

Connections



April 2014

Continuing the Commitment



The Votes Are In! And the Winners Are...

President- R. Edward Fifer
Vice President – Debbie Jessee
2nd at Large VEA Board Director – Dennis Pfenning

VEA R Council (Congressional Districts)

Rita Cooper – 2nd
Lee Dorman – 4th
Jim Hines – 6th
Louise Fishbein – 8th
Bruce Smith – 10th

In addition, 15 delegates to the VEA Delegate Assembly were chosen. The Delegate Assembly was March 27-29th in Roanoke.

The election also decided the representatives to the NEA Representative Assembly. VEA-R will send five people to the assembly in Denver.

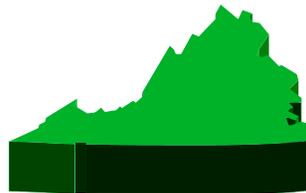
A complete list can be found at
<http://www.veanea.org/home/vea-retired.htm>



Amtrak travelers 62 years of age and over are eligible to receive a 15% discount on the lowest available rail fare on most Amtrak trains. On cross-border services operated jointly by Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada, a 10% Senior discount is applicable to travelers aged 60 and over.

News from Around the State

FEA-R Council



Among the goals of the Fairfax Education Association Retires (FEA-R) is to "stay in touch." That goal applies not only with all retired members but "actives," legislators and the larger community.

Perhaps one of the most important ways of "staying in touch" is through the activities of our Government Relations Team (GRT) under the leadership of Chairperson, Barbara Allen. Through the GRT we meet with our local state legislators two months before the annual legislative session to discuss key educational issues including

those affecting retirement and benefits. These meetings also serve to broaden support for public education and related programs.

In recent years we have partnered with members of the Prince William Education Association Retired along with other retired educators for our annual lobby day bus trip to Richmond. This important activity usually features a follow-up briefing with a VEA legislative team prior to meeting with legislators.

Beyond lobby day activities members stay involved through participation in phone banking, letter writing to get-out-the-vote for elections and in meetings with members of the school board and board of supervisors. Several of our members are part of the NEA Rapid Response Team and have participated in actions for NEA in Washington, DC.

In keeping with our goal of "staying in touch" we continue to provide our retired members information on crucial issues of education and legislation affecting retirement benefits and other issues of importance to retirees through our newsletters. Each spring we have membership luncheon featuring political figures such as Terri McAuliffe and Ann Holton or speakers on consumer affairs. This year

we will host our annual Spring Membership Luncheon on May 6, 2014 which will feature Dr. Karen Garza, Fairfax County's new superintendent of schools.

Have information from your local or regional retired group? Send it on for inclusion in next Connections. Cdonohue@veanea.org

President's Report



Well it's time to step down and let others step up but I'm not through yet. I need to say THANK YOU to so many of you and it is hard.

To each and every member a big THANK YOU for giving me the honor and the privilege of serving you as your President for the past four years. It has been a wonderful I trip with lots of twists, turns, laughs, and heartbreak (as old friends joined the VEA-Retired in the clouds so they can watch and laugh at us still down here on earth and wonder why others don't jump at the chance to continue their service to Children and Public Education).

A special thank you goes to the special group of people

that I call special angels, they just walk on earth like the rest of us. First to all the folks at the Big Red House who organize what we do, help stuff envelopes, handle our membership forms, present at our workshops, handle the paper work, answer questions, encourage us, and stand behind us all the way. Without your help we couldn't have done this. Second to all of you who served through the council and as officers. Without you, we wouldn't accomplish anything! Third, to all of you who attended any event be it a regional, state, national or the Anniversary Gala, participated on a VEA Committee, attended a pre-legislative dinner, a pre-retirement seminar, or drove into Richmond to help stuff envelopes, I really appreciate the effort and energy you spent. Keep up the good work. You have been the most dependable group of friends that I've had the joy of working with keep up the good work and I'll see you around.

Pat Kennedy

"DEJA VU"

If you can, think back about thirty years ago. The VEA Governance Districts were reconfigured and changed from numbers to letters. The UniServ Units remained

virtually the same and were not aligned with the Districts. Since then, if you recall, Districts went back to numbers and were again aligned with the UniServ Units. All of this was the result of membership growth. Well, it has happened again. The VEA has reconfigured and gone back to letter identification. The UniServ Units are now "coverage areas" for the UniServ Directors and they are not the same as the governance districts. This was done, not for membership growth, but because of a reduction in membership. It was apparent that the district representation on the VEA Board of Directors was askew. Some Board members were representing twice as many district members as others. The Board also felt it was time to reduce its size, thus reducing the financial burden on the VEA.

At the 2014 VEA Convention, delegates approved this new reconfiguration, which goes into effect this August. The VEA will consist of seventeen Districts (A-Q), with each representative on the VEA Board of Directors representing approximately 2000 members instead of the former 1200 members.

