



THE CLARION

December 2024

The Newsletter for Retired Educators
Maine Education Association Retired Vol. 136 No. 2

From our President



Bob Jean

In this issue of *The Clarion* I am going to take a trip down memory lane. It is my way of attempting to combat all the negativity and divisiveness present in our world today.

It is a trip back to my years as a third grade teacher in Tenants Harbor at the St. George School. The lessons on contractions, continents, parallelograms, and cells were all important; but those are not the highlights that come to mind when I reminisce.

What does come to mind

most are the special times when my students interacted with each other and with me to learn in a more experiential way. There is no doubt my former students cherish those memories as well. A few examples are as follows:

(1) *The Wizard of Oz* class play. A local artist guided the students in creating scenery for the play. The children did all the work with her guidance.

Parents pitched in by making costumes for four

See President, Page 4

Don't miss out!

By Rheba Michaud, Chairperson
Convention Committee

"Everyone Is a Leader" is the theme of MEA-Retired's 73rd Convention and Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 1, 2025, at the Augusta Civic Center.

And that means YOU!

You are the esteemed, appreciated leaders and members of our 16 MEA-Retired affiliates. You keep our opportunities, programs, and volunteerism going, rewarding, and fulfilling year after year.

We have a great day planned just for you and your friends and you don't want to miss it!

We listened to your suggestions after our last convention. *You liked the availability of two breakout sessions but wanted more time to view the exhibits, affiliate displays, vendors, and participate in the PAC auction.*

We revised our schedule to give an extra 45 minutes to participate in these activities and connect with

73rd MEA-Retired
Convention
and
Annual Meeting

May 1, 2025

"Everyone Is a Leader!"

retired colleagues and friends.

After lunch, we will be honored to hear our keynote speaker—an esteemed, most accomplished, renowned member of our Armed Forces community:

Keynote Speaker Captain Colleen Nevius, USNR (Retired) was the first U.S. Naval female test pilot, Captain Nevius, graduated and was commissioned in May 1977 from Purdue

University as a member of the second group of women Midshipmen accepted into Navy ROTC.



Capt. Colleen Nevius

She was selected for pilot training commencing October 1977, flying the T-28, TH-57 and H-1, earning the coveted Wings of Gold in February, 1979.

With Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) Karen Thornton, Colleen was assigned as one of two women pilots to the sea-duty

See 2025 Convention, Page 14

We need delegates! YOU?

MEA-RA: 1 delegate and 7 alternates
NEA-Retired Annual Meeting / NEA-RA: 4 delegates

MEA-RA

Maine Education Association Retired has 11 delegate seats at the MEA Representative Assembly to be held at the Marriott Sable Oaks Hotel in South Portland.

Will YOU be the one new delegate we need?

In addition to the delegate vacancy, we also have seven of the 11 alternate delegate positions open. Four alternates will be returning.

The opportunity to become

actively involved in your MEA-Retired Association by attending the RA is here!!! You are invited to participate in the all-important voting processes on new business items, resolutions, and other actions.

Will YOU join the race? At its 2024 RA, MEA voted to implement one-year terms for ALL delegates. We have delegates who were originally elected to three-year terms. Nine of our 11 delegates will continue their terms:

Four delegates have one more year and will end their terms in April 2026. Five delegates will end their terms in April 2027. According

See Delegates, Page 3



**Dental
enrollment
season opens**

**No rate increases
this year!**

**Need to change
your plan?**

**See complete
details on Page 3**

Inside this issue

73rd Convention.....	1, 14, 15
Be a Delegate.....	1, 3
Legislative Updates.....	2
Delta Dental.....	3
Delegate Life.....	1, 3
MainePERS Portal.....	4
Pre-Retirement Sessions.....	5
MEA Benefits Trust.....	6
2024 Day of Caring.....	7-10
MainePERS.....	11
NRTA & AARP.....	12-13
Membership Matters.....	16

"promoting the economic, professional, and social welfare of retired educators"



By Crystal Ward, Chairperson
Legislative Committee

Hello MEA-Retired,

Another year and another long session of the Maine Legislature will begin soon.

Maine's part-time legislature is composed of the Senate (35 members) and the House of Representatives (151 members). Members of both entities are elected for two-year terms and are limited to four consecutive terms.

The Maine House also has three non-voting members who represent the Penobscot Nation, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians.

The Legislature meets annually in regular session.

Now that we've voted . . . the work continues

The first regular session of the 132nd Legislature convenes on the first Wednesday in December 2024 after the general election. There is a statutory adjournment date of the third Wednesday in June 2025.

The regular session may be extended, statutorily by two 5-day extensions and a veto day. Maine is one of three states in the Union to use the joint standing committee system. Bills for this session must be submitted in December.

MEA-Retired will be working on bills dealing with raising the amount the State pays for health care insurance premiums by 5 percent. We will also recommend raising the capped amount to which COLA is applied.

We must remain diligent in fixing the devastating, unjust cuts to our MainePERS pension that were made in 2011. We will also be watching MaineCare.

If you have issues or concerns that seem inequitable or would be of benefit to many retirees, feel free to contact me. Now is the time when we are assembling our legislative plan. We need your input about issues that

need to be addressed.

We must continue to keep close tabs on what bills are submitted to make sure no harm will be done to retirees.

Down in Washington D.C. NEA-Retired will be keeping tabs on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. All of these plans have people who want changes, privatization, and/or cuts.

The election will send the same Maine delegation to Washington D.C.—Senators Collins and King, and Rep. Pingree. As of this writing, Golden has not yet been certified the winter. It will be decided by rank choice voting in the near future.

In Augusta Governor Mills has two years left in her term. The Maine Senate and House of Representatives appear to have the Democrats still in the Majority but by smaller margins. (Some recounts are not completed at this writing.)

In the Congress in Washington D.C. Republicans will be in the majority in the US Senate. In the US House of Representatives the Republicans may also have the majority—not all votes were counted as of this writing.

Republicans Donald Trump is the President-Elect

and JD Vance is the Vice President-Elect.

The Maine Electoral College members meet in person in Augusta to vote on December 17. Federal law requires Maine to deliver certified Electoral College results to the vice president, serving as president of the Senate, by the

See Legislative Updates, Page 5



Members are invited to sign up to receive "up-to-the-minute" legislative news and updates from MEA Government Relations Director John Kosinski. Send an email to him at jkosinski@maineea.org.

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 or mail to Kay at 23 Hilltop Drive, Oakland 04963. Questions? Call Kay at 207-512-0027.

We pay 70 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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NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA RA

June 30—July 6, 2025
Portland, OR

July 1—July 7, 2026
Denver, CO

June 29—July 5, 2027
Indianapolis, IN

June 29—July 5, 2028
Washington, D.C.

June 29—July 5, 2029
Kansas City, MO



MEA-Retired is here for you!

December 2, 2024, 9 a.m.
Executive Committee
MEA Headquarters, Augusta

March 3, 2025, 9 a.m.
Executive Committee
MEA Headquarters, Augusta

April 7, 2025, 9 a.m.
Board of Directors Meeting
Best Western Hotel, Waterville

Meet/greet begin at 9 a.m.
Meetings begin at 9:30 a.m.

Contact affiliate leaders
with ideas and concerns.

MEA-Retired Delegates

MEA-RA
May 17-18, 2025
We need 1 delegate
and 7 alternates

NEA-Retired Annual
Meeting and NEA-RA
June 30—July 7, 2025
We need 4 delegates

Will you consider?

Delegates, from Page 1

to MEA Executive Director Rachelle Bristol: "Those elected to longer terms will complete those terms."

