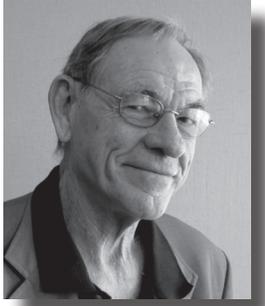




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Retirees' Chapter News

Virginia Governmental Employees Association



A Message from the President...

We are in the midst of the multicultural holiday season - Halloween, Diwali, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, New Year's - and there is much to celebrate!

We have the good fortune to live in the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Even with their imperfections, we have more freedom of choice and many more liberties than any other place I can name.

But freedom requires responsibility. I trust that each of us exercised our right to vote and will continue to responsibly voice our concerns and interests while advocating solutions to the incoming Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, House of Delegates' members and our Virginia Senators. State retirees have a vested interest in affordable healthcare and a solvent retirement system. We need to make our political leaders aware of our views.

Our November 11, 2013 meeting featured House of Delegates' Majority Leader Kirk Cox of Colonial Heights. He spoke about issues likely to arise during the 2014 General Assembly and responded to our questions. VGEA Lobbyist Jim Roberts also joined us, and both

gentlemen listened and responded to our concerns. These included an increase in the healthcare credit from \$4 per year of service and a minimum life insurance payout.

Our Treasurer, Faye Spruill, has arranged our ***Holiday Luncheon at Crab Louie's on Monday, December 9.*** Joan Dent Pond and Glen Pond will be our special guests. Staff from VGEA will also join us. We hope you will reserve a seat by sending a check for \$18 each payable to the "VGEA Retirees Chapter" to Faye. Her address is in the Retirees' newsletter, to the right of this article. She will need to call in a group total by December 5, so please don't delay.

Our 2014 meetings are scheduled for the second Monday each month through April. These are on January 13, February 10, March 10 and April 14. We meet in Imperial Plaza's activity/sales office building at 11:30 a.m. and conclude around 1 p.m. Generally, we enjoy one another's company, eat lunch, interact with our speakers, and conduct any Chapter business. Dee Esser, our Vice President is coordinating our speakers. Please come out and ***JOIN US!***

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President

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VGEA Richmond Retirees' Chapter – November 2013

Meeting Minutes

The 2013 November Meeting of the Retiree Chapter was held on the 11th at Imperial Plaza. The meeting was conducted by Walt Pulliam, president. He welcomed everyone, especially Richard Crossen who was attending for the first time. Walt also paid tribute to all veterans, and recommended that you check out va.gov/explore website for veteran's information.

Dee Esser, vice president, introduced our speaker, Delegate Kirk Cox, Speaker of the Virginia House. Delegate Cox stated that he retired last year as a teacher from Manchester High School, and he has been in the House for 24 years. He also acknowledged Becky Ryburn, his secretary, and said how much he appreciates state employees.

He said that the General Assembly works very hard to get things done. Virginia has had a budget surplus for the past two years. Most of the money came from State Agencies that found savings in their own budgets. States are required to have a Rainy Day Fund. This year we saved \$93 million to put in that fund. He recently went with the Governor to New York in order to keep our AAA Bond Rating. Only 12 other states have this AAA Rating.

The number one priority of the House this year is to fully fund VRS. Another priority is pay increases for K-12 teachers. They are the most important element in education. They are considering a "strategic compensation pay plan" where teachers are measured by the growth movement within their classroom. They are also trying to deal with salary compression issues for State employees.

Higher education is very important, and they are working to get colleges to become more efficient. Some issues are: developing innovative ideas for utilizing the campuses during the summer and other breaks; and improving graduation rates. The General Assembly is providing additional funding to some colleges to accept more students. Others are being given additional funding to develop strategies to retain students.

Delegate Cox opened the floor to questions:

Question: Can you please address the issue of the payout for life insurance for long-term retirees not being enough to cover funeral expenses?

Answer: Delegate Cox said he could not address this issue without knowing the actual cost which VRS should be able to calculate.

Question: Can the Health Care Credit be increased?

Answer: He stated that right now the priority is to fully fund VRS.

Question: The General Assembly determines COLA based on the Federal CPI. If the Feds change how they calculate the CPI, it would affect our COLA. Delegate Cox stated that he does not know what could be used instead of the CPI since that is what everyone uses.

Question: Any idea who might be the replacement for Lacey Putney?

Answer: He stated that he did not know, but the leading candidates are probably Chris Jones and Steve Landes. He added that there are a lot of Chairmanships that are open for change.

Question: What is your opinion on allowing VRS to handle investments for other entities?

Answer: He said that he doesn't have an opinion yet. It is a big issue, and we need answers regarding the liability and competing with private industry.

Question: What is your opinion of the new Governor?

Answer: Delegate Cox stated that he doesn't have one yet. He will be meeting with him in the near future. There are many issues on which they agree. They have differing opinions on Medicaid expansion. He feels that it is an efficient system that needs reforms before it is expanded. This is going to be a tough issue.

Janet Martino, secretary, asked everyone to check off their name on the member listing that is being circulated.

Faye Spruill, treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$2,070.83. She also reported that we only have 21 reservations for the Christmas Luncheon at Crab Louie's. If you wish to attend, you must send a check to her for \$18. Please make your check payable to VGEA Retiree Chapter and mail it to Faye Spruill at

MINUTES (Continued on page 3)

Design Unveiled for Second Annual **VIRGINIA CAPITOL ORNAMENT**

Second in a series of annual collectible ornaments, the 2013 Virginia Capitol Ornament features the historic Bell Tower on Capitol Square.

Finished in brilliant polished brass made entirely in the U.S. and presented in a handsome gift box, the ornament makes a perfect gift for colleagues and friends. All proceeds support the Virginia Capitol Foundation's mission to enhance the educational and cultural potential of Capitol Square's historic treasures through program development and community engagement.

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**A limited number of 2012 ornaments are still available*

MINUTES (Continued from page 2)

4818 Village Lake Drive, Richmond, VA 23234. The Luncheon will be held on December 9.

Walt reminded everyone that February 17th is Legislative Day. He also informed us that he will propose to the VGEA Board that they change the membership dues for eligible spouses. The change would be full cost for one and ½ for the spouse. He also stressed the need to get new members. Winfree Mountcastle suggested we form a membership committee.

Anne Bordelon informed us that Jim Kee who is in a wheelchair needs a ride to the meetings. She asked if anyone could give him a ride. Walt stated that P.C. Shields is still unable to attend due to balance issues. The December meeting will be our Christmas Luncheon on December 9 at 11:30 a.m. at Crab Louie's.

Submitted by:
Janet Martino
Secretary

*The VGEA
Richmond
Retirees'
Chapter
wishes you and
yours a very
healthy, happy and
peaceful New Year!*

Virginia Governmental Employees Association
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Mark Your 2014 Calendar for VGEA Legislative Day: February 17

Don't miss this enjoyable learning experience: our annual VGEA day 'on the hill' is set for Monday, February 17. The VGEA staff, Board of Director members and participants will park in the Bank of America parking lot at 10th and Cary Streets downtown, then gather for coffee at the VGEA Office at 9 a.m. at 1011 E. Main Street, Ste. 400, Richmond. We will walk about two blocks to the General Assembly Building on Capitol Square at 9 a.m., then split into small groups and visit legislators and the Capitol Build-

ing with our Board members.

This is always a very rewarding and eye-opening experience. You may want to call your legislator ahead of time to make an appointment to speak with him or her that day. Between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m., complimentary lunch sandwiches will be served back at the VGEA Office as you finish with your legislative visits. RSVP to 877-302-7146 or info@vgea.org.