



# THE CLARION

The Newsletter for Retired Educators  
Maine Education Association Retired Vol. 134, No. 2

December 2021

## From our President



Gary McGrane

It has been a busy October, and we start off November celebrating Native American Heritage Month and another opportunity for truth, healing, and change.

If you are looking for resources and information about upcoming events be sure to read the entire edition of this month's *Clarion*.

During this past month, MEA-Retired has facilitated at

least eight educational programs, four of which were multi-sessions, for a total of 28 hours of education. Most of those hours were devoted to Pre-Retirement seminars.

Thanks to our pre-retirement facilitators, Carl Bucciantini and Ed Nunery, for shepherding interested active educators through the maze of issues associated with the important decision of retirement.

Over 400 people registered for these seminars, and

many have asked for one to cover higher ed. We are contemplating adding another opportunity for our higher education folks. Not this year, but maybe next.

In other news, as your representative on the MEA Board of Directors, we issued a statement that all educators should be vaccinated against COVID-19 or should be regularly tested, in order to keep staff, students, and our communities as safe as

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## 70th Convention underway

By Rheba Michaud, Chairperson  
Convention Committee



Rheba Michaud

We are looking forward to our 70<sup>th</sup> MEA-Retired Convention and Annual Meeting at the Augusta Civic Center on May 5, 2022. Our theme is "Happy 202nd Birthday, Maine: Proud Past and Bright Future."

Our keynote speaker is Dr. Libby Bischof, Ph.D., Executive Director, Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education and Professor of History at the University of Southern Maine.

Our four breakout sessions are varied and interesting.

Author Mark Leslie of Littleton will speak about the "Underground Railroad" era in Maine.

Our worldwide travelers, Phil Gonyar and Carl Daiker of Waterville, will take us on exciting adventure, "To Antarctica and Back."

Jim and Lynne Lubas of Dover-Froxcrot will present a session on "Line Dancing." They are avid dancers and especially enjoy a night of line dancing. Attendees will move and groove and get a little exercise.

Dr. Tracy Michaud, assistant professor of Tourism and Hospitality at the University of Southern Maine will speak about how Maine is working with Iceland and

Greenland to make connections for increased travel options.

We also have speakers from MEA, MEA Benefits Trust, AARP, MainePERS and other agencies in which we are involved. The typical awards and recognitions are planned.

We know we have some new committee chairpersons who have never presented before—Membership, Community Participation, and others. We will host a "practice" session so that everyone will be comfortable with what is expected when presentations are made to those in attendance.

PAC will have its wonderful raffle table. Please plan to donate some items. We invite crafters to send a few items. The monies help defray cost for the delegates from MEA-Retired to attend NEA convention either in person or

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## MEA-Retired

"Happy 202nd Birthday,  
Maine: Proud Past,  
Bright Future"

70th Convention and  
Annual Meeting  
Augusta Civic Center  
May 5, 2022

## Leadership training highlights Parliamentarian procedures

By Bob Jean  
MEA-Retired President-Elect

Twenty members of MEA-Retired recently attended a leadership training focusing on the rules to ensure that a smooth democratic process is in place as we conduct meetings and do the business of the Association.



Our keynote speaker was Stephen Gorrie, a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians and the American Institute of Parliamentarians, reviewed the basics of Parliamentary Law.

Parliamentary procedure is vital to maintaining order, expediting business, protecting the rights of the majority to decide, protecting the rights

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# Pension history and update

By Crystal Ward  
Legislative Liaison



Since 1942, the Maine Public Employees Retirement System

(MainePERS) has helped public employees prepare for retirement. The System's contributing members include teachers, state, county, and municipal employees, legislators, judges, and those who work for other public entities.

In addition to our active members, many public sector retirees and their beneficiaries receive monthly benefits from retirement plans offered by MainePERS. The System also administers Disability Retirement, Group Life Insurance, and MaineSTART—a tax-deferred retirement savings program.

Administration of these programs includes financial administration, investment

administration, recordkeeping of members' work and compensation data, and administration of retirement-related services provided to members, employers and retirees.

MainePERS was established in 1942 for retiring state employees. Teachers, also referred to as "Old System Teachers" who were in a non-contributory retirement plan established in 1913, were brought into MainePERS in 1947. They merged with the Maine Teachers Retirement Association Retirement Plan.

MainePERS assumed an Unfunded Actuarial Liability (UAL) for these plans. Initially MainePERS was funded on a "pay-as-you-go" cost basis but was changed to funding on an UAL in 1994 in accordance with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board ("GASB") Statement No. 25 issued on November 1, 1994.

The operation, administration and policies are under the direction of an eight-member Board of Trustees that is responsible for setting policy and administering MainePERS. The Governor appoints one member to represent State and Participating Local District retirees and the Maine Education Association has a retiree representative.

In 1995, Maine voters approved amending Article IX of the Maine Constitution by adding sections 18, 18-A and 18-B, to protect the financial integrity of the State and Teacher Retirement Plan. Section 18 requires that contributions to MainePERS **be "held, invested or disbursed as in trust for the exclusive purpose of providing" retirement benefits.**

Section 18-A requires that retirement benefits be funded annually on an actuarially sound basis and prohibit the creation of unfunded liabilities. I

n 2017, voters approved another amendment, in Section 18-A that allows experience losses to be retired over 20 years instead of 10.

Section 18-B requires the Legislature to appropriate

funds such that the UAL certified on June 30, 1996 at \$2.9 billion is retired by **2028**. As a result of these amendments, MainePERS is soundly funded and on track to retire the original \$2.9 billion UAL by the required date.

Significant changes to MainePERS since inception are as follows:

**1992**—changed the calculation of average, final compensation for new and active state employees and teachers and increased the normal retirement age from 60 to 62.

**1999**—enacted 5 M.R.S., sec. 17801, to protect pension benefit as a contractual, constitutional right under the Maine and U.S. Constitutions.

**2011**—increased the retirement age from 62 to 65 for new and non-vested state employees and teachers. Employees are "vested" in retirement system after five years. Raised the Penalty for early retirement from 2.25% to 6% per year.

**2011**—reduced Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) from a maximum of 4% of the total benefit to 3% of the first \$20,000 of the pension benefit indexed to inflation. This was a substantial reduction in pension benefits. Although the stated purpose of the change was to balance the General Fund Budget, the savings were used for tax reductions on the wealthy.

In addition, the change was never intended to be permanent, but a one-time budget measure. Efforts to restore this benefit were unsuccessful. MEA and Maine Association of Retirees (MAR) will continue to work on this.

**2011**—suspended the COLA for state, teacher, legislative and judicial retirees for two years, resulting in a reduction of benefits

**2020**—amended 5 M.R.S. sec. 17801, to protect the COLA as contractual and constitutional right under the Maine and United States Constitutions. MAR and MEA were instrumental in the enactment of this important amendment

Retired educators may be

eligible for insurance under Anthem's Medicare PPO administered through the MEA Benefits Trust. Specific benefit and eligibility information is available on MEA's website <https://www.meabt.org/>

The state imposes a tax on MainePERS pension income except for a \$10,000 deduction (36 M.R.S., sec. 5122 (M-2)).

Two provisions in federal law adversely impact retirees receiving a MainePERS pension and Social Security (SS).

The first is the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP): When a person receives a pension from an employer who did not withhold SS taxes, and the person receives SS benefits, the federal government reduces the SS benefit by an amount based on the person's average monthly earnings.

