

TABCO NOTES

STAFF

In our summer edition, we reported that UniServ Director (UD) Amy Maloney had retired. Well, she's back for a short stint, covering the position recently vacated by the resignation of UD Juan Gonzalez. Amy had a short but refreshing vacation! Meanwhile, a search for a replacement is underway. In Amy's former UD position, Gail Gottlieb was hired, coming from Montgomery County. She brings lots of experience to the job.

NEGOTIATIONS

A team of educators and leadership are working to negotiate a three-year Master Agreement with BCPS under the new superintendent, Dr. William Heiser, who was previously the chief operating officer for Anne Arundel County Public Schools. The campaign kickoff event, held on September 17, brought together representatives of Baltimore County unions, and many other supportive community groups. Unfortunately, only three retired members attended. We need to get more involved in supporting active TABCO members. We are genuine dues-paying members of the Association. **Remember—we may be retired—but we are not expired!**

Don't forget to pay your dues!

The membership year runs from September to September. Annual dues remain at \$75. To avoid sending a check to MSEA each year, members might consider having their dues deducted from their pension once a year. This can be authorized by contacting Erin Sakalas at MSEA:

esakalas@mseane.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

TABCO-Retired is a class of membership that is affiliated with MSEA-Retired and NEA-Retired
TABCO-R Steering Committee Members:
Chairperson: Angela Leitzer
Elizabeth Ceanfaglione, Stephanie Foy
Julia Hinton-VanHook, Edward Kitlowski, Tammy Mills,
Cindy North, Roxann Russo, Barbara Tyler,
Mary Ellen Vecchioni, Cheryl Vourvoulas
Messenger Editors: Stephanie Foy, Angela Leitzer
To reach the TABCO-Retired Steering Committee,
email: bookends68@comcast.net

Teachers Association of Baltimore County
President Kelly Olds, Vice President Lloyd Allen
Treasurer Frank Soda, Secretary Seth Rich
and the TABCO Board of Directors
Executive Director Ben Forstenzer

TABCO office: 410-828-6403 fax: 410-337-7081
1220 C, Suite 514 E. Joppa Rd. Towson, MD 21286
Contact person for TABCO-R at the TABCO office:
Kim Melfa, kmelfa@mseane.org



The Lighter Side of TABCO-R

TABCO-R is about keeping members informed
By addressing the issues that impact our lives.
But we can be fun, **too**.

A social committee is being formed
With a myriad of events in the works.
Be on the lookout for tours, games, shows,
and tea,
To name a **few**.

We are open to all suggestions
For event ideas or help with this task.
It can only lead to fun and some time to relax
We'd like to hear from **you**.

By Barbara Tyler

If you have suggestions or ideas, or want to be involved in planning, please email bookends68@comcast.net, so you can be contacted by a member of the fledgling Social Committee.



TABCO-R MESSENGER

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Association News

By Angela Leitzer

VOTE!

As the midterm elections approach, it is vital to think about the effects of politicians and their policies on senior Americans.

Newsweek Magazine, September 16, 2026:

"New Census Bureau data released Tuesday shows the share of adults age 65 and older living in poverty under the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) climbed to 15.4 percent in 2025, up from 9.4 percent in 2020... This shift is happening just as Social Security inches closer to its funding shortfall. Automatic benefit reductions could occur within the next decade if lawmakers fail to act."

Make a plan now to vote:

1. Are you **registered** to vote? If not, get registered. (Need help? <https://www.vote411.org/register>)
2. Know **how** you will vote (Early voting? Mail-in ballot? At the polls?)
3. **Research** the candidates.
4. Where applicable, look for the **Apple Ballot** to find those endorsed by the union.
5. Know **where** you will vote, if in person.
6. **Determine who will best represent you and VOTE.**

<https://www.vote411.org/make-your-plan>

OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION

...for the only **official** retiree organization: TABCO-Retired. At the time of this writing, we can tell you that a grievance was filed by TABCO on behalf of TABCO-Retired, in support of our organizational rights. We await a response from BCPS, which has long been granting access to school system resources, and employee information to unrelated, unofficial AARP entities. When we receive more information, we will notify all members who have provided us with their email addresses.

FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE

One of our primary goals as a retiree committee is to monitor retiree healthcare benefits and intervene on behalf of members as needed. As chair, I began emailing the Office of Benefits staff in July, inquiring about the options that would be available in our next

enrollment period (October?). This was the reply received in July: *"At this time, Baltimore County Government has not yet provided BCPS with the 2027 plan options or any benefit changes. Please feel free to check back with us in September, as we expect to have additional information and updates at that time."* Several follow up emails were sent



to this person and their superior without receiving any information. If enrollment materials contain significant changes and are sent without responding to us or to TABCO leadership, there is a more serious issue.

If all previous options are retained (such as the Medicare Surround option), we still should have been notified—as promised. Those who have serious medical conditions and/or are under treatment by established medical teams need assurance that they will continue to be covered as expected. As stated in the TABCO-R section of the TABCO Policy Manual, we are *"Acting as an advocate for responding to retirees' concerns regarding rights and delayed compensation benefits guaranteed through their previous employment in BCPS."*

12th Annual Fall Forum

November 18, 2026

Garden Room at Oak Crest

9:30 a.m. ~ 2:30 p.m.

