

C-FB RSPA Newsletter

May 1, 2013

Letter from the president, Linda Tole

I have cut and pasted information that was recently on the TRTA website. These are just the basics and may have changed by the time you read this!

Two bills (SB 1458 and HB 1884) aimed at improving the actuarial condition of the TRS pension fund were revised and voted out of both their Senate and House committees.(April 24th)

TRTA members have let legislators know that we want to improve these bills and make the TRS fund actuarially sound. ***TRTA members have sent over 14,000 emails on this vital issue! Calls were made this week (May)***

The following are some of the reasons for these bills:

- The TRS pension fund has a large unfunded liability. While the system is fiscally healthy, its unfunded liability continues to grow. Eventually the plan will run out of money if we do not make some modifications.
 - The pension fund does not have a “funding period.” Under current circumstances, the contributions to the plan and its investment earnings will not keep the plan funded in the (distant) future.
 - The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is requiring all public pension plans to report their funding condition using new plan assumption methodologies as of January 2014. If TRS Texas can make some modifications to the plan, these new reporting methodologies will have little to no impact on our plan. This also will make the fund less subject to attacks from defined contribution (or, 401-k style plan) proponents.
 - **TRS will be actuarially sound under these proposals.**
 - The State is increasing its contribution to the TRS fund with these modifications.
- The average age of a retiree in 2012 was 61. TRS employees are choosing to retire at an age similar to the proposed age in the legislation.
 - The TRS-Care program is running out of money and is projected to have a \$1 billion shortfall in two years. These changes produce actuarial savings for the TRS-Care program over time and will help sustain this VITAL retirement benefit for future generations of TRS retirees.

TRTA members know that without the pension fund being actuarially sound, there can be no increases for current retirees. The last increase for TRS retirees was in 2001.

The current proposal provides for a cost-of-living increase for TRS retirees who retired in 1994 (has been changed to 1999) or before. We believe more TRS retirees will be able to receive a real, permanent, increase in their annuities if this plan is adopted.

TRTA is engaged in a very positive way with all our friends in the active community. These organizations have been very generous in their efforts to work with us. Not one of these organizations has ever suggested that TRS retirees are receiving a raise “on the backs of active employees.”

We are all working on a bill that was not designed by us, but holds the promise of putting TRS on a path to long-term actuarial soundness. As Senator Duncan and Representative Callegari said, these bills are being offered as a way to ensure that the TRS defined benefit plan survives and thrives for many, many years to come.

We are working to get retirees something sooner rather than later. While other proposals are still being considered, the possibility of retirees receiving a cost of living raise without some TRS plan modifications is, presently, remote.

SB 1458 and HB 1884 are still being worked on, but these bills do provide immediate actuarial soundness and many retirees will receive a raise if they are implemented. Especially those who retired a number of years ago and are in desperate need of some financial relief.

These changes will help us weather the anti-defined benefit plan attacks being waged all over the country (and here in Texas), make it a priority to keep TRS well-funded, and end the era of prolonged droughts when TRS retirees receive no cost-of-living increases.

SB 1458 and HB 1884 are receiving considerable discussion and we are all working together. Senator Duncan and Representative Callegari met with all stakeholders for several hours. We all had the opportunity to discuss these changes, their impact, the long-term goals, and more. While no breakthrough decisions were made, the most important facts TRTA took away from this meeting are that our elected officials want to maintain this vital retirement plan for our school employees.

This situation is far from over. TRTA remains an active participant in these discussions

Membership and More

Linda Bambina, VP for Membership

Well, ladies and gents, we are at the end of another YEAR! Just like our “school years” of the past, we will have our last “assembly” very shortly. It’s hard to believe that four years ago Kathy McWhorter called me and reached all the way through that phone line and twisted my arm to accept the Membership VP position. Mary Beth Geiger had done the vast majority of all the details of this volunteer job all by herself for TWELVE years and gee, she decided she’d had about all the fun she could stand! I’m hoping to go half that distance. Since I have so many wonderful folks helping me, it’s still a huge joy in my life to be part of this Retired school-folks group! But I could NOT do it without my FABULOUS “Lunch Bunch,” *who really came to my aid* this last meeting when I had to be out of town. **Thankyouthankyou** to Celeste Craig, Linda Anderson, Nancy Watten, Judy Thurman, Mary Beth Geiger, Kathy McWhorter, Charlotte Davis, Leola Bracey and my wonderful husband, Alan Bambina as well as Doyle McWhorter and Paul Geiger.

I understand the meeting was well attended and the pasta delicious. Apparently the Program came with a free meal (isn’t Lee Nitcholas amazing?) Quite a special time. Judy Carey (she’s a jewel if you didn’t know!) kept track of who came and I’m sorry I missed some hugs for my special friend Kathy Norman. I understand we had some folks who haven’t been in awhile: hello to Christine Walker and George; Florida Jossell and Johnnie Johnson! I was

thrilled to hear that Nichie Hoskins, our newest member came with her friend, Joyce Wagner. Welcome, Nichie.

We hope that many of you can join us for another “special time” when we say Good-Bye to Linda Tole as our President Extraordinaire. She has completed two full terms (4 years) which appears to be a “max” for our Past Presidents! I worked with Linda at RLT back in the 70’s, but I never knew the length, width and depth of her talents until I became 1st Vice President and got to know her and appreciate her myriad of abilities for all the behind the scenes business that are a big part of RSPA.

Please come join us in the middle of May to celebrate our strong association of such dedicated people as you have in your local retirement group.

