



## President's Corner

In January, BCREA is going to the dogs - at least the trained ones from **Canine Companions**.



**Melodye Martin**, her daughter **Katelyn** and her faithful dog **Dario** will be on hand to show us the amazing support that these trained Labradors and Golden Retrievers provide. It is amazing the tasks that they can perform - opening doors, pulling on socks, turning on the lights; essential tasks that build confidence and independence. They can do everything but eat a student's homework!

"Hooray for Hollywood" is the theme for the annual scholarship luncheon on February 1 at Tropical Acres. Tickets are \$50 and must be purchased in advance. You can buy your ticket at the January meeting or use the ticket form on page 5. The deadline for ticket purchases is January 20.

This fundraiser for BCREA scholarships will feature dozens of baskets filled with treasures, luxuries, and gift cards. And you may have a chance to bring home the Pot of Gold filled with coins and bills. (Last year, the pot was \$218. And this year, the pot is even heavier!) Prizes in the baskets are new items donated by members and friends. Anyone wishing to donate items for the baskets can bring them to the January meeting or contact me to arrange for collection. On Sunday, January 28, starting at 1 p.m., I will host a basket assembly party affectionately called *Controlled Chaos*. Let me know if you can help or need directions.-

[annefrench10@gmail.com](mailto:annefrench10@gmail.com).

The luncheon will be your chance to channel your inner diva, comedian, or actor. Let's see who wins an Oscar.

*Anne*

## District Director Legislative

Chair: Sue Colton  
954-695-5065 [scolton@bellsouth.net](mailto:scolton@bellsouth.net)



This year, the Florida Legislative Session begins on January 9th, 2024. Your FREA Legislative Team will be in Tallahassee from January 22 to 25. Our legislative advocacy for you centers around protecting the FRS pension and reinstating the COLA, which will help current retirees and recruit and retain teachers.

1. Re-instating Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).
2. Increase salaries for veteran teachers.
3. Reduce the time a teacher needs to sit out after they have ended DROP. We suggest returning to the prior waiting period of 1 month for teachers.
4. We ask the default to be moved back to the pension plan. Several years ago, the Legislature voted to change the FRS default into the investment plan. If a new teacher does not request to be in the pension plan, they are automatically placed into the investment plan.

Did you know that retired education system employees in Florida make up over 80% of the Florida Retirement System? This gives you enormous legislative strength in Tallahassee. In the coming months, we will ask you to write or call your legislators, asking them to support

our proposed changes if they become bills. FREA has over 11,000 members, and we vote. Our past successes show they will listen to us, especially if we contact them! Handouts for all of these issues can be found on the FREA website under the Legislative heading [www.frea.org/legislative](http://www.frea.org/legislative). *Sue*

## Fund Raising

Chair: Barbara Lewis  
954-562-1936 [barbarabeth1@att.net](mailto:barbarabeth1@att.net)



Wishing everyone a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy, Healthy New year. What's new for fundraisers? We have some great things happening! Of course, we have our SUPER BINGO! Hope to see you soon.

*Barbara*

## Morris Scholarship

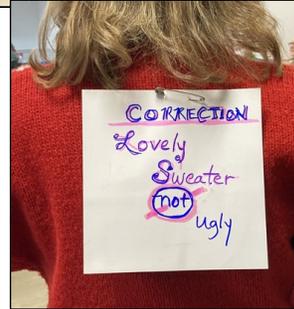
Chair: Mary Ellen Fowler  
954-925-6911 [mefdania@hotmail.com](mailto:mefdania@hotmail.com)



The Morris Scholarship will open January 20, due by March 20, with the potential for 10, \$1000 grants available for educators. Please encourage participation for any school board employee wanting to continue their education. Thanks!!! *MEF*

## Volunteer Services / Directories

Chair: Darcia Drago  
954-977-7247 dardra@att.net



Darcia

### Volunteer Services

At our January meeting we will collect items for the Forgotten Soldiers Outreach "We Care" Project. These items will be shipped to our troops overseas. They are in need of:  
**dental floss,**  
**small bottles of hand sanitizer,**  
**razors,**  
**toothbrushes,**  
**bars of soap,**  
**beef jerky,**  
**ramen noodles,**

**protein or snack bars,**  
**fruit roll ups,**  
**individually packed drink mixes,**  
**crew socks**  
**& snack storage bags.**  
I am in the process of closing out our volunteer hours for the year. Please turn in or send in any unreported hours for 2023 so they can be included in our annual report to FREA.  
Best wishes for a happy & healthy New Year!

## Information Services

Chair: Sallie Sherwood  
954-629-3712 matildatwo@aol.com



As January approaches, it is typical to review our past year and plan for the new year ahead. Some of us decide to make resolutions regarding health, activities, travel, etc, while others decide to NOT make any resolutions because we never seem to "stick with it." Personally I will try to follow through on January 9th which is National Clean Your Desk Day! According to Forbes magazine, 48% of those who make New Years resolutions claim that improving fitness is a top priority. Check with your Health Care Insurer to see if you are eligible for a free Fitbit or other tracking device. Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Cigna, John Hancock and United Health are some

of the insurance companies that will offer free tracker devices to eligible members. (Check their privacy policy before acceptance.) AI assisted scams are on the rise. Everyone needs to be aware of the phishing and malware attacks. A few reminders for the New Year:  
\*Don't take calls from unknown phone numbers.  
\*Don't click on suspicious links.  
\*Be careful with websites on your media accounts.  
\*DO NOT GIVE personal information to anyone over the phone or online! Each of your accounts should have a unique password.  
January 4, our next meeting day, happens to be National

Can Do Day! What will you do?  
National Compliment Day is January 24th. On this day, take the time to give someone a genuine, pure hearted compliment. The power of a compliment is pretty remarkable, either giving or receiving one can boost your happiness and confidence. You never know when someone could use some good vibes, so spread the positivity by giving someone a reason to smile.  
Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. Stay fit, stay sharp and send positive thoughts to others.

