

# WCRTA Spring, 2015



Dear Fellow Retiree,

WCRTA members and other Illinois retirees are anxiously awaiting the decision by the Illinois Supreme Court on whether Senate Bill 1, now enacted as Public Act 98-599, will be declared unconstitutional in whole or in part. **The decision is expected in May.** The lawyers hired to defend our rights are still confident that we will prevail. Some of you may have viewed the oral arguments before the Supreme Court in March. If you did not see them you can do so at [livestream.com/blueroomstream/events/3845430](http://livestream.com/blueroomstream/events/3845430). For those who are inclined to wade through the papers filed in the litigation, you can read it all at <http://www.state.il.us/court/SupremeCourt/SpecialMatters/2014/default.asp>. Be assured that IRTA and legal counsel are monitoring the process in support of retired educators.

We still need to provide financial assistance to IRTA to fight this and upcoming issues. IRTA has expended over \$500,000 for the Legal Defense Fund and has a current balance of about \$65,000. If you have already contributed to this special fund take this as a formal thank you and consider an additional gift to the fund. If you have not yet contributed please consider doing so. Send your check to the IRTA Legal Defense Fund at 620 N. Walnut, Springfield, IL 62702. **No IRTA funds other than those contributed to this special fund are used for any litigation activities.**

Our spring meeting is Wednesday, May 13, at noon at Mackie's Pizza in Marion. Although we have not yet firmed up a speaker, we are trying to secure the new TRS annuitant board member, Daniel Winter from Decatur. He has taken Cynthia O'Neill's place on the TRS Board of Trustees. If he is unavailable this time, we will have him at one of our meetings in the near future. We will also share with attendees the latest IRTA news from the Region 6 Conference held in Carbondale on May 7.

Finally, I reiterate my usual plea to: 1. Remain ever vigilant; 2. Become better informed; 3. Let our legislators know how we feel; 4. Join and support IRTA; 5. Sign up for and use IRTA's Voter Voice; 6. Join IRTAPAC with a \$1 monthly payroll deduction from your TRS check; 7. Most importantly, **send a check to IRTA for the Legal Defense Fund.**

Bob Campbell, WCRTA President

## **WCRTA Meetings Scheduled for the Remainder of 2015**

|            |            |                                     |
|------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| May 13     | 12:00 Noon | Mackie's Pizza                      |
| August 13  | 1:30 PM    | To Be Determined                    |
| October 19 | 1.30 PM    | St. Paul Center in<br>Johnston City |

The IRTA Board met recently and these items were shared with the members.

1. There appears to be little legislative support for Governor Rauner’s proposed changes to the state’s pension laws.
2. Governor Rauner has proposed defunding the TRIP program but that program is funded by an automatic continuing appropriation and appears to be safe for the current budget cycle.
3. Vacations By Rail has been added as a member benefit and the Vision and Dental Insurance program has been extended for two more years.
4. Horace Mann has been dropped as a benefit.
5. Sam’s Club has discontinued the discount program for members.
6. It was reported that Senate Bill 1583 is moving through the committee structure of the legislature but that it might be revised to a resolution. It would allow retirees of Medicare age who previously opted out of the Medicare Advantage Program to opt back in to the program.

**Be sure to attend the May 13 meeting at Mackie’s Pizza in Marion to hear of any other new developments shared with our delegates attending the Region 6 meeting in Carbondale.**

**New Board Members Added to WCRTA**

The February general membership meeting approved Kent Carrell, the board’s appointment to the WCRTA Board of Directors to fill the previously vacant office of Vice President. Kent retired from the math department at Marion High School a few years ago and has attended several recent board meetings as an observer to “learn the ropes” and understand the responsibilities of the office.

The April meeting of the WCRTA Board of Directors also saw the approval of Bert Gordon to membership on the board. Bert is retired from the Herrin School District. He will be assigned to a specific job on the board when he attends the June meeting of the Board.

The Board has the power to appoint additional members to serve the organization and welcomes anyone who is interested in a leadership role in WCRTA to let one of the current members know of that interest. WCRTA members are always welcome to attend the meetings and observe actions taken. Upcoming meetings of the board will be held at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church on Carbon Street in Marion on June 24, September 9 and October 19. The meetings start at 1:30 PM. Current Board members are Bob Campbell, Kent Carrell, Marge Mangan, Don Kragness, Anna Morris, Steve Maxwell, Mary Lou Gander, Tom Oates, Loren Taylor, John Harland, Patricia Koontz and Bert Gordon.

