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The VOICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWS BULLETIN OF THE TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



ON COURSE FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS

TRTA is ending 2013 with many great successes! We have our dedicated, active, impassioned members to thank for all that we have achieved. We want to thank all of you who have worked so hard to help make TRTA a great organization, one that is making a difference for all current and future TRS retirees!

2013 ON COURSE FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS

By Tim Lee
Executive Director

2013 was a year in which TRTA members accomplished significant legislative achievements. Without our members' service and action at every level, TRTA would not be as successful as it is today. YOU give us the strength and influence to protect and improve the hard-earned retirement benefits for 300,000+ retirees! TRTA has shown its power, and now our members are energized about being involved in the political process!

We worked hard to make the TRS fund actuarially sound. We pushed back against the strong, well-financed political interest groups that want to eliminate our retirement plan for all future retirees. We dispelled the myth that taking the defined benefit plan away from active employees is good for them (it's not!) and will not hurt current retirees (it would!).

Yes, this has been a good year for TRTA; however, TRTA will not ever rest or settle! We want to reach new goals, and protect and improve the lives of all current and future TRS retirees. With your help, I know we will meet our expectations!

LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS— IN TROUBLED TIMES, TRS TEXAS IS STRONG

During the 83rd Legislative Session, TRTA worked with key legislators as well as active and retired education groups to create and pass Senate Bill 1458. As a result, the TRS pension fund is actuarially sound for the first time in many years. This means that 200,000 retirees were able to receive their first permanent cost-of-living increase since 2001. This also means that a stable plan for financing the pension fund was put into place to protect benefits for all current and future TRS retirees.

With a financial plan in place, TRS may be able to provide additional COLAs for more retirees in the future. While many other states struggle to maintain their pension plans, at times cutting benefits even for current retirees, TRS Texas is strong!

80,000
and growing!

MEMBERSHIP

TRTA now has nearly 80,000 members and continues to grow!

We are proud to have so many dedicated individuals working to protect and improve the retirement benefits for over 300,000 retirees. If you know of a fellow retiree who has not yet joined our great organization, please reach out to them. Let them know about the accomplishments our 80,000 members made this year, and how adding to our growing family of retirees will continue to make us stronger.

TRTA also launched TRTACONnect for local unit treasurers in July 2013. This web-based local unit management system is being used by hundreds of local units to report membership dues and pay state dues. It also serves as a convenient reporting tool. To learn more, contact our Membership Department.



TRTA held a Day at the Capitol event in March 2013 attended by nearly 1200 members of TRTA from all over the state! Our members also made a special effort to thank their legislators, sending 9606 thank you emails to them in October.

In 2013, TRTA celebrated its 60th anniversary. This came on the heels of TRS celebrating 75 years in business. In 60 years, TRTA has grown from six local units to 259! While only 65 members attended the first annual convention in 1953, over 1000 attended in 2013.

TRTA LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH

In 2012, TRTA launched a new Legislative Training Initiative. In 2013, we were able to put this initiative into practice for the first time. What we saw was a strong, unified body of members sending cohesive messages to their legislators about protecting the TRS pension fund and the TRS-Care health insurance program.

Our elected officials were educated this session about the importance of the defined benefit plan and how vital it is to the retirement security of Texas' education personnel. As a result, not a single bill was introduced this session to eliminate the DB plan. Instead, funding was restored above and beyond the levels put in place in 2011. TRS retirees have overwhelming support from legislators for protecting TRS.

BIG NUMBERS ARE A BIG DEAL FOR TRTA

- ▶ TRTA championed funding for the pension fund and TRS-Care, securing over \$3.7 billion for these vital programs!
- ▶ State contribution increased from 6.4% in 2013 to 6.8% in 2014-15
- ▶ Increase in active teacher contribution from 6.4% to 6.7% in 2015, 7.2% in 2016 and 7.7% in 2017
- ▶ Brand new school district contribution of 1.5% in effect in 2015, for total combined employer contribution of 8.3% in 2015 and going forward
- ▶ Over 200,000 TRS annuitants received a 3% permanent cost-of-living increase (capped at \$100 per month)
- ▶ No premium increases for TRS-Care participants in 2014 or 2015
- ▶ TRTA members sent 111,216 emails to their legislators during the 83rd Session!

The VOICE subscribers
91,000



TRS NEWS

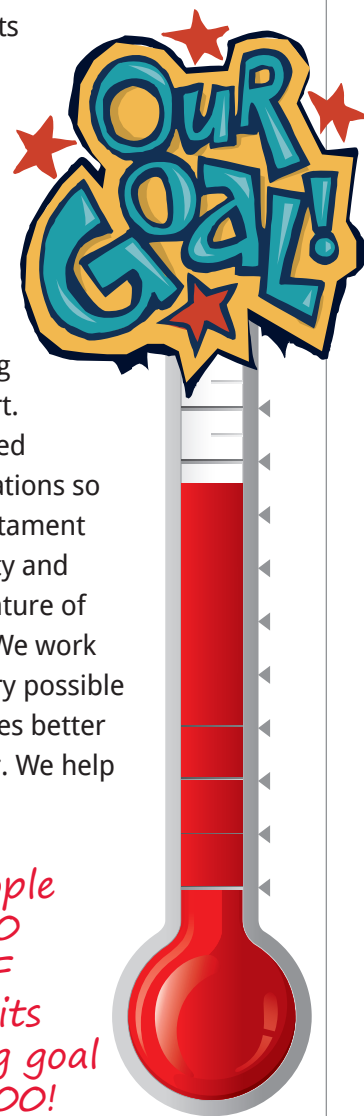
- ▶ In 2013, TRS pension trust fund earned a return of 8.9%
- ▶ The market value of the fund at end of FY 2013 was \$117.4 billion
- ▶ The funding ratio of the pension fund is presently at 80.8%
- ▶ The fund is actuarially sound and can pay off its unfunded liability in 28 years
- ▶ TRS-Care is projected to remain solvent through FY 2015
- ▶ There have been no member premium increases for TRS-Care since FY 2005 with none projected for 2014-15

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

TRTA's charitable partner, TRTF, helps educators of the past, present and future. In 2013, TRTF welcomed Jamie Larson and Martha Kallus to the Board of Trustees. After the plant explosion occurred in West, Texas in April, our members quickly made over \$41,000 in donations to the West Relief Fund. This money helped retired and active teachers in West recover from the damage. Since launching "A Helping Hand" in 2010, TRTF has provided \$47,000 in grants to 53 retirees experiencing critical need.

