Tom Falocco, a retire educator, former NJEA consultant, and now an organization specialist for NJEA, will be the keynote speaker at our May 8 business meeting at Buena Vista Country Club. The meeting begins at 11 AM.

Falocco will talk about the retirees' speakers bureau and the importance of our membership and participation in NJREA.

In addition, Sean Hadley, an NJEA associate director of government relations, will brief us on legislative issues and the status of the COLA lawsuit.

The ACREA will thank Judy Perkins, president; Rosemary O'Dowd, corresponding secretary; and Jim Goldsmith, treasurer, for their five years as association officers.

Members may nominate themselves or other candidates for any position from the floor during our business meeting on May 8. The newly elected officers will be sworn in during the luncheon.

Contact Roberta Woessner if you have any questions: 609-399-8139.
“Membership Matters” is the national award-winning communications endeavor of NJREA this year, and NJREA echoes this mantra through its unification efforts. By uniting the state with the county members, all county retiree organizations have realized a significant increase in their membership.

This transition would not have been possible without the commitment of our county membership chairs like our own, Karen Clark, and her committee. Many laborious hours have been devoted to refining our membership lists and moving forward.

Accordingly, when your renewal notice arrives, it is imperative that you respond promptly.

Specifically, as in the past, all annual NJREA members will receive a renewal notice in May for membership from September 1, 2012 – August 31, 2013.

New retirees also will receive applications and are required to join the county from which they retired or reside. Please encourage our new retirees to join ASAP. As we have done in the past, new retirees will be invited to ACREA’s fall and winter business meetings/luncheons.

Renewals can be made online by credit card at NJEA.org. This is the fastest and most accurate method to use, and we encourage its usage.

The ACREA will contact NJREA lifetime members and request $8 in dues to cover their enrollment at the local level.

Unification gives us a more vigorous voice in legislative endeavors that affect our pension and health benefits. In these tenuous times, each person who receives a state pension needs to be involved in NJEA/NJREA’s efforts to maintain the negotiated benefits he/she earned.

Please urge Atlantic County retirees who have not joined NJREA, to do so this year. NJREA advocates for the state and national interest of ALL retirees.

If you have any questions, phone Karen Clark: 609-653-2054. Without a doubt......

“Membership Matters!”

TPAF meeting in Oct.

Each person who receives a Teachers’ Pension & Annuity Fund pension is eligible to be one of six Atlantic County retired delegates to the TPAF annual meeting set for Saturday, October 20, at the Holiday Inn in East Windsor, NJ.

Nancy Rhodes, one of last year’s delegates and a participant for many years, said at our winter meeting, “The 2011 convention was more informative than in past years. I was pleased to hear that the pension fund investments had realized an 18% increase.”

A general information report regarding services provided by the Division of Pension & Benefits as well as a question and answer session make up the program.

Pre-registration is required. Therefore, tell Judy Perkins of your interest at our May 8 meeting or by phoning 609-391-1208. It is important that Atlantic County retirees are represented at this once-a-year meeting. Car pooling is arranged.

In Memoriam

We remember and pray for our friends and colleagues:

Carol Berenato
Esther Callender
George Duboff
Beverly Lipman
Doris Martin
By now, I’m sure you’ve read the article on the front page of the NJEA Reporter regarding the November school elections bill. Governor Christie signed Public Law 2011, Chapter 202, on January 17, allowing districts, town councils or citizen petitions to move school board elections from April to November.

In districts which approve this motion, no public vote will occur on school budgets that stay within the imposed two percent cap.

Presently, all Cape May County districts have voted to hold school board elections in November.

In Atlantic County, however, only Atlantic City and Hammonton will hold elections on April 17. All of the other school districts in the county have moved their board elections to November 6.

Any board member who is up for re-election would retain that seat until the November election.

As the national election season moves forward, I encourage you to vote in the presidential primary election on Tues., June 5.

Remember, education issues, such as merit pay, tenure, vouchers, and charter schools are “hot topics” not only in New Jersey but also throughout the United States. We need a president and Department of Education leader who support high educational and instructional standards as well as our collective bargaining rights. So, it is doubly important that you use your “teacher and ESP voice” at the polls.

Don’t forget: you can get a Vote-by-Mail ballot for any election if it is more convenient than voting at the polls.

