



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

XXXXV No.2

November 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's that time of year again! A new season of cool evenings and cooler days is on the way. For the members of PGPSRA, a fresh, new year is underway.

On Wednesday, September 28th, we had our first membership meeting and what a meeting it was! Dr. William Hite, the Superintendent of Schools for Prince George's County, was our guest speaker, and Dan Williams and John Sisson provided musical entertainment.

Sometimes it seems as if the broadcast and print media in our area go out of their way to find something negative they can say about our county and its school system. Well, if you weren't at the meeting, you should have been. For about forty-five minutes Dr. Hite talked the successes of our school system *in the face of nearly unprecedented challenges*.

Some of the information Dr. Hite passed on: There are 126,000 students this year. The percent of students graduating in four years has increased from 73% to 77% and the percentage of students graduating in a 5-year period is even higher. Over the last few years the percentage of students passing the reading and math tests has risen from 54% & 40%, respectively to 80% and 70%, respectively. Graduates of PGCP's Class of 2011 received some \$89,000,000 in college scholarships – scholarships to attend colleges from the Ivy League, to the deep South, to the West Coast. PGCP's recently received a \$12.5 million grant to train, develop and support

new school administrators. Nine publicly-funded charter schools were established in the county; two have been closed and seven remain. These seven are being watched very carefully to determine if they are delivering a quality educational experience for their students. These seven charter schools receive the exact same per student financial support as the regular public schools and they have to meet the same academic standards and testing programs.

Dr. Hite discussed four new academic programs in PGCP's:

1. A Health Science program has been established at Prince George's Community College. One hundred ninth graders attend class there. Each succeeding year, another 100 ninth graders will be added.
2. An Information Technology program has been established at Fairmount Heights HS where the students are taught by the school system's IT professionals and get to work side-by-side with them. At the end of the students' first year they should have their Microsoft Certification and by the time they graduate from high school, they are expected to be qualified to pursue college studies in IT or to go straight into the world of IT work.
3. At Parkdale HS, Capital One Bank has established an in-the-school bank totally operated by ten Parkdale students. The selected students spent all of last

summer receiving training at the Capital One headquarters.

1. A dual-enrollment program has been established between Oxon Hill HS and the School of Engineering at the University of Maryland in College Park. At the end of two years, the enrolled students will receive their high school diploma, their Associates Degree diploma, and will have sixteen credits toward their Bachelor's Degree.

As you can tell, good things are happening in PGCPs, and Dr. Hite was wonderful. I hope we can open each year with remarks from the Superintendent.

Dan Williams and John Sisson were simply amazing. From solos to duets, from instrumentals to sing-alongs, these two men were true entertainers-in-their-element. Enthusiastic applause from the audience closed each musical selection and seemed to say, "Give us another one!"

A calendar of worthwhile meetings has been planned for the year. On November 16, Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker, III will be our guest at the Greenbelt American Legion Post. I believe this will be the first time a Prince George's County Executive has attended one of our meetings. We are so very glad he has agreed to be our speaker and to take some questions from the attendees.

On January 18, Maryland State Treasurer Nancy Kopp will be the guest speaker at our meeting at PGCEA. In addition to being the Treasurer, Mrs. Kopp is the Chairwoman of the State's Retirement and Pension System Board of Trustees. She, too, has agreed to answer some questions posed by attendees following her remarks. A

second guest that day will be our very good friend, Lewis Robinson, the Executive Director of PGCEA.

At our March 28th meeting at PGCEA, we hope to have representatives from the Maryland State Insurance Commission speak to us about issues of insurance.

We hope to wind up the year on May 23rd at La Fontaine Bleu in New Carrollton, and hopefully the Iverson Mall Dance Troupe will provide the entertainment. This group performs regularly across the capital region to broad acclaim, and we look forward to having them that day.

I hope each of you has gotten the message: If you're not coming to our meetings, you're missing out! Peace!

Carl Lancaster, President

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report for September 2011

Opening Balances:

Checking Account	\$26377.88
Savings Account	3020.83

Activity:

Checking Account	
Receipts	924.89
Expenditures	1063.58

No Activity on Savings Account

Balances as of September 30:

Checking Account	26239.19
Savings Account	3020.83
Total Assets	29260.02

E. Vest, Treasurer

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Maryland has “found” about \$800 million in the past few months, mostly due to higher than expected income tax payments. Yet, State Comptroller Franchot has warned that the money should not be spent immediately, given the economic uncertainty regarding expected additional Federal budget cuts.