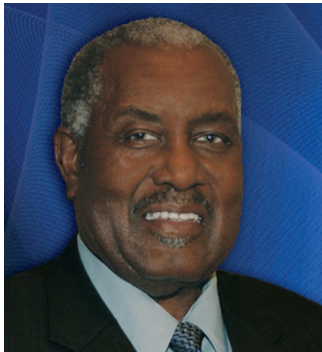
In November, TRTF sent its annual appeal letter to TRTA members asking for their support. TRTF has received \$88,000 in donations so far! This is a testament to the generosity and kind-hearted nature of our members. We work together in every possible way to make lives better for one another. We help our own!

If 240 people donate \$50 each, TRTF will reach its fundraising goal of \$100,000!



CREATING THE LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

BY HERBERT NORRIS, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT



The Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) is rich with knowledge! After all, our nearly 80,000 members are former school personnel who dedicated their lives to the pursuit of education!

Every member of TRTA is truly valuable. I want to encourage all of you to consider becoming a leader in this great organization that fights for improved benefits for over 300,000

retirees. Do you have ideas you'd like to share about how we can achieve even more in the next legislative session? Do you have a drive to serve your fellow retirees by serving on a committee or organizing retirement education events for pre-retirees?

TRTA has many opportunities for you to share your vision and leadership skills! Several of the retirees that serve on our Board of Directors started by first serving as officers in their local unit or on a local committee, myself included. I also served on state committees, such as the Finance and Information and Protective Services Committee.

You may not be sure if becoming an officer is right for you, but I assure you the rewards of participating in TRTA are great. We need people like you to guide TRTA into the future! Start by visiting with your local president about committee positions that may be open.

If you are a go-getter with political connections, you'd be a great asset to a local legislative committee! If you enjoy helping others and fundraising activities, you could be a great local Foundation representative. If you have a flair for marketing or enjoy promoting TRTA, your skills are needed on your public relations committee.

As you may know, TRTA has 12 state committees, with counterparts in almost all local units. An opportunity to share your skills and strengths is out there for you!

If you already are involved in local unit or district leadership as an elected officer and have been a member of TRTA and a local unit for at least three years, you are eligible for run for state office. Our state officer positions, up for election at the 2014 TRTA Annual Convention, are: President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President and Secretary/Treasurer. Now is the time to file if you are interested!

Commonly, officers serve in all of the leadership positions consecutively over the span of 8 years, though it is not required. For example, many Presidents initially served at the TRTA state level as Secretary/Treasurer, then Second Vice-President, followed by First Vice-President and finally President. This was the path that I followed, and now I serve as Immediate Past President, which is a non-elected position.

If you are considering a run for TRTA state office, you should complete a filing form and submit it to the TRTA office by January 15, 2014. You may also download the form online at www.trta.org.

I thank you for being a member of this great organization and hope to inspire you to take your membership in TRTA even further!

FILING FOR TRTA STATE OFFICE

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Local Unit _____

I am filing for:

- ☐ **TRTA President** ☐ **TRTA 1st Vice-President**
☐ **TRTA 2nd Vice-President** ☐ **TRTA Secretary/Treasurer**

☐ I understand that a candidate for this office shall have been a participating member of TRTA and of a Local Unit for at least three (3) years, and shall have served as an elected officer of a District or Local Unit, but need not have served as a statewide officer.

My credentials are:

A postmark of January 15, 2014 is the deadline for the TRTA office to receive this completed form and a color photo of you to be included in the first quarter 2014 issue of *The VOICE*.

Mail to TRTA | 313 E. 12th Street, Suite 200 | Austin, TX 78701



North San Antonio RTA (NSARTA)

This is Part 2 in a series of articles about the experience of being a member in the nation's largest organization of retired school personnel, the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA)!

THE TRTA EXPERIENCE

THE LOCAL CONNECTION

In the previous issue, our new series the TRTA Experience received many positive comments. In this issue, we are focusing on one of the most vital parts of TRTA: Our local units! We owe so much to those dedicated members who organize and manage the local unit network.

TRTA has a HUGE footprint all over Texas! We have 259 local units, including one near you! We hope you enjoy the article and get a sense of why local unit members feel that local involvement is a fundamental part of their lives. Please share our article with your friends and fellow retirees who may not have joined our great association yet!

Nearly 42,000 of TRTA's 80,000 members are members of a local unit. Members of TRTA join local units for a variety of reasons. Nancy Humphreys, member of the Longview-Gregg County RTA, has been a member of both TRTA and her local unit for 15 years. "I feel a professional obligation to support my profession and work to keep it secure," she says, adding that she enjoys "being informed on matters that impact retired teachers."

Local units offer a variety of programs, but information about what is happening in the Legislature to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) tops the list. Chester Cunningham, who serves as the Legislative Chairman for the Hutchinson County RSPA, values this aspect of his local unit because it gives him a "feeling of contribution to worthy causes." Mr. Cunningham also participates in both the Texas and National Silver Haired Legislatures.

Volunteer and community activities are popular among local units. Our members gave more than 5,970,080 hours of volunteer service in 2012. Jackie Mueller of the Seguin RTA says her unit "has great programs and promotes children's literacy." Indeed, hundreds of TRTA's local units participate

By TRTA Staff
Tim Lee &
Cindee Sharp

in the Children's Book Project, which was started in 1999. The purpose of the project is to put books into the hands of children who otherwise would not have books of their own. The program continues to grow, and has given over 600,000 books to children since its inception.

