



THE CLARION

The Newsletter for Retired Educators
Maine Education Association Retired Vol. 133, No. 1

October 2020

MEA-Retired
68th Annual Meeting
October 15, 2020
**“Happy 200th
Birthday, Maine!”**

From our President



Kay Grindall

As you peruse this issue of our newsletter, you will readily recognize that much is happening, opportunities for volunteerism abound and many members in MEA-Retired have been very busy and have accomplished much!

Our members are not allowing a global pandemic stop them. Despite restricted gatherings and mandated social distancing, so much is being accomplished, as we maximize use of online resources and venues.

Just see what our Pre-Retirement Committee has been able to organize. It is incredible that 300 prospective retirees from the active teach-

ing force will attend these seminars to learn about the retirement process! They've never had that many in three sessions before!

We recently held our September Board of Directors meeting in a “hybrid” format—17 in person and 13 on Zoom. We had a typical attendance, lots of socializing before the meeting, and great participation. It was exciting to be among expert retirees who are committed to keep our programs going—and flourish like never before.

On the morning of our meeting, my husband asked me at the breakfast table: “So, what do you think they will decide about the annual meeting?”

“Well,” I replied, “I see

no option but to suspend our 2020 annual meeting due to a lack of a quorum of 50.”

See, between March and September we only received 19 registrations. We'd already made plans to implement the state guidelines—wearing masks, social distancing, sanitizing, food served in individual boxes, etc.

However, the RSVP numbers indicated that most people remain reluctant to gather in a group. Understandable. In such an unprecedented time, many of us are hesitant and may also be considered high risk.

So, when our agenda moved to the annual meeting

See President, Page 5

UMS retirees stand to lose insurance benefits

By Jim McClymer, Ph.D.
AFUM President



Jim McClymer

As a retiree in the University of Maine System (UMS) and a member of the retiree health insurance plan, you

recently received slickly produced brochures showing smiling seniors enjoying life because of the caring acts of UMS and AON.

Yet, many of you did not buy into the smiling propaganda and rightfully wondered what will happen to the insurance you earned, was promised, and depended upon when you retired..

The MEA units that represented you during your career were just as blindsided by this unilateral action as you were. They had no idea this was

See UMS, Page 4

68th Annual Meeting: Register early!!

By Rheba Michaud
Convention Coordinator



Rheba Michaud

The 68th Annual Meeting of MEA-Retired will be held on Zoom and in-person at the Best Western Hotel, 375 Main St., Waterville, on Thursday, October 15, at 9:30 a.m.

Check-in and refreshments are at 9 a.m., and a buffet lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. The cost for lunch is \$10.

All unified members are invited to attend. In-person attendance will be capped at 40 registrants in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Masks must be

worn and may be removed to speak, eat, and drink.

In order to provide the buffet and check membership requirements for voting, registrations must be received by October 8.

See the registration form on Page 10. We strongly urge you to **register early** so that we receive it before the deadline.

According to our Parliamentarian Phil Gonyar of Waterville, “Our bylaws state that we need at least 50 members in a quorum in order to conduct business. We encourage members to join the meeting to have a voice in business conducted on that day.”

When we learned at our September 8 Board of Direc-

tors meeting that we only had 19 registrations, it became quite apparent we would not have enough attendees to meet our quorum requirement. After discussion, the Board voted to open up the online Zoom venue to encourage more members to attend.

Members who register to attend the annual meeting on Zoom will receive an invitation on email to attend a “Trial Zoom Meeting” on Wednesday, October 14, at 7 p.m. This will enable those who are new to Zoom to learn to navigate and participate in the venue with more ease. For more information contact me by email at rrmichaud143@charter.net or call me at 207-564-7494.

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Elections Update



By Crystal Ward
Legislative Liaison



Crystal Ward

Voting is one of the fundamental rights we have as citizens of this state and country.

Everyone should do everything possible to

cast a ballot at each election. By voting, you are keeping our democracy strong and continuing a long history of citizen participation in the governing of our state and nation.

Election Day is Tuesday November 3, 2020. Because of the pandemic, voting by absentee ballot is the best way to keep you and your family safe. Voting by absentee is very simple. Just follow the directions carefully.

Register

Any registered voter may cast an absentee ballot instead of voting in person at a voting/polling place on Election Day.

If you or someone you know isn't registered to vote, they must do that first by contacting their local clerk or go

**Celebrate Educators
American Education
Week**



November 16-20

MEA Voting Information 2020

to the Secretary of State's voter registration link: <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/index.html>

Get your absentee ballot

Voting by absentee ballot is safe, easy, and has been done reliably in Maine for many years. Secretary of State Matt Dunlap predicts that as many as 80 percent of Maine voters will vote by absentee ballot in this election.

You don't need to have a specific reason or be unable to vote at the voting place on Election Day to receive an absentee ballot.

You have a couple of

very easy ways to get your absentee ballot. You can request your absentee ballot directly from the Maine Secretary of State, or you can call or write your local election official. Either way works to get your ballot in hand in early October. Secretary Dunlap has said we'll see ballots about October 3.

Follow the link below to get your ballot today or call your local clerk's office.

<https://apps.web.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/AbsenteeBallot/index.pl>

You may make a written request for a "third person" (someone other than the voter or the voter's immediate family member) to obtain and hand-deliver an absentee

ballot.

You may vote also by casting an absentee ballot in person at the clerk's office as soon as absentee ballots are available.

Absentee ballots will be in the clerk's office around October 3. Call your clerk to check before going in.

You won't need to complete an application if you vote in person at the clerk's office. The deadline for absentee voting in the presence of the clerk, unless special circumstances exist, is the Thursday before the election.

While it is possible to request an absentee ballot right up to 5 p.m.

on October 29, 2020, you must then drop it off in person as you won't have enough time to mail it. Don't wait until then! Do it now.