The second provision is the Government Pension Offset (GPO): A person who receives a retirement pension from a governmental agency that did not withhold SS taxes will have the SS spousal benefits reduced by two-thirds of

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*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 fifth day of the month preceding publication. Please send articles to [kay\\_grindall@yahoo.com](mailto:kay_grindall@yahoo.com). Questions? Call Kay at 207-512-0027.

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@maineaa.org](mailto:lcollins@maineaa.org).

#### Communications Committee:

Chairperson Jane Conroy  
Carl Daiker, Photographer/  
Proofreader  
Molly Smith, Information Coordinator  
Kay Grindall, *Clarion* Editor  
Pam Partridge, Web Administrator  
Roger Fuller, Facebook Administrator

Gary McGrane, President  
**Maine Education Assoc. Retired**  
310 E. Dixfield Rd., Jay, ME 04239  
[gmcgrane7@gmail.com](mailto:gmcgrane7@gmail.com)  
207-645-6103  
<http://www.mearetired.org>

## 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 Executive Committee 2021-2023



**President**  
Gary McGrane  
gmccgrane7@gmail.com  
207-491-6103



**President-Elect**  
Bob Jean  
vegas04861@yahoo.com  
207-593-6597



**Secretary**  
Marilyn Hylan  
mmhylan@icloud.com  
207-491-5848



**Information  
Coordinator**  
Susan Feiner  
sfeiner@gmail.com  
207-712-4188



**Treasurer**  
Bob Souther  
rsouther@pwless.net  
207-498-8921



**Assistant Treasurer**  
Ben Paradis  
paradisben@gmail.com  
207-316-7318



**Immed. Past President**  
Kay Grindall  
kay\_grindall@yahoo.com  
207-512-0027



**Communications  
Committee**  
Jane Conroy  
jconroy@maine.edu  
207-717-6472



**Community  
Participation**  
Susan Feiner  
sfeiner@gmail.com  
207-712-4188



**Convention  
Committee**  
Rheba Michaud  
rmichaud143@charter.net  
207-564-7494



**Healthcare  
Committee**  
Belinda Mlucucci  
bmlucucci80@gmail.com  
207-846-9552



**Historian**  
Jan Crofoot  
jcrofoot@myfairpoint.net  
207-374-3277



**Legacy  
Committee**  
Hugh Keene  
mghw79@gmail.com  
207-783-3326



**Legislative  
Committee**  
Crystal Ward  
cward10@roadrunner.com  
207-786-7084



**Membership  
Committee**  
Roger Roy  
soucyroy@maine.rr.com  
207-768-1688



**Policy  
Committee**  
Corley Anne Byras  
corleybyras@gmail.com  
207-213-6880



**Pre-Retirement  
Committee**  
Susan Grondin  
scgrondin@hotmail.com  
207-782-8850



**Resolutions  
Committee**  
Claudette O'Connell  
cladet456@gmail.com  
207-942-6137



**AARP Liaison**  
Carl Bucciantini  
carlbu@fairpoint.net  
207-754-1053



**Facebook  
Administrator**  
Roger Fuller  
rfuller@mainenet.org  
818-216-0448



**MainePERS  
Trustee**  
John Kimball  
jhkmtk44@yahoo.com  
207-743-8009



**MEA Benefits Trust  
Trustee**  
Faith Campbell  
fannecampbell@gmail.com  
207-567-3190



**MEA Board of Directors**  
Gary McGrane  
gmccgrane7@gmail.com  
207-491-6103



**Parliamentarian**  
Phil Gonyar  
pgonyar@roadrunner.com  
207-873-6562



**The Clarion Editor**  
Kay Grindall  
kay\_grindall@yahoo.com  
207-512-0027



**Web Administrator**  
Pam Partridge  
pampartridge1@gmail.com  
207-635-2131

According to our bylaws, the Executive Committee of the Maine Education Association Retired shall consist of officers, chairpersons of the standing committees, the MEA Board of Directors representative, the MEA-Retired trustee to MainePERS, the retired member of MEABT, the liaison to AARP-Maine, *The Clarion* editor, the Webmaster, the Facebook Administrator, the Historian, the Parliamentarian, and the Convention Coordinator. The Board of Directors consists of the Executive Committee and affiliate

presidents and vice presidents. (See Page 4) An MEA-Retired member elected to an office in NEA-Retired or selected for an NRTA position is also an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors.

The Executive Committee shall act for the Association between meetings of the Board of Directors. It may present to the Board of Directors recommendations for its consideration or appointment. It shall be responsible for nominations, to be submitted to the Governor, for

an Association representative on the Maine Public Employees Retirement System's Board of Directors. It shall approve an annual financial review of the Association's finances at the first meeting following the biennial election. A majority of the committee chairpersons shall constitute a quorum.

The Board of Directors shall consist of the elected officers of the Association, chairpersons of standing committees, the president and vice president or their proxies of each county affi-

ate and Higher Education Association Retired.

The Board of Directors shall transact any business in the interim between annual and special meetings of the Association. The Board meets on the first Monday of September, November, April, and June. The Executive Committee meets on the first Monday of August, October, December, and March. A meeting is also held on the first Wednesday evening before the annual meeting in May.

Our bylaws are posted on our [mearetired.org](http://mearetired.org) website.

# NEA, NEA-Retired want to hear from us

What are our retirees doing? How are they helping to make differences in the lives of others? How are the lives of others being enhanced or having needs met because

retirees are sacrificing and giving of their time, resources, and talents?

We need to look no further than Monmouth, Maine! Type the following in your search google to find this website: **“Science Grandpa Teaches Kids to Shoot for the Stars.”** You will be amazed at what our very own retired science teacher, Bruce Stedman from Monmouth, has been able to accomplish and how he is still making a difference in the lives of students in classrooms today!



He has an amazing story and was recently featured by NEA and NEA-Retired as the subject of the column, “Member Spotlight.”

To that end, NEA-Retired is initiating a new project in their publication featuring members who are involved in volunteerism in very creative ways. We are invited to send stories, photos, reports, and accomplishments to feature in in-depth profiles. Each article would focus on a member who is doing something innovative and creative or who

has an interesting life story.

Examples of other recent profiles of retirees featured in the NEA publication.

- Florida retired member and leader, Ulysses Floyd, on his experiences with segregation as a student and during his career.

- Tennessee retired member, Annette Cothron, who pioneered special education in her state.

Bulletin Board—This section is a roundup of short stories featuring interesting activities and activism among individual retired members or state and local retired groups.

We are looking for suggestions of people or groups to include in these inspiring stories that may help to motivate others to more extensive volunteerism.

To help generate ideas, here are some examples of previous stories that highlight the dedication and volunteerism that make a difference in the lives of others:

A member started a program to help homeless children.

A member appeared in an ad for the Joe Biden campaign.

A local that participated in a car rally to call for a safer reopening of schools.

A state group that successfully fought to eliminate state income tax on social security.

We can see by the Day of Caring projects described on Pages 6 thru 8 of this publication that Maine retired educators already are committed to helping our students, teachers, and staff in so many venues.

These snippets into the lives of our retirees are only a small glimpse as to what they do all year long. They continue to give because our hearts remain in the classroom long after we retire.

