

MID-JEFFERSON COUNTY
RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL
OCTOBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

OFFICERS

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Charles Jehlen
President

Lynne James
Immediate Past President
(Nominations)
Newsletter /Yearbook
Retirement Education
Technology Contact

Gail Krohn
First Vice President
Membership
Publicity & Scholarship

Linda Briggs
Second Vice President
Book Project
Programs

Donna Lumpkin
Secretary

Wanda Borne
Treasurer

Dixie Tucker
Parliamentarian

Richard Briggs
Legislation

Beulah Thompson
Community Volunteer
Services

Helen Reynolds
Healthy Living

Mary Sue Carter
Informative & Protective
Services

Shelley Dettman
Member Benefits

Clara Graham
Foundation Representative

Linda Fong
Memorials, Get-Well

Olive Hall & Jolene Lemaire
Historians

Rosalie Reese
Hospitality

Patricia Allen
Social Media

Loretta Morman
Audit



September Guest Speaker

Marcy Cann

TRTA First Vice President/Membership Chair

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 13, 1:30 pm

Guest Speaker: TRTA Executive Director Tim Lee

Where: via Zoom by invitation only; begin arriving at 1:15. Click the link below to join:

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

Meeting ID: 848 9712 8429

The Time is NOW . .

. . . A message from MJCRSP President Charles Jehlen



Each successful organization is defined by its mission. This is especially true in service organizations where volunteers give their own time working for the common good. Our mission statement is laser-focused: ***The Texas Retired Teachers Association advocates for improved benefits for all education retirees and promotes the well-being of its members.*** The Teacher Retirement System lost its advocacy role in 1995. Since then, ours has been the most powerful voice for retirees in Austin.

The question we should be asking our fellow retirees is not "Are you a TRTA member?" but "Why aren't you a TRTA member?" The TRS Defined Benefit program, Cost of Living Adjustment, and retiree health insurance benefits are controlled solely by the Texas Legislature. When budgets are balanced, expensive programs like these are always on the table.

TRTA does not endorse candidates, but will provide access to those who want to educate voters. I urge you to study your candidates and determine where they stand on these vital issues. Check the track records of our representatives to see if their actions match their rhetoric. Take advantage of the TRTA Town Halls and other venues to get information to share with your friends. And vote your conscience in November.

TRTA will represent over one million current and future Texas education retirees during the 87th Texas Legislative Session. Information will flow both ways as the political process works in representatives' offices and committee meeting rooms. Constant contact with our elected official will be needed to help them understand the downstream effects of their proposals. Plan to attend our Rally in Austin in April 2021 to drive the message home.

So, if a fellow retiree's name or face pops up in your mind, call him or her and ask, "Why aren't you a TRTA member?" Now is the time to lay the groundwork. Leave no stone unturned.

September Highlights



On September 14, MJCRSP Membership Chair Richard Briggs had a one-on-one meeting with State Senator Brandon Creighton, chairman of the Higher Education Committee. Senator Creighton is very aware of how coronavirus has impacted retirees. He also is concerned about our health care. Keeping our insurance premiums at the same level was passed in the last session of the Texas Legislature, which was financially helpful. Because of the pandemic, the next Legislature will face financial difficulties. Every organization depending on state funds will ask for more funds, even though projections indicate there will be a shortfall of billions of dollars. The Senator emphasized that he is committed to supporting policies and budgeting that favorably impact retirees, especially insurance costs and cost of living in general. They also discussed the future of the Teacher Retirement System. This is the session when TRS is evaluated by the Legislature. Creighton is aware of the Indeed Tower fiasco. This is an exorbitant leasing expense, costing \$326,00 a month. He also suggested that TRS could be more transparent and user friendly. He said he will keep on top of this issue. The Senator said he is anxious to be a speaker at one of our meetings as soon as we are able to have in-person meetings.

MEMBERSHIP ALERT: When Marcy Cann, TRTA first vice president and TRTA membership chair, addressed attendees at the beginning of the meeting, she stressed the importance of meeting the TRTA goal of 100,000 members. While we have done very well in recent years, even exceeding the local unit state average in membership, we could do better if all retirees would support TRTA and MJCRSP as much as current members support them. Note the membership trends for **District 5 in the chart below.**

LU #	Local Unit	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	1 Yr %	2 Yr %
13	Beaumont ART	300	306	303	329	313	300	-4.15	-8.81
96	Hardin Co RTA	85	78	71	84	82	77	-6.10	-8.33
89	Jasper RTA	84	108	90	93	97	99	2.06	6.45
244	Kirbyville RSPA	45	58	56	53	50	44	-12.00	-16.98
109	Mid-Jefferson RSP	309	304	310	341	331	341	3.02	0.00
126	Orange Co RTA	223	215	218	215	210	224	6.67	4.19
136	Port Arthur ARSP	161	154	133	129	129	121	-6.20	-6.20
216	South Liberty Co ARSP (DISBANDED)								
241	Twin Co RSPA	119	120	121	114	108	112	3.70	-1.75

All members have been sent a list of new retirees, so please make contact with those you know and encourage them to join us. All have received materials stressing the importance of joining TRTA as well as a membership form to fill out. If **you** have not joined TRTA and the local unit or **renewed** your membership, do so now! A membership form has been included in past mailings and is also available on our website (mjcrsp.org) at the top of the home page.



Row One: Charlie Jehlen presides at his first regular meeting as MJCRSP president; members pledge their allegiance to the USA and Texas flags; Secretary Donna Lumpkin presents the minutes of the last regular meeting and shares correspondence; Treasurer Wanda Borne gives the treasurer's report and presents the 2020-2021 budget for approval;

Loretta Morman gives the 2019-2020 audit report; Linda Briggs discussed the delay of programs until face-to-face meetings resume and reports on the book project; Lynne James summarizes progress on the yearbook and discusses scholarship ad sales.

Row Two: Richard Briggs points out legislative priorities and stresses the importance of voting; Informative & Protective Services Chair Mary Sue Carter offers suggestions for washing hands during a pandemic; Linda Fong announces those who have died since our last meeting; Volunteer Chair Beulah Thompson reviews standards for volunteer activities and reminds members of the importance of volunteering, especially in an election year. (Note: Pictures were captured from video and were not available for all present at the meeting.)

HELEN'S HEALTH TIP: Now is the time to plan when you will get the vaccinations you need this year. The flu shot is vitally important in this pandemic year; remember to allow 2 weeks for the shot to build up full immunity. Also consider the following shots if you have not already gotten them: the shingles shots, the pneumonia shots, and the hepatitis B shots (doctor approval need for these). All are covered by Medicare.