If you didn’t join us for our annual NSARTA family Christmas luncheon last month, you really missed out on an amazing yuletide experience, not to be soon forgotten. Just as Maureen and I were about to drive off to our destination, Peggy Peterson, 2nd VP for programs, called me on my cell. “We have a problem, but it’s all under control,” she said.

An HVAC failure at the San Pedro Presbyterian Church had resulted in a loss of power in the fellowship hall where we normally meet. When Maureen and I arrived, Linda Nolder and her undaunted hospitality team, assisted by custodian Jesse, had an alternate plan already in place. As others arrived on scene, they pitched in to make the plan successful.

We accommodated more than 40 members and guests in the smaller, but more intimate setting of round tables in the meeting room off the main foyer. The foyer itself provided ample space for our pre-event coffee and pastries, sign-in table with waiting door prize tickets, and a catering preparation area.

In the decorated dining area, we started on time, and we all enjoyed the engaging table talk, voice and heart-lifting carol singing, interspersed door prizes, and lovingly prepared great luncheon.

The entire morning blossomed into quite a magical affair. What had transpired reminded me of what is often said about Christmas—it is a time to “open our hearts” to each other. Everyone present joined hearts and hands to make the luncheon truly special. It will be a time I will not soon forget.

Thank you to all the “Hearts of NSARTA” who made this day a glorious memory!
Our January “Hearts of NSARTA” are Janet Pennock and Pat Loewe. These ladies are some of our quiet members but in reality are very active in our organization. They are both on the Board, have travelled to Austin representing NSARTA, and help with the Children’s Book Drive. One of the first faces you’ll see as you are about to enter the fellowship hall is Pat’s. She is one of the registrars reminding you to sign in and “Don’t forget your ticket for the drawings.” And of course, she draws all the lucky numbers for the monthly door prizes. Janet is our Community Volunteer Services Chairman and is always reminding us to record our volunteer hours. So, when you are signing in for our January meeting, please add your volunteer hours in the notebook Janet provides. Thank you Pat and Janet for doing all you “quietly” do for NSARTA.

Janet Pennock  
“My story begins in Houston, Texas. My parents were Willie and Marguerite Esparza. I also had a brother, Willie, who was 10 at the time of my birth. Unfortunately, my parents got a divorce when I was 2. So my mother, my brother and I started a new chapter in my life. It was not easy for my mother to take care of us with only an eighth grade education. She did it well. My mother kept telling my brother and me that we had to go to college. There was no other choice, it was the ticket out of poverty. My brother joined the Air Force. After the Air Force he become a Dallas Police officer and was one year short of getting his degree in Criminal Justice before his premature death.

I went to Lamar Elementary. I struggled the first two years of school, then, in 3rd grade I got the most amazing teacher, Miss Joyce Jennings. She believed in me and changed my path. One teacher can make a life change for a child. I became an honor student. In 4th grade I joined Girl Scouts. Miss Jennings was my troop leader. Miss Jennings changed grades and was also my 5th grade teacher. She made a big impact on me. She went above and beyond. I went on to Marshall Junior High. When I was 13, my mother had a stroke and passed away. I left Texas and moved to California to live with my aunt and uncle. I went to La Quinta High School. We moved back to Texas after my uncle had a battle with cancer. I finished high school at Aldine High School in the Houston area. At the end of my senior year I moved in with my father, a year and a half later he died of Kidney Cancer. I graduated with honors from high school and received several academic scholarships. I did it! I was going to college. I had a work study job, a tiny check from SS and my scholarships, I can do this. I decided to go to University of Houston as an Accounting major, but I didn’t like it. When I was a Cadet Girl Scout I did a project tutoring elementary children and I enjoyed it, so I decided to try Elementary Education. I loved it and the people, too. I met my future husband, Steve Pennock, at the Health Center where I was working. He was a Pharmacy student doing a class assignment. We got married 2 years later, I graduated with a Degree in Elementary Education and we moved to Lake Jackson, Texas, his home town. My first teaching job was in 1st grade at Velasco Elementary, a Title 1 school in Brazosport ISD. I knew I was in the right profession; every day was a new challenge. I was determined to be that teacher like Miss Jennings. I would rather be in a Title school. I can relate to their struggles and can show them hope.

