**Action Report ...**

**NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, NEA Representative Assembly**

*by Richard Blish*

The 2014 NEA-Retired 31st Annual Meeting was held on June 28-29 in Denver Colorado before the NEA Representative Assembly. The agenda included the NEA Student Outreach to Teach activity, The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education Fundraising Program, New Business Item action, Elections, and a Presentation of Annual Awards.

Tom Curran was unanimously elected as NEA-Retired president for a second three year term. During his address he stressed the importance of educating people to understand the value of public schools and why it is important to elect education friendly people to our legislatures. He said, “Retirees have the power to oust those governors and legislators who have been hurting our public schools, our students and our education colleagues at all levels.” All retired attendees were urged to keep fighting and partner with younger generations.

The retirees were also addressed by the incoming NEA President, Lily Eskelsen Garcia who spoke about the importance of Social Security, immigration reform, generational diversity and NEA's mission of helping every student succeed. Lily said, “Social Security was not to build wealth, but to have a roof over our heads and food on our tables.” She also emphasized the work NEA is doing in support of immigration reform since it affects so many of our members.

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The apple tree is full of red apples again and the deer are coming regularly for a snack. Last week however there was an unexpected visitor. A coyote was under the tree munching away. That was scary.

I’ve been to buy my back-to-school supplies; just can’t resist those colored pens, binders and flash drives.

I don’t believe the teacher in me will ever get over the desire for school supplies. Along the same line, I have a theory that anyone who ever goes to school will never get over the craving for an after-school snack.

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There were 99 Kentucky delegates in attendance at the NEA Representative Assembly in Denver last month; eleven were retired.

Many important decisions were made, including the election of the executive officers. For the first time we will have an all-minority, all-female, officer team made up of Lily Eskelsen García, an elementary teacher from North Salt Lake, Utah; Becky Pringle, a physical science teacher from Harrisburg, Penn., and Princess Moss, an elementary school music teacher from Louisa County, Va.

We also said goodbye to outgoing president Dennis Van Roekel who leaves behind a legacy of making education equity a primary focus of the Association. He said, “I will always be a believer in the power and promise of public education.”

The 2014 Friend of Education Award went to Malala Yousafzai, the 15-year-old student and education activist in Pakistan who survived a brutal attack by Taliban militants determined to prevent girls from going to school.

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“We voted to end the ‘test/blame/punish’ system that has dominated public education in the last decade”

In his speech, NEA Executive Director John Stocks championed student-centered leadership and said, “We Can Beat the Koch Brothers With Student-Centered Union Leadership.”

We voted to launch a national campaign to put the focus of assessments and accountability back on student learning and end the “test-blame-punish” system that has dominated public education in the last decade. The campaign will, among other things, seek to end the abuse and overuse of high stakes standardized tests and reduce the amount of student and instructional time consumed by them.

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Back-to-school time means Election Day is approaching at a fast pace. It is essential that we go to the polls and elect pro-education candidates to all positions.

The future for all of us could change drastically in a moment if the anti-public education, anti-pension candidates/incumbents win.

At this time and throughout the school year, please do what you can to encourage member involvement in recruitment and support of active members (certified and classified), student and retired members.

Enhancing the teaching profession demands a strong, all encompassing Kentucky Education Association.
KEA-Retired members belong to one of three groups for health insurance coverage. Highlighted below are the changes that will impact each group.

**Retired Certified Members age 65 & Over:**

The Part D Prescription Drug Plan will remain with Express Scripts. This allows the continuation of KY Rx Coalition Pharm-Assist Support giving KTRS leverage with future drug pricing and your access to six pharmacists. Call 855.218.5979 to receive help with identifying lower cost prescriptions, determining drug interactions and other medication information.

United Health Care will replace Humana as the provider for the Medicare Advantage Plan. UHC has offices in Louisville and Lexington and will place a full time employee in the KTRS office to answer your questions. UHC has agreed to provide the same benefits as Humana but at a significant savings. The MEHP premium will be reduced from $290 to $250 per month. This reduction in cost also helps sustain the KTRS Medical Insurance Fund, allowing KTRS to provide health insurance to retirees. By now you should have received, from KTRS, a letter listing the change in insurance and the benefits along with an explanation.

You will receive an insurance cancellation notice from Humana. Do not panic. Your Humana coverage will end midnight Dec. 31. UHC will begin immediately thereafter. Your new insurance card should arrive by mid December. There is no reapplication process. The transfer process is automatic.

You should not see any major changes.

