There is a Chinese curse, “May you live in interesting times.” There is no doubt that the curse has fallen on us. These interesting times include:

- Increased attacks on public education at the local, state, and national levels;
- A new Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, whose entire career has been focused on undermining public education and pushing for private school vouchers and unaccountable charter schools;
- More state laws and legislation designed to weaken public employee unions and public employee pensions;
- Potential cuts to Medicare and Social Security;
- A possible revival of a Supreme Court case that could result in the elimination of agency fee payments;
- Expansion of private school voucher programs; and
- Possible significant cuts to key federal education programs, including Title I.

Taken together, these threats and attacks would not only cause great harm to public education but also to NEA and its state affiliates, and potentially to the long-term soundness and survival of our retiree benefits.

As your new President for 2017 and 2018, I pledge to help rally our members to fight attacks, whether direct or indirect, on our benefits.

In my first month as President, I, the other officers, and leaders of our advocacy team, met with the leaders of the staff unions to discuss how to continue to work together; endorsed the Women’s March on Washington and encouraged our members to participate with NEA; met with the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare; met with the Director of HR to discuss the retirement plan; and held a Board retreat to set clear goals and tactics to improve our advocacy, operations, and responsiveness to our members.

We will fight as aggressively as possible to protect our retirement benefits – both our pensions and health benefits – through an extension of a strong Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). We will continue to fight to regain representation on NEA’s Retirement Advisory Board and, in the interim, to gain access to all the information provided to board members. We plan to strengthen our partnerships with the staff unions. We plan to partner with external organizations to fight the many threats from the Trump Administration, and we plan to expand our outreach to members and update our use of technology.

Thus, more than ever, we need a strong united NEARO. We have a talented and dedicated set of

continued on page 2
officers and Board members ready to engage. I want to personally welcome Gloria Constant as our new Vice-President, and Rafael Rivera and Mona Sima Ball, as new Board members.

The NEARO officers, board, and members stand ready to fight to protect our rights, but we need your help, as well.

**What can you do? JOIN NEARO!** It’s critical that all of you renew your membership, hopefully, not just for 2017, but also for the next several years. Please read the membership letter you should have recently received on details on how to do that. Please also join our FaceBook group (just search for NEARO on FaceBook and submit a request to join the group). Please come to our membership meetings. The next one, scheduled for March 8 at NEA headquarters (11am-1 pm), will focus on educating our members on the details of the plan and pension plans in general (See page 12). Please attend NEA Retirement Board meetings to show our solidarity and demonstrate our interest to NEA. The next meeting of the Board is March 7 at 8:30am in the News Conference Room.

For those who may not know me, I worked for NEA for 25 years (1983-2009), mostly as a lobbyist in Government Relations. I retired as Director of the then brand new Education Policy and Practice department. After leaving NEA, I worked for 6 ½ years for a progressive government affairs firm, the Raben Group, where, among serving other education clients, I was Executive Director of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF) – a coalition of 120 national education associations and institutions from PreK to higher education that advocated for increased federal investments in education.

As Thomas Paine said, “These are the times that try men’s [and women’s] souls.” I believe collectively we are up to these trying and interesting times. I look forward to working with you all to help ensure that we each have a secure retirement!

Please feel free to email me with suggestions, questions and concerns at Packer418@gmail.com.

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Joel Packer, retired in 2009 as director of Education Policy and Practice.

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**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON**

Brenda Huff, Cynthia Miles, Frances Beard, Norma Jones

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2
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

1. Pat Orrange
2. Ken Chen, Doc Powell, Richard Floyd
3. Sue Chase, Mary Sosa, Warlene Gary
4. Lily Eskelsen García
5. Carol Adams, Doris Belton, Dan Holmes, Marilyn Simmons
6. Mickey Ibarra, Joe Standa, Vickie Nelson
7. Mae Kim, Barby Halstead-Worrell
8. Anita Merina, Nas Afi, Donna Gold, Betty Jeung
9. Nesa Chappelle, Anna Smith
It would have been nearly impossible to have been an employee of the National Education Association, or one of its affiliates, without marching or protesting at one time or another. After all, NEA in its modern iteration was built on activism. Whether the cause was education, children’s welfare, civil rights, labor rights, or women’s rights, NEA has demonstrated on the side of fairness and justice.

I started marching in the early 1970s, when the Pittston Oil Company wanted to build a refinery in Eastport, ME, a small town just across the Bay of Fundy from my hometown of Lubec. The Bay of Fundy has three unique characteristics: Some of the highest tides in the world, the Old Sow, (the largest whirlpool in the Western Hemisphere), and more days of pea soup fog than you can imagine. Many of us believed that was a trifecta of reasons why an oil refinery in Eastport was a recipe for disaster.