You may send stories, pictures, and related materials to [rbrown@nea.org](mailto:rbrown@nea.org),



## 2021-23 Affiliate Presidents and Vice Presidents

County	Name/Position	Tel.	Email
Androscoggin	Alfreda Fournier, P	402-9814	afournier4@roadrunner.com
	Rosita Friel, VP	336-2836	rkfriel@gmail.com
Aroostook	Roger Roy, P	768-1688	soucyroy@maine.rr.com
	Lou Willey, VP	496-5321	louwilley3@gmail.com
Cumberland	Roberta Morrill, P	893-8313	rjdutton36@aol.com
	Marie Solak, VP	632-1046	mariesolak95@gmail.com
Franklin	Jan Collins, P	578-8419	janmariecollins57@gmail.com
	Marilyn Hylan, VP	498-5848	mdhylan@yahoo.com
Hancock	Janet Varnum, Contact	288-3857	1janetva@gmail.com
Higher Ed'n.	Jane Conroy, VP	717-6472	jconroy@maine.edu
Kennebec	George Davis, P	612-2639	gldavis56@yahoo.com
	Linda Sprague VP	495-2075	ljplsprague@gmail.com
Knox	Robert Jean, P	593-6597	vegas04861@yahoo.com
	Joan Hall, VP	594-7730	jjzekehall@roadrunner.com
	Tiare Messing, VP	542-9586	eldamar@midcoast.com
Mid-Coast	Peg Newberg, Contact	833-6336	pdnewberg@comcast.net
	Molly Smith, Rep.	837-8522	gpond15@gmail.com
Oxford	John Kimball, P	743-8009	jhkmtk44@yahoo.com
	Maida Demers-Dobson, VP	336-2458	jmdobson@megalink.net
Penobscot	Esther Bushway, P	947-6448	bushway@maine.edu
	Michael Smart, VP	945-4129	mdsmart8@gmail.com
Piscataquis	Rheba Michaud, P	564-7494	rmichaud143@charter.net
	Lynne Snow, VP	944-5890	legallynne@gmail.com
Somerset	Pam Partridge, P	635-2131	pampartridge1@gmail.com
	Ronald Wilber, VP	474-3943	arwilber@myfairpoint.net
Waldo	Bonnie Maguire, Co-P	342-5456	bmaguire@fairpoint.net
	Sharon Romanow, Co-P	338-2680	Sromanow@roadrunner.com
Washington	Ruth Chaffey, P	726-5536	rmchaffey@hotmail.com
	Betsy Fitzgerald, VP	255-3127	manager@washingtoncounty maine.com
York	Shirley Jones, P	293-8908	shirljonesm@gmail.com

## Training, from Page 2

of the minority to be heard, and helping an organization achieve its purpose.

Stephen explained the order of business to be followed during business meetings and assemblies. Motions and amendments and the order in which they are to be addressed were discussed. Typically, with a basic knowledge, the chair can navigate through these with little problem. A parliamentarian should be available, however, to step in

when needed. Stephen answered questions from the audience and spoke to various scenarios that may occur during a meeting.

Corley Anne Byras of Mid-Coast conducted the afternoon interactive session. Her creative activities reviewed content from the morning. A highlight was her Jeopardy game that reviewed the material and turned into a spirited competition.

Roberta Morrill of Windham is president of Cumber-



Steve Gorrie explained proper parliamentary procedures for conducting meetings. Taking notes are Phil and Linda Sprague of Belgrade. Linda serves as president-elect of Kennebec Retired Educators Association.

## MainePERS, from Page 2

the spouse's pension benefit.

The Legislature (2020), in LD 293, agreed to pay 55% of the health care premium for retired teachers this provided a reduction in the monthly cost. The First Session of the 130th Legislature considered but failed to enact any of several proposals addressing pension reductions and the State taxation of pension benefits.

Proposals included increasing the pension reduction

and eliminating the State income tax on MainePERS pensions. MAR and MEA strongly supported the proposals to eliminate the State income tax as the simplest and most beneficial to most public service retirees.

If you have questions or would like more information or to respond to parts of this report, please contact me: cward10@roadrunner.com or 207-786-7084.

## Convention, from Page 1

virtual.

The book exchange is always an interest for our readers. Therefore, bring those books you have read and share so someone else may enjoy them, too. We will also conduct a solemn memorial service as well.

Once again, we are asking affiliates are asked if they want a table to showcase their activities throughout the year. Many affiliates offer treats or free items or conduct raffles. It is always interesting to see what MEA-Retired members and friends are doing throughout Maine.

Many affiliates do bring a treat, free item, or a raffle. Vendors from a variety of organizations and businesses will be on hand to answer your questions—insurance, crafters, AARP, and more. They offer free items and/or raffle.

The registration fee will stay the same at \$20. You receive coffee and snack in the morning, lunch (a meal), speakers, breakout sessions,

main speakers, awards, vendors from affiliates and vendors from organizations, fun treats, PAC raffle, and door prizes.

One perk of taking on a leadership position on the state or county level gives one free admission to our convention and annual meeting. You are *exempt* from the registration fee of \$20 for one of the following reasons: **MEA-Retired Honorary Member, Present year award recipient, Affiliate President or designee, Executive Committee member, or Past President**

We need your support for our decision to plan for an in-person convention and annual meeting.

If Covid-19 takes another bad turn the beginning of next year then we plan to go all virtual. The registration form will be in the February and April issues of *The Clarion*. We encourage all of you to fill it out immediately and send it right in to our registrar, Larry Given.

land County Retired Educators association and said, "The Leadership Workshop was most interesting and informative. It was very well organized. Having the printed papers to follow with the presentation was most helpful. The 'final exam' was a terrific wrap-up with lots of laughs and fun. Anyone who missed this event really missed something special."

Marilyn Hylan of Damariscotta is secretary of MEA-Retired and enjoyed the day: "Stephen Gorrie gave a very good overview of how to conduct and participate in a formal meeting. Thank you, Corley Anne, for a fun and informative afternoon."

Billie Sherman belongs to Somerset Educators Associa-

tion Retired and commented, "Recording of the secretary's minutes and the correct way to amend motions will be passed on to members of our local."

Parting thought from Stephen: "Keep things simple."

1. Ensure the democratic process is implemented—justice and courtesy for all.

2. Do only one thing at a time.

3. The majority rules.

4. The minority must be heard.

5. Each proposition is entitled to a full and free debate.

6. The desires of the individual must be merged into the larger unit—the organization or assembly.

7. The purpose is to facilitate action, not obstruct it.

## Media recognitions



MEA-Retired newsletter and website recently received first-place national awards by NEA-Retired. (L to R) Gary McGrane, president; Kay Grindall, *Clarion* editor; Pam Partridge, webmaster; and Jane Conroy, Communications Committee chairperson. Our website award will be registered on the NEA "Wall of Fame" for having earned first place for three consecutive years.

# Memorable annual Day of Caring activities

## Androscoggin

The Androscoggin Retired Educators Association (AREA) continued its Day of Caring Backpack Project for

2021.

This year the focus was on Grades Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6. AREA purchased 30 backpacks in varying sizes—small, medium, and large. Many backpacks are donated to schools, but few are targeted for smaller students. So, we tried to fill that particular need.

Three different sized backpacks were tied together and a large tag was attached which described AREA, the project, and our president's contact information.

The packages of three



This backpack is packed with school supplies for an elementary student.

backpacks were delivered to ten elementary schools in Auburn, Sabattus, Turner, Greene, Litchfield and Lisbon.

Cindy Peters and Crystal Ward of Lewiston, drove miles making deliveries, as they try to do a section of Androscoggin County each year. The Day of Caring Project has been very successful and many retirees helped to provide the backpacks and supplies.

