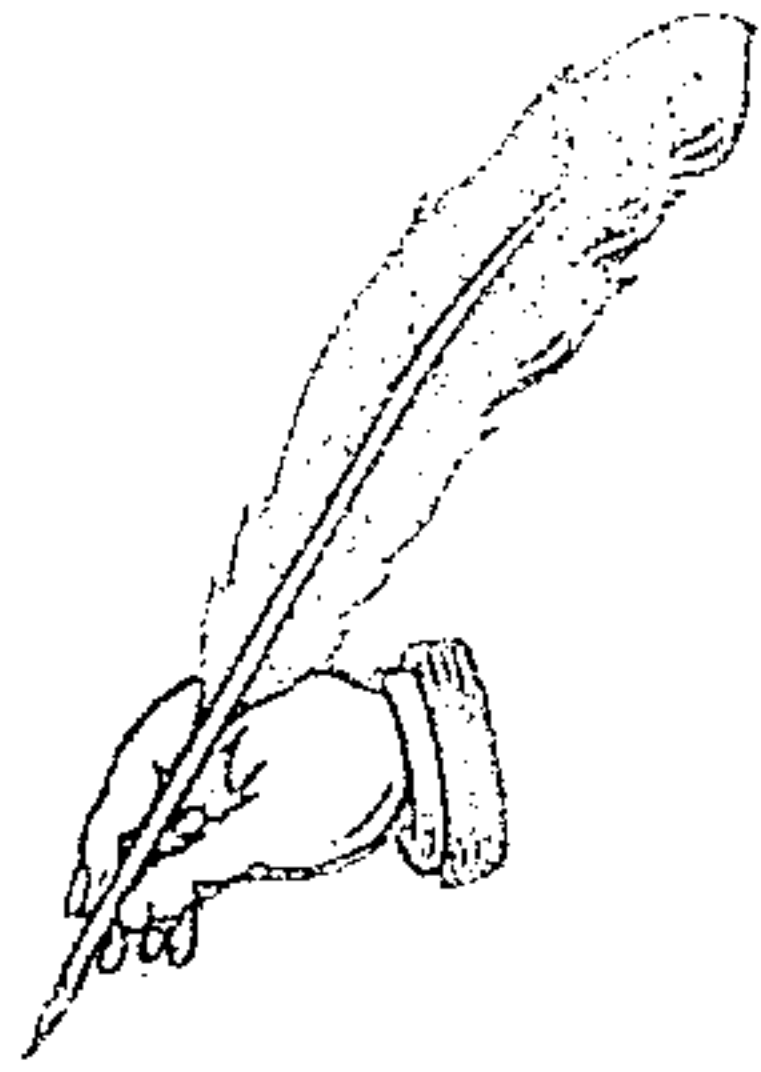
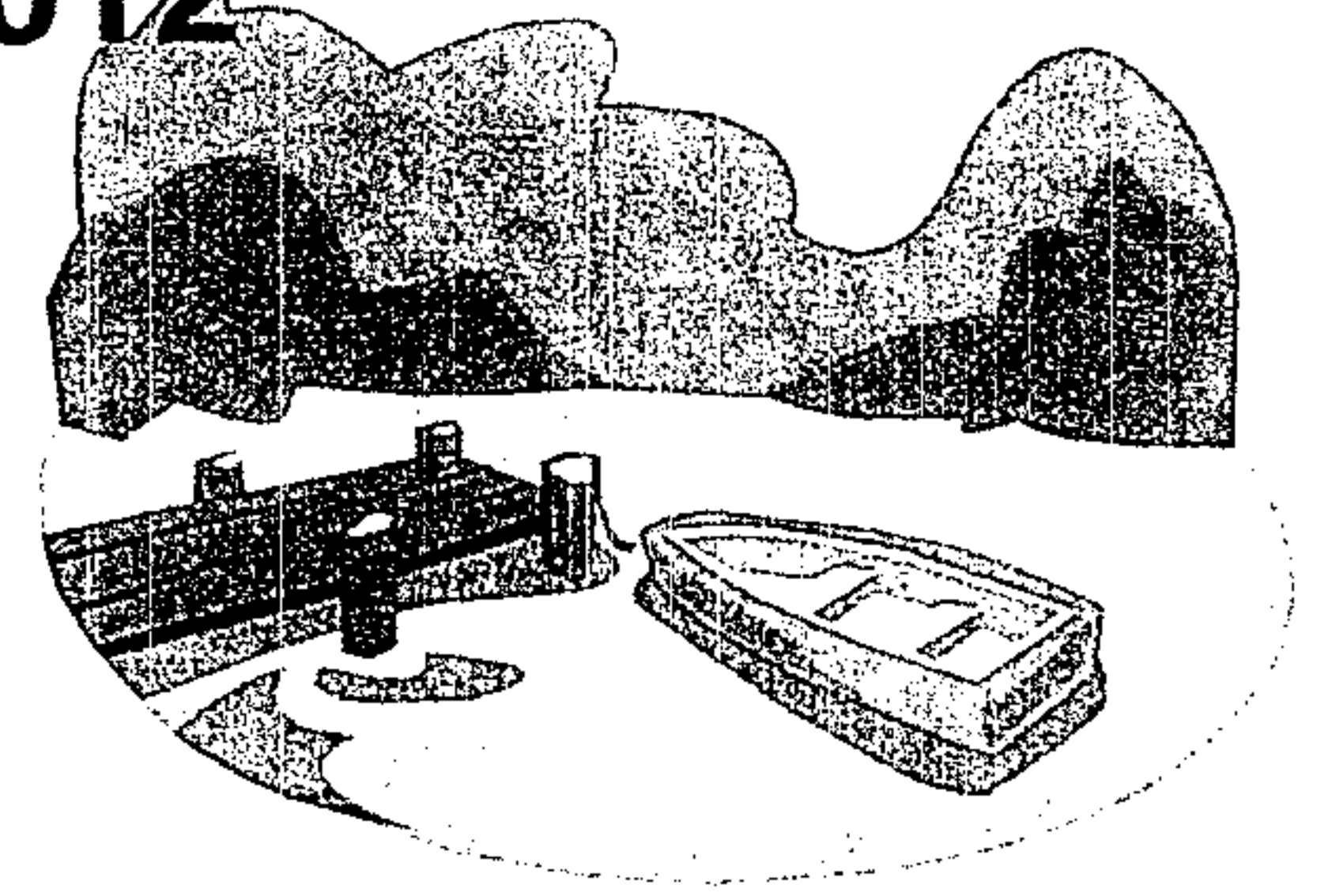


