



THE CLARION

The Newsletter for Retired Educators
Maine Education Association Retired Vol. 134, No. 5

June 2022

From our President



Gary McGrane

I am reminded of a quote by Susan Raffo: “Healing is not just about what we experience in the present. It’s also about how we understand the past, how we name our histories and frame the times in which we live.”

This is an excerpt from a book I am reading: “*My Grandmother’s Hands*” by Resmaa Menakem. I like this quote because a number of issues have come to the forefront while we try to move our organization forward.

Much healing needs to happen, and recent developments in the Maine Legislature have helped. I am sorry if I seem somewhat philosophical, but I look at our past ac-

complishments and witnessed the struggles we have all gone through during these last two years.

We are making history and gaining more and more respect because of our silent suffering as educators. Past promises are being re-examined and are being made right. There is a deeper appreciation for the efforts put forth by the teaching establishment as we continue to fight for our retirement benefits.

We are not at the level we have been promised, but we are slowly getting there. It has taken the efforts of all public employees, active and retired. We have taken a unified approach and it has been

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More \$\$ for retired educators

By Crystal Ward
Legislative Committee Chairperson

The short session of the Maine Legislature ended on April 25. Great strides were made for several critically important issues for MEA-Retired members. The supplemental budget was overwhelmingly passed by both the House and the Senate. Governor Mills signed the bipartisan supplemental budget which included major improvements for current and future retired educators.

These pension improvements were added into the

The room was filled with conversations and smiles as members reconnected with friends while making new acquaintances and community connections.

Taking chances to support PAC efforts as well as picking up freebies are always fun at convention. Teachers are known for taking advantage of free handouts! We never have enough pens!!

Attendees had a choice of four breakout sessions. However, one was cancelled due to covid, so those members received their second choice. The afternoon ended with the celebrations of achievements by members throughout the state.

Recognitions included members who logged the highest number of volunteer

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MEA-Retired says
“Thank you for
joining us on
May 5. You are
greatly
appreciated.”

budget proposal after intensive lobbying from retired and current educators across the state. Here are the highlights from MEA Government Relations Director John Kosinski.

The supplemental budget increases the base amount for our pension by 2.4 percent starting July 1, 2023. This will ensure that benefits do not deflate for current and future retirees, and we receive the full 5.4 percent COLA amount from 2022.

The budget increases the state income tax exemption on our pensions from the current \$10,000 to \$25,000 in the 2022 tax year. The exemption increases to \$30,000 in tax year 2023 and \$35,000 in tax year 2024.

This bill originated from Representative Jan Dodge from District #97—Belfast, Northport, and Waldo. Jan is a long-time MEA-Retired member and a former member of the Board of Directors.

For years, MEA has argued to lift the state income taxes on our pensions, but the

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A most memorable 70th!

By Rheba Michaud, Chairperson
Convention Committee

Nearly 150 retired educators, guests, patrons, and friends of Maine Education Association Retired gathered on May 5 at the Augusta Civic Center for the recent 70th Convention and Annual Meeting.

Speakers included representatives from MEA Benefits Trust, MEA Government Relations, and others. Renowned Maine Historian and Professor

Emeritus at the University of Southern Maine, Dr. Libby Bischof, was our keynote address speaker. Her presentation was fascinating and filled with memorable anecdotes and statistics as to the origin of our great state. The pride and commitment of the educators could be felt throughout the day.

The attendees had opportunities to view affiliate displays from around the state. Vendor displays highlighted topics such as insurance, Catholic Charities of Maine, Delta Kappa Gamma, Iris Network, Connected Credit Union, and crafters.

Our Day of Caring poster depicted the many different ways we care for children and adults of Maine.



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cost has often been pitted against the need to fund our schools appropriately. In this budget, the Legislature not only funded schools, but also provided retired educators with the tax relief they deserve.

The new state budget increases the cumulative COLA for all current retirees from 3 percent to 4 percent for the current year 2021-2022. While inflation was 5.4 percent, retirees only received a 3 percent increase last summer. The additional 1 percent COLA will help retirees as we try to keep pension benefits on par with inflationary increases.

In addition, citizens who meet certain income thresholds and file income taxes in Maine will be eligible for \$850 relief payments from the state sometime this summer. The income thresholds are as follows: \$100,000 for a single filer; \$150,000 for a head-of-household filer; and \$200,000 for joint filers.

The \$850 one-time payment is in addition to the improvements noted above. So be sure to file your taxes to receive the one-time payment. For more information, go to the website entitled Maine.gov/reliefchecks. Or you may call Maine Revenue

Services at (207) 624-9924.

These improvements are not everything MEA and MEA-Retired advocated for, but they represent real progress for current and future retirees. Folks, we did a GREAT job!

None of this could have happened without the stalwart commitment and leadership of MEA Government Relations Director John Kosinski. His untiring advocacy is greatly appreciated. He says, "These are real improvements for current and future retirees and are direct response to the many years retirees have raised their concerns."

"Legislators listened to you and prioritized pension benefits for you and other educators into the future. They deserve our thanks and a round of applause for their efforts"

Here is how things will work from MainePERS: The recently passed FY2022 and FY 2023 Supplemental Budget, Public Law c. 635, Part NN, includes provisions that impact retired members and beneficiaries in the State/Teacher, Legislative and Judicial Plans.

An additional 1 percent COLA was approved for those eligible to receive a

COLA as of September 1, 2021, for a total 2021 COLA of 4 percent. MainePERS will be processing the additional COLA payments in the May 2022 payroll—as well as a retroactive payment to reflect the increase as of September 2021.

Public Law c. 635, Part NN, also includes an increase to the 2022 COLA Base of 2.4 percent above the original 3 percent, for a total increase to the COLA Base of 5.4 percent. The COLA Base effective September 1, 2021 was \$22,947.11.

After the 3 percent COLA was actually provided on September 1, 2021, the 2022 COLA base grew to \$23,635.52. Computing the 2021 COLA Base using 5.4 percent instead of the 3 percent originally granted increases the COLA base to \$24,186.25 effective September 1, 2022.

THANK YOU to all the retirees who advocated for these landmark improvements. These advances could not have been done without you. Together we made great improvements to our pension system, despite overcoming challenging circumstances.

A staunch supporter from the beginning, MEA President Grace Leavitt said, "It was great to make so much progress on what our dedicated retired educators deserve for their years of devotion to the students of Maine.

These improvements for retirees and future retirees are thanks to many retirees raising their voices. Let's keep working together to see continued progress ahead!"

"I appreciate that this Legislature recognized that retirees were overtaxed and under covered by their pension. Taxing pensions at the same rate as Social Security is equitable. And helping to repair what was done to our pensions by the LePage administration will make it possible for us retirees to live more comfortably," says MEA-Retired Parliamentarian Phil Gonyar of Waterville.

MEA-Retired President-Elect Bob Jean of Thomaston concurs: "Thank you to those who work so hard to advance our cause. The boost to our COLA and the increase in the income tax exemption are welcome news. Combine this with the State paying 55 percent of our health insurance and the impact of these victories is even more significant for retired educators. The progress made in the Legislature makes me feel more valued for the years of service I provided in education."

