

PASR Times

Pennsylvania Association of
School Retirees Newsletter

September 2018

Volume 75 Issue Number 1

ISSN-0194-8776

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

Why volunteering for leadership roles
is vital to the future of PASR | 5

Investing in the Future

LEADING AND GIVING BACK THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

How PASR volunteers act as leaders in
their communities and beyond | 12-13

President's Message



Gary A. Parker, PASR President

You may have heard of the “Rule of 72” that pertains to how quickly an investment will double in value without any additional monies being invested. As an example, if your rate of investment earns 6%, then it would take 12 years for the investment to double, as 6 multiplied by 12 equals 72. PASR will soon be in its 82nd year of operation, and perhaps we should have our own “Rule of 82.” Our members need to think outside the box and offer suggestions for improving the workings of the Association at all levels: Chapter, Region, and State. If you are planning to attend the Leadership Conference, you will have time to share your ideas on how to improve PASR. If you are not attending, please share your ideas with someone who is representing your Chapter or Region.

As to our Association’s investment in the future, we are looking to grow in our leadership, membership, and outreach. The theme of our upcoming Leadership Conference is “Investing in the Future of PASR.”

Our current and future leaders need to make decisions and personal choices that will give them a worthwhile return on their investment.

The following may assist you in understanding what we all need to INVEST:

- I** – An **INDIVIDUAL** opportunity to offer something new or creative to the Association.
- N** – **NEW** ideas to share, and the **NEED** to gather ideas from others.
- V** – Make sure that what you and the organization are doing is of **VALUE**.
- E** – **EVALUATE** what is working, not working, and what is in need of tweaking.
- S** – **SERVE** and **SHARE** your ideas with membership at all levels.
- T** – Recognize the **TALENT** that others have to offer.

I hope to see and meet many of our current Chapter leaders and future leaders at the training in State College on October 15 –16th.

Since my last message, my wife and I attended the Erie Chapter’s June meeting where they celebrated PASR’s 80th birthday. We were also in attendance at the Association’s 80th birthday celebration at Cliff’s Tavern. Additionally, I had the pleasure of being an invited guest of PSERS for their dinner and presentation in August, which was held at the PSBA office in Mechanicsburg. Judith Guise and Russ Diesinger were also in attendance at the PSERS event representing PASR.

I leave you with the following quote that applies to the work of our upcoming Leadership Conference:

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.” – Mark Twain

A Note From the Editor

By Jaclyn M. Keys, Communications Specialist and PASR Times Editor/Writer

The theme of this issue of the PASR Times is “Investing in the Future.” In it, we will examine ways to not only invest in the future of the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees (PASR), but also in the future of our communities, our schools, and our state.

We will be taking a close look at our Executive Committee, what made them decide to become volunteers for PASR, and what their leadership in the organization has meant to them. I want to thank Immediate Past President and Nominating Committee Chair, Diana Armstong, for her contributions to the article on the importance of filling leadership roles throughout our organization. It is imperative to the future of PASR that volunteers step up to lead PASR into an even brighter future.

If you are interested in becoming a leader for PASR, we encourage you to attend the upcoming Leadership Development training on October 15 –16, 2018 (see page 4 for details).

Finally, I want to thank Diana Fessenmyer, Social Services Memorial Honor Fund Chair (SSMHF), for submitting an article describing how SSMHF contributes to the well-being of many of our members, and Evelyn Reese, Community Service Chair, for contributing an article about many of the community outreach efforts which will create a lasting impact on the future of countless individuals, schools, and organizations. Without the leadership of volunteers like Diana and Evie, our organization would not be as strong as it is today.

In This Issue

PASR—Investing in the Future
Page 4

Executive Committee Nominations Now Open
Page 5

Leadership Survey: Your Feedback is Important
Page 5

SSMHF Committee's Dedication to Helping Those in Need
Pages 6

SSMHF Committee Chairs
Page 7

PASR Leadership: Meet the Executive Committee
Page 7-9

Community Service Committee Leads Volunteer Efforts Across PA
Page 9-10

Community Service Committee Chairs
Page 10

Retirees Leading and Giving Back Through Volunteerism
Page 12-13

COLA Update: Using Technology to Get Your Story Heard
Page 14

Public Relations Committee Update: "Team Newsies" Formed
Page 15

Upcoming Mid-Term Elections: Make Your Vote Count
Page 16

Executive Director's Report

By Mark M. McKillop, Executive Director

One of the vital aspects of PASR is Leadership Development. It is essential for the growth of PASR, and it is indispensable in the areas of community service and educational support. Many members have played important roles in service to others. It started with a career in our schools and has continued on through retirement. We continue to be proud of all of our members and their contributions. Without this active support and activity, PASR would not be able to provide necessary help and assistance. Your hard work in every area of Pennsylvania allows the staff in Mechanicsburg to do our jobs more effectively. Member

leadership and volunteerism is key to the smooth running of PASR. Every minute, hour, and day spent volunteering is valuable, and we thank each and every one of you for your contributions.

With the upcoming annual Ruth Abigail Boyer Leadership Development Training and future PASR Officer elections, the focus of the staff at headquarters has been to work with the Board and Leadership Development presenters to put together a valuable conference that we hope will inspire those who attend.

The Ruth Abigail Boyer Leadership Conference

Each year, PASR holds a Leadership Development Conference in honor of Ruth Abigail Boyer. Ruth became a lifetime member of the Northampton Chapter of PASR and a lifetime member of the State Association of PASR in 1960. She was also affiliated with the NRTA Division of AARP. She was a lifetime member of the Olive Presbyterian Church in Easton.

Ruth died at the age of 92, alone in her home on Northampton Street in Easton on Saturday, January 16, 1988. She left an estate in excess of three-hundred thousand dollars and specified in her will that it be evenly divided between three organizations: YWCA of Easton, the Easton Home for Aged Women, and the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees.

The PASR Board of Directors in 1989 considered several alternate uses for her generous bequest and decided on a plan that would honor Miss Boyer's memory and provide a lasting benefit to the Association's members. The plan adopted invests the bequest in a separate fund and allocates 75% of the annual interest earnings to be used for the orientation and training of

elected and appointed volunteer leaders at the Region and Chapter levels. The first "Ruth Abigail Boyer Leadership Conference" was held in 1990.

Ruth attended both grade school (1902-1910) and high school (1910 - 1913) in Reigelsville. After graduation, she attended Churchman's Business School in Easton for one year.

Her father moved his medical practice to 1116 Northampton Street in Easton where the family was to reside as well.

Miss Boyer enrolled at East Stroudsburg College in 1915 and graduated with a certificate in Elementary Education in 1917. She taught at Hay Elementary in Northampton County her first year. The next year, and the 40 following, she taught third grade at Fairview School in Wilson Borough. She never married and retired from teaching in 1959.

