

**Leading the Way for Maine Retirees****A REMINDER  
DON'T FORGET YOUR  
PENSION DEDUCTION**

We continue to receive telephone calls from public retirees who have overlooked Maine's \$6,000 pension income deduction. You and your spouse may each deduct up to \$6,000 of eligible pension income on your Maine Income Tax return; however, except for a surviving spouse, "eligible pension income doesn't include pension income earned by another person."

Retirees receiving disability retirement are also eligible for the \$6,000 pension exemption only if they have reached the normal retirement age. The normal retirement age for MSRS retirees is 60, if you had at least ten years of service before July 1, 1993, or had reached age 60 before July 1, 1993, and had at least a year of service credit immediately prior to reaching 60. If you don't meet either of these criteria, your minimum retirement age is 62.

Except for military pension benefits, the \$6,000 exemption must be reduced by any social security and railroad retirement benefits received. For example, if you are receiving both a MSRS pension of \$12,000 per year and a social security benefit of \$2,000 per year, you would be entitled to exemption of \$4,000 (\$6,000 minus \$2,000 of Social Security = \$4,000.)

You can claim your pension exemption in 2005 on either the Short Form 1040S-ME or the Long Form 1040-ME. The pension exemption deduction is on the Short Form and is on Schedule 1 of the Long Form.

Retirees who retired after 1988 can also deduct pick-up contributions on Schedule 1 of the Long Form. To calculate the amount of your deduction, subtract the State taxable gross amount of your MSRS pension from the federal taxable gross amount as shown on the last (December) stub of your pension check for 2004. You can also use your

1099 from MSRS to calculate your deduction.

If you have questions regarding the pension exemption, please feel free to call John Wakefield at 1-800-535-6555 or e-mail [johndwakefield@adelphia.net](mailto:johndwakefield@adelphia.net). If you did miss the pension income deduction, you can file an amended Maine Tax Form (1040X-ME Amended) within three years after the date of the original return.

**GOVERNOR'S BUDGET  
PROPOSES TO  
INCREASE THE  
STATE'S SHARE OF  
RETIRED TEACHERS  
HEALTH INSURANCE**

Governor Baldacci's current service budget proposes to increase the State's share of retired teacher's health insurance from 40% to 45% beginning July 1, 2005. We commend the Governor for funding this increase in the current services budget. MAR will aggressively support this proposal, as well as our own proposal to increase the State's share from 40% to 50% effective July 1, 2005.

**BUDGET PROPOSAL  
EXTENDS RETIREMENT  
UNFUNDED LIABILITY  
TO 23 YEARS**

The Governor's 2006-07 Part 1 Budget proposes to extend the amortization of the unfunded liability from the current 14 years to 23 years. Enactment of this proposal will save the State more than \$140 million in the current biennium, but will add significant additional costs over the next eight years.

Article 9, Section 18B of the Maine Constitution requires "that each fiscal year beginning with fiscal year July 1, 1997, the Legislature shall appropriate funds that will retire in 31 years, or less the unfunded liability of the MSRS that

is attributable to teachers and State employees." In past years, the Legislature used surplus funds to accelerate the State's payment of the unfunded liability.

MAR will oppose this budget proposal as it undermines the confidence of current and future retirees. In our opinion, the citizens of Maine in approving the Constitutional Amendment in 1995 indicated that they wanted the unfunded liability paid off and no longer wanted retirement funds diverted to other uses.

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TOTAL MAR MEMBERSHIP  
14, 995  
DELTA DENTAL MEMBERSHIP  
3,334



## 2005 REGIONAL MEETINGS CALENDAR

Notice was given in the fall issue of this newsletter, and the information is running again. Mark your calendar. All meetings will start at 11:00 a.m. and lunch should end about 1:00 p.m. The locations are the same in each area as last year. We will ensure there are no problems with catering this year. Again, there will be a \$2.00 cost per attendee for lunch that will be collected at the door.

**March 25, 2005** Cumberland & York Counties:  
Location: South Portland Community College (Cafeteria)  
Cutoff Call Date to MAR to notify us of number attending:  
March 1, 2005.

**March 31, 2005** Aroostook County  
Location: No. Maine Technical College (Reed Commons Cafeteria) in Presque Isle.  
Cutoff Call Date to MAR to notify us of number attending:  
March 1, 2005.

**April 5, 2005** Penobscot, Hancock, Washington & Piscataquis Counties:  
Location: Eastern Maine Technical College (Rangeley Hall) in Bangor. *Stacy Sparkman*  
Cutoff Call Date to MAR to notify us of number attending:  
March 18, 2005.

**April 7, 2005** Androscoggin, Franklin & Oxford Counties.  
Location: Elks Lodge in Lewiston. *Amata Wiles*  
Cutoff Call Date to MAR to notify us of number attending:  
March 18, 2005.

