



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXXII No. 5

May 2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is my last message as your president. It truly has been an exciting experience. We have served together now for almost ten months, and over that time we have come to know each other better. Throughout this past year, we have grown in knowledge, faced problems, solved problems, and had our share of laughter. Now here we are – we have come through.

This final message could have consisted of only two words – Thank You! Thank you for this year that now draws to an end. Throughout these months I have come to know you as true professionals, capable, knowledgeable, dedicated, and cooperative.

Finally, we have sent letters to the Prince George's County delegation opposing shifting retirement funding from the state to the counties. Please do everything in your power to discourage passage of Senate Bill 710. Also, here's another friendly reminder to make plans to attend the retirees' convention – September 8 – 10, 2009.

Thank you again, and have a wonderful summer.

Jennie Jones

**MRSPA Convention 2009
Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel
Ocean City, Maryland
September 8, 9, 10, 2009**

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

MRSPA's Legislative Committee members continue to object strongly and vocally against any shifting of the funding of the retirement/pension system from the state to the counties. We urge all of our county members to speak to their legislators about the opposition to this idea, as well. If the local jurisdictions must pay this funding toward our retirements, they are going to have to cut costs elsewhere. This could mean that our health benefits would be reduced. The MRSPA Legislative Committee will be turning their focus in this direction in the coming months.

The Stimulus Bill passed by Congress will definitely help education spending in Maryland - - - and, Governor O'Malley has said he will put a specific amount into the retirement/pension fund, which will eliminate any shifting of the funding to the counties *this year*.

In mid-February, our organization sent letters to all 32 of our Prince George's legislators, asking them to oppose any shifting of the funding of the Maryland Retirement/ Pension System to local jurisdictions. We received only one negative reply about this action, and that was from Mike Miller, sponsor of the shifting of funding bill in the Senate. When testifying before the Senate Hearing Committee, we were reminded that there are many other agencies and people in Maryland who need money. We were asked also about the fairness of the state continually funding the teachers' pensions.

Several members of our organization traveled to Annapolis for a PGPSRA Legislative Day on March 18, 2009. We were introduced from the Senate Gallery during the morning legislative session. During lunch, nine of our county legislators and six legislative aides spoke informally with our group and reminded us that **numbers count** in Annapolis, as does our presence. (We currently have 1600 members, on whose behalf we speak.) The day was very interesting. Again, we thank our sponsor for the day, Delegate James Proctor, Jr. of District 27, for making the event possible.

For up-to-date information about the Maryland Legislature and to locate your local legislators, go to the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association's website:

- As of this printing, the legislature has not adjourned, so you will want to check on what laws are passed by Seine Die (April 13, 2009).

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Chair

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

It's that time again! PGPSRA members are rapidly approaching the end of one membership year and the beginning of a new one. Our organization needs your help in remaining a viable, vocal, and vital voice in our ever challenging society.

Your membership makes it possible for PGPSRA to be a strong voice in our community, county, and state on issues that pertain to us as individuals and as a community. Your membership also makes possible our representation on the committee which deals with our benefits at the county level. Furthermore, the size of our total membership is an indication of the level of

influence we are able to exert when we interact with legislators as they address our issues at the state level.

Please make an effort not only to renew your own membership by July 1st, but also invite other retirees to join our organization. We are only as strong as our numbers.

Renew Today! July 1st is almost here.

Lorraine W. Johnson, Membership Chair

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Community Service Committee is happy to report that one of their major projects came to realization on Saturday, April 4th, when several students from Doswell E. Brooks Elementary School were assisted in purchasing new shoes at Payless Shoe Source on Donnell Drive Forestville. Oh, what a joy to behold!

Share Baskets were donated to three families at Easter and additional supplies were distributed to the Shepherd's Cove homeless shelter and the Prince George's Family Care Center at the end of March.

One final and major project to be carried out is the assistance to homeless members of the senior class at Fairmont Heights High School. This project, led by Ethel Brown, will assist with graduation fees and prom attire.

We are happy with the services we have provided this year. They were much needed and appreciated and helped bring joy to the lives of others.

Thanks to all of you for your very generous contributions that made it all possible.

