

The AERA Voice!

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THE 2016 AERA LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP WAS HOT!!

By JANICE J. CHARLESWORTH, AERA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Members hold up “HOT” signs to show their approval of the presentation given by NRTA Advisor Mary Beth Dixon during the AERA Leadership Workshop held in Montgomery.

On May 10th, over 150 local unit leaders from across the state gathered in Montgomery for AERA’s 2016 Leadership Workshop. The theme was “Back to the Future: Utilizing Leadership from Your Past to Improve the Future.” AERA President Joe Ward opened the meeting reporting as a Board of Control member and provided an update on TRS/PEEHIP matters. President Ward wears many hats and it certainly comes in handy!

The opening session was entitled “Chocolates and Membership” presented by NRTA Advisor Mary Beth Dixon. Her presentation was based on research done with younger retirees on a national level. When she asked participants what one thing would bring in younger members, various answers were suggested. However, no one had the number one answer: “Chocolate and Wine Tastings!” Ms. Dixon put on a chocolate tasting exercise, which was very interesting. She asked everyone to think about

the texture, taste, and other aspects of chocolate instead of just popping it in your mouth and eating it. Then, she related the same analogy to what local units need to do to bring in younger members that are so necessary to the future of our association. We need to take a different approach with the current generation of retirees. Ms. Dixon had suggestions on locations, set-up of meeting space, time of meetings, etc. She suggested always providing an agenda or a road map of your meeting for those who are not familiar with it, have greeters on hand for the newcomers, and one very important tip: “Be a peer not a parent to the newcomer.” Studies show that the newcomer does not want to feel as if “their parent” is telling them what to do. Her entire presentation can be emailed to your local unit by requesting it. Simply send an email to info@aerainc.org or call the state office.

(See Workshop, page 4)