



# NEARO Outreach



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## THREE CANDIDATES UNOPPOSED FOR NEARO BOARD

Current NEARO board members Ron Houston of Washington, DC, and Norma Kacen of Arlington, VA, will step down when their terms expire at the end of this calendar year. Their expertise, enthusiasm, good counsel, and contributions to meetings, committees, and work groups will be missed.

Board member Pat Orrange’s term will also be expiring, but she’s seeking reelection. The remaining three board members—Barry Abel, Gloria Constant, and John Thurston—and all five officers—Teresa Rankin, Donna Gold, Steven Martinez, Tomas Saucedo, and Mary Faber—are less than midway through their two-year terms.

NEARO set an August deadline for candidate nominations, to allow time for a nationwide mailed secret ballot this fall. But since only three nominees agreed to run, they will be elected by acclamation at the Dec. 11 membership meeting, for two-year terms starting Jan. 1, 2016. Their photos and statements, originally intended for the ballot, are printed here so you can get to know them in advance.

Carol Adams and Edith Jefferson, who both live in Maryland, will fill the two Board seats that are reserved for members who live within 75 miles of NEA. Incumbent Pat Orrange, who lives in North Carolina, will serve a third term in one of NEARO’s two “geographically unrestricted” board seats.



### CAROL ADAMS

I have been a NEARO member since retiring from NEA in 2007. I am passionate about serving on the NEARO Board and keeping NEARO the BEST organization for our current and future retirees.

I’m interested in serving on the NEARO Board to represent the

*Carol Adams continues on page 2*

### EDITH JEFFERSON

I strongly believe in the mission and philosophy of the NEARO organization and its structure. And, as a NEARO Board member, I will work hard to help serve its membership and support its constitution.

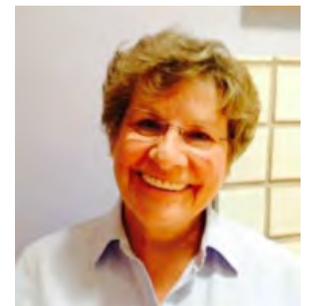


I worked as manager of business administration for 18 of my 23 years of service at NEA. I believe my experience, integrity, and honesty give me the skills necessary to successfully advocate for NEARO and its members.

We have all worked hard for our retirement pension and benefits, and I am asking you for an opportunity to help serve you and our NEARO organization.

### PAT ORRANGE

For the past four years it has been my privilege to serve as a member of the NEA Retirees Organization Board of Directors. Since selling my home in DC I have flown or “trained” to DC for the very important quarterly Board and membership meetings. I believe it is essential that the voice of retirees be unified and focused on our one major priority—the strength and long-term viability of our retirement plan.



In my previous life as director of Human Resources for NEA, I served as secretary to the Retirement Board, so I have a working knowledge of the plan and its operations. This has proven helpful as we work through the many issues NEARO faces.

*Pat Orrange continues on page 2*

*Carol Adams from page 1*

retirees as major stakeholders who deserve a voice in making sure their rights and benefits are protected. I believe our past and present board members have done a wonderful job of making NEARO an organization of which each and every member can be proud. I hope to continue this tradition.

At NEA I started working in the Research Department but spent most of my time in the Executive Office, working in the Governance and Policy Support Division

as staff liaison for the Board of Directors and the Resolutions Committee, and serving as a conference and event coordinator. I also served in various NEA Staff Organization (NEASO) positions for more than 17 years, including secretary, several terms as a board member, and a member of the bargaining committee for three different contracts.

Based on my professional and union experience, I believe I can be objective in representing all members of NEARO.

*Pat Orrange from page 1*

Since joining the NEARO Board, I have assisted in developing and analyzing two member surveys and helped in planning several DC-based programs for our members. In the coming year I will work with other

members of the Board to increase our membership, particularly among retirees who live outside the DC metro area and those who retired from NEA's state and local affiliates.



**FROM THE PRESIDENT: LOOKING AHEAD TO 2016  
TOP PRIORITIES: ADVOCACY, CONNECTIONS**

*by Teresa Rankin*

First I'd like to welcome incoming NEARO board members Carol Adams and Edith Jefferson—and to say "welcome back" to Pat Orrange as she begins her third term on the board. A North Carolina resident, Pat is helping NEARO reach out to our many current and potential members in that state.

I'd also like to thank outgoing board members Norma Kacen and Ron Houston for their years of service to NEARO. As a newbie president this year, I have greatly appreciated their knowledge, skill, and generosity.

