



# ECHOES

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

Volume XXXXI No.5

May 2008

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Be sure to come to our final meeting of the 2007 – 2008 year! We are finishing up on a year of good things for the retirees of Prince George's schools. At this final meeting, we will install officers for the coming year. They are:

President-Elect	Bonnie Curry Brose
Treasurer	Dr. Edward Vest
Recording Secretary	Joann Sloan
Corresponding Secretary	Shirley Johnson

The current President-Elect, Jennie Jones, will automatically become President.

The proposed bylaws changes have been accepted, and this will affect the length of the term of office of your leaders. It is hoped that the change will allow more continuity in our programs and contacts throughout the state. The changes are being written into the bylaws, and revised copies will be available to members at the May meeting.

A final thank-you (for this year) goes to Dan Williams and his pre-retirement team for the great workshop at Eleanor Roosevelt on March 8th. Such a day of information is a great way to assist prospective retirees towards the goal of a well-planned and well-deserved retirement. Thank you, Dan and Committee.

PGPSRA will be well represented on May 13<sup>th</sup> at the MRSPA Annual Business Meeting at Martin's Eighth Avenue in Glen Burnie. This

event is very informative, and your leaders welcome the opportunity to keep abreast of new developments so as to better serve you.

Plan to attend the meeting on May 28, 2008. It is always good to see all of you. Let's make this the best luncheon meeting yet ... good food, good entertainment, and good friends. We can't lose ... see you there!

Bonnie Curry Brose

### LEGISLATIVE REPORT

In mid-February, the Board of Trustees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System noted that the system was \$100 million short! The director, Dean Kenderdine, said we should not panic, as it was thought to be a problem with the computer system. New actuaries were hired, and after working to discover the source of the problem and the shortfall, they concluded on March 18, 2008, that the system is actually \$80 million short! The plan is to make this up by putting \$2 million a year into the fund under the corridor funding method. Or, if the system were changed to the full actuarial funding method, \$6 million per year would be added to the fund. (At any rate, it will take a very long time to bring the fund up to where it should be!) The two reasons for the shortfall are that the financial analysts underestimated how long people would be living (There are LOTS of us retirees around now!) and the corridor method of funding that was established in 2000 allowed the state to put less money into the fund each year.



Judith Zaren and I attended a NRTA (National Retired Teachers Association) Advocacy Conference in Washington in February, where we shared information about key issues confronting our retiree organizations. Surprisingly, teachers in fifteen states do not collect Social Security, and ten states deduct the monthly Social Security payments from pension checks! Nineteen states do not pay annual COLAS to retirees, and fourteen states provide no retiree health benefits. Fortunately, Maryland fares well in all of these areas. And, Prince George's County, specifically, provides health benefits in the top ten of Maryland counties. One of the days of the NRTA Conference was spent on Capitol Hill, where we were encouraged to speak with our state legislators. Judith and I visited the offices of Senators Cardin and Mikulski, and Representatives Hoyer, Ruppertsberger, Van Hollen, and Sarbanes. All of these legislators support our concerns about pensions, quality health care and economic security for seniors, and education funding in Maryland.

You likely have heard that MSTA has decided to support slots. Many of the active teachers are speaking out in opposition to this stand. The Board of Directors of MSTA made the decision, they said, because they have been assured that some of the money collected from slots will go to Maryland schools. We'll keep watching to see how that works out. (Neither PGPSRA nor MRSPA will take a position on this issue. It is up to individuals to voice their opinions on slots during the November referendum.)

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Chair

Executive Committee / Board Meeting May 14, 2008 - 10:00 a.m. PGCEA BUILDING
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## 2008 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

Three graduating seniors from Prince George's County high schools will each receive a certificate for a \$1000.00 scholarship award on May 1, 2008. The amount of the certificate will be applied toward their college fees once the treasurer of the Prince George's Scholarship Fund, Inc. receives proof that they have enrolled in their prospective college / university in the fall of 2008 or spring of 2009.

The three persons are:

- **Jennifer Erwin** from Charles H. Flowers HS who will major in Business Education at the University of Maryland, College Park,
- **Stephanie Onuocha** from Largo HS who will major in English at Case Western, Cleveland, Ohio,
- **Tiara Riley** from Dr. Henry Wise HS who will major in Mathematics Education at the University of Maryland, College Park.

