

# MID-JEFFERSON COUNTY RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL

## MARCH 2021 NEWSLETTER

### OFFICERS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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**Lynne James**  
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Retirement Education  
Technology Contact

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Membership  
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Programs

**Donna Lumpkin**  
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**Beulah Thompson**  
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**Helen Reynolds**  
Healthy Living

**Mary Sue Carter**  
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Member Benefits

**Clara Graham**  
Foundation Representative

**Linda Fong**  
Memorials, Get-Well

**Olive Hall & Jolene Lemaire**  
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**Rosalie Reese**  
Hospitality

**Patricia Allen**  
Social Media

**Loretta Morman**  
Audit

## March Guest Speaker

### Floyd Broussard, District 5 Legislative Chair



**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, April 13, 1:30 pm

**Where:** via Zoom by invitation only; begin arriving at 1:15.

**Guest Speaker: Bill Barnes, TRTF Trustee, former TRTA Legislative Chair, 2020 E. L. Galyean Award**

Click the link below to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84897128429>

## It's A Red Letter Day!

Those of us with planning calendars remember the joy of circling dates. We scheduled our meetings, projects, holidays, birthdays, and of course, our last day before retirement. We learned how to note priorities through the use of colors on the calendar. Blue and green were the cooler colors, showing low and medium priority tasks that could occasionally be postponed or ignored. Red days jumped out at us and demanded attention. I was reminded of Winston Churchill's red labels demanding *Action This Day!* during World War II. April 15's IRS deadline was a Red Day (until COVID), as was your Campus Budget Review Day. The lesson some learned the hard way was you ignore a Red Day at your peril.

Every TRTA member has a Red Letter Day coming up. The latest issue of *The Voice* has materials and instructions on the intense state lobbying campaign planned for April. There is a major difference between this effort and those of mass-mailed form letters. We are drafting hand-written letters to our state legislators, using personal experiences to ask for improved benefits for all Texas retired school personnel. TRTA has provided us with the background information and data, but hasn't asked us to copy and paste anything. Each of us will tell our own story. That is powerful.

All politics is local, and this is the time to stand up and be heard. Mail your Red Letters and join our **Zoom to the Capitol**. Encourage your friends still in the classroom to join our effort as they will reap the benefits when they retire.



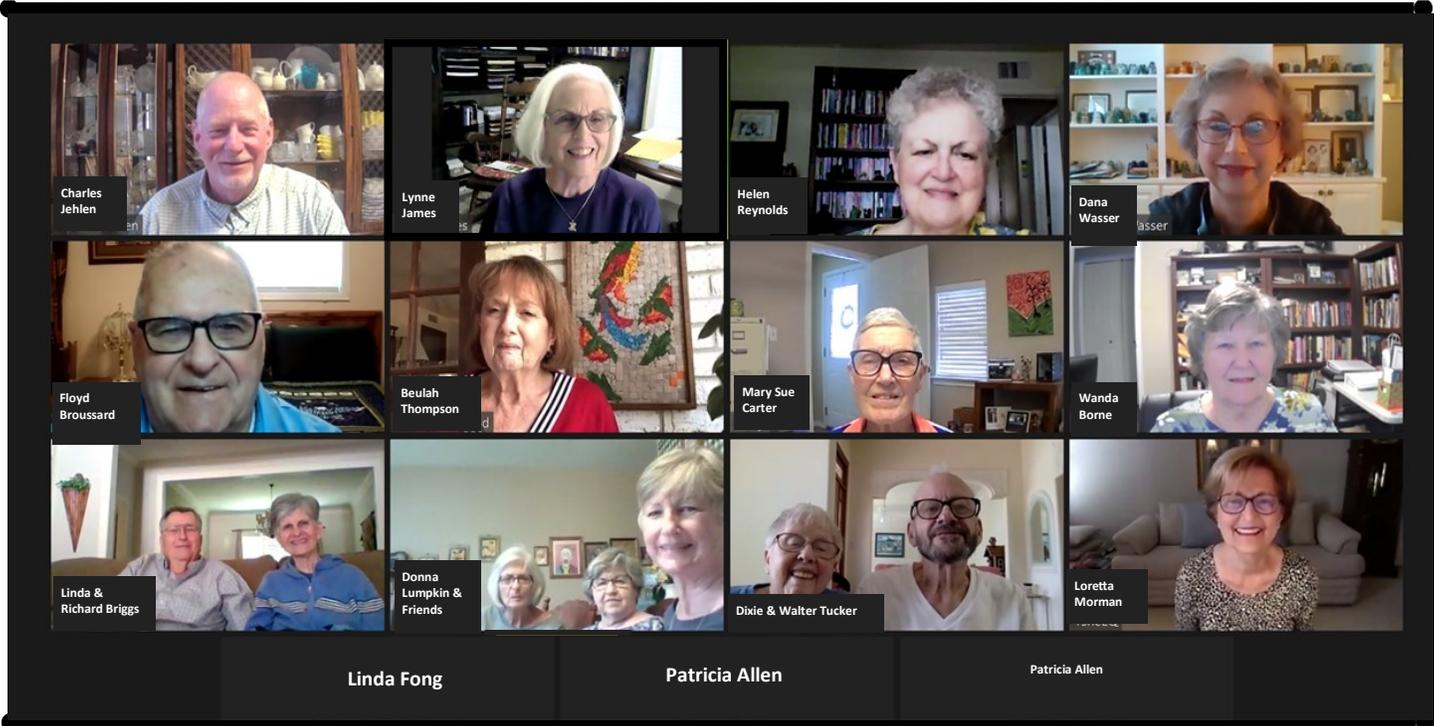
Get Ready to Zoom  
to the Capitol!

