



October 2026

THE CLARION

The Newsletter for Retired Educators
Maine Education Association Retired

Vol.138, No.1

75th MEA-Retired
Annual Meeting
and
Convention
April 29th, 2027
"Happy 75th Birthday
MEA-Retired"

From our President:



Molly Smith

September has arrived and with it comes the beginning of school for many, cooler temperatures, autumn's beautiful array of colors and the excitement of high school, collegiate and professional football.

MEA-Retired also enters its new calendar business year.

This year is very special, as we will be celebrating the 75th Anniversary of our organization, founded in 1952.

Our Convention Committee has been hard at work planning an event that I'm sure will be one to remember.

We will gather on April 29th at the Augusta Civic Center for the Convention & Annual Meeting.

Make sure to attend and join in the birthday celebration.

Beside a business meeting there will be lots of fun activities. That's not to say that doing the business of the organization can't be fun.

Look for registration information and the program of events as time draws nearer. You won't want to miss this one!

I want to keep you the members, at last count all 5,338 of you, informed as to some of the work often done behind

the scenes by your elected Officers, Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Representatives and Trustees, Administrators, Committees, Representative Delegates, and local Affiliates.

Your officers continue to do what officers are tasked to do, providing leadership and support, keeping accurate records, facilitating communication, managing financial concerns, and for some leading committees and being engaged committee members.

We were able to send representatives to attend several national meetings of the NEA-Retired Education Association.

In March, MEA-Retired delegates attended the national retired leadership meeting in Phoenix, AZ.

Again, in June/July we sent six delegates to the Retired Annual Meeting (RAM) in Denver CO.

Then, later after the RAM we joined with the Maine Education Associations delegates to participate in the NEA-Representative Assembly, the annual governance meeting.

A delegation of elected representatives and officers represented the interests of MEA-Retired, and of its members, at the Maine Education Association-Representative Assembly held in South Portland in May.

I encourage you to become a delegate for the NEA-RA and/or the MEA-RA in 2027 by running for a seat in the upcoming election, to be held late winter of 2027.

Look for further information in *The Clarion* as the time

nears. Both are important and interesting experiences that can have a meaningful impact on retirees. Our voice is important!

One of the outcomes of the 2025 MEA-RA is the work of a pilot project involving several of our local MEA-Retired affiliates to improve engagement between our currently active aspiring retirees.

These locals have designed and implemented a program of activities to address areas of need, enhanced communication, and to promote the transition of membership from active to retired status, all important areas if MEA-Retired is going to continue to grow and to maintain our membership numbers. Sadly, we are faced with a yearly natural loss of members.

The work of the ad hoc Association Review Initiative Committee will continue into the new year.

The Committee has done work to achieve an understanding of who we are as an organization, to clarify the beliefs and values of our members and to recommend positive steps forward.

Input was solicited in a variety of methods throughout last year via a general membership survey and at several governance meetings of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors.

On page 8 is a list of the top ten recommendations from the Committee, based on the information it has gathered.

See President, Page 8

As MEA-Retired approaches its 75th year as an association the Convention Committee, along with our historian, will share some of the interesting history we find. We hope to share more in future issues. Enjoy this first installment. Contact us at The Clarion if you have any special memories or interesting tidbits about our history.

MEA-Retired Involved Members

Dr. E. Ward Ireland, the New England Regional Director and Vice-President of the National Retired Teachers' Association addressed 75 retired teachers on October 30, 1952, in the Bangor Public Library.

He stated one objective of a state retired teachers' association was "to offer ways of social contacts for retired teachers." (Soule, Clara, History of Maine Retired Teachers' Association 1952-1958).

Perhaps this was the start of Maine Education-Retired

See History, Page 6

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Short Government Lesson on Political Ads by Crystal Ward— Government Teacher

The election season is full steam ahead!

The amount of money being poured into some of the Maine elections equal hundreds of million dollars. Most of the money is from out of state PAC's and Political party money.

The type of advertising is often negative propaganda and attack ads from most sources. Here are the major propaganda types used:

Bandwagon Propaganda

This type of propaganda creates a sense of isolation for audience members who have not yet joined the cause. It appeals strongly to our sense of conformity and longing to belong to a part of a group.

Testimonial Propaganda

Endorsement by a well-known, well-liked celebrity, political figure, or other entity. This creates a sense of trust

and likeability for the cause because of the person promoting it.

Plain Folks Propaganda

Endorsements by regular, ordinary folks, to show how the policy or idea has helped them. This creates a sense of normalcy about the idea that's being promoted, and shows how its success will fit into everyday life.

Transfer Propaganda

Transfer Propaganda employs techniques that access the audience's preconceived positive feelings about something, and transfers them to the idea being promoted. It relies heavily on symbolism to connect the audience's emotions to the idea.

Name-Calling Propaganda

This method uses names that evoke a negative emotional response such as fear, anger, or annoyance. By comparing the

person or idea with something else that is hated, the audience creates an association between the two in their minds.

Card Stacking Propaganda

Card stacking uses selective information to present only one side of an argument or story. This focus portrays the issue at hand unfairly and many people may be swayed in one direction or another because of incomplete details.

Glittering Generalities Propaganda

Strong loaded words are used to access the positive emotions of the target audience.

Typically, glittering generalities employ the use of slogans, and carefully selected words in the slogans often appeal to the virtues the audience holds dear.

