

Connections



Continuing the Commitment



Election Time

Pat Kennedy

Every year VEA-Retired has an election in January to choose the delegates to the VEA and NEA delegate assemblies, district council seats and officers for the council.

This year, even numbered council seats are up as are president, vice president, and 2nd VEA Board of Directors seat.

We need you to participate! We need you to vote and here's how. If you choose to vote by paper ballot, you must contact Barbara Rackley at the VEA **before January 9, 2014** to receive a paper ballot by mail in time to vote and return it to the VEA. Barbara Rackley may be contacted at:

Virginia Education Association 116 South Third Street, Richmond, VA 23219
brackley@veanea.org.

She will send you a paper ballot with instructions. The

paper ballot must be mailed back to VEA with a postmark of no later than **January 17, 2014**.

If you choose to vote electronically, you may use any personal computer or device that has internet capability (droid, iPhone, iPad, laptop). You may also use a computer at the library or any other location with public internet availability. Electronic voting starts January 22 at 12:01 am and ends January 24, 2014 at 11:59 pm. To vote, you need to go to the VEA website, www.veanea.org.

On the VEA home page look to the left and click on the election/vote icon link. The election page will come up and ask for your name as it is printed on your membership card (or on this newsletter) and your membership number (also on your membership card and this newsletter or any VEA or NEA publication). Your membership number starts with 3 zeroes followed by 6 numbers (ex. 000123456). You must input the 3 zeroes. The bios for candidates will be attached and accessed by another link on the voting page. After you vote be sure to submit your ballot by clicking on submit/vote.

Ballots will be tallied on January 27, 2014 and candidates notified by January 31, 2014. Elected delegates to the NEA will receive housing information

in March. Elected delegates to the VEA RA will receive information in the official notification by January 31. VEA delegates need to make their own housing arrangements at the VEA hotels in Roanoke prior to February 10, 2014. You will need a credit card to make your reservation. I know this is a short turnaround but it can't be helped.

Whichever way you choose to vote doesn't matter.

JUST VOTE!

***Celebrate Good Times,
Come on!***



A very big "THANK YOU" to each and every one of you who contributed to the planning of the celebration, who attended, conducted a workshop, or just sent best wishes for our 20th Anniversary Celebration at The Homestead in Bath County, VA. It was a wonderful way to finish 20 years.

A special public thanks goes to Martha Wood, Jim Amaral and Carol Donohue, VEA-R staff liason, who planned this event. Thank you for all you did.

Other thanks go to the VEA staff that supported our effort, did workshops, took

pictures, and attended the event: Phillip Forgit, our Executive Director, Tom Allen from VEA Communications, and Robley Jones from Government Relations. Special thanks to Meg Gruber, our VEA President, who so warmly welcomed all of us to this activity.



Also attending and speaking were Joyce Powell, from the NEA Executive Committee and Tom Curran, our NEA-Retired president, who discussed NEA's future. Tom Tobin from the National Committee for the Preservation of Social Security and Medicare spoke on Medicare and Social Security changes.



For those of you who couldn't come, you missed Jim Amaral singing the national anthem and Ernie Holley entertaining us at the Birthday Party Celebration. Others to thank include Eddie Fifer, Debbie Jessie, Katherine Hairston, along with Lee Dorman and

Barbara Wilson for staffing registration and helping with decorations. To all who attended, thank you. I know you had a great time.



Pat Kennedy VEA-Retired President

More Anniversary News!

The Homestead Resort in beautiful Bath County, Va. was host to a wonderful group of VEA-Retired members. Old connections were renewed as we enjoyed the traditional afternoon tea in the elegant main hall of the hotel. Later, groups of new and old friends scattered to dinner in the hotel venues and eating places around Hot Springs.

During the first session, members were treated to greetings from NEA-Retired President Curran and a very enlightening presentation on Social Security and Medicare.

VEA Executive Director Forgit gave a talk about membership development and the role of VEA-Retired as a valued part of the VEA.

Powell, who serves alongside our own Princess Moss on NEA's Executive Committee, opened the second session. Donohue and Jones rounded out the day with enlightening and informative presentations on the General Assembly and VRS. These generated a spirited question and answer period.

The final activity was a celebration of the revival of VEA-Retired. To provide a little history, Jones, then VEA president, appointed a committee of seven retirees under the leadership of VEA-Retired member of the VEA Board, Dr. Beth Nelson. Those seven were: Edith Good; Marcilla Humphries; Lucille Roane; Barbara Jureidini; John Duncan; and Martha Wood. Our staff liaison was George Hudgins. Our charge was to determine if VEA-Retired could be revived. In short order, we agreed that it could be viable and then set about to do just that. Since the planning meeting, VEA-Retired has had three elected presidents, Pat Kennedy, Ernest Holley and Martha. We have been well guided by four staff liaisons - George Hudgins, JoAnn Karsh, Ron Emery and Carol Donohue, and we have served well under VEA Presidents Robley Jones, Cheri James, Jean Bankos, Princess Moss, Kitty Boitnott and Meg Gruber. Twenty years later we number 4,600 and we're still

growing. We celebrated with an anniversary cake. Ernest Holley sang for us. All in all, a fun and informative event in a beautiful setting.