Your board held a one-day retreat in September and committed to focus on two things for the year ahead. The first is advocacy. We feel it is very important to be an independent advocacy organization that works with partners to protect our pension benefits. While we believe NEA and the NEA Retirement Board take their stewardship of the pension plan very seriously, we also know that the perspective, experience, and smarts of people receiving a pension after years of NEA and affiliate experience are a critical part of any healthy oversight of the Retirement Plan. NEARO will continue and expand that oversight by—

- ◆ Working with our partners on the Retirement Board
- ◆ Paying an independent actuary to review the health of the pension plan

- ◆ Maintaining an active committee of skilled NEARO members to digest the complex pension issues and keep all members informed
- ◆ Reaching out to more potential NEARO members—especially those who retired from state and local affiliates—to build our strength in numbers, and maintaining a defense fund in case legal action should ever be needed.

Our second focus in 2016 will be to continually expand our connection to our members and grow our membership. We are building our technical capacity to keep in touch with current members and recruit new ones (details on page 4). Kudos to Board member Gloria Constant for her push to advance our electronic connections.

Whether you're reading *Outreach* online or via USPS, this quarterly newsletter will continue to be an excellent vehicle for connecting NEARO members and sharing your wide variety of activities and adventures. But the board is also committed to the personal touch that's the key to building all organizations. So don't be surprised if you get a phone call from a NEARO board member in the new year, asking you to renew your membership.

Thanks to Tomás Saucedo, our hard-working membership secretary, we're also focusing on recruitment of the very newest retirees: alerting them to NEARO's existence and purpose as they



near retirement, and enrolling them as members right away.

To close, I'm happy to report good economic news on two fronts—news I believe results directly from collective action, past and current. Years ago, NEARO was instrumental in pushing for an annual cost-of-living increase in our pensions. The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is based on the CPI-U (Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers), with a guaranteed minimum of 1.5 percent. So while there will be no increase in Social Security benefits for 2016, look for your monthly pension check to go up by 1.5 percent starting January 1.

The other good news is that lobbying by NEA and other allies on the federal budget this fall prevailed in reducing huge proposed hikes in Medicare Part B premiums. However, 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries still face higher premiums and deductibles in 2016. You can add your voice on behalf of the Medicare Premium Fairness Act of 2015 (H.R. 3696) to protect all Medicare Part B beneficiaries; a sample letter to send your member of Congress is at [www.nea.org/home/64269.htm](http://www.nea.org/home/64269.htm).

I look forward to continued progress on your behalf in 2016. And I wish everyone the best of holidays and a wonderful new year.

## **COME ONE, COME ALL....**

If you'll be anywhere close to Washington, DC on Friday, Dec. 11, don't miss NEARO's festive winter membership meeting, beginning at 11 a.m. After the election of new board members and attention to some old and new business, we'll be socializing with former colleagues over a variety of tasty treats for lunch. Rumor has it that there may be door prizes again and some other surprises. We'll also have a visit from NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia.

The NEA staff chorus, which traditionally serenaded us with carols at this meeting, is no more. But some former choir members now active in NEARO have been invited to provide a little entertainment. Join in if you're so inclined!

Location: Auditorium Side A at NEA headquarters, 1201 Sixteenth St., NW. As always, the membership meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the NEARO board of directors at 9:30 a.m. in the same room.

The board is still experimenting with different days of the week and new formats for NEARO's three membership meetings in 2016. Watch for details in the spring (March) newsletter.

## **WHO'S IN THE NEA RETIREMENT PLAN?**

When we talk about the NEA Retirement Plan, it's important to remember that it covers not just NEA employees but also those of 21 state and local affiliates:

Association of Pennsylvania State College & University Faculties  
 Arizona Education Association  
 Arkansas Education Association  
 Clark County (NV) Education Association  
 Collier County (FL) Education Association  
 Florida Education Association  
 Georgia Association of Educators  
 Hillsborough (FL) Classroom Teachers Association  
 Kentucky Education Association  
 Maine Education Association

Mississippi Association of Educators  
 Montana Education Association  
 Nevada State Education Association  
 NEA-New Hampshire  
 NEA-New Mexico  
 North Carolina Association of Educators  
 North Dakota United  
 Orange County (FL) Classroom Teachers Assn  
 Pinellas (FL) Classroom Teachers Association  
 NEA-Rhode Island  
 South Dakota Education Association

Several other organizations that formerly participated in the Plan have withdrawn in the last few years. Their retired staff are still covered by the Plan (and therefore remain eligible to be NEARO members), but their current employees are not:

Educational Research Service  
 National Assn. of Elementary School Principals

National School Public Relations Association  
 Tucson (AZ) Education Association

At last count (11/12/15) the Retirement Plan covered 1,040 active employees, 345 "deferred vested," 1,248 current retirees, and 131 beneficiaries of deceased employees. Of those now receiving pensions, 55 percent retired from NEA, 45 percent from other employers in the Plan. Among active employees, 47 percent work for NEA, 53 percent for one of the other employers. The Plan pays out \$4,463,249 per month in benefits.



