

NEA-Alaska/Retired

Spring/Summer 2026 • Volume XL • No. 3

Aloha

As a member of the NEA Resolutions Committee representing all NEA-Retired members, I was asked to join two other subcommittees of the NEA-Retired governance. Today's message is from the NEA-Retired Benefits Committee:

Part of being a member of NEA-Retired/NEA-Alaska/Retired is a benefits package, and we have access to almost all of them. By going to [NEA Member Benefits | Teacher Discounts, Educator Discounts & NEA Savings](#), you can read over the large number of goodies that you may not know are available to you as an NEA-Retired member.

There is one new package of benefits that has just been added: Save with Shopping and Dining Discounts for Educators.

[Shopping, Dining & Cash Back Discounts for Educators | NEA Shop & Dine](#)



NEA Shop & Dine helps educators (that's us) save with restaurant discounts, digital gift cards, and cash back on everyday shopping. Make the most of your membership today!

Most of our NEA-Alaska/Retired members continue living in Alaska, so some of these benefits (for example, restaurant dining) may not be available locally, but when you travel out of state, they are there for you. I live in Hawaii and found just one nearby restaurant, but there were many choices for flights to the West

Coast available (but I need to find out if the offered prices are real savings).

In conclusion (sounds like a report in class), the "NEA Shop & Dine Program" is a complimentary program that allows you to save on shopping and dining, plus earn instant cash back on everyday purchases through an easy-to-use mobile app, customized just for NEA members. NEA Member Benefits' mission is to help you do more while spending less.



Any questions about your benefits??? Head to the NEA website: [NEA Member Benefits | Teacher Discounts, Educator Discounts & NEA Savings](#).

— Steve Click

Empower: Fees are Changing Effective July 1, 2026

State of Alaska - Defined Contribution Plans and the Deferred Compensation Plan

The State of Alaska Division of Retirement and Benefits (DRB) is entering into a new contract period with Empower beginning July 1, 2026. The purpose of this contract is for Empower to provide recordkeeping service, benefit education, financial advice/guidance services, for the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) and the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) Defined Contribution Retirement (DCR) Plans, the Supplemental Annuity Plan (SBS), and the Alaska 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan. Due to recommendations provided by the Alaska Retirement Management Board (ARMB) the recordkeeping fee charged by Empower has transitioned from an asset-based fee structure to a flat fee structure.

[Download the brochure here](#)

https://drb.alaska.gov/docs/brochures/empowerFeesBrochure_2026.pdf



— Taken from the Alaska Dept. of Administration Division of Retirement & Benefits

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President's Corner



Delegate Assembly:

Wow, it's already the beginning of another Delegate Assembly season. It seems to roll around a bit earlier every year.

For those of you who may not know, Delegate Assembly is the annual meeting where more than 300 NEA-Alaska members gather in Anchorage for three days to debate key educational issues, vote on resolutions, and establish the

organization's legislative agenda, budget, and yearly policies.

NEA-Alaska/Retired is usually allocated 35 delegates. Many of our members have been elected multiple times, but we also have many first-time delegates. It's a wonderful way to continue to contribute to our profession and our union after retirement. It's also an opportunity to reconnect with old friends and colleagues and to make new friends.

You can find the self-nomination form and instructions for completing it on page 11 of this newsletter. My advice is to submit your nomination as soon as possible. Every year, some members plan to submit their nomination but put it off until it is too late.

Leadership

Newly elected NEA-Alaska/Retired Officers, Directors at Large, and Region R Directors begin their terms July 5, 2026. These volunteer positions require time, energy, and commitment. Although these are not full-time positions, there are weeks when it certainly feels like they are. Please welcome and support the following members in their upcoming positions.

NEA-Alaska/Retired Board of Directors

Pamela Lloyd, President
Roxanne Abajian, Vice President
Barbara Stek, Secretary
Gayle Harbo, Treasurer
Annie Baker, Director at Large
Tim Parker, Director at Large
Sandi Ryan, Director at Large

NEA-Alaska Board of Directors

Trena Richardson
Dianne K. Shibe
Barbara Stek
Tim Parker

NEA-Alaska PACE Committee

Dianne K. Shibe
Ernie Kirby
Sandi Ryan
Tim Parker



I'm pleased to pass the "President's Corner" baton over to Pamela Lloyd, your new incoming NEA-Alaska/Retired President. I'm confident she will keep you informed.