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.

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NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA RA

June 29—July 6, 2022
Chicago, IL

June 30—July 6, 2023
Orlando, FL

July 1—July 7, 2024
Philadelphia, PA



MEA-Retired is here for you!

June 6, 2022 @ 9:30 a.m.
Board of Directors Meeting
Location: Best Western Hotel
Waterville

August 1, 2022 @ 9:30 a.m.
Executive Committee Meeting
Location: MEA Building

Sept. 6, 2022 @ 9:30 a.m.
Board of Directors Meeting
Location: Best Western Hotel
Augusta

Contact affiliate leaders with
ideas and concerns.



Convention, from Page 1

and physical exercise hours. We remembered our educator friends and loved ones who passed during the past year.

We proudly lauded our 13 affiliate leadership award winners. We appreciate their service to so many agencies, communities, and citizens throughout the state.

Throughout the day, I heard many comments on how well the day was going and how much they enjoyed “getting out with people.”

Jan Cerabona from Eliot said seemed to speak for so many attendees as they left smiling and rejuvenated. She said, “I was so excited to be attending our Convention and Annual Meeting for the first time in two years. Two of my friends who recently retired attended for the first time and

we had a beautiful spring day for our drive to Augusta. ...and that was just the beginning of a wonderful day.

“Registration was so efficient and welcoming. Coffee and snacks were available. Vendors and displays were inviting and informative. Best of all—the opportunity to again connect with old friends.

“The general meeting was well-organized and moved along very smoothly. My breakout session was awesome, and I heard positive reviews from those who attended other sessions as well. Luncheon was great. Thanks for a job well done.”

All breakout speakers were well received. We enjoyed keynote speaker, Dr. Bischof. Many evaluations evaluated her with a 5+ . Some comments from the evaluations were: “Fun, good,

look forward to next year.” “Awesome!” “Couldn’t be better!”

”My first MEA-Retired Convention—outstanding! Efficient, fun, well-organized and a 5+!” “Glad to be back!”

“My first convention—I’ll be back next year!” The morning session ended early with 20 extra minutes to visit vendors, raffles, and affiliate friends.

We thank our Convention Committee who joined in the work that turned out to be fun! Larry Given, Marc Poulin, and Kay Grindall came to my home to stuff envelopes and worked tirelessly to be sure all the finite details were ready for the morning of the 5th!

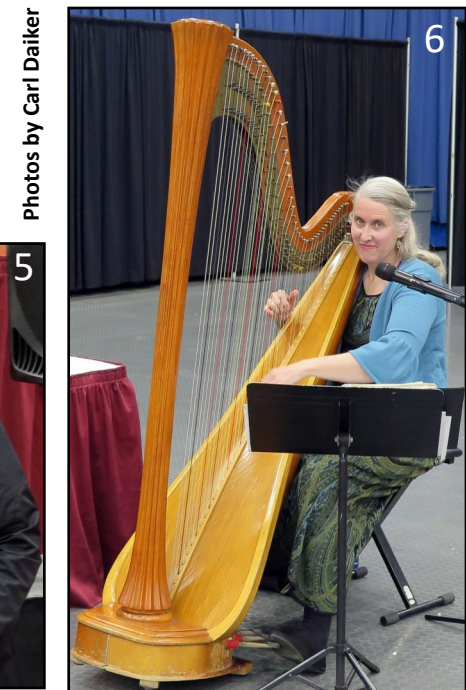
We are already looking forward to May 4, 2023.

Someone yelled to me as I left, “Rheba! Get some rest!” I smiled as a good convention came to the end.

President, from Page 1

successful because of our laser focus on people as human beings.

We understand history and have reframed the times in which we live. I anticipate our successes are not permanent so we must be ever vigilant about improving our retired position. I look forward to seeing our organization grow numerically and spiritually. It has been an honor to serve the members of our organization. Thank you for the trust you have placed in me. Peace.



Photos by Carl Daiker

(1) Affiliate representatives honored retired educators who passed in 2021. (L to R): Rheba Michaud, Marilyn Hylan, Linda Sprague, Jan Crofoot, Sue Feiner, and Nancy Eugley. (2) The keynote address was presented by Dr. Libby Bischof, Professor of History at the University of Southern Maine. Dr. Bischof explored American society and especially Maine society, through the lens of history and the lens of a camera. (3) The book swap is always a popular attraction. (4) MEA-Retired President Gary McGrane presided over the 70th Convention and Annual Meeting. (5) Carolyn Browne of Vassalboro received the Affiliate Leadership Award for Kennebec Retired Educators Association. (6) Harpist Islean Halvorson of Dover-Foxcroft thrilled the attendees with an hour concert before the morning session.



2022 Affiliate Leadership Award winners

County affiliates recognize members who demonstrate exemplary service to others in schools and communities. Active leadership on local, state, and national levels is encouraged. Unified membership in MEA-Retired is required.

—Bob Jean, President-Elect

Androscoggin:



Bruce LePage of Lewiston taught math at Edward Little High School for 34 years. He was faculty advisor

for a boys' group, "Hi Y" and volunteered at St. Patrick's Church in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine program. After retirement, he taught several classes in the Lewiston/Auburn Senior College program.

He and his wife Moira volunteered at the St. Vincent DePaul Society thrift store where he served on the Executive Committee, the Scholarship Committee, and as its treasurer. He and his wife have three children and six grandchildren.

Aroostook:



Linda Hawkins Pelletier of Fort Fairfield filled a variety of positions in Mars Hill for 36 years—Grades 7-12 special education; Grades 4-6 reading

and English; and special education director for MSAD #42. She was a member of the Certification Team. Upon retirement, she joined MEA, MEA-Retired, and AREA. She is part-time Title I coordinator.

An active member of Delta Kappa Gamma International, she participates in the backpack program, the Festival of Trees, and is corresponding secretary in Aroostook Retired Educators Association. She and her husband Dale have three children and one grandson.

Cumberland:



Marie Solak of South Portland. Marie taught Grade 3 in South Portland schools for 25 years. She

is an active member of St. Patrick's Church, serves on the Family Life Committee, and is group leader for the Pre-Marriage Program.

She has been second vice president and is program coordinator of Cumberland County Retired Educators Association. She is an active member of MEA-Retired and NEA-Retired. She and her late husband Michael have three children and three grandchildren.

Franklin:



Marilyn Hylan of Damariscotta taught high school family and consumer sciences in Brewer and Farmington. She was librarian in Dixfield Grammar School and Title I coordinator at Academy Hill in Wilton.

She served as a certification consultant for SAD #9 and class advisor at Mt. Blue High School in Farmington.

She is a leader in the XI Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International, and is currently secretary of MEA-Retired.

Marilyn is financial trustee chairperson at the Old South Congregational Church and volunteers at the Care and Share Food Closet. She recently moved from Farmington to Damariscotta. She and her late husband Daniel have two children and one grandchild.

