



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXXVI No. 3

January 2013

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings and Best Wishes to you in this New Year! May you experience comfort and peace throughout the entire year. It is hard to believe how swiftly the time passes.

It was a pleasure to see so many of you at the December meeting. Lorraine Johnson, Membership chair introduced one new member, Gertie Tillerson, and member Caril Price who was visiting from Florida. The food was good, and the room cozy and warm with festive decorations.

Joseph Barger presented updates and changes to the health benefits being offered through MRSPA. Fortunately for us, the plans offered through Prince George's County Board of Education, seem quiet adequate. Therefore, unlike many other jurisdictions in the state, most of us don't need to seek additional coverage.

I urge you to take advantage of **Abenity**, a discount program through **MRSPA**. This is especially a good time of year to realize great savings. You may access this service by logging on to MRSPA web site.

We are in need of someone to assume the position of president of our organization for the **2013-2014 Year**. The term is one year and I urge you to please consider doing so. Many people have labored long and hard to protect the rights and benefits of retirees and I hope, out of gratitude, we will Share the Load.

Please note the meeting schedule of the general membership for the remainder of the year. This schedule is slightly different than the one originally published.

Wednesday, January 23, 2013 11:00A.M. - PGCEA Center - Black History presentations by Betty McCloud & Don Conway

Wednesday, March 27, 2013 11:00am Comfort Inn-Bowie

Wednesday, May 22, 2013 11:00am Comfort Inn- Bowie

I apologize for any inconvenience these changes may cause!

See you at the next meeting on January 23, 2013, at 11:00AM.

Gretel James, President

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Our meetings follow the Prince George's Public Schools' 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 be held as scheduled.

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Maryland General Assembly convenes on January 9, 2013. There is only one specific issue that we are supporting at this time, and that is changing the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System (MSRPS) funding from the **Corridor** method back to the **Actuarial** method. The state began using the Corridor method of funding during the Glendening administration, where-by they put in a reduced amount of money than had been determined to fund the system at an 80% level. Each year since, the state has continued this method of funding, reducing the System to about a 60% level. Under the Actuarial funding method, a specific predetermined amount of money would be required to be added to MSRPS each year.

The state is still responsible for our retiree/pension benefits. The counties are now partially responsible for **active** teacher benefits. Within four years the counties will be totally responsible for the **current** teacher retiree pensions.

We must remain on guard, though, to protect our health care benefits, as the state does not provide those.

The Maryland Budget & Taxation Institute reported at the end of November that Maryland's budget is on an impressive recovery tract. In 2007, a recession hit in the United States, causing a drastic drop in the economy. Maryland lost almost 200,000 jobs, but we have gained back about two thirds of those. Our state's economy is recovering due to restraint in spending, transfers of money, and increased revenue brought in by the one-cent increase in sales tax, along with the increase in the tax on liquor and tobacco, and slot machine revenue (about \$200 million this year).

Maryland has protected funding for Medicare, Medicaid, and education. The state's 5% "Rainy Day Fund" remains untouched. The economy continues to recover - - - but (as of this December printing) we do not know what is going to happen with the Federal "Fiscal Cliff". Governor O'Malley must submit a budget for 2014 on January 16, 2013. His staff is planning a "contingency budget" in the event that the Federal government does not prevent the "Fiscal Cliff".

On November 26th AARP reported that Maryland was awarded \$123 million of Federal funding to help start the official launch of Maryland's health Insurance Exchange under the Affordable Health Care Act. This program will help thousands of uninsured Marylanders buy health insurance coverage that will become effective January 1, 2014. Maryland is working aggressively to expand access to affordable health care for all of our citizens.

The annual United Seniors of Maryland (USM) Forum previously scheduled for January 29th, at St. Johns College in Annapolis, has been postponed until March 19th.

Our annual PGPSRA Legislative Day in Annapolis is set for Wednesday, March 13th. Please plan to join the group, as we will be representing all county school employees. We will be leaving the PGCEA office in Forestville at 8:45 a.m. and travelling by coach bus to Annapolis. There we will sit in on short legislative sessions of the House and Senate, tour the historic rooms and chambers of the Maryland State House, and enjoy a sandwich/cookie lunch, during which all of our county legislators are invited to join us and speak briefly. We will return to Forestville about 2:30 p.m.

There is no cost for this special day in Annapolis.

