



IRTA ACTION

Summer 2023

Quarterly Newsletter

Tom Morris Keynote Speaker at 2023 IRTA Convention

Mr. Morris is one of the world's top public philosophers and pioneering business thinkers. He's the author of over 30 groundbreaking books and is a legendary speaker whose electrifying talks reengage people around their deepest values and reignite their passion for work and life.

Performance. Leadership. Success. Change. Commitment. Imagine the wisdom of Yoda, Gandalf, and Dumbledore, rolled together and linked to the spirit and energy of the world's most winning athletic coaches. Stir in the unexpected humor of a Seinfeld or Fallon, and you have an idea of what to expect to experience.

Mr. Morris' presentation will center around his newest book, *Plato's Lemonade Stand: Stirring Change into Something Great*. You know the old adage: "When life hands you lemons, make lemonade." Everyone says it but nobody explains how to do it. Finally, the deepest wisdom of the great practical philosophers on how to move from difficulty to delight, and into that far country beyond the valuable qualities of resilience and grit, where true transformation happens. There is an art of change that can be applied to any challenge or adversity, a sort of spiritual alchemy that can use the sour lemons that come our way for truly great lemonade.

Please join your fellow retirees at convention and engage with Mr. Morris!

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www.irtaonline.org
217.523.8488

**Defending Your Pension and
Health Insurance Benefits**

President's Message Bill Funkhouser



As we move forward, there are many virtual experiences available to our members. Our "Area" Conferences are being held throughout the year, each one hosted by one of the Area Representatives. Area 1 was held in February, Area 2 in April, Area 3 will be held on June 7th, Area 4 on July 12th, Area 5 on August 9th, and Area 6 on September 6th. All are open to all IRTA members. You will receive an email about a month before each conference. You must register to participate. There is "Coffee with Jim" usually each month. Again, you will receive an email with a link to participate. During this time, our Executive Director, Jim Bachman, will provide current information and answer questions. Watch your email for announcements about special programs presented by AMBA. These are on various subjects of interest to our members. If you missed the previous presentations, they are available on our website.

Our Convention will be an in-person event at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield on October 16th and 17th. For those of you who prefer in-person meetings, this is your opportunity. I hope to see many of you there. Watch for information in the Convention issue of the IRTA *Action* later this summer.

Recently, you should have received

a letter from me about the Foundation fundraiser. This is the major source of revenue for the Foundation, enabling us to carry out the programs of the Foundation. I hope you will all be very generous in donating.

The IRTA membership currently stands at just over 40,000 members. As we near the end of another school year, be sure to tell every retiring educator what the IRTA does and will continue to do to protect their pensions and benefits. Invite any new retiree you know to a local meeting and to join IRTA. Sometimes all it takes is a personal invitation.

As you may know, our Executive Director, Jim Bachman, will be retiring at the end of the year. The Executive Director search committee, along with our consultant, Brewer Pratt Solutions, has developed a detailed job description and is preparing to distribute it in search of potential candidates. We hope to introduce the successor for the position at the Convention in October.

Thanks to all of you for being members of the only organization whose sole purpose is to protect the benefits of retired educators.

Points to Ponder:

"The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity." - Amelia Earhart, aviator

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new." - Socrates, philosopher



IRTA Member Benefits

You can find information on all of IRTA's member benefits by visiting www.irtaonline.org, logging into the Members-Only section, and clicking on the Member Benefits tab. Some of IRTA's other benefits include Vacations by Rail, Lifeline Screening, and Hear in America. You can also contact the IRTA Office at 1.800.728.4782 for additional information.

* IRTA benefit codes must be mentioned to receive discounts.



Member Benefits



**LIVE LIFE,
UNITERRUPTED**

KEEP LIVING YOUR WAY.