Time for a family- 6 years into our marriage, our first bundle of joy arrived, Stephanie Leigh. Then 3 years later Allison Mae completed our family. I was a busy “at home” mom for 10 years. I taught at Chapelwood Methodist Pre-School for 5 years. I was very involved at my daughter’s elementary, from homeroom mother to PTO President. When Allison entered 2nd grade, I took a position at Griffith Elementary, another Title 1 school, where I taught 1st grade and Kindergarten for 15 years. I created an after school art program that produced several award winning students. I had the honor of being chosen as Griffith Elementary Teacher of the Year 2009. Our girls graduated from Texas State and were settling in the San Antonio area. We decided to relocate to the San Antonio area. The easy part was Steve transferring with Walgreens. Finding a house was a different story, we looked for 2 years before we found our forever home in Universal City. I did some long term subbing with Comal ISD, New Braunfels ISD, Judson ISD and East Central ISD. In 2013 a few months after moving
(NSARTA Hearts -continued)

into our new home I discovered I had Sarcoma Renal Cell Cancer. My kidney was removed. My cancer had signs of spreading. At that time no chemo existed to eradicate my rare cancer. My doctors told me enjoy life, my time was limited. So I retired. That was the hardest thing to do. I wasn’t ready to leave teaching. I was in a new city, didn’t really know anyone. I got on the internet started looking up Retired Teachers Groups and found NSARTA. I made the right choice. I am with my peers and they also want to make a difference. I also joined Delta Kappa Gamma-Theta Beta Chapter. Found my Peeps! My grandson Jackson was born in 2014, he is my energy source. I want to see him grow up. My cancer came back in 2017, in my lungs this time. So we take a section of my lungs and move on with life. Life is grand! I have my family and friends to share my life with. I had a very rewarding career. I know I made a difference. I plan to beat the odds- it won’t be the first time for me to do that.”

Pat Loewe  “In the depths of the depression I was born in a little farm house in south Texas. My mom was a farmer’s wife and my daddy was a deputy sheriff/farmer. With my two big brothers, we lived wild and free-riding donkeys, calves, climbing trees, in general having a great time while mom was occupied with our baby sister.

Then I remember, or think I do, President Roosevelt’s famous speech of infamy about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It seems Daddy and all five of his brothers were called up to go fight the enemy. They along with many of the young men of the area were in the National Guard. Our Texas National Guard was among the first guard to be called up.

Mom couldn’t run a big farm with a new baby by herself and keep up with us. So off we went to big San Antonio  There she got a job at Kelly, routing munitions to the Texas coast to be shipped to Europe. And yes, we were the original “latch key” kids. Victor, the oldest brother at eleven, took care of us, cooked our meals, and walked us to school. I helped by taking care of little Sandy. We adored her. She was “our baby” although mom found a sweet old lady to be her babysitter during the day.

When daddy came home from the war our life became more normal. We were attending Travis Elementary by then. Oh, how we hated that school. My brother Neil and I would walk home commiserating how mean the teachers were.

When I got to Mark Twain Jr. High, I fell in love with the school. They had a wonderful library that was amazing! I had never seen so many books before. I read and read, and read! This is where I fell in love with school!

Then it was off to Thomas Jefferson High School. All my school days at Jeff were great - being a Lasso, being in the Girls Cadet Corp, the honor societies, the clubs and finally a scholarship to the University of Texas. There I met a tall, dark, handsome Dallas boy named Robert. We married and I went to work. He went back to school- very familiar story isn’t it? The Korean war interrupted our life. Robert was called up for flight training and I went to work in Dallas for an oil company. Many years later along came our two boys, Greg and Brian.

When the boys started school, I did, too......down the road to the University of North Texas. It’s hard work being a wife, mother, Sunday school teacher, school volunteer, and PTA officer. It took me five years to get my BS, Teaching Certificate and Kindergarten Endorsement. I truly am proud to say I graduated Magna Cum Laude. Five years later I earned my Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education.
NEWSLETTER - JANUARY, 2019

(NSARTA Hearts continued)

After 29 years of teaching and the death of my husband, I retired and moved back home to San Antonio. There are so many events that my story could go on with many, many more paragraphs.

I cherish all the things I did with my husband, like building two airplanes in our garage. I can even hot-wire foam wings. I can buck rivets and go to “fly ins” all over the country. I cherish seeing my sons graduate and love spending time with my grandchildren. And needless to say I’m proud of my siblings, too. Victor is a retired biologist and a teacher. Neil is a petroleum engineer who has drilled all over the world and our baby sister, Sandy is a talented accomplished artist.”

LEGISLATIVE/FOUNDATION Carlos Ortiz

It is time to write our letters to our respective Texas representatives and senators. The same letter can also be sent to members of the Senate and House Committees which have an input into our retirement system. These committees will be formed in the Senate; however, the House will not have the committees until after the House speaker is chosen.

