



President's Retreat fun learning event

Nov. 5 meeting to cover important school finance, law issues

By Debbie Thompson, WVSBA president

"October gave a party; the leaves by hundreds came. The chestnuts, oaks, and maples, and leaves of every name. The sunshine spread a carpet, and everything was grand, Miss Weather led the dancing, Professor wind the band!" – George Cooper

I would like to start this month's column by expressing my gratitude to all of you who were so thoughtful during the recent loss of my father. Your prayers, the lovely cards and all the kind expressions of sympathy were greatly appreciated!

Autumn is the year's last but loveliest smile. The woods in their hues of gold and crimson are simply glorious! The tints of autumn are truly like a mighty flower garden and it seems to me to be the perfect time for reflection.

I would like to reflect upon the President's Retreat at Stonewall Jackson Resort on Oct. 7-8. I hope everyone who attended enjoyed the weekend's activities as much as I.

Dr. Steven L. Paine, West Virginia state superintendent of schools, got the retreat off to an enthusiastic start with his greeting. His presentation was titled "Frameworks for 21st Century Learners" and focused on the book, "The World Is Flat," by Thomas Friedman. Friedman stresses that, "The sky is not falling today, but it might be in 15 to 20 years if we do not stimulate interest in public schools students in math, science and engineering." The state board's Goal No. 1 is Mastery and Beyond (Equity in Quality).

West Virginia is perfectly positioned to achieve this goal. Our Framework for High Performing School Systems creates the perfect pathway for transformation to develop high quality school systems. Dr. Paine stressed that our students must not only reach the mastery level but above mastery and distinguished levels of learning.

Dr. Paine also expressed his desire to work collaboratively with the WVSBA to discuss issues affecting the quality of education for all students in the state. Increasing communications is one of my major goals for our association. Hearing Dr. Paine speak of the importance of this partnership warmed my heart.

Our organization has so much to offer. Our challenge is to assure that his stated intentions become reality. Let's all work to assure open, two-way communication between WVSBA and WVDE. Together we can make a very strong TEAM: Together we can make a difference!

Dr. Patricia Kusimo, the new chief executive officer of the West Virginia Center for Professional Development, briefly discussed the "CPD: Visions and Expectations." Lori Stille, Ph.D. (Jefferson), who represents county boards as a member of the CPD Board, also offered remarks.

We employed a new training strategy at the President's Retreat. For several years, I have wanted to role play an actual board of education meeting and thanks to the approval of the Training Standards Review Committee, we did just that.

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'The November Meeting' set next weekend

The West Virginia School Boards Association's newest training session, "The November Meeting," is next Saturday at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, W.Va.

The meeting includes two training sessions: One relates to school law and the other to the state School Aid Formula.

WVSBA Counsel Howard E. Seuffer Jr. of the firm Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love, will present the school law segment. Joe Panetta, director of the West Virginia Department of Education's Office of School Finance, will present the SAF segment.

The program commences at 10 a.m. and will adjourn at 4 p.m.

WVSBA President Debbie Thompson (Pleasants) has scheduled a second "all committee" meeting from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Nov. 5. (Please see her column, above.)

The WVSBA Executive Board will meet from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. for its last scheduled meeting this year.

At that meeting, the board will consider committee reports, discuss the 2006 Regular Session of the Legislature and review staff plans for the association's Winter Conference, among other items.

All association meetings are open to WVSBA members, county superintendents and the public.

If you have questions about the meeting, please contact Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., WVSBA executive director; Shirley Davidson, conference registrar or Debbie Thompson. Their e-mail addresses are hocull@wvsba.org, sdavidson@wvsba.org, and debthom@charter.net.

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FALL CONFERENCE

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Dr. Howard O’Cull, using his vast wealth of knowledge and journalistic abilities, very successfully authored an intriguing script, “Smell the Coffee,” for the role-playing activity structured around the Open Governmental Proceedings Act and Parliamentary Procedure. The role playing was a great learning tool and great fun. My special thanks to the members of our association who shared their acting expertise. (They were wonderful, but I encourage them not to give up their daytime jobs!)

