



The Apple Corps

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Kansas National
Education Association
Retired

President's Perspective

Greetings, KNEA Retirees -

The Roman god Janus, for whom the month of January is named, is the god of transitions. He has two faces: one looking back at the past, and one looking forward to the future. That seems appropriate for KNEA-Retired as we have just experienced an unprecedented and unplanned year of major change and transition, and we now look forward with hope to a pandemic-free future but wary of what may happen before that occurs.

The most major and tragic of the transitions we have experienced this past year occurred near the end, with the passing of our president, Judy Loganbill. Since all the officers were new in their positions this year, we learned together our roles and responsibilities. Working together we also formed bonds of friendship so losing Judy was both a personal and professional loss for many of us. But in a spirit of transition, we have moved on as I assume the role of KNEA-Retired president for the remainder of this term. The executive committee is committed to make the necessary changes for this to be a smooth transition and the work and actions of KNEA-R will continue. Judy would want that.

But there were so many other transitions last year. Who could have imagined we would all become Zoom meeting experts? How many of us had even heard of Zoom when the year started? It's not an ideal situation, but it has enabled us to see and hear each other while we are safely tucked away in our homes. And then there are the COVID guidelines. Did you expect to be wearing a mask every time you step out of your front door? And so much hand sanitizer—it's ubiquitous. We use it constantly. There is such an emphasis on washing our hands correctly and not touching our faces. There are also the lines we now automatically form by staying six feet away from those around us. Major life transitions.

Our organization has experienced other transitions as well. NEA, KNEA and KNEA-R now conduct nearly all of our business and decisions by Zoom or some other form of electronic communication. Major meetings like Representative Assemblies and Leadership Summits have been cancelled as on-site gatherings and have instead been conducted online. And some of this may continue post-pandemic. There is no ideal substitute for face-to-face communication but conditions have caused us to adapt.

For some of you, these changes may be more difficult. More and more of our communication is being conducted online. Email is absolutely a lifeline. Be sure we have an updated personal email address for you so that we can contact you when necessary. If you do not use email, let us know somehow so that we can find another way to communicate with you. Become a member of our KNEA-Retired Facebook page if you haven't already. We plan to communicate more through that method as well.



Transition. It's become the new normal. It's not always comfortable but it is necessary. And it can cause stress and confusion. But as leaders of KNEA-R, working together we hope to make these transitions less difficult while continuing to move forward into an unknown and uncertain future. There's hope ahead. Let's find that brighter future together. - **Bob Thesman, KNEA-R President**



Judy Loganbill (May 1953 - Dec. 2020)

KNEA Board Report



The KNEA Board of Directors met virtually on Dec. 12 to hear reports, conduct business and celebrate the association's victories. The presentation and open hearing for the 2021-2022 Operational Plan and Budget which will be presented to delegates at the KNEA Representative

Assembly in April held few surprises. KNEA leadership and management are good stewards of the association's finances.

KNEA has so much to celebrate! Active membership is up. KNEA has had the "\$40,000 Starting Salary Campaign" as one of its goals for several years. This year, 127 school districts with KNEA affiliates as the designated bargaining unit attained that goal. For those of us who started with a beginning contract barely \$10,000, having a \$40,000 base truly is cause for rejoicing!

KNEA also had a great number of members running for political office and getting involved in member engagement activities.

We have all struggled with and adjusted to changes in our activities and relationships due to COVID-19. We have had little family time, little social activity and surely miss life as we knew it this time last year. During our careers the United States faced uncertainty, tragedies and unrest. But all of that pales in comparison to what active teachers and students are facing now. KNEA, through the diligent work of Julie Wilson, KNEA Associate Executive Director, applied for and received a significant Safe and Just Schools grant from the National Education Association.

Coming in 2021, KNEA active members will have access to exclusive mental and emotional health support. The grant monies will provide help for members (and those residing in their homes) who currently do not have an emotional health benefit provided by their employer. Included in the program, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, are wellness webinars, confidential access to behavioral health clinicians with phone,

video, text or in-person access, a mobile app for dealing with stress, trauma, anxiety and loss, financial and legal counseling, and work/home balance coaching. This benefit provided by our national and state association is an amazing gift for those working in our profession right now.

