

This Political Season, Education Retirees Expect Real Action

2-4



News Updates from the President, Membership & Public Relations Chairmen

6-7

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

OUTLOOK

"A Helping Hand," Call for applications, Join us at the TRTA 57th Annual Convention

11-12



The VOICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWS BULLETIN OF THE TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

"A HELPING HAND" IS HERE!

The good that you have imagined is about to become a reality.

By Cindee Sharp, Texas Retired Teachers Foundation Specialist

In November 2009, the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF), the charitable arm of TRTA, asked you for your help. We asked you to imagine with us the good that can be accomplished through our organization to help retirees in critical need, as well as current and future public educators.

TRTF sent a letter asking you for a donation to support our three charitable programs: the newly developed "A Helping Hand," Classroom Assistance Grants, and Student Scholarships.

In conjunction with Foundation Month, this letter raised funds to help TRTF accomplish three very important goals for 2010: launch "A Helping Hand," increase the amount of grant funds available to public school teachers by \$3000 (for a total of \$5000), and award \$5000 in student scholarships to future educators.

Because of the generosity of TRTA members, TRTF has raised an astounding \$65,000! This includes individual donations that came

in through TRTF's *Season to Imagine* campaign, as well as donations provided by numerous districts and local units.

As promised, TRTF did not send multiple requests for donations. We avoided direct mail gimmicks, such as address labels supplied by external vendors, to bring our message to you. We kept the message and the process as simple as possible in order to help as many people as we can.

"The donations sent in by TRTA members go directly toward our programs, not to an outside mail house to offset cost," said Board President Tom Pritchard. "TRTF uses our donated dollars wisely to fully support the causes public education retirees care about."

But your help is still needed. This is an exciting time for the Foundation as we raise awareness of what we



can do to help others. With this increased awareness comes the necessity of additional funds to support our programs.

For the past year, the Board of Trustees for the Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF) has worked diligently to create a program to serve retirees in critical need. "A Helping Hand," a grant program designed to assist retirees with emergencies or short-time hardships, has officially launched in four pilot districts.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

This Political Season, Public Education Retirees Expect Real Action

The March primary elections are just around the corner and politicians are positioning themselves and making bold statements about public education retirees' issues.



BY TIM LEE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Political hopefuls all over Texas are asking for your support. As much as I like knowing political hopefuls are talking about matters of importance to us, I have to wonder who will *really* step up next session to make our issues a priority. It's one thing to talk about our issues; it's quite another to draw a line in the sand and stand firm.

The primaries will have passed when you read this article, but the election season will still be in full swing. Here, we offer a set of questions to ask your political candidates in the coming months, as well as answers you should expect from them.

“Are you a champion for the TRS defined benefit plan?” No value is more important to TRTA members than protecting the Teacher Retirement System's defined benefit pension plan.

So, what *is* a defined benefit plan? This

type of plan provides a retiree with a specific benefit *for life* beginning at his or her retirement. In a defined benefit plan, you cannot outlive your benefit. In the case of Texas public education employees and retirees, the benefit plan is managed by the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Benefits are based on age at retirement, years of service and highest salary. These plans are *not* based on how much money you have in your retirement account at the end of your career. Defined benefit pension plans are also sometimes called *traditional retirement plans*.

Texas made a decision in the 1930's to create a defined benefit plan for its public educators. The plan was so important to Texans that it was made part of the Texas Constitution. Today, the TRS covers retirement benefits for over 1.2 million active and retired public education employees. That's 1 out of every 20 Texans.

TRS has assets exceeding \$95 billion. It is the 7th largest pension fund in the country and the 17th largest plan in the world. If it were a private company, it would be ranked only behind Exxon Mobil as the Texas company with the most financial assets.

TRS employs more than 400 Texans. Some of the smartest and most productive financial experts in the nation have joined its investment team. From 2001 until the market crash in 2008, TRS investments have earned more than \$50 billion. The plan pays more than \$6.5 billion annually in pension benefits. As much as 95 percent of that \$6.5 billion supports the Texas economy through local and state sales tax revenue. One study suggests more than 71,000 Texas jobs can be attributed to TRS-related pension benefits.

