



Fall Program Snapshot:

September 12

Legislative
Update shared
by Tim Lee,
TRTA
Executive
Director

October 10

Tim Ball will
share about the
Women's
Storybook
Project of Texas

November 14

Bill Dolman from
the National
Museum of the
Pacific will
help us
commemorate
the 80th
anniversary of
the end of
WWII

December 12

Nancy Barr will
share "Stress
Strategies for the
Holidays"

Social hour
begins at
9:15 a.m.

President's Ponderings:

Dear ARTA Members,

Welcome to the 2025 - 2026 TRTA/ARTA year! I extend my gratitude to all new and renewing members. As we are transitioning from another warm, humid, and eventful summer, it is never too late to join, so please consider recruiting and renewing memberships.

We have had quite a year! With our reputation for excellent speakers, wonderful refreshments, and a smooth dues payment process, we gained safe entry to the meeting room, exercised during breaks, explored different door-prize processes, partnered with AMBA to recruit new members, shared ARTA Volunteer Hours with the Texas Deputy Comptroller, and hosted ARTA's first Committee Fair to conclude the year. I look forward to everyone continuing to bridge to the future!

For our September 12th meeting, TRTA Executive Director Tim Lee will present a TRTA Report on the 89th Legislative Session. He must attend another meeting after ours, so he will start right after the pledges. Please get to our meeting as soon as you can! We are meeting with the Austin area school superintendents on September 9th, and we will be so excited to share what happens! I can't wait to see everyone!!

My Bridging to the Future goals this year will include:

1-Membership and Volunteer Services Hours: We continue to attract as many Travis County retired educators as we can.

Please remember this includes EVERYONE – bus drivers, cafeteria workers, secretaries, aides, superintendents, etc. – who have a TRS pension. It is wonderful that Austin ISD allows us to set up a table at their retirement celebration, but we still need members to be active and take on leadership roles.

Providing reasons for members to join and demonstrating how easy it is to keep track of your volunteer hours to show TEXAS how much we support the Texas economy is paramount to our survival as an organization. We are having our first ARTA Area Superintendents Luncheon in early September, and we're excited to share who we are and learn ways we can support them. Our ARTA Membership and Volunteer Services Community Involvement committees are doing an amazing job and can use member support.

2- Members: We have almost 700 members when all the dues come in. We are working with TRTA and technology to make dues reminders/collections easier. I hope our 170 members who haven't renewed their dues have done so by the time you get this newsletter. How are we sharing all that ARTA/TRTA can do and to support each other? One thought is to mentor our 52 new members, something a few members have suggested! We pledge, starting at our September 12th meeting, to meet and greet members as they enter the meeting, help them get their nametags, find someone they can sit with, get them to sign up for door prizes, check out the side tables, and enjoy the amazing food and drink provided by the ARTA Social Committee. There will also be a drawing for an ARTA vest for New Members who attend!! We retirees need something to belong to for our health, vitality, and pension, and ARTA/TRTA is full of opportunities.

3- ARTA Leadership & Organizational Support:

We need to support and grow ARTA leadership. We have some ARTA positions in need of succession planning, and we would like to establish shadow roles to facilitate knowledge transfer and learning. The monthly ARTA Meeting *Newsette* needs an

editor, and the ARTA Historian needs an Archives Committee co-chair to support collecting, maintaining, and displaying the yearly scrapbooks. The ARTA Records Chair needs a co-chair to help keep current membership records. The ARTA Foundation needs a Vice President and to have their bylaws amended for the strength of ARTA in Travis County. We are looking for a Second Vice President position to be announced in January. Interested candidates should contact Joe Ramirez by the beginning of December. Please review the proposed ARTA Standing Rules amendments in this newsletter for more information about this ARTA position that will now align with the TRTA Bylaws. This past summer, we filled out a TRTA Emergency Operations Plan for ARTA in case something happens to ARTA officers. That is why we are working proactively with our leadership and organizational structure.

In closing, I am grateful to share that Rev. Taylor Dieringer, Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, has invited us to celebrate their 75th Anniversary on the last weekend of October. The event will be a Trunk or Treat style fall festival featuring a cookout and various fun activities. It is scheduled for October 25th, 2025, from 5-7 PM in their parking lot at 6600 Woodrow Avenue. We would like to plan a "Trunk" for their Trunk or Treat festival and will provide more information soon. Please add this exciting event to your calendar.

Thank you for your commitment to ARTA. Together, we will bridge to a brighter future!
Norma Jost
ARTA President 2024-2026

ARTA Zoom Meeting Link

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83666120286?pwd=80YFhmWiv5T1PtkUFz6Oav0hQ3Rryo.1>

Meeting ID: 836 6612 0286 Password: Retired

**Legislative Committee Report
By Gloria Cisneros Lenoir**

Dear ARTA friends,

One of my favorite books is *Consilience* by E. O. Wilson, the biologist who specialized in the study of ants. The main premise is that everything is connected. I have a holistic view of things and think about how they are related.

Basically, most know that the \$1 billion voucher bill got passed in the 89th Legislative Session. While at the Texas Capitol, one did not hear that the Texas Teacher Retirement System would be impacted by passage of the voucher bill. It is logical that if public schools in large cities lose enrollment to private schools, where parents can get public funds to help them pay for tuition, less funds would be invested in the retirement pension plan, and yes, the retirement system would be impacted.

Additionally, an \$8.5 billion budget bill passed in the last session. These funds were specifically to be used for such items as increased teacher and support staff salaries and special education services. If one checks the news, since the Education Department is in jeopardy under the current administration in Washington, D.C., some federal funds have not been released. Some independent school districts have reduced staffs, and some are facing deficits. The *Texas Tribune* has excellent articles on these issues.

A special session began on July 21, 2025. The original reason was to deal with the catastrophic flooding that occurred in the Texas Hill Country and to consider other state assessments besides what is currently used in STAAR testing. At this time, no legislation is being considered that relates to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). An item that was added for consideration is redistricting of congressional districts. Several hearings on HB 4 have taken place and on August 4, 2025, it was placed on the Major State Calendar. At least 51 Texas House Democratic representatives broke quorum and left the Texas Capitol so the vote would not take place during the 30-day session. I am confident that our September meeting speaker, Tim Lee, will be able to update us on the matter.

