## PASR Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees

#### **DELAWARE COUNTY CHAPTER**

# Newsletter

Volume 29, No. 2 Spring/Summer, 2021 www.delcopasr.org

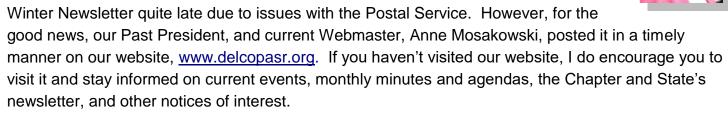
John R. Della Guardia, Editor Delaware County, Pennsylvania



#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Janice HoffmanWillis, President – Delaware County PASR

Again, I wish to express the honor of serving as your President of the **Delco PASR Chapter**. Unfortunately, you received my introduction in the



It is such a pleasure to report during this Pandemic that our Chapter has not missed a beat. We started with phone conferences, and now our monthly meetings are on Zoom, again, thanks to Anne, our digital guru. The various Committees are actively working and keeping everyone involved. We were excited to have had for our May Meeting, PASR's Executive Director, Mark McKillop who presented on "Voter Suppression, Gerrymandering, COLA, and PSERS' spending, as reported in the Philadelphia Inquirer". Future Zoom presentations will be based on Members' needs and interests, such as the comparison of insurances for retirees, senior scams as reported by AARP, and the Pennsylvania Department of Banking on banking basics, to name a few. As a member, feel free to suggest other topics for consideration.

My goals for this Chapter are to work with the Membership Committee to increase the membership and get more members involved. If each member should reach another potential member, then this can be accomplished. The Mission of PASR is "To Serve, Not To Be Served". We can better serve with more. Currently, the same person heads two to three committees. We need YOU, so we can be the **best we can be** in serving our community, providing support to our more needy members, providing scholarships to students, educational grants to district educators, and many more benefits. Let us work together to make our greatness a reality.

We welcome the new members listed below and look forward to increasing our numbers even further over the summer months.



Adrienne Gordy and Richard Henry

#### PASR RECREO - STATE TRIPS, 2021

New Orleans -- October 26 - 30, 2021 For detailed information, check our website at delcopasr.org for a link to the state's RECREO page. Caroline Fedena RECREO Chair.

Since almost all of us are vaccinated, our local chapter will be offering day trips in the fall. We are looking at venues such as Candlelight Dinner Theatre, Philly Pops Christmas Show, Barnes Museum, Shady Maple Smorgasbord: Comedy Mystery Show, etc. All venues have safety requirements set up. If you have any suggestions, please email me: <a href="mailto:c\_fedena@yahoo.com">c\_fedena@yahoo.com</a> or call 610-459-1993. All suggestions are welcomed.

#### IN MEMORIAM

With deep regret, we report the passing of HENRY A. "HANK" FIELD, on May 18, 2021. He was a beloved and active member of our PASR chapter for many years.

Hank was the recipient of the 2020 John J. Dillon Service Award for his efforts as a team leader of our Membership Committee. As our Membership Directory Coordinator, he worked closely with PASR Headquarters to keep our Chapter database current. He supplied the addresses needed for our Chapter's membership mailings and outreach campaigns to promote membership in PASR. In addition, Hank was instrumental in keeping our member database up to date and generating mailing lists for us—a big task.



Hank was the John J. Dillon Service Award recipient in 2020.

Hank also worked closely with our Social Services Memorial Honor Fund (SSMHF) Chair to produce our Necrology list which is submitted as part of the SSMHF report and shared with our members in our Chapter newsletter and at our luncheon events.

A few years ago, Hank relocated out of Pennsylvania to New Jersey, but he remained an integral part of our Delaware County Chapter services and continued to support the mission of PASR. We truly appreciated his organizational and data management skills in keeping our Chapter current and informed.