## DINOSAUR . . . OR CHANGE AGENT? NEARO NAVIGATES NEW WAYS TO DO BUSINESS

by Gloria Constant (retired in 2011 from NEA Information Technology; now serves on NEARO board of directors)

Do you have a Facebook or Twitter account? Do you Skype? Do you own a Kindle? Do you pay your bills online? Is your smartphone always in your hand or close by for looking up information and making purchases?

Or are you the kind of person who prefers chatting in person or by phone, reading books printed on paper, shopping in “brick and mortar” stores, paying bills in cash or by check, and doing research by asking a librarian?

Today’s NEARO members range from under age 50 to over age 100, meaning we encompass several generations whose comfort and fluency with information technology vary widely. Your board of directors is trying to bridge this generation gap—to bring NEARO’s organizational practices into the 21st century without mystifying those who retired before there was a computer on every desk.

Case in point: You’ll always be welcome to pay your \$15 annual membership dues the traditional way, by writing a check and mailing it to our treasurer. But beginning in 2016, you’ll also have the convenient option of paying online. No more misplacing your membership form or hunting for your checkbook or a stamp! We’ve set up a dues payment system using Square, and board members have been trying it out this fall. If you’re at all comfortable with online transactions (and if you can still read small type), you’ll find it pretty intuitive and self-explanatory. Full details are at the bottom of this page\* and will also be in our 2016

membership letter (yes, coming to you via the good old USPS unless you’ve already paid next year’s dues).

Another case in point: If you live in the DC area, you’re always welcome to attend NEARO meetings in person. But our 2014 survey found strong support for making both board and general membership meetings accessible online to everyone. Previously, NEA meeting rooms provided a conference phone on which two out-of-town board members could hear our discussions, with great difficulty. When a third “remote” caller was added, we had to use someone’s cell phone to call that person and put him on speaker. It sort of worked, but took way too much time and effort.

Now, thanks to assistance from NEA, we have an account using Global Connections Network for our audio/video conference calls. The audio for the remote users has improved, and they can see us on their screens at home, as we can see them (sorry, Barry Abel and John Thurston—moving board meetings from phone to video means a likely end to “attending” meetings in your pajamas). The new system will also let us record meetings and distribute them to members via our Facebook page or otherwise. Now that we have this new tool, we’re looking ahead to conducting “webinars,” where members use the internet or their phone to call in and/or view a one-way conference live.



\* Via your smartphone, tablet, or computer, go to <http://update.nearo.org> to find a simple, secure form where you enter your contact information and delivery preferences. Submitting this information brings you to a confirmation page. If you’re only submitting new or updated contact info, stop and close the page. If you want to pay dues or make a donation to the NEARO Defense Fund, find the link near the top of the page and copy, then paste it into your browser (note: it’s not a “hot” or clickable link). You’ll be brought to the “NEARO Online Store” page, which allows you to choose the number of years’ dues you want to pay and any Defense Fund contribution you want to make. We’ve added the cost of credit card processing to each transaction selection—less than the cost of a 1<sup>st</sup> class stamp for a \$15 dues payment. Once you’ve added your selections to the “shopping basket,” you’ll proceed to the secure payments page, where you’ll provide your credit card and billing information. Your payment is deposited immediately into NEARO’s bank account, NEARO gets a “footprint” of the transaction, and the membership database is automatically updated—all in less time than it takes to read these directions!



## A DIFFERENT KIND OF THANKFUL

by Mary Faber (retired in 2001 from NEA Human and Civil Rights; now serves as NEARO recording secretary)

Maybe it's my age, but as autumn takes hold this year and then merges into winter, I find myself noticing change more than I used to, and also appreciating it more. Not only do I respond differently to the colors and shapes outside, but I also have a different perspective on my decades of NEA work, as well as on the holidays of this season.

Almost 15 years have passed since I worked full-time at NEA. Activities always loomed large, as did people's personalities. But now I see them differently. What stands out for me today aren't the activities themselves, but how they have changed over time in my mind.

**I vividly recall my first travel assignment**, which was over the long Thanksgiving weekend in 1968: a conference in Pikeville, KY, cosponsored by what was then NEA's Center for Human Relations (CHR) and the Council of the Southern Mountains. The topic was equal educational opportunity for the children of Appalachia. CHR director Sam Ethridge brought me along to write a daily newsletter for the participants, among other duties as assigned. The newsletter was called "Conference Highlights and Reminders" (cleverly abbreviated CHR).

Lots occurred that weekend that can be laughed at now, 47 years later. For the first time in my life I rented a car (for the drive from the Lexington airport to Pikeville) and entered a liquor store (to buy beverages in a "wet" city, Lexington, for the opening reception at Pikeville College, situated in a "dry" county). I bought "two of each" kind of liquor, including rum.

