

MARSP Newsletter

March, 2012

www.midlandretireded.org

March 1, 2012
MARSP
Box 4954, Midland, TX 79704



MARSP LUNCHEON MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2012



On February 2, 2012, the Midland Association of Retired School Personnel met at First Baptist Church.

President Dorothy Thompson called the meeting to order at 12:30. The program was Hospice Hounds, a pet therapy program introduced by Suzy Mauldin, Director of Volunteer Services for Hospice. Penny Johnson, a volunteer and the owner of a therapy dog, also talked about the program.

The business meeting opened with the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Leonard Boyd. President Thompson thanked Anita Patton and Mary Jo Boyd for the centerpiece decorations. Karron Pearson, chair of the nominating committee, presented the slate of officers for 2012-13: Deanna Dunn, President; Mike and Kathy Landrum, First Vice-Presidents; Nancy Young, Second Vice-President; Dorothy Baird, Secretary; and Betty Merritt, Treasurer. There were no nominations from the floor. Nancy Dobbs moved to accept the slate by acclamation, Jean Alvey seconded, and the motion passed.

Mike Landrum announced that membership forms will be mailed with the next newsletter. Pat Adams announced that we have collected 135 books so far this year. Pat also announced that the program for March will be the Director of the Midland County Public Library, and for April we'll have a MARSP version of the Antiques Road Show.

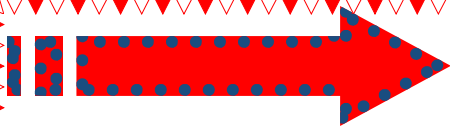
Minutes were filed without correction, and the treasurer's report was accepted as written and filed for audit. Patti Watson announced the friendship cards she had sent. Janet Haney reminded the group that the Retirement Education seminar will be Saturday, February 4, at Abell Junior High. Diantha Dawkins asked for contributions to the scholarship fund and reminded members that nominations for the scholarship are due by June 1. Dorothy Blair won the free lunch for steps, and Bob Cornell was the Top Walker for 2011. Virginia Connor won a free lunch for volunteer hours, and Betty Merritt was the Top Volunteer for 2011.

President Thompson and Ann Andrews, Legislative Chair, asked members to read an article in Texas Monthly and to send handwritten letters to our legislators. The meeting was adjourned at 1:24.

Deanna Dunn, Secretary

Acting Secretary, Dorothy Baird

February 2, 2012

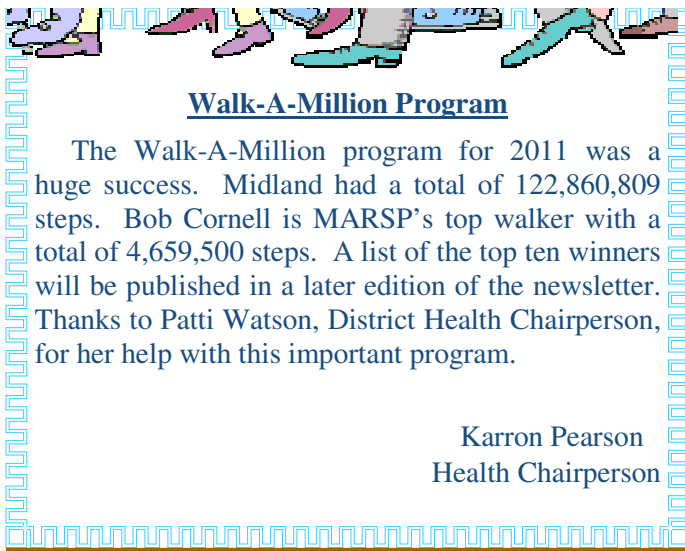


PLEASE COME TO THE MARCH MEETING



Don't forget to put Thursday, **March 1**, on your calendar. This is the date for the next meeting of MARSP. Meet and greet begins at 11:30 a.m. followed by lunch at 12:00 noon. The program will be John Trischitti, Director of the Midland County Library. His topic will be "Great Expectations", focusing on the library and its relevance to our community. The cost is **\$5.00**, and your reservation is your commitment to pay, even if you cannot attend. Mr. Trischitti will begin speaking at 12:30 p.m.