You can, with these benefits and discounts from **IRTA & AMBA:**

- Dental & Vision Plans
- Long Term Care & Home Health Care Insurance
- Medical Air Services Association (MASA)
- Cancer, Heart & Stroke, and Accident Insurances
- Medicare Solutions
- Final Expenses Whole Life & Guaranteed Acceptance Life Insurance
- Annuity
- American Hearing Benefits (AHB)
- Discounts on Travel, Dining & more

Learn More: **1-877-556-4582**

myambabenefits.info/irta

IRTA - Illinois Retired Teachers Association



IRTA 2023: Save the Dates

Convention: **October 16 & 17, 2023**
(Crowne Plaza – Springfield, IL)

Virtual Conference hosted by Area 3: June 7, 2023

Virtual Conference hosted by Area 4: July 12, 2023

Virtual Conference hosted by Area 5: August 9, 2023

Virtual Conference hosted by Area 6: September 6, 2023





IRTAF Scholarship Recipients

2023 IRTA Foundation Area Scholarship Recipients

The IRTA Foundation awards six \$2,000 scholarships to incoming juniors or seniors in college that are pursuing a degree in education. Thanks to a very generous private donation from one of our members, Areas 4 and 6 each will award a second scholarship of \$3,000. The eight winners were chosen through competition with other applicants from their own area of the state.

The Area 1 recipient is Hanna Brinker of Lena, IL. She is an incoming junior and attends the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh where she is majoring in Elementary Education.

The Area 2 recipient is Vivian Zhao of Schaumburg, IL. Vivian will be a senior in the fall and attends the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana. She is majoring in Elementary Education.

The Area 3 recipient is Christy Arreci of Berwyn, IL. She attends the University of Illinois Chicago where she will be an incoming senior. Christy is a Teaching of English major.

The Area 4 recipient is Reese Markley of Mason City, IL. Reese will be an incoming junior at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana where she is studying Mathematics Education.

The Area 4 additional scholarship recipient is Brandon Yazell of Normal, IL. Brandon will be a junior in the fall and will attend Illinois State University where he has been accepted into the Geography Social Science Teacher Education program.

The Area 5 recipient is Sadie Gardner of Shelbyville, IL. Sadie will be attending Eastern Illinois University where she will be an incoming junior. She is majoring in Elementary Education.

The Area 6 recipient is Maelee Sparks of Grantsburg, IL. Maelee is an incoming senior and attends the University of Tennessee at Martin where she is enrolled in the College of Education.

The Area 6 recipient of the additional scholarship is Megan Kronk of Highland, IL. In the fall, Megan will start her senior year at Eastern Illinois University where she is majoring in Physical Education.

The IRTA Foundation congratulates all of the recipients and wishes them the best of luck!



**Hanna
Brinker**



**Vivian
Zhao**



**Christy
Arreci**



**Reese
Markley**



**Brandon
Yazell**



**Sadie
Gardner**



IRTAF Scholarship Recipients

2023 IRTA Foundation Area Scholarship Recipients Cont.



**Maelee
Sparks**



**Megan
Kronk**

2023 Moler-Austin Recipient

The Moler-Austin Scholarship is available through the Illinois Retired Teachers Association Foundation. Two scholarships of \$4,500 are awarded to Kendall County high school graduates pursuing a degree in education. This scholarship is available because of a generous gift from deceased IRTA member Identa Austin. Identa donated eighty acres of land to the Illinois Retired Teachers Association, and the profits from the sale of that land are used to fund the Moler-Austin scholarship.

This year there was only one applicant for the Moler-Austin Scholarship and the recipient is:

Sydney Reppy of Yorkville, IL who is a 2021 graduate of Minooka Community High School. Sydney attended Joliet Junior College and is enrolled at DePaul University where she is majoring in Secondary Education and English.

This scholarship is advertised in all the local papers in Kendall County. The ad runs the last week of December and the first week of January so students that are home for Winter Break will see the advertisement.

Congratulations to Sydney and best of luck in the future as an educator!



