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Dear Members,

What a bountiful spring we have had this year. The flowers are more colorful and the trees are a brilliant green. A spring that seems more beautiful and has lasted longer than in the past.

The ARTC committees continue to meet on a regular basis over ZOOM. Technology has provided us with the tools to “keep in touch” with you. Our webpage, www.artct.org, has been updated and refreshed, as well as our Facebook site. Check us out!!

A special thank you to those affiliates who have donated to the Glenn Moon Scholarship Fund. ARTC is matching each donation since we were unable to have our spring luncheon and business meeting.

Four members of the Executive Board met on Thursday, May 6th to evaluate our new Executive Director, Tammy Gowash. We are very fortunate to have Tammy and her staff in the ARTC office. We appreciate their efforts to run the office with efficiency and dedication.

Hopefully, we will be able to have our fall luncheon at the Aqua Turf which is scheduled for Tuesday, October 12th.

Mark your calendars and keep your fingers crossed that we meet again!

Wishing you a happy and healthy summer.

Carol Noble, President
Carol Chase, Vice President

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee continues to focus on improving communications with affiliate chapters and sharing information regarding recruitment strategies and practices of interacting with members. In a year when Zoom meetings replaced in-person meetings, communication became increasingly important and difficult.

In past years, ARTC had been able to recruit new members at meetings of affiliate chapters. Letters and brochures were mailed to newly retired teachers. Our website (www.ARTCT.org) and Facebook presence provided additional sources of information. Recruitment was supported by the reinstatement of Life Memberships which proved attractive to both new and existing members.

Currently the Committee is considering incentives to newly retired teachers and the possibility of offering virtual memberships in which members will receive newsletters and other material through email.

We’re Trying Something New!

Increased postage costs and delays in mail service caused ARTC to “rethink” how we remind annual members that it is time to renew their membership. Annual members will find a card and envelope enclosed in this newsletter. Fill out the card, make your check payable to ARTC and send it in the envelope we’ve provided. Annual dues are \$50; Life Memberships are available at \$500.

Despite a difficult year ARTC continues to;

- provide you with information through emails, newsletters, our webpage, and Facebook page,
- work with our lobbyists to communicate with legislators on actions needed to support our goals and
- monitor meetings and actions of the TRB and represent your interests on proposed changes to your health insurance and pension.

Your dues make this possible!

ARTC AND THE LEGISLATURE

The Legislature is actively in session and, as of this writing, this report is a snapshot of where we are on Legislative issues regarding retired teachers. With the help of our lobbyists, we have been busy submitting testimonies and gathering information in support of ARTC goals.

Here are the issues we have supported on behalf of ARTC:

- We were the only teacher organization to submit testimony for the promised 50% tax exclusion in the budget, opposing the Governor's 25% tax extension. Thanks to the many members who emailed the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee in support of our testimony, the Committee kept the 50% CT tax exclusion in place. It is not a done deal yet, but at this moment, negotiations between the Governor's office and the Legislature is still taking place.
- We submitted testimony requesting a statutory change for an additional elected retired teacher on the TRB for fairer representation of the 38,00 retirees. Presently our lobbyists are reaching out to other organizations for additional support of this goal.
- We submitted testimony in support of the Governor's monetary allotment to the TRB, and we requested that the tentative amount of \$427.8 million in excess from the Budget Reserve Fund be allotted to the Teachers' Pension System. As of this writing, we do not have final budgetary figures.
- We submitted testimony for the 6.9% assumed rate of return on the COLA. Both the Governor and the Treasurer support this measure. If the Legislature approves this measure, it will become law and will benefit our COLA.

It is critical that for these goals to be accomplished, it requires everyone (yes, that means you) to act. Contact your Representative and Senator and urge their support for these issues that affect retired teachers. We are counting on you!

Cathy D'Agostino and Sandra Bove, Legislative Co-Chairs

LOBBYIST UPDATE

Our work at the Capitol continues in a "virtual" environment, with all Committee hearings and legislative sessions occurring either via zoom or in-person meetings closed to the general public. Committee hearings and meetings have concluded and budget proposals have been released by the Governor and Legislature. From now until the legislative session ends on June 9th, the Executive and Legislative branches of government will negotiate final agreements on the budget and major policy issues like sports gambling, legalization of marijuana, etc.

For ARTC, our priorities include maintaining a healthy pension fund, protecting health care benefits and the 50% state income tax exclusion for retired teacher pensions. We are also working to ensure the membership of the Teacher Retirement Board includes maximum representation of retired teachers to ensure that the Board understands the challenges faced by retired teachers and how the Board's decisions affects us.

