

WCIRTA

Summer, 2016



Dear Fellow Retired Educator,

Preparing this letter for the summer issue of the WCIRTA Newsletter gives me the opportunity to stay inside and enjoy the air conditioning—something for which I am most grateful. The past couple of weeks have been brutal for those having to be outside. The obligation to prepare this greeting also means I can forego the political programming that permeates the airwaves in this election season—something else for which I am grateful!

Your Board of Directors is trying something new this year. In 2015 there were only 4 retirees so we decided not to hold the usual special meeting with the board for the new retirees. (The board members would have outnumbered the new retirees by more than 3 to 1.) Instead, we decided to add them to the class of 2016 retirees and do our program to encourage membership in the organization for both at the same time. We also decided to combine this initial meeting/meal with one of our regular membership meetings to help the new retirees get acquainted with us in a more informal manner. The board thought the summer membership meeting would be easier for prospective members to attend since the turmoil of their final weeks in the school systems would be behind them.

We also have been searching for an appropriate venue to hold a meeting in Herrin so that our regular membership meetings could be rotated among most of the communities in the county. With the addition of Herrin as a meeting site, we will now meet in Carterville, Herrin, Johnston City and Marion over the course of the year. The new location in Herrin is the Dotty Event Center at 210 North Park Avenue. It is a few doors south of the Annex Café, from which our luncheon meeting will be catered. The remodeled facility can handle up to 100 attendees and features round linen-covered tables for our guests. Catering is provided by the Annex and free parking is available in a city parking lot located directly behind the facility.

For the August 18 membership meeting/new retirees meal we will have a box lunch consisting of a choice of ham salad, chicken salad and egg salad sandwich croissants, chips, cookies and soft drinks. Building rental, food costs, tax and tip totals just over \$11.50 so we have opted to charge a flat \$12.00 for the meal and thus help cover some of the cost for our 20 potential new members. Plan now to attend this meeting in Herrin on Thursday, August 18 at 1:00 PM.

The program will be presented by Leo Logsdon, who is one of the statewide representatives of AMBA, Association Member Benefits Advisors. He will share information about the more than 30 benefits offered to IRTA members including cancer, vision, dental and long-term care insurance, cell phone, rental car, hotel and Orlando vacation discounts, Apple and Dell computer discounts, identity theft protection and numerous other benefits. Retirees taking advantage of these benefits result in more than 1000 new IRTA memberships every year. And, every year there are new additions to the list of benefits available so don't think that because you have heard from an AMBA presenter in the past that you won't learn about something new—and something that you may not be able to do without!

Also, I would be remiss if I did not remind you that we will be electing new officers and board members at the regular fall membership meeting in Johnston City in October. The last meeting of the year is the Annual Meeting and will be the time to get this done. We are always looking for new officers and directors and you are encouraged to contact me or any other board member (see accompanying article for a list of current members.) New terms begin January 1.

If you have not yet paid your annual membership dues of \$5.00, plan to bring it with you to the summer meeting or send it in advance to Treasurer Don Kragness, 14082 Poor Farm Road, Johnston City, IL 62951. If you can't remember when you last paid dues you can call Don at 618-983-5546 or email him at donjank1@gmail.com to find out when your dues were last paid and how much you owe to bring your membership to current status.

I hope I see you on Thursday, August 18 at the 1:00 PM luncheon at the Dotty Event Center in Herrin!

Bob Campbell, WCRTA President

Temporary Job Opportunity for Retired Educators

Motivated individuals who are committed to excellence and experienced in working with primary and secondary school students are being recruited for the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as NAEP or The Nation's Report Card, for the National Center for Education Statistics, a part of the U.S. Department of Education.

The positions involve conducting assessment sessions with 4th- and 8th-grade students using touch-enabled tablets in participating schools across the country. Those selected will work on a team of 3-5 people. This opportunity is ideal for retired educators who have experience working with students in an assessment situation. Duties include those normally associated with administering and monitoring test takers in an academic setting.

The testing agency will provide complete paid training for all job responsibilities, paid time and mileage reimbursement for local driving to and from schools, weekly paychecks with direct deposit available, and opportunities for advancement based on performance.

Successful applicants must complete a background check, have a private vehicle and current driver's license, be able to work 20 to 30 hours per week between January 30, 2017 and March 10, 2017 and complete the required training program provided by the testing agency.

This opportunity is a part-time, temporary position with limited benefits. To apply for this position, select the link to the [Online Application](#). or go to www.westat.com/careers and select "Search Field Data Collection Jobs. Online applications will be accepted beginning in July 2016.

Wanted—A Few Good Men and Women

WCIRTA will hold an election at the fall "pie" meeting in Johnston City in October. The Nominating Committee, composed of the last three presidents, will be meeting soon to prepare a slate of officers and directors to present to the membership at that meeting. They solicit your assistance in helping prepare a slate of interested retirees

They are asking for self-recommendation if you are willing to serve your fellow retirees in this manner. Or, perhaps you could recommend someone you know who would be a good candidate. The requirements are simple: the candidate must be current on payment of dues and interested in serving others.

