



THE CLARION

The Newsletter for Retired Educators
Maine Education Association Retired Vol. 133, No. 5

June 2021

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

From our President: Our time to grow



Gary McGrane

It has been an adventure this past year, and the future looks to be just as adventurous.

We had a wonderful virtual annual meeting. Thank you, Kay and Rheba. We had a welcoming group of more than 100 participants.

I look forward to moving our organization forward in the ensuing two years with the help of our many dedicated educators.

As we gathered, we remembered those who went before and honored those who have made a defining contribution in promoting community relations and educational activities. Thank you to all recipients.

We were reminded by past president Kay Grindall that the pandemic “. . . has etched memories in our hearts and minds that have changed our outlook and priorities . . .” for the better. With one mind, we sent greetings and thanks to those

caring teachers who exemplified our purpose by promoting, professional and social welfare of our retired educators of Maine.

Special recognitions go out to those who will be taking a much deserved rest from being a chair of a committee. Positions being vacated will be filled with other dedicated individuals who are willing to step up and chair the Community Parti-

See President, Page 2

Virtual NEA Leadership Summit MEA-Retired had record attendance

By Robert Jean
MEA-Retired President-Elect

“Our Democracy, Our Responsibility, Our Time” was the theme of the 2021 Annual NEA



Leadership Summit and NEA-Retired Conference held virtually on Zoom in March. Ten members attended.

NEA planned out both events very well, with very few glitches. I can't imagine all the logistics they worked through to present these meaningful and engaging events. Participants were treated to some fabulous guest speakers. The social justice theme was prominent throughout the sessions.

NEA President Becky Pringle spoke about the power of our union---the largest in the United States. We are a very strong group who can become stronger, as we make

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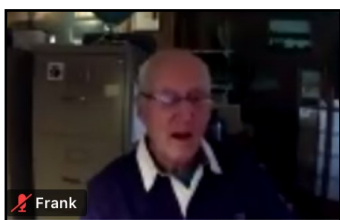
Business, recognitions at 69th annual meeting

By Rheba Michaud
Convention Coordinator



More than 100 members and guests joined our 69th Annual Meeting on Zoom on May 6. Attendees from Arizona, Texas, Colorado, Mississippi, and Florida also tuned in. Parliamentarian Phil Gonyar of Waterville stated the credentials status of having met the quorum of a minimum of 50 unified members required for a business meeting of the Association. We had 87 unified members and nearly 40 guests registered.

It was great to hear the chatter and laughter, as people entered our “Zoom Room” early to socialize with friends. In fact, Frank Maguire of South Portland says, “Better than a crowded con-



Frank Maguire of South Portland joined the annual meeting from his study in South Portland.

vention hall! I was able to see all of the participants up close and hear clearly everything that was said, but I did miss the personal contacts we make at face-to-face meetings. Wonderful way to keep our fires burning until we can meet again.”

Among the lineup of guest speakers was MEA Vice President Jesse Hargrove, a social studies teacher at Hermon High School and president of the local association. Having served on MEA Board of Directors from Region C, Jesse spoke about organizing and forming relationships.

He reminded us that we inspire him and admonished us to keep up the good work in spite of unexpected restrictions. We thank him, as he is an inspiration for all he does in his leadership po-

sition in MEA.

Our lobbyist at the state house, MEA Government Relations Director John Kosinski spoke about pending legislations that impact retired educators. LD293 increases the state's payment of healthcare premiums from 45 to 55 percent This was approved by the committee, and we hope it will receive full support of both the



MEA Vice President Jesse Hargrove brought greetings from his social studies classroom at Hermon High School.

House and Senate.

John also told us another bill would exempt our pension from state income tax. He encourages us to contact

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Legislative Update



By Crystal Ward
Legislative Liaison



This legislative session is like no other in the history of our state. Most of the Committee work is being conducted via Zoom. It feels like our MEA lobbying team is consistently in Zoom meetings to testify on key bills that impact our members.

At the same time, the Legislature has been meeting at

the Augusta Civic Center and they have limited their meetings. The actual State House would not accommodate distancing, so the Legislature has rented out the Civic Center.

MEA Government Relations John Kosinski attests to the following:

The most recent Legislative session was delayed by COVID-19. LD 293 is the bill that would increase the state's share of health insurance premiums from 45 percent to 55 percent. This legislation has one more vote of the Senate and then to the Appropriations Committee for a vote for funding.

When the bill gets to the Appropriations Committee, you will be asked to send messages to legislators asking them to support LD293.

The message will include a link to send emails directly to the committee so all members will receive your messages. It is important you contact them to show support.

Recently, testimony was given on LD1145 and LD1227. These bills would exempt more of our Mainepers pension from State of Maine income taxes. These initiatives are in the process of being voted on by the Legislature.

The **wide card** on all these bills may be Governor Mills and whether she will veto them or sign them into law—once we are able to get them passed.

Down in Washington D.C., HR82 was recently submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives. This bill

would completely remove the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision (GPO/WEP).

The latest development is that S1302 is being introduced in the Senate by Senator Susan Collins. The entire Maine delegation is backing these bills.

There is a bill in the U.S. House—HR2337—that deals with only the WEP, but there is no companion bill in the U.S. Senate yet.

As soon as information is available, it is sent to all affiliates; and hopefully members are receiving it in a timely fashion. If you want to receive a weekly update from John Kosinski, entitled "Under the Dome," please send your name, affiliate, and e-mail address to Sarah Nichols at snichols@maineea.org.

President, from Page 1

pation and Pre-Retirement Committees. Thank you, Jan and Bob.

I look forward to working with some familiar people and with some "new kids on the block" as we move into the second half of 2021.

We have learned a lot about the utilization of Zoom, Cevent, Ring Central, Whova, Teams, and Freeman platforms. All are new and exciting meeting venues, as we connect virtually to get the job done. Albeit, they are a little

intimidating, and there is a lot to learn when conducting meetings. We are up to the challenge, and I encourage everyone to be patient during this transition from spectator to active participant.

