

Retirees Association, Inc.

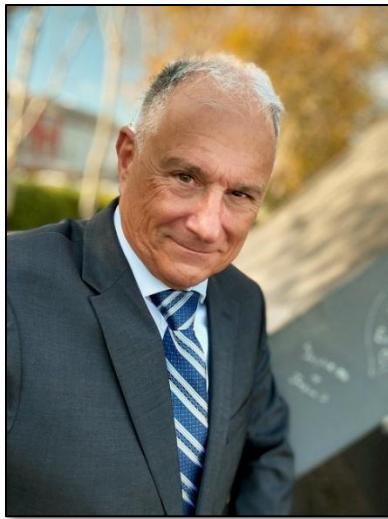
850 Hungerford Dr. Rockville, MD 20850

www.mcpsra.org



Volume 2025-26, Issue #2

December, 2025



PRESIDENT'S

MESSAGE

Bill Gregory
President - MCPSRA

The beginning of this school year has been both productive and busy for the MCPSRA Board. In this newsletter, some of our committee

chairs will share updates on their recent work and outline plans for the months ahead. I continue to feel truly fortunate to serve on this Board and deeply admire the dedication and commitment of its members.

Since our last newsletter, we have welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors. Marita Sherburne has joined us as Chair of the Legislative Committee. Marita's last position with MCPS was as principal of Wood Acres Elementary School. We are excited that Marita has joined us. She is passionate about being involved in state and local legislation and providing feedback to all of us. Marita succeeds Fred Evans, to whom we are sincerely grateful for his many years of service and steadfast advocacy on behalf of MCPS retirees.

We are also pleased to welcome Denise Bracalilly Stultz and Chris Richardson as Co-Chairs of the Insurance and Benefits Committee. Denise most recently served as a leader in Community Partnerships, and Chris was the Associate Superintendent of Special Education. We are excited to have them both on the team and look

forward to the enthusiasm and expertise they bring to their new roles.

It was wonderful to see so many retirees at our Homecoming on October 27 and our Luncheon on October 30. Both events offered opportunities to reconnect with colleagues, share updates on the work of our association, and enjoy one another's company. We are especially grateful to M&T Bank (Leisure World Branch), for sponsoring refreshments at the Homecoming and for attending in person to share valuable financial information with our members. In addition, M&T will be offering a webinar on fraud prevention for MCPSRA members early in the new year.

One of our continuing goals is to strengthen outreach and engagement among our members. This fall, we have hosted both the Homecoming and our first luncheon, and we are excited to announce the start of a virtual book club for MCPSRA members. The first selection was *Still Life* by Sarah Winman, and the group met via Zoom at 4:00 pm on November 20.

In October, we also received several inquiries from members regarding recent changes to the Cigna retiree insurance plan. Many retirees expressed confusion about the updates, and your questions enabled us to contact MCPS directly for clarification. We appreciate your vigilance and engagement in helping us advocate on behalf of all members.

As you read this newsletter, we will be entering the heart of the holiday season. On behalf of the MCPSRA Board of Directors, I extend our warmest wishes for a joyful and peaceful holiday season.

MCPSRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD)

Officers:

President	Bill Gregory	410-241-8731
Vice President	Marla Caplon	240-793-8288
Immediate Past President	Dr. Debra Munk	240-426-8407
Recording Secretary	Ranona Heller	301-801-1414
Treasurer	Dr. Stephen M. Raucher	301-318-4969

Committee Chairs:

Archives	Marti Gray	301-641-8896
Budget Development	Dr. Stephen M. Raucher	301-318-4969
Community Service	Judy Mills	240-223-7271
Consumer Education	Deb Berner	301-455-8608
Financial Review	Phil McGaughey	301-482-0497
Hospitality/Luncheons	LeeAnn Kaye	301-598-5480
--- Co-Chair	Trish Bendler	301-540-5160
Insurance and Benefits	Denise Bracalilly Stultz	240-535-5182
--- Co-Chair	Chris Richardson	410-852-4331
Legislative	Marita Sherburne	240-432-9671
MCPSRA Projects	Joan Donovan	301-253-6099
--- Co-Chair	Trish Bendler	301-540-5160
Membership Record Keeping	Kay Katz	240-793-2428
Membership Outreach	Galit Zolkower	301-570-6424
Membership Recruitment	Becky Hubbard	240-643-8610
Newsletter - Editor	Dr. Russell G. Wright	301-806-7252
Nominating	Dr. Debra Munk	240-426-8407
Parliamentarian	Reggie Ott	301-452-5449
Political Action	Dr. Debra Munk	240-426-8407
Public Relations	Dr. Dick Lipsky	301-318-0613
Recognition	Joan Donovan	301-253-6099
Scholarships (MCPSRA)	William Stief	301-956-5891
Social Media	Christina Sutter	301-471-3637
Trips	Bernadette Rager	301-774-0345

NO TRICKS! JUST TREATS

For more than 100 Montgomery County Public Schools retirees, our luncheon on October 30 was full of treats.

MCPSRA President Bill Gregory clarified parts of the Cigna Insurance plan, noting that some changes don't affect those of us on Medicare. MRSPA President Betty Weller reported on legislation the group will monitor this year—pension protection remains the top priority, along with safeguarding and improving health care benefits. Both MRSPA and local associations like MCPSRA continue to advocate for these goals.

Board of Education member Karla Silvestre stopped by to visit with MCPSRA members.

Guest speaker Becky Logan gave an excellent presentation on Artificial Intelligence (AI), offering techniques to use it effectively and comfortably. She emphasized that AI is just a tool, its answers aren't always correct, and it can be used for good or bad. Special thanks to Marcie Leibowitz and Judy Reiff for arranging the presentation. Marcie and Judy are already planning the program for our February 26, 2026 luncheon—details will be in the February newsletter.

Another highlight was scholarship winner Laura Carveli, now teaching at Wheaton HS. She has worked with special needs students and is transitioning to become a guidance counselor.

Much is happening at our Luncheon/Business Meetings—don't miss out! Upcoming dates:

February 26

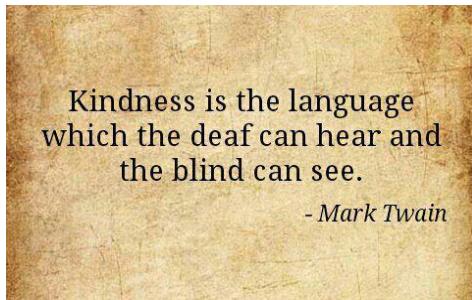
April 30

June 11

Mark your calendar and be sure to reserve your place. Come and make new friends, renew old friendship, enjoy delicious food and have a fun and interesting time!

Luncheons are held at Argyle Country Club, 14600 Argyle Club Road, Silver Spring, MD 20906.

LeeAnn Kaye



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

What motivates people to do what they do for others? Is it to get something in return? Is it for personal gain or recognition? Or is it our innate human natures to be compassionate and charitable in an effort to improve the well-being of those less fortunate than ourselves? Most of us would agree that a caring spirit guides a person's generosity.

Do we need a special event or crisis to spur us into doing random acts of kindness? Let's hope not! We will find, as we look back on our lives, that the moments when we really lived were the moments when we did things in the spirit of love. Perhaps tomorrow we will forget the kind little things we say and do today, but the recipients may cherish them over a lifetime. All of us who chose a career in the field of education were gifted with a compassion for, and a life-long love of children. We willingly gave our all each day because we knew that children are the world's most valuable resource and our best hope for the future. However, we realize that the future is purchased by actions in the present.

For 21 years, a great need in Montgomery County has inspired MCPSRA members to support our **Toolkits Project**. Their “random acts of kindness” have resulted in thousands of dollars in donations. Because of this generosity, more than 37,000 incoming kindergarteners in the Title I ELO SAIL* summer program have received toolkits filled with school supplies they can use at home to support their learning.

Why has this project remained successful for so long? Perhaps it's because each of us has a compassionate spirit that grows when we help others. Let your love of children guide you as you consider supporting this important effort. True compassion is love in action.

Please take a moment out of the 86,400 seconds you were given today to perform a simple act of kindness. Fill out the sponsorship form below and send it with your tax-deductible donation. May you feel the warmth that comes from knowing you are making a real difference in the lives of children in our county.

