

DECEMBER 1, 2023

## CELEBRATE THE GIFT OF READING

The December meeting of the McLean County Retired Teachers unit will be held on Friday, December 1st at 10:00 a.m. at **the Calvary United Methodist Church, 1700 N. Towanda Avenue, Normal, IL.**

**PROGRAM:** We are excited about the coming holiday and the opportunity to share the gift of reading with each other. This is a change from our originally planned program because our presenter has a conflict. We hope to reschedule this speaker at a later time; however sharing a favorite book or story will make our time together meaningful. Please feel free to bring a book you have recently enjoyed so that we can whip around the room with cheerful conversation.

We regret that our vice president, Dian Nealey, has submitted her resignation due to health issues. We wish her the very best as she moves forward. Dian has brought many informative and entertaining programs to us for several years. We are most appreciative for her diligent attention. Thank you, Dian! Do stay in touch and visit us as often as you can!

Dian's resignation leaves a hole in the list of officers serving our unit. Please give serious thought to agreeing to fill this gap. Dian has left a folder with thorough notes including past programs and ideas for the future. Many of you are in other organizations, so if you have ideas for programs, do not hesitate to let us know. We will add your suggestions to our resource file.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Chair Sandy Dickson appreciates the response of everyone who has submitted renewal of their dues. Only a few of you need to send dues so that we are up to date.

**LEGISLATION:** Co-chairs Maria Millen and Joyce Cryer called attention to the fact that the *Invest in Kids* program that included 9,700 students, many of whom attended private schools, will end December 31, 2023. Illinois lawmakers adjourned from the fall veto session without renewing the controversial bill.

**IRTA:** Sandy, Maria Millen, Joyce Cryer, Patsy Sharrard and I attended the **IRTA** convention in Springfield on October 16 and 17. We were reminded once again about what a powerful organization we are. We have outstanding leadership, qualified financial leaders and over 42,000 dedicated members across the state and beyond. **IRTA** is a powerful voice in Springfield. **IRTA** is the **ONLY** organization whose sole purpose is to protect the pensions and benefits of retired teachers. Sandy also states that she always leaves the convention feeling reassured that our pensions and benefits are in good hands and that our **IRTA** leaders are really looking out for each and everyone of us. If you are not a member of **IRTA**, **PLEASE** consider joining.

Effective January 1, 2024, dues are \$50.00 annually. Dues-deduct is an option in monthly amounts of only \$3.50 a month (equal to \$42.00 annually, which is a savings in itself). Life dues are \$600.00. Annual recurring dues are \$46.00 per year. Sandy and I have opted to have our **IRTA** dues deducted from our pension check each month and count the \$3.50 per month a bargain. This is the first increase in **IRTA** dues in many years. Questions? Contact Marilyn Myers or Sandy Dickson.

Maria added convention notes, as well. \$6,380 was raised to support **IRTA Political Action Committee** initiatives. Without the support of local **IRTA** units and individual members, **IRTAPAC** could not make contributions to candidates running for local and state elective office. These contributions and endorsements of candidates make it possible for **IRTA** to be a voice at the Capitol when retiree pension and health benefits are being discussed.

**BYLAWS:** Sandy Dickson, Terry Mester, Joyce Werner and Marilyn Myers continue to tweak the wording of the **MCRTA** bylaws and hope to have a copy for members to review before the meeting in March, 2024.

**COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA):** Do you recall legislative action about ten (10) years ago when Senate Bill 1 was introduced? Passage of this bill would have changed the Illinois constitution, thereby eliminating our pension **COLA**. A law suit was then initiated by the **IRTA** and the **State University Annuitant Assn. (SUAA)**. Members of both organizations worked together tirelessly and hired a law firm to fight this change. As a result, the bill did not pass and you will see a positive difference in your pension check or automatic deposit in February, 2024. This is one more reason for you to consider being a member of **IRTA**. Online membership is easy. Please give membership serious thought. Go to [www.irtaonline.org](http://www.irtaonline.org)

**BENEVOLENCE:** We are continuing to share treats to the **YWCA** program. Be sure to bring healthy snacks to the meeting and they will be delivered right away. Thank you for your generosity.

**FUTURE MEETING DATES:** We will enjoy the holiday break before the meeting in March at which time member Eden Davis will lead us in a meaningful remembrance of friends and colleagues who have passed away from March, 2022 through March, 2023. Our unit members have found this time of remembrance very meaningful as we share stories of our time with fellow teachers.

The June meeting will be a **LUNCH AND LEARN** session. Details to be announced later.

Meanwhile, remember to bring a book or book title to the meeting Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. We look forward to seeing each of you.

Marilyn Myers 309-530-8157

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