In closing, check out this excellent site for information about legislation: <https://legiscan.com>

**MEMBER BENEFITS UPDATE
By Laura Grayson and Lucia Facundo, Chairs**

Members received the TRS-Care newsletter mailed out on July 21, 2025. Information concerning healthcare coverage and opportunities to attend free and online information events are listed in the newsletter. Most convenient for members might be the TRS-Care Webinars for 2026 Benefits. All Webinars are from 10 AM to 11:30 AM CST. The TRS-Care newsletter provides a QR code for easy registration to the online event or log on to trs.texas.gov/health-benefits/events. Members may also enroll new dependents in TRS-Care Dental and Vision coverage between October 1st and December 8th, 2026. Webinars Dates: Dental and Vision-9/3/25 and 9/17/25, TRS-Care Standard Coverage 9/4/25 and 10/10/25, TRS-Care Medicare Advantage Webinar 9/26/25 and 10/15/25. An AMBA representative will be at our monthly ARTA meetings as well, and members can explore the benefit options AMBA provides. Most importantly, TRS-Care Advantage premiums will stay the same in 2026. This includes medical and pharmacy coverage. Members can call 1 888 237 6762 for further information.

**DISTRICT 13 NEWS:
YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE FALL CONFERENCE ON SEPTEMBER 17**

District 13 cordially invites all chapter members to attend its annual Fall Conference on **Wednesday, September 17, 2025**, at the San Marcos Activity Center (501 E. Hopkins St., San Marcos, TX 78666). Registration and refreshments will be served from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m., with presentations from TRTA, TRS, and AMBA taking place from 9:30 to 2:00 p.m. Lunch will also be provided.

ARTA members planning to attend need to contact President Norma Jost (njost2@yahoo.com) by **Thursday, September 11**, so that we can determine the number of lunch meals to order. There is no charge for attending the conference.

Election of District 13 officers for the 2026-2028 biennium will be conducted at this time. In May, the District 13 Nominating Committee nominated the following members to serve as officers:

- President: Joe Ramirez, Austin RTA
- First Vice-President: Melanie Mica, Fayette County RTA
- Second Vice-President: Alice Castillo, San Marcos ARTS
- Secretary: Shelly McNulty, Bastrop County RTA
- Treasurer: Michial Meyer, Williamson County RTA

Additional nominations may be taken from the floor at the Fall Conference. Elected officers will be installed on March 25, 2026, during the TRTA Virtual House of Delegates/District 13 Spring Conference, which will also be held at the San Marcos Activity Center.

Many of you may not realize that funding for the 20 TRTA districts in the state is based solely on membership dues. For every member renewal or new membership within its boundaries, a district receives \$3.00 of a member's \$35 state dues paid to TRTA. In addition, TRTA sends each chapter \$10 for every new membership if its numbers on February 28 increase from the previous February 28.

It is important that all members renew state and chapter dues and recruit new members to keep districts and chapters financially sound. For more information on District 13, please visit our website at <https://district13trta.wixsite.com/district-13-trta> and like our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TRTADistrict13>. TRTA, its 20 districts, and many local chapters are the voice for ALL public education retirees.

*Joe Ramirez
District 13 President, 2024-2026*

Identification Committee

By Lois Mayes, Co-Chair

Name tags are provided for members to wear during meetings. The tags are collected at the end of the meeting. A list of members on Zoom is made. Attendance is recorded using the returned tags and the Zoom list. Perfect attendance is determined after the May meeting. A drawing is held at the September meeting to award a free \$15 ARTA dues for one year. The winner needs to pay TRTA dues. In 2024-2025, 18 members had perfect attendance. Two on the list are Past Presidents who have dues paid by the ARTA treasurer each year. Sixteen are eligible for the drawing at the September 2025 meeting.

Barbara Bell
Norma Jost
Lois Mayes
Joyce Clendennen
LaNell Coltharp

Gladys Havel
Marcia Caldwell
Diane Wright
Maria Martinez
Terry Morganti-Fisher

Gloria Munguía
Rudy Munguía
Catherine van Zanten
Patty Young

Glenda Black
Heidi Langan
Laura Grayson
Judy Wallace

Check out our website: www.austintrta.org

ARTA Membership Update

By Terry Morganti-Fisher & Bonnie Cross, Membership Co-Chairs

Happy Fall 2025! We are so excited to announce the \$25 HEB gift card winners for the "Early Bird Dues" drawing ARTA/TRTA Members: Glenda M. Black, LaNell (Helen) Coltharp, Lloy G. Lizcano, and Catherine M. Thomas and NEW ARTA Members: Joan Hampton and Punam Rana!

Please help us by sharing the membership form and our website link with a retired friend.

Dues may be paid online at our new ARTA website: <https://austintrta.org/membership> or at our upcoming ARTA meeting on Sept 13, 2025.

Membership Form: AUSTIN RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (ARTA)

ANNUAL ARTA & TRTA MEMBERSHIP DUES – Supporting ALL Retired School Personnel

To be a member of ARTA, you must **ALSO** be a member of the *TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (TRTA)* Please pay **BOTH** your membership dues online at our ARTA Website:
<https://austintrta.org/membership>

or

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO USE THE ARTA WEBSITE, please complete this form **AND SEND IT WITH** a check payable to **ARTA** for **\$50.00**

****If you have your TRTA membership dues deducted monthly or annually by TRS, TRTA or AMBA, please COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND IT WITH a check payable to ARTA for \$15.00**

Mail to:

Tony Dishner, ARTA Treasurer
2218 Speidel Drive
Pflugerville, TX 78660-5067

NAME _____

PHONE _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

CIRCLE: Do you want to be contacted by the ARTA Telephone Tree for meeting reminders? **YES** **NO**

Do you want your phone number and address listed in the ARTA Yearbook? **YES** **NO**

