



THE CLARION

The Newsletter for Retired Educators
Maine Education Association Retired Vol. 133, No. 6

August 2021

MEA-Retired
70th Annual Meeting
and Convention
May 5, 2022
Plan now to attend!

From our President: Our time to grow



Gary McGrane

Busy, busy, busy is about all I can say regarding what your president has been doing since being elected to lead MEA-Retired.

Perhaps I should have started with Zoom instead of busy, but that sounded too pandemic. One of my primary foci has been finding members to fill the numerous MEA-Retired committee positions.

Whoever heard of retirees retiring? That does not happen

with a great deal of regularity, yet two critical positions became vacant within our ranks; Bob White, chairperson of the Pre-Retirement Committee and Jan Cerabonna, chairperson of the Community Participation Committee. Both gave notice that it was time for a change.

I asked Susan Grondin to assume Bob White's position and Susan Feiner to succeed Jan. This created a vacancy in the Resolutions Committee for which I solicited Claudette O'Connell to ac-

cept that role.

Another key position recently vacated was the Membership Committee. And so, it went on and on saying nothing about asking existing committee members to move up or stay on. Some have vacated and will need to be replaced.

Fortunately, there is an endless list of people willing to serve. I thank my lucky stars for all the dedicated souls that have stepped up because of their comradery

See President, Page 2

70th annual meeting and convention

By Rheba Michaud
Convention Coordinator

MEA-Retired is planning to hold its 70th Annual Meeting and Convention in person at the Augusta Civic Center on May 5. Put this date on your calendar and plan to attend.

Plans are in the works for a keynote speaker, breakout sessions, exhibits, PAC raffle, book swap, lunch, and more. We are reaching out to affiliates to start the county displays. There are always lots of raffles.

We need several more volunteers to serve on the committee. We also need a registrar. Please consider how you can help and let me know soon. Already serving on the Convention Committee are Susan Feiner of Yarmouth, Pam Partridge of North Anson, Kay Grindall of Oakland, and me.

If you have an idea, please

See Annual Meeting, Page 8

Virtual NEA-Retired Annual Meeting Website and Clarion earn first place awards

By Claudette O'Connell
Penobscot Retired Educ. Assoc.



Even though the NEA-Retired annual meeting was held virtually, it was very exciting to learn that once

again, our communications mediums gained national first place recognitions.

Our MEA-Retired website tied with another state for first place. Having won this first place award for three consecutive years, our website now qualifies to be placed on the NEA-Retired "Hall of Fame." Pam Partridge of North Anson is our webmaster.

Our newsletter, edited by Kay Grindall, placed in a four-way tie for first place. Congratulations to Kay and Pam for these honors. We appreciate the work of our MEA-Retired Communications Committee chaired by Jane Conroy of Dover-Foxcroft.

When I decided, in January, to run as a delegate for the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA Representative Assembly, I hoped that by summer Covid would finally be a thing of the past and the delegates would get to attend the NEA-R Annual meeting in Denver where it

originally was scheduled.

However, Covid didn't disappear; and NEA-Retired held a virtual annual meeting on June 22 and 23. So, Kay Grindall, Robert Jean, Lois Kilby-Chesley, Rheba Michaud, Gary McGrane,

See NEA-Retired, Page 4

Save the Date Leadership Training

"Democracy works best when we have rules"
Parliamentary procedures, bylaws, policies, rules of order, meeting protocol

October 27
Best Western Hotel
375 Main St., Waterville
More details forthcoming



NEA-Retired President Sarah Borgman of Indiana facilitated action and discussions at the recent virtual annual meeting.

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Legislative Update



By Crystal Ward
Legislative Liaison



Undoubtedly, we have all been awaiting word on the funding of LD 293—**To increase the State's Share of the Cost of Health Insurance for Retired Teachers.**

As of July 6, 2021, fund-

ing has not been passed by the Appropriation Committee. It is still “on the table” waiting for some action by the committee.

We have all worked hard on this bill this year. Many people worked hard to get this bill passed in BOTH the House and the Senate. We thank those who wrote letters, sent email messages, texted, and called their legislators.

To now have it stuck in the Appropriation Committee is quite frustrating. The committee can still take action. The chances are fewer and fewer, but there is still some hope.

If you know members of the Appropriations Commit-

tee, please ask them what is about the status of funding LD 293. Encourage them to provide the funds to pay for this much-needed increase in our health insurance premiums.

Members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs are as follows: Senators are Cathy Breen, Donna Bailey, and Paul Davis. Representatives are Teresa Pierce, Amy Arata, Barbara Cardone, Kristen Cloutier, Patrick Corey, Jessica Fay, Justin Fecteau, Patty Hymanson, John Martin and Sawin Millett.

As soon as movement happens, I will get the information out as soon as I can. Everyone has tried

their very best!

MEA Government Relations Director John Kosinski, has lobbied long and hard on this initiative from the beginning. Yes, this is very, very, very frustrating for ALL of us !!!

We are looking for folk who are interested in serving on the MEA-Retired Legislative Committee for 2021-2023. Please call me at 786-7084 or send me an email message to Crystal Ward at cward@roadrunner.com as soon as possible.

Furthermore, if you are interested in receiving a weekly legislative update as to MEA action from John Kosinski, send an email to jkosinski@maineea.org.

President, from Page 1

and love of their fellow educators.

I do not want to elaborate more than necessary about this pandemic other than to say that my position as a volunteer for Maine Frontline Warmline has quietly diminished because educators are less stressed and more able to cope

because of the vaccines that are now available.

Besides donating my time to listening and comforting callers I have volunteered time helping people get their vaccine. Donating six hours a day twice a week at the Auburn Mall vaccination site. This is nothing new. Been doing it for a couple of months.

Most evenings have been spent attending zoom meetings. Meetings ranged from attending Uniserv Director's District meetings to Organizing for Power with the premiere organizer, Jane McAlevy.

Continuing education is not complete until we educate others about the truth that we have learned and embraced.