WCRTA

Summer, 2012



Mark Your Calendar!

Aug. 8
1:00 pm at
Western
Sizzlin'

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to say thanks to all members who supported the effort to contact the legislators and Governor concerning legislation that would involve pension reform. We have postponed and perhaps made an impact on the people in Springfield leave our pension systems alone, because they are working exactly as they should be and with proper funding could serve the public workers for an indefinite period of time. So, keep up the good contacts with your legislators and Governor and maybe we will save the pension systems.

A good way to stay in touch with the Legislators is through Voter Voice and receive all the alerts through Voter Voice that are sent out over the email and internet. Simply go to the IRTA website and register for Voter Voice. You will be glad that you did.

Do not miss our next meeting at the Western Sizzlin in Marion on Wednesday, August 8th at 1:30 pm. Come at 1:00 pm and have lunch then we will get the meeting started by 1:30 pm. See you there.

Dee Ozment, President

WCRTA Welcomes New Members

Karen Aldridge, Sherry Austin, Nancy Bass, Kent and Laurel Carrell, Camille Goode, Debra Hale, Roberta Kearney, Debra O'Neal, Karen Seavers, Sherry Starrick, Cathy Tolbert, Jo Ann Violet, and Pamela Zeigler have joined WCRTA since April 2012. A few of the 2012 retirees have also gotten membership applications, but have not shown up on the roster yet.