MEA-Retired president and president-elect are automatic delegates to the MEA-RA. MEA Administrative Assistant Erin Noyes explains the situation that is in place this year due to the new rules implemented by MEA at the 2024 RA.

She says, "Because MEA-Retired elects their officers in May, if a current delegate becomes the president-elect, they would fill the designated president-elect seat and their vacated delegate seat would remain vacant for the year (in this case, the 2025 RA) since elections for the delegate seats are already completed at that

point." All expenses are paid, and mileage to the MEA-RA will be reimbursed. Candidates must be "unified" members which means one must be a member of MEA, MEA-Retired, and NEA-Retired.

The MEA bylaws, also found on the website Governance Documents - Maine Education Association (maineeca.org), specify the following: "Delegates representing retired members shall be apportioned in accordance with the ratio of one (1) delegate per five hundred (500) members or major portion thereof."

Just a note of explanation: The term of a delegate expires in April of the following year of service—which is before the current MEA-RA held in May.

NEA-Retired Meeting NEA-RA

Additionally, we have six delegate seats to the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly in Portland, Oregon on July 1-7, 2025.

MEA-Retired pays for all expenses—transportation, lodging and meals so that delegates may carry out the expected duties. Delegates pay nothing.

The president and president-elect shall serve as elected delegates to the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA-RA. The other four delegate seats are one-year terms open to our MEA-Retired unified members. Will you serve?

Delegates have opportunities to participate in robust discussions on many topics related to education, retirement, pensions, legislative initiatives and more. It is also a time to connect with colleagues and become acquainted with other retirees as well as younger, active educators.

It is very important to have members step up and say, "I am willing to serve." Alternate delegates are called to serve if an elected delegate is unable to attend. MEA-Retired has filled all seats in recent MEA-RA assemblies because

members like you feel the call and step up to serve.

President Bob Jean has been a delegate for a number of years and says, "There is a special feeling of camaraderie gathering with thousands of delegates from across the country who share the goal of advancing public education."

"Our Maine delegation has a rich history of being well-prepared and well-informed about the issues. We work hard at the daily early morning caucuses to be as prepared as possible. It is my hope that members will consider running for the delegate positions."

James Ford of Brunswick was a first-time retired delegate in July. He noted, "I found it supportive to see a large gathering of retired educators who still want to see improvements in the profession—especially around Improvement for the students

and the welfare of the educators."

"Having the event attached to the RA made it convenient, but also a bit on the long side. Seven days were long and at times intense—especially with the strike by service workers at NEA."

Interested candidates should submit the "Notice of Intent" form located at www.maineeca.org/mea-elections **by January 17, 2025**. If more candidates file than the number of positions, an election will be held.

More information on all of these positions of leadership in MEA and MEA-Retired may be obtained from MEA Administrative Assistant Erin Noyes at 1-888-622-4418, Ext. 2218 or email enoyes@maineeca.org.

Visit our websites for more details and activities: www.mearetired.org and www.maineeca.org.

Dental enrollment season opens

Northeast Delta Dental announces the opening of open enrollment for insurance for the ensuing year. It will begin on December 13 with an effective date of February 1, 2025.

Good news!! There are NO rate increases for this year. The monthly premiums will be as follows:

Retiree: \$59.02

Retiree + 1: \$100.53

Retiree + 2 or more: \$158.31

Below are some of the many benefits offered through Northeast Delta Dental: Double-Up Max, vision and hearing discount, extra dental benefit—Health through Oral Wellness (HOW) program, and benefit lookup site.

Questions regarding any of these programs may be directed to customer service at

1-800-832-5700 once the plan becomes active on February 1, 2025.

Interested members are invited to enroll, make changes, or cancel a dental. They must submit the form by December 13. Forms can be mailed to MEA, PO Box 310, Caribou, ME 04736.

For assistance completing the enrollment/change form, contact Lisa Collins at lcollins@maineeca.org or call her at 207-888-3804. If you are a current subscriber and do not want to make change, you will automatically be re-enrolled.



President, from Page 1

Dorothys, four Cowardly Lions, four Tin Men... you see where I am going with this. The play had four scenes, so the lead roles changed in each scene giving more students the opportunity to shine.

The community came out in full support for an evening performance. The class talked about the successful undertaking for weeks thereafter.

(2) The Field Trip to the Farnsworth Museum during the holiday season. The students learned about museum etiquette and protocol. We visited the Wyeth Wing where we learned that one of my students was the little boy in one of the paintings.

The docent asked him his name and she confirmed that yes, indeed, that was true. It was a shining moment for him and a moment my students and I will never forget.

All the students had an opportunity to create and shine in their own way in the Farnsworth art classroom with the help of some local artists. As an unexpected added bonus, Jamie Wyeth had set up his train set and told the chil-

dren all about his collection of trains and let some of them be the conductors. How could you ever forget a field trip like that?

(3) The Community Meeting. Our Grades K-8 school had regular community meetings where a class or two was featured.

My class decided to write a song about our school. I admit that I did a lot of producing and shared some of my ideas. The class, however, had lots of input—enough to make it feel like their own.

The result was amazing. They performed the song with pride. They received a very nice ovation from the student body and the parents attending the meeting.

The song became the school song. Fifteen years later it is still being sung by all participants at every community meeting. Imagine the pride they will feel when they tell their own children that it was their class who wrote this song.

(4) Read Alouds. One of my favorite parts of the day was when my students came back from lunch. That is

when I would read aloud to them. I loved doing all the facial expressions and assigning a distinct voice to each character in the book. It was relaxing and fun for me.

I pitied the occasional substitute teacher who was probably told that he/she was not doing the voices correctly.

I have former students whom I bump into who still remember their favorites: *James and the Giant Peach*, *Matilda*, *Wayside School is Falling Down*, *Lost on a Mountain in Maine*, and on and on.

Once you start reminiscing, many more positive memories come to mind but there is only so much space in a *Clarion* column. Think-

ing about this and writing it down on paper bring excitement and a smile to my face.

I hope it triggers many memories from your teaching days. It warms your heart to look back and realize all the little things that impact our students and ourselves in a big way.

It's your turn now. I am sure that our nearly 5,400 members of MEA-Retired have a myriad of experiences, memorable activities, life-changing moments with students that would be of great interest to others. Our classrooms are forever etched in our minds.

Please consider taking the time to share memories of your lifetimes in Maine's classrooms.

1099-R downloadable from MainePERS Member Portal

By Domna Giatas, Director of Communications

In January of each year, MainePERS mails an Internal Revenue Service *Form 1099-R* to each person who received either a benefit payment or a refund of contributions in the prior calendar year.

For your convenience the form also may be accessed through the MainePERS Member Portal and should be posted to your account *no later than January 31, 2025*. You can locate your *Form 1099-R* by clicking on the Documents Tab and easily

view the information or download the form.

Not yet registered for the Member Portal? You may register at our website: www.mainePers.org/memberportal. A handy guide is available to help with the process.

If you have not received your *1099-R* in the mail by February 15th and do not have access to a computer and printer, please contact MainePERS at 207-512-3100 to request a copy.

Contacting Congress

SS progress underway! We just learned that HR82 Social Security Fairness Act of 2023 was introduced in the U. S. House by Congressman Garret Graves of Louisiana on January 9, 2023. The bill is "To amend Title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions." It has 294 co-sponsors in the House.

Additionally, the comparable bill in the U.S. Senate, S597, has the same exact wording as HR82. This bill was introduced in the U. S. Senate by Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio on March 1, 2023. The bill has 45 co-sponsors.