If your provider currently accepts Medicare’s fee schedule and agrees to bill UHC, you should not have any problems. UHC will be contacting providers to educate them in regard to UHC.

If you are involved with the “Silver Sneakers” program, UHC has a similar offering.

KTRS will be holding 28 informational meetings across the state during October and November. All begin at 9 AM local time. Three are in teleconference format to allow homebound retirees an attendance option.

- Oct. 13, Curris Center Theater, Murray
- Oct. 14, Wingfield Inn Mayfield
- Oct. 15, Cherry Civic Center, Paducah
- Oct. 16, Days Inn, Madisonville
- Oct. 17, Holiday Inn, Hopkinsville
- Oct. 20, Knicely Conference Center, Bowling Green
- Oct. 21, Owensboro Convention Center
- Oct. 22, Prichard Center, Elizabethtown
- Oct. 23, J Black Center, Buckner
- Oct. 27, P Johns Brown Williamson Club, Louisville
- Oct. 28, Capital Plaza Hotel, Frankfort
- Oct. 29, Clarion North, Lexington
- Oct. 30, Best Western Holiday P, Richmond
- Oct. 31, Pioneer Playhouse, Danville
- Nov. 3, Coal Reserve Events, Somerset
- Nov. 4, Crooked Creek Golf Club, London
- Nov. 5, Pineville-Bell Co. Library, Pineville
- Nov. 6, Quality Inn, Hazard
- Nov. 7, U of P, Booth Auditorium, Pikeville
- Nov. 10, Ramada Inn Conf Ctr, Paintsville
- Nov. 13, Hampton Inn, Morehead
- Nov. 14, Ashland Plaza Hotel Convention Ctr
- Nov. 17, Marquis Conf. Center, Wilder
- Nov. 18, Radisson Riverfront, Covington
- Nov. 19, Triple Crown Country Club, Union

[TELECONFERENCE Nov. 13, 800-260-0702 Code: 333782. 5 P – 7 P ET]

[TELECONFERENCE Nov. 14, 800-260-0702 Code: 333783, 1 P – 3 P ET]

[TELECONFERENCE Nov. 19, 866-233-3852 Code: 334084, 1P – 3 P ET]

This link, http://kea.org/2014/08/12/ktrs-education-meeting-schedule.htm , will take you to the same information with more complete street addresses.

As usual, if you have concerns, you may call the KTRS hotline 800-618-1687.

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Delegate Nominations Due Oct. 10

The KEA Delegate Assembly will be held April 8 – 10, 2015, at Louisville Marriott Downtown. KEA-Retired may have as many as 73 delegates to the assembly (exact number will be known when membership is verified).

If you wish to serve as a KEA-Retired delegate to the KEA DA, return the nomination form below to Kathy Whitlock, KEA-Retired Associate Staff. Nominations must be postmarked no later than Oct. 10.

KEA-Retired Delegates to the Delegate Assembly will receive up to $250 plus mileage at the rate paid by KEA (currently 56 cents per mile). Receipts are needed for any expenses of $10 or more. Delegates must attend all sessions.

Nominations are also open for delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly. The NEA RA will be held in Orlando, July 1-6, 2015. Delegates are also expected to attend the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting which will be held in Orlando immediately prior to the NEA RA. KEA-Retired may have as many as 12 delegates to the NEA RA. KEA-Retired President Joyce Dotson is an automatic delegate to the NEA RA.

If you wish to serve as KEA-Retired delegate to the NEA RA, return the nomination form below (postmarked no later than Oct. 10) to Kathy Whitlock.

KEA-Retired delegates to the NEA RA will receive up to $1,800 toward expenses for attending the NEA RA and up to $800 toward expenses for attending the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting. Receipts are required for any expense $10 or more. A written report is required with the expense voucher.

Participants are expected to attend all sessions of the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, all sessions of the NEA RA, and any caucuses held by the Kentucky delegation.

KEA Delegate Assembly Nomination Form

Name:___________________________________  Last four digits of SS#____________________________
Address:_________________________________  or Membership # __________________
City:_____________________________________  State:___________ Zip:_____________
Email Address:____________________________  Home Phone:________________________
Signature of delegate candidate:______________________________________________________

My signature indicates that I understand and accept the attendance and stipend policy required of KEA-Retired delegates to the KEA DA.

Biographical statement to be included on ballot (limit 30 words):

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

STIPEND POLICY:
If elected, the delegate will have expenses reimbursed up to $250 plus mileage by KEA-Retired in return for attendance at all delegate business sessions and retired caucus meetings.

