



# ECHOES

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

**Volume XXXXIII No. 4**

**March 2010**

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

I have great news! For those who don't already know, we have a website! The site is relatively new, and we still are adding to it and tweaking it ... we have much to learn about things... but it is there. We plan to link you to other sites that are important to us so that relevant information can be disseminated quickly. We also hope that the website will allow you to better communicate your concerns, questions, and thoughts to us.

Members can log on to our new website at [www.pgpsra.org](http://www.pgpsra.org). If you know people who might want to join PGPSRA, share this website with them. In the near future, membership information will be posted there, along with other articles related to the work of our association. Meanwhile, as soon as the link to MRSPA is operable, prospective members will be able to go there for membership sign-up information. Finally, if you have not yet submitted your e-mail address for the PGPSRA list serve, you are encouraged to do so. The PGPSRA website and the list serve are quick and easy methods of communication. Members are urged to take advantage of them.

The Maryland Legislature is in session. Recently, several of our members attended the rally sponsored by the United Seniors of Maryland in Annapolis to monitor legislation that impacts us as retirees. PGPSRA will go to Annapolis as a group on March 17, 2010, for that same purpose. It's not too late to sign up – even the day before. Just call

Jannette Wundrow and she will let you know how to join us. So far, things are looking about as good as possible under the circumstances, and we seem to be holding our own. Do let us know if you have issues that you are concerned about. You do want to check out the legislative information in ECHOES and the MRSPA newsletter. Another source of information is the United Seniors of Maryland website (<http://www.unitedseniors.net>). Our March meeting is at La Fontaine Bleu. We hope to see you there. We are always treated as special guests and usually have a great turnout. Let's do it again this year!

Wishing for spring! Bonnie Brose, President

### **FACTS ABOUT MARYLAND**

- There are now about 5 1/2 million Marylanders.
- Maryland is considered the wealthiest state in the nation.
- There are more people 65 years and older in the state than children in grades K - 12. Maryland's school system is ranked Number One in the country.
- Maryland has the highest number of college graduates in the workforce.
- Maryland's unemployment rate is currently at 7 1/2% --- below the national average of 10%.
- Johns Hopkins University is the largest employer in the state.
- Maryland is a 50/50 federal money matching state in Medicare and Medicaid.

For three years in a row, Maryland state employees have had no increase in pay and have been required to take three furlough days without pay.

# Echoes March 2010

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Maryland General Assembly convened on January 11, 2010, and will conclude on April 12, 2010. As you are aware, Maryland was facing a \$2 billion budget deficit as of January 1, 2010. The General Assembly is looking for ways to conquer this deficit, and consequently, we have been told by legislators that education and health care services for seniors are going to be hit with considerable reductions in their budgets. Senator Mike Miller was re-elected as President of the Senate for his 24th year of service in that office, and Delegate Michael Busch was re-elected Speaker of the House for his eighth year in that position.

500 members of the United Seniors of Maryland (USM), of which MRSPA is a member organization, met in Annapolis at St. John's College on January 19th, with Bonnie and Bill Brose, Alice Hutchinson, Charlene Jacob, and me in attendance. We heard from Governor Martin O'Malley, House Speaker Michael Busch, House Minority Leader Anthony O'Donnell, twelve of our Prince George's legislators, and Secretary of Aging Gloria Lawlah. All speakers noted the budget deficit and the necessity of a "level funded" state budget for the coming year. No bills will be considered that have a fiscal note. State agency budgets will receive no increase, and will be directed to reduce their costs. USM recognized Sue Ward of Prince George's County for her outstanding service to seniors over the years.

The Federal Consumer Price Index as reported on January 16, 2010, was .13 (less than 1%); therefore, there will be a 0% COLA increase for retirees of the Maryland State Retirement/Pension System (MSRPS) in July 2010. During this General Assembly session the Maryland Retired

School Personnel Association (MRSPA) will be advocating for (1) legislation that will be necessary to avoid a negative adjustment in retirement benefits for public school retirees who have retired since June 2008; (2) the maintenance of current retirement benefits to be administered and funded by the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System (MSRPS), rather than the local jurisdictions; (3) replacement of the Corridor funding method of MRSPA by the full Actuarial funding method. MRSPA is also concerned about the high costs of health care, prescription drugs, and utility use.