For new members only: Please list the name of recruiter: _____

➔ If you would like to pay by credit card, complete your card information on the back of this form and **mail to Tony Dishner, ARTA Treasurer.**

Other questions about membership and support please contact us at tamf5683@gmail.com or bonnie@bonniecross.com Thank you for your membership and support,
Terry Morganti-Fisher and Bonnie Cross, ARTA Membership Committee Co-chairs

For treasurers' use only:

TRTA Member# _____	Payment Date: _____	Payment Amount: ☐ Check # _____ ☐ Cash _____ ☐ Credit Card/Debit _____

Page 2 Membership Form: AUSTIN RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (ARTA)

- ➔ If you would like to pay by credit card, please complete your card information and mail this form to
- ➔ **Tony Dishner, ARTA Treasurer**
2218 Speidel Drive
Pflugerville, TX 78660-5067

Please charge my card: ☐ Am Express ☐ Discover ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa	
Card Number:	
Expiration Date:	Amount: ☒ \$52.00 (\$50.00 dues + \$2.00 fee)
CVC Code:	or
Zip Code:	If you have your TRTA membership dues deducted monthly or annually by TRS, TRTA or AMBA, please pay
	Amount: ☒ \$17.00 (\$15.00 dues + \$2.00 fee)
Signature _____	

 ARTA		1234
PAY TO THE ORDER OF <u><Edit text here></u> \$ <u><EDIT HERE></u>		
<Edit text here> D 15.00		
FOR <u>Fifteen dollars and 00/00</u>		
FOR <u>ARTA dues</u>		0 5678

 ARTA		1234
PAY TO THE ORDER OF <u><Edit text here></u> \$ 50.00		
<u>Fifty dollars and 00/00</u> DOLLARS		
FOR <u>ARTA and TRTA dues</u>		
		123456789 0890 5678



Telephone Tree Committee Report
 By Rachel Davila, Co-Chair

The Telephone Tree Committee welcomes all our members to the 2025-26 ARTA year! Over the summer, the committee reviewed and updated our call list. We will continue to call members on an opt-in system. If you were overlooked and would like a monthly call to remind you of a meeting, please contact Sheila Sargent at gwsargent@sbcglobal.net or Rachel Davila at rm2davila@hotmail.com to be placed on the call list. We appreciate all our members and look forward to this new school year.

Program Report

By Warren Faulkner, Program Committee Chair

Mark your calendars and plan to join us on the following dates this year:

- **Friday, September 12:** Our program will feature a **Legislative update** and recap of the 89th Legislative Session by Tim Lee, TRTA Executive Director. Tim Lee has been the Executive Director of TRTA since 2004. He built TRTA into a powerful advocacy and action organization representing the interests of retired public-school employees. Tim and his wife Nicole have four children: Carter, Grace, Ethan, & Ryan. Before moving his family to Dripping Springs, his children attended Austin ISD schools. Please arrive to this meeting early since Tim will begin speaking promptly at 9:45 a.m.
- **Friday, October 10:** Tim Ball will share about the **The Women's Storybook Project of Texas**.
- **Friday, November 14:** In honor of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, Bill Dolman from the **National Museum of the Pacific** will present our Veteran's Day program.
- **Friday, December 13:** Enjoy the annual ARTA **holiday meeting** with music, fellowship, treats, and speaker Nancy Barr, who will lead a session entitled, "Stress Strategies for the Holidays."
- **Friday, January 9:** Executive Director Johanna Stahl-Mandel of **Capital City Village** will share about how seniors can age in place and maintain healthy, active lifestyles.
- **Friday February 13:** Dr. Joaquin Cigarroa from St. David's Healthcare will provide information on heart health.
- **Friday, March 13:** Join us for ARTA's **74th Birthday Luncheon at Chez Zee** with speakers Judy Maggio and Wesley Rose from ATX Good News.
- **Friday, April 11:** Come hear about Better ATX (**the Assistance League of Austin**) from Board President Peggy Besand.
- **Friday, May 8:** Recognition of the ARTA scholarship recipients, installation of 2026-2028 officers, ARTA committee fair, and enjoy the annual ice cream social.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

By Marsha Lyons-Gray

As educators, we observed both significant and minor achievements while supporting our students. Although these experiences remain with us, we have entered a new stage in life and continue to contribute in different and lasting ways to others. In 2024, ARTA contributed over two million dollars to community projects in the Austin area. As we reflect on last year's achievements, our focus now shifts to our serving and reporting for 2025. Last spring, we established a goal to contribute three million dollars in in-kind support to our community. So, the question is, "How might we achieve our goal?"

- Aim to ensure that at least 50% of our members report their service involvement hours and keep their records current.
- Service encompasses voluntary contributions intended to benefit society. Members may log up to 12 hours daily.
- Participate in ARTA initiatives such as the Lions Club Eye Glass Drive and the Read for the Record Project.
- Engage in public education and appropriate civic activities.
- Provide support to both family members and neighbors as needed.

CHANGE: Please report your hours monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually to Dr. Marsha Gray using any method on the collection form. If you need the form, visit the ARTA website for details. Submit your time promptly, as we are already halfway through 2025. Volunteering involves supporting others while also providing opportunities for personal growth and new experiences. As we look ahead, shared actions can have a positive impact on future communities.



ARTA Foundation Report
By Glenda Black, ARTA Foundation President



The total donated this year to the ARTA Foundation Scholarship fund is \$5,898.82 or 35.1% of the \$16,800 required to fund 14 scholarships for 2026 AISD graduating seniors of \$1200 each. One scholarship is offered to a graduating senior from each of the 14 Austin ISD high schools.

Donors this year who helped make the scholarships possible include Joe Ramirez, Sheila Sargent, Dr. Rosemary Morrow and Linda Harvey in memory of Larry Havel, Joe Ramirez in memory of Kristi Clendennen, Tony Garza, and Betty Blomquist. Kay Bouska in memory of Wayne Schade and Jackie Hastay. Gloria and Rudy Munguía make a monthly contribution to the Foundation. Linda Harvey, Kay Bouska, and Sheila Sargent honored Betty Clough, 2025 ARTA Sweetheart, and Betty Clough donated to the Foundation in memory of Mimi Parris and Loretta Hughes.