PASR and all its members shall be forever grateful to Ruth Abigail Boyer for her most generous bequest.

PASR Times

VOLUME 75 (ISSN-0194-8776)

NUMBER 1 | September 2018

POSTMASTER

Send Address Changes to:

PASR NEWSLETTER

Communications Department

878 Century Drive

Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

(717) 697-7077 | pasr@pasr.org

President | Gary A. Parker

President-Elect | Judith L. Schaffer

Vice President | William D. Neugebauer

Treasurer | Barbara F. Mitcho

Assistant Treasurer | Stephen M. Vak

Past President | Diana L. Armstrong

Executive Director | Mark M. McKillop

Editor/Writer | Jaclyn M. Keys

Proofreader | Victoria A. Longey

PASR Times, the official publication of the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees, is published four times annually (March, June, Sept., and Dec.). Subscriptions are only by membership. Periodicals postage paid at Harrisburg, PA.



PASR – Investing in the Future

The annual Ruth Abigail Boyer Leadership Development training for PASR members from across the state and even-numbered Regions' incoming 2019 Region Directors-Elect and Presidents-Elect is rapidly approaching. The training, which is centered around the theme "Investing in the Future," will be held at the Toftrees Resort in State College, PA (pictured above) on October 15–16, 2018.

The main conference, which is open to all registered members, will begin at noon on Monday, October 15th with a welcome luncheon. Immediately following the luncheon, guest presenter Jeffrey Kenderdine of the YMCA will deliver a keynote speech.

Kenderdine is no stranger to serving the community and taking on a leadership role. He is currently the Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Lancaster Family YMCA. The YMCA strengthens the foundations of community by focusing on youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

Over the past nine years, the YMCA has grown from one full-facility location serving less than 3000 members to three facilities serving nearly 18,000. The number of YMCA staff has grown from less than 200 to more than 500. In addition to these facilities, the YMCA operates a 120 acre nature-based, resident youth camp, Camp Shand, to deliver its mission throughout the County.

Following the keynote speech, attendees will have the choice of attending a roundtable discussion or a presentation. The roundtable will be about increasing awareness of PASR, recruiting and maintaining members, and recruiting people to fill leadership roles. It will be led by PASR's Bill Neugebauer, Kathy O'Rourke, Marty Reddinger, and Donna Vlassich.

The presentation, entitled "Communication in the Digital Age: Chapter Websites, Social Media, and More," will focus on how communication has changed in recent years and how to use new technologies effectively. Attendees will also be given instructions for creating and maintaining a Chapter website. The presentation will be delivered by PASR Communications Specialist, Jaclyn Keys, and guest presenter, Dr. Dominic DelliCarpini of York College of Pennsylvania.

DelliCarpini is the Dean for York College's Center for Community Engagement, the Naylor Endowed Professor of Writing Studies, and President of the National Council of Writing Program Administrators.

He has done extensive volunteer work throughout Pennsylvania and has won the York College Professional Service Award, the York County Economic Alliance's Spirit of York County Award for Community Engagement, and the 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania Award for his work within the community of York. He serves on the Board of Trustees for the York County Community Foundation, the Cultural Alliance of York County, and the York Bar Foundation, and was recently appointed by Governor Tom Wolf to his commission on public service, PennSERVE.

DelliCarpini has written numerous articles and presentations examining the role of writing as a tool for civic engagement, writing program administration, undergraduate research, and faculty development. He has also authored/edited four textbooks for first-year composition, and has served as a consultant for writing programs around the U.S.

Once the afternoon sessions are completed, a group dinner will be held. It will be followed with a presentation on PASR's member benefits, including a discussion of the recent changes to self-administered dental and vision insurance programs, led by PASR Member Benefits and Services Associate, Kelly Dygert.

The main conference will resume on the morning of Tuesday, October 16th with a group breakfast. Immediately following the breakfast, PASR Lobbyist, Jeff Hunsicker will present an in-depth look at the upcoming COLA legislation efforts spear-headed by PASR.

Another not-to-be-missed session will follow on the health of PSERS, presented by PSERS Executive Director, Glen Grell. Grell is the Executive Director of the Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS), the \$50.2 billion public pension system headquartered in Harrisburg, PA. It is currently the 20th largest state-sponsored defined benefit public pension fund in the nation, with a membership of nearly 260,000 active school employees and nearly 220,000 retirees.

Prior to being named Executive Director, Grell served as the elected State Representative for the 87th District in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, which includes several communities in Eastern Cumberland County. He was first elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 2004. During his tenure in the House of Representatives, Grell was the prime sponsor or House floor leader on legislation addressing many important matters, including the 2010 public pension reform. He also served as the House Republican Caucus' representative as a member of the PSERS Board of Trustees from 2009 to 2015 and was Chairman of the 25 member South Central (GOP) Caucus.

Prior to his election, Grell was an attorney in private practice in Central Pennsylvania. From 2000 to 2005, he served as Solicitor of Hampden Township, the largest municipality in Cumberland County. He also served as Deputy General Counsel to Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge from 1995 to 2000. Grell is also active in several pension industry associations, including the National Association of State Retirement Administrators and the National Council on Teacher Retirement.

The event will conclude with a presentation by PASR Executive Director, Mark McKillop. McKillop will be discussing the future of PASR and the possible restructuring of our organization.

It is our hope that the training will inspire attendees to use what they've learned during the conference to "invest in the future" of their local PASR Regions and Chapters.

If you are interested in attending the October 15-16, 2018 training, there is still time to register. Please contact Kristen Holjes via email at Kristen@pasr.org, or by calling headquarters at (717) 697-7077.

Executive Committee Nominations Now Open

It is hard to imagine that it is already time to begin the process of finding new members to serve on the PASR Executive Committee. Every two years, new leaders are elected during the Meeting of the House of Delegates (formerly called the Convention) to fill vital roles in our Association. The positions available for nomination are President-Elect, Vice President, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer. We are currently seeking interested candidates for each of these elected positions.

Candidacy for these volunteer positions is open to any member of the State Association. Elected officers will serve a two-year term, with only the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer permitted to run for re-election. These elections are very important, as the elected officers will determine the future direction of PASR. We encourage you to make your voice heard by running for an office.

PASR is an organization lead entirely by its members. Although the main office has six paid employees (not including the Executive Director), the volunteers who serve in our various Regions and Chapters and on the PASR Board of Directors provide the direction of the organization.

The PASR Nominating Committee will review applications received for each volunteer position and select a single individual for each office to recommend and be voted upon by the PASR House of Delegates during PASR's Meeting of the House of Delegates at the Valley Forge Casino Resort Event Center on October 8, 2019. Additional nominations for these offices can be made from the floor.

