**RRTA Meeting (Virtual on Zoom)**

**November 5, 2020**

**Attendance:**  D. Altobelli,Z. Artson-Crichlow, M. Barnum, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, P. Brody, B. Buckingham, C. Dean, K. Evans, W. Humphrey, M. Jenkins-Cox, A. Johnson, F. Macek, L. Rapkin, E. Robinson, K. Schultz, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, A. Smith, C. Smith, B. Swan, F. Valente, D. Voellinger, Y. Wooten, M. Zimmer

**Absent:** R. Allen, K. Barkley, K. Fager, M. Ferenchak, B. Gerace,K. Huey, B. Jones, M. Keating, D. Sullivan, J. Zuniga

**Also in attendance**: L. Espinosa, M. Lavonis (RTA Secretary/zoom administrator)

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:09.

2. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Erma (Jean) Dawson, Evelyn Moore (Marx, Harloff), Gordon V. Pike, Patrick R. SanFillipo. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

3. **Vote Cope** — Dave Altobelli said that NYSUT/RTA endorsed Valleriani for a judgeship. He and his wife were both in the education field and was endorsed in his last election. Dave said that he has 8 new contributors to Vote Cope, but NYSUT had contacted him about getting new contributors or for others to increase their contributions. It was suggested that he put reminders and a form in the RRTA newspaper and to have Mary Barnum send out a reminder on the list serve. Checks sent into the RTA office will be cashed eventually but because the office staff is on a Covid schedule it may take some time. Any forms from NYSUT about increasing or beginning your Vote Cope contribution should be sent to RTA instead of Albany and Dave Altobelli will forward it after putting the information into his records.

4. **Dress-A-Girl/Savvy Sewers** — Gaya Shakes reported that they are not meeting at the RTA office but many of the members are working at home. They have a project of making polar fleece blankets for men at the Dimitri House for December. Anyone wanting to help or get information about it should contact Gaya.

5. **Health Care** — Charlie Dean said that all retirees should have gotten their packet from RCSD. The informational meetings are November 12 at 2 pm for MVP and 4 pm for Excellus. You may attend one or both meetings. Charlie said that the link through Benefits was not working to get onto the zoom meeting without having to type in the long code, but RTA’s website will have the link; Mary Barnum will send out the link to her list serve; or you can go to the RCSD page, — go to menu — go to benefits — go to bottom of the page — view calendar — choose meeting. Both meetings have call in numbers in the initial letters if you want to listen in on the phone. Charlie Dean shared his phone number (865-1735) if you would like to ask him questions about the plans, however, he said he will not recommend one over the other.

Cathy Smith said she got information from MVP gold recommending that she look on their website to make sure your doctor is on your plan, and Charlie said you could do the same with medicines.

Mary Barnum recommended that everyone should go to the meeting to listen and ask questions because you might hear something you were unaware of.

There was a question about remaining on the RCSD health plan if the teacher of the couple passes away. Charlie Dean said that the other person can continue with the RCSD plan but must pay both what the district pays into the plan and the member’s contribution.

Charlie Dean reminded us that if you pay Benefit Solutions through direct payment the company will make the adjustment in the amount taken out at the beginning of the new year.

6. **Newspaper** — Mary Barnum said the newspaper will include: dues request; call for nominations of RRTA rep positions; October RRTA minutes (which included the list of reps who have one more year and whose terms are up); Savvy Sewers information; Patti Brody’s description of the Memorial Art Gallery’s Andy Warhol exhibit; and a cartoon by Alex Johnson. The deadline for anything else is Friday, November 13 for articles or pictures.

Mary Barnum said that the process of distributing the papers has changed during Covid. The secretaries are preparing the mailings and are putting the newspaper into envelopes.

7. **Cost of Living Increase (COLA) —** This year’s increase was $15/month which began in September. COLA comes to those who are 62 years old **and** have beenretired for 5 years (there is a reduction of COLA for deceased spouse benefits). Increases are cumulative and continues thanks to Vote Cope. You may want to increase your contribution to secure their lobbying for COLA.

FYI - Social Security has a 1.3% increase beginning the first of the year’s check; however, your Medicare Part B may also increase.

8. **Books for Kids** — no new news

9.  **Calendar** — RRTA meetings are the first Thursday of the month at 10 am. RTA meetings are usually the 3rd Tuesday of the month. No activities are scheduled.

10. **RRTA Dues** — This year they are $39.30 (same as last year). A letter went out to all new retirees and 12 returned theirs with their dues. They will also get this newsletter and hopefully remind them to join. Last year we had over 750 members.

Mary Barnum said that she is concerned about her email list serve data base because of changing emails from members. It will need to be worked on.

When the small wallet calendars arrive (possibly next week) members who send in their dues check will receive one which will acknowledge that your check has been received and you are a member in good standing.

11. **Labor Council** — Freddi Macek said that we are still waiting for results but are hopeful for Samra Brouk and Jeremy Cooney. Many retirees called with the phone banks and many sent postcards to NYSUT members. Charlie Dean thanked all the retirees who helped with the election.

12. Patti Brody shared the following about the Andy Warhol exhibit:

There will be 5 separate Warhol exhibits throughout the gallery:

**Andy Warhol Portfolios: A Life in Pop/Season of Warhol**

**Cow Wallpaper/Silver Clouds/Warhol TV**

The exhibition will run from October 25, 2020 - March 28, 2021 at the Memorial Art Gallery, 500 University Ave,Rochester, NY 14607. Gallery Hours are: Wednesday - Sunday 11:00AM - 5:00PM (Thursdays 11:00AM - 9:00 PM). Admission to the gallery is $20.00 (Gallery members get in free)

Because of COVID-19 the number of people allowed in the gallery is limited. Everyone must wear a mask at all times and maintain social distance. Because of this, TIMED TICKETS MUST BE ORDERED IN ADVANCE.

Information about ordering tickets will soon be available on the MAG website: [www.MAG.ROCHESTER.EDU](http://www.mag.rochester.edu/)

Don't forget to visit the STORE @ MAG. The gallery store will have a lot of Warhol related merchandise, holiday cards and decorations as well as their usual selection of art, jewelry and crafts made by local artists.

13. Gaya Shakes shared that there is a Gateways Music Festival of African-American and International music virtually, November 9 - 13. ([gatewaysmusicfestival.org](http://gatewaysmusicfestival.org))

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 am.

Mary Zimmer

RRTA Secretary