

2016 MTA RETIRED GATHERING

Honoring a colleague — and her activism

By Scott McLennan

The 15th annual Retired Members Gathering honored longtime MTA activist Gladys Durant, who died in June. And the gathering itself reflected her can-do spirit, as numerous retired members committed to participating in the campaign to defeat Question 2.

The event, held Sept. 28 at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center, also offered workshops and social opportunities, along with updates from MTA leadership.

Retired Members Committee Co-Chairs Kathleen Roberts and Richard Liston welcomed the hundreds of attendees, who in turn gave Roberts a standing ovation in recognition of her recent 102nd birthday.

Liston addressed the attendees, saying, “While we may have left our classrooms, we never left this profession — and I know you are all committed to our active members and our public school students as well.”

He highlighted a new mentoring initiative between retirees and the Student Educators Association of Massachusetts, or SEAM, and he commended the success that retirees achieved in gathering signatures last year to move the Fair Share Amendment toward the ballot in 2018. The amendment would raise revenue for public education and transportation through an additional 4 percent tax on annual income over \$1 million.



RMC Co-Chairs addressing the crowd at the 2016 Retired Gathering.

Liston urged his fellow retirees to be involved in the Save Our Public Schools campaign to defeat ballot Question 2, which seeks to lift the cap on charter schools. Many heeded the call by signing up for various actions and picking up “No on 2” yard signs to display in their neighborhoods.

“There is a lot of rhetoric being presented by charter school proponents,” Liston said. “But Massachusetts public schools are the best in the country. That’s because we did a good job. We made a difference in the lives of so many students, as our active teachers currently do, and our future teachers, with our support, will continue to do.”

MTA Vice President Erik J. Champy applauded the retirees, telling them, “We stand on your shoulders. You fought the fights that have been so important to educators and students.” Further, Champy acknowledged many individuals at the gathering for nurturing his path to leadership.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni praised the professionalism of the retirees, calling them and active educators “experts in our field.”

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RETIREED MEMBERS COMMITTEE 2016-2017

CHAIRS

Richard Liston, *Everett*
Kathleen Roberts, *Raynham*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Susan Baker, *East Falmouth**
Eileen Cleary, *Brockton*
Mary Gilmore, *South Yarmouth*
Jacqueline A. Gorrie, *Randolph***
Kathleen Harrigan, *Hanover*
Paul Mazut, *Lee*
Julia Monteiro-Johnson, *South Dennis*
Lois Powers, *Quincy**
Gerry Ruane, *Malden***
Robert Travers, Jr., *Cambridge***
Anne Wass, *Marshfield***

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MTA MEMBER BENEFITS, INC.

800.336.0990 ■ www.mtabenefits.com

MTA MEMBERSHIP DIVISION

617.878.8118 ■ 800.392.6175, ext. 8118

* Appointed Active Member

** MTA Board of Directors

REPORT OF THE CHAIRS

Richard Liston and Kay Roberts



RMC Co-Chairs showing their support for NO on 2 at the 2016 Retired Gathering.

For the 15th year, the Retired Gathering was a success. On September 28th, almost 200 registered attendees gathered in Framingham at the Sheraton to attend the 2016 MTA Retired Gathering.

On behalf of the Retired Members Committee (RMC), we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the attendees of this year's retired gathering for their generosity. This year we collected school supplies, books and recess materials for the Southbridge Education Association. The generous donations will be

delivered to the Southbridge Education Association after Thanksgiving. Thank you so much for making the lives of these students a little bit better.

This edition of the Reporter has the Nomination form for the Retired Members Committee. See page 7. That election will take place at the MTA Annual Meeting, which is scheduled for May 19 and 20 of next year. Please note the date for submission of the Nomination Form, which is March 3, 2017.

