



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

Volume 29, Number 4
Feb, 2025

President’s Message

--Anne Marie Monteparo

“You are never too old to set a new goal or to dream a new dream.” --C.S.Lewis

Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season and was able to spend time with loved ones. Our Holiday Luncheon was held at Tuscany Grill. The food and company were great as usual. Now onto 2025, which has started out with very chilly temperatures. Hope you are all staying warm.

Nancy Rhodes and I are looking forward to attending the FEA Retired Leadership Meeting in Orlando. We hope to learn new ideas to be able to serve you better.

As members of BFT/Retired we are also members of FEA and NEA. I want to share with you one way Our Unions Are At Work- Advocating for Change.

President Joe Biden recently signed into law the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82). This monumental victory will ensure that millions of educators and other public servants receive the full Social Security benefits they deserve by repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), which unfairly reduced the Social Security benefits that public employees or their spouses have earned. The National Education Association was at the forefront of advocating for repealing these unjust regulations. NEA members were on hand at the White House to witness history as President Biden signed the law.

Fortunately, FL teachers are not affected by this law; it is a victory for teachers in many states. I recently met a retired teacher from Connecticut that shared her story with me. She had worked in the Public Schools for 30 years and did not pay Social Security. But she had also worked a second job that did take out social security taxes. Because she received a pension when she retired, she was not eligible to receive the Social Security she had paid for from her second job nor was she able to receive her husband’s Social Security. She was very grateful that this bill was signed.



Next Meeting--Thur, Feb. 6, 2025

1007 Florida Ave, Rockledge

11:30 Brown bag lunch & Valentine Bingo

12:00 Business meeting

12:30 Speaker: Dr. Ben Brotemarkle, Florida Historical Society

BFT-R will provide drinks, dessert & paper products

Our speaker for February is Dr. Ben Brotemarkle, Executive Director of the Florida Historical Society, and host of the Florida Frontiers public radio and television programs. His topic will be “The Windover Dig and Discoveries.”

It all began with a bulldozer clearing land for a new housing development. It led to an unprecedented wealth of finds from 8000 years ago! The Windover Archaeological Site in Titusville was recognized by the U.S. National Park Service as a National Historic Landmark in 1987. It is also recognized as a Florida Heritage Site. It’s one of the most significant archeological sites in the United States, if not the western hemisphere.



Membership News

--Sheila Cootes



The following are on the **2024-25 “Honor Roll”** (those members who have paid their 2024-25 dues since the last newsletter): **Marsha Millar, Paulette Paradiso, Jonathan Schuman, Eva Slaughter, Charles Stockton and Barbara Wilcox.**

Just a reminder: If you are a “Life” member, you still need to pay your “Local” dues of \$30. FEA will not recognize you as a member unless you join your “local,” which is BFTR. There are 25 “members” who paid last year but have not paid this year. Please check your checkbook. If you don’t see a check made to BFT/R, let me know and send me the check.

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.

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



Political News

-Patty Farley

The battle to pass the Equal Rights Amendment has been being fought by many since the 1920's. I have personally been involved since the 1960's. For the first time in the 100+ year fight for the ERA, we have a President declaring that the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is the law of the land. Recognition of the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is a victory for all who believe in justice, equality, and fairness.

President Joe Biden declared what we all know to be true: having met all requirements, the ERA is the law of the land. The American Bar Association declared this last August. The Equal Rights Amendment is ours, and we will use it to make this country live up to its promise of justice for all.

[Statement from President Joe Biden on the Equal Rights Amendment | The White House:](#)

“I have supported the Equal Rights Amendment for more than 50 years, and I have long been clear that no one should be discriminated against based on their sex. We, as a nation, must affirm and protect women’s full equality once and for all.

On January 27, 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. The American Bar Association (ABA) has recognized that the Equal Rights Amendment has cleared all necessary hurdles to be formally added to the Constitution as the 28th Amendment. I agree with the ABA and with leading legal constitutional scholars that the Equal Rights Amendment has become part of our Constitution.