Jannette Wundrow and Sue Finan
Legislative Co-Chairs



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TREASURER'S REPORT

November 2012

Opening Balances:	\$30283.44
Savings Account:	3022.73
Activity – Checking Account:	
Receipts:	1591.35
Expenditures:	2321.70
Savings Account – No Activity	
Balances as of November 30:	
Checking Account:	29553.09
Savings Account	3022.73
Total Assets:	\$32575.82
E. Vest, Treasurer	

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Fellow PGPSRA members, we are off and running. We have successfully delivered Share Baskets for Thanksgiving to selected families at Riverdale, Bladensburg, and Mount Ranier Elementary Schools and at Hyattsville Middle School. We gave a total of twelve baskets of food to needy families whose children attend these schools. Recipients were thankful for the assistance.

Our next project includes Share Baskets for Christmas and the collection and distribution of coats in December and January.

Recipients will be selected from the schools listed above. We are asking our members to donate new coats to fit kindergarteners to eighth graders. Coats may be dropped off at PGCEA Headquarters, or you may call Chairman Ethel Brown at 202.581.0740 for assistance.

Please note that our next project includes our midyear "School Supplies Drive" in January. You are asked to bring your donations to the January meeting.

The Community Service Committee wishes to thank all persons of the association who contribute to these worthy projects.

Courtney Pringle, Newsletter Writer

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, PGPSRA welcomed two new members and some visitors to the November meeting. Among the visitors were Gertie Tillason of Surrattsville High School, and Carol Price, a PP Worker from Florida, who decided to attend our meeting and was very happy with her decision. Continue to encourage friends and colleagues to join us. PGPSRA will be stronger for it.

A special thank-you goes to Charlene Jacob for donating items for door prizes. Door prize winners were as follows: Lucia Vest, Lillie James, Charlene Jacob, Judith Naugle, and Sharon Tannenbaum. The Grand Prize winner was Katherine Brown.

Lorraine Johnson, Membership Chairperson

JOIN OUR LISTSERVE

Give Dr. Vest your e-mail address and get the latest news quickly and efficiently.

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BITS AND PIECES

Happy **January** birthday wishes to Ms. Anna Yates of Richmond, VA, who will be celebrating her 94th birthday on the 9th.

Happy **February** birthday greetings to Ms. Orine Cypert of Florence, AL, who will be having her 96th birthday on the 13th; to Ms. Catherine Mitchell of Silver Spring, who will be celebrating her 95th birthday on Valentine's Day; and to Ms. Gwendolyn Sollers of Suitland, MD, who will be marking her 93rd birthday on the 25th.

Esther Hardin retired in 2000 as Director of Staff Development. Shortly afterward, she and her husband Thomas moved to Bern, NC, where they have built a home in a golfing community so that they can enjoy their favorite sport year-round. Esther is an active member of her sorority and serves on several local and state boards. She and Thomas enjoy traveling, and during the past three years, have been to Italy (with MRSPA during the earthquake scare!) and have traveled on their own to Japan, Hawaii, London, and Paris. The Hardins have one son, a daughter-in-law, and a grandson (age 13), who live in High Point, NC. Their son Derek, a graduate of Bowie High School is now a physical therapist.

Evelyn C. Hall retired from Baden Elementary in 1990. She has since relocated to Greensboro, NC. After retiring, Evelyn worked in retail for six years and as a school crossing guard for ten years. She now enjoys playing Bridge and taking local bus trips. Evelyn has one son, two foster daughters, three foster grandchildren, and five foster great-grandchildren.

Donald (Don) H. Wilson of Bowie retired in 1995 from Dodge Park Elementary as a physical education teacher. He is a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Largo,

where he has served as President of the Men's Club for the past three years. His travels include cruises to Canada and the Bahamas and touring and visiting friends in New York, Connecticut, New Orleans, and Tennessee. One of Don's favorite sports is golf, and he has enjoyed playing in Pine Hurst, NC, and Hilton Head, SC. He has participated in a line dancing class that proved to be fun. Don definitely instilled the importance of education in his grandchildren. Since his retirement, he has had three granddaughters graduate from Bowie State University, Trinity University, and Morgan State University. Two grandsons graduated from Hampton University and the University of Maryland.

Beverly M. Harrison retired from High Point High School in 2011. She has since re-located to Charlotte, NC. Beverly has taken trips to Hawaii, Las Vegas, Charleston, and Myrtle Beach, SC. She especially enjoys traveling with family and friends to AAU Basketball Tournaments to watch her great-nephew play.

Lucy Harrell retired in 1994 from District Height Elementary. Five years ago she and her husband moved next door to their daughter and her family in Hampstead, MD. Lucy has done some unique volunteer work concerning libraries. She has set up four church libraries and held workshops on how to set up church libraries. She also does cooking for the sick and shut-in and bakes items for church bake sales. Lucy has served as vice-president and program director of her church women's group and has been an active member of several committees. She also enjoys quilting, sewing, gardening, reading, painting with acrylics, and attending her grandchildren's activities. Lucy has traveled to several states and to Canada, South America, Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Costa Rica, and through the Panama Canal. In March 2011, the Harrells celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They have two children and four grandchildren.



