

TO: MEA-Retired Members
FR: Kay Grindall, President
DA: April 9, 2020
RE: Greetings and Upcoming Events and Items of Interest

As we turned our calendars to April last week, I'm sure we all took a moment to reflect on the vast magnitude and enormity of life-changing events that March brought to our families, our communities, our state, and the entire world.

At first, it was difficult to comprehend that the coronavirus pandemic would last and have such far-reaching effects here in Maine and in MEA-Retired. It was soon evident, though, that the health threat turned life upside down and inside out. Things grew markedly worse from one day to the next. We are self-quarantining, the stock market is roiling, schools are closed, tourism and travel have grounded to a halt, and restaurants are forced to suspend in-person dining. Families are increasingly weary, anxious, uncertain and stressed—and that's just after a trip to our local grocery store!

Through it all, we can remain encouraged and victorious over so-called stumbling blocks to “the way we were.” Throughout all these unprecedented challenges and changes, our strong connection and care for the health and safety of each other as members of the MEA-Retired community never wavered. I believe we will emerge different people with a greatly enhanced awareness of the value of life and cherish each other more. Let's remain diligent in utilizing safety techniques, wearing masks, practicing self-distancing, and avoiding large crowded areas. As we know, this, too, shall pass.

May I share a very inspiring quote from Maya Angelou: ***“Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.”*** Let's admit it. We all have cloudy days—more so now than ever. Well, we can take advantage of these long days of more free time. We can write that note of encouragement or pick up the phone and call a family member or a friend who is alone. We have time now to reach out to someone with whom we have not connected for “too long.” When we plan to go to the grocery store, we can call a shut-in neighbor to see if he or she needs items. I'm sure we all appreciate the pastors, priests, rabbis, and lay ministers who have taken the extra time to be creative and provide meaningful worship experiences via YouTube, Zoom, Facebook, etc.

My father-in-law, 96, just had emergency surgery yesterday afternoon. Of course, we cannot visit him; however, my husband was able to speak with him on the phone at the hospital a few hours later. I recorded their conversation on my smart phone and sent it via text to our family. It was a treasure to hear! We can make our different world even more memorable and enriching, as we utilize our resources and an abundance of free hours in “trying to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.”

Upcoming Events

April 30, 2020, 9:30 a.m. Board of Directors meeting via ZOOM, an online meeting venue. This will replace our April 6 Board meeting. Members are encouraged to send their questions and concerns to their affiliate presidents and vice presidents who will be attending this meeting.

May 7 Convention and Annual Meeting . . . cancelled

October 15, 2020, 8:30 a.m. MEA-Retired Annual Meeting, North Room, Augusta Civic Center All members are encouraged to please save the date and make plans to attend. More details will be forthcoming.

Items of Interest

1. Pam Partridge, our convention registrar, is preparing to return the \$20 registration checks to those who have already registered for convention.
2. At yesterday's MEA-Retired online meeting of our officers, it was decided that we would mail the awards as follows: (I have sent an email message to the committee chairpersons as indicated below.)
 - (1) **To affiliate presidents or vice presidents:** Affiliate Membership Incentive Awards (Ben Paradis), Affiliate Ritter Grants (Hugh Keene), Anne Sheehan Honor Grant (Hugh Keene)
 - (2) **To designated recipients:** Community Participation (Jan Cerabona) and Affiliate Leadership Awards (Gary McGrane)
3. Lisa Collins is the new MEA-Retired assistant in the Caribou office. The best number to use to reach her is 207-498-3191 and an email may be sent to lcollins@maineea.org.
4. Lists of March and April retirees will be mailed to affiliate presidents the first of May. Please be diligent in reaching out to our 2020 retirees who may be prospective MEA-Retired members. I am attaching our membership recruitment brochure. Feel free to forward it in an email to retirees in your local districts.
5. **In Memory of Tom Curran:** An obituary for Tom Curran is scheduled to be in *The Portland Sunday Telegram* this weekend. Affiliates and individuals wishing to donate in his memory may checks payable to "The Westbrook Food Pantry" and mailed to the following address: The Westbrook Food Pantry, c/o Jeanne Riley, Director, Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street, Westbrook, ME 04092.