Complete your ballot carefully

Make very sure you follow ALL directions and **sign your name** on the back of the return envelope. Last election, many absentee ballots were thrown out because they were not signed. Your local clerk can tell you if your ballot was received and completed accurately.

Return your ballot

Return your ballot in the mail, in person at the city/town building, or in an Absentee Ballot drop box usually at your city/town office **as soon as possible.**

The best thing to do when you get your ballot is fill it out and mail it the next day. Don't put it up on the shelf and forget it! You should have your ballot around October 3 if you've requested one. When it comes in the mail, complete it and return it immediately.

To be counted, all absentee ballots must be received

by the municipal clerk by 8 p.m. on November 3— Election Day. If you haven't mailed it in at least a week before, you can drop it off in person at the clerk's office. Most offices will have a voter drop box available.

If you mail in your request, you can contact your local clerk's office to check that it was received. Your local election person is also supposed to contact you if there are any problems with your ballot, like forgetting your name, which is a good reason why it is so important that you get your ballot in early.

Voting in Person

Although most voters will vote absentee this year, around 1 out of 5 voters will vote in person on November 3. Voting sites will be set up according to CDC guidelines, and you will be required to wear a mask.

MEA staff contributed to the contents of this article.

The Clarion is published bi-monthly 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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CORRECTION

Our website received first place award during the past two years and not three years as reported in the August *Clarion*. In 2018, our website received "Runner-up" notoriety.

No one understands better than you how challenging education can be.

Never has education in Maine faced greater challenges than today. All school staff and students attempt to begin the school year while the state is in the far-reaching grip of a pandemic and a financial crisis.

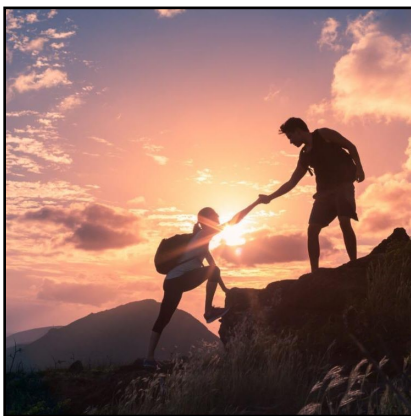
You can imagine the stress under which our teachers, administrators, ed techs, and support staff are working.

You know that operating day after day under this added uncertainty and stress of the far-reaching pandemic impacts the health and wellness of Maine's front-line education workforce and their families.

This stress can end the teaching and education careers of good people that Maine students so desperately need.

Think, too, of beginning teachers who are just getting their "dream" careers started in this less than desired environment with unprecedented expectations and mandates.

True, they will work with mentors during the first few years. However, what they learned in methods classes regarding classroom management and curriculum design and delivery will be handled much differently now that necessary Covid guidelines are being implemented.



Retired educators have been on the front lines with our students, schools, and parents for decades. They have much to offer in supporting, listening, understanding, and caring for our education personnel.

You have spent decades in the classroom. You have a true understanding of the life of a classroom teacher. You know what it is like to be support personnel. You have experiences that qualify you to help others like no one else can!

We remember how much we enjoyed teaching, and many of us return to substitute or volunteer in classrooms--where our hearts remain long after we retire.

Yes! We can help and are desperately needed! We lend a listening ear, share a sympathetic heart, and offer a word of encouragement to "keep on keeping on."

Maine is setting up a special program to support our education front line. A free confidential phone service will provide teachers and education staff across the state with Psychological First Aid (PFA).

This program is the best evidence-informed intervention we have; it was developed by The National Child Traumatic Stress Network—funded by the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Maine teachers and school staff across the state will be able to access PFA free and confidential support from a trained volunteer who can listen and encourage. We can be that volunteer! Interested retirees will receive eight hours of training to learn the process of PFA and how to be a part of this life-changing program for our educators. All training sessions will be online and available at the con-

venience of volunteers

There will be no cost to you, and training and service will not require you to leave your home or expose your or your family to any additional risk. All training is done online.

Joining us in this effort will be the fully Maine-based Maine FrontLine WarmLine based in Portland. For months this organization has been providing PFA to Maine front line workers in healthcare, emergency medical service personnel, and law enforcement officers and all of their families during this pandemic crisis.

Read about the Maine FrontLine WarmLine at <https://www.mainepsych.org/front-line-warm-line-in-the-news/>. You can see what this compassionate entity has



provided for healthcare and emergency workers by googling FrontLine

MaineLine on your search bar.

Supervisors, faculty, and support personnel are always available to volunteers on call. They include the following:

Stephen Andrew, LCSW, LADC, CCS, CGP, storyteller, consultant, trainer, therapist, co-author and Chief Energizing Officer of Health & Training Institute;

Pamela Bokar, MD, MSW, Directorm ECT/Interventional Psychiatry, MMC;

Louise Barnhart, MD, MPH, Faculty, Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency, MaineGeneral Medical Center;

S. Leigh Hasketll, Ph.D., 40 years of private practice in the mental health field and works with the Maine Disability Determination Services and Maine Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team;

Dr. Laurie Cyr-Martel,

Volunteer Opportunity: Help our educators

D.BH., CI-CISM, LCPC, more than 40 years of experience in the field of emergency services, mental health and wellness—currently serving as Clinical Coordinator



Dr. Ed Pontius
Founder

of Student Counseling for the University of New England;

Richard Lewis, MA, MS,LCPC, NCC, NBCCH,23 years in MMC Department of Psychiatry as outpatient Clinical Counselor, residency faculty and clinical supervisor; and a consultant with the Disaster Behavioral Health Agency;

Susan Williamson Pelxotto, MSW LCSW, EMT, an Integrated Primary Care Clinician with Tri-County Mental Health Services with Central Maine Healthcare, 20 years as volunteer with Yarmouth Fire-Rescue, and EMS training officer.

