



POWER Connect!

Muscle Shoals Chapter
Winter 2018 Issue

Upcoming Meetings:

March 14, 10:00 a.m.

TVA Community Credit Union
Program: Robotics, County Sheriffs
Free Lunch, Door Prizes

June 19, 9:30 a.m.

Annual Picnic & Health Fair
Program: Health, Fitness, & More
Great Door Prizes (thousands of \$)

September 12, 10:00 a.m.

TVA Community Credit Union
Program: Scholarship Presentations
Free Lunch, Door Prizes

December 12, 10:00 a.m.

TVA Community Credit Union
Program: To Be Announced
Free Lunch, Door Prizes

Be sure to receive this newsletter—
enter/update your email address by
sending it to Reba Whitson at

rjwhitson@tva.gov@tva.gov

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Muscle Shoals TVARA is on Facebook now!

Enter our name and hit like to join us for news, pictures, our newsletter and much much more

MS CHAPTER TVARA QUARTERLY MEETING

Hello everyone.

We are starting a new year with several community projects. Our chapter members are currently supporting the Annual Garden Program. We will need volunteers as we move forward.

Our next Quarterly Meeting will be held March 14, 2018, 10:00 A.M. at the TVA Community Credit Union on Wilson Dam Road in Muscle Shoals. Scheduled speakers are Colbert County Sheriff, Lauderdale County Sheriff, and the BEST Robotics team from Lexington, Alabama.

Reminder: The Muscle Shoals Chapter of the TVARA holds membership meetings each calendar quarter, the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Quarter meetings are held at the TVA Community Credit Union on Wilson Dam Road in Muscle Shoals, and the 2nd Quarter meeting is our annual health fair and picnic held at the Florence/Lauderdale Coliseum in Florence.

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Newsletter: John Ingwersen, Janice Berry

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Please join us at our quarterly meetings for good fellowship, interesting speakers, and lunch.

We have a number of sponsors for our newsletter and community projects we are involved in. Please support these sponsors anytime you have an opportunity.

Tim Cornelius

2018 Shoals Area TVARA Picnic

Mark your calendar!

The Muscle Shoals Chapter of the TVA Retirees Association will hold its annual picnic on Tuesday, June 19, 2018. This will be a fun time to come and, not only enjoy good food, but also generous door prizes and good fellowship with some old friends. The picnic will be held at the Florence-Lauderdale Coliseum, starting at 10:00 a.m. More details later.

Gerald Williams Cooperative Garden Program

By James Bedsole



We very much appreciate BVI for donating a substantial amount to the garden program this year. Their support has consistently been there every year and goes a long way toward making this program a great success.

Each year, our TVA Retirees Chapter has the privilege of helping low-income families plant a garden by providing seeds, plants, and a bag of fertilizer—enough supplies to grow a 50' by 100' garden that will provide the family with fresh vegetables all summer, and will save them \$500 in grocery bills. Those members of our Chapter wishing to help this year should call James Bedsole, 256-383-5275, to sign up, or sign up at our March Chapter meeting. Working together, we will help over 1,000 families. Last year our Chapter provided more than 600 work hours to make this vital program work.

Following are the activities for which volunteers are needed:

1. Receive telephone calls from February 5 through March 16, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the Community Action Center, Sheffield.
2. Label post cards at Community Action Agency Building, Florence, on Monday, March 26, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
3. Pre-package seeds into single-serve packs on April 2 & 3—a total of 8,000 packs are needed. We will need 25 volunteers for this effort from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at the old Board of Education Building on US 72.
4. Distribute plants and seeds from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on April 17 & 18. This will require 25 volunteers' working from the old Board of Education Building on US 72.
5. Distribute plants and seeds in Russellville on Wednesday, April 18. If you would like to volunteer, call the Russellville Community Action Agency.