Hancock:



Donna Ingalls of Ellsworth taught special education and Early Childhood Education for 35 years in the

Bangor area, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. She retired and joined MEA-Retired, NEA-Retired, MAR, and NCRGE Association. She serves on the Necrology and Benevolence Committee of the Hancock County Retired Teachers Association.

Donna is a member of the Board of Trustees at the East Blue Hill Library, and a member of the East Blue Hill Village Improvement Association, and Blue Hill Historical Society. She belongs to the American Association of University Women, Delta Kappa Gamma International Society—Theta Chapter, Ellsworth High School Alumni Association, UMS Alumni Association and University of New Hampshire Association. She is a voracious reader and an active volunteer in many venues.

Kennebec:



Carolyn Browne of Vassalboro taught Grade 4 in Waterville Public Schools for 27

years. She was a Cub Scout Den Mother and Webelos Scout Leader and participated in booster organizations for baseball, basketball, football, and tennis for many years.

She is Women's Fellowship Leader and Sunday School teacher at Riverside Congregational Church where she helps with refreshments and suppers.

Carolyn is a member of Kennebec Retired Educators Association, MEA, MEA-Retired, and NEA-Retired. She has been a gracious host for KREA's June potluck meeting and scholarship auction. She and her husband Bill have two sons and five grandchildren.

Knox:



Irene Hawes of Union taught Grade 3 in Union for 42 years.

She coached Science Olympiad and gathered Box-tops for Education to provide novels for K-6 students. She was a 4-H Club leader and a member of the Board of the Knox-Lincoln County Cooperative Extension Service.

Irene was secretary/treasurer, den mother, and badge mentor of the local Boy Scout Troop 207 and was also a Girl Scout leader. She served on the Union Scholarship Committee and was active in the People's Methodist Church.

Irene continues to serve as a trustee of the Pullen Fund Committee, a trustee of the Union Home for Better Housing/Retirement, and a director of the B.M. Clark Foundation. She has acquired grants for the Town of Union's Archival Room and served on the Union Area Chamber of Commerce. She and her husband Ronald have three children and three grandchildren.

Mid-Coast:



Molly Smith of Lisbon taught special needs students in Grades K-12 in Wiscasset. She helped with Special Olympics and was founder of the Civil Rights Teams at Mt. Ararat Middle and High Schools. She held many leadership positions in the Merry-meeting Teachers Association and was a delegate to MEA and NEA Representative Assemblies. Molly served on MEA's Human, Civil Rights, and Social Justice Committee. After retirement, she became a leader in Mid-Coast Retired Educators Association and represents the affiliate on the MEA-Retired Board of Directors.

Molly serves as Communications Committee co-chair. She volunteered at the Connor's School food bank and delivered meals to Lewiston public Schools students and families. She volunteered at various local schools. She and her husband Andrew have two children and five grandchildren.

Penobscot:



Joy Knowles taught 43 years at the Holden Elementary School. She served as president and negotiator of her local association, was a member of the Academic Council, and directed Holden School's Gifted and Talented program. She served on RSU #63 Board of Education, the Holden Conservation Commission, and the Planning Board.

Joy is a first vice president of Alpha Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma. She is communications director for Penobscot County Retired Edu-

cators Association and works diligently to recruit new members. She and her husband Galen live in Holden.

Piscataquis:



Janie Lander of Guilford taught for 35 years in MSAD #4 and MSAD #8. She was co-chair and in charge of publicity of the Guilford Bicentennial Committee. She did publicity for the Guilford River Festival Committee and was secretary and chairperson of the Board of Trustees at the Guilford Memorial Library.

Janie volunteered in the Valley Grange "Bookworm @ PCES" as a listener to students reading and helped to provide dictionaries for third graders. She was a presenter in the PCES Arts Alive Committee and is an elections worker. Upon retirement, she joined Piscataquis County Retired Educators Association and serves as secretary and publicity director. She and her husband Gregory have one child and one grandchild.

Somerset:



Eric Lahti of Madison taught social studies at Carrabec High School in North Anson for 28 years. He was department chair and coached cross country and spring track. He was president and negotiator of the Carrabec Education Association and attended MEA Representative Assemblies. He has also served on the Madison Board of Education and was a delegate to the Maine Democratic State Convention.

A retired "Master Maine

Guide," he is member of the Board of Somerset Woods Trustees and served on the Maine Archaeological Society Board of Directors for more than 40 years. A collector of antique maps, Eric loves cartography and accompanied his wife Sue to National Council of Geographic Education events. He does surveys and excavation work for the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

Upon retirement, Eric joined Somerset Education Association Retired and has been a speaker at the group. He and his wife Sue have four children and three grandchildren.

Waldo:



Constance McCarthy of Northport taught special education for 12 years and Grades 6-8 language arts for 25 years in Sad 57, Boothbay Harbor, and China. Connie was president and negotiator for the China Teachers Association and volunteers to help students read at the Weymouth Elementary School and reads to students at the Searsmont Library.

Connie served as president of Waldo Educators Association Retired and was very innovative in finding new ways to raise scholarship funds to help local students. She rose to the chal-

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way."
—John Maxwell

lenge of the pandemic and became very comfortable conducting meetings on Zoom—completely remote and hybrid. She and her husband Dan have two children and one grandchild.

York:



Margaret McLaughlin of North Berwick taught elementary grades in the Westbrook, Saco, and

Sanford schools for 33 years. She was a negotiator and chaired the Liaison Committee between teachers and the Board of Education. Upon retirement she joined York County Retired Educators Association and serves on the Calling Committee.

Margaret has supported the Holiday Fairs and serves on the Scholarship Committee. She and her husband have a large vegetable garden which produces food to be shared with neighbors, the Rehab House, Food Pantry, and others in need. She and her husband Patrick have two children and two grandchildren.

**Volunteer!
Day of Caring**



SMILE

**"Seniors Make It
Look Easy"**

Retirement: Time for volunteer opportunities

By Barbara Arsenault, Mexico
MEA-Retired Member

Like many retirees, I was first trying to figure out what would be a good fit for volunteering after I retired from education. I had been an advocate for veterans with my membership with the American Legion Auxiliary, but I wanted another activity as well.

As a retired guidance counselor, I was particularly concerned with school



Barb Arsenault

shootings—the most recent being at Sandy Hook. I was intrigued with a program called “Be SMART” which focuses on gun safety in the home.

SMART is actually an acronym:

S--Secure all guns in your home and vehicle.

M--Model responsible behavior around guns.

A--Ask about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes.

R--Recognize the risks of teen suicide.

T--Tell your peers about Be Smart.

Just before the pandemic, a “Be SMART” presentation was made at Mountain Valley Middle School in Mexico as part of an event titled “Lock It Up.”

A panel discussion consisted of the director of the project, Be SMART, local and county law enforcement officials, and an Emergency Room nurse. They spoke of the importance of locking up firearms, marijuana and pre-

scriptions.

More recently, Be SMART materials have been distributed in the Waterville Public Schools coordinated by their local police department.

The Be SMART program has had successful ties to the pediatric community, but its message about secure storage and knowing the risks have implications for older adults as well.

