**RRTA Meeting (zoom meeting)**

**February 1, 2024**

**Attendance:**  Z. Artson-Crichlow, M. Barnum, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, P. Brody, C. Dean, K. Fager, B. Gerace, K. Huey, W. Humphrey, M. Jenkins-Cox, F. Macek, L. Rapkin, E. Robinson, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, A. Smith, C. Smith, B. Swan, Y. Wooten, M. Zimmer

**Absent:** D. Altobelli, B. Buckingham, L. Espinosa, K. Evans, M. Ferenchak, S. Flynn, P. Givens, A. Johnson, M. Keating. K. Schultz, T. Stamper Webster, D. Sullivan, F. Valente, J. Zuniga

**Also in attendance**: S. Raymond, J Robillard, A. Urbanski, M Lavonis, zoom coordinator

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:17.

2. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Annabel Doll Rakoczy, Nina Jackson, Renee Liebschutz, Frank Logan, Harry Marino, Jewell Morgan and Eberhard (Art) Thieme. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

3. The January RRTA minutes are posted on line within a week of the meeting. If there are any questions, contact Mary Zimmer and changes will be announced at the next meeting.

4. **Announcements**:

a) The next RRTA meeting will be Much 7 on zoom. If you would like to attend, contact Charlie Dean or Matt Lavonis for the link.

b) Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) — Charlie Dean wanted to inform members that when having to take money out of your IRAs or annuities that are required at a certain age (depending on the year you turned the age according to federal law — was 70 and 1/2 and is now 72), you must take out a specific percentage of you investments. If you designate to give an amount of your withdrawal to a 501c3 charitable organization, it will go directly to the charity and not be applied to your total income concerning Medicare payments. You can also have the mandatory withdrawal taken in one lump sum or as a monthly payment. Discuss this and the many options with your financial advisor. Books for Kids and Peter Castle Scholarship are 501c3’s that are associated with RTA.

c) RRTA representative, Barry Swan, sent a letter of his resignation as a rep of RRTA as of today’s date. He later rescinded his resignation. Charlie Dean said that the paperwork was in and he couldn’t take back his resignation and thanked him for his years of service. Barry said he will continue to attend the meetings, as any RRTA member can attend.

When asked for his reason for his resignation, Barry said that he attempted to have RORE come to RRTA to speak about their concerns with the union three times and had been voted down each time. He said he felt that RRTA was not willing to listen to them and their concerns when other outside groups can come in to speak.

5.  **Niagara on the Lake - Shaw Festival** — Cathy Fager and Bob Gerace have been in contact with Shaw. They are looking to possibly go twice to Shaw and something earlier than the previously mentioned October date. They are working with Scenic Tour Company who helped to organize last year’s trip. Members will save about 25% on their ticket, but not on the bus cost. More information will be coming, hopefully in the April RRTA newspaper that only goes out to members.

6. **Dress a Girl/Savvy Sewers** — Gaya Shakes said that the group met Monday and made 22 dresses. She said they collected $850 from the Holiday Party raffles and donations. The donations of food went to the Dimitri House, Beyond the Sanctuary and Greece Baptist Church.

February the group is collecting cleaning products to help those who can’t afford them because they can’t purchase cleaning products with Snap. Anyone wishing to donate cleaning supplies, drop them off at the RTA office by the last Monday in February.

The intern from SWW continues to come to help out and is learning to sew.

Chojy Schroeder is working with refugees and migrants and if anyone has anything to donate contact her through RTA or Gaya.

The group has sent dresses and other items to Honduras, Haiti, Uganda, Peru, the Bahamas and Senegal. Anyone traveling and would like to deliver dresses to a needy area, contact Gaya. The group will pay for any extra suitcase.

They continue to accept donations of materials or money.

7.  **Labor Council** — Freddi Macek said that she will need volunteers for the phone banks in November. They will be calling local union workers and also out of state union workers.

She said there will be 3 primaries: Jeremy Cooney has a person challenging him in the Democratic primary; DeMond Meeks and Willie Lightfoot are vying for the same position; and County Clerk Jamie Romeo has Ann Lewis also challenging her in the Democratic Primary in June.

8. **Vote Cope** — Their main goal is to work on revising Tier 5 and 6. Consider increasing your contribution.

9. **Newspaper** — The deadline for the April newspaper will be April 1. The January newspaper is being prepared to send on Friday, February 2. Thanks to those who contributed articles and pictures.

Mary Barnum said that there are 583 dues paying members. This number is down from the 700+ from last year which means RRTA may lose reps when the election comes. We will also look at removing those elected reps who are continuously absent from meetings so we do not lose any active rep due to a lower number of members.

Charlie Dean said that a colleague of his has written a book of his experiences as the son of a Southern sharecropper and will ask him to write a synopsis of his book and where we can purchase it for the next newspaper.

10. **Books for Kids** — The group had a successful visit on a very snowy morning to 2 classes at School 9. On February 6 the group will be going to 2 classes at School 45. Anyone wishing to join the group contact Kathy Evans or Mary Barnum. If you wish to donate send in a check to RTA and you will get a thank you letter from the committee and donations over $50, you will also receive an acknowledgement from Books for Kids/FLACE, the bank that the group uses. Donations are welcome.

11. **Calendar —** March 7 will be the next RRTA meeting on zoom; the March RTA meeting is rescheduled for March 26 also on zoom. April 1 is the deadline for the newspaper. The Rep elections will begin with a list of whose terms are expiring in the April newspaper along with the nomination form.

12. **New Business** — Al Smith said that February 3 is the Annual Chaplains lost on the Dorchester at St. Mary’s Church in Washington Square at 11 am. It is attended by the American Legion and Knights of Columbus and many different denominations. (There is an elevator on the right side of the church.)

Meeting adjourned at 10:55.

Mary Zimmer

Secretary