**April 12, 2005** Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Somerset & Waldo Counties. *Glouia Rhode*  
Location: Elks Lodge in Augusta.  
Cutoff Call Date of MAR to notify us of number attending:  
March 25, 2005.

## MAR'S LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

MAR has submitted three proposals for the First Regular session of the 122nd Legislature.

An Act to Increase the State's Share of Retired Teachers' Health Insurance. This bill increases the State's contribution for health insurance for retired teachers from 40% to 50% beginning July 1, 2005.

An Act to Increase the Income Tax Deduction on Private, Public and Military Pensions from \$6,000 to \$10,000. This bill increases from \$6,000 to \$10,000 the amount of the State income tax deduction for income received from public, private and military pensions.

An Act to Authorize the Maine State Retirement System to Provide Names and Addresses to Public Retiree Organizations. This bill would allow the Maine State Retirement System to provide names and addresses of retirees to Maine-based non-profit or public organizations established to provide programs and services to public sector retirees.

The 122nd Legislature faces a number of challenges which include balancing the State's budget and implementing tax reform. Needless to say, the State's financial difficulties will be a major obstacle in enacting legislation that requires additional appropriations.

In addition to our legislative proposals above, MAR will be active in supporting all bills that benefit public retirees, and actively opposing those measures that negatively impact retirees.

## MAR'S 2005 DIRECTOR'S MEETING

MAR's 2005 Director's Meeting will be held on April 12, 2005, beginning at 9:00 a.m., at the Elks Lodge in Augusta. The meeting will take place immediately before the scheduled regional meeting.

## MAR 2005 ANNUAL MEETING

MAR's 2005 Annual Meeting will be held on May 11, 2005 at the Civic Center Auditorium in Augusta. Please mark your calendar. YOU are the reason for the meeting. We hope to see everyone there.

## MAR ADDS NEW BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS

Mar now offers FREE Notary Public and Faxing services for its members. Two MAR staffers (Maxine Gorten and Erica Graham) have completed the documentation required to become Notaries Public, and took the oath of office on November 29, 2004. The attached photograph shows Ed Pert, a Dedimus Justice and the 2nd VP of MAR's Executive Committee, administering the Notary Public oath to Maxine and Erica. Some of the commonly exercised powers of a Notary Public include: the administration of oaths or affirmations, certification of an affidavit or an acknowledgment of instruments related to real estate transfers, certification of copies of private documents, and solemnization of marriages.

If you, as an active member of MAR need either Notary Public or Faxing services, please contact the MAR Office to receive those services free of charge. This can be a significant savings for anyone who needs these types of services.

Also, MAR has just signed an agreement to sponsor Liberty Mutual Insurance as an opportunity for MAR members to obtain the lowest cost, highest quality coverage on their auto and home insurance. You will receive a mailing in the near future with the MAR logo on the documents, offering you the opportunity to compare your current insurance costs with the special pricing offered by Liberty Mutual to MAR members only. Please read "From the President's Desk" on the back page of this newsletter to see the discounts offered to MAR members through this association. Please, take the opportunity to compare prices, and get the best price for the insurance coverage that best meets your needs.





## MAR NEEDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

MAR is seeking volunteers to serve on organizational committees; specifically the By-Laws, Membership, and Legislative Committees – AND – to serve as Regional Representative in Region II (replacement for Pauline Dorr) which covers Penobscot, Hancock, Washington & Piscataquis Counties.

There is very little time involved in serving on committees or as Regional Representative. There may be a few meetings throughout the year, and your input would be valued.

If interested in any of these opportunities to serve the other members of MAR, please contact Flo Hoover or Erica Graham at the 1-800-535-6555.

## PROPOSAL FOR REVISION TO ASSOCIATION BY-LAWS (UPDATED FROM 8/2003) JULY 13, 2004

[The following proposal for revision will be presented before the upcoming MAR Director's Meeting, which will be held on April 12, 2005 at the Elks Lodge in Augusta (at 9:00 a.m., before the scheduled regional meeting). Concerns voiced by members at last year's meeting have been taken into consideration in revising the proposal for this year's presentation.]

### Proposed revision of Article III, Members:

*Section 2 (a change in the description of Associate Members):*

Any persons currently or previously employed as a public service (State, Local/Municipal, and/or Teacher) employee in Maine, or any persons retired from public service employment in any other US state who currently owns property within Maine and considers Maine as a primary or secondary resident may become an Associate Member of this Association. Associate Members may not hold elected office within the Association; nor serve in any appointed positions, on committees, or vote at meetings. Associate Members will be encouraged to express their ideas and participate in discussions at regional and annual meetings, and will be eligible for many (depending on eligibility criteria by service providers) MAR member benefits. Associate Members will be charged annual dues that are less than dues charged to MAR members.

