



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXXV No. 1

September 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome back and thank you for your membership in the Prince George's Public School Retirees Association. You are an important member in an organization which includes only former employees of the Prince George's County Public Schools; hence, as you well can imagine, PGPSRA is focused on what's happening in PGCPSS and in Prince George's County.

Last year was an exciting one as PGPSRA's Community Service Committee led by Delores Brown organized several, successful activities for the benefit of students in need and the general school community. PGPSRA's Scholarship Committee under the able leadership of Alveta Jones awarded \$10,000 to five deserving high school seniors who are planning to pursue a career in teaching. PGPSRA's Legislative Committee under the leadership of Jannette Wundrow was present in Annapolis and actively engaged with legislators from Prince George's County this past November, January, February and March.

While several changes were made to the Retirement and Pension Systems for individuals not yet retired during last winter's legislative session, Maryland Attorney General Douglas Gansler advised the legislature that under the Maryland Constitution, it could not reduce or eliminate cost-of-living benefits for retirees which were guaranteed to them by the state both during their working career and during their period of retirement.

Recently the legislature's Pension Affordability Task Force voted to request a formal opinion from the Attorney General on the question of COLAs for retirees.

On October 17 the Legislature will convene in Special Session to deal with legislative redistricting. During the Special Session, it is quite possible that the leadership of the Maryland Senate will attempt once again to reduce or eliminate COLAs for retired teachers. PGPSRA will be advocating for the maintenance of retiree benefits for which we contributed a percentage of our salary throughout our teaching careers.

On October 20, two PGPSRA members, Dr. Edward Vest and Bob LaFollette, will be inducted into the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. Both Ed and Bob had outstanding careers in the PGCPSS system and are noted for their dedication to the welfare of others. Many of us will be in attendance to congratulate them on their induction.

Included in this issue of ECHOES is a roster of our committees, the chairpersons and their contact information. If there is a committee you wish to join, please feel free to contact the chairperson and volunteer your service or contact me. Members are always welcome to help move our organization forward. Your individual membership in PGPSRA and MRSPA is an invaluable asset. If you have friends that have not joined, urge them to do so today. Remind them that PGPSRA and MRSPA are the only organizations that represent their interests first and foremost!

Elsewhere in this issue you will find a calendar of this year's PGPSRA membership meetings. Dr. Hite, PGCPSS Superintendent of Schools, will be our guest speaker at the September 28th meeting at PGCEA in Forestville. Additionally, attendees will be able to enjoy some musical entertainment by our own Dan Williams. I hope to see you there. Registration information is located elsewhere in this issue of ECHOES.

Carl Lancaster, President

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Maryland was facing a \$1.6 billion budget deficit as of January 1, 2011. One of the ways the General Assembly used to close this deficit was to increase the alcohol tax from 6% to 9%. Rather than shifting a portion of the pension costs to the counties this year, the legislature imposed a “fee” of \$163 per active teacher in each county, supposedly to cover administrative costs of the retirement/pension fund; however, the “fee” is paid into the state’s General Fund!

There were several retirement changes made for active and newly hired teachers in the state including an increased pension contribution rate of 7% (up from 5%), a multiplier of 1.3% (down from 1.8%) of the highest FIVE years of salary (instead of the highest three years), a capped COLA of 2.5%, and a requirement that individuals must acquire 90 points to retire (i.e.: age 60 and 30 years of teaching) --- and, consequently, retirement pensions will be lower.

Unfortunately, because Prince George’s County will receive considerably fewer dollars from the state in their 2012 budget, approximately 200 educational staff positions will be eliminated. Sadly, because the county did not have the funds to fight the legal ruling made by the Department of Labor concerning the visas of the Filipino teachers who have been hired since 2005, 161 special education, math and science teachers must return to the Philippines. The good news is that the Federal funding for almost 2400 Head Start positions in Maryland that Congress had threatened to eliminate was restored in a final vote. Representatives Steny Hoyer and Donna Edwards, along with Senator Barbara Mikulski, played a large part in that turn around.