By any measure, the TRS defined benefit plan is a success. Still, some elected

State Contribution Rate		Member Contribution Rate		Total Contribution Rate	
1980–1983	8.50%	1980–1983	6.65%	1980–1983	15.15%
1984–1985	7.10%	1984–1985	6.00%	1984–1985	13.10%
1986–1987	8.00%	1986–1987	6.40%	1986–1987	14.40%
1988–1989	7.20%	1988–1989	6.40%	1988–1989	13.60%
1990–1991	7.65%	1990–1991	6.40%	1990–1991	14.05%
1992–1995	7.31%	1992–1995	6.40%	1992–1995	13.71%
1996–2007	6.00%	1996–2007	6.40%	1996–2007	12.40%
2007–2009	6.58%	2007–2009	6.40%	2007–2009	12.98%
2010–2011	6.61%	2010–2011	6.40%	2010–2011	13.01%

Current and past fund contributions by the state and the active member

leaders work to only provide the absolute minimum support to keep the fund sound. Some even contend this successful program is a drain on the state budget—a dinosaur living on borrowed time.

TRTA wants anyone asking for your vote to promise they will *never* support any effort to transition the plan into a defined contribution plan (a privatized, or self-directed, plan). These plans only provide a benefit based on how much a person has saved over the course of their working career. Unlike a defined benefit plan, a person in a defined contribution plan *can* outlive their savings.

Quite simply, our vehemently protective stance regarding the defined benefit plan is representative of our desire for those who spent their careers in public service to retire with dignity.

“As a champion for the defined benefit plan, what will you do to ensure its short- and long-term health?” The TRS pension fund has three sources of funding: state contributions, member contributions and pension fund investment earnings.

The Texas Constitution requires the Texas Legislature to make a budgetary contribution to the TRS pension fund of no less than 6 percent and up to 10 percent of the aggregate active teacher payroll.

Active employees are also required to make a contribution to TRS. Only 5 percent of Texas school districts pay into both TRS and Social Security. Thus, 95 percent of public education employees are covered primarily by TRS for their retirement security.

Investment earnings are the backbone of TRS’s ability to pay pension benefits. A one-percent gain on investments is equal to about a four-percent state contribution. In other words, about 68 cents of every dollar a retiree receives in his or her pension benefit is paid for by investment earnings.

The bottom line is that the pension fund suffered tremendous loss during the financial crisis beginning in September 2008. The fund showed nearly a \$40 billion decline in value from August 2008 through February 2009.

Since then, the fund has recovered much of what it lost. But, it was *not* because the Texas Legislature responded to this crisis by increasing its contribution to the fund. In fact, the Legislature reduced its contribution to the fund this last session. Only because the Texas Attorney General ruled that a \$500 supplemental payment could not be made due to poor legislative language, did the state contribution to the fund exceed the previous biennium.

Elected officials **MUST** recognize that their commitment to the fund should be going up, not down, in times of economic stress. With 1.2 million Texans relying on this system for their retirement security, elected leaders need to recognize their legal and moral obligations to making the fund actuarially sound. A healthy TRS pension fund ensures quality employees in Texas schools, provides financial security for public education employees, and benefits Texas through broad economic stimulus.

“Retirees *NEED* a cost of living increase. What will you do to make that happen?” 10 years. That’s how long it’s been since any public education retiree in Texas received a permanent cost of living increase in our pension benefits.

Some elected officials argue the fund is in no condition to provide a benefit increase. Legally, they’re right. The fund cannot exceed its obligations to future pensioners by running up large, unfunded liabilities. In fact, the law allows the fund to amortize its funding obligations over a 31-year period. If the actuaries determine it cannot pay for those costs within 31 years, it’s labeled as “not actuarially sound.”

Today, the pension fund is not actuarially sound. As such, the law prohibits TRS retirees from getting a permanent cost of living raise. So, if the Texas Legislature knows there is a problem, what’s their plan of action?!

The Texas Legislature needs to fix this. Anyone wanting your vote **MUST** have a plan or, at the very least, *support* a plan to make the system actuarially sound and help retirees get a pension increase.

Texas elected officials understand the benefit of a permanent pension increase. In 2005, the Texas Legislature authorized a pay raise for district judges, thereby giving *themselves* a pension increase in the process. Elected officials know public pension plans in Texas do not have an automatic COLA, which is why they’ve tied their pension increases to district judges’ salaries. Anytime judges get a raise, so do they.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

This Political Season, Public Education Retirees Expect Real Action

TRTA does not oppose raises for retired legislators. In fact, TRTA feels strongly that public pensioners need some form of benefit increase on a regular basis. *But*, unlike Texas lawmakers, Texas education retirees do not benefit from an enriched pension package with higher benefit formulas, no-cost health care premiums, shortened qualifiers for vesting, and the ability to set their own pension increases. We do not object to public pensioners getting an increase, but we do object to the denial of a much-needed increase for an entire decade.