The following revisions have already been considered and supported by the Executive Committee and Board of Directors:

### Proposed revision of Article IV, Officers and Regional Representatives:

#### *Section 1 (to be revised to read):*

The Executive Committee of this Association shall consist of the President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, Immediate Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Auditor. All other sections under Article IV to remain unchanged.

### Proposed revision of Article VI, Board of Directors and Executive Committee:

#### *Section 5 (only the last sentence of Section 5 to be revised to read):*

The Executive Director to be recruited and hired as a full or part-time employee, depending upon the needs of the Association. The position will be classified as Exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The Executive Director will serve as a member of the Executive Committee with a voice, but no vote.

## DATES MAINE STATE RETIREMENT CHECKS DISBURSED IN 2005

January 28, 2005

February 25, 2005

March 30, 2005

April 29, 2005

May 27, 2005

June 29, 2005

July 29, 2005

August 30, 2005

September 30, 2005

October 28, 2005

November 29, 2005

December 30, 2005



## \*\* OPPORTUNITIES GALORE \*\*

Do you need tax counseling and/or tax preparation?

AARP Tax-Aide runs FREE services and can answer most of the tax issues faced by middle and low income taxpayers, with special attention to those aged 60 and older. To locate a site near you, call their toll-free number at 1-888-227-7669 (February 1 to April 15, 2005) or visit their website at [www.aarp.org/taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/taxaide).

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**YOU Are Needed In Local Businesses** (full or part time)

Maine businesses need your acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities in their organizations – NOW. Are you interested in full or part-time paid employment? Go to your local Manpower Office, CareerCenter, or online at [www.JobsInME.com](http://www.JobsInME.com). There are good jobs available – and employers who are savvy enough to recognize the outstanding value in hiring, training, and holding onto older workers. More and more businesses are realizing that they need the abundance of knowledge and experience that is still available from Maine's seasoned workers to keep themselves operational – and to ensure they improve or maintain the highest quality of service to their customers. Many businesses will adjust their work scheduling to accommodate the part-time or seasonal work desired by seasoned workers. Please, check it out! You (financially and health-wise), businesses (they get hard workers with instilled good work ethic and customer relation skills), and your community will benefit by putting seasoned workers back into the jobs market.

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Senior Spectrum at Muskie Center in Waterville needs volunteer van drivers for senior adventure trips in Maine. Lunch will be provided. No long-time commitment – start immediately and continue as often or little as you like. It's a wonderful way to spend the day. Please call Tina at the Muskie Center (1-800-639-1558) for information about the next scheduled trip.

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The Maine State Museum needs volunteers in the exhibit galleries and at the front desk. This is a wonderful

opportunity to stay involved in your community, and to be surrounded by the marvels of history. Volunteers will be trained on-site. Volunteers are entitled to a 10% discount at the museum store and are invited to all preview openings of new exhibits-see them before the public does. If interested, please contact Kris Weeks Oliveri at (207) 287-2302 or by e-mail at [kris.weeks-oliveri@maine.gov](mailto:kris.weeks-oliveri@maine.gov)

## LOOKING FORWARD TO SPRING: MAINE STATE PARK DAY-USE PASSES ARE FREE TO SENIOR CITIZENS

The Maine State Park Service offers FREE Senior Citizen (65 years and older) Passes. The Senior Citizen Pass admits the pass holder to free day-use areas. This pass is NOT transferable to anyone else. Applicants for the Senior Citizen Pass are required to provide a copy of a birth certificate or driver's license as proof of age.

You can obtain a Senior Citizen Pass by handwritten request, sent by mail. Remember to include a photocopy of your driver's license or birth certificate. You can mail your request to: Department of Conservation, ATTN: Charlene Daniels, 22 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0022.

### PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR RECORDS OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT

#### NOTICE OF NAME OR ADDRESS CHANGE

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address: (Former)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**New:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Tel** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** If you plan to be away any time during the year, please notify us so that we can send the UPDATE to the proper address.

**Approximate Time Away:**      **From Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **To Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## CALL TO ACTION !! YOUR ACTION NEEDED !!

Well, last year's legislation did not pass – and that opportunity is gone. HOWEVER, new legislation has been submitted in the form of HR 147, which is almost identical to last year's bills. We need your help in contacting our legislators early – and often – to get them focused on passage of this new legislation, HR 147 [it's called the Social Security Fairness Act of 2005].

Legislation has been pending in Washington, D.C. for about 10 years to repeal the Social Security penalties that hurt retired public employees in Maine and 14 other states. Let's get the Social Security Fairness Act of 2005 passed.