Maryland passed a “Dream Act” law this past General Assembly session to extend in-state college tuition fees to undocumented immigrants who have lived for at least three years in Maryland, graduated from state high schools, provided family tax returns for the last five years, completed two years of study at a community college, and then entered a four-year college program. Because some citizens objected to this idea, the law has been put on hold for at least a year. There will be a question about the validity of the law on the November 2012 election ballot. When voting on it, please consider that the majority of the students who would be affected by it did NOT come to Maryland alone. Most of them were brought here by their parents when they were very young. They have attended

schools with success and are now planning to enter college. By earning a college degree they will become productive contributing citizens to Maryland’s future. Without the benefit of in-state tuition, many will likely end up as low-wage earners, not college graduates.

The Maryland General Assembly is planning to hold a short special session beginning October 17, 2011, to redraw legislative districts and discuss new revenue sources. Feel free to contact your legislators with your suggestions of ways to raise state monies.

And, then, because a law was passed permitting you to do so, you may order a case of wine from out of state!

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Co-Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer’s Report for July 2011

Beginning Balances:	
Checking Account	\$11294.31
Savings Account	3020.45

Activity in Checking Account	
Receipts	795.90
Expenditures	300.00

Activity in Savings Account	
Interest	0.38

Balance as of July 31, 2011	
Checking Account	11790.21
Savings Account	3020.83

Total Assets	\$14811.04
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E. Vest, Treasurer

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Hello everyone! Welcome to a brand new year of service by the members of the Community Service Committee to those in need in our Prince George's County public schools.

We have a number of familiar projects planned for the ensuing 2011 – 2012 year. From September through November we will collect school supplies such as notebooks, pens, pencils, etc., along with small articles of clothing and toiletries. During that same period we will collect new coats in varying sizes for elementary and middle school children. Donations will be accepted at our meetings, or you may contact our committee chairperson to make other arrangements. Again, we shall donate share baskets containing fresh foods at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. In the spring elementary children will be taken shoe shopping for new shoes of their own choice. Finally, we shall end our projects by offering financial assistance with prom and graduation fees to homeless high school seniors.

Fellow PGPSRA members, you can see we have a vigorous agenda for the year. With your continued support, our organization can continue to shine a bright light both in our county and in our state.

Courtney Pringle, Newsletter Writer

PRIZE WINNERS MAY 25TH MEETING

**Scholarship Raffle (50/50)
Marguerite Simpson**

**Grand Door Prize
Greta Garrett**

**KEEP UP WITH THE NEWS!
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
www.pgpsra.org**

PGPSRA CALENDAR: 2011- 2012

- September 7: Executive Mtg. -- 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- September 13 – 15: MRSPA Convention**
(Tu. – Th.) Wisp Resort
- September 28: General Mtg. -- 11:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- October 20: MD Senior Citizens Hall of Fame
Induction**
(Thur.) Dr. Ed Vest & Bob LaFollette
Michael's Eighth Avenue
- November 2: Executive Mtg. – 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- November 16: General Mtg. – 11:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) American Post 135
6900 Greenbelt Rd., Greenbelt, MD
- January 4: Executive Mtg. – 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- January 25: General Mtg. – 11:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- March 7: Executive Mtg. – 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- March 28: General Mtg. – 11:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- May 2: Executive Mtg. – 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- May 8: MRSPA Annual Meeting**
(Wed.) Michael's Eighth Avenue
- May 23: General Mtg. – 11:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) Lafontaine Bleu
7963 Annapolis Rd., Lanham, MD 20707
- June 6: Executive Mtg. – 10:00 a. m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center

FIVE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED MAY 2011

Five PGPSRA memorial scholarships of \$2000.00 will be given to students entering college this fall who plan to enter the teaching profession. Each student had to meet the following requirements: (a) be a graduate of a Prince George's County public high school; (b) plan to major in education; (c) have at least a 3.0 GPA; (d) submit two letters of recommendation, one from a faculty member; and (e) submit a one-page essay explaining his/her intended contribution to the teaching profession.