The regular term of office is for two years with board meetings in January, April, June, September and December, usually on Wednesday for 90 minutes or so. Past practice has seen board members and officers agreeing to serve for two consecutive terms, the limit allowed under the WCIRTA Constitution and By-Laws.

Can we count on you to step forward and volunteer for this important task? Provide the name to any member of the board.

Acronyms Are Important to Our Future

WCIRTA and IRTA are organizations fond of using acronyms. Actually, they are not usually true acronyms, but really abbreviations using the first letters of the words in the titles. IRTA, IRTAF, WCIRTA, TRS, PAC, AMBA, LDF are prime examples. All retirees need to be familiar with these and other such abbreviations and know what people are talking about when they use them in verbal or written communication. The following is a non-exhaustive list.

IRTA—The Illinois Retired Teachers Association—over 36,000 members supporting a skeleton staff in Springfield trying to secure the rights and pension promises of over 100,000 retired educators. The only statewide agency devoted exclusively to supporting retired educators.

IRTAF—IRTA Foundation—the philanthropic arm of the organization supporting scholarships for prospective teachers, grants to current educators for classroom use and monies to older retirees who retired when salaries were next to nothing and do not have enough to provide for themselves from their meager pensions. It is supported by the annual return address label fund raising campaign, bequests and gifts from those who see the good work they do.

WCIRTA—Williamson County Illinois Retired Teachers Association—over 400 local retired educators supporting the statewide organization. Dues are only \$5.00 annually.

TRS—Teachers Retirement System—the agency responsible for payment of your pension and all factors dealing with it. Run by a board which includes political appointees and two elected representatives of retirees. Bob Lyons and Daniel Winter are our elected representatives.

PAC—Political Action Committee—made up of the members of the Legislative Committee of IRTA. They determine support offered to individuals opting to run for political office in Illinois and asking for IRTA support. Funded primarily by the voluntary deduction of \$1.00 per month from a TRS member's annuity. Have you authorized TRS to provide this amount to the IRTA's PAC?

The WCIRTA is an affiliate of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association and is Unit #86 in the IRTA Region 18 and Area 6. Members are primarily retired K-12 educators from Williamson County, Illinois, located in the southern third of the state. For membership information contact any or send your request to the WCIRTA membership chairperson, at: emax_1@mchsi.com.

We need all retired educators in Williamson County to join our local association to make us stronger and more effective in accomplishing our goals of benefiting and enhancing the retirement of each member.

Williamson County Illinois Retired Teachers Association 2015-2016 Board of Directors

President: Bob Campbell - Lake Harbor Drive, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 997-8000 or (618) 751-0352 Email Bob @: bobc1939@gmail.com **Vice President:** Kent Carrell - 311 S 4th St., Marion, IL 62959 (618) 993-6731 or (618) 559-1899 Email Kent @ kcarrell@gmail.com **Finance:** Tom Oates - 1600 Matthew Lane, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 889-0089 Email Tom @ toates@frontier.com **Treasurer:** Donald Kragness - 14802 Poor Farm Rd, Johnston City, IL 62951 (618) 983-5546 Email Don @: donjank1@gmail.com **Secretary:** Marge Mangan - 9741 Stilley's Mill Rd, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 982-2218 or (618) 889-0702 Email Marge @: marge143@frontier.com **Legislative:** Anna Morris - 404 Overlook Dr., Carterville, IL 62918 (618) 985-2890 Email Anna @: overlookmoi@gmail.com **Services/Benefits:** Mary Lou Gander - 604 E Clark St, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 993-5840 or (618) 559-7585 Email Mary Lou @: marlee88@msn.com **Membership:** Steve Maxwell - 1010 Oakwood Ln, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 997-9607 or (618) 923-3629 Email Steve @: emax_1@mchsi.com **Newsletter:** Patricia Koontz - 306 Prairie Rd, Carterville, IL 62918 (618) 559-4934 or (618) 965-2356 Email Patricia @ pkoontz@mchsi.com **Information Services:** Loren Taylor - 1705 Quail Run, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 925-6863 Loren @ lorentaylor13@hotmail.com **Director at Large:** Bert Gordon - 127 Circle Dr., Herrin, IL 62948 (618) 942-6938 bajegordon@frontier.com **Past President:** John Harland - 1382 Nicklaus Ln, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 995-1694 Email John @: harland@4siwi.com **ROE 21 Superintendent:** Matt Donkin - 200 W Jefferson St., Marion, IL 62959 (618) 998-1283 Email Matt @ mdonkin@roe21.org

For more information check out our Williamson County Illinois Retired Teachers Association website which is recognized as a model for other retired teacher associations in the state. A big thank you goes out to Steve Maxwell for maintaining and updating our website.

