

# Hickory Stick Gazette

## Ogle-Lee and IRTA – Your Link To Springfield

October, 2014

<http://ogleleerta.weebly.com>

[www.irtaonline.org](http://www.irtaonline.org)



**Our next meeting is set for Tuesday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at the Elk's Club, 1279 Franklin Grove RD, Dixon, IL 61021. (Rte 38 and Franklin Grove RD are the same. It is west of the Dixon Airport.)**

**Doors open at 11:15 AM,**

**the meal is served at noon, and the business meeting and program will follow the meal.**

**RESERVATIONS** are required. Your contact person will call you for your reservation. **If you have not received a call by October 1st, please call Jean Whipple at (815) 222-2681.**

**REMINDER:** We must pay for your meal if you made a reservation, even if you can't attend. The cost of the meal is \$7/member and \$15/non-member. The Lee/Ogle ROE is sponsoring this meal for retired teachers. As of this writing, **the menu will include baked chicken breast, scalloped potatoes, green beans, tossed green salad with choice of Ranch or French dressing, dinner roll, and brownie.** If you reserve a meal and find that you will not be able to attend, please call Jean Whipple in order to cancel your earlier reservation. **It will be too late to cancel your reservation after October 3rd.** If this occurs, please send \$7 to Ogle-Lee Treasurer, Linda Kenney, P.O. Box 314, Rochelle, IL 61068. **Please do not call the restaurant to make or cancel a reservation.** Remember, doors open at **11:15** AM with meal to be served at Noon. If you are planning to attend the October 14th meeting, you will be able to pay for your meal when you arrive.

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**October Program – Legislative Forum meeting with Sen. Tim Bivins, Rep. Tom Demmer, Rep. Don Moffitt and Rep. Brian Stewart. Asst Regional Supt Janet Kacvinsky from the Lee/Ogle ROE will attend.**

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**October 2014 – Legislative Update – Keith Erhart**  
The November general election is fast approaching. All 118 seats in the Illinois House are up for election. Nineteen of the 59 seats in the Illinois Senate are on the ballot. In order to help candidates that support our retirees' concerns, IRTA sent out 55 questionnaires to candidates seeking an IRTA endorsement. Questionnaires were not sent to legislators who voted YES on SB1 (PA 98-0599) which is now being challenged in Sangamon County Circuit Court as to its constitutionality.

In previous elections, IRTA-PAC could only endorse incumbents who had a voting record. IRTA-PAC can

now endorse non-incumbents as well. 36 candidates returned their responses to the questionnaires and 32 received an IRTA endorsement. Interestingly, IRTA demonstrated its non-partisan position as two Democrats and two Republicans did not receive endorsement and fifteen Democrats and seventeen Republicans merited IRTA approval. Locally, 45<sup>th</sup> District Sen. Tim Bivins and 36<sup>th</sup> Senate District challenger Neil Anderson were endorsed by IRTA. Representatives Mike Smiddy (71<sup>st</sup> District), Bob Pritchard (70<sup>th</sup>), Don Moffitt (74<sup>th</sup>) and Brian Stewart (89<sup>th</sup>) received IRTA endorsement.



Of the 137 House and Senate seats that are up for election, IRTA has identified only seven high-priority elections throughout the state that are hotly contested. In our region, there are two such elections that IRTA is watching carefully and investing PAC funds toward our endorsed candidates. In the 36<sup>th</sup> Senate District which covers part of Carroll County, IRTA is backing Republican challenger Neil Anderson who is trying to unseat Democrat Mike Jacobs. Sen. Jacobs in previous years was endorsed by IRTA. However, last December Jacobs broke his word and lost our trust by voting YES to SB1. SB1 passed with the bare minimum number of YES votes! Remember our bumper stickers, **"Retired Educators Vote"**. Also in Carroll County, Democratic incumbent Rep. Mike Smiddy has been a very strong supporter of concerns to retired teachers. House Speaker Mike Madigan refuses to back Rep. Smiddy who is from his own political party. For those IRTA members in Carroll County, please offer to help Neil Anderson and Mike Smiddy with their campaigns and identify yourselves as IRTA members.