**Sydney
Reppy**

Congratulations



IRTAF Scholarship Recipients

2023 Additional Foundation Scholarships

In 2023, two new Foundation Scholarships have been established. The Helen Kennedy Scholarship awards \$2,000 to an incoming sophomore, junior, or senior in college. The student must be enrolled in an accredited teacher education program and a graduate of an Illinois High School. This very generous donation was made in memory of former educator Helen Kennedy.

The 2023 recipient of the Helen Kennedy Scholarship is:

Grace Hoppe from Springfield, IL. Grace is a 2021 graduate of Springfield High School and attends Illinois State University. She will be an incoming Junior and is majoring in Middle-level Education.

The other new Foundation Scholarship added in 2023 is the Rose Sandstrom Scholarship. Rose was a member of IRTA and President of her local Warren County RTA. She established the criteria for her scholarship and her surviving spouse and son initiated the start upon her death in November 2022. The Rose Sandstrom scholarship of \$2,000 is awarded to one full-time student entering their senior year of college with a declared major in Physical Education. The recipient must be enrolled at Monmouth College or Western Illinois University.

The 2023 recipient of the Rose Sandstrom Scholarship is:

Emily Phillip of Monee, IL who is a 2020 graduate of Lyons Township High School. Emily will be an incoming senior at Monmouth College where she is pursuing a degree in Physical Education.

The IRTA Foundation would like to congratulate both Grace and Emily and wish them much success in their future as educators!!!!



**Grace
Hoppe**



**Emily
Phillip**





Dues Investment Proposal

Strengthening IRTA's Future - A Necessary Investment in Our Association

By Donnie C. Ostrom, IRTA Treasurer and Chair of the IRTA Finance Committee

With warmest regards and a steadfast commitment to our shared mission, I address you today as we continue to enhance the retirement experience for all members. As treasurer and chair of the IRTA Finance Committee, I am committed to ensuring the financial stability and long-term success of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association. We are a fiscally responsible organization, and we have always been mindful of the income our valued members provide through their dues.

We understand that inflation has driven cost increases in many areas, including labor, utilities, travel, insurance, lobbying, and mailing. To continue serving our members effectively and providing them with the latest information affecting their pensions and benefits, we must also remain technologically up-to-date.

It has been a decade since our last adjustment in fees, and after thorough deliberation, I have recommended that the Association implement a necessary dues investment starting in 2024. Both the IRTA Finance Committee and the Membership Committee have expressed their support for the following recommendations to the IRTA Executive Board. With the approval of the Executive Board, these proposed changes will be presented for a vote at the October 16th and 17th IRTA Convention. Here are the recommended adjustments:

	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Dues Deduct	\$2.50/monthly	\$3.50/monthly
Life Membership	\$400.00	\$600.00
Annual	\$40.00	\$50.00
Annual Recurring	\$38.00	\$46.00
Associate	\$25.00	\$35.00
Associate Life	\$125.00	\$200.00

This investment in our Association will help the IRTA communicate more effectively, keeping members informed about their pension and benefits, and providing access to valuable resources and activities to enhance their quality of life. It will also allow the IRTA to remain technologically competitive, ensuring that we are equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

We recognize that any increase in fees is not a decision to be made lightly. We believe that this investment is essential to maintain the level of service, advocacy, and support that our members deserve. We appreciate your understanding and continued commitment to the IRTA. Your support will allow us to remain strong and effective in the years to come.