This past fall, my husband and I moved from a two-story house with a garage to a mobile home with a small shed which made firearm storage a challenge.

As gun owners, we had to revisit storage with limited space to make sure ammunition and firearms are stored separately and secured. This was especially important as we anticipated having young family members visiting while skiing at our local Black Mountain Ski Resort.

One of the firearms we possess came from my mother and stepfather. When my stepfather was diagnosed

with Alzheimer’s, my parents wanted the rifle out of the house. If we would not take it, she knew she could turn it in to any police department.

Like many volunteer organizations, the best part of volunteering is the people. Another group known as “Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense” has a program for survivors of gun violence to connect with each other. If they so choose, they can use their voice and story in advocacy work.

Survivors find support from the organization and from each other as well as bringing awareness of the pain of losing a loved one to gun violence. I admire how they honor their loved ones with action.

On the flip side, the most difficult part of volunteering is going against the sentiment of equating gun safety with “they are going to take away our guns.” Another challenging part of volunteering is being aware of the statistics.

In 2019, 65.7 percent of Maine veterans who committed suicide chose firearms as the lethal means. In 2018, it was 76.6 percent.

Despite the roadblocks I have faced advocating for gun safety, it is extremely rewarding. My mother died at the age of 102. At age 100, she asked about a Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense meeting I was about to attend.

She told me that I had to advocate for gun safety, “so we don’t lose more people like a cousin who shot himself in 1972,” she reminded me. Her memory of that tragedy and the phone call we received amaze me to this day. I honor my cousin and advocate for safer homes.

The group is interested in spreading the word at local and statewide venues. If you would like more information about Be SMART or Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense, please contact me at barb7478@gmail.com. The groups are open to men and women, and one does not have to be a parent.

Augusta thrift store needs volunteers



Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice (Androscoggin) is proud to announce the opening of their new Hospice Thrift Store, located at 165 Capitol Street in Augusta. This new location joins their Auburn store, located at 245 Center Street, as the organization’s second hospice thrift store.

All proceeds from Androscoggin’s Hospice Thrift Store locations support the ongoing costs of patient care in our community. Last year alone, Androscoggin HHH provided more than \$1.6 million in free care to uninsured and underinsured patients and their families.

The Augusta Hospice Thrift Store is currently open on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Donations are being accepted during store hours as well.

With the exception of one employee, the store is run entirely by a team of volunteers who process donations, set up displays, and wait on customers.

Androscoggin Home Healthcare and Hospice is the largest, non-profit independent home health and hospice organization in the state. We focus on health—not illness—by making each individual’s quality of life the best it can be.

Corley Anne Byras of Augusta visits the store often and says, “The best kept secret in Augusta is that in January the Androscoggin Hospice Thrift Store opened at 165 Capitol Street. When one enters the store, it appears that you have walked into a classy boutique.

“Working in the donations area, it’s amaz-

See Thrift Store, Page 7

Do you know what your normal retirement age is and what factors go into determining when you can retire?

Do stipends count when computing your pension amount?

What medical plan is best for you if you want to live or travel outside Maine?

When should I submit my paperwork to retire from my position in the school district?

MEA-Retired and MEA sponsor retirement sessions for all members considering retirement this year or in the next five years. A presenter from the MEA Benefits Trust discusses medical plans, reviews paperwork and provides rate information.

The MainePERS representative covers information on how to calculate your pension amount and pinpoints when you can retire. The representative also discusses other details pertinent to making well-informed decisions.

Horace Mann agents summarize GPO and WEP and the negative impact on pensions. "Getting Ready to Retire" documents are reviewed by members of the MEA-Retired Pre-Retirement Committee whose members also host the Zoom meetings.

All meetings are held

through Zoom. All sessions begin at 5 p.m. and end at 6:15 p.m. on two consecutive evenings. See the schedule below.

Questions are posed in the chat room during the presentation and submitted to the corresponding presenter for a response.

Generic questions that would inform or clarify for the entire group are encouraged. Individual questions can be addressed through email or phone calls to the respective presenters.

Laurie Molton teaches K-12 Fine Arts, Gifted and Talented, and does the school yearbook. She says of the sessions, "I really felt like a deer caught in the headlights before these sessions. Now, I understand the process. I have a plan, and I know who to contact if I need help. Thanks for providing this service."

Another perspective was shared by Barbara Collins who teaches math. She says, "If you're wondering whether you can really afford to retire, think of it this way: If you had done the math and waited until you had all the money necessary to properly care for children, do you think you would have ever

had a family?

"Start the process as soon as possible. You'll be surprised how it will work out. Even though everyone is unique, everybody gets what they need next, if they desire and work for it. Just like in your classroom. There's an endless list of programs, agencies, and experts to help you be successful. Be fearless and maintain your sense of wonder!"

Registration opens two weeks in advance of the sessions. Materials used in each presentation and the Zoom link are sent to participants via email.

The dates for next season's sessions are set with two in the fall and four in the spring. More details will be posted in the August MEA-Retired *Clarion*, MEA's *Maine Educator*, MEA-Retired and MEA websites, and Facebook.

Please pass the word to prospective retirees when MEA-Retired affiliates conduct their meetings over the summer. Family members, friends, and neighbors know

"Prepare for Retirement" sessions planned

By Susan Grondin, Chairperson
Pre-Retirement Committee

teachers who are nearing retirement age and making plans to be done in the classroom. Let them know that we welcome them to join us.

Jim Thornton teaches Grade 5 at Harrison Elementary School in Bethel. He attended the sessions and agrees that "the Pre-Retirement seminars are a great way to get clarity about whether or not you are ready for retirement."

Encourage active members to attend these virtual meetings and learn all the options that await them upon their retirement. And then, of course, encourage them to join MEA-Retired..

Thrift Store, from Page 6

ing the stories that people donating items share with the volunteers as they part with cherished possessions. And the prices are fantastic—just what is needed as people are truly having to pay more for necessities. The only drawback right now is we need more volunteers to be open more hours for shoppers to have the opportunity to shop."

Androscoggin Home Healthcare and Hospice is the largest, non-profit independent home health and hospice organization in the state. They focus on health—not illness—

by making each individual's quality of life the very best it can be.

Androscoggin's Augusta Hospice Thrift Store is seeking volunteers for all positions. Folk interested in volunteering may contact Sharon Blake at sharon.blake@androscoggin.org or by calling (207) 330-9390.

To learn more about Androscoggin, including employment and volunteer opportunities, please visit www.androscoggin.org or call the Development and Community Relations Office at 207-777.7740 ext. 1311.

