WCIRTA General Membership Meeting

Tuesday May 7, 2019

Mackie’s Restaurant

The WCIRTA held a membership meeting at the Mackie’s Restaurant in Marion, Illinois on May 7, 2019. The meeting convened at 12:10 pm. Board members present were Kent Carrell, Bert Gordon, Loren Taylor, Betsy Murphy, Steve Maxwell, and John Harland. Special guests and program presenters were Jane Otte and Meril Chickini. Twenty-two members attended the meeting.

**Welcome:** PresidentBert Gordon welcomed all present and listed the names of the 2019 retirees from Williamson Co. He encouraged current members to invite them to join WCiRTA. He also shared information about the IRTA Political Action Committee, the IRTA Foundation, and announced that the IRTA endorsed candidate, Doug Strand, won the position for the IRTA Board. John Harland then led the members in a blessing prior to the luncheon buffet.

**Introduction of Speaker:** John Harland introduced the speakers for the day. Jane Otte and Meril Chickini presented information about BE SMART, Gun Safety in the Home. The purpose of this program is to keep children safe. It was developed by Mom’s Demand Action and has groups in 43 states. They revealed that gun deaths are the second leading cause of death in children and that 78% of the shooters are under 17 years of age. They encourage members to BE SMART-Secure, Model, Ask, Recognize, and Tell.

**Business:** President Gordon conducted the following business:

* Board members present were introduced.
* Steve Maxwell, Membership Chair, shared that 120 newsletters are being emailed out to active members. He listed names of members for which he needs current emails.
* John Harland, Legislation Chair, shared that TRIP or TRAIL cannot be unfunded without legislation. IRTA does not support Pritzker’s plan to underfund TRS which would result in $7 billion in penalties and interest. There is a plan to sell pension bonds to help fund the pensions which will require interest being paid on those bonds. He encouraged members to support IRTA PAC by donating $1 a month to the fund. He also encouraged member support for the IRTA Legal Defense Fund. Through the efforts of the IRTA, the 2015 Supreme Court case securing COLA payments was decided in favor of retirees. Also shared was Pritzker’s statement that retiree pensions would not be reduced.
* John Harland shared for Judi Harland, Foundation Chair, that 26 active teacher grants had been awarded. Eight retirees are being helped by the foundation with monthly stipends. The 2019 Scholarship winners for area 6 were Kathrine Drone (USI-$1500) from McLeansboro and Katherine Gallagher (EIU-$3000) from Belleville. He encouraged members to respond to the IRTA Foundation mailing and send in a donation which supports retired teachers, scholarships and the active teacher grants.

**Next Membership Meeting:** Membership meetings for 2018:

* August 12, 2019 at St Paul’s Family Life Center, Johnston City, IL. This is the PIE Meeting.
* October 17, 2019 at Mary’s Restaurant, Herrin, IL

**Next Board Meeting:** The next board meeting will be June 20, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betsy Murphy, Secretary