

NEA-Alaska/Retired

Summer / Fall 2024 • Volume XXXV No. 1

Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board

Pending changes to retiree insurance benefits include the following three items:

1. Coverage for acupuncture will be expanded to include payment to licensed acupuncturists for certain conditions such as chronic pain for up to ten annual visits
2. Members who have chosen the Standard DVR plan will have significantly more dental coverage because the current \$2000 limit will be expanded to \$3000 AND the costs of preventative care such as annual exams and x-rays will not be counted against that \$3000 limit.
3. Vision coverage will be enhanced through VPR networking, providing savings both to the plan and the patients.

The Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board (RHPAB) has been working on these issues for more than a year and recently recommended that they go out for public comment. At the end of the public comment period and upon approval of the Commissioner of Administration, these changes will take effect in January 2025. Members will still have the option of remaining in the Legacy Plan. At this time, there will be no increase in the premium costs to members.

Retiree Dental, Vision, & Audio Enrollment

The annual enrollment for Dental, Vision, and Audio (DVA) benefits for retirees begins October 14 through November 27, 2024, for the plan year beginning on January 1, 2025.

Changes are coming during the annual enrollment for Dental, Vision and Audio benefits for retirees. Click on the link provided to explore the extensive details, on these changes, which could help you decide if they will benefit you. <https://drb.alaska.gov/events/dvaenrollment.html>



— Judy Salo



2025
Open Enrollment
Dental • Visual • Audio
Oct. 14 – Nov. 27 2024

Health Benefits Contact Information

**Division of Retirement and Benefits
Member Education Center**

(907) 465-4460

Toll-Free: (800) 821-2251

**Medical Benefits
Aetna Concierge Member Services**
(855) 784-8646

**Dental Benefits
Moda/Delta Dental Member Services**
(855) 718-1768

**Pharmacy Benefits
Optum RxMember Services**
(855) 409-6999

**Long-Term Care Benefits
CHCS Services, Inc. Member Services**
(888) 287-7116

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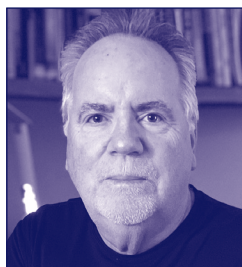
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President's Corner



The NEA-Alaska/Retired Board of Directors held a Retreat and Board Meeting on October 5-6, 2024 at the Hotel Captain Cook. The main purpose of the retreat was to discuss and plan for the future of our retired local.

In 2006, the Alaska legislature took away the defined benefit pension for new employees and instituted the current defined contribution plans. Since the majority of state workers in Alaska are not covered by the Social Security program, those hired since 2006 lack retirement security. The markets' whims affect any retirement benefits they might get. Most every other state PERS and TRS members are guaranteed some form of a defined benefit retirement or Social Security benefits, in some cases both.

Since 2006 restoring a defined benefit pension and repealing the federal restrictions on receiving Social Security benefits has been a legislative priority in Alaska and Washington, D.C. This year, thanks to the hard work of NEA-Alaska members and staff, we have been closer than ever to achieving these goals.

Meanwhile, most active NEA-Alaska members now work under the defined contribution plan. Some of them are approaching 20 years of service and must be thinking about retirement. During our retreat, we discussed how NEA-Alaska/Retired can adapt to welcome these members as pre-retired and eventual retired members. The first order of business will be to change our bylaws to accommodate defined contribution members. Many members have contributed ideas and language suggestions, and we should have final language ready for a vote after the NEA-Alaska Delegate Assembly and our next board meeting in January 2025.

I would like to express my special thanks to President Klaameyer, Government Relations Director Matt Moser, and our Staff Liaison Val Baffone. It is election season, and they are all extremely busy, but they still managed to spend several hours with us on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Their presence and the information they shared helped direct our discussions and added to our productivity. Val Baffone spent the entire weekend assisting with everything from up-to-date information to logistics with the hotel.

—Joe Boyle



Back: Annie Baker, Barbara Stek, Judy Salo, Barb George, Joe Boyle, Susan Stitham, Roxanne Abajian, Pamela Lloyd, and Gayle Harbo. Front: Kristie McEwen.

NEA-Retired Legislative Committee

The committee with 29 participants met on October 10, 2024, via Zoom, to learn the status of the GPO/WEP Repeal from Stephanie Salvador, NEA's lobbyist. HB 82 met the required sponsors for a discharge petition. The bill has been placed on the consensus calendar for 10 days, 5 of which were before the recess. Stephanie believes it will come to a vote attached to a defense spending bill or emergency disaster funding, possibly alone. In the Senate, S597 has 62 of 60 votes needed to overcome the threshold. NEA President Becky Pringle will be calling Senator Schumer to try and move this bill to a vote once it passes the House. We need to move quickly to get this done as it will not carry over to the next session.