The other two awardees are continuing students:

- **Pamela M. Stewart**, a graduate student at Bowie State University, who is completing her work for Maryland Teaching Certification;
- **Michael White**, a junior at Morgan State University, Baltimore, who is majoring in Business Education.

Our congratulations to them!

Alveta Jones, Scholarship Chair



**PROPOSED BUDGET 2008 - 2009**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>
Archives	\$100.00
Awards/ Recognition	\$100.00
Operational	\$500.00
President	\$100.00
Secretarial	\$200.00
MRSPA Meetings	\$1500.00
Treasurer	\$50.00
Newsletter/ Publications	\$8000.00
E & P Services	\$500.00
Hospitality	\$600.00
Legislative	\$1100.00
Membership	\$400.00
Program	\$1000.00
Remembrance	\$100.00
Community Service	\$4000.00
Convention Gift	\$50.00
Scholarship	\$10000.00
Contingency Fund	\$500.00

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$28800.00</b>
ESTIMATED INCOME	\$24000.00
*Dues from members [@ \$15.00 per member Estimated Membership – 1600]	
*From Checking account	\$4800.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$28800.00</b>

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Membership renewal time comes up shortly. The new local dues are \$15.00, which brings the combined membership dues to \$40.00 for PGPSRA and MRSPA. Corrected membership forms are being printed and will be available soon. Please let me know if you have a change of address or phone number. E-mail addresses are also appreciated.

My contact information is as follows:

Phone number – 301.848.9296  
 E-mail – [bookwormy@yahoo.com](mailto:bookwormy@yahoo.com)  
 Address – Martha Franklin  
 2953 Edgewood Road  
 Bryans Road, Maryland 20616

If you choose to e-mail me, I'd appreciate your using PGPSRA or something to that effect on the subject line.

Finally, many of you know someone who has retired from Prince George's County Public Schools and has not joined us. Please send me his/her name and address so that I can contact each one with membership information, or you may request the information from me and give it to them yourself. All are welcome.

Martha Franklin, Membership Chair

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Beginning Balance as of March 1, 2008

<b>Checking Account</b>	\$12002.46
Receipts	1749.54
Expenditures	2158.84

Balance as of  
 March 31, 2008 \$11593.16

**Savings Account** 2998.24

**Total Assets** \$14591.40

E. Vest, Treasurer

**PGPSRA LISTSERVE**

Keep up with all the summer news by adding your name to our listserve. Send your e-mail address to Dr. Vest at [drvest@prodigy.net](mailto:drvest@prodigy.net).



## BUSINESS HEALTH SERVICES

### Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Business Health Services is the county's new Employee Assistance Program. This program provides employees' household members with free, confidential assistance to help with emotional, work-related, work life balance and even wellness-related issues. The EAP offers assistance with, but is not limited to, such issues as stress & anxiety, substance abuse, depression, relationships, grief & loss, and domestic violence. Services are accessible twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week via a toll free number: (800.765.3277). The EAP program is also for retirees and their household members.

When someone calls, the caller is immediately connected to a BHS Care Coordinator, a Master-level clinician. The Care Coordinator will conduct a brief telephone interview to assess the problem(s) and connect the caller to the appropriate resources for assistance. The Care Coordinator then stays in touch with the caller until the case is closed to ensure satisfaction.

The program benefits include up to six free counseling sessions with an EAP professional, free legal and financial consultation and resources, and Well Coach, your personal wellness, coaching, education & referral service.

If you need more information, please call 1.800.765.3277 or visit on the web at [www.BHSONline.com](http://www.BHSONline.com). Click the link for "Employees & Their Family Members". Enter your username PRINCE to view the program information and resources specially designed for Prince George's County Public Schools.

## Spectra Vision – Reference Card

If you are a member of the Spectra Vision Care Program, you should have received two vision benefit Reference Cards by the first or second week in April. (Both cards are the same.) Two are sent to you for your convenience. The front to the cards summarizes your vision plan benefits, while the back identifies where to mail out-of-network claims and how to obtain additional information. Although these cards do not guarantee benefits, you may present them to your vision care provider to communicate important vision plan information. These reference cards are not required to visit a vision provider.

