

THE GREA BULLETIN

JOURNAL OF NEWS AND REFLECTIONS FOR RETIRED EDUCATORS OF GEORGIA

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GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA

SPRING 2023



Back in Time GREA 63rd Annual Convention Entertainment



Back in Time was formed in the summer of 2009 and has become one of the best “horn” bands around featuring the best of beach and soul and rock ‘n roll. The core of the band came from veterans of the 1960’s and 1970’s rock ‘n roll scene from around Athens and northeast Georgia. The Axemen, the Athens Rogues and Cloud Nine helped form the nucleus of Back in Time. With the influx of a young talented lead singer, two trumpets, a saxophone and trombone, Back in Time was born.

Taking songs from the original artists of the 60’s, 70’s and beyond, the band has put together arrangements that are genuine to the original recordings. From Elvis to Michael Bublé, The Platters to The Doobie Brothers, Jackie Wilson to James Brown, and General Johnson to Chicago, the band features great horns, great vocals, and a dynamite rhythm section. Arrangements by arranger Tom Wallace (arranger for the UGA Redcoat Band) and the late Chuck McKissick (Back in Time founding drummer) highlight the talents of the band.

Band members are Jonathan (JJ) Jackson—lead singer; Bob Cowles—saxophones; Adam Hayes—trumpet; Michael Crook—trumpet; Rory Crook—trombone; Mercer Crook—keyboards; Allen Beach—guitar; John Harriman—bass guitar; Mike Mauldin—drums; Glenn Brown—background vocals; and Jim Black—percussion.

Message From the President

GREA Is Empowered and Serving

By Dr. Henrietta Gray, President



Henrietta Gray

Happy New Year my Beloved GREA. We have made it to another year. Let us thank God that He blessed us to be in the land of Living. It is with a strong sense of accomplishment that we plan to culminate our administration of Empowered to Serve.

We have achieved our growth and accomplishments with an energized, excited and active leadership and membership. As we prepare for our State Convention and our Executive Leadership transition prepare to celebrate. Give yourselves a hand and let us uplift our membership and those around the State who make a difference every day by serving our schools and communities continuously in power.

It is well with GREA. Our Executive Committee and Board of Directors are anchored in unity and guided by our founding principles and best practices for the good of all our members. Our collective efforts will propel us to a strong finish of this Administration. One of our objectives is to continue to lay the groundwork to sustain the excellence and efficacy of GREA.

We have already surpassed our increased membership goal. I am in great anticipation of us exceeding the set goal for our contribution to March of Dimes. We have met other goals as well. I look forward to seeing and spending quality time with many of you at the Convention. We understood your need to have been cautious about attending the 2021 Convention. However, I am asking you to make every effort to come in large numbers from every Area and Local to our 2023 Convention. I cannot thank you enough for your continued support and adherence to strongly recruiting members. You have blessed me in so many ways and I am so grateful. It is my prayer to God that He will richly bless all of you for your kindness, support, and encouragement. It continues to be my humble privilege and pleasure to lead this auspicious organization and serve you.

Please contact me with any concerns, questions, ideas, or observations. I am here for you and empowered to serve you in Excellence.

A Word from the President-elect

By Joe Boland, President-elect



Joe Boland

I have been busy, I mean my daughter Lynn, my daughter Mary, and her daughter Ellen, and my friends, Linda McPherson, Judy Munson, Liz Bouis, Ida Dixon, and my wife Melinda. I will miss being president-elect emeritus, but time marches on.

What have I been doing? I have met with Dr. Sloan and Johnny Smith on a couple of occasions to make plans for my term. I have attended several local unit meetings. I have met with Cobb-Marietta friends to help me make plans. I have also written articles for the *Bulletin*. Both of my loyal readers have given me the same feedback—"I read your article."

You learn a lot about someone when you talk to them. I decided to highlight Dr. Beverly Roberts in this *Bulletin*. When I called her, she soon let me know that she had recently submitted her letter of resignation as Secretary of GREA to Dr. Sloan and to President Dr. Gray, whose responsibility it is to appoint a new secretary.

She served as President of GREA from 2008-2009. Her theme was "Keys to the Heart of GREA : Fellowship...Service...Support"; her charity was the Lions Clubs International used eye glasses; her colors were...wait for it....primary colors. My wife, the elementary school teacher told me these are red, blue, and green. Her convention was held in Augusta.

REGISTRATION FORM

GREA 63rd Annual Convention

Augusta Marriott at the Convention Center

Augusta, Georgia

May 2-4, 2023

Please do a separate form for each person registering!

