



May/June 2023  
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

### Vice-President's Message

I am pleased to share with you that our West Lake Shore Unit has received a Unit of Distinction Award from the Illinois Retired Teachers Association. WLSU is one of 24 state units that has received this award and will be recognized at the IRTA Biennial convention in Springfield, October 16-17. Each of the 24 units will also receive a gift of \$250. Much of the credit goes to the hard working board members of the WLSU. It has been an honor working with all the board members I have met since 2003.

The IRTA offers various ways of obtaining information. One of the best ways is to register as a member of IRTA at [irtaonline.org](http://irtaonline.org). You will have access to Legislative issues, local units, minutes of meetings, online store, trips and activities, health insurance, and voter voice which serves has an easy way to message/contact your legislators.

Information about the IRTA Foundation scholarship program, assistance to needy retirees, and The Excellence in Education Grants for active teachers can also be found on this website. If you know an active teacher that needs extra money for a special classroom activity, please have him/her log on to "[irtaonline.org](http://irtaonline.org)." Information about this program and the application which must be filled out online are available there. **The deadline for the applications is June 1, 2023.**

You probably have received via email a notification for COFFEE WITH JIM. This is a zoom meeting with Jim Bachman Executive Director of IRTA. It starts at 9:30 am the second Thursday of the month. It is a great opportunity to ask questions, share topics or just listen to the conversations that take place. It is a casual and friendly atmosphere. You probably have also received emails with the subject line IRTA Good Dog eNews and maybe could not figure out the connection to a dog. The IRTA is our pension watchdog, hence the metaphor. I am certain that our members were pleased to receive the three percent COLA in their February TRS pension checks. Good Dog eNews contains great information such as legislative updates, excellence in Education Grants information, 2023 Panama Cruise opportunity, Cubs vs Cardinals game outing, Educational Webinar Series, and more.

WLSU actively recruits new retirees. But we also need members that are willing to volunteer for leadership positions and serve as committee members. In the latest IRTA ACTION Spring 2023 edition, Bill Funkhouser (IRTA President) quotes Yogi Berra.

"if you want to do something you've never done before, you have to do something you've never done before."

I hope I will be seeing new faces and names on the WLSU board and committees in 2023. **Fran Pettersen**



**SUMMER LUNCHEON**  
**TUESDAY JUNE 13, 2023, at 11 AM**  
**We will have a short Member Meeting at 11:45**  
**CRYSTAL SKY BANQUETS**  
**7941 WEST 47<sup>TH</sup> STREET, McCOOK IL 60525**

The FAMILY STYLE meal will include soup, salad, two meat choices, pasta,  
 potatoes, vegetables, dessert, and coffee or tea. **CASH BAR**  
 Special guests will be THE SIX WIVES OF HENRY THE VIII  
**COST: MEMBERS \$30 NON MEMBERS \$35**

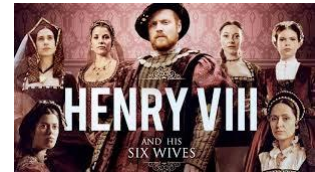
MEMBER NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 MEMBER EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
 # OF MEMBERS \_\_\_\_\_ #OF NON MEMBERS \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL COST \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form or a reasonable facsimile along with a check

Made to WEST LAKE SHORE UNIT to:  
 Louise Sterett 770 57<sup>th</sup> Street Apt 2, Clarendon Hills IL 60514

**RSVP BY MAY 22 2023**

GUEST NAMES \_\_\_\_\_



QUESTIONS: CONTACT Louise Sterett at [lasterett@yahoo.com](mailto:lasterett@yahoo.com) 630-325-6470

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## **ATTENTION 2023 RETIREES**

The West Lake Shore Unit of Illinois Retired Teachers Association invites you to attend, as our guest,  
 our June Luncheon

Date: June 13, 2023 Time: 11:00 to 2:00

Place: Crystal Sky Banquets, 7941 W. 47th St., McCook, IL

Please join us as our guest. Meet our members and learn how IRTA/WLSU has served retired teachers in the past and will continue to do so in the future, guarding your pension and health benefits, providing various benefit options such as dental and vision plans, organizing programs and activities at discount prices, and keeping you informed about any changes to your retirement benefit

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please *rsvp to Marjorie Sucansky, [sucansky@comcast.net](mailto:sucansky@comcast.net) or 630-887-6407 by May 22* or

*You may send the bottom portion of this form or a reasonable facsimile to Marjorie Sucansky,*

*2942 Crabtree Avenue, Woodridge, Illinois 60517.*



## How to Replace Lost Documents

In the previous *Direct Line* I gave you suggestions for storing important documents. Here are some suggestions for replacing documents you may have lost. (All courtesy of the AARP Bulletin, December 2022.)

