

HARTBEAT

An affiliate of the Texas Retired Teachers Association



HART's own Marcy Cann has been elected as President of TRTA. Above photo shows Marcy as Chair of the TRTA Membership Committee. (l. to r.) are Shirley Boyd, Marcy, Evelyn Leggitt, Jackie McCowin and Woody Schober. HART's Rosalind Haynes was elected President of TRTA District 4. See story on page 5.



The last HART general meeting for this academic year will be Friday, May 13, 10:00, at the Bellaire Civic Center, 7008 South Rice Avenue in Bellaire.

Our speaker will be Millard House II, HISD Superintendent. We will also have installation of officers. A Zoom link will be emailed to you several days before the meeting.

Recruiting New Members for HART

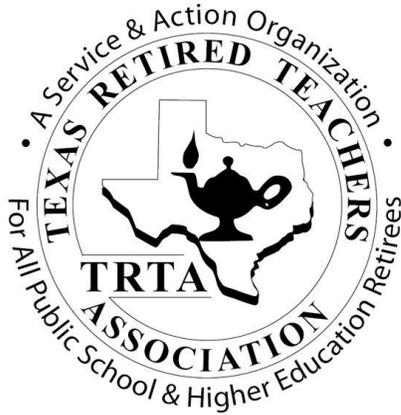
By Johnnie Robiinson, Membership Chair

Why do new HART members matter? It matters because State legislators respond to voting blocks. At the 68th TRTA State Convention in Dallas, State Membership Awards were presented for the following units:

- The 2021-2022 Highest Membership Percentage Gain was awarded to District 1.
- The Highest Membership Gain was also awarded to District 1.
- The Highest Membership Percentage Gain was awarded to Red River Co RSEA.
- The Highest Membership Gain was awarded to Austin RTA.

How can we match these superstars? • Invite family members to join who are educators or who are associated with education. • Call, write or text your former co-workers, neighbors, friends. • Contact your former schools for names of colleagues who are retiring or have already retired, but have not heard of our organization, to join both TRTA and our chapter, HART. • Don't forget to ask your church members, neighbors or anyone who engages in conversation with you about joining. • Before our next scheduled HART meeting, May 13th, each of us should have at least two more members!

Can we do it? Yes, we can!



TRTA Important Update Concerning Member Benefits

TRTA and its dental and vision benefits provider, AMBA, have agreed to continue their relationship to offer AMBA's dental and vision insurance programs to TRTA members.

AMBA is a market leader in providing value-based benefits to members of retiree associations like TRTA across the country and has been a trusted partner to TRTA for nearly four decades. Thousands of our members have enjoyed dental and vision benefits offered and administered by AMBA for years. In addition, AMBA works with hundreds of retired Texas educators each day and has worked with TRTA to help recruit over 50,000 new members into our association over the years.

TRTA always focuses on our members first and foremost. After careful consideration, we have decided that entering this new chapter with AMBA best serves our members' dental and vision benefit needs. We believe this will better position TRTA to increase our membership, which will help us achieve our legislative goals on behalf of retired educators in the State of Texas. Simply stated, we are better together!

If you would like to learn more about these dental and vision insurance benefits, we encourage you to contact AMBA at (833) 643-0263 for new customers, or (833) 643-0264 for existing customers.

2022 HART Scholarship Winners Announced

The HART Scholarship Committee has awarded \$1,000 scholarships to each of the following students from the University of St. Thomas:

Emily Zuniga—EC-6 (Bachelor of Arts in General Studies)

Sirenia Garcia—Music Education

Ursula Barreto—Special Education

Renee Babin—EC-6 (Bachelor of Arts in General Studies)

(not pictured: Angeline Pinto—Education (7-12 English))



2022 Scholarship Donations:

HART Scholarship Fund, Inc., has received donations from the following individuals for 2022:

Joan Graham and Dr. Gary Patterson.

HART members can make donations at any time of the year to this fund for any reason: in honor of a person; memory of someone; special event. HART gives scholarships to graduating students in educational programs at one of the five major universities in Houston. We rotate selection between Rice University, University of Houston, Houston Baptist University, Texas Southern University, and University of St. Thomas.

HART Meetings Feature Various Speakers



At the February HART general meeting, retired teacher Susan Marsh reported her own medical history in her talk on *Healing through Nutrition: My Personal Journey to Wellness*.

Ms. Marsh is a vegetarian and recommends the diet to everyone. She suggested everyone watch these documentaries:

PlantPure Nation,
<https://www.plantpurenation.com/pages/about-the-film>

Forks Over Knives,
<https://www.forksoverknives.com/the-film>

Eating You Alive,
<https://www.eatingyoualiv e.com>

Game Changers,
<https://gamechangersmovie.com>

Code Blue,
<https://codebluedoc.com>

Retired teacher Laura Conley has created a series of Urban Paths to encourage organized walking. She believes that moving mindfully nourish the soul and work the soles. Her website, urbanpaths.com, lists Walkshops on productivity, teamwork and the benefits of taking to the trails every day. There's even a Walking Book Club to explore inspiring reads while taking in Houston's most beautiful views.

Coach Laura has been leading Buffalo Bayou Partnership's wellness walks since 2017.



HART Technology Committeeman Dr. Richard Smith offered these ZOOM tips:

Use the "touch up my appearance" setting.
Don't forget about your background.
Use a ring light or webcam.



Don't forget to mute your microphone if you're not talking.
Don't forget to unmute your microphone when you do need to talk.
Don't chance running out of laptop battery charge.

