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Retirees' Chapter News

Virginia Governmental Employees Association



A Message from the President...

The 2015 Legislative session has ended; although the veto convocation will follow on April 15. A number of VGEA Directors, Members, Retiree Members and Staff visited with Legislators on Presidents' Day. While we can be cautiously optimistic this year, "it ain't over 'til it's over." Or, in this case, until the stroke of the Governor's pen.

In any event, we have to be relentless in our advocacy for state retirees and employees. Politics are local. Thus, we have to press our Governor and Legislators all year-long especially in their home districts. It is ***even more important in 2015*** which is an ***election year***. As you know, you can use www.viriniageneralassembly.gov to identify your area's Senator and Delegate and obtain their contact information. We each need to make a cogent, responsible case for our issues and stay the course.

Please keep in mind that March is VGEA Membership renewal month as the Membership year commences on April 1. The Retiree dues remain \$48. Renewal notices are expected soon. May I urge you to "re-up" and encourage your friends and colleagues to join in? Even, non-state employees can be Associate Members. You can go to vgea.org/membership/join/renew/ or call VGEA at 804.355.3120 for more information. Virginia toll-free 877-302-7146.

When we discuss VGEA membership, we always have to answer the question, "What's in it for Me?" Our recruitment bro-

chure and Home Page are filled with good reasons to join. The VGEA scholarships are one reason. These opportunities for Members and families are another feature of membership. This along with use of info@vgea.org where Members can seek help with employment related issues, are important services. Members can also post opinions on VGEA's Facebook page and review archived information and newsletters. Secure credit or debit card use for all or payroll deduction (for active employees) are easy payment options.

Our February 9 meeting was well attended. Vice President Dee Esser introduced our speaker, Susan Davenport, who provided a fine overview of the Virginia Repertory Theatre and the Acts of Faith program. The latter offers opportunities for involvement with spiritual themes and reflections. Win-free Mountcastle advised that our 2015 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) - a VGEA initiative - will be 1.62%. Kermit Spruill filled in for Faye Spruill with our Treasurer's report, and "We're solvent." See Janet Martino's minutes on page 2.

Our next meetings are Mondays, 11:30 a.m., March 9 and April 13 at Imperial Plaza, 1717 Bellevue Ave., Richmond. Please plan to attend and bring a friend.

"Great works are performed, not by strength, but by perseverance." - Samuel Johnson

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Walt Pulliam, Jr., President

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Virginia Governmental Employees Association

Richmond Retirees' Chapter: February 2015 Minutes

The 2015 February Meeting of the Retiree Chapter was held on February 9 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, and introduced Kathy Lackey, who was attending the meeting for the first time.

He announced that Dee Esser, Vice President, is trying to get a speaker from Anthem for our next meeting. Winfree Mountcastle informed us that based on his calculations our Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for July 1 should be 1.62%. This will be reflected on your August check.

Dee Esser introduced Susan Davenport, Director of Communications and Marketing for VA Repertory Theatre (VA Rep). Prior to her role at VA Rep, Susan worked with many nonprofits and community projects including Acts of Faith Theatre Festival and Go Read. She currently serves on several non-profit Boards including Family Lifeline, Elk Hill Farm and the Jenkins Foundation.

Barksdale started in Hanover Tavern. Bruce Miller and Phil Whiteway were doing educational programs for schools. They merged Barksdale and Theatre IV in 2012. There are now four venues: Hanover Tavern, Children's Theatre at Willow Lawn, November Theatre and Cadence Theatre.

Bruce and Phil feel it is very important to be apart of the community. For more than 30 years, they have supported Hugs and Kisses in all schools. During the presentations they are always accompanied by staff from the Department of Social Services. This presentation is a sexual abuse program. They also partner with the VA Civil War Museum, VA Museum and the SPCA. Additionally, they discount tickets to Senior Citizens and children who cannot afford to pay.

Acts of Faith was started by Bruce Miller, Janet James and other Richmond area pastors. It is an open dialogue between different faiths. Sixteen area theatres participate and many denominations, including Islam and Jewish faiths.

VA Rep is offering three plays. "The Maggie Walker Story" is in the Children's Theatre. "The Whipping Man" takes place in Richmond in April of 1865 at the end of the Civil War. Its characters are the Jewish son of the former owner and two former slaves. The play

deals with the changes in their relationships. The third play is "You're A Good Man Charlie Brown."

Ms. Davenport stressed that anyone can become involved with the theatre by volunteering to serve as ushers, helping with costumes and sets, or working in the gift shop.

Several members brought up the difficulty of parking at the November Theatre. Susan stated that for \$8.00, you can use valet parking or they now have several free parking lots nearby. Members also stated that it is difficult to get to Hanover Tavern due to the distance. They wish more plays would be at Willow Lawn. Susan was asked if the cast members are paid. Susan stated that they are paid. Some are unionized and get a larger pay. Even the interns are paid and some get housing as well.

VA Rep now has a newsletter and she passed around a list for email addresses of those who are interested in receiving a copy. She also talked about Coffee and Conversation which is held once a month on the second Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. at the Willow Lawn Theatre.

Kermit Spruill gave the Treasurer's Report for Faye Spruill. He reported that our current balance is \$1,914.18.

Walt gave a Legislative Update: There could be a pay raise for State employees. A minimum payout for life insurance is still alive. The increase in the Health Care Credit did not go anywhere. There has been some discussion about raising our health care deductible.

He also reminded us about the availability of scholarships. It can be for children or grandchildren. Applications are available online or call the VGEA office.

Remember that Monday, February 16 is Legislative Day. Anyone who is interested should meet at the VGEA Office at 8:30 a.m..

Our next meeting will be Monday, March 9, beginning at 11:30 a.m. at Imperial Plaza.

Submitted by:

Janet Martino
Secretary

Mark Your Calendar for These Special VGEA Dates:

June 6 – SPRING SUMMIT Meeting –
Hilton Garden Inn, 4500 South Peak Blvd., Roanoke

September 12 –
VGEA ANNUAL MEETING –
The Wyndham Crossings in Glen Allen



The Virginia State Capitol was covered with about seven inches of snow one chilly February morning during the 2015 General Assembly session.

The legislature does not have snow days! They meet regardless of the weather.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

For State Retirees:

Virginia Governmental Employees Association (VGEA)

(877) 302-7146 toll-free in Va.
(804) 355-3120 office
(804) 228-4501 fax

Virginia Retirement System

(888) 827-3847 toll-free

Social Security Administration

(800) 772-1213 toll-free

Medicare

(800) 633-4227 /
1-800-MEDICARE toll-free

Department for The Aging

(800) 552-3402 toll-free

Virginia Retiree Health Benefits Program

(800) 572-4098 toll-free

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***The VOICE* of Virginia's State
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