## Necrology Regretfully, we announce the deaths of

## these esteemed members

Shirley Allen Helen Ambrogi Estelle Beaver Barbara Beck Constance Bevins Patrick Brady Henry Field Norma Goff Charles Granger Patricia Hickey Edward Johnson Donald Masse

William McMillen Bertha Preston Muriel Schultz Larry Shane Marion Temme Elizabeth White

## **Membership Notes**

Sue Stevens Membership Chair

Happy Spring to all! During the past few months, we have been busy sending out email invitations to about 174 local retirees who are prospective PASR members. If you are in touch with old friends who are school retirees, please urge them to join PASR and our chapter. Information may always be found on our website www.delcopasr.org.

Also, for those of you who are <u>annual</u> members of our chapter, membership renewal time is coming up, and reminder letters should be arriving soon. A few of you have already renewed early and we thank you for that. A membership form is included below for any who may need it. Or pass it along to someone who may be interested in our organization.

to someone who may be interested in our organization.

Thank you and have a happy and safe summer!

DELAWARE COUN	TY PASR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
Name	Phone (Home)
Address	Phone (Cell)
City/State/Zip	Email
Year Retired District	Retired from
Position Before Retirement	Birth Date (Optional)
*Associate memberships: anyone interested in th	Associate* \$10.00e work of PASR; active school employees age 50 or more; former teachers ement system; former school employee retired from a non-public school; shall not be eligible to vote or hold office.
RECRUITED BY (if applicable):	
	Life \$700.00

## **Community Service Committee**

of this newsletter.

Elizabeth Gladulich Community Service

Both the Bernardine Center, <a href="http://www.bernardinecenter.org/bc">http://www.bernardinecenter.org/bc</a> and <a href="Kozy Kids of Greater Philadelphia">Kozy Kids of Greater Philadelphia</a> are two long-term projects supported by Delco PASR. Our members generously support these endeavors during our Spring and Fall Luncheons. Of course, because of the COVID-19 crisis, our luncheons have been put on hold. However, the need continues for these two worthy causes. We usually ask members to bring canned and dry foods for the Bernardine Center and winter coats, hats, gloves, and scarves for Kozy Kids. To continue to support these projects this year, please consider a monetary donation. A donation form can be found on page 9, and a pre-addressed envelope has been provided in the fold

# EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Mary Anne Caporaletti Educational Support Committee Chair



As we mentioned in our Winter Newsletter (which was long -delayed in arriving because of COVID-related Post Office issues), we were prevented from offering either the **Lauretta Woodson** or **Frank Monaghan Scholarships** this year. The cause was both financial constraints as well as the havoc wrecked by the pandemic on the normal school year. We will most certainly be revisiting this decision for the 2021-22 school year in hopes that we can continue to support outstanding graduating seniors.

We did, however, present the **Lauretta Woodson Educational Support Award** and the **Educational Grant Award** this Spring. In fact, the Chapter voted to increase the amount of each, knowing how much the events of the last school year have affected active teachers.

The 2021 Educational Support Awards were presented to Sue Heaney, Teacher, and Joan Galloway support staff, Southeast Delco School District. Congratulations to our Educational Grant Award recipient, Wendy King, 3rd Grade Teacher at Prospect Park School, Interboro School District. Our Pennsylvania school retirees are grateful for all that you and your colleagues do for the children of Delaware County in these difficult times. It is our greatest hope that the Delaware County PASR chapter can continue to recognize and support our active colleagues.

On the next page, you will see the thank you letter that Ms. King wrote along with a picture of how she puts the Grant Award money to use in her classroom. Below, beginning on this page, you will see notes from the **PASR 2020 Lauretta Woodson Scholarship Winners**, Abigail Wright and Chase Knox. We thought you might be interested in hearing about their first year of higher education.

