



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXXI No. 3

January 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Here we are in the middle of the Holiday Season! The very best to you - and yours - during all that goes on this time of year!

The plans are in for a great January meeting. Our MRSPA's President, Carole Webster, will be joining us. Thanks have been sent to Chuck Ridgeway, President-Elect of MSRPA, for spending the day with us at our general meeting in November.

Your Association is always looking for new programs. Many of you are busy, involved people. Your interests are intriguing and varied. At our January meeting, we will be hearing from a member - Don Conway. He has been collecting items and information on a variety of topics, and he is willing to share his knowledge with us. Since Don is such a multifaceted person, we are not at all sure which topic he will choose for his presentation. I'm certain that whatever he does will be great fun. You need to come to the meeting/luncheon to hear what he has to say! As usual, we will have our business meeting before the luncheon. There is a lot going on and you will want to be there to find out, first hand, about issues that concern us and our Prince George's County. Box lunches will be provided for those of you who reserve one from the treasurer before the deadline.

The By-Laws Committee has been looking at the need to change the length of term of office. We are not sure, as of yet, that this issue will

come to the floor for a vote. However, if it does, it will need your approval. Please think about this issue and bring your ideas to us. We need to have involved, participating members to keep our organization strong.

If you are not receiving our monthly E-News, contact Ed Vest at drvest@prodigy.net and he will be glad to put you in touch with us.

Bonnie Brose

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Governor O'Malley called a special legislative session that began on Monday, October 29, 2007. Before the special session began, the governor stressed that Maryland's investments in education, public safety, and public health must be protected. Most of his proposals that would have benefited seniors were eliminated by the legislators. Three of his state income enhancement proposals will be instated through instituting a progressive income tax, increasing the tobacco tax by \$1 and investing that revenue in more affordable and accessible healthcare coverage, and raising the sales tax by one cent. The question of slots will be put to the public in a referendum next November. The governor is very interested in installing some slots in the state, with the proceeds to be used to preserve and protect 600,000 acres of horse-related open space in Maryland and 18,00 horse-related jobs, along with funding school construction and public education (including colleges and universities). Governor O'Malley and the legislators have agreed to continue providing

State aid to education under the Thornton plan and to phase in the Geographic Cost of Education Index, but all at a slower rate than was originally intended, therefore costing the counties more for education. Fortunately, the House of Delegates voted to "table" the bill concerning the shifting of 50% of the cost of the pension/retirement funding to the counties. To offset this plan, the state cut funding to the counties significantly. (This does not mean that the idea of shifting pension/retirement funding to the counties will not be brought up again in the near future.) MRSPA's Legislative Committee, along with our state Education Coalition members, made our objections in writing, phone calls and e-mails to all of our legislators during the special session, concerning the shifting of 50% of school personnel retirement/pension costs to the counties. Our thanks go to those of you who contacted your local legislators about this important issue.

Because of the special legislative session, the MRSPA Legislative Workshop plans had to be revised. We lost all of our scheduled speakers! As a result, one combined state workshop was held in Odenton on November 15th. Martha Franklin and I represented Prince George's County at the event.

The United Seniors of Maryland will hold their annual Legislative Rally at St. John's College in Annapolis on Tuesday, January 22, 2008. This is always an interesting and informative meeting. Invited speakers this year are Governor O'Malley and Department of Aging Secretary Gloria Lawlah. If you are interested in attending, please contact me at 301-390-7324.

The regular General Assembly session begins on January 9, 2008, and concludes on

April 7, 2008. We will be asking again for your help on specific issues as they arise.

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of November 30, 2007

Beginning Balance	\$13075.65
Receipts	\$ 1900.78
Expenditures	\$ 1332.80
Ending Balance	\$13643.63

Balance on Hand

Checking Account	\$13643.63
Savings Account	\$ 2992.58

Total Assets	\$16636.21
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E. Vest, Treasurer

PGPSRA JANUARY 2008 MEETING AND BOX LUNCH

January 23, 2008
PGCEA Building, Forestville, MD
11:00 a.m.

Program: Don Conway
Guest: Carol Webster, President MRSPA

A box lunch will be available for \$10.00.
Reservations must be made by January 16,
2008.

