From our President

Christmas is only 353 days away, and the New Year is here. Days are getting longer.

There is no escaping from our past. We can look to the future while we live in the present. With the new year underway, we need to approach it with a conviction and a determination to make it better than the last—one step at a time.

The Maine Legislature will or has convened and is presently examining 330 emergency bills during the short session. Then, the legislative campaign season begins in earnest.

While the Maine legislators jockey for political positioning, we at MEA-Retired continue to make better the retirement for our members. We are taking a hard look at our Maine Benefits Trust Anthem BlueCross/Blue Shield Advantage Plan. Our Healthcare Committee will be tackling issues of coverage for health, vision, hearing, and dental needs.

Private insurers prefer options that are just that—“options.” You are either in or out. Remember, choices cost everyone more money. It is a fact of capitalism. The more you can dice it up, dissect it, opt in, or opt out always cost more for you or others.

It is time for universal healthcare insurance for all our citizens. It works for most retirees who depend on Social Security and Medicare.

Make plans for our 70th!

By Rheba Michaud, Chairperson Convention Committee

Our 70th convention and annual meeting will be here before we know it. Please take a moment to mark Thursday, May 5, 2022, on your calendar for an informative, fun day with retired educators from around the state at the Augusta Civic Center.

Come and share the day with fellow retirees and colleagues. Help us celebrate “Happy 202nd Birthday, Maine: Proud Past-Bright Future.”

Our keynote speaker is Professor Dr. Libby Bischoff from the University of Southern Maine. “She explores American society through the lens of history—and the lens of a camera. She is a nineteenth-century American cultural historian and specializes in the history of photography, particularly in Maine.”

She has written many articles and books and has had an exhibition at the Portland Museum of Art.

Our breakout sessions are filled with interesting speakers. Mark Leslie of Monmouth will present a compelling message on the Underground Railroad in Maine before and during the Civil War. There will be an author table and books available for purchase.

Phil Gonyar and Carl Daiker of Waterville are world travelers and will present an interesting program on their trip “To Antarctica and Back.”

Dr. Tracy S. Michaud, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Chair of the Tourism and Hospitality program at the University of Southern Maine, researches and teaches about sustainable tourism management in Maine and the Arctic. She will present “How to be a responsible traveler: Lessons from Maine to Greenland.”

You as a traveler can have a great impact on a destination and its people. Maine and Greenland (with a little Iceland thrown in there for good measure!) provide relevant case studies on how to be responsible in your travels so your impact is a positive one now and for future generations.

Jim and Lynn Lubas of Dover-Foxcroft have been line dancing for 10 years or more. They are very active, vibrant retirees who enjoy many types of music and dancing for exercise. Get your aerobic workout while listening to music and enjoying yourself. If you are interested in exercising and learning some new moves, check out the line dancing session.

They will teach a few basic steps to get started. Before you know it, you’ll have finished your daily workout.

New and experienced line dancers are welcome. No extra equipment will be needed—just a supportive pair of shoes, a little space, and a willing heart.

See AARP Award, Page 6

Bucciantinis granted national community service award

By Bob Jean
MEA-Retired President-Elect

Carl and Joyce Bucciantini of Greene were recently awarded the prestigious national AARP award that honors individual(s) who make a difference in the lives of others: “The Ethel Percy Andrus Award for Community Service.”

Ethel Andrus founded AARP in 1958 at the age of 73. It is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to enjoy benefits and services that provide the basic necessities of senior living.

Carl and Joyce are dedicated volunteers who live by Dr. Andrus’ motto: “To Serve, to Assist.”

Inside this issue

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How great to start the New Year with good news! MEA-Retired submitted a proposal to NEA to present a panel session at the annual NEA-Retired Summit in Baltimore in March. This presentation will focus on the University of Maine System (UMS) retirees’ successful fight with the Board of Trustees and the top administration.

Here is a sketch of what happened: In August 2020, the UMS notified us that our retiree group health was ending December 31, 2020, at midnight. We’d be uncovered unless we purchased our Medicare advantage or Medicare supplement plans through a company called “AON.”

Rather than continue the group health plan we’d have $1,800 per year to purchase all our healthcare: prescriptions and doctor appointments.

Also, the $1,800 would only be reimbursed to us if we purchased through a medical spending accounting sponsored by AON.

Well I’m a retired economist; and this rang every warning bell in my book. I’d been the president of the USM chapter of the system’s faculty union (AFUM) for the last five years of my career. So, I checked AON’s business reputation

Out of all the possible health insurance vendors the UMS (secretly) went to contract with the only one being sued in The Hague for crimes against humanity.

I am not exaggerating! That’s what catalyzed hundreds of UMS retirees, active employees, legislators, and other state labor unions to unite to save the retirees’ group health care that was promised.

Check out these sites to learn more of the AON tactics:
- AON Hewitt fraud
- AON profits from Pandemic
- AON Exec Steals from Charity
- AON Dr Group sues Poor Patients

No need for a spoiler alert! UMS retirees and their allies won a resounding victory. Water fountain gossip has it that when the MEA filed a class action suit against UMS, the governor’s office made a phone call. Within the hour UMS spokesperson Dan Demerrit announced that the UMS was “hitting the pause button.”

Don’t we have a great story to tell about organizing, communicating, and advocating—three of the nine leadership competencies.

The Leadership Development session includes those that focus on union leadership, organizing, and partnership building.