Fortunately, the COVID Pandemic did not interfere with the annual **Delaware County Science Fair**, and our PASR chapter was able to continue our tradition of recognizing the winners in the various categories. The **Delaware County Science Fair** winners were are follows:

Lylah Hoque, Upper Darby High School – "D" Fair, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Project: Correlations Between Age and Coronavirus Smell Loss

**Janell Moore**, Upper Darby High School – "D" Fair, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Project: **How do COVID-19 and isolation affect the teenage brain?** 

Katherine Li, Garnet Valley High School – "B" Fair, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Project: Ancestral Sequence Reconstruction of Lasso Peptides for New Drug Functions

Margaret Smith, Upper Darby High School – "A" Fair, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Project: Making Usable Digestible Biodegradable Plastics

## From the 2020 Lauretta Woodson Scholarship Winners

ABIGAII WRIGHT

To all of the educators reading this, Thank You. As someone who has begun my pursuit of an education degree, my respect for you all (or y'all as they say down here) has grown. I began my Freshman year as a part of the Elon University Teaching Fellows Program. This fast track to teacher

licensure has already challenged me and shown me some of the layers to education that I had never

discussed before. During week two I was elected as President of my cohort and by week three we were virtually tutoring elementary schoolers who were struggling with online learning. A keynote given by Dr. Bettina Love in October had us focus on race in the classroom and discuss how educators can do more to promote equality. As the new year began I started a research project where my group members and I mapped out the assets and disparities present in the surrounding districts here in North Carolina. We have also begun to prepare for a study abroad next Spring, where we will all be thrown into classrooms to teach in Dunedin, New Zealand while



simultaneously studying at the University of Otago. Overall, support like that of your organization has allowed me to continue learning and leading while pursuing teacher licensure. For that, I am eternally grateful. Thank you all!

#### **CHASE KNOX**

My name is Chase Knox, and I am currently a sophomore at Howard University pursuing an education and career in architecture, specifically residential and/or commercial. In the field of architecture, it is hard to put into words the importance of being properly educated, because it is certainly not a field to be taken lightly. Having just a taste of what it is like, in my two semesters, I have learned about so many technicalities, terms, and skills that are required to perform and survive in the field of architecture.



With four years to go, I still have so much to learn. I am proud to say that I have earned my place on Howard's Dean's List. Howard University has so far proven to have all the tools and opportunities that will set me up for success in the future and prepare me to strive in the field of architecture. The cost of my college education continues to be a challenge, so I continue to be grateful to your organization for the help you were able to give me.

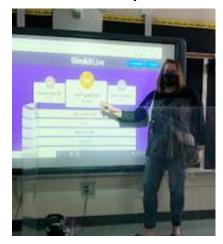


## from WENDY KING, 3rd Grade Teacher, Prospect Park School, Interboro School District Educational Grant Award recipient

Dear Ms. Caporaletti,

I would like to thank you and PASR for selecting me to receive your educational grant. This has certainly been a crazy year, and the programs that your grant enables me to fund have been incredibly useful for my 3rd graders! I'm so happy that I have your support to continue the subscriptions into next year! If you could see my students' faces under their little masks, I'm sure you'd see BIG smiles! My students LOVE these websites and beg to play the review games. They've even been able to make up their own questions to use to quiz each other!

Thank you again for the wonderful grant, and your support of education in Pennsylvania!





A new feature in our Delco PASR Newsletter will be this column featuring our members who reach a major milestone in their lives. **Turning 90** means they join the rank of **Nonegenarian**, something which is to be recognized, cherished, and celebrated. We wish to offer our happiest of **Happy Birthday Wishes** to these members who celebrated birthdays in the first half of 2021. We'll continue with another group of our celebrities in our next issue.

To us, you sparkle like a brilliant gem. The years have not diminished your special glow -they've only made you more luminous. Throughout your life, you've made it your mission to be
loving, kind, gentle, and true. Mission accomplished! Now, our mission is to shower you with
our love and gratitude. Happy Birthday! We know the road at times may have seemed long,
with many unexpected twists and turns, but we hope that the rest of your journey is a walk in
the park on a beautiful, sunny day.

Lois Adams Ruth Alexander Elizabeth Allen
Elizabeth
Anderson
Barbara
Bingham
Florence
Bortnicker
Elizabeth Bunce
Christina
Canales
Constance
Close
Marjorie
Coblentz
Jennie Cramer
Emily Dannaker
Bernadine
DeCampli

Mark Your Calendar!

