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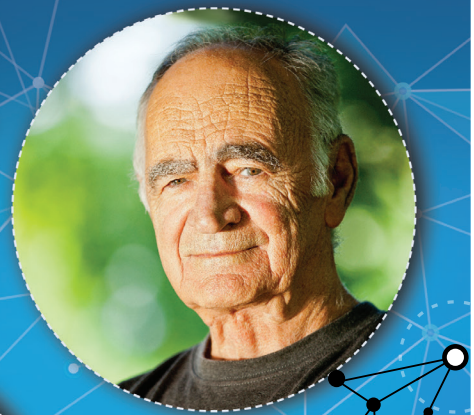
TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION
Connecting Generations
of Educators 6-9TRTF Annual Appeal Letter
GIVE TODAY! 15-16

The VOICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWS BULLETIN OF THE TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Texas Retired Teachers Foundation

NOW IS THE TIME TO GIVE

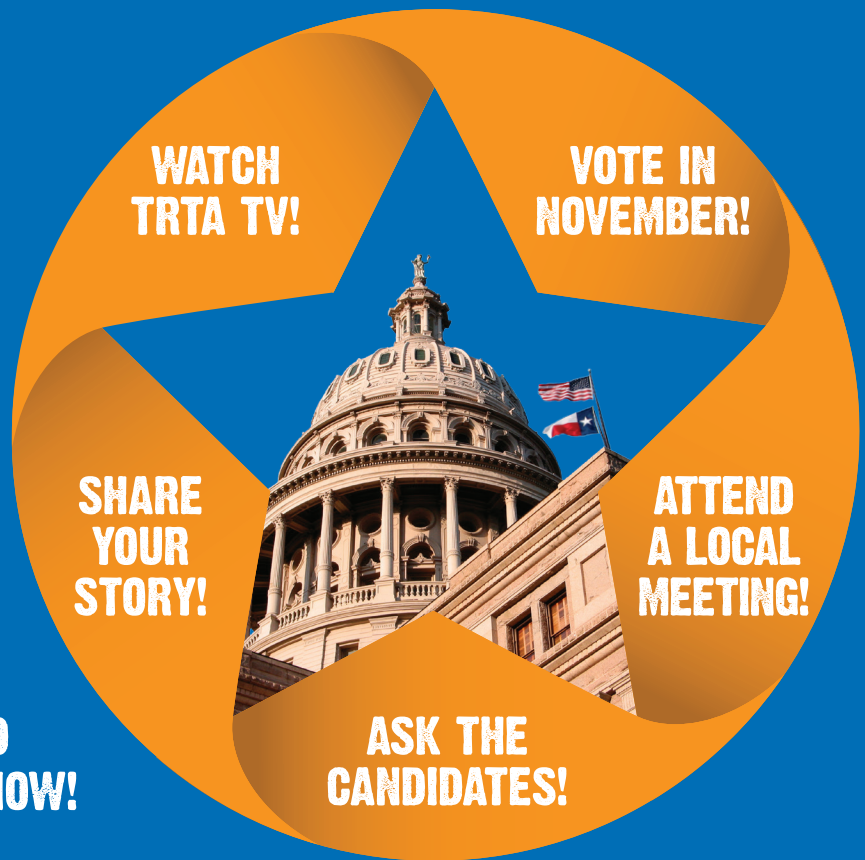
Connecting Generations
of Educators

GET MOTIVATED, BE ACTIVE!

The 84th Legislative Session is still a few months away, but that doesn't mean that members of the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) are sitting still. In fact, our members are ready to start protecting their benefits and getting the word out that their health care and pension should be top priorities in 2015!

Here are a few things that you can do now to start protecting the TRS–Care health insurance program and the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) pension fund!

JOIN YOUR FELLOW RETIREES AND PRE-RETIREEES, AND GET ACTIVE NOW!