This will be my last column as president since I chose not to run for a second term. Even though I'm an older dog now, I learned a few things over the past two years.

- First, NEA-Alaska/Retired is an exceptional organization among the various state retired organizations. Thanks to the members who first built this organization and the members who continue that work, our funding is solid, joining and maintaining memberships is relatively simple, and our role within NEA-Alaska is supportive but not intrusive. As a whole, we are respected and welcomed by the active members.
- Many members dedicate some of their precious retirement time to the organization, and a small but still substantial number dedicate a great deal of their time. I want to express my gratitude to some of them. Roxanne Abajian, our vice president and former president, has always been available to answer my questions and point me in the right direction when I veered off course. Gayle Harbo, who is our treasurer, and Roxanne made a simple, clear budget that is easy to stick to. Gayle keeps track of our spending in perfect detail, which made planning and spending less stressful. Barbara Stek, our secretary, takes notes at all our meetings. The minutes she produced have always been clear, and I would not have been able to function without them. Annie Baker, our

Communications Committee Chair, works hard, putting in many hours to produce our newsletters. Annie also “communicates” with our national retired organization, and always keeps me up to date. Susan Stitham has always been available to offer assistance and advice. Barb George and Cindy Lou Aillaud, the two membership chairs during my term, have been outstanding, hard-working, and extremely creative while setting up our membership drive table at DA. They have kept track of our membership by working with NEA-Alaska staff to ensure dues payments for membership are made, and the list of our members is kept up to date. There have been so many more, including staff members Makana Bender, Lynn Metcalfe, Jennifer Wright, Laura Bartholomae, Susie Smythe, Zac Mannix, KD Roope, and, of course, our staff liaison Jessica Minquez.

I want to thank NEA-Alaska Presidents Tom Klaameyer and Laura Capelle, and NEA-Alaska Government Relations Director Matt Moser, all of whom go above and beyond to include and support NEA-Alaska/Retired.

And finally, a big thank you to all of our members, who provide the giant shoulders future generations will stand on.

— *Respectfully, Joe Boyle*

Legislative Update

NEA-Retired is submitting an NBI to the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and to the 2026 NEA Representative Assembly, which passed with unanimous support. The NBI reads as follows: I move that the NEA, in conjunction with the NEA-Retired, work to remove the maximum amount of earnings on which you must pay social security tax so that all earned income is taxed.

Kim Trinca, Director of NEA Government Relations, gave an update on what is and is not happening in Congress. We expect the FY27 budget sometime next week, but it will be a “skinny” budget. A “skinny” budget is presented during the first year of a president’s term. To submit that in the second year of a term, Trinca called it a dereliction of duty.

Top priorities for NEA are bills protecting safe spaces, including schools, churches, etc.; stopping illegal behavior by Customs and Border Patrol and ICE; and removing mask mandates and requiring identification. Bills would also include working with local police

authorities. DHS funding is still under negotiation in the Senate.

The SAVE America Act is stuck in the Senate, as Majority Leader Thune does not have the 60 votes needed to pass, and several Republicans have said they will not vote for the Bill. The Senate is debating the Bill. The Administration is trying to tie the Bill to DHS funding. The president says this Bill is his top priority.

A question was asked about H.R. 7361—No Tax on Restored Benefits Act. This Bill, introduced in February, would prohibit taxing restored benefits, such as those gained when GPO/WEP was eliminated. This Bill currently sits in the Ways and Means Committee, and no action has been taken.

— *Pamela Lloyd*

Navigating Family Caregiving

There are many types of caregivers: professional, family, volunteer, and informal. Family caregivers are the most common type of caregiving. Early caregiving usually involves parents being the primary caregivers to their children. Later in life, caregiving might shift: children might care for a parent, or a spouse might have to care for their partner. This can be on many levels: doctor visits, medication management, and legal and financial matters. Here are many things for you to think about and know, along with some helpful websites.

Guardianship: a legal arrangement where a court grants a caregiver the authority to make personal and financial decisions for an incapacitated adult or minor child.

[Alaska Court System—SELF-HELP](#)

[Adult Guardianship—Background Information](#)

Powers of Attorney: a legal document that authorizes a trusted person (the “agent”) to make financial or healthcare decisions on your behalf; it remains valid and active even if you become incapacitated. Two types of durable powers of attorney are financial and medical/healthcare.

