

# Statement

www.psea.org/retired

**PSEA** PENNSYLVANIA  
STATE EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION

P E N N S Y L V A N I A S T A T E E D U C A T I O N A S S O C I A T I O N

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## UPDATE - New Governor and Congress What may happen in Pa. and D.C. if we're not ready

Last November, voters elected lawmakers who unfortunately may change the lives of public school employees and retirees forever.

Pennsylvania's new governor and some lawmakers were outspoken about issues important to us and disagreed with our key positions. What can we expect in 2011?

If Governor Tom Corbett's inauguration speech is any indication, we can expect sweeping changes to public education.

Corbett said the best way to embrace innovation is to make our state competitive by adding competition and choice to the education system.

The remarks might sound good on the surface, but words like "competition" and "choice" indicate this administration will find ways to fund education outside the public school system. Anticipating the governor's backing, state Sens. Jeffrey Piccola (R-Dauphin) and Anthony Williams (D-Philadelphia) have already introduced a voucher bill (Senate Bill 1). Be prepared to contact your legislators now about the voucher issue by visiting [www.psea.org](http://www.psea.org).

While Governor Ed Rendell made funding basic education one of his priorities, Corbett has signaled he may cut funding. The governor will introduce his budget at the beginning of March. That's when we'll get details about the impact of budget cuts on school districts.

Also of great interest is the level of

pension funding. Both active and retired school employees will welcome the news if the governor proposes to keep the promise of increased pension funding that was contained in Act 120 of 2010.

In Washington, the House of Representatives quickly voted to repeal the Health Care Reform act.

Then early in February, the Senate, in a procedural maneuver, killed the effort to repeal. Both parties, however, are working for a bipartisan fix to an unpopular tax-reporting requirement in the law. So far, the news is good.

But Republicans in both the House and Senate are talking about new ways to change important benefits in the law, so retirees will have to remain vigilant to stop the spread of misinformation.

Despite the negative rhetoric, individual provisions such as the ones below remain popular:

- Coverage for 32 million Americans who would be uninsured without the new law;
- The right for parents to continue to cover their children on their health policies until age 26;
- Long-needed changes to Medicare such as:
  - ♦ Fixes to the "doughnut hole" that caused seniors to pay

outrageous sums for needed prescriptions;

- ♦ Free preventive screenings for life-threatening diseases;
- ♦ Financial adjustments that extend the solvency of Medicare by 12 years.

(Source: [www.NEA.org](http://www.NEA.org))

Efforts to change Social Security

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Words like "competition" and "choice" indicate this administration will find ways to fund education outside the public school system.

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are also certain to be a priority for Congress. Again, retirees may have to fight to maintain Social Security benefits. The arguments about the national debt

and "fiscal responsibility" are obscuring some key facts. First, Social Security itself is not in debt. But many politicians see the Social Security Trust Fund as a convenient source of money to fix holes in the federal budget. President Barack Obama has said, "I do not want to cut benefits or raise the retirement age. I believe there are a number of ways we can make Social Security solvent that do not involve placing these added burdens on our seniors."

It will be up to all of us to call on the president to keep this promise.

NEA suggests taking action on these issues now by contacting your elected officials. It's easy to do this through the Legislative Action Center at [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org).



# The President's Message

Susan L. Jones, President  
PSEA-Retired

**B**y the time you receive this edition of *Statement*, the new year will be well

under way.

It is my sincere hope that 2011 will be a good year for each of you.

Looking ahead, PSEA-Retired has much to do. It is our intent to work on two fronts: first, to improve your life as a retiree and second, to continue to grow PSEA-Retired.

The November election is history, but its results are ever present. We are working to build relationships with the new administration and many new legislators while maintaining relationships with our friends who have returned to the Legislature. PSEA and PSEA-Retired continue to work tirelessly to protect, preserve and improve public education and members' rights. That means each and every one of you is always first in our minds.

The defined benefit pension system was preserved with the passage of Act 120 before the holidays. Although the law is not perfect, it is a major accomplishment for our retirement plan. A tremendous thank you to each of you who called, wrote, or e-mailed your legislators when you were asked!