Patricia Boswell gave a full scholarship designated for a McCallum student in memory of her mother, Audrey Little. Joe Ramirez gave a full scholarship in memory of Susana Alemán. Susana Alemán's family transferred her ARTA dues to the Foundation. Judy Wallace donated in memory of her mother, an ARTA member, and donated in memory of her father. Catherine G van Zanten donated in memory of her mother Jeanne Gilmore. ARTA donated in memory of Margaret Anderson, Estella Akins, Betty Blomquist, Fred Leider, Susana Alemán, Miriam Parris, Loretta Hughes, Betty Stephens, and Betty Moore. Emma Lea Mayton donated in memory of Fred Leider. Joe Ramirez gave in memory of Loretta Hughes, Gary Smith, Thomas Fincher, Mary Bach, and Justin Gabriel. Rosemary Morrow contributed in memory of Gary Smith. Theresa Tannert, Carolyn Sue Sharpe, Kathleen Silva, Janice Jones, and Wayne Bowen gave to the Foundation. Glenda Black and Rosemary Morrow gave in memory of Joe Bell. The Roadrunners Investment Club members Joe Ramirez, Jan Zajicek, Nancy Lehmann-Carsow and Kate Donaho contributed in memory of Loretta Hughes.

Make the ARTA Foundation a part of your charitable giving each year. It is a 501(c)(3) and tax deductible. Memorialize a friend. Honor a birthday or significant event in a friend's life. Support our effort to help fund the educators of the future. It's your Foundation!



ARTA Foundation Memorials for September 2025

Jane "Fairlee" Gourley-Willis was born in 1935 in San Antonio, Texas. Her father served in the US Air Force so the family moved frequently but settled in Austin when Jane was 16. She began her studies at the University of Texas at Austin at an early age and graduated with a degree in Library Science.

For over 40 years, Jane dedicated herself to the children of AISD as librarian at Leona Doss Elementary, where the library is named after her. She was honored by George and Laura Bush through the Office of the Governor. Her warm, welcoming nature resonated deeply with both students and parents who continued to seek her out long after they moved on from her library. She volunteered with Operation School Bell at the Assistance League of Austin, providing clothes for children in need. She was a die-hard UT sports fan and loved her pets. Animals were a special part of her life, and she often read stories about pets during her library sessions. Jane died April 27, 2025, at age 89. She was an ARTA member from 2010 to 2025.

Judith Rae Carr Kalb was born in 1941 in Seattle, Washington, and grew up in West Seattle in a family with three girls and a little brother. She enjoyed singing led by her father and the dance costumes carefully sewn by her mother. The family took long walks up wooded hills behind their home and ate wild blackberries off the bushes there. She graduated high school there as a serious-minded and avid reader but had no plans to attend college until her boss at Boeing encouraged her to go to college. She studied political science and history at Washington State University. She was recruited to work on the LBJ campaign in Seattle and then to work in Washington D.C. She met and married Jon Kalb from Houston, a pre-doctoral fellow. His work in geology led them to move to Ethiopia with their infant daughter. Judy taught English at a nearby Catholic girls' school. Their second daughter was born there. Political upheaval in 1978 forced them to leave Ethiopia.

They settled in Austin, where Judy earned a master's degree in Elementary Education at UT and taught children at Ortega and Hill elementary schools. When Jon was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Judy retired to help care for him. During the pandemic and a few years after Jon's death, Judy moved into a retirement home in San Francisco near her daughter, who helped care for her after she developed dementia. Judy died May 27, 2025, at age 84. She was an ARTA member from 2001 to 2019.

Memorials Continued:

Elizabeth “Betty” Elaine Behles Wrigley Owen was born in San Antonio in 1932. After graduating from Ursuline Academy, she pursued a degree in education at Our Lady of the Lake University. She moved to Eagle Pass, Texas, where she taught 6th grade. There, she met and married Jack Wrigley and had a son. After Jack’s death, Betty moved to Austin, where she met and married Bill Owen. She taught in the Austin Independent School District. During retirement, Betty was active in American Association of University Women, Delta Kappa Gamma, and ARTA. She volunteered at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. She was a member of St. Ignatius Catholic Church, where she was active with Catholic Daughters and taught religious education. She baked for fundraising bake sales and for Safe Place. Betty died June 2, 2025. She was an ARTA member from 1990 to 2025.

Mary Beth Miller Bach was born in 1950 in Rock Rapids, Iowa. She earned a BA in education at the University of Northern Iowa and met her future husband Dennis Bach there. In Des Moines, she taught pre-school, Kindergarten and 2nd grade and raised four sons. When her husband was offered a job in Texas, the family moved to Austin. Mary taught at Popham Elementary in Del Valle and Burnet Middle School in Austin. She was asked to work with dyslexia students and turned it into a passion. She was a long-time board member of the Austin Area Branch of the International Dyslexia Association and served as its president. Mary earned a Master of Education degree and then a PhD in Special Education at UT Austin. She was known for her professionalism and dedication, wit and gently sarcastic sense of humor, and her love of family.

Mary died June 16, 2025. She was an ARTA member from 2020 to 2025.

Charlene Marcella Zimmermann was born in Schulenburg, Texas, in 1938. The family moved to Austin, where they opened Zimmermann Texaco on Guadalupe Street. Charlene graduated as valedictorian of McCallum High School in 1956 and earned her degree in education from the University of Texas. She had a deep calling to teach which blossomed into a 39-year career at Brentwood Elementary, where she nurtured generations of young learners with skill, patience, and creativity. Her homemade kolaches, strudel, cookies, and divinity became treasured gifts for family, friends, and neighbors. Her artistic talents showed up everywhere, from meticulously cut bulletin board letters to hand-painted lunch boxes and lovingly crafted Christmas ornaments. A lifelong Lutheran, Charlene began her journey at First English Lutheran Church and later Faith Lutheran Church. She was a member of Epsilon Kappa Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma. She died June 29, 2025. Charlene was an ARTA member from 2000 to 2025.

