



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXX No. 5

May 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Before It is Too Late

If you have a tender message or a loving word
to say

Do not wait till you forget it

But whisper it today

The tender word unspoken

The letter never sent

The long-forgotten message

The wealth of love unspent

For those some hearts are breaking

For these some loved ones wait

So show them that you care for them

Before it is too late.

I found this tender poem in one of the bulletins I read, and thought it so to the point I wanted to share it with you. What a year! It passed so fast. The officers and Board members have been such a help to me and our organization.

I hope you were pleased with our programs. It took three years to get the group Colors to perform, and it was definitely worth the wait. They were outstanding. Our speaker Joan Chaconas was also one of the highlights of the year. Joan covered John Wilkes Booth and Mary Surratt and their collaboration before and after the Civil War.

We again were privileged to enjoy food and music at Collington. Becky Dukes, another wonderful performer we were able to enjoy, is

an accomplished musician. Thank you, Bonnie, for arranging for her to perform for us.

The historians have all been busy cleaning the files. The Community Service Committee has collected coats and food to be distributed to two elementary schools. Hats off to them!

AARP is working at a school chosen by us to recognize "Excellence in Teachers" through posters created by students. Deerfield Run Elementary was chosen to implement the program.

This is the last year our June Readern will make lunches at the September and January meetings; she is retiring. What a job she has done! We will miss her behind the scenes. Having earned a well deserved rest, she just wants to be one of the group. Thank you, June, from all of us.

See you all in May at Prince George's Community College.

Sincerely,
Kitty Walker

PGPSRA LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The annual PGPSRA Legislative Day was held on March 21, 2007. Those who attended felt the day was interesting and informative. Thanks, again, to Delegate James Proctor, Jr. (District 27) for making this day possible for us.

Legislative Report (cont.)

The MRSPA Legislative Committee had been working to get two bills passed this legislative session that deal with maintaining county boards of education health care benefits and providing a "pop-up" in retirement benefits if a spouse pre-deceases a retiree. Our sponsors have been Delegate Jim Proctor, Delegate Charles Barkley, and Senator John Astle. Unfortunately, the bills have received an unfavorable report due to the perceived mandate and the fiscal note of \$23million attached. But, we haven't given up, and next year we'll revise our legislative tactics and try again.

MRSPA supported other bills of consequence this session, one being the Healthy Maryland Initiative that favored increasing the tax on tobacco products by \$1.00 to raise revenue to provide health care benefits for about 100,000 uninsured Marylanders.

Two bills have been introduced (one by Paul Pinsky) that would create a task force to study the High School Assessments' sub groups. As it stands now, a special needs, ESOL, or other specifically classified student, could be placed in up to three sub groups, bringing a school's overall average down significantly.

We have been monitoring the Thornton Commission's Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act that includes a Geographic Cost of Education Index. This index is used to adjust state education aid to counties, based on regional differences in the cost of providing educational services. Though Governor O'Malley said during his campaign that he was in favor of funding this index, he has backed away from it for next year, citing the deficit that the state will be facing. Prince George's County will lose needed school funding because of this.

The United Seniors of Maryland is holding its annual Federal Rally in Washington on May 10th. This is an excellent opportunity to hear about what Congress is doing from scheduled speakers Senator Cardin and Senator Mikulski. Contact me for further details if you are interested in attending this very worthwhile event (301.390.7324).

Judith Zahren, MRSPA's Executive Director, and I were privileged to attend the National Retired Teachers' Association (NRTA) Conference in Washington at the end of February. Our organization belongs to NRTA, known as AARP's Educator Community. The theme of this meeting was "Divided We Fail." Throughout the conference it was stressed that we need to work together to accomplish goals. On the second day of the gathering we were encouraged to visit our legislators on Capitol Hill. Judith and I took this advice and visited the offices of Senators Cardin and Mikulski and Representatives Hoyer, Wynn, Sarbanes, Van Hollen, and Ruppertsberger. We felt our message of affordable health care and pension security for retirees was well received.

An issue of great concern to all retired school personnel throughout the state is the government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 45 that will take effect for Prince George's County in July of this year. This federal legislation may have an effect on our retiree health care benefits. The ruling requires that government units, including boards of education, must show the full cost of these benefits on their balance sheets as a long term liability. This accounting will affect County Bond Ratings. Consequently, boards of education will be looking at ways to reduce their health care costs, which will, in the long term, reduce their total liability.

Legislative Report (cont.)