If you have any questions or feedback about your vision plan, call Spectra at 1.800.638.3120.

Addie Martin, Professional Liaison

## NECROLOGY

Daniel Becker	1-06-08
Edward Clement	1-24-08
Ruth Davis	*****
Wilhelmina P. Lasley	1-19-08
Edna McGhee	5-28-06
Dr. Monroe S. Simms	11-27-07
Thelma Smith	1-1-08

## THIS AND THAT

- No trips will be scheduled until the fall. See the September issue for travel up-dates.
- Greta Garrett won fifty dollars in the 50/50 Scholarship Raffle at our March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. Alveta Jones won the door prize.



**E & PS COMMITTEE  
Volunteers Needed!**

Hopefully, we can expand the size of this committee this year. The main purposes of this committee are as follows:

1. Promote the well-being of retired personnel by helping them obtain the services and information they need to solve or avoid financial and personal problems as they grow older.
2. Serve the members of the RTA as a source of information on available services in the immediate community and on the state level.
3. Provide membership with information on consumer issues.
4. Plan for educational and service programs that focus on health care costs, preventive health care measures, legal and financial concerns, and other issues that affect retirees.

With more members, we can increase the scope of our work and keep our general membership better informed on issues that pertain to their general knowledge and well-being. Anyone who willing to work this avenue, please should call Fred Novak at 301.937.6606, or write to him at 10912 Bornedale Dr., Adelphi, MD 20783

Fred Novak, E & PS Chair

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The Community Service Committee has had some outstanding accomplishments since the beginning of the school year. To date, their projects have included donating school supplies, personal hygiene items, and clothing to needy children. The distribution of share baskets was timely in meeting other immediate needs. The committee is continuing with their support and assistance

to three homeless seniors at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Finally, the Community Service Committee has been nominated for recognition by MRSPA for their service projects this year.

Delores Brown, Community Service Chair

**PGPSRA MAY 2008  
GENERAL MEETING / LUNCHEON**

May 28, 2008 at 11:00 A.M

Marlborough Country Club  
4750 John Rogers Boulevard  
Upper Marlboro, MD

Cost: \$26.00 per person

Luncheon Buffet

Please mail your reservation(s) to the address below by May 21.  
Include a check payable to PGPSRA to cover the number of spaces you reserve.

To the Treasurer:

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

**MUSICAL PROGRAM – May 2008**

At our May meeting, we will be royally entertained by Jimmy May, a very talented young man and a member of the Music Ministry at the First Baptist Church of Glenarden. Jimmy has played for numerous events at First Baptist, including many weddings. He has also performed at the Kennedy Center. Jimmy plays wind and reed instruments and a variety of music. We are in for a real musical treat.





## **BITS AND PIECES**

Dorothy Carpenter retired as principal of Fort Foote Elementary in 1980. She and her husband, John, bought a house in Coconut Creek, FL, and moved there two years later. The Carpenters are travelers! They have been to all fifty states and sailed on many cruises. During May, they will sail again as they celebrate their 58<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and John's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

James Pindell of Annapolis retired in 1996 from Andrew Jackson Middle School. He is married to a retired Anne Arundel Business Education teacher. Jim has been an avid camper for over 40 years and has camped in the 48 contiguous states and Canada. He has even camped across country three times since retiring. He serves as Assistant State Director of the Maryland Good Sam Camping Organization. Making woodcrafts to sell at craft shows is another of Jim's interests. He is also an active member of the American Legion, having held various offices on both the local and state levels. The Pindells have one daughter, a graduate of the Howard University School of Medicine, and one granddaughter.

Jennie Jones retired from Kenmore Elementary in 2002. She and her husband, Bill, live in Bowie. They have three daughters and one grandchild. In March, Jennie and her family traveled to South Africa and Zambia, which was an awesome experience. They were fortunate to have excellent tour guides who explained the history of the places they visited. The family went on a safari and also traveled to Victoria Falls, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Jennie found her most moving and inspirational experience to be a visit to a pre-school in Cape Town, where over 100 disadvantaged children attend. Jennie has been our PGPSRA President-Elect for the

past year and will assume the Presidency this fall.

