

WCIRTA

October, 2022



Welcome to the Fall 2022 WCIRTA Newsletter

Our last membership meeting was our famous "pie meeting" in August 2022 in Johnston City. We had 37 members attending. Paul Strid gave a presentation on AMBA benefits available to IRTA members. AMBA programs cover areas such as vision, dental and long-term care. Sandra Barra was the lucky door prize winner (a gift card to Target). A special thanks to Betsy Murphy for arranging purchase of the pies and Judi and John Harland for the table set-up and decorations.

The IRTA Political Action Committee (IRTAPAC) has been meeting throughout the summer. They have assembled a list of "endorsed candidates" (52 House members and 22 Senate members) who have stated strong positions towards legislation benefitting TRS retirees. We encourage you to support those endorsed candidates with your vote in November.

Health Insurance Update- CMS has chosen Aetna to become the new MAPD provider. CMS chose to no longer provide an HMO option. Under the new contract, premiums will decrease while out-of-pocket maximums and deductibles will stay the same. No action will be required by members unless a participant wants to opt out of the PPO plan. The Aetna PPO plan and coverage will begin on January 1, 2023

The strength of the IRTA has always been its membership. Currently there are over 40,050 members. At the local level, the WCIRTA has 157 members with 64 members having dual membership in the state IRTA. We encourage our members to join the state level IRTA and also join the IRTAPAC "dollar a month" automatic deduction for political lobbying efforts. The IRTA has 3 membership plans: Due deduction/\$2.50 per month; 5 years/\$175; and Life/\$400.

Our next WCIRTA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 13th for a noon luncheon at Mary's Restaurant in Herrin. Cost of the meal is \$25 (lasagna/salad/rolls/drink/gratuity). We are fortunate to have the IRTA State President, Bill Funkhouser, as the featured speaker. Bill is from Godfrey, Illinois and is always an informative and enjoyable speaker.

Mrs. Amy Sanders will be moving from her WCIRTA Vice President's role into the WCIRTA President's position in January 2023. Amy will do a fantastic job! I would like to thank the WCIRTA membership and the WCIRA Board members, Judi and John Harland, Janice Marlo, Steve Maxwell, Betsy Murphy, Terry Ryker, Amy Sanders and Loren Taylor along with Tish Koontz for their assistance and support. Thank You !!!!

Bert Gordon
IRTA President

*WCIRTA is now also communicating via Facebook.
Please send us a friend request at **Wcirt Assoc**,
and we will provide you with event invitations and other
important information.*



We are now on
Facebook

Send a Friend Request to

Wcirt Assoc

FOUNDATION REPORT

By
Judi Harland

This autumn the Foundation has awarded grants totaling more than \$36,500 to current teachers throughout the state. One hundred and eighty-three teachers applied for grants and seventy grants were given. Area 6 was awarded twelve grants including one grant to Williamson County. That grant was to Megan Thompson from Washington Elementary in Marion.

In the spring the Foundation will award a \$2,000 scholarship in each of our six areas of the state. The scholarship information and application will be on the IRTA website beginning on December 1st www.irtaonline.org click on Foundation. All applicants must be majoring in education and be entering their junior or senior year in the 2023-2024 school year. The application deadline is March 7, 2023.

The IRTA Foundation was established in 1985 to assist retired teachers that were experiencing financial difficulties due to low pensions and inflation. We currently are assisting 7 teachers with a monthly stipend ranging from \$200-\$650. Throughout the year we also have several one-time requests for assistance with medical and dental expenses, home repairs, or other one time needs. If you know of any retired teachers that need assistance at this time, please have them contact the IRTA Foundation website or call the IRTA office (800) 728-4782

Terry Ryker bio info is as follows:

K-2 Grades Glidden Grade School Dekalb, IL
3-6 Grades Central Grade School Sycamore, IL

7th Grade Sycamore Jr. High School Sycamore, IL
8th Grade East Richland Jr. High School Olney, IL
9-12 Grades East Richland High School Olney, IL graduated 1980

1986 Graduated from Eastern Illinois University - Major Physics - Minor Mathematics
1986-1994 Physics and Chemistry Teacher Effingham High School Effingham, IL
1995 Graduated from Eastern Illinois University Master of Science degree in
Educational Administration
1995-2001 Assistant Principal Herrin High School Herrin, IL
2001-2016 Principal Herrin High School Herrin, IL
2008 Graduated Southern Illinois University Ph.D. Education
2016-2021 Superintendent Herrin CUSD #4

Association Member Benefits Advisors, or AMBA, services and benefits have been helping association members for over 65 years.