**Passport:** Call 877-487-2778 toll-free or submit a Form DS-64 online at travel.State.gov. This is important to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft. To get a replacement passport, submit Form DS-11 in person at a passport office. If this happens while you are abroad, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

**Car Title:** Replacement process varies from state to state. Check with your Department of Motor Vehicles. It may be as easy as submitting a form. In other cases, you may have to submit documents such as photo ID, vehicle registration or registration renewal notice.

For more tips about replacing lost documents, see the next *Direct Line*. **Barbara Grabowski, FYI**

### Log in to irtaonline.org For the Latest Information

The Member Portal located in the Member’s Only section of the IRTA website has been revamped. IRTA members’ usernames are now their email, and they need to establish a new password. Members can review their own personal information, pay their dues, see when their membership is up for renewal, donate or review their donation history, register for an event, and update their profile information. The Member’s Only section of the website looks similar to how it did in the past, but it has been updated to use with the new IRTA database. Check it out. There is a lot of good information there, including information about TRAIL and TRIP.

### Coffee With Jim Dates Watch your email for a zoom invitation 9:30 a.m.

May 11	September 21
June 8	October 12
July 13	November 9
August 17	December 14

### Exciting News—Get Better Informed

**This year IRTA will be hosting all of its Area Conferences virtually, and you can get access to all of them. They will be spaced throughout the year, so you will get the most up-to-date information. The schedule is below, so mark your calendar. You will receive a ZOOM invitation to each.**

<b>June 7</b>	<b>Area 3 Virtual Conference</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	<b>This is our conference</b>
<b>July 12</b>	<b>Area 4 Virtual Conference</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	
<b>August 9</b>	<b>Area 5 Virtual Conference</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	
<b>September 6</b>	<b>Area 6 Virtual Conference</b>	<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	



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**Want to stay up to date with WLSU?** Then visit the WLSU website (www.wlsu.weebly.com). Once there, you can activate a tab to topics of interest from the drop down menu. Select a tab that meets your interest: **HOME, ABOUT US, RELATED ARTICLES/VIDEOS, CONTACT A LEGISLATOR, KEEP IN TOUCH, EVENTS.** The site has information, including Past *Direct Line* Newsletters, activities hosted by WLSU, teacher grants and scholarships available, and a plethora of related information. Just touch on the tabs listed at the top of the page. You are invited to visit the website and learn more about how WLSU serves and informs the membership. **Jim Kurth, Webmaster**



You may feel that you've done your part by renewing your membership in IRTA/WLSU. You are certainly to be complimented on your continued effort to keep our organization strong. You understand that our state's politicians respect the strength of an organization. Strength of an organization, such as ours, is shown by how many members the group possesses. Politicians are looking for support to win their next election. The IRTA currently has over 40,000 members, and politicians know seniors take voting seriously. No organization can survive if members leave, die, or lose interest. Unfortunately, this happens each year. This is why we need to recruit new members and keep the ones we have.

Spring is the beginning of our push to recruit teachers retiring this year. We have 39 school districts in our WLSU area and many individual schools. It is the task of the IRTA and WLSU to reach out to as many of these prospective retirees as possible to get them to join. This effort has a time limit. Upon retirement, we lose contact since school districts do not provide personal information such as a home address for the new retirees.

The current process employed by the IRTA and WLSU to recruit new members involves the following: Early in the new year, the IRTA sends a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) letter to every public school district outside of Chicago to obtain the names and school email addresses of those retiring this school year. Although the school district should obey the FOIA directive, a number don't reply to the request, and following up is very time consuming, so it isn't done. Therefore, we never find out who is retiring from that district. Both the IRTA and WLSU contact retirees whose names we have received multiple times in an effort to get them to become members. Upon retirement, most districts delete the email link, and we lose contact. We rely on our current members to recruit former colleagues or friends who may have taught in a non-Chicago public school. Chicago teachers have their own retirement system. *All public schools outside of Chicago come under the same retirement system. Our pension comes from the Teacher Retirement System of Illinois (TRS).*

Family members, as well as retirees, may be signed up as associate members of IRTA/WLSU. It is certainly in the interest of a family member to keep a relative's pension strong. Even friends may be signed up as associate members.