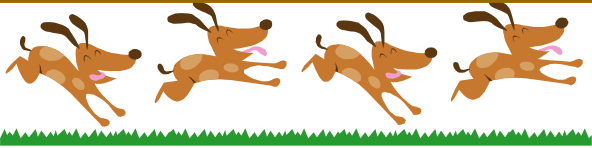
Call Anita Patton at **432-697-1602** or e-mail her at apatton123@sbcglobal.net by Monday, February 27 to make your reservation.



Walk-A-Million Program

The Walk-A-Million program for 2011 was a huge success. Midland had a total of 122,860,809 steps. Bob Cornell is MARSP's top walker with a total of 4,659,500 steps. A list of the top ten winners will be published in a later edition of the newsletter. Thanks to Patti Watson, District Health Chairperson, for her help with this important program.

Karron Pearson
Health Chairperson

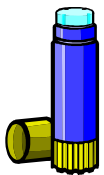


Hospice Hounds

If you missed the February meeting of MARSP, you missed a most interesting program, Hospice Hounds, a pet therapy volunteer team. Suzy Mauldin, Midland's Director of Volunteer Services for Hospice, explained that hospice dogs are registered through the TDI or Therapy Dogs International. In jest, the qualifications sound like a perfect child: a dog is friendly to strangers, sits politely, is well groomed, walks on a leash through a crowd, stays in one position, follows commands, accepts other dogs, and shows confidence. Penny Johnson, a volunteer with Hospice Hounds, brought her pet, Capree, and she explained that the animals lift the spirits of many patients during their visits in nursing homes, at Hospice, Safe Place, Senior Citizens Center, Allison Cancer Center, and other facilities in the area. Guest therapy dogs were Jesse, Pumpkin, Kona, and Capree.

Hospice Hound teams may visit Hospice-Midland patients in their private homes or in whatever setting the patient calls home, such as a long term care facility, assisted living facility, or when the patient is in the In-Patient Unit.

Hospice Hound team visits may be arranged by request through the patient's nurse, social worker, or directly by calling Director Mauldin at 682-2855. She does request advance notice to book teams for visits or events.



Skip Flavored Lip Balm

Flavored lip balms may tempt you to lick your lips, which can aggravate chapping. To treat or prevent chapped lips, use a plain lip balm with petrolatum, beeswax or an oil-based lubricating cream. Make sure to choose one with sunscreen.

Mayo Clinic Housecall, Jan 11, 2012

Karron Pearson
Healthcare Chairperson

News from Austin

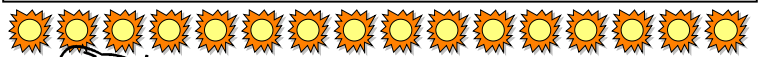


By Tim Lee

TRTA/MARSP members interested in email updates on issues pertaining to pension, health insurance, Social Security, and other hot topics should sign up for Inside Line. This email update is written by Tim Lee, TRTA Executive Director, and offers fact and opinion on the issues facing current and future education retirees. Currently, the move to change our retirement from defined benefit to a defined contribution is still in progress.

Go to <http://www.trta.org> and click the Inside Line icon like the one above. Then follow the directions.

The TRTA Call Your Legislator Hotline:
1-888-674-3788



Concerns for MARSP Members

When one of our members or a member of their family is ill or in need of support, cards are sent to let them know we are thinking of them. A sympathy card was sent recently to Joyce Luck upon the death of her brother. One was also sent to the family of Sandra Manley who passed away in Dallas on Friday, February 3.

Get-well cards have been sent to Patricia Maurer, Lyn Fishman, Ann Parish, Mike Landrum and Gaylene McMackin. Recipients of thinking-of-you cards were Diantha Dawkins, Marion and Joyce Sell, Bob Watkins, Martha Kallus, Peggy and Glenn Woods, and Fariss Murphy.

