

WCRTA Spring, 2013

Dear Members of the Williamson County Retired Teachers Association,

WCRTA has lost a good friend and a champion of the cause of retired teachers. When Dee Ozment died suddenly a few weeks ago we were all deeply saddened. Dee appeared to be in good health and never shirked his duties as President of the organization. In his modest and unassuming way, he did the things that propelled the organization forward. He could be counted upon to do the detail work necessary to keep us viable within the Illinois Retired Teachers Association. Truly, we have lost a valuable asset.

Now, however, comes the time for the rest of us to step up and shoulder some of the burden that Dee had been carrying. We have an effective Board of Directors, all of whom had already agreed, as had Dee, to continue for another term in office. That commitment remains solid, although some of us will be doing different things than we had planned on doing.

The board asked me, as the Vice-President, to assume the duties of President and I have agreed to do so. John Harland was selected by the board to fill my position as Vice-President and he also has agreed to do so. All other members of the board have pledged their continued support to the work of WCRTA. We would like to have someone from the organization volunteer to assume a position on the board for the next term so that our board can remain at full strength. *(If we have no volunteers, we just might have to do a little "drafting.")*

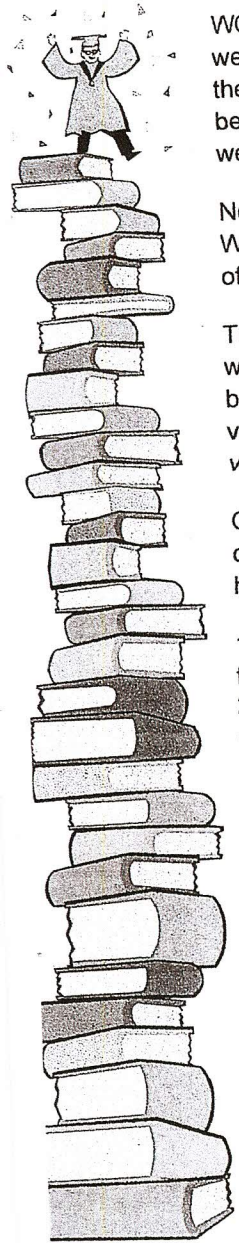
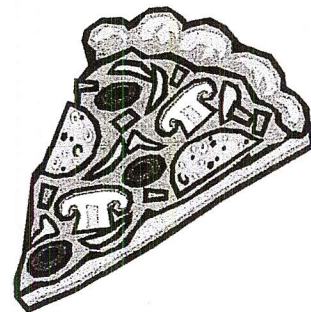
Of even more importance than filling out the membership on the board, are the tasks that remain for ALL of the members of WCRTA. There is strength in numbers and we ALL need to participate fully in both WCRTA and IRTA. Here are a handful of things we ALL should be doing:

1. Join and support IRTA if you are not already a member. The cost is only \$2.00 per month through automatic deduction from your TRS annuity.
2. Contribute to IRTAPAC to help support our efforts to get the legislature to understand the significance of the Illinois Constitution and what it says about not reducing benefits for existing retirees. This too, can be done with your approval of a \$1.00 per month deduction from your TRS annuity. We have accumulated a war chest of nearly \$40,000 already, even though only 2700 of the 34,000 IRTA members are signed up for the deduction.
3. Contribute to the new Legal Defense Fund, which now stands at nearly \$100,000. IRTA has requested a minimum donation of \$10.00 per member to this fund that could become even more critical if the legislature persists in its efforts to thwart the Illinois Constitution and tries to reduce our pensions or those of not yet retired co-workers who have been promised certain benefits. Executive Director Jim Bachman reports that if litigation is initiated we will need nearly a quarter of a million dollars on hand to fight through the courts. He said, "If you wait, it may be too late."
4. Keep the pressure on our local legislators! Let Representative John Bradley and Senator Gary Forby know frequently how you feel about what is happening in Springfield. Write them, email them, call them and go see them—OFTEN. (I sometimes think I am wearing out my welcome in John's office but if I lessen my contacts he will think I really don't mean what I have said.) Sign up for Voter-Voice, IRTA's online grassroots advocacy and lobbying tool. Go to www.irtaonline.org or call 1-800-728-4782 to get details about signing up for this program.
5. Become and remain informed about what is happening. Go to the IRTA website, www.irtaonline.org for information. Another good site is www.trs.illinois.gov.