Topics to write about are: COLA, increase State’s contribution to TRS from 6.8% to 8.5%, make the TRS pension fund actuarially sound, keep and support the defined benefit vs the defined contribution, 90% of the school districts do not participate in social Security, Health insurance-ERS (Employee Retirement System) do not pay a premium; yet TRS members pay $135 per month, support public schools not charter/private schools, the recent Voice has other topics.

Senate Committees:   Education- Finance-State Affairs

House Committees:   Appropriations-State Affairs-Pensions- Investment & Finance Svs.

PROGRAM Peggy Peterson NSARTA 2nd VP/Program Chair

Happy New Year NSARTA! Join us on Wednesday, January 16th as we Kick Off 2019 with a bit of fun! Our focus on knowing each other better, energizing our spirits and taking better care of ourselves will get our engines geared up to make our presence known to state legislators as the new session begins. Don’t miss the fun!

Special thanks to our fabulous Hospitality Committee for creating yet another lovely Christmas Luncheon. Despite last minute complications, the positive NSARTA spirit prevailed and a wonderful time was had by all!

Watch the newsletter for the next Big Read Book Club selection. We will meet in March. Let me know if you would like to join this lively group.
TREASURER’S REPORT  Carolyn Pfeiffer 210-372-434 carolynpfeiffer48@gmail.com

Treasurer’s Report as of:  1-1-2019
In our checking account we have: $1,775.26

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!!!

NSARTA Members Needed:

To attend Rally Day at the State Capitol in Austin on Wednesday, April 3, 2019. For: $20.00 per person, a bus will drive you to Austin—leaving at 7:00 AM from the Walmart parking lot (west side of the building), located at Loop 1604/Hwy. 281. The bus will return around 5:30 PM. Deadline is:  Feb. 1, for your bus reservation.

Make your $20 check payable to: TRTA District 20.
Mail to:  Carolyn Pfeiffer
          8310 Magdalena Run
          Helotes, TX. 78023
Please include your name, cell phone #, and your email address.
**David Plylar will be the bus contact person on April 3.**
Lunch is up to you (bring it along) or eat in the capitol cafeteria.

WEAR A RED SHIRT!!!

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY  Barbara Yates 494-6444

A get- well card was sent to Sherlyn Valentin, who broke her shoulder.  A thinking-of you- card was sent to Barb Rothe, whose husband had back surgery.

STITCHERY  Ledru Barker

Please join us in filling pillowcases for the VA Hospital. Pillowcases were made by Lynn East and Ledru Barker. The pillows will be sewn shut by Louise Bishoff and Ledru Barker. If no guests, then pillowcases will be stuffed by Lee Carr, Lynn East, Genie Hurta, Tina Koerber, and Pat Loewe. We would love to have more members in our group.

Don’t forget that Joann’s and Michaels give 15% discounts to TRTA members who are giving supplies for the Stitchery group’s projects. This group meets on the first Thursday of the month. Make plans to help out on February 7th, 10:00 to Noon.
COMMITTEE REPORTS

HOSPITALITY  Barbara Rothe 210-380-8150, Linda Nolder 210-490-1035

Our Christmas luncheon has come and gone but we have to thank the entire Hospitality Committee for all they did to make it a success. The committee selects the vendor and menu (we think Heavenly Gourmet is the best), decorates and cleans up afterwards, and serves the entire meal without any spills!! Many, many, thanks to these ladies who always go the extra mile for NSARTA.

Refreshments for our January meeting will be provided by NSARTA board members. If you have not brought refreshments this year, please, please, please sign up to bring refreshments for our remaining meetings, February through April. Our May meeting will include a delicious “Pot Luck” lunch. For your convenience the sign-up sheet is always on a table as you enter the fellowship hall. Michele Bibb (210) 494-8197

CHILDRENS’BOOK DRIVE  Sherlyn Valentin, Nancy Dooley, Pat Loewe

This year the goal of the Children’s Book Project is to not only distribute books to each student of Valley Hi Elementary, but also to the San Antonio Children’s Shelter and to a local pediatric clinic. NSARTA can also document the books we give to our grandchildren or to other children—for example, at birthday parties or baby showers. So each month there will be a list on which you can document the number of any books you have given—Sherlyn Valentin will have the list. Thanks again for your support.

VOLUNTEERING  Janet Pennock japennock57@yahoo.com, 979-417-3876

This is the month I have to turn in Volunteer hours for 2018. Please bring your volunteer hours to this month’s meeting. If you cannot make it to the meeting text them to me at 979-417-3876 or email them to me at japennock57@icloud.com. Please submit your hours.