Writing letters to our Congressional delegation has been something I do in my spare time. Advocating for healthcare, elimination of the WEP or GPO, or asking for a vote to support the American Rescue Plan Act are all pieces of federal legislation that will affect our members and all of Maine's citizenry.

In the interim my focus has been on increasing our membership. Why? Because there is strength in numbers and when those numbers include racial and justice

equality across the human spectrum, we all win.

Stay tuned. The way things are going we will all be together in person very soon. In the meantime stay in touch with one another, stay safe, and know we love you.

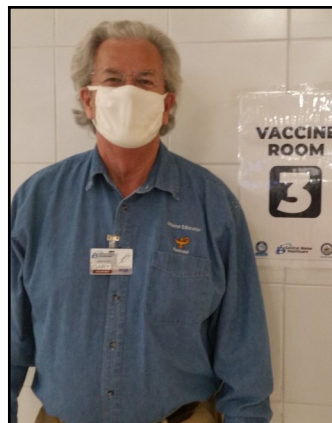
NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA RA

June 30—July 6, 2022
Dallas, TX

June 30—July 6, 2023
Orlando, FL

July 1—July 7, 2024
Philadelphia, PA

NOTE: We have six delegate seats at these meetings. Will you consider filling one?



MEA-Retired President Gary McGrane volunteered at the vaccination site at the Auburn Mall.

The Clarion is published bimonthly by Maine Education Association Retired. Readers are encouraged to submit feature stories, news articles, notices of events and activities, and opinions of statewide interest by the tenth day of the month preceding publication.

We pay 50 cents for every *Clarion* returned due to “incorrect address.” Please send address changes to Lisa Collins at 800-281-3191, Ext. 2400 or 207-888-3856 or via email at lcollins@maineea.org.

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Sitting comfortably on my couch last year, I only had my cup of coffee. This year for the 93rd MEA-RA, on May 22 and 23, I chose the dining room table which enabled me to have snacks (including an MEA cookie) along with my coffee.

Zoom was once again the venue we used, and it ran smoothly with the awesome effort of MEA President Grace Leavitt and her staff.

A change this year was the use of the chat box. This was only used for discussion and required getting into the talking order using “color indication” as would have been done with cards in person. Attendees were also muted unless asked to voice their response.

Out of a possible 306 delegates only 99 seats were filled with 129 registered. As for MEA-Retired, all 11 possible seats were filled and we had four alternates available. This has not been the case for a number of years.

Even though MEA attendance at the RA was down, membership is up—a good sign for MEA. The strategic budget was presented and passed as were five bylaw changes and three new business items (NBI).

Two of the bylaws were new. One is the addition of a new membership category known as “community ally.”

The other is the formation of a new “Black, Indigenous, People of Color Committee.” One NBI provided for MEA to

create a new award honoring an educator/individual (such as Ashley Bryan) in the field of arts and humanities for their work and advocacy towards human civil rights and social justice.

One very exciting aspect of the representative assembly is always the award presentations. The 2021 award categories and recipients were recognized as follows:

Friend of Education Award—Senator Matthea Daughtry of Cumberland District #24 (Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, North Yarmouth, and Pownal);

John Marvin Local Association Award—Auburn Education Association, Mount Blue Education Association, Associated Faculties of the University of Maine (AFUM), University of Maine Professional Staff Association (UMPSA), and Associated Clerical Staff of the University of Maine (ACSUM);

Golden Apple Award—The Center Theatre for the Performing Arts in Dover-Foxcroft;

Golden Apple Award—Equality Maine which works hard to provide equal education opportunities for all students;

Public Higher Ed Impact Award—Maine Representative Rebecca Millett from District 30 (Cape Elizabeth);

MEA Special Recognition Award—Ashley Bryan of Islesford. Author, humanitarian, philanthropist, Mr. Bryan has received honorary degrees and recognitions by a number of universities throughout the country.

Mr. Bryan is the first African American to publish a children’s book as the author and illustrator.

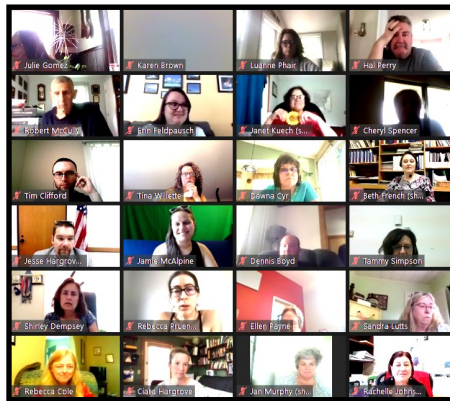
The RA continued for a short time on Sunday morning to discuss and vote on one new business item.

MEA-Retired Immediate

Past President Kay Grindall of Oakland was a delegate. She said “The MEA-RA was very informative and provided opportunities for dialogue with our counterparts in the active realm. The organizers certainly transformed restrictions and challenges of Covid-19 into an informative program.”

Newly elected President-Elect Bob Jean of Thomaston stated, “A highlight of the RA was watching the Clyde Russell Scholarship recipients’ video clips. These students were grateful, genuine, and articulate. They give me great hope for the future!”

Pam Partridge of North Anson is the webmaster of MEA-Retired’s award-winning website. She com-



MEA held its annual Representative Assembly virtually on Zoom this year. Eleven of the 99 delegates were from MEA-Retired.

mented on the memorable parts of the RA: “I was pleased to see so many delegates this year—even though it fell far short of the seats available. It was great, though, to see a full MEA-Retired delegation.

“Last year we had to wait while there were enough delegates signed in to meet the required quorum number. It was good to hear membership is up! I appreciated the work done prior to the RA which was summarized in the reports in the agenda book.”

