



ECHOES

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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September 2010

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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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, our attention is focused on what's happening in PGCPSS and in Prince George's County.

I also wish to thank Bonnie Brose for her hard work and leadership as president of PGPSRA and to wish her well as the new president of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association. Bonnie was an eager advocate for our members and she will be an invaluable asset to MRSPA in the years ahead. Bonnie will continue her service in PGPSRA by serving as our Past President and member of the Board this coming year.

I began a two-year term as president on July 1, and the Board members and I have been at work planning for the year ahead. Every county in Maryland will be confronting a major challenge that is being led by Maryland Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller. The senator is pushing legislation to make 50% of the state's contributions to the Teachers Retirement and Pension Systems the responsibility of the county governments. If Senator Miller is successful, it will have a devastating impact on the counties and it probably will have a major negative impact on active and retired school system retirees, as well. I and the PGPSRA Board take this very seriously and will contest Senator Miller's proposal as vigorously as is humanly possible.

The normal activities of PGPSRA are moving ahead. To highlight only a couple of our committees, our award-winning Community Service Committee, under the able leadership of Dolores Brown and her cadre of members, is hard at work. Our Scholarship Committee, chaired by Alveta Jones, annually awards thousands of dollars in aid to students to pursue a higher education and is gearing up for the year ahead.

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. Members are always welcome to help move our organization forward.

Your individual membership in PGPSRA and in the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association 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!

Be sure to check the calendar in this issue for the schedule of membership meetings. I hope to see you there.

Carl Lancaster, President

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

It's voting time! September 14th -Primary Election
November 2nd – General Election

There are many candidates running for election in Prince George's County. We have invited the Primary Election winners for the offices of County Executive and County Sheriff to speak briefly at our September 22nd luncheon meeting. Come and hear about their plans for Prince George's County's betterment in the coming years.

Happily, the three legislative bills that MRSPA was strongly supporting this past General Assembly session ended in our favor! The bill that Delegate James Proctor sponsored for us allows MRSPA to send out a "blind mailing" to non-member retirees in October, inviting them to join our organization. (We are hoping this action will increase our membership.

Numbers count when we speak to legislators.) It was decided that the less than 1% Consumer Price Index (CPI) recorded last January would be handled as a 0% COLA in our July retirement checks, and the minus that would have resulted will be deducted in future years when the CPI has increased to 1% or above. Lastly, there will be no shifting of funding of 50% of the retirement/pension system costs to the counties THIS YEAR. (As a result of this, teachers are to blame for the state's potholes not being filled in a timely manner --- according to an April Washington Post editorial!) A state committee has been appointed to study the exact impact the shifting of funding will have on local jurisdictions when the funding shift does occur – likely within the next few years. Whenever it begins, our retirement checks will NOT be affected. The change will begin with newly hired teachers.

An appreciative "Thank you" is extended to everyone who contacted Maryland legislators last year about our retiree concerns. We will be asking for your support again during the next General Assembly session.

The Board of Trustees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System has been informed that its portfolio returned 14.05 percent on investments for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2010 --- exceeding the 7.75 percent assumed actuarial return rate. The performance raised the assets of the system to \$31.848 billion.

Jannette Wundrow, Legislative Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report for July 2010

Beginning Balance:	
Checking account:	\$11516.81
Savings Account:	3018.94
Checking Account:	
Receipts:	480.49
Expenditures:	None
Savings Account:	0.38
Balance as of July 31:	
Checking Account:	\$11997.30
Savings Account:	3019.32
Total Assets:	\$15016.62

E. Vest, Treasurer

PGPSRA CALENDAR: 2010-2011

- September 1: Executive Mtg. – 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- September 22: General Mtg. -- 11:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- November 3: Executive Mtg. -- 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- November 18: General Mtg. -- 11:00 a.m.**
(Thurs.) American Legion Post 136
6900 Greenbelt Rd., Greenbelt, MD 20770
- January 5: Executive Mtg. -- 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- January 26: General Mtg. -- 11:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- March 2: Executive Mtg. – 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- March 23: General Mtg. -- 11:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- May 4: Executive Mtg. – 10:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) PGCEA Center
- May 25: General Mtg. -- 11:00 a.m.**
(Wed.) LaFontaine Bleu
7963 Annapolis Rd. Lanham, MD 20706
- June 8: Executive Board Transition Mtg.**
(Wed.) 10:00 a.m. –PGCEA Center

DOOR PRIZE WINNER
May 26, 2010 Meeting
Charles Hudson

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Thank you so much for your assistance in increasing the membership in our state and local associations. We are pleased to note that our membership has increased by ten members since March 2010.

As you are aware, retirees' pensions are vulnerable during this period of recession. As our state and local governments look for ways to save money, we need to redouble our efforts to protect our pensions and those of the generation following us. We need to remind our community about the value of the teaching profession to our society. We need to keep this thought before the public at all times.

Please continue to help this committee as it strives to encourage former colleagues who are unaffiliated to join us as members. We need their support in the fight to maintain our pension and health benefits.

The Membership Committee is asking you to invite eligible candidates for membership to the September meeting. We will be celebrating FRIENDSHIP DAY and look forward to having you and friends as a part of this first meeting of the year. Extra gifts will be presented to the three members with the most friends in attendance.

Thank you again for your help and support. I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday, September 22, 2010, at the Prince George's County Educators' Association Center as we celebrate our first FRIENDSHIP DAY.