The members of TRTA are diverse and active, which enhances the quality of their fellowship. Some members bring their talents and unique interests to units as the meeting program or share them with others in the community. Bernie Ponzio of the Grand Prairie RSP takes Cassidy (a golden retriever therapy dog who wears a prosthetic limb for his right front paw) to nursing homes, adult day care centers and schools. Cassidy's role is to "make people smile!"

Staying connected with former co-workers and friends is key for local unit members, not only because of the camaraderie but because, as Betty Haynes of the Mesquite ARSE puts it, "there is strength in numbers!" Being a member of the Collingsworth County RSPA also helps member Beth Lennon-Ellis stay aware of her local elected leaders' interest in TRS.

TRTA asked local units across the state to share some highlights from their recent meetings. Following are stories from seven of those units.

The **North San Antonio RTA**, located in TRTA District 20, has nearly 500 members. The unit meets on the third Wednesday of each month. NSARTA is a lively group that keeps its meetings interesting, including where members sit! Peggy Peterson, the Hospitality Chairperson, sometimes rearranges seating at meetings based upon birth month. Most of the members usually sit with former colleagues and friends. Making the seating change a few times per year helps them make new acquaintances.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

In October, the group invited special guest speaker Jerry Ferguson, Executive Director of the Elf Louise Project. This Christmas project is dedicated to providing a little bit of joy to Bexar County's less fortunate children. The organization has over 4,500 volunteers who wrap gifts and deliver toys during the Christmas season. It takes approximately 500 Santa Clauses to deliver all of the toys to the children. Some of NSARTA's members will be among the volunteers who serve in this effort this year.

NSARTA welcomed speaker Devon Schie of the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) to the group in November. Devon is a young former service member who recovered from his physical wounds, but needed help recovering from depression. Devon shared that the WWP helped him regain his strength. NSARTA has a stitchery group which contributes to the VA hospital in San Antonio, and the presentation gave members a firsthand account of how volunteer efforts help wounded soldiers.

Visit the NSARTA website to learn more: localunits.org/NSARTA. Thanks to First Vice-President Harold Black for providing information for this article.

The Canyon Lake Association of Retired Teachers and School Personnel (CLARTSP) is a small but active group. Located in TRTA District 13, the unit has about 120 members.

The group began the year with a presentation in September by the Comal County Agriculture Extension

Service teaching members how to create a habitat for hummingbirds. In October, CLARTSP members visited the New Life Center, which is a residential community for girls ages 11-17. Several members volunteer at this special facility where young girls can overcome trauma. Their November meeting focused on fitness and a silent auction which benefitted the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation.

The group plans to visit three local elementary schools to read stories and give each Kindergarten and pre-school student a book of his or her own as part of their December activities, Santa hats included! During their holiday luncheon, each member will also bring a toiletry item that will be donated to the girls at the New Life Center.

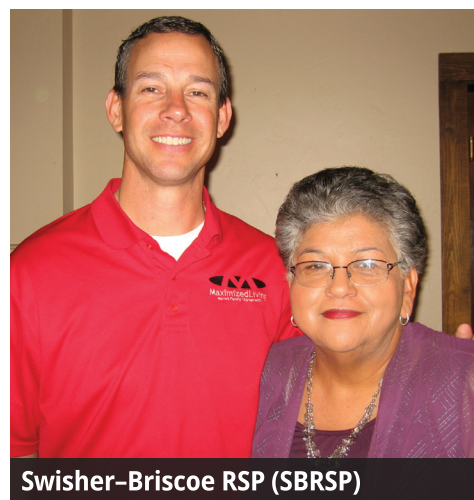
Every year, CLARTSP provides a \$1000 scholarship to a student attending Texas State University. On October 26, the group held a plant sale to supplement their scholarship fund. Members contributed a variety of plants, and were well received at Market Day sponsored by Community Resource and Recreation Center, where many members volunteer.

Thank you to President Janet Ryan for providing this update. Visit their website: localunits.org/CanyonLake.

The Klein Association of Retired Employees (KARE) is found in District 4 and has just over 200 dedicated members. Several of those members were added in the spring of 2013 after the group hosted a successful TRS Retirement Seminar event.

The group started off this school year's activities with a "HaHa, We Don't Have To Go To School" brunch. The luau theme added to the festivities.

Klein has featured several informative guest speakers, such as Byron Parffrey from Builder's Academy who spoke recently about how to make homes more energy efficient. The KARE group enjoys organizing trips, and has taken members to the



Swisher-Briscoe RSP (SBRSP)

Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens, Chappell Hill, and the Huntsville Prison Museum and Veterans Museum.

KARE's members actively participate in The Children's Book Project, Cypress Cares (support for deployed troops), and tutoring and mentoring students in area school districts.

Thanks to Kathy Bell, President of KARE, for contributing to this article.

The Swisher-Briscoe RSP (SBRSP) is a group of nearly 80 members in TRTA District 16 in the Texas Panhandle. SBRSP members are a generous group of folks who serve multiple small communities in their area.

For example, the members will bring canned food to their December meeting for donations to the Tri-County Emergency Food Pantry. The Pantry serves Silverton, Quitaque, Turkey and Flomot and also delivers meals to the homebound in these same towns. SBRSP will also collect books for the Children's Book Project in December.

SBRSP members enjoy sharing their talents. To begin the holiday season, member Julianna Howard of Tulia will present a Christmas story and member Mary Lou Moreno will display unique jewelry she designed. After the meeting, several members will prep "Snack Paks" at Panhandle Community Services.

The group also enjoys listening to entertaining guest speakers. In November, Dr. Eric Narrell presented his program "Living To Be 100." Dr. Narrell examines cultures that live



Canyon Lake Association of Retired Teachers and School Personnel (CLARTSP)

longer than Americans do and that originate from countries where walking is a common way of transportation and few people “retire.” His presentation emphasized several essentials to maximize living including a positive mindset, good nutrition, daily exercise, and elimination of as many toxins and chemicals as possible. Dr. Narrell’s informative website can be found at maximizelivingdrnarrell.com.

