



THE CLARION

The Newsletter for Retired Educators
Maine Education Association Retired Vol. 134, No. 1

October 2021

From our President: Our time to grow



Gary McGrane

As we inch closer to herd immunity, we need to get more people vaccinated. When this started a year ago, children were minimally affected.

Today it is a different story. With the new Covid-19 variant worries are expanding that include all age groups. Much of my activity has been in person but has been gravitating back to a Zoom format.

What's up with Congress? Congress has two voting

rights bills before it. The "For the People Act" and the "John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021." Both bills passed the House of Representatives in Washington and are now stalled in the US Senate.

Both have the potential of protecting or restoring a level playing field between the two major political parties. I have written letters to our members of Congress seeking their support. Our Senators have both indicated that they would consider a positive

vote if either or both bills get a Senate hearing.

In other political news, our own Maine state legislators passed numerous bills to help our retirees gain more financial security. I mention the political aspects because of efforts by MEA-Retired and MEA. We have worked diligently in improving our member benefits via voting rights to protect our democracy and supporting federal legislation to improve financial well-being.

See President, Page 3

Leadership training slated



Steve Gorrie

MEA-Retired's biennial leadership training is slated for Wednesday, October 27, in person at the Best Western Hotel, 375 Main Street, Waterville, at 8:30

a.m. Keynote speaker is Mr. Stephen Gorrie of Massachusetts, a practicing parliamentarian for the past 16 years.

A native of Andover, Massachusetts, Steve is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians and the American Institute of Parliamentarians. He currently serves as parliamentarian for the Nevada State Education Association, the Norfolk County (MA) Teachers Association, the Massachusetts Coalition of Police, the Massachusetts Community College Council, the Jack and Jill Foundation of Washington, DC, the National Council of Education Support Professionals (NEA), and the National

Council of Higher Education.

He has served on several prominent commissions—the National Commission on Service Learning, the Massachusetts Commission on Time and Learning and the Mass. Education Reform Review Commission.

A frequent presenter of parliamentary and meeting procedures at conferences and workshops, Stephen has also assisted organizations in rewriting and amending their bylaws and rules.

Steve earned a Masters degree in education at Northeastern University where he also earned a Masters Degree in Education. He is a retired Grades 4 – 6 teacher in Winchester, Massachusetts, and past president of the 117,000 member Mass. Teachers Association (MTA).

Mr. Gorrie has represented retired NEA members on the NEA Board of Directors and active and retired members on the MTA Board

of Directors and the MTA Benefits Trust Board of Directors. He is the national Elections Chair for NEA-Retired. He also the Clerk of the Board of Directors and Associate Producer of School Talk, Inc., a weekly television show on education issues.

After lunch is served, the afternoon session will be interactive dealing with a variety of topics relating to meeting protocol—agenda building, administering motions and votes, rules of order, bylaws, and parliamentary procedures.

The last project will be a Jeopardy game reviewing the contents of the program. We will have wrap up, evaluation, and door prizes.

The agenda and registration details are on Page 10. For more information interested members are invited to contact President Gary McGrane. His contact information is listed on Page 2.

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

COLA a welcomed incentive

By Crystal Ward, Chairperson
Legislative Committee

MainePERS Board of Trustees recently adopted the 2021 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). They used the Consumer Price Index-Urban (CPI-U) rate compiled by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics on June 30, 2021, as the basis for COLA for all pension plans to which it applies.

Since the June 30, rate was 5.4 percent, all plans will receive the maximum COLA allowable by law. One of the changes enacted in 2011 was our maximum COLA is set in law at 3 percent. Eligible recipients should have seen the COLA reflected in their September pension payments.

Eligible state, teacher, judicial, and legislative retirement plan retirees receive

See COLA, Page 3

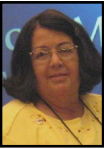
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Legislative Update



By Crystal Ward
Legislative Liaison



Your Social Security retirement or disability benefits can be reduced. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) affects how Social Security calculates your retirement or disability benefit.

If you work for an employer who doesn't withhold Social Security taxes from your salary, such as a Maine public school system or an employer in another country, any retirement or disability pension you are eligible to receive from that work will be greatly reduced.

This provision can affect you when you earn a retirement or disability pension from an employer who didn't withhold Social Security taxes and you qualify for Social Security retirement or disability

benefits from work in other jobs for which you did pay taxes. Many educators fall in this category because they pay into MainePERS and work another job where they paid Social Security.

Social Security benefits are intended to replace only some of a worker's pre-retirement earnings. It bases your benefit on your average monthly earnings adjusted for average wage growth.

We separate your average earnings into three amounts and multiply the amounts using three factors to compute your full Primary Insurance Amount (PIA).

For example, a worker who turns 62 in 2021 finds the first \$996 of average monthly earnings multiplied by 90 percent. Earnings between \$996 and \$6,002 are multiplied by 32 percent. The balance by 15 percent. The sum of the three amounts equals the PIA, which is then decreased or increased depending on whether the worker starts benefits before or after full retirement age of 70 (FRA).

Before 1983, people whose primary job wasn't covered by Social Security had their Social Security benefits calculated as if they were long-term, low-wage workers. They had the advantage of receiving a Social Security benefit representing a higher percentage of their earnings, plus a pension from a job for which they didn't pay Social Security taxes.

Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)

Congress passed the WEP to remove that ad-

vantage. Under the provision, we reduce the 90 percent factor in our formula and phase it in for workers who reached age 62 or became disabled between 1986 and 1989.