**Dues Are Due**

**DUE** you know that WCRTA **DUES** are **DUE** and payable each year in January? **DUE** the right thing and send your 2015 **DUES** to Treasurer Don Kragness at 14082 Poor Farm Road, Johnston City, IL 62951. **DUE** not procrastinate. **DUE** it now while it is fresh on your mind. **DUE** you understand?



**IRTA State & Local Unit Membership Form**

620 North Walnut Street • Springfield, IL 62702 • 1-800-728-4782  
 e-mail: irta@irtaonline.org • webpage: www.irtaonline.org

**Dues Deduct** – I hereby authorize the Teachers’ Retirement System to deduct my IRTA dues in monthly installments at an initial rate of \$2.00 or as subsequently established by the Delegate Assembly.

Association Dues are Not Tax Deductible

- State Dues**
- Dues Deduct** - \$24 a year (see left side of form)
  - 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**
- Annual - \$5

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Signature required for Dues Deduction) Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please print or use your return address label. (Only required for Dues Deduction)

|           |        |                 |                 |                 |
|-----------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| NAME LAST | FIRST  | MI              | DOB             |                 |
| ADDRESS   | CITY   | STATE           | ZIP             | RETIREMENT YEAR |
| PHONE ( ) | E-MAIL | UNIT Williamson | SCHOOL DISTRICT | RETIRED FROM    |

Please mail to IRTA.

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MARY LOU GANDER, BENEFITS CHAIR

**Re: Legislative Update**

**Fr: Anna Morris**

**Pension Law (Senate Bill 1):** The Illinois Supreme Court heard oral arguments March 15 and has the ruling on fast track.

Opinions for a favorable retiree ruling are numerous. Governor Rauner recently denounced the Court for being political activists and called for their positions to be based on merit appointments rather than elected. **Major Democratic legislative leaders who fashioned the pension bill currently being reviewed** by the Court (Nekritz and Biss) urged the Governor to submit his proposal for a new bill soon, if he expects it to be acted upon by the May 31 session ending date. They submit that pension actuaries need at least three weeks to review the proposed bill. **The Governor has proposed a vast expansion of the Tier 2 program passed in 2011 and adding many to 401-k type plans.** Biss labeled the Governor's goal of saving \$2.2 billion in pension expense in this year's budget as "absolute fantasy."

**Insurance Update (TRIP):** According to our Executive Director, Jim Bachman, there is a concern about TRIP funding, as the governor's budget contains no funding for TRIP. Our IRTA members should not be alarmed at this time and should be aware that IRTA is working to remedy this situation.

**Proposed Budget Cuts:** Practically all funding programs are impacted. These cuts could potentially affect retiree programs, SIU, and our local economies and also could result in new funding measures, including a tax on retiree pensions. Seniors could be impacted with reductions in transportation services and other aid to the elderly and infirm.

**Senate Appropriations Hearings:** Members of the committee are holding 17 public hearings around the state to judge the potential impact of the Governor's \$6 billion budget balancing cuts. They held a hearing at SIU on April 8. The State's new Comptroller, Leslie Munger, met with local leaders the following week and didn't do much to allay their concerns. She noted, "We can't cut our way, and we can't tax our way out of this. We have to grow out of this." She urged them to reduce local expenditures.

**Union Activities:** The Governor has filed a suit to eliminate "fair share" union funding. He, through the Illinois Municipal League, is assisting local government units to request local right-to-work zones. Response to date has been very limited. Of note on the local level: Makanda's village board passed the two-page resolution inadvertently, not realizing it was an anti-union action. They are attempting to reverse their approval.

**Master Contract:** The Master Contract for public employee unions expires June 30. Current employee issues include matters of merit pay, reduction in overtime hours, outsourcing of labor, etc. Health insurance will also be negotiated in this contract. What happens with the state employees could also impact teachers, both active and retired.

