

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY

Our 2021 Annual Business Meeting took place virtually on May 12. One hundred twelve registered delegates and guests "attended" the Zoom meeting. Delegates and guests were treated to an anniversary video chronicling and celebrating our first 75 years. The Memorial Service featured a video and Tillie Barckley shared a poem in honor of our members who passed away this year.

The minutes of the 2020 meeting were approved, and the Treasurer's Report was reviewed. A new Bylaw amendment was passed, as was the 2021-2022 Proposed Budget.

New officers Carla Duls, Anne Arundel County, Dr. Stephen Raucher, Montgomery County, and Janet Williams, Baltimore City, were elected by acclamation. Ms. Duls and Ms. Williams will serve one-year terms as President-elect and Secretary respectively. Dr. Raucher will serve a three-year term as Treasurer. Also elected by acclamation were Sharyn Doyle, Anne Arundel County, and Beverly Dunham, Worcester County, as non-board members on the Nominating Committee.

Our new officers were installed by Ann Marie Downey, Immediate Past President and Nominating Committee Chair. President George Denny, Jr., Prince George's County, and Vice President Dr. Debbie Chance, Talbot County, were reaffirmed as officers.



George Denny, Jr.
President



Dr. Debbie Chance
Vice President

Additionally, local associations were recognized for membership gains and community service work. Individual community service awards were also presented during the meeting. You can read more about these recognitions in a future edition of the *MRSPA News*.

Door prizes and the *MRSPA Fund* Raffle prizes were drawn immediately following the meeting. See page four for more details. If conditions allow, the 2022 Annual Business Meeting will be held on May 11, 2022, at Camelot by Martin's in Upper Marlboro. Save the date! MRSPA greatly appreciates everyone who participated in our virtual Annual Business Meeting. We believe it was a great success!



Carla Duls
President-elect



Dr. Stephen Raucher
Treasurer



Janet Williams
Secretary

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by George Denny



MRSPA "C's" You...

The days leading up to Independence Day July 4, 2021, will be remembered as the time when we all had two things to celebrate simultaneously. The first, of course, was the birth of our new nation released from governance by another country, separated from us by a vast ocean. The second was the gradual lifting of Covid restrictions that allowed us to begin to feel that normalcy, albeit a new normal, finally was emerging for all of us.

Everywhere you look a multitude of people can be found engaged in exercise, family outings, activities, and a host of other endeavors that have been denied us for so very long. One can see the excitement and rejuvenation in the faces of people venturing into shopping centers and other venues without masks.

At MRSPA we have seen the confidence returning to locals all over the state as they continue to serve their members and their communities. Local boards that had not met in months began to test the waters with Zoom meetings. Watching the gleeful expressions on the faces of Zoom attendees who had not seen each other in months was an experience never to be forgotten. Local leaders found creative ways to have their members attend in-person meetings, wearing masks and practicing social distancing all the while.

MRSPA Board members, committees and staff have continued to conduct association business in an organized, dedicated, successful manner. The Annual Business Meeting in May was "attended" by over 100 members, officers were elected, a budget was adopted, and awards were bestowed. Our members

MRSPA News

is published five times each year by the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association.

Editor
Carla J. Duls

Officers

President.....George Denny, Jr.
President-elect..... Carla J. Duls
Vice President.....Dr. Debbie Chance
Secretary.....Janet K. Williams
Treasurer.....Dr. Stephen Raucher

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donated a record amount to support the Maryland Food Bank. Our Scholarship Fund received outstanding support through the donations from our members.

MRSPA looks forward to having in-person or a hybrid of virtual and in-person meetings starting in the fall. While I was fortunate to "attend" several local meeting via Zoom, I am hopeful that I will see each of you in person over the coming months.

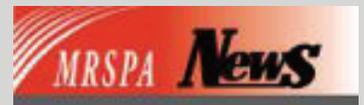
But we must not lose sight of our goal as an association, which is to protect the hard-earned pensions of our members.

(Continued on page 4)

Why wait for the mail?

Receive MRSPA News up to two weeks earlier with email delivery!

