



Hickory Stick Gazette

Ogle-Lee and IRTA – Your Link To Springfield

April 2017



<http://ogleleerta.weebly.com>

www.irtaonline.org

Our next meeting is set for Tuesday, April 4th at the Rock River Center, 810 S 10th ST, Oregon, IL. Doors open at 11:00 AM, with the business meeting at NOON, followed by lunch and then the program. RESERVATIONS are required. Your contact person will call you for your reservation. **If you have not received a call by March 24th, please call Marvel Blomberg at (815) 562-2884.**

REMINDER: We must pay for your meal if you made a reservation, even if you can't attend. The cost of the meal is \$15. *The menu will include a Plated salad with rolls, Chicken spinach lasagna, corn and bacon casserole, carrot cake, coffee and tea.*
.....

If you reserve a meal and find that you will not be able to attend, please call Marvel Blomberg (815/562-2884) in order to cancel your earlier reservation. **It will be too late to cancel your reservation after March 27th.** If this occurs, please send \$15 to Ogle-Lee Treasurer, Linda Kenney, P. O. Box 314, Rochelle, IL 61068. **Please do not call the Rock River Center to make or cancel a reservation.** If you are planning to attend the April 4th meeting, you will be able to pay for your meal when you arrive.

Program: John Lindhorst, from Ukulele Station America in Oregon, will incorporate some history of the instrument as he sings and plays songs from a variety of decades and styles. A variety of ukuleles will be on display as well.

April 2017 – Legislative Update – Keith Erhart

Illinois is in the final few months of its second year without a budget. Senate Republican leader Christine Radogno and Senate Democratic leader John Cullerton put together a package of bills, known as the Grand Bargain, to hopefully create a compromise and pave the way for approving a budget. The original series of thirteen Senate bills are all linked together. Language in each and every bill states that if passed it can only become law if all the bills pass. Five of the bills have passed but voting has stalled on the remaining bills pending further discussion. Included in these bills are Chicago Teachers' Pension funding, increased gambling options, education funding, state personal and corporate income tax increases, workers' compensation reform, pension reform and a property tax freeze. As you can see, there is something for everyone and therein lies the problem. SB11 which deals with pension reform would apply to Tier I active teachers whereby they would need to choose between accepting the automatic annual increase in retirement

(which we receive) or counting future salary increases to be figured in their pensionable salary. This legislation could impact new pipeline members of IRTA.

IRTA supports Senate Resolution 113 and House Resolution 29 which urges their chambers to NOT tax retirement income. IRTA opposes House Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 18 which calls for repealing the pension protection clause in the Illinois Constitution. You will recall that the contract protection clause is what was cited to overturn SB1 or PA 98-0599 by the Illinois Supreme Court and protect our automatic annual increases. If this constitutional amendment sponsored by Rockford representative, Joe Sosnowski, passes will this lead to another court battle as the legislators yet again attempt to reduce our pensions?

The Legal Defense Fund (LDF) balance is \$138,748. This fund is greatly depleted as IRTA spent over half a million dollars to successfully overturn SB1 (PA98-0599). Our IRTA-PAC balance is \$93,982. Please consider joining the monthly one dollar deduct to support the legislative candidates that support us and our interests.

TRS released its FY16 (fiscal year 2016 ending June 30, 2016) Annual Financial Report Summary. In the report, TRS has assets valued at \$45.3 B which is a loss of \$1.2B from the previous year as the return on investments was virtually flat for this past fiscal year. Also, expenses exceeded income so investments needed to be sold to cover payments to retirees and beneficiaries. As long as the state makes the statutory contribution to TRS, the investment portfolio needs to make 3% to break even. Less than that and investments need to be sold to cover obligations. If the investments earn more than 3%, then the unfunded liability is reduced. Again this year, Gov. Rauner's budget had zero dollars appropriated for our TRIP health insurance. Fortunately, TRIP is a continuing appropriation so the money only needs to be requested. However, that could cease at any moment with the passage of a new bill. What is protected by statute today, could cease to exist and be replaced by a new law tomorrow. Again, I cannot stress enough the importance of the solvency of the LDF and IRTA-PAC to fight for our pension and health insurance. There are major forces that want to take those benefits from us. This is a fight that will never go away.