Investment

IRTA Audit

ILLINOIS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION					
December 31, 2022					
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES					
	Operating	Life Member	IRTAPAC	Legal Defense	Total
	Fund	Fund	Fund	Fund	Funds
ASSETS					
Cash & Cash equivalents	\$ 433,356	\$ 173,717	\$ 85,959	\$ 9,340	\$ 702,372
Investments	1,690,791	1,350,798			3,041,589
Equipment, net	30,035				30,035
Due from related part	100,000				100,000
Other	761				761
Total assets	\$ 2,254,943	\$ 1,524,515	\$ 85,959	\$ 9,340	\$ 3,874,757
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS					
LIABILITIES					
Accrued payroll taxes	1,348				1,348
Total liabilities	1,348				1,348
NET ASSETS					
Undesignated	\$ 2,253,595				\$ 2,253,595
Designated by Board for Life Mbrships		1,524,515			\$ 1,524,515
With donor restrictions			\$ 85,959	\$ 9,340	\$ 95,299
Total Net assets	\$ 2,253,595	\$ 1,524,515	\$ 85,959	\$ 9,340	\$ 3,873,409
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 2,254,943	\$ 1,524,515	\$ 85,959	\$ 9,340	\$ 3,874,757
STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSE-MODIFIED CASH BASIS					
	Operating	Life Member	IRTA PAC	Legal Defense	Total
	Fund	Fund	Fund	Fund	Funds
REVENUES					
Dues	\$ 910,676	45,375			\$ 956,051
Contribution Revenue			68,683		68,683
Legal Defense Contributions				11,822	11,822
Interest/Dividends (net of fees)	52,515	29,518	478	183	82,694
Realized gain/loss/sale of Invests	(22,961)	34,790			11,829
Convention Income	24,256				24,256
Royalties	159,960				159,960
Miscellaneous Income	16,869				16,869
Total revenue	1,141,315	109,683	69,161	12,005	\$ 1,332,164
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	313,840		(174,013)	(139,827)	
Total support, revenue and releases	1,455,155	109,683	(104,852)	(127,822)	1,332,164
EXPENSES					
Program services	1,127,436	669			\$ 1,128,105
Management and general	383,173				\$ 383,173
Total Expenses	\$ 1,510,609	\$ 669	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,511,278
Change In Net Assets	(\$55,454)	\$ 109,014	(\$104,852)	(\$127,822)	(\$179,114)
Transfers	102,550	(102,550)			
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING	\$2,206,499	\$1,518,051	\$190,811	\$137,162	\$4,052,523
OF YEAR					
NET ASSETS AT END	\$2,253,595	\$1,524,515	\$85,959	\$9,340	\$3,873,409
OF YEAR					

ILLINOIS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION				
DECEMBER 31, 2022				
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES				
	Building & Operating Fund			
ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	538,027			
Investments:				
Foundation Fund	272,000			
Moler-Austin Fund	342,826			
Sandstrom Scholarship Fund	12,761			
Land, Bldg. and Equip , net	1,649,925			
Total assets	<u>2,815,539</u>			
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
LIABILITIES				
Mortgage Payable	400,258			
Due to Related Party	100,000			
Total liabilities	500,258			
NET ASSETS				
Unrestricted	1,854,558			
Temporarily restricted	460,723			
Total net assets	2,315,281			
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>2,815,539</u>			
REVENUE AND EXPENSES				
	Without Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions		Total
Support and Revenue				
Contributions	411,758	107,595		519,353
Direct mail fundraising	228,939			228,939
Interest and dividends, net of fees	8,312	13,398		21,710
Realized gain on sales of investments	-7,833	(18,129)		-25,962
Rental Income	133,880			133,880
Miscellaneous	11,208			11,208
Total support and revenue	786,264	102,864		889,128
Net Assets released from restrictions	7,588	(7,588)		
	793,852	95,276		889,128
EXPENSES	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Active teacher grants	33,529			33,529
Audit expense		9,690		9,690
Attorney Fees		766		766
Bank Charges		1,128		1,128
Board meeting/meeting expense/travel	1,312			1,312
Building and maintenance	39,690	140,719		180,409
Depreciation	29,357	29,357		58,714
Direct mail fundraising			68,768	68,768
Insurance	10,899	10,899		21,798
Interest expense	8,230	8,230		16,460
Member assistance	54,810			54,810
Office Supplies	349			349
Postage		1,510		1,510
Printing	101			101
Real Estate Commissions		3,240		3,240
Scholarships	23,605			23,605
Telephone and utilities	18,581	18,581		37,162
Miscellaneous	6,136	462		6,598
Total expenses	\$226,599	\$224,582	\$68,768	\$519,949



