



email: npcrea@gmail.com

North Pinellas County *Retired Educators Association* **NEWSLETTER**



PO Box 4248, Clearwater, FL 33758

Vol. 48, Issue 3

Jan/Feb 2023

Celebrate the New Year with North Pinellas Retired Educators



At our Tuesday, January 10, gathering, please wear something festive to celebrate the new calendar year. Our lunch menu will be lasagna, salad, garlic bread, dessert, and beverage. If you prefer, you can pre-order the Country Club Salad. Please bring cash or check for \$18 to cover luncheon, tax, and tip. Don't forget to RSVP to npcrea@gmail.com by January 5 if you are planning to attend.

Remember those Christmas gifts you weren't sure you had room for? Or maybe the gifts you weren't even sure you wanted? Well, here's your chance to pass them on to another member who wants them, as well as make some money for our organization while doing so. Bring them unwrapped for our Silent Auction.

You are also asked to donate shoes and socks or underpants in kids' sizes for Clothes to Kids in Clearwater.



HAPPY *Valentine's* DAY

On Tuesday, February 14

We'll celebrate Valentine's Day by wearing our favorite red clothing. Please bring donations of non-perishable food for the Mattie Williams Neighborhood Center in Safety Harbor. Share the love with the less fortunate in our communities.

Our speaker will share her creative energy as an author of children's books. We'll also enjoy a holiday meal plus dessert and beverage. Please RSVP to npcrea@gmail.com by February 9, and bring cash or check for \$18 to cover luncheon, tax and tip. As usual, we'll have door prizes and a Share the Wealth drawing to benefit our members.



Nancy Guss: Living with Gussto

NPCREA gathers on
Tuesday, January 10
Tuesday, February 14
11:00 am
at Clearwater Country Club
525 N. Betty Lane
Clearwater, FL 33755

President's Corner:



Bob Stephens

Our 2023 Florida Legislative Session will take place in Tallahassee from March 7 to May 5. Here are FREA's stated legislative priorities for the upcoming year:

1. FREA will advocate for legislators to restore, enhance, and protect our retiree Earned Benefits from the Florida Retirement System.

2. FREA will promote accountability in Florida Public Schools, including funding and uniform standards for all educational facilities and organizations that receive state tax dollars.

3. FREA will advocate for senior health and welfare issues that will ensure retirement with dignity, empowering people to choose how they will live as they age; including, but not limited to, support for Social Security and Medicare Benefits, Health Insurance, Cost of Living Adjustment, and affordable and accessible housing.

FREA (the Florida Retired Educators Association) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization made up of educators, school personnel, and citizens who care about public education and the protection of retiree benefits that are earned through the Florida Retirement System (FRS).

Bob Stephens



VOLUNTEER SERVICES REPORT

Name: _____

Month(s): _____

Youth

Adult

Retired Educators Assn.

Community/Clubs

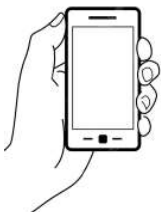
Hospital/Schools

Churches

Friends/Neighbors

All Others

TOTAL



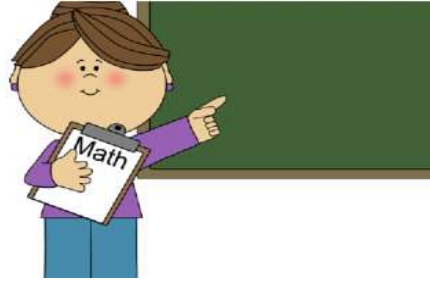
Phone to Mr. Eldon Weaver at 954.895.1073

or email to **pegasus_fl@yahoo.com**

or cut out and bring to the meeting



Blackboard Notices



...PATRONS

Please consider purchasing a patron ad, which will help to defray the costs of printing and mailing the bi-monthly *NPCREA Newsletter* and our member directories. Suggested donation is \$15; make check payable to NPCREA. Send to NPCREA, P.O. Box 4248, Clearwater, FL 33758-4248.

2022-23 Patrons:

Mary Blackmon
Mike Ceraolo-O'Donnell
Rosemarie Ceraolo-O'Donnell
Margaret DeMeza
Gay Gentry
Marie Grein
Maura Hedrich
Mary Lou Kelly
Linda McGeehan
Carole Pope
Rick Pope
Barbara Seiler
Phyllis Walls

...UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 10 - NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION!

Bring a New Year's resolution to share. Wear festive items to celebrate the new year. Bring children's shoes and socks for "Clothes to Kids" in Clearwater. Bring your unwanted or duplicate Christmas gifts for our Silent Auction of Unwanted Christmas Gifts.

Feb. 14 - VALENTINE'S DAY!

Wear red and bring new or gently used children's books to donate to the little free libraries at Moccasin Lake and Morningside Recreation Complex.