Thanks to First Vice-President Valeria Bell for providing the information.

The **Smith County Retired Teachers and School Personnel Association (SCRTSPA)** in east Texas meets in Tyler and is the local unit home of TRTA’s Immediate Past President Herbert Norris. This unit has a whopping 800+ members and two of its members were recently remembered fondly by Dallas Morning News reporter Steve Blow.

Mr. Blow grew up in Tyler and attended Jones Elementary School. He remembered he was in Ms. Marydell Outlaw’s sixth grade classroom when the news of President Kennedy’s assassination was announced. While he was writing the article, Mr. Blow called Tyler ISD to try to locate Ms. Outlaw. Because she is a member of TRTA, her address was in the SCRTSPA yearbook. Ms. Outlaw now lives in Idaho and Mr. Blow was able to phone her. He also mentioned Mrs. Eva McKnight, another of his teachers at Jones Elementary. He attended her 100th birthday party two years ago in Tyler. To read Steve Blow’s article in full, please see page 13 of *The VOICE*.

SCRTSPA recently honored its five members who are also veterans. A fourth and fifth grade choir from Bonner Elementary School entertained the group with patriotic songs.

Many thanks to Lynn Fisher, President of SCRTSPA, for sharing these stories.

Allen Retired Educators Association (AREA) in TRTA District 10 has about 200 members. Its unique programs inspire its members to share their lives with one another and have a lot of fun in the process. A favorite part of

each meeting is called “Brag.” For \$1, a member can make one brag. About \$20–\$30 is raised at each meeting and goes into the general fund.

Every month, AREA offers “Showcase Allen Youth.” Started a little over a year ago by then President Sondra Long, this tradition of inviting Allen ISD students to share their talents with retired educators has become something that all members look forward to and would certainly miss if it were not included. Middle school cheerleaders made a surprise visit to the August meeting and brought down the house with their “AREA” cheers!

A popular program is one in which member volunteer activities are highlighted. About 8 members are given 5 minutes each to share their unusual volunteer projects. From working with Habitat for Humanity,



Mills County Retired Teachers Association (MCRTA)

taking dogs into the schools to read to children with learning disabilities, helping with a free legal aid program, sharing art with elementary students, stocking the shelves of a local food pantry, or leading tours for fourth graders at Allen’s Heritage Village—the audience enjoys hearing about all the wonderful work of AREA members.

Another idea AREA uses is skits. Called the “AREA Actors,” members volunteer to be part of fun skits that also relay valuable information. A recent skit, “Behind the Scenes with AREA,” was used to announce all the activities and projects for the year to help entice new retirees and guests

to join AREA. The actors auditioned for very coveted roles in a sure-to-be Oscar nominated, award-winning movie that was being made by big shot movie director, Spike Spielberg, third cousin twice-removed of Oscar winning director, Steven Spielberg.

Thanks to President Karin Malinowsky for sharing AREA’s fun, informative activities! To read more, visit the unit’s website: localunits.org/allen.

The **Mills County Retired Teachers Association (MCRTA)** in District 12 more than doubled its size in 2013 to 75 members, thanks to grassroots efforts and a great respect for their retired school personnel.

MCRTA held a very successful retired public school employees’ luncheon that helped increase their membership. By raising the money to pay for renowned national speaker Riney Jordan and hosting a very formal, exquisite event to honor retired public school employees, this small but strong unit proved that their group of retirees had become an influential organization and had earned the respect of business leaders and the community. The event was free for attendees and supported by sponsorships and donations.

Several retirees in the area told MCRTA that this was the first time in their 30 to 40 years in education that they had ever been recognized for their work. During the event, MCRTA honored retired teacher Minnie Graves, 102, with roses. They presented Retired Teacher of the Year plaques to teachers nominated by the four school districts in the county and by the public at-large. Plaques were presented to retired paraprofessionals, school bus drivers, and school board members. A Legislator of the Year plaque was presented to Representative J. D. Sheffield.

MCRTA has continued to keep its presence visible in the county by bringing cans of food for the local food bank, supporting other worthy charities in our county, and keeping a high profile.

Thank you to President Earl Wall for the information provided in this article. ★

61st Annual TRTA Convention: "Lasso Our Legacy!"

Plans are being finalized for TRTA's 61st Annual Convention to be held in Dallas April 13-15, 2014! TRTA is ready to capitalize on the successes of the 83rd Legislative Session and band together to bring better benefits for ALL Texas public education retirees! Our focus at this year's Convention is on Leadership, Legislation and Literacy.

Registration is now open! You may register by completing the form on page 9 and mailing it to TRTA.

Room accommodations are being provided by the Sheraton Hotel Dallas, located at 400 N. Olive Street. All rooms cost \$125. Call 214.922.8000 to reserve a room before space runs out! Self-parking is available in the Sheraton parking garage at a cost of \$12 per day, while valet parking costs \$29 per day.

The Convention festivities begin with a complimentary Officers Reception on April 13 at 5:00 p.m. TRTA leaders invite you to "Laugh, Linger and Lollygag!" as we share beverages, snacks and fellowship and peruse the exhibits. You will enjoy a down-home Dallas welcome from country western band The Shady Grove Ramblers. A cash bar will be available.

Opening Ceremonies begin bright and early Monday morning at 8:00 a.m. We will feature special entertainment from The Twin Fiddles, two young ladies from Murphy, Texas. Megan and Leah Bynum started violin lessons when they were just two years old. Classically trained musicians, they enjoy country, Celtic, western swing and bluegrass music as well as singing. Our keynote speaker is Tumbleweed Smith from Big Spring. Tumbleweed is a popular newspaper columnist and producer of "The Sound of Texas" radio series.