In accordance with the PASR By-Laws, the current President-Elect will automatically assume the position of President on January 1 of elec-

tion years. Anyone wanting to be considered for a state officer position may secure an application form from their Region Director (who will be receiving copies of the application in January), from the Nominating Committee Chairman, Diana Armstrong, or from the PASR office at pasr@pasr.org.

Interested candidates should submit their completed application, along with a resume, to Diana Armstrong at 878 Century Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055.



Pictured Above: Current officers Gary Parker, Bill Neugebauer, Diana Armstrong, Steve Vak, and Barbara Mitcho being sworn in by Barry Kelly at the October 2017 Convention, held at the Eden Resort.

Leadership Survey: Your Feedback is Important

With leadership and the future of PASR in mind, we would like to give all of our active members the chance to have their opinions and feedback heard. While attendees at the upcoming Leadership Development training will have the chance to discuss and explore issues first-hand with the Board of Directors and the Executive Director, we think it's important to give those not attending a platform to add to the discussion. We would like you to share your thoughts on how to improve PASR, including your ideas on the following issues:

- Ideas on how to reorganize/restructure the Association to better meet the needs of your Chapter or Region.
- Ideas of how to recruit members to fill vacant leadership roles throughout the organization.
- Specific ideas on how to make meetings more fun and boost meeting attendance.
- Ideas on how to recruit more members and reach even more school retirees.

If you have any thoughts on the items listed above, please complete our short Leadership Survey online here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PASRleadership>. You are also welcome to pass your feedback on to your Chapter President.

Mark Your Calendar for the 2019
Meeting of the House of Delegates
October 6 – 8, 2019
Valley Forge Casino Resort Event Center



SSMHF Committee's Dedication to Helping Those in Need

By Diana Fesenmyer, PASR SSMHF State Chair

The PASR Social Service and Memorial Honor Fund Committee (SSMHF) is an active group of volunteers consisting of a State Chair and 13 Regional Chairs who oversee the work of each of the 55 local Chapter SSMHF Committees. Over 250 members volunteer their time locally to service these SSMHF Chapter Committees.

The greatest job of every SSMHF local Committee is to service confined and temporarily-confined PASR members across Pennsylvania. Locals often use word-of-mouth and over 2,000 phone calls/emails to keep in touch with these members. Many locals send cards at least six times per year to ensure that confined members know their friends in the Chapter care about them. Over 7,000 cards have been sent this year alone to 80- and 90- year-old confined and temporarily-confined members who may not be able to attend meetings regularly. Many are in nursing homes, living with their children, or no longer able to drive due to health issues. Over 50% of the 55 Chapters honor these confined members at least once per year by planning a special luncheon in their honor. PASR members and family members often provide the transportation to and from this luncheon. During the luncheon, these members are frequently asked to provide words of wisdom on how they have maintained a long life. Over 1,800 gifts/flowers were sent to these confined members in May and December of 2018. These months are called "Months Of Giving" by the local SSMHF teams.

Many SSMHF Committee members regularly visit their confined members throughout the year. According to the SSMHF two-page report forms collected, over 1,300 individual visits have been documented this year alone with only 42 chapters (80%) having provided their data.

The SSMHF Chair of each Chapter must perform a Memorial Service for all deceased members at least once per year. Many Chapters have a Memorial Service three times per year. The Regional Chairs collect the lists of each Chapter's deceased members and formulate a regional necrology list that is displayed at the House of Delegates every other year. Many Chapters report their deceased members in every newsletter and include a form to contribute to the Memorial Honor Fund (MHF).

PASR Chapters have donated over \$6,577 to the Memorial Honor Fund this year. Yet each year, \$20,000 is withdrawn from the Memorial Honor Fund. These funds are used to partially reimburse volunteers for the expenses they incur while providing services to confined and temporarily-confined members. Chapters receive reimbursement from yearly SSMHF Treasurer's Reports, which list the names, dates, costs, and services provided to all confined and partially-confined members.

The Memorial Honor Fund uses another \$6,000 annually to help members pay State Association dues so that members can maintain their insurance coverages, which require State membership.

Lastly, the Memorial Honor Fund awards individual grants to members who are financially unable to maintain their expenses due to a catastrophic event.

With an annual income of \$6,577 and yearly expenses of \$26,000, the Memorial Honor Fund is quickly depleting and may be gone in less than five years. We want to continue to be able to provide the required \$26,000 per year in monetary services, but we need the help of our Chapters and their membership. The SSMHF State Committee asks each Chapter to donate a \$50 basket for the MHF Auction at the House of Delegates every other year. This Auction often raises an additional \$3,000. During non-House of Delegates years, the SSMHF Committee is asking each of the 55 Chapters to make a \$50 donation to the Memorial Honor Fund, in addition to their normal MHF donations. We are also asking members to consider giving a donation to the Memorial Honor Fund in honor of or in memory of a friend, family member, or fellow PASR member. Please help maintain the Memorial Honor Fund for years to come.

Thank-You Notes From Members:

"Dear PASR, Thanks so much for helping my mother maintain her PASR state membership when she could no longer afford to keep up financially with her bills. You have no idea what it means to her since she has been a member for over 30 years."

"Dear PASR, I am so glad you were able to ease my heating woes last winter. Thank you for caring."

"Dear PASR, I look so forward to getting cards from my friends in PASR. Certain days are better than others, but I know that you care about me."

"Dear PASR, Thank you for the beautiful sympathy card for my husband. He and I loved to attend PASR meetings together. I know that you truly will keep me in your thoughts in this difficult time. Thank you for making a donation to the PASR Memorial Fund in his honor."

"Dear PASR, The gift card was so welcome at Christmas! I sent my grandson to Walmart's to pick up a few groceries when he stopped in to visit. I know that you care!"

Memorial Honor Fund

A contribution of \$ _____ is being made to the Memorial Honor Fund in Honor of Memory of

Name: _____

Please inform the following of this loving tribute:

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Donor: Chapter Individual

Sender's Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

County: _____ Date: _____

Please mail donations to: Memorial Honor Fund • PASR • 878 Century Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Social Service Memorial Honor Fund Committee Chairs

State Chair	Diana M Fesenmyer	dfes1@comcast.net
Region 1 Chair	Eileen M Sichel	esreading2001@yahoo.com
Region 2 Chair	JoAnn M Bailey	
Region 3 Chair	Monique H Lautenschlager	pelmhl@hotmail.com
Region 4 Chair	Janet L Zeger	jdzege1@gmail.com
Region 5 Chair	Linda M Neugebauer	lneug@atlanticbb.net
Region 6 Chair	Susan L Hilty	cybersue3386@comcast.net
Region 7 Chair	Colleen N Valosen	cvalosen@yahoo.com
Region 8 Chair	Glenda L Kemm	gkemm@hughes.net
Region 9 Chair	Phyllis A R zodkiewicz	przodkiewicz@roadrunner.com
Region 9 Co-Chair	Martha Reddinger	marty.reddinger40@gmail.com
Region 10 Chair	Carol McMurray	carolmcmurra1@gmail.com
Region 11 Chair	Theresa L Jackson	jacksontheresa99@gmail.com
Region 13 Chair	Lynette S Choate	cruzin40@gmail.com



PASR Leadership: Meet the Executive Committee

If you are considering taking on a future leadership role in PASR, you may be wondering what type of person we are looking for. The answer is simple: any! Our current leaders have widely varying interests, backgrounds, and experiences. They come from just about every public school position imaginable.