Make it a RED LETTER DAY!



VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.mjcrsp.org](http://www.mjcrsp.org) — SEE OUR VIDEO SCRAPBOOK  
VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE: [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MJCRSP/](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MJCRSP/)

# March Highlights



**ROW ONE:** Charlie Jehlen calls the March meeting to order, then leads members in prayer and pledges to the USA and Texas flags; Lynne James reports on retirement education seminars and scholarship applications; Helen Reynolds lifts our spirits with springtime health tips; Dana Wasser listens in from home. **ROW TWO:** District 5 Legislative Chair Floyd Broussard covers details about the April Day at the Capitol and TRTA’s legislative priorities on both the state and national levels; Community Volunteer Chair Beulah Thompson reports an amazing number of volunteer hours contributed by MJCRSP members that outdid last year’s total in spite of COVID; Informative & Protective Services Chair Mary Sue Carter provides tips on how to keep our “brains” healthy; Treasurer Wanda Borne reports that membership renewals are coming in steadily. **ROW THREE:** Richard Briggs gives additional information about The Day at the Capitol and how difficult it will be to visit with Speaker Dade Phelan because of his tight schedule; Linda Briggs reports that the book project at PNE went smoothly—200 books were donated with help from Philpott Ford; Donna Lumpkin attends the meeting with two friends —retired teachers with PAISD— who joined our unit; Dixie and Walter Tucker join by Zoom from home as does Loretta Morman. Patricia Allen and Linda Fong also attend the meeting.

**MEMBERSHIP STATUS:** As reported by Treasurer Wanda Borne, membership renewals are coming in steadily, which is always important in a legislative year. District 5 legislative Chair Floyd Broussard reported that the TRS Fund is *finally* actuarially sound, but there is no guarantee that the Texas Legislature will grant retirees a much needed COLA. It will take participation by all members to make contact with their legislators to express the need for financial help that has been long in coming. Of utmost importance is a high membership total to report to the legislators, as they are aware that we retirees vote! So get your name on the roll soon so Tim Lee and the TRTA legislative team can truthfully say that TRTA is stronger than ever! In his report to members, Broussard said that the average monthly income of TRS retirees is a mere \$2096. Half of our retirees receive \$1800 or less! Your latest copy of the *VOICE* clearly explains how you can participate in the *Day at the Capitol*. The *Red Letter Day* instructions are clearly stated. It is not too late to “tell your story” about how not having a COLA for the last 16 years has been a financial burden on you and your family and how the absence of a COLA has negatively affected your quality of life. On a happier note: Our insurance fund is in good shape and premiums will remain as is for at least another year. Those affected by WEP and GOP should know that TRTA is still working on a repeal of those laws from the 1980’s that prevent TRS retirees from receiving all their earned Social Security payments.