Our acting troupe, “The Not Ready for Prime Time Players,” included Lance Koury (Upshur), Jim Fox (Wood), David Cooper (Tucker), Nancy Walker (Monongalia), Rick Fitzwater (Calhoun), Patrick Long (Upshur), Carol Cain (Randolph), Luke Christie (Morgan), Debbie Thompson (Pleasants), Bob Shook (Mineral), Jo Boggess Phillips (Jackson) and Carlene Frederick (Calhoun).

Following the production troupe’s debut, Kim Croyle, an attorney with Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love, critiqued the mock board members’ actions and decisions. It was a very informative discussion for all attendees.

Dr. Lowell Johnson, president of the West Virginia Board of Education, also greeted the group. He, too, stressed his wish to have open dialogue with WVSBA members. He soon will set a date to meet with our West Virginia Board of Education Advisory Committee headed by Sue King (Greenbrier).

Following dinner on Friday evening, we conducted three cracker-barrel sessions with no specific agendas. Dr. O’Cull, Sally Cann (Hampshire) and I facilitated the sessions. I heard

several positive comments about these sessions. The opportunity to share common concerns and interfacing with colleagues often can be as productive as planned training sessions.

Saturday morning was delightful. Each board president or his or her designee was asked to “showcase” an important program, service or initiative their boards have undertaken. I wish we could have had more time to expound on details and ask more questions. This “Showcase of Counties” was tremendously informative. I was very proud of each of your presentations.

I hope you are looking forward to our Nov. 5 meeting at Stonewall Resort. Dubbed the “November Meeting,” we will discuss school

finance and school law. These topics are critical — especially school finance – because the Legislature is considering a review of the current school aid formula.

Joe Panetta, executive director of the state Department of Education’s Office of School Finance, will present the school finance program. WVSBA attorney Howard E. Seuffer Jr. will lead the school law workshop – a workshop favorite. His presentation will be in a question-and-answer format and he also will brief members on recent court cases, grievance decisions and 2005 Regular and Special Session legislation.

Another “All Committee Meeting” will be at 4 p.m. I hope you can find time to join us. I would like the chairpersons or their designees to attend the executive board meeting at 5 p.m. to give a brief overview of the work of their committees. Later, I will ask each committee to write a column about their accomplishments which will be included the *WVSBA Monthly*.

Your contributions are very important and I want to share them with the entire membership.

Has your board completed its self evaluation for this year? I hope you have, but if not, I hope you complete them soon. This is truly a growth process for your board. Having Dr. O’Cull come to your county to discuss the results is very effective. Open discussion of the findings with your board members can certainly add to your effectiveness as a decision-making body.

In case I do not see you before Thanksgiving, I wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season.

In closing, I want to share a quote I recently ran across that enforces the meaning of TEAM!

“There are few, if any, jobs in which ability alone is sufficient. Needed also are loyalty, sincerity, enthusiasm, and team play.” — William Given Jr.

Until next time...be kind to one another!

Debbie

The self-evaluation is truly a growth process for your board and discussion of the results is very effective.

The Legislature provides county board of education members, state policymakers, school administrators, and others information, opinion and commentary regarding West Virginia legislative issues. This publication does not necessarily reflect the official views, opinions or policies of the WVSBA, unless specifically stated.

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Briefly...

