

EARTA

Elgin Area Retired Teachers Association / IRTA

January / February 2014

Serving Retired Teachers of Districts 300, 301, 303, and U-46

The Jogger

GENERAL MEETING, FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2014

Holiday Inn and Suites, 495 Airport Road, Elgin, IL 60123

847-488-9000

11:30 a.m. - SOCIAL HOUR (Bennigan's cash bar). 12:00 noon - LUNCHEON

MENU

Champagne Chicken, Tossed Garden Salad with Assorted Dressings, Artisan Rolls and Butter, Whipped Potatoes, Chefs Choice Vegetable and Chefs Choice of Chocolate Dessert. Coffee, Hot Tea and Iced Tea.

Reservations are due by Friday, February 14, 2014. Please make check(s) payable to EARTA for \$ 22.25 per person (includes meal, tax and gratuity) and send to Barb McGee, 12728 Williams Road, Genoa, IL 60135. If it is necessary to contact Barb her home phone number is 815-784-5186. **It is very important to get your reservation(s) and check(s) to Barb McGee as soon as possible.** Hope to see you on the 21st.

February Program

Judy Hunnicutt and Anne Gorham, are presenters from the Art Institute's "Institute Insight" programs. We will be having a slide presentation, "The Greatest Show on Earth". It will focus on some of the great French Impressionists. I am certain it will be a lively and informative program. The program will be thirty minutes.

A Few (Subjective) Words from Irene . . .

I'm Irene Wedemeyer, your EARTA President for the next two years. I thought you deserved a few words of introduction.

In 2009, I retired from Wayne Elementary School, U-46, after teaching my full 38 year career there--initially as a 4th but mostly as a 6th grade teacher. My husband, David, is also a U-46 retired teacher/administrator. Our two children and their spouses are currently teachers. (You can imagine the great family conversations we have!) We became first-time grandparents almost a year ago. David and I own a motorhome, and are National Park geeks.

Some of you may remember my decades of involvement in the Elgin Teachers Association. I am proud to have had that opportunity to work with and advocate for teachers. I believe this is a continuation of that work -- just a little different perspective. Many of us naively believed as new teachers that educators need not be involved in politics and we, in fact, would be protected and admired by the powers that be. My involvement in the Association dispelled both of those idealistic notions and the politics of this last year have reminded me (Oh, so emphatically!) that, even in retirement, I must remain vigilant and politically active.

One of the ways to do this is to be a member of an organization – Illinois Retired Teachers Association/Elgin Area Retired Teachers Association – that is a watchdog for retired teachers. But, EARTA offers much more than that. It is a wonderful social network—a way to be connected with colleagues in a vibrant, caring atmosphere. EARTA has opportunities ranging from a bi-monthly newsletter to luncheons, from community outreach to excursions to see world-class theatre productions. You choose what suits you best,

I believe in traditions. I also believe in rejuvenating, growing, moving in new directions. You may find that I do things a little differently from time to time.

I look forward to serving as your EARTA President. Don't hesitate to contact me with ideas, questions or plain old gripes.

**MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE
NOVEMBER 15, 2013 GENERAL MEETING**

EARTA Luncheon & General Meeting

Nov. 15, 2013

Randall Oaks Country Club

11:30 am – Social

12:00 pm – Lunch

In President Sändra Woolcott 's absence, Mick Williams welcomed the group at 12:00.

Lunch was served following the invocation by Mick Williams.

Call to Order: Mick called the business meeting to order at 12:49 pm.

Officers' Reports:

Secretary – Irene Wedemeyer The minutes to the September 20, 2013 General Meeting, as printed in the Jogger, were accepted without objection.

Treasurer – Jean Jederman. The Treasurer's Report, as printed in the Jogger, was filed for audit.

Corresponding Secretary – Kay Lincicome. A reminder was given to send Kay names of any members who may be in need of a card (illnesses, hospitalizations, etc.).

Committee Reports:

Social/Charity – Coral Reinert - Coral reported that the Supper Club will meet again on December 9 at 5:30 at Hooper's in South Elgin: all are welcome to attend.

Coral also reported on the first meeting of a new EARTA group, Epicurean Adventures. The Group planned their next outing. They will have dinner at the Anvil Club on December 18 at 6pm. Everyone is welcome. If you would like to attend, please let Coral know ASAP (1-847-742-4330). Another Epicurean Adventure outing will be on January 21, 2014. Please let Karen Patterson know if you'll be attending.