Mar. 14 - ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Wear something green to celebrate and bring washcloths and towels for ARC of Pinellas. Our VP, Sharon Ozbun, will give a Safety Home Fit presentation using the AARP Guide to help us all stay safe in 2023 and beyond.

APR. 11 - CELEBRATE SPRING!

Wear something floral or colorful to make the room bloom! Please bring toiletries to donate to a local senior care facility. Also bring items to help promote our raffle basket for the FREA State Convention in May.

By Barbara Seiler



Attention, Attention! We have a hidden TREASURE in our own back yard! The Aging Well Center at the Long Center, 1501 N. Belcher Road, Clearwater, **727.562.4904**, is open 7 days a week from 8 am-8 pm.

I discovered a wealth of programs there for seniors such as: Health, Meditation, Art, Hiking, Insurance, Day trips, Silver Sneakers, Book club, Board games and Card games, Insurance counseling, Art classes, Legal counseling, Emotional health counseling, Health care access, Exercise classes, Computer classes, Wellness programs. Check out these terrific programs that change monthly and will enrich your life. Give them a try!

At Our Dec. 13 Christmas

Sharon Ozbun presided at the meeting as Bob Stephens is still on the mend from an operation in November. We hope he and Val will be back in January.

Linda McGeehan gave the Thought for the Day about the characteristics of Mall Santas and their impressions of humanity from their work with parents and children each Christmas season. She ended with the thought that the best gift we could give is our time to be with others.



The four flautists played a concert of Christmas music including Dreidel, What Child is This, It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, and many more. They were outstanding and received a great ovation. The flautists are all retired teachers: Pat Goldschmidt (Illinois), Rosie Landreth (Tennessee), Lora Mills (Broward), and Linda Shaw (Pinellas).

Cypress Lake High School, heavily damaged in Hurricane Nicole, will be sent \$100 from our treasury plus money collected at the meeting, which was \$113.

We collected 55 toys for the Salvation Army Toy Drive, which Rick and Carole Pope delivered after the luncheon.

Mike and Rosemarie Ceraolo-O'Donnell brought 5 boxes of children's books, and Mary Blackmon brought a bagful, for a total of 260 books for the Little Free Libraries. All the books will be marked with bookplates crediting NPCREA for collecting and placing them in Little Free Libraries for children to take home and read.



Luncheon was delicious: roast pork, mashed potatoes and gravy, mixed vegetables, rolls, beverage, and ice cream sundaes.

Many members came dressed in their fun Christmas costumes, including (from left) Barbara Seiler with her attendant, Sharon Ozbun, Mary Blackmon, and Marie Grein. Nan Lanham and Jeannette Crabbe won Share the Wealth, and six more attendees won door prizes.

Celebration and Luncheon

Eighteen people brought gifts for our “Naughty Elf” gift exchange. The gift exchange produced hilarity as many of the 18 members stole Publix gift cards, bottles of wine, Christmas decorations, and boxes of chocolate from each other.



6 At our November 8 Luncheon:

Vice-President Sharon Ozbun led our meeting because Bob Stephens is recovering from an operation and will be out for a couple of months. Attendees all signed a card to be sent to Bob by our new corresponding secretary, Marcia Lork.



Many members present wore our nation's colors of red, white, and blue to celebrate Veteran's Day this week. Linda McGeehan gave the Thought for the Day about the definition of a Veteran, "Someone who at one point in their life wrote a blank check made payable to the United States of America for an amount of up to and including their life." She said, "That is Honor."

Cathie Foster, chairman of Friends of Brooker Creek, is a retired teacher who just joined our unit. She showed photos of the preserve and its animals and trails, explaining that it is a 15-square-mile area of preserved wetlands, uplands, and hammocks in northern Pinellas County, just east of Lake Tarpon. Established in 1992 and owned by Pinellas County and the Water Management District, it offers birding, horseback riding, and hiking. Sharon Ozbun thanked Cathie and presented her with a check, an NPCREA mug, and a certificate of appreciation.



Rick Pope reported two new Newsletter/Directory patrons and explained why these publications need our financial support. Mary Blackmon asked members who didn't receive their emailed NPCREA Newsletter to pick up a printed copy at the next meeting.

Sharon Ozbun also presented Mary Lou Kelly with a gift for her service as our president during the challenging years from May 2020 to May 2022. We all gave Mary Lou a big round of applause for her leadership.



Ellen Young, Food Pantry Director at Mattie Williams Neighborhood Family Center in Safety Harbor, spoke to us at length about filling the need for food security for the people of northern Pinellas County. She described the workings of their food pantry and the care taken to assure families in need of fresh, wholesome food. She and two other Mattie Williams volunteers carried out a huge cartload of non-perishable food contributed by our members.

