

WCRTA



Mark your Calendar

**May 10
Mackies'
Pizza
12:00
noon**

**Next Board
Meeting** will
be held on
J u n e 2 2 ,
2016, at 1:30
P.M.

Dear Fellow Retired Educator,

Greetings and best wishes for a delightful spring and summer! I have just returned from the land of perpetual summer—Florida—where we spent the winter months and enjoyed the warmth immensely. In my absence, the outstanding board members I lauded in a recent issue of the WCIRTA Newsletter carried on the work of the organization on my behalf with their usual skill and expertise. I thank them for their continuing service. However, it is now time for me—indeed, all of us—to dig in and re-address those issues of importance to all retired educators.

Treasurer Don Kragness and Membership Chair Steve Maxwell report that our efforts to re-connect with our members over the past few months have paid dividends in updating our records and in collecting dues for our local organization. But, those updated records show that we still have 188 members who paid dues in previous years but have not yet paid the \$5.00 dues for 2016. (Remember that our By-Laws require that we drop members from the roster if they have not paid dues to the organization for three consecutive years.) Again I remind you that members of IRTA are not automatically members of WCIRTA and vice versa. We are two different organizations, one local and one statewide.

A sobering statistic was recently received from IRTA. **Over 500 members have been dropped from the Voter Voice list because of non-payment of dues to IRTA—the only state organization fighting exclusively for the benefits of retired educators.** I hope that you are not one of them since that reduces our effectiveness in countering the serious threats to our retirement security. If you are not among the nearly 200 IRTA members on our roster who pay \$2.50 monthly for their IRTA dues through Dues Deduct from their TRS annuity check please consider doing so. Ensure that you do not lose your Voter Voice capability in the crucial weeks when the legislature is in session.

Additionally, we still have the local issue of about half of the retirees or surviving spouses living in Williamson County and receiving a monthly annuity from TRS who are not members of either IRTA or WCIRTA. We can do better. We **MUST** do better!

Is there a member of your family who also receives an annuity from TRS who is not a member of either IRTA or WCIRTA? Try to convince them to join us. Do you have a friend who is also a retired educator who does not belong to either organization? The next time you meet that friend in Wal-Mart or the grocery store remind him or her of the importance of joining us. Can you think of a former co-worker who lives out of state but still receives a check each month from TRS? Drop that person a line suggesting that the \$2.50 monthly deduct from their annuity for IRTA membership is money well spent to preserve the security of their retirement. Also remind them that WCIRTA dues are only \$5.00 per year and a periodic check to WCIRTA also helps us in our continuing battle to preserve our pensions.

Urge these family members, friends and former co-workers to contact Treasurer Don Kragness, 14082 Poor Farm Road, Johnston City, IL 62951 or call Don at 618-983-5546 or email him at donjank1@gmail.com to find out when the \$5.00 annual dues were last paid or how to initiate the Dues Deduct through TRS for membership in IRTA.

Please be reminded that WCIRTA will meet on May 10 at Mackie's Pizza in Marion, on August 18 at a church in Herrin to be announced in our next Newsletter and on October 17 at the Catholic Church Community Center in Johnston City. Attend all three meetings and become more involved in WCIRTA's efforts to help IRTA help all retired educators.

Bob Campbell, WCRTA President



WCIRTA Board of Directors Meeting
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Marion, IL
Wednesday, April 6, 2016

In the absence of President Bob Campbell, Vice President Kent Carrell called the meeting to order. Others present were: Anna Morris, Tom Oates, Bert Gordon, Mary Lou Gander, Loren Taylor, Steve Maxwell, and Marge Mangan. Absent were: Don Kragness, John Harland and Judi Harland.

Approval of Minutes Tom Oates made a motion and Mary Lou Gander seconded the Minutes of February 19, 2016, membership meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report – was prepared by Don Kragness, showing a balance of \$2,585.62. Motion made by Anna Morris and seconded by Loren Taylor to accept Treasurer's report. Motion passed.

Next membership meeting on May 10, 2016, to be held at Mackie's Pizza in Marion at Noon. Tom Oates has confirmed Rich Frankenfeld as our speaker. Mary Lou Gander will confirm this date with Mackie's.

