



PRESIDENT'S CORNER, Judy Lynn

The Boots at North Star Mall are illuminated, neighborhoods are dressed up with Christmas decorations, Carolers are on the River singing Christmas Carols and folks are making plans for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day gatherings--it must be December.

Thank you for the great turnout for our Christmas Luncheon. At last count we had 62 reservations, but more have probably come in since then. Our wonderful Treasurer, Carolyn Pfeiffer, will have a final count by Friday, December 4th. I know from past experience that the Fellowship Hall will be beautifully decorated, the menu will be very satisfying and the entertainment will be top notch. Our Hospitality "Angels" have always made sure that everything is First Class. Be sure to give them a pat on the back so they will know their efforts are appreciated.

Thank you for all who contributed to the Floresville Education Foundation. I know we collected well over \$200.00 and we have forwarded the donation to the proper authorities. Thank you, also, for your kind contribution to the TRTF collection. You always come through. That's why NSARTA is such a strong viable Unit. We could not do it without your strong participation.

The President reminds the NSARTA Board that our second Board meeting of the year is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 6, 2016 at 9:30AM for Fellowship and meeting at 10:00 AM.** Please mark your calendars and plan to attend as we have a pretty full Agenda.

Kenneth joins me in wishing you and yours a blessed and joyous holiday season. We both hope you and yours had an equally joyous and blessed Thanksgiving. We all have much for which to be thankful.





On Monday, November 2, 2015 in the San Antonio Express-News, a letter entitled “Spread the Wealth” appeared. The writer wrote against the bonuses paid to the Texas Teacher Retirement system investment group. Many of you have heard me say “I do not mind paying Millions especially when the TRS Fund earns Billions with a capital B”. The writer was from New Braunfels in District 13 not District 20. I regret that we did not keep the 1980-83 TRS contribution rates. The TRS Fund would be actuarially sound today and retirees would receive an ad hoc increase in their annuity. We now have SB 1458 and we must keep the contribution rates stated in the bill. Be vigilant.

Health-Care is our next obstacle. Every day you read about healthcare providers, insurance carriers, ACA, and other health topics. In our District Fall Workshop in Boerne, Ray Spivey, TRS representative, spent most of his talk on Health-Care. Health-Care for teachers and retirees will be the main topic between now and the next Legislative Session.

CARLOS IS ON VACATION AND WON'T BE ABLE TO ATTEND THE CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Carolyn Pfeiffer 210-372-0434, carolynpfeiffer48@gmail.com

As of December 10, 2015, a current balance of **\$2,900.10** is in our free checking account. No green sheet this time at the luncheon!!**

PROGRAM



Get ready to be entertained by the Las Lomas Elementary Choir...nothing puts me in the spirit of the season more than the angelic voices of children. Under the direction of Leigh Ann Roeber, this choir travels to many locations in San Antonio bringing their beautiful voices, cheerful faces, and music that we all cherish. We are so fortunate to have them perform for us before our Christmas Luncheon. I know you will welcome them to our meeting and will be moved by their musical message.

Deadline for articles for the January Newsletter will be January 10, 2016.



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Janet James, Past President

Members of the nominating committee will meet Monday, December 13, 2015, at 9:30 a. m. The meeting will be held in the conference room at First Mark Credit Union on Gold Canyon.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT MISTLETOE Michele Bibb



Mistletoe is an evergreen pest that attaches itself to trees, plants, and shrubs stealing their nutrients and water. It is thought that it is brought to host plants by “bird poo”. Mistletoe can weaken or disfigure plants to the point where it can eventually kill the plant. Once it infects a tree, it is very difficult to kill. Even if you cut off the visible part of the invader, new plants often grow inside the host and eventually kill it. The most effective way to fight it is to remove the infected branch entirely. Eating any part of the plant may cause drowsiness, blurred vision, upset stomach, weakness, and even seizures. However, it also has a history of medicinal use. The European varieties of mistletoe have been used for centuries to treat seizures, headaches, and arthritis.

Mistletoe grows in all temperate regions of the world. It has even been found growing in the southwestern deserts of the United States. The serving class of Victorian England is credited with first recording the tradition of kissing beneath the mistletoe. Tradition dictated that a man was allowed to kiss a woman standing under the mistletoe and that bad luck would befall any woman who refused the kiss. One variation on the tradition stated that with each kiss, a berry was to be plucked from the mistletoe and that all kissing must stop after all the berries were removed. Even after all these years, kissing under the “kissing ball” is a tradition that continues in many homes all over the world today.



COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership Services

Sue Sim

If you are planning a road trip, keep La Quinta in mind for a place to stay. They offer retired teachers a discount. Look in the Voice for more information.



Hospitality

Michele Bibb

The Hospitality Committee has been working very hard getting everything ready for the Christmas Luncheon. We even met this week to make the centerpieces for each table. Plan on arriving between 10:00-10:25AM for coffee and muffins. Judy will call the meeting to order around 10:30 for a few brief announcements and our entertainment will begin at 10:45AM. We are planning for lunch to be served about 11:20ish. The Hospitality Committee will be your “serving hostesses” again this year.

After you have finished your meal, please help yourself to the dessert cake.