On October 26 and 27, 2016, the MTA RMC convened to hold its first-

ever, strategic planning retreat at the Holiday Inn in Taunton, Massachusetts. Over one and a half days, the RMC discussed issues such as bylaw and policy changes to be brought forward at the 2017 Annual Meeting, organizing ideas and planned its work for the 2016-17 academic year. The Strategic Planning Retreat was a huge success, with the Committee discussing ways to increase our membership and visibility within MTA, and in so doing, increase our power and influence. One outcome of the Retreat was a decision that the 2017 Retired Gathering will be a two day event, with a gala banquet the evening of October 17, 2017 and workshops on October 17 and 18, 2017. Please encourage other retired members to attend our MTA events throughout the year. We should be announcing the Retired Breakfast dates and locations very soon. As was stated at the Gathering, we may have left our classrooms, but we have not left the profession. Our voices and insight are important within MTA and, moreover, within the community at large. Our wisdom can have a positive impact on future decisions.

On behalf of the MTA Retired Members Committee, we wish the best to you and your families as we enter this holiday season and wish you the very best for the remainder of 2016. ■



—SAVE THE DATES—

MTA 2017 Retired Gathering

October 17 & 18, 2017

Seacrest Beach Hotel, Falmouth, MA

2016 MTA RETIRED GATHERING

» continued from PG 1

In opposing Question 2, she said, “we have an amazing opportunity to be leaders in protecting public education.”

Executive Director-Treasurer Ann Clarke wore two hats — literally — as she addressed the crowd.

First she donned a “Save Our Public Schools” cap to emphasize the MTA’s commitment to the No on 2 campaign. Then, as the audience applauded, she took off that hat and put on a cap bearing the trademark “H” of the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign. Clarke noted the importance of both defeating the ballot question and making sure that Clinton prevails over Donald Trump in the election.

Presentation of the Honor Our Own award is a highlight of the gathering each year. Typically, the Retired Members Committee solicits nominations. But this year the committee itself decided to recognize Durant, who died June 4 at the age of 75.

Durant taught for more than 30 years in the Attleboro Public Schools and remained active in both her local association and the MTA throughout retirement.

“She was one of a kind, a force of nature,” Liston said.

Durant’s son, Michael, accepted the award and described his mother as someone who was passionate about social justice and education.

“Whenever there was an election, she made sure we knew how important it was to vote,” he said, adding with a laugh: “And my mother always made sure we knew whom or what to vote for.”

Durant was an active member of the Retired Members Committee at the time of her death. She held other leadership positions in the MTA and had received the Honor Our Own award in 2010.

A couple of annual attractions were in full swing again this year. Mary Gilmore, a former MTA president, was stationed once again at a table featuring a fund-raising raffle for the Voice of Teachers for Education.

Another staple of the event is the donation of school supplies to a district with a high level of need. This year, attendees donated several boxes’ worth to the Southbridge Public Schools. ■



Upper left: MTA Retired Committee Co-Chair Kay Roberts and Michael Durant, son of Honor Our Own recipient Gladys Durant, embrace. Upper right: Participants in a social media workshop. Bottom: Attendees at the 2016 Retired Members Gathering hear from MTA leadership.

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.

Statewide Retired Region Executive Committee Member

The Executive Committee seat representing the Statewide Retired Region will be up for election. The Executive Committee, along with the Board, is a governing body of MTA, with various responsibilities including real estate, finance, and personnel oversight and decision-making. Executive Committee members automatically also serve on the MTA Board of Directors. Terms are for three years, beginning July 1, 2017. Candidates must be members of the Statewide Retired District. There is a self-nomination process, with a deadline of March 3, 2017. The election will take place at the 2017 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates, voted on by the delegates representing the Retired District.

Those wishing to run for this seat should submit a self-nominating letter no later than 5:00 pm on the first Friday in March, specifying the candidate's name and address and the office being sought. The letter should be addressed to Executive Director-Treasurer, MTA, 2 Heritage Drive, 8th Floor, Quincy, MA 02171-2119, and may be faxed to 617-570-4908 or emailed to MTAGovernance@massteacher.org.

