

November 2025

# HARTbeat

<https://www.houstonretiredteachers.org/>

The *HARTbeat* is edited by Cherry Wong with help this month from Margaret Preston



## HART Annual Spectacular Holiday Luncheon

HART has established a tradition of celebrating the year's end with a Holiday Luncheon at the Junior League of Houston. The luncheon is all about gathering with friends, wearing our holiday attire, eating a wonderful meal together, singing and being thankful. This year our Holiday Luncheon will be held on December 12, 2025.

The centerpieces of beautiful poinsettias are donated by Smart Financial and are offered at each table for a donation to our HART Scholarship Fund, Inc. Donations to the fund are also collected for the scholarships given to aspiring teachers each year. If you would like a tax deduction, please use a check made out to HART Scholarship Fund, Inc. You will receive an acknowledgment after the event.

As usual, the doors will open at 11:00 AM. Tickets are \$50 and may be purchased by cash or check payable to HART. Friends and family are welcomed to attend this wonderful event. You can buy tickets at the November 14 HART meeting, or you can mail your check to:

Virgil Fisher

5834 Picasso Place

Houston, TX 77096-3913

Deadline for purchasing a ticket is December 5

Happy Holidays!

## Expanding Horizons



The pictures above are from the trip to Skylawn and the trip to the Bluebell Creamery in Brenham. Expanding Horizons is HART's get out and have some fun committee, run by Gary Patterson and Suzanne Mihaloglou. The next scheduled trip is to Brookwood Community in Brookshire, Tx, on November 18 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Enjoy a tour of Brookwood followed by a delicious lunch and then, shop till you drop. Key word: Poinsettias. Make your reservation at the November 14 meeting or email [suzannemihaloglou@yahoo.com](mailto:suzannemihaloglou@yahoo.com) with the following information: your name, email address, phone number, an emergency contact name and phone number who is not on the trip, and whether you will need a wheelchair or walker. Save the date for the following trips in 2026: February 27, March 27, and April 22.

## **We Love Books! by Howard Bruce, HART 2<sup>nd</sup> VP**

I know you love books! TRTA would like to know how many books you gave to children in 2025. That can be any book given to your children, grandchildren, church, or any other organization to which you donated a book. For example, I took 60 books to Quito, Ecuador this summer on a mission trip. Our HART chapter donated 770 new books to Ed White Elementary School this past May. Please keep a record of any books you gave as gifts during 2025 and turn in the information to Howard Bruce, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. I can think of no greater gift to encourage our youth to read and expand their minds.

## **Legislative Committee Report by Cappy Selig, 4<sup>th</sup> VP**

I'm sure you heard the big news that retired Texas teachers are eligible to get their Social Security benefits! If you meet any of the following conditions, you may be eligible to collect Social Security:

1. Did you work and earn 40 credits (10 years) in one or more positions that paid into the Social Security system? If you aren't sure, call the Social Security office (800) 772-1213.
2. Have you been married for more than 10 years, and did your spouse pay into the Social Security system. Call the Social Security office (800) 772-1213 and inquire about Spousal Benefits, if your spouse is still living. If your spouse is deceased, ask about Survivor Benefits.
3. Are you divorced but were married for more than 10 years, and did your ex pay into the Social Security system? Call the Social Security office and inquire about Spousal Benefits if your spouse is still living. If your ex is deceased, ask about Survivor benefits.

There may be other situations where you might qualify.

Complete your information online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

Call the Social Security office at (800) 772-1213 (be prepared for a long wait, be patient!).

## **District 4 Fall Conference**



HART attendees enjoyed meeting with State Representative Gene Wu from District 137. Senator Joan Huffman and other elected representatives all pledged to continue their support of retired teachers.

# Membership Committee Report

The membership committee, lead by 1<sup>st</sup> VP Rosa Espinosa, has worked hard to recruit and retain membership in both TRTA and HART. Despite our efforts, we are headed toward having 50 fewer members at the end of 2025 compared to 2024. Approximately 450 people will receive this newsletter, and yet only 300 of those are paid HART members. We follow the practice of TRTA by keeping members on our email list for three years before dropping them for non-payment.

Both TRTA, our state organization, and HART, our local chapter, have fought for and won several significant improvements to the retirement benefits of retired public school teachers and personnel. HART holds interesting meetings and sponsors trips to local attractions. We keep members informed about voting procedures and issues of importance to educators. We are nonpartisan. We need to increase our membership to increase our voice with our elected officials and our ability to preserve and protect our defined benefit retirement plan, our excellent and low cost health insurance, and to fight for a yearly cost of living adjustment to our pension.

Please join us by paying your dues, attending meetings, engaging with your elected representatives, and recruiting your friends and colleagues. Together, we are strong.