## Aroostook

Members of the Aroostook Retired Educators Association (AREA) participated in the Day of Caring with our Bulging Backpacks Project.

We chose two schools in Houlton—the Elementary School (Pre-Kindergarten-Grade 2) and Southside School, Grades 3-5).

Members of AREA purchase school supplies and give monetary donations for our chosen schools. This year was



Houlton Elementary School secretary, Sue Wilmot, helped us unload totes with our gifts.

challenging since we were able to hold only two of our four in-person meetings this summer.

However, thanks to the incredible generosity of our members, our Bulging Backpack Committee was able to collect money, shop and fill two large totes for each school containing supplies to put in their supply closets for teachers and students.

We also made up a gift bag for each of the 37 classroom teachers with a "Thank

You" card, a letter from Aroostook REA, a cash gift, and some special items just for them.

Because of Covid precautions, we were unable to present our projects to the classroom teachers and offer our appreciation for all they do for our students..

Rather, we met outside the school with secretaries, principals, and custodians and transferred all the gifts! Definitely, a year to remember!

Committee members spearheading this project are Janet Woods, Donna Hurley, and Rose Harris,

## Cumberland

Members of Cumberland County Retired Educators Association continues to support the Locker Project this year for the Day of Caring program by sending a donation of \$300 to the Locker Project of Maine, PO Box 3134, Portland 04104.

We did this last year since we hadn't met in person to collect food items for them. Though we are collecting items this fall, we feel that a monetary donation can be used where it is most needed.

## Franklin

Members of Franklin County Retired Educators Association provided school supplies and snacks to students and teachers in Spruce

Mountain Middle School in Jay.

## Hancock

Members of Hancock County Retired Educators Association have provided much-needed school supplies for teachers and students. Each one is invited to give them to a school of his or her choice in Hancock County.

Retirees also volunteered to spend time with members who do not get out much—take them for rides or out to lunch.

## Kennebec

Members of the Kennebec Retired Educators Association (KREA) gathered at Readfield Elementary School to assist teachers with many tasks as they prepared for the opening day

of school.

A variety of teaching materials for students were laminated so that they could be cleaned after each use. We helped teachers by photocopying, collating, stapling, cutting, sorting and cataloging books, and more.

KREA invited teachers and staff to morning coffee and donuts and to lunch. As our day ended, we wished them well as they faced the new year with the continuation of changes imposed by Covid-19 guidelines.

KREA members participating in the service project were Kathleen Choate, Linda Ellis, Phil & Linda Sprague, Larry Given, Marc Poulin, Kelly Frey, Joan Meehan

Also, George & Lauralee Davis, Corley Anne Byras, Roberta Morin, Carl Daiker,



Kelly Frey of Mt. Vernon retired on June 11 and joined KREA on June 14. She had mountains of papers to photocopy for teachers.

Phil Gonyar, Jeff & Karen Malnick (visiting family from Connecticut), and Kay Grindall.

## Knox

Members of Knox County Retired Education Association (KCREA) recently delivered school supplies and money for

See Day of Caring, Page 7

## Day of Caring, from Page 5

playground equipment to Ash Point Community School in Owls Head—RSU #13. The Day of Caring project is a statewide community service



Kneeling is Ash Point Community School Principal Ben Tripp. KCREA members (L to R) Sue McNeilly, Linda Woodman, Bob Jean, and Beth Chamberlin.

initiative sponsored by the Maine Education Association Retired in remembrance of September 11, 2001.

Interested KCREA members are invited to bring either school supplies or money to our September meeting.

In addition to a large amount of supplies, \$300 was collected to add to the \$100 grant we received from MEA-Retired to help provide supplies for students and teachers.

We look forward to our annual projects to reach out to our schools in Knox County communities.

### Mid-Coast

The Mid-Coast Retired Educators Association members volunteered to work at

Bowdoin Central School to help teachers prepare for the first day of school.

Corley Anne Byras



Deb Wagg organizes books, paper, pens, pencils, file folders and classroom supplies in the closet for school personnel.

worked all morning making copies of documents for the secretary and teachers.

Mary Ellen Stypinski and her husband moved all the books from the book room to a new location because the room had to be prepared for another Kindergarten class.

Merle and Debbie Wagg were tasked with opening all the boxes of supplies that came in during the summer. They sorted and organized them in the supply closet for teachers and students.

Many of the teachers stopped by to thank us. We were treated to some great snacks and plenty of water to keep us hydrated. We headed home with a great feeling of accomplishment.

### Penobscot

Penobscot County Retired Educators Association (PCREA) members collected funds to support “Dirigo Reads.” Dan and Karen Cashman are cofounders of Dirigo Reads. The donation will be used to purchase books that will be distributed to first graders who attend schools in Penobscot County.



(L to R): Dan Cashman of “Dirigo Reads” accepts a donation from PCREA President-Elect Michael Smart of Veazie.

### Piscataquis

Piscataquis County Retired Educators plan for the Day of Caring was to donate \$100 to the four school districts in our county: Greenville, Guilford, Milo, and Dover-Foxcroft.

We asked each athletic

director of the district to use the money to help maintain their first aid kits they have to use when needed at the games.

We put \$300 from our general fund with the grant of \$100 to pay for the upgrades. Janie Lander contacted each school district athletic director and delivered a check to each.

### Somerset

Members of Somerset Education Association Retired (SEAR) donated boxes of school supplies for teachers and students. They also donated a check for \$100 to staff at the Norridgewock Millstream Elementary



SEAR Vice President Ron Wilber delivered a box to Principal Robert Rodrigue. At right is Anna Wilber, SEAR secretary for nine years.

School.

### Waldo

Members of Waldo Education Association Retired (WEAR) donated \$100 to Mt. View Middle School in Thorndike. The funds are to be used to purchase personal hygiene items for students in need.

We also made a donation of \$100 to Mt. View Elementary School which will be used to purchase positive affirmation magnets for students' lockers—designed to raise spirits and spread joy among the students during these days of Covid challenges!

Due to the pandemic, we felt this was the safest way to support students and teachers. They were very appreciative of the donations!

### Washington

Members of the Washington County Retired Teachers Association (WCRTA) participated in the MEA-Retired Day of Caring since it was implemented statewide in 2010.

In 2016, our affiliate established a long-term goal to provide a treasure chest filled with supplies to each of the approximately 30 elementary

schools in Washington County.

Many changes have occurred due in part to the impact of the pandemic and this project is no exception. We have added sanitizing supplies to the treasure chest as well. In addition, members were offered the opportunity to make a monetary donation instead of providing the actual items.

This seemed to work well since the affiliate met in person only twice this year. However, voting cards were sent to each member and the top four schools were to receive the chests.

Mary McFadden, Carolyn Mahar, and Dawn Noonan delivered one to Perry Elementary School.

Eva Becket and Pat Sammer delivered chests to schools in Princeton and Woodland. Gwen Strout and Nancy Wiley delivered a chest to Milbridge Elementary School.

Our affiliate has received numerous hand-written as well as verbal thank you messages from principals, faculty, staff, and students expressing their appreciation

See Day of Caring, Page 8

**Day of Caring, from Page 7**

WCRTA members collected items for local schools. Preparing items are (L to R—Row 1) Beverly Randall, Gwen Strout, Pat Sammer, Eva Beckett, Hazel Hammond, Barbara Maloy. (Row 2) John Sprague, Dawn Noonan, Ruth Chaffey, Mary McFadden.



for our donations. It is gratifying to know that we are able to contribute to the educational experience for the teachers and students in Washington County.

