

## ***DIRECTOR'S COPY***

***District 1 Summer Newsletter 2017***

*Director Melanie Waite*

### **District Director's Report**

I visited each unit in the spring, learning that everyone is busy awarding scholarships, enjoying guest speakers, donating books, sharing food and fellowship. Only Escambia has a Facebook page, but at least half of the members, by show of hands, in each unit have access to computers and Facebook, making communication via electronics increasingly feasible. Be sure to check the FREA website frequently: [www.frea.org](http://www.frea.org). Unit websites can be linked to FREA.org. (Contact Anne if you have a problem.) We'll need a new Director next year, since I can serve just two terms. Nominations or volunteers, please!

**Membership:** By paying dues early FREA saved \$1648 on mailouts. Emphasis is still on recruiting new members. Challenge: if we each reach one, we'll double our membership.

Libby Brut, who is retiring after 29 years as Database Manager with FREA, shared that we can request membership lists and retirement lists from FREA, or request them ourselves from School Boards, who may charge us for the information. FREA will request them from the State on our behalf. The State sometimes provides lists of college professors, support people, etc

Many retirees are not ready to join immediately, so keep inviting them for several years after they retire.

Also, I learned that the unit membership chair needs to notify FREA of the passing of members or they will not be removed from mailing lists or recognized at the Memorial Service at the convention.

**Volunteer Services:** State Chair Jody Scruggs reported that we logged almost 10 million volunteer hours, valued at \$24.18/hour for a total of \$474,479.02 We continue the Margaret Poppell project, with schools or Wee Little Free Libraries.

### **Fall Workshops:**

The Bay unit will host the 2017 Fall Workshop. It will be held Monday, October 2 at Grace Presbyterian Church, 1415 Airport Road Panama City. \$15 registration fee includes breakfast and lunch. Reservations by unit required by September 23.

*Bay* arrangements, registration, table decor

*Escambia* fundraising for scholarships

*Santa Rosa* program, evaluations, photos, favors

*West Jackson* name tags

Bring for display Watch Us Grow projects, unit scrapbooks and banners, etc.

2017 Awards will be presented.

Thelma Bruce arranged with La Quinta Inn & Suites for us to stay the night before the workshop for \$69/room, including breakfast. Info: 1030 E 23<sup>rd</sup> St., PC 866-527-1498. Reservations: [Barbara@www.frea.org](mailto:Barbara@www.frea.org) to get the special rate and avoid paying tax.

This is our big fundraiser, so Trustee Pam Schwartz says people who are going to give to FREF should do it at the workshop. Checks are tax deductible and winners do not have to be present. There are two categories: \$25 and \$50. Pam asks that unit members donate gift cards to popular restaurants, stores, etc. for auctions. These are quicker and easier to set up and distribute.

### **Forms**

Be sure to use current forms (2016 or newer) for all reports: awards, volunteerism, state of the units, etc. They are available in the President's Handbook and on the [freq.org](http://freq.org) website.

**Legislative:** Watch for emails updating us on bills being considered. *Likely to change on a daily basis.* If default into investment program becomes law (Leg. Session early Jan.) FREA should develop a policy statement to tell anyone hired that FRA strongly urges them to enter the FRS within 9 months. Now firemen and police default into the pension plan.

Note: AARP members get NRTA membership free. We are affiliated with but not part of NRTA. Numbers count, so mention in emails and calls that you belong to NRTA as well as FREA. If you are a member of AARP, ask to have NRTA printed on your membership card. Then you will get a publication and additional benefits.

### **FREA State Convention in Altamonte Springs May 24-26**

#### **Theme: Education Entertainment & Enlightenment.**

District 1 had a greater representation than the 7 delegats last year. Twelve of us attended: 3 from Bay, 3 from Escambia, 4 from Santa Rosa, and 2 from West Jackson .

Next year's convention returns to the Hilton, Altamonte Springs, May 23-25.

Two special evenings kept us entertained and well fed, a 1920's mystery dinner theater and a hoe-down with square and line dancing. Both involved special attire and audience participation.

All 49 units were represented, with 211 registrants by the opening meeting and more to come.

Keynote speaker Ash Williams, State Board of Administration Executive Director, reported that FRS is much better off than it's been in a while. (We own stock in Yeti.)

We had a MIDWAY, a one-stop center for FREF fundraising: Extravaganza, Country Store, and auctions; unit displays; plus games and other activities. It was worth going to race pigs and toss rings at bottles.

Kristi Daniels, from NRTA, provided training on increasing membership, and will meet with Directors again at the August meeting for additional training.

**FREF:** Be sure to turn in Scholarship Applications for State Scholarships and for Practicing Educator Grants. There is also assistance available for retirees in distress..

**Election:** Next year we will need to elect a new District 1 Director. Pam Schwartz, who has done an exceptional job, is reaching term limits.

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