As a former union organizer, I have a major goal to see our membership grow. We have the potential and with the dedication of our membership and our Pre-Re-

tirement Committee members, we can do this.

When we dedicate ourselves to the service of others, we will all benefit in the strength of numbers. I thank you in advance for doing your part to enable our organization to grow.

Thank you for the trust and faith you all have shown me as we work together in the next two years. But most

ly, I thank you for your friendship. Great days are ahead.

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

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

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

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

NEA-Retired Annual Meeting—Virtually

June 24-25, 2021, 1:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.. Daily

NEA-RA—Virtually

June 30-July 3, 2021, 2 p.m.—8 p.m. daily

In-Person Representative Assemblies

June 30—July 6, 2022—Dallas, TX

June 30—July 6, 2023—Orlando, FL

Jul 1—July 7, 2024—Philadelphia, PA



MEA-Retired is here for you!

Board of Directors Meeting
June 7, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

Executive Committee Meeting
August 2, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

Board of Directors Meeting
Sept. 7, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

Contact affiliate leaders
with ideas and concerns

MEA Board of Directors report

By Gary McGrane
District R MEA Board Member

Twenty-seven MEA Board members, staff and two observers from MEASO attended our recent two-day meetings.

The opening announcements started with a land use acknowledgment—we meet on the traditional lands served by the people of the tribes of the Wabanaki Confederacy.

We honor America's First People and all elders, past, present, and emerging, and we are called on to learn, and share what we learn, about the tribal history, culture, and contributions that have been suppressed in telling the story of America.

The name Wabanaki describes the place where the first light of a new dawn first touches Turtle Island (what some First Nations people call

North America). Chwaban is the period of time just before the new dawn and aki" refers to the land of that place.

Since the first contact with Europeans, the native population in Maine was depleted by 98 percent. Only four of the Wabanaki tribes of the area now known as Maine are still here today: the Penobscot, the Passamaquoddy, the Maliseet, and the Micmac.

The Wabanaki ancestors prophesied all that was to happen to their people—they called these "The seven fires prophecies"—each fire described an era—and the seventh fire described an era when the world would be befouled—the rivers so polluted that the fish would be unfit to eat.

Following this, it was prophesied that there would

be an era of hope, of healing, and a call to action for all peoples of all races and religions to come together and work for the good of all.

This era is when the truth must be told and must be heard. The traditional Wabanaki teachings say that this era of harmony will begin in the east and will sweep across "Turtle Island."

As we prepared for the 2021 MEA Representative Assembly, we noted that we needed to comply with required processes and respond to requests virtually.

Someone will be monitoring our actions to make sure we follow the guidelines laid out for us from MEA's 2020-2021 Priority Objectives.

As to highlights of our recent Board meeting, active membership has increased by 190 members. Professional staff added 227 members, ESP decreased by 37 members, student membership has decreased by 47, and retired membership has increased by 73 members. Many of these are from the higher ed ranks.

The Board heard updates regarding the Seminar to Advance Racial and Social Justice. Reports were given from members who attended the NEA Leadership Summit in March, the Higher Ed Conference and excerpts from the Retired Conference.

Those who attended are able to access breakout sessions that were missed due to conflicting schedules. Participants will be able to view these sessions until June 1,

Updates keep us Informed

2021, through the NEA Hub network.

MEA-Retired has been fortunate to have ten attendees at the annual NEA Summit and Conference: Molly Smith, Mid-Coast; Jane Conroy, Higher Ed; Robert Jean, Knox; Crystal Ward, Androscoggin; Rheba Michaud, Piscataquis; Belinda Saucier, Androscoggin; Claudette O'Connell, Penobscot; Susan Feiner, Higher Ed; Kay Grindall, Kennebec; and Gary McGrane, Higher Ed.

The Board reappointed Robin Colby to a third term on the Benefits Trust Board of Directors and will be joined by Hal Perry who will be serving his first term in that capacity on August 1, 2021.

MEA President Grace Leavitt gave a brief president's report as did Executive Director Rachele Johnson. Treasurer, Beth French outlined the financial status. We ended with a discussion on membership recruitment.

If there are ever any questions about what was discussed at a Board meeting or if members have suggestions or issues they would like to see addressed, please contact me at 207-645-6103 or email gmcgrane7@gmail.com.

Farewell and fond memories

By Jan Cerabona



Greetings. I just wanted to let everyone know that we are starting plans for 2021 Day of Caring.

Last year 12 of our counties completed Day of Caring projects and are now eligible for a matching \$100 grant from MEA-Retired when they submit 2021 plans.

We realize that schools are in unusual circumstances, as they make plans for the 2021-22 school year. Therefore, we remain flexible in the timeframe for submitting plans for this fall.

I have enjoyed being chairperson of the statewide Community Participation Committee over the past ten years. Thanks to our affiliates for all that has been done to make this such a positive statewide volunteer project.

It is difficult to step away, but it is also the right time to have a new person at the helm of this ongoing program of statewide volunteerism. I have my notebooks with Community Participation material ready for our new chairperson. I will plan to meet with that person and support them during this transition period.

As committee chairperson, I have enjoyed being a member of the MEA-Retired Executive Committee and our Board of Directors. I have made some wonderful friends and have seen our state organization grow. I will miss being a member of our state leadership team.

However, I have been traveling from Eliot to Augusta for meetings for many years, and I'm definitely ready to end that drive.

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Summit, from Page 1

the commitment to use our voices more.

The pandemic brought to the surface what educators have known for years. The inequities suffered by many students and families were on public display, and many heroes came to the rescue. Now is the time to keep the momentum going and work with the public to find solutions.

A variety of breakout sessions were offered throughout this three-day (or longer for those who also attended the Higher Ed. Conference) marathon. I had my doubts about being able to stay focused with all this screen time, but it was easy with the variety and pace of the program.