Our leaders all bring individualized strengths, focuses, goals, and ideas to PASR that help make our Association great. Each has joined PASR and chosen to take on a leadership role for their own reasons, but they all share two core common goals: to improve the lives of fellow retirees, and to strengthen PASR for the future. The following introductions detail the current members of the Executive Committee and the experiences that led them not only to join PASR, but also to volunteer for their current leadership roles.

PRESIDENT | Gary Parker

PASR President, Gary Parker, never considered a career other than teaching math in public schools. He received his BS in mathematics from Mansfield State College, and used it to propel a successful career as a mathematics teacher and department chair at Montrose Area School District. During Gary's final years of teaching, he taught AP Calculus, Calculus and Trig, and Advanced Math.

Gary comes from a long line of public school employees, and actually found out about PASR through his mother and cousins who were active members of the Bradford/Sullivan Chapter. Gary says he joined PASR partly because he was given a free membership to his local Chapter, but mostly because he loves meeting new people who share the common interest of assisting fellow retirees.

This passion that has no doubt contributed to his desire to take on a leadership role in PASR, although Gary admits that it was ultimately the influence of a fellow retired math teacher that led him to assume

his first leadership role as President-Elect of the Susquehanna Chapter. As for leadership at the State level, Gary was asked by the late Ms. Joan Peters to consider applying for Vice President, a position which he ultimately won. Gary remembers the Erie Convention fondly where he was first asked to take the Vice President role, as well as the support and encouragement of fellow Officers and Directors within PASR as they work toward common goals.

As for the future of PASR, Gary looks forward to leading an effort to consolidate or eliminate Committees within the Association in order to streamline PASR activities. He also plans to lead an effort with Executive Director, Mark McKillop, to address the idea of combining or changing areas of assignment within the current Region structure.

PRESIDENT-ELECT | Judith Schaffer

PASR President-Elect, Judith Schaffer, discovered her passion for public school education at a young age, ignited by her love of reading. While in only seventh grade, Judy's desire to read led her to volunteer in her school's library. Judy fondly remembers loving the "job" so much because it enabled her to "read as many new books as [she] wanted before they were put on the shelves."

Wanting to share that love with other children, Judy became determined to someday run her own library, and earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Library Science and English. Judy fulfilled her dream of running a library as the Valley Middle School Librarian for the New Kensington-Arnold School District, the position from which she ultimately retired.

Judy not only serves a leadership role in PASR, but also volunteers for a number of other organizations that allow her to pursue her many interests. She is the convention coordinator for the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania, is involved on the state level for Delta Kappa

Continued on page 8-9...

Gamma Society International, volunteers as a disaster worker for the American Red Cross, and volunteers for other smaller groups like the Tarentum Library, The Knead Café, and the Allegheny Township Community Club.

Judy's PASR leadership journey began when she served as the Assistant Chair of Public Relations. She has also served as chair of SSMHF, Alle-Kiski President-Elect and President, and SSMHF Region 6 Chair, as well as both Assistant Director and Director of Region 6. Judy is currently not only acting as PASR's President-Elect, but also Region 6 Director.

While serving as President-Elect, Judy plans to focus on making the PR committee an active, vital group that will work together to promote PASR. She also wants to reach out to all Chapter and State members through more personal involvement and visits. Judy's ultimate goal is to have all members know her by name.

VICE PRESIDENT | William Neugebauer

PASR Vice President, Bill Neugebauer, graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, followed by a Master's degree from Penn State University. Bill always knew he wanted to be a public school teacher, viewing teaching as an honorable profession from a young age. Bill remembers his school experience and the teachers who worked with him fondly, and attributes his love of teaching to the many good role models he encountered during his education from first grade on.

It's no surprise that with teachers having such a profound impact on him at a young age, Bill made it his career to work with elementary school students. Bill retired from Altoona Area School District as a full-time teacher of the gifted, working all day with exceptional fifth grade students.

Bill first joined PASR at the encouragement of his wife, Linda, who had retired three years prior to him and had become an active PASR member. She explained to Bill that PASR truly cared for retired school employees, and not just those currently employed like other organizations. Bill also loved the idea of PASR because it serves all public school retirees. Linda described meetings to him as being a great "equalizer" where cafeteria workers would sit next to superintendents, art teachers would sit next to bus drivers, and they all worked together with no feelings of superiority among the group; a concept that greatly appealed to him.

It didn't take Bill long to begin serving in leadership roles within the Blair County Chapter. These experiences gave him the opportunity to see what was going on at the State level and to become interested in working with the State. Bill then became State Membership Chair, a position he held for many years, which he describes as being one of his most rewarding experiences with PASR to date. Bill said the experience was so positive because he had "the finest, most dedicated people working on [his] State Committee." Under Bill's direction, the Committee was able to increase membership to the highest levels in recent years. Bill's years of experience as the State Membership Chair led him to believe he could make a difference and could help move the State organization forward if he were to be elected to a leadership role. During the October 2017 Convention, Bill was given that chance after

being nominated for Vice President from the floor and being elected by his peers.

Along with his duties as Vice President, Bill enjoys completing community service projects with the Blair County Chapter. Bill views community service as an extension of the work he did during his career as a teacher. His favorite volunteer activity is visiting local nursing homes to have lunch with Chapter members and potential Chapter members.

While serving as Vice President, Bill hopes to travel across the state and meet with other PASR members to listen to their stories, give them any kind of help he can from the State level, and to encourage them to make their Chapter the best Chapter in the state.

TREASURER | Barbara Mitcho

PASR Treasurer, Barb Mitcho, graduated from Edinboro State Teachers College (now Edinboro University of PA), with a Bachelor's degree in Speech and Hearing Therapy/English and a Master's degree in Educational Development and Strategies. When she graduated, Speech, Language, and Hearing Therapist opportunities in the public schools were abundant, with school districts actively seeking them out. Barb began her public school career immediately as a Speech Therapist, a position which she held until retirement thirty-four years later.