This year, the Health Options Program is conducting an Open Enrollment from early October through November 15, 2021. Open Enrollment is a special enrollment period that allows all eligible PSERS members to elect coverage in the Program – without a qualifying event. Even if a member declined coverage in the past, he/she will have another opportunity to elect coverage this fall.

#### LEGISLATIVE AND L/PEC

#### SPRING/SUMMER, 2021, UPDATE

Steve Kupsov Legislative and L/PEC Chairs **Delaware County** 



We are finally in a fading pandemic – one that has transformed all of our lives over the past 14 months or so. Thanks to science, the majority of us are fully vaccinated and are venturing outside and visiting our families without fear of contracting the virus while continuing to follow the CDC rules of safety.

By now, most have heard of the FBI investigation, along with the empaneling of a grand jury, to look into the operations of PSERS to gain factual insight on the functions and operations of that organization. Publicly, PSERS provides very little information about their operations. This is partly due to confidentiality agreements between PSERS and investment firms. However, the Federal Grand Jury is likely to recommend legislative action aimed at reform. There is a call to bring more transparency to PSERS and government in general. Multiple PSERS Board members, including former State Treasurer, Joseph M. Torsella, and current State Treasurer, Stacy Garrity, are ardent

supporters of reform. The spotlight will be on PSERS and its return on investments, and it will drive more reforms in terms of practice and transparency that are more aligned with the practices and positions of PASR.

Please be aware that PASR and PSERS are separate operations without any direct connection; therefore, the investigation does not directly involve our organization. Below is a message from Mark McKillop. PASR Executive Director, more fully explaining the current PSERS issues. To stay informed, continue to visit our website, www.delcopasr.org and the state website, www.pasr.org.





## A Message from

#### PASR Statement on PSERS (May 26, 2021)

Mark McKillop, Executive Director

Due to recent news about issues involving the Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS), the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees (PASR) is compelled to respond as it funds our pensions in retirement. Since PASR represents only retirees and not active members, issues involving alleged malfeasance at PSERS significantly impact our members and their livelihoods.

PSERS has acknowledged that there is an active FBI investigation along with a federal grand jury investigation into its recent operations. At this time, there is no evidence or information leading to the conclusion that any pension has been placed in jeopardy.

Please note that PASR and PSERS are separate operations without any direct connection, therefore the investigation does not directly involve our organization.

#### Reason for the Investigation

There is a shared risk provision with active (non-retiree) PSERS members under Pennsylvania State Law that is based on an investment "window" of nine years. If PSERS investment returns fall below 6.36 percent over those nine years, a shared risk provision increases the amount that public school

employees, who were hired after July 1, 2011, pay into PSERS. Originally, PSERS certified that the nine-year return was 6.38 percent. Later, PSERS held a special meeting and changed the number to 6.34 percent which activated that shared risk provision.

News reports surfaced that indicated a possible investigation was underway at PSERS about the estimation of the nine-year investment return and the process it took to reach that number. Recently, additional reports have indicated that the investigation goes beyond the process of the estimation. At this point, it is speculation until there is a second-party validation.

As a result of the pending investigations, PSERS has acknowledged hiring at least four outside law firms to represent them. Also, PSERS has acknowledged hiring an additional outside consulting firm to help with investments during the time their staff is under investigation. This will result in additional money being spent in addition to normal management and personnel costs. PASR will seek information about the impact of those additional expenditures.

#### **Next Steps**

The PSERS investigation will take time to run its course, and we must respect that process. It is important to note that the average federal grand jury investigation usually takes anywhere from 12 to 18 months to complete.

PASR will closely follow this issue and we are committed to providing factual updates to keep you informed as the investigation progresses. We are here to be a trusted resource and will continue to advocate on your behalf.

We sincerely appreciate our members and leaders who have reached out to us to comment and seek additional information. We rely on feedback from our members, and we will continue to be responsive.

## SOCIAL SERVICES MEMORIAL HONOR FUND John R. Della Guardia

SSMHF Chair.

