

Reflections on Nov 7, 2017

By Barbara Allen,
Government Relations Chair

As I am writing the first words of this article, it is November 9, 2017. Wow, what a week it has been! Clearly, the election was a huge surprise in many ways, no matter what your political persuasion. To be forthright and of course truthful, most of you who know me, know that I am a good old yellow-dog-Democrat. I spend a lot of time organizing my precinct so it performs amongst the best. I communicate with the neighbors within my precinct; I alert them of certain upcoming events and certainly encourage them to participate in whatever way works best for them. We are teachers; and we know how to organize, be it the classroom or a political community. But, this past year has been a tough one in the political arena. So, my hopes for this week were that we would squeak out a win of two or three percentage points for the top three candidates, Governor, Lt. Gov. and Attorney General, and hope they would lead us toward better healthcare, increased funding for

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Mark Your 2017 Calendar!

Govt. Relations Team (GRT)

Meeting—Thurs, Jan 11, FEA Office

VEA-R Online Voting—noon, Jan 24-noon, Jan 26

VEA-R Lobby Day—Thurs, Jan 25, Richmond

NEA Organizing Conference—Mar 17-19, Grand Hyatt, Chicago

VEA Convention—Apr 19-21, Hampton

FEA-R Luncheon—Tues, May 8, FEA Office

NEA-R Annual Meeting—June 28-29

NEA Convention—June 30-July 5, Minneapolis

Statewide VEA-R Member Meeting—Oct 8-10, Natural Bridge Historic Hotel & Conference Center

Join us for Lobby Day Jan 25 Make your voice heard!

ALL FEA-R and FCRE members are encouraged to join in this year's bus trip to Richmond to lobby our legislators. With the many wins among our endorsed candidates, our voices have the potential to be heard more loudly and clearly as we stand up for our legislative agenda! The bus will stop at three different places to pick up participants along the way.

Stop #1 is the parking lot at the Fair Oaks Mall, between poles 55 and 58. You can see the Mantech Building sign from poles 55-58, but that building **IS NOT** on the Fair Oaks Parking Lot property. The bus will leave that area at 6:00 a.m.

Stop #2 is the parking lot of Little River United Church of Christ at 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, across from Northern Virginia Community College. The bus will leave for Richmond from there at 6:30 a.m.

Stop #3 is the Cracker Barrel, just off Rt. 95, at 17115 Dumfries Road, Dumfries, VA. The bus will leave from the Cracker Barrel between 6:50 and 7:00 a.m.

Briefing on the latest issues will be given by VEA staff members, **ON the BUS, in the parking lot behind the VEA office in Richmond. VEA retirees from around the state who would like to join us there, will be welcome to board the bus at the VEA office parking lot.**

Retirees will meet with legislators during the morning after the briefing. The General Assembly Building will be closed for renovation during the next four years!! We will be meeting our legislators in the Pocahontas Building about a block away. We will be able to eat lunch before our return home in the cafeteria across the street in the Sun Trust building.

The bus will leave the Richmond area by around 3:00 and will return sometime between 5:00 and 6:00 to the stops that were made in the morning.

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FEA-R Members Running for VEA-R Positions

Vote online in January!

All members are urged to vote for our local candidates for positions on the VEA-R Council. Electronic voting begins at noon on January 24 and ends at noon on January 26. To vote, go to www.veanea.org and click on Member Center at the top right where you will find the link to Elections. You will need your member number, which can be found on the address label of this newsletter or any NEA or VEA publication or on your membership card. If you have any issues, call the VEA at 1-800-552-9554.

Members may instead request a paper ballot by contacting brackley@veanea.org. Your paper ballot must be postmarked by the close of business, January 23, to be counted.

Please support your local candidates to represent your concerns on the state level! The following FEA-R members have been endorsed by the FEA-R Council for the following seats:

VEA-R Council President

Dennis Pfennig

District 6 Congressional Seat

Cheryl Perry

District 8 Congressional Seat

Kathy Davis

District 10 Congressional Seat

Marlene Parker

FEA-Retired

3917 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22030

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FEA-Retired Council 2017-18

Mimi Dash, President

Kathy Davis, Vice President

Barbara Allen

Karen Beasley

John Duncan

Walt Miika

Cheryl Perry

Larry Armentrout

Cheryl Binkley

Leon Haynie

Marlene Parker

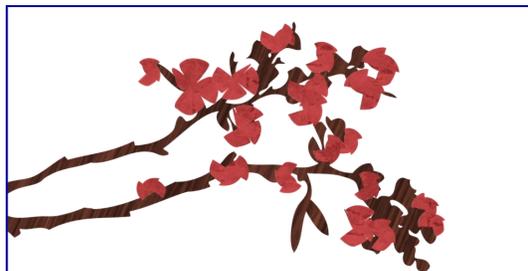
Dave Thomas

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education, protection of our immigrant populations and continuation of economic growth.

The astonishing revelation came late on Tuesday night as I was trying to track the crawl at the bottom of the TV screen. So many new candidates were flipping seats from red to blue and from male to female! Amazing! The true picture came on Wednesday morning when there seemed to appear the possibility of taking a majority in the House of Delegates!!! Truly astonishing. Well, I may have gotten a little overzealous, because the challenges continue. I think that will probably not happen, but it will be very close. That, my friends, was not on anybody's radar screen that I know...including the brilliant political analysis of Larry Sabato from UVA.