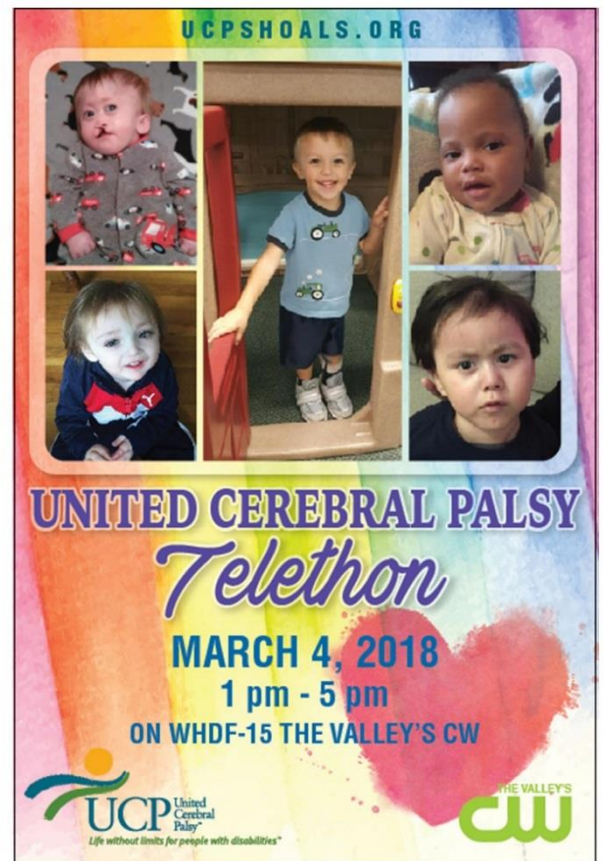
This is a good program to help those in our community who are willing to help themselves. They will reap the harvest, and we will know we were able to help. At the same time, you can enjoy the fellowship of other TVA retirees and catch up with former colleagues.

54th Year of UCP Telethon

By Allison Isbell

Editor's Note: Shoals CASA carries an advertisement in our newsletter every issue, thus supporting our Endowed Scholarship Fund. Please give your support to them!

We are gearing up for our 54th annual telethon for the Cerebral Palsy Center, to be held March 4, 2018, from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. on the Valley's CW (channel 15). The Florence Civitan Club sponsors the telethon each year. UCP provides free therapy and services to children who are developmentally disabled/delayed in northwest Alabama. They currently serve approximately 60 children who have various delays or disabilities, including children who have cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome, cleft palate, spina bifida, etc. Basically, if a child has a delay in his/her development, UCP can help. Through a grant with the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect, UCP provides money to families with children who are developmentally delayed to help them pay for sitters. All the money raised on March 4th will stay right here in northwest Alabama to help local children and their families. We surely hope you'll promote the telethon and encourage all your family and friends



to donate this year. For more information, or to make a pledge or donation, you can visit www.ucpshoals.org or call Alison Isbell at (256) 381-4310.

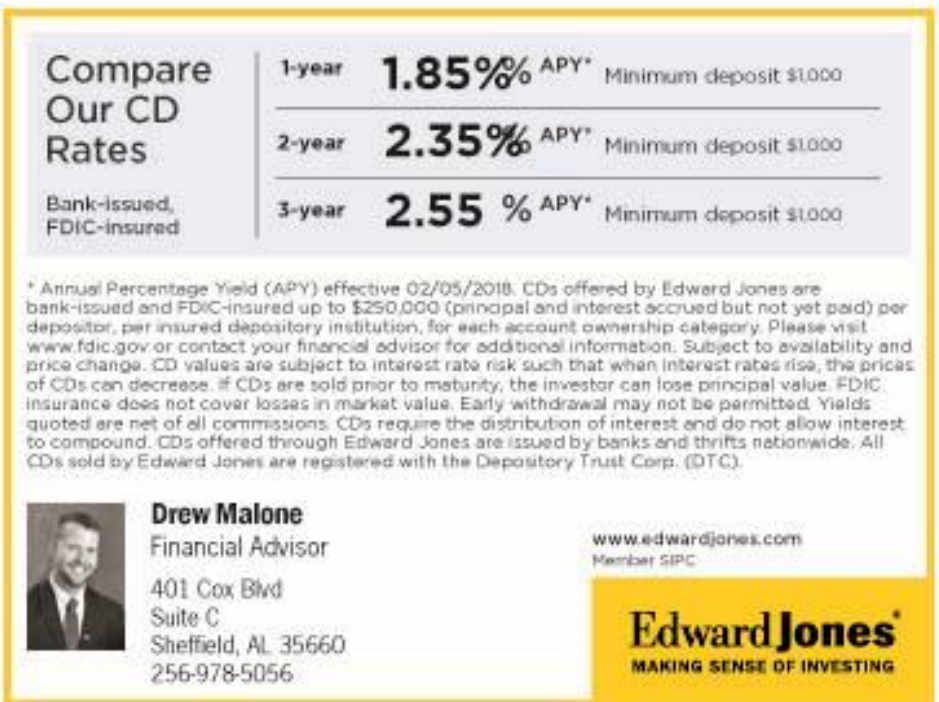
Muscle Shoals Chapter TVARA/UNA Endowed Scholarship Your Support Needed!

