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Current News of Special Interest to State Retirees

RSEA Website: [www.RSEA4U.org](http://www.RSEA4U.org)

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Editor, Marcia Hoos

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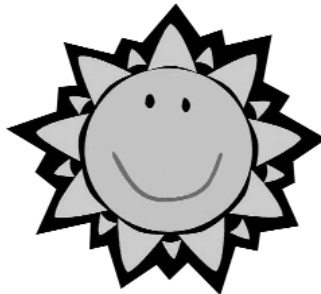
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## FROM SPRINGFIELD TO HOLLYWOOD: SUMMER SERIES BEGINS

- Muriel Runyen, Publicity & Education



"Summertime, and the livin' is easy."

Taking its cue from the familiar words to a popular tune, RSEA traditionally takes a break from heavy issues like legislation, health insurance and bridge collapses and looks to the brighter side of life for its summer programs.

This year we're using the theme, "Interesting People; Interesting Lives," and we're bringing in speakers on three different topics which we hope will prove -- well, for lack of a better word, interesting.

Opening the series at our meeting on June 25 will be Dean Williams, a still photographer who has parlayed his love of movies in to a career which makes him feel as at home on a Hollywood sound stage as in his Springfield studio. He will speak on the topic, "From Springfield to Hollywood: You Can Do It, Too."

Williams is the one who shoots those action shots we see on posters, DVD covers, and in newspaper and magazine ads for current movies, as well as glamour pictures of Hollywood celebrities. He takes

thousands of pictures while the filming is underway, and from these the studio selects the ones to be used for promotion.

Williams has contracts with all the major studios and has shot hundreds of film as well as over 150 television, including the popular Warner Bros./NBC hit series, "ER."

As executive director of both the Springfield and Central Illinois Film Commissions, Williams has been working with Rep. Raymond Poe on a bill designed to encourage more film production in Illinois by providing a tax incentive.

RSEA members will probably be surprised to learn that the Film Commission was involved with the production of no less than 35 films in Central Illinois last year alone. Among them was "The Informant," starring Matt Damon. We don't know how many Hollywood secrets Williams is prepared to divulge, but we're confident this will be an informative, entertaining program. See you on June 25!

Other "Interesting People with Interesting Lives" scheduled to appear in our summer series are Carol Matheson, former RSEA president, who will speak in July on her ongoing mission work in Nicaragua, and another RSEA member, Ralph "Corky" Sutherland of Peoria, who will come to us in August to tell us of some of his many humorous adventures as a teenage hitchhiker. Watch future REPORTERS for details!





On the last day of the legislative session, our day began with a ray of hope, our bill sailing through the House on a unanimous vote. However, because the Senate had originally passed the bill with a contribution rate of 1%, whereas an actuarial report indicated that to make this bill revenue neutral, in other words, at no cost to the state, a contribution rate of between 3% and 4% would be required. So, with great reluctance, we finally accepted a contribution rate of 3.5%. However, in making this change, it was necessary to amend the bill, thereby requiring that it go back to the Senate for their concurrence. Unfortunately, the Senate left town, one could say, bailed out, before they could act on our bill. It is small consolation that our

bill was only one of many that did not receive attention.

Maybe most frustrating of all, is the nit picking, as if our bill was some massive program that would bankrupt the state. At the very last moment, there was haggling over one tenth of one percent, the wait for yet another actuarial report, which is, at best, a blue sky projection of what the economics will be in thirty years. Based on that report, the latest of many, the contribution rate was finally changed to 3.6%. Heaven forbid that the state would have to contribute even a penny for the widows of state employees! You can be sure that when we finally get the details of this session, there will be highly touted, and very expensive, state programs, plus, of course, more

than a little pork to be passed around. Also, in spite of much posturing, many heated public denials; the legislative pay raise was quietly enacted.

Now, our next chance of passing the Social Security offset will not come until November. Sounds like the familiar cry of one of our favorite baseball teams, "Wait until next year!" Unfortunately, for many of our older members, for some of our older widows, waiting for next year, and then the next, may not be an option. I'm sure you can understand my frustration, when I have to say that if your financial plan A was based on the repeal of the Social Security offset, maybe you'd better begin working on plan B.

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## MEMBER Q & A

### MEMBER:

I'm a widow and a retired State employee. I can't draw any of my husband's Social Security because of the social security offset that was in place when I retired. I wasn't allowed to participate in the social security program when I went to work for the state because they didn't have one in place at that time. I didn't opt to many years later because my husband was paying into the system. At that time everyone was able to draw from their husband's social Security if they become a widow. I think I'm entitled to social security as well as the widows of State employees' spouses. My husband paid into it for many years.

