



Austin Retired Teachers Association

Regular Monthly Meeting

Friday, February 13, 2026

Hybrid Meeting: In Person or Zoom at Faith Lutheran Church



AGENDA

ZOOM LOG-IN/SOCIAL TIME: 9:15 a.m.–9:45 a.m.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85025126693?pwd=JBbLTGRS9mmlbQ9rFzkobSRrRhVfVJ.1>

Meeting ID: 850 2512 6693 Passcode: Retired

*****ARTA Meet & Greet Commitment!*****

GATHERING:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1) Call to Order/Announcements | Norma Jost |
| a. Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. and Texas flags | Harishini Ernest |
| b. Inspiration | Warren Faulkner |

2) PROGRAM:

Introduction of Speaker: Leilani Clark

“Heart Health”

Mary Elizabeth Buckel, Community Health Coordinator with the American Heart Association

----- Happy Valentine’s Day Exercise with Yolanda Rangel -----
Five Door Prizes with Catherine van Zanten/Break

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 3) Introduction of Guests/New Members | Betty Zschesche |
| 4) ARTA Foundation Report/Memorial Tributes
AND the ARTA Sweetheart Announcement | Glenda Black & Linda Harvey |
| 5) BUSINESS and COMMITTEE REPORTS: | |
| a. Approval of January 9, 2026, Minutes | Marcia Caldwell |
| b. Treasurer’s Report | Tony Dishner |
| c. Nominating Committee Report | Rosemary Morrow |
| d. Election of 2026–2028 ARTA Officers | Norma Jost |
| e. Membership Report | Bonnie Cross & Terry Morganti-Fisher |
| f. Volunteer Services/Community Involvement Update | Marsha Lyons-Gray |
| g. Legislative Update | Craig Campbell & Gloria Lenoir |
| h. TRTA Children’s Book Project 3/2 & 3/11 | Maria Martinez |
| i. ARTA Birthday Luncheon Update March 13 | Mary Lou Clayton |
| j. March 25 TRTA House of Delegates Live 3/25 | Norma Jost |
| k. Jumpstart Read for the Record – Signups in February for 2/26 | Norma Jost |
| l. Announcements and Reminders | Norma Jost |
| m. Door Prizes | G. Lenoir & C. van Zanten |
| 6) Adjournment | Norma Jost |

**Next Meeting: March 13, 2026, “Uplifting, positive stories about Central Texas”
Judy Maggio and Leslie Rhode, ATX Good News**

TRTA Photo Policy: If a TRTA member wishes not to be photographed, recorded, or appear in TRTA promotional items, the member should avoid any cameras in the area.
Refer to the meeting packet for the full text of this policy.

Follow us at our ARTA Website, Facebook & Instagram sites:

Website <https://austinrta.org/>, Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/TRTA.org>, Instagram https://www.instagram.com/austin_rta



Austin Retired Teachers Association

Meeting Highlights, January 9, 2026

In Person at Faith Church and on Zoom

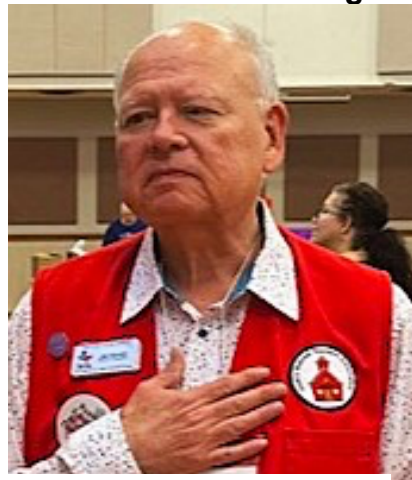
Joyce Clendennen, ARTA Historian



ARTA President Norma Jost called the meeting to order and asked members to sign up for Jumpstart and the TRTA House of Delegates.



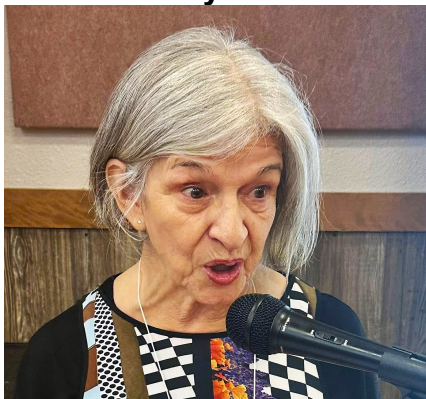
Joe Ramirez led the pledges of allegiance to the United States and Texas flags.



Executive Director Johanna Stahl-Mandel spoke about "Capital City Village: A Journey from Strangers to Friends."



Legislative Co-Chair Gloria Cisneros Lenoir reminded members to vote in the Texas Primary on March 3rd.



Thank you to outgoing ARTA 2nd Vice-President and Social Committee Chair Patty Young.



Dr. Mary Lou Clayton said ARTA's 74th Birthday Luncheon at Chez Zee will be \$40, which is due to her by March 2nd.



ARTA member and Deputy Voter Registrar Adrienne Thrasher reviewed voter registration information with John O'Sullivan.



2026-2028 ARTA Nominated Officers: President Dr. Marsha Lyons-Gray, Second Vice-President Judy Wallace, and Assistant Treasurer Al Weber.





Austin Retired Teachers Association
Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting
Friday, January 9, 2026
Via In person/Zoom



The regular monthly meeting of the Austin Retired Teachers Association was held January 9, 2026, in person and via Zoom. In attendance there were 83 in person and eight present on Zoom for a total of 91 attendees.

GATHERING

Call to Order/Announcements: President Norma Jost called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. She made the general announcements about cell phones and reminded members that volunteer hours are due. Jost also asked members if they were sure they were registered to vote.

Pledges of Allegiance to the U.S. and Texas flags: Former President Joe Ramirez led the pledges.

Inspiration: Marilyn Gregory inspired members to let love and laughter enrich their lives this new year.