If you know an MARSP member who would like a card, please call Patti Watson at 697-1170 or e-mail her at pnw1000@gmail.com. You may also have extra cards at your house that you are not using. You may bring those to Patti at the monthly luncheon or let her know and someone will come and pick them up.

Thank you for keeping Patti informed of the need for cards, and for the cards you have donated.

Patti Watson
Friendship Chairperson



Newsletter Articles

If you have an article for the newsletter, please e-mail it to Joyce Whitley at joyce.whitley@gmail.com. You may also send articles to Joyce or Carole Miller at 1210 W. Golf Course Road, Midland, 79701. If you have suggestions for upcoming newsletters, they are always welcome.

Volunteer Hours - February 2012

Name: _____

Number of Hours: _____

Walking Steps - February 2012

Name: _____

Number of Steps: _____



MEMBERSHIP:

ENROLL NOW FOR NEXT YEAR!!

Now is the time to MAIL YOUR CHECK because CURRENT MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2012. You will be eligible for **PRIZES (over 50 last year)** at the May meeting if MARSP receives your form with payment postmarked by May 1, 2012. (YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE PRESENT TO WIN!)

Please send your dues now to reduce MARSP costs for reminder notices! Also help the association gain new members to increase its influence with state and national legislators when encouraging them to enact measures such as the Social Security Fairness Act and legislation that comes before the Texas Legislature. When we talk to political representatives, they always ask how many retirees are members of our association.

We are gearing up for a big fight in the 2013 legislative session over defined benefit plans vs. defined contribution plans. A defined benefit plan guarantees retirees a set pension for life. You may not ever get a raise, but you never miss an annuity check. A defined contribution is based on money you save and/or invest during your working life. It's up to you to find the money, in your relatively small paycheck, to put aside. It's up to you (and perhaps the financial advisor you hire) to be sure you have enough to live on for the last 20-30 years of your life. If you make poor decisions, you may run out of money.

A bill to eliminate defined benefit plans throughout Texas was defeated in the 2011 session. An attorney named Bill King in Houston has already formed a group to lobby the next legislature. He doesn't like the police pension fund in Houston, so he thinks we should get rid of all pension funds, well-managed or not. TRS is extremely well-managed. And we need to fight to keep it.

Membership in MARSP and TRTA is our primary means of getting legislative information. TRS can't lobby; TRTA and other teacher organizations can. TRTA keeps its members informed, lets us know when bills are coming up in committee and on the floor, and helps us communicate with our legislators by phone and e-mail quickly and effectively. We need your help more than ever as we fight to keep TRS and our defined benefit for generations of educators.

PLEASE REMEMBER, NO OTHER ENTITY WORKS SOLELY FOR YOU IN AUSTIN AND SPEAKS FOR YOU IN WASHINGTON. Please join to help us become a stronger voice for retired personnel in Midland, in Texas, and in the USA. Both TRTA and MARSP need your support through your membership.

Questions: Call Mike or Kathy Landrum, (432) 631-7390.

Mike and Kathy Landrum
Membership Chairpersons



Be Careful in Cold Weather

Being outside in cold weather increases heart attack risk. For every one-degree Celsius drop in temperature, heart attack risks increased by 2%. Risk was highest among people ages 75 to 84 and those with a history of coronary heart disease. Cold weather may make blood vessels work harder to regulate body temperature....and strenuous cold-weather tasks such as shoveling snow may put stress on the heart.

Krishnan Bhaskaran, PhD, lecturer, statistical epidemiology,
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine,

Karron Pearson
Healthcare Chairperson



Health Tips

When walking for exercise, dress in loose fitting, comfortable clothing. Wear layers if you need to adjust to changing temperature. If you walk outside, choose clothes appropriate for the weather. Avoid rubberized materials because they don't allow perspiration to evaporate. Wear bright colors or reflective tape after dark so that motorists can see you.