Dr. Ed Pontius, MD, DLFAPA, is the founding director of FrontLine MaineLine and a psychiatric physician in Portland. He has developed innovative clinical teams in the area of anxiety disorders, PTSD, ad mass casualty disaster.

Richard Lewis will facilitate this program's customized two-hour training and all of these professional clinicians will offer ongoing support to volunteers as they begin this amazing journey of volunteerism.

You will have supervision

See FontLine, Page 10

Launching pre-retirement seminars on Zoom

By Robert White, Chairperson Pre-Retirement Committee



Bob White

Due to the mandated restrictions of COVID-19, our pre-retirement seminars will now be held on the online meeting venue Zoom.

While we knew that holding these interactive seminars on Zoom would be different, we were surprised when all three sessions filled up with 100 attendees apiece within a week! Truly remarkable! We've never had our sessions fill up so fast!

The pandemic has led to many other changes in our "normal" presentations. All seminars are accessible statewide.

These plans were put in place in July by a committee consisting of Kay Grindall,

MEA-Retired President; Gary McGrane, MEA-Retired Vice President; Bob White, Pre-Retirement Chair; and Pre-Retirement Committee members Carl Bucciantini, Ed Nunery, and Mike Smart.

Also assisting are Lisa Collins and Erin Noyes, MEA Staff Representatives; David Jones, MainePERS; Sharon Beaulieu, MEA Benefit Trust; and Kurt Schaefer, Horace Mann.

Our committee and presenters have been working hard to reorganize the Pre-Retirement seminars to be as convenient, interactive, and accessible to prospective retirees and meet all COVID-19 assembly guidelines.

The MEA will send an email to all active MEA members informing them of the new Pre-Retirement seminar format along with registration information.

This same information will appear on the MEA and MEA-Retired websites along with an announcement in the September issue of the *Maine Educator*.

With much discussion through email, the committee

made a decision to limit each session to 100 participants.

They will attend both meetings in the session they select. Registration will close two weeks prior to the date selected. Packets of hard copies of the power point presentations will be sent to registrants by mail.

The Zoom meeting link, ID and pass code will be sent on email to the registrants the day before each session that consists of two one-hour meetings. See the information below:

Pre-Retirement Committee members Carl Bucciantini and Ed Nunery will be hosting the sessions representing the MEA-Retired portion of the meetings.

The dates of the February sessions will be announced in the December Clarion. It will be a different environment as we won't have to worry about weather, snowstorms, or travel conditions! Prospective retirees can sit on their couches, sip hot tea, and learn all about the wonderful world of retirement!

As with launching all new programs, we are sure the spring sessions will enable us to implement a few changes to correct any glitches which occurred with the fall sessions.

Thanks to the Committee members for their hard work and many great suggestions to get this huge undertaking off the ground in this world of restrictions and mandates.

Pre-Retirement Fall Schedule Zoom Online Venue: 5 – 6:15 p.m.

SESSION 1

Tuesday, Oct. 13, MEA-Retired, MainePERS

Wednesday, Oct. 14, MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO

SESSION 2

Tuesday, Oct. 27, MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO

Wednesday, October 28, 2020 - MEA-Retired, MainePERS

SESSION 3

Wednesday, Nov. 4, MEA-Retired, MainePERS

Thursday, Nov. 5, MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO

UMS, from Page 1

about to happen.

The various groups of employees are Association Facul-



ties of the University of Maine (AFUM), Associated COLT Staff of the University of Maine (ACSUM), and the University of Maine Professional Staff Association (UMPSA).

Representatives are working with MEA to respond to this threat to your retirement and what will become our retiree insurance benefit at this point.

The UMS position is that we do not represent the retir-

ees and lack standing to protect the benefits you earned while we did represent you. Their position is that they can do with you as they like.

They also want you, and us, to stop complaining and accept how wonderful this change is for us all. Since UMS seeks to deny you a voice, perhaps you may wish to express yourself directly to the System office and your representatives.

The MEA units have each issued demands to bargain and provided ten-day notice. UMS is arguing that they need not bargain with us but have, nevertheless, agreed to meet with us.

If you would like to be added to an email list to re-

ceive information and updates about this issue, please email Sarah Nichols at the MEA office at [\[ols@maineea.org\]\(mailto:ols@maineea.org\) and let her know of which bargaining unit you were a member when you retired.](mailto:snich-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Write for *The Clarion*

We always want to hear from our readers. Surely you must have some suggestions, ideas, concerns, and questions. A goal is to have as many different people write as possible. We like to hear various perspectives and learn what our retired colleagues are doing.

We glean ideas as to opportunities for volunteerism and service in our own communities and schools. Our writers share ideas, suggest activities, and opportunities for involvement.

We also like to hear your opinions and if you agree or disagree with the manner in which we move forward with initiatives, activities, and projects. We have lived through a record-setting six months. What have you learned? What suggestions do you have? Consider writing an article or letter to the editor for *The Clarion*. Let us hear from you.



Now is the time: Become more involved

Consider being a delegate

By Larry Given
Information Coordinator



Larry Given

The opportunity to become actively involved in your MEA-Retired Association is here!!! You are invited to participate in the election process as described in this article below.

The first elections are for four (4) 3-year terms to represent MEA-Retired at the MEA Representative Assembly (MEA-RA). This assembly is usually held in May of each year and most recently held at the Marriott Sable Oaks Hotel in South Portland.

If elected, delegates have opportunities to participate in robust discussions on many topics related to education, retirement, pensions, legislative initiatives and more. It is also a time to connect with colleagues and get to know younger, active educators who have enthusiasm for education.

When elected, you will join seven (7) other retirees in the delegation. You will not be alone. It is very important

to have members step up and say, "I am willing to serve."

