

Coles County Retired Teachers NEWS

November 2011

Pension face-off looms on SB 512

According to news reports, Illinois House Minority Leader Tom Cross, R-Oswego, said he will be ready to call a bill to set up a three-tiered pension system for state workers during the second week of the legislature's veto session, which starts Nov. 8.

Cross said the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, a group of the city's top CEOs, has brokered a deal in which House Republicans would provide 30 votes for the pension bill, Senate Bill 512, and House Democrats would provide another 30. Sixty votes are needed for legislation to pass the House.

"We have 30," Cross said.

Senate President John Cullerton, D-Chicago, says the pension bill is unconstitutional, although he has not ruled out allowing a vote in his chamber.

The bill would offer current teachers, university employees and state workers three pension options: Stay in the current system but pay significantly more, go into a second tier for workers hired after Jan. 1 that has reduced benefits or choose a 401(k)-style defined contribution plan.

House Speaker Michael Madigan, D-Chicago, supports the Cross plan. Madigan, Cross and business groups representing Illinois' largest corporations say that, without changes, the money owed to the state pension systems will eat up an increasingly larger share of the state budget, crowding out other services.



In October, the Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation awarded nearly \$15,000 in grant money to several public school educators from Southern Illinois counties. This grant money will allow these educators to enrich their instruction with materials not otherwise available to them. Juanita Sherwood, CCRTA president, center, presents Brenda Foster, left, and Patti Murphy, right, teachers at Charleston Middle School, a \$416 grant for a project designed to foster a love of reading in middle school students while exploring the theme that all students are unique and different.

Popular team trivial pursuit returns for the November CCRTA meeting

After a couple of years hiatus, team trivial pursuit returns for this month's CCRTA meeting on November 8th.

Under the direction of fellow CCRTA member, **Vickie Baker**, members and guests attending will be randomly divided into teams

and indulge in a fun competition.

In the past, it has always been fun to see how each of the teams work together on the categories of

questions and each participant brings his or her special knowledge to the challenge.

The meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the LifeSpan Center.

Helping with refreshments this month will be **Jo and John Swick, Judi Heckel and Juanita Sherwood.**

**Have a safe,
healthy and
enjoyable
Thanksgiving**

*For each new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food, for love and friends,
For everything Thy goodness sends.*

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

George Stone honored at IRTA convention

Five members of our group attended the convention held on October 17th and 18th at the Hilton in Springfield.

It started shortly after noon on the 17th and ended mid-morning on the 18th. In years past, there had been proposals to add to the by-laws and/or constitution. Presentation, discussion, and voting on these in years past had taken a lot of time.

Our group was eligible to send six delegates since we have a large membership, but **Karen Stone, Bill and Madeline Van Keuren, and I** were the official delegates from CCRTA.

George Stone was in attendance, and he represented us, but he was also there as a member of the IRTA State Board and region representative. My husband also went along as a non-delegate.

The out-going president Phil Robbins did a good job of conducting things as he always has a good story or joke to tell, and his delivery is great.

The in-coming president is Gary Elmen from DuPage. His credentials look great, and he made a good impression in a short acceptance speech. We can look forward to good leadership of our state organization from him for the next two years.

There is a fundraiser for the IRTA Foundation to which locals donate "baskets" for a silent auction. Bill and Madeline put ours together. They gathered a lot of Amish foods that were canned or dried; it brought over \$70, a respectable amount. Only two or three others brought more than that. Thank you to the Van Keurens for taking care of that

task.

There are usually break-out sessions on the first afternoon. We tried to cover all four. The one on identity theft was wonderful. The other three were about computer use, especially building a website (which we already have), information about the health of the TRS, and reverse mortgages. They were timely issues.

George was honored by our group as our outstanding member. His picture and personal information was included in a Power-point presentation prior to the banquet; unit honorees were presented with a gift during the post-banquet festivities.

Congratulations to him, and a hearty thank-you for all that he has done for our group and the IRTA beyond our local.

It is good to have the conven-



Juanita Sherwood

tion out of the way. It is held every other year, in the odd-numbered years. We should always be sure to send representatives as this is one

way to keep in touch in person with what is going on with the group on the state level, and a way to network with others.

It is also a good way to become familiar with those who are elected to serve our organization on the state level, those who serve appointments such as Cynthia O'Neill and Bob Lyons, retired teachers themselves, who serve on the TRS board, and those who work in the state office. A committee on the state level plans the convention, and if you ever attend, you will find that it is well organized.

One way many of us keep in touch with some of those men-

tioned above is by e-mail. As president, I get emails from the state office which are intended to be passed along to the board as well as emails from Bob Lyons about what is going on with TRS.

