

The Bell Ringer

Kent County Retired School Personnel Association

Volume 37 Number 1 September 2015

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

I am so excited to serve as your president this year. I am looking forward to continuing the great work and service to our community that the Kent County Retired School Personnel Association has been engaged in for so many years. It is indeed extraordinary that in addition to being outstanding educators we continue to offer our expertise to enhance the lives of the citizens of Kent County. I am honored to provide leadership and advocacy for public education not only in Kent County but the entire State of Maryland.

Our work continues to be challenging as budgets become more restrictive and our leaders in Annapolis seek ways to save funds. We will continue to have our voices heard to ensure that our hard-earned retirement funds are safe and secure. It is also important that members of the Kent County Board of Education keep our medical benefits a high priority when planning the education budget.

This year promises to be especially exciting as we celebrate our history that began in 1953 with a small number of retirees including the retired Superintendent of Schools. This year, 2015 marks 62 years. As our organization grows, our voices become more powerful and the services we render make a significant difference in our community.

I sincerely thank members of our organization for agreeing to assume leadership on the various committees. It takes all of us to continue to move forward as an association.

Welcome to all newly retired members. I am looking forward to seeing each of you at our four annual meetings.

Respectfully,
Barbara



The meeting was called to order by President Nancy Harrington at 11:22 at Luisa's Restaurant in Chestertown, MD.

Nancy welcomed our guests: Max Muller, President of MRSPA; Judith Zahren, Executive Director of MRSPA; and Flo Terrell 2014-2015 KC Teacher of the Year.

Two of our members who have recently passed away, Doris Lill and Sue Quinn, were remembered and honored by the presentation of individual roses.

Committee Reports:

Cliff School:

Jean Foreman asked for volunteer docents for Cliff School and for volunteers to sell chances on an "Italian Basket" at the Farmers Market in Chestertown on July 18, 2015. Proceeds will go to Cliff School.

Scholarship:

Billie Lynne Roberts reported that KCRSPA awarded 4 scholarships for \$1000 each this year. The recipients were Casey Roberts, Savannah Hague, Ray Gill, and Sawyer Cornelius.

Service:

Billie Lynne Roberts asked that we keep a record of our service to the community.

Membership

Fay Miller visited 5 schools to invite people who are retiring to become members. We had a 6.02% increase in membership this year and received Honorable Mention for membership growth at the MRSPA Annual Meeting in May.

Legislative:

Betty Barbe reported. The Administration through the Speaker of the House has introduced legislation supporting Charter Schools - The Public Charter School Expansion and Improvement Act. MRSPA recommended opposing this legislation with a letter.

There was legislation which replaced "corridor funding" of state pensions with an "actuarial" method. "Corridor funding" was adopted under the Glendenning administration and resulted in years of insufficient state contributions to the pension fund. The O'Malley administration pledged to reinvest money back into the system with the goal of restoring it to 80% funding by 2023 and to 100% funding by 2038. Unfortunately, legislators siphoned off some of this money that was intended to restore the integrity of the pension to balance the state books. That happened 2 years in a row. Because of recent strong stock market performance, an immediate shift back to full actuarial funding has been recommended by the Department of Legislative Services. The extra "make-up" payments used under "corridor funding" would be abandoned.

Gov. Hogan recently pulled \$68 million from education appropriations and used some of that money to contribute to the state pension as part of the “make-up” money that started under the O’Malley Administration. These funds were badly needed by the school systems to prevent teacher lay-offs and programs for the students, including pre-K programs. The districts most hurt by the diversion of education funds were Baltimore City, PG County and Montgomery County, but the schools systems of all counties will be affected. Please note that the state’s required \$1.8 billion pension contribution was made this year and that the pension funds are safe from any “raiding” by the legislature or the governor. The funds in question are those that were supposed to be contributed in addition to the required funding since the shortfall caused by “corridor funding” under Gov. Glendenning. There are assertions that this denial of funds to the school districts and the diversion of those funds to the pension system are illegal actions.

There has been a commission established to study testing and assessments.

