



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

XXXXV No. 3

January 2012

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PGPSRA is ACTIVE! If there is any doubt, just take a moment to consider the breadth of its activities in just the last month or so. The Community Service Committee's annual New Coat Drive is well underway. The Scholarship Committee is putting plans in place for this year's scholarship program. Representatives of PGPSRA participated in MRSPA's Legislative Workshop in Annapolis. Our Benefits Liaison recently participated in a meeting at PGCP's Administration Building in Upper Marlboro. Best of all, for the first time ever, the Prince George's County Executive was the guest speaker at one of our membership meetings.

Rushern L. Baker, III, the Prince George's County Executive, was the guest speaker at our meeting on November 16, at the Greenbelt American Legion Post 136. Listening to Rushern describe his vision for the county and the priority he has set in his administration for a quality education for the students was wonderful. It can only lead one to wish him the best and to believe that if anyone can give true, honest service to the welfare of the county and its school system, it is our County Executive and good friend, Rushern Baker! We thank him for all he already has done to improve our county and we wish him much continued success in the months and years ahead!

As has been announced previously, on January 18, Maryland State Treasurer Nancy Kopp will

be the guest speaker at our meeting at PGCEA. In addition to being the Treasurer, Mrs. Kopp is the Chairwoman of the State's Retirement and Pension System Board of Trustees. She has agreed to answer some questions posed by attendees following her remarks. A second guest speaker that day will be Lewis Robinson, the Executive Director of PGCEA who on July 1, 2011, celebrated twenty-years in that position.

I hope each of you has gotten the message: If you're not coming to our meetings, you're missing out on a good time and the latest scoop on what's really happening! Registration information for January's General Membership Meeting is located elsewhere in this issue of the ECHOES.

As I write this, Thanksgiving has passed and we are starting to think of the Christmas Season. In only a few more weeks we'll be into the New Year and the days will be getting longer in the eternal cycle of life. New life, a renewal of all that is good, will come with this winter's first significant snowfall. Like many of you, I dread the shoveling of that powdery white stuff, but I love the beauty, magic and peace that are part of the "watching the white stuff fall".

I wish peace, health and happiness for each of you. May all of your snowflakes be small, light ones!

Carl Lancaster, President

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Maryland General Assembly held a special session in late October to redraw legislative districts. The United States Constitution and the Maryland Constitution require Maryland to redraw its congressional and legislative districts every ten years following a census, in order to maintain an equal voting population. Governor O'Malley will introduce the proposed redistricting plan as a joint resolution on the first day of the regular session of the General Assembly – January 11, 2012. This plan automatically becomes law on February 24, 2012, unless the General Assembly enacts its own plan.

It is important that we continue to ask our legislators **NOT to shift the pension funding to the counties, NOT to reduce the COLA formula for retirees, and to return the Maryland State Pension System from Corridor Funding to the Full Actuarial Funding Method.** At our November PGPSRA meeting, each attendee was asked to write a line or two on a postcard to be sent to one of his/her local legislators, stating one of the above mentioned concerns of our school system retirees. We thank MRSPA for purchasing the postcards and paying the postage to mail them.

The Blue Ribbon Committee on Transportation Funding, established in 2010 by the General Assembly, has recommended a three-year phase-in of a 15 cent per-gallon fuel tax increase. Last February the state chapter of the American Society of Engineers gave Maryland's road network a score of C-. Our highways and bridges need repairing.

Due to the failure of the Congressional "Super Committee" to reach agreement on cuts to balance the Federal budget, a \$1.2

trillion reduction in the budget will automatically go into effect in 2013. Social Security and Medicare will be exempt from the cuts. However, education and other social programs could be hit very hard. The Department of Defense will account for more than half of the budget reduction, which will greatly affect Maryland. The state has more than 42,600 federal defense jobs; the Defense Department paid nearly \$1.9 billion in wages to employees living in Maryland last year. Almost \$9.3 billion (31%) of Maryland's 2011/2012 budget came from federal funding. About a quarter of the state budget year that begins in July will overlap with the beginning of the planned federal cuts.

The United Seniors of Maryland (USM), of which MSRPA is a member, will hold their annual Legislative Forum Day on January 24, 2012, at St. Johns College in Annapolis. This is always a very interesting all-day meeting with invited speakers being Governor O'Malley, Senate President Mike Miller, House Speaker Michael Busch, Secretary Gloria Lawlah, and other special guests. A box lunch is included in the price of the \$15 ticket. Please contact me if you are interested in attending (Jannette Wundrow – 301.390.7324).

