



Hickory Stick Gazette

Ogle-Lee and IRTA – Your Link To Springfield

July 2017

<http://ogleleerta.weebly.com>

www.irtaonline.org



Our next meeting is set for Tuesday, July 11th at the First Presbyterian Church, 1100 Calvin RD, Rochelle, IL. Calvin RD intersects with RT 38 just East of May Mart Shopping Center. The church is on the south side of RT 38. 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 June 30th 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 BBQ Pork on Vienna bun, 7-layered salad, fresh fruit salad, Mrs. Fischer's potato chips, mini cherry cheesecake, coffee and tea.**

This will be a buffet-style luncheon catered by Ralphie and LuLu's of Ashton. Members will be on hand to offer assistance if necessary.

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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 June 30th.** If this occurs, please send \$15 to Ogle-Lee Treasurer, Linda Kenney, P. O. Box 314, Rochelle, IL 61068. **Please do not call the First Presbyterian Church to make or cancel a reservation.** If you are planning to attend the July 11th meeting, you will be able to pay for your meal when you arrive.

Program: Dan Graber and Terry Dickow – The Road to Cuba! Dan and Terry are retired teachers from Rochelle who traveled to Cuba in March 2016. They will tell you what life in Cuba was like from a tourist angle.

Loretta Bell will be giving Memorials for those Ogle-Lee members who passed away in 2016.

July 2017 – Legislative Update – Keith Erhart

In a democracy, we deserve the leaders we elect. Or more simply, we get what we deserve. We hear more and more complaints of our national leaders and their inability to compromise and work together for the betterment of all Americans. But we only have ourselves to blame for electing them. America has a population of approximately 324 million people. About 103 million are children, felons and non-citizens. The remaining 221 million Americans have the privilege and responsibility of voting. In the

2016 presidential election 136,628,459 votes were recorded so nearly 40% of eligible Americans didn't bother to vote. Donald Trump received 62,979,636 popular votes or only about 28.5% of the eligible vote. We deserve the leaders we elect or didn't bother to elect.

At the state level, we have been frustrated at the inability of the legislature to pass a budget for two years. Many necessary state services including public schools have gone unfunded or under-funded. These agencies are unable to provide for those in need of their services. Again, we deserve the leaders we elect. May 31 was the deadline for a compromise budget by a simple majority. Now, a higher three-fifths majority in each legislative chamber is required to pass any legislation.

Due to the budget stalemate, Illinois had its bond rating downgraded to one step above junk by S&P Global Ratings and Moody's Investors, the lowest ranking on record for a U.S. state. S&P warned that Illinois will likely lose its investment-grade status around the end of the month if the political leaders haven't agreed on a budget to reduce the government's debts. The new fiscal year (FY 2018) will begin on July 1, 2017. A downgrade to junk would add further financial pressure by increasing the state's borrowing costs and preventing mutual funds from buying Illinois' securities. Illinois, like all states, does not have the ability to resort to bankruptcy to escape its debts.

For most of us our TRS pension will be the primary or only means of support for the rest of our lives. It amazes me that out of 108,000 retired teachers in TRS only 37,391 are members of IRTA which lobbies on behalf of keeping our pensions and health insurance intact. Recently, IRTA sent out 20,000 emails to IRTA members through Voter Voice to ask our state senators to vote "NO" on SB42 which would have removed TRIP funding as a continuing appropriation. The result would pave the way to remove the state's funding for TRIP. It took ten seconds to open the email and send it to Sen. Bivins (who did vote NO). Approximately 4,500 members bothered to respond. This is 12% of IRTA membership and 4% of TRS retired teachers. With our non-involvement, we get what we deserve.

This leads me to the point of this article. Jean Whipple and Jean Hoff have done an excellent job as co-presidents for four years (two years longer than they originally agreed to serve because nobody stepped forward to take a turn). They ARE resigning. Richard Longfellow has set up one of the best local IRTA websites in the state. He IS resigning and someone needs to keep the website updated. I have resigned from my state legislative committee last