However, we must remain vigilant on the issue of pensions. While Act 120 was a success for which we can all be proud, we must work to ensure that it is implemented properly and the funding commitments made by the commonwealth are upheld.

We must also continue to work to preserve Social Security and Medicare. As Congress reconvenes, we must be extremely watchful. Fortunately, NEA keeps us abreast of these issues and the member action needed. In turn, we will let you know when to call your senators and representatives in Washington.

The COLA Coalition met in early January and again in February. A COLA at this time is not realistic even though we have members in desperate need. In addition, leaders from both PSEA and PASR met regarding Act 120 and COLA issues. Both organizations are aware of the national and state economic and political climates and the difficulty these pose in working for and securing any

benefit increases. This is not what we want to hear, but we must be realistic as we work for you, our members.

As you may have already heard, a dues rate factor increase for PSEA active dues was approved at the December PSEA House of Delegates. PSEA-Retired dues are based on a percentage of PSEA active dues in accordance with the retired dues formula approved by the PSEA Board of Directors. As a result of this action, Retired annual dues are projected to increase by three dollars in 2011-2012. Current life members need not be concerned with this increase.

NEA-Retired dues are used to help defray costs for NEA-Retired staff consultants and lobbyists. These people work on the retired program at the national level and lobby the federal

government on retiree issues such as Social Security and Medicare. NEA-Retired members also have access to the NEA Member Benefits Program and receive NEA publications.

**A tremendous thank you to each of you who called, wrote, or e-mailed your legislators when you were asked!**

PSEA-Retired dues help to cover the costs of PSEA staff consultants and lobbyists who perform the same tasks at the state level as NEA staff in Washington. These funds also help to

cover delegate expenses to the NEA-Representative Assembly and the PSEA Houses of Delegates. PSEA Member Benefits and PSEA publications are available to every member.

Local dues are remitted to each county where they are used to cover costs for local newsletters, mailings and meetings, as well as community service projects.

The new business items from the first Retired House of Delegates are being implemented. For updates on these items, check with the president of your retired region.

Please feel free to contact me at [Flyawayslj@aol.com](mailto:Flyawayslj@aol.com) if you have questions or concerns. Keeping you informed and being in communication with you is very important to me.

## 2010-2011 Unified Dues Breakdown

**Unified Life Member: \$563\***  
*(can choose one-time payment or four-year option)*

- \$200 (NEA)
- \$313 (PSEA)
- \$50 (Local)

**Unified Annual Member: \$51\***  
*(renewable each year)*

- \$25 (NEA)
- \$21 (PSEA)
- \$5 (Local)

*\*A dues rate factor increase was approved at the December PSEA House of Delegates. PSEA-Retired annual dues are projected to increase in 2011-2012 as a result. This will be finalized in April.*

*NEA dues will be finalized following the 2011 NEA Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly.*



# PACE Report *by Mary Flaherty Artuso*

## A look back

This is not the easiest report I have ever written, nor is it brimming with stunning victories from the November election. There is always a sense of disappointment when the candidates we support do not win. These feelings are manifested even more considering the hours we invested on behalf of those candidates.

However, that does not mean we should march lockstep with legislative leaders or a governor who will support legislation undermining public education, labor and other issues important to retirees.

If anything, the election results should strengthen our resolve to continue fighting for public education. I encourage you to remain active and engage the public and elected officials about the critical issues we face over the coming months and years.

One thing I am sure about is my sincere gratitude to you for supporting PSEA-PACE recommended candidates, your PACE donations and your willingness to volunteer on the campaign trail.

While the results of the General Election were not what we worked for, we still have reason to be hopeful and much to be proud of. We raised \$21,995 in PACE contributions in 2010 and are on our way to another successful campaign drive this year.

Last year, as well as every other year, PSEA-Retired was the first group to raise the PACE flag at both PSEA Houses. The flag is a visual demonstration showing that every one of our member delegates made a contribution to PACE. At our own PSEA-Retired House we raised \$3,065.

