

2017 MTA RETIRED GATHERING

Honoring a colleague — and her activism

By Scott McLennan

Although most of them are no longer in the classroom, the MTA's retired members are still having a significant impact on public education, as they showed when they attended a conference in Hyannis in October.

Now in its 16th year and expanded to a two-day format, the MTA Retired Gathering was held at the Cape Codder Resort on Oct. 17 and 18.

The event, organized by the MTA Retired Members Committee, offered those who attended numerous workshops and opportunities to socialize. The conference also demonstrated the many ways in which retirees are still contributing to public schools, colleges and universities.

A call had gone out in advance asking MTA Retired members to bring items such as soccer balls and jump-ropes to be donated to the Barnstable United Elementary School. As is the tradition at each gathering, a school or district is selected to receive items that the educators there say will benefit their students.

The Barnstable Teachers' Association wanted to emphasize the value of recess by making sure that students have equipment for games and activities. The retirees responded with an assortment of basketballs, soccer balls and kick balls (more than 60 in all), duffle bags to store the equipment and about a dozen jump-ropes, as well as classroom supplies and monetary donations.



The Springfield retirees behind Tools 4 Teaching were recognized with the Honor Our Own award. From left to right are Chris O'Connor, Ronnie Tillman, Chris Williams, Dawna Jenne, Carol Alminas, Nancy Meyer and Sue Fielding.

HONORING SPRINGFIELD RETIREES

Another important annual tradition is the Honor Our Own award, which recognizes outstanding work by an active or retired MTA educator. This year the award went to the members of the Springfield Education Association's Committee of Retirees in recognition of their successful Tools 4 Teaching program.

The committee started Tools 4 Teaching in 2013 to collect materials from educators who were retiring or changing grade levels and getting them — at no cost — into the hands of colleagues who could use them.

The committee has expanded Tools 4 Teaching to the point where it leases space in a municipal building to house books, furnishings and many other useful classroom items.

SEA educators can visit the "recycling store" to pick up items when it opens twice a month. The committee also actively solicits donations such as pens, notepads and binders from private

RETIREED MEMBERS COMMITTEE 2017-2018

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Richard Liston, *Everett*

VICE CHAIR

Julia Monteiro-Johnson, *South Dennis*

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Eileen Cleary, *Brockton*
John DeCicco, *Leominster*
Mary Gilmore, *South Yarmouth*
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Lois Powers, *Quincy*
Gerry Ruane, *Malden***
Beth Stafford, *Whitman**
Robert Travers, Jr., *Cambridge***
Anne Wass, *Marshfield***

RETIREED MEMBERS ORGANIZER

Robert Whalen
rwhalen@massteacher.org
617.878.8206 ■ 800.392.6175, ext. 8206

GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGNS COORDINATOR

Eric Smith
esmith@massteacher.org
617.878.8194 ■ 800.392.6175, ext. 8194

MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor
Quincy, MA 02171-2119
800.392.6175 ■ www.massteacher.org

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800.336.0990 ■ www.mtabenefits.com

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* Appointed Active Member

** MTA Board of Directors

» continued on PG 2

2017 MTA RETIRED GATHERING

» continued from PG 1

businesses and other sources to keep them from ending up in the trash.

“We wanted to help teachers, help students and help our planet,” said SEA retiree Chris Williams. The goal now, she said, is to see Tools 4 Teaching replicated in other districts.

Those recognized with the award were Nancy Meyer, Sue Fielding, Dawna Jenne, Carol Alminas, Chris O’Connor, Ronnie Tillman, Norma Alejandro, Jean Haley, Gail Healey, Linda Kingston, Mary Scherpa, Pat Sullivan and Williams.

REMEMBER TO ASK

Christine Blower, a leader in Britain’s recently constituted National Education Union, offered a keynote address that touched upon the valuable role of public education in a healthy society and the challenges facing trade unionists.

The NEU was formed from the merger of two large teachers’ unions, and Blower stressed the value of solidarity in accomplishing goals. “Ask not what your union can do for you, but what you can do for your union,” she said, borrowing from President John F. Kennedy’s famous quote.

Her comments also touched upon the MTA’s All In campaign. Blower said that membership in Britain’s trade unions has been completely voluntary since the era of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. One of the main guides her members use to ensure robust and active membership is titled “No One Ever Asked Me.”

“When we talk to teachers who do not belong to the union and we ask why, the most common answer is, ‘No one ever asked me,’” Blower said.