The KNEA Board will be participating in two book studies. The first, under the leadership of the Racial Justice Committee, is *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, by Robin DiAngelo. The second book study, *We Got This*, by Cornelius Minor, will be led by the Social Justice Leadership Committee. Both books are powerfully written. The book studies will offer an opportunity for personal reflection and change.

Submitted by
Judy Johnson, KNEA-Retired representative,
KNEA Board of Directors

Congratulations to Bob Thesman as the 2020 Pam Taverner Distinguished Service



Awardee! Bob co-started a second Kansas City area local, is active in his church, serves on the Coordinating Council, and is stepping up to become president with the passing of Judy Loganbill.

This award began as we celebrated our 25th anniversary two years ago. (Photo above: Chris Huntsman presented the plaque that resides at KNEA HQ to Pam Taverner during the 25th anniversary state conference at Bethel College in Newton.)

Watch for the Membership Moments coming to your email box in early 2021. If we don't have your email address, you will not receive them!

- Dian Dotts, KNEA-Retired Membership Chair



🍏 Apple Bites 🍏

By Eleanor Browning, KPAC-Retired

Any candidate can make claims or say what they want. In our democracy, it's the voters who get the final word.

Mark Desetti recently wrote the following in Under the Dome: *"Here in Kansas, all state Senate and House seats were up and while we generally know what's what, even in these races we can't be certain of every outcome. This is not unusual. We remember a primary race one year that was decided with a coin toss when the candidates tied and another general election House race that was decided by only one vote. And they say your vote doesn't matter! We wonder who that one voter was!"*

To see the rest of this "Post Election Rundown" blog post, go to <http://underthedomeks.org/3988-2/>



Supporting Teachers During the Pandemic

As retired teachers spend more time safely at home during the pandemic, many schools have lost their service as volunteers or substitute teachers. But we can still find ways to support our active colleagues, many of whom are teaching in person and remote at the same time.

For example, all teachers enjoy a card or note of encouragement. Even a positive post to teachers on social media can make a difference.

To become more involved, call a local school or teacher and find out what they need, which might range from Clorox wipes to headsets or mice for Chromebooks. Another idea is dropping off pre-packaged snacks at the school door for teachers.

Either as individuals or retired local chapters, let's do what we can to lift up teachers during this difficult time.

- Sherry Turnbull, KNEA-Retired Secretary/
Treasurer

Whether the KNEA Representative Assembly in April is going to be virtual or in-person will be determined soon. The following KNEA-Retired members have been elected to attend:

George Blume • Shelia Blume • Debi Ellis • Ruth Goff • Carolyn Hill-Demory • Scott Pittman • Sherry Turnbull • Bob Thesman (president position) • Judy Johnson (Board of Directors position)

Sunflower East News The following two Zoom meetings have been planned: **On Jan. 26**, there will be a conversation with a local or county official, and perhaps an additional Saturday Zoom call with a state legislator. **On March 23**, Angie Powers from the NEA Board of Directors, and Bob Thesman, KNEA-Retired President, will be the Zoom speakers. **On June 22**, a socially distanced gathering is planned at Paula Dix's yard.



Even during COVID-19, C.A.R.E. members (left to right) Ethel Edwards, Terry Good, Marj Loyd and Sarah Meadows continued their tradition of decorating a Christmas tree. They called their 6-foot tall, 2020 tree, "Elves on the Shelf."

2020-21 KNEA-R Executive Committee

President • Bob Thesman

bobthesman@gmail.com

Vice President (Vacant)

Secretary-Treasurer • Sherry Turnbull

sturnbull100@gmail.com

KNEA Board Member • Judy Johnson

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Past President • Chris Huntsman

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Apple Corps Chair • Shelia Blume

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KPAC Representative • Eleanor Browning

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Board of Directors Report

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Education Association



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