If you wish to become involved, but to a lesser degree, there are also nine (9) vacancies available for alternate delegates to this Assembly.

Alternate delegates are called to serve if an elected delegate is unable to attend the assembly. These alternate positions are for varied lengths of terms.

I am a delegate to the MEA RA, and I personally invite you to join us. What is the saying? Nothing ventured, nothing gained. MEA-Retired is very proud of the fact that the organization has been able to fill all delegate seats in recent assemblies.

The second set of elections I will describe is for the four (4) seats as delegates to the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the

NEA Representative Assembly (NEA RA). This election is for one year only.

The next NEA-Retired Annual Meeting will be held on June 29-30, 2021. The NEA RA will be held on July 1-6, 2021. Both events will be held in Denver, Colorado.

Let me be clear: This is truly a committed time to serve your Association. It is an exciting time, an exhausting time, but a truly exhilarating experience!

It is a one-year term and you could very well enjoy it so much you would seek another term another year. There are also four

alternate delegate seats available.

Your retired association will be there to help

you. MEA-Retired will provide educational support and emotional support. It also provides financial support for trans-

portation, lodging and meals as long as you carry out the duties of representing the organization.

Each year the MEA-Retired Executive Committee designates a certain amount of money to support our delegates to the national meetings. For more information please refer to the policy handbook for details or ask a member who has been a delegate.

I am told election materials will be available around the middle of December. A candidate for election must complete a "Form of Intent" and a biographical summary.

These documents are to be submitted to Administrative Assistant Terry Gordon at MEA by the posted deadline. Election information and materials will be published in *The Maine Educator*.

Interested members may also obtain more information on the MEA website (www.mainecea.org) and the MEA-Retired website (www.mearetired.org).



President, from Page 1

for discussion, I asked someone to make a motion to suspend our annual meeting due to a lack of a quorum. Discussion of the motion indicated that they would like to hold the annual meeting on Zoom and in person. Hence, that motion was defeated.

The success of our September Board of Directors meeting—in person and on Zoom encouraged members to continue these options. Members were able to see and hear discussions, motions, and votes.

Our hybrid meeting required our "thinking outside the box" to pull off this fledgling. Faithful members gave up two mornings to meet at the hotel so that we could

practice two "trial runs" to ensure that the system and technology would synchronize and work to its optimum performance.

Similarly, many affiliates have been very creative in reaching out to their members and staying connected through phone calls, cards, and volunteer projects. Many have held their meetings on Zoom to stay connected, conduct business, hear guest speakers, and make plans to complete projects.

We are in uncharted waters but because of you, your zeal, your hard work, and your hearts to serve others even in the midst of the most trying and difficult of circumstances, we continue

to move forward. You never give up!

T. J. Black said, "If we wait until every possible hindrance has been removed before we do our work, we

will never attempt anything."

It is my privilege to work with a group of committed retirees who so readily serve others—in spite of unprecedented hindrances.

MEA-Retired 68th Annual Meeting Best Western Hotel, Waterville, ME Zoom Online Meeting Venue October 15, 2020

9:00 a.m.	Registration, Light Refreshments
9:30 a.m.	Welcome Pledge of Allegiance MEA Greetings 2020 Honorary Membership Award In Memoriam Minutes 2019 Annual Meeting Presentation/Vote on Resolutions Presentation/Vote on Amendments to Bylaws Adjournment
11:30 a.m.	Lunch

Members enjoy benefits of NRTA grant

By Carl Bucciantini, AARP Liaison



Carl Bucciantini

“The Maine Senior College Network (MSCN) extends a warm welcome to 70 Maine Education Association Retired members who recently subscribed to the statewide program of courses,” says Anne Cardale, MSCN Program Director, in Portland.

This enrichment initiative of awarding memberships in MSCN was made possible with grant funds from the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA), a subsidiary of AARP. ...

The project was launched in conjunction with the several goals of the grant, one of which is to also help our members stay informed and explore some activities designed to remain connected in this time of “Stay Safer at Home.”

To that end these registrations will enable members to attend virtual classes regardless from which of the 17 MSCN sites the classes originate.

While living in Skowhegan, Dot Keller of Georgia took many MSCN classes and remembers many of them. She says, “I took a lot of classes at the Senior College. Out of their many varied offerings three stand out for me.

“One was a series of literature classes on William Faulkner taught by Lincoln Ladd. These were fascinating in part because of his personal stories about Faulkner and his extensive knowledge of

his works and background. We certainly got more out of these classes than how to pronounce Yoknapatawpha County!

“Another favorite was a series of classes regarding legal issues for seniors. These ranged from financial to last wishes decisions we all have to make. Lawyers and experts were brought in, and they were very open to taking questions from the class.

“Finally, I thoroughly enjoyed the four Friday morning film series classes. The films were chosen by the class members who then had to introduce them. It was fascinating to watch fellow classmates share a lot of background about their favorite films and why they meant so much to them. I chose to present *Bringing Up Baby* featuring Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant.”

As the AARP liaison to MEA-Retired and chairper-

son of the NRTA Grant Committee, I extend appreciation to members of the committee who spearheaded the project and attended countless meetings to organize details and implement plans

I am so excited to see the overwhelming interest in the MSCN project. I couldn't believe it when we had our first 40 registrants in less than 24 hours! Then, when we expanded to add another 30 signups, they registered in record time!

This has been so rewarding, and we are so pleased to know that many of our members will have access to great entertaining, enriching programs. Utilizing Zoom and other online venues will enable them to register for courses at all 17 sites throughout the state

Serving on the Grant Committee are Ben Paradis, Fort Kent; Kay Grindall, Oakland; and Crystal Ward and Roger Fuller, both of Lewiston.

Great gifts for friends, auctions, birthdays, Christmas!

