



Brevard Federation of Teachers

Retired Chapter News

“Retired, Not Expired”

Volume 27, Number 5
Mar. 2023

The President’s Missive

--Joan Taddie

We all know that February is the shortest month of the year, but it seems to always be a very busy month! We all had a wonderful start to the month of February because we had our first General Membership Meeting back at the BFT Office! Much thanks to Rita Hewett and friends for the beautiful Valentine’s decorations that made our first meeting so festive! We had a wonderful turnout, and it was great seeing and catching up with everyone as we enjoyed our “brown bag lunch” and the yummy desserts that filled an entire long table!

We had informative and important discussions on the Governor’s recent legislative actions that will negatively affect Florida teachers’ unions. Nancy discussed the establishment of a ride-sharing program for our members who no longer feel comfortable driving, and Lin Herz discussed the three exciting and informative field trips on the calendar, including our trip to the Moore Center in Titusville on February 27. Lin Herz then introduced a wonderful speaker, Alexandra Callner, who is a Certified Clinical Hypnotist and Certified Hypnosit Therapist. Alexandra is very passionate about holistic healing and specializes “in releasing trauma and stuck negative emotions.”

The best moment of our meeting was our annual recognition of Chris for everything she does for us! We surprised her with a card signed by all of us and opened to become a bouquet of flowers for her desk. We included a gift of a \$100 check that we know she will use to entertain her beloved grandchildren!

At the end of our meeting, we were surprised by a visit from BFT President Anthony Colucci and his BFT officers who welcomed us back to our home and discussed some of the important issues that are facing our amazing and courageous teachers every day!

On February 16, Nancy Johnson and I were asked again to run the process at the BFT office for the 2023 Election Nominations. It was wonderful to see so many BFT members show up to put their names on the ballot to be elected to represent our Brevard teachers during these difficult times. We had an excellent response to our field trip to the Moore Center! Can’t wait to see all of you there!





Next Meeting--Thur, Mar. 2, 2023

BFT Office

1007 Florida Ave, Rockledge

11:30 Brown bag lunch

12:00 Business meeting

1:00 Speaker: Jennifer Cleveland

BFT-R will provide drinks, dessert & paper products

March Speaker

--Lin Herz

Our March speaker is Jennifer Cleveland. Jennifer had been a personal trainer and paramedic until she became legally blind in 2009, and had to redefine her life on every level. She is now a yoga teacher, a Reiki 2 and Thai massage practitioner, and a licensed massage therapist.

She and her standard poodle guide dog, Frank, are very active in the community providing awareness for the visually impaired, spiritual support, and inspiration for people who are disabled. She served on the board for the Center for the Visually Impaired. She currently serves on the Transportation Disadvantaged Board for Space Coast Area Transit where she is an advocate and systems user.

She has shared her story at many events including being the keynote speaker at Women of Excellence and at NASA functions. Jennifer's story and activities have been featured in numerous publications.

Jennifer Cleveland shares this E.B. White saying: "I get up every morning determined to both change the world and have one hell of a good time. Sometimes this makes planning my day difficult."



On **March 23rd at 11:00** we'll be touring **Forever Florida**. Margaret Broussard from Forever Florida spoke to us last year about this very special place. We'll be boarding an open-air safari coach that is elevated five feet off the earth & offers fantastic views of the Florida wild. Our 2-hour tour will be moderated by Margaret herself, who has extensive knowledge about the plant and animal species in the area. We'll even stop by a floodplain forest and take a look at Bull Creek, a blackwater stream in the Florida wetlands. After the tour, we'll return to the Visitor Center, where we'll eat a picnic lunch.

If our group winds up being more than 20 people, we will be split up into two tours. One group will tour Forever Florida first, and the other group will eat lunch first. Those who RSVP earlier will be able to choose which group they are in.

The field trip is free but donations are greatly appreciated.