Here is the meat of the panel proposal we submitted.

In this highly interactive session presenters will outline how Maine higher ed retirees organized to win back their retiree group health insurance after the Board of Trustees cancelled it (without notice and in the middle of the pandemic). Presenters will discuss and give examples of the strategies we developed for successfully advocating, communicating and organizing. The presentation includes short videos (3-5 minutes) from higher ed retiree participants in this successful union action.

Vides will include (1)

See Higher Ed on Page 8

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. 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.

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The importance of an annual physical exam and other preventive services:
Anthem reaches out to members on a regular basis to make sure that they are getting the care they need to live healthier and to prevent chronic conditions such as diabetes, osteoporosis, and hypertension.

Any member who is identified as being at risk and has gaps in care will receive communications throughout the year to ensure they are staying on top of their health including reminders to schedule their annual physical exam.

To further understand your plan and whether you are at risk for certain chronic conditions, you can register at www.anthem.com to access your plan and health resources. You can easily check the status of claims and review plan documents. There is also an online library of medical articles and videos. If you choose, you can opt in to receive paperless communications.

With the Sydney Health app, you can do all that, plus view your plan membership card. Wherever you are, you can use your device’s GPS to find nearby doctors, hospitals, and urgent care centers. You can also use the chat feature to quickly find answers to your questions and set your own health reminders and wellness goals.

You can also store and share your health records with My Family Health Record (myFHR), which gives you the ability to share your health information with doctors, family members, and caregivers.

So, whether it’s a phone call from Anthem or one of its vendors reaching out to help you schedule your next preventive service, or a simple reminder “postcard,” please take advantage of these benefits. They are designed to keep you healthy and enjoy a full life.

If you have concerns, contact me at anytime at 207-622-4418, Ext. 2238. Or email me at jkent@meabt.org.

MEABT insurance review

I hope that you are enjoying our wonderful Maine winter. Some days are challenging, but I appreciate the bright sunny days the season affords to those spending this time of the year in Maine.

Winter brings back some of my happiest duty memories from my 33 years at Mount View Junior High/Middle School in Torndhike. The early year gives us opportunities to review and reflect on our decisions in maintaining our physical, mental and financial health.

MEA Benefits Trust (MEABT) will answer questions and hear suggestions regarding services and programs and continues to serve members.

The Trust facilitated the timely distribution of nearly 10,500 health insurance reimbursement checks to retirees. As you know, this was due to legislative action raising the state’s health insurance share from 45 to 55 percent for public school retirees. Several issues had to be sorted: (1) A time gap between the date the law was enacted and the date funds were authorized to be released. (2) The varying monthly premiums for individual retirees.

In November, the MEA-Retired Board of Directors and Healthcare Committee requested that MEABT research the prices of premiums for vision and dental insurance to be added to our plans. Executive Director Jennifer Kent researched these prices with several insurance companies and submitted her report to the MEABT Board of Directors in December. She also forwarded the information to MEA-Retired President Gary McGrane and Healthcare Committee Chairperson Belinda Micucci. Further information and action on this matter is expected.

I would be happy to hear your questions and suggestions: (207) 567-3190 or fannecampbell@gmail.com.

My sincere best wishes for a happy, healthy new year!

By Faith Campbell, MEA-Retired Liaison
Maine Education Association Benefits Trust

MainePERS update

By John Kimball, MainePERS Trustee

Another round of ZOOM Meetings (Love/Hate relationship because of Covid) will begin the new year. Here is what’s happening at MainePERS.

The Board of Trustees is becoming more and more comfortable with our new Executive Director, Dr. Rebecca M. Wyke. The following goals were recently adopted by the Trustees:

Preservation of Trust Fund
Security and integrity of system information systems
Cultivation of a member-centric organization
Development of stakeholder relations

Adopted updated Objectives:
Planning for post-2028 full funding of Unfunded Actuarial Liability (UAL), including a possible Social Security option
- Responding to legislation (divestment of certain investment holdings)
- Expanding defined contribution plans to teachers.
- Exploring mandatory long-term disability insurance coverage
- Election of Board Officers
Both Board Chair and Vice-Chair were re-elected: (Brian Noyes and Richard Metivier, respectively)
- Review of Actuarial Report (Cheiron)
Discussions ensured regarding the trend toward full funding of the UAL and the cost of deregulation of the securities industry by the Bush II Administration ($1 Billion market collapse of 2007-9).

We also discussed the cutting of retiree benefits in 2011 ($1.22 Billion), historic and current Cash Flows (over last 10 years), and the effects of lowering the discount rate to a more conservative 6.5 percent while maintaining the projected inflation rate of 2.75 percent.

The result of all this mumbo-jumbo results in a projected funding rate for the UAL of over 90 percent for the first time ever. However, the UAL increased over $300 Million (>12 percent) since 2020.

Good News: MainePERS Investment Portfolio had a market value >$18.5 Billion (unaudited) at the end of October, 2021. If you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at 207-743-8009 or jhkmtk44@yahoo.com.

Take care and Happy New Year greetings to all.

Check out the Sydney Health App

By Jennifer Kent
MEAABT Executive Director

Signed to keep you healthy and enjoy a full life.

If you have concerns, contact me at anytime at 207-622-4418, Ext. 2238. Or email me at jkent@meabt.org.

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Take care and Happy New Year greetings to all.
and some music.

A variety of exhibitors and vendors will offer a look at services and items that are available today. Affiliates will have exhibits that depict the programs in which they are involved during the year.