Kimberly Burd Royal was born February 18, 1961, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She was an accomplished educator who earned her bachelor’s degree and two master’s degrees. Kim worked as an ELA curriculum specialist for Austin ISD and then served as principal of Widen Elementary before her retirement. Her passion for education shone brightly as she inspired countless children and colleagues. Her infectious laughter, kind heart, and nurturing spirit created cherished memories for those she loved. She died July 4, 2025, at age 64. She was an ARTA member from 2023 to 2025.

Joel (Joe) Forrest Bell was born in 1946 in Delhi, Louisiana. His family lived in Dallas until he settled in Shreveport when Joe was in junior high. He graduated from Baylor University with a bachelor’s degree in biology and earned a master’s degree in design and simulation from the University of Texas at Austin. After Baylor, Joe worked in Italy and Libya as a mud logger. He traveled in Europe on field breaks. Upon returning to the United States, he worked at the UT language lab and taught science and social studies at O. Henry Junior High. He later developed an expertise in information technology and for 30 years implemented software at several businesses. In retirement, he was the part-time pantry director of Micah 6, a non-profit across from UT. Joe was energetic, creative, curious, and resilient. He loved to teach others and taught a Sunday School class that studied books and films at University Baptist Church. He cooked for the church too and was known for his enormous jars of pimento cheese or egg salad prepared for meetings. He operated the church’s sound system and served as a deacon and a missions committee member. Once Joe knew he had Alzheimer’s, he walked several miles a day and adopted a diet he thought would slow the progress of the disease. He participated in a clinical trial to help determine the benefits of a new memory loss drug. He and his wife Ellen became members of Love Notes, a chorus for persons with memory loss and their partners. He attended House of Friends.

Joe died July 9, 2025. He was an ARTA member from 2020-2025. His wife of 54 years, Ellen Victory Bell, also an ARTA member, survives him. Together, they were a marvelous example for all of us of making the most of every moment of life.

Ruth Elizabeth “Rusty” Grimes Poynor Cribbs was born in 1937 in Paris, Texas. She lived in Dallas and graduated from the University of North Texas. She married Hugh Poynor, and they had one son. She later married William Randolph Cribbs and enjoyed real estate development in Winter Haven, Florida, until his death.

Rusty taught Special Education, early childhood education, and elementary grades in AISD until her retirement in 2000. She volunteered at the Texas Military Forces Museum, the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, and was active in UT LAMP. She died July 21, 2025, at age 87. She was an ARTA member from 2001 to 2025.

Treasurer's Report
By Tony Dishner, ARTA Treasurer

Many thanks to this year's budget committee comprised of Tony Dishner- Chair, Rudy Munguía, Wendy Abel, Joe Ramirez, Gladys Havel, and Norma Jost. Our budget was calculated based on dues income of 600 members X \$15 each totaling \$9,000, plus an \$800 reimbursement from District 13, and \$2,620 reserve funds giving a total projected income of \$12,420. To follow is the proposed budget for the 2025-2026 ARTA year to be approved at the September regular meeting.

Austin Retired Teachers Association Proposed Budget

	August 13, 2025	Budget	Expenses	Proposed Budget
		2024-2025	2024-2025	2025-2026
1	OFFICERS			
2	ALL OFFICERS	1200	563.57	1000
3	STANDING/SPECIAL COMMITTEES			
4	Archives	25		25
5	Bulk Mailing	900	354	800
6	Children's Book Project			50
7	Communication/Volunteer Services	25		25
8	Contingency/Miscellaneous	1175		700
9	Convention (Not scheduled for this year)	25		25
10	Courtesy	75	130.15	75
11	Health & Safety	25		25
12	Historian	300	145.77	300
13	Identification	25		25
14	Legislative	400	315	200
15	Luncheon	100		100
16	Meeting Place (Faith Lutheran Church)	1120	1120	1120
17	Member Benefits	25		25
19	Membership	500	632.59	585
20	Monthly Meeting Packet/ Luncheon Program			600
21	Newsletter	2200	1814.68	1500
22	Post Office Box/Safety Deposit Box			460
23	Program/Door Prizes	150		200
24	Records	25		25
25	Retirement Education	25		25
26	Scholarship Memorials	300	345	300
27	Social	250	201.16	225
28	Standing Rules	25		25
29	Technology	2000	607.24	1200
30	Telephone	25		25
31	Yearbook	1500	1746	2000
32	TOTAL	12,420	8000.16	11,665

**Proposed Amendments to the ARTA Standing Rules
By Jane Garner, Standing Rules Committee Chair**

The Standing Rules Committee proposes the adoption of the following proposed amendments to align the responsibilities of the ARTA Second Vice-President, Treasurer, and Communications Committee Chair to the current TRTA Bylaws, District 13 Standing Rules, and the new TRTA Operations Emergency Plan. Membership will vote on these proposed amendments at the October 10 ARTA meeting to go into effect July 1, 2026:

If adopted, **Rule 7.1.4 as amended** shall read:

The Second Vice-President shall:

- a. preside in the absence of the President and First Vice-President;
- b. serve as chair of the Communications Committee;
- c. represent the chapter Communications Committee at the district and state levels;
- d. promote the Children's Book Project and serve as coordinator or work with the assigned Children's Book Project coordinator;
- e. promote or work with the Technology Chair and committee to maintain local chapter website, newsletters, and social media.

If adopted, **Rule 7.1.6 as amended** will include the additional two responsibilities:

The Treasurer shall:

- g. complete the annual review and revision of the TRTA Operations Emergency Plan with assistance from the President, Technology Chair and the ARTA Foundation Treasurer;
- h. retain a copy of the TRTA Operations Emergency Plan along with the ARTA President and one other bonded officer to serve as an alternate and notify the District 13 Treasurer annually when the plan has been completed.