Every political ad will have one of more of these types selected to favor a candidate or harm an opposing candidate.

By law, no political ad is required to be true. They can and do lie!

Be wise, do research, and ask questions. Do not be fooled by professional propagandists.

**Deadlines for
submitting articles for
future issues of *The
Clarion*:**

**December issue
submit by November 5**

**February issue
submit by January 5**

**April issue
submit by March 5**

**Send articles/photos
to:**

vegas04861@yahoo.com

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. Send articles to vegas04861@yahoo.com Questions? Call Bob Jean at 207-593-6597

We pay 70 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 lcol-lins@maineaa.org.

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NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA RA

June 29—July 5, 2027
Indianapolis, IN

June 29—July 5, 2028
Washington, D.C.

June 29—July 5, 2029
Kansas City, MO

For information on how to become a delegate, contact us on our website.

mearetired.org



MEA-Retired meeting schedule

October 5, 9:00 AM
Executive Committee
MEA Headquarters, Augusta

November 2, 9:00 AM
Board of Directors Meeting
Best Western Hotel
Waterville

December 7, 9:00 AM
Executive Committee
MEA Headquarters, Augusta

March 8, 9:00 AM
Executive Committee
MEA Headquarters, Augusta

**Contact your affiliate leaders
with concerns and ideas.**



**The latest legislative news
in only a click away.
Sign up today!**

Members are invited to sign up for all the latest legislative news and updates from MEA Government Relations Director Jan Kosinski. Join today by emailing him at:

jkosinski@maineaa.org

NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly by Bo Zabierek

The National Education Association's Retired Annual Meeting was held in Denver, Colorado at the Hilton Denver City Center on June 30 & July 1st.

We had candidates to elect for various national offices, new business items to consider, scholarships to give out and funds to raise.

President Anita Gibson gavled the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. The four half-day general sessions had a theme and the first morning's session was **"Strengthening the Foundation of NEA -Retired: Protecting our Democracy."**

The second session was **"NEA -Retired: Recognizing our**

Impact."

Candidates spoke and items were auctioned by association leaders who delivered their annual speeches and reports while raising PAC dollars with auction items.

Day two started with elections and then general session three **"Future Focused: Organizing for Power."**

Election results were announced, more fundraising this time for the Kinnaman Scholarships, and all the while the silent auction ended.

The final general session was **"NEA Retired: Member-Driven and Leader Focused."**

The afternoon included speeches from various student

scholarship recipients and active members running for office at the NEA-RA, which would start just two days later.

The 2026 NEA Representative Assembly was held at the Denver Convention Center from July 3rd-7th.

Our full Leadership slate was up for election. NEA President, Becky Pringle, termed out and her daughter kicked off the convention with a touching tribute only a loving daughter could deliver.

Voting on New Business Items began and continued throughout the RA.

Teachers, ESP, and Higher Educators of the Year were all honored.

Candidates gave speeches and new officers were elected. Four Days of Learning sessions were held in the afternoon of the 6th and the morning of the 7th. I choose these sessions to attend:

- America 250 and Beyond: NEA Advancing Civic Literacy
- Legislative Lobbying and Working with Lawmakers
- Lobbying 101-Building Lasting Influence with Federal Lawmakers
- Republican Educators Leadership Lab.

MEA and MEA-Retired delegates joined teams to split and consider NBIs and take positions to present to the daily morning caucuses.

These considerations were compared to leadership positions after breakfast each morning.

Delegates enjoyed an Escape Room experience for Maine night, a July 4th Rockies baseball game, and/or options to attend various themed dinners and award ceremonies available to attending delegates throughout the week..

2026-27 Pre-retirement Seminar Schedule

Fall sessions

October 6– MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust
October 7– MEA-Retired local, MainePERS

October 20– MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust
October 21– MEA-Retired local, MainePERS

November 3– MEA-Retired, MEA Benefits Trust
November 4– MEA-Retired local, MainePERS

***Sessions begin at 5:00 p.m. each night**

***Attendees must be MEA members**

***Early registration is recommended**

To register contact Lisa Collins at :
lcollins@maineea.org

CONGRATULATIONS "Century+ Club"

Frances Bryson, 1/1/1923
Theresa Thibeault, 1/1/1925
Gladys Stokinger, 1/1/1925
Ruth McInnis, 3/14/1925
Elwyn Walkier, 6/17/1925
Lorraine Bowdoin, 1/1/1926
Lucy Deroche, 1/1/1926
Elinor (Geri) Kenneally, 1/29/1926
Margaret Davis, 5/4/1926



A Wonderful Honor! Old Hallowell Day Committee Chooses Citizen of the Year

Mary Moody of Hallowell has been chosen by the Old Hallowell Day Committee as the 2026 Citizen of the Year.

Mary was born in Downeast Maine and has been a resident of Hallowell since 1969.

After getting her degree in education, she was offered teaching jobs in Van Buren and Hallowell.



Mary Moody honored with Citizen of the Year Award by Hallowell Committee

She chose Hallowell and worked at the Stevens School until it closed before going on to work for the Department of Education.

Mary is a lifelong volunteer. She has been a trustee of Row House, Inc., Hallowell's Historical Society, since 1990 and has served terms as a past President and the current Treasurer.

She is a former member of the

Community Development Committee and served on the School Board and Christmas in Old Hallowell Committee.