One thing that we were urged to do at the convention was sign up for Voter Voice if you have access to a computer. It is a way our group lets legislators and other elected officials know how we feel about things that affect retired teachers. Let us know if you want to participate and need assistance with it. It may become very important to let elected officials know about our feelings in the coming months.

Thanks to **Kathy Hummel, her husband Dick, and Nancy Easter-Shick** for presenting our program in October. Local history is always of interest to our group.

Vickie Baker will present our program on November 8th. Be sure to put that on your calendar; her challenge is always fun.

Coles County Retired **Teachers Board**

President

Juanita Sherwood, 345-7997
jsherwood@consolidated.net

Vice President

Bill VanKeuren, 797-6313
wmv1000@yahoo.com

Secretary

Bonnie Tipword, 348-8175
catslady@peoplepc.com

Treasurer

Jo Swick, 234-3200
jksjs64@yahoo.com

Membership

Karen Stone, 234-8096
kageston@aol.com

Legislation

John Swick, 234-3200
jksjs64@yahoo.com

Retirement Education

Open

Member Benefits
Bill VanKeuren, 797-6313
wmv1000@yahoo.com

Information Services

George Stone, 234-8096
kageston@aol.com

Newsletter

Donald Starwalt, 345-4303
drwalt@charleston.k12.il.us

History and Archives

Candy Tate, 234-8320
cdret1070@hotmail.com

Courtesy and Outreach

Jill Bell-Adkins, 235-5791
Pat Randolph, 235-1537

Social Committee

Eloise Buffenmeyer, 234-9859
Mary Lou Gaskill, 345-3798
Marie Nielsen, 345-4582
Marge Meenen, 345-5496

Website manager

Madeline Van Keuren, 797-6313
mvankeuren@frontiernet.net

See this newsletter online at
www.colescountyrta.org

CCRTA Unit 55 is an affiliate of
the Illinois Retired Teachers
Association, 620 North Walnut,
Springfield, IL 62702

Historical murder mystery entertains members

Bill Van Keuren introduced the October meeting program, "The Unsolved Ellington Murder Mystery," presented by Dick and Kathy Hummel and Nancy Easter-Shick.

Kathy and her daughter wrote a young adult novel about the murder and Nancy is in the process of writing a book about the murder.

Dick was in costume as Nathan Ellington who has come back to tell the following "true story" because there was a miscarriage of justice.

There is a small pistol in the County Clerk's office in the Coles County Courthouse and it is the pistol that killed Nathan Ellington. He was shot 156 years ago this month by his son-in-law Adolphus (Dolph) Monroe.

Nathan Ellington, an early founder in Coles County, held many offices and was the first Coles County Clerk.

In 1852 Dolph Monroe came from Kentucky. He had relatives locally including Byrd Monroe and came to seek his fortune.

Dolph opened a drug store on the square and an oyster bar just off the square on "whiskey row."

Nathan liked Dolph who was a friend of his son, J.D., but his wife, Fannie, did not.

The Monroe family was very prominent and Fannie was jealous so she took it out on Dolph.

The Ellington's lived on the "dog leg" of 11th Street. The property went from Lincoln to 18th Street to Harrison and encompassed the High School, Trojan Hill, and Los Potrillos. The first Coles County Fair was

held on their land.

Dolph met Nathan and Fannie's daughter, Nancy. They fell in love and asked permission to marry. Nathan agreed, but Fannie said no and Nathan reluctantly went along with her when they asked again four or five months later.

Because Nancy was pregnant, Nathan and Fannie agreed to the marriage. Their granddaughter, May, was born a few months later and Fannie's dislike of Dolph increased. She didn't approve of his influence on J.D. encouraging him to gamble and bet on horse races.

She also encouraged Nancy to leave Dolph and goaded Nathan to change his will in October of 1855 to cut Nancy out if she didn't leave Dolph.

On October 18, J.D. was confronted by Byrd Monroe because J.D. owed him money. Dolph was implicated, but he denied it. On Saturday, Dolph and Nathan had a confrontation on the square about the debt. They both went to Byrd Monroe's store on the square to settle the dispute, but he wasn't there. The two men started arguing and accused each other of spreading lies.

Nathan complained about how Dolph treated his daughter. Nathan accosted Dolph with his cane. Dolph pulled a pistol from his pocket which he carried because he felt intimidated by the Ellington family and friends. Dolph fired and the bullet grazed Nathan's head.