So my high school friends and I organized. We wrote letters, we went door to door, and we even staged a public debate for the town. After the debate one of the clergy took me to task for my anti-refinery position thus indelibly marking my first experience in speaking truth to power.

The refinery scheme eventually failed. Sadly, I can’t claim victory for my school chums and myself. It was actually the Environmental Protection Agency that came to the rescue when it discovered that the Bay is the site where endangered right whales (eubalaena glacialis) bring their calves in the summer. It would be fair to say, however, that our high school campaign raised the community’s consciousness. I’m also happy to say that the Bay today is still pristine and welcoming both for the tourists who arrive each summer to enjoy its beauty and for the whales.

Fast forward to the 1980s and the era of the Equal Rights Amendment. While working for the Maine Teachers Association in Bangor, I, along with my husband, heeded the call of the National Women’s Organization and marched for ERA ratification in our state. Although the Amendment passed in Maine, the act failed nationally by one state.

Later, as an NEA staff member, I joined my colleagues in organizing marches on behalf of a variety of issues important to our mission and our members—education funding, children’s rights, human rights, and so much more.

But, the biggest and most important march of my lifetime arrived just this year – on January 21.

On March 20 a new U.S. President was sworn and a new administration installed. On March 21, men and women marched on Washington DC, state capitals, and cities across the country and the globe to express their concern for how this new administration will govern and deal with women’s rights, the rights of gays and lesbians, the environment, the Affordable Care Act, public education, and so many other issues that have been of concern to us for years.

As the photos in the insert illustrate, many of our NEA members and colleagues marched for fairness and justice.

One march may call attention to our concerns, but as we all learned long ago there are vital follow-up steps that must be taken to insure that our viewpoints are heard and heeded. That means contact with our elected officials by phone, by letter, and by visits to make an impact at all levels of government.

What the next four years will bring no one can predict. But I know one thing: I will not be silent. We should not be silent. We have never been silent when there is so much at stake. We must all continue to march.

Lynn Coffin retired in 2009 as director of NEA Marketing and Information Services.
Web App

TRUMP140.com

I believe democracy needs the media, and I support them (#presspledge), but President Trump often bashes news organizations, especially on Twitter.

Trump140.com is a web app to expose the truth behind the presidential tweets. Beside each of those tweets is one or more news articles from the best, most nonpartisan newspapers and news organizations. For example, when Trump promoted L.L. Bean in a tweet, Trump140 linked to two pieces: a Vox article about how this tweet broke the law according to The Office of Government Ethics, and a Bangor Daily News story about the boycott.

https://trump140.com/tweets/17178

The app is available on the web, not in any app store. Just visit Trump140.com with either your laptop browser or phone browser—and you are using the app! Instant access. Android phone users will be prompted, after a couple of visits, to add the app to their home screens. iPhone users can do this manually. But those steps are completely optional.

The next version of the app will allow trusted readers, like all NEARO members, to add news stories as new tweets appear. There may even be a weekly newsletter. I hope you will find this an interesting way to follow the news — and Trump’s tweets — and I welcome your feedback.

Ray Daly retired in 2012 from Information Services. Pictured above is Ray, wife Bonnie Gardner, and son Owen.
I was extremely gratified to read an article about Phil Hirschkop in the Washington Post of December 10 of last year. Phil was NEA’s civil liberties attorney at the time I was hired in September 1968 as the civil liberties coordinator in the new Center for Human Relations (now Human and Civil Rights).

My first case involved a young white woman who was teaching on Nantucket Island in Massachusetts. She wrote the NEA asking for advice should she be fired if she carried out her plans to marry a Black carpenter who had moved to the scenic island from Harlem, New York. On my suggestion, an attorney in another unit advised her on how to apply for aid from the NEA DuShane Defense Fund should she be fired. Then I advised her on how to build a defense before she was married. Hannah and Danny were married over Christmas, and she was fired a week later. The next problem was to find legal assistance, which proved more difficult than I expected.

A majority of people I talked to at the NEA and elsewhere were actually opposed to getting involved. Her local teachers association refused to give her assistance. The executive director of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, himself a school board president, told her he would fire her if she was teaching in his school district.

My director, Sam Ethridge, agreed that I could get a deposition from Phil Hirschkop. I called him and suggested that I thought there was an implied right of association within the guarantees of the first amendment to the Constitution, namely that teachers should enjoy the same rights as other citizens, including the freedom to choose their associates as well as their spouses. The most important question in this case was not the right to marry a person of a different race, which had been settled in Loving v. Virginia. The most important question for us had to do with whether a public school board as an agency of the state could constitutionally dismiss an employee, namely a teacher, for exercising the same rights available to other citizens. Phil agreed, and we went to court.