Maura Hedrich introduced Mr. Alec Liem, principal of Largo Middle IB World School, who received our contribution of a \$200 grant this year. The grant will be used to stock their "ROAR" Store, a place where students can redeem points they have earned for their Responsible, Organized, Accountable, and Respectful behaviors on their campus. He said our grant would impact all Largo Middle students.



Eldon Weaver collected our Volunteer Services reports; and when one was pulled for a gift, the lucky volunteer was Eldon himself with 80 hours of volunteer service in the previous two months.

Ten attendees won door prizes, and two members won Share the Wealth. One lucky attendee won the Pineapple Basket, donated by Phyllis Walls.



Scholarship for Future Florida Teachers

**Applications must be in by
January 20, 2023**

Florida Retired Educators Foundation

Since 1980, FREF has awarded scholarships for high school graduates who wish to teach in the State of Florida. The amount is \$4000 over a four-year period, \$1000 per year.

Eligibility Criteria

- ⇒ Seniors graduating from an accredited Florida high school (public/private)
- ⇒ Unweighted GPA of 3.0 or higher
- ⇒ Minimum test scores –SAT - 1000 or ACT – 22
- ⇒ Must attend an accredited Florida college/university (public/private)
- ⇒ Must teach in Florida, following graduation. A copy of the OFFICIAL FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL TEACHING CERTIFICATE must be sent to the State FREA Office. The scholarship requires recipients to teach in the State of Florida for one year for every year the scholarship was awarded.

Application Process

Deadline: January 20, 2023 for application. Other supporting documents must be in by January 31, 2023.

Apply Online: www.frea.org/scholarships. If you do not have a computer, see your Guidance Counselor or the College & College Advisor.



Teachers!!!!



Can You Use \$1000?

Do you have a project you would love to do with your students, but cannot get the funding?

Each year Florida Retired Educators Foundation (FREF) awards grants for \$1000 to educators who apply.

Winners have done everything from buying a French horn, to starting a robotics club, to buying wobble chairs for autistic students, and more.

The FREF Trustees evaluate the grant proposals that are submitted and designate the two grant winners, with each receiving \$1,000

Go to www.FREA.org

Click on Scholarships, Grants, & Contests

Select Practicing Educator Grants

Application Period is September 1, 2022-February 15, 2023



North Pinellas County Retired Educators Association Membership Application



9

Unified Dues: **\$50.00 Annually** – July 1 to June 30

<input type="checkbox"/> New Membership <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal of Membership	General Member - Circle One: Retired School Teacher/School Administrator/School Transportation School Maintenance, School Cafeteria. Other:
FREA Benefits are fully available to ALL FREA members be they Regular or Associate.	Associate Member Associate: Any person supporting the mission of the Association may apply for associate membership. (Associate members may not vote as a delegate.)
Circle One: Miss, Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., Other	Date:
Your Name:	Spouse's Name
Mailing Address Apt./Condo	Telephone—Cell phone preferred ()
City	State Zip County
E-mail address:	Your Month/Day/of Birth:
School District Retired From: Year Retired	Position Retired From

NPCREA and FREA are your advocates regarding your pension and the future of education in the State of Florida. Would you like to support our efforts on behalf of all present and future Retired Educators, and other beneficiaries of the Florida Retirement System like First Responders, etc.? This money will be used in a non-partisan way.

Yes, I would like to support FREA's Legislative Advocacy: \$ 4.00

Unified Dues for July 1—June 30: **\$50.00**

Yes, I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to Florida Retired Educators Foundation of \$5.00

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: NPCREA (North Pinellas County Retired Educators Association)

Mail to: NPCREA, P.O. Box 4248 Clearwater, FL 33758-4248

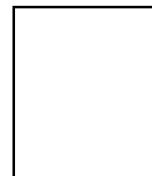
Have questions? Contact NPCREA: NPCREA@gmail.com

NPCREA has many active committees. All of our committees welcome new people, ideas and /or suggestions. The work of the committees listed below is explained at our meetings.

Please indicate your interest in one or more of them by checking the line by the committee. The chair will contact you personally.

Volunteer Services		Information Services		Newsletter	
Hospitality		Legislative		Photography (Historian)	
Sunshine		Name Tags		Retirement Planning	
Phone Tree		Membership		Publicity/Website	
Cultural Affairs		Nominating		Thought for the Day	

**NORTH PINELLAS COUNTY
RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 4248
CLEARWATER, FL 33758-4248**



NPCREA OFFICERS FOR 2022-24

PRESIDENT	BOB STEPHENS
VICE-PRESIDENT	SHARON OZBUN
TREASURER	MARIE GREIN
RECORDING SECY.	MARY BLACKMON
CORRESPONDING SECY.	MARCIA LORK
HISTORIAN	MARY BLACKMON
TECH SPECIALIST	MAURA HEDRICH

Email Address: npcrea@gmail.com

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