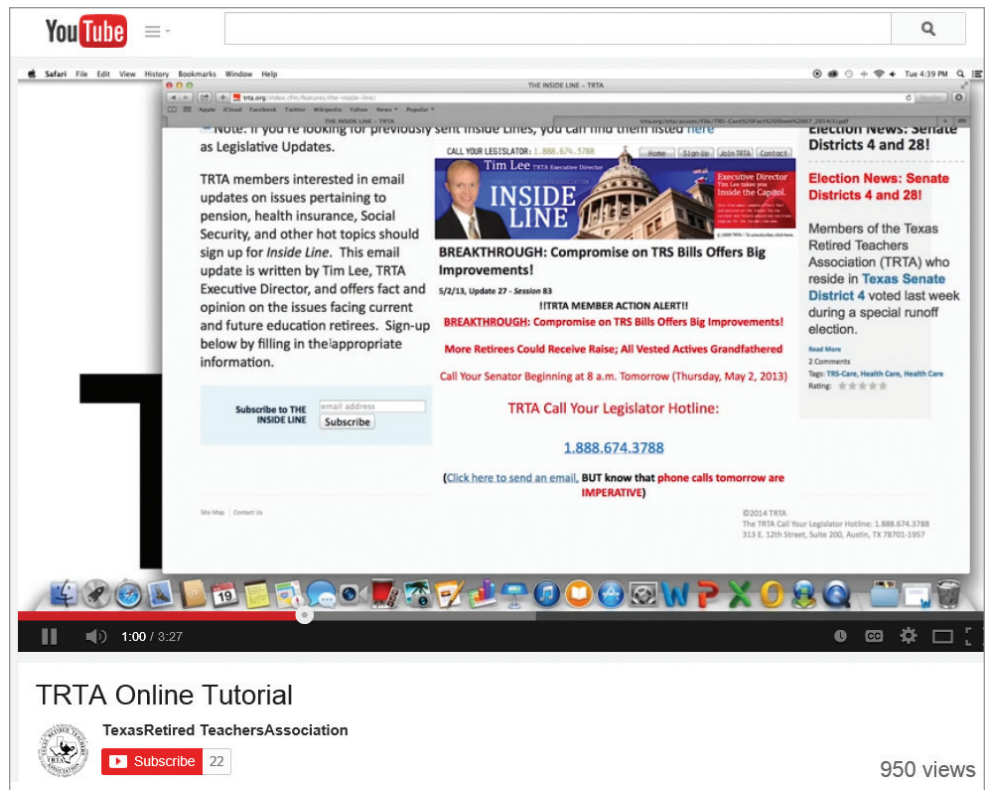


Watch TRTA TV!

TRTA has a new staff member who is dedicating much of his time to advancing our communications initiatives through video updates. Find TRTA TV on YouTube (www.youtube.com/THETRTATV).

Watch this brief but helpful tutorial (see link below) which shows you how to sign up for Tim Lee's email newsletter, the *Inside Line*. Stay informed by receiving regular weekly updates! We use the *Inside Line* for our email action alert campaigns, which helps us contact legislators when urgent matters—such as a bill going up for a vote—happen!

The video also shows you how to read *The VOICE* online and where to find legislative fact sheets, as well as how to find out who your legislators are and their contact information. Be sure to share this video with your fellow retirees!



WATCH TRTA TV ONLINE: WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/THETRTATV



GET MOTIVATED, BE ACTIVE!

Attend your fall local unit meetings!

Are you a member of one of TRTA's 259 local units? Be sure to attend your fall meetings! Legislative Chairmen across the state are preparing for the upcoming legislative session and are looking for volunteers who want to get involved. Join a contact team, and be your local unit's go-to person when your legislator needs the facts from a trusted source.

If you are not a member of a local unit, consider joining one! There is a TRTA local unit near you! Visit our website (trta.org) and hover over the tab TRTA Near You to learn more.

Local units provide members with a front row seat to the action. Legislators and candidates for political office often attend local unit meetings. Speakers, such as TRTA Executive Director Tim Lee, come to meetings to provide members with updated information about TRS-Care and pension issues. Not only can you experience fellowship, but also you can get involved with any of a variety of committees, from legislative to public relations to health care.

Ask the Candidates!

Ask the candidates running for office in your area where they stand on funding for the TRS pension fund and TRS-Care!

Ask if they will support maintaining the provisions laid out in Senate Bill 1458 that increased the state's contribution to the TRS pension fund to 6.8%. Ask if they support providing additional funds to help resolve the TRS-Care funding shortfall of nearly \$1 billion. Ask if they support a secure retirement for our state's 300,000+ retirees and 1,000,000 pre-retirees!

Vote in the November election!

The biggest impact you can make in your future is through the power of the ballot. Elections for many senators and representatives are occurring in November.

November Election Schedule

First Day of Early Voting	Monday, October 20, 2014
Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail (Received, not Postmarked)	Friday, October 24, 2014
Last Day of Early Voting	Friday, October 31, 2014
Last day to Receive Ballot by Mail	Tuesday, November 4, 2014 (election day) at 7:00 p.m. (unless overseas deadline applies)

Mark your calendar now and be sure to get out and vote! You can also make a plan to vote early. Consider organizing a group of your fellow retirees, TRTA members, family and friends and caravan to the polling location together. If you vote early, you can vote at any location within your precinct!

Early voting for the November elections begins October 20 and continues through October 31. Begin studying the candidates that are running for office in your district now. Election day is November 4.

Share Your Story!

TRTA is still in need of personal anecdotes from our members who use the TRS-Care health insurance program. We know that protecting the program from a \$1 billion shortfall will be a top priority in 2015, but starting to share this message with legislators in January is too late!

Let's get the word out NOW that TRS-Care is vital to our livelihood and that retirees should not shoulder the entire burden of the financial crisis! ★



Share your story by sending an email to us at info@trta.org. Include in the subject line **My TRS-Care Story**. We want to know the following from you:

1. How would losing your TRS-Care health insurance impact you?
2. How would you be impacted if your premiums increased by up to 135%?
3. Why is TRS-Care important to you?

Be sure to include your name and address so that we can ensure your legislator hears it from you!

★ MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Membership! Why are numbers important? We all know that when more people support an effort, the better chance we have of coming out on top!

Our local units have held their first meetings of the 2014–2015 membership year, plans have been made, and programs are in place! Your State Membership Committee hopes you include in your plans at least one reminder at each meeting to regain lost members or recruit new ones. The State Membership Committee members have been in contact with all District First Vice–Presidents, and we hope this information has been shared with all Local First Vice–Presidents.

What if each of our 80,000 members chose to recruit at least one new member? Simple math tells us our membership would double in one year.

Each of us has faced challenges in our educational service and come through, so the State Membership Committee challenges everyone reading this article to give it a try. We all know retirees and people who support retirees or active employees (pre-retirees) who should be a part of our organization.

Some will say “Yes! I can do that and more!” Others will simply read and forget. If you are one of those folks, please reconsider. Many of our current members voluntarily give their time to see your annuities and benefits preserved. TRTA members before us had a vision and worked hard so that we could have the benefits we use today.