After a pre-conference meeting, my assignment was chauffeuring people home to get ready for the evening's reception, and I had in my car the beverages plus the county sheriff, the chief of police, and the school superintendent, along with a student who lived in a secluded hollow. We reached the student's home via an unpaved road of pebbles and stones, at one point driving across a stream, with the bottles clanging in the trunk. Was I the only one who heard them? It didn't matter. Except for the untouched rum and Sam's question to me—"Don't you know that people drink bourbon here?"—the reception was a success.

The next day's opening and workshop sessions went well also, even though all cars in the parking lot were leafleted to protest our integrated conference. That night I wrote the newsletter, typed it onto mimeograph paper, laboriously correcting errors as I went; ran off the pages on a Gestetner machine (by myself because it was after midnight and the student helpers' work curfew was 10 p.m.); then collated, stapled, and stacked the copies for the students to deliver to the

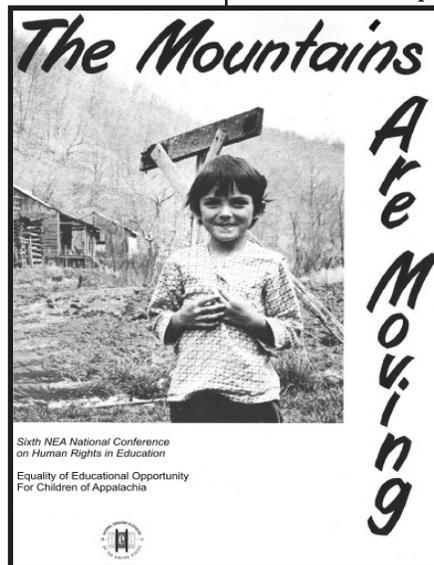
next day's session. Around 3 a.m. I descended the creaky stairs, turning off the lights as I went, in what was an old and cavernous but beautiful building. Under a pitch black sky—no moonlight, even—I fumbled to insert my gigantic (House of Usher?) key into the keyhole to lock up. Then I blindly groped my way across the dark parking lot, miraculously colliding with my car instead of something sinister.

The drive to the hotel was on a paved road, but a narrow one that curved around a mountain and included a railroad crossing. Ominous sign. In the distance an enormous cross glowed high in the sky. I'm neither Christian nor religious, and the cross was not of the fiery Klan variety, but . . .

**I returned safely to the hotel that night and enjoyed** the rest of the conference at the college. The sessions were packed with good information and expressions of gratitude by local human relations workers for the opportunity to come out of their isolated work settings and meet other progressives.

We NEA people, some conference participants, local officials, and students were invited to the home of Thomas Johns, the Pikeville College president, for a delightful Thanksgiving dinner. The students kept singing "He's a witch doctor, Dr. Johns" to demonstrate their affection.

How does one define such a work and holiday experience? I'm sure all NEARO members who traveled for work had similar ones. But for a long time afterward, I didn't know how to process that weekend: surprise, healthful and unhealthful stress, camaraderie, fear, and shock. Then it came to me: diversity! Expressions of different beliefs, in settings different from my urban coastal ones, are just that: different. That's what CHR, NEA, and I stood for—and I was thankful.



## PLANNING AHEAD FOR SENIOR HOUSING AND CARE NEEDS

Those who attended NEARO's September membership meeting heard an informative presentation on the choices available as we begin to need help taking care of our aging selves. Not a topic anyone really enjoys thinking about, but an important one, given the statistics: 70 percent of us will need at least two years of care in our senior years.

The speaker was Washington, DC-area certified senior advisor Heidi Garvis. She recommends being proactive: having a senior care plan in place by age 75 so we're ready to arrange care if and when our living environment (whether the home where we raised a family, or an "active adult" home in a "55+" community) no longer meets our physical, emotional, social, or financial needs.

There are three broad options: continuing to live in our own home with help, living in the home of a family member who becomes our caregiver, and moving to an assisted living or continuing (graduated) care retirement community.

In-home help is available from home care companies offering "hands off" and "hands on" services. The former are non-personal services such as house-keeping, laundry, meal preparation, shopping, and being a companion at doctor appointments and social gatherings. The latter are personal services such as bathing, dressing, toileting, and dental hygiene.

Home care costs depend on the number of hours a day needed. Companions are about \$19 an hour in the DC metro area; nurse's aides are \$22 to \$27. There's usually a four-hour minimum per day. At \$22 an hour, full-time care (day shift plus night shift) costs about \$16,000 a month. Live-in care runs less: about \$7,600 a month.

Living with friends (think "The Golden Girls") or family members in a multigenerational household offers both benefits (companionship, shared household duties) and drawbacks (loss of privacy, boundary issues, need for home modifications).