She advocates for the disabled, works on accessible parking in Hallowell, is involved with the Levinson Center in Bangor, and is current President of ARCH Beta Housing.

She has managed numerous charitable public suppers for Sacred Heart Church, Row House, the Hubbard Free Library, and Old Hallowell Day.

She is a member of Kennebec Retired Educators Association. She is a member of Gamma Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International.

Mary describes Hallowell as a welcoming community where people are friendly and willing to help as needed.

She felt immediately embraced by the community when she moved here in her early twenties.

Hallowell is very lucky that Mary has chosen to spend her life here. The Old Hallowell Day Committee is pleased to name Mary Moody our Citizen of the Year.

Her late husband Walter taught social studies, math, and science for 36 years at Gardiner Area Middle School. They have two children.

Congratulations on receiving this special honor, Mary!

Kennebec Retired Educators Association Day of Caring Project– 2026

Ten Kennebec County Retired Educators Association members joined together to help teachers at the James H. Bean School in Sidney prepare for the first day of school in August. The school is home to students in Pre-k to Grade 5.



Roberta Drummond and Elizabeth Doyon cutting for the cause.

They worked on bulletin boards, bus tags, room readiness, photocopying, collating, laminating posters, and clothes sorting. KREA supplied lunch and a great time of fellowship with fellow teachers.



KREA members take time to share lunch with school staff.

“It was great working with the teachers, and a bonus was that this school was air conditioned,” said Kathie Choate of Augusta.

KREA has participated in the annual Day of Caring projects in Kennebec County for 15 years. Kathie has organized these projects for 14 years.

Workers for the day included Phil and Linda Sprague, Larry Given, Marc Poulin, Carl Daiker, Marshalyn Baker, Bonnie Nielson, Elizabeth Doyon, Roberta Drummond, and Kathie Choate.

**More affiliate projects will be featured in December.
Send articles/photos to vegas04861@yahoo.com**

**Invite a retiree to
join MEA-Retired!**

**Direct them to our
website @**

mearetired.org

Thank you!!

Yearly Dues

MEA- \$31

MEA-Retired- \$21

NEA-Retired- \$35

**(\$7.25 out of your
monthly paycheck)**

AARP Top 50+ Voter Concerns

by Joyce Bucciantini

AARP Community Outreach Coordinator

The November mid-term elections are rapidly approaching and voters will soon have a chance to cast their votes.

Maine has a very high voter turnout rate. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, voters over age 65 vote at higher rates than their younger counterparts.

Maine voters age 50+ showed up to vote at higher rates, casting 59.3% of all votes in the 2024 general election.

Maine's 50+ voters are not shy about making their voices heard at the ballot box and their votes make a difference.

Last December AARP asked older voters to name "the biggest issue facing the country today." Reminiscent of the

financial concerns from the early 1990s, today's 50+ voters were most concerned about pocket book issues.

Both a December 2025 poll <https://www.aarp.org/government-elections/whats-motivating-oldervoters/> and more current AARP polling

<https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/voter-research/politics/2026-midterm-election-polls/> identified "cost of living" as the biggest issue facing our country.

Voters were most concerned about the increased cost of every day essentials.

Increasing grocery, gas, and utility prices were top concerns.

Survey participants also listed

the cost of health care, prescription drugs, taxes, and housing as major issues in the upcoming elections.

Talk to just about anybody in Maine and odds are they will have similar concerns.

Protecting Social Security and Medicare remain important issues for 50+ voters as well.

We all pay into these programs during our working careers and we expect them to be there for us when we need them,

The recently repealed Social Security offset allows retired educators and state employees to receive the full amount of accrued Social Security benefits.

Any cuts to Social Security or Medicare would certainly negatively impact older Mainers' household budgets.

Living expenses were not the only issues reflected in the AARP polls.

Threats to democracy, political divisions, immigration, and

jobs were important issues for voters of all ages with older voters giving more weight to these concerns than younger voters.

John Hishta, AARP senior vice president of campaigns summed up the findings by observing, "The economy drives everything."

As always, check out the AARP website for upcoming AARP events including our educational voting workshops with the Secretary of State in October.

I also urge you to visit www.aarp.org/votes/ME/ which is our voter engagement hub, where you'll find helpful information about our priority issues and other nonpartisan voting resources for Maine voters.



2027 Convention Booklet Necrology

Please keep track throughout the next 12 months -
Names of all

deceased personnel who contribute to the *education* of students—bus drivers, custodians, cooks, secretaries, coaches, ed techs, teachers, principals, crossing guards, superintendents, etc. Many of these education personnel do not belong to an affiliate nor to MEA-Retired, but their names are included in our convention booklet.

Dates of deceased for our 2027 booklet:
March 1, 2026, thru March 1, 2027

Please send names throughout the year to
kay_grindall@yahoo.com
Mail to 23 Hilltop Drive Oakland 04963

Thank you for helping us remember and memorialize our friends and colleagues!

Partnership for Caring MEA and MEA-Retired are here for you!

Retired educators remain eligible to participate in the "Partnership for Caring" financial assistance program.

The criteria reads: "**MEA will assist local affiliates to meet exigent expenses of an unpredictable nature incurred by members or their immediate families. Specifically, the MEA will match, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$1,500 in contributions raised by a local affiliate or combinations of affiliates to meet such expenses.**"

When an affiliate raises funds to assist a needy unified member to help with catastrophic circumstances (fire, flood, serious health diagnoses, etc.), MEA will match the raised amount up to \$1,500.