8820 Walther Blvd. Parkville, MD 21234

Join us for:

~Conversation with officials
~ "Road Tripping" presentation
~Updates on Association news,
Social Opportunities, and KidCare...
AND ~ morning snacks, lunch,
and our annual Book Exchange!
Free to TABCO-R members
(\$5.00 for one guest)

Registration is required.

Here is how to register:

Online Link:

<https://tabco.org/event/annual-fall-forum/>
Or, call TABCO HQ @ 410-828-6403

That Librarian: The Fight Against Book Banning in America

By Barbara Tyler

There Amanda Jones was, living in her hometown of Watson, Louisiana, working as a middle school librarian. Then everything changed after she spoke at the local public library's board meeting against censorship and banning books. She began receiving frightening and abusive emails which signified the start of an ongoing social media campaign to destroy her reputation. Jones was so shaken she began sleeping with a gun under her bed and took a semester's sabbatical to deal with the turmoil.

"What kind of world are we living in that has some of our most devoted community servants living so terrified?" Jones asks in her memoir. Instead of be-

ing silenced, Amanda Jones channeled her emotions into positive actions researching the politics and financing of the groups responsible for the attacks, and spoke to the importance of representation and diversity in library collections.

For those of us who value books, libraries, and freedom of information, *That Librarian* is an empowering, triumphant tale.



"The best gift you can give someone is a trip with them. The memories and the bond formed during travel last forever."

Travel with friends:

By Cindy North

"Pardon me, boy. Is that the Chattanooga Choo-choo?" Well, yes, it is, but there is so much more to this Tennessee city than the train mentioned in the famous song.

My college dorm mates of 50+ years ago and I chose "The Scenic City" for this year's annual get-together. We went to school in Nashville, about 125 miles northwest, so all of us had been here before, but not for years.

It's no longer the small, sleepy city of our past. It is a thriving place of artisan shops, historic landmarks, and unforgettable restaurants. We took in as many as we could within our four-day visit.

Of course, there are the must-see attractions, but we refined our tour to enjoy those that were walkable and "senior" friendly, such as taking in the Incline Railway—reported to be one of the steepest in the world, and still used by commuters to get from the top to the bottom of Lookout Mountain. We spent a lovely afternoon at Point Park on the mountain, which commemorates the 1863 "Battle Above the Clouds" during the Civil War (free admission to National Park Pass holders), then enjoyed a sunset cruise on the Southern Belle Riverboat, com-

plete with dinner (which included a Moon Pie; the factory store is on board) and live music.

Another day, we had a full "high" tea at the "Homefront Tea Room" in the Grand Junction Depot of the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum. Our experience included a ride on a fully restored train up to the museum's train turntable and back. Wandering through the Bluff View Arts District, and visiting the Hunter Museum of American Art with dinner nearby at Tony's Pasta Shop (home-made pasta to make you swoon!) capped our visit.



Cindy (first on left) and her travel buddies with the Moon Pie guy



(See page 3, "Travel with friends")

What's Happening With NEA/MSEA/Retired

By Julia Hinton-VanHook
Chair of the Retired Advisory Council
& TABCO-R Committee member

MSEA-Retired continues to represent retired educators, organize activities across Maryland, and keep members connected to Association work at the state and national levels. The Maryland State Retired Council meets throughout the year to represent members and plan activities that bring retirees together across the state. Members are encouraged to check the MSEA website for upcoming activities and to remain active in the Association. As an MSEA member (your TABCO-Retired dues make you a member of MSEA-R and NEA-R as well) you may attend activities offered by MSEA. Nominations for anyone interested in running for a Retired Advisory Council seat will open September 30.

MSEA Convention and Retired Representation

MSEA-Retired is preparing for the annual MSEA Convention in Ocean City, Maryland, which will take place October 16–17. Twenty-four retired delegates from across the state will represent retired members. MSEA-Retired will again put forward a bylaw change requesting that a retired educator have a voting seat on the MSEA Board of Directors. **We need to have a seat at the table.**

Upcoming Conferences

The MSEA "Mega" Conference will be held in February. More information will be shared

when available.

The NEA Retired Conference will be held March 31–April 2 in New Orleans. The NEA Retired Annual Meeting will take place in Indianapolis in June 2027. **Stay engaged and know what is happening!**

Cruise to the Bahamas with retired colleagues!

The MSEA Retired Advisory Council is pleased to invite all retired members to sail with us aboard the Carnival Cruise Line for a 7-day cruise departing from Baltimore, MD and running March 14–21, 2027.

Together, we'll visit beautiful destinations, including **Celebration Key, Half Moon Cay, and Nassau, Bahamas**, while enjoying great company, relaxation, and the chance to make lasting memories with fellow retirees.

Cruise Rates (based on double occupancy and availability):

Inside Stateroom: \$874 per person

Ocean View Stateroom: \$974 per person

Balcony Stateroom: \$1,104 per person

Final payment is due 90 days before sailing. Prices are subject to change and availability.

To reserve your cabin or learn more, please contact:

Erik Rojas

Carnival Cruise Consultant

800-819-3902, ext. 82880

erojas@carnival.com

"Travel with friends" from page 2

But there are so many other neighborhoods worth visiting, like Coolidge Park—where we rode on a 100-year-old hand-carved carousel! —and downtown, where *The Pickle Barrel*, a bar and grill set in a 130-year-old "flatiron" building, serves the best "Chicago Dog" outside of Illinois you'll ever have.

Chattanooga: history, art, unique experiences, great food—all well-worth a visit!