AMBA discovered its mission when realizing hard-working educators lose many essential benefits when they retire and wanted to make sure retirees had access to high-quality coverage.

AMBA quickly expanded to also assist other dedicated, hard-working public employees, including: state retirees, active principals, military, trade professionals, firefighters and law enforcement, alumni groups, Allied Healthcare, state-based professional occupations' groups, nurses associations, and other non-profit associations.

Today, AMBA partners with associations across all 50 states and Canada. Meeting the unique needs of each member of all of their association partners requires a full array of benefits.

Paul Strid Benefits Representative 708-347-7081 paul.strid@amba.info

Loren Taylor, Member Benefits

Area 6 Information

By
John Harland
Area 6 Representative

The Springfield Office of IRTA continues to work to protect pensions of retired educators in Illinois and answer questions for retirees.

Recently there has been news from TRS. The CFO (Jana Berschneider) of TRS was fired in June of 2021 and the Executive Director of TRS (Richard Ingram) resigned in August 2021. The reason for these actions is that apparently there was a problem with how a new software package approved by TRS. TRS whistleblowers had turned these individuals in to TRS auditors. TRS is investigating the problem and the FBI is also studying the problem. Fortunately, our pensions are not affected by the investigation.

A second issue with TRS is that TRS recertified what the State of Illinois should contribute to our insurance. TRS approved a reduction \$43+ million for the State of Illinois. The problem is TRS does not have a right to do the recertification. Presently, IRTA is working TRS, CMS, and Attorney General of Illinois to correct error by TRS. It is important for TRS to reverse their action and resend their reduction action. IRTA will continue to work to correct this action.

Some Units in Area 6 are starting to have face to face meetings. In June, July, and August I have attended unit meetings in Madison, Marion, Clinton, and Williamson counties. Additionally, I have also twice attended Williamson County Retired Teachers Executive Board. I have also had a meeting with the three Regional Directors and have encouraged them to contact the units in their regions. I am looking forward to attending more Unit meetings in Area 6 as the COVID cases start to decline.

IRTA has changed the IRTA State Convention to a virtual meeting instead of having a face to face meeting. Many Units were not planning on attending face to face meeting, and it is necessary to have a quorum approve officers for next year and approve IRTA Constitutional amendments.

Finally, as face to face meetings begin, please remember that your unit needs **you**. Every successful unit is based on strong members. The stronger the membership of an unit the more successful the unit will be. Stronger membership means being willing to serve your unit by volunteering.



"I know I didn't do my homework, so I understand keeping me in from recess. Then again, recess offers badly needed exercise, social interaction, and the opportunity to refocus. It's a quandary."

WCIRTA Treasurer's Report

1/1/2022 - 8/16/2022

<u>BEGINNING BALANCE</u>	\$31,682 .07
<u>INCOME</u>	
Dues	\$800.00
IRTA Check	\$250.00
	\$1,050 TOTAL
<u>EXPENSES</u>	
IRTA Foundation Memorials	\$90.00
Postage	\$33.00
990 Filing Fee	\$49.99
Retirees Dinner	\$181.30
St. Pauls Church (Hall Rental)	\$100.00
Keith Kern (Pies)	\$144.00
	\$598 TOTAL
<u>ENDING BALANCE</u>	\$41,682 278
Dues for 2022 may now be paid.	
Local dues are \$10.00 per year.	
8/24/2022 Currently 157 paid members which include 38 complimentary memberships.	
Please make your LOCAL dues check to: WCIRTA	
Mail to: Janice Marlo, 2605 Old Creal Springs Road, Marion, IL 62959	
Send State Dues to IRTA in Springfield (Dues Deduct is recommended)	
Submitted 8/16/2022 by Janice Marlo, Treasurer	