“Are you paying attention to the health care issue?” So much talk about health care these days seems to be just that: *talk*. Talk with little substance or solid ground to support it. The good news is that Texas TRS has managed a successful health care program for public education retirees for 25 years. The program was originally projected to last 10 years without major changes, but today, the plan insures over 200,000 public education retirees and dependents and has done so without huge premium increases or drastic benefit reductions. It also has done so with a prescription drug plan, something nearly all privately offered Medicare supplement plans don’t offer.

TRS-Care is by any measure a success. It will, though, face funding shortfalls by 2015. “Well, that’s nearly 4 years from now,” you might say. In legislative terms, that’s just around the corner.

Health care funding issues are very serious and have a tendency to compound over time if left unchecked. TRS decision makers are indicating that the legislature needs to pay attention to the issue. That said, if a legislator wants your vote, he or she needs to agree that cutting health care funding is NOT an option.

But that idea has already been compromised. Just a month ago, the Governor and legislative leaders instructed state agencies to cut their budgets by 5 percent this biennium. They exempted reductions to the TRS pension

fund, but they did not exempt the TRS-Care plan. That means TRS has been tasked with reducing your TRS-Care plan by \$19 to \$25 million, depending on how the legislature responds to options presented by the TRS Board of Trustees.

These changes do not mean you will lose benefits or pay higher premiums. It does mean, though, that the issue of keeping TRS-Care funded over the long-term just got more difficult. Political hopefuls better have a plan or support plans to keep your health care benefits intact for the long-term; otherwise, it’s time to talk to other candidates.

“Okay, you say education retirees are priority. What, exactly, do you mean by that?” Every session has certain issues that dominate the news, the floor debate, and often the general mood of the Texas Legislature. Often, the issues have more to do with politics than good public policy, but they can dictate the overall agenda of the proceedings. Sometimes these are called “tier 1 priorities,” “major policy objectives,” or other legislative turns of phrase.

Call them what you will, but these issues are real legislative priorities that garner nearly every elected official’s attention. After 10 years of no permanent pension benefit increases, two down markets to which the legislature has barely responded (mostly because TRS has been so good at making up the losses through solid investment strategy), and a lack of any conclusive plan on how to deal with the issues presented above, political hopefuls must be asked to make TRS and public education retirees a major state priority this session. In truth, one session is not enough. Legislators need to make your issues a major priority for several sessions to come.

The time for legislators relying on a handful of their colleagues whom they consider “TRS experts” is over. EVERY legislator needs to know more about our issues and start clamoring for action. Legislative leaders need to know that

retirees’ calls for action on TRS issues will not be quieted by mere lip service.

Legislators tend to have a short-term view of TRS issues. Worse yet, their view may even be turning into a “crisis management” perspective. This is dangerous. Legislators need to identify the issues, think of action steps, call the right people to the table, be real about the solutions, and take the right steps to implement solutions. It won’t happen overnight, but it *will* happen if legislators and policy makers are as committed to these issues in session as they claim to be on the campaign trail. ★

CONVENTION NEWS

For complete convention details, please visit www.trta.org.

Convention Schedule Tuesday, April 13, 2010

Delegate certification/registration will open from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Exhibits will be open from noon–6 p.m. The TRTA Executive Committee will meet at 10:30 a.m.–noon, the TRTA Leadership Training and Legislative Committees will meet from 1–2 p.m., the TRTA District Presidents will meet from 2–3:30 p.m., the TRTA Board of Directors will meet from 3–5 p.m. and the Foundation Board of Trustees will meet from 7–8:30 p.m. The Rangers Ballpark tour will begin at 11:30 a.m. and will end at 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 14, 2010

Exhibits and delegate certification/registration will be open from 8 a.m.–5 p.m. The opening ceremonies will be from 8:30–10:30 a.m. The District Caucuses will meet from 10:45–11:45 a.m. and the Foundation luncheon will begin at noon. The breakout sessions will begin at 1:45 p.m. and end at 5:15 p.m. The President’s reception will begin at 6:30 and end at 8 p.m. If you are planning to attend the reception, please check the box on the pre-registration form on page 5.

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Exhibits will open at 8 a.m. and close at noon. Delegate certification and registration will be open from 8–9 a.m. The first meeting of the House of Delegates will be from 9–11:45 a.m. and the Stilwell luncheon will begin at noon. The second House of Delegates will begin at 1:45 p.m. and the banquet is scheduled from 6:30–8:30 p.m.

CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MARCH 22, 2010

- ⊙ Mail completed form with payment to: TRTA
 Attn: Accounting
 313 E. 12th Street, Suite 200 • Austin, TX 78701
- ⊙ Banquet, Breakfast, Lunch and Tour tickets sold only in advance.
- ⊙ Requests for refunds **MUST** be received in the TRTA office by March 22, 2010. No on-site refunds will be issued.

Personal Information, one registrant per form

NAME (LAST/FIRST)		MEMBER ID
ADDRESS		
CITY	STATE	ZIP
PHONE	EMAIL	

President's Reception WEDNESDAY (04.14.10 • 6:30 – 8 p.m.) ★ RSVP—PLEASE CHECK BOX IF ATTENDING THE **COMPLIMENTARY RECEPTION**

Pre-Registration Fee

PRE-REGISTRATION _____ \$20.00 PER PERSON	<p style="text-align: center;">PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MARCH 22, 2010</p> ON-SITE REGISTRATION PER PERSON \$25.00 EVERY PERSON WHO ATTENDS ANY PART OF THE CONVENTION MUST PAY REGISTRATION FEE	\$ _____
--	--	----------

Banquet Fee

BANQUET, THURSDAY (04.15.10 • 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.) _____ \$38.00 PER PERSON	\$ _____
---	----------

Breakfast Fees

SHERATON BREAKFAST, WEDNESDAY (04.14.10) _____ \$10.00 PER PERSON	SHERATON BREAKFAST, THURSDAY (04.15.10) _____ \$10.00 PER PERSON	\$ _____
HILTON BREAKFAST, WEDNESDAY (04.14.10) _____ \$10.00 PER PERSON	HILTON BREAKFAST, THURSDAY (04.15.10) _____ \$10.00 PER PERSON	\$ _____

Lunch Fees

FOUNDATION LUNCHEON, WEDNESDAY (04.14.10) _____ \$28.00 PER PERSON	STILWELL LUNCHEON, THURSDAY (04.15.10) _____ \$27.00 PER PERSON	\$ _____
CONVENTION LUNCH, WEDNESDAY (04.14.10) _____ \$17.00 PER PERSON	CONVENTION LUNCH, THURSDAY (04.15.10) _____ \$17.00 PER PERSON	\$ _____

Tour Fees

RANGERS BALLPARK, TUESDAY (04.13.10 • 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.) _____ \$25.00 PER PERSON	<p style="text-align: center;">NOTIFICATION TO TOUR PARTICIPANTS</p> If a tour is canceled because of low interest, refunds will be made within 30 days after the convention.	\$ _____
---	--	----------

REQUESTS FOR REFUNDS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE TRTA OFFICE BY MARCH 22, 2010. NO ON-SITE REFUNDS WILL BE ISSUED. ALL PRICES INCLUDE SERVICE CHARGES.

TOTAL REMITTANCE
\$ _____

Payment Information

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

▼ CREDIT CARD NUMBER ▼ EXPIRATION

<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
---	---



▼ SIGNATURE _____

PRESIDENT'S LINE



2009–2010
TRTA PRESIDENT
Dora Scott–Nichols

➤ Comments/questions? Contact Dora Scott–Nichols
713.465.8912 • dorashn@comcast.net

Happy New Year! I hope you all are having a wonderful 2010 so far. Our officers and staff are working fast and furious on the TRTA 57th Annual State Convention, to be held April 13-15 in Arlington. If you have not yet made your reservations, please do so, as this event should not be missed! District XI is graciously hosting the week's events, which are sure to live up to the convention's theme: "A Winning Game Plan."

In legislative news, Senator Robert Duncan requested to meet with the TRTA Board of Directors this past January, and we sat down with him to hear what he had to say. Senator Duncan explained his position on the refusal of last year's supplemental payment even in light of unanimous votes in both houses. He stated that he would not consider supporting such a payment until the TRS fund became actuarially sound again. Although we have put our collective heart and soul into educating the legislature about our issues, we still have much work to do.

Your officers also met in January with the district presidents throughout the state and held meaningful exchanges about the future of TRTA and how districts play a critical role in our overall structure. Your district presidents are to be commended for the amount of energy they pour into their work.

I am beyond thrilled to report that our state membership levels have risen to an unprecedented height: more than 71,000! Aggressive plans are underway for the 2010–2011 membership year, which begins this March.

Last but not most certainly not least, I am proud to announce that TRTA is leading the GPO/WEP repeal effort and making bold strides toward that end. This March, we are hosting a national GPO/WEP summit in Washington D.C. with support from our fellow retirees throughout the nation who are affected by these harmful Social Security provisions. We will keep you updated on our successes as they develop.

