

ECHOES

Vol. LVI No. 2

The Prince George's Public School Retirees Association Newsletter

November 2021

PGPSRA Founded and Established June 18, 1964



From the President,

As we have been moving through 2021, signs of normalcy have begun to appear all over. Likely due to COVID-19 and the disruptions it has imposed on us, our membership took a serious hit this year. We lost quite a few members since all this began some eighteen months ago. Slowly but surely, we are coming back.

I want to again thank each of you for being members of The Prince George's Public School Retirees Association (PGPSRA). I appreciate your participation in this adventure that none of us thought we would ever have to do. We could not do this as individuals. Remember, our public pensions are not a handout. We earned it!

For quite some time, we have been accustomed to having our temperature taken as we enter a public building to see if we may have the virus we are not aware of. It might be a good idea to check the temperature of PGPSRA to see if we're still a healthy organization. After all, we've not been seeing people for a while as we usually do. But, is our work getting done?

My assessment is that PGPSRA is a healthy body, but health maintenance is important. As members we must:

Continue to pay our dues.

Continue to read newsletters and other communications and respond appropriately.

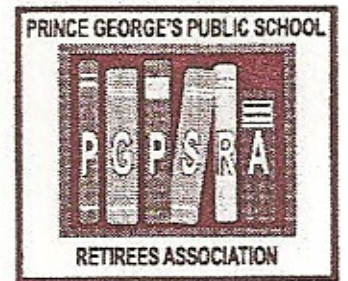
Continue to be responsible for doing our homework to understand the issues.

No matter what the circumstances, let's work together to keep PGPSRA a healthy organization.

I again thank Dr. Donna Christy, President of Prince George's County Education Association (PGCEA) for providing welcoming remarks at our September meeting. She also agreed to provide meeting space for us at the PGCEA Building. I thank Dr. Rudolph Saunders, Director of Transportation for providing us with information regarding the shortage of bus drivers and the PGCPSS transportation issues and how we can assist.

Until we see each other again, stay safe and stay well. We will get through this together.

Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms



President's Report	1
Officers/Committees	2
Membership	3
Treasurer's Report	4
Remembrance	4
Bits and Pieces	5
Community Service	6
Legislative	6
Meal Reservation	7
Remembrance	7



**Benefits
Updates – 2021-2022**

Open Enrollment was from October 11, 2021 (Monday) thru October 27, 2021 (Wednesday). If you made any changes on the list of services below, they won't be effective until **January 1, 2022.**

***Dental** – Aetna

***Prescription** - Caremark
(younger than 65)

Silverscript
(Medicare)

***Hospitalization/Vision** – Care-
First (BCBS)/ Kaiser
Permanente

During Open Enrollment: You were able to:

***Switch between plans (Carefirst to Kaiser or vice versa).**

***Drop dependents. You could not add dependents.**

***Drop dependents even after Open Enrollment.**

Once you become Medicare eligible (at age 65) and you are enrolled in Carefirst, Medicare becomes primary and Carefirst is secondary.

If you are enrolled in Kaiser Permanente, then Medicare becomes your primary.

When a retiree passes and is enrolled in benefits (medical, prescription, dental, vision or life insurance) contact the PGCPB Benefits Office (301)-952-6600.

**Addie Martin
(301)-868-6081**

**Caring
for a
healthy
future**



Officers and Committee Chairs of PGPSRA

President: Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms
(obridge@verizon.net)

President-Elect: William Barnes (billbarnes2011@gmail.com)

Past President/Nominating: George Denny

Recording Sec.: Gretel James (gret22@verizon.net)

Treasurer: Dr. Edward Vest (homevest552@comcast.net)

Corr. Secretary: Courtney Pringle (pringc@aol.com)

Auditing: Susan Fortgang (sfort@msn.com) & Leah Fowble (pepper3495@aol.com)

BOE Liaison: Addie Martin (amartin668@aol.com)

Bylaws: MaryLouise J. Isbell (maryi32@verizon.net)

Comm. Service: Courtney Pringle (pringc@aol.com)

Consumer Ed.: Norma Martof (nmartof@verizon.net)

Historian: Don Conway (donconway5@icloud.com)

Inspirations: Dan Williams (hapycmprs@mac.com)

Legislation: Sue Finan (sfinan77@gmail.com)

Membership: Maryann M. Royall (maryakaroyall@aol.com)

Newsletter: Bonnie Brose (bcbrose@comcast.net)

Programs: Bonnie Brose and Norma Martof

Webmaster/Parliamentarian: Dr. William Brose
(wmbrose@comcast.net)

Recognition: Vacant

Remembrance: Jayne Johns (jaynejohns@verizon.net) and
Linda Butler (lidab127@verizon.net)

Scholarships: Vera J. Davis (301 452 350) & Brenda Barnes

Trips: Addie Martin (amartin668@aol.com)