Monday's events continue with the

Foundation Luncheon at 11:45 a.m., followed by an afternoon of training and informative breakout sessions. Some of the special informational sessions include Julia Heaberlin, a mystery author from Dallas who sets her books in Texas. Her books include "Playing Dead" and "Black-Eyed Susans." Julia will sell and autograph her books during the Convention. You can also learn about brain health from Pam Kovacs of the Friends Place Adult Day Services. Carol Spool will provide a special session about conservation and recycling, and Shannon Page of the Old Red Museum will present a history of Dallas and its people.

Monday winds down with a banquet that begins at 6:30 p.m. Entertainment for the evening is Holly Tucker, a country western singer from Waco. Ms. Tucker placed 5th on the TV show "The Voice." A cash bar will be available during the banquet.

Tuesday, April 15 provides an opportunity for early risers to hear from Tim Lee and other legislative experts during the 7:00 a.m. Legislative Breakfast. The business of the association will be conducted during the First House of Delegates promptly at 9:00 a.m. We will break for lunch at 11:30. The Stilwell Foundation will host a special 50th birthday luncheon at Noon that day and tickets are now available for purchase. Members will return for the Second House of Delegates at 1:45 p.m.

Register soon to be a part of TRTA's 61st Annual Convention in April! Space is limited at all special events, so purchase your tickets today! We hope you can join us in Dallas as we begin the next successful sixty years of TRTA! ★



Convention Schedule

SUNDAY, APRIL 13

10 – 11:30 a.m.

TRTF Board of Trustees Meeting

12 – 7 p.m.

Delegate Certification/Registration & Exhibits

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

TRTA Board of Directors Meeting

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

District Presidents Meeting

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Facilitators Meeting

5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Legislative Committee Meeting

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Special Event Reception

MONDAY, APRIL 14

7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Delegate Certification/Registration & Exhibits

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Opening Ceremonies

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

District Caucus Meetings

11:45 a.m.

Foundation Luncheon

1:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Breakout Sessions I, II & III

6:30 p.m.

Banquet

TUESDAY, APRIL 15

7:00 a.m.

Legislative Breakfast

7:00 – 8:00 a.m.

Delegate Certification/Registration

9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

First Meeting of the House of Delegates

12 p.m.

Stilwell Luncheon

1:45 p.m. – TBD

Second Meeting of the House of Delegates

TBD

TRTA Board of Directors Meeting

Sheraton Hotel, Dallas • April 13–15, 2014

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MARCH 28, 2014



REGISTRANT INFORMATION

Last and First Name

TRTA ID

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Email

CONVENTION INFORMATION

Every convention attendee must register. One registrant per form. Please check all boxes that apply. Attendees must pay the \$30 registration fee or \$35 on-site registration (late) fee. Refund requests must be received by March 31, 2014. No on-site refunds will be issued. Service charges included. Mail completed form and payment to TRTA, Attention: Accounting, 313 E. 12th Street, Suite 200, Austin, TX 78701.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- ☐ Registration (Deadline March 28, 2014) \$30 per person
- ☐ Special Event Reception (Sunday, April 13, 2014 • 5–7 p.m.) Complimentary
- ☐ Foundation Luncheon (Monday, April 14, 2014 • 11:45 a.m.) \$35 per person
- ☐ Banquet (Monday, April 14, 2014 • 6:30 p.m.) \$50 per person
- ☐ Legislative Breakfast (Tuesday, April 15, 2014 • 7 a.m.) \$25 per person
- ☐ Stilwell Retirement Luncheon (Tuesday, April 15, 2014 • 12 p.m.) \$35 per person

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION

A confirmation letter will be mailed prior to convention. Please bring your confirmation letter when you check in.

- ☐ Check or money order enclosed payable to TRTA
- ☐ Please charge my credit card

TOTAL REMITTANCE

\$ _____

▼ Credit Card Number

□ □ □ □ - □ □ □ □ - □ □ □ □ - □ □ □ □

▼ Expiration

□ □ - □ □



▼ Signature

TRTA TOUR PROGRAM

TRTA 61st Annual Convention | Sunday, April 13, 2014

Dallas Highlights



Join your tour guide...off to enjoy the top sights and attractions of downtown Dallas! Art, architecture, JFK, professional sports, parks and more, on this exciting city tour! Visit Dealey Plaza, birthplace of Dallas and site of the tragic JFK assassination. Stop by spectacular Pioneer Plaza, which commemorates Dallas' western heritage. Tour Victory Park...see the American Airlines Center, home to the Dallas Mav's, and the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. Already a Dallas icon, drive the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge, designed by renowned Spanish architect, Santiago Calatrava. Walk the Dallas Arts District, a rare jewel that is the centerpiece of our cultural life. See the historic antebellum Belo Mansion, and hear about the Mansion's ties to the infamous gangsters Bonnie & Clyde! Drive scenic Turtle Creek to the exclusive

neighborhood of Highland Park, passing by beautiful mansions of well-known Dallasites.

April 13, 2014 | 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. | Cost: \$40 per person

Southfork Ranch



No visit to Dallas is complete without visiting the legendary Southfork Ranch! Begin with a stop at the Visitors Center and a tour of the Ewing Museum, Dallas Legends Exhibit, where you will see the gun that shot J.R., Lucy's wedding dress and more memorabilia! Your private tour guide will lead your stroll of the ranch grounds en-route to the Ewing Mansion, stopping along the way to visit the ranch buildings and hearing a history of the ranch. See Texas Longhorns and miniature horses! Enjoy a guided tour of the Mansion, including interesting tidbits about the years of filming and insight into the character of the Ewing's. As you depart the Mansion, there will be time for a little shopping at the gift shop!