Legislative News & IRTAPAC

2023 Legislative End of Session Report

The 103rd General Assembly adjourned its spring 2023 session until the call of the presiding officer. This year marked the first time in three years that the legislative body conducted business in person and under normal circumstances, having had its operations disrupted by Covid for the past three years. In total, 566 bills passed both chambers, including 346 House Bills and 220 Senate Bills. While the General Assembly did not meet its target adjournment date of May 19, it did conclude its spring session comfortably in advance of its usual May 31 deadline. Several bills were finalized this week including the FY24 operating and capital budget; omnibus packages on revenue, Medicaid, and property taxes; and reform measures concerning procurement and elections.

Budget Overview:

SB 250, as amended, became the budget, and it appropriates \$50.618 billion in General Revenue Funds and assumes revenue of \$50.717 billion. The Budget relied on HB 3817, the budget implementation bill and SB 1963, the state revenue package, to produce \$70 million in new revenue as well as create the substantive framework for the budget. The budget allowed for \$200 million more than the statutory payment for pensions (of which approximately \$100 million will go to TRS), increasing the rainy-day fund and prepaying bond payments. The Budget fully funded the statutorily mandated payment for health insurance, albeit at the lower rate that CMS established for this year.

The budget includes \$250 million for the Governor's early childhood plan and \$50 million for early childhood capital improvements. At the K-12 level, monies will be going to expand access to computer science coursework (\$3 million); providing for evidence-based funding formula (\$350 million additional); starting up a program to address teacher vacancies (\$45 million); and statewide launching of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (\$1.6 million). Higher education funding reflects a 7% increase (the largest increase in two decades): \$80.5 million for public universities and \$19.4 million for community colleges. Perhaps the biggest change is that everyone at or below the median income level can attend community college for free.

Other initiatives in the budget included \$460 million in new money for businesses, \$112.5 million for local governments, \$20 million to build more grocery stores and \$85 million in new money to combat homelessness.

Legislation of Interest to IRTA:

- SB 1468 extends the sunset until 2026 for returning to work for up to 120 days or 600 hours. This provision, although in law for over a decade, was set to expire at the end of this year.

- SB 2152 made changes related to proxy voting. This initiative of the Treasurer started out with strong opposition; however, the bill was ultimately changed to be permissive and will likely not impact TRS's proxy voting practices. This bill would have reduced the authority of individuals elected to the TRS board had it passed unamended.

- HB 3504 120 days notice requirement for changes to TRIP/TRAIL. This legislation was an initiative of IRTA to make sure that individuals are given notice of changes to their healthcare at least 4 months prior to those changes being implemented. Ultimately, the General Assembly was consumed with saving the community college health insurance fund from bankruptcy and chose not to address TRIP or Trail this year; however, we will be continuing this conversation into the next legislative year.

- HB 3784 made multiple changes to TRIP/TRAIL in reaction to legislative displeasure at the changes CMS most recently made to their healthcare programs. Ultimately, the legislation did not progress but will be part of ongoing conversations that include IRTA and CMS with the legislative oversight bodies.

IRTAPAC

The IRTAPAC Fund continues to grow, but we need your help. Donate to our Political Action Committee and protect the status of retired educators by donating just \$1.00 per month through pension deduction. IRTA will continue to fight for retired educators' benefits as we have for over 65 years. Help Us in Our Fight! The IRTAPAC donation form can be found on the IRTA website at www.irtaonline.org.

Member dues money is never used for PAC purposes.



Memorials

In Memory Of

Below, you will find a list of names of those remembered by memorial gifts for the months of February - April. For a complete list of donations to the Foundation, please visit the IRTA website and look under the Foundation section.

