

**Editor: Henny van Dijk**

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**May, 2019**

## UTHRO Awards Its First Grant



Posing with winner Gabriel Fries, J.L.R. Rita Zachariassen, Peggy O'Neill and Barbara Kelly

Thursday, March 26 was an exciting day for UTHRO! It was the occasion of the first award from the UTHRO Endowment for Healthy Aging that our members have worked so hard to fund over the past three years. The Endowment has reached over \$63,000, and the interest this year available for use was \$2,000. UTHRO partnered with the Consortium on Aging to coordinate requests for proposals from young UTHealth faculty members, conducting research in geriatrics, for a \$2,000 seed grant from UTHRO. Seven proposals were received, reviewed by the UTHRO Endowment Committee, and narrowed to the three top proposals. The investigators of these three were invited to present their work to the UTHRO membership at a Lunch and Learn. We had a good turnout of about 30 UTHRO members plus some guests, who enjoyed a nice lunch organized by Gill and Barry Rittman (thank you!), listened to the speakers and asked questions. UTHRO members then voted on the top presentation. The award was given to Dr. Gabriel Fries, an Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at the Medical School, for his research on the mechanisms leading to epigenetic age acceleration, that occurs because of factors other than DNA mutations and may not match a person's chronological age, a kind of premature aging. Knowing that increasing age is a major risk factor for many chronic diseases, including Alzheimer's Disease, the use of markers to predict this epigenetic aging in comparison to chronological aging could lead to therapies aimed at preventing this to take place. Fries' project is expected to be conducted over the next year, and he will report the results to us at the end of that time. Thank you to all who have contributed to the Endowment fund through direct donations and through the Loose Change project. We are counting on your continued support to grow the fund so that the interest generated each year can be used to support research, patient care and/or education in geriatrics.

Peggy O'Neill

## Cinco de Mayo Lunch & Learn



UTHRO's Event Committee cordially invites you to a truly entertaining event

Plan to join us on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at OCB Rio Grande 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 as we celebrate Cinco de Mayo, the date in 1862 when a ragtag small Mexican army (2000 men) defeated the mighty French forces (6000 strong) in the battle of Puebla.

Of course having a good time means enjoying each other's company while enjoying good food, so bring your favorite Tex-Mex dish. UTHRO will serve the tacos. We plan on providing meat, tortillas, basic fixings (lettuce, cheese, onion, jalapeño etc) but please bring a side dish such as tamales, rice, beans, salsa, guacamole and desserts (and maybe chips for those that don't want to cook).

And while we enjoy the food we thought it would be fun to play Loteria or Mexican Bingo, not for money mind you, but just for fun and some of you might get lucky and win a small prize.

And for those who never played the game, think of it as Bingo with pictures instead of numbers.



To start the game, the caller selects a card from the deck and announces it to the players by its name. The players with a matching image on their board mark it off with a chip. The first player with four chips in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal row, or fills the *tabla* first shouts "Lotería!" and is the winner.

Please **RSVP by Wed. May 1**, so we have an idea of how many tacos we need and what dish you plan to bring.

**RSVP to:** Barry Rittman [barryrittman@gmail.com](mailto:barryrittman@gmail.com) or call 713-542-8108

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## Best & Worst Sleep Postions



**Joint pain, heartburn, sleep apnea— whatever’s keeping you up at night, here’s your fix.**

Try this: Bend your wrist as far back as you can toward your forearm. How long can you hold it there? Probably not long, says Scott Bautch, a Wisconsin-based chiropractor. He asks people to do this to prove a point. “You wouldn’t watch an entire football game with your wrist stretched as far as possible, your arm way above your head, or your pelvis twisted to one side,” he says. That’s because during the day, you often change positions to save yourself from discomfort. But at night, many people fall asleep in these compromising positions, unaware of the pain it’s causing until it wakes them. “These positions become painful because they test your range of motion, which tends to narrow with age,” That’s why it’s so important to sleep in a neutral position, meaning no body part is stretched, squeezed, or awkwardly placed. Fixing your sleep posture can help relieve pain right away or even prevent it from happening in the first place. But it’s not just about orthopedic issues. Adjusting your sleep position can also help improve breathing and circulation, relieve heartburn symptoms, and boost overall quality of life. Here are the best and worst ways to sleep for common ailments.

