	Membership Luncheon	Ashton	11:15 a.m.

Membership Report

In our last issue of the *Direct Line* I referred to the Charles Dickens quote of it being the best of times and the worst of times. There have been a few changes for the better, and some issues remain the same or have gotten worse since the last newsletter. Hardly being an optimist, I always look for the gray in any silver lining, and I know I've gotten worse since the election in November 2016. The destructive hurricane season has passed although the impacted areas are still suffering, especially in Puerto Rico. The wildfires in California have caused some of the worst destruction ever seen in the state. Tensions between the U.S. and North Korea have not improved, and conditions in Iran can be added to the list. Threats and insults continue to fly back and forth.

As I stated in the last *DL* issue, on the positive side we're still receiving our full pensions along with the 3% COLA added in the New Year. Our subsidized health care is still in place despite the efforts of Governor Rauner. However, public employee unions will be weakened with an expected ruling later this year from the U.S. Supreme Court, disallowing fair share. There are estimates that unions will lose one-third or more of their members, and unions will need to recertify each member annually. This alone will be an enormous task, taking valuable time from members' issues. If unions are weakened, the IRTA will need to fight harder to maintain the member benefits we currently enjoy and which IFT and IEA are currently helping us fight for. Although the IFT and IEA are most concerned with issues facing active teachers, we are still allies, and we all have friends and/or relatives who are active teachers. Plus, many IRTA members still maintain their membership in IFT and/or IEA Retired.

To strengthen the IRTA/WLSU we need to add members and retain those we have. Since there are close to 120,000 TRS annuitants and the IRTA has only 38,000 members, there is no shortage of recruits. They are all around us. We need to find them and make them members. You can help by asking all retired-teacher colleagues if they are IRTA members. If they are not members, guide them to membership. It's as simple as going to Google and typing IRTA. Follow the directions on the IRTA website to membership. Follow up with your friend afterward since saying one will join and actually joining are not the same. Also, help out by signing up your spouse or any other non-teacher friend or relative who shares your feelings about teachers and education. Remember, numbers are important to politicians who see them as voters. As mentioned, this can all be done online at the IRTA website or at your local's website at www.wlsu.weebly.com, or you can contact a WLSU membership committee member for help.

The good news for our local is that the position of president of WLSU has been filled, and the membership committee has added three new members to replace the current chairman. The three new retirees who have joined the WLSU board are Onofria Perricone, Barbara Lucente, and Carol Villa. Onofria will be in charge of recordkeeping; Barbara will be handling renewals; and Carol will be focusing on recruitment. I will remain awhile as an adviser to ensure a smooth transition.

Approximately a third of our WLSU members have not renewed their 2018 memberships. Please renew now. Those members who fail to renew will not receive another newsletter, and all communications will end March

2018. Please send a check to our Treasurer, Louise Sterett, made out to WLSU/IRTA. Her address is 770 57th St., #2, Clarendon Hills, IL 60514. Please renew for more than one year. Dues are \$12 annually, \$30 for 3 years, \$45 for 5 years and \$125 for Life membership. Check your newsletter label or email/call me if you are unsure of your dues status. See Contact Box for email or phone information.

Please work to improve our organizations to ensure our strength as retired educators who can rely on a financially secure retirement. As Henry Ford once said, “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”

Happy New Year and thank you for being a member of WLSU.
Tom Szot, WLSU Membership Committee Chair

WLSU/IRTA Welcomes These New Members



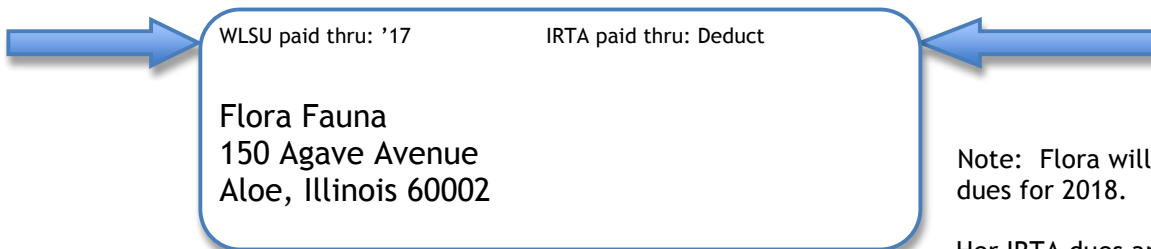
Joseph Tedeschi
Rosanne Dusek Tenuta
Catherine Massagli
Joan Slanina
Colleen Kadlec

Sharon Holtrop
Lisa Calvert
Elizabeth Slotwinski
Elaine Gross

Kathy Kucia
Barbara Walsh
Perry Walters
Carol Vashinko
Darlene Calabrese

Read Your Label

Check the label on your newsletter to see your dues status.