I wish you all the best in 2010 and always. This is an important moment in Texas history, and I urge you all to remember to vote for what you believe in. Retired educators are an important part of the fabric of this great state, and we deserve to be heard!

Keep spreading the good word about TRTA! Remember, every member counts!

"Encore! One More!" An awareness campaign promoting companionship and connection

Visiting with friends and family is a part of the holiday season that we all look forward to, and this is especially true for individuals living in long-term care facilities. When the season for frequent volunteer visits and events begins to taper off, it is not uncommon for residents living in long-term care settings to feel more isolated.

One way to maintain connections with the community is through the Silver Lining program offered through the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS). The Silver Lining program offers ongoing volunteer opportunities that provide social connection to people living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and state supported living centers. Silver Lining works with volunteers by assisting with locating a facility partner, providing program resources and providing recognition incentives.

TRTA members can help create a happy new year by setting up a friendly visit with local long-term care residents and making the commitment to come back one more time to visit residents at a partnering facility. Silver Lining offers flexible volunteering options. Visit a few times or make a commitment to build relationships with multiple volunteer visits. Go on your own or coordinate a volunteer group.

Silver Lining also supports opportunities in service-learning by fostering connections between long-term care residents and youth. Service-learning is a teaching method that combines classroom curriculum with meaningful volunteer experiences. Interested members can volunteer with local area Silver Lining school groups to collaborate on a variety of service-learning projects. To get involved, visit www.silverliningatdads.org or call 800.889.8595. Make a difference in the life of another and start the New Year with a friendly volunteer visit!



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE



2009–2010
TRTA FIRST VICE–PRESIDENT
MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN
Herbert Norris

The lifeblood of any association is its membership, and the Texas Retired Teachers Association is blessed with very special, dedicated and committed people. These members are the very reason our numbers continue to increase. With membership numbers reaching toward the 72,000 mark, we are deeply appreciative of each and every one of your

recruitment efforts.

My pastor has mentioned several times that there are two sides to every situation – for instance, the good side and the bad side. The good side of such a growing membership is that a number like “72 thousand” can’t hurt when we’re communicating our thoughts and concerns to our legislators.

On the other hand, the bad side is this: when we look at the total pool of public education retirees in Texas, which currently exceeds 250,000, our number is merely a drop in the bucket. We have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go. So, in this coming year, please join us in our “Each One Bring One” campaign and do your part to help us reach our goal of 100,000. We will share more information about this exciting project at the annual state convention in April.

As we all know, there is no “I” in team. Together, we can attain great things.

PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE



2009–2010
TRTA SECOND VICE–PRESIDENT/PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIRMAN
Maridell Fryar

What an exciting time to be a member of TRTA! Membership numbers are up, steps and volunteer hours are reported, Children’s Book Projects are completed, TRTA is hosting a summit in Washington, D.C., and convention plans are being finalized. How great it is to be a part of such a dynamic organization!

I am so pleased with the feedback I have received from local units and districts as the reports have come in from the Children’s Book Projects. Anne Holloman, Children’s Book Project Chairman for HART (Houston Area RTA) called to tell me of a special donation their unit received. A Tiger Cub den mother of eight first graders in Arlington, Texas, learned of the project and her boys wanted to help. So the eight little boys earned five dollars each and then bought books,

which they sent to HART.

This story reminded me that a great source of books can be in partnering with other organizations in our communities. The Midland unit (MARSP) partnered this year with a pep club from one of the local freshman high schools. Other units have reported working with Delta Kappa Gamma chapters, local study clubs and other civic organizations. You might want to check out <http://booksforkids.firstbook.org> to see if you can access books through this organization. Keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities to increase your book counts and, therefore, your contributions to your community through partnering. Thank you for all you do to promote literacy and a love of reading through the TRTA Children’s Book Project.

Whether you are 10 miles
or 1,000 miles from
home, MASA is there
to assist you when
emergencies arise.



“I have been a widow for the last four years. Prior to this, I don’t think I’ve been in an emergency room in my life and as we get older things just seem to happen to us. I have now been to the emergency room three times in the last four years and fortunately those trips have been from my home to the hospital which is about two miles. However, I have been unable to drive myself due to the circumstances.

I have herniated discs in my back and when my back goes out the only way to the hospital is on a board, and that is not fun. This has happened twice since my husband died and the third trip was for food poisoning which of course happened after midnight and I refused to wake up friends or neighbors. These are my reasons for taking out the MASA emergency policy.”