Maine Educator



Retired



- Long-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$35
- Navy Blue Hats @ \$13
- Red, Iris Blue Tee Shirts @ \$21
- Red, Ultramarine Golf Shirts @ \$29
- Sizes: S, M, L
- Sizes XL & XXL: Add \$2
- Sizes XXXL & XXXXL: Add \$4
- Lapel Pins @ \$10

Name _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Tel. _____ Affiliate _____

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

Questions? Contact Rena Kearney at rkearney@ainop.com or 207-429-9041. Prices include tax and postage/handling.
Make checks payable to MEA-Retired and mail to Rena Kearney, PO Box 377, Mars Hill, ME 04758.
 (Items produced by Cushman's Embroidery, Presque Isle, ME)



MEA Benefits Trust is offering a free wellbeing program with built-in motivations and support for sticking to those healthy habits—like moving more, sleeping better, and stressing less. Join our program today!

Program Highlights

What is your go-to spot for mindfulness, meditation, yoga, and emotional intelligence. Earn points while working on your mental wellbeing.

Nutrition Guide: Got a sweet tooth? Eat whatever's easy? Pick your nutrition profile and we'll serve up healthy tips and great recipes from Zipongo—just for you. Plus, get extra rewards for tracking with MyFitnessPal.

Journeys are daily self-guided courses to help you

build healthy habits. Reaching a personal health goal starts with a single step.

Program Eligibility

Who is eligible for the Virgin Pulse Program? MEA Benefits Trust plan members, their spouses, domestic partners, and dependents ages 18 to 26 years—along with our retirees who receive Medicare Advantage—are eligible for the program.

How do I register for the program? If you are eligible, you may navigate to join.virginpulse.com/MEABT. (Important: Please type complete address—including /MEABT.) and click on the “Click to Start” button.

Fill in the registration information using the email address of your choice, choose a password, and accept the privacy policy and membership agreement. Click “Let's get started” to complete the registration process at

join.virginpulse.com/MEABT.

How do I sign into my account after registering?

You can simply go to member.virginpulse.com to sign into your platform. You can also use the Virgin Pulse app on a mobile device.

Do I need a Fitbit or other activity tracker to participate?

No, you do not need a device to participate in the program—there are numerous options available for participation outside of activity tracking. If you do not have a device, you can use your smartphone to track your activity or use one of the numerous devices and apps that are compatible with Virgin Pulse.

Check out the Devices & Apps page for a comprehensive list of fitness devices and apps that are compatible with Virgin Pulse. You can link as many devices and apps as you wish. The points you earn will be based on the device or app recording the

MEABT: Connecting with others can be fun!

By Jennifer Kent, Exec. Director
MEA Benefits Trust

highest activity.

How do I know what activities I can earn points for?

Once you're on the platform, go to the Rewards menu and click on “How to Earn.” You'll be brought to a list of all the ways that you can earn points.

Where can I go for more information or help?

You can call Virgin Pulse via their U.S. customer service line at 1-855-689-6884 or email meabt.support@virginpulse.com for additional assistance.



Jennifer Kent



MEA's “Extraordinary Session”



Robert Jean

It was my pleasure to be a MEA-Retired delegate at the 92nd Annual MEA RA that was held in May.

It's now August 15, 2020; and the MEA “Extraordinary Session” was underway. This Part 2 of the RA was also conducted on Zoom. It took several minutes for us to reach a quorum, but once that happened it was smooth sailing.

Three of the business items that were passed will potentially strengthen membership in the future.

1. Resolved: that the MEA investigate the feasibility of increasing the number of delegates representing student members at the MEA Representative Assembly. Our Aspiring Educators/Student MEA members have much to contribute as decisions are made that affect the future of public education.

2. Resolved: that the MEA investigate the feasibility of adding a “Community Ally” membership category for friends of public education. Such membership would not include the right

to vote, nor the right to hold office in the Association.

3. Resolved: that the MEA purchase and use the Hustle app to communicate with ESP members across the state. Many ESP do not have access to computers throughout their day and many do not access email or internet at home.

One resolution that passed (D 21) affects retirees---- Resolved: That the MEA believes retirees should be consulted if the local bargaining unit is considering changing health insurance carriers.

Another item of special interest to our group is a change to the Bylaws under the Retired Membership category as follows:

A Retired member who has contracted with an employing school district to work more than thirty (30) days or two hundred forty (240) hours in a membership year will have their Retired membership placed on hold: he/she shall join as an Active member until no longer eligible for Active

By Robert Jean, President
Knox County Retired Educators Association

membership, at which point Retired membership will be restored.

As I sat in my Zoom window, I looked around and saw that here were lots of empty seats. However, I am happy to report that you all should be very proud to know that MEA-Retired has no problem filling its seats! It is an honor to be a delegate to the RA and have a voice in decision-making.

Participating in the RA gives me an understanding of the unique challenges teachers are facing these days. Hopefully, they learn more about issues facing retirees as well. The connections between the two groups (active and retired) are so important because active teachers will be with us someday.

I feel MEA is definitely in good hands. President Grace Leavitt and Vice President Jesse Hargrove, and supporting staff are genuinely interested in supporting MEA-Retired.

Finally, Zoom is pretty neat, and it has certainly enabled groups to meet that would not otherwise gather. However, I can't wait for a live MEA RA next year!



Gary McGrane

After six months into the new year, things have not slowed down at MEA. Work has moved quickly from ongoing needs related to remote learning to a focus on how to best address school in the fall, despite much uncertainty.

All meetings have occurred virtually, with the exception of the MEA Board Retreat. Three Board members attended the retreat via the internet. We never exceeded the maximum allowable numbers while maintaining social distancing.

The MEA continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation as it relates to school openings and in-person instruction. The greatest concern is the health and safety protocols that need to be in place to protect the students, staff and general public.

