**St. Bernard Retired Teachers’ Association**

**Docville Farmhouse**

**March 23, 2018**

The meeting was called to order by President Paul Grethel at 12:00 p.m.

The Invocation was given by Les Sharfenstein, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Denise Cooper.

President Paul Grethel welcomed everyone and gave some interesting trivia tidbits that ranged from topics such as medicinal use of ketchup in the 1830’s to the number of cookies a person consumes in his lifetime.

Recording Secretary Mickey Lux read the minutes from the last meeting, and they were approved as read.

Treasurer Hugh Craft reported a balance of $12,411.32 and that the organization has 163 members, which includes 104 life members.

President Grethel reported that March 15 was the state’s recognition of retired teachers. Coffee mugs were distributed with the quotation, “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops,” and they were handed to each member and guest as they entered the meeting.

The meeting resumed after the luncheon which consisted of hot boiled crawfish, shrimp jambalaya, and cheesecake.

President Grethel announced that Cindy Kooke was selected as SBRTA Retired Teacher of the Year. She was presented with a cake which she cut and shared with the membership and their guests.

President Grethel reported that we did bring school supplies to Smith Elementary right before the Christmas break. He asked if we wished to continue the practice. Someone asked, “How did it go?” President Grethel said that it went well and that we presented the school with about $1,000.00 worth of supplies.

Mr. Craft suggested that we split the donations between Smith Elementary and Gauthier Elementary next time since both of these schools have a lot of economically deprived students.

President Grethel said we will collect the supplies at the fall and Christmas luncheons and then present them to the schools right before the Christmas break.

Mr. Craft introduced the guest speaker, Mrs. Rita Gue, the president of the Meraux Foundation. Mrs. Gue spoke about how the Meraux Foundation came to be and the many ways the Foundation helps the St. Bernard Parish public schools and the community.

President Grethel introduced the Louisiana Retired Teachers’ Association Executive Director, Rodney Watson. Mr. Watson said that his contract with LRTA as Executive Director is up this spring. Mr. Watson brought us up to date with what is going on with our state legislature. He referred to the three stapled handouts that were given out to the membership. These handouts have information about bills which are detrimental to our retirement plans. He asked us to please read the handouts and contact our legislators and tell them to defeat these bills that affect us adversely. He said that there are two envelopes that are pre-addressed and already have the postage on them. All we have to do is write the letters to our legislators. He said that one of the letters is already written for us. He also suggested that we invite our local legislators to our meetings. He asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Carl Gaines asked if Mr. Watkins could email us with the numbers of the bills we need to support and ones that should be defeated. Mr. Watson said that he would.

Mrs. Craft said that members can be on the email list of the LRTA. If we leave our email with Mr. Watson, he will put us on the list.

 Dr. James Taylor got up and spoke to the members about how he is running for re-election as Retiree Representative of the Louisiana Retired Teachers’ Association and asked for our support. Dr. Taylor also said that the biggest threat as far as he is concerned is a Constitutional Convention. Our present Constitution was developed in 1973 and recognizes the sanctity of the contract.

President Grethel asked members to support Dr. Taylor in his bid for re-election.

Tickets for the door prizes were pulled, and the half and half raffle ticket, which was worth $83.00, was also drawn. The winner of the half and half raffle was Dr. James Taylor.

President Grethel asked the membership if there was a better day for us to have our meetings other than Friday, and it looked like Friday is the best day. President Grethel said that our next meeting will be around the third week in June.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michaele “Mickey” Lux, Recording Secretary