To the Treasurer:

Ed Vest
7908 Klovstad Drive
Fort Washington, MD 20744

DEDICATION OF THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS MUSIC WING

Leroy A. Battle was honored on October 6, 2007, when the Prince George's County Public Schools celebrated the accomplishments of the former music teacher and Tuskegee Airman, by dedicating the Frederick Douglass Music Wing in his name. Mr. Battle served as founder and director of the Douglass High School band for eighteen years beginning in 1950, after earning his wings as one of the distinguished Tuskegee Airmen in the mid-1940's.

During his years as a teacher, Mr. Battle modeled musical and academic excellence by motivating, guiding, and inspiring generations of music students.

Mr. Battle became involved in music when he was only ten years old, as a member of the Boy Scouts Drum and Bugle Corps. In high school he won a scholarship to study with a New York Philharmonic's concert master, Saul Goodman.

Mr. Battle went on to become a life-long educator, teacher, jazz musician, and band leader.

Needless to say, we are most pleased to call him a fellow member of our PGPSRA!

AARP STATE VOLUNTEER AWARD

On November 7, 1997, Kitty Walker was honored at the annual AARP State Volunteer Awards luncheon in Annapolis for her work with an intergenerational project. The activity involved local middle school students and their recognition of older volunteers in Maryland. Kitty was the AARP school liaison, who encouraged 200 students to create colorful construction paper cards with handwritten messages

thanking AARP volunteers for their dedicated work across the state.

Kitty is the Past President of PGPSRA and continues to be active in our organization, as well as in several other groups. She lives in Dunkirk, Maryland.

MARYLAND SENIOR CITIZENS HALL OF FAME HONOREES

It is with pleasure and pride that we announce the recent induction of two members from our PGPSRA into the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. They are Julia Derry and Carl Lancaster. They were selected as outstanding senior volunteers from many nominees throughout the state.

Julia, who is a very spry, articulate, gracious 95 year-old lady, has been volunteering with OASIS of Hyattsville since 1990. OASIS is a national nonprofit educational organization designed to enhance the quality of life for mature adults. However, Julia, the tireless dedicated OASIS volunteer, has also been enhancing the lives of area children for the past fifteen years. She has been working as an Intergenerational Tutor, teaching children of all nationalities and impacting their lives in a positive way. Julia also helps man the desk at OASIS and enjoys a weekly game of Mah-Jong. She lives in Riverdale.

Carl has served voluntarily for the past twenty years, since 1987, as a Trustee with the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System. His dedication to the Board has been commendable. His knowledge and expertise in the field of investments is well recognized. For the past several years, Carl has served on the Board's sub-committees of Corporate Governance and Real Estate. His knowledge of the functioning of the

retirement/pension system is incredible. He is a member of MRSPA and is currently the Budget Chair on their Board of Directors. Carl was appointed and has been serving since August 6, 2007, as the interim President and CEO of the Maryland School for the Blind in Baltimore. He lives in Columbia, Maryland.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

As you know, Jane and I are retiring from our positions as co-chairs of the Membership Committee. We want to thank you all for your support through the years. We especially wish to express our appreciation to our Treasurer, Dr. Edward Vest. We appreciate his careful attention to detail, his cooperative spirit, and most of all, the pleasure of his company at the sign-up table.

Our President, Bonnie Brose, is presently seeking someone to assume the mantle of Membership chair. Jane and I have certainly enjoyed our time in this position. The process, working in concert with Dr. Vest and the state office, is very manageable. We urge YOU to consider this opportunity to help keep our organization viable.

Congratulations to Alveta Jones who was the Door Prize winner at our November luncheon at La Fontaine Bleu. Spread the word about PGPSRA – encourage your colleagues to join us – we do good work with good people. There is truly “strength in numbers”. Each new person brings us new ideas and energy and gives us the potential to have an even greater impact in our community.

Pat Tompkins, Co-Chair

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The members of the Community Service Committee wish you a Happy New Year.

The Community Service Committee is ready to embark on its first community service project for the 2007-2008 school years. We are soliciting help from the membership in order to make this project a success. The committee decided, as its first project, to donate school supplies and personal hygiene items to elementary school students now living in shelters in Prince George’s County. We are requesting PGPSRA members to bring to our next meeting on January 23, 2008, any of the items listed below.

Acceptable items are school supplies such as tablets, notebooks, notebook paper, book bags, pencils, rulers, and any other items that are deemed as school supplies. Personal hygiene products include deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks, underwear for elementary school children, combs, brushes, wash cloths, soap, lotion, and shampoo.