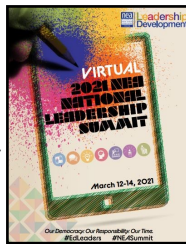
A few examples of breakout topics included: Organize/Activate—Let’s Protect Public Education and Our Pensions, Benefits, Public Speaking, Exploring Your

NEA Member Benefits, Parliamentary Procedures, and Your Leadership Journey.

One breakout session was dedicated to participants meeting as a state to share what we learned and how ideas may be implemented here in Maine. My sense is that everyone felt like it was time well spent.

Personally, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to spend time with colleagues from Maine and around the country. I learned so much, and the experience of a virtual conference was surprisingly connective.

Others agreed. Crystal Ward of Lewiston said, “The keynote speakers were thought-provoking, and I enjoyed the breakout sessions. I gathered information on membership organizing, NEA grant usage, and how to use the Member Benefits website.”



Ten members of MEA-Retired attended the recent National Education Association Leadership Summit and NEA-Retired Conference.

“I also learned how to make gumbo and a “mocktail” with non-alcoholic gin and heard a great New Orleans brass band.”

First-time attendee Rheba Michaud of Dover-Foxcroft, said, “I attended ‘If You’re Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands.’ The whole conference was a fun, inspiring time.”

This was an interesting session with ideas on how to deal with Covid. We discussed emotional and social wellness. I liked the session when we met with our own states and to see familiar faces and hear each other.”

Claudette O’Connell of Bangor says of her experi-

ence, “I learned more about parliamentary procedure and the NEA Member Benefits website which is found at (neamb.com/start) which provides many benefits for NEA members and their families. I found author, Nancy McLean, to be very impressive, and I intend to read her book, *Democracy in Chains*.”

President-Elect Gary McGrane said, “I wish to express my appreciation for the support from MEA and MEA-Retired and all those who became my friends along the way. All events provided many opportunities to learn more about what is happening around the country and our role in leadership development in our own state association.”

Springing into action!

By Ben Paradis
Aroostook Ret. Educ. Assoc.

A crisp wind blew across my lawn as I surveyed winter’s leftovers where the plow had pushed snow. The ragged grass was high enough to require the season’s first cutting two weeks ahead of last year.

These signs of spring reminded me that it is the time to get to work, not only around the house but also in our efforts to recruit our newest retirees. We encourage affiliates to contact new retirees inviting them to join.

Not all of them join, however, so it is important to find ways to follow up and continue recruiting and spreading the word about the benefits of membership.

The NRTA Grant Committee is applying for a grant to promote communication with

our members through various modes. One technique suggests hosting social gatherings at the affiliate level that could be subsidized through funds from this grant.

This year has been difficult for affiliates to meet in person and some affiliates have seen a drop in membership. However, others have managed to boost their enrollment through extraordinary efforts on Zoom.

At the state level, MEA-Retired’s membership has increased to more than 5,500. But there probably is an equal number of retirees out there who are not members. We invite them to join.

Hope you are all looking forward to enjoying the outdoors like I am and that you are successful in your recruiting efforts.

Thank
you

to our 2021
Delegates

MEA-RA

Paul Bouchard
Jane Conroy
Larry Given
Kay Grindall
Marilyn Hylan
Bob Jean
Lois Kilby-Chesley
Claudette O’Connell
Ben Paradis
Pam Partridge
Belinda Saucier

NEA-Retired Annual Meeting/RA

Kay Grindall
Bob Jean
Lois Kilby-Chesley
Gary McGrane
Rheba Michaud
Claudette O’Connell

Congratulations: 2021 Honorary Member

By Corley Anne Byras
 MEA-Retired Immediate Past President

Jan Dodge of Belfast received the annual Maine Education Association Retired 2021 Honorary Membership Award at its recent virtual 69th annual meeting.

Retired music educator, MEA-Retired Board member, former Waldo Educators Association Retired president, and member of the State of Maine House of Representatives, Jan is serving her second term in the Maine House of Representatives representing House District #97 comprised of Belfast, Northport and Waldo.

Jan graduated from Belfast Area High School and the University of Michigan Schools of Music and Education. She taught for 30 years in Downeast Maine in the former Flanders Bay Community School District (now RSU #24).

While teaching, Jan served on the negotiating team and as building representative. She held the offices of secretary, vice president and president in her local—the Flanders Bay Education Association. She served on the MEA Government Relations Committee for almost 20 years.



Jan was the recipient of the 2019 Maine Education Association “Anne Sheehan Political Action Award.” It was presented at the MEA-RA annual awards banquet by Treasurer Beth French on the left and President Grace Leavitt on the right.

Jan retired in June of 2010 and in July began her service to MEA-Retired leadership and as a member of the Board of Directors. She served tirelessly as corresponding secretary, recording secretary and then infor-



Jan Dodge is in her second term from House District #97 and serves on the Education Committee.

mation coordinator.

While MEA-Retired President, the late Tom Moore awarded Jan the President’s Citation for “meticulous attention to details, inexhaustible energy and enthusiasm, probing questions and perseverance.”

Jan also joined the Waldo Education Association Retired (WEAR) where her Mom, Polly Dodge, had also been a member. Jan later served as vice president and then president of WEAR until the fall of 2018.

In the fall of 2017, former MEA-Retired President Corley Anne Byras and Jan represented the Legislative Committee and attended the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) National Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C. This was Jan’s second lobbying experience on Capitol Hill and perhaps has played a role in inspiring her to begin the path to serve the State of Maine as a

legislator.

Jan is also active in her community and volunteers for the Chamber of Commerce, has served in leadership positions in Waldo County Triad and Aging Well in Waldo County.

Representative Dodge is a passionate advocate and has earned endorsements from Maine Conservation Voters, Planned Parenthood, the Maine Service Employees Association (MSEA-SEIU), AFL-CIO, Equality Maine and the Maine People’s Alliance.