I have resigned as Ogle-Lee legislative chairman effective at the end of this calendar year. I want to thank the local IRTA officers and membership for their support during the past years. We need someone to take over the position to keep our members informed with the latest news affecting

our pensions and health insurance. This person will receive updates from the IRTA legislative committee and government affairs director. The TRS website is also a great reference. As you receive communication from these different sources, you will forward this information to our membership director who will send it to our members who are signed up to receive emails. Ogle-Lee has three meetings annually at which you may be asked to address our membership and answer questions. Prior to the meeting you will write a column for our newsletter. Please consider becoming more involved in our local organization and committing some time to this rewarding position. It is imperative that someone steps up and takes their turn to inform our members.

IRTA-PAC – Please consider joining the IRTA-PAC donation deduct program as you will automatically be enrolled in a one dollar per month contribution to support those legislators that support us. Forms will be available at the April 4th meeting.

NEW OFFICERS will be needed at the end of this year. Co-Presidents **Jean Hoff** and **Jean Whipple** will be finishing up four years in office and will not be running for another term. **Keith Erhart** has been the Legislative Representative and **Richard Longfellow** has been the Webmaster. Both will be stepping down from those positions. **Please consider coming on the Board and getting involved.** We need officers to keep our organization going! Please contact Jean Hoff (815.732-3818) or Jean Whipple (815.222-2681) if you are willing to serve. **OGLE-LEE RTA NEEDS YOU TO STEP UP!**

CONTACT CALLERS: With the passing of **Dick Wood and Geraldine French** and the “retirement” of **Andy Hinkle and Hal Weaver**, we are happy to welcome **Jan Dietrich, Linda Knigge, and Priscilla Brickley** to take over calling members for those areas! Thank you to **Andy and Hal** for your years of calling!

We are excited to welcome the following new members to the Ogle-Lee RTA:
Floya Hawkins – Pipeline
Mary Murtaugh - Pipeline
Holly Peterson – Pipeline
Martha Schultz – Pipeline

Ogle-Lee Retired Teachers Association
 Jean Whipple, Membership
 8551 Yellowstone DR
 Byron, IL 61010

sIRTA Area 1 Conference will be held on **May 15 at IVCC, Oglesby, and May 16 at Northwest Territory Historic Center in Dixon.** Information will be provided on our Litigation and other Legislative Issues, TRS, TRIP Ins. for both Medicare and non-Medicare members, Legal Defense Fund, Membership Recruitment, IRTA Foundation, IRTAPAC, and Member Benefits from AMBA. If you are a member of Ogle-Lee RTA, we will cover the cost of \$12/person. Please let Jean Hoff (815.732-3818) know by April 28th if you are interested in attending.

2017 Ogle-Lee RTA OFFICERS

Co-Presidents	Jean Hoff Jean Whipple
Co-Vice-Presidents	Diane Kenney Carole Sutton
Secretary	Elke Grennan
Treasurer	Linda Kenney
Membership	Jean Whipple Sharon Bayme
Member Benefits	Phillip Bratta
Legislative	Keith Erhart
Contact Coordinator	Marvel Blomberg
Historian	Loretta Bell
Webmaster	Richard Longfellow

FUTURE GENERAL MEETINGS for 2017:
April 4 – Rock River Center, Oregon (Note change to first Tuesday for this meeting only)
July 11 – First Presbyterian Church, 1100 Calvin RD, Rochelle
 Program will be *The Road to Cuba!* by Dan Graber and Terry Dickow who traveled to Cuba in March 2016.
October 10 – Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center, (LOMC) Oregon. Program will be presented by Gail Beck, the KSB Hospital dietician.
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS:
 June 13 – Byron Library
 September 12 – Byron Library
 November 14 – Byron Library