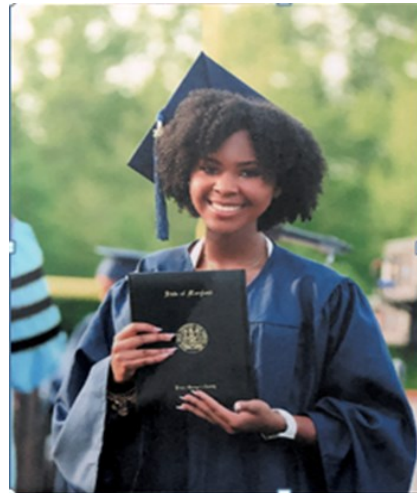
SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

Scholarship News

Please consider donating to our education scholarship fund this year. We anticipate more students majoring in education will apply this year since they are back in the building interacting with their counselors. Applications will be available in December. Here are a few words from our 2021-22 recipients. They each received \$1000.00.

London Jenkins graduated from Prince George's Community College receiving her Assoc.Degree and High School diploma. She will major in Early Childhood Education.

College is going well for me. I am getting quite adjusted to my classes as well as my dormitory life. Being in teacher preparation classes has really opened up my eyes about the wonderful experience of this opportunity. Thank you so much.



I am a Double Major in Music Education and Music Performance here at UMD(**University of Maryland College Park**) and I love it! It definitely is a lot of work, but it is a journey I am ready to embark on. This has been an incredible experience so far from living in the dorms, eating in dining halls, and in person classes; things that would be otherwise normal but in recent circumstances with COVID, are a huge blessing. Just wanted to say thanks again for helping me achieve my goals with your financial assistance and warm words of guidance.

Hope to see you all soon.

Brenda Barnes, Chairman



THANK YOU

Members at the September meeting were pleased to be joined by the new President of PGCEA, Dr. Donna Christy. Dr. Christy brought us up to date with information about the Association and noted PGCEA's planned continuance of our organizations working together in support of educators—retired and current. Thank you, Dr. Christy!



TREASURER'S REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2021

OPENING BALANCES:

Checking Account	\$38424.12
Savings Account	126.86

ACTIVITY – CHECKING ACCOUNT

Receipts	820.20
Expenditures	1483.67

NO ACTIVITY IN SAVINGS ACCOUNT

CLOSING BALANCES:

Checking Account	37760.65
Savings Account	126.86
TOTAL ASSETS	\$37887.51

Respectfully submitted,
Edward N. Vest

REMEMBRANCE

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Clavelina Lea Sarmiento | 08/03/21 |
| Ronald Seibert | 03/16/20 |
| Dennis Cope | 08/23/21 |
| Bonolyn K. Snyder. | 05/23/21 |
| Herman Frederick | 08/31/21 |
| Seymour Zucker | 01/08/21 |

Submitted by Jayne Johns and
Linda Butler, Co-Chairs

CALENDAR FOR 2021-2022

September 22

November 17

January 26

March 23

May 18

All meetings except for May will be at PGCEA

May's meeting will be at the Comfort Inn



Bits and Pieces

Happy **NOVEMBER** birthday wishes to several of our Emeritus members: two of whom will be celebrating on the 11th - Ms. Phyllis Cabbage of Albuquerque, N.M. will be turning 94 years-old, and Mrs. Elizabeth Proctor of Upper Marlboro, will be reaching her 90th year; Mrs. Pauline Staggers of Largo will be having her 95th birthday on the 13th; Mrs. Dorothy Sojourner of Silver Spring will be marking her 99th birthday on the 18th; Ms Elizabeth Kibler of Greenbelt will be celebrating her 95th birthday on the 21st; Mr. Donald Kiah of Punta Gorda, FL. will be having his 95th birthday on the 23rd; and Ms. Elizabeth Picciotto of Deale will be observing her 92nd birthday on the 25th.

Happy **DECEMBER** birthday greetings to other Emeritus members: Mrs. Dorothy Tupper of Beltsville will be having her 97th birthday on the 6th; Mrs. Rennie Quible of Dover, DE. will be marking her 97th birthday on the 14th; Mrs. Isabella MacPherson of Salisbury will be reaching her 91st birthday on the 18th; Ms. Erma Sarahan of College Park will be turning 96 years-old on the 27th; and Ms. Mary White of Dayton, MD. will be observing her 97th birthday on the 31st.

