

# WCIRTA

August, 2020



We hope that all of our WCIRTA members are all healthy and "weathering the storm" of the Covid-19 virus.

The health crisis has necessitated the postponement or cancellation of some WCIRTA events.

The 2020 "New Retirees Dinner" that was scheduled for April 21, 2020 was cancelled. However, the twenty Williamson County retirees will soon be receiving a letter informing them about our organization and mentioning that they will receive a one-year complimentary membership in the WCIRTA.

Our current plans are to invite the 2020 retirees to join with the 2021 retirees at the next "New Retirees Dinner" in April 2021.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances, we also had to cancel the popular membership "pie meeting" scheduled for August 10, 2020 at St. Paul's Parish Hall in Johnston City.

At this time, the next membership meeting October 15, 2020 at Mary's Restaurant, is still scheduled. Mrs. Cheryl Absher is scheduled to speak with a very interesting and informative presentation on the role of the CASA program. However, we will review the status of the health crisis at our next Executive Board meeting in September and decide if sufficient progress has been made in order to host a membership meeting. More information will be available via e-mail contacts and in our September WCIRTA newsletter.

The offices of the IRTA in Springfield have been working remotely from home but have been staying in contact with local IRTA units. It has been reported that the Illinois budget passed in the summer veto session had earmarks to fully fund the state's contribution to TRS.

As always, we encourage our members to maintain membership in the IRTA and consider contributions to the IRTA Foundation and the IRTAPAC (Political Action Committee). The IRTAPAC can be supported with an automatic \$1-a-month deduction from your TRS stipend.

It appears that the reopening of Illinois schools can best be described as "organized chaos"! Sometimes retirement does have its benefits!

We hope to see our members at the October membership meeting. Please stay healthy, stay safe, keep in contact with your friends and neighbors and complete all of those long delayed projects around the house.

Bert Gordon  
President  
WCIRTA

## **WCIRTA Membership Report**

**We hope all of our member retirees are healthy and enjoying their retirement during these unprecedented times. Thank you Dana Brewer, Harold Collier, and Arma Raski for recently getting your address or email addresses updated with the IRTA. IRTA President John Flaherty sent us a note of thanks for our contribution into helping the IRTA grow to reach its 39,000 membership goal.**

**He also commented: “We are one of the few organizations of retirees that continues to grow. Other states have retired teacher organizations but almost every-one is struggling with membership. For us to continue to grow is amazing and even more so in these trying times. I want to personally thank each of you who continues to spread the word about how the Association has helped to protect our pensions and benefits”**

**Your Board of Directors continues to plan our future membership meetings. I found it a bit challenging to sit at our recent BOD meeting with masks covering our mouths. There was a bit of humor listening to muffled educators trying to speak. ;-)**

**We were unable to have our end of the year meeting at Mackies Pizza for the new retirees. We are planning a bit different method of congratulating all of the Williamson County teachers who retired at the end of the 2020 school year. They all receive a free, full year of WCIRTA membership and should be getting our newsletters and emails regarding our membership meetings.**

**I’m also reminded that we all need to keep our computers free of viruses and malware. One of our members recently had their email account hacked and lots of folks got some interesting email requests. It’s always a good idea to keep your virus and malware programs updated and run your scans frequently. I personally got hit by ransomware in March. I found that not only did I have to take down and rebuild my computer, I also had to suspend all online banking accounts, etc. I couldn’t reactivate the accounts until at least a month had passed and I could prove to the banks that my system was clean.**

**Our WCIRTA website can be found here: <https://williamsoncountyrta.weebly.com/> for more membership information.**

**Steve Maxwell - WCIRTA Membership & Website Administrator**

### **Foundation Report**

**Judi Harland  
Scholarships**

**The IRTA Foundation provides a \$1,500 scholarship in each of the six areas of the state. The 2020 Area 6 recipient is Rachel Durham of Eldorado, IL. She will be an incoming senior at Union University in Jackson, TN majoring in Elementary Education.**