With the advent of widespread email usage, signing up for membership is easy. You simply google IRTA. Choose the IRTA Membership link to get to the IRTA website. Here, a prospective member has choices. One can join online by filling out the application form, or via text or via QR Code, or print a membership form to mail. If a problem occurs, call 800-728-4782 for help weekdays between 8 and 5.

Also, both the IRTA and WLSU offer free membership to current teachers who will retire within the next 4 years. Then upon retirement, dues will need to be paid. You may see dues rates at the IRTA website, and WLSU dues rates are seen at our website, [www.wlsu.weebly.com](http://www.wlsu.weebly.com). Dues deduction is the cheapest way to join IRTA.

Recruitment is not easy. It takes a lot of effort to keep an organization going and thriving. The IRTA does a phenomenal job, but it also relies on its members to "talk-it-up." We need your help to get family members and friends to join. If you know the home address of a new retiree or anyone you wish us to contact, email the name and address to either Steve Yurek, Keith Bailey, or Louise Sterett. (See the Contact Box for phone numbers or email addresses.) They will see to contacting the person. Please remember that it's your pension you are protecting by making an effort to recruit a new member. As Dr. Seuss said in *The Lorax*, "*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.*" *Show you care a lot about your pension; recruit new members.*

Thank you for being a member of WLSU.  
**Tom Szot, Membership emeritus**



## WLSU/IRTA WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS

Diane Jarosz Julie Loftus Arlene Kachka Anna Klamik Sabrena Robinson  
Marian Zeidman Jeanette Kludac



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 Foundation

Margaret Wischer Ron Nikceovich Mileva Ruvarac Elyse Janet Jones Mary Klonowski Donatta Yates

### Adopt-a-School Project 2023-2024

The adopt-a-School project is underway again after two years of being dormant due to the pandemic. It was exciting to once again send out letters to schools located in the footprint of WLSU's borders to elicit a potential partnership. As in the past, letters went to schools that had very high percentages of low income students. This year we will be working with Thurgood Marshall School in Bellwood. This school serves students in grades K-5 and currently has 270 students enrolled. The principal, Jeremy Burnham, and I have had a number of conversations regarding how we can be of assistance to both his staff and students.

Dr. Burnham sees his school having a variety of needs and his generated list indicates just that. They are open to receiving school supplies such as sanitary wipes, backpacks, crayons, markers, construction paper and the like, but he also presented some specialized items such as reading materials and white polo shirts which are part of their daily uniform. He also mentioned a need for volunteers that might be willing to come into the school to work in small groups with students. We had a lengthy discussion about these needs at our last Board meeting and decided that I would present all the needs and let members decide how they would like to proceed.

The Adopt a School project has been well received by our members. It has given them the opportunity to help school communities with a variety of needs. My hope is that this tradition will continue into the 2023-2024 school year. **I will be collecting donated items at WLSU functions or you can drop donated items at my home at 427 N Waiola, La Grange Park. We have a large front porch so feel free to place items there. If you have questions, feel free to email me at [jj149@aol.com](mailto:jj149@aol.com) or call me at 708-352-7115.**

**Items Being Collected** School supplies such as tissues, paper towels, sanitary wipes. Pocket folders, backpacks, pencils, markers, crayons, constructions paper etc.

White polo shirts in sizes 4-16. It is part of their school uniform and many of the families have trouble purchasing them. Keeping a supply of them available at the school would be helpful.

#### Reading Materials

Treasure Bay Books 60 of each title *Dinosaurs, About Bats, International Space Station, Space 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, When I Grow Up, What Would You Do, Well Mannered Monster*

Flash Cards 60 sets of each  
Flash Cards by Scholastic  
Target First Word Flashcards  
Target Sight Words Flashcard

If you are interested in volunteering in the school, please contact me so that I can assist in setting this up and getting you connected with the principal.

My hope is that come August I will be delivering many of the items to Thurgood Marshall School. I thank you in advance for your generosity. **Julie Jeter, Foundation**



**ANDY WARHOL EXHIBIT  
2 PM THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023  
AT THE MAC AT COD  
25 FAWELL BLVD, GLEN ELLYN IL**

We will have a special docent presentation at 2 pm followed by a tour of the exhibit at 2:30 pm. Program Committee members will be in the lobby of the MAC by 1:30 pm to hand out tickets. The person registering will receive an envelope with the number of tickets paid for on his/her registration form.