Returned Newsletters

Newsletters were returned and we need addresses for the following people. If you know any of these members' addresses please send them Tom Oates or Steve Maxwell

Quetta Karcher, 1700 W. Maplewood St., Marion, IL

Margaret Jones, 7568 Rt. 166, Creal Springs, IL 62922

Lucille Queen, 914 N. Bentley St., Marion

Kay Ferris, 1806 Suzanne Dr, Marion

James McNary, 306 Lockmoor St., Collinsville, IL 62234

Loy Smith, 14707 Northville Rd., Apt. 53, Plymouth, MI 48170

Raymond Harold, 500 Arbor Drive, Carbondale, IL 62901

Don't forget to pay your \$5.00 local dues. We have almost 300 WCRTA members whose state dues are paid and many who have not paid their 1012 dues. Send me a note if you're not sure if you've paid or not. I'll also try and make contact with those within the next few weeks who may have forgotten. Steve Maxwell, WCRTA Membership Chairman

emax_1@mchsi.com (ph: 618-923-3689)

Re: Legislative Update
Fr: Anna Morris

As I was saying. . . Forget Constitutional assurances. Pension benefits as we have known them are soon likely to change.

The spring legislative session ended shortly after its May 31 deadline in heated debate over its final unresolved issue—public pension reform. However, our major political leaders are committed to making legal changes before the summer is over or at least by year's end.

A primary bone of contention centers around who will pay the majority of costs for future teacher retirements (also for community colleges and universities). Will it be the State government or local school districts? A choice of the latter, which the Governor and Speaker of the House favor, would probably ultimately result in higher local property taxes. State responsibility would almost certainly produce higher pension deficits.

Agreement seemed to be unified toward an arrangement that would offer retired teachers a choice of one of two options. Option one would allow us to keep the current COLA (cost of living adjustment) of 3%, but become ineligible to access any state sponsored health insurance program. Option two would allow access to insurance programs but change the annual COLA to the lesser of half the amount of the annual federal consumer price index (CPI) or 3%, whichever is lower.

Further, under option two, COLAs would not be compounded. Rather, they would be calculated on a constant flat base, likely the amount a retiree is receiving at the time the bill becomes law (at least, that's the thinking at this time).

Any changes will almost certainly be challenged in court (Lisa Madigan, Attorney General, will defend the State). In their wisdom, the legislators have excluded the Judges' Retirement System from any changes in the COLA. Changes have already been made, with the passage of Senate Bill 1313, to the health insurance benefits of the members of the State Employees' Pension System.

It should be noted that the major teachers' unions (IEA and IFT) are in agreement that changes in pension benefits are needed but wish to be a part of the negotiating process.

The following info is provided by Cynthia O'Neill, our TRS Board Trustee:
An article on TRS was published in the 6-28 issue of WSJ [Wall Street Journal] on pages C 1-2. It focused on our 8.5% expected rate of return (ERR), higher than that of many other pension systems. When the Board meets on August 22-23-24, trustees will be presented with a discussion of the issue with Buck Consultants, our actuaries—a discussion we have every 5 years according to plan. Of course if

TRS lowers the ERR, the State liability number goes up. The important view is the long-term view because we are a pension system, and the annual investment return over 30 years has been 9.3%. (In 2011 the return was over 23%; the 2012 figures are not final, but could be near 7.8%). One final point, sometimes the media choose to use the past 10-year period to cite TRS returns—a period everyone knows for being volatile and financially stressed—thus, the appropriateness of the long-term approach.