Loren Taylor, Information Services

TREASURER'S REPORT

BALANCE 4/3/2016	\$2585.62
INCOME	125.00
EXPENSES	68.00
BALANCE 6/19/2016	\$2642.62

Don Kragness, Treasurer

TRAVELING ??---BENEFITS

BELOW ARE SOME BENEFITS THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO IRTA MEMBERS IN PLANNING FOR A SUMMER/FALL VACATION.

AAA---IRTA MEMBERS CAN JOIN AAA AT A GROUP RATE. AAA MEMBERS CAN SAVE WHEN THEY TRAVEL, DINE, AND SHOP WITH EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS AVAILABLE THROUGH AAA. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR TO JOIN AAA, PLEASE CALL 1.866.YOUR.AAA (1.866.968.7222) AND MENTION GROUP CODE GTA65AC.

RENTAL CAR DISCOUNTS—IRTA MEMBERS ARE ELGIBLE FOR DISCOUNTS ON RENTAL CARS WITH THREE MAJOR CHAINS.

HERTZ/800.651.2210/www.hertz.com

DISCOUNT CODE: 1860896

AVIS CAR RENTALS/800.331.1212/www.avis.com

DISCOUNT CODE: G725000

BUDGET CAR RENTALS/800.455.2848/www.budget.com

DISCOUNT CODE: X925500



HAPPY PLANNING,
MARY LOU GANDER, BENEFITS CHAIRPERSON

Re: Legislative Update
Fr: Anna Morris

Stopgap Budget: A stopgap budget package compromise between the governor and the legislature was enacted June 30, the day prior to the start of the new fiscal year. Under its terms, schools K-12 were funded for a full year and state agencies, higher education and various social programs were funded through Dec. 31, 2016. Primary and secondary schools will receive a total of 7.5 billion, with no school receiving less aid than last year. An additional 250 million will be directed to the high poverty districts. Under this provision, Carterville, for example, will get \$447,839 and Marion will receive 357,657. Also, the state will provide 215 million for the employer's share in the Chicago Pension System—only if the legislature enacts pension reforms. SIU will receive an additional 106 million for its three campuses and community colleges will split 114 million and previously unfunded social programs will get 650 million. Deep Southern Illinois community colleges will receive less than originally anticipated.

Post Stopgap: Subsequent to the passage of the stopgap budget, Governor Rauner held a series of press interviews to discuss what might happen next. He expressed optimism that a full budget might be passed after the November election and mid-January when the new legislature is seated. Further he was asked what are the “must have” changes to get enacted. He listed the following measures:

- **Workers Compensation Reform.** He stated that this is the number one regulation pushing manufacturing jobs out of Illinois.
- **Pension Reform.** He's promoting a plan to give workers a choice. Generally, it would amount to lower wages and greater retirement benefits, or higher wages and lesser retirement benefits. Current retiree benefits would not be affected.
- **Local Government Reform.** Local schools and governments would have more control over their affairs and less imposition of unfunded mandates from Springfield.
- **Political Reform.** He supports term limits for elected officials and revision of the way political boundaries are drawn.

Master Contract: The Illinois Labor Relations Board voted unanimously on July 7 to deny Governor Rauner's request to declare an impasse in its negotiations with AFSCME, thus allowing him to impose items such as pay raises and **health insurance costs.** Employees would have an option to strike. Instead, an administrative law judge will rule on these matters, probably in November.

On Insurance: Although United Healthcare is pulling out of the Illinois Exchange under the Affordable Care Act, it is expected to continue service to state and university retirees. In any event the retirees are constitutionally assured of quality healthcare.

On Investments: A new rule promulgated by the U. S. Dept. of Labor is intended to protect retirement savings. Basically, the rule prevents financial advisers from considering their personal compensation when recommending products to their clients. Until this rule, advisers could steer their clients in and out of risky investments which produced big commissions and fees for themselves, a process known as “churning.”

A Personal Observation: The consequences of uncertain budgets are many—particularly to higher education and pressure on some of our best students to leave the state. The following info comes from The Southern and is a summary from the top six 2016 high school graduates. **Of the five high schools in our county and a total of 30 honor graduates, 13 will attend school out of state, 4 will attend John A. Logan and only 2 will attend SIU.**

A Word to the Wise: David Yepsen, retiring director of the Paul Simon Institute at SIU was asked a series of questions at an exit interview. Here's one: Q. What can you take away from your many years on the political scene, either nationally or in Southern Illinois? His answer: **Politics is a serious business and the outcomes have real consequences. More people need to take it more seriously and become more informed and involved. Our many political problems are not solved by fewer people participating.**

State Representative John Bradley: 618-997-9697 217-782-1051 repjohnbradley@mychoice.net **Senator Gary Forby: 618-439-2504 217-782-5509 senatorforby@yahoo.com**

Dates to Remember



Next Board Meeting will be held on September 14, 2016 at 1:30 P.M. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Marion.

August 18 membership meeting/new retirees meal, Thursday, August 18 at 1:00 PM. at the Dotty Event Center at 210 North Park Avenue., Herrin, IL.