R. Edward Fifer

VEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

As usual, the VEA Board of Directors met prior to the 2014 VEA Convention in Roanoke. Much of the meeting was devoted to approving all of the practices, procedures, and goals to be forwarded on to the convention. Also approval of resolutions and budget was a necessary part of the agenda.

While discussing the budget, an interesting group dynamic situation occurred. The VEA Executive Committee brought forth a motion on the budget. There was a great deal of discussion and several substitute motions were made and defeated. After 90 minutes, the Board unanimously passed the original Executive Committee motion. One might think that time was wasted, but by taking the 90 minutes, the divided board went through an important process and was united in the end.

Our own VEA-Retired President, Pat Kennedy, gave the VEA Election Committee report. If you can remember, a few years ago, VEA changed the voting procedure for state wide elections. Voting for state offices is only done by elected delegates. Pat

reviewed the convention voting procedures with the Board.

The Executive Committee reported on the new Board of Directors' attendance policy. Stricter procedures will be in place to handle absenteeism on the Board. The Board also approved the redistricting of VEA Governance structure. This proposal was sent on to the Convention and was approved by the delegates. New District lines had to be drawn, because of a drastic decline in membership.

Another important item on the Board's agenda was the retirement announcement of Beblon Parks. She has been the heart and soul of VEA for many years. As we rejoice in her retirement, we will greatly miss her.

R. Edward Fifer



Beblon Parks and one of her many admirers pose with the Friend of Education award from VEA.

Week of Action

NEA-R, along with many other organizations, is

sponsoring a Week of Action May 13-14 to mark the 60th anniversary of Brown v. the Board of Education. Details on the event are still under development.

For more information, contact edjusticedayofaction@gmail.com

Become a Force in Public Education



VEA needs you to hold lawmakers accountable.

When you sign up to be a VEA cyberlobbyist, you'll receive occasional e-mails from our Government Relations team on critical education legislation. (No, we won't bombard you with daily messages.) Some of the messages will include links you can click on to easily e-mail the Governor or your representatives in the General Assembly. When we ask you to send a message, we provide talking points you can quickly personalize to get your point across. It's that easy. Please go here to sign up!

<http://www.veanea.org/home/521.htm>

Remember When?

The 1964 New York World's Fair opened April 22, 1964,

and ran for two six-month seasons. There was no more popular place to be than Flushing Meadow, a showcase of mid-century American culture and technology. Although nearly 52 million people attended the fair, it was a huge financial flop, returning only 19 cents on the dollar to investors.

The fair's most popular exhibit was GM's Futurama, which mesmerized nearly 26 million visitors with its 3-D scenes of the "World of Tomorrow."



This exhibit showed life 60 years into the future, 2024. Shown were a lunar base of operation, an Antarctic "Weather Central" climate forecasting center, underseas exploration and "Hotel Atlantis" for underseas vacationing. Visitors rode through the exhibit in 3-abreast chairs on a ride train. The exhibit was again sponsored by General Motors. Waiting lines were often two hours long and longer.

NEA Retired Organizing Conference

This conference, held in Houston, Texas, focused on

organizing retired members and recruiting new retired members. I attended two of the workshops offered among a wide variety of offerings.

Kimberly Anderson, Director of the NEA Student Program, formally at VEA, presented information on how to connect students in the education programs of colleges and universities with retired members and chapters. The main idea of the program is to use known connections in the community to connect a retiree organizer with a faculty member in the Department of Education and leadership of the student program leadership. Such connections lead to dialogue about ways students can be supported during their school years and in the early years of their teaching career.

Programs, such as mentoring first year teachers by retirees, are already in place in some states, including Virginia, or can be custom designed to suit the needs of individuals in a specific setting. One program idea was an exchange center, a file of various lesson plans and resources from the archives of retired teachers. Another group sponsors "coffee and chat" hours for informal dialogue between retirees and students.

The second workshop I attended was led by Marilyn Wagner, president of Florida EA-Retired, and Todd Crenshaw, Organizer for NEA-Retired. The Project, called M.O.R.E., is in pilot implementation in Florida.

The basic idea is the Mobilize, Organize, Recruit and Engage. The project hopes to organize local chapters in Florida and is funded by a grant from NEA. The M.O.R.E. idea centers around organizing NEA-Retired members to become an effective army of members who will stand up for Public Education in the Florida local, state and national elections. This is a slow process and takes the dedication of a few retired leaders willing to do the hard work of contacting and training members around a key issue and helping them to become strong advocates.

More information on both of these workshops can be found on the NEA website or by contacting Kimberly at Kanderson@nea.org and Todd at tcrenshaw@nea.org

Martha Wood