The following comments and article have been forwarded by Bob Lyons, who, along with Cynthia O’Neill, represents us on the TRS Board of Trustees:

This is worth reading for the numbers and Martire is correct in pointing out that the ‘95 funding is not solving the unfunded liability but his implication that it caused the problem is only true if you assume that if the Pension Ramp plan had not existed then the state would have fully funded us. Why would you believe that? Suffice to say, under the current plan, which the state has already said they must change because they cannot afford to make the payments, it is not until 2034 that state puts in enough money for the five systems’ unfunded liabilities to start to go down. Let’s use the headline for this essay in the Springfield paper” “Don’t Blame the Benefits!” That is the point to remember and to share. Bob Lyons

Blame ‘Pension Ramp’ for state’s liability

By Ralph Martire Center for Tax and Budget Accountability

If you want to believe “unaffordable” pension benefits promised to public sector workers like teachers and social workers caused Illinois’ outsized, \$83 billion unfunded pension liability, stop reading now. This column will only make your head hurt by disproving that canard with facts. If you’d rather understand both the true cause of that underfunding and how it actually strains the state’s budget, then continue reading.

Start with the most important fact: Illinois’ “ginormous” unfunded pension liability wasn’t caused by any inherent aspect of the pension systems. That’s right, neither the benefits promised nor the cost of paying for those benefits is to blame. Here’s proof.

The current unfunded liability totals \$83 billion because Illinois has only \$63.6 billion in pension assets to cover \$146.5 billion in pension liabilities. Expressed as a percentage, that’s an aggregate funded ratio of just 43.4 percent. To be sound, public sector pension systems should be at least 80 to 90 percent funded. That’s scary, but here’s the eye-opener: If retirement benefits and salary increases were the only drivers of the unfunded liability, the state’s retirement systems would be about 94 percent funded today. In other words, there’d be no pension crisis.

What Illinois really has is a debt crisis. Here’s why. For decades, Illinois’ poorly designed tax policy created an ongoing structural deficit. That means, adjusting

solely for inflation and population, tax revenue hasn't grown at a rate sufficient to cover the increased cost of delivering the same level of services from one year into the next. This is somewhat amazing, given that despite having the fifth-largest population of any state, Illinois annually ranks in the bottom 10 in service spending.

To paper over — without resolving — the fact that its tax policy is so poor Illinois can't afford to be one of the lowest-spending states in the nation, decision makers funded public services by borrowing against what they owed the pension systems. In effect, the state racked up a ton of debt by using the pension systems like a credit card to pay for public services for which there was not enough tax revenue. By 1994, lawmakers had borrowed so much against pensions that the funded ratio was just 54.5 percent.

This benefited taxpayers in the short run by allowing them to consume public services without having to pay the full cost of those services, but the ever-growing debt ultimately had to be paid. Purportedly to rectify the problem, Public Act 88-0593 was passed in 1995. Known as the "Pension Ramp," it established a repayment schedule to get the pension systems 90 percent funded by 2045.

Unfortunately the Pension Ramp was fundamentally flawed, because it continued the practice of borrowing against pension contributions to fund services for 15 more years, effectively tripling total pension debt, and was so backloaded that the installments of debt to be repaid in out years jumped at annual rates that were unrealistic and unaffordable. For instance last year in FY2012, the state's pension contribution was \$4.1 billion, of which only \$1.6 billion was the cost of funding benefits, while more than half, \$2.5 billion, was repayment of debt. In FY2013 the contribution jumps by 23 percent to \$5.1 billion — with all the increase being debt repayment under the goofy Pension Ramp.

The implication is clear: The problem won't be solved by cutting benefits, because benefits aren't the problem, the Pension Ramp is. Indeed, if the state had incurred this debt with a bank rather than the retirement systems, Illinois couldn't even try to make the bank's workers repay the state's debt, and couldn't have forced the bank to accept an unrealistic, unaffordable repayment schedule.

- Ralph Martire, rmartire@ctbaonline.org, is executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, a Chicago-based bipartisan fiscal policy think tank.

The following is a list of the legislators for our area with their e-mail addresses and phone numbers. Please keep this page for your use now and in the future. There may be an occasion when you will want to contact a legislator other than Bradley or Forby, who represent Williamson County.