**Due to the generosity of an IRTA member, an additional scholarship is awarded in our area. (Area 6) The \$3,000 recipient is Allison Baer of Carbondale, IL. She will be an incoming senior at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale majoring in Elementary Education.**

### **Excellence in Education Grants for Current Teachers**

**The IRTA Foundation has a total of \$36,500 in grant money available for active teachers. The maximum for each grant is \$750. Please encourage all current teachers in our area to apply for a grant. They just go to [irtaonline.org](http://irtaonline.org) and click on Foundation and then click on Grants. Download, complete, and submit the application online by Thursday, October 1, 2020.**

# IRTA Legislation

By

John Harland

There has not been a great deal legislative action in Springfield that relates to retired teachers. That has been some activity that is important to retirees. First, the governor and the legislature has approved the TRS contribution for 2020-21. The governor and legislature has stated that they fully funded the TRS, but it is important to realize that the State of Illinois does what they call smoothing (providing less than is necessary to reduce pension liabilities). Most CPA's would argue that State should have contributed more than what the State calls full funding. The good news is that we did get more than State has contributed in the past.

Second, IRTA is not taking a position Governor Pritzker's "Fair Tax." IRTA will provide information to members at a later date. Do not expect IRTA to oppose or support the "Fair Tax" proposal that you will vote on November.

## IRTA Member Benefits—Article 3

Previously in this series of WCIRTA Newsletter articles you were told that membership in IRTA brings with it other benefits you can access at any time, simply by virtue of your membership in the organization. Several of the benefits are IRTA Endorsed Benefits while others are called Informative Benefits and are made available to the membership but not officially endorsed.

Several of the Informative Benefits are health related and most are optional activities in which individual members might want to participate. This article will deal with the Informative Benefits related to health and the next issue of WCIRTA Newsletter will address the other Informative Benefits, most of which are discounts for travel, dining and purchases.

Since we often experience difficulty in hearing as we age, two of the Informative Benefits available through AMBA address our needs in hearing assistance. One is a Hearing Plan Discount that you and your spouse have available providing for free annual screenings and special discounts on hearing aid purchases. Contact Hear In America at 800-286-6149 or go online to [www.hearinamerica.com](http://www.hearinamerica.com) for details. The second hearing benefit is from American Hearing Benefits, through which IRTA members and their families are entitled to a free annual hearing screening with referrals to AHB's network of local recommended hearing professionals. Specifics include up to 60% off on the latest hearing aid technology and a free two year warranty on every purchase. For more information call 888-200-5701 or go online using AMBA as a code to [www.americanhearingbenefits.com/partners/amba](http://www.americanhearingbenefits.com/partners/amba).

Another useful item as we age is the Medipendant Personal Emergency Response System. IRTA's relationship with AMBA makes this state-of-the-art medical alert device available to members at Preferred Pricing discounts. Call 855-874-1989 or go online to [www.medipendant-IRTA.com](http://www.medipendant-IRTA.com). Discounted pricing is available by using the IRTA Code CAB7123.

A related benefit is Term Life Express, which offers amounts between \$25,000 and \$300,000 in term insurance for 10, 15, 20 or 30 year terms. The underwriting is fast and simple and you can be covered in a short time. Call AMBA at 800-258-7041 for details.

Although the final benefit covered in this issue is not specifically for retirees, it does apply to very important members of their families—their pets. It is Veterinary Pet Insurance providing IRTA members with a 5% discount on pet insurance for a variety of procedures. Call 877-738-7874 or go online to [www.petinsuranc.com/irta-online](http://www.petinsuranc.com/irta-online) for more information and a quotation.

Can't wait until the next issue of the WCIRTA Newsletter for more information? Google [amba.info](http://amba.info) or [IRTAonline](http://IRTAonline) to learn more. (And while you're there, review some of the other benefits, all with low-cost payment options.)