Nine of you donated items to the Gettysburg auction: Boyd Weiss and Phil Russo, NE; Linda Runyan and Tony Stagno, MW; Patsy Tallarico and Sue Rice, SW; Susan Castle, ME;

Helen Bonsall, SE; and Linda Myers, CW. Thanks to all who bought items at the PACE auction.

In addition, Ralph Butera, W; and Jane Curry, ME; received the retired PACE Gettysburg scholarships. This was the first year that retirees were granted scholarships. Also, Sue Rice successfully collected 100 percent of the PACE contributions from members attending the Retired school.

## A look at the new reality

Pennsylvania is facing a budget deficit of \$4 billion and with the public outcry for no tax increases, it is a very real possibility that public services will be reduced. Should the state and federal government fail to meet their obligations to fund public services, costs will be transferred to local governments.

NEA and PSEA will fight for us, but we have the strongest weapons in our own hands. We need to make sure we are well informed and prevent the public from being misled from the type of 30-second sound bites that would lead chickens to vote for Colonel Sanders. We have an obligation to fight for the kids who cannot fight for themselves. We must also fight to protect the benefits we earned as public servants and rightfully deserve.

We need to vote, but we also need to make our votes count more.

Make your voices heard. Speak and write to your state and federal legislators. Attend town hall meetings. Express yourself by articulating our views on public education, labor, Social Security and Medicare. Encourage friends and family to do the same. Our voices are our power and we must make them heard everywhere we go. Our voices are our most valuable asset and if we are loud enough, people will listen.

### Use your voice!

## 2011 Primary Election Calendar

- **Tuesday, Feb. 15**—First day to circulate and file nomination petitions
- **Tuesday, March 8**—Last day to circulate and file nomination petitions
- **Tuesday, May 17**—Municipal Primary Election Day
- **Tuesday, Nov. 8**—Municipal General Election Day

It is prudent to circulate petitions for education-friendly candidates. It demonstrates commitment to the candidates in a meaningful way.

### Offices

#### • Statewide

Superior Court of PA (one position)  
Commonwealth Court of PA (one position)

#### • County\*

County Executive/Council/Commissioner	
Sheriff	Prothonotary
Coroner	Controller
Recorder of Deeds	Treasurer
Register of Wills	District Attorney
Clerk of Courts	Jury Commissioners
	Auditors

\*Elected positions vary from county to county based on county size and historical precedent for rotation of elected offices.

#### • City/Borough/Township/School Board\*

Mayor	
Council people	
Township Commissioners/Supervisors	
Auditors	Constables
Tax Collector	Election Boards
Treasurer	School Board Directors
Controller	

\*Elected positions vary based on municipality size and historical precedent for rotation of elected offices.

### Other information

If you cannot be in your district on Primary Election Day, request an absentee ballot from your county election office. The deadline to apply is one week prior to the primary and your ballot must be returned by the Friday before the election.

In the Primary, you will only be able to vote for candidates running in your party.

Statewide recommendations can be found at [www.psea.org](http://www.psea.org) and in *Voice*. PACE recommendations are based on voting records, or interviews and public comments concerning issues that affect active and retired members. Your region PACE Directors can answer any questions you may have concerning your local recommendations.

These elections are important and they foster future statewide and national political leaders.

***We need to be involved!***

# Regions, Locals give back to the community

**P**SEA-Retired members love to eat and greet—no question about it. So the popular breakfast and luncheon meetings we sponsor not only keep us up-to-date and well-fed, they provide opportunities for us to see old friends and to work with them to plan good works. Every region makes it a point to sponsor projects and recruit volunteers for local causes.

**Western Region** retirees, for example, exchange old cell phones for calling cards so that troops in Afghanistan and Iraq can call home.

In **Southeastern Region**, Florence Williams leads the effort to supply phone cards to veterans, urging members to donate cash at each Chester County meeting. Also, Delaware County president Dave O'Connell reminds members to bring canned goods, paper products and other non-perishables to each lunch. The collected items go to the Upper Darby Food Bank.