May I remind our presidents and vice presidents to begin planning displays of your interesting, fun activities and opportunities for service.

The silent auction and vendor raffles are very popular. Affiliate Leadership Awards, Presidential Award, Honorary Award, and Ritter Grants will be presented.

The free book swap is popular. There is a table for you to bring your books for others to enjoy reading and pick up books for yourself—for free.

A very interesting “In Memoriam” recognition program will honor fellow retired educators who died this year. Be sure to remind your necrology chairpersons to send the names of deceased members to be included in our convention booklet. See note below.

The convention starts at 8:30 with registration/coffee/Danish/fruit. A very good lunch offers a variety of entrees. The day ends at 2:30 p.m. All for $20.

More than 200 gathered for this annual statewide event during our last in-person meeting. Crystal Ward of Lewiston is our legislative chairperson and has attended a number of conventions. She says, “The convention allows me to meet people from across the state. We have opportunities for learning new ideas and seeing what other county organizations are doing.

“The many speakers are informative and very entertaining. The business meeting allows participation from all members. The awards and ceremonies highlight the wonderful things being done by seniors. A lot is packed in a few hours! I recommend it highly.”

Bob Souther of Camden attends because “I am the MEA-Retired treasurer. I also attend because it’s a great opportunity to get together with other retirees for fellowship, good food, and breakout sessions. It’s also wonderful to see many retired educators honored for various endeavors.”

Jane Conroy of Dover – Foxcroft agrees, “I attended my first one in 2016 when I first retired—mainly out of curiosity as I didn’t know many members statewide. I continue to attend because it is a fun way to stay connected with other retirees and learn new information on issues related to retirement. I enjoy spending the one day in that way.”

Beth Chamberlin of Thomaston is a member of Knox Country Retired Educators and commented, “Since I joined MEA-Retired, I have attended the state convention, and it is always a wonderful day. The programs are interesting, and it is a pleasure to connect with members from other affiliates. There are many vendors and exhibitors for attendees to visit. Many members are recognized, for various reasons. I encourage members of MEA-Retired to attend our well-organized and upbeat state convention.”

Connie McCarthy of Northport is past president of Waldo Educators Association Retired and says, “I went to my first convention in 2019. I found it informative and supportive of the efforts of our local chapters.”

Plan for a group of you to come for the wonderful day where you will be entertained and remain informed on issues pertaining to our retirement.

See the schedule on Page 8 and the registration form on Page 11. Register early and please note the red sentence at the bottom of the box. We look forward to seeing you on May 5. Plan to bring friends.
NEA- Retired Executive Council conducted their recent meeting virtually. As of this writing, NEA-R membership is 327,000+ members.

Special guest was NEA President Becky Pringle. President Pringle challenged us to think about what systems in education can and should be collaborative in practice. We have to think differently—we need to develop an “enterprise of leadership development.”

The balance of the Jack Kinnamon Scholarship Fund is approximately $131,116. Five scholarships ($2,500 each) were awarded this past year. Contributions to the Fund have suffered a bit because we have not met face-to-face.

Legislative report was presented by Sylvia Johnson. Social Security Trustees report a surplus of $3 trillion. The fund is fully funded for approximately the next 10 years.

As of this writing, there has been a 5.9 percent increase in Social Security benefits—by far the largest increase for nearly 40 years to 64 million Social Security recipients.

The NEA-Retired Executive Council is working to provide resource informational packets to retired state organizations. Topics include legislative issues, membership, education of pre-retired members on pensions/social security, and more.

Vacancies exist on the NEA-Retired Executive Council and in the retired positions on the NEA Board. These vacant positions include: Vice President of the Retired Executive Council, two Executive Council positions, two positions on the NEA Board representing the Retired, and one alternate for the Board of Directors representing the retired membership.

The next NEA-Retired President sends greetings

By Sarah Borgman

Happy New Year! A new year with new opportunities and challenges lies ahead. May this year be an especially good one for you and your members.

Registration for our spring conference in Baltimore opened on January 7. Be sure to read all the directions before filling in your choices so you don’t have to go back and start again… voice of experience talking!

We have 44 presidents registered. The hotel name should be available by the time we register, of course, but I always think, “What difference does it make?” It will be so good to all be together again! We have some great workshops and speakers ready to go!

May I ask that you reserve some important 2022 dates:

- March 11, 12, 13—NEA Summit, Las Vegas, NV. Presidents are not funded this year but you and your members are invited.
- March 16, 17, 18—NEA Retired Conference, Baltimore, MD. Retired President, membership chairperson, and staff liaison funded as per previous letter (Hotel to be named at a later date.)
- June 29-30—NEA Retired Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- July 3, 4, 5, 6—NEA Representative Assembly, Chicago, IL. Site to be declared.

Please remember I’m here to help and to answer questions at anytime. Call me at 574-849-5580 or write an email to whadyapple@frontier.com.

Read Across America Day!
March 2, 2022

Sue Feiner of Yarmouth was recently awarded the prestigious notoriety of Professor Emerita of Economics and Women and Gender Studies at the University of Southern Maine effective December 1, 2021. She was nominated by her peers

This recommendation has also been endorsed by Dr. Adam Tuchinsky, Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences as well as by Dr. Glenn Cummings, President of the University of Southern Maine.

