



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXXV No. 4

March 2012

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

You may recall that in the January *ECHOES* I discussed the myriad activities occurring within the PGPSRA. Let me assure you that PGPSRA's activity level has not lessened in the least. The Community Service Committee continues to work to assist children in several schools with certain articles of clothing and with school supplies. The Scholarship Committee recently has contacted and delivered information about PGPSRA's Scholarship Program to the guidance office in all of our high schools. If I recall correctly, there will be at least six scholarships of \$2,000 each awarded later this spring. If you have not yet contributed to the Scholarship Fund, it is not too late. Simply make out a check made payable to PGPSRA with the notation at the bottom that it is for the Scholarship Fund and send it to our Treasurer, Dr. Edward N. Vest, 7908 Klovstad Drive, Fort Washington, MD 20744-1729. You will receive a receipt for your charitable contribution.

Maryland State Treasurer Nancy Kopp was one of our guest speakers at the January 18th General Membership Meeting. She addressed many topics from her perspective

I also call to your attention an article in the Tuesday, January 31 issue of *The Washington Post*, "O'Malley Proposes Gas Tax Increase."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/omalley-proposes-6percent-sales-tax-on-gas/2012/01/30/gIQAiaUrdQstory.html>. This article deals with the governor's announcement that he is going to ask the legislature to approve an "unprecedented tax increase on gasoline," a 6 percent sales tax on every gallon of gasoline sold in Maryland. At current prices, approximately \$3.45 per gallon, that would add some \$.20 - \$.21 to the price of every gallon purchased.

All of these initiatives, if enacted, will have deep and LONG LASTING impact on both active and retired educators. If you're not up-to-date on what's happening, read the newspapers daily, come to our meetings or simply pick up the phone or drop us a line.

On Monday, January 16, Jannette Wundrow, Sue Finan and I visited the legislative offices of all Prince George's County legislators and also met with the House Delegation Chairwoman, Melony Griffith. In previous sessions our county's House delegation has stood firm in opposition to Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller's efforts to shift one-half of the state's contribution for teacher pensions onto the counties. Jannette, Sue and I are hopeful that under Delegate Griffith's leadership, our delegation will continue to protect the counties from being burdened with what rightly always has been the state's responsibility.

as Treasurer, a former member of the House of Delegates for twenty-nine years, Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees for Maryland's Retirement and Pension Systems and as Chairwoman of the Maryland College Savings Plan. She very graciously spent an hour with us and everyone was impressed by her calm, gracious manner and her willingness to take questions from the attendees.

Lew Robinson, the Executive Director of PGCEA was our second speaker on January 18. On October 20th, 2011, Lew was a recipient of a Civic Leadership Award by the Community Foundation of Prince George's County – one of only three awards presented last year. Last June 30th, Lew completed twenty years as the Executive Director of PGCEA. In addition, Lew serves on the Maryland College Savings Plan Board of Directors with Treasurer Kopp. It was an honor to be able to recognize his many contributions to our school system and all of its employees and to have Treasurer Kopp share in the moment.

On a more state-wide basis, I refer each of you to an article in the Sunday, January 29 issue of *The Washington Post*, "Maryland Governor's Agenda Faces Challenges, Poll Shows." http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/maryland-governors-agenda-faces-challenges-poll-shows/2012/01/27/gIQA13W3YQ_story.html. The article details the challenges he faces on a number of key budget and tax proposals in this year's legislative session. There are numerous issues on the governor's very large plate: same-sex marriage, broad-based tax increases, doubling the charges for the so-called "flush tax"; a plan ultimately to shift half of the state's contributions for teacher pensions onto the local counties, a plan to initiate an offshore wind-power industry in Maryland, and last but by no means least, his plan to increase the state's tax on gasoline.



On Friday, January 27, Jannette Wundrow and I attended the weekly Prince George's House Delegation meeting in Annapolis and had a chance to speak very briefly with a number of our delegates before the meeting began. As it turned out, Dr. William Hite, Superintendent of Schools for PGCPSS presented his status report on the school system. He addressed the financial challenges that confront our school system and efforts being made by the County Executive, members of the County Council and state legislators to do what they can to improve the funding and to oppose placing the responsibility for teacher pensions on the counties. Dr. Hite addressed the status of numerous initiatives being implemented to improve education for all the children. Previously, you may recall my describing the new Health Services program that began at the Prince George's Community College last fall with an enrollment of 100 ninth graders. Dr. Hite reported to the House Delegation that 50% of the 100 ninth graders came from homes below the poverty line and that at the end of the first semester no student had dropped out of the program, the 100 students had an overall GPA of 3.78 and there is a waiting list of more than 4,000 students wanting to get in to this coming fall's second class of ninth graders. Dr. Hite's presentation was extremely positive and I cannot tell you how impressed I am with his leadership skills and the positive image he projects. He seems always to have a calm, quiet command of the situation at-hand and I believe we are very fortunate to have Dr. Hite as our Superintendent!