2022-2023 Pre-Retirement Events

Fall Session 1:

Tuesday, Oct. 18—MEA Benefits Trust & GPO/WEP

Wednesday, Oct. 19—MainePERS

Fall Session 2:

Tuesday, Oct. 25—MEA Benefits Trust & GPO/WEP

Wednesday, Oct. 26—MainePERS

Spring Session 3:

Tuesday, Jan. 10—MEA Benefits Trust & GPO/WEP

Wednesday, Jan. 11—MainePERS

Spring Session 4:

Tuesday, Jan. 17—MEA Benefits Trust & GPO/WEP

Wednesday, Jan. 18—MainePERS

Spring Session 5:

Tuesday, Feb. 7—MEA Benefits Trust & GPO/WEP

Wednesday, Feb. 8—MainePERS

Spring Session 6:

Tuesday, Mar. 7—MEA Benefits Trust & GPO/WEP

Wednesday, Mar. 8—MainePERS

Sue Grondin, Chairperson, scgrondin@hotmail.com, 207-782-8850

NEA-Retired Summit a unique experience

By Bob Jean
MEA-Retired President-Elect

The “nearly normal” NEA-Retired Conference was held in Baltimore.

The daily health screening and masking up in the meetings were small inconveniences when looking at the big picture. It was so refreshing to



Representing MEA-Retired at the recent NEA-Retired Summit in Baltimore are (L to R): President-Elect Bob Jean, Thomaston; Information Coordinator Sue Feiner, Yarmouth; Membership Chairperson Roger Roy, Caribou; and MEA-Retired President Gary McGrane, Jay.

meet retired educators from all over the country. Networking is much more pleasurable when done in person as opposed to Zoom.

NEA-Retired President Sarah Borgman initiated the conference with opening remarks. Sarah is known for leading by example. She is always a motivating speaker who reminds us how important our group is to the NEA. NEA-Retired continues to be a leader in supporting political In fact, at a time in history when they probably need it the most.

MEA-Retired was well-represented at the conference: Gary McGrane, Roger Roy, Bob Jean, and Susan

Feiner. Sue was also a presenter. By splitting up for breakout sessions we covered a lot of issues and surely had unique take-aways from our experienc-

es.

I started out with a session on parliamentary procedure (because you can never have enough training). The presenters made it interactive and fun. They summed it up in simple terms--parliamentary procedure is a set of rules of conduct that allows everyone to be heard. It helps in making decisions with minimal confusion. It should promote a pleasant environment for all participants.

My next session was “Retirees Organize to Save Group Health Insurance” presented by our very own Susan Feiner. Susan outlined how Maine higher ed. retirees organized and strategized to win back their health insurance.

The presentation included short videos of retirees who participated in this union action. The important role played by MEA-NEA was, also, highlighted.

The Illinois Experiment, a breakout dealing with racial and social justice, was my next stop. This session was quite informative as the presenters shared lots of re-



Sue Feiner of Higher Educators Association Retired (HEAR) presented a session on the University of Maine System restoration of group health insurance benefits.

sources, most of which can be found on the NEA website. Time was built in the schedule for a couple of reflective activities. All participants left with many ideas to share back home.

The final session I attended was about pre-retirement seminars. I've shared my thoughts about this one with many people. The take-away for me was that I am so proud of the work we do here in Maine with our pre-retirement program. Thank you to our team for putting us ahead of so many other states.

On the final night we heard from keynote speaker Mary Kusler, NEA's Senior Director of the Center for Advocacy and Political Action. She stressed the importance of continued efforts to recruit and support public education candidates at all levels.

Mary spoke about the critical need to support our active educators. Of course, she also encouraged donating to PAC/NEA Fund and participating in the auction which was quite successful.

A link was available for people not attending in person. That drew in many more bidders. NEA-Retired will continue this practice at future conferences due to the positive response.

This was my first national conference. I learned a little, networked a lot, and met wonderful people. Next time, I hope we can meet without masks!

Affiliate activities abound



Busy preparing for the April meeting of Cumberland County Retired Educators Association are L to R: Marilyn McLeod of Portland; Dolores Drivas, South Portland, Priscilla Swartz, Cape Elizabeth; Linda Hussey, South Portland, and Francesca Perazzi, Portland. Francesca is 101.

AARP news, updates, and a new liaison

By Pam Partridge
MEA-Retired AARP Liaison

Hello, MEA retirees. I am Pam Partridge, your newly appointed AARP Maine liaison to the MEA-Retired Board of Directors. I live in North Anson and also serve as president of Somerset Educators Association Retired (SEAR).

As you read in the April issue of *The Clarion*, Carl Bucciantini of Greene now serves as the Volunteer Director for AARP Maine and is doing a fantastic job across the state in his new role.

He began his new position hosting a state-wide virtual listening tour in March with a number of regional zoom meetings. It was a wonderful opportunity to share concerns and learn what AARP is doing in Maine. He's going to be very busy!

I became a volunteer with AARP during the spring of 2019 after Japhet Els, Outreach Director for AARP Maine, made a presentation to SEAR..

I was amazed to learn about all of the things AARP does across Maine for the 50-plus community! Wanting to "get in on the action," we started AARP sponsored monthly "Coffee Talk" gatherings at Maine Grains in Skowhegan that summer.

I attended some trainings and joined the Tuesdays at the State House (TASH) group in early January 2020 when COVID-19 arrived and all in-person AARP events were cancelled nationally.

With the help of their volunteers, AARP continued to do their advocacy and outreach work in the virtual world online, over the phone, and through letter writing.

As your new AARP Maine liaison, I will attend the monthly AARP Executive Council meetings and share information from those meetings with the MEA-Retired Board of Directors. I will also contribute bimonthly updates in *The Clarion* to keep all our members updated.

The State of Maine Legis-

lature is pretty much done as of writing this article, and it was a busy, out-of-the-ordinary session. AARP Maine accomplishments during 2022 legislative session included hosting half a dozen kitchen table chats with district legislators and constituents. We saw the passage of several critical pieces of legislation that directly affect seniors living in Maine.

LD 1636 will improve RX price transparency.

LD 1778 is "An Act to Improve Health Care Affordability and Increase Options for Comprehensive Coverage for Individuals and Small Businesses."

LD 2003 is "An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions."

We were so pleased to see money included in the supplemental budget allocated for studying the initiative that benefits all families— Paid Family Medical Leave.

We hosted our first in-person TASH session in two years. Members were busy with the publication of eight volunteer Letters to the Editor (LTE). Multiple staff members and volunteers testified on legislative and budgetary issues. After a year with pandemic restrictions, many tasks were checked off the "To do" list.

Yes, we were thrilled the TASH group met in person at the State Capitol on April 12 for the first time in two years. While there, we met with Governor Mills and members of the Senate and House leadership.

Many of us were so pleased to be in the Senate Chamber when Rick Lawrence became the first Black judge to be confirmed to

serve on the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. That was a landmark experience.

Safely and cautiously, AARP Maine has begun preparing for in-person gatherings around the state. Staff members have returned to the Portland office, and visits from the public are by appointment only. Feel free to call AARP Maine at (207) 776-6348. The office is located at 53 Baxter Boulevard, Portland, ME 04103.

MEA-Retired has a link to AARP Maine events on our website homepage calendar. Go to mearetired.org, scroll down the page, and you will see "Events." Also, check the AARP Maine website for updates as things are changing.

