

PARTA

SOUNDINGS

MARCH 2015

Peoria Area Retired Teachers' Association

MEETING

**March 2, 2015
11:30 A.M.
Barrack's Cater Inn
\$12.00**

GREETERS

-  Jean O'Mara-Thieman
-  Judy Cagle

INVOCATION

-  Jeanne St. Julian

PLEDGE

-  Jeanne St. Julian

LUNCHEON

- Corn Beef
- Cabbage
- Assorted Salads
- Assorted Desserts



PROGRAM

ICC: Scholarships & Programs for Seniors



Elaine Goslin
Alumni Relations



Stephanie Holmes
Resource Development Manager

Terry Knapp
PARTA Scholarship Chair

MEETING

Dave Barnwell
PARTA President
Chairperson

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings! Our February meeting was a wonderful way to start the new calendar year. The Peoria High students put on a great program. Thanks to all who braved the weather that wintery day.

There are some important events occurring in March. Some of you will be able to vote in the upcoming District 150 election. There are two seats open. At this critical time, be sure to do your research on the candidates and their positions and VOTE! Also, there may be news from the Illinois Supreme Court that will affect all of our pensions.

This month's program will feature our ICC Scholarship highlighting what it has done for past recipients and how we can expand our scholarship assistance.

Don't forget to bring a fellow retired educator to one of our future meetings.



Dave Barnwell, PARTA President

Upcoming Meetings – Bring a Friend



April 6: Gang Alternative / Prevention Programs
Carl Cannon, ELITE Founder and Sergeant James Chiola, Peoria Police Department

May 4: Sports Stories

Kirk Wessler
Peoria Journal Star Sports Editor/Columnist



June 1: Culture Change Coalition

One-Bring-One Membership Drive!

Thoughts for Today

I am beginning to learn that it is the sweet, simple things of life which are the real ones after all. ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder

It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get up. ~ Vince Lombardi



Roger Hampton, Soundings Editor



SOUNDINGS

PARTA LUNCHEON MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 2, 2015

PARTA president Dave Barnwell welcomed everyone, especially the Peoria High School students. Patti Monks led the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the Invocation. There were 72 members present – a great number given the weather conditions.

After the luncheon, we enjoyed an excellent presentation on the Civil War from members of the Peoria High School Orchestra, led by Jason Warner. The presentation included a PowerPoint, narration, and music.

Dave opened the business meeting.

- The minutes in the Soundings were approved as written.
- The Treasurer's Report and budget for 2015 were on the table. Eric Johnson said the results of the audit showed that Shirley Horwedel kept a record of everything that came in and went out.
- John Rathbun said he is still collecting dues.
- Frances Farragher reported the passing of three members.

- Terry Knapp said collections for the Scholarship Fund would be taken next month. Donors will match funds up to \$500.

- Roger said the IRTA Region 9 director has resigned. If you're interested in the opening, see him. In February, retirees will receive our 3% COLA raise, and IRTA should be thanked for that. IRTA has spent over \$500,000 to defend our pensions. The lawsuit is going to the Supreme Court in March and more contributions to the Legal Defense Fund are needed.

- Helen Dunn has done an excellent job as PARTA historian. She has resigned that position and therefore PARTA will need someone else to volunteer. Helen said that she will assist the new historian for six months.

- Ann Winget left index cards on the tables for those who haven't filled one out yet to submit five things about themselves. Dave thanked Ann for her variety of programs. In March, our program will be ICC talking about Scholarships and programs for seniors. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted, Kathy Simpson, Recording Secretary



NEW 2015 PARTA DIRECTORY

**If your information in the new PARTA Directory is incorrect,
PLEASE CONTACT JOHN RATHBUN
so that the PARTA database can be kept current.**

PHONE: 309.745.8375 - EMAIL: genrebun@aol.com

George Gibons	Deceased: July 1, 2014	Carol Johnson	Deceased: January 9, 2015
Cathy Beres	Deceased: December 15, 2014	Beth Mikesell	Deceased: February 4, 2015

So long as the memory of certain beloved friends lives in my heart,
I shall say that life is good. ~ Helen Keller

We're RICH!

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver in the Hair • Gold in the Teeth • Crystals in the Kidneys • Sugar in the Blood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead in the Buttocks • Iron in the Arteries • An inexhaustible supply of Natural Gas. |
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We NEVER thought we'd accumulate SUCH WEALTH!