Deborah Davis retired from Martin Luther King Middle School in 2012, as a teacher of World Languages and AV-ID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) and coordinator for interns for the University of Maryland. She moved to the Hilton Head, S.C. area immediately after retirement. There she substituted for two years, then became an ESOL teacher at Bluffton High School for the next six years. Now that Deborah has retired again, she is enjoying her friends, family, and travel. She has taken short trips to small towns, attending local festivals in S.C., N.C., and Florida. Also, Deborah, her sister, and a cousin have developed an interest in genealogy. They have learned of interesting, exciting adventures of their ancestors – even reading letters they have found that were written during the Gold Rush era. Following the down-turning of Covid, Deborah hopes to volunteer making a difference in people's lives and that of animals trapped in ocean pollution. She has two sons and four grandchildren – all boys!

Gela Brooks of Upper Marlboro, retired in 2001 after a 31-year teaching career that included Lakeland, Paint Branch, Arrowhead, and Mattaponi elementary schools. After several years of volunteering and substituting, she was hired to assist the reading teacher/test coordinator at Northview Elementary. Since leaving Northview, Gela has enjoyed working at her church in administration and with the hospitality and missions ministries. Among her hobbies are reading, working jigsaw and crossword puzzles, exercising and attending antique car shows where her husband of 49 years, Ron, displays his 1931 Model A Ford. Because she loves theater, Gela holds season tickets to Arena Stage and occasionally travels to New York for a Broadway play. A main interest of Gela's is traveling, and she has visited since retirement: Miami, Orlando, and St. Augustine, FL.; New Orleans, LA.; Mt. Rushmore, SD; Montreal, and Toronto, Canada; Savannah, GA.; Niagara Falls, NY; Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine in New England; Myrtle Beach, SC; and participated in a Civil Rights Tour, which included the southern cities of Atlanta, Birmingham, Tuskegee, Selma, Montgomery, Memphis, and Little Rock.

***To contribute to BITS & PIECES, contact: JannetteWundrow@comcast.net or 301-390-7324

COMMUNITY SERVICE

HIP, HIP, HURRAY!

OUR COMMUNITY SERVICE "SAGE" GROUP continues its work of collaborating with our respective schools to help students and teachers continue to be the best they can be in school during this 2021 Covid-19 Pandemic year. The schools receiving this help are Tayac Elementary, Brandywine Elementary, Glass Manor Elementary, Forest Heights Elementary, and Surrattsville High School.

The Community Service members continue to forge ahead during these trying times to satisfy the request of their respective schools. We ask that the general body continue to work with us as we endeavor to strive for excellence in executing this mission.

We continue to welcome new members.

**Courtney Pringle
Community Service, Chairperson**



LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE



Great news from The Maryland State Retirement and Pension System is that the pension fund's fiscal year-to-date performance as of May 31, 2021, was 24.65%, adding nearly \$12 billion in assets under management since the end of the last fiscal year. Full audited investment results will be posted online when available.

MRSPA Legislative Priorities for 2022: R. Dean Kenderdine Executive Director of Maryland State Retirement Agency retired July 1. The new director is Martin Noven. Once again, I encourage everyone to sign up on the state retirement agency website. Simply visit sra.maryland.gov and in the top right of the webpage, click on my SRPS Login. Click Register and follow the instructions. This site will answer your retirement questions.

including:

Addressing the rising cost of long-term care insurance

Support programs which strengthen the ability of seniors to better navigate the internet.

Protect citizens voting rights.

Support services to help adults age in place with a good quality of life.

Continue to protect our defined benefit pensions.

Please continue to visit the MRSPA.org website for up-to-date information.

DuVal's Adrin Leak Named Prince George's Teacher of the Year



Congratulations to DuVal High School English teacher Adrin Leak for being named Prince George's County Public Schools Teacher of the Year for 2021-2022. Ms. Leak was selected for her dedication, initiative, creativity and superior ability to inspire. We will be inviting Ms. Leak to join us at an upcoming General Meeting.



Thank You!

Also at our September meeting, we were pleased to have Dr. Rudolph Sanders join us. Dr. Sanders explained to us the difficulties with Transportation that have been a part of the opening of our schools in this age of COVID-19. He assures us that the difficulties with acquiring bus drivers and re-doing the bus routes is being worked on and our children are safe and getting to and from school. We appreciate the hard work of everyone in our schools at this difficult time.

RESERVATIONS FOR NOVEMBER

Our November 17th General Membership meeting will be held virtually once more. Due to the continuing issues with the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to "distance" it is felt that we should be cautious and not try to meet in person, just yet.

You must let Dr. Ed Vest know that you plan to attend! Please email him your name and email address no later than November 10th. You will be added to the list of attendees and you will then receive the invitation to join the meeting that will be opened at 11 a.m. You will receive the agenda for the meeting by email.

Ed Vesthomevest552@comcast.net

We hope you will be able to join us!

PGPSRA

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We're on the web!
www.pgpsra.org

VISIT THESE WEBSITES www.MRSPA.org and www.PGPSRA.org

If you have not already done so,
send your email address to Dr. Vest

To get the latest, quickest news.