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# Retirees' Chapter News

## Virginia Governmental Employees Association



### *A Message from the President...*

**W**e will have an opportunity to get our thoughts to our representatives on VGEA's Legislative Day. Our annual "day on the hill" is set for Presidents' Day, Monday, February 16, at 8:30 a.m., at the VGEA Office, 1011 E. Main Street, where we'll have bagels and coffee and then walk up to the General Assembly. This will allow our state Senators, Delegates and their staffers to meet with state retirees, employees and voters personally. Keep in mind that 2015 is a General Assembly election year. Unfortunately, my Senator, Walter Stosch (R-12th – Henrico), has decided not to run in 2015. He has a great grasp of budgetary matters and will be a loss to Virginia. Please join us on Feb. 16 if you can and bring colleagues.

State employees are woefully underpaid and we must continue to make a case for a salary increase. But, we also have to offer positive reasons for adequate pay. I firmly believe we can do so. Virginia is a "well managed state" because its employees effectively perform :

- **Policy** – Love thy neighbor is good policy but, without action, it doesn't mean much. Public employees *execute* laws and policies.
- **Efficiency** – The number of state workers per capita is below the national average. State agencies consistently operate within budgeted funds.
- **Ethical** – Corruption or malfeasance by state workers is rarely reported.
- **Responsiveness** – There are few com-

plaints about state employees from the citizenry.

At our January 12 meeting, Ms. Mary Ann Johnson of the Greater Richmond Alzheimer's Association discussed dementia diseases and responded to questions. These maladies have great impact on affected families and friends.

Dee Esser, Vice President, briefed us on the joint letter to all Virginia Senators and Delegates from VGEA and the State Police Association, setting out the case for increasing the pay of state employees. Ann Bordelon, Mary Donan, and Kermit Spruill were appointed to the Nominating Committee. Officers to serve 2-year terms will be elected in April.

**Our next meeting is Monday, February 9** and **Bruce Miller**, Artistic Director of **Virginia Repertory Theatre**, will speak about the Acts of Faith collaboration between Richmond theatre companies and faith communities. Our following meetings will be held **Monday, March 9;** and **Monday, April 13; all at 11:30 a.m., at Imperial Plaza, Sales / Activity Building, 1717 Bellevue Avenue, Richmond.**

*"Grant us the serenity to accept that which cannot be changed; the courage to change that which can be changed; and the wisdom to know the difference."* **Reinhold Niebuhr**

**Walt**  
**Walt Pulliam, Jr., President**

### Officers

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# Virginia Governmental Employees Association

## *Richmond Retirees' Chapter: January 2015 Minutes*

The 2015 January Meeting of the Retirees' Chapter was held on the 12th at Imperial Plaza. The meeting was conducted by Walt Pulliam, President. He asked that everyone check the listing that was being circulated to ensure that all information was correct. Walt welcomed everyone. Janet, Secretary, read a Thank You from Joan Pond for treating she and Glen at the Christmas Luncheon. Walt thanked Dee and Janet for making the arrangements for the Christmas Luncheon at the Olive Garden.

Dee Esser, Vice President, introduced Mary Ann Johnson, Program Manager, from the Alzheimer's Association. She has a Master's Degree in Christian Education and has been with the Alzheimer's Association for 14 years.

Ms. Johnson stated that the Association offers services to anyone with a cognitive impairment. The Care Consultants assess the situation and try to ensure that everyone is in agreement with plans for short- and long-term care arrangements. They also offer support groups for the individual and caregivers. If a caregiver needs a break, they can offer a respite scholarship up to \$750.

The Association also offers a safety service. There is a 70 percent chance that the individual will wander. There are Medic Alert Safe Return bracelets that contain their first name and an 800 phone number to call. They assist in the safe return of the individual. There are several counties that have Project Life Saver which uses a radio tracking system. The family can call the police, and they will help to track the individual.

There is a stigma attached to dementia. We need to talk about it and stop sweeping it under the rug. Memory loss does not necessarily mean dementia or Alzheimer's. It could be a health symptom for grief, an accident, potassium deficiency or dehydration. Make sure you eat a healthy, balanced diet. Include foods that are good for you such as salmon, olive oil, and fruits high in antioxidants. We also need to talk to our children or other relatives regarding Power of Attorney and "end of life" directives.

To help identify problems early, there are 10 Alzheimer's Warning Signs:

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Change in the ability to plan or solve problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time and special relationships

5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace their steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Change in mood and personality.

