

THE HORSESHOE CRAB

Newsletter of the Cumberland County Retirees' Education Association



Volume II, No. 1

September, 2016

The Prez Says:

The following is a letter I sent to State Senator Sweeney last week.

Dear State Senator Sweeney,

I have listened carefully to the things you have said concerning the Constitutional Amendment about pensions. I heard you say in February, at the NJEA Legislative Conference that it would be done before August and it wouldn't mean any increase in taxes. As it got closer and closer to the deadline of August 8, 2016, you said the gas tax had to pass first, insuring that the Transportation Trust Fund would get the needed funds. After a great deal of pressure from the public workers, who knew the Constitutional Amendment had to be passed by August 8, 2016, to be on this year's ballot, you asked what we were so worried about because there was always next year. After all, the pension payment was in the budget for this year and we could have the Constitutional Amendment on the November, 2017 ballot.

Governor Christie has issued an Executive Order that requires the cost of fixing roads, which was usually taken from the Transportation Trust Fund (which is essentially bankrupt) will come from the General Fund now. Well, Senator Sweeney, please tell me what guarantee we have that the state's pension payment, which is the last thing that gets paid out of the state general fund each year, will be fully paid? Traditionally, the pension gets whatever is left when everything else is paid no matter what the budget says. A key component of the Constitutional Amendment was quarterly payments to the state pension funds. Now that won't happen this year. How, sir, will a full pension payment be made with the additional drain of the General Fund for road repair? I'm sure you have a plan that will make sure the pension funds you said you care so dearly about will get the amount specified in the budget. Would you please share your plan with all of us who are so concerned about our pensions? Remember the public workers NEVER missed a payment even when the state kept saying the pension system was over funded.

Sincerely,
Charles Moses, President
Cumberland County Retirees' Education Association



For more information see the CCREA Website or call Charlie Moses (609) 774-6374

- **September 24—Saturday—CASA Superhero 5k run/walk—Gloucester County College — 9 am until noon.**
- **September 27—Tuesday—CCCEA LAT—CCCEA Office—4:30 pm**
- **September 28—Wednesday—CCREA Exec. Meeting—CCCEA Office—11 am**
- **September 28—Wednesday—New Member Tea—CCCEA Office—2 pm**
- **October 1—LAT Brunch—Marciano's Restaurant—9:30 am (CCREA Members are welcome to register to attend)**
- **October 5—CCREA Meeting and Luncheon—Centerton Country Club— 11 am, meeting; 12 noon, luncheon**
- **October 25—CCCEA Fall Focus—Eastlyn Country Club—4:30 pm (CCREA members are welcome and encouraged to attend)**
- **November 3 & 4—Thursday & Friday—Phone Banking—CCCEA Office—10 until Noon**
- **November 8—ELECTION DAY**
- **November 9 & 10—NJREA Convention—Resorts, Atlantic City**
- **November 10 & 11— Thursday & Friday NJEA Convention—Convention Center—Atlantic City**
- **December 7—Wednesday—CCREA Exec. Meeting—CCCEA Office—10 am**
- **December 14—Wednesday—CCREA Holiday Tea—Eastlyn Country Club— 12:30 pm, Meeting; 1 pm, Holiday Tea.**



SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Joseph Franchetta Scholarships (CCREA) are awarded each year to a graduate of each county high school who states an interest in majoring in education at an institute of higher education.

This year's recipients include Bridgeton High School graduate Kimberly Pantaleon, Cumberland Regional's Sarah Harkcom, Millville's Matthew Pierce and Abigail Abate from Vineland. Kimberly is planning on attending The College of New Jersey (Trenton State) and majoring in Elementary Education – Math. Sarah has enrolled at James Madison University (Virginia) where she is studying Interdisciplinary Liberal Studies, with a minor in Elementary Education. Matthew indicates he will be attending Cumberland County College to major in Environmental Science before continuing his studies to receive a degree in Education. Abigail will be attending Cumberland County College.



GR UPDATE NEA/NJEA/NJREA ENDORSEMENTS By Chuck Griffiths

NEA/NJEA/NJREA have announced their endorsements for this fall's general election. For Congress, **Frank LoBiondo (R)** once again gains the support of these educational organizations. Frank has been a true friend of the educational community throughout his many years in the House of Representatives. For President of the United States, **Hillary Clinton (D)** is the clear choice. Her commitment to NEA goals is evident in her proposals and positions. Please support both of these candidates with your vote on November 8th.

Do You Go South For The Winter?



Membership Chair Irene Savicky wants you to notify her if you winter down south or anywhere else in the country. She can make sure you continue to get our newsletters and mailings while you are away. Remember to include the dates you are going to leave and return to our area.

Contact Irene at (856) 863-8424 or email her at isavicky@aol.com

New Member Tea Letter Correction

All dates for the New Member Tea are 2016.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REPORT

Dear Senator Sweeney,

My name is Sandra Zaccaria. I am a retired educator from Cumberland County. I was in Trenton Monday as the Cumberland County GR co-chair hoping to encourage your committee to post and pass SCR-2. After hearing about this issue at every LAT meeting this year and believing NJEA's assurances that Democratic leadership understands the issues of our pension problem, I have spent the last 6 months talking to peers about connecting with friends and family who could be supporters of the question that would be on the November ballot. I did that because you made it clear that you would get the question on the ballot but it would be up to us, NJEA members, to get the vote out to support and pass the Constitutional Amendment. For 6 months, because of the trust built between you and the teachers of New Jersey, I have done my job as a member of the GR committee. That is to say the GR committee has mobilized hundreds of teachers in Cumberland County based on the promises made when we met with you. How would you want us to explain to your constituents that those assurances were empty promises?