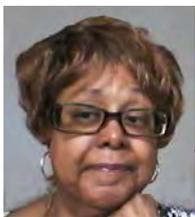
Moving into a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) lets you move up and down the ladder among different levels of care as needs arise, without ever having to relocate again. But buying into a CCRC means qualifying both financially and medically.

Average monthly costs in the DC area:

- ◆ Independent living apartment, \$2,000 - \$3,000+
- ◆ Assisted living (24/7 help with activities of daily living), \$4,500 - \$8,000
- ◆ Skilled nursing and rehab (\$10,000).

There's a lot to weigh and consider as you evaluate your potential support system, your personality and preferred lifestyle, and many other issues. For more specific information and advice, phone 571-488-9396, see <http://www.caringconsiderations.com>, or email Heidi Garvis: [heidi@caringconsiderations.com](mailto:heidi@caringconsiderations.com).

### REVERSING THE USUAL PATTERN



## I MOVED FROM 'CONTINUING CARE' TO AN 'ACTIVE ADULT' COMMUNITY

by Jackie Smith (retired Jan. 1, 2010 from NEA Collective Bargaining & Member Advocacy)

When I retired I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to downsize, sell my house, and move. So I went online to check for senior housing. I ordered and reviewed brochures for places in North Carolina and Maryland. I compared pricing, features, floor plans, amenities, and local attractions.

I then decided that a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) would best meet all my objectives for independent living and future needs if my health declined. I found what seemed to be the ideal place: Collington Life Care Community in Mitchellville, MD, near good public transportation, restaurants, and shopping, nestled in a natural setting with a lake and some of nature's creatures. I interviewed residents,

took tours, went to lunches, and decided I felt right at home, even though I didn't yet have totally gray hair and wrinkles.

A CCRC offers a commitment to serving your medical, spiritual, physical, and mental needs as you continue to age—in various settings all at one location, so you'll never need to move again. You get one fantastic meal a day, housekeeping, and everything else to keep you completely spoiled and living well independently, sometimes into your 90s and beyond. It's like Shangri-la. I signed a contract, paid an enormous entrance fee, moved into a cute little cottage, and watched my monthly fees go up every year.

I quickly got involved in all the activities and committees. There is definitely a career path



(unpaid, of course) for those who want to use their leadership, organizational, and financial skills. A CCRC offers a chance to try out all those hidden talents you have, like acting and public speaking, to a very grateful and forgiving audience.

For three years things went well, just as planned. Then the unexpected, unpredictable happened (it's called life), and I discovered that I just couldn't afford this lifestyle any longer.

In hindsight, my advice to former colleagues reading this:

- ◆ Wait until your house is sold, your debts are paid, and your finances are stable. Moving into a CCRC when you're still in your 60s isn't the best idea. In my case, late 70s might have been wiser.
- ◆ Review your purchase contract with a lawyer so there are no surprises later on.

- ◆ Don't rely on the community's past financial performance. Monthly fees will go up, sometimes dramatically.

After the CCRC, my next choice was "senior living." I was shocked to see how limited the choices were on my side of Maryland. Based on income restrictions, my options came down to two locations, out of maybe 20. I couldn't afford to be picky and chose Southwinds in Charles County.

I'm glad to have found this 55+ active adult community. Translation: many residents are much older, many more are not active. Apartment living doesn't answer the "where to next?" question the way a CCRC does, but an on-site assisted living facility is planned for the future. Meanwhile, many residents in need of caregivers hire their own, which allows them to age in place here.

## AGING IN PLACE: IT TAKES A 'VILLAGE'

Many of us are familiar with what is said to be a traditional African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." A parallel truth turns out to be that it takes a Village to support its elders.

Staying in our homes as we age, known as "aging in place" among senior housing experts, is not a new phenomenon. The preferred choice for many seniors, aging in place has often involved having an able-bodied family member live with them, or paying for periodic or full-time in-home caretakers.

The Village concept is a fairly new one, intended to enable seniors to age safely in their own homes in mixed-age neighborhoods, without having to rely on family or friends who may live far away. Begun in Boston in 2001 by 12 elderly neighbors determined to avoid moving to an assisted living or continuing care community, the Village approach has been spreading around the country. At last count there were 170 active Villages, with another 160 being planned.

NEARO Vice-President Donna Gold recently put some questions to Lisa Walker, a founding board member

and former chair of Hyattsville (MD) Aging in Place, Inc. (HAP), a Village in which Lisa remains very active.

### *What is the essence of the Village movement?*

Villages are peer-to-peer assistance, based on the philosophy that neighbors and nearby friends can give each other help to stay living in their own homes and being active in the community. This isn't a government-sponsored social service; it is neighbors helping neighbors, providing assistance and support as we age. Villages aren't residential facilities; they're people in their own homes. Most Villages reflect the unique characteristics of their



area. For example, HAP is all-volunteer and has no office; organizing and communicating about services are all done by phone and computer.

