



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXIV No. 4

March 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TIME: Is time a concept, or a record of things that have occurred? Is time a target for some future activity or promise? Do we have time – too little or too much? Our answers to these questions may be different; however, time has one characteristic which is the same for all of us -- permanency. Whatever happens in any moment in time, once happened, cannot be changed. Will we use our available moments wisely?

I am writing this in late January and you'll get to read it in early March. What a difference a little passage of time can make! Tonight we're anticipating more freezing rain, some sleet, and perhaps more snow. Come March we'll be having a real sense of "cabin fever" wanting the warmth of spring to hurry up and get here. Through it all, moment by moment, time continues to pass. Will we feel the resurgence and life renewal that is represented in the blooming of spring's daffodils and jonquils? Will we enjoy the freshness of the air that accompanies a spring shower? Whatever we do and whatever happens, we can't push a "replay button" later to change what we did or didn't do.

SAVE THE DATE!
September 13 – 15, 2011
MRSPA 2011 Convention
Wisp Resort
McHenry, MD
www.wispresort.com

As of today, other representatives of PGPSRA and I have been to Annapolis a few times regarding the legislature's consideration of pension and health care changes that could have huge negative impacts on all of us retirees and those we hold so dear. By the time you read this, we will have been to Annapolis a few more times representing the interests of our retiree members. Also by the time you read this, there will be only a few weeks left in the legislative session and the pension and health insurance issues will have been decided. When the legislative session adjourns, will you have invested some of your time on the issue? The day after the legislature adjourns will be too late. The opportunity of time will have passed.

Knowing that real friends are something we can never have too many of, who were your close friends when you worked at each school or office during your career in PGPSRA? Are there former colleagues in your previous work sites whom you haven't spoken to in a long time? Perhaps today is a good day to pick up the phone and call someone. Each day that passes is a friendship opportunity that, once passed, is forever gone. Believe it or not, time is of the essence; our time will eventually run out.

I wish much peace, health, and happiness for each of you.

Carl Lancaster, President

Our next membership meeting will be held at PGCEA, 8008 Marlboro Pike, Forestville, MD, on March 23rd at 11:00. The program will be on the topic of “eldercare” and the speakers will be from the Maryland Department of Aging. There is much about this topic that all of us need to know, and I hope you will plan to attend. If you have a friend (regardless of membership status) whocould benefit from learning some very valuable information, bring him or her along –simply make a lunch reservation for both of you. Information on the meeting and luncheon reservations is elsewhere in *ECHOES*.

Carl Lancaster, President

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Our annual PGPSRA **Legislative Day in Annapolis is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, 2011**. 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 in Forestville 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. You will be representing your co-retirees.

*** Call me for reservations: 301.390.7324

The Maryland General Assembly convened on January 12th and will conclude on April 11th. As you may remember, Maryland was facing a \$1.6 billion budget deficit as of January 1, 2011. The General Assembly has been looking for ways to conquer this deficit. Tax increases on alcohol and gasoline are among other proposals.

The Pension Sustainability Committee met during the fall and made suggestions as to where cuts could be made to help Maryland operate within a balanced budget in the coming year. Fortunately, one of the recommendations, freezing future COLA increases, has been taken off the table. However, the suggestion to shift part of the funding of the pension costs to the local jurisdictions looms large. There have been several suggestions made for active and newly hired teachers in order to keep their current retirement benefits. All involve added payroll contributions and years of service. The Maryland State Retirement Agency reported a superb 18-month investment performance from July 1, 2008, through December 31, 2010, raising the assets of the system to \$36 billion --- an increase of more than \$4 billion. These positive changes will not be reflected in our state’s economy, though, before 2012 – 13. In order to have our retirement system properly funded, the General Assembly needs to consider the Board of Trustees’ request to begin pulling out of the Corridor Funding method and revert to the Actuarial method of funding.

Good news, the end of year Consumer Price Index (CPI) determines the annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) for us. A report out on January 14th noted that the 2010 CPI was at 1.5%. Our July retirement/pension checks will show a COLA of 1.284%, following the deduction of last year’s COLA, when the CPI dipped below one percent to .356%.

It is important to contact your legislators individually on the shifting of funding to the counties issue by writing letters, and/or e-mails, telephoning, and speaking in person. Let your voice be heard! As we go to press, members of PGPSRA plan to join me at the Miller Senate Building in Annapolis on February 16th, to go to all of our Prince George’s legislators’ offices, to let them know we are retired school employees who strongly object to shifting any portion of the funding of our retirement/pension system to the county. Less county funds could adversely affect our health care benefits. On January 19th, President Carl Lancaster and I visited the thirty-two Prince George’s legislators’ offices and left a letter telling of our concerns. We were well received.

Unfortunately, the United Seniors of Maryland Rally, planned for January 25, had to be changed to March 9, 2011. Please contact me for a ticket if you plan to attend this informative event.