Online events include yoga classes, movie screenings, cooking classes, book groups, and so much more. If you haven't heard about our monthly Zoom program entitled, *Fraud Watch*, join us at 10 a.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

These sessions are free to join. One just has to register online in order to receive the Zoom link. Just google "AARP Maine Fraud Watch" and look for the registration link on the page. These informative sessions offer current scam and fraud updates and alerts. There is time for participants to share stories and ask questions. The 30-minute program is hosted by Phil Chin, various guest speakers, and me.

AARP collaborates with other organizations and agencies that work to meet the needs of the 50+ community. For example, AARP Maine is currently collaborating with *America Walks*, an agency whose goal it is to "advance walkable, equitable, connected, and accessible places in every community across the U.S."



Pam Partridge

America Walks will provide training and coaching to assist Augusta and Brewer with designing and implementing a plan that is tailored to best fit their needs so that people have spaces to move safely. Watch for more news on the *America Walks* projects and how a program can be organized in your communities.

AARP Maine also partnered with the Maine Broadband Coalition to build teams of local leaders as part of a **County Connector** program, establishing a "grass-roots network to help build . . . the network!"

On the federal level there is an all out effort by AARP to reach out to Congress for supporting RX pricing reform and to allow Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices. Collective voices are heard, so join the chorus on this issue that affects so many members of our 50-plus communities.

State volunteers will take a break from their weekly meetings during the month of May. Meetings and planning will resume in June when they will continue to defend and strengthen the issues of paid family medical leave, affordable utility costs, our long-term care system, voter access and election security.

Interested volunteers may contact the Portland office at (866) 544-5380 or go to <https://states.aarp.org/maine/>. It's not all legislative. There are many more opportunities volunteers do to support the 50-plus community! Join our team and serve.

MEA Benefits Trust updates

By Faith Campbell
MEA Benefits Trust Liaison

I hope that you are enjoying these late spring days. It can be joyfully overwhelming when preparing for our uniquely wonderful Maine summers.

Maine Education Association Benefits Trust (MEABT) has been working to provide our members and their families with the needed resources

to enjoy these summer days to the fullest.

You will find related articles in this issue of *The Clarion*, by MEABT Executive Director Jennifer Kent and MEABT Wellness Director Michael Booth. Ms. Kent will be providing information on the Anthem Medicare Advantage contract renewal program.

She will also address the ongoing efforts to minimize any effects that a dispute between Anthem and Maine Health might have on our membership.

This information can be troubling since Anthem is our primary health insurance and Maine Health is a major healthcare provider for our members. The stated intent of Maine Health is that they

will no longer be an in-network provider beginning January 1, 2023. This announcement continues to be particularly troubling.

We have some reassuring news. MEABT members who subscribe to our group insurance programs will have service until December 31, 2022.

Furthermore, the deadline will not affect Medicare Advantage subscribers. Their coverage will continue uninterrupted. Nonetheless, the Trust is committed to mitigating any negative impacts on our members.

Ms. Kent provided testimony at the April 28th Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee hearing regarding the Anthem Maine Health con-

tract dispute. Denise McDonough, President of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, requested and was granted an opportunity to address the MEABT Board. She stated that Anthem is working on contingency plans to ensure that subscribers will be able to obtain affordable medical services.

COVID-19 remains a concern for many of us. Medicare recipients are now eligible to receive up to 8 free Covid tests per calendar month at participating pharmacies. The pharmacies will directly bill Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services. Please direct any further questions and concerns to our staff at the MEABT. You may contact the Trust at www.meabt.org or call 1-888-662-4418.

Retirement begins for many educators in June! Give your newly retired friends a special gift!

Maine Educator



Long-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$33
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Sizes XL & XXL: Add \$2
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Lapel Pins @ \$10

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

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

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

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Questions: Please call Virgin Pulse Customer Service

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Michael Booth, SPHR

MEA Benefits Trust Wellness Director

mbooth@mebt.org

207-622-4418, Ext. 2510

MEA Benefits Trust testifies on your behalf

By Jennifer Kent, Executive Director MEA Benefits Trust

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services

RE: Briefing on Provider Contracting Dispute between Anthem and Maine Health

DA: April 26, 2022

Testimony given by Jennifer Kent, Executive Director of the Maine Education Association Benefits Trust

Greetings Senator Sanborn Representative Tepler and members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance &

Financial Services.

My name is Jennifer Kent and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Education Association Benefits Trust, a not-for-profit employee welfare benefit plan dedicated to the health of Maine public school employees and their families.

Our plan offers health insurance to approximately 68,000 active and retired educators, support staff and their dependents in the K-12 schools throughout Maine.

Our active and retiree medical and prescription benefits are insured by Anthem. The Trust has worked hard to provide our members with the best health and wellness plans at affordable rates.

In March, our Board of Trustees renewed with Anthem for the plan year July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, and rates were distributed to all of our participating schools.

We are very concerned about the impacts of an unexpected, mid-contract termination of Maine Medical Center from the Anthem provider network, particularly as it will occur in the middle of our insured contract year.

Schools and towns have developed budgets and tax rates based on our negotiations with Anthem, which assume Maine Medical Center is paid as an in-network provider at the in-network rates which were mutually negotiated by Maine Health and Anthem as part of their three-year contract.

The Trust has worked hard over the years to keep increases in medical premiums as low as possible for our members,

the school districts and the taxpayers, while also investing in tools and resources to help keep our members healthy and productive.

In addition to cost considerations, Maine Medical Center going out of network, mid-contract, is an unprecedented disruption to our members adding unnecessary stress for our members, after everything they have been through during this pandemic.

We respect the ability of parties in any negotiation to disagree. We note, however, that this is no ordinary contract negotiation. The issues are far more complicated than has been captured in the news reports.

The resolution of this dispute will have far-reaching consequences to the delivery of affordable health care in Maine for years to come.

A solution requires com-

promise by both parties and an awareness and appreciation of their respective perspectives and of their mutual responsibility to the community that they both serve.

We do not believe that our carrier should automatically agree to any increase proposed by a provider, especially mid-contract. We expect our insurance company to work to mitigate costs and trend, to provide our members access to the best care at the best possible price.

We also note that it is important for providers to be paid correctly and promptly to support the delivery of ongoing, quality care. We continue to encourage compromise and

flexibility by both parties, to reach a resolution that is, first and foremost,

in the best interests of their patients and members.

Contingency planning for the largest hospital in the state being out of network for the largest health insurance carrier in the state is complicated and takes time.

Trusts like ours and other stakeholders will need to develop prudent and appropriate alternatives for our members if this dispute is not satisfactorily resolved. Time is of the essence in getting these parties back to the mediation table and resolving their differences.

We appreciate and support the efforts of this Committee. We encourage this Committee, the Bureau of Insurance, the Governor, and the Attorney General to take whatever actions they can to encourage and facilitate the mediation and resolution of this dispute in a timely and equitable fashion.

Thank you.



New MEA App

The MEA continues to try and meet your needs and is also launching a new way for you to access information from the Union. You can now find MEA information at your fingertips with our new app! There has never been an easier way to reach MEA.

The app will give you up-to-date information from your Union so make sure you download it today and enable push notifications, so you don't miss a thing!

The MEA App is in the App Store and Google Play.

Download the MEA App Today!