### *What services does your organization offer? Are these typical of other villages?*

HAP began running informational seminars (fall prevention, medical changes, nutrition) and providing social activities (picnic, parade float, ice cream social) in 2011 and began direct neighbor-to-neighbor help in 2013. The most often requested services



are transportation (mostly to medical appointments but also to the grocery store, bank, post office), home chores, and yard chores. HAP has formed partnerships with local groups such as the Girl Scouts to help with yard clean-up. We operate an emergency “phone tree” that checks in on members during heatwaves and storms, and we’ve organized a band of people who are available for shoveling snow. We also have a vendor list to identify reliable services. Most Villages offer similar services.

We don’t provide medical care or health services, so if members need daily assistance, we talk with them about the options for getting home care help. This past year we have had seven of our oldest members transition into assisted living or to living with a relative. This has changed the requests we get; the remaining neighbors are more interested in informational and social gatherings. We’ve added sessions on developing an individual aging plan, as a result of the experiences our members went through prior to going into assisted living.

***Is village membership an affordable choice?***

Our take on affordability is a bit different from some other Villages that charge \$300 to \$700 a year for membership. Hyattsville has a diverse population, and many of the oldest residents (upper 80s, 90s) live on very limited incomes. We decided not to charge much but to offer residents the opportunity to make greater contributions if they can. Since the beginning we’ve charged only \$20 annually and then raised money in the community.

Personally, I think the Village model is affordable even at \$300 or \$500 per person, because it’s like an insurance policy that provides friendly neighborhood-based assistance. This is not “care”—it’s friendship.

***What factors do you think would make a Village a good fit for a senior?***

If you don’t have the resources to move to a “55 plus” or graduated care community, a Village offers a more affordable option. It has the benefit of keeping you in your home and your neighborhood, where you know people and have contributed throughout your life. It provides a way to stay active and engaged with people across age groups. Many villages are inter-generational, and their events provide ways for older people to interact with children and youth on a regular basis.

However, if you need intensive supported health and daily living services, a Village can help only to a point; it isn’t likely to provide daily intensive care. However, this may change over time. A growing number of Villages are talking about providing more intensive services for their members—partnering with home care and nursing services, collaborating with health and assisted living facilities, exploring alternatives to support neighbors who have been members for years.



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON VILLAGES AND RELATED SENIOR HOUSING OPTIONS**

Village to Village Network is the national organization of Villages across the U.S. For a map and list of all operating and developing Villages, go to <http://www.vtvnetwork.org>. Other resources:

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/health360/posts/2015/10/19-how-villages-help-seniors-age-at-home-butler-diaz#.VikCdyqHWSg.twitter>

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/06/23/health/at-home-many-seniors-are-imprisoned-by-their-independence.html?referrer&r=0>

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/senior-housing/senior-housing-options.htm>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/08/AR2010020802459.html>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/communes-may-be-the-new-retirement-home\\_55e47693e4b0b7a963399447](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/communes-may-be-the-new-retirement-home_55e47693e4b0b7a963399447)

## Mainely Musings



# HUNGRY? BETTER NOT READ THIS . . .

by Lynn Coffin, who retired in 2009 as director of NEA Marketing and Information Services. She and her husband live in Portland, Maine.

Food is one of my obsessions. Next to books, orchids, and African violets, I probably think more about food selection, preparation, and ingestion than anything else. Fortunately, I live in Portland, Maine, which makes it easy for me to indulge my food fantasies. The city is a gourmet's paradise. We have great farmers' markets, an abundance of seafood, locally raised beef and pork, and a restaurant scene that is varied and hard to keep up with. We even have a nationally regarded cookbook store a couple of towns over, where it's possible to find a wealth of tomes both new and antique.

My love of all things food emerged long after I became an adult. When I was growing up my family had a garden, so there were fresh vegetables in the summer (which we canned and froze for winter consumption); there were saltwater and freshwater fish, as well as beef grown locally. My dad was a hunter, so we had venison in the fall. In spite of this abundance, however, our meals were pretty standard New England fare—salt cod dinners, corned beef and cabbage, and finnan haddie (smoked haddock in a milk and butter sauce). My mother fried donuts every Saturday, and occasionally my dad would whip up a big spaghetti sauce into which he threw everything but the kitchen sink. In other words, we ate well if not lavishly.

Of course there wasn't much in the way of fast food back then (unless you count Swanson's TV dinners), but even if there had been, our town was far too small to have a McDonald's or a Pizza Hut, so everyone cooked and ate at home.

**I think my first exposure to the "art" of cooking was watching "The Galloping Gourmet" on Canadian television when I was a teenager. Graham Kerr made cooking seem interesting and exciting, whether he was using unfamiliar ingredients like clarified butter or using familiar ingredients like cream in new ways. And it didn't hurt that he was very witty and extremely good looking.**

Later on I discovered Julia Child and was enthralled by her culinary enthusiasm. I can still hear her voice in my head to this day.