- **Please tell us what to cover at session.** Attendees for the West Virginia School Boards Association's November training session, which will be Nov. 5 at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, W.Va., should submit questions for the school law segment to WVSBA by Nov. 2. We prefer e-mail submissions. WVSBA Counsel Howard E. Seufer Jr. will present the school law segment, which is mostly based on county board members' and county superintendents' questions submitted before the meeting. Attendees should refer to their Oct. 27 meeting-related memorandum for more details.
- **Don't forget self-assessments.** County board self-assessments should be completed by Dec. 31. If your county board or superintendent has questions regarding the assessment or assessment instrument, please contact WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D. at hocull@wvsba.org.
- **Deadline for required training Dec. 31.** County board members whose terms expire June 30, 2006 must receive the required seven clock hours' training by Dec. 31 regardless of whether they seek re-election, based on West Virginia Code Section 18-5-1a. If illness or other extenuating circumstances preclude a county board member from completing the required training, please contact O'Cull so he may relay this information to the West Virginia School Boards Association-West Virginia Board of Education School Board Member Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC). That committee meets Dec. 14 in Charleston in conjunction with the December WVBE meeting. O'Cull said any such requests must be in writing. Faxes will not be accepted and the state superintendent has sole discretion to grant these type waivers, according to WVBE policy adopted in 1993.
- **Winter Conference topics requested.** If you have workshop or general session topics you'd like considered for the WVSBA Winter Conference, which will be Feb. 17-18 at the Charleston Marriott Hotel, please contact O'Cull or WVSBA President Debbie Thompson. Thompson may be reached by e-mail at debthom@charter.net or by telephone number at (304) 665-2187. O'Cull's telephone number is (304) 346-0571.
- **Legislation committee to consult each board.** O'Cull announced, largely in response to inquiries the association office received, that WVSBA's Committee on Legislation (formerly Committee of 55) will include consultation at various stages with one representative of each county board. The representative will be chosen or elected by that county board. During the legislative session, a smaller, regional committee will act in terms of more immediate legislative matters. As in the past, the entire COL, as time allows, may be contacted. O'Cull's restructuring recommendation will be made at the organization's Nov. 5 Executive Board meeting.
- **We'd like your help with committees.** If you would like to serve on an association committee, please contact Presi-

dent Debbie Thompson. There are five standing committees: Committee on Fiscal Integrity; Committee on Policy and Resolutions; Committee on Handbook Revision; Committee on Communications and the WV Board of Education Advisory Committee. Thompson also has appointed a committee to revise WVSBA's constitution and bylaws. Committees typically meet in conjunction with regularly scheduled association meetings.

- **Online training draws broad audience.** If you participated in WVSBA's online training module about the state's Open Governmental Proceedings Act (OGPA) and would like to be part of a focus group that evaluates that program, please contact O'Cull. According to WVSBA records, 78 people participated in the inaugural training effort, including 65 county board members, one county superintendent and one state board of education member. Other participants identified themselves as public officials or citizens. At least one news reporter participated in the training.

O'Cull is recommending a second module be developed for use in Spring 2006. The training is underwritten by the West Virginia School Boards Effectiveness Project (WVSBEP), an initiative of the Legislature, the WVBE, the state Department of Education and WVSBA. The WVSBEP was first funded in 1989.

Stay informed.

On the Web at:
WVSBA.ORG

“The November Meeting” Agenda

Stonewall Resort – Roanoke, W. Va.

Saturday, November 5, 2005

10 a.m. *“School Law Potpourri”*

Howard E. Seufer Jr., Bowles Rice McDavid Graff
& Love, West Virginia School Boards Association
counsel

Noon Group Luncheon, Stillwaters Restaurant

1 p.m. *“The State School Aid Formula in Perspective: Mechanics
and Philosophy”*

Joe Panetta, Office of School Finance,
West Virginia Department of Education

2:30 pm Refreshment Break

4 p.m. Adjournment

4 p.m. *“All Committees”* Meeting Segment

5 p.m. WVSBA Executive Board Meeting

7 p.m. WVSBA Executive Board Meeting (Adjournment)

For more information, please contact the WVSBA staff at
(304) 346-0571.

The conference registrar is Shirley Davidson. Her e-mail
address is sdavidson@wvsba.org.

Future Meetings

**The November Workshop:
School Aid Formula & School Law**
November 5, 2005
Stonewall Resort, Roanoke

WVSBA Winter Conference ‘06
February 17/18, 2006
Marriott Hotel, Charleston

Orientation ‘06
June 14-16, 2006
Stonewall Resort, Roanoke

WVSBA Fall Conference ‘06
September 22/23, 2006
Marriott Hotel, Charleston

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