The benefits associated with emeritus status include participation in academic convocations and commencement, library privileges, possession of a University identification card, inclusion on mailing lists and all official faculty listings, office or laboratory space (upon request and subject to availability), and attendance at faculty meetings (non-voting status).

We commend Sue’s record of academic achievement and service to the university and recognize her accomplishments with this renowned honor.

MEA-Retired President Gary McGrane commends Sue’s outstanding recognition: “Susan’s exemplary service to all—students, staff, faculty and community—is rightly deserving because of her academic achievements and her outspoken advocacy for women empowerment. Susan is well deserving of this prestigious honor. Congratulations, Ms. Feiner!”

Sue serves as information coordinator for the Board of Directors of MEA-Retired.
Affiliates give and give . . .

Franklin County Retired Educators (FCRE) participated in the annual Day of Caring sponsored by MEA-Retired. This year’s choice school to help was Spruce Mountain Middle School (SMMS) in Jay. Racheal Mastine, Pamela Roy, and Jordan Brotherton are new teachers and had much to do to prepare for their first days. They submitted lists for needed items. FCRE President Jan Collins and Day of Caring Chair Joanne Dunlap delivered supplies to SMMS Principal Carrie Luce and teachers.

The staff expressed appreciation to FCRE for their generosity in providing a boost during the difficulties of teaching during the adjustments required in Covid-19.

Presenting school supplies are (Back) Joanne Dunlap and Jan Collins (third from right) of FCRE. First-year teachers (L to R): Racheal Mastine, Pamela Roy, and Jordan Brotherton. At right is SMMS Principal Carrie Luce.

We would like to hear from you

We want to hear from our readers. We are very interested in learning more about the coping skills you have used to get through two plus years of Covid.

What tools have you used to boost your morale? How are you reaching out to family and friends, and how are they reaching out to you? Are you sewing masks? Are you providing transportation to people in need? Are you working at a soup kitchen or a food pantry?

Have you gone back into the classroom as a substitute teacher? Maybe you are tutoring your grandkids during sessions of remote learning at the kitchen table.

Whatever it is that gets you through these times, we want to know about them. We are sure the sharing of your experiences will help others in the education community to get to the other side of this crisis.

We invite you to write your thoughts and reflections as we embark on 2022. Please send your thoughts and experiences in an email message to kay_grindall@yahoo.com or send to 23 Hilltop Drive, Oakland, ME 04963.

AARP Award, from Page 1

Not To Be Served.”

Right on the heels of this special award, Carl was appointed as the new Volunteer State President of AARP Maine. According to Executive Director Noel Bonam, “Carl’s kindness and humility, his commitment to collaborative leadership and his intimate knowledge and experience of volunteer engagement made him our first choice.”

As the volunteer state president, Carl is the leader of the AARP Executive Council. He will also represent AARP Maine in public events and in the press—as one of our primary volunteer spokespersons. Carl has served as AARP liaison on the Board of Directors of MEA-Retired for the past four years. He has tendered his resignation to give more time to this new position.

Joyce is a tutor and tutor trainer for the Androscoggin Literacy Volunteers. She is chairperson of the “Read to Me” program in the Lewiston-Auburn community. This program is sponsored by the Mu Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International—a sorority for women educators.

Together, they are dedicated volunteers with AARP Maine where they host Lewiston-Auburn virtual On-Tap every Thursday at 5 p.m. They are a team of effective volunteers. Joyce reminded us that “volunteering is just part of our lives.”

Carl will continue to participate in the AARP legislative advocacy program known as “Tuesdays at the State House” (TASH). It is a volunteer group of advocates who dress up in their red shirts and testify before legislative committees, speak up in their communities, distribute flyers wherever possible, and just be a red presence as they remain vigilant in advocating for improved senior living for all Mainers who are 50 and older.

The group meets at the state house at 9 a.m. every Tuesday while legislature is in session.

MEA-Retired President Gary McGrane says, “We are very sorry to lose Carl on our Board of Directors. He has been a staple to our organization and has filled many shoes. He will be extremely difficult to replace. We wish him the best of luck in his new position as Maine’s AARP Volunteer State President.”

Sue Grondin of Lewiston is chairperson of MEA-Retired’s Pre-Retirement Committee and spoke so highly of her colleague: “Carl has been instrumental in carving the format for our Pre-Retirement Seminars. As one of the session hosts, he inserts humor about the joys of retirement while conducting the Zoom meetings and relaying questions to the presenters. We members of the Pre-Retirement Committee will miss Carl and his expertise. We wish him all the best in his new position with AARP.”

Both Carl and Joyce have extensive backgrounds in education. Carl taught Grades 3 and 4 for ten years in Dexter. He then served as an elementary and secondary counselor in the Auburn School Department for 21 years.

Joyce served as an Enrichment Volunteer Coordinator for the elementary grades for six years in Seward, Alaska. Then, she taught middle school language arts in Auburn for 20 years.

Joyce and Carl met at the Auburn Middle School and were married in 2007. They have four adult children and four grandchildren.

Joyce and Carl, we extend to you our most sincere CONGRATULATIONS.
When I saw the article in the December Clarion listing 1952 as the start of MEA—Retired, I remembered that it was an important year for me as well. I enrolled in Farmington State Teachers College—wondering how I was going to pay for those four years of education. My parents could not afford to help me at the time. I was fortunate to learn that the Dean of Men had secured a job for me working in the kitchen at the college. However, that only paid for my board.

