

NEWSLETTER AND MINUTES

Odessa Retired Teachers and School Personnel Association

Meeting: November 18, 2024

Highland United UMC 1808 N Dixie, Odessa, Texas 79761 (south parking lot)

Meet and Greet 11:15 am Lunch 11:30 Meeting 12:00pm

Pledges Kathy Chandler Thought for the Day Mary Alice Ramos Invocation Sandy Ramage

Presidents Corner by Sandy Ramage It's November and Thanksgiving is on its way. We had a great meeting in October. Cecelia Reyes presented a highly informative program on Specialized Communication Equipment to assist the hearing impaired.

Our program at the November 18th meeting will be presented by State Representative Brooks Langraf. You will want to be here to hear about the latest news in the upcoming session of the Texas House of Representatives. If you bring a retired teacher that is not a member of ORTA as your guest, your name will be entered into a drawing for \$10 that will be drawn at the end of the meeting. Will the lucky winner be you?

The menu for November 18, 2024 meeting is Chicken Spaghetti, green beans, tossed salad and French bread and dessert. A \$4 donation is per person requested to help cover the cost of the meal. Those bringing desserts in November are Mary Alice Ramos, Betty Lively, and Elaine Davisson. Thank you to Sara Easley, Helen Kirk, and Marilyn Andjulus for bringing the delicious desserts in October.

In November and December, we are asking you to bring a can of soup with a pull top to the meeting to be given to Meals on Wheels. Thank you for all the pencils that you brought in September and October.

November is Foundation month. The Texas Retired Teachers Foundation (TRTF) is the TRTA charitable partner. Some of the programs that TRTF manages are "A Helping Hand", Disaster Relief, Classroom Assistance Grants, and first year teacher Scholarships. Please bring a dollar or two to give to the TRTF donation jar this month. Thank you to Libby McCrone as ORTA's Foundation Chair for keeping us informed on the Foundation.

ORTA Christmas Dinner is Monday, December 16, 2024. It will be \$12 per person. Look for your special invitation coming soon.

ORTA has a new web site. It can be found at <https://www.trta-district-18.org/>. A big thank you to Libby McCrone and Mike Landrum for their work on ORTA's website.

November Birthdays: November 1st Judith Heron, 9th Nancy Clark, 10th Ann Becker, 13th Bobby Barlow, Anna Richardson, 18th Pat Fowler, 22nd Dorothy Glover, 25th Nannette Kelton

First Vice-President: ORT/SPA truly has an excellent group that attends the monthly meetings. Out of all the TRS annuity recipients in Ector County approximately forty out of our 151 members attend the monthly meeting. About 1700 retirees receive an annuity in Ector County but only 151 belong to ORT/SPA. Does this mean that over 1500 retirees do not know that there is a local chapter that exists to help to obtain their COLA's, 13th checks, insurance rates, and other benefits? Please encourage all ECISD retirees to come to a meeting and see what ORT/SPA can do for them. Our group also needs to let active ECISD employees know that we exist for their future retirement benefits.

The Volunteer Hours turned in for October were 3,929.5. Some of these hours were collected over several months. The total number so far this year is 11,280.5 hours. This shows the dedication that the Odessa Chapter volunteers have for their community. Please bring your volunteer hours to the November 18th meeting. (or text, call, or e-mail to Ricky Chandler (432-631-1039, or r_chandler@grandecom.net). Esther Sofge will include your hours and send them to the state office.

Legislative News: The 89th Legislative session begins in January. A list of TRTA Priorities for this session from TRTA will be given to you at the November 18th meeting so you can let people know the challenges of 2025.

Also: BROOKS LANDGRAF, state representative will be our speaker. Please bring a friend and a can of soup with a pull top.

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Odessa Retired Teachers and School Personnel Association

Meeting: October 21, 2024

Highland United Methodist Church

1808 N. Dixie, Odessa, TX 79761 (south parking lot)

Meet and Greet 11:15 am Lunch 11:30 Meeting 12:00 pm

Pledges Melody Drinkard Thought for the Day Sara Easley Invocation Elaine Davisson

Program: Specialized Communication Equipment presented by Cecilia Reyes

President's Corner.... It's October and beginning to feel like Fall. We had a great meeting in September and were so glad to see everyone from the summer break. Karla Kirk from Amba

presented our program. We welcomed three new members Cheryl Qualls, Julie Kupper, and Kevin Mobley who had their state and local membership paid through Amba's lunch and learn program. Sherry Cook won the \$50 drawing from Amba. Margaret Green won the \$10 drawing for bringing a guest. Bring guest that is not a member of ORT/SPA to the October meeting to have your name entered in the \$10 drawing. The next winner could be you!