Lorraine W. Johnson, Membership Chair

***CONGRATULATIONS TO BONNIE CURRY BROSE,
NEWLY-INSTALLED PRESIDENT
of Maryland Retired School Personnel Association***

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The cliché, “We reap what we sow,” bears a lot of truth as recently experienced by the Community Service Committee. We’ve attempted to sow good seeds by committing good deeds for children and families in area schools and thus have been the reapers of many expressions of appreciation.

For outstanding service to the community, we received the following awards:

- **Community Partner of the Year** from G. James Gholson Middle School
- **The Outstanding Community Service Award**, presented Delores Brown by AARP

As you may recall, we lost our longtime, dedicated member, Doris Porchea, last spring. To honor her memory, a generous contribution was made to Allen Chapel AME Church’s Tony Farmer Scholarship Fund.

A \$500.00 contribution was made to G. James Middle School for eighth grade end-of-the-year activities.

Though details of plans for the ensuing year have not been finalized, we expect to continue serving the children and families of our school community.

Gretel James, Newsletter Writer

TRAVEL UPDATE

Do you enjoy going to the theater or touring cultural or historical sites? Charles Hudson, our PGPSRA travel coordinator, will have some exciting ideas for your consideration at the September 22nd meeting.

GUESS WHO CAME TO THE LUNCHEON!

PGPSRA members were privileged to welcome one of its iconic members, Mrs. Mildred Ridgely Gray, to lunch at Riderwood in Silver Spring on May 26, 2010.

Mrs. Gray is a very special lady not only for her longevity (89 years), but more importantly, for the vast body of work done over the years on behalf her home county, Prince George’s County. Mrs. Gray began her career in 1940 as a teaching principal in a one-room school with grades 1 through 7. She ended her career as principal of the Margaret Brent Special Center in 1983.

This industrious lady continued her active life style after retirement with her parents’ motto in mind, “One should put something back into the community.” As a result, she established the Mildred Ridgely Gray Charitable Trust, whose mission is as follows: to research family histories and institutions, to maintain the Authur and Mary E. Ridgely House, and to support the preservation of the historic Ridgely United Methodist Church. The Ridgely Gray Trust also provides scholarships to Prince George’s County students for research, study, and preservation of the heritage of Prince George’s County, with special interest given to the Berry Plantation.

Hats off to the lovely Mrs. Mildred Ridgely Gray!

Courtney Pringle, Corresponding Secretary

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The best and most beautiful things cannot be seen or touched – they must be felt with the heart.

~Helen Keller~

BITS AND PIECES

Happy October birthday wishes to **Catherine Deck** of Ocean Pines, MD, who will be celebrating her 99th birthday on the 1st, and to **Eleanor Murray** of Phoenix, AZ, who will be celebrating her 99th birthday on the 12th of the month.

Charlene Jacob of Springdale and **Lorraine Johnson** of Capitol Heights traveled to New Orleans in May to attend Lorraine's 50th class reunion at Dillard University. Charlene, Class of 1959, is PGPSRA's historian and the treasurer of the Dillard University National Alumni Association. Lorraine, PGPSRA's membership chair, is a member of the Dillard University Class of 1960. Lorraine and the forty-six other members of the Class of 1960 in attendance at the reunion were heralded as "Golden Graduates". Many special activities were arranged for the "Golden Graduates" who donned golden robes and hats and marched in the graduation processional. The reunion was an exciting time for Charlene, a retiree from James McHenry Elementary, and Lorraine, an Oakcrest Elementary retiree. Lorraine also traveled to Spokane, WA, in July to attend a meeting of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society, an organization of key women educators.

John Sisson of Lanham, formerly a Japanese language teacher at Eleanor Roosevelt and High Point High Schools, spent the months of February and March on the road: Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Los Angeles, the California wine country, Las Vegas for the NCAA finals, and lastly, visiting friends in Houston and San Antonio. "Retirement rocks," says John. "Every day is Saturday!" John is our PGPSRA Consumer Education Chair, who keeps us abreast of the latest senior scams.

Patricia Drummey retired from District Heights Elementary. She is now enjoying life at the Greenspring Retirement Community in Springfield, VA. Her favorite pastime is reading. Her three grown children live in the area and visit often. She is the proud grandmother of four; her oldest grandson recently graduated from Georgetown University. Patricia was looking forward to spending many weekends this past summer with her family in Ocean City.

Joan Dean of Montgomery Village, MD, retired from James McHenry Elementary in 2008. She volunteers at St. Vincent de Paul Society (Help for Poor), regularly drives a lady for her doctor and hospital appointments, and helps with her church bazaars. Joan has enjoyed vacations in Las Vegas, New York City, and Branson, MO; to Rhode Island and Massachusetts to see whales at sea, to the Mall of America in MN, and most recently to Orlando. She has six grandchildren, and had four children; sadly, two have died in adulthood. Joan is planning to do two things in the future: write a children's book series about a boy with hyperactivity, and remake her attic into another living space.

Bonnie and Bill Brose of Upper Marlboro, both Prince George's retirees --- he from Pointer Ridge Elementary, and she from Kenmoor Middle --- celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary with a trip to Argentina this past April. In August they enjoyed travels to Belgium and the Netherlands. When Bonnie returned after two weeks, she assumed her duties as President of MRSPA. Bill stayed on longer in Belgium to further his study of the Dutch language. In the fall, Bill will continue to serve as PGPSRA'S parliamentarian and begin his term as chair of the MRSPA Public Relations Committee. The Broses have four children and five grandchildren.