As of January 31 of this year, our endowment has reached \$44,893.66, up more than \$3,000 from our January 2017 balance. In the three-month period from November 2017 through January 2018, we have had one contribution—that from John Ingwersen.

The endowment is now supporting one scholarship of about \$1,000 each year (\$500 in the fall and \$500 in the following spring). Now, we can start looking forward to increasing the endowment so that we can either give more than one scholarship or increase the amount of the scholarship. The scholarship award gives preference to relatives of active Muscle Shoals TVARA members. Application must be made before February 1 of the year the scholarship is awarded (the deadline has been extended through March 1 this year). The scholarship for the 2018-2019 academic year will be presented at our September Quarterly meeting, along with a \$100 award for the best essay submitted with an application.

Donations are tax deductible. Make your check payable to Muscle Shoals Chapter TVARA/UNA Endowed Scholarship and mail it to:


UNA Foundation Office
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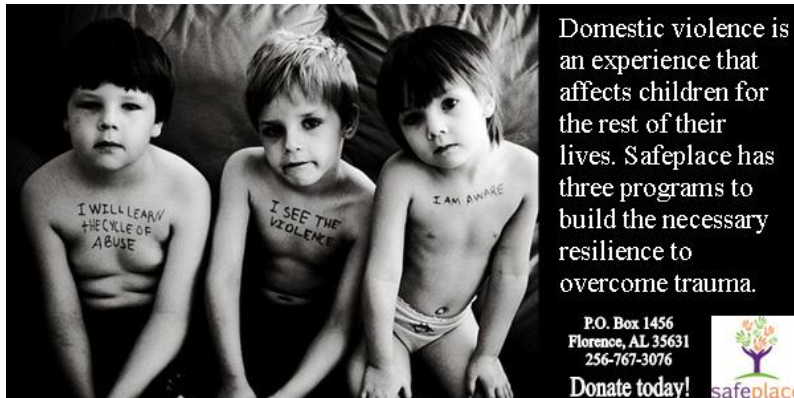
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Support Our Endowed Scholarship

We have several businesses and charities who are supporting our endowed scholarship by providing financial support through the purchase of ads for our newsletter and booths at our Annual Health Fair/Picnic. In the next newsletter we will announce the total amounts for this year. Please support these businesses and charities as they support us.



February Valleywide Meeting Summary

The Valleywide meeting on February 1 was held by telecom, and there was no special presentation. Our new president, DeWitt Burleson, conducted the meeting. Pat Bracket reported that TVARS assets had increased to \$8.2 billion, which covers 85% of liabilities. Mellon Bank has taken over as

trustee, and all TVARA members should by now have received information from Mellon on how to set up online access if desired. Jennifer Beckett reported that One Exchange is going to have a name change and will now be known as “Via Benefits”. There will be no change in substance to the program. The TVARA website continues to evolve to be more user friendly and add items of interest.

2017 Crossfire Game Day Valuable Workplace Skills on Display by Stephanie Newland

Bulletin, 2/23/2018. This just received from Jim Russell, President, BVI: “Your grant request for \$5,000 is approved. We will mail a check to your treasurer early next week. The Chapter’s work with BEST Robotics is greatly appreciated.”



The 2017 NW Alabama BEST Robotics Competition was held Saturday, October 7. The event, hosted by the Shoals Chamber of Commerce and Northwest-Shoals



Community College, is the culmination of work from more than 550 students on 26 teams from northwest Alabama and south-central Tennessee. Each team spent

six hectic weeks designing and building a robot to accomplish the game challenges; developing an engineering notebook and a marketing presentation; designing and building a trade show booth; creating team-wear, websites, creative videos, and much more!

BEST Robotics is free for any school's participation! Each team receives the same box of equipment and supplies (motors, servos, controllers, plywood, wire, PVC, and various other parts and pieces) and has just six weeks to build their machine and accomplish all the other elements of the competition. They cannot use anything except what they are given, leveling the playing field, no matter the socio-economic situation of the school. It's all about creativity, skills, teamwork, and time management—all skills every employer desires in their workforce!