[Alaska Power of Attorney Booklet](#)

[Alaska Advance Health Care Directive Form](#)

Social Security: If your loved one cannot manage their funds, you can apply to become their “Representative Payee”. This legally designates you to receive and spend their Social Security or SSI money on their behalf.

[Social Security—Representative Payee Program](#)

[Spotlight on Living Arrangements—2026 Edition](#)

Health Insurance: Does the person you are taking care of have some type of health insurance? If your family member is 65 or older or has certain disabilities, explore Medicare coverage options on [Medicare.gov](#). Check to see if they have supplemental insurance. If you relocate your family member to another state, check whether their supplemental health insurance will follow them. You might have to get new supplemental insurance if it doesn’t.

Financial Information: Helpful information you might need to know about your family member.

- Monthly Income
- Assets & Debt
- Life Insurance Policies
- Tax Returns
- Estate Planning: Wills, Deeds, Trusts

Family Members’ Personal Information: Know where documents are located.

- Full legal name
- Social Security number
- Legal residence
- Birth Certificates, marriage certificates, divorce paperwork, adoption paperwork, and citizenship papers
- Military records
- Names and phone numbers of doctors, lawyers, financial advisors, relatives, and close friends
- [VA Benefits and Services](#)

Living Arrangements:

- Some things to consider when making living arrangements for your family member: medical needs, budget, and desired level of independence.

Transportation:

For those whose physical or cognitive disabilities prevent them from riding fixed-route public transit.

- **Anchorage:** Managed by [AnchorRIDES](#). Reservations and eligibility assessments can be made by calling (907) 343-6543 (Option 2).
- **Fairbanks:** Managed by the [Van Tran](#) program. Contact (907) 459-1196 for service modification requests or to schedule.
- **Juneau:** [Capital Transit](#) features wheelchair-accessible buses, supplemented by complementary paratransit services for qualified riders.

Dietary Needs: Knowing your family member’s nutritional needs is essential for managing chronic conditions, preventing malnutrition, and maintaining their energy. Tailored diets prevent dangerous medical complications, like blood sugar spikes in diabetics or high blood pressure in those with hypertension. Consult your family member’s doctor to see if they have specific dietary needs.

Senior Centers: Check the senior centers in the area where you live, in or out of Alaska. Senior centers are vital hubs; many provide hot meals, transportation, socialization, and advocacy. Here are some of Alaska’s senior centers:

Anchor Point

Center: Anchor Point Senior Citizens

Address: 72750 Milo Fritz Ave, Anchor Point, AK 99556

Phone: (907) 235-7788

Anchorage

Center: Anchorage Senior Activity Center

Address: 1300 E 19th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99501

Phone: (907) 770-2000

Chugiak/Eagle River

Center: Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center
Address: 22424 Birchwood Loop Rd, Chugiak, AK 99567
Phone: (907) 688-2655

Fairbanks

Center: Fairbanks Senior Center/North Star Council on Aging
Address: 1424 Moore St., Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: (907) 452-1735

Homer

Center: Homer Senior Citizens, Inc.
Address: 3935 Svedlund St., Homer, AK 99603
Phone: (907) 235-3436

Juneau

Center: Juneau Senior Center
Address: 895 W 12th St., Suite 160, Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: (907) 463-6196

Kenai

Center: Kenai Senior Citizens Center
Address: 361 Senior Ct, Kenai, AK 99611
Phone: (907) 283-4156

Ketchikan

Center: Ketchikan Senior Center
Address: 1016 Water St., Ketchikan, AK 99901
Phone: (907) 225-6575

North Pole

Center: Santa's Senior Citizens
Address: 101 E 5th Ave, North Pole, AK 99705
Phone: (907) 488-4663

Palmer

Center: Mat-Su Senior Services
Address: 1132 S Chugach St., Palmer, AK 99645
Phone: (907) 745-5454

Seward

Center: Seward Senior Citizens Center
Address: 336 3rd Ave, Seward, AK 99664
Phone: (907) 224-5604

Talkeetna

Center: Upper Susitna Community & Senior Center
Address: 16463 E Helena Dr., Talkeetna, AK 99676
Phone: (907) 733-6200

Valdez

Center: Valdez Senior Center, Inc.
Address: 1300 E Hanagita St., Valdez, AK 99686
Phone: (907) 835-2126