PROGRAM:

Program Introduction and Presentation: Ellen Bell introduced Johanna Stahl-Mandel, Executive Director of Capital City Village. This is an organization that grew out of a group of friends at Tarrytown United Methodist Church here in Austin. The group's main goals are to help senior citizens have less isolation as they need help aging in place. Members aged 50+ join the group to be listed on the preferred service provider list or participate in regular social activities. Stahl-Mandel shared that the current top-requested service is for transportation.

BREAK/Exercise with Laurie Barber

Introduction of New Members: Betty Zschiesche acknowledged the seven new ARTA members; two were present. See the January *Newsette* for the names.

ARTA Foundation Report/Memorials: Linda Harvey thanked ARTA members for donations to the Foundation's funds in December. She also read memorial tributes to Elma Berrones, Mildred Nance, and Mary Helen Quintero, ARTA members who passed away in December 2025. Their memorials are listed in the January *Newsette*.

BUSINESS and COMMITTEE REPORTS

Approval of December 12, 2025, Minutes: The minutes were approved as printed.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Tony Dishner's report will be filed for audit. Dishner moved that, on recommendation of the ARTA Executive Board, the amount in the 2025-2026 budget allocated for the *ARTA News* be increased to cover the costs of printing and mailing the February and May issues. The membership approved the motion by unanimous consent.

Nominating Committee Report: Past President Joe Ramirez, chair of the Nominating Committee, announced the nominations for ARTA 2026-2028 officers as follows:

President: Dr. Marsha Lyons-Gray
Second Vice-President: Judy Wallace
Assistant Treasurer: Al Weber

Membership Report: Terry Morganti-Fisher said ARTA had fluctuation in membership numbers due to deaths. The membership official count will be recorded on February 28, 2026.

Volunteer Services/ Community Involvement: Marsha Lyons-Gray said 106 members had submitted their volunteer hours. She will have the 2025 total volunteer hours at the February meeting.

TRTA Children's Book Project: Coordinator Maria Martinez shared that ARTA would be working with Mathews and Blackshear elementaries this year. Volunteers will work with the librarians to clean, label, and sort the over 1,000 books collected this year. There will be a volunteer sign-up sheet at the February meeting.

Legislative Update: Gloria Lenoir directed members' attention to Page 7 in the *Newsette* where the March 3 Texas primary election schedule is listed. Links are also available to help members research candidates.

ARTA Birthday Luncheon Update: Mary Lou Clayton announced she was able to secure the Friday, March 13, date at Chez Zee for the same price again this year. She was deeply grateful to the owner of Chez Zee for her support of ARTA and public education.

March 25 TRTA House of Delegates Live!: District 13 President Joe Ramirez reminded ARTA members to try and plan to attend the March 25 House of Delegates Live! in San Marcos. Austin will have ten official delegates, but all may attend. More information will be in the February meeting packet.

Announcements and Reminders: President Norma Jost again reminded members to take advantage of The Sistine Chapel Experience. Jost said she bought 12 Read for the Record books in English, and 12 in Spanish. There will be a different speaker at the February meeting than had been previously listed.

Door Prizes: Door prizes were awarded.

Adjournment: President Norma Jost adjourned the meeting at 11:39 a.m.

Marcia Caldwell, Secretary

Norma Jost, President

AUSTIN RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

TREASURER'S REPORT

January 1–31, 2026

Money Market

Initial Month Balance	\$ 2,171.72	
Income/expenses	\$ 0.65	
Ending Balance	\$ 2,172.37	\$ 2,172.37

Member Savings

Initial Month Balance	\$ 532.78	
Dividend	\$ 4.30	
Ending Balance	\$ 537.08	\$ 537.08

A+ Checking

Initial Month Balance	\$14,811.88	
Deposits	\$ 883.16	
Expenses	\$ (958.09)	
Ending Balance	\$14,736.95	\$14,736.95

Start-Up Certificate \$ 1,000.00 \$ 1,000.00

12 month Certificate

Initial Month Balance	\$ 2,373.79	
Dividend	\$ 7.92	
Ending Balance	\$ 2,381.71	\$ 2,381.71

24 Month Certificate

Initial Month Balance	\$ 2,360.13	
Dividend	\$ 8.02	
Ending Balance	\$ 2,368.15	\$ 2,368.15

Total	\$23,196.26
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Tony Dishner
Treasurer



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Happy February 2026! Thank you for your continued support, dedication, and collaboration on behalf of ARTA.

I invite you to join me on **Friday, February 13**, either in person at **Faith Lutheran Church** or via **Zoom**. Our guest speaker will be **Mary Elizabeth Buckel**, Community Health Coordinator with the **American Heart Association**, who will present “Heart Health.” This is an especially important topic in our retirement years. Please join us for this informative program, a little exercise, writing notes on hearts for our ARTA Sweetheart, and socializing with yummy treats provided by the **ARTA Foundation Board**.

Please note that **primary elections** will be held on March 3 (*early voting 2/17-2/27*). More information can be found in the legislative section of this packet. We must continue to educate our political leaders and strengthen our membership to protect our pensions and benefits, advocate for cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), and defend public education. This is a powerful reminder of why **ARTA/TRTA membership matters**.

We also want to highlight the tremendous work our members do in the community. In **2025**, we **earned more than in 2024** – stay tuned for the actual amount! Please remember to begin tracking your **VOLUNTEER service hours for 2026**.

Nominations for **President, Second Vice-President, and Assistant Treasurer** will be voted on at our February meeting with installation taking place in May.

We also have an exciting volunteer opportunity coming up! ARTA will support reading Jumpstart’s *See Marcos Grow* at **Galindo and Padrón elementary schools on February 26, 2026**. Please sign up with me. I will create the SignUpGenius once campus teacher commitments are finalized.