Attention to civil and human rights, social and ra-

MEA-Retired has full delegation at MEA-RA

By Belinda Saucier, Delegate MEA-Representative Assembly

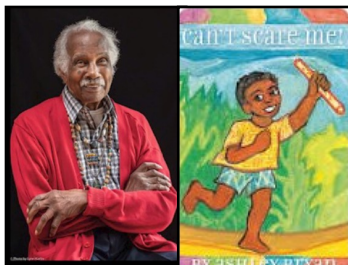
cial justice, ethnic committee representation, and gender issues stood out. I hope we will have the opportunity to attend workshops and trainings around those topics.

Furthermore, I wondered how much discussion there would be about the new membership category—“Community Ally” in the Constitution. It wasn’t until it came up in the bylaw change requests that it generated discussion and passed.

The new business item addressing class size/teacher ratio shows that we are looking ahead to be prepared for future health crises, and that issue needs more work.

Of course, it is anticipated that the 2022 RA will be held in person when we can return to the festivities and events that provide for more memorably, interpersonal connections.

Plan now to run for a delegate seat! The dates are May 21-22, 2022.



Children’s author and illustrator Ashley Bryan received MEA’s first annual Special Recognition Award. Bryan has written and illustrated more than 45 children’s books.

Volunteer!
2021 Day of Caring
 How will you help
 our local schools
 this year?

NEA-Retired, from Page 1

and I “attended” virtually from our computers or smartphones at home..

The first session of the national event started with a flag salute, led by our MEA-Retired Past President, Kay Grindall. Following the land management statement, we experienced technical difficulties.

Conducting this national meeting virtually was a herculean task. After a time, technicians solved the problems, and the meeting proceeded as planned without too many glitches.

We delegates logged on to the website each day at 1:30 p.m., and the meeting ended by 6 p.m.. The time frame was set later in the day to accommodate those



A variety of electronic devices enabled delegates to connect to the RA remotely. We were all set—so long as a thunderstorm did not take out our electricity or internet services.

NEA-Retired positions—secretary, members of Executive Council and Board of Directors, and members of the Resolutions Committee. It is always impressive to listen to candidates talk about their goals and experiences and to hear the reasons why they want have a leadership position in NEA-Retired.

Voting for the Resolutions Committee took place virtually, after the speeches. The delegates were given plenty of time to vote electronically and the results

who live in other time zones.

We listened to speeches by those who were running for election to

were announced the next day.

During the second day, business address proposed amendments to the Bylaws and New Business Items. Interestingly enough, the process took place as if we had been in a face-to-face meeting. People clicked on a link to gain access to the speaking order. Technicians phoned the delegates, so that they could speak from their phones to all of us. Therefore, a delegate could speak for or against a motion or request “Points of Order.” Doing all of this virtually was not too complicated but required patience by the NEA-Retired President Sarah Borgman and the delegates calling in because sometimes it was a slow process.

However, the meeting was run democratically; and all delegates had the option to speak on the motions presented. Furthermore, the delegates will soon be receiving mailed paper ballots to vote for candidates for officers. The results of those votes will be published in an upcoming issue of the *NEA Today*.

The delegates approved two “New Business Items.” One reduced lifetime dues for ESP’s—charging them 60 percent of NEA-Retired dues. The other was the adoption of the following NEA-Retired mission and vision statements:

The mission statement reads: *NEA-Retired is dedicated to promoting secure retirement with dignity, advancing equitable and quality public education, and advocating for human, civil, and economic rights for all.*

The vision of NEA-Retired is to become the preeminent voice for retired members while strengthening NEA.

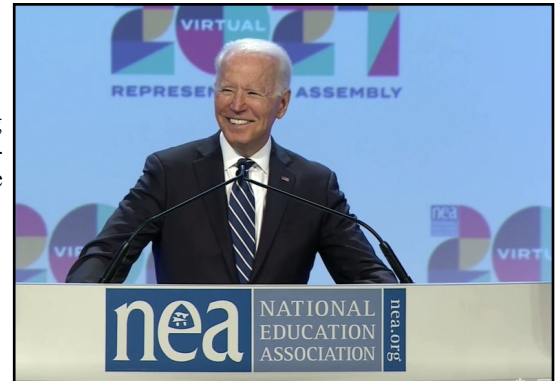


After the two-day NEA-Retired Annual Meeting adjourned on June 24, retired delegates joined the virtual NEA Representative Assembly from June 30 thru July 3. The days began with a two-hour morning state caucus led by MEA President Grace Leavitt and then debate and voting on new business items and bylaw and constitution amendments hosted by NEA President Becky Pringle.

nized.”

Bob Jean was pleased that one of the student recipients of the Jack Kinnaman Scholarship had recorded a message of thanks for the delegates. Bob said “It is always a pleasure to hear from our aspiring educators.”

Lois Kilby-Chesley of Dresden, for-



President Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden were special guests at the NEA-RA. Dr. Biden is a community college educator and has been a long-time member of NEA. President Biden spoke.

mer MEA President, commented, “For me the local, MEA, and NEA have always been about the people. Whether it was talking to someone I didn’t know well from Maine, Alabama or Oklahoma, or watching the fantastic costumes every 4th of July or seeing old friends, I looked for the networking. That’s why I enjoyed the Representative Assemblies so much for the 16 years I attended.

“It’s also why this year’s virtual NEA-Retired annual meeting was a great couple of days. Although the virtual format made it impossible to talk back and forth, it was invigorating to see the retirees—many former acquaintances—in new roles. It was inspiring to hear NEA President Becky Pringle speak, to see Vice President Princess Moss, and especially listening to my friend from the state president cadre, Noel Candelaria, NEA’s current secretary/treasurer.”

Representing MEA-Retired at the NEA-Retired annual meeting were Rheba Michaud, Dover-Foxcroft; Gary McGrane, Jay; Bob Jean, Thomaston; Lois Kilby-Chesley, Durham; Kay Grindall, Oakland; and Claudette O’Connell of Bangor.

I am amazed that it was possible to conduct the meeting so well virtually. I thank all the MEA-Retired members who voted for me to attend as a delegate. I am grateful for the opportunities I’ve had through the years, to represent Maine educators on the state and national level.