Mayo Clinic Housecall, Jan. 17, 2012



Many people blink less than normal when working on a computer, which can lead to dry eyes. The solution? Refresh your eyes by making a conscious effort to blink more often. Blinking produces tears, which can help moisten and lubricate your eyes.

Mayo Clinic Housecall, Jan. 25, 2012

Karron Pearson
Healthcare Chairperson



MARSP Honors Maridell Fryar With a Donation to the Foundation

The MARSP Board has approved the collection of donations to the Texas Retired Teacher Foundation at the March meeting or through a mail-in. These funds will be given in honor of Maridell Fryar, who most likely will be elected the TRTA President for the 2012-2013 year.

The donations will be presented at the Foundation Luncheon during the convention in Houston. You will recall that the Foundation has three very worthy programs which it supports, each one benefitting active teachers or retired teachers. Let's once again show our support and pride in our MARSP member and former president, Maridell, and make a generous contribution to the Foundation. Bring your donation to the March MARSP meeting or mail it to MARSP, PO Box 4954, Midland, TX 79704. Attn: Foundation Luncheon.

For questions or further information, please contact Martha Kallus at 682-2846 or mdkallus@sbcglobal.net.

Martha Kallus

Texas Retired Teachers Foundation Liaison

MARSP Scholarship



The MARSP awards a \$1500 scholarship every year to a deserving applicant. Each month, bags are left on the tables at the luncheons so that members may donate. Each time we have a guest speaker, MARSP donates to the scholarship fund in the speaker's name. Anyone can donate to the fund in honor or memory of a loved one. In order to be considered for the scholarship, an applicant must meet the following criteria:

1. be currently enrolled in a university or college in Texas
2. be sponsored by an MARSP member who is a relative or mentor
3. be pursuing an undergraduate or master's degree in education or an educational certificate
4. submit a completed application postmarked by Friday, June 1, 2012.

If you have a relative or protégée who will be attending college in Texas and pursuing a teaching credential, you might wish to direct the student to midlandretired.org to fill out the application for the scholarship. The completed application should be mailed to: Diantha Dawkins, Box 80459, Midland, TX 79708.

Diantha Dawkins
Scholarship Chairperson

Volunteer Hours



The members of MARSP turned in a total of 169,237 volunteer hours for 2011. If that number is multiplied by the minimum wage in Texas of \$7.25 an hour, the total is \$1,226,968.25. That is how much our members could have earned if they had been paid for their services. Betty Merritt was the top volunteer for 2011, turning in a total of 4,138 hours. Any unpaid job for which you donate your time is counted as volunteer hours. Religious/church activities, assisting senior citizens or the disabled, school-related activities, community service, caring for grandchildren and helping with meals on wheels are just a few of the activities which count as volunteer hours. Please be diligent about turning in your hours so that you can get credit.

You may turn your hours in at the monthly luncheons, where your name will be entered into a drawing for a free lunch, or you may e-mail your hours to cd.neyoung@grandecom.net.

Nancy Young
Community Volunteer Service

Reservations for Luncheons



Each month you are encouraged to make your timely reservation to attend the MARSP luncheon. It is very important that you make that reservation because the providers at First Baptist Church prepare the meals according to the number that is turned in. If reservations are made for 50 people and 55 people show up, that means 5 people do not get a meal. Conversely, if you make a reservation and are not able to come, MARSP has to pay for your meal which goes to waste. Please be diligent in making your reservations and paying for your meal if you are unable to attend.



Children's Books Needed



MARSP is still collecting children's books to be donated to different organizations in town which deal with children. Last year, we collected over 3,000, and it would be wonderful if we could best that number this year. So far, we have 135 books. Please clean out your closets. Ask your relatives to clean their closets and bookshelves and donate their new and gently used books to MARSP. This is a state-wide project and gives children who don't have ready access to books a chance to have books. A local food pantry tries to put a book in every food basket given to a family where there is a child in that family. Often times, that is the only book the child owns. Please ask your friends and neighbors for books and let's see if we can beat our record from last year.

Pat Adams
Book Chairperson