An application can be found on our MEA-Retired website and Facebook page.

History, from Page 1

retirees volunteering in their communities.

At the October 28, 1954 meeting of more than 100 members held at the Parish House of the First Parish Church, Portland, the minutes reflect MEA Retired members “giving their time in community service and work for others.” (Soule, Clara, History of Maine Retired Teachers’ Association 1952-1958)

Thirty years later in 1987, the Community Participation report in the March issue of the Clarion stated “18.1% or approximately 1/5 of the membership show wide-spread activities of retired teachers in their communities.

Working within their churches leads the list of activities. A close second is helping or visiting in hospitals, nursing homes or with shut ins. Third is helping in various civic, fraternal, and service organizations.”

Members volunteered a total of 74,003 hours in 1987. The Community Participation Committee Chairperson’s report submitted by Martha R. Curtis on October 3, 1991, stated a total of 162,648 volunteer hours from all 16 counties.

As we started the next decade, MEA Retired Retirees in 2000, volunteered 144,790 hours worth a total of \$1,800,000.

In the fall of 2009, a new program called “Seniors Do Something” was introduced to increase physical activity among the members.

One year later, 99,000 hours were reported by retirees. The number of hours continues to increase each year as our members continue to report physical and volunteer hours to their Affiliate contact person in April.

In 2010 the MEA-Retired Day of Caring was established. The Day of Caring initiative

is based on AARP’s National Day of Service and NEA’s Outreach to Teach. It was introduced by Jan Cerabona of York.

The purpose was to “provide some tender, loving care for one school in each of our 16 counties.” (Cerabona, Jan.)

As a result, on or around September 11, affiliates are encouraged to do something special for a school in their area.

Past and present projects include planting flowers, providing back packs, collecting school supplies, donating a book for the school library, updating school playground equipment, photocopying, mounting bulletin boards, and donating funds for musical instruments.

MEA-Retired matches an affiliate’s contribution of \$100 for Day of Caring projects.

A picture of members participating in the activity, a receipt indicating \$100 was spent by the affiliate, and a summary of the project is required to receive matching funds. The form is on the MEA-Retired website.

In 2027, MEA-Retired retirees will have embraced our motto “promoting the economic, professional, and social welfare of retired educators” for 75 years.

Affiliates will continue to support our educational communities and to encourage physical activity for our members.

As we look back and forward, remember the acronym presented by Jan Cerabona in 2012:

S.M.I.L.E.

(Seniors Make It Look Easy)

**2026 U.S. Elections
November 3, 2026
Every vote matters!**

MEA-Retired AARP Liaison Report to the MEA-Retired Board of Directors by Pam Partridge

I recently attended the AARP Maine Volunteer Voter Engagement Training.

We learned about a variety of ways to reach and help empower Mainers age 50+ to make their voices heard in the democratic process.

We will be sharing information about the key issues to AARP, encouraging civic participation, and building positive, nonpartisan relationships with the candidates for office.

Our voices matter because our age group (50+) represents the largest voting block.*

We need to remind the candidates of that fact and that they have a responsibility to recognize and address the challenges we face, like caring for our loved ones, affordable housing and protecting social security.

Gary McGrane and I also recently attended a NRTA ZOOM meeting.

NRTA stands for the National Retired Teacher Association, which is the educator wing of AARP.

NRTA would like to know more about the issues critical to the Maine educator retiree community.

I had shared some details about our Maine retiree COLA history in the ZOOM chat while we met.

As a result, I met with Ari Stock, an AARP Planning & Performance Analyst on Monday, 7/27, to discuss pension (and COLA) related issues.

He gathers stories and information about retired educators living on a pension and shares their perspectives and experiences with the NRTA leadership.

During the month of July, AARP sponsored an event, “Get the Scoop on Social Security” in 3 locations, offering attendees a free ice cream cone along with the latest information about the Social Security program.

Coffee Talks and other free to the public events continue state-wide and you can get the dates and locations through the MEA-Retired Homepage link. [https:// www.aarp.org/states/main/](https://www.aarp.org/states/main/)

During the month of August, small regional groups of AARP volunteers met to plan events and ways to reach Maine voters about the importance of having their voices heard through their vote.

Keep your eyes open for commercials, interviews, letters to the editor, and tables with voter/voting information at public events.

*% of all Maine 2024 General Election Voters
65+ **33.4%**
50-64 **25.9%**
Under 50 **40.7%**

FREE COFFEE SOCIALS Sponsored by AARP

[Bangor](#)

[Third Friday of the month
8:30-10:00](#)

[Dysart’s– Bangor](#)

[Lewiston/Auburn](#)

[Last Thursday of the month
8:00-9:30](#)

[Auburn Senior Community Ctr.
Yarmouth](#)

[First Friday of the month
10:00-11:30](#)

[Yarmouth Community Center](#)

[Naples](#)

[Second Friday of the month
10:00-11:00](#)

[Singer Center \(Grange\)](#)

[Fort Kent](#)

[Second Wednesday of the month
2:30-3:30](#)

[Fort Kent Public Library](#)

Maine AFL-CIO 2026 Summer Conference

Review by Faith Campbell, MEA-Retired Delegate

Thank you Maine Education Association-Retired Executive Committee members for the honor of selecting me as a delegate to this year's Maine AFL-CIO Summer Labor Conference.