April 13, 2014 | 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. | Cost: \$50 per person

JFK and Sixth Floor Museum



Experience the JFK tragedy first-hand as your guide takes you through the historic events of that day. We first visit the major sites of this story beginning with the Oak Cliff boarding home of Lee Harvey Oswald....stop by the Memorial to Officer Tippett.... see the famous Texas Theatre where Oswald was captured by the Dallas Police. Follow the parade route of Kennedy's motorcade, passing by the Old Municipal Building where Jack Ruby shot Oswald. Stop at the Kennedy Memorial...walk Dealey Plaza and learn about the infamous grassy knoll. Tour the acclaimed Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza, housed in the former Texas School Book Depository, to see film clips, photographs, and memorabilia commemorating the President's life, death, and legacy. This exhibition chronicles the assassination and its aftermath, and

recognizes Kennedy's lasting impact on American culture. **April 13, 2014 | 1 – 4 p.m. | Cost: \$52 per person**

George W. Bush Presidential Library & Museum and SMU



Located on the picturesque campus of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, the Bush Center invites you to learn about President and Mrs. Bush and the American Presidency by visiting the Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Explore the interactive museum galleries, sit in the Oval Office, enjoy the Texas Rose Garden, enjoy a coffee in the café, shop in the Museum store and stroll through the 15-acre park filled with native Texas prairie grasses and wildflowers. Enjoy a driving tour of the SMU campus, the private university founded in 1911 and located in the heart of Dallas. Visit the outdoor sculpture garden of the Meadows Museum of Art, home to one of the finest collections of Spanish art outside of Spain. See Dallas Hall and the lovely Perkins Chapel. Drive through the historical Highland Park neighborhood

designed by the developer of Beverly Hills, California. **April 13, 2014 | 1 – 4 p.m. | Cost: \$50 per person**

Please note all tours are for times stated. Transportation on tour bus with private tour guide and admission to attraction is included. All tours depart and return to the Sheraton Dallas Hotel. To read about the terms and conditions, please visit www.trta.org.

TRTA 61st Annual Convention 2014

Tour Registration Form

Deadline March 31, 2014

Make checks payable to Discover Dallas Tours. Mail form and check/credit card information to Dallas Discover Tours.
Attn: Rebecca Koenigs • 4410 Glenwick Lane • Dallas, TX 75205

Purchaser Contact Information

Purchaser Name: _____ Cell: (_____) _____ - _____

List the names of the corresponding ticket holders: _____

Scheduled Tours – Sunday, April 13, 2014

Dallas Highlights Tour

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

\$40 x _____ ticket(s) Total: _____

Southfork Ranch Tour

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

\$50 x _____ ticket(s) Total: _____

JFK & Sixth Floor Museum

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

\$52 x _____ ticket(s) Total: _____

Bush Presidential Library & SMU

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

\$50 x _____ ticket(s) Total: _____

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Payment Information

_____ Check (Please make payable to Discover Dallas Tours)

_____ Credit Card _____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____ Discover

Credit Card Number: _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ Expiration Date: _____ / _____

CID _____ (Last 3 digits located on the back of credit card)

Name on Card

Signature

Tour registration form may be submitted by mail or email: rebecca@discoverdallastours.com.

Discover Dallas Tours

Attn: Rebecca Koenigs • 4410 Glenwick Lane • Dallas, TX 75205

Deadline to submit form is March 31, 2014. Tour space is limited; please register in advance. Tours may not be reserved by telephone. Tour purchases may not be cancelled and are not refundable.

However, the payment amount may be applied to another tour, based upon availability.

Contact Rebecca Koenigs for more information 214.521.3737.

Health Benefits of Superfood Chia Seeds

A few years ago chia seeds were found only in health food stores and eaten mainly by those considered "health nuts" by their peers. As the health benefits of chia seeds become more well-known, they are moving into the mainstream.

Everyone from recreational athletes and active moms to health conscious teens and seniors are including chia seeds in their diets. They are comparable to other "super" foods in that they deliver maximum nutrients for minimal calories. Anyone who has ever dieted understands the importance of foods such as this. Reducing calories should not mean reducing nutrition. The more high-nutrient low-calorie foods you include in your diet the healthier your weight loss journey. Though research has shown chia seeds do not directly trigger weight loss, they are a healthy addition to your diet and allow you to replace unhealthy foods without growing bored. Chia seeds are similar to flax seed. They are packed with protein and contain omega 3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and calcium. Chia contains a great deal of fiber which provides a feeling of fullness without overeating. The seeds are capable of absorbing more than 10 times their weight in water. They expand in your stomach and help reduce caloric intake, leaving no room for snacking and overeating.

Chia Seeds are Versatile

One of the most advantageous benefits of chia seeds is their ability to taste like just about anything. So many people falter on their diets because they dislike the bitter taste of greens or cannot stomach several liters of water everyday. The seeds can be flavored in any way you choose. You can add them to pudding, mix them with juice, or blend them with water and natural flavoring. Once you add water, they form a type of jelly that keeps you feeling full, but tastes like an indulgent snack. Most people enjoy them with sweet flavors and there are many pre-made snacks available that are great options when you are on the go.

Chia Seeds Help Balance Blood Sugar

Not only are chia seeds great for dieting and preventing weight-related health problems, they can directly help you prevent and manage diabetes. This is because chia seeds help you balance blood sugar levels. The gelling action of chia seeds is caused by its soluble and insoluble fiber content. Eating chia seeds combined with starchy foods helps your body slow its conversion of those starches into sugar. Adding chia to a typical meal supports your body in converting food to a slow, steady stream of energy, instead of a spike and dip in blood sugar.

Chia Seeds Support Healthy Digestion

Fiber is one of the best things you can include in your diet to promote healthy digestion.

Today, many people suffer from digestive conditions caused by over processed foods. Despite the amount of food people eat many lack the fiber they need on a daily basis to keep their digestive system healthy. Chia provide both soluble and insoluble fiber. They are a great substitute if you are unable or unwilling to eat excessive amounts of vegetables and whole grains. The fiber in the seeds keep the colon hydrated and helps food move through the digestive system.