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

The 2017 NEA Representative Assembly will be held July 2 through July 5, in Boston. (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

Available Opportunities for MTA Retired Members:

- *Statewide Retired Region Member on the MTA Executive Committee*
- *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*

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 Boston. Information will be sent to the delegation at a later date, 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-nomination process. These delegates will be elected by a ballot sent to all NEA retired members in March.

MTA provides funding to the winners of the MTA Statewide, Regional, and Retired elections to the NEA-RA, subject to accountability requirements (\$1200 stipend per delegate).

Those interested can access the online nomination form at www.massteacher.org/nomform. The nomination deadline is Friday, January 13, 2017.

Statewide Retired District Delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting

The 2017 MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates will be held May 19 and 20 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.

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 March. Nominations are open to all eligible MTA/NEA retired members through a self-nomination process. The 2017 allocation of retired delegates and successors will be based on the number of MTA/NEA retired members as of March 1, 2017.

Elected Statewide Retired district delegates may apply for reimbursement of certain expenses up to \$300.

Those interested can access the online nomination form at www.massteacher.org/nomform. The nomination deadline is Friday, January 13, 2017.

MTA Retired Members Committee

Four members of the Retired Members Committee will be elected by the Statewide Retired District Delegates at the 2017 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, 2017.

Those interested can access the online nomination form at www.massteacher.org/nomform. The nomination deadline is Friday, March 3, 2017.

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.

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. ■

Please note that paper forms are available in this issue of the MTA Reporter, but we strongly encourage you to use the online nomination forms at www.massteacher.org/nomform

FREQUENTLY REQUESTED CONTACT INFORMATION

Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System (MTRS) www.mass.gov/mtrs	State Board of Retirement www.mass.gov/treasury/retirement/state-board-of-retire
MTRS Headquarters 617.679.6877 500 Rutherford Avenue, Suite 210 Charlestown, MA 02129-1628	SBR Boston Office 617.367.7770 One Winter Street, 8th Floor Boston, MA 02108
MTRS Western Office 413.784.1711 One Monarch Place, Suite 510 Springfield, MA 01144-4028	SBR Springfield Office 413.730.6135 463 Dwight Street, Room 109 Springfield, MA 01103
Questions regarding your MTA Member ID Card or Calendar can be directed to: Renee Gatewood – rgatewood@massteacher.org – 617.878.8000, ext. 8208	

THE NEA-RA IS COMING TO BOSTON

And you can get involved

The 2017 NEA Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly, the largest democratic deliberative assembly in the world, is coming to Boston. This means roughly 8,000 delegates from across the country — NEA members from all segments of the education profession — will converge on our city from **June 30 to July 5**. There are many opportunities for MTA members to get involved and experience the RA firsthand.

There are many ways to get involved.

NEA's Annual Meeting brings approximately 15,000 people — delegates and their families, exhibitors, press, visitors, and Association staff — into the host city for a week of intensive activities.



MTA is looking for volunteers for the 2017 Host Committee. The Host Committee chairs are organizing volunteers to work on one of five Host Committee sub committees to facilitate the smooth operation of the NEA Annual Meeting. NEA members who accept positions on the Host Committee cannot serve as delegates or officers to the RA during the Annual Meeting.

The Host Committee Chair is Julia Monteiro Johnson and the Treasurer is Richard Liston.

For more information about the specific committees and volunteers opportunities:

massteacher.org/news/conferences/nea_ra

MTA Awarded Grant to Create Retired Member/Student Member Mentoring Program

On October 25, 2016, MTA was notified by the NEA Center for Organizing that it had been awarded a grant for \$4,195.50 to develop a Retired Member/Student Member Mentoring Program. Program development will begin as soon as the election has concluded with the goal of launching the Mentoring Program in fall of 2017.



