

MEA-Retired Tribune

February, 2021

Welcoming February with rays of sunshine

Sunshine greeted me as I enjoyed a cup of joe this beautiful first day of February. A text from a friend fortunate to get her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine last Tuesday reminded me that I could get on the county health department link at 1 p.m. today to try my luck at getting one of 1000 allocated doses for the week. I got online shortly before 1, the appointment link opened at 1 and appointments were taken by 1:05 without my being able to get one of them. Better luck next week.

Getting the opportunity to be vaccinated varies county to county and state to state, and the “pecking order” does as well. Those Traverse City Area Public Schools staff members who wanted their first shots received them Friday and Saturday and will get the second dose in three weeks. Both NEA-Retired President Sarah Borgman from Indiana and Florida EA-Retired President Janice Poirier shared last week that school staff in their states are not considered essential workers so will not necessarily be vaccinated anytime soon. By the same token, my 67-year-old cousin from Wisconsin traveled to the Sunshine State last week to spend a couple months there with his wife; he was able to book an appointment in the Orlando area before he headed south. Go figure.

With the change of leadership in Washington and concerted effort to get 100 million vaccinated in 100 days, there is hope that more shots will get into more arms sooner rather than later. As this effort hopefully ramps up quickly, more seniors, essential workers and those with compromising health issues in ALL areas—particularly those underserved areas—will get that first, then second, dose ASAP.

If the projected number of doses get into arms in 100 days, if the scores of millions of doses ordered recently by the government do so in the few months afterward, there are hopes that more of the country will be seeing a lot more sunshine regardless of the weather outside.

From [hhs.gov](https://www.hhs.gov), [fbi.gov](https://www.fbi.gov) and [justice.gov](https://www.justice.gov): **Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine Scams**

As many of us anxiously await our COVID-19 vaccines, here are signs of potential scams:

- You are asked to pay out of pocket to get the vaccine.
- You are asked to pay to put your name on a vaccine waiting list or to get early access.
- Advertisements for vaccines through social media platforms, email, telephone calls, online, or from unsolicited/unknown sources.
- Marketers offering to sell or ship doses of the vaccine for payment.

Protect Yourself. Do not give out your personal information to unknown sources.

If you believe you have been the victim of COVID-19 fraud, immediately report it to:

- HHS-OIG Hotline: 1-800-HHS-TIPS or tips.hhs.gov
- FBI Hotline: 1-800-CALL-FBI or ic3.gov
- CMS/Medicare Hotline: 1-800-MEDICARE

For accurate, up-to-date information about COVID-19, visit:

- oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus
- [fbi.gov / coronavirus](https://fbi.gov/coronavirus)
- justice.gov/coronavirus

Thank you, Nancy; welcome, Julie!

Among the many adventures that COVID-19 has provided include our relying on technology to keep us connected. MEA-Retired was so fortunate to have member Nancy Coscarelli helping us through her management of our Facebook page and *Constant Contact* communications and work with Dave Schopp, our webpage guru. We thank Nancy for her years of invaluable help and service to members.

2021 marks Nancy's handing over the reins, and we welcome Julie Hyatt, a retired Midland Public Schools educator, who has stepped into that role. Julie created and helps manage the webpage for the East Mid-Michigan MEA-Retired chapter. Julie earned her Master's Degree in technology, and, along with chapter Vice President Val Trabucchi, has taught several seminars aimed at helping chapter members be more comfortable with the technology that has become increasingly important in our lives.

In addition to having Julie manage the aforementioned communication tools, we are exploring opportunities to have Julie and Val share their talents and expertise with more of our members statewide. Stay tuned!

Early, lesser-known sit-in made a difference in Wichita

As I was sipping my coffee earlier this morning, I watched part of the Today Show, and heard co-anchor Sheinelle Jones begin the first day of Black History Month with a fascinating feature story. Jones shared that she grew up in Wichita, Kansas, and was amazed that she had never heard of the Dockum Drug Store sit-in staged by local students that happened there a year and a half before the better-known event at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. She is certainly not alone in not knowing this important piece of history that happened in her hometown; I, too, was introduced to it this morning for the first time.