Will you take a few minutes to contact our congressional delegates to encourage them to continue advocating for the passage of these two critically important bills. See email contact information below for our congressional delegates. If you do not have a computer, send a handwritten letter.

Rep. Chellie Pingree (District 1): 354 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-6116
<https://pingree.house.gov/contact/contactform.htm>

Rep. Jared Golden (District 2): 1710 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-6306
https://golden.house.gov/address_authentication?form=/contact

Sen. Angus King (District 1): 133 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510 (202) 224-5344
<https://www.king.senate.gov/contact>

Sen. Susan Collins (District 2): 413 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510 (202) 224-2523
<https://www.collins.senate.gov/contact/email-senator-collins/form>

The new school year is already providing opportunities for our active members to explore their retirement opportunities and benefits.

We have finished our fall sessions and look forward to our gearing up again in January and February.

All seminars are on select Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 5-6:15 pm. Lisa Collins, MEA-Retired's Uniserv Assistant in the Caribou office, takes care of the registration and member verification.

She organizes the meetings on Zoom and sends email messages containing the Zoom link and attaches documents relating to the presentations. We can host up to 200 attendees in a typical Zoom meeting.

She also sends a followup email containing a survey for participants to review the program. We are interested in hearing from our participants and utilize their suggestions as we move forward in this virtual program of awareness of retirement expectations.

MEA-Retired President Bob Jean kicks off the first night with a quick explanation of unified membership in MEA, and MEA-Retired, and NEA-Retired.

He also highlights county affiliate membership and how active members become after retirement. He notes that membership in all four associations are a real bargain—all under \$100 per year!!

Dues in MEA, MEA-Retired, and NEA-Retired are

deducted from your retirement check. County dues are paid in cash.

Committee member Jim Thornton hosts our first evening and monitors the chat for member questions and introduces the evening's presenters.

Tuesday evening sessions feature Sharon Beaulieu of MEA Benefits Trust who coordinates with Lisa to get verified members their own personal Anthem rate sheets. These sheets indicate the cost particular to them and the district wherein they worked.

Sharon then presents slides that walk members through the Anthem Medicare Advantage health insurance plan. By the way, this is the plan that MEA has lobbied the state to subsidize at 60 percent of the monthly premiums.

A local Horace Mann insurance agent presents a brief review of the Social Security Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). We know that these restrictions penalize rightfully earned Social Security benefits from members and their spouses.

When one begins to receive his or her state pension from the Maine Public Employee Retirement System (MainePERS), the Social Security inequities greatly diminish the amount of the benefit that is rightfully earned.

Committee member Joan

Warren of Lyman hosts Wednesday night MainePERS presentations and reminds members to submit their surveys. She also reminds them of all the benefits of joining and becoming involved in the nearest county associations.

Kim Bumford from MainePERS explains the many options that are available when one is considering retirement. They learn the various options from which one must choose the best one that fits the retiree's needs and the expectations of family members as well. Retirees chart their future with all the options they have to choose from as they finalize their actual retirement date.

Joan monitors the chat, and Kim fields questions after presenting each part of the plan. Committee member Julie Gomez backs up both Jim and Joan in their hosting duties whenever they cannot attend. Sharon is backed up by Patty Wheeler in the Portland Anthem office and

Seminars prepare for retirement

By Bo Zabierek, Chairperson
Pre-Retirement Committee

works closely with Sharon to accommodate our plan members.

Alex Rand from MainePERS backs up Kim if she has any schedule conflicts.

Both October sessions were well attended. We look forward to our winter seminars in January and February. Members are always encouraged to attend multiple sessions as they approach their retirement date. New questions always arise that need answers as one makes this important decision of leaving the classroom.

Pre-Retirement seminars slated

MEA-Retired pre-retirement seminars will be held virtually by Zoom on two consecutive nights from 5:00-6:15 P.M. Members should attend BOTH nights. Below are the dates for the Zoom seminars.

WINTER 2025 SEMINARS

Session 4 –	
Tuesday, January 14	MEA Benefits Trust & WEP/GPO
Wednesday, January 15	MEA-Retired & MainePERS
Session 5 –	
Tuesday, January 28	MEA Benefits Trust & WEP/GPO
Wednesday, January 29	MEA-Retired & MainePERS
Session 6 –	
Tuesday, February 11	MEA Benefits Trust & WEP/GPO
Wednesday, February 12	MEA-Retired & MainePERS

Interested active educators who are MEA members are invited to attend and must pre-register—contact Lisa Collins at lcollins@maineaa.org.

Further information may be obtained from
Pre-Retirement Committee Chairperson
Bo Zabierek at 207-365-4329 or bozabierek@gmail.com

Legislative Updates, from Page 2

fourth Wednesday in December—which is Christmas Day this year.

Then the vice president or the Archivist of the United States asks the Maine Secretary of State to send the certified election results to Congress—using direct mail or a messenger. For members elected to the House and Senate, they are seated at the first meeting of the 119th Congress on January 3, 2025.

A joint session of Congress is required by the 12th Amendment to count the electoral votes and declare the winners of the presidential election. That joint session of Congress will be held on Jan. 6, 2025, at 1 p.m. On January 20, 2025, at noon the next president and vice president will take their oaths of office.

Updates from Benefits Trust

By Faith Campbell, Trustee
MEA Benefits Trust

Once again we find ourselves in the throes of shortened daylight—anticipating the beauties and challenges of another Maine winter.

The MEA Benefits Trust

trustees and staff extend our warmest wishes to you and yours during this celebratory season. To start the celebrations, there will be no changes in the Anthem Medicare Advantage premiums during 2025. Most members' premiums were reduced beginning in July, 2024, and this rate will continue for another 12 months.

More good news—Medicare Part D out of pocket annual maximum member payment will be reduced from \$8,000 to \$2,000 beginning January 1, 2025. This is a provision of the Inflation Reduction Act passed and enacted under the Biden Administration.

The MEABT trustees and staff attended the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans in San Diego in November.

Some of the sessions were directly focused upon retiree benefits. I have provided a partial list below with a brief outline of planned topics of discussion.

- Legal and Legislative Updates for Retirement Plans
- Updates in legislative and regulatory policies for pension and benefit plans;

- Public Plan Approaches to Retiree Health Care Coverage Overview of coverage options pre- and post-Medicare enrollment Pros and Cons for health plans

and participants Examples of successful approaches in action;

- Survey of the Retirement Landscape Impact of longevity on retiree pension and benefit plans Generations in the workforce Economic impacts on retiree pension and benefit plans; and

- Public Employment Retiree Strategy The relationship between Social Security, Medicare and pension plans (cost, coverage, eligibility, government pension offset—a topic near and dear to our hearts) and more.

Strategies also include helping members calculate their highest value options and making the best decisions

Fun, food, and friendships

By Corley Anne Byras

Mid-Coast Retired Educators Association

It's great to be retired and to be able to travel anytime during the year—not just in the summertime. But driving, parking, and working out the details can be mind-boggling as we get older.

Traveling with others is fun, entertaining, and ideal in making new friends. Experiencing places with others brings excitement to our lives.

The Mid-Coast Retired Educators Association is offering the opportunity to travel by bus to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, April 21-April 25, 2025 departing from Brunswick. The five-day and four-night trip to Lancaster and the Dutch Country includes the following;

Motorcoach Transpiration

Four nights lodging in the Lancaster area (double occupancy);

Eight meals: Four breakfasts and four dinners;

Admission to the show “NOAH” at Sight and Sound Millennium Theatre;

Admission to the show at the Magic and Wonder Theater;

Admission to the Amish Experience and Jacob's Choice at the F/X Theatre;

Admission to the Gettysburg Nation-

al Park and guided battlefield tour;

Visit to the charming Kitchen Kettle Village; and

A guided tour of Lancaster

The cost of this trip is \$800 (which includes all gratuities) with a **\$75 deposit due by December 15** to reserve your seat. The final payment is due by February 15, 2025. For further information and reservations please contact Corley Anne Byras at 213-6880 or send an email message to corleybyras@gmail.com.