We must continue the work that Dee led us in so effectively during the recent past. I pledge to you that I will give my best efforts. Will you match that pledge in response? Dee would be so pleased.

Bob Campbell

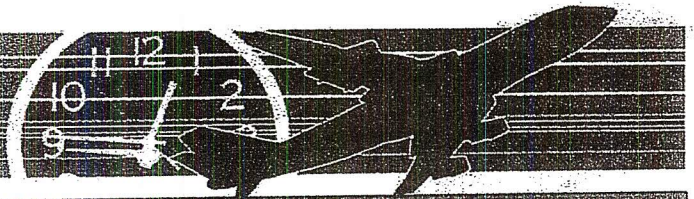
Next Meeting is May 7 at
noon at Mackies Pizza in
Marion.



IRTA Member Benefits

For up-to-date Information go to www.irtaonline.org

**When Seconds Count,
Count on MASA!**



Medical Air Services Association Endorsed by the Illinois Retired Teachers Association

What is MASA?

Medical Air Services Association is an international association dedicated to providing life-saving emergency assistance from home or while traveling. This plan is designed to protect members against catastrophic financial loss when emergencies arise.

Why Join MASA?

- ❖ Covers all types of emergencies that require transportation
 - fixed wing aircraft
 - helicopter
 - ground ambulance
- ❖ Pre-existing conditions are covered
- ❖ No claim forms, no deductibles
- ❖ The world's oldest and finest prepaid emergency assistance program
- ❖ Extremely affordable – less than \$25.00 a month
- ❖ Anyone can join regardless of age or medical condition
- ❖ MASA works for you whether at home or traveling

How can I obtain more information about MASA benefits?
Contact AMBA's toll free number at **1.800.258.7041** for additional information.

Mary Lou Gander
Benefits

The Platinum Membership Provided Through MASA Offers the Following Exclusive Services to IRTA Members:

- **Emergency Air Transportation**
- **Helicopter Transportation**
- **Ground Ambulance Transportation**
- **Organ Retrieval**
- **Organ Recipient Transportation**
- **Recuperation/Repatriation**
- **Return Transportation**
- **Escort Transportation**
- **Non-Injury Transportation**
- **Minor Children/Grandchildren Return**
- **Mortal Remains**
- **Vehicle Return**
- **World Wide Coverage**

Frequently Asked Questions

Does MASA work while I am at home?

Absolutely! Whether you are in need of specialized medicine not available locally, or if you become ill or suffer an injury that requires local transportation by ground ambulance or helicopter, or if you need to be transported by air ambulance to an upgraded medical facility, MASA will be there for you.

How does MASA work when I am traveling?

If you suffer an illness or injury that requires hospitalization MASA can return you home for treatment or to recuperate in familiar surroundings. If you require air ambulance transportation, MASA can send a relative or friend with you and if your vehicle is stranded MASA will return that to your home by a bonded driver.

Who makes the decision if I am going to be transported by an air ambulance?

Your attending physician and MASA's medical director determine where and when you will be flown. Once the decision has been made, MASA takes charge.

How much does an air ambulance flight cost?

Air ambulance transportation is expensive, sometimes \$50,000 or even more! In most instances health insurance or Medicare coverage pays little, if any, of this expense and they don't provide the other benefits that MASA provides to you absolutely free of charge.

What happens if I pass away while away from home?

MASA will make the arrangements and pay for the return of a member's remains to the airport nearest to the member's permanent residence.

Where can I use MASA's services?

MASA's Platinum Members have worldwide coverage. Wherever you go, MASA is there with you!

How do I qualify to become a MASA member?

Simply fill out the attached application form and return it in the enclosed self-addressed envelope with your choice of payment. All IRTA members are eligible for membership at the same price, regardless of age or medical condition.

How can I obtain more information about MASA benefits?

Contact AMBA's toll free number 1.800.258.7041 for additional information.

Williamson County Retired Teachers Association
Retirees' Dinner Tuesday, April 23, 2013
Mackies Pizza, Marion, Illinois

The dinner meeting began at 6:00 P.M.- with a welcome from Bob Campbell; he also asked the meal blessing. Bob then introduced the Board members as well as Kurt Endebrock from the Regional Office of Education. Matt Donkin arrived later. There were 28 present, including 11 retirees.