**MEMBERSHIP FORMS ARE ATTACHED FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT RENEWED THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN TRTA. THE SOONER YOU GET THEM IN, THE BETTER OFF WE WILL BE AS WE LOBBY FOR A COLA! JOINING THE STATE AND LOCAL UNIT FOR ONLY \$45 IS THE BEST \$45 YOU WILL EVER SPEND! SHARE YOUR MEMBERSHIP FORM WITH A NEW MEMBER WHO HAS NEVER JOINED OR A NEW RETIREE WHO IS ABOUT TO JOIN OUR RANKS.**

**HELEN’S HEALTH TIP:** March was TRTA “Stay Strong” month. One way we can stay strong is to exercise outdoors by walking and enjoying the cool spring days and gardening. Be sure to check out your exercise shoes and exercise garments. Perhaps a new outfit and/or shoes could be a spirit lifter

**Mid-Jefferson County Retired School Personnel Membership Form 2021-2022**  
**(Membership drive begins on March 1 each calendar year.)**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  Check if cell only

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Please check one: New Member _____ Membership Renewal _____</b>     | <b>(2021-2022)</b> |
| Active Member (TRTA & LOCAL) (Receiving TRS Annuity)                   | \$45.00 _____      |
| Associate Member (TRTA & LOCAL) (Active teachers/spouses, etc.)        | \$45.00 _____      |
| Life Member (LOCAL dues only)  | \$10.00 _____      |
| Current Monthly Member (Payroll Deduction/Bank Draft; Local dues only) | \$10.00 _____      |
| Add \$1 (or more) toward our annual Book Project                       | \$1.00 _____       |
| Scholarship Donation (optional)  | \$ _____           |
| <b><u>TOTAL</u></b>  | <b>\$ _____</b>    |

Make Check Payable to: **MJCRSP**  
 Mail to Wanda Borne, 6975 Olympic, Port Arthur, TX 77642  
 or bring form and check to MJCRSP meeting.

*Monthly meetings are held by Zoom, or at the  
 Ritter Senior Citizen Center, 914 Boston Avenue in Nederland  
 the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 1:30.*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# It's time for public school employees to receive a COLA in their pensions

Dear Editor,

It's been 17 years since many retired public school employees received a Cost Of Living Adjustment in their pension.

The Texas Retired Teachers Association has worked with state legislators for many years advocating improved funding for the Texas Retirement System and its TRS Care medical plan.

TRS manages the sixth largest public pension fund in the nation. The TRS pension fund is actuarially sound and can support a COLA for these retired employees.

TRS benefits are modest. More than half of TRS retirees earn less than

\$2,000 a month. TRS is not coordinated with Social Security, and 96 percent of TRS retirees do not pay into the federal program.

Most TRS retirees do not receive any Social Security income, including spousal or widower's benefits, due to the federal Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision laws.

Members of the Mid-Jefferson County Retired School Personnel are participating in a letter-writing campaign supporting the COLA request.

These letters are being mailed in red envelopes, featuring the color worn by TRTA members during advocacy visits to Austin in previous legislative years.

Although personal visits to our legislators are not allowed this year, MJCRSP members will participate in the virtual Zoom To The Capitol Rally starting April 5.

Everyone is invited to contact their legislators and support the COLA for Texas public school retirees.

Membership in TRTA/MJCRSP is only \$45 a year. Information and membership forms can be found on the Mid-Jefferson County Retired School Personnel webpage at [mjcrsp.org](http://mjcrsp.org).

— *Charlie Jehlen, Mid-Jefferson County Retired School Personnel president and Groves resident*