The 130th Maine Legislature has wrapped up its work for what is known as “the long session.” Legislators tackled hundreds of pieces of legislation. Many of these addressed the needs of senior citizens. AARP experienced some victories and a few disappointments.



Noel Bonam

Probably the biggest win is the overwhelmingly bipartisan House vote of 130-11 in support of LD 1622, “An Act To Promote Individual Retirement Savings through a Public-Private Partnership.” This legislation is better known as “Work and Save.” It is rare to see such strong support for a bill of this nature.

We are thrilled to see Maine legislators coming together around such a practical response to the need to make it easier for working Mainers to save for their future and retirements.

It really is an initiative in which everyone can participate. The Senate passed L.D. 1622 without discussion and Governor Mills has signed this important piece of legislation into law.

Prescription drug reform continues to be a priority of

AARP and of the legislative leadership. A series of bills were introduced and passed. All focused on increasing consumer safeguards and transparency in the pricing of these critical medications.

While not every bill that AARP supported was certainly far outweighed the setbacks.

Finally, I’m pleased to announce that Noel Bonam has been hired as the new AARP Maine State Director. Mr. Bonam brings with him great extensive experience in leadership development, stakeholder engagement, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) practice and civic leadership.

Before joining AARP, Noel had been the Head of The Global Institute, a public benefit organization (with operational hubs in Denmark, India and the US), specializing in

social equity, leadership development and organizational sustainability.

Bonam has worked extensively with diverse

partners from across the world, particularly in the public and not-for-profit sectors.

Formerly, he was the Director for the Bureau of Multicultural Affairs for the State of Maine. In that role, he was responsible for Maine’s systemic changes through Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts.

To that end he worked closely with a variety of inter-departmental stakeholders and with key community partners from across the State.

He practices collaborative facilitative leadership and is committed to stakeholder engagement and empowerment, long-term sustainability and dialogue for action.

Mr. Bonam is a graduate of the Senior Executive in State and Local Government mid-career program at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

He has a Masters degree in Public Personnel Management from Osmania University (India) and a certification in “Diversity, Equity

AARP made legislative strides, adds expert staff

By Carl Bucciantini, AARP Liaison

and Inclusion in Human Resources” from Cornell University.

Civic engagement has been a big part of his life from a very young age and he has been actively involved with several organizations over the years.

He is currently the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Association for World Education, an international NGO specializing in lifelong learning and with consultative status at the United Nations.

We welcome Mr. Bonam to Maine and his new position in the premiere entity that serves thousands of Mainers.



Bucciantini



Volunteer! Day of Caring



SMILE

“Seniors Make It Look Easy”

MEA-Retired is here for you!

Executive Committee Meeting
Best Western Hotel
375 Main St., Waterville
August 2, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

Board of Directors Meeting
Best Western Hotel
375 Main St., Waterville
Sept. 7, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

Executive Committee Meeting
Location TBA
October 4, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

Contact affiliate leaders
with ideas and concerns

“Not everything is cancelled”

Sun is not canceled.
Spring is not cancelled.
Relationships are not cancelled.
Love is not cancelled.
Reading is not cancelled.
Devotion is not cancelled.
Music is not cancelled.
Imagination is not cancelled.
Kindness is not cancelled.
Hope is not cancelled.
And God's love is not cancelled.



Hugh Keene is chairperson of the MEA-Retired Legacy Committee and included this poem in his report to our 2021 virtual annual meeting held on Zoom on May 6.

Meaningful connections during “paused year” of Volunteerism (No pauses for retirees)

By Deb Wagg
Mid-Coast Retired Educ. Assoc.

A year of so many disruptions to our lives. Even though there will be no awards or recognitions for our volunteer and exercise hours during the past year due to the restrictions from Covid-19, most retired educators kept very busy.

Mid-Coast kept busy. Gyms might have been closed but that didn't stop our members from exercising. We all put many hours of dancing, kayaking, hiking on trails,

walking outside and inside our homes, using stairs, yoga, stretching, biking, gardening, raking, walking pets and, of course, one of our favorites—chasing after our grandchildren. So many hours of movement kept our bodies and minds healthy and on the move.

Many activities for community participation were put on hold with state regulations in place. However, our members certainly did not stop and take a year off. We were able to stay involved with many organizations that so desperately needed our community commitment and volunteerism. We put countless hours into these worthy causes; here are just a few:

- *volunteer at Harpswell Aging at Home (HAH). A community organization that helps older adults thrive while staying in their own homes. Some prepared many meals for the Meals in a Pinch program

- *paint on shells and drift-

wood to be sold at church fairs;

- *spend hours at the Mid-Coast Literacy

- *connect with phone chats to elderly neighbors, which has helped to avoid depression, fear and loneliness during these times of self-quarantine;

- *serve in many church-related activities

- *make quilts and prayer shawls for Hospice;

- *knit hats for kids at local daycares and after-school programs;

- *plant, weed and harvest produce from the Harpswell Community Garden programs which provide donations to “Meals in a Pinch” and free produce distributed in various locations in Harpswell;

- *deliver fresh produce from the Mid-Coast Hunger Prevention Program in Brunswick;

- *help with the overall maintenance of the community garden in Harpswell;

- *buy groceries for neighbors;

- *communicate with members of the Harpswell Garden Club;

- *place flags at local cemeteries for Maine Veterans prior to Memorial Day;

- *meetings for Library Board members;

- *participate in story time and elementary school play groups and in book clubs with the high school students

- *attend countless Zoom meetings for story times, “Make a Bag” activity, Executive Committee meetings for Mid-Coast Retired Educators Association, library board meetings and book clubs;

- *purchase, wrap, and deliver gifts for the Augusta Togus Veterans.

We have come together to make a difference in the lives of others in spite of what is going on around us.. We were able to reach out to the needy and elderly in our communities to help meet needs and give back.

By Beth Chamberlin
Knox County Retired Educ. Assoc.