RSVP by March 16 to Lin via email lin32905@gmail.com or text 321-960-8194

If you would like to attend, but need a ride, let Joan know via email jtaddie@cfl.rr.com or by text or phone 321-266-6006

Location: 4755 North Kenansville Road, St. Cloud (south of Holopaw)



Ride Sharing

Need a ride to a meeting or field trip? Willing to pick up a nearby member & give them a ride? We are starting a ride sharing list. If you need a ride or are willing to pick someone up nearby, contact:

Ride sharing for meetings: Email, call or text Nancy Johnson at nanjoh99@gmail.com or 321-960-1246

Ride sharing for field trips: Email, call or text Joan Taddie at jtaddie@cfl.rr.com or 321-266-6006



Membership News

--Sheila Cootes

The following are on the **2022-23 “Honor Roll”** (those members who have paid their 2022-23 dues since the last newsletter): **Marion Blocker, Judith Doyle, Linda Guiles, Lin Herz, Susan How, Marsha Millar, Marjorie Misits, Paulette Paradiso, Charles Stockton, Dicque Walz and Judith Wilkie .**



Just a reminder: dues for 2023-24 are not due until October of this year. Please wait until then to send me your check.

Membership questions? Just call or text (321) 427-7808 or e-mail (scootes@earthlink.net)



Legislative Report

--Patty Farley

On February 6, Florida’s Legislature was convened in a special session for the fourth time in less than a year.

As in the other special sessions, this one is perhaps notable for what was not even allowed to be discussed. Issues, such as the housing crisis, rising insurance costs, and making healthcare more accessible and affordable were ignored. House Democratic Leader Fentrice Driskell asked the Republican leadership to consider two bills regarding relief on property insurance and making healthcare more affordable, yet the Republican Leadership denied her request, ruling her bills out of order.

Instead, the Legislature focused on issues important to the governor. Bills heard dealt with removing local control, expanding the newly created elections police force, and using taxpayer funds to fly immigrants across the country to anywhere Governor DeSantis chooses. Each of these bills builds upon previously approved laws and attempts to rectify matters that are currently waiting to be adjudicated in court in a manner positive for the Governor.

I am writing this in February—a month celebrated for Black History. Yet in Florida Governor DeSantis continues his attack on Black History and AP African American Studies and pushes for voter suppression.

I will have bill numbers and more info in the next issue.

Read, Recycle, and Reward Program

--Rita Hewett



Wow! Only a few more months to go before school is out. Lots of books need to be vetted and prepared before delivering to schools for our precious young readers. Schools, teachers, parents, and students want our books. If you would like to help, please let me know. We need you on Monday or Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Your time working with the book project counts as volunteer hours for BFTR. Be a part of a great group of dedicated members who know the value of books and reading. With more volunteers we can help more children benefit from our wonderful books. Don't wait for someone else to volunteer, step up now.

Come and join us. **Contact Rita Hewett, Program Chair, at (321) 720-3683.**

Volunteer Hours

--Susan Vincent

I'm sending thank you to all who gave me their volunteer hours at the last meeting. Keep up the good work! Don't forget to send me your hours to snv1@cfl.rr.com. Please put volunteer hours in the subject line.