REGULAR REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 14th

Name on convention badge _____

Local Unit Name and Area _____

Office Held _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ State _____

Registration for the Convention \$50 Amt. \$ _____

Early Bird Registration before April 1st \$40 Amt. \$ _____

Tuesday Banquet: May 2nd, 6:30 p.m. \$50 Amt. \$ _____

Wednesday Awards Breakfast: May 3rd-8:30 a.m. \$45 Amt. \$ _____

Wednesday Night Banquet: May 3rd-6:30 p.m. \$50 Amt. \$ _____

Total Due Amt. \$ _____

Your check should be for the total amount shown above. Please do not include any other types of payment/donations in your Registration check. No refunds after April 14th. **A reminder that meal tickets must be bought before the convention and they will not be sold at the convention. Everyone taking part in any convention activities, including meals, must register for the convention.**

Mail to: GREA Convention Registration
P. O. Box 1379 • Flowery Branch, Ga. 30542

Deadline to register is April 18, 2022. After that registration will be at the convention! The number to call for reservations is 1-800-228-9290 (GREA Annual Convention) or use the weblink below to book your Group Rate for the GREA 2023 Convention before April 10, 2023. The convention rate is available May 1-4 though most of you will want May 2-4. Guests must enter exact arrival and departure dates

She has served a couple of terms as Richmond County REA President. She now does their newsletter, publications, and hand-book. She has served as GREA and GREM Secretary since 2013.

Beverly received her BS from Auburn and her advanced degrees from UGA. After two years of teaching in Alabama, and two years at Forest Park High School, she taught 28 years at Augusta Technical College, which includes her tenure as an administrator. She taught Business Math, English, and Typing. She retired in 1995.

She has been very active in the Lions Club. She was an International Director for two years—the only female. She is an active member of the Augusta Genealogical Society and the Daughters of the American Revolution. In addition, she is the chairman of the Scholarship Committees for the community in which she lives.

She still teaches in retirement. She teaches genealogy in her community and hosts webinars on various subjects.

Thank you, Dr. Roberts, for your many years of service to GREA.

TRS News

Politics, Education, and Pensions

By L. C. (Buster) Evans, Ed.D
Executive Director, TRS of Georgia



Buster Evans

Happy New Year to our GREA friends! We so hope that the beginning of 2023 has been great for you and your families. By the time this letter is published, our 2023 session of the Georgia Legislature will be almost over. News coming out from under the Gold Dome has actually been quite good thus far this session....let's take a look.

First, Governor Kemp, while he can certainly boast great success in the area of economic development, is proving that his legacy will go down in history as being an "education governor" as well! From pretty much day one, Governor Kemp has spent time with and listened to educators. Early on, he made the \$5,000 salary boost promise...and kept it! Now, in the first year of his second term, Governor Kemp is further committing to an additional salary boost AND making further gains to fund the QBE funding formula while also working to further the cause of school safety! As retired educators, we should be excited to watch our profession being supported in these ways!

As I draft this article, the legislature is beginning week number 3 and day number 10 of 40 (which sometimes feels like 400)! There are many new faces in Atlanta with around 30 percent of the members of the general assembly being new. With these changes has come significant change in leadership. The House Retirement Committee will be chaired by returning Chairman John Carson. The Senate Retirement Committee will be chaired by Senator Rick Williams. There are a number of new committee members that we look forward to getting to know and working with in the coming weeks. Let me encourage you to thank them for their service and support for education!

One of the primary reasons we have a defined benefit pension plan is for the purposes of recruitment and retention of quality educators. During the past year, especially, we have heard interest in legislation being introduced that would allow for school nutrition, transportation, and maintenance personnel to have the opportunity to choose to be in TRS or select their current plan known as Public Schools Employees Retirement System (PSERS). This interest has risen due to school systems finding it difficult to recruit and retain personnel in these areas as jobs are plentiful in the current strong economy in Georgia. We will see where this potential legislation may go, but I do find it interesting that the recruitment and retention value of the pension system continues to be believed in both here in Georgia and nationally.

In closing, I look forward to seeing many of you at your upcoming annual conference in Augusta later this spring. Meanwhile, we wish for each of you good health and happiness as you continue to enjoy your retirement! Thank you for the honor that I have to serve you and our active and retired educators in Georgia!

Ramblin' Around With the Executive Director

By Bill Sloan, Executive Director



William Sloan

I am excited! GREA is having a great year! We are seeing so many wonderful things going on with our local units! Our Director of Communications and I have been attending a lot of local unit meetings in the last few months. It is exciting to see people getting back together again for fellowship with each other and having exciting programs and activities! The pandemic could not kill what all of you have helped grow over the years. It appears local units have come back stronger than ever.

Your leadership team of President Dr. Henrietta Gray, President-elect Joe Boland, and Past President JoAnn Tomlinson have also been visiting a lot of local units and I hear glowing reports of what they see going on all across our state. It is so exciting to see and hear what is happening. Thank you, local leaders, for a job well done!