With Medical Air Services Association (MASA) there are NO deductibles, NO age limits, NO health questions, and NO dollar limits! Membership includes non-injury transport, organ retrieval/organ recipient transportation, vehicle return, world-wide coverage, escort transportation, recuperation/repatriation, minor children/grandchildren returned home, and mortal remains transport. Membership is \$24.50 a month for members or \$32.50 a month for family coverage.

Call AMBA to learn more or to enroll.

800.258.7041

Nominating Committee Report

The TRTA Nominating Committee, chaired by Immediate Past President Aubrey Cherry (Dist. XIX), reports that the following members have filed and are eligible candidates, for TRTA office for the 2010–2011 association year. The nominees will be elected by the TRTA House of Delegates during the upcoming TRTA 57th Annual Convention in Arlington. Other members of the committee include George Brown (VIII), Peggy Clark (XVII), Sam Kiker (XI), and Darlene Bealmear (X).



Herbert Norris, For President

Serving as State First Vice–President (2008–2010)

Served as State Second Vice–President (2006–2008), State Secretary/Treasurer (2004–2006), District VII Second Vice–President (2005–2006), and State Informative and Protective Services Committee Chairman (2000–2004)

Maridell Fryar, For First Vice–President

Serving as State Second Vice–President (2008–2010)

Served as State Secretary/Treasurer (2006–2008), Midland ARSP President (2006–2008), District XVIII Legislative and Retirement Education Committee member, and Midland ARSP Newsletter Chairman and Secretary

Mary Jane Hamilton, For Second Vice–President

Serving as State Secretary/Treasurer and Convention Site Selection Chairman (2009–2010)

Served as Convention Site Selection member (2008–2009), District X President and District Presidents Council Recorder (2006–2008), State Community Volunteer Service Committee member (2007–2008), Allen REA President (2003–2005) and Second Vice–President (2001–2003)

Lynda Gottschalk, For Secretary/Treasurer

Serving as State District Presidents Council Chairman, District XV President (2008–2010) and Runnels County RSE Historian (2004–2010)

Served as State Officer Handbook Committee member and State TRS Benefit Education Chairman (2008–2009), and District Presidents Council Vice–Chairman (2006–2008)

Francis Plemmons, For Secretary/Treasurer

Serving as State Auditor Selection Criteria Chairman, Emergency Response Committee member, District VII Community Volunteer Service Committee Chairman, Rusk County RTA Treasurer and Parliamentarian (2009–2010)

State Community Volunteer Service Committee Chairman (2007–2009), District VII President (2006–2008), and District VII Treasurer (2004–2006)

Pride of Texas:

Retired Teacher Celebrates 100th Birthday

Edna Mae Peek Bost, who was born Sept. 27, 1909, in Rockwall County, is a true pioneer Texas teacher. She began teaching the first six grades in a one-room, country school house at age 17, and retired at 72 from the Brownfield Independent School District. "I came to Brownfield in 1937 and married the coach," she recalls. But she grew up in the small town of Fate, majored in education at North Texas University, and became an occasional master of the one-liner. "Fate was a little town between Rockwell and Royse City," she said in a recent interview. "It was named for Mr. Fateville. They just left off the 'ville' and called it 'Fate.'"

Her first teaching assignment, obtained after receiving an emergency teaching certificate because of a shortage of teachers, was 10 miles from her father's farm. In cold weather, he would drive her to school and build a fire in the potbellied stove. In fair weather, when he needed to be working, she would drive herself. "The highway was half a highway and was called a slab," she explained of paving that was only wide enough for one car.

"Going south you could stay on the slab, but if you were going the other way you had to get off if you met a car—and you got off in black mud." Was that in a Model T? "Well, sure. They didn't have anything after that," she said of a car that still has collectors and enthusiasts 100 years after it was introduced. Hers was a Model T coupe. "That was all I could afford."

After two years of teaching in the country school, she got a job in the school in her hometown. "I was teaching in the very same room that I went to when I was in the fourth grade, and I taught with my first-grade teacher." She had older brothers, one of whom was a successful businessman, and he helped her pay for college expenses. Her mother also saved money for her from the sale of butter, eggs and milk.

She doesn't list music as a special interest: "They tried to give me music. The brother who sent me to college gave me piano for nine years, but it never did take." One of her lifelong interests has been reading, and the newspaper is included: "I'm one of those people who reads everything in the paper, so don't publish anything you don't want us to know." But she likes her newspaper in the traditional form. "I still like that paper in front of me. I read it hurriedly, then I go back and re-read it."