Death of Gene Armstrong

--Lin Herz

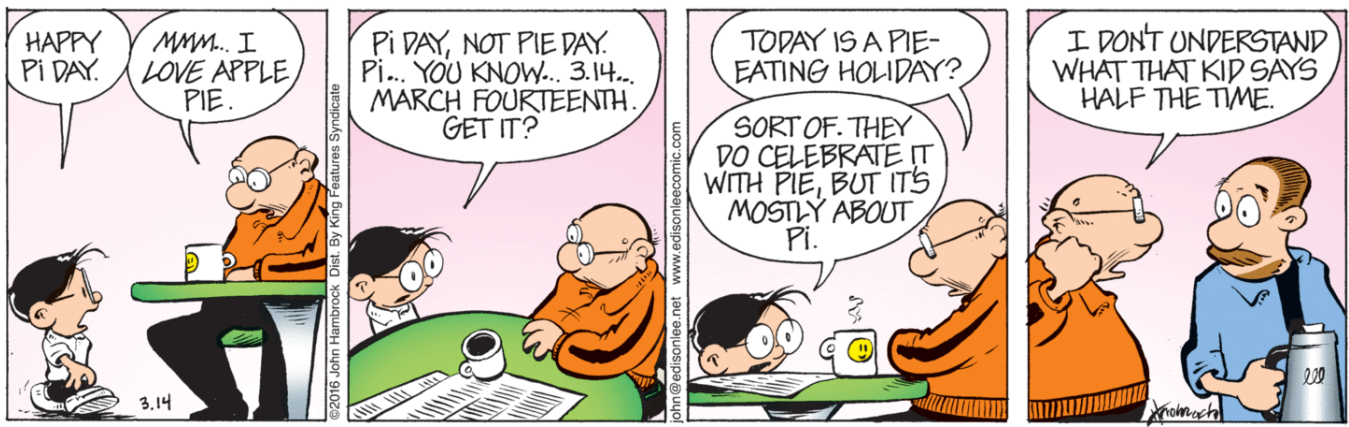
For those of you who were teaching in Brevard in the 1970's and belonged to the Brevard Federation of Teachers, I have sad news to share. Former BFT President, Gene Armstrong, after a month-long battle with Stage 4 heart failure, surrounded by Mary, his loving wife of 52 years and his children, lost the fight for his life and passed away on February 14, 2023. Gene was BFT President from 1974-1980. He was president when the collective bargaining law for public employees passed and when BFT won the collective bargaining election in 1977.

After we lost the collective bargaining election against the CTA in 1975, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) told Gene that BFT needed a full-time president to survive and grow. They would support BFT financially if he became the full-time president. Gene had just gotten his continuing contract (similar to PSC). The school board would not give Gene, a physics teacher at Cocoa High, leave. He had to resign his position, knowing the school board might not rehire him if he wanted to teach again. At the time it was a gamble, but Gene put his faith, enthusiasm, and efforts behind BFT.

In 1977, BFT won collective bargaining rights and bargained its first contract. Many gains for teachers happened during his tenure. Gene encouraged this young teacher to become an active member!

GoodBye February





Brevard Federation of Teachers-Retired Chapter News

OFFICERS

CALENDAR

President: Joan Taddie jtaddie@cfl.rr.com
Vice-President: Nancy Johnson nanjoh99@gmail.com
Co-Secretaries: Linda Guiles lindag315@aol.com
 JayAnn Preston jayannpreston@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Susan Vincent snv1@cfl.rr.com
Membership Chair: Sheila Cootes 427-7808
Sunshine Coordinator: Eva Slaughter 724-0702
Program Coordinator: Lin Herz lin32905@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor: Nancy Johnson nanjoh99@gmail.com

Thur, Mar. 2 - BFT-R meeting at BFT Office
 1007 Florida Ave, Rockledge
 -11:30 Brown bag lunch
 -12:00 Business meeting
 -1:00 Speaker-Jennifer Cleveland

Next meeting - Thur, Apr. 6

Membership Application

I want to join BFT/R for the 2022-2023 school year and receive membership benefits. Enclosed please find a check payable to BFT/R for:

New Member

Annual dues \$76.00
 Lifetime dues \$400.00
 (state and national)

Renewing Member

Annual dues \$76.00 (For non-life members)
 Local dues for Lifetime members **\$30 each year**
 Lifetime dues \$400 (BFTR pays local dues 1st year)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____ Cell _____

Former School _____ Subject /Grade Level _____

Interests _____

Signature _____

Please complete this form and mail it and your check to Sheila Cootes, 3737 Sunward Dr., Merritt Island, FL 32953.