In spite of all the home cooking and television tutelage, however, I never learned to cook. In fact I could barely boil water when I began teaching and was living on my

own. Out of necessity I became a self-taught cook—after all, I had to eat! I didn't even possess a proper cookbook. My grandmother and my mother wrote recipes on index cards and I coached myself along.

**Meeting my husband was no doubt the turning point in my culinary life. Phil liked to cook and actually possessed his own well-thumbed volumes of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking!* When NEA hired me, we moved to Boston and started haunting the stalls of Faneuil Hall Marketplace for meat and produce. Phil bought me a Cuisinart. I learned to make *pâté*! Yay! Phil worked in a bookstore in Harvard Square and had a nice employee discount, so the cookbooks began to flow in, and we started to experiment.**

Today, all these years later, we have the kitchen responsibilities down to a science. I am the executive chef. I peruse both the recipes we have clipped and the shelves and shelves of cookbooks we have collected in order to choose what the menu will be. Phil is the sous chef. He does most of the actual cooking. It's a division of labor that plays to each of our strengths, and we both love the end results!

As much as we love selecting food and cooking for each other, however, we enjoy cooking for others even more. There is something satisfying about sitting around the table sharing food with family and friends. The clink of wine glasses, the convivial conversations, the sighs of satisfaction compose the music that can only be orchestrated by a lovely meal. Now that we are back in New England, we are lucky enough to be able to share holiday feasts with both our families. Of course, we have our traditional holiday meals—turkey (or turducken) at Thanksgiving, roast beef at Christmas, and lamb for Easter. My deviled eggs are extremely popular, so they've become a tradition. I try to make new versions every year, scouring cookbooks and the Internet for ideas for new fillings.

Recently, I've become captivated by an Icelandic tradition that combines my passion for food and my passion for books. It seems on the night before Christmas, families in Iceland gather for a large feast, after which they exchange presents—most often books—and spend the rest of the night reading. People generally take their new books to bed, along with some chocolate. Food and books: could there be a more wonderful way to spend a holiday?



## ELDERS, YOUNGERS SHARE EPIPHANIES

by Dorothy Massie (retired in 1986 from NEA Human and Civil Rights)

Is there a bright side to aging, other than the fact that one is still alive to do it?

I'm (still) here to tell you that there is. In fact, there are several,

but I want to take note here of just three: good friends, family, and good conversation. These three came together for me in a most memorable way last summer when I visited my son Dana and his family in Santa Cruz, CA.

I'm lucky enough to have another dear son and good friends too, near me in Springfield, VA. Although we often engage in what we call "Seinfeld conversations"—sort of about nothing—we do from time to time have thoughtful discussions of our deeply held questions about rights and wrongs and the ambiguities of philosophical and political issues. And sometimes in the midst of these conversations about public matters, we share our own personal stories; we reveal our feelings in ways that draw us closer to each other.

But this kind of sharing happens more often with my close friends than with my children. There seems to be a sort of emotional boundary between generations—or perhaps I experience this boundary more because my three children are all male and not very much into bonding with Momma.

**Anyway, there was no sign of a boundary during that special evening in June in Santa Cruz.** We were all gathered at dinner—a feast prepared by Michelle, my son Dana's wife. Also at the table were their two children—Emma, 19, and Atticus, 16, along with Emma's boyfriend Zach. The two others—most significant others—were my dear friends of many years, Jane Power and her husband, Jack O'Dell. (Those of you who are approaching me in age will certainly remember Jane, a superb NEA editor and writer).

Dana had known and liked Jane since he was a boy; he and Michelle rediscovered—and fell in love with—both Jane and Jack when all of us went on a cruise sponsored by the magazine *The Nation* two years ago. They knew about Jack's life: his years as a civil rights leader and aide to Martin Luther King in the 1960s, his career as a teacher, union leader, writer. And they were in awe of the wisdom and intellect of both my friends.

From the beginning of that evening as we sat down to dinner, we all seemed to be very closely attuned to each other—particularly Dana and Michelle and Jack

and Jane and I. The evening became more lively as the three generations began to interact, and the conversation really took off when one of the "elders" asked one of the "youngers" this question:

"What experience(s) in your life so far do you remember as having been most significant in shaping your character, in creating the person you are today?"

**The young people truly became attentive; not one of them was dismissive or shy.** Each took time, after a moment of reflection, to recall experiences which, though they may not have realized it at the time, had truly been life-changing. And we older ones told of our own epiphanies.

We shared a wide range of stories: a cancer diagnosis, recovery, freedom from drug therapy; a sudden vision of one's mission in life (later realized); an adolescent's discovery of Richard Wright's *Black Boy*; a swimmer's recognition of her life's ambition (the Olympics); a young girl's discovery of what a light year means and what that did to her traditional religious belief.