As you may remember, our PGPSRA supported the nomination of Donald O'Neal as our candidate for the Board of Trustees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System. Sadly, Donald has had health problems and cannot accept the nomination. Therefore, we are now supporting the retiree being promoted by MSTA for the position. She is Theresa Lochte, a retired speech pathologist from Baltimore County. She was introduced at the recent MRSPA Board of Directors' meeting and seems very capable and willing to accept the job. We will miss Carl Lancaster, who has been our representative on the MSRPS board for the past twenty years.

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Chair

PRE-RETIREMENT CONFERENCE

Many thanks to: Barbara Burnham, Phyllis DeTuncq, Bonnie Brose, Polyann Doyle, Beatrice Aist, and Alveta Jones who worked fast and hard on March 5th at the Board of Education to prepare the information packets for 500 prospective retirees at the conference at Eleanor Roosevelt High School on March 10, 2007. Additional thanks to: Johanna Scherzer, Jannette Wundrow, Gretel James, Jennie Jones, and Delores Brown who assisted in organizing and distributing name tags and packets at the conference. BODACIOUS thanks to: Pat Tompkins and Donna Tickel who volunteered their time and energy at both the packet assembly and at Roosevelt! Our working together at both the conference and the preparation days was most enjoyable.

Dan Williams, Cheer Leader

FINANCIAL REPORT March 31, 2007

Balance on Hand	
Checking Account	\$9736.04
Savings Account	\$6967.84
Total Assets	\$167030.88

PROPOSED BUDGET: 2007 – 2008

Revised by Executive Board March 13, 2007

Category	Current Budget	Proposed Budget
Archives	500.00	100.00
Awards / Recognition	100.00	100.00
Liaison Professional	50.00	0.00
Operational	1000.00	500.00
President	200.00	100.00
Secretarial	300.00	200.00
MSRPA Meetings	2500.00	1500.00
Treasurer	100.00	50.00
Newsletter / Publications	13000.00	7000.00
Edu/Protective Services	500.00	100.00
Hospitality	1500.00	600.00
Legislative	1100.00	1100.00
Membership	500.00	300.00
Program	1500.00	1000.00
Remembrance	300.00	100.00
Community Service	2500.00	2500.00
Convention Gift	50.00	50.00
Scholarship	10000.00	5000.00
Contingency Fund	1700.00	500.00
Incorporation Expenses	500.00	000.00
GRAND TOTALS	37900.00	20800.00

ESTIMATED INCOME

Dues from members @ \$10.00 each	\$16000.00
Estimated membership of 1600	
From Checking Account	\$4800.00
TOTAL	\$20800.00

E. Vest, Treasurer

BITS & PIECES

Julia Derry of Riverdale celebrated her 94th birthday last November! Julia has not let her age slow her down at all. She retired in 1976 from the county reading program. She continues to be active with the OASIS organization in Hyattsville, where for the past fourteen years she has worked with the Intergenerational Tutoring Program, teaching Turkish, Greek, Hispanic, and American children. OASIS has provided opportunities for Julia to take trips, participate in physical fitness classes, and interact with people of like interests. She also plays Mah Jongg and works crossword puzzles. Mrs. Derry says that meeting different challenges keeps a person on her toes. (*Our Congratulations to Mrs. Derry!)

Dorothy Vozar celebrated her 90th birthday in February. (*Our Congratulations) Dorothy retired in 1972 as a classroom teacher at Surrattsville Elementary School. Twenty years later, she moved from her home in Upper Marlboro to Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, but returned to the Washington area in 2003. She now lives in Leesburg, VA, with her daughter and son-in-law. Dorothy has three grandchildren and three great-grandsons.

Glenn Leshner retired as principal of James Madison, Jr. Middle School in 1975 --- and, the eight following years he served as principal in the private sector, at Grace Brethren Christian School in Temple Hills. After retiring the second time, Glenn and his wife lived in Heritage Harbor, near Annapolis, where he was involved in their TV studio doing camera work, directing, and interviewing community members of interest. Glenn and his wife then moved to Augusta, GA, to be near family members. While there he volunteered as a maintenance helper at a local hospital, served as

Chairman of the Auxiliary, and edited the newsletter. The Leshner's next move was to Virginia Beach to be near their son in the U.S. Navy; when he was sent to Japan, they visited him there twice. The Leshner's final move has been to Riderwood Village in Silver Spring. There Glenn belongs to the Woodcrafter's club and is on the church council. He and his wife have traveled the U. S. in a motor home and have taken cruises to Alaska and the Caribbean. The Leshner's have three children (all graduates from Suitland High) and two grandchildren. Glenn reports that Maw and Paw are doing well!