Thank you to the approximate 7,000 retired educators who have contributed to the Legal Defense Fund. As for the remaining 93,000 retired educators who have yet to help, **we need your financial support as the LDF will be drained before the end of the year due to paying for the lawsuit that is fighting to keep your pension benefits.**

Both republican and democratic candidates that support full funding of the pension systems, cost of living adjustments and retirees' health insurance are coming under attack this election year. Tens of millions of dollars are being funneled to campaigns to oppose our endorsed candidates that are fighting for us. **Please donate to our IRTA Political Action Committee and protect your retirement benefits by donating just \$1.00 per month through the pension deduction. It just may be the best investment you will ever make.**

**Questions Legislatures have been asked to address at our October meeting.**

**(1) Retiree Health Insurance:**

The State of Illinois contributes less than 20% of the cost of a retired teacher’s health insurance premium. In a recent ruling, the Illinois Supreme Court declared that all pension benefits, including health insurance, cannot be diminished or impaired.

**Do you insist that the state should continue to pay its portion of the TRIP premium?**

**(2) Pension Funding Indebtedness:**

Over the last sixty years, Illinois has paid on average only 55% of what actuaries determined was necessary to fully fund the Teachers Retirement System (TRS). In contrast, over this same time period, educators had withheld from every pay check 100% of what they were told to contribute. Due to a lack of revenue, the state has paid for public services by not making its required contributions to the pension systems. The State’s “borrowing” has caused this massive under-funded pension crisis. As a result, almost 80% of the state’s \$3.4B annual payment to TRS is going to “catch-up” what Illinois did not contribute to the pension systems over the last sixty years.

**Do you support full funding of the Teachers Retirement System?**

**(3) Contractual and Constitutional Protections:**

The Pension Code as stated in the Illinois Constitution is an enforceable, contractual relationship so benefits cannot be diminished or impaired. The Pension Code includes retired teachers’ pensions and cost of living adjustment (COLA).

**Do you support any reduction in retired teachers’ pensions or COLA, or do you find any reduction to be unconstitutional? Will you oppose a constitutional amendment to eliminate the contract protection clause from the Illinois Constitution? What does your oath of office to defend the Constitution mean to you?**

**(4) Your Pledge:**

If you tell us today that you won’t vote for any legislation which would diminish our retirement benefits in any way, and then at a later date you are pressured by your party, or the powers that be to vote for such legislation, **how will you resolve this?**  
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**Ogle-Lee Scholarship**

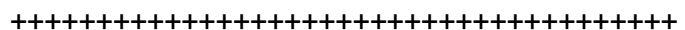
The Ogle-Lee Retired Teachers Association – IRTA presented a \$750.00 Scholarship to Brianna Koenig from Stillman Valley. Brianna will be a senior at Illinois State University and will spend her last year student teaching Math with freshman and sophomores in high school. She will attend our July 2015 meeting.

We had 11 very outstanding applicants for this scholarship and would like to see this as an ongoing project. If you would like to donate to our scholarship fund, please write a check to Ogle-Lee RTA and indicate it is for the scholarship, or you could make a donation to the scholarship fund in memory of a teacher.

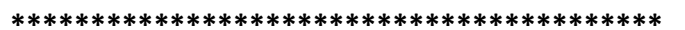


**2014-2015 Ogle-Lee RTA OFFICERS**

|                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Co-Presidents       | Jean Hoff       |
|                     | Jean Whipple    |
| Vice-President      | Ferol Empen     |
| Secretary           | Elke Grennan    |
| Treasurer           | Linda Kenney    |
| Membership          | Richard Wood    |
| Member Benefits     | Phillip Bratta  |
| Legislative         | Keith Erhart    |
| Contact Coordinator | Marvel Blomberg |
| Historian           | Loretta Bell    |
| Review of Books     | Gerald Wine     |



**Marvel Blomberg has agreed to take over the position as Contact Coordinator. She will begin these duties in 2015. Thank you, Marvel!**



**We are very happy to welcome the following new members to the Ogle-Lee RTA:**

- Jan Dietrich
- Karole Glaser
- Lisa Gardner-Kinsella
- Charles Kinsella
- Carla Miller
- Jody Ryder
- Alice Shafer

IRTA and Ogle-Lee your link to Springfield  
Dick Wood  
P. O. Box 156  
Leaf River, IL 61047