### RSEA RESPONSE:

I have to assume that when you say you are not receiving your husband's Social Security, you're talking about your federal Social Security, which is reduced because your employment was not subject to Social Security contribution. As for your eligibility for widow's benefits on the basis of your husband's state job, we are always reluctant to give an opinion on individual cases. In any retirement situation, there are literally scores of situations, depending on age, length of service, your own federal Social Security situation, etc. Only the retirement system itself has all the necessary information to give you an informed answer. You might contact them at (217) 785-7444, at [www.state.IL.us/srs](http://www.state.IL.us/srs), or at P.O. Box 19255, Springfield, 62794-9255.



RETIRE STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
ADDRESS CHANGE FORM AND APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME: First, Middle initial, Last
MAILING ADDRESS: Street Address or PO Box #, Apt # if applicable, City, State, Zip Code
PHONE #: ( )
E-MAIL ADDRESS:

email address: retire@RSEA4U.org
website: www.RSEA4U.org

Mark ALL Boxes that apply:

- Permanent Address Change, Temporary Address Change for \_\_\_ months, Current Member Renewal (Annual Payees Only), New Member, I am a: Retiree, Spouse/Survivor, \*Current Employee of, My Check for \$ \_\_\_ is enclosed for January through December, I hereby authorize the State Employees Retirement System of Illinois (SERS) to deduct from my pension check the amount as certified by the RSEA of Illinois for my dues, and to remit said amount to the RSEA of Illinois.

Signature: SS# Date

Mail to: RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION P.O. BOX 1974 SPRINGFIELD, IL 62705-1974

Current employees must obtain, complete and submit a Payroll Deduction Authorization (for 38 cents per pay period) to their payroll department.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS - THANKS FOR JOINING US

- Linda L. Brown, Springfield; Joyce Newmann, Delavan WI; Robert Haas, Jr., Lincoln; Mary Waldon, Springfield (survivor); Barbara McBride, Lacey WA (survivor)

FINAL FAREWELL TO OUR DEPARTED MEMBERS

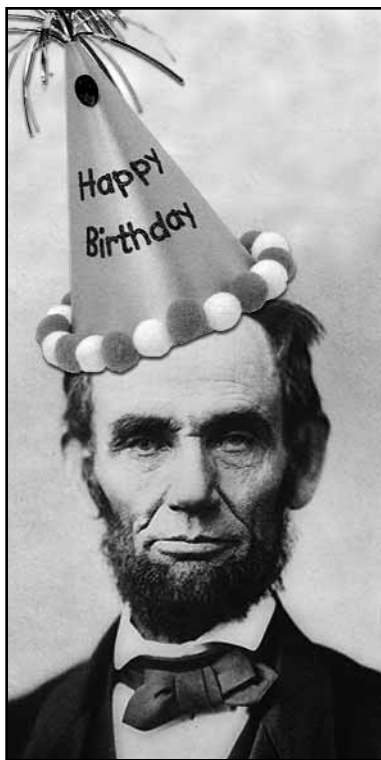
- Raymond Becerra, Granite City; Janet Nordstrom, Galva; Constance Bostick, Chatham; Aileen Pearson, San Francisco CA; Robert A Bretscher, 92, Springfield (d.d. 5/4/08) \*; Charles Peters, 72, Decatur (d.d. 3/12/08); Norman Cottingham, Jacksonville; Rosemary Schomig, Joliet; Mary Eblen, Anna; Oma Shappard, Moline; Earline Fuller, Decatur; John Sisson Jr., Champaign; Paul Fry, Springfield; Frances Turner, Edina MN; Geraldine Gillespie, Vienna; Robert (Bob) Waldon, 58, Springfield (d.d. 4/15/08); Shirley Howell, Quincy; Ruby Williams, Washington DC; William Kennedy, Springfield; Lillian Witcher, Hendersonville TN; Vernon Meents, Chebanse; Theodore Workun, Morton Grove.

\* Mr. Bretscher was a Navy Veteran of WW II, retired with 25 years service from IDOT in 1990, and was a past Board member of RSEA.

Information regarding deceased members is mostly obtained from the SERS. A computer-generated list of payroll deduction members who have passed on is sent monthly. If notice is received from a deceased's family regarding these deaths or others not listed, I will gladly include additional information, such as date of death and state agencies they retired from, etc. And, as always, if you are a surviving spouse and not already a member of RSEA, you may enroll by completing and submitting the membership application printed above.

-Pat Espenschied, Membership Chair

## NO SURPRISE PARTY FOR ABE: 200TH BIRTHDAY BASH PLANS REVEALED



Who knew that sleepy Jacksonville, Il had so many ties with Abraham Lincoln? (To which our readers in Chicago and Timbuktu are probably adding "And who cares?")

But people do care. Throughout Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky, the three state most closely identified with the martyred president's life, communities are clamoring for a piece of the birthday cake as the nation gears up for Abe's big 200th Birthday Bash in 2009.