Ryan Fecteau of Biddeford is the Speaker of the House of Representatives and has worked with Jan on a number of issues. He says, “Rep. Jan Dodge is one of the most community-oriented representatives that I have served alongside. She listens intently to her constituents, digs into the issues and champions their interests in Augusta.”

“As a member of the Education Committee, her decades of experience in the classroom have been critical to assessing how to make our education system stronger and more equitable for all students in Maine.”

MEA Government Relations Director John Kosinski sees Jan on a regular basis when he does advocacy work at the state house. He says, “Representative Jan Dodge has been a nonstop advocate for all educators—teachers, ed techs, bus drivers, higher ed faculty, and more. She never equivocates and always aggressively advocates for MEA members and the students we serve.”

“Currently, Jan is working on bills to improve the unemployment system for bus drivers and other school



employees, increase the state contribution towards our retired educator health plan, and other initiatives. Jan is an educator like we, and it makes a huge difference to have someone in Augusta who knows and understands the challenges of being an educator today.”

Jan continues to serve



(L to R): Corley Anne Byras, Senator Angus King, and Jan Dodge met in Washington, DC, while at a meeting of the National Retired Teachers Association meeting.

students, educators, retirees, her community and the State of Maine.

Congratulations, Jan! We thank you for your commitment to serve others so willingly. We wish you the best in your years of service to the citizens of the State of Maine.



Jan received the traditional engraved school bell as our 2021 Honorary Membership Award recipient.

Congratulations: 2021 Affiliate Leadership Awards

Androscoggin: **Mona Ervin** of Auburn taught U.S. history at Lewiston High School. She was chairperson of the Staff Development Committee, yearbook advisor, and Student Council advisor. She was a regional and state director of the area's Odyssey of the Mind program. She was a member of the Board of Advisors for Washington Workshops, a program that took students to Washington, DC, where they learned about the U.S. government firsthand. Mona served on the Parish Council of St. Phillips Church and chaired the church fair three times. She was president of Mu Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International, an honorary society of outstanding women educators. She and her husband James have five children and 15 grandchildren.



Aroostook: **Donna Hurley** of Caribou taught home economics at Caribou High School for 39 years. She was adviser to the Future Homemakers of America Club and a member of the Wellness and Staff Development teams. Donna has held many positions in Aroostook Retired Educators Association (AREA) and is currently co-chair of the Day of Caring Bulging Backpack project. She is a charter member of the Caribou branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW) and served on the statewide Diversity Committee. She is treasurer of the UM Extension Caribou Homemakers. She and her late husband Frank have two children and two granddaughters and one great grandson.



Cumberland: **Linda Hussey** of South Portland taught elementary education in Reed, Lyseth, and Presumpscot for 47 years. A member of Cumberland County Retired Educators Association since 2003, Linda has served on the Scholarship and Program Committees and is a driver, greeter, and a phone pal. She supports the Good Shepherd Sisters of Quebec, Canada, and assists at the St. Joseph Convent in Biddeford. Linda organizes agendas and refreshments for funerals, retreats, special services and collected articles/funds for mission projects in Haiti, Lesotho, and the Ester House in Biddeford.



Franklin: **Ann Yorks** of Farmington taught Kindergarten for seven years, culinary arts at the Foster Technology Center for 17 years, and then served as Director/Principal for 10 years. She served as former co-president of FCREA, chair of Day of Caring, and recruitment of members. She is a member of the Rotary Club, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Farmington Association. She is vice president and treasurer of the Franklin County Neighborhood Extension Association, an incorporator of the Franklin Savings Bank for 26 years, and a communicant at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. She and her husband Robert have two children, five grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.



Hancock: **Judy Bragg** of Ellsworth taught elementary education for two years and then taught family and consumer science and health at Bucksport High School for 30 years. She was president and chief negotiator of her local association. She



was a building rep and attended RA's. She was chair of the district's Recertification Governing Board for many years and participated in legislative advocacy programs. She has been involved in the American Association of University Women and the Hancock branch of Business and Professional Women Association. Judy is a 40-year member of the Theta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International. She is involved in many activities for members of Hancock County Retired Educators Association. She and her husband Robert have two children and four grandchildren.

Higher Ed: **Jane Conroy** of Dover-Foxcroft taught for 33 years in the University Cooperative Extension Education Program—presenting workshops specializing in nutrition, financial literacy, and child development. In cooperation with the University, she created the Applaud and Assist Parents as Teachers program in Piscataquis County. She supervises the county's EF-NEP program and has piloted one on a regional basis. She is a member of PCREA and has served as vice president. Jane is also vice president of the Higher Ed Association Retired and works diligently in recruiting new members. She is chairperson of the MEA-Retired Communications Committee and a member of MEA Government Relations Committee. She serves on the town's Board of Selectmen and is a member of the County Budget Committee. Jane is a substitute teacher and helps with the local food pantry. She and her husband Ed have three children and two grandchildren.



Kennebec: **Lenora Murray** of Vassalboro began her 45-year education, leadership, and consultant careers as an elementary teacher for 12 years and then principal of Brookside School (now George J. Mitchell School) in Waterville where she also served as K-12 curriculum coordinator. Nora was superintendent of schools in MSAD #16, School Union #51, MSAD #49, and School Union #52. She directed the Maine Gates Leadership Project and served as a consultant with No Child Left Behind in cooperation with the State Department of Education. Nora was also an instructor in the University of Maine Graduate Outreach Program. She is secretary for KREA. She and her husband Bruce have two sons and four grandchildren.



Knox: **Joan Hall** of Owls Head taught elementary education in Rockland and Thomaston for 38 years. She was head teacher, served on Curriculum Development Committee, and was a mentor to new teachers. Joan served as president and secretary of her local teachers union. She also attended MEA-RA. Joan is a member and serves as program co-chairperson of KCREA. She belongs to Friends of Rockland Public Library, is secretary of the local Women's Golf Association, and is a committee member of Mid-Coast Breast Cancer Classic. She is past president and served in other leadership positions in the local "Nu" chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International. She and her husband Jim have three children and six grandchildren.



