

May/June 2023

Administrator's Report



Nominations:

July 1 - Aug 1

Deadline to Request

Mail-In Ballot: Sept 1

Election Held: Oct 3

Winners Announced:

**Oct 14 Representative
Assembly Meeting**

Greetings MCEA members,

I am proud to say that the past few months have been busy ones for MCEA. You—members and leaders—have been taking action to address workplace issues. You will read more later in this issue about how members just like you are taking initiative and tackling hard problems.

For this issue of the Buzz, I would like to focus on the upcoming elections for the MCEA Executive Board.

Union elections, I would argue, are among the few genuine expressions of democracy, in which workers both build and govern their own organization. Elected union officers represent one of the pillars of the labor movement: that any working person can become a leader. Other than being a union member, the only qualification needed is the will to do it.

Now is your chance, as active MCEA members, to have real input into the governance of MCEA, and to put forth the names of those who can help keep this union a strong and effective guardian of the rights of State and public employees.

As you may have already read in the letter from the Elections Committee, nominations open on July 1 and close on August 1. All Executive Board positions are open and position descriptions will be listed further in this issue. Send nominations to elections@mcea.org, providing the full name of each nominee and the office to which you are nominating. You may also send questions or concerns to the same email address.

As always, please reach out to update your contact information, especially if you did not receive the letter from the Elections Committee.

Remember, MCEA only works if YOU, our members, participate. As such, I hope that you will take the time to nominate those who you feel can help guide our union into its future. We are off to a great start already—let's keep it going.

In unity,
Leonard Lee

MCEA EXECUTIVE BOARD POSITIONS

- President
- Executive Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

[\(Click here and navigate to Article 6 for the list of duties\)](#)

Exciting Announcement: the MCEA Membership Drive!



Union membership makes people power, and people power is what makes big changes in your workplace. Stronger unions don't just happen without recruitment and organizing.

You know why you joined your union. You know why membership and activism are important. Your coworkers need to know, too.

Starting July 1 and ending September 30, you can earn rewards for signing up new members:

- 1 new member – MCEA keychain
- 5 members – MCEA T-shirt
- 10 members – \$50 gift card
- 15 members – \$100 gift card

By the end of the Membership Drive on September 30, **the member who recruits the most members (minimum of 10!) will win a weekend getaway.** If there are multiple winners, their names will be entered into a drawing. Winners will be announced during the October 14, 2023 Representative Assembly meeting.

Not only are you building power, but you get a chance to win cool prizes. If you'd like talking points on how to speak to potential members, give Andrew Mayton a call at 443-286-0520.



Did You Know?

AFT's Accidental Death & Dismemberment Plan

Would your family be secure if you were to have an accident at work?

As a member of MCEA, you are also entitled to every benefit won by the American Federation

of Teachers. This includes a completely free, no-strings-attached Accidental Death & Dismemberment insurance.

Whether an accident happens at work or in your personal life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) insurance helps provide members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) with financial support needed by you or your family. As a benefit of the American Federation of Teachers membership, the national AFT has arranged for all active working and retired members in good standing to have \$5,000 of AD&D coverage from Federal Insurance Company, a Chubb company.

AFT members who spend their lives working to provide stability for their families should have extra protection if a work-related accident occurs. That's why the policy provides extra benefits for workplace accidents.

Sign up for this benefit here: <https://leadernet.aft.org/webform/maryland-classified-employees-association-1935-add-beneficiary-form>

Reminder: Boston Mutual Guaranteed Issue Whole Life Insurance

Important Reminder for MCEA Members!!!!

Guaranteed Issue Whole Life Insurance
(Open Enrollment: May 1 - July 31, 2023)

Guaranteed Issue Life Insurance Open-Enrollment Ends July 31, 2023!

As an MCEA member, you are eligible for GUARANTEED ISSUE whole life insurance from Boston Mutual through the convenience of payroll deduction! This exciting offer is available for you, your spouse, children, and grandchildren.

For as little as \$4.00 Biweekly, you can purchase a life insurance policy that is affordable, accrues cash value, and is portable should you retire or resign!

To be eligible for coverage:

- You need be an Active MCEA Member
- Work at least 20 hours per week

Open enrollment ends July 31, 2023, so please don't wait to take advantage of this exciting opportunity.

[To obtain a life insurance quote, click HERE.](#)

To learn more about this valuable MCEA member benefit, please email MCEA's Insurance Agent, Kathy Goeller at kathy_goeller@rktongue.com or call Kathy at 443.253.6191.