CONGRATULATIONS



Benita Russo, 1/1/1919
Irene Robertson, 10/23/1919
Lucille Walker, 1/1/1921
Frances Bryson, 1/1/1923
Josephine McAlary, 1/1/1923

FREE Coffee Socials

Want to meet other AARP members this summer? Join AARP Maine for free coffee and snacks while greeting neighbors, friends, staff, and volunteers. You will also hear from community leaders.

Coffee socials are held each month at the following locations and times:

Bangor: Third Friday, 8:30-10 a.m., Dysart's at 1110 Broadway.

Fort Kent: Second Wednesday, 2-3 p.m., Public Library, One Monument Square.

Lewiston/Auburn: Last Wednesday, 8:30-10 a.m., Happy Days Diner, 67 Mill St., Auburn.

Portland: First Friday, 10-11:30 a.m., AARP Maine's State Office, 53 Baxter Blvd., Suite 202.

Partnership for Caring

Retired educators remain eligible to participate in the “Partnership for Caring” financial assistance program. The criteria reads: “MEA will assist local affiliates to meet exigent expenses of an unpredictable nature incurred by members or their immediate families. Specifically, the MEA will match, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$1,500 in contributions raised by a local affiliate or combination of affiliates to meet such expenses.”

When an affiliate raises funds to assist a needy unified member to help with catastrophic circumstances (fire, flood serious health diagnoses, etc.), MEA will match the raised amount up to \$1,500. Applications are on our MEA-Retired website and Facebook page.

Day of Caring 2024!

MEA-Retired retirees once again were generous in providing school supplies, mounting bulletin boards, photocopying first-day-of-school documents, laminating words, weeding gardens, and volunteering to assist our active educators as another school year opened.

Our Day of Caring projects provided opportunities for educators to communicate with each other and to support one another as a new year began. The numerous tasks involved in setting up a classroom or organizing materials for another year can take many hours.

By volunteering in our schools, MEA-Retired retirees were able to assist with many of these tasks. This allowed our active educators time to focus on their new students.

The Community Participation Committee thanks all affiliates for scheduling their projects to coordinate with our annual Day of Caring held on the pivotal date of September 11 or as close as possible to that date.

A special message of appreciation is extended to our selfless educator retirees who are not only "life-long learners" but they are truly "life-long givers."

'Tis the Day of Caring season

By Susan Grondin, Chairperson
Community Participation Com.

Androscoggin

Members of Androscoggin Retired Education Association (AREA) continued working with "The Store Next Door" student assistance program. The initiative serves over 400 Lewiston children under the age of 18 in Grades K-12.

A community donation-based, non-profit store is trying to help students in Lewiston Public Schools obtain the necessities they need such as clothing, food, hygiene products, school supplies, and a safe place. This is crucial, as many of these kids come from broken homes and face terrible hardships that many others may not understand. They are trusted adults for these youth, helping them rebuild trust and feel safe. Many former students reach out as adults to thank them for their support.

The Store Next Door is located in the basement of the Gov. James B. Longley School building on Birch Street in Lewiston. It is a place where students can hang out, shop, eat, wash clothes, and even take a shower. AREA members donated school supplies and over \$400 in gift cards to grocery stores for the student assistance program.

Aroostook

Members of Aroostook Retired Education Association (AREA) continued our participation in the annual Day of Caring



(L to R): Rise Harris, Rita Roy, Susie Szava-Kovats, Janet Woods, and Donna Hurley delivered school supplies for students and teachers at Southern Aroostook Elementary School in Dyer Brook.

project with our "Bulging Backpack Project." Thanks to the continuous support of our generous members, we provided school supplies to teachers and students at Katahdin Elementary in Stacyville and Southern Aroostook Elementary School in Dyer Brook.

During our site visits, the classroom teachers filled out a "wish list" of supplies needed. AREA members brought school supplies and monetary gifts during our four summer luncheon meetings. We also made up a gift bag of special items for each classroom teacher with a "Thank you" card with a monetary gift from AREA to be used to purchase something special for their students.

We presented our tables of supplies and gifts at each school on their workshop day, October 11, and invited the teachers to "shop" from the tables for supplies that were on their wish lists.

We also placed "Thank you" notes and special treats in the common rooms for principals, secretaries and all other support personnel.

Cumberland

Members of Cumberland County Retired Educators Association (CCREA) donated a variety of school supplies such as pencils, colored pencils, crayons, glue, scissors, notebooks, picture albums, tissues, and note pads to teachers and students at Congin School in Westbrook. Staff expressed appreciation for the supplies that will be extremely helpful for many students as they begin a new school year.



(L to R): CCREA members Themia Raymond, Westbrook; Jean Phillips, Windham; Nancy Kilbride, Portland; Marie Solak, South Portland; Gisele Bougie, Portland; Jim Thornton, Westbrook; Roberta Morrill, Windham; Sandra Abbott, Scarborough; Linda Hussey, South Portland; Pauline Cormier, Portland; Dottie Megna, Portland.

See Day of Caring, Page 8

Franklin

The Mallett School in Farmington was selected by Franklin County Retired Educators Association to be our target school this year. We chose to work with four Pre-Kindergarten classes.

Of the four teachers in this grade level, two are new to the system this year. We invited them, either as a group or individually, to make a list of \$150 worth of supplies to provide for some little extras in their classes.

We also decided to surprise all the staff with donuts on a random morning as a “Thank you” for all their dedication to education.



Hancock

Hancock County Retired Teachers Association members were asked to bring school supplies to their first meeting on September 10. We collected four boxes of notebooks, pencils, erasers, markers, crayons, and other items to donate to our chosen school.

We delivered the donated items—a check for \$100, and four gift cards to Walmart (three for \$20 each and one for \$24.50) to Connors Emerson School in Bar Harbor. The school secretary and her

daughter (who is in second grade) were surprised and grateful to receive our donations.

Kennebec

Fifteen Kennebec County Retired Educators Association (KREA) members joined together to help teachers at the Atwood Elementary School in Oakland prepare for the first day of school in August. The school is home to students in Pre-K through Grade 2 classes.

They worked on bulletin boards, bus tags, room readiness, photocopying, collating, laminating posters, and clothes sorting.



KREA members Tom Wells, Joann Tyler, and Joan Meehan check in new library books at the Atwood Elementary School in Oakland.

KREA supplied morning donuts, coffee, lunch and a great time of fellowship with fellow teachers.

KREA workers included Phil and Linda Sprague, Larry Given, Marc Poulin, Phil Gonyar, Carl Daiker, Linda Ellis, Joan Meehan, Joann Tyler, Marilyn Hall, Tom Wells, Bonnie Nielson, Betty-Jane Meader, Nora Murray, and Kathie Choate.. Also joining our group were Jeff and Karen Malnick of Connecticut. (They are Phil Gonyar’s niece and nephew.)

Knox

Knox County Retired Educators Association members collected a variety of school supplies to assist the Thomaston Grammar School with keeping their supply closet stocked. We also received \$120 in donations from members to be added to the \$84.50 in Walmart gift cards and in matching funds from MEA-Retired.