Reports:

Legislative – Anna Morris reported on the Governor's zeroing out contributions paid by the state to TRIP; the recent Supreme Court ruling on Fair Share brought by a few California teachers; the unfunded pension liability; and other information pertaining to the teachers' health insurance.

Membership – Steve Maxwell and the Board continue updating contact information. Steve reported that there have been two deaths in our membership: John Parks and Bobby Gullledge. Also there was some discussion regarding members being dropped after 3 years of nonpayment. Possibly having active and inactive members.

Information Services – Loren Taylor has received a copy of the Minutes of the Information Services meeting. Taylor reported that this was the first time he received this from Tricia Klim.

Retirees: Loren Taylor made a motion to recognize Retirees at the August 18th membership meeting. Kent Carrell seconded. Motion passed. Packets of information will be prepared for each retiree. Retirees to date: Herrin -4; Carterville – 2; Crab Orchard – 0; Johnston City – X; and Marion-- X.

Contacts will be made with the Retirees.

Area 6 Conference will be held in Carbondale on May 5, 2016.

Next Board Meeting will be held on June 22, 2016, at 1:30 P.M. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Marion.

Newsletter Deadlines for Spring issue:

April 15 – Articles to Tisha

April 22 – Typed copy to ROE

April 29 – e-mailed or USPS

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:40 P.M. Marge Mangan, Secretary

Why do we have a Williamson County Illinois Retired Teachers Association? The following statements will help to answer that question:

to cooperate with the NRTA Division of the American Association of Retired Persons; to maintain and improve the social, educational, economic and recreational welfare and status of retired educators in the local community, state and nation;

to help retired teachers maintain identity with the teaching profession and to further the cause of education, and to provide opportunities for meaningful contact with friends and associates of the active teaching years; to gather and disseminate information of value to the members;

to provide an organizational framework through which retired educators can continue a life of service to fellow members; their active colleagues, and the community; to respond to community needs and to encourage retired teachers to contribute their talents and experience to the decision-making processes in their local communities;

to present the image of aging as one of dignity, independence and purpose; and to encourage active educators to prepare for retirement; and to familiarize retired and active teachers with the benefits of membership in the local, state and national associations.

After reading the above, one can see why our organization needs each Williamson County educator to become a member and to assist in helping to incorporate and follow-through on the above tasks. With more members the stronger the organization becomes and more goals can be accomplished. We are an association of educators, by educators, and for educators.

Loren Taylor, Information Services

Fr: Anna Morris

Via email, IRTA members recently received information from Jim Bachman, executive director of IRTA, alerting retirees that the governor, in his proposed budget, **had zeroed out contributions made by the state to TRIP**, the teachers' health insurance plan. If this should stand, teachers' healthcare costs for TRIP would double. **However, we can take some solace in that the retiree health insurance plans are currently funded through a continuing appropriation and the legislature would have to give permission to stop payment. Two ways this could change: The General Assembly grants the governor power to ignore these continuing appropriations, or the General Assembly amends current law to change the substantive language. Republican leaders Sen. Radogno and Rep. Durkin have introduced SB2789 and HB4521 . If these bills were enacted, it would give the governor free reign over spending and would enable him to suspend continuing appropriations. IRTA will vigorously oppose any bills that would jeopardize TRIP funding.**

Benefit Recipient Rates per month now range from \$305 to \$794 for those who are not Medicare eligible and from \$88 to \$217 for those who are Medicare eligible. **For dependents: Not Medicare eligible--from \$1,220 to \$1,587 Medicare eligible--from \$306 to \$435.** Doubling these premiums would be a severe hardship for many of our retirees.

Meanwhile, due to the lack of a state budget, Central Management Services is delaying payment to health service providers under self-insurance programs such as Quality Care from three months to more than a year. Currently owing over \$2.9 billion, the state will pay 1% per month of delayed time until payments are made. This adds millions of dollars in debt owed by the state. Some users in other state pension systems are being forced to delay necessary care or make upfront payments before receiving treatment.

State Senator Andy Manar is holding meetings throughout Illinois to support legislation that would attempt to equalize state funding among school districts. Under the proposal, costs for funding Chicago's pension system would be shifted to the state.