All of us should be willing to “pay it forward” for those who are still active in our schools, just as those before us paid it forward for us. Wouldn’t it be great if we could go into the 2015 legislative session with 150,000+ members? Our membership makes a difference!

A special “Thanks” to the members of the State Membership Committee: Maria Garza (District 1), Dr. Martha Jones (District 3), Betty Mehmen (District 4) and Dr. Charlotte Travis (District 20). Between the five of us and all of YOU working together, we will see our TRTA membership grow!



Nancy Byler

2014–2016 TRTA First Vice–President



TRTA UPCOMING DEADLINES

Proposed Bylaws Amendments: Due November 1

Article XV, Section 1 of the TRTA bylaws states that “proposed amendments to be considered by the Organizational Affairs Committee shall be made through a Local Unit or a TRTA District and shall be submitted to the TRTA office by November 1, 2014.” Download the bylaws amendment form at www.trta.org. Please attach a copy of the District or Local Unit meeting minutes during which the proposed bylaws amendment was passed.

Children’s Book Project and Community Volunteer Service Hours Reports: Due February 15

District reports are due to the State Public Relations Committee Representative or the Community Volunteer Service Representative by February 15, 2015.

Delegate Information: Due March 1

Names of all convention delegates are due in the TRTA office by March 1, 2015. Information and forms will be mailed to District and Local Unit Presidents in December. Local Unit Delegates: Two (2) delegates for the first one hundred (100) TRTA members or fraction thereof; and, one (1) delegate for each additional 100 TRTA members in a Local Unit or fraction thereof. Automatic Delegates: Members of the TRTA Board of Directors; Chairmen of the TRTA Standing Committees; District Presidents, First Vice–Presidents, and Second Vice–Presidents; and Past Presidents of TRTA.

2014-2016 TRTA BOARD

PRESIDENT

Fran Plemmons

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Maridell Fryar

FIRST VP/MEMBERSHIP

Nancy Byler

SECOND VP/PUBLIC RELATIONS

Patricia Macias

SECRETARY/TREASURER & FINANCE

Leroy DeHaven

DIST. PRESIDENTS COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

Marcy Cann

DIST. PRESIDENTS COUNCIL VICE–CHAIRMAN

Robert (Bob) Gillette

DIST. PRESIDENTS COUNCIL RECORDER

June Cooper

LEGISLATIVE COORDINATOR/CHAIRMAN

Bill Barnes

ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS/CHAIRMAN

Larry Davis

HISTORIAN

Dr. Mary Widmier

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER SERVICE **Sherry**

Hubbard, HEALTH CARE **Mary Ann Dolezal**,

INFORMATIVE & PROTECTIVE SERVICES **Patti**

Faulkner, LEADERSHIP TRAINING **Wayne Byrd**,

LOCAL UNIT SUPPORT **Lynn Granzin**, MEMBER

BENEFITS **Pat Toland**, RETIREMENT EDUCATION

Gaylene Skaggs

District Presidents Leadership Training Conference Held in Austin

TRTA's 20 district presidents met in Austin July 8-11 for their annual District Presidents Leadership Training Conference (DPLTC). During DPLTC, these TRTA leaders from all across the state receive comprehensive training from all state committee chairmen, staff members, the Board of Directors and the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation.

The conference served as an opportunity for all continuing and incoming district presidents to become acquainted with one another. The primary focus of the event was to inform presidents of the coming challenges for TRTA in the 84th Legislative Session.

Along with new initiatives, district presidents gleaned and learned how to disseminate information from state level committees to their

district and local unit counterparts. Facilitating the work of the health care, retirement education, community and volunteer service, informative and protective services, member benefits,

organizational affairs, and local unit support committees is a key role for a TRTA district president.

The presidents also elected their

District Presidents Council, three representatives who serve on the TRTA Board of Directors. Council Chairman is Marcy Cann of District 4, Vice-Chairman is Robert (Bob) Gillette of District 14 and Recorder is June Cooper of District 17.

The presidents returned home excited to face the challenges of the coming year. TRTA is grateful for the active participation of our district leaders and looks forward to working with them to make our association cohesive and strong. To view a complete schedule of the

TRTA District Fall Conventions, please visit www.trta.org. ★



2014–2015 TRTA District Presidents



State Representative Drew Darby and District 15 President Lynn Granzin

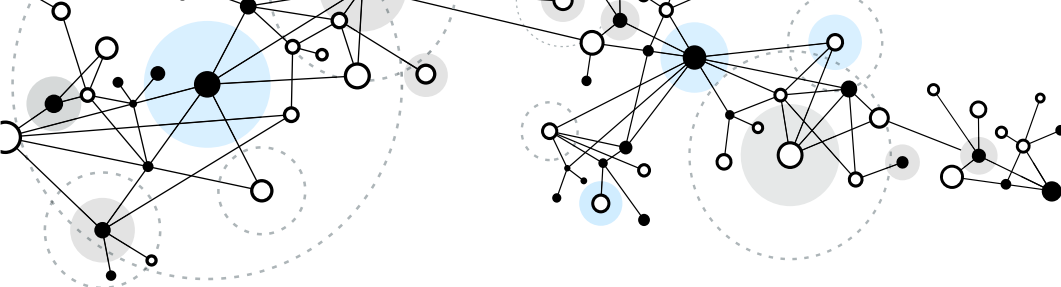


President Fran Plemmons and District 7 President Penny McDonald



Legislative Coordinator/Chairman Bill Barnes

2014–2015 District Presidents (image above not in district order): Patricia Shupe (District 1), Paula Stone (District 2), Carolyn Hale (District 3), Marcy Cann (District 4), R. A. Hidalgo (District 5), Jamie Larson (District 6), Penny McDonald (District 7), Mary Nell Short (District 8), Dale Thomas (District 9), Nolita Johnson (District 10), Jack Knowles (District 11), Stephen Caruso (District 12), Kathleen Elbel (District 13), Robert (Bob) Gillette (District 14), Lynn Granzin (District 15), Tommy Hayes (District 16), June Cooper (District 17), Wayne Smith (District 18), Norma K. Irwin (District 19, not present) Ron Leiman (representing District 19), Charlotte Travis, Ph. D. (District 20).