**York**

On September 11, retired educators in York County Retired Educators Association (YCRA) worked at the Young School in Saco. Four of our members worked with the principal, three members of their parent group, and board of education members.

The small but mighty group accomplished all that was planned. We are especially excited about painting the play-

ground games.

Jan Cerabona said, "I wish I could be there to see the students eyes at recess time!"

Thanks to Staples, we were able to fill a school box for each of the 300 students at the Young School. We were also able to present the principal with a donation from our York County Retired Educators and Maine Retired Educators.

This is our twelfth year of participating in the annual MEA-Retired Educators Day of Caring.

Each County Association is asked to do something special for a school in their county on or around September 11 to

honor the memory of those who gave their lives on September, 11, 2001.

We had a beautiful day, lots of food and a great feeling of doing something nice for someone else. However, the final extra special capstone activity was to share pizza with the brave, wonderful Saco Firefighters.



YCRA members Jan Cerabona of Eliot and Bill Soucy of Saco paint the playground in bright colors at the Young School in Saco.

**Great gifts for retired friends, auctions, birthdays, Christmas**

Maine Educator



- Long-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$33
- Short-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$31
- 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)

Resolutions are belief statements of MEA-Retired relating to the quality of life of its members. They are not action items and do not have any budgetary impact on the Association.

Do you have ideas to share with leadership as to current issues facing retirees that you would like to address? What considerations do you consider important that would enhance or enrich the quality of

life for retired educators? We invite you to submit a resolution to be considered at our annual meeting on May 5, 2022. See form below.

*Sample resolution: Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes members should encourage young people to research (investigate) careers in education,*

Following are resolutions as depicted in our 2021 convention booklet:

Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes members should support legislative efforts to exempt public pensions from state income tax. (Adopted 1997, Amended and readopted 2002-2006, Amended 2021)

Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes members should support legislative efforts to repeal the GPO/WEP federal provisions in the Social Security Act.

# Resolutions dictate MEA-Retired procedures

By Claudette O'Connell, Chair Resolutions Committee.

(Amended and readopted in 2002-2006, Amended 2021)



Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes members should support legislative efforts to increase retired educator's pension exemption from \$10,000 to parity with the Social Security exemption, and exclude any Social Security benefit received from being used to reduce the deduction. (2005, Amended 2006, Amended 2021)

Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes members should support legislative efforts to allow Maine health and dental premiums to be tax deductible in full. (2005, Amended 2006, Amended 2021)

Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes members should support increasing state funding to 90 percent for health insurance for school employees who are members of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System. (2010, Amended 2012, Amended 2021)

Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes members should actively promote efforts to maintain retirement benefits for members of the Maine Retirement System. (2011, Amended 2012, Amended 2021)

Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes members should support legislative efforts to address "aging in place" issues including increasing the number of home health workers. (2015,

## Maine Education Association Retired

2022 Proposed Resolution Form

Submit by February 15, 2022

Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for submission: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by  Individual  MEA-Retired committee (check one)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliate \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

MEA-Retired Resolutions Committee response:

- Submit to MEA-Retired Annual Meeting for approval
- Edited and submitted to MEA-Retired Annual Meeting for approval
- Proposed resolution denied as received after the submission date
- Proposed language constitutes an action item

A copy of this form indicating the MEA-Retired Resolutions Committee response will be sent to the contact individual or committee chair prior to the Annual Meeting in May. Submit this form to Claudette O'Connell, Chairperson, Resolutions Committee, 320 Howard Street, Bangor, ME 04401 or email your resolution to [cladet456@gmail.com](mailto:cladet456@gmail.com) or [gmcgrane7@gmail.com](mailto:gmcgrane7@gmail.com).

(Sources: MEA/NEA forms August 2019)



By Pam Partridge, President  
Somerset Educators Assoc. Retired

Ron and Anna Wilber of Skowhegan celebrated their 49th wedding anniversary a few months ago. They clearly enjoy being with each other and stay busy together—usually, where you see one, you see the other by his or her side.

Ron graduated from Lewiston High School and earned a degree in elementary/middle school education at the University of Maine at Machias (UMM).

He loved going to school and learning and began to think that teaching would give him a rewarding life. He fondly remembers his own teachers. A fifth grade teacher was particularly memorable, and he felt he really blossomed under the challenges she offered the class. Also, his mother was a teacher, and his parents valued education greatly.

Anna graduated from



## A team of co-educators on many levels

Waterville High School and did not have immediate plans to go to college. She went to work for a bank for a year. However, she had a good friend who went to college and a five-year-old brother who clearly loved school so much. Just watching and listening to his being so happy in school inspired her to become a teacher.

Sadly, after her freshman year in college, she experienced the unthinkable when her greatly beloved eight-year-old brother passed away from a heart issue.

Her family encouraged her to pursue her dream of becoming a kindergarten teacher, and she was the first in her family to complete four years of college. She earned a degree in elementary education at UMM where she met Ron.

Anna taught kindergarten for a year in Winter Harbor, and Ron finished his college degree. They were married and moved to the Skowhegan area to teach. Ron started out at the Norridgewock Elementary School and later transferred to Bloomfield Elementary School. At Mercer Elementary Anna taught kindergarten and Pre-K for a few years. She finished her teaching career of 38 years at North Elementary kindergarten in Skowhegan.

They retired 37 years later. For decades many students in the Skowhegan district had either Mr. Wilber or Mrs. Wilber—or both!

Anna was a building representative and secretary for the Skowhegan Teachers Association. Ron became the supervisor for the Grade 6 boys who served as safety guides for students at various crosswalks.

He was a member of the Student Assistant Team (SAT) which helped develop a plan

for students to be evaluated for special education support. The team met every week for many years.

Anna also served on the Building Committee for the reconstruction of Mercer Elementary School. Ron was on a Curriculum Committee that selected new textbooks for social studies.

Ron served as a judge for National History Day, where junior high and high school students complete a project—writing an essay, creating a poster display, or participating in a skit. The winners were invited to Washington, DC, to compete on the national level.

They understand that teaching is an all-consuming career. Having a good sense of humor is important, and “you certainly are busy all of the time!” they agreed.

Furthermore, they share the belief that “as members of the teaching community, you build lasting relationships with fellow teachers and students that last for many years. You don’t always realize the impact you make on a student because you are so busy. Then a student comes back and tells you how important you were at a pivotal time in his or her life. That is so rewarding.”

In fact, a former student now in her 40’s, Bridget Salley Celik commented on her interactions with Anna: “You started my learning journey providing a safe place to learn and grow.”

Anna loved music and enjoyed seeing what music elicits from students. “It gave them a means to express themselves. ‘Show and tell’ was fun. They were the stars for a few minutes!”

Ron recalled a field trip to see the Telstar Satellite Earth Station in Andover, Maine. The bus ran out of gas on the way back just before dismissal time. They sent a bus to transfer the students.

Ron and Anna were great colleagues and helped other teachers whenever possible. Ron recalled a lot of fun field trips with a fellow teacher, Jane Arthur, who fondly remembers their teaching days together:

“Ron and I frequently did our field trips together at Bloomfield Elementary School. He was a wonderful role model for our students—displaying a kind and caring male for the boys and girls in our classes.”

She shared an experience when their principal was retiring. “We were asked to do a fun celebration for her and agreed that we would ‘act’ like we were the principal’s replacement. I dressed as a farmer named ‘Principal Ima Hogg,’ and Ron wore a cow suit as my ‘Vice Principal Udder Delight.’”