Mid-Coast: **George Sergeant** of Brunswick taught high school chemistry and physics in Wisconsin for five years and 30 years in Scarborough, Mt. Ararat, and Wiscasset. He coached track, volleyball, and basketball and served as his local association president and negotiator. An avid organic gardener, George has served as president of the Merrymeeting Audubon Society and served on the Board for 35 years. He served on the statewide Audubon Board for six years and is a 40-year member of the Sagadahoc Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. George is a member of the Chocolate Church Arts Center and has been a member of the Portland Camera Club for more than 50 years. He is an active member of MCREA and MEA-Retired. He and his wife Sue travel and speak of their trips at various organizations.



Oxford: **Rodney Abbott** of West Paris taught English and social studies for 38 years in Buckfield, Livermore Falls, and Bethel (Telstar Regional High School). He also taught U.S. history as an adjunct professor at the University of Maine at Augusta for 16 years. Rodney was president of the teacher associations where he taught. He has served on the Board of Trustees of the West Paris Library and is moderator of the Mission Congregational Church, UCC, of West Paris. Rodney joined the Oxford County Educators Association Retired (OCEA-R) as soon as he retired and is instrumental in placing a book by a Maine author in every library in the county. He also serves on the scholarship committee and fills in for the president at meetings of OCEA-R. Rodney and his wife Lois have four children and five grandchildren.



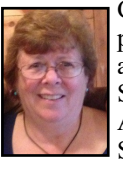
Penobscot: **Esther Bushway** of Veazie taught for 32 years in Indiana and Maine. She taught Grades 3 thru 8, was a literacy specialist and Reading Recovery teacher, and taught special education. She is a member of Alpha Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International and serves as Chapter Ceremonies co-chair. Esther is a member of the Fairview Cemetery Committee, a trustee of the Veazie Sewer District, and a member of the Veazie Recreational Committee. She also volunteered for the annual American Folk Festival. She and her husband Al have one son and two grandchildren.



Piscataquis: **Rheba Michaud** of Dover-Foxcroft taught 44 years—language arts at SeDoMoCha Middle School in Dover-Foxcroft and at the Charleston Elementary School. She served as vice president and is current president at PCREA. She is busy at the Area Food Cupboard—as a volunteer and vice chairperson of the Board. A communicant of The Lady of the Snows parish, Rheba is a member of the kitchen crew and co-chair of the Christmas Fair. She is chairperson of the MEA-Retired Convention Committee and serves on the NEA-Retired Grant Committee. She and her husband Dave have three daughters and five grandchildren.



Somerset: **Susan Lahti** of Madison taught social studies at Carrabec High School for 33 years. She served as president and chief negotiator of her local association and coordinated the Giant Traveling Map Project. She planned and instructed for the Maine Geographic Alliance Summer Institutes and was moderator of the State Geography Bee for 25 years. She was president



of the XI Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International and served on the Scholarship and Nominations Committees as well as World Fellowship Program. Sue is a member of the East Madison Historical Association and an active member of SEAR. She and her husband Eric have four children and three grandchildren.

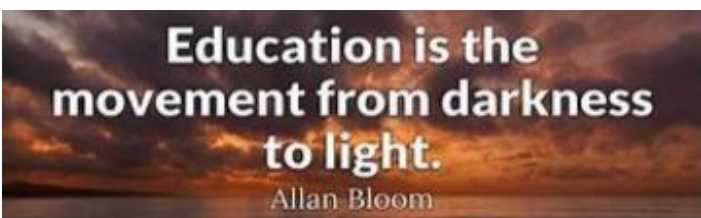
Waldo: **Bonnie Maguire** of Searsmont taught elementary education for 20 years and Title I Reading Recovery for another 19. She is a long-time member of NEA and MEA and now the retired organizations. She was a building rep and chairperson and secretary of the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee in MSAD #34. Bonnie is a 40-year member of the Epsilon Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International and served as vice president and president. She has served on Scholarship, Music, and Bylaw Committees. Bonnie is an active member of the Searsmont United Methodist Church where she is a trustee, member of the Council of Ministries, director of youth choir, and Sunday School helper. She is third select-person in Searsmont and organized the Woodsman Day Parade. Bonnie and her late husband Greg have two children and five grandchildren.



Washington: **Cathy Johnson** of Machiasport taught English and ESL at Washington Academy for 40 years. She mentored new teachers, was the drama director, and designed ESL curriculum. She was a member of the Governing Board of Drama Council and was a speech adjunct professor at Thomas College. She hosted the Eastern Regional One-Act Play Festival at the University of Maine at Machias and is a volunteer at the Abbey Museum. She is a member of Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and is a member of the Machiasport Historical Society. She is a member of DAR Hannah Weston Chapter and the Maine Old Cemetery Association. Cathy and her late husband Paul have two sons and four grandchildren.



York: **Joan Warren** of Lyman taught elementary education in Biddeford for 20 years before becoming principal of the primary school another 18 years. Joan has been vice president and is the current president of YCREA. She is a past member of the Scholarship and Travel Committees and served as the social media chairperson. Joan volunteers in local schools and the Robbie Foundation—a charitable organization supporting special needs students. She has participated in Special Olympics by providing hands-on activities and fundraising. She is involved with Marriage Encounter Weekends and is a CCD instructor at her church. She is a member of the Iota Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International. Joan continues her passion for helping others as the owner of Joan Warren Coaching, her counseling business. She and her husband Joseph have three children and five grandchildren.



Annual Meeting, from Page 1

our representatives.

Every Friday John sends a legislative update entitled “Under the Dome” which reviews the week’s legislation and offers suggestions as to how we can support initiatives. To stay informed and receive John’s weekly emails, send a request to him at snichols@maineea.org.