Gretel James, Committee Member

TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer's report for March 2009 is as follows:

Opening Balance:

Checking Account - \$21270.19
Savings Account - \$ 3013.30

Receipts:

Checking Account - \$1099.54
Savings Account - 000.00

Expenditures:

Checking Account - \$3783.11
Savings Account - 000.00

Balance as of March 31:

Checking Account - \$18586.62
Savings Account: \$3013.30

TOTAL ASSETS: \$21599.92

E. Vest, Treasurer

TRAVELING WITH CHARLIE

According to Charles Hudson, our travel coordinator, the June 3rd trip to the Allenberry Theater in Pennsylvania sold out at the March 25th meeting. They are going to enjoy a buffet lunch and see a comedy entitled "Ladies Night in a Turkish Bath."

If you are going to miss the June trip, Charlie has others you might enjoy. Several overnight trips have been suggested for the fall, preferably in October. Hopefully, the group can do one of them. Members are asked to consider the choices and let Charlie know what their preferences are. If you did not get the list of suggestions, you may call 301.572.9778 for information or pick one up at the May meeting.

Charles Hudson, Travel Coordinator

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Six of the seventy-four Prince George's Scholarship fund Inc. applicants are committed to teaching and will receive scholarship awards on Wednesday, May 6, 2009, at 1:00 p.m. at the PGCEA Center in Forestville, MD. The awardees are:

Jasmine Bullock – Forestville Academy – Elementary Education – Frostburg State University

Christine Davis – Gwynn Park – Education & Computer Science – North Carolina A&T University

Ashley Exum – Largo – Elementary Education – Towson State University

Jessica Lucas – Bowie – Elementary Education – Towson State University

JaCara Rhodes – Surratsville – Elementary Education – Bowie State University

Ashlee Williams – Surratsville – Special Education – Bowie State University

Their commitment to education is reflected in some excerpts from their essays:

"My goal in life is to make a positive impact on someone's life. I want to help bring about change to children at a young age as my elementary teachers have done for me."

"My future goal is to make a difference – a change in the lives of boys and girls."

"I choose this profession because I love children."

"Despite the importance of teachers in our society, many people still think of teaching as a job. I plan to make it a profession, not just a job!"

At this writing, the Scholarship Committee is nearing its goal of providing an additional scholarship of \$2000.00 to a sixth person going into teaching. This effort has been most helpful in that it gave the Prince George's Scholarship Fund, Inc. the opportunity to award all six applicants a scholarship. Thanks to everybody who helped – the personal donations, buying raffle tickets, and not requesting a refund from the January luncheon meeting. All persons will be recognized at our May meeting.

Alveta Jones, Scholarship Chair

A TALENTED TRIO

What a wonderfully diverse and talented group we retired teachers are! That thought kept bouncing through my mind as we were so royally entertained by fellow members at the March 25th PGPSRA meeting.

Dan Williams got things started. With a guitar slung over his shoulder, a black Stetson on his head, and a twinkle in his eye, he soon had our toes tapping and our heads bobbing while he strummed his guitar and crooned one of Tennessee Ernie Ford's famous old hits. For the second song, "The Day the Squirrel Went Berserk," Dan asked the audience to participate during the chorus. We were glad to oblige; and at the appointed times, we eagerly waved our arms in the air and shouted hallelujah. What we lacked in musicality, we made up for with enthusiasm. His most amusing song was a spoof done to the tune and cadence of another popular oldie called "Sixteen Tons." Instead of depicting the hard life of a steel driver, Dan's version used wit and humor to describe the everyday woes of the classroom teacher. We got a good chuckle from his clever observations about the profession because, as the old saying goes, lots of truth can be told in a joke. Dan brought his delightful performance to an end with a group sing-along of "Amazing Grace," a neat segue into the next act.

The second part of the entertainment was furnished by a talented couple, Elizabeth Clarke-Rich and her husband Amos K. Rich. Elizabeth read three of her original poems celebrating the accomplishments of three distinguished African Americans: Rosa Parks, Shirley Chisholm, and Barack Obama. Her poems reminded us of the heights to which we can rise if we have the strength, the will, and the opportunity to do so. Amos Rich ended the program with an

enthusiastic presentation of Dr. Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech. How uplifting it was to hear Dr. King's wonderful speech recited with such reverence and conviction!