For people who reach 62 or became disabled in 1990 or later, we reduce the 90 percent factor to as little as 40 percent. If you have 30 or more years of substantial earnings, we don't reduce the standard 90 percent factor in our formula. If you have 21 to 29 years of substantial earnings, we reduce the 90 percent factor to between 45 and 85 percent.

To see the maximum reduction in your benefit, visit www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/wep.

Government Pension Offset (GPO)

This law affects spouses and widows or widowers. If one earns retirement or disability pension from a federal, state (MainePERS), or a local government based on your own work for which you didn't pay Social Security taxes, Social Security may reduce your benefits by two-thirds of your government pension. In other words, if you receive a monthly civil service pension of \$600, two-thirds of that, or \$400, must be deducted from your Social Security benefits.

Furthermore, if you're eligible for a \$500 spousal, widow, or widower benefit from Social Security, you'll receive only \$100 a month ($\$500 - \$400 = \100).

If two-thirds of your government pension is more than your Social Security benefit, your benefit would be reduced to zero. For example, if a woman worked and earned her own \$800 monthly Social Security benefit, but was also due a \$500 spousal benefit on her husband's record, we couldn't pay that spouse's benefit because her own benefit offsets it.

Before enactment of the GPO, if that same woman were a government employee who didn't pay into Social

Security and earned an \$800 government pension, there was no offset.

For more information contact Social Security anytime or visit the website: www.socialsecurity.gov.

NEA-SUPPORTED BILLS

The bipartisan Social Security Fairness Act (S. 1302/H.R. 82) would fully repeal the GPO and WEP. The House bill has 136 co-sponsors in the House and in the Senate. NEA members' advocacy—more than 20,000 emails to Congress last year alone—played a key role in building this support.

The bipartisan Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act (H.R. 2337) starts to fix problems caused by the WEP, but does not address the GPO. The bill has 142 co-sponsors in the House.

This bill provides that current retirees would receive an extra \$150 a month and future retirees an extra \$75 a month on average. No one would receive less. NEA continues to advocate for full repeal of both the GPO and WEP.

The Clarion is published bimonthly by Maine Education Association Retired. Readers are encouraged to submit feature stories, news articles, notices of events and activities, and opinions of statewide interest by the fifth day of the month preceding publication. Please send articles to kay_grindall@yahoo.com. Questions? Call Kay at 207-512-0027.

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

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NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA RA

June 30—July 6, 2022
Dallas, TX

June 30—July 6, 2023
Orlando, FL

July 1—July 7, 2024
Philadelphia, PA

NOTE: We have six delegate seats at these meetings. Will you consider filling one?



National Education Week
November 15-21

What is the House Call program?

The Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan offers many value-added benefits and programs.

One of these exciting programs is House Calls, which is an in-home or telehealth program that partners you with a healthcare professional to create a personalized care plan and help members achieve improved healthcare based on your unique needs.

The House Calls outreach program is available to MEA Benefits Trust (MEABT) members at no additional cost. So, be sure to take advantage of the benefits it offers when

you are contacted.

What can you expect?

The House Call program focuses on your healthcare needs. This includes a personalized visit from a licensed clinician to your home or virtually through an electronic device (cell phone, tablet, or computer). This visit and followup reports lead to a tailored treatment plan designed for you.

During the visit, the clinician will (1) discuss questions or concerns you may have about your health in a more relaxed setting; (2) provide some basic healthcare screenings; and (3) take notes based on the health visit and record your assessment results.

The results of the health assessment will be shared with you and your doctor.

The House Call program promotes continued care coordination by also assisting with scheduling follow up appointments with your healthcare providers based on recommendations from



the evaluation.

Who may contact you?

If you receive a call from any of the supporting vendors listed below, please know that this is legitimate outreach by your Anthem plan.

Members are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this exciting benefit and all the program offers.

House Call vendors include: Inovalon, Matrix Medical Network, and Signify Health. The House Call program is administered by Inovalon, Matrix Medical Network or Signify Health, independent companies.

Inovalon also uses the following support language: Inovalon is a business associate as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and

Personalized care via the “House Call” program

By Jennifer Kent, Exec. Director
MEA Benefits Trust

Accountability Act (HIPAA) of Anthem Blue Cross.

The program will maintain the confidentiality of all Protected Health Information.

Interested members may obtain more information by sending an email to me at jkent@meabt.org or call me at 207-622-4418, Ext. 2238.



MEA Benefits Trust

President, from Page 1

In other business Bob Jean and I attended a NEA-Retired zoom leadership training. The training consisted of presentations from Stephen Gorrie on Parliamentary procedure. Tom Wellman gave a motivational presentation on membership recruitment. Linda McCray kept us interested when speaking on “How we can effectively Communicate” with others.

NEA-Retired President Borgman rounded out the two-hour workshop with a rousing and informative talk on Volunteerism.

I have attended UniServ Directors Annual Membership meeting across the state, promoting our organization and our pre-retirement seminars. I have been busy with MEA Board meetings and retreats since we last met. Your MEA Board has been meeting with more frequency as I serve on the Policy Committee and participate in the Ad Hoc Members of Color bimonthly meetings.

COLA, from Page 1

the **3 percent COLA** on their retirement benefit up to \$22,947.11. This is the 2021 base and computes a maximum increase of **\$57.37 per month**. The 2021 COLA-base will increase by 3 percent to \$23,635.52. The total amount that will be paid to the approximately 37,100 eligible benefit recipients in these plans during the next 12 months as a result of the 2021 COLA will be approximately \$18,300,000.

You can read more about eligibility requirements and how your plan implements this COLA www.maine.gov. You can also call our office at 800-451-9800 and speak with one of our service representatives.

