



The Apple Corps

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Kansas National
Education Association
Retired

President's Perspective

Connections to our community. It's just a part of being a retired educator. We have the time to volunteer and even perform part-time working situations in helping organizations. Since helping others is in our nature as educators, community organizations provide us multiple opportunities to do just that. Whether it is delivering Meals on Wheels to fellow citizens in need, involving ourselves in local, state and national political campaigns or activities, serving in our churches in some vital roles, or even serving in public office as a school board member or city council member, you will find KNEA-Retired members doing their part to keep services functioning.

And it's not just volunteering. Often we find ourselves in the role of organizer or planner. Our years of using our skills in classrooms or elsewhere in schools have prepared us to take leading roles in civic or community or other organizations, and to make a difference in the lives of those who need those services.

It's fulfilling and enjoyable, since seeing a need and filling that need are what we do. This issue focuses on the myriad ways we serve and get involved. There are so many more but we will just scratch the surface in how KNEA-R members are connecting to our local, state and national needs.

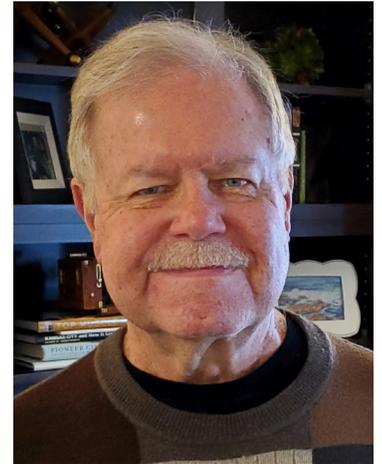
Bob Thesman, KNEA-Retired President

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Without our retired KNEA members who are willing to attend meetings and make sure the educators' voice is heard, we would be left out of our state and national committees who make decisions that affect students, teachers and even the retired of us. Thanks to all of you. We will be featuring those of you who substitute, still sponsor clubs or do anything to support the schools and students in your community. That will be the emphasis for the summer edition of The Apple Corps in 2022. Get ready to send in those stories and pictures in June. I'm looking forward to your stories!



- Shelia Blume



The Community Connections Issue

CARE, Capital Area Retired Educators, participated in the Festival of Trees that benefits SLI-Topeka, which supports individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our tree's theme was "Winter Storyland" and included a variety of books. We also created a few other items, such as wreaths, that were bid on. CARE is also gearing up to help Capital UniServ host Chili and Chat in January. This event is where area legislators and other elected officials are invited to come meet with constituents, especially regarding issues related to education.



- Mary Masters

As a Retired Lifetime Member of KNEA/NEA, I have continued being involved in advocating for public schools. I ran for local and state board of education positions. While not being successful in getting elected, I did not stop. I also remain active in the Kansas Coalition of Public Retirees (KCPR) as well as your KNEA/NEA Retired Political Action Representative. As a member of KCPR, I meet monthly with other KPERS retirees to advocate for a KPERS Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). I will be reaching out soon to let you know how you can help. I am following the footsteps of Chris Huntsman, former KNEA Retired president, as she met regularly with this coalition. Tom Schwartz, KNEA-R, has recently started attending these meetings. If interested, just reach out to me.

Recently I was asked to be interviewed by the National Public Pensions Coalition and The KC Beacon about the importance of my KPERS pension. Making connections with groups who advocate for pensions is important.

As your KNEA/NEA PAC representative, I will be attending meetings to help elect pro-public education candidates. For now, please consider supporting by contributing to each fund. You can do this by monthly contributions or periodically one-time donations. Stay tuned, stay informed and help advocate for our public schools at the state and national levels.

- Ruth Goff

The Topeka League of Women Voters has been registering high school students to vote in government classes for many, many years. Many League/KNEA-R members have done this, as well as administrators and community folks. Members do different high schools; I do Seaman 345 and Highland Park High School in 501. The presentation has a Power Point with a 10-minute video on the history of voting (a fun video with "famous people") and slides on how government affects our daily lives - like military, higher ed, rental, wages, etc. We also do a simulation on how your voice can make a difference with 50% registration and then 25% making it to the polls, so 25% or less make the decision for 100% of the people. Are their interests the same as yours? Stats show the number of voters 18-24 is on the increase!