Nathan pushed Dolph to the ground and began choking him. Dolph had a matching pistol in his other pocket. He pulled the pistol and shot Nathan in the chest. Nathan lingered for 7 or 8 days and died of blood poisoning.



Before he died, Nathan told his family that Dolph was just protecting himself and he shouldn't be hung. The family never told the court.

Nancy knew what her father wanted, but she was not allowed to tell anyone. Within three months, Dolph was tried and found guilty in days and ordered to be hanged on February 13.

The town doctor went to the governor who gave Dolph a reprieve. However, people had come from all over, especially on the railroad, to see the hanging.

People were upset that it wasn't going to take place. Some tried to stop the crowd, but the crowd went to the jail, which was where the post office is now and forcefully took Dolph to the courthouse lawn which was much bigger then and had willow trees.

They tried to hang him from a willow tree, but it didn't work. They then took him along Jackson to the Town Branch and hung him there. They drove his body around the square in a wagon. On February 15, Nancy and the doctor retrieved the body and took Dolph to Kentucky to be buried under a willow tree as he requested in his will.

Dolph gave all his money to Monroe relatives, because he thought Nancy and May would be provided for. He also asked Nancy not to raise May in her mother's house. Nancy had to stay with her mother for a while,

but she married a cousin from Virginia, and she and May moved there. Tragically, May had a club foot which Fannie thought was punishment for Nancy marrying Dolph.

Nancy died young and was buried in Virginia. Fannie and J.D. lived for 11 years and died within a week of each other. They were believed to be suicides. May lived many years and was buried by Nancy.

During the business meeting, Bill VanKeuren said there is open enrollment because some companies complained they lost people because of the controversy in July. You can only change carriers. If you don't want to change, you don't have to do anything. The present insurance is good until June 30, 2012. Letters and postcards have been sent from different groups.

The IRTA convention was October 17 and 18 and there were no constitutional amendments to discuss.

The Executive Board Meeting was October 25 at the Lifespan Center.

Regarding member concerns: Jo Swick had knee surgery and is now recovering at home.

George Stone passed out fliers for the Holiday Open House at the Gannaway House from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on November 12. The Exchange Club of Mattoon is having a pulled pork sandwich supper from 4:30 to 7:00 at the Eagles Club on November 14.

The nominating committee announced that Vicki Nevius will run for vice president and Bill VanKeuren has agreed to be the candidate for president. Voting will be at November 8th meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie Tipsword, secretary

Big Money Is Supporting Legislators Who Are Attacking Illinois Pensions and Educators!



Don't Delay – A Donation to IRTA Political Action Committee is in Your Self-Interest

The Governor and legislators have negligently underfunded pensions and then used that accumulated debt to scapegoat retired, current, and future teachers and state employees. *The Chicago Tribune* continually runs editorials and letters to the editor seeking to gut public employee pensions. The problems are not our fault. We paid our statutory contributions!

So far, our opponents have been successful at decimating a retirement plan for new employees. Now the media and certain business groups with vested interests are taking aim at the retirement benefits of current employees. If they have not yet attacked current retirees, it is NOT because they don't want to.

Fight back against these well-funded attackers. Donate to our IRTA Political Action Committee and protect the status of retired teachers by donating just \$1.00 a month through pension deduction. IRTA has over 50 years of solid accomplishments in pension and benefit improvements for retired Illinois educators. Help Us in Our Fight! Mail the donation form below to IRTA, 620 N. Walnut St., Springfield, IL 62702.

IRTA's Accomplishments Include . . .

2010

IRTA Voter Voice efforts (over 3,000 e-mails were sent) prevented the General Assembly from passing legislation that would have allowed the State of Illinois to issue IOUs to TRS for its 2011 pension payment.

2009

IRTA efforts prevented a 25% health insurance (TRIP) premium increase for out-of-state retirees.

2007-2009

IRTA grassroots efforts assisted TRS in obtaining the required appropriation certified by the TRS Board of Trustees under the 50 year funding plan.

Please detach the form below and mail to IRTA.

IRTAPAC Deduction Form



620 North Walnut Street • Springfield, IL 62702 • 1-800-728-4782
e-mail: irta@irtaonline.org • webpage: www.irtaonline.org

IRTAPAC Dues Deduction – I hereby authorize the Teachers' Retirement System to deduct my IRTAPAC contribution in monthly installments at an initial rate of \$1.00.

(Signature Required)

Social Security # _____

(Required)

Please print or use your return address label.

NAME LAST	FIRST	MIDDLE	DOB
ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
PHONE ()	E-MAIL		
			RETIREMENT YEAR

Sign Up Today!

Please be sure to include your signature and social security number.