During the next two years, Hannah worked for $.50 an hour at a restaurant, which fired her when they found out why she had left teaching. She got another job for $.50 an hour in a woolen mill on the island. After her victory, which helped affirm freedom of association rights under the First Amendment, she returned to her teaching job, where she was now a hero. She was elected president of the local teachers association and doubled its membership her first year back. It was a great story for the NEA and teachers and for human rights everywhere.

As for Phil, he went on to win many other great victories establishing civil rights and civil liberties for people of many different groups. I am proud to have known him and to salute him at this time. And now my wife, Madeline, and I will definitely be going to watch the movie, Loving, which tells the story of Mildred and Richard Loving, an interracial couple who married in Washington, DC in 1958. When they moved to Virginia, they were arrested and banished from the state. Phil successfully defended them.
**Loving: A Movie Review and American History Lesson**

**WHEN VIRGINIA WAS NOT FOR LOVERS**

Shortly after Black boxer Jack Johnson defeated the “The Great White Hope” on July 4, 1910, it was learned that he had married Lucille Cameron, a white woman. Being the most publicized African-American on the planet, there were many who were outraged by the interracial marriage, disgusted by the example it set, and concerned about how it challenged prevailing notions of white supremacy and Black inferiority. Nothing upset southern white men more than white women having intimate affairs with Black men, and rumors or evidence of such affairs were the leading cause of lynchings. But Johnson had married in Illinois, where interracial marriages were not forbidden by law. Speaking from the floor of Congress, Representative Seaborn A. Roddenberry of Georgia, eloquent with racism and indignation, introduced a Constitutional amendment to ban intermarriages, saying:

“No brutality, no infamy, no degradation in all the years of southern slavery, possessed such villainous character and such atrocious qualities as the provisions of the laws of Illinois, New York, Massachusetts, and other states which allow the marriage of the negro, Jack Johnson, to a woman of Caucasian strain. (applause). Gentlemen I offer this resolution ... Intermarriage between whites and blacks is repulsive and averse to every sentiment of pure American spirit. It is abhorrent and repugnant to the very principles of Saxon government. It is subversive to social peace. It is destructive of moral supremacy, and ultimately this slavery of white women to black beasts will bring the nation to a conflict as fatal and as bloody as ever reddened the soil of Virginia or crimsoned the mountain paths of Pennsylvania.... Let us uproot and exterminate now this debasing ultra-demoralizing, unAmerican and inhuman leprosy.”

*Congressional Record, 62d. Congress, 3d. Less., December 11, 1912, pp 502-503*

Governor Cole Blease of South Carolina was more virulent, insisting that any Black man who went so far as to place “his hands upon a white woman ought not to have any trial, and all the white manhood of South Carolina wants to know is that they have the right man and there will be no trial... Such a thing as happened a few days ago in a certain state cannot happen in South Carolina; the boasted hero of the Blacks, who claims to be the superior of the white man in the ring, could not disgrace South Carolina by having himself united to a white woman within its borders.”

Fortunately, although antimiscegenation amendments were proposed in Congress in 1871, 1912, 1913, and 1928, enough good sense and decency prevailed that a nationwide law against racially mixed marriages was never enacted. However, prior to the California Supreme Court’s ruling in 1948 (*Perez v. Sharp*), no U.S. Court had ever struck down a ban on interracial marriages.

**That is the historical setting** of Jeff Nichols’s appropriately titled and poignant movie, *Loving*. It is based on the real experiences of Richard and Mildred Loving, two rural people deeply in love, one white and one Black, who made one unforgivable mistake: in 1958, they traveled to Washington, DC to get married, because she was pregnant, and then returned to Virginia where they were both arrested for violating state law. Neither was an advocate for social justice or was well educated, politically motivated, or out to prove anything. They were not an orchestrated or designed test case. Richard and Mildred just wanted to be left alone, to live their simple lives, and raise their family without interference or “making a public fuss.”

The movie opens in the 1950s with brilliant cinematography, capturing the beauty and simplicity
NEARO Outreach

of the geography and daily lives of the people of rural Caroline County, Virginia, where Blacks and whites lived close together and sometimes shared intimacy in a small enclave which, according to the local sheriff, had resulted in “blood (that) doesn’t know where it wants to be.” Richard, played by Joel Edgerton, was a construction worker, whose friends were mostly Black, and Mildred, played by Ruth Negga, lived with her parents, whose socio-economic level was above that of Richard’s family. But none of that made any difference to either family or their close friends, white and Black, who accepted their romantic relationship. But when Mildred became pregnant—they decided to get married in DC, only 82 miles removed in distance, but a galaxy apart in everything else—for the simple reason that they were in love.