These funds will be used to help fund the Wellness Committee Winter Festival. This event provides a variety of outdoor activities such as sled pulling races and a snowman making contest—among others. Students always look forward to this event and have lots of fun interacting with others and enjoying the winter outdoor fun.

Mid-Coast

Members of Mid-Coast Retired Educators Association filled six backpacks for students at Woodside Elementary School in Topsham, Harpswell Community School, and Beecher Stowe School in Brunswick.

Carolyn Aberg and Deb Wagg went to their local Walmart for a frugal morning of shopping with calculators in hand. We were extremely successful.

At checkout the cashier inquired about our quantity of school supplies. We informed her that we were retired educators shopping for those in need at local schools.

A gentleman behind us overheard our conversation and praised us for taking on this project. He said that “educators spend too much of their own money.” He handed us a \$50 bill for a donation to our cause. We left the store overwhelmed by his random act of kindness.



Deborah Wagg of Mid-Coast Retired Educators Association presented three backpacks to Richard Dedek, Principal of Woodside Elementary School in Topsham.

Oxford

Oxford County Educators Association Retired (OCEA-R) conducts an ongoing program of providing “Maine Books for Maine Kids.” Each year we choose a book that we think is wor-

See Day of Caring, Page 9

Day of Caring, from Page 8

thy of consideration and that young people will enjoy.

We alternate between books for beginners and those for older age groups. These books are written by Maine authors who have strong ties to Maine and who write about subjects of special interest to the children of Maine. .

The books are presented to each of the more than 20 public libraries in Oxford County. This year's choice of books is *The Blue Lobster Visits the Eye Doctor* by Robin Taylor-Chiarelllo of Lovell.

Penobscot



More than 15 years ago, Donna Oliver and members of Penobscot County Retired Educators Association (PCREA) introduced the "Project Lioness Program" to fourth grade students in School Administrative District #63 (Eddington and Holden). Under her guidance and with the help of community volunteers, students design and sew quilts.

Students in the Holden Elementary School proudly display a quilt they created for other children in need.

The quilts are distributed to children locally and provide security, warmth, and comfort to children who are hospitalized, traumatized, or in a shelter.

This project provides a rewarding and fun service opportunity as well as teaching the importance of compassion and caring.

This year for PCREA's Day of Caring, a \$200 check was donated to Holden School fourth grade students. The funds will be used to purchase supplies so that this worthwhile quilt project can continue. Over just the past five years, students have donated 200 quilts to needy children! Amazing!!

Piscataquis

Piscataquis Region Retired Educators Association (PRREA) members presented \$100 checks to the Parent Teacher Organization in Piscataquis Community Elementary School, Greenville Consolidated School, and Ridgeview Consolidated School in Dexter.

The monies were to be used in ways to benefit the organizations as they help students and teachers in the various schools—ensuring positive growth and successes.



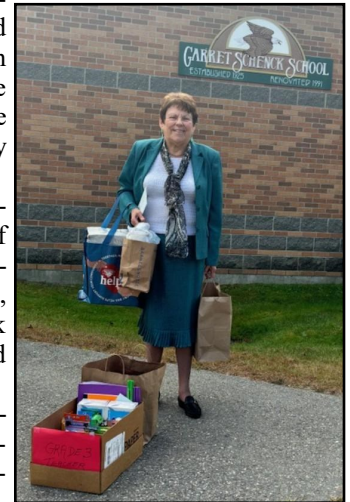
(L to R) Janie Lander, Jade Chisholm, Brianna Ricker, and Tedianne Thurlow assemble presentations for the PRREA Day of Caring project.

Somerset

Each year members of Somerset Educators Association Retired (SEAR) choose one school in Somerset County for which we collect supplies. We selected the Garrett Schenk Elementary School in North Anson this year.

Most often, our members purchase the school supplies out of their own pockets—pencils, notebooks, erasers, markers, folders, binders, glue sticks, notebook paper, and more. We donated \$100 to the library this year.

Pictured here is SEAR President Lorraine Mahoney of Norridgewock delivering school supplies to the school.



Waldo

Members of Waldo Educators Association Retired (WEAR) donated the \$100 subsidy from MEA-Retired to the Palermo Consolidated School to purchase some Reading Response to Intervention (RTI) books.

Additionally, WEAR donated \$100 to the Leroy Smith Elementary School in Winterport to be used to provide items and supplies for students' needs.



WEAR President Michael Lawson presents a check to Diane Carrillo at the Palermo Consolidated School.

Washington

The 2024 Day of Caring Project was the second year of a two-year goal established by the Washington County Retired Teachers Association (WCREA).

(Previously, we had completed our goal of providing a treasure chest of school supplies to each of the 36 plus schools in Washington County. At that time, we chose between four and six schools annually due to budgetary constraints).

We were very excited to be able to complete the project this year. The \$2,000 raised enabled us to have our treasurer, Barbara Maloy, write \$500 checks for East Grand High School, Danforth; Calais High School; Machias Memorial High School; and Washington Academy, East Machias.

Our affiliate membership prefers "the personal touch" whenever possible. We were fortunate to have Stephanie Strongin hand deliver the checks to Washington Academy and East Grand High School. Her children had attended Washington Academy.

See Day of Caring, Page 10

Day of Caring, from Page 9

Betsy Fitzgerald and Barbara Maloy—long-time active members of the community at large—volunteered to do the same for Machias Memorial High School. Rick Chaffey, a veteran teacher at Calais High School, delivered the check to that school.

The letter enclosed with each check indicated that the money was to be used to defray transportation and/or meal costs for students on school-sanctioned field trips. Another option was to use the funds toward procuring a motivational speaker. Finally, the money could be used to do either or both options. Our affiliate is brain-storming opportunities for next year!



WCREA members assemble at a recent meeting. Front: Nancy Willey, Cherryfield. Second row: Barbara Maloy, Machiasport; Hazel Hammond, Columbia Falls; Ruth Chaffey, Dennysville; Stephanie Strongin, Machiasport; Rick Chaffey, Dennysville; Judy Randall, Jonesboro; Diana Elkavitch, Addison; Michael Elkavitch, Addison.

Volunteer

As we continue helping our schools and communities



York

Members of the York County Retired Educators Association (YCREA) completed another awesome Day of Caring event. This was our 15th Annual Day of Caring Project, and we spent our special day of volunteerism at the Great Works School in South Berwick. Principal Jerry Burnell and some of his staff (current and retired) helped with the assigned projects as well as many retired educators..

Several long-time YCREA members and one brand new member also joined us. A special welcome was extended to our newest retired member, Deb Butler. Deb has been very active in MEA.

The weather was beautiful, and Jerry had a wish list ready for us to tackle. I think we did an amazing job and pretty much completed our assignments.

We outlined a playground sized map of the United States to be painted later in the week. We put wood chips around a tree near the entrance to the school. We cleared brush around the edge of the lower playground. We painted trim around a couple of the school entrance doors. The last item on the list was staining an outdoor shed.

Thanks to ongoing support from Newington Staples we had a gift card for the school. Thanks to MEA-Retired, YCREA, and the generosity of individual members of YCREA. we were able to present Mr. Burnell with a sizable check to use for the benefit of his staff and students over the next year.

Nothing feels better than working with a group of people who just want to do something to make life a little better for others. What a great, memorable, and productive day to be available and able to help another school—its teachers and students.

There are so many opportunities for volunteerism. We are already looking forward to next year!



YCREA members Deb Butler and Bill Soucy participated in the annual Day of Caring activities by repairing and painting an athletic supply shed outside the Great Works School in South Berwick.

Finances

The preliminary balance of the fund has reached **\$20.1 Billion** even as the financial markets continue to be volatile.