## Membership year runs from July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

### New or Renewing Members

Print legal name: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred name (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street

City

Zip

Preferred phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment: TRTA \$35 (not applicable if your state dues are paid from annuity or by credit card)**

**HART \$15**

**Contribution \_\_\_\_\_ (general operations and mailings)**

**Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_**

**Make check payable to HART and mail to HART, PO Box 6727, Houston, TX 77265-6727**

**You may also join TRTA/HART online by using <https://www.houstonretiredteachers.org> A transaction fee of \$3.00 will be added for using the online feature. The online feature is not applicable if you have your TRTA dues taken automatically from your annuity or by credit card.**

I receive an annuity from TRS.

I would prefer to receive all HART communication by e-mail.

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# President's Corner



## What A Time! What A Time In Tokyo, Japan!

Growing up in Sunnyside, Texas, (a popular residence just 10 minutes from NRG Stadium), I thought, I would never travel beyond the state lines of Louisiana, but I did.

My grandson, Bryce Deadmon, was blessed again to represent our USA in the World Championship Track & Field Events. It was held in Tokyo, Japan this year. A group of family members and friends all traveled over 12,000 miles and 25-28 hours round-trip, to Tokyo, Japan to eat, shop, walk and tour many cities in Japan. Oh, yes, we also had many opportunities to cheer and support Bryce and the USA teams at the National Stadium.

Before leaving, I did my homework assignment: Learn some important Japanese phrases! I'll share a few with you:

<b>Japanese words/phrase</b>	translation to	<b>English</b>
konnichiwa		hello/good afternoon
arigato gozaimasu		thank you
ohayou gozaimasu		good morning
konbanwa		good evening
onegaishimasu		please
hai		yes
lie		no
toire wa doko desuka?		Where is the toilet?

We also visited Mt. Fuji, the Ginza Shopping Mall, Shibuya Crossing, the Imperial Palace, the Tokyo Tower, Tokyo Sky Tree, a Sumo Wrestling Practice and the oldest temple in Tokyo, Sensoji Temple. We experienced driving a Mario Go-Cart, riding on subways, a karaoke session, participating in a sushi making class and a lot of walking, walking, walking.

As far as different eating experiences: We traveled over 6,000 miles to Tokyo to be offered chicken nuggets. (lol) Delicious Taiwanese and middle eastern Indian foods were also on our plates. To top off our Japanese experience, we learned more about their culture by participating in a private tea ceremony while wearing kimonos.

Oh, by the way, Bryce and his teammates each won a GOLD MEDAL running in the 4x400m mixed relay and a SILVER MEDAL in the 4x400m men's relay for our USA! GO USA! GO USA!

Oh, the places we shall go ----- What a time! What a time!

## Nominations Committee Report

The following HART members have agreed to stand for election at the March 13, 2026, meeting: President - Rosa Espinosa, 1<sup>st</sup> VP – Howard Bruce, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP – Patricia Green, 3<sup>rd</sup> VP – Denise Pronin, 4<sup>th</sup> VP – Cappy Selig, Corresponding Secretary – Mary Mattison and Recording Secretary – TBD. Thank you to the Nominating Committee for their hard work: Virgil Fisher, Cappy Selig, Patricia Bonner, Jane Sakely and chair Margaret Preston.

## Houston Area Retired Teachers

P. O. Box 6727

Houston, TX 77265-6727

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## Mark Your Calendar

- November is TRTF Giving Month. Go to <https://trtf.org/> for more information
- November 4 VOTING DAY – HISD School Board, Constitution Amendments and more
- November 14 General Meeting: Special guest *Tim Lee, TRTA Executive Director* and #1 supporter of retired teachers. Buy tickets for the HART Annual Holiday Luncheon.
- November 18 Expanding Horizons trip to Brookwood Community.
- December 12 HART Annual Holiday Luncheon at the Junior League of Houston, 1811 Briar Oaks Ln, Houston. Tickets are \$50 and must be purchased by December 5. If you cannot purchase a ticket at the November meeting, send your request and check to Virgil Fisher, 5834 Picasso, Houston, TX 77096.
- February 13 General Meeting – *Personal Finance* with Jorge Olvera
- February 23 **HART's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday** - stay tuned for party invitations!
- March 13 General Meeting: *Books for Development* with Mark Cotham: Election of Officers
- April 10 General Meeting: *Meet a Therapy Dog* with Veterinarian Lisa Lowenstein
- May 8 General Meeting: Installation of Officers and Celebration

*All General Meetings are at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, 9600 S. Gessner, 9:30 a.m. social time, 10:00 a.m. meeting time. Handicap parking is on the Northeast side. Please do NOT park on the grass.*