Peri Pantazes

School board elections move to November

Important Dates
⇒ School Board - April 17
⇒ Atlantic City & Hammonton
⇒ Municipal Elections - May 8
⇒ Presidential Primary - June 5
⇒ General Election / School Board - November 6

Legislative District Contact Information

LD 1: Sen. Jeff Van Drew: 21 N. Main Street, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210 609-465-0700 SenVanDrew@njleg.org
FAX 609-465-4578
Assemblyman Matthew Milam and Assemblyman Nelson Albano: 1028 East Landis Avenue, Vineland, NJ 08360
856-696-7109 AsmMilam@njleg.org FAX: 856-765-0897 / 856-696-7109 AsmAlbano@njleg.org FAX: 856-696-7159

LD 2: Sen. James Whelan: 511 Tilton Road, Northfield, NJ 08225 609-383-1388 SenWhelan@njleg.org FAX: 609-383-1497
Assemblyman John Amodeo and Assemblyman Chris Brown: 1801 Zion Road, Suite 1, Northfield, NJ 08225
609-677-8266 AsmAmodeo@njleg.org AsmBrown@njleg.org FAX: 609-677-8853

LD 8: Sen. Dawn Marie Addiego 32A North Main St., Medford, NJ 08055 609-654-1498 SenAddiego@njleg.org
FAX: 609-654-4518
Assemblyman Christopher J. Brown and Assemblyman Scott Rudder: 32A North Main St., Medford, NJ 08055
609-654-1498 AsmBrown@njleg.org/AsmRudder@njleg.org FAX: 609-654-4518

LD 9: Sen. Christopher Connors: 620 W. Lacey Road, Forked River, NJ 08731 609-693-6700 SenConnors@njleg.org
FAX: 609-693-2469
Assemblywoman DiAnne Gove and Assemblyman Brian Rumpf: 620 W. Lacey Road, Forked River, NJ 08731
609-693-6700 AswGove@njleg.org / AsmRumpf@njleg.org FAX: 609-693-2469
In October, Karen Clark, Joanne Peek, and Dennis Yob participated in NJEA’s communication workshop in Trenton. ACREA members can see the results of this training in our new web site, newsletter, and email blasts.

Dennis designed the banner for the web site and within a few days, the site was up and running. Members accessing Atlanticrea.wordpress.com find copies of our newsletter, meeting minutes, important dates to remember, as well as links to NJREA scholarship forms, Medco, and the Division of Pension and Benefits. Because the site is routinely updated, ACREA members should check it often.

Joanne Peek has used layout tips to enhance our winter and spring newsletters. She strives to make the publication visually interesting and content informative. The publication has a color e-mail format that Joanne sends to those members who have requested this cost-saving e-version. Members may sign up for the e-newsletter at Atlanticrea@yahoo.com

Computers enable us to share critical information quickly. For this reason, Karen Clark now uses the Constant Contact service to facilitate our email blasts. In addition to an accelerated pace in sending information, the service provides more privacy with email addresses.

We encourage members to utilize our communication sources and the NJEA/NJREA’s website at NJEA.org.
The ACREA operates successfully because we have many volunteers who graciously help as officers, committee members, phone callers, rally participants, delegates, and luncheon helpers. ALL assistance is more than appreciated!

The Mailing Committee is one group that we want to acknowledge. Chaired by Madeline Ianni, the mailers gather 3-4 times per year at the Linwood Free Public Library to fold, label, stamp, and prepare our publication for distribution.

Most recently, the committee has been composed of: Doris Banilower, Karen Clark, Rosemary Celandine, Jim Goldsmith, Bob Kickish, Marianne Martin, Anne McLaughlin, Rosemary O’Dowd, Peri Pantazes, Joanne Peek, Alice Richardson, Carol Romano, Pat Royal, Betty Shearer, Annie Smith, Betty Welsh, and Madeline Ianni, chair.

As our membership increases, additional volunteers are welcome! Contact Madeline Ianni, Joanne Peek, or Judy Perkins during our May meeting or by email to join this committee.

Volunteers are valued and always needed

Carol Romano is always one of the first to arrive at a meeting to greet members and encourage them to purchase tickets for luncheon prizes. We thank Carol for many years of service!