There has been a commission established to study pre-school.

Our guest speaker, Flo Terrell, spoke about her experiences as the Kent County Teacher of the Year.

MRSPA Max Muller spoke about the importance of membership. Numbers are important as we go into Annapolis to protect our pensions.

MRSPA Executive Director Judith Zahren spoke about her experiences with KCRSPA.

MRSPA President-elect Fay Miller reminded us that this year’s theme is “The best is yet to come.” She congratulated KCRSPA on reaching its 50th anniversary and commented that our pension is secure at present, but we must always pay attention to what the state government is doing regarding the pension and other funding since our health benefits are funded by Kent County and cuts in state funding could affect the county’s ability to fund our insurance.

Incoming President, Dr. Barbara Wheeler greeted the members. She made positive comments about the Cliff School. She said that if any of us wants to be a chairperson or co-chairperson of a committee, we should contact her.

The officers of the KCRSPA this year are:

President:	Dr. Barbara Wheeler
Vice President:	Jean Wright
Secretary:	Terri Bostic
Treasurer:	Jean Foreman

To celebrate the KCRSPA 50th Anniversary, 3 trifold displays were on view to our members. Also, all members present received souvenir bags containing treats and gifts. Thanks go to Nancy Harrington for getting those together.

Congratulations to Fay Miller who will be inducted into the Senior Citizen Hall of Fame this year in October. She was the KCRSPA’s nominee.

A beautiful flowering astilbe plant was presented to Nancy Harrington as a token of our appreciation for her service as KCRSPA president.

Many thanks to Cathy Clark and Eileen Hahn for arranging our luncheon meeting at Luisa's. The space was accommodating and the lunch was delicious.

Many thanks to Bonnie Smith and Emily Massey for arranging for the program.

After closing remarks by outgoing president Nancy Harrington the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Bostic,

Secretary

Membership Goal for 2015-16

The membership committee for MRSPA has set their goal at 15,000 By March 1, 2016. It will be a tremendous challenge to meet this goal and is asking each local to grow by 7% in order to reach this goal. The number KCRSPA will be striving to meet is 94. We are currently at 92. We are hopeful that each of our unified members will renew and pay their dues by November 2nd; reminders have been mailed to any unpaid cash members. Each one of us can help in this effort by recruiting a former colleague.

Congratulations and welcome to MRSPA/KCRSPA unified membership
In the past year:

Nina S. Burt

Kathleen Clark

Sharon O'Toole Gordon

Marsha Miller

Invitations have been sent to the 8 retiring Kent County Public Schools employees as of June 30, 2015 to join us at the October luncheon meeting as our guests. Please welcome them and encourage them to become members. They are: Janis Gatzke, Connie Fithian, Gladys Miller, Katherine Ashley, Sydney Deringer, Susan Crooks, John Wright, and Maureen Krieger.

The Emeritus Membership issue will continue to be explored during the coming year. Members are encouraged to suggest alternatives to dues-free membership. This will be an agenda item for discussion in the upcoming leadership workshops.

MRSPA is non-partisan and is the only organization in the state that works exclusively for retired school system personnel.

Scholarship Fund

In the past, KCRSPA has asked members to contribute a gift of \$25 each year to help support the scholarship fund. Last year we received some generous donations. Many thanks to those who made a contribution. Your gifts make it possible for our group to support students entering the field of education. **Please think about supporting our fund this school year and use the form provided.** Educators need to be in the forefront of supporting education.

Scholarship Donation Form

NAME _____

DATE _____

Amount _____

In honor or memory of: _____

Thank you for your support.

Checks may be made to KCRSPA and mailed to:

Jean Foreman

8531 Broadneck Rd.

Chestertown, MD 2162

Dear Friends,

I hope each of you had a wonderful summer. I am sure it was very busy .

I want to thank all of you so very much for the lovely astillbe plant and the beautiful Cliff School paperweight. It was very thoughtful of you.

It was an honor and a privilege to have been your President for the last two years.

