



# ECHOES

## THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXXIII No. 3

January 2010

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Happy New Year! Happy new decade! We're off to a great start. Our membership chair has been working very successfully to find us new members. There are many potential members out in your neighborhoods with whom you have kept in touch during your retirement. Talk to them about our organization and let them know that it is important to belong!

We had a wonderful meeting in November. We were delighted to have had Judy Zahren, the Executive Director of MRSPA, with us to let us know what is happening on the statewide level. MRSPA works hard to maintain your benefits and to offer you more services each year. Be sure to visit their website at [www.MRSPA.org](http://www.MRSPA.org) to become more familiar with their activities.

We were also pleased to welcome fellow member and Maryland Delegate, Joanne Benson. She had much to share, including her pledge of continuing support on behalf of Maryland's retired teachers. We are always glad to have Delegate Benson stop in to be with us.

This year will be a very interesting legislative session. Be ready to get informed and involved. Our Legislative Chair, Jannette Wundrow, is planning a group trip to Annapolis in March to

meet with our representatives in the General Assembly. I hope that we will have a large presence for the day.

My ongoing push, though, is to minimize the need to travel to be informed or involved. In this age of computers, our members need to become more computer savvy and "get connected". If you feel that the technology is overwhelming, there are friends and neighbors (and your children) who can help you. You will find that it is a lot of fun! I hope to work with Janette Bell (our Public Relations Chair) to establish a PGPSRA website by the end of this school year. Our members will then have a direct link to MRSPA and all it has to offer.

Lastly, plan to attend the January meeting at PGCEA Center. We will, again, have the box lunches that have been so well received. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Hite, who will share with us his ideas on the status of Prince George's County Public Schools.

See you there!

Bonnie Brose

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### **MID-YEAR BACK TO SCHOOL PROJECT**



**Don't forget to bring a donation of school supplies and toiletries to our January meeting.**

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

On November 10th, President Bonnie Brose and I attended an MRSPA Legislative Workshop at the Miller Senate Building in Annapolis. There we heard from members of the Retirement/Pension System, along with Maryland State Treasurer Nancy Kopp, Senator Richard Madaleno, and Delegate Norman Conway. They explained that Maryland continues to face deficits of about \$300 million in the coming year. The state will put \$833 million into the retirement/pension system this year. The Stimulus Package gave the state \$1.4 billion, of which \$900 million was set aside for education, saving 1785 educator jobs and adding a substantial sum to the retirement/pension fund. However, there is an end to the Stimulus money, so during the next General Assembly session that begins January 12, 2010, the idea of shifting funding of the retirement/pension system to the local jurisdictions is sure to be brought up again. We must speak out against this plan as an organization and as individuals.

Our PGPSRA annual **Legislative Day in Annapolis** is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 17, 2010**. Mark your calendars now, and plan to be a part of the group that will travel by bus to Annapolis for this event sponsored by Delegate James Proctor (27th District). We will be leaving the PGCEA office in Forestville at 8:45 a.m. and returning about 2:30 p.m. We will sit in on short sessions of both the House and Senate and visit the Governor's Mansion. All of our Prince George's legislators will be invited to join us for an informal sandwich/cookie lunch and to speak briefly to our members in attendance. There is no charge for the trip. For further information, you may contact me (Jannette Wundrow) at 301.390.7324.

The annual United Seniors of Maryland Rally will be held at St. John's College in Annapolis on Tuesday, January 19, 2010. This is always an interesting all day meeting with invited speakers: Governor O'Malley, Senator Mike Miller, and Delegate Michael Busch. Further information may be obtained at the website: [www.unitedseniors.net](http://www.unitedseniors.net). Contact me (Jannette Wundrow) if you are interested in attending.

Prior to 1971, retirees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System (MSRPS) received occasional increases in their retirement benefits through ad-hoc adjustments provided by the Maryland General Assembly. This changed in 1971 when the General Assembly enacted legislation establishing an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA). For the first time since 1971, information from the United States Department of Labor indicates that the cost of living adjustment (COLA) for July 2010 will be **NEGATIVE**, which will reduce monthly benefits for the majority of MSRPS retirees. Unfortunately, for some retirees receiving their first adjustment in July 2010 this negative COLA will reduce the monthly benefit below the initial benefit allowance received at retirement. The MSRPS Board of Directors believes the General Assembly needs to take emergency action to amend the law and prevent this looming **NEGATIVE COLA**. Two options are currently being discussed: (1) to increase the benefits, rather than adjust the allowance with a COLA annually (2) to have a 0% COLA this year, and recoup the amount in the following years. We will be watching this action closely.

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Chair

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer's report as of November 22 is as follows:

Opening Balance on November 1, 2009:

Checking Account \$24404.23

Savings Account \$3016.68

Receipts-Checking Account \$1940.04

Receipts - Savings Account \$0.00

Expenditures-Checking \$2239.19

Expenditures - Savings \$0.00

Balance as of November 22, 2009:

Checking Account \$24105.08

Savings Account \$3016.68

Total Assets \$27121.76

E. Vest, Treasurer

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

We have just come to the season of the year when the spirit of **thanks** and **caring, giving** and **sharing is at its greatest**. Too often **this spirit slips away as the bleakness of winter sets in and we fall back into the mood of apathy and complacency.**

Not so with us, however, for we continue to plan and serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The five schools we adopted for service this year are Douglas High, Fairmont Heights High, G. James Gholson Middle, and Melwood Elementary.