It was a lovely afternoon, and we thank our three talented colleagues for making it so.

Perhaps at future meetings other members will step to center stage and share their talents and expertise; for even though we are retirees, we still have many talents and gifts to share.

Alice J. Hutchinson

March Meeting Prize Winners

Door Prize: Rose Miller

50/50 Scholarship Fund Drawing:
Polly Ann Doyle

Thanks to Polly Ann for donating her winnings
to the Scholarship Fund

NECROLOGY

Barbara Carins Boycan	10-25-08
Beverly S. Bailer	03-19-09
Earl Wesley Dade	03-02-09
Clarice Evelyn Denny	12-29-08
(Mother of George Denny)	
Thomas H. Flood	
Henry J. Gasket	
Mary S. Heinze	01-06-09
Dr. Dora C. Kennedy	02-01-09
Joyce Meducci	07-08-08
John E. Myles, Jr.	12-21-08
John Thomas "Jack" Smyth	01-17-09
Phyllis Thomas	01-12-09
Lindsey Thomas	
Jennie Thompson	12-20-08

Jannie Goldston, Chair

BITS AND PIECES

Belated Birthday Wishes to Evelyn Shank of Pompano Beach, FL, a centenarian, who became 102 on April 19th. Happy June Birthday Wishes to Juanita Lee of Columbia, SC, who is turning 90 years old, and Esther Vogel of Falls Church, who will be celebrating her 98th birthday. Not only will Ellen Kendrick of Waldorf be marking her 90th birthday in June, but she will also be celebrating her 68th wedding anniversary, as well!

Edna Drago of Silver Spring, a retired elementary teacher, is a very active 90 year old lady. Edna was named "Volunteer of the year 2008" by the college Park Aviation Museum. She is a licensed pilot and an instructor pilot who volunteers at the College Park Aviation Museum, as well as the National Air & Space Museum in Washington, DC. Mrs. Drago's husband was also a licensed pilot, and they experienced many flying trips together. Edna is to be commended for her work in the county Meals on Wheels too.

Don Conway of Beltsville, a former physical education teacher, continues his Volkswalking Club participation year-round. He recently was awarded recognition for completing 900 event walks! The latest walks took him through many cities and state parks, and past numerous historic landmarks in Maryland and Delaware. Donald also has been traveling throughout Maryland and Delaware with his Moveable Museum of African-American history memorabilia. His January/February tour began on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday at the Oxon Hill library and continued in community centers, churches, senior centers, and schools. This is an extensive collection that Don has gathered over the years of interesting, educational

Black History memorabilia. It is well worth seeing.

Patricia Bruce of Hyattsville retired from Forestville high School in 1997. She now keeps busy managing rental properties, while participating in Girl Scouts, OASIS, book clubs, Mahjong, and water aerobics. Patricia has enjoyed travels to China, Chile, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Russia, Australia, Nova Scotia, and several continental states from Maine to Arizona. Patricia has one daughter who lives in Virginia and a son in the Air Force. She is the grandmother of four-year-old Anya. Patricia says she is on her way to becoming a bionic woman, as she has had both a shoulder and two knee replacements.

Ralette Cruse, who retired from Excel Academy in 2007 (one of the first public charter schools in the county), now lives in Tucson, AZ. She took a year off from other activities to travel to the Copper Canyon (twice the size of the Grand Canyon) in Mexico. She has traveled throughout the United States and has met family and friends along the way in Memphis and San Francisco. She, of course, loves the winters in Arizona. Ralette began subbing long term in a first grade classroom last year and stayed for several months. The local newspaper *Sahuuarita Sun* wrote an article about her experience. Ralette has written two activity books for students that explain the Constitution and the Underground Railroad. Ralette has a daughter and grandchildren who live in Maryland, and she is earning lots of frequent flyer miles with visits to them.

Roy Burley retired as vice principal of Potomac High School in 1982. Having been a twelve-month employee, he served as the principal of a junior high summer program in one of the county schools each summer.

After retiring, Roy left Camp Springs and moved to Mount Pleasant, SC, near Charleston. He and his wife enjoy participating in the many activities that are offered in their retirement community, located near the Isle of Palms beach. They live close to their daughter, her husband, and two grandchildren, so they are involved with many family activities, as well. Roy keeps in touch with other family members and friends in Maryland by e-mail. Besides frequent use of his computer, Roy stays involved with sports, church, reading, walking for health, and keeping abreast of current events. The Burleys are enjoying retirement.

