

Dear MRTA,

Betty and I just completed 3 days at Tan-Tar-A running the MRTA Exhibit Booth for Missouri Music Educators Associations (MMEA) annual state-wide conference. Betty spent 7 1/2 hours on Thursday and I spent 8 1/2 on Friday and 4 on Saturday for a total of 20 hours. MRTA was one of approximately 140 exhibitors. Thanks to Patti's usual request we were next to PSRS/PEERS and we were the first 2 exhibits as you entered the exhibit hall; you could not get into the exhibits without going by US. Thanks, Patti. The Staff estimated between 4,000-4,200 in attendance for the 3 day conference. There were over 100 bus loads of students who were performing so there were tons of parents and sponsors in attendance as well as those registered. All 3 days there was a steady stream of visitors with no lulls. Much of the time we were swamped.

We were kept busy making packets of materials and then handing them out. The PSRS/PEERS Staff worked closely with us and we made a GREAT team of sharing each other's visitors. Nearly everyone stopped at both booths. We answered many questions and provided a lot of MRTA valuable information. We received lots of Thank You's for our efforts in Jeff City and our pink pens. We continued to use our catchy and popular motto. It is "YOU NEED US AND WE NEED YOU!" Several visitors are already MRTA members, but most of them took packets for friends that were retiring this year. There was wide-spread interest in MRTA because so many people are either retiring or thinking about retiring this year. Listed below are some of the highlights Betty and I remember from our booth work.

1. MRTA and Tri Lakes are getting a new member soon. A Music Educator from School of the Ozarks said his wife in retiring this year from Branson and had friends in Tri Lakes and she would be sending her membership in soon.
2. A lady who retired a couple of years ago said Carolyn Hayes told her to join, but she had not yet. I told her she needed to listen to Carolyn because ALL of MRTA listens to her. She chuckled and said she would send her membership in.
3. A man from the KC area who is already a member picked up a complete packet for his wife who is retiring this year. He also wanted to find out how to ride a bus to Legislative Day and I gave him Fred Price's phone number and e-mail.
4. When Betty was working, a lady came up and started asking Betty about membership and another lady from Columbia came up, listened and then told her she needed to join because MRTA was a great organization.
5. Also, while Betty was working a lady came up and said she was from St. Charles and asked Betty if this was NEA. Betty said NO, we were all inclusive. She said "I need this and it is only \$35. I'll join."
6. I put a membership in the mail today that I picked up on Saturday.
7. Several people who are retiring this year or are thinking about retiring said that they would join and several mentioned using on-line enrollment.

8. A lady from Pierce City who is retiring this year said she would join, especially after she told me who her best friend was and I told her she had been a friend of the Beals for almost 40 years. SMALL WORLD!

This is the LARGEST Conference Exhibit that MRTA does. It is the 2nd largest at Tan-Tar-A has each year. The largest one is business, not education. Each Year we come away from the MMEA Conference with skyrocketing excitement and enthusiasm for MRTA. It is certainly tiring, but so exciting and rewarding to spread the MRTA gospel to so many prospective members. Like the previous years, this conference brought "MUSIC TO OUR EARS FOR MRTA.

Larry Beal, Chairman
MRTA Retirement Education Committee