ROE Information Kurt distributed handouts regarding new Educator License & Certification Changes. Certificates become licenses by July 1, 2013. The handout includes a great deal of information.

General Information Bob Campbell told the group that there are about 100,000 retired teachers in Illinois. 35,000 are members of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association and a smaller number are members of the Illinois Education Association Retired. Members of the IRTA and IEAR are exclusively retired teachers. He further explained dues and payroll deductions.

Member Benefits Mary Lou Gander reported on benefits, such as cellphone discounts, and long-term insurance.

Membership Data Steve Maxwell reported. We have over 300 on our membership rolls.

WCRTA & IRTA Website Steve Maxwell reported. He encouraged all present to check out the website for more information.

Foundation Focus Judi Harland reported. The Foundation has three main components: assists retired teachers who have financial problems; give active teachers grants, and provide scholarships to Juniors and Seniors. Their fundraiser is return address labels.

Insurance Issues John Harland reported. There are 3 choices of insurance: Health Link, Health Alliance, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Legislative Matters Anna Morris reported. Anna gave an update on bills pertaining to retired teachers.

Questions and Concerns Bob encouraged new retirees to contact any of the Board members if they have a question or concern. Bob also mentioned that the IRTA has 2 lobbyists in Springfield.

Bob thanked everyone for their attendance. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Marge Mangan, Secretary

Williamson County Retired Teachers Association
Board of Directors Meeting April 10, 2013
Held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Marion, IL

Due to the death of Lyle Dee Ozment and the hospitalization of Bob Campbell, Tom Oates conducted the meeting.

I. Roll Call There being a quorum, Tom Oates opened the meeting at 1:30 P.M. Steve Maxwell made the motion for John Harland to serve as Acting Vice President until further action is taken. Anna Morris seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed.
Bob Campbell will serve as President.

II. Approval of Minutes and Treasurer's Report. Motion was made and seconded to approve the Minutes of the January 9, 2013, Board Meeting. All approved; motion passed. Motion was made and seconded to approve the Minutes of the February 1, 2013, General Meeting held at the Crab Orchard Golf Course. All approved; motion passed. The Treasurer's report showed a balance of \$3,422.99 as of April 8, 2013. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Report. All approved; motion passed.

III. New Business Due to the death of Lyle Dee Ozment, certain issues need to be addressed. Tom Oates will collect all materials pertaining to the WCRTA from Dee's house. Steve Maxwell will work with Dee's computer. Contact will be made by both Tom and Steve with Diane Ozment.

IV. Future Meetings April 23, 2013, New Retirees' Dinner
Bob has checked with Mackies; John will confirm. Invitations were sent to 19 new retirees. Deadline to RSVP for this dinner is April 19, 2013.
April 17 -- phone calls will be made to those who have not yet responded. E-mail will then be sent to Bob about who has responded. Speakers at this meeting will include insurance, benefits, ROE, and membership. Mary Lou will have a packet of information for the retirees, John will contact the ROE, and Steve will have membership information. A count of Board members shows 8 will attend the dinner.
Follow-up with retirees: John - Special Education and Marion Unit 2; Mary Lou - Herrin Unit 4; Anna - Carterville Unit 5; Steve - Johnston City - Unit 1. There are no retirees from Crab Orchard Unit 3.

May 2, 2013 - Area 6 Annual Conference We are allowed 8 to attend.

A check of Board Members present shows 5 or 6 would attend.

May 7, 2013 --WCRTA Membership Meeting to be held at Mackies Pizza in Marion. The speaker will be Dr. Bernard Rerri, Mt. Vernon, Illinois. He will address issues on maintaining our health. John will check with Bob about the speaker.

V Newsletter Deadline. The deadline for the Newsletter is:

Friday, April 19: Items for the Newsletter should be given to Trish.

Friday, April 26: Newsletter will be given to Destiny at the ROE's Office.

Monday, April 29: John Harland will pick up and mail the Newsletters.

VI. Other business There was discussion regarding a tribute in memory of Lyle Dee Ozment.

VII - Adjournment. There being no further business, Steve Maxwell made

A motion to adjourn. John Harland seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 P.M.

Marge Mangan,
Secretary

April 2013
 The WRCTA hosted its annual retiree's dinner at Mackies Pizza on April 23, 2013 at 6:00 pm. The next general meeting is also at Mackies on May 7th at 12:00 noon. Thanks to our members who continue to update their profiles with new phone, email, or personal addresses. We have been collecting the 2013 dues since January 2013. Send in your dues if you have forgotten or send me a note and I'll check you status.