York/Adams PSEA-Retired in **Southern Region** has taken on a service project where bugging is allowed. They have "adopted" Donna Watkins, a community member, who promotes literacy by "bugging" adults and children to read. Watkins even appears at York/Adams meetings in her bug costume so that members will be inspired to contribute books to her cause. So far, the local has given the "bug lady" more than 800 books to distribute to children and adults in the area.

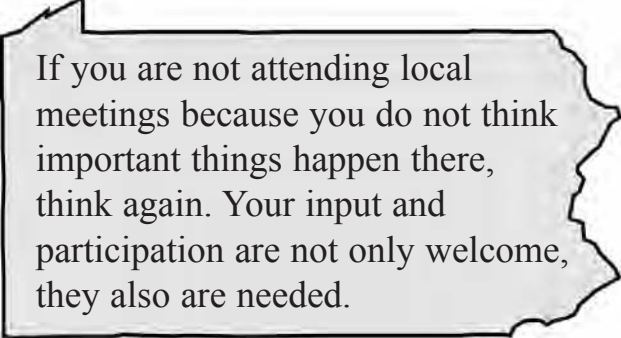
In **Midwestern Region**, Bucks County members contributed more than \$1500 last year to Camp Discovery, a week-long overnight camp for children with behavioral problems. Bob Duaine and Ada Mae Karlberg organize the program each summer. Meanwhile, Montgomery County-Retired raises money to give scholarships each year to high school seniors planning careers in education.

In **Northeastern Region**, projects vary year to year, according to region president Mary Moran. "We've done work for Women's Resources in various chapters," she said. "This is a battered women's shelter with a long list of needs. We've also worked for Angie's Closet, an organization that supplies single mothers with resources such as baby clothes and gift cards."

Three county locals in **Eastern Region** actively participate in the nationally recognized Cops 'n' Kids program, which was developed in 1997 by a Wisconsin police officer, to put books in the hands of children. Beverly Bradley, president of Lehigh County PSEA-Retired, has earned international recognition for her work with the program. Bradley shamelessly recruits PSEA-Retired members to help sort books—a mammoth task—and to read to the children. To date, the organization has distributed more than 390,000 books.

"Members from throughout the Lehigh Valley have made this literacy initiative the success that it is. I appreciate everything Georgeanne Moyer, Rosemarie Mordaunt, Linda Unangst and Linda Weiss have done to keep our Cops 'n' Kids program functioning.

"We recently honored one volunteer, Linda Judge, with a commemorative plaque displayed in our reading room. For years, she coordinated our book storage site located within the Valley's Coca-Cola headquarters. Tragically, Linda passed away recently. We wanted to remember her for her extraordinary commitment to the children of the Lehigh Valley," Bradley said.



If you are not attending local meetings because you do not think important things happen there, think again. Your input and participation are not only welcome, they also are needed.

**Midwestern Region** locals collect donations that support a wide range of community-oriented projects. For several years, Beaver County members have helped support Family Services of Beaver County for families in crisis. Donated items range from household goods to cleaning and school supplies.

Last fall, Butler County collected bins full of personal care, stationery, clothing and recreational items. During past drives members have supported Veterans' Administration patients, the Humane Society, the Butler County Food Cupboard and the Slippery Rock Pregnancy Center. They are planning to provide aid to children living in crisis centers in their next effort.

Linda Morrison, Lawrence County president, said she and her members have been supporting the Crisis Shelter of Lawrence County. "We select items from the shelter's wish list," Morrison said. "Monetary donations are also accepted. Donations are for abused women and their children."

Clarion County President Linda Runyan said, "We routinely gather 'food stuffs' for the soup pantries. Activities are sponsored to raise monies for the poor and needy. Members are involved individually in helping raise monies. And last spring we raised money to support a 5K race which supports the soldiers in a unit where one member's nephew is a Medal of Honor winner."

These examples are only a snapshot of how some retirees give back. The next issue will feature more projects.

# In Southwestern Region, soldiers come first

Most Americans can agree on one national issue: those who serve our country deserve our gratitude, support, and love.

For its biggest service project, Southwestern Region-Retired members put soldiers first. They solicit the names of men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and send each soldier at least one big Xerox box (often two) packed with goodies. Over time, they've discovered what the servicemen and women really like.

