

## **Minutes of WCREA Meeting of November 8, 2004**

A meeting of the WCREA was held at the Pump House Restaurant in Hackettstown. The meeting was called to order at 10:45 by President Pat Kollar who led the flag salute. Richard Buralli led in the singing of "America".

In the absence of the secretary, Theresa Ravensburg read the minutes of the last meeting. Treasurer David Knauth reported a balance of \$3,820.56 and \$342.00 in the scholarship account. Both reports were approved as read.

Corresponding Secretary Sandy Beck has agreed to chair a "trip" committee if there is enough member interest. WCREA may sponsor trips. Anyone interested in helping or giving trip suggestions, contact Sandy .

Membership Chairperson Pat Kay reported that we have 172 members, 18 new ones. She read a list of the new members. She also stated that the deadline for the Christmas luncheon meeting at Flynn's on Dec. 7 is Nov. 29. She reminded everyone that the reservations are to be sent to her, not David Knauth.

Barbara Miller said that she needs help with birthday card lists. Elaine Buralli has the lists for the current year. People sending cards will continue to do so until new lists are formulated. Barbara then read a list of Nov. and Dec. birthdays. It was noted that Mildred Firth will observe her 103rd birthday on Nov. 23. Members were encouraged to send her cards.

President Kollar reported on several meetings she attended this fall. The NJREA Sept. 23, fall meeting and luncheon were very informative. The guest speaker was Lily Eskelsen, NEA Secretary-Treasurer and she was outstanding.

The Constitution Committee meeting was held on Oct. 25. The new NJREA constitution was approved. Some changes include changing the name of the NJREA to the New Jersey Retirees' Education Association, eliminating the office of corresponding secretary and allowing officers to serve three successive two-year terms.

The Government Relations committee worked very hard for John Kerry. The focus now will be on the state and federal issues important to NJREA members.

Pat cautioned against joining the Medicare prescription drug plan as the NJHB plan is far superior. She said that the state wants to hire external money managers to manage 13% of the funds in the pension fund. This would cost 1&1/2% in management fees and approximately 20% (would vary based on the company and performance) of the profits. NJEA and NJREA are opposed. The pension fund is of great concern since it will currently be solvent until 2027.

Vice-President Doug Morris reported on meetings he had attended at the NJREA convention. Harry Baldwin listed the chief priorities (really wish lists) for the TPAF. Among them were full funding for pension and health benefits, 100% COLA, changing the retirement formula to N/50 and reducing taxes, both state and federal.

Rob Broderick (NJEA Gov't Relations) said that there are about 13 Republicans looking to run for NJ governor, but only two Democrats, John Corzine and Rob Andrews, both of whom are favorable to the NJEA.

Doug reported that WCREA information can now be found on the WCEA web site (<http://www.warrencoea.org>). Carol Mertz, WCEA President has approved our using the web site without charge. Members are urged to access this site for WCREA information. Out of state members especially can keep informed of WCREA events.

Discussion followed on the new Aetna Dental Plan. Some felt that not enough thought had gone into the new plan. Pres. Kollar explained the rationale behind the new plan as had been explained by Roe Jankowski at our Sept. meeting. Jerry Walker, an associate member, thanked Doug Morris for answering his questions and concerns about the plan, answers which he could not obtain from Trenton or from Aetna.

With no old or new business, the meeting was adjourned. Pat Kollar introduced Fred Aug, NJREA President who spoke on various issues. He said that the NJREA membership in October was 20, 627 and will probably exceed 22,000. This allows NJREA to have an impact on the legislature, since retirees vote! We now also have an additional seat on the NJEA Delegate Assembly, being the largest segment represented. He further stated that about 200 had attended the NJREA Convention which was quite successful. He also spoke on the Mercer Report on the pension fund (contact Pres. Pat Kollar or VP Doug Morris for further info). The state has borrowed \$1.3 **billion** from the pension fund and hasn't put money into the fund since 1995! Finally, he said there are many good, hardworking people in the NJREA and we need to look out for ourselves.

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