In emphasizing the importance of fighting for well-funded public schools and respect for educators, Blower stated: “Education is a human right, a civil right and a public good.”

WE NEED YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Richard Liston, chair of the Retired Members Committee, thanked conference attendees for their continued activism throughout the years, saying that many retired members are as active now in union initiatives as they were when they were in the classroom. He noted retirees’ continuing commitment to assisting new educators, giving a nod to a mentoring program between MTA retirees and student members.

“Massachusetts’ public schools are the best in the country because we did a great job,” Liston said, adding that retirees continue to support new and future educators. “Their success will be our success.”



Beverly Saccocia took a moment to remember Kathleen Roberts, a former MTA president and a longtime co-chair of the Retired Members Committee who died in September.

Liston also expressed the sorrow of many in the room for the death of Kathleen Roberts, his longtime co-chair on the committee. Roberts, a past MTA president and active unionist for more than 70 years, died in September at the age of 103. Many at the gathering signed a condolence book that will be given to Roberts’ family, and an MTA documentary, “Kind Kay,” was shown.

MTA leaders also addressed the gathering, acknowledging all that the retirees have done to build their union.

This is a crucial time to share wisdom with current members as the labor movement comes under attack, said MTA President Barbara Madeloni.

“As elders of the education and labor movements, you have experiences others do not have, and we need that knowledge,” Madeloni said.

She drew a comparison between the victory at the ballot box last fall that kept the cap on charter schools and the role that the MTA and other unions played in preserving prevailing-wage laws 30 years ago.

“It’s not about getting one win and then it’s over. It’s a way to live,” she said.

MTA Vice President Erik J. Champy told the retirees that they “set the tone for what it means to be brothers and sisters in an association.”

“You have shown us the value of standing shoulder to shoulder to fight for the issues important to our students, our colleagues and our communities,” he added. ■

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Richard Liston

“Grieve not... nor speak of me with tears... but laugh and talk of me as though I were beside you”.

Kay Roberts was an amazing woman, who will be missed by so many. I was so fortunate to be her Co-Chair to the Retired Members Committee for many years. She led by example, always striving for better ways to enrich our lives. She was a friend to so many. We honor her daily by continuing to work so retirees can live with dignity.

Our Gathering was a great success. It was our first two day conference, but we will continue to evaluate and try to be bigger and better in the upcoming

years. Your Committee has been working diligently to bring new and exciting events for all retired Members. This year we will have luncheons in place of our usual breakfasts.

Working with active members of MTA we will be part of the “ALL IN” and Raise Up Massachusetts campaigns. A successful mentoring program is underway with our student members.

I am so proud to be Chair of your Retired Members Committee, a group of dedicated individuals, who work so hard on your behalf. Please feel free to contact any of us with concerns or ideas. ■



MTA Retired Members Committee Chair, Richard Liston

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT, OCT. 20-21, 2017

Gerry Ruane

This month’s Board meeting was held at the Sheraton Framingham. Anne Wass, Jackie Gorrie and Gerry Ruane represented the retired members. Steve Gorrie is a member of the NEA Board of Directors and is a non-voting member of the MTA Board. President Madeloni called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The first order of business was the approval of committee budgets. The Retired Members Committee budget was increased to \$15,000.

There were a number of policy changes that were presented to the Board. Policy changes require discussion at two meetings before approval. Several Policies were voted on at the second reading.

1. Policy 70.10 concerning voting for Retired Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting was discussed and changes were made to make things easier for retired delegates. Starting with the 2018 Annual Meeting, the election for retired delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting will begin on the first Monday of February and will end on the second Friday of March. MTA Retired Delegates will be notified in time to make Hotel reservations and make plans for the 2018 Annual Meeting on May 5-6, 2018.
2. A new policy was adopted to increase the NEA RA Delegate stipends to \$1600 for statewide, retired and

regional delegates and \$600 for local delegates.

3. A policy was adopted that would provide the \$450 stipend for the Ethnic Minority Delegate to the Annual Meeting.
4. Policy changes affecting Policy 70 which governs MTA elections was brought for a second reading. After much discussion, the Board voted to send the proposals back to the Credential and Ballots Committee.

