



MID-JEFFERSON COUNTY RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL MARCH 2014 NEWSLETTER



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Children's Book Project

Donna Lumpkin
Refreshment & Hospitality

Wanda Borne
Audit



February 11, 2014

Program by

Larry Hansing

Safe and Smart Living for Seniors

- ◆ **Next meeting:** March 11, 2014, @ Ritter Center in Nederland, 914 Boston Avenue—1:30
- ◆ **Program:** "What's Up with Print?" by Roger Cowles, Editor of Port Arthur News
- ◆ **Refreshments:** Gail Krohn (Chairman), Wanda Borne, Candice Zummo, Paula Kanesaw, and Dana Wasser
- ◆ **District 5 Spring Leadership Training:** Friday, May 9, First Baptist Church in Nederland

TRS-Care shortfall

A message from MJCRSP President Linda Briggs

The 2015 legislative session may be the most important ever to public school retirees because of the TRS-Care billion dollar shortfall. Without any increase in state contribution, our premiums will drastically increase, making health care insurance unaffordable to many retirees. We will be asking for help from legislators, many of whom will be inexperienced and backed by powerful anti-pension groups. A strong TRTA to represent our interests is a must.



TRTA 2014-2015 membership totals will determine our influence. MJRSVP's drive begins now. You may mail in your dues with the form attached or bring your dues to the next meeting. We all need to spread the word and recruit.

If you haven't voted early, please vote in the primary election March 4. Voting members carry more weight with politicians than non-voters. (And they get a list of those who vote!)

As you can see on the attached membership form for 2014-2015 that dues have increased at the state level, and for a very good reason. TRTA dues have not increased since 1999, but costs have escalated. In order to keep a quality staff, TRTA must meet basic salary needs. Attacks by well-funded outside groups have been costly to defend against, and legal support has been needed to help defend retiree benefits. Even at \$45, we get our money's worth with TRTA!

VISIT OUR WEB SITE: To keep up with meetings and activities of MJCRSP, check out the unit web site at www.localunits.org/MidJefferson. Now available is the 2013-2014 yearbook. It is password protected and only current members will have access. If you are a current member who does not have a password or if you have joined recently, email Lynne James (lynnej@gt.rr.com) or call 409.735.6171 and ask for her.

SPECIAL THANKS to MCT Credit Union and Hebert Library for the use of their facilities in preparing our monthly newsletters.

February highlights



Top left to right: Members enjoy fellowship and refreshments; Linda Briggs presides at business meeting; state representative candidate Dade Phelan addresses members; Linda Fong reports on health and wellness of members; Leanne Johnson, candidate for 9th Court of Appeals and niece of Margaret Smith, speaks to members. **Bottom left to right:** Candice Zummo, Wanda Borne, Gail Krohn, Dana Wasser, and Paula Kanesaw prepare refreshments; Richard Briggs introduces Dade Phelan, Republican candidate for Texas House District 21(currently held by Allan Ritter); Susan Jones reads correspondence; Lynne James and Mary Beth McDuff attend TRTA Connect workshop for District 5.

About TRS-Care . . . From TRTA Executive Director Tim Lee on TRS Workshop, February 12, 2014

“TRTA has worked to protect retiree income by partnering with the Legislature to maintain TRS-Care premiums. While many TRS long-term retirees received a modest increase in their retirement benefits in 2013, not everyone received the raise. Many retirees are still in need, and the raise that was given is simply not enough to cover the increased costs of TRS-Care premiums that may occur as early as September 1, 2015. How much could those TRS-Care premiums increase? TRS reported [at the Corpus Christi workshop on February 12] that if the Legislature is unable to correct the funding deficiencies inherent in the TRS-Care program and instead relies on retirees to make up the \$1 billion shortfall, premiums could triple over the next two-year period! That premium hike would force many TRS-Care participants out of the program as it would far exceed their ability to cover the costs and still live comfortably. Please understand that TRS has indicated that TRS-Care premium increases are NOT needed for the current biennium (2014-15). TRTA will have the next legislative session to be active (beginning in 2015) and help resolve this crisis. Yesterday’s discussion was about what MAY happen in a worst case scenario. TRS answered a TRTA question about what the premiums for retirees may be should the Legislature decide to place the entire burden of the shortfall on retirees, and the result would be devastating. For retirees paying about \$350 per month, the premium would rise to about \$585 per month and continue to rise.”

HELEN’S HEALTH TIP: To give your immune system a boost during cold and flu season, follow these guidelines: relieve stress (sing, laugh, meditate), get enough sleep, exercise, connect with others, and eat well (especially yogurt, bananas, onions, kale and broccoli).