Wasilla

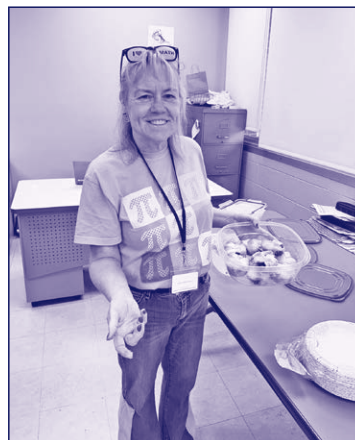
Center: Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. (WASI)
Address: 1301 S Century Cir, Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone: (907) 376-3104

Taking Care of Yourself: Caregiving is demanding, and prioritizing your own well-being is essential, not selfish. You can stay strong and full of energy to give your loved one the best care possible by setting limits, taking care of your physical and mental health, and asking for help. Check your area for Family Caregiver Support Programs.

- **Alaska Family Caregiver Support Program:** Alaska's Family Caregiver Support Program helps caregivers of all ages who care for someone 60 or older and grandparents 55 or older raising grandchildren. [State of Alaska Department of Health—Family Caregiver Support Program](#).

— Annie Baker

Retirees Making a Difference



Laura with pies

NEA-Alaska/Retired member Laura Farley retired from MSEA last year, 2025. Laura volunteered in her daughter's classroom this school year during "Math Week" at the Black Hawk Middle School in Madison, Wisconsin. On one of the days, they made mini pies for PI DAY. Laura said she had a "great" time.

NEA-Alaska/Retired member Rebecca Paul retired from KPBSD in 2020. Rebecca read to K-1 students at the Voznesenka School in the Kenai Peninsula School District, in Alaska, during "Read Across America Week" this year.



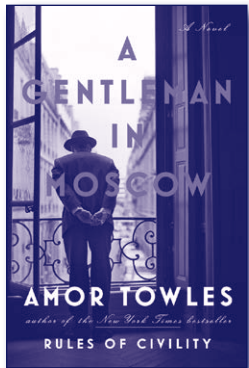
Rebecca reading

Book Blast

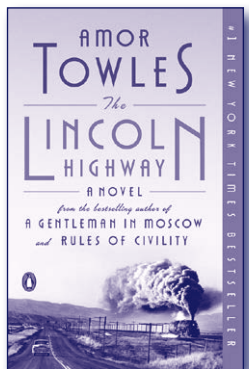
A Gentleman in Moscow and The Lincoln Highway

Novels by Amor Towles

Amor Towles is a master of drawing characters that we feel we know. He shows us their hearts, loves, hopes, and pain.



In *A Gentleman in Moscow*, we meet Count Alexander Rostov, a Russian aristocrat sentenced to living in a tiny attic room of the elegant Metropol Hotel by a Bolshevik tribunal. Through his eyes, we see his youth as a young Russian aristocrat. After the terror of surviving the Revolution, Rostov returns to Russia from his exile in France, only to be isolated with his ghosts under house arrest in a dank attic room in the Metropol. Rostov's wit and charm come through as he reminisces. He treasures his memories and finds joy in entertaining the precocious young girl, Nina Kulikova. She is the daughter of a Ukrainian bureaucrat who lives in the hotel. Nina is left on her own to amuse herself and becomes Rostov's shadow, as she instigates many adventures that enrich his humble existence and give her the companionship of a grandfather. Ready for college, she leaves as a young adult, only to return years later to entrust her daughter, Sophia, into Rostov's protection.



In *The Lincoln Highway*, Towles looks again at class structure ... in 1950's America. Emmett returns home from a 15-month stint at the Salinas juvenile facility for involuntary manslaughter. He and his little brother, Billy, are left orphaned to fend for themselves. The adults who surround them are dismissive of their situation. Their neighbor, Sally, a friend of Emmett, protects and cares for Billy while Emmett is in jail. She is a true friend to both boys. As their father is dead and their farm is foreclosed, they plan for their next chapter. Emmett wants to go to Texas, and Billy has his heart set on going to California to find their mother, who had

deserted the family years ago. Before they take off, two inmates/friends of Emmett's from Salinas show up at the farm, informing him that they escaped in the trunk of the warden's car when he gave Emmett a ride home. Duchess is a good-natured master of chaos who hides a dark side, and Wooley is a quiet introvert with problems of his own. He is an abandoned aristocrat left to fend for himself in a world he is ill-prepared. Each character has a strong sense of what is right and wrong from their own perspective. Towles gives insights into their inner thoughts and motivations. America post-World War II is in transition, and so are these young people. Billy might be the youngest, but with his strong heart and empathy, he helps the characters survive. His friendship with Ulysses, a sad and isolated World War II vet, transforms them both and helps the young brothers survive the evils that enter along the journey. Readers will not be disappointed as they travel with Emmett and Billy as they try to reach their dreams without losing themselves.