The GPO/WEP - 2.1 million people subject to WEP lose up to half their Social Security benefit and the 746,000 subject to GPO —70% lose their entire Social Security benefit. States where educators are NOT covered by Social Security: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia (some areas), Illinois, Kentucky (some areas), Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Rhode Island (some areas), and Texas.

NEA has led the fight to repeal the WEP/GPO offset provisions to SS. During that time, we have had tremendous bipartisan support from both Democrats and Republicans to co-author specific legislation in both the house and senate. We have only had one or two hearings in that span of time! Member advocacy has been the Key to Success. 180,000 messages on GPO/WEP have been sent during the 118th Congress. 30,000 since September 10th urging members to sign the discharge petition to force a floor vote in the House.

Preparing for the cost argument: The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) states this repeal will cost \$195.6 billion dollars over 10 years. This is the money that will now be paid to people if passed. Passing the Social Security Benefit Act will save the government \$2 Billion dollars in SNAP benefits. CBO also states that Social Security will be insolvent 6 months earlier than predicted if passed. Social Security solvency needs to be addressed anyway.

NEA's Legislative Priorities for 2024

- GPO/WEP Repeal: Push leadership to bring the Social Security Fairness Act (S.597) to a floor vote. Ask your representative in the house to vote "Yes" when HR 82 comes up for a vote (most likely in November).
- Urge your Congress person to support the Senate appropriations funding levels in the final fiscal year 2025 education funding bill.

- Ask your Congress person to co-sponsor Ethan's law (S.173/HR660) to require safe storage of firearms.

1. This bill establishes a framework to regulate the storage of firearms on residential premises at the federal, state, and tribal levels.
2. At the federal level, the bill establishes statutory requirements for firearms on residential premises to be safely stored if a minor is likely to gain access without permission or if a resident is ineligible to possess a firearm.
3. An individual who violates the requirements is subject to criminal penalties. A firearm stored in violation of the requirements is subject to seizure and forfeiture.
4. At the state and tribal levels, the bill requires the Department of Justice to award grants to implement functionally identical requirements for the safe storage of firearms.

Encourage your senator to bring to the floor as many judicial nominees as possible for a vote, and confirm them before this session ends.

Ask your Senators to support President Biden's nomination of Suzanne Summerlin as General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

"We need to Get Out the Vote".

In Solidarity!

— Pamela Lloyd and Howard Maxwell

Top 10 Reasons to Vote NO on Measure 2

1. Prevent political elites and outside interests from dictating Alaska's elections.
2. Protect Alaskans' right to vote how they want, for whoever they want; regardless of party.
3. Require candidates from every party to compete for your vote in every election, forcing them to appeal to as many Alaskans as possible.
4. Uphold the freedom to vote for the best candidate, not just the lesser of two evils.
5. Stop political parties from limiting our choices.
6. Prevent party bosses from closing our primary elections even further.
7. Ensure that veterans and active-duty military who are not registered with a political party cannot be excluded from voting in our primary elections.
8. Save the state the three million dollars it would cost to go back to the old, flawed voting system, keeping that money for our PFDs, schools, roads, and cops.
9. Empower third parties and disrupt the two-party system.
10. Honors the majority of Alaskans who chose to vote for candidates of different parties when given the chance.



RAM

What do you call a group of over 300 retired educators?
You call it the RAM*

Many drove, some rode the rails, while Howard Maxwell and I flew to Philadelphia, the Birthplace of America, the City of Neighborhoods, the City of Brotherly Love. We came together because it was time to do the “business” of the National Education Association-Retired. The elected delegates numbered 328, with 319 being able to attend the two-day meeting; the Retired Annual Meeting (RAM*) delegates represented the more than 300,000 retired educator members of NEA.

Howard and I stayed at our NEA-Alaska delegation hotel, so chose to walk a few blocks to make meetings (downtown Philadelphia is a “walkable” city). The RAM* is always scheduled just before the NEA Representative Assembly so that we can debate and make decisions about positions we may make as the retired group.

A major emphasis for NEA in general is the elimination of the penalizing parts of Social Security’s Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). Working together with other public employee groups, we are making progress to have Congress pass a measure to end those penalties (which affect us in Alaska) and then have our US President sign it into law. It is an uphill movement, and we are slowly getting there. We need to work on Alaska Senator Dan Sullivan to become a cosponsor of S.597.

It is also the time to listen to candidates running for retired, elected positions as well as NEA level positions. Part of the time is to raise money for the political action committee of NEA (that supports pro-public education candidates endorsed by NEA and/or NEA state affiliates).

The RAM* is also a time to recognize NEA-Retired state and local affiliates for increased membership (pre-retired and retired), as well as various modes of communications between those associations and their members.

Another fundraising activity, one that we have supported at our own NEA-Alaska Delegate Assembly, is the Jack Kinnaman Scholarship for aspiring educators. This nationwide scholarship helps six students with a \$3,500 scholarship (this year). We met most of the recipients and learned their educator goals (we will be in good hands in the future of public education).