Ms. Joy Hatchette, Associate Commissioner of the Maryland State Insurance Administration will be our guest speaker at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 28, at PGCEA in Forestville. Ms. Hatchette spoke at the MRSPA Convention this past September and numerous PGPSRA members who heard her presentation gave her rave reviews. I urge you to join us. I'm sure her remarks will be more than worthwhile.

Peace, health and happiness to each of you!
Carl Lancaster, President

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Maryland General Assembly has been in session since January 11, 2012. Governor O'Malley has stated that his areas of concentration during this session will be education and transportation. His proposed budget includes many tax increases, along with some shifting of the pension funding to local jurisdictions. MRSPA's Legislative Committee plans to meet with the governor to discuss the likely consequences the pension shifting action could have on our county retirees and their health benefits. The budget will not be finalized until April 3, 2012.

It is important that we continue to ask our legislators NOT to shift the pension funding to the counties, and NOT to reduce the COLA formula for retirees, and to return the Maryland State Pension System from the Corridor Funding to the Full Actuarial Funding Method. President Carl Lancaster, Sue Finan, and I went to Annapolis on January 16, 2012, to hand-deliver letters with the above message to each of our Prince George's legislators. We also met with Delegate Melony Griffith, Chair of the Special Joint Committee on Pensions. Each Friday morning I, and often Carl Lancaster, attend the Prince George's Legislative Caucus to hear of specific plans for legislation within the county.

The United Seniors of Maryland (USM) held their Legislative Forum Day on January 24, 2012, at St. Johns College in Annapolis. We heard speakers Senator Minority Whip E. J. Pipkin, House Speaker Micheal Busch, House Minority Leader Anthony McDonnell, and Secretary of Aging Gloria Lawlah. Everyone spoke of Governor O'Malley's proposed budget cuts and added taxes. During a one-hour segment of the meeting, attendees from each county represented met with their local legislators to discuss current issues before the General Assembly. Our Prince George's legislators voiced their support of NOT shifting the pension funding to the local jurisdictions. Attending from PGPSRA were Bonnie Brose, Sue Finan, Oliver Myers, and myself.

Our annual PGPSRA Legislative Day in Annapolis will be March 14, 2012, sponsored by Delegate James Proctor of the 27th District. 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 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 (301.390.7324)

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

A special thank-you goes to Judith Naugle who donated gifts for the door prizes for our January 25th meeting. Door prize winners were Serena Gregg, Dorothy Caster, Carolyn Sullivan, Leah Fowble, and Claudia Farrell. The twenty dollar door prize winner was M. Rowena Jackson, and Delores Brown won the 50/50 scholarship raffle.

Congratulations to all!

Lorraine Johnson, Membership Chair

**Put the word out:
New Members Are Wanted!**

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of January 31, 2012

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Opening Balances: | |
| Checking Account | \$23957.93 |
| Savings Account | \$3021.21 |

| | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Activity -- Checking Account | |
| Receipts | \$732.08 |
| Expenditures | \$668.34 |

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Activity -- Savings Account: | |
| Interest | \$0.38 |

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Closing Balances: | |
| Checking Account | \$24021.67 |
| Savings Account | \$3021.59 |
| Total Assets | \$27043.26 |

E. Vest, Treasurer

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TRAVEL UPDATE

Great News! The trip to see *Jonah and the Whale* at the Sight and Sound Theater in Strasburg, Pennsylvania, on March 21, 2012, is a sell-out. We anticipate a wonderful day of entertainment and fellowship.

The next trip will be in the fall to see *The Color Purple* at Toby's Dinner Theater in Columbia. Plan to join us.

Charles Hudson, Trip Organizer

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community Service members are grateful for the contributions of supplies and coats received from PGPSRA members through the month of January. It is gratifying to be part of such a caring body of people. The supplies and coats have been distributed to our designated schools: Glass Manor Elementary, Oxon Hill Elementary, and Oxon Hill Middle.

The Community Service Committee is now turning its attention to the second part of its agenda which is to complete the Elementary School Shoe Drive and to provide assistance to selected high school students who are scheduled to graduate in May.

The activities cited above are being carried out by dedicated Community Service members: Delores Brown, Ethel Brown, Charline Jacob, Gretel James, Mary Pannell, Margaret Morgan, Courtney Pringle, Stanley Tweedy, Jennie Thomas, and Claudia Farrell (the newest member of our group).