Barb began taking on leadership roles in PASR during her first year as a member when her chapter's RECREO Chair asked for help with organizing bus trips. As a young girl, Barb had dreamed of being a tour guide, and saw the opportunity to live her dream by helping the RECREO Committee. Two months later, Barb became not only RECREO Chair, but also Vice President of Programs. She later served as President of her Chapter (twice), Region Director, Assistant State Treasurer, and finally Treasurer.

Barb says she enjoys being a PASR member because it keeps her in contact with former colleagues, allows her to meet new friends, and provides social activities. Barb says she is "proud to serve PASR because [she believes] in its mission and [is] happy to participate in serving its members." One of Barb's favorite memories from her leadership roles with PASR was serving as the 2012 State Convention Chair, and said "it was a lot of work, but I had the absolute best Committee people! We all worked very hard to make PASR's 75th Anniversary memorable. That was one Convention I didn't want to end."

During her time as Treasurer, Barb has been instrumental in the PASR Lottery Fundraisers. While serving as Co-Chair for the Fundraisers, Barb has worked to raise money to fund a number of initiatives, including the purchase of the PASR Unified Database and the replacement of the State headquarters' antiquated telephone system. Barb looks forward to continuing to contribute to PASR as Treasurer.

ASSISTANT TREASURER | Stephen Vak

PASR Assistant Treasurer, Steve Vak, attributes his decision to work in the public school system to his desire to give back for all of the good experiences he had while attending public school. Steve began his career as a mathematics teacher, which led to him undertaking a number of positions throughout the public school system, including a teacher of gifted students, Business Manager, and Superintendent.

Steve has a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Susquehanna University, and a Master's degree and Educational Doctorate in Educational Administration from Lehigh University.

Like many other members of the Executive Committee, Steve has participated in leadership roles throughout a number of organizations, including serving as Board member for the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, Pennsylvania School Boards Insurance Company, Pennsylvania's Diagnostic and Prescriptive Mathematics Program, and the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Despite his many professional memberships and service roles, Steve is particularly invested in his work at PASR. Steve joined PASR due to his hope to be able to better help fellow retirees. He later took on a leadership role in our Association because he enjoys working with the great people he's met during his time with PASR, and because he felt that he could help PASR become a better organization.

Steve's goal while serving as Assistant Treasurer is to contribute to the financial strength of PASR.

PAST PRESIDENT | Diana Armstrong

PASR Past President, Diana Armstrong, is a graduate of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and was happy to be able to do her student teaching in a Pittsburgh public high school and elementary school while attending Carnegie Mellon University. Diana's student teaching lead her to receive an interview with the Employment Executive of Pittsburgh Public Schools, and she was fortunate to receive a full-time job and begin her teaching career immediately.

Though Diana began her career as an art teacher, she filled many jobs throughout the public school system, including Department Chair, Ac-

Community Service Committee Leads Volunteer Efforts Across PA

By Evie Reese, PASR State Chair for the Community Service Committee

Retirement doesn't just mean golf courses and rocking chairs for Pennsylvania's public school retirees. Retired school employees are much more than that; they are a valuable public resource as volunteers. Encouraging members to volunteer and donate their time and services for the benefit of their towns and communities has been a focus of PASR since its founding.

Our Association can be defined in a number of ways depending on the interests of its members. Those of us who are involved in community service refer to it as a service organization. We are school retirees voluntarily joined together "to serve others in need and help one another enjoy retirement."

The Community Service Committee was established by PASR in 1964. Adopting the motto "To Serve, Not To Be Served" that was promoted by Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus when she founded NRTA in 1947 and AARP in 1955, PASR's Community Service Committee has been helping our members identify volunteer opportunities and promote community service projects and programs for more than five decades.

One of the Community Service Committee's goals is to encourage retired school employees to identify community needs and to develop

tivity Teacher, Vice Principal, and Dean of Students. She was Principal of Morningside School in Pittsburgh when she retired.

Diana was first introduced to PASR through a friend from her church and active PghASR member who invited her to attend a PghASR event. It was during that event that Diana first found out about PASR, and she has been a member ever since. It's no surprise, then, that Diana's favorite part of being a PASR member is the friendships she has made.

Diana recalls a number of fond memories from her time with PASR, including her first Convention, where she said she could feel this excitement in the air. Diana also noted that seeing the first financial report during her presidency where PASR was officially out of "the red" was a high note, as was finding Executive Director Mark McKillop, who she attributes to bringing PASR into the 21st century. Diana is also proud to have been part of bringing together the current staff of the PASR headquarters' office, who she feels are "united in making PASR the finest retirement organization you could ever find."

During her time in the Executive Committee, Diana has made a number of contributions, which she plans to continue. Diana states that "As President of PASR, I have had my time to direct the future of PASR, and as Immediate Past President I am giving all my support and effort to the vision/direction of the President, Executive Director, and to the Board to train new leaders for local Chapters and Board positions." She also hopes to help increase membership, increase the number of benefits PASR offers, and assist with the continued fight for a COLA. Diana also hopes to help "keep PASR a vibrant organization for ALL retirees of our public schools."

programs and projects that are recognizable as PASR contributions to the community. They also strive to project a positive image of retired school employees by actively demonstrating that retired school employees are a valuable public resource as volunteers.

The Community Service Committee has continually reached those goals through volunteerism, and continues to embark on many new community service initiatives. The list of community service projects that PASR members organize and support is astounding. PASR members are serving those in need—the poor, the young, the elderly, educators, non-educators—persons living throughout Pennsylvania and across the globe.

The State Community Service Committee, which consists of the State Chair and 13 Region Chairs, focuses its efforts on educating Region and Chapter leaders about the variety of projects that are already in existence and about the organizations with whom Chapters can partner. The Committee also encourages Chapters to leverage the ingenuity and talents of its members to develop their own projects independent of other organizations.

The State Committee serves as a conduit for sharing information about what the Chapters in each Region are doing, thus giving Chap-

Continued on page 10...

ters an ever-expanding list of ways that their members can provide support and service to those living in their communities.

PASR has Community Service Committees in every County in the Commonwealth. It is here that acts of public service take place. It is here that needs are found and programs are created or a partnership is forged with an existing entity to help the community where it is needed the most. The list of community service projects being implemented by Chapters is long and diverse. While there are far too many to list individually, the following is a representative sampling:

We participate in the Dream Come True and American Cancer Society telethons, pack Sunshine boxes for seniors and Back Pack Buddies for children. We honor the troops by working with Operation: Military Kids, assisting Keystone Soldiers in packing boxes and providing for their food bank, participating in laying Wreaths Across America, knitting helmet liners, sending packages of requested items to the troops, personalizing Christmas cards for the troops, and providing stuffed toys for returning military to give to their sons or daughters as they welcome them home.

