



Brevard Federation of Teachers

Retired Chapter News

"Retired, Not Expired"

Volume 27, Number 3
Dec. 2022

The President's Missive

--Joan Taddie

Election Day, November 8, in Brevard County has resulted in some major changes in the Brevard County School Board. **Gene Trent** (53.31%) defeated Erin Dunne (46.69%) to represent District 2. He will join **Katye Campbell**, who defeated Kimberly Hough in the Primary to represent District 5, and the District 3 representative, **Jennifer Jenkins**, the District 4 representative, **Matt Susin**, and **Megan Wright**, who defeated former Brevard School Board Chair, Misty Belford, in the Primary to represent District 1.

The turnout for this election in Brevard was much better than the Primary turnout of **ONLY 27.28%**. The General Election in Brevard on November 8 recorded:

Registered Voters: **460,372**

Ballots Counted: **268,335**

Percentage of Voter Turnout: **58.29%** (We can still do better!)

On Tuesday, November 8, Katye Campbell, Gene Trent, and Megan Wright were given the Oath of Office. What followed was the election of **Matt Susin** as **Brevard School Board Chair**, and **Megan Wright**, who was endorsed by Governor Ron DeSantis, as **Brevard School Board Vice Chair**. The new School Board worked quickly to vote in two major changes for the Brevard Public School System. The first change was to segregate school bathrooms and locker rooms by biological sex. The vote for this change was 4-1 with Jennifer Jenkins voting in opposition. The second change was to remove Mark Mullins as Superintendent. This was supported by Susin, Trent, and Wright, and Dr. Mullins agreed to step down, so no vote needed to be taken. Campbell and Jenkins were strongly against this change.

A bright spot in the 2022 Election was the passage of the Ad Valorem Millage to Increase Teacher Pay and Other Purposes. This was passed with a **YES vote of 58.21%** to a NO vote of 41.79%. Thank you to everyone who put out a sign and who voted for this important Millage for our teachers!

On November 3, we had our BFT-R monthly meeting at the Melbourne Public Library. It was a great turnout, and everyone was excited to catch up with each other during our Brown Bag Lunch. We had an informative Business Meeting, and then Lin Herz introduced our Speaker, Margaret Broussard from Forever Florida. We were all mesmerized by the presentation, which included beautiful slides of Florida wildlife and the land of Forever Florida that Margaret and her family have preserved for all of us to visit. Lin will be organizing a field trip to Forever Florida in the Spring. Thank you, Margaret, for visiting us and sharing your love of this land and your beautiful and heartfelt story about your beloved son.

I hope all of you have a very happy Thanksgiving! I am so thankful to be a part of the BFT-R! I want to send a special thanks to our Executive Board for all the work that they do to make our organization relevant, productive, informative, & collegial, and we are a great group of friends! See you all in February!

"Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall." —Confucius



Membership News

--Sheila Cootes

No new members this month. Know someone who recently retired? Let them know what a great organization BFTR is. We will welcome them and even give them a gift or two.

The following are on the **2022-23 “Honor Roll”** (those members who have paid their 2022-23 dues since the last newsletter): **Judith Alexander, Sheila Bollinger, Atlene Britt, Theresa Brown, Cecily Cain, Teresita Delgado, Janet Eastman, Deborah Keys, Judith Kinloch, Cynthia Novak, Ann Perrine, Marion Pickett, Carol Post, Eileen Schaap, Daniel Scheuerer, Geneva Swilley and Susan Vincent.**



There are 29 “almost members” who are Life members but have not paid their 2022-23 local dues of \$30. There are also six “almost members” who are Annual members who have not paid their 2022-23 dues of \$76. That’s why our BFTR total membership is only 63. Ugh! Our membership was 92 in May of this year. Our representation at state and national meetings is based on our membership, so we need to get that number back up to the 90’s. Since we are not meeting until February 2, 2023, please send me your check via postal mail. My address is on the membership form on the last page of this newsletter. Remember to make the check payable to “BFTR.”

Life membership is \$400. We (BFTR) will pay your local dues the year you become a “life member.” **Save \$46 per year (plus the \$30 we “give” you for that first year’s local dues).** We will be glad to accept the \$400 amount in two or three (your choice) installments.

Annual membership is \$76 (\$30 of that amount stays with BFTR). Annual members, consider changing to the “life” status.

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

Read, Recycle, and Reward Program

--Fran Baer



Once Upon A Time

For the past eight years, BFTR has made reading enjoyment for Brevard County’s youngest students the mission of our 3R’s, Read, Recycle, Reward Project. Under the dedicated direction of Rita Hewett and her team of volunteers, thousands of books and related plush animals and toys have found their way into the hands of our first graders, kindergarteners, preschoolers, and primary exceptional education classes in all county Title One Schools.

Initially we set up the packaged books in the library or cafeteria and the teachers brought their students in to make their selection. When COVID closed our schools to visitors, we adapted and dropped the books/toys off for the schools to distribute as they determined.

In all these years the responses have been only positive. Administrators, teachers, support staff, students and parents welcomed and looked forward to our return, year after year.

Not so this year. Legislation, signed by Governor DeSantis, regulating what books can be allowed in schools has hampered our mission. What began as a school decision has morphed into a district unwritten directive. It’s easy to be critical of the edict, but in my conversations with the powers that be, I detect the motive is to protect teachers, administrators and the district from the potentially harsh punishment of losing licenses and funding by permitting books not vetted by a school librarian into the schools.

So, what do we do? The fallout from the legislation is still being analyzed. State training is being formulated and expected in January. In the meantime our books, carefully selected by those of you who have given your time and expertise to ensure appropriateness for our early childhood readers, await distribution. Hopefully, when the dust settles, cooler heads will take a positive step and allow our mission to proceed. Absent that, we will pursue alternatives and continue to look forward to the day when books are not assumed toxic, but viewed as a measure of a healthy community.

Volunteer Hours

--Susan Vincent

Thank you to the people who sent me their volunteer hours. Send hours to snv1@cfl.rr.com. Please put volunteer hours in the subject line.



Brevard Federation of Teachers-Retired Chapter News

OFFICERS

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CALENDAR

**Next meeting: Thur, Feb.2, 2023 at
BFT Office**

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.