Great news for eligible retirees

—Health Insurance—

On July 19, 2021, the Governor signed into law a measure that will increase the amount the State pays for the health insurance of qualified retired eligible educators. The new law will increase the state’s share from 45 percent to 55 percent. The law takes effect on October 18, 2021; however, the increase in the state’s share will be retroactive back to July 1, 2021.

Please note, if you are a retiree currently receiving the 45 percent contribution, you do NOT need to take any action to have this change take effect. The MEA Benefits Trust is working closely with Anthem, the State of Maine, and MainePERS to implement this change.

We anticipate that the change will be reflected in your November deduction and Anthem and the State

will coordinate the retroactive payments by the State and subsequent refunds to impacted retirees. It will take time to complete all the refunds associated with the retroactive effective date.

--Dental Insurance--

MEA-Retired offers a group dental plan to members. The open enrollment period for joining Northeast Delta Dental will start on November 1, and end December 31.

Changes in the plan or rates will be effective February 1, 2022.

Interested members may sign up by contacting Lisa Collins at 207-888-3856 or lcollins@mainecea.org during November and December to sign up.

We are unable to sign you up prior to November 1—unless you join MEA-Retired as a new member. The plan will then start on February 1, 2022.

MainePERS announces new director



Dr. Rebecca M. Wyke was recently appointed to serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System (MainePERS).

MainePERS is an inde

pendent agency of the State of Maine, providing pension and other related benefits to over 120,000 members. Members include state employees, public schoolteachers, and employees of more than 300 municipalities and other participating local districts.

Wyke previously served in executive roles for the University of Maine System (UMS), joining the UMS in 2008 as the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and Treasurer to the Board of Trustees.

In 2017, she became the President of the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA), previously serving as the interim president in 2015-

2016. Wyke continues to serve as adjunct faculty for the Public Administration Program at UMA and has taught for the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine.

Prior to joining UMS, Wyke served for nearly six years in Governor Baldacci's Cabinet as the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Wyke also served in the administration of three Maine Secretaries of State, serving as the Chief Deputy Secretary of State for eight years.

In 2020, Governor Janet Mills tapped Wyke to serve on the Governor's Economic Recovery Committee formed in response to the pandemic.

Wyke contributed to the subcommittees on Healthcare, Nonprofits, Child Care and Support Services and the subcommittee on Talent and Workforce.

Wyke currently serves on the Board of the Holocaust & Human Rights Center of Maine. Wyke has previously served on the Board of Directors of the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Augusta Board of Trade, and Dead River Company.

Wyke received a doctorate in education from the University of Pennsylvania. She also holds a Masters of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Maine.

Rebecca lives in Augusta and has three adult children.

It's time to consider being a delegate

By Larry Given
Kennebec Retired Educ. Assoc.



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

The first elections are for three 3-year terms to represent MEA-Retired at the MEA Representative Assembly (MEA-RA). This assembly is usually held in May of each year. Most recently, the meeting was held virtually. When held as an in-person meeting, it is usually 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 become acquainted with younger, active educators.

When elected, you will join ten other retirees in the delegation. 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 vacancies for alternate delegates to this Assembly.

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

I invite you to join other delegates. 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 elec-

tions is for the four seats as delegates to the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA Representative Assembly (NEA-RA). This election is for a one-year tenure.

The Maine retired delegation is directed by President Gary McGrane and Vice President Bob Jean.

The NEA RA will be held on July 2-6, 2022. The NEA-Retired Annual Meeting will precede the NEA RA. The dates will be confirmed in the election materials. Both events will be held in Dallas, Texas.

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 a 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 transportation, 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 MEA-Retired policy handbook for details or ask a member who has been a delegate.

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 the Administrative Assistant at MEA by the posted deadline. Election information and materials will be published in *The Clarion* in December and *The Maine Educator*.

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



When we first began hearing about the covid-19 virus and its spread, many of us thought that this would be over in a few short weeks. Then, we would resume life as we always had. We now know that this was optimistic thinking.

In April 2020, the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) created the national "We Care" grant program for use by the state retired educator associations to reach out and engage with members. Projects included help in addressing isolation, improving communication to keep people more informed, and finding ways to provide ongoing support.

"We Care" grants have been made available to state associations again this year. MEA-Retired was among the first to apply and received grants for the past two years.

Last year we provided information to members, sponsored a Zoom presentation with experts, and offered memberships to Senior College sites. All projects were designed to help our members feel more connected and have access to the most current information available.

Now that we are over a year into the pandemic and with hope on the horizon, our approach to this year's grant

has been one of providing information to help members transition to pre-pandemic activities.

Committee members Jane Conroy, Gary McGrane, Roger Fuller, Kay Grindall, Pamela Partridge, and Rheba Michaud created a variety of ways to help our members as we all emerge from isolation.

Information was sent to members by email or by a U.S. Postal Service mailing. Ideas were shared as to how to transition.

A Zoom panel discussion was held in partnership with AARP Maine, and experts discussed and answered questions dealing with a variety of topics—medical, mental health, state parks, and tourism. We are also working on ways to boost our social media presence.

Additionally, the committee recently decided to offer \$100 to MEA-Retired affiliates to be used to further enhance their efforts in maintaining meaningful connections with members.

At the time of writing, we have received and approved requests from the following affiliates: Franklin, Hancock, Higher Education (HEAR), Kennebec, Mid-Coast, Somerset (SEAR), and Piscataquis.

The creativity of our af

filiates is boundless, as evidenced by a sampling of their proposed activities for which they plan to use the funds:

"Reaching out to members who are ill, homebound, caring for a loved one, or grieving a loss with cards, flowers, a ride and occasionally, a meal at a local eatery."