Your selection provided me a tremendous opportunity to enhance knowledge, participate in fulfilling discussions, meet wonderful people and reconnect with existing acquaintances.

Most MEA-Retired members know first hand the effectiveness of organized labor within the education professions. I feel that sometimes we overlook the contributions and concerns of our brothers and sisters in the affiliated unions.

I was reminded of the universality of organized labor in a session led by Rev. Mike Seavey. He was able to pull together common faith based threads which align to union goals of decent wages, health care and retirement security and the underlying foundation of providing a path to human dignity.

I felt the intensity of universality throughout the conference.

Woosik Kim recounted how his Metal Workers Union joined with other unions and students to help rescind a martial law decree in his home country of South Korea in 2023 and 2024.

Their continued efforts convinced the Republic of Korea's National Assembly to impeach the President who had put martial law in place. He informed

us that there have been similar union actions resulting in major government reforms since the 1940s.

The last major action being in 1987 known as the Great Worker's Struggle.

He claims this history connects all workers and leads to ongoing success. Reminding us that our work should not be a stop gap in order to be effective.

SEIU California State Council President David Huerta presented his union's actions in protecting the rights of immigrant workers.

He was arrested in 2025 when federal agents said he was obstructing justice as they attempted to enter a business suspected of immigration law violations.

These charges were dropped on July 27, 2026. He cited the fortitude that immigrant workers bring to organized labor. He mentioned their experiences of hardship of war and living under authoritarian leadership.

They bring a heightened feeling of solidarity when fighting for a common cause.

His words were amply demonstrated by Maine State Nursing Association members who had to temporarily leave the conference to work for the release of Debora Kapisha.

Debora is a nurse at Maine Medical Center legally authorized to work in the United States pending an asylum hearing. She was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) during the weekend of August 1 and 2, 2026.

It was feared that she had been removed to a distant location. At the August 5th press conference and demonstration, it was learned that Debora was in Boston.

On August 6th, she was released from ICE custody largely attributed to the MSNA's and numerous other organized labor groups' efforts. She is currently at her Maine home.

There were several break out sessions providing information and resources on protecting workers from excessive government action.

The underlying theme was to be prepared and ready for action. You need to build your base and have effective communication networks.

Candidates Hannah Pingree and Troy Jackson addressed the conference attendees. Both stressed their and their family work histories, strong organized labor ties and commitments to respectable wage, affordable health care and retirement security.

They, too, urged that solidarity and continued awareness and action are necessary to protect employees' rights.

Shortly after the candidates left, a discussion broke out on what we could do if for some reason an announcement was made to suspend elections. It was a lively and hard discussion as we queried "What we can do?" versus "What we are willing to do?"

A definite united answer was not obtained but I feel many attendees had the chance to self-reflect with an increased awareness.

One of our greatest joys as educators is the renewed hope afforded to us when interacting with students. Many of the conference attendees and facilitators were graduate students from a number of University of Maine system campuses.

I was awe struck listening to

their commitments to their disciplines through which they are dedicated to human social, economic and political advancement.

I was astounded especially by the work being completed by the Orono campuses Bureau of Labor Education and the University of Southern Maine's Scontras Center for Labor and Community Education.

Once again, thank you for the honor of selecting me to be your delegate to this year's Maine AFL-CIO Summer Labor Conference.

I am willing to provide further information or contacts for any questions and concerns you may have.

**Respectfully submitted,
Faith Campbell,
MEA-Retired Delegate to the
AFL-CIO Labor Conference**

Day of Caring 2026-27

**All MEA-Retired affiliates
are invited to apply for
Day of Caring grants.
Application forms may
be found on the website
[@mearetired.org](https://mearetired.org)**

**Return forms prior to
October 15, 2026
Email to Susan Grondin
scgrondin@hotmail.com
Or by mail to:
47 Hilltop Ave.
Lewiston, ME 04240**

**Upon completion project
descriptions and photos
can be sent to:
vegas04861@yahoo.com
to be shared in the
December *Clarion*.**

President, from Page 1

- * Inform “new” legislators of COLA calculations, healthcare costs and pension issues;
- * Recruit new members to be unified members;
- * Make distinctions between MEA-Retired and MAR (Maine Association of Retirees);
- * Work toward retirement security, health and safety, and manage the costs of insurance (Anthem and Medicare);
- * Send more frequent brief emails to update members of top priority issues as changes occur;
- * Encourage lobbying.;
- * Address the challenges of the increasing cost of health care;
- * Confront political issues and the timeliness of communications;
- * Promote legislative advocacy by encouraging members to subscribe to Under the Dome;
- * Foster digital communications, but also address the needs of those who rely on paper communications.

Other committees have been hard at work as well.

The Health Care Committee membership was reconstituted and became active, soliciting your opinions, gaining insights to your needs and experiences

through a general membership survey.

The Legislative Committee remains active and vigilant as we enter a new year of legislation and mid-term elections that could have great impact on the lives of our students, their families, our active educator colleagues, and the welfare of retirees.

Rights need to be protected and dignity should be respected.

The PAC Committee actively encourages donation to support political action and candidates who are friends of Public Education.

Please consider a recurring donation to help in this work. **(No member’s dues are used in PAC activities)**

Our Historian along with a few volunteers has done wonderful work in organizing the archived material housed at the Maine State Library.

An effort to update the history of the MEA-Retired Organization is underway, in time for our birthday celebration next April.