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Alice Hutchinson retired from Hyattsville Middle School in 1998. Since that time she has participated in the Active Seniors Program at Prince George's Community College. This past summer she joined over fifty other members in an exciting 13-day land and sea cruise to Alaska. It was an extraordinary vacation. The land segment started in Anchorage on a chilly, windy day in July, and what a sharp contrast it was to the 100 degree temperatures in Maryland! The stay in Anchorage, as in the other cities, included traditional sightseeing in the historic downtown area and a visit to the Alaskan Native Cultural Center and other sites of historical or cultural significance. A day later the group boarded a dome railcar for a trip to Denali National Park, the famous preserve for Alaskan wildlife and the site of Mt. McKinley. From Denali the group traveled to Fairbanks, the most interior city visited on the tour. On August 3, the group flew from Fairbanks to Seward where they boarded the Celebrity Millennium for a cruise down the Inside Passage. The names of places visited brought back memories of Jack London's stories in 8th grade English – Hubbard Glacier, Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan. According to Alice, the scenery in Alaska was simply spectacular – mighty mountains shrouded in mist, spruce trees reaching for the sky, small towns and villages nestled upon the hillsides, grizzlies frolicking in the meadow, sparkling lakes and raging rivers, shimmering glaciers shedding chunks of ice into the deep blue sea. Sometimes it seemed as if each new vista was even more beautiful than the one before. An added, but equally important, reward of this trip was the spirit of congeniality and cohesiveness that developed among the travelers, staff included, as they shared their Alaskan Adventure of 2012. It was a wonderful trip.



NECROLOGY/REMEMBRANCE

Sandra Chinn

November 2012

From: MRSPA WEBSITE

The Social Security Administration has announced that monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for nearly 62 million Americans will increase 1.7% in 2013.

The 1.7% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits that more than 56 million Social Security beneficiaries receive in January 2013. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 31, 2012.

Some other changes that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$113,700 from \$110,100. Of the 163 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2013, nearly 10 million will pay higher taxes as a result of the increase in the taxable maximum.

Information about Medicare changes for 2013, when announced, will be available at www.medicare.gov. For some beneficiaries, their Social Security increase may be partially or completely offset by increases in Medicare. To read more, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.



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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

HOLIDAY GIFT

By Lorraine Williams
Johnson

Soli Deo Gloria

Santa's packed his bag
And he's on the move.
He's read his lists
And he's found his groove.
There are gifts for all:
The big and the small;
The young and the old
With goodies untold.

But the gift from you
That will give us a lift
Has not arrived as yet,

Last Name

First Name

Middle

Street Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

Cell Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Birth date _____

Date of Retirement _____

But it is one we hope to get.

PGPSRA wants to hear from
you

We want to see your face;
We want you to know

That for you, there is a place
With us, and a special seat,
And fun and fellowship
That really can't be beat;
Wonderful programs and
much more

That any member will simply
adore.

We're waiting for you.

Dues per year: _____ Prince George's Public Schools Retirees Association \$15.00

_____ Maryland School Personnel Association \$35.00

_____ Membership in both organizations \$50.00

Enclosed please find my check in the amount of \$ _____ made payable to MRSPA or complete a Dues Deduction form.

DUES DEDUCTION FORM

I hereby authorize the TEACHERS RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND to deduct annual membership dues of \$ _____ for the State and Local Retired School Personnel Association from one of my retirement checks each year.

This authorization is to remain in effect until revoked by me.

Signature _____ Date _____

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Social Security Number (Required) _____

Please return the application form and your check to: Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, 8379 Piney Orchard Parkway, #A, Odenton, Maryland 21113-1508.

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DATES TO REMEMBER – 2013

January 9: Executive Mtg. 10:00 a.m.
PGCEA Center

January 23: General Mtg. 11:00 a.m.
PGCEA Center

February 1: Deadline for March *Echoes*

March 6: Executive Board Mtg.
PGCEA Center

March 13: Legislative Day
Annapolis, MD

PGPSRA MEETING/LUNCHEON

Date: January 23, 2012
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Place: PGCEA Center
Cost: \$10.00

To make your luncheon reservation, please send your check, payable to PGPSRA, for the appropriate amount to Dr. Edward Vest, 7908 Klovstad Drive, Fort Washington, MD 20744-1729. The reservation deadline is January 16, 2012.

LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM

Name: _____

Lunches Ordered: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Names of Guests: _____

REMINDER



January is School Supplies Month for PGPSRA members. Please bring your donations to the general meeting on January 23.