Scan the QR code for the Apple App Store.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Maine Education Association statewide committees meet three or four times a year. (Budget Committee meets twice.) on Saturdays from 10 a.m.—3 p.m. at the MEA building, 35 Community Drive, Augusta. Lunch and mileage are provided.

We would like to note that several committees have seats specifically designated for MEA-Retired members: Government Relations, Instruction & Professional Development, and Statewide Bargaining. It is our intent to fill at least these three positions. Please consider how you can become more involved on the state level.

Furthermore, MEA-Retired members may hold a seat on other committees as well—even though they are not specifically designated for a retiree.

Committees give input to the MEA Board of Directors, staff, and the MEA Representative Assembly.



Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC): Advocates for minority involvement and pathways to leadership, supports educators and students of color, promotes and supports anti-racist education, and identifies policies and practices that further support the MEA becoming an inclusive, equitable, and diverse organization.

Education Support Professionals (ESP): Advocates for ESP involvement in the Association and educational and training programs designed to advance ESP related issues.

Government Relations (GR): Develops and advocates the legislative program of the Association.

Human and Civil Rights and Social Justice (HCRSJ): Advocates for educational and training programs designed to enhance human and civil rights and makes recommendations on ways for MEA to promote

social justice.

Instruction and Professional Development (IPD): Recommends policies in the areas of instruction and professional development that involve the practitioner in the areas of classroom management, professional practices and standards, educational technology, early childhood education, and productive evaluation programs.

Resolutions: Receives proposed resolutions (belief statements) and new business items (action items) from members, committees and other groups. After editing and reviewing resolutions and new business items, presents them to the Representative Assembly.

Statewide Bargaining (SWBC): Develops, reviews and recommends policies relating to the promotion of collective bargaining and goals; advises the staff regarding the development of resources to satisfy local affiliate needs related to col-

We need YOU: MEA statewide committees

lective bargaining.

Strategic Budget: Prepares the annual budget for presentation to the Representative Assembly for adoption.

Structure and Bylaws (S&B): Studies the MEA Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules and makes recommendations to achieve the purposes of the Association; is responsible for the continuous maintenance of an efficient and workable election procedure.

Interested members may contact MEA President Grace Leavitt at 207-622-5866 or email gleavitt@maineea.org.

MEA Board of Directors update

*By Gary McGrane, MEA-Retired Member
MEA Board of Directors*

The MEA-RA and NEA-RA were the primary topic of discussion at the recent MEA Board of Directors meeting.

Of particular note was acknowledgement of our efforts in testifying for a MainePERS Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase for retirees in the governor's Supplemental Budget.

Though all the requests were not granted, we did get an additional increase in our base rate of 1 percent retroactive to September 1, 2021. In addition to the earlier 3 percent COLA increase, a 1.5 percent one-time payment will be made in lieu of a base rate COLA increase.

After all benefits are calculated, the MainePERS base

will be \$24,185.25—up from \$22,196.92 as of September 1, 2022.

MEA Executive Director Rachelle Johnson reported that our retired educator membership increased by 54 retirees. This will be a critical number going forward because of additional advocacy that will be needed in the future.

A special thank you to our Legislative Committee Chairperson Crystal Ward for activating our core base of fellow retirees to lobby and testify before the Legislature.

We needed testimony from our members to share critical stories that illustrate needs of retired educators.

Crystal delivered on both.

Many have inquired as to when the MEA office in Augusta will be open to our general membership. Offices will be opened to members again as of April 18 by appointment only. The reason for appointments is about numbers and the interior construction upgrade that is in progress. The safety of all parties continues to be paramount.

Other presentations and updates were provided by our NEA director, MEABT Trustee, Higher Ed Director, ESP Director, Student MEA representatives, Impact Co-Captains, Treasurer and my report to the Board of Directors.

All reports were prefaced by President Grace Leavitt's opening reports on activities and appreciation of the continuation of member activities and programs.

Of special note the Board reappointed Patty Scully, Sonya Varney, and Jill Plourde to the MEA Benefits Trust Board of Directors.

We concluded our meeting with the presentation of a document put together by the Member Engagement Subcommittee.

If our MEA-Retired members have concerns or issues to be addressed in the Board of Directors meetings, feel free to contact me. See the bottom of Page 2 as to how to contact me.



By Corley Anne Byras, Chairperson
Policy Committee

It was a pleasure to nominate Kay Grindall for the 2022 MEA-Retired Honorary Member award. Kay served as president of the MEA-Retired Association in 2019-2021—throughout the unprecedented time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

She found innovative ways to communicate, hold meetings, and inspire others to step forward for the Association. It was under her tenure that our pre-retirement seminars moved from in-person to virtual via Zoom.

Her time as president had many extraordinary circumstances, and she devoted her time and energy to overcome whatever the obstacles were. Because of her dedication and perseverance, MEA-Retired was stronger and ready to meet the various challenges.

Kay graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor's degree in business education from Thomas College and earned a master's degree in education from the University of Maine.

She taught English, journalism, and business education courses at Waterville High School for 30 years. She was also a part-time adjunct professor of accounting at Thomas College for ten years.

She was advisor to the high school newspaper, *The Panther Press*. In conjunction with the University of Maine and personnel at the Waterville *Morning Sentinel*, Kay organized and hosted annual statewide high school journalism conferences for many years.

2022 Honorary Membership award

She was chosen Maine's "Business Educator of the Year" in 2000 and was the recipient of a faculty "Renaissance" Award for her excellence in the classroom and her service to students and colleagues.

She was treasurer and newsletter editor for the Waterville Teachers Association for 28 years and became a life member of NEA in 1986. She served on MEA's Strategic Budget Committee and Resolutions Committee and has been a delegate to many MEA and NEA Representative Assemblies.

Past MEA-Retired President and Parliamentarian Phil Gonyar taught with Kay at Waterville High School where they also worked together in the local Association. He says, "Kay is a major contributor to MEA-Retired. Serving as our president she was organized, creative, and thorough."

"As editor of *The Clarion*, she produces a newsletter which wins national awards. But most importantly, she cares. She is constantly looking for ways to assure the Association is successful. None of this surprises me. From our teaching days together until now, I have seen her contributions to education, to community, and to friends."

Upon retirement in 2008, she joined MEA-Retired where she served on the Board of Directors as corresponding secretary, second vice presi-

dent, president elect, and then president of MEA-Retired for the 2019-2021 biennium.

Since 2011, she has served as the editor of *The Clarion*, MEA-Retired's bi-monthly newsletter which



Kay participated in KREA's annual Day of Caring project helping teachers at Belgrade Central School prepare for the first day of school in 2021. L to R: Kay Grindall, Marshalyn Baker of Belgrade, Linda Ellis of Clinton, and Phil Gonyar of Waterville.

has garnered national notoriety from NEA-Retired.

She is also past president of Kennebec Retired Educators Association and is its current Membership Committee chairperson.

Kay has been a member of the Kappa Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International since 1994—a society



Kay served as president from 2019-2021—when most of the meetings during her tenure were held on Zoom due to Covid-19. The annual convention was cancelled in 2020 and 2021.

of women educators. She is secretary of Kappa chapter.