WCRTA members were especially saddened with the recent passing of our President Dee Ozment. Dee was a tireless WCRTA President who will be greatly missed. Vice President Bob Campbell is presiding over the Board of Directors meetings and hopefully transitioning to the President position.

The WCRTA website continues to get updated and seeing an increase in visitors. If you haven't visited the site, click on over to: <http://williamsoncountyrtta.weebly.com/> and browse around. It's your site, so send me any updates, changes you would like to see.

Steve Maxwell
 WCRTA Membership Chairman
 emax_1@mchsi.com

Re: Update
 FR: Anna Morris

The following info comes from Cynthia O'Neill, our representative on the TRS Board of Trustees. (We have two representatives: Cynthia O'Neill and Bob Lyons. Both do an excellent job on the Board.) Cynthia mentions another bill, SB 2404, which we must monitor closely.

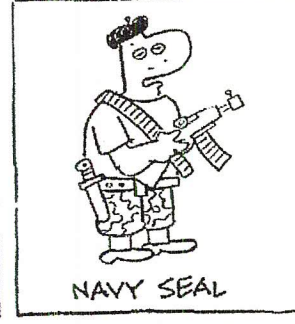
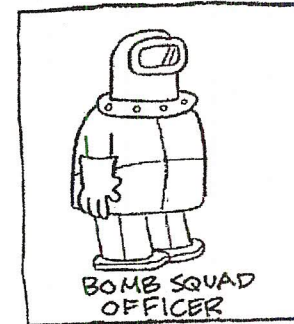
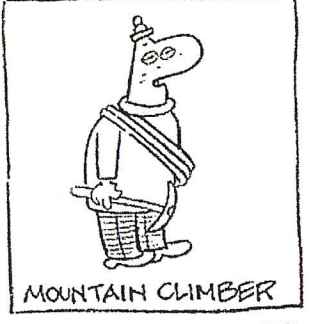
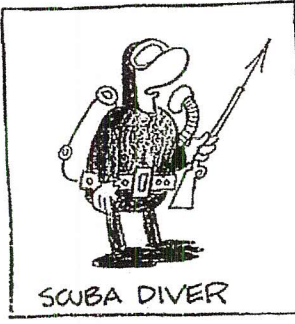
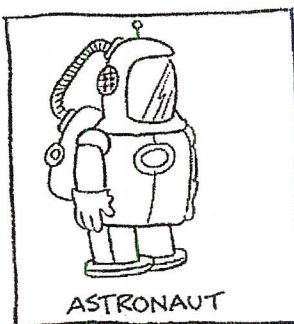
"Be sure members have turned in their e-mail addresses to TRS so that they can be contacted quickly if/when legislation "happens." The instruction to do that was printed in the last Topics and Report, but just in case, here it is: members@trs.il.gov.

Everyone should watch the legislation as it does or does not progress. Watch SB 2404--needs to be called by Friday. TRS will be meeting this Wed., Thurs., and Friday at our Retreat Meeting in Peoria. Those who can "google" should keep in touch with the TRS website. Stay tuned is the best message. Use "Voter Voice" is another. Another is sign up for our deduct for the PAC. I noticed that the committee which decides where PAC dollars should be spent just considered Sheila Simon for a contribution, but decided to delay the action until her political quest becomes unmistakable."

WILLIAMSON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
 TREASURER'S REPORT

DATE: 04/19
 BEGINNING BALANCE...7/1/2012..... \$3,227.9
 INCOME..... \$ 475.00
 EXPENSES..... \$ 270.00
 ENDING BALANCE...04/19/2013..... \$ 3,432.99

TOM OATES, TREASURER



Re: Legislative Update
Fr: Anna Morris

Of note: The next few weeks are important to all retirees who are concerned about keeping their pensions and insurance benefits as they now exist. Be prepared to call your senator and representative. Sign up for VoterVoice at <http://irtaonline.org/> if you haven't already done so to receive alerts on pending legislation.
John Bradley: 618-997-9697 / 217-782-1051 Sen. Gary Forby: 618-439-2504 / 217-782-5509

Con-stitutional Protection

Throughout the years, we have been reassured that our pensions are protected by the Illinois Constitution. Crafty legislators and attorneys are now betting that the Constitution can be circumvented and that protection erased. For example, Senate Bill 1 poses two options. Option one reduces our COLA (cost-of-living adjustment) to one half of the consumer price index. If the court rules this approach unconstitutional, then it provides option two, which would make each retiree choose between keeping the regular COLA or having access to state-sponsored insurance. They reason that our pension benefits are a contract and a contract must have the approval of both parties, the State and the retiree. Too, some members of the legislative body seem to think that if the State can prove it is in a financial crisis, constitutional protection would be voided.