**WCRTA Treasurer's Report**

|                          |                                    |                   |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Beginning Balance</b> | <b>12/31/14</b>                    | <b>\$2,455.02</b> |
| <b>Income</b>            | <b>Dues \$440.00</b>               |                   |
|                          | <b>Rebate on Sound System \$10</b> |                   |
| <b>Expenses</b>          | <b>IRTA Foundation \$30</b>        |                   |
| <b>Ending Balance</b>    | <b>4/2/15</b>                      | <b>\$2875.33</b>  |

If you have not paid your dues for 2015, please make your \$5.00 check to WCRTA and mail to  
Don Kragness  
14802 Poor Farm Road  
Johnston City, IL 82951

## WCRTA Membership Report 04/17/2018

We appreciate your past, present, and future interest and participation in the Williamson County Retired Teachers Association. Our \$5.00 local dues are paid separately from your IRTA dues and due on January 1 of each year. Thanks to all of you who have paid your 2015 WCRTA dues. We had an additional 13 members pay their dues during the past few weeks. However, our membership reports indicate a significant number have forgotten and not paid their 2015 dues. We currently have 249 of 378 members still needing to pay their 2015 dues. 185 of our members pay the state IRTA dues using the Dues Deduction option. 85 are Life Members of the state IRTA and several others pay their IRTA dues annually, etc. We continue to keep our local dues at a low \$5.00 annual fee. Members who have forgotten about paying their local dues should have gotten a reminder email from me by the time this newsletter goes to print. Please don't hesitate to call or email me with any questions or concerns. Your dues should be paid to WCRTA Treasurer Don Kragness.

I try and keep up with changes in physical or email addresses and phone #s. Don't hesitate to send updates to me or Don Kragness if there has been a change you would like to share

Don't forget that our website at: <http://williamsoncountyrta.weebly.com/> is regularly updated all kinds of info.

Steve Maxwell WCRTA Membership Chair

Email: [emax\\_1@mchsi.com](mailto:emax_1@mchsi.com)

Phone: 618-923-3629

### Highlights of Board of Directors Meeting

President Bob Campbell called the meeting to order. Those present were: Bob Campbell, Mary Lou Gander, Tom Oates, Steve Maxwell, Don Kragness, Anna Morris, John Harland, and Marge Mangan. Kent Carrell and Loren Taylor were absent due to medical issues.

**Retirees' dinner** Since only 4 people from Williamson County schools will be retiring this year, there will be no retirees' dinner. Bob will send each retiree a letter welcoming them, as well as preparing packets for each of them. The retirees are:

Johnston City Unit 1 – Phyllis Jones

Marion Unit 2 – Cindy Bushing

Crab Orchard Unit 3 – No retirees

Herrin Unit 4 – Mark May and Kay Ingersall

Carterville Unit 5 – No retirees

**Area 6 Meeting** Eight Board members of WCRTA will attend the Area 6 meeting in Carbondale on May 7, 2015.

#### Reports of Standing Committees –

**Member Benefits** – Mary Lou Gander reported. TRIP is planning to put in two new parts: dental and open enrollment.

**Membership** – Steve Maxwell reported. Steve told of three deceased members: Helen Cast, Anita Odle, and Brenda Preston. 13 members have paid dues from January 1 to April 8, 2015. John added that almost every one of the 89 newsletters sent through the uSPS had “red x;s”. There was discussion as to how to collect dues.

**Legislative** – Anna Morris reported. Pension Law (SB1). The Illinois Supreme Court heard oral arguments March 15 and has the ruling on fast track. Members of the Senate Appropriations are holding 17 public hearings around the State to judge the potential impact of the governor's \$6 billion budget balancing cuts. They will hold a hearing at SIU on April 8. She also reported on proposed budget cuts that could potentially affect retiree programs and our local economy.

**Discussion of Update By-Laws** – Technically, WCRTA needs to have an audit. The difficulty is that the fiscal year for WCRTA is July 1 through June 30. The fiscal year for IRTA is the calendar year. There was much discussion on Article VI. That would mean updating Article VI, changing July 1 to January 1 for the fiscal year.

**Section 3** – We need to have a committee of the past three Presidents.

They are Jim DeYoung, John Harland, and Bob Campbell. Bob will study the potential changes/updates on Article VI. He will bring the suggested changes/updates to the Board. If approved, they will be brought to the Membership at the Annual Meeting. If the fiscal year changes, the Annual Meeting would be in Johnston City in October 2015. If there is no change, the Annual Meeting would be in May 2015.

**Article X** – deals with Elections and Terms of Office. The terms of office are two-year terms for President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. (Lyle Dee Ozment had just started his second term as President prior to his death.) Bob will also work with these changes and present them at the Annual Meeting.

**Other /Business** – Legal Defense Fund – The balance in this fund had been \$490,000. Just under \$400,000 has been spent, leaving a balance of about \$100,000. Bill Funkhauser is retiring.

Marge Mangan, Secretary