The greatest job of every SSMHF local committee, including ours here in Delaware County, is to service confined and temporarily confined PASR members. Many local committees send cards to ensure that confined members know that their friends in the chapter care about them. Over 7000 cards were sent last year statewide to confined members and temporarily confined members who may not have been able to attend meetings. Many are in nursing homes, assisted living settings or hospitals, congregate care facilities, living with their children, or no longer able to leave home due to health issues. Over 1800 Gifts/flowers have been sent to these confined members in May and December of each year by the majority of chapters. These months are called Months of Giving by the local SSMHF teams. Many SSMHF committees regularly visit their confined members throughout the year. COVID halted this practice in 2020, but with more and more members being vaccinated, visits may begin again.

Each year, the state Memorial Honor Fund partially reimburses locals for the expenses incurred for the services they provide for their confined members. The Memorial Honor Fund uses another \$6000 yearly to help financially strapped members pay their state dues so that members can maintain their insurance coverage that requires this state membership. Lastly, the Memorial Honor Fund awards individual grants to members who are financially unable to maintain their expenses due to a catastrophic event. Due to limited funding, very few of these grants are awarded yearly. Happily, however, the PASR Board of Directors has provided \$5,000.00 to be used specifically for such persons; as such, we hope to be able to help more people.

With yearly costs of \$26,000, the Memorial Honor Fund is quickly depleting and will be gone within only a few years unless we can continue receiving donations yearly from chapters and members. The SSMHF committees use no dues money to complete this work. All funding is from donations by chapters and individuals only.

# An Appeal to Members of PASR - Delaware County Chapter

I hope this letter reaches everyone in reasonably good health and safe from all harm. I am writing you to request your continued support of our **Social Service Memorial Honor Fund**.

Before the COVID Pandemic, we solicited your financial support during our Spring and Fall Luncheons. In 2020 and thus far this year, we couldn't hold these luncheons, and thus, funds were not collected. Nonetheless, the needs of our members didn't stop. In fact, they increased. The form below is a way to continue your financial assistance to these individuals and organizations. A brief explanation of how these funds are dispersed is included and a more complete description can be found on the Delco PASR website, <a href="https://www.delcoPASR.com">www.delcoPASR.com</a>.

For your convenience, a self-address envelope is provided in the fold of this newsletter. Please make checks payable to Delso PASR and Mail them to Harry Hill, Treasurer; 67 Hidden Valley Road; Aston, PA 19014-2532.

Thank You for your consideration and your generosity.

Sincerely, Janice HoffmanWillis, Ed.D. President



**>**<

### **PASR Donation Response Form**

Name	Phone (In the event we need to contact you)		
DONATION TO			
Social Services Helps retired public school employees in ne	\$ eed of financial and emotional support		
BERNARDINE CENTER -	\$		
KOZY KIDS OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA AREA -	\$		
The Bernardine Center and Kozy Kids are b	oth a primary focus for Delco PASR support		
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT, SCHOLARSHIPS/GRANTS – Funds our scholarship and grant programs			
L-PEC -	\$		
A legislative voice for all school retirees, we	orks for Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs)		
MEMORIAL LEGACY DONATION TO DELCO PASR			
In memory of Henry "Hank" Field	\$		
In memory of	\$		
Insert name of person you wish to be rea	membered		
TOTAL AMOUNT Enclosed	\$		

# Large-scale global study to investigate links between COVID-19 and cognitive decline

There is compelling evidence that COVID-19 will have long-term effects on the brains and nervous systems of survivors as they age, and researchers announced a large international study to investigate the correlation between the coronavirus and cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease, and other dementia in later life.

Decades of evidence from other respiratory viruses, along with observations of patients in recent months, suggests such infections may increase a person's risk for Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and other brain disorders, according to a paper announcing the study published in Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association. In the year since the coronavirus began spreading across the globe, doctors have noted lingering post-recovery conditions ranging from 'brain fog' and forgetfulness to anxiety, depression and psychosis. "Abnormal brain imaging has emerged as a major feature of COVID-19 from all parts of the world," the paper said, adding that brain abnormalities have been observed even in a person whose only symptom was anosmia, or loss of smell.