The menu for the October 21, 2024 meeting is Taco Salad, chips, salsa and dessert. A \$4 donation per person is requested to help cover the cost of the meal. Those bringing desserts in October are Sara Easley, Marilyn Andjulis, and Helen Kirk. Thank you to Mary Alice Ramos, Beth Wilson, and Melody Drinkard for bringing the delicious desserts in September.

This year we will have a project each month to give back to the community. This month we are continuing our pencil project to give to an elementary school. So, when you are out shopping, pick up a package of pencils to bring to the meeting. Thank you to all those who brought peanut butter or pencils in September. ORT/SPA donated 14 jars of peanut butter to the Channel 7 peanut butter drive.

We had a great District 18 Fall Conference on October 8, 2024, with 14 members attending. Kevin Sparks and Brooks Landgraf gave us updates on what was happening in the Senate and House of Representatives to support teachers and retired teachers. We also received the newest information from TRS, TRTA, and Amba.

Yea! Great News! A new 2024-2025 ORT/SPA directory is coming soon! All directories will be sent by email. The cost of printing and mailing printed copies is prohibitive. If your email has changed or if you have a different email address where you would like your directory to be sent, please contact Rick Chandler email : r_chandler@grandecom.net or Sandy Ramage email: msramage@aol.com .A big thank you to Rick Chandler for all of his work in getting the directory put together.

October Birthdays: 3rd Sue Kidd , 5th Donna Massey, 7th Cheryl Qualls , 10th Kenna Hurley, 15th Frances Kirven, Doris Jane Moore, 21st Helen Slusher, 22nd Gwen Collins , 25th Cynthia Lehman , 28th Juanella Mouser , 31st Sara Easley

Member we will miss: Sue Kettle

First Vice-President section for October 2024.... The first meeting of the year was well attended, provided great information, and yes, the food was fantastic. It was wonderful seeing our "old" friends and visiting with everyone especially the potential new members. ORT/SPA still needs your help in getting all retirees to join TRTA at both the state and local level. Visiting with past and current retirees, some say they do not see a reason joining just to visit with other retirees. This gives us a chance to explain that we need to get up to date

TRS information, upcoming legislation in Austin, benefit information that we need, and an united voice of members across the state of Texas. Imagine, if all the TRS retirees in the state joined, what a voice we would have in the legislative issues. Some retirees do not even know that their TRS-Care Medicare Advantage premiums will be lowered in January 2025. Encourage your friends to come see what the local chapter is about before they join. Come visit, have a good meal, and see the benefits of becoming a member, If they still don't join, we still work very hard for them to get annuity increase (COLA), the best premiums for TRS-Care, the best benefits, and advocate for them in the Texas Legislature. They do not know what they are missing until they know!!Please inform them. Membership information: State dues\$35.00, Local dues \$15.00. Members join both for \$50.00. Send dues to Treasurer Corky Barth, P.O. Box 1645, Odessa TX 79760. Bring a new member or guest and have your name put in drawing at the October meeting for a TEN DOLLAR BILL.

Legislative News:...The TRS Board of Trustees met in September 2024 and released some information. TRS investments are healthy and the us markets have some incredibly well this year. TRS investments are up 21%in the 23-24 school year, compared to a typical year of 11%.TRS has hired 3 new staff members in the benefit services division to help handle this increase. The new ALPHA and BRAVO will be completed in 2025. TRS will need supplemental funds from the state and has asked for \$450 Million for the next biennium to keep premium increases down. This information was released: over 285,00 stipends were authorized by HB1----205,00 retirees did not receive a stipend, more than 400,00annuiants received a COLA, over 86,000 retirees did not receive a stipend or a COLA. So as our Executive Director Tim Lee says, Work is not finished!!

Volunteer Hours:....Even if you cannot make the meetings, we know that you are volunteering out in the community. Please send in those volunteer hours so your chapter can sent them into the state for all the volunteer work that is done by our members. The Number of hour for July, August are_____. Please send your hours to email: r_chandler@grandecom.net or call or text them to Ricky Chandler 432-631-1039. Please report all volunteer hours to your chapter. If your ORT/SPA friends do volunteer work, please encourage them to report hours.