Non-passage of previous bills has financially hurt Maine's public retirees. Maine's public retirees are not receiving the full measure of retirement income they have earned from both their State pensions AND Social Security entitlements.

After the first Call To Action last year, we received letters from our Maine Legislators expressing their support for the pending legislation and informing us that they would continue to fight to get the bill(s) passed. This legislation is still pending (in the form of HR 147), and it needs to be passed this year. Promises we can get everyday, favorable results are needed. These legislators are seasoned politicians and know how to employ effective tactics to get legislation they fully support passed in Washington, D.C. Please call AND write again to Maine's Senators and Representatives and tell them bill HR 147 must pass this year and become law. Let them know that you don't want to hear that passing the bill would be too expensive. Hundreds of thousands working lifetimes have been devoted to quality public service for the citizens of Maine and the 14 other states. These public service workers are still negatively affected by the neglect of our nation's political leaders to pass this legislation. It's a shame that the public service retirees in 15 of 50 states must fight for their entitlement to the full measure of retirement income they have earned. It needs to STOP this year with the passage of this legislation.

Please call AND write today. Speak and write clearly that they must take necessary action to get this legislation passed THIS YEAR. Favorable results on this legislation could significantly help the political party that makes passage a reality – in the next election, and for years to come.

To reach Maine's Representatives, call AND write to:

### Senator Olympia J. Snowe

154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

E-mail: [olympia@snowe.senate.gov](mailto:olympia@snowe.senate.gov)

Phone: (202) 224-5344 (D.C.); (207) 282-4144 (Biddeford); (207) 786-2451 (Auburn); (207) 945-0432 (Bangor); (207) 874-0883 (Portland); (207) 622-8292 (Augusta); (207) 764-5124 (Presque Isle).

Fax: (202) 224-1946

### Senator Susan M. Collins

172 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

E-mail: [senator@collins.senate.gov](mailto:senator@collins.senate.gov)

Phone: (202) 224-2523 (D.C.); (207) 622-8414 (Augusta); (207) 945-0417 (Bangor); (207) 283-1101 (Biddeford); (207) 780-3575 (Portland); (207) 784-6969 (Lewiston); (207) 493-7873 (Caribou).

Fax: (202) 224-2693

### Representative Thomas H. Allen

1717 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

E-mail: [rep.tomallen@mail.house.gov](mailto:rep.tomallen@mail.house.gov)

Phone: (202) 225-6116 (D.C.); (207) 774-5019 (Portland)

Fax: (202) 225-5590

### Representative Michael Michaud

437 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

E-mail: [rep.mikemichaud@mail.house.gov](mailto:rep.mikemichaud@mail.house.gov)

Phone: (202) 225-6306 (D.C.); (207) 942-6935 (Bangor); (207) 782-3704 (Lewiston); (207) 764-1036 (Presque Isle)

Fax: (202) 225-2943





# From the President's Desk

**NOTE:** The Executive Director and Executive Committee of MAR, are always looking for potential new benefits for our members. We are only looking for benefits that would improve the quality of life for MAR members. Costs and ensuring quality of products/services for our members are important considerations when deciding which benefits will be sponsored by MAR.

Let's review the current list of benefits for MAR members. What are we getting for our \$15.00 annual membership dues?

- Advocacy before the Legislature concerning matters affecting Maine Retirees
- Membership in an organization who's only concern is protecting the rights and benefits of Maine Retirees
- Quarterly newsletters with information useful to its members
- Delta Dental insurance coverage at reasonable Association rates
- Website available to its members with relevant information and an abundance of links to other internet sites that provide services and information to Retirees
- FREE retirement financial advising by Atlantic Investment Advisors
- FREE \$1,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance
- FREE Notary Public services (\*new benefit)
- FREE faxing services (\*new benefit)
- Availability of credit card through MBNA at Association APR of 7.9% and NO annual fees
- Availability of Cancér Protector Plus insurance through AFLAC at low Association rates
- (Effective shortly) Availability of home and automobile insurance coverage by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. The auto insurance benefit alone offers MAR members: 10-20% Good Driver Discount, 10-20% Multi-car Discount, 20-30% Air Bag Discount, 5-10% Anti-Lock Brakes Discount, 5-25% Anti-Theft Device Discount, 10% Low Mileage Discount, 10% Mature Driver Discount, AND an additional 5% Discount for being an active member of MAR.

Edmund Hagan,  
President

MAR's Executive Committee: Edmund Hagan (President), Isabella Thurston (1st Vice-President), Ed Pert (2nd Vice-President), Hilary Fleming (Treasurer), Esther Jean (Auditor), and Henry Carbone (Secretary).

Address Service Requested

280 Maine Avenue  
Farmingdale, Maine 04344



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