Legislator List

Representative John E. Bradley
117th District
269-S Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217)782-1051
Email: repjohnbradley@mychoice.net

501 DeYoung, Suite 5
Marion, IL 62959
(618)997-9697

Senator Gary Forby
59th District
417 Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217)782-5509

903 W. Washington, Suite 5
Benton, IL 62812
(618)439-2504
Email: senatorforby@yahoo.com

Senator Dave Luechtefeld
58th District
(618) 548-9080
Springfield, IL 62706
(217)782-8137
700 N. Front Street
Okawville, IL 62271
Email: sendavel@midwest.net

Rep. Jerry F. Costello II
116th District
(618)443-5757
(217)782-1018
Email: staterepcostello@gmail.com

Representative Mike Bost
115th District
280-S Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217)782-0387
Email: mike.bost@gmail.com

300 E. Main
Carbondale, IL 62901
(618)457-5787

Representative Brandon Phelps
118th District
271-S Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217)782-5131
Email: bphelps118@gmail.com

2 N. Vine
Harrisburg, IL 62946
(618)253-4189

Representative John Cavaletto
107th District 103-B Capitol Bldg.
Springfield: (217)782-0066
Email: john@johncavaletto.com
1370 W. Main Street, Ste. A
P O Box 1264
Salem, IL 62881

Senator John O. Jones
(618)243-9014
54th District
2929 Broadway, STE. #5
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
Springfield: (217) 782-0471
District: (618)242-9511
Email: johnojones@sbcglobal.net

Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation Fact Sheet

The **Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation** is a charitable organization and does not use IRTA dues money for any of the programs listed below.

Where does the money come from to support these programs?

Our funds come from two basic sources. First of all, our 93 Units across the state collect money from their members to support the Foundation. In addition, most of our units honor their deceased members with memorial donations to the Foundation. In the last 5-6 years, we have conducted a direct-mail fundraiser. **It is often referred to as the "Label" fundraiser. Last year we received donations in the amount of \$167,451. The mailing included individualized mailing labels, a personalized note-pad and 2 bookmarks. The cost of the product, the postage and the 3 mailings was \$51,614. This means our net income was \$115,837. In other words, the Foundation Programs listed below receive 69% of monies donated to the label campaign.**

Programs:

Retired Teachers Assistance

We are currently assisting 15 retired teachers with monthly stipends that total \$4,850 a month. This is an annual total of \$58,200.00. Our average monthly assistance check is \$309.00. The checks range in amount from \$160.00 to \$500.00.

These grants are based on need. Recipients are required to fill out an application listing their monthly income from all sources and their monthly expenses. They are also required to send in their most recent tax return. A committee, made up of the Foundation Chair, the Foundation Treasurer, the Foundation Vice-Chair, the IRTA Executive Director and the IRTA Comptroller, reviews these applications and makes a determination as to whether the Foundation will assist them. Most of the people we assist retired many years ago and receive very small pensions. Many are single women or disabled individuals.

We are currently paying real estate taxes for one person. Before we started to pay the taxes, they were being charged on a credit card.

The Foundation will also assist people with one-time needs. These needs could be anything from medical expenses to paying back taxes so that a recipient doesn't lose their house.

Scholarships (for aspiring teachers)

We provide six (6) \$1,500 scholarships to juniors or seniors in college who are majoring in Education. Applications are made available on-line and are mailed to all the community colleges in Illinois. When we determine applicants have met all of our requirements, our Foundation Area Reps make a decision on the winner from each Area.

Excellence in Education Grants for Teachers

We provide \$15,000 worth of small grants to Pre-School through High School teachers for projects that they would like to do in their classrooms or for supplies that their school districts can't afford to provide. Each year we rotate the areas from which we accept applications. We started in the Southern Illinois counties, then the Central Illinois counties and finally the Northern counties. **In 2011 we gave out 36 grants in the Southern Illinois counties.**

I CARE Ombudsman Program

We support a Nursing Home Ombudsman program that sends volunteers into nursing homes to protect resident rights. (\$26,000.00 annual) The Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation is designated as the provider agency for the Ombudsman Program for the Area 07.

ICARE provides investigative services, regular presence in long term care facilities, public information and community education, issue advocacy, resident and family council development and support, inquiry processing, long term care facility staff in-service training and volunteer management for the region's 12 county area.