You may recall that at last year’s RAM* in Orlando, I was elected to the first alternate position (as a retired member) on the NEA Resolutions Committee. NEA-Retired has six members on that large committee. During 2024 I was not called to fill in. This year, I ran again and received 93.5% of votes cast (vote for six). I will now become an active member of the Resolutions Committee come September. I look forward to not only representing NEA-Alaska/Retired members, but all NEA-Retired members for 2024-2025.

– Steve Click

Election News – You Need to Know

The following NEA-Alaska/Retired members will be representing you at the 2025 NEA-Alaska Delegate Assembly.

Cindy Lou Aillaud	A Bryant Christensen	Todd Hindman	Lori Mertes	P. Renee Rindone
Whit Aillaud	Steve Click	Michael Husa	Kate Ortega	Sandi Ryan
Glenn Bafia	Pat DeSmet	Stanley G. King	Tim Parker	Tammy Smith
Bonnie Barber	Emilia Eaton	Ernie Kirby	Rebecca Paul	Kristina Tornqvist
Mary Bohanan	Barbara George	Faith Lee	Sharon Penttila	Bob Williams
Loretta Christie	Beverly Goad	Howard Maxwell	Christopher Provost	

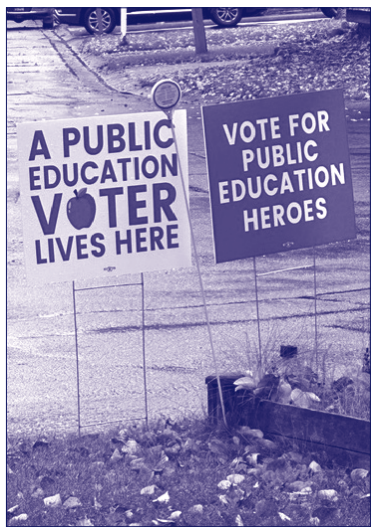
Alternates:

Troy Carlock, Donald Campbell, Teresa Duncan, Jenny Feuilles, Jeff Hebard, Nancy Hummel, Jim Lepley, Marilyn Pillifant, Deb Reynolds, Tom Richards, Pat Romans, Christine D Scott, Dianne K. Shibe, Christine Smith, Greg Turner, Graham Ward, Sheryl Wittig

By virtue of their position on the NEA-Alaska/Retired Board: Joseph C Boyle, Roxanne Abajian, Gayle Harbo, Annie Baker, Pamela Lloyd, and Susan Stitham are retired delegates as well. Kristi McEwen, Trena Richardson, Judy Salo, and Barbara Stek will join our retired delegation as NEA-Alaska Board of Directors state delegates at DA.

Our Fall – Check out those leaves – NEA-Alaska Board Meeting

The state board met in Anchorage on September 20 and 21. All four of your representatives were present - Trena Richardson, Judy Salo, Kristi McEwen, and myself, Barbara Stek. Kristi was able to attend a new board member orientation and I met with the executive committee where



Every vote counts!

Zac Mannix, our Executive Director, presented his goals.

Matt Moser detailed his government relations report regarding upcoming elections and the Remember I'll skip ahead to tomorrow's Labor Walk with members of the AFL-CIO. Some of our folks walked neighborhoods in support of Chuck Kopp and Ted Eischeid, while I rode around putting up signs supporting education

for those who had requested them.

Vice President Laura Capelle has been active with our political agenda. She chaired the Alaska caucus at the Representative Assembly (RA). We are once again in TNT - The Northern Tier. We will have a joint meeting in Alaska next year. Kathy Simpler, NEA Director, let us know that the National Staff Organization (NSO) contract dispute which caused RA to be cancelled after just one day of business is settled. Action will be taken at their next board meeting on the NBIs from RA. The frequency of RA is again being considered.

In previous articles, you may have noticed similarities in the region reports. Just because a new school year has started, it seems that the issues remain the same - SPED concerns, numerous vacancies, rising health care costs. Some regions will be bargaining; one region's open bargaining was important to members. Our report, delivered by Trena, mentioned our new president, Joe Boyle, our October retreat, and political activities.

Zac presented his goals:

- Strategic Membership Growth: Right now, we are down members, but membership is in flux at this time of year.
- Establishing Cleansing Membership Data: Let's get our data up to date. Determine potential members versus objectors.
- Building on Staff Strength: Our resources are spread thin. We have a focus on establishing continuing education units with UAA for professional development. "Grow Your Own"
- Enhanced Committee and Member Ownership: Contribute to the actual work product - don't leave everything to the Board.

Zac reminded us that we need to be good stewards of our resources.

PACE Committee Proposal: A dues increase has been proposed. \$25.00 for certificated, 1/2 for ESPs - not changed since 1992

Here are some committee assignments: Susan Stitham - DA Review; Nancy Allen - Budget and Audit; Donna Williams - Steering and Rules; Barbara Stek - Executive Committee.