The Federal Reserve dropped interest rates by 50 Basis Points (1/2 percent). Too aggressive?? Jerome Powell, FED Chair, has bowed to Wall Street and political interests, which should not be surprising, given his record in 2020.

Both Israel and Iran continue their tit-for-tat retaliatory attacks, but another “new” opportunity for a ceasefire and hostage release negotiations for the war in Gaza exist.

The risk of a greater Mid-East War has lessened as Israel didn’t attack either Iran’s nuclear or oil facilities.

Oil prices are lower as China has suffered an economic downturn, and Russia’s saber-rattling over the use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine and use of North Korean troops increase geo-political risk.

The 2024 election looms over everything. The GOP Trump/Vance ticket and Project 2025 platform may undermine their call for UNITY, the end of divisive rhetoric, and representation for all Americans.

The Harris/Walz ticket has created an upsurge in political activity. As of this writing, both parties have begun their end-of-campaign strategies. Nothing will be resolved until after U.S. elections, if even then.

There continues to be a monthly cash outflow from the programs due to benefit payments and the system’s investment program.

At the October Board of Trustees meeting, this outflow was reported as **-\$444 (ttm) million**. This outflow is projected to reverse in the next 12 months as investment **distributions** should outpace benefit and investment **outflows** by nearly **\$460 Million**.

The amount of benefit payments for September 2024 was 107,825,148 for 48,310 recipients.

The state is relying on investment earnings and employee contributions to subsidize the decreased benefits that were enacted by Governor LePage’s first two years with control of both House and Senate. These trends are projected to continue at the same levels.

The 2024 FY return exceeded actuarial projections. This affects the next biennial state budgets. The preliminary Sept. 2024 monthly return was 0.7 percent.

Calendar Year September 30, 2024, results were 6.7 percent. Fiscal Year to Date return is at 2.2 percent (Sept. 30, 2024).

In 2028, after the 1995 UAL has been paid off, the system anticipates the unfunded liability accrued since 1995 to be approximately **\$1 Billion**.

expected return of 6.5 percent.

Public market returns are driving over-all return. The system’s asset allocation has resulted in reduced overall volatility as most of the public market volatility affects only one third of total assets. Asset allocation review is ongoing and will be adjusted to reflect future obligations. Liquidity is **not** a concern. (**\$8.59 Billion**)

MaineSTART, the supplemental tax-advantaged retirement accounts for certain employees (401a, 403b, and 457b), have been meeting their benchmark goals. The best performers over time have been Vanguard Social FTSE Index and Vanguard Total Stock Market Index.

Legislative Update

The for the next biennium current legislative committees are still meeting, preparing bills and budgets for the next biennium.



There will be further policy discussions involving **actuarial assumptions** as projections for State mandatory contributions have failed to control the volatility of the funding level of the UAL.

Any benefit restorations in the next biennium will continue to be challenging because the impending increased UAL payments may fluctuate significantly with the approaching deadline.

This is a typical effect at the end of a liability funding scheme. The systems rolling 3-Year Annualized risk of the fund is 5.9 percent and well **below** the assumed actuarial assumed risk of 12 percent. Meanwhile the Rolling Three-Year Annualized Rate of Return of 5.0 percent has fallen **below** the

Several bills were carried over on the Special Appropriations Table:

LD. 70—raising the COLA base to \$40,000

LD. 185—reducing the early retirement penalty to 2 percent per year

LD. 426—a subsidy for buying back additional military time

LD. 1096—COLA Cap 2 percent cumulative increase to September 2022.

Bills carried over by the Senate:

LD. 457—increased COLA base in 2024 to \$40,000 (temporary).

Operations

The changes implemented by MainePERS CEO Dr. Rebecca Wyke and staff continue to improve member service, efficiency, and mo-

Quarter 3 MainePERS update

By John Kimball
MainePERS Trustee

rale. Among changes to improve services are increased feedback opportunities for stakeholders.

The member portal is experiencing ever-increasing use—resulting in significant time savings to staff. The work backlog that caused the “Focus Fridays Program” will be extended a few more months until the flood of teacher retirees has been cleared.

The recent internal change in the phone system has resulted in less wait time in reaching the appropriate staff personnel. Full staffing problems have been mitigated and the backlog has declined significantly.

The total number of retirees is over **48,310**. June/July retirements surged by 600 members. Staff reported that all July retirees received preliminary checks.

Monthly retiree payroll was **\$107.8 Million**. MainePERS continues to contact previous participants, who are no longer active, are not vested, and are continuing withdrawing their contributions to the System. Each withdrawal of contributions represents an “experience gain” to the system.

MainePERS is updating the current, outdated Pension Administration System (PAS) with a five-year system upgrade.

Note: The 2023 Annual Report is available through the MainePERS Portal.

NRTA: Free to AARP educator members

By Julie Gomez
Androscoggin Ret. Educ/ Assoc.

I attended the November 4th MEA-Retired Board of Directors meeting. The National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) membership was mentioned

I thought, "What?!"

As an active or retired

educator, I had no idea that membership in AARP made me an automatic member of NRTA! So, I had to investigate. The following information is taken directly from the NRTA page of the AARP website.

"NRTA is the seed that grew into AARP. Ethel Percy Andrus of California founded NRTA: AARP's Educator Community (then known as the National Retired Teachers Association) in 1947 to address educators' economic challenges and health insurance needs in retirement.

NRTA is America's leading national organization representing the interests of more than 850,000 working

and retired educators age 50+.

They work with a network of state-based Retired Educators Associations (REAs) across the nation to collaborate and provide strategic support to protect educators' financial security and foster collaboration and volunteerism."

I decided to see if it would be beneficial to be a member of NRTA and called AARP. I asked about joining and, I discovered that I am already a member of NRTA!

All AARP members who are teachers are automatic members. One can have AARP OR NRTA listed on his or her membership card. You cannot have both

listed.

The fees and benefits are the same no matter which logo one chooses. The NRTA pages of the AARP website have many resources dedicated to teachers and their interests. Type NRTA in the Search on the AARP website.

I decided to stay with the AARP logo. My husband and I travel regularly and use the discounts associated with our card. I know that my AARP card is immediately recognized nationwide and am not sure a card that has a NRTA logo would be recognized.

Did you know that your spouse receives FREE membership in AARP when you join? Two memberships for the price of one! I like that!

AARP: "To serve, not to be served"

By Pam Partridge, AARP Liaison
Somerset Educators Assoc. Retired

MEA-Retired State President Robert Jean and I recently attended the two-day National Retired Teacher Association (NRTA) Northeast Regional Volunteer Leadership meeting in Concord, NH.

NRTA is the retired educator wing of AARP. The purpose of the meeting on the first day was to join the retired educator leadership in each Northeastern state and the Virgin Islands. The agenda provided time to share information about our state structures, recruitment and membership, and successes and challenges.

To that end, NRTA provided information about resources for state retired educator associations (REAs) and the supportive role of the AARP liaison to the state REA. We learned the history of NRTA and its pivotal position in AARP nationally. We learned there were many similarities among all the state organizations, but there are also broad differences.

To understand the relationship between MEA-Retired and AARP, you need to know a little history about NRTA, AARP, and their founder, Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus.

Dr. Andrus was born in San Francisco in 1884 but grew up in Chicago. After earning a Bachelor of Philosophy degree from the University of Chicago, she began a career in teaching. She volunteered to teach evening classes at two settlement

houses in Chicago that provided services to immigrants. She then taught at San Paula High school in Los Angeles when she moved back to California with her family.