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

NEWS FROM ROSE

Beginning with retirement in 1998, Rose Miller began the life of a nation and international traveler. It began in 2000 with a full day's stay in Oberammergau, Germany, to see the Passion Play. Additional time was spent touring several castles, stopping to see the Manneken Pis statue in Brussels, Belgium, and riding along the countryside in Switzerland with stops at cheese making sites. We did not leave without ample watches to remind us of this experience.

In 2002, the travel experiences came from spending Black History Month in Ghana, West Africa. Space prevents sharing the emotions from visits to several slave castles and villages, and the participation in a name-giving ceremony. 2004 provided visits to the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg where Nelson Mandela studied, the prison cell where he was held,

and the W. E. B. Dubois Memorial Library. Being in South Africa during the 10th anniversary of the end of apartheid was an occasion to visit the church where Bishop Tutu served as leader and to visit Table Mountain and the Cape of Good Hope, as well.

Spending a full day at the Louvre was only one stop in a one week stay in Paris. The formal gardens and statues are not easy to describe because the emotions created by their beauty seemed overwhelming.

Visiting Alaska and Hawaii served as proof that our country is a match for anything found anywhere. All one has to do is decide what he or she would like to see or do. We have mountains, waterfalls, cheese making and wine making – you name it.

With travel guidelines as they are, Rose travels with her husband, Jesse, and with caution. Most recent trips have been to Cancun, Montreal, Spokane, Seattle, and Puerto Vallarta.

Compared to having served as Principal of Lord Baltimore Academy, Vice-principal at Andrew Jackson and Martin Luther King Middle Schools, and a science teacher at Roger B. Taney Middle School, traveling does not match the natural excitement that comes from interacting with children!

Submitted by Rose Miller

JULY 2009 COLA

**The Maryland State
Retirement & Pension System
announced the COLA for July
2009 will be 3.839%.**

**MRSPA
ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
May 12, 2009**

It is the time of year that representatives from all Maryland counties get together in Glen Burnie to exchange ideas about what's been happening all year. Your PGPSRA President has prepared a statement for the annual meeting that highlights the accomplishments of our organization. We have a full contingent of delegates planning to attend this year's meeting. There are many items that must be discussed. One important item is the need to increase MRSPA dues by \$10.00 a year. Proponents of the dues increase have presented a strong case, and its approval is very likely.

It is important to show everyone that PGPSRA is a vital part of the state organization. We have several members who participate on the state level. This year, our own Bonnie Brose is running for President-Elect of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association. It is important to be there to support Bonnie. Should she be elected, she would be following in the steps of other Prince George's County members who served as presidents ... most recently Bob Miller (2000-2001) and Ethel Shafer (1992-1993).

Strong leadership on the state level will serve our organization well during these tough economic times. We wish Bonnie much success as she aspires to this new position of leadership.

DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER ECHOES

August 1, 2009

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

PGPSRA MEETING / LUNCHEON

DATE: May 27, 2009
TIME: 11:00 a.m. – meeting
11:45 – buffet
12:35 – program
PLACE: La Fontaine Bleu
7963 Annapolis Road
Lanham MD. 20706
301.731.4333
COST: \$25.00 per person

This important meeting includes the election and installation of officers for the coming year. The guest speaker at this meeting will be Maryland Teacher of the Year, Mr. William Thomas.

Please send your check, payable to PGPSRA, for the appropriate amount to Dr. Edward Vest, Treasurer; 7908 Klovstad Drive, Fort Washington, MD 20744-1729.

The reservation deadline is May 20, 2009.

RESERVATION FORM

Name: _____

Lunches Ordered: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Names of Guests: _____

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

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

DATED MATERIAL

**PESORTED STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT # 3070
WASHINGTON DC**

**MEMBERSHIP MEETING &
LUNCHEON**

May 27, 2009
La Fontaine Bleu
11:00 a.m. - Business Meeting
12:00 - Luncheon

Reservations Due - May 20th

2009

Do more than belong, participate.

Do more than care, help.