Sallie



## Passages



Happy Birthday to our Birthday Club (members over 85!)  
**Beverly Merrill 1/03**  
**Emma Black 1/08**  
**Jaqueline Hall 1/23**



Thinking of You

**Barbara Bohuny**  
**Marelise LeClerc**  
**Susan Lochrie**  
**Val Proffer**  
**Josephine Walker**  
**James Etta Warner**  
**Arline Ziller**



In Memoriam  
**Lois Rhodes 11/2022**  
**Rita Sanderson 11/2023**  
**Pat Schroeder 11/2023**  
**Frances Smoot 11/2023**



## Membership...

Chair: LuAnn Comes  
954-475-1510 lacomes987@aol.com



Enjoying the company of our current friends and making new friends are two great reasons to be a member of BCREA.

Sharing the presentations and activities with others makes them more meaningful, so encourage your friends to join BCREA.

Forty-eight members attended the December meeting. Let's see if we can top that number in January! Please contact me by phone or email if you need membership information or forms.

*LuAnn*



## Social Committee

Chair: Marianne Scott  
954-321-9174 mscott33317@yahoo.com



We are rapidly approaching the end of 2023 and soon we will be welcoming 2024. Our last meeting for 2023 had many members in festive attire as well as a mar-

everyone in 2024. Happy New Year!

*Marianne*



velous assortment of scrumptious food. Ladies, you ended our 2023 buffet on a high note and I'm sure 2024 will be no different. Starting in January, place cards will be available if you wish to use them to identify the food you have brought to the luncheon. Thank you for bringing in reusable take-home containers. Many, many are used every month. Looking forward to seeing



A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

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# Literacy

Chair: Sandy Lefkowitz  
954-557-5817  
Slef123@bellsouth.net



Happy New Year and Happy Reading. Here are some New Year's resolutions to add to your list for 2024:  
\* **Read a favorite book** to a young child. Or take time for you and an older child to read a book together.  
\* Encourage others to read and visit the library. **Support all authors and books.** Remember the books you loved as a child and those you love to read to your children and grandkids.  
\* **Donate one new or gently used child's book** to our BCREA book box. If every-one brings in one book we will have over 50 books to pass on to children, helping them develop

a love for reading. A big thank you to everyone who brought children's books to the December meeting. Let's continue filling up the book box.  
\* The February 13 deadline for the fifth-grade writing contest is coming. Be sure fifth graders know that essays for the Margaret Poppell Fifth Grade Essay Contest must be turned in by February 13. **All fifth graders in Broward County may enter the contest. This includes Broward Public Schools, home schools, private and charter schools.** The Literacy Committee can't wait to read the essays. *Sandy*

## Scholarship Luncheon Ticket Order Form

Number of tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$50.00 each

Extra Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Entrée choices: \_\_\_ Prime Rib \_\_\_ Salmon  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Send a check made out to BCREA  
Include a Self-addressed, stamped envelope

to  
Diane Texter  
742 NW 69 Terrace  
Margate, FL 33063  
Deadline - January 24



*Bev's Bytes.....*



The winners of the Scholarship Fundraiser this month were: \$20 - **Darlene Pillsbury**; \$10 each - **Karen Avery** and **Mozella Lennon**. Flowers (donated by **Carol Roland** as always) were won by (l-r) **Jaqueline Hall**, **Alyce Aspler** and **Carol Roland**! And the pink Christmas Tree was won by **Mozella Lennon** (far left). For those who enjoyed the SPHS Chorale, they will be part of the Winter Concert at SPHS on Tuesday, December 19 at 7:00 pm. Tickets are only \$5.00 and you can purchase them online. You may have noticed in Passages that longtime member and Past-President Frances Smoot passed away in November. She will be missed.

And that's the last byte for January. *Happy 2024*

*Bev*

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**PERMIT NO. 409**

**- DATED MATERIAL -  
 PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**

**Holiday Attire at the Meeting**



**FREF Extravaganza Tickets - Only \$10.00**

Buy your tickets now for 2 Chances to WIN:  
 1st - \$100 Cash Guaranteed Prize to a winner in District 10:  
 Dade, Broward or Palm Beach. PLUS  
 2nd - \$500 Cash - 1st Prize  
 \$300 Cash - 2nd Prize  
 \$200 Cash - 3rd Prize

Donations are used to fund scholarships for future Florida teachers. Buy Tickets at the January - March meetings or fill out the form below and send with a check to:

**Shirley Swartz**  
**1920 SW 52 Terrace**  
**Plantation, FL 33317**

Make your check payable to FREF (Florida Retired Educators Foundation).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

All donations will be used to fund the general scholarship program as well as the operating expenses of the Foundation.

**BCREA VOLUNTEER REPORTING FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please Print)

Month \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer hours working with adults** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (persons who are non-family members;  
this also includes literacy hours)

**Volunteer hours working with youth** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Persons 25 years of age or younger;  
This also includes literacy hours)

Bring this to our next meeting, e-mail it to me at  
[dardra@att.net](mailto:dardra@att.net) or mail it to me at:

**Darcia Drago**  
**2505 Dagoon Avenue**  
**Coconut Creek, FL 33063**