For most of her life she has been active in church, and also has taught Sunday school. She has memorized a favorite Scripture passage and quotes it readily: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Then, she adds a personal note: "I'm still working on that." ✪

Reprinted from Lubbock Avalanche–Journal article by Sarah Nightingale

TRTA BYLAWS 2010 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

AMENDMENT #1

Article 1: Name. Amend by striking "Teachers Association, hereinafter referred to as TRTA" and inserting "School Employees Association, hereinafter referred to as TRSEA." Collateral amendments: Article II. Sections 1 & 2; Article III. Sections 1 & 2; Article IV. Sections 1, 2, 3, & 4; Article V. Sections 1 & 2; Article VI. Sections 1 & 2; Article VII. Sections 1, 2, & 3; Article VIII. Sections 1, 2, & 3; Article IX. Sections 1, 2, 3, 5, & 6; Article XI. Sections 1 & 3; Article XII.; Article XIII. Section 1; Article XIV.; Article XV. Sections 1, 2, & 3.

If adopted would read:

The name of this organization shall be the Texas Retired School Employees Association, hereinafter referred to as TRSEA.

Maker's Rationale: This change would make it very clear we, who make up the current membership of TRTA, welcome and encourage all TRS retirees to join us in seeking expanded benefits for all TRS retirees.

Maker of Amendment: Hill Country RTA, District 20

Individual to Contact: Dick Gore

OAC Recommends: Disapproval

OAC Rationale: Though the idea has merit, OAC opposes changing the name of TRTA at this time. OAC believes more study is needed on the following issues:

- (1) fiscal cost of a name change (stationery, advertising, etc);
- (2) cost of the legal work;
- (3) benefits or disadvantages as experienced by other like organizations;
- (4) options used by other like organizations by changing focus, but no name; and
- (5) impact on legislative work.

Board of Directors Recommends: Disapproval

Board of Directors' Rationale:

- (1) Loss of name recognition and name identity with the major impact on legislative efforts as well as other business of TRTA; and
- (2) Retention of the word "teacher" ties us to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS)

AMENDMENT #2

Article VII: Officers of the Organization. Section 3. Amend by inserting before "President" the following: "Officer vacancies shall be filled as follows:" and insert numbers 1, 2, and 3 in front of the current headings.

If adopted would read:

Section 3

Officer vacancies shall be filled as follows:

1. **President:** If a vacancy should occur in the office of President, the First Vice-President shall advance to fill the position. If the First Vice-President is unable to assume the office of President in such

a case, the Second Vice-President or the Secretary/Treasurer, in that order, shall do so. When any officer assumes the office of President to fill a vacancy, the resulting vacancy shall be filled by appointment, as provided.

2. **Other Statewide Offices:** The President with the approval of the Board of Directors shall appoint a qualified TRTA member to fill a vacancy occurring in any elected office, other than President, and in any appointed office. If there is a vacancy in the office of the Immediate Past President, the President shall appoint, with the Board of Directors' approval, a TRTA Past President to serve as the Immediate Past President.

3. **Representatives from the District Presidents Council:** Vacancies in the representatives from the District Presidents Council shall be filled by current District Presidents.

Maker's Rationale: To bring into conformance with other sections in Article VII.

Maker of Amendment: Organizational Affairs Committee

Individual to Contact: Martha Kallus

OAC Recommends: Adoption

Board of Directors Recommends: Approval

Board of Directors' Rationale: Change of title is a more accurate description of contents of the Section

AMENDMENT #3

Article VII: Officers of the Organization. Amend by adding a new Section 4. "Section 4. TRTA membership shall be: 1. complimentary to all current elected state officers; and 2. conferred for life upon the completion of service in the office of state President."

If adopted would read:

Section 4

TRTA membership shall be:

1. complimentary to all current elected state officers; and
2. conferred for life upon the completion of service in the office of state President.

Maker's Rationale: This action would acknowledge the organization's appreciation for the volunteer service of those who serve as officers and would represent an expression of gratitude for their dedicated service.

Maker of Amendment: Organizational Affairs Committee

Individual to Contact: Martha Kallus

OAC Recommends: Adoption

Board of Directors Recommends: Approval

Board of Directors' Rationale: This action would be consistent with other organizations providing gestures of respect for their current officers and past presidents.

OUTLOOK



LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR TEXAS EDUCATION

DO YOU NEED HELP?

How to apply for "A Helping Hand"

11

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

2010–2011 Scholarships and Grants

11

JOIN US AT THE TRTA 57TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

Foundation Luncheon details and more!