Vice President Champy presented the Budget Priorities for the 2018-2019 MTA Budget. The adopted priorities are:

- Support the goal of the All In Campaign to attain an unprecedented level of member engagement across the Massachusetts Teachers Association.
- Provide meaningful and effective services to members and locals.
- Provide leadership and membership development programs to active, retired and student members in the following areas:
 1. Professional Development
 2. Collective Bargaining
 3. Grievance Processing
 4. Organizing and Political Action

» continued on PG 4

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT, OCT. 20-21, 2017

» continued from PG 3

- Strengthen public education and labor rights by providing resources to:
 1. Support coalitions with external partners
 2. Achieve MTA's legislative and election goals
 3. Influence education policy at the state and local level
- Meet contractual obligations to MTA employees by adequately funding the following:
 1. Employee pension fund
 2. Employee post-retirement health benefits
 3. Contractual obligations

ALL IN Campaign: The managers of Affiliate Services gave a report on the ALL IN Campaign. This Campaign is to build member involvement and to increase union activities in Locals including the Retired. The Campaign is in response to the looming Supreme Court Case concerning the loss of Agency Fee. This will be accomplished by having conversations with members

about union membership and what their contribution can be. Part of this is to let ESP's know that they are eligible for MTA Retired Membership. All local presidents are being notified and provided with information about MTA Retired.

The Board also received a request by the Massachusetts Nurses Association to support their ballot question on hospital staffing. This request was supported by the Board.

MTA members continue to collect signatures for the \$15 minimum wage sponsored by Raise Up Massachusetts. If you would like to volunteer please email Bob Whalen at rwhalen@massteacher.org

Finally, our own Board Member, Jackie Gorrie, was reelected to the MTA Benefits Board of Directors. Congratulations Jackie!

The meeting adjourned around 3:00 PM Saturday.

If you have any questions about the Board meeting please contact me at gpruane@gmail.com ■

UPDATE ON MTA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



After a busy September on Beacon Hill, all of MTA's priority bills have now received a legislative hearing. Each bill is now being reviewed by its committee of jurisdiction, which will take into account the testimony offered by MTA and other stakeholders as it deliberates. Most committees have until February 7, 2018 to decide whether or not to recommend that a bill proceed in the legislative process. The only exception is the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, which has until March 28, 2018 to report out legislation.

S.308, An Act strengthening and investing in our educators, students, and communities

The bill was heard by the Joint Committee on Education on September 12.

S.1481, An Act to provide fair and affordable public retiree benefits

The bill was heard by the Joint Committee on Public Service on September 19.

H.639, An Act investing in public higher education

The bill was heard by the Joint Committee on Higher Education over the course of two hearings on June 29 and July 13, respectively.

H.2365/S.1004, An Act to improve the Commonwealth's economy with a strong minimum wage and a strong tipped minimum wage

The bill was heard by the Joint Committee on Labor & Workforce Development on September 19.

H.2172/S.1048, An Act establishing a family and medical leave insurance program

The bill was heard by the Joint Committee on Labor & Workforce Development on June 13. ■

MEET THE NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A highlight



John DeCicco

Leominster

I was a technology engineering teacher at Oakmont Regional High School. I joined MTA Retired to benefit from Retirement Plus, I feel it's important to stay active as a retiree so I can be a voice for our current educators and insure that this hard won benefit and many others stay in place.

Every educator should continue in MTA as a retired member to avail themselves of the great MTAB benefit programs, which can stretch your buying power and extend the value of your pension benefits.

Paul Mazut

Lee



Hi. My name is Paul Mazut. I live in a small town called Lee. It is in Berkshire County located in the western part of the state. I worked for the city of Westfield as a vocational teacher for 36 years. Working as a machine shop Instructor has allowed me to pursue a passion of restoring old cars, mainly Corvettes. I also make parts for the cars, which I sell to several restoration supply companies. During the year I travel to different parts of the country to judge early corvettes as a national master judge.

While I was still teaching, I was appointed to the Retired Members Committee as an active member. I really enjoyed it and wanted to stay involved during retirement. Being involved has allowed me to keep up with all of the latest issues pertaining to retirees and to fight for retiree benefits. I feel retirees should get involved in some manner as the benefits belong to them.



Julia Monteiro Johnson

South Dennis

I'm Julia Monteiro Johnson. I live in South Dennis with my husband, driver and traveling companion, Larry. We have four grown children, four grandchildren and one great-grandson. I have an M.L.S. and an M.S. in Instructional Technology. I retired from the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District in 2010.