"Providing those who can no longer attend meetings with a visit, including a lunch or snack or perhaps a puzzle or a plant."

"Reaching out to those members who are caregivers. We propose to support those members with a gift card to provide them card/flowers, a meal or delivery service as an acknowledgement of appreciation of their caregiving role during these times. Upon approval, the local affiliate will match this award as we know \$100 is a small amount to fulfill a great need."

"In order to best serve the members in these days of COVID, we need the capability to consistently connect with our membership remotely. The acquisition of the AV equipment will allow for the affiliate's independence to stream meetings and other events from any location and not be dependent on

"We Care" Grant funds Affiliate projects

By Carl Bucciantini, Chairperson
We Care Grant Committee

venues that provide AV equipment."

"We will buy flowers for those who are ill and unable to come to meetings; take an educator to lunch or bring a lunch to him/her; send cards and write notes of encouragement; visit a shut-in; and take a person for a ride."

"We would reach out with a rose vase or small gift, and a \$5 gift card from Hannaford's, Dunkin Donuts or McDonald's to let them know we are thinking of them. This would involve a personal visit to deliver the gift and gift card."

It's clear that we are a caring community, dedicated to helping others. Our committee is pleased to provide funds for affiliates to continue to support their members.



MEA Board Briefings

Just as this past year has been the most challenging ever for all members of the Maine Education Association, so has it been for the MEA Board of Directors. The Board of Directors met many more times than in any previous year in order to deal with issues related to the pandemic and its effects on our members as they manage the classroom under most incredibly difficult circumstances.

A lot has happened since I last communicated to our retired members. Administrative Assistant Terry Gordon has taken another position outside of MEA. The Dr. Leveque Elementary School in Frenchville was razed by an electrical malfunction and burned to the ground—incomprehensible loss!

A new contract has been negotiated with Maine Education Association Staff Organization (MEASO). This entity represents the staff, Uniserv directors, and their assistants. We have a new logo to be unveiled.

MEA President Grace Leavitt presented information about what we can expect when schools open in September. MEA will advance the premise that we will follow science and the Maine CDC guidance by the time schools open.

Among the many duties and responsibilities, Grace continues to collaborate, monitor and advise members about implementing safe practices, reducing hunger in Maine, and communicating with the Biden administration regarding

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

availability of school funding.

Executive Director Rachelle Johnson met individually with 98 percent of Board members and staff and invited current and potential members to query about their involvement in MEA. She updated the Board on the MEA cellphone app and what it means for members as we direct communications with MEA-Retired.

The "Members Only" section of the MEA website was rolled out in September. I suggest you check it out. Rachelle also noted that Maine is one of eight states that has increased in membership this year.

The usual presentations and updates were heard from various MEA officers, committee chairs, and personnel.

Referendum questions on the November ballot

Secretary of State Shenna Bellows recently announced the order of the three questions on the November 2, 2021, Referendum Election ballot. The order of the questions was determined according to the State of Maine statute.

Question 1 Citizen Initiative

Do you want to ban the construction of high-impact electric transmission lines in the Upper Kennebec Region

and to require the Legislature to approve all other such projects anywhere in Maine, both retroactively to 2020, and to require the Legislature, retroactively to 2014, to approve by a two-thirds vote such projects using public land?

A **YES** vote on this question would (1) block construction of transmission lines defined as “high impact” including the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) and (2) require the state legislature to approve high-impact electric projects.

A **NO** vote on this question would allow NECEC project to continue construction and the state legislature would not be required to approve “high impact” projects.

NECEC is the only organization that covers all of the clean energy market segments in the Northeast, representing the business perspectives of clean energy companies that span the broad spectrum of the clean energy industry—including energy efficiency, demand response, renewable energy, combined heat and power, and energy storage.

representing the business perspectives of clean energy companies that span the broad spectrum of the clean energy industry—including energy efficiency, demand response, renewable energy, combined heat and power, and energy storage.

Question 2 Bond Issue

Do you favor a \$100,000,000 bond issue to build or improve roads, bridges, railroads, airports, transit facilities and ports and make other transportation investments, to be used to leverage an estimated \$253,000,000 in federal and other funds?

Question 3 Constitutional Amendment

Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals

have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to grow, raise, harvest, produce and consume the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being.

Volunteer! Day of Caring



S M I L E
“Seniors Make It
Look Easy”

Great gifts for retired friends, auctions, birthdays, Christmas

Maine Educator



Long-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$33
Short-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$31
Navy Blue Hats @ \$12
Red, Iris Blue Tee Shirts @ \$20
Red, Ultramarine Golf Shirts @ \$28

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)

By Carolyn Horth
Penobscot Valley Senior College



Carolyn Horth

When I retired from teaching, I wanted to remain engaged as a life-long learner. I like to read and do crafts. I like to hike and camp and travel and explore the world around me.

My mother discovered Penobscot Valley Senior College (PVSC) first. She took up bridge by taking a Senior College class.

I decided to join PVSC and enrolled in the spring semester 2020. Well, we all know what happened to in-person classes last March. Cancelled.

The University of Maine closed and Maine students, teachers and staff went home to figure out how to learn and teach “remotely.”

PVSC also adapted, and I was able to take interesting and intriguing classes via Zoom. Although I had used technology in a variety of formats in the classroom for

years, I was totally unfamiliar with Zoom.

Once again, Senior College was there to help me—with a guided learning session on the techniques of using Zoom. They even personalized help by phone or online. My Zoom classmates have been from all over Maine and out of state.