And remember: kindness never gets old. It has no expiration date, and it inspires today's children to grow into compassionate adults. (*Extended Learning Opportunities In Learning Summer Adventures In Learning)

g,
Joan Donovan

SUPPORT FOR THE MCPSRA TOOLKITS PROJECT

Please provide the following information and mail it along with a check (payable to: **MCPS Educational Foundation**, with "Toolkits Project" on the memo line, to Mrs. Joan Donovan, 13 Hilton Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20882-3521

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Donation enclosed: \$

Optional: In memory of _____ In honor of _____

Optional: In memory of _____ in honor of _____
Send acknowledgement to _____

Send acknowledgement to _____

Select one: _____ *e-mail me a receipt at _____
(* e-mail format)

(*preferred)

no receipt is necessary mail me a receipt (if necessary)

Welcome New Members

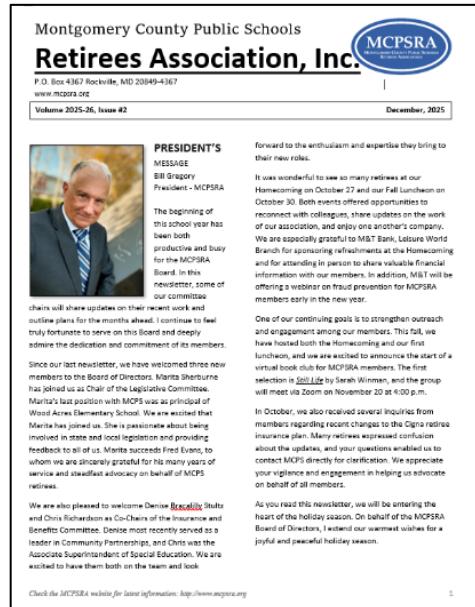
Joined in September 2025

Leslie L Gerran-Davison	9558 White Pillar Terr., Gaithersburg, MD 20882	240-308-0973
Catherine Higgins-Bisnett	807 Maple Ave., Rockville, MD 20850	240-672-5041
Kelley S. Knox	41 W Highway 14, Unit #2911, Spearfish, SD 57783	301-775-9783
Linus E. Ngide	10016 Oxbridge Way, Bowie, MD 20721	240-997-2889
Douglas W. Parker	19704 Westerly Ave., Poolesville, MD 20837	301-646-9977
Njai Ceesay	19373 Coppermine Sq., Leesburg, VA 20176	301-973-1575
Leon F. Busche	12185 Hidden Brook Terrace, North Potomac, MD 20878-3321	301-963-1874

Joined in October 2025

Barbara Hangemanole	14506 Kelscot Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20906	301-768-5524
Jane Frances Butler	31940 Geoff Way, Sorrento, FL 32776	352-729-2578
Lynn M. Cornelius	3602 Bermuda Ct., Olney, MD 20832	240-476-2085
Lauren S. Wilkinson	9216 Clematis Ct., Gaithersburg, MD 20882-3818	301-873-4622
Amy A., Shapiro	2228 Hall Pl. NW, Washington, DC 20007	202-607-1133
Andrea H. Maples	401 Quiet Creek Dr., Gettysburg, PA 17325-9505	301-655-0672

Get Future Newsletters by Email Only!



Do you prefer reading our newsletter on a screen? If so, you can help us save on printing and postage by getting only the email version!

Let us know if you'd like to join the **212** members who have already switched.

Just send an email to mcpsra.org@mail.com. Include your first and last name and write the words "**EMAIL ONLY**" on the Subject line.

The change will take effect with the February 2026 issue.

SAVE THE DATE

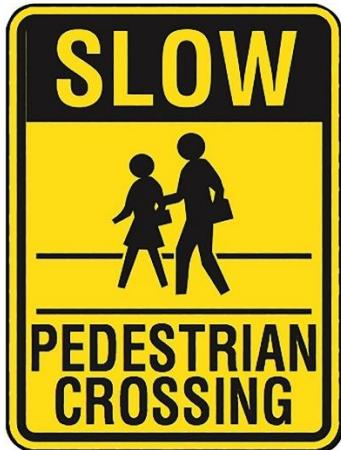
Thursday, April 9, 2026
11:00 AM - 3:30 PM
MCPSRA will host a Blood Drive
in the Central Office Auditorium



More details coming in 2026.