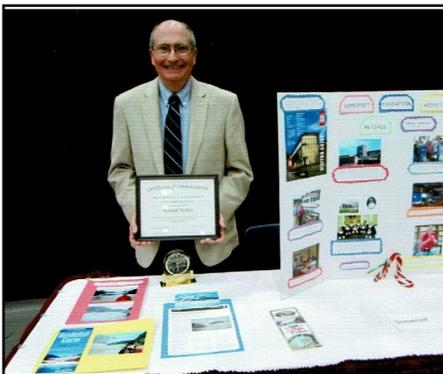
“He was told under no conditions was he to laugh during our skit. Udder Delight stole the show by rolling his eyes but never cracking up. He deserved an Oscar! The skit was so popular that everyone wanted the cow back in subsequent celebrations.”

Jane had a couple of the Wilber children in class and noted, “They are so devoted to their family and faith.”

Speaking of faith, Ron and Anna are regular attendees at the Notre Dame de Lourdes Church in Skowhegan.

When they retired, Ron and Anna volunteered two mornings a week at one of our district’s elementary schools for 10 years in a program called “Story Boost.”

This one-on-one reading program exposes elementary students to books while they



Ron always helped with Somerset’s affiliate displays at our convention. He is pictured here receiving the Leadership Award in 2017.

See Wilbers on Page 11

## Wilbers, from Page 10

receive more tutelage to help develop their reading skills.

JoEllen Gifford taught



This is Hubbard Glacier, which is located in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska. It is 76 miles long and 7 miles wide and the largest glacier in North America.

kindergarten at North Elementary School in Skowhegan where Ron and Anna worked with students for ten years in the “Story Boost” program.

Adult volunteers come and read with at-risk students who likely have not had adults read to them at home prior to kindergarten. Their schema and vocabulary development may be delayed or have a very

short attention span. Teachers ask volunteers read 15 minutes twice a week with a handful of their students.

JoEllen says, “Anna

and Ron started to volunteer with my classroom in 2009. Each year I selected four or five students to read with Anna and Ron. They would spend an hour twice a week reading and discussing the books and asking questions. They introduced special points of

interest about the story and asked the children to make predictions about what they think might happen.

“They formed a special bond with these students and were role models for good reading habits. The students loved the special attention that they received and learned to become active listeners and engaged in in-

teractive conversations.”

Ron and Anna are active in their retirement. Ron is the vice president, and Anna is the secretary (nine years so far) of the Somerset Education Association Retired (SEAR).

Each one has received the SEAR Leadership Award sponsored annually by the Maine Education Association Retired. Ron was chairperson of the SEAR Scholarship Committee and is chair of the Community Participation Committee—a position he’s held for a number of years.

They continue to attend state conferences where they help to set up the SEAR display. They helped June Nickerson-Hovey when she served as chairperson for the annual MEA-Retired convention for four years.

June says, “When I think of them, I am reminded of what a wonderful couple they are—calm, great inner strength, and deep beliefs. They are always willing to help others with ever so gracious spirits. They are such

good people—this world needs many more of them.”

The Wilbers have also traveled extensively in their retirement—cruising to the Mediterranean, Barcelona, Spain, Croatia, Rome, Venice, Montenegro, the Caribbean, Alaska, and most recently right before Covid—a dream trip to Israel.

When they are not serving elsewhere, Ron is outdoors doing chores. He has the most perfectly straight, evenly stacked, wall of firewood I have ever seen. Both love outdoor activities. When not babysitting their granddaughter, they enjoy reading a variety of genres.

Ron and Anna live in Skowhegan and have a son Michael and a daughter Kathleen. Their son Robert and daughter-in-law Terri have Olivia, 5, and a son to be born in January.

*Pam Partridge retired after teaching elementary education for 24 years at the Garrett Schenck School in Anson. Pam lives in North Anson. She and her late husband Deane have two children, four grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.*

## MEA Board of Directors report

By Gary McGrane, Member  
MEA Board of Directors

The Maine Education Association Board of Directors have met on four separate occasions since my last report.

A July Board retreat, an executive session, a Policy Committee meeting, and a September Board of Directors meeting.

The July Board Retreat started with a detailed report from President Grace Leavitt followed by a report from our Executive Director Rachelle Johnson. See July 21 & 22 Board Briefings for more details.

The most pertinent decision of our meeting that has a direct effect on MEA-Retired was the appointment of Faith

Campbell to represent retirees as our trustee on the Maine Benefits Trust—a three-year term starting August 1. MEA has a policy whereby at least one trustee be a retiree.

Larry Given previously served in that capacity for five years. Faith met the criteria—she is retired and a unified member.

The usual reports were reviewed and accepted. There were several presentations and updates. Government Relations Director, John Kosinski, shared some legislative successes. Cedena McAvoy and I shared our experiences from attending the AFL-CIO Organizing 4 Power conferences.

I updated the Board on the start of our pre-retirement sessions and our Leadership

Development Training in October. Our pre-retirement schedule will be part of the information distributed at UniServ District Membership meetings.

We were encouraged to attend as many membership meetings as we could. I attended meetings in Augusta, Searsport, Bangor, Portland, and Skowhegan in person and two others via zoom.

I have been asked to serve on the MEA Policy Committee. We have been meeting to review and develop policies such as MEA-RA adoption of New Business Items. Some of these NBI’s deal with ESP dues structure, new membership category (Community Allies) etc.

We meet outside the Board meetings and present our work to the full Board for discussion and a vote.

I invite you to review the Board report, and I would be happy to answer questions regarding the issues confronting us as members of MEA.

### MEA-Retired is here for you!

**December 6, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.**  
**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Best Western Hotel & Zoom**  
**375 Main St., Waterville**

**March 7, 2022 @ 9:30 a.m.**  
**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Best Western Hotel & Zoom**  
**375 Main St., Waterville**

**April 4, 2022 @ 9:30 a.m.**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Best Western Hotel & Zoom**  
**375 Main St., Waterville**

**Contact affiliate leaders with ideas and concerns.**

# Check out our Facebook page

By Roger Fuller, Administrator  
MEA-Retired Facebook page



Roger Fuller

The Maine Education Association Retired endeavor to create and maintain a Facebook presence is moving right along quite

nicely

We now have about 150 followers from the organization, and we post articles of interest and newsworthy items for educators almost every day. And every once in a while we reference a good recipe!

We also post every issue of *The Clarion* and make references to our active website: [mearetired.org](http://mearetired.org). Connections are being made by members and others.

Most importantly, though, we have created a system of "private groups" to make Facebook available, relevant, and safe to retired educators.

These private groups are open to affiliates and the membership in an affiliate organization. Because they are "private" groups, membership must be approved by a "moderator."

So far, two affiliates have "private groups"—Andros-coggin and Aroostook Counties. They are expanding their membership in those groups and maintaining ongoing communications to stay more connected with their mem-



bers.

Each private group is created under the MEA-Retired banner, so is automatically related to issues and topics relevant to MEA-Retired and the corresponding affiliates.

We invite other affiliates to consider creating their own private groups as well. It is easy. Simply send a request to me at the following email address: [rfuller@mainenet.org](mailto:rfuller@mainenet.org).

We encourage members to check out our online presence. Our MEA-Retired Facebook page may be reached at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063702362546>.