SOUNDINGS

Governor Bruce Rauner delivered his 2015 State of the State Address on Wednesday, February 4, 2015. He never uttered the word "pension" in his speech, but the topic was covered in his handout. Two items referred to pensions:



- Pursue permanent pension relief through a constitutional amendment.
- Protect historically accrued state pension benefits for retirees and current workers, while moving all current workers into the Tier 2 pension plan and/or a 401(k) for their future work. Police and firefighters should receive separate special consideration.

New Case Studies Find Increased Costs When States Switch from Pensions to Individual Accounts

The experiences of Alaska, Michigan, and West Virginia Offer Cautionary Examples to Policymakers



A series of new case studies finds that states that shifted retirement plans from defined benefit (DB) pension plans to defined contribution (DC) 401(k)-type individual accounts experienced higher costs. The case studies also indicate that the DB to DC switch exacerbated rather than solved any pension underfunding issues, and employees faced increased levels of retirement insecurity.

Case Studies of State Pension Plans that Switched to Defined Contribution Plans, by the National Institute on Retirement Security, presents summaries of changes in three states that made the switch from a DB pension to DC accounts. The case studies examine key issues that impact pension plans, including demographic changes, the cost of providing benefits, actuarially required contributions (ARC), plan funding levels and retirement security for employees.

The case studies indicate that the best way for a state to address any pension underfunding issue is to implement a responsible funding policy with full annual required contributions, and for states to evaluate assumptions and funding policies over time, making any appropriate adjustments.

Source: www.nirsonline.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=879

It's what you learn *after* you know it all that counts. ~ John Wooden

The Illinois General Assembly in Action

To watch either the House or Senate chambers in action, you can follow along at www.ilga.gov under the Audio/Video tab.



A retired PARTA member filled out the registration form at her doctor's office. After the address, the form asked for "Zip." She wrote, "Not bad for my age!"



SOUNDINGS

According to a media analysis, TRS currently ranks 40th, based on assets, among United States pension systems, both public and private, having a net position of \$45.8 billion at the end of fiscal year 2014.

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However, if the System had been properly funded since its inception in 1939, TRS would be among the 10 largest U.S. systems. These facts underscore the extent of the problem.

HISTORICAL UNDERFUNDING

Most of the TRS unfunded liability is due to insufficient State contributions accumulated since 1939. Because State contributions annually failed to meet actuarial requirements, the largest share of the annual State contribution is dedicated to paying off the unfunded liability.

TRS Financial Highlights for FY2014

- The net position of TRS at the end of FY14 was \$45.8 billion.
- During FY14, the net position of TRS increased \$6.0 billion.
- Total investment gain was \$6.8 billion, compared to an investment gain of \$4.6 billion in FY13, an increase of \$2.2 billion.



TRS Investment Performance (<i>net of fees</i>)				
	1 year	3 years	5 years	10 years
Annualized Return	17.4%	10.1%	13.2%	7.3%

Guests for Dinner – A Daughter’s Prayer

A family was having guests to dinner. At the table, the mother turned to her six-year-old daughter and says, "Dear, would you like to say the blessing?"
"I wouldn't know what to say," replies the little girl.
"Just say what you hear Mommy say, sweetie."
Her daughter takes a deep breath, bows her head, and solemnly says, "Dear Lord, why did I invite all these people to dinner?"



The psychology instructor had just finished a lecture on mental health and was giving an oral test. Speaking specifically about manic depression, she asked, "How would you diagnose a patient who walks back and forth yelling at the top of his lungs one minute, then sits in a chair weeping uncontrollably the next?" A young man in the rear raised his hand and answered, "A basketball coach?"

When you think a terrible call was made during the game,
just remember that official rule books are not made in Braille!



A certain basketball player was explaining to his coach why he appeared nervous at practice: "My sister's expecting a baby, and I don't know if I'm going to be an uncle or an aunt." (Documented 1982)

SOUNDINGS

Defined Contribution Plans – NOT an Answer for Illinois

The pension reform plan outlined in your January 20 editorial, "Our View: Plan B for pension reform," is erroneous and misleading in several respects. Most glaringly, it is grossly misinformed to declare that none of the state's current annual pension contribution addresses the unfunded liability.