Community Participation– Cindy Lange Toys were collected today for the Elgin Area Holiday Toy Give Away.

IRTA Convention – Marilyn Foster, immediate past IRTA Region 5 Director, reported on our participation at the IRTA Convention. 13 EARTA members were delegates and Marilyn thanked them all for their work on our behalf. Marilyn urged all EARTA members to donate money to the IRTA Legal Defense Fund.

Marilyn also introduced our new Region 5 Director, Coral Reinert.

Legislation – Cliff Olson - Cliff passed out a printed report (report on file.) Our pensions continue to be under attack. Cliff urged all members to remain vigilant and be ready to take action when needed. Cliff encouraged all members to donate to the EARTA Legal Defense Fund. Adrienne then presented Cliff with a gift to honor him as our EARTA Teacher of the Year.

Membership/Director - David Brown—Dave provided an explanation of annual and life memberships. Mick reminded everyone to send change of addresses (including SnowBird addresses) to David.

Old Business/Discussion:

Mick put out the call for a Jogger Editor. Thus is a new position on our Board. Any interested member should contact Mick or Irene Wedemeyer.

Mick urged all members to pay attention to Voter Voice and news from Springfield regarding pensions.

New Business: In Sändra's absence, Mick read an excerpt from the Jogger that Sändra had written. Adrienne presented the following slate of officers to the membership.

Corresponding Secretary—Kay Lincicome

Treasurer—Jean Jederman

President—Irene Wedemeyer

Adrienne moved (Carolyn Jarvis, second) to accept the slate of officers presented. Motion passed.

Adrienne then installed the new officers.

The next General Membership Meeting & Luncheon is February 21, 2014. (Place TBA.) (11:30-social, 12:00-lunch, 1:00-program)

Adjournment: Seeing no further business, Irene Wedemeyer adjourned the meeting at 1:30.

Program – Shelly Singer explained that our original program for today (Gary Newman presenting a picture travelogue of Scandinavia) has been moved to our Feb. meeting. Instead, Cliff Olsen presented information regarding the new MediCare Advantage Plans. After his very informative presentation, Cliff took questions from members.

Irene Wedemeyer Secretary

SOCIAL EVENTS:

Supper Club: We met on Monday, January 13th, at Hooper's Bar and Grill. Everyone enjoyed catching up on the news from over the holidays and are now looking forward to meeting again on February 10th. This time we will gather at about 4:00 p.m., instead of 5:30, as David Brown would like us to help

prepare the new Directories for mailing. If you haven't joined us before, please mark your calendar to attend and see what you've been missing!

Epicurean Adventure: The eighteen EARTA members who joined us for dinner at the Anvil Club on December 18th had a great time. The food was delicious, but we missed the popcorn!

New Tour: On Sunday, May 18th, 2014, we will go to the Fireside Dinner Theatre to see **Fiddler on the Roof**. Transportation, tickets to the show, and a fabulous dinner will all be included. Please make your reservations early as we only have 40 places. We will meet at Country Inn Suites (side of Jimmy's Charhouse) 2270 Point Blvd, Elgin, IL, at 12:15 p.m., with coach leaving at 12:30 p.m. (Remember there is a \$2.00 per car parking fee at the Suites.) and return about 9:00 p.m. The total cost will be \$95.00. Please remit your check made out to the EARTA and mail to Coral Reinert, 801 N. McLean Blvd., Unit 254, Elgin, IL, 60123, by **April 18th**.

Epicurean Adventures continues in January when we go to the Urban Grille in Geneva for the 21st of January at 6:00 PM. Urban Grille is located at 6th Street and Route 38. They accept separate checks. Let Irene Wedemeyer know if you're attending. 847.697.5434 or iwedemeyer@wowway.com See you there.

IMPORTANT: Please let Susan Frederitzi (Corresponding Secretary), Page 31, know when there is an illness or death among our membership. Also let Jean Jederman or David Brown know about deaths.

IMPORTANT: Please be sure you have kept us up-to-date about any changes in your address, phone number, and e-mail addresses. Our web chairperson, June Preucil, recently did a check for the accuracy of our listed e-mail address and a number of them came back as no longer viable.

Board of Directors

We are pleased to announce that Kay Lincicome has agreed to fill in the unexpired term as our Recording Secretary and Susan Frederitzi will be taking over the unexpired term as our Corresponding Secretary. Both of these people have already given a great deal of their time and talents to our organization and we are thrilled that they will continue to serve EARTA by accepting these positions.