Please mark your calendar for the **ARTA 74th Birthday Luncheon on March 13**. We will hear from **Judy Maggio and Leslie Rhode** of *ATX Good News*, who will share “Uplifting, Positive Stories about Central Texas.” We will also honor our **ARTA Sweetheart**. Registration is available at <https://tinyurl.com/3f6f7znp>.

Payment (\$40) will be accepted through **March 2**, at our February meeting (cash/check), or online via the ARTA website (\$42): <https://austnrta.org/arta-birthday-luncheon>.

Finally, the **TRTA House of Delegates Live!** will convene in **San Marcos on March 25, 2026**. This event is open to all ARTA members who want to attend. We currently have **ten delegates and two alternates**, each of whom must have access to a smartphone or tablet. I am currently collecting names of additional attendees by February 11—please let me know by email at njost2@yahoo.com.

Let’s continue to make 2026 a fantastic year for ARTA. Thank you for all that you do, and I look forward to seeing you at our February meeting!

*Norma Jost
ARTA President 2024–2026*

We are ARTA/TRTA Members, and we:

- pay dues early or on time – our term is 7/1-6/30,
- advocate for Education; and
- publicize Who We Are and WHAT We Do for TEXAS- Volunteer Hours impact the TX Economy 1/1-12/31!

TRTA PHOTO POLICY

At public TRTA events (such as convention), including at the local, district, and state levels, photos may be taken by TRTA staff and/or volunteers. TRTA may use likenesses of its members in photographs, videos, or other digital or social media (“photo”) in its publications, including web-based publications, without payment or other consideration. If a TRTA member wishes not to be photographed, recorded, or appear in TRTA promotional items, the member should avoid any cameras in the area.

This should be in your directory, on every printed agenda, and/or posted at a sign-in table, and/or posted on screen if using technology projection, and/or announced at the beginning of meetings for every TRTA event you host or participate in.



WELCOME, NEW ARTA MEMBERS!

Welcome to the first-time ARTA members who joined after our January 9 regular meeting! Your fellow members are honored that you are now part of our organization.

We have plenty of committees that you can join. Do not hesitate to contact me at **njost2@yahoo.com** if you are interested in joining any of our committees. I will then place you in contact with the appropriate committee chairs.

Please welcome the following new ARTA members:

- Virginia “Sissy” Camacho Anderson
- Barbara ten Brink
- Charles Moody

*Norma Jost
ARTA President*

IN MEMORIAM

Earline Hill Carter was born in rural Caldwell County on November 19, 1922. She moved to Austin as a young girl and graduated from the original L.C. Anderson High School and Tillotson College with additional studies at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. She began her teaching career in 1962 at the Texas School for the Deaf and then worked for more than 30 years in South San Antonio ISD.

Earline returned to Austin in 2005 and was actively involved with Mt. Sinai Baptist Church. She and her two sisters, Ida Hunt and the late Gloria Richards, were all members of TRTA and ARTA. Earline passed away January 1, 2026, at the age of 103. She was an ARTA member from 2009 to 2026.

Cecile Battle Banks was born on March 6, 1931, in Cooper, Texas. After the death of her father, she moved to Wichita Falls and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1947. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree cum laude from Butler College in Tyler and a master’s degree in education from Prairie View A&M. She completed additional post-graduate work at SMU, Sul Ross College, and The University of Texas at Austin.

As a military wife, Cecile traveled throughout the world and began her teaching career in Sculthorpe, England, before returning

to the United States in 1967, when she was hired as a 3rd grade teacher in Austin ISD. She spent the last nine years of her career in AISD as an instructional coordinator and worked with and evaluated nearly 400 teachers in the 12 schools that were assigned to her. ARTA member Kathryn Stone recalled how Cecile loved to decorate classrooms and would always have extra cut-outs and other decorations prepared for her when she didn’t have enough. Teachers who worked with Cecile remembered her kindness toward them and how much she cared for students.

Besides TRTA and ARTA, Cecile was actively involved in the Ebenezer Baptist Church choir, the National Council of Negro Women, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and served as president of the Austin Capital City Lioness Club in 1984. In 2008, she was nominated for induction into the Texas Women’s Hall of Fame.

Ill health forced Cecile to move back to Wichita Falls in 2012 to live closer to family. She died on January 28, 2026, at age 94. She was an ARTA member from 1991 to 2026 and was one of ARTA’s last seven surviving TRTA Life Members.

Joe Ramirez

NEW PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Do you remember the procedure of a motion to close nominations and elect the nominees by acclamation? Keep reading: **the revised rules allow for no vote at all if there is no opposition for a position.** The nominee is elected automatically; however, our standing rules require a voice vote, so we will follow that procedure. The chair (i.e., president) will ask for any nominations from the floor for each office, declare that nominations are closed when no one speaks up, and proceed to take the vote for each office.

In my 25 years of ARTA membership, I have no recollection of any office ever having more than one candidate. In the unlikely event that should happen, however, voting under our rules would be by written ballot.

ARTA Standing Rules, 2025

Rule 6.2 Election procedure

“The nominating chair will report the slate of officers at the regular January meeting. Officers



shall be elected at the regular February meeting by voice vote unless nominations are made from the floor (with the consent of the nominee). In this case voting shall be by secret ballot. At hybrid meetings, members attending virtually have the same rights as those who are physically present. A majority of those present shall elect. If circumstances prevent an in-person meeting, election of officers may be conducted electronically.”

Robert’s Rules Of Order Newly Revised, 12th ed. ©2020

“If only one person is nominated and the bylaws do not require that a ballot vote be taken, the chair, after ensuring that, in fact, no members present wish to make further nominations, simply declares that the nominee is elected, thus effecting the election by unanimous consent or ‘acclamation’.” [RONR (12th ed.): 46:40]

*Jane Garner
ARTA Parliamentarian*

**2026-2028 ARTA OFFICERS
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION**

The election of Austin Retired Teachers Association officers for the 2026–2028 biennium will be conducted at the February 13 ARTA regular meeting. Candidate names were presented to the ARTA membership at the ARTA regular meeting on Friday, January 9.