12

"A HELPING HAND" CONTINUED FROM COVER

In February, Districts 8, 12, 17 and 20, along with their local units, participated in conference calls to learn how to begin the program in their areas. These districts are now ready to accept applications for "A Helping Hand." TRTF has chosen to use a pilot format as a way to assess the efficiency of the application process and make adjustments as needed before it goes statewide. "A Helping Hand" will launch statewide by the fall of 2010.

TRTA has over 71,000 members and continues to grow, but this growth means TRTF will struggle to assist all the retirees who need help. \$65,000 is enough to help many people, but we have a greater vision: to be recognized as the leader in providing useful services to retired Texas teachers and school personnel.

"A Helping Hand" is the best avenue for providing these services to retirees. Your donation creates opportunities for hundreds of individuals to receive help, including yourself. Funds from "A Helping Hand" can help a retiree by replacing heaters or air conditioners; by repairing homes damaged by floods, hurricanes, or other natural disasters; and by assisting those with low monthly incomes and large medical bills or other expenses.

You (or someone you know) may be experiencing an extenuating circumstance or emergency that you simply cannot afford to pay with your retirement income. TRTF wants to be the resource that helps you get back on your feet.

We can do that by working together. We have a common goal: to improve the quality of life of public education retirees. Your part in this effort can be small or large, but it always makes a difference. If every member of TRTA gave as little as \$10, TRTF would raise an unprecedented \$720,000.

Let's see how many people we can lend a helping hand.

How to Apply for "A Helping Hand"

If you are a member of one of the "A Helping Hand" pilot districts (8, 12, 17, 20) and you (or someone you know) need(s) assistance, please contact your local unit president or Foundation representative. For additional information, email help@trtf.org.

Call for Applications

It's not too late to submit applications for the 2010–2011 TRTF student scholarships and classroom assistance grants! This year, TRTF is awarding 10 (ten) \$500 scholarships and 10 (ten) \$500 grants.

Applications and guidelines are available on the TRTF web site www.trtf.org/apply or by email at info@trtf.org.

The deadline for submitting all completed applications is Thursday, March 18, 2010 by 5:00 p.m. Winners will be announced at the TRTA Annual Convention during the Foundation Luncheon on April 14, 2010.



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

THE FOUNDATION AT THE TRTA 57TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

TRTF is looking forward to April 2010 when the TRTA 57th Annual Convention takes place in Arlington. The Foundation luncheon will be held on Wednesday, April 14 at noon.

This year's menu includes romaine lettuce with tomatoes and parmesan cheese; chicken breast filled with onion, garlic, tomatoes, green olives, and mozzarella and topped with an herb sauce; orzo pilaf; grilled squash; and cherry cheesecake for dessert. Our guest speaker for this year's luncheon is Dr. Barry Thompson. Dr. Thompson has 44 years of experience in Texas education, including 13 years in public schools and 31 years in higher education. He holds degrees from Tarleton State University, Texas Tech University, and Texas A & M University. He is President Emeritus of Tarleton State University and Chancellor Emeritus of the Texas A & M University System.

Luncheon tickets cost \$28 and should be purchased in advance. To pre-register for the luncheon, please see the Convention registration form on page 5. We look forward to having you as our guest!

This year, the Foundation will be raising funds for "A Helping Hand" by hosting a photo booth in the exhibition hall. For a suggested donation of \$15, guests will receive one 5 x 7 photograph commemorating their experience in Arlington. To participate, stop by the Foundation's exhibitor booth during convention and schedule a time to have your picture taken. TRTF will be able to accept cash or check only as forms of payment. Additionally, TRTF will offer commemorative "TRTA Day at the Capitol" bags for a suggested donation of \$5 while supplies last. Proceeds will go directly to "A Helping Hand."

TRTF is looking for volunteers to assist us during the Convention this year. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Cindee Sharp at info@trtf.org.

Donations are tax deductible and may be designated specifically for any of TRTF's three charitable programs ("A Helping Hand," Classroom Assistance Grants, or Student Scholarships) if you so choose. Donations may be made in memory or in honor of loved ones and friends. The Foundation office will acknowledge all donations.

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

OUTLOOK

LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR TEXAS EDUCATION

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS FOUNDATION

I WANT TO
HELP!

DONATION
CARD
DONATIONS ARE
TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Please accept my gift in memory or
in honor of (circle one):

Please accept my donation of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Donations are tax deductible. Enclose a check, completed donation card and send to:
Texas Retired Teachers Foundation • 313 E. 12th St., Ste. 250 • Austin, TX 78701-1956