The Pre-Retirement Committee is readying seminars again to inform and support active educators whose retirement is eminent or for those who are preparing a few years out.

A new Social Security component has been added to the sem-

inars, in special consideration of the recent passage of the Social Security Fairness Act that continues to improve the lives of retirees.

The Communications Committee’s activities reach in many directions, from the publishing of this *Clarion*, managing the website (check it out at mearetired.org), our Facebook page (yes, we have one) and keeping members of the Association and the community up-to-date as to our activities.

There is one last committee I would like to focus on, the ad hoc Standards of Affiliation Committee.

This is a relatively new committee just formed in April of this year.

Through the work of the Association Review Initiative Committee and in examining our governance documents, it was discovered that MEA-Retired and its 16 local affiliates need to enter into a process of review to bring them into alignment with the standards (rules) that we agreed to abide by when we enter into affiliation with the Maine Education Association and the National Education Association-Retired.

This is a necessary and healthy activity for any organization to periodically undertake.

A couple effected areas have

to do with membership and elections.

I will work to keep you informed as to this work, in future publications of The *Clarion*.

For an understanding what the 7 Standards of Affiliation are and why they are important, please refer to the article in this *Clarion* written about the Standards of Affiliation by Committee Chair, Grace Leavitt.

I have not listed nor commented on each of our hard working 13 standing committees and 3 current ad hoc committees in this column.

It is my intention to encourage a few committees to share information about their work and responsibilities, in future *Clarion* publications. This way you the members can learn more about the work of the Association.

Please enjoy this time of year to its fullest and accept my best wishes for your good health and that of your loved ones.

It is a valued commodity as we move through the years.

**In Solidarity, Molly A Smith
Maine Education Association
Retired-President**

Observations from the Communications Committee

Web Administrator

I began in my role as the administrator of the website on June 1. For nearly the last year (358 days) 9,627 have visited the website for an average of 24 visits per day.

My general goals since I started have been to stay as current as possible with updates and the maintain the level of information that will be helpful to members.

One new feature I have been using is to include a brief, gen-

eral update article to inform about most new changes that have been made near the top of the home page.

Lastly, I have been trying to eliminate redundancies since we are limited to a certain number of sections under each category. ~Jim Thornton

Facebook Administrator

The Facebook Page continues its work by posting relevant articles from a variety of sources.

The articles are of interest to retired teachers. The number of readers has increased to over 200. We continue to sponsor groups for the affiliates and wish that more affiliates would

be in contact with me to advance the ideas of MEA-Retired and the local affiliates.

We could certainly be using this great resource more effectively. ~Roget Fuller

Zoom Administrator

We are getting a great deal of use on our Zoom platform. Several groups use Zoom regularly for their meetings.

In the past year the following committees have made use of Zoom: ARI, Communications, Convention, HealthCare, Higher Education, Historian, Pre-Retirement, and Special Projects.

In addition, officer meetings and all of our pre retirement

sessions for active educators are held on Zoom. ~Bob Jean

Information Coordinator
The information coordinator plays a vital role in connecting us all.

It is very important for the membership to respond to emails/requests from Barbara Hammond in order for her to update important documents, handbook information, and RSVPs for meetings. Thank you to all who are prompt responding to these requests.

We have lots of resources available to our members. We will continue to review, make appropriate changes, and promote our resources.

STANDARDS OF AFFILIATION

by Grace Leavitt, Chair, Standards of Affiliation ad hoc committee

As you know, MEA-Retired is affiliated with NEA-Retired and MEA.

This affiliation provides a wide variety of resources and supports to our members, everything from lobbying efforts to improve the lives of retirees, to grants to support initiatives, to a number of discounts on services and products through NEA Member Benefits, to name a few.

There are six requirements—"Standards of Affiliation"—in order to ensure our Association maintains these connections and stays strong.

The Standards are as follows: 1) following the principle of one person/one vote for representation on our governing

bodies; 2) taking legally permissible steps to achieve ethnic-minority representation and proportional representation by education position on our governing bodies; 3) conducting elections with open nominations and a secret ballot; 4) requiring membership in the local (MEA-Retired), state (MEA), and national associations (NEA-Retired) (referred to as 'unified membership'); 5) having the same membership year as MEA and NEA; and 6) providing a due process hearing if a member is to be censured, suspended, or expelled.

An ad hoc committee was formed to review our Bylaws and consider what amendments may help to clarify that we are

maintaining these standards.

Any amendments that are proposed will be presented to the membership for their consideration at the annual meeting this spring.

There will also be assistance provided to our affiliates (county and higher ed) to review their documents for the same purpose.

Especially given the protections for members' rights and the responsibilities of union officers as contained in the federal Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA), it is important that we keep our union strong at all levels of our Association.

More details on the bylaws of MEA-Retired, NEA-Retired, and MEA are on the corresponding websites.

A summary of LMRDA can be found on the NEA website.

Pre-Retirement News from Bo Zabierek

"It has been an honor to chair this committee for the past four years and I look forward to continuing to serve MEA-Retired in a new capacity."

~Bo Zabierek~

Julie Gomez, our President-elect, will chair the committee and continue to host MainePERS sessions.

Jim Thornton will finish out the year hosting Anthem sessions, with Karla Bracy as team back up.

Julie will be reaching out to members to fill the fourth slot on the committee.