By this time next year, the whole world will know about Lincoln's legacy to the various towns where he once resided or where his footsteps left an imprint. Thousands of volun-

teers in those communities are working to preserve that heritage.

One of the most enthusiastic of those volunteers is Dr. Axel Steuer, president of Illinois College in Jacksonville, who spoke to RSEA at its meeting in Springfield in May. Dr. Steuer was able to tell of many of the events now in the planning stages, from small projects on the home front to grandiose celebrations on a national scale.

Of most interest to RSEA members were the plans he outlined for Illinois including documentary programs to be aired on public television: reenactment of Lincoln-Douglas debated on some of the actual debate sites; and the many "Looking for Lincoln" projects now being developed in communities with a claim to the Lincoln legacy.

Illinois will also be the scene of numerous "legacy projects" honoring Lincoln's memory through the restoration of court-houses and other historic structures, he said.

Jacksonville, Steuer said, will hold a Chautauqua honoring Lincoln on Labor Day. "Except for Springfield and Bloomington, no city in Illinois has closer ties to Lincoln than

Jacksonville, he declared, adding "and no college in the country has closer connections to Lincoln than Illinois College."

Well aware that Lincoln had never attended college, RSEA members appeared puzzled at that claim until Steuer listed Abe's numerous friends and associates who were IC alumni: the famed Green brothers, who served as his mentors: William "Billy" Herndon, his law partner; Ann Rutledge's brother; William Jennings Bryan and others.

"If Lincoln has gone to college, it would have been Illinois College," he said. "Of course, there was no other college in Illinois at that time." he added with a laugh.

Sleep Jacksonville, which has previously relied on its academic reputation for its fame (two outstanding private colleges) will surely be on the tourist trail by this time next year, if Dr. Steuer's predictions come true!

For current information about Bicentennial plans, Steuer advised his audience to Google "Lincoln Day by Day" or check the website: [www.lincoln.2009.net](http://www.lincoln.2009.net).

*-Muriel Runyen  
Publicity & Education*

## NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT - Bill Curry



Sunshine, hot temperatures and humidity. It must be summer in Illinois! A good place to beat the heat and humidity is to attend the RSEA monthly meeting. Our meeting place is large, airy, and air conditioned. We also offer a program, coffee, cookies, and a chance to connect with fellow retirees.

Summer is vacation time. Has the high price of gasoline kept you at home? Please think about a short trip to Springfield, IL. You can visit the Abraham Lincoln Museum, Abraham Lincoln Library, and Train

Depot that Lincoln used to leave Springfield for Washington, D. C. All three are within easy walking distance such as just crossing the street. While in Springfield, other places to visit include the Dana Thomas House, a house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Just down the street and around the corner is the Vachel Lindsay House, a well known Illinois poet. And of course the Lincoln Home is nearby. These are just a few of the places to visit in Springfield. Please think about a long weekend that would also include attending the RSEA membership meeting. It is held the last Wednesday of every month at St. John's Lutheran Church at 1:30 p.m. It is located at 2477 West Washington Street.

On a personal note, I will beat the heat by taking a trip to the

British Isles. I am leaving July 3rd from St. Louis. I will be spending time in Ireland, Scotland, and London. Temperatures that range from 50 to 75 are wonderful! And there is no humidity!

This is my second time in Ireland, fourth time in Scotland, and fifth time in London. There are so many things to see that I am able to see something different each trip. I will be traveling with a group of 42. All are from the central Illinois area. Some are currently working for the State. I will try to work RSEA into the conversation somewhere during the trip. Maybe I will return with some new members instead of souvenirs.

Have a great summer!

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### CHICAGO METRO CHAPTER

Chicago Metro RSEA have a meeting scheduled for Wed, May 21, in the Thompson Center, 100 W Randolph, Room 9-034, commencing at 1p.

Barbara Baird from SRS will be our speaker. She will speak on the annual insurance update info. Members will be asked to limit questions to general information rather than ones that apply to their personal situation. They will be encouraged to contact their SERS insurance contact person in Springfield who has been assigned by the last two numbers of their Soc. Sec Number.

Although this meeting will be kind of routine, an open invitation is extended to anyone who wishes to attend.

Sylvia Schluter  
Chair, Chicago Metro RSEA



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### THIS MONTH

Wednesday, June 25, 2008 - 1:30 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
Family Life Center  
2477 W. Washington St., Springfield, Illinois

*"From Springfield to Hollywood:  
You Can Do It, Too!"*

**Dean Williams**  
*Still Photographer*

### COMING ATTRACTIONS

**July 30, 2008**

*"Mission to Nicaragua"*  
**Carol Matheson**  
*Former RSEA President*

\*\*\*\*\*

**August 27, 2008**

*"Thumbs Up at 5"*  
**Ralph "Corky" Sutherland**  
*Peoria  
IDOT Engineer, Retired*