The competition was fierce this year, with more teams competing than ever before. At the end of the day, ALL teams had lost some sleep, eaten lots of pizza, had a ton of fun, and, most importantly, gained valuable workplace and life skills in the process.



Congratulations to the eight teams who went to the South's BEST Regional Championship and the inaugural Invitational Tournament in Auburn, December 2-3: Brooks H. S., Moulton M. S./Lawrence Co. H. S., Covenant Christian School, Lexington H. S., Rogers H. S., Trinitas Classical School, Central H. S., and Mars Hill Bible School.

A special thank you to BVI and the Shoals area TVA Retirees for their continued support as a Platinum Sponsor and as volunteers in the NW Alabama BEST Robotics program! We could not provide this program for area schools without the generous support of our sponsors, partners and volunteers!

There Are Clues Here, Sherlock

By Ron Helgemo

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the Florence Civitan Newsletter. This is a very succinctly written reason why our Chapter is among the best in the retirement system. It is our volunteers and all that we do in our community that makes the difference. And to keep all this going, we need volunteers willing to step up and take Chapter offices. We are still searching for a Vice-President. Please step up and volunteer or find someone who is ready and willing.

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Not long ago I belonged to a local organization of folks made up of federal retirees. There were only about a dozen or so of us. Without a major federal installation nearby, we had no large organization to provide us with a flow of new members. Much like Civitans, they met monthly at a local restaurant and occasionally had speakers. Also, each meeting began with the pledge to our flag and a short business meeting.

Business meetings were predictable—read the minutes, go over the treasurer’s report, talk about how to increase membership—you could count

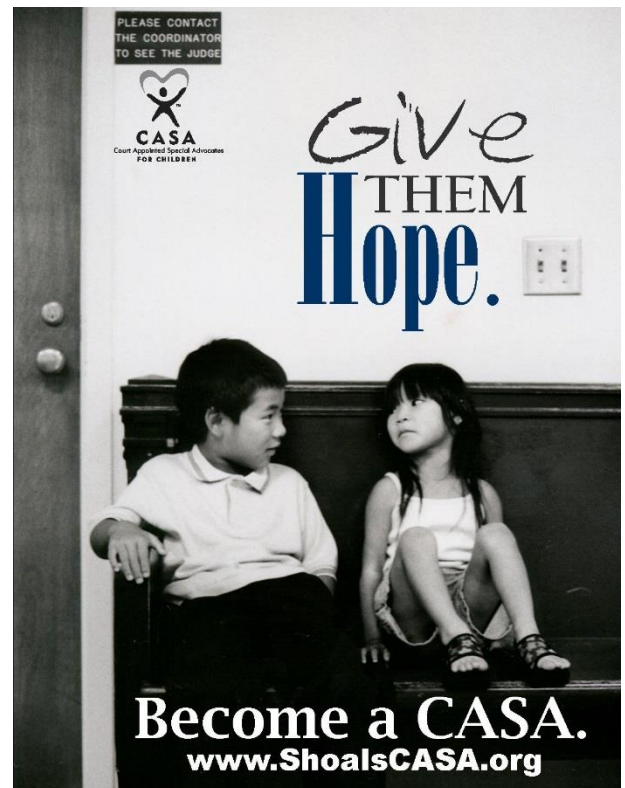
on it—how do we increase membership? Since it was a retirees’ organization, we suffered the same fate as many other senior groups—our members kept kicking the bucket. And we weren’t replacing them. We needed new members.

Regretfully, the national organization was a reflection of our own. It too was always about recruiting new members. Ok, said I, what is it we do to attract new members? A monthly lunch at Ryan’s won’t cut it. What do we offer? What is our core mission? Why should anyone join us?

The responses were disheartening. There was always the part about protecting our earned retirement benefits, but beyond that the silence was deafening. Supporting an organization for its lobbying power has its merits, I suppose, but it seemed to me then, as it seems to me now, that organizations need a purpose that is both clear and compelling. This organization had neither.

There are clues here, Sherlock. Membership drives are essential to a service organization’s survival. But membership drives are useless if the organization cannot sell what it has to offer—and what it has to offer must be the driving force.

Civitans is all about what its name says it is: citizenship. We offer opportunities for community service, we offer fellowship, and we offer education through our weekly speakers. In short, we have a purpose that is both clear and compelling.