We help with library book sales, work with therapy dogs, tutor in the schools, teach in the prisons, maintain bike/hike trails, and maintain the grounds of municipal buildings. We serve our communities by participating in watershed protection and conservation projects, ringing the Salvation Army bell, collecting items for the local food pantry, providing for the homeless, volunteering as docents in museums and cultural centers, assisting at the Special Olympics, the Farm Show, the Senior Expo, and the Little League World Series.

We make candy bags to accompany the Valentine's Day delivery of Meals on Wheels, knit lap robes for wheelchair bound patients, and clip Coupons for Education. We promote family literacy by working with the Literacy Council in adult education. We support Carbon Readers and the First Book Project. We donate books to Reach Out and Read, to libraries, schools, and to day care centers - and we travel with the Little Red School House.

PASR volunteers are making an incredible difference in their commu-

nities, and are getting the message out to our members and the public about PASR and the good work that retired school personnel are doing for the community. A survey of Chapters revealed that Community Service has established a presence on social media, especially Facebook and YouTube. Many chapters are using social media, their websites, and community newspapers and/or television to keep their members informed and to publicize community service events.

Erie Chapter, for example, has made a short video to highlight some of the opportunities that are available for volunteering. Luzerne/Wyoming Chapter has had their socks for children project covered by three newspapers. Berks and Lehigh Chapters have been published in their local newspapers. Westmoreland Chapter's effort with food bank donations was posted on the Westmoreland County Food Bank Facebook page; they were also featured on Redstone Highlands Facebook page after making wreaths for residents.

A number of Chapters are making connections with organizations that need volunteers and are inviting them to leave materials and/or make presentations. Many Chapters publish community service directories listing organizations in need of volunteers. Fayette Chapter has produced a Volunteer Opportunity Directory. They also work with the RSVP program to provide opportunities for volunteerism and use the email directory to inform members about requests for additional volunteers. The word is getting around that PASR members are ready to serve!

We are both grateful for and proud of our dedicated volunteer efforts and we appreciate the enthusiasm, commitment, and vitality of our PASR members. Our volunteers are giving their time, talent, voices, and energy. They are working together to build stronger, more vibrant communities through their service. We extend our thanks to them for all that they do to strengthen their communities and to support the causes that they care about. To quote Dr. Andrus, "The community is the place where we, as older individuals, can be most effective. In no other place can we gain so much cooperation and win so many champions and supporters."

Community Service Committee Chairs

State Chair	Evelyn R Reese	ejreese1@verizon.net
Region 1 Chair	Sandra J Kates	sandel0618@aol.com
Region 2 Chair	Carol M Rieder	crjingabug@gmail.com
Region 3 Chair	Catherine P Cortegerone	ccortege@aol.com
Region 4 Chair	Olive A Stoops	dostoops@nmax.net
Region 5 Chair	Myrna A Wieggle	mawieggle@ptd.net
Region 6 Chair	Nancy J Fondrk	nfondrk@yahoo.com
Region 7 Chair	Barbara Anne Ruschak	barb480@gmail.com
Region 8 Chair	Patricia A Jones	turkeyhill2@neo.rr.com
Region 9 Chair	Diane Grzelak	edndeegrzelak@msn.com
Region 10 Chair	Shirley B Crawley	sbcjec@windstream.net
Region 11 Chair	Michael W Andrews	manpoetlive@verizon.net
Region 12 Chair	James W White	jwhite2244@comcast.net
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Retirees Leading and Giving Back Through Volunteerism

A common misconception about leadership is that you need to be serving in an official leadership role to lead. While it certainly helps by providing structure and authority, PASR sees a number of leaders fulfill other roles in the organization and their communities. Among them are those who take the initiative to volunteer.

PASR has a rich history of making a difference through volunteerism. The following article highlights just a few of the ways our volunteers are making a difference.

Community Service

“To serve, not to be served” is the motto for PASR’s Community Service Committee. The motto was originally promoted by Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, a retired educator from California, for both of the national organizations she founded: NRTA in 1947, and AARP in 1955.

Recognizing that individuals can significantly enhance the quality of their retirement lives through volunteerism, PASR created the Community Service Committee in 1964. Through this Committee, PASR has helped members identify volunteer opportunities and promote community service projects for more than five decades.

In retirement you can enjoy the best of both worlds—maintain the freedom you earned to do what you want when you want and continue to perform valuable services in your community through volunteerism.

PASR has Community Service Committees in nearly every County in the state to help members identify volunteer opportunities and to catalog the services that school retirees are providing to their communities on an individual and group basis. Many Chapters even publish community service directories listing organizations in need of volunteers.

Each year, these Committees conduct member volunteerism surveys and report the findings to the media and even public officials to ensure that everyone knows that public school retirees are an asset. Too often retirees are portrayed as a burden to taxpayers. The value of volunteer service being contributed by school retirees far exceeds the amounts that taxpayers are contributing to fund retiree benefits, and we think it is important that the general public be made aware of this fact.

From these surveys, each PASR Chapter also selects an individual who has provided community service activities to a broad array of organizations and honors them with the Volunteer of the Year Award. This is given to show our appreciation for their demonstrated commitment to the ideals and goals of selflessly serving others within their community and to encourage others to become equally involved.

Many PASR Chapters realize a lack of services in their Counties and develop their own community service project to meet these needs. Projects such as the Klothes for Kids, Mitten Tree, and Crawford Reads are all perfect examples of this. Rather than reinvent the wheel, some chapters have partnered with other organizations to provide much needed community services such as the Carbon Chapter’s Healthy Smiles, Happy Kids for the mobile dental unit.

Social Service Memorial Honor Fund (SSMHF)

For the past 50 years, PASR’s Social Service Memorial Honor Fund (SSMHF) Committee has helped thousands of Pennsylvania’s public school retirees in need of financial and/or emotional support through the Social Service Memorial Honor Fund (SSMHF) and caring volunteers. These volunteers spread cheer and comfort to our confined members.

Without contributions from our members, these financial grants, small gifts and cards, and regular visits would not be possible.

The SSMHF Committee serves our own members in their time of need. This committee has three main purposes:

- Promote the growth and proper utilization of the PASR Memorial Honor Fund.
- Assist members who are in need of moral and financial support.
- Encourage the work of the local Chapters in activities related to services for retirees who, due to illness or old age, are confined to their homes, hospitals, or nursing facilities.

The Memorial Honor Fund, which began in 1964 with \$10,000, has grown to provide for expressions of kindness, sympathy, and care to thousands of PASR members in need every year. Today, SSMHF monies derive from a fund at the State level as well as contributions that the local Chapters choose to raise and/or earmark at the local level.