Staff members at the Thomaston Grammar School of RSU 13 did an amazing job, educationally and socially, during the pandemic. Remote learning started on March 16, 2020, and continued through until the end of the school year. They opened the school the first week advertising pickup times when students could get school work, belongings left, and electronic devices.

Our granddaughter Ava was in Grade 4 and had regularly scheduled weekly Zoom meetings with different



Ella registered for kindergarten online and had an unusual start to her education career.

formats, different teachers and different attendees. Teachers really worked hard and consistently to remain connected with their students. For example, a couple of teachers were able to use grant money to order grade

appropriate KiwiCo Kits (hands-on science/art materials) which were delivered to every student in the school.

“Field Day” bags with materials were delivered to every student. They started their day with a field day activity on Zoom with their physical education teacher. Students were invited to send in a video clip of them reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. These videos were used every morning with daily announcements over Zoom.

Families could also sign up for bag lunches which were delivered to daily pickup sites. Kudos to the staff for their endless devotion to the students of Thomaston Grammar School.



Paul and Beth's granddaughters—Ava Ruth Chamberlin, Grade 4, and her sister Ella Jean, Grade 1—are very eager to return to school in person in the fall.



During the pandemic retired educator Bernadette Gratto of Portland volunteered to teach her kindergarten grandson William. She says, “I transformed my living room into a classroom. I researched kindergarten curriculum and asked friends for materials. Lots of new learning for both of us, as I taught mostly Grades 3 thru 8 in the Portland City Schools. Here we are celebrating 100 days of school.”

In a year of global pandemic, Maine's retired educators contributed nearly \$2 million in volunteer time helping students, supporting teachers, and volunteering in libraries, food pantries, soup kitchens, community centers and more during 2019-2020.

Before tackling those numbers, I'd like to thank every-

one who's been helping me in my new position on the MEA-Retired Board of Directors. I hope I'll do half as good a job as rock star retiree, Jan Cerabona. Her work tracking the near endless activities of retired Maine educators leaves this former USM professor deeply moved.

So much to write about, so little space. I mean really— what can one say about retired educators volunteering nearly 70,000 hours in support of the state's educators and students as they struggled through a global pandemic? That's only the equivalent of **35 years of work!** (Full disclosure: your author is a retired economist.)

One full-time year of employment is 2,000 hours—40 hours per week X 50 weeks per year = 2,000. Divide 70,000 hours of volunteer work by 2,000 hours equals 35 years.

Did your jaw just drop? Mine did. If you needed any more evidence of Maine's teachers' commitment to their communities, these numbers ought to do it. How-

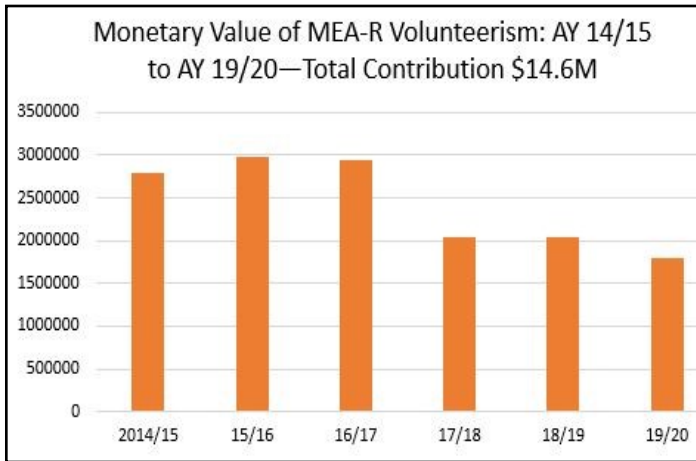
Retired educators volunteerism equals one entire career

By Sue Feiner, Chairperson
Community Participation Com.

ever you measure it—in dollars or in time—Maine educators' devotion to our shared future lasts well beyond their active classroom years.

Kudos to Maine's retired educators. Let's hit 80,000 hours this year! In this author's view educators' unpaid work is seriously undercounted. GO!

In this author's view educators' unpaid work is seriously undercounted.



Great gifts for retired friends, auctions, birthdays, Christmas

Maine Educator



Retired



Long-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$33
Navy Blue Hats @ \$12
Red, Iris Blue Tee Shirts @ \$20
Red, Ultramarine Golf Shirts @ \$28
Sizes: S, M, L
Sizes XL & XXL: Add \$2
Sizes XXXL & XXXXL: Add \$4
Lapel Pins @ \$10

Name _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Tel. _____ Affiliate _____

Qty.	Item	Size	Color	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Sizes XL, XXL: Add \$2 Sizes XXXL, XXXXL: Add \$4				
	Total Remittance				

Questions? Contact Rena Kearney at rkearney@ainop.com or 207-429-9041. Prices include tax and postage/handling.

Make checks payable to MEA-Retired and mail to Rena Kearney, PO Box 377, Mars Hill, ME 04758.

(Items produced by Cushman's Embroidery, Presque Isle, ME)

Pre-Retirement sessions to be held on Zoom in 2021-22

By Susan Grondin, Chairperson
Pre-Retirement Committee



Sue Grondin

Do you know an active member who is thinking of retiring within the next five years? If so, you might want to encourage them to register in the fall for one of the MEA-Retired/ MEA sponsored pre-retirement seminars.

Pre-retirement seminars will be held virtually over the course of two consecutive nights from 5:00-6:15 P.M.

The first night will consist of presentations from an MEA-Retired individual introducing the association, an MEA Benefits Trust staff person providing health insurance information and an individual discussing Windfall Elimination Provision/ Government Pension Offset (WEP/GPO).

The next night a Maine Public Employees Retirement System (MainePERS) employee will present information about initiating the retirement process.

Members should be prepared to attend *BOTH* nights. The link to attend a session will be emailed to registrants the day before they are scheduled to attend. Registration information will be sent to all MEA members in the fall.