Thank you, members of PGPSRA, for your continued contributions and support of the children of Prince George's County Public Schools through your monetary contributions, supplies, and encouragement rendered to the Community Service Committee.

Courtney Pringle, Newsletter Writer

REMEMBRANCE / NECROLOGY

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Richard Green | 12-19-11 |
| M. Eleanor Hall | 11-26-11 |
| Jay A. Lane | 07-17-11 |

Jannie Goldsoton, Chairperson

CONSUMER CONNECTION

Do you know?

Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) recently announced it has added an emergency contact option to Maryland driver's licenses. Maryland drivers can now add up to three emergency contacts to their driver's license so police will know whom to call if an accident occurs. The emergency contact information is stored electronically on an individual's driver's license and will be available only to authorized personnel.

You can go to the MVA's website at www.mva.maryland.gov and add three emergency contacts in just a few minutes. You will need to have your driver's license number. Go to the website, on the right find "Do it Online" and there you will see the choice and click "Emergency Contacts" and in the next menu again click on "Emergency Contacts" to add your emergency contacts. The entire process takes less than ten minutes.

THINGS WORTH REMEMBERING:

The value of time,
The success of perseverance,
The dignity of simplicity,
The worth of character,
The virtue of patience,
The wisdom of economy,
The power of kindness.

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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 93rd birthday on the 1st; Mrs. Ethel Schafer of Waldorf, MD, who will be celebrating her 96th birthday on the 7th; and Mrs. Pauline Storey Banks of Alexandria, VA, who is turning 98 years old on the 11th.

Happy April birthday greetings to Mrs. Evelyn Shank of Pompano Beach, FL, who will be celebrating her 105th birthday on the 19th; and to Mr. Gordon Wilson of Ft. Meyers, FL, who is turning 95 years old on the 24th.

Jewell Greer retired from Hyattsville Junior High School in 1972 and has since relocated to El Paso, Texas. She enjoys traveling and reading, but also fills her time with many volunteer activities. Jewell serves on the boards of several organizations. Among them are the Mayor's Council on Aging, Meals on Wheels, the YWCA's Racial Justice Committee and their Transitional Living Center (providing shelter and training for women and children who need a safe place to live temporarily). She recently received the Shirley and Charles Leavell Award from the El Paso Chapter of the YMCA for her years of dedicated volunteerism and support of the YWCA mission. She is also active in the Retired Officers Club, Links, Inc., and the graduate chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc., her college sorority. Jewell and her husband have enjoyed many short trips to Albuquerque and Tucson and have sailed on several cruises. They plan to celebrate their 64th wedding anniversary in May in Rogers, Arkansas, with army friends with whom they served in Germany in 1953. The Greers have three adult children, four grandchildren, and three great granddaughters.

Carroll Thorne of Waldorf, MD, retired in 2004 from the Board of Education Office of Human Resources and Benefits. Since retiring, she has enjoyed having lunch once a week with friends. She also likes doing cross-stitching and crocheting. Carroll travels as often as possible to Suffolk, VA, to visit her mother who celebrated her 90th birthday with a family party last December. Whenever they can coordinate travels, Carroll, her mother, and three sisters like to meet at Dover Downs, DE, for a day of fun. Carroll and her husband enjoy going to Myrtle Beach, SC, to relax at the ocean. The Thornes will celebrate their 28th wedding anniversary in June. Carroll has a son and a daughter and two step-sons. Together she and her husband have ten grandchildren, with a new grandson due in March.

Betty Green of Upper Marlboro, retired from Morningside Elementary in 1986. As a music teacher, she taught in 19 different schools with 21 different principals over a 34 year period! Currently she is involved as a volunteer at her church and within her community. Betty has been a very active traveler; she's been to 49 states and has taken several cruises to Alaska and the Caribbean.

Serena Gregg of Gambrills, MD, retired from Phyllis E. Williams Elementary in 1993. She spends most of her time now writing and performing monologues on "Women of the Bible" (over 20 to date) in area churches, nursing homes, and at places where special events are being held. She has made a CD entitled "Women of the Bible Monologues". Serena serves as a lay speaker for her church. She also enjoys traveling, has toured Europe and sailed on a cruise to Hawaii with MRSPA, taken a cruise to Bermuda with the Bowie Alumni Class of '58, sailed with friends to Alaska, and traveled with friends and relatives to the Holy Land in Orlando. Serena is a widow who greatly enjoys the company of her family.