Fall Event was on October 18. Perhaps we were able to "capture" a few more pre-retired educators at this event.

— Barbara Stek

Member Spotlight

My name is Kristi McEwen. My Yup'ik name is Mingqun. My family makes our home on the ancestral lands of the Tanana Khwt'ana in Fairbanks. Originally from Mamterilliq (Bethel), I am an enrolled tribal member of Orutsararmuit Native Council. In 2021, I retired from the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District after 20 years as a music educator. I continue my teaching as a homeschool parent with a focus on learning through Indigenous perspectives with accurate and inclusive curricula. Equity and Indigenous representation are my passions, and I believe Alaska Native perspectives, voice, and leadership are the future of education in Alaska and beyond. It is an honor and privilege to serve our membership as NEA-Alaska Region R Director.

— Kristi McEwen



Representative Assembly | July 2–July 6, 2024

Steve Click and I were your elected delegates to the Retired Annual Meeting (RAM) which precedes RA and to the full Representative Assembly. RA was held in Philadelphia. Daily NEA-Alaska Caucus meetings were held at 7am. I served on the daily Preview Committee which met at 6am each day to study official RA business and make recommendations for caucus positions on New Business Items (NBIs), Standing Rules, and Resolutions that would be coming to the RA Floor.

During the daily NEA-Alaska Caucus meetings, our 50+ Alaska delegates heard candidates and other visitors speak and worked hard on raising money for the NEA fund. Retired members are encouraged to give generously to the NEAFund.org and, if possible, make monthly contributions (if you do not already do this, it's easy - please consider). We also spent time each day speaking with the Alaska Delegation, discussing the merits of joining NEA-Alaska/Retired as a pre-retired member. We were successful in boosting our membership by two or three. Most importantly, our caucus spent many hours considering the NBIs, thereby arriving at caucus positions to take to the floor each day.

This year, RA ended after only four days and after only two days on the floor because of a strike by NEA staff (National Education Association Staff Organization (NEASO)). Because the delegates to RA were not about to cross picket lines, RA was disbanded and the Bylaw and Constitutional amendments, as well as the national candidate elections, were all conducted by mail. The remaining NBIs (the great majority) were passed on to the NEA Board and Executive Committee for discussion, review, and possible action. Kathy Simpler, our NEA Director, will likely have an update at DA or before. The Alaska Delegation to RA met for an additional day after RA was disbanded and worked to take positions on as many of the NBIs as we could so that information could be passed to our Director as well as our NEA-Alaska Board of Directors. Laura Capelle (NEA-Alaska VP) was our acting chair of the delegation as President Tom Klaameyer had an unforeseen family matter which necessitated, he, miss RA. Laura did a fantastic job chairing the caucus and leading us through the difficult situation surrounding the work stoppage.

In the two floor sessions that we were in session, we heard some inspiring speeches, and we did address the first 6 NBIs. The results of these actions were as follows:

NBI 1 ADOPTED Building on the efforts of Fulfill the Promise (fulfillthepromise.net), in order to expand our network of community partners, stakeholders, and state and local affiliates to further our mission, in collaboration with state and local affiliates, NEA shall provide an online resource to enhance transparency in funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and add to the push towards full congressional funding of IDEA. The online resource will be hosted on nea.org and provide access to information on IDEA funding gaps by school district, as well as an advocacy action center where a user can find and send a pre-drafted, customizable email to their congressional representative expressing the importance of full congressional funding for IDEA. This initiative aims to inform and engage stakeholders across all zip codes, fostering community-driven discussions on optimizing IDEA funding for the betterment of local education. **Cost Implications** This item cannot be accomplished with current staff and resources under the 2024–26 Proposed Strategic Plan and Budget. It will cost an additional \$36,250.

NBI 2 ADOPTED NEA shall include in the annual budget report a breakdown of NEA organizational division spending with an overall amount allocated for each division. **Cost Implications** This item can be accomplished with current staff and resources under the 2024-26 Proposed Strategic Plan and Budget at no additional cost.

NBI 3 ADOPTED NEA will actively work to assist state and local affiliates in ending the attacks on public education and organized labor by: 1. Working with local and state leaders to create a common definition of strike and action readiness; 2. Ensuring that all state and local affiliates are aware of resources and trainings available through NEA on strike and/or action readiness; 3. Providing training to all interested state and local affiliates on strike and/or action readiness; 4. Helping state and local affiliates remove potential financial barriers to accessing trainings on strike and/or action readiness; 5. Assisting interested state and local affiliates to connect regionally and across the nation to build stronger solidarity and support networks; 6. Providing guidance and/or information to state and local affiliates interested in establishing strike/action/crisis funds; and 7. Integrating these tactics into the Campaign to Promote, Protect, and Strengthen Public Education. **Cost Implications** This item cannot be accomplished with current staff and resources under the 2024-26 Proposed Strategic Plan and Budget. It will cost an additional \$51,000.