"We collect items at every meeting," President Sue Rice said. "We've learned that the troops need toiletries. We send them the ones from hotel rooms because they're the right size. They also love baby wipes—they're great for cleaning up after marching all day.

"And they want tampons," she added. "The soldiers have discovered that they keep the

blowing sand out of rifle barrels. Sometimes, unfortunately, they must use the tampons to staunch the blood flow from a wound. That's hard to think about, but it's real."

Food, of course, ranks high on soldiers' lists of desires. Popcorn is a favorite and so is the college dorm standby, "Oodles of Noodles."

Since the troops often have long hours to while away between assignments, they love to read paperback books. "We send lots of them," Rice said.

Following each spring and fall

luncheon when new items have been collected, the region packing team gets together at Rice's home. The group has packing down to a science. Once the boxes are full, they load two



The packing team left to right: Patty Johnson, Kenwyn Dorsey, Melaney Dufalla, Sandra King, Mary Lou Niverth and Faye Ross.

or three cars and head for the back door of the post office. One postal worker in particular receives the shipment. She tallies the charges and waits for Rice to reappear the next day to pay with donations from the region or from individual members.

"Each box includes a note," Rice explained. "We tell the soldiers that we represent PSEA-Retired and that we are their school family. We also tell them we are grateful for their service."

The project has grown over the years. "Now we include things to give to the children," Rice said. "We learned that the soldiers wanted to help them."

Appalled at seeing children in Iraq and Afghanistan doing their school-work by scratching letters and numbers in the dirt, the soldiers have

taken action. They are building schools in both countries. Southwestern Region-Retired helps by providing school supplies. In addition, the soldiers distribute stuffed animals from the shipments to hospitalized children.

The boxes also include colorful hats, gloves and scarves for the children. The region now has volunteers who knit scarves and helmet liners to protect soldiers' faces, necks and shoulders. The knitters learned quickly to use camouflage colors and only 100 percent wool yarn. "Acrylic yarn melts and might burn a soldier who is injured," said Rice.

"For the children we can use any yarn and any colors as long as we avoid the red, white and blue combination. We don't want anyone thinking of our help as just American propaganda."

As if the care packages for the troops aren't enough, Southwestern Region-Retired also supplies phone cards to patients at Walter Reed Hospital. The late Congressman John Murtha used to distribute the cards personally. His successor, Rep. Mark Critz (PA-12), gladly volunteered to continue the tradition. Rice and the others who work with her must send the cards to Critz's Johnstown office, not to his office in Washington. All mail

sent to Washington must go through scanners that would destroy the magnetic stripes on the phone cards.

"We've helped a lot of soldiers," Rice said. "And we're happy to do it."

*"We've helped a lot of soldiers," Rice said.*

*"And we're happy to do it."*

# Retirees use leisure time creatively

## Travel, grandchildren take first place, but retirees do a whole lot more

**W**hen we were working, it wasn't unusual for retirees to visit the staff lounge. After all the greetings and questions, visitors were sure to say, "I don't know how I ever worked. I'm busier now than ever before." As active employees we had difficulty believing that, so we just laughed politely and went back to work.

Now it's our turn. Just what are we doing to keep ourselves busy and out of trouble?

Travel, both with and without the RV, certainly tops the list. Spoiling grandchildren is up there. Of course, traveling to the grandchildren to spoil them combines the best of both worlds. But amazingly, there's still time left over.

### Retirement gives time for art

**L**ouise Cosgrove, a former art teacher from Lehigh County PSEA-Retired, finally can pursue her own art. Last fall, she won first place from the Bethlehem Palette Club for her portrait titled "Alan." Cosgrove received applause from her Lehigh County colleagues who had a chance to admire the drawing on display at the Banana Factory, a local arts facility. Cosgrove said, "Prior to retirement I was an exhibiting member of the Lehigh Art Alliance, the Bethlehem Palette Club and the Parkland Art League. Now I'm a board member of the first two groups, coordinator of the portrait-painting group in the Palette Club (painting from a live model every Wednesday) among other things. I'm living the dream!"



