



November 2023

## Musings from Mary Ellen

“Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home.” *Edith Sitwell (2011). “Taken Care Of: An Autobiography”, p.176, A&C Black.*

I would like to begin by congratulating the two new members of the CTRB: Mary Beth Lang and Ed Vargas. Unfortunately, a GBRTA member and one of ARTC and GBRTA’s endorsed candidates, Rita McDougald-Campbell, was not elected. I know that Rita will continue to work on all issues that relate to Connecticut retired teachers.

So, Election Day and Halloween are behind us, which means winter is approaching! Edith Sitwell’s quotation reminds me (and perhaps some of you) of memories of family gatherings, whether it be Thanksgiving or any of the December holidays. This year, think about creating a new memory by attending GBRTA’s General Meeting and Luncheon on December 14<sup>th</sup>. A sing along and other holiday festivities will help all of us enjoy the colder weather, even if we dislike the white stuff. Deadline for registering for the luncheon is November 27<sup>th</sup>. See more details on page 3.

As members of GBRTA, we have a few reasons to feel thankful:

We have energetic volunteers, who organize the luncheons, create the newsletters, and produce a professional website for our organization!

We are affiliated with the Association of Retired Teachers of Connecticut-ARTC. This group of volunteers help retired teachers in understanding their pensions, their healthcare, and their social security (or lack of). In addition, they work on making the CTRB elections more transparent by sponsoring webinars with endorsed candidates and by sending out pertinent information to retired teachers.

We had a GBRTA member, Rita, run for one of the CTRB additional seats. She will continue to be involved passionately in lobbying for all of us.

A reminder to renew your membership, if needed. Encourage other CT retired teachers, who taught with you, to join GBRTA. Invite them to the luncheon. We hope to be able to sponsor some informal get togethers in the New Year. All of us need “the touch of a friendly hand”.

Best wishes for your holidays, and a Happy New Year,

Mary Ellen

### A Note from Rita McDougald-Campbell

The results of the Teachers’ Retirement Board election were announced on November 8th. My running mate, Ed Vargas, received the highest vote tally, with almost 1,000 more votes than the next closest competitor. I did not win the second available seat, but I am thrilled with Ed’s victory. Congratulations to Ed; I know he will serve us well.

I thank those of you who supported my candidacy. While I’m not on the TRB, know that I will continue to lobby to protect our pensions and ensure that we retain quality and affordable health insurance options.

It is important to understand that while there are now four retiree representatives on the TRB, it is imperative that all retirees use their voices to hold our representatives accountable

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**Holiday Lunch Meeting**  
**December 14, 2023 10:30 am**  
**Tashua Knolls Tashua Knolls Lane Trumbull, CT**

Come join your fellow retirees for some holiday fun! Sheena Graham will lead us in a merry sing along as we craft some holiday decorations. Wear your best or worst holiday sweater and/or hat—prizes will be awarded!

Following the special lunch, you'll have time to chat and share memories with old and new friends. We know that some of our members no longer drive but would like to attend the Holiday Lunch. If you need a ride, please contact Vice-President Pat DeCoster at [patsail62@gmail.com](mailto:patsail62@gmail.com) as soon as possible. Pat will try to match you up with someone who has indicated a willingness to drive.

**Menu Selections and Prices:**

Eggplant Parmigiana	\$ 36	Breast of Chicken <i>Francaise</i>	\$ 37
Broiled Filet of Sole <i>Almandine</i>	\$ 37	Roast Top Round of Beef	\$ 41

**Dessert:** Lemon Mousse

All meals include melon with prosciutto starter, garden salad, rice pilaf, vegetable, rolls, coffee and tea. Since the price for each meal is different, there can be no substitutions. Please do not request changes to the set menu.

**Details:** The business portion of the meeting will begin at 10:30 am followed by the program. Lunch will be served at noon. If you are attending the business portion of the meeting and not staying for lunch, please call to let us know that you are coming so we can arrange seating for you. Make check payable to GBRTA with date, menu choice and your phone number on the check. Only one reservation per check. Checks must accompany reservations.

**Reservations and payment by November 27 to:**

**Sandra Petrucelli-Carbone      607 Juniper Court      Oxford, CT 06478**  
**203-463-8403      spcdkg@comcast.net**



**Holiday Raffle:** An integral part of GBRTA's mission is to award scholarships to 16 public high school seniors in Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Milford, Monroe, Shelton, Stratford and Trumbull who plan on entering the teaching profession. Proceeds from our Holiday Raffle benefit our Scholarship Fund!

Please consider donating an item for the raffle, such as gift cards, holiday baskets or holiday food or beverages.