I am excited! We have over 33,000 members and have added over 2,400 new members to our rolls since last April. We are growing everyday thanks to the work of all of you and especially AMBA who has really been signing up a lot of new members for us. I really appreciate what AMBA is doing every day for GREA. Please thank their agents when they come visit your local meetings. At every meeting Mr. Smith and I attend there is one of the AMBA folks there just adding support to their members. If you have not had an AMBA rep at your meetings this year, please invite them. They would be excited to help you grow.

Have you looked at our Facebook page lately? It is full of exciting news about what is going on across Georgia. You are missing some exciting information if you are not being a part of this communication network through Facebook. Is your local unit sending us info to share with others? We love to receive info from local units. Brag on your local unit by sharing info with us. Contact Mr. Johnny Smith at johnny.smith@grea3.org if you have any questions about being a part of this wonderful way to share local news. We want info from you for our Facebook page!

The Georgia TRS is doing an outstanding job in protecting your retirement funds and you can rest assured your retirement check will always be there. I really enjoy that 1.5% COLA every 6 months as many other state retirees do not get COLAs. Thank you, Dr. Buster Evans and your entire staff, for a job well done.

I am so excited with the new leadership staff at SHBP. Executive Director Louis Amis and his staff have really done an outstanding job on being more available and cooperative with insurance questions and concerns. I have really been impressed with what is happening with our state health benefits agency. Thank you, Mr. Amis and your staff, for your outstanding work for retirees.

We are all blessed to be a retired educator in Georgia. The Georgia General Assembly has been good to retirees over the years, and I am thankful for their support of retired educators.

I am happy and excited to work for you everyday!



GREA 63rd Annual Convention

Augusta Marriott at the Convention Center

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News From GREA Local Units

Athens Area REA December meeting members of the collected canned goods and teddy bears. Canned goods were given to the local Food Bank. Teddy Bears were given to Police Departments to comfort youngsters as deemed necessary by the police officer. The REA members enjoyed an array of holiday music. Mrs. Bertha Rambeau led the group with a beautiful sing-along. It was a great way to get into the holidays ahead.

Atlanta REA held its regular meeting via Zoom on Friday, January 13, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. The guest speaker for our meeting was the superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools (APS), Dr. Lisa Herring. She shared with the members the following: its mission, corporate sponsors, partnerships, volunteer opportunities, etc. Also, during the meeting, members were given an opportunity to share their resolutions for the year.

Brantley County REA was blessed to enjoy a performance of holiday music from the Brantley County Middle School and Brantley County High School Choruses, and they also feasted on soups, sandwiches, desserts, etc. brought in by their members during their December meeting. At this meeting the members brought in consumable school supplies to help when students have run out of what they had at the beginning of the year. Chapter president Dr. Tim Sawyer stated, "we're happy to be able to partner with the BC Schools to provide these supplies for students whose families might be struggling to ensure their kids have what they need for the upcoming semester. The system leadership has assured us that they'll be getting these supplies to where they're needed the most, and we're glad to be a catalyst for good for the children of Brantley County."

Burke County REA enjoyed socializing during the Christmas Luncheon at Red Lobster in Augusta, Georgia on December 1st. Activities were short and sweet, and the food was delicious. We made our Annual Donation to CSRA EOA Adopt-A-Child in December. The New Year began with a visit from Dr. Roger Williams, GREa Area 12 Director, who commended our unit for the great work being done and urged us to continue to serve and stay committed. His message was very inspiring. Our Annual American Heart Association Luncheon was held at Good Day Café on Feb. 2nd. Burke County REA donated \$600 to the American Heart Association and \$200 to the March of Dimes for its Unit Service Projects. Congratulations to President Emanuel Larkin, Jr. who was awarded a Community Service Award by New Aurora Chapter No. 60, Order of the Eastern Star, Waynesboro—District No. 16.

Chatham REA members were very busy serving in the community in November and December 2022. We joined Georgia State Representative Carl Gilliard at the Savannah Feed the Hungry event, where between 6,000-10,000 guests received a hot meal and food for their holiday dinners. We donated fruit baskets to six alternative programs in the Savannah-Chatham County School System, donated gift cards to Greenbriar Children's Center and the Tom Austin House, provided assistance at Greenbriar Gift Wrap Center, and donated personal care items to National Council of Negro Women for their Homeless Shoebox project. Chatham REA kicked off 2023 with the annual tour of local schools. Herschel V. Jenkins High School, which opened a brand new, state-of-the-art building in August 2022 was chosen. Members showed up in great numbers. Thanks to President-elect Carrie Howard and H.V. Jenkins teacher Ruby Hall for arranging the school tour. Hats off to the best tour guide, Principal Heather Handy, who was excited to see that many of us were interested in the new building. Chatham REA looks forward to awarding scholarships to students attending Georgia Southern University, and Savannah State University later this year.

