

A MOMENT WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT



Marjorie Clark and Vice President Joe Biden

In May, a group of four educators, including our own Marjorie Clark, and about 30 activists representing employee groups, were invited to the home of Vice President Biden. They discussed the importance of re-electing President Obama and later had the chance to speak to Mr. Biden as they were photographed during the reception.

Marjorie told Connections:

As representatives of **Educators for Obama**, we spent the day at NEA headquarters prepping for the evening event by discussing why this election is so important to educators. We practiced condensing our ideas to fit into any brief conversational opportunities we might have with Mr. Biden. This practice time even included being videotaped in unrehearsed

Q and A segments. At the reception, we applauded Mr. Biden's comments that the Administration particularly wants to protect public education, to support educators with respect and dignity, and to restore fairness to the middle class through giving all children the educational opportunity to live the American Dream. I felt particularly fortunate, as a retired educator, to be included with representatives from Virginia, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania; this group also included Fairfax school bus driver David Foust. It is discouraging to fight again for things we have fought so hard for in the past--whether education, women's rights, or voting rights. I also stated that in many states legislators are submitting one bill after another that 'cut education off at the knees', and if we have to keep on fighting to protect public education, we will.

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VRS BOARD ADDRESSES ERROR IN COLA CALCULATION

By now, most retirees who left before 2008 have gotten a letter from VRS regarding an error in the cost of living calculation that led to overpayment to about 120,000 people. The total overpayment is \$28.7 million.

What is VRS doing about it? The remedy approved by the VRS Board is a two

step approach. First, the COLA, effective July 1, 2012, for the affected retirees has been adjusted downward from 3.08% to 2.66%.

Second, the remaining overpayment will be subtracted from the retiree's life insurance benefits upon death. This amount ranges from \$50 to \$1,600, and the average amount is \$239. Retirees also have the option of repaying the amount by check. If you do not want the life insurance amount reduced, you may send a check to VRS for the total amount of the overpayment. Checks should be made payable to: Treasurer of Virginia – VRS and sent along with a copy of the VRS letter to: Virginia Retirement System, Control Section, P. O. Box 361, Richmond, VA 23218-0361 by November 15, 2012.

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IMPRESSIONS FROM A FIRST-TIME DELEGATE

R. Edward (Eddie) Fifer

Inspired, enlightened, and rejuvenated is how I felt as a first-time delegate at the 2012 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting held June 27-29th in Washington D.C. After several years of trying to get elected, I finally made it this year, and it was well worth the wait. The gathering may have been a lot smaller than the NEA Convention, and the delegates may not have

been as quick on their feet, but you could see that the passion and commitment was still alive and well.



NEA-Retired is the only part of NEA which has sustained a continuous increase in membership. I learned that most of the goals and objectives of the NEA-Retired members are the same as those we have for VEA-Retired. We always want to do what we can to promote membership and the goals of the NEA, as well as our own. There are many past NEA leaders that are now retired members. Their vast knowledge and expertise can only be an asset in our NEA family.

The experience of an NEA-Retired convention is one that every retired member should have. If you are interested in becoming an NEA-Retired delegate, please put your name in the hat. Even if it takes several years to finally be elected, it is well worth the effort.

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"I keep six honest serving men, they taught me all I know, Their names are What and Why and When, And How And Where And Who." - Rudyard Kipling's The Serving Men.

Mark Your Calendar! **VEA-R Regional Meetings**

There are four VEA-R Regional Retirement Meetings scheduled across the state. Meeting details and a registration form are at the end of this newsletter and also at these links:

<http://www.veanea.org/home/321.htm>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/247025472075983/#!/VEARetired/events> (click on meeting for specifics)

Please register by September 20, 2012.

If you have any questions, please contact Shana Moore at VEA (800-552-9554 X 328 or smoore@veanea.org)

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Reggie Smith Organizing School

Reggie Smith Organizing School (RSOS) held at the University of Richmond this July featured three days of training on subjects including strengthening local associations, media relations, supporting emerging leaders, political action, workplace issues, coalition-building, organizing, and building better teaching and learning communities

Martha Wood was one of the presenters offering information on the preparing for retirement and changes to

the VRS system. Martha also manned an information table.



Her thoughts on the event:

I was especially pleased to see so many new leaders there to help VEA grow. It really pleases me to show up and not know everyone there, because it means there are many new people attending. When I first started, I was one of these new leaders, and we took VEA in a new direction. I'm sure the new direction these leaders choose will serve the needs of the members. I am excited to see this new generation step up.

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VEA-R President's Corner

Pat Kennedy



Welcome back to a new school year, one that I hope finds you waving to those big yellow buses as they pass

you by. Maybe you're missing those bright eager faces that walked through your classroom door but I bet you're not missing lesson plans, SOLs (or whatever is replacing them), or bus and hall duty.

If you find yourself at loose ends there are opportunities all around. You could become involved with the VEA-Retired or volunteer to help your own local association recruit new members. With elections coming up you could work at the polls or as an election official. You could just travel the world or just relax. Whatever you choose remember to enjoy yourself.

I would like to invite you to become involved with the VEA-Retired and the VEA effort to protect and build up public schools and public education. There are folks out there who have made it their life purpose to destroy public education and all that we love and worked on for years. We need you to attend meetings in your area and make your voice heard. Write letters to the local papers in support of your schools and public education.

This fall I would like to invite you to attend one of our VEA-Retired Regional meetings. Information is included on where and when a meeting is scheduled for your area. Fill out the form and mail to the address on the form before September 20.