I have received so many positive emails with people sharing that this is the first time in a year they feel there is hope for our country or that they haven't awakened in the middle of the night worrying because of the administration presently in the White House. Right here in Virginia may be the beginning of a wave toward a more positive, safer, less hateful future for our country. I hope so.



Annual Spring Luncheon May 8

The annual FEA-R Luncheon featuring a catered lunch and presentation by new FCPS Superintendent Scott Brabrand will be held on Tuesday, May 8, at noon at the FEA Office.

Be sure to mark your calendar for this special event! It will be an excellent opportunity to reunite with old friends and to ask our superintendent any questions that you may have about the school system in general and substitute teaching and retiree benefits in particular. **Look for details in the April newsletter!**

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All retired teachers and education support persons are invited **AND ENCOURAGED** to travel to Richmond and visit with our Northern Virginia legislators. Don't feel like you must be an expert on the issues to qualify as an education retiree lobbyist. Join us for an interesting and **FUN** day. Learn what we do and **WHY** we do it.

If you are interested, please come to our meeting on January 11 at 10:00 a.m. at the FEA office and learn a little more about our agenda or feel free to contact Barbara Allen at Barbarawallaceallen@yahoo.com or (h) 703-978-0470.

Mini-seminar at the FEA Office Friday, Feb 16, 10:30-noon Bring out your inner geek and hone your digital skills

Register by emailing IPD@fairfaxea.org with "Mini Seminar" in the subject or phone 703-352-7300. (Snow date: Feb 23)

Some of the potential topics to be discussed by Fairfax digital expert Stan Schretter include the following: using smartphone technology, building social networks, using apps, maps, folders, etc., and maintaining your device's security. Come with your devices and questions!



Stan Schretter's wife and daughters use one word to describe him: geek. At the age of 13, to the dismay of his tolerant parents, Stan joined a group of friends operating ham radio, then wired his home with antennas. His love of technology has morphed into things like iPods, computers, laptops, and an iPad that is never far from his reach. This love guided Stan into becoming an electrical engineer and spending almost 40 years applying technology to key problems in aerospace, defense and intelligence. Along the way, merging his love of ham radio and computers, he developed award-winning PC software used by ham radio operators world-wide to remotely control their stations via the Internet.

More recently Stan has rekindled his interest in photography. He joined OLLI in 2005, attending OLLI classes part-time while he was still working. An OLLI instructor since 2007, Stan has taught OLLI classes on photography, Holocaust, and the Internet. In addition to taking OLLI classes, he is a part-time graduate student at George Mason University, taking classes in visual technology, photography, religion and computers. He was elected to the OLLI Board of Directors in 2010 and Treasurer in 2012.

Substitute Pay Still on the Front Burner

FEA-R has kept this issue alive in talks with Human Resources and School Board members and will keep pushing for re-instatement of higher pay for retired subs as well as others who choose to support the school system in this way.

Having been an FCPS teacher, Superintendent Scott Brabrand knows the difference a competent sub can make in the classroom. In an hour-long meeting with the FEA-R Council in September, he spoke about coming up with ways to better compensate and attract subs. In addition, he recognized the value that retirees bring to the classroom and the toll it takes on teachers and IA's to fill in during their planning time.

We encourage all of you who have been affected by this issue to send him an email, encouraging him to follow through! (Go to www.fcps.edu website, on the Menu click on About US, and then click on Departments, where you will find the contact vehicle for the Superintendent.)

Position Statement for the 2018 General Assembly Session

ON BEHALF OF ALL NORTHERN VIRGINIA'S RETIRED EDUCATION EMPLOYEES, THE MEMBERS OF THE FAIRFAX EDUCATION ASSOCIATION-RETIRED AND THE FAIRFAX COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. Fully fund the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) and maintain it as a defined benefit plan without any other option.**
 - A. **IMPLEMENT** VRS actuarial recommendations, including continuing to fully fund the Board Certified Contribution Rate to VRS.
 - B. **OPPOSE** all efforts to erode the VRS retirement plan.
- 2. Provide equity for ALL education employees, bringing them to the level of benefits provided to state employees in comparable positions.**
 - A. This increase should be appropriated from the state funds and NOT from local revenues.
 - B. Provide health insurance credit to all educational support professionals (ESP).

IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR ACTIVELY EMPLOYED COLLEAGUES, RETIRED EDUCATORS ALSO CALL ON LAWMAKERS TO:

- 3. Commit to providing a high quality environment for teaching and learning.**
 - A. Attract and retain highly qualified educators.
 - Recognize the importance of professional autonomy for practitioners and provide avenues for their input.
 - Maintain the current continuing contract.
 - Reinstate the three person fact-finding panel.
 - Restore a three year probationary period for new teachers.
 - Significantly improve educator salaries.
 - B. Continue to examine and evaluate the frequency and dependence on high stakes testing.
 - C. Promote a teacher evaluation system that uses multiple measures, reduces reliance on standardized test scores, and reflects a teacher's effectiveness.
 - D. Oppose voucher and tax credit plans for private and home K-12 education.
- 4. Fully fund SOQ mandates, including significant reductions in class size, and revise the funding formula to more accurately reflect the needs of all localities.**
- 5. OPPOSE Charter School Amendments and/or any attempts to divert public dollars to non-public schools.**
- 6. Support Medicaid expansion to provide necessary health care to children of low income families and to bring additional federal funding to the Virginia General Fund.**

Government Relations Team

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