Our annual PGPSRA Legislative Day trip to Annapolis will be March 14, 2012.

Please plan to join the group, as we will be representing all county school employees with our pension and COLA concerns. We will be leaving the PGCEA office 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 Governor's Mansion and 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 to speak briefly.

We will return to Forestville about 2:30 p.m. There is no cost for this special day in Annapolis.

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Co-Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report for November:

Beginning Balances:

Checking Account \$26343.03

Savings Account 3021.21

Activity – Checking Account

Receipts 878.63

Expenditures 1428.49

No Activity – Savings Account

Balances as of November 30:

Checking Account \$25793.17

Savings Account 3021.21

Total Assets \$28814.38

E. Vest, Treasurer

TRAVEL UPDATE

At the present time, two trips are being organized for 2012. The first trip will be after Easter, on April 25, 2012, to the Sight and Sound Theater in Strasburg, PA, to see *Jonah and the Whale*. This is planned for a 2-day and 1-night trip for \$225.00 per person, double occupancy. Included in the cost (based on 40 persons) are tickets to the show, dinner after the show at Hershey Farms, round-trip transportation, bus driver tip, one night motel room, breakfast next morning, sightseeing trip of Lancaster, PA, and time at a shopping area.

A deposit of \$100.00 per person is due at our January 2012 meeting. Checks should be made out to PGPSRA – Tours, and given to Mr. Hudson. If there are any questions, call him at 302.572.9778.

If there aren't enough people willing to commit for the two days and one night, the trip organizer will try to get the bus, show, and dinner on a one day trip. Later on in the fall he will schedule a one-day trip to Toby's Dinner Theater in Columbia to see *The Color Purple*. Oprah Winfrey starred in this show when it first came out. It was a big success on Broadway.

Charles Hudson, Trip Organizer

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community Service members have begun the delivery of new coats to the schools selected in its committee meeting. Several generous members brought coats to our general meeting in November, thus helping the project to get underway.

The committee will continue to accept new coats, monetary donations, and school supplies through January. We are looking for coats in sizes that fit children aged six to fourteen. If you have new coats to donate, please call a Community Service member if you need a pick up.

Alice Konze, a long-standing member of PGPSRA, who is now in her 91st year, donated \$300.00 to purchase new coats for our coat drive. We thank you, Ms. Konze, for your generous and continuing support of the children of Prince George's County Public Schools.

Courtney Pringle, Newsletter Writer

**STAY CONNECTED! Visit our Website at
www.pgpsra.org**

HEALTH INSURANCE COALITION

As many of you know, every 4 to 5 years the Health Insurance Coalition begins to look at different vendors (insurance companies) and their proposals for the different medical plans for employees and retirees of Prince George's County Public Schools.

Representatives for PGPCS Health Insurance Coalition have met three times in the past month to peruse and discuss our present Dental (Aetna) Plan. These discussions have included the following items: 1). comparing the PGPCS Dental Plan to those in surrounding VA, DC, and MD school districts; 2). reviewing the Proposed Summary of Dental Benefits by Aetna; and 3). options being offered beyond the diagnostic, preventive, and basic dental care that could be included for those who may want more coverage.

In addition, all vendors interested in presenting an insurance proposal for PGPCS have been provided extensive questionnaires to complete.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 301.868.6081.

Addie L. Martin, Benefit Liaison

A VOLUNTEER IS RECOGNIZED

Rose Miller, a resident of Fort Washington, MD, was one of forty nominees inducted into the 25th Annual Maryland Citizens Hall of Fame (MSCHF) for the year 2011. The ceremony and luncheon was held at Michael's Eighth Avenue in Glen Burnie, MD, on October 20, 2011.

Each year MSCHF recognizes persons who are at least 65 years of age who live in Maryland and have performed outstanding

service in their communities. Each honoree receives a membership certificate, a lapel pin, and a copy of the **Blue Book** with his/her bio and a picture. A copy of the **Blue Book** is kept in the archives at the Langsdale Library at the University of Baltimore,

Actually, Rose began her life as a retiree by devoting time to help middle school girls consider non-traditional careers in areas of math, science and technology. Furthermore, until recently she was involved in scheduling, ordering and distributing grade level approved books as a part of the RIF Nationwide Program. The initial program was at Glassmanor Elementary School. Today five schools are involved and books are given to students five times a year.