Louise Cosgrove

Some, like Linda Ciani, MW; are born collectors. However, Ciani, prefers to be called a "completest." Naturally, as a retired librarian from the Community College of Beaver County, she has an extensive library.

She enjoys collecting first editions of several authors. For example, Ciani collects the Dave Robicheaux books by James Lee Burke. That means she must have the uncorrected proof, the corrected proof, the galley proof, a signed American edition and a signed British edition. She also collects the audio versions of the books.

But where she truly defines "completest" is with her collection of Rex Stout and his Nero Wolfe works. Not only does she have the books, but she also has magazines with articles about Stout and other fictional works by him in various publications, the video collection of the Nero Wolfe television series, Trivial Pursuit cards, stamps and other memorabilia. It is a truly impressive collection!

Pat Doyle from Beaver County, MW; retired last year as a custodian, the 33-year president of her local, and a member of the PSEA Resolutions Committee. It also was the first time in a number of years that she did not represent ESP as a delegate to the NEA-RA. But she still wanted to attend, and paid her own way. She learned that some NEA members would be working for Habitat for Humanity, so she showed up at the bus and found there was room for her.

Doyle spent two days doing trim carpentry in a home in the New Orleans suburb of Sliddell.

"I did not go to New Orleans with clothing appropriate for doing construction, but it was worth ruining a few things in exchange for the satisfaction of helping people rebuild their lives," Doyle said.

Dave Droppa from Bucks County, ME, devotes his time to the Levittown Bristol Kiwanis. "We emphasize

doing good things for children," he said. During the holidays, his chapter raised more than \$166,000 for families in need. Also, he helped the group raise \$40,000 more for scholarships through the Sesame Street Classic, a

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*"It's important to volunteer and to give back to be a part of the community."*

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5K race. Droppa also unloads, sorts and distributes truckloads of food donated through the Kiwanis to the Emergency Relief Association, a food pantry. "It's important to volunteer and to give back to be a part of the community," Droppa said.



Sue Sunday

Southern Region-Retired recognized the service of one of its members by giving her its highest award. The region named Sue Sunday, Capital Area-

Retired, as the region's "Friend of Education."

As an active member, Sunday was very involved in PSEA activities—she served twice as Southern Region president-elect and president and was a member of the PSEA Board of Directors.

In 1982 she was a driving force in raising money for the original Ronald McDonald House, coordinating Southern Region's fund-raising activities. Under her leadership, the region met its \$25,000 goal.

She also was instrumental in raising funds for the House's 2009 addition—the goal was \$50,000. She helped raise more than \$64,000.

Ronald McDonald House also benefited from her service on its board of directors.

Now, Sunday is helping to coordinate Capital Area PSEA-Retired's project of collecting items for the Hershey Ronald McDonald House.



# Thinking out loud

by Philip Russo

## A 'friend' or not a 'friend'

**F**riendship. This simple word carries meaning in all of our lives. There are probably as many definitions as there are people. Dictionaries define it as the "state of being friends." This led me to look up the definition of "friend." Webster has several, including: "attracted to another by affection or esteem," "acquaintance" and "not hostile." Another explains that friends are of the "same nation or group." I believe you can see a pattern developing here. Clearly, there are varying degrees of friendship.

But what exactly is friendship? I pose this question because of my recent Facebook quest. It all started when a buddy took some photos I really wanted to see, but was forced to sign up for Facebook to view them. "Be there or be square," suggested several colleagues. I am purposely not calling them friends although they may be. I haven't decided yet. Regardless, it occurred to me that I had an obligation to myself and my friends to know what constitutes being a friend.

I plunged feet first into Facebook. I chose a password and created a profile complete with a photo of myself. I was an official member of the network. When I finally figured out how to find my buddy's profile so I could see the photos that started this project in the first place, I discovered they were pictures that he sent months ago via e-mail. The entire effort was a

waste of time! Or was it? I decided to answer that question later and signed off.