Adrienne Cannon of Alexandria, a former Italian and Spanish teacher at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, was featured in a WASHINGTON POST article, with a photo, the first week in January. Since retiring, Adrienne has become an accomplished clarinet player. The newspaper article was an essay by Adrienne relating her experience this past summer when she played with the Orchestra of the Rockies in Fort Collins, CO. She travels to Sarasota, FL, each winter to play with the Barnum & Bailey Circus Band. She and her husband Joel are frequent volunteers at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D. C.

Ernestine Gray retired in 1991 as a guidance counselor from Kettering Middle School. In the same year she received her Ph.D. in Christian Education, and returned to her love of missions, traveling to Russia, Israel, Egypt, Nigeria, and Guatemala. Her mission work has taken her to six continents. In 1992 Ernestine was ordained by the International Gospel Assemblies, headquartered in Missouri. She authored "God is Love" in 1997, and has been featured on YouTube, African Vision Network, and Women in Ministry. She has served as a volunteer clinical pastoral counselor at St. Elizabeth's Hospital and a volunteer in the Pediatric Department of Occupation at Greater Southeast Hospital. Ernestine became a Board Certified Christian Counselor in 2007. She is presently on the teaching staff with children at From The Heart Church Ministries in Clinton, serves as a church intercessor, and enjoys the Senior Ministry. Both Ernestine and her husband Charles are on the pastoral staff at Hadley hospital in Washington, DC. The Grays live in Temple Hills. They celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary in June 2011. Ernestine and Charles have three grandchildren and three adult sons, one of whom is a school counselor in the Prince George's County Public Schools.

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

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NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Nominations for officers of PGPSRA (2012 – 2013) are as follows:

Recording Secretary: Joann Sloan

Treasurer: Dr. Ed Vest

Corresponding Secretary: Courtney Pringle

Elections will be held at our general meeting in March. Induction of officers will occur at the general meeting in May.

Bonnie Brose, Chairperson

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 7, 2012
Executive Board Meeting

March 14, 2012
Legislative Day in Annapolis

March 21, 2012
Theater trip to Strasburg, PA

March 28, 2012
General Membership Meeting/Election

April 1, 2012
Deadline for *Echoes*

REMINDER: Stay connected! To receive information between issues of *Echoes*, contact Dr. Vest to add your email address to the PGPSRA listserve.

OFFICERS FOR 2012-2013

Elected for another term of office at the March General Meeting of PGCSRA were: **Treasurer** – Dr. Edward Vest; **Recording Secretary** – Joann Sloan; **Corresponding Secretary** – Courtney Pringle. Plan to be at the May meeting to see them inducted and to wish them well.

TREASURER'S REPORT March 2012

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Beginning Balances | |
| Checking Account | \$23555.72 |
| Savings Account | 3021.59 |
| Activity – Checking Account | |
| Receipts | 540.45 |
| Expenditures | 4078.94 |
| No Activity in Savings Account | |
| Total Assets as of March 31 | |
| Checking Account | 20017.23 |
| Savings Account | 3021.59 |
| Total Assets | \$23038.82 |

E. Vest, Treasurer

BENEFITS REPORT

At this time, no changes have been made regarding our medical, dental, vision and prescriptions benefits. The Prince George's County Board of Education has hired

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

PGPSRA was pleased to welcome three new members at the March 28th meeting. They were Lauvinia M. Alston, Marlene Pickles, and Lois Anne Williams. We look forward to their continued presence at our meetings and for their participation in the various activities we sponsor. Door prize winners were Mary Isbell, Charlene Jacob, Marlene Pickles, and Lillie James. The Grand Prize winner was Mildred Mitchell. The 50/50 Scholarship Raffle was won by Eleanor Ford.

New members bring new energy and new ideas. Continue to encourage your former colleagues to join us.

Lorraine Johnson, Membership Chair

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



AON, a consulting firm, to review and compile the data from sixteen vendors who responded to the county's RFP (Request for Proposals) Forms.

The Respondents were:

- Medical – Carefirst, Aetna, Cigna, Unitedcare
- Dental – Dominion Dental, Aetna, Cigna, Carefirst, United Concordia, United Healthcare, DeltaDental, DentalQuest
- Vision – Eyemed, Superior, Carefirst, United Healthcare, VSP, Cigna
- Prescription – Aetna, OptumRX, Carefirst, CatalystRx, Medco, Caremark, Express Scripts, Cigna

Once AON completes its review, the Coalition (of which I am a member), the Benefits Office and the Budget Department at the Board will review and rate the vendors. If any changes are made, they will be effective October 1, 2012, with the new contract.

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

Addie Martin, Benefits Liaison