Since her retirement in 1998, Rose has served as president of five organizations and has tutored three adults who completed GED requirements. She still goes to play games at a nursing home in Clinton and chaperones school trips. On the international level, Rose has taken clothes for children and adults to Ghana, West Africa; and she participates in a group that visits and makes financial donations to Christianburg School in Johannesburg, South Africa. Efforts of the groups with which Rose works have resulted in the construction of a kindergarten/elementary school in Ghana, and a library - equipped with books - and a basketball court in Johannesburg.

Rose brings us beautiful words of wisdom and inspiration at each PGPSRA meeting, and we heartily congratulate her on her induction into the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame!

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE OF
ECHOES**

February 1, 2012

ahutchinson00@hotmail.com

BITS AND PIECES

Happy **January** birthday wishes to Ms. Anita Yates of Richmond, VA, who will be celebrating her 93rd birthday on the 9th.

Happy **February** birthday greetings to Mr. Philip Robinson of Mitchellville, MD, who will be marking his 97th birthday on the 6th; to Ms. Orine Cypert of Florence, Alabama, who will be celebrating her 95th birthday on the 13th; to Ms. Catherine Mitchell of Silver Spring, MD, who will be having her 94th birthday on Valentine's Day; and to Ms. Gwendolyn Sollers of Suitland, MD, who will be celebrating her 91st birthday on the 25th.

Katie McClellan of Adelphi retired after 42 years of teaching elementary school in the county. Since then, she has enjoyed travels to many Caribbean Islands, Africa, Canada and 40 of the United States. She often visits South Carolina with her family. Her hobbies include bowling, dancing, collecting postcards, reading, and playing cards. Much of Katie's time is spent each week at the Langley Park Senior Center, where she participates in the walking program and takes short trips. Katie finds every day fun!

Philip Baxter, who now lives in Lakeland, FL, retired in 1982, after having taught instrumental music at four elementary schools in the southern part of the county. Teaching was not his first career, though. He was an Episcopal minister in Bowie in the 1960's (when the first roads were being laid out on the Belair Estate). At that time his now deceased wife Alice was teaching elementary music in the county. The Baxters moved to Wisconsin, where Philip accepted a position but returned ten years later, and he began his teaching career. After the death of his wife in 1981, Philip obtained a Master's degree in counseling, moved to

Florida, worked at a social agency for three years, and served as assistant minister at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He has since married Dorothea, who recently retired from teaching violin. The Baxters' life evolves around music, as Philip is a member of the Lakeland Choral Society and Dorothea plays in the Imperial Symphony. They have attended three interesting musical workshops in London, England; Eisenstat, Austria; and Florence, Italy. Philip has two daughters, a son, and three step-daughters. He has fond memories of his years as a minister and teacher in Prince George's County.

Bonnie Maslanik of Bowie retired in 2010, after 33 years as an elementary music teacher in the county. She has been playing as a trombonist with the Washington Redskins Marching Band since 1978! As the fourth woman to join the all-volunteer band, she has seen ten coaches come and go. Bonnie is considered the "Helen Thomas of the Band", and was honored last season to receive a ring awarded to her for many service years by team owner, Daniel Snyder. One season when Bonnie's son Paul was in high school, he played as a drummer with the band. Needless to say, her family members are all avid Redskins fans. Since her retirement and knee surgery, Bonnie continues as an instrumentalist with the band, but no longer joins the marching formations. She also belongs to several local organizations and treasures the time she spends with her 15 grandchildren.

Gail Withuhn retired from the English Department of Laurel High School in 2005. In August 2010, she and her husband moved to Calaveras County, CA, where they have built a house on family property in the town of Burson. (Gail noted that Mark Twain made this area famous with his story "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras

County".) Gail enjoys landscaping, reading, singing in her church choir, writing poetry, and playing piano and flute. Recently she and her husband spent time visiting national parks in California and Nevada. The Withuhns have an adult son in Washington, DC, and another son and daughter-in-law in West Virginia.

Mary Ellen Gordon of Burtonsville, MD, retired as a Region V Instructional Specialist in 2004. She is a member of the Maryland Pastel society and the Senior Artists Alliance. She is currently President of the Maryland Art League. Her travels have taken her to Europe and Latin America. Mary Ellen has seven grandchildren.

