



## Next Meeting

August 14

St. Paul's  
Parish  
Center  
Johnston  
City

1:00 p.m.

Summer is here in Southern Illinois with its heat and humidity. However there has been enough rain to keep everything green and growing. I enjoy working in my yard on landscaping and I also have a small tomato garden in my back yard. I have about 15 kinds of hostas growing in various areas around my house. Also the day lilies were beautiful this year in my terracing although they are pretty much done now. I hope to share a little about myself in each newsletter so those who do not know me may learn a little bit about what makes me tick.

Finally there is some good news out of Springfield. A budget has been passed! There does not seem to be anything in the budget that will hurt benefits for retired teachers. Education funding is one thing that is still not for sure as of writing this article. We will hear more about this at our upcoming meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 14, at 1:30 pm at St. Paul's Parish Center in Johnston City. This is the "pie meeting" that is now scheduled at a different time of the year to help with scheduling for St. Paul. We will hear from Mary Shaw from IRTA (see related article). I hope to see you all there and we can enjoy some tasty pie.

Kent Carrell, President WCIRTA

### WCIRTA Membership Report - July 2017

The WCIRTA welcomed new members Donna Barnett, Deborah Bouse, Mary Faulkner, Sue Hamilton, and Iris Walker. Several members have also updated their addresses, phone numbers or email addresses. If you have any changes to your address, phone number, or email addresses you may send the updates to me membership chair Steve Maxwell @ [emax\\_1@mchsi.com](mailto:emax_1@mchsi.com), to Treasurer Don Kragness @ [donjank1@gmail.com](mailto:donjank1@gmail.com), or to IRTA's Susan Goetz @ [susan@irtaonline.org](mailto:susan@irtaonline.org).

A big THANKS to the 126 members who have paid their 2017 dues. There are still many retirees who have not paid the annual dues and it's still not too late to pay. Treasurer Don Kragness collects the annual dues and the dues can be sent to him at: 14802 Poor Farm Rd, Johnston City, IL 62951. Don's phone # is (618) 983-5546.

Our next WCIRTA membership meeting is August 14 at St Paul's Catholic Church, in Johnston City. The meeting starts at 1:30 pm and we now have confirmation that IRTA staffer, Mary Shaw, will present the program. This is our annual "pie" meeting, so plan to attend and enjoy homemade pie while getting IRTA updates.

We mourn the passing of 2 retirees. I've added Georgianna Richey who passed in May 2017 and Leslie Porter who passed in June 2017. To the Gone But Not Forgotten list on our website at: <https://www.weebly.com/weebly/main.php>.

The WCIRTA website is located @: <https://www.weebly.com/weebly/main.php>. The newsletters and other info is readily available. The complete list of 2017 Board of Directors can be found here: <https://www.weebly.com/weebly/main.php> Feel free to contact any BOD member if you have any suggestions for meetings or activities.

Steve Maxwell, WCIRTA Membership

## **Re: Legislative Update**

**Fr: Anna Morris**

**The Budget: For the first time in over two years, Illinois has a budget.** It came on July 6, 2017, when the House voted to override Governor Rauner's veto of a budget bill passed by both houses and previously overridden by the Senate. **The plan provides for 36 billion in spending, about three billion less** than was being spent (due to court orders) when the state had no budget. It will be funded through a \$5 billion tax increase. Individual tax rates will rise from 3.75 percent to 4.95 percent, retroactive to July 1. Funding streams for state agencies will be reduced by about five percent, and higher education will be reduced to about five percent less than their 2015 amount. **The budget deal includes a plan to borrow money to pay down a portion of about \$15 billion in existing debt, on some of which the state is paying 12 percent in annual overdue interest. Absent a budget, the state's bond rating would have been lowered to about Junk bond status.** Local legislators Phelps [D] and Bryant [R] voted for the plan. Opposing it were Fowler [R], Severin [R], Costello [D] and Schimpf [R]. General reasons for supporting the budget focused on the dire status of local agencies, particularly higher education and social services. Opposing reasons centered on the stress of higher taxes and the absence of significant desired government reforms. **The budget fully funds the Teachers' Retirement Insurance Program but at a lesser amount than the actuarial total previously certified by the board.** In a related matter, educational funding, which is based on a new formula, is awaiting the governor's signature. He has threatened to veto the bill. If he does, the opening of local schools may be delayed. In the meantime, reform measures the governor wants are being studied by legislative groups.

