

WCIRTA



Winter, 2018

Next Meeting

February 9

Crab Orchard Golf Club

9:00 am

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.”

— William Arthur Ward

I trust you all had a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year. We are looking forward to a good year for WCIRTA. We have our legislators coming to our February meeting. Other programs planned include: SI Elder Law - Tiffany Sievers, Member Benefits from AMBA, Bill Funkhauser and SIH Cancer Institute.

Seven of us attended the state IRTA Convention in Springfield at the end of October. We heard an excellent presentation about the legal items that have been addressed in the last two years. Of course SB 1 was the main thing but other items were explained. It made me very pleased to know that the IRTA is staying on top of defending our benefits. Unfortunately Bill Funkhauser was not successful in his bid to become vice-president of IRTA, but on the bright side he will serve our region for the next two years. Another item of interest is that an amendment was passed that says any new member will only have two options for dues for IRTA: lifetime dues or dues deduct from their pension.

I would like to thank Marge Mangan for her years of service on the Board of Directors. Marge has decided to step down from her position as Member Benefits Director. If any of you are interested in becoming a part of the Board of Directors please talk to someone currently on the Board.

Our next meeting is Friday, February 9 at 9:00 am at the Crab Orchard Golf Club in Carterville. Dave Severin and Dale Fowler will be in attendance and will address our group. I am sure they will be willing to answer any questions you might have for them.

We are in the process of identifying educators that will be retiring at the end of the 2017-18 school year. If any of you know some of these people, please encourage them to join IRTA and WCIRTA. Since we have entered 2018, that means that dues are now needing to be paid unless you have paid ahead. They are only \$10 for the year and can be paid at the meeting or can be mailed to Don Kragness, 14802 Poor Farm Road, Johnston City, IL 62951.

We have been experiencing some cold weather recently! However when we were visiting my son and family in Minneapolis after Christmas the high temperature for several days was below 0 degrees F!! Even those who live there were saying it was cold.

I hope to see you at our February meeting. In the mean time, stay warm.

Kent Carrell

President WCIRTA

Re: Legislative Update

Fr: Anna Morris

Following the fall veto session, some highlights of interest to our organization include:

- **A bill enacted to outlaw local “right to work” zones was vetoed by the governor. Such zones would allow individuals to work on projects without being members of a union. A large majority of the Senate voted to override the veto. However, the House voted to sustain the veto by one vote, with Representative Severin included in the majority. The bill was thus defeated.**
- **Another vetoed bill would require state agencies to submit their expenses to the Comptroller on a monthly basis (rather than yearly). Both houses voted in overwhelming numbers to override the veto, and the bill becomes law.**
- **Finally, the governor decided not to use his veto on a bill that allows the funding for abortion for Medicaid recipients as state-insured employees. The bill becomes law. Senator Fowler and several groups are attempting to challenge the bill in court. One such effort was tossed out by a state judge on December 28.**

Janus vs. AFSCME—The U. S. Supreme Court agreed to hear this case, and it will likely be argued in January. If the case is upheld, employees represented by public unions will not be required to pay dues called “fair share” contributions. Consequently, the strength of unions likely will be severely impacted. This case was instigated by Gov. Rauner.

March 20, 2018 Primary Election—Filing is well underway for the Primary. Largely because of his pro-abortion stand, Governor Rauner is being challenged by Conservative representative Jeanne Ives. J. B. Pritzker, a strong poll leader among a large field of Democrat candidates, has the support of several labor groups, including the Illinois Education Association and the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

State Debt—“Old” debts (some dating back to 2015) to vendors are now being paid by funds received from about 5 billion in bond sales. Bond interest is much lower than the interest that would accrue to the vendors.

New Leader—A new director has been appointed to lead the prestigious Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIU. John T. Shaw, a native of central Illinois with vast experience working with governments at all levels, will lead the non-partisan service center. Its timely studies, surveys, and interviews are an important data source.