Complete & return this form by Oct.10 to:
KEA-Retired Delegate Elections
105 Diagnostic Drive - Suite B
Frankfort KY 40601

NEA Representative Assembly Nomination Form

Name:_____________________________  SS#_____________________________  KEA-Retired District:_________________________
Address:_________________________________  or Membership # __________________
City:_____________________________________  State:___________Zip:_____________
Email Address:____________________________  Home Phone:________________________
Signature:______________________________  Date:______________________________

My signature indicates that I understand and accept the attendance and stipend policy required of KEA-Retired delegates to the NEA RA.

Biographical statement to be included on ballot (limit 30 words):

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

STIPEND POLICY:
KEA-Retired will reimburse elected delegates up to $2,600 in return for attendance at the NEA-Retired annual meeting, all NEA RA business sessions and all Kentucky delegate caucus meetings.

Complete & return this form by Oct. 10 to:
KEA-Retired Delegate Elections
105 Diagnostic Drive - Suite B
Frankfort KY 40601
Your help is needed! Please send an e-mail to gpowep@kea.org stating your support of HR 1795 and S 896. These bills will end the provisions known as Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision. GPO/WEP penalize folks like you who have dedicated their lives to public education and other public service careers by taking away Social Security benefits that have been EARNED.

Luckily, Democrats and Republicans in both the Senate and House of Representatives are working together to address these troubling provisions. The Social Security Fairness Act of 2013 has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Reps. Rodney Davis (R-IL) and Adam Schiff (D-CA) as HR 1795. On the Senate side, Sens. Mark Begich (D-AK), Dean Heller (R-NV), Susan Collins (R-ME) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) have introduced the same bill as S 896.

Your NEA directors – Kandie McDaniel and Eddie Campbell – will print your messages and then hand-deliver them to the members of the Kentucky Congressional delegation.

Hello there! I am your new buddy, JOLT. When there are actions critical to preserving or improving your retirement benefits, a visit from me will be on its way. I’ll be asking you to do Just One Little Thing. Look for me in your email box.

Be seeing you soon,
JOLT
In her address to the retirees, incoming NEA Vice President, Becky Pringle, praised the contributions of retired members to the success of NEA. She called retirees NEA’s “first line of defense”. Becky told attendees that they are central to the Association’s strategic goals of strengthening affiliates and creating great public schools. When there is a need to produce turnout at rallies, phone banks or provide any other activism, “You are the first ones we call,” she said.

Reinforced in all the speeches was the importance of retirees not only for what we have done, but also for the contributions we will continue to make in the future.

The keynote speaker for the Representative Assembly was John Stocks, Executive Director of NEA. John said, “Retirees have worked and changed the course of history for those who came after. The battles today are different ones and the gains we secured are at risk today. No one has ever handed us anything. Anything we got, we fought for.” But he added, “We’re not backing down from any fights.” Instead, Stocks said, “The union is going ‘back to basics’ – organizing, engaging members and becoming more politically active. We are upping our game in politics. We are asking every member to step in and step up.” John concluded his speech saying, “We ask our members to join us as we take back our profession. We want to define what good teaching looks like. We want to define how we work to meet the needs of all children. No one knows better than educators what children need to succeed in school. It is up to all of us to live up to the legacy we have made”. He also emphasized that many gains from the past are now at risk as anti-union groups work to destroy unions and remove collective bargaining rights.

The NEA RA ended on a bitter-sweet note July 6th when the delegates said goodbye to outgoing NEA President, Dennis Van Roekel and gave a rousing welcome to newly elected President, Lily Eskelsen Garcia. After praising those who have supported and worked in concert with her, Lily concluded NEA’s 152nd Representative Assembly with a strong message to those “who don’t know what they’re talking about...We Are Fearless and We Will Not Be Silent!”

“We,” of course, refers to the three million educators who know what is best for students, learning and the teaching profession.

More information and speeches of the 2014 NEA RA may be found at www.nea.org under Grants and Events.

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**BOOMER! — INSURANCE CHANGES**

Retired Classified Members age 65 and Over:

KRS offers a Medicare eligible plan with Humana as the plan administrator. This will NOT change. At this time, it is expected that re-enrollment will not be necessary; however, it is always wise to read all enrollment materials thoroughly. KRS will host a series of informational webinars this fall; however, a schedule is not available at this time.

All Retired Members Under age 65 may access coverage through KY Employees Health Plan:

Effective January 2015...