The next day, I had several Facebook friend requests. I recognized some names but not others. A dozen or so were former students. One in California and another in New Mexico wanted to share pictures of themselves and their families. We began e-mailing back and forth, reflecting on days gone by. Three more friends were neighbors who had moved away and wanted to get me up to speed on their lives in a new part of the world. Many were present and past colleagues and acquaintances who just wanted to check in and say "hello." I have to admit I enjoyed reconnecting with old acquaintances. I began to think this social network wasn't all that bad. Except for a few sex questions I received from people I didn't know.

I also received many requests from people of whom I had either a very faint recollection or no recollection at all. What to do? Were these friends who might be offended if I ignored them? Was my memory suspect? Should I "ignore" or "confirm" them as friends? As you might guess, very few profile photos looked anything like the 15- to 18-year-olds I knew when I taught high school. It became even more difficult to decide whether to accept their friendship when their profile pictures were of children or pets (this is very common, I came to learn). How the heck was I supposed to determine who my friends were,

when all I had to go on was a photo of Bowser?

What to do? Facebook: a miracle or a plague? So many questions, so few answers.

I have always considered myself to be a private person with only a few real friends but friendly with all. Was I wrong?

This entire conundrum took some serious thinking, but I am happy to report that I did reach a conclusion.

In my opinion, friendship must be personal, a sharing of feelings and emotions, common interests and goals. A true friend will help when you are sad and will help you deal with what made you sad. Friends will help clean your fish and drag your deer. When you are blue, a friend will help dislodge whatever it is that's choking you. A friend will always be there in your time of need. Real friends keep your secrets, tell you the truth, and accept you the way you are. And a true friend knows that when you're smiling, you're probably thinking about something the two of you shared.

I decided to remove myself from Facebook or "deactivate temporarily." Maybe I'll go back some day, but for now I'm closing up shop. I have plenty of friends and since retirement I've even made some new ones.

No doubt about it, I like my friends up close and personal. How about you?

Just thinking out loud.

*Comments or thoughts can be sent to: PTRussoSr@aol.com*

## My PSEA: Your online membership connection

PSEA.org continues to grow and change based on member feedback and ideas. The website's newest section, "My PSEA," was launched in December. My PSEA is a central place on the PSEA website where members can quickly and easily update and manage their PSEA membership information. The new section links members to:

- Member profiles – where members can add or update contact information
- Activate ID cards
- Subscribe to PSEA e-newsletters
- Request or print new ID cards
- Go Green! Request an online ballot to vote for NEA-RA delegates
- Share your thoughts on issues important to PSEA members and public education.

Visit [www.psea.org/MyPSEA](http://www.psea.org/MyPSEA) to learn more about how My PSEA can help you find membership information.

www.psea.org/retired PSEA PENNSYLVANIA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

# Statement

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## IRS Rule

Two years ago PSERS informed you that the IRS was using new tax withholding tables for the Making Work Pay tax credit. Although pension benefits were not considered earned income and could not be used for tax credit, the IRS instructed PSERS to use the new tax tables and so not as much tax was taken from our pension checks.

What the government giveth, the government taketh away. We received notification from PSERS in January that since the Making Work Pay credit expired at the end of 2010, they are now required to return to the old tax tables. Many of us saw a decrease in our net income starting in February.

It is an inconvenience, but PSERS is just following the law.

## NEA-Retired brings regional conference to Pittsburgh

**W**e have a special opportunity next month to meet with other NEA-Retired members. The East Regional Retired Conference is held in Pittsburgh March 25-27 at the Omni William Penn Hotel and Spa.

The conference will feature many new and exciting workshops.

PSEA-Retired is hosting conference host and President Sue Jones has promised a strong show of Pennsylvania hospitality.

The registration fee prior to March 1 is \$79 and \$99 thereafter. The hotel rate is \$139 per night. Register for the conference and book a hotel room at [www.nea.org/retired](http://www.nea.org/retired) - select the button for regional conferences.

Jones said she hopes that Pennsylvania members will be a strong, visible presence at the conference.



*Second Vice President Patsy Tallarico, President Sue Jones, and Vice President Mary Moran cut the celebration cake.*

Membership Chair Mary Kieras said. "We did it! As of September 1, PSEA-Retired reached its goal of 25,000 members during its 25th anniversary."