The Maryland General Assembly is planning to hold a short special session beginning October 17th, to redraw legislative districts and discuss new revenue sources. The state used Transportation and Land Preservation Funds for other purposes last year and is now issuing bonds to cover some capital expenses usually paid with tax revenue. Neil Bergsman, political analyst, has commended Governor O’Malley’s understanding that a cuts-only approach to the coming year’s budget will jeopardize investments in Maryland’s future; instead Maryland must also include increased revenue in budget planning. One thing that is being discussed quietly is an increase of one cent in the state sales tax. Because Maryland has kept \$600 million in a reserve fund, the state retains its AAA bond rating.

In September House Speaker Michael Busch noted that the state has two mandates: to balance the budget and fund equitable education. (4.75% of the state budget is allotted to basic education; this is more than any other state designates.) Medicaid is funded on a 50/50 basis between the Federal government and the state. If the Federal government cuts the funds for Medicaid and the Emergency Energy Fund (which they have threatened to do), Maryland is going to have to transfer funds from the Transportation Fund again. As you have likely heard, the toll on the Bay Bridge, along with other toll bridges and roads, increases on November 1st. This money

will be used exclusively for the maintenance of the bridges and roads where it is collected.

Prince George’s County has retained its AAA bond rating from three rating houses that examine local government finances. This is great news, indicating that the county’s financial stability is ranked better than that of the Federal government, whose credit rating was downgraded after the August stalemate over government spending and the federal deficit. County Executive Rushern Baker has indicated that the county will be able to borrow money at a lower interest rate, allowing for additional funding of some services and programs that were previously reduced.

It is important that we continue to remind our legislators **NOT** to shift the pension funding to the counties or reduce the COLA formula for retirees, and to return the Maryland State Pension System from Corridor Funding to the Full Actuarial Funding method.

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Co-Chair

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The Nominations Committee is looking for members interested in holding an office in PGPSRA in 2012 – 2013. We need to fill the position of Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary. Names of all nominees should be submitted to Chairperson Bonnie Brose. Elections will be held in March with the installation at the May meeting.

Bonnie Brose, Chair

**STAY CONNECTED!
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT**

www.pgpsra.org

COMMUNITY SERVICE

WANTED: WARM NEW COATS!

The Community Service Committee wants to provide warm new coats for some of our county's most vulnerable public school children. We are looking for coats in sizes that fit children aged six to fourteen. Our plan is to distribute the coats before the winter break.

We are asking you, our fellow PGPSRA members, to consider the need and donate a coat to this project. Coats will be collected at our meeting on November 16th, or you may contact a Community Service member for a pick-up. Monetary donations will be accepted as well. Thank you for your help with this drive.

Courtney Pringle, Newsletter Writer

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

All five of the 2011 scholarship awardees are enrolled in their respective colleges. (See May *ECHOES*.) Our committee members will keep in touch with them. Furthermore, Jessica Johnson, a recipient in 2008, received a B.S. in Music Education from Fiske University and is in the Master's program at Tennessee State University. She and her mother express thanks to our organization for our support.

Thanks to all who support the committee with donations and buying raffle tickets.

Alveta S. Jones, Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The opening session of the recent MRSPA Convention focused on "Membership Essentials: How to get them, keep them, and thank them."

Numbers do count, and we are pleased to welcome six new members to PGPSRA and look forward to their taking an active role in this organization.

They are as follows:

Antoinette Andolfatto
Sharon E. Bowen
Miriam Milam
Gwendolyn Myers
Margaret C. Thorne
Harry D. White

Lorraine Johnson, Chairperson

CONVENTION 2011

PGPSRA was well represented at the MRSPA Convention, held at Wisp Resort in McHenry, Maryland, September 13–15. Twenty-four of our members attended. On Thursday our delegation met for lunch together at the Santa Fe Grill. It was a time of good food, fun, and fellowship.

The workshops conducted addressed such topics as leadership, membership benefits, insurance, technology, and the pension fund. It was good to learn that the pension fund gained 20.4% this year. On the final day of the convention, members wrote cards to their state legislators asking for their support in maintaining our pension benefits.

There was also time for dining, dancing, and games. Our own Lorraine Johnson was one of the vendors, displaying her book of poetry. The culminating activity was a trip to Fallingwater, a widely acclaimed home which Frank Lloyd Wright designed in southwest Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands. The name of the home was quite descriptive of the day on which we visited, but the tour was well worth the effort.

