

TRTA's Information and Protective Services' "Quick Blips"

March 1, 2017



Recommended Reading if you like "intense"

Dantes' Inferno: A Dr. Silvia Strange novel by Sarah Lovett

The Pact by Jodi Picoult

TRS-CARE in TROUBLE: What Can You Do?



All retirees and future retirees are requested to call your legislators in Austin by using the toll-free Legislator Hotline: 1.888.674.3788. Review the fact pages on pages 3-5 of *The Voice*, 1st quarter 2017 prior to your call.

E-mail your legislators!

firstname.lastname@senate.texas.gov or
firstname.lastname@house.texas.gov

When you get Tim Lee's Action Alert in his *Inside Edition*, click on the alert link to send your legislators an urgent message. Sign up for the free newsletter at trta.org.

Sign up at

www.facebook.com/TexasRetiredTeachers

Friend your legislator on Facebook. Like their page, and send them urgent messages. Type their title, first and last name into the Search tool on FB to see if they have an account.

Write an editorial and send it to your local newspaper! A sample editorial pattern is on the TRTA website at the following link:

www.trta.org/trs-care.

Create a post on your FB wall, sharing your need for TRS-Care.

See *The Voice*, 1st quarter, 2017, for more suggestions and help.

Your state I&PS Committee: Judy Hart, chairperson, Dist. 16; Dr. Amy Jo Baker, Dist. 20; Ron Gawryszewski, Dist. 12; Jose Lugo, Dist. 1; and Dr. Thalia Matherson, Dist. 10.

IMMUNE SYSTEM 101

Starting at around age 65, the production of immune cells drops and our immune system weakens. Try these 5 steps to boost your immune system: (1) Try moderate-intensity exercise such as brisk walking for 20 minutes a day for five days a week to ward off respiratory viruses. (2) Get a minimum of 7 hours of sleep. Lack of sleep weakens the immune system's response to vaccines also. (3) Take at least 600 IUs of vitamin D, or reach for vitamin D-fortified cereals. (4) Get your annual flu shot, your 5-year pneumonia shot, and your 10-year tetanus-diphtheria booster. (5) Engage in hobbies that reduce stress: Tai chi, a gentle form of martial arts, boosts immunity to shingles. Sing in a choir, learn a new language, learn a new instrument, take art classes, engage in woodworking, write your story for your grandchildren, volunteer, etc. Watching television does not count as a stress-reducing hobby. [SPRY Living Online at <Parade.com> Nov. 2016]

BRIEF TIDBITS

Patti W. in California to "Dear Heloise" suggests tying a small pillowcase over the boot you have to wear with a stress fracture or other foot ailment when you lie in bed. The hook-and-loop won't stick to your sheets. [*Amarillo Globe-News*, Feb. 11, 2017, p. B4]

Eddie Casia, a tattoo artist, says his one rule to follow is he will not tattoo a spouse's name on anybody. [*Amarillo Globe-News*, Feb. 20, 2017, p. A1]

Marty Rowley, Vice Chair of the State Board of Education, District 15, clarified "a misconception. . . Charter schools are public schools since their inception in 1995. They are required by law to be non-profits and are subject to the same Open Meetings and Public Information Acts, conflict of interest laws and board member training as local school districts. They must maintain the same standards as traditional school districts and must forfeit their charters if they fail academically or financially. Charter schools would be damaged by losing money if the proposed SB 3 school voucher bill passed through the Texas Legislature." ["Clearing Up Misconceptions about School Choices." *Amarillo Globe-News*, Feb. 27, 2017, p. A11.]

MORE TIDBITS

“Teaching Winston Churchill’s ‘confirmed unteachability’ of humanity”: Connie Cox sent two packages to her 18-year-old son Conner Cox away at college. He found food in one and trash in the other. He called home to see if his mom had made a mistake. She replied, “No, that’s the trash you were supposed to take out.” Conner laughed hysterically and then tweeted a photo. He obviously took the trash out. [“Not Fake News.” AP rpt. in *Amarillo Globe-News*, Feb. 26, 2017, p. A 21.]

APRIL TAX HEADACHE RELIEF

AARP and the IRS sponsor a program using trained and certified volunteers to prepare and e-file federal returns at no cost to senior citizens and low-to-moderate income taxpayers. They will prepare your taxes until April 15. The program is almost 50 years old. Check with your Senior Service Centers and local libraries. [*Amarillo Globe-News*, Feb. 26, 2017, p. A14.]

Activate the Brain: Learn a New Language

Duolingo is a free website and mobile app that “gamifies” language learning (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, Italian, Romanian, Russian, Dutch, and Turkish). Duolingo was founded in 2009 by entrepreneur Luis von Ahn and now has a user base of 30 million.

City University of NYC finds that skills gained from 34 hours of Duolingo equaled one US college semester of language courses. Doctors recommend learning a new language to postpone dementia. It will keep your brain active. [“Life Lanes.” *Progressive.com*.]

Sources for Severe Weather

Steve Kaczynski offers 3 sources for weather information: (1) The most obvious is your local news team, which is often more relevant than national resources. (2) The weather channel and the “breaking weather channel” are good sources also. (3) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA.gov) is the federal government’s climatology branch. It covers everything from earthquakes to carbon dioxide levels and has an active Twitter handle with great information. Consider a Twitter account just to follow and be informed. [“Life Lanes.” *Progressive.com*.]

Roadside America App

The Roadside America app offers categories like “along the way” for some off-the-road interesting things to visit. Brittany Anstrom recommends that travelers plan road trips to allow resting and checking out some of these “along the way” visits every third day of your trip. The app includes “sit or squat” (clean bathrooms or not) and “hotel tonight” for last minute lodging. [“Life Lanes.” *Progressive.com*]

School choice is already dead in the Texas House, says **Rep. Dan Huberty**, a Houston Republican and chairman of the House Public Education Committee. “School choice has no path forward in the House during the current legislative session.” [*The Texas Tribune*. Rpt. in *Amarillo Globe-News*. March 1, 2017, A5].



Filed bills against over-testing of students in grades 3-8, prohibiting the use of common core curriculum in Texas schools, and The Foundation of Texas School Program.

Rep. Dan Huberty

Spiritual Support Just a Click Away!

Chaplains on Hand offers 24/7 spiritual comfort and support to anyone, regardless of religious beliefs. Designed initially for those facing illness and grief and for caregivers.

- Chat with a chaplain
- Submit a prayer request
- Log on to Chaplainsonhand.org
- Call 844-242-7524

Fishermen and hunters: Access details and comment on proposed changes to the state’s hunting and fishing regulations for 2017-18 at http://tpwd.texas.gov/business/feedback/public_comments/. [Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept., *Borger News-Herald*. 2/28/2017. p. 1.]

Scammers are spoofing news sites to promote health products. Scammers create fake websites, fake endorsements from public figures, and lie about the effectiveness of their products. Be wary of “brain booster” pills that have “fake Stephen Hawking and Anderson Cooper” and others. Rather, talk to your doctor to get facts about health products. [Andrew Johnson, Consumer Education Specialist, FTC., Feb. 28, 2017.]

Risk-free trials are rip offs. The FTC says one group of dietary supplement marketers sold products through deceptive “risk free” offers and charged people repeatedly for unwanted products. [Bridget Small, Consumer Education Specialist, FTC. Feb. 22, 2017.]