Cherokee REA has been selected by CCSd Preschool Center (Ralph Bunche Preschool) as its 2023 Volunteer of the Year. The Volunteer

of the Year reception and awards ceremony will be held on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at the Dr. Frank R. Petruziello Educational Services Facility in Canton. During the ceremony, school Volunteer of the Year winners from throughout the Cherokee County School District will be recognized and presented with a plaque by Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Brian V. Hightower. The CREa Executive Board will proudly accept this honor in the name of all CREa members who have graciously volunteered, donated, and supported the Ralph Bunche Preschool Center (in Canton) under the leadership of CREa Vice President and Project Liaison, Bonny Keheley. CREa members provide a fall breakfast, bus driver appreciation, and holiday luncheon, as well as winter and spring treats and snacks to thank and encourage faculty and staff throughout the year. As the primary focus of CREa's efforts, support for the students is ongoing, including readers and classroom volunteers. A variety of donations are accepted from members at five of six CREa meetings. Items donated include clinic materials (such as disinfecting wipes, hand cleaner and latex gloves), Halloween candy, new and gently used picture books (over 120 books were gathered—each student received the gift of a book for the holidays) and sweatpants, undies, socks (for those times a student may need a fresh change). As the weather warms up, sidewalk chalk and bubbles are donated, and Earth Day is celebrated with butterfly houses and cups of painted lady caterpillars delivered to classrooms for the study of life cycles. Field Day provides an opportunity for CREa members to volunteer and assist faculty and staff with all those fun end-of-the-year student games and activities.

Clayton County REA were informed and entertained by members of the Jonesboro High School Mock Trial Team at the November meeting and were entertained at the December meeting by CCREA member Michael Kingsbury who presented a piano concert and at the January meeting by members of the Southern Crescent Storytellers.

Dalton-Whitfield-Murray REA held its annual December luncheon/auction at the Dalton Golf and Country Club. 140 members and guests attended the event that benefits the scholarship fund. GREa guests attending were Dr. Bill Sloan, Johnny Smith, Joe Boland, Jesse Hunter, Dennis and Penny Howerton, and AMBA representative, Leeann Sturtz. This marks the 13th year for the event for the unit. Those attending enjoyed a buffet lunch, a silent auction, a marketplace, and a live auction. Scott Chitwood, Whitfield County Sheriff, served as auctioneer. The event started in 2009 as a goal of Faye Fox, DWMREA member. Faye's daughter was a special guest at the event. The project has grown through the years, and this year a goal of \$15,000 was set, and the goal was met and around \$17,000 has been raised. Members also donated new toys that were given to local agencies. Sixteen years ago, the unit awarded three \$300 scholarships. Now, eleven scholarships of \$1,100 each are awarded to seven local high school students and four Dalton State College students. The unit has given 78 scholarships and \$70,000 during these sixteen years. Dorothy Gray and Twinkle Chitwood are auction co-chairs, and Sally Little is scholarship chair. Bill Weaver serves as scholarship fund chair.

Dawson County REA members have been working hard this year on community service. We have volunteered at the following school events: parent pick up lines, book fairs, judges for Spelling Bee Contest, and Grinch Day! We have also served lunch for the Chamber of Commerce. It is our goal this year to put our name and faces back into the community. It has been a fun experience! We hope to continue to support our schools and community!

Effingham REA met in January as the first meeting in 2023. There were 34 members present who enjoyed an informed presentation by Don Adams of Kelly Tours. A slideshow featuring many places in the US and abroad were presented with brief descriptions about each one. There are many opportunities to travel, including days trips and

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short overnight trips. Hopefully, some of our members will enjoy a day trip in the weeks to come. Members who have been working on the Encompass Library gave a good progress report. The library has been completely set up, with just a few minor details to complete. We are planning an open house for the staff and our EREA members to view the library and all its contents and furnishings. Members brought items for our Nursing Home project. Many things were collected, including color and activity books, nail polishes, markers, etc. Sylvia Arnsdorff, coordinator, will present these to the residents at Effingham County Care Center. Another bake sale is being planned for the spring to help fund our Scholarship program. Those applications have been sent to the various schools and posted on the district website. We are continuing to work on GREA membership, and planning to meet our 10% goal very soon. Next meeting is March 13 at the Recreation Department at 10:30.

Floyd/Rome REA President, Diane Lanham attended the October meetings of the City of Rome Commission and the Floyd County Commission in October to accept proclamation recognizing Georgia Retired Educators Day. Our November meeting program was "Kicking Crime" presented by Judge Kay Ann Weatherington, and proved to be extremely interesting as she gave us a picture of what and how the courts were challenged to operate during the pandemic. Our Program Chair, Juanita King, secured a talented group of singers for our December meeting to give some Christmas music. Cheryl and Eric Willoughby are doing a fantastic job with our Community Service projects. November Community service focused on Floyd-Rome County Community Kitchen, and they were able to deliver a goodly number of boxes of food items, plus showers and laundry items. Our February service project is the March of Dimes. Donations for scholarships for rising seniors of Berry College and Shorter University have been good this year and we will give \$950 scholarships to two students at each college. Daphnie Morrison, Scholarship chair, has been working with both colleges to secure information from each college. These scholarships will be presented at our April meeting. Members have plenty of choices to read in the upcoming months. They have a paperback book sale at every meeting. The books are \$1 and all books are donated by members. Browsing through the books is a part of our pre-meeting fellowship time. It is a good project to help our new members meet others in FRREA.