— Kate Ortega

Health Benefit Contact Information

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

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

Lantern
Member Services
(855) 715-1680

Teladoc Health
Member Services
(855) 835-2362

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

**Standard Plan Vision Benefits:
Vision Service Plan (VSP)**
Member Services
(800) 877-7195

Pharmacy Benefits: Optum Rx
Member Service
(855) 409-6999

Hinge Health
Member Services
(855) 902-2777



NIRS 2026

The National Institute on Retirement Security recently held its 17th Annual Retirement Policy Conference on March 2-3, 2026, in Washington, D.C. The event brought together policymakers, researchers, industry leaders, and pension plan executives to discuss important issues facing retirement security in America. I had the pleasure of attending this conference.

The conference began with a keynote from Honorable Martin O'Malley, former Social Security Commissioner and Governor of Maryland. He spoke about how Social Security is at a crossroads and why it's important for Americans to have a program they can trust and rely on for retirement. This was followed by a discussion of how rising living and housing costs, along with inflation, are making retirement planning more challenging for everyone.

Christian Weller, professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston, addressed the uncertainty many feel about retirement today. A panel discussion followed about Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1980) and their unique retirement saving challenges, featuring author Kerry Hannon and Jason Fichtner from the LIMRA Alliance for Lifetime Income.

A panel, referencing Kerry Hannon's book 'Retirement Bites,' focused on Generation X's retirement preparation and offered practical advice to improve savings and planning.

Key Highlights from the Conference Panel:

1. Many Gen Xers currently struggle with financial stress, primarily due to stagnant wages, high housing prices, and limited retirement savings. The panel explored how these specific factors impact their ability to retire comfortably.
2. Financial Literacy and Education: Kerry Hannon stressed that understanding basic financial concepts and planning can help people prepare better for retirement. She shared simple, practical tips for improving savings and making informed decisions.
3. Speakers discussed how events such as the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have made it harder for many people to save for retirement.
4. The panel presented different ways to save for retirement, including workplace plans, IRAs, and health savings accounts (HSAs).
5. Experts suggested making it easier to join retirement savings plans and providing more financial education to help more people save for the future. They also discussed the need to address the rising cost of living.

The conference underscored that planning ahead and using available resources are essential for financial security in retirement.

U.S. Representative Thomas Suozzi concluded the conference by discussing ways to make long-term care more affordable for seniors through new policy ideas.

Experts and leaders in retirement planning attended the event and worked together to improve retirement security for everyone.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the NEA-Alaska Board for the trust and confidence in nominating me again for the Alaska Retirement Management Board (ARMB). Since there has been no appointment by this administration, I will unfortunately not be continuing in this role and will not be submitting further updates on the ARMB work. It has been an honor to serve on the ARMB for the past four years and to keep you updated.

— Sandi Ryan

Lyn's Family Favorite Cheese Pie (Quiche)

Gather:

- 9 1/2" deep dish pie pan
- 4 cup measure (or 1 cup, plus a standard-size mixing bowl)
- Homemade or store-bought pie crust (from the refrigerator section)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup eggs (beaten), slightly less or more is ok
- 1 cup milk (2%, whole)
- 1 cup shredded cheese (any kind, substitute (along with the shredded cheese) 1/4 cup cottage cheese.
- 1 cup (cooled) roasted, sautéed, and/or frozen (thawed) vegetables*— roughly chopped.

Preparation:

- Preheat oven to 350°
- Shape the pie crust in the pie pan
- Gently mix all ingredients and slowly pour into the prepared pie shell.
- Bake for 1 hour (five to 10 minutes longer if living at a high altitude). It's done when the top and the pie crust are browned.

Serve hot. It can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Serve with salad for dinner or microwave for a quick breakfast. This recipe is flexible and forgiving, plus a great use of leftover vegetables.