If you would like to donate a raffle prize, please contact  
**Kathy Chimini      203-375-6659      531kmc@gmail.com**  
 ahead of time to let her know what you will be donating.

**Save the Date!!!**

On your new 2024 calendar, mark April 4 and June 13 as the dates for GBRTA’s general meetings and lunches. ARTC’s Spring luncheon will be held at the Aqua Turf on May 21.

**Mercy Learning Center**

GBRTA members supported the Community Outreach Program by contributing \$1,100. to the Mercy Learning Center in Bridgeport. A huge thank-you to all who are helping underprivileged teens to enjoy a happier holiday season.

***In Memoriam***

- Barbara Firisin* ..... 06/24/2023**
- Barbara King* ..... 06/21/2023**
- Doris E. Tariska* ..... 02/04/2023**
- Ilse Levi* ..... 05/07/2023**
- Sondra Berkman* ..... 05/12/2023**
- Robert Caciopoli* ..... 07/23/2023**
- Isobel Trudeau* ..... 10/30/2023**
- Joan Murchie* ..... 11/01/2023**

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**Annual Dues—\$20      Life Membership \$250**

GBRTA’s membership year runs from September 1 to August 31. Members whose dues are two or more years in arrears will be dropped from the membership file and must repay two years of back dues for reinstatement.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Year Retired \_\_\_\_\_ School System \_\_\_\_\_

New Member \_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_ Amount of check \_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_\_ Please check here if there are any changes to your contact information.**

Mail form and check, payable to GBRTA to:

**Ann Block    60 Ridgeview Avenue      Trumbull, CT 06611**  
**annblock93@gmail.com      203-268-1577**

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**A Note From Rita . . .**

as they act and speak on our behalf.

I would be remiss if I did not mention how disappointed I was to learn that only 37% of eligible retirees cast ballots in the election. For whatever reason, 63% chose to sit on the sidelines. We must do better if we are to maintain those benefits on which we have come to depend. The low participation rate sends the message that we are complacent and accepting of decisions that may not be in our best interest. We retirees are in charge of our fate. We must do better.

Stay tuned and pay attention. The 2024 legislative session is right around the corner, so be ready to roll up your sleeves and get to work to protect our benefits.

Rita McDougald-Campbell

**COLA Adjustments Approved**

The TRB has voted to approve the following cost of living increase for January 2024. Based on the statutes governing Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for CTRB members, the Connecticut Teachers’ Retirement Board will be granting COLA as follows.

COLA Group	January 2024 COLA Increase	July 2024 COLA Increase
Members retired prior to September 1992	TBD	TBD
Members retired on or after September 1, 1992 and joined the Teachers' Retirement System prior to July 1, 2007	3.2%	3.2%
Members retired on or after September 1, 1992 and joined the Teachers' Retirement System on or after July 1, 2007	3%	3%



**GBRTA**

**Email**

**GBRTA.org@gmail.com**

**Website**

**www.GBRTA.org**

Check your name on the address block. If it's followed by anything other than *Life Member* or the date is earlier than **September 1, 2024 (09/01/24)**, you're behind in your dues. Please use the form on page 3 to catch up!

**The Fund to Elect Officers and Board Members**

The Greater Bridgeport Retired Teachers Fund, established in 1983 through a bequest from Florence Batchelder, will elect officers and board members in May, 2024. The governing board, which manages the affairs and portfolio of the Fund, has six officers and nine additional members elected for two year terms. The 2024-2025 slate will be announced at the April GBRTA meeting and voted on at its June meeting.

If you are interested in serving as an officer or on the Fund's board, or for further information, please contact the chair of the nominating committee, Sandra Petrucelli-Carbone at

**203-463-8403 or [spcdkg@comcast.net](mailto:spcdkg@comcast.net)**

by January 15, 2024. Additional information about the Fund can be found at [www.GBRTA.org](http://www.GBRTA.org)

**Did You Notice. . .**

The price of almost everything you purchase has risen sharply in the past year? We'd like to call your attention to one notable exception—GBRTA's dues have not changed for two decades! We'd like to maintain the dues at the current level, and you can help.

A number of members have not shared email addresses with us and need to be reminded to pay their dues through a postcard mailing. It adds up—the reminder cards are printed, stamped (\$0.51) and sent on their way. The dues payment is acknowledged with another postcard.

Your part—pay attention to the address box on your newsletter. **If it's followed by anything other than *Life Member* or the date is earlier than **September 1, 2024 (09/01/24)**, you're behind in your dues.** Please use the form on page 3 to catch up (or even pay ahead!) Don't make us send you a postcard! And please, make sure we have your correct email address.