Message from Your President

Margaret Preston



The TRTA State Convention, the first since the pandemic shut down all such gatherings, was a wonderful refresher on the importance of our organization. There is an article in this *HARTbeat* about the convention, but I will sum it up by saying retaining and recruiting members is our core; protecting and improving retired teacher benefits is our purpose. Together we can do our part to ensure that a teaching career is rewarding for both active and retired teachers.

And speaking of membership, it has been gratifying to receive so many renewals from members, many with notes of encouragement, donations and contact information corrections. I love hearing from you by mail, phone, email, Facebook, or messages through our website. Several members have reached out to ask why they were not getting our emails, and we have been able to correct information so that we can stay in touch. If you know a member or colleague you have not seen or heard from in a while, give them a call. Encourage your friends to join HART.

Our last meeting of the year will be Friday, May 13, at 10:00 a.m. I am encouraging everyone to bring their favorite snack to share and we will take a step toward “normal.” Masks are optional, and many of our members still feel they are needed for their own safety and the safety of others. We support each other in all our choices, so do not hesitate to join us.

Finally, the big news – our own Marcy Cann was elected and installed as President of TRTA! Yes, she is the President of the whole state! We can look forward to a great future, and offer Marcy our pledge of support throughout her two-year tenure. Also, our own Rosalind Haynes was elected and will soon be installed as President of TRTA District 4. She has a huge job keeping all 22 local chapters in line, but I know we all will be available to help her in any way she needs us.

CONGRATULATIONS to MARCY and ROSALIND!

Beware of TRS Scammers

Some members and retirees have contacted TRS to ask whether TRS employees or representatives initiate meetings with members — whether at home or online — to discuss TRS benefits.

The answer is no – TRS staff members and representatives do **not** go to members' and retirees' homes or offices. If someone asks to meet with you in your home, that person does not represent TRS. TRS also does not initiate meetings with members by sending an electronic request such as an email or Zoom meeting request. TRS will only meet with a member if the member requests to schedule an appointment by calling TRS Member Services.

Please note that some organizations use names that sound like TRS and solicit TRS members and retirees for the purpose of offering supplemental insurance or investment services. These vendors may send you postcards and email messages.

They may also represent that they work with TRS benefits or can advise you regarding TRS benefits and the retirement process. These communications are often sent by private, for-profit groups that may wish to sell you something or promise printouts containing tax or retirement information for those who respond.

Again, TRS does not initiate contact with you to offer retirement services or promise to advise you regarding the best retirement strategy for you. Please carefully review the materials these solicitors provide before responding. Respond to the solicitors only if you believe their information or services would be to your advantage and you do not mind receiving follow-up information. Information about your potential retirement benefits from TRS is available to you at no cost.

HARTbeat is the newsletter of HART, edited by Howard Lindsay, hhlindsay@comcast.net. Please consider contributing photos, articles or letters. Your presence at HART events implies approval for us to use your photographs for publicity purposes.

Activities of the TRTA State Convention

By Margaret Preston

HART was represented at the TRTA State Convention by seven delegates and two more members who represented the State and District 4. Thank you to Margaret Preston, Johnnie Robinson, Rosa Espinosa, Judy Harwell, Jane Sakely, Kathryn Brown, Jane Eixman, Rosalind Haynes, and Marcy Cann, for getting up early, studying the issues we needed to vote on, attending informative sessions, and working hard to make HART and TRTA a successful and thriving organization.

During the House of Delegates, we voted to accept new bylaws as presented in the last issue of *The Voice*. These bylaws make no major changes, just revised language to meet legal requirements, and streamlined the document. At other sessions we attended training for Presidents, Treasurers, 1st Vice-Presidents (Membership), 2nd Vice-Presidents (Public Relations – now called Communications), Secretaries, and on Retirement Education, Legislation, and Parliamentary Procedures. There were many other sessions covering general topics such as gardening, caregiving, estate planning, etc., that we could not attend but were well received by those attendees without “official” obligations.

The highlights of the conference were the rousing speeches we got from our legislative leaders, including Executive Director Tim Lee,

and Legislative Coordinator Larry Yawn, who reminded us of the importance of growing our organization to grow our influence and voice with our elected representatives. During a panel discussion by State Senator Royce West, State Rep Rafael Anchía, State Rep Giovanni Capriglione, and State Rep Tony Tinderholt, they all emphasized getting to know your representatives, communicating often with clear expectations, and politely but firmly advocating for the legislative priorities of TRTA. Senator West was very candid when he said that now is the time to let your representatives know what you want, not after they are elected. They want our votes, and for the most part, want to be seen as supportive of active and retired teachers.

Tim Lee delivered a message that all members should hear. He said that our members worked hard and sacrificed for years to educate our students, and now continue to work for the greater good, protecting our defined benefit plan, improving our health insurance and advocating for a fair cost of living raise. **Our goal for the next two years is to win a COLA for retired teachers in the next legislative session.** The whole state organization is dedicated to this goal. We need everyone to get on-board. Together we can accomplish great things so that the teachers of Texas benefit for many years to come.

Houston Association of Retired Teachers
P.O. Box 6727
Houston, TX 77265-6727

Houston Area Retired Teachers Membership Form

It's time to join HART and TRTA for 2022-23

New or Renewing Members—Print legal name below

Preferred name (if different): _____

Contact Information: Address

Preferred phone number: _____

Email: _____

*Attach your check for \$45 (\$35 goes to TRTA and \$10 to HART). If you have your TRTA dues automatically drafted, send \$10 only. Mail to HART, P. O. Box 6727, Houston, TX 77265-6727.

I receive an annuity from a teacher retirement system.

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

Please accept my added donation to HART for general operations and mailings. _____