Jeannette Grotke of Greenbelt retired from Forestville High School in 1995, but her teaching career did not end then. She taught in the Peace Corps in Thailand from 1998 to 2000, in Russia in 2001, and then in schools in Honduras, and a Spanish school in the rainforest of Peru. Jeannette has enjoyed travels to Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Pakistan, Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, Mexico, and Nicaragua. Jeannette has children whom she enjoys visiting in Maine and California.

Dorothy Weber retired in 1973 from Woodley Knoll Elementary in Suitland. She now lives with her son, Dean, in Wilmington, NC, and enjoys going out to lunch every day. Dorothy has been a diligent traveler, far exceeding the time that most people spend on vacation. During her travels, she and her husband spent four months on an Alaskan trip, three months on a 1000 mile sojourn down the Baja Peninsula and back, a one-year trip that included two months in New Zealand and ten months going on an 18,000 mile journey around the entire coast of Australia. Dorothy has been to Africa and South America, each for four times, and sailed the Caribbean twice.

To contribute to BITS AND PIECES. Contact Jannette Wundrow [jannettewundrow@comcast.net](mailto:jannettewundrow@comcast.net) or 1007 Packton Lane, Bowie, MD 20716.

## **HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU!**

We wish each of you a safe and happy summer. For those who are traveling, check out the safe travel tips from the **E & PS Communicator** on the next page.



## From E & PS COMMUNICATOR



### An Apology

"In the last issue the incorrect phone number was given for securing coupons to be ready for digital TV. While the offer ended March 31<sup>st</sup>, I hope that it did not create a problem. However, there is good news. The boxes should be available at Best Buy, Office Depot, Circuit City, Radio Shack, Sears, Target, and Wal-Mart. Some brands are selling for much less than initially thought, some are as low as \$39.99. Remember that this only affects analog antenna-dependent TV's that are not connected to cable or satellite."

### Travel Safety

"Whether traveling for work or pleasure, it is important to keep abreast of safety issues. You may want to check these web sites: U.S. Department of Transportation offers airline, highway, and rail safety information at [www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov). Transportation Security Administration has advice on safe travel by air, land and sea. They post tips on dealing with airline security checks, traveling with children and warnings on prohibited items. Click on travelers and consumers at [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov). U. S. State Department provides information on what to do before, during and when you return from a trip overseas at [www.state.gov.travel](http://www.state.gov.travel). Centers for disease control and prevention offer health related travel information. You can research vaccination requirements, find information on how to avoid illness caused by food and water, and review inspection scores on specific cruise ships at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

It is better safe than sorry. A couple traveled to China and used only one credit card as they had been advised. Several months after returning home, they found

charges made on that credit card in China. Make sure you check your statements and call the company if you find discrepancies."

### TWO RETIREES SHARE THEIR PASSIONS

We ARE teachers! We have a wealth of information among our membership. Attendees at the last two luncheon meetings were fortunate to have two of their fellow PGPSRA members share their passion and expertise in programs that were both entertaining and informative.

A former PE teacher at Ridgecrest Elementary, Don Conway shared his passion for collecting memorabilia from the Black American Heritage. Much of his extensive display came from the sports world, but it covered many other events and topics as well. Don's collections were mounted on science boards and made a display so large that it took up most of the side and back space of the PGCEA meeting hall. After speaking to the group about his collection – and how it and evolved – the audience was invited to take a closer look at all he had brought. The size and depth of the display were truly amazing.

Vexillology is Barry McKown's passion. Barry, a former Prince George's science teacher, brought us an impressive slide show that outlined the history of flags, especially the American flag and its origins. He explained and illustrated various symbols and colors, what they mean, and the protocol for displaying flags. The presentation reminded us not to take American flag and what it represents for granted.

We thank Don and Barry for sharing their knowledge with us, and we invite and encourage others of you to do likewise.



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

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

**DATED MATERIAL**

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**MEMBERSHIP MEETING &  
LUNCHEON**

May 28, 2008  
Marlboro Country Club  
11:00 a.m. - Business Meeting  
12:00 - Luncheon

Reservations Due – May 21

**2008**

**Do more than belong, participate.**

**Do more than care, help.**