



# GCREA Newsline

February 2024

Volume 11 Issue 3

GWINNETT COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION GCREA.org

**2024**

**NEXT**

**GCREA**

**MEETING**

**Feb.9,2024**

**TPC Sugarloaf  
Country Club**

**Doors Open 10:00**

**Meeting Starts 10:20**

**President:**

**Karen Efstration**

**President-elect:**

**CeCe Landress**

**Secretary:**

**Carolyn Madden**

**Treasurer:**

**Holly Gardiner**

**Fellowship  
Support  
Service**

## From the President

**Karen Efstration**

“Together Everyone Achieves More.” Wow! When I chose this as our moto for the year, I didn’t realize how important it would be. After testing positive the day before our December fund raising meeting, I reached out to our President Elect and several other board members to tell them that I could not attend.

All those planning to attend sprang into action! Our President Elect, Cece Landress, could have “run to the hills.” Instead, she welcomed speakers, solved issues with luncheon employees, and followed the planned agenda. Members stepped up to help other members unload auction baskets from their cars. Other members helped to display baskets to look their best. The speaker from Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful shared how to recycle holiday trash. The inspiration presentation went smoothly even when the technology didn’t. In the end, basket sales to fund scholarships exceeded those raised during previous years. Members had positive things to say about the entire event.

I would like to thank all of you. Your efforts as a “Team” were a true blessing for all of us. This statement is so true:

“Together Everyone Achieves More”

## Updates on GCREA Website and Facebook Page by Laura Raiman

Please see updates made to our website and our Facebook page! Our website is [gcrea.org](http://gcrea.org) with no need to type the https: prefix in your browser. Use the password gcrea2020 to access the Members Only section and check that your information is correct there or find friends' info.

On Facebook, click the magnifying glass and try typing GCREA. If that doesn't work type Gwinnett County Retired Educators Association, which surely works! The date of our next meeting is added on the home page, with more info there and under the pulldown tabs at the top. Message me there by clicking the tiny speech bubble with N at the top, if you have news to share with our members, but nothing you wouldn't want on the front page of the newspaper! Thanks to our treasurer Holly for training me to get it done!

## GCREA Sunshine Report, January 2024

It's always important to catch up on news of our friends and see how they are faring. GCREA has lost a few of our members over the past few months. In October we lost Jane Bowery, Gayle Lever, Debbie Fox Sherman, and Ed Hunt. We also recently lost Helen Love.

Good news to report is that Sharon Larkin is recovering well from her knee replacement surgery. Theresa Nichols also has good news to report that she feels she is over the worst of her treatments and is doing better day by day. Some others of our members that we want to keep in mind as they continue improving from recent medical concerns are Paula Parris, Deloris Mullins, Rosa Fite and Patsy Huey. Patsy and Paula also lost their husbands recently.

Through the good work of Stephanie Hodgin, several members receive a card from GCREA each month. Among them are Don Burt, Brooks Coleman, and Jimmie Mae Sosebee. Cards can do so much to brighten someone's day.

If you know of someone in GCREA who needs our collective thoughts and good wishes, even if it is you yourself, please let me, Judy Shaklee, know so that I can communicate the information to the group. You can email me at [jcyjshak@bellsouth.net](mailto:jcjshak@bellsouth.net) or call 678-910-6152. Those of us who have worked in education are some of the most caring human beings in the world, and we want to continue supporting one another.

## Teacher Tales

### Stick to the Routine

Teachers love routine. Students love routine once they own it. The class routine is the foundation of a focused and energetic class. In orchestra, the students follow certain steps to prepare for the rehearsal of music. The routine is as follows: unpack the instrument (violin, viola, cello or bass), sit down, open the case, check to make sure your music is on the music stand, rosin up your bow, check your tuning and go! Teamwork is achieved with this approach to middle school orchestra.

It's April 1992 when all my 8th graders are working their way through a morning class. It's amazing how serious they became closer to the end of the year, with visions of high school! These were my experts and they had almost 3 years of prepping for class. They were working well together and preparing for their Final Spring Orchestra Concert.

On that particular morning they followed the routine in a normal fashion. Except for one student named Peter. Peter always seemed sleepy in the early class, and he asked me if he could sit out. I asked him if he needed the nurse, and he replied in the negative. Therefore, the sleepy head went to the back of the cello section and sat on the carpeted floor, as per my instructions.

"To begin class, let's play through the concert music" are my directions and so the music starts. They play the music resolutely and quickly. Regular rehearsal always leads to a familiar performance. It is routine, by 8th grade, to avoid stopping and only fix mistakes after the music is complete. Perhaps we were timing the music to know the length of the upcoming concert? It seems like a routine day....

Meanwhile, my eyes glance over at Peter. And, within about 5 minutes, he is snoozing on the floor, flat on his back...like it's naptime. This is a little annoying to me since it was not part of the routine. Well, no worries, just concentrate on the students who are rehearsing the music, I say to myself.

5 minutes later - I glance over toward Peter and notice what looks like a small snake near his head?? So, the empty space in my stomach gets bigger and my heartbeat is quicker! But that couldn't be a snake, as my arms are continuing to whirl through the conducting pattern. If I stop conducting the music, what will happen? How could this be?? Surely, it was a rubber snake that Peter had put there to scare me! It must be a prank.... the sleepy head with April Fools ideas still on his mind! Also, I am not in a condition to accept jokes about snakes, with my first child due in 3 months!!!