Jones was able to interview a few who were part of the sit-in, which occurred July 19-August 11, 1958, and was astonished that some of those interviewed were friends of her own family who had never mentioned this historic event.

According to an NPR feature broadcast in October, 2006, the then whites-only lunch counter at the Dockum Drug Store was the site of the sit-in, planned by then-President of the local NAACP Youth Council Ron Walters and his cousin Carol Parks-Hahn, who was treasurer of the group. Walters

described Wichita at the time as “Mississippi up north” in terms of its segregationist practices. The three-week-long sit-in resulted in all Dockum Drug Stores in Kansas being desegregated, and helped set the stage for successful, non-violent, student-led sit-ins for justice in other states.

As we celebrate Black History Month, weeks after the swearing-in of our first Black, South Asian-American female vice president, take time to discover more happenings that made a difference. While positive changes have occurred in the last 60+ years, many more need to happen.

Here’s the link to the Today Show feature about the Dockum Drug Store sit-in:

<https://www.today.com/video/how-the-dockum-drug-store-sit-in-blazed-a-trail-for-civil-rights-100336709759>

Sarah Says: From NEA-Retired President Sarah Borgman

Almost a year now we’ve been dealing with the pandemic; yes, it seems like forever. We’ve read every article how to take care of ourselves, to practice good mental health, nutrition, socializing—or not. It lingers on. However, I have hope and encouragement---hope things are getting better AND encouraged when I read and hear what NEA Retired members have done and are continuing to do. **Valentine’s Day** is fast approaching. Take time to love yourself; give yourself a treat be it chocolates or the gift of time. Show your love to others; do something for someone else...a phone call, a card, a small token sent. Forgive yourself and someone else if necessary. Bask in the glory of one more day to be alive, happy, and serving. I see it every day in your work and your concern for the work we do. When all is said and done, don’t let anyone say that more was SAID than DONE! Shortest month of the year lies before us. Let’s use every bit of it in doing!

REMINDER: Your vote makes a difference starting February 8

On February 8, 2021, MEA-Retired members will begin casting ballots for MEA-Retired delegates to the MEA Representative Assembly, the NEA Representative Assembly, and the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, as well as Region Directors, if needed.

Online voting begins at 8 a.m. EST February 8, 2021 and ends 4 p.m. EST February 19, 2021.

Here’s how—You can use your own computer, your neighbor’s, your grandchildren’s or one at your local library.

1. Go to the MEA website at **mynea.org/onlinevoting**

2. Follow the Login instructions:

First Name

(often your legal first name)

Last Name

Last four digits

of your social security number

3. Click the “Login” button.

4. If your record is found and the polls are open, your ballot will be displayed.

5. Select the candidates for which you wish to vote. Clicking the “Additional Info” link next to a ballot item will allow you to read biographical information on the candidate if it has been submitted.
6. Once you have made your selections, click the “Confirm Ballot” button.
7. A preview of your ballot selections will be shown. To modify any of your selections, click the “Modify Ballot” button.
8. To cast your ballot, click the “Cast Ballot” button. Once your ballot is cast, you will see a confirmation page.
9. Click the “Sign Out” link to log out of the system.

If you have any problems using the MEA Online Voting application, contact the MEA IT Department at 517-337-5440 from 8 a.m.–4 p.m., Monday–Friday. If you call after hours, please leave a voicemail, and your message will be returned as soon as possible.



If you can do so, bundle up, go outside, get a little exercise and soak up some Vitamin D! My friend and fellow MEA-Retired member Kathi Dean and I grabbed our snowshoes a few days last week, physically distanced and enjoyed the beauty of winter in our area.

Please continue to be happy and healthy, and stay safe and warm! (Picture courtesy of Kathi Dean)