VEA-RETIRED ELECTIONS

Petitions to run for office for the VEA-Retired and to run for delegate status to the VEA and NEA

Representative Assemblies are available from the VEA and can be requested by phone or e-mail, or you can pick one up at the regional meetings.

VEA- R will be electing to the VEA-Retired Council a secretary and district representatives for odd-number districts. VEA-Retired districts are the same as congressional districts in the state. To run you must have worked in or live in the congressional district you want to represent. Districts 1,3,5,7 and 9 are up for elections. Each term of office is for two years.

Because of expense and time, elections will be held electronically this year. You can vote electronically on any device that can access the internet. However, if you want a paper ballot you may request one from the VEA and it will be mailed to you. There will be more information on the voting process in the next issue of the VEA-Retired Connections.



NEA Click & Save



Our most popular discount program for NEA members and their families, this exclusive shopping service offers savings on brand name merchandise from hundreds of top retailers, online stores, and local merchants. Save on clothing, electronics, restaurants, jewelry, movie tickets and more! Find it on www.neamb.com.



LOOMING BUDGET CUTS COULD CRIPPLE VIRGINIA

“Sequestration” stands to devastate Virginia’s economy unless the U.S. Congress acts in the next few months to prevent it. Sequestration means deep and automatic cuts to education, social services, national defense and other federal spending. Virginia would suffer greatly because it’s home to major federal programs, particularly in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads.

In connection with the Budget Control Act, non-defense discretionary

programs, including nearly all education programs, will face an estimated **8.4 percent across-the-board cut** on January 2, 2013. Education funding would fall off a cliff, dropping to pre-2003 levels.

NEA is calling on Congress to find a balanced approach to deficit reduction –including closing corporate tax loopholes and ensuring the top two percent of all earners -- those most able to do so -- pay their fair share.

Take Action Today: [Tell Congress](http://www.nea.org/home/LegislativeActionCenter.html) to take a balanced approach to deficit reduction and reject more cuts to education. <http://www.nea.org/home/LegislativeActionCenter.html>

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Taking Charge: Identity Theft

Identity theft - someone steals your personal information and uses it without your permission. It is a crime that can wreak havoc with your finances, credit history, and reputation – and it can take time, money, and patience to resolve.

If you suspect that someone has stolen your identity, act quickly. Setting things straight involves some work.



A guide from the Federal Trade Commission has tips, worksheets, blank forms, and sample letters to guide you through the recovery process. It covers:

- What identity theft victims must do immediately
- What problems may crop up
- How you can reduce your risk of identity theft

The guide is only available on-line:

<http://publications.usa.gov/USAPubs.php?PubID=641>

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How to Change Your Direct Deposit Information with VRS

Switching banks? Don't forget to notify VRS of your change. Fill out a VRS-57 form (Authorization for Direct Deposit) which is available on-line or call VRS 888- 827-3847 to request that they mail you a form.

The change takes at least 30 days so don't close your old account until you receive a deposit in your new account.

VEA-R Grants

VEA-R has grants to assist local associations and their Uniserv units in developing and supporting VEA-R chapters in their locality.

Any VEA-R member can apply for a grant. In localities where no local retired chapter exists, a local association president or Uniserv Council Chair person can apply.

Applications must include a cover sheet and detailed descriptions including objectives, timelines and budget information. At the end of the grant period, evaluations are required.

For more information and application material, contact Carol Donohue at the VEA, cdonohue@veanea.org or 800-552-9554 X 325. The application material is also available on the Web at: <http://www.veanea.org>.



"Good news! We rolled doubles"

Fun, fellowship and timely information are all available at the retiree regional meetings. Please register by filling out the registration form and mail with your check to VEA or PWEA for Northern Virginia. Lunch is included or available. **Please send your registration and payment by September 20th.**

10/4/12

Tidewater

11:00 – 2:00

Golden Corral

1123 West Mercury Boulevard

Hampton, VA.

Topic: - Protecting VRS and Public Education (presented by Rob Jones)

Lunch ordered from menu, no advance cost

10/11/12

Northern Va. Regional Meeting

10:00-2:00

Fort Belvoir Officers Club

5550 Schultz Circle, #20, VA

Topic: Consumer Protection (presented by the Fairfax County Office of Consumer Affairs)

Cost: \$16.95

10/10/12

Central Va. Regional Meeting

10:00- 2:00

Chesterfield Central Library

9501 Lori Rd

Chesterfield, Va.

Topic: - Protecting VRS and Public Education (presented by Rob Jones)

Cost: \$15

10/16/11

Piedmont Regional Meeting

10:00- 2:00

Quality Dutch Inn

2360 Virginia Ave

Collinsville, Virginia 24078

Topic: - Protecting VRS and Public Education (presented by Rob Jones)

Cost: \$15.00

Check our website and FB pages for updates:

<http://www.veanea.org/vea-retired/vea-r-news.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/247025472075983#!/VEARetired/events>



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Name _____

Location _____

Phone _____

Meeting Date _____

Email _____

Check Enclosed \$ _____

For all meetings EXCEPT Northern Va., send form and check to:

**Virginia Education Association (Make check payable to VEA)
Attn: Shana Moore
116 S. 3rd Street
Richmond, VA. 23219**

800-552-9554 X328

For Northern Va. Meeting ONLY, send form and check to:

**Prince William Education Association (Make check payable to PWEA)
ATTN: J. Wells
8510 Bucyrus Court
Manassas, VA 20110**

703-361-2444