The drama begins when they are both naive enough to believe a marriage certificate in DC has any bearing on the customs and traditions of Virginia—a state, ironically, with a long history of condoning illegitimate interracial children, beginning with those of its most prominent founding father. They were arrested and forced to relocate. They chose DC, a place they abhorred, longing to return to Virginia which they ultimately did, but not before their case attracted national attention and the ACLU took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, challenging Virginia’s antiquated anti-miscegenation laws. Richard and Mildred never liked the publicity the case brought to their lives, alternating between a sideshow and genuine sympathy. But because they had moved back to Virginia before the decision was rendered, they rightfully feared that an adverse outcome might result in their imprisonment. That period in the movie is the most tense and dramatic. In 1967, the high court ruled in Loving v. Virginia that such laws were unconstitutional. When notified by phone from the lawyers that their case had been won, the Lovings said thank you, and went about their normal lives—which was all they wanted in the first place.

The beauty of this movie unfolds on several levels. One is the casting. Both Edgerton and Negga are phenotypes or clones of Richard and Mildred, and those who have seen the 2011 HBO documentary on the case by Nancy Buirski, now available on YouTube, will observe how much the actors understood the emotions and the personalities of the real Richard and Mildred Loving. Unfortunately, the Academy of Motion Pictures does not have an Oscar category for casting directors. If it did, then Francine Maisler would have been nominated. Another level is the quietness of the movie: both characters speak on screen far less than is normally required for the roles of leading actors. But that becomes the silent strength of the movie—their ability to speak volumes about love, justice, and inequities without saying a word. Also, this movie bends with “the arc of the moral universe,” as described by Martin Luther King, Jr., in that it “bends towards justice.” For this movie, it is easy to place trust in the central characters, allowing them to guide you through the movie from their perspective. And there is a sadness to it as well. They never seem to grasp or care about the impact of their case or how it could help change America. Richard and Mildred just wanted to love each other and be left alone.

And, finally, this movie is history that we should all know. Two thumbs up.

Al-Tony Gilmore, a historian and former history professor, retired in 2012 from NEA Research and the NEA Archive at George Washington University. He is currently the Historian Emeritus of the NEA. Al-Tony’s new book, A More Perfect Union: The Merger of the South Carolina Education Association and the Palmetto Education Association, will be released in April.
Book Review

SUBSTITUTE: GOING TO SCHOOL WITH A THOUSAND KIDS
BY NICHOLSON BAKER, SIMON AND SHUSTER, 2016

It’s been 62 years since I finished my K-12 experience as a student. It’s been 50 years since I left teaching and started my Association career. And Nicholson Baker’s book “Substitute: Going to School With a Thousand Kids” brought back so much of it all that I’m worn out. I smiled and shook my head. I celebrated, and I lamented.

The book is a bit of a trudge. It’s over 700 pages long, but it’s worth the trudge. It’s not an “I can’t put it down” experience. Each chapter is a fairly new episode, although over the long haul, each chapter is still connected to the others. It covers 28 days of his substitute teaching experience, although it seems like about 28 years.

Baker gives us the full and detailed dialogue between student and teacher, between student and student, between teacher and teacher, and between each of them and the “substitute.” And along the way we pick up Baker’s concern for what’s happening in schools today.

Part of the fun for me was actually learning all over again some of the many things I was taught, or at least exposed to, that I never used after moving on.

One professional reviewer noted that what Baker provides, “is a lived-through sense of how busy and complicated and weird and long every school day is; how many ups and downs there are, and how exhausting – and sometimes entertaining – school is, for students and teachers both.”

Baker’s reflections throughout about schooling in general are both troubling and useful to those of us whose daily experience takes place in schools across the country.

At one point early on, Baker, after a day with second graders, finishes a chapter with this: “I thanked them and waved goodbye. I turned out the lights, washed my hands, and splashed water on my face. I felt like crying, from exhaustion or despair or joy. I’m not sure which.” And there, my friends, is what we devoted our efforts to for many years. That’s who paid our generous salaries and benefits.

You will find poor teachers and heroes both as you traverse Baker’s detailed vignettes. Baker is critical, although subtly, of much that happens in schools today. But he champions teachers and feels they should paid better, treated better, and have more reasonable workloads.

Throughout my reading, I kept coming back to what I learned in my experience with the NEA Learning Labs Initiative. That is, the primary purpose of education is to preserve and nurture enthusiasm and joyful learning and to do so by exploiting each child’s daily needs and ongoing curiosities.