The Foundation has operated ICARE, formerly known as Project Advocate, Long Term Care Ombudsman program for Area 7 since 1992. Over the past 13 years, I CARE has been recognized as a leader in the state in terms of the quality of service offered to residents and their families, the large number of volunteers advocates recruited, the high volume of trainings offered to volunteers and staff on a state wide basis, the effective public information campaign achieved partly through producing and staffing of a public television show entitled "Quality Care Today", the systems legislative advocacy provided through the Regional Ombudsman's roles in several statewide workgroups and in the Statewide Ombudsman Association and in encouraging Pioneer Practices to be implemented in the facilities.

2012 WCRTA DUES (01/01/2012 – 12/31/2012)

If there is NO RED "X" by your name on the mailing label of this Newsletter, you have paid your 2012 local dues. THANKS!!

If a RED "X" appears next to your name on the mailing label, you have not paid your 2012 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: _____

Williamson County Retired Teachers Association
General Meeting, Mackie's Pizza, Marion, IL
Tuesday, May 1, 2012

Meeting followed a pizza buffet at Noon.

With about 73 members in attendance, Dee Ozment, President of the WCRTA, welcomed all. This is to be an informative Question and Answer meeting.

The Treasurer's Report showed: \$3,881.68 - beginning balance. \$2,242.00 Income. \$2,975.69 Expenses. \$3,147.99 Ending Balance. Treasurer's Report as of May 1, 2012. Minutes and Treasurer's Report moved, seconded, and approved.

Since Matt Donklin, Regional Superintendent of Education, was in Springfield, Kurt Endebrock, Assistant Regional Superintendent of Education, attended the meeting .

Information was given during the meeting and questions were answered:

^ Dick Ingram held a TRS town hall meeting on April 11, 2012, at the Marion High School. Pension is a huge issue.

^ ROE is fighting for us. ROE's are necessary and needed to make sure the process is followed when determining boundaries throughout the state. There is a possibility to consolidate ROE's from 44 in the state to 35. Our ROE is the largest ROE in Southern Illinois. Our ROE copies newsletters for us and provides postage, as well as additional assistance . Kurt mentioned to membership "If there is something we (members) need, let the ROE know about it".

^ Steve Maxwell reported on Retirees dinner; update on membership. Connie Beasley reported on member benefits.

^ Judi Harlan represented scholarships and the IRTA Foundation. The Foundation supports us by giving \$65,000 to retired teachers who need financial help, grants for teachers in the classroom (3 are to teachers in Marion); \$1500 scholarships to a Junior or Senior student in education in Area 6. We will have 2 scholarships.

^ There are 3 people representing us at the state level. Judi --the IRTA Foundation; John Harlan for Finance Committee; Bob Campbell -- Legislative Committee for Region 18; Bob said we need to become active and get into IRTA on line. Get involved in Voter Voice. Get involved in our unit. Bob encouraged members to join IRTA-PAC.

^ The Appropriations committee needs to know how we want money spent. Using the internet, find out who the members of this Committee are: Ill. General Assembly.

^ Anna Morris reported on Insurance -- it may increase; She encouraged members to sign up for Voter Voice It is a serious situation for active teachers and newly hired. IRTA is the only organization in Springfield devoted to the rights of retirees.

^ 4 of our members have met with John Bradley. Some are setting up meetings with Bradley and Gary Forby.

^ John and Bob are on the nominating committee. Dee Ozment's term is expiring.

^ Dee asked for any other questions. There being none, the next meeting is scheduled for Aug. 8 at 1 P.M. at Western Sizzlin in Marion. The meeting adjourned at 1:50 P.M.

Marge Mangon
Secretary

**Retirees' Dinner
Tuesday, April 24, 2012
Mackie's Pizza, Marion**

Nine new retirees attended the dinner meeting on April 24, 2012, at Mackie's Pizza in Marion at 6 P.M. There were 24 total in attendance.