The Texas Retired Teachers Foundation: Connecting Generations of Educators

A quality education is a priceless commodity. It's something that is far too often taken for granted. We are here to tell you, you are appreciated. The power of education lies not in the hands of policymakers, but in the hearts of educators.

Over the past 20 years, hundreds of educators—those who have taught and retired, those who are still teaching, and those who are studying to pursue this rewarding profession—have been helped in some way by YOU. The Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF) has pursued this journey relentlessly with your help.

Your impact is eternal, much like education itself: you cannot tell where your influence stops!

You've given so much, and we want to thank you and share the stories of the people whose lives you've impacted through your generous donations. The more you have given, the more the Foundation's impact has grown. Though our means are modest, the results of our programs are incredible.

When the Foundation assists a retiree with a financial emergency, it improves their quality of life. It means that for the first time in years, a retiree is able to see again because he couldn't afford eyeglasses without our help. "A Helping Hand" makes lives better and alleviates worry and fear!

When TRTF provides a grant to a public school teacher, the students benefit! They learn something new or experience education from a brand new perspective that affects who they become in the future. Maybe they will become educators themselves.

When TRTF gives a scholarship to a future educator, we encourage them to pursue what is a rewarding but difficult path. Teaching is not easy. It requires passion, perseverance and an inherent love of learning and sharing with others. Ultimately, we know that their passion will influence hundreds, perhaps thousands of students!

Our legacy as educators lives on through the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation, an organization founded and guided by TRTA members. It is a bridge that connects educators of the past, present and future! The Foundation is truly connecting generations of Texas educators!

The existence of our foundation proves how we work together and count on each other in trying times. The Foundation's very existence is dependent upon YOU. Without you, TRTF could never have helped the people you will read about today.

Giving "A Helping Hand" to Retirees in Need

"A Helping Hand" provides public education retirees with charitable assistance for a one-time special need or other short-term hardship.



In August, "A Helping Hand" was able to pay for plumbing repairs for a recipient in District 6. She had been unable to live in her home because her bathroom was unusable. The \$1850 grant will allow her to be in her own home again!

TRTF also helped a Houston resident by providing her with oscillating fans to help cool her home. For many retirees who reside in Texas, the summer heat can be debilitating, and the energy costs associated with running central air conditioning can be insurmountable.

"A Helping Hand" has given over \$62,000 in grants to retirees for various needs, including medical and dental bills, energy bills, home and car repairs

*The Foundation's very existence is
dependent upon YOU.*



and more, including nearly \$5000 since July 1. The Foundation assists many retirees who have fallen on hard times and are facing unexpected financial burdens. Applications for assistance through this program are accepted year-round and the confidentiality of the applicant is protected. If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, please contact us at 1.800.880.1650 or help@trtf.org.

In April 2013, the small town of West, Texas suffered severe consequences as the result of a fertilizer plant explosion. Homes, cars and possessions were destroyed. People were injured. Schools were decimated. The members of TRTA quickly joined together to donate over \$41,000 to the Foundation's ad hoc charitable program, the West Relief Fund, a supplemental aspect of "A Helping Hand."

Two TRTA members learned that

Yet another member's car was severely damaged when she was driving her car five blocks away as the explosion happened.

their home, workshop and RV were declared totaled by their insurance company. Flying glass ruined their bedding, mattresses, and furniture. Thankfully, they were not injured; but the thought of having to start over during their retirement years left them with feelings of despair.

Another member's home was destroyed and declared a total loss. All of her furniture, small appliances and linens had to be replaced. Yet another member's car was severely damaged when she was driving her car five blocks away as the explosion happened. Two active teachers working for West ISD needed help paying for deductibles on their homes and cars and other repairs not covered by insurance.

TRTF was able to help all of these individuals and more, awarding \$29,000 in grant monies. TRTF also donated \$6000 to the Legacy West Education Foundation to assist West ISD with classroom needs. The remaining \$6500 was presented to Dr. Jan Hungate by TRTF Trustee Ronnie Jung during the 61st Annual TRTA Convention Foundation Luncheon.

Continued on next page

Dr. Jan Hungate shared the school district's plans for rebuilding West ISD with us. The funds donated by our members are helping in this effort. The school, which will house both the West High School and Middle School students, is scheduled to open in January 2016. Learn more about the reconstruction progress by visiting the Restore West ISD website (restorewestisd.com).

Think of how the dollars you have donated changed the lives of the residents and students of West, Texas. You have played a vital role in ensuring that an entire town is able to educate its students. You have helped people who lost everything start over again!

Providing Resources to Teachers

In early September, TRTF received a wonderful thank you note from Stephanie Peters. She teaches all subjects to special needs students with a wide range of disabilities at Hitchcock Primary in Hitchcock, Texas. With her \$500 grant from TRTF, she purchased story kits to help her students have better visual/hands-on learning, which furthers their academic growth and development.