I have served as a local president, NEA Director and MTA Director and on numerous committees. My involvement with the union is a serious commitment and a source of joy and pride. A highlight of my union involvement was receiving the Louise Gaskins Lifetime Civil Rights Award. I'm

currently serving the first year of my second two-year term of the Retired Members Committee and was elected Vice-Chair. Thank you for re-electing me to serve you.

I had the opportunity to attend the NEA Retired Organizing Conference during my first term. The workshops were intense and informative. We've taken many of the successful ideas that were presented and have implemented them within MTA Retired. We are working diligently to increase our membership. We are working to have all delegate seats at the Annual Meeting filled every year. I am delighted that the recent 2-day Gathering was successful!

Please contact me with suggestions, questions or comments at 774-212-3100 or johnson.julia@comcast.net. If you haven't sent MTA your email address, please do so. Thanks.

» continued on PG 6

MEET THE NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

» continued from PG 5



Lois Powers

Quincy

Greetings! I am Lois Powers; I live in Quincy (although, now that I am retired, I like to say that my home base is Quincy because I am traveling – primarily in the U.S. – as much as I can.) I was the Career Resource Librarian at the University of Massachusetts Boston; I worked there for 25+ years. In addition to assisting students with their career research, I was the department's editor, buyer, paper pusher, writer (bi-weekly job bulletin, 8 to 12 pages), and "hostess with the mostest" at our events. Prior to my employment at UMB, I had the great pleasure of working on the same waterfront peninsula but at the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum since its opening.

Several years ago, I joined MTA Retired via the pre-retired opportunity because I had no doubt that I would want to continue to be part of 'the voice of education'. I have been fortunate in making so many friends, contacts and acquaintances in the MTA (and NEA) and I want to foster those relationships. Also, I truly believe in paying it forward so I plan to continue my activism on behalf of the MTA's Mission and I'd like to be available to 'sing the praises' of our organization. Lastly, the benefits available to me as a retired member of MTA are a huge plus! I use the heating oil and restaurant discounts regularly. Free or reduced tickets to museums, aquariums and some tourist attractions are available. The MTAB benefits more than pay for my MTA Retired membership several times over since I joined lifetime. Definitely a win-win!

WHY I AM AN MTA RETIRED MEMBER

Beverly Saccocia



I joined the MTA retired group to continue to be of service to the MTA, friends and students.

I originally started the process to get approval of ESPs to join my union. We prevailed and I served as the Bridgewater-Raynham Education Association Board of Directors Liaison for ESPs. I was chairperson of Negotiations with the Bridgewater-Raynham school committee representing ESPs.

At a later time, Anne Wass encouraged me to be more active and run for the MTA Board of Directors after I had already served six years on the MTA ESP Committee. I was elected to serve as an MTA Board member representing District 35-C teachers and paraprofessionals. I served for six year years.

I worked at the Bridgewater-Raynham school system for thirty years. After I retired last year, I wanted to remain active in MTA. I ran to become a member of the MTA Retired Committee but lost this year.

I will continue to be active in MTA Retired in any way possible and needed. I will again run to become a member of MTA Retired Committee but whatever the results are of that election, I will help, speak out, and volunteer to help out wherever I can help.

I love working with former officers of the MTA, Board of Directors members and new members and friends to help. I especially wish as one of my goals to encourage more MTA ESPs to join our group.

Beverly Saccocia, Pocket2609@comast.net, 508-944-9491

If you have some news from your local retired group that you wish to share, please send it to Robert Whalen at rwhalen@massteacher.org.

ELECTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR MTA RETIRED MEMBERS

An overview

Our union's strength comes from full participation of all members, including retirees, in MTA and NEA election processes at the local, state and national levels. Please consider the following opportunities to engage the democratic processes of our union. Share with other retirees, and let's grow union power.

The election and nomination process for all of the seats described here are subject to MTA Bylaws and to MTA Policy/Procedures for Nominations and Elections, all of which is available upon request from the MTA Division of Governance.

MTA Retired Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (NEA-RA)

The 2018 NEA Representative Assembly will be held July 2 through July 5, in Minneapolis. (Required attendance begins with the first caucus on June 30 at 9:30 am.)

The NEA-RA is the meeting of representatives from all NEA state associations. At this meeting, policies are voted on and set regarding a range of issues critical to educators from testing to economic and racial justice, to electoral politics, and more. It is an opportunity for democratic engagement and making national connections to build our movement and strength.