The meeting began at 6:45 P.M. with Dee Ozment, President, welcoming all present. Various information was distributed: IRTA, WCRTA. TRS sends out the retirement checks through the Comptroller's Office in Springfield. "We are an organization to protect our retirees." There are 4 meetings a year. We are Unit #86, Area 6, Region 18.

John Harlan introduced Letitia from the ROE. She explained the certification process, stressing the importance of keeping track of one's own days of substituting. Also discussed was Voter Voice.

Judi Harlan is on the Foundation Board; she is our Area 6 representative. The Foundation supplies grants for classroom teachers; scholarships for students going into Jr. or Sr. years in college. We had 2 winners. Also the Foundation helps retired teachers who retired so long ago that their retirement checks do not keep up with today's expenses. This helps them.

Connie Beasley, Benefits Chair, and Mary Lou Gander, Services, explains what is covered in their areas. Dues: WCRTA: \$5.00/year; IRTA: \$35/year or \$400/lifetime. Dues Deduct is \$2.00/month = \$24.00/year. Dues for the newly retired are free through December 31, 2012.

Don Kragness, Finance Chair, discussed insurance.

Bob Campbell, Legislative Committee, told the group there are no numbered bills at the present time. He said IRTA members "speak with one voice." Also discussed the IRTA PAC – the political action committee. Many dislike the PAC, but recognize the work they do, such as lobbying.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

The nine retirees present and their school:

Karen Aldridge, Lincoln in Marion
Sherry Austin, Lincoln in Marion
JoAnn Violet, Unit 2
Pam Zeigler, WCSED
Kent Carrell, Marion High School

Bobby Kearney, WCSED
Debra O'Neal, WCSED
Nancy Bass, WCSED SHI
Carnille Goode, Lincoln in Marion

*Marge Mangor
Secretary*

REMINDER OF BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO IRTA MEMBERS

ENDORSED BENEFITS

AUTO/HOME INSURANCE	LIFE LINE SCREENING
LONG TERM/HOME HEALTH CARE INSURANCE	TAX DEFERRED ANNUITY
FIRST DIAGNOSIS CANCER INSURANCE	MEDICAL AIR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
FINAL EXPENSE WHOLE LIFE INSURANCE	GOV. EMPLOYEE TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES
MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT INSURANCE	IDENTITY THEFT SOLUTIONS
DENTAL/VISION INSURANCE	CREDIT CARD

INFORMATIVE BENEFITS

COMPUTER DISCOUNT	AIR EVAC LIFE TEAM
WIREFLY—CELL PHONES & PLANS	COLLETTE VACATIONS
RENTAL CAR DISCOUNTS	ATT DISCOUNTS
1-800 FLOWERS (15	VERIZON DISCOUNTS
HEARING PLAN DISCOUNT	
WELLS FARGO ADVISORS NETWORK	

FOR INFORMATION, CALL IRTA @ 800-728-4782

MARY LOU GANDER

WCRTA BENEFITS & SERVICES

WCRTA will soon have a web site that you can access through the IRTA's web site @ <http://www.irtaonline.org/> or search for County units @ <http://www.irtaonline.org/Units.aspx>

WILLIAMSON COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
TREASURER'S REPORT

DATE: 6/30/2012

BEGINNING BALANCE: 7/1/2011 \$3,881.68

INCOME:

DUES: \$1,930.00
MISC \$0.00
MEETING EXPENSE REIMB \$427.00
OVERPAYMENT OF DUES \$0.00

TOTAL INCOME: \$2,357.00

EXPENSES:

ANNUAL DUES: \$420.00
LIFE \$400.00
DUES
DUES REIMBURSEMENT \$0.00
ANNUAL CONFERENCE \$94.00
DINNER FOR RETIREES \$311.05
IRTA CONVENTION \$1,297.08
MEMORIALS \$50.00
MEETING EXPENSE \$438.56

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$3,010.69

ENDING BALANCE: 6/30/2012 \$3,227.99

TOM OATES, TREASURER