VEA-Retired looks forward to another celebration of our service and growth.

Martha Wood

To see more pictures from the Homestead 20th Anniversary, "like" our Facebook page, Virginia Education Association-Retired.

Valuable Info for Retirees

NEA Member Benefits offers Kiplinger's Retirement Report, provided free to NEA members. This monthly guide is full of practical information and advice aimed to help you plan for and enjoy your retirement. Sign up for the Retirement E-newsletter

<https://secure.neamb.com/myneamb.htm#mynewsletters>

and NEA will send you monthly reminders when the next issue of the Kiplinger's Retirement Report is available.



VEA Board Report

During the September and October VEA Board meetings, the major emphasis was on strategic planning to increase membership and improve communication with our current members. Of course, the board conducted its regular business, but a great deal of time was spent in small and large groups going through the various steps in developing this strategic plan.

Unlike the VEA-Retired, the VEA has lost a significant number of members over the last few years. Less members means less money. As a result, several staff positions were cut, including a few of our UniServ directors. The good news this year is that the loss of members is less than anticipated, so the budget is in good shape and the VEA was able to reinstate some of the UniServ positions.

The VEA Board of Directors hopes to be able to turn the tide of membership loss, and

recruit new members and retain existing members. The VEA-Retired may be able to help in this "recruit and retain" mission. We all need to help with active membership as well as retired. We are all part of the VEA/NEA family.

R. Edward "Eddie" Fifer
Ret. Member at Large, VEA Board

Local Updates

The Prince William Education Association-Retired (PWEA-R) has a busy year planned for 2013-2014. The year began by sending four representatives to the VEA-R 20th Anniversary Meeting at The Homestead in Hot Springs, Virginia. This is being followed by a Social Tea and Membership Meeting in December, monthly get-togethers for lunch and musical performances from January through April, and a luncheon and membership meeting in May.

PWEA-R members will meet with legislators to talk with them about education and retirement issues before they go to Richmond in January. Members plan on following this up by traveling to Richmond for VEA-R Lobby Day on January 23 with other VEA-R members from throughout Northern Virginia via FEA-R's sponsored bus.

PWEA-R continues to offer assistance and support to the Prince William,

Manassas, and Manassas Park Education Associations upon request.

**James R. Amaral, District 10
VEA-R Council**

**Have some news about
your local retired group?
Email it to
thenderson@veanea.org
And we'll include it in our
next issue.**



Lobby Day for Retired Educators

This year the VEA-R Lobby Day is January 23, 2014. The members in Northern Virginia are again planning to have a bus that will travel to Richmond. A briefing will be held by VEA's Government Relations staff before members visit their legislators. If you would like to ride along, give the FEA office a call at 703-352-7300 to find out time and place of pick-up. We need as many of our members who can to be there on the 23rd.

Be a Part of the NEA- Retired Rapid Response Team!

Join with over 3,000 other
NEA Retired Members that

live within a 50-mile radius of downtown Washington, DC. Your expertise and years of experience are crucial during this critical turning point in NEA history.

We'd love to have you partner with us!

To join the NEA Retired Rapid Response Team, contact Todd Crenshaw at:
TCrenshaw@nea.org.

The Latest ID Theft Scams You Need to Know About

With so much of our lives online now, ID thieves are discovering new ways to take advantage of us. Learn how to protect yourself and your family. Protecting your identity can feel like a full-time job. You know you shouldn't give out personal information over the phone, via email or to strangers with sob stories. You think you've got your bases covered ... until scammers come up with some devious new way to assume your identity.



One of the newest scams that's growing exponentially involves tax refunds. Many

Americans file electronically, and refunds can be disbursed via mail or direct deposit. Filing via Internet speeds up the refund process—but sometimes it helps crooks get their hands on your cash in record time. That's because scammers have been stealing the names and Social Security numbers of law-abiding citizens and using that information to file bogus digital tax returns to divert refunds to their own accounts.

When these ID theft victims file their returns, they're told by the IRS that their refund already has been sent. At that point, damage control ensues, and it can take victims as long as a year to get things straightened out and finally receive their refund.

The IRS does have an ID theft hotline at 1-800-908-4490. Experts say the best way to guard against this type of ID theft, aside from keeping your SSN confidential, is to file your tax return as early as possible.

The general rule on ID theft: "Be aware." Protect your personal information. The ID Theft Resource Center, which was founded in 1999 by an ID theft victim and is funded by sponsors and partners, has a hotline for victims at 1-888-400-5530.