We sat at that table for close to two hours engrossed in sharing our memories—and in giving to each other something important of ourselves. This wasn't an occasion of older and younger generations somewhat awkwardly reaching down, or up, to each other. It was a time of humans sharing their lives honestly with each other. It was a time to treasure and be thankful for.

*NEARO members Jane Power (at 11:00) and Dorothy Massie (at 2:00) share memories with friends and three generations of family around the dinner table.*



## REUNION AT SEA

by John Yrchik (staffer in NEA Research from 1986 to 1995; retired in 2011 as executive director of the Connecticut Education Association)

I was in the elevator on the new *Viking Star* in the initial days of a cruise around Scandinavia and the other Baltic countries this past June, when a woman passenger looked at me and said, "Did you ever work for the National Education Association? I'm Claudia Cole and I think I know you."

I told her she does know me and introduced myself. We had afternoon tea with our spouses. In arranging to meet for drinks another day, we discovered that Claudia and Wayne were in cabin 505, while Eileen and I were in 506. In truth, it seems that one is never far from the NEA family, even when enjoying the land of the midnight sun.

To remember the moment, I snapped a selfie (Claudia's first and my second ever). The other photo here, taken from the deck of our ship, shows a 4 a.m. sunrise over Norway's Aurlandsfjord.



## WELCOME, NEW RETIREES!

<b>Phillip Bennett</b> 11/13/00 - 11/1/15 Kentucky Education Association	<b>Laura Haug</b> 6/1/01 - 11/1/15 South Dakota Education Association	<b>Sandra Rice</b> 1/1/00 - 12/1/15 North Carolina Education Assn
<b>Laurie Damiani</b> 5/17/82 - 11/1/15 Tucson (AZ) Education Association	<b>James Paulsen</b> 6/6/95 - 12/1/15 Arizona Education Association	<b>Nancy Sharbel</b> 3/29/1995 - 10/1/15 Nat Assn of Elem School Principals
<b>Ellen Duff</b> 9/8/97 - 12/1/15 Maine Education Association	<b>Gary Peck</b> 1/3/11 - retro 10/1/2015 Nevada State Education Association	<b>Jerry Lee Wilson</b> 8/1/89 - 12/1/15 South Dakota Education Assn

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## FAREWELLS

**Elma Williams Andrea**, 95, died Aug. 30 in Bethesda, MD. Born in Washington, DC, she worked 30 years for NEA, retiring in 1984 as a legislative information specialist. She graduated from George Washington University in 1953 and earned an MA in public administration from American University in 1961. Her early career was with WTOP and CBS Radio and TV. Elma is survived by her husband, Mario I. Andrea; they were married for 28 years.

**Ruth Butts**, 95, died Nov. 1 in Venice, FL. She retired from NEA International Relations in 1985 after a 21-year career. She is survived by her three children, five grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. Donations in her memory may be made to First Baptist Church of Osprey or Venice Independent Mission, 573 Briarwood Rd., Venice, FL 34295.

**Betty Ann Wargo**, 85, who retired from NEA Staff Travel in 1994, died Nov. 6. She began her 23-year NEA career in 1971. Colleagues remember Betty as a cheerful voice on the phone, always available to advise about flights and fares, happy to help with cost center numbers, and unfazed by last-minute itinerary changes. She lived in Alexandria, VA.

### Correction

We've been informed by Roy Edelfelt's widow, Margo, that the photo accompanying our farewell to Roy in the Sept. 2015 *Outreach* was actually of his brother Ivan. (Google image searches don't always yield accurate results.) With apologies, here is a photo of the late great Roy Edelfelt.



## THE ARCHIVE WANTS YOUR MEMORABILIA!

*by Vakil Smallen, NEA Collection Archivist, George Washington University Special Collections*

We archivists have a word for additional materials added to an existing collection. We call them accruals. Thanks to the publicity NEARO has given GWU Special Collections and the NEA Collection in particular, we've recently received accruals from NEARO members Marshall Donley and Bill Martin.

Marshall donated several publications, and Bill sent us 14 years' worth of American Education Week and National Teacher Day kits—reproducible proclamations, clip art, and other materials mailed annually to

NEA affiliates to help them create local observances. The NEA Collection already included AEW and NTD kits from as far back as 1921, but there were significant gaps for recent years. Bill's much appreciated gift covers the years 1983 through 1997 and fills in those gaps.

If you're downsizing or otherwise feeling a need to rid yourself of old treasures from your days as an NEA or state or local association staffer, think twice before tossing it all in the trash. Send me a quick e-mail ([smallen@email.gwu.edu](mailto:smallen@email.gwu.edu)) and see if some of your "stuff" might find a new home as an accrual!

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