Consumer Education for December 2025—January 2026 by Deb Berner

Pedestrian Safety

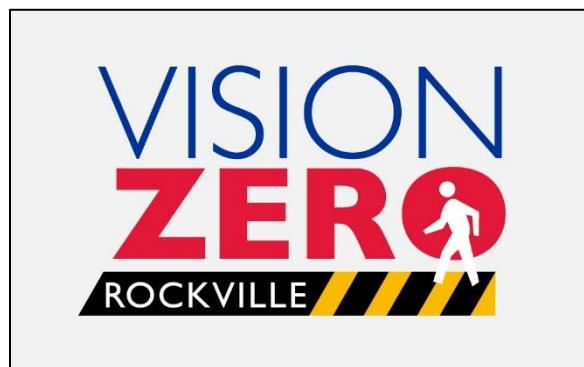


As the holidays sparkle around us and a new year beckons, it's easy to trade our walking shoes for our warm slippers. But staying active through the winter months keeps both body and spirit strong. Whether it's a brisk stroll through the neighborhood or gentle stretching indoors, every step counts toward good health. As we enjoy the season, let's also remember to walk safely when outdoors—bright clothing, good footing, and a watchful eye can make all the difference.

I am an avid hiker and try to walk as much as possible each day—whether in one of our wonderful parks or just taking a quick loop around the streets in my neighborhood. Lately, though, there have been growing concerns about pedestrian safety, as more people are walking in the street instead of using the sidewalks. This can be hazardous, especially in the darker hours, since drivers aren't always aware of pedestrians in the roadway. Pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers all share responsibility for following safety rules to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

Approximately 7,148 pedestrians in the U.S. were killed by drivers in 2024, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA). In Maryland alone, there were 154 pedestrian fatalities and 2,764 pedestrian injuries resulting from 2,808 crashes involving vehicles and pedestrians.

Montgomery County is one of the first county governments in the United States to adopt a Vision Zero plan—an initiative to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries while promoting safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. Below are some pedestrian safety tips and links to websites where you can find more information.



For Pedestrians:

- **Be Visible:** Wear light-colored or reflective clothing and use a flashlight at night.
- **Stay Aware:** Put away cell phones and avoid wearing headphones so you can hear approaching vehicles.
- **Use Sidewalks When Available:** If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic to see oncoming vehicles.

- **Use Designated Crosswalks and Obey Traffic Signals:** Look left, right, and left again before crossing, and continue to look until you're safely on the other side.
- **Make Eye Contact:** Acknowledge and ensure the driver sees you before crossing.

For Drivers:

- **Be Alert:** Always watch for pedestrians, especially at dawn, dusk, and in bad weather.
- **Be Patient:** Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and stop well before the crosswalk so other drivers can also see them.
- **Always Yield at Crosswalks:** Look for and yield to pedestrians when turning on a green light or when right turns on red are permitted.
- **Be Vigilant When Turning or Backing Up:** Pedestrians can be hidden from view—check carefully.
- **Obey Speed Limits and Stop Signs:** Drive within posted limits, come to a complete stop at stop signs, and slowdown in school zones, residential, and commercial areas.



*Learn more about the ***Vision Zero Action Plan*** here: <https://visionzeronetwork.org/about/what-is-vision-zero/>

*For information about Pedestrian Safety programs and projects in Montgomery County, visit <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-PedSafety/index.html>.

As we close the year and step into a new one, let's make a commitment to stay active and stay safe. A daily walk, even in cooler weather, can lift our spirits, strengthen our bodies, and connect us with our community. By being alert, visible, and respectful of traffic rules, we can all help create safer streets for everyone.

On behalf of the MCPSRA Board, I would like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

*Please check out the November/December **Consumer Connection** newsletter on the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association site at <https://mrspa.org> for more updates and information.