Note: Flora will need to send in her WLSU dues for 2018.

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 or Tom Szot with any questions. See the WLSU Contact Information Box.



For each of our recently deceased members WLSU donates \$25 to the IRTA Needy Teachers Fund
Janet Koke-Petrakis William Lehman Wilma Dombrowski

WLSU NEEDS YOU!

I know we all have other obligations, but saving our pensions and health benefits should count among them. Thanks to Gus Jackson for stepping up, we now have a new Member Benefits committee member. As of January 2018, however, WLSU will still need another member for the Legislative Committee. This position does not require a great deal of work. Please consider joining the board, and let Julie or Vince know if you are willing to share some of your time.

Membership Meeting Tuesday, March 6th at Ashton Place

After attending the IRTA Conference in October, I hurriedly booked two people who spoke at the convention to speak to our unit. Not only are they knowledgeable, but they are also great speakers. John Flaherty is our recently elected Vice President of IRTA. Holding this position means that in two years he will likely assume the presidency. Mr. Flaherty is an active member of the Blackhawk Unit of the IRTA and has been an active member of the Legislative Committee for many years. I am hoping he will share his thoughts as he assumes the state-wide role of the Vice President.

The second speaker who will be addressing us is Ed Wollet. Mr. Wollet is the Chair of the Legislative Committee of the IRTA and as such can speak to us about the need for all of us to be diligent regarding what is going on in Springfield, and for that matter, on the national level as well. The next election cycle in 2018 will be a critical one that could have many repercussions.

Both of these gentlemen will be traveling some distance to spend time with members of WLSU at this meeting. I am hopeful that the turn out for this event will be a good one. By March the weather should be warming up, so it might be nice to get out and reconnect with other members. Our membership and attendance at events is really spread by word of mouth. Please make an effort to attend and bring a friend. It would be wonderful to see a filled room for these speakers.

The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. at Ashton Place, 341 75th Street, Willowbrook, across from Hinsdale South.

Attention WLSU Members Who Are Veterans

This information was in a current issue of the VFW Post 1578 newsletter: Congress Introduces Bill to Privatize VA. Congressman Doug Lamborn (R-Colo.) recently introduced a bill that would break our promise to veterans. H.R. 4457, the Veterans Empowerment Act, would dismantle the VA health care system, charge veterans for service-connected health care, and reduce VA to an insurance program for veterans. Congressman Lamborn and bill cosponsors, Congressmen Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) and Trent Franks (R-Ariz.), must not be allowed to advance this dangerous proposal. Urge your member of Congress to oppose H.R. 4457 and let Congress know if they cannot take care of America's veterans, then Congress should quit creating them.

Don't Unsubscribe from Emails Unless You Mean It

If you have not been receiving emails from WLSU, maybe you are happy, but if you do want to keep abreast of what is going on with WLSU and your pension and health care benefits, please contact Marge Sucansky. You may have unintentionally unsubscribed or been unsubscribed by someone to whom you sent one of our emails. I can help you get resubscribed. sucansky@comcast.net

ADOPT A SCHOOL PROJECT 2017

Once again the members of WLSU showed their generosity by donating school supplies to Rhodes School in River Grove. For the third year in a row we have partnered with a local school district to provide needed school supplies to its students. In early December I made a fourth trip to Rhodes School, dropping off mainly winter

clothing that their staff had requested. It was perfect timing because cold weather had just started to set in and I am certain that the items were put to use very soon.

Right before the holidays I received the following:

I wanted to thank the Illinois Retired Teacher Association’s West Lake Shore Unit, as well as you personally, for the recent donation of school supplies, backpacks, hats, and gloves for our students. Once again, your generous acts of kindness to the Rhodes’s community are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jim Prather

Superintendent

WLSU members can take pride both in their generosity and their continued investment in educational programming. This project serves the dual purpose of assisting students and teachers as well as highlighting the work of retired educators through IRTA/WLSU. For many actives this is the first time they have heard of our organization, and we are making a positive impression, to say the least.

