



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

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President’s Message

--Anne Marie Monteparo

Spring weather is here to stay, I hope. I don’t know about you, but I need to warm up! That’s why I moved to Florida. Let’s hope the good Florida weather returns!

On February 10 some members of BFT-Retired attended the Melbourne City Council meeting to celebrate Judith Doyle as she received a Volunteer Milestone award for 20 years of service to the Melbourne Housing Authority. Congratulations Judith and thank you for your service to the Melbourne Community.



On February 18th Nancy Rhodes and I attended the BFT General Membership meeting. We ran the process at the BFT office for the 2026 Election Nominations. The BFT members put their names on the ballot for President, South Area Director, Political Coordinator, FEA Delegates, NEA Delegates, and AFT Delegates. Nancy and I shared information about BFT Retired and asked the teachers to spread the word to the members who are retiring.

As supporters of Public Education we need to advocate for our public schools and our teaching profession! We need to stay informed and be activists! One way you can help is to visit FEAweb.org to learn more about sessions and sign up for FEA Action Alerts. These Alerts make it very easy to email your legislators. They provide the message and you just provide your information. Then with one click of a button your message is sent. You can also sign up for FEA Power Hour at bit.ly/FEAPowerHour, which takes place every Tuesday at 5:30. Many retired teachers participate in the Power Hour during which they collectively call the Senators and Representatives. Thank you to some of our members who participated on February 17th. We can’t sit back and hope things change. Remember there is Power in Numbers!



Next Meeting--Thur, Mar. 5, 2026

1007 Florida Ave, Rockledge

11:30 Brown bag lunch

12:00 Business meeting

12:30 Speaker: Tom Funk, professional archaeologist

BFT-R will provide drinks, dessert & paper products

In March, renowned professional archaeologist Tom Funk will be talking to us about archaeological finds in Brevard County.



Political News



-Patty Farley

Bills are Just Plain Mean in Tallahassee

Things are getting pretty strange in the legislature in Tallahassee. I thought I would share some info recently reported so you can see how and who is really behind a lot of the bills that just seem to be plain mean.

One of Governor Ron Desantis's billionaire backers is a man named Dick Uihlein, the Republican megadonor who is the largest funder of the Foundation for Government Accountability (Also known as FGA), which is a right-wing lobbying group working out of Naples, Florida. Uihlein, an heir to the Schlitz brewing fortune and the founder of the shipping supply company Uline, has been very good to Ron DeSantis. Campaign-finance filings show that Uihlein has given more than \$2.4 million to DeSantis over the past five years. What has Uihlein received in return?

It has been reported that Desantis's staff works closely with FGA to come up with bills and policies that are very harmful to working families. FGA is probably best known for opposing Medicaid expansion in Florida under the Affordable Care Act. FGA also opposes "Vote by Mail" and diversity programs.

The following is a list of items backed by FGA and promoted by DeSantis:

- Cutting — by more than half — the amount of money that laid-off workers can receive through Florida's unemployment insurance program
- Forcing people to submit to drug testing before they could receive temporary cash assistance (though courts later ruled this unconstitutional)
- Imposing "work requirements" on many Floridians as a condition of receiving food stamps
- Eliminating \$300-a-week emergency unemployment payments for jobless Floridians that were funded by the federal government during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Making it harder for public-sector workers to pay dues to their union — while also requiring more of them to pay dues if they want to keep their union.

This week the billionaires got behind a union busting bill that many thought we had under control. They pushed it on social media and no one is sure what will happen next.

Field Trip

--Lin Herz

On March 12th we'll be visiting two museums in Winter Park and have lunch on Park Avenue.

First we'll be visiting the Rollins Museum of Art. The museum has thousands of works spanning centuries, from ancient art and artifacts to contemporary art. The works include paintings as well as three-dimensional objects including sculpture, decorative arts, and archaeological artifacts.

Next we'll visit the Albin Polasek Museum & Sculpture Gardens which holds the world's largest concentration of artwork created by internationally renowned sculptor Albin Polasek, much of which is on display in his historic home and studio and the 3.5-acre sculpture garden. The museum's largest and most significant works of art are displayed in the outdoor sculpture garden where there are 50+ works on permanent display created by Polasek, his wife Ruth Sherwood, and several contemporary artists.

Built-in 1949 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Polasek's home & studio is furnished with his own work, his European decorative art and objects collection, his original sculptor's tools, and artwork by notable contemporaries.

RSVP to Lin no later than March 5th. Text or call 321-960-8194

Read, Recycle, and Reward Program

--Rita Hewett

Sabal Elementary School has invited us to come to their Literacy Night. Parents will be able to see the many different books we offer to help their child have a love of books and reading. Parents will also be able to see what books interest their child.

We are anticipating:

28 Pre-K

56 Kindergarten children

64 first graders

Total children served: 148

Total number of books given out: 296

Be sure to check out the thank you we got from Turner Elementary on the BFTR Facebook page!

Volunteer Hours

--Susan Vincent

Please write in your volunteer hours on the sign-in sheet at our next meeting or email them to me. You don't have to volunteer at schools for your hours to count. You can also count your travel time. You can send them to my email: snv1@cfl.rr.com. Please put "volunteer hours" in the subject line.





Brevard Federation of Teachers-Retired Chapter News

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Thur, Mar. 5 - BFT-R meeting at BFT Office
 1007 Florida Ave, Rockledge
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 -12:00 Business meeting
 -12:30 Speaker: Tom Funk, Professional Archaeologist

Next meeting - Apr. 2, 2026

Membership Application

I want to join BFT/R for the 2025-2026 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.**