I was talking with some friends at the frat house about summer jobs. Two of the guys told me they worked as bell hops at the Bar Harbor Inn—the most exclusive hotel in the coastal Bar Harbor area.

They told us that the summer before the hotel had ten girls working as waitresses. The hotel manager found that they were always arguing and disagreeing with one another. He said they were very difficult employees with whom to work.

Six of us wrote to the manager and told him that we men could do the work of ten girls, and we would not need to have bus boys. He took us up on the offer, and we started that summer.

We lived in a large attic room in the hotel. There were eight guys in the same room—six waiters and the two bell hops. Five of us bonded during that summer, and we have remained best friends since that time. All five of us were married, and the group of ten would meet several times every summer.

Four of those friends were attendants at my wedding. Although the numbers dwindled, we who are left still meet—70 years later!

Hugh (pictured third from left) and his wait staff friends pose for a photo before they prepared to serve a large banquet at the Bar Harbor Hotel in 1952.

Four generations of educators
Thanks to the University of Maine system

By Gerry Day, Gorham

In the early 1960’s, my mom, Virginia Thompson Williams, worked as a telephone operator in Cornish.

The office went dial and because she was married, she was offered a transfer and undesirable shifts in the Portland office. Instead, she opted to take the $100 per year offered for her service and use it to send her family through Gorham State Teachers College (GSTC).

Mom received her Bachelor’s degree from GSTC in 1966 and went on to teach in several elementary schools in SAD #6 in Buxton. Today, she is 102 and has been very active. She enjoyed bowling, playing Bingo, reading, and traveling with friends after her retirement.

I am Geraldine, the older child. I was working in an office in 1959 and applied for an assistant manager’s position. I was informed that only men were eligible for that position. So, I decided to earn my teaching degree from GSTC.

My husband, Thomas Day, earned his GED. In those day, GED’s were not acceptable for entrance but he took several night courses at GSTC. Professor Allan Pease took him under his wing and convinced the administration to take him in the day college.

We received our Master’s degrees and became guidance counselors—Thomas at Bonny Eagle Middle School in Buxton and I at Deering High School in Portland.

Our son Todd graduated from University of Maine at Portland-Gorham and taught for 25 years at Lincoln Middle School in Portland. Todd is now teaching at a private school in Florida.

Todd’s daughter, Taylor Day, just graduated from the University of Southern Maine this past June and is teaching at Art Play, a preschool in Portland.

Virginia’s younger son, Taylor, is 70 years old.

Retired educator Virginia Williams has been very active until recently. She will be 102 on Valentine’s Day.

MEA-Retired turns 70! Where were you in 1952?

By Hugh Keene, Chairperson Legacy Committee

Marjorie Bishop, Presque Isle 1/10/1922
Rachel Burden, Presque Isle 2/18/1921
Francesca Perazzi, Portland 2/4/1921
Irene Robertson, Inverness, FL 10/23/1919
Martha Rollins, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 6/22/1919
Benita Russo, South Portland 1/1/1919
Virginia Williams, Gorham 2/14/1919

Do you know of someone who is 100 or older?

See Generations, Page 8
Proposed 2022 resolutions

By Claudette O’Connell, Chair
Resolutions Committee

The Resolutions Committee proposes the following new resolutions for approval at the MEA-Retired Executive Committee meeting in March.

If approved, these resolutions will be recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. If they gain further approval, they will then be presented to members at the 2022 annual meeting in May for consideration.

Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes members should actively support efforts in state legislation that would provide retirees with a full Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) based on the Consumer Price Index each year.

Resolved: That MEA-Retired believes that every eligible citizen has a constitutional right to vote and therefore opposes all actions that encourage voter disenfranchisement.

We welcome input from our members and invite you to contact me: (207) 942-6137 or cladet456@gmail.com. Committee members are Vicki Amoroso of Rumford and Louise Thompson of Wayne.

Higher Ed, from Page 2

our members’ statements to the Board of Trustees during sessions open to the public, (2) letters of support written by legislators, and (3) comments from higher ed retirees who would have suffered severe financial and health setbacks as a result of the unilateral insurance change.

The presentation will showcase the indispensable role of MEA, MEA-Retired, and NEA in this critically important win to retain health insurance benefits for members.

Retirees are able to keep their group health insurance—no thanks to UMS.

Generations, from Page 7

Larry Thompson, also graduated from GSTC with Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees and was an administrator in the Lake Region School System in Naples for years.

Larry’s wife, Claire LaBrie, was also a graduate of the University of Maine system and taught in Northern Maine for awhile. She finished her career as an administrator of Special Education in the Cape Elizabeth School Department.

Others in our family also pursued college degrees at the University and were educators as well. Our family would like to acknowledge that the Maine University System has been influential in the lives of four generations of our family. We also credit it with the success and fulfillment we have had in our educational careers.