Stephanie tell us "our theme this year is super heroes and 'what's your super power?' I love children's books and using them to help my students' academic abilities flourish and grow. Choosing me as a grant winner will allow me to put my 'super power' of sharing my love of literature into action in a big way!"

The Foundation also received a very large thank you note featuring the names of the sixty-plus students who attended the Camp Invention program put on by teacher Rene Callison at J.K. Hileman Elementary in Queen City. Her program allowed all students in Cass County to participate in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) concepts through hands-on, creative problem-solving activities.

The grant funds allowed more children the opportunity to attend despite financial circumstances.

Since 2008, TRTF has provided over \$33,000 in grants to public school teachers to support innovative projects and learning platforms that impact Texas students.

Connecting Generations of Educators

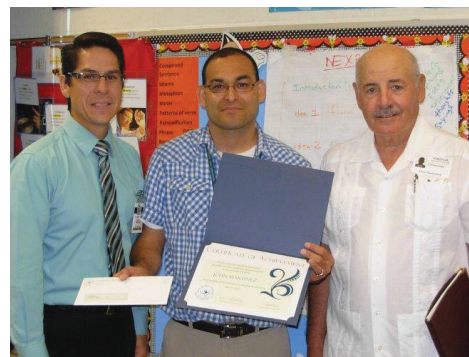
Above all else, TRTF values public education and those who dedicate their lives to this noble endeavor. In 2011, TRTF launched the Legacy Campaign to promote a positive image of education, classroom teachers and TRS. This program has proven to be both educational as well as influential.

TRTF's first video, "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: The Legacy of Public Education," shared the stories of four retired teachers. Their insightful and emotional comments resonated with fellow retirees and also active teachers who face a sometimes complex work environment.

Naomi Pasemann, a retired teacher who resides in Taylor, states in the video that "education is a tough job, and it's a job in which we must succeed. We cannot fail in what we are doing, and yet there are a lot of influences that would make it very easy for us to fail."

One of the unspoken goals of TRTF has been to prevent failure and instead provide avenues of encouragement for active teachers. The Legacy Campaign is that bridge which connects those who have lived through the experience of educating others and those who are still on the ground every day.

The second Legacy video emphasized the value of TRS and the defined benefit plan, which is usually the sole source of retirement income for all of its 1.4 million members. In "Preserving the Legacy: Actives and Retirees Working Together," active teacher



Visit www.restorewestisd.com to learn about West ISD.



and former TRS Trustee Charlotte Clifton states that "TRS is the forever factor...in that TRS was around when my mother was teaching in 1955 and her contributions have helped me and my contributions will help future generations of teachers."

As Nancy Byler, TRTA First Vice-President, mentioned in her article on page 4, we pay it forward as others have paid it forward for us. The Legacy Campaign connects generations of educators and is a guiding light for those who have questions or who may be struggling.

This year, TRTF is expanding its outreach to active personnel by partnering with Texas Association of School Administrators on the Teacher of the Year (TOY) program. Since 1969, the Texas State TOY program has honored excellence in classroom education and provided a forum to showcase many outstanding educators whose efforts and example have inspired their students, their colleagues and the communities they serve. Texas Teacher of the Year is the highest honor that the State of Texas can bestow upon a teacher.

TRTF is joining TASA as a facilitator of TOY and has made a commitment to donate \$10,000 to the program. TRTF believes this program will help us further our Legacy Campaign and connect generations of educators.

Education: The Family Tradition

At TRTF, you will often hear our trustees discussing the legacy of public

"Helping secure teachers for future generations is a wonderful and fulfilling goal of TRTF."

education. Many of us have children and sons or daughters-in-law who pursue the teaching profession; now, we are excited when we hear that our grandchildren want to become teachers too!

Bailey Beam is a talented soccer player, a motivated worker, and a recipient of many awards at Allen High School, including the "Eagle Scholar Award." As a member of TRTA and Allen Retired Educators Association, Sondra Long was thrilled to find out that her granddaughter Bailey was a recipient of the TRTF scholarship this year.

As Sondra says, "Bailey's financial needs are overwhelming at times. Trusting Bailey with your money has made her future brighter." Sondra suggests that any TRTA members with children or grandchildren needing support in beginning a successful future as a teacher should look into the scholarship program. "Helping secure teachers for future generations is a wonderful and fulfilling goal of TRTF. And, now, it has a part in my granddaughter's success!"

Bailey is now using her scholarship at the School of Education at Texas Tech. Sondra says the best words to describe her are "feisty" and "determined." Bailey is determined to better her future by getting an education and equally determined to better the future for generations to come. "Now, with the help of organizations like TRTF, she is on her way to becoming a colorful, creative and caring teacher."

Sue Tabor, a member of the Wichita Falls ARSP, was elated to hear that her nephew Zachary received the TRTF scholarship. The scholarship is "helping him on his journey to make his dream of becoming a coach and developing kids to each ones very best potential on and off the playing field a reality!"

Sue also tells us that Zachary has chosen to continue the "'Tabor Tradition' as a fourth generation Texas educator!" Zachary is pursuing his degree at North Lake College in Irving, where he plays on the men's basketball team. He says that the best way to "give back to my community is through educating young student athletes." Sue is certain that with his drive and personality, Zachary will have many championship teams. "He is certainly a champion in my eyes!"

The Foundation has provided over \$37,000 in scholarships to future educators since 2008. ★

To donate today, please see pages 15–16.

62nd TRTA Annual Convention Planning Underway!