It is important to contact your legislators individually on specific issues by writing letters and/or e-mails, telephoning, and speaking in person. Let your voice be heard!

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

## JANUARY PRIZE WINNERS

*Grand Door Prize*

**Helen Greene**

*50/50 Scholarship Raffle*

**Mary Purnell**

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer's report for January 2010 is as follows:

|                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Opening Balance – January 1, 2010 |            |
| Checking Account                  | \$23838.74 |
| Savings Account                   | \$3016.68  |
| Checking Account:                 |            |
| Receipts                          | \$765.03   |
| Expenditures                      | \$2197.57  |
| New Total                         | \$22406.57 |
| Savings Account:                  |            |
| Receipts                          | \$ 1.14    |
| New Total                         | \$3017.82  |
| Total Assets – January 31, 2010   |            |
| Checking Account                  | \$22406.57 |
| Savings Account                   | \$3017.82  |
| Total Assets                      | \$25424.39 |

E. Vest, Treasurer

## REMEMBRANCE/NECROLOGY

Jack McDonald 12- 16 – 09

Bernard “Jack” Gordon 01- 01 – 10

Irvin R. Frazier 12 – 23 – 09

Jannie Goldston, Chair

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

In her poem “Grandmothers,” Maya Angelou explains, “When you learn, **teach**; when you get, **give**.” We of the Community Service Committee are working to improve the quality of life for children attending **Melwood** Elementary School, **G. James Gholson** Middle School, and **Douglass** High School. Children learn what they live, and by our lending of time, talent, and treasure, we are **teaching** the importance of **giving**. We expect that from this lesson, some of them will be inspired to **give by serving**.

Thanks to your generous contributions, for which we are most grateful, school supplies toiletries, and small articles of clothing were delivered to Melwood Elementary School and G. James Gholson Middle School following the January meeting.

During the remaining months of the school year, fresh food baskets will be distributed, new shoes purchased, and assistance with graduation and prom fees will be offered. In addition, we will lend support to a mentoring program for girls at **Flintstone** Elementary School.

Kudos to the following: Committee chairperson **Delores Brown** who has been nominated for the AARP Outstanding Community Service Award, which recognizes state volunteerism and civic engagement; and committee member **Lillie Artis** who was recognized last October by her alma mater, Saint Augustine College, for outstanding service to the school through the local alumni association. We continue on in service!

Gretel James, Newsletter Writer

## **MRSPA DUES INCREASE FOR 2010-11**

This article is to inform you of the impending raise in state dues from \$25 to \$35 beginning with the 2010-2011 membership year. The new dues amounts will go into effect on March 1, 2010, the date MRSPA begins accepting payments for the coming membership year (2010-2011).

The MRSPA Membership Recruitment Committee is offering a one-time \$5 dues reduction for the 2010-2011 membership year to all new members who authorize dues deduction. The amount offsets the \$35 dues and reduces it to \$30. Dues deduction members joining after January 1, 2010, will have their dues deducted in July 2010. They will also receive "bonus months" from January to July 2010.

Cash members who were dropped for non-payment of dues in November 2009 and have not rejoined MRSPA will receive a Former Member letter on February 1, 2010. It will encourage them to rejoin MRSPA and to choose the dues deduction option in order to avoid being cancelled in the future.

Cash members who join between January 1 and February 28 will be paying for the current membership year, July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010. Cash members who pay after March 1 will be paying for the 2010-2011 membership year. The MRSPA dues for 2010-2011 are \$35.00.

The benefit of signing up for dues deduction is that the member would receive the remainder of the 2009-2010 membership year free. They would have their annual dues deducted in July 2010 for the 2010-2011 membership year. They would also be eligible for the one-time \$5 reduction in state dues.

There are two words of **caution** about the dues reduction membership option. This option is available only if members are receiving a retirement check from the State of Maryland. Also, the member must have a social security number on file with a signed authorization form.

Lorraine Johnson, Membership Chair

## **A VISIT WITH DR. WILLIAM R. HITE, JR.**

On Wednesday, January 27, 2010, PGPSRA was privileged to have Dr. William R. Hite, Jr., Superintendent of Prince George's County Public Schools, as the guest speaker at our luncheon meeting. Dr. Hite shared with us facts, figures, and concerns about the state of our public school system and its retired teachers as well.