MEA-Retired 2022 Pre-Retirement Schedule

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, 207-782-8850

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MAINE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION RETIRED
70th Convention & Annual Meeting
Augusta Civic Center, Augusta, ME
“Happy 202nd Birthday, Maine: Proud Past, Bright Future”
May 5, 2022

8:30 Registration, refreshments, exhibits, vendor & county displays, PAC raffle, book swap, music by Isean Halvorson of Dover-Foxcroft
9:30 Welcome…………………………………………Gary McGrane, President
Land Acknowledgement
Invocation
Pledge of Allegiance…………………………………Bob Jean, President-Elect
National Anthem
Maine Education Association………….Rachelle Johnson, Executive Director
MainePERS………………………………………..Dr. Rebecca Wyke, Executive Director
MEA Benefits Trust……………………………Jennifer Kent, Executive Director
AARP, Maine…………………………………….Noel Bonam, Executive Director
MEA Government Relations……………………….John Kosinski
Legacy Committee…………………………………Hugh Keene, Chairperson
In Memoriam Tributes…………………………….Kay Grindall, Past President

10:30 View exhibits
11:00 Breakout Sessions (See descriptions on Page 1.) PAC raffle is conducted.
12:00 Buffet Lunch—Main floor (ticket needed)
Keynote Address:  Dr. Libby Bischof
Professor of History, University of Southern Maine
1:25 Business Meeting—Main floor……………………Gary McGrane, President
Minutes of 2021 Annual Meeting…………………….Marilyn Hylan, Secretary
Action on Resolutions ……………………………..Claudette O’Connell, Chairperson
Honorary Member Presentation …………………….Gary McGrane, President
Membership Committee Awards……………………………Roger Roy, Chairperson
Community Participation Awards…………………………Susan Feiner, Chairperson
Affiliate Leadership Awards……………………………Bob Jean, President-Elect
Presidential Award………………………………..Gary McGrane, President

2:30 Adjournment………………………………………Gary McGrane, President
AARP Maine is gearing up for the new legislative season as well as identifying target areas to pursue in the support of the age 50+ community. Staff and volunteers have been meeting virtually throughout the summer to review the work of the past year and to lay the groundwork for the upcoming year of advocacy, under the leadership of our new state director, Noël Bonam.

Noël was born in Southern India where his family put education and lifelong learning ahead of all other things. He learned about Judaism, Islam and Buddhism just as much as Christianity. He was taught world history as well as Indian history. He learned about kindness and humanity just as much as math and reading.

He states, “From a young age, I really loved to travel. It is that love for travel that made me live in three different parts of the world before moving to the US in 2000.”

Professionally, Noël worked in fields of suicide prevention, arts, public health, social services, international development, social justice and leadership development before arriving at AARP.

He says of his leadership style: “I am a very collaborative leader and I believe the biggest responsibility of a leader is to support others to succeed and to create inclusive platforms whereupon others can speak their minds, work for their own success (and for that of others), and to thrive by doing so.”

Noël believes that the past three decades of leadership development consisting of stakeholder engagement, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practice and civic leadership—are critical, relevant skills that he brings to his new role at AARP to engage members in their highest level of competence.

Of all the places to which Noël has traveled, he says, “When I got to Maine for the first time, I distinctly remember thinking that I could live here for the rest of my life. Moving to Maine was definitely one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.”

Even after being here 21 years, he is still discovering wonderful things about this great state! He observes, “Many people move here for the natural beauty and for the quality of life that Maine offers. I moved here because of the people of Maine.

Mainers have big hearts and they are not only thoughtful and hardworking people but also humble, resilient and frank.

Noël Bonam loves all that Maine has to offer and is committed to doing what he can to maintain a health lifestyle and programs for our 50+ population.

“Noel Bonam at aarp.org.

“With Mainers, what you see is what you get. One can’t ask for more than that.”

He finds that the needs of Maine seniors are similar to elsewhere—connectivity, public transportation, long-term care and opportunities for intergenerational engagement are among the needs that are unique to Maine’s aging population. He states further, “I am happy to report that my team and I are currently working on the ‘State Plan’ that will define pathways to addressing the needs and involving partners and volunteers from across the state.”

AARP will work to advance the Age-Friendly and Livable Communities Initiative that is promoted nationally. Maine has 73 Age-Friendly Communities. Thanks to dedicated community leaders, local elected officials, municipal employees, and engaged volunteers, Maine is leading the country through the work that is being done by Age-Friendly Communities. AARP is a huge organization with a comprehensive network of departments and programs that strive to empower people to choose how they live and thrive as they age. Many meaningful opportunities are available to members in every state in the nation.

However, not every eligible older adult in Maine is aware of these opportunities; we need to increase awareness and encourage participation among Maine seniors.

Another of his goals is to support the development of a stronger volunteer presence and capacity for volunteerism in each county. AARP Maine is a statewide organization and has members in every corner.

We want to continue to strengthen the existing network across the state by assessing county-specific needs for capacity building opportunities, by strengthening the relationships between Age-Friendly Communities across the state and by supporting initiatives that help to remove disparities among the different regions.

Additionally, as an active member of the Broadband Coalition of Maine, we are also committed to making sure every part of the state of Maine is ‘connected’ as this will help to reduce the disparities that Mainers from rural regions experience.

When not working for the 200,000+ AARP members in Maine, Noël is either doing artwork, taking road trips, cooking, or simply spending time with family and friends. He is a professional visual and performing artist—and an extrovert. He says, “I never tire of social interactions with friends and strangers alike.”

Welcome to Maine, Noël! He makes his home in Portland where the state AARP office is also located. Feel free to reach out to Noël at nbonom@aarp.org.
McCully retires after 59 years of teaching

By Susan Grondin, Chairperson Pre-Retirement Committee

As educators, how many times have we heard adults say, “If it were not for my teacher, I would not have the success I have today!”

Yes, we can be influential in guiding students to pursue their talents, but parental support and advice impact decisions well into adulthood.