At this time the House of Representatives has approved three pension bills. HB 1154 caps retirement pensions at \$113,700; HB 1166 increases the retirement age to 67; and HB 1165 caps the COLA at \$750. Other bills are in the hopper.

You may be aware that IRTA retained a prestigious Chicago law firm which gave a lengthy opinion that each of the efforts proposed to reduce retiree benefits is unconstitutional.

Finally, the We Are One Coalition is supporting SB 2404/HB 3162. In short, these bills would exclude current retirees from all pension reforms.

Our constitutional assurance seems to have evolved into a constitutional dance. (More on this from Bob Lyons)

The following bill is now under consideration. It includes the fundamental measures already proposed in previous pension bills mentioned above.

Pension Reform Proposal – House Bill 3411

Issue: A comprehensive overhaul of the Illinois pension code, House Bill 3411, was proposed on February 27, 2013 in the General Assembly by House Republican Leader Tom Cross of Oswego and State Rep. Elaine Nekritz, D-Northbrook.

TRS will not take a position on House Bill 3411. It is the legislature's job to dictate the laws and rules that govern TRS and other public pension systems. The job of TRS is to administer those laws and work to secure the System's finances so that the promises made to generations of teachers by the General Assembly can be kept.

Discussion: The bill seeks to stabilize TRS finances and eliminate the System's unfunded liability in 30 years by raising active member contributions, raising the retirement age for younger member, reducing the cost of living adjustment for all retired members, delaying all COLA payments until age 67 and requiring all new members after the bill becomes law to join a new "Tier III" that is composed of both a traditional pension and a 401(k) style retirement fund.

For all active and retired Tier I members (service before January 1, 2011)

- The Tier I COLA is capped at 3 percent and each year the percentage increase would be equal to one-half of the consumer price index, calculated from the member's original pension amount, not from the current pension amount.
 - All Cost of Living Adjustments apply only to the first \$25,000 of a pension. The COLA for annual benefits of \$25,000 or more is capped at \$750.
 - Currently, the average TRS pension is \$48,216. Under current law, for example, with the COLA that pension grows to \$49,662 in the second year and \$51,152 in the third year. In this proposal, with a capped COLA, the same pension would grow to \$48,966 in the second year and \$49,716 in the third year.
- Members would not receive a COLA until age 67 or five years after they retire, whichever comes first. This would apply to all retired members already receiving a COLA under the old rules. These members could see their COLA suspended for a period of time, but would not lose any COLAs previously received.
- The salary used to determine an active member's final average salary would be capped at the maximum Social Security wage base, which is \$113,700 in 2013. However for a TRS member employed under an individual or union contract, the cap would be set at the member's maximum salary under the contract at the time the law takes effect, if the salary exceeds the Social Security wage base. Contractual salaries that are below the Social Security wage base when the bill takes effect would be allowed to rise to the Social Security wage base.
- Active member contributions would increase from 9.4 percent to 10.4 percent during the 2013-2014 school year and increase to 11.4 percent beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.
- The retirement age would be set on a sliding scale based on the member's age and the time the law takes effect:
 - 45 and older: Current rules apply. Retire between the ages of 55 and 59 with at least 20 years of service and receive a reduced benefit, or at 60 or more and receive a full benefit
 - 40 to 44 years old: Retire at 56 to 60 with at least 20 years of service for a reduced benefit and at 61 for full benefits.
 - 35 to 39 years old: Retire at 58 to 62 with at least 20 years of service for a reduced benefit and at 63 for full benefits.
 - 34 and younger: Retire at 60 to 64 with at least 20 years of service for a reduced benefit and at 65 for full benefits.

For all Tier II members (beginning TRS service between January 1, 2011 and the effective date of HB 3411)

- Tier II members can irrevocably elect to join the new Tier III benefit plan or remain in Tier II.