Community Volunteer Service Committee

Why do we bother with reporting the number of hours spent in volunteer work? It is a form of validation for a large group of retirees who served in the past and continue to serve others. Documented volunteer hours show the general public and our legislators the wonderful contributions made by retired school personnel. Putting a number to these volunteer efforts increases an awareness of the huge difference TRTA volunteers make. In this way we demonstrate that education retirees are “valuable” assets to their communities and to the state.

Be sure that you keep up with your volunteer hours during the summer months. You can e-mail your hours monthly to Celeste (celrob2@sbcglobal.net), or you can report them when meetings resume. (this includes time babysitting/entertaining grandchildren, as well as time spent as a caregiver).

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From Lee Nitcholas

District X TRTA President Jo Long to Address CFB RSPA, Install Officers

Hard to believe as it is, another year has passed and we are planning the last meeting of the year. We are honored to have our District President address our membership at the upcoming May meeting. Ms. Jo Long will be speaking on the status of the state and district associations and our goals for the future. She will also have current information on the status of legislation and the possibility that our retirement fund may become actuarially sound so that at least some retirees receive badly needed increases in their monthly checks. Don't miss this important message!

It is also the time of year that new officers begin their term as leaders of our local organization as current officers step aside. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the contributions that outgoing president Linda Tole has made during her term in office. We have increased our membership, attendance and participation in activities under her leadership. She had made a difference and we are the better for it! Thank you, Linda!

Our 2013-14 board is ready to take the reigns of leadership and District President Long will be installing the new officers.

From Beth Sargent-Field Trip News

Our last field trip was to Ennis to see the most beautiful sights of bluebonnet-covered land and enjoy lunch at the Wildflower Cafe. We learned that Ennis has been designated the "Official Texas Bluebonnet Trail" by the Texas Legislature. Linda Bambina and Barbara Gilbert liked to see the cows walking single file, going through the bluebonnets. Pat Enlow and Blanche McClain loved the gorgeous sunny day. Judy Carey stopped to smell the bluebonnets. Della Swaim liked the mixture of wildflowers. Sammy Perry was tempted to move to the country and she said, "There was a home for sale that 4 of us could move into". Lee Nitcholas liked walking in the bluebonnets and talking to the young family having a picnic. And Judy Thurman and Beth Sargent noted that it was a perfect day to enjoy "Earth Day".

May is National Arthritis Month. Take a look at the whole-body benefits of walking.

HEAD/BRAIN: Walking improves mood. It increases mood-enhancing neurotransmitters and reduces the stress hormone cortisol, helping you feel less anxious or sad. Other benefits of walking may also include a decreased risk of Alzheimer's disease, age-related dementia and stroke.

EYES: Walking wards off glaucoma. It reduces the pressure inside the eye, which lowers your chance of developing glaucoma.

CHEST: Lowers blood pressure. Walking makes your heart pump faster, which speeds blood flow and relaxes arteries so that blood pressure decreases – and so does the risk of heart attack or stroke.

SPINE: Relieves back pain. Walking strengthens core muscles of back and abdomen, which reduces back pain.

HIP: Reduces hip fracture. Walking is a weight-bearing exercise. The benefits of walking include strengthening muscles and bones, which wards off osteoporosis and reduces the chance of fracture; and shifting pressure from joints to strong muscles, reducing arthritis pain.

KNEES: Keeps joints lubricated. Movement increases the production of synovial fluid, which keeps knees lubricated and decreases pain and stiffness.

LEGS: Walking lowers the risk of blood clots by helping calf muscles squeeze deep veins and keeps blood pumping freely back to the heart.

FOOT: Reduces the load on joints. Walking helps lower or maintain body weight, reducing the stress on feet, knees and hips.

ARMS: Strengthens arm muscles. Pumping your arms as you walk tones muscles – and helps you walk faster, thus burning more calories.

NOSE: Makes you breathe better. When walking, your breathing rate increases, causing oxygen to travel faster through bloodstream, helping to eliminate waste products and improve your energy level and the ability to heal.

C-FB RSPA MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2013-2014

TRTA NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!!!

It is hard to believe that our May meeting is coming up and it will be our last meeting until September. We have had some fun and informative meetings this year and the field trips have been awesome. This is a reminder if you haven't paid your dues for 2013-2014 you can pay them at the May meeting. I would like to ask a favor, if you are paying your dues with cash, could you please put it in an envelope with your name on the envelope or put a sticky note with your name on your cash. Remember that your dues should to be paid as soon as possible. Please continue to keep paying dues during the summer if you cannot pay at the May meeting. Since we will not have another newsletter until September, I will be sending out reminders during the summer to members who are not current on their dues. We also need to keep our current members renewing their membership, along with inviting new retirees to become members and join us at our meetings. I want to encourage you to go to the TRTA website www.TRTA.org click on Local Units and go to our local organization to view the Treasurer's Reports that are posted there. It will show you where we spend your local dues of \$10.00 that you pay each year.

Dues are \$35.00 (\$25.00 for state dues and \$10.00 for local dues). Make a check out to C-FB RSPA for \$35.00 if you are paying state and local and \$10.00 if you are only paying local. YOU MUST PAY STATE AND LOCAL TO BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER. You can mail your dues to **Judy Carey, 975 Laguna Drive, Coppell, TX 75019.** You can also call me at **972-393-2956** if you have a question about your dues or send me an email at judy.carey@verizon.net .

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