Convention Schedule

MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2015

11:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Delegate Certification

Registration

Exhibits

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

TRTA Officers Meeting

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

TRTA Board of Directors Meeting

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

DP Meeting

Foundation Trustees

Facilitators Meeting

6:30 p.m.

Welcome/Awards Dinner

TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2015

7:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.

Foundation Breakfast

7:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Delegate Certification

Registration

Exhibits

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Breakout Sessions I, II & III

12:15 p.m.

Legislative Luncheon

1:30 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Caucus Meetings

2:30 p.m. – TBD

House of Delegates

TBD

TRTA Board of Directors

Dinner on your own

Day at the Capitol Schedule

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2015

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Legislative Visits

9:30 a.m.

House Gallery

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Photo opportunities with Legislators

10:30 a.m.

Senate Gallery

11:30 a.m.

Rally on Capitol Steps

12:00 p.m.

Additional Legislative Visits

12:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Ice Cream Social

TRTA members are sure to have an enlightening, educational and motivating experience in 2015, when they attend the 62nd TRTA Annual Convention in Austin, Texas!

The convention will be held April 6-7, 2015 at the JW Marriott on 110 E. 2nd Street. The hotel is now taking reservations. The group rate of \$169 (+ tax) per night is good through March 16, 2015, but rooms are filling quickly! Please note the group rate is available April 5-8.

Call 1.888.236.2427 and be sure to ask for the “Texas Retired Teachers Association 62nd Annual Convention” group rate! For online reservations, please visit the home page of the TRTA website (www.trta.org).

There is no better time to be in Austin! The Texas Legislature will be in regular session, discussing such vital issues as the TRS-Care health insurance program and ways to protect the longevity of benefits for our public education retirees and pre-retirees.

TRTA has released a tentative schedule of events to help you plan your travel. Due to the Easter holiday on April 5, convention activities will begin later in the day on Monday, April 6, allowing members to travel in the morning and still arrive in time for registration. Unlike years past, there will be no banquet, and instead members may attend a welcome dinner on the first night.

Day two (April 7) begins with a Foundation Breakfast. Previously, TRTF held a luncheon. Though the format will be somewhat different, members will still be able to present gifts to the Foundation in honor or in memory of a loved one, friend or colleague.

Training sessions and the House of Delegates fill the second day. A legislative luncheon will be held at 12:15 p.m. At the conclusion of the House of Delegates, attendees will be able to choose from a wide variety of

restaurants within walking distance of the hotel in wonderfully diverse downtown Austin for dinner.

The length of the convention will be truncated, allowing for a full day of legislative grassroots advocacy on Wednesday, April 8! Our “Day at the Capitol” event is open to all Convention attendees as well as any member who wishes to travel to Austin for this purpose only.

The Day at the Capitol allows public education retirees to visit with their legislators, be honored by both the Texas Senate and House and enjoy a rousing speech by TRTA officers and elected officials on the Capitol grounds. All attendees at this event are encouraged to wear red!

We hope you will join us in Austin in April for convention, Day at the Capitol, or both! Look for the registration form for all events in the fourth quarter issue of *The VOICE*. ★

Call 1.888.236.2427 and be sure to ask for the “Texas Retired Teachers Association 62nd Annual Convention” group rate!





Connecting generations of educators.

Last year, you donated over \$100,000!
You helped change the lives of 67 public school
teachers, 74 future educators, and 64 retirees.
Help us do it again!

You change people's lives by the
simple act of making a donation.



Use this bulletin and enclosed envelope to donate today.

TRTA Deputy Director Retires

Many members of TRTA know and love Bobbie Pearson, the organization's Deputy Director for the past eleven years. Bobbie has been a cherished friend, trustworthy confidante and steadfast employee. For some members of the staff, she has been a second mom, someone who we can turn to for advice or a warm embrace.

Bobbie served TRTA as both a leader and a follower, able to resolve difficult situations with unflappable ease or work through all hours of the day and night to help the TRTA team meet its goal. It is with both sadness and joy that we announce her retirement from TRTA.

As of October 1, Bobbie has been enjoying her retirement in Bastrop and spending time with her family and friends. Though we will rely on her from time to time as a consultant, she will no longer be working full-time at the TRTA office in Austin. Replacing Bobbie will be an impossible task, but it is our goal as an organization to ensure that your needs are met. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions or concerns as we make this significant staff transition.

Bobbie has taken the time to share her thoughts about her time at TRTA. Please read, in her own words, about the incredible journey she has traversed while working for Texas public education retirees.

"As I think about the last 11 years, I am in awe of all the changes that have occurred since I came to work for TRTA. As I look out the window, I see Darrell K. Royal Texas Memorial Stadium and the Jumbotron scoreboard in the background and the roofs of the state parking garages partially filled with cars. Eleven years ago when I looked out a window from the TASA headquarters (where TRTA rented office space), I could see the skeleton of a building I was told would soon be the permanent home of TRTA. At that time, occupying the building seemed to be in the distant future. However, a short year later on a bitterly cold morning, we held a dedication ceremony on the first floor parking garage of that same building. TRTA had a home!

A lot of other changes happened in those 11 years. Most significantly, a few months after I joined the TRTA team, we hired a young Executive Director from Illinois. We all

"I am looking forward to what is in the next chapter of my life."



wondered who this whippersnapper was and just what he would do for our association. My, my, did we find out! Trying to keep up with his vision for TRTA was like trying to catch a Texas Blue Norther and put it in a tow sack! He had, and has, such enthusiasm and passion for retired teachers and pensions! Life as we knew it was changed forever.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be a member of the TRTA team. It has been exciting to be involved in the growth of the association. I remember the exhilaration when we reached 55,000 members; today we have nearly 80,000 members and it is still exciting! The many improvements to our database and processing of membership dues, and the improved member benefits are too numerous to name. Being of service to our members is gratifying.