Bob Kovalchik of College Park, MD, retired as a baseball coach from Parkdale High School in 1991. He began the next interesting phase of his life as a volunteer at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, in 1993; and this last fall he was commended for having conducted 1500 public tours! This milestone tour included adults from Australia, Holland, California, and Montana. Bob averages 100 tours annually. He occasionally conducts private tours, and some participants have been John Travolta, the King of Jordan, and the Defense Minister of Iraq. One of his most enjoyable tours is titled "African Americans in Aviation". It includes discussions of the Tuskegee Airmen, the 13 African American astronauts, and black women pilots of the 1930's and 40's. Some of his other tours include exhibits of Mars and other planets and weather satellites. Bob has served as a travel representative for student tours at the museum, and continues to be active in the fund raising organization of Field of Firsts. He piloted a CSN 152 plane for short distances for a number of years, but now settles for reading about aviation.

Gail Golden, who lives in Waldorf, MD, retired in 2010 as principal of Hyattsville middle School. Her interest in education continues, as she now does contract work as a consultant for D.C. public schools and a D.C. charter school. Gail also serves as a court appointed special advocate for foster children and volunteers with the American Red Cross and Heeding God's Call of Greater Washington (an advocacy group against gun violence). She has enjoyed stays at Sandbridge (near Virginia Beach) and visits with family in North Carolina, Georgia, and California.

Lillian Wiseman retired from Seabrook Elementary in 1989. She served for the next twenty years as a substitute teacher. Now she works with several organizations at her church, as well as transporting neighbors, friends and family members to various appointments, and having fun with the Red Hat Society. She also enjoys reading, doing crossword puzzles and visiting casinos. Lillian has sailed on a pleasant Caribbean cruise, attended her daughter's wedding in Jamaica, and traveled by automobile to California, Las Vegas, Texas, and Connecticut. She and her husband of 50 years (as of last May) live in Springdale, MD. They have one daughter; sadly their 44-year-old son passed away two years ago.

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

PRIZE WINNERS
November 16th Meeting

Grand Door Prize
Greta Garrett

Scholarship Raffle (50/50)
Pauline Woolfork

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

WE MISS YOU Soli Deo Gloria

I checked my renewal lists today
And discovered you had gone away.
It made me sad, despondent, too --
Frustrated about just what to do.
I think how much I miss your face
Your name, your gifts, your special place.
So please do reconsider now
Your absence from our ranks, and vow
To renew your membership, today
I don't want you to go away!

PGPSRA needs you!

We welcome new member:
Mrs. Sharon Tannenbaum

Lorraine Johnson, Membership Chair



NECROLOGY

Gladys Kraus	09 - 13 - 11
William Laslo	11 - 24 - 11
Ida Wilson Pinkney	11 - 23 - 11
Ruth Maxwell Scott	11 - 01 - 11
Goldie Estelle Smith-Watson	11 - 24 - 11
Ruth Daugherty Treanor	11 - 25 - 11

Jannie Goldston, Chairperson

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If the county public schools open on a delayed schedule, our meeting will be held.
If the county public schools are closed, the meeting will not be held.

PGPSRA MEETING/LUNCHEON

Date: January 18, 2012
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Place: PGCEA Center
Cost: \$11.00 (Box Lunch)

Our guest speakers will be Maryland State Treasurer Nancy Kopp and Lewis Robinson, Executive Director of PGCEA. The Community Service Committee will continue accepting school supplies and coats for children in need.

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 11, 2012.

LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM

Name: _____

Lunches Ordered: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Names of guests: _____

THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR

We must make a world
a place where
love dominates our hearts
nature sets the standard for beauty
simplicity and honesty are
the essence of our relationships
kindness guides our actions
and everyone respects one another

Susan Polis Schutz

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

Dr. Edward N. Vest
7908 Klovstad Drive
Fort Washington, MD 20744-1729

DATED MATERIAL

**PRESORTED STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT # 3070
WASHINGTON DC**



JANNETTE WUNDROW
1007 PACKTON LN
BOWIE MD 20716-1761

**MEMBERSHIP MEETING &
LUNCHEON**

January 18, 2012
PGCEA Center
11:00 a.m.

Reservations Due – January 11

HAPPY NEW YEAR