NBI 4 DEFEATED**NBI 5 DEFEATED**

While it was disappointing for the national delegates who had traveled so far and worked so hard to attend and participate in Representative Assembly, it was nonetheless a great reminder of the thousands of committed NEA members, both active and retired who are fighting the good fight and who are focusing so hard on student learning and who are committed to making our schools a better place.

After the delegates had returned home, our President Becky Pringle wrote in an email:

“You responded with grace and care in the face of uncertainty, and I thank you for it. I am so proud of your leadership, determination, and creativity. You found ways to continue to work toward the goals of the RA – learning together and providing guidance to advance the NEA mission”.

As a footnote, NEA, and its staff union, NEASO, did recently reach a tentative agreement

And both parties have begun the process of seeking ratification of a successor agreement.

WASHINGTON—The following statement can be attributed to NEA Executive Director Kim Anderson and NEASO President Robin L. McLean:

“The National Education Association (NEA) and the National Education Association Staff Organization (NEASO) today reached a tentative agreement on a new contract. Both parties have begun the process of seeking ratification and approval of the tentative agreement. Details of this agreement and process are confidential pending ratification by both parties.”

Other notes:

2024 RA Elections (by mailed ballots to delegates)

Executive Committee | Three-year Term (2 Seats)

Elected Gladys Marquez 2,810 86.37%

Elected Ronald Duff Martin 2,590 79.61%

ESP At-Large Board of Directors | Three-year Term (2 Seats)

Elected Michelle Dennard 1,980 68.62%

Elected Amy Evans 1,797 62.28%

ESP At-Large Board of Directors | One-year Term (1 Seat)

Elected Dr. Karoline Bethea-Jones 1,706 53.33%

Higher Ed At-Large Board of Directors | Three-year Term (1 Seat)

Elected Clinton Smith 1,834 56.82%

We ended our RA PAC fundraising period at \$953,755 raised by delegates. This is an incredible amount and commitment by delegates.

Missy Testerman, an English as a Second Language Teacher in rural Tennessee, has been named the 2024 National Teacher of the Year.

Jen Bramson, an early childhood paraeducator in Park City, Utah, has been named the 2024 NEA Education Support Professional (ESP) of the Year.

– Howard Maxwell

Halibut Dip

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. cooked halibut, cut up or shredded
- 3 TBSP butter
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 C mayonnaise
- 1 C sour cream
- 1 C Parmesan cheese, shredded
- 1 TBSP dill weed (dried or fresh)
- 2 TBSP pickled jalapeño, diced
- 2 TBSP pickled jalapeño juice (or a little more)

Directions:

- Skin and cut halibut into 1½” pieces. Sauté in the butter and minced garlic. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. Then, shred or flake the fish. In a bowl, mix the sour cream, mayo, cheese, dill, jalapeño, and jalapeño juice. Add in the shredded fish and mix together.
- Preheat the oven to 350 F. Bake for 30 minutes until nice and bubbly. Serve with tortilla chips, crackers, or bread slices.

– Submitted by Sherry Blizzard

- Sherry’s friend Cory Carlo, Prevention Intervention Specialist at Randy Smith Middle School in Fairbanks, makes this wonderful warm dip for potlucks. It vanishes as soon as it is put on the table.

Alaska Retirement Management Board

The Alaska Retirement Management Board (ARM Board) met in Fairbanks this September 7th-9th at the Wedgewood Hotel. It was good to be back in my hometown in the northern region.

While many times, there were few in-person visitors at our meetings, this one saw more participants than usual. Several, including NEA-Alaska President Tom Klaameyer, testified regarding the notification of potential delays of pension checks for newly retired Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) members. Newly retired teachers and public employees were notified of possible delays of eight to ten weeks, some even longer. Testimony was clear—thank you for going the extra mile and getting us our retirement checks on time, but this cannot happen again. Some testified about the loss of vacation because of concern that they would be using savings for everyday expenses and even taking on another job to ensure house expenses were met. Kathy Lea, Director of the Division of Retirement and Benefits, explained the shortage of employees and how current and future employees are cross-trained to avoid potential delays in the future.

As of September 1, 2024, the total assets under management were \$44.2 Billion, with PERS at \$25.6 billion, TRS at \$11.7 Billion, and Deferred Compensation at \$1.3 Billion.

Membership in active tiers showed an expected decrease in PERS Tiers 1-3, TRS Tiers 1-2, and an increase in PERS Tier 4. However, there has also been a decrease in active TRS Tier 3 (the Defined Contribution tier in effect since June 2006) members. There is a 645-member decrease in active teachers statewide.

Every September, the ARM Board adopts the employer contribution rate for the following fiscal year, in this case, FY 2026. The rates are set a year in advance to allow employers (local and state) adequate time to adjust to the changes in contribution amounts.