Robert “Bob” McCully, a retired educator from Falmouth, is one such individual who recently retired after spending 59 years teaching mathematics.

Yes! 59 years!

Bob grew up in Little Falls, New York, and graduated with a degree in mathematics from St. Bonaventure University. He also earned master’s degrees in mathematics from the University of Maine and the University of New Hampshire.

Bob was awarded National Science Foundation summer fellowships for graduate studies at Oberlin College, at the University of New Hampshire, and two summer fellowships at Rutgers University.

After additional graduate work at MIT and Tufts, Bob was a participant and a presenter in a summer “Teaching with Technology” program at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire.

Ron Lancaster was a presenter and recalls, “I was impressed with Bob’s passion for teaching and desire to learn new things. He’s a remarkable man—he cares about others and has great personal and strong leadership skills.”

Ron summed up Bob’s career: “I do not know of any teacher who has taught for 59 years. He could have retired decades ago, but he stayed on as a teacher because for him it is a profession, a dedication and never just a job. Bob is a master teacher and I have learned a great deal from him.”

A chemistry major at St. Bonaventure while on a Division One basketball scholarship, Bob encountered a conflict. The lab time required for a chemistry major competed with basketball practices. At a stature of 6 feet, 9 inches, he was a premiere basketball player—a priority for him and the team.

Calling home, Bob told his father he thought he should switch to being a math major. His Dad replied that he was to take whatever he wanted, as long as he graduated certified to teach.

“My father recognized something in me that I didn’t see in myself, and I will always be grateful to him for that. Unfortunately, my father didn’t live long enough to see me follow through on his sage advice. He always supported me, but typically made suggestions rather than ultimatums,” Bob said.

Actually, educators hold a rich legacy in Bob’s family. His maternal grandfather was a professor at Syracuse University, and his maternal grandmother was an elementary school teacher. Bob is also proud of his niece Kristin—a dedicated elementary teacher in New York.

Bob’s first position was a two-year teaching fellowship at the University of Maine. He then spent five years at St. Bonaventure teaching undergraduate and graduate mathematics courses while coaching tennis and basketball.

Prior to taking a position teaching mathematics at Falmouth High School, Bob did a two-year fellowship at the University of New Hampshire and was an adjunct at a branch campus of the University of Pittsburgh.

Fifty years of his 59 years in education were spent at Falmouth High School where he coached basketball and tennis at the varsity and middle school levels.

He was also advisor to the Student Council, served a couple years as a department chair, and participated on numerous committees—one of which was the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). He served on the committee that hosted the teams at his own school and served on teams visiting and evaluating other schools. He was one of the authors for the math portion of the Maine Educational Assessment Exam.

A strong advocate for the Falmouth Education Association (FEA), Bob served as a chief negotiator many times. He was a multiple-term president in non-negotiating years and the FEA treasurer for a year. He also served as a consultant for ed techs and secretaries during their contract negotiations.

Bob was an NEA-RA MEA-RA delegate, served on the MEA Board of Directors for 13 years during which time he was chair of the Policy Review Committee. Other committee assignments included the Statewide Bargaining Committee, Resolutions Committee, and Strategic Budget Committee.

MEA President Grace Leavitt has known Bob “ever since I first got involved at the state level of our Association—and have had many conversations with him on a wide range of topics! The first lengthy discussion was at an MEA-RA regarding Maine Learning Results when they were first developed.

“It is hard to say what Bob is more passionate about: mathematics, teaching, coaching (especially tennis!), or union advocacy. He was dedicated to all of these. And even in retirement, so well-deserved after so many years in the classroom, he wanted to be on the MEA Statewide Bargaining Committee again! Of course, we welcome and appreciate his experience and expertise.”

As he reflects over his nearly 60 years in the classroom, Bob says, “Teaching is a passionate career in an all-consuming venue in which lasting relationships are built. It requires a passion to put in the unseen hours required to be satisfied with your classroom performance. Usually Sundays and ‘vacation’ days are consumed by preparing for the time ahead or catching up with work that wasn’t possible to do any other time.”

“I am sure Bob spoke for all of us when he said, ‘It is very gratifying when students, parents, and colleagues take the time to recognize the effort you have put in on their behalf. It can be frustrating when a chance encounter with a former student causes you to participate in a game of ‘Bet you can’t guess who I am!’ It often leads to a heart-felt ‘Thank You.’”

He says that “a sense of See McCully on Page 11
humor is one of the most important attributes for an educator. You can plan ahead or be spontaneous. Recognizing student accomplishment and effort is vital. Because of a constant erosion of classroom time it is vital to be as efficient as possible, while still being thorough.”

Having taught nearly six decades, Bob found his final was most notable in terms of change and adaptation due to the pandemic.

When thinking about role models and people who inspired him, Bob recalls Mr. Harold Templeman—his senior high school English and homeroom teacher. He recalls him as being “a very demanding, but truly interesting and caring individual. He didn’t put up with any foolishness. He had a wonderful, dry sense of humor and was very quick to recognize students’ accomplishments. I was able to go into honors English as a college freshman, and I earned a minor in English.

Through his decades of teaching and coaching, Bob has received numerous recognitions: the 2004 MEA Award for Teaching Excellence, an Educator of Distinction by the Coca Cola Foundation, an Outstanding Educator by the American Red Cross, and a member of Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers.

His coaching expertise earned him the distinction of Maine High School Tennis Coach of the Year multiple times. Bob was highly regarded by staff and students as evident with a yearbook dedication at FHS.

