



Brevard Federation of Teachers *Retired Chapter News* *“Retired, Not Expired”*

Volume 26, Number 5
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The President’s Missive

--Joan Taddie

“It is not possible to be in favor of justice for some people and not be in favor of justice for all people.”--*Martin Luther King Jr.*

As I sat at my computer tonight to write this missive, our precious democracy was threatened by the failure of congress to advance the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. This vote has “effectively ended hopes of implementing national standards around election procedures that could have blocked some of the most restrictive new GOP laws” in several presidential battleground states, including Florida, that have imposed restrictive new election laws in 2021.

As a Democratic Committeewoman in Melbourne Village, I spent many hours going door to door to educate our villagers about the voting changes for our last election. Governor DeSantis and his Republican majority in Tallahassee had made voting more complicated and less voter-friendly. Vote By Mail ballot applications now needed to include a driver’s license number or the last 4 numbers of the voter’s social security #. The application was now only good for 2 years rather than 4 years of receiving a VBM ballot. There were a limited number of drop boxes available, and the time frame for mailing the VBM ballot was shortened.

An effective means of assisting voters in African-American neighborhoods to vote was called “Souls to the Polls.” After Sunday church services, buses would be waiting to bring the worshipers to the polls, until the state eliminated early voting on Sundays. Limiting the number of polling locations in underserved communities created long lines and hours of waiting. People were thirsty and hungry, but it was now prohibited to pass out any water or food to anyone waiting in line to vote.

In a democracy, every citizen should have the right to vote, and everyone is treated equally and has equal rights. Nearly all recent polls show that Americans believe democracy is under threat. Here in Florida, Governor DeSantis wants you to believe the lie that there is widespread voter fraud in our state. His latest proposal is “the creation of something called the Office of Election Crime and Security.” He is asking GOP lawmakers to approve a \$6 million “special police force to oversee elections, a proposal that election experts say could lead to intimidation of voters and organizers.”

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “The time is always right to do what is right.” What will you do to bring back justice to all the people? What will you do knowing that the United States Senate failed our democracy tonight?



Next Meeting--Thur, Feb. 3, 2022 via ZOOM

11:00 Business meeting

You will be receiving an email that will give you the information you need to attend including our meeting ID#. Text or call Joan at 321-266-6006 if you need any help, or a practice session to figure out how to be admitted into the meeting. The meeting room will be open at 10:30 if you would like to get into the meeting earlier.



Membership News

--Sheila Cootes

The following are on the **2021-22 "Honor Roll"** (those members who have paid their 2021-22 dues since the last newsletter): **Lin Herz and Cynthia (Cindi) Novak.**



There are only nine "almost members" who haven't paid their dues. We do not have a meeting till February, so if you're one of the nine, just 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)



Legislative Report

--Patty Farley

The Florida Legislature is now in session for 2022.

Governor Ron DeSantis, in his State of the State address, emphasized over and over that Florida was a free state and how much money he had available to distribute. He used the governor's platform to make a campaign speech against the Biden administration and spoke on ending critical race theory, which is not taught in our public schools.

He spoke on Liberal attempts to defund police, ending abortion with the Texas abortion law, expanding gun access and the creation of a new election integrity unit and advocated for freedom for anti-maskers and those holding anti-vaccine views, while pushing issues of allowing parents to have access to teacher lesson plans.

He made no mention of the large number of deaths due to covid, the affordable housing crisis, the need for health care, food shortages and help for the homeless.

Right after speeches by Governor DeSantis and the Legislative Leadership proclaiming the "freedom" of the Sunshine State, legislation in the Senate that would hide the selection process for college and university presidents, which was clearly against the sunshine laws, moved forward along with bills to preempt our local communities right to have home rule.

The cash surplus Governor DeSantis took credit for having is from the cash sent to Florida in stimulus funds by the Biden Administration.

There are specific Education bills to watch:

SB1048 High Stakes Testing, which does not end the problem, just changes the group from whom the tests are purchased and increases the frequency of testing

SB 506 Dealing with Vouchers

SB 758 Charter School Expansion, which takes supervision of charter schools from local school boards.

Plus there are bills other dealing with the election of members of local school boards.

Read, Recycle, and Reward Program

--Rita Hewett

During the winter break several people dropped off donations at my house for our book program. Then more people from thrift stores saved books and stuffed animals for our program. I want to thank The Haven, In the Pink, CITA, June Park, Holy Trinity, Genesis House and others. We are grateful for their support. Wow! Schools were closed so all the donations are at my house.

Two high school seniors got in touch with me wanting to do a Book Drive for our program as their senior project. How lucky can we get! Thank you Melbourne Central High School student Megan McKay and Maize Davis from Edgewood High School. Now my house is overflowing with books and cute little stuffed animals.

During the break Carol Linton invited our book team to her house for a "Thank You Holiday Party". The food and company were great.



Left to right: Seated are Fran Baer and Carol Linton. Standing are Carol Post, Linda Guiles, Eileen Schaap, Kathy Whitehead and Rita Hewett. Not shown are Cindy Worznicki and Sheila Bollinger.

After a nice winter break we are back matching books at Eau Gallie High School. Now we have plenty of items to help our program be a success in the Central Area schools. Thank you book team! To join our team, please call Rita Hewett at (321)720-3683 to let me know which days you can help.



Notification of BFT-R Election of Officers

Every two years, during April, the Brevard Federation of Teachers-Retired holds elections for the following officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary (2).

These are the officers who served during the May, 2020 – April, 2022 term and are seeking reelection for the May, 2022 – April, 2024 term:

President: Joan Taddie

Vice-President: Nancy Johnson

Treasurer: Susan Vincent

Secretary: Linda Guiles

Please nominate yourself or another member for any of these elected positions. Please note that we need 2 Secretaries to ensure that minutes are taken at all meetings. The membership will vote for the slate of officers in April 2022.

As officers you are required to make a report at each monthly General Membership meeting. You are also required to attend the monthly Executive Board meetings, which occur approximately 2 weeks before the General Membership Meetings. Membership chair, Speaker/Field Trip chair, and 3R's Book chair are appointed by the officers and are also members of the Executive Board.

Please email Sheila Cootes at scootes@earthlink.net to nominate yourself or another member for any of the positions listed above by April 1, 2022.



Volunteer Hours

--Susan Vincent

I know we aren't doing much volunteering at this time but don't forget meetings you are doing on zoom in your count. Many places aren't taking volunteer help now due to Covid-19. Be diligent and find a new way. Remember to send your hours to snv1@cfl.rr.com. Please put volunteer hours in the subject line. Thanks for all you do in the name of BFT-Retired.