Dr. Hite stated that our benefits are safe and that he opposed any interference with the pension and health care benefits for current retirees. The retirement group found this to be a refreshing statement. Dr. Hite further stated that the school budget for 2010 – 2011 took a negative hit due to the Thornton Funding rate. As a result there must be some shifting of priorities. He stated that the high school graduation rate was 86% last year. However, he was concerned about the low minority male graduation rate and said that the school system is working to improve it.

Many association members found the superintendent sincere, informative, knowledgeable, and appreciative of those who paved the way for him in the system.  
**HATS OFF TO DR. HITE!**

Courtney Pringle, Corresponding Secretary

## TRAVEL UPDATE

A trip to Allenberry Playhouse in Boiling Springs, PA, has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 29, 2010.

The show is one that was requested at our last meeting. It is a mystery called *Murder on the Nile* by Agatha Christie. The cost of the trip will be \$100.00 person, which will cover all expenses including round-trip bus fare, bus driver tip, show admission, buffet lunch, taxes, and gratuities. A minimum of thirty people is required for the trip to proceed. We can take as many as forty-five persons.

Both the playhouse and the bus have to be paid in full thirty days ahead of time. Therefore, you must bring a check for \$100.00 to the March 24, 2010 meeting or mail me a check before that date. Checks should be made out to PGPSRA-Tours. If there are any questions, call me at 301.572.9778.

A second trip has been scheduled for Wednesday, June 9, 2010, to the Sight and Sound Theater in Strasburg, PA, to see the musical story of *Joseph*, based on the Bible. The show will start at 1:00 p.m., and we will go to Hershey Farms Restaurant for an Amish buffet dinner after the show. The cost of the show and dinner is \$85.00 per person. The cost of the bus and bus driver's tip is \$30.00, for a total cost of \$115.00 per person. Again, a total of at least thirty persons is required to get group rates and for the trip to go. The theater and the bus company have to be paid by May 14, 2010. More information will be provided at our meeting on March 24, 2010. It might help to bring a blank check with you to the meeting.

I can be reached at 301.572.9778 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and between 8:00 p.m. and midnight.

My address is Charles L. Hudson, Hunter Glen - Apt. 319, 3154 Gracefield Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

Charles Hudson, Travel Coordinator

## PROFESSIONAL LIAISON

By now, most employees have received their new Care First BC/BS id cards. Below is a list of common questions and answers. Please help in spreading the word that **benefits remain the same. Nothing has changed!**

1. *The new card indicates Preferred Provider Option (PPO). Do we still the HMO Plan?* Yes. Both cards indicated Preferred Provider Option; however, the placement of the wording differs on the new card. Again nothing has changed – our benefits remain the same.

2. *My new card indicates DR. NOT CHOSEN. However, I have a primary care physician's name. What should I do?* Contact customer service at 800.628.8549 and provide them with your primary care physician's name.

3. *I did not receive a new id card?* Contact the Benefits office at 301.952.6230.

4. *I received my new card; however my dependent(s) (i.e., spouse/child) did not receive a card. What should I do?* Contact the Benefits office at 301.952.6230.

5. *I'm enrolled in the family option, Out of Area Plan. I received cards for my dependents (i.e. spouse/child(ren)); however, they were not personalized identification cards. How do I obtain personalized identification cards with the dependents name on it?* Employees/retirees enrolled in the Out of Area Plan do not receive personalized cards for their dependents.

6. *My specialist (preferred provider) indicated I no longer require a referral in order to receive care. Is this true?* No. If you elect to seek services from a specialist (preferred provider, you have elected to use Option 2 (PPO). You will be subject to a co-pay and a deductible. If you continue to receive care from your PCP and obtain a referral, you have elected to remain in Option 1 (Blue Cross HMO). You will be subject to a co-pay and no deductible.

7. *Whom do I contact regarding questions and concerns?* Employees should contact the new customer service number 800.628.8549.

Addie Martin, Professional Liaison

## **BITS AND PIECES**

Happy **March** birthday wishes to Ethel Schafer of Waldorf, who will celebrate her 94th birthday on the 7th; to Pauline Banks of Alexandria, VA, who will be marking her 96th birthday on the 11th; to Catherine Donovan of Monroe, PA, who will be turning 98 on the 26th; and to Edna Dragoo of Silver Spring, who will be celebrating her 91st birthday this month.

