President’s Perspective

The business of the association. The Representative Assembly. One of the three Coordinating Council meetings of this year. Caucuses. A Pre-Retired lunch for those who are considering retiring soon. The KPAC bucket auction. And countless informal meetings and conversations. Many of you have experienced this weekend in the past as delegates. It is a flurry of activity. The one time in the year we consider the business of the association together. Democratically and together. And for the first time in three years, we met in person. Masked and being careful, we greeted each other like a long lost family because we are family. And seeing each other on a Zoom square just wasn’t enough!

This issue of the Apple Corps centers on these meetings and events. Your KNEA RA delegates reported on various aspects of the weekend. And you will read that here. We made our decisions and listened to some inspiring speeches and attended a rally and then we moved back to our homes and locals. Until next year.

Bob Thesman, KNEA-Retired President

Goodbye & Welcome

For the past few years, KNEA-R has been blessed to have Rex Hull as our KNEA assigned staff liaison and Tammy Wagoner as our administrative assistant. They have been invaluable resources and colleagues. But they are moving on to other KNEA assignments. They will be greatly missed. But at the same time, we welcome new-to-us faces as partners in our efforts. Tammy Baltzell will be our new staff liaison and Christine Foster will be our new administrative assistant. They are both located in the Eastern Regional Office. They have both begun meeting with us and we look forward to this new partnership. By the way, if you get an email message from Tammy Baltzell or Christine, please open it as they will often send mass email messages for KNEA-R.

Pictured above: Tammy Baltzell, left, and Rex Hull, meet with the Coordinating Council in April.
Kansas Teacher Hall of Fame

The Kansas Teachers’ Hall of Fame was established in 1977 in Dodge City. Since its inception, more than 450 exemplary educators have been inducted. Each year, nominations are accepted from each of the 12 districts in Kansas. The state selection committee meets in late March to review the candidates.

The inductees meet the highest standards. The teacher must 1) show evidence of outstanding teaching and or administration; 2) show evidence of positive interactions with students and parents; 3) possess qualities that set him/her apart from other educators; 4) demonstrate continued pursuit of educational opportunities throughout their career; 5) share ideas by conducting workshops, classes, etc. for parents, teachers, and/or administrators; 6) demonstrate involvement in community activities; 7) exhibit educational recognition and awards; 8) submit a 100 word description of his/her philosophy of education. Additionally, nominees must have been a K-12 teacher or administrator for a minimum of 25 years in Kansas.

Application forms can be found on the KTHOF website and can also be received by reaching out to one of the district heads.

This year’s class of inductees includes Carol S. Adams, Manhattan; Michal Austin, Potwin; Joanne Emerick, Hoxie; Bette Milleson James, Hoxie; Julie McCreight, Leon; Sherry Pfeifer, Maize; and Mary Jane Witt, Junction City.

We would like to invite each of you to attend the upcoming induction for the class of 2022 at 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 4, in Dodge City. You might also like to attend the luncheon to hear the KTOY, Susanne Stevenson, speak.

The luncheon cost is $20. The induction ceremony is free of charge. We hope to see you in Dodge City!

I would also like to thank the KNEA-R coordinating council members for their valuable support and contributions to the KTHOF at the last council meeting!

Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council met Monday, April 25. The Pam Traverner Award for 2021 was presented to John Hope and the 2022 award was presented to Chris Huntsman. The work of the council committees was discussed. The Pre-retired Zoom meetings are going well. The next one will explain Tier 3 KPERS and what members can expect. A collection was taken up for the Kansas Teachers Hall of Fame.

The council was given an update on the legislature and bills to watch. Check www.underthedomeks.org for updated information. KNEA-Retired is working on a cost of living adjustment. The last COLA we received was 25 years ago. The local chapters gave their reports, and retiring members of the council were recognized.

Members of the Coordinating Council show off the Justice Imagine Justice student expression contest artwork on the front of the KNEA headquarters.

Bob Thesman, KNEA-R president, left, presented the 2022 Pam Johnson Taverner Distinguished Service award to Chris Huntsman, KNEA-R past president, during the April Coordinating Council meeting.
KNEA Board Report

The April 22 board meeting, which occurred the day before the annual Representative Assembly, began with an extensive presentation from California Casualty representatives about the varied programs Cal Cas offers. A popular benefit is waiving a policy deductible if one’s vehicle is damaged on school property. California Casualty is open to all members, their immediate families and now also to members’ siblings.

Because there are so many new staff members, because other staff members have had position changes in KNEA and finally since it’s been over two years since they could meet face-to-face, all the staff gathered at headquarters recently for training and fellowship. It was the first time since the beginning of COVID that many had been in the building.

A teacher retention survey sponsored by KNEA, Kansas State Department of Education, United School Superintendents and the Kansas Association of School Boards was developed and conducted by Emporia State University researchers. Over 20,000 Kansas educators responded to the survey. Of the many, many conclusions, it is not surprising a high driving factor for leaving the profession is the societal view of the teaching profession. Conversely, a high driving factor for remaining in the profession is our relationships with our colleagues. KUDOS to those of you who retired after decades of teaching grades six through eight! This survey’s results note that middle school teachers have the highest significant risk for leaving the profession.

Idalia Shuman, director of Teaching and Learning, has received NEA grants focusing on teacher well-being. She referenced “If mama ain’t happy…” as “If teacher ain’t happy, then students aren’t happy.” The board also spent time preparing for the weekend state RA activities and met briefly after the RA to adopt the operational plan and budget for 2022-2023.