Creates a new Tier III benefit structure (beginning service after the effective date of HB 3411)

- The Tier III benefit structure is a “hybrid” combination of:
 - A TRS-style defined benefit annuity – a guaranteed lifetime pension.
 - A 401(k)-style defined contribution plan – an amount of money contributed over the member’s career

that is distributed evenly in retirement until the account is exhausted.

- For the defined contribution “DC” plan:
 - Each Tier III member will contribute at least 5 percent of salary to the DC plan and would be allowed to

contribute more.

- School districts would contribute between 3 percent and 10 percent of salary to the DC plan. The actual amount will be negotiated by employers and employees in each district.

Each Tier III member will have an individual account with TRS, and the System is directed invest the account’s funds according to each member’s age: An “aggressive strategy” for younger members and a “conservative strategy” for older members.

- The member could “roll over” all funds in the DC plan into another retirement vehicle, like a private

401(k) plan.

- For the defined benefit “DB” plan:
 - Each Tier III member will contribute 4 percent of salary to the DB plan.
 - The Tier III COLA is capped at 3 percent and each year the percentage increase would be equal to one-

half of the consumer price index, calculated from the member’s original pension amount, not from the current pension amount.

- A member can retire with a full pension at age 67.
- A member can retire between the ages of 62 and 66, but the member’s pension will be reduced by 0.5

percent for each month the member is under age 67. For example, a member retiring at age 62 would receive a pension reduced by 30 percent from a “full” pension earned by the member.

- The formula for calculating a Tier III DB pension is different from a Tier I pension:
 - Instead of a multiplier of 2.2 percent, the multiplier will be 1.1 percent.
 - The member’s “final average salary” in the calculation would be the average of the eight highest

consecutive salaries out of the last 10 years of service.

- The salary used to determine an active member’s final average salary would be capped at the maximum

Social Security wage base, which is \$113,700 in 2013. However for a TRS member employed under an individual or union contract, the cap would be set at the member’s maximum salary under the contract at the time the law takes effect, if the salary exceeds the Social Security wage base. Contractual salaries that are below the Social Security wage base when the bill takes effect would be allowed to rise to the Social Security wage base.

For School Districts

Each school district will pay the entire annual cost of the Tier III DB plan, as well as the cost of any unfunded liability that may develop in the plan.

For State Government

- If the state does not pay its annual contribution to TRS within a set period of time, TRS could go to court to force the state to pay the contribution in the same way that the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund can force local governments to pay their contributions.

- The law is designed to make TRS 100 percent funded in 30 years.

- Once the state’s outstanding pension obligation bonds are paid off, the money being used to retire that debt will be dedicated to paying off the TRS unfunded liability until that liability is retired, instead of funding the annual cost of pensions.

2013 WCRTA DUES (01/01/2013 – 12/31/2013)

If there is NO "X" by your name on the mailing label of this Newsletter, you have paid your 2013 local dues. THANKS!!

If an "X" appears next to your name on the mailing label, you have not paid your 2013 local dues. Please mail the completed personal information form provided below and a check for \$5.00 to : **Tom Oates, Treasurer, 1600 Matthew Lane, Marion, IL 62959.** If questions: call Tom Oates at 618-997-4880. To pay State Dues, complete the IRTA Membership Form and the Personal Information Form.

IRTA STATE & LOCAL UNIT MEMBERSHIP FORM

620 NORTH WALNUT STREET, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62702 ... 1-800-728-4782

Email: irta@irtaonline.org --- web: www.irtaonline.org

STATE DUES

- Dues Deduct - \$24/year (Complete the Authorization for Dues Deduct Section below.)
- Annual - \$35
- 5 Years - \$150
- Life - \$400
- Membership Free for the Calendar Year of Retirement

STATE ASSOCIATE DUES (non certified)

- Annual - \$25
- Life - \$125

LOCAL UNIT DUES (WCRTA)

- Annual - \$5

Authorization for Dues Deduct (STATE DUES) – Signature and Social Security # Required --
I hereby authorize the Teachers' Retirement System to deduct my IRTA dues in monthly installments at an initial rate of \$2.00/mo. or as subsequently established by the Delegate Assembly.

_____ Signature required for Dues Deduct.

_____ Social Security # required for Dues Deduct

PLEASE PRINT –PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

Last Name: _____ First: _____ MI: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

DOB: _____ District Retired From: _____ YR Retired: _____