Cecelia Smith retired in 1997 as a guidance counselor from Forestville High School. She then relocated to Greensboro, Georgia, where she worked eight more years in Green County as a teacher and guidance counselor. Since retiring in 2006, Cecelia has enjoyed sewing, reading, golf, working out at Curves, and spoiling her twenty grandkids and five great-grandkids. She has six adult children. Cecelia found time to travel to Germany, China, Oklahoma, North Carolina, and Maryland. (She says retirement is exhausting, but fun.) Cecelia and her husband will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary during 2007. (*Our Congratulations!)

Charlotte Faison of District Heights retired from Robert Gray Elementary in 2002. She enjoys quilting, and has recently completed a special quilt for her aunt and uncle's 60th wedding anniversary. Charlotte tutors children two evenings a week, has volunteered as a science fair judge at District Heights Elementary, and besides teaching Sunday School, also volunteers with a program that she began at her church that promotes families reading together. She is an avid five-morning-a-week exerciser. This past winter Charlotte

enjoyed a "Girl Spa Weekend" in Destin, FL, that included spa treatments, high tea, and shopping expeditions. Charlotte especially likes spending activity time with her three pre-school grandchildren.

Glenna Hull of Clear Spring, MD, retired from Robert Goddard Middle School in 1995. She enjoys spending her free time with model railroading and playing tennis.

Elizabeth "Betsy" Gay of Brookeville, MD, retired in 1999 from High Point High School, and she reports that she is having the time of her life. Betsy substitutes occasionally in Montgomery County and helps a friend with a dog-walking business. Her interests include gardening, genealogy, kayaking, and Volksmarching. Since retiring, she has enjoyed a Hawaiian cruise, taken a trip to the American Southwest, traveled to Lake Temagami in Ontario, and participated in Volksmarching trips to Niagara Falls and other locations in New York and Ontario. Betsy has two married daughters and six gorgeous grandchildren (aged two to nine years).

Glenda Skolaski retired from Brandywine Elementary in 1991. She and her husband Paul now live in Locust Grove, VA. Glenda is a volunteer driver for "Ride for Life." She continues to sing with the Sweet Adeline Potomac Harmony Chorus of Arlington, VA, and many of her activities revolve around her singing. This coming October her Potomac Harmony chorus will be going to Calgary, Canada, to compete on the international stage with other groups from all over the world. Another Sweet Adeline competition will be held in Winston Salem, NC, and the winner of that performance will go to Hawaii to perform the following October. The Skolaskis will be celebrating their 57th wedding anniversary while in Winston Salem. (*Our

Congratulations!) They recently became the great-grandparents of a beautiful baby girl.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

A new printing of our brochures arrived in time for distribution at the Prince George's County Pre-Retirement Conference. If you need brochures to give to your newly retired friends, please contact me to get what you need.

Do not send membership checks to me until you have received your renewal notice from MRSPA – some time in May. Dues for membership in the state association (Maryland Retired School Personnel Association) and the local association (Prince George's Public School Retirees Association) are \$35.00 per year. Our membership year is from July 1 to June 30. You may sign up for dues deduction. Thirty-five dollars will then be deducted automatically from your July 31 retirement check.

The winner of the door prize at the March meeting was Dorothy Castor.

Jane Jones, Membership Co-Chair

NEOCROLOGY REPORT

MEMBERS

Frank Facinoli	3-3-07
Charles J. O'Donnell	1-30-07

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Newsletter Deadline: The deadline for the September issue of *Echoes* is August 1, 2007. You may reach me at ahutchinson00@hotmail.com

PGPSRA LUNCHEON MEETING

Where: Prince George's Community College Largo Student Center Community Room B Largo, Maryland
When: May 23, 2007 Meeting 11:00 a.m. Lunch 12:00 noon
Cost: \$20.00 Make checks payable to: PGPSRA As Soon As Possible
Your name:
How many:
Please submit form to: Dr. Ed Vest, 7908 Klovstad Drive Fort Washington, MD 20744

COME ONE! COME ALL!

All PGPSRA members are urged to attend the luncheon meeting on May 23, 2007. That will be our last meeting until September, and there are several important issues on the agenda. Among them are the approval of the budget and the installation of the officers for 2007 – 2008. Furthermore, it is an excellent time to enjoy food, fun, and fellowship with our fellow retirees.