Gretel T. James, President-Elect

MARYLAND SENIOR CITIZENS HONOREES

It is with pleasure and pride that we announce the recent induction of two members of our PGPSRA into the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of fame. They are **Dr. Edward Vest** and **Mr. Robert LaFollette**. These gentlemen were selected as outstanding senior volunteers from many nominees throughout the state.

Dr. Edward (Ed) Vest retired from Prince George's County Public Schools as vice-principal of Crossland High School in 1998. He has served on the PGPSRA Board of Directors for the past eight years as our very competent Treasurer. After presenting the Treasurer's Report at each meeting, Dr. Vest always ends with a joke (to help the medicine go down). He is also the person who welcomes attendees to each meeting with a cheerful greeting, while handing out printed name tags and confirming reservations. He has served on the Consumer Education Committee and is the keeper of our PGPSRA Listserve, sending out computer messages of concern to members. Dr. Vest holds life memberships in the National Education Association (NEA), the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA), and the Maryland Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students. He is an active member of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA), and belongs to the Maryland Association of Secondary Principals, National Association of Secondary Principals, Maryland State Educators Association, and the Cistern Society (College of Charleston, S.C.).

Dr. Vest is a charter member of the National Council - Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD) - The George Washington University (GWU), Washington, D.C. There he is a volunteer for numerous activities at both GWU and GSEHD, participating with committees, panels, publications, student orientations, and commencement exercises. He has held offices on the Board of Directors of GWU Alumni Association, and continues as an engaged member. Ed has participated in GWU Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa since

1965, and has been awarded the status of Executive Director Emeritus. Other organizations in which he actively participates are the Luther Rice Society, The Heritage Society, The Tempietto Circle of the Heritage Society, and the Alumni Emeriti Society.

Dr. Vest and his wife, Lucia, have established the Vest Family Fellowship in the GSEHD at GWU, to award scholarships for graduate students preparing for a career in public education. Ed and Lucia established the Johnson-Vest Family Scholarship at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina, for students studying the classics, with special emphasis on students who are preparing to teach Latin in the public schools.

Ed is a friendly, energetic fellow, always willing to lend a hand in any situation. He and Lucia have a home in Fort Washington, on several acres of land, covered with a variety of flowers and trees, and a large garden in season. His presence is an asset to his neighborhood and the county, where he has served as an Election Judge for many years.

Mr. Robert (Bob) LaFollette retired from the Prince George's Public School System in 1986, having taught chemistry and photography at Northwestern High School, and math and photography at Bladensburg High School. He also worked for nine years in the Audiovisual/Library Services Office, doing most of the photography for the Board of Education's publications and publicity.

Following his retirement Bob became quite involved in the Homeowners' Association of Woodstream Village in Seabrook. In 2005, he and his wife, Gayle, moved to the Fairhaven Continuing Care Retirement Community in Sykesville, MD. Sadly, Gayle passed away shortly afterward. Bob has one son and daughter and three grandchildren.

Mr. LaFollette has served on the Fairhaven Residents' Association Board of Directors. He is Chair of the Computer/Photography group, and participates with several other committees and volunteer projects. He has set up a Residents' Website, used and enjoyed by many residents. Mr. LaFollette has spent the past six years volunteering in a variety of

capacities in the Fairhaven Community, where many residents have benefited from his generous spirit. He brought his passion for photography with him to Fairhaven. There he has become the photographic recorder of the community's successes, accomplishments, celebrations, and aspects of the day-to-day life of the residents. Bob has been an advocate in ensuring that these photographic images are captured and honored by displaying them in attractive, accessible settings. Through this volunteer work, he validates the significance of each individual at Fairhaven. He does not hesitate to readjust his daily schedule to accommodate and record the many events of the retirement community.

During his free time, Mr. LaFollette has enjoyed cruises to Alaska, Hawaii, Panama, and the Caribbean, and has made frequent trips to his home state of Indiana to visit family and friends.

PRIZE WINNERS
September 28th Meeting

Grand Door Prize
M. Rowena Jackson

Scholarship Raffle (50/50)
Ruby Gross

*Special thanks to Ms. Gross who
donated half of her winnings to the
Scholarship Fund*

BITS AND PIECES

Congratulations to Dr. Alan and Mrs. Chotiner of College Park, who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on October 3, 2011.