Events - Past & Upcoming

Representative Assembly

Our constitution compels us to hold two Representative Assemblies each year.

On Saturday, April 29, we held our inaugural Spring Representative Assembly via both Zoom and in-person here at MCEA Headquarters.

Next Representative Assembly Meeting on October 14, 2023 via both Zoom and in-person here at MCEA Headquarters.

Among the topics discussed, we received a legislative update, updates from our Councils, and reviewed the budget for 2023. For further information, please contact info@mcea.org.

Harford County: Facing the New Administration Head-On



New administrations come with new challenges. When Bob Cassilly was elected the Harford County Executive, we knew our relationship with the county government would change. What we didn't know is how drastically it would change.

First, our bargaining team was met with hostility from the County, including a lawyer who insisted that he did not have to negotiate with us. Cassilly reflected this

attitude when he announced, while we were still negotiating our contract, that our County employees would only receive a 1.5% COLA, with another 1.5% possible six months later, depending on finances.

Then, shortly into his term, Cassilly made opponents of both the sheriff's office, the public libraries, and the public schools. Management and labor in these sectors united against Cassilly

and [held a rally against his proposed budget cuts](#) for FY2024. Cassilly [responded](#): “If I fund the additional \$40 million requested by the board of education and the sheriff’s request for \$28 million, I will need to raise taxes by \$500 per household.”

MCEA leaders asserted that this was a transparent attempt to divide County employees from the general public by claiming he will make the public pay for what the County has always provided.

Joy Clark, MCEA Council 610 Vice President, Mike Keeney, and Andrew Mayton testified at the Harford County Council Public Hearing on the FY2024 Budget. Each expressed solidarity with the many teachers and library employees who showed up and explained why they oppose the budget.

This led to several requests for meetings between MCEA Council 610 leadership and Harford County Councilpeople, the first with Councilman Penman, who expressed his solidarity and support, and offered guidance.

MCEA Council 610 plans to continue building support not only with the council people, but also with other unions in the county.

Further, their contract is now complete. The bargaining team (Stan Divelbliss, Joy Clark, Jennifer Ensor, James Bullock, Corey Mitchell, and Jayme Robinson) fought hard for each new benefit, and worked to prevent the County from removing benefits we’ve already secured. And we are not through fighting – we secured an agreement with the County that we will return to the bargaining table if there are any modifications to the current budget, and we demanded a one-year contract so that we can return this fall to continue to fight for better wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment.



On Monday, June 26, County employees enjoyed the highest voter participation in Council 610 history using an online election tool, and voted overwhelmingly in favor of ratifying their contract.

Salisbury University: Wages & Bargaining



In early May, the Salisbury University President, Dr. Carolyn Lepre, sent a message to the entire campus community that caught many in MCEA’s bargaining unit off guard.

After reminding us of her promise that she “would make every decision with a people-first mentality,” we learned that exempt and faculty employees would be receiving equity increases, averaging between 1% and 6%.

Dr. Lepre added that “salaries for our bargaining unit non-exempt employees are reviewed annually and are adjusted when warranted.” This is not technically true, as we have an advantage the others do not—the power to collectively bargain.

Though the President’s email had a demoralizing effect on bargaining unit employees all over campus, it was important for Council 72’s leadership to catch everyone up to the same page.

We held a meeting on June 7 to explain the situation and plan how to direct our energy to build strength at the bargaining table. Members and non-members alike expressed their frustration at the administration but resolved to move the struggle forward.

MCEA and Salisbury University are still at the bargaining table.

Retirees Council: Fight Back for Prescription Meds!

MCEA's Retirees Council held a hybrid meeting on Saturday, June 10. The main discussion was around the prescription plan legislation, which threatens to revoke State retirees' ability to afford their prescription medications.

In 2018, thousands of State retirees received a letter from the Department of Budget and Management stating that their prescription drug program was eliminated in 2011. This would force those who were Medicare eligible into Medicare Part D, which drastically increased prescription drug prices, far beyond affordability.

A group of retirees, with assistance from an attorney, filed a complaint and motion for injunctive relief, which was granted in October of 2018, which maintained the original prescription plan until the complaint was settled.

This was a temporary victory—the case is back in court. On June 29, MCEA retiree members plan to attend the hearing in Greenbelt to express solidarity with all State retirees.

As always, thank you for your service to Maryland's public.

— MCEA Staff



(From left to right: Mike Keeney, Hillary Davis, Andrew Mayton, Wanda Bailey, Marilyn Miller, Leonard Lee)



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