Addressing the concern of the unfunded DB pension liability is paramount to the ARM Board. The board considered several funding scenarios, but again, we adopted the one that helped address the funding liability with a “pay more now” or “pay a lot more later” approach. The ARM Board recommended a higher rate of amortization; for FY 2026, the recommendation for PERS employer contribution to be 28.33% (compared with FY25 adopted 26.67%) and the TRS rate recommendation of 31.33% (compared with FY adopted rate of 28.59%).

By statutes, the contribution of non-state PERS employers is 22%, and that of TRS employers is 12.56%. The state pays

the difference. Therefore, if followed, the recommendations by the ARM Board would mean the additional contributions would come from general funds in the FY26 budget.

Even though the healthcare trust overfunding for both PERS and TRS dropped by about 5% last year, the projections remain to continue the overfunding and growth of both trusts. Currently, both PERS and TRS healthcare trusts are over 120% funded. Therefore, the ARM Board recommended that no normal cost contributions be made to healthcare trusts for FY26.

DRB sent a notice on September 16 to all persons with funds invested in Empower Managed Accounts (My Total Retirement) that those accounts were being closed as of November 16. All future deposits for current employees are placed into an age-appropriate Alaska Target Date Fund, and current funds would remain in the accounts they had been, but management by Empower would end. On the surface, this might seem to apply only to active members, but not entirely. The closure could impact retired members with an SBS (Supplemental Annuity Plan), an Alaska Deferred Compensation Plan, or a Defined Contribution account if they were enrolled in Managed Accounts.

You should have received the closure notice if you are a retired member enrolled in Managed Accounts with an SBS, Deferred Compensation, or Defined Contribution account. Here is the link to the notice, why the ARM Board recommended closing managed accounts, and common Q and A: <https://treasury.dor.alaska.gov/armb/managed-accounts>

The ARM Board working group on education, with the help of T. Rowe Price, developed information pieces.



- Alaska Target Retirement Trusts (video TRT 2:25 minutes)
- Alaska Pre-Retiree & Retiree Brochure
- Alaska Actives Brochure
- Your Investment Options

The Questions and Answers for managed Account closure above contain links to hypothetical examples and a glide path formula. Both are potentially useful to members with SBS or DC funds in a former managed accounts portfolio.

It is always wonderful to see members at the meetings. Our next meeting is December 3-5 in Anchorage at the Atwood Building. Tuesday is committee meetings, and Wednesday and Thursday is the board.

— *Sandi Ryan*

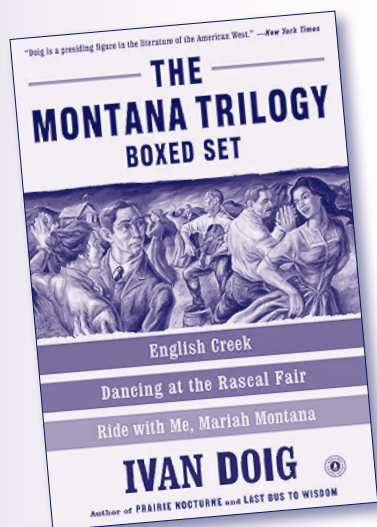
Book Blast

The Montana Trilogy

So many educators in Alaska have roots deep in the Northern High-Line of Montana and the Dakotas. Montana author, Ivan Doig weaves language and images to draw a masterpiece of the hopes, dreams and struggles of the immigrants, dirt farmers, power brokers and their descendants who came to the new territories from across the “Pond”.

The Montana Trilogy will be great winter reads, “English Creek”, “Dancing at the Rascal Fair”, and “Ride with Me, Mariah Montana”, will hook you into the lives of the Two Medicine Country and the Eastern Front of the Northern Rockies. Doig opens the hearts of his characters to us. Loss, betrayal, laughter and joy on the backdrop of the Big Sky.

— Kate Ortega



Why I Joined NEA-Alaska Pre-Retired



I joined NEA-Alaska Pre-Retired because I am committed to remaining a member of our union throughout my career as an educator, and into my post-retirement days. For me, it was an easy decision, and one that brings me great comfort. I feel secure in the knowledge that I will stay connected to my union siblings and keep pace with the important goings-on in our union and in our state.

Our NEA-Alaska/Retired local is powerful. The thoughtfulness, perspective, and candor members bring to conversations concerning education and unionism is inspiring. I feel truly fortunate to be able to have these conversations with educators who know far more than me about many of the issues we are grappling with today. It seems only natural that I would want to join such a group!

Of course, I am reassured in the knowledge I will continue to receive all the fabulous NEA Member Benefits I enjoy now, as a Pre-Retired member. But the real reason I chose a Pre-Retired membership is my commitment to public education in Alaska and our union. It is exciting to me that union involvement and our advocacy do not end after retirement, and that I can stay active with my union siblings in the work to which we have dedicated our professional lives.