If you'd like to receive MRSPA News via email, just let us know, and we'll add you to our electronic distribution list. You'll receive the publication faster AND help us reduce printing costs. **Email your request to: mrspa@mrspa.org and put "Newsletter by Email" in the subject line of the email and please include your full name and your email address.**



From the

Executive Director Wanda Ruffo Twigg



Teacher, cafeteria worker, bus driver, secretary, paraprofessional, administrator, building service worker, pupil personnel worker, psychologist, counselor, principal, coach, therapist and so many more. Titles that our members wore as badges of honor while employed and still proudly reflect upon and value in our retirement.

Another title we all have is “member”. We are members of a group of retired school personnel with a long successful history and a bright future, MRSPA. That successful past and bright future are because of you, our members. “Member” is the most important title in our organization. We are grateful to you for being a member of MRSPA whether you are a first year or a 30- year member. (Yes, we do have some members who retired more than 30 years ago!)

Your membership is why we get up in the morning and why we try to change with the times to bring you fun and useful information and member benefits. You are why we monitor and take positions on legislation annually. You are why we make every decision every day. We hope you are as proud of your title as “member” of MRSPA as we are of you.

This summer, all of our current MRSPA members will receive a new plastic MRSPA membership card in the US Mail. This new card will have no expiration date, so please hang on to it. We hope you will carry your new MRSPA membership card with pride and encourage all of your non-member retired school personnel friends to join us. Applications can be found on our website at www.mrspa.org, click Join.

Enjoy a more “usual” summer of relaxation and fun! Thank you for being a member!

Thank you to our generous members who donated \$4,931 to the ABM MD Food Bank Food Drive and to those who purchased over \$5,500 worth of raffle tickets to support our *MRSPA Fund*.



Vision Statement

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association inspires the dedication, commitment, skills and abilities of its members in service to fellow retirees and the entire community in an ever-changing world.

Mission Statement

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association is a nonprofit organization comprised of retired school system personnel. It serves as an advocate for retirees and provides expanding services to members, empowering them to enrich the quality of their lives. The organization is dedicated to excellence in education and life-long learning. It promotes community service by its members through a myriad of volunteer activities.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

We, the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, are evolving to reflect the goals and aspirations of a contemporary organization. Through our shared values, we create an environment where all members are included, respected, and appreciated.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS RECOGNIZED; RAFFLE PRIZES AWARDED

Three Maryland public schools employees were awarded \$2000 scholarships each to continue their goals to obtain teaching certification.

Matilda Barckley, MRSPA Scholarship Committee Chair, recognized Alicia Benton, Somerset County, Melissa Martinez, Montgomery County and William Brad Distad, Washington County. Each received certificates following MRSPA's Virtual Annual Business Meeting, May 12, 2021.

Funds for the scholarships are raised through raffle ticket sales and donations. Proceeds from the fundraisers go directly to the Community Foundation of Frederick County, which is the nonprofit agency that holds the *Fund* on behalf of MRSPA. Additional funds are raised through the returns on the *MRSPA Fund* investments.

MRSPA Scholarship Committee members Matilda Barckley, Chair; George Denny, Jr., Frances

Miller, Carla Duls, Nancy Gordon, and Lynne Bratten thank those who purchased raffle tickets, the local associations who donated to offset the cost of the raffle prizes, and those who made other monetary donations.

The winners of our *MRSPA Fund* Raffle prizes are: Max Muller, Anne Arundel, \$300 first prize; Nancy Gordon, Frederick County, Maryland Themed basket, second prize; and the 5 third place basket winners were Henrietta Lease, Garrett County, Spa; Joan Meagher, Baltimore County, Cooking; Nancy Zinn, Calvert County, Movie Night; Jannette Wundrow, Prince George's County, Wine Lover's; and Eleanor Fisher, Frederick County, Sports Lover's. Congratulations to all the winners!

The Committee extends their gratitude to the Office Staff, Board of Directors, Local Associations, and all others who supported this important effort.



Nancy Zinn
Calvert County
Movie Night Basket



Nancy Gordon
Frederick County
Maryland Basket



Henrietta Lease
Garrett County
Spa Basket

(President, continued from page 2)

At the State level we continue to monitor legislation in Annapolis that might affect us in any way. It is at the local level that we need to have you help protect the retirement health benefits offered to you by your city, county and/or school system. As local governments deal with declining revenues, the temptation has been and might continue to be for them to reconsider the levels of funding they are willing to provide for retirees.

Meanwhile, summer is here and the best is yet to come. As an unknown writer put it, "Aim big, dream more, fly high, and smile bright."