Ten graduating seniors from Prince George's County applied for the five scholarships – the highest number we've ever received. In addition, there were five applications from students from Charles and Anne Arundel Counties whose parents work as police officers in Prince George's County. However, in the review process, four applications were found to be incomplete. Thus, six persons were invited for the interview in March.

Four students came for the interview, and each was awarded a \$2000.00 scholarship to be paid to the college or student upon verification that the student is enrolled at the college of his/her choice. These persons are **Elam Diamond** of Bowie HS to attend Delaware State University majoring in Early Childhood Education; **Shelly Hamm** of Eleanor Roosevelt HS to attend the University of Alabama majoring in Early Childhood Education; **Tynita Johnson** of Wise HS to attend Towson State University majoring in Education; and **Jackson Whiting** of Forestville Military Academy to attend Prince George's Community College majoring in High School Education.

The Prince George's Scholarship Fund, Inc. Committee made a special exception for **Jazmine Lewis**, a graduating senior from North Point HS in Charles County. She has a great passion for teaching and wants to make a difference for boys and girls in her community. Her parents are police officers working in Prince George's County. She plans to attend the College of Southern Maryland majoring in Early Childhood Education.

Our PGPSRA Scholarship Committee will review the criteria for persons receiving the five memorial scholarships at its August meeting. The committee thanks all persons who contribute to the scholarship fund or buy raffle tickets at our meetings. Persons interested in serving on the Scholarship Committee are invited to join us on Wednesday, August 31st, at 10:00 a.m. at the PGCEA building in Forestville.

Alveta S. Jones, Chairperson

BITS AND PIECES

Happy **October** birthday wishes to **Mrs. Eleanor Murray** of Phoenix, AZ, who will be celebrating her 93rd birthday on the 12th.

Alberta Ellis of Greenbelt retired as the Reading Recovery teacher at District Heights Elementary in 2006. She has since worked as a substitute and volunteered with the tutorial reading services in Prince George's schools. Alberta enjoys bowling, reading, and making greeting cards for all occasions. She serves on the Board of Directors at Highland Park Christian Academy, as a substitute Sunday school teacher, and a caregiver for seniors. Her travels have taken her to Gambia, West Africa; Ramstein and Frankfurt, Germany; Montreal and Quebec City, and sailing on a Caribbean cruise. Alberta has one daughter and three grandchildren.

Jerome (Jerry) Six retired from Friendly High School in 1999. He has since relocated to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he is enjoying the pace of life.

Linda Yancey of Silver Spring retired from University Park Elementary School. Since then, she has volunteered with the U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Homeland Security and at an otolaryngology (ear, nose, throat) practice. She has also served as a board member and secretary for the Tuskegee Airmen Women's Auxiliary. Linda enjoys sailing, learning to ski, reading, working puzzles, using computer technology, researching genealogy, and making new friends. She has traveled to Utah, Nevada, Florida, and California. Linda's daughter lives in Brussels, and she is planning to visit her this autumn.

Susan Fortgang retired as a math teacher from Gwynn Park High School in 2005. Continuing to put her skills to use, she works part-time at the Huntington Learning Center. She also volunteers at the Charles County Humane Society. Susan and her husband live in Accokeek, MD. They have enjoyed several cruises to the Caribbean. This past March they went on a wonderful week-long ski trip to Steam Boat Springs, Colorado – something Susan had always wanted to do!

Linda Woodruff retired from the Bowie High School CRI Program in 2004. She and her dog Penny live in Bowie. Linda's interests include travel and camping, photography, reading, visiting national parks and monuments, as well as local historical sites, and volunteering at her church. She has been to Alaska, New England, the South, the Southwest, and the Mid-Atlantic wherever her RV will take her.

TRAVEL UPDATE

** For those who like to travel or go to the theater, our Travel Organizer, Charles Hudson, will have some interesting proposals for consideration at our September meeting. You're invited to come and see what's being offered this year and to join the fun.