Glancing again and focusing more on the “rubber snake”, my neck tightens. My mind races, did my eyes deceive me? Then, I see a snake tongue wiggling from the snake’s head, inches from Peter’s sleepy head. Could it be real?? It’s NOT rubber? Why doesn’t Peter wake up? Is this really happening? Just call Peter’s name softly over the music and get him to wake up!! “Peter, Peter”? Goodness gracious, how do I stop the music and get Peter to move away from the snake!?!???

By this time the students were looking strangely up at me while playing music but trying to read my lips. The concertmaster (1st violin) momentarily pauses her bow, and she says. “Mrs. Rooker, what is the matter?” Finally, I blurted out the words that were hammering in my head...” THERE’S A SNAKE IN THE CLASSROOM! PETER GET UP!”

In less than 2 seconds, the entire orchestra class is on their feet and headed for the door with their instruments! It is a very different musical evacuation! (During fire-drill we never carry the instruments). We all arrive in the hallway with no line-up, slamming the door behind us!! Then the questions weigh in! “Peter, was that a real snake next to your head? Whose snake is that??” “How did a snake get in the orchestra room?” And the students are cooing “Mrs. Rooker are you OK?” “Peter, it didn’t bite you, did it?” LOL! Peter, “No, I was asleep”.

One student calmly says, “That’s Ms. Brown’s baby king snake, it got out of its glass tank and was not there during homeroom this morning!” Me: “Well, get over there to Ms. Brown’s classroom and tell her to come immediately and get this snake OUT of the ORCHESTRA ROOM!” Then laughter ensues. Ms. Brown arrives, smiling and saying “I wonder how my poor baby got way over here to the orchestra room? Are you all OK?”. Thankfully, she removed our uninvited reptilian audience member without a rehearsal ticket.

Looking back, class routine and focus carried the day! We were so involved in the music class rehearsal that we never noticed Ms. Brown’s snake, until Peter started snoozing. We were all happy that the snake belonged in the science classroom and not in a violin case! “Stick to the Routine” has been a treasured teacher tale for many years.

Musically, Kimberly Rooker 🎷

## A Message from CeCe Landress

We ended the year with a great silent auction raising more than \$2,000 to go towards education scholarships. Then we started the new year by focusing on our health and our plan for the upcoming year. Melissa Anthony of Silver Sneakers spoke to the group about Silver Sneakers fitness classes which can be taken in person or online. Her associate then led the group in a fitness routine which could be done standing or seated. For more information about Silver Sneakers, which is free to retirees with Medicare, just go online to Silver Sneakers. Please remember to set some practical health goals for yourself and record them on the 4 X 6 card to share at our next meeting.

If your family or friends clean out their closets and find shoes that they can no longer use, please offer to collect them. Bring them to the next meeting where we will donate them to people who are without shoes or give them to cancer survivor groups.

I hope to see you at our next meeting on February 9, where Brooks Coleman and Beauty Baldwin share their memories of the small, rural Gwinnett County School System and how it changed into the system that it is today. If you did not receive an invitation or have friends who are members and not receiving communication or invitations to the luncheon, please email Lisa Eubanks at [ldavis940@gmail.com](mailto:ldavis940@gmail.com). She will update the information in the Constant Contact website. Also, as a reminder, the luncheon invitation can be found on our website, [gcrea.org](http://gcrea.org), and our Facebook page.

Thank you! We are looking forward to a great year!

Cecelia Landress

GCREA President Elect



## The Book Mobile is on the Move!

On Wednesday, February 28, Chesney Elementary will experience the Gwinnett County Public Schools Book Mobile for the school's very first time. Our organization is covering the cost for all kindergarten through third grade students to receive a book of their choice to take home and keep. Principal Dr. Ricardo Quinn was so inspired by our gracious gift that he decided to cover the cost for the rest of the school's students, the fourth and fifth grades.

Media specialist Kim Jones expresses her thoughts, "We are very excited about this Book Mobile event and look forward to working together to put books in our students' hands and encourage them to build their personal libraries. Thank you!"

GCREA will have volunteers work one of two shifts to assist the students and staff. (9:00-11:30 am and 11:30-2:00 pm) If interested in serving, please contact Ellen Sumner, 404-861-5279.



## A Teacher Tale Footnote by Karen McKnight

You may remember reading about Karen's dog Holly in the November 2023 Newsline. Holly decided to board the school bus during its afternoon stop in front of Karen's house much to the delight of the children. Karen has since added this footnote to that story.

After smelling the air outside, Holly's successor, Honey, took off when it was really cold recently. I had to go outside with my walker to get her when a Fed Ex truck stopped. Honey climbed into the truck and didn't want to leave. The driver had to escort her out of the truck and bring her back to me. My dogs seem to meet new people by climbing into cars, trucks, and buses.

Pictures from December Meeting and Gift Basket Auction



Thank you for supporting our scholarship fundraiser through your basket donations, winning bids, and cash donations.

**Editor's Note:**  
The next edition of the Newsline will be published April 1, 2024  
Deadline for articles is March 23, 2024  
sharonlarkin1826@gmail.com

**Please invite your friends to join us at our next meeting!**