The Tuesday session lineup:

Jim Thornton-host
Molly Smith—Unified Membership
Sharon Beaulieu-Anthem Medicare Advantage Plan information

Wednesday sessions include:

Julie Gomez-host
Short presentation about local affiliates

Kimberly Bumford-MainePERS presentation

Order your MEA-Retired Merchandise Today!!

Maine Educator



Retired



Long-sleeved Denim Shirts @ \$47
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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)

MEABT Trustee Report by Faith Campbell

Here we are in the midst of brilliant autumn days. I find the air particularly refreshing at this time of year. I hope that all of you have a chance to enjoy it each and every day.

I remember how much I enjoyed the fall season with my students. There was always something to look forward to celebrating. I took full advantage of my social studies curriculum in justifying these activities as being standards related to the consternation of several administrators.

The Maine Education Association Board of Trustees (MEABT) met on August 18, 2026. This day-long meeting focused upon setting the Board of Trustees (BOT) agenda for the next twelve to twenty four months.

The Trustees heard presentations from legal counsel Verrill, insurance broker Cross, investment manager HM Payson and insurer Anthem BCBS in addition to MEABT personnel.

The Trustees meet 9 to 10 times a year. Our next scheduled meeting is on October 15, 2026. MEABT Executive Director Jennifer Kent detailed work completed thus far on the Medicare Advantage renewal for 2027.

At this time, it appears that premium changes should be minimal for the 2027 calendar year. However, regulatory changes affecting the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services are a concern for 2028.

The MEABT staff is monitoring these concerns and will provide updates to the MEABT membership when new information becomes available. You can find further information by visiting www.cms.gov. This link will take you to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services website.

Most Trustees will be attending the International Foundation for Employee Benefits Plans annual convention in October.

We expect to be provided with in-depth analysis of the changes and their implications to our plan.

I expect to be able to share this information in the *Clarion's* December issue.

The BOT reviewed and reaffirmed the Trust's guiding principles on August 18th. They are as follows: **A.** Ensure the existence of the MEABT health plan for plan participants **B.** Offer the highest level of health care and other benefits at a competitive cost. **C.** Protect the integrity of our modified statewide risk pool. **D.** Ensure that health care consumer education continues to be a significant component of the MEABT health plan.

There have been some changes to the Board of Trustees over the summer months. Regrettably, Lynn Snow has resigned from the Board due to health concerns. Lynn has been a strong education advocate for a number of years. Her presence is already missed by the BOT and MEABT staff.

The current BOT is comprised of the following individuals Hal Perry, President

Patty Scully, Vice President
Lindsey Dos Santos, Secretary
Faith Campbell, Liaison to MEA Retired.

Other members include:
Nyiesha Gradney de Lima,
Beth French, MEA Vice President
Maurice Langlois, Monica Malcolmson, Bobbi Thibodeau, and Ken Williams.

It is my privilege to serve with these fine individuals as well as to serve you, our members.

Respectfully Submitted:
Faith Campbell MEABT Trustee.

Some Special Programs: Scholarships and Grants

MEA, MEA-Retired and NEA-Retired have some wonderful programs that you may have already heard about but it bears repeating.

Ritter Grant

Local affiliates have the opportunity to apply for our Ritter Grant on a yearly basis.

The Legacy Committee is charged with overseeing grant applications and manages the funds given by members or in memory of deceased members.

The grant awards are used in many ways.

Monies from the Ritter Grant provide up to \$500 each year to enhance the MEA-Retired Annual Meeting by finding speakers and/or programs.

The Ritter Grant also provides funding for the Leadership Awards given out at the Annual Meeting.

Affiliates who apply for a grant can be awarded up to \$300 a year for their special project.

It is a great resource that we hope affiliates will take advantage of each year.

Anne Sheehan Memorial

The Anne Sheehan Memorial is the result of a request from the family of Anne Sheehan who was an active member of MEA-Retired and a long-time active member and leader of MEA.

She was committed to education and educational opportunities for advanced study for those in the profession and for political activity.

The Legacy Committee

has established the Anne Sheehan Honor Grant of \$1500 in memory of Anne to be awarded to a full time educator and member of MEA and who is enrolled in a graduate program in education.

Jack Kinnaman Scholarship

The NEA-Retired Jack Kinnaman Scholarship was established in honor of Jack Kinnaman who passed away while serving as NEA-Retired Vice President.

It is a scholarship awarded to aspiring educators who meet all the requirements of the application process and are selected by the Jack Kinnaman Scholarship Committee. Winners are announced and celebrated at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting.

In 2002, the first year of the program, a scholarship of \$1000 was awarded to one student.

The program has grown due to support and donations of retired members.

This past year, scholarships of \$3500 each were awarded to 5 students.

For more information on the application process visit our website.

Applications for all three programs can be found on our website at mearetired.org

The deadline for the Ritter and Sheehan grants is February 1, 2027.

The Kinnaman Scholarship deadline is April 15, 2027

**MainePERS Trustee
Report
September 2026
by John Kimball**

**MainePERS Trustee
(Retired Educator)**

Finances: The National Debt now exceeds \$40 Trillion!! The military excursion against Iran has extended to 7 months.

The preliminary balance of the fund was \$23.03 Billion (EOM, July, 2026).

The 2026 Fiscal year-to-date (JUL 1, 2025-JUN 30, 2026) projected-return is > 11%, which exceeds the return assumption. The financial markets continue to be volatile. Previous rate cuts have not lowered the cost of home mortgages or the cost of U.S. government borrowing.