She was appointed California's first female high school principal for the Abraham Lincoln High School in East Los Angeles at the age of 32. She worked with an ethnically diverse population.

In addition to setting high academic standards, she provided her students with community involvement programs and night-school programs for parents. While doing this work she continued her own education and earned a Ph.D from the University of Southern California.

There was a time in her career when she left her job and cared for her mother who was ill. Fortunately, her mother recovered; and Dr. Andrus was able to return to work.

When she retired, she volunteered with the California Retired Teachers Association. She saw firsthand the harmful impact of inflation and increasing health care costs on teacher pensions.

One day she called on a retired teacher who was living in a backyard chicken coup because she could not

afford better housing. This was not acceptable and she decided to act.

That action led to the establishment of the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA). Its mission is to give retired educators "a national voice in making life better for all."

Dr. Andrus made it a mission to get affordable health care for retired teachers. After being rejected by many health insurance companies who thought it would be too risky to provide health insurance to older retirees, she found one company willing to take the risk. The program was highly successful and soon the NRTA office was getting calls from non-educator retirees wanting to buy the insurance.

The call for affordable health insurance for so many other retirees was a need Dr. Andrus could not ignore. So, at the age of 73 she founded the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in 1958.

Over the years, AARP has expanded its advocacy to other public policy issues such as safe, comfortable and affordable housing for the 50+ community. AARP continues to advocate for a variety of issues and will into the future. Maintaining the health and viability of Social Security for future generations is a current top

See AARP, Page 13

AARP, from Page 12

priority nationally. They also advocate for affordable prescription drugs.

On the state level, priority advocacy issues are decided by the Executive Council (EC), and need approval by AARP national. Your AARP liaison is your voice as a voting member of the EC.

NRTA continues to provide resources and tools to retired educators and state REAs. They provide leadership skill training and share strategies for growing membership. They also provide grants to REAs for special projects.

AARP has more than 38,000,000 members nationwide and more than 200,000 in Maine.

One person's efforts to help retired teachers in California grew into a much larger national organization that today is recognized as the voice of the 50+ community. The lesson of her life is that no matter where you are in your life's journey, you have the potential to do your greatest work yet!

If you would like to learn more about the life of Dr. Andrus, go to the AARP website: [https://videos.aarp.org/detail/video/6307365991112/dr.-ethel-percy-andrus-and-nrta-aarp-s-educator-community?](https://videos.aarp.org/detail/video/6307365991112/dr.-ethel-percy-andrus-and-nrta-aarp-s-educator-community?autoStart=true&q=nrt&fbclid=IwAR2QBw9wEueUXdgPbmB9cO5xDb4UZ0turZmZgBJEASmxu_2GITWTXMZQEzA)

[autoStart=true&q=nrt&fbclid=IwAR2QBw9wEueUXdgPbmB9cO5xDb4UZ0turZmZgBJEASmxu_2GITWTXMZQEzA](https://videos.aarp.org/detail/video/6307365991112/dr.-ethel-percy-andrus-and-nrta-aarp-s-educator-community?autoStart=true&q=nrt&fbclid=IwAR2QBw9wEueUXdgPbmB9cO5xDb4UZ0turZmZgBJEASmxu_2GITWTXMZQEzA)

If your local affiliate would like a Fraud Watch program, please contact

me at pampartridge1@gmail.com. Source for information in this article may be found at the following website: <https://states.aarp.org/montana/about-our-founder>.

Get taxes done FREE

AARP will do your taxes free! The program, aimed at taxpayers 50 years of age and older, is free and doesn't require AARP membership.

You'll get assistance from volunteers certified by the Internal Revenue Service. You can even get your tax return sent electronically for free, which will speed your refund.

To get help with preparing your tax return from an IRS-certified volunteer, book an appointment using the "Site Locator." You can't just walk in empty-handed or with a shoebox full of receipts. Here's what you will need:

All correspondence received from the IRS and your state/local taxing authority.

Social Security cards and/or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number notices/cards or other official documen-

tation that show the taxpayer identification numbers for every individual on your return.

Government-issued photo ID for each taxpayer.

Checking or savings account information if you want to direct-deposit any refund(s) or direct-debit any amounts due.

Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN) (for each individual if applicable). Don't have one? The IRS can send you one.

Most taxpayers have a choice of taking either a standard deduction or itemizing their deductions. You need to have more itemized deductions than the standard deduction. If you have a substantial amount of deductions, you may want to itemize. If so, bring receipts and other documents delineating deductible payments.

Christmas is around the corner—give a retirement gift!

Maine Educator



Retired



Long-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$47

Short-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$42

Navy Blue Hats @ \$25

Red, Iris Blue Tee Shirts @ \$23

Red, Ultramarine Golf Shirts @ \$37

Lapel Pins @ \$10

Prices include tax and postage/handling

Name _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Tel. _____ Affiliate _____

Qty.	Item	Size	Color	Unit Price	Total Cost
	Sizes S. M. L 1X or 2X: Add \$2 3X or 4X : 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)

2025 Convention, from Page 1

component of Helicopter Combat Support Squadron Six (HC-6) at NAS Norfolk, VA, to fly the H-46 Sea Knight's Vertical Replenishment (VertRep) mission.

The first woman pilot to graduate from USSS Naval Test Pilot School, Colleen was assigned to the Rotary Wing Aircraft Test Directorate as lead pilot for H-46 and CH-53E helicopters. She completed more than 50 projects in a two-year assignment in the Attack Assault Branch.

She completed the assignment as Assistant Officer in Charge, HM-12 Sea Component flying the Vertical Onboard Delivery (VOD) mission, subsequently standing up HC-2 VOD Squad. She was deployed with the CH-53E to NAS Roosevelt Roads in support of carrier training, and to the North Atlantic in support of NATO exercises.

She and her husband Bill Readdy have three children raised in the Arlington, Virginia, area. Following in his mom and grandfather's footsteps, one of their sons continues the family flying legacy.

We are pleased to offer the following four breakout sessions:

"Hiking in Maine for All Ages" by Ed Mathieu of Sangerville. An experienced Maine guide for over 30 years, Ed has spent many a time in the great outdoors with people all across the globe—showing them great places to find peacefulness in the woods and view scenery, wildlife, and ten waterfalls.

His presentation will encompass some of these beautiful places to visit that are easily accessible for any age. He will share pictures and stories of nice family-friendly hiking areas in our beautiful state.

His website invites folk to "join us to go on a Maine moose watching tour by canoe! Our registered Maine guides drive you from the Moosehead Lake region to remote Maine woods, ponds, and shallow bodies of water where moose and other wildlife feed. Did you know that Maine moose in the North Maine Woods outnumber people three to one?"

His Maine moose tours and wildlife safaris by canoe are 3.5 to 4 hours. All trips depart from Northeast Whitewater with our knowledgeable and entertaining guides to remote Maine woods ponds in



Ed Mathieu

the North Maine Woods where you will experience canoeing in a peaceful, pristine setting.

Moose feed in the shallow ponds, so our Maine moose canoe tours take you to remote spots where guests have the best opportunity to get close to moose and other wildlife on our moose tours by canoe.

Capture amazing moose pictures, hear moose slurping and chomping the pond weeds, all the while getting up close and personal to the elusive Maine moose on our Maine moose canoe tours. This session promises to be very interesting.

David Melville of Portland is a Maine author, speaker, and ontologist. He studied communications and public relations at the University of Maine.

His recent interesting book entitled, *The 5 Things to Improve Your Everyday Experiences* is light-hearted and easy to read. It is not political, not preachy—but just real-world techniques to improve your everyday experiences.