We had interesting discussions, question-and-answer sessions, exchanges of viewpoints, insights, and opinions. Classes were engaging, thought-provoking, and fun—in addition to the convenience of taking classes in the comforts of our own homes.

Furthermore, cancelling classes due to inclement weather or the forecast of a “nor’easter” was non-existent. So, what do you want to do now that summer is over and the long winter evenings loom?

Join a Maine Senior College! You can enrich your life and expand your horizons with lively, no-pressure courses.

Classes in Senior College encompass all kinds of topics. Although the program is called a senior college, it’s not really college. Participants have no prerequisites, no homework, no tests, no requirements, no stress — just learning for fun and stimulation.

Courses usually last two hours and are held weekly for six weeks during the fall and spring semesters. Some fall courses will be conducted on Zoom, while others are planned for in-person meetings.

Instructors are volunteer experts—most often retired teachers. Members enjoy meeting people and getting to know other classmates as much as the contents of the course material.

Another benefit is that one can enroll in courses at any of Maine’s 17 senior colleges. With Zoom, we don’t even have to leave our homes. And, if you’re not familiar with Zoom, you can sign up for a free Zoom introduction, like I did. So no

Do you know about Senior College?

“I didn’t!”

matter where you live, distance is never a hindrance.

Find more information on PVSC at <https://pvsc.myrec.com/info/default.aspx>

To find Senior College nearest you, access the following website: <https://www.maineseniorcollege.org/find-a-senior-college>

Carolyn taught French, Spanish, and social studies in AOS 47—retiring in 2018. She taught skiing at Hermon Mountain and volunteers for winter Special Olympics. She is a member of the Publicity Committee of PVSC. She and her husband Tim live in Orland and have one daughter and nine foreign exchange students.

Pre-Retirement seminars critical to retirement

By Susan Grondin, Chairperson
Pre-Retirement Committee



Pre-retirement seminars will begin in October and will be virtual. Since there are no guidelines for seminars to be held virtually, the Committee drafted language for consideration by the Policy Committee.

Seminar dates are posted on the MEA-Retired website, MEA website, and Facebook. Presenters represent MainePERS,

Membership, from Page 12

Retired has only a portion of eligible retirees as members. Let’s be diligent in reaching out to invite colleagues to become members.

Keeping our retiree benefits and building on what we already have takes all of us doing our part to spread the word. We can make a difference in the lives of others—one member at a time. Please help by inviting other retirees so we can continue to help and advocate for the best retirement possible.

Horace Mann, and MEABenefits Trust. President Gary McGrane will welcome members and Carl Bucciantini and Ed Nunery will host the seminars.

Darrell King of Millinocket has agreed to serve on the Pre-retirement Committee. Lisa Collins, MEA Administrative Assistant, will send active members registration information. They may register with her and she will send seminar materials to the registrants on email

The Committee encourages anyone considering retirement within the next five years to attend a seminar session, which is offered in two consecutive nights. See the

following schedule.

I would ask our retirees to encourage active educators to sign up.

MEA-Retired 2021-2022 Pre-Retirement Schedule

Session 1: Tuesday, October 12—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO; Wednesday, October 13—MainePERS

Session 2: Tuesday, October 26—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO; Wednesday, October 27—MainePERS

Session 3: Tuesday, November 9—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO; Wednesday, November 10—MainePERS

Session 4: Tuesday, January 25—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, and WEP/GPO; Wednesday, January 26—MainePERS

Session 5: Tuesday, February 8—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust and WEP/GPO; Wednesday, February 9—MainePERS

Session 6: Tuesday, February 15—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust, WEP/GPO; Wednesday, February 16—MainePERS

Session 7: Tuesday, March 1—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust and WEP/GPO; Wednesday, March 2—MainePERS

Session 8: Tuesday, March 8—MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust and WEP/GPO; Wednesday, March 9—MainePERS

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



By Jeanne Carney

To be blessed with the gift of friendship of Evelyn Emery is one of the greatest blessings God could give one of His children.

I don't say this lightly because knowing Evelyn is to know a treasure of the most rare kind. She has walked and talked the life of Christ her entire adult life and modeled this life so beautifully for everyone around her.

Growing up in Attleboro, Massachusetts, life was not easy for Evelyn, as her family was split at an early age, which forced her into foster care. Not many people have heard her testimony of this time of her life. It is truly through God's grace that she grew into the amazing woman she is today. Her resilience, hard work, God-given talents and abilities have blessed all of us who know and love her.

Early on, Evelyn knew she wanted to be a teacher. She says, "I was keeping so much

Forever the teacher—even at 97!

in my mind that I wanted to give to others."

Her experiences in the annual summer Vacation Bible School at her church when she was a teenager also pointed her in the direction of teaching.

She graduated from North High School in Worcester, Massachusetts, and completed a three-year Music Program at Providence Bible Institute in Rhode Island.

She graduated from North High School in Worcester, Massachusetts, and completed a three-year Music Program at Providence Bible Institute in Rhode Island. Evelyn came to Houlton on a summer mission project working in Vacation Bible School. It was then that she met her husband Ralph who was from Wypitlock.



Evelyn Emery

After being married in 1948, Evelyn continued her education and received her bachelor's degree from Rick-er College in Houlton. She began her career teaching Grades 1-2 in Wypitlock. She then taught all levels and subjects up through Grade 8—wherever and whenever needed.

From there, she taught several elementary years in Ellsworth—and one year of high school. Then, Evelyn taught Adult Education G.E.D. classes at Region 111 School and Mattanawcook High School in Lincoln.