I have had a lot of changes in my personal life as well. While I still live in Bastrop, I have downsized my home. I was able to sell my riverfront property and purchase a smaller house on a smaller lot. My two sons live in Bastrop as well and check on me frequently. However, they have threatened to put my picture on a poster that says "Do Not Let This Woman Come Into Your Store" and post it at Lowe's and Home Depot. My daughters are in Austin as are my stepsons, sister and numerous nieces and nephews. They all look in on me from time to time.

I am looking forward to what is in the next chapter of my life. God has been good to me and I know the next steps will be just as exciting as the first ones." ★



TRTA is pleased to announce the addition of Mr. Roy Varney, our new Communications Multimedia Specialist, to our staff. Roy was born and raised in the small town of Fredericksburg, Texas. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theater from Saint Edward's University in Austin in 2010. Subsequently, he started a small business with his father, Urban Herbal, a specialty boutique gift shop in Fredericksburg. In 2014, he completed his Master's degree in Journalism from the University of Texas.

He specializes in video and audio content creation, as well as data visualization, web programming and writing. Check out Roy's work on our new TRTA TV online news channel! In his spare time, Roy enjoys following sports leagues, especially NFL, NBA and college football and basketball. His hobbies include playing a variety of board and card games. Please join us in welcoming Roy to the TRTA family! If you have an idea for a video project TRTA should pursue, contact Roy at roy@trta.org.

Aging and illness are sometimes thought of as two sides of the same coin; we get old, we get sick, and that's just the way it goes.

Today, there is no doubt that a healthy diet and the right amount of exercise can stave off (and in some cases prevent) many illnesses, keep us active longer, and make us look and feel better at the same time.

Texercise

Texercise is a statewide fitness program to educate and involve Texans in physical activities and proper nutrition.

Rusty Cribbs, a 77-year-old Austinite, is a Texercise instructor. She spends about 10 hours a week exercising. Her apartment complex has a pool and a fitness center, so she also does water aerobics, walks on the treadmill and the Stairmaster, and also rides a stationary bike. "And I also enjoy dancing," she said.

Cribbs is a firm believer in the merits of exercise and diet. Texercise "has added so much to my overall health," she said.

Getting Started Is the Hardest Part of a Fitness Program

Walking is a great way to be active. Work toward a goal of 6,000-10,000 steps a day. Sound daunting? Perhaps, but it could be easier than you think. For illustration, a football field is 300 feet long; that's about 750 steps for the average person.

Texercise is perfect for the beginner. "Texercise is a well-organized program and it's easy to follow," Cribbs said. "I encourage my students to keep the handbook with them at all times, because there's always something you can do. We're surrounded by opportunities to exercise, so we have no excuse not to exercise."

You Can Find Time for Exercise, If You Look

There are several ways to make time

Look Better, Feel Better, Keep Healthy With Texercise

Jeff Carmack, Managing Editor, Texas Department of Aging and Disability



**Look Better, Feel Better,
Keep Healthy With Texercise**

The right diet and regular exercise can help you look and feel better and stay healthier. *Texercise can help.*

www.texercise.com

to exercise. You can exercise during your lunch hour or walk during your breaks. And remember that day-to-day activities such as vacuuming, gardening, walking your dog or washing are exercise. Even 10 minutes a day can make a difference.

Healthy Eating Made Easy

Proper nutrition includes plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grain products, protein-rich foods, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, and foods with plenty of calcium, vitamin D and vitamin B-12. Eating right boosts energy and lowers the risk for many chronic diseases.

Cribbs said, "As part of my classes, we always take time to have a healthy snack. And the Texercise book has lots of good information about proper nutrition. It also helps you eat smarter when you're eating out, and during the holidays."

Time to Trade In Your Old Eating Habits

For ideas on healthy eating habits, nutritional plans, a food guidance system and a healthy eating index, visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture's www.choosemyplate.gov. The changes you make are important and can improve your health and your

everyday life. Pretty soon, it will be a habit to eat well. The Texercise website and handbook www.texercise.com also include nutrition information.

"It's a new way of life, and eating correctly and exercising regularly can help us have a long healthy life to look forward to," Cribbs said.