Best wishes and stay safe.
George Denny, President

VIRTUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION PRODUCTIVE

As we have continued to live in interesting times, the 2021 General Assembly session was interesting, indeed. Almost entirely virtual, advocacy was enhanced in some ways and challenging in other ways. All of our testimony was submitted online. We could not attend meetings or visit our legislators in person. We could watch sessions and committee hearings regularly online.

In spite of the logistics of life in a pandemic, this was a very productive session - in some ways, the most productive in many years. The dire predictions of last spring concerning the potential cost of the pandemic were not borne out. Infusions of money from federal relief programs further helped the state and county budgets.

In terms of MRSPA priorities, we did have some success. Our pensions continue to be secure and growing. We are currently at 74% funded. There was significant progress toward our technology goals. The 2020 lockdown showed the need for improved access

to Wi-Fi and broadband. The Digital Connectivity Act of 2021 established the Statewide Office of Broadband. The success and value of telehealth has been codified in the Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021. This Act covers audio and video telehealth visits and includes medical assistance for psychiatric needs as well as addiction counseling.

The Legislature overrode the Governor's veto of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and approved legislation to adjust the implementation to account for the delay. This is a once in a generation change in education for Maryland to provide greater equity and resources for all schools.

Other major legislation that was approved included police reform, resource equity, and voting laws.

Virginia Crespo
Legislative Aide

MRSPA MEMBERS GARNER HALL OF FAME GERI AWARD

The 2020 Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame honored two MRSPA inductees with the coveted GERI award: Harold Siskind, of St. Mary's County and Genevieve Metzger, of Baltimore County. The Geri is presented to volunteers who demonstrate extraordinary humanitarian community service.

Other MRSPA members inducted into the Hall of Fame were: Rita Wiant Schoenadel, Allegany County; Charles Day and Michelle Day, Anne Arundel County; Velma C. Hicks, Baltimore City; Joan L. Jordan, and Rosalin A. Wilcox, Baltimore County; Nancy W. Zinn, Calvert County; C. Elizabeth Moore, Cecil County; Jean L. Wright, Kent County; Nicalena Neary and Elizabeth A. Stonesifer, Montgomery County; Claren Heikal and Jayne Howell Johns, and Maryann M. Royall, Prince George's County; and Elynor M. Truffer, Talbot County.

MRSPA congratulates all our member inductees!



Harold Siskind
St. Mary's County



Genevieve Metzger and
co-recipient Bill Metzger
Baltimore County

Automatic Annual Dues Deduction and COLA

Annual dues (MRSPA dues of \$45, plus the local dues amount) will be deducted from the July 31 retirement/pension check for members with authorized automatic dues deduction

Members paying by check or credit card should have received your annual notice in the US Mail in late June. A final notice will be sent to those who remain unpaid in August.

The Maryland State Retirement and Pension System Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) effective July 1 is 1.234% for retirees from the employees or Teacher's Retirement System OR persons who retired before July 1, 2011.

Noven Appointed MSRA Executive Director



The Board of Trustees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System (MSRA) has appointed Martin Noven as the agency's new executive director, effective July 1, 2021. Noven is succeeding R. Dean Kenderdine who is retiring after 14 years at the helm of MSRA.

Noven was selected following a nationwide search. MRSPA Board member and MSRA trustee, Ken Haines, chaired the search committee for MSRA who employed Denver based EFL Associates to lead the search.

Most recently, Noven served as executive director of the Illinois State Universities Retirement System (SURS) overseeing a \$22 billion fund that serves 229,999 university employees and retirees. Prior to working for SURS, Noven was senior director for government markets at Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America (TIAA-CREF). Additionally, he worked in various positions in the Illinois State Treasurer's Office from 1993 to 2007.

Maryland Treasurer, Nancy Kopp states, "Noven comes to Maryland with an exceptional depth of experience, much needed at this critical time, and we are confident he will serve our members well."

MRSPA looks forward to continuing our excellent working relationship with MSRA through Mr. Noven. We wish him every success!