Odessa Retired Teachers and School Personnel Association

Name_____

Month_____ Number of hours_____

Odessa Teachers and School Personnel Association

Meeting: Monday September 16, 2024

Highland United Methodist Church

1808 N Dixie (South Parking Lot)

Odessa, Texas 79761

Meet and Greet 11:15am Lunch 11:30am Meeting 12:00pm

President's corner by Sandy RamageIt's September! Welcome back! It will be so good to see everyone and hear about your summer adventures. Our first meeting this year is on Monday, September 16, 2024. We will begin serving lunch at 11:30. The menu is hamburgers with all the trimmings, baked beans, potato salad, chips, and dessert. We are asking for a \$4 per person to help cover the cost of the meal.

This year we will have a project each month to give back to the community. This month we are asking our members to bring a jar of peanut butter as part of Channel 7's Peanut butter Drive that will be donated to the food bank or a package of pencils that will be taken to an elementary school.

The District 18 Fall Conference will be on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, 8:30 am to 2 pm at the Region 18 Service Center. This is a great meeting to learn what is happening in TRTA from our Legislators, TRTA first Vice President, TRS Fin Officer, and Amba. There will be a catered lunch (\$10) and door prizes. We always have an exciting time and get valuable information, Please RSVP to Sandy Ramage by September 27, 2024 cell 432-634-6020 or msramage@aol.com

First Vice President Ricky Chandler Welcome to the first meeting of 2024-2025. I am still learning the ropes of my new responsibilities so bear with me. We certainly need to increase our membership of our local chapter, and I need your help. Please stress to your friends and family in the education

community that TRTA and your local chapter are advocates for supporting their Teacher Retirement pension fund and TRS Care insurance. If you bring a new potential or a past member that has not rejoined the local chapter in the past two years, your name will be put in a drawing for you to win \$10.00 at the end of that meeting. If you have already joined this year, thank you very much for your membership. If you have not joined, please do so at the September 16th meeting, Dues are still a low price of \$35.00 for State and local dues are at \$ 15 for a total of \$50.00 for the entire year. Please make your check out to ORT/SPA and give it to Corky Barth at the next meeting. If you cannot attend this meeting, you can mail your dues to: Treasurer of ORT/SPA; PO Box 1645; Odessa, TX 70760-1645. Thank you in advance for spreading the information about your organization and the help that it brings to all retirees.

Volunteer Hours:

Everyone in our chapter does good deeds as by volunteering your time at many places. Church functions, keeping grandkids, running errands for friends and family, meals on wheels, hospital volunteers, mowed a lawn for someone, library events, and the list goes on and on and on!!! Count the ways you have brought others good cheer and write it down and turn it in!! On your table at the next meeting, you will find a paper labeled Volunteer Hours. Fill it out and turn it in -yes, we will remind you to do so!!! If you cannot attend the meeting, you still need to get credit for your volunteer hours, so send them to Ricky Chandler at r_chandler@grandecom.net (underscore between the rand 432-631-1039 to leave a voice mail if I do not answer.

Remember State Theme: Bridge to the Future

Odessa Retired Teachers/School Personnel Association

Name _____

Month _____

Total Hours _____

September Birthdays: September 9th Denise Elms, 5th Cathy Gilland,9th

Carolina Garcia,10th Ellen Sablan,12th Patricia Gonzales,16th Sharon

Lipham,18th Betty Lively 24th Helen Kirk, 29th Elsie Mohler,30th Lynne Cown

Friends we will miss: Frizella Whitiker , Barbara Waddell, Roy Dunn , Claudette

Jones

Odessa Retired Teachers/School Personnel Association

Newsletter

May, 2024

This month's meeting will be held on May 20 at 11:30am at Highland Church, 1808 N. Dixie, Odessa. This meeting is our annual banquet, and the executive board has a very exciting menu planned. If you have not yet made reservations, you may send a check made out to ORT/SPA, and mail it to Retired Teachers, P.O. Box 1645, Odessa, TX 79760. The cost is \$12.00 and covers everything from soup to nuts. Bring a prospective new member.

The five members who attended the state convention had a great experience and came back with much information for the chapter. In total, there were 736 members in attendance, from all over the state. One bit of information we learned is that TRTA is the largest organization representing retired teachers in the state and the nation. TRTA has approximately 96,000 members.

There were three amendments to the bylaws that were discussed and voted on. All amendments were approved by the house of delegates.

Amendment One: membership dues shall be based on a rate established by the board of directors and approved by the house of delegates.

Amendment Two: The First Vice-President shall be called the President Elect, and the Second Vice-President shall be called the Vice-President.

Amendment Three: Membership/Volunteer/Services Committee shall be called the Membership/Community Involvement Committee.

Elizabeth Barlow, the Health and Wellness chair, is having surgery on her spine to remove a cyst. Please keep her and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

If you are a mom, I hope you had a fantastic Mother's Day. To all the dads, I hope you have a fantastic Father's Day.