During this six-month timeframe MEA continues to take action that advances the interests of its members. Due to the pandemic, our aging educational workforce may exacerbate the school opening situation because of increases in early retirements.

We are already seeing more webinars, tele-town

halls, virtual meetings—Zoom and webinars on numerous topics from social justice, CDC guidelines, and gubernatorial requirements.

MEA works with many organizations that have a direct impact on school openings virtually, in-person hybrid—depending on classroom size. Prior to all this the Board was asked to read our governance document. The MEA Virtual Screening & Endorsement Process was held virtually in July.

With that as a backdrop the Board reviewed our ethics policy with our in-house attorney Andrew Mason. Attorney Mason concluded, "Our responsibility is to be supportive of Board decisions or be quiet."

We also had a report from Beth French, our treasurer, and a discussion of our fiduciary responsibilities of duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience. We were all asked to visit the website of SAVI regarding education loan forgiveness.

SAVI is a non-profit, non-governmental agency that does research on various issues and topics of concern; i.e., education, property, etc. They collect data and make it available to entities requesting such information. One-half hour was devoted

to politics and "How To Be An Antiracist" which included the adoption of the affirmative action report and a minority involvement plan.

Robert Bonnelley was appointed to the Board of Judicial Review. His term will expire in 2025.

The Board's annual retreat was held at Poland Springs Resort in Poland. Presentations were made by our officers and Attorney Andrew Mason. Board member Suzen Polk-Hoffses gave updates on her social and racial justice work and reviewed the details of her meeting with Nesrene Griffin on July 30.

President Leavitt reminded us of the virtual meeting on August 13 and the Extraordinary Virtual RA on August 15.

Newly elected NEA Director Rebecca Cole of Windham facilitated the discussion on the book, *How To Be An Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi.

Action Items and other discussions included acceptance of treasurer's report, the Affirmative Action Report, and adoption of the MEA Priorities for 2020-2021. We also approved the Minority Involvement Plan, changes to the Policy Handbook, the affiliation of the

MEA Board Briefings

By Gary McGrane
President-Elect/MEA Board Member

Maine Art Education Association and the Maine Council for the Social Studies as non-governance academic affiliations of the MEA.

The Board discussed revisions for improving and/or updating the MEA Screening and Endorsement process, ways to increase contributions to the MEA Fund for Public Education and the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

Board members were asked to consider attending one or more of the UniServ District meetings, the Great Public School Event, a five-part series on trauma, and a Webinar with two pediatricians.

Grace updated us on her interviews about reopening schools and asked how to best deliver the *Llama* books that are ready for distribution.

It is an honor to serve in this capacity. Thank you.

Volunteer! Day of Caring



SMILE
"Seniors Make It
Look Easy"

Community involvement at its best!

By Janice Cerabona, Chairperson
Community Participation Com.

Residents of Eliot have found the perfect Covid-19 activity that gets them out into the fresh air and allows them to social distance and see their friends and neighbors—and getting some much needed exercise!

Landowners have been helping Eliot Historical Society members and town workers to clean up two very badly neglected cemeteries.

Within five working days

they were able to take down a "jungle" and reveal the stones of two of Eliot's first settlers—the Spinney and Tetherly families. These two cemeteries, some of the oldest in the town, are also the resting places of many veterans.

When Spinney descendant Barry Bernard from Portland, Maine, contacted the Historical Society, he was immediately met with the help he was looking for.

The Eliot Historical Soci-

ety had an "Adopt a Cemetery Program" in place which matches people with old family cemeteries to help protect and preserve these old burial sites.

Rosanne Adams is head of the program and contacted the residents, whose homes back up to the two adjoining cemeteries. Steve Robinson, director of Eliot's Public Works Department, also joined the effort.

The residents were
See Cemeteries, Page 10



By Janice Loughlin, YCREA
Scholarship Committee Chairperson

Nancy Sullivan grew up in Saco—the youngest of three children and the only girl. Her father owned a hardware store in town where Nancy was expected to help out behind the scenes starting at age 7 or 8.

When she was 12 years old, her family moved across Route 1 to a big house with an attached barn, where her father opened a barbecue restaurant. He did all of the cooking over charcoal. Nancy was often found waiting on tables with her little white apron.



Nancy served seven terms in the Maine Legislature—three in the House of Representatives and four in the Senate.

Early on Nancy learned that in a family business, everyone is in it together and has to pitch in—not necessarily for pay, but because all hands are needed to create success.

This “in it together” approach has stuck with her all her life. Where Nancy sees a need, she pitches in with gusto, without expectation of anything in return.

She graduated from Thornton Academy in 1967. While there, she was elected

student council president—though as a girl the odds at that time were stacked against her. Winning the election was a huge source of personal gratification and initiated and cemented her lifelong interest in politics.

Nancy clearly recalls her guidance counselor reviewing her good grades and National Honor Society status during her senior year and suggesting two career paths—nurse or teacher.

She had, in fact, grown up with a Little Golden Book entitled *Nurse Nancy* and she even had a tiny nurse costume her mother had sewn for her.

But though nursing seemed interesting, as someone who could never stand the sight of blood she decided to pursue a career in education and became a teacher.

A teacher who was an early inspiration to Nancy was Miss Elaine White, her seventh grade math teacher. Miss White eventually became an assistant principal under whom Nancy would teach.

Nancy attended Gorham State College—now known as the University of Southern Maine—finishing in just three and one-half years. During her sophomore year she married a fellow teacher.

Nancy’s first job was a transitional first grade teacher in Gorham. She had her son Peter in 1971 and took a six-year hiatus from teaching. Her first marriage ultimately ended in divorce—leaving Nancy with a need for a viable way to support herself.