**TICKETS: \$20 MEMBERS                      \$22.50 NON MEMBERS**

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO WEST LAKE SHORE UNIT**

**MEMBER  
NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBER  
EMAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBER PHONE  
#** \_\_\_\_\_

**# OF MEMBER TICKETS** \_\_\_\_\_ **#OF NON MEMBER TICKETS** \_\_\_\_\_

**AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND REGISTRATION ALONG WITH THE CHECK TO  
FRAN PETERSEN 8613 THISTLEWOOD CT, DARIEN IL 60561**

**RSVP BY JULY 24, 2023**



## 2023 Excellence in Education Grants for Teachers

The IRTA Foundation continues to work toward the future by offering \$42,000 in grant money to educators.

Being an educator, do you often think of this phrase — Extra Funds Needed — when it comes to planning special projects for your students? You may be finding that revenue sources are not available for such unique activities.

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation is making \$42,000 in grant money available to ALL counties in Illinois. This special grant will provide additional funds to public school educators (Pre-K through 12) so that their students will have the means to participate in special projects. The funds are not intended to provide regular curricular materials.

Please visit the IRTA website at [www.irtaonline.org](http://www.irtaonline.org) for further instructions. You can download, complete, and submit the application online from the IRTA website. **All proposals must be submitted by June 1, 2023.** A special committee will select the recipients of the grant money over the summer. Grant awards will be presented in the fall.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) Office by phone at 1.800.728.4782 or by e-mail at [irta@irtaonline.org](mailto:irta@irtaonline.org). Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation, 828 S. Second St., 4th Floor, Springfield, IL 62704 \* Chicago Public School employees are not eligible for this grant program. Printed January 2023

The IRTA Foundation continues to be fiscally sound and ready to assist members who may have particular needs. In 2022 the Foundation assisted 11 people who were in need. A total of \$54,810. was distributed to these individuals. Currently the Foundation is helping 10 retirees at a monthly cost of \$4625. Please remember that these monies are there to assist any retired Illinois teacher (one does not have to be an IRTA member to apply) and they only need apply.

**Another aspect of the Foundation’s efforts focus on scholarships. Six area recipients of \$2000 have recently been selected. This year the Area 3 \$2000 scholarship is being awarded to Christy Arreci who is a student at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Christy resides in Berwyn and is a graduate of Morton West High School. She is an incoming senior with a major in English but also has an interest in engineering and technical writing. After graduation she plans to use her talents in the public school system teaching English. If you are a recent JSM retiree, please try to attend the June luncheon. We hope to have Christy and her family there to accept the scholarship.**

Please note that the Foundation’s monies come entirely from donations, not dues. The primary fundraiser for the Foundation will be in the mail soon, so please be on the lookout. Last year the fundraiser generated \$228,938. Any contribution would be appreciated. **Julie Jeter, Foundation**

### WLSU Contact Information

Vice President	Membership	Membership	Treasurer	Foundation
Fran Pettersen	Steve Yurek	Keith Bailey	Louise Sterett	Julie Jeter
708-302-2129	630-991-1123	630-926-0742	630-325-6470	708-370-3929
<a href="mailto:narfp@yahoo.com">narfp@yahoo.com</a>	<a href="mailto:mathgreat34@comcast.net">mathgreat34@comcast.net</a>	<a href="mailto:kmldbailey@ameritech.net">kmldbailey@ameritech.net</a>	<a href="mailto:lasterett@yahoo.com">lasterett@yahoo.com</a>	<a href="mailto:jj149@aol.com">jj149@aol.com</a>

**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](http://irtaonline.org).

Other helpful numbers:

**Teachers’ Retirement System** 1-877-927-5877, email— [members@trsil.org](mailto:members@trsil.org) website: <http://www.trsil.org>

**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.

## Mark Your Calendar

June 6	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m.
June 7	Area 3 Conference	Zoom	10:30 a.m.
June 13	Membership Luncheon	Crystal Sky	11:15 a.m.
August 8	Executive board Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m.
August 17	Andy Warhol Exhibit	COD	
September 13	Membership Meeting	TBD	TBD
October 10	Executive Board Meeting	Plymouth Place	10:00 a.m.
October 16-17	IRTA Biennial Convention	Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield	
December 1	Membership Luncheon	Crystal Sky	11:15 a.m.

Censorship is the child of fear, the father of ignorance, and the weapon of tyrants.

Laurie Halse Anderson

**Bring school supplies for Adopt-a-School to the luncheon or COD event.**

**Try going GREEN with your next newsletter.**

Contact Louise Sterett

“Investing in the FUTURE of retired teachers”

DIRECT LINE

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