David will skillfully challenge readers to reassess their lives with fresh perspectives and encourage us to "step out of our comfort zones" and try new initiatives.



David Melville

According to David, we can (1) change our mind; (2) pay attention to our attention; (3) employ radical acceptance; (4) infuse the day with gratitude; and (5) be present.

David and his wife Lisa have raised six sons in and around the Portland area.

"Mission Dogs" by **Christie Gardner** of Oxford. She is a retired Army veteran. She was injured overseas in 2006 and spent nearly five years rehabbing before she was finally able to live on her own again.

She started participating in adaptive sports—thanks to her service dog Moxie. She's been on the US Women's Para Ice Hockey Team for 14 years and was an alternate for Tokyo 2020 in shot put and discus. She also represented the USA at the Para Surfing World Championships in 2020 and earned a silver medal at the Para Pan American Games in Santiago, Chile, in 2023.

Gardner trained service dogs and therapy dogs for ten years but wanted to grow that dream



Christie Gardner

to help more Mainers in need. Mission Working Dogs was founded in July 2020 as a local non-profit to do just that. The organization serves to train service dogs and therapy dogs for the local community and has recently opened a new training center in Maine.

Its mission is to improve the lives of community members who live with a disability. Properly trained service dogs are provided to help them live independently and therapy dogs bring mental well-being to citizens of Maine. They especially target residents of nursing homes, hospitals, and schools.

"The Basics of Healthy Foot Care" by Lisa Nelson of Oakland. A registered nurse specializing in podiatry, Lisa identifies and treats nail and foot diseases—including fungi of the nail. She treats and recommends prescriptive treatments for callouses, corns, and ingrown toenails.

Lisa will discuss techniques of healthy foot care and will explain gait analyses and foot measurement as one ages. She noted that the size of the average woman's shoe increases by two sizes by the age of 50. She will share tips on gaining and maintaining maximum mobility through the aging process.



Lisa Nelson

She serves clients in clinics in Scarborough, South Portland, Portland, Freeport, Wiscasset, Skowhegan, Oakland and Waterville. She also does homecare visits for folk who no longer drive.

I am most grateful for the work of our Convention Committee who have joined me for another year—Bob Jean, Susan Grondin, Rena Kearney, and Kay Grindall. We have met several times on Zoom to rework our schedule to incorporate your suggestions, confirm speakers, and discuss decorations, room assignments and setups as well as our spring timeline to finish tasks.

We always need help the day before the convention to stuff envelopes and prepare for registrations. Then on the day of the convention, we need people to help set up center displays on tables, our book swap table, and clean up after the day is done.

Last year many of you were very helpful—Thank you! This old saying proved true last year: "Many hands make light work" came true and we look

See Convention, Page 15

Convention, from Page 14

forward to having more help again this year.

Be thinking how you might be able to help in 2025. We can begin setting up around 7 a.m. and could definitely use more help. Feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 207-564-7494 or send me an email to rmichaud143@charter.net.

Please write "MEA-Retired Conv." on your May 1, 2025, calendar and plan to attend. Remember that the number one comment you wrote last year was, "It is always great to see friends and former colleagues!"

Let's be sure to make sure that happen again! Stay tuned for more information and be safe!

Membership, from Page 16

influence in the local schools and communities.

When you're in your community, look around. Do you know a former educator who isn't in MEA-Retired? Do you know someone who was a bus driver years ago? How about a former cafeteria worker?

There are people all around us who should be part of our union family. People who worked with kids tend to be nice people, and they are fun to be with. Invite them into the family!

73rd MEA-Retired Convention & Annual Meeting

"Everyone Is a Leader!"

Keynote Speaker

Captain Colleen Nevius, USNR (Retired)

May 1, 2025

Augusta Civic Center, 76 Community Drive, Augusta

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Name _____ Tel. _____ Affiliate _____

Address _____ City/Town _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____ Age 90+ FREE _____

Registration: \$30—coffee/juice/food, vendors, raffles, prizes, book exchange, awards, affiliate displays, buffet lunch, entertainment, annual business meeting, fellowship

Two breakout sessions featuring four topics: Select 1st and 2nd choices for each one.

- (1) Mission Dogs (2) The Basics of Healthy Footcare
(3) Hiking the Maine Outdoors (4) Improving Everyday Expectations

Session 1 10:35—11:10 a.m.: _____ 1st choice _____ 2nd choice

Session 2 11:20—11:55 a.m.: _____ 1st choice _____ 2nd choice

This form may be duplicated—submit a separate registration form for each registrant. Registration is to be postmarked by April 15, 2025

Make check payable to MEA-Retired. Send with registration form(s) to Carl Bucciantini, Registrar, PO Box 352, Greene, ME 04236-0352.

Questions? Convention Chair Rheba Michaud, rmichaud143@charter.net (207) 564-7494

Book table at convention

Tables will be set up at our MEA-Retired convention 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 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 and have more free time. Bring books and take books.

So, when you start your spring cleaning, begin with your bookcases and share your reading material. For more information, contact our convention coordinator, Rheba Michaud at 207-564-7494.



Convention Booklet Deadlines

December 1: Leadership Award Bios & Photos to MEA-Retired President-Elect Molly Smith

February 1: Leadership Award Bios & Photos to booklet editor Kay Grindall

March 1: Reports from MEA-Retired officers, liaisons, and committee chairpersons

March 15: Necrology Reports

Names of all deceased who contribute to the education of students—bus drivers, custodians, cooks, secretaries, coaches, ed techs, teachers, principals, crossing guards, superintendents, Dates of decease: March 10, 2024, thru March 10, 2025

**Please send to kay_grindall@yahoo.com.
Mail to 23 Hilltop Drive Oakland 04963**



Maine Education Association Retired
35 Community Drive
Augusta, ME 04330

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Membership Matters: Who can be a member?

Our union of educators is made up of several overlapping organizations. At the national level, we have NEA; at the state level, we have MEA.

But that's not the whole story.

When we retire, we have MEA-Retired. Membership. Eligibility is open to all who

worked in positions connected with education and students. We represent teachers, ed techs, clerical staff, nurses, counselors, food service workers, bus drivers, crossing guards, principals, superintendents, counselors, and custodians. And more.

In higher ed, we represent professors, researchers, professional staff, athletics staff, clerical staff, as well as maintenance and custodial staff. When they retire, they are all represented by MEA-Retired.

We have 16 local affiliate organizations. One represents retired higher ed personnel; whereas, the others represent retirees employed in the local K-12 schools organized roughly along county lines.

It is this last group that can broaden our outreach.

Anyone who has worked in schools can join a local affiliate as an associate member.

They do not have to be members of MEA-Retired or have been union members in their previous life. Many bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, secretaries and others spent years working in our schools and educating our children. They may not have been eligible to join a union, but they can easily join MEA-Retired.

For example, my wife worked for years as an elementary school secretary in Fort Kent in the 1960's and 70's. In those years, secretaries were not unionized. She worked closely with the teachers and developed many close friendships.

She cannot join MEA-Retired, but she is an associate member of Aroostook

Retired Educators Association (ARA). As do many others, she looks forward to our summer luncheon meetings where she can meet with friends and colleagues.

When I served on the MEA Board of Directors, she attended numerous events, including several representative assemblies as a visitor. She is known by so many MEA members that many assume she is a former teacher. Despite having a long career with the federal government, she still fondly remembers her years at Fort Kent Elementary School.

Do you know someone who worked in public education? Invite them to join our family as an associate member. It's a great way to increase our numbers in the local affiliates, and increase our

See Membership, Page 15