She decided to become a Tupperware saleslady so that she could create her own hours and work for herself. She became a manager and recruited more than 30 women to her sales team. She topped a list of successful managers in the New England and New York regions and ultimately won a trip to Hawaii.

Nancy would go on to work for Tupperware for years, until an administrator in Biddeford asked her to apply for a job as a middle school remedial math teacher. From there she taught sixth grade English and social studies.

She soon moved on to a position at Saco Middle School, where she taught for 13 years while simultaneously serving in the Maine legislature. Nancy served three terms in the Maine House before winning a Senate seat where she served for four two-year terms.

Her commitment to the Maine Legislature took her out of the classroom each year from January to April. These months were unpaid by the school system. Each year Nancy interviewed and ultimately selected the long-term subs for her classes.

Her son, Peter Chandler, followed in her footsteps and worked eight years for Congressman Mike Michaud. Peter then spent four years as the chief of staff for Con-

gresswoman Debbie Dingell of Michigan.

Nancy became president of the Saco Education Association for four years and was an integral part of contract negotiations.

Upon retirement she



Nancy (center) participated in the national Women’s March for children and free public education while in Colorado in January of 2017. “My friends in Denver and I marched with more than 10,000 others,” says Nancy.

served as president of the York County Retired Educators Association for four years and is currently membership chair and serves on the Investment Committee.

She also served for two years as AARP liaison to MEA-Retired and is a member of the Policy Committee. While president of YCREA, she served on MEA-Retired’s Board of Directors.

She enjoys being part of groups that get things done, where she can help look for compromise to move things forward. Having officially retired from teaching in 2011, Nancy and her husband Paul live on Bear Pond in Hartford, where she is on the Ordinance Committee and volunteers at the local food pantry.

They spend the other six months at their condo in Canon City, Colorado, where she participates in the neighborhood watch committee and recently organized a food drive.

Nancy loves to travel, particularly cruises; but she is absolutely at her best when helping other people and being involved in her community wherever she is.



Nancy and her husband Paul stand in the doorway of their summer home on beautiful Bear Pond in Hartford, Maine.



Maine Education Association Retired 68th Annual Meeting Registration “Happy 200th Birthday, Maine”



—October 15, 2020—

Best Western Hotel, 375 Main St., Waterville, ME (Just off Exit 130)

Meet & Greet at 9 a.m. Meeting begins at 9:30 a.m.

I plan to attend in person.
 I plan to attend on Zoom.
 I plan to attend via telephone at this number: _____

Name _____ Tel. _____ Email _____

Address _____ City/Town _____

State _____ Zip _____ County Affiliate _____ Age 90+ FREE _____

In-Person Registration: \$10—coffee/juice/fruit/Danish AND lunch

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

Registration must be received by October 8.

*Make check payable to MEA-Retired and mail to Pam Partridge, Registrar, 23 Union St., North Anson, ME 04958-7149.
(Legibly written email addresses will receive a confirmation of registration.)*

Questions? Call Rheba Michaud, Convention Coordinator, at 207-564-7494.

Cemeteries, from Page 8

thrilled when they heard about the effort and offered their support and help. Steve Robinson had no hesitation in offering the help of his town crew to do the initial cutting down of the brush and hauling the



Barry Bernard of Portland and Jan Cerabona of Eliot work to clean and reconstruct stones and plots at the Tetherly Spinney Cemetery—one of 150 cemeteries in Eliot.

debris away.

The plan set, they have met one day a week for the last five weeks. They cut down trees, removed invasive brush, pulled up vines and weeds, and raked the ground. An added bonus for all their hard work was the discovery of stones, long forgotten and out of sight under the ground! The brush, now all hauled away, they see ahead a few more work days to cut and pull up the rest of the stubble, rake and then, if there is time, they will start to clean and upright/reset the fallen stones before the snow flies.

During this time of stress and negativity, this cooperative effort, between landowners, the Historical Society and the town, shows what can be done when people cooperate.

Perhaps this activity will inspire other communities to

help to protect the resting places of its earliest citizens while we remain socially distanced during this pandemic.

Front-Line, from Page 3

and support behind you, and you will be joining with other MEA-Retired members who care about Maine’s students, teachers, education staffs, and schools.

Any volunteer who has a cell phone or tablet with the ability to connect on occasion on the internet may access the training. Don’t miss this opportunity to join a support system to help make a difference in the lives of our education personnel.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or you might want to start by learning more, click <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2MLTFBY>.

Your Maine colleagues need you and will appreciate your support. Retirees interested in participating in this program are invited to email kay_grindall@yahoo.com at your earliest convenience.

The annual NEA-Retired Jack Kinnaman Memorial Scholarship was created in memory of the late Jack Kinnaman, Vice President and former Advisory Council member of NEA-Retired.

Jack represented NEA-Retired on the Fund for Children and Public Education and in numerous local, state, and national Association positions—active and retired. He is most fondly remembered as being NEA's *Cat in the Hat*.

Jack cared about students, especially those who need financial assistance. It is his family's wish that the scholarship goes to such students.

Applications must meet the following criteria and be post-marked by April 15, 2021. One scholarship of \$2,000 will be awarded.

Application forms may be accessed at <http://www.nea.org/home/1598.html>. Electronic submission is not permitted.

The scholarship application must be submitted as one package—application, letters of recommendation, and official university/college transcript.

Student applicants must be a member of the NEA Student Program. Questions about the Student Program may be directed to: 202-822-7132. Applicants are asked to do the following:

(1) List the NEA Student

Program activities in which you participate at local, state, and national levels.

(2) Submit a brief paragraph demonstrating financial need and how this scholarship will help you complete a degree in teacher education.

(3) Submit an essay of up to 200 words describing your NEA

Student Program activities on the local, state, and/or national level.

(4) Submit a copy of the most recent transcript with a 2.5 or higher grade point average.