In the movie, “Field of Dreams”, they have that wonderful line, “build it and they will come”. It may even be true. But I’m convinced that what we build makes a difference. A few years ago, my federal retiree organization folded; we gave up our charter. There is a lesson here. We can have membership

drives until we are blue in the proverbial face, but it won't help unless we stay true to our values and we are willing to live those values. Citizenship is what we are building. Build that, and then they will come.

THE EAGLES ARE REBUILDING THE NEST

By John Blackwell



When November arrives, the John Blackwell family knows it time to begin seeing the eagles again at their home on Wilson Lake. The eagles never leave the area but return to the nest area at about sundown each day. You seldom see them around the nest during most daylight hours. However, things change about November when they begin to prepare the nest for laying eggs. This past November, they were regularly seen bringing sticks to shore up the huge nest. The nest sits atop a large pine tree and is about 90 feet off the ground and is about 7 feet across and 6 feet deep. The nest is made up of branches that the eagles carefully place. The top of the nest is covered

with grass and straw to have a nesting area for laying eggs. By the middle of January, the nest is ready for nesting. The eagles will mate, and eggs will be laid sometime about mid to late January. Sure enough, the eggs were thought to be laid about January 15 or 16. Once the eggs are laid, an eagle will always be on the nest. An eagle will sit for about four hours and if the mate does not return, it begins screaming. The eagles place the eggs against their skin after parting their breast feathers. The pictures that you are seeing are made from the ground by Steve Letson, Wildlife Photographer. Steve and his camera are located on the ground, well away from the nest. He has a powerful camera lens to capture these great pictures. Steve is a dedicated photographer, often spending hours waiting for the perfect picture. He has been taking these pictures for many years.



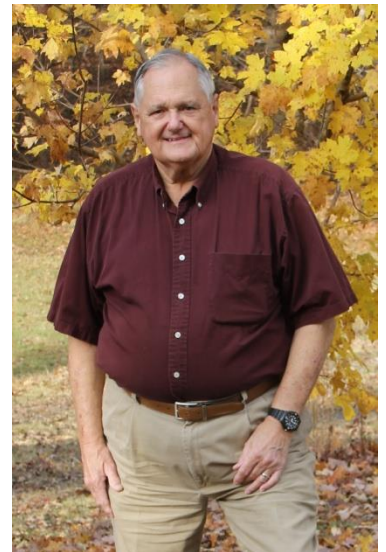


An Interesting Career

By Ralph Wallace

Editor's Note: Ralph Wallace retired several years ago and has been gone from the area caring for family. He returned this year, and I thought you might enjoy hearing about his work experiences.

After graduating from UNA (FSC) in 1963, I spent two years as an Air Defense Artillery Director in the US Army. I was stationed at a small Air Force base (Truax Field) in Madison, Wisconsin, where we were watching for the Russians to attack over the North Pole. After leaving the Army, I worked in Baltimore, Maryland, for one year before beginning my career with TVA in 1966. I began my TVA career in the Industrial and Air Hygiene Branch in the old First Quarters facilities. At that time we were performing air pollution studies at some of TVA's coal-fired plants, primarily Paradise, Johnsonville, Shawnee, and Bull Run. My primary assignment during the field studies was to photograph the plumes from the plants while others made measurements of the effluent compounds from a helicopter flying through the plumes. After the field studies, we all joined in with the analysis of the data.



After about 3-4 years, I was asked to move to the Environmental Radiological Laboratory. TVA was beginning preoperational environmental monitoring at Browns Ferry, and I was assigned to perform chemical and radiological analyses of the samples taken in the program. In 1970, I took a leave of absence to pursue a master's degree (MSPH) in Radiological Hygiene at the University of North Carolina. I completed the degree in one year and returned to the TVA Radiological Laboratory. After about a year in the lab, I was assigned the responsibility to develop a Mobile Whole-Body Counter for use at the nuclear plants. The counter consisted of a radiation detector designed to measure radioactivity in the human body. The counter, with its associated electronics, was mounted in a truck that could travel from plant to plant to perform the measurements. I then made the first whole body radiation measurements for the employees at Browns Ferry. These measurements were made before the plant began operations and were used to establish the background radiation levels. One interesting fact: The human body contains the naturally occurring radioisotope, potassium-40, and the natural levels in women are higher than in men. So, guys, you are receiving a slight radiation exposure when you sleep with your wife.



Join a Caring Community. Five clubs in Shoals area meeting at various times and days. Call Cameron Kay at 256-810-6569 for a club near you!

Great opportunity to see some of the country that I had never seen before, including Mount Rushmore, the Badlands etc.