We appreciate any of the items listed above. Members may donate more than one item. Thank you for your attention to this request and for your continuing support.

Delores Brown, Co-Chair

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 go on as planned.

BITS AND PIECES

Julia Derry of Riverdale celebrated her 95th birthday in November!

J (Judith) Davis was elected for a sixth term as Mayor of Greenbelt in November!

Charlie and Ann Hudson of Silver Spring celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in October! The Hudsons commemorated the event with a special trip that began with a flight to Toronto. They traveled on to Vancouver, where they were met by three family members for a celebratory dinner. Charlie and Ann spent two nights at Two Rivers Junction, then more time at the Bass Resort. From there they took a bus to Jasper, stopping at Lake Louise and walking on a glacier! They concluded their trip by riding the train across the scenic countryside of Canada from Vancouver to Toronto, after which they flew back to Maryland. The Hudsons have three married children and nine grandchildren.

Gloria Farrar of Oxon Hill retired in 2005, although she actually left classroom teaching in 1982 and began work as a realtor with Remax Colonial Homes at National Harbor. Gloria is a past president of the Prince George's Association of Realtors and has been the PAC Representative of Realtors of Maryland and the surrounding region for many years. She has served as vice president of the River Ridge Rec Council and also worked with Habitat. Gloria likes traveling whenever possible. She has been to forty-eight states and over forty countries. She has enjoyed numerous real estate conventions in San Francisco, New Orleans, and Las Vegas. Gloria has two children (both of whom are in real estate) and two grandchildren.

Pearl Ellerin retired as art teacher from Glenridge Junior High School and Nicholas Orem Middle School in 1986. This past July she moved to a two bedroom Hyatt Independent and Assisted Living apartment in Boca Raton, FL. Pearl is thrilled with her new place. The second bedroom accommodates her artistic endeavors and includes a kiln, two sewing machines, a 72 inch worktable, and a Dell computer. Pearl also volunteers as a Residence Ambassador and the Resident Librarian (with 1400 books that she is attempting to organize!). She is finding joy in making new friends, but fondly remembers those she worked with in the county.

Ruby Pinkney Gross of Brandywine retired in 1991 after having taught in both Charles and Prince George's Counties. Ruby spends a lot of her free time working with community projects, especially related to St. Phillips' Parish in Baden. She is also active in other organizations including C.S.S., the Democratic Club, O.E.S., Pomonkey High School Alumni, and the Bowie State University Alumni Association. Ruby enjoys traveling, and has been to most of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. She has visited some countries overseas. Last May she helped sponsor a trip with the Peter Gross, Sr. Scholarship Committee to Ottawa, Canada. During the summer months, Ruby spent time in the Caribbean and Ocean City, MD, and at Christmas she relaxed in Myrtle Beach. Ruby enjoys spending as much time as possible with her adult children, seven grandchildren, and four great grandchildren, all of whom live in Maryland and Virginia.

Stanley Tweedy of District Heights retired from Andrew Jackson Middle School in 2004. Since retiring, Stanley has enjoyed a variety of activities including painting, jewelry making, and gardening. She served

as our PGPSRA Recording Secretary for one year. During the past few years Stanley's travels has taken her to Cape Cod, Niagara Falls, and Montreal. She also travels locally with Harmony Hall Seniors of Fort Washington.

Carolyn (Lynn) Harden retired last June after teaching biology and serving as a Science Teacher Coordinator and as an Aerospace Instructional Coordinator. Her last four years were most interesting, for they were spent at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center as a "teacher on loan" to the education office there. Lynn and her husband moved to Macon, Georgia, in July. There they are completing the renovation of a 1922 estate home in the historic district of the city. Because the house is located only about a mile from I-75 and I-16, Lynn jokingly refers to the house as a "potential PGPSRA Retiree Hurricane Evacuation Route B&B" for some of her former colleagues who have retired to Florida's Gulf Coast and the southeast coasts of South Carolina and Georgia.

Pam Enger, who lives with her husband on a large cattle farm in Ellsworth, Wisconsin, spent a few weeks in October visiting her mother and friends in our area.