Chia Seeds are Great for Heart Health

The fiber content in chia seeds helps lower bad cholesterol, but the seeds feature other healthy benefits. Chia contains omega 3 fatty acids. The seeds are an excellent vegetarian substitute for fish or fish oil supplements. Chia offers the highest amount of omega-3 from a plant source and actually contains more omega-3 than salmon when compared by weight.

Chia Seeds Boost Your Energy Levels

Chia seeds are a complete protein. Unlike some popular vegetarian protein sources, such as peanut butter and nuts, they offer a complete blend of essential fatty acids, and also contain minerals and vitamins. Chia's ability to balance your blood sugar also ensures you do not experience a crash after your energy burst.

Chia Seeds: An Anti-Cancer Food

Chia seeds contain antioxidants. Antioxidants are a variety of substances that are known for combating the cancer-causing free radicals that damage your cells. Many foods, especially fruits and vegetables, contain antioxidants and are an important part of a healthy diet. Unfortunately, fresh fruits and vegetables have a short shelf life. Not so with chia seeds. Stored at room temperature, they remain fresh for at least two years. Even other types of seeds do not offer this benefit. There are very few foods capable of this type of longevity without dangerous chemicals and preservatives. Not only do antioxidants aid in the prevention of cancer, they also prevent other free radical damage, such as premature aging and inflammation.



Chia Seeds Help You Curb Cravings when Dieting

Food cravings are caused by a variety of factors, but one of the most common is nutrition deficiency.

Unfortunately, many people feed their cravings with the wrong foods. Chia seeds are not only a great way to satiate your cravings they also prevent future cravings. No matter what signals your body is sending, chia can help you squelch its desire to eat foods that are poor choices.

Chia Seeds are a Low-Fat Alternative

Not only do chia seeds make a great addition to snacks and meals, they are a great replacement for unhealthy ingredients in many of your favorite recipes. They are an excellent substitute for butter, so you can use them to bake healthier goodies. Just swap half the butter called for in your favorite cookie or cake recipe with an equivalent amount of chia gel. This makes the treat healthier and it also extends its freshness. Best of all, most people report the addition of chia is barely noticeable and in some cases, even improves the taste of the final product. People are always looking for simple ways to improve the health of their diets. They do not want complicated recipes or expensive ingredients. Chia seeds are one of the most practical, beneficial additions to a diet and can truly provide a life-altering effect.

BY ZOE MIDAS, MY HEALTHY LIVING COACH (MHLIC)
(WWW.MYHEALTHYLIVINGCOACH.COM)

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title: VOICE (THE)

2. Issue Date: 01/01/2013

3. Issue Frequency: 4

4. Number of Issues Published Annually: 4

5. Annual Subscription Price: \$2.00

6. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 01/01/2013

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4):

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer):

9. Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):

10. Publication Title: VOICE (THE)

11. Issue Date: 01/01/2013

12. Issue Frequency: 4

13. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 01/01/2013

14. Total Number of Copies (Net press run):

15. Total Number of Copies (Net press run):

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99. Issue Frequency: 4

100. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 01/01/2013

MY OLD SCHOOL WAS THE PERFECT SETTING TO RECALL THE DESPAIR OF JFK'S DEATH

BY STEVE BLOW

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS (WWW.DALLASNEWS.COM)

TYLER—The world's attention was focused on Dealey Plaza on Friday, but I found myself drawn to a quieter, more personal place.

It was at Mattie Jones Elementary School in my hometown of Tyler that I learned of the assassination of our president, and somehow it felt like the place to be once again in the noon hour 50 years later.

But don't picture a school lively and brimming with children. That would have been the scene at the new Mattie Jones campus a little farther out on Front Street. My pilgrimage was to an old, now-vacated school building—the one that had been my Mattie Jones.

The utter quiet there, the air of desolation, made the perfect setting to recall the despair that fell over us in such an unexpected instant.

I peered through a dusty window into the sixth-grade classroom where I heard the news. Just a single small student desk was in the center of the abandoned room. A couple of small tables and a filing cabinet were pushed to one side.

But I had no trouble looking across the empty classroom and seeing Mrs. Marydell Outlaw at her teacher's desk once more, weeping, trying not to, and only weeping more.

That's how we found her when our boisterous class returned to the room after lunch and outside playtime afterwards. We could not have been more dumbstruck by this scene.

She controlled her tears just enough to tell us that the principal would be in momentarily to make an announcement. Whispering between desks, we could only guess that she had been fired.

Principal Ed McMillan came in, looking stricken, and told us something even more unbelievable—that President John F. Kennedy had been shot dead in Dallas.

I doubt if I knew the word "immortal" back then, but that's the way our movie-star president seemed to us kids. Young, dashing, brave. Of course we'd all seen Cliff Robertson in PT 109 that summer.

Mrs. Outlaw is 94 now. She lives in Boise, Idaho, where her son settled. "I'm still a Texan, and they don't appreciate that much up here," she told me in a phone chat this week.

Of course, she remembers the day. "It was terrible," she said. "I can't believe it has been 50 years."

I had always assumed that Mr. McMillan wanted the glory of making the dramatic announcement himself that day. But Mrs. Outlaw said no. "He asked if I wanted to tell the children or have him do it. I said, 'You do it. I'll be crying too much.'"

Mattie Jones Elementary was one of those flat-roofed, open-hall schools considered ultramodern when it was built in the 1950s. My sixth-grade classroom shared bathrooms with an adjoining third-grade class. That's where my brother, Craig, was that day—in Mrs. Eva McKnight's class. She had been my teacher, too.