Noel Candelaria, NEA’s secretary-treasurer, spoke to us from Austin, Texas. He is immediate past president of Texas State Teachers Association and served as president of the Ysleta Teachers Association in El Paso, Texas.

He commended retired educators who are so helpful and available and have such a history of their state and national associations. NEA is offering more grants for retirees and returning the extra day at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting in June.

Noel commented that “we don’t always remember which baseball or basketball teams won each year. However, when you ask a person, ‘Do you have a favorite teacher?’ they always have a story of one or more helpful, engaging, favorite teachers.”

He concluded by stating how influential we are, and we have lasting impact on students and others. Even in our retirement we continue to make our mark.

Upon moving into the business portion of our agenda, Kay reviewed the voting procedures in a Zoom meeting. Gary McGrane reported the voting results while Ed Nunery monitored the chat room for comments and questions. All attendees had received our yearbook in the mail and were referenced to various pages when reports were given and votes taken.

Resolutions Committee Chairperson Susan Grondin presented the action items to be reworded as philosophical resolutions. The committee motion passed.

Bylaws Review Committee Chairperson Phil Gonyar presented several proposed bylaws changes that were also approved in a vote. These changes will be incorporated in our document which is posted on our MEA-Retired website.

A special feature this year was the drawing of ten names of members to receive \$50 checks in the mail. Recipients of the cash prizes are Carol Boyd, Kennebunkport; Judith Bragg, Ellsworth; Carl Bucciantini, Greene; Ruth Gahagan, Caribou; Susan Grondin, Lewiston; Carl

Daiker, Waterville; Linda Sprague, Belgrade; Carol Sricos, Delmar, NY; and Bob White, Caribou.

President Grindall expressed appreciation to our Board of Directors which consists of our statewide committee chairpersons and affiliate presidents and presidents-elect. “You have worked tirelessly over the past two years in spite of the restrictions. Much has been accomplished because you rose to the challenges with determination to serve others.”

Hugh Keene chairs the Legacy Committee and reminded us how the committee was established. Eight Ritter grants were presented. I think we will all remember the portion of Hugh’s speech that gave us reason to pause and reflect on the past year of ravaging Covid-19.

Kay honored Jan Dodge of Belfast by presenting her the 2021 Honorary Member Award. Jan is a retired music educator, MEA and MEA-Retired Board member, former Waldo Educators Association Retired president, and current member of the State of Maine House of Representatives from District 97 consisting of Northport, Waldo, and Belfast.

Ben Paradis is chair of the Membership Committee and spoke of membership incentives. Four affiliates increased their membership and were eligible to receive \$50 grants: Higher Ed, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Waldo.

Kay shared warm accolades about the very active Jan Cerabona who initiated the statewide Day of Caring volunteerism program ten years ago. She is retiring from the committee and will leave “very big shoes to fill.”

Kay noted that members in all 16 affiliates were honored with leadership awards. Gary McGrane recognized each person. Very interesting biographies are found in our yearbook.

The prestigious President’s Award was presented to Bob White of Caribou as he retires after co-chairing and chairing the Pre-Retirement Committee for 14 years. In her words, “We speak in terms of ‘thousands’ when we think of all Bob has

done for active educators and MEA-Retired in the past 14 years: Thousands of photocopies, thousands of miles on his car, and thousands of active and retired educators he has contacted in Maine.

“Change is not easy at any age; however, Bob and his team—Ed Nunery, Mike Smart, and Carl Bucciantini—acquiesced and moved the program to Zoom when in-person meetings were no longer possible. Participation in the annual program grew from about 500-600 in-person attendees to nearly 1,100 Zoom participants.”

A solemn, beautiful “In Memoriam” tribute was given by Immediate Past President Corley Anne Byras to commemorate those who have died during the past year. She laid a white rose and lit a candle that will burn 324 minutes—one for each of our beloved friends listed in our booklet. She read a touching eulogy, “We Will Remember Them.”

Ed Nunery served as chairperson of our Nominating Committee and presented the slate of officers for the next biennium. Phil Gonyar conducted the installation: President Gary Mc Grane, President-Elect Bob Jean, Secretary Marilyn Hylan, Treasurer Robert Souther, and Information Coordinator Molly Smith.

Rheba Michaud thanked her Annual Meeting Committee: Larry Given, Marc Poulin, June Nickerson-Hovey, Pam Partridge and Kay Grindall for the help and decisions of the past year. Pam is retiring after serving as registrar for many years.

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New officers were elected to serve MEA-Retired in the next biennium. Row 1: Gary McGrane of Jay, president and Bob Jean of Rockport, president-elect. Row 2: Marilyn Hylan of Farmington, secretary and Bob Souther of Caribou, treasurer. Row 3: Molly Smith of Lisbon, Information Coordinator. The officers were installed by Parliamentarian Phil Gonyar of Waterville.

Reflections of 14 memorable years

By Bob White
Aroostook Retired Ed. Assoc.

Committee.



The Committee, with members from Southern, Central, Eastern and Northern Maine, cut down the amount of travel time and expense. Each member had only three seminars to conduct each year.

In closing, I wish to thank these very fine professionals with whom I have been privileged to work over the years. I see our committee continuing to flourish and grow our membership as we help active educators begin a well-informed retirement.

I would like to thank Kay Grindall and the MEA-Retirement “community” for recognizing me with the “President’s Award” during the recent 69th Annual Meeting.

In June 2007, Paul Bouchard from Fort Kent was president of MEA-Retired. One of his first responsibilities was to fill several vacant committees with new chairpersons.

One vacant position was the Pre-Retirement Committee. Being quite a salesman, Paul convinced Gaye Miller from Brunswick and me from Caribou to serve as co-chairs of the Pre-Retirement Committee. He assured us that it was a “piece of cake,” and we only had to conduct ten seminars statewide.

We soon found out that this undertaking was a huge cake—starting from scratch, and neither one of us knew how to turn on the oven!