As retirement approached Bob did not make students and staff aware of his intent to retire right away, and it didn’t become widely known until much later in the school year. He was humbled and overwhelmed by the number of people who came by to thank him.

Bob suggests that new teachers “remember to always present yourself as a positive role model for young people. The demands currently placed on teachers make it difficult to put in the hours that co-curricular and extra-curricular activities demand, but it is really rewarding to be involved outside the classroom. The collegiality and camaraderie achieved by interacting with fellow professionals is essential to enjoying a satisfying career.”

Retirement has brought many adjustments, but Bob is finding plenty to do. He is decluttering and improving the house, reading, doing crossword puzzles and jumbles, writing programs for graphing calculators, and constructing computer programs that make challenging mathematical concepts visual by simulation.

While rehabbing from knee replacement so he can more fully enjoy tennis, golf, and fishing, Bob continues to coach. Seniors from his high school have been contacting him to write letters of recommendation.

Other areas of interest include watching televised sporting events and volunteering to tutor students in math. Bob has donated 32 gallons of blood to the Red Cross and plans to continue to volunteer at blood drives.

We welcome Bob as a member, and he has already indicated he wants to be involved with the county affiliate and MEA-Retired. Bob and his wife Brenda live in the North Deering suburb of Portland.

Sue Grondin of Lewiston retired after teaching language arts for 35 years in Lewiston Middle School. She was an active MEA member in her local association and served on state and local committees. She was a delegate to MEA-RA and NEA-RA. She is chair of MEA-Retired’s Pre-Retirement Committee.

70th MEA-Retired Convention & Annual Meeting

“Happy 202nd Birthday, Maine: Proud Past, Bright Future”

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Libby Bischof, Professor of History

University of Southern Maine

May 5, 2022

Augusta Civic Center, 76 Community Drive, Augusta

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Name_________________________Tel. ___________ Email__________________________

Address_________________________________City/Town___________________________

State__ Zip______ Affiliate_____________________________ Age 90+ FREE ______

Registration: $20—coffee/ juice/ food, vendors, affiliate displays, buffet lunch, & entertainment. Write “1” and “2” on the lines to indicate your first and second choices for breakout sessions:

_____Line Dancing ______Underground Railroad ____To Antarctica and Back

_____Travels & Tourism: Greenland & Iceland

This form may be duplicated—submit a separate registration form for each registrant.

Registration is to be postmarked by April 23, 2022

Make check payable to MEA-Retired. Send with registration form(s) to Larry Given, Registrar, 84 Kenway Drive, Litchfield, ME 04350

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

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when an additional $3 were added to bring the amount to $15.

Local affiliate dues range from $5 to $12 per year.

Membership dues for NEA-Retired dues are $35 per year. Life membership now costs $300.

If you are a new retiree and expect to be retired 20-30 years, this is a real bargain! Some of us remember when we paid $100 to be life members of NEA—which carried over to our NEA-Retired realm.

A combination of the dues equals $3 to $6 per month—depending on if you are a life member of NEA-Retired. Many of us spend more than that on morning coffee. I consider all this a great bargain, and urged everyone to sign up as they consider retirement.
Membership Matters: A great bargain!!

By Roger Roy, Chairperson
Membership Committee

I’m protecting my pension and healthcare insurance, as well as protecting students and educators. I’m also building social bonds with fellow educators. In addition, I qualify for discount prices for travel, insurance, banking, automobiles, appliances, and many more things.

How do I do that? By being a member of my retirees’ union. I’m a lifetime member of NEA-Retired, so my membership costs me only about $3 per month. For that, I’m a member of NEA-Retired, MEA-Retired, Higher Educators Association Retired (HEAR), and Aroostook Retired Educators Association (AREA).

NEA-Retired is the National Education Association-Retired that works for us at the national level as well as negotiates all kinds of product and service discount prices for members.

MEA-Retired is the Maine Education Association Retired which is our voice in Augusta on all educational issues. HEAR is the higher education, local affiliate, and AREA is the Aroostook County local affiliate of MEA-R; these unions deal with specialized issues and social networking.

When the University of Maine System unilaterally changed retirees’ guaranteed healthcare insurance plan, MEA helped us win a settlement that forced the University System to back down and negotiate changes to our healthcare.

I ended up with a better healthcare insurance and the knowledge that my insurance coverage cannot be changed unilaterally.

Does anyone believe that a single retiree could afford to stand against the University System? No way! Without my union standing behind me, I would definitely lose out.

My wife and I also really enjoy the summer luncheon meetings of the Aroostook affiliate. We enjoy the fellowship of 75 or more old friends and colleagues.

What about having to pay dues? Anyone who knows me, knows I am frugal. I drive an old car; my wife gets a new one and I recycle her old one. I can’t bring myself to buy “big boy toys” like a motorcycle, ATV or boat, but I would never consider not being a union member. I like having someone cover my back.

Furthermore, the dues are cheap. MEA dues are $29 per year. According to MEA by-laws, their retired dues are computed at 5 percent of the MEA members active professional dues plus an assessment fee of $6.

Hence, the Active Professional dues amount is $450 x 5% = $22.50, rounded up to the nearest dollar would be $23 plus the assessment fee of $6 would be a total of $29.

MEA-Retired dues are $15. These dues are set by the Board of Directors. They were $12 from 2002 thru 2020.

See Dues on Page 11