In the next several weeks, please make an effort to contact your local legislators on behalf of the priorities listed above so that our voice is heard.

Kevin Graff, ARTC Lobbyist

INSURANCE UPDATE

This year has been extremely trying for all of us. If you add in the anxiety of choosing a Health Insurance Plan, it could be overwhelming. Due to the pandemic, the TRB was unable to hold in-person presentations and was forced to present information via on-line technology. This limited retired teachers from a true question and answer period which resulted in much confusion. The ARTC received numerous communications from our membership regarding the lack of clear-cut insurance information. We sincerely hope this open enrollment period will have dramatic improvement in regard to correcting all inconsistencies. We fully endorse the concept that the TRB should offer both plans, MA and MS. These choices are essential to the health and wellbeing of retired teachers.

What is the process the TRB must follow for choosing health insurance contracts?

The following is the basic process that must be followed every three years by Connecticut Statute:

- REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS, RFP. The RFP is developed with the coordination of the health insurance consultant, this year Segal Consulting.
- The TRB develops a health insurance subcommittee usual consisting of three to four members. Note: the ARTC would hope they choose TRB members that have experience in insurance and finance.
- The TRB receives contracts from interested insurance companies.
- The TRB health Insurance committee reviews all contracts relating to the RFP with the health insurance consultant. After an in-depth review, they usually come up with the best three for final analysis.
- A final decision is made by the health insurance subcommittee and health insurance consultant.
- This contract is then sent to the entire TRB Board for a final vote.
- Because these contracts are from private insurance companies they must be sent to the CT. Dept. of Insurance and the Attorney General's Office for evaluation and approval.
- This is a timely procedure that must be met before the TRB can proceed with the dissemination of information to the retired teachers—Open enrollment usually occurs between Oct. 15 and Nov. 7. We hope that this information helps you to understand the process. As further information becomes available the ARTC will post it on its website. The new plan starts on January 1, 2022. The ARTC health insurance committee wishes you a HEALTHY SUMMER.

Respectfully Submitted- Richard and Louise Follman

CONTACT LIST FOR HEALTH INSURANCE Anthem Supplement-800-633-6673
BENEFITS DEVISION TRB—959-867-6377 or TRB.Benefits@ct.gov
HEALTH INSURANCE-PROVIDERS -Advantage PPO-833-607-6518

Rick and Louis Follman

News from ARTC-PAC

Members of the Political Action Committee have been meeting via Zoom for over a year and are anticipating the time very soon when we can meet in person. We endorse candidates for the Connecticut General Assembly who understand and advocate for retired teachers. When we are able to meet again we host Meet & Greet events as well as sponsoring Lobby Day at the state Capitol. If you think you would enjoy being part of this committee, we would love to welcome you. We are actively looking for new members. Simply contact Marie Petitti (tonpetitti@aol.com) or Mary Hendrickson (baijian@aol.com); they can answer any questions and help get you on board.

Get involved - you can make a difference.

OUR AFFILIATES

The Naugatuck Retired Teachers are finally meeting for a June luncheon after fifteen long months of not being able to get together due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The NRT is so happy that many members are vaccinated, ready to share their experiences, and that the restaurants are able to accommodate larger groups so that no one is left out. Debbie DeRienz, NRT President.

Debbie DeRienz, NRT President

The Bristol affiliate still had a busy year even though the pandemic shut down our many activities. We met in my backyard with social distancing in July and a zoom meeting in January. One of the most important things we continued was our scholarship award winners. In 2020 the winner was Luke Ashworth from Bristol Eastern. In 2021 the winners were Brooke Soucy from Bristol Central and Kathryn Bardeck from Bristol Eastern. We also made a donation to the Mothers and Infant program at Zion Lutheran Church. This is our long standing charitable activity.

We look forward to the fall where we hope to return to our Welcome Back Breakfast and a raffle we hold for a donation to a first or second year teacher. We have two social activities; one in the fall and one in the spring and our banquet in May.

We continue to collect emails and have sent out occasional messages between our two letters sent to the membership. We wish all to continue to stay safe and hopefully we will return to in person events soon.

Charlene Berube, President of Bristol

Although RTAM (Retired Teachers Association of Manchester) has not been meeting in person during the pandemic, you can join our members on our relatively new Facebook page. To locate us, it is entitled Manchester Retired Teachers Association, since there are so very many retired teacher groups (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/591412248374014>). As an altruistic group, we did donate to the Manchester Scholarship Foundation this spring for a high school graduate attending college in an educational capacity. We will be sending out our newsletter for members and look forward to our next in-person event.