Currently, there are more than 500 SSMHF volunteers serving members in need across Pennsylvania. The work of the Social Service Memorial Honor Fund Committee, however, relies on the contributions of PASR members. Of course, there is a sum of money invested, but the needs of our retirees would quickly bankrupt the fund if it were not regularly replenished. It is the responsibility of all PASR members to increase the treasury of the Social Service Memorial Honor Fund.

We don’t forget about our colleagues in retirement, and we certainly don’t forget about them just because they aren’t able to attend a meeting or a social function. PASR, at both the local and the state levels, is there for them in their time of need—both emotionally and financially, when possible.

Feeding the Hungry in Our Communities

Did you know that in the United States, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, nearly one in five children—about 16 million youth—are struggling with hunger? In 2010, 17.2 million households—14.5% of households or approximately one in seven—were classified “food insecure,” the highest number ever recorded in America. (Food security is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”)

More than 20 million children receive a free or reduced-price lunch each school day. Less than half of them get breakfast, and only 10% have access to summer feeding sites. AARP reported that since 2001, the problem of hunger among older Americans has spiked nearly 80%. Today, nearly nine million people age 50+ are at risk of going hungry. Sadly, in America, nearly 40% of edible food is discarded—enough to feed 25 million people!

Seeing the need to address this growing problem, PASR members decided to act. In 2013, PASR’s Community Service Committee unanimously recommended that PASR Chapters/members engage in efforts to alleviate hunger in their localities. The PASR Board of Directors agreed and is encouraging all Chapters to either continue or to initiate a special project or activity seeking to alleviate hunger in their communities.

The idea for PASR to organize and promote activities for members to help alleviate hunger originated in Greene Chapter and was spearheaded by Cathy Butcher, Greene Chapter Past President. Butcher is very actively involved in helping to eliminate hunger in her area, particularly for school-aged children and seniors who do not have sufficient pension incomes or Social Security benefits to meet their basic living expenses.

Butcher felt that all PASR chapters should address hunger in their communities: “Every person who has worked in schools has witnessed



the impact of hunger on children. Hunger makes it harder for children to learn in school and slows down their physical development. However, food insecurity affects individuals of all ages and results from a wide variety of circumstances. Today's economy has created a need for assistance by people who would never have imagined themselves to be in need of this help. Businesses have laid off workers or closed, full-time jobs have been replaced with part-time jobs, houses have been foreclosed, affordable housing is difficult to find, and medical costs have risen while health benefits have been lost. Hunger zaps the strength of the working poor. Senior citizens are finding that they do not have sufficient funds to meet expenses. Hunger worsens the health issues of our senior citizens and the disabled. Hunger perpetuates the cycle of poverty."

Throughout the Commonwealth and beyond, PASR Chapters heard the call and initiated or expanded a project to address hunger in their areas.

Filling the Void in Educational Funding

When working in the public schools, did you ever have a great idea for a project or activity that you were certain would improve the school environment and/or enhance learning for the children you were serving? The project or activity required a relatively small amount of funding; unfortunately, when you requested the funding from the district administration, the response was, "Sorry, no money."

Sadly, these days, more and more school employees are hearing "Sorry, no money." Continued cuts in state subsidies for education have become the norm. Many districts are at capacity in terms of securing more revenue from local taxpayers. School budgets have been slashed significantly, and school personnel across the state are being furloughed. Public schools, often accused of not being innovative, are being denied the financial means to innovate. From where will the funding for new projects and activities to improve our schools and enhance the education of Pennsylvania's children come?

PASR's Educational Support Committee fills some of the void in educational funding. Each year, PASR distributes \$750 to each of our 12 in-state Regions (a total of \$9,000). The purpose of these grants is to help school employees conduct a special program or activity for improving their schools' environments and enhancing the education of students for which they have been unable to obtain funding from their school districts. Many Chapters take the monies they receive from the

State and supplement them, sometimes doubling the amounts initially received. Many of PASR's Chapters and Regions have opted to increase the funding locally.

Supporting the Troops

While stories from the front lines may have faded from the front pages of newspapers, the valiant service provided by our troops overseas and the sacrifices their families are making back home remain forefront in the minds of PASR members.

In 2008, our State Community Service Committee launched a campaign to encourage PASR local Chapters to conduct activities providing support for our military personnel serving overseas and/or their families back home here in Pennsylvania. Since then, the number of Chapters conducting projects each year has steadily increased, as has the variety of services provided by those Chapters.

The participation in this endeavor by Chapter members throughout the state is extraordinary. When you consider the infinite number of potential projects and activities from which Chapter members can choose and the great number of things that Chapter members were already doing to serve all sorts of people in their communities, it is very significant that more than two-thirds of our Chapters elected to take on new projects to benefit our troops overseas and their families at home. It is a strong testament to the patriotism of our members and the respect and admiration we have for our armed forces personnel and their families.

In setting forth the challenge for PASR Chapters to engage their members in activities to serve troops and their families, the State Community Service Committee did not tell Chapters what to do. Instead, the Committee focused its efforts on educating Region and Chapter leaders about the wide variety of military support organizations and projects that were already in existence and with whom Chapters could partner. The Committee also encouraged Chapters to leverage the ingenuity and talents of their members to develop their own projects, independent of other organizations, and served as a conduit for sharing information about what the Chapters in each region were doing, thus giving Chapters an ever expanding list of ways their members could render support to the troops and their families.

COLA Update: Using New Technology to Get Your Story Heard

Along with the continued work of our lobbyist, Jeff Hunsicker, PASR is set to begin an aggressive cost of living adjustment (COLA) campaign that will address the need for a COLA in two unique ways. First, PASR has been actively reaching out to other retiree organizations and is spearheading a unified coalition of Pennsylvania retiree groups who will work together to present a unified front to legislators.

Secondly, PASR will be launching a video campaign. We understand that new technologies offer the opportunity to disseminate information more broadly than we have in the past. Modern communication, even with legislators, has shifted focus from formal letters and petitions to storytelling.

It is our hope that we will be able to use video technology and the Internet to get our members' stories in front of legislators. We believe that if legislators, and even the public, have the chance to hear from retirees firsthand about how the lack of a COLA is impacting their

lives, our message will be strengthened.

The first steps have been taken toward making the video campaign a reality. Funds for a professional video camera are in place, and resumes of both professional videographers and volunteers are being reviewed.

The next step in the process will be to gather volunteers who are willing to be filmed and have their stories shared with legislators through email, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and the PASR website. If you are interested in participating in this effort and would be willing to travel to the Harrisburg, PA area for filming, please email pasr@pasr.org.