THANK YOU AGAIN, Nancy



September 3, 2015 KCRSPA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

The meeting was convened by Dr. Barbara Wheeler at 10 am at the KCPL Annex. We said the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Fay Miller, Winnie Walters, Ruth Wilson, Betty Barbe, Nancy Harrington, Kathy Clark, Emily Massey, Margie Wilson, Jean Foreman, Olythea Hunley, Barbara Wheeler, Billie Lynne Roberts and Terri Bostic attended.

The minutes of the May 7, 2015 Executive Committee Meeting were read and approved.

Treasure's Report: The treasury balance as of August 31, 2015 is \$6583.82. The scholarship fund balance is \$ 2574.13.

There was no Old Business.

New Business:

On behalf of the KCRSPA, President Dr. Wheeler presented outgoing President Nancy Harrington with a beautiful expression of appreciation mounted in a solid glass frame.

President Dr. Wheeler presented an encouraging "President's Message" and a "President's Report" which included the following:

N. Harrington, Kathy Clark, Fay Miller, and Jean Foreman met with Barbara Wheeler to discuss the upcoming year. We will request to get on a KC BOE agenda to advise them of our mission, to thank them for ongoing budget support, and to offer our support for KCPS. We also should provide input on the consolidation and redistricting and advocate for the budget to the County Commissioners.

A wireless microphone was purchase to enable everyone to hear at our general meetings.

The MRSPA Leadership Workshop is Sept. 29 in Easton at William Hill Manor from 9 am until 2 pm. Please contact Dr. Barbara Wheeler if you would like to attend.

Submit articles for the newsletter to Terri Mullikin at rockhallpixie@verizon.net.

Fay Miller distributed the 2015 – 2016 MRSPA Handbook and the KCRSPA Handbook. Nancy Harrington and Kathy Clark volunteered to update the chapter history in the KCRSPA Handbook each year.

Committee Reports:

Archives: Winnie Walters reported that her work on these is ongoing.

Cliff School: Jean Foreman gave an extensive report thanking those who have volunteered to be docents. Visitors average 5 – 12 on Saturdays when the school is open. The painting at Cliff School has been completed and funds to be used for blackboard repair are being sought from grants and from the County Commissioners. Jean submitted a Kent News article about the 48-star flag which was donated by Shelby Strudwick to Cliff School through the Port of Chester Questers. National Retired Teachers Association service award. There has been some success with members recording their volunteer hours on the reporting form in the newsletter. Members are encouraged to continue to make donations to the Food Pantry.

Community Service:

Billie Lynne Roberts reported that Fay Miller has been accepted into the AARP Senior Citizen Hall of Fame. The induction celebration/dinner will be on October 22, 2015 at 11am in Glen Burnie. Reservations should be made by October 9, 2015. The announcement will be made at the general meeting on October 1, 2015.

Terri Mullikin has been recommended for her service to receive the National Retired Teachers Association service award.

There has been some success with members recording their volunteer hours on the reporting form in the newsletter. Members are encouraged to continue to make donations to the Food Pantry.

Legislative:

Betty Barbe directed our attention to Action Line which has an article about the \$68 million which Governor Hogan tried to divert from the GCEI (geographic cost of education) to the pension fund. This proved to be illegal and now, according to the Action Line, Gov. Hogan has “carted it off” where it will sit until a year from now when it can be used by the Governor “for anything he pleases”.

Betty encouraged us to visit “marylandeducators.org/2015Scorecard” for a regional guide to your legislators’ education votes.

This year’s MRSPA Legislative Workshop will be held on November 4 in Annapolis.

Membership

The MRSPA has set its goal at 15,000 members by March 1, 2016 and is asking each local to increase its membership by 7%, which for us could be as few as 2 new unified members. Fay has been very active in contacting potential members including new retirees, who will be welcomed at the Oct. 1 meeting

Fay reported that the Emeritus Membership issue will continue to be explored and will be a topic of discussion at the upcoming legislative workshops.

Scholarship

Billie Lynne reported that the scholarship monies have been paid to the appropriate colleges – two to Salisbury University and two to St. Mary’s College.