If adopted, **Rule 11.4 as amended** shall read:

Communications Committee. This committee shall promote and publicize TRTA state, district, and local chapter activities to the general public, all active and retired educational employees, and elected officials. The Second Vice-President shall chair and represent this committee at the district and state levels.

11.4.1 TRTA Children's Book Project:

- a. collects children's books suitable for pre-K through grade 5;
- b. selects a donor elementary school and a receiving elementary school in support of "Student to Student" gifts of books for the same grades;
- c. determines dates for the collecting period;
- d. screens books and inserts book labels;
- e. delivers books to the receiving school;
- a. submits an annual report to the Second Vice-Presidents of ARTA and District 13.
(Previously Rule 11.5.1 under the Courtesy Committee)

Endorsed by the ARTA Executive Board, August 4, 2025

**TRTF IS OFFERING DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE
FOR TRS RETIREES AFFECTED BY THE JULY HILL COUNTRY FLOODS**

The Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) and Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF) are saddened by the loss experienced due to the recent flooding. Both TRTA and TRTF are focusing on doing our part, especially helping those TRS retirees impacted during this time of need. Many of our members and supporters have suffered greatly from these floods. If you or someone you know needs financial assistance, TRTF is here to help. TRTF is currently offering \$500 grants through its Disaster Relief program to help cover emergency expenses. To complete the application, you can either go to https://trtf.org/TRTF/TRTF/Initiatives/Disaster_Relief_Fund.aspx?hkey=37f48c11-64d6-4e35-bd70-199174f86422 or complete and mail the document included in this newsletter. Please be aware that it may take an extended amount of time to respond to requests. **Grant seekers are NOT required to be members of the TRTA but must be receiving an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS).**

If you have the ability to contribute to TRTF's Disaster Relief program, TRTF has a donation page set up at https://trtf.org/TRTF/TRTF/Donations/Donation_Home.aspx?hkey=e0f4eb53-66a0-474d-a1fb-e8a99a3bf491. All donations are tax-deductible, and your donation will go directly towards helping retired Texas educators. Thus far, we've raised more than \$8,000 in donations during this time of need. Our hearts are heavy as we know so many of our members have been impacted by the floods. Thank you for your membership to TRTA and your contributions.

Joe Ramirez, District 13 President and Dr. Rosemary Morrow, District 13 TRTF Liaison



The Texas Retired Teachers Foundation Disaster Relief Short-Term Assistance Request

TRTF's Disaster Relief program assists retired public-school personnel in Texas who require emergency assistance for a one-time special need or other short-term hardship as a result of a disaster. Approved recipients for this assistance will receive a one-time grant from TRTF via direct deposit or check.

Grant seekers are NOT required to be members of the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA), but must be receiving an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS)

Complete and return to TRTF at 313 E. 12th Street, Ste. 220, Austin, TX 78701 or email to help@trtf.org.

SECTION 1

Grant Seeker Name _____

Phone Number _____

Permanent Address _____ City _____ County _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Are you displaced from your home currently? (Check one) ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please provide an alternate address where you are able to receive mail below.

Alternate Address _____ City _____ County _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Are you a member of the Texas Retired Teachers Association? (Check one) ☐ YES ☐ NO

Are you receiving benefits from TRS? (Check one) ☐ YES ☐ NO

Please include proof of your TRS annuity. Examples include a bank statement or form 1099-R.

Briefly explain the nature of your emergency and for what needs you will be using financial assistance from TRTF. (Please attach an additional page to explain if more space is needed).

SECTION 2

TRTF's preferred method of providing aid to Disaster Relief recipients is via direct deposit. If you are uncomfortable with providing the information requested below for a direct deposit, TRTF will issue and mail a paper check to your permanent address if you are residing there currently or your alternate address if you have been misplaced from your residence. Please indicate your preference below:

If approved for a TRTF Disaster Relief grant, I prefer: (Check one) ☐ Direct Deposit ☐ Paper Check

Bank Name _____

Account Number _____

Routing Number _____

Signature _____

**ARTA Scholar Update
By Glenda Black**

Since we received the name of our thirteenth ARTA Foundation scholar from Crockett High School after the other scholars were recognized, to follow is some information about her. Aubriana Arispe was selected thanks to the perseverance of her high school counselor, who kept on the case until she found a qualified nominee. Aubriana, 18, plans to attend Austin Christian University to study Early Childhood Education to pursue a career as a Kindergarten teacher and school counselor. At Crockett, she was captain of the basketball team and all-district honorable mention. She was also on the tennis and track teams. She was a member of the National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Student Leadership Council and Thrive youth group. Her essay is entitled "Losing Myself to Find Myself" in response to the assigned topic- "A personal challenge that I had to overcome and how I overcame it." She wrote, "I can remember this time like it was yesterday because it was the year I lost myself. I went from being someone full of energy and motivation to someone I barely recognized. I felt as if I were always exhausted, distant and disconnected from everything that once brought me joy. I stopped doing the things I loved. I drifted from friends. I smiled less. What helped me start healing was one small but powerful moment when someone finally asked me 'What's really going on?' That question permitted me to stop pretending. I started opening up to my coach, whom I trusted, then slowly to my mom and eventually to myself." "I am applying for this scholarship because I want to take what I have been through and use it to help others. Whether it is through mentoring, counseling or just being someone who listens, I want to be there for people who feel lost like I once did. Thank you for considering my story. I learned that even the hard parts of our journeys can lead to something meaningful."

To give you a further feel for the scholars we fund, here is a part of the essay submitted by Nathan Howard, our McCallum High School scholar. "I adore music. It gives me chills. It makes me cry. It makes it impossible for me not to smile. My love of music is without a doubt the first thing that people should know about me. I can travel to places I've never even seen and return to those I've forgotten. I can feel things I can't describe and feel things I know all too well. I can see all my favorite people in music. I can see God in music. Music never bores me and the effect it has on me can come from anywhere." "It's when I consider the breadth of music in my own life and what it can do to me that I begin to imagine what it can mean for others. Two realizations in this have become integral to me. The first is that, despite appearing differently to everyone, music has the ability to affect us all in the same massive ways. How could this be so, given the vast variety of music and the infinite variety of listeners? The second is that, despite its enormity, we are capable of giving music to each other as a gift. How could such a thing be possible? Well, the former, in many ways, enables us to accomplish the latter." "When I listen to the perspectives of the world around me, I find that my own love for music is more in tune. I am reminded of what music can do, and I am empowered to step back on stage, into the practice room, and I hope, into a middle school or high school choir room someday to pursue my craft with all my heart."