Elected delegates are also strongly encouraged to attend the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, taking place immediately before the NEA-RA in Minneapolis. Information will be sent to the elected delegates, and MTA will reimburse additional hotel and food costs for attending this meeting.

NEA will allocate the number of retired delegate seats to the NEA-RA for Massachusetts. Nominations are open to all eligible MTA/NEA retired members through a self-

Available Opportunities for MTA Retired Members:

- *Retired Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly**
- *Retired Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting**
- *MTA Retired Members Committee**

**Nomination forms available online at www.massteacher.org/nomform*

nomination process. These delegates will be elected by a ballot sent to all NEA retired members in February.

MTA provides funding to the winners of the MTA Statewide, Regional, and Retired elections to the NEA-RA, subject to accountability requirements (\$1600 stipend per delegate).

Those interested can access the online nomination form at www.massteacher.org/nomform. The nomination deadline is Friday, January 12, 2018.

Statewide Retired District Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting

The 2018 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates will be held May 4 and 5 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. In this meeting, delegates from across the state gather to vote on policies and set the direction for the MTA in the year ahead. Your voice matters.

» continued on PG 8

Highlights from MTA Benefits

Dental coverage. Dental insurance can be expensive and sometimes you find out that it doesn't even cover the services you need. MTA Benefits' program through United Concordia provides dental insurance at a low cost that includes implant coverage.

Group travel. Cruise to Cuba, roam the alleys through Venice, or take in the breathtaking views of Victoria Falls. In 2018, Durgan Travel is offering tours to Cuba, Italy, Ireland, China and the south of Africa. Space fills quickly, especially for tours that take place during school vacation weeks.

Take the trip of a lifetime with fellow MTA members!

Hearing aids. Hearing loss is the third most common health condition in the United States, but a proper hearing aid will improve daily communication, emotional and physical health and cognitive function. Hear in America offers members savings of 30-70% as well as free hearing screenings, no enrollment fees, 3 years of free batteries and more.

For more information on these and other MTA Benefits programs, visit www.mtabenefits.com. ■

ELECTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR MTA RETIRED MEMBERS

Continued

The Statewide Retired District Delegates will be elected by ballot sent to the retired membership in conjunction with the NEA delegate elections in February. Nominations are open to all eligible MTA/NEA retired members through a self-nomination process. The 2018 allocation of retired delegates and successors will be based on the number of MTA/NEA retired members as of March 1, 2018.

Elected Statewide Retired district delegates may apply for reimbursement of certain expenses up to \$450.

Those interested can access the online nomination form at www.massteacher.org/nomform. The nomination deadline is Friday, January 12, 2018.

MTA Retired Members Committee

Four members of the Retired Members Committee will be elected by the Statewide Retired District Delegates at the 2018 Annual Meeting. This committee plans the statewide retiree conference and serves as an important voice of retirees within the MTA. The committee seats have terms of two years, starting July 1, 2018.

Those interested can access the online nomination form at

www.massteacher.org/nomform. The nomination deadline is Friday, March 2, 2018.

Election Waiver

MTA's election waiver policy applies to the elections described in this issue. If the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled, the election(s) may be waived and the candidate(s) declared elected to the position(s) in question.

Nomination and Election Details Now on the MTA Website

In addition to the information published here and in the fall issue of *MTA Today*, all MTA and NEA election information may also be accessed at the MTA website: www.massteacher.org/2018governance.

MTA Retired Elections Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the nomination or election process, please feel free to contact John Connelly at jconnelly@massteacher.org. or at 617-878-8305. ■

Introducing a new collaborative effort:

The Retired Member / Student Member Mentoring Program



Are you interested in helping a student teacher and want to provide an additional support system outside of the student's practicum? Consider applying to be a mentor today!



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INSIDE THE NOV/DEC ISSUE

DESCRIPTION	Page	DESCRIPTION	Page
2017 MTA RETIRED GATHERING.....	1	ELECTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETIRED MEMBERS. . . .	7-8
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR	3	HIGHLIGHTS FROM MTA BENEFITS.	7
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT	3-4	2018 NOMINATION FORM FOR THE RETIRED MEMBERS COMMITTEE.	9
UPDATE ON MTA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA	4	2018 NOMINATION FORM FOR THE MTA ANNUAL MEETING OF DELEGATES/NEA-RA	11
MEET THE NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS	5-6		
WHY I AM AN MTA RETIRED MEMBER	6		