Ray Gill and Sawyer Cornelius wrote thank you notes to the KCRSPA for awarding scholarships to them. Billie Lynn encouraged everyone to contribute to the scholarship fund.

Trips

Ruth Wilson reported that the November trip is full but members could still be added to the waiting list.

Program

Kathy Clark reported that our October, March, and June meetings will be at Luisa's. The Christmas meeting will be at the CRYCC. We will be celebrating our 62nd Anniversary as an organization at the October meeting and Nancy Harrington is planning commemorative favors for those attending. Our guest speaker in October will be Dan MacLeod, IT Director for KCPS.

We received thank you notes from Judy Zahren and Max Muller for inviting them to the June luncheon. Max donated to our scholarship fund.

Hospitality

Emily Massey asked if we wanted to do the Chinese Auction again this year. We thought that would be a good idea and noted that last year the auction generated \$156 for the scholarship fund. She asked if we wanted to do the 50-50 raffle at the meetings and we agreed that we should.

Food Pantry

Margie Baker reported that our organization donated 22 books, \$15 in cash, 57.6 lbs. of food and 45 egg cartons in June 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Bostic

Recording Secretary

Save Money on Party/Picnic Supplies

Have you been to your local Dollar Store lately? They have a great variety of party supplies for cook-outs, birthday, seasonal or any other type of party. Find everything from plates to serving dishes and cutlery to balloons and party favors. If you are a little creative you can do an amazing themed party by sticking to certain colors and only adding a few of the more expensive items from the party store.

Buy Produce in Season

Food in season is priced to sell. During the summer months, corn on the cob can cost as little as 10 cents an ear; at other times of the year it may cost twice as much. Shop your local farmer's market for great deals on local produce.

To check out local farmer's markets in Maryland go to this website:
**[http://www.visitmaryland.org/
article/ maryland-farmers-](http://www.visitmaryland.org/article/maryland-farmers-)**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shelby Strudwick shows the 48-star flag she donated to the Cliffs School Museum.

48-star flag given to Cliffs School

CHESTERTOWN — To make certain the artifacts in the Cliffs School Museum are as authentic as possible, the Port of Chester Questers have been successful in procuring a classroom-sized flag with 48 stars, in keeping with the years the schoolhouse was open.

Shelby Strudwick, a Kent County resident, recently donated the 60-year-old flag.

The Cliffs School Museum is a one-room schoolhouse which served children in grades one through seven for Kent County's farming and watermen communities. It opened in 1878 and closed in 1939. President Dwight

D. Eisenhower signed statehood bills for the 49th and 50th states (Alaska and Hawaii) in 1959.

In the schoolhouse, lessons of the day for each class are written on the blackboards. A pot-bellied stove — used for heat and to warm soup for lunch, student desks and textbooks are also on view.

The schoolhouse is located 8.5 miles south of Chestertown, on Quaker Neck Road. It is open to the public on the third Saturday of each month through October. Private showings are available; call 410-778-2529 to make arrangements. Donations are welcome.

Make Barista Worthy Iced Coffee at Huge Savings

To make: Combine 6 ounces (1 1/2 heaping cups) medium to coarsely ground coffee with 4 cups room-temperature water in a glass container. Let sit at room temperature for 12 hours.

Strain through a mesh strainer lined with a coffee filter. (This base, about 2 3/4 cups total, will keep in the refrigerator for 2 weeks.)

To serve: Combine a scant 1/2 cup of the coffee base with equal parts of water and milk. Pour over ice. Makes 6 servings.

National Fire Prevention Week is October 4-10, 2015

Keep your family safe with a working smoke alarm in every bedroom.

Did you know that roughly half of home fire deaths result from fires reported between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m. when most people are asleep?

Smoke alarms save lives. If there is a fire in your home, smoke spreads fast and you need smoke alarms to give you time to get out. In fact, having a working smoke alarm cuts the chances of dying in a reported fire in half!

Make sure that all smoke alarms in your home have working batteries! Protect yourself and your loved ones.



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