** Renew old friendships and make new ones on an early spring cruise! Why not join several other Prince George's County retirees who cruise together every year. On March 4, 2012, the group is going on a 7-day Eastern Caribbean cruise (Holland America Line) stopping at Grand Turk, Turk & Caicos Islands, San Juan, (Puerto Rico) Phillipsburg, (St. Maarten) and Half Moon Cay, (Bahamas).

For details, call Frank Parise at 321.254.6752 or email Davismrd3491@bellsouth.net

Adrienne Cannon, who retired in 1996, formerly taught Italian and Spanish at Eleanor Roosevelt High and Oxon Hill Schools. She recently celebrated her 55th high school reunion and her 50th wedding anniversary with her husband Joel Robert. The Cannons live in Alexandria, VA, yet they spend a lot of time volunteering at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Adrienne continues to pursue a post-retirement musical career as a clarinetist. In the summer she played in the Orchestra of the Rockies in Fort Collins, CO, and during September she will be performing with the Williamsburg Consort in Williamsburg, VA.

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

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

We welcome the following new members to our organization:

Annie Carter
Barbara L. Malay
Debra Sheppard
Melissa Osler Zentz

Our summer season of relaxing is slowly slipping away. It is time to focus our attention and get back to serious work on behalf of the organization. In addition to getting back to serious work, it is also time to renew our memberships for the 2011 – 2012 year.

We encourage you to bring a colleague to our next general meeting in September.

Lorraine W. Johnson, Chair



NECROLOGY

Nora Millhouser	4 – 15 – 11
Bernadine Young	4 – 16 – 11
Carlene Boston Jackson	6 – 14 – 11

MRSA CONVENTION 2011

September 13 – 15, 2011

Wisp Resort, McHenry, MD

(www.mrspa.org)

We hope to see you there!

CONSUMER CONNECTION

Watch the Juice: Orange juice, apple juice and grapefruit juice can affect your medicines. Grapefruit juice increases drugs' potency, but orange and apple juice have the opposite effect – drinking them within two hours of taking certain medicines can weaken the drug's effectiveness. The medications include *beta blockers* for blood pressure, the allergy treatment *fexofenadine*, the antibiotic *ciprofloxacin*, and the cancer drug *etoposide*. Avoid fruit juices for four hours before taking medicines. Drink a glass of water with medicines.

PGPSRA MEETING/LUNCHEON

Date:	September 28, 2011
Time:	11:00 a.m.
Place:	PGCEA Center
Cost:	\$11.00 (Box Lunch)

Dr. Hite, our Superintendent of Public Schools, will be our guest speaker, and our Community Service Committee will be accepting school supplies and coats for children in need.

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 September 21, 2011.

LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM

Name: _____

Lunches Ordered: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Names of Guests: _____

TOBY'S THEATER TRIP

On Wednesday, August 3rd, a group of PGPSRA retirees, led by Charley Hudson, traveled to Toby's Dinner Theater in Columbia for a very entertaining afternoon show. After a tasty buffet luncheon and conversation, we settled down comfortably to enjoy the 1930's musical comedy *Anything Goes*. This is a play about a cruise ship that sailed from New York to London, carrying an unusual group of passengers from socialites to mobsters, whose antics provided a series of comedic happenings set to music and dance. The music was lively and the costumes were colorful and attractive. The Cole Porter lyrics brought back memories of familiar songs; among them: "Anything Goes", "You're the Top", and "I Get a Kick out of You." We left the theater in a joyful mood, humming the show melodies.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE OF *ECHOES*

October 1, 2011

ahutchinson00@hotmail.com

FROM THE DESK OF ROSE MILLER

Just One

Author Unknown

One song can spark a moment,
One flower can wake a dream
One tree can start a forest,
One bird can start a spring.

One smile begins a friendship,
One handclasp lifts a soul.
One star can guide a ship at sea,
One word can frame a goal.

One vote can change a nation,
One sunbeam lights a room
One candle wipes out darkness,
One laugh can conquer gloom.

One step must start each journey.
One word must start a prayer,
One hope will raise our spirits,
One touch can show you care.

One voice can speak with wisdom,
One heart can know what's true.
One life can make a difference,
You see, it's up to you.