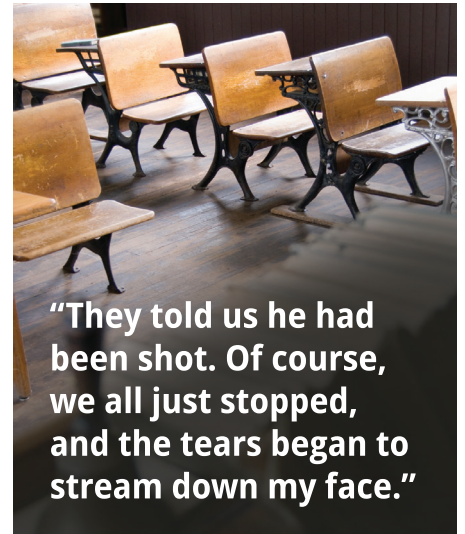
"I remember I was sitting in front of the room, reading a story to the children and all of a sudden I heard something. Somebody screamed," Mrs. McKnight told me in a phone catch-up. She still lives in Tyler, and we stay in touch. She will be 102 next week.

"They told us he had been shot. Of course, we all just stopped, and the tears began to stream down my face," she said. "It's so sad to think about it."

Mattie Jones was tiny back then, just eight classrooms. I'd been in class with basically the same 25 kids since first grade. I can still reel off the names of my six teachers without even thinking.

The old school building sits well off the road. It's still surrounded by tall pines, just as it was back then. "Nestled," you want to say. And it really was a little world unto itself. Sheltered. It was my world. And none could have felt safer or more secure.

But in the noon hour of that November day, my world wobbled. And I never again trusted it quite the same.



Delegate Information for Districts and Local Units

Names of all convention delegates are due in the TRTA office by March 1, 2014. 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.

OUTLOOK

LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR TEXAS EDUCATION



A LEGACY OF HELPING OUR OWN

2013 Annual Appeal Update

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SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

Applications now available!

15

DONATE TODAY!

Donation card on the back of *The VOICE*

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THANK YOU FOR HELPING OUR OWN!

TRTF thanks all members and friends for the generous contributions and overwhelming support! Because of you, TRTF has raised \$88,000 since November 1. We are only \$12,000 away from meeting our goal of raising \$100,000! Numerous donations have been received from districts, local units, and individuals to support our charitable programs: "A Helping Hand," Student Scholarships, Classroom Assistance Grants, and our educational program, The Legacy Campaign. Without you, these programs could not continue to help our educators of the past, present and future.

Where does your money go? The "A Helping Hand" program continues to help retirees in need. Since July 1st, the program has awarded over \$7,000 to 11 retirees all over Texas. Recently, a member in the Dallas area reached out to the Foundation for assistance. Two hospital stays and an unexpected car repair made it impossible to afford her mortgage payment that month. The "A Helping

Hand" committee quickly responded to her needs and made the payment so that she could get back on her feet.

Another TRS annuitant was affected financially when his spouse was diagnosed with a liver disease that has placed her on a liver transplant list. Their income was significantly reduced when she had to go on disability yet continue to pay for health insurance. With hospital bills increasing, they were not able to pay their mortgage payment on their home. Again, the committee responded and provided the needed assistance.

Many of you have sent responses from our annual appeal letter that was mailed in late October regarding our "A Helping Hand" program. One member writes "thank you for developing such an important agency for 'our own.' It is a reflection of not only our profession, but the hearts that remain beating in service to mankind even beyond our years in the classrooms of Texas. I am grateful to have been a part of such a profession." -- Member from Navasota

Scholarships & Grants are available

The 2014 TRTF Student Scholarship and Classroom Assistance Grant applications are now available. 15 \$500 student scholarships and 15 \$500 classroom assistance grants will be awarded for the 2014–2015 school year. All applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on March 13, 2014 and meet the eligibility requirements to be considered. Recipients will be announced during the Foundation Luncheon at the 61st Annual TRTA Convention in Dallas on April 14, 2014 but do not need to be present to win. Electronic versions of the scholarship and grant applications may be downloaded from the TRTF website at www.trtf.org/index.cfm/scholarships-grants. To request a hard copy of the application or to learn more, please contact Beth Unite at beth@trta.org or 800.880.1650 X102.

CONTINUED ON THE BACK



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

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

TRTF appreciates the many years that teachers have spent educating our students and future leaders. Our "A Helping Hand" program was created to allow us to support our own members who are experiencing a financial hardship due to an emergency. Since the program's inception in 2010, \$47,000 has been awarded to 53 individuals. Due to the numerous calls the TRTF office receives daily from those in need, we hope to award even more grants in 2014!

In 2013, 15 student scholarships were awarded to students pursuing degrees in education at various Texas colleges. Also in 2013, 15 classroom assistance grants were awarded to public school teachers to support projects that enhance the learning experiences of their students. One recent grant recipient writes

"I want to thank you and Texas retired teachers for donating money and time to make grants available to teachers and students. Our students have limited exposure to cultural/educational experiences outside of the classroom and this grant enables our school to provide an opportunity to have hands-on experiences."-- Jackie Reily, KEYS Learning Center, HEB ISD

In 2014, TRTF will continue to fund these innovative projects and assist our future educators by awarding 15 classroom assistance grants and 15 student scholarships. Furthermore, TRTF will continue producing resources for retirees and active teachers who want to protect their retirement security through our educational program The Legacy Campaign. TRTF promotes the message that public education, our educators and TRS are vital to the state. The Foundation values the importance of helping retirees leave a legacy for future educators. A favorite quote expresses the sentiment best:

"What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others."--Pericles

If you haven't done so, please join our campaign by supporting our programs and help us reach our goals! There is still time to make a tax-deductible donation! Please contact Beth Unite at 800.880.1650 to make a credit card donation by phone, or use our donation card on the back of *The VOICE*. Thank you for making 2013 a successful year. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and makes a difference in the lives of past, present and future educators!

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

OUTLOOK

LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR TEXAS EDUCATION

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

 **I WANT TO HELP!**

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DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

PLEASE ACCEPT MY DONATION OF:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$_____

IN MEMORY OF:

IN HONOR OF:

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SAVE TRTF A STAMP AND EMAIL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO:

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Texas Retired Teachers Foundation • 313 E. 12th St., Ste. 200 • Austin, TX 78701-1957