Statement from TRS Executive Director Dick Ingram—“State government got a budget in 2017. But TRS got less money. Despite this reduction in fiscal year 2018 state support, TRS has—and will have—more than enough money to pay benefits for the foreseeable future. We currently have about \$50 billion in the bank. Total investment income last year was \$5.5 billion. Annually, our benefit payments total about \$6 billion. Still, the \$500 million reduction in the state’s contribution is important for the long-term future of TRS. Our latest actuarial report shows TRS is 40 percent funded.”

**Contact Information: Senator Dale Fowler 618-294-8951 217-782-5509 senatorfowler59@gmail.com
Representative Dave Severin 618-440-5090 217-782-1051**

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

TREASURER'S REPORT

DATE 1/10/2018

BEGINNING BALANCE	11/27/2017		\$2,295.86
INCOME			
DUES		\$35.00	\$35.00
EXPENSES			
Convention - Rooms		\$492.68	
Form 990 Filing Fee		\$39.95	\$532.63
ENDING BALANCE	1/10/2018		\$1,798.23

IT'S TIME TO PAY YOUR 2018 LOCAL AND STATE DUES

LOCAL DUES ARE NOW \$10.00 PER YEAR

Please make your LOCAL dues check to: WCIRTA

Mail to: DON KRAGNESS, Treasurer, 14802 Poor Farm Road, Johnston City, IL 62951

IT'S IMPORTANT.

DO IT TODAY!!!

President of IRTA, David Davison, is pleased to report significant achievements recently that position the Association to defend member interests at the capitol, to increase membership, to provide greater service by our Springfield Office, and to continue to offer excellent benefits and activities. IRTA, is now, a well-known and influential organization in Springfield. He also is happy to report that the Lutheran Family Services has rented our old Springfield Office which we still own.

The most important legislative achievement this summer was to save subsidies for the Teachers Retirement Insurance Program. These subsidies help to reduce the cost of our premiums for health insurance.

The IRTA continues to change and adapt to members' needs. The process for membership can be done totally, electronically online. We have added 3800 new members in the last two years and are hoping to reach a total increase of 4000 by the end of 2017. AMBA which provides many benefits is very involved in helping to enroll new members.

The IRTA Foundation continues to offer "Scholarships" and "Grants to Active Teachers' Programs. The Foundation is administered independently of Association monies.

Over 460 members recently attended our Biennial IRTA State Convention. From the Convention the following statements were offered in "The Path Forward":

1. We believe any attempts to take away our health insurance benefits will fail.
 2. We are ready, willing, and able to fight any further efforts through litigation.
 3. We should be proud of how our Association has and will continue to respond.
- Proposed amendment changes and the updated constitution can be found online.

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association will convene informational meetings in Florida for Illinois annuitants with regard to IRTA activities. Meetings are scheduled for February 12, 13, and 15, 2018, in the Villages, Sarasota and Naples.

For more information contact IRTA Office at 1-800-728-4782. This will help our Illinois snowbirds. Incoming President Roger Hampton and IRTA Executive Director Jim Bachman plan to attend.

I think many of us here in Southern Illinois would like to join them at this meeting. "Bob Campbell, save us a seat."

If you have not paid your WCIRTA dues for this year or have not joined, please consider making this a priority for 2018. This would be a great resolution to resolve to help our association locally and statewide and one that should be easy to accomplish.

Loren Taylor, Information Services

\$1500 IRTA Foundation Scholarship in our Area

Do you know a college student that would like a \$1500 scholarship?
It is easy to apply. Applications are available at irtaonline.org
An application must be postmarked no later than March 7, prior to the applicant's **junior or senior year in college**. The student must be accepted into a Teacher Certification Program and be a resident of our area, Area 6. Applicants must have and maintain at least a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Inquiries or questions, please contact Susan Goetz 1-800-728-4782 or email susan@irtaonline.org