Committee members Carl

Bucciantini of Greene, Ed Nunnery of Cumberland Foreside, Darrell King of Millinocket, and Chairperson Susan Grondin of Lewiston will be reviewing the Pre-Retirement Committee guidelines and job descriptions to reflect the move to an internet venue.

Changes will be presented to the Policy Committee for consideration. Discussions through the year will focus on opportunities to provide information for our MEA members as they navigate the retirement process and to encourage membership in our organization.

Lisa Collins, MEA-Retired Assistant, is responsible for registering active members for seminars and for emailing retirement materials prior to the meetings. She also assists our committee as needed.

The Committee looks forward to another positive year of engagement with our retired and active members.

Seminar dates for 2021-2022 have been posted on the MEA-Retired website and Facebook, the MEA website as well as in print publications—*The Clarion* and *The Maine Educator*.

Following are the dates of pre-retirement seminars:

Session 1: Tuesday, October 12—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO; Wednesday, October 13—MainePERS
Session 2: Tuesday, October 26—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO; Wednesday, October 27—MainePERS
Session 3: Tuesday, November 9—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO; Wednesday, November 10—MainePERS
Session 4: Tuesday, January 25—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, and WEP/GPO; Wednesday, January 26—MainePERS
Session 5: Tuesday, February 8—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust and WEP/GPO; Wednesday, February 9—MainePERS
Session 6: Tuesday, February 15—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO; Wednesday, February 16—MainePERS
Session 7: Tuesday, March 1—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust and WEP/GPO; Wednesday, March 2—MainePERS
Session 8: Tuesday, March 8—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust and WEP/GPO; Wednesday, March 9—MainePERS

Time to nominate colleagues: 2022 Honorary Membership

Opportunities for nominating a deserving individual to receive an honorary membership award are encouraged every year.

Article III of our MEA-Retired bylaws deals with membership. Section 4 specifically addresses “Honorary Membership.” This status is granted to a person who has made a noteworthy contribution to education or to this Association.

A member may nominate a fellow member and present a letter of recommendation to the Board of Directors by October 1. A two-thirds vote of the members of the Board of Directors is required to ratify the nomination. (This is usually done at the December Board meeting.)

No more than one honorary membership may be granted in any one year. The Association will pay unified and affiliate dues for honorary members. Non-members

will be paid expenses to attend the Annual Meeting.

MEA-Retired Honorary Members are invited to attend the MEA-Retired Annual Meeting and Convention held in the following spring. At that time a special presentation and recognition will be made.

Registration and mileage expenses to convention will be paid. Expenses for designated lodging and meals will be paid to those who travel 90 miles or more one way to attend.

A list of honorary membership awards is announced in the annual convention booklet and included in the August *Clarion*.

The deadline for nominations to be received by our president is October 1. Please send to Gary McGrane, 310 East Dixfield Road, Jay, ME 04239. Or documents may be sent via email to gmc-grane7@gmail.com.

Annual Meeting, from Page 1

let me know. There are many wonderful speakers out there. Please send me suggested names of speakers for our convention sessions. I am hoping to find a variety of speakers on a variety of topics.

If you or if you know of someone who has a compelling, interesting message or craft or skill or display, please feel free to contact me by phone at 207-564-7494 or send an email message to me at rmichaud143@charter.net. We are open to new ideas.

Maine
FRONTLINE **WARM LINE**
Call 207-221-8196 or
Text "Frontline" to 898-211
We've got your back.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only assessment that measures what U.S. students know and can do in various subjects across the nation, states, and in some urban districts.

Also known as The Nation's Report Card, NAEP has provided important information about how students are performing academically since 1969.

NAEP is a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

NAEP is given to a representative sample of students across the country. Results are reported for groups of students with similar characteristics (e.g., gender, race and ethnicity, school location), not individual students.

National results are available for all subjects assessed by NAEP. State and selected urban district results are available for mathematics, reading, and (in some assessment years) science and writing.

NAEP is seeking motivated individuals who are committed to excellence and have experience working in schools

with students.

The position involves conducting assessment sessions with 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-grade students using touch-enabled tablets in participating schools across the country. You will work on a team of two to four people. This opportunity is ideal for retired educators.

Participants will (1) administer assessment sessions using tablets in schools;

(2) prepare the room and set up equipment;

(3) check student attendance and read directions

aloud to students;

(4) monitor the assessment sessions using NAEP tablet;

(5) answer student questions using prepared guidelines;

(6) collect assessment materials

when the assessment is done;

(7) ensure quality control is achieved; and (8) assist in packing assessment equipment.

Westat provides complete paid training, paid time and mileage reimbursement for local driving to and from schools, weekly paychecks with direct deposit, and opportunities for advancement based on performance.

Qualified applicants must be available to work 20

to 30 hours a week, during daytime hours, when work is available, from **January 24th to March 4, 2022**.

We ask that they (1) complete required components of training, including online courses to be completed independently, and a one to two-day in-person meeting during January 2022;

(2) be willing to complete background check requirements, including an FBI fingerprint check;

(3) be able to access a telephone service with a long distance calling feature;

(4) have access to computer, Internet connection, and personal, private email account;

(5) have a valid driver's license and access to an insured, reliable vehicle to travel to and from schools; and

(6) have a high school diploma or GED.

It is preferred that candidates have prior experience working with students in an educational setting in a team environment.

He or she should have excellent verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills and be basic computer proficient.

One should be self-motivated, organized, flexible, and detail-oriented. Overnight travel may be required.

One may have to lift and carry up to 20 pounds and be able to climb stairs with or without reasonable accom-

Opportunity for retired educators Great winter project! Earn \$\$

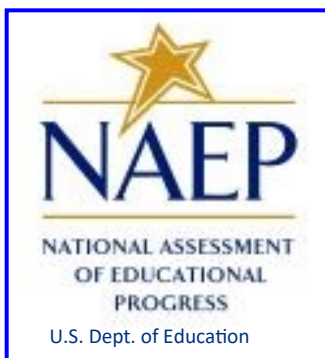
modations. This opportunity is a part-time, temporary position with limited benefits.