The ARTA Nominating Committee recommends the following members for ARTA officers, 2026–2028:

- **President: Dr. Marsha Lyons-Gray**
- **Second Vice-President: Judy Wallace**
- **Assistant Treasurer: Al Weber**

Additional nominations for each office may be made from the floor at the February meeting. The person nominated should give consent to be considered and to serve.

The installation ceremony will be held at the May 8 ARTA regular meeting. Officers will assume their newly elected positions on July 1, 2026, and serve through June 30, 2028.

ARTA officers continuing their 2024–2026 terms are:

- **First Vice-President: Terry Morganti-Fisher**
- **Secretary: Marcia Caldwell**
- **Treasurer: Tony Dishner**

We also extend our appreciation to outgoing officers **President Norma Jost, Second Vice-President Patty Young, and Assistant Treasurer Wendy Abel** for their years of service as ARTA officers.

*Joe Ramirez & Dr. Rosemary Morrow
Nominating Committee Co-chairs*

ARTA BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

Please come to ARTA’s 74th Birthday Luncheon, Friday, March 13, 2026, 11:30 a.m, at Chez Zee, 5406 Balcones Drive, Austin, 78731. We will hear Judy Maggio and Leslie Rhode speak about “ATX Good News.” Our ARTA Sweetheart will be honored.

The cost of the luncheon is \$40, which includes valet parking. Please pay by March 2. You may pay online at

<https://austinrta.org/arta-birthday-luncheon>, bring a check or cash to the February 13 meeting, or mail a check to Mary Lou Clayton, 2309 Sunny Slope Drive, Austin, Texas, 78703.

Special thanks to Norma Jost for creating this signup link, <https://tinyurl.com/yck7mfer>. Please do not miss this wonderful opportunity to celebrate ARTA’s 74th Birthday together!

*Mary Lou Clayton
ARTA Birthday Luncheon Chair*

CHILDREN’S BOOK PROJECT

We are set to go in completing our book project for the 2025–2026 school year. Mathews and Blackshear schools have been selected as receiving schools. Both schools are centrally located—Mathews Elementary, 906 West Lynn, is scheduled for March 2, and Blackshear Elementary, 1712 E. 11th Street, is scheduled for March 11.

I invite you to sign up to volunteer for one of these schools. We will begin at 9:30 am and hopefully be finished by noon. We will examine each book, apply our ARTA label to each book, and sort them out by grade level.

A sign up sheet will be provided at our February ARTA meeting. Please join me in completing this worthwhile project; students will be thrilled to select a book to call their own.

Thank you again for your generous donations.

*Maria Martinez
ARTA Children’s Book Project Coordinator*



MEMBER BENEFITS COMMITTEE

A reminder to ARTA members to subscribe to *The Pulse*, an online TRS publication offering information on making the most of health care benefits offered: The January 23, 2026, issue contains links to articles offering information for earning rewards by shopping for cost effective providers. It also provides a link to <https://www.airrosti.com/trs/>, a website providing information on remote physical therapy to alleviate joint and muscle pain. See <https://www.trs.texas.gov/learning-resources/publications/pulse>

AMBA News

AMBA has introduced the TRTA Unique Journeys series, trips designed with TRTA members in mind. Members can learn more by watching the webinars on these upcoming trips by going to the links listed below.

- The “Not Back to School Cruise” on September 20-26 leaving from Galveston: <https://youtu.be/uNi55k1y8a0>
- Great Trains to Grand Canyon and Sedona (November 1-6) and Christmas in Washington D.C. (December 8-12): <https://youtu.be/feBSplFQctY>

Members can find more information and check for available space at the TRTA website under **TRTA Member Benefits** or at <https://www.boscovstravel.com/trta/>. If interested, do not delay, space is limited.

AMBA has started a monthly webinar series for members that tackle key issues. Each month a different issue/topic will be covered. The March webinar, “Guarding Your Nest Egg: Smarter Ways To Protect Your Retirement Dollars” is scheduled for March 3 at 10:30 a.m. CST. Members can register for the webinar here: [https:// ambabenefits.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-M5J1QLoRu-CyL2_saijw](https://ambabenefits.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-M5J1QLoRu-CyL2_saijw)

*Laura Grayson & Lucia Facundo
Member Benefits Committee Co-chairs*

**VOLUNTEER SERVICES/
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

The Austin Retired Teachers Association (ARTA) is proud to honor and recognize the outstanding volunteer efforts of its members over the past year. In 2025, ARTA members collectively contributed a remarkable total of **97,727** hours of volunteer service.

This extraordinary commitment translates to an impressive monetary value of **\$3,417,513.19**. These contributions were made possible by the dedication of 176 members who took the time to submit their service hours.

Congratulations to all involved for making such a significant impact through their volunteerism and for exemplifying the spirit of service that defines our association.

Thank you to Norma Jost, Joe Ramirez, and Lois Mayes for gathering attendance information and contacting members about submission hours. Thanks also to those who reminded others and to everyone who submitted their hours on time by various methods. Your help is appreciated.

It is a brand-new year, and the Volunteer Services/Community Involvement Committee is eager to get started working together for a greater 2026 as we increase our gift to the Texas economy.

As you keep track of your hours during 2026, please remember:

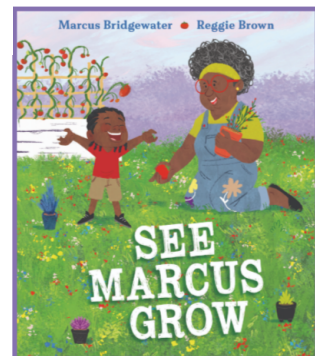
- Service is anything you do for others without compensation.
- You may count your hours from the time you leave home until you return.
- Meetings and activities related to TRTA may count toward your hours.
- You may count up to 12 hours per day.

“Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another.” John Dewey

*Marsha Lyons-Gray, Chair
Volunteer Services/Community Involvement Committee*

TWO SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity #1:



**Jumpstart Read for the Record 2/26/26!!
Sign up at the February 13 ARTA Meeting!**



Opportunity #2: Better ATX (formerly known as the Assistance League of Austin)—Giving back with every purchase

Better ATX THRIFT HOUSE, located at 4901 Burnet Road, is the third and current location of our high quality and affordable resale store. Inside, you'll find gently used items—from clothing and furniture to books, art, and collectibles—all generously donated by our community, and when we have more than we can sell, we partner with other nonprofits to share those goods, helping neighbors in need and keeping usable items out of the landfill.

Better ATX programs include:

- *Better ATX Clothes for Kids*
- *Better ATX Toy Cart*
- *Better ATX School Communities*
- *Better ATX Families*
- *Better ATX Scholars*
- *Better ATX Assault Survivors*
- *Better ATX Waste Not*

More info at our website: <https://www.betteratx.org/>

Three Ways to Join the Better ATX Mission

1. Volunteer:

<https://www.volgistics.com/appform/663843163>

2. Donate:

https://secure.lgiforms.com/form_engine/s/x1_NcmnFyc3C7HnpQjQMag

3. Shop at the **Better ATX THRIFT HOUSE**;

4901 Burnet Road, 78756

Shopping Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Donations Mon.–Sat., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Every purchase, donation, and visit moves our mission forward.

Stay in the Know

Follow us to view weekly Better ATX THRIFT HOUSE finds and learn more about our programs:

Facebook Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/BetterATX>

Instagram Link:

<https://www.instagram.com/betteratx/>

Stay Connected Link:

<https://www.betteratx.org/#sign-up>

TRTA DISTRICT 13 HOUSE OF DELEGATES LIVE! – MARCH 25, 2026

In lieu of a traditional state convention this year, TRTA will be holding the TRTA House of

Delegates Live!, which will be broadcast to 20 different sites across the state on **Wednesday, March 25**. District 13 delegates will meet at the San Marcos Activity Center (501 E. Hopkins St) in San Marcos from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This year's theme is "TRTA: Celebrating Our Connection to You!"

Delegates from the 14 chapters in our district will vote electronically on the election of TRTA state officers for the 2026-2028 biennium as well as three proposed amendments to the TRTA Bylaws. Delegates will need to bring a smartphone or tablet connected to their personal email address to cast their votes. Proposed amendments and a motion to increase state dues are reviewed in more detail in an additional article published in the February *Newsette*.

Austin RTA is currently projected to have ten voting delegates along with alternates. ARTA President Norma Jost will work with membership to determine who will serve as voting delegates. These delegates must communicate with our membership before March 25 to address a motion that will be made by the TRTA Executive Board during the House of Delegates business meeting to raise **state dues from \$35 to \$48 beginning on July 1, 2027**. Your feedback is essential on how the ARTA delegates will cast their votes on this motion.

Regardless of whether you are serving as a voting delegate or not, I invite all of you to attend the House of Delegates Live! Session followed by an abbreviated District 13 Spring Conference after lunch. There is no charge for lunch, and incoming District 13 officers will be installed during the afternoon conference. District 13 members who recruited first-time TRTA members between March 1, 2025, and February 28, 2026, will also be eligible for one of eight \$50 checks from the "Each One-Bring One" drawing that will take place at the business meeting.

Joe Ramirez

TRTA District 13 President

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TRTA BYLAWS

Delegates attending the March 25 TRTA House of Delegates Live! will be voting on three



proposed amendments to the TRTA Bylaws. Any amendment that passes will go into effect on **July 1, 2027**, but districts and chapters can revise their Standing Rules before then and will not need to go through the formal process of voting for these changes.

Proposed Amendment 1

If adopted, Local Chapters will be referred to as Chapters.

Maker of Amendment: TRTA Board of Directors

Board of Directors Recommends: Approval

Board of Directors Rationale: During the 2022 State Convention House of Delegates, “Local Units” was changed to “Chapters,” but the word “Local” was not removed.

OAC Recommends: Approval

OAC Rationale: The OAC (TRTA State Organizational Affairs Committee) agrees with the maker and recommends the proviso that the TRTA staff and leadership will fully implement all necessary changes by July 1, 2027.

District 13 President’s Comments: No impact to the ARTA Standing Rules since “local” is not used in that document. Changes to the District 13 Standing Rules will automatically go into effect with the July 1, 2027, biennium.

Proposed Amendment 2

If adopted, elected district officers and committee chairs are required to be members of a local chapter within that district. Elected district officers shall be receiving an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

Maker of Amendment: Joe Ramirez, TRTA District 13 President

Maker’s Rationale: According to Article IV, Section 1, membership in TRTA is open to “any person interested in public education and will to work to achieve the objectives of TRTA.” To be inclusive of all members in TRTA and address challenges of filling leadership positions at the district level, TRTA should allow college and university educators retiring from ERS, former teachers who left the profession and withdrew their TRS funds, school employees retiring under different states’ pension systems, or beneficiaries of living TRS annuitants to serve in these positions because they support the same

goals as TRS annuitants. No fiscal impact to TRTA or its districts and local chapters.

OAC Recommends: Approval

OAC Rationale: The amendment allows districts to fill volunteer leadership roles of non-officer positions with TRTA chapter members. This provides more options for seeking volunteers for these roles.

Board of Directors Recommends: Approval

Board of Directors Rationale: The Board of Directors agrees with the OAC’s rationale and would like to further clarify that this amendment permits district committee chairs to fill volunteer leadership roles in non-officer positions, and they are not required to be TRS annuitants.