The fate of the state's Master Labor Contract is now in the hands of the Illinois Labor Relations Board. Negotiations have been ongoing for over a year. In January, the governor filed a complaint stating that AFSCME, the public employees' agent, had bargained in bad faith and that an impasse should be declared. AFSCME filed a counter complaint stating the administration had bargained in bad faith. Important issues, such as future insurance costs, hang in the balance. HB580 calling for a settlement by an independent arbitrator is pending in the legislature.

In another labor matter, the U.S. Supreme Court on a tie vote of 4-4 sent a California teachers' suit back to the appellate court which affirms the legality of fair-share contributions by those affected by, but not wishing to pay, union dues. Governor Rauner has a similar case pending in court which would outlaw mandatory fair-share contributions to Illinois public unions. This is a way to weaken the unions and their bargaining power.

Of note: The unfunded liability of the Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Illinois makes up more than half of the state's projected \$113 billion in pension debt.

· TRIP Revenue FY2016 \$451,480,908

1. Retirees - \$151,551,204/34%
2. State - \$108,258,261/24%
3. Teachers - \$99,438,048/22%
4. Employers - \$74,346,280/16.4%
5. Medicare Part D - \$2,793,160/.6%
6. Other - \$15,093,955/3%

· TRIP Statistics

1. Total number of participants – 74,801
2. Medicare Advantage participants – 52,381
3. Managed Care participants – 26.4%
4. Major Medical participants – 73.6%

YOU CAN FIND INFORMATION ON ALL OF IRTA'S MEMBER BENEFITS BY VISITING www.irtaonline.org LOGGING INTO THE MEMBERS-ONLY SETION AND CLICKING ON THE MEMBER BENEFITS TAB. SOME OF IRTA'S BENEFITS INCLUDE PRODUCTS FROM AMBA (PET INSURANCE MEDICAL AIR SERVICES, MEDIPENDANT, LONG TERM AND OTHER INSURANCES, GROUP VISION, DENTAL AND HEARING PLANS, RENTAL CAR DISCOUNTS, ETC.) . ALSO, PRODUCTS FROM LIBERTY MUTUAL, VACATION BY RAIL, AND LIFELINE SCREENING.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT THE IRTA OFFICE AT 1.800.728.4782.
Mary Lou Gander, Benefits ChairPerson

WCRTA Treasurer's Report
Don Kragness

BALANCE ON HAND 12/8/2015	\$1690.62
INCOME	995.00
EXPENSES	100.00
ENDING BALANCE 4/3/2016	\$2585.62

Retired Teachers Stand Against Proposed Insurance Cuts

IRTA calls for member support and solidarity to fight the potential theft of benefits!

Only 36,000 of 106,000+ TRS annuitants are members of IRTA. Encourage a fellow teacher to join IRTA Today!

SPRINGFIELD, ILL- Members of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA), a statewide association of retired educators, their families and supporters, held a news conference Wednesday at the Illinois Capitol about the need to protect and defend the benefits promised to retired teachers.

"We are sounding the alarm in regard to the proposed budget by the governor that would be catastrophic to retired educators," Dave Davison said, a former high school math teacher, administrator and coach and current president of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association. "It is unimaginable to think what retired teachers and families would endure if the governor's proposed cuts to the Teachers Retirement Insurance Program, commonly referred to as "TRIP" is allowed to pass."

In Governor Rauner's proposed budget, the contributions paid by the state to the group health insurance plan provided to TRS annuitants, survivors and retired employees has been zeroed out. IRTA estimates that at a minimum, healthcare costs for TRIP members would double.

"Teachers again are being used as the scapegoats for budget problems created by decades of politicians who did not fully fund teacher pension and benefit funds," Davison added. "The proposals being floated are immoral. These are the people who taught your parents, you and now your children."

Retired teacher Patsy Sherrard from Normal, Ill. taught business education in Marseilles and Gridley before retiring in 1993. She said she never received a large salary, but the trade-off was the promise that she would receive pension benefits that would not be diminished and part of that was a state subsidized health insurance plan when she retired. That promise gave her the sense of security, which made her small salary manageable during her years teaching.

"My concern today is that the Governor is attempting to alter that agreement and take away the guarantees that were made when I started my career as a teacher," Sherrard said. "This action is disrespectful to all retired teachers. Retirees didn't cause the budget crisis and we should not be expected to rescue the state from the current budget