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Chair

TREASURER’S REPORT

Beginning Balance as of January 1, 2011

Checking Account:	\$26860.64
Savings Account:	\$3019.70

Activity -- Checking Account

Receipts:	\$1023.15
Expenditures:	\$2266.91

Activity -- Savings Account

Interest:	\$0.38
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Balances as of January 31, 2011

Checking Account:	\$25616.88
Savings Account:	\$3020.08
Total Assets:	\$28636.95

E. Vest, Treasurer

TRAVEL UPDATE

The cancellation of our January membership meeting necessitated canceling the day trip scheduled for early March. However, since ice and snow will not last forever, I will bring plans to the March meeting for a day trip in April. I invite all of you to join us. It will be a wonderful change of pace after a long difficult winter.

Charles Hudson, Travel Coordinator

PROPOSED OFFICERS FOR PGPSRA 2010 – 2011

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Be it a person, place or thing, that which usually fades from one's immediate view fades from the mind as well; thus the phrase "**out of sight, out of mind**". This certainly does not hold true with **Mrs. Alice Koonze**. You see, Mrs. Koonze is among the most elderly of retirees residing in the local area.

Though unable to attend meetings, she keeps informed of the activities of the association through **ECHOES**. Immediately after the announcement of the coat drive sponsored by the Community Service Committee, Ed Vest received a check from her on January 3, 2011, in the amount of \$200.00 for the purchase of coats. We are most grateful to Mrs. Koonze for this generous donation. Unfortunately, execution of the project has been delayed because of weather conditions. However, we will inform the membership as to when the project is expected to be completed. As of this writing, we have received \$485.00 in contributions, and we thank all who contributed. Contributions will be accepted up until the day of the March 23rd membership meeting.

We continue to deliver Share Baskets to children and families of Concord Elementary, Suitland Elementary, and Drew Freeman Middle School. Students at the elementary schools will be given the opportunity to shop for shoes in April.

Gretel T. James, Newsletter Writer

The nominating committee presents the following:

Treasurer – Dr. Ed Vest

Secretary – Joann Sloan

Corresponding Secretary – Courtney Pringle

The committee will entertain nominations from the floor.

Also, the office of president-elect is open. Nominations from the floor will be requested at the March meeting. Please consider this office – or any other office – for yourself or for a friend or colleague who wants to help the organization. PGPSRA is an important factor in maintaining your retirement benefits. It does not run without the contributions of its members.

Bonnie Brose, Nominations Chair

WELCOME

TO THE FOLLOWING

NEW PGPSRA MEMBERS:

Mrs. Patricia Alsop

Mrs. Gwendolyn W. Jefferson

CONSUMER EDUCATION

Useful Web Sites:

www.citrify.com – This site allows you to touch up photos – whiten teeth, and remove wrinkles, red eyes and blemishes.

www.CharityNavigator.org – This site lets you look up ratings on efficiency, administrative expenses, and other criteria for more than 5500 charities.

www.IFixIt.com – This site will help you repair many devices such as cameras, iPods, washing machines, etc.

From Consumer Connection (MRSPA)

Watch out for this scam!

One of our members called in to report a scam pulled on her father and some of his neighbors. A gentleman in a uniform and hard hat, holding a clipboard, knocks on the door and says there is a gas leak or other utility problem in the neighborhood, and he needs to check your basement or utility room. While you are taking him there to examine the area and receiving the good news that everything is fine, an accomplice has come in through the now unlocked door and scanned your home for cash, wallets, or purses left out, along with any jewelry or small electronic items that can be quickly filched. They are long gone before you even know you've been burgled. Don't fall for this. Always ask to see an ID card, and examine it carefully. Telephone the utility in question if you have any doubts.

This was one we hadn't heard before. If you can warn us of any new scams going around, please send us a message at sissonsan@yahoo.com.

John Sisson, Chair

BITS AND PIECES

Happy **March** birthday wishes to several of our Emeritus Members: Mrs. Edna Dragoo of Silver Spring, MD, who will be having her 92nd birthday on the 1st; Mrs. Ethel Schafer of Waldorf, MD, who will be celebrating her 95th birthday on the 7th; and Mrs. Pauline Storey Banks of Alexandria, VA, who is turning 97 years old on the 11th.

Happy **April** birthday wishes to Mrs. Evelyn Shank of Pompano Beach, FL, who will be celebrating her 104th birthday on the 19th; and to Mr. Gordon Wilson of Ft. Meyers, FL, who is turning 94 years old on the 24th.

Maureen Fitzpatrick of Silver Spring, MD, retired from Martin Luther King Middle School in June 2009. She has continued her association with MLK Middle School by volunteering and substituting about two days a week. Maureen and her husband are avid ballroom dancers. They also like sailing and have been on cruises to Alaska, Florida, California, Seattle, Vancouver, Mexico and through the Panama Canal. They've visited Brussels and Amsterdam and admired the windmills and tulips. Maureen enjoys getting together with former colleagues for social occasions. The Fitzpatrick's have one 17 month-old grandson, whom they love to babysit.