Inflation will remain higher longer and **middle and lower income workers will continue to struggle financially.**

The effect of tariffs and energy increased in the 2nd quarter. The arbitrary nature of the current tariff policy and the erratic and conflicting administration public statements remain a cause for uncertainty.

The financial markets continue to show signs that there is a bubble in the **AI** and more im-

portantly the Commodities, Cryptocurrency and Private Credit markets.

The State of Maine funds your retirement benefits with employee contributions, employer contributions, and investment earnings of the \$23 billion dollars of assets in the fund.

For Fiscal 2027, financial markets are expected to contribute \$1.5 billion.

There continues to be a monthly cash inflow from investments despite a \$460 million deficit due to benefit payments.

At the July Board of Trustees meeting, the trailing 12-month period outflow was \$95 million. The outflow is projected to be an inflow in the next 12 months as investment distributions should outpace benefit and investment outflows by nearly \$190 million.

Benefit payments for the next 12 months are projected to be \$480 million below funding sources.

In 2028, after the 1995 UAL has been paid off, the system anticipates the unfunded liability accrued since 2012 to be approximately \$1.5 billion, which is greater than the total liability cuts made by the LePage Administration.

Those 2012 benefit cuts have resulted in an improvement of the Funding Ratio, but the Funding Ratio does not pay retir-

ees' benefits.

The 3-Year Annualized Rate of Return of 9.3% remains **above** the expected return of 6.5%.

The Public Equity (Domestic and Foreign), Alternative Credit and Private Equity allocations are driving over-all return. Liquidity is **not** a concern. (\$10.7 billion)

As part of the ongoing MainePERS Board Education Program, the Investment Team and the Investment Consultants, Cambridge and Albourne reviewed the Quarterly Private Asset Classes performance.

All Private Assets (Private Equity, Alternative Credit, Real, and Risk Diversifiers) are providing real returns and are providing the portfolio diversification expected of them. Fossil Fuel and For-Profit Prison definitions and policies were reviewed for clarification and compliance.

Long-Term Performance and Risk analysis was reviewed as well as Asset Allocation and Investment Activity.

On August 25, the Investment Team, Consultants, and Trustees met with Private Asset Managers in Portland for possible future investments.

Securities Lending contributed \$2.6 Million in FY 2026. Alternative Asset classes (03/31/2026)

have an IRR (Internal Rate of Return) of 9.6%.

Q2 2026 Review of GLI, OPEB, RHIT (Group Life Insurance, Other Post Employment Benefits, Retired Health Insurance Trust) reflected some accounting adjustments but excellent returns (1-year, 18.2%; 3-year, 15.1%).

The Public Equity Benchmark will be changed to align more closely with the full global market opportunity and improve diversification at the September board meeting.

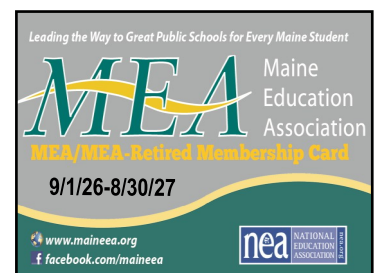
Executive: MainePERS has a new CFO, Karen Doyle, General Counsel, Nanette Ardry, and COO, Chip Gavin.

These changes were the result of planned retirements and assignment of other duties.

In January 2026, there were **49,015** recipients of benefit payments totaling **\$113.6 million.**



Here is your MEA and MEA-Retired 2026-27 membership card.





The School Year Still Speaks

by Corley-Anne Byras

For most people, January marks the beginning of a new year. For educators, however, September has always held a special significance.

Even after retirement, many of us find ourselves measuring time by the rhythm of the school calendar.

When the first leaves begin to turn and school buses reappear on neighborhood streets, something familiar stirs within us.

September reminds us of fresh starts and endless possibilities. It brings back memories of newly sharpened pencils, carefully arranged classrooms, lesson plans waiting to unfold, and the anticipation of meeting a new group of students.

We remember the excitement, the challenges, and the hope

that each new school year would bring.

Though we may no longer stand before a classroom each morning, the values that guided our careers remain a part of who we are.

Educators do not retire from caring, encouraging, mentoring, or learning. These qualities continue to shape our lives and our communities.

Many retired educators remain active as volunteers, tutors, mentors, advocates, and life-long learners.

The lessons we taught continue to live on through former students who are now parents, professionals, community leaders, and educators themselves.

September also offers an

opportunity to reflect on the lasting impact of our profession.

Few careers touch as many lives or leave such enduring footprints. We may never fully know how a word of encouragement, a patient explanation, or a belief in a struggling student changed the course of someone's life.

Yet those moments matter, and their influence continues long after the final bell rings.

As another school year begins, we celebrate the profession that shaped us and the friendships we built along the way. We take pride in our shared legacy and look forward to the opportunities retirement offers for continued growth, service, and connection.

The school year still speaks to us — not because we miss the paperwork, deadlines, or early morning alarms, but because

teaching was never simply a job. It was a calling. Callings have a way of staying with us, season after season, year after year.

As September unfolds, may we cherish the memories, celebrate the present, and continue inspiring others through the wisdom and experiences we have gained throughout our educational journeys.

**Invite a retiree to join
MEA-Retired!**

**Direct them to our
Website @
mearetired.org**