Grady County REA recently had superintendent, Dr. Eric McFee, as their speaker. Dr. Eric McFee, who shared with us his priorities for the Grady Co. School System. Dr. McFee's philosophy is that "We must guarantee to our parents and students an equitable and viable (that is, "attainable," not dumbing down) curriculum for each student." His four main objectives for achieving this include: 1) collaboration among educators 2) intervention in addressing student weaknesses 3) initiative in taking reading and writing goals seriously and 4) testing. In closing, Dr. McFee insisted that he will not settle for students in other school systems doing better than Grady County students. He did address the current teacher shortage and the fact that over 20% of newly hired teachers have no background in education. Each new teacher, however, is assigned a mentor whose help is often invaluable. He finished his informative presentation with a question/answer session.

Greene County REA members busied themselves being ambassadors of Love, Comfort, and Joy December 9, 2022. We prepared Christmas gifts that were carefully wrapped and neatly tucked inside holiday Christmas bags for residents of Greene Point Nursing Home in Union Point, Georgia. The gifts were taken to the facility and placed under the beautifully decorated tree at Greene Point. Each resident would be the recipient of a warm and cozy throw on Christmas Day. Next year our unit will choose a different community organization to share the spirit of Christmas.

Griffin-Spalding REA unit member Sandra Drake's home was partially destroyed by one of several tornadoes that hit the Griffin area

on Jan 12th. Our unit made a donation towards the local tornado relief fund.

Gwinnett County REA started off 2023 with a program Honoring Law Enforcement. Our January speaker was Captain Mary Williford of the Gwinnett County Schools Safety and Security. She brought great insight into the layers of security that are in place to protect all students and staff members. Also in January, more than a dozen of our members assisted with the GCPS Book Mobile at Britt Elementary in Snellville. On January 23rd, ALL 554 students enrolled at Britt walked through the Book Mobile and received a FREE book. GCREA provided a generous contribution for books and our members assisted the students. GCREA is honored to partner with the staff and the schools in Gwinnett to promote school safety and reading.

Habersham REA members enjoyed a great time of fun and fellowship at their December Christmas party at The Food Factory in Cornelia, Georgia. Also, many HREA members helped lay wreaths at the local VFW cemetery which was coordinated with the NATIONAL WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY on December 17. Former Governor Deal was the main speaker for this occasion. Afterwards that Saturday night, many members attended a musical concert performed by his daughter, Katie Deal.

Haralson/Bremen REA is off and running in the New Year. We have been excited to visit the schools recently while delivering our school supplies for the middle schools second semester. Teachers and principals were much appreciative of the supplies for their schools. We were also invited to join one of our schools for three separate food competitions to promote teacher morale. It was a great time of fellowship with the staff. Looking ahead to our February meeting we will be completing our GREA's President Project for March of Dimes. Our members have been very generous in their donations which we are thankful. We also plan to visit our high schools this month to provide a treat for each staff member to show our appreciation for the work they are doing for our young people of our community. Liz Bouis, our area director, will be joining us for our meeting to update us on all things GREA along with the very talented students from Bremen High School performing for our unit. Great things are happening at HBREA!

Lumpkin County REA members were treated to a wonderful day trip to the Georgia Retired Educators Museum, compliments of our school Superintendent Dr. Rob Brown. He even served as our school bus driver for the day. Many thanks to him and GREM staff.

Mitchell-Baker REA continues to enjoy each other's presence during this winter season. On December 13, 2022, the association celebrated Christmas with the Baker County crew, in Newton, Georgia. We incorporated a short memorial for those educators who spent countless days, months, and years educating students in Mitchell and Baker Counties. The M-B REA also blessed a family in need. We met the required growth percents, as well as donated to Dr. Gray's March of Dimes Project. Our next meeting is slated for February 8, 2023. City Manager, Dennis Stroud, will be the guest speaker. During the month of March, we will participate in Dr. Seuss's celebration at the primary and elementary schools. Thanks to all members for working together, because it allows us to do "GREAT" work.

Monroe County REA exceeded the local project goal of 100 pairs of socks. The total number of socks collected was 144 pairs donated to a local nursing home. MCREA donated \$25.00 to Mrs. Freeman's favorite charity, Mary Persons Olympics, in her memory. Vice President Catherine Chambliss represented the Monroe County Retired Educator Association in a 5k Race (3.1 miles) for a local fallen firefighter's granddaughter Scholarship benefit. Catherine Chambliss won first place in her age group. Congratulations, Catherine Chambliss. As part of our Health & Wellness Committee, Monroe County Senior Line Dancers

attended our December meeting to demonstrate line dancing to the group. Some benefits of dancing are improved memory flexibility, help to control weight, and increased metabolism. All attendees had a wonderful time. AMBA Representative Debbie Scarborough visited MCREA to explain the benefits and discounts available to GREA and local members. All retirees had fun and fellowship.