For more details, visit <http://www.workNAEP.com> and provide your name and email. Online applications will be available beginning summer 2021. For more information send an email to NAEPreruit@westat.com.

Retired educator Rhea Michaud of Dover-Foxcroft has administered tests. She says, "I really enjoyed working for NAEP. The six-week testing span worked well for my schedule, and it was nice making some extra income during the winter months.

"I enjoyed being in the schools and working directly with the students. We work in teams of two or four people. And it's always great meeting other retired educators and, of course, the active educators and students."

She added, "All in all, working for NAEP as an assessment administrator was a very positive experience for me. I plan on working for the upcoming 2022 NAEP session coming this winter!"



Membership, from Page 12

soucyroy@maine.rr.com;

Or Lois Kilby-Chesley of Durham, lkilbychesley@gmail.com.

On a more personal note, I am very excited to be the Membership Committee chairperson for 2021-23. After I finished my presidency at MEA in 2018, I ran for State Senate against Jeff Timberlake, visited Central Asia, did some substitute teaching, taught students remotely in Maine and in Central Asia, mourned the passing of my mother and sister, and cleaned out and sold the family home-

stead of 70 years.

Of course, as with all of you, I stayed in place at home in Durham for more than a year.

I'm now ready to take on new adventures and challenges, including re-activating with educators through MEA-Retired. It was wonderful to see so many familiar names on the membership rolls! I certainly look forward to



seeing you again.

I will certainly join in virtual local and county meetings when opportunities arise. Whenever possible I will join the anticipated face-to-face meetings that will hopefully resume in the fall. I can't wait to see you. In the meantime, stay safe and healthy as we return to normalcy in our lives and at MEA-Retired. This is a great time to check out our website, download our membership application, and share with friends. It can be filled out electronically and then printed and placed in the mail. Let us hear from you.



By Pamela Walton
Knox County Ret. Educ. Association

We pedaled our bicycles over dirt paths along the shining Caribbean waters and arrived at my classroom to address the first task of each day. I emptied the wee mouse out of the trash can--but only after checking for the whereabouts of the resident rat. After all, he had managed to devour the classroom goldfish without leaving a trace! We were armed with a mighty broom in case he should reappear.

My classroom was half of an abandoned construction trailer with six doors and no windows. It was supported by concrete blocks and was so unsteady that none of my 36 first graders or I could write if someone were walking.

On the other side of the dividing particle board were the same number of first graders taught by my counterpart, Marcia Ramsey, a Jamaican teacher.

After ridding my trailer of



Three first graders are excited for the first day of school to start.

Life-changing experiences in Bahamaland

vermin, Dick trekked across uneven terrain to the screened-in Bahama Room of the convent where the upright piano was situated. This is where he taught music to over 500 students in Grades K-9. That old piano was often dragged outside to accompany singing and dancing in the yard. The images of those students in their immaculate red and white uniforms and voices reaching upward through the palm fronds are forever held close.

Some of the richest experiences of our long teaching careers happened right there at St. Vincent de Paul School in Hunter, Grand Bahama Island. Dick hailed from Iowa after five years of teaching K-12 music and I from teaching elementary grades in Saint John, New Brunswick.

Who could ever imagine that we would meet in a school on that little island and marry after two years?

One lunchtime, a group of my children came screaming across the yard. I jumped up in a panic from the doorstep (there was no staff room) and dashed to meet them. "Must be y'all's mummy and daddy!"

It took me some time to understand that they were referring to a tourist couple in an old Cadillac that was cruising the grounds. The Bahamian driver was evidently showing them a "typical native school."

I queried the children as to why they thought these were my parents. "Blue eyes, sharp nose, white skin" was the explanation. Dick and I were the only white people many of these kids had ever seen. We had many Jamaican and Bahamian teachers. The student body had the same makeup with the addition of some Haitian children. Their innocence was precious.

We learned to understand each other on many levels.

One day I was flummoxed by dear little Myrthaline's sobbing, "It meetmedere!" I asked the others what she meant, and they yelled in chorus, "It meet her dere!"

I finally got it! We had just taken the latest set of readers to our desks. Myrthaline had opened hers and saw pencil scribbling on some pages. She desperate-

one could ever meet. She had a genuine smile that would warm any heart and an infectious hearty laugh. She graduated with her master's degree in education in Minnesota--along with her own sister who became superintendent of all Catholic education in the Bahamas.

Following graduation, Sister Patricia returned to her



Mr. Walton rehearses with students in preparation for the annual spring concert.

ly wanted me to understand that she hadn't done it—"It had met her there!" I reassured her all was well.

This happened after we retrieved the books from storage. We had stood in a circle, as was the routine, and I had thrown the books on the floor. In a flurry of activity, we had stomped on the huge roaches that flew from the pages, picked them up by the antennae and had thrown them in the trash can.

We had then marched off in a line to the distant building that housed the only bathroom for the washing of hands. A bottle of germ squirt would have been a saving grace back then!

Our principal, Sister Mary Patricia Russell, was one of the most beautiful, caring and devoted leaders

own little community of Hunter and single-handedly whipped the school of scattered buildings and Quonset huts into a place of real learning. She drove over the myriad dirt tracks through the bush and demanded that all children attend school. She outfitted them with shoes and uniforms and managed to furnish the latest reading programs.

Though the buildings remained the same, education soared because she was committed to doing everything possible to ensure success. This also meant using her broom to beat the huge bony cows out of the school yard. At times they got away from their Haitian owner, and we didn't need "cow pies" underfoot!

We didn't have phone ser-

See Bahamas on Page 11

Bahamas, from Page 10

vice at the school, but one had only to mention that there was a need for a project. Off she'd go to Freeport in her big old station wagon. No request was too much!