Peg Belanger from the MEA office in Bangor was the “go-to” person for the pre-retirement program who made

all the arrangements for the registration and the sites. This was a big portion of the overall detailed work required to carry out the program.

“Cold Turkey” is the best way to describe us as we entered Brewer High School for our first seminar. Luckily, Past President Sandra Crehore conducted the seminar. We watched and listened, took many notes, and came away confident that it might be a good “piece of cake” after all.

Gaye conducted the seminars in Brunswick, Lewiston, South Portland, Kennebunk and Skowhegan. I became a road warrior traveling from Caribou to seminars in Waterville, Ellsworth, Rockland, Bangor and Caribou. In 2014, a seminar was added in Machias.

We worked together for about seven years with no problems, but it seemed as though every seminar had a “glitch.” With the help of the local association hosts and

hostesses and the flexibility and understanding of our presenters, we managed to overcome.

Due to health concerns, Gaye had to retire. Several members of MEA-Retired’s Executive Committee took a quick crash course and were able to fill in for Gaye.

Peg Belanger retired, and her responsibility was turned over to her replacement—Dianne Leighton. It was in working with Dianne I realized the amount of preparation that had to be done starting months prior to meetings.

The Pre-Retirement Committee added new team members from 2014 until the present time: Marc Poulin of Skowhegan and Marta Robbins of Bangor worked with the Committee for several years joining Ed Nunery of Cumberland Foreside.

The Committee expanded to three more members plus the chair with Carl Bucciantini of Greene and Mike Smart of Veazie making up the present Pre-Retirement

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Kay offered genuine thanks “for the wealth of knowledge and guidance you have shared and your collaboration as we blazed through the past year together. Despite juggling your own pandemic-interrupted lives, you have persevered—answering phone calls, sending emails, compiling reports, serving on committees, caring for our members, volunteering at every opportunity, and making differences in many lives wherever you go.”

Newly elected President Gary McGrane commended Kay for her work over the past two years. “Thank You” signs were displayed on the Zoom screens on Gary’s cue.

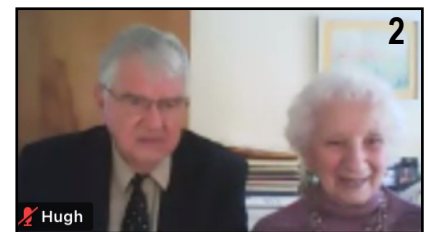
Treasurer Bob Souther commented, “The meeting was extremely well organized, and our president did her usual excellent job of conducting the meeting. I really enjoyed hearing NEA secretary/treasurer. Another highlight was the honoring of Bob White for his many years of service to MEA-Retired.”

Sue Grondin of Lewiston is a member of the Executive Committee and comments, MEA-Retired’s Annual Meeting through Zoom was very well organized. The agenda covered all areas that would have been presented in an in-person meeting. Zoom’s chat feature was used to assist

members or express positive statements. Although not an ideal situation, MEA-Retired adjusted to the times and provided the opportunity for members to be engaged. Thank you Rheba and committee members.”

Beth Chamberlin of Thomaston is president-elect of Knox County Retired Educators and noted, “The MEA-Retired zoom annual meeting ran extremely well. It was nice the booklets were mailed early, so we could follow the program easily. Hopefully, next year we will be able to meet in person. Kudos to the convention committee, chaired by Rheba Michaud, for a job well done.”

(1) Retired educators Dave and Rheba Michaud of Dover-Foxcroft drew names of ten attendees who would receive \$50 checks in the mail. (2) Hugh and Grace Keene of Auburn have attended retired annual meetings for nearly 30 years. Both are retired educators. (3) Guests and members joined Zoom from all over Maine and five states.



Benefits of Virgin Pulse Wellness Program

By Michael Booth, Wellness Director
MEA Benefits Trust

Carol Nylen was recently selected as one of two Virgin Pulse program quarterly drawing winners of a \$250 gift card.

Carol is a retired teacher who most recently taught at King Middle School in Portland and Skillin Elementary School in South Portland. Carol is very active in her retirement and continues to teach remotely with fourth graders in South Portland while supervising student interns with the



Carol Nylen

University of Southern Maine.

I had an opportunity to catch up with Carol and ask her a few questions as to how she utilizes the Virgin Pulse Program.

Michael: I think people would be interested to know how you have been successful utilizing the Virgin Pulse Program?

Carol: For me it's all about the points! I can be very competitive, and I do my best to maximize my points opportunities. At first it took me a little time to get used to this program because it is quite a bit different from the previous wellness program.

Now, I am totally into it! I wear a fitness watch and seek opportunities to add steps to my day. I enjoy the challenges and the healthy habits. In fact, because of one healthy habit challenge, I now seek parking spots furthest away from the location I am visiting. This little trick adds valuable steps to my daily step count.

I enjoy the daily cards, journeys, and challenges. I

was part of a team named "teachers rule" for the latest step challenge and earned a fourth-place finish overall. We were extremely proud about that accomplishment.

Michael: You are certainly engaged in the program. How long does it take you to enter your information?

Carol: My Apple watch is synched to the program so my steps and sleep are sent over automatically. I log in through the Virgin Pulse app on my smartphone and read my two daily cards and record my healthy habits. This takes me approximately two minutes.

Michael: Have you had success meeting wellness goals?

Carol: I have always been active, but the program really does teach you about your health and I certainly like receiving incentives for it. I really enjoy the healthy habits and pay attention to them.

It has really stuck in my mind, what I should be doing and how I can add activity and improve my health.

It has made an impression; sometimes I take screen shots of the cards if it is something I want to refer to later, such as exercises or tips I want to remember or share. I have recently reached out to a Virgin Pulse health coach and will be starting those sessions soon.

Michael: Any advice to those who are not participating in the Virgin Pulse Program?

Carol: It is a bit of a learning curve to start, but it really is worth joining. This program has incentives for you to log on every day, if possible, and gives you lots of tips, recipes, and exercises that are geared to you, as well as challenges from time to time. It is worth your while to spend a minute or two signing on each day.