A select number of students in these schools will receive new shoes, fresh food, school supplies, toiletries, and small articles of clothing as part of our **Mid-Year Back to School** project. Please contribute to this effort by bringing donations of school supplies and toiletries to our January Meeting!! We have truly embraced a theory of Abraham Lincoln by determining the things that can be done and working towards that end.

Gretel James,  
Newsletter Writer

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee is pleased to report that we have added thirty-seven new members to our group since March 1st. Thank you for your diligence in spreading the word to your friends and former members of our organization. Please continue to invite former employees of the Prince George's County Public School system to join us so that our membership numbers climb even higher. As we all know: **NUMBERS COUNT!** Again, I thank you for your efforts at recruiting new members to our organization. Keep up the good work.

Lorraine W. Johnson, Membership Chair

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### POETRY BOOK AVAILABLE

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Lorraine Johnson will have copies of *Knots*, her book of original poetry, available for purchase at our January meeting. The book sells for \$12.00 per copy.

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## CONSTITUTION / BYLAWS COMMITTEE

### Proposed Bylaws Change:

As directed by the Executive Board of the Prince George's Public School Retirees Association, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee in consultation with the Parliamentarian presents the following information and recommendation.

In order to be consistent with the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, we propose an editorial change in Article III, Section II, Part B of the bylaws. Below is the section with the editorial change noted. The italics would be replaced with the words in bold print. The change reflects only the desire to be in concert with the Maryland retired School Personnel Association and does not change the function of the committee.

### Article III, Section II, Part b):

Standing Committees and special appointments by the President shall be: Liaison – Professional, Community Service, Constitution/Bylaws, (Education and Protective Services) **Consumer Education**, Nominating, Parliamentarian, Remembrance/Necrology, Scholarship, Telephone Communications, and Travel.

Pat Tompkins, Constitution/Bylaws Chair



## SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The Scholarship Committee again thanks the nineteen persons who donated to the Scholarship Drive during 2008-09 and to the many persons who bought raffle tickets. We were able to raise \$2000.00 which enabled us to award a sixth scholarship in May.

According to the treasurer of the Prince George's County Scholarship Fund, Incorporated, five of the awardees entered institutions of higher learning in the fall and submitted documentation to receive the \$2000.00 award. It is hoped that the sixth person will enter college January / February 2010.

The Scholarship Committee is continuing its 50/50 raffle at each meeting. At our January meeting, we are planning to submit a plan for raising additional scholarship funds. Look for more details in March *ECHOES*.

Alveta S. Jones, Scholarship Chair

## TRAVEL UPDATE

At the November meeting members were polled to see which of the suggested one-day trips people were most interested in taking. The results show that the first choice is a trip to see *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* at the Allenberry Playhouse in Boiling Springs, PA. That show runs from June 9 – July 11. The second choice is *Murder on the Nile* at the same theater from April 21 – May 9. There was also some interest in seeing *Joseph* at the Sight and Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA.

Specific information regarding dates and prices will be given at the January meeting.

Charles Hudson, Travel Coordinator

## **BITS AND PIECES**

Happy birthday wishes to Anita Yates of Richmond, who will celebrate her 91st birthday on **January 9th**.

Happy **February** birthday wishes to Phillip Robinson of Mitchellville who will be marking his 95th birthday on the 6th; Minnie Florence of Cypert, Alabama, who will be celebrating her 93rd birthday on the 13th; and Catherine Mitchell of Silver Spring who will be having her 92nd birthday on the 14th --- Valentines Day!

Althea Ross Carrick retired from Glen Dale Elementary in 1975. She now lives in a retirement community in Catonsville, MD, where she keeps very busy. Althea continues to be involved in education; she is currently taking three classes a week at Baltimore Community College. She belongs to several organizations, does handicraft work for charity, and volunteers in her community Care Center. Althea has three adult children, five grandchildren, and ten great-grand children, all of whom she enjoys visiting.

Judith (J) Davis of Greenbelt, Fran Doyle of Fort Washington, and Bonnie Brose (our PGPSRA President) of Upper Marlboro traveled in August to Ellsworth, Wisconsin, to visit their long-time compatriot, Pam Gardiner Enger (also a PGPSRA retiree). Pam and her husband, Warren, along with her mother (who left Suitland a year ago) live on a 500+ acre farm about an hour out of St. Paul, MN. The visit was a relaxing, fun-filled few days of catching up on old friendships. They spent a day at the county fair, took a wagon ride through the fields and past dairy cattle, spent lazy hours sitting and reading on the porch while watching hummingbirds and a brilliant lightening display one evening. There was an interesting auto tour along the Mississippi

River, through many small towns, giving all of the friends a chance to shop and explore both Wisconsin and Minnesota,

Patricia Carlton retired in 1993 from Bowie High School, and worked for the next three years at the Library of Congress. She also went back to college and obtained her Master of Library Science degree. Patricia moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 2007.