After retirement, Evelyn was needed again and returned to Ellsworth—finishing her long teaching career at the young age of 77. Along with being a teacher, she also belonged to the PTA and was involved in many

conferences and staff development seminars. She sponsored student special music programs, class trips, and various special events—trips to the beach, picnics, and bicycle trips!

Evelyn says that teaching, "comes from the heart and involves every part of your life—education, emotions, and the ability to reach out to students as they are learning and growing."

She feels that "patience, a listening ear, and compassion" are what make a teacher memorable. She stresses the importance of having "an understanding of problems of students, but encouraging them to apply what they learn in the process of getting to the next level." These philosophies are probably why Evelyn has maintained so many contacts with so many former students after all these years in the classroom.

Evelyn also served as town clerk in Wypitlock for 30 years where she came to know many of her fellow residents.

Evelyn has friends, literally, all around the world. She has spent many summers at Living Waters Campground in Danforth, Maine, volunteering her time in the office, playing the piano at services, and being available to the youth and people of all ages.

These summer experiences have afforded her many close relationships. She has maintained friendships with people across the border in Canada, and from as far away as India! She has associations with hundreds of young people every summer. These include campers and others who serve as staff, counselors, or musical groups through the years.

Many missionaries return year after year and remain in constant touch with Evelyn via Facebook. Every year she makes new friends and continues to be a blessing to all at this facility—even at 97 years old!!

One person who brings a smile to Evelyn's face and warmth to her heart is Chris Gnanakan. She truly loves him like a son. Dr. Chris Gnanakan, from South India, is Professor of Theology and Global Studies at Liberty University and serves as the Director of Leadership Development for Christar.

Chris summarizes Evelyn as a "Saintly Soldier." He says, "Evelyn has always shown me what a saint should look like in her: (1) attitude, (2) actions, and (3) activities."

Lest one thinks Evelyn does not keep up with the times, just check out her Face-

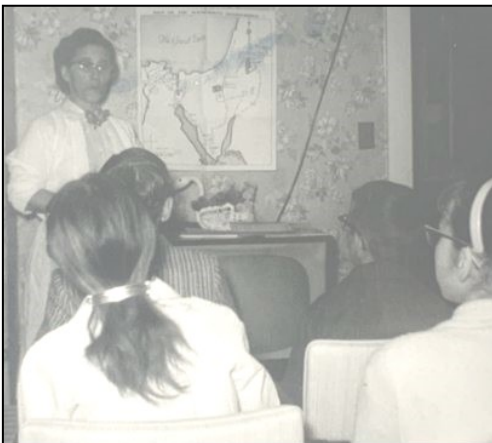


Evelyn was a favorite teacher among many of her students at Ellsworth High School.

book page. You will see how popular and up-to-date she is on the news and daily activities.

She believes in the importance of carrying on a legacy. This is evident as she edu-

See Evelyn on Page 9



Teaching has always been a passion for Evelyn as evidenced by more than 50 years in the classroom.

Donations to Political Action Committee (PAC) go a long way in helping us to advance our causes—both locally and nationally.

We have made some great strides in seeing important legislative victories in the past year. Of course, more battles are on the horizon.

It is not time to rest on our laurels. Our best weapon is to ensure that we always have a healthy PAC fund to support initiatives that enhance our retirees. I am sure you liked the COLA increase in our September pensions.

You will have more in

your monthly pensions when the state begins to pay 55 percent instead of 45 percent of our health insurance premiums. How do you think this happened? It took people lobbying and speaking to legislators in Augusta.

Further, your six delegates to the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA-RA were asked to donate \$200 to PAC as part of the responsibility of representing you. Would you consider donating to MEA-Retired PAC to help share the financial burden on



six of our members?

I will be attending a virtual meeting with PAC chairs from every state very soon. I look forward to the exchange of information and expect to gather new ideas to help our Association.

In the meantime here are a few ways members can help:

1. Send a check designated for PAC. Mail it to MEA-Retired Treasurer Robert Souther, 4 Applewood Lane, Camden, ME 04843.

2. Schedule a collection, strictly for PAC, at one of your local affiliate meetings. We do a great job at collecting for various charities so why not support our own initiatives that directly impact our quality of life.

3. If you receive mileage for MEA-Related events, consider donating a portion to PAC.

4. Send ideas as to how we can increase PAC dona-

Why should we donate to PAC?

By Bob Jean, PAC Captain
MEA-Retired President-Elect

tions.to ve-
gas04861@ ya-
hoo.com or call me
at 207-593-6597.



Let's take a moment to celebrate the gains and commit to maintain the momentum by supporting PAC. Checks may be made payable to MEA-Retired, designated for PAC and mailed to our treasurer, Bob Souther, 4 Applewood Lane, Camden, ME 04843.

Evelyn, from Page 8

scribes teaching as “a very gratifying career. It is not a job; it is training young people to take your place when you retire.”

Evelyn and her late husband Ralph were members of The Gideons International where they were diligent in distributing scriptures in schools, medical facilities, hotels, motels, and other venues. As a widow, she still maintains her Auxiliary membership. I would say that is very forward thinking!

Evelyn has many hobbies—puzzles, knitting, coloring books, and more. She humbly added, “playing the piano” at the end of the list. However, we who have the pleasure of listening to her play soon realize she is a gifted, accomplished pianist.

Dale and Mary Ann Tudor live in Lincoln and attend Maranatha Riverside Church with Evelyn. They love to hear her play. Mary Ann says, “Evelyn is so talented and has so many rhythms, notes, crescendos, harmonies and she never skips a beat! Such a blessing!”