**mushrooms, spinach, broccoli, or asparagus. I've used chopped or ground sausage, even leftover bacon (but who has leftover bacon?).*

— Lyn Ballam, Tucson, AZ - (retired FEA)

Where in the World?

Wow! We had many, many correct guesses for Roxanne Abajian's location in the Winter 2026 "Where in the World" article. We had many correct answers, one of which was a little more detailed and mentioned the addresses of both theatres in the background. Our winning member is Celia Foley, Anchorage, Alaska. Roxanne was in Midtown Manhattan, in New York, on 44th St by the Majestic Theater (246 W 44th St) and the St. James Theater (245 W 44th St).

OK, ready for a new location to figure out?

Let's see who can guess the location of our NEA-Alaska/Retired "Book Blast" writer, Kate Ortega, by sending an email to me, Annie Baker, at annie_b@mac.com, with your guess. The deadline for submitting your guess is August 31st, 2026. Please mention "Where in the World" in the subject line and include your home address. 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, and NEA-Alaska Board members are not eligible to make a guess.*

The winner will be revealed in our next newsletter.

— Annie Baker



Membership Drive a Soaring Success

This year's membership drive was a "raven" success at the recruiting table during the NEA-Alaska, 2026, Delegate Assembly. Volunteers were "cawmazing", and gifts brought to the table were a "cawlllection" of raven-themed items. As a result of their efforts, NEA-Alaska/Retired gained 16 new pre-retired members. That's enough to form a conspiracy! A big thank you goes out to all who made this a success, and a big welcome to our pre-retired members.

Big thanks also to President Laura Capelle for her patience with the retirees and their raven theme. She tolerated the raven jokes and the "cawcaw-phony" of caws whenever a membership update was given at the mic. President Capelle was "cawsome"!

— Cindy Lou Aillaud



Retirees' Tips, Tricks & Tidbits



Although we are sad to see Makana Bender leave, we would like to welcome our new NEA-Alaska Associate Staff person assigned to our NEA-Alaska/Retired local, Lena Gonzales!

Welcome
TO THE TEAM

NEA-Alaska Board of Directors Meeting

March & June 2026

I could not think of a catchy title to preface this report of the latest doings of your retired members on the state board. So, we will just dive in with information from the meeting held in Juneau, March 30-31. Each region gave brief reports, which often centered on the status of contract negotiations, the lack of district finances, neighborhood school closures, healthcare, and the loss of non-tenured educators.

The Region R group, that's us, continues to work on updating our policies. We did gain 16 pre-retired members at January's Delegate Assembly. Our members participated in Read Across America events as well as several national conferences.

Matt Moser provided updates on the latest in legislation and scheduled appointments so that we were able to visit with our respective legislators. Most visits were positive - there are many legislators who welcome our input and who respond favorably to these visits. We should thank them whenever possible for their support of us.

Fast forward to our next state board meeting held in Anchorage at the end of May. There have been lots of staffing changes. Makana Bender, who was always a great help to our retired group, has resigned. New folks have been appointed to the PACE Committee and to board positions. One of the bigger changes involves our NEA Director, Kathy Simpler, who is retiring. Our policy dictates that the NEA-Alaska President fill that position

until the next election cycle, which will be after Delegate Assembly 2027.

You may be seeing a poll regarding a name change for NEA-Alaska. The poll will provide a clear fiscal note along with the pros and cons of such a change, along with some proposed names. We will address this issue again at our September meeting.

An ad hoc committee was formed to provide policy regarding the naming of NEA-Alaska spaces and/or rooms. Tim Parker and Trena Richardson will co-chair. Susan Stitham will be a member.

We approved the local capacity matching grants. Winners of the education scholarships were notified.

Outgoing board members were recognized - our own Kristi McEwen is leaving the board. Her thoughtful presence will be missed by all of us.

Dianne Shibe joined this meeting as an incoming board member. She will be serving a one-year term beginning in July. Tim Parker will represent us on the Board's Executive Committee this coming year.

Our next meeting will be in September.

— *Respectfully submitted by Barbara Stek on behalf of Kristi McEwen, Trena Richardson, Tim Parker, Region R Directors, NEA-Alaska Board.*

Communications

NEA-Alaska/Retired

I am happy to report our retired members are beginning to submit blurbs and photos of their volunteer work; we can showcase many of these on our retired [website](#), [Facebook Page](#), and newsletter.