I am NEA-Alaska Pre-Retired, so I know I will continue to be a part of the conversation, continue to help, and continue to work for the well-being of students, families, and education in Alaska. It seems more and more of my friends are moving into this storied group of NEA-Alaska educators. I am so happy to know that I will eventually join them, too!

— Laura Capelle

Membership

Congratulations to those of you elected to NEA-Alaska Delegate Assembly 2025! It's always an exciting time to see friends from all over the state and do NEA-Alaska and NEA business in a democratic manner. It's also a time for us to encourage active educators to join us as lifetime members of NEA-Alaska/Retired. If you are coming to DA, our theme for our NEA-Alaska/Retired table this year is “You Otter Join Us”. Delegates, please bring an otter gift to DA for our newly “captured” members. I love that NEA National has coined the phrase, “capturing new members”. Ideas for otter gifts can be a coffee mug, sticky notes, etc. Amazon has several “otter” ideas.

Have fun with this!

Before I go, I want to thank Pat Desmet for so willingly helping with a DA table every year. I also wish to thank Barbara Stek for doing a membership table at the Fall Event. Thank you, too, to all of you who volunteer at the membership table at DA and fall event. See you in January at DA. We “otter” have a great DA.

— Barb George



Still True Today

Gayle Harbo, wrote an article 13 years ago, it was titled “Don’t Apologize For Your Pension – You Earned It”. Much of what Gayle said in her article is still true today!

- Public employees and teachers still get attacked on the perceived thought that they receive “extraordinary” benefits.
- Many still attack public education and the salaries and benefits of education employees. As Gayle said in her article, years ago, “I would defy any one of them to spend two weeks managing a class of public-school children - they would soon be singing a different tune”.
- The “Defined Benefit” pension system is still being scrutinized.
- Pension dollars that have flowed into Alaskan communities, and the services required to help these retirees have resulted in the creation of thousands of new jobs for younger Alaskans. National studies have shown that for every dollar paid in public pension funds, more than six dollars is generated back to communities.
- Defined Benefit public education employees have contributed significant amounts to their pensions, provide services to all who walk through the school house door and give a continuity of commitment during good times and difficult times in the economy. These PERS and TRS retirees still

need to contact members of the Chamber of Commerce, Borough Assembly, City Council and “talk radio” and not apologize, but indicate their benefits provide a great value to the Alaskan Economy.

- Since the inception of the Defined Contribution plan, the employee turnover rate still remains at a high level. Many educators have left their profession and to employment elsewhere, and receive better salaries and benefits.
- The reason why you should not apologize for receiving your pension, in addition to the fact that you committed your life to delivering an exceptional education to the public education students you taught, often providing materials and supplies out of your own pocket, always offering support to students who often did not receive support at home, is that your service to your school and community provided consistent quality programs and a stable work force.
- Retirees commit thousands of hours of volunteer service to Alaskan communities, provide stability, wisdom, and a sense of continuity to their cities and villages of residence. Don’t apologize for the pensions you earned - you have provided memorable education experiences to thousands of children. **Be proud of what you accomplished - you earned your retirement – ENJOY IT.**

– Gayle Harbo and Annie Baker



WITH YOUR NEA-RETIRED “GET OUT THE VOTE” PLAN

On July 23, 2024, NEA endorsed Vice-President Kamala Harris for President. At the Democratic National Committee convention, Kamala was nominated by delegates to be the Democrat candidate for President of the United States. On August 22, 2024, Kamala accepted their nomination. Former public school teacher and coach, Tim Walz, has accepted nomination as her Vice-Presidential running mate. **NOW IT'S OUR TURN TO GET OUT THE VOTE AND ELECT KAMALA HARRIS AND TIM WALZ!**

How do we do that? Look Below—and use the NEA-Retired “Get Out the Vote” Plan!

1. Make a list of 10 people.
2. Contact them and find out if they plan to vote – if not let them know the importance of voting this year:
 - Securing Social Security and Medicare • Funding Public Education • Ensuring a woman’s right to make her own health care decisions with her doctor • Keeping the Affordable Care Act • Guaranteeing our democratic freedoms, such as the right to vote
3. What method will they use to vote?
 - Will they vote early? • Absentee Ballot (by mail or turn in to the appropriate government office)? • In-Person (at designated voting location)? • Do they need assistance, i.e. a ride to their designated polling place (either early or on Election Day)?
4. Follow-up prior to Election Day to be sure that they still plan to vote and if they need assistance.
5. Contact them after Election Day and thank them for voting!

HOW WILL I CREATE MY LIST OF TEN VOTERS?