Another of our scholars, Lucy Johnson, a graduate of Bowie High School, who plans to teach third grade wrote, "I want to build a classroom where students are excited to learn, where they feel safe to make mistakes, and where they're empowered to ask questions and take risks without the fear of feeling 'stupid.' Creating this kind of environment involves fostering a space where vulnerability is welcomed, and mistakes are recognized as part of the learning process. I plan to implement activities and discussions that encourage students to share their thoughts, knowing that their contributions are valuable. I believe that when students feel confident in expressing themselves, they are more likely to take intellectual risks and challenge themselves academically. My goal is not only to inspire my students to improve academically but also to help them build confidence in their own abilities. Learning should never be about feeling left behind; it should be about growth, exploration and realizing that no one is ever 'too far behind' to catch up. I want my classroom to be a place of joy—where kids feel energized, curious, and eager to tackle challenges. Above all, I want to show my students that learning is a lifelong journey that doesn't have to be a chore—it can be fun, exciting and full of potential. I want my students to understand that education is not just about passing tests or meeting standards- it's about developing skills, discovering passions and embracing the process of learning as something valuable in itself. By providing a safe, engaging and supportive space, I hope to set my students up for long-term success both in the classroom and beyond. I want them to leave my class not only having gained academic knowledge but also with a greater sense of

Scholar Update Continued:

self-confidence, curiosity and a love for learning that will carry with them throughout their lives.”

The ARTA Foundation is now funding subsequent years for at least two of our scholars who have completed their first year of college. This year, three previous recipients received a second continuing scholarship since the funds became available. The essays submitted by our continuing scholars give a glimpse into their progress to become educators. Dulce Nolasco wrote, “During my first year in college, I took Introduction to the Teaching Profession, a course which has helped me gain a better understanding on what it will take to become a future educator. Through this class, I gained classroom management skills, learned teaching methods, and grew confident that I am capable of doing this. By taking this course, I had the opportunity to observe multiple schools and a variety of grades that allowed me to watch how each teacher stood their ground, organized their rooms and had different attention getting strategies. Being in a class surrounded by others who have the same passion as me motivate me to continue this journey. I understand being a teacher is a big responsibility, and I am fully committed to making a change in the students’ lives.”

Angelica Chu wrote in her essay, “During this first year of studying at the University of Texas at Austin, I learned that education classes are the ones I tend to enjoy the most. The class that made me realize that education is the right path for me is called Foundations of US Schooling. I still remember on the first day of class when my professor asked us to protect an egg while every group had a different amount of resources. When the whole class realized how unfair it was, we all started arguing. My professor looked at all of us and laughed. He said we only cared about the fairness of the activity and forgot about the main objective, which was to protect the egg. He told us that this was an example of how different schools have different resources, yet as the teacher, your goal is not to make sure whether things are fair; instead, your job is to protect the student and put all your focus on them. On my own time, I was able to start my own tutoring sessions that aimed to help foreign children of all ages improve their English. My goal when it comes to my career is to make a positive impact on children by helping them learn and grow.”

Our third continuing scholar, Devonna Sterling, wrote of the challenges of being a freshman in college. She related, “This past school year was full of ups and downs, and honestly, it taught me a lot more than I expected. One of the biggest challenges I faced was time management. In high school, I was so used to doing all of my work in class so I wouldn’t have to do anything when I get home and could just relax. In college, that changed fast. I never had time to finish work in class so what I did was as soon as I was done with all of my classes, I would start on work I can get done in one day in my room. Then, I also had to learn how to study since I didn’t really do that in high school, as well as learning how to manage my time and how to stay focused when distractions were everywhere. It was hard though, because they were everywhere. There were moments when I fell behind or became frustrated, but eventually I started to figure out what worked for me. I started planning my weeks breaking down assignments and using campus resources like tutoring and study groups. It didn’t happen overnight, but it made a huge difference.”

We hope you have enjoyed reading about our scholars. Our ARTA Foundation scholarships are our way of investing in the next generation of educators. Please continue to support our effort.

TRTA Children’s Book Project

By Maria Martinez, TRTA Children’s Book Project Coordinator

I wish to thank all ARTA members who volunteered at Cook Elementary on May 5th in the completion of our book project. ARTA members and partnering schools donated 873 books.

Your generous participation in this worthwhile effort is certainly appreciated by children who otherwise might not have a book of their own. Beginning in September, books will be collected at our ARTA monthly meetings for the 2026 school year. Also, a BIG thank you to Joe Ramirez, who offered to share his storage unit to house our boxes of books for this year. Looking forward to seeing everyone at our September meeting.



ARTA Health News

Avoiding Excess Sugar

In the May/June edition of the *AARP Bulletin*, there was an article about “The Aging Power of Sugar.” In summary, the article proposed that we can slow down the aging process by avoiding sugar. Research suggests that most Americans eat anywhere from 55–92 grams of added sugar daily, which is equivalent to 13–22 teaspoons of table sugar each day. For example, 1 cup (271 grams) of cranberry juice contains more than 7 teaspoons of sugar (31 grams). The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that men should not exceed 36 grams (9 teaspoons) of sugar each day and women 25 grams (6 teaspoons).