Community Service Update by Judy Mills

Happy Holiday Season to All! This is the time of year when we are likely preparing, decorating, celebrating, visiting, baking or cooking together. But also, it is a time of year to be thankful and grateful for what we have, be it shelter, clothing, health, happiness, or simply another day to smile.



We had an eventful October luncheon of togetherness and laughter. But we also saw the generous side of our members through the cash, checks, and coats donated to support our MCPSRA Service Project. Two elementary schools who reached out to us and who met the criteria for need were provided winter coats for their older students. We were able to do this because of our members' generosity! Officials at both schools were pleased with your donations, one stated in part, "We are so appreciative of these coats! They're so sparkly and new." We also collected funds for the Headstart coat drive (matched by an anonymous donor)! Thank you all for your contributions!

MCPSRA members continue volunteering at **Interfaith Works**, Rockville, MD to sort clothing or restock non-perishables in the Food Pantry. These events are enjoyed by all and well attended. We hope you will join us on one of the following dates: December 18, January 8, February 5, March 12, April 9, or May 14. Email judy.mills549@gmail.com if you can attend. Interfaith Works values your time, anytime. All are welcome. **Interfaith Works** - <https://www.iworksmc.org/>. Interfaith Works (IW) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing emergency shelter, supportive housing, essential needs, and employment programs for Montgomery County residents who are experiencing difficulties.

The Montgomery County Truancy Prevention Program (TPP) is actively recruiting volunteers! As a part of the crime prevention initiatives established by the MD State's Attorney's Office, TPP works to improve attendance in MCPS by discovering the root causes of truancy and assisting students with issues that impact attendance. The program serves many MCPS schools and additional Volunteers are needed to expand the Program! Serving as a Mentor or Facilitator is a rewarding way to utilize your expertise. The next orientation is in February for the Spring semester. This is a ten-week commitment of 2-3 hours a week. Volunteers meet with chronically absent students, helping them set goals to improve their attendance. Students successfully completing the program are invited to attend a graduation ceremony at the end of each semester. You will see the impact on students and their proud families as they gather to celebrate their successes. For more information, please contact Rebecca Marcolini at 240-777-7370 or email Rebecca.Marcolini@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov

It's Grand to be 55+ in Montgomery County, MD! Be sure to check out classes, offerings and multiple volunteer opportunities across Montgomery County, but specifically please check out the numerous opportunities at the Holiday Park Senior Center, 3950 Ferrara Drive, Wheaton, MD 20906. At Holiday Park, Seniors 60 or over can register to sign up for lunch! Please call for more information, (240) 777-4999, or visit www.mocorec.com .

Other Ways to Serve your Community:

Montgomery County, MD: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter>

Montgomery County Public Schools: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/student-engagement/volunteers>

Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission MNCPPC: <https://www.mncppc.org/volunteer>



IN MEMORIUM

Past President Kenneth Knight (Ken) Muir

1933 - 2025

Kenneth Knight Muir, age 92, died peacefully on August 20, 2025. Ken was Past President and Past Treasurer of MCPSRA and Past Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair and Board Member of MRSPA [Maryland Retired School Personnel Association].

Ken was raised in Montgomery County, graduating from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School in 1950. He attended Antioch College, majoring in accounting and education and graduated in 1956. He earned

a master's degree in education from the University of Maryland in 1957, and a doctorate in education from George Washington University in 1974.

In 1966, Ken was hired to re-establish the communication office for Montgomery County Public Schools. He was MCPS Director of Information and legislative liaison until 1985, when he became the Director of Management and Planning. He retired in 1990 after 33 years in public education.

Ken was also active in the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) and served as President in 1975-76. He hosted cable television news programs *Montgomery Week in Review* and *News Counterpoint*. After moving to Leisure World in 2013, he served as president of the Overlook [Condominium] Board of Directors and chaired the Leisure World's Government Affairs Advisory Committee. Ken gave his time to many other volunteer organizations, including 10 years as a reader for the visually impaired at the Washington Ear.

Ken and Jean Muir were married for 62 years. He was a beloved father, father-in-law, grandfather and great grandfather. A Celebration of Life Memorial Service was held on September 26th.

