

## **UTA Retirees Club**

### **Meeting Minutes**

*March 14, 2017*

*Room 106*

*Maverick Stadium*

*Next meeting:* April 11, 2017, 10am-noon, Room 200 Wetzel Building

---

#### **I. Announcements**

President Rita Thompson was absent due to family illness. Vice-President for Programs Harley Courtney welcomed everyone to the meeting. Secretary Rosanne Minyard announced that the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting would be at the Wetzel Building Room 200 and that a Benefits Fair would be held in the Bluebonnet Ballroom tomorrow March 15<sup>th</sup> (11am-1:30pm). Flyers are available and registration is required.

#### **II. Program**

Harley Courtney introduced our speaker Vicki Bryant from Arlington Baptist College. Vicki has been instrumental in compiling the history and securing artifacts for the Top O' Hill Terrace which is the present location of Arlington Baptist College. The property was purchased by Beulah Marshall in the early 1920's and opened as a Tea Room serving such dishes as chicken fried steak cooked over a coal burning stove. Fred Browning, a Fort Worth plumber and gambler, opened the property as a Casino. He built numerous escape tunnels, secret rooms and walls that turned to hide the gambling devices since gambling was illegal. During a raid, the casino could be turned back into a dining hall in a matter of minutes. The gamblers would escape through the tunnels to the Tea Room on the hillside. Being located between Dallas and Fort Worth, this was a popular establishment for many famous people and Vicki gave a long list of names. Bonnie and Clyde were frequent visitors as well as many Hollywood stars such as Mae West, Hedy Lamar and Robert Young. Dr. J. Frank Norris, cofounder of the Fundamental Baptist Bible Institute, declared the Top O' Hill as a blight on Tarrant County and said that one day the Baptist would own the place. In 1956 the property was purchased by the Baptist Seminary. Known as Vegas before Vegas, this historic landmark is currently opened to tours by reservation with a \$10 per person donation. Donations are needed to maintain this property as well as to obtain historical artifacts as they surface. Vicki has often spent her own money to buy such items as roulette wheels and casino chips. At present, the Tea Room is in danger of sliding down the hill since the retaining wall is in dire need of restoration.

#### **III. Discussion**

After her video presentation, Vicki answered questions and provided brochures.

Submitted by Rosanne Minyard, secretary