In fact, Mary Ann remembered a special ladies event when Evelyn was asked to read the Christmas story from the Bible. She explained, “We decorated a rocking chair and set up a microphone for

her to use to make it as easy for her as possible.”

She explained further, “After being introduced, Evelyn rose from her chair and declared, ‘I don’t need to go and sit up there. I’ll just stay where I am, and everyone will be able to hear me because I’ll just use my teacher voice!’ And she did.”

Yes, we love Evelyn’s piano playing, but more than that, we love our Evelyn. She is such an inspiration to so many. She is a prayer warrior, a woman of purpose and enormous faith! And, oh yes, she was—and still is—the ever ready teacher.

Evelyn and her late husband had four sons and a daughter. She resides in Lincoln, with her second eldest son, Ray and his wife Nancy. Her son Bruce and wife and daughter Nancy and husband and families live in New York. Her youngest son Alan and his wife live in Houlton. Her oldest son David passed away five and one-half years ago; he is sadly missed by Evelyn and her family. She also has 12 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren.

Jeanne Carney retired from teaching Grade 6 language arts and social studies in Lincoln. She and her husband Michael live in Lincoln and have two grown children and one granddaughter—a second one due in October.

Century Club



Congratulations

Francesca Perazzi, Portland

Send the names of retired educators who have reached this milestone to kay_grindall@yahoo.com

Volunteer!

Day of Caring
How will you help our local schools this year?

Donate to PAC to support our initiatives & delegates

MEA-Retired is here for you!

Executive Committee Meeting
Best Western Hotel & Zoom
375 Main St., Waterville
October 4, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

Board of Directors Meeting
Best Western Hotel & Zoom
375 Main St., Waterville
November 1, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

Executive Committee Meeting
Zoom Online Venue
December 6, 2021 @ 9:30 a.m.

Contact affiliate leaders with ideas and concerns.

Brewer-based Food AND Medicine (FAM) began Solidarity Harvest in 2003 with 50 Thanksgiving meals delivered to laid-off workers in the Bangor area.

Last November, with the pandemic raging and so many out of work, Solidarity Harvest distributed 1,400 meals statewide to households chosen by 80 community partners—unions, religious groups, and social assistance non-profits.

Despite the increase in size, the underlying philosophy remains the same: Solidarity not charity. The premise of charity is that the fortunate few must help the unfortunate many. Solidarity says: We have to help one another, because we're all in this together.

FAM's mission is to organize, educate, and empower workers and our communities to work toward economic and social justice. They liaise with unions, farmers, community groups, small business and faith-based organizations to create solutions and positive change.

The solidarity principle means that FAM works with a

network of Maine farmers and other food producers to buy local food, break it down into household portions, and distribute to needy families. Dozens of volunteers participate in this worthy project by picking up food, breaking it down, and distributing meals to those in need.

But the first task is raising money. Food producers receive a fair price for their harvest. Solidarity Harvest is eligible for price breaks for volume purchases.



Participating households get the fixings for an ample meal: in addition to a turkey (donated by Penquis), ten pounds of

potatoes, five pounds of winter squash, three pounds of carrots, and equivalent amounts of beets, turnips, onions, garlic, cranberries, apples, cider, and butter. Each meal costs an economical \$40.

With the pandemic still going strong, supplemental unemployment benefits expiring, and many tourist-season jobs ending, the need is greater than ever. This year's goal is to provide 1,500 meals.

Raising \$60,000 is not

easy, but FAM does it the old-fashioned way—a dollar at a time.

MEA has been a stalwart and generous supporter at the state level. Could your book group, church group, or MEA-Retired affiliates join them in supporting a meal?

Donations in any amount from individuals or groups are welcomed. You may donate online through the FAM website

(www.foodandmedicine.us/solidarity-harvest/). Or you may send a check, payable to Food AND Medicine, to FAM at 20 Ivers Street, Brewer ME 04412.

In November, FAM will also need volunteers to help with breakdown of food items and delivery of meals. For safety reasons, FAM has decentralized volunteer work and moved some of it outside to various other sites. Check the website for details and locations. Or send an email to FAM's office manager, Melissa Smith at (melissa@foodandmedicine.org).

FAM chose its name as a reminder that no one should have to choose between food or medicine. This year that is an all-too-real choice for many Maine families.

Solidarity Harvest means that 1,500 fewer of them will

Solidarity Harvest provides for those in need

By Lisa Feldman, Member MEA-Retired Higher Ed Affiliate

have to make that choice on Thanksgiving. It's the union way to say: "This may be a bad time, but we can help each other through it."

Lisa Feldman retired from Nottage Library, UMA-Bangor, in 2016. She was a proud member of ACSUM, the statewide MEA local that represents all COLT (Clerical, Office, Laboratory and Technical) workers in the University of Maine System and Cooperative Extension. She lives in Orono.

Thanksgiving recipes wanted

Every year FAM includes a small booklet of recipes with each meal carton. If you'd like to share one, please send it to Melissa Smith at (melissa@foodandmedicine.org) or mail it to Solidarity Harvest, c/o FAM, 20 Ivers Street, Brewer ME 04412. Easy, thrifty ones are best.