### Back Pain

**Best:** On your back with a pillow under your knees.

**Worst:** On your stomach.

### Stiff Neck

**Best:** On your back or side with a pillow that holds your head in neutral. **Worst:** On your stomach.

### Shoulder Injury or Pain

**Best:** On your good side or back with a pillow to support your bad shoulder. **Worst:** On your bad shoulder.

### Hip or Knee Pain (Not Due to Knee Replacement)

**Best:** On your back with a pillow under your knees, or on your good side with a pillow between your knees.

**Worst:** On your bad hip or knee

### Sleep Apnea

**Best:** On your side or elevated on your back.

**Worst:** Flat on your back.

### Heartburn

**Best:** On your left side with torso elevated.

**Worst:** Flat on your back or on your right side.

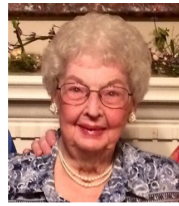
### Carpal Tunnel

**Best:** Any position where your wrist is neutral.

**Worst:** On your side with your wrist curled and tucked underneath you.

By Jerilyn Covert | November 5, 2018

## Remembering Nita Shandera



Long time UTHRO member Juanita Shandera, better known to her colleagues and our members as “Nita” passed away on November 24. Born on April 16, 1924 in Beakiss, Williamson County. Nita worked early in her career for the Harris County Probation Department. In 1966, she was employed by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Dental Branch where she retired in 1991 after 25 years of service as an Executive Assistant in the Dean’s Office. Nita is survived by her daughter, Shar-Lee, and her son, Steve and his wife, Holly. She is also survived by her 6 grandchildren as well as by her six great-grandchildren.

I had asked several contacts at the School of Dentistry, but Nita retired in 1991 and only a few are still there. I did get two responses from those who were there:

I do remember her as a very nice and capable person

*Joan Akin*

I remember Nita Shandera from her days at the then Dental Branch. She worked in the Dean’s office, and was always the go-to person when you wanted any information. She was a tall, attractive woman, always very well dressed and with a smile. Even after she retired, she came back to help out temporarily in the Dean’s office when I was in that office when we needed her because a key person was out for a period of time. Her very pleasant personality made things run very smoothly. Though I did not know her well, she made a lasting impression on me. My condolences to her family on her passing.

*Peggy O’Neill*



## Mark Your Calendar



The Event Committee has reserved the Precinct 1 bus to take us to another exotic destination, but is still in the process of selecting the most fun one.

We will update you in the coming newsletters about the destination, but for now please mark this date and be surprised!





Houston's Best Brain Day

Spring..Forward ? Easy for You

**UTHealth**  
**STOMP OUT STROKE**  
**Festival**

Presented by  
**Encompass Health**

*Houston's Best Brain Day!*

Special Guest - José Griñan, FOX 26  
 Live Ice Sculpting by Reverend Butter

Saturday, May 4, 2019, 9:00 am - 3:30 pm  
 Discovery Green, Jones Lawn & Grace Event Lawn  
 1500 McKinney St, Houston, TX 77010




*"I hate it when the clocks go forward"*



**"Provisions" – A Winning Poem**



Photo credit Getty Images

Sylvia Villarreal MEd, MPH, a guest contractor at McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics, is the winner of the *Annals of Internal Medicine's* 2018 Poetry Prize for the best poem published throughout the year. Villarreal wrote her poem titled "Provisions" about an encounter that she had with a woman at a grocery store. What started as a normal, everyday trip to the grocery store, turned into an event that stuck with her for years, before one day finding the inspiration to write down what had happened.