Morgan County REA has had a year of excellent, informative meetings so far! Local non-profit organizations were featured at our November meeting with our own members telling us about the various non-profits on which they lead and serve: Community Garden, Boys and Girls Club, FERST Readers, Community Food Bank, Morgan Medical Center Auxiliary, Foothills, and the Humane Society. Morgan County Middle School students gave our retired educators a tour of their new school in January, and in March, Dr. Jimmy Stokes, former Executive Director and Lobbyist for the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL) will provide a legislative update. We also purchased gift certificates from a local ice cream shop for each new Morgan County teacher. (Which went over very well! Our newest teachers will always remember how much the retired educators cared about them that first week!) We are now collecting paperback and hardback books from our members to place in the Teachers' Lounge at each school, along with a hand-made bookmark publicizing our group.

Muscogee REA met on February 3, 2023 at St. Luke Ministry Center with decorations on a Valentine theme. Our president, Carole Mashburn, called the meeting to order and gave the welcome. After a delicious lunch, Dr. Marietta Webb introduced the program presented by Columbus State University's College of Education and Health Professions, Center for Quality Teaching and Learning staff members. Kim Cason, Amy Strickland and Debby Whatley shared a PowerPoint highlighting the Go2Teach program. This program focuses on CQTL's effort to recruit and retain quality teaching candidates from initial enrollment through graduation, certification, and induction. Donna Kemp gave the Area 9 update. Committee reports were given by the Chairpersons of Community Service, Legislative, Membership, Retirement Information & Services, and Spotlight ads. Drawing for door prizes was followed by adjournment of the meeting.

Newton County REA has been busy! During our October meeting, Chairman Marcello Banes of the Newton County Board of Commissioners, declared November 6, 2022 as Retired Educators Day in Newton County! He presented a framed proclamation to our unit. In November, Mr. Levi Koebel spoke to our unit about the work of the Newton Salvation Army, and the services and volunteer opportunities. Our Unit adopted two children from the Angel Tree to sponsor for Christmas. December brought around our annual holiday luncheon. Mr. Trevor Page from Covington First UMC was our guest speaker. He shared with us the mission of their food ministry in the community. Members brought in Donation of Warm Wear that was distributed at the Repairers of the Breach Community Outreach Center for the homeless in Newton County. On December 9, 2022, our Unit provided Teacher Appreciation Breakfast from Dunkin' to three of our local schools! We recognize three schools a year with a Holiday Breakfast. At our February meeting, we had a presentation about Silver Sneakers, and learned three easy exercises to increase mobility, flexibility, and stamina. We also had a Painting Party fundraiser to benefit our scholarship program by Luckie Dawg Designs! In Newton County, we are busy in our community and in our schools!

Paulding REA met on January 10th. Our organization has focused on donations for a local elementary school. At the beginning of this school year, we donated backpacks and school supplies. We donated \$430 of gift cards for the Christmas holidays. On the 10th, personal care items for the school's students and families were donated. Area 15 Director Liz Bouis shared GREA information with our members.

Entertainment was provided by a choral group from Hiram High School directed by Ashley Peeler.

Peach County REA first meeting of the year was held on January 9, 2023, at Trinity Baptist Church. During the meeting the members recognized the recipients of the Aundrea Strange Scholarship. The recipients are twin brothers Joseph and Jordan Stephens. They are both freshmen enrolled at Fort Valley State University. Jordan is a Biology major and his brother Joseph is a math/engineering major enrolled in the CDEP program. Both are members of the Blue Machine Marching Band.

Pickens County REA had a great holiday season. We helped the ACES Youth Home in Jasper with some of their Christmas wishes and had Holiday Trivia with door prizes. Rick Jasperse, State House of Representatives, was our speaker. He was great and gave a lot of good information about the direction Georgia is taking in many areas.

Pike County REA has had a wonderful start so far this year. Our membership has grown, and we achieved our 15% GREA membership goal. We completed several community projects, celebrated a meaningful Christmas program, and enjoyed a number of very informative speakers. We are currently working on our scholarship and plans to honor retiring teachers. Last year we gave three \$1,200.00 scholarships to deserving Pike County students who want to go into the education field. We hope to match or go beyond that goal this year. We are so proud of our members and their hard work.