## Pre-Retirement sessions underway

By Susan Grondin, Chairperson  
Pre-Retirement Committee



Sue Grondin

The fall Pre-Retirement Seminars have been successful. In spite of some technological glitches, the first seminar in October was well received by prospective retirees.

Evaluation comments from registrants indicate the length of the seminars, the use of Zoom, the factual information, and the knowledge of the presenters were very positive.

Presentations by Horace Mann representatives, Sharon Beaulieu from the MEA Benefits Trust, and David Jones of MainePERS provided clear and concise information.

Since each person's situation is different, the presenters encourage pre-retirees to make an appointment with Social Security, MainePERS, and the MEA Benefits Trust to determine the financial status and expectations of each individual retirement plan.

The WEP and GPO rulings impact individuals; therefore, educators should speak with a representative from Social Security to learn the full impact of these offsets and the restrictions inherent in each.

Spring sessions will open two weeks prior to each seminar for pre-retirees to register. Our committee suggests prospective retirees attend a seminar three to five years prior to retirement to understand information that could impact an anticipated retirement date.

Lisa Collins, the MEA

Administrative Assistant who works with MEA-Retired, emails members the dates for registering.

Once registered, the attendees receive an email message containing the Zoom link, informational materials, and an evaluation form to review prior to each seminar.

Zoom hosts are Carl Bucciantini of Greene and Ed Nunery of Cumberland Center monitor the chat box and relay registrant questions to the presenters during each seminar.

Sincere appreciation to our speakers and facilitators.

## Wanted: Books for Book Swap

Once again tables will be set up at our MEA-Retired convention in Augusta for our **FREE** book swap. Bring books you have read and take books donated by others. It is a great way to expand your reading and clean out bookshelves. You do not have to bring books in order to take books.



Children's books will also be available. We always need new books to read to our grandchildren now that we are retired have more free time to spend with family. For more information, contact our coordinator, Bob Jean, at 207-593-6597 or send an email to him at [vegas04861@yahoo.com](mailto:vegas04861@yahoo.com).

## MEA-Retired 2022 Pre-Retirement Schedule

- 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

Sue Grondin, Chairperson, [scgrondin@hotmail.com](mailto:scgrondin@hotmail.com), 207-782-8850

Maine Education Association Retired has 11 delegate seats at the MEA-RA in May. Delegates are elected to three-year terms and eight of those elected delegates will be returning.

Additionally, at our 2021 annual meeting, we voted to approve a bylaw change whereby our MEA-Retired president and president-elect are automatic delegates to the MEA-RA.

Since President McGrane is the MEA-Retired representative on the MEA Board of Directors, he is an automatic delegate representing that position.

Our President-Elect Bob Jean will also have a seat at the RA. This leaves two open seats for members to seek election to three-year terms.

In addition to the two-

delegate vacancy, MEA will also conduct elections for the alternate vacancies for MEA-Retired members during the 2022 election season:

There are 10 vacancies for alternate delegates as follows: three 3-year terms; four 2-year terms; and three 1-year terms. Members are encouraged to consider being a delegate or an alternate.

The MEA Representative Assembly will be held at the Sheraton Sable Oaks Hotel in South Portland on May 21 & 22, 2022.

**Application Deadline: January 21, 2022**

NEA Representative Assembly Delegates/Successor Delegates: There are four statewide vacancies to represent the MEA-Retired Association at the National Edu-

cation Association (NEA) Representative Assembly and the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting. These four delegate seats are one-year terms and are in addition to the seats held by Gary McGrane and Bob Jean.

NEA-Retired Members for Life who are exempted from unification are not eligible to run for these positions; however, they may vote for candidates.

Delegates should expect to attend the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting on June 29 & 30, and the NEA Representative Assembly, which will take place from July 3 through July 6, 2022.

**Application Deadline: January 21, 2022.** "Notice of Intent" Forms to be a candidate will be available in December on our website: [www.mearetired.org](http://www.mearetired.org). All forms are available elec-



**Delegate Time**  
**A memorable experience!**  
**Will you serve?**

tronically; paper copies will not be created.

NOTE: The NEA Board of Directors voted on November 3 not to hold the Representative Assembly in Dallas due to concerns over the lack of safety regarding Covid. At the time of this printing, the location will be announced later.

Interested folk may contact Erin Noyes at MEA headquarters: [enoyes@mainecea.org](mailto:enoyes@mainecea.org) or 1-888-622-4418, Ext. 2218.

**From our President, Page 1**

possible during this continuing pandemic.

We further advocated that all public schools follow Maine CDC Guidelines. Regardless of the restrictions like masks and social distancing, testing or vaccinations, I continue to meet via Zoom, except when MEA-Retired meets. Zoom affords me the safety and confidence that my family and I will be safe.

I recently attended the MEA Fall Conference October 23 and 30; Contract Analysis & Proposal Preparation.

I wrote letters on numerous topics to Congressman Jared Golden and U.S. Senators Angus King and Susan Collins a number of times about issues of interest to MEA and MEA-Retired—as suggested by NEA Ed Justice.

Most recently I made over 65 telephone calls and had 21 conversations about GOTV for the November election.

Today I take a relaxing respite from my union activities to enjoy the day. Thank you for the opportunity to serve this organization. I appreciate the opportunity to communicate in person when we can. Stay healthy and stay safe until we meet again.

**Happy 70th Birthday, MEA-Retired!**

Do you know how MEA-Retired began in 1952? Were you in college or teaching in 1952? We would like to feature events, people, accomplishments,

historic moments, landmark occasions, and unique experiences in our 2022 issues. Please send stories and photos to [kay\\_grindall@yahoo.com](mailto:kay_grindall@yahoo.com).

**Dear Miss Perazzi,**  
Although I never had the privilege of being in your English class at Deering High School in Portland, I did have the pleasure of being on the faculty while teaching biology and health for eight years—1965-1969 & 1975-1978.  
I do remember sitting at the round table with you and listening carefully as the English teachers talked strategies. I admired the reputation that you had from all the different students and faculty.  
"Happy Birthday" and be well.  
**Stephanie (Gerber) Stern, '60**  
**Bonita Springs, Florida**  
*I taught science at Portland High School for the next 20 years with 17 as department chair.*

**Century Club**

**Rachel Burden, Presque Isle**  
**Francesca Perazzi, Portland**  
**Martha Rollins, Dover-Foxcroft**

Send the names of retired educators who have reached this milestone to [kay\\_grindall@yahoo.com](mailto:kay_grindall@yahoo.com)

# Tune in to AARP for winter fun, services, and learning

By Carl Bucciantini, AARP Liaison

This is the time of year when AARP staff is creating their State Plan that will serve Maine's 55+ residents for 2021-2022. State Director, Noël Bonam is working to expand and diversify the AARP Maine Executive Council and is retooling roles and responsibilities among staff and volunteers.

In-person activities are still on hold for the foreseeable

future, so we remain in the virtual world. With that in mind, here are some activities that can be shared with MEA-Retired membership:

**Aging Fearlessly: Insights and Hints from the Front Lines of Aging in Maine:**

Read volunteer Suzanne Carmichael's take on aging in Maine. It's entertaining, well-written and informative!

You can find all of Suzanne's blog posts here: <https://states.aarp.org/maine/meaging>

**Emergency Broadband Benefit:**

If the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us anything, it's that access to high-speed internet is not a luxury in this day. It's a necessity!

There is an opportunity for households in need of financial assistance to obtain

internet service. The Emergency Broadband Benefit is an FCC program to help families and households struggling to afford internet service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This new benefit will connect eligible households to jobs, critical healthcare services, virtual classrooms, social and agency meetings, and so much more.