Happy **November** birthday wishes to Mrs. Julia Derry of Charlottesville, VA, who will be celebrating her 99th birthday on the 28th.

Happy **December** birthday greetings to Mrs. Nana Bush of Maryville, TN, who will be marking her 92nd birthday on the 16th; to Dr. Dale Woodburn of College

Park, who will celebrate his 92nd birthday on the 17th; to Mrs. Josephine Marzetti of Catonsville, MD, who is having her 93rd birthday on the 24th; and to Mrs. Annie Barbour of Indian Head, MD, who will be 96 years old on the 28th!

Bonnie Gill retired from Friendly High School in 1996 and moved to Lexington, Kentucky. She enjoys playing Bridge (plain and duplicate) and swimming on a regular basis. She loves bus trips that go all over the country. As a volunteer, Bonnie works with the Reclaiming Futures organization, where she mentors one teenager at a time from his/her appearance in drug court through graduation from a designated drug program. She also tutors first grade students in reading at a local elementary school. Helping to beautify her city, Bonnie works with the Master Gardening program. On a very happy note, Bonnie has one son, who is engaged to be married next year.

Godelieve Bartley of Upper Marlboro retired from H.W. Wheatley Special Center. Since then she has served as secretary for the Prince George's Chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), taught Dutch to graduate students at the University of Maryland, and has been a volunteer docent and liaison/interpreter of Dutch and Flemish at Riversdale House in Riverdale. This past summer Godlieve spent a month in Belgium visiting relatives and friends, where she also hosted two historians associated with the Riversdale House Museum. As a guide and interpreter, she showed them the many historic architectural and artistic splendors of cities, castles, and historic museums in the countryside. In December Godlieve and her husband will visit their son, his wife, and special friends in Los Angeles, then depart for a two-week cruise to the Hawaiian Islands to celebrate the wedding anniversaries of all three couples.

Dr. Caril Price, former pupil personnel worker, moved to Florida following her retirement in 2004, to be near her son James (Jeff) Gilliea. Sadly, Jeff passed away in April 2009, following a lengthy illness. Caril now lives in Lake Worth, FL. Travel, reading, music, and water sports remain her major interests. She would enjoy hearing from friends and former co-workers.

Donald Conway retired in 1995 as a physical education teacher from Ridgecrest Elementary. Don is a devoted member of the American Volkssports Association, walking many miles each year. His summer activities and travels included the Alumni Weekend at Delaware State University in Dover in May, the 17th Biennial American Volkssports Association in Iowa in June, where he participated in six walks (Council Bluffs, Coon Rapids, Clear Lake, Mason City, Urbandale, & Winterset), attendance at three College World Series games in Omaha, Nebraska, in June, and attendance at the Jerry Malloy Negro Leagues Conference in July in Indianapolis, Indiana. He had a very interesting and educational summer. Don and his wife Joyce, a Montgomery County teacher, live in Beltsville. They have one son and one grandson.

To contribute to BITS AND PIECES, please contact Jannette Wundrow at jannettewundrow@comcast.net.



REMEMBRANCE / NECROLOGY

Pete Patrick Klapps	7 - 21 - 11
Edna Meads	9 - 27 - 11
Horace M. Mann	8 - 13 - 11
Parthenia S. Pruden	8 - 13 - 11
William B. Smith	

Jannie Goldston, Chairperson

PGPSRA MEETING/LUNCHEON

Date: November 16, 2011
 Time: 11:00 a.m.
 Place: Greenbelt American Legion Post 136
 6900 Greenbelt Rd.
 Greenbelt, MD
 Cost: \$14.00

The luncheon menu is as follows: Baked meat loaf, stuffed chicken breast, mashed potatoes, green beans, tossed salad, assorted beverages, and dessert.

To make your luncheon reservation, 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 November 9, 2011.

LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM	
Name:	_____
Lunches Ordered:	_____
Amount Enclosed:	_____
Names of Guests:	_____

*WITH SINCERE WISHES FOR
 PEACE, HAPPINESS, AND JOY
 DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON*

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE OF
 ECHOES**

December 1, 2011
ahutchinson00@hotmail.com

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

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

DATED MATERIAL

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

**MEMBERSHIP MEETING &
LUNCHEON**

November 16, 2011
Greenbelt American Legion Post 136
11:00 a.m.

Reservations Due - November 9

**Coat Drive donations will be
accepted at the November
meeting.**