Democracy Works Best When We Have Rules

Best Western Plus 375 Main Street Waterville
October 27, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

- 8:30 Registration & Refreshments
- 9:00 Welcome
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Land Acknowledgement
- Introductions
- 9:30 "Smooth Meetings" by Stephen Gorrie
- 11:30 Questions and Answers
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:45 Interactive Activities
- 1:45 Wrap Up/Evaluation/Door Prizes
- 2:00 Adjournment

MEA-Retired Leadership Training Registration

October 27, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Tel. _____

Affiliate _____

Position _____

Deadline for phone call or email registration: October 20
Deadline for mailing the registration: October 17
Bob Jean, Registrar, 18 Hilltop Drive, Rockport, ME 04856
vegas04861@yahoo.com (207) 593-6597

Jack Kinnaman Scholarship

The NEA-Retired Jack Kinnaman Memorial Scholarship was created in memory of Jack Kinnaman, vice president and former Advisory Council member of NEA-Retired. I

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

Jack cared about students, especially those who were financially impacted and needed a helping hand, and it is his family's wish that the scholarships created in Jack's honor go to such students.

Scholarships of \$2,500 will be awarded, and only students who are members of the NEA Aspiring Educator Program are eligible to apply. Information about the NEA Aspiring Educators Program is available here: <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/our-members/aspiring-educators>

The Jack Kinnaman Memorial Scholarship application submission timeline is open from January 1 to April 15—the final deadline for submitting the online application. It is available online at the NEA-Retired and MEA-Retired websites.

All of the following scholarship application items must be submitted together in one package consisting of the com-

pleted application cover page and the following documents:

(1) List of the NEA Aspiring Educators Program activities in which you participate at the local, state, and national level;

(2) Personal essay up to 200 words describing your NEA Aspiring Educators Program involvement on the local, state, and/or national level(s);

(3) paragraph demonstrating financial need, with explanation on how this scholarship will help to complete a degree in teacher education;

(4) a copy of most recent transcript with a GPA of 2.5 or higher;

(5) two letters of recommendation—one from a faculty member or NEA Aspiring Educators Program advisor and one from a non-relative

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

The preferred method of submission is via email to RetiredAnnualMeet-

ing@nea.org.

Packets may also be sent in the mail by April 15, 2022, to National Education Association, Attention: Jack Kinnaman Scholarship, 1201 16th St., NW, Suite 519, Washington, DC 20036.

Sheehan & Ritter Grants

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 are 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

RESOURCES: Sheehan Grant Kinnaman Scholarship Ritter Grants

By Hugh Keene, Chairperson
Legacy Committee

presentation will be made at our convention in Augusta on May 5.

MEA-Retired awards grants to affiliates up to \$300 from a bequest from Past President Jane Ritter. Monies must be designated to projects that make a difference for members with special needs. Projects include providing transportation retired educators to attend affiliate meetings, visiting shut-ins, sending flowers in the hospital, buying greeting cards and postage stamps, etc.

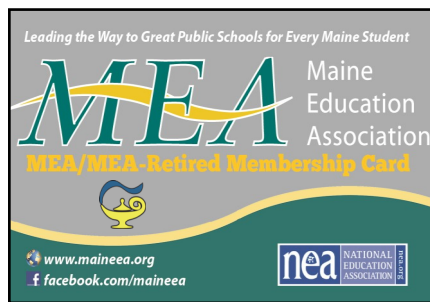
Funds cannot be used to pay for any typical and usual routine association business.

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 5.

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

Ritter Grant applications are distributed to affiliate presidents or vice presidents at the September Board of Directors meeting. Due to the event being held hybrid, some affiliate leaders did not attend and did not receive the applications.

Applications can be emailed upon request by contacting Hugh Keene at mghw79@gmail.com. Feel free to call him at 207-783-3326 if you have further questions.



2022 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, 2021, thru March 31, 2022

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



Membership Matters: Help us help you!

By Lois Kilby-Chesley
Mid-Coast Retired Educators Assoc.

Helping others was the career of every retired educator—regardless of the labels attached to our positions.

That’s what we did. We kept our students safe, made sure they understood the academic content, listened when they needed a friendly ear, gave them emotional support, and spoke up for public education to ensure adequate funding and resources. Helping is forever ingrained in who we are.

MEA-Retired members continue to help our colleagues—active and retired—to ensure that our students and educators have bright futures.

One way we can reach out to active educators is to remind them of the importance of attending our two-night Pre-Retirement Seminars. These

sessions are filled with all the pertinent information necessary for retirement. (See schedule on Page 10.)

Please share these dates with the wider communities to ensure that educators register for a retirement training seminar. The first night presentations are from MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust (insurance), and the effects of WEP/GPO (Social Security adjustments).



The second evening presentation is MainePERS (retirement system).

As an MEA-Retired member, you can help our county affiliates and MEA-Retired build our memberships by encouraging potential retirees to remember the work we do on their behalf after retirement.

*Work in political issues that affect retirees from Pre-K-12 and all categories within the University of Maine system.

*Support pro-education candidates for positions—locally, in Augusta and in Washington, DC.

*Protect retiree insurance benefits as evidenced by our recent two wins: (1) increase of Pre-K-12 state insurance costs from 45 percent to 55 percent and (2) return to health benefits at the University of Maine system. that had been unilaterally changed.

*Meet with others around the state (MEA-Retired Annual Meeting and MEA Representative Assembly) and around the country (NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assem-

bly) to protect and enhance retiree rights.

*Partner with like-minded groups such as AARP.

You can help within your circle of friends by reminding them of the many positive actions in which MEA-Retired engages. Encourage them to join us and take them to our website to download a membership application at <https://mearetired.org/joining>

Membership in MEA-Retired, MEA, and NEA-Retired costs less than 30 cents a day. Leaders and staff work around the clock on your behalf. I often think about what our lives would be like if we didn’t have people helping us in our retirement. A dreadful thought indeed.

As with everything, there is power in numbers. MEA-

See Membership, Page 7