- Anthem Blue Cross-Blue Shield will replace Humana as the medical plan administrator. Since this is a self-insured plan operating with an external administrator, most benefits are designed in house. Little change in coverage is expected.
- CVS Caremark will be the pharmacy benefit manager. You do not have to use a CVS pharmacy and may continue using your existing retail, grocery store, independent pharmacy, etc.

The schedules showing the various coverage options and corresponding costs have not yet been released.

*As always, send your comments or questions to me at this address: wildcat860@aol.com*

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**ANNUAL MEETING, REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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More information and speeches of the 2014 NEA RA may be found at www.nea.org under Grants and Events.
KEA-Retired Central District members will meet three times during 2014-2015. Meetings will be held at the KEA Lexington Office, 523 Williamstown Way. Dates are: Sept. 9, 5 p.m.—Dinner will be provided; Jan. 13, 2015, 1 p.m.—Covered dish lunch (bring a dish to share); May 12, 2015, 1 p.m.—Light lunch provided.

President Joyce Dotson will be our guest at the September meeting, and we will welcome new KEA-Retired members. Jane Gilbert, KTRS Insurance person, has been scheduled for the January meeting.

On July 29, Central District members prepared over 300 information bags for new hires in Fayette County. Sharron Oxendine has been elected to the KEA-Retired board from Central District, replacing Fred Tilsley who was elected in April to serve on the KEA board from KEA-Retired.

First District Members of the FDEA-Retired will be having our first meeting of the year on Sept. 8. Jane Gilbert, insurance coordinator for Kentucky Teachers Retirement System, will be our guest speaker on the changes for health insurance Jan. 1, 2015. We will be having additional meetings in October, February and May. Watch your mailbox.

Upper Cumberland UCEA-Retired members will hold their fall meeting at David’s Steak House on Tues., Oct. 14. Registration and lunch will begin at 11:30 a.m.; the program starts at noon. Mark your calendar and plan to attend. Lunch will be provided.

NKEA NKEA-Retired members have been busy revitalizing the NKEA-Retired association. We met Aug. 26 at the new KEA office in Florence. We had lunch, introduced the new director and discussed the benefits of belonging to KEA-Retired. We are excited to have another means of communicating important information to our retired members in northern Kentucky.

Fifth District Members met in Shelbyville at the new outlet mall Culvers Restaurant on Aug. 20 to update and discuss issues affecting members. Guy Kendall-Freas, Affiliate Relations Specialist NEA Member Benefits, dropped by with NEA freebies and information on a new travel discount initiative that NEA Member Benefits is launching.

MCEA MCEA-Retired members are in the process of organizing this year’s fall membership drive where newly retired KEA members will be invited to attend the open MCEA-Retired fall business meeting. Those members wanting to join may respond by calling Pres. Linda F. Darnell at 606-678-5453. Meeting dates, times, and locations may be found by “liking” Middle Cumberland (the one with a teacher’s cup) on Facebook and reading the various posts as time nears for each meeting. We are looking forward to having a KTRS representative speak on our new insurance. Lunch will be provided.

JCTA JCTA-Retired members have scheduled a Sept. 30 trip to Berea. Details have been mailed. Our annual luncheon will be held Oct. 14 at the Olmstead on Frankfort Avenue. An election will be held at the luncheon for a representative to the Board of Directors. Deadline for nomination forms and resumes is Sept. 19. Constitutional changes will be presented, discussed and a vote held. Attendees will be asked to confirm or update their e-mail addresses.
KEA-Retired wants to communicate with you.

Now that you are retired, your former school e-mail address is no longer active. Please take a few moments and send your current e-mail address to either Kathy Whitlock kwhitlock@kea.org or Brenda McGown bmcgown@kea.org. You will get information much quicker. We promise not to over stuff your mail box. If you are receiving information already, there is no need to supply your e-mail address.

To Do List . . .
✓ If not already registered, register to vote.
✓ Encourage friends and family to register to vote.
✓ Work to elect education-friendly candidates.
✓ Send current mailing address + e-mail address to KEA-Retired.
✓ Respond to JOLT’s requests.
✓ Self nominate to serve as delegate to NEA RA and/or KEA DA

Have you heard? The KEA-Retired office is moving to KEA headquarters. After October 24, our address will be 401 Capital Ave., Frankfort, KY 40601.

NOTICE ... All KEA-Retired members are receiving this newsletter via mail; however, the next issue will only be mailed to members for whom we do not have a valid email address or members who have requested a print copy. To request a print copy, either email Kathy Whitlock at kwhitlock@kea.org or leave her a message at 1-888-226-3500.