This year, less than 25% of the \$3.4 billion state contribution to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) is for the cost of pensions. More than 75% of the state's contribution is dedicated to the unfunded liability created by decades of underfunding by state government.

Since the lion's share of TRS's \$104 billion total liability is owed to retired and older teachers, closing the existing plan would

still leave a significant unfunded debt to be repaid. Further, prudent practice would require that this debt be paid down much more quickly than the 30-year time period that is noted in your editorial. This will increase costs related to the current system in the near term, before you even consider the cost of the contribution the state would make to the new defined contribution plan you propose. Also, you must take into account the documented, historic failure of defined contribution plans as a primary source of retirement income that adequately prepare people for their post-career needs.

Simplistic proposals and poorly researched conclusions do not make a useful contribution to the debate over serious policy issues that affect us all in Illinois.



Letter to the Editor: Dick Ingram, Executive Director Teachers' Retirement System

Source: www.daily-chronicle.com/2015/01/21/letter-defined-contribution-plans-not-answer-for-illinois/ar6q52n/

COMMON SENSE – JUST SAYIN'

✓ COMMON SENSE is like deodorant. The people who need it most, NEVER USE IT!

✓ If it is called COMMON SENSE, why is it so rare?

✓ COMMON SENSE is NOT a gift; it's a punishment because you have to deal with everyone who doesn't have it!

✓ COMMON SENSE is now an endangered species.



POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS HELP TO CREATE A POSITIVE LIFE

By reading affirmations daily, negative thoughts of fear, resentment, anger and doubt begin to be replaced with positive thoughts.

Try putting some affirmations on 3x5 cards and read them two or three times a day.

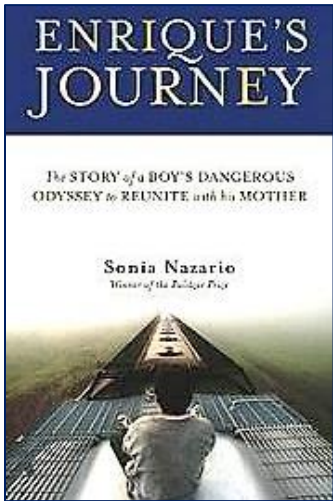
Life is a joy filled with delightful surprises. It is always too early to give up on your goals.

I exercise *religiously*.

I do one push-up and then say, "Amen!"



SOUNDINGS



Read the book
and get involved!

Presented by
Peoria Public Library
& Common Place

Peoria Reads! has announced that the next community-wide read will be *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with his Mother* by Pulitzer Prize winner Sonia Nazario. A series of book discussions and events will be held in April and all are encouraged to read *Enrique's Journey* and talk about it with others.

More information may be found at: peoriareads.org

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE (OLLI)

OLLI is an organization whose members, age 50 and older, want to keep learning and stay active as they reach and enjoy retirement. Participants enjoy a diverse collection of year-round programs.

OLLI at Bradley has nearly 1,100 Peoria-area members who are enjoying the best of life-after-50 as they participate in events designed just for them.



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| ➤ LECTURES | ➤ CINEMA | ➤ CINEMA CONVERSATIONS |
| ➤ CLASSES | ➤ STUDY GROUPS | ➤ TRIPS (Local, Regional and Multi-Day) |

For information: call 677.3900 or go online to www.bradley.edu/olli

THINGS I'VE LEARNED FROM MY SON

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you hear the toilet flush and the words "Uh-oh," it's already too late. • "Play-Doh" and "microwave" should never be used in the same sentence. • You should not throw baseballs up when the ceiling fan is on. • The glass in windows doesn't stop a baseball hit by a ceiling fan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No matter how much Jell-O you put in a swimming pool you still can't walk on water. • A king size waterbed holds enough water to fill a 2,000 square foot house 4 inches deep. • Certain Legos will pass through the digestive tract of a six-year-old. • Always look in the oven before you turn it on. |
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THE MIND OF A SIX-YEAR-OLD IS AMAZING!!!



Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.

Anyone who keeps learning stays young.

The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.

~ Henry Ford

SOUNDINGS

FRAUD ALERT: If you're thinking about giving to a charity, do your research to avoid fraudsters who try to take advantage of your generosity. Especially this time of year, there are many fraudulent solicitations of donations to charities or fundraiser campaigns.

