

A Message from the President

In 2004, FEA President Barbara Allen appointed an ad hoc committee of retirees to lay the foundation for a local division of VEA-Retired. Under the leadership of Mimi Dash, a former FEA president and one-time NEA Director, the committee completed its work in rapid time. To the astonishment of many, including incoming FEA president Rick Baumgartner, who like Allen enthusiastically supported the concept, Dash's committee had ready within a year a constitution and by-laws for the newly named Fairfax Education Association-Retired (FEA-R—many members today like to call it just "fear").

In addition to writing governing documents, Dash's committee was able to get FEA leadership and its then Executive Director Kenneth Reinshuttle to agree that membership in FEA-R would be automatic when one joined as a life-member of NEA-R/VEA-R. In other words, there would be no cost to be a member of FEA-R nor would there be any dues. Its expenses would be handled by FEA itself.

To get the fledging organization off the ground, Baumgartner appointed a nine member FEA-R Council, four of whose members were given one-year terms and five two-year terms. Thus, elections in the future would never result in an entire council being replaced. Under its FEA Board-approved constitution, FEA-R's Council elected its first president, Dennis Pfennig, a twenty-year FEA Board veteran and one time NEA

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Annual Meeting, 2010

NEA-R's Annual Luncheon meeting in May was well attended by over 40 members. A sign of the position FEA-R holds within the FEA family was the attendance the entire afternoon by both FEA President Michael Hairston and FEA Executive Director JoAnn Karsh. As in past years, attendees were able to reconnect with old friends and make new acquaintances, sharing stories of travels and opportunities in retirement.

President Dennis Pfennig announced that an all-member council election would be held, as there were six candidates for the five open seats—Larry Armentrout, Mimi Dash, Kathy Davis, Cheryl Fulton, Walt Mika, and John Myers. In John Myer's absence, the current council members running for re-election opted not to make speeches.

After another delicious lunch catered by Doug Cook of DC Catering, Attorney Steve Stone reminded attendees of the benefits of utilizing FEA Legal Services and stated that some additional services would soon be announced. He added that Attorney Kevin Boyle has also been assisting members with consumer issues, which already expands this valuable benefit of membership.

Vice President Mimi Dash presented an overview of FEA-R activities in 2009-2010, which included the General Assembly Contact Team's lobbying of the General Assembly on retirement issues and several council members' attendance at NEA Health Conferences and conventions. She also spoke of the inequity of our having to apply for a grant from VEA-R, which represents only a small portion of the dues VEA-R receives from FEA-R members. The council will continue to lobby VEA-R

for a larger rebate of our dues monies to expend on FEA-Retired activities.

Bud, Scott, and Brad Kaplan of Kaplan Financial in Fairfax City gave a presentation on the benefits of long-term planning, the current state of the economy, and the advisability of getting one's financial house in order by filing important documents and ensuring that the person with one's power-of-attorney be informed as to their location. The firm provided a safe for the door prize. All and all, the annual meeting was a fun gathering for all involved.

FEA-R Files Challenge

In the early spring, the FEA-R Council unanimously authorized a challenge to the election procedure used by VEA to select retired delegates to the NEA July 2010 Convention in New Orleans. Under NEA guidelines that challenge based on election irregularities was filed with NEA's Credential Committee. The FEA-R Council asked that the announced election results be declared invalid and a new election take place. The NEA put the petition in the hands of one of its attorneys, who spent so much time investigating that by the time he got around to speaking to the FEA-R President about the essence of the complaint it was

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FEA-Retired

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FEA-Retired Council 2009-10

Dennis Pfennig, President
Mimi Dash, Vice President

Barbara Allen Larry Armentrout Kathy Davis John Duncan
Cheryl Fulton Walt Mika Marlene Parker

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Resolutions Committee member. At the same time the FEA Representative Assembly approved an amendment to FEA's constitution granting FEA-R's president full voting rights on the FEA Board of Directors. During Pfennig's three-year presidency, he ensured that the council met on an orderly, pre-arranged schedule; and he founded the organization's newsletter. Dash at this point was FEA-R VP.

Mimi Dash followed Pfennig as president. Her wise guidance over a three year term as both FEA-R leader and voting member of the FEA Board of Directors was and is still greatly admired, especially with reference to the trying difficulties our local organization experienced starting the summer of 2009. Pfennig was her VP.

After three years of monthly FEA Representative Assembly and Board meetings and chairing FEA-R Council gatherings five times a year, Dash called it quits. Pfennig agreed to step into the leadership vacuum for one more year as to be honest at that time no other council member was free to make such a commitment. Dash again served as VP.

But now both are stepping down...neither Pfennig nor Dash will serve as either president or vice president come the fall. They believe they have given the organization the firm foundation it deserves and that it will run just fine without their spearhead leadership. They will both, however, continue as members of the FEA-R Council.



Yet Another Award

This newsletter received yet again, and for the final time, an award at the annual NEA-Retired Convention in New Orleans. This time the award was for being placed in the "Winners' Circle," meaning that having won the local newsletter award three times since the award was instituted this newsletter may no longer be entered in competition.



John Duncan receives award from NEA-R President Barbara Matteson

The award would never have been possible without the strong support of past and present FEA Presidents, Executive Directors, in-house staff, especially council

staff liaison Nancy Perkins and communications expert Pete Marinovich, and proofreader Kathy Davis.

FEA-R Council member John Duncan accepted the award on behalf of the organization on June 27, 2010, from the hands of NEA-R President Barbara Matteson.

FEA-R Files Challenge, *continued from p. 1*

early June—far too late to do anything positive about FEA-R's challenge.

Accordingly, it was no surprise a few days later when the NEA attorney notified FEA-R that its petition was rejected. That notification did not say (a) when the NEA Credentials Committee met; (b) who sat on that committee; nor (c) why the committee rejected the petition. Thus, at the direction of the council, President Pfennig sent a letter to NEA President Dennis Van Roekel asking the above three questions be answered. FEA-R awaits a response.

VEA-R Election Procedure

In the winter of 2010, VEA-R conducted an election to select delegates to both the VEA and NEA Conventions. In the spring of 2010, FEA-R held an election to fill five council seats. VEA-R had at the time 4004 members. Of these, 150 voted (4%). FEA-R had 385 members; 157 voted (41%). Both elections had participants who were similar in age, health, and education. Now why the great disparity in participation?

The answer is simple. VEA-R conducted its election electronically. FEA-R conducted its election the traditional way—members were mailed paper ballots along with brief candidate position statements and a return envelope, postage paid by FEA.

FEA-R's Council argued that the need for participatory democracy outweighed other issues, including cost. Its president stressed to VEA-R that one could hardly claim the moral right to represent an organization when supported by a mere four percent of the membership. The VEA-R Council heard this argument and that of individual members across the state. Accordingly, at its August meeting the VEA-R Council voted to return to the use of paper ballots in future elections. Logic triumphed.

Council Election Results

All five incumbents were re-elected to the FEA-R Council for two-year terms commencing August 1, 2010, and terminating July 31, 2012. At its September 2010 meeting, the council will elect its president, vice president and secretary for the ensuing academic year.