Constitution/Bylaws Amendments

The Board passed 2 amendments to our Constitution/Bylaws.

Amendment 1

Article V, Section 2, b. (3) will now read: (3) New Members. Dues of new members joining between April 1 and December 31 shall be waived to the following fiscal year.

Amendment 2

Policies 3. C. will have a sentence added to now read: C. The Retired Teacher of the Year will be announced at the June meeting. In the year of an IRTA Convention, the EARTA Retired Teacher of the Year will also be our IRTA Honoree.

Defend Your Pension

Our parent organization, IRTA, has filed suit challenging the constitutionality of Senate Bill 1, which decimates our retirements, cost of living adjustments and plans for a secure future! The cost of such litigation is huge and dues dollars may NOT be used. Please contribute to the Legal Defense Fund. Write checks to IRTA, note Legal Defense Fund on the memo line and mail to IRTA, 620 North Walnut Street, Springfield, IL 62702. You may also donate online with a credit card at www.irtaonline.org

Scholarship Opportunity

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) Foundation awards one \$1500 scholarship per IRTA Area per year. The recipient must either be a resident of IL or must have graduated from an IL high school, be a sophomore or junior in college and be enrolled full-time in an accredited teacher education program. Information and application forms may be found on the IRTA website at www.irtaonline.org. All forms must be postmarked by March 7.

Remember all four (4) Kane County hospitals accept Medicare with access to Humana and United Healthcare as per Janice Bonda, seminar presenter at the Elgin Center. Your new insurance cards are arriving or have been received and coverage begins February 1, 2014. Optima Rx is the prescription mail order provider for UHC and Osco is in the PPO even though it is not listed in your book printed in September 2013. For mail order, you will need new prescription script to order.

**THE JOGGER / EARTA
P.O. BOX 5515
ELGIN, ILLINOIS 60121**

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Dated Material

Return Service Requested

Jan 2014: Legislative Report

Over 41,000 TRS annuitants made a health care election. Under 2,000 did not return a form so they are being called by TRS to confirm their final choice. Do not give out personal information to anyone purporting to be from United Health Care or someone else. They are not making calls! For those who made a choice, the different amount taken will show up on your March 3, 2014, pension check. The 3% benefit increase will begin with the February 3, 2014 and continue through the rest of the year. Direct deposits continue to be made on the first of the month.

Our pension "reform" lawsuit was first filed December 27, 2013, and IRTA and the school administrators filed in Cook County Circuit Court to uphold the pension protection clause of the Illinois Constitution.

The Retired State Employees Association (RSEA) and the Illinois State Employees Association sued on Thursday, January 2, 2014, and filed in Sangamon County. A couple of hours later, the Illinois State Employees Association Retirees (ISEA-R) filed and they requested class action for SERS (State Employees Retirement System of Illinois), SURS (State Universities Retirement System of Illinois), GARS (General Assembly Retirement System), and TRS with a minimum of 20 (twenty) years of service.

All three lawsuits make a diminishment claim against the AAI (COLA), the age change, the salary cap and differences past those commonalities. The RSEA case claims a violation of the equal protection clause, since the judges are not included. ISEA-R and RSEA include an escrow request in case of a federal appeal under contract law.

I expect, IEA, IFT, SEIU and AFSCME to join in the lawsuits at some point. Actives are also impacted since their contracts began on day one of their employment. Federal contract law, bargaining law, and ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) requirements impact the unions especially since Illinois opted out of Social Security. Actuary requirements, reporting, and recordkeeping are impacted and are an additional expense necessary to protect the retirement assets of annuitants. Retirees took reduced incomes and contributed to their accounts and now the government wants to pick their pockets ... taking money out of their account. At the same time, the corporations want more corporate welfare with "Trickle Up" economics at the expense of retirees. Robber barons should be a thing of the past! Unfortunately, they have returned with a vengeance ... dare we call this practice economic fascism ... after all, the government is planning to take money out of your savings account on June 1, 2014.

Please continue to contribute to the Legal Defense Fund and make the \$1.00/month dues deduct to IRTA PAC (Political Action Committee).

Stay up-to-date and be ready for a Call To Action as there is certain to be legislative information concerning our pension system. As always, check the EARTA, IRTA and TRS websites.

Respectfully submitted,
Cliff Olson, EARTA Legislative Chair IRTA Legislative Committee