REGISTRATION  Pat Loewe & Eddy English

The registration table keeps a record of each person who attends. They also distribute name tags and furnish every attendee with a raffle ticket for a drawing at the end of meetings. Be sure to stop by the registration desk and sign in, as you enter each meeting. If you have not brought refreshments to a meeting this year, please sign up to participate. You can do this at the registration table also.
MEMBERSHIP  
Harold Black

The membership year for TRTA runs from July 1 to June 31 each year. Membership renewal signup begins in March. Renewals paid in Jan and Feb will be held until March to and applied to the 2019-2020 membership year. New members who need their membership to qualify for TRTA insurance will NOT have their membership held for the 2019-2020 renewal.

Welcome!

NSARTA
You are invited to join us in the efforts we are making to improve retirement benefits and to be of service in our community.

We meet at:
SAN PEDRO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
14900 SAN PEDRO AVENUE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, 78232
210-494-6560

We always meet on the third Wednesday of each month. We have our social gathering at 9:30 a.m. and our meeting is from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Our dues are $50 - $35 of this goes to the state. Come join in the fun!!

Let it snow, Let it snow, Let it snow!
Look at what you eat

- Keep a food diary for a week or two and record everything you eat or drink. Track the number of servings you eat from each food group.
- For a balanced diet every day, eat a variety of:
  - 6 or more ounce-equivalents of grains, such as cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta, every day. An ounce-equivalent is 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal.
  - 2 cups of vegetables, especially:
    - Dark-green vegetables such as broccoli and spinach.
    - Orange vegetables such as carrots and sweet potatoes.
    - Dry beans (such as pinto and kidney beans) and peas (such as lentils).
  - 2 cups of fresh, frozen, or canned fruit. A small apple or 1 banana or orange equals 1 cup.
  - 3 cups of nonfat or low-fat milk, yogurt, or other milk products.
  - 5 ounces of meat and beans, such as chicken, fish, lean meat, beans, nuts, and seeds. One egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, ⅓ ounce nuts or seeds, or ⅛ cup of cooked beans equals 1 ounce of meat.
- Learn how to read food labels for serving sizes and ingredients. Fast-food and convenience-food meals often contain few or no fruits or vegetables. Make sure you eat some fruits and vegetables to make the meal more nutritious.
- Look at your food diary. For each food group, add up what you have eaten and then divide the total by the number of days. This will give you an idea of how much you are eating from each food group. See if you can find some ways to change your diet to make it more healthy.

Start small

- Do not try to make dramatic changes to your diet all at once. You might feel that you are missing out on your favorite foods and then be more likely to fail.
- Start slowly, and gradually change your habits. Try some of the following:
  - Use whole wheat bread instead of white bread.
  - Use nonfat or low-fat milk instead of whole milk.
  - Eat brown rice instead of white rice, and eat whole wheat pasta instead of white-flour pasta.
  - Try low-fat cheeses and low-fat yogurt.
  - Add more fruits and vegetables to meals and have them for snacks.
  - Add lettuce, tomato, cucumber, and onion to sandwiches.
  - Add fruit to yogurt and cereal.

Enjoy food

- You can still eat your favorite foods. You just may need to eat less of them. If your favorite foods are high in fat, salt, and sugar, limit how often you eat them, but do not cut them out entirely.
- Eat a wide variety of foods.

Make healthy choices when eating out

- The type of restaurant you choose can help you make healthy choices. Even fast-food chains are now offering more low-fat or healthier choices on the menu.
- Choose smaller portions, or take half of your meal home.
- When eating out, try:
  - A veggie pizza with a whole wheat crust or grilled chicken (instead of sausage or pepperoni).
  - Pasta with roasted vegetables, grilled chicken, or marinara sauce instead of cream sauce.
  - A vegetable wrap or grilled chicken wrap.
  - Broiled or poached food instead of fried or breaded items.

Make healthy choices easy

- Buy packaged, prewashed, ready-to-eat fresh vegetables and fruits, such as baby carrots, salad mixes, and chopped or shredded broccoli and cauliflower.
- Buy packaged, presliced fruits, such as melon or pineapple.
- Choose 100% fruit or vegetable juice instead of soda. Limit juice intake to 4 to 6 oz (⅓ to ⅔ cup) a day.
- Blend low-fat yogurt, fruit juice, and canned or frozen fruit to make a smoothie for breakfast or a snack.

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