Polk REA is all about serving our community. This month their community service project was collecting toiletries, cleaning supplies and craft supplies for Our House Domestic Violence Shelter. Our House is a non-profit temporary Safe House for victims of domestic violence & their children. PREA conducts numerous service projects throughout the year, such as, collecting toys at Christmas for the Christmas for Kids Program, donating to March of Dimes, collecting canned goods for a local food pantry, and awarding a \$500 grant to a first-year teacher in Polk School District. Polk Retired Educators had a great time participating in the Best Me in '23 event. This event is sponsored each year by Polk School District for the purpose of providing support to county's families and their children. As students return to school for a new semester the school district wanted to ensure that students would have the supplies they need to be successful. Polk Retired Educators Association passed out over 400 composition notebooks. Victory Baptist Church's gymnasium was full of community civic and church groups giving away school supplies. The response was phenomenal! The motto of PREA and its state affiliation, GREA, is Fellowship, Service and Support. Polk REA strives to uphold this motto in all its activities.

Richmond County REA members could be spotted throughout Abilene Baptist Church during the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Celebration. Member and current corresponding secretary, Lucretia Brown was one of the Augusta Chorale that entertained the audience during the program. RCREA was awarded the Community Service Award by the Global Race Unity, Inc. and RCREA President, Dr. Sharon Ray accepted the award on behalf of our unit. Also recognized as one of five recipients of the Rosa Parks Education and Community Service Award was RCREA member, Dr. Virginia Bradshaw. Rev. Larry Fryer, an RCREA member and CEO of Global Race Unity, Inc. presented the awards.

South Fulton REA held its January meeting at Piccadilly Cafeteria in College Park. The speaker was Merlin Knight, Vice President and membership chair of the South Fulton Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Knight gave us some important information about the South Fulton Chamber and resources that are available to the community. A highlight of his presentation was the discussion of the REPAIR WITH KINDNESS

PROGRAM. This program helps qualified individuals to make repairs to their homes. We also welcomed two new members.

Tri-County REA is working hard to meet the needs of the communities in McDuffie and Warren counties while fellowshiping and supporting each other. In November, the proclamation was signed by the mayor declaring November 6, 2022, Georgia Retired Educators Day; and we were treated with goodies from area businesses. Our service project was Socktober. Tri-County members collected over one hundred pairs of socks for families in shelters. Our guest speaker for November was Dr. Gregory Rhodes, service leader at the Salvation Army in Augusta, Georgia. Dr. Rhodes shared valuable information about the serviced rendered and how we could help. Our February service project was to collect personal size hygiene products such as soap, lotion shampoo, etc. of which we collected over 200 items. Our March guest speaker was Mrs. Jennifer Daniels, director of the Thomson YMCA. She told us about the need for beds in our counties. Therefore, our service project for March and April is to purchase two beds with coverings for the "A Place to Dream" project sponsored by the Thomson YMCA.

Toombs County REA met with AMBA representative Mrs. Lisa McKenzie in our February meeting to learn new information about the upgrades of AMBA's products. Very informative and a pleasant person to hear.

Troup REA meeting on January 26, 2023 was a very informative day. We met the two candidates for Mayor of LaGrange, Mr. Jim Arrington and Doctor Willie T. Edmondson. They were both given 5 minutes to introduce themselves and explain why and what they want to do as Mayor. They were able to squeeze in a lot of information in the short time allotted. The program was presented by Debron Walker from the Eleanor Roosevelt School in Warm Springs, Georgia. His presentation included the history of the last Rosenwald school and the current plans for the restoration of the historic campus. Please check out their Facebook page at The Eleanor Roosevelt School Warm Springs, Georgia.

Valdosta Lowndes REA in December donated more than 100 toys to the Salvation Army of Valdosta for the Empty Stocking Fund. "We are so grateful for the donations," Capt. Judy Chung said. "We could not provide children with a special Christmas without the support of our donors and community partners." At the December meeting, Dr. Henrietta Gray, Georgia Retired Educators state president, was the speaker. "I am thankful to meet with you all as we are focused on the same mission," she said. "As an educator, I believe we need to teach our children and grandchildren the difference between right and wrong so that they can be active members in society." Dr. Gray's administration motto is: Empower to Serve. Sharon Walker, VLREA president, said, "We are thankful to Dr. Gray for her leadership platform, 'empower to serve,' as she serves communities across the state." The monthly meeting concluded with Christmas carols, fellowship, and lunch. In January, our speaker, Dr. Clarissa Alderman, owner and director of Family Insight, LLC, a mental health program for outpatient counseling and therapy. Today she offered many coping situations for all, and especially those that could be helpful for senior citizens. Dr. Alderman was quick to remind us that our State Health Insurance DOES cover mental health, so if we feel a need, talk to a professional. Everyone enjoyed the program and was grateful for all the suggestions. VLREA is proud to have reached their 7% membership growth goals! In February, the members continued to collect perishable canned goods to deliver to our (Valdosta) Second Harvest food bank. The program for our February meeting will be entertainment from our dynamic Valdosta High School Jazz Band. We celebrated an early Valentine's Day by playing Valentine Trivia Games, gave out door prizes & gave out Valentine's Day goody bags to all who attended. VLREA will continue to make strides in increasing our membership and be more involved in community activities. We are planning for a great 2023.