There she serves as a volunteer docent at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and at Ghost Ranch, where Georgia O'Keeffe lived. She also works to preserve and protect endangered prairie dogs. Patricia has enjoyed travels to Costa Rica and several European countries.

Alice Hutchinson, of Lanham (our PGPSRA Newsletter Editor), and her daughter took a two-week tour of Italy in October, as a joint birthday celebration. The tour began on the beautiful Amalfi Coast, a hair-raising thirty-two mile stretch of coastline from Sorrento to Salerno. The views were simply spectacular! Other highlights included visiting the wonderfully preserved Pompeii, dining on the Via Veneto, standing in awe in front of Michelangelo's *Pieta* and *David*, making pasta at the Culinary Institute in Orvieto, wine tasting in Tuscany, and learning to navigate the subway in Rome and the canals of Venice. Alice says, "These few sentences barely begin to describe the many wonderful experiences we enjoyed." A knowledgeable tour guide introduced Alice and her daughter to many other places of historical, cultural, and artistic importance, but still allotted them time to explore on their own. Every day brought something new, different, amazing, and fun.

To contribute to BITS AND PIECES, contact Jannette Wundrow at [jannetewundrow@comcast.net](mailto:jannetewundrow@comcast.net) or 1007 Packton Lane, Bowie, MD 20716.

## CONSUMER EDUCATION

**Have you ever been scammed? Or has someone tried and failed?**

**Share your story and help your fellow retirees beware!**

It's getting tougher and tougher to keep ahead of the criminals. New and novel ways of stealing your identity and ticking you out of your money are cropping up all the time. Warnings about new tactics often don't get out until thousands have been victimized.

The Consumer Education Committee needs your help in identifying how our members are being attacked. Please take a few moments to share your personal experience with scams, attempted scams, consumer fraud, and other forms of victimization you may have experienced. We will highlight some of these in future issues of our newsletter. All sources will be held in strictest confidence.

***WE WILL NEVER REVEAL YOUR NAME!***

Please address your stories to: [sissonsan@yahoo.com](mailto:sissonsan@yahoo.com)

If you prefer snail:

John Sisson  
6326 Naval Avenue  
Lanham, MD 20706

301.577.4344

Many thanks for your cooperation.

John Sisson, Consumer Education Chair

## REMEMBRANCE / NECROLOGY

Garrett, William D.  
Gruber, John

Howard, Florence Devitt	10 – 27 – 09
Marshall, Dorothy	5 – 14 – 09
Timmons, Fannie	10 – 02 – 09

Jannie Goldston, Chair

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**January 13..... Executive Board Meeting**

**PGCEA Bldg.**

**January 19.....United Seniors Rally**  
**Annapolis**

**January 27.....General Membership Meeting**

**PGCEA BLDG**

**February 1.....Deadline for ECHOES**

**[ahutchinson00@hotmail.com](mailto:ahutchinson00@hotmail.com)**

**March 10.....Executive Board Meeting**  
**PGCEA Bldg.**

**March 17.....Legislative Day**  
**Annapolis**

**March 24.....General Membership Meeting**  
**PGCEA Bldg.**

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Our meetings follow the Prince George's Public School's policy for cancellation due to inclement weather. Listen to your radio and/or TV for announcements. However, a delayed opening means that our meeting will go on as planned.

## A THOUGHT FOR THESE STRESSFUL TIMES

If you have a clear conscience and good health,  
If you have good friends and a happy home,  
If your heart has kept its youth and your soul its honesty, then cheer up –  
You are one of life's fortunate millionaires.

## ILLUMINATION

**Note:** Something to think about as birthdays come and go!

Lord thou knowest better than I myself that I am growing older, and will some day be old.

**Keep Me** from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject on every occasion.

**Release Me** from craving to try to straighten out everybody's affairs.

**Make Me** thoughtful but not moody, helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all – but, thou knowest, Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

**Keep My** mind free from the recital of endless details.

**Give Me** wings to get to the point.

**Seal My** lips to my many aches and pains – they are increasing and my love and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

**I Ask** for grace enough to listen to the tales of others' pain.

**Help Me** endure them with patience.

**Teach Me** the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible that I may be mistaken.

**Keep Me** reasonably sweet. I don't want to be a saint... Some of them are so hard to live with, but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

**Help Me** extract all possible fun out of life. There are so many funny things around us and I don't want to miss any of them. AMEN!

Ray Rasten

## PGPSRA LUNCHEON

**DATE:** January 27, 2010

**TIME:** 11:00 A. M.

**PLACE:** PGCEA Building

**COST:** \$11.00 (Box Lunch)

**NOTE:** *Our guest speaker will be Dr. Hite, Superintendent of Prince George's County Public Schools.*

Please mail the reservation form below by January 20th to:

Dr. Edward N. Vest  
7908 Klovstad Drive  
Fort Washington, Maryland 20744

### LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM:

**Due: January 20, 2010**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Lunches Ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Guests: \_\_\_\_\_