To contribute to BITS AND PIECES, contact Jan Wundrow at jannettewundrow@comcast.net or 1007 Packton La., Bowie, MD 20716.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE STAYS IN TOUCH WITH 2007 AWARDEES

One of the goals of the Scholarship Committee is to stay in touch with the awardees. In the November *Echoes*, Danielle Miller, a recipient of the scholarship award for four years, shared some reflections. This month, Jessica

Johnson, a recipient for 2006 and 2007, sends this note:

Dear Mrs. Alveta Jones and the Prince George's Public School Retirees Association:

I would love to take the time to thank you for the scholarship that you awarded me. With the financial help for school, I have gone on to prove to myself as well as others that I am a true scholar from the Prince George's County School System. I would like to tell you that I took my musical talent from Suitland HS to Fisk. After doing so, Fisk selected me to perform at "The James A. Hefner HBCU Piano Competition" on March 21 of 2007. I performed "Fantasy in d' minor", and every one seemed surprised by my level of skill. Also I performed at "The 2007 Fisk University Baccalaureate Service." I played a musical selection by the name of "For Your Goodness" by Gale Jones Murphy. Once again the audience gave me a standing ovation. And I almost forgot the award that I received from the Nashville Music Teachers Association for a rating of "Excellent" for piano solo auditions in college. I have you to thank for helping to make my college experience less stressful due to money matters. Thank you so much for your help and support.

Thanks again.
Jessica Johnson
Fisk University

JUST A REMINDER

**** Executive Committee/Board Meeting** will be held on January 9, 2008, at the PGCEA Building; the general meeting is on January 23rd at the PGCEA Building. (RSVP by Jan.16)

**** Echoes deadline** for the March issue is February 1, 2008.
(ahutchinson00@hotmail.com)

DON CONWAY'S LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

You are in for a special treat at our January 23rd luncheon meeting at the PGCEA office. Don Conway will be showing and explaining his extensive display of Black History memorabilia. His collection includes items pertaining to local history, the Negro Baseball Leagues, and famous African Americans. Throughout the year Don travels to several locations throughout MD, DE, PA, and Washington, DC to present his memorabilia.

Don first became interested in collecting in 1946, when his father gave him the first Black American half-dollar minted, depicting Booker T. Washington. Since retiring in 1995 as P. E. teacher and coach (25 years at Ridgecrest Elementary), Don's enthusiasm for collecting Black History memorabilia has increased. For the past ten years he has been displaying his moveable Museum.

During February 2007, Don took his Moveable Museum to the Department of Agriculture's Library Black History Program in Laurel as a part of their "Window to the Past - a Glimpse of Local Black History". He also presented at the Black History celebrations at McKinley High School in Washington, the Queens Chapel Church, and some community centers in the county.

His Black history display was set up for the musical dramas "Black Journey" and "Rosa's Ride" at the Public Playhouse in Bladensburg.

At Delaware State University, Don's alma mater, he presented his Black History memorabilia during a celebration for Rev.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Don also displayed his collection at their Black History Awareness Night at one of their basketball games.

During the spring and summer months, the Jackie Robinson and Negro Leagues portion of the Moveable Museum were on display for the Jackie Robinson Day Tribute in Philadelphia. Displays of Negro Leagues memorabilia were shown at Minor League baseball parks including the Bowie Baysox, Lancaster and Harrisburg Giants, and York, PA, Revolutions.

This past summer Don presented his memorabilia at the Beltsville Recreation Center and the Prince George's Ballroom.

Don says he collects and displays the memorabilia to keep Black History alive. This is a very interesting presentation that you won't want to miss.

RESOLUTIONS

No one gets out of this world alive.

**Resolve therefore in the year to come to maintain a sense of values.

**Take care of yourself. Good health is everyone's major source of wealth. Without it, happiness is impossible.

**Resolve to be cheerful and helpful. People will repay you in kind.

**Resolve to listen more and to talk less. No one ever learns anything by talking.

** Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic to the striving and tolerant of the weak and the wrong. Sometime in life you have been all of these.

Excerpts from Walter Scott (1975)

**Prince George's Public School
Retirees Association**

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**MEMBERSHIP MEETING &
LUNCHEON**

January 23, 2008
PGCEA Building, Forestville, MD

11:00 a.m. - Business Meeting
12:00 - Luncheon

Reservations Due – January 16th

2008

Do more than belong, participate.

Do more than care, help.