Excess sugar consumption can accelerate the aging process, impacting both physical appearance and overall health. The primary mechanism is called glycation, where sugar molecules attach to proteins like collagen and elastin, forming harmful compounds called Advanced Glycation End Products (AGEs). We have heard forever how sugar can cause tooth decay, add to weight gain, and increase your diabetes risk. Sugar also contributes to chronic inflammation, mitochondrial dysfunction, and hormonal imbalances, all of which play a role in age-related decline. Furthermore, this process leads to wrinkles, sagging skin, and a dull complexion. Sugar can overwhelm mitochondria, the powerhouses of cells, leading to decreased efficiency and contributing to muscle loss, fatigue, and organ degeneration. Fluctuations in blood sugar and insulin levels can disrupt hormones, affecting sleep, mood, and potentially increasing cortisol levels. In a July 2024 study, researchers at the University of California – San Francisco found that people who ate a diet low in added sugar were biologically younger regardless of how healthy they managed their daily routine. Eating lots of sugar causes your body to age seven times its natural rate.

The American Heart Association suggests the following tips:

- Shop wisely. Compare nutrition food labels and choose products with the lowest amounts of added sugars.
- Go from added to natural. Instead of adding sugar to cereal or oatmeal, enjoy the sweetness from the natural sugars found in fruits.
- Half it. When baking cookies, brownies or cakes, cut the sugar called for in your recipe by one-third to one-half. Often you won't notice the difference.
- Use flavor extracts. Reduce some of the added sugar in recipes by using extracts, such as almond, vanilla, orange or lemon, to add some sweet scent without adding sugar.
- Spice it up. Enhance foods with warm spices instead of all the added sugar. Try ginger, allspice, cinnamon or nutmeg.
- Drink more water.

So do we have to avoid all sweets? Of course not, as occasional sugar indulgence is not harmful. The key is awareness and moderation. Be mindful of hidden sugars in processed foods, sugary drinks, condiments, yogurts, etc. Choose healthy snacks. Low sugar, healthy snacks include options like edamame, apple slices with peanut butter, roasted chickpeas, cottage cheese with berries, eggs, and nuts. These snacks provide protein, fiber, and healthy fats, helping to manage blood sugar levels and prevent energy crashes. To address that extra craving for a sweet, choose dark chocolate!

ARTA Yearbooks

By Marilyn Gregory, Yearbook Editor

The 2025-2026 ARTA Yearbook is at Thomas Graphics being printed and should be ready for mailing by early September. All current paid ARTA members will receive their yearbook by postal mail in September. Read through all parts of the yearbook and use it as a reference for information you will need throughout the year.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE INVOLVEMENT

ARTA members, are you seeking new opportunities? Multiple service roles are available. Please see the options below for participation details.

1. Academy 4 Needs Volunteers at Hart Elementary:

Academy 4 is dedicated to supporting every school it serves. Academy 4 matches each fourth-grade student with a community volunteer mentor who meets monthly to foster the development of leadership skills.

- Volunteers engage in one-on-one sessions with students on designated Fridays from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
- Volunteers play a pivotal role by building supportive, dependable relationships with students.

Spark Clubs

- Spark Clubs are made up of two 45-minute segments, each with 10–12 students under the guidance of 2–3 leaders.
- These clubs aim to inspire students to explore new interests and expand their perspectives.
- Activities offered include art, cooking, music, soccer, among others.

Academy 4 provides all necessary materials for leadership mentoring. Volunteers conduct one 90-minute session per month on designated Fridays from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

View a video showcasing a typical Academy 4 Friday:

<https://sites.google.com/view/a4sparkclubs>

For more information about Academy 4, contact: Anna Scott, the Austin, TX Site Coordinator

Office: 817-744-8707 | Cell: 737-300-6827

685 John B Sias Memorial Pkwy, Ste 215, Fort Worth, TX 76134

ACADEMY4.ORG

2. SEEDLING Project Needs Mentors:

Seedling's mission is to mitigate the impact of parental incarceration.

The program staff works closely with mentors and schools to ensure successful matches and offers ongoing support. Mentors volunteer about 30–45 minutes each week during the school year to build positive relationships with students. Pairings are based on shared interests for productive, healthy connections.

For more information, contact info@seedlingmentors.org.

ARTA Address Update

After many years of using ARTA members' personal addresses, the Austin Retired Teacher Association has an official address! It should not be used, however, for mailing in dues as membership dues must still be sent directly to the ARTA treasurer as noted on the membership form on page 4 of this newsletter.

The new USPS ARTA address is as follows: **Austin Retired Teachers Association**

P.O. Box 90878

Austin, TX 78709

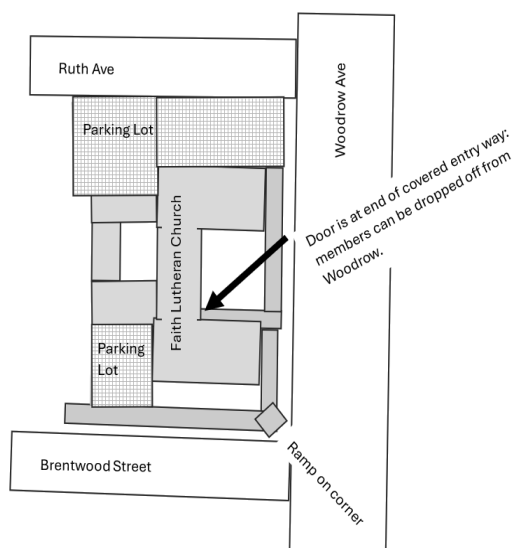
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ARTA NEWS is a tri-annual publication of the
Austin Retired Teachers Association.
Inquiries may be directed to Debbie Sansom,
Editor, by phone at (512)799-9624 or to Norma
Jost, ARTA President at
njost2@yahoo.com

ARTA Door Entry/Exit Reminder at Faith Lutheran Church



1. ARTA members need to keep in mind that we **MUST** honor the contractual obligations stipulated by Faith Lutheran Church when using its meeting facilities. This is essential for the safety of our members, the children in the daycare center, and church staff.
2. Do not leave any doors propped open.
3. Please avoid the courtyard by the daycare center at all times. If needing to step outside at break, exit through the south entrance.
4. Enter/exit our meeting space either through the doors closest to the restrooms and out toward Woodrow Ave. or through the south entrance on Brentwood Street.