Joyce Flora retired from Kenmore Middle School in 1997, having also taught at Valley View and Capitol Heights Elementary Schools. She moved to Milton, Delaware, in 2002 and married Robert (Jake) Jacoby in 2003. Joyce enjoys painting pastels and is the president of the Millsboro Art League. She is also interested in antiques and participates in a booth at the Heritage Antique Market in Lewes, DE. She also plays in four Bridge groups. Her recent travels have taken her to Atlanta, Cincinnati,

BITS AND PIECES (Con't.)

and Nashville. Joyce has a married daughter and two granddaughters who live in Atlanta and a son who lives who lives in Oswego, New York.

Jeannette Yates retired from Lamont Elementary in 1985. She lives in Annapolis most of the year and volunteers for the Annapolis Historical Society. A wise lady, Jeannette spends her winters in the warm sunshine of Fort Lauderdale, FL, where she enjoys golf and shuffleboard. She loves to dance and has taught line dancing for thirteen years in Florida and in Annapolis. Travel is another of Jeannette's pleasures. Her latest trip was a riverboat cruise from Amsterdam to Budapest. She has also cruised the Mediterranean and around Cape Horn in South America. Other trips have taken her to Rome, Barcelona, and Tunisia. Jeannette loves to read, and when she attended the International Book Festival in 2010, she was able to see and get an autograph from Ken Follett, one of her favorite authors. Jeannette has a son, Steven, and a daughter, Margie.

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



NECROLOGY

James W. Buffington	12 – 20 – 10
W. Doris Chambers	12 – 06 – 10
Catherine Donovan	12 – 12 – 10
H. Jo Fisher	10 – 24 – 10
Mary Lancaster	01 – 23 – 11
Margaret Walder	01 – 20 – 11
Mary Zimmerman	01 – 19 – 11

Phyllis Rice

Jannie Goldston, Chair

OH, YES WE CAN

By Rachel Phillips

In the hour of adversity, let us not be without hope. Riches are not from an abundance of worldly goods, but from a contented mind. Smart people believe only half of what they hear; smarter people know which half to believe.

We can change our little corner of the world.
OH, YES WE CAN!

No matter what may be your lot in life, build something on it. The more that is left to chance, the less chance there is for success. True clarity sees the need, not the cause.

We will change our little corner of the world.
OH, YES WE CAN!

I find the great thing in the world is not so much where we stand as it is in what direction we are moving, thinking, progressing from one place to another. Worry remains static; the role in life is to change worry into thinking and anxiety into positive action.

We can change our world. OH, YES WE CAN!

People who wear smiles have friends; people who wear frowns have wrinkles. A good thing is to remember, a better thing is to do; work with a construction gang, not with a wrecking crew. Common sense is an uncommon degree in what the world calls wisdom.

We can right many wrongs. OH, YES WE CAN!

Doing nothing is very hard to do because you never know when you're done. Ability is what you're capable of doing, motivation determines what you do, attitude determines how well you do it. The reason history repeats itself is that most people weren't listening the first time.

We will make it if we try. OH, YES WE CAN!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday March 2, 2011
PGPSRA Executive Board Meeting
PGCEA Center

Wednesday, March 9, 2011 United
Seniors of Maryland Rally
Annapolis

Wednesday, March 16, 2011
PGPSRA Annual Legislative Day
(Bus Trip)
Annapolis

Wednesday, March 23, 2011
General Membership Meeting
PGCEA Center

Wednesday May 4, 2011 PGPSRA
Executive Board Meeting PGCEA
Center

Wednesday, May 25, 2011 General
Membership Meeting La Fontaine
Bleu

Wednesday, June 8, 2011
Transition Meeting PGCEA Center

SAVE THE DATE!
September 13 – 15, 2011
MRSPA 2011 Convention
Wisp Resort
McHenry, MD

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 as scheduled.



PGPSRA MEETING/LUNCHEON

Date: March 23, 2011
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Place: PGCEA Center
Cost: \$11.00 (Box Lunch)

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 March 16, 2011.

LUNCHEON NOTICE FROM DR. VEST

Members who had paid for box lunches for the canceled January 26th meeting will have their payment carried over to the membership meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 23, 2011, at PGCEA. In order to prevent his writing numerous \$11.00 checks, if you are unable to attend the March 23rd meeting, the \$11.00 will be donated, in your name, to the Scholarship Fund. Of course, if you desire a refund, let Dr. Vest know and he will see that you get it.

LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM MARCH 23, 2011

Name: _____

Lunches Ordered: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Names of Guests: _____

COLLECTION OF COATS & SCHOOL SUPPLIES IS EXTENDED

Since the January meeting had to be canceled, the Community Service Committee is still asking members to bring their donations of new coats, school supplies, and toiletries to the general membership meeting on Wednesday, March 23, 2011. Monetary contributions are appreciated as well.

Thank you for all you do to help and encourage some of our most vulnerable students.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ECHOES
April 1, 2011 ahutchinson00@hotmail.com