



MID-JEFFERSON COUNTY RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL MAY 2016 NEWSLETTER

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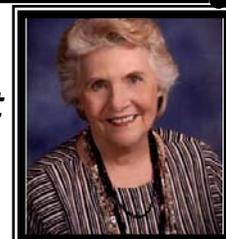
April Program: Kay Decuir Director Nederland Economic Development



- ◆ **District V Spring Leadership Training:** Friday, May 6, 10 AM-2PM at FBC-Nederland.
- ◆ **Next meeting:** 1:30 PM, May 10 at Ritter Senior Center, 914 Boston Avenue, Nederland.
- ◆ **Program:** Richard Briggs, Installation of 2016-2017 Officers
- ◆ **Hostesses:** Linda Pinner (chairman), Loretta Morman, Olive Hall, and Wanda Borne

Let's do our part . . .

A message from our president



As the year comes to a close, there are several issues we need to keep in focus: health care, teacher shortage, and pension solvency. At our meeting last month I shared information from the Texas AFT newsletter regarding health care. It is one of the most complete articles that clearly addresses the problem. In a later article there was a graph that depicted how contributions from retirees, active teachers, districts, and the state have lessened over the years, I encourage each of you to access the AFT web site (www.texasaft.org/) and read both articles to be completely informed.

The state of Texas is entering a critical era of teacher shortage. It is predicted there will be a shortage of 30,000 next year due to several factors: state testing requirements, lack of support for discipline problems, and lack of encouragement from those in the profession. Sometimes we are our own worst enemies. We should be doing everything we can to encourage the best and brightest to enter the teaching field.

Finally, pension benefits concerns. For the first time, due mostly to lack of state participation, the pension fund is not actuarially sound. Yes, the state kicked in \$738 million to get us through our health care situation this biennium, but that does not carry over into the next two years. In addition, unless we can impress legislators of the necessity of additional funding for both our health care and out retirement fund, we may lose the fight to retain both our defined benefits and our current health care benefits.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: To keep up with meetings and activities of MJCRSP, check out the unit web site at www.localunits.org/MidJefferson. **Please help us to save the cost of a stamp and agree to receive the newsletter by email.** Contact Lynne James at lynnej@gt.rr.com or call her at 409.735.6171 and ask to be placed on the emailing list!

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

April meeting highlights



Row 1: Linda Pinner, Olive Hall, Loretta Morman, and Wanda Borne provide refreshments; Gail poses with Kay Decuir; Donna and Kay smile for the camera.

Row 2: Linda, Rosalie, and Dixie await the beginning of the meeting. **Row 3:** Gail, Donna, and Helen are in a deep discussion; Jolene, Beulah, and Linda listen to Candye; members listen to the program presentation and Frances enjoys refreshments .

Legislators stress involvement: Legislators and TRTA executives all stressed the importance of continuous involvement in the legislative process preceding and during the next legislative session. Senators Joan Huffman and John Whitmire, as well as TRTA Executive Director Tim Lee, all emphasized the importance of communication as the most important thing members can do to gain support from legislators for our defined benefit plan, which will likely be contested in the next session. Adequate funding to sustain our health care will be difficult to find, they said, because the state will have fewer resources when the session begins in January 2017. All stress communication: **Know** your representatives and senators. Make sure **they know you** and whom you represent. Make **face-to-face contact** if at all possible. **Call** them, **write** them, **email** them. **Keep up** with what is going on in Austin through the *Inside Line* and TRTA-TV. **Respond** when asked to make contact when important items are being discussed. More detailed reports will be given at the May meeting by the delegates who represented us at the convention in Houston. This is a meeting everyone should attend!



Linda Fong, TRTA Executive Director Tim Lee, Dana Wasser, Lynne James, Patricia Allen, Becky Dungan, and Clara Graham at convention.

HELEN'S HEALTH TIP: Nutrition labels on foods contain a wealth of important information. Read them carefully to be sure you are choosing foods that are highly nutritious.