A Word From the Past President

GREM—The Place to Visit in 2023

By Jo Ann Tomlinson, Past President



Jo Ann
Tomlinson

Hello GREA Members! Spring is fast approaching! Have YOU been to visit our Georgia Retired Educators Museum? If not, NOW is a Great time to make plans to go visit. You may already have your programs planned for the remainder of the year, but who is to say you must go visit the GREM Museum on your scheduled REA day of the month. Just put the idea out there in front of your unit's members. See how many are interested. Someone may have a van that has 7 or 8 seats or your church bus or several cars and get together and make a Field Trip to Flowery Branch, home of the GRE Museum.

YOU WILL BE SOOOO GLAD that you made the effort and the trip! In the spring, there are lots of things you can consider doing on your field trip such as going to see the Spring flowers at Gibbs Gardens, Ball Ground, Georgia (if you are not familiar with this beautiful place, google and check it out), who would love to see a waterfall and not have to hike to see it (there are some in this area), who would like to pan for gold (Dahlonega has several places and is close by), if you are a hiker there are lots of trails at different levels to explore and of course, your MAIN ATTRACTION, the Georgia Retired Educators Museum with the patio of bricks (it is so much fun looking for people you know and their brick—then make a picture with your phone to send to them).

OK, ARE YOU READY? Let's make plans and have a wonderful time! Then come home and share all you saw and did with your unit's members. Do NOT Make it Difficult! Call a motel in the area you think you want to spend the night and tell them how many rooms you need to see if they will give you a discount OR check the VRBO and Airbnb accommodations to see if the possibility of renting a house or cabin is the way you want to make this FUN and EXCITING Field Trip happen!

A tidbit of info for all the south Georgia folks! Traveling in the mountains is not like traveling on the flat lands of south Georgia. It will take you a minimum of 5-6 minutes to go a couple of miles in the mountains!! If where you are staying is 5 to 8 miles from your destination, just plan accordingly because it will definitely take you a longer time to go around the mountain than driving on our Flat Lands! Georgia is a beautiful state with Mountains, Flat Lands, Beaches, Big Cities and Small Cities. GO while you are ABLE and have a BALL with your FRIENDS! Can't wait to hear from you and what all your group did on Your Field Trip! Also PLAN NOW to attend the 63rd Annual GREA Convention in Augusta May 2-4, 2023. Be sure to check out ExploreGeorgia.org. We are trying to get the museum on this website!!

Take advantage of your opportunities! Don't sit back and miss ALL the FUN! It is YOUR Time to GO and ENJOY! Looking Forward to seeing YOU at the GREA Convention in Augusta!

Blessings, JoAnn

Be A FROG—Fully Rely On God.

A Word from AMBA

Struggling With Your New Year's Resolution? The 'Monday Reset' Can Help You Attain Success

If that "New Year, New Me" resolution is proving to be more difficult to achieve than you anticipated, you're not alone. In 2021, Approximately 67 million American adults made New Year's resolutions to improve their health. Though the intentions were good, from adopting healthier lifestyles to enjoying life more, 18% already failed by January and 41% were no longer on track with their top resolutions by July.

Why Many New Year's Resolutions Fail

Many New Year's resolutions involve changing habits. However all too frequently, many people don't replace a habit with a new, better habit. To change a habit, we must recognize the motivation that precedes the routine and understand the reward from practicing that routine.

For example, if your New Year's resolution was to cut back on drinking, it's important to understand what motivates the behavior. If a drink is a way for you to decompress after a stressful day and to socialize with others, it's important to replace the routine with another behavior from that gives you similar benefits.

Also, New Year's resolutions are frequently vague. Creating a detailed road map to follow with specific goals and break them down into bite-sized pieces can make a world of difference.

The Monday Reset Can Help You Succeed

The Monday Reset encourages people to think of each new week as a kind of mini-New Year's. Breaking down a single, large New Year's resolution into regular 'Healthy Monday Resolutions,' lets you customize and set specific goals each week of the year.

This increased regular commitment may also help sustain healthy behavior over time. Setting goals every Monday can be inspire constant fresh approaches. Plus, the Monday Reset is designed for you to set smaller, more reasonable goals and check your progress once weekly, instead of yearly with resolutions.

By taking smaller steps toward change, there's an opportunity to celebrate the small wins frequently, which serves as a reward and replaces the reward derived from the undesirable habit.

It's not too late to re-start the objectives you set for yourself for 2023. For example, if improving your health was among your resolutions, a great first step is by making sure you have all the benefits you need. **From Vision and Dental to many other important plans, your association and AMBA can help you fill the gaps in your coverage. Request a FREE Benefits Review with an AMBA field agent at www.amba-review.com or call 866-615-4063 Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5p.m. CT.**

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Johnny Smith, Editor

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