District 13 President’s Comments: No impact to the current ARTA or District 13 Standing Rules. The amendment, if passed, will revise TRTA Bylaw X by requiring that only district officers and not committee chairs must be TRS annuitants.

Proposed Amendment 3

If adopted, “3. Delegates must be receiving an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.” will be struck through the list.

Article XIV. House of Delegates

Section 3. Local Chapter Delegates

The delegates shall be determined by:

1. Two (2) delegates for the first 100 members in a local chapter or fraction thereof;
2. One (1) delegate for each additional 100 members in a local chapter or fraction thereof; and
3. ~~Delegates must be receiving an annuity from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.~~

Maker of Amendment: Joe Ramirez, District 13 President

Maker’s Rationale: TRTA Bylaws open membership to “any person interested in public education and willing to work to achieve the objectives of TRTA.” At the same time, the bylaws prevent anyone who does not receive an annuity from TRS from serving as a chapter delegate to the House of Delegates. This includes college and university educators retiring from ERS, former teachers who left the profession and withdrew their TRS funds, school employees retiring under different states’ pension systems, or beneficiaries of living TRS annuitants. These members share the same goals



as TRTA and are willing to serve in leadership positions or as chapter delegates, especially when many chapters face the challenge of meeting the number of delegates allotted to them. No fiscal impact to TRTA, its districts, or local chapters.

OAC Recommends: Disapproval

OAC Rationale: The Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) chief governing body is the House of Delegates responsible for electing officers, approving amendments, and protecting the long-term governance of TRTA.

A core aspect of the TRTA Bylaws stipulates that State and District officers are all annuitants of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

This ensures that the TRTA leadership focus is exclusively on the mission of TRTA to protect the retirement security of all TRS Texas members.

To protect the integrity of this mission, the TRTA OAC believes all House of Delegates and all TRTA state and district officers meet the same bar of dedication and distinction to protect the governance of the TRTA and our work to protect retirement security for all TRS members.

Board of Directors Recommends: Disapproval

Board of Directors Rationale: The Board of Directors agrees with the OAC's rationale.

District 13 President's Comments: I

respectfully disagree with the TRTA non-approval recommendation because ALL TRTA members pay the same amount of dues, but non-TRS annuitants do not receive full privileges that other members receive. Many of these non-annuitants share the same goals that TRTA has and vote for elected officials in Texas. Some TRS annuitants are concerned that non-annuitants may have a "hidden agenda" contrary to the goals of TRTA. No chapter has a majority of non-annuitants, and our district and chapter officers who select delegates have enough foresight and prudence to know which non-annuitants are active members who support our organization's goals.

If adopted, ARTA Standing Rule 3.2 and District 13 Standing Rule III.2 would automatically be revised.

Proposed Dues Increase:

The TRTA Board of Directors will be making a motion to raise state dues from \$35 to \$48

beginning **July 1, 2027**. According to Article IV, Section 2, of the TRTA Bylaws, state membership dues are set at a rate established by the Board of Directors and approved by the House of Delegates. **Note that TRTA amended its original proposal of \$50 dues to \$48 dues on January 26, 2026.**

TRTA justifies this increase for several reasons:

- The last increase took place in 2012.
- Additional funding is needed to hire more TRTA staff.
- Additional funding will be used to enhance interactive technology that appeals to younger retirees.
- State dues for TRTA are less than in most other states.

Reasons to oppose the increase:

- The current cost of living does not make it affordable for some of our long-time members to pay higher state dues on top of chapter dues.
- Higher dues may cause members in Texas to leave TRTA and join TSTA or ATPE, both of which lobby for retirees and charge dues comparable to TRTA's \$35 current dues.
- Most TRTA members who retired after September 1, 2020, have not received any type of benefit enhancement from the legislature. They did not qualify for the COLA under Proposition 9, and most are not old enough to have received either the one-time stipend in 2023 for members over age 70 or backpay from the repeal of WEP/GPO in 2024.
- TRTA instead should invest its resources in creating an aggressive agenda to lobby the 90th Texas Legislature to provide more financial benefits to TRS annuitants.

District 13 members should communicate with their delegates their opinions regarding the proposed dues increase before the March 25 House of Delegates.

*Joe Ramirez
TRTA District 13 President*

TRTA STATE OFFICER CANDIDATES FOR 2026-2028 BIENNIUM

The following TRTA members have announced their intention to seek an elected state office for the 2026-2028 biennium. Article V, Section 2, of the TRTA Bylaws states that



additional nominations can be made from the floor at the House of Delegates. Information on each candidate and their position statements are listed below. **It is important to note that the race for TRTA Vice-President will be contested between two candidates who submitted their paperwork to TRTA.**

President:

- **Frana Patterson** - *Palo Pinto County Retired Teachers Association (PPCRTA), District 11*

Currently serving as the TRTA First Vice-President (2024-2026), TRTA Second Vice-President, TRTA Secretary/Treasurer, District 11 President, TRTA Presidents Council Chair, District 11 First Vice-President, State Committee Chair, Chapter President, Chapter Legislative Chair, Chapter Retirement Education Chair. It is crucial that we advocate to preserve and improve benefits for public school retirees. I would like to continue working and serving with you.

President-Elect:

- **Terri Navrkal** - *Lubbock South Plains Retired Teachers Association (LSPRTA), District 17*

Currently serving as TRTA Second Vice-President/Communications Committee Chair (2024- 2026). I have served in the following positions: TRTA Secretary/Treasurer/Finance Committee Chair (2022-2024), District Presidents Council Chair (2020-2022), District 17 President (2018-2022), TRTA Public Relations Committee (2016-2018), TRTA Health Committee (2014-2016), Senior Tutor Recruitment and Partnership Advisor for the Texas Retired Teacher Foundation, Tutorial Program (2020-2023), Lubbock South Plains RTA: President (2020-2022, 2017-2019, 2013-2015), and First Vice- President (2015-2017). I am excited about the opportunity to become the first ever President-Elect of TRTA. With your support/vote my goal is to “Keep TRTA ‘GOING and GROWING’.”