(5) Complete the application and submit with two letters of recommendation: one from a faculty member or NEA Student Program advisor and one from a non-relative.

Mail completed packet by April 15, 2021, to NEA-Retired, Attention: Jack Kinnaman Memorial Scholarship, Room 410, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

MEA-Retired also offers a scholarship in memory of Anne Sheehan, a retired educator, a member of the MEA and MEA-Retired Board of

Directors and MEA Representative Assembly.

Anne was also chairperson of the MEA Government Relations Committee for 15 years, a delegate to the NEA-RA, and a member of the NEA Resolutions Committee. After she passed very suddenly in 2009, her family created a memorial fund honoring her

long-term commitment to education, MEA, and political activities.

This “honor grant” in her memory is for active teachers pursuing further education. Applicants must be full-time educators practicing in Maine and be enrolled in a humanities program leading to a graduate degree in the arts, sciences, or education.

The teacher must demonstrate financial need. Grants may cover expenses incurred in attaining advanced degrees.

Applications were distributed at the September Board meeting or emailed to affiliate presidents. They are also on the MEA and MEA-Retired websites and are available from all affiliate presidents. Further questions may be sent on email to mghw79@gmail.com.

Applications must be submitted by February 1. A presentation will be made at our convention in Augusta on May 6.

MEA-Retired awards affiliates grants up to \$300 from a bequest from Past President Jane Ritter. Monies must be designated by county units to provide special projects with a focus on making a difference for members with special needs.

Projects include provid-

Resources: Sheehan Grant, Kinnaman Scholarship, Ritter



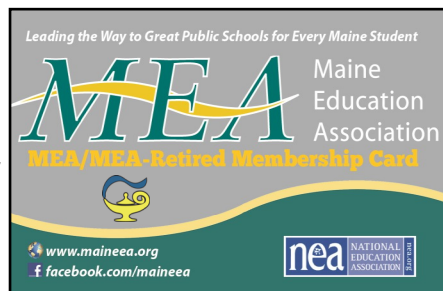
Hugh Keene

ing transportation to enable retired educators to attend affiliate meetings, visiting shut-ins, sending flowers in the hospital, buying greeting cards and postage stamps, etc.

Funds cannot be used to pay for any typical and usual routine association business.

Our Legacy Committee will meet to determine which county affiliates qualify to receive the funds. Ritter grants will be presented to affiliates at our annual convention on May 6.

Ritter applications may be obtained from me and must be submitted by February 1 to me at 179 Cook St., Auburn, 04210.



2021 Convention Booklet Deadlines

February 1: Leadership Award Bios & Photos

March 1: MEA-Retired Officers Committee Chairs' Reports

April 1: Necrology Reports

Necrology Note: Names of all deceased educators who contribute to the education of students—bus drivers, custodians, cooks secretaries, coaches, ed techs, teachers, principals, superintendents
April 1, 2020, thru March 31, 2021

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

MEA-Retired is here for you!

Executive Committee Meeting

October 5, 2020, 9:30 a.m.
Best Western Hotel, Waterville
and Zoom Online Venue

MEA-Retired Annual Meeting

October 15, 2020, 9:30 a.m.
Best Western Hotel, Waterville
and Zoom Online Venue

Board of Directors Meeting

November 2, 2020, 9:30 a.m.
Best Western Hotel, Waterville
and Zoom Online Venue

Executive Committee Meeting

December 7, 2020, 9:30 a.m.
Best Western Hotel, Waterville
and Zoom Online Venue

Questions? Suggestions?
Please contact us today!



Membership Matters: “Homecoming”

By Ben Paradis, President
Aroostook Retired Educators Association



Bzzz! Bzzz!
Bzzz! went my alarm at 3 a.m. at my son Tim’s home in Hampden.

A sliver of street light peered in the window blind enabled me to see the alarm and turn it off.

Tim was already up making coffee in the kitchen, as I headed to the bathroom to shower for the last time for several weeks.

This was the day for my by-pass surgery, and the staff had told me to shower with special antiseptic soap before reporting at the hospital. Only black coffee and clear liquids were to be consumed that morning.

Tim was my designated driver, and we arrived at EMMC for the pre-op preparations. My temperature checked out okay, but for some reason my blood pressure was higher than normal. They still took me in and inserted various tubes into my arms.

Finally the surgeon and anesthesiologist showed up for a ‘chat’ about what they would be doing. Two incisions would be made to remove two veins in my thigh and two more would be for installing around the aneurysm

behind my knee.

Then, I was asked to count backwards from 100: I remember getting to 97 and then waking up to beeping noises. Tim was sitting by my side with a big smile welcoming me back to the world of the living.

I peeked under the sheet to see that my leg had multiple bandages covering the incisions. A nurse came by to take my ‘vitals’ and offer me Tylenol for pain.

The next morning the surgeon said I would be staying for a few days for observation and to allow time for healing to begin.

On the fourth day, I was finally discharged, and Tim then drove me home. Several family members were there to greet us. What a welcomed homecoming! Tim is

allowed to work from home and volunteered to stay the week to help with the dressings and run errands.

The joy of coming back home is similar to what we feel when we choose to join MEA-Retired—spending time with our former colleagues and association members.

MEA-Retired gives us a feeling of belonging and many opportunities to help others. Each county has an affiliate association that promotes socialization and volunteerism among its members.

Becoming a member is easy and not costly. Unified dues are just about \$7 a month and entitle us to discounts and special offers. Most importantly, we help to advocate for educators at the state and national level.

So, please, come home.

**NEA-Retired
Annual Meeting
NEA Representative
Assembly**
6/29–7/6, 2021 – Denver, CO
6/29–7/6, 2022 – Dallas, TX
6/29–7/6, 2023 – Orlando, FL