### **The Price of the Budget Crisis to State Universities:**

- 2.3 billion in budget cuts
- Over 1,600 layoffs
- 5 of 7 of the state's public universities have junk-bond ratings
- 45 percent of high school graduates enroll in out-of-state institutions
- 130,000 low-income college students are losing tuition grants

**Senate Leadership: Senate Minority Leader Christine Radogno [R] has resigned from the senate. She is generally credited with forging the "Grand Design" compromise along with Senate President John Cullerton [D] to resolve the budget impasse. Republicans have elected Bill Brady of Bloomington to succeed her.**

**Health Insurance Change: Retirees who have Cigna as their carrier under the Illinois group insurance plan have a change as of July 1.** Under a competitive bidding process, the state has chosen Aetna to replace Cigna as the plan administrator. Although costs and benefits remain the same, your current physicians may not be in the Aetna network. You can check if your doctors are in the network by calling 855-339-9731 or visiting [aetnastateofillinois.com](http://aetnastateofillinois.com).

**For more legislative information, please read Loren Taylor's article. Loren is the chair of Information Services for our unit.**

To the group:

Thanks for all that you have done for our kids during your careers and as we all take care of each other during retirement. It's been an honor and pleasure to serve and work with you. You can change my email address to [mndonkin@wfschools.org](mailto:mndonkin@wfschools.org) and Lorie LeQuatte at [llequatte@roe21.org](mailto:llequatte@roe21.org) and Mandy Horn at [mhorn@roe21.org](mailto:mhorn@roe21.org).

**Matt Donkin**

The IRTA is working with legislators and will continue to work with them on your behalf to ensure the Governor's proposal to defund TRIP does not come to fruition. In addition to not funding insurance, Governor Rauner is renewing his call for changes to pensions this year by proposing an optional Tier 3 benefit plan for newly hired employees. Moreover, the Governor is again urging enactment of the funding changes he initially proposed a year ago. These changes would underfund the pension systems once again, "kicking the can down the road" for others to deal with in the future.

He also is proposing changing the benefits that future annuitants receive through the pension consideration model. It would require active Tier 1 employees who are part of **TRS, SURS, GARS and Chicago Teachers Pension Fund** (this excludes state employees and judges) to elect to make an irrevocable election to either: (i) keep all increases to pensionable salary until retirement but have automatic annual increases in retirement annuity delayed and reduced (no more compounded COLA if you add raises to your salary up until you retire).

(ii) maintain the current benefit package with additional limitations on pensionable salary keep compounded COLA on your pension, but no additional raises you receive after the effective date of this bill will be applied to the pensionable amount you receive.

Votes can happen quickly and sometimes without warning. If and when bills are to be voted on, the IRTA will update you through the Voter Voice system. If you are not currently signed up to receive these email alerts, please visit the IRTA website at [irtaonline.org](http://irtaonline.org) or call the IRTA Office at 1.800.728.4782 to sign up.

Loren Taylor, Information Services

## **IRTA Governmental Affairs Director to Speak at August 14 WCIRTA Meeting**

Mary Shaw, the Director of Governmental Affairs for the Illinois Retired Teachers Association in Springfield, will address the membership of the Williamson County Retired Teachers Association at the next membership meeting on Monday, August 14, 2017 at the St. Paul's Catholic Church Community Center in Johnston City. (This will be the annual "Pie Meeting" and will begin at 1:30 PM)

Mary will explain the goals of her job and the relationships she has established to work with the legislature for the benefit of IRTA and its members. She will also present information about her background and previous working experience before joining the IRTA staff.

Topics to be addressed will include the recently concluded legislative session, the successful override of Governor Rauner's veto of the budget, and things that rank and file members of IRTA must do to protect our pensions and healthcare benefits. Information to sign up for IRTAPAC and VoterVoice will be presented by Mary, along with details about the Legislative Defense Fund and how to contribute to it.

Put this item on your calendar NOW so that you do not miss this timely and informative presentation. Bob Campbell

**Reminder - dues are now \$10/year. If you haven't paid, please send to Don Kragness, 14802 POOR FARM ROAD, JOHNSTON CITY, IL 62951**

**IT'S IMPORTANT. DO IT TODAY!!**