NEA-Retired Virtual Communications

At our last NEA-Retired Virtual Communications meeting, held on April 20, 2026, we discussed recommendations regarding our retired newsletters. Here are the recommendations that were submitted to the NEA-Retired Executive Council, along with their respective outcomes.

1. Affiliates using paid professionals, including staff, to layout/format their newsletters will be judged separately

from peer affiliates who do not. **Motion tabled until the October Executive Council meeting.**

2. The NEA-Retired President will poll state retired presidents to determine which states use professional staff to format their newsletters. **Motion passed.**
3. Affiliates are eligible to compete for the NEA-Retired Communication awards in any newsletter category if they make use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist in editing their own content. However, affiliates are ineligible to compete if Artificial Intelligence is used to produce the text of the articles. **Motion passed.**

When we meet again for the 2026–2027 school year, one of our topics will be on retired state affiliate websites.

— *Respectfully, Annie Baker*

Redefining the Routine

I asked the 2026 NEA-Alaska/Retired Delegate Assembly delegates what they are doing in retirement. Here are some of the responses:

Lori Mertes

Being retired does not mean we stop leading the profession. On April 18, 2026, I was installed as the new Alaska State President for Alpha Delta Kappa. Alpha Delta Kappa supports the professional efforts of outstanding women educators. Since 1947, over 125,000 women educators around the world have discovered the many opportunities provided by membership in Alpha Delta Kappa. There are opportunities for recognition of commitment to educational excellence as well as personal and professional growth. Alpha Delta Kappa empowers women to advance in their educational careers, supports altruistic projects, and embraces cultural differences through world understanding. My goal is to strengthen our chapters in Alaska by listening to educators to find out what they need and how they can grow in the profession

by allowing Alpha Delta Kappa to be part of that growth. We have three chapters in Alaska, one in Anchorage and two in Fairbanks. We are in the process of working with UAF to start a chapter at the collegiate level. My new logo for Alpha Delta Kappa for 2026-2028.



Rebecca Paul

Since retiring from education, I have embraced new opportunities while staying active and engaged. I divide my time between Alaska and Illinois, enjoying travel, family, and especially time with my grandchildren. One of my most rewarding retirement adventures has been developing Remarkable Vintage, a small business inspired by my love of antiques, collectibles, and the stories they tell. Building the business has allowed me to combine creativity, lifelong

learning, and entrepreneurship while connecting with people who share an appreciation for history and treasured objects.

Retirement has given me the freedom to explore new interests, strengthen old friendships, and continue growing in ways I never imagined during my years in the classroom.

— Annie Baker



Emilia Eaton

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of Emilia Eaton, a long-time Delegate Assembly delegate. Emilia was a dedicated member of the Education Support Staff Association (ESSA) and NEA-Alaska/Retired, and truly loved being involved in the union. Delegate Assembly was incredibly special to Emilia; she always looked forward to participating and catching up with her active and retired colleagues.

Emilia stayed active well into retirement, generously volunteering her time for Listening Tours to help encourage new members. Outside of her union work, Emilia loved spending time with her family, she was a devout member of her church, enjoyed traveling with her daughter Rebecca, loved going to aquacise, was tickled to get her nails done, and was a devoted friend who always stayed in touch and checked in on others. She will be deeply missed.

— Annie Baker on behalf of NEA-Alaska/Retired





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email: info@neaalaska.org

Have a great summer, enjoy the sun,
and do something special that makes you smile!

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



Editor: Annie Baker

This newsletter is the official publication of NEA-Alaska/Retired. 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

Find us on Facebook and online

[NEA-Alaska Retired](https://www.facebook.com/NEA-Alaska-Retired) website: www.neaalaskaretired.com

Calendar of Events

June 2026

- 6/29 - 7/8 NEA-Alaska offices closed
- 6/30 - 7/1 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting – Denver, CO

July 2026

- 4-7 NEA Representative Assembly – Denver, CO

August 2026

- 15 Tentative Virtual NEA-Alaska Board Meeting
- 31 Deadline to submit guesses for "Where in the World"

September 2026

- 14 Deadline for postmarking mailed 2027 DA Nominations
- 20 Deadline for emailing 2027 DA Nominations
- 25-26 NEA-Alaska Board Meeting
– Anchorage Office

October 2026

- 5-7 NEA-Alaska/Retired Retreat & Board Meeting