

FREA DISTRICT 5

WINTER 2020
Volume 4 Issue 2

on the rise 

NEW NEWS FROM FREA

BENEFITS FROM AMBA

The newest **FREA partner AMBA** – *Association Member Benefits Advisors* – offers several exciting opportunities for us. In addition to expanding many areas of health, financial, and planning benefits from our long-time partnership with FRG, AMBA will actually be increasing our individual Unit membership! New members are already being added to the state rosters and soon our state office will be notifying local groups of members in the area. Units should therefore begin preparations for positive ‘welcome aboard’ presentations and activities to really attract these potential new members.

GOING ALL IN WITH DIGITAL INFORMATION

Please share with all members that any FREA /FREF information will now **only be available online** through the FREA website- **frea.org**. The state office will no longer be providing ‘hard copies’ of report forms, application forms, handbooks, etc. Unit members can print any item from the web site when needed. And by the way, all forms and information on the website are the most current – any items members may have that are different from those, or dated before August 2019 should be discarded.

AND DIGITAL MEETINGS/CONFERENCES TOO ???

Yes indeed, we now have the capacity to provide groups with **video conferencing technology** if desired. Potentially this application can be useful for Unit Presidents or other officers to meet ‘virtually’, District Directors could ‘meet’ with Unit officers, State Chairs and Committees can use the virtual platform, etc. The video software system is known as **Zoom**, and can be used on cell phones, desk computers, laptops, tablets, etc. There is actually a *youtube* instructional video for ‘how to’ use Zoom. In order to access Zoom, you must first contact the FREA state office [via email or phone] and they will send a special link that can be used to connect all meeting individuals.

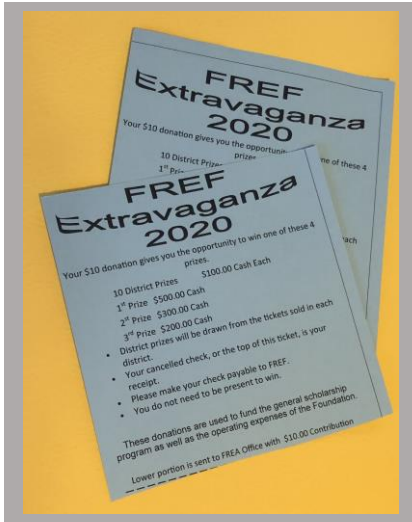
FREA STATE CONVENTION

Come back to Daytona May 12-14, at the Grand Plaza Spa & Resort for the next convention. This year’s theme will center somewhat around highlighting past decades- “*From Roaring 20’s to Soaring 20’s*”. Units will be asked to showcase their history in a creative way on a poster display, and also should expect to provide another special themed basket for the FREF fundraiser. **More details will be coming soon!**

DATES TO REMEMBER

- MARCH 1 Unit Membership Grant proposals DUE to FREA office
- MARCH 15 Unit Volunteer Service Report, Volunteer of the Year nominee, 5th Grade Essay winner DUE to District Volunteer Services Chair; Unit *Certificate of Excellence* DUE to FREA office
- MARCH 31 Unit FREF *Certificate of Recognition* DUE to FREA office
- APRIL 1 All District Volunteer Services submissions DUE to State Volunteer Services Chair
- MAY 12-14 FREA State Convention, Daytona Beach

DISTRICT FREF FUNDRAISING



Have you purchased your FREF Extravaganza Tickets yet?? Remember, one \$100 winner from each District will be chosen. And the big \$500 winner last year was from District 5!

[Sara Dixon, Nassau Co. REA]

So don't delay – get your tickets now from your Unit FREF Trustee/Scholarship Chair.

District 5 FREF Trustee Stephanie Manwell will gladly receive your Unit money and purchased ticket cards any time now. All the ticket cards for each District will be contained together for the drawing at the State Convention in May. After each District winner is chosen, then all submissions will be poured into one huge basket for the grand prize drawings.

Extravaganza tickets are \$10 each. Remember that all these funds will be used for our state Scholarship recipients as well as to provide some financial assistance to members in need.

FREF District Trustee Stephanie Manwell 1601 Nectarine St. Apt. H-3, Fernandina Beach, FL 32034; 904-310-6010 (h) stephanie.manwell@comcast.net.

BYLAWS AND STANDING RULES

Units are reminded to send in your current Unit Bylaws to the **State Bylaws Chair Fay Murphy** by **April 1, 2020**. Sometimes Unit membership experiences a relaxed attention to somewhat tedious but necessary attention to governance protocol. This may happen for a variety of reasons, usually decreasing member numbers and loss of veteran leadership individuals. If there is a copy of unit bylaws archived by the FREA State office, then these 'organization working rules' can be available when needed for a unit undergoing revitalization/renewal efforts. Our District 5 Units should review your bylaws, try to modify them as best as possible to use the same numerical order and name as the seventeen Articles of the state bylaws, and send them in [via email or postal mail] to Fay. Please do not hesitate to contact Fay if you have any questions or concerns. She would love to help you anytime.