MCPSRA on Social Media by Christina Sutter

Check out our redesigned website at <http://www.mcpsra.org/>

We have been working diligently to reorganize our website, making it easier to navigate. Use the **Quick Links** column to easily find information regarding Tool Kits, Scholarships, Luncheons, Community Service projects, and Social Events. The Newsletter Tab always has the most recent newsletters.



You can easily see Upcoming Events from the Home Page with links to pages with additional information.

You can also keep up to date on Facebook @ Maryland MCPS Retirees Association and the MCPSRA private group.

We look forward to seeing you on the Internet!



Facebook
Public
Page



Stay
Connected
!

Like

Check out MCPSRA
on the internet!



Facebook
Private
Members
Group



Share



MCPS
Web
Page



Join

And

Follow

Instagram
Marylandmcpsretirees



"It's simple. At Osher, I learn new things from excellent instructors and make new friends with similar interests. What could be better?"

DEBBY VIVARI



"I belong to Osher at JHU because I like nurturing my mind and interacting with peers who share my interests. Through Osher, I'm exposed to different viewpoints from people locally, and from as far away as California... and even England!"

BILL LEWIS



"In-person classes provide an invigorating opportunity to socialize with other members, not only in class but over lunch or coffee. The Zoom classes are convenient and allow us to learn from instructors who are outside the Washington metropolitan area—as far away as Pennsylvania and California."

MILLIE ROGERS

**OSHER
LIFELONG
LEARNING
INSTITUTE**



The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Johns Hopkins offers enrichment classes, field trips, and travel opportunities for adults. Memberships include one, two, four, or six classes per semester. Keep your mind active and have fun like these members do.

For program details, visit osher.jhu.edu, call the staff cell phone at 240-595-2219, or email osher@jhu.edu.

Reflections from Our October Luncheon

My husband Willie and I truly enjoy MCPSRA luncheons. They are always welcoming



and inviting. We look forward to meeting with retired friends and colleagues and meeting and sharing stories with many other retirees. The MCPSRA officers and planners have a well-organized luncheon from beginning to end. We not only have a delicious lunch; we have informative presentations. Some of the topics that have been led by experts have enlightened us on Scams, Healthcare, the Sandy Spring Slave Museum, a Washington Post Reporter on Native American Culture and the Einstein HS Visual Arts Program, to name a few. Many of the presenters have been MCPS graduates and this makes us proud to witness their successes.

The MCPSRA luncheons are an afternoon of good fellowship, good food and a lot of fun!! We plan on attending all the luncheons and invite all retirees to join us!!!

**Audrey T. Hill MCPS High School Counselor (34 years)
Montgomery College Transfer Counselor/Professor (11 years)**

Reflections from Our October Luncheon (Continued from page 10)



In addition to the yummy food, there are many reasons I enjoy attending the MCPSRA Luncheons. Pertinent information regarding our benefits is provided. The guest speakers are interesting and informative. Last week I learned how Artificial Intelligence might be used by students, teachers and retirees. As a result of joining MCPSRA I've met others with common interests and become involved with volunteer opportunities.

Lois Schreiber ESOL Teacher, Lucy Barnsley ES

Reuniting with fellow colleagues—both staff members and fellow teachers from schools we had worked during our careers.

Making new friends—by talking to others at our table we always find connections which leads to wonderful, interesting conversations on numerous topics.

The speakers—each one is usually well prepared and knows his/her topic well. They expose us to numerous topics from the Maryland legislature as it relates to State retirees to a good book to read—written by someone you might know.



The luncheon is an opportunity for everyone and the food is always good!

Jan Schmidt Diamond ES Seneca Valley HS
Spencer Schmidt Julius West MS

Montgomery County Public Schools
MCPS Retirees Association, Inc.
850 Hungerford Dr. Rockville, MD 20850

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 201
Suburban, MD

DATEDMATERIAL



**MCPSRA Luncheon/Business Meeting
ARGYLE COUNTRY CLUB**

**Gathering: 11:00 a.m.; Business Meeting: 11:30 am.
Luncheon: 12:00 Noon; Program 1:00 pm.**

Next Luncheon Date February 26, 2026

The MCPSRA Newsletter is published in October, December, February, April, and June.

This is the December 2025 issue.