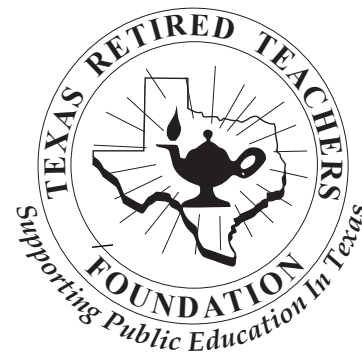
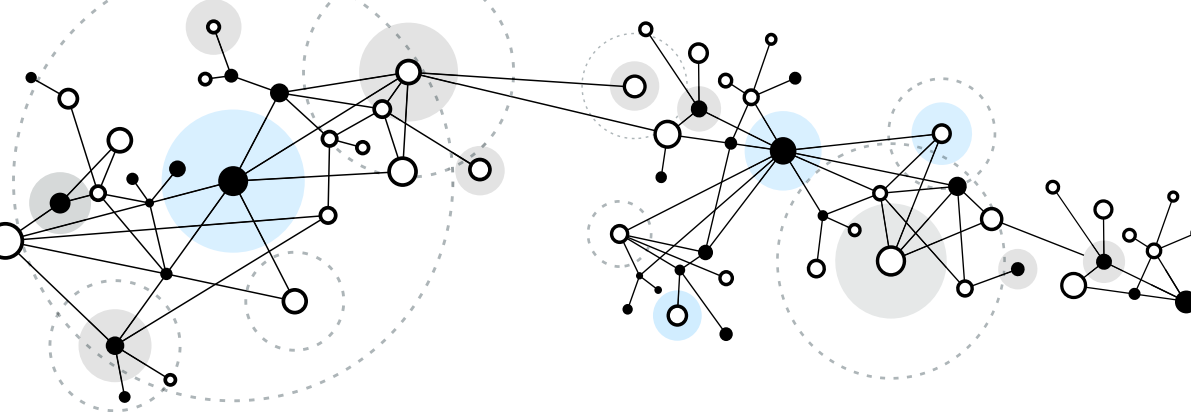
To download a free copy of the Texercise handbook, go here www.texercise.com.

GET MORE AT DIAMOND PLUS!

Read more articles and discover valuable resources from the Department of Aging & Disability Services (DADS) by participating in TRTA's premier membership program, Diamond Plus!

To learn more, visit www.trtadiamondplus.org or call us at 1.800.880.1650. Participants pay their dues monthly instead of annually (\$2.92 per month).

Receive regular updates from DADS and other sponsors, as well as timely information about legislative issues from TRTA!



The Texas Retired Teachers Foundation is a family. We are a charitable organization founded, established and maintained by Texas public education retirees.

TRTA members dedicated their entire lives to education. Many of our children and now grandchildren are now following in our footsteps. One of this year's scholarship recipients, a young man who wants to educate student athletes, says that his great-grandmother served on the first board of TRTA!

This great education legacy carries on through our four charitable programs, each with a unique focus that allows us to help educators of the past, present and future: "A Helping Hand," Classroom Assistance Grants, Student Scholarships and the Legacy Campaign.

Your support of the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF) has provided over \$170,000 to public school teachers, students, and retirees since 2008. That includes 67 public school teachers, 74 future educators, and 64 retirees! You have also helped 10 residents of West, Texas get back on their feet. Money you donated is helping to rebuild two schools in West from the ground up!

Your donations are needed to help us continue this legacy. If 2,000 TRTA members donate \$50 each, we can raise \$100,000! Every day, TRTF hears from retirees struggling with difficult circumstances. Every year, we receive hundreds of applications from teachers and students seeking assistance to help them achieve their goals and dreams. Because of you, we have been able to help many of them!

How can you help?

Please be a part of our legacy and make a donation to TRTF today. This is our annual appeal. **Using *The VOICE* for our annual appeal saves thousands of dollars in postage, meaning thousands more can be dedicated to our charitable programs.** Please use the donation card found on the back of *The VOICE* and the enclosed envelope to send in your tax deductible donation.

With your donation, we can provide financial assistance to 35+ retirees in need, award scholarships to future educators who will carry on the Texas education legacy, award classroom grants to educators with innovative projects that motivate the students in our Texas public classrooms, and connect generations of educators while promoting a positive image of public education.



Student Scholarships



Legacy Campaign



Classroom Assistance Grants



The VOICE

Send address changes to:
Texas Retired Teachers Association
313 E. 12th Street, Suite 200 | Austin, TX 78701-1957
800.880.1650 | www.trta.org

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After West: TRTA Members Move Forward

A fertilizer plant explosion occurred in West in April 2013. The immediate impact led to 15 deaths, 160 injuries and the destruction of 150 buildings. Two retired public school teachers, Nancy and Richard Sullivan, were among those who had their homes totaled by the explosion's impact.

Nancy Sullivan recalls "it was like an earthquake...we went out with the clothes on our backs, literally." Nancy Sullivan worked as a math and English teacher for 35 years. Richard Sullivan worked as a coach before taking a job in the oil fields of the Permian Basin. TRTF provided a \$6000 grant to the Sullivans to help them repair damage to their vehicles and pay for pharmacy prescriptions.

The long-term impact of the explosion includes physical and psychological ailments that explosion victims are still coping with. Sullivan went to see a doctor who said many of the victims have experienced trauma similar to post-traumatic stress disorder. "I fell to pieces," Sullivan said.

The Sullivans lived in a RV during the summer of 2013 in the aftermath of the explosion. However, the RV was incapable of supporting their electrical needs. Many

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

Thank you

for helping us change people's lives.

times, they were unable to run the air conditioning. Nancy Sullivan's daughter offered the couple a small apartment in Houston, which they accepted for a short period of time. Due to numerous doctor visits and heavy traffic, the pair knew that they could not sustain the lifestyle.

Between October 2013 and February 2014, Richard Sullivan was hospitalized for a total of 41 days, undergoing a litany of cardiovascular surgeries.

The Sullivans are now rebuilding their lives. They purchased a new home on the outskirts of Waco last November through the use of insurance payments. Though the road to recovery is sometimes long and challenging, we know that Nancy and Richard will persevere. Nancy says she and Richard are doing fine.

TRTF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Please enclose your tax-deductible donation with this card in the envelope provided. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Yes, I want to help! ☐ \$100 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ Other \$ _____

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Thank you for your support.

Texas Retired Teachers Foundation | 313 E. 12th Street, Suite 200 | Austin, TX 78701

Connecting generations of educators.