It is long past time to recognize the will of the American people. In keeping with my oath and duty to Constitution and country, I affirm what I believe and what three-fourths of the states have ratified: the 28th Amendment is the law of the land, guaranteeing all Americans equal rights and protections under the law regardless of their sex. “

FIELD TRIPS

--Lin Herz

On Thursday, February 27th we'll be exploring Leu Gardens in Orlando, an amazing botanical garden of nearly 50-acres with 20 separate gardens. Each garden is designed to inspire visitors to appreciate and understand plants. Admission is \$15, which includes the gardens and a tour of the historic Leu House. February was suggested, as it's the best month to view their camellias in bloom. There are benches throughout the gardens if you need to rest. We'll be car-pooling to the Gardens.

We'll be leaving Brevard at 10:00 a.m.

If you'd like to learn more go to <https://www.leugardens.org/plant-collections/> or contact Lin at lin32905@gmail.com or text or call 321-960-8194.

RSVP by February 14th so that we have time to arrange carpools.

Field trips for March and April

We'll be discussing these trips at our February meeting. If you're not able to attend the meeting, let me know if you are interested in attending either or both of them. lin32905@gmail.com or 321-960-8194

March- In March we'll be going to the Museum of Arts and Sciences (MOAS) in Daytona.

Tripadvisor says it's Central Florida's primary arts, science, and history museum. The Museum consists of a planetarium, art museum that has the largest collection of art from Florida art in the world, a permanent display of Cuban fine art and folk art, African folk art, etc. There's a visiting exhibit of John J. Audubon's "Birds of Florida." Another area has on display fancy railroad cars, including a private coach with all the comforts of home, and a train station. They also have the largest exhibition of Coca Cola memorabilia in the world. The planetarium has 3 shows during the day, one on dinosaurs, one called "The Sky Tonight, Live," and "Wings Over Water" showing the amazing lives of 3 types of water birds.

That's just touching the surface of what the museum has to offer. I think we'll want to return!

To find out more, check out <https://www.moas.org/> and <https://tinyurl.com/t6xr2f7d>

The date will be announced later.

If you won't be at the February meeting, please let me know if you are interested in attending. We'll pick a date that is convenient for the most people who want to attend.

The group price includes a discount and includes a highlights tour: with the planetarium is \$18, without the planetarium is \$15

April- In April we'll be going to the Brevard Zoo in Viera. If you buy your ticket online there is a \$2.00 discount. We went a few years ago, and there is even more to see now. We'd like everyone to purchase online. The cost in person for senior citizens is \$29.95 and online \$27.95. Their website is

<https://brevardzoo.org/visit/>

We'll decide on a date later.

More information will come in the next newsletter. Please let me know if you are interested in visiting the museum or the zoo.

lin32905@gmail.com or text or call 321-960-8194

Read, Recycle, and Reward Program

--Rita Hewett

The 3R Book Program had some VIP volunteers this month. Jonathan Hilliard, BFT 2nd Vice-President, and his therapy dog joined us. That was an extra big surprise for the children! During January we visited 3 schools and served 563 students. A total of 1,126 books were distributed.



Volunteer Hours

Until further notice, if you email your volunteer hours, send them to **Anne Marie Monteparo** at amonteparo@cfl.rr.com Please put "volunteer hours" in the subject line. You can also write in your volunteer hours on the sign in sheet at our next meeting.

Innovative Grant Update

Anne Marie Monteparo received this from Melissa Cole, Kindergarten teacher at Enterprise Elementary and one of the recipients of the Innovative Grant:

"Thank you again for awarding Michelle and I funds to purchase items for our Literacy Tool Kits. Our students are SOARING with the Science of Reading this year as we implement new teaching methods and practice processes. Here is a peak at some of the items our students use daily to solidify their learning. Thank you and the BFT Retiree Chapter for your support!"



Happy Valentine's Day



Brevard Federation of Teachers-Retired Chapter News

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**Thur, Feb. 6 - BFT-R meeting at
 BFT Office
 1007 Florida Ave, Rockledge
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 -12:00 Business meeting
 -12:30 Speaker: Dr. Ben Brotemarkle,
 Florida Historical Society**

Next meeting - March 6, 2025

Membership Application

I want to join BFT/R for the 2024-2025 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.