Dementia is very hard to diagnose. Usually after a battery of tests shows nothing, then all that's left is dementia. Women are more at risk than men, and African Americans more than other nationalities. It's important to keep active. There are currently three drugs available that will slow the progression of dementia. It's important that we develop a healthy lifestyle and socialize. Physical and mental exercise is also important.

Walt asked if there were any issues we needed to discuss. Dee Esser, member of the VGEA Board presented the Board's legislative agenda and reasons for pay increases for State Employees.

Faye Spruill, Treasurer, reported that our current balance is \$1,914.18.

It was agreed that we would send a letter of appreciation to Bob Schultze who is resigning as Director of VRS.

Weldon Hazelwood will be our speaker In October. His topic will be Medigap Insurance.

Anne Bordelon, Mary Donan and Kermit Spruill are the nominating committee and will report the slate of officers n April.

A question was asked about the cost of a shingles injection. There was a variety of responses. It was suggested that the best place to go is IVNA to get a reimbursement from Medicare.

***Our next meeting will be February 9th at 11:30 am. Our speaker will be Bruce Miller, Artistic Director of Virginia Repertory Theatre, who will speak about the Acts of Faith collaboration between Richmond theatre companies and faith communities. This is America's largest faith based event.***

*Submitted by: Janet Martino, Secretary*

# VGEA Scholarship Program

VGEA will award four (4) scholarships each in the amount of \$2,500 for the 2015 Fall Semester.

## Eligibility:

- To be eligible, you need to either be a VGEA member, spouse, child or grandchild of a member. The member needs to have been a VGEA member in good standing for a full year prior to the application date.
- Members of the VGEA Board of Directors, VGEA employees and contractors, as well as their spouses, children and grandchildren are not eligible.
- Previous VGEA scholarship winners are not eligible
- Only the first 100 applications received will be accepted.

## Application Packet must include:

- Application Form that is completely filled out.
- One letter from a supervisor or teacher and one personal reference (non family member) each no longer than two pages double spaced.
- An essay that is no longer than two pages double spaced on topic specified on application form.
- Candidates *may* also be asked to participate in an interview with a member of the VGEA Board of Directors.

## Guidelines and Procedures:

- Candidates must attend a college or university, or technical institution accredited by the State Council on Higher Education (SCHEV accredited) or state equivalent.
- Candidates must submit the entire application packet all at one time with your name on each page to be considered as an applicant.
- Each application packet submitted must be formatted in MS Word or as a PDF.
- Once notified that you are a winner your social security number must be given to VGEA for the college accounting purposes.***
- Scholarships will be awarded in May for the 2015 fall semester. Notification will be included in the VGEA Newsletter and on the Web site and in the winner's local newspaper. The awarded recipients will be invited to the VGEA Annual Meeting for the presentation. ***Successful candidates must submit a photo after award notification and attend the VGEA Annual Meeting on September 12, 2015.***
- Scholarships awarded will be mailed directly to the college financial aid office.
- VGEA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age or disability.

*The Scholarship Committee will review all applications received before the deadline and will recommend recipient(s) to the Board of Directors for approval. The recommendations and scholarships awarded will be at the sole discretion of the Scholarship Committee and the Board of Directors. The decision is final and not subject to review or appeal.*

## VGEA Scholarship Application Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a VGEA Member  I am the spouse/child/grandchild of a VGEA Member

If you are the spouse/child/grandchild of a VGEA Member please list the name of the VGEA Member, VGEA Number, when joined VGEA and your relationship.

\_\_\_\_\_

***PLEASE GO TO [vgea.org](http://vgea.org) for the rest of the application.*** Complete it and send it as an MS Word format or as a PDF packet to the VGEA Office at [info@vgea.com](mailto:info@vgea.com). Deadline is February 27 and four \$2,500 scholarships will be awarded.

Virginia Governmental Employees Association  
1011 East Main Street, Suite 400  
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## **VGEA LEGISLATIVE DAY 2015**

***Monday, February 16, 8:30 a.m.***

***At the VGEA Office***

- ***Meet your Legislators! Learn to Lobby***
- ***Morning coffee and donuts, plus complimentary lunch***
- ***Tour the beautiful Capitol, designed by Thomas Jefferson!***

***RSVP NOW: email [info@vgea.org](mailto:info@vgea.org) or  
call 877-302-7146***