However, this also included taking soil samples and getting stuck in snow drifts in Wyoming when the temperatures dropped to about -17 degrees, and chipping through ice in Cheyenne River at Edgemont, South Dakota, to take water samples.

The second interesting event during this period was the identification of radon as a natural radiation hazard to the public. One of the sources of the radon is from naturally occurring deposits of thorium in soils. The radon can migrate into our homes and cause significant radiation exposures. In addition, naturally occurring radioactive materials that are sources of radon are found in deposits of phosphates. TVA mined these phosphates for years to use in the production of fertilizers. But the radioactive materials wound up in the wastes from these operations, and TVA had sold these wastes to be used in the making of concrete blocks. One homeowner in Tennessee sued TVA because the blocks used in building his house contained this waste from TVA's Muscle Shoals facility. As a result, we spent a good bit of time evaluating the potential hazard from this waste. The issue was somewhat abated after TVA contracted with Oak Ridge National Laboratories to conduct a

This counter was not used very much. TVA changed directions and decided to install a permanent Whole-Body Counter at each plant.

The rest of my career with TVA was spent directing the Environmental Radiological Monitoring Programs for each of the sites. I supervised the sample collectors, analyzed the data, and reported the results to the NRC. This proved interesting in a couple of ways. First, in about 1974 TVA branched out into uranium mining and milling. They bought a uranium mill in Edgemont, South Dakota, and entered into mining and milling with several uranium companies in the west. Since TVA was responsible for developing Environmental Impact Statements for these projects, we had to establish environmental sampling programs at these sites. So, for about the next 5-8 years I made quarterly trips to South Dakota, Wyoming, and New Mexico to collect samples for these programs.



study comparing the radiation levels inside homes made with these blocks with levels in homes that did not contain the phosphate waste in the blocks. The results of the study indicated that the difference between the levels in the two types of structures was lost in the natural statistical variation of the levels in buildings made with blocks that did not contain the phosphate wastes. Is that confusing enough for you?

Overall, my career with TVA contained enough controversy to make things interesting. I was able to travel a good bit and see a number of interesting sites (like eagles fishing on a lake in South Dakota, national treasures, Ospreys nesting on power line towers in Watts Bar Lake). I don't think I would change a thing!

AND THEY ASK—WHY DO I LIKE RETIREMENT?

QUESTION: How many days in a week? ANSWER: 6 Saturdays, 1 Sunday

QUESTION: When is a retiree's bedtime? ANSWER: Three hours after he falls asleep on the couch.

QUESTION: How many retirees are needed to change a light bulb? ANSWER: Only one, but it takes all day.

QUESTION: What's the biggest gripe of retirees?

ANSWER: There is not enough time to get everything done.

QUESTION: Why don't retirees mind being called Seniors?

ANSWER: The term comes with a 10% percent discount.

QUESTION: Among retirees, what is considered formal attire?

ANSWER: Tied shoes.

QUESTION: Why do retirees count pennies? ANSWER: They are the only ones who have the time.

QUESTION: What is the common term for someone who continues to work and refuses to retire?

ANSWER: Nuts!

QUESTION: Why are retirees so slow to clean out the basement? ANSWER: They know that as soon as they do, one of their adult kids will want to store stuff there.

QUESTION: What do retirees call a long lunch? ANSWER: Normal.

QUESTION: What is the best way to describe retirement? ANSWER: The never-ending Coffee Break.



QUESTION: What's the biggest advantage of going back to school as a retiree? ANSWER: If you cut classes, no one can call your parents.

QUESTION: Why does a retiree often say he doesn't miss work but misses the people he used to work with? ANSWER: He is too polite to tell the truth.

QUESTION: What do you do all week? ANSWER: Monday to Friday—Nothing; Saturday and Sunday—Rest

(copied)

Contributed by Joan Marsh.

Help! We Need Your Help!

Do you enjoy writing or photography? We're working to make this newsletter the best, and your talents are needed. If you would like to occasionally write an article on your experiences, or on a TVA person who deserves recognition, please let me know, and I will schedule your article for a future newsletter. Do you enjoy photography? We could use a designated photographer to get pictures at our various events. We have been somewhat haphazard at this and would like to get better. Call John Ingwersen at 256-757-5325.



Suggestions?

We want your feedback, comments, and suggestions. Let us know what you would like for TVARA programs, for our newsletter, and/or ways we can improve, in any way, our service to you.