In 2003, Kay founded Shorthand Writers of Maine which has had more than 200 members registered in many states and as far away as Australia. Two-thirds or more of the members are retired business educators.

Past MEA-Retired President Marilyn Hall of Waterville has known Kay for nearly 50 years. She says, "I first met Kay as her two daughters' First Grade Teacher in Winslow. Her girls were excellent students and a pleasure to have in class. Kay was always very supportive as a parent for all educational programs."

"To my knowledge, Kay has never refused a request from anyone in the educational field when she has been asked to assist with a project. Former students at Waterville High School still speak fondly of her. MEA-Retired is fortunate to have Kay as an active member, Past MEA President and Editor of *The Clarion*. Thank you Kay."

Her husband Richard spent 40 years in law enforcement, retiring as chief of police in Winslow. They remain active members of their church. They have two married daughters (both educators) and two grandchildren. The Grindalls live in Oakland.

Kay's passion to work for students and educators has been a lifetime journey and will continue throughout her life. She truly is very deserving of this high honor.

Corley Anne Byras of Augusta retired after 18 years at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham. She served as president of Mid-Coast Retired Educators Association and MEA-Retired president in 2017-2019. Corley is chairperson of the Policy Committee and has been a delegate to NEA-RA. She and her late husband George have four grown children and three granddaughters.

“Let’s hear it for PAC!”

Corley Anne Byras of Augusta is chairperson of the Political Action Campaign (PAC) raffle held at our annual convention.

Wow! It was fantastic to return to the Augusta Civic Center for our 70th Convention and Annual Meeting of the Maine Education Association Retired. After two years of meeting through Zoom, it was meaningful to see friends and those with whom we had worked and met over Zoom.

It was a memorable day, as we shared the joy of those who received well-deserved

awards. Visiting the vendors, enjoying wonderful food, finding treasures at the book swap, and simply being together again.

It was fantastic to be busy with the 50+ item raffle which is held to raise funds for Children and Public Education which is part of the NEA PAC. For over two years I’d been accepting donations for the raffle, and it is great to get rid of the items and not be storing four bins of donations.

And it’s even better that our delegates attending the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting in Chicago will already

have funds to contribute from MEA-Retired.

Thank you to all who helped to provide these funds for PAC. You have made donations to a most worthy cause.

Now for the results: We made \$556 that will be distributed among our NEA delegates. I love statistics—53 people purchased tickets and there were 32 winners.

Two members won three times. The vendor for the Iris Network and other members actually won two items.

A huge thank you to all of you who contributed items and those who participated in

More on convention: Make plans to join us next year

the raffle.

Looking forward to seeing you in Augusta next year on the first Thursday in May. Let’s start collecting items!

“My first convention”

Sue Feiner of Yarmouth-says, “Congrats MEA-Retired! I’m proud to count myself one of the greatest bunch of educators I’ve had the good fortune to know.

“First, thank you for trusting me with the job of information coordinator. Passing on the organization’s crucial information turned out to be a great introduction to the wonderful work in which we are all engaged.”

Day of Caring and Community Participation are but two of the on-going programs of MEA-Retired. Who knew that MEA-Retired educators make annual in-kind contributions to Maine public schools worth over \$650,000?

MEA-Retired also provides great opportunities to support great educators’ health. The affiliate-based activity/exercise programs hit some pretty big bumps in the

early days of the pandemic. Yet Maine’s retired educators were able to keep on keeping on.

During the convention I joined my MEA-Retired Higher Ed folks, and they elected me president of the Higher Education Association Retired (HEAR).

In this role I will provide real-time updates on UMSys actions that undermine our University colleagues, damage public higher education or demonstrate the bad faith System officers bring to the bargaining table.

When I woke up on May 5, I was a bit nervous. I ended the day with a big smile. Thank you all for your more than generous welcome. The Convention was fun. Putting names with faces was terrific. I’ve been a member of a lot of organizations in my life. Hands down! MEA-Retired is the BEST!



Enjoying some good conversations with friends around the table before the start of convention are L to R: George Sergeant, Brunswick; Jeff Harper, Auburn; Ed Nunery, Cumberland Center; Molly Smith, Lisbon; and Peg Newberg, Harpswell. People seemed ready for our in-person gathering after not meeting for convention since 2019.



Happy to be meeting in person and waiting for the program to start are retired educators from Knox County. (L to R): Linda Woodman, Nancy Eugley, Irene Hawes, and Angela Buras.

‘Tis the season for Driver’s Ed



Hamilton’s Driving School has locations in Portland, Saco and Kennebunk. We are looking for at least one instructor for behind-the-wheel driving for our Kennebunk location.

No experience needed.

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Schedule is flexible—mostly after school (sometimes before school) and weekends. Summer schedule is much more flexible with 15-30 hours a week or more if wanted.

Great job for a retired teacher!

Would love to have you join our team!
Call or text Joe Hamilton 207-423-2439



Membership Matters: People like being asked

*By Roger Roy, Chairperson
Membership Committee*

When was the last time you invited someone to join MEA-Retired and NEA-Retired? How about joining your local affiliate?

I'm sure you know at least one person who has recently retired or plans to retire in the near future. If you don't speak up for us and invite them to join us, then who will?

Change is all around us, and we need to manage that change as best as we can. If we meekly submit to change, one could say that we deserve what happens to us. The more of us who are involved, the more that legislators and administrators will pay attention to what we say! It's as simple as that.

I once heard this quote: "You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give." Now that we

are no longer earning a living, that time and energy can be channeled to volunteerism. When you see a new retiree, congratulate them and ask if they have joined us yet. Let them know that we want their input; we want them to join us. We need to support one another, and they need our support and information as they begin to navigate the retired life.

Let them know what your local affiliate is doing; let them know what social events are planned for the summer. If your local affiliate has a service project, invite them to participate.

Pretty soon, we will begin planning our 2022 Day of Caring projects in our local schools and communities. That is a great initiation to the joys of volunteerism

with other active retirees in our affiliates. Undoubtedly, some of us taught with these new retirees; so it is just a matter of spending more time with friends and former colleagues.

As you proudly tout the benefits of involvement in retirement, they truly will be glad you spoke up and cared enough to invite them. Without a doubt, the lives of members of affiliates, MEA-Retired, MEA, and NEA-Retired have been greatly enhanced in so many ways.

We are very proud of what we are doing for educators, for students, and for our communities. Retirees have dedicated their lives to thousands of students and don't want to stop now.

As we know, being a teacher is not a job; it's a

calling that we never desert. It is who we were in the classrooms, and it is who we are as we retire. We still have that "servant's heart" to be of assistance to those around us and volunteer proudly, often, and as creatively as possible. You remind me of the following quote: "Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

How true.

We must continue to be proud of that and celebrate it as we work together, side by side, with fellow retirees giving and giving. Membership is about being part of something that is bigger than we. It is about facing the future proudly—determined to make life better for everyone.

How about it? Whom will you ask? Someone may just be waiting for that question.