Vice-President (Contested Election):

- **Gary L. Schepf** - *Irving Retired School Personnel Association (IRSPA), District 10*

I joined Irving RSPA in 2013 while still employed. I have served as my Chapter Second Vice- President and Chapter President. I served

as District 10 Technology Chair and District 10 President. At the State level, I have served as the Presidents Council Chair and am currently serving as the State Secretary/Treasurer and as the State Finance Committee Chair (2024-2026). As Vice-President, my goal is to continue building upon our foundation, while actively shaping the path forward for TRTA’s next era.

- **Cheryl Glasser** - *Katy Area Retired Educators (KARE), District 4*

Currently serving as President of the Katy Chapter (2024-2026). While president, my chapter has increased membership by 10%, improved meeting attendance by 22%, and we received district awards for our Book Project and Community Service successes. Serving as Co-Parliamentarian of District 4. Served as Co-2nd VP of the Katy Chapter (2023-2024). Before retirement in 2023, I was a school principal/AP for 25 years. As Vice-President of TRTA, I will work to strengthen our organization by improving communication between the state and local chapters, increasing member involvement, and growing TRTA to its highest membership ever. I am committed to expanding our book project donation efforts to five books per member and ensuring every retiree feels informed, valued, and inspired to serve.

Secretary/Treasurer:

- **Karen Hoelscher** - *Runnels County Retired School Employees (RCRSE), District 15*

Currently serving as District Presidents Council Chair (2024-2026) and District 15 President (2022-2026). Served as District Presidents Council Vice-Chair (2023-2024) and District Presidents Council Recorder (2022-2023). Currently serving on the TRTF Dr. Kate Bell and E.L. Galyean Assistance Fund Committee. Served on State Local Unit Support Committee (2020-2022), TRTF Tutor Program Tutor Recruitment and Partnership Advisor (2020-2023). Served as District First Vice-President (2018-2022), District Historian (2016-2018). Currently serving as Runnels County RSE Immediate Past President (2022-2026). Served as Runnels County RSE President (2016-2022), Runnels County RSE Secretary (2014-2016), Runnels County RSE Historian (2016-2020) and joined TRTA in 2013. I want to be a TRTA officer to support,



OPEN ELECTION FOR TEXAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT 5

The 15 members on the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) set policies and standards for Texas public schools. As a result, the SBOE is one of the most powerful agencies of the state executive branch. Their responsibilities include:

- Setting curriculum standards
- Reviewing and adopting instructional materials
- Establishing graduation requirements
- Overseeing the Texas Permanent School Fund
- Determining the rules for educator certification
- Awarding or vetoing applications for new charter schools

You can learn more about the SBOE and its representatives at <https://sboe.texas.gov/>.

Although the SBOE does not have direct policy influence on TRS, the decisions they make affect in-service teachers. If these policies prove to be unpopular with current educators, many tend to leave the profession or apply to work at private schools, which are not impacted by most SBOE decisions. As a result, TRS receives less funding from current public school employees and the school districts that they work for.

Every biennium, half of the board is up for election. Registered voters living in SBOE District 5, which includes **Bastrop, Blanco, Caldwell, Guadalupe, Hays, Travis, and Williamson** counties, will have to decide on a new SBOE member to represent them. Incumbent Rebecca Bell-Metereau, who is also a TRTA and Austin RTA member, will not be seeking reelection. Although familiarity and work experience in public education is an ideal quality to look for in the 15 members of the SBOE, voters will be surprised that many of the current representatives lack this experience and come from different aspects of the business world. It is imperative that voters make educated decisions on who is best qualified in each SBOE district to implement public school policies.

Six Democrats and one Republican have filed to run in the March 3 primary for SBOE 5. Full biographies and work experience can be found at

https://ballotpedia.org/Texas_State_Board_of_Education_election,_2026, but the following overview summarizes each candidate's experience in public education and the Texas workforce:

Democratic Candidates:

- **Stephanie Bazan** (Austin) – communications consultant and officer, former adjunct professor at St. Edward's University, and leader of several non-profits in the Austin area. Candidate website at <https://www.stephaniebazan.com/>.
- **Allison Bush** (Pflugerville) – former teacher, counselor, and executive director in Crosby, Bastrop, and Pflugerville ISDs. Candidate website at <https://www.allisonfortx.com/>.
- **Abigail Gray** (Austin) – former 3rd grade public school teacher in East Texas, instructional coach at Public Charter School in Austin, reviewer of instructional materials for the SBOE's curriculum adoption process. Candidate website at <https://www.abigailgraytx.com/>.
- **Kevin Jackson** (Austin) – current school diagnostician in Del Valle ISD with former teaching experience in English, Special Education, and U.S. History in Judson, Austin, and Round Rock ISDs. Candidate website at <https://kevinfortx.com/>.
- **Neto Longoria** (Austin) – experience as a canvasser, parent support specialist, and Special Education teacher who has been affiliated with the Martin MS PTA in Austin ISD. No candidate website is currently available.
- **Victor Sampson** (Austin) – former secondary Science teacher and professor of STEM Education at UT-Austin who is co-founder of an educational company dedicated to helping teachers use research-based, innovative approaches to teaching science. Candidate website at <https://www.victorsampson.org/>.

Republican Candidate:

- **Mica Arrellano** (no residency listed) – Candidate has not submitted any information to Ballotpedia nor are there any websites or social media sites available.

*Joe Ramirez
TRTA District 13 President*



LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

- Primary early voting is from February 17 to 27, 2026.
- Election Day is Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

The last day to register to vote was February 2, 2026, and the last day to apply to vote by mail is February 20, 2026.