AVOID any Charity or Fundraiser that:

- Refuses to provide detailed information about its identity, mission, costs, and how the donation will be used.
- Won't provide proof that a contribution is tax deductible.
- Asks for donations in cash or asks you to wire money.
- Thanks you for a pledge you don't remember making.
- Uses a name that closely resembles that of a better-known, reputable organization.
- Uses high-pressure tactics like trying to get you to donate immediately, without giving you time to think about it and do your research.
- Offers to send a courier or overnight delivery service to collect the donation immediately.
- Guarantees sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution. By law, you never have to give a donation to be eligible to win a sweepstakes.



Charity Checklist:



Take the following precautions to make sure your donation benefits the people and organizations you want to help.

- ASK for detailed information about the charity, including name, address, and telephone number.
- ASK if the caller is a paid fundraiser. If so, ask:
 - The name of the charity they represent
 - The percentage of your donation that will go to the charity
 - How much will go to the actual cause to which you're donating
 - How much will go to the fundraiser
- Keep a record of your donations.
- CALL the charity. Find out if the organization is aware of the solicitation and has authorized the use of its name.
- NEVER send cash donations. For security and tax purposes, it's best to pay by check — made payable to the charity — or by credit card.



Charities and the "DO NOT CALL" Registry

The National Do Not Call Registry gives you a way to reduce telemarketing calls, but it exempts charities and political groups.

However, if a fundraiser is calling on behalf of a charity, you may ask not to get any more calls from, or on behalf of, that specific charity.

If those calls continue, the fundraiser may be subject to a fine.



Additional information online at: www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0074-giving-charity

Community Day of Service

Here's your chance to visit and volunteer with non-profit service organizations. On Saturday, April 11th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Peoria Public Library North Branch, the Library will be holding a Community Day of Service. All ages are invited to participate in this community event to learn about service organizations and assist with special projects.

Drop in between 1:00 and 3:00 to lend a hand.



DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Start by doing what's necessary, then what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible. ~ Saint Francis of Assisi



SOUNDINGS

I Asked Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan A Question

Glen Brown, Blogger - Teacher/Poet/Musician

I attended a presentation at Benedictine University yesterday. It was sponsored by the Center for Civic Leadership. Former Attorney General James Ryan (1995-2003) introduced guest speaker Attorney General Lisa Madigan. Madigan spoke about her personal experiences that led to her career and about the job description of an attorney general: she referred to herself as “legal officer of the State.” She talked about data and identity theft; she emphasized the concept of “social justice work,” and told students in attendance to “never give up hope” regarding their future. There was a brief time for queries after her speech. I stated the following comment and then asked her a question:

I presume that as the “legal officer of the State,” you will uphold the Illinois Constitution. This might entail safeguarding a contractual guarantee stated in Article XIII, Section 5, commonly known as the “Pension Clause” which states in part: *Membership in any pension or retirement system of the State... shall be an enforceable contractual relationship, the benefits of which shall not be diminished or impaired.* There are at least a dozen antedated court cases that have upheld this assurance.

Though these guarantees are currently in conflict with legislation that was sponsored by House Speaker Michael Madigan and passed in the House of Representatives and Senate on December 3rd, would you be representing the public employees’ and retirees’ constitutional guarantees; if yes, please explain how you will represent the public employees and retirees in Illinois.



Elected official Madigan responded:

“I will be representing the State [but not its public employees]; I cannot comment on litigation in the media.”



“Each prospective holder of a State office or other State position created by this Constitution, before taking office, shall take and subscribe to the following oath or affirmation: ‘I do solemnly swear (affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Illinois, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of...to the best of my ability’.”

(The Constitution of the State of Illinois, Article XIII—Oath or Affirmation of Office, Section 3).

Source: teacherpoetmusicianglenbrown.blogspot.com/2014/02/i-asked-illinois-attorney-general-lisa.html

Three sisters age 92, 94 and 96 live in a house together.

One night the 96 year old draws a bath, puts her foot in and pauses. She yells down the stairs, “Was I getting in or out of the bath?” The 94 year old yells back, “I don’t know, I’ll come up and see.” She starts up the stairs and pauses; then she yells, “Was I going up the stairs or coming down?” The 92 year old was sitting at the kitchen table having tea listening to her sisters. She shakes her head and says, “I sure hope I never get that forgetful.” She knocks on wood for good measure. She then yells, “I’ll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who’s at the door.”



Remember that no matter how much you push the “*envelope*”, it will still be “*stationery*”!