The societal and economic ramifications could be significant because of the pandemic's scale. Some COVID-19 survivors over 60 have reported short-term memory issues and trouble completing simple tasks that they used to do without any difficulty, such as planning a meal or cooking. This is all very recent, so we can't tell whether these are transitory problems or will become chronic.

Researchers hope to enroll a total of about 40,000 survivors. Some will be selected for the study from a pool of millions of confirmed COVID-19 cases. Others will be people enrolled in studies already underway, including one on cognitive function at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York.

## Executive Director's Report -- Adjusting Our Approach

By Mark A. McKillop, Executive Director

Our goal of obtaining a COLA for our members is never far from our minds. The unexpected pandemic along with the recent news reports involving PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System) have added to our challenge. Also, never far from our minds is the split that was caused by the passage of Act 9 of 2001. Many of our members retired before 2001 and were not able to take advantage of the multiplier increase established with the passage of Act 9. We want to fight for the rights and needs of all PASR members. At times, a special effort is required for those most in need. Many who retired before 2001 are having difficulty making ends meet. Recently, the Board of Directors approved the hiring of TRIAD Strategies as the Lobbyists that represent PASR. We thank former Lobbyist Jeff Hunsicker for his expertise and service over the past four years. His dedication to our members and his commitment to our success were appreciated. As we welcome TRIAD to the PASR family, we wish Jeff well in his future endeavors. Working with TRIAD, we will need to integrate our message and Association efforts toward educating the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Our message will always include a sense of urgency while making a compelling case for the critical need to pass this long-overdue legislation. TRIAD stands with us in this endeavor and will provide guidance as we work on behalf of our members.



#### To ALL PASR MEMBERS - Thank you for being a volunteer in our community!

PASR Chapters are interested in documenting the hours of service that volunteer retirees contribute to their local communities. In doing this, our volunteers show the community at large a positive picture of the activities of public school retirees. Please take a moment to complete this form, filling in the appropriate number of hours PER YEAR that you volunteer. A summary of this information is shared with AARP, NRTA, and PASR Headquarters.

EDUCATIONAL Historical Assn Library School Board Other Total  SOCIAL SERVICES Boards/Committees Cancer Society Drug/Alcohol Fire/Ambulance Fraternal Groups Hospital/Nursing Home Meals on Wheels Office of the Aging Red Cross Salvation Army Service Organization Soup Kitchen/Food Bank Visitation/Nurturing Other Total POLITICAL Advocacy Elections	HRS/YR	Adult Instruction Youth Instruction Organization Visitation Other Total SERVICES TO YOUTH Alliance to Youth Classroom Volunteer Head Start Latch-Key Program Literacy Scholarships School Volunteer Sports Tutoring YMCA/YWCA Other Total I have served in special follows:	HRS/YR
Government			
Other <b>Total</b>			
Total			
Name			
Total Hrs. / Year / All Categor	ies Chapter _		
Phone Number	Date	E-Mail	
YES, I want my hours cou	unted, but <b>DO NOT</b> conside	me for the <b>Volunteer of the</b> er me for the <b>Volunteer of the</b>	he Year Award.

RETURN THIS FORM TO: Harry Hill, 67 Hidden Valley Road, Aston, PA 19014 by July 31, 2021

Please use a second sheet of paper to clarify or to provide a more detailed description of your involvement with any activities not listed.

Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees PASR -- Delaware County Chapter c/o John R. Della Guardia, Editor 11 King Court Boothwyn, PA 19061-4253

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## A message to our members

Like everyone, we are hoping that the worst part of the recent pandemic is behind us. Over the past year, we have adjusted to all challenges related to COVID 19 without a roadmap to show us the way. Since the start of the pandemic, all of us have been through unexpected experiences. Moving forward, our job will be to take these experiences and work toward a better **PASR** for our members. At the very least, the past year has compelled us to effectively utilize different methods of communication.

Thanks to all members for their patience during these difficult times. Without member participation, **PASR** would not be successful.

Our best wishes for a healthy and enjoyable summer.