I realize you probably would want us to explain about the Transportation Trust Fund and the potential holes it could put in the state budget. But that would be dishonest because the holes are being created by political decisions to eliminate or decrease other state taxes as the gas tax is increased. Most teachers are part of the middle class and view some of those suggested tax tradeoffs as benefiting the state's wealthier citizens to the detriment of our need for a secure pension. In fact, retired teachers remember 20 years of marches and rallies in Trenton to make the pension fund solvent and secure. I especially remember the rally to make the Millionaire's Tax a reality only to have legislators let it lapse while pension funds remain seriously depleted. I have listened to you agree many times that we have earned our pensions, have faithfully made our contributions and deserve a secure retirement. The most frequent question I am asked is why we do not get our COLA anymore. As you know there will be no COLA until the pension fund reaches 80% full funding. That confuses most people so I explain that Chapter 78 is a negotiated agreement that was supposed to get and keep our pensions solvent and safe and the COLA was part of that agreement. Eighty percent of full funding will never happen while our legislators continue to find excuses that allow the state to renege on its fair and moral obligation to fund our pensions. I can find no justification to give teachers in Cumberland County that would explain your sudden change of heart regarding the Constitutional Amendment that I told teachers we would be working on in the Fall. I emphasized repeatedly that part of the plan depended on us getting out the vote after Senator Sweeney does his part to get it on the November ballot. Now what do I tell teachers here and what does NJEA tell teachers statewide?

As a dues paying member of NJEA I am also upset because we have invested a lot of money gearing up for "our part" by preparing literature and promotional materials as well as training members to organize and advocate for the upcoming vote on the ballot question. Every county at the local level has done the same. I feel like the bride who was left standing at the altar. I find no apparent reason for SCR-2 to have gotten caught up and bundled with other issues. That too seems to be an unnecessary and harmful political decision. So, in the end, it feels like the ultimate betrayal from someone teachers have always been told they could trust.

Sandra Zaccaria

CASA Super Hero Event

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) defends the abused and neglected children in Cumberland, Salem, Gloucester, and Camden Counties. On Saturday, September 24, 2016, they will be holding their fundraising 4th Annual Super Hero 5K Run/Walk. The event is being held this year at Rowan College of Gloucester County, 1400 Tanyard Road, Sewell, NJ from 9 am until 12 noon. The CCCEA will again be an NJEA PRIDE Sponsor and will welcome any assistance and participation by our Cumberland County Retired Educators. CCCEA will be joining with the Gloucester County Education Association in handing out snacks to the participants. And, since CCCEA is a sponsor, there are a limited number of complementary slots open for anyone wishing to enter the 5K race. You can volunteer to attend to help pass out the snacks and PRIDE materials, or run/walk. Further information on the event is at the website www.wespeakupforchildren.org. Should you wish to assist, please contact CCCEA President, Deanna Nicosia-Jones at nicosiajones@verison.net. Deanna will provide you with additional details regarding activities and times.



Your Help Is Needed

On November 3 & 4, 2016, Thursday and Friday, we need you to help the CCCEA Government Relations Committee to make phone calls to our members reminding them to vote. Even though the Constitutional Amendment concerning the pensions is not on the ballot we still have endorsed candidates in this upcoming election.

If you are able to help please call either Chuck Griffiths (856) 692-5239 or Sandra Zaccaria (856) 697-2761 to volunteer an hour or two to help us out.

October CCREA Meeting and Luncheon

The meeting will be at 11 am on October 5, 2016, at the Centerton Golf Club. Luncheon will follow at noon. Please notice that the date for this meeting has been changed due to the Jewish Holiday of Yom Kippur.

Please return this portion of the form with your payment. Thank you.

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

The new luncheon format will consist of soup, salad, entrée and dessert. The cost is \$22 per member or guest.

Guest's Name (only people not eligible to be a member may be a guest at our event)

This month we will be serving a vegetable soup, and a choice of the following:

Pasta w/Marinara Turkey Sandwich Chef Salad

Member's Choice: () () ()

Guest's Choice: () () ()

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Return this form with your payment to **Linda Ward, 6 Osborn Lane, Bridgeton, NJ 08302**, by September 27, 2016. Make checks payable to **CCREA**. Reservations must include payment. Payment will not be accepted at the door.

NO REFUNDS

Important Reminder:

State law requires that a retired member or dependent spouse/ partner/child who is eligible for Medicare by reason of age (65 or older) or disability must be enrolled in both Medicare Part A (Hospital) and Part B (Medical) and maintain Medicare Part A and Part B coverage to remain eligible for coverage through the SHBP/ SEHBP. Acceptable proof includes a photocopy of your Medicare card showing Parts A and B coverage. Send evidence of enrollment to the Health Benefits Bureau, Division of Pensions and Benefits, PO Box 299, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0299.

If you are collecting Social Security you must apply for Medicare yourself approximately 3 months before the month you turn 65 and payment for Part B will be deducted from your Social Security check.

If you are not collecting Social Security you must apply for Medicare yourself approximately 3 months before the month you turn 65 and make payments for Part B yourself.

If you are retired from a board of education with 25 years or more of pension credit you will receive full Medicare reimbursement. This reimbursement will be added directly to your monthly pension check.

If you have not yet paid your dues please do so right away! If your dues are not paid this will be your last CCREA newsletter

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Connie Cossboom
96 Sentry Drive
Bridgeton NJ 08302

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