And the best part is that you can earn \$\$ for adding healthy habits to your life!

For more information on how to become involved in this program, feel free to contact me at 207-622-4418, Ext. 2510 or send an email to mbooth@meabt.org

AARP Maine begins to open doors

Summer's on our doorstep, and the overall health situation is looking more positive. While we can all look forward to spending time with family and friends, we can't allow ourselves to be complacent. Since the beginning of the pandemic, AARP Maine has been leading the charge in advocating for members of the 50+ community.

I'm writing this in early May, and right now 71 percent of those age 50+ are fully vaccinated, while 51 percent of all eligible has received full coverage. This is great news, but we're not done yet!

Vaccines are available at local and state-run sites as well at certain pharmacies. If you are homebound, lack internet access, need language assistance, or require other help arranging vaccination, call 888-445-4111. The hotline is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

The state health department has a

free transit service for people who need rides to vaccine appointments, available Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call 855-608-5172 at least 48 hours before your scheduled shot to reserve a ride.

Veterans Affairs facilities are vaccinating veterans, spouses and veteran caregivers. AARP recommends that individuals talk to their medical provider about the safety, effectiveness, benefits and risks of the COVID-19 vaccine. For more information and links to the resources, go to: <https://states.aarp.org/maine>

Mainers living and working in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus pandemic. If you have an older spouse, sibling, parent or other loved one in a nursing home, here are eight key questions to ask, as recommended by experts:

By Carl Bucciantini, AARP Liaison

How far along are COVID-19 vaccinations?

Has anyone at the facility tested positive for COVID-19 in the past two weeks? What is the facility doing to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks?

Does the staff have sufficient levels of personal protective equipment (PPE) — masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, gowns and gloves — to keep both staff and residents safe?

What is the nursing home doing to help residents stay connected with their families or other loved ones during this time?

How is the facility communicating important information to residents and their loved ones on a regular basis?

Is the nursing home currently at full staffing levels?



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Earn Rewards by Making Healthy Choices.

Virgin Pulse is a unique online platform with tools and support to help you make changes to your physical health, activity level, mental health and day-to-day stress.

With over 100 different points earning activities, you can define what wellness means to you and earn your incentive with your choice of healthy behaviors.

We heard you! **Beginning July 1, 2021**, it will be easier to earn points.

- Activity minutes, steps and workouts
- 10- and 20-day bonuses for activity, daily cards and healthy habits
- Preventive screenings and annual physicals
- Quarterly goal reduced from 20,000 to 18,000 points

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Total
Points	2,000	5,000	12,000	18,000	18,000
Rewards	\$5 Pulse Cash	\$10 Pulse Cash	\$20 Pulse Cash	\$27.50 Pulse Cash	\$62.50 Pulse Cash

Earn **\$62.50 Pulse Cash per quarter**, up to **\$250 Pulse Cash after four quarters/ year**.

How to begin:

- Step 1** Sign up for your Virgin Pulse account by going to join.virginpulse.com/MEABT. **Already a member?** Sign in at member.virginpulse.com
- Step 2** Sign up with your name as it appears on your Anthem card.
- Step 3** Download the **Virgin Pulse mobile app** for iOS or Android.
Please note: An activity tracker device is not required to participate.

Eligibility: Employees, retirees, spouses, domestic partners and dependents 18-26 years old are eligible, if covered under the MEABT health plan.

Assistance, contact Virgin Pulse Member Services: 1-855-689-6884





Ritter grants help to encourage others

*By Hugh Keene, Chairperson
Legacy Committee*

These affiliates are awarded Ritter Grants for 2021-2022 year. The main theme for most applications was to maintain contact with members and provide encouragement and opportunities for ongoing communication and socialization during Covid:

ANDROSCOGGIN:

“Not Everything is Canceled”...to alleviate depression and other feelings of loss, each member will be mailed a card with uplifting messages. Members over 74 years of age will receive a \$10 Dunkin Donuts card.

FRANKLIN:

“Operation Friendship”... flowers and cards will be sent to shut-ins, visit members, and take them to lunch when possible..

HIGHER ED:

“Membership Drive” wherein letters will be sent to members in the state and out-of-state to

(1) create a database, (2) set a Zoom meeting for current and potential members, (3) improve visibility within MEA-Retired, and (4) encourage members to serve on committees.

KENNEBEC: “Include All Members in Activities”...provide opportunities for members to attend special activities. This includes birthdays, special holidays, and meetings when possible.

KNOX: “Kindness, Communication, Reaching Out, Encouragement” Communicate with members in need by phone, Facebook, photos, newspaper articles, etc. Flowers to cheer them up. Members encouraged to alert us when someone is needed.

MID-COAST: “Christmas boxes” Make sure all members are valued and thought of. Boxes are

assembled at a meeting to be given to those who cannot attend.

WALDO: “Letters of Appeal.” Letters sent to all members to encourage donating to scholarship fund . This will encourage all members to participate in an im-

portant event each year.

WASHINGTON: “Keeping in Contact with Members” Through letters and newsprint we will keep in contact with members during the year. Individualized Zoom sessions to keep members in contact with others.

AARP, from Page 10

for nurses, aides and other workers?

How are healthy-living programs being maintained?

If you’d like more detailed information about the questions to ask and possible actions to take, go to: <http://bit.ly/8caregiverquestions>

Finally, I have some bittersweet news: State AARP Director Lori Parham has accepted the newly created position of State Policy and Advocacy Director for

Government Affairs with AARP. Her new duties will be focused on AARP legislative and regulatory advocacy across the country. The good news is that she will be working from Maine and plans to follow the ongoing work of the state office.

Jane Margesson, AARP Maine Communication Director, has been appointed Interim State Director while AARP recruits for the State Director position. Anyone with questions may contact her at jmargesson@aarp.org.