Former MTA President Steve Gorrie was cheered by the crowd at Fenway Park as a Boston Red Sox Most Valuable Educator on Saturday June 18 game at Fenway Park. The MTA Most Valuable Educator Program provides the opportunity to recognize All-Star educators prior to Saturday home games over the summer. Gorrie and other MVE winners are selected by the Red Sox based on nominations from the public, each of which must include an essay explaining the reason recognition is deserved. They are lauded at Red Sox Saturday home games. Anyone can nominate an outstanding teacher, education support professional, school staff member, coach or volunteer by writing about his or her contribution to student achievement.

Photo courtesy of the Boston Red Sox

Please note that paper forms are available in this issue of the MTA Reporter, but we strongly encourage you to use the online nomination forms at www.massteacher.org/nomform

**ONLINE NOMINATION FORMS
AVAILABLE AT**

WWW.MASSTEACHER.ORG/NOMFORM

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Richard Connole, 72, a member of the MTA Retired Members Committee, passed away peacefully on Monday, November 7, 2016, surrounded by family after a courageous battle with cancer. He was born in Worcester on April 8, 1944, and spent 35 years as an educator before retiring in 2005.

The Retired Members Committee honors his dedication to the work of the committee and MTA retirees.

MTA Reporter

MEDICARE UPDATE

The Social Security Administration recently announced that, in 2017, beneficiaries will receive a cost-of-living adjustment of 0.3 percent. But about 70 percent of beneficiaries will not see any increase in their Social Security benefits because every dollar of the increase will go to pay for higher Medicare premiums. What will happen to the other 30 percent of beneficiaries depends on the mood of the Congress.

Typically, the Medicare Part B premium is increased each year in line with Part B per capita expenditures. In the absence of any complicating factors, the 2016 monthly premium would have increased from \$104.90 in 2015 to \$120.70. The law, however, contains a “hold harmless” provision that limits the dollar increase in the premium to the dollar increase in an individual’s Social Security benefit. Because the COLA for Social Security benefits was zero for 2016, premiums

did not increase for the 70 percent of beneficiaries protected by the hold harmless provision and they continued to pay \$104.90.

Although the Medicare Part B premium has not been officially announced for 2017, at the time of this writing, reports suggest that, if the hold harmless provision did not apply, the premium would be about the same in 2017 as in 2016 – that is, about \$120. Beneficiaries protected by the hold harmless provision, however, will see their Medicare Part B premium go up only by the dollar increase in their Social Security benefit.

The really interesting question is what’s going to happen to the 30 percent of beneficiaries not protected by the hold harmless provision. These include new enrollees during the year (5 percent); enrollees who do not receive a Social Security benefit check (3 percent); enrollees with high incomes, who

are subject to the income-related premium adjustment (6 percent); and dual Medicare-Medicaid beneficiaries, whose full premiums are paid by state Medicaid programs (19 percent). (Some overlap exists between the categories, which explains why the numbers add up to slightly more than 30 percent.)

In 2016, the unprotected group faced increases as high as 50 percent, in part to make up for what the protected 70 percent weren’t paying. But in October last year, Congress and the President agreed on a two-year budget deal that held the increases to 16 percent in 2016. So the basic premium for the unprotected group rose to \$121.80, and much higher for those with income-related premiums. But the protection technically would apply to 2017 only if it were another year of zero Social Security COLA. Who knows what will happen in the face of a very small COLA. ■

A NEW REASON TO SMILE

A New MTA Benefit

MTA’s newest benefit is a low-cost dental insurance plan with United Concordia. Members who are looking to supplement existing coverage or to replace their current coverage will want to review this plan. The Concordia Preferred (PPO) dental plan features an annual cost as low as \$584 for an individual, a nationwide network, no waiting periods, multiple payment options including credit cards, ability to visit any dentist, online enrollment and an annual maximum rollover benefit. Visit mtabenefits.com/dental-plans for an outline of benefits or call 800.382.1352 for more information. ■



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