The books for the book project may need to be donated to the two school libraries rather than individual students, due to the lateness of their arrival from Scholastic Books. There should be enough books left over to donate to one school next year.

For those of you who enjoy traveling I have three websites you might want to check into. Some of you may be familiar with these already. Road Scholar, roadscholar.org; Boscov's Travel, boscovstravel.com, and Bilbrey Tours, bilbreytours.com. Bilbrey Tours is based in Abilene, TX.

This is the last newsletter of my biennium as your president. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve in that capacity. I would like to thank all the members of the executive board for all their hard work and dedication. They have all done an outstanding job. Thanks also to everyone who showed up month after month to support the organization. Without you, ORT/SPA would not exist.

Karen Telk
ORT/SPA President

Membership: from Sandy Ramage, First Vice-President:

May is here, and summer is on its way! We are looking forward to seeing you at the MAY 20, 2024 Spring Luncheon. Shirley Johnson District 18 TRTA President will be there to install the new officers for 2024-2025.

We have 102 members that have renewed their membership for TRTA and ORT/SPA and have their name entered in the drawing for \$100 at the summer birthday party in July. Have you sent in your membership card and cheque for \$50 for the state and local dues? Will you be the lucky winner? If you need a membership card or if you know someone who is interested in joining, please call me (432-634-6020) or you can pay your dues at the May meeting. See you on May 20th and bring a friend! TRTA has accomplished a lot this year but there is still more to do. REMEMBER YOU NEED ORT/SPA AND ORT/SPA NEEDS YOU.

May Birthdays: May 4th Donna Prima, 15th Marsha Dry and Amelia Lyons, 20th Margie Gillette and Betty Love, 29th Lou Ann Rabe and Patsy Yielding

Members we will miss: Floy Hinson, Amy Jo Marshall

Friends of education we will miss: Jayne Sandate, Kim Williams, R.N., Margaret McBee, Jean Raley, Tammy Ricks, Calvin Moore

Odessa Retired Teachers/School Personnel Association

Newsletter

April, 2024

Members,

I hope everyone had a great Easter, with lots of Easter eggs to be found. I was cleaning up in my backyard yesterday and found three toys, in the watering can, that my husband hid and my granddaughters didn't find. I'm just glad they weren't hard boiled eggs.

There will be five of us, from the chapter, attending the TRTA convention, so the April meeting has been moved to April 22nd, still at 11:30 at Highland Methodist. Those attending the convention are Betty Lively, Mary Alice Ramos, she will be representing the district, Rick and Cathy Chandler and myself. We will give reports about our experience at the April 22nd meeting. I hope to see several people there and everyone bring a friend.

The TRTA District XVIII (18) Spring Leadership Conference will be held at the Region 18 Education Service Center on May 7, 2024. Registration will begin at 8:30AM with refreshments available and the meeting will start at 9:00AM. Marcy Cann, the TRTA state president will give us an update on the state of TRTA. There will be training sessions for new officers and committee people. AMBA representative, D'Anna Baucom will be there and, as always, Michael Landrum will be there to take group pictures. After lunch will be the installation of the new district officers and presentation of various awards. The cost of lunch is only \$10.00 which includes everything from the soup to the nuts. Everyone should have their registration in by April 30, 2024 and you will be able to register at the April 22nd ORTA meeting. If you are unable to attend that meeting email me at karen.telck@att.net or text to 432-770-9363. I would love to have a grand showing of members.

I hope everyone enjoyed the Eclipse, it was pretty amazing, even in Midland and Odessa.

Sincerely,

Karen Telck
ORTA/SPA
President

From Sandy Ramage, First Vice President:

Happy April Everyone! It is enrollment time for the coming 2024-2025 year for TRTA and ORTA. Sixty-two members have enrolled so far and I have their names entered in the drawing for a \$100 early bird award to be given in July have you sent your membership in? If you did not receive a membership card or if you need another card, please let me know. You can send your membership and check in the mail, the address is on the membership card, or you can bring it to the ORTA meeting April 22, 2024.

April Birthdays: April 2nd Berna May, 3rd Carol Hill, Gail Potter, 7th Dorothy Johnson, Grace Crumley, 11th Cindy Slack, 12th Julie Brown, 13th Danny Keener, 14th Mary Alice Ramos, 21st Frances Hall, 23rd Harold McKelvain.

Members we will miss: Marilyn Chatham and Barbara Davidson.

As always, make sure you get your community service, volunteer hours turned in to Ester Sofge at toold@aol.com.