We celebrate all the teachers that have worked under very difficult conditions through this pandemic. We know that our teachers have given all their energies to be creative.

“I believe that education is all about being excited about something. Seeing passion and enthusiasm helps push an educational message.” Steve Irwin

If you would like more information about the Manchester affiliate, you can contact Ginny Schneider, President (vschneid@comcast.net)

I wish I had more to say other than we, as an organization and as individuals, have survived this past year. I have not done any Zoom meetings with our membership, but I have tried to attend all of the Zoom meetings that ARTC held. I just wish all of our locals members could hear how involved ARTC is in our legislative efforts. This as well as always being the best place to turn to for insurance issues.

I am currently working on a letter to all our members that “hopefully” will be sent out in an email blast.

Maybe soon we can move on!

Rona Rothhouse, President Northern Fairfield County

MEET THE STAFF

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Executive Director at the ARTC office. I am very excited to be working with the organization. I retired from Somers High School after 30 years as a Health and Physical Education Teacher. Along with teaching, I was an advisor for many different classes, SADD(Students Against Destructive Decisions) and SSS(Student's Supporting Students).



I grew up in Somers, went to Springfield College for my undergraduate, and just recently got my Masters in Educational Technology at UCONN. My involvement in the community included a Nurses Aide, EMT/Firefighter, Boy Scout, and church volunteer.

I am married, have a son, and two stepsons and come from a large family; which includes five siblings. My hobbies and interests include watching and rooting for our New England sports teams, playing golf, swimming, and camping with my large family. My passion is crafting. I love to embroider, sew, and do many different crafts; which include woodworking, glass blocks and vinyl. I have enjoyed my position at the ARTC office meeting and working with members. If there are any questions I can answer, feel free to call the Manchester office.

Tammy Gowash, Executive Director



I would like to introduce myself as the new Media Specialist at ARTC. I have owned my own business for the past 5 years.

I grew up in Stafford Springs and recently just moved into my childhood home. I am married and have 3 children, 2 boys and a girl. My hobbies are building legos, gardening, and spending time with my family.

I look forward to updating and publishing articles for the members of ARTC on our Facebook and Webpage.

Kayla Briggs, Media Specialist

I would like to introduce myself as the Administrative Secretary at the Manchester ARTC office. I have been here since November of 2020. I worked for 34 years at Automatic Data Processing in Windsor Connecticut. I got promoted to Project Service Specialist in Client Services as my last job prior to retiring.



I live in Somers Connecticut with my Fiancée. Together we have 5 children and 6 grandchildren. My free time is spent camping in Chaplin Connecticut.

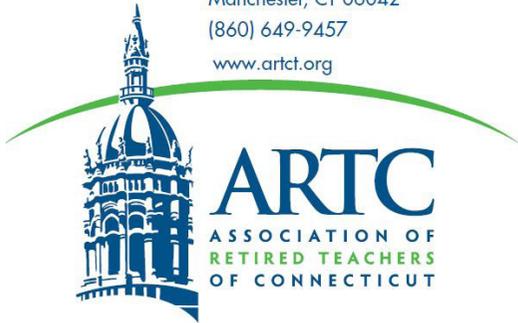
I look forward to working with members and committees at ARTC. Feel free to contact me at the Manchester office.

Beverly Clements, Administrative Secretary

◆ *Coming soon....Pay your dues online* ◆

Since 1946, ARTC has been a retiree organization exclusively representing CT Retired Teachers.

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2021 WINNERS OF THE GLENN MOON SCHOLARSHIPS

After careful consideration of 83 applicants, many of whom are great candidates and will be wonderful educators in the future, the Glenn Moon Scholarship Board has decided on two outstanding students to receive help from our scholarship for help with their college tuition costs.



\$2000 four-year renewable scholarship winner: Alexandra Podgorska from Rocky Hill will attend the University of Connecticut in the fall to major in English education.



\$1500 one-year scholarship winner: Marissa Walsh from Norwalk will attend Marist College in the fall to major in elementary education.

The Glenn Moon Scholarship is funded by donations from generous ARTC affiliates and wonderful retired teachers who are members of ARTC. We thank you all. The last two years have been especially difficult financially because of the pandemic. Without the visibility we get from luncheons for member donations and raffles, there have not been as many contributions as other years. Please consider giving to this worthwhile scholarship by giving to the Glenn Moon Scholarship Fund and send it to our treasurer:

Brad Hayward, 148 Lewis Road, Bristol, CT 06010

Your donation can be to honor a loved one or an educator whom you would like to be remembered.

Judy Morganroth Chairperson of the Glenn Moon Scholarship Committee