Securing L/PEC funds continues to be an important part of PASR's legislative and COLA efforts. Please consider contributing to this effort either online, or by sending in the form below:

Internet Donations Direct:

<https://www.pasr.org/fund-donations/?Fund=P>

Or, you can donate by signing into the PASR Member Page at <https://www.pasr.org> and logging in. Then, select PASR Fund Donations (Under Member Links in the top right). Next, click the red "Donate" button next to the for the Legislative/Political Education Committee Fund.

Mail Donations: PASR L/PEC, 878 Century Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Contribution Payable to L/PEC Amount: \$ _____

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Public Relations Committee Update: “Team Newsies” Formed

By Judith Schaffer, President-Elect and Public Relations Committee Chair

Members, officers, and guests of the Public Relations Committee met for a first time ever face-to-face training session on August 29 at PASR headquarters. Judith Schaffer, PR Chair and President-Elect, along with Jaclyn Keys, PASR Communications Specialist and PASR Times Editor/Writer, welcomed “Team Newsies” to a full day of Public Relations presentations. Emphasis was placed on the quote: “Everything You Do Or Say is PR!”

The Keynote Speaker was Dr. Dominic DelliCarpini, Dean for the Center for Community Engagement at York College. His topic was “Delighting Your Members: Public Relations As Public Relationships.”

“The media today is user controlled,” said Dr. DelliCarpini, “thus today’s criteria for writing should always include knowledge of the projected audience.” He urged consideration of the question: “What do they want and think of us?” Public Relations should focus on designing an experience that quickly engages the reader, as research shows that they do not read from beginning to end.

The next segment, led by Keys, dealt with understanding the need for diversity in pictures, explained the new PASR Photo Release Form, and discussed requirements for submitting Chapter News and PASR Times articles. A diversity photo display board was prepared by Schaffer and used in discussions in relation to Chapter photography.

The first afternoon session featured proper introduction methods designed by Dale Carnegie from his book, *The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking*. The group prepared individual introductions for our Executive Director, Mark McKillop, using his personal resume. The group learned that, according to Carnegie, a good introduction is always given in under one minute.

Group interaction lead by Schaffer highlighted preliminary attempts at preparing a PASR Elevator Speech. The goal of this type of communication is to come up with a 100 word or less, 45 second “talk” that describes our organization and that can be easily recited when mem-

bers are questioned by another person in an unpredicted situation. The session’s emphasis was on completing an Elevator Speech, which will be submitted to our membership in the near future, that is easy to use and that works.

The afternoon session ended with a briefing on the new Media Award Form and with a review of the wording of a new proposed PR activity for the PASR 2019 Goals.

Chapters are urged to nominate Media Award recipients using the new form, especially for coverage relating to PASR Day held last June, 2018.



Pictured Above: PR committee members and guests pose for a group photo during the August 29th training session. Back Row: Polly Shaw, Gary Parker, Bill Neugebauer, Mark McKillop, Gail Maurer, Keynote Speaker Dr. Dominic DelliCarpini Front Row: Judith Guise, Carla Auten, Sherry Morris, Judith Schaffer, and Waneta Lingenfelter

PASR Board of Directors

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PRESIDENT-ELECT | Judith L. Schaffer, (724) 339-7161, judlees@hotmail.com
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TREASURER | Barbara Mitcho, (814) 474-2586, myciiov@verizon.net
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State & Board Committee Chairs

BY-LAWS | Richard M. Genung, (814) 333-9706, rgenung@zoominternet.net
CHAPTER SUPPORT | Diana L. Armstrong, (412) 682-4379, darmstrong13@verizon.net
CITATIONS | William D. Neugebauer, (814) 942-3488, wneug@atlanticbb.net
COMMUNITY SERVICE | Evelyn R. Reese, (610) 584-5789, ejreese1@verizon.net
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT | Ruth W. Roberts, (570) 966-9391, zaraq@hotmail.com
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LEGISLATIVE | Max E. Krugle, Jr., (724) 337-1078, mek306@verizon.net
L/PEC | Bruce Hockersmith, (717) 532-8539, bruhocjr@comcast.net
MB&S | Sandra A. Kinter, (724) 349-9026, sandyakers@comcast.net
MEMBERSHIP | Veronica R. Rozic, (724) 524-1511, vverrozic@aol.com
NOMINATING | Diana L. Armstrong, (412) 682-4379, darmstrong13@verizon.net
PERSONNEL | Diana L. Armstrong, (412) 682-4379, darmstrong13@verizon.net
POLICY | William D. Neugebauer, (814) 942-3488, wneug@atlanticbb.net
PSERS LIASON | Judith L. Guise, (215) 536-5196, jmisguided70@gmail.com
PUBLIC RELATIONS | Judith L. Schaffer, (724) 339-7161, judlees@hotmail.com
RECRO | Wayne A. Seely, (570) 384-4407, seely@pa.metrocast.net
RESOLUTIONS | Bernard J. Liscik, (724) 463-3181, bernardliscik@comcast.net
RETIREMENT PLANNING | Vacant
SSMHF | Diana M. Fesenmyer, (814) 676-6442, dfes1@comcast.net

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Upcoming Mid-Term Elections: Make Your Vote Count

By Mark M. McKillop, Executive Director

2018 marks a very important election year in Pennsylvania and the United States. Every single US Congressional seat is up for election (435), and 33 out of the 100 US Senate seats, including the seat held by Pennsylvania's Senator Robert P. Casey, are up for election as well.

In Pennsylvania, all 203 State House Seats are up for election along with one-half (25-Even Numbered) of the State Senate seats. In addition, there is an election for Governor of Pennsylvania between incumbent Tom Wolf and former State Senator Scott Wagner.

It is important to find out as much as possible about the candidates and their positions on issues important to PASR. This year, we are placing two documents on our website for our members only. One will help you find your elected official, and the other is a document that provides a data overview of the 2018 elections by County, Congressional District, State Senate District, and State House District. The title of the first document is the PASR Election and Political Guide (2018). We plan to continue this practice of showing the membership all of the data that is important in understanding the election process. The second document is the PASR Reapportionment Guide (2018). We are also completing the update of the PASR Guide to Capitol Hill which was last written in 1999-2000. This document will also be available on our website. The Guide to Capitol Hill has been updated to make it more relevant by adding additional methods of communication, including the various electronic techniques.

The chart below synthesizes the potential changes that could occur in our representation in the US Congress, State Senate, and State House:

Legislative Body	PA Total	Current	Number of Seats that	Realistic Number
	Districts	Make-Up	Could Change Parties	Could Change Parties
US Congress	18	13R-5D	6 Seats (5R, 1D)	5 Seats (4R, 1D)
State Senate	25	33R-16D	6 Seats (6R, 0D)	3 Seats (3R, 0D)
State House	203	121R-81D	35 Seats (27R, 8D)	9 Seats (8R, 1D)
Election Districts	246			