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KNEA-RETIRED T-SHIRTS FOR SALE

Sherry Turnbull has provided a place where we can get shirts that reflect our participation in our retired organization. Visit the website below and get your own t-shirts and pullovers. Let others know you are proud of your service for students!
https://knearetiredapparel.itemorder.com/shop/sale/

Bob Thesman, KNEA-R president, right, presented the 2021 Pam Johnson Taverner Distinguished Service award to John Hope during the April Coordinating Council meeting.

KNEA Board Report (continued)

In a previous report, KNEA’s Just Imagine Justice program was highlighted. The Student Expression Campaign winners in each of the categories—visual art, music, spoken word, and video or photography were honored at a dinner with KNEA officers and were also recognized at the representative assembly. The winning entries are, or will soon be, posted on the campaign’s website, justimaginejustice.org. If you are in Topeka driving past KNEA HQ, take note of the windows. All five of the visual arts submissions are on display for passersby to see. Very, very impressive. They should give all of us hope. Our future is in good hands.

Submitted by Judy Johnson
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In This Issue:
The KNEA RA Wrap-Up
Kansas NEA Retired T-Shirts!
Hall of Fame Induction
A Welcome & A Goodbye
April 2022 KNEA Board of Directors Report

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KNEA-R elected delegates to the 2022 Representative Assembly were: Sherry Turnbull, Shelia Blume, George Blume, Jane Mallonee, Darrell McCune, and Kathy Meyer. Also elected but unable to attend were Ruth Goff and Charlie Rogers. Bob Thesman (KNEA-R President) and Judy Johnson (KNEA-R Rep on the KNEA Board of Directors) were also delegates by virtue of office. Here we are in our new official KNEA-R shirts.

The following were the seven New Business Items (NBIs) presented for consideration at this year's KNEA RA:

NBI 1 - work via the legislative agenda to advocate for Columbus Day to be Indigenous Peoples' Day - adopted
NBI 2 - disseminate materials to members promoting activities celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day - adopted
NBI 3 - employ licensed school counselors - referred to committee
NBI 4 - Withdrawn
NBI 5 - develop a “business ally list” that identifies local, state, and national businesses that support public education and unionism - failed
NBI 6 - recognize Educational Support Professionals through a bill of rights - adopted
NBI 7 - offer a green delegate option to KNEA RA delegates for packets 1 & 2 - adopted.

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Much discussion on NBI 5 about who/how vetting occur.
NBI 7 had much discussion about connectivity costs and if all info would be readily available in a timely manner. Modified to be only for packets 1 and 2 - not items brought to floor during RA.

There were four Resolutions held for discussion by the RA delegates this year. Two of them were recommended by the Resolutions Committee and approved by the delegates. These resolutions were improving the Social/Emotional and Health Education for Youth resolution by including references to school social workers and removing the word “guidance” from references to comprehensive school counseling programs. Two proposed new resolutions were not recommended by the Resolutions Committee and were not approved by delegates.

These resolutions centered on changes in the respect for individual names and pronouns and limiting the roles that school social workers play in schools. Please contact any of your delegates for more complete information on these actions.

The winners of the 2021 Just Imagine Justice Student Expression contest (pictured above) were introduced to the KNEA RA delegates. They responded in a creative form to the essential question: What does racial and/or social justice look, sound, or feel like to you when you express your feelings through your chosen art form?
A SHORT REVIEW OF THE 2022 KNEA RA

Gov. Laura Kelly and KNEA officers, from left, Kimberly Howard, vice president; Sherri Schwanz, president and Lindsay Buck, secretary/treasurer.

There were several good speakers at the 2022 KNEA RA. Kim Anderson, NEA Executive Director, spoke about how much teachers have given during the pandemic. Kansas Governor Laura Kelly thanked teachers for their work and asked for their continued support. U.S. Representative Sharice Davids made a surprise visit to the rally and talked about how much she appreciates teachers.

On Saturday of the RA, delegates were primed to march to the Kansas Statehouse and have a rousing rally. The weather had other plans and the wind and chance of rain cancelled the rally but not the enthusiasm of the delegates. The event was moved into the Maner Conference Center and the excitement ramped up! Many speakers who care about complete funding for all public school students spoke to the crowd of delegates and other public education supporters. Gov. Kelly also spoke to the group and thanked teachers for the job they have done throughout the pandemic and after. Sharice Davids made a surprise appearance, speaking to the crowd with encouraging words and ending the rally on a positive note.

A Delegate’s Perspective on the 2022 KNEA RA

Representing KNEA-R was an honor! I noticed the smaller turnout: <250 instead of the typical >400 attendees. But I also quickly noticed the greater diversity of the members, not only in ages, but in back- grounds. This led to some excellent discussions on NBI’s relating to Racial and Social Justice. With the legislature in the turn around session, we heard from key voices who support public school education (see opposite column).

I really appreciated how KNEA President Sherri Schwanz got right to our items of business. I can remember other years where it seemed like those items were put at a time in the schedule when people were tired or felt a time pressure to quickly move them through without the discussion they deserved. This year, it seemed that business items and other parts of the agenda such as speakers and awards were interspersed in a way that made everything really flow well.

In addition to the diligent work done on the floor by our KNEA-R delegates, Cindy Williams, Dian Dotts and Scott Pittman (pictured above) promoted KNEA-Retired membership at a table outside the RA business floor. They provided membership forms and answered questions. There were 20 delegates who accepted our offer to attend a hospitality luncheon sponsored by Ogden Financial Group. We are grateful for OFG’s continued support of KNEA-Retired.