Why is it that our political leaders, of both parties, don’t seem to grasp this? Maybe all politicians should be required to spend 28 days substituting, as Baker did, before they enact legislation for an environment they don’t understand, and, in many cases, don’t appreciate.

Substitute was reviewed by Bob Barkley, who retired in 2001 from NEA Affiliate Learning and Effectiveness.
# Directory Changes

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WELCOME, NEW RETIREES!

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FAREWELLS

Lee Littlefield, UniServ Director for Orange/Osceola Florida Service Unit for 20 years and the Polk Education Association from 2003 until his retirement, passed away Friday, September 30, 2016. Friends and family remembered him as a leader who sought to make a difference in the field of education and as an effective negotiator, trainer, lobbyist, writer, and speaker. Lee is survived by his wife, Rhoda Morales, sons Derek (Jeremy) and Richard (LeeAnne) from his first marriage, and four grandchildren: Annabel, Evan, Jaxson and Mason.

Wendy (Pearce) Paser, of the Pinellas County Education Association, passed away October 4, 2016 after a courageous battle with cancer. Friend and former colleague Karen Olivares noted, “Wendy made a difference in every classroom she stepped in, every teacher she mentored, every member she guided. The schools and employees of Pinellas County Public Schools are better off due to her commitment and passion for quality teaching and learning.” Wendy is survived by her husband of 42 years, Bill Paser; children Jamie (Fred) Hunter, and Jason Paser; stepdaughters Dana (John) Mihalik, and Melania and Melissa Paser; grandchildren Liam Hunter, Emily and Zach Mihalik, and Lola Paser; siblings Jackie (Royce) Rogers, Dan (Hyelan) Pearce, Ruth Nelson, and Gerri (Steve) Isaacson.

William Kilroy, Jr. passed away on January 21, 2017. After teaching and serving as president of the Somerville and Burlington Education Associations, he served as director of Publications and Public Relations. In 1972, he joined the professional staff of the NEA where he served for 30 years, focusing on organizing, crisis management, communications, and strategic planning. He is survived by his children, Jane Switchenko Sturbridge, Mary Kilroy, Patricia Papapietro, and Christopher Kilroy as well as eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.
NEARO Membership Meeting  
Wednesday, March 8, 2017  
11 am - 1 pm  
NEA - News Conference Room  
Topic: NEA Retirement Plan and Pension Rights

A PowerPoint presentation by NEA-Human Resources on everything and more about our Retirement Plan plus the opportunity to ask questions you have about making sure you receive that pension check each and every month.

Karen Friedman, Pension Rights Center provides an overview of their work, the state of our nation's private retirement system, attacks against such pension systems, and what NEARO members can do to join the protest against pension injustices.

Refreshments will be served, and we look forward to seeing you.

Don’t forget all retirees are invited to attend the NEA Retirement Board meeting on March 7 from 9 am - 2 pm.
Women March Across the Country
5 million protesters in 674 cities rallied for human rights January 21
“This is what democracy looks like,” “This is what America looks like,” “Fired up, Ready to go!”

1. Joel Packer
2. Princess Moss, Becky Pringle
Merwyn Scott, Associate Director, MCOP
3. Gina Lewis-Carmon
4. Third from Left Peggy Cochran, former Executive Director of NEA Missouri
WHAT WAS THE WOMEN’S MARCH LIKE?

A sea of pussy hats: pink, red, purple, multicolored, striped, knitted, crocheted, fleece, decorated, plain.

Wall-to-wall people: many races, ethnicities, religions, faiths, cultures, gender identities, ages, sizes, abilities; walking, wheelchair driven; packed tightly; calm, peaceful, smiling, helpful, singing, chanting.

Clear plastic back packs, not much trash. Long, patient lines at the Metro and port-a-potties. Helpful attendants and guards. Minimal police presence.

No one minded that it was hard to hear the speakers, hard to see the stage and screen. What mattered was being there, being present, being counted.

The costumes: Blind Justice with a blindfold over the marcher’s eyes and the Scales of Justice in her hand; a hat at last three feet across.

The signs: I throw like a GIRL, I’m a NASTY woman, Meet a Muslim, Women’s Rights are Human Rights, Black Lives Matter; issue signs on the environment, reproductive freedom, stop fracking, etc.

The chants: “This is what America looks like,” “Fired up, Ready to go!”

In my state, Vermont, Montpelier was expecting 3,000 marchers: There were so many, they had to close the exits on I-89. Greenfield was expecting 1,500; at least 3,000 showed up.

In a word: Inspiring.