(Family • Friends • Neighbors • Acquaintances • Co-Workers • Former Students)

Retirees' Tips, Tricks & Tidbits

We made this “Little Library” out of scrap materials from our various remodels in our house. The roof is made of flooring material, the main part of the house was made from leftover door wood and paneling, and the base was an old tree that our neighbor had left over. The door was plexiglass and dowel rods. The color of the library is left over paint from our house.

– Lori Mertes



Let's have some fun!

Congratulations go to Ruthie Knight, retired member from Valdez, Alaska. Ruth was the winner of the last “Where in the World” article in the Spring/Summer 2024 issue of the newsletter.

(Barbara Stek was in Cashmere, WA, at the Riverside Memorial Park, standing with the bronze statues commemorating 9/11.)

OK, READY, SET TO GO! WHERE IN THE WORLD WERE PAMELA LLOYD AND BARB GEORGE?

You are welcome to guess where Pam and Barb were, email your guess to annie_b@mac.com. The deadline for submitting your guess for the picture in this newsletter is December 15, 2024, and you must mention “Where in the World” in the subject line. Correct guesses will be entered into a drawing, and the winner will receive a \$25 Visa card mailed directly to them.

*Our NEA-Alaska/Retired Board members, NEA-Alaska/Retired committee members, NEA-Alaska Board members, NEA-Retired committee members, and NEA committee members are not eligible to make a guess.

The winner will be revealed in our next newsletter.

– Annie Baker



Help Us Find You!

Please make sure we have your current mailing address, phone number, and email address. Contact Makana Bender at (907) 274-0536 to make any changes to your information.





4100 Spenard Road
Anchorage, AK 99517
www.neaalaska.org or
email: info@neaalaska.org

Your Vote Counts!

www.elections.alaska.gov

Important information regarding the
2024 General Election can be found at the
State of Alaska – Division of Elections.

2024 NEA-ALASKA PACE RECOMMENDATIONS

BALLOT MEASURES



VOTE YES ON 1

To support working families



VOTE NO ON 2

To protect open primaries



VOTE TO RETAIN ALL JUDGES

U.S. HOUSE

U.S. Rep. Mary Peltola



ALASKA STATE SENATE

- **Senate B:** Sen. Jesse Kiehl
- **Senate D:** Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
- **Senate H:** Sen. Matt Claman
- **Senate J:** Sen. Forrest Dunbar
- **Senate L:** Sen. Kelly Merrick
- **Senate P:** Sen. Scott Kawasaki
- **Senate R:** Savannah Fletcher
- **Senate T:** Sen. Donny Olson

ALASKA STATE HOUSE

- **HD 1:** Grant Echohawk*
- **HD 1:** Agnes Moran*
- **HD 2:** Rep. Rebecca Himschoot
- **HD 3:** Rep. Andi Story
- **HD 4:** Rep. Sara Hannan
- **HD 5:** Rep. Louise Stutes
- **HD 6:** Brent Johnson
- **HD 9:** Ky Holland
- **HD 10:** Rep. Chuck Kopp
- **HD 11:** Walter Featherly
- **HD 12:** Rep. Calvin Schrage
- **HD 13:** Rep. Andy Josephson
- **HD 14:** Rep. Alyse Galvin
- **HD 15:** Denny Wells
- **HD 16:** Carolyn Hall
- **HD 17:** Rep. Zack Fields
- **HD 18:** Rep. Cliff Groh
- **HD 19:** Rep. Genevieve Mina
- **HD 20:** Rep. Andrew Gray
- **HD 21:** Rep. Donna Mears
- **HD 22:** Ted Eischeid
- **HD 31:** Rep. Maxine Dibert
- **HD 34:** Joy Beth Cottle
- **HD 35:** Rep. Ashley Carrick
- **HD 36:** Brandon Putuuqti Kowalski
- **HD 37:** Rep. Bryce Edgmon
- **HD 38:** Rep. CJ McCormick
- **HD 39:** Rep. Neal Foster
- **HD 40:** Robyn Niayuq Burke

*Dual Endorsement

• Former/Present Educator

NEA-Alaska PACE is a non-partisan committee of your colleagues elected by their peers. Their candidate recommendations are made based on support for public education and educators regardless of party affiliation.

Calendar of Events

November 2024

11/1–11/2 NEA-Alaska Board Meeting

11/5 *Election Day* – *Get Out The Vote*

December 2024

12/15 “Where in the World” guess deadline

January 2025

1/14–1/15 NEA-Alaska Board Meeting

1/16 PARSA Meeting

1/16 NEA-Alaska/Retired Policy Assembly

1/16–1/18 NEA-Alaska Delegate Assembly

1/19 NEA-Alaska/Retired Board Meeting

March 2025

3/9–3/11 NEA-Retired Conference

Editor: Annie Baker

This newsletter is the official publication of NEA-Alaska/Retired, printed four times a year. Retired members are encouraged to submit articles, as well as voice comments and concerns. Articles should be sent in Word via email, with “Newsletter” in the subject line, to Annie Baker: annie_b@mac.com