The entertainment at the May luncheon will be provided by the Smart Alex Quartet. These are four guys who love singing barbershop harmony for the sheer fun of it. This foursome serves up good old fashioned barbershop entertainment with a lighthearted touch. We hope you will join us.

DIRECTIONS: The meeting will be held in the Largo Student Center, Community Room B on the second floor next to the Rennie Forum. The Largo Student Center is the last building on your right if you enter the campus at the light on Route 202 near Largo High School. Visitors' parking is in Lots B & D. Handicapped parking is in Lots C & D and in front of Marlboro Hall.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

On behalf of the Community Service Committee, I want to express our appreciation for your support of our Canned Food/Winter Coat Drive. PGPSRA also deserves a hearty thank-you for your monetary donations to the good Shepherd School. As of March 28, we have collected \$317.00. There will be one more opportunity to donate at the general membership meeting in May. Please dig a little deeper, and ask your family and friends to participate.

We still need volunteers for our two adopted schools, Morningside and Oakcrest Elementary Schools. Many thanks for making a difference.

Jennie Jones, Community Service Chair

MRS PA E & PS COMMITTEE

Tourists are prime targets for pickpockets. When you make a purchase and put your change away, a pickpocket may be watching to see where you put your money.

What can you do? Divide your money among different pockets, wallet/purse, briefcase, carrying bag, etc. When you are in public places, don't use any money from your wallet/purse that holds most of your money. Take it from a pocket that holds a lesser amount instead.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The Scholarship Committee proudly announces that on May 10, 2007, there will be a ceremony at the PGCEA Building to award five \$2000 scholarships. The awardees were selected in late April.

Alveta Jones, Scholarship Chair

JANNETTE WUNDROW HONORED

Jannette Wundrow, who does such a spectacular job of keeping PGPSRA informed of political and legislative matters, was recently honored by AARP for her outstanding leadership and service. The award was presented at the November 29th luncheon in Annapolis, where AARP honored chapters and individuals who distinguished themselves in their volunteer efforts. Jannette is the legislative chair for PGPSRA, and she also serves as the state legislative chair for MRSPA. She is a constant presence in the halls of the General Assembly in Annapolis, where she is an ardent advocate for retirees. Congratulations, Jannette, and thank you for all that you do.

AARP'S WALK FOR HEALTH

AARP began a 10-week Walking Program for Marylanders at Iverson Mall, Hillcrest Heights on April 3, 2007. Two hundred twenty-five (225) people arrived at 7:30 a.m. to join the "Walk for Health" program! Several of the participants were members of PGPSRA. Prior to the walking, there was a program in which speakers presented information and encouragement to the group. Greetings and explanations of the endeavor were given by AARP's Maryland Director, Joe DeMattos, and Community Outreach Director, Deniece Fields. Health

reasons for beginning a walking and exercise regimen at any age were itemized and explained by Dr. Reginald Robinson of the Washington Cardiology Associates. Lisa Alexander, of the Prince George's County Health Department, explained the benefits of good nutrition and physical fitness. Edward Lee, a physical therapist, described the merits of exercise in moderation and with physical limitations. The Area Agency on Aging Information Specialist, Joy Sharps provided information about senior assistance programs in the county that were of interest to people with specific problems affecting their health.

When the group left, they were enthused and energized about walking for health reasons. Everyone was inspired to begin walking at least a few times a week, whether it is individually or with others. In ten weeks, every one was invited to come back together and learn of the successes that have been achieved in fitness and health.

GRAVE ROBBERY

The AARP bulletin for March 2007 tells how scammers use obituaries to steal the personal identity of the dead. They can get credit reports, social security numbers, and other personal data for as little as \$15.00 on the internet. This information is sold to persons with bad credit. Then the buyers open credit card accounts in the name of the deceased. The scammers get the information by reading the obituaries to get names and addresses.

How can this be avoided? * Don't include details such as birthdates or addresses in the obituary. * Mail copies of the death certificate to all three credit reporting bureaus. * Contact your state department of motor vehicles to cancel any driver's license. * A few weeks after taking the above measures, run a credit check to ensure that there's no suspicious activity occurring.

Think this can't happen - about 400,000 checking accounts were opened in the names of deceased people in 2004.

Prince George's Public School
Retirees Association

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

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MEMBERSHIP MEETING

May 23, 2007
Prince George's Community College

11:00 a. m. Business Meeting
12:00 noon Luncheon
Reservations Due – May 18, 2007

**A good exercise for
the heart is to
bend down and help
another up.**