

HERALD BANNER

Retired teachers remain active

By **CAROL FERGUSON**

Herald-Banner Staff

— Technically they may be retired, but members of Greenville Retired Teachers and School Employees organization still have a lively interest in the educational system.

Priscilla Moore, current president of the group, and Barbara Underwood, six-time president, explained that active members are anyone who is drawing teacher retirement. “But anyone who desires to promote the purpose of education can be an associate member,” Moore said.

“We meet the second Wednesday of every month at 1:30 p.m. at Highland Terrace Baptist Church. They’re good enough to furnish us a room to meet in,” she added.

Current projects of the organization include:

— Collecting new or gently used books to donate to the Community Health Center

— A Legacy Award of \$500, presented to a first-year teacher. “They don’t get paid until they’ve taught a month, and expenses come out of your pocket that first month,” Moore explained. Nominees, who have been recommended by their principals, are interviewed, and this year’s winner was Amy Walker who teaches second grade at Boles Home.

— Keeping track of each member’s volunteer hours in the community. “We convert those hours into dollars — about \$13 to \$16 an hour — and make out a ‘check’ to give to the mayor of Greenville,” Underwood said.

“The check is not real money, but it shows the city how much we are giving in dollar savings to the community.”

— A health program called Walks A Million, in which members keep track of the hours they walk and turn in the mileage at the end of the year. A certificate of appreciation is given to the member turning in the most miles. Final reports are sent to the governor, with 156 local groups throughout the state participating.

Guest speakers at monthly programs have ranged from Greenville School Superintendent Lloyd Graham and State Sen. Robert Deuell, to a musical presentation by the GHS choir, Daybreak, at the Christmas program.

“Show And Tell” programs, reminiscent of classroom days, are also popular. In these, a member celebrating a birthday brings a favorite item to show the group — such as an antique, a family picture or a prized quilt.

Moore said she retired after 25 years at Lamar Elementary School. “I was a paraprofessional, a certified teacher with my own classroom, and I had the first computer lab in an elementary school in Greenville,” she noted.

Underwood’s last school before retiring was Houston Elementary School where she taught everything from pre-K, to third, fourth and sixth grades. “I liked the variety,” she said.

Greenville Retired Teachers and School Employees was organized March 21, 1973, and is affiliated with Texas Retired Teachers which was organized statewide in 1953. There are about 90 members in the local group.

Underwood said the purpose of the state organization is: “To encourage all retired public school employees to use their talents, training and experience in furthering the educational, social and civic growth of the community, state and nation.”

Both women agreed that membership in the organization has been valuable to them. “It helps me keep abreast of the latest ideas of what’s going on in the community and statewide — to keep our minds active,” said Underwood. “It also helps us in leadership roles.”

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