Happy **April** birthday wishes to Evelyn Shank of Pompano Beach, FL, who will be celebrating her 103rd birthday on the 13th; and to Gordon Wilson of Ft. Meyers, FL, who will be 93 years old on the 24th.

Dorothy Campbell of Upper Marlboro retired as a business teacher from Fairmont Heights High School in 1995. She has continued her involvement in education by working part time as an Academic Advisor for Prince George's Community College at their Extension Center at Andrews Air Force Base.

Since retiring, Dorothy has traveled to Hawaii, several European countries, Russia, and Israel. In the fall, she completed building a log cabin in the mountains of her home state of North Carolina, where she and her family spent the Thanksgiving holidays together. Dorothy has one daughter and two grandsons.

Tom Antonielli, of Edgewater, MD, retired in 1997 from Parkdale High School. He continues as an adjunct faculty member of Strayer University, where he has taught for the last 43 years. His free time is spent reading, exercising, and vacationing frequently in Ocean City. Tom has two adult children and four grandsons.

Bette Deller, of Beltsville, retired from Bladensburg Elementary in 1999, then she became a realtor with Long and Foster Real Estate, Inc. Bette finds the schedule flexible, and the job offers some of the same satisfactions she enjoyed as a teacher. She mentors new realtors, has taken additional training courses, and uses the skills she learned in teaching to guide buyers and sellers through the real estate process. Bette remains active in church activities and enjoys monthly lunches with a group of retired teachers from one of the six schools where she taught. She has traveled to visit family in Virginia and upstate New York and to the ocean at various

times. A special trip was when her son and his wife took her to see the Broadway show *Curtains* and to have an exquisite (new decade celebration) birthday dinner at Maze by Gordon Ramsey at the London. Bette has one son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren, whom she enjoys visiting at least monthly.

Gwendolyn (Gwen) Cooley retired from Mary Harris "Mother" Jones Elementary in 2006, and her husband, Bob, retired the same year. The Cooleys live in Silver Spring. Since retirement, they have been playing golf together, have taken a two-week tour of Alaska, spent a week in Ireland, and enjoyed a two-week cruise of the Mediterranean. Gwen serves as President of Kappa Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International Society, teaches a Sunday school class, and is a member of the Christian Education Committee at her church. She also subs in the county once in a while to keep up with teaching, kids, and old friends. Gwen and Bob have a son and daughter-in-law who are expecting their first child in April and a daughter who is a nurse at Georgetown university Hospital and has been featured in recent TV commercials for the hospital.

Adrienne Cannon retired from Eleanor Roosevelt High School as an Italian teacher in 1996. She and her husband Bob live in Alexandria, VA. Since retiring, Adrienne has been a docent at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, and a member of the National Symphony Orchestra Women's Committee. She is very involved in music and has performed both in the Northern Virginia Community College Band of Alexandria and at the Kennedy Center, where she recently (Dec. 09) performed in a clarinet duet. In January, Adrienne traveled to Sarasota, FL, to play in the clarinet section of the Barnum and Bailey Circus Band – recording circus band classics and accompanying a performance of young circus acrobats. Last July, she traveled to Santa Fe, New Mexico, the oldest capital city in North America and rich in Native American art and culture, for the purpose of participating in the week-long Kammermusik Woodwind Workshop. After practicing with other musicians all week, she played the clarinet during the final chamber music concert. Adrienne and her husband drove through the 7500 foot high Sandia Mountain range on their way to Santa Fe, which was quite challenging as mountain drafts buffeted the car. The Cannons have one son, a daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren who live in New York City.

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

## PGPSRA LUNCHEON

**DATE:** March 24, 2010

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

**PLACE:** La Fontaine Bleu  
7963 Annapolis Road  
Lanham, MD 20706

**COST:** \$25.00

**NOTE:** *Our guest speaker will be Karen Straughn, Director of the Mediation Unit from the Office of the Attorney General.*

**TOPIC:** *Senior Scams*

Please mail the reservation form below and a check for the appropriate amount payable to PGPSRA by March 17th to:

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

### LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT *ECHOES***

**April 1, 2010**

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

## 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.