*I spot you first in floral, reaching past purple gladiolas  
 and petite roses to score a sassy bunch of sunflowers.  
 On to bakery to claim a glossy cake – your daughter's  
 favorite, I overhear – announcing her name in yellow icing.  
 Our carts cross again in produce, where, over dusky egg-  
 plants and delicate lettuces, we exchange a glancing smile  
 – a nod  
 To roles and rituals, we keepers of the celebration even  
 after decades have distanced us from our homegrown  
 progeny.  
 The final sighting at checkout, where I grin as you fasten  
 three roiling balloons to your basket. You chat with  
 the checker, offer the bagger an encouraging aside –  
 something about perseverance, the doors it can open.  
 The 'I Love You' balloon bobs merrily above the others  
 As you swipe your card. Then, one last remark  
 to the checkout team before you turn to go: "So glad  
 It's pretty today. That cemetery gets muddy in the rain."  
 Outside in sunlight, you're on the other side of the wide  
 parking lot. I return your brief wave as you wrangle bal-  
 loons, now dancing madly to escape backseat confine-  
 ment. Then You're gone, pulling away, a silent riot of color  
 in your wake.*

Edited from an article by Roman Petrowski

On Saturday May 4, UTHealth organizes their 7th Annual "Stomp Out Stroke Festival" held on the grounds of Discovery Green downtown at 1500 McKinney. The festival runs from 9AM till 3:30 PM and is presented by Encompass Health with major sponsor ships by MDACC, HEB and many others. I have been to the first one when Jim Grotta, MD introduced the special stroke ambulance which houses an MRI for fast diagnosis and therefore life saving treatment. The Festival is organized around "brain zones" each geared to a special area of health. There is the **Brain Discovery Zone** with brain imaging, BP screening, bone density screening and dental advice.

Next is the **Healthy Brain Zone** with the carotid Doppler screening, HEB's cholesterol and glucose testing, migraine, concussions and seizures in kids, stroke in women and "ask the stroke doctor"

**Stroke Recovery & Rehabilitation Zone** where several rehabilitation programs give advise on recovery, memory screening, fall risks, and obstructive sleep apnea.

Finally a very special **Kids Zone**, where kids are educated via the Ameribrain Inflatable exhibit—Kids Think F.A.S.T—Brain and Fitness—TMS hard hats for little heads—Hula dancing to get fit THI center for women's heart & vascular health and finally some typical kids stuff—like face painting, moonwalk, Balloon twister and the kids stage which features dancers from a number of folklore groups, and Live Ice sculpting by Reverend Butter.

So for our age group there is the testing for stroke and other diagnostic testing, rehab information and more, while when you bring your grandkids there is an awful lot of information for them as well as some fun stuff.

**UTHealth Stomp Out Stroke Festival—a no brainer!**



UTHRO likes  
to welcome

- Michael Thompson
- James McLemore
- Sandra Vick
- Debbie Valenza
- Sherry Dunn
- Efren Pena

# UTHRO

The University of Texas Houston Retiree Organization  
1851 Crosspoint, Suite 1.204  
Houston, TX 77054

To update your address or phone number  
please contact us at 281-655-1983

*And now for something completely different ...*

## *Inquisitive Minds Want To Know ...*



- Is it good if a vacuum really sucks?  
If a word is misspelled in the dictionary, how would we ever know?  
Why do "tug" boats push their barges?  
Why do we sing "Take me out to the ball game" when we are already there?  
Why are they called "stands" when they are made for sitting?  
Why is it called "after dark" when it really is "after light"?  
Why do "overlook" and "oversee" mean opposite things?  
Why is "phonics" not spelled the way it sounds?  
If love is blind, why is lingerie so popular?  
If you are cross-eyed and have dyslexia, can you read all right?  
Why is bra singular and panties plural?  
Why do you press harder on the buttons of a remote control when you know the batteries are dead?  
Why do we wash bath towels? Aren't we clean when we use them?  
Why do they call it a TV set when you only have one?



### **UTHRO OFFICERS 2019**

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