Although we were hired at a Catholic school, choice of religion was not a prerequisite. In the 70's, government schools in the Bahamas were deplorable. A classroom could house up to 50 children with not enough pencils to go around. Salary was not guaranteed.

One highlight of a school year was the magnificent Christmas concert Dick directed. Sister Patricia triumphed in securing the Bahamas Princess Hotel ballroom in Freeport for this highly anticipated event. The huge stage, framed by elegant curtains, was the perfect setting for these musically gifted students.

Families "dressed to the nines" crowded in and beamed with pride at the music provided by their children. One class after another performed two or three selections of song and dance--often with props and costumes.

Picture 20 kindergarten girls, dressed in frilly white dresses, lacy socks, and patent leather shoes, tripping across the stage to, "Here Comes Suzy Snowflake!" They sang their little hearts out, and my eyes pricked with pride and tears.

We carry treasured memories in our hearts and minds.

We will always remember the bird's eye view of hundreds of school children gathered around the flagpole each morning, standing at attention and singing the national anthem. "Lift up your heads to the rising sun, Bahamaland..."

We entered the Bahamas as tourists for four years, as we had no work permits. No functioning schools (all run by churches) had been granted them. The government made it cost-prohibitive.

At times we flew back before official sunset, having left that morning for Florida on a four-seater plane. We were often queried about length of our stay. An immigration officer once asked, "You plan on doing a little teaching while you're here?"

After four years, Dick and I knew it was time to get settled somewhere in Canada or the United States. Sister Patricia and many others saw us off at the airport. Leaving the place that had become home was heartbreaking, and we waved good-bye with overflowing hearts.

We flew into Miami, bought an old Chevy Nova, and headed north. We ultimately settled in Rockland in August of 1979, and here we have stayed.

We felt very fortunate that Dick secured a vocal music teaching position in MSAD 5. He spent the next 35 years in K-12 music, retiring in 2015 after teaching for 44 years.

He had also played in the dining room at the Samoset for decades and accompanied weddings, funerals, and church worship.

Dick started a show choir and supported the "Up With People" program for which many of his students were selected to travel to Europe and throughout the U.S. Many qualified for All-State Chorus and participated in District III Music Festivals.

I took courses at UMO and did substitute teaching. I taught for four years at

Rockport Elementary and then chose to stay at home raising our two boys for 11 years.

During that time, I worked at the Camden Yacht Club and had other aside jobs—one of which was teaching Business English to women in job training. I finished my career with 22 years at our dear little Gifford Butler School in

South Thomaston. I retired in 2018 after experiencing the joy of having my grandson and his friends in my class.

The Waltons live in Rockland and have two married sons and three grandchildren.



Richard and Pam stay busy in their retirement years.

Bits 'n Pieces

Sam's Club Renewal

As members renew their Sam's Club memberships in the next few months, no incentives for renewal are available at this time. We will let you know as soon as perks are reinstated at Bangor, Augusta, and Scarborough clubs.



Write for *The Clarion*

We always want to hear from our readers. A goal is to have as many different people write as possible. We like to hear various perspectives and learn what our retired colleagues are doing.

We glean ideas as to opportunities for volunteerism and service in our own communities and schools. Our writers share good ideas, suggest activities, and opportunities for involvement.



We also like to hear your opinions and if you agree or disagree with the manner in which we move forward with initiatives, activities, and projects.

We have lived through a record-setting four months. What have you learned? What suggestions do you have? Please consider writing an article or letter to the editor for *The Clarion*. Share your ideas. Consider writing.

Do you now have email?

Maybe when you joined MEA-Retired years ago, you did not have an email account. Now, you may be using email.

Did you just recently acquire an email account? Has your email address changed? If we do not have your email address and you would like to receive our electronic communications, please send an email message to our MEA-Retired liaison, Lisa Collins, at lcolins@maineea.org.



Mrs. Walton poses with one of her "smaller" classes at the end of a most memorable year.



Membership Matters: Welcome a friend

By Lois Kilby-Chesle, Chairperson
Membership Committee

Ahh, summer in Maine!
As retirees we can all celebrate with our colleagues who have wrapped up their last weeks in the classroom, or perhaps of their career, and enjoyed a few weeks of summer bliss. We welcome all our new retirees to join MEA-Retired as we strengthen our ranks and increase our friendships.

Remember your last few days of packing and saying goodbye? Lost in those busy times was the thought about

joining MEA-Retired. That's how you, as a relaxed retiree, can help us:

Speak to recently retired educators about signing up for our organization.

Direct new retirees to the application website at <https://mearetired.org/joining>

Share your copy of the Clarion (when you've read all the news) as a way of showing the work we do at MEA-Retired.

Talk to new retirees about the importance of staying active in our Association. There are so many benefits, from gaining retiree rights in the legislature through political action, to discounts and savings opportunities from NEA partners, to social interaction (who doesn't want a little more time with friends after the past year?)

Gift a retiree the costs of membership. Or encourage your Local Education Association to pay the year's cost. It's no more than \$100 for the year.

The 2021-22 dues structure is as follows: MEA Retired dues, \$15; MEA dues, \$29; NEA-Retired dues, \$35. Or you may also purchase a one-time Life Membership in NEA-Retired for \$300. Dues for local county affiliates range from \$5 to \$15 per year.

If you have former colleagues who haven't yet joined, encourage them as well. Can you think of just one person you know who was an active local MEA member before retiring, but who hasn't joined MEA Retired? Sometimes in the past we know we have missed

getting all our potential members. We could double our numbers if we each found one new member! It would be AMAZING to have a larger group of retiree friends in our state. By working together to build our membership numbers, we all gain.

If you have questions about membership, reach out to our wonderful Membership Committee members:

- Kay Grindall of Oakland, kay_grindall@yahoo.com;
- Paul Bouchard of Fort Kent, paulj@roadrunner.com
- Peter Allen of Portland, pallen04038@gmail.com;
- Robert Jean of Thomaston, vegas04861@yahoo.com;
- Roger Roy of Caribou,



Kilby-Chesley

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