Election dates for the State of Texas are available on this link:

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/important-election-dates.shtml>

The primary election ballot is available on <https://apps.texastribune.org/features/2026/texas-march-2026-primary-ballot/>. Check out the candidates in League of Women Voters of the Austin Area *Voters Guide* at <https://lwvaustin.org/Voters->

[Guide#VotersGuide&gsc.tab=0](#), or other sources as more information becomes available.

Please be sure you are registered to vote and check out the candidates to see who is most supportive of public education and who supports keeping the defined benefit plan with TRS that we already have. The Employees Retirement System (ERS) converted to defined contribution plan, and for those who have those accounts, when the funds run out, that is it. There are efforts to convert TRS to the defined contribution plan. We must persist and not support those efforts.

*Gloria Lenoir
Legislative Committee Co-chair*

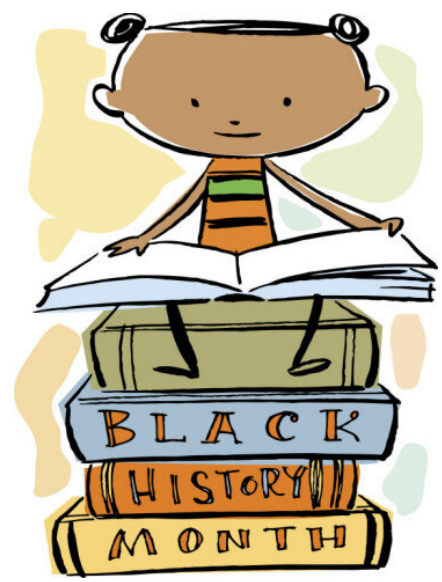
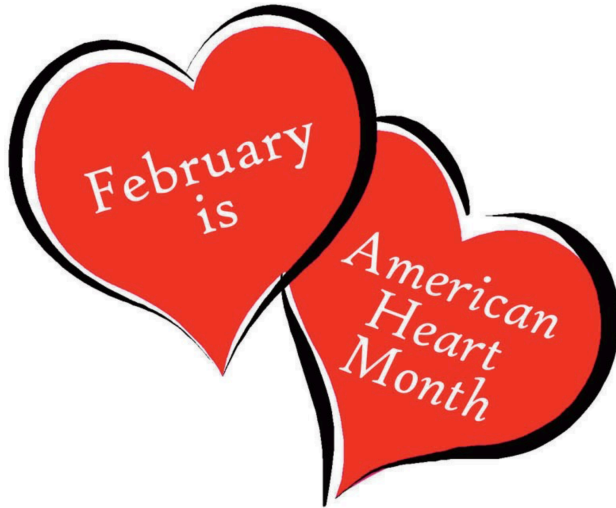
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STATE HOUSE DISTRICT PRIMARIES BY AREAS WHERE ARTA MEMBERS LIVE		
HD#	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Javi Andrade • Kelly Hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellen Troxclair (i) • George Cambanis
45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erin Zwiener (i) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joseph Heft • Tennyson Moreno
46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheryl Cole (i) 	NONE
47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joseph Kopser • Pooja Sethi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jennifer Mushtaler
	<i>Incumbent Vikki Goodwin is running for Lieutenant Governor.</i>	
48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donna Howard (i) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthony Gupta
49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kimmie Ellison • Montserrat Garibay • Gigs Hodges • Robin Lerner • Josh Reyna • Sam Slade • Kathy Tovo • Shenghao Wang 	NONE
	<i>Incumbent Gina Hinojosa is running for Governor.</i>	
50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan Boynton • John Hash • Jeremy Hendricks • Kate Lincoln-Goldfinch • Samantha Lopez-Resendez • William Rannefeld 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Howard Olsen IV
	<i>Incumbent James Talarico is running for U.S. Senate.</i>	
51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Luisa "Lulu" Flores (i) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jessica Martinez
136	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Bucy III (i) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theodore Schramm



STATE SENATE DISTRICT PRIMARIES BY AREAS WHERE ARTA MEMBERS LIVE		
SD#	Democratic Candidates	Republican Candidates
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Judith Zaffirini (i)Cortney Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Julie Dahlberg

*There is no election in **Senate District 14** until 2028. Current incumbent Sarah Eckardt is running for State Comptroller in the Democratic Primary. Should she win the General Election in November, a special election will be held to fill her Senate seat.*



February 2026 News

ARTA Membership Update from Terry Morganti-Fisher & Bonnie Cross, Membership Co-Chairs

Our focus is to get as many new or renewing members (\$50 level) by Feb. 28th to maximize our rebate from TRTA. Please help! The more members we have the more we can advocate for our retirees. What WE do is paramount to supporting ALL Texas Retired Educator pensions and benefits.

The Membership Committee sends its appreciation to all our members. We are gearing up for our 2026 membership campaign and ask that you please help us by sharing the membership form and our website link: <https://austinrta.org/membership> with a retired friend. We accept membership renewals at our meetings including our March luncheon.

Many thanks!

Terry Morganti-Fisher and Bonnie Cross, ARTA Membership Committee Co-chairs



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://austinrta.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 page 2 of this form.


For treasurers' use only:


TRTA Member# _____	Payment Date: _____	Payment Amount: <input type="checkbox"/> Check # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Cash _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card/Debit _____
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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 to
Tony Dishner, ARTA Treasurer
2218 Speidel Drive
Pflugerville, TX 78660-5067

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

	1234
DATE <input type="text"/>	
PAY TO THE ORDER OF< <i>ARTA</i>	\$ 50.00
<i>Fifty dollars and 00/00</i>	DOLLARS <i>f</i>
FOR <i>ARTA and TRTA dues paid together</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
⑆23456789 ⑆890 567⑆	

	1234
DATE <input type="text"/>	
PAY TO THE ORDER OF< <i>ARTA</i>	\$ 15.00
<i>Fifteen dollars and 00/00</i>	DOLLARS <i>f</i>
FOR <i>ARTA dues</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
⑆23456789 ⑆890 567⑆	