For more information on how to access this Broadband Benefit service, go to: <https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>

**Gentle Chair Yoga:**

AARP Maine knows healthy living is a decision that requires your attention, motivation, and action.

We invite you to join AARP Maine on Friday mornings to learn more about healthy living and to join us

for a gentle chair yoga class. This is being offered now through the end of December.

For more information and to register for the sessions, go to: [https://bit.ly/aarpchair\\_yog-anov](https://bit.ly/aarpchair_yog-anov)

For more information and to register for the December sessions, go to: <https://bit.ly/aarpchairyogadec>

**Meditation Moments:**

You can do a lot in ten minutes. Each Wednesday morning we gather for a Meditation Moment to become focused, take a deep breath, relax, think, and get ready for the day.

Maybe it'll help you, too. All are welcome! This will be offered through December. For more information and to register, go to: <https://states.aarp.org/maine/about-aarp-maine-events-and-more>

## Membership, from Page 16

I plan on meeting with my committee soon although I hate zoom meetings. I am sure you agree that meeting and seeing people face-to-face are much preferred.

Some affiliates have great procedures to recruit new members and retain existing ones, but others less so. We

need to meet and collaborate by sharing what is working well in some affiliates. We can learn from each other and incorporate ideas for recruiting and retaining members.

We don't need to reinvent the wheel, but we need to help some affiliates who are facing challenges. No

two affiliates are the same, but we do have common issues and goals and can help each other.

Aroostook is the largest affiliate in number of members, but more retirees die each year than new people retire. This is a byproduct of having lost approximately half of our county's population over the last 50 or more years.

To maintain membership in Aroostook, I have witnessed how retirees relish the social interaction of our lunches during the summer months. We average more than 75 members per meet-

ing as we meet in four regions to keep in touch with everyone since we are so geographically separated. We can't have those meetings in the winter months since we live in "Siberia."

As an aside, every affiliate has its own story, and that is why it is so important for us to attend the convention and annual meeting in May of every year.

I will close by saying that my goal for membership is for each affiliate to be a sustainable, healthy family unit, looking out for every member and doing whatever we can to help each other.

## Convention Booklet Deadlines

**February 1: Leadership Award Bios & Photos**

**March 1: MEA-Retired Officers  
Committee Chairs Reports**

**April 1: Necrology Reports**

**Necrology Note:** Names of all deceased who contribute to the education of students—bus drivers, custodians, cooks, secretaries, coaches, ed techs, teachers, principals, Superintendents, etc.

Dates of decease: April 1, 2021, thru March 31, 2022

Please send to [kay\\_grindall@yahoo.com](mailto:kay_grindall@yahoo.com).

Mail to 23 Hilltop Drive Oakland 04963

## Items needed for PAC auction at convention!

Some great projects for the slow winter months:  
Knit? Sew? Crochet? Wood or metal creations?  
Bake? Unique crafts?

Contact Corley Anne Byras, Auction Chairperson  
207-213-6880 or [corleybyras@gmail.com](mailto:corleybyras@gmail.com)



## Northeast Delta Dental offers more than dental benefits

### Extraordinary national network access and savings like no other

Seeing a network dentist translates to..

- ★ **No balance billing** - Subscribers cannot be billed for the difference between the in-network dentists' submitted charges and Delta Dental's maximum allowable charges.
- ★ **Reduced paperwork** - In-network dentists complete and forward dental claims directly to Northeast Delta Dental. Subscribers do not have to file claim forms and payment is made directly to the in-network dentist.
- ★ **No up-front payment** - Participating Delta Dental dentists cannot charge up-front for the amount reimbursable under the local Delta Dental contract.

### First-of-its-kind Health *through* Oral Wellness® (HOW®) program

Identifies and engages patients at greater risk for oral disease, thereby helping members gain and maintain better oral and overall health (and ultimately help reduce health care expenditures). Learn more at [www.HealthThroughOralWellness.com](http://www.HealthThroughOralWellness.com)

The following rates will be effective February 1, 2022:

- Member \$55.10
- Member + One \$93.86
- Family \$147.80

## 5 Smile-Friendly Ways to Live Longer

### 1. Eat a balanced diet

Try mouth-friendly snacks like cheese and low-sugar yogurt for teeth-strengthening calcium and vitamin D and drink plenty of water to help prevent cavity-causing dry mouth. You can also avoid extra calories and cavities by limiting sugary and starchy foods and sugary drinks, including sticky candies, potato chips, sport drinks, and sodas.

### 2. Maintain a healthy weight

Obesity (a body mass index higher than 30) shortens life expectancy and is a risk factor for early death. Excess weight is also a sign of overeating and consuming too many unhealthy foods, which puts you at risk for cavities, gum disease and other oral health issues.

### 3. Practice great oral hygiene

Brushing your teeth with fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day for two minutes each time, flossing daily and visiting your dentist regularly are obviously smart ways to maintain great oral health. But did you know

oral health is also connected to good overall health? Numerous studies have found that people with gum disease may be at increased risk for heart disease, diabetes and other health problems.

### 4. Exercise and reduce stress

Exercise and meditation can also reduce stress. Stress has been linked to a decreased lifespan and increased illness, including these oral health problems:

- Teeth clenching and grinding
- Cold and canker sores
- Gum disease



### 5. Avoid tobacco and limit alcohol

All forms of tobacco (including vaping) also have negative effects on oral health. Along with an increased risk of oral cancer, tobacco usage can damage teeth and gums, and cause tooth loss, bad breath, and yellow teeth. Drinking alcohol can cause cavities due to sugar and dry mouth. It can also lead to gum disease, oral cancer, and more.



# Membership Matters: Everyone's responsibility

By Roger Roy, Chairperson  
Membership Committee

As the newly appointed membership chair, I feel uncertain how to proceed, but that never stopped me taking on other endeavors in the past.

As did many of you, I am sure, I thought Lois Kilby-Chesley started out very well in this position but had to

step down for family reasons. I humbly agreed to serve in her place when the position became open.

I am a member of the Higher Education Association Retired (HEAR). I also serve as president of the Aroostook Retired Educators Association (AREA).

In my previous life as a professor at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, I served as membership chairperson for the Associated Faculties of the University of Maine (AFUM).

It was there that I learned that membership is everybody's business. We are stronger when we are many and together. We are weak

when we are working by ourselves.

Membership comes from giving retirees an opportunity to join us. We are a voice for retiree benefits—especially protecting our retirement and healthcare coverage for which we worked long and hard.

But I have seen that it is easy to sit back and let someone else do the work of advocating for us and advocating for students.

Everyone is busy, but advocacy work is easier if shared among many. Politicians respond if they know you are speaking for many members who come from

every legislative district and always vote.

My goals as membership chair are to carry on the duties I have seen Ben Paradis and Paul Bouchard do so well for many years.

Paul Bouchard helped me sign up for NEA-Retired for a lifetime membership when I was 60 years old—10 years before I finally retired from the university five years ago. The cost was only \$100 then, and I was eligible.

You see, higher ed faculty usually retire much later than K-12 teachers because our working conditions are so much easier. We control our work spaces—administrators don't.



**RETIREMENT**

Take the next step

Join Maine Education Association Retired



Give a Gift

NEA: \$35  
MEA: \$29  
MEA-Retired: \$15  
Affiliate: Dues vary

Join us Today!!

MEA-Retired Membership

See Membership, Page 14