Volunteering

Sue Winebrenner, suehwine@sbcglobal.net

695-2629



"December is our last month of volunteer hours for this recording period. Be prepared to record your 2015 volunteer hours at the luncheon. Remember travel time to and from counts as does babysitting. Thanks"

Notification Committee



Our Notification Committee calls members each month who do NOT have an email address to keep them informed of meetings and NSARTA information. Are you a member without an email address, and want to receive monthly NSARTA reminder calls; or do you know of a member that would like a monthly reminder? If so, please call Michele Bibb, 494-8197, and we will be happy to include you on our caller list.

Michele Bibb 494-8197

Stitchery

Ledru Barker & Josie Broekhove

Thanks

...to all who stuffed pillows, donated fabric and other items to our Stitchery Group during our November meeting. I know Harold Black got some excellent pictures of members stuffing those pillows! I can't wait to see them! Michele Bibb

Childrens' Book Drive

Nancy Dooley, Pat Loewe, Carolyn Varian



A very special thank you to everyone, who donated books, money, and/or time; to NSARTA's 2015 Children's Book Project. It is your generosity that makes this project so successful. A report will be sent to TRTA, who will recognize NSARTA's participation in this statewide project. We will continue collecting books and money again in January.



THANK YOU!

Health

Betty Moseley

Offering Condolences: 10 Helpful Things to Say to a Grieving Person<http://www.caring.com/articles/condolences>

When offering condolences, there are plenty of things not to say to a grieving person; finding the right words can be harder. The following suggestions offer kindness and compassion. And sometimes you don't have to say anything at all; when it comes to condolences, a hug is often worth a thousand words.

1. *"I'm so sorry for your loss."* It's short, sweet, heartfelt, and always welcomed.
2. *"Please know that I'm here for you."* It never hurts to remind someone in pain of your friendship.
3. *"You're in my thoughts and prayers."* Even people who aren't religious are unlikely to be offended if they know you're sincere (or leave off the "prayers" if you think they might be).
4. *"Remember you can call me at any hour."* Be specific: "You know I'm always up till midnight."
5. *"She was such a wonderful person."* Don't worry that you'll make the bereaved person think about the loved one by bringing up positive reminiscences; you can rest assured he or she is always in mind already.
6. *"I don't know what to say."* Admitting you're tongue-tied about offering condolences is fine.
7. *"I can't imagine what you're going through."* This beats comparing the death with your own stories of loss.
8. *"Would you like to talk about it? I'm listening."* Provide a gentle opening for the person to share.
9. *"How are you feeling -- really?"* A more pointed invitation to unload may be welcomed by some.
10. *"I've brought you a meal to eat or freeze; it's in disposable containers so no need to return anything."*

Better than asking, "How can I help?" is to step in with concrete help: bringing a meal, a quart of milk, a carton of eggs picked up when you do your own grocery shopping; or showing up to mow the lawn.

Offering condolences is an act of kindness; actionable acts of kindness give both condolence and practical support.

Resources for Grief and Loss

HELLO GRIEF <http://www.hellogrief.org/resources/texas/>

Hello Grief provides information and resources about grief in order to break through the current culture of avoidance that surrounds death and loss. Instead, Hello Grief addresses bereavement head-on for those who are helping others cope, as well as those who need support on their own personal journey with grief.

National Support Groups and Agencies

The Compassionate Friends <http://www.compassionatefriends.org/>

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive. Site includes a chapter locator for finding a local group in your city and "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). A customized packet of bereavement materials for your situation can be sent to you at no charge. *To learn more about attending TCF Chapter Meetings, visit online.*

TCF's National Office 877-969-0010; email nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org or

Health continued

GriefShare www.griefshare.org

GriefShare groups meet in churches (Protestant and Catholic) throughout the world. Over 9,000 churches participate in this program. A GriefShare group is typically designed around a 13-week grief support group/video series, and is specifically for those who are grieving the death of a loved one. Use the online locator to find a group near you or call 800-395-5755 or email infor@griefshare.org.

AARP.org/Griefandloss – AARP has compiled a wonderful array of articles on dealing with debt after a death, starting conversations about the end of life, and even a piece on odd funeral requests.

Hospice.Net - Hospice.net offers a comprehensive directory of information on their site, broken down into sections with resources specific to caregivers, children, patients, those seeking hospice services, and those in bereavement.

Adec.org/CopingwithLoss – One of the oldest interdisciplinary organizations in its field, the Association of Death Education & Counseling, also known as The Thanatology Association, has a wide range of support services for the griever who visits their site, including a thanatologist directory (thanatologists are specialists in death & dying, bereavement & loss).

HospiceFoundation.org – On the “Grief” page of The Hospice Foundation of America’s website, visitors will find a basic definition of grief, a link to dozens of articles on the subject, and advice on how to search for local support groups, including a few links to national organizations that offer local services, like the National Alliance for Grieving Children and The Compassionate Friends(www.compassionatefriends.org).

HelpGuide.org – This is an excellent – and quite extensive – site with great articles, links to other useful resources, an emotional skills toolkit, a section on the difference between grief and depression, and much more.

Contact local faith-based groups, hospitals, hospice and medical centers for bereavement support groups in your area.

- nihnewsinhealth@od.nih.gov



