January 8, 2017

Happy New Year

Wow, can it actually be 2017. It is true that time flies....... whether you are having fun or not!! I hope that each of you had a wonderful holiday season and are enjoying a great new year! My hope for the new year is that we will see more unity and less chaos in our nation and the world.

As I work on this newsletter, I am sitting near a window where I see the sun melting all the tree ice, which is the only evidence of the big snow storm we were supposed to have last night. The prediction was just a little off, and only the northern counties got much snowfall at all. I know we had a lot of disappointed kids around Fayette County this morning.

Well, that cannot curb my optimism since the FCREA has had an enjoyable and productive year so far. Our programs have been great, and we have earned money for our scholarship and for the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy. More about these things in this newsletter. My only disappointment is the lack of members who regularly attend our meetings. A big THANK YOU to all of you who do attend. Come on out and join this great group. Fayette County should have the largest and most active retired educator group in the state. I hope to see you in February.

Sandra M. Watson

increase membership

To continue to earn Unit of Excellence, we must increase our membership by 10%. That means we must enroll 33 members this year in GREA. I am excited that we have 25 new members so far! We have until April to increase our GREA membership by 7 people. Please help us by inviting a newly retired educator, an inactive member, or another retiree who is not a member to join FCREA and GREA. If you are a member of FCREA, but not GREA, we encourage you to join. We have many members, and we want to grow the numbers who regularly attend our meetings. It is fun to see old friends and enjoy the fellowship during our meetings. Please come, and invite a retired friend to attend each month.

FCREA Officers

President: Sandra Watson
watson.sandra@me.com
Vice President: Deb Posey
dposey@bellsouth.net
Secretary: Tracie Fleming
tflemin1@bellsouth.net
Treasurer: Mary Maud Hiestand
heistandmm@comcast.net
Join Us for the Last Four Meetings of FCREA

We have some great programs scheduled for the second part of the year. In February, we are going to learn all about **Laughter Yoga**. Laughter yoga is based on the belief that voluntary laughter provides the same physiological and psychological benefits as spontaneous laughter. Laughing is an easy way to bring more oxygen to the body and brain, foster positive feelings, and improve interpersonal skills. What better way to spend your time! In March, we will meet at **Arbor Terrace** in PTC with **Chef Nancy**. She will help us learn to cook and eat healthy, and then we will have a great lunch at Arbor Terrace. In April, **Brian Cooper**, VP for Operations at Pinewood Studio will tell us about Pinewood Studio and Pinewood Forrest. In May, we will have our annual **Scholarship Luncheon** and a school system update by **Dr. Jody Barrow**. All in all, these meetings sound very exciting and informative. Come join us and bring a retired friend.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 9, 2017</td>
<td>Pippy Rogers</td>
<td>Laughter Yoga – Pippy will discuss this form of exercise akin to internal jogging that promotes the use of laughter as a form of physical exercise</td>
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<td>March 9, 2017</td>
<td>Chef Nancy Jaworski</td>
<td>Chef Nancy will discuss ways to cook to eat healthy – even when cooking just for two. She has a recipe every month in <em>Fayette Woman</em> magazine</td>
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<td>April 13, 2017</td>
<td>Brian Cooper</td>
<td>Pinewood Studio – Brian will talk with us about Pinewood Studio and Pinewood Forrest, the new exciting and eclectic community to be constructed next to Pinewood Studio. Installation – Joan will preside over our installation of new officers.</td>
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<td>May 18, 2017</td>
<td>Dr. Jody Barrow</td>
<td>Scholarship Luncheon – We honor our high school scholarship recipient and our middle school achievement award recipients.</td>
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We Met Our Board of Education Candidates

In September, we met the FCBOE candidates for districts 1, 3, and 5. Each candidate expressed their platform, so that FCREA members could make a wise decision at the polls. Pictured below are Barry Marchman (R), Melissa Lohr (D), Scott Hollowell (R), Ching Ching Yap (D), and Brian Anderson (R). Marchman, Hollowell, and Anderson won the election.

We Learned All About Traveling

Nancy Hall with Traveling Teachers (Vacation Getaways/Prime Time Adventures) came in October to present information about the trips she is developing and about traveling in general. She plans trips especially for retired teachers and has some exciting adventures in the making. She even gave us information about packing light. If you want to contact her or receive her newsletters, contact Nancy at primeteacher@bellsouth.net.

Nancy took a moment to take a photo with Sandra after her presentation.

GO TO: www.fayettagaretirededucators.org for important information. FCREA and GREA registration forms available online – renew early before our first meeting!!!
Annual Scholarship Auction

We had a great scholarship auction in November. Patty Brown, Realtor, Auctioneer, Appraiser, was our auctioneer for the fourth year. This year, Andrea Donila graciously took a lead to improve our auction. At Patty’s suggestion, Andrea encouraged members to get together and make baskets rather than just bring individual items. The baskets were wonderful and were a big hit. Lots of Christmas presents were purchased that day. Andrea plans to make next year’s auction even better, and we hope to invite guests other than just FCREA members to come and bid for baskets and items. Maybe members can solicit donations from local businesses. We hope to involve more participants in the auction so that we aren’t just purchasing then buying back what we purchased!

With the purchase of baskets and items as well as donations from members, we earned $2241 to support our scholarship and our awards for middle school students. A big thanks to all members who participated in this important fundraiser. Even though the auction is over, you can always donate to our scholarship fund.

Officers for 2017–18

Sandra Watson, Deb Posey, Tracie Fleming, and Mary Maud Hiestand have served as executive officers for 2 years at the end of this year. It is time for a new slate of officers, and we need some members to step up and volunteer for these leadership roles. Many of our core group of members have already served as officers, and it seems harder each year to find members willing to lead. If we want to maintain our organization, we need strong and enthusiastic leaders willing to try to grow our group. Please contact an officer if you would like to volunteer for a leadership position.

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GREA 59th Annual Convention
Evergreen Marriott
Stone Mountain
May 9, 10, 11, 2017

Registration Deadline is April 28
Early registration before March 17 - $40
After March 17 - $45

Information will be posted on the website: www.garetirededucators.org
As you know, Dr. L.C. (Buster) Evans is now the new Executive Director of TRS since Jeff Ezell's retirement last summer. In his report in the GREA newsletter, he announced that TRS is now on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/trsgeorgia/ and Twitter @TRSgeorgia. These are two great ways to stay informed about our retirement system.

Important Information Repeated from the Last Newsletter

Dr. Bill Sloan talked at the GREA Area meeting about our retirement plan. He explained the difference between a Defined Benefit (DB) plan and a Defined Contribution (DC) plan. At present, we have a DB plan which provides retirement income that lasts and cannot run out. Professional money managers make investment decisions about our money and it has low fees.

A DC plan [also called a 401(k) or 403(b)] does not guarantee that retirement income will last through retirement. It can experience dramatic fluctuations in account value with stock and market downturns. This plan requires that employees decide how to invest and spend down retirement savings, and it often has higher or unclear fees.

Almost every year, the legislature tries to change our DB plan to a DC plan. When they try to do this, we must come together to ensure that they hear us when we protest. Please keep up with legislation related to our TRS.

Plan to come FCREA’s next meeting on February, 9th.

Let’s learn all about Laughter Yoga and laugh our way to better health!!

Fayetteville First United Methodist Church – Family Living Center 10:30 AM