February

- DuPage County RTA in memory of:
Rona Purpura
- Fulton Co RTA in memory of:
Geraldine Aten
Beverly Carlton
- Jackson County RTA in memory of:
Elise Ashby
Thomas K. Berry
David Brandt
Shirley Briley
Jacqueline Carrothers
Juanita Crackel
Lois Marie Harker
Michael Law
Lois Lembcke
Mary Alice Moss
Hershel "Gene" Murdach
Barbara Summer
Edward Willis
- Joliet Area RTA in memory of:
Judith Lynn Michels
Loretta Wojtak
- Madison County #2 RTA in memory of:
Bette Barton
Lois Cook
Ruth Harris
Evelyn McQuinn
- Northwest Suburban RTA in memory of:
Elinor Reader
- Peoria Area RTA in memory of:
Emma Lou Beckwith

- Kathy Churchill
Mary Frances Cunningham
Frances Farraher
Susan Fink
Johanne Grewell
Carolyn Jo Guariglia
Margaret Kohlhase
Doris Larke
Patricia Gay Lindberg
Marie Maxwell
Phillip Mayer
Jean Powers
James Ranney
Gail A. Snowden
Barbara Sullivan
Bonnie Swanson
Vivian Todden
Richard Van Scyoc
Venita Webb
Doris "Dodi" Ann Wilcoxon Larke
- Tazewell County RTA in memory of:
Bonnie Seelye
Jill Weber
- Other Memorial:
Bill Bailey in memory of:
Bill McCauley

March

- Douglas Co RTA in memory of:
Carolyn Eckerty
- Lawrence Co RTA in memory of:
Lloyd "Pete" Peterson
- Livingston Co RTA in memory of:
Jean Dietz
Janice Nussbaum
Frances Russow
Bob Young
- Madison Co #2 RTA in memory of:
Robert Jurgena
- McLean Co RTA in memory of:
Unit members who have passed away
- Monroe Co RTA in memory of:
Thelma Brandon
Mary Messamore
- Morgan & Scott Co RTA in memory of:
John Althoff

- Jean Harlow-Truesdell
Vivian Mussatto
Pearl Schneider
- Northwest Suburban RTA in memory of:
John Gardner
- White Co RTA in memory of:
C. Ernest Essary
Dean Hughes
Clara Pritchett

- Other Memorials:
Sara Ellen Anderson in memory of:
Carolyn Jarvis
- Sara Ellen Anderson in memory of:
Jeanette Miller
- John J. Vespo in memory of:
Rona Purpura
- Sharon Kman in memory of:
Marie Trankina

April

- Aurora Area RTA in memory of:
Patricia Daugherty
Pauline Easley
Nancy Forsell
Charles Gilmore
- Champaign Co RTA in memory of:
Jean Breeze
Roberta Lindstrand
- Fulton Co RTA in memory of:
Maralyn Holley
- Illinois Alpha Chapter in memory of:
John Berns
- Livingston Co RTA in memory of:
Elizabeth "Betsy" Deters
Mary Dohman
- Northwest Suburban RTA in memory of:
Edah Grobe
Evelyn Smith
- Randolph Co RTA in memory of:
Frances Dreyer
Steve Gerlach
Sharon Runge
- Tazewell Co RTA in memory of:
Raymond Bill
- West Lake Shore Unit RTA in memory of:
Mary Hohe
Elyse Janet Jones
Mary Klonowski
Ron Nikceovich
Margaret Wichser
- Whiteside Co RTA in memory of:
Judith Holesinger

Thank You!

Please remember that you can ask your local funeral home to add the IRTA Foundation as a memorial choice at your loved one's funeral.



IRTA Foundation Donation Form

828 S. Second St., 4th Floor Springfield, IL 62704

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift to the Foundation for:

Donation \$

Name

Street

City

State

Zip

E-mail

Latest News!

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