Julie Jeter

IRTA OUR FRIEND WITH BENEFITS—Know the benefits available to you



CAR RENTAL DISCOUNTS:

Hertz	800-654-2210	www.hertz.com	Code 1860896
Avis	800-331-1212	www.avis.com	Code G725000
Budget	800-455-2828	www.budget.com	CodeX925500

Please remember car rental agencies are not always on-site at the airport. Another option would be to use the services of Uber or Lyft in lieu of renting a car. The above companies can be contacted by downloading the apps to a smart phone. Enjoy your travel. ☺

Vince LaPaglia, Member Benefits Chairperson,

IRTAPAC

1. The Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) is an organization of over 37,000 retired educators. The IRTAPAC is a way to protect our benefits. It provides financial support to legislators who support us. If members go to fundraisers for their legislators, they should contact their local president to get donations that can be presented to the legislators at the fundraiser.
2. The IRTAPAC Committee has a process to determine whom we support and endorse through a questionnaire that helps it assess the positions of Illinois legislative candidates. This year IRTA will be offering endorsements to Congressional as well as local candidates since the governor is trying to make an end run around the Illinois Constitution by lobbying Congress to pass a bill that would circumvent state constitutions with regard to pensions and nullify Article XIII in the Illinois Constitution, the pension protection clause. That questionnaire will be sent out to legislators, asking them to fill it out and return it if they would like to be considered for endorsement by IRTA. The questionnaire will be available for your review as soon as it is completed by the legislative committee. If you are interested in viewing the questionnaire, please contact the IRTA legislative member for WLSU, Vic Corder at 773-857-2161 or vcorder@rcn.com. There is currently \$156,937 in the PAC Fund. The goal is to increase the number of people who participate via deduct for the PAC Fund. Deduct takes \$1 a month from your pension check. Many of you may make a yearly contribution to the PAC; however, through deduct, our

legislative committee knows exactly what to expect as far as funds are concerned. It is a more reliable measure of what funds can be disbursed for lobbying. Look for the form on the website www.irtaonline.org. The Mid-Term Elections in the U.S. will be especially critical in 2018 as all 435 House of Representative seats and 33 of the 100 Senate seats will be contested. In addition, elections for governor will be held in 36 states and 3 territories. In Illinois the General Assembly will have between 28 and 31 seats open. All of these new people will have to be educated regarding the revenue problem of the state rather than allowing them to blame pensions which we have earned and been promised.

A Plea to Members—Help Increase Membership

There are over 70,000 retirees out there who are not members but who benefit from IRTA's efforts.. These are people who did not join IRTA when they retired. If you know any educators, retired or active, who are not aware of what IRTA has done for them, please urge them to join us in the fight to preserve our pensions. If you know educators who have signed letters of intent to retire, urge them to join via the Pipeline, which gives them free membership in IRTA and WLSU until they retire. Give retirees the application in this issue and contact Tom Szot for a Pipeline application for those still active. Help them fill it out. Offer to pay postage to mail it to IRTA. Our lobbyists need numbers when they talk to legislators. Also, remind them of the activities of the Foundation—Excellence in Education Grants to active teachers, applications available at www.irtaonline.org; scholarships for current college students; and the Foundation's support of needy teachers. For more information, go to the website.

Foundation News—Hurry, there is a deadline

The IRTA Foundation awards six \$1,500 scholarships in each of the IRTA Areas of the State to incoming juniors or seniors in college that are pursuing a degree in education. Thanks to a very generous private donation from one of our members, Areas 4 and 6 will each award a second scholarship of \$2,500. Applications are available on the IRTA website www.irtaonline.org under the Foundation tab or by contacting Susan Goetz at the IRTA Office 1-800-728-4782 or email susan@irtaonline.org. They also can be obtained by contacting Fran Pettersen at narfp@sbcglobal.net or by calling 630-985-7508. The application deadline is March 7, 2018.



AMAZON - If you make purchases from Amazon, please [click here](#). A percentage of all purchases will go to the IRTA Foundation by using this link. If you receive this newsletter by snail mail, go to the the IRTA website at www.irtaonline.org to take part in this program

Excellence in Education Grants were awarded to 73 active teachers in the Fall of 2017 for a total of \$36,103.99. This was the first year that the Excellence in Education Grants were available statewide.

The Annuitant Assistance Program is currently assisting ten retirees on a monthly basis. One time needs such as real estate tax payments, medical and dental bills have also been furnished. The total spent was \$55,450. The application for financial assistance can be found on the IRTA website at www.irtaonline.org or by calling the IRTA office at 1-800-728-4782.

The IRTA Foundation is the benevolent side of IRTA. The funding for the programs listed above comes from donations and the return address label campaign which is the major source of the Foundation's funding. Every donation is important so that these programs will continue. **Fran Pettersen, Foundation Chair**



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.



West Lake Shore Unit
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Marjorie Sucansky, Newsletter Publisher
2942 Crabtree Avenue
Woodridge, Illinois 60517

Direct Line mailer: Simonette Urbain

DIRECT LINE
“Investing in the FUTURE of retired teachers”

March 6 Membership Meeting at Ashton Place—no rsvp required