Then we register them to vote. Some are 18; in Shawnee County if you are 17, you can fill out the form and the election office rolls it over on your 18th birthday. Prior to 2020, we did the paper federal form. Last year, during the pandemic, we did everything by Zoom and it was a mess for the first school. So we just did a "canned" YouTube that teachers could access and students registered at ksvotes.org. This year we did it in-person with online registration and the students were very engaged! I feel so good after a very tiring day of doing this!

- Chris Huntsman

Another example of a connection between KNEA-R and our communities can be found in the **Kansas Teachers' Hall of Fame**, Dodge City. This hall of fame is the first one of its kind in the U.S. and is dedicated to the early and present-day teachers who have devoted their lives to this profession. The gallery displays photos and stories of more than 400 teachers named to the Hall of Fame. Nomination forms and criteria can be found on the KTHOF website at www.teachershallfamedodgecityks.org.

Current District Heads include several current and past members of the KNEA-R Coordinating Council, including Bob Thesman, Debi Ellis, Kathy Frederking (who currently serves as president of the KTHOF Board), Pam Taverner, Jannette Luthi, and Louise Leslie. Contact any of them for more information.

KNEA-R Coordinating Council

The following is the Coordinating Council summary of Sept. 23, 2021, meeting:

We approved new members for the council. First-year members serving this year include Debi Ellis, Gail Kieffer, Kathy Meyer, and John Hope.

New KNEA-R Committees were announced. The committees had their first meetings in October and gave their first reports to the Executive Committee on Nov. 15. The six committees and their chairs are:

Communications—Vice President Sherry Turnbull

Membership—Dian Dotts

KPAC—Ruth Goff

Local Presidents—Shelley Dunham and Jenny Prichard

Annual Summit planning—Secretary/
Treasurer Robert Hubbard

Pre-Retired Workshops—Tom Schwartz
Revisions to the bylaws were presented for a first reading. The revisions are mainly updating as to how we currently operate. Changes will be approved by the council during their Feb. 2022 meeting.

The **Pam Johnson Taverner Award**, which recognizes one KNEA-R member for service to the organization and community, will receive nominations which are due by April 1. Nomination forms for KNEA-R delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly and for the KNEA-R position on the KNEA Board of Directors are due on Dec. 1, 2021.

The 2022 NEA Leadership Summit will be held in March. More details about that will be forthcoming.

President Bob Thesman and Secretary/
Treasurer Robert Hubbard will be working with Staff Liaison Rex Hull to develop a budget for the upcoming year.

Ruth Goff presented a summary of both the legislative and KPERS activities.



KNEA-Retired delegates chosen for the Kansas NEA Representative Assembly

Recently an election was held to elect the eight delegates KNEA-R is allocated to the KNEA Representative Assembly in April. Since only eight nominating petitions were submitted, these eight members will represent us:

Jane Mallonee, Shelia Blume, George Blume, Ruth Goff, Kathy Meyer, Darrell McCune, Sherry Turnbull, and Charlie Rogers. Bob Thesman, President, and Judy Johnson, KNEA Board of Directors rep, will also be delegates by virtue of office.

* * *

The KNEA Board of Directors met on Oct. 2 in Topeka, adhering to COVID protocols. We continued our professional learning into transactional and transformational organizational activities. The KNEA Membership Policies and Practices were updated and clarified. These will standardize but not diminish local control of membership decisions.

The annual review of KNEA's Bylaw 3-1g which includes people of color/ethnic minority delegate numbers commensurate with the population of the state was presented.

The KNEA executive committee recommended and the board of directors unanimously approved the following critical addition to the previously adopted 2021-2022

Operational Plan: The KNEA Executive Committee recommends to the KNEA BOD to accept the KNEA proposal to address the shortage among the education workforce through partnerships with other statewide organizations and coalitions who are dedicated to strengthening public education. Extensive work with Kansas education partners, KSDE, USA-Kansas, KASB, etc., has already begun.

-Judy Johnson



2021-22 KNEA-Retired Executive Committee

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KNEA Board Member • Judy Johnson

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How KNEA-R members
connect to their
communities across
Kansas
October 2021
KNEA Board
of Directors Report
KNEA-R Executive &
Coordinating Council
Meeting Reports

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Kansas National
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Kansas NEA Retired

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