[Fay Murphy, faymurph@aol.com, 941-758-5140; 5932 Java Plum Ln., Bradenton, FL 34203-7327)

NOW the next step is to update the **FREA 'Standing Rules'**, which basically are specified policies to guide general operating procedures of the organization. Member input is welcomed and needed, so check out these 'Rules' and think about suggestions to make us operate more efficiently and purposefully.

STATE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Our **FREA State Membership Chair Jody Scruggs** has moved to Fernandina Beach! She will now be part of our District 5 membership- Welcome Jody! Her new mailing address has not been posted as yet, however her contact information remains the same: granjo55@aol.com 772-285-5953.

Also, don't neglect to complete and submit any new unit member applications to the FREA office. The state database will keep tabs on membership changes automatically, so Units do not need to separately submit information for the Unit Membership Contest. Just continue to dedicate time and energy into finding and adding new members!

OFFICER CANDIDATES FOR NEXT TERM



Just a reminder that each Unit should be in the process of identifying its leadership team for the next two years. Units need to submit this information to the FREA office as soon as possible. Many units are experiencing challenges not only in maintaining/increasing membership but also in recruiting leaders. Some are being creative in choosing leaders by now having 'co-presidents, etc.', reducing time of leader service [one year, quarterly, etc.], or even appointing meeting program committees to be in charge.

Whatever can work is always good – let's continue to support each other to uphold a strong fellowship of retired educators who can enjoy time together. It is important to maintain that sense of individual belonging, as well as being part of a group to offer valid and significant services to the community.

Now is also the time to prepare for new District Leadership as well. Our District 5 team has worked magnificently for the better of our Units. Members must now consider who can continue to keep us 'on the rise' for even greater success. A new District Director must be elected at the next state convention, and then the various district committee chairs will be appointed. Be ready to accept a volunteer position when asked – or even voice your interest in serving be known now to any District officer.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Thanks to **District 5 Legislative Chair Melissa Borghorst** for attending the Florida State Legislature session in January. Here is a quick look at issues she and other FREA representatives were part of:

- Voiced opposition to SB 62 during the Education Committee meeting. This Bill would require school districts that pass local initiatives to add funds to schools to share the money with charter schools. This part of the Bill would overrule local authority.
- The Committee finally agreed that bonuses for 'Best and Brightest' was not in the best interest of all teachers.
- Senator Torres has introduced a Bill for COLA for state employees. *Teachers are employees of districts and are not considered state employees.* New retirees do not have a COLA. We want it for every retiree and for current members of the FRS.

All retired educators must be vigilant of these and other pertinent education legislation to support issues that will enhance and further improve positive successes for employed educators and students.

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LEGISLATURE

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FREA MISSION STATEMENT

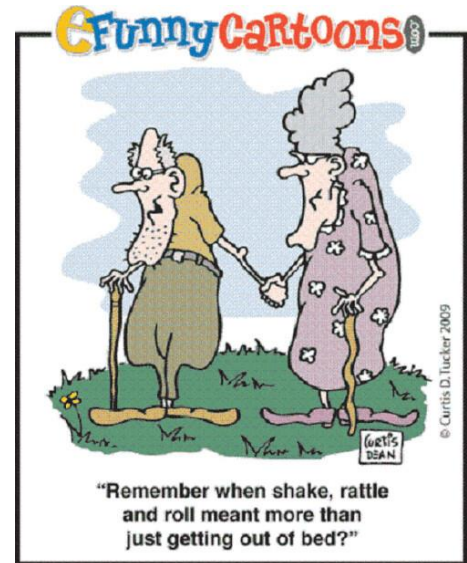
- To safeguard the strength of the Florida Retirement System
- To support public education in Florida
- To provide fellowship opportunities
- To encourage community involvement
- To be a source of information and materials

Florida Retired Educators
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St. Petersburg, FL 33702-3047

Phone 727-577-6400

Email info@frea.org

Web www.frea.org



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FINANCIAL & HEALTH CARE PLANNING REPRESENTATIVES

FLORIDA RETIREMENT GROUP

Haitham Aboul-Hosn, District 5 contact person
Haitham.AboulHosn@FLRetirementGroup.com
1-407-928-4447

www.FLRetirementGroup.com



Feel free to contact any of the FRG advisors for a free 'second opinion' on your current financial plan.