2022 Tour Offerings

Tours are open to MRSPA members, their families and friends. Link for tours is on our website, www.mrspa.org Need contact information for tour company? Call Toll-free: 1.877.625.6782

America's Music Cities
feat. Nashville, Memphis, & New Orleans

Mayflower Cruises & Tours
May 20-27, 2022 (8 Days - 11 Meals)

Highlights: Opryland, Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum, Stax Museum of American Soul, Graceland, Delta Blues Museum, Ground Zero Blues Museum, BB King Museum, Vicksburg National Military Park, Oak Alley Plantation, French Quarter, Paddlewheeler Creole Queen.

Mackinac Island
Collette Tours
September/October 2022 (8 Days - 11 Meals)

Highlights: Guided tour of Chicago, Traverse City, Historic Charlevoix, Mackinac's Grand Hotel, Horse-drawn Carriage Ride, Surrey Hills Carriage Museum, Arch Rock, Dinner at Salle a Manger, Frankenmuth, Dearborn, Henry Ford Museum, Greenfield Village.

Holland & Belgium Springtime River Cruise
featuring Floriade

Collette Tours
April 2022 (9 Days - 20 Meals)

Highlights: Amsterdam, Keukenhof Gardens, Arnhem, Middelburg, Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, Kinderdijk, Utrecht, Floriade

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MRSPA CALENDAR

- July 5Independence Day Celebrated
MRSPA Office Closed
- July 21.....Local Presidents' Meeting
Virtual via Zoom
- August 11.....MRSPA Board of Director's Meeting
TBD
- September 6.....Labor Day
MRSPA Office Closed
- September 29.....MRSPA Leadership Workshop
TBD

**MRSPA TRIPS AND TRAVEL
2021-2022**

- Southwest National Parks**, September 5, 2021 (Grand Circle Travel) Contact Amanda Turrell at (386) 597 – 1380 or (386) 290 – 2997 or ATurrell@oattravel.com. **Code: Go- 28192**
- Discover Scotland**, September 13 - 22, 2021 (Collette) Contact Leigh Ann Keller at Action Travel (301) 843-0887 or admin@actiontraveltours.com
- New England Rails and Sails**, October 1-9, 2021 (Mayflower Tours) Contact Debbie Martinez at (810) 797 – 5710 or (630) 673 – 0773 or Debbie@mayflowercruisesandtours.com.
- Texas Cowboy Country**, October 16 -24, 2021 (Mayflower Tours) Contact Debbie Martinez at (810) 797 – 5710 or (630) 673 – 0773 or Debbie@mayflowercruisesandtours.com.
- Greece: A Land of Gods & Heroes**, November 6 - 14, 2021 (Aventura World) Contact Dora Ferreira at (201) 228 – 5266 or reservations@aventuraworld.com.
- Santa Fe Holiday**, November 28 - December 3, 2021 (Collette) Contact Leigh Ann Keller at Action Travel (301) 843-0887 or admin@actiontraveltours.com.
- Backroads of Iberia: Spain and Portugal**, April 2 - 17, 2022, Overseas Adventure Travel (Grand Circle Travel Small Group), Contact Amanda Turrell at (386) 597 – 1380 or (386) 290 – 2997 or ATurrell@oattravel.com. **Code: GO- 28192.**
- Holland and Belgium Springtime River Cruise**, April 2022 (Collette Tour) Contact Leigh Ann Keller at Action Travel (301) 843-0887 or admin@actiontraveltours.com.
- America's Music Cities featuring Nashville, Memphis, & New Orleans**, May 20-27, 2022,(Mayflower) Contact Debbie Martinez at (810) 797 – 5710 or (630) 673 – 0773 or Debbie@mayflowercruisesandtours.com.
- Oberammergau and Passion Play**, May 22-31, 2022 (Collette) Contact Leigh Ann Keller at Action Travel (301) 843-0887 or admin@actiontraveltours.com
- Alaska Cruise/Tour**, July 8 - 20, 2022 (Cruises Plus) Contact Judy Warsaw at 410-494-1414, or judycruisesplus@aol.com.
- Mackinac Island**, Sept/Oct, 2022 (Collette Tours) Contact Leigh Ann Keller at Action Travel (301) 843-0887 or admin@actiontraveltours.com

Check our website at www.mrspa.org , click **Travel** to locate more information on any of the scheduled trips.

All MRSPA trips are open to MRSPA members, their family and friends. Please use **Code: GO- 28192** anytime you travel with Grand Circle Tours to access a special deal for you and MRSPA, even if it's not a MRSPA sponsored trip.